



**Victims or Actors of Development: *the case of the San People at D'Kar, Botswana***

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## **DEDICATION**

To my family and friends thank you for your support. Bertran Kiil there are no words to express my gratitude.

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## ABSTRACT

There are a lot of issues concerning the San people of Botswana with regards to self determination and the relationship with the state. There is overlapping issues concerning the San people of Botswana, for the purposes of discussion the thesis highlights some of the issues without delving too much into them as they are not the point of discussion but nonetheless noteworthy.

The paper is grounded on various discussions about the identity of the San people of Botswana and their contemporary way of life. The discussion is rooted in the development policies which have been initiated by the Botswana government on the San people and how these have created a potential gap in achieving realistic developmental initiatives on the San people. By outlining some of the projects carried out by the KFO the discussion has shown how this group has attempted to fill in the gaps created by government initiatives which failed to address the state of the San people as proven by the perpetual poverty which seems to characterise them. Although the point of focus is mainly on the arts and craft and the D'Qare Qare Game Farm it was necessary to show other projects as they also have a significant contribution to the livelihood of the San people of Botswana.

The discussion interprets data gathered during field work in relation to the actor oriented theory. The discussion started with socio-demographic characteristics which discusses aspects of gender and age in relations to the respondents and the impact and or influence of both respectively, in the outcome of data collection. The discussion goes further into interpreting data by citing some activities which are embarked upon by the San people involved with the KFO projects. The participation in the KFO projects is used to highlight the symbiotic relationship between the San and the KFO projects and how this is played out.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

CBNRM- Community Based Natural Resource Management

CKGR- Central Kalahari Game Reserve

FPK- First People of Kalahari

KFO- Kuru Family of Organisations

ILO-International Labour Organisation

NGO- Non Governmental Organisation

RADP-Remote Area Dweller Programme

RAD-Remote Area Dweller

SASI- South African San Institution

TOCADI- Trust for Okavango Cultural and Development Initiatives

WIMSA- Working group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa

UN- United Nations

## **TERMINOLOGY**

Batswana- plural for all citizens of Botswana

Basarwa- a name used for San people (collective)

Kgotla- a place where locals meet with leaders to discuss communal issues

Bantu- a name for all migrated tribes found in most countries in Southern Africa

## **Chapter One**

### **GENERAL INTRODUCTIONS**

#### **Section 1**

##### **1.1 Introduction**

This research is an attempt to understand the diverse roles in the livelihoods of the San People residing within the Ghantsi district in Botswana, with regards to social change and development and the role they play within these. The findings of this paper do not intend to be a summary of the issues or even a complete analysis of the San people living in D'Kar and or surrounding areas. Rather, this discussion evolves out of a larger conversation with which I am engaged, a personal narrative of my recent fieldwork experiences to complete my dissertation, an interest/empathy in Indigenous recognition and rights struggles, a strong interest in the roles of Non Governmental Organisation working with the San, and the current political discourse in Botswana. More importantly, it is an attempt to make my perspectives, motivations, and research more transparent.

The primary focus will be on the D'Kar village, Kuru Family Organisation (KFO) and the work it is doing among and within the San communities. Social change in this paper would be referred to as a systematic shift in the norm of people, for example, “uneven developments, a change in the relative status and standing of ethnic group, of power transition, a change in the environment” (Miall 2007:12). The role of the San people under discussion is whether they are victims or actor in development oriented initiatives. Victimhood in this sense can be characterized by extreme sense of mortal vulnerability.

An interesting aspect of victimhood is the dual nature of the relationship victimized groups have with their role as victims. On the one hand, there seems to be general unwillingness or inability to get past feelings of victimhood. Groups sometimes even glorify the self righteousness of victimhood by identifying strongly with the group “chosen trauma”, allowing the group's history as a victim to become an ironic rallying point and chosen group identity marker. In this case the state of being an indigenous person and the “rights” and “characters”

that comes with whereas, an actor oriented approach begins with the simple idea that different social forms develop under the same or similar structural circumstances.

Such differences reflect variations in the ways in which actors attempt to come to grips, cognitively, emotionally and organizationally, with the situations they face, furthermore it also points to the variability of action with respect to meaning, norms and the attribution of intentionality, since social actors can engage with, distance themselves from, or adopt an ambiguous stance towards certain codified rules and interpretations (Long 2001:17). Being an actor in this case would therefore be regarded as having authority or the opportunity to partake in decision making, whereas being a victim would mean being denied the right and dignity of choice be it through coercion and or force of any nature.

## **1.2 Historical Background of Indigenous Rights and the Challenges in definition**

Although Botswana is a member of the United Nations and therefore conforms by the Convention for indigenous people, there has been a lot of difficulties in the acknowledgement and or the acceptance of what constitutes being an indigenous citizen in the country. The 1957 ILO Convention No. 107 addresses the protection and integration of indigenous peoples. Since reviewing the 1957 convention No 10 and amending it to ILO Convention No. 169, indigenous people are defined as, “both tribal people’s whose social, cultural and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations and to peoples who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from populations which inhabit the country at the time of conquest or colonisation” (antenna: 16.09.08).

While the ILO defines indigenous peoples in terms of their characteristics and self identification, The official rhetoric of the Republic of Botswana is that there are no Indigenous minorities in the country, taking the stance that all citizens of Botswana (i.e. ‘Batswana’) are Indigenous and no group of people should be seen as separate from this civic identity and afforded special rights. The government of Botswana is of view that there are no indigenous people in the country and that all Batswana (people of Botswana) are indigenous. Hence if we are to try an identity the status of the San people as Batswana and not indigenous

people of Botswana, then they are struggling as any other people (tribes) residing in Botswana. However if we apply the indigenous status as per convention No 169, then there are a lot of distinguishing factors between the San and the non San peoples of Botswana.

“Since independence, the government of Botswana has endeavoured to build ‘united’ nations based on equality of all citizens. With this aim in mind, it was decided that every Motswana<sup>1</sup> would be considered indigenous and thereby place all ethnic groups and tribes on an equal footing. The government does not believe in the separate but equal maxim, ‘separate is not and can never be considered equal’. All tribes were to be treated equally to avoid heightening any difference and thereby hoping to maintain a peaceful society” (Ditshwanelo 2006: 9).

The status of the San people of Botswana is characterized by absolute poverty, no or very little education and the high rate of unemployment and a sense of hopelessness. Basarwa have the distinction of being perceived and depicted as the most marginalized of all groups of people in Botswana. It is imperative however to acknowledge that it has always been important for national government to design and formulate and implement policies aimed at eradicating poverty and the status of its citizens. These policies are however influenced by the World Bank, its agencies and donors. Bratton (1989: 576), estimate suggests that NGO’s in Kenya receive 90 of their capital and operating expenses from abroad through various NGO’s. A government responds ambiguously to this fact. On the one hand, they welcome the influx of additional resources; on the other hand they are concerned that NGO’s are accountable to, and may act as proxies for, foreign interests.

### **1.3 Promises of alternative Livelihood**

When relating the above nuances to the case of the San people as in many other indigenous people, the areas they occupy usually form an important part of their (natural) resources where for example economic rationality cannot be divorced from political realities, hence the constant clash with governments with regards to rights to occupy the said areas, self determination and representation and interest of NGO’s. Bratton (1989: 576) surmises this brilliantly that, “in sum the very existence of NGO’s is a test of a government’s stance on a basic issue of national governance; how to balance central political control autonomy for civic organizations, because NGO activities can involve a wide range of sensitive political actors –

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<sup>1</sup> Motswana- singular way of saying a citizen of Botswana, plural would be Batswana.

donors in the international arena, neighboring countries in the region , and social groups within its own territory – a government may even come to view NGO's through the lense of state security". Although the above nuances will not form part of the discussion here, it forms a fairly understandable conversation for the general discussion and point of view as it does not divorce the politics and economics that are there but merely informs the reader.

Since the Bechuanaland Protectorate gained its independence from the British on September 30th, 1966, the 'Tswana'-dominated government has held the official line in its assertions of the country's plurality *and* homogeneity depending on the target audience (Motzafi-Haller 1995, 1998) and the potential political and economic gains' in (Reed 2008: 5).

Arguably the Ditshwanelo (2006: 6) Human rights group in Botswana is of view that, "the Basarwa may be recognized as indigenous peoples because they are said to be descendants of the original populations residing in the area now known as Botswana. The traditional Basarwa or San peoples were nomadic hunters and gatherers, who travelled in small family bands. They followed the water, game and edible plants: everything they needed for daily subsistence was carried with them. Water was easily obtained from underground sources. The concept of private ownership of land did not exist in their culture, as it is understood in present day Botswana."

Ditshwanelo's human rights group therefore defines the state of indiginity in line with the ILO Convention No169, whereas the government of Botswana argues that in 1885 when the British government gave Botswana a protectorate status, the latter failed to determine and or give an indigenous status to the San people thereby collectively giving them a protected status as Bantu people even though they were not of the Bantu descendents. "Without the formal acknowledgement of the Basarwa people's existence within the Kalahari, there was no opportunity for land use patterns in the Basarwa traditional areas to find "official recognition'. When the Kalahari Desert was declared crown land by the former colonial government, the Basarwa and other major inhabitants became unlawful occupiers on their traditional lands" (Ditshwanelo 2006: 6).

By placing in here different definitions to what indigenous people are commonly referred to and the Botswana government perspective the intention is not to explicitly challenge the nationalist discourse of Botswana, but rather trying to tease out the nuances and shades of gray within the region's past. My intentions through my work are to illustrate the variety of

interactions that went on between people of different groups and 'economic status in Botswana's past to push for a greater understanding and appreciation of the 'other' in local and national arenas, especially in light of a shared, cooperative past in which *all* groups participated in building the nation and should be appreciated for their contributions through labour and culture.

The stand which the government of Botswana has taken with regards to what constitutes an indigenous person, is however not to say that there is total authoritarian control, since citizens in the country are afforded significant freedoms and especially the ability (while not always acknowledged) to voice dissenting opinions through various forums like the Kgotla system and rallies held by respective constituents members who report to central government (Reed 2008: 6). Nyati-Ramahobo (2000: 253-254) is of the opinion that minority languages and cultures are not allowed to use their distinctive different languages that including the San People. She asserts this practice to the broader national policy which is assimilationist in nature that views differences in people as a threat to national unity.

These same sentiments are carried out by Reed (2008: 8), and equate the practice as eerily reminiscent of the South African apartheid government's resettlement of groups to homelands during the 1960s and 70s. A lot of research has been conducted on the San People and it is imperative to note where the finding of different researchers with regards to the contemporary status of the San is depicted. More often than not there is a tendency to depict the San people in a primordial way. This is rather contradictory to the status of the San and can prove to be a hindrance towards a full understanding of the continued interactions that include hybridity, adaptability, and flux and representations of such actions and all other holistic developmental initiatives. Currently in Botswana there are no San people who are 'hunter and gatherers', but rather San people whose lifestyle and way of life has changed drastically and only use foraging to supplement their diet but not as a way of life.

Nengwekhulu (1998: 43) cautions that, "Most new arrivals tend to blend into a landscape discontinuously and often adapt to local conditions rather than importing a package of archaeologically distinctive cultural elements and practices. This examination is conducted partly in the material world and may reasonably be expected to leave observable traces". It is with these thoughts and historical occurrences that the Botswana Government views the status of 'Batswana'. The government of Botswana regards the San people of Botswana as not static

and unchanged, but rather as dynamic, participant cultures before and after the arrival of Bantu-speaking farmers to Botswana at least 2000 years ago.

This is noteworthy for there has been a lot of a change both in the San people's culture and the Bantu. Reed (2008: 10) further asserts that contemporary San people are active participants in the country's present culture and economies: "Today, for example, Basarwa labour is an important part of cattle post life, and wild foods are often exchanged for milk and grain. In addition, Basarwa share their waterholes with Herero and Tswana herdsmen. These herders, in turn, have learned about wild plants and their uses from the Basarwa."

#### **1.4 Statement of the Problem**

The research seeks to find how interest groups particularly the KFO has worked together to empower the San people and their communities and what the latter's influence and or participation reflects. The issues that came forth were the state of victimhood and dependency on the KFO projects, and the sense of awareness of this state and to some extent the involvement of the San people in this symbiotic affair hence rendering them the state of actors. The San people have become both victims and actors to third parties especially NGO's whose selling bid is that they work for the San and run projects based for the San people. The San have had their indigenous status used for both the benefit of NGO's and in some cases their own benefit. Development of the San people is uneven as it is based on indigenous entitlement and not humanistic and or community interest.

The intention here is not to vilify anyone but rather to give an account on variation of attitudes and meaning derived from how these projects are run and the effects it has on individuals and collectives. The projects run by the KFO are said to be run by the San and for the San (Kuru, 2008), as per the advertisement and or marketing of products from these initiatives. What is surprising yet or maybe of concern is that the San people are labourers in these projects and not management and in instances where they are management, their managerial ability is not independent of their 'superiors' as they have to qualify and quantify their actions and decisions.

The relationship between the San people in the case of D'Kar is an example of how good intentions at times may turn awry. What started as projects that was meant to help a community has turned into a dependent way of life. This has not only crippled both the youth and the elderly but has extended to a sense that, 'that is all that people feel they can do and or

go for employment'. What remains to be questioned is how much of this dependency is the project management aware of and what they are doing about it. By divorcing the San people from the global context of the world and recreating 'a primordially based indigenous' atmosphere and or community, where do NGO's place the San and how much of this contemporary world are they allowed to explore and within what context.

What struck me as absurd was the amount of advertising about events and the San's way of life which is spread on the internet and all forms of media advertising and in the most primordial lifestyle hence rendering them as a culturally static community. Some of the initiatives of the KFO are to teach others about the San's way of life. But this same education is very selective in the sense that it reaches those who have the resources to access it and not the minority who do not have access to the internet and other modern gargets that makes communication easier. The San people of D'Kar have resorted to dancing for tourists in animal skin to show how they 'live' their life, and yet it is a fact that this was way back just those who have interest in them remembers their history.

Why is it then that theirs has been turned into a tool of entertainment all in the name of helping them preserve their culture. Whether or not they agree to it is irrespective for they are under duress to do so considering their welfare and lifestyle. This primordial view has tended to victimise the San in the sense that their lifestyle is viewed as stagnant hence not giving adequate room and or account of the changes that happened in the past decades. At what expense is their culture preserved. Does othering them as 'special' and or 'exotic' render them an equal footing in today's society? Certainly not.

### **1.5 Hypothesis**

The San people have become dependent on the Kuru Family Organisation (KFO).

### **1.6 General Objective**

- To analyze whether the San people of Botswana as per the case study are indeed victims of development or architects (passive or active) of the type of development initiatives they are often exposed to.
- What projects does the KFO initiate and how they benefit the San?
- Is there a generally symbiotic relationship between the San and the projects afforded them?

## **1.7 Relevance of the Study**

*“Far from the stale problem in southern Africa where “[anthropologists] tend to confuse change in behaviour or behavioural systems with change in identity...; cultural traits are equated with material culture, and quantifiable changes in materials culture over time are equated with acculturation...; and acculturative frameworks are incapable of accurately predicting what aspects of culture will change in given circumstances” (Cusack 1998)*

A lot of studies and research has been done about the San People of Botswana. This constant interest has been witnessed in the ever-changing lifestyle and the effects of development in their livelihood. The study attempts to demonstrate a more dynamic nature of group interaction and identity formation in culture contact situations and the perceived meanings without narrowing it to an archaeological point of view but rather approaching the issues from a much more holistic stance. This study is relevant for the understanding of social change and development initiatives carried out by both government and NGOs as it highlights some of the potential pitfalls which can arise from both policy making and implementation.

