

# Implementation of the Language-in-education Policy and Achieving Education for All Goals in Botswana Primary Schools

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**Abstract** Nations are tasked with expanding education, increasing its accessibility and quality to develop skilled labour forces needed to compete in the global world. Every nation is under pressure to strive to give their learners an opportunity to explore their potential to achieve the national and global educational goals. In learning, language and culture play a vital role in achieving educational goals at individual, national and international levels. This paper is part of the main study that used the qualitative approach to investigate how the language-in-education policy is implemented in ethnically and linguistically complex classrooms. The policy recognises only two languages of instruction: the national and a foreign language. Therefore, the idea is to see how such a policy is implemented in situations where learners do not speak the two languages. The findings indicate that there are challenges that could impede on achieving both the national and global educational goals especially Education for All goals as regards ethnic minority groups. The study observed that some of the marginalized groups such as BaZezuru and San lag behind due to language barrier and different lifestyle which are not considered in the implementation process. The paper recommends a reconsideration of the language-in-education policy that is inclusive in order to achieve the Education for All goals.

**Keywords** Language-in-education Policy, Policy Implementation, Ethnic Minority Groups, Education for All Goals

UNESCO and the World Bank committed to achieve six specific goals. The focus of this article is on some of the education for all goals: expanding on early childhood care and education; providing free and compulsory primary education for all; promoting learning and life skills for young people and adults and improving the quality of education. Achieving education for all goals is critical for attaining all the Millennium Development Goals due to the direct impact of education on children and reproductive health.

In the G8 education experts report (2009) of sharing responsibilities to advance education for all, the participants adopted the 'framework for action on education for All (EFA)' which was regarded as a collective commitment to action based on a vision of the critical role of education for empowering individuals and transforming societies. The meeting responded to issues raised in the April 2000 meeting discussed in Dakar for the World education Forum. Some raised issues concerned out-of-school children that are believed to be hard to reach, since perceive education is not a viable alternative for them in rural areas. In 2008, the Hokkaido Toyako Summit Declaration reiterated the commitment and paid specific attention to countries affected by crisis and marginalized population. In addition it reaffirmed the importance of education and looked at the efforts to ensure that EFA but 2015 remains achievable. Against this background, the report indicates that education can play a key role in global recovery, growth and development. Furthermore, participants supported the Oslo Declaration of 2008 of 'Acting Together' adopted by EFA High Level Group (HLG) convened by UNESCO which fostered national sector plans that could streamline policies for equity and inclusion rather than perpetuating dependency. The Summit recognized millions of children who have not attended school or dropped out early and that it is necessary to support remedial education and give them second chance in a systematic way. Other special attention was devoted to the quality of teaching and relevance of curricula, as pre-conditions for improving learning outcomes. In essence, as the way forward for the G8 Education Experts (2009),

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## 1. Introduction

Education for all is an international initiative first launched in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 to bring the benefits of education to every citizen in the whole society. In order to realize this aim, a broad coalition of national governments, civil society groups, and development agencies such as

basic education has to foster the development and growth in learners amongst other things. Basic education is a key factor in poverty reduction; it has to consider inclusive education stressed on marginalized groups most at the risk of missing out on the gains from education. The development of education plans should contribute to an effective implementation of sound and sustainable sector plans with primary education priorities. These should be aligned with wider education sector and other sectors to assure development results, close the gaps in education data, policy and capacity to accelerate action on EFA.

## 2. Background to the Study

Botswana is a country in Southern Africa with a small population of 2 099 024 (Republic of Botswana, 2011). Botswana is one of the countries where English still dominates in the post colonial era. The country has rich linguistic diversity with only 8 major tribes recognized. The tribes are not classified according to numbers but to political status held by the groups from as far as the colonial era. There are about 28 languages spoken in the country but only two languages are recognized (Batibo, 2005). Setswana is used as a national language while English is the official language. Amongst other ethnic groups in Botswana two marginalized groups are the focus of this paper: BaZezuru and San. The two ethnic groups have some similarities regarding the language problems encountered in the implementation of the language-in-education policy. For example, BaZezuru are found in some areas of Botswana such as Gaborone, Serowe and Francistown and other villages but in small numbers. Most of them originated from Zimbabwe but settled in Botswana a long time ago. Wherever they settle, the BaZezuru groups isolate themselves from the rest of the society. They do not believe in formal education but their lives are characterized by carpentry, metal work, needlework and buying and selling of food products they plough and buy. Hence, their children learn about these skills at a tender age, and most of them do not go to school but are taught how to earn a living through acquiring the skills mentioned above. Research on BaZezuru children in schools is limited, hence issuing affecting them is basic primary education and secondary schools could be rather unique to this paper.

