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UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND

RESEARCH REPORT ON

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN POST APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA: STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT, POLICY INITIATIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN THE FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

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DECEMBER 2008

DECLARATION

I declare that this report:

"Early Childhood Education in Post Apartheid South Africa: Stakeholder Involvement, Policy Initiatives and Implementation"

is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signature _____

Name: Boniface John Phiri

Date _____

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ABSTRACT

In most poor countries, children grow up without quality education. In addition, human development, which needs to be expanded, is also lacking. These challenges mostly facing poor countries are also characteristic of middle income countries such as South Africa where illiteracy levels especially among the black communities tend to be high against the background that per capita income is relatively higher than in most poor countries. The high illiteracy levels in South Africa can be linked to the absence of ECE policies in the apartheid era. As such, this calls for comprehensive ECE policies. In recognition of this fact, the government has prioritised provision of ECE services for five year olds through Grade R.

However, the 0-4 year age group remains ignored and left in the hands of independent and community providers. Access to ECE services by children in rural areas also remains low despite government efforts to reach out to vulnerable and poor children. This challenge undermines efforts to reduce poverty which in most cases is passed on from poor parents to poor children who grow up deprived and without life skills, perpetuating the poverty cycle. It is important then to consider effective models of providing ECE services in order to break the poverty cycle and build human capabilities to realise widespread benefits of development.

ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANC	African National Congress
CBO	Community Based Organization
CCECD	Coordinated Committee for Early Childhood Development
CEPD	Centre for Education Policy Development
DoE	Department of Education
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ECEC	Early Childhood Education and Care
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EFA	Education For All
EPU	Education Policy Unit
EPWP	Expanded Public Works Programme
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
Grade R	Grade Reception
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
HRD	Human Resource Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MECF	Ministry of Early Childhood and Family
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MOE	Ministry of Education

NEPI	National Education Policy Investigation
NECC	National Education Coordinating Committee
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NQA	National Qualifications Authority
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Plan
UNESCO	United Nations Education and Scientific Co-operation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Funds
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is a new phenomenon in the context of South African education. This is with the understanding that focus on ECE policies in South Africa became prominent during the transition period from the apartheid system to the new democratic government. Despite this being the case, ECE services have a long history in South Africa especially among the white population.

As would also be observed later, the term Early Childhood Education is used in this report to refer specifically to the education issues of children from birth to five as considered by White Paper 5. On the other hand, Early Childhood Development (ECD) is a comprehensive term implying all aspects of child development including education, nutrition and health. The two acronyms ECD and ECE are used differently in the study according to the context in which they are applied. This distinction is important because most often the two terms are used interchangeably as though they have the same meaning. The focus of this report is on ECE policy process and how the policies are implemented in the context of ECD.

The increasing focus on expanding ECE services in South Africa emanates from the growing emphasis by researchers who have established that ECE has long lasting impressions on children when they grow up. It is argued from research that the human

brain grows to its full capacity by the age of five. From this background, it is imperative that between the age 0-5, children are given the necessary stimulation so as to build strong foundations for future life experiences.

It is with this emphasis on expanding ECE services and exploiting the necessary avenues for provision that this research sought to establish what policies are in place and how the policies are implemented. In this regard, the literature review looks at the historical theory of ECD. A look at the historical theory helps us appreciate the importance attached to ECD from history. The literature also brings out the historical background of the South African education system especially during the apartheid era in order to locate the current education policies and the background upon which they were formulated. A wider view of global efforts in addressing the needs of children is discussed in the literature as regards the rights based approach and the broader perspective of the millennium declaration and the overarching goal of eradicating poverty by 2015.

Chapter three of the report looks at the data collection process. This largely involved document analysis and interviews with major stakeholders in the ECD sub sector in South Africa. As such, the analysis of policies and the implementation process was based on the documents collected and the interviews conducted during the data collection process. From the data collected, chapter four analyses the policy process, identifying major stakeholders who participated in policy formulation and also identifying and discussing the major policy documents and initiatives. This is followed by chapter five

which discusses the implementation process as regards to access, practitioner supply and financing among others.

Based on the analysis of the policies and the implementation process, the report observes that there is need to consider alternative models of provision. It is important to acknowledge the lack of skills as well as high unemployment levels especially among the previously marginalized groups in South Africa. This calls for concerted efforts in building strong foundations through comprehensive ECD policies and ensure that the poverty cycle is broken.

1.2. Research question

What is the policy framework and implementation process towards the provision of ECE in Post-Apartheid South Africa?

1.3. Research Objectives

Main Objective

- The main objective of the research was to establish what policies and initiatives South Africa has put in place to provide ECE services to South African children.

Specific Objectives

- To establish stakeholder involvement in policy formulation and implementation processes
- To investigate policies and initiatives in South Africa that have focussed on the provision of ECE
- To investigate how policies on ECE are implemented especially among the poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged

CHAPTER TWO

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This mini-thesis builds on Amartya Sen's theory of development. What Sen considers as the overriding purpose of development is to build human capabilities to participate in the political and economic affairs of the state. Sen places great emphasis on the need for nation states to expand provision of social services, health and education as primary ends and substantive means of development. This chapter recognizes a wide range of development theories that contributed greatly to the body of knowledge on the concept of development. In particular, the literature briefly discusses the modernization theory as espoused by W.W. Rostow and the dependency theory as propounded by Andre Gunder Frank. However, before discussing theories of development, this chapter gives a brief historical theory of child development.

2.1.1. Historical theory of Child development

The history of child development can be traced in recent years as having developed since the eighteenth century. In the history of child development, different researchers have taken different standpoints as to what influences children's behavior and attitudes as they grow up. Explanations on factors influencing child behavior have fallen within the 'nature-nurture' question (Gonzalez-Mena, 2008: p18).

In the perspective of the nature-nurture question, researchers have sought to explain whether children grow up to behave the way they do because of their genetic make-up or because of the influence of the environment they grow up in. Gonzalez-Mena (2008:18) observes that although some researchers today still lean one way or the other, most would agree that what counts is the interaction of genetics and the environment. These researchers argue that child development is a dynamic process in which nature influences nurture and vice-versa.

According to Gonzalez-Mena (2008), the English philosopher John Locke (1632-1704) was the first to write about the newborn as a blank slate. Locke argued that a child had no inborn ability to influence its own development and that only the environment influenced child behavior. The blank slate theory is premised on the understanding that the child is open to all kinds of learning and that the kind of learning is what largely determines the outcome of the child. Proponents of this theory place the responsibility of developing children into responsible adults on the teachers and parents and the overall environment as the overriding factor determining children's outcome. This view perceives heredity as a passive element that plays no role in determining outcomes of child development.

On the other hand, a French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) held the view that children are pure and innocent beings with great potential that only needs to be unlocked (Gonzalez-Mena, 2008:19). Rousseau held the view that babies were born with an inherent drive to do what is good and are vulnerable to the corrupt influence of adults. In his view, children should be allowed to grow independently with minimum

supervision from adults and that only the natural tendency of children would influence them to grow into responsible adults.

Added to these two perspectives of child development is the church's view that the child is basically evil. According to Gonzalez-Mena, early church philosophers held the belief that each child carried the seed of evil as a result of being born in original sin and only the strictest discipline would keep the child from being even more sinful (Gonzalez-Mena, 2008: 18).

Broadly, these three historical approaches form the basis for early childhood theory today: Locke's emphasis on the environment, Rousseau's belief in the natural process of development and the church's idea of original sin. The current debate on early childhood development has taken a holistic approach that aims to include all the basic needs of the child such as nutrition, health, education and the need to create a child friendly atmosphere that fosters play.

2.1.2 The broad concept of Development

Amartya Sen defines development as the "process of expanding people's capabilities" (Amartya Sen, 1999: 36). In this context, development implies the expansion of people's basic liberties to participate without restraint in the political, economic and social dispensation of state affairs. This definition is premised on the understanding that all aspects of human wellbeing such as increased life expectancy and access to social

services are guaranteed through enhancement of people's self expression and freedom of choice.

Realizing the limits to economic growth and a broad range of negative externalities associated with industrialization, the UN has embraced the concept of sustainable development. This concept means "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (UNDP, South Africa, 2003: 2).

In both definitions, the common ground is the need for the development process to address and meet the development needs of people. The concept of sustainable economic development, on the other hand, emerges from the realization of widespread negative externalities emanating from the development process such as pollution and the growing awareness of the depletion of some natural resources that impose a limit to growth. Sustainable development embraces the need to ensure environmental control. However, attaining sustainable development in the face of neo-liberal globalization is difficult to conceive. For one reason, neoliberal globalization aims to achieve the goal of development by expanding economic growth. This kind of economic growth expands by increasing consumption levels of natural resources, thereby threatening environmental sustainability.

Secondly, sustainability with growth in developing countries is elusive. Developing countries are under undue pressure to increase levels of investment by attracting foreign

capital scarce in the developing countries. Attracting foreign capital comes at the expense of sacrificing domestic policies that can address challenges of inequality and economic marginalization. Foreign capital is attracted under certain conditions suitable for expanded exploitation of natural resources while paying little attention to the needs of the future generations in developing countries. As such, the state must play a major role in regulating the activities of the market to lessen environmental degradation and ensure that the needs of future generations are taken into consideration. Above all, the goal of development is to improve the quality of life of people leading to increased life expectancy, expanded access to education, health and increased capacity to participate freely in the democratic dispensation and running of national state affairs. This development goal must guarantee the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

Development is a broad term used to define desirable attainments of economic activities. In attempting to grasp the concept of development, theories of development help in understanding the complex issues associated with the term. On one hand, the modernization theory as espoused by WW Rostow (1960) was premised on the understanding that all nations pass through the same stages of economic development: the traditional society, the pre-conditions for take off, the take off, the drive to maturity, and the age of high mass consumption (1960: 101). According to the modernization theory, each of the stages represents a progressive step from a basic traditional society and is associated with progressive forms of accumulation. Under this theory, it is possible to identify all societies in their economic dimensions as lying within the above five categories.

On the other hand, Andre Gunder Frank (1969) gives a different view of this theory. Gunder Frank's theory of development is built on the principle that today's developing and developed countries do not share the same history of their development process. He argued in consideration of the causes of underdevelopment, a term used to refer to the kind of development in less developed countries that takes a transition from a previously natural resource endowed state to that which is exploited and striving to achieve development. In Gunder Frank's perspective, underdevelopment is the main cause for present day poor countries' lack of development. In his argument, today's underdeveloped nations are poor for the reason that they were exploited by today's rich countries.

It can be argued that this exploitation process dating back to the time developed countries established links with less developed countries has continued into the modern day economic order where developed countries continue to exploit less developed countries through neo-liberal globalization. Therefore, according to Gunder Frank, less developed countries can only develop if they de-link from developed countries economies. Otherwise, the continued relationship between rich and poor nations would only work to worsen the underdeveloped state of less developed countries as the movement of resources from less developed countries to developed countries would continue.

However, the two theories mentioned above do not take into account the importance of education in economic development. From the two theories of development and

modernization, development is largely perceived in the accumulative process, where a nation is perceived as developed upon attaining high levels of industrial accumulation through the application of modern skills of production. Less emphasis is given to the importance of education both as a means and end of development.

In this view, it is appropriate to consider Amartya Sen's theory of development. Amartya Sen views the expansion of human freedoms as being both the primary end as well as the principal means of development (Sen; 1999: 36). Sen contends that development must be seen to enhance human capabilities to enjoy both constitutive and instrumental freedoms. The constitutive human freedoms identified include basic capabilities such as avoiding starvation, undernourishment and premature mortality. Other freedoms identified include being literate and numerate, enjoying political participation and uncensored speech (1999: 36). In this view, development is expanding the identified freedoms upon which the assessment of development must be based.

Sen further identifies five "instrumental" freedoms. These include political freedoms, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees and protective security (Sen; 1999: 37). The important factor Sen identifies is the fact that well performing economic systems cannot address all the social evils arising from social exclusion. In addition, enhancing economic growth through expansion of social opportunities such as basic education has historically proved to be highly beneficial.

The case of Japan which initially developed the human resource base before industrialization serves as a good example of the need for education to achieve economic development. Sen gives the example of Japan to emphasize the importance of education to enhancing economic growth through the expansion of social opportunities. It is observed that Japan had a higher rate of literacy than Europe in the mid-nineteenth century when industrialization had not yet occurred in Japan but gone on for many decades in Europe. It is further observed that Japan's economic development was clearly much helped by the human resource development related to the social opportunities that were generated. Similar connections linking economic growth to literacy levels are attributed to the East Asian miracle concerning the development of most East Asian countries.

Amartya Sen places emphasis on the creation of social opportunities specifically in education and health. The social opportunities have an influence on an individual's ability to live a better and healthy life. These facilities are important not only for the conduct of private lives such as living a healthy life and avoiding preventable morbidity and pre-mature mortality, but also are more effective in economic and political activities (1999: 39).

