

**THE MANAGEMENT AND  
DEVELOPMENT OF  
MULTI-CULTURAL SOCIAL WORK  
PRACTICE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN  
NATIONAL DEFENCE FORCE**

by



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## **DECLARATION**

**I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.**

## SUMMARY

Multi-cultural social work practice necessitates that the social worker possesses specific knowledge and practice skills in order to render a competent service to a diverse client system. To date, the SANDF does not possess any definite guidelines regarding multi-cultural social work practice. Consequently social work practitioners are ill-equipped to render a needs-based, multi-cultural competent service to the culturally different client system.

The purpose of this study, was to develop theoretical and practical guidelines for multi-cultural social work practice within the SANDF. An attempt is made to ensure that the social service delivery system is attentive to cultural diversity among clients, whilst providing social work interventions to the client system. The objectives of the study were: firstly, to present a profile of the current consumers of social work services within the SANDF; secondly, to reflect on the nature and function of military social work within the SANDF, and to investigate the need to incorporate multi-cultural social work practice into the military setting; thirdly, to determine how the existing social work programmes in the SANDF are meeting the needs of the client system of diverse origin and culture; fourthly, to investigate the extent to which the social worker gives attention to the different cultural backgrounds of the client system; and fifthly, to explore the knowledge and practice skills needed by the social work practitioner to render multi-cultural social work services in the military setting.

The study was confined to a purposive sample of 557 clients to assess their need for multi-cultural social work services. They were representative of the unique diversity in ethnic and cultural heritage, gender, and religious affiliations. The results were analysed qualitatively as well as quantitatively. Structured interviews were conducted with 16 key figures in social work management in order to assess how existing social work programmes have been designed and are managed to meet the requirements of multi-cultural social work. The results were also analysed qualitatively and quantitatively. Furthermore, group interviews with a randomly selected sample of 45 social work officers [production workers], were conducted to determine their knowledge and perceptions of and attitudes towards multi-cultural

social work and to investigate the extent to which they were attentive to the cultural backgrounds of clients when rendering social work services. These results were again analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively.

The empirical study enabled the researcher to draw certain conclusions. From the client system's responses it was obvious that social workers should be aware of the client system's cultural, ethnic and/or religious background. Social work managers on the other hand must be skilled in the management of a multi-cultural social work personnel system. The processes used during strategic planning, which should always be preceded by an environmental study, would have an effect on service rendering within multi-cultural social work practice. Most social work programmes have been adapted to suit the needs of a diverse client system. The research results pointed out that the DSW's business plan should focus more on developmental issues like HIV/AIDS. The majority of the social work managers regarded their service rendering as being culturally competent. Although certain misconceptions were evident, social work practitioners do understand the meaning of a multi-cultural competent service rendering. Social work practitioners are not clear whether their cultural, ethnic and/or language background has an influence on their service rendering. Concerning communication it was pointed out that communication in a person's mother tongue is most effective during social work intervention. Although all social work approaches are utilised by the practitioners, their overall theoretical knowledge and skills application of these approaches are questionable. In the light of these aspects confusion exists amongst the respondents as to whether social work programmes are meeting the needs of a multi-cultural client system.

A number of recommendations flow from the findings and conclusions. The DSW's business plan should focus more on developmental social work aspects, and should continuously stress the importance of having a diverse knowledge and skills base of the most significant models and approaches. The social work delivery system requires more theoretical knowledge and skills in the management and implementation of a multi-culturally competent social work service, and should be skilled in how to convert social work programmes into culturally competent

programmes. The workers should further be competent at addressing problems experienced within their own cultural/ethnic background, before engaging in any social work intervention with a diverse client system. Social workers should further be empowered regarding the role, function and implementation of social development strategies within the daily service rendering and thus be guided to work in a multi-cultural social work environment. In the broader sense, staff in each social work office and/or section should identify the stumbling blocks that communication has on their service delivery. Training programmes should be developed for preparing or ongoing education of the social service delivery system regarding cultural competence. Further research should be undertaken concerning factors such as: decreasing stress experienced by social workers towards a diverse client system; the effectiveness of social work programmes in reaching cultural competence; and lastly, the effect of social work management on culturally competent practice.

## OPSOMMING

- Die praktyk van multi-kulturele maatskaplike werk vereis dat die maatskaplike werker oor spesifieke kennis en praktykvaardighede moet beskik ten einde 'n bevoegde diens aan die kultureel-diverse kliëntsisteem te lewer. Die Suid-Afrikaanse Nasionale Weermag (SANW) beskik tans oor geen definitiewe riglyne rakende multi-kulturele maatskaplikewerk-dienslewering nie. Gevolglik is maatskaplike werkers nie toegerus om 'n behoefte-gebaseerde, multi-kulturele diens aan die kultureel-diverse kliëntsisteme te lewer nie.

Die doel van hierdie studie is om teoretiese en praktiese riglyne vir multi-kulturele maatskaplike werk in die SANW daar te stel. Daar is gepoog om die maatskaplikewerk-diensleweringssisteem bedag te maak op die variasies van kultuur wat by kliënte tydens maatskaplikewerk-dienslewering teenwoordig is. Die doelwitte van die studie is soos volg: eerstens, om die huidige profiel van die verbruikers van maatskaplikewerk-dienste in die SANW weer te gee; tweedens, om te fokus op die aard en funksie van militêre maatskaplike werk in die SANW, en die nut van multi-kulturele maatskaplike werk binne die militêre omgewing te ondersoek; derdens, om vas te stel of die huidige maatskaplikewerk-programme binne die SANW wel aan die behoeftes van 'n kultureel-diverse kliëntsisteem voldoen; vierdens, om die mate waarin die maatskaplike werker aandag skenk aan die kulturele agtergronde van kliëntsisteme te ondersoek; en laastens om vas te stel watter kennis en vaardighede maatskaplike werkers benodig ten einde 'n multi-kulturele maatskaplikewerk-diens binne die weermag opset daar te stel.

Die studie het 'n doelbewuste steekproef van 557 kliënte ingesluit om die behoefte aan multi-kulturele maatskaplikewerk-dienste vas te stel. Hulle was verteenwoordigend van 'n verskeidenheid van etniese en kulturele agtergronde, geslag asook godsdienstige affiliasies. Die resultate is beide kwalitatief en kwantitatief ontleed. Gestruktureerde onderhoude is gevoer met 16 sleutel figure wat deel vorm van maatskaplikewerk-bestuur ten einde vas te stel hoe huidige maatskaplikewerk-programme ontwerp en bestuur word ten einde aan die vereistes van multi-kulturele maatskaplike werk te voldoen. Hierdie resultate is ook kwalitatief

en kwantitatief ontleed. Voorts is groepsonderhoude gevoer met 'n ewekansige geselekteerde steekproef van 45 maatskaplikewerk-offisiere [produksie werkers] om hulle kennis, en menings van en houdings teenoor multi-kulturele maatskaplike werk vas te stel. Daar is verder bepaal in hoe 'n mate hulle wel sensitief is vir kliënte se kulturele agtergronde tydens dienslewering. Hierdie resultate is ook kwalitatief en kwantitatief ontleed.

Na aanleiding van die empiriese ondersoek is bepaalde gevolgtrekkings gemaak. Die kliëntsisteem het aangedui dat dit belangrik is vir maatskaplike werkers om bewus te wees van die kulturele, etniese en godsdienstige agtergronde van die kliënte. Maatskaplikewerk-bestuurders moet vaardig wees in die bestuur van 'n multi-kulturele maatskaplike werk personeel sisteem. Die proses wat tydens strategiese beplanning gebruik word, en voorafgegaan word deur 'n omgewingsontleding, sal wel 'n effek hê op dienslewering binne 'n multi-kulturele maatskaplike werk. Maatskaplikewerk-programme is wel aangepas om aan die behoeftes van 'n kultureel-diverse kliëntsisteem te voldoen. Die navorsing het aangedui dat die Direkoraat Maatskaplikewerk-dienste se besigheidsplan meer op ontwikkelingsaspekte soos MIV/VIGS moet fokus. Die meerderheid maatskaplikewerk-bestuurders beskou hul dienslewering as kultureel aanvaarbaar. Ten spyte van sekere wanopvattinge, verstaan maatskaplikewerk-praktisyns wel die betekenis van multi-kultureel bevoegde dienslewering. Onduidelikheid bestaan egter of hulle eie kulturele/etniese/taal agtergrond wel dienslewering kan beïnvloed. Met betrekking tot kommunikasie is aangedui dat maatskaplikewerk-intervensie meer effektief is indien dit in 'n persoon se moedertaal plaasvind. Alhoewel die meeste maatskaplikewerk-benaderings wel deur die praktisyns benut word, word hul teoretiese kennis en die toepassing daarvan, bevraagteken. In die lig van veral hiervan is die respondente in die war of die maatskaplikewerk-programme wel aan die behoeftes van die multi-kulturele kliënt sisteem voldoen.

Aanbevelings na aanleiding van die bevindinge sluit in dat die besigheidsplan van die Direkoraat Maatskaplikewerk-dienste meer moet fokus op ontwikkelingsaspekte en die noodsaaklikheid moet aandui dat 'n verskeidenheid kennis- en vaardigheidsbassisse nodig is van toepaslike modelle en benaderings in die praktyk.

Die maatskaplikewerk-diensleweringstelsel benodig meer teoretiese kennis en vaardighede in die bestuur en implementering van 'n multi-kulturele bevoegde maatskaplikewerk-diens, asook die vaardigheid om maatskaplikewerk-programme in kultureel aanvaarbare programme om te skakel. Hulle moet verder ook oor die vaardigheid beskik om probleme binne hul eie kulturele/etniese agtergrond effektief te hanteer, alvorens enige maatskaplikewerk-intervensie met 'n kultureel-diverse kliëntstelsel kan plaasvind. Maatskaplike werkers moet ook bemagtig wees met betrekking tot die rol, funksie en implementering van maatskaplike ontwikkelingsstrategieë binne die konteks van daaglikse dienslewering en dus gehelp word om binne die multi-kulturele maatskaplikewerk-omgewing te werk. Verder moet personeel in elke maatskaplikewerk-kantoor en/of -afdeling kommunikasie stuikeblokke identifiseer wat dienslewering negatief kan beïnvloed. Opleidingsprogramme moet ontwikkel word vir die voorbereiding en voortdurende onderrig van die maatskaplikewerk-diensleweringstelsel rakende kulturele bevoegdheid. Voorts moet navorsing onderneem word oor die verligting van spanning by maatskaplike werkers teenoor 'n kultureel-diverse kliëntstelsel; die effektiwiteit van maatskaplikewerk-programme om kulturele bevoegdheid te bereik; en die effek van maatskaplikewerk-bestuur op 'n kultureelbevoegde-praktiek.

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***Conclusions and recommendations made within this study, are that of the author and are not necessarily the views of the the SANDF.***

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

Many changes have occurred within the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) following the 1994 democratic elections (Pretorius, 1998:1). The SANDF experienced organisational changes because all the former defence forces, (which included the South African-, Ciskei-, Transkei-, Venda-, and Boputhatswana defence forces, together with Umkhonto weSizwe and APLA), amalgamated to form the South African National Defence Force (Khanyile, 1997). These changes had an impact on the demographic profile of the personnel of the SANDF which is now representative of all ethnic and cultural groups, gender, religious- and political affiliations. Social work services are rendered by social work officers in the Directorate Social Work (DSW) to all SANDF personnel and their dependants. The transformation of the workforce therefore also affected the nature of the social work services that are required.

The researcher has eight years experience as social work officer in the SANDF, and worked for seven years within the military communities of the former Ciskei and Transkei areas. He became aware of the difficulty of rendering social work services to a culturally heterogeneous client system and to deal with mostly Xhosa speaking clients in the former Ciskei and Transkei areas. The researcher, currently the provincial manager of social work in the military setting of the North West Province, realised that social workers who still have a predominantly western social work education, are **ill-equipped** to attend to the **needs** and **problems** of a largely African client system. These social workers still use predominantly western theories and models in service rendering to clients and their families.

The researcher became aware of the fact that the social work managers as well as the social work practitioners in the DSW, need to increase their **knowledge** and practice **skills** in order to render **multi-cultural social work services** to the demographically transformed client system. Sheafor, Horesji and Horesji (2000:94) noted that the **culture, ethnicity, and/or religious beliefs** of clients, can have a **significant impact** on their **help-seeking behaviour** and on whether a particular approach or service will be perceived by them as **needed, relevant, and useful**. This also has a bearing on how the client defines a particular situation as being a problem, and how the client expects to be treated by the service system (i.e. Directorate Social Work within the SANDF) and service providers (i.e. the social work officers and managers). Sheafor, Horesji, and Horesji (2000:94) made it clear that if one segment in a person's life, like religion and/or moral beliefs, is avoided, *it will handicap the interaction process as well as the professional relationship between the social worker and the client*. The multi-cultural perspective in social work supports the principle of being concerned with the whole person in totality during intervention (Devore & Schlesinger, 1991; Lum, 1992; and Mackintosh, 1998).

The Business Plan (1997) of the DSW in the SANDF states that its **mission** is to *render and market* an **equitable and sustainable needs-based and people-centred** social service through a *developmental social work approach*. The DSW aims to ensure the accessibility and availability of services to all clientele (all military personnel and their dependants), thereby enhancing their social and organisational well-being.

In order to enable social work officers and social work managers to fulfil the mission of the DSW, they should take cognisance of the diversity of languages, subcultures, values and beliefs of clients, as well as the functioning of SANDF personnel **within the military culture**. Social work officers and especially social work managers therefore need to find ways of addressing the social problems of people of diverse origin and culture which exist within the workforce of the SANDF and to whom social workers have to render social work services.

## 1.2 PRELIMINARY STUDY

The question as to how prepared South African social work managers and social work practitioners are to work multi-culturally was addressed by Sikhitha (1996:61). The author also stated that the *New South Africa* demands that social workers become culturally sensitive in all spheres of life.

The approach to the study of multi-cultural social work practice that will be followed is that of Devore and Schlesinger (1991) and Sheafor, Horesji and Horesji (2000:59) who described **multi-cultural social work practice** as the **ability to assist** the **client system** in ways that are **acceptable** and **useful** to them (the clients). This can only be done if the worker acts in compliance with the cultural background and expectations of the client. It is thus imperative that the *service provider learns* about the cultural context of the client's presenting problem and to integrate that knowledge into the professional assessment and intervention plans. Only then will social work practitioners be competent to address the diverse social needs and problems of the client system (Graham, 1999). With reference to this approach, the **focus** of this **study** is to determine how **multi-cultural practice principles** and **strategies** can be *incorporated* as an alternative paradigm into the *general social work practice* of the military setting (Graham, 1999).

The changed conditions in the military setting in South Africa indicate the need for a theoretical and practical framework for multi-cultural social work practice which can guide the intervention of social workers in the SANDF.

## 1.3 RESEARCH GOAL

The goal of this study is to develop theoretical and practical guidelines for multi-cultural social work practice within the SANDF. This will ensure that the social service delivery system, managed by managers, supervisors, consultants and social workers, whilst providing social work interventions to the client system, will be attentive to cultural variations amongst clients.

### 1.3.1 **Objectives**

In order to achieve the goal of this study, the following objectives have been formulated:

- a) To present a profile of the current consumers of social work practice within the SANDF, in order to illustrate the multi-cultural composition of the client system and to determine their need for multi-cultural social work practice.
- b) To reflect on the nature and function of military social work within the SANDF as based on the Directorate Social Work's vision and to investigate the need to incorporate multi-cultural social work practice into the military setting.
- c) To assess how existing social work programmes in the SANDF are meeting the needs of people of diverse origin and culture.
- d) To investigate the extent to which social workers are aware of the different cultural, ethnic and language backgrounds of clients when rendering social work services.
- e) To describe the knowledge and practice skills needed by social work officers to render multi-cultural social work services in the military setting according to the set guidelines for multi-cultural social work practice.

## 1.4 **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This part of the study will focus on the type of research, the universum and sampling, measuring instruments as well as the data processing procedure.

### 1.4.1 Type of research

In this study both quantitative and qualitative methods were used. The research methodology best suited to achieve the goal of the study is the *developmental research approach* which aims to generate new social intervention technology (Thomas, 1985a:483). Thomas (1987:382) presents the following definition of **development research**: "...it is inquiry directed toward the analysis, development, and evaluation of human service innovations". This definition suggests that new technology should be designed by implementing the developmental research model. The first three phases of this model will be displayed in figure 1.1 given below.

PHASES	MATERIAL CONDITIONS	OPERATIONAL STEPS
<b>Phase 1:</b> <b>Analysis</b>	Problematic condition State of existing technology Technological information and resources	1. Problem identification and analysis 2. State-of-the-art review 3. Feasibility study 4. Selection of objectives 5. Selection of information sources
<b>Phase 2:</b> <b>Development</b>	Relevant data Materialised design of technology New product	6. Gathering and evaluation of technological resources 7. Design of social technology 8. Technological realisation
<b>Phase 3:</b> <b>Evaluation</b>	Trail and field implementations Outcomes of use	9. Trial use 10. Collection of evaluative data 11. Evaluation of social technology 12. Redesign as necessary

[Thomas 1985a]

**FIGURE 1.1: THE DEVELOPMENTAL RESEARCH MODEL**

**Phase 1: Analysis:** Figure 1.1 indicates that the first phase of the developmental research model consists of three material conditions, namely, the problem analysis, the state of existing technology and the analysing of information and resources before new technology can be developed (Thomas, 1985b).

The first operational step is to identify the problem and to analyse it. The culmination of various cultural, ethnic and religious groupings within the SANDF

and the ability of the current social service delivery system to render a needs-based service, can be regarded as the identified problematic condition which requires analysis.

The next operational step is to review the existing social technology. This entails the analysis of social work in the military environment within a multi-cultural setting. It was furthermore necessary to analyse whether social work service delivery is congruent with the expectations of the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) and the Financing Policy for Developmental Social Welfare Services (1999).

During the feasibility study, also referred to as the third operational step, the researcher held discussions with clients, colleagues, managers and the researcher's study leader regarding the value of researching multi-cultural practices within the SANDF. It is important to determine whether a study of this nature is feasible. Technological fact-finding facilitates the selection of objectives which is another operational step. The selected objectives acted as guideline during the study and provided an indication as to whether the current social work service is needs-based.

Phase 1 is concluded with the selection of information as the last operational step. For the purpose of this study, the stakeholders have been identified as the providers and consumers of social work services within the military environment. These stakeholders were the study population for this study.

**Phase 2: Developmental phase:** The developmental phase is the second phase of the developmental research model. This phase focuses on the selection, evaluation and collation of relevant information in order to transform and develop a new product (Thomas, 1985a). Thomas further mentions that the realisation of a new technological product is the consequence of designing technology.

A literature review was undertaken by the researcher in order to determine the requirements of multi-cultural social work practice. Current social work practices in the military setting were analysed for their congruence with the requirements as stipulated in the literature review. Additional social work practices in the military setting, which will enhance competence in service rendering, will be identified.

Based on the literature review three structured questionnaires were developed as the data collection tools. These were completed by the consumers and providers of the social work services in the SANDF during 2001.

An empirical research study was undertaken in order for data to be collected, interpreted and analysed.

**Phase 3: Evaluation phase:** This phase of the developmental research model focuses on the testing of the new product. This entails the trial use of the new product. The trial and field implementation of the new technology provides data that can be utilised for evaluating the innovation in order to determine whether it should be revised and how best to do this (Thomas, 1985a).

The extent to which the prescribed guidelines and suggested approaches and models for rendering competent multi-cultural social work practice equip social work professionals, demands continuous evaluation within the rapidly changing military environment. Feedback regarding the impact of these guidelines, approaches and models within the multi-cultural social work setting, are crucial and feedback from relevant stakeholders is continually evaluated. The evaluation and regular revision of these suggestions will contribute toward a service which is useful and acceptable to the multi-cultural client system (Sheafor, Horesji & Horesji, 2000:59).

The findings of this research will be available for use in social work practice in the military environment and for further follow-up studies.

### 1.4.2 Universe and sampling

- A purposive sample of 557 selected clients who represent the diversity in ethnic and cultural heritage, gender and religious and political affiliation, were interviewed (Appendix A) during May 2001 to assess their need for multi-cultural social work services. These results were analysed qualitatively as well as quantitatively.

Structured interviews with a purposive sample of 16 key figures of the social delivery system (managers, supervisors, consultants) were conducted during July/August 2001 to assess how existing social work programmes are designed and managed to meet the requirements of multi-cultural social work practice (Appendix B). These results were qualitatively and quantitatively analysed.

The findings of the interviews with the clients and the key figures of the social delivery system may be regarded as the results of problem analysis, because this indicates whether the current social work services meet the needs of a multi-cultural client system. Possible changes within the service are also highlighted. These findings are supplemented by an analysis of the relevance of existing theoretical frameworks of multi-cultural practice as implemented in Britain and the USA, to service rendering in the SANDF in SA. The design of new technology, viz multi-cultural social work practice, is based on the analysis of the empirical and literature studies.

Group interviews (Appendix C) with a randomly selected sample of 45 social work officers, working in the SANDF, were conducted during July/August 2001 to determine their knowledge and perceptions of and attitudes toward multi-cultural social work practice. These interventions are indicative of the extent to which they are attentive to the cultural backgrounds of clients when rendering social work services. Their perceptions of how the technology that will be designed, can be utilised in the military setting (SANDF), were also assessed. These results were obtained by using a structured interview schedule and were both quantitatively and qualitatively analysed.

Recommendations regarding the management of multi-cultural social work practice were based on the findings of the literature and empirical studies and include the new intervention technology.

#### 1.4.3 Measuring instruments

Three different interview schedules were compiled and which were completed within a group context. The interview schedule for the client system formed part of an environmental study process that took place within the Mafikeng/Zeerust military communities. Only the questions related to this study were analysed and are included in *Appendix A*. The interview schedules for the social work managers (*Appendix B*) and social work production workers (*Appendix C*) were completed within the DSW during July and August 2001.

Guidelines as suggested by Leedy (1993:187-192) were taken into consideration in the compiling of the various questionnaires. Structured as well as unstructured questions formed part of the various questionnaires, which were set in English. Confidentiality was taken into consideration.

#### 1.4.4 Data processing procedure

According to Gouws, et al (1982:48) the processing of data is the description and analysing of all gathered data. All the data within this study has been processed by hand. The findings of the research will be presented in tables and figures, to promote the usefulness and significance of the information.

### 1.5 PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT

This **research report** contains *eight chapters* consisting of the following:

The **first chapter** serves as the introduction to the study. All methods and procedures used during the investigation, are explained in this chapter.

**Chapter two** focuses on the strategic direction of social work in the military environment. Attention is given to the process of the strategic direction of the DSW and whether this is in line with governmental requirements, because the ultimate goal for social work is to render a service which strives towards cultural competency in service rendering.

A theoretical overview of principles and strategies of multi-cultural social work practice which contributes towards competence in service rendering, is presented in **chapter three**.

While **chapter four** concentrates on specific requirements for communication and multi-cultural competence during social work interventions, the **fifth chapter** gives attention to the different social work approaches in the military setting, from a generalist perspective.

The findings of this study are discussed in two chapters, namely **chapter six** and **chapter seven**. **Chapter six** offers a situation analysis of the client system's expectations regarding social work in the military environment, as well as the social work manager's role within the multi-cultural social work field. **Chapter seven** focuses on the knowledge, perceptions and attitudes of social work production workers regarding multi-cultural social service rendering.

The conclusions derived from the study are explained in **chapter eight** and are followed by recommendations.

**CHAPTER 2****STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS OF SOCIAL WORK  
IN THE  
MILITARY ENVIRONMENT****2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The many changes that have occurred within the SANDF following the 1994 democratic elections and which have affected the nature of the social work services rendered by the service providers, calls for a definite process of strategic planning, also within the Directorate of Social Work. Furthermore, the goal of this study, namely to develop theoretical and practical guidelines for multi-cultural social work practice within the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), also necessitates the researcher to reflect on the nature and function of social work in the military setting within the SANDF. Social work in the military environment is based on the same principles and strategies that guide and govern the social work profession in general, and thus provides the mandate for the SANDF to practice social work.

Discussions regarding multi-culturalism have increasingly become an important and critical focus of modern day social work. The rapidly changing South African environment, which has also affected the SANDF at large (Khanyile, 1997), has placed demands on social work practitioners and managers to improve their knowledge, skills and awareness of the diversity of cultures. It is furthermore important to translate this theoretical understanding into practical actions designed to facilitate effective service delivery and social change. It still remains the responsibility of the social work practitioner and manager to make a difference in the lives of the many client systems within the SANDF. One of the goals in South Africa of social work is to render a service which strives towards cultural competency in line with the welfare policy expectations of the South African

Government in terms of the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) and the Financing Policy for Developmental Social Welfare Services (1999).

The importance and need for strategic direction and transformation of social welfare services and programmes within the Directorate Social Work are highlighted throughout this chapter.

## 2.2 SOCIAL WORK IN THE DIVERSE SETTINGS OF THE SANDF

The establishment of the South African National Defence Force by incorporating the defence forces from the non-statutory forces (Umkhonto weSizwe and Apla), the armies of the former Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei (TBVC), and the former South African Defence Force (SADF), generated a diverse setting. Khanyile (1997:78) emphasised that although the SADF had ethnic battalions, it was largely homogeneous, while the former non-statutory forces and TBVC states had a variety of ethnic and racial mixes. Consequently, the **military environment** is becoming increasingly **diverse in nature**, which places a demand on the social worker in the military environment to **render a flexible and multi-cultural competent service**. In addressing this issue of diversity, the Directorate Social Work (Military Social Work Practice Model, 1998) and Mattaini, Lowery and Meyer (1998:70) stress that consideration should be given to the following;

- ♦ **Cultural Pluralism.** Social work practitioners in the military setting, need to understand and respect the religious and cultural diversity of the client system. Many social workers in the SANDF are being called upon to serve a client system with whom they have had little or no interaction in the past. Language difference is one of the main stumbling blocks that needs to be overcome. In addition to language, the understanding of the clients' cultural background is crucial in order to understand the experiences which shaped their lives. This very necessary insight can be developed through reading, dialogue and consultation with influential role players in communities. Cultural tolerance is crucial and challenges racism on a continuous basis.

- ♦ **Gender.** Jobs that were previously done by men in the military force, usually white Afrikaans speaking men, are now being executed by both men and women of all ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The right of women to equal treatment has also been recognised and accepted by the SANDF. For the first time social workers need to address issues, such as the implications of the operational deployment of women, women serving on naval ships, and women being deployed in extreme temperatures or situations, facing international military communities. The status of women needs to be promoted by the social work practitioner and this further contributes to the severing of gender stereotypes.
  
- ♦ **Diversity of the units served.** Social workers often have the responsibility of serving more than one military unit at a time. Each unit has also its own culture, own composition of personnel and purpose, as well as its own needs. This also places stress on the social worker, who has to make repeated role changes when moving between units.
  
- ♦ **Organisational change.** The social worker in the military setting also needs to develop a clear understanding of the effects of organisational change and of transformation on the development of the organisation and its members. This might entail activities like, the rationalisation of personnel, the evolvement of organisational culture and priorities, the levelling of the organisational structure, the changing mandate of the Department of Defence, and even doing away with certain functions. The key role of the social worker in the military environment is to ensure a humanitarian approach to any organisational change.

From the afore-mentioned discussion, it can be concluded that the social worker in the military setting who is often called upon to provide a sense of stability and direction in the many diverse situations experienced within the SANDF. The present process of dynamic transformation is often experienced as stressful and confusing by the military members and their dependants. Members often do not know what is expected of them and how to handle the changing processes. In

many cases the Darwinian concept of goodness-of-fit situation, (Germain and Gitterman, 1980:5) is not experienced. However, it remains the responsibility of social work to promote the goodness-of-fit between the person and environment within this changing environment.

## 2.3 THE NEED FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING WITHIN THE DSW

The changes which have taken place within the SANDF since the 1994 democratic elections, e.g. cultural pluralism, a move towards employing more women in areas previously manned by men, the diversity within military units and organisational changes call for a process of continuous strategic planning within the DSW. This will determine whether service rendering is still in line with the needs and requirements of the stakeholders and consumers of the service, as well as with the changing internal and external environments.

### 2.3.1 Description of strategic planning

According to Mercer (1991:18) **strategic planning** is either an *instrument for change*, or a *process*. This author mentions that an *instrument* for change specifically refers to the development of the vision, mission, goals and objectives of the organisation as well as to the strategies that are used. Mercer (1991:18-19) further states that the *process* consists of two functions, namely *to evaluate the applicability of the content of the business plan*; and *to determine the critical role of the top managers within the organisation*.

Taking the above in consideration, strategic planning should **firstly** be a constant evaluating process of the applicability of the organisational planning content which is reflected in the Business Plan (1997) of the DSW. Thus, it will be imperative to evaluate if the vision and mission and its strategic objectives as set out in the Business Plan (1997) of the DSW are still intact and address the needs and demands of its consumers of the service within the changing environment. Brody (1993:41-42) is of the opinion that strategic planning is one of the most

effective and applicable management tools used by the management of any organisation, as it will direct service rendering.

**Secondly**, strategic planning refers to the crucial role of top management, despite the involvement of the other managers within the organisation. Kroon (1996:136) mentions that strategic planning is the continuous planning process of top management in a changing environment in order to develop and implement a suitable plan that will lead to the fulfilment of the changing needs of the consumers of the service. Within the multi-cultural setting of the SANDF, it is important that the viewpoints of supervisors, area managers and middle managers be taken into consideration, as these people are usually in contact with the production workers on ground level and are aware of situations, issues and problems experienced at that level. Continuous feedback to top management by the supervisors and middle managers will be useful and it will prevent decisions and plans being made which do not comply with the demands of the changing environment.

Considering the importance of strategic planning it is imperative that the relevance of the Business Plan of the DSW as developed in 1997 and its vision and mission as well as the strategic objectives as set out in the Business Plan (1997) be assessed. This is necessary to determine if they are still applicable in the changed environment of the SANDF. It is further necessary to determine whether the service providers of the social work service within the SANDF still agree with the strategic objectives as set out in the DSW's Business Plan (1997), and if not, what needs to be changed?

Kroon (1996:136) states that strategic planning is a worthwhile exercise for any organisation, because it leads to a **faster** and **better** adaptation to the changing circumstances and contributes to a more successful functioning of the organisation.

### 2.3.2 Reasons for strategic planning

Various authors such as Fox, Schwella and Wissink (1991:223), Kroon (1996:136) and Stoner (1982:103) refer to six reasons why it is important for any organisation to undergo a strategic planning exercise. They stress that strategic planning exercises:

- ❖ give managers within an organisation the opportunity to make and implement the necessary adjustments which are congruent with the changing environment. The DSW, for instance, would be able to determine if service rendering addresses problems experienced by the different ethnic and cultural groups working together in the same office or unit;
  
- ❖ involve various levels of management within the management-process. Involving the middle managers, area managers and even the supervisors within the DSW will ensure that attention is given to issues on ground level. This is important to make sure that service rendering is a needs-based service. Thus a service based on relevant issues and problems experienced by the consumers on ground level;
  
- ❖ stimulate the workers' conceptual thinking as all the aspects in the planning processes are considered. This might stimulate the creative and innovative thought processes of members who are involved, which would give a new and fresher look to service rendering and prevent boredom amongst the providers of the service;
  
- ❖ lead to the enhancement of the decision-making process as it is future orientated and concentrates on problems the organisation might encounter. It will also provide some answers to the social work practitioners when encountering certain issues. It will be specifically helpful to the social worker situated in a one-man office in the rural area where direct supervision, social work colleagues or even telephone facilities are not available;

❖ further the formal strategic planning process of organisations that are involved. These organisations are more successful than those organisations that do not adhere to any strategic planning processes. The social work practitioner will follow-up and address the pressing issues on the ground which may lead to more satisfied consumers of the service;

❖ lastly, stimulate the process of formulating realistic objectives which will serve as motivation for the service providers. Communication, co-ordination and participation within the organisation will improve as a result of new realistic and needs-based objectives. It will be easier for the social work practitioner to achieve these determined objectives and also contribute to the social work practitioners' motivation to render a culturally competent social work service.

The **implementation of strategic planning** is **imperative** for any organisation, like the SANDF, which is faced with an environment where rapid political, economic, social and technological changes take place and where there is increased competition, shortages and high costs of natural resources, and which functions within a globalisation context,. Kroon (1996:135) mentions that to be able to survive and grow, organisations, in this case also the Directorate Social Work, must adapt to the changing external as well as internal environment. If this does not happen, services will not be rendered according to needs and this might lead to a situation where the services are no longer required. The Directorate of Social Work within the SANDF needs to establish whether its service rendering is still according to the needs of its stakeholders and if it is in line with the changing situation experienced since the integration of the different defence forces in 1994.

### 2.3.3 The steps within the strategic planning process

Various authors (Brody, 1993:45; Kroon, 1996:140-148) as well as Lyons, in Osborne (1996:91-100), mention certain steps which need to be followed during any strategic planning process. These steps which are discussed very briefly,

could be followed by the DSW within the SANDF during any strategic planning process.

**STEP 1 - Beginning of the process:** This step implies that an influential person, like the director and/or any of the other senior manager within the organisation, acknowledges the need for strategic planning. Clarity on the execution of the process as well as who will be involved in the strategic planning process, which may include other top personnel, political party leaders or even clients (consumers of the service), is necessary.

**STEP 2 - Develop a new or review the existing mission of the organisation:** During this stage it might be necessary to review the mission of the organisation or to develop a totally new one. Because of all the changes it would be advisable for the DSW to revise the present mission statement to determine if it still addresses the changes which occurred within the SANDF at large.

**STEP 3 - Conduct an internal analysis:** Lyons, in Osborne (1996:94), states that it is important to conduct an internal analysis by gathering all the necessary information on what the organisation is doing, how it is done, and what resources are needed. The DSW for example may need to get all the relevant information regarding the client system, their specific social work needs, what resources (for example social workers with specific knowledge and skills), are required and specify how the social work service will be able to meet these needs.

**STEP 4 - Environmental study and future senario:** It will be beneficial to do an environmental study to determine what is taking place within the external and internal environment. In the case of the DSW, the question will have to be asked whether the DSW is still able to render a needs-based service since the changes in 1994. Lyons, in Osborne (1996:95), also adds that together with the analysis of the environment it is necessary to endeavour to predict any future changes within the environment. By doing this the DSW in the SANDF will ensure that it is still

equipped for service rendering even if the scenario might change in the near future.

**STEP 5 - Analysis of strong points, weaknesses, opportunities and threats**

**[SWOT]:** Small (2000:58) mentions that it is necessary for the strategic planning group to assess the weak and strong points of the organisation, especially regarding the environment. The analysis of the strong and weak points tends to evaluate the data gathered during step three while an appreciation of the opportunities and threats tends to evaluate the information gathered in step four.

**STEP 6 - Identify strategic aspects:** According to Edwards and Eadie (1994:116) this step refers to service rendering challenges and includes policy related questions which will affect the mandate, mission, values, productivity level, client system, the financial management and organisational design. The DSW for example might need to prioritise all the aspects that need to be addressed during service rendering. Addressing the ethnic and cultural related issues, as well as how to handle an ever changing environment are important aspects in this regard.

**STEP 7 - Strategic development:** During this step it is necessary to determine an action plan for each strategic aspect planned for during step six. The DSW could for instance group all the action plans for each strategic aspect together in one programme, revise the resources and the social work personnel responsibilities and indicate the way the organisation will handle an important role player (like top managers in the SANDF) within the organisation. Small (2000:60) also adds that this step must indicate how the organisation will look within the next five to ten years. This will definitely prove that the organisation is future orientated in its planning processes. This is an important step for the DSW.

**STEP 8 - Operationalisation of the strategic planning process:** Lyons, in Osborne (1996:99), clearly states that the viewpoints of the personnel and interest groups will in some ways be transformed if the strategic planning process has been successful up to this point. Concerning the DSW, this step requires that

the DSW will have to implement the action plan in practice. According to Kroon (1996:159) the participation of each staff member in the implementation of the action plan, is crucial. In the DSW this will only be possible if the social work sections within the DSW determine what they as section will be able to achieve according to the main action plan.

**STEP 9 - Continuous revising/strategic evaluation:** This step can be regarded as the most important step in the process. The DSW for instance will have to continuously revise the main action plan, its workability, what the impact of the said objectives are on the client system, and what needs to be changed. Small (2000:62) mentions that predictions made for the future need to be revised annually or biannually because these predictions might in time be totally incorrect and not in line with the present situation within the organisation.

From the aforementioned discussion, one can conclude that the DSW needs to execute the strategic planning process regarding social work in the military setting. In this way it can be determined whether service delivery within the changing environment is still in line with the stakeholder's requirements. The following section will focus on social work within the military setting.

## 2.4 NATURE OF SOCIAL WORK IN THE MILITARY ENVIRONMENT

In order to develop a better understanding of the nature of social work in the military environment, it is necessary to focus on its origins as well as how to define the term and the purpose of social work in the military environment. This section will conclude with a discussion on the four intervention strategies present in social work in the military environment.

### 2.4.1 Origin of social work in the military environment

Social work in the military setting can, according to Garber and McNelis (1995:1726), be regarded as a form of occupational social work which originated in the United States of America (USA). The involvement of the USA in World War

It created a need to address the psychiatric problems experienced by the US Army soldiers. The American Red Cross was at that stage the primary service provider of social work related services to the US Army. In 1943 social work was first acknowledged as a profession within the US Army. The main task of social work was to take care of the social well-being of members of the military setting and their dependants. Today social work in the military milieu encompasses a full range of general and specialist tasks in various settings, for instance social work in the army, navy, air force, as well as the various health service settings. Today the social worker requires skills to intervene with individuals, groups and communities; to develop educational, preventative and empowerment programmes, and to influence work-related problem situations regarding policy-practice issues on organisational level.

In the South African context, social work in the military environment has a collective history as it comprises social workers who were previously employed by other defence forces, each with their unique culture and ethnic background, (Khanyile, 1997:78). The amalgamation of SANDF implied that the social work practitioners who formed part of the former non-statutory forces (Umkonto weSizwe and Apla), the former Transkei, Bophuhatswana, Venda, and Ciskei defence forces and the former South African Defence Force, were integrated with the then South African Defence Force (SADF), to form the new Directorate Social Work (DSW) of the SANDF.

At present, as part of the Department of Defence, the DSW is a branch of the South African Military Health Services (SAMHS). The DSW, functions under the command of the SAMHS, and comprises approximately 130 social workers. These social workers are deployed in the various units throughout the country, and are tasked to deliver a comprehensive occupational social work service in alignment with the Directorate Social Work's Business Plan (1997).

Thus, a strategic planning process is urgently needed to determine a change in direction of social work to comply with the current transformed situation of services and programmes within the DSW.

#### 2.4.2 Definition of social work in the military environment

Social work in the American military setting is seen as one of the oldest forms of occupational social work (Ozawa, 1980). Googins and Godfrey (1985:398) and Straussner (1990:2) state that occupational social work is that specialised field of social work practice which addresses the human and social needs of employees in the work setting, by drafting and executing appropriate intervention plans to ensure an emotionally healthier individual and a positive work environment. This definition accentuates the affinity between the military forces and occupational social work, as well as the importance of the development and enhancement of the person and his/her environment.

A strategic planning exercise needs to determine if this definition is still in accordance with the service requirements as stipulated in two policy documents, namely the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) and the Financing Policy (1999). This will be dealt with later in this chapter.

#### 2.4.3 The purpose of social work in the military environment

Googins and Godfrey (1987:38) and Ozawa (1980:38) state that the purpose of occupational social work is to improve **productivity**, to better stability, to enhance the general well-being of the employee(s), and to strengthen the relationship between the employer and employee. This statement clearly indicates that the employee within the industrial setting must be productive and that stumbling blocks need to be cleared, especially those which restrict members in performing their organisational tasks and affect the income of the organisation negatively.

Googins and Godfrey (1987) further state that employees must not be looked at in isolation, but rather in relation to their nuclear or family systems, groups and/or communities as well as the organisation where they render services. Tension between individuals and their family systems, groups, communities and the

organisation will influence productivity levels and stability within the work setting. The DSW's Military Social Work Practice Model (1998) supports this point of view and states that the behaviour and actions of the employees influence, not only the work-force, but also their family systems, groups and/or communities. On the other hand, the behaviour and viewpoints of the employees' families, groups and communities will also influence the employees. When employees experience disharmony amongst their individual-, family-, group-, community- and organisational systems, a problem situation - with unnecessary tension might develop and so restrict the workers' productivity.

As this study aims to discuss the development and management of multi-cultural social work practice within the SANDF, it is necessary to address the purpose of social work in the military setting and to determine whether the existing purpose is still relevant within a diverse setting like the military. The culmination of all the different defence forces, as stated earlier in this chapter, to form the SANDF, brought together a variety of ethnic and racial elements which are in themselves problematic. People who did not inherently know each other, were put together in the same office. Consequently offices which were usually manned by only one or two members of the same culture had to make place for members of diverse cultures. This meant that at times between ten and fifteen people had to share the same office, which is in itself problematic. The researcher who experienced this situation on more than one occasion in the many military units he served often had to diffuse the situation amongst the people in the office.

*Some of the problems experienced in these offices were the following.*

- Limited office space. Some of the offices were only meant for a maximum of one or two people.
  
- Higher noise levels. Due to the increase of personnel in offices and in the passages of the workplace higher noise levels were experienced.

- Conflict in relationships. People from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds and religious orientations, who had not been exposed to each other before, were forced to work together in these limited office facilities. Misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and conflict between people were the norm.

Bearing this in mind, it is obvious that the social work practitioners in the SANDF are not geared or empowered to work in aforementioned situations. Such situations necessitated the implementation of cultural sensitivity and conflict management programmes. The main aim of these programmes is to empower the military members in the different units to work together in diverse settings, irrespective of their different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds. Through these programmes the members have the opportunity to learn not only about each other, but also from each other.

Racial and cultural tensions have a negative effect on the stability and productivity of the different military units as members are unhappy about the situation they experience. In view of the aforementioned purpose of social work in the military environment, and the situations which were experienced within the military setting, the researcher is of the opinion that it will be better to first focus on stabilising the military environment and the relationships between the people and then to concentrate on productivity issues. The question could be raised whether it is the purpose of social work in the military environment to empower the military members towards cultural tolerance within the SANDF and thereafter to concentrate on productivity issues. Would it not be more useful for the DSW to conduct a strategic planning process and then evaluate whether the purpose of social work within the military setting is still intact, bearing in mind the changes that took place, as well as whether the social work practitioners are competent in addressing these changes within the organisation?

Strategic planning is necessary to determine whether the purpose of social work in the military milieu is still congruent with the current situation of the

transformation of services and programmes within the DSW as well as with the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) and the Financing Policy (1999).

#### 2.4.4 Intervention strategies of social work in the military environment

The intervention strategies of social work in the military setting have been set out in the Directorate Social Work's Military Social Work Practice Model (1998) as a model for social work practice in the SANDF. There are four intervention strategies for social work in the SANDF. During 1996/97 the Director of Social Work within the SANDF instructed a working team consisting of social work practitioners, supervisors and middle managers to develop a Model for Social Work in the Military setting. Although the ideas and viewpoints of Googins and Godfrey (1985 and 1987) form part of the intervention strategies, others were derived from the members who were involved in the working party itself. Googins and Godfrey (1985:400), mention these intervention strategies of social work in the military, but discussed them as phases of occupational social work. Using these as background, the intervention strategies of social work in the military setting were determined by the DSW as follows:

- ♦ **Restorative interventions:** The social work practitioner in the military environment mainly renders a problem-solving service to people with a psycho-social problem. Problems addressed with this strategy are personal in nature, for example substance abuse, marital problems, child abuse, adjustment difficulties, and even financial difficulties. The social worker might use either the case-, group- and/or community work methods as appropriate intervention strategies with the employee and his/her family depending on which method will best suit the problem situation as experienced by the system as a whole. The main aim of this intervention is to restore the client system's problem-solving and coping abilities. In this case, the military member is seen firstly as a person and then as an employee of the SANDF.

- ♦ **Promotive interventions:** The focus during this strategy is on preventive, educational and developmental social work services. Any intervention which aims to promote and enhance the healthy social functioning of employees and their dependants, falls under this intervention. The military member and his/her dependants are again seen firstly as a person and secondly as an employee. All problems which are not seen as a problem at a human resources level and all interventions which focus on the need experienced by the person, also fall under this strategy. In this case the social worker may use all of the primary social work methods (case-, group- and community work), or conduct workshops, lectures, seminars, use pamphlets and organise exhibitions in order to address the need experienced by the client system.
  
