

BASARWA DEVELOPMENT AT CROSSROADS: CONTRADICTIONS AND RESISTANCE-CRITICAL INSIGHTS FROM THE CKGR RELOCATIONS

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Abstract

The relationship between the government of Botswana and the Basarwa has attracted considerable attention nationally and internationally in the recent past. Underlying the controversies over the development of Basarwa have been the issues of land rights. The Botswana government has made different responses to these issues. Firstly, it has declared an area which the Basarwa consider to be their ancestral land a Reserve. Secondly, the government designed and implemented a re-settlement policy that involves relocation of Basarwa from the area declared a "Reserve" to government created settlements under the Remote Area Development Program (RADP). This article is based on the empirical findings of a fact finding mission on the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR) in 2004. The article examines some of the underlying factors that motivated relocation and the Basarwa's resistance to that relocation. It argues that the problem is not just a matter of relocation per se, and the manner in which it was handled. The fundamental problem rather hinges on the different definitions of 'development' by both the government of Botswana and the Basarwa. The resistance of the Basarwa therefore emanate from fundamental differences in the conception of development between the two parties. This article proposes a pragmatic and sustainable solution to the Basarwa development problem in Botswana. The solution to the current impasse lies in a more negotiated and consultative process facilitated by both parties rather than through confrontation in the courts of law.

Keywords: development, resistance, relocation, wildlife, resources.

1.0 Background: Events that led to relocation of Basarwa from the CKGR

The Basarwa as they are commonly called in Botswana, have lived in the region known today as the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR) since time immemorial. Historically, CKGR was established as a game reserve under the Game Proclamation through the High Commissioners Notice on February 14th 1961. The CKGR, covering 52, 800 square kilometres, was established following the recommendations of the anthropologist George Silberbauer. One of the main reason for establishing the reserve was to allow the Basarwa and the Bakgalagadi (with whom they have co-habited for more than 400 years) to continue their traditional lifestyle if they so wished. It was also meant to provide protection for Basarwa displaced from the Gantsi farms. The rights of the residents of CKGR were recognized by the British colonial government who guaranteed them exclusive rights (to practice their traditional hunting and gathering lifestyles) under a system of traditional land usage (Silberbauer, 1965). When Botswana was declared independent in 1966, the exclusive rights accorded to the Basarwa by the British colonial government were not abolished. The constitution of Botswana, in particular Article 14 (3), only accorded the Basarwa a right to reside in the CKGR.

After independence in 1966 the Government of Botswana made a commitment to develop all Batswana in Botswana irrespective of their ethnic origin and locality. The government position was that every Motswana should have unimpeded access to whatever development benefits independent Botswana provided. To realize this commitment, naively or otherwise, the Botswana government ensured that Basarwa, like all other Batswana communities were catered for. The perception was that Basarwa could no longer be said to be nomadic hunters and gatherers since their lifestyles were changing dramatically, including those residing in the CKGR. The changing lifestyles inside the CKGR, in particular, shifting from a hunter-gatherer lifestyle to a more permanent settlement, has led to conflict of land use inside the CKGR, which is primarily a game reserve.

To address problems emanating from conflicts in land use practices, the Government of Botswana appointed a fact finding mission in 1985, which consisted of government officials. The purpose of the mission was to investigate perceived changes with a view to providing information that would facilitate decision-making on environmental protection and wildlife conservation. The mission's report confirmed allegations of sedentarism, adoption of modern means of hunting, depletion of wildlife and veld foods and an increase in the number of livestock among Basarwa communities. The government of Botswana adopted a position that the emerging lifestyle was not compatible with the promotion of wildlife conservation in the CKGR. On the basis of the report, the Botswana government began talking about the need to resettle CKGR residents since 1986 – estimated at the time to be about 1 500 – 2000 individuals. As the years unfolded, people grew more and more uncertain about their future. Between 1996 and 1997, the government officially announced that all communities within the CKGR would have to relocate to places outside the reserve; New Xade to the west of CKGR, and Kaudwane, which is south of the reserve. Relocation meant termination of social services (water, closing down of the school and health post) inside the reserve and provision of such services in the newly created settlements. This process was informed and guided by the government policy on Remote Area Development, RADP, 1978.

Initially, the government anticipated that the relocation will proceed smoothly since it was perceived to be in the best interest of the CKGR residents. However, as will be demonstrated throughout this article, the events that followed were very unpleasant and raised fundamental questions about government conceptions of development and its consequent strategies. The purpose of this article is to analyze the extent to which the events in the CKGR, i.e. the relocation and the reactions to it, are a reflection of the differences in the definition of 'development' by the government and by the Basarwa, differences which lead to resistance by the Basarwa. The article begins with events that led to the relocations, the arguments for and against relocation (contesting views). This is followed by a critical review of public policy on the Basarwa development and intervention strategies. Next, challenges to the Botswana government notions of development meant for the Basarwa is examined in the light of the findings from the CKGR fact finding mission. This analysis aims at highlighting insights that the CKGR events shed on issues of Basarwa development in Botswana.