In line with this emphasis, illiteracy is a barrier to participation in economic activities that need a higher degree of literacy be able to develop specialized skills. In addition, political participation is also limited by an individual's ability to read newspapers and other print and electronic forms of communication and participation in public debates. As such, lack

of education excludes an individual from participating in both political and economic activities leading to social exclusion. Low literacy levels, therefore, is one contributing factor to high poverty levels in developing countries and poor communities within developing countries.

It is from this realization that UNDP includes education and health attainments as key indicators of human development both as primary means and desirable ends of development. If the primary goal of development is to improve the quality of life of individuals, then high levels of development must be seen in building people's capabilities to participate in political and economic opportunities created by the process of development.

However, the evidence provided from East Asian countries is against the general neo-liberal theory of development which contends that the expansion of social opportunities as regards health and education is a luxury of rich countries. The neo-liberal approach assumes a trickle-down effect, a natural process that would allow for the benefits of economic growth to trickle down to the disadvantaged groups of society through a process of accumulation driven by the private sector. It is assumed that only high levels of economic growth would allow for economic benefits to trickle down and spread the gains of growth to the disadvantaged in society.

Globalization in simple terms means a process by which local or regional entities are tranformed into global entities. This process is characterised with a tendency by which

the activities of people in the world are unified into a single global unit. The globalization process takes a combination of economic, technological, sociocultural and political forces. Globalization is often used to refer to economic globalization, that is, integration of national economies into the international economy through trade, foreign direct investment, capital flows, migration, and the spread of technology. Economic globalization is often packaged with free market economic policies devised by global institutions; the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

A set of economic policies are advocated by global institutions under the umbrella term called the Washington Consensus. These policies include the liberalization of local economies, deregulation of companies, privatization of state owned enterprises, liberalization of financial markets, reduction in public service spending, downsising of the public service and the pursuance of tight monetary and fiscal policies among others (Peet, 2003: 205). These neoliberal policies became more prominent in the late 1980s and early 1990s after the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).

In a broader perspective, neoliberal globalization has been associated with rapid political and economic transformations that have had a huge bearing on policies concerning the provision of social services including ECE services worldwide. The collapse of the USSR signified an end of attempts to pursue communism. The collapse of communism led to a shift to open market economies enforcing neo-liberal rules on developing countries. As earlier mentioned neo-liberal policies demand reduction in government expenditure on social services including education. Broadly, these neoliberal policies have had the

consequence of increasing unemployment levels and social exclusion, rising poverty and inequality, and general inability of low income groups to pay for social services.

Myers (2002) points out that governments and international organizations, in the attempt to counter these impacts, have began to support 'compensatory' programmes including those for the care, education and development of small children (UNESCO; 2002: 24). Neoliberal globalization is considered to be the major impediment to the provision of ECE in neoliberal economies because of the demand to limit government participation. It is noted that while the "cultural revolution" of the 1960s and 70s produced a momentum towards integrating care and education, the forces of neoliberal globalization have had the opposite effect of retarding the move towards unified services, by tending to minimize state participation (UNESCO; 2002: 24). Further, neoliberal globalization with cuts in social spending has also had the consequence of undermining and ignoring social demands and unique country backgrounds while encouraging uniform policies.

As noted above, reduction in social spending reduces the government's ability to meet the needs of expanding the provision of education services. Poor families face the challenge of providing education support to their children especially ECE needs. As a result, children may grow without accessing ECE opportunities which in most cases are a preserve of rich families that can afford to pay for their children. As the provision of social services is shifted to private providers, the poor are further confined in the margins of poverty. To break this poverty cycle, government needs to play a significant role in

ensuring the gains of growth are redistributed and be able to build human capabilities with emphasis on building strong foundations through ECE.

2.1.3. Early Childhood Development

Broadly, Early Childhood Development (ECD) as defined by Linda Chisholm (2004:340) is a set of strategies that meet the basic needs of young children from birth to at least nine years. ECD adopts a holistic approach encompassing health, nutrition, hygiene and children's cognitive development and socio-emotional well-being (UNESCO, 2007). On the other hand, Early Childhood Education is a component of ECD that specifically refers to the provision of childhood education to children between the age of three and six. Regarding child education, Joe L. Frost argues that research has showed that the first years of a child's life are the period of most rapid growth in physical and mental characteristic and of great susceptibility to environmental influences (Frost, 1968: 5). In his view, deprivations in the early years are more disastrous in their effects than at any later stage in life. This argument places emphasis on the importance of early childhood development as an effective way of developing children into responsible adults.

Further, early childhood programmes are vital to offset social and economic disadvantage and are an instrument to guarantee children's rights that opens the way to all the EFA goals and contributes powerfully to reducing poverty, the main objective of the Millennium Development Goals. As such the provision of ECD as observed by Chisholm requires concerted support from the state, NGOs, civil society, communities and families.

She identifies poverty as one main challenge to the provision of ECD in South Africa. Chisholm asserts that using different poverty lines and data sets, various studies estimate that between 58 and 75 per cent of South African children live below the poverty line (2004: 343). She further states that 1999 official statistics indicate that poverty is concentrated among black households – 52 per cent of black people, 17 per cent of coloureds, and less than 5 per cent of Indians and whites are poor (2004: 344).

In addition, Pierre Du Plessis and Lloyd Conley argue that poverty is one of the major threats to the realization of children's rights worldwide and particularly in South Africa (2007). Currently 66% of South African children live in severe poverty (2007). It is observed that poverty and inequality in South Africa continue to worsen particularly among vulnerable groups of children, such as those infected and affected by HIV/ AIDS, those living on the streets, children of farm workers and illegal immigrants. It is noted that these children face discrimination, isolation and extreme hardship (2007).

2.1.4. Importance of Education to Development

While expanding ECE services is a goal, at the same time it is a powerful driver towards achieving the other MDGs. Research indicates that more equitable distribution of education is correlated with lower poverty and inequality and faster economic growth (Barbra, 2003:1). It is further noted that greater education for girls has strong positive impacts on the health of the children, immunization rates, family nutrition and the next

generation's schooling attainment (Barbra, 2003) besides helping fight the spread and impact of HIV/AIDS.

Barbra (2003) adds that when combined with sound macro-economic policies, education is fundamental for the construction of globally competitive economies and democratic societies. Education is important for spreading new ideas and technologies which in turn are critical for sustained growth by increasing labour productivity. Ultimately, education builds what Amartya Sen (1999) calls real human freedoms.

In short, education is one of the most powerful instruments known for reducing poverty and inequality and for laying the basis for sustained economic growth, sound governance and effective institutions (Barbra, 2003). Primary education also contributes to better natural resource management, including conservation for the tropical rain forest (Barbra, 2003). To attain this early education is required.

Moreover, the importance of the link between children's health, education, and well-being and poverty reduction is gaining recognition by policy makers working in international development. An example of this recognition is the fact that five of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted by the United Nations in 2000 relate to the health, nutrition, and education of young children.

These goals include halving the percentage of children who suffer hunger, reducing by two-thirds the rate at which children under age 5 are dying, decreasing by three-quarters

the ratio of maternal deaths to live births, providing all children the opportunity to complete primary education, and eliminating gender disparities in schooling opportunities (UNESCO, 2000). Recognition of the importance of the early years is also reflected in the first of the six goals set at the Dakar World Forum on Education for All (EFA) in April 2000: "to expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children" (UNESCO 2000).

2.2. ECD in South Africa

By and large, it should be acknowledged that South Africa occupies a special place among developing countries as one that stands a high chance of adequately meeting the needs of children. However, periodical reviews by UNESCO EFA monitoring team have indicated that all countries committed to the Dakar framework of 2000 are not on track on many of the EFA goals including that of expanding Early Childhood Education and care. This remains to be challenged as to understand why South Africa seems to be facing challenges keeping on track with the Dakar EFA framework even when it is presented with a range of opportunities to meet the goals.

In attempting to widen the understanding on challenges towards providing ECE in South Africa, the research draws on information from a wide range of literature, with a focus on the historical theory of Child development, brief history of South Africa's education system, the transition to democracy in South Africa, commitments to the Millennium declaration and the broad concept of Early Childhood Education.

The literature highlights South Africa's brief economic outlook and give a brief background of South African Education before and after the transition to Democracy. Later, the literature highlights the global initiatives in addressing challenges of poverty and development. Specifically, the initiatives centre on the Millennium Declaration and the Dakar Framework for EFA. Other initiatives include the rights based approach in the provision of ECD as envisaged in the General Rights of Children. The literature ends by discussing the importance of Education to Development and the need to expand learning opportunities to the poor and vulnerable children.

2.2.1. Background of South African Education

As regards education, before the democratic elections in 1994, South Africa had a racially divided education system. The policy of apartheid discriminated against certain racial groups resulting in unequal provision of education in terms of race and region. According to the country report for EFA, "economic and social discrimination against Black South Africans under apartheid left the country with considerable income inequality with public spending on each Black student as low as 20% of the spending on each white student. As late as 1986, the state spent nine times more on each white learner than it spent on learners in the worst off Bantustans" (Department of Education, 2005:1).

South Africa's education history departs mainly from the establishment of the Education Department in the Cape Colony in 1839. The system of education so introduced was

based on the British colonial education policy that largely marginalised the rural population. Bias in accessing education opportunities earlier was mainly on a regional basis where the rural population, including "rural whites (especially poor white Afrikaners) fared poorly in the provision of education" (Kallaway P, 2002: 14). However, by the last quarter of the nineteenth century, there was an increasing racial division in the provision of educational resources for blacks and whites (2002:14). Education for Africans continued to suffer low financing and increasingly Africans paid for their own schools through taxes, school fees and direct voluntary contributions (Davies, 1972: 36).

This later saw the introduction of Bantu Education by the newly elected National Party in 1948. Kallaway notes that the National Party came into government without a clear plan of action other than the keenness to promote the interests of Afrikaner politics against English domination of economic social and cultural life; fight big business and its control by alien forces of Anglo-Jewish capitalism; and prevent black encroachment on white interests" (2002: 13).

Bantu education was premised on three main principles which emphasised the necessity for preparing blacks for opportunities prepared for them, different from the whites. It further emphasised the need to inculcate in Africans the understanding that they did not have equal rights with the whites and that their development should confine them in their own sphere which for blacks was to be in rural areas and as migrant workers (Kallaway 2002).

In essence, the education of young African children in South Africa was also ignored during apartheid. To address this problem, groups of African women, many of whom were lacking formal education or knowledge of early childhood education (ECE) practices, established private preschools called Educare centers in urban areas, townships, and rural homelands (Lubeck, 1991).

According to Linda Chisholm, formal provision of ECD in South Africa was started as far back as the 1930s. It is observed that ECD's early provision reflected segregationist policy tendencies. It is further observed that by the 1940s, the Department of Welfare provided subsidies to 'day-care centres' and provincial education departments provided subsidies in support of nursery schools.

However, most important of all, Chisholm contends that welfare and education were polarised, observing that while welfare subsidies were provided without racial discrimination, education programmes were not available to black children (2004: 366). Further, it is noted that subsidies were initially provided to cover half the costs but were not increased over time, shifting the burden to parents through increased user fees. This situation allowed for privileged white parents to pay more; a trend which eventually disadvantaged the black community.

The marginalisation of the black community to ECE services were further exacerbated under the Nationalist Party when support for early childhood services decreased

substantially. This was at the launch of the formal apartheid rule where the minimal state support only targeted poor white children (2004: 346).

In reference to the National Education Policy Act of 1967, Chisholm observes that at the time of the launch of formal apartheid, pre-primary education was taken over by the provincial departments, establishing the basis for the expanded provision of pre-primary services to white children (2004:346). It is further noted that by the 1970s and 1980s, pre-primary education for white children had expanded and in turn, the apartheid government ordered the Department of Education and Training to stop subsidising pre-primary centres of education for black children, leaving the responsibility to parents, communities, foreign and NGO funding and the private sector (2004:346). With a growing gap and neglect for early childhood services for blacks, NGOs emerged as dominant providers.

On the other hand, Chisholm observes that besides racial discrimination for pre-primary education, there was racial discrimination in the training of providers. It is stated that training courses for black ECD practitioners were phased out by 1990, with NGOs taking the responsibility of servicing black ECD practitioners.

However, since the transition to a democratic government in 1994, South Africa sought to address the legacy of discrimination by establishing a new legal system and framework for education. Policies and the legislative framework have been directed at increasing access to education and equitable distribution of resources. Particular efforts have been

made towards improving conditions for the previously disadvantaged including women and children. The right to education is also enshrined in the 1996 constitution to ensure the guarantee of education to all South Africans without discrimination of any sort (Chisholm, L., 2004: 352). However, the right to education is not extended to the provision of ECE.