The San is another group of marginalized population who has a unique lifestyle which is different from the rest of the society of Botswana. Most of them still live in remote areas of Botswana where it is difficult to access formal education. The parents nowadays work as herdsmen and herd cattle for the people from recognized tribal groups. The government has built primary and secondary schools in settlements where the San children can access education by staying in hostels in close proximity to the schools. This has resulted in children attending schools at reasonable numbers.

The two groups talked about in this paper have different home languages to those spoken in schools or used as media

of instruction. The current language-in-education policy recommends the use of Setswana at standard One with a switch to English at standard Two. This means that the two groups learn Setswana as a second language and English as a foreign language as compared to their counterparts from other ethnic groups. Comparatively, the two ethnic groups' lifestyles are different but issues affecting at lower primary were quite similar in this study.

## 3. Methodology

This paper is based on empirical research on the implementation of the language-in-education policy (LiEP) in Botswana primary schools conducted in the year 2010 and 2012 respectively. The pilot study of 2010 results are included and discussed in this paper because they set a tone and paved way for the main study especially where learners go to school only speaking the home languages. The group that is singled out is that of the BaZezuru. This group seems not to be widely researched in the language field; that is why it is of utmost importance to this paper. From the main study of 2012 three primary schools are used only because they enrolled the various San groups. Therefore, the total number of primary schools referred to in this paper is four because they have similar characteristics of enrolling learners from linguistically diverse areas.

The study adopted the qualitative approach with an ethnographic aroma. The qualitative approach was chosen so that the researcher could study the participants in their natural environment and hear what they have to say about the implementation of the policy. The key objectives of the study were to investigate how the policy is implemented, examine the implementation strategies used by teachers, explore the challenges encountered and establish solutions to the challenges encountered.

The objectives were explored using the various qualitative research data collection tools such as the open ended questionnaires, classroom observations, interviews and field notes. The triangulation of these data collection tools painted a vivid picture of how the implementation of the LiEP is done in various primary schools. The triangulation of the data also made the data reliable and credible as it was observed that the participants were saying basically the same thing in different ways through the data collection instruments.

The areas of study used for this paper are carefully chosen with a distance of 100 – 1000 kilometres apart from different districts. The districts were Southern, Kgalagadi, Kweneng and Ngamiland. The primary schools sampled from these districts were characterized by ethnically and linguistically diverse learners who do not speak the national language as the first language. The idea was to see how the national language is introduced where learners go to school speaking different home languages from the languages of instruction. The pilot primary school in the Southern region admitted learners from different countries who were immigrants from

Zimbabwe, Somalia, Sudan, Zambia and Namibia as well as the locals. The primary school in Ngamiland also had heterogeneous groups who speak Otjiherero, Shekgalagari, Setswana and different San languages such as //Ani, Buga and Kaukau (Ju |'hoasi). The primary school in Kweneng was dominated by learners who speak Kua (/ Gana); Khute (/ Gui); Cua (Hoan) and different dialects of Shekgalagari such as Sheshaga and Shebolloongwe and a few Tswana speaking groups. While the primary school in Kgalagadi was dominated by learners who speak Nama, !Xóǀ; Shekgalagari, Otjiherero, Afrikaans and Setswana which is influenced by Serolong in Morokweng (South Africa) because the area shares the border with South Africa. This selection gave the researcher an idea of how teachers implemented the policy in different situations and also how these learners responded to the implementation process.

In each school the different levels of primary were sampled such as Standard One, Two, Four and Seven for different reasons. For example, Standard One was where the national language Setswana was introduced as a medium of instruction. Standard Two was where English was introduced as a medium of instruction after learning in Setswana for one year only. Standard Four was where learners write their National Attainment Tests and the idea was to see how they cope with the teaching and learning process and see whether they have already acquired the basic language skills to apply them in their national examinations. Standard Seven was where the learners write their final Primary School Leaving Examinations using both English and Setswana. This level was chosen to see the status in which learners write the final examinations using English. In this regard, these levels were critical for this study to observe the different stages of the implementation of the LiEP as well as seeing how effective the LiEP is with completing classes.

