



**POLYTECHNIC OF NAMIBIA**

**Harold Pupkewitz Graduate School of Business**

**An Investigation into the Effectiveness of the Decentralisation Process as a  
means of Integrating Staff into Regional Councils: A Case Study of Ohangwena  
Regional Council**

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Mini-Thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Leadership and Change Management in the Harold Pupkewitz Graduate  
School of Business at the Polytechnic of Namibia

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### **Declaration**

I Maria Ndatale Petrus hereby declare that this work contained in the mini-thesis entitled An Investigation into the Effectiveness of the Decentralisation Process as a Means of Integrating Seconded Staff in the Regional Council is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university or other higher education institution for the award of a degree.

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### **Dedications**

This study is dedicated to my late parents **Joseph Udjombala and Paulina Aukumbe**

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## **Abbreviations**

EUC	European Union Communities
CRO	Chief Regional Officer
LA	Local Authorities
LM	Line Ministries
MRLGHRD	Ministry of Regional Local Government Housing and Rural Development
PMP	Performance Management Plan
RDCC	Regional Development Coordination Committee
RC	Regional Council
UDPP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nation Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation

## **Abstract**

The objective of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of decentralisation as a means to integrate central government seconded staff into Ohangwena Regional Council. The study highlights the knowledge of decentralisation in Ohangwena Regional Council, the delegated education directorate and maintenance section; the planning and co-ordination of the two delegated function's activities between a regional council and delegating line ministries, the management of central government seconded staff in terms of induction, training and recruitment, the readiness of Ohangwena Regional Council for devolution and the level of integration of central government seconded staff in Ohangwena Regional Council.

The main findings of the study are that central government seconded staff are not well integrated into Ohangwena Regional Council. The level of integration is found to be moderate. This study reveals that there are several challenges that contribute to this low level of integration. The lack of capacity in the decentralisation policy at operational level comes out as one of the key contributing factors

This study argues that the Ministry of Regional and Local Government Housing and Rural Development provided training on decentralisation at the beginning of the decentralisation program and is currently focusing on conducting sensitisation workshops to ensure that the decentralisation policy is understood well by all, especially at sub-national government as the key implementer. This study will then serve as a source document for key stakeholders to the decentralisation process

in addressing key issues impacting on the effective integration of central government seconded staff in regional councils.

**Key words:** decentralisation, integration, central government seconded staff, delegation, regional council, line ministry, function, capacity building and induction

## **Chapter 1**

### **1. Introduction and background of the study.**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

This study analyses the effectiveness of the decentralisation process as a means of integrating central government seconded staff into regional councils based on the case study of Ohangwena Region. This chapter introduces the study by providing the background information of the research problem, the research question, and the aims of the study, its limitations and an outline of the study.

#### **1.2 Background of The Study**

According to Sharma (2005) decentralisation has become a worldwide trend over the past decades. Sharma further assumes that in some African countries decentralisation has gathered momentum from the early 1980s. While in several African states expanding substantial resources in political and administrative decentralisation necessitated a decentralisation process. Burns et al. (1994) stress that in the Western developed countries; decentralisation is promoted as a means to streamline government administration under over-tightening fiscal constraints and in response to public dissatisfaction with inefficient and unresponsive government bureaucracy.

According to Hoop (2005) analyzing the administration of regional government in Namibia cannot be divorced from the country's painful history of colonialism and apartheid. In Namibia decentralisation started immediately after

independence when the Swapo Government realised that there was a need for people to participate in decisions that affected their lives at central, regional and local levels.

In this regard, the Swapo Manifesto (1989, p.18) states that “under a Swapo government independent Namibia will have democratically elected local authorities both rural and urban area in order to give power to the people at grassroots level, to make decisions on matters affecting their lives”. Before independence Namibia was administered by means of ethnic administration which administered people according to their ethnicity and this was considered as the second tier of the authorities. This set-up was changed immediately after independence with the implementation of the decentralisation process.

The implementation of the decentralisation process in Namibia started with the establishment of regional councils, as set out in Article 102 of the Namibian Constitution (MRLGHRD, 1997). According to the Constitution of Namibia (article 102, p.54) “Namibia shall be divided into regional and local units, which shall consist of such regional and local Authorities as may be determined and defined by Act of Parliament”. In the same vein, the Regional Council Act (Act 22 of 1992, p.28) states that “regional councils which are the second tier system of the government are responsible for planning the development of regions”. This legislative framework provided the institutionalising of the decentralised government. In 1996 Cabinet adopted the decentralisation policy and it was launched as the Decentralisation Program for Namibia in March 1998. This policy identified functions to be decentralised and indicated the implementation guidelines, strategies and the form of decentralisation adopted in the Namibian Decentralisation Policy (1998). The

Namibian Decentralisation Policy was given legal force through the introduction of the Decentralisation Enabling Act, (Act 33 of 200).

The aim of the decentralisation policy in Namibia is “to provide people at grass root level with the opportunity to participate in decision making that affects their life and to extend democracy based on national ideas and values” (Decentralisation Policy 1998, p.4). The implementation of the Decentralisation Policy in Namibia aimed to decentralise functions from line ministries to the regional councils and local authorities, first by delegation and ultimately by devolving the delegated functions, power, and authorities to these two tiers of government.

The first function decentralised to the Region Councils, including the Ohangwena region, was the rural water supply, followed by primary and secondary education and later in 2008, the maintenance function was also delegated. These functions are listed in the decentralisation policy as functions to be decentralised immediately to the regional councils except the maintenance function.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Work and Transport have a decentralisation functional framework that stipulates functions to be decentralised and the specific activities decentralised to regional councils. This study is only focusing on the delegated education and the maintenances functions because the rural water supply function is delegated but it has not yet been handed over for supervision by the regional councils.

Namibia is divided into fourteen administrative regions and Ohangwena is one of the fourteen regions. The capital city of Ohangwena is Eenhana and this is where the research was conducted. Ohangwena Regional Council is situated in the north

eastern part of Namibia. The Regional Council's organisational structure consists of four directorates, four divisions, five subdivisions and one section. This structure is the same in all fourteen regions (Office of the Prime Minister, Public Services Commission, 2003).

According to the Decentralisation Enabling Act (Act 33 of 2000) the Minister of Regional Local Government, Housing and Rural Development may decentralise to any regional council or local authorities council any functions determined by him or her. The Minister should do this in consultation with the Minister responsible for the Line Ministry concerned. This is preceded by a Cabinet resolution and the government gazette notice.

All central government staff seconded to the Regional councils signed the agreement letter for secondment before being seconded. Agreements signed are valid for three years starting from the date it is signed. This is because the delegation phase which is a preparatory phase for devolution is the ultimate phase in Namibia's decentralisation process. The delegation phase is a three-year period in Namibia (MRLGHRD, 2004).

During this delegation phase the Line Ministries are still budgeting for the functions and transfer the funds to the regional council on a monthly basis. The salary of delegated staff is paid and budgeted for by the line ministry. Delegated staff report under the structure of the regional council to the line ministry and they remain the staff of the line ministry and resort under the Public Service Act of 1995 (Manuals, Procedures and Guidelines for the delegation phase of decentralisation, 2004).



The Manual, Procedures and Guidelines for the delegation phase of decentralisation further stated that the central government seconded staff files remain with the line ministry and the ministries send a copy of the personnel file to the regional council where the staffs are based. Assets and other resources used for the execution of the functions are handed over to the regional councils but remain the assets of the line ministry.

All the correspondence to and from the line ministries is addressed to the Chief Regional Officer and forwarded to the respective directorates of either the Education Directorate or Directorate of Planning, where maintenance functions fall. The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry remains the accounting office at this phase and the regional councils perform the functions as an agent, on behalf of the Line Ministry.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

The transfer of central government functions to sub-national government level would improve grass root participation by re-assigning decision-making responsibilities to lower government units. The delegated Directorate of Education and the Maintenance Sections identify their needs at the regional level and forward their plans to their respective ministries.

Despite these improvements poor integration of central government seconded staff has been observed in regional councils and it has impacted on the effective and efficient delivery of services by central government seconded staff and this in turn has undermined the objectives of decentralisation. Coupled with this is a lack of co-ordination of the delegated functions in terms of planning and managing of central

government seconded staff personnel files. Planning of delegated functions is done separately from the regional council's activities.

Decentralisation reform in Namibia has never meant just shifting responsibilities to regional councils but rather it aims to transfer power and improve service delivery to communities. However the potential benefit of decentralisation may not be achieved to the fullest if central government seconded staff are not well integrated into regional councils.

If this continues, the preparatory phase of delegation will not achieve its purpose of preparing central government seconded staff for the devolution phase. The central government seconded staff will not be integrated into the regional council in terms of reporting, planning and co-ordination of activities because they are still working as if they are deconcentrated. Although there are several issues, challenges and experiences with the implementation of decentralisation, this study investigated the challenges of integrating central government seconded staff into Ohangwena Regional Council.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

The study was conducted in the Ohangwena Region. The study addresses the following main research questions.

- How effective is the decentralisation policy in integrating central government seconded staff in the Ohangwena Regional Council?
- What are the contributing factors impacting on the effective integration of central government seconded staff?

## **1.5 Research Objectives**

The main objectives of this study are:

- To investigate the effectiveness of the decentralisation process for integrating central government seconded staff into regional councils.
- To find out factors that impact on the effective integration of central government seconded staff to Ohangwena Regional Council.
- To explore and describe how activities are co-ordinated between Ohangwena Regional Council and central government seconded staff.
- To examine the level of integration of central government seconded staff to Ohangwena Regional Council.
- To establish current practices and make recommendations.

## **1.6 Research Methodology**

This study uses both primary and secondary data. Qualitative research was used to collect data including interview, literature review and observation. Primary data comes from interviews conducted, covering central government seconded staff and staff of the Ohangwena Regional Council. The interview questions focused on the respondent's knowledge of the decentralisation process, capacity development in the decentralisation policy, co-ordination of decentralised functions, participation in recruitment and the level of integration of central government seconded staff in Ohangwena Regional Council. The target research population for this study is 490 people while the sample size of participants is 20

### **1.7 Significance of the Study**

This is the first study to look at the integration of central government seconded staff into a regional council since the secondment of such staff to regional councils due to decentralisation. The study provides a deep understanding of the factors that contribute to the poor integration of central government seconded staff into the Regional Council. The study also provides useful information for the policy and decision makers in a decentralisation program to suggest possible strategies to address these shortcomings before moving to the devolution phase.

The study assists in identifying whether there was an improvement in the provision of services during the delegation phase, especially in terms of delegated functions to Ohangwena regional councils. The study has also mapped out what transpired during the phase of delegation for those seconded staff members with an emphasis on planning, and the co-ordination of delegated functions as well as the level of integration of seconded staff. The study may also serve as a guideline for researchers who would wish to conduct research on similar topics.

### **1.8 Broad Areas of Management Theory of the Study**

The study looked at the following broad areas of management theory that are pertinent to it. Areas such as induction, planning and co-ordination, decision making, staffing, reporting, budgeting and capacity building were explored and their importance during the delegation phase. Reviews of factors that contribute to poor integration of central government seconded staff into a regional council were investigated. In depth discussion with staff engaged in decentralisation implementation at regional level was carried out. It was concluded that qualitative

research by means of interviews, literature reviews and observation would be the best way to assess the problem of integration with reference to the management theories already identified.

### **1.9 Limitations of the Study**

The study was conducted in Ohangwena Region which is 800 kilometres from Windhoek. This made the research process very costly due to the distances involved in travelling and accommodation. Although there is a lot of information on decentralisation, there was limited data on the integration of seconded staff in regional councils due to decentralisation in Namibia. Accessing information from respondents was also a challenge because not all respondents were willing to give information despite the explanation of the confidentiality of the research. Some respondents considered some information as confidential and they were not willing to share it.

The study was also time consuming because making appointments with some of the participants was challenging, especially those at top management level, due to meetings and other work related commitments which made it difficult for them to keep the appointment date and time as agreed. This challenge extended the data collection period that was planned for two weeks to three weeks. Another challenge was that none of the respondents interviewed agreed to be recorded; they all opted for notes to be taken of the discussion.

Furthermore biases could exist because the information contained in this thesis does not represent the opinion of all Ohangwena Regional Council staff or of all the central government seconded staff.

### **1.10 Outline of the Research**

The study contains six chapters. Chapter One gives an introduction to the context of the study, discusses the background, problem statements, research objectives and research questions, the scope and study justifications. It briefly states the broader areas of management theory of the study, the limitation of the study and the outlines of the study. Chapter Two focuses on the theoretical framework based on a literature review that is relevant to this study and discusses the concepts of decentralisation.

Chapter Three presents the methodology selected for this study, data collection methods, sample design and tools used to collect data. Chapter Four presents the data analysis and interpretation of the research carried out. Chapter Five focuses on the discussion of the findings and Chapter Six presents the conclusion and recommendations.

### **1.11. Conclusion**

This chapter has provided an overview of the study to enable the reader to understand what the study entails and how the following chapter, the literature review, is relevant to this research.

## **Chapter 2**

### **2. Literature Review**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter gave an introduction to the study, the research questions and the objectives. This chapter reviews the literature, starting with the key concepts of decentralisation, different forms of decentralisation and focuses more on the administration of decentralisation and the delegation phase. It also looks at the rationale of decentralisation, civil service reform and decentralisation and the challenges of human resources management in terms of integration of central government seconded staff in sub-national government.

#### **2.2 Definition of the Concept of Decentralisation**

Decentralisation is used in most countries as a key component of good governance and development and Namibia is no different. Various researchers and scholars define the concept of decentralisation in different ways demonstrating that there is no common definition or understanding of decentralisation, although much work has gone into exploring its differing application. According to Ragmi (2013) decentralisation is a power and politics game between or within governments, external development partners, local authorities and civil societies.

Ragmi (2013) further stated that decentralisation is the process of negotiation between central and local government rather than a transformational process because it is very important to define the roles of central government and local government

stating who does what, who has what and who is gaining and who is losing, otherwise this may bring tension between the two tiers in terms of definition, and the demarcation of responsibilities and promises of service outcomes.

This is further explained by Berkhout (2005) who stated that decentralisation seldom constitutes a clear shift or restructuring of power from the centre to the periphery, but is often an amalgamation of concealed centralisation measures. Decentralisation shifts decision making power, no matter to what degree, to sub-national administrative and political units (MRLGHRD, 2000).

Turner and Hume (1997, p.152) defined decentralisation as “the transfer of authority to perform some services to the public from an individual agency in central government to one which is closer to the public served”. However Hope (2000) argued decentralisation is the transfer of authority or responsibilities for decision making, planning, management or resources allocation from any level of government, regional or functional authorities, semi-autonomous public authorities, parastatal organisations, private entities or voluntary organisations.