2.2.2. Transition to Democracy

Since the National Party assumed power in 1948, there was growing discontent among the disadvantaged and marginalised African community in South Africa. The decades of struggle against widespread human rights abuse by the Apartheid rule culminated into a peaceful transition to democracy in April 1994. Eventually, the new democratic government introduced education reforms to promote an equity based education system. Equity driven financing was also introduced with specific emphasis on the South African national constitution to recognise basic education as a basic human right without any form of discrimination (Kallaway, 2002). New Legislation was introduced including the South African Schools Act (1996) that provides that schooling for children aged 7 to 15 is compulsory. The old discriminatory curriculum of Bantu education was replaced by a new curriculum (C2005) (Kallaway, 2002).

After the smooth transition to democratic governance, it is noted that most of the ECD centres were not registered. For those that were registered, pre-primary schools were registered under education while ‘crèches’ and ‘educare’ centres registered under welfare

(2004:347). In reference to a World Bank and CEPD study, it is estimated that almost ten percent of South African children between birth and six had access to some form of ECD site and three percent had access to a subsidised service. It is further observed that whilst over one-third of children attended early childhood facilities, only six percent of black children had this access and the gap on per-capita expenditure between white children and black children was wide. It is important to observe that the racial divide that was created by the apartheid regime created long lasting challenges to equitable provision of early childhood services.

2.2.3. Double transition

It is important to mention that the transition to democracy in South Africa came simultaneously with the transition to neo-liberal policies. This double transition had implications on the different social groups within South Africa. Webster and Adler acknowledge that globalization presents difficult problems for countries undergoing a double transition by generating a number of new stresses on an economy while undermining the state's traditional role in economic management (Webster & Adler, 1999: 349).

One great challenge with the transition to neo-liberal policies is that among other economic targets, the new government sought to contain the fiscal space within low levels while at the same time facing the challenge to expand social spending to tackle widening inequality between the rich and the poor. It is argued that the 1994 political

transition to democracy was purchased at a price of ensuring the survival of the world's most unequal capitalist systems (Webster & Adler; 1999: 351). This implies that after the transition, the new government's policies were required to address the legacy of inequality emanating from discriminatory policies of the apartheid system. However, the neo-liberal environment after the transition stood to work against the need for equitable redistribution of gains from economic growth.

2.2.4. South Africa's Brief Economic Outlook

As regards the economy, South Africa is a middle income country with a per capita income of $13,845 (UNDP Human Development Report, 2007). With a population size of 48.6 million people, South Africa has an abundant supply of resources, well developed financial, legal, communications, and energy and transport sectors.

A review of the performance of the economy after the transition indicates that great progress has been made in stabilizing the macro-economic position after 1994 despite the background of a fragile economy under apartheid. However, it also indicates that the economy has been characterized with the dynamic of inequality and exclusion. The review shows that macro-economic stabilization had largely been driven by improvement in trade and increasing levels of infrastructure development. Moreover, tremendous progress has been recorded in areas predominantly controlled by the state while less progress has been seen where dependence is on the private sector and civil society

organizations especially in the area of job creation. The table below shows the trend of economic growth from 1994 to 2007.

Economic growth, 1994-2007

Average annual growth in:	1994-2003	2004-2007
GDP	3%	5%
GDP per capita	1%	4%

Source: Towards a Fifteen Year Review; 2008

From the table above, it shows that the South African economy has recorded sustained real GDP growth from 1994 to 2007. The period 2004-2007 experienced higher levels of GDP growth averaging 5%. Compared to the 3% average from 1994 – 2003, the last three years have recorded highest growth rates since the transition to democracy. Per capita income of 4% in the last three years also shows that the economy is growing at a faster rate than the population growth rate.

On the other hand, despite the steady economic growth recorded since 1994, unemployment rates are still high. From the review, it is stated that unemployment

increased for several years, peaking at 31.5% in 2003 after which faster GDP growth turned the trend as the net number of new jobs started to outstrip growth (Towards a Fifteen Year Review; 2008: 32). It is indicated that by 2007 the unemployment rate was 23%, with blacks unemployment at 30.5% compared to 4.5% of whites' unemployment.

However, the above unemployment statistics are in the context of the restricted definition of unemployment that only considers those actively searching for jobs. The restricted definition includes informal jobs whose conditions of employment are poor and deplorable. In this case, when using the expanded definition of unemployment as adopted by the labour movement and civil society groups, unemployment rates are estimated at 38% (Pillay, 2008: 7). Besides the challenge of high unemployment rates, the economy faces the challenge of rising inequality levels. Persisting inequality is largely the result of disparities in ownership, income and skills which skews the benefit of growth to those who are able to take full advantage of increased economic opportunities while the rest of society plunges into deeper poverty.

However, despite these internal rigidities still persistent even after the transition to democracy and neoliberal economy, South Africa has a developed industrial base and vibrant service industry. As such, South Africa is one among a few Third World countries better placed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and indeed the Education For All goals as reaffirmed by the 2000 Dakar world conference on education.

2.2.5. The Millennium Declaration and the Dakar Framework for EFA

At the beginning of the millennium 2000, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Millennium declaration, envisaging a world with less poverty, hunger and disease, more survival chances for mothers and infants, universal and accessible education for children, gender inequality in opportunities, and a sustainable environment. These declarations took the shape of eight millennium development goals. The development goals further envisage a world in which developing and developed countries worked in partnership for the betterment of all. The framework of the millennium development goals were developed with time bound targets by which progress can be measured.

On the other hand, ten years before the turn of the millennium, a world conference on education for all was held in Jomtien, Thailand. The conference set out the goal that every child in every country should have the chance to complete at least primary education (Barbra B, Mingat A, Rakotomalal R., 2003:1). The conference set this goal to be achieved by the year 2000. Later, the world education forum in Dakar in 2000 observed that most countries did not achieve this goal and reaffirmed and extended the Jomtien commitment, bringing a welcome emphasis on schooling quality while acknowledging that universal primary education had not yet been reached. Universal primary completion and gender equity in primary and secondary education were reaffirmed in that same year as millennium development goals.

2.2.6. General Rights of Children

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and its various protocols are the most important set of international legal standards for the protection and well-being of the world's children. At the 2002 World Summit for Children in New York, the General Assembly officially adopted the international Plan of Action 'A World Fit for Children' (UN report, 2000:71) It specifies a number of important goals, strategies and actions by means of which the UN Convention on the Rights of Children can be implemented in the next few years. Consideration and further development of these two international instruments are of outstanding significance in an increasingly globalized world. The well-being of each child and the well-being of all children are becoming more and more intertwined.

At the 2002 World Summit for Children, the states therefore committed themselves to 'develop and implement special strategies for improving the quality of education and meeting the learning needs of all' (UN Report 2002:6). South Africa recognises the broad provision of these rights to children. Under the Child Care Act 74 of 1983 (The Act), children have the right to health, social security, right to family life, right to identity, nationality and refuge. Further, the Act guarantees the rights of children to protection against abuse and neglect by parents and care-givers/child care workers and protection against all forms of degrading punishment. In addition, not only does the Act guarantee the protection of children against all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse but also provides for the protection of children against harmful substances.

Equally important is the Right to Education. The Act provides that education starts from the child's early years and the State should provide ECD services to all children without any discrimination. Education must develop children's personalities and talents. It must also develop children's respect for human rights, their parents, their culture, language and beliefs, including respect for cultures that are different from their own. Respect for the natural environment is also important. Education must also prepare the child for lifelong learning in a spirit of understanding and equality.

2.2.7. ECD Policy resolutions in South Africa

The African National Congress (ANC) resolutions of the 52nd National Conference of 2007 recognise the need to prioritise ECD. The resolutions prioritise the welfare of children and envisage to develop, monitor and measure tools that define and deal with child poverty. Among other commitments, the ANC resolved to strengthen childhood development centres and urge communities to understand and deal seriously with the rights of children (2007:14). Above all, the ANC resolved to develop a comprehensive strategy on ECD.

Additionally, in the year 2000, South Africa and other Commonwealth countries endorsed the Millennium declaration which enshrines the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), including that on Universal Primary Education (UPE). In the same year, South Africa and other Commonwealth countries were also present in Senegal when the Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All incorporating six Education For All

(EFA) goals was formulated. Basically, the EFA goals set out to expand provision of Early Childhood Education and Care; providing free and compulsory Universal Primary Education; developing life skills in young and adult scholars; achieving 50% adult literacy; eliminating gender disparities in schools; and improving all aspects of the quality of education (Steve P. and Carlos A., 2006: 2). Three years later in Edinburgh, Commonwealth Ministers of Education reaffirmed the importance of these goals for the Commonwealth countries. They emphasised the importance of mobilising resources in meeting educational targets by 2015 as a contribution to improving the social status of Commonwealth countries. Further, it was widely observed by Commonwealth Ministers of Education in 2003 that "no country, even those with high incomes and well established education systems, has achieved all the EFA goals" (Steve Parker and Carlos Aggio, 2006: 1). Issues of equity and quality were considered as important and needed concerted efforts to be addressed.

Broadly, the EFA framework is conceived as giving a comprehensive approach to addressing the challenge of basic education for all. A number of performance indicators are used to monitor the progress of each country in achieving the EFA goals. Since the Millennium declaration and Dakar framework on EFA of 2000, many countries have realigned their education systems to conform to the needs and demands for achieving the goals by 2015.

2.2.8. Comparative ECD practices

A UNESCO report on ECD gives a brief analysis of the background and comparative practices of ECD in different countries. The report notes that one of the greatest impediments to progress on ECD is the conceptual gap that persists between early childhood education and care for children under three (UNESCO; 2002: 6). The report further notes that country policies range from an extreme of perceiving responsibility for ECE to be for parents and private providers to that of perceiving it as a government responsibility. On one extreme, Britain, USA, Netherlands and Australia are some of the countries that previously considered ECE services as solely a responsibility of parents. Further, the USA is noted as one country that neither has a national child/family policy or a coherent ECE policy. It is also observed that in Britain and USA, access to public services had long been limited to low income families or children considered to be vulnerable.

On the other hand, the Dutch government is identified to have become aware of the need for ECE in the 1990s when it considered promoting child development and wellbeing by aligning family policy with the provision of ECD services. In the Netherlands, it is observed that the capacity to provide ECE increased four-fold between 1990 and 1996 thanks to an ambitious policy for child care and education (2002). Among all the other countries cited above, it is observed that Britain has changed drastically, reversing the earlier trend of leaving the provision of ECD services to the private sector by introducing

policies addressing early childhood and also expanding employment opportunities to the female labour force.

Citing the Government of the United Kingdom, it is noted that among the main initiatives taken are: educational provision for all four-year-olds; a National child care strategy to be implemented through Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships; a compensatory programme called '*Sure Start'* targeting children under three and their families in disadvantaged areas; new sources of funding for early childhood; and a plan to develop and implement a framework for qualifications and training in the early years education, childcare and playgroup sectors (UNESCO; 2002:7).

Among other developing countries outside Africa, the report compares the provision of ECD services in China, Cambodia, Vietnam and Brazil. As regards China, it is noted that since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, ECD provision has developed rapidly. China is observed to have accomplished a great deal in the area of ECD with the establishment of a highly complex and diverse system (2002: 8).

There are mainly three types of ECD provision in China: nurseries or infant schools for under three-year-olds; kindergartens for age three to six-seven and pre-primary classes for six-seven year-olds (UNESCO 2002: 9). According to the report (2002), these are established in large and medium sizes cities and are usually linked to manufacturing and mining enterprises and factories, government institutions such as universities and neighbourhoods.

As regards training of educators, nursery educators received training through the public health departments, while kindergarten teachers had training at four possible levels: junior middle, senior middle, college or university (B.A.), and postgraduate (M.A.), under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education (2002: 9).

As for Brazil, the 1988 constitution guarantees the right of every child to ECD. It is recognised as an extension of the universal right to education for children from zero to six year olds and as a right of children of working parents (2002: 12). As a way of streamlining the provision of ECD, the government of Brazil transferred childcare services from the welfare to the education system in 1996. With reference to the education of teachers, the stipulated minimum educational qualification is a secondary school certificate from a recognised teacher training school. However, the recommended qualification is a University degree.

Despite these positive efforts, it is observed that the challenge to provide ECD in Brazil currently arises from the neoliberal policies adopted by the government of Brazil in 1994 upon the election of the new government. The neoliberal policies adopted were in partnership with the World Bank and required the adoption of low public investment in ECD. This is cited as the main reason for the absence of an ECD policy in Brazil. It is expected with renewed efforts from policies of the Workers Party that policy emphasis would be placed on reducing the high income inequality with special focus on addressing root causes of economic marginalization (Barbosa, 2007).