- ♦ **Work-person interventions:** Interpersonal relationships within the workplace are also addressed by the social work practitioner in the military setting. The interface between the workplace and other systems, like the family and community, are addressed by the intervention strategy. In this situation the military member is viewed as an employee in relation to other employees within the working place. Interventions focus in this instance on work-related problems which are part of the employees work situation. Social work practitioners in the military need to assist the employees experiencing problems such as conflict between peers, conflict with management, inadequate channels of communication, or unfair treatment. In these cases the social worker focuses on the interaction between the military organisation and the employee. Better communication and co-operation between the systems are facilitated and an attempt is made to enable the employees to cope with the demands placed on them by the military environment. Through this intervention employees can cope, in a more positive way, with long separation from their families due to deployments, the constant transfers, the employee's constant exposure to dangerous situations and the combat readiness of the employee at all times.

- ♦ **Workplace interventions:** The social worker in the military setting is further concerned about the organisation (SANDF) at large. Interventions in this strategy concern establishing standard practices, which include structures and policies which will be to the benefit of the organisation as well as to the benefit of the employees. As the employee is viewed as part of the organisational structure, the social worker will for example advise the organisation regarding the human resources factors in the workplace. When these structures are not efficient or impact negatively on the employees and/or their families/communities, it is a matter for concern. Negotiations and bargaining within the workplace as a means to change existing structures and procedures, include the conducting of research, and developing policy proposals in order to enhance the structure and functioning of the organisation. Work groups address workplace issues by developing structures or forums for better co-operation between the military and the community (family and/or civilian community) to which the employee belongs.

According to the SANDF: *The Military Social Work Practice Model*, finalised in 1998, newly appointed social workers in the SANDF will tend to utilise the first two intervention strategies (restorative and promotive). Once they gain more experience within the military setting, they will also start to utilise the latter two intervention strategies (work-person and workplace). As previously mentioned, the social worker can however use more than one strategy at a time during an intervention. It is the responsibility of the social worker to identify the intervention strategies being used, know the difference between the strategies, and to determine when to use which one or combinations thereof.

Understanding the different intervention strategies currently being used within the DSW of the SANDF, and in the light of the ever changing military environment, it would be advisable to determine the congruity between the military clientele's demands and the intervention strategies being used. It is, however, important, in view of the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) and the Financing Policy for Developmental Social Welfare Services (1999), to determine the alignment of

these intervention strategies with the two policy documents. It is the task of the DSW within the SANDF to constantly use these two policy documents to guide the process of strategic planning. This will ensure that the DSW's service rendering is in line with the policy requirements of national government.

In view of the aforementioned discussion, the following section will concentrate on the policy related issues within the social welfare milieu and how the policy matters could be incorporated within service rendering strategies of DSW in the SANDF.

## **2.5 POLICY RELATED ISSUES WITHIN SOCIAL WELFARE**

The aim of this section is to discuss the strategic direction of social work in the military setting. To be able to do this, it is crucial to concentrate on current policy related issues within the South African Social Welfare Milieu. This will enable the DSW, within the SANDF, to be in line with the requirements as stipulated in the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) and the Financing Policy for Developmental Social Welfare Services (1999) of the South African Government and should therefore be included in the process of strategic planning.

The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) of 1994 which was part of the African National Congress's (ANC) election campaign can be seen as the base document for the current White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) as well as the Financing Policy for Developmental Social Welfare Services (1999). By definition, the RDP (1994) document suggests an integrated, coherent social-economic policy framework with its main aim to redistribute resources amongst all the South African citizens and to strive for the development and empowerment of its people.

The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) on the other hand reflects the new social welfare policy within South Africa. This Paper (White Paper for Social Welfare 1997:15) states that social welfare is "*...an integrated and comprehensive system of social services, facilities, programmes and social security to promote*

*social development, social justice and the social functioning of people*". The **developmental approach** as spelled out in the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) sets the framework for all the developmental social service policies and programmes. These policies and programmes all need to be in line with the following principles of the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997:17): secured basic welfare rights, equity, non-discrimination, democracy, improvement of the quality of life, human rights, people-centeredness, investment in human capital, sustainability, partnership, intersectoral collaboration, decentralisation of service delivery, quality of services, transparency and accountability, accessibility, appropriateness and *ubuntu* (a term which will be discussed in chapter 3).

According to Howes (1996:207) all the above principles, which were also presented in the Draft White Paper for Social Welfare (1996), form the framework for ethical decision-making in social work practice, on macro-, meso-, and micro-levels. On **macro-level**, ethical decisions centre around funding and targeting clients systems to be served. On **meso-level** management's decisions focus on the prioritising of needs and utilising human resources. **Micro-level** decisions involve the social workers and their clients.

**The Financing Policy for Developmental Social Welfare Service** was adopted by the South African Parliament on the 26th March 1999. This is regarded as "*...one of the most important policy instruments for the fundamental transformation of both service delivery and the financing thereof*". The aim of this document is "*...to rationalise welfare funding, to target beneficiaries and distribute benefits equitably, to ensure resources are used efficiently and effectively, and thereby to correct injustices and imbalances brought about by the present skewed allocation of resources*" (Financing Policy 1999:4).

As stated earlier, the developmental approach forms the basis of all discussions in the aforementioned policy documents. While the purpose of this study is to develop theoretical and practical guidelines for multi-cultural social work practice within the SANDF, this development needs to be in line with the developmental perspective as stipulated in these two policy documents.

The focus of the following section will be on the developmental approach for social work services and how it should be carried out within the multi-cultural environment of the SANDF.

## 2.6 THE DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH FOR SOCIAL WORK SERVICES

Various authors including Gray (1996:193-204, 1997:210-222); Kaseke (1998:144-149); Lombard (1996:162-172, 1997:11-23, 2000:124-140); Mazibuko (1996:234-241); Midgley (1996:1-19); O' Brien (1997:193-209); Potgieter (1998); Rankin (1997:184-192); Sewpaul (1997:1-9); as well as Woods (1998:236-245; 1999:209-221), offered discussions on the developmental approach to social work practice. It is within the context of their viewpoints that the following section is based.

It is however important to first determine what is meant by the word **development**, because it will contribute to the understanding of the developmental approach as a whole. Attention will then be given to the models of social welfare, social and economic interventions, as well as the holistic approach.

### 2.6.1 Definition of development

In the New Dictionary of Social Work (1996:17) development is defined as a "*PROCESS which suggests the desired direction in which a GROUP or COMMUNITY moves (as it is determined by themselves) in order to accomplish economic progress, political participation and social reconstruction*". According to Van Breda (1999:5) "*...development refers to the progressively greater meeting of the fundamental human needs for subsistence, protection, affection, understanding, participation, creation, idleness, identity and freedom*". Woods (1998:236) however, also refers to the word *development* as the process which allows for the greatest improvement in a person's quality of life in general.

Analysing these definitions, it is obvious that although **development** means different things to different people, it always has to do with the **betterment** of the **human being** and is synonymous with the growth principle.

### 2.6.2 Models of social welfare

Midgley (1996:1) mentions that the developmental model has attracted more attention than the **residual** and **institutional** models which were universally used in years gone by. The **residual model**, according to Lombard (1999:100); Midgley (1996:1) and Potgieter (1998:116-117), recommends that the limited public resources be targeted at the most needy section of the population, while the **institutional model** argues the extensive involvement of the state in all aspects of social welfare. The institutional model is mainly concerned with needs satisfaction through social policy planning and is also known as the social administration approach to social services.

Neither of these two models addressed the developmental needs of people in South Africa and both assumed that the costs of welfare would be met from revenues generated by the economy of the country. Midgley (1996:1) states that the limitations of the aforementioned models necessitated the development of the **social developmental approach** for social service rendering. This approach assumes that services and programmes should be developed to solve the problems connected with the unmet needs of people. The social developmental approach to social service delivery's primary feature is its concern with development. Midgley (1996:2) mentions that this approach promotes a dynamic process of growth, change and progress by integrating economic and social policies. This author also states that the social developmental approach favours social programmes that are compatible with economic development and demonstrate an effective rate of return to social expenditures. Thus, the effective harmonisation of economic and social interventions within a dynamic process is required. This approach, according to Potgieter (1998:117) accepts that it is possible and desirable to use income maintenance in order to provide quality of life as a means to promote and enhance human development.

Although the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) is to some extent based on the perceptions of Midgley (1996:1-7), this paper adopts a more general approach to individual development. The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997:7) states that the main goal for social welfare is “...a humane, peaceful, just and caring society which will uphold welfare rights, facilitate the meeting of basic human needs, release people’s creative energies, help them achieve their aspirations, build human capacity and self-reliance, and participate fully in all spheres of social, economic and political life”.

Max-Neef (1991:16), a Chilean economist, also emphasises the fact that development is not just about “objects”, but about people. This means that development is not about money, but about meeting the needs of the people. People must thus be the focus of any development. It is therefore necessary for **development** to *focus* on the *satisfaction* of fundamental **human needs** and it goes beyond the economic rationale (Max-Neef 1991:23). The emphasis is on human needs and the satisfaction of those needs. Human needs within the multi-cultural milieu, do not only differ among persons and cultural groups, to cultural group, but also in the way these needs are satisfied.

Beckett and Dungee-Anderson (1997:29) state that **that** which is deemed abnormal in one culture or person may be perfectly normal in another culture or person. This implies that if one culture’s or person’s basic needs are satisfied in a certain way, it may be taboo or unacceptable within another culture or person.

In the New Dictionary of Social Work (1996:18) it is evident that the developmental approach focuses primarily on individuals as members of families and households who require certain minimum standards for meeting their basic needs. Mazibuko (1996:238) also adds that a **people-centered** and **social participation** philosophy seems to be the main value premise of the social developmental approach. This approach must be based on the needs of the people (the recipients of the service) and they must be able to partake in the decision-making process regarding service delivery. This is specifically important

within a multi-cultural setting where the client system originates from different backgrounds regarding culture and ethnicity, each with its own view point on life and service expectations.

In the light of the aforementioned, the following issues need to be clarified, not only within the military environment, but also in civilian society. *Is economic development really necessary for social development?* Is it not more beneficial for the social worker in the military to rather focus on the human issues, than on the economy? *What will the definition of social development mean to the social work practitioner who is working in a one-man office in a rural area?* How will he/she implement the developmental approach?

The culmination of all the different defence forces in the SANDF, as explained earlier in this chapter and mentioned by Khanyile (1997), necessitated that the social work managers and practitioners must acquaint themselves with the application of the social developmental approach during service rendering, especially within the multi-cultural setting. The SANDF is composed of different cultural and ethnic groupings which all originate from various geographical areas within South Africa. Some members originate from areas with limited or no infrastructure and resources. The former Ciskei/ Transkei region is an example of an area with limited or no resources and infrastructure. In a study done by Schaaf (1998) it is evident that although many of the military members work at military units throughout South Africa, a large number of their dependants still reside in areas lacking resources or infrastructure. Reasons given for staying behind in these areas include those of culture and tradition.

The application of the social developmental approach will not only benefit the military members, but also their dependants who are part of this impoverished situation. The social work practitioner/manager should be competent in dealing with these situations, especially within the SANDF context where a diversity of cultures exist. Sowers-Hoag and Sandau-Beckler (1996:38) add that efficient knowledge of the client system's background and culture is crucial. If this is not the case, the social work practitioner/manager might find himself/herself in a

situation suggesting ideas or even engaging in activities which are not acceptable to certain cultural members.

The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997:96) deems social development as a means to bring about sustained improvement in the well-being of the individual, family, community and society at large. It is based on Midgley's (1996:2) perception that it is a planned process of social change designed to promote the people's welfare in conjunction with a comprehensive process of economic development.

### 2.6.3 Social and economic interventions

The inter-dependency of the economy and development necessitates the researcher to focus on the social and economic interventions within the social welfare context.

Midgley (1996:3) conceptualises three ways in which the developmental approach attempts to harmonise social and economic interventions within a dynamic process. These will be discussed as follows.

**Firstly**, the developmental approach establishes organisational mechanisms within which economic and social policies can be intergrated. These mechanisms necessitate that social and economic agencies collaborate and integrate their efforts through improved co-ordination and planning. A pertinent example here is the Affirmative Action Policy of the South African Government as stipulated in the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998, which aims to promote the interests of gender and cultural groups who were previously disadvantaged. Other examples include large corporations who embark on community empowerment projects like adult literacy programmes or social upliftment like housing projects. By addressing social issues like literacy, the economic issues automatically benefit too ( Midgley 1995:23).

**Secondly**, economic development must have a positive impact on the person's well-being (Midgley 1996:3). There is little point in achieving high rates of economic growth if the benefits of growth do not improve the lives of the ordinary person. Therefore it is crucial that policies ensure the people's participation in the economy through active engagement in job creation and self employment opportunities. The social work practitioner in the military who renders a service to these dependants might launch various developmental projects within these military communities. These projects could include training regarding life skills education, business skills, problem-solving, conflict management, communication skills as well as HIV/AIDS education. Clients could be trained how to start a business and how to generate an income through this. The social work practitioner might initiate the training process, for instance in candle-making, leather work or even baking. Unemployed military dependants would benefit immensely through these developmental projects, as they would not only grow and change, but could use the income to add quality to their lives. The client system would not only feel empowered regarding life issues, but would master the skills of income generation.

Resources also need to be redistributed so as to create social service programmes that meet the basic social needs of all the citizens. The SANDF has embarked on a land reform programme in order to redress the needs of individuals displaced from their ancestral land. It is further involved in resettling former employees who have become redundant as in the case of the Bushman foot soldiers used in the Angolan wars. Without the assistance of the SANDF these ex-employees face a scenario of anomaly in that both the culture of their forefathers and their employing body is no longer relevant. They are now faced with reintegration into society, a process that can only be successful with the provision of knowledge, skills and resources as provided by means of the SANDF social work interventions and the land reform programmes.

**Thirdly**, social development also encourages the introduction of social programmes which generate rates of return on social expenditures and contribute directly to economic development (Midgley 1996:3). This includes programmes

which promote the mobilisation of human capital, enhance social capital formation and increase opportunities for productive employment as well as self-employment among low income and special needs groups. For instance, investments in education, childhood nutrition, health care, skills training, housing and similar programmes all generate the development of human and social capital. Furthermore, programmes which provide vocational training for clients with special needs and in turn help them to secure productive employment have a similar effect. In terms of the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995, organisations are compelled to provide employment within the workplace for individuals with disabilities. In some countries organisations are penalised for not meeting these requirements.

The focus of the social worker should be on community based projects which establish both the social and economic infrastructures which will facilitate the emergence of productive, local co-operative enterprises that generate income and better the standards of living of all South African citizens.

#### 2.6.4 The holistic developmental model

Both Lombard (1996:169) and Potgieter (1998:114-121) mention that the developmental model of social services must be contextualised in a holistic way. Potgieter (1998:14-121) points out that when looking at **social development**, it must not be seen in isolation, but rather seen as going hand-in-hand with **social functioning**, **social care** and **social security**. These can be discussed as follows:

- **Social functioning:** Social functioning, according to Potgieter (1998:115), refers to the way in which people interact with their physical and social environment, including the people and social institutions therein. It is usually as a result of transactions between a person and parts of his/her world that the individual's quality of life is enhanced or damaged. Contact between the people involves their total beings, and includes their view

points of the world, their needs, their beliefs, feelings and their behaviour. Thus, all aspects of life are similarly affected by the contact.

Potgieter (1998:117) also states that groups, organisations and communities usually enhance their capacity regarding social functioning by developing resources, promoting positive relationships between members and creating opportunities for growth and development. Potgieter (1998:27) mentions that while some individuals change and make adjustments as is required by his/ her environment at a particular point in time, others might find themselves in a situation of not being able to cope at all. Life's demands seem too much for them. When situations like these are experienced, the social functioning of those people is at risk. The tragic murder of SANDF employees at Tempee during September 1999 by an employee as a result of an inability to satisfy an inner need to attend to a family matter and fulfil military requirements, resulted from an ineffective coping mechanism. The social ills of military transfers or deployments are well documented and could be compared to the forced removals or migrant labour legislation of the apartheid era. Families and communities which were once functional and economically stable units, are often left in a sea of anomalies when either the family or the breadwinner is transferred.

It is therefore the social work practitioner in the SANDF's task to identify certain positive characteristics of employees and their family members who cope well with the military demands, e.g. transfers, separation from their family members and the employee's exposure to extremely dangerous situations especially during combat situations. It is the social worker in the military's task to further develop these positive characteristics for instance by including the employees and their families in life skills/empowerment programmes, and even resilience programmes for those who are exposed to constant deployments. By doing so, their social functioning is further enhanced. The employees and their families will then experience the various military demands as less traumatic on their unique family systems and they will be able to cope more satisfactorily with these situations.

Strumpher (1990:265) mentioned that this approach is termed **solutogenesis**. If the social worker understands this approach and knows how to utilise this to the benefit of the client system, the effective social functioning of the client system is enhanced. This will also contribute positively to the social development debate within the social work domain.

- **Social care:** The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997:12) includes social care as one of the restructuring priorities regarding social services. Social care is defined by the New Dictionary of Social Work (1996:58) as *"...measures which are drawn up by the State and private sector to enable members of society to meet their needs in order to promote their social functioning"*. The well-being of people and a willingness to care for and enhance their quality of life is the heart of the social work profession. According to Potgieter (1998:119) the relationship between the client and the social worker is the primary place where nurturing and empowerment takes place. This requires the securing of safety and comfort, as well as providing for their basic needs satisfaction of the client systems. The trend towards the Adult Basic Education Training (A.B.E.T.) programmes focuses on making individuals functionally literate thereby enhancing employment and productivity opportunities.

Thus, social care implies non-monetary help to individuals which increases their abilities to function optimally within the society, while social security provides the direct monetary assistance.

Issues that need to be clarified in the study are the following: It is important to establish whether the social work practitioner in the SANDF really concentrates on empowering the military members and/or their dependants with developmental programmes based on the needs of the consumers. If this empowering is done, the impact of these programmes and projects on the consumers must be assessed. It must further be established whether the DSW's strategic objectives pay attention to developmental issues needed by the consumers of the service. Lastly it is also necessary to

determine to what extent transformation of the social work personnel and their service rendering took place within the DSW and what effect it had.

- **Social security:** Social security refers to programmes provided by social legislation in order to address issues like poverty, ill-health and unemployment. It makes provision for infirmity, disability and death (Potgieter 1998:119). The New Dictionary of Social Work (1996:59) sees this as a type of service which aims to assist individuals and communities by means of contributory and non-contributory schemes, and to make provision for basic needs. Examples include compulsory retirement or pension schemes, medical aid and health programmes as well as contributions to unemployment funds.

In view of the aforementioned discussion it must be emphasised that if the DSW aims to move towards a more developmental approach in its service rendering, evaluation of its current strategic objectives is imperative so as to ensure that attention is given to the holistic developmental approach during service rendering. If this is not the case, then transformation within the DSW needs to be addressed as soon as possible to be in line with the requirements as stipulated within the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) as well as in the Financing Policy for Developmental Social Welfare Services (1999).

## 2.7 CONCLUSION

The establishment of the SANDF by the bringing together of all the different defence forces, namely the non-statutory forces (Umkhonto weSizwe and Apla) as well as the former TBVC armies and the former SADF, brought about a diverse setting which placed a huge demand on the military social worker.

Throughout this discussion it was evident that social work in the military environment and occupational social work can be seen as similar programmes, as both are concerned with the organisation on the one hand, and the individual, group and community on the other hand. The main goal of military social work is

not only productivity and stability within the organisation, but also to enhance and promote the social well-being of individuals, groups and communities.

Four intervention strategies within military social work which needed to be identified and utilised by the social worker in the military setting, have been discussed. It is imperative that the four intervention strategies as stipulated in the Financing Policy for Developmental Social Welfare Service (1999) be made part of these intervention strategies so as to ensure that service rendering is still in line with policy requirements.

The modern day social work practitioner/ manager needs to take cognisance of the multi-sectoral/ factorial elements within multi-cultural social work practice. A brief overview was given of two of the cornerstone documents in modern day social work practice, namely the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) and the Financing Policy for Development Social Welfare Services (1999). Both these documents focus on the developmental approach with regards to service rendering and empowerment of individuals and communities.

Chapter 3 gives a theoretical overview of the various principles and strategies within multi-cultural social work practice.

## CHAPTER 3

### A THEORETICAL OVERVIEW OF THE PRINCIPLES AND STRATEGIES OF MULTI-CULTURAL SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Social work professionals often make the statement that they treat all persons equally, irrespective of colour or creed. Schram (1994:252) states that this attitude stresses a commitment to treating all persons with equal dignity and respect and is based on the belief that everyone is valuable. It is, however, important to remember that each individual is unique bio, psycho, social and spiritual being, which in turn affects the way in which the person will think and behave. To ignore a person's cultural uniqueness as a human being, will also have a detrimental effect on the quality of service rendering.

The aim of this study is to develop theoretical and practical guidelines for a multi-cultural social work practice within the SANDF in an attempt to ensure that the social service delivery system (managers, supervisors, consultants and social workers) attend to, especially, the cultural variations amongst clients. This chapter will focus on a theoretical overview of principles and strategies for multi-cultural social work practice. Attention will also be given to the necessity for multi-cultural social work, its assumptions, relevant principles, understanding of human diversity, values and individual aspirations. The influence of culture, cultural competence and ethnicity in the multi-cultural social work setting will also be highlighted.

#### 3.2 THE NEED FOR MULTI-CULTURAL SOCIAL WORK

The literature, including Asamoah (1996:1-3); Gould (1995:200); Legault (1996:49-53); Lum (1992:1-30); Matthew (1996:131-134); Sue and Sue (1990); Torres and Jones (1997:161-168) and Uehara et al (1996:613-614),

abounds with the importance of rendering multi-cultural social work services. The discussion of Uehara et al (1996:614) on the ultimate goal for multi-cultural social work practice, which is also the same for multi-cultural social work research and education, could be seen as summation thereof. According to Uehara et al (1996:614), the ultimate **goal for multi-cultural social work practice** is to strive for **social justice** and to **transform** those contemporary *social/cultural structures* and *processes* which continue to support injustice and inequality. This entails that social work organisations, and in this case, the SANDF, must strive to enable all its members and their dependants, to share equally in the rights and opportunities afforded by the organisation, in this instance the SANDF and to ensure that each person interacts fairly and justly with others (Potgieter 1998:297). Uehara et al (1996:614), further states that if this is not the case, social work practitioners and social work managers, need to challenge the structures and processes that continue to support unfairness and disparity amongst the members and the services rendered, in order to bring about change. This must also be the ultimate goal for social work services within the DSW of the SANDF.

Transformation of structures and processes has already begun to take place within the military setting. No longer are services confined to ethnic, cultural or gender groups, nor based on religious- and or political affiliation, as was the case prior to the 1994 democratic elections in South Africa (Khanyile, 1997). Services within the DSW have become more accessible to the entire SANDF personnel system and their dependants. Changes are also evident within the personnel composition of the DWS. The social work manager's profile has become more representative with regards to culture and ethnicity, gender, religious- and political affiliations. This was further reflected in the social work practitioners' profile.

Against this background, Asamoah (1996:1) is of the opinion that the *question* is no longer whether social workers should provide a culturally competent service to the client system, but rather **how the social work practitioner**, and the social work **manager can best do it**. Given this statement, Sheafor, Horesji and

Horesji (2000:59) mention that social work practitioners/managers - the service providers - must strive towards cultural competence in service rendering. This calls for **interventions** that are **acceptable** and **useful** to the client system and requires that the social work practitioner/manager be congruent with the client system's cultural background and expectations. This further requires that the service providers learn more about the client system's culture, the presenting problem, and how to integrate that knowledge into a professional assessment, evaluation and intervention strategy. This has been personally experienced by the researcher while rendering social work services, not only as an only social worker, but also as an only white, Afrikaans speaking social worker for the past eight years to a Xhosa speaking client system. Some of the main stumbling blocks experienced by the researcher during service rendering in these communities were issues like the understanding of the Xhosa culture, traditions and language and how to render an African social work service from a westernised educational perspective. The researcher had to make innovative adjustments to his service rendering approach in order for him to be effective within the client system. By using, for instance, visual aids, cultural and language barriers were overcome when dealing with emotive issues. This intervention strategy enabled the researcher to explore abstract concepts like emotions, love and happiness, in a more understandable way with the client system.

The client system could also explain their feelings to the social worker regarding the presenting problem situation, by using drawings and pictures. This was found to be extremely useful especially when dealing with the traditional Xhosa person, where language barriers arose. Furthermore, the researcher enrolled for various levels of Xhosa language courses, which assisted him in the development of a good working knowledge of the Xhosa language. He further consulted with his Xhosa colleagues and friends regarding cultural issues. However, it was found that the best way to become acquainted with another person's cultural aspects, is to operate amongst the people of that culture and to communicate continuously with them. This is summed-up very adequately by Hickson and Christie (1989:164) who state that "*...the multi-cultural professional should be able to meet the world and the people in depth, and to share in the same reality in a*

*collaborative endeavour to effect change*". This is the focus of multi-cultural social work practice and needs to form part of the DSW's strategic planning process.

### 3.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING HUMAN DIVERSITY

In view of the focus of this study, which aims to discuss the development of theoretical and practical guidelines for multi-cultural social work practice, as well as how to manage this practice within the SANDF, attention will be focused on human diversity, which will provide the reader with a clearer picture of the concept, ***cultural diversity***.

Potgieter (1998:6) is of the opinion that the concept of human diversity sensitises the professional person to appreciate differences among people and to accept the fact that people are uniquely different in that each person experiences his/her world in his/her own unique way. The rendering of social work services within a multi-cultural setting, necessitates one to *understand* the fact that *people* are not only *different* or diverse as a result of their culture or ethnic grouping, but also because of the fact that they are *human beings*. Even members from the same cultural and ethnic background, or of the same age, gender, class, religious, political affiliation, including sexual orientation, physical and mental abilities, are unique and have the need for individualisation.

Potgieter (1998:6) further stresses that it is always unfortunate when people experience events differently, for instance as a type of a win/lose situation, which is why it is often difficult to understand the notion of being equal, but different. A person's limited observational capacity and firmly embedded attitudes which label and categorise people and their actions, oppose the idea of the respect for diversity. Therefore, an individual's personal, family, cultural and social backgrounds often make it difficult for others, especially the social work practitioner/manager, to observe the behaviour and actions of people from another cultural background, without making judgements based on one's own prejudices or stereotyped ideas. However, it is imperative, within

multi-cultural social work practice, that social work practitioners/managers familiarise themselves with various aspects of different cultures, before they can become effective helpers (Mattaini, Lowery and Meyer 1998:70). It is important, for example, to know how people of different cultures greet each other, what meaning is attached to emotions like laughter, tears, pain or joy and their cultural significance, and how these are dealt with. Social work practitioners/managers must further understand how people from a different culture view authority and how success is defined.

In addition Mattaini, Lowery and Meyer (1998:69-78) state that the social work practitioner/manager who finds him/herself within a multi-cultural setting needs to understand the different groups' viewpoints on for instance, gender issues, marriage and parenthood. Actions like stealing, alcohol abuse, and even views on disability and illness, might be seen in a total different light. Nevertheless, social work practitioners/managers should try to develop an understanding of these differences and also know how these differences can influence a person's attitude and behaviour. Social work practitioners/managers need to be sensitive to their own prejudices and generalisations about people and their behaviour. This is an important step towards understanding diversity and being able to accept other people as being unique.

### **3.4 THE VALUES AND PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL WORK IN THE MULTI-CULTURAL SETTING**

Devore and Schlesinger (1991:97) clearly illustrate that social work remains a profession which is committed to people, their well-being, and to the enhancement of the quality of their lives. This entails that services are rendered within a multi-cultural milieu irrespective of which ethnic and cultural grouping the client system belongs to, and whatever their gender, and/or religious- and political affiliations are. However, before attention can be given to the values of social work in a multi-cultural setting, it is necessary to clearly understand what is meant by the term, values. The New Dictionary of Social Work (1996:66) explains that a value is the "*...enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of*

*existence is personally or socially preferable*". Loewenberg and Dolgoff (1988:16) add that professional **values** act as **guidance for practice**; the way social work services need to be carried out; and are always the source of principles. According to Potgieter (1998:38), a principle is the general truth, grounded in values and stated as a rule that should be followed.

Against this background attention will be given to the values and principles of social work practice within the multi-cultural setting. Devore and Schlesinger (1991:97-98) refer to social work's value base which was conceptualised by Levy (1973), and which is particularly relevant to ethnic-sensitive social work or, for the purpose of this study, to multi-cultural social work practice. The values as developed by Levy (1973) and adopted by Devore and Schlesinger (1991:97-98) have been adapted by Potgieter (1998:39-45) and will be used for the purpose of this discussion. These values are:

- [1] *Values as ways to view (see) people;*
- [2] *Values as ways to deal (handle them) with people.*
- [3] *Values as the dream (vision) of people.*

Most of these values form part of the discussions of the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) as well as the Financing Policy for Developmental Social Welfare Services (1999) in South Africa. The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997:16-17) specifically mentions these principles which need to form the basis of any social work policy, programmes and projects within the DSW.

#### **3.4.1 Values as ways to view people**

This value orientation as acknowledged by Devore and Schlesinger (1991:98), focuses on the relationships between people and their environments and include the following:

#### 3.4.1.1 ***Worth and dignity***

Social work and specifically multi-cultural social work practice believes in the dignity and worth of all **people** and that they should be **treated with respect and understanding**. In other words, social workers should view the person as a whole, which includes the biophysical, psychological, social and spiritual side of the human being (Morales and Sheaffer, 1986:206). Failure to view the person as a whole will have a detrimental effect on the quality of service rendering by the social worker/manager.

Compton and Gallaway (1999:105) mention that people are sufficient ends in themselves and must not be treated as objects or as means to other ends. It is therefore critical to respect each person's dignity and worth as a human being. These authors further specify that people who feel good about themselves, will see themselves as persons of worth and have a sense of their own strength and capabilities and tend to be happier, and have the ability to deal constructively and appropriately with the environment in which they find themselves. Therefore, social workers/managers who find themselves within the multi-cultural milieu need to be sensitive to the way in which they see others, especially clients with a different cultural background.

#### 3.4.1.2 ***Diversity and uniqueness***

Human beings are diverse in race, ethnicity, culture, class, age, gender, religious- and political affiliations, sexual orientations, physical and mental abilities. Thus, people do not only look different, but everyone also experiences life in his/her own special and unique way. People are uniquely different, and need to be treated as individuals (Mattaini, Lowery and Meyer 1998:69). Not only is diversity experienced amongst the client system within the military communities, but also amongst the personnel composition of social workers within the DSW. Social work practitioners and social work managers are also diverse in many facets of race, ethnicity, culture, gender, religious- and political affiliations. All the different former defence forces (South African, Ciskei, Transkei, Venda, and

Boputhatswana as well as Umkhonto we Sizwe and Apla) were integrated to form the South African National Defence Force (Khanyile, 1997). As a result of this, the personnel profile of the SANDF met all the criteria for diversity. Not only did the client system for social work become more diverse, but so too did the personnel composition within the SANDF. This changed environment brought about situations which were new and strange not only to the social work practitioners, but also to the social work managers who had to deal with this diversity of ethnicity, culture, gender, religious- and political affiliations, within the personnel composition of each social work office. The purpose of this study, to develop theoretical and practical guidelines for multi-cultural social work practice within the SANDF, is an attempt to ensure that the social services delivery system (managers, supervisors, consultants and practitioners) whilst providing social work interventions to the client system, will be attentive to cultural variations amongst clients.

#### 3.4.1.3 ***The capacity to grow and change***

Potgieter (1998:40), referring to Smalley (1967:63), is of the opinion that people are viewed as actors and are in a continuous process of becoming. This entails that people grow and change specifically in ways that will make their lives more rewarding. The social work practitioner and social work manager must therefore acknowledge their own ability to grow and change. Social work practitioners/managers must adapt to changed situations and change to particularly function within the multi-cultural setting as presently experienced within the SANDF. As Potgieter (1998:40) states, no one is ever too young or too old to change. The question here is not whether one can grow and change, but whether one would like to or allow him/herself to grow and to change. One can deliberately try to block one's capacity to grow and change by developing a negative attitude towards change. The social work practitioners/managers who find themselves in the midst of the multi-cultural environment, need to develop a positive attitude towards service rendering as it will allow an opportunity for growth and change, not only within themselves, but also with regards to service rendering. In this way, it will ensure that the best possible service is rendered

effectively to the client system, irrespective of the client system's ethnic or cultural grouping, gender, religious- and political affiliations.

#### 3.4.1.4 ***The need to belong***

One of the basic needs of the human being, according to Compton and Galaway (1984:74), is the need to belong. It is a basic need to belong for instance to a family, an ethnic- and cultural group, and/or to a specific religious group, political group or social organisation. Furthermore it is a basic need to be loved and to be cared for by a person or group of people. Rowe (1986:416) states that love, caring and concern can develop through contact with others, because therein lies a person's greatest security.

People's humanity comes to the fore through their relationship with other people within their environment, as well as through each person's recognition of each other's humanity. The principle of UBUNTU which stresses the togetherness with other people, serves as a summary for the need to belong and to recognise each other's humanity. The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997:17) explains that **UBUNTU** means that "...people are people through other people". A person becomes a person through the eyes of other people. A person's interactions are therefore the way in which a person accepts and respects others. Potgieter (1998:104) refers to UBUNTU as having concern for other people. To have concern for other people is to have respect for other people's differences and being different and to experience some sense of responsibility for others, especially those who are less fortunate.

#### 3.4.1.5 ***Responsibility towards self and fellow human beings***

According to Devore and Schlesinger (1991:98) and Mattaini, Lowery and Meyer (1998:xv-xiv), it is the belief of the social work profession that each person is responsible for him/herself and that every one is capable of making decisions that will affect their own lives as well as those of other people around them. This was experienced as an example within the SANDF during September 1999 when an officer at the Tempe Military Base in Bloemfontein decided to avenge a grievance

which arose regarding his salary situation. In the process, eight SANDF members were shot dead at their workplace. This incident did not only have an adverse effect on the eight people who died during the shoot-out, but also on each member of their family systems. The officer's decision to kill, (*he was also killed during the process*), also had an impact on his own family system who were dependent on him as the only breadwinner. It further also had an effect on the unit where he was working, the military community of Bloemfontein, the Defence Force and South African society at large.

### 3.4.2 Values as the way to deal with people:

According to Devore and Schlesinger (1991:98) this category of values focuses on the importance of treating people in a way that enhances their opportunity for self-direction. The core principles as identified by Biestek (1957), Compton and Gallaway (1999:178), Goldstein (1973:136-137), Perlman (1965) and Potgieter (1998:42) are the following:

#### 3.4.2.1 *Individualisation*

Social workers, specifically within the multi-cultural setting aim to treat people as unique individuals. It is therefore essential for the social work practitioner/manager not to label or stereotype people as it makes one less sensitive to the needs of other people, and will fail to treat the client(s) as unique individual(s). It is thus important to note that each person is unique and will experience the same situation differently. This is even more relevant when dealing with and working amongst people from diverse ethnic and cultural origins. The experience of the same situation has different meanings to people from different backgrounds. For instance, when people have to share one glass of water amongst each other, it may be interpreted in various ways. This might be a gesture of friendliness, acceptance and welcoming for one person, while another person might experience this situation as disrespectful or unhygienic.

### 3.4.2.2 **Acceptance**

This term is defined by the New Dictionary of Social Work (1996:1) “...as a principle whereby the attitude and action of the social worker demonstrates that he respects the client system’s dignity as a human being, that he understands his behaviour and feelings and he does not judge”. Potgieter (1998:43) states that it has become a cliché to state that social workers accept people as and for what they are. As this statement lessens the need for change and development, it is more positive to state that people should be accepted for what they can become. The focus on “*becoming*”, emphasises the need for growth and change.

The word *accept*, literally means to be open to the views and perspectives of the client system which also requires the ability to convey interest and warmth. Goldstein (1973:136-137) however, states that acceptance might leave a feeling of apprehension in the client system whose past experiences have alienated them from others. People who are accustomed to exclusion and discrimination may see the closeness and interest from the social work practitioner/manager in a terrifying light. It is therefore important when dealing with a diverse client system, specifically those who were exposed to the Apartheid system in South Africa prior to the 1994 democratic elections, to be aware of where the client is psychologically. Certain groups of people might not have had the exposure to certain resources and situations within their communities and might not know what to expect when coming into contact with social work interventions.

Nevertheless, Compton and Gallaway (1999:178) clearly state that acceptance does not mean that the social work practitioner/manager must always agree with the client system’s behaviour or even approve it at all. It is also important to understand that the entire client system cannot just do as they feel to do and that their actions will be “*excused*” from the world in which they find themselves in. The client system might be incorrect, but it does not mean that he/she should be stigmatised. Acceptance in this sense means to rather try and understand the problem situation of the client system, which caused them to act in a specific way.

It is therefore imperative for the social work practitioner/manager within a multi-cultural environment to get to know the client system, their cultural aspects like their heritage, language, that which is acceptable and not acceptable, likes and dislikes as well as specific cultural practices (Mattaini, Lowery and Meyer 1998:69-85). Only once the social work practitioners/managers have managed to learn more about the client system, will they be able to understand certain problem situations, especially those which arise within a specific cultural situation. This in turn will enable them to render an effective needs-based service.

#### 3.4.2.3 ***Controlled emotional involvement***

It is vital for the social work practitioners/managers to control their involvement with the client system, so as not to become over involved, but still be able to respond with the necessary sensitivity. The social work practitioners/managers must determine for themselves where their professional responsibility regarding the client system ends and where that of the client system begins. The client system must realise from the start that the problem situation belongs to himself/herself and that the social work practitioner/manager cannot assume responsibility for the problem. The professional's role is only to assist the client system to address the situation in their own unique way, (Mattaini, Lowery and Meyer 1998:73).

The social work practitioner/manager who renders services to a culturally diverse client system, might become over involved with the client system. This is especially true in situations where the client system originates from an unfamiliar or unknown ethnic or cultural grouping to that of the social work professional. It is therefore important that the social work practitioner/manager acquaints him/herself with the necessary knowledge and skills to deal with the culturally divergent client system.

#### 3.4.2.4 ***Non-judgmental attitude***

Although the roots of a non-judgmental attitude lie in acceptance and non-blaming, it also includes the ability to assess and evaluate situations and the

behaviour of the client systems. Potgieter (1998:44) refers to Biestek (1957) who states that one must have the ability to ***hate the sin but to love the fellow sinner***. Thus, it is not the person that needs to be judged, but rather the situation the person finds him-/herself within. Social work practitioners/managers should be careful not to be judgemental when dealing with a culturally diverse client system. This is specifically important when dealing with a client system originating from previously disadvantaged backgrounds, as was the case in South Africa prior to the 1994 democratic elections. The client system might experience it as a step into the past which will result in ineffective service rendering.

### 3.4.2.5 ***Self-determination***

This principle refers to the ability of human beings to make their own choices and decisions, and therefore focuses on a person's responsibility for conducting his/her own affairs. It includes consideration for the rights and needs of others. In other words, it gives an individual the freedom and responsibility to think, choose and act wisely, and allows for mistakes. Social work practitioners/managers should allow the client system to make their own choices and not make decisions for them, as social work practitioners/managers often tend to do. Perlman (1965) emphasises the fact that self-determination is more an illusion than a reality. It is an expression of a person's innate drive to experience the self and to be the master of one's self. An individual possesses the freedom and inner capacity as well as the outer opportunity to make reasonable choices amongst possible, socially acceptable alternatives. The client system's right to make choices especially in situations where they might not understand the consequences of their behaviour or actions, may result in a choice of direction which could be harmful to themselves and/or others. This may be due to the lack of opportunities in the past to make responsible choices. In cases like these the social work practitioner/manager should take action that could limit their freedom of choice in order to protect the client system and maybe others in the process.

While stationed in the Eastern Province, the researcher often had to play both an advocate and authoritarian role with regards to the client system and various financial institutions. Unscrupulous insurance agents would often take advantage

of SANDF members and overburden them financially, resulting in insufficient financial means for both the members and their dependants. In these cases, the social work practitioner as an advocate, took the empowerment away from the client system, and as an authoritarian, the practitioner intervened to protect the interests of the client system.

Potgieter (1998:45) states categorically that the client system benefits more from travel guides than directive travel agents. The independence as well as the self-respect of the client system engenders empowerment which will lead to a full and satisfying life. The client system must always be the chief decision-maker and problem-solver, although the helper must always be in a position to make suggestions or offer an opinion where necessary.

#### 3.4.2.6 **Accountability**

The New Dictionary of Social Work (1996:1) refers to accountability as the *"...obligation of a social worker and welfare agency of being answerable to the client systems, donors, management bodies, the public and specific government institutions for the range and quality of services rendered, the allocation and use of resources and the realisation of objectives"*.

According to Potgieter (1998:45) this principle has a threefold impact: *i)* Social workers and social work managers should be competent and skilled practitioners who are able to utilise intervention strategies that best fit the client system. The impact of their services needs to be evaluated, in order to ensure that the client system is receiving the best possible service, and that the interventions should be in line with the organisation's programmes and strategies. This must always be true in the case of the SANDF. *ii)* The social work practitioner/manager as well as the client system are both individually responsible for the behaviour and actions that were agreed upon, with the expectation that commitments should be followed through. By holding the client system accountable, their dignity and individuality are enhanced. Booyens (1996:149) states that by sharing responsibility with another person, one grants them authority over a situation and therefore make them accountable for their actions or

omissions. If the client system is actively involved in the intervention process, he/she too must take responsibility and be accountable for its success or failure. *iii)* Lastly, social work practitioners/managers should also hold other stakeholders like non-government organisations and the government accountable for improving the existing services and policies. They must also make them aware of where facilities or services are lacking. The basic constitutional right to belong to a trade union is only now entrenched in SANDF policy. The non existence of trade unions within the SANDF has previously excluded its labour force from various accepted labour practices like for instance collective bargaining. The SANDF is now accountable to the government, labour organisations and the client system with regards to labour matters.

### 3.4.3 Values as the ideal of people

These values according to Devore and Schlesinger (1991:98) involve the familiar values of self-realisation, self-actualisation and equal opportunity. In order for people to attain specific ideals the following are needed.

#### 3.4.3.1 **Equity**

Equity refers to an ideal for people which is based on the view that all people have dignity and worth and that they should be respected as such. The social work profession believes that all members of society should have equal opportunities and equal access to resources to be able to realise their potential and to be able to grow and change. Thus, services rendered by social work practitioners/managers within the DSW of the SANDF must be accessible and rendered to all those in need.

#### 3.4.3.2 **Democracy**

Democracy means that equal privileges, duties and responsibilities should be shared by all people of a country together with a collective responsibility of the government or service providers to provide resources and services that will assist

all human beings in meeting their needs. In this regard it is important to understand that each person is important and that every voice should be heard. Opportunities should be created by authorities whereby the participation of all people is invited, especially in situations regarding decision-making, and regarding services which affect them. This must however not be to the detriment of minority groups. President Mbeki's inaugural speech (June:1999) was characteristic of this when he proclaimed "*...the people have spoken*", yet in the same speech he vowed to prevent the abuse of power against minority groups. Social work practitioners/managers within the military setting should involve the client system in decision-making regarding programmes and projects that will have an affect on them. This will not only have an effect on the quality of service rendering but the ownership of a specific programme will not only be with the social work practitioner/manager, but also with the people involved.

#### 3.4.3.3 ***Social justice***

This value forms part of the value system of the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) as the social welfare policy promotes a condition of basic rights, security, opportunities, obligations and social benefits for all the country's people. Therefore, social institutions should be made more responsive towards human needs so as to ensure that all people share equally in the social order and have equal access to opportunities and resources. Social justices can be seen in issues such as non-discrimination, access to resources, collective responsibility and social change. In the Daily Dispatch of 31 July 2000, Feni quotes the Commission for Gender Equality-researcher, B. Bulunga-Monama as blaming the inequality of male and female in traditional African culture on the fact that many South Africans tend to still shield customary practices, including stereotype women's roles in society and within the family. She continues to explain that black South Africans are subject to two sets of laws running parallel to each other, namely customary law (traditional practices) and civil law, as well as that which includes both common and statutory law. Very often a basic constitutional right, for example, to own property is overshadowed by customary law because a woman may not own land as this is a man's domain. This type of mind-set seriously undermines the rights of women, especially in cases of widowhood or

single-parenthood. With the increase of HIV/AIDS the issue of land tenure especially by rural women is pertinent.

