

***SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK SERVICE DELIVERY :  
MODELS FOR FUTURE PRACTICE***

***by***

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## SUMMARY

The focus of this study was to develop an indigenous, relevant model of school social work for future practice in South Africa. This was accomplished by surveying policies governing school social work services, researching the nature and severity of problems experienced in schools, examining the scope of current school social work in addressing these problems/needs and finally producing a model on which future school social work practice could be based.

The research methodology was chosen on the basis of progressing beyond the acquisition of knowledge, to application of this knowledge to the practice of school social work. The developmental research design as discussed by Thomas (1985a:488; 1985b:50) was viewed as serving the purposes of the study. In accord with this design, the study was divided into several phases - the analysis, development and evaluation phases. Two further phases are outlined by Thomas (1985a), viz. the diffusion and adoption phases, which would follow once the developed social technology has been further field tested and the results disseminated for adoption.

During the analysis phase, current policies and school social work services in the various departments of education were examined. Problems in different schools in these department were also surveyed to gauge the effectiveness of services in dealing with these problems. Results revealed that current school social work practice and policies do not meet the needs of schools.

During the development phase, a changed emphasis in service provision was

advocated through the adoption of service methods to complement a casework focus. In this regard, community school, school change and social interaction functions were advocated. An ecological model, derived from ecological and systems theories, was recommended as offering scope for a changed emphasis to ensure that services were comprehensive and relevant. This emphasis focused on achieving a goodness of fit between the individual and the environment by intervening at different systemic levels, depending on where deficits or dysfunction existed. Thereby, intervention could be directed at micro, mezzo, exo or macrosystemic levels. In a feasibility study, conducted during the analysis phase of the study, this model was found to be appropriate and practical for future use. If school social workers practise an ecological model, then their services would be cost effective since both a preventive and therapeutic bias would be accommodated. Children would also be assured of support services that prevent problems, that facilitate the role of the educator in comprehensive education and that intervene timeously in respect of problems and needs.

Recommendations in respect of accommodating a changed focus of intervention included changes in policies to promote the use of the ecological model, the education and training of social workers in acquiring knowledge and skills congruent with the use of an ecological paradigm, training of educationists to include knowledge of the service to facilitate teamwork and referral, preliminary tasks to be undertaken prior to service provision, a unitary education department to serve all children equally irrespective of colour or creed, and research to be undertaken with education personnel as a joint endeavour to encourage the establishment of the service.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This study was concerned with school social work service delivery in South Africa. In specific, it explored current policies regarding the service, the current status of school social work practice, the nature and extent of problems to be addressed by school social workers and the development of an indigenous, relevant model for the future.

The focus of the study was extensive, in that exploration and analysis of various policies, services and problems/needs was undertaken before the nature and scope of future school social work service delivery could be recommended. This extensive focus was inevitable and conforms to the peculiarities of a society which distributes resources according to racial affiliation. The study aimed at racial relevancy and took cognisance of the transitions being experienced in South Africa. This was achieved by obtaining as representative a sample by race as possible and undertaking a feasibility study which aimed at facilitating the adoption of recommendations within a changing societal context.

### **1.1 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY**

The context in which the present study was undertaken merits attention. This requires elaboration in order that the topic of the study and the results are appropriately contextualised.

Firstly, the call to indigenise social work has implications for both educators and practitioners to ensure relevant services (Taback, 1991). In this regard, requests have been made for traditional, casework approaches to social work to be supplemented by preventive, developmental approaches (Jacob, Joseph and van Rooyen, 1991; Khosa, 1991). School social work that has been practised in South African schools has also been primarily therapeutic in nature, with extensive use of casework functions (Polatinsky, 1978; Kasiram, 1987). This compares favourably with overseas literature on the over-use of traditional functions (Zielinski and Coolidge 1981; Allen-Meares 1977). Social workers tend to develop a "lag" in responding to changing societal conditions (Hare, 1988; Taback, 1991). The transition has to be made from a predominantly clinical - casework approach to that of a home - school - community perspective (Allen-Meares, 1977). This perspective takes into consideration all the ecosystems affecting the school and the school-going child. The present study aimed to identify those functions that would best serve such an ecosystemic perspective. Within this context, the study aimed to determine the limitations of present school social work approaches and in tandem with the call for proactive responses, develop an indigenous, relevant future school social work model.

Secondly, the school is an obvious venue for the provision of social services to the school child (Candotti and Mason, 1992). It is considered as providing for multi-faceted interventions, in particular for community outreach which is regarded as important for societies experiencing various deficits (Gathiram, 1993). More information is required to suitably utilise the school as a point of entry regarding

service provision. In this context, the study explored the nature and extent of problems at schools in order that the developed social technology was appropriately contextualised.

Finally, social welfare in South Africa has been distributed unequally across the racial spectrum. According to Titmuss (1963, as quoted by Patel, 1992), social welfare is a broad term and encompasses traditional social services, income maintenance, social work, health care, housing, education and employment. The availability of education and welfare to the child may be examined in relation to institutional and residual models in respect of social welfare. The residual model "is associated with minimal state intervention in the provision and financing" of social services (Patel, 1992:18). The principle of selectivity is used as a criterion to determine access to services, with resources being targeted at selected groups that are considered to be deserving. On the other hand, the institutional model (also referred to as the welfare state model), "is the opposite of the residual model. Here, access to services is based on the principle of universality" (Patel, 1992:19). In following the institutional model, the state accepts primary responsibility for its citizens, and its role in service provision is substantial.

It is apparent that both education and welfare in South Africa follow a residual approach (Patel, 1992:47). Service provision is rendered even more inaccessible by being allocated according to race. The most disadvantaged population group has clearly been the black group with figures on the per capita expenditure on school pupils being 4,448 rands for the white school pupil, as compared to 1,248 rands

being spent on the black pupil in 1991/2 (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1993:588). These figures reflect clear disparities despite the dismantling of apartheid and the call to redress imbalances (Patel, 1992:47).

Change in the inequitable distribution of resources seems to have gained momentum since pressure groups have set themselves the task of changing the status quo through mass action and strikes (South African Democratic Teachers Union, correspondence from the Southern Natal Branch, June, 1993). In this context, the present study investigated deficits in school social work services amongst the different racial groups and identified the shape of future services for all school going children.

## **1.2 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY**

The need for knowledge to direct future school social work services is recommended in societies even where transitions are not as acutely manifest as in South Africa (Hare, 1988). Keeping abreast of changing societal contexts is recommended to ensure relevancy, equitable distribution of resources and survival when economic cut-backs plague support services. Knowledge to direct the future practice of school social work and evaluative research to prove effectiveness are recommended by Weatherley (1982) and Jankovic and Michals (1982).

The issues of relevancy, equitable distribution and survival in school social work in South Africa, require urgent attention. South Africa is currently on the

threshold of experiencing major transitions in all institutions. Education and welfare services have long been argued as being inadequate in relation to addressing the needs and problems of their constituent systems (Badenhorst, 1989; Kasiram, 1987; Livingstone and Mabetoa, 1989). School social work services have not been established to any significant degree in South African schools (Livingstone, 1990; Rocher, 1977). Indeed, in many African schools, the service is non-existent (Reports from the Department of Education and Training, 1992). Deficits in pupil support services need to be clearly identified in order that they are adequately redressed in a post-apartheid South Africa. With the economic slump affecting the country at large, school support services are often considered an unaffordable luxury. Therefore, it is essential to locate deficits in school social work provision within an infrastructure that takes consideration of these economic restraints. There is a clear need to address the issue of the feasibility of a changed focus of practice within changing social, political and economical circumstances. An all-encompassing model that accommodates the diversity of problems in South African schools was developed and evaluated in order that responsible application of the developed technological effort was possible (Thomas, 1985a:494).

Therefore the motivation for this study was to produce a substantial theoretical foundation, utilization strategies, and innovative interventions for school social work. This was expected to facilitate the establishment of relevant school social work in all South African schools. In view of the service being relevant, its worth would be recognised, thereby allowing it to survive in the face of budgetary cut-backs.



This general motivation may be translated into specific questions that the study aimed to address as follows:

### **KEY QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED IN THE RESEARCH**

1. What are the policies that govern school social work practice in South Africa and how do these affect present day service delivery?
2. What is the nature and extent of problems\needs which school social workers must address?
3. Is existing school social work practice adequate in meeting the needs and problems of the systems served by it?
4. Can school social work services be improved or made more effective?
5. What would be an appropriate model that can accommodate the diversity of problems/needs at schools in a comprehensive and effective way and serve as a guide for future practice?

### **1.3 RESEARCH APPROACH TO THE STUDY**

The research approach to the study is summarised in this chapter to facilitate conceptualization of the research process. This is essential since the literature review presented over the next two chapters, forms part of Thomas' (1985a; 1985b) developmental design which has provided methodological direction for the present study. Details of the methodology and sampling procedures are presented in chapter four.

Any research endeavour aims to explore and acquire knowledge in respect of a particular area of concern. This study aimed at acquiring more information on existing school social work policy and practice. In order to move beyond the acquisition of knowledge, and to utilise what was learnt in school social work practice, the scope of the present study extended to the development and evaluation of a social technology with regard to the field of study. This necessitated the application of knowledge acquired in the earlier phases of the research design, to developing and evaluating a feasible model that could be adopted by South African school social workers. A developmental research approach was selected to accommodate the focus of this study. Developmental research is described by Thomas (1985a: 498) as "those methods by which interventional innovations and other aspects of social technology are analysed, designed, created, and evaluated".

A particular feature of the developmental design which had relevance for the

present study, was the analysis of various sources of information which were used in the determination of a future model. This was considered important in that it was possible to adequately research different levels of service provision across the racial barrier.

Thomas' (1985a; 1985b) developmental research model was employed in this study and terminology used is consistent with his model. The study focused on the social service system which is classified by Thomas as one of the main types of social technology.

The developmental research model described by Thomas' (1985a; 1985b) consists of 5 phases, each achieved through several operational steps. These are:

**The Analysis Phase** achievable through the following operational steps:

- problem analysis and identification
- state-of-the-art review
- feasibility study
- selection of technological objectives
- selection of information sources.

**The Development Phase** achievable through the following operational steps:

- gathering and evaluating information
- designing of social technology
- technological realization.

**The Evaluation Phase** achievable through the following operational steps:

- trial use
- collection of evaluative data
- redesign as necessary and repeat steps in the development and evaluation phases.

**The Diffusion Phase** involves the dissemination of information to potential users after the innovation has been positively valued and considered worthy of use. This may be achieved through the operational steps of:

- preparation of the diffusion media
- dissemination of product information.

**The Adoption Phase** is the final phase in the developmental paradigm and consists of implementation by users.

The scope of the present study extended to the evaluation phase where the developed social technology was evaluated in trial use. The two phases of diffusion and adoption were not undertaken in the present study. It is envisaged that once the research report has been positively evaluated, the phases of diffusion and adoption will follow. A summary of the application of Thomas' development research design to the present study is reproduced from chapter four to provide an overview of the research process and the sample used in the different phases and steps in the study.

Table 4.1: Application of the Developmental Research Model to Present Research Design.

PHASE	OPERATIONAL STEPS	INFORMATION SOURCES/SAMPLE
1:ANALYSIS	1.Problem Analysis and Identification	Survey of literature; policy makers in welfare and education; national councils of welfare; universities who completed questions 1-3 of Appendix A; & analyses of pupils' problems via Appendix B, section B.
	2.State-of-the-art Review	Educationists & school social workers who completed sections B, C, D and E-1 of Appendix B; the researcher's experience of the field; attendance at & delivery of papers at conferences
	3.Feasibility Study	Educationists who completed section F of Appendix B and universities and policy makers who responded to question 5 of Appendix A.
	4&5.Selection of Technological Objectives and Information Sources	Literature in respect of a changed emphasis; findings in respect of surveys conducted through Appendixes A & B.
2:DEVELOPMENT	6-8. Gathering/ evaluating technological resources; designing & realizing technology	Data from educationists and school social workers who completed section E-2 of Appendix B and question 4 & 6 of Appendix A.
3:EVALUATION	9.Trial Use	Trial use of the model in pilot project using student school social workers
	10-12.Collection of evaluative data; evaluation of technology; redesigning as necessary	
4:DIFFUSION	13.Preparation of diffusion media	
	14.Dissemination of product Information.	
5:ADOPTION	15. Implementation by users.	

## 1.4 EXPLANATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

The terminology used in the study is in accordance with general usage or is ordinarily accepted in social work literature. However, some terms have not been widely used or have specific meaning in the South African societal context and are explained further. School social work functions described in the different phases are explained as follows :

**Traditional Functions** - These functions have an essentially individualistic focus on the pupil who has emotional difficulties that block the attainment of maximum potential (Alderson, 1972). The term is used interchangeably with casework functions in this study.

**School Change Functions** - These functions aim to produce institutional change within the school, thereby anticipating sources of difficulties to lie within dysfunctional school policies and practices (Livingstone, 1990).

**Community School Functions** - These functions focus on producing changes in the community since sources of difficulty are identified as deficits within the community surrounding the school (Alderson, 1972).

**Social Interaction Functions** - These functions aim to improve relationships among the pupil, school and community. There are a variety of functions that serve such a broad focus.

**Ecological Functions** - These functions aim to achieve a goodness of fit between the pupil and his/her environment (Monkman, 1981). Thus the focus is broad, encompassing interventions at a multiplicity of levels.

**Microsystemic Functions** - Functions with a micro or microsystemic focus are in accord with the traditional emphasis of social work with interventions aiming at the school, family or individual child (Levine and Mellor, 1988).

**Mezzosystemic Functions** - Functions with a mezzo or mezzosystemic focus on strengthening partnerships between the school and the family (Levine and Mellor, 1988).

**Exosystemic Functions** - Functions with an exo or exosystemic focus target neighbours, social agencies, businesses and the community at large (Levine and Mellor, 1988).

**Macrosystemic Functions** - Functions with a macro or macrosystemic focus aim at identifying dysfunctional policies, with intervention at the level of national values, legislations, policies and funding patterns (Pennekamp and Freeman, 1988).

When referring to the different racial groups, the following distinctions are made to facilitate clarity :

**African** - This term has been used interchangeably with the term "black" in accordance with popular usage of these terms in the media. Other racial groups in South Africa are referred to as "coloured", "Indian" and "white".

In accordance with Thomas' (1985a; 1985b) developmental design, the following terms regarding the phases are explained :

**Developmental Phase** - In the context of the present study, this phase involved the creation of the interventional innovation. It included the operational steps of gathering and evaluating information from the preceding phase and designing and realising the technology.

**Evaluation Phase** - In this phase, evaluative research was conducted to appraise and revise the technology. It was an inherent part of the present study in accordance with Thomas' developmental research model in order to facilitate the application of the technological realisation.

Some of the operational steps in the various phases require explanation to increase clarity and understanding. These are :

**Feasibility Study** - This was one of the steps of the Analysis Phase of Thomas' (1985a; 1985b) development model. It included a "fact-finding enquiry to determine whether the development effort was technologically feasible" (Thomas 1985a:492).

**State-of-the-art Review** - This operational step of the Analysis Phase consisted of activities of reviewing and appraising the state of existing social technology in



the field of study.

In the context of this study, the term "**dilute**" refers to the weakened strength of the service as a result of the school social worker serving more than two schools concurrently. The reference to the poor "**visibility**" of the service and the school social worker is similarly used to describe services that have been weakened due to more than two schools being concurrently served.

### **1.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

General limitations of the present study included the sample selection in respect of the analysis, development and evaluation phases of the study. Since service provision in respect of social work in general and in school social work in particular, is racially determined (Patel, 1992; Livingstone and Mabetoa, 1989), sample selection was governed by these differences. Thus, although the study aimed at racial relevancy, the nature and extent of exposure of school social work did not always allow all racial groups to participate to the same extent in all phases of the study. Black schools in particular provided very limited input in view of the fact that school social work is not practised in their schools.