As concerns some African countries, it is acknowledged that there is growing state participation in ECD broadly motivated by the Jomtien EFA conference of 1990. Many countries have taken different initiatives to expand ECD services. Among others, Senegal reacted to the demands for expanding ECD services by creating the Ministry of Early Childhood and Family (MECF). The function of this ministry is to implement ECE in collaboration with other players from the private sector, CBOs and NGOs. The report states that the ministry also takes care of the ECD sub-component of the Ten-Year Plan for education and training in cooperation with the Ministry of Education (2002: 13). The Ten-Year Plan targets to offer 50 percent of pre-school children the possibility of physical, moral and aesthetic education to help ensure their success in primary school (2002:13). The plan also targeted to establish 415 new nursery schools to be constructed with support from the private sector.

With other African countries, it is observed that Kenya has the longest tradition of policy development on ECD (2002: 16). The pre-school education in Kenya expanded since gaining independence. Under the 'Harambee' philosophy, which simply means working together, community development needs are identified at community level and programmes are created by the community to address the need. It is noted that in ECD this approach resulted in the creation of pre-schools in many villages because parents wanted them (2002: 16). They found a location for the centre and chose a woman to care for three-to-six-year-olds. As a result, ECEC in Kenya serves the entire cross-section of social, economic, cultural and geographical groups (2002: 16).

The transfer of responsibility for ECEC policy and programmes to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOE) in 1980, coupled with a move to decentralize the government in 1983, contributed greatly to further developments in the field (2002:16). District and local governments have taken on the main responsibility for ongoing support of pre-school education, while the MOE is involved in setting policy guidelines for early childhood programmes, registering pre-schools, coordinating government grants and funds from external donors, and providing early childhood personnel at all levels (2002: 16).

2.2.9. A case for ECD in South Africa

Given the growing attention early childhood development is receiving, it is expected that South Africa devises policies to address the need to expand ECD services. However, with the apparent high poverty levels among certain categories of the South African society, the challenge to develop children into responsible adults is massive and calls for integrated efforts between the state and other players to achieve the goal of child development. This may help avoid the poverty cycle where poor children are likely to grow up to become poor adults and to give birth to children who are poor, perpetuating the poverty cycle. In contrast, children are more likely to go to school and to perform well if they have support during the earliest years and if their parents are educated and supported in providing appropriate care.

Cognisant of this challenge, this research sought to identify government efforts in tackling the huge task of meeting Early Childhood Development challenges, particularly as regards Early Childhood Education. This was done through interviews with the government education department officials, education Trade Union officials, NGOs and Civil Society organizations involved in education matters.

CHAPTER THREE

3. Methodology

This study focussed on the South African ECE policy process and implementation. The study was to identify what policies government has put in place, stakeholder involvement during the policy process and how the policies are implemented in regard to the policy discourse.

The main objective of the research was to establish what policies and initiatives South Africa has put in place to address the challenge of providing ECE services cognizant of the need to expand ECE services. One of the objectives was to investigate policy responses in South Africa that have focussed on the provision of Early Childhood Education. Another of the objectives was to establish stakeholder involvement in policy formulation and implementation processes. The third objective sought to investigate how policies on ECE are implemented especially among the poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged.

To answer these research objectives, a qualitative research method was used in the data collection process. The qualitative approach in this regard was considered appropriate with the consideration that the type of information required to inform the research was mainly from documents. The information from documents however was to be supported by major players in the ECD sub-sector. In this regard, the data collection method took

mainly two forms. On one hand, primary data was collected through in-depth interviews with major stakeholders in the ECD sub-sector. The interviews were conducted using an interview guide schedule with broad questions for investigation.

3.1 Sampling and Data Collection

In selecting the sample, a non probability sampling method was used. This method of sampling was used in order to select organizations and individuals that would provide valid information for the research. The ECD policy making process in South Africa was not linear and involved different strategies at different levels of policy development. For this reason, a number of stakeholders were involved in the policy process before and after the transition to democracy. However, even when a number of stakeholders were involved, some are more pronounced in the historical process and are still active in the ECD sub-sector policies. Prominent among these organizations is the HSRC, CEPD, WITS EPU and SADTU. In addition, there are many more individuals that participated in the policy process and undertook independent research to identify policy gaps in the ECD sub sector.

Examples of such individuals include Linda Chisholm, Linda Bersterker and Roy Padayachee among others. Observing that there was a wider range from which the research data could have been collected, the sample from which the data was collected was narrowed to a few organizations and individuals. This however did not compromise on inclusiveness and quality of the information collected in the view that information

from documents covered a wider range of the activities of all players in the ECD sub sector.

3.2 Techniques of data collection

The data collected was mainly from interviews with SADTU, EPU, CEPD and the Department of Education. Documents were also collected from the organizations interviewed. Other documents were collated from government websites, some newspapers and publications.

3.3 Document analysis

This research drew most of the information from documents. These included minutes of proceedings of government departments' deliberations. These were sourced from government websites. Other documents included the Audit report on ECD, the Interim policy on ECD, White Paper 5 on ECD, the Integrated ECD plan, and SADTU report to the 5th National Congress of 2002, the EPU quarterly review of 2001 among others. Other useful documents were sourced from the HSRC which informed the current state of ECE.

3.4 Interviews

Four main interviews were conducted during the data collection process. The interviews were conducted with key persons at SADTU, EPU, CEPD and the Department of

Education. At SADTU, an in-depth interview was conducted with the SADTU education specialist. The interview helped in understanding the general picture of the ECD sub-sector and SADTU's commitments to the expansion of ECE services. An interview was also conducted with CEPD which at the time was evaluating government's readiness to meet the 2010 target of introducing Grade R in all government primary schools. The interview with CEPD uncovered most of the challenges facing government especially in the area of ensuring adequate supply of ECD practitioners in government primary schools.

Similar responses came from the EPU interview with the Director where the Unit was conducting research to establish the link between participation in ECD services and the possibility of children to drop out of school later. An interview with the Directorate of ECD at the Department of Education gave a very clear picture on how the ECD sub-sector is disintegrated with government departments working in silos. This brings the challenge of harmonising the operations of various departments so as to come up with a coordinated system of ECD provision.

3.5 Sample questions

Broad open ended questions were used in the interviews. The broad questions were backed by follow up questions depending on the responses from the respondents. Open ended questions were used in order to stimulate a wider range of responses from the respondents. This was with the view that closed questions would restrict the respondents'

responses and thus would not allow for a wider range of ideas and opinions. Broadly, these questions centred on the following issues:

Which of the ECD policies do you identify as a reflection of government's commitment towards expanding ECD services?

What specific policies target poor children and how are they implemented?

What is your view regarding ECD financing?

How is ECE practitioner training, certification and staffing?

What do you consider as major challenges to the provision of ECE services in South Africa?

3.6 Limitations

One of the limitations was the difficulty to get the interviews on schedule because most of the respondents were busy. This resulted in making follow ups for most of the interviews. The other limitation was that ECD is now at the policy implementation stage and thus, most of the organizations interviewed did not have so much information on ECD in the view that they are not involved in implementing policies. For this reason, all the organizations consistently referred the researcher to the Department of Education for more valid and detailed answers. One respondent specifically put it that it would not help to have a number of interviews just for the sake of widening the sample size when you can conduct one interview with the Department of Education and get all the information.

3.7 Ethical considerations

This research did not have any serious ethical concerns. In addition, respondents consent or approval was obtained at all times especially for direct quotations and for citing their names in the report.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. Policy Analysis

4.1. The Policy Process

It should be acknowledged from the onset that the ECD policy process in South Africa did not follow a logical process of coordinated policy formulation initiatives. The process was characterized with various initiatives from NGO ECD providers, individuals as well as government. Research conducted by Juliana Seleti in fulfillment of a Doctor of Philosophy degree discussed the consultation and partnership processes government developed with ECD stakeholders over time. The focus area was investigating the main actors and partnerships in formulating White Paper 5. The research managed to establish the background of ECD policy development in the pre-apartheid and post apartheid era.

Among the major findings of the research was the background that during the apartheid system, there was no policy guiding ECD provision and also that even when the apartheid provision was discriminatory, there were no state policies in support of the discriminatory provision. Seleti's research also shows that major ECD policy advocacy gained momentum in the 1980s running towards the democratic transition and peaked in 2001 after the formulation of White Paper 5 on ECD. However, the research did not investigate the policy implementation process which is the motivation for this research.

As has been noted earlier, ECE policy development and formulation did not follow coordinated stages of development. Rather, different forces influenced the policy process and the resultant policies. Most of the stakeholders who participated directly or indirectly in the ECE policy were individuals or groups which had interest in the ECD policy process. Seleti acknowledges that in the ECE policy process investigation, it is evident that certain individuals played a critical role either as individuals or representatives of NGOs. The names of the individuals include Roy Padayachee, Eric Atmore, Joyce Matube, Kalie Naidoo, David Plaatjies, Linda Biersteker, and Ihron Van Rensburg (2006:10). From this research, it also came out prominent that Linda Chisholm is among the notable individuals that contributed and still working on ECD policy. However, Linda Chisholm was not among the names identified by Seleti probably for the reason that she might have come later on the ECD policy stage.

Furthermore, Seleti notes that other stakeholders in ECE policy came as ECD practitioners and caregivers. The role of practitioners and caregivers is important in ECD policy formulation as they are at the delivery point of ECD services and better placed to understand challenges facing ECD provision. However, it is observed that the treatment of practitioners and caregivers during the policy process was unsatisfactory in that no proper mechanisms were put in place to ensure that most practitioners were directly involved in the policy process (Seleti, 2006: 113). It is further observed that some practitioners were not aware of White Paper 5 by the year 2006. Practitioners as stakeholders also seemed to have a problem with the language of major policy documents

and the fact that they were not involved in any policy information gathering or dissemination processes.

According to Seleti, the ECD stakeholder movement in South Africa has its roots in the 1980s, during which time it became evident to many child advocates in the country that young children, especially non-white children were suffering the adverse effects of lack of access to quality ECD care and education services (2006: 134). With the growing realization to expand provision of ECD services to disadvantaged children, individuals and organizations set up ECD centres and NGOs to care and educate young children. However, it is observed that these centres were of poor quality and did not meet desirable standards due to lack of government regulation and support in the sense that the apartheid government did not recognize ECD centres run by NGOs.

For this reason, the NGOs worked independently and developed the sector on their own. There was no formal relationship between the apartheid government and NGOs providing ECD services. In addition, the domination of NGOs in the provision of ECD services continued into the post apartheid government. This situation motivated the formation of the ECD directorate at the Department of Education in 1998. The introduction of the ECD directorate was followed by the formation of the Coordinated Committee for Early Childhood Development (CCECD) as a platform for stakeholder participation. As such, the CCECD necessitated the participation of stakeholders who were engaged on various matters regarding ECD services. With the help and coordination by CCECD, White Paper 5 was formulated. The development of White Paper 5 was also necessitated by the World

Bank research conducted in 1994. The study was conducted by CEPD and served as a turning point for ECD policy engagement in that it came up with recommendations for ECD provisioning with a focus on the Department of Education ECD programmes as well as placing strong emphasis on the need for stakeholder participation.

Members of the CCECD were drawn from various stakeholders that included representatives of the NGOs, universities, trade unions, research bodies, and government departments. The first step to policy development led to the formation of the Interim ECD Policy. The policy was created through the CCECD interaction by necessitating a national consultative process. Seleti acknowledges that several meetings and workshops were held under the coordination of the CCECD that served as awareness forums and gave the sector an opportunity to provide feedback and inputs on the content of the interim ECD policy (2006: 172). The provisions of the Interim ECD policy would be discussed later in this research.

The second major ECD policy development process was the ECD pilot study. The study's main objective was to test the feasibility of the Interim Policy. According to Seleti, the ECD pilot study process introduced one of the biggest government and ECD stakeholder collaborations ever seen in the country (2006: 173). Government funded the pilot through the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) with the aim of identifying the best models for Grade R provisioning. The stakeholders were selected through a tender process and provided training as well as administrative support to the pilot and also made available research expertise to the process. From the pilot study, it

was established that a countrywide audit of ECD services needed to be undertaken with the involvement of all stakeholders. Arising from this, a nationwide ECD audit was conducted in 2000 with support from the European Union.

The Audit produced useful statistical data for ECD implementation as regards ECD sites, practitioners and learners across the country. The ECD stakeholders played a key role in the implementation of the Audit. According to Seleti (2006), they worked as organizers of the whole audit implementation process; trained the enumerators and conducted the whole audit with technical and financial support from government and the European Union.

The three policy processes; the Interim ECD Policy, the Pilot and the Audit provided the basis for the development of ECD policy in the post apartheid era as they were undertaken to inform the final ECD policy strategies. With this background of the ECD policy process, Seleti (2006) and the EPU (2001) observe that the Department of Education finalized the policy development process without stakeholder participation. The Department of Education considered it right to finalize the process with the understanding that the entire process of ECD policy development had been consultative. From this standpoint, government had the responsibility to bring to an end a long consultative process to avoid further delay.