Teachers were key informants of the study as they were directly implementing the policy in the classrooms. Their participation in this study was critical in order to discern their views about the policy, observe them teaching and also have face to face interaction with them to observe and hear their expressions and experiences regarding the implementation of the LiEP. This made a total of 16 teachers from all the schools, that is, one at each four primary school levels. The investigation of teachers using various data collection instruments provided a rich database on how they view the implementation of the policy. The learners' exercise books were also scrutinized to see how they responded to the policy. They were also observed in the classrooms through learning different subjects to see how they responded to the languages of instruction at different levels of primary education. From each class the research selected randomly four exercise books from two boys and two girls. This means that the total number of exercise books scrutinized was sixty four.

The researcher had meetings with all staff members before the commencement of the study to sample the classes and teachers randomly and requested the identified teachers to sign the consent form. Open ended questionnaires were distributed after identifying the classes and teachers who

were going to participate in the study and these were followed by classroom observations to compare what the teachers said in the open ended questionnaires. Classrooms observations were followed by interviews to confirm observations made during teaching and what teachers said in the open ended questionnaires as well. Field notes were made during the day at school assemblies and break time to check which languages used by learners to interact and how teachers also interacted with learners outside the classrooms. All notes were compared and contrasted to identify similarities and differences in the schools studied. All these were followed by a meeting with all staff members to validate the data.

Data were coded according to the key research questions to see how they were all answered from each of the primary schools studied. Coding was done to identify the major and minor themes emerging from the data. This is what the researcher observed that the Education for All Goals could be a farfetched phenomenon looking at the views of the teachers, how the LiEP is implemented, challenges encountered and how learners responded to the policy. The major theme was that the Botswana language-in-education policy is not adhered to and learners in both urban and rural primary schools which do not respond positively to it and therefore the outcomes were negative especially in the three rural primary schools.

Documents analysis was done on reports on Mother Tongue Education Conference papers, Report on the Remote Area Development Program of 2003. All these reports indicated a trend that the marginalized groups did not acquire basic language skills due to language barrier and hence most of them dropped out of school at Standard One and Two. Also Education for All principles and reports of whether they are achieved or not internally were used as reference. Reviewing of the reports and documents allowed the researcher to note similarities regarding the inequalities presented by the media of instruction regarding BaZezuru and San learners.

## 4. Discussion of Findings

The discussion of findings is based on the four Education for All goals namely; expanding early childhood care and education, promoting learning and lifelong skills, completing free and compulsory education and addressing learners' basic needs. The focus of the discussion observes how the language-in-education policy implementation process and classroom practices impede on achieving the Education for All goals. Languages have complex implications both locally and globally and are of strategic importance (UNISA Language Policy, 2006).

### Expanding Early Childhood Care and Education

The goal above calls for better and more possibilities to support young children, their families and communities in all the areas where the child is growing physically, emotionally,

socially and intellectually (UNESCO, 2005). This goal is concerned with the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children (UNESCO, 2005). In this view, like other governments, the government of Botswana is tasked with promoting better and more possibilities in supporting young children to benefit from the education system especially the vulnerable and disadvantaged children. In Malaysia, it has been observed in the report for Remote Area Development Program of 2000 that inappropriate education system exacerbates the erosion of the culture and identity of indigenous people. Policy imposition, without consultation with affected peoples, contains values that run counter to their world views, lifestyles, cultural and spiritual traditions (see also Report of the Remote Area Development Program, 2003). The same applies to the Aborigines in Australia who seem to be disadvantaged by the other aspects of the Australian society, the education system included. However, the Australian government designed a policy that is inclusive and an educational program that is relevant to their culture. Findings from the pilot study in one primary school attended by the BaZezuru children indicate that very little is done to support their childhood learning. Learners go straight to primary education without having been initiated into the education system through kindergarten. Again it is evident that BaZezuru children's life is characterized by lack of communication, being unable to read and write in the languages of instruction, lack of participation, loss of interest in learning and high school dropout. The learning they encounter in primary school is different from how they are initiated into life. Their lives are characterized by creative work such as carpentry, metal work and buying and selling of goods. This is eroded by the different languages that they find at school, the curriculum, learning strategies that are inappropriate to their learning and also lack of support from parents who cannot help them with their assignments either because of different languages or illiteracy. One of the teachers confirmed this by saying that, *"BaZezuru children drop out of school early to venture into vendor businesses at home. After school, they go out to sell different homemade items and eventually drop out to focus on their lifestyle."* The children talked about in this case are Standards One and Two and they are initiated into making money at a tender age.