The same issue of unequal distribution of resources and services in respect of school social work in certain areas and racial groups produced a concentration of the study in certain geographical areas for certain race groups e.g. in determining school social work in respect of the Indian population, only the Durban area where

the service was in operation, was available for exploration. This shortcoming prevented the formulation of race related conclusions in respect of geographical area.

It is unusual for any development effort to complete the entire developmental process. The scope of the present study extended to the conclusion of the evaluation phase. Only preliminary testing at a pilot level was undertaken in the present study, with the expectation that further evaluation and field testing is necessary to refine the social technology in order that adoption may be effected.

## **1.6 DIVISION OF THE REPORT**

The report is divided into six chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the study with an explanation of the particular context in which the study was conducted, the research methodology that was selected and an outline of the aims of the research.

Chapters 2 and 3 comprise the literature review. In chapter 2, theories applicable to school social work and models currently in use, are described. Chapter 3 contains an explanation of problems that are commonly experienced in schools and possible practice interventions that may be employed in dealing with them.

The research methodology is presented in chapter 4, within Thomas' (1985a; 1985b) developmental research paradigm.

Results are analysed and discussed in chapter 5, which is divided into three sections, congruent with the three phases of Thomas' (1985a; 1985b) developmental model. Section one deals with the analysis phase, section two, the development phase and section three, the evaluation phase.

Finally, conclusions and recommendations are presented in chapter 6. Conclusions follow the chronological sequence of the developmental model. Recommendations on the new technology are presented as the general recommendations, followed by specific recommendations that would provide for the adoption of the new technology.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW: THEORIES AND MODELS**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, definitive issues and the purpose and evolution of the school and school social work through time, are discussed. These evolutionary trends are traced within the context of South African school social work practice. The need for a new perspective to meet the challenge of changing societal influences is suggested by many authors and the rationale for this is also provided. In keeping with the need for a changed focus, theoretical orientations and models suited to a needs-centred approach are discussed. Literature relating to consultation theory, role theory, organizational theory, competence theory, systems theory and ecological theory is discussed. Models of school social work are then presented in tabular form, followed by a discussion of the traditional, school change, community school and social interaction models.

This chapter provides a backdrop for the development of a relevant model for school social workers and contains information that would be used in the development phase of Thomas' (1985a) development, research and utilization model.

## **2.2 THE PURPOSE OF THE SCHOOL AND THE OBJECTIVES OF SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK**

According to Radin (1975), the three major goals of the school are :

1. fostering the growth of each unique individual to fulfil his potential;
2. socializing the youngster for future positions in society; socialization includes training in writing, reading and arithmetic as well as vocational and citizenship education;
3. perpetuating a culture.

One of the earlier definitions of school social work is :

"School social work is a service which contributes to the major purposes of the school." (Poole, 1959 in Hare, 1988).

To what extent are the goals of the school compatible with the goals of school social work? According to Radin (1975), the major goals of school social work are:

1. to promote the maximum development of all children in a school, particularly those whose potential has been grossly unrealized;
2. to facilitate the optimum preparation of students for future roles in society.

Radin (1975) notes that the first two goals of the school are congruent with the goals of school social work. Hare (1988:218) outlines the essential purpose of school social work as providing "a setting for teaching and learning in which all children can prepare themselves for the world they now live in and the world they will face in the future". This definition highlights the objective of the school as being responsible for teaching children a culture and values to prepare them for the performance of future societal roles. Thus, the second goal of the school as outlined by Radin (1975) is also congruent with the third goal of school social work, taking the afore-mentioned definition into consideration.

The goal of preparing children for future roles in society is held not only as a view by international authors such as Costin and Radin, but also by South African authors and researchers. Badenhorst (1989:416) reports in the South African Journal of Education, that education must "prepare the child for fulfilment of his mandate in life". He explains that education prepares the child for a specific reality and therefore needs continuous evaluation to ensure that it is congruent with the changing realities of society. Engelbrecht (1989:467), also reports in the South African Journal of Education that education should always be related to the future by addressing changing societal issues. School social workers can assist by planning curricula changes and skill acquisition in pupils. Enhancing pupils' communication skills, coping and survival skills and offering assertive training to curb substance, child and sexual abuse are but a few examples of the scope of school social work in schools. The intention to prepare children for a changing context, to adequately prepare them for their future roles, is clear from these

examples. Le Roux (1988:397) succinctly asserts that school social work is a "pedagogical necessity".

The potential that school social work has for dealing with several areas of life is apparent. As early as 1949, Poole identified this potential when she wrote that :

"primary prevention, system improvement, restorative and growth promoting interventions with individuals, families and small groups and community activities designed to improve school - community relations and increase support for schools" are some of the areas for professional intervention by the school social worker (Winters and Maluccio, 1988:210).

Clearly then, schools offer the scope for providing a broad range of goals and functions. Fulfilment of these goals will require that school social work place itself at the very "crossroads of life" (Winters and Maluccio, 1988:210) and facilitate the interaction among schools, families and their communities. School social workers need to position themselves at the interface of the various systems that are connected to the child.

### **2.3 EVOLVING TRENDS IN SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK**

The objectives of school social work have evolved through time to keep abreast of changing educational and societal influences. In 1949, Poole (Levine and Mellor, 1988:236) indicated that the primary purpose of the school social worker was to

assist children in benefitting from their opportunities to learn. Therefore it was important to work with administrative and other staff to develop a school's programme and to help formulate policies and procedures. The recommended intervention was casework with children and outreach to parents to build better home-school relations. Parents were referred to appropriate resources. The school social worker was also expected to work with teachers to promote insights about children and assist teachers in planning their work. Also addressed was the idea of the school social worker contributing to system maintenance and/or change in working with other systems. These objectives are broad and encompass many objectives of modern school social work.

To determine how these objectives differed from actual practice, researched documentation by Costin (1969) and Allen-Meares (1977) can be cited. Both researchers found in independent studies that the school social worker performed mainly casework functions related to the individual child and his/her family. Levine and Mellor (1988:237) criticize the findings of these studies explaining that the preference for performing casework functions was not analysed in the context of the expectation from educational authorities. The expectation of educationists needs to be considered in school social work task performance since the teamwork approach forms the very basis of school social work, influencing team members in a variety of ways (Hildebrandt, 1992).

Radin (1989:213-214) supports Costin's (1969) and Allen-Meares' (1977) findings. She points out that the initial trend in school social work in 1913 was that of



family - school liaison. The emphasis was to "help the school and the parents to understand each other better and to adapt to each other's needs and demands". Ensuring regular attendance was an important function as was that of sensitizing the school to understanding how the child's home and environment affected his/her schooling. This emphasis was the key focus until the 1930's when the mental hygiene movement influenced treatment approaches. The focus then became one of diagnosing and treating children with difficulties using an essentially casework approach.

In the 1960's, the focus of school social work switched dramatically to system change for problem prevention since schools were accused of contributing to poverty and racism (Radin, 1989). It is perhaps this stage that South African schools are in presently, since historically school policies reflected the apartheid policy of favouring the white race and disadvantaging the black (Livingstone, 1990). The need for system change in education is clearly seen in South African literature where appeals are made for more skills acquisition, changing curricula, the preparation of the child for future roles and for the deployment of school social workers as a pedagogical necessity (Badenhorst, 1989; Engelbrecht, 1989; Le Roux, 1988). The need for the development of indigenous models on which to base school social work practice is clear.

According to Radin (1989), "current trends" in American school social work practice are seen in increased work with the handicapped, interdisciplinary teamwork and evaluation of practice. These trends are not found in South African

schools because the service has not been established to any significant degree nor for any significant length of time. (Reports : The Houses of Delegates; Representatives; Assembly, 1992; the Department of Education and Training, 1992). Kasiram (1987) and Hildebrandt (1992) found that educationists and school social workers experienced role confusion and overlap. Interdisciplinary teamwork was recommended as it was not being practised. Thus it is apparent that school social work practice in South Africa differs significantly from practices abroad. Yet some of the needs remain common e.g. a need for a changed focus, system change and a proactive response.

## **2.4 THE NEED FOR A NEW PERSPECTIVE**

Schools both in South Africa and abroad are faced with fresh challenges to meet changing trends in the family, the economy, national demography, health and political arenas (Hare, 1988:229). In an earlier study, Hare (1983:57) refers to the "rising tide of mediocrity in education", causing a nation to be at risk of losing its intellectual and industrial leadership. The South African nation is at great risk, because there is often an absence of education altogether (The South African Institute of Race Relations, 1993), challenging educationists and leaders to find solutions to the numerous issues with which the nation struggles (Department of National Health and Development, March 1993).

Radin (1989) points out that educators can no longer afford to blame the student and family background for educational failure. She suggests that preventive

intervention to cater for children at risk because of being physically, economically, socially or politically disadvantaged, needs to become a future focus of the school social worker. Brown and Swanson (1988:92-93) refer to the need to combine an ecological and problem solving approach. They too advocate preventive intervention through the performance of the following functions :

1. Case Management

Herein the school social worker is expected to provide an integrated service to meet the total needs of the client system. The emphasis is not on direct service provision but on locating, monitoring and coordinating services to ensure effectiveness.

2. Case Coordination

This function emphasises the need for multidisciplinary teamwork and treating the client system holistically. The school social worker has to make the effort to synchronize the therapeutic actions of different professionals to prevent unconstructive overlap.

3. Collaboration

The collaborative process is the joint effort between the helping systems to facilitate smooth service delivery.

4. Case Conferences

This is aimed at bringing together involved agencies to identify the services

provided and specify the goals and strategies for action. Again, the intention is to synchronize the efforts of change agents.

## 5. Consultation

This function is employed to seek knowledge from experts and to provide knowledge to others. Consultation has a preventive element in school social work since it can assist in problem prevention if reliable information is offered to deal with potential problems.

The researcher notes that Brown and Swanson (1988) refer to the combination of the ecological and problem solving approach as a fresh innovative strategy to meet change. However, the five functions cited above are clearly grounded in traditional casework phraseology. This points to the possible difficulty in moving away from casework to more innovative methods of intervention.

Several other authors cite the ecological approach as providing the basis for future school social practice. Levine and Mellor (1988) indicate that the ecological perspective allows for the performance of functions at multiple levels of service. Thereby school social workers have the opportunity to attend to the complexities of the person and the environment. Pennekamp and Freeman (1988) also refer to the ecological perspective as allowing for interventions at multiple levels specifying them as follows :

1. The microsystem level: Focus here is on individuals, families and schools.
2. The mezzosystem level: Focus here is on the partnership between the family and the school.
3. The exosystem level: Focus here is on neighbours, the surrounding community, social agencies and businesses.
4. The macrosystem level: Focus here is on national values, priorities, legislation, policies and funding patterns.

Hare (1988) and Pennekamp and Freeman (1988) maintain that if school social work is to meet the challenge of relevancy and expansion, school social workers need to pay attention to the following :

1. The functions relating to the evolving trends in education and society at large.
2. Collaborative rather than competitive relationships to be cultivated with colleagues involved in pupil welfare.
3. Using multiple levels of intervention to address the complexities of the person and environment.

Stuart (1986) suggests that the focus of school social work has not changed and should not to any significant degree. He indicates that the profession has always been grounded in the same values and that continuity rather than abrupt change has characterized its history. Promoting a goodness of fit between the person and the environment to enhance social functioning, has long been a goal of social work.

Strategies are now bolder and more varied, but the essential focus remains the same. Staudt and Kerle (1987) suggest that the school social worker's role become deliberately varied to cater for changing social and community needs. Developing service priorities is advocated to ensure an appropriate choice of strategy and focus. According to Staudt and Kerle (1987), service priorities should include :

1. consultation, direct involvement or both for life threatening or crisis situations;
2. assessment for special education placements;
3. consultation services for teachers;
4. services necessary for the smooth functioning of the pupil welfare team such as facilitating parent conferences for pupil evaluation;
5. direct services including home-school liaison and group counselling; and
6. establishing which policies and practices hinder effective social work service provision.

School social work abroad has clearly evolved through time in an attempt to meet the challenge of a changing societal context. Modern strategies include proactive responses, an ecological approach, system change and deliberate deployment of social work knowledge and skills (Winters and Maluccio, 1988). In South Africa, school social work is a scarce resource because most schools do not have school social workers in their employ, or one school social worker serves so many schools simultaneously, that the service is rendered ineffective (Kasiram, 1987). It is apparent that before any innovative change is encouraged in the area of school

social work, appropriate establishment of the service must first occur.

## **2.5 THEORETICAL ORIENTATIONS**

There are various theoretical orientations suited to school social work. However, it has already been suggested that there is a need for a fresh perspective to keep abreast of changing societal circumstances. Theoretical orientations which suggest a changed emphasis are included in this section, including those theories which may be regarded as having a "traditional" emphasis, but which may be regarded as having functional relevance to the school social setting (Costin, 1975; Hare, 1988; Levine and Mellor, 1988; Pennekamp and Freeman, 1988; Radin, 1989).

### **2.5.1 CONSULTATION THEORY**

Consultation theory is included in this discussion on theoretical orientations because it provides for the resolution and prevention of problems at many levels. According to Sabatino (1982), consultation theory and the development of models of consultation are in the "preparadigm" stage. This is the stage where several theoretical perspectives co-exist, each looking at different aspects of the problem, with no one perspective being more encompassing than another. Using psychodynamic theory, Sabatino (1982) refers to the various consultative interventions that focus on the consultee's own internal conflicts about the client or problem.

## Definitions

According to Caplan (1970), consultation is :

"a process of interaction between two professional persons - the consultant, who is a specialist, and the consultee, who invokes the consultants' help in regard to a current work problem with which he is having some difficulty " (Apter, 1982:152).

Meyers, Parsons and Martin (1970) provide the following definition of consultation:

"Consultation is a method of intervention which always has the following elements:

1. it is a problem-solving process;
2. it takes place between a professional consultant and a consultee who has responsibility for the direct service to another person;
3. it is a voluntary relationship;
4. the objective is to solve a job-related problem of the consultee;
5. the consultant and the consultee share in solving the problem;
6. the consultee profits from the consultation in such a way that the consultee is better prepared to deal with similar problems in the future" (Sabatino, 1982:273).

Consultation may be seen as an interactional process between a help-giver and a help-seeker who is experiencing difficulties in performing functions with a particular client, group, or organization. (Sabatino, 1982).



## **The Consultation Process**

Sabatino (1982) and Apter (1982) discuss the consultation process as it applies to the school situation. The consultation programme must be planned in collaboration with all staff members. Here a contract to facilitate implementation of consultation is useful. Such a contract would provide information on the purpose of consultations, the specific functions of the consultant and the consultee (be this an individual or group), the frequency and location of consultation meetings, and confidentiality as an essential concomitant of the process.

The consultation process should begin with establishing a collaborative relationship, to help the teacher feel comfortable, relaxed and respected. The consultation should then proceed to assisting the consultee to identify the problem. This requires that the consultant him/herself models calm, concerned problem-solving and demonstrates a belief that with enough information, all human behaviour is understandable. Then the consultation proceeds to exploring alternate solutions, planning the agreed-upon intervention, evaluating the likely effects of the intervention and re-planning if necessary. The consultant must clearly impart to the consultee that the consultee has the decision-making power, control and responsibility for implementing the intervention.

Schein (1969) and Sarason (1966, 1971, quoted by Sabatino, 1982) use organizational theory as a basis for developing consultative interventions. They explain that the setting, with its role expectations, controls the behaviour of employees and makes change difficult.

Other theorists use a social situational approach to consultation emphasising the interface between man and his environment. Yet others ground consultative interventions in behavioural theory or ecological theory. Thus consultation may be regarded both as a process or method and a theory.

The different approaches to consultation widen the scope of interventions that may be used, from a traditional client-centred approach to group consultation and planning system change (Sabatino, 1982).