As a result of this, government left out some of the important contributions made by stakeholders in the consultative process. It is observed that several models of the

government and ECD stakeholder collaboration were created before the White Paper 5 was formulated. According to Seleti, the White Paper 5 formulation process, apart from 0-4 year olds intersectoral structures for collaboration on services and delivery, overlooked the opportunity of delving into the stakeholder policy development models for future and continued government and stakeholder collaboration (2006: 175). As such, the final ECD policy did not envisage a partnership between government and stakeholders as regards the policy content and future monitoring of the implementation process. It could be for this reason that most of the stakeholders that participated in the initial policy process are currently not actively involved in the implementation of ECD policy. Suffice to say that this lack of stakeholder inclusiveness in White Paper 5 is the reason for the absence of a coordinated monitoring system currently.

Furthermore, the Wits EPU observes that while the White Paper 5 claims to emerge from a rational national pilot project, combined and reinforced by international research, the proposed policy itself does not flow from these lessons (EPU Quarterly Review; 2001: 13). The EPU argues that results from the national pilot motivated for a more integrated and intersectoral approach. In addition, the national audit also emphasized the importance of ECD services from 0-5 years and not isolating the five year olds into reception year.
From this background, it can be concluded that White Paper 5 was not informed by the preceding policy processes. There was a pre-determined position in government to expand ECD services through reception year targeting five year olds while neglecting the 0-4 year age cohort. This is the case even when outcomes of the nationwide audit recommended a more integrated approach as a model of provision.

While it can be appreciated that the reception year provision is a step further in expanding ECE services, the challenge is to expand ECE services to the 0-4 year age group. Going by the statistics indicated later in this research, it is observed that despite the efforts to expand ECD services to the poor and vulnerable, it shows that the number of poor children attending ECD services is still low compared to privileged groups found in urban centers such as Gauteng province. The 0-4 year poor children are the most disadvantaged. This is against the background that research indicates that the 0-5 year period is the time the human brain experiences rapid growth and that deprivations in this early stage of life may have lasting effects on the child's ability to cope in adult life.

In the next section, the research focuses on how specific organizations contributed to ECD policy process. It must be acknowledged once more that there are more organizations and individuals that contributed to the ECD policy development process. However, this research focuses on the contributions of a few stakeholders taking into consideration the limitations of the sample size.

4.1.1. Role of the Department of Education

As mentioned earlier in this research, ECD is an umbrella term that refers to the development processes through which children undergo in their early lives. On the other hand ECE is a term that refers to programmes and strategies directed at providing children with necessary stimulation through children's education activities. In addressing

the development needs of children, ECD programmes require a range of strategies directed at helping families and communities to meet the needs of children.

The strategies and programmes for ECD are usually formulated cognizant of a wide range of challenges associated with children's backgrounds such as poverty, inequality, ill health, challenges of HIV/AIDS, and overall vulnerability in disadvantaged communities. Due to these multiple challenges to provision of ECD services, government departments need to interlink and collaborate on various aspects of child development to realize the concept of the "whole child" where aspects of health, nutrition, shelter and stimulation through ECE form important components of ECD.

From the perspective of the education of children, the DoE has the responsibility of providing the education component of child development. For this reason, the national Department of Education established a Directorate of ECD. The role of the DoE is to develop national policies for the education of young children besides the responsibilities of ensuring policy development at all levels of education provision in South Africa. Thus, in education policy formulation, the DoE is guided by the objective of improving access to education for all children in South Africa.

It is important to note that since the transition to democracy in 1994, there have been massive policy shifts as regards education provision in South Africa. As such, the period from 1990 to 1994 was the historical moment for ECD policy formulation. This was a transformative period in the political arena in anticipation of a new democratic

government. The ANC as the leading party in the democratic movement played a crucial and active role in ECD policy process. However, before 1990, ECD policies were fragmented and discriminatory. As Juliana Seleti observes,

"the apartheid era ECD structures and systems, even though intended to supply discriminatory ECD provisioning were not supported by clear and distinct ECD policies (Seleti, 2006: 80).

As a number of activists saw hope in the new political dispensation, they came on board to participate in the ECD policy process. Among the most outstanding of these active stakeholders were unions and NGOs. Although there are a number of organizations and individuals that actively participated in this new policy process, this research identifies the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU), the Wits Education Policy Unit (EPU), the Center for Education Policy Development (CEPD) and the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) as some of the key stakeholders that shaped the ECD policies currently in place. As earlier mentioned, this research undertakes to look at some of the contributions made by these stakeholders.

4.1.2. The EPU and ECD policy development

The Wits Education Policy Unit (EPU) was formed in 1987 as a joint unit with the University of the Witwatersrand and the National Education Co-ordinating Committee (NECC). The purpose was to assist in the development of post-apartheid education policy. After the smooth transition to a democratic government in 1994, the EPU provided policy support, research and analysis to the new democratic movement and to national and provincial governments. Among other issues, the EPU also assisted in

providing rapid policy response to decision makers and policy makers in education by producing high quality research data. The EPU further assisted and continues to assist in providing training to researchers. Among the major national policy contributions, the EPU contributed significantly to the management and research of the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) between 1989 and 1992.

In an interview with Shireen Motala, the director of the Unit, she admitted that EPU had been active in many policy engagements with government. This is also supported with the fact that at the time of this research, the Unit was carrying out a research on behalf of the DoE. As the director stated;

*"At the moment, the unit is undertaking research on behalf of the Department of Education to establish the relationship between a child's participation in pre-primary education and the future probability of the child dropping out of school. However, except for this current research, there is no other specific programme on ECE with the DoE. This I think is because at the moment, most of the ECE policies are at implementation stage and there is less policy development around ECE" (*Motala, 19/08/2008).

As earlier observed, the period between 1990 and 1994 was indeed a great transformation period of intensive policy changes. This research also traces the role played by the Center for Education Policy Development (CEPD) in the education policy transformation specifically as regards ECE.

4.1.3. CEPD and ECD policy development

The Centre for Education Policy Development (CEPD) was established in 1993 by an initiative of the ANC. Its purpose was to develop education policy after the transition to democracy. One of the most notable contributions of CEPD was the development of the

education policy for the African National Congress (ANC) upon which the ANC based its policy advocacy. Even years after the transition to democracy, CEPD has continued to engage with the government on major policy issues in education. An interview with one of the researchers revealed that at the time of this research, CEPD was evaluating government's chances of attaining the targets of White Paper 5 as regards providing reception class to all South African children by 2010. The researcher stated that;

"Currently, CEPD is undertaking research to assess the possibility of government attaining the target of providing reception class education in accredited schools to all children aged five before being introduced into grade 1. Government, through White Paper 5 has targeted to provide South African children with reception/pre-primary education by the year 2010 (Phoebi Kaniki, 25/08/2008).

However, as previously observed by the EPU, CEPD reiterated that most policies on ECE are at the implementation stage and there is less policy engagement between government and stakeholders. In addition, this research concluded that CEPD is not specifically an organization specialized on ECE policy but rather engages with government on various policy issues regarding education depending on the policy issue at hand. In this respect, it is important to note that besides evaluating the chances of attaining the target of providing grade R classes to all South African children by 2010, the organization did not have any other programme concerning ECE in South Africa.

4.1.4. SADTU and ECD policy development

The South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) was formed in 1990 with the aim of bringing together a range of racially divided teacher organizations into a unitary

structure with a progressive vision. SADTU challenged the legitimacy of ethnic education departments and made an important contribution to the struggle for non-racialism in South Africa. One of the notable contributions of SADTU to education policy was its active participation in the NEPI, an exercise that significantly changed the course of education policy in South Africa from a discriminatory and racially divided system to that which embraces values of equality.

Most of the SADTU policy resolutions on ECE are contained in its report of the 5th National Congress held in 2002. The Congress deliberated on issues concerning developments in ECD, the status of the ECD provision, challenges facing government, and challenges for SADTU. Furthermore, the organization's commitments on ECE issues are also reflected in its commitment to the EFA goals. This is demonstrated in the organization's active involvement with Education International, an international organization with a central agenda of ensuring world governments' commitment to the attainment of EFA goals.

The above are a few of the stakeholders that actively participated in the ECD policy process. The culmination of their efforts is seen in the various policy initiatives and strategies on ECD. The next section discusses some of the policy processes and strategies currently guiding ECD provision in South Africa.

4.2. The ECD Policies

4.2.1. The Interim ECD Policy

In 1996 the DoE adopted the Interim ECD policy which provided for the implementation of a National Reception Year Pilot Project that was undertaken to identify a lower cost model and a curriculum for implementation of the reception year. This was to be done in partnership with non-governmental organizations and community based ECD service providers.

4.2.2. The Pilot Project

After the adoption of the Interim ECD policy in 1996, provincial education departments and the European Union allocated R125 million to implement the National ECD Reception Year Pilot Project (White Paper 5, Clause 3.1.7). Arising from this project, 2, 730 sites were established and about 66 000 Reception Year learners countrywide participated in a period of over three years (Ibid). Some of the objectives of the pilot project were to identify methods of accrediting practitioners, find appropriate models of providing subsidy and devise effective ways of providing Reception Year education.

In general, the pilot project was to test the Interim ECD policy, particularly related to the Reception year (Grade R). As mentioned, the underlying aim was to make and test innovations in the ECD field as regards accreditation, policy and modes of providing subsidy to ECD centers. The pilot project sought to identify an effective model of

promoting outcomes based education and assessment and also providing training to provincial departments and organizations in the sector.

Added to the above mentioned policies, the Ministries of Education and Labour published a joint Human Resource Development Strategy for South Africa in 200l. The Human Resource Development Strategy recognizes that developing the human resource base in South Africa starts at birth. With this recognition, it placed emphasis on the registration of sites, the professional development of ECD practitioners and quality assurance of education and training programmes at ECD sites (White Paper 5; Clause 3.1.21).

A range of other policies and strategies were devised during and after 1994. These include the Free Health Care policy of 1994, Technical Guidelines on Immunization in South Africa of 1995, and the Integrated Nutrition Strategy of 1998. In addition, efforts to provide ECD services are also reflected in legislation such as the Welfare Laws Amendment Act of 1997. These policies and legislation aim to expand the provision of ECD services to all South African children with a special focus on poor and vulnerable children.

Furthermore, the Interim ECD Policy outlines the main pillars of the government's ECD policy. These include a policy for provision of ECD services, a policy for ECD curriculum development, policy on accreditation of practitioners, policy on the funding of

ECD services and policy in respect of policy development structures (Interim Policy for ECD; Clause 8.0).

4.2.3. The Nationwide ECD Audit

The ECD Audit conducted in 2000/2001 was a country wide research study on the situation and status of ECD in South Africa. The study provided very critical qualitative and quantitative data on various areas regarding the provision of ECD in South Africa. Among other issues, the study gave important information on qualifications, sites and the geographical spread of ECD programmes, organizations involved, the nature of teaching and learning resources, the population spread of children with and without access to ECD services.

According to the Audit, it shows that only 43% of the 960,000 children in the 5-6 year age group were enrolled in identifiable ECD sites (Department of Education; 2001: 1). This alarming situation resulted in the current focus of ECD policy on the formalization of provisioning with respect to the Reception Year for the 5-6 year age group. As a result the Reception Year was included as part of the new Revised National Curriculum Statement being compulsory and effective from January 2004. For the first time in South Africa, the' year before school' became part of the national curriculum.

This initiative, however, has had serious implications for the human resources required, classroom space which needs to be expanded, revision of the school curriculum to

incorporate the Grade R curriculum, overall realigning of the school environment to accommodate the younger pre-primary school children. The other challenges also come from the various backgrounds of ECD practitioners who needed to be trained on the new school curriculum in a short time.

4.2.4. White Paper 5

In addressing the challenges of ECD provision in South Africa, the government, through the Department of Education, Department of Social Development and Department of Health formulated White Paper 5 on ECD. This was government's first indication of its commitment to ECD in education. The interim policy was developed as a strategy on how to include a reception year as part of the 10 years of compulsory schooling. It must be acknowledged that in South Africa, the ECD programmes cover the age range from birth to nine years. However, the priority of the White Paper 5 is the implementation of the pre-school Reception Year (Grade R) for five year olds.

In this case, the medium term policy goal is to provide all learners with ten years of compulsory school education as required by the national constitution. This includes one year of reception which is to be integrated into the mainstream primary school programme. Formulated in 2001, the White Paper 5 on ECD targets that by 2010, all learners that enter grade 1 should have participated in an accredited Reception Year programme and that there shall be created a system of provision that is 75 percent state

subsidized rather than the current estimated 25 percent state subsidization (White Paper 5, 2001: Clause 1.4.3).

