

CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The position and rights of minority groups in nation-states across the world are presently the focus of many debates. Education provision according to their unique educational needs is regarded as one of the important rights of minority groups and has been a central theme of discussion since the second half of the twentieth century. It is also internationally accepted that one of the crucial educational rights demanded by minority groups is to be educated at their own institutions (Steyn & Vanderstraeten, 1998:13). South Africa is at present just beginning to discuss the necessity of recognising minority group rights. The South African situation must be understood against the background of the drive to avoid any possibility of creating a new system of apartheid and to develop unity in the South African community (Steyn, 1997b:1).

The purpose of this chapter is to give a brief orientation to the report. It starts with the motivation and statement of the research problem. The aims and objectives of the research problem will follow. The research methods and how the research is demarcated will be next and lastly the proposed composition of the research will be stated.

1.2 MOTIVATION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The characteristics of the educational system in South Africa have undergone essential fundamental changes since 1994. These changes include the new structure of the education system in order to create a just and equitable system that provides good quality education and training to learners young and old throughout the country. An important instrument guiding the development of the new structure is the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa as adopted on 8 May 1996 and amended on 11 October 1996 by the Constitutional Assembly

and which came into operation on 4 February 1997 (Oosthuizen, 1997:21). Chapter 2 of the Constitution contains the Bill of Human Rights in which the State guarantees the protection of the fundamental rights of individuals. Some of these provisions are of particular importance to the provision of education in South Africa.

However, in culturally diverse societies difficulties arise because a minority group (ethnic, linguistic or religious) might perceive the education system as providing or transmitting the cultural values of the majority group, which it fears or rejects as subversive of its own culture, unless it could have access to its own educational provision (Watson, 1985:73). Internationally the rights of minority groups have been accepted in the various treaties, conventions, international deliberations and constitutions of several countries, for example, the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights of the United Nations (1966), and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990).

The concept of minority rights is not well known in South Africa and is often confused with a kind of *nieu-apartheid* (Steyn, 1997b:1). Minority rights acknowledge two basic principles, namely the principle of non-discrimination, which aims at formal equal treatment of members of the minority and of the majority groups, and secondly, the principle qualified as the protection of minorities. The latter implies differential treatment. To be found in Section 9 of the Constitution (SA, 1996), the first principle can be illustrated by referring to the school admission policy that has to be free from any unfair discriminatory criteria. In the case of *Matuka and Others v Laerskool Potgietersrus* 1996 (Transvaal Supreme Court, case number 2436/96) it transpired amongst other things, that in terms of the primary school's admission policy, provision was only made for the admission of white learners. It was held that such provision in the admission policy would be regarded as unconstitutional since it discriminates unfairly on the grounds of race (Oosthuizen, 1997:22).

In the second principle, differentiation is not to be regarded as synonymous with unfair discrimination. In the decision before the Constitutional Court: *President of the Republic of South Africa v Hugo* 1997(1997(6) BCLR 708(CC)) the court summarised this point as follows: "We need therefore to develop a concept of unfair discrimination which recognises that although society which afford each human being equal treatment on the basis of equal worth and freedom as our goal, we cannot achieve that goal by insisting upon identical treatment in all circumstances before that goal is achieved"(ibid.).

An example of a minority group in South Africa is the Griquas who is an identifiable culture group constituting a minority group mainly in the Northern Cape Province in South Africa.

They are characterised by a strong feeling of solidarity because of their particular historical development. According to Van Staden (1998:1) and Van Gass (1995:16) these people want to continue to exist as an identifiable group with the minority right to develop their own culture by means of education. At the present moment they are assimilated or classified as Coloured people and the general language of use is Afrikaans (Di Friuli, 1997:85). According to Van Staden (1998:4) they are unhappy with the present provision of education because it is this classification that has resulted in their language not being taught and the school curriculum not reflecting their culture and traditions. Their language, Xiri or Griqua (Nurse, 1975:10), is not even recognised as one of the eleven official languages (Calitz, 1998:113). In these circumstances the issues of access to excellence and equity of educational opportunities usually prevail (SA, 1995:71). The pivotal question is how to make the total education enterprise more responsive to the histories, heritages, life experiences, cultural conditioning and day-to-day life situation of the Griquas in its policy-making, programme planning and instructional practices.

From the above discussion the problem of this research will centre around the following question: What arrangements could be made in the education system to cater for the specific educational provision of the Griquas according to their unique educational needs ?

1.3 AIM OF RESEARCH

The aim of this research is to determine the relevant education provision of the Griqua people in order to meet their specific educational needs. This aim can be achieved by means of the following objectives:

- Objective 1: To identify the national and international perceptions on the educational rights of minority groups.
- Objective 2: To analyse the educational needs of minority groups.
- Objective 3: To determine and analyse the educational needs and the relevant determinants with regard to the education provision of the Griquas according to their specific educational needs.
- Objective 4: To determine possible options for the education provision for the Griquas.

1.4 METHOD OF RESEARCH

1.4.1 Literature study

Soer (1997:127) maintains that the aim of reviewing literature is to help the researcher in formulating and solving a problem. It is very important in the development of the argumentation and it guides the execution of research. In this study primary and secondary sources such as books and journals were used. All information gathered was evaluated so that sound decisions and conclusions could be arrived at. A DIALOG-search was used with the following descriptors: strategic planning, education provision, minority group, minority rights, educational needs, Griquas in South Africa.

1.4.2 The qualitative research method

Qualitative research refers to research that produces descriptive data such as people's own written or spoken words and observable behaviour. It tries to understand the perspectives of people in their everyday life. It is a process that is constantly adapted to the reactions of subjects as they describe their experiences in the interviews. The actual words that the subjects use are recorded and included in the research reports (De Witt, 1997:79). Focus group discussion as a research technique is one type of a qualitative research method.

1.4.3 The focus group as a technique in the qualitative research method

Focus group interviewing could be defined as a group discussion in which a small number of participants, typically six to twelve, talk about topics of special relevance to a study, under the guidance of a moderator. The informal group situation and the largely unstructured nature of the questions encourage participants to disclose behaviour and attitudes they might not disclose during individual interviews. This happens since participants tend to feel more comfortable and secure in the company of people who share similar opinions, views and behaviour than in the company of the individual interviewer (Folch-Lyon & Frost, 1981:443). The focus group discussion is conducted as an open conversation in which each participant may comment, ask questions of other participants, or respond to comments by others, including the interviewer (Ferreira & Puth, 1988:127).

The aim of the focus group as a technique is to attempt to understand how individuals experience their life-world and how they make sense of what is happening to them by means of interviews. The technique consists of steps with the following sequence (Wellman & Kruger, 1999:196) :- sampling (snowball); phases in conducting focus groups interviews; analysis of interviews; and reporting. The content and implications of each of the steps will be discussed in Chapter 4. The technique will be used to determine the educational needs of the Griquas as a minority group in South Africa.

- Sampling

According to Wellman and Kruger, (1999:196) the researcher usually obtains individuals with whom to conduct unstructured interviews by means of purposive sampling. In this kind of sampling a few individuals are approached from the relevant population. These individuals act as informants and identify other members from the same population for inclusion in the sample.

The sample in this research was gathered by means of snowball-sampling. Some individuals from the Griqua community were approached. These individuals then acted as informants and identified other members (e.g. friends) from the Griqua community for inclusion in the sample. The latter in turn identified a further set of individuals, and the sample, like a rolling snowball, grew in size.

The focus groups were organised as explained above in four geographical areas in the Northern Cape Province, namely Campbell, Douglas, Prieska, and Daniëlskuil. Two groups of adults and youths were organised in each area: adults as users of education and youths as future users of education. Each group consisted of not less than 10 members. Ordinary people, leaders and opinion makers were organised from the Griqua community. In the case of adults, parents, educators, the church as well as business were taken into account. In the case of youth, the leaders of youth and cultural organisations of the Griqua were taken into account.

- Process/course of the interviews in focus groups

At the beginning, the interviewer explains the purpose of the study to the prospective participants and seeks their co-operation. Among other things the researcher should

give an indication of how long the interview is expected to take place. Frankness and honesty are required from the interviewer to build up a feeling of trust with the prospective participants (Wellman & Kruger, 1999:196).

In each focus group a moderator was chosen to facilitate the discussions. Care was taken that he had the following traits: a genuine interest in hearing other people's thoughts and feelings, expressive of his own feelings, spontaneous, with a sense of humour, empathetic, able to admit his own biases, insightful about people, able to express thoughts clearly, and flexible. He must be able to take into account the sensitivity of the research problem, time constraints, the amount of probing required and the interaction between the demographics (e.g. age and sex) of the focus group members. It is important to consider location when planning focus group discussions. In all cases the chosen location was easy to find and close to participants' homes. The locations were free from outside distractions.

A structured questionnaire with open-ended questions adapted from Steyn (1997c:8) was sent to members of the focus groups beforehand with background information with regard to the rights of minority groups. This was done in order to prepare members adequately for group discussions. The questionnaire consisted of three related items, namely the focus of education (cf.par.3.2), the school and the educational needs of minority groups (cf.par.3.3) and the standpoint on the issue of minority groups. Each member of the focus group was requested to complete the questionnaire and to hand it to the focus group leader. The duration of the discussions was more or less an hour and a half. The purpose of the focus group was not to change the individual members from their positions but to determine the position of the group as a whole. A tape recorder was used to record the proceedings. The researcher also took notes. Neither the taking of notes nor recording on tapes inhibited the participants' spontaneous behaviour. Questions were ordered from the more general to the more specific and questions of greatest significance were placed at the beginning and those of lesser significance near the end.

The analysis of the information obtained from the focus groups was based on the interviewer's records, i.e. from notes and information captured on the tape recorder. The data obtained from focus groups was analysed by means of systematic coding through content analysis. Focus groups in conjunction with participants' observation were used for the purpose of triangulation and verifying of data. At the end of the meetings a report was written based on the notes and the tape recordings. The re-

sponses of the focus groups were compared with the individual responses and no deviations were found.

- Validity of research findings

Each focus group was requested to choose two representatives who would receive the report for verification. A final report on all focus groups was done after being verified by the focus group representatives. The research results of the focus group were used together with the findings of the literature study to identify and verify the experiences of the various Griqua groups. The findings can be regarded as valid because the research technique managed to determine the solution to the problem for part of the research and the results were honest and logically correct.

- Personal observation by the author

- It is absolutely important for the researcher to clearly explain the purpose of the tape recordings and note-taking during the focus groups meetings. Some members of the focus groups were sceptical and afraid to communicate freely during the initial stages because of the tape recording and note-taking.
- There is one question that was not answered satisfactorily by the respondents in meetings. That question dealt with the role of the Griqua learner as a self-actualising educant. To the mind of the author the question was beyond the comprehension of the respondents.
- It is necessary for the researcher to seek a respectable and well-known person among the members of the focus group as a moderator. The researcher encountered problems at two places, namely Douglas and Daniëlskuil because of poor organisation. The researcher had to visit these places for the second time with a reputable moderator.
- Thorough planning and budgeting have to be done as this method of research involves transport costs and refreshments like tea and biscuits for members of the focus group.
- The researcher must always guard against some members of the focus group turning a meeting into political forum or a grievance meeting, mixing educational needs with political needs. This tendency appeared at several occasions.
- The researcher must always avoid the dominance of one person in a meeting as this will turn to suppress other members into airing their views freely.

- Advantages (Krueger, 1994:61; Ferreira & Puth,1988:129; Morgan, 1993:37)
 - ❑ Questions about sensitive and highly emotional issues may be asked in in-depth interviews which cannot be done in telephonic interviews and postal surveys.
 - ❑ Qualitative research is particularly useful in areas where the phenomenon is not as easy to observe for outsiders. It can reveal complicated details of a phenomenon that is not revealed with quantitative methods.
 - ❑ Because of the participation of the subjects they are democratic in nature.
 - ❑ They are community-based.
 - ❑ Focus groups can be conducted at relatively modest costs and in a relatively brief time-span.
 - ❑ Focus groups expose the researcher to the participants' world-views.
 - ❑ Focus group discussions shed light on phenomena and social processes that we know very little about.
 - ❑ Focus groups provide socially-oriented research procedures. Focus groups facilitate interaction between subjects and uniquely capture the dynamics of group interaction.
 - ❑ Focus groups have high face validity. Not only are they understood, their methods are also comfortable since they seem credible to those using the information. Results are not presented in percentages and complicated statistical tables or charts, but in lay terminology with quotations from actual people.
- Disadvantages (Krueger 1994:63; Ferreira & Puth, 1988:130)
 - ❑ Each focus group has its unique characteristics.
 - ❑ The data is often too complex to analyse.
 - ❑ The facilitators must be well trained to master the technique.
 - ❑ It may be a difficult task to organise and to arrange meetings for the subjects.
 - ❑ The success of the meetings depends on whether the situation is conducive to the meetings to take place.
 - ❑ Material acquired by using focus groups cannot be generalised.