In view of the aforementioned discussion, it is important for the DSW to ensure that these values and principles form part of all social service delivery intervention strategies to the client system.

### 3.5 IMPORTANT FACTORS IN MULTI-CULTURAL SOCIAL WORK

Various factors play an important role in service rendering within a multi-cultural setting and therefore need to be understood by social work practitioners and service providers in the military environment. The factors which will be discussed are: the influence of culture, an explanation of cultural competence and an understanding of ethnicity.

#### 3.5.1 The influence of culture

From the literature as presented by Jayasuriya (1992:39); Potgieter (1998:296); Ronnau (1994:32); and Williams (1997:14-15), culture can be described as that complex whole which includes the way in which people live, their collection of values, beliefs, aesthetic standards, linguistic expression, styles of communication, patterns of thinking and the behavioural norms which a group of people have developed to ensure its survival within a particular physical and human environment. A specific culture is shared by the members of a society. It is a total way of life with all the material and non-material products that are transmitted from one generation to the next. This description of culture enumerates several factors, such as normative (value norms), affective (sentimental and loyalty), cognitive (knowledge, beliefs, myths), aesthetic (beauty and pleasing to look at) and behavioural (customs, practices, rites) patterns. It is clear that culture has to do with people in interaction with one another and their environment is therefore **not static**.

The DSW within the SANDF has found itself in an exciting and ever-changing environment ever since the 1994 democratic elections in South Africa. The culmination of all the different defence forces to form the South African National Defence Force brought about an environment filled with various ethnic and cultural groups and varied religious- and political affiliations. The rendering of a multi-cultural social work service within the DSW has become a reality. Durst (1994:30) however mentions that multi-cultural social work practice possesses its own set of challenges of which every practitioner must take cognisance. Strydom (2000:93) specifies that for a professional to render an effective culturally diverse service, is it important to understand the customs, codes of behaviour and value systems of the people they work with. Sikhitha (1996:63) emphasises the fact that professionals (social work practitioners/managers) must have the right attitude when dealing with a diverse client system. The social work practitioner/manager must realise that his/her way of life, values and culture are just one way of doing things and that there are other valid ways which are not necessarily better or worse, but only different. Hickson and Christi (1989:163) state that cultures are not comparatively better or worse, superior or inferior, more meaningful or meaningless, but that each culture is different and excitingly meaningful. This emphasises that culture develops and grows through the interaction of individuals with each other and is always on the move.

Strydom (2000:93) argues that the rapid growth and the increasing visibility of ethnic and racial groups have vigorously challenged the social work profession to educate students, and in this case, social workers within the DSW of the SANDF, in ethnic-competent social work practice among cross-cultural settings. Problems experienced during service delivery, according to Siegel (1994:87), mostly involve the inability of the therapist, (social work practitioner/manager) to provide culturally responsive forms of treatment. Professionals might have a basic respect for ethnic and cultural diversity, but fail to integrate the knowledge of different cultural styles into service rendering. Brown (1992:3) also adds that it is the professional person, and not the client system, that must adjust himself/herself to the cultural setting. This was experienced by the researcher, (Afrikaans speaking with a Westernised background), who worked for the past eight years within the military communities of the former Ciskei and Transkei areas with a

mainly rural Xhosa speaking client system. Continuous consultations with Xhosa speaking colleagues, friends, the client system itself, influential members within the Xhosa community, like headmen, sangomas, nurses, church ministers and teachers, enabled the researcher to learn more about the client system and to adapt intervention strategies to suit the client system.

The very important issue of adaptation to different cultures raises the questions whether social workers and social work managers understand the concept of cultural competence, and whether social workers and social work managers, within the DSW of the SANDF, are competent with regards to the rendering of a culturally competent social work service.

In view of this it is imperative to obtain a clear understanding of the term cultural competence, which will be the focus of the following discussion.

### 3.5.2 Description of cultural competence

Various authors (Hickson and Christie 1989:163; Matthews 1996:133; Ronnau 1994:32-36; Soweres-Hoag and Sandau-Beckler 1996:38; and Williams 1997:14), have focused attention on the term, cultural competence. For the purpose of this discussion the definition as offered by Sheafor, Horesji and Horesji (2000:59) will be used as it was found to best suit the purpose of this research as it also serves as a summary of the definitions of cultural competence. Thus, **cultural competence** as explained by the above authors can be seen as the “*ability to give aid or assistance to clients* (which could include social work manager to social worker, supervisor to supervisee, or even the consultant to consultee) *in a way that is acceptable and useful to them, because they are congruent with the clients’ cultural background and expectations*”. It also refers to the **service provider’s** (social work practitioners/managers) ability to **learn** about the **cultural context** of a presenting problem and to **integrate** that knowledge into a professional assessment, evaluation and intervention strategy. It is important here for the helper (social work practitioner/manager) to know where the client

system is coming from and what is acceptable and not acceptable within their culture.

Ideally one should try to fully understand the language the client is speaking. Brown (1992:4) refers to language not only as a means of communication, but also as a social process. Language is therefore the articulation of the way in which a person's expresses his world, and as such determines how a person perceives the world, what each persons experiences will be, and the choices people are able to see as being available to them. It is through the acquisition of language that one acquires the beliefs, knowledge, values and attitudes of one's own culture.

Devore and Schlesinger (1991:31-32) also state that attention should be given to the rituals and celebrations of the specific individual, group or community with whom the professional is working. Rituals involve the religious practices, rites and celebrations surrounding life cycle events such as births, marriages and deaths. Information about religious practices is imperative. For many people, like the orthodox believers of most religious groups, religious rituals are built into the core of daily living.

The researcher who rendered a social work service for the past eight years to the mainly Xhosa speaking military communities of the former Ciskei and Transkei area, had to adapt the type of service rendered to suit the client system. Consultations with his Xhosa speaking colleagues and friends took place on almost a daily basis. The researcher also visited the predominately Xhosa areas and especially the remote areas of the former Ciskei and Transkei. Consultations with influential members within the different villages, like the tribal headman, sangomas, nurses, teachers, church ministers and also with the people themselves, assisted the researcher to gain the necessary knowledge regarding the Xhosa clients and their culture. Notwithstanding this, the researcher also attended four Xhosa courses which enabled him to gain a good working knowledge of the Xhosa language. This was very useful, especially during intervention sessions with a Xhosa speaking client system. The researcher also made an concerted effort to attend cultural celebrations as well as religious

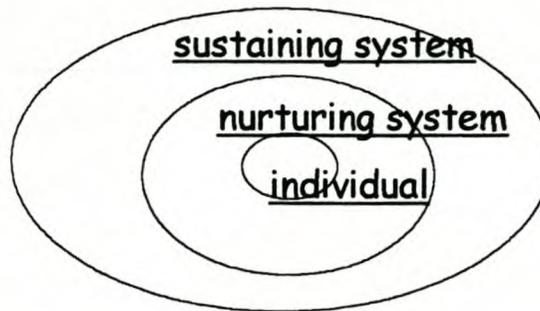
practices in the military community. This further empowered him with the finer aspects of the Xhosa culture which contributed to more effective service rendering.

### 3.5.3 Perception of ethnicity

In view of the focus of this study on multi-cultural social work practice, it is also necessary not only to give attention to what is meant by culture, but to develop a clear understanding of the word ethnicity.

***Ethnicity*** can be defined as the quality of group identity that comes from a sense of history tied to time and place (Williams 1997:15). In other words, it is a form of shared historical experience which is often tied to the place of national origin. Ethnicity can also be grounded in a need for survival. The Jewish nation is by definition an unique culture by virtue of the nation's history of persecution, (Mattaini, Lowery and Meyer, 1998:78). Many varied subcultures or ethnic groups have formed as a result of the Holocaust and concentration camps. Examples include Russian-Jews and American-Jews. Similar persecution of political activists during the "struggle" in South Africa resulted in forced and voluntary exiles as well as activists going underground in order to escape detention. Devore and Schlesinger (1991:23) refer to ethnicity as a sense of people-hood experienced by members of the same ethnic group. People perceive themselves as belonging to a group which identifies itself according to certain identifiable characteristics or emblems, like food, language or even the wearing of specific clothing. In this case, Jayasuriya (1992:47) adds that individuals need to identify themselves as different and be identified as different by other people. Now more than ever individuals have the need to be recognised by their cultural heritage. Now, for instance, the South African Parliament is no longer a grey suit domain, but abounds with "umbaco", beads and blankets. This is indicative of the sense of pride and peoplehood that exist amongst people from diverse origins within South Africa. No longer is "waterblommetjie-breedie" the main dish but "umqhushu" or "pap" and "wors". Individuals wear clothes, colours and insignia in order to identify with and be identified by their values, beliefs and culture.

Netting, Kettner and McMurtry (1993:215-217) are of the opinion that for the social work professional to understand the complexities of ethnicity during service rendering, is it helpful to see it in the light of the **dual perspective**. This perspective views the individual as the centre of two surrounding systems, namely the **nurturing system** and the **sustaining system**. See figure 3.1



**FIGURE: 3.1: DUAL PERSPECTIVE** (Netting, Kettner & McMurtry 1993:215)

Figure 3.1 reflects that the people are surrounded by the **nurturing system** which consists of their parents, extended family or substitute family practices, community experiences, beliefs, values, customs and traditions within which this person was raised. Surrounding the nurturing system is the **sustaining system** which consists of the dominant society. This system also reflects beliefs, values, customs and traditions.

The social work professional who is also the change agent needs to focus on the degree of fit which exists between the individual's, family's or a group's nurturing system and the sustaining system within which they function. It is important to determine the type of interaction which exists between the individual's nurturing and sustaining systems, why the two systems are adaptable or what conflict exists between them. The nurturing system supports the importance of the family over the individual, while the sustaining system emphasises the interaction with society. The individual's sustaining system is usually made up of influential and powerful people within society, like teachers, employers, politicians, church ministers and the like.

When dealing with people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, it is important for the professional person to get a clear understanding of the nurturing

system's (individual's, family's, group's) understanding of a problem situation and how this corresponds with the sustaining system's (e.g. teachers, politicians, church ministers) understanding and viewpoint of that specific problem situation. Feni in Daily Dispatch 31 July 2000, quotes Bulunga-Monama as blaming the historical oppression of black women on both the nurturing system, (customary law/practices) and the then sustaining system (apartheid state). She further argues that while it is noble to hold onto tradition and preserve one's cultural heritage, those practices which inhibit the rights and equality of members in society need to be challenged. It is therefore essential that social workers/managers who aim to render a multi-cultural social work service within a specific cultural and ethnic grouping, understand the support derived from the nurturing and sustaining systems.

### 3.6 CONCLUSION

Throughout this discussion it was evident that the social work practitioner/manager should be cognisant of the important role culture plays during service rendering specifically within the multi-cultural setting. It is furthermore important to develop a clear understanding of human diversity as well as the basic values and principles of the social work profession.

The rendering of a culturally competent social work service relies heavily on the professional person's ability to assist the client(s) in ways which are acceptable and useful to the client(s). This is based on the professional's ability to be aware of and understand the client(s) cultural background and expectations and to respect these accordingly.

In the light of this discussion, the following chapter will focus on the requirements needed for communication and competence during social work interventions.

## CHAPTER 4

### COMMUNICATION AND MULTI-CULTURAL COMPETENCE IN SERVICE RENDERING

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

One of the most pressing challenges confronting the social work profession within the Directorate Social Work of the South African National Defence Force, is an urgency to focus on sensitisation to the needs and values of a progressively diverse client system. The rendering of an effective, needs-based and quality focused social work service within the military multi-cultural environment is both important and essential.

While the previous chapter concentrated on an overview of the principles and strategies of multi-cultural social work practice, this chapter intends to provide an overview of an intervention model which could be implemented within the military multi-cultural social work practice for service rendering.

This chapter will focus on the communication process used to implement the intervention model and the importance thereof. Communication as part of the multi-cultural social work practice, different styles of communication, as well as its role within the professional environment will be discussed. Act 108 of 1996 of the South African Constitution (1996:16) specifically mentions that all South African citizens have the right to their language of choice as well as cultural life and also need to be respected by the social work practitioners/managers.

The multi-cultural intervention strategy within social work practice will also be explained and the focus will be on six characteristics of a multi-cultural competent intervention. This will be followed by a discussion of the value orientation model as developed by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961).

This chapter will conclude with a section on the barriers preventing effective multi-cultural social work intervention.

## 4.2 COMMUNICATION PROCESS

According to the literature (Payne, 1991:161-167; Potgieter, 1998:79; Preston-Shoot & Agass, 1990:73; Turner, 1986:219-220) any intervention is a process which relies heavily on the professional person's ability to communicate with others. Therefore, in order to be effective, it is necessary for the social work practitioner/manager to clearly understand the process of communication, and to be able to guide the interaction process between him/herself and the client system.

In expatiation of the concept communication, the following will be discussed: communication as part of multi-cultural social work practice, communication styles as well as communication within the professional environment.

### 4.2.1 Communication as part of multi-cultural social work practice

According to The New Dictionary of Social Work (1996:11), **communication** is a "*process by which thoughts or feelings are conveyed either verbally or non verbally by one person to another*".

Communication is further described by Dungee-Anderson and Beckett (1995:460) as a critical part of social work practice and forms the foundation of any intervention, namely between the social work practitioner and his/her client system or with his/her social work manager or vice versa. Consequently, communication takes place between at least two persons. Social work practitioners/managers are constantly faced with communication, as it forms an intricate part of any social work practice.

Dungee-Anderson and Beckett (1995:460) further state that communication also involves a set of **symbols** which have various meanings attached to them, and

have different meanings to different people. Thus, communication is more than just a conversation between two people. It includes the way in which something is said, facial expressions and tone of voice. This is apparent when the social work practitioner in the SANDF, who is in contact with a young Xhosa man with his face smeared with red clay, realises that this person has just completed an initiation process as part of his culture. The red clay is both a cultural and ritual symbol. Thus various symbols, dress codes and rituals also form part of the communication process. Only when the professional person is equipped with the necessary knowledge of the client system's culture will it be possible for him/her to interpret these symbols and to make the relevant assumptions.

#### 4.2.2 Communication styles

While the main focus of this discussion will be on the ideas of Sue and Sue (1990:49-74), the work of other authors (Dungee-Anderson, 1995:461; Potgieter, 1998:87; and Turner, 1986:220-240), will also be included throughout.

As seen earlier in this chapter, communication consists of verbal and non-verbal communication, which includes the transmission of content and sentiment of messages (Dungee-Anderson & Becket, 1995:461; Turner, 1986:220-234). The social work practitioner/manager must not only be able to send messages (*to make him/herself understood*), but also be able to receive messages, (*to hear, listen, interpret, understand and to respond*). Verbal communication refers to the content of *what* is said whilst non-verbal communication refers to the *how* something has been said. Dungee-Anderson and Beckett (1995:461) as well as Turner (1986:226-229) refer to non-verbal communication as eye contact, touching, facial expressions and other forms of body language which may vary across and within cultural groupings. When dealing with a multi-cultural client system, it is important for the social work practitioner/manager to know about the culture, including the communication styles within the culture. This is evidenced in certain African cultures, for instance the Xhosa's and Zulu's, where the making of eye contact is a sign of disrespect. In cases where the social work practitioner/manager is unaware of these different traditions, he/she might

experience the person as not wanting to listen to him/her and this might result in conflict. To force eye contact will result in an ineffective social work intervention.

Sue and Sue (1990:51) and Turner (1986:235) mention that the practitioner, and also the manager, seem to be more concerned with the **accuracy of communication** (in other words - *to get to the heart of the matter*), rather than to concentrate on whether the communication is appropriate. For instance, it is important for the social work practitioner/manager to focus on the content of what he/she has said to the client/subordinate, and that it is acceptable within that person's culture and/or frame of reference. Caution should be exercised in order to prevent misunderstandings or misinterpretations in communication. Within the South African context with its history of apartheid, a certain action or statement by the social work practitioner/manager towards a client/subordinate from a different cultural and ethnic background, might be understood by the client/subordinate as unfair or discriminatory, even though it might not have been the intention. In view of the multi-cultural/multi-linguistic nature of the present SANDF the issue of an acceptable single language medium had to be addressed. Previously the language medium of the SADF was predominantly Afrikaans which was in line with the government of the day. However, with the subsequent changes in government and the integration of various defence forces, the previously accepted language norm is now no longer acceptable nor viable.

In an attempt to address the needs of the majority of the SANDF's employees, as well as ensuring effective command and control within the organisation, it was decided to utilise the universal language medium of English, (SANDF reference: SG PLAN/C/515/1/B dated 10 June 2000). While this does not afford every employee the right to speak, read and write in his/her mother tongue, it at least aims to prevent misunderstandings or misinterpretations as would be the case if all 11 languages enjoyed equal status at any given time. This working rule had to be made in spite of the fact that Act 108 of 1996 of the South African Constitution (1996:16) states that South African citizens have the right to his/her language of choice as well as cultural life.

Furthermore, communication strongly correlates to race, culture and the ethnicity of the people with whom the social work practitioner/manager is in contact. It should never be taken for granted that everybody communicates in the same way. The diversity of cultures within the SANDF necessitates communication to be appropriately and effectively diverse or varied. In view of this it is essential to look at communication within the professional environment, which will follow this discussion.

#### 4.2.3 Communication within the professional environment

Dungee-Anderson and Beckett (1995:461); Potgieter (1998:87); Preston-Shoot and Agass (1990:113) and Turner (1986:235-237) argue that in order for the social work practitioner/manager to develop multi-cultural practice competency, special knowledge and specific communication skills need to be taught and mastered through education and training. In order for the practitioner/manager to establish an effective helping relationship with the client/subordinate/colleague, it is critical to require practice skills. This is a process which is based on the empathic understanding of the client-in-situation, mutuality of purpose, goals and practice outcomes. Dungee-Anderson and Beckett (1995:461) refer to Hepworth and Larson (1990) who suggest that empathic communication is a basic skill that tends to bridge the gap present in transracial and transcultural relationships. Thus, **professional social work communication** includes the *mastery of empathic understanding*, which mainly helps to define a significant component of social work intervention. Furthermore, the ability of empathic understanding and the ability to work from a client-centered perspective require **self-awareness**, which is a prerequisite to empathy. Attention will be given to self-awareness within the framework of this chapter.

Sue and Sue (1990:69) make it clear that different cultural groups may be more receptive to certain communication styles as a result of their cultural and socio-political beliefs. It may be useful for the social work practitioner/manager when dealing with a client who originates from a different cultural heritage, to find

out what the most effective and acceptable way of communication within his/her specific culture is. The social work practitioner might discover that the use of drawings in order to communicate a certain idea, may be more receptive and also more understandable than just merely the discussion of the situation.

Sue and Sue (1990:71) refer to Ivey (1981; 1986); who suggests that the social work practitioners/managers need to be able to transfer their communication styles from one to the other in such a way as to meet the developmental needs of the client. This is specifically crucial when engaging in intervention sessions. Sue and Sue further stressed that professionals (social work practitioners/managers from differing theoretical orientations) will tend to use different skill-patterns, which may be inappropriate to the communication style and helping style of the culturally different client system.

Lastly, it is the professionals' responsibility to learn about the client's culture and the necessary behaviours in order to ensure effective multi-cultural communication. If social work practitioners/managers want their intervention strategies to be effective and of any help to the client system, it is important for them to learn about and know the client's culture and traditions. Especially **that** which is acceptable and **that** which is not acceptable. The social work practitioner/manager must continuously raise questions whether the interventions are useful and therapeutic for him/herself and for the client system. Therefore, a thorough knowledge of the client system, as well as a continuous development of the skill in dealing with the culturally different client system needs to be developed. The skill of working with the culturally different client system is an important factor within the SANDF environment which need to be the outcome of a strategic planning process within the DSW.

#### **4.3 MULTI-CULTURAL INTERVENTION IN PRACTICE**

The purpose of this discussion is to simplify the multi-cultural intervention strategy into practice. This may be helpful for any social work practitioner/manager within a multi-cultural social work setting. Although chapter 5 intends to focus on the

social work intervention approaches in the military setting, attention will be given to characteristics of a multi-cultural competent intervention.

#### 4.3.1 The nature of multi-cultural competent interventions

Ronnau (1994:33-34) lists six characteristics required by professionals regarding the rendering of a multi-cultural competent social work service. These characteristics correspond with the eight functional steps developed by Dungee-Anderson and Beckett (1990:462-467) and will enable the social work practitioner/manager to master the fundamentals of sensitive and competent practice with individuals, groups and/or communities from a multi-cultural background. For the purpose of this discussion, these characteristics and steps have been grouped together into the six characteristics of multi-cultural competent intervention. Ideas and viewpoints from additional authors like, Becket and Dungee-Anderson (1997:39); Hickson and Christie (1989:163); Khanyile (1997:79); Matthews (1996:132-133); Potgieter (1998:103); Strydom (2000:93); Sue and Sue (1990:167); The New Dictionary of Social Work (1996); and Torress and Jones (1997:167) will also be considered. The characteristics of multi-cultural competent intervention are discussed in the following pages.

##### 4.3.1.1 **Commitment**

Before the social work practitioner/manager can become effective in the rendering of a multi-cultural competent service, it is important to *develop the right attitude* towards the culture of the client system. A negative attitude will hamper the effectiveness of any service rendering as the client could assume that the professional person does not want to assist him/her with his/her problem. Some clients might further feel that the helper is against him/her as a person, which might bring feelings of unfair treatment, and even discrimination to the fore. A positive attitude on the other hand will display commitment that the professional person is willing to deal with the client system's situation. This will have a more positive effect on the quality of service rendering by the social work practitioner/manager.

It is important for the professional person *to be committed to and to admit that he/she might lack the required knowledge of the client system, and to engage him/herself to learn more about it.* It is impossible for the social work practitioners/managers to have all the knowledge and skills regarding different cultural beliefs and traditions of all the client systems that they have contact with. Social work practitioners/managers who find themselves within a certain geographical area need, however, be aware of the cultural traditions within that area.

#### 4.3.1.2 **Cultural differences**

The culturally competent professional must become aware, identify and accept that significant differences do exist between people of different cultures. To ignore this fact is not helpful, and might even be harmful. The definition of culture clearly specifies that aspects of living, and styles of communication are being shared and experienced amongst members of a particular society. It is therefore critical for the social work practitioner/manager to be aware of and to acknowledge that the client and/or subordinate is unique individual. This is especially true when dealing with people originating from a different cultural and ethnic background. People are not all the same and cannot be treated in the same way. It might be helpful to discuss the cultural differences with the client or subordinate. This may sensitise the practitioner/manager to acknowledge differences amongst his/her clients. In the same way, knowledge gained about values of other cultures is an important practice component. When the client's cultural values and behaviours are ignored, it may undervalue the individual and the cultural identity of that client system.

For instance, the professional person must *know how people of certain cultures greet each other* and know the correct way of addressing elders within that specific culture. The professional person needs to be open to the fact that he/she does not possess all the knowledge and skills regarding a person's culture in general. Becket and Dungee-Anderson (1997:39) state that it is the

professional's (social work practitioner/manager), duty to meet the client where the client is and to offer them informed and effective multi-cultural therapeutic interventions. It is furthermore the social work practitioner/manager who needs to identify the differences between him/her, as the professional and the client system, and to respect these differences.

Sue and Sue (1990:167) argue that it is important for the social work practitioner/manager *to explore his/her own values, standards and assumptions about human behaviour*. Rather than to believe that one's own cultural heritage is superior, the social work practitioner/manager needs to accept and respect those cultural differences which do exist.

The practitioner/manager also needs to *be comfortable with these differences*. Sue and Sue (1990:167) explain further that differences must not be seen as being deviant, but each individual must be regarded as an equal human being. The message must be clear that the client system must know that the professional person accepts him/her in spite of various differences.

It is important for the social work practitioner/manager *to be aware of stereotypes* and as Sue and Sue (1990:167) suggest, to actively and constantly attempt to avoid prejudices, unwarranted labelling or stereotyping. Stereotyping when working within a multi-cultural environment like the SANDF, can become common practice. Afrikaans speaking people might be seen as white and listening to "boeremusiek", whilst all the Xhosa speaking people could be regarded as blacks who prefer to eat "umqhushu" - which might not be the case at all. These are always typical examples of stereotyping. It is also imperative for the social work practitioner/manager not to execute stereotypical responses towards an ethnic or cultural grouping, and to recognise heterogeneity within that given ethnic and cultural group. For instance when dealing with a black person, one cannot automatically accept that he/she belongs to the Xhosa, Zulu or Tswana nation or that this specific person believes in ancestral spiritual practices. Although the person is black, he might belong to an ethnic grouping with different cultural orientations where they view the belief in ancestral practices as insane or as a

sin. Thus, to acknowledge the cultural differences within a specific ethnic grouping, is critical. As Sue and Sue (1990:167) explain, the professional person must be active and consistent in an attempt to avoid unwanted stereotyping or labelling when working with the multi-cultural client system.

In conclusion of the discussion, note can be taken of Strydom (2000:93) who states that in order to practice relevant social work within a multi-cultural setting, one must learn to understand the customs, codes of behaviour and value systems of the people that the social work professional is in contact with.

#### 4.3.1.3 **Self-awareness**

Social work practitioners/managers need to become *more aware of their own culture and their cultural beliefs and values*. Torres and Jones (1997:168) suggest that it is important to explore one's own ethnic and cultural background, especially how this identity may affect the interaction process with individuals from a different cultural grouping. It is important to recognise the influence his/her own culture has on the way he/she thinks and acts. Thus, introspection of some kind is necessary before coming in contact with any diverse cultural and ethnic groupings. As Khanyile (1997:79) explains, the SANDF is an institution that can least afford ethnic-related problems.

However, the social work practitioner/manager needs *to get in touch with the values and norms which have been passed on to them from their own family system, groups, and communities*. Matthews (1996:133) mentions that when assessing the structure and functioning of one's own system, it will be easier to understand the cultural system in which the other person works, lives, and functions.

It may further be helpful to *look at the system that the social worker practitioners or managers originated from and what specific structures and functions exist within their own systems*. This will help them to see how these structures and functions influence the way in which they think, act, communicate, assess and evaluate

themselves and others, specifically those from other cultures, backgrounds or origins.

Hickson and Christie (1989:163) are of the opinion that when the professional person starts looking at his/her own cultural background, structures and functioning, he/she *will become more aware of and accept his/her own cultural baggage that exists*. Only when one starts with a process of introspection, can an individual become more understanding and even empathetic with regards to people from other cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

#### 4.3.1.4 ***Knowledge of the client culture***

The gaining of knowledge about a specific culture is an ongoing process. It is also unrealistic to expect any helper, whether it is the social worker, the social work manager, the supervisor or the consultant, to have a comprehensive knowledge of all the cultures with which they may come into contact. It is advisable *to know what symbols are meaningful to the specific culture* one is working with, and how that culture defines, for instance, health or how primary support networks are configured. The ultimate goal must always be to gain enough knowledge in order to identify what information is needed to render an effective, culturally competent social work service.

Matthews (1996:133) postulates that the ability to *acquire and access accurate cultural information about the client system*, is viewed as essential to cultural competence. It is therefore crucial for the social work practitioner, manager, consultant, and supervisor to know how to provide a multi-cultural service. They must further know the character of the population which the organisation is dealing with and how to make these services accessible to all within the military community.

The social work practitioner/manager needs to *develop an awareness of the different meanings that behaviours may have within the different cultures*. When dealing with different cultures, it is important to know how different cultures

understand, treat and behave for instance towards alcoholics, women/child abusers and rapists. Further examples include the correct conduct in the presence of children, men, women and the elderly. Matthews (1996:133) states that the professional person needs to understand motivation, stress reaction and problem-solving. By doing so the social work practitioner/manager can avoid the violation of the norms of the client system's culture.

Dungee-Anderson and Beckett (1995:465) argue clearly that the multi-cultural competent practitioner is not necessarily an expert in many different cultures, but he/she is rather one who is *aware of the cultural values and patterns that motivate the practitioner's personal and their client's behaviours*. Once again, the best way to get to know other cultures is to talk to the people of that specific culture, and especially members with influence within the particular culture, like church ministers, teachers, professional nurses, the tribal headman and even sangomas. The practitioner/manager must also feel free to ask the clients about their customs and values. Dungee-Anderson and Beckett (1995:465) state that it is the need to be sensitive to different cultures means not to accept the fact that people who look the same, have the same cultural background and need to be treated the same way.

Culturally competent professionals (social work practitioners/-managers) will have to *adapt their interventions in order to meet the needs of their clients from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds*. These include assessing ways which are most effective when making initial contact with the client, how to conduct an interview, who to include in the session, how quickly to move in suggesting changes, and the *appropriateness* of interventions. Hickson and Christie (1989:163) are also of the opinion that to gain knowledge of an individual's culture will enhance the professional person's awareness of using culturally appropriate skills. It is further important that the professional knows when and how to structure the intervention according to the individual's cultural frame of reference. Without a framework of cultural reference and appropriate skills the professional is left to respond intuitively and spontaneously, but perhaps not always in a culturally effective manner.

#### 4.3.1.5 **Empathy**

Another characteristic of multi-cultural competent intervention is to empathise with persons from other cultures. The New Dictionary of Social Work (1996:21) refers to empathy as *"the attitude of the social worker which reflects the intellectual and objective acceptance of the client's feelings and circumstances"*. Potgieter (1998:103) further explains that empathy involves the sensitive and correct grasping of the meaning of what the client system is saying and feeling, and it also goes beyond the most obvious feelings to the more subtle experiences of such a client system. To empathise with a person, especially from another culture, is to recognise his/her individuality and uniqueness as a human being. Potgieter (1998:103) refers to Konopka (1964) who used the proverb of the Minnesota Indians which states that ***"one must never judge a man until you have walked a moon in his moccasins"***. This proverb provides a clear picture of the nature of empathy for multi-cultural social work practitioners and managers. To step into the shoes of another person, whether it is someone from the same or different culture, always leads to the understanding of the other person, which will enable the social work practitioner/manager to feel intensely what the client system is experiencing. In other words, to empathise with people from a different culture, is to try and understand that person from his/her own specific frame of reference.

#### 4.3.1.6 **Adaptation**

The social work practitioner/manager within the military environment which consists of a diverse client system with regards to ethnic and cultural groupings, will not be able to adapt to all these different groupings of people. Therefore, it will be more useful to rather adapt to the multi-cultural situation. The new Dictionary of Social Work (1996:2) states that adaptation is a *"...reciprocal process between individual and environment, to accommodate one another in order to bring about a goodness-of-fit between human needs and environmental resources"*. This adaptation will enable the social work practitioner/manager in the military setting to provide the best possible service to the client system who

might be from a different cultural/ethnic grouping, gender, religious- and political affiliation. This would then be done in ways which are in accordance with the specific needs of the client system.

The aforementioned discussion should form part of the thought processes when conducting a strategic planning process within the DSW. This will ensure a more multi-cultural competent service rendering intervention process.

#### 4.3.2 Values orientation model

Communication and competence in multi-cultural interventions should be based on a value system for service rendering. Ponce (1995:29-41) noted that the **value orientation model**, as developed by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) was found particularly helpful during intervention sessions with people from various cultural backgrounds. Other authors like Beckett and Dungee-Anderson (1997:31-37); Sue and Sue (1990:124-133 & 137-140); and Anderson (1990:90-96) have also referred to this model as the most useful framework for understanding differences among individuals, groups and communities of all cultures.

##### 4.3.2.1 Assumptions

The aforementioned authors state that the **value orientation model** is based on the following four assumptions, namely that:

- 1) there are a limited number of common human problems for which people at all times must find solutions;
- 2) although there is a variety of solutions to problems experienced by members of all cultures, it is neither limitless nor random;
- 3) alternatives to solutions are present in all the structures of every culture, but they are different. These differences among various

cultures are based on the pattern of preferences for each of these solutions within each culture's value system;

- 4) there is always a rank order of preferences regarding solutions in each culture. Certain cultures will favour a certain solution to a problem situation more than another culture will.

It is therefore crucial that the **social work practitioners/managers acquaint themselves** with this **value orientation model** specifically when rendering a social work service within the current multi-cultural setting which is visible and experienced within the SANDF.

#### 4.3.2.2 **Core human dimensions**

Furthermore, the **value orientation model** assumes that there is a set of **core human dimensions** that is always of importance for all the people of all the cultures. These dimensions are:

□ **Time focus:** This dimension implies that all cultures focus on the **past** (history and traditions), the **present** (here and now), and/or the **future** (to be) within their daily interactions with each other. Beckett and Dungee-Anderson (1997:33) explain that members with a past orientation value tradition, will regard the past as being very important and will believe that much of the learning will take place through the understanding of their history. Members from a present oriented value orientation will believe that the present moment is everything and that nothing else is relevant. Those from the future value orientated group believe that they should make current sacrifices in order to ensure a better future. The social work practitioner/manager needs to be aware of the client system's specific value orientation regarding time, as this will be useful when striving to render a culturally competent service.

□ **Preferred mode of activity:** The preferred mode of activity refers to a cultural orientation which describes how people from different cultures act. Cultures differ in their attitudes towards activity. There are always three recurring characteristics of the human activity present in any cultural grouping, namely: (a) the **being**, (b) the **being-in-becoming**, and (c) the **doing**. Cultural members who value the **being orientation** believe that the value of life is in life itself. For these people it is just enough to be, to exist and nothing else. The **being-in-becoming** group will treasure life for the opportunities offered for the development of the inner self. The value orientations of certain cultural groups is to develop the inner self. Furthermore, the doing group tend to be active, hard workers and they believe that the greatest rewards in life come only from hard work - to always do something constructively. People with this value orientation believe that rewards are self-determined and prefer activity that results in measurable accomplishments. Thus if a person works hard, his/her efforts will be rewarded.

□ **The social relations with people:** This dimension defines the human relationships. Sue and Sue (1990:138-139) mention that in some cultures relationships tend to be more **lineal**, authoritarian and hierarchical in which for instance the father is the absolute ruler of the family. Other cultures might emphasise a horizontal, equal and **collateral** relationship with each other. This view point states that it is important to turn to your family and/or friends when a problem situation arises. There are also other cultures who value **individual autonomy**. For these groups, individual autonomy and independence and that each person controls his/her own destiny are important.

□ **The person's relationship with nature/environment:** This dimension describes the relationship of persons with their physical environment and how they relate to nature/the environment. Some members of certain cultures might perceive themselves as **harmonious** with "**Mother Earth**" and nature. They believe that they coexist in harmony with each other. Other cultures might feel that they are governed by a value of **subjugation to nature**. The belief here is mainly that life is largely determined by external forces like God, fate, or even

genetics. On the other hand, some groups might value control and mastery over nature as important. People within this cultural grouping believe that they have a responsibility to overcome obstacles in nature, and to continuously strive to challenge, conquer and control nature.

□ **The innate human nature:** Firstly, some cultures will view human beings as basically *evil* or *bad*. Members with this orientation do not see any good in the human being itself. Secondly, other groups might see people as both *good* and *bad*, in other words, as *neutral*. These people accept that the environment can influence behaviour and, therefore they tend to be more receptive towards environmental sources for change and improvement. Thirdly, human beings might also be seen as only *good*. These cultures will highly value the characteristics of compassion, respect for life, moderation in behaviour and selflessness. Certain cultural groups believe that they experience problems because of a lack of opportunity for mature development. They feel they have been deprived of resources.

Taking the aforementioned discussion in consideration, Anderson (1990:90) is of the opinion that **value orientations** have **three significant qualities**. These are: (1) Directional; (2) Cognitive; and (3) Affective.

- ❖ **Directional:** these value orientations provide a programme for selecting behaviours from more or less favoured alternatives. The social work practitioner/manager is guided through a set of possibilities which might be applicable to the specific client system's situation. It is therefore crucial for the multi-cultural social work practitioner/manager to become acquainted with the value orientation model, which will better equip the service provider which path needs to be followed when he/she comes into contact with a different cultural grouping.
- ❖ **Cognitive:** these value orientations provide a conceptual world view through which people filter their understanding of the nature of the world and human affairs. This model will give the service provider a better

understanding of behaviours, attitudes, as well as the thought processes of different cultural groups.

- ❖ **Affective:** these value orientations are invested with strong emotional themes which contribute to people and social systems. This will empower the multi-cultural social work practitioner/manager with a better perception of why certain members within a cultural group are so resistant to change and why others, who might be from another cultural group are more positive toward change.

Thus, the **value orientation theory** can help to identify significant aspects of the problem situations experienced amongst members of different cultural backgrounds. A **value orientation** can, according to Anderson (1990:90) be summed-up as a generalised and organised conception, influencing the behaviour of time, nature, man's place in it, man's relation to man and the desirable and undesirable aspects of man's-environment and inter-human transactions. It is therefore imperative that the DSW take note of this value orientation theory during the strategic planning process as this will stimulate the thought processes of the strategic planning personnel.

#### 4.4 BARRIERS IN EFFECTIVE MULTI-CULTURAL INTERVENTION

The rendering of an effective multi-cultural intervention service can be impeded by problems experienced throughout the process. From related literature it is evident that only a few authors mention certain barriers which may occur during multi-cultural practice. Barriers such as discussed by Dungee-Anderson and Beckett (1995:462); Hickson and Christie (1989:162-163); Potgieter (1998:85-86) and Sue and Sue (1990:27-48) were grouped together for the purpose of this discussion.

#### 4.4.1 Language barriers

Using a language which is unknown or unfamiliar to the client system may lead to misunderstandings and even misinterpretations. The opposite is also true where the social work practitioner/manager, *may be an Afrikaans speaking person who tries to speak the language of the Xhosa or Tswana client system*. This language might also be unfamiliar to the professional person. This can easily lead to ambiguous messages which have little meaning for the client, or they can be interpreted in several different ways. The client system may also see the use of another language, and especially if it is the professional person's mother tongue, as unfair and discriminatory. It is therefore important that if there is a difference in languages between the social work practitioner/manager and the client system, that this be discussed and sorted-out before any intervention takes place. To make use of an interpreter might be helpful and a useful strategy.

#### 4.4.2 Cultural-bound values

Culture simply consists of all those actions that a person has learned to do, believes in, values and enjoys doing. It is the totality of all the ideals, beliefs, skills, tools, customs, and institutions into which each member of the society is born. The professional person who is too confined to the beliefs and traditions of his/her own culture, might have a negative effect on the client system who originated from a different cultural background with a contrasting value system. If there are strong differences the intervention session might also be used as a powerful tactic against people whose ideas, values, beliefs and behaviour differ from those which the practitioner/manager values. It is therefore important for the professional person to be aware of his own cultural values and how they may impede negatively on the professional relationship with the client system. If this is not addressed it will have a negative effect on service rendering.

#### 4.4.2.1 **Self-disclosure**

During intervention the social worker might open-up and talk about the most intimate aspects of his/her life. These intimate revelations of one's personal and social problems may however not be acceptable within the cultural and ethnic group the social work practitioner/manager is in contact with. This will then lead to a process whereby intervention will be viewed as inappropriate and even absurd. It is therefore crucial to know the client system's cultural beliefs and value orientations before revealing intimate aspects. It is always more beneficial to determine beforehand whether certain intervention strategies will be useful and helpful during social work practice, and to use only the positive ones.

#### 4.4.2.2 **Lack of knowledge of the clients background**

Matthews (1996:133) emphasises the fact that the professional person must have sufficient knowledge of the client systems' cultural background and heritage, it will contribute to a more effective service rendering strategy. This will limit the social work practitioner/manager from making suggestions or even saying things to the client system which will impact negatively. Knowledge of the client's background is a prerequisite for any multi-cultural social work practice strategy.

The DSW within the SANDF must be attentive towards the various barriers which prevent effective multi-cultural interventions. This must also form part of the thought processes during the process of strategic planning within the DSW.

### 4.5 **CONCLUSION**

Communication forms an important part of any social work intervention strategy and cannot be ignored. It is thus crucial that the social work professional is aware of the realms of verbal and non-verbal communication styles and how these can be used within the professional environment.

Any multi-cultural intervention practice requires that the professional person be committed towards service rendering. Furthermore, the professional person must also become aware, identify and accept that differences do exist between people of different cultures. The social work practitioner/manager must also become aware of their own culture as well as beliefs and values. Multi-cultural intervention competence requires the gaining of more knowledge about the client's culture on a continuous basis. Nevertheless, it might be helpful to empathise with persons from other cultures and to adapt to the different groupings of people.

This chapter was concluded by focusing on the value orientation model which was found to be a useful model especially during intervention sessions with people from different cultural backgrounds. Any other model may have hampered the rendering of an effective service to the client system.

The following chapter will focus on the various social work intervention approaches from a generalist perspective.

**CHAPTER 5****SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTION APPROACHES IN THE MILITARY SETTING:  
A GENERALIST PERSPECTIVE****5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The generalist concept, according to Johnson (1992:1) and Kirst-Ashman and Hull (1993:4-6), implies that during the intervention with the client system, the social worker will assess the problem situation with the client(s). They decide which system is the appropriate unit of attention or focus as well as which intervention strategy will be most applicable for change to take place. For the social worker in the military setting, the unit of attention might be the individual person, his/her family system, or a small group of people, or even the organisation [SANDF] itself. The organisation may include the specific section the individual is working within, like his/her supervisor or even the commanding officer of a military unit. Thus, the social work practitioner/manager within the military setting needs to have the knowledge and skills in order to work with a variety of systems each with their own specific cultural and ethnic background, heritage, and traditions. Kirst-Ashman and Hull (1993: 6) refer to this as having an ***eclectic theoretical base*** of all the intervention **strategies and approaches** for ***social work practice***.

A social work practitioner/manager in the military is a **generalist practitioner** by virtue of working in an organisation which has a variety of subcultures [like different rank groupings] bound in norms, values and traditions. Examples include the military language especially used during training exercises and on military parade grounds, military uniform and the many military protocols. These are mainly foreign to social work practitioners functioning outside the South African National Defence Force.

While chapters 3 and 4 focused on the concept of multi-culturalism which strives towards competency in service rendering, this chapter specifically explores the **social work approaches** with a view to identifying **an approach** most suited to **cultural competency** within the South African context and more specifically, the SANDF. The core business of the approaches which will be discussed within this chapter, also needs to be included within the strategic planning process, which will ensure a culturally competent practice within the Directorate Social Work of the SANDF.

## 5.2 SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTION APPROACHES

For any social work practitioner/manager in the military environment to render a **culturally competent social work service** to the significant client system [employee(s) and families], a **thorough knowledge** of different intervention approaches is imperative. In addition to knowledge, the practitioner must be competent in applying this knowledge in intervention sessions with the client system who originates from a variety of cultural, ethnic and even religious backgrounds and traditions. This is specifically important for the social work practitioner/manager within the SANDF who needs to render services from a generalist perspective, although still in the occupational social work domain. The **diverse client system**, each with their unique cultural and ethnic heritage or background, habits and traditions necessitates the *social work practitioner* in the military setting to be **a generalist** in himself/herself. This is also true for the social work manager with a diverse staff component situation. *Social work managers* also need to know where his/her subordinate's, actions and behaviour stem from. This will prevent **misinterpretations** and **frustrations** from both the manager and the practitioner. Thus, **knowledge** of different intervention **approaches** is **imperative** for the social work manager(s) when assisting a subordinate(s) during supervision, consultation, and even in-service training sessions.

Working in a multi-cultural work setting also necessitates the social work production worker to have a **holistic knowledge** and **skills** foundation of various

social work intervention approaches and to use the integrated approach during service rendering in a multi-cultural setting. This is crucial as none of these intervention approaches specifically provides for service rendering in a multi-cultural setting. Therefore, the **integration** of two or more *intervention approaches* to form one approach during service rendering to a diverse client system might be necessary, especially when the service has as focus a culturally competent social work service rendering. Thus, a **generalist perspective** for the *social work practitioner/manager* in the military setting is important especially when integration of more than one intervention strategies into one strategy is important. In this way the client system is best served.

The following intervention approaches will be briefly discussed, namely the psychosocial-, problem-solving-, task-centered-, systems-, ecological-, the cultural awareness approaches as well as the community developmental approach. According to the researcher these approaches are the most suitable for social work in the military context. Throughout this discussion, multi-cultural issues like cultural/ethnic traditions and habits will be included, where possible.

### 5.2.1 The psychosocial approach

According to authors such as Devore and Schesinger, (1991:123); Johnson, (1992:23-24); Mattaini, Lowery and Meyer, (1998:6 & 140-141); Turner, (1986:484) and Woods and Hollis (1990:25-60) the focus is mainly on the critical relationship between the person(s) and his/her or their significant environment as well as on the interaction between the environment and the person(s). This implies that the social work practitioner/manager focuses on the **person-in-the-situation**, (Woods & Hollis, 1990:27).