Similarly, these characteristics have been observed in the classrooms indicates that San classroom experiences are characterized by: lack of communication between teachers and students, lack of interest in school, lack of classroom participation, unable to read books of their level, poor spellings and high school dropout (Hays, 2002; le Roux, 1999; Mokibelo & Moumakwa, 2006). On a similar note, Letshabo (2002) reports that Remote Area Dweller learners need to be considered as an ethnic, cultural and a language minority that is economically disadvantaged. The implementation process as it is, does not nurture their childhood learning and it does not build on their previous knowledge. Letshabo (2002) reports that San children's parents do not have equitable opportunity to visit school due to their life style of hunters and gatherers and cattle herding

which is also based on subservience. Even when an opportunity is presented parents do not visit the school mainly because school promotes, in the parents view, a culture that is foreign to them. In this respect, parents of San ethnic minority children may not be able to solve problems their children are experiencing at school and again will not create a relationship with school authorities necessary to develop their children. In this regard, early childhood care is not nourished by the school for both the San and BaZezuru.

### Completing Free and Compulsory Education

One of the goals of EFA is to ensure that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, those in difficult circumstances, and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality (UNESCO, 2005). The goal sets the objective of seeing that all children; girls as well as boys, go to school and finish primary education (UNESCO, 2005). In order to achieve this goal, Botswana increased enrolment statistics in primary schools so that children can have access to education. From 1995 - 2000, the estimated net enrolment rate for children aged 7-13 was consistently above 95%, peaking at 100% in 1999 and 2000 (Millennium Development Goals Status Report, 2004: 28). Although Botswana achieved enrolment in terms of statistics, it ignored what happened within the four walls of the classrooms regarding accessing to education because the implementation of the language-in-education policy seems to be a problem. Looking at the circumstances presented by LiEP implementation and other researches where both learners and teachers do not understand each other is a challenge that needs to be addressed. Findings from research of the 2005-6 and 2012 studies of two ethnic groups indicate that there is still a problem of learners who are taught by teachers who speak different languages from those of the learners. For example, findings from pilot study primary school in the Southern region, indicates that learners had a problem of communication because of the home language that was different from those used as media of instruction and those used by teachers. Teachers spoke Setswana, Ikalanga and other languages while BaZezuru speak Shona and Ndebele. BaZezuru learners could not read nor write in the two languages of instructions used. Although teachers tried their best to address communication problems through code-switching and code mixing, the exercise was done in the teachers' languages and not the students' languages; hence, this perpetuated the problems of comprehension and understanding of concepts. One of the teachers said, *"I teach these children in Setswana but I do not have a common language with them. BaZezuru children are the disadvantaged group because they do not understand both languages of instruction."* The same sentiments were shared by other scholars in Ghanzi district where learners speak various San languages or Afrikaans (Hays, 2002a; Hays 2009b; le Roux, 1999; Saugestad, 2001). Teachers speak Setswana or Shekgalagari and other languages spoken in Botswana while San learners speak various San languages

that are not even related. San children therefore experience language shock at school due to the introduction of two languages that are unfamiliar. Le Roux (1999: 2) states that,

San children everywhere have to study in languages they often start learning the day they enter school. Mostly, before they have completely mastered the first language, the tuition switches to English, a second foreign and mostly unknown language. This cripples their progress and results in frustration. Although San children are considered intelligent and gifted by most teachers, they mostly do not fulfil their intellectual potential, especially in the final years of school.

According to the above quotation, there are problems regarding San children that may impede on completing the free and compulsory education goal. This also affects BaZezuru children. Further, teaching a language goes with its culture, this means that learners may also experience the problem of understanding the cultures of the new languages with which they may not associate their lives with. In this respect, the language barrier the two ethnic minority groups experience present inequalities in learning, ineffective learning and makes both teaching learning a difficult and daunting exercise. Teachers also may be frustrated by the language barrier and this may brew other problems of negative attitude towards the learners and learners may see no reason to stay in school and may decide to disengage from school or lose interest in school altogether (see also Hays, 2002; Polelo, 2004; Revised National Policy on Education, 1994).