From an ecological perspective, consultation is an essential aspect of intervention into troubled systems. On a macrosystemic level, consultation within troubled systems could provide the basic framework for the negotiation of solutions. School systems also experience disequilibrium, making it necessary for administrators and school social workers to utilise consultation increasingly. Research by Sabatino (1982) indicated that the amount of time school social workers spent on consultation was 29.1% compared with 24% being the time spent on casework with pupils. In another study by Alderson, Goldstein and Zimmerman (1981), consultation with the teacher was performed by 87% of the school social workers, consultation with parents by 85% of the school social workers, liaison between home and school by 84% of the respondents and casework counselling with parents by 74% of the school social workers. The importance of consultation in school social work is thus clearly apparent. Consultation with teachers gives school social workers high visibility with the core staff. The benefits of consultation to teachers are both preventive and therapeutic. Consultation lowers role strain, improves job

performance and provides the teacher with opportunities to develop classroom conditions conducive to preventive mental health (Sabatino, 1982). These effects are indeed beneficial to South African education which is described as being in "crisis" because negotiation has failed to produce settlements to various issues. The call for strikes, "chalkdowns" and protest marches are commonplace (Minute: Southern Natal South African Democratic Teachers' Union, 17 June 1993).

Apter (1982:278-279) provides the following motivation for utilising consultation theory to guide practice :

1. **Need for knowledge :** This occurs when a teacher is lacking psychosocial knowledge and makes erroneous conclusions or misunderstands a child's behaviour. Sometimes the teacher has the theoretical knowledge to understand the situation but does not see its relevance to the problem at hand. A typical situation requiring further knowledge and skill acquisition would be child abuse.
2. **Need for skill :** Here the teacher's problem is not one of a lack of knowledge but a lack of skills in solving the problem. Often both the need for knowledge and the need for skills go together as in the example of child abuse. The consultant must guard against the temptation to enforce views on the consultee as this does not constitute consultation and will threaten the collegial relationship.

3. **Need for self-confidence :** When a teacher demonstrates knowledge and skill but is unable to use it, then he/she may be lacking self-confidence. This will be detected in uncertainty, tentativeness and feelings of worthlessness or incompetence. The consultant needs to offer support for the teacher's good work and/or link the teacher to another staff member who will offer further support.
4. **Lack of objectivity :** This occurs when a teacher loses professional distance by becoming too close or too distant from the pupil. This may affect the teacher's role functioning, distort perceptions or cloud judgements. Providing an adequate role model, recounting similar experiences in which the problem was overcome and assisting the teacher to separate his/her feelings from the situation, are suggestions for enabling the teacher to regain objectivity.

Apter (1982:156) suggests the following "Do's and Don'ts" for consultants. On micro, mezzo and macrosystemic levels they may pave the way to democratic problem solving and decision making. They also serve to summarize the consultative process.

1. **Techniques which have a favourable effect**

- a) Redirect for elaboration.
- b) Reflect feelings in an empathic way.
- c) Clarify expectations for the interview and for the consultation contract.

- d) Listen actively.
- e) Use non-verbal attending behaviours such as eye contact and nodding in agreement.
- f) Ask pertinent, specific questions.
- g) Be tentative with suggestions such as "do you think", "it sounds like".
- h) Use supportive comments.
- i) End with a concrete plan (even if only for the next meeting).
- j) Admit non-expertise.
- k) Give several options.
- l) Let consultees vent their problems.
- m) Use pauses as these may generate more data.
- n) Be natural.

## **2. Techniques which have an unfavourable effect**

- a) Redirecting questions excessively may lead to frustration.
- b) Shifting, fiddling, excessive movements may communicate boredom.
- c) Asking defensive questions such as "what do you want me to do?"
- d) Changing the subject abruptly may communicate lack of interest.
- e) Engaging in distracting behaviours such as doodling, staring out of the window.
- f) Pursuing irrelevant or confusing issues.
- g) Focusing interview on self.
- h) Setting self up as expert.
- i) Over-using technical language or jargon.

- j) Providing false solutions or premature closure.

These techniques, although simple, prove to be a challenge in application. This is evidenced when there is a "dead-lock" in communication amongst various systems both in educational and welfare settings. Successful negotiation depends on deliberate application of these techniques.

It is apparent that consultation as a theoretical perspective provides an overarching framework for the containment of various interventions. The multi-faceted nature of educational and social problems could well be served by such a perspective. As will be clarified during the discussion on models of school social work, consultation provides the theoretical base for a wide variety of interventions.

## **2.5.2 COMMUNICATION THEORY**

Communication theory forms the conceptual base for the social interaction model in school social work practice (Livingstone, 1990). Nelsen (1986:220) broadly refers to the focus of this theory as "understanding how people receive information from their own feelings, thoughts, memories, physical sensations, and environments; how they evaluate this information; and how they subsequently act". Attention is afforded to examining how people affect each other immediately after and/or during communication. This effect is described in terms of patterns of communication, skill in communication and effects of nonverbal communication. Simons and Aigner (1985) also refer to the effects of communication but only in

terms of a communications skills model and a communication systems model. The nonverbal element is not specifically mentioned but could well be contained within either of the two models.

According to Simons and Aigner (1985), the communications skills model deals with acquisition of skills for improving communication. Within this context, actions such as speaking for others, assuming you know what the other means, poor listening and adopting a win-lose stance are corrected and alternatives encouraged. In a school situation, there is much scope for the development of misunderstanding and for active hostilities to ensue as a consequence. Poor communication may occur amongst educationists, between teachers and pupils, amongst management personnel, between management and teachers, between teachers and parents and between educationists and pupil personnel staff.

The communication systems model focuses on encouraging new patterns of communication since these are frequently dysfunctional and serve only to maintain an old balance (Simons and Aigner, 1985). Instead of responding to changing circumstances, a family or a school system continues to ignore the changes, thereby rendering communication irrelevant and dysfunctional. Skill in communication is not needed, but change in style or pattern of communication is required to promote relevancy in practice.

Nonverbal communication is a powerful means of influence (Simons and Aigner, 1985). Within the school context, it is very possible that there could be

incongruence between verbal and nonverbal communication. This could occur at a variety of different levels. The powerful effect of the different kinds of communication needs to be carefully understood in the school setting. Nelsen (1986) explains the relevance of communication theory to school social work. She points out that communication theory is closely linked to personality theory, theories of social interaction and ecological theory where intervention is aimed at the individual, the social system and the environment.

### **Uses of Communication Theory**

Nelsen (1986) offers the following suggestions for uses of communication theory, which have relevance for the school social work practitioner :

#### **1. Framework for practice**

The communication skills and communication systems models suggested by Simons and Aigner (1985) are grounded in communication theory and aim to help improve communication practices. Interventive styles include didactic presentations, demonstrations, role plays and assignments. The communication systems model employs various strategies ranging from helping client systems make connections about their communication patterns, to using symptoms for therapeutic effect.

#### **2. Framework for teaching**

The school teacher may find it useful to adopt a general communication perspective to facilitate the understanding of behaviour. This perspective



helps with accepting problematic behaviour that may appear nonsensical. There would also be more tolerance of behaviour in the classroom, the staffroom, in the social worker's and principal's office, and during the negotiation of settlements of key issues.

### **3. Nonverbal and cross-cultural communication**

To understand both nonverbal and cross-cultural communication requires skill and knowledge. Nonverbal communication may be clearly observed without the recipient knowing how to respond to it. Nelsen (1986) refers to "adaptor" communication, thought to develop in childhood as a means of dealing with emotions and social situations through bodily movement. Examples of adaptors may be restless moving of the legs. This may denote discomfort and the need to take flight or escape from the issue on hand.

Nonverbal and verbal communication between people of different race, ethnic and social class requires attention because the meaning of symbols (verbal and nonverbal) can be very different. A typical example is eye contact which is seen to be disrespectful in a black culture but lack of which is interpreted as being cagey or unworthy of trust in a white culture. In applying communication theory to cross-cultural and nonverbal communication in a changing societal context, the practitioner needs to become aware of all levels of communication.

With the increase in the number and severity of interpersonal problems,

communication theory could provide a useful framework for mediation. Indeed, communication theory would be useful in promoting healthier understanding amongst various systems that have overt or covert conflicts with each other. Thus, the relevance of communication theory on micro, mezzo, macro and exo systems is apparent as is its inclusion into future school social work practice.

### **2.5.3           ROLE THEORY**

According to Simons and Aigner (1985), the concept "role" refers to a range of values, motives and behaviours that are expected of a person within his social position or status. These positions and their corresponding roles include both formal and informal positions. Davis (1986:544) offers a comprehensive list of terms commonly associated with role theory. These are discussed and their relevance to school social work elucidated.

#### **1.       Social Position and Social Status**

These terms are often used interchangeably although the latter is more value-laden than the former. Position merely refers to classifications of persons according to occupation on a formal or informal basis. e.g. teacher, parent or pupil. In a school, there is much scope for behaviour to be incongruent with position. A teacher is expected to be the educator and care-giver during and sometimes even beyond the school day. Daily issues that require attention are: who expects a particular set of behaviours, who is affected by the behaviour and who challenges the teacher on the

incongruencies.

## **2. Ascribed Position**

These positions occur because of birth, social experience or maturity. A teacher is expected to behave in certain ways as is the pupil or the principal. It is commonplace to ascribe set positions to persons who come from certain social backgrounds. This has occurred in the area of racially integrated schooling, with teachers attaching expectations of academic underachievement to black pupils (Chetty et al., 1992).

## **3. Achieved Position**

These positions are achieved through skill or effort. Most positions are held through a combination of both ascription and achievement. The knowledge that mechanisms exist for changing positions, may serve as incentives for upward mobility. This aspect could be afforded importance in a school, especially in a disadvantaged setting where set expectations may determine future behaviours. Problems are experienced when there is incongruence between behaviour and ascribed/achieved position. The frequency of this occurrence in schools is exemplified in the daily detention and punishment of the pupil or in reports of molestation of the child by a teacher. The teacher, principal or school social worker may be called to intervene at these levels to promote a better fit between position and behaviour.

#### **4. Status**

Status refers to the value of the position. Status determinants are generally prestige, authority and wealth. If the school social worker's position is not perceived as having sufficient status, then poor performance of the role is expected.

#### **5. Role, Role Set, Role Expectations and Role Complementarity**

A role is a "patterned sequence of learned actions or deeds performed by a person in an interaction situation" Davis (1986:544). Role set refers to the varied set of behaviours associated with a position. A social worker behaves in a certain way in relation to clientele and in another way at home as parent of his/her children. Role expectations are the sets of behaviours expected of the person by others within a particular position. It frequently happens that the actor's expectations of his/her own behaviours differs from the persons with whom he/she interacts, thereby introducing confusion and even conflict.

According to Davis (1986), role complementarity exists when the role behaviour and role expectations of persons in an interpersonal system are harmonious. A lack of complementarity is produced by: a lack of knowledge of the role system, discrepant goals on the part of the role partners which can result in role confusion and role overlap, disagreement on the right of one of the partners to occupy a position and absence of appropriate resources to facilitate role performance.

## 6. Norms

According to Davis (186), norms are role expectations that serve to prescribe behaviours that ought to be performed within a particular position.

These terms serve to offer some clarity regarding the potential areas of difficulty in role performance.

Role theory covers a broad spectrum and is interdisciplinary in nature. It has particular relevance for school social work as it allows for an expansion of functions to keep abreast of changing societal circumstances, new definitions of and expectations of school social work (Levine and Mellor, 1988). In 1949, Poole defined the role of the school social worker as assisting children "in benefiting from their opportunity to learn" (Levine and Mellor, 1988:236). The emphasis was to offer casework services to the school child and an outreach service to parents. Since then, there has been a change towards working at the interface where school and child meet. This changed focus uses an ecological perspective that is need rather than method oriented (Brown and Swanson, 1988; Hare, 1988; Pennekamp and Freeman, 1988). School social workers are often victims of job stress and burnout because of role conflict and role ambiguity (Pamperin, 1987:60). Job stress and burnout may be prevented if the school social worker assesses his/her expectations of the role and includes proactive rather than therapeutic interventive strategies, obtains clear expectations from the school and requests the school to sanction professional freedom so that there is creative problem-solving.

Role theory thus needs to be understood and applied in school social work settings. Its divergent nature and scope provides a conceptual framework for dealing with a variety of issues ranging from role conflict to proactive approaches to problem prevention. It provides for multi-level intervention for multi-faceted problems at different systemic levels.

#### **2.5.4 ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY AND ITS RELEVANCE TO SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK**

As early as 1975, Costin highlighted the importance of school social workers utilizing concepts of organizational theory in the school-community-pupil model of school social work (Costin, 1975). She pointed to organizational theory being used to address the issue of unequal educational opportunities. In South African education, this issue received considerable publicity in May 1992 and 1993. During this time, educationists marched through the city centres to express their discontent with unequal education policies for different racial groups, and all teachers not being permitted to affiliate to a unitary teachers' association.

In 1970, Dunham expressed the need for social workers to have skills in analysing an organization/situation before embarking on service provision. "Time and again, therapeutic techniques and programs rest on guesswork and political expediency..." (Gouldner as quoted by Dunham, 1970:112). School social workers could offer meaningful assistance to expedite progress of change efforts if they employed organizational theory to intervene at appropriate levels. Cervera (1990)

too, contends that effective involvement in an educational setting requires that the school social worker understand the school's organization. In relation to the South African school context, both the school's structure and its relationship to the wider societal context needs to be clearly identified. The school is a complex bureaucracy with many staff levels, relationships to numerous societal systems and special features which allow certain aspects of organizational theory to have particular relevance. Freeman (1985) outlines these features as follows :

### **1. Goal Displacement**

This phenomenon causes institutions to become preoccupied with their own maintenance and survival thereby rendering their service objectives ineffective. The institution will be primarily concerned with protecting its jurisdiction or continuing programmes despite them being poorly received. In a society experiencing economic, social and political changes and major budget cut-backs, goal displacement is commonplace because it is too time consuming and costly to keep abreast of rapid changes. The school social worker has a significant role to perform in identifying areas of goal displacement. The school may be used to further individual rather than group goals. This will be seen when a programme's success is considered more important than the needs of the pupils for whom the programme was designed. The school social worker has to be knowledgeable of and alert to the existence of such displacement so that the school population may be empowered to meet service objectives responsibly. Functions within the school change and community school models of school social work may be

successfully employed to promote changes when goal displacement has occurred.

## **2. Planned Involvement in School Politics**

The question is not whether or not a school social worker should be involved in school politics but how responsibly she can execute this important function. In 1977, Allen-Meares found that school social workers were reluctant to become involved in school politics. She found that out of a total of 9 functions, involvement in school politics ranked seventh. Kasiram, as recently as 1987, found that the traditional function of linking home and school using a casework approach was the most popular function rated high in importance by educationists and school social workers alike. Involvement in other functions was considered less important. Steiner (as quoted by Freeman, 1985), suggests that one of the possible reasons for this reluctance is the lack of training in understanding organizational dynamics. Lee (1983) also cites the reason of inadequate training of social workers. She indicates that social workers are too often trained to acquire micro rather than macrosystemic skills. Freeman (1985) proposes the use of interdisciplinary group planning procedures to ensure that the school social worker adopts an ecological perspective to problem prevention and problem solving. School policies will then be determined by the personnel who are affected by the policies and therefore followed with more commitment.



Lee (1983) proposes that the school social worker become involved in school politics because of the very definition of his/her function. She points out the need for the school social worker to assist in distributing power equitably because of her observation that powerlessness in school personnel leads to depression, anger and stagnation.

### **3. Procedures for Decision Making**

The school social worker has to understand procedures for decision making at higher administrative levels. According to Freeman (1985), this means that the school social worker requires knowledge of how input groups influence decision makers and vice versa. These input groups could be non governmentally represented political groups, local committees or parent action committees. The school social worker needs to be astute enough to gauge which of these groups wield power and align him/herself to the ones that most closely represent the ideologies that would best serve the school. When a society is experiencing transition, the school social worker could offer professional expertise in directing future educational policies by using the relationships that have been built with groups which wield power. This is achieved by keeping informative and relevant records, analysing records responsibly and by interpreting the analyses of the records to the decision makers (Lee, 1983:306).