Reddy (1999) defined decentralisation as the transfer of authority, legislative, judicial or administrative from higher level of government to the lower level. The United Nations and the United Nation Development program (1999) referred to decentralisation as the restructuring or reorganisation of authority so that there is a system of co-responsibility between institutions of governance at the central, regional and local levels according to the principles of subsidiary, that increase the overall quality and effectiveness of the system of governance while increasing the authority and capabilities at sub-national level.



The United Nation definition further stated that decentralisation should contribute to the key element of good governance and should not be seen as end in itself. It can be a means for creating more open, responsive and effective local governance and representational systems of community-level decision making. Work (2002) defined decentralisation as a process that brings decision making closer to the people in order to stimulate programmes and services that better address local needs. According to Schneider (2003) decentralisation is a mixture of administrative, fiscal and political functions and relationships in the design of decentralisation all three concepts should be included.

Schneider (2003) further argued that decentralisation can be measured by taking into consideration these three core dimensions because they are related even though they are substantially different.

Ekpo (2008) maintained decentralisation is a kind of vertical power sharing within the political system whereby competences and responsibilities are distributed across different tiers of government. Gravingholt et al. (2006) viewed decentralisation as the process by which authority, responsibilities power, resources and accountability are transferred from central level government to sub-national government.

Gravingholt et al. (2006) further stated that it is very important to distinguish the categories of decentralisation to highlight its many dimensions. These concepts have considerable overlaps because decentralisation efforts are strongly linked to the country size, its population, history, politics, climate as well as its geographical and ethnic diversity. Precise definitions are thus less important than ensuring a balanced, comprehensive approach.

In this regard Smoke (2003, p.8) stated that “decentralisation is invariably complex and has several dimensions that are integrated and must be considered together”. Smoke (2003) further mentioned that it seems there are ambiguities in the conceptualisation as well as the practices of decentralisation because decentralisation means different things to different people as demonstrated by these theories. These ideas show that although there is no overall definition of decentralisation most scholars agree that decentralisation includes the transferring of power and resources to sub-national government. Since there is no agreed definition of decentralisation the next section looks at the different dimensions or forms of decentralisation.

### **2.3 Different Forms of Decentralisation**

It is clear from the various definitions of decentralisation that it embraces a variety of concepts which must be carefully analyzed in any particular country before starting with the program. The programmes need to be chosen carefully to support the reorganisation of a financial, administrative or service delivery system. This can only be done through the different types of decentralisation such as political, administrative and fiscal (Smoke, 2003).

Smoke (2003) further argued that these three dimensions are inter-related and decentralisation in one dimension may influence or cross over into decentralisation in another. Failing to account for this inter-relationship measure of decentralisation can either over or underestimate the amount of decentralisation which occurs. A good example of this is that administrative decentralisation might generate fiscal decentralisation as sub-national governance needs resources to assert administrative decentralisation. These models are found together in various mixes, sometimes one may be the first stage in the evolution of another.

The United Nations Development Program (2004) suggested four major forms of administrative decentralisation. These are deconcentration, delegation, devolution and privatisation. This study focuses on three of the forms: deconcentration, delegation and devolution. These different forms of administrative decentralisation should be distinguished because they have different characteristics and policy implications. Different countries choose the appropriate form of decentralisation that works effectively. This is because countries may have different aims for decentralisation as well as conditions of success.

Namibia as a country from the constitutional commitment and the legislation view prefers decentralisation of devolution of power to lower tiers within the context and overall authority of unitary state starting with delegation (MRLGHRD, 1997).

According to Namibia's Decentralisation Policy (1998) the country has opted to use only two phases of administrative decentralisation, delegation and devolution. The Namibian Decentralisation Policy (1998) further defines deconcentration as a process by which central government decentralises its own staff to sub-national government to carry out their regular functions closer to the people they serve or are supposed to interface with for whatever purpose.

The World Bank (2003) characterised deconcentration as the weakest form of decentralisation that is most frequently used in unitary states. Litvack (2003) defined deconcentration as the distribution of decision making authorities, financial and management responsibilities among different levels of the central government. Litvack (2003) further stated that deconcentration is merely shifting responsibilities from central government to regions, provinces or districts. This form of

decentralisation aims to create a stronger capacity under the supervision of a central government ministry.

In terms of staff movement to sub-national government, Julian (2004) viewed deconcentration as a way of shifting agents from central government control by relocating and geographically dispersing those to a sub-national government level to perform functions on behalf of the centre. In addition Julian (2004) argued that deconcentration is concerned with the transfer of power to local branches of central government or line ministries to the upwardly accountable bodies appointed and reporting to the centre.

Julian's (2004) argument supported the World Bank (2003) view that deconcentration is a weak form of decentralisation because the downward accountability relationships from which many benefits are expected are not well established as in the democratic or political forms of decentralisation. Manor (1999) referred to deconcentration as an administrative decentralisation that transfers authority to sub-national branches of the central state often to the line ministry of officials based in local areas, as cited in Grawford & Hertmann (2008).

UNESCO (2005) viewed deconcentration as the delegation of responsibility for management purposes from a central level to sub-national level while decisions and policy formulation are done at the centre. In terms of integrating seconded staff into the regional council and deconcentration as a form of administration decentralisation there is little link between the regional staff and the seconded staff since the sub national government is not directly controlling the seconded staff (Kolehmainen-Aitken, 2001).

It can be concluded then, that deconcentration is not a good form of administrative decentralisation to integrate staff into regional structures since integration involves the synthesis of people into one corporate culture. This form of decentralisation is not part of the decentralisation phase in Namibia, even though some line ministries have opted to decentralise by means of deconcentration. The Namibian Decentralisation Policy (1998, p.11) states that “due to the complexity of decentralisation and its implementation requirements, going through various interim stages including delegation shall form part of the implementation of decentralisation program for Namibia therefore the implementation of decentralisation shall start with/ under delegation”.

According to Namibia’s Decentralisation Policy (1998) delegation is when central government allocates some of its functions to the sub-national levels to carry out but not to take full responsibility for and without abrogating its own public accountability for those functions and without prejudice to its right to retract those functions. This usually happens through the executives rather than the legislative. In support of the above arguments, Litvack (2003) defined delegations as a more extensive form of decentralisation with central governments transferring responsibilities for decision making and administration of public functions to semi-autonomous organisations not wholly controlled by central government but ultimately accountable to it.

The United Nation Development Program (1999) referred to delegation as the transfer of government decision making, administrative authority and responsibility, carefully spelling out tasks to institutions and organisations that are either under a government’s indirect control or are semi-independent. Furthermore the central

government does not fully control the activities of these institutions but the institution performing the function on behalf of the central government and which are accountable to central government. Delegation is the transfer of specific authority and decision making powers to organisations that are outside the regular bureaucratic structure and that are only indirectly controlled by the central government such as parastatals, regional development corporations and semi-autonomous agencies (UNDP, 1997, b).

The United Nations Development Program (2002) defined delegation as the redistribution of authority and responsibilities from the centre to the local units of government that are not always branches of the delegating authority but the center will remain accountable for the delegated functions.

Several studies (Oyono, 2004; Haque, 2008; and Ribot, 2002) revealed a similar outcome that delegation is when the power and functions are transferred to semi-independent units or entities without the center giving up the ultimate decision making role. Regmi et al. (2010) viewed delegation as the transfer of certain responsibilities to organisations which are outside the bureaucratic structure and are indirectly controlled by the central government.

Delegation is considered to be the first phase of the decentralisation process in Namibia with the aim to empower the sub-national government to make decisions and to perform the functions transferred to them from the central government as an agent on behalf of the decentralising line ministry. The line ministry is still fully accountable and responsible for policy making and capacity building of the seconded staff. Seconded staff are managed under the Public Service Act of 1995 (Decentralization Manual, Procedures and Guidelines for delegation phase, 2007).

Mointyre & Kluyman (2003) defined devolution as a creation or strengthening of sub-national levels of government, such as provincial and local government, to have a considerable political and managerial decision making authority with respect to a range of functions.

In this case, Oyono (2004) argued that devolution transfers power to local governments and to the authority representing and who is accountable to local populations. While Litvack (2003) illustrated that devolution is a transfer of authority for decision making, finance and management to sub-national government, this sub-national government should have clear and legally recognised geographic boundaries over which they exercise authority and within which they perform public functions.

The United Nation Development Program (1999) viewed devolution as a genuine decentralisation whereby the central government relinquishes certain functions or creates new units of government that are outside of its direct control. It further stated that devolution has certain fundamental characteristics such as:

- sub-national governments are autonomous, independent and clearly perceived as separate levels of government over which certain authorities exercise little or no direct control,
- sub-national government has clear and legally recognised geographic boundaries within which they exercise authorities and perform public functions.

The Decentralisation Policy (1998) stated that devolution involves the transfer of authority and the giving of full responsibility and accountability to perform certain functions from the central government to sub-national government.

In terms of a seconded staff perspective, countries that adopt devolution as a model of decentralisation will not have the problem of integrating seconded staff because it is considered as the best form of administrative decentralisation. Delegated staff can be easily integrated into the sub-national government since it is autonomous and the authority is transferred in terms of political power to make decisions, economic or financial resources management and the administrative and service delivery (MRLGHRD, 2013).

## **2.4 Rational for Decentralisation**

According to the World Bank (2005) decentralisation in some African countries was introduced due to the spread of multi part political systems and demands for more control or participation in the political process. In most East-Asian countries decentralisation was brought in due to political factors such as the collapse of an authoritarian regime e.g. The Philippines and Indonesia or structural changes such as continuous economic growth and urbanisation.

In contrast to the above, Bardhana (2002) noted that decentralisation has for many decades been seen as a public sector reform necessary for invigorating the states in Africa and it may be attributed to the perceived failure of centralisation. Similarly in the same context, Phirinyane (2009, p.33) as cited in Bardhana (2002, p. 17) also noted that “decentralisation has for many decades been seen as the public sector reform necessary for invigorating the states and apparent global popularity of decentralisation may attributed to the perceived failure of central government”.

Crawford & Hartmann (2008) stressed that the rationale of decentralisation is to shrink the power of the centralised state and deepen the democratic agenda in order



to provide greater opportunity for influencing decision making processes at the local level.

According to Smoke (2003) some of the factors that prompt nations to adopt decentralisation are anticipated improvement of efficiency, improved governance, improved equity, improved development and poverty reduction. In the same context Litvack (1999), as cited in World Bank (1997) pointed out that decentralisation reflects a broader process of political and economic reforms in most countries since it brings an economic and political systems closer to the communities. The political change worldwide also brings rise in the local demands for decentralisation.

Similarly Oates (2007) stressed that the aim of decentralisation is to provide a more generous level of public output at all levels of government because local governments are closer to their constituencies and have knowledge of local preferences that the centre cannot easily come by. In the same vein, MRLGHRD (1997) indicated that decentralisation in Namibia is prompted by the current government's willingness to encourage participatory democracy in decision making and power at both regional and local level.

## **2.5 Civil Service Reform and Decentralisation**

Olsen (2007) argued that the reform of a civil service is the process of modifying rules and incentives to obtain a more efficient, dedicated and performing government labour force in a newly decentralised environment. Olsen (2007) further stated that this reform of a civil service has a fairly widespread influence on capacity building development at all government levels, which is the key component of decentralisation. A civil service at all levels of government needs a capable, motivated

and efficient staff in order to deliver quality services to citizens. When functions are decentralised, existing bureaucratic patterns must be re-organised as roles and accountability are shifted. This then intensifies the need for capable staff because of the changes of the location of power and jobs from central to local government. According to Kolehmainen-Aitken (2004) different countries have defined the civil service status of transferred staff in the public sector in four ways:

- **Retain a uniform national civil service:** staff are seconded or transferred to decentralised units such as districts, under centrally defined civil service terms. Countries such as Papua New Guinea and the Philippines are using this form of reform.
- **Decentralise the national civil service:** staff are transferred to decentralised units, with civil service processes also decentralised, to newly created local-level public service commissions. This is the reform mechanism that Uganda uses to transfer staff to local level.
- **Mixed model:** Old employees are seconded to decentralised units under the national civil service with centrally defined terms. New personnel are employed directly by the decentralised units under locally defined terms. This is the reform mechanism that Jamaica uses.
- **Remove health workers from the national civil service:** All public sector health workers become employees of a "national health service" with its own terms and conditions of service (e.g. Ghana), or transferred staff are "de-linked" from it with local terms and conditions of work (e.g. Zambia).

According to the European Union Communities (2009) civil service reform can describe many changes, from minor adjustment to management arrangements of fundamental changes in ownership. Reform can be a change that either produces a measurable improvement in services or a noticeable change in the relationship between institutions of the state and the citizens. Reform that changes civil servant pay will have no impact on services or on the way the civil service relates to the citizens, so this change would not be counted as genuine reform or change. In terms of decentralisation civil service reform is usually a supportive strategy for more general decentralisation in government operations or service delivery.

Decentralisation reform in many countries comes as a means of improving service delivery to citizens and for communities to participate in decisions that affects them. Decentralising the civil service is not an end in itself, as mentioned above. Decentralisation happens in order to provide better services and manage resources more efficiently (EUC, 2009).

The World Bank (2007) also indicated that civil service reform is not an end in itself but is done in order to provide better service, to manage resources more effectively and efficiently and to support the general goal outcome. The Bank further stated that in the context of decentralisation civil service reform is a process of modifying rules and incentives to obtain more efficient dedicated and better performing staff in a newly decentralised environment. When civil service functions and structures are decentralised, roles are more organised and accountability is shifted.

Wunsch & Alowu (2004) illustrated that decentralisation reforms in several African states became more substantial to the point where they were of a

fundamentally different order because of significant elements of authority, responsibility for services, and the fiscal and human resources that were transferred to local governments. Wunsch & Alowu's argument supported the idea of Ahwoi (2010) who indicated that the notion of decentralisation in African countries is challenged by the problem of bureaucrats who have a paternalistic, central orientation and are thus reluctant to cede their power.

Kwemena (2010) stressed that decentralisation reform in Africa fails due to insufficient preparatory groundwork for reform. Central governments, in most cases, do not correctly assess the functional capacity of regional governments to which functions are to be transferred. To make the matter worse there is often inadequate or no training to prepare stakeholders for the reform. These are some of the weaknesses that lead to poor management of the reform process.

Riruako (2007) and Kwemeni (2010) have proved that poor preparation is the cause of poor management of the reform process. Their argument is further confirmed by the report in the Namibian Sun (Iileka, 2013, p.2) "Ohangwena Region was in the rush to transfer the staff from Ondangwa without making necessary preparation such as making services available before the move". Staffs are finding it hard having to travelling every morning and afternoon due to a lack of accommodation in Eenhana and few schools for their children.

The New Era newspaper (Sinvula, 2011, p.3) stated that "decentralisation in Namibia requires a huge sum of money to support the capacity development and infrastructure if is to succeed and it requires proper preparation and resources if is to succeed". According to Alan & Koranteg (2011) the main weaknesses in the

governance are; poor co-ordination, ineffective regulation and the marginalisation of disadvantaged communities.