As regards the provision of ECD services to children within the age 6 to 9 years, the policy goals and programmes are outlined in the five year plan, Tirisano. Under Tirisano, a Sotho word meaning "let us work together", the policies and programmes focus on lower primary education from grade 1 to 4. However, since the focus of this research is on pre-primary education, the ECD programmes and policies above Reception year are not discussed.

On the other hand, the White Paper prioritized the development of a strategic plan for inter-sectoral collaboration with a focus on efforts to improve the quality of learning programmes (2001: Clause 1.4.5). In line with this, the strategic plan prioritized the development of curricula, and professional career pathing and development. In addition, the Department of Education (DoE) is expected to prioritize the subsidization of early learning programmes for four year olds from poor rural and poor urban families, HIV/AIDS positive/infected children and children with special needs.

In achieving the goals of the White Paper 5, the government devised different strategies on efforts to ensure provision of ECD services. Government's commitment can be traced from the fact that the national constitution of 1996 recognizes the right of every child, among other basic human rights, to family care or parental care, or to appropriate parental care when removed from the family environment; to basic nutrition, shelter, basic health

care and social services. Above everything else, the 1996 Constitution provides that everyone has the right to a basic education *(Section 29 of Bill of Rights).*

Following the constitutional recognition of the rights of all children, different policies and strategies were devised. Mostly, the policy strategies were premised on addressing the imbalances and challenges emanating from the apartheid system of governance. The inadequacies were adequately identified by the 1998 DoE Audit of programmes that relate to the provision of ECD as has been explained above.

4.2.5. The Integrated ECD Plan

Furthermore, government efforts in expanding the provision of ECD services are reflected in the Integrated ECD Plan. The Integrated ECD Plan is part of government's initiative to improve and increase care and education services in the ECD sector. The Integrated plan includes the overall Integrated Policy Framework, *Tshwaragano Ka Bana*, which is the government programme for the delivery of integrated services to vulnerable children and families and the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), which provides job creation opportunities in the ECD sector (Department of Education, 2004).

4.2.6. The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP)

The EPWP is a cross-cutting programme to be implemented by government in collaboration with all stakeholders in various sectors. It is a national programme that aims at incorporating a large number of the unemployed into productive work through skills development and expanding employment opportunities as a way of reducing high poverty levels. It focuses on four main sectors; infrastructure, economic, environmental and social development. Under social development, the programme aims to create work opportunities in public social programmes including opportunities for home-based care workers and early childhood development practitioners.

In this case, the EPWP links with the integrated ECD plan by focusing on providing work place experience and training to ECD practitioners working with the 0-4 year age group. The Integrated ECD Plan identifies four main approaches to ECD one of which is to provide opportunities for women to earn a living by setting up childcare facilities in their immediate communities (Department of Education, 2004). In addition, the Integrated ECD Plan recognizes the fact that no single ECD model is appropriate to meet the various needs of different family backgrounds. With this realization, it recommends a range of options such as home and care-based services, after-care for school going children, stimulation programmes including part-day programmes, family education, and health and nutrition programmes (Department of Education, 2004)

The EPWP was envisaged in 2002 when the 51st African National Congress (ANC) conference resolved to be committed to an expansion in public investment initiatives to create jobs. This commitment was reaffirmed by President Thabo Mbeki in his State of the Nation speech in February 2003 when he ascertained government's commitment to expand socio-economic opportunities by providing productive jobs to the marginalized. As such, the ECD programme aims to develop skills amongst 19,800 child care practitioners over a period of five years, thereby increasing their capacity to generate an income and at the same time improve the care and learning environment of children.

Besides the commitment to increase the number of ECD practitioners through EPWP and the integrated ECD plan, the 51st ANC congress resolutions gave strong recognition to the importance of protecting the rights of children and especially the girl-child. The 2007 ANC resolutions further gave more elaborate commitments to the cause for ECD by way of envisaging developing a comprehensive strategy on ECD (ANC 2007 Resolutions; 13).

CHAPTER FIVE

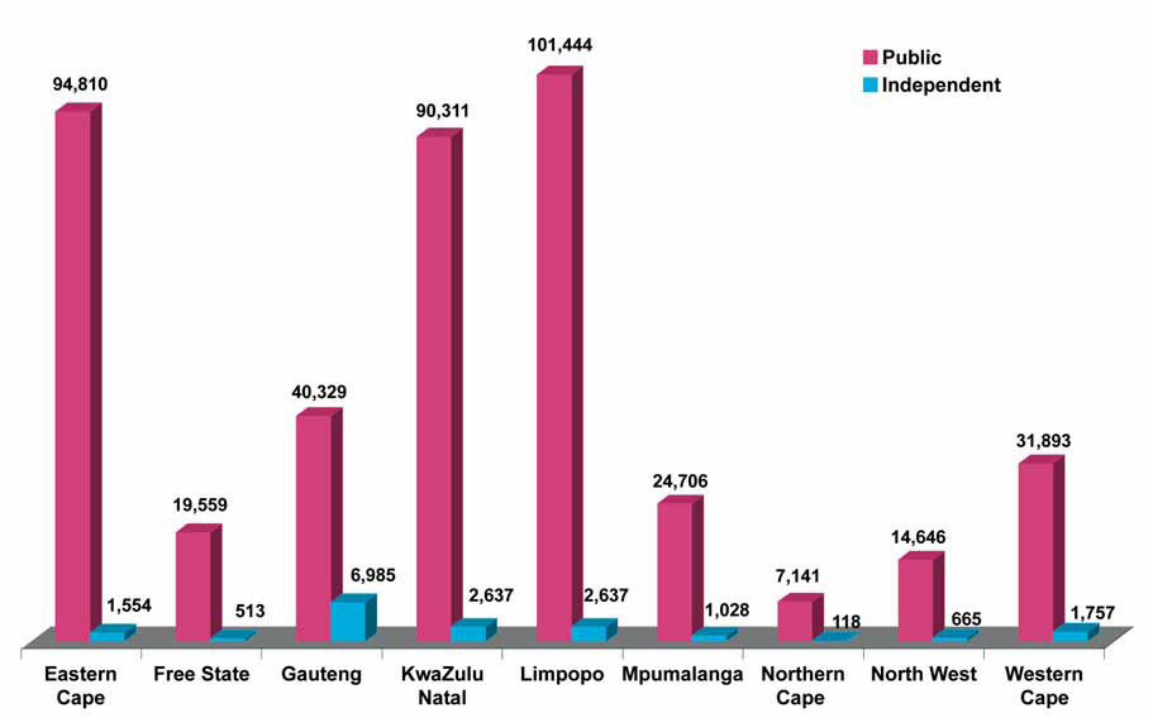
5. Policy Implementation

5.1. Access

Under the National Integrated Plan for ECD, government has been able to address the rights of young children to ECD among other basic services. As acknowledged earlier, the formal provision of ECD falls under the mandate of the Department of Social Development for the registration of ECD centers while the Department of Education is responsible for Grade R provision as a preparatory grade for primary education.

As of 2000, the national ECD Audit established that there were a total of 23,482 of formal and unregulated ECD sites which catered for 1,030, 473 children. Of these children, less than half were in the 5-6 age group, and the majority of young children from birth to five, around 84%, did not have access to formal ECD provision and relied on their parents and primary caregivers for ECD services and stimulation (UNICEF, 2007: 17). By March 2007, there were 9,726 centers registered by the Department of Social Development. Of these, 5,431 centers received financial support from the Department of Social Development amounting to R350,189,490 for 2006/2007 helping to reach out to 392,977 (UNICEF, 2007: 18).

The table below shows the number of children in grade R in 2006



Source: Education Management Information System, School Realities 2006

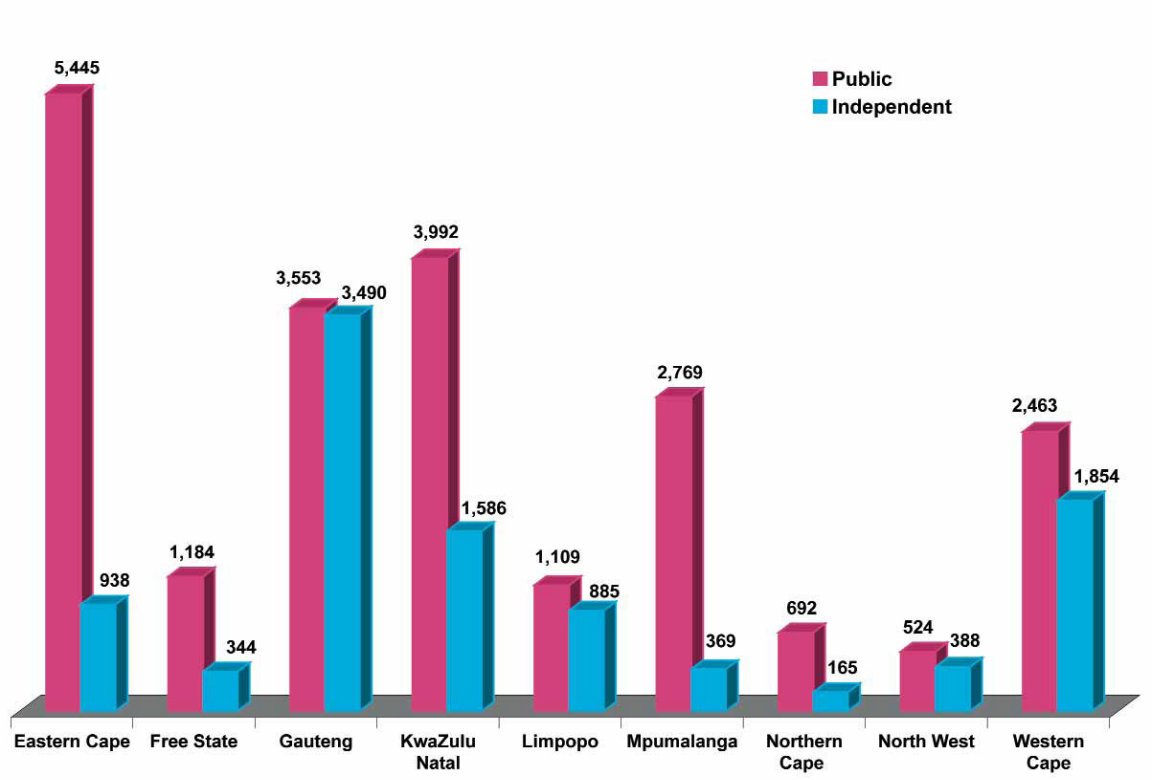
This research also found out that there were 31,928 children (below 5 years of age) in public and independent pre-Grade R classes and 441,621 children in the reception year (Grade R) across the country in 2006 (UNICEF, 2007: 19-20). This shows that access to Grade R increased from 356 000 in 2003, 405, 000 in 2004 to 441,621 in 2006 as also indicated by the minutes of the Education Portfolio Committee report to the Parliamentary Monitoring group on 30 May 2006 (Department of Education, 2006).

As by June 2008, minutes of a briefing meeting at the Department of Education indicate that there were significant increases in the number of children enrolled in Grade R classes. It is indicated that in addition to the 487 525 children currently in public primary

schools, there were approximately 200 000 children registered in private institutions. It is further indicated that the total stands approximately at 687 000, making the target of 990 530 children by 2010 viable (Department of Education, 2008).

However, reliable data regarding access by the 0-4 years age group is not available. This concern is also reflected in the minutes of the Education Portfolio Committee. This research observes that in the UNICEF report on child statistics, it indicates that by 2006, 31,928 children in the 0-4 age group had access to ECD services. The distribution of pre-Grade R children accessing ECD services as of 2006 is as given in the graph below.

Number of children in pre-Grade R, 2006



Source: Education Management Information System, School Realities 2006

Recent data from the Education Portfolio Committee indicates that the number of pre-Grade R learners increased from about 30 000 in 2004 to 34 000 in 2005 (Department of Education, 2006). This could be the reason why the statistics were challenged by the Parliamentary Monitoring Group as to the authenticity and reliability of the data. However, the information available indicates that generally there is an expansion in the provision of ECD services which can largely be attributed to the expansion of Grade R classes.

5.2. Practitioner Supply

Child/practitioner ratios have always been used to assess the staffing levels of practitioners in ECD centers and schools. The ratio has a bearing on the quality of services provided to children. It is considered that when the ratios are high, children are not given adequate attention required because of crowded classes that lessen contact time between the child and the practitioner. In comparison to advanced countries such as USA, Denmark and Spain, the ratios range from an average of 25-30/1 as observed by the HSRC (2008). For this reason, this research endeavoured to establish the child/practitioner ratios in South Africa. It was observed that current data is not available on child/practitioner ratios. This observation is also supported by the HSRC findings that identified at the time of the 2001 Audit that the average practitioner-to-child ratio across all ages and facilities was 1:19 (HSRC, 2008: 199). Going by this ratio, it can be concluded that there is enough practitioner supply for ECD services. However, of late,

there has been massive expansion in the provision of ECD services which requires the supply of ECD practitioners to be ascertained through reliable data bases.