What are the procedures for organizational analysis in schools? Such procedures must provide for the collecting and analysing of data in a systematic and orderly

manner. Freeman (1985:146-152) describes the procedures as follows :

**1. Clear statement of purpose**

The aim of clarity in stating purpose is threefold - firstly, to identify the organizational dynamics of pupils' adjustment, secondly, to develop a plan of action to resolve adjustment problems, and finally to help to monitor any progress that is made in implementing the plan.

**2. Description of the Procedure's Components**

Background information and information related to four major categories are used in this procedure. According to Freeman (1985), background information is sought on racial-ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds of children and school staff, the number of professional and non professional staff, types of educational programmes provided at the school, the amount of time that the school social worker spends in the school building and a description of the surrounding community.

The four categories cover the following components :

1. The school policies component - Herein information is needed on school practices in terms of rules and rule enforcement, curriculum, instructional methods, extent of flexibility and creativity and extracurricular programmes.
2. The school relations and environment component - Herein is included information on staff-student interaction, staff-parent interaction, student-

student interaction, school-community relations and the physical environment.

3. The school social work component - Information in this category includes actual school social work practice and school social work interactions and communications.
4. The data collection component - This includes data analysis and formulating a plan of action.

### **3. Use of Procedure**

Freeman (1985) points to the importance of clarity as to who should initiate the organizational analysis and under what circumstances, who should complete the items in each component and the process for doing this, and who should analyse the data and the procedure to be used for this.

School social workers are the most likely persons to initiate organizational analysis because of their training in problem identification and because of their professional mandate. In initiating the analysis, the school social worker must remember to obtain the sanction and the involvement of the school principal. Rocher (1977) too, discusses the need for the principal as the administrative head of the school to be responsible for all that occurs within the school building.

According to Freeman (1985), the circumstances that point to the need for organizational analysis are: changes in the school's teaching staff or student

population, the curriculum, school practices or the physical setting. Such changes produce disequilibrium and require systematic analysis of the reactions and coping strategies that were used. Even when there are no major changes in the school's programmes, such analyses are useful in assessing aspects of the programme that should be retained and those which should be discarded (Weatherley, 1982).

Social workers who wish to understand changing societal contexts before embarking on interventive programmes require knowledge of organizational theory. Organizational theory also lends itself to a community oriented approach which suggests a developmental perspective, and proactive rather than therapeutic responses. Thus it is apparent that an organizational perspective could form a valuable basis for the promotion of relevant school social work practice.

### **2.5.5 COMPETENCE THEORY**

The competence orientation is related to the ecological approach in that it contrasts with the traditional pathology or deficit model and focuses on promoting competence.

Competence is defined as "the repertoire of skills that enable a person to function effectively" (Winters and Maluccio, 1988:213). The quote offered by Germain and Gitterman (1986:622) is more related to the health model as competence is referred to as "the sum of the person's successful experiences in the environment".

Experiences that an individual has in influencing his environment negatively or positively, can contribute to or stifle the development of a sense of competence. Thus when a child enters school, his/her experiences therein will immediately contribute to developing a sense of competence and build or shatter self confidence. Educationists are becoming increasingly aware of their influences on the school child. Engelbrecht, in the South African Journal of Education (1989:467) reminds educationists that they have to ensure meaningful education of and influence on the child by building the child's competencies. He advocates enhancing the communication skills of the child and helping the child acquire basic life and survival skills. The combined use of communication and competence theory is herein apparent, allowing for meaningful intervention at various dysfunctional levels. Badenhorst (1989:416) refers to the challenge of preparing children for their future mandates in life. Therefore educationists and pupil support service providers are seeking an interprofessional team to assist in the achievement of this function. Africa (1977), Badenhorst (1989), Kasiram (1987), Le Roux (1988) and Rocher (1977) all refer to the need for involvement of the school social worker to assist the educationist. Increasing competence levels and developing relevant competencies becomes a challenging function of the school. Therefore it is necessary that educationists and pupil support services have knowledge of competence theory to encourage the development of competencies.

According to Erikson (as quoted by Germain and Gitterman, 1986:622), achievement of competence is the major task of the school child. However, the family, school and community must provide conditions that will maintain curiosity

and exploration for ensuring successful life experiences. This implies that the school teacher needs to be provided with the freedom to teach creatively and that children must have the opportunity for creative learning. The South African education system is controlled by the Republic of South Africa Constitution Act of 1983 and the General Education Act of 1984 (Livingstone, 1990). Through these acts, many restrictions are placed on the teacher regarding who, what and how he/she teaches. Education personnel experience powerlessness and this leads to depression, anger and stagnation (Lee, 1983:302). Creativity is stifled and burnout is common.

Germain and Gitterman (1986) also hold the view that when people have had little or no opportunity for successful action or are deprived of social respect and power, there is little motivation for developing competencies. This is found to be the case with the South African school child for whom additional academic support becomes a necessity. Hoosen (1990:74), in her study of first year social work students, found that 91% of her respondents suffered from a poor self concept and lacked essential competencies to cope with an academic career. She demonstrated that through an academic development programme and groupwork service, 97% of the respondents' self concepts improved. Hoosen and Sewpaul (1992) reported on the same study, that students who received academic support, reflected greater awareness of others as well as themselves, more confidence and greater interaction with peers and tutors. Identifying impaired or underdeveloped competencies and thereafter offering appropriate interventive programmes, could become the domain of the school social worker.

Competence centred social work practices embody a set of attitudes, principles and strategies. These are designed to promote functioning by focusing on client strengths, emphasising the use of natural helping networks and using environmental resources (Winters and Maluccio, 1988:214). The ecological paradigm makes similar use of the environment to promote adjustment and an appropriate goodness of fit between the individual and the environment. It is important to search for strengths to help clientele rejuvenate their striving for competence and excellence. In conjunction with the ecological approach and systems theory, the competence orientation suggests several interrelated themes that are useful in guiding school social workers. Winters and Maluccio (1988) outline these as follows :

1. Parents and children may be viewed as engaged in ongoing, dynamic transactions with their environments in a continuous process of growth and adaptation. Responding to changing environmental pressures and recognising the influence of the environment, are key features of ecological and systems theories respectively.
2. Parents and children may be regarded as open systems that actively seek competence in their lives. These systems are viewed as dynamically responsive to their environments. They are not closed to the changes occurring around them. The concepts of open systems and the need for responsible adjustment to changes are not exclusive to competence theory. The kinship between competence theory and systems and ecological theories

is apparent.

3. Practitioners could move away from assisting clients to cope with their environments. The focus of change is often the environment itself rather than the individual.
4. People need varied environmental opportunities and social supports to promote growth, self-fulfilment and competence. The focus of intervention is not the dysfunctional individual, but dysfunctional and inadequate systems. A macrosystemic response is required, responding to the call for complementing traditional microsystemic interventions.
5. There should be a match between the individual and the social resources to which he/she is referred to encourage optimal growth and competence. The link with ecological theory becomes apparent once again, indicating the interrelatedness of different theoretical orientations which purport to effect change in similar situations. Some examples of competence based programmes used at schools are: involving parents in playground monitoring, operating an after-school telephone hotline for latch-key children, thereby increasing the parents' competence in parenting or educating illiterate parents after hours to help them to function in an informed manner in a society that is essentially literate (Winters and Maluccio, 1988).



Competence orientations are not used exclusively. They have strong connections with systemic and ecological orientations. Combined with these orientations, they provide a powerful base for developing significant future school social work programmes.

## **2.5.6            SYSTEMS THEORY**

As early as 1975, Costin identified systems theory as having relevance to school social work practice (Costin, 1975). She viewed the school as consisting of interrelated systems that were in constant interaction. The school system has a well defined structure to maintain the relationships that exist within it. No part of the system can function independently, nor can any part function without affecting other parts of the system.

Costin (1975) described a model of school social work practice that was derived from the systems perspective. This model emphasised the relationships amongst the school, pupil and the community. Costin did not imply that the individual was unimportant, but that attention cannot be limited to the individual. Allen-Meares (1977:85) pointed out that the systems perspective was not in conflict with the traditional perspective. Rather, it served to broaden the base from which the social worker could view a complex organization. Allen-Meares (1977) contended that because the school social worker has operated from a micro level for so long, he/she is in a favourable position to adopt a macro view of the school. The use of organizational theory alongside systems theory to facilitate understanding of the

systems that are in interaction with each other, is clearly necessary when intervening at different systemic levels. The school is a natural unit that clearly depicts the need for use of a systemic perspective to view the complex organization of the school.

There are several salient features of the systems perspective that are of special significance to the school social worker. These are :

1. The systems framework allows for different modes of interventions so that the client system is not restricted to a single approach. This capacity is based on the concept of **equifinality** (Rodway, 1986). This feature allows the therapist the freedom to suit the intervention to the problem, with the same therapeutic end in sight. Equifinality allows for creativity in the selection of an intervention. Thus the school social worker may intervene both at micro and macrosystemic levels to produce change.
2. The systems perspective allows for the **sytematizing of data** from different frames of reference and fields of knowledge that provide the basis for social work practice. Attention is shifted from the individual to the interaction among systems (Rodway, 1986:519). This feature has particular relevance to school social work, since there are many influences that constantly impact on the school.
3. Another important feature of the systems perspective is that it **places the**

**environment in the forefront.** This aspect has brought into focus "the complex interactive nature of the environment and its multi-faceted relationship to human development and functioning" (Rodway, 1986:533). Such an emphasis on the environment is essential when one considers the many subsystems within the school and the larger subsystems that are influencing the school.

Radin (1989) refers to the evolution of school social work trends and the need for a different response to problems and problem prevention. She explains that there is a need to respond differently to problematic issues such as poor educational performance of low income children and low teacher expectations of poor or minority pupils. Change at these levels necessitates interventions at larger system levels.

4. The **interdisciplinary team** has become synonymous with school social work. Its relevance to school social work has been researched locally and abroad (Africa, 1977; Allen-Meares, 1977; Costin 1975, Hildebrandt, 1992; Kasiram, 1987; N A S W, 1983; Rocher 1977). The systems framework has brought into prominence the concept of the social work team or interdisciplinary teamwork. Interdisciplinary teamwork allows different professionals to come together to holistically plan appropriate interventions.
5. Systems theory offers the alternative of **less emphasis on pathology** and more emphasis on the interaction of the client with the variety of systems

in the environment (Rodway, 1986:534). Therefore the client is not viewed as being the origin of the problem. The target of change is the systems that are seen as impacting on the problems.

6. Rodway (1986:534) also refers to the **relevance of systems theory to crisis intervention** because of the emphasis on assessment of various person-in-situation aspects. Thereby a comprehensive assessment is undertaken to lead to interventions that have taken all possible causative issues into consideration. Within this context, elements that are rigid and not amenable to change are assessed, as are those elements that are open to change. Thereafter, immediate and relevant intervention is possible.
7. Systems theory helps establish the **patterns of problematic behaviour**. If this is effectively accomplished, then the school social worker can identify dysfunctional systems and plan large scale systemic changes. Lindquist, Molnar and Brauchmann (1987:44) refer to the value of this feature in the following statement:  
  
"a systemic perspective helps the therapist see these behaviours as manifestations of systemic patterns within the school; within the family; between the school and the family; or any combination of these."
8. Lindquist, Molnar and Brauchmann (1987:50) refer to the **preventive worth** of a systemic perspective. They request that the school social worker develop proactive responses to problem prevention. This provides for in

depth assessment of the problem situation. Radin (1989:215) too refers to the preventive worth of school social work practice when she indicates the need for "system change for problem prevention". Intervening at larger system levels ensures that the practitioner engages in a thorough diagnosis. The systemic perspective operates best in conjunction with the ecological perspective, since the focus can be on system or environmental change.

In practice, the theoretical orientations that the school social worker adopts, appear to vary with the main emphasis still being the traditional approach. Many authors refer to the growing need among school social workers to shift their focus of treatment from the individual to larger systems. (Allen-Meares, 1977; Bacher, 1982; Costin, 1969; Hare, 1988). It is apparent that school social workers are not responding to societal changes and are developing a "lag" because of not keeping abreast of changing societal contexts (Hare, 1988:219). As has been mentioned earlier, this may be attributed to the expectations of the school administrator of school social workers. Zielinski and Coolidge, in their paper on "Systems Model of School Social Work: Barriers to Implementation" at the N A S W conference in 1981, identify the "barrier" as the administrator. They point out that the school administrator who is accustomed to a traditional individual approach, is reluctant to adopt a systemic perspective because of the following possibilities :

1. A fear that the school social worker may not have time for individual intervention with pupils.
2. An expectation that it would take a long time for the school to see the

benefits of the preventive value of the systemic perspective.

3. A fear that he/she would have the responsibility to deal individually with each problem child, given that the school social worker would be preoccupied with the new approach.

Zielinski and Coolidge (1981) point out that the administrator sees the traditional approach as having too much value for it to be replaced. The administrator may accept the systemic perspective if he/she were assured that it would supplement rather than replace traditional approaches. As has been suggested by Allen-Meares (1977:85), the systems perspective is not in "conflict" with traditional treatment approaches. It is there to provide a wider basis for more accurate assessment and treatment of problems and for introducing a preventive component to school social work interventions.

### **2.5.7 ECOLOGICAL THEORY**

Germain and Gitterman (1980:1) describe the ecological view as that wherein "human needs and problems are generated by the transactions between people and their environments". Several theoretical orientations together form the basis of ecological theory. The ecological perspective moves away from linearity which is useful in the study of physical and biological entities. Instead, the focus is on the wholeness, interdependence and complementarity of living organisms. Germain and Gitterman (1980) point out that traditional eastern thought reflected the oneness of man and his environment and of the sense of kinship between the

person and nature. The individual is expected to live in harmony or synchrony with the environment. Western thought now appears to be approaching a view of the world that is closer to eastern thought by way of introducing the ecological orientation in the study of living entities.

According to Apter (1982:57-58), the ecological orientation is based on the assumption that the child is a complete entity surrounded by a unique social system or ecosystem. When the various aspects of the system are functioning harmoniously together, then the ecosystem is congruent or balanced. When the different aspects of the system are not functioning optimally, then the system is not balanced or the particular elements are said to be in conflict with each other (Apter 1982:57-58). Ecological theory is clearly relevant to school social work because the school is a real-life ecological unit. The child is in intimate interaction with the school. The school social worker is placed at the interface of the school and the child. The school social worker also stands at the interface of the family and the school and the community/society and the school. This suggests that a variety of interventions are needed to effect change and produce congruence within the child's ecosystem.

Levine and Mellor (1988:235) contend that the ecological perspective has emerged in recognition of the "importance of conjoint activities at multiple levels of the system". Greif and Lynch (1983:36) refer to the focus of ecological theory being the "interface of the organism and the impinging environment". The impinging environment may be varied, accommodating the multiple levels at which deficits

occur. Hare (1988:223) indicates that educators can no longer blame the student and family background for academic failure. Educators and school support staff need to search beyond traditional variables. This is where the ecological orientation offers an emphasis on both the individual and the context or environment. Such an emphasis is not peculiar to ecological theory, but also to a systemic orientation. Meyer (1983) discusses the potential of an **ecosystemic** viewpoint for providing a unifying perspective. She contends that both systemic and ecological theories could be combined to offer an overarching frame of reference within which a wide choice of interventions may be used. She clarifies that the ecosystemic perspective "merely provides a way of thinking about case phenomena, without a predefined classification of the phenomena in question" (Meyer, 1983:28). The ecological perspective on the other hand, also "crosses traditional methodological boundaries" (Meyer, 1983:28), offering for both a conceptual framework and a specific structure. Although both approaches cross methodological boundaries, the ecosystemic perspective offers no methodological guidance as compared to the ecological which offers a "temporal framework...and a repertoire of practice roles and skills" (Meyer, 1983:29). It is this distinction of the ecological perspective moving beyond conceptualisation to identification of methods and skills, that may prompt school social workers to favour its use over that of the ecosystemic framework. Thus methods and skills, may be as broad ranging as the problem complex dictates. Hence, the ecological perspective provides a basis for the development of a model for practice because of its emphasis on steering the practitioner across methodological boundaries and inviting intervention at micro, mezzo, exo and macrosystemic levels.