While most literature jointly refers to **Psychosocial/Diagnostic Approaches**, Woods and Hollis (1990:230) emphasise that it is important to differentiate between the *psychosocial study* which consists of data collection and *assessing*, and the processing of the collected data which will influence the chosen social work intervention style.

Various assumptions regarding psychological interventions are highlighted in Devore and Schlesinger (1991:123-126) and Payne (1991:83). Amongst these are the value of the model by virtue of the fact that it has a long history and is still applied today. It is further noted that the concept psychosocial is derived from two terms namely: **psychological** (individuals' well-being) and **sociological** (individuals' interaction with the environment). This entails the client having the ability and incumbent responsibility to be active in determining his/her destiny in relation to him-/herself, significant others and the social environment he/she finds himself/herself in. The researcher is of the opinion that one's ability to make informed decisions is based on **nature** and **nurture**. **Nature**, for instance, is based on the individual's *genetic inheritance* whereas **nurture** refers to the person's *primary socialisation, need realisation, self-worth* and his/her *immediate environment*.

Devore and Schlesinger (1991:126) conclude that the **aim** of the **psychosocial approach** is to take **cognisance** of the **interaction between the individual** and his/her **environment**. This entails acknowledging the client's past experiences, value systems, personality and coping mechanisms. Based on this data, clients are assisted to cope as best as they can within the given situation. All possible attempts are made to harness the previous positive interactions and/or experiences in order to deal with the current difficulties or negative situations in a healthy, constructive and positive manner.

### 5.2.2 The problem-solving approach

Despite the fact that *Perlman (1957)* can be regarded as the *originator* of the problem-solving thought processes, a more structured model [almost similar as the problem-solving approach] was later conceptualised by Reid and Epstein (1972). It is called the task-centered approach (Devore and Schlesinger (1991:131). This discussion will deal with the two approaches separately.

Perlman (1957:58) highlights the **purpose** of the **problem-solving** approach as a way of *assisting* the client to deal with a problem, whether it be to change or adapt the said problem. This is brought about by a therapeutic relationship which facilitates the client in identifying, exploring and addressing the problem experienced. Mattaini, Lowerey and Meyer (1998:160) expand on this idea of **empowering** the **client** to *deal with the problem*. The aforementioned authors refer to choices and consequences whereby the client is assisted to make decisions based on **well thought through** problem-solving strategies, including weighing up the potential consequences and choices.

Perlman (1957:3-63 and 1986:254-255), mention that the social work practitioner/manager must remember that when using the problem-solving approach, there is always a **person** [in the case of SANDF a military employee, military dependant or social work practitioner] with a specific **problem** situation or need who comes to a **place** [in this case the social work practitioner's/manager's office within the SANDF's office or section], and undergoes in most case a specific **process** [which is called individual casework, or when dealing with a social work practitioner this might be the supervision and/or consultation process]. Perlman (1986:254), adds the **Professional Person** as well, who is in this case the social work practitioner/manager working within the SANDF.

However, there are certain **steps** during the problem-solving approach which need to be considered by the service provider. These steps, which will be followed in this discussion, mainly emerge from the work of Potgieter (1998:222-224).

#### i) **Steps in the problem-solving process**

There are six steps that can be followed by the social work practitioner/manager when engaging in the problem-solving approach, namely: recognition of the problem, defining the problem, deciding on alternative proposals for the solution

of the problem, deciding which alternative to accept, the implementation of the selected option and evaluating the outcome (Potgieter 1998:222-224).

**Recognition of the problem.** Any problem-solving process always begins with a **painful condition** experienced by someone. Slaikeu (1990:444) mentions that it would be advisable for the social work practitioner/manager, during this step, to *explore* the client system's *attitudes* and *perceptions* regarding the problem situation and to determine whether the military employee, military dependant, or social work practitioner identifies a problem or ignores the fact that a problem of some sort exists. It is also important to determine their level of enthusiasm to take immediate action regarding the problem.

**Defining the problem.** According to Potgieter (1998:222) this step is what the *problem* actually is about. There are certain helpful actions when defining the problem situation. Hepworth, Rooney and Larsen (1997:416) are of the opinion that the social work practitioner/manager must assist the client(s) [military employee(s), military dependant(s) or social work practitioner(s)] to pinpoint the problematic behaviour and to explore their feelings concerning the problem. The client might, for example, identify his/her constant negative attitude and augmentative behaviour towards different cultural and ethnic colleagues working in the same office/section/unit as being problematic. The next action will be to *analyse* with the client, who is responsible for what part of the problem. In other words, does the client [military employee, or social work practitioner] also experience some kind of negativity and/or antagonistic feelings from his/her colleagues within the same office/section/unit towards him/her? Lastly, *specify the needs* of the participants, especially if there are more person's involved. It will be best to take all the needs of the people involved into consideration or even to reach a compromise between the people involved.

**Deciding on alternative proposals for the solution of the problem.** Potgieter (1998:223) mentions that to **brainstorm** alternative **solutions** for problem-solving is a **valuable technique** which can be used with the client system. The idea is to

get as many courses of action as possible from the client system involved and not to immediately reject any of the suggestions received.

**Deciding which alternative to accept.** The idea during this step is to weigh all the suggested **solutions** carefully and to select the most effective and suitable alternative which best meets the needs of the members involved. Potgieter (1998:223) mentions certain questions that should be kept in mind during this step, for instance, how the alternatives will affect the problematic conditions experienced, who will be most affected by the solution, who will lose and or gain from it, is the solution acceptable for everyone involved and who has a vested interest regarding the solution.

**Implementation of the selected option.** The identified **solution** will be **valueless** if it is not **implemented**. Potgieter (1998:223) mentions that many solutions simply fail because they are implemented half-heartedly and without enthusiasm. The social work practitioner/manager could even, with the client system, concentrate on what to do in future when faced with a similar situation experienced within the office/section or unit, as well as how to proceed with the selected option when a breakdown or lapse occurs.

**Evaluating the outcome.** If a person fails to identify which of the components of the plan worked and were helpful, nobody will learn much from the experience. This will then cause the **problem-solving** process to be a **trial-and-error** situation (Potgieter, 1998:223). It is **crucial** for the client system to always **monitor** the change which took place, to evaluate the appropriateness of the methods used during the process and to determine whether the purpose was accomplished.

### 5.2.3 Task-centered approach

Reid (1986:280) mentions the fact that social work intervention sessions commence with a **review** of **previously identified problems** and the **means**

identified to **address** the problem situations experienced. The means to a satisfactory end are called **tasks**. A single problem may require a variety of tasks to be undertaken in order to achieve a satisfactory problem-solving result.

Doel and Marsh (1992:23) clearly state that the **task-centered practice** begins with an identified problem which is usually socially based. Ideally this problem should be identified by the client, but an external source may also refer the problem. In the military processes court martials, a disciplinary hearing, a person not functioning at work and being identified by his supervisor may be the external resources. This approach can be applied to individuals or within a group context. Both Payne (1991:102) and Reid (1986:290) emphasise that task-centered approaches are not based on psychodynamic ideas, but are rather *short-term interactions* focused on assisting the client to deal with the situation at hand. The social work practitioner/manager and the client system **identify** the **problem areas** and **tasks needed** to successfully deal with the problems. Tasks are carried out by both the practitioner and the client system between the intervention sessions.

Apart from the aforementioned, the focus will now shift towards the systemic intervention strategies within social work. Due to the important role various systems fulfil within any social work practice, an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the systems approach is not only crucial for the social work practitioners/managers in general, but also for the DSW when engaging in a process of strategic planning.

#### 5.2.4 **Systems intervention approach**

In the discussion of this approach, attention will be given to the understanding of the systems approach, the various characteristics of a system, as well as the different systems within the social work practice.

### a) **Understanding of the systems approach**

Literature such as Compton and Galaway (1999:28-34); Devore and Schlesinger (1991: 144-152); Doel and Marsh (1992:12 & 96); Pincus and Minahan (1973:53-68); Potgieter (1998:54-62); Preston-Shoot and Agass (1990:4,7,11,43-82); Rodway (1986:514-535); and Woods and Hollis (1990:28-30), abounds with references to the systems approach and/or theory within the social work milieu. Potgieter (1998:54) and Rodway (1986: 516 & 655) make specific mention that a **system** is a **unit of people**, connected through some form of relationship with one another, within a specific **context, space** and **time**. A nuclear family is an example of a specific relationship formed within a socially acceptable context, which fulfils certain functions within a specific time and space. These include the procreation and socialisation of the species. This system is furthermore interactive with various other systems including work, school, religious- and broader community systems. Each of these systems has its own set of norms, values and accepted behaviours which form the systems culture. Thus, a system is not something visible or tangible and sometimes makes the objective observation of it impossible.

Potgieter (1998:54) explains that a system is "**put together**" in a structured way through the arrangement of its parts in a **hierarchy**, which means that there are different rankings within the system and that each rank has its own specific *tasks, roles* and *authority*. In a traditional household, like the Xhosa, the male figure is often seen as the head of the house with the highest level of authority and status, (Magubane 1998:12-22). His wife or first born son may take on a *second-in-charge* role depending on the situation. The tasks and roles are usually shaped in relation to the larger system by the individual system's membership within their particular groupings, like cultural/ethnic, racial, gender and even work groupings.

The social work practitioner/manager in the SANDF needs to understand the systems approach concept in order to enable him/her to understand the client system as a whole. The **employee's cultural** and **ethnic** background within the

traditional context, forms part of the community system from which the employee/client comes. Therefore, each employee/client within the SANDF originates from a larger system. According to Potgieter (1998: 54) and Compton and Gallaway (1999:30-31) the client system is at the same time made up of smaller systems. The **individual** is a system which consists of **subsystems**, e.g. the physical, emotional, intellectual, and the spiritual. Each subsystem can be subdivided into smaller **sub-subsystems**, for instance the physical subsystem can be divided into the respiratory and even reproduction system and the like (Potgieter 1998:54). The same is true of the other subsystems like the emotional, intellectual and spiritual. The employee/client is furthermore part of various other systems. For example, a subsystem like the family system, who live amongst friends and neighbours (all part of a system in their own unique way) and within the wider community system. Potgieter (1998:54) states that systems are always subsystems of other larger systems, but can also, at the same time, be divided into smaller subsystems. The larger system therefore provides the *environmental* setting for smaller systems to live and exist in. A thorough understanding of the aforementioned approach by the social work practitioner/manager is crucial, in order to understand the person within the context of his/her environmental setting.

The researcher, noted that, following the death of a male employee within a traditional Xhosa system, the widow despite being nominated as the benefactor of the estate, remained disempowered by virtue of cultural practices. The widow is expected to consult with her deceased husband's family with regards to the planned management of the estate. This practice contradicts the South African Constitution, yet is bound in tradition, (The SA Constitution; Act 108 of 1996).

The characteristics of a system will form part of the next discussion.

#### b) **Characteristics of a system**

Compton and Gallaway (1999:29-34); Potgieter (1998:54-58); Preston-Shoot and Agass (1990:43-82); and Rodway (1986:516-519) mention a number of

**characteristics** to be kept-in-mind when dealing with the systems approach concept.

- Social work practitioners/managers must differentiate between an **open** and **closed** system. According to Rodway (1986:516), an **open system** is involved in *active exchange* with its environment. In other words, an open system receives inputs from the environment and provides output, or gives a response to the environment. Culture in its broadest sense is non-static in that as a subsystem for example, the family residing in a rural area, on relocating to the urban areas, goes through a process of re-examining their norms and values in relation to their new surroundings. An example could be that of the undisputed authority of the head of the home in the rural Xhosa family situation (Magubane, 1998:12-33). Within the realms of the urban set-up, the head of the Xhosa home no longer enjoys sovereignty, but he is expected to enforce a set of socially acceptable norms and values. These might be in conflict with his internalised cultural values and cause great conflict within the family system. Examples include the emancipation of women and young Xhosa men who often prefer that circumcisions must be done in hospitals rather than in traditional circumcision schools.
  
- On the other hand, a **closed system**, as described by Rodway (1986:516), is **self-contained** and does **not** in any way **depend** on the **environment**. This type of system does not interact with any other system and, as Compton and Gallaway (1999:29-30) explain, this system neither accepts any input from other systems nor does it produce any outputs to other systems. An example here would be the religious/cultural practices of certain groups like the Amish, who have managed to remain almost unscathed by the evolution of the surrounding world by virtue of social and physical isolation.
  
- Systems are also characterised by **boundaries** which differentiate or distinguish them from their environment (Preston-Shoot and Agass, 1990:45). Boundaries indicate that which is inside and/or outside the specific system, and are usually part of the individual's assessment/ observation and

description of a particular system. Potgieter (1998:56) makes reference to the enforcement of artificial boundaries as entrenched under the former South African Apartheid system. The military system with its unique uniform and vehicles definitely distinguishes itself from the civilian field.

- Systems can also be characterised according to the **entropy** and/or **negentropy** of the open and closed system, (Rodway, 1986:517). **Negentropy** is seen as the tendency of living systems to **import more energy** than the system exports. If the system maintains a higher level of energy than it loses, the system will be able to grow and develop further. When **more energy is exported** than the system is able to maintain, it is known as **entropy**. This results in the system losing its vitality and it finally decays. Rodway (1986:517) further highlights that this phenomenon is universal and part of the growth cycle. The example cited by Rodway (1986:517), is that in youth, negentropy is prevalent as more energy is maintained than exported which facilitates growth. Entropy is the opposite, as in old age where the system exports more energy than it maintains, with the resultant decay of the system. Potgieter (1998:56) attributes the fall of apartheid within the South African system to the effect of entropy. Any system that fails to actively interact with the environment is doomed to experience entropy.
  
- Furthermore, all open and closed systems seem to **attain stationary states** (Rodway, 1986:517). This means that in a closed system, this is a form of **equilibrium** or a **state of rest** and within an open system, it is a form of the dynamic interplay of forces giving the appearance of a dynamic, steady state. Compton & Gallaway (1984:123 and 1999:31) call this steady state a type of **homeostasis**. **Homeostasis** is thus a dynamic process where the system may experience periods of rest which enables it to reorganise itself and grow in the period that follows. Therefore **a system can change** (Potgieter, 1998:60). **Systems change all the time**. Barker (1986:50) states that although human systems do not want to change, they still change by the minute by virtue of growing older.

- States of **equifinality** and **multifinality** are also part of a system, (Compton and Gallaway 1984:123). The aforementioned author refers to **equifinality** as the capacity to *achieve identical results* from different initial conditions. **Multifinality** on the other hand means that *similar conditions* may lead to **dissimilar end states**. The similar initial conditions in living systems may or may not be relevant to or important in the establishment of the end state.
  
- An open system according to Rodway (1984:517), also needs to give some information back to the system to indicate how it as a system is doing. This is known as **feedback**. This information is however imperative to the system in order to guide and steer its operation as a system within the environment.
  
- The concept **holon** is also part of a system. Potgieter (1998:54-55) is of the opinion that the **holon** describes the *interconnected structure* of systems. It refers to the invisible thread that connects parts of a system into a whole and emphasises the fact that **each level** in a *system*, is focused both towards the smaller system which the specific system is composed of and towards the larger system of which it is part. Compton and Gallaway (1994:120) mention that each part of a system is always connected to its other parts in some way, and whatever happens to one part, will always have an affect on the other parts of the system.
  
- Regarding systems, Rodway (1986:518) also mentions **differentiation** which means the developmental sequences and changes which occur over time within systems and refers to the movement from undifferentiated wholeness to differentiated parts. This can be explained from the family systems' point of view, where the role of parent changes as the child grows and develops. While the child is still in the infancy stage, the parental role might be that of protector/provider and the infant's role one of dependence progressing to a more independent state as the child grows older and becomes a teenager.

- Lastly, systems also possess a form of **synergy**. Potgieter (1998:57) explains that a **system** can **create** some **energy internally** which enables the system to maintain itself as a system. For instance, feelings of cohesion are engendered within a family or group by means of storytelling. This is the norm within certain cultures, like the Xhosa culture where tales of cultural heroes and villains are told.

The different systems which form social work practice follow the above discussion.

### c) **The different systems within social work practice**

Before attention can be given to the next approach in social work, it will be necessary to briefly explain the different systems that form part of any social work practice situation. Compton and Galaway (1999:33-34); Potgieter (1998:61-62) and Pincus and Minaham (1973:53-63) make mention of the *change agent* system, the *client* system, the *target* system, as well as the *action* system.

**The change agent system** refers, according to Potgieter (1998:61) and Pincus and Minaham (1973:54), to **paid professionals** who are employed to *facilitate* the *process* of planned change within a particular system. In the SANDF the change agent might be the social work practitioners/managers specifically employed to work towards a planned changed situation in the military setting. During the transformation of all the different defence forces into the South African National Defence Force, social work practitioners/managers had to facilitate an atmosphere of acceptance, working together and mutual respect for the different cultural/ethnic, religious and/or gender groupings who were put together in one office/section or even a unit.

**The client system** is, according to Compton and Gallaway (1999:33-34) and Potgieter (1998:61) **people** who have **asked for** and **contracted** with the *social work practitioner/manager* for **social work services** through an explicit working agreement or contract. In the SANDF this may include the military employee,

military couples, their families, a group of military employees or their families and/or the military communities.

**The target system** is those people, groups, organisations or agencies that the change agent needs to **influence** or **change** in order to accomplish its goals (Potgieter, 1998:61). Thus the client system might be the target system when identified as the unit that needs change. Pincus and Minaham (1973:59), however, mention that the client system is not always the system that needs to be changed. For example, if a military employee [client system] initiates a problem situation at the social work practitioners office because he is discriminated against by his/her supervisor [target system], social work interventions with the military employee [client system] might bring about the needed change within the supervisor [target system].

**The action system** is that system with which the helper [social work practitioner/manager] works to accomplish the tasks and achieve the goals of the change effort (Potgieter, 1998:62). The **action system** in the aforementioned example of the **military employee** [*client system*] who feels discriminated against by his/her supervisor [*target system*], might be the commanding officer of that specific unit, or the military employee's [*client system*] peer group, or even the labour relations committee of the unit. In other words, any one who is involved in bringing about the needed change is the action system.

Apart from the above, knowledge of the ecological or life model approach as well as the implementation thereof by the social work practitioner/manager, is also essential, and will form part of the next discussion.

### 5.2.5 Ecological or life model approach

The **ecological** or **life model approach** focuses on the **person** and his/her **environment** (Germain and Gitterman, 1986:619). Germain and Gitterman (1980:619), explain that the ecological perspective focuses on **viewing** the

transactions between **people** and **their environments**. In other words, to see how the person fits into his/her environment, or as Germain and Gitterman (1986:619) and Devore and Schlesinger (1991:147) explain it, the "**person-environment-fit**" or "**goodness-of-fit**". The New Dictionary for Social Work (1996:28) mentions that the "**goodness-of-fit**" is a "*...condition which is the result of a positive adaptation between the individual and environment*". Thus, in the SANDF, the social work practitioner/manager will be interested in the adaptation of the military employee [client] to the environment he/she is working in, and vice-versa.

During the integration of the former defence forces to form the new SANDF, the aforementioned was often experienced by the researcher. The researcher, as a social work practitioner, had to intervene on many an occasion in situations where employees did not experience a situation of goodness-of-fit. This was particularly evident in office situations where a high concentration of employees originating from different cultural/ethnic backgrounds and traditions which were unknown to each other, shared the same office or worked together in the same section or military unit. These varying **cultural/ethnic traditions** were often a source of **misinterpretations** and **misunderstandings**, which further lead to unnecessary disputes within the sections or military units.

It was the researcher's task as social work practitioner to assist the members who experienced difficulty in adapting within their new environment and who did not experience a goodness-of-fit situation to reach an adaptive balance between themselves and their environment. Some of the aspects addressed by the researcher included the **animosities** amongst people coming from different cultural backgrounds. This was because of a lack of knowledge about each others cultural/ethnic traditions and habits.

A major empowerment project was launched whereby employees from different cultural/ethnic backgrounds who were working together in the same office/section or military unit, were put together with the main aim to learn from each other and about each others cultures. This lead to the diminishing of animosities towards

one another which further resulted in misinterpretations and misunderstanding being restricted to the absolute minimum. An improved goodness-of-fit situation especially from those members [employees] who did not initially adapt well within their working environment was noted.

In view of situations like the above, Devore and Schlesinger (1991:152-160) in general, gave attention to a cultural awareness approach, which will be the focus of the next discussion.

### 5.2.6 Cultural awareness approaches

As the main aim of this study is to develop theoretical and practical guidelines for multi-cultural social work practice within the SANDF, it is imperative that attention be directed towards a ***cultural awareness approach*** during social work intervention. This should also form part of the strategic planning thought processes of the DSW. Currently, within the Directorate Social Work of the SANDF, no intervention approaches which concentrate specifically on culture and ethnicity exist.

The researcher, with a predominantly western social work education, rendered social work services to military communities, predominantly Xhosa speaking, of the former Ciskei and Transkei areas. This entailed having to integrate the different western client system approaches in social work to suite the Xhosa speaking clientele. During service rendering it became apparent how ill-equipped the practitioner was to attend to the needs and problem situations of the Xhosa client system, as none of the traditional/western approaches, strategies and intervention models made provision for service rendering to a more African client system.

Today, due to transformation and the integration of the various defence forces to form the South African National Defence Force, the rendering of services to a largely multi-cultural client system is more evident than before. This integration and transformation process further brought about a more multi-cultural social work

personnel system, which entails that social work offices within the **SANDF** no longer consist of one single cultural grouping, but are **micro-cosms** of **various cultural** and **ethnic backgrounds** and **traditions**. Therefore, not only the social work practitioners, but social work managers too, had to deal with a multi-cultural personnel situation. This for many of the managers, was an unfamiliar and strange situation to deal with. In reality, no particular approach and/or strategy existed for social work managers to guide them in dealing with this multi-cultural personnel situation. This shortcoming often resulted in misinterpretations and conflict between the social work manager(s) and social work practitioner(s), based on language differences and unfamiliar cultural and ethnic habits and traditions. The aforementioned could best be summarised by a statement made in Mattaini, Lowerey and Meyer (1998:69) who referred to Demetria Martínez regarding multi-culturalism:

"The problem is we're not seeing or hearing the same things.

Even church bells mean something different to us.

She hears them and sets her watch. I hear them

and remember the endless funerals in the village outside  
the capital. But what right do I have to be angry with her?

It is not her fault her culture has made her who she is."

In chapters 3 and 4 an overview of the different principles, strategies as well as the requirements of multi-cultural competent intervention practices for a multi-cultural social work practice were discussed. Devore and Schlesinger (1991:155-158) mention the process-stage during approach of which is also applicable to multi-cultural intervention. This process-stage approach will expand on the cultural awareness dialogue and will be discussed in the section that follows.

a) **The intervention process-stage approach**

The intervention process-stage approach consists of various stages: contact, problem identification, assessment, intervention and termination (Lum 1992). The primary focus of this approach is that of meeting the needs of the multi-cultural client system by a culturally competent social work service provider (Devore and Schlesinger, 1991:156).

**Contact.** During the **contact stage**, according to Devore and Schlesinger (1991:156), and Cournoyer (1996:131), the social work practitioner/manager focuses on commencing the delivery of a service to a particular cultural grouping. This necessitates an **understanding** of the particular client system, their **background, functioning, protocols and communications styles**. During this stage it might be helpful for the social work practitioner/manager to undertake a form of *self-study* into the specific cultural and ethnic backgrounds and traditions of the client system he/she is in contact with. This will enable and empower the social work practitioner/manager with the necessary knowledge of how the specific individual(s) function, what language they speak as well as important client system rituals and protocols. The social work practitioner/manager will gain more insight into the problem situation that needs to be addressed. If the social work practitioner/manager fails to acquaint himself/herself with regards to the client system's background and heritage, the social work intervention will be worthless and might as well not take place at all (Sheafor, Horesji and Horesji, 2000;56-60).

**Problem identification.** In this stage, it will be beneficial to **evaluate** the **problem** in relation to the client system's socio-cultural environment, (Devore and Schlesinger 1991:156-157). The gaining of knowledge about the client system's heritage and background will also assist the social work practitioner/manager during the problem identification stage.

Devore and Schlesinger (1991:156) further state that it is important to **understand** the **client's perception** of the problem and how his/her culture

influences the problem experienced. The researcher is of the opinion that if the social work practitioner/manager does not possess the necessary knowledge and skills regarding the client system's cultural and ethnic background and heritage, he/she will not be able to sensitively assist the client system in formulating the problem situation.

Van Rooyen and Combrink (1980:231) state that the social work practitioner/manager must not only assist the client in defining the problem, but he/she must also **read between the lines**. In other words, the social work practitioner/manager must be able to recognise those aspects the client is not mentioning. These aspects might include cultural matters which the client system would like to ignore or get away from, but for certain reasons known to the client alone, he/she is too scared to mention. Only when the social work practitioner/manager has knowledge regarding the client system's cultural and ethnic background, will he/she be able to assist the client system during this stage to effectively identify the problem and to include important aspects like cultural matters or protocols.

**Assessment.** The New Dictionary of Social Work (1996:4) explains **assessment** as a “...*process of analysing the factors that influence the social functioning of the individual, family, group or community*”. This entails that the social work practitioner/manager needs to have *expert knowledge* about the client system's socio-environmental background and traditions which will enable him/her to perform a thorough assessment of the problem situation experienced by the client system.

**Intervention.** Johnson (1992:67) mentions that during the intervention stage, the social work practitioner/manager is faced with the task of **bringing** about **change** within the client system's situation. This requires a thorough understanding of the **person-in-the-situation** to purposefully bring about the needed change.

Johnson (1992:67) further states that the actions undertaken by the social work practitioner/manager in order to induce the change, is guided by the knowledge about the client system's background and traditions as well as the social work practitioner /manager's competence in dealing with the client system's situation. It is important to note that intervention does not mean that the social work practitioner/manager controls the client system or the situation, but rather that he/she assists and supports the client system in dealing with the problem experienced.

Devore and Schlesinger (1991:157) elaborate on this by saying that during this stage is it important that the practitioner together with the client system, identify the goals for intervention and look into what type of problem-solving behaviour is needed from the client system's side. Furthermore, attention needs to be focused on how the problem was experienced in the past, what the present manifestations are, and even in some cases make a prediction of how the problem will display itself in the near future. This same author mentions that micro, mezzo and macro intervention might also be necessary. Within the military context, the micro level might be the changes within military employee(s) himself/themselves or even small groups of employee(s) and or their dependants. On the mezzo level the focus might be on the military employees' cultural and ethnic background or on the communities they originate from. The macro level will be the SANDF as an organisation or the South African society at large in which these military employees find themselves.

During this stage, it will be beneficial for the social work practitioner/manager to find the most suited social work intervention approach and strategy for the specific multi-cultural client system. It is therefore crucial to **posses updated knowledge and skills** of the different **social work intervention approaches**. If this is not the case, the service provider will not be able to best utilise the most suited intervention approach for the specific client system. Thus, a **holistic view** of available **approaches** within the social work milieu, is imperative.

**Termination.** Devore and Schlesinger (1991:158) mention that this stage is synonymous with the completion and accomplishment of goals as identified during the previous phase. Reid (1986:281), furthermore mentions that this stage is characterised by a review of the progress made during the intervention process when both the social work practitioner/manager and client system dealt with the problem. The client must further be helped to plan how he/she will continue to work on the problem experienced as well as what can be done when faced with a similar situation in the future. It is important during this stage to positively stress problem-solving skills which the client has mastered during problem analysis. Knowledge of the client system's cultural and ethnic background will further assist the social work practitioner/manager in selecting an appropriate way of terminating the process. Failure to acknowledge the client system's customs and traditions will be more harmful, which may result in an ineffective intervention outcome (Mattaini, Lowery, and Meyer, 1998:69-84).

In view of the aforementioned discussions, the social provision and structural approach will be discussed as part of the cultural awareness framework.

#### b) **Social provision and structural approach**

The researcher is of the opinion that although Devore and Schlesinger (1991:140-144) discuss the social provision and structural approach as a separate approach, this approach could also be included within the cultural awareness approach's framework. The researcher's rationale for this is that the focus of this study is to develop theoretical and practical guidelines for multi-cultural social work practice within the SANDF. Devore and Schlesinger (1991:141) argue that people are not necessarily the cause of the problems they experience, and are not always the appropriate target for change efforts, but that the individual might be the result of **inadequate social arrangements** within their environments. These inadequate social arrangements may be responsible for many problematic situations experienced by individuals. These environmental pressures should therefore rather be considered as a possible source of suffering and the target of change. The apartheid system in South Africa can be seen as

an example whereby inadequate social arrangements were forcibly experienced by certain cultural and ethnic groupings in South Africa, (Mandela 1994). Some of these inadequate social arrangements include the reservation of basic resources like water, electricity, sanitation, housing, certain jobs in the workplace and the like for certain sections of the population. This implied that if an individual was not part of this “**elite**” cultural and ethnic grouping, he/she had to be satisfied with the resources, whether good or bad, as allocated to him/ her based on the individual’s cultural/ ethnic classification. The end result was a situation with an inadequate social arrangement.

Certain intervention procedures also form part of the social provision and structural approach and will be discuss as follows.

#### ○ ***Interventive procedures***

Devore and Sclesinger (1991:143-144) mention four interventive principles for the social work service provider when utilising this approach.

The first principle is that of **accountability** to the client system. Accountability is based on the assumption that clients are able and capable of defining their own needs, while the social work practitioner/manager merely helps in reducing those situations the client sees as problematic. The social work practitioner/manager within the military setting might assist an employee in defining his/her need or problem statement. The employee [client] for example who might not have completed his Xhosa cultural rite to manhood, may be faced with a situation of conflicting values, namely to adhere to his cultural practices, as a Xhosa, while fulfilling his role and obligations as a SANDF employee. The social work practitioner could guide the Xhosa employee in what he could do to complete his cultural obligations and with the client’s consent, discuss this situation on his behalf with his supervisors/seniors. One of the issues arising from the aforementioned, may be the need for him to take leave in order to attend the circumcision school for an extended six to eight week period. The social work practitioner as well as the employee [client] could discuss a possible solution

regarding this extended leave, which could then be discussed by the social work practitioner and the client's supervisor/senior. It is important that the employee [client] be included in the discussions about this situation to keep him/her [client] informed and also that he/she [client] can feel that he/she shares the ownership of the situation.

The second principle is that of following the demands associated with **tasks**. Wood and Middleman (1989:31) suggest that the client's tasks be converted into goals and objectives and this determines what needs to be done in order to deal with the situation. The same authors mention that the environment is often the primary target of change, which needs to be prepared so that change can take place and/or the need and/or problem situation can be effectively dealt with.

The example used in the aforementioned discussion of the Xhosa employee [client] that needs to complete his cultural rite to manhood, can still be applicable during this second principle. Discussions for instance between the social work practitioner and the employee's [client] supervisor/senior regarding the required leave and placement of the employee on his subsequent return to work can also be seen as preparing the environment for change to take place. Furthermore, arrangements will have to be made for the client to wear civilian clothing on return from the initiation school (Magubane, 1998:20). It is expected of the new initiate to wear red clay on his face and tweed clothes as part of his final transition to manhood. Thus, in this case the environment might hamper the employee [client] to reach the said goal(s) and objective(s) and it could thus be seen as the primary target for change.

The third principle is to maximise **potential support within the client's environment**. Devore and Schlesinger (1991:143) mention that the social work practitioner might need to modify or create new structures for potential support within the client's environment. It may be helpful to the Xhosa employee [client] who needs to complete his cultural rite to manhood, if the social work practitioner assists him in finding other employees within the same unit or section who also faces the same situation, thereby forming support groups. It will further be to the

benefit of the employee [client] if a network group with other members within his community, who are also due to attend initiation school, can be formed. The network will ensure that, while culturally acceptable practices are adhered to, safe and hygienic principles during circumcision processes are maintained. This will be achieved if accredited traditional surgeons and sterile blades and equipment are used.

The fourth and last principle is that of **least contest** which entails that the social work practitioner exerts the least amount of pressure for the client to complete his/her tasks (Devore and Schlesinger 1991:144). With regards to the employee [client] needing to complete his cultural rite to manhood, it would be better to use a "**soft approach**" and to negotiate the issue of extended leave and placement on return to the workplace on behalf of the Xhosa employee [client] with his supervisor/senior, before engaging in more vigorous protest actions.

The social work practitioner/manager must be a **change agent** in bringing about an awareness of the multi-cultural and ethnic nature of the organisation. This entails being actively involved in policy formulation with regards to cultural tolerance and the means to accommodate various cultural practices and rites.

### 5.2.7 Community development approach

The researcher is of the opinion that if a social worker within the military engages himself/herself in social development, it will be helpful to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills regarding the **community development approach**. To involve a community in any social work intervention process, will automatically pave the way for some social development to take place. Thus, it is important to know the process of doing community development, because if done correctly, it will automatically contribute towards the positive integration of the social developmental approach. Before focusing on the process that needs to be followed during this approach, it is necessary to look at what is meant by the terms community and development.

A **community**, according to Mattaini, Lowery and Meyer (1998:211) is a group of people who are grouped together **geographically**. The same authors also see a community as people, **socially** grouped together and where they share the same interests, or are **collectively** grouped together by means of their identity, sense of peoplehood [ethnicity as discussed in chapter two] or by their political affiliation.

The word, **development** relates to "*PROCESS which suggests the desired direction in which a GROUP (2) or COMMUNITY moves (as determined by themselves) in order to accomplish economic progress, political participation and social reconstruction*" (The New Dictionary of Social Work, 1996:17). This same dictionary also defines the **development approach** as an "*...approach used in SOCIAL WORK which, at primary level, focuses on individuals as members of FAMILIES and households who require certain minimum standards for meeting their basic needs*" (The New Dictionary of Social Work, 1996:18). Both definitions contribute towards the betterment of the human being in order to function optimally within themselves, groups or communities.

In line with the above explanation, Lombard, Weyers and Schoeman (1991); Rothmand and Tropman (1987) and Swanepoel (1997:70-88) identified the steps that can be followed by the social worker during this approach. The various steps are as follows:

**Step 1: Making contact with the community.** According to Swanepoel (1997:70) this is the most important step because the way in which the worker makes contact with the community will determine the success of any further efforts by the social worker. This is especially true of social workers within the military setting which consist of various cultural/ethnic/religious/language groupings. It would be fatal for any development to take place if the social worker has a negative attitude when working with people emanating from a different background to that of the social worker. Devore and Schlesinger (1991:261) mention that the social worker must have specific knowledge about the particular community, for instance, who they are, where they are from, previous community development efforts, including the outcome of such effort[s], the community's

attitude regarding social work services and in particular the specific social worker who will do the community work, and lastly, how the community members behave towards one another. For example how they treat older or younger members or even strangers.

During this phase the worker becomes aware of the needs of the community which will automatically lead to the forming of the action group[s]. Swanepoel (1997:78) is of the opinion that the people's perceptions regarding needs, and the different groups of people who identify strongly with the identified needs, will give a clear indication of whom the action group will consist of.

**Step 2: *Undertaking a survey.*** This is another crucial step and must not be ignored (Swanepoel, 1997:95). The survey can be done by observing what is going on within the community, having discussions with various groups and/or role players within the community like teachers, church ministers, professional nurses, or even the completion of a questionnaire by the community members. During this step, the worker will determine exactly what the need[s] within the specific community are, as well as what their feelings are regarding these need[s]. Within a specific military community in the North West Province, the social workers were of the opinion that the identified military village [community] was desperately in need of a crèche for their small children. During a recent environmental study by Thiele (2001) done within the particular military village, it was found that only 19% of the military members within that area regarded a crèche as a necessity, while 81% of the members listed various other more pressing priorities. Thus, this step is imperative and must be carried out before any action takes place within a community.

**Step 3: *Needs identification.*** Once the survey has been completed, it is necessary to get consensus regarding the identified needs (Swanepoel, 1997:108). At this point it is obvious that the different action groups will see different needs as important. The needs of a group of military women who see the need for knitting or sewing as a priority, will differ immensely from a group of military men who perceive the need for a tavern with a snooker table facility as a

higher priority than those identified by the women's group. Because the social worker within the military setting is working with people originating from varied cultural/ethnic/religious/language backgrounds, this step is particularly important. In other words, it is important to evaluate who is regarding what as a need, and why it is seen as that. Devore and Schlesinger (1991:263) mention that this step might require the most time, accompanied by much patience on the social worker's side. To move too quickly into the next stage may go against the need of the specific community as they might not yet be ready to move on. Kirst-Ashman and Hull (1993:138) add that the social worker's primary role in this step is to **estimate the extent of the demand for a certain service needed.**

**Step 4: Resource identification.** According to Payne (1986:21) it is important at this stage to answer questions like: what resources [internal as well as external] are needed to move from the current situation towards development and growth; are the present available resources sufficient in addressing the needs of the community and will it be possible to use some of the resources simultaneously in achieving more than one need? It might even be necessary for the worker to create new resources. The aforementioned was personally experienced by the researcher who rendered social work services within a military community with limited or hardly any resources available. The researcher had to use networking and negotiated roles, which was very helpful when working within a community with limited resources. The need for training in home-base-care for family members with a terminal illness was one of the priorities identified within a specific community the researcher was working in. Discussions by the researcher with one of the health care facilities within a bigger township complex lead to the incorporation of certain of these identified military dependants into the home-based-care-training. After a compromise was reached between the identified health facility and the researcher, the researcher who assisted by presenting certain topics to the attendees of the home-based-care group, the training of identified military dependants was done free.

**Step 5: Forming a committee** Getting together a committee who will handle and drive the projects when addressing the needs of the community, is another

important stage according to Lombard and Weyers (1991:135) and Swanepoel (1997:131-132). Because of the learning value of community development, it is important that the committee and its chairperson consist of members from that particular community. In this way, members from the community will learn to become leaders themselves. The social worker must allow the committee to drive the community project and only be available as a consultant. This will further limit dependence on the social worker and will contribute to the community taking responsibility for their own needs as well as for the way the needs are addressed. The committee is usually elected by the action group[s] formed during step one.

**Step 6: *Planning*.** This step forces the worker and the community to draw up a management plan of the project[s] that will be executed in fulfilling the needs of the community, (Payne, 1986:21). This refers to the required actions that must be taken, deciding who will assist with what action, target dates for finalisation, what resources are required, including the budget for each project and how the evaluation will be done.

**Step 7: *Implementation*.** This step has to do with the coming to fruition of all the planned activities which started with step one (Swanepoel, 1997:162). This step is also known as the operationalisation of the plan. For instance, if the women's group identified the need to sell their home-made articles at a buy-and-sell day, then this stage would be the actual buy-and-sell-day that would take place within the community.

**Step 8: *Evaluation*.** Devore and Schlesinger (1991:247) mention that although this is the last step, it is the vehicle for accountability. In other words, it is here where it must be determined whether the plan was successful. If the answer is yes, it must be determined what the next step will be. If the answer is in the negative, the committee must evaluate what went wrong and why, as well as what could be done differently next time. Because the social worker in the military is working within a military community consisting of various cultural/ethnic/religious/language backgrounds, continuous evaluation after each

step is imperative. This will identify certain problems at an early stage which can then be addressed and sorted-out immediately.

As the social worker within the military setting works mostly within a multi-cultural setting, it is crucial to be competent in rendering a service of excellence according to the community development approach. If the worker fails to work effectively within the community he/she is stationed in, the social work service rendering will also be impaired. The governmental expectations as indicated in the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) and the Financing Policy (1999) regarding social development, will then not be adhered to and/or not achieved at all.

### **5.3 CONCLUSION**

From the discussion in this chapter it can be seen that the modern day social work practitioner/manager within the military setting, needs to take cognisance of the multi-sectoral/ factoral elements within multi-cultural social work practice. This chapter provided a brief overview of some of the more well-known approaches present in modern day social work practice. Throughout the discussion it was evident that the social work practitioners/managers, who are also generalists, need to possess a thorough knowledge of the discussed approaches in social work which will then enable them to render a competent service to the diverse client system.

These approaches, as discussed within this chapter, could also form part of the Directorate Social Work's strategic planning strategy. This will ensure a strategic planning process which is not only in line with the welfare policy expectations of the South African Government in terms of the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) and Financing Policy for Developmental Social Welfare Services (1999), but will also adhere to the requirements of a multi-cultural social work service rendering practice.

The next part of this study [*chapter 6 and 7*] will focus on the empirical research in which the client system, social work managers and social work production workers within the SANDF were involved.

## CHAPTER 6

### ROLE PLAYERS WITHIN THE MULTI-CULTURAL SOCIAL WORK FIELD IN THE SANDF

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

Although the method of study has been discussed in chapter one, this chapter presents the application of this method in order to assist in achieving the main goal of this study, namely to develop theoretical and practical guidelines for a multi-cultural social work practice within the SANDF.

The following two chapters, will focus mainly on the empirical part of this study.

Chapter 6 focuses on the results of the study undertaken with a purposive sample of selected clients within the military communities of Mafikeng and Zeerust who represent the diversity in ethnic and cultural heritage, gender and religious as well as political affiliation. Furthermore, results of the structured interviews with the managerial social delivery system members will also be discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 7 will concentrate on the results of a survey done with the social work production workers within the SANDF.

#### 6.2 THE DIVERSE CLIENT SYSTEM'S RESPONSE

An environmental study was undertaken by the social work section of the military community of Mafikeng and Zeerust within the North West Province during October 2001 (Thiele, 2001). Although the researcher and a social work practitioner were both responsible for the study, the final environmental study report was compiled by the social work practitioner only. Six questions regarding multi-cultural social work practice within the SANDF which were formulated by the researcher, have been incorporated into the questionnaire compiled by the social work practitioner who was responsible for conducting the survey. (*Appendix A will display only the six*

questions applicable to this study). Of the 1 985 members working within the three military units in the Mafikeng/Zeerust military community, which comprises all cultural/ethnic and religious groupings, only 557 participated willingly in the environmental study. Following the guidelines given by De Vos (1998:192-193), it is sufficient to include 14% of respondents [eg. 140 of a population of 1000 people] during a sampling process. The availability sample of 557 out of 1 985 members was 28% and can thus be regarded as sufficiently representative.

An environmental study is, according to Brody (1993:41-42), an important tool for showing the direction of service rendering. The needs of the consumers of the service were identified and analysed. The questions related to this study, were dealt with within a group context and respondents' feedback will be presented in the following section.

## 6.2.1 AGE AND GENDER

The age and gender of the respondents in this environmental study are as follows:

### 6.2.1.1 The age of the respondents

The age groupings of the respondents are given in table 6.1 which is question one of Appendix A. This question will indicate the majority of the client system's age grouping with whom social workers are in contact and know how to adapt social work programmes to best suit the specific age groupings.

**TABLE 6.1: AGE OF CLIENTS**

AGE	f	%
20-29	150	26.9
30-39	359	64.5
40-49	41	7.4
50 - +	7	1.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>557</b>	<b>100</b>

N=557

From table 6.1 it is clear that the majority of the respondents, 359 [64,5%], fall into the 30 - 39 year age grouping. This is followed by 150 members [26,9%] in the 20 - 29 year age grouping. Only 41 members [7,4%] are between 40 - 49 years old. This

is followed by seven [1,3%] respondents who are in the 50 years and more age grouping.

The majority of the respondents between the ages 20 - 39 (509 [ 91,4%] ) can be regarded as youth, because Van Rooyen and Jarman (2001:183) referring to the National Youth Commission (NYC) (1996) define a young person "as being between 14 - 35 years" of age and the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997:68) regards a youth as being between 16 - 30 years of age.

### 6.2.1.2 Gender of respondents

Because the needs among men and women are different, it was necessary to know the ratio between the two sexes within the military setting. The gender of respondents is indicated in table 6.2. It is also part of question one, Appendix A.

**TABLE 6.2: GENDER OF MEMBERS**

GENDER	f	%
Male	528	95
Female	29	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>557</b>	<b>100</b>

**N = 557**

From table 6.2 it is evident that the majority 95% [528] of the respondents who were included in this environmental study are males, with only 29 [5%] female respondents. The perception of soldiering traditionally being a "man's job" can be regarded as the reason for there still being many more males than females within the military community.

As indicated in table 6.1 and table 6.2 most of the respondents (359 [64.5%] ) are male and between the ages 30 - 40 years. It is therefore imperative that social work service rendering focuses primarily on the needs of young males.

## 6.2.2 RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

The religious background of the 557 respondents, (the second question in Appendix A), who took part in the environmental study exercise will be shown in table 6.3. For any social work service rendering to be effective within a multi-cultural setting, it is important to know the client system's religious background, because this will guide service rendering and also show how to adapt social work programmes to best suit the client system.