This study is particularly of interest as it highlights the diverse roles the San have within the said bodies or the lack thereof and the repercussions of such. The study will contribute to the academic knowledge in this field without necessarily pretending to give holistic answers but rather meaningful interpretation of events happening in and around the San People of Botswana. As a Botswana student I am aware of the biases and prejudices I may have towards the study, the findings, and the end results.

## **1.8 Scope and Organisation of the Study**

This work is divided into 5 chapters. Each chapter will discuss a different aspect building up to a more understanding of the San People of Botswana and the issues at hand. The chapters have different themes for easy analysis and understanding of issues raised. Chapter one provides an introduction of the thesis. This chapter is divided into two sections; the first one introduces the topic, highlights problem statements, hypothesis, objectives and relevance of the thesis. There is also a brief synopsis of indigenous people's rights and the state of being indigenous in Botswana and how the term is defined and or acknowledged.

The latter aspect of chapter one discusses these aspects in lieu of the United Nations (UN), with reference to the International Labor organization Convention No169, which specifically

addresses indigenous and tribal people in independent countries. The second section of this chapter discusses techniques of data collection, sampling and field experiences.

Chapter two discusses the Kuru Family Organisation (KFO) and the work they carry out for and with the San People. The highlight is with the first two projects which are a point of focus as the research was done within these. Chapter three focuses on the theoretical framework and attempts to link the theory to the field work. Chapter four focuses on the analytical presentation and findings. Chapter five summarises the thesis and gives a brief conclusion. This chapter will also provide recommendations and observations for future policy and planning of development for and with the San People with regard to the field work and the insights from thereof.

## **Section 2**

### **Methodology**

## 2.1 Introduction

This section comprise of two parts. Part one will focus primarily on the country profile with specific highlights on geography, demography and economic aspects. The last part will focus on methodology and data collection.

## 2.2 Country Profile

### 2.2.1 Geography

Republic of Botswana is located in the Southern region of Africa with approximately 600,370 kilometres and a population of about 1,842,323 (as of 2008). The republic of Botswana, then Bechuanaland, was a British protectorate from 1885-1965 and became independent in 1966 from Britain. Botswana boasts of vast and abundant wildlife with some of the best natural resources such as diamonds. However Botswana is a semi arid country with up to 70% of the land being covered by the Kalahari Desert. Botswana is completely landlocked, neighboring, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia, making the country reliant on its neighbors for trade and routes for exports. There are two cities in Botswana, Gaborone and Francistown, with Gaborone being the commercial capital.



Figure 1

Source: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bc.html>

### 2.2.2 Demographics

The population in Botswana consists of mainly Tswana speaking tribes with different dialects as a majority. There are however other tribes like Kalanga, Herero, Hambukushu, Wayeyi, Bakgalagadi and Basarwa (the only indigenous group) commonly referred to as the San and Whites. The majority of the citizens live along the Southern coast along cities and villages with a large concentration in Gaborone. The official language is Setswana and English is mostly used for business purposes, however Kalanga is also widely spoken in the northern region and the San have retained their languages. Botswana is divided into 9 districts and 5 town councils for administrative and service delivery purpose.

### **2.2.3 Economy**

Being a semi-arid land Botswana does not have a thriving farming community. The economy is rather based on mining natural resources like diamond which accounts for 'more than one-third of GDP and for 70-80% of export earnings. Tourism, financial services, cattle raising are other key sectors (CIA 2008). Botswana is rated as one of the countries with a high rate of HIV/AIDS infection in the world but it is often credited to the way the country and its administration have responded to the infectious disease. HIV/AIDS is undoubtedly causing a great threat to the economy especially on the manpower sector as it affects the majority of the working group with estimates of up to 45 years of life expectancy (Ibid 2008).

Economically, Botswana is one of the fastest growing economies in the world and this is often attributed to sound fiscal discipline and management. Although politically stable since independence, there is a growing disgruntlement for the lack of strong opposition party and hence having being ruled by the same party since the inception of the republic. Furthermore both the economic and political stability of the country is getting weakened by the high influx of migrants from Zimbabwe, fleeing the latter country in search of better life opportunities.

### **2.2.4 Study Area**

The research was undertaken at Ghantsi District in Botswana and the surrounding settlement called D'Kar. Ghantsi is the main town in the district and hosts the main office for the Kuru Group and some of the projects they offer. This part of the country was chosen as it is predominately occupied by indigenous people and it is much easier to find and conduct interviews from here. D'Kar is a small settlement in the outskirts of Ghantsi and also host a number of project aimed at improving the lives of indigenous people who reside there.

### **2.2.5 Ghantsi**

The population of Ghantsi (inclusive of surrounding areas) is 33, 170 as of 2001 and it covers 117 910 sq. kilometres (CIA 2008). Ghantsi district lies in the western part of Botswana, bordering Namibia in the west and extending east into much of the interior of the country. The administrative part of this district is also called Ghantsi. Most of the eastern half of Ghantsi makes up the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR). The name Ghantsi is said to come from the [‘Naro language](#) word "Gaentsii", meaning "swollen buttocks" referring the good health of antelope and, later, cattle which congregated around a pan in the area’ (Wikipedia 2008). Ghantsi is mostly a pastoral farming area and supplies much of the exported beef from Botswana. The Naro language is widely spoken in Ghantsi by the San as well as Afrikaans in addition to other languages spoken throughout the country.

Much like other settlements and towns of Botswana Ghantsi had the first Dutch settler in 1870, Henrik Van Zyl, who was a farmer. With vast migration throughout Southern Africa, more Dutch farmers began settling in Ghantsi and surrounding areas in the late 1890s. Currently the population of Ghantsi include much of the San people as well as white farmers and Bakgalagadi predominantly.

### **2.2.6 D’Kar**

D’Kar is a small settlement about 37 kilometres north of Ghantsi. The establishment of this settlement can be traced back as far as 1957 when government started surveying of farms, drilling of water and fencing of all farms. This settlement is resident to 1,500 San people. Historically it is said that the first missionary to D’Kar is Reverend Andries Ramp and his wife from South Africa who administered the farm until another missionary Dirk Jerling arrived in 1967 and managed the farm between 1970 and 1982. The settlement is said to be owned by the Dutch reformed church of which the missionaries are affiliated to. Prior to this ownership the land is said to have belonged to the Aranos Reformed Church of Namibia, who owned the farm specifically to reach and assist the San community and later succeeded the land to the current owner. However the claim of ownership is still highly questioned by some residents who want clarification on the matter as this settlement is highly undeveloped with no prospects for jobs except for the ones created by the KFO projects (Kayawe 2008).

In 1978 the Dutch Reformed Church donated some of the land around school and clinic within the settlement to the Botswana government to continue such services for the San people residing in D'Kar. With seemingly no prospects for work for the residents of this community the first Kuru projects started in 1983 funded by the Dekar Foundation of South Africa who also funded services like water.

### **2.2.7 Interpreting Data**

This section discusses the research methods used to collect data and reasons chosen for methodology. Qualitative method of study was used for data collection and analysis. The above choice has been influenced by the view that qualitative research in sum, “determines the cause of international human behaviors, such as whether or not those behaviors were induced by a program being evaluated, must involve a search for the operative reasons behind the behaviors at issue”, hence its suitability for the intended research and data collection (Mohr 1999: 75).

Field work was carried as a style of investigation to gather data. Fieldwork is a process where data is collected over a period of time in a natural setting or a setting that reflects a naturally occurring order of meaning. Fieldwork in this research was used to collect both primary data and secondary data. Primary data was collected first hand in natural setting, ie. At D'Kar and secondary data was done through various articles and written materials on the subject. The research was carried out using semi-structured interviews as one of the primary source of data collection as well as direct observation, oral histories and informal discussions.

Interviews were chosen for data collection as this gave me an opportunity to gain insights into people's opinions, their feelings about the subject matter and also their emotions as well as the experiences they have. Structured and semi structured interviews were conducted for research. Semi structured interviews provided open discussion and helped get out more from the interviewees, as I already had an idea of the type of information I was looking for, but at the same time open to more information that may come up during the interviews.

Having chosen to study an NGO like the Kuru Family of organization, and the San people living within the reach of this organization, it was rather important to use this method to determine whether the response and impact is influenced and or induced by incentives that

people are getting and if so what has been the effect of such. By using this method I therefore seek to be more exploratory and seek to articulate the views of the people I will be studying.

Secondary sources of data employed during the research involved reviewing articles, books and journals from the University of Botswana Special Collection Library, the National Library, Botswana Parliament Library as well as the materials I had looked into as a basis for my research from the University of Tromsø. By varying the techniques throughout the research I managed to feed into the doctrine of qualitative methodology, as this study concerns itself with the aspects of life that gives quality to the everyday existence. For example backgrounds of subject matters and other broader perceptions.

Qualitative research bases its findings on actual events and empirical experiences hence this methodology “seeks to describe actions within a specific setting and invites rather than tries to control the possibility of a rich array of variables” (Holliday 2002: 2). By going and observing projects Implemented by the KFO and the everyday life world of the San peoples, I got a chance to do a direct observation and get firsthand knowledge of the effects of these projects. The application of these varying methods helped shift focus on the interplay that exists between different contexts of the interviewees’ home and work and the general lifestyle and what they think their life would be if not for these projects and their input (Wolfgramm Fox 1997: 441).

### **2.2.8 Direct Observation**

Conducting research in Botswana is generally not easy especially with issues which are deemed sensitive by both the state and the said. I chose to do direct observation so as to have an unhindered view into the lives of the San people and try to relate what I had gathered in the amount of materials collected and what has been published before. This gave me enough space and time to take in the environment, the people, and just the everyday life style of the people and how they relate to events about and around them. With the knowledge that the research and data collection was based on qualitative methodology, it was imperative to take in all the aspects of the researched subjects. As McBride and Schostak (2008: 6) points out when doing qualitative research there is engagement of both the researcher and the researched subject hence qualitative research does not avoid the complexity of social life. Instead great

efforts are made to illuminate and understand social situations and human feelings through immersion and detailed in depth exploration.

Qualitative research acquires this stake through asking and observing about the researched subject. Thus theory tends to be built from the ground of experience and practice. I spent most of the mornings alternating between Ghantsi and D'Kar settlement visiting most of the projects run by the KFO and generally taking interest in what people were doing and familiarizing myself with people and the places there were at. As I was conducting qualitative research the context in which practice takes place has an important bearing upon that practice and research should be rooted accordingly.

It was important for me to be flexible and develop good listening skills as I came to realize that people were more relaxed and open about their real feelings when they are comfortable or speaking in jest. I noticed that the use of local language in this case Naro, which is widely spoken, would have been of great advantage but the use of Setswana was most welcome as most people can speak both languages although with a dialect. Although most people I sat and had chats with knew that I was doing research and was collecting data they did not want to talk much about the subjects of discussion but rather their everyday life. By showing interest in what they did most people were very receptive, helpful and found my limited knowledge and curiosity quite humorous.

### **2.2.9 Arriving in Ghantsi District**

The fieldwork was carried out in Ghantsi District specifically at D'Kar and the town of Ghantsi. Before embarking on the trip to this district I had familiarized myself with the routes to be taken as I had never been to the district before and also made reservations for accommodation. I did not know anyone residing there who I could stay with for the period of data collection. I decided to bring my younger sister along who is an undergraduate at the University of Botswana, as an assistant and also for companionship since I was camping out in the bush and felt that it would be safer to have someone else with.

The first night was spent in the town of Ghantsi as we arrived quite late in the evening and could not proceed to any other place at that time. Although this was not planned, it was not troublesome for I had already put aside funds for emergencies and an extra day in case it was

needed. The trip to Ghantsi is long and not completely safe especially being a young woman and driving for long distance. One has to account to the fact that there are no gas stations in-between for some hundreds of kilometers and neither is it a busy road, hence a lot of preparation was done in case I needed to change a wheel or had an emergency breakdown and had to wait for hours before the next vehicle passed by.

My family helped me prepare for such emergencies by finding out from friends and relatives who might be travelling the Kalahari road within the days I was to set out. Fortunately there were two other people known to family that were also travelling during the same time as I had planned, so it was safer to drive knowing that there is someone who can assist in case of emergency. Although I did not leave at the same time with the other travelers we left hours apart.

After spending the first night in Ghantsi I proceeded to D' Qare Qare game farm where I had made reservations for camping and where the research was to commence. This place is a few kilometers from town and the off road is a typical desert road with lots of sand and trenches. I had chosen to drive myself to the research region as this would give me unlimited freedom to move about and around the areas of interest. Also public transport is not highly reliable within Ghantsi as a lot of people rely on hitchhiking.

I arrived at D'Qare Qare farm where I was to reside and stated my purpose the first day so as to not spring any unwanted surprises on the residents and the workers I might interview later. I then presented a letter from the ministry authorising me to carry out research<sup>2</sup>. I had made copies of the letter in case I had to leave one which was precisely the case. Although I had to state how long my stay will be for accommodation I had decided before hand to do observations first so my stay was regarded as indefinite. This was received well by the Farm managers and they helped me choose a good camping spot<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 1 for copy of authorisation letter.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix 2 for camp setting

We were viewed with a lot of curiosity when I asked why, the answer was that not a lot of 'Batswana' come to camp out here, and let alone two young women. This was regarded with a lot of humor and doubt as to how long we will last in the bush but we were welcome to ask for any assistance. I set camp with the help of my assistant and next was to find firewood for the night. After all preparations for my stay were set and settled I decided to walk around and familiarise myself with the surroundings. I was aware that the farm has some wild animals which are allowed to roam free although none deemed dangerous except snakes and carried anti venom pills with me all the time.

I spent the next three days and nights in the company of the farm workers who are San people and took trips to D'Kar settlement where I introduced myself to the coordinator and was offered the use of the small library they had and any other assistance which I may require. A lot of time was spent walking around the settlement and greeting people and asking for water. I had learnt from a young age that in Botswana asking for water is usually a breakthrough the conversation. Asking for water from someone in Botswana usually means that you are the same as you both drink from the same source and especially that you are not regarding their water as less worthy of you.

Although I am not a San person, I knew that humility always gets one somewhere and it is universal. Most of the families I met when doing observations were curious when I was going to start research and ask them questions. My reply was often to say soon. Some regarded me as not serious where others asked me why I had come to lounge around D'Kar and not ask them questions. From this conversation a lot of people started telling me about their lives and what they did for a living and this helped me formulate some of the questions to be used for interview later. Although I had questions in mind getting to know people and their surroundings helped me have a clear focus and expelled any pre conceived thoughts I may have had.

Most of the people I met were convinced that I could speak Naro and that I was of San descent. It took a lot of convincing to say that I could not speak the language but would love to. I was not at all surprised by the immediate assumption they made about my ethnicity, as I possess what anthropologists would call requisite features of San people. The texture of my hair, skin colour and high cheekbones which are often used to characterize the San people and I guess the easy going mannerism.

### **3.1 Interviews**

Both structured and non-structured interviews were conducted. Since some data was collected in an unstructured manner and required a more intensive interaction with the people involved. Precision was not an issue rather that the interviewees are comfortable, feel safe and have consented and not been coerced to talk. This approach was influenced by the sentiments that there are multiple constructed realities embedded in different layers of 'truth', hence the principled development of research strategy is to suit the scenario being studied as it is revealed (Holliday 2002: 6).

By using unstructured interviews and choosing interviewees randomly, I was able to bring forth the views and enhance participation of the members of the community. The inclusion of both direct and indirect observations helped capture more relational data. During my visits and casual chats with some people it came to my attention that a lot of the people had been interviewed before, so after talking to several of them it was easier to pick out the fact that the answers were almost the same even though it was coming in different wording and context. What gave this away was the fact that I constantly was being told the same issue of poverty feelings of abandonment, lack of resources and other developments. Any attempt to deviate from the above issues was met with imprecise answers.