Some definitions of ecological terms are presented as follows :

**Ecology** is "the study of relationships between organisms and environment" (Apter, 1982:60).

"**Ecology** is the science of organism-environment relations. It leads to a view of person and environment as a unitary, interacting system in which each constantly affects and shapes the other. This view directs our professional attention to the whole so that we attend to the complexities of the environment just as we attend to the complexities of the person..." (Germain, 1982:5-6).

**Ecosystem** is "the interaction between living organisms and their physical environment" (Apter, 1982:60).

**Goodness of fit** is "the congruence (match) between the organism's natural characteristics and the environment in which he is placed" (Apter, 1982:60).

These definitions specify the essential elements of ecological theory. Intervening at the level of the environment is an important feature of the ecological approach. It allows the therapist to intervene at a preventive level. Several authors refer to the preventive value of the ecological orientation. Levine, Allen-Meares and Easton (1987:146) refer to the focus on environmental factors as encouraging "commitment to the principles of prevention". They refer to shifting the focus from the "deed to the need" (1987:146) in order that attention be on prevention.

Germain (1982:8) refers to the school social worker's critical location in the child's ecological context to undertake preventive tasks. Apter (1982:210) discusses the levels at which prevention in the school setting can occur. The aim of primary prevention is to reduce the incidence of dysfunction and pathology by focusing interventive efforts on the population at large and eliminating the causes of pathology. Secondary prevention is aimed at identifying signs of maladjustment as soon as they occur and introducing prompt corrective efforts. Tertiary prevention is aimed at reducing the likelihood that individuals who are already experiencing problems, will become more severely disabled.

The ecological perspective underscores the need for interventions to focus on improving transactions between people and environments (Winters and Maluccio, 1988:212). In so doing, the therapist will adopt a preventive stance to problem solving and problem prevention.

### **Key elements of ecological theory**

Unique features of ecological theory in respect of school social work have been identified by Apter (1982:78) as follows :

1. **Focus of intervention is on the child's entire community or ecological system.** An attempt is made to understand the impact of the entire environment on the child. This provides the school social worker with a comprehensive diagnosis of the problem. It subsequently allows for in depth interventions at multiple levels, depending on where deficits or

malfunctioning have been identified.

2. **An effort is made to synthesize information from different social situations.** This synthesis may contain physical, biological and social variables. Such a synthesis has much value to the South African school social worker who cannot afford to perceive variables independently or in isolation.

3. **The approach emphasises individual adaptation and adjustment.**

The ecological approach does not preclude the use of the traditional casework method. The child is enabled to adapt to the school environment as well as the social environment. The child's ability to interrelate with others provides the framework for coping with the physical environment. It is for this reason that Cilliers (1989:1) refers to the complicated function of education of the school child as "life skills education". A "life skill" focus would prepare the child for realities within the school and outside the school, thus necessitating both an individual and an environmental approach.

4. **The approach assumes that information obtained from various aspects of the child's environment can be used to facilitate a "congruent" environment.** Intervention is designed to provide teachers and children with accurate information about resources in the environment and the various environmental choices. Many problems may be averted if clientele are aware of resources to encourage the development of

"congruence" between the child and his/her environment.

5. **Focus is on values or a value orientation.** Although the child's response is culturally relative, the values contained in the ecological environment also influence his/her responses. Thus a child from a "conservative" background may be influenced to react in a culturally different manner because of environmental pressures. The ecological approach attends to the goodness of fit, or the lack thereof, between the child's cultural values and those of the environment.

Pennekamp and Freeman (1988:247-249) identify the key elements of the ecological paradigm in relation to the subsystems with which it is involved, as follows :

1. **Microsystem.** At the microsystem level, the school social worker can intervene at either the level of the individual, school or the family. Pennekamp and Freeman (1988:247) indicate the need for the school social worker to widen the definition of the family. Parents must include single parents, joint custodial parents, divorced parents, step-parents, current partners involved in some aspect of care-giving, extended family members, foster families and secondary care-givers such as baby-sitters and day care staff. Changes in family structure have to be recognized and accommodated in building and reinforcing family-school liaisons.

At the level of the school, the school social worker again has the function of broadening the definition of the educator. This is a prerequisite to initiating effective intervention at this level. The child's educator ranges from the class teacher to instructional staff outside the school.

**2. Mezzosystem.** The complexities within the microsystems make it essential for there to be a set of visible and publicized pathways between the school and the family. Family school partnership programmes strengthen the mezzosystems that join together youngsters, their families, their schools, and the community. Attention to mezzosystems are "the glue needed to hold partnerships together" (Pennekamp and Freeman, 1988:248). Schools and families experience a variety of problems together - the child bringing the family problem to the school and taking the school problem to the family. A pattern of responses and resources need to be identified so that there is some measure of support given throughout difficult times. Relationship building between the school and the family is seen as the method of working at the mezzosystem level.

**3. Exosystem.** The exosystem consists of neighbours, social agencies, businesses and the community at large. The exosystem needs opportunities to reach out to the school and the family. It must be instilled in the school, family and the community that everyone needs help at times and that everyone can be helpful at other times. An example of community involvement in the school and family, is where business sets up work-

oriented curricula in schools. This provides the student with the incentive to finish school. Such a programme is particularly relevant to schools that experience a high drop-out rate. Du Plessis (1993:77) argues that the school must develop a close relationship with the community since the state seems "poised to shed much of its responsibilities towards education". Work with community resources has much value in conveying the concept of shared responsibility.

4. **Macrosystems.** The macrosystem includes national values, legislation, policies and funding patterns. These are not always seen as promoting the interests of the school child. Families and school staff are "apt to feel helpless" when faced with legislative issues (Pennekamp and Freeman, 1988:250). They require information and collaborative teamwork with other systems, to take effective protest action. School social workers could play a significant role in intervening at the macro level. Brown and Swanson (1988:90) refer to the importance of intervening at a policy level to design programmes to "ameliorate social problems instead of stabilizing or maintaining them". Costin (1969) and Allen-Meares (1977) indicate that such a role is essential, but difficult to adopt.

The subsystems outlined above, serve to guide the practitioner in carefully identifying the areas in which deficit and dysfunction may occur. Such guidance is appreciated when there is rapid transition and a constant call for relevancy.

## **Ecological assessment**

There has been increasing attention focused on developing more comprehensive assessment strategies. Ecological assessment is gaining popularity and complementing the use of traditional assessment procedures (Apter, 1982:117). Using ecological assessment procedures, the child is assessed in the various "ecologies" or environments in which he functions. Within the school, the child changes ecologies each time he changes a class, has a new teacher or experiences a different physical area. An ecological assessment contains the following elements (Apter, 1982:116) :

1. Information about a child is sought from all the environments in which the child spends time.
2. The information is used to develop a picture of the entire system wherein the child exists.
3. An effort is made to pin-point areas of discord as well as accord or agreement.

Linked to the elements are the following principles of ecological assessment (Apter, 1982:119) :

1. An ecological assessment has a broad perspective of the problem. Even when the focus is the child, the context is always seen as having an influence.
2. The goal of an ecological orientation is not to change the individual, but to

change the system in order to enhance the individual's functioning.

3. Before intervening in a system, it is necessary to evaluate the likely effects of the intervention. This principle is not unique to the ecological approach.
4. Each system is governed by different norms. These norms often determine whether responses are functional or dysfunctional.
5. The ultimate goal of system intervention is optimal independent functioning. Therefore every effort is made to identify the system's strengths and intervene minimally, in order that independence is achieved as soon as possible.
6. Ecological assessment seeks to identify the strengths and the weaknesses, the strengths being emphasised as the most valuable resource for problem solving.

### **Ecomapping**

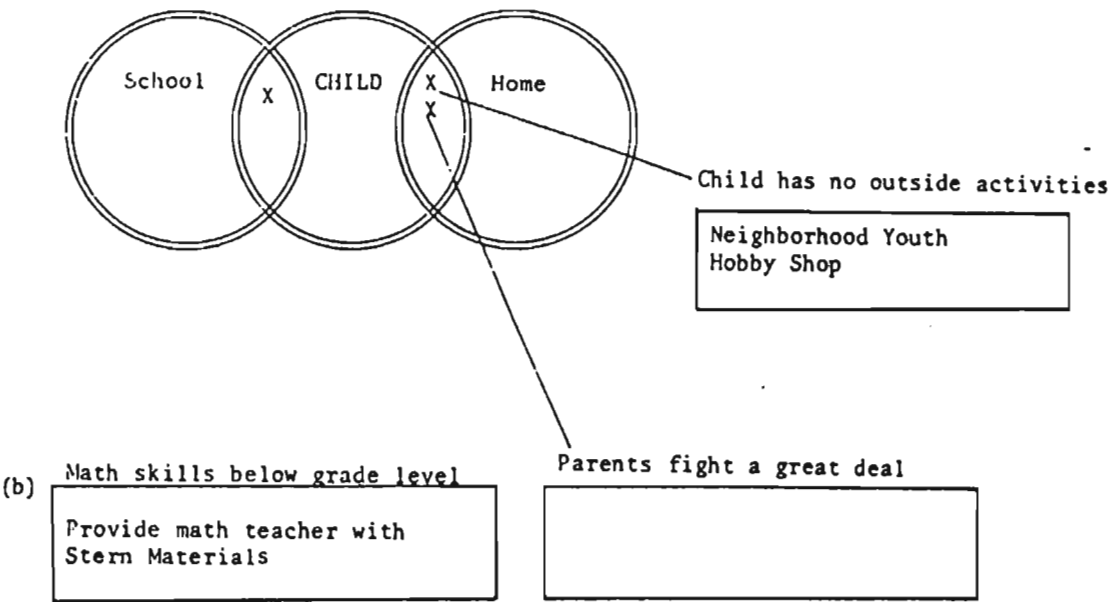
Through ecological mapping or ecomapping, the school social worker is able to see the pupil in his or her interactions with various subsystems in the ecological environment. The pupil is viewed as part of a minisystem in interaction with other systems (Brown and Swanson, 1988:90).

The pupil's interactions with these systems can be represented graphically to produce an ecomap that depicts areas of discordance e.g. the child may be depicted as experiencing problems with mathematics in the class-child system interaction. In the home-child systems, areas of discord are identified as parents fighting and the child having no outside activities. All these issues are graphically presented



in the following ecomap to facilitate a quick overall assessment of the child's problem situation. "Stern Materials" referred to in the ecomap are mathematic aids used by the American math teacher to facilitate optimum learning.

**Example of an Ecomap (from Apter, 1982:125)**



In this ecomap, the "X" denotes specific areas of discord in the systems which are seen to be interlinked. Remediation plans to effect change with regard to the discord are indicated in the boxes. Obvious choices are first selected as solutions or remediation measures (MacKay quoted by Apter, 1982: 124). As problems unfold and new areas of discord emerge, remediation plans are accordingly adjusted. The empty box denotes that remediation measures have not yet been developed.

The ecological map forms part of the assessment phase and provides the school social worker with a graphic and different way of conceptualizing problems, how problems interlink and remediation measures to be used in their resolution. Apter (1982:128) presents four specific ways of utilising ecomapping :

1. It is a "thinking tool" to help with organizing data, discovering where information is lacking, locating possible areas of intervention or simply conceptualizing the problem in a different way.
2. It is an assessment tool to be used jointly by the worker and the client. It is useful for the worker and the client to work out the ecomap together. This would provide opportunity for client participation from assessment through to implementation of interventions.
3. It is a useful recording tool. It provides the reader with a considerable amount of information and a quick sense of the situation.
4. It is a useful evaluative tool to measure whether change has occurred. This is achieved when an ecomap is drawn both at intake and at termination.

In conclusion, the ecological orientation holds potential for school social work because of the following reasons :

1. The ecological approach focuses on health and growth rather than illness. Clientele require incentive to believe that change and growth is possible and this cannot be achieved whilst assuming an illness orientation.
2. It enables practitioners to conceptualize the dynamic relationships between

the child and the subsystems with which he/she interacts. It further provides for the identification of significant sources of help and points to areas of stress and conflict. Thus, its focus is not only conceptual, but also directive as regards methodologies, skills and roles that are suited to an ecological orientation.

3. It promotes appreciation of the unique qualities, styles and needs of different ethnic and racial groups, thereby facilitating the provision of culturally relevant services.
4. The ecological approach conceptualizes school social work as a comprehensive service with a strong preventive component. This view emphasises "a multi-faceted practice approach to children and their families in the context of their life situation and social environment" (Winters and Maluccio, 1988:212-213).

Emanating from theory, are models which form the bases for practice.

## **2.6 MODELS OF SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK**

Of what use is a theoretical model? Alderson (1972:59) points out several functions of models as follows :

1. It allows one to "step back" for a while, away from one's routine and to view practice against a theoretical backdrop.
2. It provides a scheme or map for making sense out of the real world or the practice situation.

3. It has practical significance for diagnosing and planning further interventions.

Models serve to inform practice rather than dictate the specifics of function. There are various models cited in literature which inform school social work practice. These are summarised in Table 2.1, having been derived from several authors viz. Alderson (1972), Allen-Meares, Washington and Welsh (1986), Costin (1975), and Livingstone (1990).

TABLE 2.1 MODELS OF SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK

MODEL	TRADITIONAL/ CLINICAL	SCHOOL CHANGE	COMMUNITY SCHOOL	SOCIAL INTERACTION
FOCUS	Individual pupils with social and emotional difficulties and the microsystem with which the pupil is linked	The school milieu; dysfunctional school policies and practices	Deprived, disadvantaged, marginalised communities or communities that are undergoing transition	Reciprocal influences of the acts of individuals and groups; barriers to good communication between individuals and groups
GOALS	Effective functioning of the individual/group to encourage optimal use of the school experience	Alteration of dysfunctional school practices	Development of community understanding and support of the school; development of programmes to assist the disadvantaged pupil and alleviation of conditions that perpetuate deprivation	Identification and removal of barriers to reciprocal interaction and development of mutual aid systems
TARGET SYSTEM	Pupils and their families	Pupils; parents; teachers; administrative personnel within and outside of the school	The community surrounding the school; the school population and the school as an institution	The interactional field
VIEW OF SOURCES OF DIFFICULTY	Pupils' psychic and emotional difficulties; dysfunctional families and difficult parent-child relationships	Dysfunctional school practices	Poverty; disadvantage, deprivation and school personnel who lack understanding of the effects thereof	Dysfunctional relationships among the school, community and the pupils
WORKER'S TASKS AND ACTIVITIES	Casework; family therapy; group work; liaison functions between and among pupils, parents, school personnel and social work agencies	Identifying dysfunctional school practices; forming problem-solving teams to address the dysfunction through direct consultation and negotiation with individuals and/or groups	Gaining knowledge of and becoming involved in community problems; educating school personnel on community problems; enabling community participation in and resolution of problems; encouraging community involvement in school programmes	Identifying common ground amongst participants in the reciprocal process; establishing mutual goals amongst role players; challenging obstacles that impede communication; contributing information to target systems; establishing mutual aid systems; directing and facilitating change efforts;
WORKER ROLES	Enabling; supporting; collaboration and consultation	Advocacy; negotiation; consultation; enabling and mediation	Mediation; enabling advocacy and outreach	Mediation, consultation and advocacy
CONCEPTUAL/ THEORETICAL BASE	Psychoanalysis; consultation and psychosocial approaches; ego psychology; casework theory and methodology	Organizational theory; theories of deviance and consultation	Community organization; communication theory and systems theory	Systems theory; communication theory and consultation theory

(Adapted from Alderson(1972); Allen-Meares, Washington and Welsh (1986); Livingstone (1990).

Some adaptation has occurred with regard to broadening out emphases and work methodology in an attempt to present a comprehensive picture taking cognisance of the contributions of all these authors. Of special note, is that there is no mention of ecological theory or an ecological model within the existing framework presented in this table. Although Germain and Gitterman (1980) and Apter (1982) have both outlined the relevance of ecological theory to social work, it has not been formally included into a description of models of school social work. Despite literature supporting a changed focus in school social work (refer to section 2.4 of this chapter), no formal attempt has been made to adjust the existing models on school social work significantly. Livingstone (1990) has identified the inclusion of the school-community-pupil model as suggested by Costin (1975) as relevant for school social work. The researcher has not included this model in the summary in Table 2.1 because of its similarities to the social interaction and school change models. Rather, these two models have been broadened out to include aspects to cover a school-community-pupil emphasis as presented by Alderson (1972).

## **THE TRADITIONAL CLINICAL MODEL**

The traditional model is the most commonly used model and perceived by educators to be the most important model informing practice (Alderson, 1972; Kasiram 1987). It allows the school social worker to alleviate the stresses of the individual and his/her family without producing any major disruption to formal school activities. The model is acceptable if the source of the problem lies within the child and/or the family. The school social worker may choose to work with groups of individuals with similar problems. This may result in identifying

problem clusters which may point to the need for a fresh approach with a broader focus. This could provide the incentive to move beyond the traditional micro perspective to a macro perspective.

Liaison functions could serve to unite the microsystemic and macrosystemic perspectives. These could include referring the child for specialized assistance or working in tandem with existing professional help received by the child. The emphasis however, is that liaison functions in this model generally aim to improve individual functioning and not institutional or community functioning. Gaps in service delivery are apparent.

Alderson refers to the "durability" of this model despite the intense criticism that has been directed at it (Alderson, 1972:63). He indicates that this model views deficits as lying within the individual and therefore change efforts need to be directed accordingly. The school is viewed as benign, by both school personnel and change agents. The need for expansion beyond the traditional, individual approach has already been highlighted (Allen-Meaures and Lane, 1983; Costin, 1975; Timberlake, Sabatino and Hooper, 1982). Because this model is perceived as durable in middle class neighbourhoods, where there is a lack of community disruption and change, a community that is experiencing change is unsuited to the use of this model. It needs to be complemented with approaches that have a wider focus.



## THE SCHOOL CHANGE MODEL

Alderson (1972) refers to this model as the institutional change model, thereby indicating that the focus of attention is the school as an institution. Dysfunctional school practices are common. They occur at various levels, ranging from those affecting school curricula to determining disciplinary measures. In South Africa, dysfunctional school practices are perpetuated by policies that serve minority group interest e.g. the per capita expenditure on African school pupils was R1248 and R4448 for White pupils in 1991/2 (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1993:588). Educational policies have also aimed at conformity, disregarding majority group interest. Several studies have recently focused on the relevance of education, multicultural education or school personnel needing assistance to deal with the complex issues that challenge the school teacher (Badenhorst, 1989; Engelbrecht, 1989; Hickson and White, 1989; Le Roux, 1988; Marais, 1988; Smit 1987). Le Roux (1988) suggests that school social work becomes a pedagogical necessity because the child is too complex to warrant education by the teacher alone. Hickson and White (1989) advocate the deployment of support staff such as guidance counsellors to address the issue of vocational immaturity. Engelbrecht (1989) indicates the need for education to be related to future realities. He recommends that education prepare the individual for changes in the demography, economy, ecology, value orientation and vocational opportunity afforded to a nation. These studies aim to search for answers regarding changing needs and problems beyond the traditional or microsystemic to mezzosystemic and macrosystemic influences that affect school practices.



Alderson (1972) criticizes this model for being too narrow in viewing the sources of difficulty that produce problems in the school child. The school is seen as the major, if not the exclusive system responsible for producing difficulties. This is clearly stifling to social workers who must consider all possible contributory factors in diagnosing and intervening effectively. South African school social workers need to enlist the help of all significant players in change efforts in order to ensure relevancy (Gathiram, 1993). This means that they have to firstly recognise the role of all the systems that impinge on the school and adopt a systemic and/or ecological perspective to problem prevention and problem solution. This necessitates the use of greater skill in working with the school power structure and risk-taking is required. Such skill is necessary as the school social worker may be easily removed from practice, made ineffectual or blocked because he/she may be perceived as a "trouble-shooter" (Alderson, 1972:65). Although much attention is presently afforded to dysfunctional policies and practices, these do not exclusively influence the school child. An approach that combines the use of the school change and traditional models may accommodate the variety of problems emerging in schools.

## **THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL MODEL**

The community school model holds promise for disadvantaged and deprived communities that misunderstand and/or are misunderstood by other systems (Alderson 1972, Allen-Meares 1977, Allen-Meares, Washington and Welsh 1986). In South Africa, misunderstanding and distrust has reached devastating proportions - it has turned into actively expressed hostility and schools are burned

alongside incidences of staff members being attacked and killed (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1993:451). Misunderstanding is a two-way process, therefore this model could also focus on communities that have been ignored, their needs not respected or their embittered emotions not allowed expression.

Alderson (1972:67) refers to the relevance of this model to communities that are undergoing "drastic" change. South African communities and schools fall into this category. The school social worker is therefore expected to take cognisance of the various societal influences and plan interventions bearing these in mind. Therapeutic interventions with unemployed youth, school drop-outs, victims of violence, perpetrators of violence, homeless children and children from poverty stricken families are examples of the general clientele the school social worker is expected to serve, when using this model.

If this model were to include as its goal the aspect of generating better understanding and communication between the school and the smaller and wider community, then the target could also broaden beyond the immediate neighbourhood of the school community. Increased awareness of the community in which the school is based, is the main function of the school social worker in the community school model. This aim is laudable in disadvantaged communities where one typically finds a lack of understanding by the school of the community and vice versa. The problem of poor understanding leads to poor communication. South Africa is experiencing transition, necessitating understanding and communication with disadvantaged communities (The Vuleka Trust, 1992).

Communication may break down and negotiation may give way to confrontation, mass action and violence. The school social worker can make a difference by modelling negotiation and conflict resolution skills in order to improve relationships between the school and the community. The Vuleka Trust (1992) have set themselves this task of negotiating with communities in an effort to build bridges and resolve conflicts. They advocate a win - win solution to problems and foresee that communities may be brought together if they are taught basic skills of negotiation.

If this model incorporated an ecological orientation, problems could be viewed from a broader frame of reference. Macro societal influences cannot be ignored, but have to be seriously considered when planning interventive strategies. Bridge building between the local community, the school and the larger society, is an aim to which the school social worker could aspire (Kasiram, 1992).

The practice of this model is not simple. Research points to the reluctance of school social workers to move away from the traditional model (Allen-Meares, 1977; Costin, 1969; Kasiram, 1987). According to Alderson (1972), implementing a changed focus is difficult because school social workers lack the necessary training to equip them to intervene differently. At a local level, Kasiram (1987) and Hildebrandt (1992) found that school social workers lacked understanding of their own role and function and expressed reluctance to adopt a changed focus. The community school model is similar to the school change model. The difference lies in the unit of attention being the school as an institution in the latter model

whilst in the community school model, attention is directed to the surrounding community. It would seem that both the school change and community school models have relevance to South African schools. Ideally, if both models were combined, then due attention would be afforded to deficits in the school as well the community. If the traditional emphasis were included in this combination, then it would appear that micro and macrosystemic influences would be adequately accommodated.

### **THE SOCIAL INTERACTION MODEL**

Because the scope of this model is wide, there is a clear de-emphasis on the use of any specific methodology. However, the practitioner's awareness of the forces impacting on the child, help with directing attention to the field of focus. Since there is a wide range of groups that nurture and influence the school pupil, this model has a wide scope of practice.

As regards the target in this model, Alderson (1972:71) refers to the danger of viewing the target system too narrowly. Thus, although the range of interventions and scope of practice is wide because of the focus being the entire interactional field, the target system remains only this field. Such a target is restrictive in accomplishing accurate and comprehensive diagnoses.

A major source of difficulty in South African schools, is the narrow view held by educationists and school social workers alike, regarding the service that school support networks could offer (Kasiram, 1987). It has been found that there is

much scepticism regarding the invitation by school social workers to offer a service that extends beyond the traditional role of casework and linking home and school. This impacts on the school social worker's initiative to embark on innovative programmes that focus on a less traditional approach. As a result, the school social worker may remain disengaged from the community, unable to identify dysfunctional relationships and be rendered ineffective.

To practice the social interaction model, the social worker requires skills in becoming effectively involved in relationships with: individuals, families, small groups, neighbourhood groups, institutions in the community and with the community as a whole. The school social worker has to be visible and have credibility to intervene at all these different levels. This can only be achieved if there is a high standard of work and there is a demonstration of commitment and dedication in the execution of professional duties. Trust building has first to be accomplished between the school social worker and the client systems before it can be developed amongst the various subsystems themselves. To secure good working relationships with power groups that have opposing ideologies, may be the greatest challenge for the school social worker.

At a micro level, the school social worker could promote good working relationships between the school and the home. This could be achieved by the school social worker encouraging parent and pupil representation at staff meetings. Thereby, trust could be built and parents and pupils could be actively involved in decision making concerning their education. The school-family

partnership is referred to by several authors (Cervera, 1990; Pennekamp and Freeman, 1988; Winters and Maluccio, 1988). These authors express the need for bridge building rather than adopting an "us/them" stance between the school and the community. All too often, parents are ignorant of how to gain access to schools. They are mystified by the school's structures and decision-making processes (Pennekamp and Freeman, 1988:250). Lee (1983) asserts that having information means having power and that parental involvement could only benefit the school rather than hamper its educational goals.

Livingstone (1990:307) refers to South African school curricula representing the values and beliefs of the dominant groups in society. Chetty et al. (1992) found that educationists recommended changing school curricula as a way forward in achieving integrated and relevant education. If significant relationships were developed with parents and students, then they would be empowered to decide on their curricula and pursue their educational careers uncomplainingly. This in turn may generate a new image to replace the stereotype of blacks having limited capabilities (Costin, 1972:348-349).

Weingrod (1991:340) appeals to school social work practitioners and educationists to address issues of school reform. Gathiram (1993) also advocates that community engagement be used to stimulate reform.

The social interaction model has several advantages and disadvantages. Its broad base is an advantage when one considers the multiplicity of forces that impinge

on any situation and the freedom to be innovative in the choice of a suitable approach. The role of linking important systems that are in constant interaction, is well suited to this model. Mediation is a key operation in this model and although this is generally viewed as a strength, it may stifle the performance of advocacy functions when these are indicated. This model may be too non directive to offer any real guidance to the practitioner. The emphasis on intervening at the level of all relationships, may be vague and unhelpful. It is possible to allow for flexibility alongside an offer of a variety of treatment approaches, which this model does not appear to accommodate. Rather, it appears to be a conceptual tool for assessing the varieties of interactional influences that impact on the school child.

The school-community-pupil model has as its focus the interactions amongst students, the school and the community (Costin, 1975). Similarly to the school change model, worker tasks centre around developing programmes that aim to benefit the disadvantaged pupil. Such an emphasis is achieved via consultation, collaboration and mediation. These roles are common to several models viz. the social interaction, school change and community school models. As with the other models, this model calls for collaborative and team effort to include significant players in change.

The common theme that has been developed throughout the presentation of the existing models of school social work, has been that of introducing a broader perspective to problem prevention and problem solving. An ecological perspective

may serve the interest of societies in transition because it focuses on the complexities of the individual as well as of the environment or ecology. Each child is viewed as a complete entity surrounded by a "unique mini-social system or ecosystem" (Apter, 1982:57). When the ecological system is disrupted, intervention is needed. The ecological viewpoint allows a variety of interventions including those that follow from behavioural, biophysical, or psychodynamic beliefs. It demands that all interventions be examined with regard to their potential effect on the entire ecosystem. This orientation also deals with the interface between the individual and "whatever confronts him or her in living" (Monkman, 1981:138). Although the belief that individuals must function in synchrony with the environment, is the central feature of this perspective, it adequately accommodates societal dysfunction and resource re-distribution. This feature of encompassing environmental and individual deficits, holds potential for multi-problem communities.

All the models presented in this chapter, have some value in serving societies in transition. If a model were developed to accommodate an ecological bias, it may be viewed as a catalyst to combine a variety of need-determined interventive strategies.

## **SUMMARY**

This chapter has dealt with various related themes ranging from the purpose of school social work and the need for a new perspective to theories that guide school social work practice. In describing existing models that serve to inform practice,



gaps in service delivery are apparent. The themes presented in this chapter, link with Thomas' (1985a) developmental model of research wherein a variety of sources are consulted before a technology (in this study a new model) may be developed. Thus, an analysis of existing literature forms the basis for the analysis phase of the study and serves to provide information for the development of a new technology.

# **CHAPTER THREE**

## **LITERATURE REVIEW : PROBLEMS AND PRACTICE INTERVENTIONS**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The first step of problem analysis in the analysis phase of Thomas' (1985a:489) developmental, research and utilization model and the step of "state-of-the-art review" form the content of this chapter. Problems commonly handled by school social workers are identified, namely racial issues, vandalism and violence, poverty and homelessness, substance abuse, truancy and non attendance, and stress and delinquency. Each identified problem or cluster of related problems serves to establish the "problematic human condition" (Thomas, 1985a:489). A state-of-the-art review of possible practice interventions and models of school social work are then discussed, taking cognisance of the South African societal context.

Problems or clusters of related problems, are isolated to facilitate the analysis of practice interventions and to present informed alternatives systematically. The choice of problems which are discussed in this chapter, have been derived from literature supporting the nature of problems currently experienced in schools.

### 3.2 RACIAL ISSUES

Racial considerations dominate South African literature, research, debate and mass action as the struggle for liberation from suppression progresses (Claasen, 1989; Cleaver, 1988; Goodey, 1989; Jeffery, 1991; Lines, 1986; McRoy and Freeman, 1986; South African Institute of Race Relations, 1993). Numerous studies highlight the need for recognition of racial identity issues or offer programmes on multicultural education. Others, such as the study by Jeffery (1991) highlight local concern regarding mass mobilisation. In her book "Forum on Mass Mobilisation", Jeffery quotes statistics on the number of schools that were disrupted by some form of mass mobilisation in South Africa in 1991. For only the first six months of the year, the total number was forty eight disrupted schools. Disruption took various forms: pupil boycott of classes, principal and staff being chased out of school, teachers, parents and community members marching to city centres to demand recognition and equal education, strike or a "chalk down" by teachers, pupils occupying empty white schools, and closing of schools after pupils rioted and a teacher was stabbed. These forms of disruption clearly reflect the high levels of anger and hostility experienced in the country.

Racial issues cover many aspects. For the purposes of presenting a composite picture in respect of racial concerns, racial identity issues and equal educational opportunities are discussed together. Other aspects related to race, are discussed under various headings in this chapter.

McRoy and Freeman (1986) refer to the racial identity dilemma in relation to children who come from mixed parentage. These children belong to two different race groups - one that is positively valued by society and one that is devalued. Such children soon learn to calculate the "social mathematics of being black versus white" (McRoy and Freeman, 1986:165). Practical considerations as suggested by McRoy and Freeman (1986) are presented alongside the feasibility of their application as follows :

1. There is a need for preventive activities by school social workers. In their studies, educationists Goodey (1989), Claassen (1989) and Claassen and Niemann (1992) referred to multicultural education as the most acceptable preventive educational approach.

To promote prevention, school social workers must identify children at risk at an early stage. For this purpose, the questionnaire is recommended by McRoy and Freeman (1986) as a useful tool for early identification. This is perceived as feasible since the school social worker is trained in research.

2. Knowledge on racial identity issues and related resources is required. In 1986, Lines recommended that social workers become involved with disadvantaged communities. She recommended that social work training prepare practitioners for a different cultural context and that a multidisciplinary team serve the multiplicity of problems of such communities. Chavkin and Garza-Lubeck (1990) indicate that once school

social workers are adequately informed about racial issues, they would be able to provide training for educators to ensure an unbiased education.

The school social worker may find it essential to attend workshops to improve understanding of race related issues, given that present social work education may be inadequate. In 1991, the Joint Universities Committee held a conference with the aim of making social work education relevant for a non racial, democratic South Africa. At the conference, Drower (1991) referred to the social work profession having to accept that it does not exist in a socio-political vacuum. Taback (1991) too, appealed for social work training to meet the demands of a transforming society. Galloway (1991) expressed the concern that social workers may be instrumental in participating in and maintaining racism. She proposed that social workers "eradicate racism by becoming racially aware, working to eliminate racism in their agency and practice, and taking up the anti-racist struggle more generally through political activity" (1991:247).

