

was from Mahopong. The discouragement of independent political organization on the part of the San was significant. It connected directly to the other key issues of land rights, cattle, and the control of community resources. As Gulbrandsen et al. pertinently noted, without recognised leadership the people of the zones have no legal defences against outside intruders.

Literacy, or the lack of it, is relevant to political organization. While the adult illiteracy rate for all Botswana in 1990 was only 26.4%, the position of the San appears to be totally different. A study of four settlements in the Central District, during 1989, found that as many as 86% of respondents had never been to school or had access to adult literacy programmes (Ndozi and Toteng).

That the San and other Remote people constitute almost half of the population of the Ghanzi District is of active political importance. Illiteracy is a grave weakness but it does not guarantee acquiescence. In Groot Laagte, for example, the monitors found during 1990-91 that 72 per cent of respondents held national identity cards, and that 81% had voted in the 1989 national elections.

1994. *Developing Basarwa Research and Research for Basarwa Development*
eds S. Saugestad + J. Tsosope
Gaborone: NIR p. 57

**DEMOCRACY RESEARCH ACTIVITIES
AND PROSPECTS OF STUDYING ISSUES RELATED TO THE BASARWA**

By

**Patrick Molutsi, Senior Lecturer,
Department of Sociology,
University of Botswana**

The Democracy Research Project was established in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Botswana in 1987. The central objective of the Project is to study, monitor and publish aspects of Botswana democracy. The activities involve research on different topics, seminars and workshops to disseminate results, and publication of books and manuscripts on the subject of democracy.

General Findings to-date

Different research conducted by Project members over the years shows that Botswana has succeeded in establishing a wide range of stable institutions at central and local levels. So far these institutions have a potential to promote democracy and protect basic rights of individuals. Our research, however, shows that the public is poorly informed, peripherally involved and less aware of the functions of these institutions and their relevance to their needs.

At another level our findings show that there are still general problems of attitudes, discrimination and deprivation especially in the countryside meted to minority groups and women, which limit these groups' enjoyment of a democratic culture in Botswana.

The Basarwa in particular are slowly losing their traditional hunting territory, rights to hunting and gathering freely and are encouraged to settle in desolate places where neither livestock rearing nor crop production is viable. Poverty among the Basarwa, women, small farmers and low levels of literacy are major constraints to participation of these people in development.

Future Research Focus

Recent research trends in Botswana show that we may be reaching a turning point where the focus of research is shifting from macro issues of policy, development and democracy to more focused research. In the past few years, emphasis has been laid on questions of whose democracy, whose development, etc. These questions have led to efforts to carry out research on the needs of women, children, people with disability, teenage problems and youth.

In the Democracy Research Project, the focus has also shifted from democracy seen from the top which focuses on institutions and structure and little on the process and practice of democracy, to issues of how the civil society perceives democracy and how they practice it. In this context the issues of Basarwa's land rights, group rights, etc will become relevant.