

**MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY**



**FACULTY OF ARTS**

**DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE LIVELIHOODS OF ETHNIC MINORITIES IN  
NAMIBIA: A CASE OF THE SAN COMMUNITY IN OSHANDI VILLAGE IN  
ONDOBE CONSTITUENCY OF OHANGWENA REGION, NAMIBIA**

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*Our Hands, Our Minds, Our Destiny*

## APPROVAL FORM

The undersigned certify that they have read and recommend to the Midlands State University for acceptance, a dissertation entitled “**An assessment of the livelihoods of ethnic minorities in Namibia: A case of the san community in Oshandi village in Ondobe constituency of Ohangwena region**” submitted to the Faculty of Arts, department of Development Studies by Tomas T Puleinge in partial fulfilment of the requirements for Bachelor of Arts in Development Studies Honours Degree.

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**DECLARATION**

I, Tomas Tungeumbo Puleinge, declare that the work I have submitted is my own effort and it has not been submitted anywhere for any degree purposes in any other University. I attest that the information in the Dissertation which is not my own has been identified and acknowledged. It is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the **Bachelor of Arts in Development Studies Honours Degree** at Midlands State University, Main Campus.

Signature .....Date.....

## **DEDICATION**

This piece of work is to my family, with a special dedication to my late Mother who passed on early 2014, (May your soul continue resting in peace mom).

I also dedicate this paper to my grandfather Nathanael Puleinge and my young brother Eben-Eser Lihongeni Puleinge as well as all my lovely sisters and brothers who have inspired me and guided me and through their commitment in attaining excellence. They have inspired me undoubtedly to be original and to always aim for the most excellent in all endeavours be it academic, social, economic and spiritual.

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### **List of Acronyms**

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
GDP	Gross domestic product
GRN	Government of the Republic of Namibia
HIV	Human Immune Virus
ID	Identity Cards
MLR	Ministry of Lands and Resettlements
NDP	Namibia National Development Plan
NPC	National Planning Commission
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
SADF	South African Defence Force
SAHO	South African History Online
OVP	Office of the Vice President

### **Abstract**

*The importance of understanding the livelihood strategies of ethnic minorities has received a fresh impetus over the last few years with the emphasis by many Western donors on poverty reduction. This research aims to investigate livelihood strategies of San people in Oshandi village of Ondobe constituency in Ohangwena region in Namibia. Their economic, marginalization is compounded by their ethnic background a stigma that also marginalizes them politically and socially. It also examined the efforts that Namibian government and non state actors have made towards improving the livelihoods among the San community. Only samples of 15 San households were selected using purposive sampling. To achieve the objectives the researcher used both the qualitative research design which entailed the use of interviews, questionnaires and desk study. The results were based on the information captured in the questionnaires and qualitative face to face interactions.*

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This paper seeks to assess the livelihoods of the ethnic's minorities in Namibia focusing on the San community in Oshandi village of Ondobe constituency in Ohangwena region. The discrimination, among the San community came as result of segregation. The marginalization and poverty among them all came as a result of their distinctness from the mainstream traditions and cultures. The poverty status of minority populations may be better understood in terms of social exclusion due to the poverty which is being more of a social phenomenon.

In understanding chronic poverty in most communities Bird et al (n.d) is of views that social exclusion becomes a valuable concept. The availability of information, better housing, good meal as well as an improved health and education in the larger society better explains an improved livelihood.

An ethnic group is a segment of a larger society whose members are thought by them and or others to have a common origin and to share important segments of a common culture and who in addition participate in shared activities in which the common origin and culture are significant ingredients. Cohen (1974) views the ethnic group as a joint of people of the same patterns of normative behaviour and those that form a part of a larger population, interacting with people from other collectivises within the framework of a social system. By normative behaviour he means the symbolic formations and activities found in such contexts as kinship and marriage, friendship, ritual and other types of ceremonies.

This research is targeting Oshandi because it is one of the places where there are a large number of San people and was the last place of San community to receive houses from the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) in March 2015. The community was also provided with a kinder garden building for their children. Some other sites for San community have received brick houses and nutritional gardens after the provision of land from the Ministry of Lands and Resettlement.

The research will also give the definitions of livelihoods and the theories that best explain the issue of excessive poverty among ethnic minorities.

## **2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Ancestral San peoples have lived in southern Africa since ancient times, where they are commonly known as Bushmen, San, Khwe or as the Basarwa. They have been resident in and around the Kalahari Desert for at least 20,000 years. San populations lived by hunting and gathering as the sole occupants of southern Africa. Archaeological evidence indicates that the San lived in small mobile groups with complex microlithic stone tool technology (Mitchell 2002).

At one time, the San occupied an area stretching from the Congo-Zambezi watershed in central Africa south to the Cape. The San were relatively widely dispersed in the region, and they numbered up to 300,000 people (Lee 1976). Today, San peoples reside in six countries with scattered individuals and small communities who identify themselves as San in other countries such as Lesotho and Swaziland. The majority of the San are to be found in the Kalahari Desert region of Namibia and Botswana, though there are also populations of San in Angola, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa.

San used bows and arrows to hunt, trapping small animals and eating edible roots and berries. They lived in rock shelters, in the open or in crude shelters of twigs and grass or animal skins. They made no pottery, rather using ostrich eggshells or animal parts for storing and holding liquids. For these reasons, animals and nature are central features in the Bushman's religious tradition, folklore, art and rituals.

These nomadic hunter-gatherers once occupied all of southern Africa. The successive arrival of the Bantu, sedentary farmers, and livestock Hottentots living and speaking a language of the same family, has decimated the population and has pushed to land increasingly thankless

[www.minorityrights.org](http://www.minorityrights.org)). In the eighteenth century, farmers would gather a militia (commando) who launched punitive expeditions on the Bushmen.

Now relegated to one of the most thankless land of the world, the Kalahari Bushmen may still need to clear off the ground admitted the government of Botswana to incorporate the benefits of civilization, but according to those involved, to leave way to the diamond exploration that would protect the De Beers.

In 1991, Botswana Christian Council issued a report about a case involving suspected Bushmen to hunt on private property and were arrested and tortured by national park rangers. In 1997, many were expelled from their homes in the Kalahari and those who stayed suffered drastic declines in their hunting territory, continual harassment and torture. In early 2002, the harassment escalated: water pumps were destroyed, water supplies dumped into the wilderness and hunting and gathering prohibited.

The San people are now found in most of the Southern countries. Namibia is said to have sizable number of the San population as compared to other parts of Southern Africa apart from Botswana. Due to this number of the San population the Namibian government intervened to help this marginalised group through different programmes and initiatives.

The lessening of poverty and inequality remains an overarching priority the Namibian Government. It is indicate by the national development framework, Vision 2030, finds that the current situation “Inequality and poverty jeopardize social harmony, peace and democracy and sets as its long term development objective. Poverty is reduced to the minimum, the existing pattern of income distribution is equitable and disparity is at the minimum. (GRN, 2004). Moreover, strategies to implement Vision 2030, such as the successive medium-term National Development Plans, the 1998 Poverty Reduction Strategy and the 2001 National Poverty Reduction Action Programme all have reduction of poverty

and inequality among their chief objectives (GRN 1998, 2001, 2002, 2005). Namibia is also a signatory to major agreements that shape the global development policy agenda notably the 2000 Millennium Declaration, which commits countries to cut the 1990 incidence of income poverty by half before 2015 and a range of other social development objectives known as the Millennium Development Goals.

Despite many promises and efforts to develop the country after 26 years since independence, poverty and inequality are still prominent features of Namibian society. The reasons and possible solutions for these concerns are widely debated by politicians and the general public, but these discussions are often based on emotions and not on actual evidence.

Scholars like Deruyttere (1997) captured the plight of ethnic communities when he notes that ethnic minorities comprises a significant percentage of the rural poor and they remain the most vulnerable and marginalised group in the rural poor category. Little research has been carried out in Namibia about the minority communities and their ways of living due to the lack of interest among researchers. The problems of ethnic minorities spread from social, economic to political, and this has created an economic and social nightmare for them. Mudzudzo (2001) says socially, ethnic minority communities are a neglected and despised group due to their poverty as well as the ethnocentric perceptions of their distinct cultures by other ethnic and dominant groups whilst national policies have economically marginalised them.

Due to the historical minimal access to education and economic opportunities under colonial rule, San and other indigenous Namibians faced challenges in exercising fully their rights fully. Despite the government's land redistribution and tenure reform, a frantic land grabbing has also erupted in some communal areas. This saw some of the communal farmers who own large cattle heads fencing off large plots for private use of which happened at the expenses of the small minority, the San who owned a few head of cattle with no financial means to erect

fences. Meanwhile the fencing of land in communal areas has been declared illegal in Namibia, but this has led to further conflict between and within many communities. The San are Southern Africa's indigenous people and communities of the San are sprawled across the countries: Botswana, Namibia, Angola, and South Africa, with small numbers in Zimbabwe and Zambia. Historically, the San are hunter-gatherers. However, modern-day conservation policies, amongst others, have prevented them from exercising this way of survival and today the San exist in a state of extreme poverty.

Contemporary San exhibit a wide variety of adaptations and types of interactions with other societies, governments, and international institutions (Lee et al 1979). Over the past several decades, often with the assistance of anthropologists and interested development workers, the San communities have formed their own non-government organizations, and they have established a variety of development projects.

### **3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Ethnic minorities are crucial in development. Their participation in decision making enables them to contribute in societal transformation. The research seeks to examine livelihoods of ethnic minorities focusing on the San in Oshandi village of Ohangwena region in Ondobe constituency. The livelihoods are going to be assessed under the following indicators: income levels, improved houses, improved literacy level, improved health care, better diet as well as improved assets. This study will be an eye opener to both the academia and the policy makers to come up with vibrant strategies to rescue the marginalised ethnic groups in Namibia.

## **4. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Livelihoods**

A person's livelihood refers to their means of securing the basic necessities being food, water, shelter and clothing. It is through livelihoods that person's life is supported and this can be through a formal or informal activity or income generating activity. Chambers and Conway (1991) are of views that a livelihood comprises of people, their capabilities and their means of living, including food, income and assets. Having three meals a day, having a source of income that is constant and also owning a house are some of the livelihood indicators.

Most San households in Ohangwena Region depend for their livelihoods on food aid, piecework, veldt food gathering, pensions, subsistence agriculture, some limited IGAs, child labour and begging or asking Ovawambo neighbours for food. With this assistance their lives have greatly changed as they become their source of income and this has reduced the existing virtuous cycles of poverty now having at least three meals per day. The san community in Oshandi have a public state clinic thus reducing mortality rate caused by not going to the hospital on time.

### **Indicators of livelihoods**

- Improved household assets
- Having at least three meals a day, food security
- Improved housing structures
- Sending children to school up to secondary education
- Income generating projects, employment creation

## **Ethnic minorities**

Minority group is a term referring to a category of people differentiated from the majority who holds the majority of positions of social power in society, and may be defined by law. The differentiation can be based on one or more observable human characteristics, including, but not limited to: ethnicity, race, gender, wealth, health or sexual orientation. The ethnic minorities may also be identified by their distinct practices, way of dressing, language, beliefs, and also customs (Baumann, 2004). Usage of the term is applied to various situations and civilizations within history, despite its popular misassociation with a numerical, statistical minority. In almost every society ethnic minority groups are recognized, however the relationship that will exist between them and other dominant groups is what determines their assimilation into the mainstream cultures or their self-segregation.

## **5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study was guided by the theoretical concept of Social Inclusion made popular by the works of such scholars as Silver and Haan. This theory puts emphasis on the need for partaking and inclusion in all processes that support human standard of life. The concept is based on the two paradigms of social cohesion and incorporation whereby social cohesion is achieved without forcing the marginalized groups to conform to the norms and values of the dominant groups which they otherwise do not subscribe to. Social inclusion is best suited to give solutions to problems of discrimination and marginalisation which consequently lead to extreme poverty because of its multidimensional approach to poverty obliteration as it considers the economic, social, political and cultural aspects of a person's life (Pradhan, 2006).

Social Inclusion is a task that aims to find means of including the excluded (Loury 1999; Jackson 1999 cited in Pradhan 2006). While some scholars decide to define social exclusion in simple terms of social inclusion as the opposite of social exclusion (European Foundation



1995), this research operationalised the DFID/World Bank (2005) definition which states that social inclusion is more than just the opposite of exclusion, rather it is the “the removal of institutional barriers and the enhancement of incentives to increase the access of diverse individuals and groups to development opportunities”.

## **6. OVERALL OBJECTIVE**

To assess the livelihoods and severity of poverty among ethnic minority groups focusing on the san in Namibia

## **7. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

1. To examine the level of the living standards of the San at Oshandi,
2. To examine ways that Namibian government has made towards improving the livelihoods of the San in Oshandi of Ohangwena region

## **8. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

In the quest to find out why extreme poverty is persisting among ethnic minority communities in Namibia, the research answered the following questions basing on information obtained through the study of the San community in Oshandi:

- What is the level of the San’s living standard at Oshandi?
- What efforts have been made by the government in improving the livelihoods among the San community of Oshandi?

## **9. SIGNIFICANCE / JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY**

This research is motivated by the desire to examine how ethnic minority are treated in the society. This study is crucial to different stakeholders such as government as well as non-governmental organizations which are involved in improving livelihoods of the minority

groups and poverty alleviation in particular as it will guide their programming, academia, on knowing and understanding the significance of involving or considering minority groups in development of a country. Baseline information on the state of affairs among ethnic minorities in the country is provided by the study and it is an eye opener to government, policy makers and development oriented organisations that there are neglected communities among us that need urgent help. It was critical to look into the state of affairs among ethnic minority communities so as to make progress in the rural development sector by finding means to help these communities out of poverty.

Furthermore, the study served as a voice to the silent ethnic minorities of Namibia and addressed their rights and significance in society because they are a major part of our diversity as a nation.

## **10. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The researcher faced obstacles in addressing the objectives of the research:

- Financial challenges: Lack of funds limited the researcher's movement in data collection. However, the researcher used foot to walk from one area to another and was also at one point assisted by the Office of the Prime Minister with transport to visit some San community research sites in Okongo area of Ohangwena region.
- Lack of cooperation by some participants who viewed the researcher from a political side feared the aftermath. This led the researcher to have unbalanced information during questionnaires and interviews. However the researcher has also used the observation to come up with the exact information.
- The participants could not understand the questionnaires due to the high level of illiteracy among the respondents. However the researcher contacted interviews and have also asked the question in Oshiwambo for effective communication.

- Community resistance: Some san left when the researcher was introduced to them saying they are tired of being asked the same questions over and over by the called researchers. However the researcher proceeded with those that were available and have also sought information from the Centre care taker.

## **11. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **11.1 RESEARCH DESIGN**

This research was carried out through the use of qualitative type of research. According to (Nicholls, 2011) Qualitative research methods serve to provide a bigger picture of a situation or issue and can inform in an accessible way. The method allow for much more detailed investigation of issues - answering questions of meaning, who is affected (by the issue) why, what factors are involved, do individuals react or respond differently to each other.