**TABLE 6.3: RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS**

CHURCH/RELIGION	f	%	CHURCH/RELIGION	f	%
Roman Catholic	81	14.5	7th Day Adventist	8	1.4
Dutch Reformed Church	70	12.6	Reformed Church	6	1.1
Methodist	64	12	Assembly of God	5	1
Apostolic Faith Mission	61	11	New Independant Congregational Church	5	1
Lutheran Church	53	9.6	Baptist Church	4	0.7
Zion Christian Church	43	7.7	SDA	3	0.5
Anglican Church	31	5.6	St. Paul's Church	3	0.5
United Christian Church of South Africa	25	4.5	Presbyterian Church	2	0.4
Old Apostolic Church	18	3.2	Ethiopian Catholic Church	2	0.4
Church of Christ	16	2.9	Muslim	2	0.4
The Twelfth Apostle Church	12	2.2	Church of England	1	0.2
St. John's Church	8	1.4	"Gereformeed"	1	0.2
IPC -Independent Pentecostal Church	8	1.4	New Life Church	1	0.2
Sabbath Church	1	0.2	None	23	4.1
			<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>557</b>	<b>100</b>

N = 557

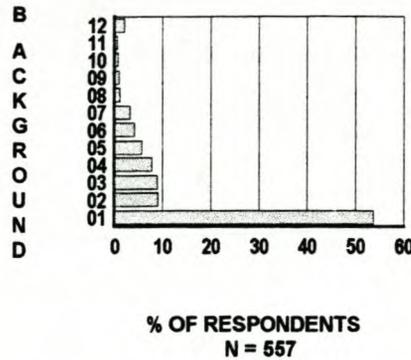
Table 6.3 shows that no dominance of religious backgrounds exists and that the respondents emanate from a wide variety of religious backgrounds. This variety of religions emphasises the importance of rendering a multi-cultural social work practice within the SANDF. The workplace is not only becoming more diverse regarding ethnic or cultural backgrounds. Religion also can not be ignored.

## 6.2.3 CULTURAL/ETHNIC/LANGUAGE BACKGROUND

Multi-cultural social work service rendering necessitates one to be aware of the cultural/ethnic/language background of the client system and to adjust social work programmes to best suit the client system. It is also imperative for social workers to know the type of cultural/ethnic/language backgrounds they are in contact with. The cultural/ethnic/language backgrounds (question three, Appendix A) of the respondents will be specified in figure 6.1 and will follow after a description of the various cultural, ethnic and language backgrounds.

**Description of the cultural/ethnic/language background**

- |             |                                     |             |              |             |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| 01: Tswana  | 02: Afrikaans                       | 03: Zulu    | 04: Se-Sotho | 05: Xhosa   |
| 06: N-Sotho | 07: Portuguese                      | 08: Ndebele | 09: Swazi    | 10: English |
| 11: Venda   | 12: Other [members did not specify] |             |              |             |



**FIGURE 6.1: CULTURAL/ETHNIC/LANGUAGE BACKGROUND**

From figure 6.1 it is evident that although the majority of the military members are from a Tswana cultural/ethnic background [300 (53,9%)], almost half of the other respondents originate from a wide variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

Because Lyons, in Osborne (1996:99), mentions that all viewpoints of interest groups should be transformed in some way and be included in a process of strategic planning, it is imperative for the DSW to consider the viewpoints of the various cultural and ethnic groupings during a strategic planning process in order to design a multi-cultural competent service.

**6.2.4 CULTURAL/ETHNIC/RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND**

The respondents were asked (in question four, Appendix A) whether it was necessary for the social worker to be aware of and informed regarding the client’s cultural and ethnic background. Table 6.4 indicates their responses.

**TABLE 6.4: AWARENESS OF BACKGROUND**

Aware of background	f	%
YES	425	76.3
NO	76	13.6
No response given	56	10.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>557</b>	<b>100</b>

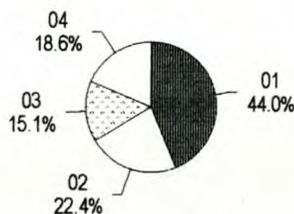
N = 557

In table 6.4 it is clear that although 13.6% [76] of the respondents did not think that it was necessary for the social worker to be aware of their cultural/ethnic background, the majority, (76,3% [425] ) of the respondents felt it was important. This emphasises the importance of this study and the need for the social workers as well as the social work managers to be informed about the client system's cultural and ethnic background, because attention must be given to the viewpoints of interest groups during service rendering (Lyons, in Osborne, 1996:99). Fifty six [10,1%] of the respondents did not respond to this question.

A description of the reasons given by the 425 [76,3%] respondents who indicated YES in table 6.4 and their responses to the question (question five, Appendix A), will be given and displayed in figure 6.2 below. A description of the responses is offered, followed by a pie-chart indicating the frequency distribution of the reasons.

**Description of reasons given**

- 01: To understand their culture and have respect for it.
- 02: Home visits to various cultural groupings will equip social workers with the necessary knowledge about the various cultures.
- 03: If the social worker has knowledge regarding the specific culture he/she is in contact with, it will contribute towards problem-solving.
- 04: No reasons given.



N = 425

\*Respondents could give more than one answer

**FIGURE 6.2: NECESSITY FOR BACKGROUND AWARENESS**

In figure 6.2 it can be seen that 44,0% [187] of the respondents (*description 01*) feel that if the social worker is aware of their cultural and ethnic background, they [the social workers] will understand them better and will respect their cultural background more. This corresponds with Lyons, in Osborne (1996:95), who stresses the importance of an environmental study before service rendering. This will indicate who the client system is and their specific needs for service rendering. Their cultural and ethnic backgrounds might require the social worker to pay attention to certain aspects, like the way the client system handles problems and also resolves them. Mattaini, Lowery and Meyer (1998:70) also support the viewpoint of Lyons in their

statement that social workers must familiarise themselves with the various aspects of the different cultures before they can become effective helpers.

Ninety four (22,3%) of the respondents are of the opinion that if social workers engage themselves in doing home visits, it will better equip them with the needed knowledge of the client system's culture (*description 02*). Sixty five [15,7%] of the respondents said that it would contribute towards problem-solving (*description 03*) and 79 of the respondents in *description 04* gave no reasons.

In question 6 of Appendix A the respondents who indicated NO to the question about the need for the social worker to be aware and informed of the client's cultural and ethnic background, (see table 6.4), gave five reasons for their responses. The responses will first be given whereafter the frequency distribution of the responses will be displayed in figure 6.3.

**Description of reasons**

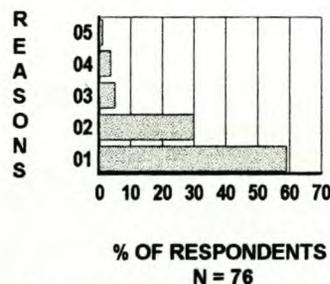
01: No reasons/comments given

02: Not necessary

03: It will influence one's privacy

04: Will breach confidentiality

05: Rather consult with church minister.



\*Respondents could give more than one answer

**FIGURE 6.3: NO NEED FOR BACKGROUND AWARENESS**

From figure 6.3 it is clear that most (59,2% [45]) of the respondents did not give any reasons for their choice (*description 01*) while 30,2% [23] respondents mentioned that it is not necessary for the social workers to be aware of their [client's] cultural/ethnic background (*description 02*). Besides this, 5,2% [four] respondents feel that it will impinge on their privacy (*description 03*); 3,9% [three] respondents mention that it will breach confidentiality, while one [1,3%] respondent indicates that he/she would rather consult his/her church minister than any social worker (*description 05*). If the viewpoints of the majority of respondents are taken into consideration, as been mentioned by Lyons, in Osborne (1996:99), the expectations

of the client system regarding a social work service rendering should be highlighted and included in a strategic planning process.

Bearing the responses received from the consumers of the social work services in mind, it is evident that services are rendered to a diverse client system originating from a variety of religious and cultural backgrounds. Although the majority of respondents expressed the opinion that social workers must be aware of the clients' cultural and ethnic background, this was not confirmed by all. This once again emphasises the need for involvement of the various stakeholders and client systems during a process of strategic planning, which will ensure a more client centered and needs-based service rendering.

The next part of this chapter will focus on the responses received from the social work management survey.

### 6.3 SOCIAL WORK MANAGEMENT SURVEY

There are currently 25 managerial social work positions within the Directorate Social Work [DSW] of the SANDF. Because of more than one vacancy currently existing within the DSW, only 16 social work managers could be involved in the survey (*Appendix B : interview schedule*). The following discussion and the organogram in the figure below explain the present-day managerial situation within the DSW of the SANDF.



**FIGURE 6.4: ORGANOGRAM OF DSW**

As can be seen in figure 6.4, the DSW currently consists of various levels of social work managers like the director, staff officers (who can be deputy directors and

assistant directors), area managers (who can be assistant directors and chief social workers), and supervisors (who can be assistant directors, chief social workers and senior social workers). The director and deputy directors [also known as staff officers] are situated at the South African Military Health Service's Headquarters in Pretoria, and work mostly at a strategic level which mainly involves policy making. The remaining staff officers are assistant directors and are placed within the various provinces. These staff officers are the heads of military social work on a tactical level within the various provinces. Subordinates to the staff officers [assistant director] are usually one or two area managers whose main task is to assist the staff officer in managerial tasks and to head a decentralised social work office or area within a specific province. For instance, in the North West Province social work in the military force consists of the researcher as the staff officer [assistant director] permanently based in Potchefstroom. The military units are not confined to the Potchefstroom area but also work in the Mafikeng and Zeerust areas. There are currently three military social workers employed at military units within the Mafikeng and Zeerust areas. There is one area manager, permanently based in Mafikeng, who is the head of the military social work office within the Zeerust and Mafikeng areas. This area manager who is currently a chief social worker is responsible for assisting the researcher [staff officer based in Potchefstroom] with managerial tasks including office inspections, performance management, completion of the management information system [MIS] and the like.

Reasons for the minimal social work manager respondents [16] include the transformation process within the SANDF which has led to many vacant social work managerial positions within the DSW. Social workers are usually prime candidates for managerial positions [outside military social work] such as commanding officers within the SANDF. There are currently five social work staff officers in five different provinces staffed as commanding officers of military health units. Unfortunately, none of these five staff officer's posts has yet been filled. This places a huge burden on the rest of the military social workers, because area managers as well as production workers have to stand in as the staff officer and still have to do their own work, e.g. area management work and/or production work.

Furthermore, social work managers who are already employed in a social work managerial position, are required to attend military managerial training for a duration of nine months.

The current transformation process within the SANDF is a contributing factor to the turbulent military environment. It is therefore imperative to take note that the aforementioned discussion is based on the up-to-date situation within the SANDF and DSW during August 2001, bearing in mind that this information might change drastically in time to come.

With this in mind, the results of the social work managerial survey will follow this discussion.

### 6.3.1 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

The respondents were requested to indicate their cultural/ethnic/language background, their present post position as well as the number of years of service as a social work manager within the SANDF.

#### 6.3.1.1 Cultural/ethnic/language background

The respondents indicated their cultural/ethnic/language background in answer to question 1.1. Table 6.5 shows the cultural/ethnic/language background distribution of the respondents.

**TABLE 6.5 : CULTURAL BACKGROUND**

Cultural background	f	%
Tswana	2	12.5
Indian	1	6.3
English	1	6.3
Afrikaans	12	75
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

N=16

Table 6.5 shows that the majority of the respondents originate from an Afrikaans cultural/ethnic/language background. A reason for this is that most of the management positions within the Directorate Social Work are still held by managers

originating from an Afrikaans background. The SANDF as well as the DSW is currently in a process of transformation and envisages that this disparity regarding representivity will change as it receives priority. As figure 6.1 shows that the majority of the client system originates from a Tswana orientated background, representivity, also on managerial level, is crucial. Affirmative action within the DSW to rectify the imbalance regarding social work manager's cultural/ethnic/language background is important.

### 6.3.1.2 Present employment

Respondents had to indicate, in question 1.1.2, their present post positions within the SANDF. Their current post positions are presented in table 6.6.

**TABLE 6.6: PRESENT EMPLOYMENT**

Post position	f	%
Staff officer [Assistant Director]	6	37.5
Area manager	7	43.7
Supervisor	3	18.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

N=16

According to table 6.6, seven [43,7%] of the respondents were social work area managers, although only six [37,5%] respondents were staff officers. Only three [18.7%] respondents were supervisors. Although the number of staff members employed in the different post positions are not equal at each level, Kroon's (1996:159) suggestion that the participation of each staff member in the implementation of the action plan during a process of strategic planning is crucial, should be taken seriously by the DSW.

### 6.3.1.3 Years of service

The information regarding respondents' years of service (question 1.3) as a social work manager was another aspect that was investigated. Table 6.7 indicates the respondents' number of years experience as social work managers.

**TABLE 6.7: YEARS OF SERVICE**

YEARS OF SERVICE	f	%
<1 yr. - 4 yrs	5	31.3
5 yr +	11	68.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

N = 16

From table 6.7 above, it is clear that the majority of the respondents (68,7% [11] ) had more than five years of service, while 31,3% [five] of the respondents had less than one year to four years of service in the SANDF. These findings reveal that despite the transformation process and the ever changing environment, the management positions are still held by more senior people, who have at least some kind of experience of management. It is therefore possible to support the statement of Kroon (1996:136) that strategic planning should be a continuous planning process of top management in a changing environment in order to develop and implement a suitable plan that will lead to the fulfillment of the changing needs of the consumers of the service. This is especially important in times of change as certain decisions regarding posts and post structures, as well as how the specific social work service will correspond to the ever changing environment of the SANDF, require direction from experienced social work managers. Decisions might otherwise be taken regarding the service which might have a detrimental effect on service rendering. Only an experienced manager will be able to limit mistakes made in the past.

### 6.3.2 STRATEGIC PLANNING WITHIN THE DSW

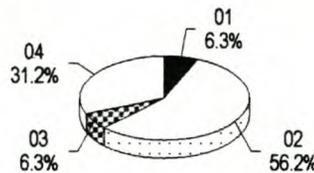
The respondents were asked to explain how a process of strategic planning will contribute towards a multi-cultural social work practice. Respondents also had to mention the importance of involving key role-players during strategic planning, as well as the need for a constant environment study within the SANDF.

#### 6.3.2.1 Contribution towards multi-cultural practice

In question 2.1, the respondents were asked to indicate how a process of strategic planning could promote a multi-cultural social work practice. Their responses have been categorised into four descriptions. Figure 6.5 below graphically presents the responses received.

**Description of the process**

- 01: It would be promoted if the following take place: (a) taking note of the actual stakeholder size; (b) environmental analysis of the different groups/cultures (c) forecast environmental trends and events in different cultures in the SANDF (d) and to determine strategic options with the different cultures in mind.
- 02: Constant coordination, planning, communication at all levels, re-evaluation and editing of current programmes on strategic level by making use of a participative diverse model. Through this, the most important information and skills can be made available to social workers which will ensure a more competent service.
- 03: Emotional conditions regarding multi-cultural issues amongst social workers will be identified and addressed by a process of strategic planning.
- 04: By viewing the business plan as a key component of strategic planning, the environmental study which precedes the writing of the plan, will ensure that the multi-cultural nature of the client system is taken into account during strategic planning. Thus, a needs-based focus.



N = 16

**FIGURE 6.5: STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS**

More than half of the respondents (56,2% [nine] ) are of the opinion that by doing continuous coordination, planning, communication at all levels, re-evaluation and editing of current programmes on strategic level and making use of a participative diverse model will contribute towards a multi-cultural social work practice (*description 02*). Only five [31,2%] respondents feel that by viewing the business plan as a key component of strategic planning, the environmental study which precedes the writing of the plan, will ensure that the multi-cultural nature of the client system is taken into account during strategic planning. Thus, a needs-based focus (*description 04*). Only one [6,3%] of the respondents is of the opinion that a multi-cultural social work practice will be promoted if the following are taken into consideration: (a) the actual stakeholder size; (b) an environmental analysis of the different groups/cultures (c) a forecast of environmental trends and events in different cultures in the SANDF and (d) to determine strategic options with the different cultures in mind (*description 01*). One [6,3%] respondent supported *description 03* which states that emotional conditions regarding multi-cultural issues amongst social workers will be identified and addressed within a process of strategic planning.

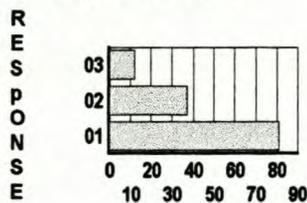
From a literature review in chapter 2, it was evident that the responses received from the respondents are in line with Brody's (1993:41-42) view that strategic planning is one of the most effective and applicable management tools used by the management of any organisation because it will show the direction for service rendering, indicate the applicability of the services rendered to the client system and will include the most important role players within the organisation. The aforementioned will ensure that the strategic planning process contributes to the needs of the diverse client system. The many different responses received are also indicative of the respondents' understanding of strategic planning in their own unique ways. It is thus clear that all people do not have the same understanding of the strategic planning process and need to be managed and dealt with by the DSW before engaging into a process of strategic planning.

### 6.3.2.2 Key role-players' involvement

The importance of involving the key role-players within the DSW during a process of strategic planning was investigated in question 2.2. The responses will first be given and be followed by a graphical presentation in figure 6.5.

#### Description of the importance of involving key role-players

- 01: Area managers, supervisors, middle managers play a vital role in any strategic planning process, as they are constantly in contact with production workers on ground level which give them a broad vision and perspective of the needs of the internal and external community and will enhance transparency of all actions.
- 02: It would ensure the buy-in, ownership and commitment from the start and alignment in terms of its purpose, outputs, measures, and criteria for prioritisation of tasks on strategic level.
- 03: It will enhance the credibility and truthfulness of the strategic planning process.



% OF RESPONDENTS

N = 16

*\*Respondents could give more than one answer*

**FIGURE 6.6: KEY ROLE PLAYERS' INVOLVEMENT**

Figure 6.6 indicates that the majority of the respondents (81,3% [13] ) are of the opinion that area managers, supervisors, and middle managers play a vital role in

any strategic planning process, because they are constantly in contact with production workers on ground level. This gives them a broad perspective of the needs of the internal and external community and also enhances the transparency of all actions (*description 01*). Six [37,5%] respondents indicated involvement in strategic planning that would ensure the key role-players buy-in and that ownership is also committed from the start. It will also ensure alignment in terms of the strategic plan's purpose, outputs, measures and criteria for prioritisation of tasks on strategic level (*description 02*). Only two [12,5%] of the respondents mentioned that involving all the key-role players will ensure the credibility of the strategic planning process (*description 03*).

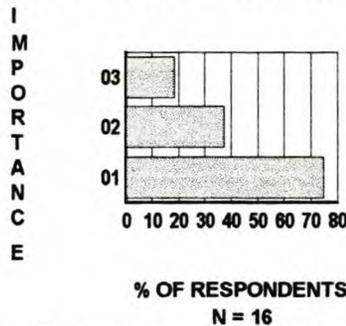
It is clear that the aforementioned responses are in line with the viewpoint of Kroon (1996:136) who states that strategic planning is a "...*continuous planning process of top management in a changing environment in order to develop and implement a suitable plan that will lead to the fulfillment of the changing needs of the consumers*". This will enable the managers or key role-players to develop and implement a suitable plan that will lead to the fulfillment of the changing needs of the consumers of the service. The key role-players will also be able to ensure that the service is needs-based and in line with the expectations of the consumers of the service. Key role-players will then be in contact with the production workers and be aware of situations, issues and problems experienced on ground level and therefore be able to make appropriate decisions.

### 6.3.2.3 **Importance of an environmental study**

In question 2.3, the respondents were asked to explain the importance of doing a continuous external as well as internal environmental study for the DSW. The findings were grouped into three descriptions and are indicated in figure 6.7 given below.

**Description of the importance of continuous environmental study**

- 01: To continuously forecast internal and external community [environmental] trends which will enable the DSW to position itself regarding a needs-based preventative/developmental/educational service at grass-roots level, which is also in line with the policy requirements of the government.
- 02: Apart from the fact that the needs of people, and the military environment change, a continuous environmental study is also the DSW's core business.
- 03: Services not needed might be seen as negative marketing and will give the DSW the opportunity to see the opinions of people regarding the service.



**FIGURE 6.7: IMPORTANCE OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY**

As shown in figure 6.7 an environmental study will predict the internal and external environmental trends and will enable the DSW to position itself regarding a needs-based preventative/developmental/educational service at grass-roots level, which is also in line with the policy requirements of the government (*description 01*). This was supported by three-quarters (75% [12]) of the respondents. Although six [37,5%] of the respondents felt that the execution of an environmental study was the DSW's core business (*description 02*), three [18,7%] respondents felt that if there was not a need for a specific service, as it might be regarded as negative marketing (*description 03*). The environmental study will thus give the DSW the opportunity to evaluate the opinions of people regarding the service.

The three descriptions in figure 6.7 can be regarded as interdependent on one another because important views on the usefulness of an environmental study came to the fore. An environmental study which is the DSW's core business, especially during strategic planning, will definitely indicate which services are required and which are not needed. This corresponds with Lyons, in Osborne (1996:92-100), who explains that an environmental analysis gives the social work manager an indication of what is happening within the external and internal environments. This environmental analysis therefore gives an indication of the needs within the organisation of consumers as well as the available resources to address these needs. Support for these views is reflected by the main aim of an environmental

study which was carried out during October 2001 by Thiele (2001) amongst 557 military members stationed within the Mafikeng/Zeerust military communities, and which was to get a profile regarding the military members within a specific area, as well as of their needs and expectations regarding the social work services. The information received equipped the social work personnel within the Mafikeng/Zeerust region to direct their service rendering at what is required by the consumers of their service.

### **6.3.3 DSW's BUSINESS PLAN**

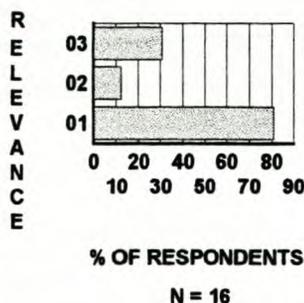
The relevance of the DSW's Business Plan as well as its alignment with the expectations of the South African Government in terms of the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) and the Financing Policy for Developmental Social Welfare Service (1999), was also investigated during this study.

#### **6.3.3.1 Relevance of business plan**

The respondents were asked, in question 3.1, what their opinions are of the relevance of the current business plan of the DSW as developed in 1997, with regards to the vision, mission and strategic objectives, in meeting the needs of the multi-cultural client system. The responses were grouped into three descriptions and are displayed in figure 6.8.

**Description of relevance of D SW's business plan**

- 01:** Military social workers are well-informed regarding the DSW's business plan's end-results and outputs, which were recently updated and in line with the policy documents to render a needs-based multi-cultural service to the client system today and in the future of the SANDF.
- 02:** More or less focus on developmental and occupational social work practice which meet the needs of multi-cultural client system.
- 03:** The business plan needs to focus more on developmental issues like HIV/AIDS. Thus continuous updating regarding new developments is imperative.



\*Respondents could give more than one response

**FIGURE 6.8: RELEVANCE OF DSW's BUSINESS PLAN**

From figure 6.8 it is evident that 81,2% [13] of the respondents felt that the current business plan was in line with the policy documents of the South African Government and relevant to render a needs-based multi-cultural service to the client system in the SANDF today and in the future (*description 01*). Twelve and a half percent [two] of the respondents felt that the business plan did focus on developmental and occupational social work practice and also met the needs of the multi-cultural client system (*description 02*). Despite the aforementioned, 31,2% [five] of the respondents were of the opinion that the business plan needs to focus more on developmental issues like HIV/AIDS. Thus continuous updating regarding new developments is imperative.

These findings should be interpreted by taking note of various authors, like Brody (1993:45); Kroon (1996:140-148); and Lyons, in Osborne (1996:92-100), who mention that an organisation such as the DSW will need to revise its business plan's workability on ground level, as well as what the impact of the objectives are on the client system and what needs to be changed. Small (2000:62), on the other hand, states that any predictions made of the future need to be revised annually or even biannually, because these predictions might be incorrect and not in line with the present organisational situations. Therefore the ever changing military environment

together with the current transformation process requires a constant revision of the DSW's business plan.

It is thus clear that the responses are not in line with related literature, (Brody, 1993:45; Kroon, 1996:140-148; and Lyons, in Osborne, 1996:92-100). The constantly changing military environment together with the uncertainty that goes with it, might force the respondents to hold on to the existing and better known business plan as they may not be so sure of what to expect after its revision. Furthermore, the process of when revision is needed, and why, might be unfamiliar to them.

### 6.3.3.2 DSW's business plan versus governmental expectations

Another aspect that was investigated in question 3.2 was the relation between the expectations of the South African Government's policy documents such as the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) and the Financing Policy for Developmental Social Welfare Services (1999) and the DSW's business plan. The respondents were asked whether the Directorate's business plan was in line with the governments expectations. See table 6.8 below for their responses.

**TABLE 6.8: BUSINESS PLAN VS EXPECTATIONS**

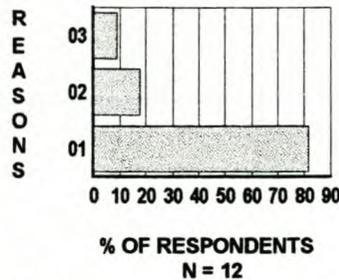
RESPONSE	f	%
YES	12	75
NO	1	6.3
UNSURE	3	18.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

N=16

Three quarters of the respondents (12 or 75%) indicated that the current DSW's business plan was in line with all the requirements of the South African Government's policy documents, as shown in table 6.8. The reasons given by these 12 [75%] respondents and which are reflected in question 3.3 of the questionnaire, are grouped into three descriptions which will be listed and then presented in figure 6.9 below.

**Description of responses**

- 01: Although the business plan is based on a military perspective, it addresses vital issues like promotive and developmental work, HIV/AIDS, women and victim empowerment. These are well covered therefore the business plan is still relevant as it addresses individual and community needs.
- 02: The White Paper should focus also on occupational social work.
- 03: Although all important factors are addressed, it needs an immediate update as to include and focus more on the developmental approach.



**FIGURE 6.9: EXPECTATION RESPONSE**

Figure 6.9 shows that 10 [83,3%] of the respondents who indicated YES in table 6.8 felt that although the business plan is based on a military perspective, it addresses vital issues like promotive and developmental work, HIV/AIDS, women and victim empowerment. These were dealt with sufficiently, therefore the business plan was still relevant as it addressed individual and community needs (*description 01*). Two [16,6%] of the 12 respondents who indicated YES in table 6.9 felt that the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) should focus also on occupational social work, which is not currently the case. The researcher is of the opinion that these two respondents confused the White Paper with the business plan or did not understand that the DSW's business plan rather needs to be in line with the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997). Only one [8,3%] of the 12 respondents in table 6.8 stated that although all the most important factors were covered in-depth, the business plan should be updated immediately so as to include the developmental approach.

Although the DSW's business plan is based on a more military perspective, the researcher is of the opinion that the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) should form the basis of the DSW's business plan. The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) forms the foundation of any service rendering within the social welfare domain and must be adhered to.

As shown in table 6.8, one [6,3%] respondent is not of the opinion that the business plan meets the South African Government's policy requirements and three [18,7%]

respondents indicated that they were unsure regarding this. This represents question 3.4 of the questionnaire.

Although the total number of respondents who indicated NO or UNSURE in table 6.8 were four [25%] in number, only two [50%] respondents motivated their viewpoints.

The motivations received postulated that the Directorate's business plan was not contradicting the policy requirements of the government. Another respondent made it clear that he/she perceived the role of the social worker in the military environment to be different from the general "Welfare Environment". This respondent said it is not considered important for the business plan to be in line with the expectations of the White Paper or the Financing Policy. The DSW's business plan rather needs to concentrate more on developmental occupational social work within the military setting.

Taking the above responses into consideration, the researcher is, however, of the opinion that it is crucial for the DSW's business plan to be in line with the expectations of the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) and the Financing Policy for Developmental Social Welfare Services (1999). A reason for this is that the military members are also part of the broader community system and thus not immune to environmental influences experienced by the bigger or civilian community. The military members also experience financial problems and/or have the need for developmental programmes like the broader community. Governmental expectations are mostly based on national situations experienced by the broader community. It would therefore be unfair if services and programmes are only available to members outside the military and not to military members themselves. This will also include the perception of only the civilian population experiencing a specific problem situation, which might lead to stereotyping a certain group of people within the broader community.

### 6.3.4 PROGRAMME PLANNING

The respondents had to indicate the process followed during programme designing, as well as how these programmes contributed towards meeting the needs of a multi-cultural client system. Furthermore, the existing programmes within the DSW which contribute toward multi-culturalism as well as in what way the programmes contribute towards multi-culturalism, had to be specified. The respondents also explained how these existing programmes contributed towards social development.

#### 6.3.4.1 Programme design process

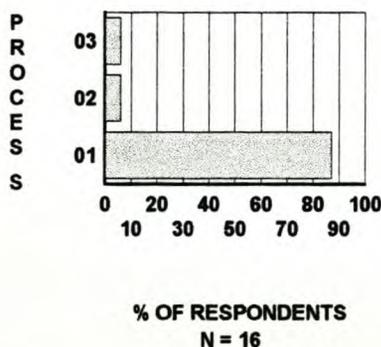
Because the process of designing a social work programme is crucial in meeting the needs of a multi-cultural client system, respondents were questioned to indicate which process they followed during the designing of a social work related programme. Related literature, (Brody 1993:45; Kroon 1996:140-148 and Lyons, in Osborne, 1996:92-100), have given nine steps that can be followed during a strategic planning process. The researcher is of the opinion that these steps can also be used during a social work programme designing process.

The steps as discussed by the aforementioned authors and which were discussed in full in chapter 2 are: **(1)** The beginning of the process. This implies that a need for a specific programme must exist and indicate who will be involved. The establishment of a committee which will be involved with the designing process might form part of the first step. **(2)** Develop or review the mission of the organisation. **(3)** Conduct an internal analysis to see what the organisation/section/unit is doing, what resources are needed and how the programme will be implemented. **(4)** Do an environmental study to determine the need for such a specific programme. **(5)** A SWOT analysis will indicate whether the specific social work section is capable of designing and implementing such a programme. **(6)** Identify the strategic aspects to determine how this programme will affect the mission, values, the social worker's productivity level as well the client system. **(7)** Determine an action plan for each strategic aspect planned for during step 6. **(8)** Operationalise the process by implementing the action plan(s). **(9)** Revise and evaluate the programme on a continuous basis.

The responses received to question 4.1 on the process followed by the respondents in designing social work programmes will follow and are displayed in figure 6.10.

**Description of the process in designing a social work programme**

- 01: The process starts by determining the need for the programme which includes an environmental study. The resources should be identified. A committee should be established which will assist with the writing of a programme. Inputs from the stakeholders and multi-professional team are important, because this will ensure the buy-in into the programme. The next stage is that of programme writing which consists of the goal(s), objectives, activities and time frames. Evaluation of the process is the next stage, followed by the implementation stage. After the implementation, the process should be re-evaluated to see if the programme is still on the right track and to determine how it was experienced by the consumers of the programme.
- 02: First do an environmental study which will be followed by examining the requirements of the DSW. After the formulation of the plan, negotiations with the stakeholders are crucial to determine their interest. The last stage is the finalisation thereof.
- 03: The process starts by doing research followed by the drafting of a programme. The programme is piloted on a small group. The evaluation of the programme presented to a smaller group. Changes are usually made if necessary. The next step will be to present the programme to a bigger group.



**FIGURE 6.10: PROGRAMME DESIGN PROCESS**

According to figure 6.10 the majority of the respondents (87,5% [14] ) use a process which is also in line with the aforementioned literature. These respondents mention that the process begins by determining the need for the programme and an environmental reading which also includes the identification of resources. The establishment of a committee is helpful to assist with the writing of the programme designing process. Inputs from the stakeholders and multi-professional team are important, because this will ensure that they buy into the programme. The researcher is of the opinion that if the role-players within an organisation do not buy-in into the specific programme by seeing it as important and feeling part of it, the achievement of the goal and objectives of the specific programme will not be possible. The worker will experience problems to get anybody committed, yet alone

finalising and implementing the programme (*description 01*). Only one [6,3%] respondent indicated that he/she would begin with an environmental study, and would take cognisance of the guidelines received from the DSW. The plan once formulated is then taken to the stakeholders in order to gain their interest. The finalisation of the plan is the last stage (*description 02*). Another respondent (one [6,3%]) has begun to do some research into the need for the programme. The programme once drafted, is then piloted to a small group of people. Evaluation takes place and the necessary changes are made after which the programme is presented to a bigger group (*description 03*).

Although none of the nine steps, as discussed by Lyons, in Osborne (1996:92-100), were exactly indicated by the respondents, their understanding of the process followed during programme designing was noticeable.

### 6.3.4.2 Needs-based social work programmes

In question 4.2, the respondents were tasked to indicate how the social work-related programmes contribute towards meeting the needs of a multi-cultural client system. The responses follow and are presented in figure 6.11.

#### Description of the responses

- 01: If the environmental study is based on the participation of all role-players, it will be needs-based and automatically contribute towards the needs of the multi-cultural client system.
- 02: As long as the programme does not promote an "us" and "them" feeling, it will meet the needs of a diverse client system.
- 03: If the stakeholders represent all levels to buy-in into the programme, it will be needs-based.
- 04: The word: multi-cultural must not be used at all, but rather focus on how these programmes can fit in with the military culture within the SANDF.

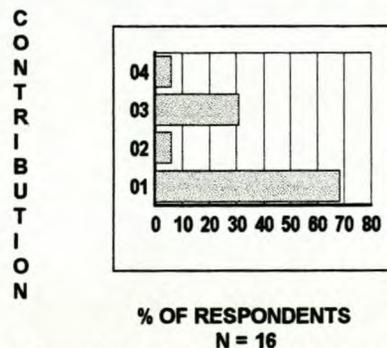


FIGURE 6.11: NEEDS-BASED SOCIAL WORK PROGRAMMES

As figure 6.11 indicates, 68,7% [11] of the respondents are of the opinion, as stated in *description 01*, that if an environmental study is based on the participation of all

role-players, it will be needs-based and automatically contribute towards the multi-cultural client system. Five [31,2%] respondents felt that if the stakeholders represent all levels and buy into the programme, it will then be needs-based (*description 03*). The responses received in description 01 and 03 indicate that social work related programmes do contribute towards the needs of the client system. Only one [6,3%] respondent was of the opinion that if the programmes do not promote an “us” and “them” feeling, it will contribute towards the needs of the diverse client system (*description 02*). Another respondent (one [6,3%]) made the statement that the word “**multi-cultural**” should not be used at all during service rendering, but that the focus should be on how the social work programmes can best fit in with the military culture within the SANDF. The researcher is of the opinion that the employees of the SANDF who function within the military culture originate from various cultural/ethnic and/or religious backgrounds and their views must not be ignored. The social work programmes must be in line with the military culture of the SANDF, but still need to be **needs-based** in order to render a multi-cultural social work service, otherwise the client system will lose interest in the programmes and they will be seen as negative marketing for social work. Hickson and Christie (1989:164) state that focus should be given to meet the world and the people in depth, and to share in the same reality in a collaborative endeavour to effect change in some way or another. Thus, to ignore the concept of “multi-cultural” will mean that people do not have specific needs and are seen as “robots” with programmes programmed into their computer brains.

#### 6.3.4.3 Existing social work programmes

The respondents had to indicate, in question 4.3 (a), whether the existing social work programmes contributed towards a multi-cultural social work service rendering. Table 6.9 indicates these responses.

**TABLE 6.9: SOCIAL WORK PROGRAMMES**

PROGRAMMES	f	%
Supervisors training programme [STP]	2	12.5
Life skills / empowerment programme / potential development	8	50
Deployment resilience programme	5	31.2
Women empowerment/ violence programmes	3	18.7
HIV/AIDS programme	3	18.7
Financial management programme	5	31.2
Rationalisation programmes	2	12.5
Cultural diversity programmes	8	50
Alcohol and substance abuse programmes	2	12.5
Employee assistance programmes	2	12.5
All community development done in a people centered way.	1	6.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>*41</b>	<b>100</b>

N = 16

\* Respondents could give more than one response

Table 6.9 shows that the cultural diversity programme and life skills/empowerment/potential development programme, are seen by most (eight [50%]) of the respondents as meeting the needs of a culturally diverse client system. Next in the line are the deployment resilience and financial management programmes indicated by five (31.2%) of the respondents respectively. The women empowerment/violence and HIV/AIDS programmes are identified by three [18.7%] respondents respectively. The alcohol and substance abuse programme, employee assistance programmes, rationalisation programmes and STP's, are regarded by two [12.5%] respondents as contributing towards a multi-cultural social work service rendering. Only one [6.2%] respondent indicated that all community development programmes done in a people-centered way will automatically promote a multi-cultural social work service rendering.

It is positive to note that within an environment which is representative of various cultural/ethnic/religious groupings, certain programmes of DSW meet the needs of a multi-cultural client system. In table 6.3, the various religious backgrounds of the diverse client system were confirmed as well as the many cultural and ethnic orientations in figure 6.1.

### 6.3.4.4 Contribution towards multi-culturalism

After listing these programmes [see table 6.9], the respondents had to indicate in question 4.3. (b) in what way the programmes contributed towards a multi-cultural social work service. All the responses were grouped together into three descriptions which will first be presented and thereafter displayed in figure 6.12.

#### Description of contribution

- 01: All programmes were adapted to enhance the needs of a multi-cultural military system, which promote a better understanding and awareness on all levels.
- 02: Members of all cultures are empowered with the knowledge and skills to further develop themselves and therefore the programmes are in line with the needs of the client systems.
- 03: Role-players, stakeholders, presenters and programme writers from all cultural groupings are involved during the writing of the programme which ensures cultural friendliness.

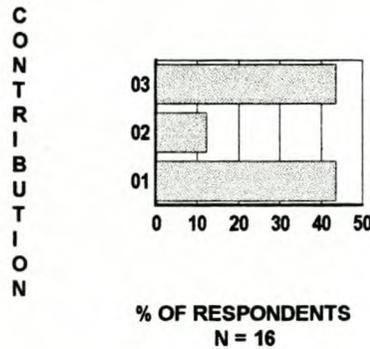


FIGURE 6.12: CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS MULTI-CULTURALISM

As seen in the figure 6.12, 43,8% [seven] of the respondents felt that as the role-players, stakeholders, presenters and programme writers were representative of all cultural groups, the writing of these programmes will ensure a positive contribution towards a multi-cultural service (*description 03*). Besides this, another 43,8% [seven] of the respondents indicated that all programmes within the DSW were adapted to enhance the needs of a multi-cultural military system, and also to promote a better understanding and awareness of these programmes at all levels (*description 01*). Only two [12,5%] respondents indicated that all the existing social work programmes empowered members of all cultures with the knowledge and skills to further develop themselves and that the programmes were therefore in line with the needs of the client systems (*description 02*).

From the responses it is apparent that all respondents agree that existing social work programmes do contribute towards a multi-cultural social work practice and that only different needs exist among the client system. These findings can be seen as supportive of the view of Matthews (1996:133) that the ability to acquire and access accurate cultural information about the client system, is essential to cultural competence. It is thus imperative to consider all the different needs of the client system as well as to obtain the correct knowledge regarding a specific culture when developing new social work programmes.

### 6.3.4.5 Social development

The respondents answered the open-ended question 4.4 on how the existing social work programmes contribute towards the social development perspective. The responses of all 16 [100%] can be classified into five categories and are given in figure 6.13 below.

#### Description of responses

- 01: It empowers the client system to help him-/herself.
- 02: It assists the client system regarding the development of certain skills, enhances decision-making, fosters values and personal growth by using the adult education perspective.
- 03: Clients sometimes experience a "so what" feeling as development in an advanced manner is usually not involved.
- 04: It would enhance social development if it were rather person-centered.
- 05: Not in any way unless the community takes responsibility for the programmes.

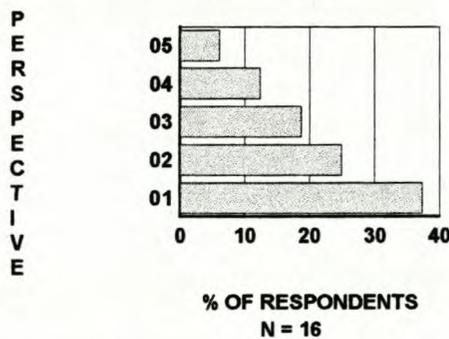


FIGURE 6.13: CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

It is clear from figure 6.13 that six [37,5%] respondents mentioned that the programmes did contribute towards the social developmental perspective because the programmes focus on teaching the client system to help him-/herself (*description 01*). Four [25%] respondents indicated that the existing programmes assist the client system with regards to the development of certain skills, enhance decision-making, foster values and enable the clients to experience personal growth by using the adult

education perspective (*description 02*). On the other hand, three [18,8%] respondents stated that programmes are often too elementary, leaving the client system with a “so what” feeling, as development is often not addressed in an advanced manner (*description 03*). Two [12,5%] respondents felt that the programmes will enhance social development if they are based on the person-centered approach (*description 04*). Only one [6,3%] respondent indicated that no programme will promote any form of social development if the community does not take responsibility for the programme being presented (*description 05*).

Woods (1998:236) states that development refers to a process which allows for the greatest improvement in a person’s quality of life in general, and Midgley (1996:2) mentions that social development promotes a process of growth, change and progress by integrating economic and social policies. Mazibuki (1996:238) feels that a people-centered and social participation philosophy seem to be the main value promise of this approach. The researcher is of the opinion that an integrated focus on the client system will enhance social development. This is confirmed by Potgieter (1998:114-121) who states that the holistic developmental model, which focuses on the client system’s social functioning, social care and social security, will contribute more towards social development.

With this in mind it is clear from the aforementioned responses, that social work managers have an understanding of what is meant by social development.

### **6.3.5 CULTURAL/ETHNIC/LANGUAGE BACKGROUND**

In question 5.1, the respondents had to point out what the cultural/ethnic/language background of the majority of their social work personnel within their section is. Table 6.10 gives an analysis of the present situation.

**TABLE 6.10: BACKGROUNDS**

Background	f	%
Zulu	5	9.8
Se-Sotho	3	5.9
Xhosa	7	13.7
Tswana	10	19.6
N-Sotho	5	9.8
Indian	1	2
Swazi	1	2
Afrikaans	12	23.5
Venda	1	2
English	6	11.8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>*51</b>	<b>100</b>

N = 16

\* Respondents could give more than one answer

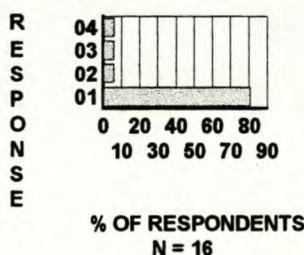
The above analysis in table 6.10 shows that the social work personnel consists of a wide variety of cultural/ethnic/language mixes. This requires efficient management skills by the social work manager. If the social work manager ignores a social worker's cultural/ethnic/language background, he/she will not be able to meet the social worker within his/her world in-depth and he/she will also, in the same way, not be able to effect change and development within the subordinate (Hickson & Christie, 989:164).

### 6.3.5.1 Client system's cultural/ethnic background

The respondents had to respond to open-ended question 5.2 regarding the necessity for the social work practitioner to be aware of the cultural/ethnic background of the client system during service rendering. All responses were categorised into four categories. Figure 6.14 below presents these responses.

#### Description of responses

- 01: Different cultures have different needs and behaviour patterns and must be understood by the social worker in order to understand the client. The social work professional must meet the client on his/her level, and determine what motivated the client to act in a certain way. This will ensure acceptability and applicability of the intervention process.
- 02: It is not so important to be aware of the background, as the social work theory should be the only guide for social workers.
- 03: Professional must join and agree with the predominant habits, practices and beliefs of the group.
- 04: It is more important that the presenter is from the same cultural background than that of the group.



**FIGURE 6.14: BACKGROUND AWARENESS**

According to figure 6.14, 81,2% [13] of the respondents stated that the different cultures have different needs and behaviour patterns which must be understood by the social work practitioner. The worker must meet the client on his/her level and determine what motivated the client to act in a certain way. This will ensure acceptability and applicability of the intervention process (*description 01*).

These findings support Strydom's (2000:93) statement that for a professional to render an effective culturally diverse service, it is important to understand the customs, codes of behaviour and value-systems of the people. Durst (1994:30) mentions that multi-cultural social work practice possesses its own set of challenges of which social workers must take cognisance. Thus, to be aware of the client system's cultural and ethnic background is crucial.