However, as observed above, the information on child/practitioner ratios is not available currently. The only data available is provided from the 2001 national Audit that indicates that at the time of the audit, a vast majority of the 48,561 ECD practitioners, about 80%, were considered under-qualified because they lacked formal training (HSRC, 2008). This gives the impression that a large cohort of the current practitioners need retraining to meet the standards set by the National Qualifications Authority (NQA). The challenge of training and retraining already existent practitioners has raised concerns as to the pace at which ECD practitioners are trained which does not match the rate at which ECD services are expanded. Concerns were also raised by a CEPD researcher regarding government's readiness to meet the 2010 target of providing Grade R classes to all South African children. In her statement the researcher stated that;

"I was in Mpumalanga last week on the CEPD research. What I observed is that currently the schools are not ready to accommodate the Grade R classes. One major problem is that there are no certified teachers for Reception Year. Most of the teachers available were trained by NGOs and do not meet the SACE standards for certification. In addition, reception year teachers want to identify themselves as teachers and not pre-primary school practitioners. On the other hand, some of the Primary school teachers given the responsibility to handle Grade R classes are not trained on how to handle pre-primary school children. As a result, they end up teaching pre-primary school children what is supposed to be taught to older primary school pupils" (Phoebi Kaniki, 25/08/2008)

Similar concerns were also raised by officials at the Department of Education. It is considered that most practitioners are under-qualified and under-paid. The requirement is that every ECD practitioner must have a minimum qualification of Matric level to be

eligible for ECD training that takes at most three years of college education. In addition, teacher employment in pre-grade R depends on the ability of parents to pay for their children and about 30% of government subsidy is paid to the teachers in some schools. The need for certification with NQF has worked to sideline most practitioners that were trained by NGOs and have hands on experience in handling young children.

5.3. Financing

As regards ECD financing, it is observed that funding had increased from R12m in 1995 to R538m in 2004/5. A total of R4.2bn was allocated to provinces for the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) in 2005. Of this amount, R2, 2bn was allocated to ECD services. As stated in the minutes of the Education Portfolio Committee, this funding was aimed at training teachers and paying their stipends. The Department of Social Development aimed to increase the subsidy to R9 per child per day from R2 to R7 and as such the committee recommended that a five-fold increase in real terms was needed to meet targets by 2010.

The minutes of June 3, 2008 in a briefing by the Department of Education, Ms Dorothy Masipa, Deputy Director: Financial Planning, DoE, explained the norms and standards for funding ECD facilities. Ms Masipa stated that two models for funding were developed and provinces could decide what model to follow. In the first model, funds were transferred directly to the account of the school so that it could be managed independently. The second model allowed the province to manage the funds on behalf of

the school. In addition, she stated that funding for both Grade R and Pre-Grade R was targeted at the poorest families and that Community-based centres, which would normally not qualify for funding, had to meet specific criteria to be registered as independent schools (Department of Education, 2008).

However, despite these observed financing commitments both by government and stakeholders, this research found out that the major challenge to providing ECD services to South African children is widespread poverty especially among rural children. A 2007 United Nations Children's Funds (UNICEF) report estimates income poverty to affect 55 percent of all South African children, with rural black children being the most affected (UNICEF, 2007). Given this prevailing situation, government's Child Support Grant stands to be one of the best ways of reducing child poverty.

As such, a report released by the Department of Social Development indicates that the Child Support Grant now reaches 8,3 million beneficiaries compared to only 34 000 in 1999 when it was just launched (Department of Social Development, 2008). The report further indicates that Child Support Grant has widely been used to meet basic essentials such as food and other basic social needs including education and health related costs. It is further observed that children in homes receiving Child Support Grant are more likely to attend a crèche or preschool than children of the same age group who were not receiving the grant. It is acknowledged that various studies have consistently confirmed that the grants not only reduce the occurrence of hunger and poverty but also that they also facilitate household access to basic services and economic opportunities. From this

background, a statement by the Minister of Social Development, Zola Skweyiya, on the release of the report stated that;

'this challenges the anecdotes about the grants being misused by caregivers on a large scale' (Ministry of Social Development, 2008)

This statement is in reaction to the widespread view that Child Support Grant is generally misapplied and abused by recipients of the grant. Recently, there was a statement published by Ilitha Labantu, an NGO focusing on violence against women and children. The NGO observed that there is a "dramatic" increase in young mothers misusing the grant, sometimes known as the "womb fee" in townships. The situation was attributed to poverty because the mothers wanted to live a good life. It is further observed that mostly young women go on drinking sprees, bought clothing and gambled with the money (Pretoria News; 29 September 2008). It is also considered that the grandparents tend to bear the burden of taking care of the children. In addition, the increase in the Child Support Grant is also connected to high pregnancy and HIV/AIDS rates as young poor mothers consider it worthwhile to have a child as a way of being eligible for child support grant.

However, this research has established that there is no credible report pointing to the fact that Child Support Grant is abused. The argument therefore is that as a widespread phenomenon, clearly there are reported instances of abuse, but the research commissioned by the Minister of Social Development showed that this was not a general phenomenon occurrence. For example, a newspaper article published by the Daily Sun on

Monday, 20 October, 2008 alleges that a 37 year old mother abused the Child Support Grant on beer, stating that:

"This 37 year old mother regularly left her daughter alone in the house to go out on drinking sprees. And her family said she used the little girl's grant money to nurse her drinking habits. …The heartless mum from hell lives in Etwatwa East, in Ekurhuleni. She was arrested on Saturday after her young sister went to the cops. Her family told cops that two kids died last year as a result of her irresponsible behaviour. On two separate occasions, she left a child alone in the house only to find the child dead on her return. Mabote Motopi from the police confirmed the matter".

Concerns of abuse of the Child Support Grant were also raised by a government official at the Directorate of ECD, Department of Education. The official noted that;

"Some recent research indicates that Child Support Grant is misused by parents/guardians that use the grant to buy beer. Observe the day when parents get Child Support grant and you will find out that the shabeens are congested. For this reason, I consider that the major challenge regarding financing of ECD currently is that departments responsible for ECD work in silos and there is no coordination of activities and financing between the Department of Education and the Department of Social Development. In addition, it is also difficult to support families in homes where there is no adequate and safe sanitation, but again that is the role of municipalities. Therefore, there is need for an effective model of support and not the current child support grant/no fees schools. These models need to be replaced by a more developmental approach that can effectively empower households. In my view, households are the most appropriate places for child stimulation because the environment at home is best suited for a child's needs such as love and care (Department of Education official, 10/10/2008)".

Despite the official acknowledging abuse of Child Support Grant, no comprehensive research information is available to emphasize abuse of Child Support Grant. As such, evidence of abuse of the grant is only available as anecdotes and cannot be used to generalize abuse of Child Support Grant as a general pattern.

However, there are various challenges regarding provision of ECD services that transcend successful implementation of Child Support Grant. One of the major challenges

is that the sector is currently uncoordinated with various departments working independently. In acknowledging these challenges, Samuels, the Director for ECD at the Department of Education noted that;

Currently, the Department of Education and the Department of Social Welfare are working in silos and their programmes are not coordinated, (Samuels; 10/10/2008)

In this regard, she recommended an integrated approach to ECD policies under one department, bringing together social workers, teachers and health workers to allow coordination of roles for each department. This is cognizant of the fact that currently the Department of Social Welfare, the Department of Education and the Department of Health work independently and do not coordinate on issues concerning child development. The lack of coordination also brings about confusion about which department is responsible for the 0-4 year olds as the Department of Social Development shifts the burden to the Department of Education.

5.4. Broad Challenges

Challenges facing the provision of ECE in South Africa broadly anchor on devising effective and innovative strategies to be able to reach out to all children especially the poor and disadvantaged. It is important to observe that since the start of the implementation of White Paper 5 on ECD, significant challenges still exist where children in disadvantaged communities still lag behind in levels of accessing ECD services. According to a Census of 2001, a larger proportion of children aged 0–4 attended a pre-school institution in the more industrialized and densely populated

provinces than in rural provinces. For example, in Gauteng, one in five young children (19.7 percent) were attending a pre-school institution, whereas in the Northern Cape, which is sparsely populated, only one in 14 infants (7.2 percent) were attending school (Department of Education; 2006). The figure below shows the variation and distribution of children attending pre-school institution per province.

Percentage of young children attending a pre-school institution



Source: Education Information System, School Realities 2006

From the diagram above, it shows that by 2006, a higher percentage of children in rural areas were not accessing ECE services. This entails that access to ECE is still a challenge

in rural areas, against the background that ECD strategies are specially aimed to target poor and vulnerable communities.

Broadly, as has already been pointed out in this research, the Interim Policy on ECD of 1996 shares the vision of the Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989, the World Conference on Education For All of 1996 and the World Summit for Children of 1990. To meet the needs of providing ECD services to South African children, the policy emphasizes empowering parents, families and communities to equip them with the necessary capacity to care and develop children. The policy further emphasizes effective planning and provision of ECD services through intersectoral collaboration and involvement of stakeholders such as NGOs at community level, teacher training colleges, unions and other donor institutions.

At the same time, the Interim policy suggests the introduction of Grade R in all accredited schools. This in itself implies that there are two models; one that seeks provision through a community based system relying on community organizations and families to provide ECD services and on the other hand there is a school based model that seeks to expand ECE services through expansion of Grade R education. The challenge arising from the community based model is that communities are faced with challenges of poverty manifested through low levels of children participation in ECD services in most disadvantaged places especially the rural areas. In addition, the policy only proposes for the provision of Reception Year services for five year olds. Less attention is given to pre-Reception Year services where no comprehensive guidelines for support are outlined.

It is also difficult to understand the policy strategies where specifically the poor are targeted when at the same time the policy embraces inclusive education. It should be realized that when the poor are targeted and segregated on the basis of special needs, it would most likely work to further marginalize the poor children. As such, the most effective policy model is one that closes the gap between the rich and the poor through 100 percent public financing of ECD services, not only focusing on the Reception Year class but rather extended to the 0-4 year age group.

As regards practitioner certification, the SAQA requirements emphasize more on a practitioner's technical abilities. However, the qualities of an effective ECD practitioner are more related to the practitioner's ability to relate with children and the ability to facilitate children working and growing together and also to organize and engage with families. These needed attributes for an ECD practitioner may not be developed through formal education as required by SAQA but rather through years of engaging with children. It is for this reason that some of the most dedicated and effective ECD practitioners in South Africa today are considered under-qualified because they do not meet the formal level of education as required by the NQA. Most ECD practitioners do not have Matric qualification, a benchmark for one to qualify to undergo ECD training at an accredited training institution.

In an effort to fill the gap created by the shortage of qualified ECD practitioners, the government supplements Reception Year provision by placing formal teachers into Reception Year classes. This is problematic in the sense that most educators have not

been taught to be facilitators of children's play. As such, this may work to the detriment of the children's development instead of helping develop capacities in them. All in all, it must be emphasized that a qualification framework is important. However, it should be informed by the type of skills and qualities required of an effective ECD practitioner.

5.5. ECD and Human Development

It must be recognized that the underlying objective of ECD and education in general is to build human capabilities and skills to be able to engage effectively in the development process of the country and also to be able to benefit from economic opportunities. In regard to this, the South African government, since 1994, has consistently focused on expanding skills levels by implementing the skills development strategy. The skills development strategy has focused largely on transforming public education and training institutions as well as establishing new institutions. The strategy is informed by the fact that generally there is a shortage of critical skills on the labour market while at the same time, a large proportion of the South African population is unemployed or are engaged in informal employment. This research identifies that some of the reasons for high unemployment rates is lack of formal training, the tendency to limit training to the needs of individual employers which hinders labour mobility and generally, the mismatch between the skills needed by employers and the ones available on the labour market.

To address the challenge posed by the shortage of skills, government efforts are seen through the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and the National Skills Funds where skills developments have been initiated with the involvement of various

institutions as well as government programmes such as the EPWP. It is important to acknowledge that the interventions have helped improve the situation of the unemployed as well as the employed. According to a ten year review of sectoral programmes, more resources have been directed towards increasing the number of engineering graduates, increased registration of artisans, targeted training for business process outsourcing as a strategic growth sector, and placement of over 15, 000 unemployed graduates in companies in South Africa and abroad (Towards a Fifteen Year Review, 2008: 40).

However, regardless of these efforts, unemployment levels in South Africa are still high. The skills development initiatives put in place have not produced the skills needed on the labour market due to various reasons such as the inefficiency of SETAs and general lack of formal education among a large proportion of the South African population. Suffice to say that this lack of education especially among the black population is largely a vice emanating from the legacy of apartheid and the challenge still persist despite various initiatives. Currently, illiteracy levels, especially among the adult black population are still high.