The other most important issue to highlight is the issue of gender. Girls drop out of school more than boys although research amongst San communities indicates basically the same number of dropouts by gender. For example, in the pilot study there was an indication that more BaZezuru girl children drop out of school, not because of pregnancy but because they have to venture into business at a very tender age. According to the teachers, *“the girl child is taught to bring home food for the family at a tender age through selling their homemade products such as pillows, sofa covers, curtains and other house hold items as well as selling fruits and vegetables.”* During the time of the pilot study in Standards One and Two classes, ten BaZezuru girls dropped from standard One while in Standard Two twelve have already dropped by term two. In a study conducted by Polelo (2004) in Kweneng District at junior secondary school, there was an indication that more girls drop out of school between the ages of fifteen to seventeen. The reasons range from pregnancy to desertion. Mokibelo and Moumakwa (2006) also indicate that girls drop out more than boys and the reasons are language barrier, being nostalgic, cultural conflict, a long curriculum that takes years to complete and marriage (see also Mokibelo, 2014). These issues contribute towards the girl child not completing her education. The reasons are also contributed by the school set up, the curriculum, the policy itself and cultural conflict. These

cannot be ignored if we are to achieve Education for All goals.

If children find learning a frustrating exercise and decide to disengage from school, then the implementation of the language-in-education policy is far from achieving EFA goals. The EFA goal fosters that all children must complete their primary education. However, the statistics indicate that learners especially from ethnic minority groups in remote area settlements and with those that have a different home language indicate that they drop out of school in large numbers. Comparatively, the dropout rate is between 20-25 annually from each class and at both levels of Standard One or Two. This is against the realization of the EFA goal. This could be the reason why United Nations tasked countries to take measurable steps because it recognizes that millions of children have not attended school or dropped out early and there is need to support remedial education and second chance in a systematic way. Although the education at primary is still free and compulsory, not all children at primary school benefit from it even if they are going to school. It is frustrating for children and parents who make an effort to educate their children and in the end they are disappointed by the very authorities who encourage learners to go to school through a policy that discriminates them. If the situation continues to be as such, this EFA goal is far from being realized.

### **Promoting Learning and Lifelong Skills**

Another EFA goal promotes learning and lifelong skills for young people and adults. This goal places emphasis on the learning needs of young people and adults in the context of lifelong learning (UNESCO, 2005). The goal fosters for an improvement in all aspects of the quality of education and ensures the excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills (UNESCO, 2005). Also, the goal encourages the education systems to aim for a situation where people can achieve excellence. This means that we have to check if there are strategies in place in Botswana education system that promotes this goal. However, the opposite seems to be happening because there are gaps that need to be filled. It appears the LiEP is not situated in the socio-political context in which it is implemented. The medium of instruction forms the most powerful means of imparting skills through the language learners understand. If children do not understand the instructions it may be difficult to see life beyond the primary schooling. Further, it may be difficult to develop their meta-cognitive skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, evaluating, synthesizing information and creative thinking. These skills can help learners to cope with the challenges of life such as managing their own businesses and looking for suitable jobs. Classroom observations from the pilot primary school indicate that children could not follow instructions in English and Setswana, the response to Setswana and English instruction was very slow in the classrooms such that teachers taught the children with anger

and frustration and labelled them with a negative attitude. Again, BaZezuru learners may feel ashamed of their own mother tongue more so they were penalized for using it in the classrooms. Although, the expectation is high for learning outcomes, it might be difficult to claim that any effective learning is taking place such that learners would acquire lifelong learning skills. Le Roux (1999) points out that the NGO programs are trying to design bridging programs and culture friendly education for the San and this effort seems to be failing because the success rate remains low. According to Le Roux, San children still have cultural and material problems to adapt to mainstream education and needs to be supported throughout their school. The fact that the education system regards and treats the home languages of these learners as backward and uncivilized could frustrate the learners. This means that the current education system may fail to help both BaZezuru and San learners to acquire lifelong skills for survival in the community. However, it is important to note that both BaZezuru and San children learn skills from their parents, they do practical and creative work of carpentry, woodwork, skin processing, various use of eggshells, metal work, buying and selling of goods. These skills are hands on and the situation at school is different such that they might be bored by the 'theoretical approaches' used with teachers dominating the teaching and learning process. The question is what happens to these skills at school? Are the skills or this knowledge buried? How are the skills they learn from home linked with the curriculum at school? These questions remain unanswered. Therefore, the current policy ostensibly retards the learning and lifelong learning skills.