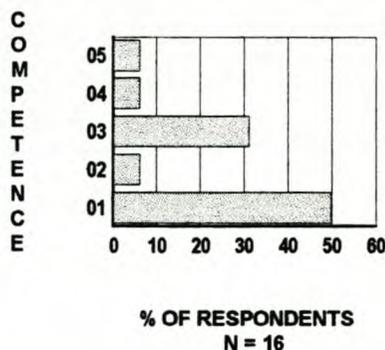
From the responses received from the client system as displayed in table 6.4 it was noted that the majority, 425 (76,3%) of the clients felt that it is imperative for the social work professional to be aware of and informed regarding their [clients'] cultural/ethnic/language backgrounds. Thus, it is remarkable to note that respondents do strive towards cultural competence in their own unique ways.

#### **6.3.6 COMPETENCE**

In question 6.1, the social work managers had to indicate how competent they regard themselves to be in performing management activities with social work practitioners coming from a different cultural/ethnic background than themselves. The responses were grouped into five categories. Figure 6.15 below presents these responses.

**Description of competence**

- 01: Very competent: a manager needs to manage people within the section according to their strong and weak points, and to keep in mind the relevance and accountability of the service. It is not about culture, but about the management of personalities, expertise and expectations.
- 02: The manager must be open to continuously learn from others.
- 03: Average: although still in a learning process, managers should move towards competence in an organizational culture.
- 04: Managers should rather focus on the basic social work knowledge and skills as a way to understand and accept the people.
- 05: Do not know at all.



**FIGURE 6.15: COMPETENCE IN MANAGEMENT**

As shown in figure 6.15, half (50% [8] ) of the respondents stated that they regarded themselves as being very competent in rendering management activities to a diverse social work personnel system. These respondents also stated that a manager needs to manage people within the section according to their own strong and weak points. They felt that prevalence and accountability should always be kept in mind, and that management was not about culture, but rather about the management of personalities, expertise and expectations (*description 01*). Five [31,3%] of the respondents regarded themselves as being average with regards to the rendering of services to a diverse system. These respondents added that although they were still in a learning process, the manager should rather focus on understanding and dealing with the organisational culture (*description 03*) than the diverse client system. One of the respondents [6,3%] mentioned that the manager should have an attitude of being open to continuous learning from others (*description 02*). Another respondent (6,3%) stated that the manager should rather focus on the basic social work knowledge and skills as a way to understand and accept people (*description 04*). One [6,3%] respondent indicated that he/she did not know how competent he/she was regarding the rendering of a cultural competent service (*description 05*).

From the responses received it is evident that the respondents are not clear about their management skills within a multi-cultural environment. Another factor that comes to the fore is the various responses from them. This clearly indicates the

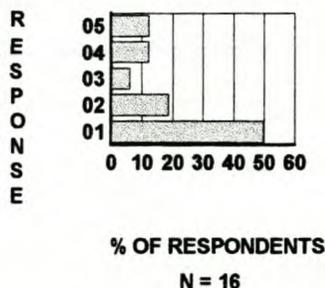
diverse thought processes that exist amongst the respondents. Thus, to ignore the differences that exist amongst people, whether cultural/ethnic, religious and or language, will be disastrous. Note should be taken of Asamoah (1996:1) who mentioned that the question is not whether professionals **should** provide a culturally competent service, *but* rather **how well** they can do it. It is therefore a given fact that the social work manager and production worker **must ensure** that a **culturally competent service is rendered** to the client system.

### 6.3.7 HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Another open-ended question (nr. 6.2) presented to the respondents, requested their opinion of how the social work manager's cultural/ethnic background will influence the human resources management of social work practitioners emanating from a cultural background different to their own. Torres and Jones (1997:168) suggest that it is important to explore one's own ethnic and cultural background, and especially how this may effect the interaction process with individuals from a different cultural grouping. To recognise a person's own culture's influence on his/her way of thinking and actions, is crucial. Introspection of some kind is necessary before coming into contact with any diverse cultural and ethnic grouping. The responses were categorised into five groupings which will be discussed first and thereafter presented in figure 6.16 below.

**Description of responses**

- 01:** Although the manager should focus on the management of personalities and skills of the workers and how these will fit into the military culture, managers should accept all subordinates irrespective of their culture, and be guided by their perceptions and value principles. This is also part of a Christian's perspective of life.
- 02:** Tend to be more tolerant towards social workers from a different background although it is the task of management to empower and enable subordinates.
- 03:** Do not know at all.
- 04:** One tends to work more from a westernised background and therefore will expect subordinates to be responsible and disciplined workers.
- 05:** If a manager was brought up in a township, he/she will have been exposed to many different cultures which will have empowered him/her regarding how to act towards a given culture.



**FIGURE 6.16: HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT**

From figure 6.16, it is evident that half of the respondents (50% [eight] ) are of the opinion in *description 01*, that the manager should rather focus on the management of personalities and skills of social workers and how these will fit in with the military culture. Three [18,8%] of the respondents indicated in *description 02*, that they are more tolerant towards social workers from a different background; two [12,5] of the respondents mentioned that their westernised way of working expects subordinates to be responsible and disciplined (*description 04*); another two [12,5%] of the respondents indicated that they were brought up in a township and were thus used to all the different cultures. One [6,3%] respondent did not give any answer.

These findings are in line with Ronnau (1994:33-34) and Dungee-Anderson and Beckett (1990:462-467) who mentioned that the social work professional needs to become more aware of their own culture, beliefs and values. The researcher is of the opinion that this will promote competence in service rendering as professionals will be less likely to project negative attitudes and feelings regarding their own culture onto the client system. This is confirmed by Torres and Jones (1997:168) who state that its important to explore one's own cultural and ethnic background and specifically how it may effect the interaction process with people from a different cultural background.

### 6.3.7.1 Competence in service rendering

Another factor addressed in the research was whether the respondents regarded their social work service rendering in the section as multi-cultural (question 6.3). Table 6.11 presents the responses.

**TABLE 6.11: COMPETENCE IN SERVICE RENDERING**

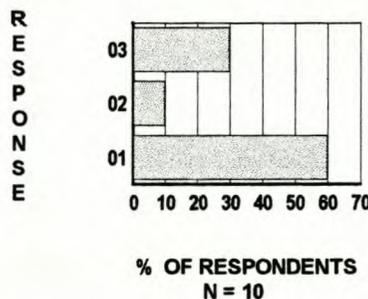
RESPONSES	f	%
YES	10	62.5
NO	4	25
UNSURE	2	12.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

N = 16

It is evident from table 6.11 above that the majority, 10 (62,5%) of the respondents stated that they were of the opinion that their social work section is rendering a competent multi-cultural social work service. These 10 [62,5%] respondents based their decisions on the following three responses in question 6.4, which will also be displayed in figure 6.17.

**Description of responses**

- 01: The focus is on needs-driven service rendering with the aim to increase productivity, to improve stability within the workplace, to facilitate organisational change and the general well-being of the general work force.
- 02: Programmes like life skills, financial management and HIV/AIDS have been adjusted to accommodate the culturally different client system.
- 03: All the social workers are representative of all the cultures, which ensures competence.



**FIGURE 6.17: COMPETENCE IN SERVICE RENDERING**

Figure 6.17 shows that six [60%] of the 10 [62,5%] respondents indicated in table 6.11 that the focus within their social work section was needs-driven with the aim to increase productivity, improve stability within the workplace, facilitate organisational change and the general well-being of the general work force (*description 01*). This is in line with Googins and Godfrey (1987:38) and Ozawa (1980:38) who state that the purpose of occupational social work is to improve stability, to enhance the general

well-being of employee[s] and to strengthen the relationship between the employer and employee. This clearly emphasises the need towards competence in service rendering.

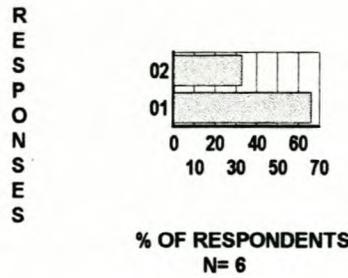
Three [30%] of the 10 respondents in table 6.11 are of the opinion that the availability of social workers representative of the different cultures within their social work section, ensures cultural competence (*description 03*). The researcher does not agree with this statement, because the availability of various social work practitioners emanating from different cultural/ethnic backgrounds does not automatically guarantee cultural competence. Authors like Jayasuriya (1992:39); Potgieter (1998:296); Ronnau (1994:32) and Williams (1997:14-15) make it clear that culture has to do with people in interaction with one another and their environment and is therefore not static. The professional from the same culture as the client system might not even agree with all cultural rituals and traditions and thus by detrimentally assuming that this professional person will render a competent service, because of the similar cultural background.

Only one [10%] of the 10 respondent in table 6.11 mentioned that the life skills, financial management and HIV/AIDS programmes have been adjusted in order to accommodate the culturally different client system (*description 02*). It is enlightening to note that there are at least some programmes within the DSW that do contribute towards a multi-cultural service rendering.

Those respondents who indicated NO, (25% [four] ), or UNSURE, (12,5% [two] ), in table 6.11 have given the following suggestions (question 6.5) for what needs to be done to ensure a competent multi-cultural social work service with their sections. These responses were grouped into two descriptions which will also be displayed in figure 6.18.

**Description of the responses**

- 01: Too many workers from one cultural grouping who often have a reluctant attitude to render a service to all cultural groupings.
- 02: Need to concentrate more on cultural issues.



**FIGURE 6.18: POOR COMPETENCE IN SERVICE RENDERING**

From figure 6.18 it is evident that four (66,7%) of the six [37,5%] respondents in table 6.11 who indicated NO and UNSURE, stated that there are still too many social workers emanating from one cultural grouping who have a reluctant attitude to render a service to all cultural groupings (*description 01*). Two [33,3%] of the six [37,5%] respondents in table 6.11 are of the opinion that their social work section needs to concentrate more on cultural issues. This is extremely important as Becket and Dungee-Anderson (1997:39) state that it is the professional person’s duty to meet the client where he/she is, and to offer informed and effective multi-cultural therapeutic interventions to the client system.

This is a prime example of social work professionals who have not yet sorted out their own attitudes towards rendering services to a diverse client system. In the military environment, with its diverse client system, reaching of competence in social work service rendering, is imperative.

**6.3.7.2 Guidance for human resources management**

The respondents had to indicate in question 7.1, whether they required any additional knowledge and skills with regards to the management of a multi-cultural social work personnel system. Table 6.12 indicates the responses.

**TABLE : 6.12: GUIDANCE FOR HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT**

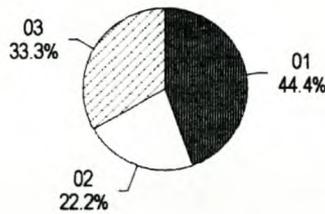
RESPONSES	f	%
YES	9	56.3
NO	4	25
UNSURE	3	18.8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

N = 16

Table 6.12 shows that 56,3% [nine] of the respondents required some form of guidance regarding the management of a multi-cultural social work personnel system. The knowledge and skills needed by these 56,3% [nine] respondents were categorised into three groupings (question 7.2), which will be displayed in figure 6.19 below.

**Description of responses**

- 01: Knowledge regarding languages, religions, characteristics of other cultures and what the social work manager can do to promote a nonracial and multi-cultural social work service.
- 02: The role of rituals, the importance of life-events to a culture like births, marriages, deaths, and to accommodate the different working styles and work tempo.
- 03: How to effectively address racism in a unit originating from a long-standing bitterness within a person or group of people which is in some instances justifiable and in some cases not.



N = 9

**FIGURE 6.19: SPECIFIC GUIDELINES**

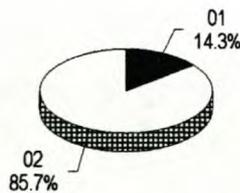
From figure 6.19 it is evident that four [44,4%] of the respondents who indicated YES in table 6.12 require knowledge regarding different languages, religions, characteristics of other cultures and what the social work manager can do to promote a nonracial and multi-cultural social work service (*description 01*). Three [33,3%] of the nine respondents in table 6.12 require knowledge and skills of how to effectively address racism within a unit which originates from a long-standing bitterness within a person or group of people which is in some instances justifiable and in some cases not (*description 03*). Only two [22,2%] of the nine respondents in table 6.12 stated that knowledge and skills are needed regarding the role of rituals, importance of life-events to a culture like births, marriages, deaths, and ways in which to accommodate the different working styles and work tempo (*description 02*).

The responses given in figure 6.19 are, according to the research, all the basic knowledge needed within a multi-cultural setting. Devore and Schlesinger (1991:31-32) clearly state that attention should be given to the rituals and celebrations of the specific individuals, groups and communities within which the professional person is working. If the professional person does not possess basic knowledge and skills regarding the client system's cultural and ethnic background and heritage, he/she will not be able to sensitively assist the client in any form of service rendering.

In table 6.12, four [25%] respondents indicated NO while another three [18,8%] respondents indicated UNSURE with regards to the need for knowledge and skills (question 7.3). These seven [43,8%] respondents indicated the following two responses as reasons for their decisions in figure 6.20. Figure 6.20 will display these responses below.

**Description of responses**

- 01: Multi-cultural management is not needed, but rather a basic management course.
- 02: Management skills which will equip a manager to handle diversity which can also be applicable within a multi-cultural social work setting.



N = 7

**FIGURE 6.20 GUIDELINES NOT ESSENTIAL**

Figure 6.20 shows that the majority (85,7% [six] ) of the seven respondents in table 6.12 require a management skills training programme which will equip the manager to better handle diversity and which will also be applicable within a multi-cultural social work setting (*description 02*). Only one [14,3%] of the seven respondents in table 6.12 stated that he/she did not need guidelines in multi-cultural management, but rather a basic management course (*description 01*).

According to the researcher, attention towards a multi-cultural service rendering should be included into management courses. The implementation of management

within a multi-cultural environment must be the focus of any management training. By doing so the social work manager can become skilled in rendering management functions in a multi-cultural setting.

### 6.3.8 SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTION

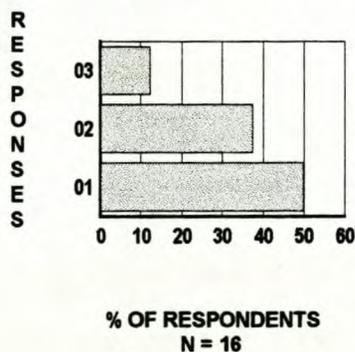
The respondents had to respond to three open-ended questions. They were asked to indicate what they as a managers, were doing to update the knowledge of their subordinate social work practitioners regarding cultural models and approaches. Another question focused on the cultural models and approaches they were aware of, while the last question concentrated on how these cultural models and approaches contributed towards competent multi-cultural social work service rendering. The responses to the aforementioned questions will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

#### 6.3.8.1 Updating social work practitioners knowledge

The managers' responses to question 8.1 regarding the updating of the knowledge of social work practitioners regarding cultural models and approaches in order to ensure a cultural competent service, were categorised into three categories. These three responses are displayed in figure 6.21 below.

**Description of responses**

- 01: Nothing specifically is done, because it is not the way of thinking.
- 02: During in-service training, group supervision and discussion sessions.
- 03: By reading widely and making the literature available to others within the section.



**FIGURE 6.21: UPDATING KNOWLEDGE**

According to figure 6.21, eight [50%] of the respondents indicated that multi-cultural social work service rendering is not their way of thinking, and therefore they are not

doing anything specific (*description 01*). The attitude of these respondents stresses the importance of integrating multi-cultural practice within managerial skills training. This might sensitise especially managers of the importance of focussing on the different needs and viewpoints of those emanating from a diverse cultural/ethnic and/or religious background.

Despite the view expressed in *description 01*, six [37,5%] respondents indicated that they did use in-service training, group supervision and discussion sessions to update the social work practitioners regarding cultural models and approaches (*description 02*). Only two [12,5%] respondents mentioned that they read widely and then made sure that the literature is available to the rest of the personnel within the section.

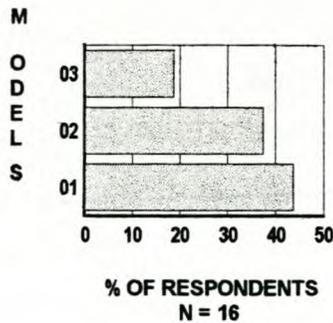
Within an organisation like the SANDF which consists of a wide variety of cultural/ethnic/language mixes, [see paragraph 6.2.3 within this chapter], it is appalling to note that the social work managers are not doing much to update their social work practitioner's knowledge regarding culturally sensitive models and approaches. The researcher is of the opinion that the updating of social workers regarding cultural models and approaches should form part of the guidelines given by the Directorate Social Work to all managers. This will sensitise then towards the importance of this matter.

#### 6.3.8.2 **Cultural models and approaches**

The responses were grouped into three descriptions which are presented in figure 6.22.

**Description of models and approaches**

- 01: Not aware of any available models and approaches.
- 02: The social work practice model, systems theory, narrative theory, behaviorism, existentialism, rational-emotive therapy, the resilience model and the person-centered approach.
- 03: Apart from a model on training students for social work within a multi-cultural society, Devore & Schlesinger explain the ethnic-sensitive approach.



**FIGURE 6.22: SOCIAL WORK MODELS AND APPROACHES**

Although figure 6.22 indicates that seven [43,8%] of the respondents are not aware of any models and approaches (*description 01*), six [37,5%] stated that they did make use of the social work practice model, the systems theory, the narrative theory, behaviorism, existentialism, rational-emotive therapy, the resilience model and the person-centered approach (*description 02*). Three [12,5%] respondents mentioned that besides the model on training students for social work within a multi-cultural society, they made use of Devore and Schlesinger’s ethnic-sensitive approach (*description 03*). Of the 16 respondents, it is positive to learn that at least three [12,5%] of them are aware of culturally sensitive literature as mentioned by Devore and Schlesinger (1991).

The researcher is of the opinion that some of the respondents are not aware of the existence of the ethnic-sensitive approach within social work practice. The fact that professionals have not been exposed enough to multi-cultural service rendering and that clients are rather referred to practitioners emanating from the same culture as themselves, might serve as reason for them not being sensitive towards the ethnic-sensitive models and approaches.

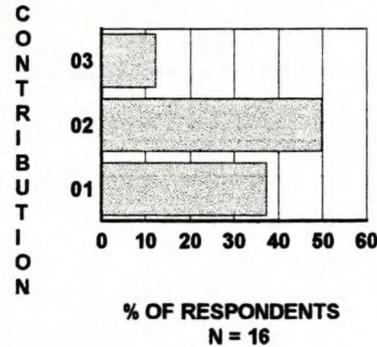
**6.3.8.3 Contribution towards competence**

In question 8.3 the respondents were asked to indicate how the cultural models and approaches they indicated in figure 6.22 contribute towards a competent

multi-cultural service rendering. Their responses were grouped into three categories. Figure 6.23 graphically displays these responses.

**Description of the responses**

- 01: Not sure at all.
- 02: Focus on the needs, look at clients situation and will create a greater sensitivity and understanding towards different client systems.
- 03: Focus on the person as a whole.



**FIGURE 6.23: CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS COMPETENCE**

Figure 6.23 shows that eight [50%] of the respondents stated that the models and approaches focus on the needs from the client system’s frame of reference and also create a greater sensitivity and understanding towards different client systems (*description 02*). Six [37,5%] of the respondents were not sure whether these models and approaches contribute towards a multi-cultural service rendering (*description 01*). Only two [12,5%] respondents indicated that the models and approaches focused on the person as a whole (*description 03*).

Once again the respondents are not clear about what is needed in an approach or model to achieve competence in service rendering. Sheafor, Horesji and Horesji’s (2000:59) statement that competence calls for interventions that are acceptable and useful to the client system can be used as a guideline in this regard. This requires the professional person to always be aware of the client system’s cultural background and expectations during the implementation of available approaches and models in social work service rendering.

## 6.4 CONCLUSION

From the discussion of service rendering to the client system, it is evident that the social worker must be aware of the client's cultural/ethnic/language/religious background during service rendering.

The information obtained from the findings of the social management professionals will provide more insight into managerial aspects within a multi-cultural managerial service rendering environment. It is also crucial to note that the present social work managers within the DSW still need to learn more regarding management activities within a diverse client system.

The next chapter will concentrate on the findings received from the social work production workers.

## CHAPTER 7

### THE ROLE OF SANDF SOCIAL WORK PRODUCTION WORKERS IN MULTI-CULTURAL PRACTICE

#### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

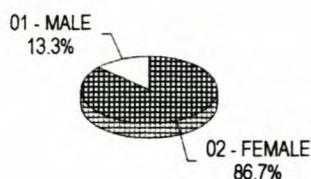
In this chapter the results of the group interviews (*Appendix C*) with 45 of approximately 105 (42,8%) social work production workers within the SANDF will be discussed. In view of De Vos's (1998:192-193) guidelines that 45% of a population of 100 people can be regarded as a representative sample, this study can be regarded as being relatively representative of all the social work production workers within the DSW of the SANDF.

#### 7.2 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

The following data represents the biographical information with regards to the respondents' gender (question 1.1), the respondents' cultural background (question 1.2.1), their years of service within the SANDF (question 1.3.1), as well as their total number of years of service as a social worker (question 1.3.2). This section will conclude with a focus on the nature of services rendered (question 1.4.1) by the respondents.

##### 7.2.1 Gender

The first factor which was investigated was the gender of the respondents. The distribution is reflected in the figure 7.1 below.



N = 45

**FIGURE 7.1: GENDER OF SOCIAL WORKERS**

Figure 7.1 shows that more females [86,7%] completed the questionnaires than males [13,3%]. The reason for this is probably because the social work profession within the SANDF is currently dominated by females employees. Furthermore, the social work profession, like the nursing profession (Setswe, 1996:16-17), is traditionally seen as a female domain. Although this situation is currently changing as more males enter the social work field, the majority of the social work posts within the SANDF are still held by female social workers.

### 7.2.2 Cultural background

Another aspect reflected on was the respondents' cultural/ethnic/language backgrounds. The findings are presented in Table 7.1.

**TABLE 7.1: CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS**

BACKGROUNDS	f	%
Zulu	3	6.6
Se-Sotho	1	2.2
Xhosa	5	11.1
Tswana	10	22.2
N-Sotho	2	4.4
Swazi	1	2.2
Afrikaans	18	40
Venda	1	2.2
English	2	4.4
Tsonga	1	2.2
Indian	1	2.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100</b>

N = 45

Table 7.1 shows that less than half of the respondents (40% [18]) were from an Afrikaans speaking/cultural/ethnic background, while two [4,4%] respondents were from an English background. The Tswana speaking/cultural/ethnic/language

background represented 10 [22,2%] of the respondents. Only five [11,1%] respondents were from a Xhosa background, followed by three [6,6%] respondents from a Zulu background. Northern-Sotho was only represented by two [4,4%] respondents, while Se-Sotho, Swazi, Venda, Tsonga and Indian were represented by one [2,2%] respondent respectively. One [2,2%] respondent represents the Tsonga background while another one [2,2%] originates from an Indian background.

From the aforementioned, it is clear that although the Afrikaans speaking cultural/ethnic/language backgrounds represented 40%, which is not half of the respondents, the rest of the cultural/ethnic/language backgrounds, grouped together as indicated in table 7.1, are represented by the majority (27 [60%] ) of the respondents. As can be seen from the results, this research can be considered as being representative of a variety of cultural/ethnic and language backgrounds.

### 7.2.3 Years of service

The number of service years as social worker within the SANDF as well as their total number of years as a social worker, which include the years within the SANDF and outside the organisation were investigated.

#### 7.2.3.1 Number of service years within the SANDF

Table 7.2 indicates the number of years of service as a social worker within the SANDF.

**TABLE 7.2: YEARS OF SERVICE**

Service years in SANDF	f	%
<5 months - 2 yr.	17	37.7
3 yr. - 6 yr.	13	28.8
7 yr. - 10 yr.	10	22.2
11 yr. - 15 yr.	3	6.6
16 yr +	2	4.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100</b>

**N = 45**

In table 7.2 the respondents' total number of years as a social worker within the SANDF are grouped into time frames ranging from less than five months to 20 years of service. The majority of the respondents (37,7% [17] ) specified their years of service from less than five months to two years. This is followed by 13 [28,8%] respondents with three to six years of service, ten [22,2%] respondents with seven to 10 years of service and three (6,6%) respondents with 11 to 15 years of service. Only two (4,4%) of the workers had more than 16 years of service.

### 7.2.3.2 Total number of years of service as a social worker

Table 7.3 indicates the period of service within the SANDF, as well as within other organisations.

**TABLE 7.3: TOTAL YEARS OF SERVICE**

TOTAL YEARS	f	%
1 yr. - 4 yr.	18	40
5 yr. - 9 yr.	13	28.8
10 yr. - 14 yr.	8	17.7
15 yr. - 19 yr.	2	4.4
20 yr. - 24 yr.	3	6.6
25 yr. +	1	2.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100</b>

N = 45

Table 7.3 shows that although only 18 [40%] of the respondents have one to four years of service as a social worker within and outside the SANDF, the majority, namely 27 [60%] of the respondents' number of year of service range from five to more than 25 years of service.

It is clear from both table 7.2 and table 7.3, that respondents currently employed within the SANDF may lack an experience base as social workers due to the limited number of years of experience as social workers. A change in occupation can be regarded as a reason for the limited experience of social workers. This was also found in a study done by Botha and Cronje (1996:314), who referred to Lyons et al (1995:181), who stated that social workers are prime candidates for administrative positions in, for instance, the nursing and education

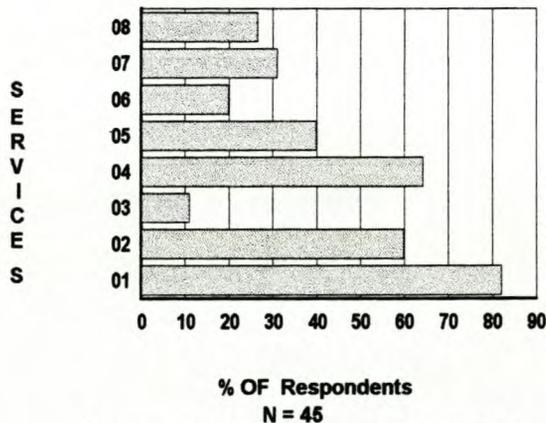
professions or they become involved in their own businesses. This situation, as discussed in chapter 6, is also true of the military setting. As mentioned, social workers are currently prime candidates for managerial positions, which are mainly outside the social work domain but within the bigger SANDF.

### 7.2.4 Nature of social work services

Social work service rendering within the SANDF is characterised by a wide variety of services rendered by social workers. Respondents have been requested to point out the type of services rendered by them. A description of these will first be given and demonstrated in figure 7.2.

**Description of service rendering**

01: Family care	02: Child care	03: Geriatric care	06: Physically impaired
04: Alcohol and substance dependency	05: Mental health		
07: Medical social work	08: Occupational social work		



**FIGURE 7.2: NATURE OF SERVICE**

From figure 7.2 it is evident that a wide variety of services are being rendered within the military setting. The military setting places various demands on its employees as well as on their dependants. Some of these demands, as discussed by Pretorius (1998:17-18), are for example: separation from family members through constant deployments and attending military courses; continuous transference of members and their families; the fact that military members must be combat ready at all times and often at short notice; and lastly, the continuous exposure to dangerous situations. Thus, the extreme, volatile

military environment can be seen as a reason for the high concentration on family- and child care, as well as alcohol and substance dependency during social work service rendering. Although 12 [26,6%] members added occupational social work as a service rendering field, it is important to note that military social work forms part of occupational social work in general. Therefore, all the respondents do render social work services within the occupational field of the military environment, because as Garber & McNelis (1995:1726) explained, social work in the military environment is one of the oldest forms of occupational social work.

### 7.3 MULTI-CULTURAL SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

In this section six subsections related to multi-cultural social work practice will be offered. The respondents had to explain their understanding in general of the terms: "*multi-cultural social work practice, culture and ethnicity*". This was followed by respondents specifying the cultural/ethnic/language backgrounds of the majority of their clients, as well as the importance of being aware of the clients-system's cultural/ethnic/language background. In the competence subsection, the respondents were requested to describe their competence regarding social work service rendering to a culturally different client system. The respondents also had to indicate whether their own cultural/ethnic/language background could influence service rendering to the culturally different client system. This subsection concluded with the respondents' understanding of a culturally competent service.

The question as to whether the respondents require any additional knowledge and skills regarding service rendering to a multi-cultural client system, was another aspect that was investigated. The various value orientations which could play a role during any social work intervention form another part of the discussion. The last subsection focuses on the role and importance which communication has during service rendering to a multi-cultural client system, as well as what *respondents* have done to overcome the cultural and language barriers which may exist during service rendering.

### 7.3.1 Understanding various terminologies

The respondents were asked to explain their understanding of the terms: multi-cultural social work practice, culture, and ethnicity.

#### 7.3.1.1 Multi-cultural social work practice

By analysing the data from the respondents in question 2.1.1, their understanding of the term *multi-cultural social work practice* has been categorised into six descriptions. These descriptions will first be given and displayed in figure 7.3.

##### Descriptions of the term: multi-cultural social work practice

- 01: The social worker is sensitive towards and recognises the prevalence of more than one culture within an organisation and is willing to render a service which is based on felt and expressed needs regarding people's cultural background.
- 02: A social work practice that crosses all cultural/ethnic/language borders.
- 03: The awareness, understanding, acceptance, accommodation of all cultures with an open and receptive attitude, which enables the social worker to intervene optimally with all clients originating from a different cultural background.
- 04: Do not know.
- 05: Refers to the different and diverse values that govern the social work profession.
- 06: To have a pool of social workers emanating from various cultural/ethnic/language backgrounds and allow clients to report to social workers originating from their own unique culture/ethnic/language grouping.

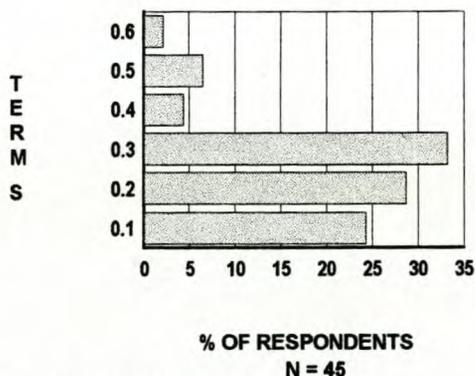


FIGURE 7.3: UNDERSTANDING OF MULTI-CULTURAL SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

Figure 7.3 shows that fifteen (33,3%) of the respondents indicated that **multi-cultural social work practice** concentrates on the **awareness, acceptance, accommodation** of all cultures with an **open** and **receptive** attitude, which enables the social worker to **intervene optimally** with clients originating from a different background (*description 03*). This was followed by thirteen (28,8%) of the respondents explaining that a multi-cultural social work practice is a **social work practice** (*description 02*) that **crosses all cultural/ethnic/language borders**. There were eleven (24,4%) respondents

(*description 01*) who mentioned that the social worker must be **sensitive** and must **recognise** the **prevalence of more than one culture** within an organisation and must be willing to render a service to them which is based on felt and expressed needs regarding people's cultural background. Only three (6,6%) respondents indicated that multi-cultural social work practice refers to the different and diverse **values** that govern the social work profession (*description 05*). Only two [4,4%] **respondents** (*description 04*) **did not know** what the term entailed, and another one (2,2%) respondent interpreted the concept as a **pool of social workers** emanating from various cultural/ethnic/language backgrounds and as being essential to allow clients to report to social workers originating from their own/similar culture/ethnic/language grouping (*description 06*).

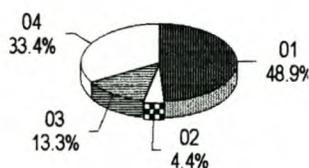
The respondents' misinterpretations of the term, multi-cultural social work practice, necessitates the researcher to confirm the meaning of a multi-cultural social work practice as explained by Uehara et al (1996:64) who state that the ultimate goal of multi-cultural social work practice is to strive towards social justice and to transform those contemporary social/cultural processes and structures which continue to support injustice and inequality. Thus, the social worker within the SANDF must challenge and break down any structure and process that constantly support unfairness and disparity amongst members and the services rendered. During the environmental study done within the Mafikeng/Zeerust military communities, it was clear that the client system consisted of an extensive multifariousness of religions and cultural/ethnic/language backgrounds. It is therefore appalling to note that the majority of the respondents do not have a clear idea of what is meant by a multi-cultural social work practice. The researcher regards the ignorance of the social work managers, as discussed in chapter 6, to empower their social workers regarding multi-cultural models and approaches, as a possible reason for their uncertainty about multi-cultural social work practice.

### 7.3.1.2 Culture

- The respondents' understanding of the term culture in question 2.1.2 can be explained in four different descriptions, which will first be given and then displayed in figure 7.4.

#### Description of the term culture

- 01: Culture relates to language, habits, beliefs, ideas, rituals, traditions and the religion of people brought over from one generation to the next by the way they do things.
- 02: A pattern of assumptions that a given group of people have developed and learned over time and internalised to teach the other members of that particular group.
- 03: It also refers to material and non-material commonalties shared by a group of people which also define their identity, way of living and daily lifestyle.
- 04: It is the norms, values and standards of a particular group of people.



N = 45

FIGURE 7.4: UNDERSTANDING OF CULTURE

According to figure 7.4 the majority of the respondents (22 [48,8% ] who responded in *description 01* see **culture** as being related to **language, habits, beliefs, ideas, rituals, traditions** and the **religion** of people brought over from the one generation to the next by the way they do things. *Description 04* which states that culture is a **pattern of assumptions** that a given group of people have developed and learned over time and are **internalised** to teach the other members of that particular group, were selected by 15 [33,3%] of the respondents. Only six [13,3%] of the respondents (*description 03*) were of the opinion that culture is all those **material** and **non-material** commonalties shared by a group of people which define their identity, way of living and their daily lifestyles. Two [4,4%] respondents mentioned that culture is the **norms, values** and **standards** of a particular group of people (*description 04*).

The aforementioned responses are in line with the literature study undertaken in chapter 3, where culture was explained according to Ronnau (1994:32);

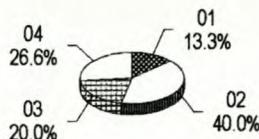
Jayasuriya (1992:39); Potgieter (1998:296); and Williams (1997:14-15) as that complex whole which includes the way in which people live, their collection of values, beliefs, aesthetic standards, linguistic expressions, styles of communication, patterns of thinking and behavioural norms which a group of people have developed to ensure their survival within a particular physical and human environment. Thus, the specific culture is shared by members of a society which includes their total way of life with all the material and non-material products transmitted from one generation to the next. From the responses it is clear that although various descriptions were given by the respondents regarding the term, a clear idea exists of what the term culture entails.

### 7.3.1.3 Ethnicity

The understanding of the term ethnicity (question 2.1.3) can also be detailed in four different descriptions, which is displayed in figure 7.5.

#### Description of term ethnicity

- 01: Do not know at all.  
 02: It reflects the differences within a certain culture regarding all the clans who dress and look differently, have different traditions, habits, belief systems as well as speaking with a different dialect.  
 03: It describe all the subgroups a person belongs to.  
 04: People are bound on genetic grounds which brings their identity to the fore, and binds them together.



N = 45

FIGURE 7.5: UNDERSTANDING OF ETHNICITY

Figure 7.5 indicates that 18 (40%) respondents understand **ethnicity** (description 02), as the differences within a certain culture regarding all the clans who **dress** and **look** differently, have different **traditions**, **habits**, **beliefs** and **speak** a different dialect. Description 04 is representative of the views of 12 (26,6%) of the respondents who are of the opinion that **people are bound on genetic grounds**

which bring their identity to the fore. Nine [20%] of the respondents explain that ethnicity describes the **subgroups** a person belongs to (*description 03*).

The aforementioned responses are in line with the explanation as given by Williams (1997:15) who describes ethnicity as a quality of **group identity** which comes from a sense of history tied to time and place. Devore and Schlesinger (1991:23) added that ethnicity is a sense of **people-hood** experienced by members of the same group which includes aspects like food, language, certain identifiable characteristics, emblems or even the wearing of specific clothing.

Six [13,3%] of the respondents, however, indicated that they were unable to explain the term ethnicity (*description 01*). These respondents might never have been confronted with this term and may also be confused regarding what is meant by a multi-cultural social work practice. This could be seen as reasons for them not knowing what the term ethnicity entails.

### 7.3.2 Cultural/ethnic/language background

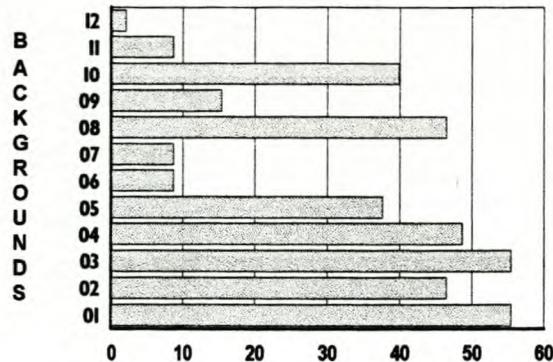
The respondents were asked, in question 2.2.1, to indicate the cultural/ethnic/language background of the majority of their clients. They were also required to give their opinion in question 2.2.2 regarding the necessity of being aware of the client system's cultural/ethnic/language background during service rendering.

#### 7.3.2.1 The client systems' cultural/ethnic/language background

The respondents were requested to stipulate the cultural/ethnic/language background of the majority of their clients. Respondents could mark more than one response. A classification of the descriptions of the cultural/ethnic/language background will be given, and displayed in figure 7.6 below.

**Description of cultural/ethnic/language background of clients**

01: Zulu	02: Se-sotho	03: Xhosa	04: Tswana	05: N-Sotho
06: Swazi	07: Ndebele	08: Afrikaans	09: Venda	10: English
11: Tsonga	12: Portuguese			



% OF RESPONDENTS

N = 45

\*Respondents could give more than one response

FIGURE 7.6: CULTURAL/ETHNIC/LANGUAGE BACKGROUNDS

Figure 7.6 shows that the majority of clients originate from **Zulu** (*description 01*) and **Xhosa** (*description 03*) cultural/ethnic/language backgrounds. These responses represent 55.5% [25] respectively. This is followed by *description 04* which indicates that 48.8% [22] of the clients originate from a **Tswana** cultural/ethnic/language background. *Description 02 [Se-Sotho]* and *description 08 [Afrikaans]* were each represented by 46.6% [21] responses. This is followed by **English** (*description 10*) with 40% [18]; **Northern Sotho** (*description 05*) by 37.7% [17]; **Venda** (*description 09*) by 15.5% [seven]; **Swazi** (*description 06*), **Ndebele** (*description 07*) and **Tsonga** (*description 11*) all represented by 8.8% [four] responses each. Only one respondent (2.2%) indicated a client system originating from a **Portuguese** (*description 12*) cultural/ethnic/language background. The Tsonga and Portuguese backgrounds were added as other cultural/ethnic/language groups by the respondents.

Throughout the aforementioned descriptions of the client systems cultural/ethnic/language backgrounds, it is evident that social work services are being rendered to a wide variety of clients originating from different cultural/ethnic/language backgrounds. This was also confirmed during the

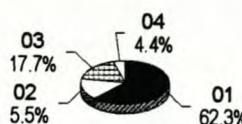
environmental study done in Mafikeng/Zeerust and discussed in chapter six. Once again, it also emphasises the importance of this study which aims to develop theoretical and practical guidelines for a multi-cultural social work practice within the SANDF. It is therefore imperative for social workers to constantly be aware of the cultural/ethnic/language backgrounds of the client system which they serve. The fact that many social work practitioners, (see table 7.1), who emanate from an Afrikaans cultural background, work mostly with a client system from a Zulu and Tswana cultural/ethnic/language background, reiterates the importance of this study. This study therefore strives towards guiding social work professionals in ways of working within a multi-cultural social work setting.

### 7.3.2.2 Awareness of client's cultural/ethnic background

A description of the responses will be given after which they will be displayed in figure 7.7.

#### Descriptions of why the social worker must be aware of client system's culture

- 01: To understand the client system's needs, loyalties, socialisation and viewpoints of the situation, their way of doing things as well as taboos within their culture.
- 02: To know how the client will solve a problem according to his/her culture.
- 03: To make the social work process more effective and also enhance the quality of service rendering.
- 04: Awareness of the client system's culture will not make any difference, because the social worker must rather focus on his/her social work knowledge and skills during service rendering.



N = 45

**FIGURE 7.7: BACKGROUND AWARENESS**

In figure 7.7 it is evident that the majority, namely 28 respondents [62,3%] felt that it was necessary to be aware of the client systems' culture as it would assist in understanding the client's needs, loyalties, socialisation and viewpoints of the situation, their way of doing things as well as taboos within their culture (*description 01*). This is also stressed by Sheafor, Horesji, and Horesji (2000:59) who are of the opinion that a helper must know where the client system comes from

especially when they have certain view points, do things in a specific way, as well as what is acceptable and is not acceptable within the culture of the client system. During interviews with a diverse client system, it was noted in chapter 6 that 76,3% [425] of the 557 respondents supported the concept of the social worker's need to be aware of the client system's cultural/ethnic background.

The second largest group of respondents (17,7% [eight] ) mentioned that the social worker must be aware of the client system's cultural background so as to make the social work process more effective and which will enhance the quality of service rendering to that particular system (*description 03*). Seven [15,5%] of the respondents indicated (*description 02*) that being aware of the client's culture will assist the social worker in developing an understanding of how a problem should be solved within that specific culture. Strydom (2000:93) endorses the same reasons when he mentions that it is crucial for social workers to understand the customs, codes of behaviour and value systems of the people they work with. This will definitely have an effect on the quality and effectiveness of the service rendered to a particular client system.

Despite the aforementioned findings, two [4.4%] of the respondents mentioned (*description 04*) that it would not make any difference for the social worker to be aware of the client's cultural background, because the social worker must focus on his/her own social work knowledge and skills during service rendering. The researcher is of the opinion that it is absolutely essential to concentrate on social work knowledge and skills, and that the social worker will render a far more effective service if the client system's cultural background is taken into consideration during service rendering.

### 7.3.3 Competence

The focus in question 2.3.1 is on how competent the respondents regard themselves to be in service rendering to a culturally different client system; whether the respondents are of the opinion that their own cultural/ethnic/language

background can influence service rendering in question 2.3.2; and how good is their understanding of a cultural competent service (question 2.3.3).

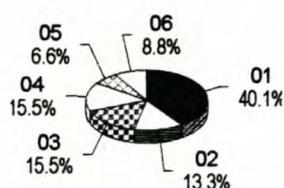
### 7.3.3.1 Competency in service rendering

The respondents had to describe their competence in rendering a social work service to a culturally different client system. Asamoah (1996:1) mentions that the question is not whether social workers should provide a culturally competent service to the client system, but rather how the social work practitioner, and the social work manager can best do it. Sheafor, Horesji, and Horesji (2000:59) added that the social work practitioner and manager should always strive towards cultural competence in service rendering.

The responses received from the respondents have been categorised into six different descriptions. These descriptions will first be mentioned and followed by a display in figure 7.8.

#### Description of competence

- 01:** Very competent [80-100%]. Exposed to many cultures, gained a lot of knowledge which results in respect towards different groups and greater accommodation of different cultures and groups.  
**02:** 50% competent. Trying very hard. Find that language is a huge problem.  
**03:** In a continuous learning process.  
**04:** Very difficult to understand the diverse client system - this includes language, and religion.  
**05:** Try to look at things from the client's perspective.  
**06:** Grew-up in a township. Used to many different cultures/religions/languages.



N = 45

**FIGURE 7.8: DESCRIPTION OF COMPETENCE**

Figure 7.8 explains that **40,1%** [18] of the respondents regarded themselves as being **very competent** [80-100%] in rendering a social work service to a culturally different client system (*description 01*). These respondents indicated that through their exposure to many different cultures, they are equipped with the necessary knowledge which results in respect for other different groups and a greater

accommodation of the different cultures and groupings. *Description 03* and *04* were represented by **15,5%** [seven] respondents each. In *description 03* the respondents indicated that they were in a ***continuous process of learning***, while *description 04* stressed that it is very ***difficult to understand the diverse client system*** which includes language and religion. **Six** [13,3%] of the respondents stated that they regard themselves as being **50% competent**, as they try very hard to be competent, but that the ***language*** is still a ***huge problem***, (*description 02*). **Four** [8,8%] of the respondents were in a favourable position as they indicated that they were **brought up in a township** which ***equipped them*** with the **knowledge** and **skills** to deal with a different cultural system's (*description 06*). This section was concluded by **three** [6,6%] of the respondents indicating that they were trying to view things from the clients perspective (*description 05*).