According to the Human Resource Development (HRD) Strategy for the public service, about three (3) million South Africans cannot read and write at all (HRD Strategy for SA; 2001-2006: 33). This affects their ability to participate fully in the political, economic and social spheres of life. Due to this overwhelming challenge, a high proportion of the South African population requires adult basic education to be able to acquire the needed knowledge to develop necessary skills. This requires that in the longer term, training

programmes be coordinated with strong foundations for education, linking initial education in children to the future needs of national development.

Furthermore, it is identified that lack of skills among the unemployed population is largely the cause for social exclusion, where the previously marginalized group under apartheid is still living in perpetual poverty. In turn, the poverty is inherited by children born from previously marginalized parents, thereby perpetuating the poverty cycle. It should be acknowledged that some of the efforts to redistribute resources have actually worked to reduce the levels of poverty. According to the Ten Year Review Synthesis, when using the R322 per person [per month] poverty line, in 1995 about 53% of households were living below that line while by 2005, that figure had decreased to 48% (Towards a Fifteen Year Review; 2008: 73).

Therefore, these interventions need to be sustained in the meantime because the impact of poverty and inequality would be worse in the absence of these measures. According to the Ten Year Review Synthesis, social grants have played a very critical role in this regard in reducing poverty levels. Social grants, being the largest form of government support for the poor, increased from 2.5 million beneficiaries in 1999 to over 12 million in 2007 with the largest part of this being in the form of the child support grant, which reached 7.8 million beneficiaries in 2007 compared to 34 000 in 1999 (Ten Year Review Synthesis, 2008: 19). These statistics reflect government's commitment to reducing poverty levels.

However, it must also be noted that the current interventions will not provide a lasting solution without programmes to strengthen human capabilities and promote self sufficiency. The use of social grants to reduce poverty levels must not be considered an end in itself. Although it is worthwhile to commend initiatives that have led to the increased number of vulnerable groups benefiting from various government grants and also the increased government annual allocations towards providing grants, it should also be acknowledged that grants are not a sufficient measure to reduce the levels of poverty to desirable levels. Grants cannot provide a lasting solution without programmes to strengthen human capabilities and promote self-sufficiency.

In this regard, the poor need to have access to income by way of participating in economic activities. This can only be possible when they have strong foundations from early childhood and well nurtured talents and skills that enable them realize their full potential in adulthood. Any effective initiatives to reduce poverty must take into consideration root causes of poverty such as marginalization in early childhood. Therefore, to break the cycle of poverty, attention must be given to initiatives that improve human capabilities through education in particular so as to expand people's chances of entering the labour market.

It must be realized that the transition from childhood to youth or adulthood is somewhat a complex process. As such, without relevant institutions and policies in the education system to shape the career path of children and the youth, many young people end up being marginalized. With marginalization comes lack of hope and inability to reason.

This in turn leads to violent behaviour, high crime rates, increased cases of substance abuse and involvement in various undesirable behaviours as the only way youths try to seek meaning in life. As children get involved in illegal activities, criminal attitudes and tendencies get entrenched in their behavioural patterns. They are initiated into the criminal world early in life and get nurtured into adulthood by the criminal world. The Ten year review (2008) acknowledges that the Department of Correctional services reports an increase in the number of juveniles serving lengthy sentences for violent crimes. As such it can be deduced that high levels of youth unemployment and a high rate of young offenders in prison reflects policy gaps or inefficiencies in the education system and the whole economy in general.

Furthermore, it is widely argued that there is a link between a child's participation in ECE and the future probability of the child to drop out of school. The argument is that most of the children that receive comprehensive ECE in their early life are less likely to drop out of school as they proceed further in education. From this standpoint, comprehensive ECE plays a significant part in shaping the future behavioural patterns of youth and adults. As young people drop out of school, they are unable to participate and earn income from economic activities. In addition, they cannot make it in self-employment as success in most economic activities largely depends on high levels of education and literacy.

CHAPTER SIX

6.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

By and large, this research sought to investigate the ECE policies in South Africa. The research investigated the policy process and established stakeholder participation in the process. Stakeholder participation is important in the policy process from the point that stakeholders in ECE play a very important role both during the policy formulation process and at policy implementation stage. Furthermore, the research also sought to interrogate the policy implementation process and establish how the policy intentions reflect the implementation process. Specific policies were identified as the bedrock for provision of early childhood services in South Africa.

In this view, various policies and initiatives on ECD were identified. Looking at the policy formulation process, it is observed that between the 1980s and 1990s, concerted efforts were made directed at formulating appropriate and comprehensive ECD policies. This was the transition period from the discriminatory apartheid system to that which provides equal opportunities to all. It was during this period that major policy documents such as the 1994 ANC yellow book gave recognition to the provision of ECD services. When the ANC recognized the need for expanded provision of ECD services in South Africa, attention was given in government policy decision processes to incorporate ECD policy in government policy priorities.

It is for this reason that by 1996 the Interim ECD policy was adopted with major stakeholders playing a significant role in the policy formulation process. Later the interim policy was tested by the Pilot Project which helped identify major challenges of ECD provisioning. Among other things, the Pilot Project recognized the need to conduct a nationwide audit of ECD services to ascertain the number of ECD sites, number of practitioners as well as the number of learners. Arising from this, the Audit was conducted between 2000 and 2001 which identified a number of weaknesses upon which recommendations were based.

With the Interim ECD policy, the Pilot Project and the Nationwide Audit in place, it was expected that a comprehensive ECD policy would be formulated. Many stakeholders who were part of the ECD policy process from the initial stage expected to be part of the final policy decision that would address the challenges of ECD provisioning as identified by the Audit. One of the most important recommendations of the Audit was to provide ECD services using an integrated sectoral approach. However, the Department of Education formulated the final ECD policy, White Paper 5, without the involvement of other stakeholders. As a result of this, White Paper 5 left out most of the recommendations of the Audit. It could be for the reason that the Department of Education wanted to bring an end to the long process of policy consultation.

As such, White Paper 5 only focuses on the provision of Grade R classes to five year olds leaving out the 0-4 year age group. The provision of ECD services to the 0-4 year age group is mainly left to independent providers and community schools. This places the

demand for ECD provision on parents who are required to pay to meet the needs of ECE for their children. Even when there is government subsidy given to the ECD sites, the subsidy is not adequate enough to offset the burden on poor parents who can hardly afford to pay for their children. Even to mention that Child Support Grant has helped mitigate child poverty, the grant does not lift children out of the poverty inherited from their parents. As such, children from poor families are sidelined, denied access to ECE at the age they are supposed to build strong foundations.

As the statistics indicate, the most sidelined of these children are in rural areas. The rural children also have to walk long distances to ECE centers, making it difficult for them to attend ECE services regularly. Home based care, on the other hand, is not the best alternative because parents are poor and do not have the capacity to provide quality home based care for their children. In addition, most of the parents even in the middle class spend most of their time at work and therefore are not available to provide the home based care needed for their children. In this case, what are required are models that would empower vulnerable parents and ensure that children especially from disadvantaged groups access quality ECE services through government support. This could be the most effective way of breaking the poverty cycle.

In addition, ECD practitioners in private ECD sites depend heavily on the money paid by parents for their salaries. Given that the money from parents is not adequate to provide for quality ECE services, ECE practitioners are usually underpaid. For this reason, most independent and community based ECD centers face the challenge of attracting qualified

practitioners. Coupled with this challenge is the fact that the standards of certifying practitioners do not take into consideration an assessment of practitioners' abilities to interact and foster children's development through years of experience. As such the certification process discriminates many practitioners that have contributed to the provision of ECE services through years of involvement in the sub-sector.

As concerns Grade R provision, it is important to acknowledge government's commitment towards expanding ECE services by expanding Reception Classes. This is also observed through expanded financing towards Grade R. Notwithstanding the fact that financing towards Grade R still needs scaling up, there are many other challenges as has already been identified. Generally, the sector is currently disintegrated, with the Department of Education and the Department of Social Development working independently. In addition, the financing system for ECD is disintegrated, with the Department of Education focusing on Grade R while leaving the 0-4 year olds under the responsibility of the Department of Social Development.

With this lack of coordination, there is confusion as to which department is accountable to the responsibility of providing ECE services to the 0-4 year olds in the sense that the Department of Social Development does not have the mandate of educating children. From this background, it is important to integrate ECD policies under one department to bring together social workers, health workers and ECE providers and practitioners. The financing system also needs harmonizing so that allocations towards ECD services do not

fall within different departments but rather under the guidance and responsibility of one department.

As regards globalization and ECE, it is imperative to note that ECE policies are affected by how economic policies are formulated and implemented. Considering that South Africa follows a neo-liberal economic policy, this has a bearing on the financing of ECE services. It could be from this perspective that the departure point for White Paper 5 is that provision of ECD services is the responsibility of parents and independent providers. However, government only intends to intervene where ECE service provision excludes the disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.

Consequently, funding towards ECE services is low even when it is incontestable that generally, funding towards education has increased since 1994. Currently, only about 60% of the five year olds are able to access ECE services (Towards a Fifteen Year Review, p23). Given this background, it seems that government's commitment to expand ECE services is only in the context of meeting the EFA goals through Grade R provision and be in good standing in the face of the international community's standpoint. From this perspective, if access through Grade R provision is taken as an indicator for achieving EFA goals, it is possible to consider South Africa as being on track to meet the EFA goals by the year 2015. However, access alone is not satisfactory as an indicator of achievement if quality of provision is ignored and ECE practitioners do not have the necessary qualifications to provide ECE services.

The commitment to the EFA goals only gives the impression that South Africa is committed to the Millennium declaration and bound to meet the EFA goals in general by the year 2015. However, meeting the EFA goals in itself is not satisfactory if ECD policies do not address the root causes of poverty and inequality. As such, the EFA goals might be met without achieving the goals of development in the context of expanding human capabilities as an end and means of development.

It is also important to note that practitioner training heavily relies on provision by independent NGOs. This reflects the low public financing towards ECE services which is against the background that ECE practitioners are not adequate and most of those available are considered under-qualified. This low financing on ECE in particular can be attributed to the neo-liberal economic policies that advocate for less public spending towards education. Therefore, the need for expanded and comprehensive ECE services is made strong from the emerging global economy that is widely described as the "knowledge economy". It is in the view of the knowledge economy that children need to be provided comprehensive ECD services to prepare them for the emerging challenges of the global economy. As such ECE financing needs to be expanded to be able to meet the needs for development and not only meeting the narrow targets of EFA goals.

This research puts emphasis on developing human capabilities as an end of development as well as the means through which development can be realized. In this regard, the research recognizes the challenges posed by globalization in realizing human capabilities. As earlier noted in broader context, the term globalization is complex and all embracing.

However, it can also be defined as the synthesis of different cultures into different economic systems through expanding markets and invention of new technology. In this case, globalization takes different dimensions and impacts differently in different economies. This report focused on one main aspect of globalization; neoliberal globalization.

As regards neo-liberal globalization, it is common knowledge that neoliberalism has had great influence on economic policies of most developing countries. Neoliberal policies advocate for privatization of state owned enterprises, deregulation, liberalization of economies, removal of trade barriers, and privatizing the provision of social services such as health and education. Above all, neoliberal globalization advocates for a small public service with the aim of reducing public expenditure on wages. In this view, it is assumed that the benefits of growth would naturally trickle down to the poor through high growth.

However, high growth levels in South Africa have not led to widespread gains in the economy, but rather, there is growing inequality between the rich and the poor. In addition, the privatization of social services has had a negative impact particularly on the education sector. The challenge has largely been the need to expand provision of ECE while at the same time limiting public expenditure on social services. In this perspective, the private sector is left as the prime driver for the provision of education services. It could be in this view that White Paper 5 on ECD considers it the responsibility of parents and the private sector to provide ECD services. The government is only committed to provide ECE services by expanding Grade R provision. This commitment can sometimes

be seen as a campaign to meet the EFA goals. By attempting to meet the EFA goals, the 0-4 year age group has been ignored and left solely in the hands of the private sector, NGOs and the community, under the regulation of the Department of Social Development. As such, there is no real commitment from government other than being committed to the Millennium Declaration.

It is in this case that even when there are efforts to provide ECE to the poor and vulnerable children, statistics show that access by the poor and vulnerable is still low with rural areas indicating the lowest levels of participation. In addition, not only is ECE participation for the 0-4 year age group low but the quality of provision is also compromised by the insecure, underpaid and under-qualified ECD practitioners.

In a country where income inequalities as well as poverty levels are high, the responsibility to provide ECE rests on government. When left to the market to determine the provision of ECE services, the nature of provision will be driven by the profit motive and would further deny the opportunity of poor children to access ECE services, perpetuating the poverty cycle and inequality. Thus, education at every level should be considered a public good fully supported by the state without any form of discrimination.

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