## **2.6 Human Resources Management and Integration in a Decentralisation Context**

Olsen (2007) stressed that the decision to decentralise or retain central control over human resources management such as recruitment, hiring and salary setting etc depends heavily on the existing degree of sub-national government capacity. The above view is supported by Antwi et al. (2007) who stated that decentralisation in both theory and practice aims to improve good local governance and to provide a higher quality public service that is valued by citizens. They further stated that the design, institutional and human resources capacity arrangement governing its implementation will determine the successfulness of decentralisation. The Namibian Decentralisation Policy states that in order to sustain the pace of decentralisation and ensure its successful implementation during the delegation phase, the central government shall ensure that the policy is well explained and understood by all (MRLGHRD, 1998).

In integrating staff into sub-national government Berer (2003) assumed that the reason for seconding staff to local government by means of decentralisation was to integrate them into the local government. The local government would be responsible for the management of seconded staff, budgeting, funding and the provision of services to the community. Berer (2003) further stated that the integration of services would improve the delivery of services because planning and co-ordination of different services will be done in the same place. Similarly Schierhout & Fonn (2008) suggested that the integration of services or staff seems to

work together when the target groups or population for the different services are the same.

Kolehmainen– Aitken (2001) stated that decentralisation changes the way human resources are organised into the functional structures and in the job that they perform because organisational structures and positions need to be changed in order to conform to the new division of power and resources. Kolehmainen - Aitken further stated that the transfer of human resources to local control is a far more complex process than the handover of facilities or equipment. Modifying and creating a new organisational structure and position at both a local and central level should specify the linkage between them through the following factors:

- Revising job descriptions and reporting relationships.
- Defining the new process for personnel management.
- Deciding how to relocate existing staff to new organisational structures.
- Transferring personnel records and staff.
- Modifying if a new employer refuses to accept the transfer.
- Dealing with individual staff members who will not or cannot accept a transfer.

Green (2005) indicated that civil servants form a crucial link between the delivery of financial resources to the government and the delivery of essential public services to the people. The relationship between decentralisation and civil service management is a two way process. First there is the behaviour of civil servants and their performance. Secondly civil service management should be seen as an essential

component in the design of decentralisation rather than a separate, stand-alone process.

In Namibia the human resources management under delegation requires that activities transfer to regional council together with staff and resources and during the delegation phase seconded staff remains staff members of the line ministry and so are subject to the regulations laid out in the Public Service Act (Act 13 of 1995).

MRLGHRD manual procedures and guidelines for the delegation phase (2004, p.5) identify the key role players in human resources related matters as follows:

- The supervisor in the regional council is the driving force as they must seek and finalise the human related issues of their subordinates.
- The human resources officers, both at regional council and line ministries, provide administrative services. The chief regional officer is accountable to the Permanent Secretary, who is still accountable for all the resources during the delegation phase.
- The office of the Prime Minister following the recommendation of the public service commissioner is responsible for placing the seconded staff into regional council as seconded staff.
- The Labour Union ensures that labour matters are taken into consideration during the delegation phase.

With respect to the integration of new staff into the organisation Hamilton (2008) stated that successful effective integration of new employees into the work place during their first year increases the retention percentage and improves engagement and performance. Hamilton (2008) further indicated that most organisations see integration as part of orientation, a one-off event that happens

during the first day at work. Most of the time this orientation is a stand-alone event not integrated with other first year experiences for new employees. Hamilton developed a model for integration and engaging new employees called “getting on board”. This idea was further confirmed by a study conducted by the Hewitt Association (2003) which found that companies who invest time and resources in “on-boarding” enjoyed the highest level of employee’s engagement.

Recruitment Round Table (2005) research results revealed that effective “on-board” programmes can improve employees’ performance by 11.3 percent. In contrast to this view, Walker (2008) stated that an on-board program will not be successful if it lacks a focus on the agency’s mission, vision and culture and this often happens in organisations, when they deploy on-board initiatives.

## **2.7 Decentralisation and Service Delivery**

Shah & Thompson (2004) argued that the decentralisation of service delivery is attributed to different reasons in different countries. Improving service delivery has been a common factor in most of the African countries. Furthermore, decentralisation has not been effective in improving service delivery by local governments due to lack of revenues and the necessary administrative capacity on the part of local government.

This limited evidence indicates that decentralisation has yet to deliver its promised results because there is no evidence that service delivery and poverty indicators have improved as a result of decentralisation governance. Work (2002) suggested that as part of decentralisation, the integration of programmes at regional level will improve service delivery. It was found that for an improvement in service



delivery at the local government level, services needed to be integrated and provided in the team set-up.

Muriisa (2008) suggested that local governments are more responsive and accountable to the people they serve as they are closer to the community than the central government. Muriisa further stated that decentralisation contributes to service delivery due to the fact that it transfers the real power to the sub-national government. It reduces the work load of officials at the centre and improves financial accountability through the establishment of clear links between tax payment and services providers.

Mariisa (2008) further stressed that Ugandan decentralisation has achieved only limited successes in service delivery in education and the health sector, despite the good intentions of decentralisation. The implementation has been faced with challenges of personnel capacity at local level and an effective monitoring of service delivery. The study further revealed this approach needed a proper evaluation to determine the extent to which it has led to the improvement of service delivery. There is a need to look at the accountability, efficiency and effectiveness as tools for evaluation.

McLennan & Munslow (2009, p. 139) stated that “in South Africa each sphere of the government is autonomous but interdependent”. However the provincial government is faced with the challenges of the delivery of social services, the role of the provincial legislatures, provincial administration costs, accountability and the division of responsibilities and civil service skills. It further stated that the provinces exercise no real policy autonomy and they lack accountability to their electorates, a

situation that derives from their inability or unwillingness to raise their own sources of taxation revenue.

In support of the argument, Cabral (2011) emphasised the same point, arguing that there is a lack of systematic analysis of decentralisation in Africa and its impact on service delivery and poverty reduction. Elhiraika (2007) revealed that in South Africa, service delivery due to decentralisation increased the accountability and transparency of policy makers and service providers as well as the responsiveness to local preferences and needs. Similarly, Sayed (2008) argued that the South African government committed itself to obtaining community support and participation in order to improve service delivery.

The World Bank (2008) indicated that decentralisation in Ethiopia has made considerable progress in the delivery of basic services such as education and health as the government established the foundation of consolidation accountability mechanisms for better services by delegates' responsible for the delivery of services to local government.

Fjeldstand et al. (2005) stated that despite decentralisation in Namibia, lack of local authority preparedness of planning and robust decision making are some two of the contributing factors impacting on the service delivery. In contrast to the above, the report from the Ministry of Regional Local Government Housing and Rural Development (2011) stated that there has been an improvement in the provision of most services after the implementation of decentralisation. The report further indicated that the provisions of basic services such as, water, electricity, sewerage and drainage have been improved.

In Namibia decentralised line ministry is responsible for budgeting and planning for delegated functions. Planning is done in co-ordination with the sub-national government where the functions are delegated, taking into account Vision 2030. The Permanent Secretary of the decentralised line ministry is accountable for all the resources during the delegation phase. The ministry that delegates functions transfers the money on a monthly basis to a special account opened by the regional council where the function is decentralised (MRLGHRD, 1998).

### **2.7.1. Decentralisation and capacity building**

The World Bank (2005) indicated that devolution of responsibility for management and public services should be seen as a necessary step in building individuals and institutional capacity. The World Bank (2005) further stressed that learning by doing should also be encouraged because it is a more sustainable and individualised approach than occasional courses for development without paying attention to the task being performed by individuals. The critical challenge is to maintain the forward momentum while balancing capacity considerations. Larbi (1998) stressed that the absence of capacity building in any organisation necessitates capacity building and the effect of capacity building must be preceded by the existence of some capacity.

In the same vein, Devas (2005) stated that local government often suffers from weak institutional capacity and that decision making processes are unsystematic. The mechanisms of accountability between officials and elected representatives are inadequate and there is a shortage of officials with the necessary technical, managerial and financial skills. Devas further argued that there is a lack of financial resources to

attract and retain high calibre staff because local government in Africa offers a lower salary than the private sector.

The research that was conducted in Indonesia and Philippines by the Asian foundation (2002) shows that countries can build their capacity through decentralisation. The World Bank (2008) indicates that decentralisation improves the capacity of local government to plan and manage finance as well as the delivery of services to the community. For decentralisation to achieve its targets there should be a high level of public accountability. The other problem contributing to poor service delivery is the lack of transparency in the allocation of resources and weak budgetary procedures with regards to the record keeping and auditing.

### **2.7.2 Decentralisation and planning and co-ordination**

According to Hadingham (2003) decentralisation planning has been the move for most developing countries on the advice of international development agencies and donors. Hadingham further outlined that decentralisation planning systems are increasingly required to undertake the functions of integrating “top down” outcomes of the process. These participatory planning systems have an important role to play in creating an enabling environment for local communities to participate in development decisions and activities.

While Mullins (2004) stated that decentralisation planning should be a shared function with initial overall strategies developed and sponsored centrally, it should also involve local communities and the development of their capacity. Chandrasekhar (2002) indicated that for decentralisation to become meaningful, planning should

ensure that the resources needed are devolved to lower levels of decision makers and for them to have the right to allocate resources in accordance with the local priorities.

Waldron, Vsanthakumar and Arulray (1996) illustrated that whether planning for long term programme priorities or planning a two hours meeting, the planning aspects of management are the major contributors to success and productivity of the organisation. Planning is the key management function of any extensive work. It is the process of determining in advance what should be accomplished when, by whom, how and at what cost.

In Namibia the delegation phase of decentralisation marks the beginning of a regional “bottom up” approach to development planning and budgeting. Planning is based on defined policies and objectives and the communities at the grass root level identify the need. This need must be addressed effectively through the development planning process and implementation (Manual, Procedures and Guidelines for the decentralization phase of decentralization, 2007).

In terms of seconding staff Mullins (2004) stated that co-ordination requires consultation and entails both vertical and horizontal collaboration. The more complicated the inter-governmental distribution of responsibilities, the more important and difficult co-ordination becomes.

Mullins (2004) further emphasized the importance of co-ordination as follows:

- Coordination is necessary to clarify national policies and goals.
- Establish agreements regarding the contribution of individual program and levels.
- It helps to communicate experiences and progress towards objectives.

- It identifies and eliminates overlapping, duplication or competing activities.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

The literature review indicates that most African countries embark on decentralisation to improve the living standard of their people by empowering the sub-national government and involve people at a grass root level to participate in decisions that affect their life. There is a link between decentralisation and human resources management as neither of these factors can stand alone. The literature also revealed that the success of decentralisation, in terms of human resources management, will depend on the capacity of sub-national government in the management of both financial and human resources.

The literature laid a foundation for the study because most of the findings are in agreement with previous scholars' findings. For instance, as Maina (2005) stressed, there is disparate approach in most countries in terms of integrating seconded staff into sub-national government because some African countries are experiencing challenges with the capacity of sub-national government to manage decentralised functions. The next chapter presents the research methods which map out the strategies used in the collection of data and how it is analysed.

## **Chapter 3**

### **3. Research Methodology and Design**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

Chapter Two presented a review of the relevant literature and analysed it in relation to the study. The purpose of Chapter Three is to explore and analyse the research methods used in conducting this study. The approach and methodology used were determined by the aims of the study.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The study is based on the assumption that central government seconded staff to the regional councils are not well integrated into them. The study uses the case of Ohangwena Regional Council. The study adopted an interpretive approach as a research method to investigate the effectiveness of decentralisation as a means to integrate central government seconded staff to regional councils.

Since this study needs an insider's perspective, feelings and thoughts, an interpretive approach is found to be relevant. An interpretive approach is associated with qualitative research and this study uses the qualitative research methods. According to Silverman (2003, 2013) qualitative research is the most powerful research in exploring everyday activities that are taken for granted. Silverman further stated that the beauty of qualitative research is that it gives the researcher access to the nitty- gritty reality of everyday life viewed through a new analytic lens.

Ritchie & Lewis (2009, p.2) defined qualitative research as a “situated activity that locates the observer in the world”. Ritchie & Lewis (2009) further indicated that qualitative research consists of sets of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. Yin (2003) argued that the premise of interpretive researchers is that access to reality through social constructions such as language is underpinned by observation and interpretations. Observation collects information about an event, while to interpret gives meaning to that information by judging the match between the information and some obstruct pattern. The researcher used face to face interviews, observation and desk documents analysis to collect data. Data collection methods by means of interviews usually “involves close contact between the researcher and research participants, which are interactive and developmental and allow for merging issues to be explored” (Ritchie and Lewis, 2009, p.5).

Creswell & Plano Clark (2004, P. 6) stressed that “qualitative research is an enquiring approach, in which the enquirer analyses and codes the data for description themes, interprets the meaning of the information drawing on personal reflection and past research and writes a final report”.

### **3.3 Case Study**

The study involves an analysis of decentralisation as a means of integrating seconded staff into regional councils in terms of process, approach, administrative structures and systems in place. A case study was found as the best strategy that can allow for a qualitative approach. The Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management Paper (2010) defined the case study as a general approach to understand phenomenon that involve many specific methodologies such as interviews and direct observation and desk study.



Bromley (1986) has illustrated that case studies are used to get a deeper understanding which hopefully results in new learning to be investigated. Bromley further stated that case studies are pertinent when the research addresses explanatory questions. According to Baxter & Jacks (2008) qualitative case study methodology provides tools for researchers to study complex phenomena within their context. It becomes a valuable method, develops interventions and evaluates programs for improvement. Baxter and Jacks have further stated that qualitative research ensures that the issues are not explored through one lens but rather a variety of lenses which allows for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood. Central to the above, Robert Stake (1995) and Robert Yin (2003, 2006) on their approach and guide to case studies state that a case study is relative and it depends on one's perception.

For the purpose of this study the researcher investigated the following question:

How can the integration of central government seconded staff during the process of decentralisation to regional council be improved?

### **3.4 Case Selection**

According to Gerring (2008) case selection procedures should consider focusing on the typical diverse, extreme, deviant, influential and similar information. Curtis et al. (2000) cited Stake (1994) who suggested that a distinction should be made between intrinsic case works and instrumental or collective case work. In the intrinsic case the environment is pre specified, not chosen because a particular case is focusing on the actual research question. In an instrumental or collective case one or more cases need to be chosen from a number of possible alternatives in order to

explore a research theme. Curtis et al. further stated that qualitative research requires a case to be chosen and so making a proper selection is very important.

For this research an instrumental case work was selected. Ohangwena Regional Council was selected for this study because it is one of the regional councils that experienced a lot of challenges with seconded staff members. However the region is still trying very hard to implement the decentralisation policy despite all these challenges, such as moving the seconded staff from Oshana region to Ohangwena region. The exceptionality of this region can be explained by their perseverance in going beyond their limit to implement the process. This creates a conducive environment to address the research question.