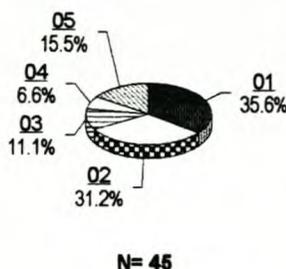
Taking the aforementioned responses into consideration, it is evident that social workers who do not regard themselves as being competent in rendering a service to a different cultural system, are at least making a concerted effort by either looking at things from the client's perspective and/or are learning constantly about the client systems' cultural background. Sheafor, Horesji and Horesji (2000:59) state when striving towards competence in service rendering, that social workers should be congruent with the clients' cultural background and expectations.

#### 7.3.3.2 **The cultural/ethnic/language background of the social worker**

Another aspect investigated was whether the social worker's cultural/ethnic/language background can influence service rendering to a culturally different client system. The responses of the client system were grouped into five different responses. A description of these responses will follow, and then be indicated in figure 7.9.

**Description of whether culture can influence service rendering**

- 01:** No, by using the person-centered approach, the person is the instrument in social service rendering.
- 02:** Yes, it can create a barrier regarding the understanding of the client system as the worker might see situations from his/her own frame of reference which may influence objectivity and problem-solving.
- 03:** Social work principles and values are too dominant which will result in no interference into the cultural and ethnic background.
- 04:** If the social worker acts professionally, his/her [social worker] culture will not influence service rendering.
- 05:** Yes, especially if the service provider does not have any knowledge of the client system's background or cannot speak the language of the client.

**FIGURE 7.9: INFLUENCE OF CULTURE**

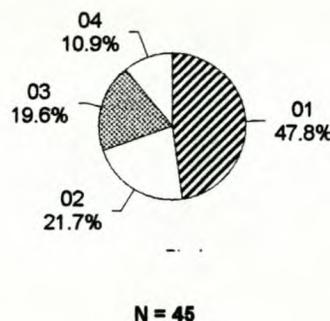
According to the data in figure 7.9, it is clear that descriptions 01, 03 and 04 correspond as they indicate that if the social worker applies professional principles with in-depth knowledge and with the right attitude, the cultural/ethnic/language background of the social worker will not have a negative influence on service rendering. From the responses received, it is clear that the respondents are not totally clear if and how their own cultures influence service rendering as stated by Devore and Schlesinger (1991). The researcher is of the opinion that it is crucial for the production worker to be aware of his/her own cultural background during service rendering. The production worker who works mostly on ground level is often the "mirror" of the social work profession's ability to intervene in the lives of the diverse client system. If the social workers have some unresolved issues, e.g. like being unhappy about certain traditions and/or habits of their own culture, they might project their negative feelings and unresolved issues about their own culture onto the client system. By doing so, the client system might experience the social worker as insensitive, disrespectful and therefore regard any help received from the social worker as negative and useless. Note should be taken of Hickson and Christie (1989:163) who add that when the professional workers start to look at their own cultural background, structures and functioning, they become more aware of and accept their own cultural baggage that may exist.

### 7.3.3.3 Understanding the term, cultural competent service

According to Sheafor, Horesji and Horesji (2000:59), cultural competence can be seen as the ability to give aid or assistance to clients in a way that is **acceptable** and **useful** to them, because the social work practitioner's knowledge is congruent with the client's cultural background and expectations. This also refers to the ability of the social work service provider to learn about the cultural context of a presenting problem and to integrate that knowledge into a professional assessment, evaluation and intervention strategy. Thus, it is again important that the social worker must know where the client system comes from, and what is acceptable and not acceptable within the client system's culture. With this in mind, it is necessary to consider the various responses indicated by the respondents. The responses were grouped into four descriptions which will now be considered and shown in figure 7.10.

#### Description of a culturally competent service

- 01:** The client is first and the social worker must be sensitive with the right knowledge, skills and positive attitude to accommodate clients from a different cultural/ethnic/language/religious background.
- 02:** The ideal service which is efficient and effective in rendering a service to all cultural groupings within an organisation.
- 03:** A holistic social work service rendered by a pool of social workers representative of all the different cultural, ethnic and language groupings.
- 04:** A social work service based on the values and principles of the profession.



**FIGURE 7.10: CULTURAL COMPETENCE**

From figure 7.10, it is clear that most of the respondents did understand what is meant by a cultural competent service. The diverse military environment can be seen as a reason for their sensitivity and better understanding of cultural competence. According to table 7.1, 40% of the social work practitioners come from an Afrikaans cultural/ethnic/language background and they render services

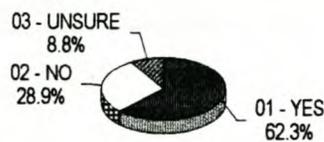
to predominantly a Zulu and Xhosa cultural/ethnic/language orientated client system. Figure 6.20 indicates that most of the social work managers are doing the minimum to assist the practitioners regarding updating of cultural models and approaches. Thus, social workers have to ascertain for themselves correct ways in handling the diverse client system. The question according to Asamoah (1996:1) is no longer whether professionals should provide a culturally competent service to the client system, but rather how the social work practitioner, and the social work manager *can best do it*. In addition to this, Sheafor, Horesji and Horesji (2000:59) state that cultural competence is the ability to give aid or assistance to the client system in a way that is **acceptable** and **useful** to them, because they are congruent with the client's cultural background and expectations. The feasibility of having social workers representative [*description 03*] of all the cultural/ethnic/language grouping within a social work section is, however, questioned. In view of budgetary constraints and the fact that the military management is not able to appoint social workers who represent all the cultural/ethnic/language groupings within a social work section, it will not be possible.

#### 7.3.4 Additional knowledge needs for service rendering

In question 2.4.1, the respondents had to stipulate whether they required any additional knowledge and skills regarding social work service rendering to a multi-cultural client system. Those in need of some kind of knowledge and skills, had to specify their requirements in question 2.4.2, while respondents who did not need any additional knowledge and skills were asked in question 2.4.3 to motivate their responses.

### 7.3.4.1 Knowledge and skills

Figure 7.11 indicates whether the respondents require any additional knowledge and skills regarding social work service rendering to a multi-cultural client system.



N=45

**FIGURE 7.11: KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS REQUIRED**

In figure 7.11 it is clear that the majority of the respondents (62,3% [28]) indicated the need for additional knowledge and skills regarding service rendering to a multi-cultural client system. This again emphasised the importance of effective personnel development by the social work managers. The fact that 40% of the service providers in the sample are from an Afrikaans cultural/ethnic/language background, who render services to a dominant Zulu and Xhosa cultural client system as seen in figure 7.6, could be regarded as the main reason for such a need for knowledge and skills. In figure 7.8, only four [8,8%] of the respondents indicated that they were in a favourable position as they were brought up in a township which equipped them with the knowledge and skills in order to deal with a culturally different client system. Thirteen [28,9%] respondents indicated that they did not need any additional knowledge and skills in rendering a multi-cultural social work service to a culturally different client system. Four [8,8%] of the respondents were unsure whether they required additional knowledge and skills.

The fact that most of the respondents indicated the need for additional knowledge and skills regarding service rendering to a multi-cultural client system, emphasises the importance of this study within the DSW of the SANDF which

aims to develop theoretical and practical guidelines for multi-cultural social work practice within the SANDF.

a) **Specific knowledge and skills needed**

The responses, from the 28 [62,3%] respondents in figure 7.11 who indicated the need for knowledge and skills, have been grouped into five descriptions which will first be given and then demonstrated in figure 7.12 that follows the descriptions.

**Description of the specific knowledge and skills**

- 01: Holistic knowledge about the client's language, cultural beliefs and habits, cultural illnesses, cultural perceptions of healing which facilitate an effective service rendering.
- 02: Knowledge regarding the link between body, soul, mind and spirit of the client system and how to address these cultural issues especially when they are in conflict with the SANDF's system.
- 03: Those aspects of culture that lead to malfunctioning and social problems.
- 04: Knowledge of various cultures/traditions/religions - even those one never get in contact with.
- 05: The functioning of authority within the family system of other cultures.

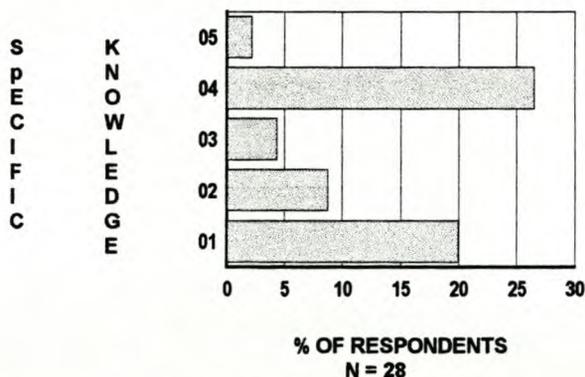


FIGURE 7.12: ADDITIONAL SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS REQUIRED

In figure 7.12 it is evident that all the responses are interrelated because each response concentrates on traditional habits and rituals present in all cultural settings. These findings support Dungee-Anderson and Beckett (1990:462-467) and Ronnau (1994:33-34) when they stipulate that gaining knowledge of a specific culture is an ongoing process. Although it is unrealistic to have comprehensive knowledge of all the various cultures the social worker comes in contact with, it is preferable to at least know for instance the meaning of symbols specific to the prevalent culture. The ultimate goal should be to gain enough knowledge in order to identify what information is needed to render an **effective, culturally competent social work service**. The environmental study done by the social work section in the North West area confirmed that the client system consists of a wide variety of cultural/ethnic/languages backgrounds (figure 6.1) with services

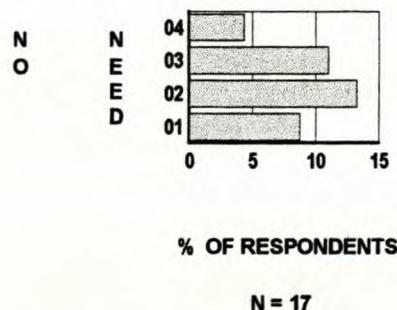
provided by predominantly Afrikaans orientated professionals (table 7.1). Thus, no service provider can claim to ignore a person's cultural/ethnic and language background. Knowledge and skills about the client system are of the utmost importance. The researcher is of the opinion that social work professionals should read more about a client's culture or talk to people emanating from that specific culture he/she would like know more about. The attendance of specific cultural rituals like the birth of a child, marriage or death ceremonies provides a good knowledge base for the researcher during service rendering in a Xhosa dominated cultural setting.

**b) Reasons for not requiring additional cultural specific knowledge and skills**

Only 13 [28,9%] respondents indicated in figure 7.11 that they did not require any additional knowledge and skills regarding social work service rendering to a multi-cultural client system, while four [8,8%] respondents were unsure whether they needed additional knowledge and skills. These responses were grouped into four descriptions which will follow this discussion. The display of these responses will be given in figure 7.13.

**Description of responses**

- 01: Enough colleagues from different cultural backgrounds within section.  
 02: Should possess sufficient social work knowledge and skills of basic social work principles to render a competent service.  
 03: Social workers must practice the person-centered approach.  
 04: Exposed to many different cultures.



**FIGURE 7.13: REASONS FOR NOT REQUIRING ADDITIONAL CULTURAL SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS**

From the responses received and displayed in figure 7.13, is it clear that those who indicated NO, 13 [28,8%] or were UNSURE, four [8,8%] in figure 7.11

had reached some form of cultural competence in service rendering within their own unique way. However, although these respondents comprise 37,7% [17] of the respondents, the majority of the respondents (62% [28]) have not yet reached this competence level. The researcher is, however, of the opinion that because culture is not static, as seen in chapter 3 by Jayasuriya (1992:39); Potgieter (1998:296); Ronnau (1994:32) and Williams (1997:14-15), no social work professionals can regard themselves as having enough knowledge and skills regarding a specific culture. Cultural/ethnic specific activities which might have been acceptable in the past may have changed and are no longer relevant. For instance, the South African Parliament which was known as a grey suit domain in the past, currently abounds with "umbaco", bead and blankets. These changes are the result of the 1994 democratic elections in South Africa. Continuous updating of one's knowledge and skills regarding a specific culture one is in contact with, is imperative. This is echoed by Sowere-Hoag and Sandau-Beckler (1996:36) who mention that sufficient knowledge of the client system's background and culture is essential.

### 7.3.5 Value orientations

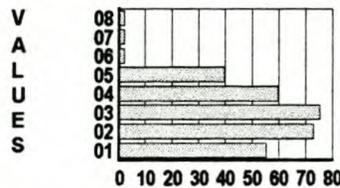
It was necessary to investigate (question 2.5.1) the role that value orientations play during social work interventions, because according to Ponce (1995:29-41), who discussed the value orientation model, there is always a set of core human dimensions pertinent to all the people of all cultures. The dimensions are e.g. **time focus** which refers to the importance of the *past*, *present* and *future* within a cultural context. The next dimension is the **mode of activity** present in any culture and refers to the *way people behave* within a specific culture. This is followed by the next value orientation namely **social relationships** which refers to the relation people have with each other within a specific culture. **People's relationship with nature** and their interaction with their **physical environment** also form part of the value orientations present in any culture. The last value orientation concentrates on **innate human nature**, which refers to how specific cultures view human beings. Ponce (1995:29-41) further states that some cultures view humans as evil or bad while others see people as being good and bad. It is thus important for the social

worker, when dealing with a variety of culturally different clients, to be aware of these value orientations which are normally present in any culture.

With this in mind, the respondents had to indicate which value orientations they regard as important during service rendering to a culturally different client system. More than one answer could be noted. A description of the responses will first be given after which they will be presented in figure 7.14.

**Description of value orientations**

- |  |  |                                 |
|--|--|---------------------------------|
| <b>01:</b> Time focus                                      | <b>02:</b> Mode of activity                    | <b>03:</b> Social relationships |
| <b>04:</b> A person's relationship with nature/environment | <b>05:</b> Intrinsic human nature              |                                 |
| <b>06:</b> Relations between body/spirit/soul.             | <b>07:</b>                                     |                                 |
| <b>08:</b> Cultural punishments/ legal - the fear thereof  | <b>08:</b> Nutritional aspects and differences |                                 |



**% OF RESPONDENTS**

**N = 45**

*\*Respondent could indicate more than one answer*

**FIGURE 7.14: VALUE ORIENTATIONS**

From the responses received and displayed in figure 7.14 it is evident that the respondents agree with the value orientations as found in Ponce (1995:29-41). The researcher is of the opinion that if social work professionals could be informed about Kirst-Ashman and Hull (1993:6), who stressed the importance of having an eclectic theoretical base of all the intervention strategies and approaches for social work practice, it could serve as a value guideline in itself within a multi-cultural social work setting. This will allow the professional to assess the client situation within his/her cultural/ethnic/language background, and then make use of the most appropriate intervention approach or to integrate various approaches into a new one to effectively assist the client system with the problem they experience. According to Johnson (1992:1) and Kirst-Ashman and Hull (1993:4-6) this is called the generalist concept, (discussed in chapter 5).

One [2,2%] respondent added three additional value orientations which according to him/her also play a role during service rendering. These added value orientations are the relationship **between body, spirit and soul** within any culture (*description 06*), the way certain cultures view punishment as well as the fear thereof within that culture (*description 07*), and lastly the importance to take note of the nutritional aspects and differences during service rendering with a culturally different client system.

The relation between body/spirit and the soul, as an important value orientation, has also been the experience of the researcher when he worked amongst the Xhosa speaking people within the former Transkei and Ciskei military communities. The belief in the ancestral spirits and what “they” are telling and/or guiding the person how to act, sometimes what to say, is one of the most important aspects the researcher had to keep in mind, especially during his social work intervention sessions with a Xhosa speaking person. This value orientation, namely the relationship between the body/spirit and the soul, can therefore also be added to the value orientations model as discussed by Ponce (1995:29-41).

### 7.3.6 The role of communication

Another factor that was investigated was the role communication plays during service rendering to a culturally different client system. Respondents were asked to specify the language they communicated in with most of their clients and whether it was part of their mother tongue. If the language was not part of their mother tongue, the respondents had to indicate if they experienced any difficulty in communicating with their clients in a different language. The respondents also had to mention whether they ever experienced a situation where the client system experienced difficulty in expressing their feelings and explaining the problem situation in a language other than their mother tongue.

Furthermore, the respondents were required to explain the process they followed when the client system found it difficult to express their feelings and problem situation in a language other than their mother tongue as well as what the social

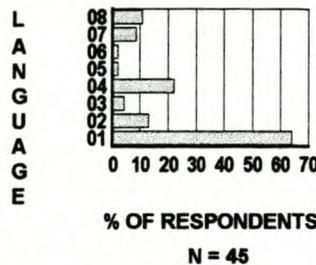
worker could do to overcome this difficulty of expressing feelings and problems by the client situation. This section will conclude by focusing on how respondents can overcome cultural and language barriers during social work interventions.

### 7.3.6.1 Language of communication with clients

The respondents specified, in question 2.6.1, the language in which they communicated most during sessions. A description of the language responses will follow and are presented in figure 7.15 below.

**Description of languages**

01: English	03: Xhosa	05: Afrikaans	07: Tswana
02: Se-Sotho	04: Zulu	06: Northern Sotho	08: Communicate in client's language



\*Respondents could give more than one response

**FIGURE 7.15: DESCRIPTION OF LANGUAGES**

Figure 7.15 shows that English (64,4% [29] ) was mostly used during the intervention sessions (*description 01*). This contradicts figure 6.1, where the client system indicated their cultural/ethnic/language background as Tswana. It can be assumed that the social work interventions are mostly not conducted in the majority of the client system's or social work professional's mother tongue. The fact that 40% of the social work practitioners in the sample, as displayed in table 7.1, emanate from an Afrikaans cultural/ethnic/language background who cannot communicate in the client's mother tongue can be seen as reason for this.

Another reason for the frequent use of English might be because English is seen as an international language and is currently accepted as the official language within South Africa as well as among the SANDF members.

### 7.3.6.2 Communication in mother tongue

Table 7.4 below shows that those who communicate in their mother tongue (53,4% [24]) and those who do not (46,6% [21]) are almost the same (question 2.6.2). In figure 7.6 the respondents indicated that 46,6% of their client system originated from an Afrikaans cultural/ethnic/language background. This corresponds with table 7.1 where 40% of the social work practitioners were also from an Afrikaans background. This could be the reason, as indicated in the table below, why 53,4% of the respondents communicate with their client system in their mother tongue.

**TABLE 7.4: MOTHER TONGUE COMMUNICATION**

COMMUNICATION IN MOTHER TONGUE	f	%
YES	24	53.4
NO	21	46.6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100</b>

N = 45

### 7.3.6.3 Difficulty to communicate in another language

Once again, as seen in table 7.4, there is not a big difference (in table 7.5, question 2.6.3), between those who have difficulty communicating in another language (47,6% [10]) and those who do not experience a problem (52,4% [11]) communicating in another language. The responses are indicated in table 7.5.

**TABLE 7.5: DIFFICULTY IN COMMUNICATION**

DIFFICULTY IN COMMUNICATION	f	%
YES	10	47.6
NO	11	52.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100</b>

N = 21

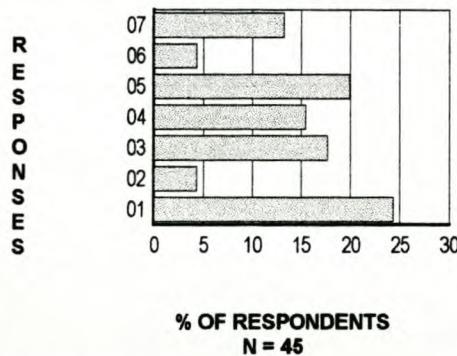
The responses as indicated in table 7.5 once again emphasise the importance for social work professionals to acquaint themselves with the cultural/ethnic/language background of the majority of their client system. By doing so, most of the fears and difficulties during communication with the client system will be overcome. With this in mind, Dungee-Anderson and Beckett (1995:462); Hickson and Christie (1989:162-163); Potgieter (1998:85-86); and Sue and Sue (1990:27-48) mention that if there is a difference in languages between the social work professional and the

client system, it must be discussed and sorted-out before any intervention can take place. This will put both professional and client more at ease, as the social worker will know how to handle the language issue between him-/herself and the client and the client on the other hand, will know what to expect from the social worker.

In question 2.6.4 the respondents were asked to motivate their responses as given in table 7.5. The motivations have been grouped together into six different responses. A description of these responses will follow after which they will be displayed in figure 7.16.

**Description of responses**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>01:</b> Totally bilingual.   | <b>02:</b> Use role-plays, demonstrations, drawings and pictures during interventions. |
| <b>03:</b> Use translators - especially when the wife's find it difficult to speak English. |  |
| <b>04:</b> Speak same language of that of the client system.                                | <b>05:</b> Use of English.   |
| <b>06:</b> Most of clients can speak more than one language.                                | <b>07:</b> No response.  |



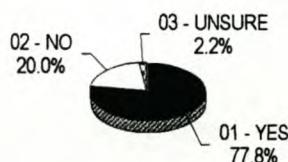
**FIGURE 7.16 : RESPONSE OF COMMUNICATION DIFFICULTY**

Figure 7.16 shows that eleven [24,4%] respondents are totally bilingual (*description 01*) which eases the communication process with the client system. Nine [20%] respondents mentioned that they used English during service rendering (*description 05*). Only eight [17,7%] respondents made use of translators (*description 03*). This was followed by seven respondents [15,5%] who did speak the same language (*description 04*) as the client system. Two [4,4%] respondents indicated that they made use of role-plays, demonstrations, drawings and pictures during intervention sessions (*description 02*). **Description 06** was supported by two [4,4%] of the respondents who said that most of their clients could speak more than one language during interventions. Six [13,3%] respondents did not indicate any response (*description 07*).

From the aforementioned, it is clear that the respondents have again managed, in their own unique ways, to overcome the communication barriers that may exist between them and their client system. The researcher is of the opinion that social workers should constantly try to adapt procedures, like the communication process, not only to reach cultural competence, but also to enhance a multi-cultural social work practice service rendering. Note should be taken of Dungee-Anderson and Beckett (1990:462-467) who mentioned that the social work practitioner must understand how to adapt and change processes during service rendering within a multi-cultural situation. To adapt towards the culturally different client system and to change social work approaches and models to best suit the client system, will ensure an outstanding service rendering to the client system.

#### 7.3.6.4 Difficulty in expressing feelings and problem situations

Figure 7.17 indicates the responses of the respondents to question 2.6.5.



N = 35

**FIGURE 7.17: DIFFICULTY TO EXPRESS EMOTIONS**

From figure 7.17 it is clear that the majority of the clients find it difficult to express their feelings and problem situations in a language other than their mother tongue. This is represented by 77,7% [35] of the responses. These findings correspond with Sue and Sue (1990:51) and Turner (1986:235) when they mention that the professional person must be concerned with the accuracy of communication - to get to the heart of the problem, rather than to concentrate on whether the communication is appropriate. If the client system finds it difficult to express their feelings and the problem situation they experience, the social worker will not be able to get to the heart of what is wrong and therefore will not be able to assist the client system in a

way that is acceptable and useful. Thus, cultural competence will not be reached at all.

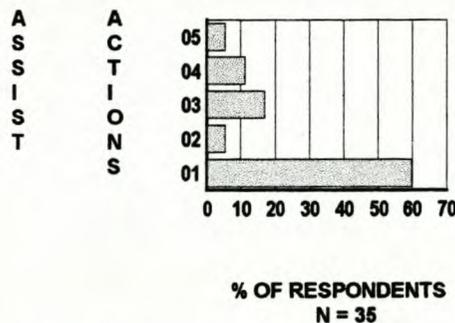
The 20% [nine] respondents who indicated that their clients do not find it difficult expressing their feeling and problem situations, are probably using the client's mother tongue during intervention sessions. Only one respondent [2,2%] was unsure of this issue.

### 7.3.6.5 Actions in assisting the client

The 77,8% [35] of respondents who indicated YES in figure 7.17 had to explain in question 2.6.6 the actions taken by them to assist the client system when they experienced difficulty in expressing their feelings and problem situations in a language other than their mother tongue. The responses were grouped in five descriptions which will follow this discussion. Figure 7.18 displays the responses received.

**Description of actions taken**

- 01: Use a trustworthy translator/interpreter.    02: Use pictures/drawings on flip chart.
- 03: Refer client to colleague who can speak the same language than the client and are from the same cultural background as the client.
- 04: Use rephrasing and empathy is such a way to enable the client to understand clearly what the social worker means.
- 05: Can speak the language of the client



**FIGURE 7.18: ACTIONS TO ASSIST THE CLIENT SYSTEM**

From figure 7.18 it is evident that more than half of the respondents (60% [21]) indicated that they made use of a trustworthy translator/interpreter during service rendering (*description 01*). The researcher, who possesses a good working knowledge of Xhosa, found it useful to use a trustworthy translator during interventions at times. In order to be successful using a translator, Devenish (1996:285) mentions that it is important for the social worker and translator to work

together as a team. A reason for this is because the translator must prolong the services rendered by the social worker and must convey the correct message. Six [17.1%] of the respondents, however, referred the client to a colleague who could speak the same language as the client and/or who are also from the same cultural background than the client system (*description 03*). This is not always possible as social workers often work alone. This stresses the importance of becoming culturally competent during service rendering.

The aforementioned is followed by *description 04*, and was indicated by four (11,4%) respondents, explaining that they made use of rephrasing and empathy in a way which would enable the client to understand clearly what the social worker was explaining. With this in mind, Potgieter (1998:103) explains that empathy involves being sensitive and trying to grasp the meaning of what the client is saying and the client is feeling. It also goes beyond the most obvious feelings to the more subtle experiences of such a client system. To empathise with a person from another culture for instance, is to recognise his/her individuality and uniqueness as a human being.

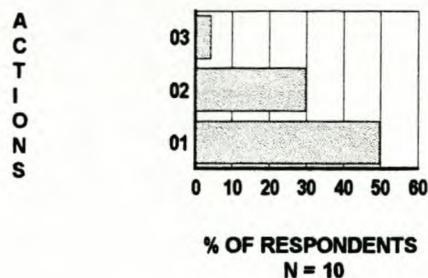
The remaining two [5,7%] respondents respectively indicated that they used pictures and drawings on a flip chart (*description 02*) and could also speak the same language as the client system, (*description 05*). The use of pictures and drawings by either the social worker or the client, is regarded by the researcher as extremely helpful within the multi-cultural setting. Facial expressions can be drawn by the client for instance when explaining his/her current feeling regarding a situation.

#### 7.3.6.6 **What social work practitioners can do to assist the client**

The nine [20%] respondents who indicated NO, or the one [2,2%] who was UNSURE, in figure 7.17 had to explain in question 2.6.7, what social workers can do when they experience a situation where clients have difficulty in expressing their feelings and/or the problem situation in a language other than their mother tongue. The description of the responses will first be given and then be followed by a presentation in figure 7.19.

**Descriptions how the social worker can assist the client system**

- 01: Refer client to a social worker emanating from the same culture who can speak the same language than the client.  
 02: Use more than one language - speak the language of the client.  
 03: The social worker can learn to speak the client's language



**FIGURE 7.19: SOCIAL WORK ACTIONS DURING COMMUNICATION DIFFICULTIES**

In figure 7.19 it is evident that five [50%] of the 10 respondents in figure 7.17 indicated that they would refer the client to a social worker emanating from the same culture who could also speak the same language as the client (*description 01*). The profile of the client system in chapter 6 shows that clients emanate from many different cultural/ethnic/language and religious backgrounds. It will be impossible to have social workers available who represent all the different backgrounds. Therefore, the service rendered by the available social worker, whether from the same background or not, must be competent. Social workers should know how to deal with clients from these different cultural/ethnic/language and religious backgrounds. Three [30%] respondents are of the opinion that they will make use of more than one language (*description 02*). According to Act 108 of 1996 of the South African Constitution (1996:16), South African citizens have the right to their language of choice as well as cultural life. The researcher is concerned whether these respondents would really be able to speak the client's language, because 11 different languages have been approved by the South African Government. Only two respondents [4,4%] mentioned that the social worker must learn to speak the client system's language (*description 03*). This is echoed by Brown (1992:4) who states that the social worker should fully understand the language the client is speaking, because it is not only a means of communication, but a social process as well. Thus, the ideal is therefore to learn the language of the majority of one's client system.

### 7.3.6.7 Overcoming cultural and language barriers

-This part of the survey was concluded by respondents indicating in question 2.6.8 how they personally overcame cultural and language barriers which they experienced during social work interventions. The responses were classified into seven descriptions and as displayed in figure 7.20 below.

**Description of how to overcome cultural and language barriers**

- 01: Make use of an interpreter.
- 02: Continue to speak English, the client will perhaps recognise certain words.
- 03: View each client as an unique individual based on respect and view him/her from their own frame of reference.
- 04: Speak very plain language during communication with the client system.
- 05: Read about the clients language, culture and background or ask the client.
- 06: Refer the client to a social worker who can understand the client's language and culture.
- 07: Have a nonjudgmental attitude, be relaxed, listen, observe and be honest if unclear.

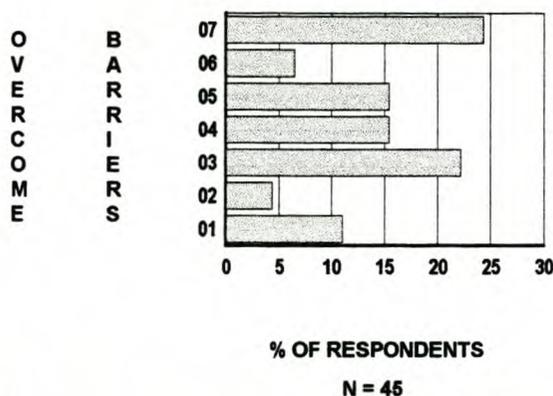


FIGURE 7.20: OVERCOMING BARRIERS

From figure 7.20 it is obvious that almost a quarter of the responses (24,4% [11]) contained in *description 07*, suggest having a nonjudgmental attitude, to be relaxed and observant and also to be honest if the social worker does not understand. Besides this, 22,2% [10] respondents were of the opinion (*description 03*) that the client must be seen as an unique individual based on respect and to see him/her [client] from his/her frame of reference. The researcher is of the opinion that by having a nonjudgmental attitude and respecting the client as an unique individual, are part of the social work profession's professional values during service rendering. Note should be taken of Loewenberg and Dolgoff (1988:16) who regard values as guidance for practice, and the way social work services need to be carried out. It is also furthermore part of any social work intervention to clarify if the worker is not clear about what the client is explaining. Defining of the problem situation with the client system, as explained by Potgieter (1998:222-224) will help to clarify uncertainties regarding the situation experienced. Seven [15,5%] respondents

respectively mentioned that it was more beneficial to speak in a plain language to the client system (*description 04*) and to familiarise oneself with the client's language, cultural background or even to ask the client when he/she is unclear about something (*description 05*). Only five [11,1%] respondents made use of an interpreter when experiencing cultural and language barriers (*description 01*). Another option might be to refer the client to a social worker who understands the client's language and culture. This was voiced by three [6,6%] of the respondents (*description 06*). Lastly, two [4,4%] of the respondents were of the opinion that it was better to try and speak English as the client might recognise certain words and understand the ensuing communication (*description 02*). The researcher is of the opinion that to carry on using a language which is unfamiliar to the client will be of no help at all and the statement by Sue and Sue (1990:71), who made it clear that if the social workers want to be effective and of any help to the client system, is it important for them to know about the client's culture and traditions. This opinion may be used as a guideline. The researcher added language to this statement by Sue and Sue (1990:71).

#### **7.4 SOCIAL WORK APPROACHES WITHIN A GENERALIST CONTEXT**

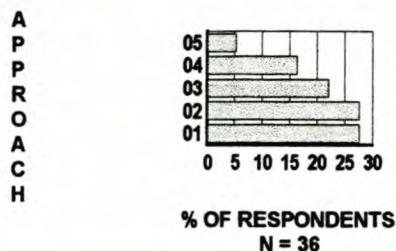
During this part of the survey, respondents explained their understanding of the generalist approach as well as which approaches they favour during intervention sessions.

##### **7.4.1 Understanding the term, *Generalist***

The respondents had to explain, in question 3.1.1, their understanding of the term: *generalist*. Only 36 [80%] of the 45 respondents completed this question. It might be that those who did not respond to the question did not know what is meant by the word *generalist* and therefore decided not to respond at all. The 36 responses were grouped together into five descriptions which will follow. Figure 7.21 displays the responses.

**Description of the approach**

- 01: Do not know at all.  
 02: It is a non-specialised approach.  
 03: Social worker practicing a broad spectrum of social work services to the client system by making use of various knowledge and skills in social work.  
 04: Making use of general ideas and concepts [see all the clients as the same] in service rendering.  
 05: Social worker render service in any field of social work.



**FIGURE 7.21: UNDERSTANDING THE TERM, GENERALIST**

Ten [27,7%] respondents indicated in figure 7.21, that they did not know what the meaning of the term *generalist* was (*description 01*), and another 10 [27,7%] respondents explained their understanding of it as a non-specialised approach used by a social worker (*description 02*). Furthermore, eight [22,2%] respondents mentioned that the generalist approach was when a social worker practices a broad spectrum of social work services to the client system by making use of various kinds of knowledge and skills in social work (*description 03*). Six [16,6%] respondents saw the generalist approach as using general ideas and concepts in service rendering and to see all the clients as the same (*description 04*). Only two [5,5%] respondents explained that the generalist approach refers to a social worker who can work in any field of social work (*description 05*).

From the aforementioned it is clear that, apart from *description 01*, the respondents did have some idea of what is meant by the term, *generalist*. The researcher is of the opinion that the ignorance of social work managers regarding multi-cultural social work practice as indicated in figure 6.20, can be seen as a contributory factor to the respondents' vague understanding of this term. They need to be informed that, according to Johnson (1992:1), the concept *generalist* implies that during intervention with the client system, the social worker will assess the problem situation with the client(s) and then decide which system is the most suitable unit of attention or focus, as well as which intervention strategy would best be applicable for change to take place.

## 7.4.2 Approaches during service rendering

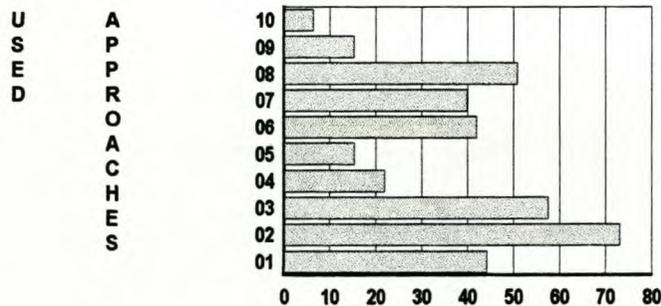
Respondents had to indicate the approach they used during social work service rendering, the importance of having a holistic knowledge and skills base regarding the approaches, as well as the social work approach's contribution towards a cultural competent service rendering.

### 7.4.2.1 Frequently used approaches

The respondents had to indicate in question 3.2.1, which of the social work approaches they favour during service rendering. More than one approach could be marked. A description of the approaches is given below and will be displayed in figure 7.22.

#### Description of the approaches

01: Psychosocial approach	02: Problem-solving approach	03: Systems approach
04: Cultural awareness approach/ethnic-sensitive	05: Ecological approach / Life model	
06: Task-centered approach	07: Social development	
08: Community development approach	09: Person-centered approach	10: Client-centered approach



% OF RESPONDENTS

N = 45

\* Respondents could indicate more than one approach

FIGURE 7.22: FREQUENTLY USED APPROACHES

Figure 7.22 shows that the **problem-solving approach** (description 02) was the most favoured approach and was used by 33 [73,3%] respondents. The response can be linked to the fact that this is the most well-known approach. Perlman (1957: 58) states that the purpose of this approach is to assist the client to

deal with the problem at hand. To know how a specific culture views and deals with a problem situation is thus important.

The second most used approach is the systems approach (*description 03*) which was used by 26 [57,7%] respondents. It can be taken that these respondents were informed of the facts abouts systems approach as explained by Potgieter (1998:54) and Rodway (1986:516 and 655) who mention that a system is a unit of people connected through some form of relationship with one another, within a specific context, space and time. To ignore one's culture during this approach will be detrimental, because the social worker must understand the holistic functioning of the individual within his/her cultural environment, which consists of many traditions, habits and ways of doing things. The researcher views this approach of the respondents as excellent, because the client's cultural/ethnic/language background will be part of a system during service rendering. The social worker will automatically be forced to include the client's cultural/ethnic/language background within this approach and will indicate clearly its influence on the problem situation the client experiences.

The community development approach (*description 08*) was favoured by 23 [51,1%] of the respondents. As mentioned in chapter 5, is it imperative for the social worker to know what this approach entails, especially when entering the social development arena. To know the process of community development will automatically pave the way to integrate social development at the same time. The correct implementation of this approach within service rendering is, however, questioned by the researcher. It is thus important that the respondents take cognisance of the eight steps as identified by Swanepoel (1997:70-188) and which are followed during this approach and according to the researcher will be helpful within a multi-cultural environment. These steps are: **step 1:** the worker makes contact with the community; **step 2:** conducts a survey in the community; **step 3:** identifies the needs; **step 4:** identifies the resources within and outside the community needed to contribute towards fulfilling the needs; **step 5:** establishes a committee; **step 6:** plans the actions that will take place, and by whom, and when what will be completed; **step 7:** implements

the plan and lastly, **step 8:** evaluates if the plan is successful and/or if it addresses the specific identified needs of the community.

The fourth most used approach was the psychosocial approach (*description 01*) which is used by 20 [44,4%] respondents. According to Woods and Hollis (1990:27) it is critical, during this approach, to see the relationship between the person and his/her environment. Thus, these respondents are aware that the social worker cannot be ignorant regarding a person's cultural/ethnic/language/religious background, because the environment does influence the functioning of people. The cultural/ethnic/religious beliefs and practices form part of a person's environment and it is therefore crucial for the social worker to focus on the environment during any intervention with the client system. Social workers should keep the dual perspective of figure 3.1 in mind when engaging in any form of intervention with a culturally different client system. This perspective as described by Netting, Kettner and McMurtry (1993:215-217) sees people surrounded by the nurturing system, which consist of their parents, extended family, practices, community experiences, beliefs, values and traditions within which this person was raised. Surrounding the nurturing system is the sustaining system which consist of the dominant society and also reflects on beliefs, values, customs and traditions.

The task-centered approach (*description 06*) was used by 19 [42,2%] respondents which begins with an identified problem which is usually socially based (Doel and March, 1992:23). The effects and influences of a client's culture must be taken into consideration as this might shed some light on the problem experienced and how to resolve it. By ignoring a client's culture, the social worker might suggest specific ideas and actions that must be taken into consideration and which are absolutely taboo for the client and may aggravate the problem situation experienced. Social workers using this approach should also know that Mattaini, Lowery and Meyer (1998:70) added that it is important within the multi-cultural social work environment, that social work professionals familiarise themselves with various aspects of different cultures, before they can become effective helpers. It is important, for instance, to know how different cultures greet each other, what meaning is attached to emotions

like laughter, tears, pain or joy and their cultural significance, and how these are dealt with.

The social developmental approach which, according to Midgley (1996:2), promotes a dynamic process of growth, change and progress by integrating economic and social policies, (*description 07*), was only favoured by 18 [40%] respondents. This approach further assumes that services and programmes should be developed to solve problems experienced by the people [client system]. If the social worker is uninformed regarding a client system's culture, he/she might not know how development programmes will be received by the specific culture.

Ten [22,2%] respondents indicated that they use the cultural awareness/ethnic-sensitive approach (*description 04*) the main aim of which, as developed by Devore and Schlesinger (1991:156), is to meet the needs of a multi-cultural client system by a culturally competent social work service provider. It is thus crucial for social workers to acquaint themselves with the cultural practices of the client system they are in contact with, because this would indicate how things are done within that culture. The social work intervention must then be adopted in such a way that it is acceptable and useful to the client system. In this manner, as Sheafor, Horesji and Horesji (2000:59) indicate, cultural competence within the multi-cultural social work setting will be achieved.

The ecological approach as explained by Germain and Gitterman (1986:619) focuses on how the person fits into his/her environment, (*description 05*), and the person-centered approach (*description 09*) were both used by seven [15,5%] respondents respectively. The researcher is once again of the opinion that if the service provider possesses sufficient knowledge of and understands the client system's cultural/ethnic/language/religious background, he/she will become aware of the client's relationship with his/her environment. The dual perspective, as conceptualised by Netting, Kettner and McMurtry (1993:215-217), figure 3.1, can also be kept in mind when using this approach within the multi-cultural social work setting.

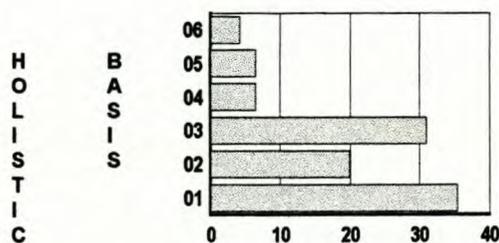
The approach least used by the respondents (6,6% [three]) was the client-centered approach (*description 10*). The person-centered and client-centered approaches have been added as additional approaches by the respondents to this question. A reason for their infrequent use of the person- and client centered approach might be because they automatically concentrate on the person or client when using the other approaches. The respondents probably also found the other approaches as discussed above to be more useful to the client system and therefore rather concentrated on them.

#### 7.4.2.2 Holistic knowledge and skills base of approaches

The respondents were requested in question 3.2.2 to comment on the question regarding the necessity of having a foundation of holistic knowledge and skills of the various interventions approaches and processes in social work. The responses were clustered in six different descriptions. Figure 7.23 presents the responses graphically.

##### Description why it is necessary to have an holistic foundation

- 01: To implement the most effective intervention process, social workers need to have a broad knowledge and skills basis regarding social work theory which will ensure the best possible service to the client system.
- 02: To assist with the assessment process of clients from a diverse background, is it necessary for the social worker to be flexible during service rendering.
- 03: Use of the best possible approach to facilitate problem-solving would enhance the credibility and professionalism as well as the competence in service rendering .
- 04: Social work focuses on individuals require a holistic approach to overcome barriers between the worker and the client.
- 05: To make the client system's problem situation more understandable.
- 06: Do not know at all.



% OF RESPONDENTS  
N = 45

\*Respondents could indicate more than one response

**FIGURE 7.23 : HOLISTIC KNOWLEDGE BASE**

Despite the fact that only two [4,4%] respondents indicated (figure 7.23, *description 06*) that they did not know why it was necessary to have a holistic knowledge and skills foundation regarding social work approaches and processes, all the other

responses were positive. Sixteen [35,5%] respondents explained that it will assist them to implement the most effective intervention process as it will ensure the best possible service towards the client system (*description 01*). Another response given by 14 [31,1%] respondents was that it is important (*description 03*) to empower social workers regarding the use of the best possible approach as it will facilitate problem-solving and enhance professionalism, credibility and competency in service rendering. Nine [20%] respondents indicated that a holistic knowledge and skills foundation will ease the assessment process regarding clients from diverse backgrounds and that the social worker needs to be flexible with the approach used during service rendering (*description 02*). Lastly, three [6,6%] respondents felt that as social work focuses on individuals who require a holistic approach from the social worker will overcome the barriers that might exist between the client and worker (*description 04*), while another three [6,6%] respondents indicated that it will make the client system's problem situation more understandable to the social worker (*description 05*).

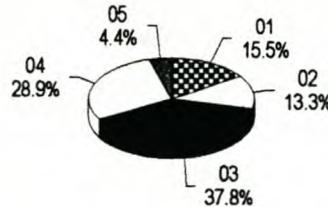
The diverse client system, as indicated in chapter 6, will require a holistic knowledge and skills foundation regarding social work approaches and strategies. The social worker might need to integrate various approaches and strategies in assisting a specific client emanating from a particular cultural grouping. If the social work professional does not possess a holistic knowledge foundation of the available social work approaches and strategies, the worker will fail to assist the client system competently with a method that is acceptable and useful to the client (Sheafor, Horesji, Horesji (2000:59). Except for two, almost all respondents agreed in some way or another with this viewpoint as mentioned by Sheafor, Horesji, and Horesji (2000:59).

#### 7.4.2.3 **Contribution towards cultural competence**

The respondents had to indicate in question 3.2.3 in which way the approach(es) used during intervention sessions could contribute to a more culturally competent service rendering. All the responses were grouped together in five different descriptions which are displayed in figure 7.24.