I then decided that although I would have guide lines as to what I was going to ask I would conduct the interview in a random manner and unstructured way such that I am able to get out more from the people that I was interviewing. Oral history was central to the interviews especially for people who could not read and write and some just did not like the formality of sitting and being asked questions as they then clum up. I found that it was easier to let people talk about themselves ask them about their life and ease into the data I was looking for.

This enriched the data I collected as it placed it in time, location and events that were happening in the individual and most often the community at all points of change which some were deemed positive whereas others negative and some uncertain. I did not have a lot of assumptions about the San people and their livelihood or any pre conceived judgments. It may be because I am no stranger to their world and livelihood so much as to create or imagine scenes about what I was to see and observe; but I did have a lot of ideas about the KFO and

their mandate and was waiting with a lot of anticipation and eagerness to witness the positives that were taking place in the life of the San people.

### **3.1.1 Sampling Procedure; Approach, and Population**

I used a convenience sampling procedure as it proved to be more compatible with qualitative method more especially with the semi structured interviews and the way the interviews were conducted. This method is sometimes called grab or opportunity sampling as it is used arbitrarily and in an unstructured manner from the frame. The interviews were conducted in an informal manner as most started with oral history culminating into the random research questions. Initially I did not have a set number of people I wanted to interview. I spoke to twenty five people randomly but later narrowed down my research data to twelve. The interviewees were mostly females as there is a lot of them who are working with the projects.

The few males who were interviewed also worked with KFO projects and some who were not employed or have chosen not to participate in the projects but reside at D'Kar and were familiar with the projects. Most of the females interviewed were helpful although they were most concerned that they wanted their children to study hard and not work in the projects like them. The same sentiments were often said by the male interviewees. The informants were representative across board for they ranged from age twenty to 58 from both genders.

### **3.1.2 Research Fatigue**

The San people of Botswana are some of the most researched communities in Southern Africa. The interest on the San is mostly on their indigenous status as well as the unique culture they are known for. The San people are traditionally hospitable people and very welcoming to people of other tribes, be it foreign or non San locals. Their lives in today Botswana, raises a lot of curiosity, a sense of exotism which is highly attractive to both researchers and tourist. Being aware of this trend, the San's nature of hospitality has enabled them to benefit from the growing trend by researchers and tourist seeking to see and experience "Bushman" in the wild.

However after spending time with them and within their community, it became quite clear that although the San were hospitable and friendly, they often expressed feelings of resentment towards what they viewed as 'constant interrupting of their lives and privacy' by

‘people who come here to ask us a lot of stupid questions’. ‘Stupid questions,’ in this regard was said with a lot of humor, and laughter. The San people were of opinion that ‘these people, you tell them this, and they believe you, sometimes they want you to agree with what they say about our lifestyle, so we just agree as long as they leave us alone and sometimes they give us money’.

The San showed tremendous signs of research fatigue in their dislike of being constantly under observation but also those of agency for they were able to play the part they were required as there was monetary benefits. The San people and also some non San Batswana expressed their ‘tiredness,’ of being ‘probed,’ and poked about and having researchers ‘interfering with their lives and privacy,’ and rarely seeing much difference in their everyday livelihood. Although they did credit the KFO for the initiatives they have taken, some felt that they are somehow not able to reach their potential or there is no progression in their life but at least they were there and doing something and quick to point out that should other opportunities arise they would be very much welcome.

It is from some of the everyday life and letting people talk freely without constraints that I began to formulate better research questions and look at the life of the San people and the developments and or lack thereof around them in a more holistic approach. Trust is very important and not easily coming from most people in this area. Without trust and respect for the San one is likely to get the data they ‘want or from first impressions only’.

### **3.2.1 Fieldwork Experiences**

#### **3.2.2 Getting a research permit**

Getting a research permit to do data collection was somewhat problematic. The argument from the government point of view is that researchers often do not consult them or make little attempt to do so; hence researchers leave the country with one set of view from the San people. Often the government of Botswana feels that their role in development of the San is often looked at in a biased manner as they are often regarded or referred to as too developmentalist, has the potential to disrupt the San culture through resettlements and other development oriented initiatives which are deemed ruinous to the San’s cultural lifestyle.

Whether or not these claims from the government are true depends on whose perspective one is writing from. From the observations I made the same fears, which the government has of misrepresentation could be the downfall with regards to permit issuance as it could be viewed as gate keeping. ‘The government of Botswana claims that it is for the purposes of providing better essential services to these people and bringing them into the modern state of living in Botswana, as well as protecting wild game levels and the environment from destruction by livestock’(Reed 2008: 8). As much as the government is entitled to protect its stance and policies with regards to its citizens, gate keeping renders its position suspicious as this has the potential to compromise the data collected under when a researcher feels under duress.

The other difficulty arises from the fact that there has been a lot of media coverage over the San dispute with the government with some foreign help and support from NGO’s like Survival international. The role of NGO’s although relevant, that the San get a better deal with the government, is often looked at as a hindrance between the government and the San people. It is the ‘interfering’ manner of the NGO’s that the government is not all too pleased with. Having said this then, most researchers find it difficult to do research, as their intentions should be stated and progress monitored to ensure that there is not much negativity said and or implied. For a researcher to get a permit to collect data one has to be registered with the University of Botswana as an affiliate student, then the university will carry out the application for the said researcher.

This is often time consuming as the researcher has to wait for the ministry of local government to issue a permit to do research. Once the permit has been issued the researcher is made aware that they have to send copies of materials collected, and their thesis to the said ministry, the university archives and other relevant stakeholders which are deemed of importance. Although this is often argued as to keep data on local research, it has the potential to compromise the quality of research as one cannot be critical of the state, NGO’s for fear of future reprimands to do research.

Although I was not dealing or seeking to collect data about the contentious issue of land and or resettlement of the San people I was greeted with the same suspicion and told outright that getting a research permit to collect data on the San could prove to be problematic, hence maybe another topic would get me a permit much faster. The same anxiety and reluctance was observed with the KFO. Getting some people with authority to do interviews was often met

with excuses of 'no time or busy', but was gladly offered to have some interviewees arranged for me.

Although this was a great gesture having done observations and staying around the community I noticed that the interviewees would be the employees or some people I had met around the projects and wondered on what criteria were they chosen, hence declining the offer. My gratitude was met with a polite, 'ok but you must be careful of the people you talk to people here are never satisfied, they will always want more'. The idea of having some people who were experienced with research and data collection was most unwelcome as I had noticed from having small talks with people that it was like they had a manuscript of questions and answers and they were all the same. Even though the offer may have been well intended it was of not much use in that context.

### **3.2.3 Confidentiality and Consent**

Conducting interviews was hard both in Gaborone where I had hoped to get more people to interview and in Ghantsi. The one thing that is clear is that people were suspicious of my intentions and were constantly asking if I was from the government. It dawned on me that the case of the San people and the Government of Botswana with regards to land was still a sore point of contention from both sides especially that the negotiations are still ongoing and both parties are not so eager to discuss issues relating to the San. There are heightened suspicions from both sides and fear of misrepresentation. On the government side it is often that they feel misrepresented and misquoted and or their intentions taken out of context and hence putting them in a bad light and creating a general bad picture when it comes to issues of the San and developments thereof.

The San on the other hand feels that they are being spied upon and any information they may give might land them in trouble. It makes it difficult for research work to be done especially when one is from outside the country. This is not to put blame on any of the parties but rather to highlight how at times misrepresentation of issues of any nature of research and or lack of presentation can be a hindrance to future research. As for the use of tape recorders most interviewees were strongly against that for reasons mentioned above.

### **3.2.4 Time Constraints**

A lot of the time was used to collect literature and read more on the local materials written on the San. As I had to wait for long to get the research permit the decision was made that should I not get the permit then a literature review would be done instead of practical field work. The permit was issued half way through the last month. Although I did not have much time left preparations were always on standby and on the go. The decision to go and stay in Ghantsi and D'Kar for observation was helpful as it was easier to conduct interviews after familiarizing myself with the place. The use of local language proved to be of great advantage as I could converse with people and they were much more open to use any language besides English in their places of work.

### **3.2.5 Education and Language Barrier**

I found that most of the interviewees could read and write a bit as they have had some form of primary education. When quizzed about the state of literacy among themselves the interviewees pointed out that it was difficult for them to learn how to speak write and Setswana and English which are the official languages in Botswana as they would prefer to be taught in Naro, which is their mother tongue. Although they could speak Setswana it was not their preferred language of communication, however they pointed out that most of the youth are given some opportunity to learn more from government schools. However they pointed out that despite being provided with most of the essentials to make their lives easy while studying, there is still a high drop out of teenagers from high school.

The reason for such was not known to the respondent but just that teenagers go to high school and more often than not after the first school holiday away from their homes they do not want to go back to school and often do not site their reasons for doing so. I found that most of the interviewees could speak Setswana language although with a dialect but it was easier to conduct interviews in Setswana than it would have been in English. The interviewees responded more positively and with a bit of confidence in front of other stuff that does not understand Setswana and were much more open about how they felt.

### **3.2.6 Summary**

This chapter is divided into two sections with the first outlining the topic and introducing the research agenda. The second part of the chapter gave an overview of Botswana and narrows down to the study area in D'Kar. This assist in familiarising oneself with the geographical and demographic of the country. The section further focuses on methodological framework used for the research with varying techniques and the importance of this variation is discussed. The methodology also indicated that various methods of collection were adopted, varying from primary and secondary level.

Various tools and techniques adopted in the collection of various types of data were not left out in the discussion. There are a lot of issues concerning the San people of Botswana with regards to self determination and the relationship with the state. Although not all the problems will be discussed in the thesis it is imperative to note that these issues are overlapping and it is difficulty in some instances to talk about one and leave the other. For the purposes of discussion the thesis highlights some of the issues without delving too much into them as they are not the point of discussion but nonetheless noteworthy.

## **Chapter Two**

### **BACKGROUND ON KURU FAMILY ORGANISATION AND GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter will give a brief account of indigenous people's rights with regards to Botswana Government. It will give an outline of the state of the San people prior to independence and now, to create context for the formation of NGO's like the Kuru Family of Organisation (KFO) when considering the gap that had been created by earlier policies and its long term effects on the status of the San. The projects which form the KFO will be briefly discussed also.

The rights of indigenous people have taken centre stage in the past couple of years. Having decided upon the adoption of certain proposals with regards to the partial revision of the Indigenous and Tribal Populations Convention, 1957 (No. 107), what came forth is mainly the need for recognition and self determination by indigenous people throughout the world. With the backing of the United Nations there has been a call to recognize that indigenous peoples are the holders of unique languages, knowledge systems and beliefs and possess invaluable knowledge of practices for the sustainable management of natural resources. Hence indigenous people must be protected them from actions of governments and third party organisations which may have detrimental effect on them as bearers of culture.

Although some countries have difficulties accepting the conventional definition of indigenous people, especially in developing countries, according to the UN, 'the most fruitful approach is to identify, rather than define indigenous peoples. This is based on the fundamental criterion of self-identification as underlined in a number of human rights documents' (IWGA 2008). Indigenous people have a special relation to and use of their traditional land. Their ancestral land has a fundamental importance for their collective physical and cultural survival as peoples. Indigenous peoples hold their own diverse concepts of development, based on their traditional values, visions, needs and priorities (Ibid 2008).

#### **4.1.1 Who are the San people of Botswana Then and Now**

The San people are considered the first inhabitants of Southern Africa and their population spreads throughout four countries today. The San people are now found in parts Botswana, South Africa, Namibia and Angola. However the thesis will be specifically discussing the San people of Botswana. The San peoples of Botswana may be recognized as “indigenous peoples” because they are said to be descendants of the original populations residing in the area now known as Botswana. The traditional Basarwa or San peoples were nomadic hunter and gatherers, who travelled in small family bands. They followed the water, game and edible plants, everything they needed for daily subsistence was carried with them. The concept of private ownership of land did not exist in their culture, as it is understood in present day Botswana (Ditshwanelo 2006: 6). However many scholars argued that the Basarwa’s territoriality is intimately associated with their social organization. The band , consisting of a cluster perhaps 3 or 4, extended families, possesses land and all its natural resource, such as game, veld food, firewood and water. The band identifies itself within a certain piece of land, well defined and limited in extend. Traditionally Basarwa are said to move within the area they consider their land typically up to about 50km. Basarwa affirm that they are not normadic as portrayed in the literature (Bolaane 2004: 404).

The San people comprise of different groups with different languages and specific tribal names. “The best suggestion so far is probably the Naro/Central Khoesan word N/oakwe (meaning the red people, in contrast to the Bantu-speaking people, the black people), which is a term introduced by the emerging indigenous organization The First People of the Kalahari” (Saugestad 1998: 5)<sup>4</sup>. Although the San people are often depicted in anthropological term as hunter gatherers and bearers of tradition which is thousands of years old, Motzafi–Haller (1995: 539), advocates that there has been a considerable shift in how the San people are today and surmises this by stating that , ”the Kalahari San, who became symbols of hunter-gatherers in general, can no longer be viewed as ‘living fossils’ who existed in a world of

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<sup>4</sup> The San people have different Groups and are not made of a homogenous group. These are the /Gui, G//ana, Nharo and Ju/'hoasi. These groups are found in different parts of Botswana.

pristine isolation until very recently; they must instead be understood in the context of their wider regional and international economies, politics, and history.”

Bearing the above utterances in mind it follows then to acknowledge that the San people have over the years been in contact with both the Bantu people and the White colonialists and this contact has had a considerable change in their culture and way of life. This clearly support the lack of existence of the Bushmen groups who are hunter-gatherers but rather that there might be a few left who gathers wild food to supplement their diet but not as a way of life. By rendering the San people the status of hunter-gatherers by be it Tswana people and or Europeans this has in turn objectified the San and placed the as the 'other ', who is often of low status and class.

In today Botswana, the San people do a mix of paid work. Agriculture and keeping of livestock is a common practice. This practice is not only found among the San as it is done throughout the country. Most San people live today in settled communities a lot of which comprise of other non San people. Most of these communities were formed by government ministries. The San people have been moved out of places which are now national parks, trek routes and mining areas (e.g Orapa) in Botswana by the Ministry of Local Government, Lands and housing (Hitchcock 2002: 798). “Some of them receive commodities and cash through various government livelihood support and labour-based rural development programmes” (Ibid 2002: 798)

#### **4.1.2 Botswana Government Development Initiatives and Policies on the San People Post Independence**

At the attainment of independence in 1966 the Government of Botswana invested heavily on the economic with the hope of reinvesting proceeds into social development. Mining revenues were earmarked to be reinvested back into social infrastructure and hence diversify the economy through further investments in human capital. Sound as the intentions were these developments often did not reach rural people especially the San people who resided in the outskirts of both towns and closest villages.

Marginalisation of the San people is often attributed to the inequitable spread of these developments as they were often concentrated in the South Eastern part of Botswana. This

research does not seek to insinuate that the policies of the Botswana Government were intentionally seeking to marginalize the San; rather the failure is attributed to implementation of these policies and often the lack of consultation on the San people hence missing out on what the San people view as priorities and other organizational factors not taken into account.

It is imperative that I state that what contributed to the San people's poverty today is policies which were made post independence which did not take into account the migratory and hierarchical structure of the San people. The remnant of this stance is evident today as there does not seem to be an end in sight for the poor livelihood which characterizes the San people's life. The main reasons for these untold persistent miseries could be attributed to policies which are not guided by local concerns, since there has been a blanket approach to solve poverty.

The Tribal Land Act of 1968 saw the start of marginalisation of the San with regards to land ownership. This act desiccated land in categories of agricultural settlements national parks, mining and saw the continuation of villagisation of tribes. The creations of the above 'were supposedly made on empty land'. This did not take into account the San's people's land use at that particular time and how they saw land holding. The disregard for this or the lack of acknowledgement for the San and their existence in these particular lands saw them being cut off these pieces of land as they were not accorded foraging rights and or ownership. "Basarwa are true nomads and have no right to land except hunting... (Wily 1979).

The Tribal Land Grazing Policy of 1975 saw further marginalisation and dispossession of land from the San people. The policy was seen as a major shift from communal land to leasehold which in turn will ensure proper management and livestock development. To achieve these plans huge pieces of land was taken over by the state and those within tribes for livestock upkeep. The San being in groups which are not homogenous were further excluded from the land they resided in. although this policy was later discarded, the effects of it were not reviewed and neither was land given back to the first owners in this case being the San.

The Remote Area Development Programme (RADP) of 1978 was initiated to help the San people with provisions of social services such as health, water and education and enhance the livelihood of Remote Area Dwellers. This programme was initiated in on the eve of the 1970's and it still exists or remnants of it does. The programme had and still have many

failures and most of them have been attributed to basic lack of consultation with the concerned people to know what they want and need and how they prioritise these.

The San people live in a state of perpetual marginalisation which can be attributed to a number of socio-economic problems and policies which were not compatible to address them.

A prevailing assumption has been that San communities lacked formal leaders. This was based on the fact that they did not have organized political institutions and did not recognize a paramount chief but that did not mean they did not have means and ways of communication and or organisation. The political marginalisation of the San can be seen as a result of a number of factors: their high level of illiteracy, their lack of information and insight in national politics, their weak socio-economic situation which makes it easy for non-San politicians to buy their votes with food and other cheap commodities that San candidates cannot afford, and the lack of a strong, cohesive San movement.

## **4.2 Indigenous Rights and the Kuru Family Organisation (KFO)**

### **4.2.1 Introduction**

#### **4.2.1 Kuru Family Organisation (KFO)**

The Kuru Family Organisation is an NGO representing indigenous peoples rights and administers some projects to fill the gap created by development policies which are often more advanced for the San. The San people of Botswana are characterized by poverty and little education especially ones residing in rural districts and far from towns. The lack of education has in turn incapacitated the San people in the sense that they are often left out of development and where they are included often they cannot meet the demands of up keeping some development adventures and maintain their simple lifestyle. It is this clash that makes the San more vulnerable to contemporary demand of a globalised society.

The Kuru Family of Organisation is an affiliated group of eight NGOs working in both Botswana and South Africa that has the common goal of empowering the most vulnerable group of indigenous peoples in Southern Africa, namely the San, to take control over their own destinies through a holistic process approach to development Kuru (2008). This group represents a portion of San people who do not want to be bound by the constitutions of primordial culture but want to adopt some modern way of life and still preserve some of their

culture. Hence the KFO tries to strike a balance between development and maintenance of culture.

By encompassing several groups into one, to make the Family, the Kuru group has a far more reaching impact as it covers a wide and multiple issues at the same time. The Kuru has introduced a concept of eco tourism which is taken up by the San communities to empower themselves. Although the thesis will discuss projects from the Kuru Group, the main focus will be on the D'Qare Qare game farm and the Arts and Craft at D'Kar settlement. The above members have not been chosen because there is any specific and or special reason for doing so but merely because research was undertaken there.

It is imperative that I state that, by having chosen to study the works being done by the Kuru Group as an interest group, the overall intention is to find and or acknowledge multiple ways in which indigenous people in this case being the San, relate and work with the projects and what these mean to them. I further intend to show the relationship between the KFO and the San communities where these projects are undertaken. Hence interaction and collaboration with members of the communities was imperative to achieving this. With years of close residence and interaction it is important to acknowledge that there has been significant cultural change and adaptations between the San people and the non-San locals through marriage, trade and finding social security within each other.

Although the KFO works with the San group and other tribes in the Okavango area, it is important to acknowledge the significant cultural changes throughout the years and relations created between the San and the non San people of Botswana to avoid a future situation of minority versus the rest.

#### **4.2.2 Projects run by the Kuru Family of Organisation**

There are several projects run by the KFO within 'minority' groups in Botswana including the San people. Although most of these projects are situated in Ghantsi and D'Kar some go as far as the Western part of Botswana reaching up to the Okavango areas. Inclusive of the KFO there are about 10 projects which will be discussed in brief below.

**4.2.3 Ghantsi Craft:** This is an income generating project for San people residing in Ghantsi and D'Kar and the Kalahari through the creation of jewellery, ornaments and paintings. The jewellery and ornaments are made from Ostrich eggs and animal skins in a traditional

craftsmanship of the San People. At Ghantsi Craft these jewellery and ornaments are made by some skilled elderly women and some youths who are keen to learn from the jewellery makers. The crafts are then sold to individuals and tourists alike and the proceeds go to helping the women who make them. The paintings are done at D'Kar by both men and women. The Kuru has created an arts and craft centre where painting is done and the painting are later sold and some proceeds go to helping the artist and maintaining their craftsmanship.<sup>5</sup>



**Figure 2. Ornaments**

Photo: Tshepang Lebotse

**4.2.4 D'Qare Qare Game Farm:** This farm was purchased in 1994 as a contribution to the preservation of the San people's culture and way of life. It is owned by residents of D'Kar settlement who are mainly of San descent. The farm is said to be the only game farm owned by the San people. Within the farm there are several activities that are income generating. These activities are based on the San cultural way of life. This is one of the places where tourists come and learn about the activities of the San and have first hand oral history passed down from generations as well as see what is left of the dancing skills. The farm is also used as a camping site and has standard rooms which are let out for those preferring to stay indoors and yet interested in outdoor activities. The proceeds from these activities are used to

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<sup>5</sup> Refer to Appendix 3 for more pictures of arts and craft

maintain the farm and pay the workers. The various activities include bush walking which is lead by a San guide, dancing by the fire and oral traditional stories told by the fire and healing dance.<sup>6</sup>



**Figure 3. Healing dance**

Photo: Tshepang Lebotse

**4.2.5 D’Kar Trust:** This trust identifies projects that the San people are interested in and puts them into action. It is both income generating and culture preserving. This trust runs the leather and tannery, fabric painting and screen printing which are later sold out to tourist and other craft shops. D’Kar Trust is responsible for providing water and other services to the D’Kar population of at least 1500 people and their animals (Kuru 2008).

The D’Kar trust was founded in 1991 and is also working towards the mandate of the Kuru Group which aims to preserve and promote the San culture as well as empowering them through eco tourism and other needs. The D’Kar trust and cultural centre consists of museum, library and other cultural activities which are manned and managed by the San people with

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<sup>6</sup> Refer to Appendix 4 for more pictures of activities at the Game Farm.

the help of others. I intend to explore and find out from individuals involved in these activities and the founding members how these projects have come about and the extent to which the San people are involved as well as how individuals' lives have been impacted by these projects. I find it imperative to interview members who are involved to try and find out the balance between what these project bring as an alternative and how they have worked towards achieving a sustainable lifestyle in view of the changing times and global cultural invasion.



**Figure 4. D'Kar Cultural Centre**

Photo: Tshepang Lebotse

**4.2.6 Bokamoso Trust:** This preschool is located at D'Kar settlement. The difference with this preschool is that it focuses on early childhood learning using the mother tongue i.e. Naro language as a medium of instruction. It has been argued that the San children do not fare well in their studies as they are taught in Setswana which is not their mother tongue hence the difficulty in following curriculum. The preschool tries to bridge that gap and prepare children before they go onto primary school.



**Figure 5. Bokamoso Pre-School**

Photo: Tshepang Lebotse

**4.2.7 Komku Trust:** This trust was formed in 1999 and it is a part of KFO. “Komku” is a Naro word meaning listen to each other (Kuru 2008). The activity of this group stretches throughout the Ghantsi district covering small settlements which have the San people as the predominant population. The aim is to create a dialogue with the San people on issues of development, health and empowerment. Other major objectives of the Komku Trust are to create empowered and independent communities who know their rights, options and potential and strive hard to achieve them. The trust also offers advice where needed as well as technical assistance, particularly in Natural resource conservation through an organization known as the Community Based Natural Resource Management whose aim is to see to it that the community conserves and sustains the use of natural resources. Other objective includes the support of the livelihood choices of the people who resides in the Ghantsi District and hence creating a conducive environment that supports and diversify livelihood options. It also aims at creating a social environment that takes pride in and respects the San culture as it is, as well as increase the financial sustainability of the San.

**4.2.8 Letloa Trust:** As the KFO acknowledges that development touches the whole being and cannot be compartmentalized, Letloa sees its role as informing the process of development and how change affects the whole person, from a cultural perspective (Kuru 2008). Letloa Trust achieves their set mandate through giving technical assistance to all other affiliated members of the KFO. They further aim to provide assistance to any other group that works with minorities and the San people

**4.2.9 Trust for Okavango Cultural and Development Initiatives (TOCaDI):** this projects aims to provide Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) where residents of specific areas are involved in taking care and decision making with regards to the management of natural resources for the benefit of the communities they live in. The project aims to empower communities in the ever changing world with management skills of the natural resources within their communities. In view of the global environmental crisis TOCaDI assists people with re-interaction of man and wild animals in a conservative way that is not harmful to the environment. The livelihood of people residing in rural or conservation areas is further improved by helping them source food security in terms of drought and non-hunting seasons.

**4.3 Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa (WIMSA):** WIMSA is part of the KFO and aims to promote the San people both locally and internationally through a vast network of activities regarding issues of land loss, human rights related issues and education.

**4.3.1 South African San Institution (SASI):** This organisation works closely with WIMSA. The aim is to promote and preserve the San culture throughout the Southern African region. SASI was established in 1996 and it deals with human rights issues affecting the San. Although not strictly a human rights group SASI is also dealing with developmental issues affecting the San people.

## **5.1 Contemporary challenges of the San People of Botswana**

### **5.1.1 The San people's Land or Claim thereof**

Of late the San people are famed for their landmark case against Botswana government with regards to land right and the disputed Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR). This will be

looked at in brief hence it is not the point of contention and or discussion. ‘This case, while not explicitly, is the Botswana government challenging some of its fellow citizens,’ “distinct and irrefutable First Nation status” which “undermines the political authority of a government and nation state made up of more recent arrivals” (Nengwekhulu 1998: 48), is a very important phenomenon with the status of indigenous people both around the world and especially in African states. There is no argument to contend that the San people of Botswana are the First people, the point of contention is the right to land and the claim of settlement thereof based on indigeneity.

The issue of securing land for the San is important for the development initiatives to be carried out for the San people as a whole. The government of Botswana has resettled the San outside the boundaries of the 581,731 kilometre squares of the CKGR. This move by the government has attracted a lot of attention from both the Human Rights groups and the Conservationist and other interest groups. The government of Botswana claims that it is for the purposes of providing better essential services to the San people and bringing them into the modern state of living in Botswana, as well as protecting wild game levels and the environment from destruction by livestock. Others, such as the international NGO Survival International challenged this move as a destruction of the San people culture and the attempt by the government to eradicate them:

*“On January 2002, the government of Botswana ceased the provision of basic and essential services to all Basarwa and Bakgalagadi remaining in the CKGR. This decision critically altered the previously stated intention of the government, which had consistently proclaimed that they would not force people to relocate. Immediately after the government cancelled the services, officials dismantled existing service infrastructures, such as water tanks, and dumped the community’s water reserves into the ground” (Reed 2008: 7.)*

Although many see this as a cruel attack on indigenous people of Botswana, the issue here is the way the San people are portrayed and how their fights are carried out. The primordialist, romantic notion of the ‘red people’ who are laughing and very friendly and intrigued by a coca cola bottle as depicted in the movie ‘the Gods must be crazy’ is more damaging to the San people as it portrays them as timeless and unchanged foragers tied to their land. The reality of the situation is that while the San people may have a deeper connection through time to the land, they cannot be seen as a static culture. A more realistic image of the San is one that

shows them living “in conditions of marginalization and poverty on the periphery of the global capitalist and state systems” (Sylvain 2002: 1074). But what happened is that the San are said to be able to gather food for themselves, to live with animals and development and services that the government was providing is detrimental to such lifestyle.

Development oriented notions are seen as perilous to the San culture. If so then the government did not feel obliged to provide them with anything as they are portrayed not to need any and can source whatever they need from nature. It is seen as cruel and evil intended but in a highly publicized situations such as this, where indigenous groups in conflict with states and corporate systems, their identities often become essentialized. Essentialized and timeless, primordial identities create world sympathies and play on the timeless image of a helpless people in danger of being enveloped by the modern world, a technique that has been used by Survival International and backfired badly on the San people. In Botswana, the ‘Basarwa’ have not been explicitly *denied* their past, it is just that they have not been active participants in its interpretation until (Hitchcock 2001: 61-71)

Despite all of the problematic issues, a reality exists whereby groups have and will continue to attempt to appropriate and manipulate the past as finer distinctions in the postcolonial context. It is the duty of us as researchers to be able to describe and address current power asymmetries among various ethnic communities, in order to sharpen the contrast between ‘indigenous’ Africans and the other Africans, indigenous peoples’ forums stress cultural distinctness and link it directly to prior occupancy and the down fall of this line of thinking has been shown by the case of the San (First Peoples of the Kalahari) that better arguments are needed and better approaches to contemporary issues such as these is indeed of great importance.

### **5.1.2 Summary**

This chapter has contributed to the discussions by discussing the identity of the San people of Botswana and their contemporary way of life. The discussion is rooted in the development policies which have been initiated by the Botswana government on the San people and how these have created a potential gap in achieving realistic developmental initiatives on the San people. By outlining some of the projects carried out by the KFO the discussion has shown how this group has attempted to fill in the gaps created by government initiatives which failed to address the state of the San people as proven by the perpetual poverty which seems to

characterise them. Although the point of focus is mainly on the first two projects it was necessary to show other projects as they also have a significant contribution to the livelihood of the San people of Botswana. A brief discussion of the contemporary status of the San people concludes this chapter.

## **Chapter Three**

### **6.1 Theoretical Framework**

#### **6.1.1 Introduction**

This chapter will be discussing the livelihood of the San people at D'Kar settlement and their situated life. The discussion will be focused on the projects that the Kuru Family of Organization is providing and how these are interpreted by the recipients. The major source of livelihood in this settlement is working in the San arts and craft, the D'Qare Qare game farm and the government drought relief programmes. The discussion will be an attempt to bring forth the relationships that has been cultivated through these projects by the San people and how they view the impact of the projects. The theoretical framework that underlies the discussion is that of agency and victimhood with regards to development.

Development theory is vast and varied and so is social change but for the purposes of developing a conceptual discussion with relevance to the topic, the focus is on the practical theory of actor, agency and structure which feeds into concepts of development initiatives and implementation of the said. The chapter will give conceptual explanations of actor, agency and structural oriented theory. The discussions will be carried forth by citing aspects of Kuru Projects and the relation to these theories by applying it to the San people.

It is imperative to state that this thesis will try to avert some common knowledge that the San people are hunter gatherers. The decision to take this stance is mainly because there has been considerable change in the lives of the San people of Botswana, and to situate them in this knowledge will be a fallacy. While this knowledge may work in some instances (Brosius 1997; Pulido 1996: 55), in this case is of view that this perspective is more damaging to the San people in its portrayal of them as timeless and unchanged foragers tied to their land.

The San people have had rather a dynamic, participant culture before and after the arrival of Bantu-speaking farmers to Botswana at least 2000 years ago. "Today, for example, Sarwa labour is an important part of cattle post life, and wild foods are often exchanged for milk and grain. In addition, Basarwa share their waterholes with Herero and Tswana herdsmen. These herders, in turn, have learned about wild plants and their uses from the Basarwa" (Reed 2008: 10).

The reality of the situation is that while the San people may have a deeper connection through time to their land, they cannot be seen as having a static culture. The San have been and still are important active participants in economic activities, as evidenced through ethno history and archaeology, in the past and to this day by, for example, working as laborers on farms and cattle posts. A more realistic image of the San people is one that shows them living “in conditions of marginalization and poverty on the periphery of the global capitalist and state systems” (Sylvain 2002: 1074).

The aim of the discussion here is not to advocate an approach to the past via archaeology that takes modern ‘ethnic’ identities and maps them onto archaeological sites and materials. What I am interested in is engaging a dialogue through time and space that brings to the fore the importance of development projects of the Kuru and the role the San play within these as they represent the latter in the here and now. The theoretical approach which will be adopted re-asserts the importance of the agency of individuals in the face of structural constraints. The actor oriented theory is thus illustrative of such as shall be discussed in the next pages.

### **6.1.2 Practice Theory**

### **6.1.3 Actor, Agency and Structure**

*‘Actor oriented concepts aim to find room for a multiplicity of rationalities, desires, capacities and practices, including of course those also associated with various modes of instrumentalism. The relative importance of these various ideas, sentiments and ways of acting, for shaping social arrangements and for bringing about change, can only be assessed contextually and will depend up on a host of interconnected social, cultural, technical and resource components’* (Long 2001).

The actor oriented approach is a value laden theory with multiple approaches to issues of development and social structure. This theory therefore seeks to explain development outcomes in different terms in which there are processes of some understanding between individuals and collectives.

Long (2001: 20) opines that the actor oriented approach begins with the simple idea that different social forms develop under the same or similar structural circumstances. Such differences reflect variations in the ways in which actors attempt to come to grips, cognitively, emotionally and organizationally, with the situations they face. This theory is

thus oriented within time, space and events that shape the responses of the affected parties. This theory is grounded in a social constructionist view of change and continuity. Long's (2001: 15) version of a constructionist perspective focuses upon making and remaking of society through the ongoing self transforming actions and perceptions of a diverse and interlocked world of actor.

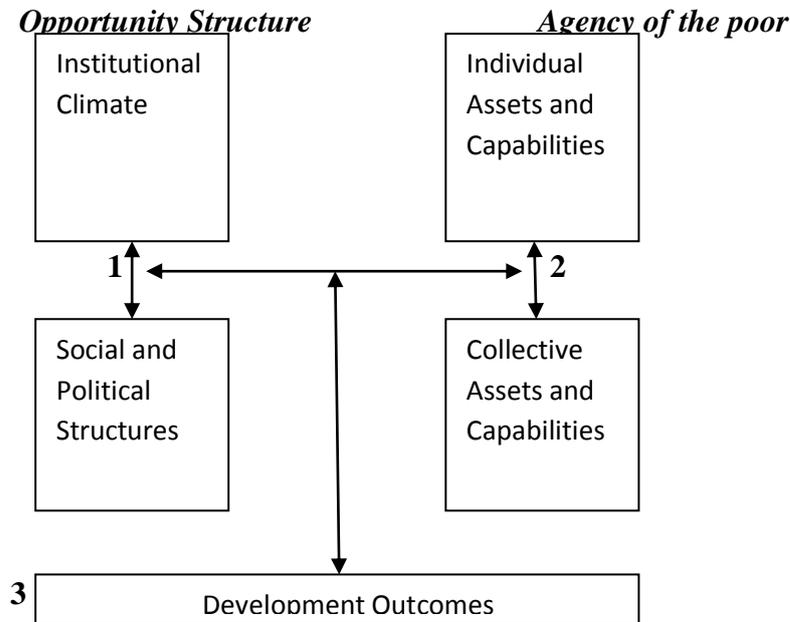
The actor theory advocates that actors exercise some kind of power, leverage or room for maneuver, even those in highly subordinate positions. Although the actor may be dependent on some resources, "whereby those who are subordinate can influence the activities of their superiors and in these ways they actively engage (though not always at the level of discursive consciousness) in the construction of their own social worlds and experiential lives even though the circumstances they encounter are not simply of their own making' (Long 2001: 17). This understanding is derived from the fact that even under coercion the actor has skills and knowledge that they can use as leverage even minutely so. And in turn renders the actor an opportunity even slightly, that they are not wholly passive for they have room for leverage, as much as they are dependent on resources their capability and knowledge is still important.

It is this rare knowledge that gives actors room to maneuver and some sort of leverage. Narayan(2005) explained this knowledge based empowerment to mean the expansion of freedom of choice and action to shape one's life, that is, the control over resources and decision. Although Narayan(2005) explains the empowerment framework by using poor people for illustration the same will be used as it shares same qualities and trends that indigenous people and in this case the San people go through. Be that as it may indigenous peoples (San) empowerment is mostly always curtailed by factors such as local culture, space, identity and policies which position them in a subordinate position in relation to other tribes.

Subordination is often embedded in a culture of institutional relations hence institutional definition of "empowerment" is the expansion of assets and capabilities of the San people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives. The above discussions shows that the San people in this case are usually found in subordinate positions within the societies they live in. Narayan (2005) concluded that this definition places more emphasis on institutions and interaction between indigenous people (San) and the more powerful actors. There is therefore the need to adopt a theoretical framework as shown below which clearly outlines the key factors that facilitate or constrain

San people's efforts to improve their own well being and thus leads to development on their own terms.

**Figure1: An overview of the theoretical framework**



**Figure 6.**

**Source:** Narayan (2005:5)

The first block represents the opportunity structure that the San people face, while the second block depicts the capacity for agency of the San. Thirdly is the development block which comes as a result of the combination of the first 2 blocks Narayan (2005: 6) explained the opportunity structure to mean the institutional or social rules and norms within which poor people pursue their interest. These institutional rules and norms could be local culture, and in this instance even identity which position people different levels. Therefore the removal of both formal and informal institutional barriers which hinders poor people from taking actions in order to improve their well beings is necessary.

Social and political structures, which perpetuate unequal power relations also needs to be changed (Ibid. 2005: 6). Ellis (2000) cited in Narayan (2005: 6) alludes that institutions are the formal rules, conventions and informal codes of behavior, which constraints on human interactions. Agency on the other hand, Narayan (2005:7) said is the capacity of actors (San)

to take purposeful action, which is a function of both individual and collective assets and capabilities. Agency is defined by the capacity of actors to take purposeful action, a function of both individual and collective assets and capabilities.

Therefore the empowerment of the San is a product of the interaction between the agency of the latter and the opportunity structure in which this agency is exercised. Empowerment is fundamentally a relational concept, coming into view out of the interaction between the San and the environment. This takes place through the rules, resources, norms and process governing the interaction between the San and in this case the NGO's who have become more powerful actors (Ibid 2005:7). The empowerment of the San therefore calls for changes in institutional and organizational processes which seek to position them differently from other non indigenous people.

Long (2001: 19) reiterates that the theory of indigenous agency underlines the importance of examining how notions of personhood and thus of agency (knowledgeability/ capability) are differently constituted culturally and affect the management of interpersonal relations and the kinds of control that actors can pursue vis a vis each other. In the field of development, this means analyzing how differential conceptions of power, influence, knowledge and efficacy may shape the responses and strategies of different actors.

The San people's assets and capabilities are usually conceptualized as individual attributes, and that the collective capabilities and organizations are often necessary in helping them break through constraints of powerlessness. Embedded in a culture of inequality, the San people need a range of assets and capabilities (representation and recognition of their identity) to negotiate and influence NGO's in order to increase their own well-being. Assets in this case, refers to material assets both physical (knowledge and skills) and financial.

They are the basic building blocks upon which individuals are able to undertake production, engage in labour market, and participate in reciprocal exchanges with other individuals. These may be described as stocks of capital that are able to generate the means of survival of the individual when used either directly or indirectly. Examples are land, livestock and housing which enable people to withstand shocks and expand their horizon of choices.

Capabilities on the other hand are inherent characteristics which enable an individual to use his/her assets differently to increase their well being. These capabilities could either be human (good health, education) social (social belonging, leadership, relations of trust), psychological

(self esteem, ability to imagine and aspire, hope) or political (necessity to represent oneself /others, access information form associations, recognition of one's identity). However, these capabilities are influenced by some structural limitations which are known as ecological limitations and status governed by rights and duties or some institutionalized patterns.

Empowerment of poor, excluded, or subordinate groups is a product of the interaction between the agency of these individuals and groups and the opportunity structure in which this agency is potentially exercised (Narayan 2005: 6). Barth (1966: 32) further reiterates the above statements, that people in the course of interactions make choices governed by interest. Barth (1966: 32) calls these interactions, transactions. Transactions are interpersonal relationship governed systematically by reciprocity and are never random. Thus, in the course of transactions, actors make choices in such a way that the value gained is equivalent or greater than the value lost.

Gronhaug (1978) reiterates the above with how the actor is entering into different social fields and the society at large by looking at the macro-micro levels of the field of social organization. According to Gronhaug (1978), actors do not move from the micro to the macro level within a structured society. Within the same structure, one can find patterns of both macro and micro levels. In the same way, the same actors belong to both the macro-level of social institutions and the micro-level of interaction. Thus, from the micro level, they are linked to the macro level. Social structures consist of values, dynamics and cultural codes which are distinctive, hence it is not predefined. The said structure can be identified in terms of their quantitative attributes -of space, numbers and time.

## Chapter four

### Data Presentation and Analysis

#### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the field data and related interpretations within the actor-oriented framework of the study. This study involves highlighting cases of agency and victimhood among the present San informants and their underlying reasons. With this approach in mind, I look at some KFO developmental projects.

This chapter is structured as such: section 1 looks at the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, while section 2 is on data sets addressing the research questions.

#### Section 1

##### 7.1.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics

The socio-demographic data sets will be limited to gender, age and educational background. The informants were of San descent residing at D'Kar settlement and working in the KFO projects. Most of the respondents have been working in these projects for a couple of years.

##### 7.1.2 Gender Distribution

Table 1 shows gender distribution of the respondents.

**Table 1: Gender Distribution of Respondents**

Gender Group	Absolute Figure	Percentage
Female	8	67
Male	4	33
Total	12	100

Source: Fieldwork 2008

Table 1 shows that there were 8 (67%) female respondents and 4 (33%) male respondents. There were more female respondents than. That is there are more women working in the KFO projects than males raising gendered issues in KFO activities.

The artistry of doing craft work is mostly done by women. Although some men are also involved in KFO projects, their expertise is mostly restricted to animal trekking and hunting. Craft work is somewhat an extension of domestic chores as more women and young girls are involved. The respondents indicated that craft work is a repetitious delicate work, requiring attention to detail and concentration, hence necessitating nimble fingers especially styling ostrich egg shells and making ornaments. The art of marking craft therefore calls for little modern knowledge and are highly labour intensive.

Elson and Pearson (1981: 93) comments that the intensity of work done by women and the choice in the gender is influenced not only by the fact that they have nimble fingers, but also because of the tendency of “women to be naturally docile and willing to accept tough work discipline, and naturally less inclined to join trade unions, than men and to be naturally more suited to tedious, repetitious monotonous work.”

The San dance as depicted in figure 1 below is mostly done by men as this is where they show their prowess in hunting skills and animal trekking. The women sit, sing and clap while the men mimic what they do when hunting. The dance is usually like story telling of the history and livelihood forms of the San people; folklore turned into songs and imagery of a hunter’s life as well as healing. This is not a depiction of the contemporary life of the San people as their lifestyle have changed over time, but perhaps a reinvention of the past in their present lifestyle.



**Figure 7**

Healing dance 2008

### 7.1.3 Age Distribution

Table 2 shows 3 and 1 respondents, within the age groups of 20-29 and 30-39 respectively. Also 7 and 1 respondents falls under the ages of 40-49 and 60 and above respectively. The total number of respondents is 12, with more interviews conducted with women than men. There was no respondent between the ages of 50 and 59 as the respondents fell into other age categories.

**Table 2: Age Distribution of Respondents**

Age Group	Women		Men		Total
	Absolute	Percentage	Absolute	Percentage	
20-29	2	17	1	8	3
30-39	0	0	1	8	1
40-49	6	50	1	8	7
50-59					
60 and above			1	8	1

Source: Fieldwork 2008

The age of the respondents showed a large gap between both men and women; on average women were older than men. The age of the respondents gives an idea of who is involved in

and benefitting from these projects and the extent of their involvement. The art of craft making is usually associated with older women as they possess more skill and experience. Elderly people especially women seem to be more involved in the KFO projects than youth. It is argued that, the limited time and erratic participation of younger women, that is, women with the burden of child bearing and house hold provisioning responsibilities, usually yields insufficient individual benefits to guarantee their project involvement

### ***Household Dependents***

The first indicator which struck me on arriving at D'Kar was the number of children in the settlement as opposed to the amount of women of child bearing age. Although it is not conclusive to give an account of this disparity, it became apparent when looking at the age of the people involved in these projects especially women. I asked one of the women respondents why there were not many younger women involved in the projects and also why the latter was not highly visible in the settlement.

The inquiry was answered by more than one respondent that their youth have fallen victim to the scourge of HIV/AIDS, hence some leaving a lot of children behind to be taken care of by the elderly parents. One respondent said the following about this situation;

*“Well they are mostly orphans we are grandparents and parents. Our children have been taken by the disease of people living in towns”* (‘Gamme’ 49 years, 15 July 2008).

*“The parents did not listen and went off to Ghantsi, next thing they come back with sick children and most of them die because they get that disease”* (‘Gamme’ 49 years, 15 July 2008).

‘Gamme’ lives with 5 of her grandchildren and only one surviving son. She had 2 daughters who have long passed and left behind their off springs behind. Although the children receive public welfare support in the form of food subsidies, clothing, medical health and exemption from paying school fees, ‘Gamme’ still has to do the daily care of mothering and nurturing her grandchildren. All this on top of taking care of herself. The respondent was saddened that she does not want to die and leave the children as orphans without any guardian.

Another informant had this to say;

*“The other reason you don’t see young women here is that they are not interested in working for the projects as they want to get involved in other careers which the district has to offer where they work with other people who are non-San.*

*Our children are ashamed of being associated with these projects and they would rather go and suffer in Ghantsi looking for jobs. Being a Mosarwa is a shameful thing for them and it is highlighted by working here” (‘Kenosi’ 47 years, 15 July 2008)*

The older respondents have hence found these projects a safe haven and source of living due to easy entry and no capital requirement. Also formal education is not a requirement in securing a job in these projects so their age and lack of formal education is not a barrier for them to make a living.

The ability to bring their children to work is also important for these women as they are adamant that there is no one to care for these children when they are working, so combining nurturing and fostering their children proved to be quite ideal for them. Since the women are older and know a lot of their history, folklore and are also skilled in art and craft making. This gives them plenty of opportunity to recite the local narratives to tourists and teach them about different artifact, their symbolic meaning and their ritual use and hence they make money from this knowledge.

## **Section 2**

### **7.1.4 Art and Craft**

The San people of D’Kar can be regarded as actors as they are always looking for a way to cope with the ever changing situations around them. These situations include are immense poverty and unemployment. However by virtue of being who they are (indigenous), they posses incredible knowledge of the wild, skills for making artifacts, and game tracking which are truly exotic and highly sort after by tourists and some locals. The interest generated by the San’s indigenous culture is based on the fact that they are regarded as the first people to be found in Southern Africa and still possesses some unchanged elements of their culture even after generations of migration and living in close quotas with other tribes.