### **3.5 Population**

According to Castillo (2009) a research population is generally a large collection of individuals or objects that is the main focus of a scientific query and it is done for the benefit of the population. Castillo further stated that this is done because populations can be large in size and often researchers cannot test every individual in the population as it is expensive and time consuming. This research relies on using sampling methods to conduct research.

Ritchie and Lewis (2009, p. 87) illustrated three key questions which need to be addressed in defining the population study (summarised):

- Which group or sub-population is of central interest to the subject matter of the study? This involves deciding which population will, by virtue of their proximity to the research question, be able to provide the richest and most relevant information

- Are there subsets of the central population that should be excluded? This may be because of their specific circumstances or experiences set them outside the scope of study
- Are there additional groups or sub-populations that should be included because of their views, experiences and so on, that will bring contrasting or complementary insights to the query?

The research population for this study therefore, consists of 490. The study focuses on staff members both at top management level, middle management level and operational staff.

### **3.6 Sampling Techniques**

This study used a purposeful non-probability sampling. The study targeted 20 respondents who were purposefully selected from various directorates and divisions of both Ohangwena Regional Council and central government seconded staff to Ohangwena regional council.

Staffs that deal with support services such as the Directorate of Planning in Ohangwena Regional Council and the division of planning of delegated education functions, division of human resources and finance in Ohangwena Regional Council and sections of human resources and finance of delegated education function were interviewed.

These directorates and divisions are more involved with both seconded and non-seconded staff and that is where the integration is needed for effective service delivery. The chief regional officer and the head of all delegated functions were also part of the group interviewed.

In this study the selection of respondents is based on clusters at both levels and directorates or divisions due to the smallness of the sample frame. The size of sampling is determined by the number of staff at management level and operational level in each cluster.

The criteria used for the selection of participants are as follows:

Participants should be at senior, middle management level, hold one of the positions mentioned in **Table 1** and are believed to have the practical experience of what worked and what did not work with the process of decentralisation. These participants were also purposefully selected because they are the people who were involved in decision making in the implementation of decentralisation at a sub-national level.

Participants at operational level were selected because they have been involved in the process of decentralisation and were directly involved in the actual implementation of decentralised education or maintenance function at a regional level. These respondents should also hold one of the positions mentioned in **Table 1** on page 41. All selected staff members were interviewed as intended.

**Table 1: Population Sample of the Research Participants**

Directorate/ Division	No	Top mana geme nt	Middle managem ent	Operatio nal level
Chief Regional Officer	1	1		
Director and Deputy Director of Education	2	2		
Planning and development for both Ohangwena Regional Council and education ( <i>Director, Deputy director, Chief position and Senior officer</i> )	6	2	3	1
Chief maintenance officer	1		1	
Human Resources officers both for education, maintenance and Ohangwena Regional Council( <i>Director ,Deputy director ,Chief position and senior officers</i> )	6	1	2	3
Finance officers for both Ohangwena Regional council education and maintenance ( <i>Director, Deputy director, Chief position and Senior finance officers</i> )	4		2	2
<u>TOTAL</u>	20	6	8	6

Source: field study (2013)

### **3.7 Research Instruments**

The study uses different research instruments for the purpose of data collection. Research instruments such as in-depth face to face interview with key respondents, observation and desk study of relevant documents such as decentralisation guidelines, reports, and articles about decentralisation as well as books were analysed. The interview used both open ended and structured questions

#### **3.7.1 Face to face interview**

Kajornboom (2005, p.14) defined the interview as a “system of talking and listening to people”. While Kvale (1996) defined the interview as an interchange of views between two or more on a topic of mutual interest, seeing the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production. In contrast to the above, Cohen, Manio and Morrison (2000, p.267) have stated that “the interview is not simply concerned with collecting data about life, it is embedded and becomes part of life itself”. Gill et al. (2008) stated that the interview explores the views, experiences, beliefs and motivation of individuals on specific matters and provides a deeper understanding of social phenomena.

According to Legard, Keegan & Ward (2009) a researcher has to be able to create a good working relationship with participants. A good working relationship is achieved where the researcher seeks to put the participants at ease and create a climate of trust. Interviews have some advantages such as the ability to respond flexibly to the interviewee and being able to show understanding and empathy.

In this study an interview guide (in the form of questionnaire) was developed and organised into different themes to guide the interviews. This guide was used to

collect data during the interview. This helped the researcher in collecting primary data. It comprised of several open ended, as well as a few structured questions, regarding planning of delegated functions and the co-ordination of activities between Ohangwena Regional Council and the delegating line ministries. Questions also covered areas such as, the management of central government seconded staff, capacity building of both regional council staff and central government seconded staff, contributing factors to poor integration and levels of integration. Before starting the interview, the researcher contacted respondents at their work place and appointments were made to conduct the interviews.

The researcher also explained the whole process of the interview to the respondents as well as the consent letter. Some respondents were given the prepared questionnaires to read through before the interview (given on request only). Since the interviews were done using a prepared questionnaire, the interview probing was used in cases where respondents gave inadequate information. Questions were also made clear where respondents felt they were not clear.

### **3.7.2 Desk study**

To gain background knowledge on the subject, desk research was used to analyse secondary data. This data is based on written documents and reports on decentralisation such as decentralisation policy guidelines. Relevant previous academic research papers on decentralisation were purposefully selected and reviewed to provide a perspective on the overall decentralisation policy. These documents enabled the researcher to assess secondary data information on decentralisation and the integration of seconded staff in a regional council.

### **3.7.3 Observation**

Marshall (2006, p. 99) indicated that “observation entails the systematic noting and recording of events, behaviours and artefacts in the social setting chosen for the study”. Dewalt & Dewalt (2001) stated that observation involves more than just hanging out, self-aware observers use observation systematically. Participants’ observational studies can begin by choosing a site that helps to explore gaps in the theory or choose a site that offers the chance to observe groups or organisation of specific substantive interest.

In this study the researcher conducted observation in the human resources division of the regional council to observe how human resources issues are co-ordinated between the regional council and central government seconded staff and to find out whether the human resources activities of decentralised functions are carried out as per the decentralisation guidelines. The researcher also attended the economising committee meeting, where issues of funding and project planning are discussed.

### **3.8 Study Procedure**

An introductory letter was written to the Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development as a ministry mandated with co-ordination of the decentralisation process. Approval was then given to access secondary data on decentralisation. Another letter was written to the Chief Regional Officer of Ohangwena Regional Council for permission to interact with respondents since the council was used as a case study. The acting chief regional



officer then introduced the researcher to heads of delegated functions, as well as to the head of planning, human resources and finances in the regional council.

Appointments were made to meet the respondents for interviews and those who had requested the prepared questionnaires were given them. The programme planned to meet the respondents in their offices. One interview took almost one hour and thirty five minutes. The whole exercise took three weeks.

### **3.9 Data Collection Procedures**

According to Kajornboom (2005) research differs in a number of aspects but one of the common aspects is the need to collect data. Kajornboon further stated that data collection can be delivered by a number of methods.

This study uses a multiple data collection approach such as in depth interview with relevant selected participants, desk research where several documents such as journals, articles, books, guidelines, Acts and policies on decentralisation process were analysed as well as observation.

The interviews were completed “face to face” with top and middle management as well as operational staff of both the Regional Council and those that were seconded from central government. Semi-structured questions were used in this interview. The consent forms were explained to the research participants before they signed them.

Interview participants for this research were selected purposively because they had practical experience of what worked and what did not work, how things were done and what needed to be improved in terms of integrating central government

seconded staff into regional councils. They were directly involved in decision making in the implementation of decentralisation. The senior officials had more experience and knowledge of policy issues. Responses from respondents were recorded, analysed and transcribed.

### **3.10 Data Analyses**

Data was analysed using qualitative methods, as this was conducted with officials at different levels such as senior management officials, middle management officials and operational officials. A thematic analytical approach was adopted to analyse data for this study. This approach uses themes that describe the phenomenon under investigation. Data collected from respondents were first classified into clusters based on position and in a few cases directorates.

Similar responses were merged and grouped together to form categories that were later organised into themes. This process helped the interviewer to examine the transcripts and documentary notes as well as those noted during observations. All the records obtained during interview, observation and desk study were then organised into categories and themes and interpreted to arrive at the findings. Some respondents' views were also quoted verbatim to give their actual feelings about the issues that were raised.

Data was also coded for easier analysis and interpretations since some interviews that were recorded were edited based on their categories. Data was also analysed by means of tables. Interview analysis helped the researcher to compare the information collected through document analysis with interview transcripts. The analysis of documents such as manuals, procedure and guidelines for delegation

phase, strategic plans, memos and a few communication letters to different stakeholders helped the researcher to evaluate the effectiveness of the decentralisation process in integrating central government seconded staff in Ohangwena Regional Council. Since the study is an interpretive case study it was expedient to employ the context dependent approach. As Dobson (1999) argued the context dependent approach recognises more fully the reality of the research situation.

### **3.11 Ethical Issues**

According to Orb, Eisenhower, &Wynaden (2001) the concept of ethics is the cornerstone for conducting effective and meaningful research. Orb et al. (2001) further recommended that conducting qualitative research required the researcher to be responsible for any ethical issues within an investigation. According to Haughton et al. (2010) ethical issues pertaining to qualitative research are concerned with the issues of consent procedures, the relationship between the researcher and participants and the ratio of risk and benefits.

For this study consent was obtained from the Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development as well as from the Chief Executive Officer of Ohangwena Regional Council. All selected respondents signed a consent form before interviews were conducted; the interviewer ensured that the respondents understood the consent form before signing it.

Respondents were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. All interviews were recorded in the prepared guide questionnaires and in the notebook with the permission of each respondent and the results of each interview were kept confidential.

## **Chapter 4**

### **4. Data Presentation and Analysis of the Findings**

#### **4.1 Introductions**

This chapter presents the findings of the study. The analysis is based on the data gathered through interviews with key respondents, observation and document analysis. The objectives of the study are to investigate the effectiveness of decentralisation to integrate central government seconded staff in Ohangwena Regional Council by determining the level of integration and factors impacting on the integration

Data collected through interviews, observation and documentary analysis are merged into categories. These categories are as follows:

- The biographical data of respondents
- Understanding of decentralisation policy
- Training on decentralisation
- Co-ordination of delegated activities in terms of planning and human resources management of central government seconded staff
- Capacity to manage decentralised functions
- Perceptions on the improvement of service delivery after the delegation of education and maintenance functions to Ohangwena region
- Contributing factors impacting on the integration of central government seconded staff
- Perception of the level of integration

## **4.2 Biographical Data of Respondents**

### **4.2.1. Interview respondents**

The table 2 below presents the findings on positions held by the twenty research participants.

The study reveals that the majority of respondents interviewed are at management levels. Participants interviewed are as follows: Seven (7) senior management, Seven (7) middle management and Six (6) operational staff members. These respondents were selected based their knowledge, experience and role in policy matters in regional government. They also know what worked with the implementation of the decentralisation policy, what did not work and how it could be improved.

**Table 2: Position held by respondents**

Positions	Numbers
Senior management	7
Middle management	7
Operational staff	6
Total	20

Source: Field Survey (2013)

### **4.2.2 Respondents by gender**

The study considers the gender of the respondents because normally men and women hold different views on many issues and decentralisation is no different. It is also important to establish whether Ohangwena Regional Council is gender balanced

in terms of staffing. Out of 20 respondents 14 are male and 6 are female. The composition of respondents shows a higher proportion of men than women.

This gender bias is due to the fact that the majority of respondents interviewed are in management positions and these are occupied by men. This gender bias also reflects the fact that women have previously been at a disadvantage in Namibia and this has caused the greater gender gap in employment rates and levels.

The other reason for this gender bias is that in Namibia, for quite a long time certain professions such as nurses, pre-primary and primary school teachers and human resources management were seen as suitable for women. There were jobs that were seen to be specifically for women, for example, nursing.

**Table 3: Respondents by gender**

Gender	Number
Male	14
Female	6
Total	20

Source: Field Survey (2013)

#### **4.2.3 Working years of experience**

The study also looked at the job experiences of respondents to see whether Ohangwena Regional Council has experienced staff. The study revealed that Ohangwena Regional Council does have experienced staff as although only three respondents had two years experience in their post, most of the respondents had more than five years. This varied from between 2 to 25 years. Those who had spent two

years in their position were mostly newly recruited or who had been recently promoted to the new position or transferred from central government or other regional councils.

**Table 4: Respondents' years of experience**

Research respondents	Years of experiences
Central government seconded staff members	2 - 10
Regional Council staff members	3 - 25

Source: Field Survey (2013)

### **4.3 General knowledge of Namibian Decentralisation Policy**

#### **4.3.1 Understanding of a decentralisation policy**

This section presents the findings regarding the understanding of the decentralisation policy by respondents based on the question: "What is their understanding of the decentralisation policy in Namibia"? The study found that the respondents interviewed had a varied understanding and knowledge of the decentralisation policy. Some respondents at senior management level described decentralisation as a process that brings services closer to the people by letting people participate in decisions that affect their life. A respondent at senior management level stressed that the aim of decentralisation is to release power from central government to the people who deliver services at the regional level. This process cut out some of the bureaucracy in terms of planning because both administration and political decisions are made at the regional level. The respondent further pointed out that

decentralisation is also good for democracy because people who hold answers to the problems experienced by the communities are of the community.

Respondents at middle management level interviewed defined decentralisation as the transfer of decision making responsibilities from central to regional councils. They further mentioned that this transfer can be done by means of delegation or devolution. They also pointed out that currently no function has been devolved because the process is still at delegation phase.

However, some respondents at operational level pointed out that decentralisation is not fully understood by all and staff members need to be trained because they have limited knowledge of the decentralisation policy.

These respondents pointed out that the government had good intentions with regard to the policy of decentralisation but the fact that it is not well explained to all staff members made the implementation difficult, especially at the operational level. The above argument was confirmed by a respondent at the operation level who stressed that they have little understanding of decentralisation and it is therefore, very difficult for them to comment on a policy that they do not understand.

Based on all the responses from participants, it was found that the policy of decentralisation is understood well at top and middle management level. Most of them defined decentralisation as Work (2002) and UNDP (1999) have. The study also finds that most of the respondents at senior level and some at operational level are well informed and understand the decentralisation policy very well.

The study finds that from the six staff members at the operational level who participated, four indicated that a lot needs to be done for the policy of



decentralisation to be understood well and known by all. The respondents also pointed out that it is virtually impossible to implement something that the majority of people do not understand and expect it to be effectively and efficiently implemented.

Although most respondents view decentralisation as a good policy, some felt that there is a need to train staff to make sure that they are well prepared and understand the policy very well and so will be able to implement it, as required. This further supports the argument of Sinvula (2013) who stressed that decentralisation requires proper preparation and resources if it is to succeed.