**Description of how the approach could contribute toward competence**

- 01: View the client's interactions with various systems in his/her existing environment, as well as how the client solve their problems [systems approach].
- 02: Do not know at all.
- 03: The approaches would empower the client system toward the development of the self.
- 04: The client would be seen as a human being, make the client feel in control of his/her life.
- 05: See the person within his/her environment [psychosocial approach].



N = 45

**FIGURE 7.24 : CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS CULTURAL COMPETENCE**

From figure 7.24 it is evident that 17 [37,8%] of the respondents felt that the approaches empower the client system in the development of the self (*description 03*). Others were of the opinion that the client must be seen with respect as a human being by making the client feel in control of his/her life during interventions (*description 04*). This statement represents the views of 13 [28,9%] of the respondents. Seven [15,5%] respondents felt that the systems approach contributed toward competence as it viewed the clients' interactions with various systems in their existing environment, as well as how they solved their problems (*description 01*). Only two [4,4%] respondents saw the psychosocial approach as a contributor towards cultural competence (*description 05*), because this approach sees the person within his/her environment. Six [13,3%] respondents indicated that they did not know how the approach could contribute towards cultural competence (*description 02*).

From the above responses it is clear that most of the respondents (39 [86,6%]), do contribute to some form of cultural competence during service rendering. This is positive, despite the social work managers' failure (in figure 6.21) to update their social workers' knowledge and skills regarding cultural models and practices. It is furthermore enlightening to note, that 40% of the social workers are from an Afrikaans cultural/ethnic/language background or are English speaking [4,4%] as shown in table 7.1, renders services to a predominantly Zulu and Xhosa (figure 7.6) client system. Cultural competence is thus to render services to a client system in

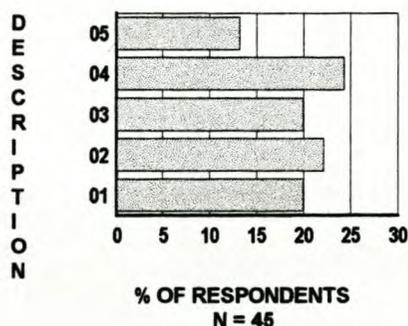
such a way that is acceptable and useful to the client as explained by Sheafor, Horesji, and Horesji (2000:59).

## 7.5 SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

In question 3.2.4, respondents had to indicate the role that a social developmental intervention strategy play during social work service rendering within a multi-cultural environment. All responses were grouped into five descriptions as given in figure 7.25 which graphically illustrates these responses.

### Description of the role of social development

- 01: Do not know at all
- 02: If the focus is needs-based, clients will be motivated to take part in the programme especially if the aim is to enhance their social functioning.
- 03: Social development, which is the main aim in service rendering, will enhance the value of diversity of the client system and will make the social worker the master of a cultural competent service.
- 04: Social development views clients according to their own potential and therefore leave room for progress within their own frame of reference.
- 05: Social development teaches the client independence and co-responsibility of actions.



**FIGURE 7.25: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ROLE**

In view of the aforementioned figure 7.25, eleven [24,4%] respondents were of the opinion that social development views the clients according to their own potential and this leaves room for progress within their own frame of reference (*description 04*). Ten [22,2%] respondents felt that if the approaches were needs-based, the clients would be motivated to take part in the programme presented to them, especially if the aim was to enhance their social functioning (*description 02*). Another nine [20%] respondents mentioned that social development will enhance the value of the diversity of the clients and will make the social worker the master of a culturally competent service rendering (*description 03*). Six [13,3%] respondents explained that social development taught the client system independence as well as

co-responsibility for actions. Nine [20%] of the respondents did not know what responses to give (*description 01*),

From the responses it is evident that most of the respondents (36 [80%]) do have some idea of how a social developmental intervention strategy can contribute towards a multi-cultural, competent service rendering. This approach, which is the backbone of the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997), aims to promote development, growth and change in people within a community structure, (Midgley, 1996:2). The researcher is of the opinion that this strategy can be integrated into any social work service rendering approach and model, because Uehara et al (1996:614) regard the ultimate goal for a multi-cultural social work practice as a striving towards social justice and transformation of those social/cultural structures and processes which continue to support injustice and inequality.

## **7.6 CULTURAL COMPETENT SOCIAL WORK PROGRAMMES**

In question 3.2.5, respondents had to indicate whether the existing social work programmes meet the needs of the client system. Respondents who agree with this statement had to indicate the type of programmes (question 3.2.6). Those who did not agree that the existing social work programmes met the needs of the client system at large, were asked, in question 3.2.7, to motivate their opinion.

### **7.6.1 Programmes that meet the needs of the client systems**

In table 7.6 it is evident that, despite the fact that 17 [37,7%] respondents were of the opinion that the existing social work programmes did meet the needs of the client system at large, another group of 17 [37,7%] respondents were unsure about this fact. Eleven [24,2%] respondents mentioned that the existing social work programmes did not meet the needs of the client system at large. Thus, according to table 7.6, 28 [62,2%] respondents are either unsure or did not agree that the existing programmes are needs-based. This group is representative of the majority of the respondents and can be seen in a negative light. This is in direct conflict with the responses received and presented in figure 6.11 where social work managers

indicated that all social work programmes, displayed in table 6.9, contribute towards cultural competence. They regarded their social work sections in table 6.11 as rendering an excellent multi-cultural service. Whether the social work managers and practitioners really know what is meant by a competent service rendering within a multi-cultural setting, is questioned by the researcher.

**TABLE 7.6: CULTURAL COMPETENT PROGRAMMES**

Needs-based programmes	f	%
YES	17	37.7
NO	11	24.4
UNSURE	17	37.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100</b>

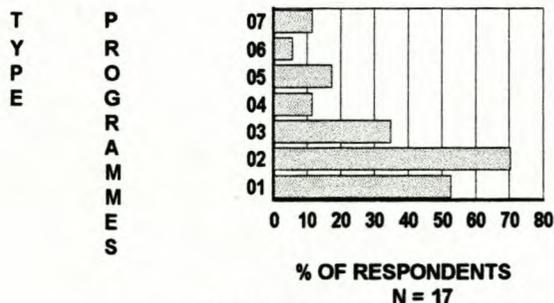
N = 45

### 7.6.2 Types of social work programmes

Respondents who responded positively (in table 7.6) were asked to name the type of social work programmes which contribute towards meeting the needs of the client system at large. The various programmes will first be named and then displayed in figure 7.26 below.

#### Description of the programmes

- |     |  |     |                               |
|-----|--|-----|-------------------------------|
| 01: | Financial management programmes which focuses on the basic needs of the client system. | 03: | HIV/AIDS programme.           |
| 02: | Life skills - based on the diverse client system.                                      | 05: | Women health programmes.      |
| 04: | Alcohol and substance abuse programme.   | 07: | Stress management programmes. |
| 06: | Deployment resilience programme.   |     |                               |



**FIGURE 7.26: TYPE OF PROGRAMMES**

From the 17 [37,7%] respondents who indicated YES in table 7.5, it is clear that the life skills programmes [see figure 7.26] were still regarded as needs-based and this was indicated by 12 [70,5%] respondents (description 02). Financial management (description 01) was second in line and supported by nine [52,9%] of the

respondents. The HIV/AIDS programme (*description 03*) presented by the social workers was also seen as needs-based by six [35,2%] of the respondents. The following programmes were also seen as meeting the needs of the client system at large: women's health programmes (*description 05*) by three [17,6%] respondents; alcohol and substance abuse (*description 04*) and stress management programmes (*description 07*) by two [17,7%] of the respondents respectively, as well as the deployment resilience programme which was felt by only one [5,8%] respondent to be needs-based.

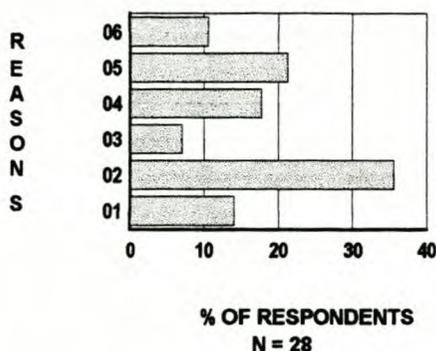
Thus, it is clear that there are existing programmes within the DSW that do meet the needs of the client system at large. The researcher is of the opinion that it is good to have all these programmes available, but the presentation thereof by the social workers will be the main contributing factor regarding cultural competence. The attitude, willingness, and acceptance of the social worker to work with people from a different cultural background is important. It is not positive to have programmes that meet all the criteria of a culturally competent service, but the social workers' attitudes are negative when working with a diverse group of people. This will then be a futile exercise. This is also explained by Ronnau (1994:33-34) who states that it is important for the social work professional to develop the right attitude towards the culture of the client system. A negative attitude will hamper the effectiveness of any service rendering as the client could assume that the professional person does not want to assist him/her regarding his/her problem. On the other hand, a positive attitude and willingness to engage in some form of social work intervention with the client system will display the professional person's commitment to assist the client with his/her situation, whether during individual interventions, or group- or community work.

### **7.6.3 Reasons why programmes are not needs-based**

The 62,2% [28] respondents who indicated NO (24,4% [11] ) or the (37,7%[17]) who indicated UNSURE in table 7.6 presented some responses which were grouped into six descriptions. The descriptions will first be given and then be displayed in figure 7.27.

**Description of responses**

- 01: Too many cultural elements are present in the military community that withholds the clients to function socially healthy like: (a) unwillingness of the many family systems to be transferred with the military employees to new places of employment; (b) the attitude hold by many of the men that they are allow to sleep around as they wish; (c) unfounded fears for spiritual powers that might come onto a person; (d) also the fear of getting killed if one person has got more property or are more wealthy than others within the community.
- 02: Social workers are not empowered enough regarding the development of cultural competent programmes as these programmes have too much of a westernised focus.
- 03: Life skills programmes need to be reevaluated and rewritten to fit into the current diverse culture system of the military.
- 04: Do not know at all.
- 05: Research is still needed regarding cultural competent programmes.
- 06: Social workers are concentrating too much on their statistics to satisfy their supervisors and often forget about the needs of the client system.



\*Respondents indicated more than one response

**FIGURE 7.27: REASONS WHY PROGRAMMES ARE NOT NEEDS-BASED**

Figure 7.27 shows that many of the social workers (35,7% [10] ) are not empowered regarding the development of culturally competent programmes as the existing programmes' main focus is based on western approaches (*description 02*). A question raised by the researcher in paragraph 7.6.1 of whether the social work managers and practitioners really know what is meant by a competent service rendering within a multi-cultural setting, can be answered by *description 02*. The social work managers' ignorance towards the updating of their social workers' knowledge and skills about cultural competent approaches and models, and which is indicated in figure 6.20, could be seen as reasons for social workers not being empowered regarding the development of culturally competent programmes. In table 6.9 the social work managers indicated all the programmes that contribute towards a multi-cultural social work service rendering. They also regarded their social work sections in table 6.11 as competent in service rendering. The researcher is of opinion that if social work professionals follow the basic principle as indicated by Seafor, Horesji, and Horesji (2000:59), that cultural competence is to strive towards a service which is useful and acceptable to the client system, they will know how to change and adapt programmes to suit the culturally different client system. Professionals will only be able to know when a service is useful and acceptable if

they assure themselves regarding the client system's cultural/ethnic/language background. This will indicate to the social worker what is acceptable in a specific culture and what is not and will therefore be able to adapt social work programmes to best suit the client system.

Six [21,4%] respondents mentioned that much research is still needed (*description 05*), and five [17,8%] respondents did not know why the programmes were not meeting the needs of the client system at large (*description 04*). This once again contradicts figure 6.11 which indicates that all social work managers agreed that social work programmes contribute towards cultural competence. It further contradicts the findings in table 6.11 where social work managers assessed their sections' service rendering as culturally competent.

Four [14,2%] of the respondents mentioned that too many cultural elements were present within the military community that prevent the client from functioning socially in a healthy manner. The most important elements are: the unwillingness of families to be transferred together with the military employees; men's perceived attitude that it is acceptable to have extra marital affairs; unfounded fears of spiritual powers that might influence a person and also the fear of getting killed if one person has more property and regarded as more wealthy within the community. The researcher is still of the opinion that if the practitioner learns about the client system's cultural/ethnic/language background, he/she will know how to effectively address these cultural elements present in the different cultures and supports Sheafor, Horesji, and Horesji (2000:59) who stress the service provider's ability to learn about the cultural context of a presenting problem and to integrate that knowledge into a professional assessment, evaluation and intervention strategy. Doing so, social workers will be equipped to develop programmes which suit the needs of a multi-cultural client system.

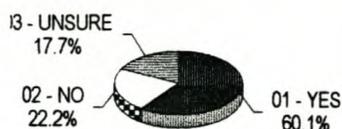
## 7.7 GUIDELINES FOR SERVICE RENDERING

In question 3.3.1, the respondents had to indicate whether they required any guidelines regarding service rendering within the multi-cultural setting. The type of

guidelines needed also had to be listed while those who are not in need of any guidelines had to motivate their answers.

### 7.7.1 The need for guidelines

Figure 7.28 displays the responses of question 3.3.1.



N = 45

**FIGURE 7.28: GUIDELINES REQUIRED**

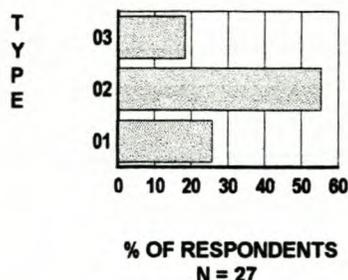
Figure 7.28 shows that 27 [60,1%] of the respondents needed guidelines for service rendering within the multi-cultural setting. Ten [22,2%] respondents indicated that they did not need any guidelines, while eight [17,7%] of the respondents were unsure whether they needed guidelines or not. The respondents' need for guidelines once again stresses the importance for this study and is also in line with figure 7.27, where respondents indicate in *description 02*, that they are not empowered to develop social work programmes in a multi-cultural setting.

### 7.7.2 The type of guidelines

The guidelines as indicated by the 27 [60,1%] respondents were grouped together into three descriptions. These descriptions (question 3.3.2) will be presented first and then followed by figure 7.29.

**Description of responses**

- 01: Language classes within the SANDF are crucial.  
 02: Any information regarding multi-cultural social work which will make the service more efficient and the social workers more competent.  
 03: Information regarding the rituals, habits, and traditions during important life cycle happenings like birth, marriages and death.



**FIGURE 7.29: TYPE OF GUIDELINES REQUIRED**

It is clear in figure 7.29, that a third of the respondents (55,5% [15] ) felt that any kind of information regarding multi-cultural social work which will make the service more competent will be helpful (*description 02*). This is followed by 25,9% [seven] of the respondents who prefer to have language classes within the SANDF (*description 01*). Lastly, 18,5% [five] respondents need more information regarding rituals, habits, and traditions during important life cycle happenings like births, marriages and death (*description 03*).

From the above responses it is clear that all the respondents are in need of some guidelines to reach competence in service rendering. This is also in line with the responses received from the social work managers (presented in table 6.12), who indicated the need for the management of a multi-cultural social work personnel system. It is the belief of the researcher, that if social work managers can become competent in rendering management services to a diverse personnel system, it will serve as example to social workers *what to be aware of* during service rendering to a culturally different client system.

### 7.7.3 Reasons for not requiring guidelines

Although 38,9% [18] of the respondents indicated in figure 7.28 that they did not need guidelines, 22,2% [10] of the respondents and 17,7% [eight] of the respondents were unsure whether they were in need of any guidelines. Only 15,5%

[seven] of the 38,9% [18] respondents motivated their responses in question 3.3.3.

***The motivations were as follows:***

- a) Are already well-equipped to render a cultural competent service.
- b) Did not believe in a multi-cultural approach at all, as it might lead to discrimination which will also enhance stereotyping.
- c) View the client as an individual who is part of a specific culture, namely the military culture.
- d) If the social worker practices basic respect, there will not be any problems.

Based on the aforementioned responses received from the respondents, it is evident that the respondents do not have a clear idea of what knowledge and skills are required within a multi-cultural social work milieu. This once again emphasises the importance of this study, namely to develop theoretical and practical guidelines for multi-cultural social work practice within the SANDF.

## **7.8 CONCLUSION**

The research findings contained in this chapter reflect the wide scope of knowledge and skills required by the social work production workers regarding the rendering of a needs-based multi-cultural social work practice to the diverse client system within the SANDF.

From this chapter it is evident that the more than three quarters of the social workers who render services to a predominantly Zulu and Xhosa client system emanate from an Afrikaans and English cultural/ethnic/language background. Guidelines of how to reach cultural competence as well as how to transform social work programmes for the multi-cultural social work setting, are urgently needed. In addressing this need for guidelines, the majority of the respondents indicated their need for specific knowledge and skills regarding service rendering to a multi-cultural client system.

The information contained in this chapter will give the social work management a clear indication of the competence level of multi-cultural service rendering to the culturally/ethnically different client systems.

The conclusion and recommendations derived from this study will be presented in chapter 8.

**CHAPTER 8****CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS****8.1 INTRODUCTION**

The goal of this study was to develop theoretical and practical guidelines for multi-cultural social work practice within the SANDF. This is necessary to ensure that the social service delivery system (managers, supervisors, consultants and social workers) attend to cultural variations amongst clients, whilst providing social work services to the client system.

The conclusions and recommendations regarding the findings of the study will be discussed in this chapter.

**8.2 CONCLUSIONS**

The conclusions can be separated into three main sections, namely conclusions based on the findings from the diverse client system, conclusions based on multi-cultural management practice by the social work managers and conclusions based on the knowledge, perceptions and attitudes of social work practitioners about multi-cultural social work practice within the SANDF.

The aforementioned conclusions are based on the outcome of the empirical research.

**8.2.1 FINDINGS FROM THE DIVERSE CLIENT SYSTEM**

In this section, several conclusions are made and discussed.

- ♦ **Age and gender of the respondents**

The majority of the respondents fall into the age grouping 20 - 39 yrs, which can be regarded as young adulthood. Social work programmes within the military setting should therefore focus on empowering these individuals in order to better equip them to deal with issues of daily living, e.g. relationships, child raising and workplace conflict.

More males than females acted as respondents. In view of the transformation being experienced within the SANDF, more females are entering the military field. Social work interventions should therefore focus on how to better accommodate females within the military environment which was traditionally viewed as a "*man's job*".

- ♦ **Religious backgrounds**

No dominance of any religion was evidenced. It would be inadvisable to ignore the existence of various religions within the workplace as this also contributes to the diversity of the SANDF work-force.

- ♦ **Cultural/ethnic background awareness**

Respondents emanated from various cultural and ethnic backgrounds. The majority of the client systems originated from the Tswana culture.

The study noted that the majority of the respondents indicated the importance of the social worker's awareness regarding the cultural/ethnic/religious backgrounds of their clients. This will enhance understanding and respect for the client system and discourage activities that are not useful or acceptable to the specific client system during social work interventions.

## 8.2.2 SOCIAL WORK MANAGEMENT SURVEY

This survey highlighted that social work managers play a vital role with regards to the management and establishment of a multi-cultural social work practice within the DSW of the SANDF.

- ♦ **Cultural background and present employment**

From the findings it was noted that less than half of the management contingent within the SANDF was still from an Afrikaans and English cultural/ethnic/language background. The importance of striving towards a multi-cultural social work service is emphasised as services are rendered to a client system emanating from a wide variety of cultural/ethnic/religious backgrounds.

- ♦ **Years of service**

The current social work management within the SANDF consists of relatively experienced managers. An experienced manager will try to limit mistakes made in the past. This is especially important during the present transformation process being experienced within the DSW and the SANDF.

- ♦ **The contribution of strategic planning towards multi-cultural social work practice**

The process used, as well as the involvement of key-role players within a strategic planning process, will have a definite outcome on the effect of service rendering within a multi-cultural social work practice.

It was further established that the undertaking of a continuous environmental study, will indicate the direction of a strategic planning process, and will enhance needs-based service rendering.

- ♦ **DSW business plan**

Although three quarters of the respondents indicated that the DSW's business plan was seen as relevant and in line with government expectations, the need to focus more on development programmes like HIV/AIDS, was highlighted. Furthermore, the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) and the Financing Policy for Developmental Social Welfare Services (1999) should form the foundation of the DSW's business plan which is based on a military perspective. The reason is that the military members are part of the broader community system and are thus not immune to the environmental influences experienced by the bigger or civilian community.

- ♦ **Programme planning**

From the literature review and the findings related to the views of the social work managers, it is clear that a fair understanding existed of the process to be followed during the designing of a programme. The process that will be followed during programme planning will guide the social work delivery system to focus on the needs of a multi-cultural client system within the SANDF.

- ♦ **Existing social work programmes**

Various programmes which contribute towards the multi-cultural client system within the SANDF exist within the DSW. The client system's various religious backgrounds, as showed in table 6.3, and their different cultural/ethnic/language backgrounds shown in figure 6.1, confirm the importance of multi-cultural social work programmes. It was found that most of the programmes have been adapted to suit the needs of a diverse client system and that these programmes empowered the client system in their further development. It is imperative that programmes be adjusted to suit the specific client system with whom the social worker is in contact. Knowledge regarding the client system's cultural/ethnic/religious background will enable the worker to amend social work programmes to suit the client system.

- ♦ **Social development**

The survey's findings correspond with those of the literature, in that social work programmes contribute toward the social development of people. The researcher is of the opinion that an integrated intervention focus during service rendering to the client system, will enhance social development. This will enable the social worker to combine various models and approaches to form one integrated approach to best suit the client system.

- ♦ **Cultural/ethnic/language background of social work personnel**

It was noted that the social work personnel represent a wide variety of cultural/ethnic/language backgrounds. This emphasises the importance of the social work manager being aware of their social work subordinate's cultural/ethnic/language backgrounds. This will facilitate a better understanding of the client system's actions and behaviour. Management courses should focus on the management of a diverse personnel system as this will enhance the competence of the social work manager's managerial ability within a multi-cultural setting.

- ♦ **Competency level**

Managers were unclear with regards to their own management skills within a multi-cultural environment. The varying responses were indicative of the variety of thoughts which exist amongst people. It was further noted that each social work manager executed management activities within a multi-cultural setting in his/her own unique way. Many of these management activities may have developed from a trial-and-error effort when these managers were confronted with a need within a culturally diverse setting.

- ♦ **Human resources management**

Most of the respondents indicated, during the execution of human resources management, that the social work manager should focus on the management of personalities and skills of social workers and how to accommodate these within the military culture. Competence in service rendering to a diverse client system will be enhanced if the social work professional were to be acquainted with the culture, beliefs and value systems of the client system.

Furthermore, social work managers play a vital role with regards to the management and establishment of a multi-cultural social work practice within the DSW of the SANDF. This entails that the social work manager should be skilled in both general management practices and the management of a multi-cultural social worker personnel system.

- ♦ **Competence in service rendering**

Whilst the majority of the respondents regarded their service rendering as being multi-cultural, a quarter of them were unsure regarding their social work section's competence in multi-cultural service rendering. Some social workers are reluctant to work with a client system emanating from a different cultural/ethnic/language/religious system and this emphasises the importance of this study.

- ♦ **Guidance for human resources management**

Respondents expressed the need for some form of guidance regarding the diversity of South African languages, cultures, ethnicity and religions, and what the social work manager can do in order to promote non-racial, multi-cultural social work practice. The majority of the social work managers still originate from an Afrikaans cultural/ethnic/religious background while their social work service personnel emanates from a diverse background. This contributes to the manager's need for guidance within a multi-cultural human resources

setting. Knowledge regarding the subordinate social worker's culture and language will assist the manager to effectively deal with personnel related issues like births, deaths and resolving issues within a cultural framework. This will contribute towards service competence of a diverse personnel system.

- ♦ **Social work intervention**

Despite the variety of cultural/ethnic/language/religious backgrounds within the DSW and the SANDF, social work managers are not actively updating their social work practitioner's knowledge and skills with regards to culturally sensitive models and approaches. In a diverse organisation like the SANDF, it is imperative for social work managers to become actively involved in the empowering of their social work personnel with approaches and models needed to contribute towards competence within a multi-cultural service setting.

Only a few of the managers were aware of the existing cultural models and approaches which could be utilised.

### **8.2.3 SURVEY REGARDING SOCIAL WORK PRACTITIONERS**

This study highlighted the importance of knowledge, perceptions and attitudes of social work practitioners during service rendering to a multi-cultural client system within the SANDF.

- ♦ **Gender and cultural background**

Social work services within the SANDF are still dominated by female production workers from mainly Afrikaans and English cultural backgrounds. As the focus of social work services within the SANDF is on a diverse client system of mainly men, the importance of this study which focuses on multi-cultural social work service rendering is highlighted.

- ♦ **Years of service**

The majority of the respondents had a limited number of years social work experience both within the SANDF or other social work sectors. Most of the respondents were not aware of the cultural competence models and approaches that exist within the multi-cultural social work domain.

- ♦ **Nature of the social work service**

A wide variety of social work services are rendered by the respondents with the highest focus on alcohol dependency and family care. As a result of social work services being rendered mainly from Afrikaans and English speaking backgrounds to a diverse client system, the need to focus on social work within a multi-cultural setting like the SANDF, is imperative.

- ♦ **Multi-cultural social work practice**

Although the majority of the respondents understood the terms culture and ethnicity, they did not have a clear understanding of what is meant by multi-cultural social work practice. Their limited experience as social workers and the fact that their social work managers did not focus on multi-cultural models and approaches can be regarded as the reason for their lack of insight into the term multi-cultural social work practice. Social workers in the military environment working with a diverse client system need to focus more on empowering themselves in order to render a more culturally competent social work service.

- ♦ **Awareness of client's cultural/ethnic/language background**

As social work production workers are rendering services to a client system emanating from a wide variety of cultural/ethnic/language backgrounds, it is imperative to be aware of the client system's background. This will lead to a

better understanding of the diverse client system and also contribute towards competence in service rendering.

- ♦ **Competence**

It was noted that respondents did not regard themselves as being competent in rendering services to a different cultural client system as services are mainly rendered by social workers emanating from Afrikaans and English cultural backgrounds to a diverse client system. A significant number respondents did, however, indicate that they were attempting to view problems experienced by the client within the client system's cultural background. Concentration on culturally competent service rendering within a multi-cultural social work context by both the social work managers and production workers is imperative.

- ♦ **The influence of the practitioner's background**

Social work practitioners were not clear as to whether their cultural/ethnic/language backgrounds influence their service rendering to a culturally different client system. This may be as a result of respondents' possessing a limited knowledge base with regards to the working of a multi-cultural social work practice.

- ♦ **Understanding of the term: culturally competent service**

The respondents were familiar with the term cultural competent service as is found in related literature. The diverse military environment could help to sensitise the production workers toward a better understanding of cultural competence. The implementation of culturally competent services by social workers is, however, questionable.

- ♦ **Knowledge for service rendering**

Social work practitioners appear to have a desire for knowledge regarding the cultural/ethnic/language/religious aspects of their client systems. Once again this emphasises the importance of an effective personnel development programme by social work managers which concentrates on multi-cultural social work practice. Such programmes will sensitise and empower not only the social worker, but also the social work managers toward service rendering to a diverse client system.

- ♦ **Value orientations**

The respondents were familiar with the important role value orientations play during service rendering to a culturally diverse client system. An eclectic theoretical base of social work intervention strategies and approaches will, in itself, serve as a value guideline within a multi-cultural social work setting. Such knowledge will empower the professional to assess the client's situation within his/her cultural/ethnic/language background and then use the most appropriate intervention approach or integrate various approaches in order to effectively assist the client system with the problem experienced.

- ♦ **Role of communication**

The importance of communication during social work intervention, as well as the different languages spoken by the client system, was noticeable. Social workers need to acquaint themselves with the language of the majority of their client system. This will assist the worker to understand the client who cannot speak English or Afrikaans, and who is only fluent in his/her mother tongue. Clients would more likely consult with social workers who can speak their own language irrespective of the worker's cultural/ethnic/religious/language background.

- ♦ **Communication in mother tongue**

Findings substantiated that communication in the mother tongue of both the practitioner and client will promote the social work intervention process during service rendering.

When communication difficulties arose during service rendering, the social work practitioners made use of various ways to overcome these difficulties. The use of a suitably skilled translator/interpreter is seen as the most beneficial way.

Furthermore, it was noted that if the social work practitioner still experienced problems with communication during service rendering, referral to a social worker emanating from the same cultural/ethnic/language background as the client is the obvious step to take.

- ♦ **Respondents' understanding of the term: *generalist***

It was found that respondents had a vague understanding of the term, *generalist*. This is disturbing to the researcher in view of the nature of multi-cultural social work service within the SANDF. Ideally social workers should have a holistic knowledge-base of social work approaches and models when working with a diverse client system. The worker would then be better able to assess the problem situation experienced by the clients within their cultural milieu and be able to integrate various approaches and models to best suit the client system. The failure of social work managers to update their workers' knowledge and skills regarding cultural models and approaches could also be viewed as a reason for the respondents' poor understanding of the term: *generalist*.

- ♦ **Approaches to service rendering**

Almost all the known approaches to service rendering were being utilised by social work practitioners during service rendering. Although they understood the importance of having a holistic knowledge and skills base of the approaches, their in-depth knowledge and skills regarding these approaches were superficial.

- ♦ **Contribution towards cultural competence**

While respondents possessed insight with regards to the contribution of various approaches towards cultural competence, confusion existed in their understanding of the way these approaches could contribute towards cultural competence.

- ♦ **Understanding of social development**

It was noted that not all the respondents understood the role of social development within a multi-cultural environment. This was viewed by the researcher as a matter for concern as social development forms the foundation of governmental expectations and social welfare policies.

- ♦ **Culturally competent social work programmes**

While various social work programmes were identified by the respondents as meeting the needs of a multi-cultural client system, it was noted that confusion existed amongst the respondents as to whether these programmes met the needs of a multi-cultural client system.

Various reasons have been highlighted by the respondents as to why the identified programmes failed to meet the needs of the client system. The most prominent reason was that social workers were not empowered in developing culturally competent programmes.

- ♦ **Guidelines for service rendering**

The majority of the respondents identified the need for guidelines regarding social work service rendering within a multi-cultural social work practice.

### 8.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following section contains recommendations based on the findings and conclusions emanating from the research.

- ♦ **Training**

The social service delivery system [managers, supervisors, consultants and production workers] require knowledge and skills in the management and implementation of a multi-culturally competent social work service. It is recommended that:

- 1) *registered cultural competent social work training courses be designed and implemented within the DSW;*
- 2) *orientation programmes for social workers in the military setting include cultural competence programmes ;*
- 3) *cultural competent training be operationalised by management within the practitioners workplace.*

- ♦ **DSW Business Plan**

It is recommended that the business plan of the Directorate Social Work:

- 1) *should focus more on aspects of developmental social work;*

- 2) *should highlight and emphasise cultural competency in social work service rendering.*

- ♦ **Social work programmes**

Stemming from the research it is recommended that:

- 1) *the social work delivery system should be suitably skilled by management on how to amend social work programmes which fail to comply with cultural competence into cultural competent programmes;*

- ♦ **Social work approaches and models**

Concerning social work approaches and models, it is recommended :

- 1) *that the DSW continue to focus on the importance of social workers having a diverse knowledge and skills base consisting of the most significant social work models and approaches;*
- 2) *that social work managers utilise personnel development programmes to empower social workers with the relevant knowledge and skills of various social work models and approaches, especially those focusing on cultural sensitivity.*

- ♦ **Cultural/ethnic backgrounds**

Service providers should be assisted to:

- 1) *address problems experienced within their own cultural/ethnic backgrounds, before engaging in any social work intervention processes with a diverse client system.*

♦ **Communication**

It is recommended that:

- 1) *each social work office and/or section should identify possible stumbling blocks that communication has on effective service delivery;*
- 2) *possible solutions to how to overcome language issues during social work intervention should be discussed by the social workers, and also with the client system.*

♦ **Social development**

It is recommended that:

- 1) *social workers be empowered regarding the role, function and implementation of social developmental strategies which will assist them in rendering a more competent service to the diverse client system.*

♦ **Guidelines**

It is suggested that new guidelines be developed regarding:

- 1) *the authority system within cultures;*
- 2) *the role of rituals, beliefs, cultural illnesses, perceptions of healing, important life events like births, marriages and deaths within cultures;*
- 3) *the link between body, soul, mind and spirit and how to address these when in conflict with the military system;*

- 4) *aspects that lead to malfunctioning and social problems experienced by people of different cultures.*
- 5) *how to effectively address racism within the military environment;*
- 6) *training programmes aimed at preparing managers, consultants, supervisors and production workers through continuing education regarding multi-cultural competence.*

♦ **Further research**

It is recommended that further research be conducted covering the following topics:

- a) *Factors that decrease stress experienced by social workers working with a diverse client system.*
- b) *The effectiveness of social work programmes in reaching cultural competence.*
- c) *The effect of social work management on a cultural competent practice.*

**FINAL REMARK**

To conclude, is it the wish of the researcher that the findings of this research will inspire social workers within the SANDF to strive towards service excellence within a multi-cultural milieu and that social work services make a difference to the lives of the diverse client systems within the military environment.

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***APPENDIX A***

**ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY  
QUESTIONNAIRE**

**ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY**

**MILITARY COMMUNITY  
MAFIKENG/ZEERUST**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**General Information**

- A. The Directorate Social Work in the SANDF has requested the Social Work Section within the North West Area Military Health Unit to complete an environmental study within the Mafikeng/Zeerust military communities.
- B. The aim of this research is to identify the developmental needs within these communities and to strategically plan accordingly.
- C. You are therefore requested to complete the questionnaire. All information will be handled confidential.

1. Please indicate your age and gender.

AGE: _____	GENDER: =	FEMALE	MALE
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2. Please specify your religious background: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Please indicate your cultural/ethnic/language background with a cross in the appropriate block:

Tswana		N-Sotho		Portuguese	
Zulu		Swazi		English	
Se-Sotho		Ndebele		Afrikaans	
Xhosa		Venda		Other [Specify]	

4. It is important for the social worker to acknowledge your cultural/ethnic/language background?

YES	NO
-----	----

5. If YES, what in your opinion, can the social worker do to acknowledge your cultural/ethnic/language background?

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6. If NO, please explain why it is not so important for the social worker to acknowledge your cultural/ethnic/language background?

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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME**

*[The afore-mentioned questiones have been included by the researcher during an environmental study done by Maj Thiele, a social work area manager within the Mafikeng/Zeerust military community]*

***APPENDIX B***

**QUESTIONNAIRE  
FOR  
SOCIAL WORK MANAGERS**

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK**  
**UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH**

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SOCIAL WORK MANAGERS IN THE  
SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL DEFENCE FORCE**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this questionnaire is to ascertain from the social work managers, how existing social work programmes within the SANDF are designed and managed to meet the requirements of a multi-cultural social work practice within the South African National Defence Force. The findings of this research will be regarded as the problem analysis of the study.

**GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS**

Read through all the questions, and answer honestly. In order to ensure anonymity, do not put your name on the questionnaire. The questionnaire will be administered within a group context.

Please note that certain questions require only a cross in the relevant block(s), whilst other questions may require an explanation or motivation.

It is important that all questions are answered.

**1. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

**1.1 Cultural background**

1.1.1 Please indicate your cultural/ethnic/language background. *[Mark with a cross next to the appropriate block]*

Zulu		Swazi	
Se-Sotho		Ndebele	
Xhosa		Afrikaans	
Tswana		Venda	
N-Sotho		English	
Other? [Specify]			

**1.1.2 Present employment**

1.2.1 Indicate your present post situation in the SANDF. *(Mark with a cross next to the appropriate block.)*

1. Staff officer	
2. Area manager	
3. Supervisor	
4. Other, specify	

**1.3 Years of service**

1.3.1 Indicate your *years of service* as a social work manager within the SANDF. *(Indicate the number of years.)*

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2. **STRATEGIC PLANNING WITHIN THE DSW**

2.1 In your opinion, explain how a process of strategic planning will contribute towards promoting a multi-cultural social work practice?

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2.2 In your view, why is it important to involve key roleplayers [supervisors, area managers and middle managers] within the DSW during a process of strategic planning?

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2.3 Why do you think it is important for the DSW to do a continuous environmental reading [external as well as internal]?

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3. **DSW's Bussiness Plan**

3.1 How relevant is the current Bussiness Plan of the DSW [as developed in 1997], with its vision, mission and strategic objectives, in meeting the needs of the multi-cultural client system?

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3.2 Are you of the opinion that the DSW's Bussiness Plan is in line with the expectations of the South African Government in terms of the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) and Financing Policy for Developmental Social Welfare Services (1999)?

YES	NO	UNSURE
-----	----	--------

3.3 If YES, please elaborate.

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3.4 If NO or UNSURE, please motivate your answer.

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4. Programme planning

4.1 Briefly explain the process followed by yourself regarding the designing of a social work related programme.

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4.2 In your view, how do these social work related programmes contribute towards meeting the needs of a multi-cultural client system?

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4.3 Briefly explain :

(a) *which programmes existing within the DSW contribute towards a multi-cultural social work service rendering?*

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(b) *in what way do these programmes contribute towards a multi-cultural social work service?*

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4.4 In your opinion, how do these existing social work programmes contribute towards the social development perspective?

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5. Cultural/ethnic background

5.1 Indicate the cultural/ethnic language background of the majority of the social work personnel in your section.

*(More than one answer could be marked)*

Zulu		Swazi	
Se-Sotho		Ndebele	
Xhosa		Afrikaans	
Tswana		Venda	
N-Sotho		English	
Other? [Specify]			

5.2 Based on your personal experience, why is it necessary for the social work practitioner to be aware of the cultural/ethnic background of the client system during service rendering?

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6. Competence

6.1 How competent do you regard yourself in performing management activities with regards to social work practitioner's emanating from a different cultural/ethnic background and origin to yourself?

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6.2 In your opinion, how would your cultural/ethnic background influence your human resources management of social work practitioners emanating from a different cultural background to yourself?

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6.3 Do you think that your particular social work section is rendering a competent multi-cultural social work service to the client system?

YES	NO	UNSURE
-----	----	--------

6.4 If YES, please explain.

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6.5 If NO or UNSURE, please indicate what, in your opinion, still needs to be done to ensure a competent multi-cultural social work service within your section.

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7. Guidance for human resources management

7.1 Do you require any additional knowledge and skills wrt the management of a multi-cultural social work personnel system?

YES	NO	UNSURE
-----	----	--------

7.2 If YES, briefly explain what knowledge and skills are needed by you.

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7.3 If NO or UNSURE, please motivate your answer.

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8. **SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTION**

8.1 Explain what you as a manager are doing to update the knowledge of social work practitioners regarding cultural [ethnic-sensitive] models and approaches to ensure a cultural competent social work service rendering to clients?

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8.2 Please indicate the cultural [ethnic-sensitive] models and approaches which you are aware of for social work service rendering to a multi-cultural client system.

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8.3 In your view, how do these cultural models and approaches contribute towards a competent multi-cultural service rendering?

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*THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME*

***APPENDIX C***

**QUESTIONNAIRE  
FOR  
SOCIAL WORK PRACTITIONERS**

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK**  
**UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH**

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MILITARY SOCIAL WORK PRACTITIONERS  
IN THE  
SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL DEFENCE FORCE**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this questionnaire is to determine the knowledge and perceptions of and attitudes of social work practitioners with regards to multi-cultural social work practice within the South African National Defence Force. The findings of this research will be used to develop theoretical and practical guidelines for the management of multi-cultural social work practice within the SANDF.

**GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS**

Read through all the questions, and answer honestly. In order to ensure anonymity, do not put your name on the questionnaire. The questionnaire will be administered within a group context.

Please note that certain questions require only a cross in the relevant block(s), whilst other questions may require an explanation or motivation.

It is important that all questions are answered.

**1. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

1.1. Gender: [Mark with cross next to appropriate block]

Female		Male	
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**1.2. Social work practitioner's cultural background**

1.2.1 Please indicate your cultural/ethnic/language background.

Zulu	Swazi	Other? [Specify]
Se-Sotho	Ndebele	
Xhosa	Afrikaans	
Tswana	Venda	
N-Sotho	English	

**1.3. Years of service**

1.3.1 Indicate your *years of service* as a social worker within the SANDF. (*Indicate the number of years.*)

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1.3.2. Indicate your *total years of service* as a social worker. This includes the period of service within the SANDF, as well as within any other organisations. (*Indicate the number of years.*)

\_\_\_\_\_

1.4 Nature of social work services

1.4.1 Indicate the *nature of social work services* rendered by you. (*More than one field can be marked*)

Family care		Mental health	
Child care		Physically disabled	
Geriatric care		Medical social work	
Alcohol and substance dependency			
Other, specify			

2 **MULTI-CULTURAL SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE**

2.1 Descriptions

2.1.1 Explain your understanding of the term, multi-cultural social work practice

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2.1.2 Explain your understanding of the term, culture.

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2.1.3 Explain your understanding of the term, ethnicity.

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2.2 Cultural/ethnic background

2.2.1 Indicate the cultural/ethnic language background of the majority of your clients. (*More than one answer could be marked*)

Zulu		Swazi		Other? [Specify
Se-Sotho		Ndebele		
Xhosa		Afrikaans		
Tswana		Venda		
N-Sotho		English		

2.2.2 In your view, is it necessary for the social work practitioner to be aware of the cultural/ethnic background of the client system during service rendering?

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2.3 **Competence**

2.3.1 Describe how competent you regard yourself in rendering social work services to a cultural different client system.

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2.3.2 In your view, could your particular cultural/ethnic/language background influence social work service rendering to a cultural different client system?

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2.3.3 Briefly explain your understanding of a cultural competent service:

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2.4 **Additional knowledge for social work service rendering to a multi-cultural client system**

2.4.1 Do you require additional knowledge and skills regarding social work service rendering to a multi-cultural client system?

YES	NO	UNSURE
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2.4.2 If YES, please elaborate:

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2.4.3 If NO or UNSURE, motivate your answer:

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2.5 **Value orientations**

2.5.1 In your opinion, which of the following personal value orientations inherent to an individual play a role during social work intervention. *(More than one answer could be marked)*

Time focus [ <i>importance of the past, present and future in a culture context</i> ]	
Mode of activity [ <i>cultural specific behaviour for instance -way they behave in a certain culture</i> ]	
Social relationships [ <i>relations with each other in a culture</i> ]	
A person's relationship with nature/environment [ <i>people's relationship / interaction with their physical environment</i> ]	
Inmate human nature [ <i>view of some cultures that humans are evil/bad or good and bad</i> ]	
Other(s)	

2.6 The role of communication

2.6.1 In which language do you communicate with most of your clients?

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2.6.2 Is this your mother tongue language?

YES	NO
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2.6.3 If NO, do you find it difficult to communicate with clients because of the difference in language?

YES	NO
-----	----

2.6.4 Motivate your previous answer.

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2.6.5 During social work interventions, have you ever experienced a situation where the client system experienced difficulty in expressing their feelings and the problem situation in a language other than their mother tongue?

YES	NO	UNSURE
-----	----	--------

2.6.6 If YES, what actions did you as the social work practitioner take to assist the client system during this situation?

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2.6.7 If NO or UNSURE, what do you think can a social work practitioner do when a situation as explained in question 2.6.5 occurs?

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2.6.8 How do you personally overcome cultural and language barriers during social work interventions?

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3. **SOCIAL WORK APPROACHES WITHIN THE GENERALIST CONTEXT**

3.1 Description

3.1.1 Explain your understanding of the term, *Generalist*?

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3.2 Approaches used during social work service rendering

3.2.1 Which of the following approaches do you favour during service rendering. (*More than one can be chosen*)

*psychosocial approach		*systems approach	
*problem-solving approach		*ecological approach / life model	
cultural awareness approach/ethnic-sensitive		*task-centered approach	
social development		*community development approach	
Others, specify			

3.2.2 In your opinion, why is it necessary for the social work practitioner to have a holistic foundation of the knowledge and skill of the social work intervention approaches and process?

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3.2.3 Based on your experience, how do the approach(es) used by you during intervention sessions contribute to a more cultural competent service rendering?

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3.2.4 What role does the social development intervention strategy play during social work service rendering within a multi-cultural environment?

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3.2.5 Are you of the opinion that existing social work programmes meet the needs of the client systems at large?

YES	NO	UNSURE
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3.2.6 If YES, explain what type of social work programmes.

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3.2.7 If NO or UNSURE, motivate your answer.

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3.3 Guidelines for service rendering by the social work practitioner within the multi-cultural setting

3.3.1 Do you have a need for guidelines wrt multi-cultural social work service rendering to clients within your work situation?

YES	NO	UNSURE
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3.3.2 If YES, please elaborate.

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3.3.3 If NO or UNSURE, motivate your answer.

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME