

One participant maintained forcefully that the initial task was one of acquiring and disseminating knowledge, saying that we are neither OXFAM nor adult literacy experts.

P. Molutsi emphasised the need for educating the public about Basarwa and suggested that the steering committee call on people who have worked in this field to give talks about them. For example, Saugestad had addressed his Sociology students last year, and they were very interested. Other ideas put forward were the possibility of doing research on two matters which the Deputy Permanent Secretary, Mr. C. Ntwaagae had indicated his Ministry was keen to support: 1) the link between Basarwa and the environment and 2) hunting skills research.

Datta brought up the matter of funding, saying that NIR has some resources. Senior students could be encouraged to do Basarwa research, for which they might receive some remuneration. He also suggested that other research funds, such as the Gender Research Programme, could be utilised for research on gender relations among the Basarwa.

During the discussion a number of more practical aspects of research organisations were touched upon. These had been outlined, eg. in the Background Document that was circulated from NIR before the seminar. A number of objectives have already been achieved, including the arrangement of the present workshop. It was felt that the task ahead should be to keep up this momentum, to consolidate the activities and interests expressed so far, and to create an infrastructure that will be conducive to individual research projects and the gradual establishment of a multidisciplinary, 'umbrella type' research programme.

Datta expressed the view that the present Committee for the Promotion of Basarwa Research should be the appropriate unit for following up the different ideas and proposals that had emerged during the workshop. To this end he proposed that the Committee be given a mandate from the Basarwa Research Workshop to evaluate its present composition, and to take such steps towards restructuring and co-opting new members as the committee might feel useful. He also suggested that the Committee should proceed towards being recognised as a regular Standing Committee under the University of Botswana Senate, quoting the Gender Policy Programme Committee as a relevant parallel case. The participants supported these proposals.

CLOSING REMARKS

Lebohang Letsie-Taole was called upon by the chairman to make the closing remarks. She began by thanking all the organisers, particularly Sidsel Saugestad who had made the workshop possible. She felt it had been a very successful workshop and that it had been an historical, unprecedented event for Botswana. For the University of Botswana it represents a personal commitment to the Basarwa, and she was particularly appreciative that two Basarwa had attended. Workshop members had agreed that Basarwa opinion is needed and that there should be more participatory research, so it was most relevant that Basarwa were present. Also having representatives from Namibia and South Africa has given a regional perspective to the gathering which is important. This would facilitate the pooling together of resources and strengthening collaboration, she said, and expressed the hope that this cooperation will continue. In conclusion, Letsie-Taole stressed the need to explore real issues (including those of gender) and always to seek to be informed.

1994. Developing Basarwa Research and
Research for Basarwa Development
eds. S. Saugestad + J. Tsonope
Gaborone: NIR
APPENDIX A

A SUMMARY OF SOME SALIENT POINTS

The workshop did not pass any resolutions. Being the first of its kind ever held in Botswana, much of its objective was achieved by bringing the participants together and starting up a dialogue that hopefully will be continued in many different fora. However, a few points may be mentioned that seemed to set the tone and indicated a direction forwards:

1) The workshop came at a right time, as the University is ready to give priority to research activities. Developments outside the University also highlight the need to address the issue of the Basarwa. The Regional San conference that followed a month after the workshop saw interaction between government, researchers and the San/Basarwa delegates.

2) An independent Namibia and a New South Africa provide new and very promising opportunities for regional cooperation on Basarwa/San research.

3) Concerning research interests and plans, three areas were in focus:

Linguistics:

- standardisation of terminology for language names and orthography
- fieldwork on current status and distribution of Khoesan languages in Botswana.

Law:

- human rights & land rights

Social Sciences:

Two methodological approaches are needed, and should complement each other:

- case studies/community studies for the detailed picture,
- but also need for aggregate data and a more comprehensive picture.

Studies must make it possible to compare Basarwa groups with national averages.

4) The ideas that emerged at the workshop should be followed up in a variety of ways: short-term projects and pilot studies should be encouraged, and over time an 'umbrella-type' research programme should be established.

5) There is a structure in place to follow up the ideas that were put forward. The members of the Steering Committee for Basarwa Research are the following:

African Languages: Dr. Joseph Tsonope, Ms. M. Kopi

CCE/DAE: Dr. Samora Gaborone

Economics: Mr. J. Sentsho

Environmental Science: Mr. Masego Mpotokwane

History: Dr. Paul Lane

Law: Mr. B. Moeletsi

Nursing Education: Prof. Serara Selelo-Kupe

Sociology: Dr. Patrick Molutsi

NIR: Dr. Ansu Datta

Secretary: Basarwa research coordinator/secretary, NIR.