Some respondents at operational level indicated that the decentralisation policy is understood well, but they felt that the implementers are just ignored because although there are very clear rules on how to implement the policy in Namibia, they do not necessarily want to follow the decentralisation policy and guidelines provided.

#### **4.4 Capacity development**

##### **4.4.1 Training on a decentralisation policy**

On the question of whether respondents have attended any training on decentralisation, this study reveals that only eight (8) out of fourteen (14) respondents at both senior and middle management level indicated that they had attended training on the decentralisation policy and several sensitisation workshops. Some respondents from education management level stressed that they had only attended a few sensitisation workshops and the latest one had been in Otjiwarongo in 2012. They further indicated that the aim of that workshop was to inform stakeholders of the progress made with decentralised education functions, the challenges experienced and to clarify roles and the reporting lines of different stakeholders in the process.

Other respondents at management level also pointed out that even though these information sessions are not training they helped them to understand the process of decentralisation and its implementation. They also advised that it would be good if the training for decentralisation was to be given at least once a year in order to refresh staff and to ensure that newly recruited staff were also well informed and trained on decentralisation policy.

Some respondents at operational level also revealed that there is a need for capacity building in terms of decentralisation especially on the operational guidelines for the delegation phase. It is crucial for each and every one involved in the implementation of the guidelines to understand them and to be able to implement the decentralisation policy efficiently and effectively.

In support of the above view a respondent at operational level mentioned that the decentralisation policy and guidelines are available but it is interpreted differently by different stakeholders during implementation that is why training is needed. They further indicate that even though feedback is always given during meetings by those who attended training on decentralisation they still feel training is needed. Some respondents suggested that the Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development should ensure that the policy of decentralisation is fully understood by all the staff members by providing training.

The study also reveals that only a few respondents at operational level had attended decentralisation policy training and this had been at the beginning of the decentralisation program. Some respondents indicate that even though most of the respondents had attended training on the decentralisation policy was not helpful

because it was received at the beginning of the decentralisation programme and the majority of the people who had attended are no longer with the regional council.

The study also finds that capacity building on decentralisation needed to be given as a matter of urgency at operational level because it would help implementers at this level to understand the decentralisation policy. Currently some implementers at this level are operating in the dark without a clear understanding of the decentralisation policy and this has led to confusion, especially with the roles of different stakeholders in the process. Thus the study finds the argument of Green (2005) valid. Green (2005) cited Prud'homme (1995) who stated that the low capacity and inexperience of local civil servants can mean a sharp deterioration in the quality and efficiency of public services. Green further indicated that the critical challenge is to maintain forward momentum while balancing capacity consideration.

#### **4.4.2 Integrated training committee for both ohangwena regional council and central government seconded staff.**

This section presents and analyses the findings on the question of whether the Regional Council has a training committee and whether it is integrated. From the point of view of the Education Directorate most of the respondents indicate that the regional council does not have an integrated training committee. They further mention that the only integrated committees are the Economising Committee and the Tender Committee. They also point out that the Education Directorate has its own training committee and that this committee is responsible for co-ordinating the training needs of the delegated Education Directorate. This training can be identified in the sections, division, and directorate or sometimes even at the national level. Education

respondents also mention that all capacity building of education staff is co-ordinated from their head office in Windhoek.

Some respondents at senior management level indicate that even though the regional council does not have an integrated training committee they sometimes combine training, for example, the training that was provided to all support services staff, e.g, clerk and secretary, was integrated.

They further mention that there was also a time when the education archivists provided training for all the staff in Ohangwena Regional Council, including delegated staff. The other training that was integrated was record management training where staffs were trained together whether they were central government seconded staff or regional council staff.

However some respondents from the maintenance section state that nothing had been changed in terms of provision of training since their delegation to Ohangwena Regional Council. Their head office in Windhoek is still responsible for their capacity building. The respondent further states that the training needs are identified at division level and the division prepares a submission through the Chief Regional Officer to the Ministry of Work head office in Windhoek for consideration.

Based on the above mentioned point most of the respondents from the regional council point out that the regional council has a training policy but it is not an integrated training policy. It only caters for regional council staff not for delegated staff. The respondents further support the view of the delegated education directorate and maintenance section respondents that the only integrated committees in the regional council are the Economising Committee and the Tender Committee.

However, the respondents feel that it would be good to integrate the Stock Taking Committee because this would help the regional council and the delegated education directorate and maintenance section, in terms of resources, because the resources will then be combined.

#### **4.5 Capacity to manage decentralised functions**

##### **4.5.1 Ohangwena regional council capacity to manage decentralised functions**

Various responses were gathered regarding the regional council capacity to manage decentralised functions. Most of the delegated education directorate respondents at management level were positive that the regional council has capacity to manage the delegated functions.

They state that there are a few challenges such as limited financial resources, poor infrastructures (accommodation in terms of housing and offices) and lack of qualified Information Technology staff. A respondent remarked that: *“the internet is one of the biggest problems because the regional council only has one information technology staff member and she also does not do everything. Some of the things are still done in Windhoek, for example, if the internet is off, then the region has to wait for Windhoek to solve the problem”*.

Most respondents from the maintenance division also support the above view point and note that the regional council has the capacity to manage the decentralised functions but the budget that the division of maintenance receives is not always enough for all the projects. They further state that they have a lot of government buildings that need to be renovated but lack of resources sometimes prevent them achieving their set goals on time. A respondent remarked that *“many government*

*schools in the region are dilapidated but the delegated maintenance division does not have enough funding to maintain those schools*". The respondents also point out that the region has many students that are still having lessons in classrooms made from corrugated iron or wood and sticks and in most cases these children are sharing books.

Some respondents from regional council management stress that the regional council has the capacity to manage the delegated functions but that it experiences challenges, for instance, lack of financial resources to attract, hire and retain qualified staff such as engineers. They further indicate that it is sometimes difficult to retain qualified staff in the region because of its geographical remoteness. This was confirmed by Lwendo & Sazita (2011, p. 89) local authorities lack financial resources to attract and hire qualified staff such as engineers, graphic designers etc, These categories prefer to work in cities where they can have part time jobs (for example lecturing), to increase their finances because some functions are transferred without the necessary resources.

Furthermore the study finds that some respondents feel that even though the regional council has the capacity to manage decentralised functions, there is a need for refresher training every year to ensure the continuity capacity of implementers. This view supports the argument of Green (2005, p. 132) that *"in order for civil servants to deliver the quality local services envisioned under decentralisation they need to have the capacity to do so and this should involve both individuals and institutional elements as the success of decentralisation depends on the ability of the individual civil servant to take on new tasks"*.

## **4.6 Co-ordination of Delegated Activities**

This section presents and analyses the findings on the perception of participants regarding the co-ordination of delegated activities between Ohangwena Regional Council and central government seconded staff in terms of planning and human resources management of central government seconded staff.

### **4.6.1 Planning and co-ordination of delegated education activities**

Education respondents were asked for their perception on how education activities are planned. Some respondents at senior management level point out that planning of educational needs and activities starts at division level, where staff members of each division come together and plan for their division. They further mention that after the division level all the division heads come together to develop the annual plan for the directorate.

They further point out that the final plan is compiled by the education planning division and forwarded through the Director of Education to the Chief Regional Officer, who will then forward it to the education head office in Windhoek. Some education officials at middle management level point out that the Education Directorate has developed a Performance Management Plan (PMP) that is drawn from the Ministry of Education strategic plan. The respondents further indicate that it is a ministerial requirement that each region should have a Performance Management Plan drawn from a ministry strategic plan as the ministry realised that different regions have different educational needs. The Performance Management Plan is a five year plan and out of the PMP each education directorate, including Ohangwena Education Directorate, has to develop an annual plan. It was also mentioned during the

interviews by some respondents from the education directorate middle management level, that the education directorate staff always come together to review their annual plan and draw up a new annual plan for the following year.

On the question of whether the activities of central government staff are well co-ordinated between central government seconded staff and Ohangwena Regional Council some of the education respondents at senior management level feel that activities of the education directorate are planned with the involvement of regional council. This perception is also confirmed by other education respondents at middle management level, who state that the input of the regional council is always considered as crucial in the planning of education activities. That is why management from the regional council are always invited to education directorate planning sessions. Even though most respondents at management level feel that there is involvement of regional council in educational function planning, some education respondents at operational level point out that these activities are planned without the involvement of regional council.

With regard to whether education activities are well co-ordinated between the Education Directorate and Ohangwena Regional Council, the respondents at management level indicate that the education activities are well co-ordinated and there is good communication between the education directorate and regional council. They further point out that the roles of different stakeholders of decentralisation policy are very clear and this makes it easier for the co-ordination between these two offices.

The above point is also confirmed by another respondent from the regional council planning directorate who indicates that educational activities are well co-



ordinated between the two offices. They mention that the integration of the economising and tender committees as a good example. Also delegated function activities and activities of the regional council, as well as other deconcentrated line ministries in the region are presented at the Regional Development Co-ordination Committee (RDCC). This committee is there to co-ordinate all the planned activities of the region.

In spite of the above views some education respondents at middle management level stress that even though there are many good things that come with a decentralisation policy there are some grey areas that need to be dealt with. For example, the regional council is supposed to appoint the decentralisation committee to co-ordinate all the seconded staff members but this committee has yet to be appointed.

This is also confirmed by other education respondents from the planning division, who feel that seconded activities are not well co-ordinated because there are no clear cut roles. They point out that they are experiencing challenges of dual reporting, especially in the planning section. They further mention that they are also not clear as to whom they should report their activities. They were informed that they are under the Directorate of Planning at regional council and they should report through the Deputy Director of Planning to the regional council but they are also required to report all their activities to the Director of Education through their immediate supervisor, who is also the Deputy Director of Special Programmes in the education directorate. This dual reporting is creating problems and in some instances delays in service delivery.

The above point is also confirmed by some respondents from the human resources division at regional council, who point out that alot needs to be done on

how activities between the two offices should be co-ordinated, especially in terms of human resources of regional council and the education directorate. They further point out that the regional council human resources division is not involved in education human resources activities except when taking part in recruitment, as panel members. They feel that the co-ordination of human resources activities is only happening at the chief regional officer level because education human resources submissions that need to go through the Deputy Director of Human Resources are submitted straight to the Chief Regional Officer (CRO) office.

Some respondents from regional council also feel that co-ordination between seconded staff and the regional council is not good at all levels, especially the division level. They further state that currently the co-ordination of activities between seconded staff and the regional council is seen at the chief regional officer level and division of finance at the deputy director level.

Some respondents feel that the different office accommodation is also a contributing factor to this poor co-ordination. The regional council office has no space to accommodate the education and maintenance support services, such as human resources and finance divisions. They feel that if these divisions were in the same building the problem of co-ordination would be solved.

Other respondents from regional council at the operational level stress that it is very difficult to comment on co-ordination of activities because it is not clear to some staff members. It seems the central government seconded staff are managing themselves and the regional council is on its own. There is no clear co-ordination especially at the operational level. They further state that although the linkage

between the regional council and delegated staff in not seen at some levels it is clear at the chief regional officer level.

#### **4.6.2 Planning and co-ordination of delegated maintenance section activities**

Respondents from the seconded maintenance section indicate that the planning of maintenance activities starts at the section level. All section staff come together to develop a maintenance section Ohangwena region annual plan which they then send to the head office in Windhoek through the Ohangwena Regional Council Chief Executive Officer.

On the question of whether delegated maintenance function activities are included in the Ohangwena Regional Council strategic plan, some maintenance respondents point out that they are not sure if their activities are reflected in the strategic plan of the regional council but they know it is in the strategic plan of the Ministry of Works and Transport.

With regard to whether the regional council has a functional and shared strategic plan, some respondents from the maintenance section of works stress that they were once invited to the strategic planning session for Ohangwena Regional Council but they could not remember whether it was the formulation or review. The respondents also point out that they do not know whether the regional council has a strategic plan because they have not seen it. The analysis of the findings for this section reveals that the regional council strategic plan is not known or seen at the delegated maintenance section because it is not shared with the staff members of this section.

Although the majority of the education directorate feel that the co-ordination of activities between the education directorate and regional council is good, respondents from the delegated maintenance section stress that co-ordination of activities between the two offices is good only to a certain extent. There is a communication gap between some of the regional council management staff and the maintenance section.

Other respondents from the maintenance section point out that although there is good communication between the regional council and the maintenance section they feel that there is an issue of political differences that plays a role in the poor co-ordination of activities between some maintenance section staff and some managers within the regional council. They further state that this problem leads to some staff in the maintenance section by-passing their immediate supervisors and reporting to the regional council directly. A respondent in the maintenance section also feels that if issues of politics are not handled very well it will lead to poor co-ordination at the office level and later to poor service delivery to customers. It was also mentioned that politics is a “*silent killer*” and in most cases it plants the seed of hate between brothers, that why it is a bad thing at the office level, as it affects service delivery.

The respondents further point out that although the section is encouraged to be part of management meetings sometimes they do not attend due to some other pressing work, such as attending to emergencies.

On the question of whether the reporting line is very clear, the maintenance section respondents feel that the reporting structure is not fine because of mis-interpretation and the mis-understanding of the decentralisation policy by different stakeholders. A respondent from maintenance states “*the tendency of some*

*subordinates by-passing their immediate supervisor and reporting directly to regional council contributes to poor co-ordination of activities between the two offices".* The respondent further indicated that this situation can also create hostility in the work place and hampers a good working relationship.

#### **4.6.3 Planning of ohangwena regional council activities.**

The findings of this section also reveal mixed perceptions among the respondents of the regional council on the planning of Ohangwena Regional Council activities. Some respondents at management level point out that planning of regional council activities starts at the division level and later the heads of division meet to draw up an annual plan. They further state that the regional council has the draft strategic plan and activities of the delegated functions are also included.

Some regional council senior management respondents indicate that seconded staff members of education and maintenance are involved in the developing and reviewing of the regional council strategic plan. They mention that the current strategic plan of the regional council is still in its draft form but all management of the central government seconded staff are always involved, either in the planning or the reviewing of the regional council plans. Some respondents of Ohangwena Regional Council mention that all the planned activities of the council are approved by the Regional Development Committee. With regard to the question of whether the regional council has a shared and functional strategic plan, the study reveals that there are different perceptions from the different levels.

Education respondents at senior management level indicate that Ohangwena Regional Council has a strategic plan and activities of the seconded education

function are included in the regional council strategic plan. They also point out that the regional council vision is shared with all the central government seconded education staff members and that most of the education management took part in developing the strategic plan for the regional council as well as the review. Respondents from education at senior management level point out that they always brief other staff members on what transpired during these planning workshops.

Respondents from education at middle management level support this perception of senior level management. The regional council has a shared vision and some seconded education staff are involved in the planning and review sessions of the regional council strategic plan. However, respondents from education at operational level point out that they did not see the strategic plan of the regional council. Some also indicate that they show the vision of the regional council in the big posters at the entrance of the regional council office. Interestingly none of the education respondents mention how teachers, principals, education inspectors and the community are involved in the planning of education activities.