2.0 Research site and methods

The data for this article was obtained primarily from former residents of the CKGR (both inside and outside the Reserve) who informed the fact finding mission team which visited the CKGR in

March, 2004. The team comprised professionals, including government officials, members of the local press, local NGOs and UBTromso Basarwa Research Program Coordinator. Places and settlements visited include: Gope, Gugamma, Metsiamanong, Molapo and Xade (inside the Reserve) and newly created settlements of Kaudwane and New Xade as well as older Basarwa settlements such as East and West Hanahai, which are all outside the Reserve. The visit allowed civil society organizations, the media, independent research organizations and government officials to assess the situation for themselves and then to provide correct information to the rest of the world.

During the visit approximately 235 Basarwa (both inside and outside the Reserve) were informally interviewed. Interviews were conducted either in small focus groups or individually, and both interviews were supplemented by observations. A cross section of residents participated in the interviews, including; men, women, youth, welfare recipients and those who have benefited from income generating schemes. In addition, reports obtained from both Kweneng and Gantsi District Councils, Ministry of Local Government and the 1985 Fact Finding Mission were reviewed.

3.0 Relocation

3.1 *Who was relocated and why?*

A study conducted by Sheller (1977) found that residents of CKGR comprise mainly three different groups, namely, the G/wikwe, G/naakwe (Basarwa) and the Bakgalagadi. The majority, about 84.2% comprise the Basarwa while the remaining 15.8% comprised Bakgalagadi (mostly those of the Bangologa extraction) and other small groups who have resided in the area now known as the CKGR even before the creation of Gantsi farms. These are the people who are being relocated. Contrary to the impression created in the media and by some international NGOs, it is important to point out that it is not all the people in the CKGR who are resisting relocation but a section of some Basarwa – mainly those associated with the First People of the Kalahari (A Pan San organization based in Gantsi). The official reasons given for the relocation of the Basarwa from CKGR were based primarily on the report of the 1985 Fact Finding Mission, and subsequent findings from other independent researchers. In 1986 the government took a decision, published through the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Circular No.1 of 1986, that:

- The Reserve could not carry both Basarwa and wildlife, i.e. wildlife and people could not co-exist. The lifestyles of the residents of CKGR had changed over the years; they were no longer nomadic traditional hunter-gatherer but were more sedentary. This had resulted in conflict of land use between wildlife conservation and human settlements.
- That it was not economically and administratively feasible nor sustainable to provide services to scattered populations within the CKGR and therefore any developments in Old Xade and other settlements in the CKGR be frozen because they had no prospect of becoming economically viable.

The reasons given then and subsequently were based on broader government development goals that residents of CKGR, like all other Batswana elsewhere, deserved the benefits of development; that people should partake in the ‘development’ of the country; and that this could only happen

in 'modern' settlements under the auspices of the RADP where water, schools, health and other facilities could be provided.

3.2 The conduct of the relocation exercise

The process of implementing the above decision was a difficult and a sensitive task for the government. It involved reversing a decision that was taken earlier i.e. before the 1985 Fact Finding Mission was undertaken in which Xade (known now as Old Xade) was declared a permanent settlement by the then Minister of Local Government Lands and Housing – Minister Daniel Kwelagobe. Basic infrastructure such as a school, a health post and water were provided and people from other settlements within the Reserve were encouraged to relocate to Xade. This was to change a few years later, when in a concerted effort to implement the recommendations of the 1985 Fact Finding Mission government began consultations for removals. According to government, extensive consultations (presumably premised on Botswana's democratic traditions) began in 1985. In 1986, the Botswana Cabinet by unanimous decision decides the residents of CKGR to relocate and to find alternative relocation areas outside the Reserve for their settlements. Government maintains that these processes were carried with all the stakeholders, including the residents of Xade. These went on until 1997 when the first removals started and continued until 2001 when social services inside the Reserve were terminated.

However, during this exercise some residents expressed dissatisfaction with the manner in which consultations were being carried out. Some residents were concerned that government had already made a decision to relocate them and was therefore negotiating in "bad faith." With impending removals in 1996 some concerned residents contacted Ditshwanelo – *Botswana Centre for Human Rights* for advice. Ditshwanelo conducted a fact finding mission and produced a report entitled: "When Will This Moving Stop? (1996).

The findings of the report did not support the government relocation agenda but instead called for more negotiations. The government ignored the report and continued with relocation. The first removals started in March, 1997, (after 12 years of arm twisting and cajoling) when some resident succumbed to government pressure and persistence and finally relocated to the newly created settlements in New Xade and Kaudwane under the auspices of the RADP. According to government sources (Maribe, 2006) 1, 739 people relocated voluntarily to New Xade and Kaudwane. On arrival at the new settlements, they were given the freedom to selected areas similar to those found inside the CKGR where they could build their homes. This was a calculated move by the government meant to create the impression that no one was forced to relocate and that the new settlement was not different from the old one. However, it is important to point out that not all residents moved; others remained behind since they were not yet ready to relocate and were not convinced that relocation was a good idea. A population census conducted in 2001 found that 689 people were still resident inside the reserve (CSO, 2001).

3.3 Compensation

The records of the offices of the Gantsi District Commissioner and Council Secretary show that all the people who relocated from the reserve were paid compensation for all their irremovable and irreplaceable belongings such as building materials and ploughing fields. Transport was provided to ferry livestock (cattle, goats, donkeys, horses and chicken) and other major

belongings such as wooden poles, grass and household utensils to the new settlements. The residents were also paid disturbance allowances calculated at 10% of the total compensation. The total compensation ranged from P1000.00 to P100.000.00 per adult resident or family unit. While some residents viewed compensation as generous others felt it was inadequate – inadequate in the sense that it was short-termed and could not compensate for their land which was regarded as a fundamental source of livelihood. These ties with the land were clearly demonstrated by those who were said to have relocated voluntarily from the reserve. They continued to make frequent visits to the reserve, some of who actually returned altogether and re-settled inside the reserve because they felt alienated from their traditional land and natural resources.

3.4 The Resistance

The relocation of the Basarwa from the CKGR was not a smooth ride. It was met with massive and unprecedented resistance. Collins Concise Dictionary (1996:1139) defines the concept resistance as “to stand firm, fight against, refuse to accept and comply with.” Two forms of resistance are discernible from the actions of the Basarwa. Firstly, they refused to accept and comply with what they considered to be forced and involuntary relocation because they did not find the reasons given for their relocation convincing. Secondly, they stood firm and fought against what they considered to be a flagrant violation of their land rights.

It is important to point out that the Basarwa have been relocated in the past in the name of development, in particular, to implement government policy on Remote Area Development. Thus relocation for conservation or any other purpose is not peculiar to former residents of the CKGR. Evidence derived from records indicates that, for instance, in the 1970s, 483 people were relocated from the Gemsbok National Park when it was gazetted. Similarly, 33 people were moved from the Makgadikgadi Pans National Park. Some people were moved from the outskirts of the Moremi Game Reserve when it was established. The majority of people relocated were ethnic Basarwa (Matlhare, 2004) ¹. In almost all instances, the people did not openly resist relocation in the manner they are doing in the current dispensation. Since the CKGR impasse is arguably the first act of open resistance and defiance, the critical question to ask is ‘Why?’ Are the CKGR Basarwa resisting relocation per se or is it the manner in which it is being carried out?

There are three possible answers to this question. Firstly, with the intervention of the First People of the Kalahari and work by other NGOs such as Ditshwanelo, the Basarwa are increasingly becoming conscious of their human rights. Saugestad (2005) argues that the resistance represents “a last stand.” In other words, the Basarwa have been, and continue to be pushed out of what they consider to be their ancestral lands many times and are now saying, “Enough is enough”. It is important to note that the Basarwa are the only ethnic minority group in Botswana without a defined tribal and/or ethnic territory like Batswapong, Babirwa and other minority groups.

Secondly, a decision to terminate services inside the CKGR without convincing evidence and in an attempt to force the remaining residents to relocate hardened attitudes and strengthened the basis for resistance. Thirdly, and most importantly, the Basarwa are laying a claim to a land which they believe is their “ancestral land” and that a Game Reserve has been imposed on them under the British colonial rule and now the post-colonial government.

3.5 Contesting Views

There have been two contesting arguments regarding the issue of relocation. First, the Government of Botswana argues that it is in the best interest of Basarwa to relocate because such a move will ensure development and provision of social service leading to an improvement in quality of life. Conversely, the Basarwa argue for their right to stay in their ancestral land, and maintain that development, if any, should be brought to where the people are, since development is meant for the people and therefore should be built round the people and not the other way round.

In an attempt to resolve the above controversy a Negotiating Team was formed in 1998 comprising various stakeholders including: CKGR Committee (two representatives from each of the seven settlements in the reserve), The First People of The Kalahari (FPK), Working Group of Indigenous Minorities of Southern Africa (WIMSA), Kuru Development Trust, Botswana Council of Churches (BCC) and DITSHWANELO – The Botswana Centre for Human Rights. The last two groups had non-voting powers because they are non-Basarwa based. Several meetings were held between the Negotiating Team and various Ministers and Government officials, including Ministers Boometswe Mokgothu, Daniel Kwelagobe and Margret Nasha, all from the Ministry of Local Government. From 1998 until 2000 several meetings were also held with the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) which culminated in cooperation between the Negotiating Team and DWNP. Maps were produced by DWNP in consultation with the affected communities, indicating the territories in which the various groups in the CKGR lived. The process also recognized the indigenous knowledge of the communities living within the CKGR. In 2001, the Third Draft Management Plan for CKGR and Khutse Game Reserve (based on the work done by DWNP, through community consultations) was produced. This was directly facilitated by the Negotiating Team. The Draft Third Plan was approved by the Gantsi and Kweneng District Councils. There was agreement between DWNP and the Negotiating Team on the draft boundaries of the Community Use Zones (CUZ).

However, just at the stage when negotiations were close to producing an agreement under which the settlements inside the reserve would have their own “community user zones” which would allow them to continue hunting and gathering in these zones and launching projects to generate much needed revenue, the government, without consultation with residents, produced an alternate management plan. The alternate plan absolutely prohibited any form of hunting, gathering, cultivation of any crops or rearing of domestic livestock. In 2001 the government unilaterally withdrew basic services. The aim was to make living conditions of the Basarwa untenable. It is on the basis of this that many questions have been asked. The overarching question has been whether or not the government has the power to relocate people from what they consider to be their ancestral lands against their will in the name of development.

Granted, development is an imperative and inevitable and above all it was meant to improve quality of life for the Basarwa. But should development be imposed and residents forced to relocate? These and other related questions need to be answered in order to address contradictions in the government’s definition/perception of development. The controversies surrounding the notions of development, ancestral land and removals from the game reserve are discussed in detail under the section on ‘Challenges to the government of Botswana’s Notions of Development’ in section 5.0 below.

4.0 A critical review of public policy

The events in the CKGR are a reflection of contradictions in public policy. This article will provide a critical appraisal of only two public policies. The Wildlife Conservation Policy of 1986 and the subsequent Parks Act of 1992, as well as the Remote Area Development Program of 1978. An analysis of these policies and programs will show in various ways how they have shaped subsequent development practices. The analysis will demonstrate how development and implementation of the above policies and programs have been harmful to the interests and aspirations of Basarwa.

4.1 Wildlife Conservation Policy and National Parks Act, 1992

The Wildlife Conservation Policy and National Parks Act of 1992 is a legal instrument used for the management of Botswana's wildlife resources. Interestingly, the Wildlife Conservation and National Parks Act provide that communities which are principally dependent on hunting and gathering be issued with Special Game Licenses. This license, which is issued free of charge, entitles recipients to hunt a number of species throughout the year to meet their subsistence needs. The former residents of the CKGR, though not qualifying for issuance of this license, have been accorded a special dispensation by the government to continue to be issued with a special game license. This arrangement is also supported by the Wildlife Conservation Policy (1986), which promotes Community-Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM). CBNRM was introduced 12 years ago to help Basarwa and other communities to manage their natural resource. Communities of New Xade and Kaudwane have since been mobilized and sensitized about CBNRM so that they can accrue economic benefits in CBNRM initiatives.

The major flaw in the above arrangement is that the issuing of a license sends a contradictory message to the Basarwa. On the one hand, the issuance of the special game license is recognition of the hunter gatherer mode of existence. On the other, the government maintains that wildlife and people cannot co-exist despite evidence from other parts of the country where wildlife and Basarwa co-exist and have been co-existing since time immemorial. For example, the communities of Khwai, Mababe and Sankoyo on the edge of the Moremi Game Reserve are allowed to co-exist with and use available wildlife resources in their vicinity to sustain their livelihood. In fact such communities benefit substantially from CBNRM. The government is silent on the question: "Why the same privileges cannot be extended to the former residents of the CKGR?" Further, in February, 2002, the government of Botswana displaced the Basarwa from the CKGR under the National Parks and Game Reserve Regulations on frivolous grounds such as protection of the wildlife population in the reserve. This displacement of the Basarwa contradicts the Botswana Constitution Article 14 (3) which guarantees the Basarwa the freedom and right to reside in any part of Botswana. When the Basarwa sought to exercise their right accorded under the Constitution, the government came up with disingenuous plan to repeal the same on the obnoxious ground that there was no point in maintaining this provision since the residents of the Reserve have been persuaded to be relocated. This constitutes a travesty and a mockery of democracy, justice and the rule of law.

4.2 The Remote Area Development Program

Responses to the plight of the Basarwa in Botswana have always taken the form of provision of social programs. Since the mid 1970s, the basic philosophy that has dominated official thinking

on rural development has been one of government-led development initiatives and effective execution of policies and programs capable of promoting rural development (Chambers & Feldman, 1973). To this end, the Government of Botswana has applied several measures in an effort to “develop” what they perceived to be the uncivilised and backwards elements of the population – the Basarwa. The main aim has been to improve livelihoods and quality of life. The Remote Area Development Program (RADP) became one of the major programs geared towards this end.

The government of Botswana formally adopted the Remote Area Development Program (RADP) in 1978 as its chief strategy for the Basarwa development (MLGL, 1978), and in doing so affirmed its commitment by recognizing that the Basarwa are disadvantaged relative to mainstream Bantu groups (Wily, 1982). The overall objectives of the RADP are to settle the Basarwa into Bantu-type settlements in order to improve their socio-economic conditions so that they can live a life comparable to that of the Bantu groups in the country. The government, in setting up settlement schemes, gave several reasons for this move. First, it was argued that it is easier to provide water and social services such as education and health if people are settled in one area. The second reason was that settlements are viewed as a means of encouraging the Basarwa to settle, develop and promote indigenous leadership and to integrate into the national economy and society of the country. A third benefit of the scheme is that it provides a focal point for targeted development assistance, such as the Economic Promotion Fund (EPF). The EPF focuses on promoting income-generating activities such as carpentry, bakery and weaving in Basarwa settlements (Hitchcock, 1999).

Although the objectives of the RADP are laudable, they have proved difficult to achieve for a variety of reasons. Evidence from numerous evaluations of the RADP (Egner, 1981; Kann et.al 1990; NORAD, 1997) suggests that their implementation has created more problems than solutions. Such problems include, among others, socio-economic marginalisation of the Basarwa resulting in their dependency on government welfare programmes. The evaluations by Kann et. al. (1990) and NORAD, (1997) recommended that the government address the problem of dependency through an empowerment strategy.

4.3 Shortcomings of the RADP: Implications for the former residents of the CKGR

The shortcomings of the RADP programme are extensively documented in the literature on the Basarwa in Botswana (see, for example, Hitchcock, 1996, 1999; NORAD, 1997; Saugestad, 2001a). There is no doubt that the resettlement schemes initiated by government have greatly disadvantaged the Basarwa because their outcomes have often tended to be negative, and have reinforced rather than redressed forms of marginalisation and under-development. Given the past and present failures of the RADP, there is no evidence to suggest that the RADP model will improve the quality of life of the former resident of the CKGR. In fact, basing our analysis on the past experiences, the contrary is true. The realities in the new settlements have been found to be similar to those of other older settlements elsewhere in the country. In both Kaudwane and New Xade, field reports from the various scholars and RADP officers show that the social and economic programs initiated under the RADP, such as education, health, and Economic Promotion Fund (EPF) have inevitably failed, in that their interventions did not bring any qualitative improvement in the lives of the Basarwa.

Failure is often attributed to two major factors. Firstly, the manner in which RADP is implemented – the coercive, top-down paternalistic methods employed by government officials coupled with their negative attitudes towards the Basarwa. Secondly, the incompatibilities of settlement life with the Basarwa values, lifestyle and culture. The resettlement approach ignored the culture of the Basarwa, which is closely linked to the land. Evidence from numerous sources reveals that moving the Basarwa from their familiar cultural environment, and putting them into settlements result in alienation, confusion and despair (Nthomang, 2004). Demonstrating the insensitive nature of public policy towards the Basarwa, Mogalakwe (1986) asserts that the manner in which relocation is being conducted appear to be based on a flawed liberal argument that Basarwa are Batswana and like any other citizen they can be relocated where their interest conflict with national interests.

Given the above failures, it is ironic that government should recommend a resettlement strategy as a solution to the development of the former residents of CKGR. It is not unreasonable to conclude that refusal of some former residents of the CKGR to relocate was largely informed by the present and past failures of the RADP. Basarwa are not entirely stupid, they know that RADP is not the answer. Instead, it will create more problems than solutions. In fact, they see the RADP as part of the problem. This is a reasonable and an informed position, given numerous progress reports and evaluations of the RADP that have consistently provided a catalogue of both unsuccessful and “pipeline” projects all over the country.

A critical examination of the RADP in the early 1980s, 1990s and by BIDPA in 2003 leads to the conclusion that the shortcomings of the RADP far outweigh its successes, and that there is a gap between policy objectives and the translation of those objectives into action. These criticisms remain valid today and the reasons for them are embedded in the very nature of the RADP approach to the development of the Basarwa, which promote integration and/or assimilation (Egner, 1981). It is largely for these reasons that the Basarwa remain among the poorest of the poor in Botswana.

5.0 Development

5.1 The Botswana government notion of development

Since independence in 1966, Botswana has attempted to strike a balance between its social, economic and political development agendas. Economically, the focus has been on attaining financial viability and economic growth. This is expected to enable the government to provide and deliver tangible public goods and services. Political development, on the other hand, could be regarded as the accountability of the state to the people through the electoral process, legal recourse, the separation of powers and transparency. Both of these developments ultimately provide the basis for framing and implementing public policy. However, in practice, the effectiveness of public policies varies considerably, depending on the extent to which the economic and political dimensions are truly democratized. Given the possible contradictory outcomes of political and economic transformations referred to above, this situation of uncertainty poses challenges for public policy to improve human well being and democracy while promoting economic growth. It is within this broader frame work that the different conceptions of “development” will be interrogated. The critical questions to address are: ‘What is meant by development in Botswana, and in particular towards the Basarwa of CKGR?’ ‘Who defines

development?’ ‘In the event that differences in interpretation of the concept development emerge, whose definition should prevail?’ This analysis of development is relevant to the current situation in the CKGR.

The government of Botswana argues that provision of development is the basis for relocating the Basarwa from the CKGR. According to the government, the term “development” in *Setswana* simply means *Ditlhabololo*. *Ditlhabololo* are usually given to people by the government, and are seen mainly in terms of physical infrastructure and provision of social amenities such as water, health and education. According to the government, the action of removing the *Basarwa* from CKGR is justified because it is meant to help “develop”, “civilize” and integrate them into mainstream society so that the Basarwa, like all Bantu groups can enjoy the fruits of development (Egner, 1981). The Botswana development approach has to a very large extent been informed by growth-centred development – often referred to as modernization theory (Rostow, 1960). Modernization theory involves the transfer of “modern values” such as entrepreneurialism as resources in the pursuit of economic growth. This include: fiscal policies, industrialization, agricultural and tourism development. Following this model, the thrust of Botswana’s development strategy has been and continues to be exploiting the country’s mineral and tourism wealth and investing the proceeds in social development initiatives. Social development has meant substantial spending on social services such as education, health and water.

Despite Botswana’s democratic traditions this process has often been defined by the government with little or no input from the people concerned. The fundamental flaws in growth-centred development, as it relates to the former residents of the CKGR, are evident in its assumptions. It ignores the special needs, circumstances and aspirations of the people in the development process, lumping them together with mainstream population groups. Failure to take into account the voices of the people in the development process means that their voices are not heard. This flaw is inherent in almost all public policies in Botswana, in particular, the RADP. It constitutes the main reason why the RADP has failed to produce positive changes in the development of the Basarwa communities. The main problem is the inability of the government to understand development issues in a holistic manner, and the invariable tendency towards government-led development. The Basarwa have challenged this notion of development without success. The CKGR Basarwa’s notion of “development” is that “development” should go to where the people are and not the people to the development. They wanted to remain in the Game Reserve and those who have relocated have expressed a strong desire to return. According to the Basarwa, a policy that forcefully removes people from the land to which they claim ownership and settles or attempts to resettle them elsewhere will never be developmentally or morally justifiable, irrespective of the purported good intentions of its architects. People must never be manipulated to suit development; people are the subjects of development and not its objects.

5.2 Challenges to the Botswana Government notion of development

The above points on the different notions of development have also been made by the various researchers, practitioners and commentators, with particular reference on the RADP as a major policy/program towards the development of Basarwa (Nthomang, 2004). However, in order to capture the sentiments of the Basarwa, which clearly reflects their perception of development, this article reports, below, stories emerging from the fact finding mission on the different Basarwa communities both inside and outside the CKGR in 2004.

5.2.1 CKGR speaks-out

A fact finding mission to the CKGR was undertaken from the 4th - 7th March, 2004. The mission was prompted by what an international lobby group called Survival International (SI) described as “forced removal” of the Basarwa from the CKGR. The Government of Botswana calls the process “relocation of Basarwa” for purposes of development. The purpose of the visit was to address current concerns on the rationale behind the relocation exercise. This section therefore presents a summary of the findings of the fact-finding mission to the CKGR. This is done by providing a qualitative description and verbatim quotes of what the residents said about their relocation from the CKGR to provide an insight into the perceptions and views of community members on the concept of ‘development’ which underlies the relocation exercise.

Gugamma

Two families in Gugamma who have resisted all efforts to relocate them to Kaudwane have this to say:

Kaudwane is a death trap. Our people in Kaudwane are suffering from TB and dying in large numbers and the government calls this development. We want to stay in Gugamma and we shall remain and die here ...this is our ancestral land.

Another resident of Gugamma noted emphatically:

If the government wants to develop us, then, development should be brought in here to our land. We have been driven out of our land. We did not agree to move. They forced us to leave our land. The police beat us. It is not true that government talked to us.

The expression “this is our land, ... we were forced to move” were repeated by almost everyone interviewed. It is a symbolic gesture and a clear reflection of the commitment of Basarwa to stay in their land. Taylor (2000) argues that the Basarwa land in Botswana is a tangible representation of their history and identity. It is also a reminder of their alienation, not just from their physical space, but from many of the markers by which they have come to define themselves. Even though land is primarily a source of human livelihood, the Basarwa also perceive it as a sacred cultural heritage.

Molapo and Metsiamanong

In the settlements of Molapo and Metsiamanong, the fact-finding mission found about 25 to 35 people. These included a large number of returnees given that almost all people had relocated in the past. The fact finding mission came across donkeys and horses and goats inside the Reserve. This was a clear indication that people were not happy with life in the newly created settlements and had returned to their old homes inside the Reserve, and, by the look of things, it seemed reasonable to expect more returnees to arrive back into the Reserve.. It was however not immediately clear whether people had come back permanently or were just visiting friends and relatives.

Residents of Metsiamanong and Molapo raised similar concerns that:

- There was too much alcohol abuse and lawlessness in the resettlement camps.

- They did not voluntarily relocate to the new centre's but were forcibly removed when the services were terminated.
- That they want to stay in the CKGR as it is their ancestral land.

Kaudwane and New Xade

In Kaudwane and New Xade residents said:

They gave us services such as food and water, but these have not improved our lives. We continue to suffer and we are hungry. Is this development? No it is not, we want peace.

The relocation has impacted negatively on our livelihood and social relationships. We have lost our donkeys and goats at Kaudwane and New Xade.

Settlement life is not good for us. We have come back to CKGR to continue our traditional hunting and gathering lifestyle, because it is our ancestral land.

Throughout the trip, an overwhelming majority of the people pointed out that they were not going to move anywhere unless forced to do so by government action or inaction. They pointed out that if government is serious about development, government should bring development where the people are, i.e. inside the Reserve. Those who have experienced both worlds (life inside and outside the CKGR) prefer to remain inside. They gave several reasons for this. Life at the settlement is hell, with many people dying of strange diseases like HIV/AIDS and most people have turned to alcoholism and violence. People are hungry, suffering and dependent on government handouts. This is a life completely different from what they were used to – a self-sufficient and self-reliant lifestyle dependent on nature and its provisions.

5.2.3 Discussions

While government rationale for the relocation alluded to above is acknowledged, it is also important to consider the reasons advanced by the Basarwa for their preference to remain inside the Reserve. Clearly, there is a fundamental issue that must be resolved. While government views CKGR as simply a Reserve for wildlife, for the Basarwa, the CKGR is their ancestral land and a Reserve has been imposed on them. This is the bone of contention that has led to the current impasse and must be addressed forthwith. A delicate balance must be struck. It is excessive when government out of concern for a genuine problem, introduces draconian measures (cutting services to the CKGR) that do not take into account the views of the people affected. To safeguard its liberal democratic principles, government should respect individual freedoms and personal choices of the Basarwa. Given the problems at hand, the critical questions are: 'What lessons have we learned or are discernible from the current impasse between the government and the Basarwa of CKGR?' 'What insights do the CKGR controversies shed on issues of development, the role of the government and the intended beneficiaries?' Several lessons are discernible:

- That the model of development that prescribes how Basarwa should live and which is founded on the Bantu land tenure system has proved unworkable and should not be imposed on the Basarwa.

- That unwillingness to accommodate Basarwa collective concerns or to recognize them as distinct, self-identifying cultural communities is a violation of their human rights and their right to make decision and choices.
- That government must learn to consult. Lack of consultation has led to the current impasse on CKGR. Lack of consultation has led to the design of policies and program that are detrimental to the welfare of the Basarwa, hence the resistance.

In addition to the above, education is also very important. The Basarwa and government officials should educate themselves on how environment conservation and humans can co-exist. Enforcement of existing laws on flora and fauna can effectively address some of the problems at the centre of the relocation exercise as opposed to the removals, thus diverting government attention from the expensive court procedures and redirecting it to development processes. The fundamental constitutional rights which all Batswana, including the Basarwa communities, have should be respected by the State and by individuals. Basarwa should have the right to choose where to live. There should be no forced relocation. It is clear that the Basarwa are still comfortable pursuing traditional methods of living in the era of globalization, change, and modernity. It is a lifestyle to which they owe to their ancestors and the one in which their ancestors have lived for centuries. It is reasonable, therefore, to argue that they should be left to live their preferred lifestyle until they voluntarily choose to abandon it and embrace mainstream development practice.

It is clear from the foregoing stories that the Basarwa are adversely affected by government development prescriptions. For them development, at least as envisaged by the government, has meant oppression, exploitation and suffering. It has also meant imposition of dominant cultural values and traditions. For example, in the case of CKGR the relocation exercise has resulted in the appropriation of the whole Reserve exclusively for wildlife and tourism. The shortcomings of this development approach are well articulated by the Basarwa as indicated above. The approach has been criticized for being irrelevant and ineffective in meeting needs and problems of the Basarwa. There is a tendency to also focus on provision social welfare services and social control rather than on empowerment and sustainable poverty alleviation strategies. Writing in a different development context but more relevant to the situation of the Basarwa in Botswana, Dasgupta (1978) argued:

What is worse is that the methods and goals which are being used to combat the incidence of deprivation are, it seems, themselves responsible not only for the poverty but also for its increase day by day ... development has thus been responsible for the misery and privation of the freedom era ... and has played a role somewhat similar to that of the imperialism of the past (Dasgupta,1978:62-63).

Information gleaned from program evaluation studies, carried out to determine the effectiveness of a considerable number of social development programs in many Basarwa communities in Botswana (NORAD, 1997; BIDPA, 2003) bears testimony to the above assertion. The literature also offers reasons for the general inability of many such development programs to meet the needs of the Basarwa. The following factors have frequently been identified:

- Policies, procedures and expectations often fail to take into account the unique culture, traditions and current life situation of Basarwa (Saugestad, 2001).
- Because programs have not been designed with the needs of the Basarwa in mind, they frequently provide services that are not relevant or, alternatively, fail to provide services that are needed.

While there is evidence that, in some cases the Basarwa have benefited from the fruits of government development programs, that is, in terms of education, health and limited employment opportunities - there is also increasing evidence of the Basarwa's marginality in the overall development processes. It is quite clear that the voices of the Basarwa have largely been ignored by the various development programs. As a result, government development often fails to recognise the special needs of the Basarwa and that the Basarwa should be equal partners in the development process.

Consultation processes that were started in early 2000 which culminated in the Final Draft Management Plan for Central Kalahari Game Reserve, in September 2001 (Department of Wildlife and National Parks, 2001), must be resumed. The National Parks and Game Reserve Regulations (2000) provide the mechanisms to develop new innovative strategies that recognize Basarwa land use and landholding practices. Compromise is essential to design a workable management plan that will be supported by all stakeholders and to bring about a 'win-win' situation between the need for conservation and the needs of the communities. The plan should involve those communities who were at the time living in the CKGR and those who had resettled in Kaudwane and New Xade.

Work had already been done to identify community use zones, which were to be subdivided along traditional lines into separate areas for each of the main communities. The traditional territories were to be maintained and understood by the communities and their indigenous knowledge was to be revived. This would encourage effective management of envisaged income-generating activities and Community-Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) at village level with overall coordination done jointly by all the villages. CBRNM addresses issues central to Basarwa identity and subsistence practices; land, wildlife and natural resources. Such initiatives are intended to promote tourism as a profitable business likely to benefit both the Basarwa and the government (Taylor, 2000).

A return to the negotiation table by all the stakeholders should be encouraged. This is primarily a Botswana issue concerning Botswana's development strategies and it is important to find a long lasting solution. Without concrete steps toward recognition of genuine consultation as the bedrock of development and the Basarwa as equal partners in the development process, Botswana will not be able to achieve the goals of a safe, secure, prosperous, productive and innovative nation by 2016.

6.0 Conclusion

This article has demonstrated that the relocation of the Basarwa from the CKGR is a sensitive and contentious issue that must be handled with professionalism devoid of emotional outbursts. The Basarwa argue that they have been "forcibly" removed from the CKGR with adverse consequences for the economic, social, family and spiritual life. The article has attempted to

examine this position against government policy on relocation and the motivation behind the relocation exercise. The article concludes that the relocation exercise while well-intentioned was poorly handled leading to resistance on the part of the Basarwa. In particular, consultations were reported to have been very inadequate. The article notes that, because of that, the desire is that consultation continues between the government, the Basarwa, NGOs and other stakeholders. The government notion of development should also be interrogated with a view to make it consistent with the aspirations of the people or find an alternative model acceptable to both parties. The ideological divide, i.e. “ancestral land vis-à-vis Reserve” must be unpacked and fully addressed. Government should abandon a dominant mindset and ill-conceived assumptions about Basarwa development and commit itself to relationships based on equality and partnership in the development process.

Endnotes

¹ Joseph Matlhare is the former Director of the Department of Wildlife and National Parks. He presented a paper at the BOCONGO organized CKGR workshop on the Relationship Between People and Wildlife in March, 2004.

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