### **Addressing Learners Basic Learning Needs**

The goal above involves an education system that meets children's basic learning needs in the best and fullest sense of the term (UNESCO, 2005). This education system should help learners to learn to know, to do, to live together and to be. It is an education geared to tapping each individual's talents and potential, and developing learners' personalities, so that they can improve their lives and transform their societies (UNESCO, 2005). Research which investigated the implementation of the language-in-education policy at one primary school where BaZezuru children attended showed that the needs of learners are not met because both students and teachers do not understand each other because of the different languages they use, both teachers and students have different culture, both learners and teachers cannot contextualize learning. This means that if children cannot understand and comprehend concepts at the initial stages of learning, they cannot learn to know, to do, to live together and to be. In this regard, formal education is not addressing BaZezuru learners' needs. In the Regional Mother Tongue Conference held in 2005 in Botswana, presenters raised similar concerns to those of BaZezuru children regarding San and Khoe learners in Southern African region. Most of the presenters emphasized on the use of mother tongue education at early learning due to the language-in-education

policy used which creates a gap between the rhetoric medium of instruction and the realities of its implementation. Some of the presenters argued that it is necessary to use pedagogical practices that can address the needs of learners.

According to (Hays, 2009) another conference was held in Namibia, Windhoek that orchestrated the issues of San, the same concerns were raised that advocated for bilingual and multilingual education that would inform language-in-education policy throughout Africa. In the end there was a unanimous agreement that the economic and social benefits of mother tongue education far outweigh the costs stipulated in such debates. In view of this, African governments were tasked to increase access to mother tongue education and provide it up to much higher levels. According to Penduka 11 Declaration 2004: 2-3) 'a child needs to enter school using his/her first language and then through an additive approach, bring in other languages required for wider communication... San languages and knowledge systems are important resource in education, both for San and nation as a whole.' Consistent with the latter, Wu and Bilash (1998) point out that in the United States, bilingual education for minority children has been in hot debate among politicians, educators and large number of concerned citizens. Equally in Europe, the debate around linguistic diversity has made some governments to consider inclusion of regional indigenous languages in the education system (Wu & Bilash, 1998). This pressure on governments has further perpetuated the inequalities in language-in-education policies. But the question of who teaches these children remains because mother tongue can only be emphasized when both the teacher and students speak the same language; hence achieving EFA goals remains a dream in Botswana situation as regards BaZezuru and San. Further, Letshabo (2002) also points out in her report on Monitoring and Evaluation: a Whole-School improvement Strategy Report that there is a strong culture of under-performance in external examinations such as the Standard Four Attainment Tests and the Primary School Leaving Examinations among San learners. This is due to unfavorable instructional conditions that prevail in RAD schools. Letshabo acknowledges the fact that Tabachnick (1980) identified a need to design instructional materials that are suitable for San children on the basis that the culture of learners, their lifestyles, and their economic and social realities are different from that of the main stream Botswana culture. Important to note is that BaZezuru children's results are not always visible because they do not complete primary education and engage in the selling of their products like their parents at a tender age.

Arguably, South Africa presents a good example of such a language policy with eleven local languages used in various situations, the education system included (Banda, 2004; Beukes, 2006). South Africa has taken giant steps in order to realize the EFA goals. In Botswana, although the Revised National Policy on Education, 1994 recommends the use of Setswana as a medium of instruction, it is only under the

pretext that Botswana is a monolingual country and yet the truth is the opposite. Hence, the implementation of the language-in-education policy remains a challenge in areas where learners speak a different language altogether.

Teachers' roles are important when it comes to achieving educational goals. According to Broadhead (2001) the role of the teacher in promoting active learning approaches may now need to be more clearly emphasized. However, research indicates that most of teachers teaching in schools attended by ethnic minority groups are not trained. For example Letshabo (2002:14) recorded that:

...Kweneng West, where a significant number of Remote Area Dweller learners are found, has a disproportionately higher number of untrained teachers. For example, 6 of 12 (50.0%) teachers at Kaudwane were untrained in 2002, 3 of 8 (37.5%) in Tshwaane, 10 of 29 (34.5%) in Letlhakeng Primary and 2 of 7 (28.6%) in Khekhenye and 3 of 13 (23.1%) in Mantshwabisi. A higher percentage (more than 50%) had 0-2 years of experience as trained teachers. This is in contrast with an average of 12.2 % surplus of trained teachers in a number of urban centres (EFA Report, 2000)...