The findings of this study reveal that only education senior and middle management and a few operational level staff have participated in the development of the regional council strategic plan and the current draft plan is not shared with all the staff in the directorate. It can be concluded that it may be that the plan is not shared because it is still in its draft form.

## **4.7 Management of Central Government Seconded Staff**

This section presents the findings on the questions regarding management of seconded staff and the involvement of regional council in the recruitment and induction of seconded staff.

### **4.7.1 Involvement of regional council on recruitment of seconded staff**

Based on the question whether the regional council is involved in the recruitment of vacant positions in the delegated structure. The findings reveal that some of the respondents from education middle management admit that regional council is always involved in the recruitment of staff except for the recruitment of teachers. In support of the above points, respondents from the education operational level stress that the regional council is always part of the panel during interviews of all vacant positions in the delegated education structure, except teachers. Furthermore the education respondents point out that the regional council does not take part in the selection of candidates to be interviewed. They also point out that after the interview all the paper work up to appointment of candidates is done at the line ministry.

In line with the above mentioned points, the respondents from the delegated maintenance section confirm that the regional council is only involved in the recruitment for vacant positions in the delegated maintenance structure as panel members. They further point out that the Ministry of Work and Transport head office in Windhoek is still responsible for the advertising of vacant positions. The employment applications of advertised positions are sent and shortlisted in Windhoek.

They also mention that interviews are conducted at regional council and after that all documents are sent to the Ministry for appointments.

However the study finds that all respondents from regional council management interviewed point out that they are always involved in the recruiting for vacant positions in the delegated structures but they feel that co-ordination between the three offices, in terms of recruitment needs to be strengthened. The analysis of findings also shows that almost all the respondents to this question indicate that the regional council involvement on recruitment for vacant positions in the delegated structure is only as panel members.

#### **4.7.2 Induction of seconded staff**

Most of the respondents from the education directorate indicate that they did not know whether the regional council has an induction program in place but they were briefed by the Chief Regional Officer when they started. Some respondents further stress that they did not know if it was an induction perhaps because they expected more than what happened as it was more of an introductory session. In this light, other respondents from the education directorate senior management emphasis that the regional council conducted the formal induction, where central government seconded staff of education were briefed, on the new amendments to the staff rules and the reporting system etc.

Although some respondents from the education directorate indicate that the formal induction was conducted, some respondents from the maintenance division feel that they were not inducted in the regional council but that they were briefed on reporting systems when they started. In addition the analysis finds that five



respondents, two from middle management and three from operational level regional council, joined others by stating that seconded staff of both education and works were not well inducted into regional council and this sometimes caused challenges in terms of reporting.

A respondent stressed that *“it is why reporting is only clear at the level of Chief Regional Officer”*. In supporting the above viewpoint another respondent feel that there is a need for the regional council to still conduct that induction to clear all misunderstandings, especially in terms of reporting, organisational culture and structures.

The findings revealed that the majority of seconded staff targeted research participants felt that central government seconded staff are inducted but that the induction did not provide an understanding of regional council culture, structure or the decentralisation reporting system.

#### **4.8 Perception of Service Delivery after Integration of Seconded Staff.**

Respondents were also asked whether the integration of central government seconded staff in the regional council would improve service delivery in the Ohangwena region. Most of the respondents at management level both (senior and middle management) were positive that integration would improve service delivery. They state that there is a need to integrate support services divisions such as human resources and finance, in order to improve service delivery in the region. They identified a gap in the support services divisions that needed to be addressed as a matter of urgency. Respondents also point out that currently these divisions are not working together as per the decentralisation policy and this has impacted on service

delivery. They mention that even though there is good communication between the education directorate and the regional council, the head of human resources is not involved in education human resources activities as a head of such a division should be.

However a respondent from the regional council human resources division also supports the above point by stressing that the integration will improve service delivery if the support services divisions such as finance, administration, planning and human resources are integrated. The respondent further states that the dummy files (copy of the original file) of seconded staff are not in one office, education is keeping their files and the regional council is only keeping the dummy files of the maintenance division and those of regional council staff.

The other interesting point highlighted by the maintenance section is that the section is also keeping copy dummy files in their office. The reason given for this arrangement is that copies of these files are kept at the maintenance office for administrative purposes. For example, keeping track of the leave days of the delegated maintenance staff, instead of asking the regional council all the time a delegated maintenance staff wants to go on leave. The respondents feel that this arrangement in itself will delay the provision of service and it needs to be stopped

Some respondents from education middle management indicate that integration will improve service delivery because integration means that services are provided jointly by a multi-disciplinary team. They point out that integration is very important during the delegation phase to prepare staff before the devolution phase is implemented. They state that integration will not only improve service delivery but it will also improve the working relationship between seconded staff and regional

council staff. A respondent from the planning division of education notes out that integration can take place in many ways, such as, planning together, co-ordinating some activities together or joint staff training. Currently this is not happening at all division levels but it is happening at top management level. At division level it is limited to some areas for example; finance. That is why the payment of service providers is faster than it used to be before the delegation of education functions. The above view point confirms the argument of Cameron and Lart (2003) that stated the importance of successful joint working of clear, realistic and achievable aims and objectives; understood and accepted by all partners. They further stated that differences in organisational processes, priorities or planning cycles are factors that can create a climate for conflict rather than co-operation.

Another respondent from the education directorate planning section stresses that integration of planning is good but in terms of education planning it will need someone with an education background to be able to plan the activities well. The views expressed by the respondent above were found to be in line with Coxon, Clausen and Argoud (2005) who cited Wistow and Hardy. They identified that professional barriers are one of the recognised barriers to integrated working. They further stated that professional cultures create barriers to integrate as a result of differences in training, values and ideas of good practices.

Other education respondents point out that sharing offices space and other activities can make integrated working easier. That is why the directorate takes the first initiative to invite regional council staff and maintenance division staff to their end of year functions in order to develop a good relationship and make integration easier.

Some respondents from the maintenance division state that integration would improve service delivery because it helps to address challenges, such as transport. Regional council and seconded staff could co-ordinate travelling to the same area, using one car instead of two. This would cut the cost of transport. Currently education and maintenance are managing their own transport and regional council is managing theirs. Meanwhile other respondents from the maintenance division revealed that unclear roles and responsibilities and poor communication between different stakeholders can result in poor integration which later can impact on service delivery.

This view is also supported by some respondents at operational level from the regional council, who feel that integration improves service delivery because it integrates some of the committees, such as the Economising Committee. Previously education, maintenance and the regional council were each had their own Economising Committee and things were taking a long time to be approved, unlike now, when the Economising Committee has been integrated.

#### **4.9 The Perception on the Contributing Factors Impacting on the Effectiveness of the Integration of Central Government Seconded Staff.**

This section discusses the perception of the respondents about the factors impacting on the effectiveness of integration of seconded staff. Various respondents have different views regarding this question. Various factors such as:

- Lack of capacity building
- Resistance to change
- Lack of “buy in” and unclear role clarification
- Lack of integrated committees

- Inadequate infrastructures such as housing and office accommodations
- Information Technology systems that do not speak to each other
- Unclear reporting lines

are identified as some of the factors impacting on the effective integration of seconded staff in the Ohangwena Regional Council.

Some respondents from regional council management stressed that even though there is good communication between the delegated education functions and the regional council, a lot to be done in terms of information sharing and capacity building. They state that these are key factors that contribute to the poor integration of seconded staff in a regional council.

A respondent from the regional council stresses that some people up to now did not understand the process of decentralisation and that it could lead to resistance. The respondent further states that if delegated staffs are to be integrated they need to understand and internalise the decentralisation policy. A respondent went on to state that delegated staff members needed to “*buy in*” to the process of decentralisation but this could only happen if they understood the decentralisation policy and the guideline for the delegation phase. The respondent also suggests that the Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development needed to train both the regional council and delegated staff in the delegated phase guidelines because this is currently the key challenge to the process of decentralisation at the regional level.

Another challenge raised by respondents from the education directorate is clarification of roles of different stakeholders in the process of decentralisation. They suggested that functions needed to be clearly defined so that staff knew what is expected of them and where their roles start and end.

However, a respondent from the regional council management, when probed about the challenge of capacity building, confirmed the above points, that capacity building is the main challenge, because the decentralisation policy is not understood well enough by some of the staffs that are involved in its implementation. This makes the execution of the decentralisation policy a challenge.

On the same lines the respondents from the maintenance division suggest that training on decentralisation needs to be provided to all delegated staff including the regional council staff in order to have the same understanding of the aims and objectives of the policy and its implementation. The issue of training was found, by most of the participants, to be the key factor to poor integration of seconded staff in the regional council.

The issue of the unified Economising Committee also registers with some respondents from education as a challenge. They point out that the unified Economising Committee sometimes took too long to approve things and this made some staff unsupportive of the integrated committee.

Another issue they raise is that the impact on integration of seconded staff in the regional council is an issue of power. Some respondents from regional council revealed that the issue of power is also a contributing factor to poor integration because some stakeholders do not want to release power especially those that have to change their reporting line after delegation. They point out that this issue leads to a breakdown in communication and the flow of information from some supervisors to their subordinates. This made it difficult for those individuals to integrate into the regional council.

Another respondent from the education directorate stresses the issue of lack of co-ordination between divisions, such as human resources, is impacting on integration, in terms of the reporting line. A respondent further explains that “ *the education human resources is not reporting to the Deputy Director of Human Resources at regional council but they report to the Director of Education and the Chief Regional Officer*”. This makes it difficult for the division head of human resources to integrate with the human resources education staff under the human resources division because submissions from the education directorate go straight to the Chief Regional Officer without going through the Deputy Director of Human Resources in Ohangwena Regional Council.

This argument is also supported by respondents from the maintenance division who point out that the challenges of the reporting line are one of the major contributing factors to an effective integration of seconded staff into the Ohangwena Regional Council. They further mention the issue of communication breakdown and a poor flow of information between some supervisors and their subordinates as contributing factors to poor integration. Most of the respondents interviewed suggest that the dual reporting is a problem and it is negatively affecting the integration of seconded staff.

The other issue which became apparent during the interviews as a challenge to integration is the overlapping of activities in terms of the dual reporting of planning, human resources and salary office to the regional council. This issue was confirmed by a respondent from the planning division of the education directorate who stresses that “ *sometimes it is very difficult to know who to report some things to because there*

*is no proper reporting channel that is clear for every one and this is the contributing factor that negatively impacts on the integration of planning section staff. “*

A respondent from the Regional Council points out that the unavailability or inadequate office space to accommodate seconded staff, especially those that are in general services, such as finance, human resources and administration is found to be another of the contributing factors impacting in the effective integration of seconded staff.

The other factors identified by all the respondents from the Education Directorate is the issue of housing accommodation. Some respondents suggest that the government needs to look to the plight of seconded staff in the Ohangwena region in terms of housing accommodation. They suggest that the government could build housing for the seconded staff members to rent.

They also mention that the houses are very expensive now in Eenhana and most of the seconded staff already has houses in their previous duty station. Some only have a few years left to finish paying their bond and some are close to their retirement. This makes it difficult for them to buy another house in Eenhana.

Meanwhile some respondents suggest that the government needs to introduce incentives to motivate and attract seconded staff to work in some of the remote areas where functions are delegated. The combination of government pay and difficult living conditions cannot attract higher qualified staff to those areas. In most cases it leads to a higher turnover. They further propose incentives such as the bush allowance for teachers and propose that this allowance should be called a “*delegation allowance*”.



Dummy files are also identified as a problem because some of the files received from line ministries are not updated and some only have the agreement letter for delegation. It was further stated that the other issue is that there is no consistency in this dummy file issue because Education is keeping their dummy file at their office while the maintenance dummy file is kept at the regional council office. Another respondent stresses that they understand the office accommodation issue but the government needs to be consistent because if it starts being relaxed with some of the guidelines, it will cause a problem later.

Another factor identified by respondents as a contributing factor is the issue of recruitment. This still remains the responsibility of the delegating line ministries. The regional council feels that this is impacting in the effective integration of seconded staff because in some cases the line ministries are communicating directly with their seconded staff on recruitment issues. In spite of the challenges and occasional setbacks most of the respondents were of the opinion that the positive aspects of decentralisation outweigh the negatives and they state that decentralisation is the best way to bring service to the people.

#### **4.10 Readiness of Ohangwena Regional Council for devolution**

The question was posed to the respondents as to whether Ohangwena Regional Council is ready for devolution. The respondents gave the following responses, summarised in the table 5 on page 78.

**Table 5: Readiness of Ohangwena Regional Council for Devolution**

Position	Ready for devolution	Not ready for devolution	Not sure if the regional council is ready or not
Senior management	7	2	
Middle management	2	2	
Operational staff		2	1

Source: field survey (2013)

Seven of the respondents at senior management level feel that Ohangwena Regional Council is ready for the devolution phase. A respondent from regional council management who is of the opinion that the regional council is ready for devolution stresses that it is ready because they have all the necessary skills and experience and the region has a very dedicated and skilled Chief Executive Officer, as well as the top management. On the same lines another respondent in support of readiness states it will be easier for the region to manage functions under devolution because under devolution the regional council will budget for the devolved functions.

The above point is supported by another two respondents at middle management from regional council. These respondents feel that the regional council is ready for devolution in terms of financial and human resources management. They also indicate that devolution will make everything easier for the regional council than the current delegation phase because they will have to manage the devolved functions fully without depending on the mother ministry for a budget. Interestingly, most of

the respondents who indicated that the regional council is ready for devolution based this readiness in term of financial management and experience.

However, two other respondents at senior management level feel that the regional council is not yet ready for devolution because seconded staffs are not fully integrated within Ohangwena Regional Council. A respondent states that there are still some seconded staffs and delegating line ministries that are not adhering to the reporting line as stated in the guidelines for the delegation phase. Another respondent at the operational level from the maintenance section feels that the regional council is not ready for devolution and stated that “*decentralisation is like Vision 2030. There is a need for a clear picture and information needs to be shared for it to be successful*”. There is a need for ministries to work together with Ohangwena Regional Council to make this programme a success.

A respondent notes that they all hope for devolution one day but they feel that for now Ohangena Regional Council is not yet ready. Other respondents at operational level feel that until the issue of inadequate office and housing accommodation is resolved a region cannot move to a devolution phase. They further indicate that there are several challenges such as, dual reporting in some divisions of the general services directorate that need to be cleared before the region moves to the devolution phase.

Other participants in this study state that they do not know whether the regional council is ready or not because they are not well enough informed on the decentralisation policy itself.