As a result many of them use these rare skills and ancient knowledge to substantiate their livelihood and help themselves meet everyday needs. The initiative of income generating projects from the Kuru Family of Organisation, like the arts and craft studio and the D'Qare Qare game farm, which are income generating in nature and are being serviced by skills from the San people, and has hence given the San an opportunity to participate actively in determining their needs and meeting them. The San people make artifacts from natural products such as producing baskets from grass, animal carvings from wood and decorative ornaments from leather and animal skins. They use ostrich egg shells to make décor for houses and jewellery for everyday and ceremonial wear. Figure 8 below is a picture of some of the finished products made by the women for the KFO to be sold to tourists and locals.



**Figure**

**8**

**Ghantsi Craft 2008**

Since the San people influence the content and form of these projects, following Long (2001: 13), this phenomenon necessarily fit into the existing life worlds of the individuals and social groups affected. In this way they are mediated and transformed by these same actors and structures. Also, to the extent that large scale and remote forces do alter the life chances and behavior of individuals, they can only do so through shaping directly or indirectly, the everyday life experiences and perceptions of the individuals and groups concerned. The fact

that these projects are set within the communities of the San people they are therefore controlled by the San in the sense that if they do not work at these projects and impart their knowledge they are likely to be in recession. There is somewhat a symbiotic relationship between the San people and the KFO: while the KFO rely on the San for production of artifacts for sale, the San people rely on the KFO for marketing these products and for jobs to create them. Hence making this a mutually beneficial relationship.

Robins (2001: 850) opines that, the perceived uniqueness of the Kalahari San and their land claim has attracted enormous media, donor and NGO interest. Popular images of primordial bushmen not only fuel media and scholarly interest, but also shape government, NGO, and donor perceptions and development strategies and priorities. For instance San development projects are known to receive generous funding from international donor organizations for whom the Kalahari bushmen represent the last of the surviving Late Stone Age hunter-gatherer.

The KFO projects are highly dependent on local skills and knowledge as much as the locals are dependent on the marketing skills and organisational skills of the KFO. This highlights the symbiotic relationship between the organisation and the San people. Although always portrayed as foragers and hunters, the involvement of the San people within and in these projects shows that they are active in their own economic wellbeing through the use of their skills and local knowledge.

The portrayal of the San as foragers and hunter gatherers has in a way blinded critical observation which is pertinent to the field of development, “where we also need to get behind the myths, models and policy and institutions, as well as the reifications of local culture and knowledge, to uncover the particulars of people’s ‘life worlds’. That is, we need to document the ways in which people steer or muddle their ways through difficult scenarios, turning bad into less bad circumstances,” in this case poverty, unemployment and other social ills (Long 2001: 14).

### ***Playing the ‘fool’***

*‘You know these white people who come here every time to ask us ridiculous questions they think we don’t know they make money. (Laughter). We know and it is ok, some of them are very good and nice to us so we help them with what they want to know some are not here to*

*learn but to confirm what they think they know and they put words in your mouth, you say no they will find a way to ask you until you say yes.*

*How can you confirm something you have no knowledge of? ('Tsame' 33 years old).*

*Another informant lamented thus;*

*The more you confirm what they want to know the more they are nice to you, me I sometimes just add a little bit here and there and they are happy ('Tiego' 44 years old)*

*You have no clue about the kind of people we get to talk to year after year, you see you are a Motswana and obviously you know a little bit about Basarwa. Even then you are still asking me questions, but the way you ask me question, shows that you are interested in knowing and you listen to me and give me respect. I can feel that you respect me and I will give you the knowledge I can, what I don't know I will tell you who to ask or simply tell you that I do not know.*

*Tell me are you sure you are a Mokgoni, hee! (look at this girl admonishing to other women folk who were now looking at me keenly), the hair ears and even your color hee! I know our youth change and deny they are our children when they get to towns... ('Tiego' 44 years old).*



**Figure 9**  
**2008**

**Taking a break and trying to make a necklace**

The true nature of the San origins has been used for many years as “these people who are unchanging”. The results of these have seen the San people’s reluctance to seize opportunities offered to many as these were regarded as detrimental for their future and their culture. What has been cast for the San people from this thinking is that, theirs is not a changing culture and hence it has become commercialized and marketed as ever stagnant.

*Give me that thing you put on your mouth the one that makes it shiny, I will put it on when I am not here because if I put it on the bosses look at me funny.*

*The thing is the more ragged and haggard we look the more it pleases them as then tourists donate a lot and they also give us some money. But I will put it on, I saw one girl from Gaborone with that ... ('Gaone' 20 years old).*

Through the years what both researchers and NGO’s have not highlighted is the generational change of the San people and the Environmental change which has a lot to do with determining the outcome of their lifestyle. Throughout the changing years there has been change and intermarriages and the desire to possess the culture aspect without being bond to it. The premise of the projects is indigeneity this has landed a hand in some people being dependent on that.

**7.1.5 Living with Indigeneity**

The San people want to be equated to every other citizen and reap the benefit of such, but by working and being within NGO’s project which are specifically indigenous in nature this has rendered them difficulties in assuming their own position within the society they live in. This difficulty has however not been a deterrent in advancing for poverty upliftment as the San people have not only assumed the state of being actors but are capable (even within severely restricted social and personal space ) of processing (self- conscious or otherwise) their lived experiences and acting upon them.

Having gotten the gist that their indigenous status is not only useful to them but also to the NGO’s whose manifesto is that for indigenous people, the San people of D’Kar have been

able to rip off from this myth. What comes to is the fact that the San people want development in their regions as any other citizen but because there has been throttling advocacy to preserve their culture the results has been that culture and its aspect of primordial stance has stood to benefit them even more.

*'I must tell you that I am a Mosarwa even tomorrow I will still wake up a Mosarwa whether I am in Ghantsi or D'Kar my status is the same. I like working for the KFO as they are giving us an opportunity to be and do what we love best but I don't want them to tell me not to get developed as that will interfere with my culture.'*

*I am the one who has realized the importance of that culture of mine, and I am now working to preserve it and will do so wherever I am in the world regardless of who I meet, marry or what I eat or wear' ('Tsame' 33 years old).*

The fact that researchers, scholars government official and or others have often depicted them as helpless individuals who tend to be stuck in the past has not only worked to fail policies aimed to alleviate the San from poverty. It has also worked to make the San people desire the state of being categorised as stagnant and not a part of the "world beyond their periphery". Often the understanding of their status as the San is taken for granted but, by being categorised in the light of primordial beings with little or no way forward, the San people have taken the stance to use this leverage to their advantage. The use of their skills and knowledge which is quite rare has rendered them an opportunity to use these for daily livelihood. It thus gives them leverage regardless of whether they recognise this or not.

As one of the respondents pointed out earlier in the discussion that there is already a presumption that they live in a certain way, the San have realized that they more sorry they look to the outsider who does not want to understand them or who patronises their way of living the more they can make a living out of that mindset. By constantly averting our mindset to the fact that "*I am a San*" then our preconceived idea of what constitute a San person is what gets played on to gain sympathy and money from tourists and in some cases researchers as the respondents pointed out.

The assumption that the San people are hunter-gatherers in today's Southern Africa often feeds into the concept of agency as they then tend to use this fallacy and keep this myth alive for their own benefit. This tendency has also been seen to victimise the San as they are then relegated to the status of 'non-changing' hence their identity as hunter gatherers becomes a

hindrance. Whether or not this tendency is beneficial in the long run remains to be seen and debated upon. Chief Rebecca Banika<sup>7</sup> specially elected chief representative in Pandamatenga summed up the above in the Botswana House of Chiefs by stating that she is aware that culture is dynamic and not static:

*”Fellow San, let us stop expressing our culture to others, dancing naked for free in the name of culture while others are exploiting us and our quality of life continue to deteriorate”*

Chief Rebecca was merely pointing out a fact that the San people are neither passive victims of the representations, political agendas and development discourses of powerful outsiders as they are consenting to the ideology for their own benefit and in some cases hide behind the custodians of unique culture:

*“bagaetsho a re tsweng mo go tsholeng re binela bangwe ka rona re sa tswala re re ke ngwao. Bagaetsho ga go ope yoo tsholegileng a sa apare letlalo mme ba tlogetse tsa kapari ya letlalo. Mme e bile go se sepe se re se bonang mo mminong o , se se ka tokafatsang matshelo a rona (Motshabi and Saugestad 2003: 29)<sup>8</sup>*

*‘When you are of San descent what can you really do. Whenever something happens when you are working with other non San people especially Bakgoni<sup>9</sup> they will constantly remind you that you are a Mosarwa and useless if not unproductive. You can never really escape your identity but we don’t want people to call us names so we work where our own are, and will not feel ridiculed’ (‘Kgopolo,’ 42 years).*

The San people of D’Kar are characterized by poverty and unemployment. Poverty has been known to manifest itself as material deprivation as evidenced by the lack of infrastructure, unstable living quarters and a general feeling of listlessness. For many scholars causes of

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<sup>7</sup> Chief Rebecca Banika is specially elected chief for people of Pandamatenga in the Northern part of Botswana. This area consists of different tribes being, the Sobeya, San, Kalanga who are regarded as minority Tribes in Botswana.

<sup>8</sup> My fellow people let us cease from dancing for other people, naked and claim that it is in the name of our culture. Fellow people there is no one who originated without wearing leather clothings, but they have all ceased to wear such garments. Especially when there is nothing that we benefit from our dance, that uplift our lives.

<sup>9</sup> Bakgoni. a name usually used to describe non San people. Commonly used in the Kgalagadi district.

poverty are attributed to unequal power distribution and eco- political relations. However true that may be in some cases, it cannot be said for all. The government of Botswana provides all its citizens with free education, health and social services regardless of tribal and or ethnic belonging. What the NGO's provide is supplementary and necessary in some aspect but one cannot conclude that without the latter's assistance people will die of hunger and starvation.

*'the government is trying to help us a lot but it is never enough. But it is better than nothing. Let me tell you the KFO they give us jobs to here but it is not the best jobs ever they are the same as Bakgoni , as sometimes they are rude to us and pay us little. I know it is because I am a Mosarwa and a poor woman with no education that is why I get the treatment I do from people, and I don't care I will always be a Mosarwa and happy with that.'* ('Batho, 28 years old).

The tension between decision making and the best interest of people involved is contentious. This ambiguity lies at the heart of NGO's dual mandate: to promote the cultural survival of indigenous peoples and to socialize them into becoming virtuous modern citizens within a global civil society. The San people have been an ideal topic of discussion for many years and many scholars feel that they are being discriminated against on the basis of their status as indigenous people. The reality of such utterances lies with the scholars making these conclusions and the basis for such.

The arts and craft center at D'Kar provides an opportunity for the most illiterate and vulnerable society. The San people's vulnerability cannot be wholly attributed to lack of chance and or opportunity. The San people have been working with researchers and NGO's for a long time. The fact that the Botswana government does not agree as to what constitutes an indigenous person but rather has an encompassing view of its citizens has had a downfall for the San People. With influence from researchers who are mostly from abroad and the also the fact that they possess a knowledge that can be harvested for either purposes, the San have become tools in both the research world and the NGO's in some instances with full knowledge of that and actively participating in the hunter gatherer myth for their own benefit.

#### **7.1.6 San people as Agents of Social Change**

Gardner et al. (1999: 59-60) refers to the notion of the human agency as the ability of people to actively engage in shaping their own worlds, rather than their actions being pre-determined by intervention from external bodies. This idea is fully taken up by development theorists as it points to a more constructive change, which can often be molded into policy making and change.

Hitchcock (1999: 61-71) validates this point of view by advocating that an agency relationship is conducive when a principal delegates some rights to members of a certain group, for example user rights over a resource, marketing of, skills and knowledge to an agent who is bound by a (formal or informal) contract to represent the principal's interests in return for payment of some kind. The argument is that capable agency, when directed by active local leaders, can help to direct local action, and make it more effective. This is particularly true where specialized knowledge is required to undertake action, as in the case of marketing and running projects for the San People and giving them a forum where they can air their concerns views with regards to development and or the lack thereof or in dealing with government offices, where knowledge of bureaucratic processes is needed.

Social change here would be referred to as a systematic shift in the norm of people, for example, "uneven developments, a change in the relative status and standing of ethnic group, of power transition, a change in the environment" (Miall 2007: 12). The San people are indeed agents of change within their own societies as evidenced by their choice in what they participate in and not. It could be said that they set milieus of patterns of change within their society as their participation in continuing to depict themselves as hunter-gatherer for their own benefit sets a pace as to what they need or not.

#### **7.1.7 D'Qare Qare Game Farm**



**Figure 10**                      **Traditional San hut (Mogwaafatshe) used as accommodation for tourist 2008**

This farm was purchased in 1994 as contributory to the preservation of the San people's culture and way of life. It is owned by residents of D'Kar settlement. The farm is said to be the only game farm owned by the San people. Within the farm there are several activities that are income generating activities. These activities are based on the San cultural way of life. D'Qare Qare is a place where tourists come and learn about the San way of life. This includes camping, bush walking, dancing by the fire and story-telling told by the fire as well as a small curio shop.

### ***Traditional Dance***

This farm is managed by non-San peoples and the labourers are of San descent. The ritual dance by the fire is said to bring out the trance dance and healing which the San are characterised with as part of their culture. The dance is mainly done by men, with women sitting, singing and clapping for them. Before having a chance to see the San people dance at

D'Qare Qare one of the elderly men leading the dance explained what the dance is all about. Though it is a ritual dance, it is a forum where men showcase their hunting skills. There are songs about certain animals like the Kudu and others and when the songs are sang the men mimick the behaviour of such animals and how they hunt them. The dance is carried out in the bush by a bonfire, creating a tantalizing scenery.



Figure 11  
2008

Fieldwork

The footsteps of the dance in some songs show the tracks of animals and how the hunter tracks the animal. These dances are done by elderly men who are hunters themselves and at times they are joined young boys who are learning the hunting skills. The dance commences into a trance dance which is spiritual and healing by nature.



**Figure**

**12**

**Fieldwork 2008**

A male dancer had the following to say:

*” The dancers do not go into trance as and when they please, but when tourists come everyday during high season it is culturally and even spiritually impossible to heal everyday but they can imitate what happens when on those rare occasion they do go into trance”*  
(Richard 60 years, 17 July 2008).

When further asked as whether this involves public deceit, he noted that:

*”It is what they want to see, they come here to see that and we give them what they want and we get paid, so who is complaining, but i am not saying you should go and say that lol, the white people will not come anymore they are quite sensitive, some understand that we don't go into trance all the time and we only show them what it looks like in the events we do.”*  
(Richard 60 years, 17 July 2008).

Richter (1999: 119) opines that this type of staged authenticity boils down the fact that the San people have a control on what is presented as they have vested economic interest. This presentation brings forth the question of whether this cultures presented accurately portray current life of the San or do they contribute to museumisation, the freezing of heritage and the

selling of the frozen product. She further asserts that, “there is no question that heritage tourism today in many societies is much more willing to confront the shameful legacies of the past and the inability of government policies to live up to the ideals immortalized in more traditional heritage sites. What is more problematic is whether the messages are primarily motivated by greed, milking the macabre for as minorities become more powerful and affluent, they become not only subjects but consumers of heritage tourism” (ibid 1999:119).

### *Clapping*

During the San dance women are more engaged in clapping of hands. They have little participation in dancing as they are the singers. However there are some songs that women can dance with men. When witnessing the dance the women came with their children to share in the experience of the dance.



**Figure 13**  
**dance ritual**

**Women participating in a**

### **7.1.8 San People as Victims of Development and Social Change**

*“NGOs have been identified by advocates of neoliberalism as effective institutions for transferring training and skills that assist individuals and communities to compete in markets, to provide welfare services to those who are marginalized by the market, contribute to democratization and the growth of robust civil policies. It would appear from all this interest in NGOs that they are indeed the new panacea for the promotion of third world democracy, civil society and development.”* Robins (2001)

The San people have not always been forthcoming with their contemporary lifestyle as it negates the picturesque notion of hunter-gatherer. Although they are mostly adamant as I came to notice throughout data collection that they want some elements of development and be acknowledged for their place in modern society, it was clearly evident from the activities that they pursue that they want both worlds. As great as that may be it is difficult for them to attain the two as , “given the strong interest of international donors in the cultural survival of vanishing cultures and languages, it could be argued that it still makes strategic sense for San communities, and SASI, to stress the importance of their hunter-gatherer lifestyle , indigenous knowledge and San continuity.

The deployment of these strategies to gain donor funding may also contribute towards reconstituting kinship and other activities that contribute towards the remaking of San conceptions of human existence. However endorsing primordialist notion of the San as hunter-gatherer has also contributed towards the devaluation and marginalization of alternative livelihood strategies and social practices, which do not conform to this stereotypical bushman image” (Robins 2001: 849).

The San people have become victims of their own identity as the first peoples and custodians of a unique culture. When working with NGO’s they have to assert their identity as it is practically the only requirement they need to gain employment in these projects. Kent (1992: 45-70) opines that it is not enough to assert one’s identity, as it must always be reinforced by others. Identity formation always involves power, the power of one group to establish its way of life as normative. Thus indigenous people are faced with the challenge of constructing an identity that balances positive group identification against the onslaught of negative categorization by others.

***Development for us too!***

The issue of the San people of Botswana is important in the contemporary view both from political, archaeological and economic times that we reside in. 'Past practices of categorizing archaeological assemblages as 'forager', 'herder' or 'farmer' has shown us that these terms often mean very little as people are known to drift in and out of these macro categories and often would not even see themselves as belonging to any of them, instead self identifying elsewhere, reminding us that tradition shapes our identity, but does not bind us to it' (Reed 2008: 13).

In this respect a male informant explained that:

*" I am a San person, but I am also more than that, I want to be recognised as an equal citizen who has the potential to be more than the identity I was born with. I work for the Kuru Projects and I am happy with the opportunity these projects give me and the importance of our culture but at the same time I want us to have more here in D'Kar. We want more development here roads, a kgotla<sup>10</sup> and electricity. When we state our positions with the Kuru people they always remind us of our culture and the importance of it.('Peter' 22years old, 15 July 2008).*

The Kuru Family Organisation, a Non Governmental Organisation (NGO), has long been advocating for the preservation of the San culture and providing development projects in the San communities in face of their changing environment, political and economic circumstances.

This group will be discussed in light of the holistic development oriented approach with the projects conducted both in D'Kar and the town of Ghantsi. "Kuru group's overall objective is to stop dependency and develop sustainable self help projects which will have the capacity to define, direct and implement the community's own development" (Saugestad 1998: 298).

*" I am aware of my culture and love my culture and there is nothing that will change the fact that I am a Mosarwa. I will always be a Mosarwa and it is my duty to make sure that my culture lives on but that does not mean I don't want to live like everyone in Botswana"* (Peter' 22 years old, 15 July 2008).

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<sup>10</sup> Kgotla is a place where local people meet to discuss development of their own community and general problems they face. This place is where anyone can air their view without fear of persecution or discrimination.

In attempting to relate the above statements and the disgruntled feelings by the respondent I became increasingly interested in the roles of NGO's in local political processes, in mediating representations of the San, and in brokering global discourses on civil society, cultural survival and indigenous people's rights. First Peoples status may have made sense in the land claim and in acquiring donor and aid for the San people but sentiments like the above seeks to locate these developments within the context of the changing roles and influences of donor and NGO'S and how these affect the San in the long term and limit them. Robins (2001: 850) is of view that," such an approach could render the San increasingly dependent on powerful donors and create obstacles for san communities seeking to develop independent and effective local community and leadership structures, as given the limited financial resources available, NGO's are becoming more dependent on the whims and fancies of international donors, state aid agencies and corporate patrons."

The San peoples have been further victimised by their status even by other non San group. Some view them as wanting special treatment based on their First Peoples status and therefore not willing to work as hard as the rest of the nation. This has in turn further caused resentment between the San and other tribes. Instead of encouraging strategic ties with their neighbours, a donor focus on San exceptionalism and First People status has ended up isolating and alienating this claimant community from potential human resources and political allies in the neighbouring communal areas and rural towns. What comes to mind is an incident that happened when i was filling gas at a gas station in Ghantsi and one of the attendants was angry with a customer and she berated the man by saying that:

*"I am not surprised, you know when you are a bushman, you will always be a bushman you will never change".(Unknown, 16 July 2008).*

These utterances were said with regards to the man complaint. Although i did not know what the argument was all about the above statement shows that there is some form of lowly class and status as well as resentment of anyone who is San as they are often classified the same.

In other word ethnic separatist strategy that was perceived to be strategic during the San land claim process, and which was supported by NGO's and donors, could contribute towards erecting an artificial barrier between communities even though many of the San claimants come from these neighboring areas and have close kinship ties with people living there. This

goes to show that donor focus on indigenous San has created problematic socio-spatial and political divisions.

Indeed SASI is now finding itself in a situation where it is unable entirely to dismiss international donor desires for authentic First People , and yet unable to ignore the ambiguities, contradictions and messy social realities they meet in their everyday encounter in the Kalahari.“While these claims have resulted in significant gains for this marginalized community, a stress on primordial notions of San tradition and First People status has also had unintended consequences in terms of generating conflict between the San peoples and the communities they live in as well as running against the grain of the donor and NGO civilizing mission and its civic culture of liberal individualism (Robins 2001: 853).

### **7.19 Summary**

This chapter discusses and interprets data gathered during field work in relation to the actor oriented theory. The discussion started with socio-demographic characteristics which discusses aspects of gender and age in relations to the respondents and the impact and or influence of both respectively, in the outcome of data collection. The discussion goes further into interpreting data by citing some activities which are embarked upon by the San people involved with the KFO projects. The participation in the KFO projects is used to highlight the symbiotic relationship between the San and the KFO projects and how this is played out.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Summary and Conclusions**

#### **8.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a general summary of the study, and draw conclusions within the general context of development interventions and perceptions of agency or victimhood among beneficiary communities.

The study has specifically focused on KFO projects and their implications of how the San people of D'Kar earn a living in contemporary livelihood. Although the focus is on the San people of D'Kar who have been participants in data collection, I find it fitting to state that the San people of Botswana in general are characterized by poverty.

There are a lot of issues concerning the San people of Botswana with regards to self determination and their relationship with the state. Although not all the problems will be discussed in the thesis it is imperative to note that these issues are overlapping and it is difficulty in some instances to talk about one and leave the other. For the purposes of discussion the thesis has highlighted some of the issues without delving too much into them as they are not the point of discussion but nonetheless noteworthy.

The thesis has contributed to these various discussions about the identity of the San people of Botswana and their contemporary way of life. The discussion is rooted in the development policies which have been initiated by the Botswana government on the San people and how these have created a potential gap in achieving realistic developmental initiatives on the San people. By outlining some of the projects carried out by the KFO the discussion has shown how this group has attempted to fill in the gaps created by government initiatives which failed to address the state of the San people as proven by the perpetual poverty which seems to characterise them. Although the point of focus is mainly on the first two projects i.e the arts

and craft and the D'Qare Qare Game Farm it was necessary to show other projects as they also have a significant contribution to the livelihood of the San people of Botswana.

The discussion interpreted data gathered during field work in relation to the actor oriented theory. The discussion started with socio-demographic characteristics which discusses aspects of gender and age in relations to the respondents and the impact and or influence of both respectively, in the outcome of data collection. The discussion goes further into interpreting data by citing some activities which are embarked upon by the San people involved with the KFO projects. The participation in the KFO projects is used to highlight the symbiotic relationship between the San and the KFO projects and how this is played out.

### **8.1.1 Summary of Principal Findings**

The findings have shown that the KFO has provided job opportunities and helped preserve aspects of indigenous culture through various projects. The San people who work in these projects have been able to assert their identity as they are able to do what they regard as their culture and are able to make money from it.

The diverse livelihood portfolios of indigenous people in the twenty-first century certainly include economic integration, opportunities for off-farm employment and migration to the cities by some members of the communities. However the KFO has provided San people who are still residing in areas of less development with opportunities for work through various projects.

The Constitution of Botswana regards all those who live in the country as Batswana thereby excluding the possibility of indigenous status. This approach has caused concern that the indigenous population, being the San people are therefore not recognized for their 'first peoples' status and therefore their culture is seemingly lost in the milieu of development and assimilative policies. NGO's like the KFO have therefore come up with projects which are culture preservative in nature.

It is worth mentioning that the KFO has played a significant role in the processes of development of poor countries, especially where indigenous people's are involved. NGO's are perceived as the outside actors who work in the interest of indigenous peoples and in this case the San people. However well intentions of KFO may be data suggested that there is more to the relationship between indigenous people who work with NGO's than just the upliftment of

poverty. The present San people expressed desire for development towards a certain lifestyle. For example they expressed desire to have tarred roads, running water and electricity, which for the KFO might mean modern lifestyle and hence deviating from their indigenous and cultural way of life which is a premise for funding for KFO projects.

This is likely to cause conflict of interest between the parties. For the San depend on the projects for supplementary earning power and the KFO depend on the San to practice their culture for more funding from other agencies. This realization therefore highlights the symbiotic relationship between the San people and the project they are involved in. The San people's way of life has changed dramatically as some respondents pointed out, but the earning power from KFO projects is dependent on the 'staged authenticity' which is often presented. The staged authenticity is achieved by presenting a lifestyle that they are no longer living but it is still highly revered by tourists and locals. The San achieve this through trance dance which as one of the respondents pointed out that it is not every day that they can achieve that stage. But when tourists come that is what they want to see and they mimick that state of mind and present it as legitimate.

Although the San people acknowledge the 'staged authenticity' done in some of the projects, there is also an acknowledgement of the dilemma of the continuation of such. This presents them as timeless and not changing while the reverse is true.

### **8.1.2 Conclusions for policy planning**

#### ***Review the Constitution***

Recent debates have shown that there is need to review the constitution of Botswana with regards to indigenous peoples and their rights. The leading human rights activists group, Ditshwanelo has been in the forefront leading of the debate about the revision of the constitution, as it is deemed to be in violation of human rights and the ILO convention No 169 which Botswana is a part of.

The constitution was drafted in 1965 and is typically reflective of its time and history of the Bechuanaland protectorate, with focus on civil and political rights. That the government of Botswana assumes that the removal of section 14 (3) © which refers specifically to 'Bushmen' will achieve 'tribal neutrality' is reflective of a systematic failure of the government to appreciate the implications of a rights based approach to development. This

approach is reflected too in other law reform measures effected in the country (Ditshwanelo 2006: 30). By removing Section 14 (3) the state hence taken the identity of the San people and the legality of that right. Without that section it becomes difficult for the San people to demand that their indigenous status be recognized as the constitution reflects that there are no indigenous people in Botswana.

Bratton (1989: 336) opines that the developmental state of Botswana is based on a foundation of capitalism in which the government, through a wide variety of incentives, actively promotes private investment by national and multinational corporations, while creating profit based public enterprises and investing directly in private firms Bratton (1989: 336) Further points out that “while the exploitation of natural resources is the primary source of boom periods in developing nations, it is also precarious. The ability of external markets to disrupt prices for primary export goods like oil and diamonds is well documented.”

There has been a developmental mentality that the source of infrastructure from which wealth is drawn must be sustained and ultimately expanded. The expansion of Botswana wealth has seen resettlements throughout the country and the San people have been more affected by these resettlements. The fact that their First People status is not recognized has made it impossible for the San people to claim any form of royalties from any natural resources they have had to be resettled away from. Development itself has embedded costs that must be met, but further democratization of the political system and more equitable distribution of resources will enhance the process.

### ***NGOs Relations***

When NGO's embark on any mission of assistance in any country it is imperative to acknowledge the rule of law of each country as much as it is of great essence for the concerned states to give assistance to NGO's to work. It has often proved difficult for NGO's working in African states with indigenous issues to come to agreement with the state on their concerns. The degree of government control is critically determined within a host country. Because African nations are ethnically diverse, and because minority groups may live in border areas abutting unfriendly neighboring states, governments often have very good reason to fear fragmentation of the polity which can be done through ideas of separatism and or a feeling of individualism and entitlement.

There is another set of development programmes, however, which can set governments and NGO's on a collision course. Certain progressive NGO's argue that equitable economic developments cannot take place unless governments put in place a foundation of political and legal preconditions. Bratton (1989:584) laments on this approach that "Governments can easily dismiss these requirements as dancing to the tune of a foreign piper with no legitimate right of entry into the domestic policy debate. If national NGO's in Africa are to be truly autonomous, they will have to devote greater effort to building a domestic resource base. This is important not only in terms of economic efficiency and institutional sustainability, but in terms of ensuring the accountability of indigenous NGO's to a domestic political constituency.

It is often difficult to divorce political issues of indigenous people from economics and social changes taking place within their communities, this is mainly because a government's development responsibilities are national in scope, planners usually try to spread investments evenly across the country. By contrast, most of NGO's project are small scale, location specific and have marginal spread effects beyond a favoured project site (Bratton 1989: 578).

Indigenous community-based NGO's are more likely to attempt to operate in isolation from government. This has often proven problematic as in the instance of the Survival International Group, the KFO and the Government of Botswana. The difference in opinion and further fragmentation has proven detrimental for the relation between the parties and the very people they are representing.

The Human rights NGO's in their quest to achieving a land mark victory for the Bushmen have been through statements released to the media hostile to developmental interest groups which also represent a large portion of the San People. In this instance there has been criticism of the Survival International group which is affiliated with the First People as a Human rights oriented group and the Kuru Groups which have long existed in Botswana. The Kuru Family of Organisations, on the other hand, is a number of development organisations that work for social cultural and economic development of marginalised minorities. Among other things, this means to assist communities to make the best possible use of existing government development incentives. Saugestad (2008) who has done extensive work on issues affecting

the San people is quick to point out that the criticism of development oriented groups by the human rights based group only serves to create unwarranted tension and is misplaced.

There is an emphasis that both kinds of organisations are perfectly legitimate and have complementary objectives. “All organisations represent some Bushmen; none are representative of all Bushmen.” (Saugestad 2008). The lack of coordination between these groups, whether intended or not, the confrontational nature of Survival International's engagement in Botswana has triggered a widespread antagonism against foreign NGO involvements, which stretches beyond government circles.

Their Bushian attitude that "those who are not for us are against us" has created a division within the NGO and donor section of Botswana's civil society. The loser is most directly the organisation, First Peoples of the Kalahari, who are deprived of the support they need, and could have expected, from the more liberal section of local society. But ultimately we all lose' (Saugestad 2008). I find it important to point out the positive aspects and work that some interest groups like the Kuru are doing to further enrich the lives of the San people. Much controversy has been on going and it is at times questionable that some human rights groups may be so critical of development even if it is positive and welcomed by some.

### ***Consultation with San People and NGO's involved with them***

Many policies and projects for rural development that are supported by numerous donors and development agencies today, for agriculture, natural resource management, marketing, microfinance, and service delivery are based on the premise that people will cooperate at the local level, or even across different policy levels. In order to avoid the failures of the earlier policies meant to uplift the San people and eradicate poverty within their communities there is need for thorough consultation with the San people, and NGO's which have long worked with the San to gain a better perspective as to how they can be assisted.

While initiating community-based development programs, it is important to base these policies on sound theoretical foundations. Much has been proven in the last decades on the determinants of collective action, there is the need to refine findings and improve empirical

research methods so that it will be possible to inform policy makers on the best way to scale-up successful and practical policies.

Consultation should be done at all levels of society. The involvement of the concerned people is therefore imperative as they are then given a chance to craft out their needs and how others can help them rather than working on the assumption of what is important for them. By involving the San people in policy making and drafts, this will give them a sense of control over what type of development they want. It is important that policy makers and other stakeholders do thorough consultation and help craft developments policies that are at the pace that those concerned will be able to manage and live within as the people tend to take care and get involved in policies which they have had a part in drafting. This reinforces the need to bring local or indigenous knowledge also into the centre piece of development.

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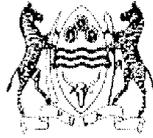
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## Appendix 1

TELEPHONE: 3611100  
FAX: 3907426



REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND HOME AFFAIRS  
PRIVATE BAG 002  
GABORONE

**REF:** CHA 1/17 2 XI (66)

03 July 2008

Miss Tshepang Denise Lebotse  
Private Bag 003  
Suite 321  
Mogoditshane  
Botswana

Dear Madam

### **GRANT OF A RESEARCH PERMIT**

Please refer to your application for a research permit dated 08 June 2008.

You are hereby granted permission to carry out research entitled "**Human Rights vs Development: The case of the Kuru groups and the San people of Botswana**". Permission is granted subject to the following conditions:-

1. Copies of any report/video produced are deposited with the Director of Research and Development office of the University of Botswana, Botswana National Library Service, Botswana National Archives and Records Services, Permanent Secretary Ministry of Education, Department of Culture and Youth.
2. The Permit does not give authority to enter any premises, private establishment or protected area. Permission for such entry should be negotiated with those concerned.
3. The permit is valid for a period not exceeding **seven weeks** beginning **12<sup>th</sup> July 2008** to the **30<sup>th</sup> August 2008**.
4. You shall conduct the study according to the particulars furnished in the application form.
5. Failure to comply with any of the above – stipulated conditions will result in the immediate cancellation of the permit.

Yours faithfully

Ditso Anneleng

For/ **PERMANENT SECRETARY**

gps/DA

## **Appendix 2**

### Interview Guide

#### Interviewee 1

**Question.** How much do you know about the centre?

*Answer.* Not much but that this centre preserves our culture so we can pass it on to our children and other people who are not aware of it.

**Question.** How do you do you pass on your culture especially to children.

*Answer.* We have workshops with our children and have practical lessons where they are taught different skills.

**Question.** Are they interested?

*Answer.* Yes some are but the older ones show little interest.

**Question.** How long have you been working here?

*Answer.* 7 years.

**Question.** Are there any changes that you can tell about, that you have seen over the years you have been here?

*Answer.* Yes, my involvement with kuru shows me that there are many changes.

**Question.** What kind of changes?

*Answer.* Many of the changes are of personal nature and mostly individuals, I know who I am and I am proud of who and what I am.

**Question.** Has this centre in general brought changes to the lives of people here besides the economic changes which are highly visible?

*Answer.* Yes it has been the mediator between us and the outside world. It has shown us that we are part of this country and development is for us also.

**Question.** Do you like developments that the centre and its associates have brought?

*Answer.* Yes they are very much welcome.

**Question.** Can you elaborate more on the changes and developments that you are talking about?

**Answer.** When I speak of development, I don't mean buildings or infrastructure in general because as you see, there is not much. But it has made us own our culture more and be proud of it.

**Question.** How?

**Answer.** At first we were not so trusting of each other but we have been brought together by the centre and are much closer and appreciative of each other.

**Question .** Why were you not trustful of each other?

**Answer .** Some are poor and they did not want to share whatever they had.

**Question .** What development and input has the centre made to reinstate the trust and improve the lives of people.

**Answer .** The centre has made some relevant trust that we make a living out of.

**Question.** Are people interested in making a living and putting money into this trust fund?

**Answer.** They are getting to understand what the centre is doing, but they are not trust worthy of the trust fund.

**Question.** Why don't they trust the centre and its intentions to alleviate poverty and all?

**Answer.** There were rumors that the centre is splitting so the local were mistrustful of the whites who run the organization , but I cannot tell you more on that because it was just rumors.

**Question.** How is kuru different from First People of the Kalahari (FPK)?

**Answer.** FPK is much more political and this one is much more development oriented. Some people wanted to get political with regards to the San and our culture, but eventually they came back.

**Questions.** Is this place owned by the government?

**Answer .** D;kar is not owned by the government nor is it run by the government. It is owned by the Dutch Reformed church the land is also owned by the same.

**Question .** Why did you choose to live here?

**Answer.** I went to school here then came back to live here.

**Question.** Why would people choose to live here on a private land where government development may not be so forthcoming?

*Answer.* Most of them are close to each other and they help each other. Besides family ties and communal are very important, it is not so easy out there, life is much harder and we don't get used to it.

**Question.** Any last words or something that you might want to say or talk about.

*Answer.* I have nothing else to say.

### **Observations**

The interviewee was a bit reluctant at first to talk but with time he came around as we reached a familial ground. The interview was conducted in Setswana and directly translated into English. There was no language barrier between me and the interview and it was easier to talk as we spoke a language that we both could understand. I noticed that most people are tired of talking about their lifestyle to strangers, researchers and the like. There is a lot of research and researchers going on both from local students and international researcher and organization and not forgetting the government also, so it is a bit stressful for people to be continuously saying the same thing. This is understandable because the amount of research work and researchers who come here is quite high. It is also that people do not see change that is feasible and sustainable from being asked questions all the time regarding their life and livelihood.

## **Interviewee 2**

**Question.** When did you start working here D 'Kar Game Farm?

*Answer.* 2006.

**Question.** Why did you choose to work here ?

*Answer.* I like working in the game farm

**Question.** How different is this from any other job?

*Answer.* I chose it because I wanted to live in the bush and since this project is culture sensitive and also to know more about san culture.

**Question.** So have you achieved what you set out?

*Answer.* Yes I have achieved what I set out

**Question.** Why did you choose to learn about san culture?

*Answer.* I am a descendent it is my mother tongue , naró.

**Question.** Are there any developments here with regards to both culture and quality of life that you have seen since been here?

*Answer.* Yes there are there are traditional dance and other crafts, it brings income to the people involved which is highly needed as jobs are very scarce.

**Question.** How many locals (Batswana who are non San) come here?

*Answer.* Not many do.

**Question.** Why do you think it is like that?

*Answer.* I am not sure but, I don't understand because mostly they want a much more developed site, they want luxury like restaurant, electricity and pubs here.

**Question.** Do they know what this (Kuru ) is all about?

*Answer.* We tell them

**Question.** What is the response?

*Answer.* I don't know they like electricity, some come here and they look for bars and restaurants.

**Question.** Are they interested in knowing more about the naró culture

*Answer.* No I don't think so.

**Question.** Why do you think so?

*Answer.* I don't know

**Question.** Do you think that it is more tourism centered than knowledge sharing.

*Answer.* These days everything is about money so it is better that they make money so they can help themselves.

**Question.** Does it bring anything for the children?

*Answer.* We bring children here and they live in the bush with parents so they learn the culture from their parents.

**Question.** Is the culture thriving though?

*Answer.* Yes, I believe it will stay here and the interest is there.

**Question.** If you were to address youth about naro culture and the development that surrounds it, what would you say.

*Answer.* We do try and show them activities like rope making, and craft and snares and different games for the naro children so I would say that we should learn to accept each other's culture and not laugh because someone has a different culture or they are showing it and it is not the same as ours.

**Question.** Do you get any help from government?

*Answer.* We do get some help, as there are some developments in D'Kar.

**Question.** Are these developments welcome by the Naro people.

*Answer.* Yes they are.

**Question.** Are they not interfering with the cultural way of life?

*Answer.* Culture is there but development also should be there. San people also want development.

**Question.** Do you want limited development or all that can make your life easier.

*Answer.* We want development as a whole to better our life.

**Question.** How do you feel about those who are not pro development and strongly say that development would not be compatible with the San's way of life?

*Answer.* Life goes on and so does development as long as we know and can maintain culture, I don't see why there should not be development based on culture.

**Question.** Who do you think is responsible for making sure that culture stays and lives on?

*Answer.* We are (San), it is our responsibility if we do not own our culture and make sure that it lives on who will.

**Question.** Are children interested?

*Answer.* Yes they are, they like the workshops and there is interest.

**Question.** Do you get the same response from children of all ages?

*Answer.* They show interest but, once they get to teenage hood they loose interest.

**Question.** Why do you think it is so?

*Answer.* I am not sure, probably because they are still discovering themselves.

**Question.** Do they realize themselves though?

*Answer.* Yes some do, but some discard culture altogether.

**Question.** Why would they discard their culture?

*Answer.* Well sometimes they choose to go out to bars and other places of negative influence.

**Question.** Are they embarrassed to be San (Naro)?

*Answer.* Not really, they are not embarrassed

**Question.** Do you think that it could be bad timing (like when they already have plans) that you ask them to do cultural events?

*Answer.* Well we usually go out on Fridays and come back on Sunday so they want to go out into towns but I believe that if it was any other day they would come.

**Question.** So would I be right to assume that they are balancing between culture and modern lifestyle.

*Answer.* Yes, the thing is that they already know their culture so I think they want to experience other cultures.

**Question.** Is there anything that you want to say, about kuru or any last words?

*Answer.* All I want to say is that even if there are developments people should not forget their culture.

## **Observations**

The interviewee was quite forth coming. However as the questions were carrying on he was a bit evasive and I got the feeling that some of the answers he had given me were genuine whereas some sounded a bit rehearsed. It was not easy to ask some questions regarding land

as I drew a blank answer from the respondent or he just says I don't know anything and the mood changes.

Although I wanted to learn more about the land aspect I figured that Kuru and the people working there were not the appropriate people to ask or find out more.

**Interviewee 3**

**Question.** When did you start working here?

**Answer.** 2006.

**Question.** Why did you choose to work here?

**Answer.** Because it is a san based project.

**Question.** Why choose a San based project.

**Answer.** There are no jobs so it is easier to get a job here which does not require much skill.

**Question.** As a woman what developments would you say have been done to uplift women?

**Answer.** I don't know how to answer but I can say that we have jobs so we are able to live from salary.

**Question.** How

**Answer.** Because they can make a living from here, working in the farm and singing and dancing.

**Question.** Do you think you will live here for long?

**Answer.** No

**Question.** Why?

**Answer.** If I get a better job I will go even if it is not San based.

**Question.** Why do you want to go

**Answer.** I am tired of working with white people; they don't want to listen to us when we want to develop this place or suggest any changes even though they say it belongs to us. When we tell them what we want they do not want to change as it is based on our primordial lifestyle. If it is for us but we cannot add any changes that we fell will better us, we just work and they do all the paper work.

**Question.** What kind of development do you want to see?

**Answer.** We want electricity, food and better food but there is no money all the time. There is not enough staff so we work for long hours.

**Question.** Do you as the San people feel ownership of this place?

**Answer.** Yes we do, but we don't run the place, it is ran by people who are not San so it is difficult for them to listen to us.

**Question.** Do you think that if it was run by the san it would be better?

**Answer.** Yes I do. We wanted to have a leader of the san culture because this is ours so it is run by whites and sometimes people who visit turn away because they don't understand why we have a white leader when this project is marketed as us.

**Question.** Why is there lots of whites people and not black.

**Answer.** I do not know , maybe it is because the prices are for expatriates and not locals so they can see. When we talk about it we are told to leave it alone.

**Question.** Do you loose a lot of staff who are of San?

**Answer.** Yes before there used to be those who come and leave but there is 3 ladies who have worked here for years.

**Question.** Are developments that have been done so far what you want?

**Answer.** Yes we a D kar since they say it is privately owned there cannot be any developments since it is private but we want them and more.

**Question.** What sort of development do you want?

**Answer.** A Kgotla where we can air our views, teachers are limited the ones who are there do not give education that one can go far with, preschool. It would be better if our children were taught with an interpreter so they can learn without a language barrier.

**Question.** If for all that you say and sound not sure and unhappy about the environment that you live in why do you still live here.?

**Answer.** We grew up here so we don't know where else to go. So there is not much to do, it is not easy to be elsewhere . Life in Gantsi is not good for us as the San because they drink a lot when they go there. When they are at D'Kar they don't drink a lot.

**Question .** Would you say that it might be identity crises?

**Answer.** Yes when they are in D'Kar there are elders who advise, so once they go to towns they are alone especially the youth.

**Question.** Some people say that too much development more than what you have will interfere with your way of life what do you say to that.

**Answer.** Yes it may be true but we want development, all of it, it has nothing to do with culture , it is up to us the San to preserve our culture. It may interfere with our lifestyle but .....The kind of development does not matter as long as we the San keep on preserving our culture.

**Question.** When it comes to social development like education up to what level do the San children go?

*Answer.* Form three, some run away, they are used to village life and the parents are not too concerned with education, sometimes it is poverty sometimes when they see other children having more they do not want to stay.

**Question.** Are they not on social system, from the government?

*Answer.* Some are orphans and they are provided with everything, but the other ones fall under RADO but not all of them. They are given everything but we do not know why they don't want to continue. Because they cannot say that they do not have clothes or school uniform.

**Question.** Any last words.

*Answer.* Most of us are not happy even though we are a bit better with projects from Kuru, we feel that there is more that we can have but they don't want us to ask for more because we are San so I don't know.

## **Observations**

The interviewee was much more respondent and was willing to discuss other issues that are of concern to them as the staff and as a San that she feels were taken for granted. There was a lot of emotions that she showed, she seemed upset about the situation that she is in. Although her answers were not much different from others they came across much more unrehearsed. The interview was conducted in Setswana language as was the preference of the interviewee.

When she talked of the hours that they have to work and the improvements that they want which can be deemed as developmental she expressed a strong desire for such. I did however note that the gentleman who is the leader and was 'new' to the was listening in on intently. Although I had asked for an interview from him which was declined as he was very busy, it was a surprise that after interviewing the lady I was called to the desk to come and see the farm land scape and told of the pending development which was to be done.

I was told by the leader that he is to turn around the farm and make it a much more profitable place and overall better as they are running out of funds and I should not hesitate to ask any questions. Although a welcome surprise, the leader was much appreciative of the six who have been working at the farm for the past six months without an appointed manager and they ran the place to a full success. The ladies did a marvelous job even though they are back to their menial positions.

## **Kuru Museum and Craft Centre**

Please answer the following questions underneath each question. Although some questions may seem obvious it always helps to hear it from someone who deals with place directly.

- When was the centre established?
- What are the aims of the centre?
  1. What inspired you to come up with this idea of having a San owned farm.
  2. How did you acquire the land?
  3. What do you use the land for?
  4. What has *the response of the San people to land acquisition*?
  5. What has been the attitude of non-San locals towards your activities?
  6. What has been the attitude of the government towards your activities?
  7. Has the centre been realizing its aims? If yes/no, why?

### Appendix 3



#### **Setting up camp in D'Qare Qare**

*Setting up camp for research work. This was accommodation for the duration of data collection in Gantsi.*

**Appendix 4**



*Arts and craft made by San women and sold to tourists in Gantsi*



**Arts and Craft**

## Appendix 5



*Traditional dance performed by San people. The activity takes place at D'Qare Qare game farm and it is done during the night. Revelers are invited to join in the dance and learn a step or two.*



*A dance between a man and a woman mimicking what happens when the husband returns from hunting. The woman is seen here in a jubilant mood and welcoming the husband and helping him carry the animal.*

## Appendix 6



*Some of the residential houses at D'kar settlement*







**Livelihoods**

## Appendix 7



*Dutch Reformed Church at D'Kar Settlement*