Qualitative methods make use of open-ended questions and probing gives participants the opportunity to respond in their own words, rather than forcing them to choose from fixed responses. Open-ended questions have the ability to evoke responses that are: meaningful and culturally salient to the participant, unanticipated by the researcher, rich and explanatory in nature.

### **12. DATA GATHERING TECHNIQUES**

The research used both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data for this study was gathered using face to face structured and unstructured interviews with san community site headman and their care takers. Questionnaires with both open and closed questions were also used to collect data for the study. Covert resident's observation was also contacted during the study. Where the residents at san people site permitted photographs were taken of

their houses and those of their living style. Secondary data obtained through a wide range of relevant documents.

### **Interviews**

In this research, interviews have been used. The research was very broad in nature to the extent that the researcher managed to interview the Ondobe constituency councillor, the nurse in charge at Oshandi clinic Mrs Mwandangi, the Deputy Director Administration in the Oshana Regional Council; the San care takers, the San themselves as well as other development officers in different ministries. During interview, the data was written down on interview questionnaires and some recorded through voice recorder so as to get the full details about the research. More so, most of the respondents had difficulties in reading and understanding English and as a result, interviews became crucial so as to accommodate them.

### **Questionnaires**

Ranjit (2005) states that in a questionnaire, questions are laid down to respondents for them to answer. The questionnaire consists of both open- ended and closed- ended questions. The questionnaires were designed in the English language but researcher administered in the Oshiwambo language due to the very low literacy rates among the population under study. Questionnaires are crucial in that written data will not be lost easily. Once data has been written, the information can be kept safely and cannot easily be lost due to human error such as forgetting. They are also important in that the respondent will take his/her time to complete the questionnaires.

### **Desk Study**

With information so readily available particularly on the internet, this study also made use of such sources of information as books published electronic journals, journals as well as

newspapers. Desk research can be defined as a secondary source of information which includes looking into already existing information from previous researches and documentations. The information obtained through desk research may render itself to a process of clarification whereby primary sources may reveal a completely different picture altogether, or it may work to support the researcher's ideas and line of research.

#### **14. SAMPLING**

Sampling is a method of studying from a few selected items, instead of the entire big number of units. It is very crucial in this research. The major importance is that because of the large population in the research area, it is expensive, difficult if not impossible to consult each and every individual. Therefore sampling allows choosing a specific group of people as respondents. There is an opportunity for highly representative if all subjects participate.

#### **15. SAMPLING METHOD**

##### **Purposive sampling**

This is one of the most common sampling strategies, which groups participants according to preselected criteria relevant to a particular research question (FHI, 2006). Sample sizes are flexible prior to data collection; depend on the resources and time available, as well as the study's objectives. This method therefore was useful, as it enabled the researcher to gather much data against the time available for the data collection in the area of study. More so, it enabled the researcher to collect data from the relevant respondents hence saving time and resources (FHI, 2006).

##### **Target population**

Oshandi san community has a population of 135 with a number of 35 households and is the only village in Ondobe constituency with a large number of san people living at the same site. The sample population was made up of 45% of the total number of San households in

Oshandi village. Out of the 35 San households, 15 households were chosen using purposive sampling.

## **16. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Livelihoods allow people to secure the basic necessities of life, such as food, water, shelter and clothing. Engaging in livelihoods activities involves attaining the knowledge, skills, social network, raw materials, and other resources to meet individual or collective needs on a sustainable basis. Displaced people are typically involved in activities such as agriculture, livestock breeding, fishing and trade. Income provides the basis for food security and self reliance, contributing towards general stability, prosperity and peace.

Livelihood is further defined by International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, (IFR n.d) as a means of making a living. It encompasses people's capabilities, assets, income and activities required to secure the necessities of life. A livelihood is sustainable when it enables people to cope with and recover from shocks and stresses such as natural disasters and economic or social upheavals and enhances their well-being and that of future generations without undermining the natural environment or resource base.

### **Poverty among ethnic minorities**

Definite patterns of disadvantage and vulnerability exist among ethnic minorities and they deserve a chance to be explored and addressed. Barnard (2011) acknowledges that poverty among ethnic minorities is not a result of chance but can be traced back to issues of inequalities in society that create vulnerabilities among minority groups. Poverty rates are double among ethnic minorities than in ethnic majorities and their plight is far from over as they are simply overlooked. Castles and Miller (1993) reiterate that ethnic minorities are made to adjust, that is they are forced to adjust and adopt new ways of living for them to fit into society and this consequently compromises on their livelihoods and social identity. The

plight of ethnic minorities should be of global concern given the issues of the rights and inherent dignity and respect of all persons as articulated in the both the UDHR of 1948 and the ACHPR of 1986 among many other international conventions.

Kabeer (n.d) alluded that, one of the major disadvantages of ethnic minorities lies in the non-recognition of their culture. This then transfers to social, economic and political disadvantage and deprivation. Thus culturally disadvantaged minorities must first get recognition to enhance identity and participation and the rest will follow.

Noyoo (2000) blames the plight of ethnic minorities in sub-Saharan Africa on the governments on the basis that they are the prime mobilizers and distributors of resources to their people. He further stresses the point that development must be inclusive and not be representative of only those ethnic groups that are in government; rather it must be blind to the whole concept of identity and go on to serve the people.

According to Ditshwanelo (1996) San in Botswana have been required to move out of areas that they had occupied, in some cases, for hundreds of years. The resettlement process has had momentous effects on their welfare, it lessen their access to natural resources with which they are familiar, restrict the amount of land they have to reside in and use, and puts them in positions where they are interrupting on other groups, a process which has sometimes led to social conflicts.

Botswana government chose to resettle several hundred residents of the Calahari Game Reserve (CKGR) in 1997, the second largest game reserve in Africa. The justification of this involuntary resettlement was that it would promote conservation and development and would improve the standard of living of the San ([www.survivalinternational.org](http://www.survivalinternational.org)). The Central Kalahari case provides an excellent example of how international, national, and local pressures have affected the well-being of local people in Africa and how recommendations

from environmental organizations and development agencies have influenced policies at the state level.

Soon after, the Bushmen were advised by the government minister because of the diamond which was discovered in that area. In three big clearances, in 1997, 2002 and 2005, virtually all the Bushmen were forced out. Their homes were dismantled, their school and health post were closed, their water supply was destroyed and the people were threatened and trucked away. Some of the San did not return to the reserve and now live in the resettlement camp outside the reserve. They rarely able to hunt and they are being beaten up and arrested when they do so which now forced them to depend on government handouts. Most of them now resorted to the use of alcohol which results into illnesses such as TB and HIV/AIDS.

### **High Court appeal**

Early January 2011, the San of Botswana managed to win an appeal against the government in the High Court after they initially denied access to drinking water inside the reserve through bore holes. They were represented by Barrister Gordon Bennett in court as the judges declared the Botswana government guilty of degrading treatment and described the case as a harrowing story of human suffering and despair. The Government also ordered to pay the costs of the San's appeal (BBC NEWS 2006). The Botswana government's official Facebook page states in several 2013 posts that "contrary to some media reports the Government has consistently provided the residents with water. When the borehole was temporarily shut down last year water was trucked in until the borehole was restored.

Due to nomadic nature of the San they were always on the move in search of game and plant foods they did not build permanent settlements as they preferred using rock shelters as temporary live sites and or open camps probably weather conditions dictated the choice of



sites. The San existed in small family groups of about 12 - 30 people. A chief controlled their resources on behalf of the group. As nomads, they have no need for permanent shelters ([www.about.com](http://www.about.com)). The San hunter-gatherers were Stone Age people. They never made use of metals as their weapons being made of wood, stone as well as bones. They did not tame animals and did not cultivate crops as nor did pottery instead they used ostrich egg-shells for storing and holding liquids.

In Southern Africa, the San communities remain vulnerable and are subject to the same marginalization in terms of socio-economic, political, language, and cultural indicators.

The absence of data for each country where the San live makes it difficult to make comparisons in different countries with a qualitative framework, but available evidence suggests that their socio-economic status in each country is sufficiently similar for broad generalization.

In terms of improved living standards, the San people are still lagging behind in South Africa. Living in rural areas and stigmatized as a rural underclass by dominant sectors of society, the San also work as unskilled labourers watching sheep or doing domestic work without tenure rights or job security in poorly paid seasonal work on farms (UN 2005). San children, youth and women are vulnerable to violence, discrimination, drug abuse, alcoholism, high suicide rates, prostitution and other syndromes associated with poverty.

However, scholars and academia have viewed the San as people characterised by poor houses, nomadic in nature, people who practice nomadic hunting and gathering as well as people who wear clothes made from animal skins, short leather aprons, skin sandals, and beads. This perspectives is therefore overlooked the livelihoods of the San. The world has transformed the lives of the San through the government's efforts to enhance their livelihoods. Governments have created and reserved permanent land and locations for the San

to settle. This move has been both to civilize and transform the lives of the San for the better as well as to protect natural resources and wildlife. However, evidence from other countries has shown that trying to make the San give up their traditional culture and adopt new ways of living is always ineffective.

It has always been a challenge in maintaining the traditional culture and way of life for the San. As the San are known for hunting, the land that they have been using for hunting and gathering was turned into grazing land. Environmental management and conservation has now become the most concern for most of the nations as it is good for their development. Policies and national laws world wise have deformed most areas rich in wildlife and natural resources into protected zones or parks with any form of human activity forbidden. One of these policies is seen in Namibia under the legislation which includes the law of the 1960s, which was passed by the Department of Nature Conservation and saw the !Kung (San people's name Namibia) lose 90% of their traditional Nyae Nyae land ([www.saho.com](http://www.saho.com)).

This research was guided by unique needs that constitute livelihood when they are in presence and these are: safe drinking water, food, shelter, sanitation facilities, health, roads, education, information and access to services.

## **17. ETHICAL CONSIDERATION**

Ethics build the basis of any research project and a research that does not deem on how a situation will directly or indirectly affect an individual is unethical and unacceptable. These are the principles that guided this project, putting 'the people' first before anything else. This research will take into consideration that participation will be charitable, consent, informed and confidentiality will be maintained. The individual's autonomy in making any decision related to their willingness to participate or not will be respected, and honesty.

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.0 AN OVERVIEW OF THE SAN IN NAMIBIA

The San people are believed to be the first inhabitants of Southern Africa and their population spreads throughout four countries today. The San people are now found in parts Namibia, South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Angola (SAHO 2010). However the thesis will be particularly discussing the San people of Namibia, in Oshandi of Ohangwena region. The San people of Namibia are recognized as “indigenous peoples” as they are said to be descendants of the original populations residing in the area now known as Namibia. The traditional San peoples have travelled in small family bands as nomadic hunter and gatherers. They followed the water, game and edible plants; they carried with them everything they needed for daily subsistence. The concept of private ownership of land did not exist in their culture, as it is understood in present day Namibia (NAMRIGHT 2006). However it is argued by many scholars that the Namibian San’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.

The San people are one of the indigenous minorities in Namibia that are known for their hunting and gathering lifestyle as according to National Planning Commission (NPC 2003). They were widely known as Bushmen because of their nomadic and non-sedentary routine. It is complex to fully institute where exactly the San came from due to the lack of written accounts. However, much of the information about the San lies in oral history which tells of their stories from generation to generation, as well as in their paintings as they were very inventive people. Potenza (1992) argued that although their routes cannot be clear, the San

people are said to have come to Southern Africa from North and Central Africa thousands of years before the Germans arrived in Namibia.

As most society in early history, the San survived on hunting and gathering. They made use of stone tools even to cut the animals that they hunted as iron equipments had not yet been invented. It is recorded by the South African History Online (SAHO) that it is warranted for one to say that the history of the Stone Age is the history of the San people because they are the ideal example of the Stone Age people and they lived longest in this antique way of life before civilisation. The 'clicks' language of the San people has had its roots traced back to the middle Stone Age period.

### **1.1 The name San**

According to the South African San Institute (2000) the word San comes from the Khoekhoe language. It is not clear what it means; probably it refers to people without cattle or people who forage for their food. It is generally applied to the hunting and gathering peoples of southern Africa who are descended from the original humans in this region of Africa. The SASI (2000) further states that the term San came into use along with the word Khoesan in the late 1920s and 1930s. The terms were coined by Leonhard Schulze and promoted in the English speaking world by Isaac Schapera.

San people had previously been referred to by different names: Soaqua (also a Khoe word), Bosjesmanne, Bushmen, Basarwa, Batwa, Abathwa, Baroa and so forth. San people had names for themselves, such as |Xam-ka-!e (the Karoo San), N||nǀe (southern Kalahari San), ||Xegwi (North Drakensberg San), etc. In the N|u language, spoken by the N||nǀe people, the word for San hunter-gatherers is Sasi. This word may have had the same origin as the word San, but it also refers to the sacred eland antelope (SASI 2000).

## **1.2 Sans as the Indigenous habitants**

Although Namibia is a member of the United Nations and therefore conforms by the Convention for indigenous people, there have been a lot of difficulties in the acknowledgement and or the acceptance of what constitutes being an indigenous citizen in the country. The protection and integration of indigenous peoples is addressed in the 1957 ILO Convention No. 107. Since the review of 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, (Hitchcock and Robert 2004).

Since independence, the Namibian government has endeavoured to build united nations (one Namibia one nation) based on equality of all citizens. San or Bush man are regarded as indigenous hunter-gatherer people of Southern Africa and with this aim in mind, it was certain that every Namibian would be considered indigenous and thereby places all ethnic groups and tribes on an equal footing. All tribes in Namibia were to be treated equally to avoid intensifying any difference and thereby hoping to maintain a peaceful society.

The status of the San people of Namibia is characterized by absolute poverty, no or very little education and the high pace of unemployment and a sense of hopelessness. It is crucial however to acknowledge that it has always been significant for national government to design, 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), estimate suggests that NGO’s in Kenya receive 85 of their capital and

operating expenses from abroad through various NGOs. A government responds dubiously to this fact. On the one hand, they welcome the influx of additional resources; on the other hand they are concerned that NGOs are accountable to, and may act as proxies for, foreign interests.

### **1.3 Demographics and population**

The term San is used to refer to a diverse group of indigenous people living in southern Africa who share historical and linguistic connections. The term “Bushmen” is no longer used. Unfortunately, the San have historically been regarded as second-class citizens in Namibia by Europeans and Bantu-speaking peoples of north-east Africa. According to the National Planning Commission (2011) Namibia has a population of approximately 33,000 San less than 2% of the total population (about 2 million). Their Human Development Index is less than half the national average, while their Human Poverty Index is more than double the national average. Per capita income of the San is the lowest among all language groups in Namibia, and the majority of the population lacks access to means of earning cash income. Food security is a major problem with up to 75% of Namibian San dependent on food-aid programmes. Other problems facing the population include landlessness, lack of education, extreme poverty and dependency, as well as vulnerability to poverty related diseases e.g. tuberculosis (WHO 2001).

The San live in isolated groups in widespread regions of the Kalahari and traditionally used to be hunter-gatherers who migrated in small family bands. The San did not keep domestic livestock and they moved with everything they possessed to follow the availability of water, game and edible plants. Ownership of possessions or livestock is not typical in San society. Traditionally, women tend to look after the children as well as collecting plants and the men are involved in hunting.

Today, San communities are settled permanently in villages where they are diversifying their sources of livelihood like other indigenous communities in Namibia. A number of San are engaged in livestock and crop farming although at a very small scale are employed to earn income, selling crafts, benefit from the social welfare grants provided by the Namibian government, participate in national programmes and have access to social services such as education.

About 33,000 people in Namibia, living mostly in the north and east of the country, are identified as San or Bushman people, the etymologically pejorative, but widely used terms describing the Hai//om, Ju/'Hoansi, !Xu (or Vasekele), Kwe (or Khwe), //Khou-/eisi, Naro, !Xo, /Auni and /Nu-//en ethno-linguistic groups (LAC, 2006).

#### **1.4 The dynamics of San marginalisation**

The living conditions of the majority in Namibians have improved tangibly as result of positive development since independence; government's progress is witnessed within the San communities. Most significantly, the minority of San in Namibia remain almost utterly dependent on cheap labour exchange in an economy where employment in the agricultural sector is deteriorating and where there is little other employment available for unskilled workers in rural areas. Economic dependency, low self esteem, cultural and adaptive problems, social trauma and poverty all combine auto-catalytically to replicate San marginalisation and dependency.

#### **1.5 Location of San**

The San communities like other indigenous communities are settled in all parts of Namibia. The San community is widespread in the Caprivi, Ohangwena, Otjozondjupa and Oshikoto regions of the country. In most cases the San communities are settled along tribal lines in the different regions of the country and have embraced the socio-economic lifestyle of the region

in which they live. In some regions some indigenous tribe members are very few and do not constitute a community but rather a few households that constitutes several family members.

### **1.6 Economy and socio-political structure**

According to Gordon et al (2000) Bushmen were hunter/gatherers, with traditionally about 70/80% of their diet consisting of plant food, as well as berries, nuts, roots and melons gathered primarily by the women. The remaining 30/40% was meat (mostly antelopes), hunted by the men using poisoned arrows and spears on hunts that could last several days. The San made their own temporary homes out of the wood that they gathered. Their hunting & gathering economy and social structure had remained virtually unchanged for thousands of years until very recently, a socio-economic culture that has sustained mankind universally during their evolution until the beginning of agriculture. Gordon et al (2000) further states that the Bushmen did not farm or keep livestock, having no concept of the ownership of land or animal.

### **1.7 Archaeological evidence**

There is evidence to back the journey of the San people through history. Fragments of human bones and art artefacts such as rock art and beadwork as well as the assessment of the places they used to occupy give clues to their historical journey. Namibia is home to the oldest rock paintings of the San and they are dated back to 26 000 years ago (SAHO). The San's beliefs and cultural practises are enshrined in the archaeological evidence and it gives a rich understanding of who they are. Some of the glories of African history are mirrored in San rock art which is representative of the spirit of Africa Renaissance. Gradually the San stopped painting as they grew less in numbers as a result of forced and voluntary movement and their cultural performance also reduced.



### **1.8 Traditional way of life in a modernizing world**

It has not been easy to maintain the traditional culture and way of life for the San. With rearing of animals becoming more and more ingrained in African culture, previous land that had been used by the San for hunting and gathering was turned into grazing land. With environmental management and conservation becoming popular, policies and national laws across the continent have warped most areas rich in wildlife and natural resources into protected zones or parks with any form of human activity forbidden. Examples of such legislation include the 1960s law in Namibia that was passed by the Department of Nature Conservation and saw the !Kung (name for the San people in Namibia) lose 90% of their traditional Nyae Nyae land (SAHO, nd)

Governments have also created and reserved permanent land and locations for the San to settle. This move has been both to civilize and transform the lives of the San for the better as well as to protect natural resources and wildlife. However, evidence from other countries has shown that trying to make the San forego their traditional culture and adopt new ways of living is always ineffective.

The San all around the continent have always struggled to prove their ownership to land as they are usually not in possession of any form of identification documents for title deeds and thus they have often suffered at the hands of dominant groups who blame them of dwelling in land which does not belong to them as was the case with the San people in South Africa against local dominant groups (SAHO 2014). Living alongside non San people, they have experienced segregation as they are usually called savages or animals by their neighbours due to their traditional cultural practises and beliefs.

Since prehistory their status of the san as the ancestry of the original inhabitants of much of Southern and Eastern Africa serves to underpin constant ideas of their living isolated lives as hunter-gatherers unaltered. In fact San people face a situation resulting from centuries, if not

millennia, of interaction with their neighbours, a relationship which has normally been at best highly exploitative and at worst genocidal. Such interaction has all but overwhelmed traditional hunting and gathering culture.

### **1.10 Social problems**

As with many other indigenous peoples throughout the world, the trauma of poverty and adjusting to life in the 20th century has resulted in San developing a crowd of social problems, the most prominent of which is alcohol abuse. San have no tradition of alcohol consumption and hence few social institutions which regulate it as an activity. Of the numerous incidents of domestic violence, fighting and petty crime, the overwhelming majority are committed by people who are drunk. While alcohol abuse and related problems should be seen as a symptom of the harsh manner of their inclusion in the colonial political economy, these problems have developed a momentum of their own and have unquestionably weakened social structures, community institutions and capacity.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2.0 LIVELIHOODS OF THE SANS IN OSHANDI VILLAGE**

This chapter seek to discuss the various roles in the livelihoods of the San People residing within the Oshandi Village of Ondobe constituency in Namibia, with regards to social change and development and the role they play within these. The findings in this chapter do not intend to be a summary of the issues or even a complete analysis of the San people living in Oshandi 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 the livelihoods of ethnic minorities, a strong interest in the roles of Non Governmental Organisation working with the San, and the current political discourse in Namibia. More importantly, it is an attempt to make my perspectives, motivations, and research more transparent.

Livelihoods allow people to secure the basic provisions of life, such as food, water, shelter and clothing. Engaging in livelihoods activities involves attaining the knowledge, skills, social network, raw materials, and other resources to meet individual or collective desires on a sustainable basis. Displaced people are typically involved in activities such as agriculture, livestock breeding, fishing and trade. Income provides the basis for food security and self-reliance, contributing towards general stability, prosperity and peace.

### **2.1 SAN'S LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES IN OSHANDI**

Most San households in Ohangwena Region depend for their livelihoods on food aid, piecework, veldfood gathering, pensions, subsistence agriculture and begging or asking Ovawambo neighbours for food.

It is imperative that in the analysis of the livelihoods of the San the Brundtland definition of sustainability was used by the researcher whereby the San are able to meet needs of the

current generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Brundtland Commission 2012). So as to secure the livelihoods and their families a number of strategies were adopted by the San but they have proven insufficient and the needs of the current generation have not been met. There are different factors contribute to the diversity of the San's livelihoods which include the fact that the San do not have a defined economic way of life due to lack of assets because of their historical background. They venture into different livelihood strategies in a bid to try and survive. According to one respondent, all the strategies that the San have adopted are meant to provide them directly or indirectly with food for consumption.

During the month of June/July the San in Oshandi community site engage themselves with the harvesting of grass which is suitable for thatching. This grass is then sold to the Ovawambo for food and sometimes second-hand clothes as well as traditional beer (Otombo). They are also hired by Ovawambo to clear their fields in around August/September as a way of preparation for the first rains of the farming season. After the farming season which normally starts in November/ December stretching to early January, the San harvest Mopani worms for sale. Women and children camp in the forests where the Mopani worms will be plenty and harvest the worms before drying them.

The research therefore found that the San community at Oshandi research site most depends mostly on the following for their survival:

- food aid (mostly maize-meal and tined fish),
- Casual work and piecework,
- food bought with money earned by selling arts and crafts,
- food bought with pension money (Old Age Pension, , OVC grants),
- begging, or asking Ovawambo neighbours for food when in dire need; and

- veldfood

### **2.1.1 Food aid**

The San at Oshandi like any others receives food aid food from the OPM's San Development Programme (SDP), drought relief food and food for work from the Office of the Prime Minister via the Ohangwena Regional Council and distributed by the respective constituency offices. Food aid normally targets vulnerable and/or marginalised communities including the San and the Ovatie, and usually consisted of maize meal (one 12.5 kg sack), tinned fish, know soups for sauce and cooking oil. They also receive rice via the councillor's office. Food aid is distributed differently depending on whether or not a community received livelihood support from the MLR and the DRFN. Usually at Oshandi, food aid is distributed to San households only, on an irregular basis, through the office of the councillor of Ondobe constituency based on the household's size. The San in Oshandi receives food aid on a monthly or bi-monthly basis.

### **2.1.2 Casual work and piecework**

Casual work and piecework are also central livelihood strategies for San households. Casual work refers to the non-pensionable and informal work arrangement whereby an employer pays the worker a wage at the end of the month or a specified period (e.g. for herding livestock). Piecework on the other hand, is an informal labour arrangement whereby the employer pays a pre-agreed amount after a much shorter period (often just a few hours) for a smaller-scale task. Various kinds of casual work and piecework are available to the San, such as clearing crop fields, cultivation tasks, repairing houses, fetching water for shebeen operators, collecting firewood and herding livestock (Barrett et al 2007). These types of labour are remunerated with money, food items and/or non-food items, and where the

medium of exchange is money, the rates vary from one site to another and according to the job done.

The researcher learned that the types of piecework done by San men is different to those done by San women, and specific cases in Ohangwena revealed that women earned less money than men for piecework in general. San children at Oshandi also do piecework to supplement the household income, and this appeared to be an accepted practice in most San households in this area.

In rural areas the availability of piecework and casual work is also always dependent on the seasons in crop-farming regions such as Omusati, Ohangwena, Kavango and Caprivi, opportunities for piecework increase in times of tilling, planting and harvesting, and in general there are more opportunities for casual work in these northern crop-growing areas compared to the drier, eastern parts of the country (NPC 2000). Construction and maintenance activities can provide another source of income for San people, if and when San are hired for such work in their own communities or in communities in surrounding areas.

### **2.1.3 Arts and crafts**

The San people of Namibia 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 The researcher learned that some San women at Oshandi generated income by making baskets, necklaces, bracelets and clothes, and San men usually made traditional knives, bows, arrows, wooden cups and fix shoes, whether for generating income or for own use. Discussion participants indicated that these experiences had increased the confidence of those who partake, and contributed to increasing their income to some degree, albeit irregularly.

#### **2.1.4 Pensions and social welfare grants**

Namibia is one of only six sub-Saharan countries that provide a monthly, non-contributory pension to its elderly citizens (Pelham 2007). Every Namibian citizen aged 60 and older residing in the country is entitled to receive a monthly pension of N\$1000. Namibia inherited the concept of a non-contributory pension from the South African Government at Independence, but made substantial changes to it by way of the National Pension Act 10 of 1992 which forms the regulatory framework under which the Old Age Pension is currently administered in Namibia.

The Old Age Pension is identified one of the major livelihood strategies among the San across the regions, chiefly because it provides a regular income to the beneficiaries and their dependants. Indeed, in many San households at Oshandi, this pension is the main regular source of household income, or even the only regular source. It is indicated by the Namibia Household Income and Expenditure Survey (NHIES) of 2009/2010 that 20.1% of Khoisan speakers in Namibia rely on pensions as their main source of income, which is nearly double the national average of 11.1% (Namibia Statistics Agency (NSA 2012). The San use the Old Age Pension money to cover the costs of basic items such as food, clothing and school-related necessities. However, the financial support offered by a pension recipient to a San household is often eroded by a fragmentary crippling debt burden. In fact they use most of the pension money on settling household debts on the day of the pension payout, leaving very little to survive on for the next month and resulting, of course, in new debt commitments.

In addition, a number of challenges were said to be limiting the San's access to Old Age Pensions at Oshandi. For example, inability to register for the pension was a common complaint by most of the participants in this study at this area. The participants indicated that this was due to their lack of national documents such as Identity cards (ID) and/or birth certificate being essential for registration and their inability to afford transport to Eenhana

town to register for a pension. San also cited a misrepresentation of their ages (i.e. under 60 rather than 60+) on their Identity documents as a reason for their not receiving an Old Age Pension. It is stated in the Namibia's Fourth National Development Plan 2012/13 to 2016/17 (NDP4) that 91% of people aged 60 and above receive an Old Age Pension (NPC 2012).

### **2.1.5 Relations with other groups**

The types of relationships between the Ovawambo (Ohangwena's majority population) and the San are wide-ranging from employer-employee, sexual and romantic partners, spouses, fellow villagers as well as fellow otombo drinkers.

In the region's socio-political setup, relationships with Ovambo people are crucial for San people as a matter of survival. This is because Ovawambo people provide piecework, food, transportation, communication, leadership and assistance in times of crises. However, San are certainly in an inferior position at all levels. One discussion participant noted that Ovambo people treat them as one would treat children, as people who did not know much and/or could not take care of themselves. He further narrated that they were looked upon as drunks, in constant need and dependent on the Ovawambo for their survival, they were usually talked to, not with. He even pointed out that they were sometimes treated like dogs. Romantic and sexual relations between San and Ovambo speaking people are complicated. It was said that Ovawambo women would not have romantic or sexual relations with San men because the latter did not have much to offer. Ovawambo men, on the other hand, seemed to engage in sexual relations with the San women, but tended not to marry them or form romantic partnerships with them, mainly because in their view the women were not equal to the Ovawambo. According to the San's headman at Oshandi site, generally Ovawambo men who impregnated a San woman do not accept the same paternal responsibilities as they do when they impregnated an Ovambo woman. Children born from such inter-ethnic sexual



relationships were referred to as “San children” (omukwanghala) but not as “Ovambo children”.

### **2.1.6 Hunting**

All discussion participants at Oshandi indicated that they did not hunt because hunting was no longer allowed. The researchers saw some San carrying bows and arrows, but reportedly these were made for sale, not for hunting. During the discussion with the san, a participant noted that hunting was still taking place in and around the village. Discussion participants at the Oshandi noted they were unhappy with the regulations that prevented them from hunting and living as they had in the past.

### **2.1.7 Water availability**

Water is an essential requirement that is needed for the day to day use by any human being. Access to clean water for drinking is one of the major indicators of whether one is living under extreme poverty or not. Clean drinking water will automatically promote one’s good health and increase their lifespan. The researcher found that the Oshandi community site was provided with clean water by the OPM. This would prevent them from getting diseases via using dirty water.

### **2.1.8 Health and sanitation**

Health and sanitation issues are a real danger that might threaten the San community’s wellbeing. Some participant at Oshandi indicated that they have little knowledge left about traditional medicines and most of the trees they used to use for medicine have long been cut down and or disappeared and the appreciated that their situation differs from other sans in the region in that though the nearest hospital is 20 KM away from their community, they receive treatment at the Oshandi clinic which is 2 kilometres away from their homes. The sans have also pointed out that some of them are being denied services at Oshandi clinic in an even that

they don't have consultation fees of N\$ 4 though it was condemned by the nurse in charge at that clinic. She explained that there is no provision for the San to receive medical treatments for free, but they look at their conditions and attend to those who are really in need of medical attention without asking for any requirements. She further said she advises them always to come for voluntary HIV test so as to be sure of their HIV status and acquire further treatment where required.

The lack of sanitation facilities was a concern at Oshandi where there was no pit latrine. Using the bush is regarded as unhygienic due to flies and limited options for hand washing. Though the Prime Minister's office have provided them with water for domestic use and plans to start nutritional garden the participants indicated that they are still using bush as toilets. The office of the councillor indicated that the toilets are in plans to be constructed.

The research has also learned that there was no bathing facilities at the site and the San could spend more days without taking bath. Their clothes were very dirty, lying on the ground and when asked why their clothes were in a mess, they responded that they do not have bathing soaps and they have no proper bags to keep their clothes.

### **2.1.9 Education**

According to MDG #2, primary education must be universal thus all children are entitled to go to school regardless of their circumstances. The questionnaires obtained that 90% of the respondents have never been to school and 85% of the respondents were between the ages of 40-50 years.

The Namibian government is putting more efforts to get as many San people educated as possible. Under the Office of the Prime Minister, a kinder garden (Early hood Child Development centre) was constructed at Oshandi early 2010 and was officially opened by the

then Deputy Prime Minister Hon. Marko Uusiku. The kinder garden has learners from local tribal groups too, but it is predominantly for San learners. When the researcher visited the centre he has confirmed that a total of 27 learners were registered of which 12 were San and the other 15 were from Oshiwambo tribe. To boost the attendance of the kids, the Supplementary School Feeding Programme (SSFP) is introduced where they prepare a porridge which is served at 10am and 11:30am. Despite the (SSFP) the attendance was still low and learners are reportedly show up to school only during the serving ours. The class is made up of corrugated iron sheets and there is one unqualified teacher. The teacher noted that since the establishment of the ECD centre in 2010 there is no record of any learner from that centre that made it to the high level of study.

#### **2.1.10 Housing**

The San at Oshandi lived in small structures built with tree logs. These small structures are known as 'Omapundo' in Oshiwambo vernacular meaning 'tiny huts'.

The researcher found out that the Namibian government under the OPM have provided this community with houses made out of the corrugated iron sheets early this year. This is to improve their housing standards from tiny houses to modern housed. According to the Deputy Director Administration, in the office of the Ohangwena Governor, the government has plans to construct brick houses for these people as they did at other centres. One of the respondents admired the Ohangwena Governor; Hon. Usko Nghaamwa for his efforts in making sure their wellbeing is one of his priorities.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3.0 INTERVENTION BY THE STATE AND NON STATE ACTORS ON THE SAN IN OSHANDI VILLAGE**

Realizing results in the lessening of poverty can only be attained when all stakeholders, including those that are external to Government recognise their roles and responsibilities. Generally, it can be agreed upon that almost all development assistance is aimed at achieving the major goal of poverty diminution. A process of promoting economic growth to lift as many people out of poverty as possible is required through poverty reduction. The chapter furnishes an impression of the policy framework concerning poverty reduction programmes among the san in Namibia over the years. It looks at the programmes and policies that the Government of Namibia has put in place to ensure that poverty is eased in the country specifically among the San community. Appropriate policies which would encourage stakeholder participation in poverty alleviation and inspire economic development would be a pre-requisite for successful poverty alleviation programmes.

#### **3.1 Role of Government**

The international community through the MDGs; MDG #1 recognised the alleviation of constant poverty and improving of livelihoods as an ethical obligation that is fast becoming a rights-based phenomenon. The government has a legal mandate to protect the rights of its citizens and thus plays a leading role in livelihood improvements. According to Adejumobi (2006), the role of government in ensuring better living standard can be best understood in terms of governance issues as these are at the heart of poverty alleviation. Adejumobi further says that a good governed state through decentralization of power and rule of law will consequently affect social service delivery in a positive way. Some of the major interventions that government can undertake include extending educational support to the underprivileged, capacitating and redistributing resources to empower the poor to be more productive.

### **3.2 San Development Programmes**

In an effort to find a solution, the government, through the Office of the Prime Minister, has set up a deliberate effort, the San Development Programme, to ensure that San people receive assistance and support from the government, individuals, businesses and other development partners. The efforts are geared towards initiating development programmes in their communities. Since 2005, the then Deputy Prime Minister (Dr Albertina Amathila) has been spearheading the San Development Programme to cater for their needs in terms of setting up income and wealth generating projects to ensure the survival of the people whose life is nomadic and who used to survive on wild berries and animal hunting.

Since its inception in November 2005, the San Development Programme has kept in check the rate at which San learners were dropping out of schools. More San kids and learners are today attending school. The programme has initiated five pre-schools in the Ohangwena region. It is noted that the rate of drop-out among school going children is now relatively stable. It was also through this programme that the pre-school at Oshandi San community site was constructed so as to improve the San's literacy level.

In a bid to improve the housing for the San Community in Oshandi, the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) built zinc houses for them. Some 32 households of this community were constructed early this year for them to relocate from their traditional dwellings called omapundo.

The programme mainly focuses on sustainable livelihood support programmes, education, land and income-generating initiatives for marginalised communities. In a short span of time, the programme has recorded considerable achievements in the provision of land, livestock, education, clean drinking water, livelihood support goods, conservancies and better housing to bring these communities on par with the mainstream population in Namibia.

Through the San Development programme in the OPM the program builds schools, provides allowance for care takers, buy school uniforms, pay school fees and food for the San as well as pay allowance to the students at high level institutions. The supplementary school feeding programme is also introduced at the pre-school. All these are done so as to encourage the San to attend school but its success has been limited. The research found that some of the children at the Oshandi pre-school only come to school at the feeding time and leave as soon as they get their plates of food.

### **3.3 Role of Civil Society and NGOs**

As according to Connolly, (2007) in developing world civil society has been mainly understood to be promoting democracy as well as being a watchdog for the state. However, since the beginning of the MDGs the role of civil society has altered from the promotion of democracy to partnership role within the governments in promoting improving livelihoods through pro-poor discourse.

The involvement of the Namibian Red Cross Society's (NRCS) with the San community includes a programme that provides agricultural starter packs to grow vegetables in gardens. This programme is designed to reduce food insecurity in this community. Training in gardening as part of capacity building for the San is also provided by NRSs.

The researcher has also established that NRCS has an important function of implementing government projects for vulnerable communities which are identified by the government especially through re-adoption of Indigenous knowledge system. The NRCs is also playing a major role in training the private sector in first aid classes. Namibian Red Cross Society acknowledges government as the umbrella body for what it has done in the attempt to improve the livelihoods especially among the San community within the region. They said

“at Oshandi, a good infrastructure such as roads and telecommunication networks were constructed by the government which facilitates accessibility to this area, according to NRCS.

### **3.4 Role of media**

According to Wood (2007), the media provides an open forum where public views including the poor’s concerns are reflected. The media plays a scrutiny role which has the potential to unearth issues that are otherwise unknown to the general public and it can mainstream poverty issues in its news coverage. Much of the media’s reach raises awareness and increases constructive debate holding responsible authorities accountable. When properly engaged, the media can use feature stories to provide new angles and tell hard-hitting human stories. The press can integrate poverty reduction stories into the core areas of journalism, such as politics, business and economics, governance, corruption and crime. Media is an essential tool in the prevention of violent conflict, as it creates a platform for non-violent discussion and issue resolution. By giving individuals and groups a voice, the media alleviates the sense of isolation and hopelessness that often precedes violence. A free flow of information strengthens accountability and transparency and prevents corruption. It can serve to inform governments of issues simmering among populations in order to direct the state’s resources towards areas of potential dissatisfaction and unrest. The media, therefore, affords individuals and communities the possibility to become active in the development process, thereby increasing its long-term suitability and sustainability.

### **3.2 OVERALL CHALLENGES**

The researcher has noted that the San community is over shadowed by shebeens which belong to the Oshiwambo speaking people. This leads to the San’s over consuming of alcohol.

Due to the nomadic nature of the San people, Ministry of Home Affairs experienced challenges in tracing the spouses to register their children for identification documents, especially the fathers. To acquire the identity documents both parents have to be present. These documents are necessary during the children's school registration as well as when it will be required in future

Ignorance among the San themselves has affected the government's efforts in assisting improving their livelihoods. The research has learned that some of the San at Oshandi sell relief food in exchange with the traditional beer (otombo). The government has put the caretaker at the centre to control them on such ridiculous behaviours. The San would sell the tinned fish and meal meals. The office of the councillor has also condemned the issue of this trading. They warned those who buy food items from the San to stop it with immediate effects.

“Our children's traditional names are not recognised when we take them for birth registration and or to primary schools”. These were words from one of the respondents. Though the Deputy Minister of marginalised communities promised to do something about this issue as it leads to the loss of indigenous names of the San, the respondent indicated that when they take children for registration the officials refuse to register them as they claim not to be able to pronounce them nor to write them since they are in San language. It becomes hard for the San to write them down for the officials due to the high level of illiterate rate which saw most of the San not able to read and write.



The lack of sanitation facilities at Oshandi was another challenge. The researcher found that there are no toilets, the San are still using bush as toilets. Using the bush is regarded as unhygienic due to flies and limited options for hand washing. The use of bush may lead diseases such as cholera

Most of the participants at Oshandi considered child labour to be an acceptable source of income. Ovawambo households use San children to look after cattle or do other types of piecework and either pay the children directly or pay their parents. None of the San parents who participated in the research discussions expressed any concern about their children doing such work.

### **Unfair trade between the san and the owambo people**

Due to the lack land and farming equipment, agriculture became unproductive for the San of Oshandi. Most of their farming is done using their own hands due to lack of ploughs. From time to time when they manage to get ploughs from the Ovawambo they are able to plough their fields. In order to help themselves, they have become labourers for their neighbours (Ovawambo) whereby they do most of the harvesting, field clearing and cultivation. In return they get food, second-hand clothing or in some instance traditional beer (Otombo) of which does not amount to the work done. Therefore, many complained during the interviews pointing to the unfair trade that takes place between the two parties with the San working more for very little.

Respondent #1, “What we are paid for our labour is very little, does not wealth work we do”.



**FIG 1:** *The picture above shows a san man at Oshandi working on the craft for an Owambo person and he complained of the unfair trade that takes place between them and the owambo people. Source: Primary data 2015*

### **3.3 WAYS OF ENHANCING LIVELIHOODS OF THE SAN**

Given the situation as presented in the study, the status of the San has not changed much.

Hence, some of the actions that need to be taken are as follows:

- The improvement of the livelihood of marginalised communities should be viewed as a matter of urgency as the legacy of colonial subjugation and social marginalisation had a negative psychological effect on the people of Namibia.
- The constructions of shebeens near the San community's sites must be forbidden. This will prevent the non- San speaking who sell beers to them as they rob off their pension funds. It will also reduce the abuse of alcohol among the san.
- Programmes and initiatives implemented by the government and non state actors must be culturally sensitive and attempt to work with and through existing social and cultural structures

- Preserving their traditions and encourage them to put them to good use. Training on how to utilize facilities at their disposal without changing their culture is needed.
- San language should be introduced in school and book in San language should be introduced.
- The Ondobe Councillor should ensure that ethnic groups including the San in his constituencies are represented in their forums to address their concerns during meetings as well as an adequate representation on land boards in Ohangwena region.
- The Ministry of Home Affairs should continue to decentralise their services to reach the san communities. The identity documents will enable them register for pension funds as well as to register and or apply for voter cards so as to demonstrate their democratic rights during elections.
- There is need for social workers to work with the San people so as to provide them with counselling where necessary

### 3.4 QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a student at Midlands State University for Bachelor of Arts in Development Studies Honours degree. As part of the programme requirement, I am carrying out a research on the **“Livelihoods of ethnic minorities in Namibia focusing on the San community in Oshandi of Ondobe constituency in Ohangwena region”**. I warmly appeal for your contribution in this assessment by responding to the listed questions below. All the data that will be gathered through this questionnaire will be strictly used for academic purposes and it will be treated with uncompromised confidentiality.

#### Part A: Demographic Data (tick where appropriate)

Sex

Male	Female
------	--------

Age

>15	15-20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	>60

Level of education

Primary level	Secondary level	Vocational Institution level	Tertiary level

Number of people per household (specify number)

<5	5 to 10	>10

**Part B**

Do you possess any assets ? Yes/No

i) If yes, mention them.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

ii) What is the highest level of education attained by a member of your family?  
.....

iii) Are you employed? Yes/No

iv) What is the nature of your employment?.....  
.....

v) If not, why?  
.....  
.....

vi) What is your monthly income?  
.....

vii) Do you have access to basic shelter? Yes/No

viii) If not, why?  
.....  
.....

ix) Do you have access to clean water? Yes/No

x) If not, why?  
.....  
.....

xi) Do you have access to food? Yes/No

xii) If not, why?  
.....  
.....

xiii) Do you have access to sanitary facilities? Yes/No

xiv) If yes, name them?  
.....  
.....

**Part C**

i) Has government implemented any projects at you centre? Yes/No

ii) Were the projects beneficial to you? Yes/No

iii) If not, why?  
.....  
.....

.....  
.....

**Part D**

- i) Do you have access to land? Yes/No
- ii) If not, why?.....  
.....
- iii) What skills/competences do you have?.....  
.....
- iv) What do you think is the source of all your challenges?.....  
.....  
.....

**Part E**

- i) How many NGOs have worked with you so far? .....
- ii) Did you benefit from their projects? Yes/No
- iii) If not, why?.....  
.....  
.....

**Part F**

- i) What do you suppose should be done to improve your livelihoods? By NGOs.....  
.....
- ii) By government.....  
.....  
.....by other players.....  
.....  
.....

**THANK YOU!**

### **3.5 INTERVIEW GUIDE**

#### **Interview guide for the San community at Oshandi**

1. For how long have you lived in this settlement and where did you live before?
2. What challenges are you facing?
3. What do you think is the cause for your challenges?
4. How are you coping with your challenges?
5. What were your livelihood sources before you came in this settlement?
6. What are your livelihood sources now?
7. Are these livelihood sources sustainable for you?
8. What is your relationship with your neighbours ( Ovawambo)
9. What has government done for you to improve your livelihoods?
10. What have NGOs done for you improve your livelihoods?

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## **PRIMARY SOURCES**

## **Interviews**

Focus group discussions (San community) on June 2015, Oshandi village

Interview with Mr Kamatuka (Deputy Director Marginalised groups, State House) on June 2015

Interview with Mr Shimanda ( Deputy Director Administration, OHC) on June 2015

Interview with Mr Haulumbu (Oshandi San community site head) on July 2015

Interview with Mrs Eva Nghishoono Mwandangi (Nurse at Oshandi clinic) on July 2015

Interview with Ms Nangula Wapota (Clerk, Ondobe constituency office) on July 2015

Interview with Ms Rosalia (Care taker) on July 2015

Radio dialogue