#### **4.11 Level of Integration of Central Government Seconded Staff**

Respondents were asked to give their views on the level of integration of seconded staff and their perceptions are as follows:

**Table 6: Level of Integration of central government seconded staff**

Level of integration	Number of participants
Very high	0
High	0
Moderate	13
Low	5
Very low	2

Sources: Field Survey (2013)

None of the respondents interviewed indicate that the level of integration is very high or high but 13 of the respondents are of the opinion that the integration level is moderate, 5 indicate that it is low and 2 indicate that it is very low. All 13 respondents who indicate that the level of integration is moderate feel it is because of the factors mentioned above impacting on the integration of seconded staff.

#### **4.12 Document Analysis**

This section's aim is to analyse documents which contribute to the findings of this research. Several documents received from respondents were analysed.

Documents such as a draft strategic plan of Ohangwena Regional Council, an internal memo, a training report, manual, procedures and guidelines for the delegation phase

are analysed. There are also various correspondence documents between the regional council, directorate of education and maintenance divisions as well as the directorate of decentralisation co-ordination in the Ministry of Regional Local Government, Housing and Rural Development which were analysed. The aim of analysing these documents is to find out whether decentralised functions of education and maintenance are included in the strategic plan of Ohangwena Regional Council and how integrated functions are co-ordinated between different delegated staff and Ohangwena Regional Council in terms of finance and planning. The other reason is also to find out whether there is any training on decentralisation provided for both regional council and seconded staff.

The study finds that the draft strategic plan of Ohangwena Regional Council covered all the delegated functions of the Education Directorate and maintenance divisions. In the correspondence and memos between the regional council and seconded staff the study analysis found that there are several communications between the regional council and seconded staff which is an indication of good communication and co-ordination of activities. The study also finds that the Control Work Inspector and education management take part in the management meetings that meet every month. Various decentralised issues are discussed at management meetings. For example, issues such as delegating signing power for expenditures to various levels to speed up the provision of services.

The study further analyses the correspondence and memos on related delegated functions. For example, on 1 March, 2013 the Chief Regional Officer of Ohangwena Regional Council wrote a letter to all directors that specified how much each level or rank was authorised to sign. The letter stipulated that the Control Work

Inspectors Finance Advisors –Education are given the limit of N\$ 50 000, Deputy Directors N\$ 100 000 while the Directors were authorised to sign up to N\$ 200 000. The study also analyses the training documents and materials that the respondents received during training.

Further analysis of documents finds that several information sharing meetings were conducted between delegated ministry and the Ministry of Regional and Local Government Housing and Rural Development in 2010 and 2011. One of the joint consultative workshops on decentralisation was in Otjiwarongo in 2011.

Topics such as the overview of decentralisation, the, reporting line and the progress made with decentralisation and challenges experienced with delegated functions were discussed. The purpose of that workshop was to identify challenges experienced by staff during the implementation of decentralisation and to come up with ways of how to address the challenges. Challenges such as, inadequate office accommodation and housing for seconded staff, communication and reporting line, and issues of dummy files received without all the necessary documents were all identified.

Further document analysis was also done on the decentralisation guidelines' training that was provided to all human resources officers from 5 to 21 August 2013 in Swakopmund. Topics such as, human resources under delegation, status of ministry on delegation of functions, transition from delegation to devolution, record management and communication and report lines were discussed. This training was attended by all human resources staff of the education directorate and regional council.

#### **4.13 Observation**

During data collection the following was observed:

- Decentralised activities are discussed in the committee meetings and all the delegated functions are well represented in the committee.
- Delegated staffs are dealing with human resources issues themselves with very few links with Ohangwena Regional Council.
- Delegated Education Directorate has a section that deals with human resources issues but this is not linked to the main human resources division of Ohangwena Regional Council.
- All external communications are going through the Chief Regional Officer's office as required. Seconded education staff members are frustrated by the travelling between Ondangwa and Eenhana every morning.

#### **4.14 Conclusion**

This chapter has shown differing opinions from the participants interviewed. It also points out various issues that were raised in relation to the integration of seconded staff in the Ohangwena Regional Council. The main issue raised that seems to be impacting on the integration of seconded staff is that of capacity building.

Other issues such as the human resources division not being integrated, planning of activities between regional council and seconded functions done separately and the reporting and communication lines not adhered to, are also seen as some of the issues impacting on the effective integration of seconded staff.

Despite these above mentioned challenges different respondents also noticed some improvement in service delivery due to the integration of some committees such as the economising committee and the tender committee. The next chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations.



## **Chapter 5**

### **5. Discussion of the Results**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

This chapter presents the discussion of the results from the interview with respondents. The study was guided by the main question “How can the integration of seconded staff during the process of decentralisation to a regional council be improved?

This chapter discusses the results of the main findings in chapter 4 in the context of the main question and other investigation questions on page 5. It also determines the extent to which each of the main findings affects the effective integration of seconded staff in the Ohangwena Regional Council.

The following are the study findings:

- Disparity in the knowledge of decentralisation as well as in the provision of training on decentralisation between staff at management level and operational level in Ohangwena Regional Council (both central government seconded staff and Ohangwena regional council staff).
- Unclear role clarification between Ohangwena Regional Council and central government seconded staff.
- Poor induction of central government seconded staff in Ohangwena Regional Council

- Minimal participation of Ohangwena Regional Council staff in recruitment for vacant positions in the delegated structures of both delegated education directorate and Maintenance section.
- Central government seconded staff are not well integrated in the Ohangwena Regional Council.
- Planning of central government seconded staff activities and Ohangwena Regional Council activities are done using the participatory approach.
- Integration of central government seconded staff will improve service delivery.

## **5.2 Disparity in Knowledge of the Decentralisation Policy**

The Namibian Decentralisation Policy clearly states that in order to sustain the pace of decentralisation and ensure its successful implementation during the delegation phase, the central government shall ensure that the decentralisation policy process is well explained to all stakeholders (MRLGHRD, 1998).

However the results of this study show that there is a disparity in knowledge of the Decentralisation Policy between management and operational staff at Ohangwena Regional Council. The greater knowledge of decentralisation is observed mostly in the senior and middle management level while operational staffs were observed to have a minimal knowledge of decentralisation.

The same sentiment is also found in the study conducted by Shaningwa (2012) in the Kavango Regional Council that documented similar findings. The Decentralisation Policy is not well known and clear to all staff members in Kavango Council. However it was not indicated why decentralisation is not well known and

why it is not clear to all staff. This disparity in knowledge of the Decentralisation Policy among these levels of participants could imply that those at management level are knowledgeable because they are involved in the decision making.

Furthermore, minimal knowledge of the decentralisation policy process observed among some of the operational level staff is confirmed in the study conducted by the Ministry of Regional and Local Government Housing and Rural Development (2013) which reported similar findings. However the study conducted by Samoff (1990) states that when decentralisation is not understood and it does not correspond with the interests of those who have to apply it, the implication is that the decentralisation system is not implemented effectively.

This challenge in the disparity of knowledge was also observed to have an effect on the integration of seconded staff because the effects of decentralisation for seconded staff is greatly influenced by the knowledge and administrative linkages which exist between the different levels in regional council and the delegated structures. Thus, it is necessary for all actors involved in the process of decentralisation, at all levels, to have knowledge of the Decentralisation Policy.

However with the small sample size, caution must be applied as there might be bias in the responses on which these findings are based. It is therefore assumed that the disparity in the decentralisation process knowledge in Ohangwena region is impacting on the implementation of the decentralisation process and in turn on the integration of seconded staff in that region.

### **5.3 Capacity Developments on the Decentralisation Policy between Management and Operational Levels**

The Namibian Decentralisation Policy states that for the decentralisation process to be effectively implemented, capacity has to be developed across the board. It also indicates that the MRLGHRD has the responsibility to ensure that the sub-national governments are empowered with the skills and knowledge in the decentralisation process (MRLGHRD, 1998).

The result of this study shows that there is a disparity in the provision of training between the management and operational staff in Ohangwena Regional Council. Furthermore, this study reveals that most of the training efforts provided focus more on upper level staff and the capacity of lower level staff were given far too little attention. These findings confirm why the operational staff indicated that they have a limited knowledge of decentralisation policy in response to the question about their knowledge of it.

Some scholars such as Work (2002) indicated that capacity development in terms of human resources and financial support has been seen as the obstacle in furthering the decentralisation process. He further suggested that capacity development needs to be an ongoing process. The same sentiment is reported in the Namibian Local Government Reform Position paper (2013) that the lack of capacity development has affected the quality of governance and decision making of some council. It is therefore assumed that the lack of capacity that was observed among some of the seconded staff is contributing to the poor integration of seconded staff in Ohangwena Regional Council.

The other obstacle on capacity development on decentralisation revealed in this study is that the seconded staff to Ohangwena Regional Council depends on the central government for capacity building during the preparatory phase of delegation. This implies that the central government has the power to decide when to give training on the decentralisation policy process. Even though this practice is found to be in line with the manual, procedure and guidelines for the delegation phase it is assumed that the issue of bureaucracy requirements may play a role in providing capacity building for those delegated staff.

This sentiment is shared in the study by Kulipossa (2004) which reported that the local capacity is sometimes considered inadequate because of bureaucratic requirements that are imposed by the centre that are inappropriate for local decision makers. Even though his findings are contrary to the Namibian decentralisation policy requirements they seem to be in support of this study findings because there is some disparity in the provision of (capacity development) training at all levels and one can assume that bureaucratic requirements contributed to this disparity in training.

The study also revealed that the MRLGHRD as the co-ordinator of the decentralisation process and responsible for providing capacity development to regional council and seconded staff on the decentralisation policy guidelines is currently focusing more on conducting sensitisation workshops which are mostly attended by management staff rather than operational staff. Even though sensitisation workshops are important to discuss any change needed and progress made the participants in this study felt it is also important to equip operational staff with the necessary skills and knowledge to be able to implement the decentralisation process effectively and efficiently.

Another finding of the research is that the MRLGHRD has ensured that all the regions are given all the necessary tools from the beginning of the implementation of the decentralisation process. Tools such as a decentralisation policy, guidelines for a delegation phase etc. but these documents are not used. The above findings are also reported in the study by Amutenya (2002). The study reported that the MRLGHRD has reasonably succeeded in providing all the necessary tools and capacity development to sub- national government before and after the implementation of the decentralisation process to make the decentralisation programme a success. Amutenya's research findings are in agreement with Litvack, Ahamad and Bird (1999) who pointed out that capacity should precede decentralisation to ensure proper implementation.

It is then assumed that this state of affairs widened the integration gap between seconded staff and Ohangwena Regional Council staff because implementation is not done according to the decentralisation guidelines of the delegation phase. The assumption of this finding is that this depends on central government for capacity building which delays training because of the bureaucratic requirements of the centre.

#### **5.4 Participatory Planning of Delegated Activities**

The finding of this study reveals that there is no integrated planning in Ohangwena Regional Council. The planning of delegated functions activities are done separately from those of Ohangwena Regional Council. The only noticeable trend is that there is a participatory planning system in the Ohangwena Regional Council. However; only staff members at management level attend the planning sessions of seconded staff activities and that is by invitation.

Therefore the findings of this study are in line with the Namibian Decentralisation Manual, Procedures and Guidelines that requires that planning of decentralised functions activities is to be done in the participatory manner between the regional council and the delegating line ministries MRLGHRD, 2007). Mullins (2004) also suggested that decentralisation planning should be a shared function with initial overall strategies developed and sponsored centrally and it should involve local capacity.

However, the findings of this study differ from the findings of the study by Beer (2003) who stated that the reason for seconding staff to local government by means of decentralisation is to integrate them into the local government to be able to plan together. Local government should be responsible with the management for these staff in terms of funding and provision of services to the community.

It is then assumed that it is very difficult to have integrated planning during the delegation phase of decentralisation because the regional council is only playing a supervisory role. Seconded staffs are still staff members of the line ministry and their performance agreements are based on the strategic plan of their delegating line ministries. However these findings are not encouraging and further research should be done to investigate how the planning of delegation is to be improved during the delegation phase of decentralisation in Namibia.

### **5.5 Unclear Roles between Central Government Seconded Staff and Ohangwena Regional Council.**

The result of this study shows that there are no clear roles or reporting lines between Ohangwena Regional Council and seconded staff. This situation leads to dual reporting by some of the seconded staff. However the Namibian Decentralisation

Policy states that the roles of different stakeholders in the decentralisation policy process should be clearly clarified to avoid duplications of responsibilities and confusion in the reporting process (MRLGHRD, 1998). It is therefore assumed that the lack of clarification of the roles is contributing to dual reporting because some supervisors may not have the necessary technical skills to supervise certain functions. This confusion may force some staff to seek advice from their previous supervisor to improve in the reporting procedures.

This practice has, therefore, created a situation where roles and the clarification of information on reporting lines is only clear at management level but not at operational level. This shows the mis-alignment of MRLGHRD decentralisation guideline that pointed out that the delegation phase is the preparatory phase for devolution and roles should be clarified to ensure that the aim of the delegation phase is achieved (MRLGHRD, 2007).

### **5.6 Participation of Ohangwena Regional Council on Recruitment of Delegated Structure**

The finding of this study indicates that Ohangwena Regional Council is only participating in the recruitment of seconded staff as a panel member. However the Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development, Manual, Procedures and Guidelines for the delegation phase states that during this phase all interested applicants should submit their application to the regional council and all the queries should be addressed to the regional council. The guidelines further state that a representative from the regional council, who is the immediate supervisor, should be part of the interview panel and the regional council personnel division carries out the role of secretariat.



These findings are found to be in line with the decentralisation guidelines for the delegation phase. These state that the delegated staff are still the staff of the delegating line ministry and the line ministry has the responsibility to ensure that vacant positions in the delegated structure are filled in co-ordination with the regional council (MRLGHRD, 2007). What did not come out of this study is whether the role of secretariat for the interview is carried out by the regional council as per the guidelines. Therefore it is implied from this research that the procedures for recruitment, as laid down in the regional council, may not be followed. This can have an impact on the integration of seconded staff because the link between their office and the regional council may not be clear to them in terms of recruitment.

### **5.7 Poor Induction of Central Government Seconded Staff in the Ohangwena Regional Council**

Participants were asked to share their views on whether seconded staffs are well inducted into the Ohangwena Regional Council. The study findings show that seconded staffs of both education and maintenance functions are not well inducted. They were only introduced to the regional council and briefly informed about the reporting line. However these findings are contrary to the Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development Manual, Procedures and Guidelines for the delegation phase. This states that the receiving regional council or local authority shall prepare an induction programme for the newly central government seconded staff, aimed at introducing the central government seconded staff members to the institution and work itself. The central government seconded staff members should also receive an introductory letter which spells out the regional

council staff policy and the mechanisms to measure performance (MRLGHRD, 2007).

It is therefore assumed that very little was done in terms of inducting seconded staff in Ohangwena Regional Council. The result of this poor integration is that seconded staffs are not feeling part of the regional council and this has an impact on their integration in the regional council.