1.4.4 The method of strategic planning in the education system

The aim of strategic planning as a research technique is to provide specific guidelines for the structuring and functioning of the individual components as well as for the desirable interaction between the different components of the education system. The technique consists of

two phases, namely the planning analysis phase and the planning operationalisation phase. Each of these phases consists of different steps namely (Steyn, 1997a:7):

□ **The phase of planning analysis**

This phase consists of the following steps:

- Vision-setting:- this step implies the identification of the target group and their educational needs as well as the identification of the terrain, meaning the theoretical guidelines and other practical examples.
- Analysis of the relevant information:- this step includes the internal information indicating the situation in the education system. The information can be historic, reciprocal or educational. It also includes the external information indicating information regarding the situation of and in the target group, namely regarding the demographic, science and technological, language, social and economical, political and institutional and philosophical trends.

This phase can be summarised by using the following indicators:

- Vision-setting
Analysis of target group and their educational needs. Analysis of the terrain
- Analysis of the relevant information, namely
 - The internal information indicating the situation in the education system. The information could be historic, reciprocal or educational in nature.
 - The external information indicating information regarding the situation of and in the target group, namely regarding
 - » demographic trends
 - » science and technological trends
 - » language trends
 - » social and economic trends
 - » political and institutional trends
 - » philosophical trends
- SWOT-analysis

❑ **The phase of planning operationalisation**

This phase consists of the following steps:

- Mission-setting:- the mission usually provides the ideals regarding the characteristics of the education system.
- Setting the aims and objectives:- these are usually formulated through consultation with all social structures with an interest in education in view of the educational needs, the determinants, the domain, the strong and weak points, the opportunities and threats and the mission.
- Planning the structure for teaching:- this implies planning for the educational levels and institutions, curricular and differentiation, the learners, the educators; the medium of instruction and the physical facilities.
- Planning support services:- this implies planning for support services to learners, support services regarding the teaching services and structures and support services to educators.
- Planning the education system administration:- this implies planning the organisational structure of functionaries, the liaison and financial arrangements.
- Planning the education system policy, which includes format of policy and the formulation of decisions taken in the previous steps in policy format.

This phase can be summarised by using the following indicators:

- Mission-setting
- Setting the aims and objectives
- Planning the structure for teaching, referring to
 - ❑ educational levels and institutions
 - ❑ curricular and differentiation
 - ❑ learners
 - ❑ educators
 - ❑ medium of instruction
 - ❑ physical facilities

- Planning the support services, referring to
 - support services to learners
 - support services regarding the teaching services and structures
 - support services to educators
- Planning the education system administration, referring to
 - the organisational structure of the functionaries
 - liaison arrangements
 - financial arrangements

1.5 DEMARCATION OF RESEARCH

The area of investigation will be the education provision for the Griqua people in the Northern Cape Province where they are in large numbers, although the Griqua people has settled throughout South Africa (Van Staden 1998:7).

1.6 COMPOSITION OF THE RESEARCH

The research report has the following structure:

- In Chapter 2 the theory of the rights of minority groups will be dealt with, emphasising the national and international perspectives on the rights of minority groups. It will start with information on the nature and origin of minority groups, followed by the general and educational rights of minority groups and its implications. The implications of these rights on the national education provision are discussed next. The chapter is concluded by discussing national unity and cultural diversity in the provision of education in four foreign countries as well as in South Africa.
- Chapter 3 will also deal with the theory of the rights of the minority group but with emphasis on the nature of education and the relation between the educational institution and the minority group. It emphasises the aim of education as being to equip the minority learners with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to fulfil their different roles in life. The competencies needed by minority learners to fulfil these life roles are also discussed. The characteristics of the educational institutions that must be compatible to the unique characteristics of minority groups conclude the chapter.

- Chapter 4 deals with the educational needs of the Griqua community as an example of a minority group in the Northern Cape Province as well as the relevant determinants in their education provision. It starts with a brief history of the Griqua community in South Africa. The educational needs of the Griquas were determined by using the method of focus group discussions as a technique in the qualitative research tradition. The relevant determinants with regard to the education provision of the Griquas is discussed next and from them the strong and weak points, the opportunities and threats are deduced.
- Chapter 5 was used to plan the education provision of the Griquas by using the method of strategic planning in the education system. Different options with regard to the education provision of the Griquas are given.
- Chapter 6 deals with the findings and recommendations for the whole report.

1.7 SUMMARY

This chapter spelt out the research problem, namely: What arrangements can be made in the education system in order to cater for the specific educational provision of the Griquas according to their unique educational needs? The aim of the research and the methods used to solve this problem were also clearly spelt out. Finally the demarcation of the research and its composition were discussed.

In the next chapter the national and international perspectives with regard to the rights of minority groups will be discussed.