According to the quotation above, the unqualified members of staff can contribute to ethnic minority quality education. This could result in under performance in final national examinations and failure to achieve EFA goals. Times of change require new practices: informed practices that are underpinned by intelligent thinking needs associates with training, support and development of teachers (Broadhead, 2001).

It is through language that issues of differences amongst people, tolerance and issues of discrimination can be talked about and debated. If there is no language of communication between the sender and the receiver there can be no effective teaching and learning taking place. This means that learners cannot fully explore their individual talents and potential. Bagwasi (2005) argues that, ...'there is need to promote linguistic justice, there is need to a language reform policy through which a learner's second and third languages will be added to his/her repertoire of language systems...' (Mother Tongue Education Conference Report 2005, p.34). Talents are explored and exposed when students understand what they are doing as this can boost their self esteem, morale as well as giving them a sense of belongingness. According to Maslow (1940) learners need to realize their personal potential, have self fulfillment and personal growth as well as having esteem needs such as achievement, status and responsibility, independence and prestige. If learners cannot explore their talents and potential, they will not grow and develop academically, socially, economically and politically. They may be unable to improve their lives and those of their societies. In this respect education would have failed to play a key role in global recovery, growth and development. The current status quo perpetuates a spirit of dependency amongst its citizens. In brief, the LiEP is not effective in such

cases and requires the educational authorities to review the policy or revisit implementation strategies to benefit all the student population. The implementation of the language-in-education policy has to work in harmony with achieving Education for All goals.

## 5. Conclusions

The implementation of the LiEP, the impact of the languages of instruction and achieving EFA goals are a concern voiced in this discussion. The current language-in-education policy is a challenge to BaZezuru and San learners because it impedes on achieving the Education for All goals. The two ethnic groups find themselves as partially or not fulfilling the international education goals. Although the Education for All goals seem obligatory for all United Nations countries, Botswana's language-in-education policy seems not to be promoting learning and lifelong skills because very little learning appears to be taking place in the classrooms because of the language barrier. Further, it is from the benefit of teaching and learning that learners can acquire lifelong learning skills they can use after completing their education. If the skills are not refined, this can impede on their social, economic and political life of learners.

Secondly, the language-in-education policy does very little to nurture and expand early childhood learning because learners drop out of school at a tender age. They find no reason to sit in the classrooms when there is communication break down between them and their teachers. The only place they find comfortable seems to be at home where they can freely communicate with their parents and develop their traditional survival skills.

Thirdly, the language-in-education policy does not allow the learners to complete their education. Although the education is compulsory and enrolment is always high at the beginning of the academic year, the high school dropout rate appears to compete with the enrolment statistics. Learners drop out at a high rate (Hays, 2002; Polelo, 2004, Mokibelo & Moumakwa, 2006). The Botswana government took for granted that by enrolling more learners and building more schools they would have fulfilled Education for All goals. However, the government ignored what happens within the classrooms regarding the San and BaZezuru children, hence, most of them decide to go back to their roots: their home lifestyle and not complete their primary and secondary education.

Lastly, the language-in-education policy ostensibly does not address the learners' basic needs. While it is expected that policies are intended to provide solutions to the problems, it looks like a far-fetched in Botswana education system regarding ethnic minority learners. They enjoy limited protection within the education system. The policy presents inequalities amongst student population, learners from the major tribal groups seems to be benefiting more than the ethnic minority groups such as San and BaZezuru.

This paper therefore challenges the Botswana education

system to consider recent decisions from the Mother Tongue Education Conference held in Botswana in 2005 and UNESCO (2005) campaign on mother tongue education to review the language-in-education policy to cater for other indigenous groups. It is apparent that policy makers and education authorities ignore the negative impact the language-in-education policy is presenting regarding the languages of instructions, hence, this will be difficult to reach Education for All goals. It is best to consider a review that promotes change, learning and transformation amongst learners of Botswana.

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