### **5.8 Integration Improves Services Delivery**

Integration of central government seconded staff and services deliveries are regarded as the cornerstone to improve service delivery because services will be provided jointly by a multi-disciplinary team. Participants in this study were asked to share their views on whether integration of central government seconded staff would improve service delivery in the Ohangwena region.

The findings of the study show that integration would improve the service delivery because integrated staff share the same vision admission and are aligned to the same organisational purpose. This study also notes that integrating services such as transport would rapidly improve service delivery because transportation is one of the services that delays most of the other services due to non-availability. Therefore the findings of this study are in agreement with Work (2002) who suggested that for an improvement of service delivery at local government level, services need to be integrated and provided in the team set-up.

However the challenge of integrating transportation in the Ohangwena Regional Council may not be possible due to the fact that the decentralisation policy indicates that resources for delegated functions should only be used for its purpose,

for example resources for an education function may not be deployed to services of other functions unless an arrangement has made (MRLGHRD, 2007).

It is therefore assumed from this study that if transport and other support services were to be integrated and co-ordinated by one division in the Ohangwena Regional Council the provision of services would be improved. The other reason is that in the integration situation vehicles belong to the pool and are therefore assigned based on priorities and agreed schedules.

### **5.9 Contributing Factors Impacting the Effective Integration of Central Government Seconded Staff**

Participants were asked to share their view on the challenges contributing to poor integration of central government seconded staff in Ohangwena Regional Council. The findings of this study show that there are several factors contributing to the poor integration of central government seconded staff members in Ohangwena Regional Council. However most of the challenges have already been discussed in the previous sections. This section discusses the remaining challenges.

The finding of this study indicates that there are inadequate infrastructures in terms of office accommodation and housing in the Ohangwena region. The Ohangwena region is still at a developing stage. This study's finding is confirmed by the report in the *Confidante* newspaper (Daniel, 2013, P.3) that housing is the major challenge in Ohangwena Regional Council due to the non-availability of serviced land in Eenhana town. The report further indicated that the situation was also worsened because financial institutions do not want to lend money for building houses in unserviced areas such as declared settlements.

Furthermore, it is assumed that the challenge of an inadequate infrastructure has an impact on the process of decentralisation and on the integration of educational seconded staff in Ohangwena Regional Council. They may not be able to buy houses in Eenhana, since serviced land may not be available. This may end up being costly to the staff and to the government at large. This was also confirmed in the report in a Namibia Sun (Iileka, 2013, p. 2) that decentralisation of education functions to the Ohangwena region is costly because staff members are travelling every morning from Ondangwa due to the non-availability of housing accommodation. Therefore this situation is contributing to the poor integration of seconded staff.

The other noticeable finding of this research is the moderate integration of seconded staff in the Ohangwena Regional Council. There is no existing literature that looks at the integration of seconded staff except the current findings of this study. The possible explanation for these findings could be the several challenges that are mentioned in this chapter as the contributing factors to poor integration.

## **5.10 Conclusions**

In conclusion this chapter gives a broader understanding of issues impacting on the process of integrating seconded staff in Ohangwena region.

## **Chapter 6**

### **6. Conclusions and Recommendations**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter gives the conclusions and recommendations emanating from the research objectives.

#### **6.2 Conclusions**

The study objective was to investigate the effectiveness of the decentralisation process to integrate seconded staff in regional councils.

It is clear from the findings of this study that the concept of decentralisation is not understood well by all staff in Ohangwena Regional Council. This disparity of knowledge and capacity development in the decentralisation policy is found to contribute to the poor integration of seconded staff in Ohangwena Regional Council. The result of this study supports the idea of Work (2002) that capacity development on decentralisation should be a continuous process for decentralisation to be successful.

Therefore the failure of the seconded staff to be successfully integrated in Ohangwena Regional Council is blamed on factors such as limited knowledge of decentralisation policy, lack of capacity building at operational level and poor co-ordination of decentralised activities. As such, it is surprising that the regional council staffs who are the implementers have limited knowledge of the programme that they need to implement even though the policy of decentralisation is very clear i.e. that for

decentralisation to be implemented the capacity of all implementers should be developed.

Furthermore, roles of the different stakeholders in the decentralisation policy process in Ohangwena region is not yet clear to all regional council staff. Therefore, the impact of decentralisation on integrated central government seconded staff is not seen by Ohangwena Regional Council staff. As such the central government seconded staff integration level is found to be at the moderate level. Despite the exploratory nature, this study offers some insight into the challenges impacting on the effective integration of seconded staff in the regional council and the current level of integration of this staff in Ohangwena Regional Council. The findings add to a growing body of literature on the decentralisation policy process in Namibia. However with a small sample size, caution must be applied, as the findings may be biased. It does not represent the views of all Ohangwena Regional Council staff and all central government seconded staff to the Ohangwena region.

### **6.3 Recommendations**

The study recommends the followings:

Since most of the stakeholders are not trained in the decentralisation policy and guidelines for the delegation phase or some of the necessary legislations for decentralisation, it is recommended that the Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development considers training all staff involved in the implementation of a decentralisation policy to be at the same level and have the same understanding to make its implementation run smoothly.

Activities of delegated functions of education and maintenance should be part of the regional council strategic plans and their annual plan should be based on the regional council strategic plan. This will help the regional council as the supervising entity to monitor the performance of delegated functions.

Reporting lines should be clear and dual reporting should be done away with to avoid confusion among staff. Reporting of the education section of human resources and other divisions that are not following the right channels should start reporting as per the guidelines for the delegation phase. This would ensure that the delegation phase as a preparatory phase, achieves its objectives of preparing staff for the devolution phase. This would help the seconded staff to prepare for devolution in terms of reporting because it would be difficult for them to start reporting through the right channel during the devolution phase. It is also recommended that the regional council in co-ordination with the delegating line ministries should be involved in the recruitment for vacant positions in delegated structures from advertisement to the final recruitment of staff. In this way the regional council will feel part of the recruitment because the regional council is the one that will be supervising these staff in the end.

It is also recommended that seconded staff should be fully inducted into the regional council for them to feel accepted as part of the regional council. It is also recommended that, as per the guidelines for the delegation phase, a mentor who will work with the seconded staff and advise them when needed be appointed for the seconded staff in Ohangwena region.

With reference to the concern that was raised on integrating training policy and committee, it is recommended that the regional council should ensure that

training of support service staff, for example, human resources officers and finance clerks be provided together except on functions such as education, electrician or artisan training. In the same vein it is also recommended that the regional council should come up with strategies on how to integrate services such as transport that it is seen to be impacting in delivery of services.

On the identified issue of inadequate infrastructures, such as housing accommodation for seconded staff it is recommended that the government should address this challenge by working together with Eenhana Town Council and National Housing Enterprises to build houses for seconded staff to buy. The challenges are the lack of serviced land in Eenhana and that some seconded staffs are near their retirement and so may not be funded by the bank to buy houses in Eenhana. The other recommendation is for the government to give incentives to seconded staff, especially those seconded to remote areas such as Eenhana.

Furthermore, it should be realised that there is a need for future studies to investigate how the lack of infrastructure is impacting on the process of decentralisation in the Ohangwena region.



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## 8. Appendix

Appendix 1



Republic of Namibia

### Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development

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Our Ref.:  
Your Ref.:

Date: 4 November 2013

TO:

Sirika Ausiku (Ms)  
Permanent Secretary

Through:

Mr. Godwin Sikabongo  
Director Decentralisation Coordination

VIA:

Ms. Milly Jafta  
Deputy Director: Division Policy and Legislation

FROM:

Maria Petrus  
Chief Policy Analyst  
Decentralisation Coordination Directorate



**Subject: Request to conduct research on decentralization process in the Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development.**

I am Maria Petrus a Chief Policy Analyst at the Directorate of Decentralization Coordination. I am currently studying for a Master degree in Leadership and Change Management with the Polytechnic of Namibia. I will write my last course work subjects in December 2013 and I am expected to undertake a research study as a requirement for the degree after completion of the course work.

I am requesting for permission to involve the ministerial staff members in the Directorate of Decentralization in this study. I am intend to interview four staff at the Directorate of Decentralization Coordination in the ministry, one at management level and two at middle management level. As mentioned above the other part of this research will be conducted in Ohangwena Region, to be specific in Ohangwena Regional Council.

The letter for request to conduct research in Ohangwena Region is attached for your information and consideration. My specific project will focus on decentralization process. I am particularly interested in

All official correspondence must be addressed to the Permanent Secretary

exploring the question of: How effective is the decentralization process on integrating seconded staff into Regional Council. Participant will participate voluntarily, as per the attached interview consent. Participants' opinion and experiences are very important to this study and the findings will be beneficiary to the Directorate of Decentralization Coordination, Regional Councils and to the Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development as a whole because if the problems are identified they could be addressed to improve the situation.

The interview should take approximately 30 minutes per each participant to answer to already prepared questioner.

Thank you very much for your assistance in this endeavor.

## Appendix 2

Maria Ndatale Petrus  
Windhoek, Namibia  
0811242650 (Cell)  
061 297527 (Tel)  
061 224281 (Fax)

12 November 2013

Mr. D.V.K. Kashikola  
Chief Regional Officer  
Ohangwena Regional Council

**Subject: Request to conduct research on Decentralization in Ohangwena Region**

Dear Sir,

I am Maria Petrus; I am a student at Polytechnic of Namibia, studying towards a Master degree in Leadership and Change Management. I finished my first year course work and as per the degree requirements. The second part is the research thesis. The research will start in 18 November 2013 to 24 December 2014.

I intend to interview two non seconded management staff of Ohangwena Regional Council, two seconded management staff of delegated functions, one for education functions, one for maintenance function, four seconded middle management staff of both education and maintenance functions two per each and three staff members of the regional council and three seconded staff members of both maintenance and education functions. **Therefore, I am requesting permission to involve the Regional Council staff members in this study.**

My specific project will focus on decentralization process; I am particularly interested in exploring the question of: **How effective is the decentralization process as a means of integrating seconded staff into Regional Council.** Participant will participate voluntarily, as per the attached interview consent. Their opinion and experiences are very important to this study and the findings will be beneficiary to the Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and



Rural Development as a whole and the Regional Councils because if the problems are identified they could be addressed to improve the situation.

The interview should take approximately 30 minutes per each participant to answer to already prepared questioner.

Thank you very much for your cooperation and assistance in this endeavor.

Yours in education



.....  
Maria Petrus  
Polytechnic of Namibia, Harold Pupkewitz business school  
Master student

## Appendix 3



**POLYTECHNIC OF NAMIBIA**

**Harold Pupkewitz Graduate School of Business**

**INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM**

**Researcher: Maria N. Petrus**

I.....volunteer to participate in a research conducted by Maria N. Petrus a student from Polytechnic of Namibia, Business school. I understand that the project is designed to gather information about the effectiveness of decentralization as means of integrating seconded staff into Regional Council.

My participation in this project is voluntary and I may withdraw and discontinue at any time and I have the right not to answer questions that I am not comfortable without penalty.

I understand that the researcher will not identify me by name in any report using information obtained from this interview, and my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure.

The information obtained will not be used to my disadvantage and there are no other people rather than the researcher and myself who have access to this raw data. The researcher has explained to me comprehensively the terms and condition and the purpose of this research.

I have read and understood the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction and I voluntarily agreed to participate in this study.

.....

Signature of the participant

Date

.....

Signature of researcher

Date

## Questionnaire



POLYTECHNIC OF NAMIBIA

**Appendix 4**

**Questionnaire to staff members of Ohangwena regional council and seconded staff of education directorate and maintenance section Ohangwena region.**

**INTERVIEWER: MARIA PETRUS**

**A.BIOGRAPHIC DATA OF RESPONDENTS**

## A.1) Position held by respondents

Senior position	
Middle management	
Operational staff	

## A.2) Gender

Male	
Female	

## A.3) Number of years working in the current position

0 -5 year	
6 -15year	
16- 20 years	
21 - above	

**B.GENERAL KNOWLEDGE ON DECENTRALISATION POLICY**

## B.1 What is your understanding on Decentralisation policy in Namibia?

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**C. CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT UNDER DELEGATION PHASE**

## C.1. Are you trained on decentralisation?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, about what?

.....

.....

.....

## C.2. Does Regional Council have approved training policy that caters for seconded staff? If yes, explain

Yes	No
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.....

## C.3. Who is responsible for identifying seconded staff members training needs?

.....

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.....

C.4. In your view, does the regional council have the capacity to manage seconded functions? Explain

Yes	No
-----	----

## **D. COORDINATION OF DELEGATED ACTIVITIES UNDER DELEGATION PHASE**

### **D.1 PLANNING**

D.1.1. How is the seconded activities of education functions being planned? (only *education delegated staff*)

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D.1.2. How are the seconded activities of maintenances functions being planned? (only *maintenances delegated staff*)

.....

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.....

.....

D.1.3. How is Ohangwena regional council activities being planned? (Only *Ohangwena regional council non delegated staff*)

.....

.....

D.1.4. Does Ohangwena Regional Council have a share and functional the strategic plan that include the delegated function activities? If yes, explain

Yes	No
-----	----

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.....

.....

D.1.5. Do you think the activities are well coordinating between seconded staff members of the Directorate of Education and Regional Council Office? *(Only education seconded staff and Ohangwena regional council)*

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, explain

.....

.....

.....

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.....

D.1.6. Do you think the activities are well coordinating between seconded staff members of maintenances division and Regional Council Office? *(Only maintenances division and Ohangwena regional council)*

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, explain

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## **D.2 HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT UNDERDELEGATION PHASE**

D.2.1. Do the Regional council involve in recruitment of vacant position in the delegated structures of maintenances section and education directorate? If yes explain

Yes	No
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D.2.2 Does Regional Council has an Induction Program in place for inducting delegated staff?

Yes	No
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D.2.3. Are you well inducted in the Ohangwena regional council? (Only seconded staff)

Yes	No
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.....

D.2.4. Does induction provides an understanding of the Regional Council culture and structures for new staff members? If yes, explain

Yes	No
-----	----

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.....

## **E. SERVICE DELIVERY**

E.1. In your view do you think integrated of seconded staff will improve service delivery in the Ohangwena Regional Council?

Yes	No
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If yes, explain

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.....

.....

**F. CONTRIBUTION FACTORS TO POOR INTEGRATION OF SECONDED STAFF**

F.1. In your view what are the contributing factors impacting on the effectiveness of integrating of seconded staff members in the Ohangwena Regional Council?

Yes	No
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.....

F.2. In your view, do you think Ohangwena Regional Council is well prepared for the devolution phase? If yes explain

Yes	No
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.....

.....

.....

**G. LEVEL OF INTEGRATION OF SECONDED STAFF**

G.1 On your view what is the level of integration of seconded staff in the regional council? Explain more

Very higher	
higher	
moderate	
Low	
Very low	

.....

.....

.....



G.2. Anything you want to add?

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