3. Awareness of values and biases regarding racial mixing or integration is required (McRoy and Freeman, 1986). Training social workers for a changed societal context could deal with this aspect. Training of educationists is also advocated by van der Westhuizen and Theron (1993) to accommodate educationists' resistance to accepting changes in the educational arena. Objectivity and a non judgemental attitude need to be emphasised. Self awareness and a continual monitoring of biases, may help to prevent

practice from becoming tainted.

4. Skills to assess and intervene in family and organizational dynamics related to racial issues are necessary. According to McRoy and Freeman (1986), social workers are skilled in adopting a systemic or ecological view of situations and are therefore in a favourable position to assess racially biased dynamics accurately. Jacob, Joseph and van Rooyen (1991) make a plea for local social workers to acquire these skills to facilitate clear conceptualizing of problem conditions.

### **3.2.1 Practice Interventions**

McRoy and Freeman (1986) suggest that after problems have been clearly identified, intervention follows with a focus on: parent - child relationships, relationships with others in the school environment, primary groups, religious organizations, neighbourhood relationships and other relevant social systems that impinge on the child's functioning. Therefore, a multiplicity of approaches is advocated with the choice of approach being determined by need. This is essentially what an ecological bias in respect of school social work proposes. McRoy and Freeman (1986) suggest interventions including individual, group and family counselling, classroom discussions with students, consultation with teachers and collaboration with community organizations.

These interventions allow children to develop positive images of themselves in

several areas including the area of racial heritage. However these responses do not adequately accommodate racial concerns of a macrosystemic nature. Proactive responses that provide for environmental development and change are advocated by McRoy and Freeman (1986:173) as follows :

1. Children could be allowed to integrate with all race groups by living in a neighbourhood that is multiracial and by attending mixed race schools. The South African Institute of Race Relations (1990) found that integration in South Africa is still fraught with many problems. The institute cites numerous reports of abuse and threats by white neighbours or authorities. They span incidences of poison-pen letters to "offenders", invasion of property by protesters, firing of shots at "offenders" and being ordered to vacate a holiday flat because of being black.

Integrated schooling has been recently introduced in South Africa with a variety of difficulties being reported on its acceptance and administration (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1990). In their discussion on integrated schooling, Allen-Meares, Washington and Welsh (1986), suggest bussing as a remedy to dismantling segregated schooling. However, "white flight" is accelerated as more white families abandon these areas to either send their children to private schools or move to the suburbs. Ginsburg (1989:37) suggests that white flight and segregation could be counteracted if curricula are upgraded to attract high achieving pupils remaining in the school. She also suggests that racial quotas be established and rigorously

applied to ensure integration. This enforced integration rarely works as people who do not agree with the principles of integration, soon find ways of deceiving the system as evidenced in the examples quoted earlier (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1990).

2. Children could be encouraged to acknowledge and discuss their racial heritage with parents and other significant individuals. Lines (1986) and Moroz and Segal (1990) point out that this may seem an ideal to South African social workers when many disadvantaged children do not have homes or parents.
3. Parents could be encouraged to perceive their children's racial problems accurately and facilitate a resolution. According to the South African Institute of Race Relations (1993:449), there were 2911 deaths from political violence in the first 11 months of 1992 as compared to 2536 deaths in the same period in 1991. Against this backdrop, such a strategy is essential for both children and the general population in the country.
4. Children and their parents could have frequent satisfactory contact with black people who are positive role models (McRoy and Freeman, 1986). They should be encouraged to develop positive non stereotypic attitudes toward blacks based on direct contacts and experiences. This influence is expected to encourage children from a devalued culture to feel proud of their heritage, rather than to helplessly adopt cultures that offer values that are



in conflict with their traditional beliefs. South Africa has several such personages, but in a time of political upheaval and unrest, scepticism regarding the actual worth of these persons and fear of being victimised if seen to befriend such a person, is not uncommon. The South African Institute of Race Relations (1993:460) reports many and varied incidences of violent deaths as a direct result of suspected association with persons from different political groups.

5. The family should form an identity as a unit (McRoy and Freeman, 1986). Arguments presented in the discussion on the existence of the intact family unit and the priorities of the disadvantaged family, are applicable here.

These interventions may appear somewhat idealistic, but if due consideration is afforded to the present changing societal context, the need for their adoption is abundantly clear. Indeed, an infrastructure to accommodate some of these interventions, is already being created through affirmative action policies and the growth of multiracial schools. The South African Institute of Race Relations (1993:597) reports that by the end of 1991, a total of 809 white schools had been opened to pupils of all races in accordance with the models system of schooling. The number of African children enrolled at Indian schools increased from 58 in 1986 to 21940 in 1992.

These interventions require the school social worker to adopt an ecological perspective. McRoy and Freeman (1986:171) refer to the adoption of the ecological

perspective as facilitating a shift from the child to interaction between the individual and environmental factors. Being thus guided, the school social worker could facilitate change at macrosystemic levels, resulting in changing dysfunctional policies that have prejudiced and disadvantaged certain groups of children.

Berkhout (1989) refers to the improbability of the educational system singularly changing societal inequalities in South Africa. Cleaver (1988) agrees with this view, contending that equalization of educational opportunities requires improvement and transformation of many things beyond the school system. Attempts to equalize education could be realised if there were equal funds allocated to education across the racial board, if there were equal norms and standards for education, equal curricula and teachers (in relation to remuneration and qualification) and equal examinations. Multicultural education is an option that holds promise for equalizing education. Goodey (1989:477) explains that South Africa is "one of the most multi-ethnic, multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-cultural societies in the world". He points out the difficulty of finding the "mythical equilibrium" between social and political stability and the tolerance for and encouragement of the diversity of cultures. It is clear that no blue print is available and that the struggle to aspire to maintain this equilibrium will be continuous. Allen-Meares, Washington and Welsh (1986), Goodey (1989) and Claassen (1989) refer to the need to "reform" mono culturally biased education systems through the following :

1. Educational planning with the community is necessary to cater for different needs. Allen-Meares, Washington and Welsh refer to the "miseducation of minorities and other children who are linguistically different" (1986:184). In America, the quest for liberation and equalization of opportunity, led to the uniformity of policies and curricula. Now there is increasing recognition afforded to the need to preserve the rich differences in culture and to encourage a sense of pride in racially different groups. Chavkin and Garza-Lubeck (1990) refer to the need for inclusion of minority or under represented parents in planning policy. At a local level, outreach programmes, networking with social service agencies, parental empowerment and enhancing parent-teacher partnerships are suggested as means of promoting participation of all significant players (Gathiram, 1993; Lee, 1983; The Vuleka Trust, 1992).
2. A national educational policy with clear and achievable aims is required. According to Livingstone (1990), the dilemma of different aims for different race groups is clearly a problem, especially when considering that education of disadvantaged communities has been deliberately highjacked during the apartheid regime. Statistics on expenditure in education according to race reveal this bias. In 1991/1992, the per capita figures were R1248 for Africans, R2701 for coloured pupils and R4448 for whites (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1993). Figures for Indian pupils were not available.

3. Goodey (1989) refers to the restructuring of the school system to allow for the representation of all different cultural groups. According to Coleman (as quoted by Allen-Meares, Washington and Welsh, 1986), racial balancing in a school increased the academic achievement of minority or disadvantaged pupils significantly. At a local level, the need for multicultural education which would entail the representation of all different cultural groups in a school, has been advocated by several educationists such as Claassen (1989), Berkhout (1989), and Claassen and Niemann (1992). The school social worker could liaise with the school's administration and/or with teacher trade unions to encourage the promotion of equal education policies. The school social worker is in a favourable position to implement this function when intervening at exo and macrosystemic levels within the ecological paradigm (McRoy and Freeman, 1986). Bilingual or bicultural education could also be introduced to adequately develop the child's intellectual abilities by utilising the child's native language to acquire proficiency in English (Allen-Meares, Washington and Welsh, 1986). This may prove to be a challenge for South African educators, considering the rich variety of languages among the different races.
4. Reflection of sympathetic insight of the influences of different cultures in curricula is necessary. The South African Institute of Race Relations (1990:811) refers to curricula being predominantly "Euro-centric and white dominated" in South Africa and that there is a need for the "experience, ideals, values and aspirations of all communities" to be represented in

curriculum planning. The curriculum could be examined to remove culturally biased, racist and sexist material. All cultural groups could be represented and cultural tolerance could result. Integration need not mean a loss of the child's right to his or her cultural identity but a rich assimilation of differences (Allen-Meares, Washington and Welsh 1986).

5. Teacher education to improve knowledge of all cultures is necessary. This links with McRoy and Freeman's (1986) and Drower's (1991) reference to the suitable training of professionals to incorporate knowledge of different cultures and strategies that aim to facilitate racial and cultural integration.
6. Human relations to bring children and staff together for the purpose of promoting amicable relationships and better understanding needs to be developed. In a school that has introduced integration, this effort will have a positive influence on several other aspects of school functioning such as uniting educational staff opinion on inservice training to deal with prejudices and modelling a commitment to racial harmony (Chetty et al. 1992; Morrow, 1988).
7. Legislation to fund only those schools that operate as unitary schools or schools that cater for all race groups could be introduced. Allen-Meares, Washington and Welsh (1986) refer to the social discrimination that continues to occur with the introduction of such specific legislation e.g. class rooms having the same race children within a mixed race school. Any

legislative attempt needs to accommodate all significant participants at various systemic levels, indicating the appropriateness of the ecological perspective once again.

8. Children could be bussed to ensure some measure of integration (Allen-Meares, Washington and Welsh 1986). This has not provided a foolproof remedy to the problem as has been referred to in the discussion on "white flight". Any mandate introduced to eliminate segregation is not expected to meet with much success as people will always attempt to defy the ruling. Effort at dismantling segregation must be done in consultation with significant players and must be representative of the general school feeling in favour of integration. Participation and empowerment of all persons in respect of change is advocated by several authors such as Lines (1986), The Vuleka Trust (1992) and Gathiram (1993).

Practical implications with regard to racial issues are mainly oriented to deal with contextual factors (McRoy and Freeman, 1986:167). The use of the school change, social interaction and the community school models is thus indicated. There is also scope for individual and group counselling, involving use of the traditional/clinical model of school social work. Service priorities may be guided by need in an attempt to ensure the resolution and prevention of problems related to racial issues.



### **3.3 VANDALISM AND VIOLENCE**

Vandalism and violence are discussed together in this section as they often occur side by side. However, it is important to note that the factors that contribute to vandalism do not necessarily produce violence directly. Of importance too, is the relationship between factors related to both violence and vandalism and wider societal concerns. This is particularly true of the South African society where violence has become synonymous with the political struggle for freedom and democracy (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1993).

The South African Institute of Race Relations (1990:836; 1993:425) refers to the relationship between violence and school disruption. Violence flares up during school disruption owing to confrontations between opposing student groups or interest groups. Police personnel, educationists and youth are attacked, arrested or killed in the course of the conflict. People flee the violence and move to other areas as refugees, adding to "the burgeoning population of school leavers who are unemployed and unable to find places in schools". The struggle for equal education occurs at a risk to individual and community safety.

Ellis, Ray and Coleman (1983) researched factors that related to school vandalism in America. They found that the pupil teacher ratio was the single most significant factor that correlated positively with school vandalism in that vandalism decreased as the number of pupils for whom the teacher was responsible, decreased. In March 1992, the pupil teacher ratio was found to be 41 to 1 for African schools in

the non homeland areas and ranged from 18 to 21 to 1 for White schools in the various provinces in South Africa (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1993: 605). This finding has significant implications for South African education where teacher pupil ratios require stabilising in order that imbalances are redressed and violence reduced.

A large school enrolment was also related to school vandalism as it is expected that "deindividualization" is common in the larger school (Ellis, Ray and Coleman, 1983). Linked with such vandalism is violence amongst pupils who suffer from a sense of alienation and whose parents are not concerned about their education. This points to the need for pupil and parent involvement in the school's functioning to increase the sense of belonging and pride and to reduce acts of hostility towards the school (Gathiram, 1993; Wodarski and Hedrick, 1987). If parents do not demonstrate interest in their children, the child may seek the security of belonging to a gang. These gangs comprise disgruntled youth who band together for anti-social activities that are often violent and illegal (Ginsburg, 1989). Vandalism is but one activity of such a gang and violence often replaces acts of vandalism as the gang develops on the criminal continuum.

Ellis, Ray and Coleman (1983) also found that vandalism increases as grade levels increase. This points to the possibility of peer pressure influences which must then be minimized through group and/or individual professional services. The advantages of a group approach to problem prevention and solution is discussed in greater detail, in section 3.3.1 of this chapter. A significant finding of the study



was that vandalism was not related to race and that institutionalized racism be recognised.

Schools that do not hire out their facilities for after school activities, have a higher incidence of vandalism (Ellis, Ray and Coleman, 1983). When the school is occupied after school hours, the chances of vandalising decreases. Therefore the logical step, is to open the school for use by the community. This is likely to offer opportunities for local communities to develop a variety of programmes, using the school as a venue.

Violence is sometimes seen as appearing further on the continuum of acts of hostility. The interrelationship of violence and vandalism is demonstrated to facilitate an understanding of where these acts of hostility feature on a continuum of anti-social activities. Wodarski and Hedrick (1987) offer some insights on factors promoting violence in children and on practice implications for school social work. The authors advocate that violent children be closely monitored. They argue that if their problems are not resolved early enough, it could result in considerable expenditure for the state, should custodial care of some kind or other be required later in life. Variables that are linked with violence include the following (Wodarski and Hedrick, 1987) :

### **1. The Political Struggle and Child Management**

Lack of adequate parenting correlates significantly with violence amongst children (Wodarski and Hedrick, 1987). When parents are lax in their

disciplining, or where there is no monitoring of the child or too much interference by the parent, the child may respond with violence. Often, the child is exposed to parental aggression and conflict resulting in violence being modelled as a problem solving strategy.

In South African communities, violence typifies the political struggle for power with damage and loss of life occurring as regular features of everyday living (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1993). Children grow up in an atmosphere of seeing adults and youth using violent means to deal with situations (Friedman, 1992). The result of these children using violence in problem solving is therefore inevitable. Strategies for breaking this cycle of violence have to be developed (The Vuleka Trust, 1992). Clearly, both micro and macrosystemic approaches would accommodate the wide diversity of problem issues associated with violence.

## **2. Cognitive, Social and Academic Skill**

According to Wodarski and Hedrick (1987), violent children lack the ability to empathise and cope with stress prosocially. They possess less academic skills in the areas of verbal intelligence, reading achievement and homework completion. This may exacerbate the sense of alienation the child experiences in relation to prosocial activities and relationships. Dropping out of school may result and the child may seek similar peers who provide affirmation for his/her behaviour. A subculture of values related to inadequate self control, minimal education and inability to engage in

empathic behaviours could develop. Where these subcultures become sufficiently widespread, entire nations are at risk. South African communities need to accept the enormity of violence amidst their people, in order that adequate remedial measures be developed (The Vuleka Trust, 1992).

### **3. Self Esteem and Peer Relations**

Violent individuals have poor self concepts and experience difficulty in integrating with prosocial peer groups (Wodarski and Hedrick, 1987). The difficulties they experience at school and the rejection by their teachers, parents and peers, tends to reduce their self esteem. As indicated in the afore-mentioned discussion, these children seek companionship and affirmation amongst other children with similar experiences. Substance abuse often forms an important facet of their lives. The cycle of violence and lack of inhibition perpetuates itself.

#### **3.3.1 Practice Interventions**

Practice implications in respect of vandalism and violence support the use of a combination of models ranging from a traditional clinical approach to a community school model. Alvarez and Welsh (1990) refer to a group approach to deal with violence, Wodarski and Hedrick (1987) refer to the need for interdisciplinary teamwork and Ellis, Ray and Coleman (1983) discuss the need for macrosystemic responses. The ecological paradigm would accommodate the variety of functions

required to implement change at all these levels.

Ellis, Ray and Coleman (1983); Wodarski and Hedrick (1987); Whittington and Moran (1990) offer several interventions to deal with vandalism and violence in the school. The cause of acts of vandalism and violence must first be identified to establish the nature, duration and extent of intervention. This may appear to be logical but it is tempting to label a child or situation without affording due consideration to causative detail.

Preventive interventions have been discussed by Wodarski and Hedrick (1987) and make provision for children considered to be at risk. These children are identified as anti-social and engage in non compliant activities, are restless, impulsive or aggressive. According to Wodarski and Hedrick (1987), a group approach to problem prevention and problem solving is valuable with such children for the following reasons :

1. The group interaction typifies several daily interactions in the child's life and facilitates learning or unlearning of social behaviours. Lewin (1980) points out an important facet of daily interactions being enjoyment or fun and adds that the group often provides for this neglected but important ingredient that promotes adjustment. If the focus of the group experience is on functional rather than dysfunctional behaviour, there is much scope for members to derive optimal benefits (Alvarez and Welsh, 1990). Group members are helped to assert themselves rather than act out their

difficulties. The advantage of such an approach is that each child develops the ability to make decisions and to acquire competence, to increase trust in persons and activities and to increase their social skills and self esteem.

2. If a behaviour is learned in a group context, it is likely to come under the control of many discriminative stimuli. Therefore greater generalization of the behaviour can occur. Alvarez and Welsh (1990:53) describe the use of an experiential group experience with children to reverse feelings of failure and alienation. These children enjoyed the characteristic group sessions and an all day field experience to offer more opportunity for problem solving in relation to anxieties and discomforts.
3. Groups provide a context in which behaviours may be tested and supported in a realistic atmosphere (Wodarski and Hedrick, 1987). Thus group members can get immediate feedback on their problem solving abilities. Likewise, they are provided with role models for acquiring socially acceptable behaviour. It is for this reason that authors such as Polatinsky (1978) and Wayne and Fernstein (1978) have stressed the significance of the preventive worth of the groupwork method. Polatinsky (1978) used an experimental and control group to arrive at the conclusion that the group that received the service, proved to have more social competence, educational competence and capacity for accurate self analysis than the control group that did not receive the service.

4. Time economy in serving many children is a clear advantage especially in the school setting where the practitioner serves a large clientele (Wodarski and Hedrick, 1987).

Wodarski and Hedrick (1987) offer the following therapeutic interventions which also contain scope for prevention in respect of violent children :

- identifying stresses that can provoke anger and subsequent violent behaviour;
- developing cognitive relaxation skills to reduce the effects of stresses;
- learning how to receive assertive statements and dealing with the anger of others;
- developing appropriate communication and assertion skills;
- practising alternate behaviour such as stimulus removal, in anger provoking situations;
- enhancing problem solving skills which would include generating information and working out possible solutions with the aim of making an appropriate choice;
- altering dissatisfaction about interpersonal relationships. This involves learning to interact in meaningful and satisfying ways.

Whittington and Moran (1990) describe a specific programme for inculcating basic non violence in children and for providing them with coping skills and positive mental health. Both preventive and therapeutic strategies that were described in the previous interventions, are contained in this programme. The programme is

presented in some depth and similarities in value bases or aims with previous interventions, outlined. The programme is entitled: "Peace Begins With Me". It was field tested for five years in a multicultural school. It consists of 16 weekly sessions ranging in time from 25 minutes to 60 minutes depending on the child's attention span and is conducted by a social worker, teacher or counsellor. The 16 sessions have the following themes that are presented in a variety of age-appropriate ways:

1. What is self esteem?
2. What is self control and time out?
3. What is positive self talk?
4. Everyone has feelings.
5. Say what you mean out loud.
6. Walk in someone else's shoes.
7. Parents are people too.
8. Beware of prejudice.
9. Walk away from trouble.
10. Follow people who are positive.
11. Make careful choices and decisions.
12. Oops, I made a mistake.
13. Behaviour has consequences.
14. Both sides can win.
15. Take care of yourself and your world.
16. Celebration and conclusion.

Time out, self talk and gender objective attitudes were seen as central to preventing violence. Therefore the sessions feature these aspects regularly whilst developing value bases and specific behaviour changes. Each session opens with discussion on how members used time out the previous week and to what effect. Time out is used when the individual perceives emotional signals of rising tension. During time out, self talk is encouraged to de-escalate the anger by thinking, planning or consulting in relation to the situation. The child may rest, walk, jog, listen to music, ride a bicycle or engage in any activity that allows him to release frustrations and plan an appropriate strategy. After 7 - 8 weeks into the programme, the children may have difficulty in recognizing uses of time out in their lives. This is not indicative of regression, but that the child has internalised time out and that it has become automatic, heralding the onset of control.

In a society that exhibits decay in values and where violence is a first hand, regular experience, deliberate effort is needed to effect some change (The Vuleka Trust, 1992). In a school, children are a ready target and can unlearn faulty values through group and individual influence (Gonet, 1990). This programme makes extensive use of the group work approach, but has a specially designed structure. The preventive aspect of the programme is featured in the underlying belief that children at risk for developing violent behaviour are identified early and in them being offered the opportunity to unlearn socially unacceptable values. This programme accommodates both prevention and therapy to deal with escalating incidences of vandalism and violence.



At a symposium on the prevention of violence and negligence in South Africa, a declaration by delegates to prevent violence in various ways was presented for publication (Department of National Health and Population Development, March 1993). Preaching the word of God, changing attitudes of people with regard to violence, promoting communication and cognitive skills of children, mobilising and empowering communities to stimulate school-parent partnerships, encouraging responsible decision making regarding addictive substances and educating people of their basic rights were suggested by educators and church organisations. Taylor (1992:197), in identifying a peace curriculum for schools in South Africa, also stressed the importance of human rights and social conscientising. Responsible decision making is incorporated within teaching of conflict resolution and mediation.

The particular nature of vandalism and violence with its far reaching repercussions, favours a proactive response although there is scope for therapeutic responses as well. Models of practice would therefore fall into categories that accommodate this dual emphasis.

### **3.4 POVERTY, HOMELESSNESS AND THE NOMADIC CHILD**

The school child who does not have a proper home, or who has relocated because of violence and unrest or who simply does not have a home at all, is becoming an increasingly common feature in the school. These themes are combined because of their interconnectedness and their relationship to poverty.

Statistics released on housing shortages in 1992 in South Africa were high with the figure for blacks being the highest at 935 972 and lowest for whites at 104 000 (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1993:211). Related to this is unemployment, which the South African Institute of Race Relations (1993:179) quotes as being 1 out of every 5 persons in South Africa (excluding the independent homelands), as at March 1991. In the same time period, black unemployment was highest at 25% as compared to Indian at 13%, coloured at 17% and white at 4%. Since 1990, further deterioration has taken place because of the decline in the economy. According to the South African Chamber of Business, unemployment was expected to increase due to the recession affecting industrial production (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1993:179). Khosa (1991:232) demonstrates the relationship between unemployment, the poverty stricken child, homelessness and underachievement through citing the poverty cycle theory. She appeals to social workers to break the cycle of poverty and stop blaming the poor for their problems, advocating interprofessionalism, co-ordination and deliberate "war" on poverty. Weeks (1991:370), in a similar vein, advocates that welfare authorities recognize poverty, and then adopt long term, developmental strategies of a self help nature to combat the problem. Both authors indicate the need for macrosystemic responses to the problem.

What are the causes of homelessness and relocation in relation to poverty, societal decay and transition? Bloomfield and Holzman (1988); The Detainees Support Committee (1986); Gewirtzman and Fodor (1987); Moroz and Segal (1990); O' Connor (1989); Scharf, Powell and Thomas (1986); Staudt (1987) offer the

following reasons for this problem :

1. Violence, unemployment, reduced income and general financial concerns often trigger off relocation in the hope of finding greener pastures elsewhere. The Detainees' Parents Support Committee (1986:148) reports that "in violent confrontations, chaos and escape, children are sometimes separated from parents". Some are even born into these situations where parents are hiding or "demolishing" their "homes" by day and re-erecting them at night for shelter. A search for peace, security and economic prosperity is often closely linked to violence, poverty and homelessness (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1993).
2. According to Moroz and Segal (1990), separation, divorce or re-marriage is another factor that produces relocation and the subsequent adjustment difficulties of a new family structure and a new neighbourhood and school. Moving means loss for everyone in the family. It means changing one's life style and this can be very stressful if associated with unemployment or divorce. Even in the absence of financial or emotional strain, adjustment to finding a home, locating the grocery store and doctor, or establishing a bank account, can produce stress. O' Connor (1989) reports that children experiencing problems at home often experience rejection, marginalization and exclusion at school. These children see themselves as outsiders in terms of academic performance and/or their acceptance by peers and authority figures.

3. O' Connor (1989) interviewed school children without homes or who had relocated on numerous occasions and found that school related problems provided a substantial basis for children leaving home. The result was relocation to another school and the accompanying problems of repeated exclusion or running away from school. Such a child experiences sufficient alienation to be pushed out of the school. Therefore the term school "push-out" rather than "drop-out" is applicable to this child. In the school, the child is alienated through practices such as segregation of classes according to academic performance and autocratic punishment of "deviance" by separation from peers and expulsion from school. The child is usually driven to seek the comfort of isolation because the environment both at school and home simply does not offer any meaningful support.
4. The problem child who is expelled from school is another concern of the educational authority. Scharf, Powell and Thomas (1986:269) found that in their study in Cape Town, that 31 homeless children reported that they had major difficulties at school as compared to only 4 reporting no problems at school. The majority experienced problems in relation to disciplinary transgression or collusion of the school and the family in failing to discipline, overcrowded schools that were stifling rather than stimulating and punitive teachers who resorted to such a stance to obtain discipline. As opposed to the child who runs away from school and home, this child is excluded by the school for a variety of reasons. The parents of such a child usually seek admission to another school in the vicinity. The underlying

pathology is not addressed, rather the child is moved from school to school repeating behaviours that expelled him/her and further entrenching the belief that he/she is a social misfit.

5. Relocation of the child seeking integrated schooling or better schooling is a new concern of educational authorities (Chetty et al. 1992). These children may come from financially stable settings but are considered disadvantaged because of their previous school experience. The challenge to educationists is indeed enormous as the teacher is used to teaching in a unicultural setting (Claassen and Niemann, 1992). The teacher and the school as a whole need to understand the demands of integrated schooling and to make efforts to meet them.

Indeed the problems experienced by homeless and relocated or dislocated children are numerous. Authors such as Bloomfield and Holzman (1988); Gewirtzman and Fodor (1987); Moroz and Segal (1990); Staudt (1987), identify the following symptoms displayed by these children :

- a sense of loss, worry and fear;
- seeing life as temporary;
- lack of interest in self and others;
- poor grooming and/or personal hygiene;
- sadness/crying, withdrawal, aggression or regression;
- chronic hunger or fatigue;
- extreme obedience or rebelliousness;



- absence from school;
- chronic unpreparedness for school e.g. not completing homework;
- inappropriate clowning.

These children with their severe symptoms, constitute an increasing number of young people who require support and professional help.

### **3.4.1 Practice Interventions**

Offering professional assistance to the homeless or relocated child is no easy task because of the difficulty in identifying such a child and determining the factors that led to relocation and homelessness (Moroz and Segal, 1990). Because of the problem having such a widespread influence on the different areas of the child's life, several theoretical orientations combine to offer a foundation for relevant practice. Models of practice would accordingly also differ, depending on the nature, severity and repercussions of the problem. Establishing accurate diagnoses provides the impetus for appropriate intervention. However, this is not easily accomplished as pointed out by Moroz and Segal (1990) for the following reasons:

- homeless people do not have addresses, therefore it is difficult to document their numbers and plan services;
- homeless people are vulnerable and reluctant to be identified by authorities for fear of being reported as neglectful or having their shelters torn down;
- different groups of homeless or relocated people exist, each group with its own peculiar reasons and characteristics, making the problem complex and difficult in terms of accurate diagnosis and intervention.

The following intervention choices are suggested, after the problem situation is carefully assessed :

1. A kinship unit that matches adult volunteers with children and youth who are in need could be developed (Staudt, 1987). This effort serves to bring the school and the community together, with the result that there is clear representation of unmet needs to the school's authorities. The community is a partner of the school in educating the child. Gathiram (1993); Kasiram (1992); Moroz and Segal (1990) also refer to the need for links with the community, by using exosystemic and macrosystemic responses to ensure comprehensive services. In times of unrest and violence, this may appear idealistic rather than practical, but efforts in this direction must continue (Friedman, 1992; The Vuleka Trust, 1992).
2. On a one to one basis, Gewirtzman and Fodor (1987) suggest several strategies for the homeless child. These are to be implemented by the teacher, but training is expected to occur at a broader, school policy level. The child could be provided with a structured, non threatening environment at school e.g. allotting cubicles with the name of each child. The teacher should be helped to understand that the child may be unwilling to part with personal possessions (perhaps temporarily) and act accordingly towards the child. Regressions should be expected and teachers should try to break up tasks into smaller, more manageable ones. As far as possible, these children could be encouraged to express their fears with due respect afforded to the

need for privacy should the child so desire. Where possible, these children could be given the opportunity for engaging in activities involving fun and laughter, ingredients that typify a child's life, but which are dangerously amiss in the lives of these children. All these strategies are practical and demonstrate sensitive caring for the homeless child.

3. Groupwork services to children and families of children where relocation has occurred, is advocated by Bloomfield and Holzman (1988). This approach is suggested for families where relocation has produced loss, disruption and insecurity. New children are identified at the beginning of each year and form the target for groupwork intervention. They meet weekly for 4 weeks. The first session consists of a tour of the school's buildings and general introductions to all staff members. Subsequent sessions relate to relationship building with small and then larger groups in and outside of the school, and discussions about feelings regarding the move. Progress regarding the child in the group is reported to the parent and parent participation in the programme is encouraged. Parent groups are also undertaken with the aim of getting to know the school, the child's feelings to relocation and dealing with the group's problems in relation to the move. The child and family that would benefit from this intervention, would not have the severe symptoms of the child without the security of a home. It may be implemented with children seeking integrated or disruption free schooling. The groupwork service may be supplemented with individual or family counselling (Staudt, 1987).



4. On a practical level, Moroz and Segal (1990) suggest that flexible criteria be developed to enable the child who moves frequently or who has no address, to receive some educational instruction. Specific policies that serve to further alienate the homeless child must be recognized and changed. Changing dysfunctional policies is a macrosystemic intervention, since it requires that negotiation and conflict resolution occur with various significant others/groups (Pennekamp and Freeman, 1988). This may mean that the child be allowed to register at the school even though he/she may not have the necessary immunization or proof of residency or that academic prowess be temporarily de-emphasised to engage the disadvantaged child in learning. Other practical suggestions include negotiation for temporary housing, medical and social services. This necessitates the school social worker being aware of resources and of the need to establish comprehensive service networks. Education and sensitizing of the school and surrounding community of the problems and needs of homeless or marginalized people is another important role of the social worker.

The number of homeless, relocated, dislocated and marginalized children is ever increasing. Suggested interventions include both micro and macrosystemic approaches and necessitate the use of comprehensive service networks. An ecological perspective would accommodate individual and environmental systems as well as interventions at the interface of these systems. An ecological framework may be viewed as offering conceptual and methodological guidance to enable intervention at a variety of levels.

### **3.5 SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

"One of the great and growing concerns of the population in general and of parents in particular is the rising tide of drug experimentation and drug abuse among adolescents" (Landress, 1983:241). Although for some adolescents substance abuse is a problem in and of itself, for many it is symptomatic of various other problems such as academic frustration, insufficient motivation and self control, a sense of alienation, low self concept and a disrupted home environment. Therefore, it is apparent that substance abuse cannot be isolated as a product of a particular set of circumstances alone, but needs to be assessed against a backdrop of several possible micro and macrosystemic influences.

What are the variables that predispose adolescents to alcohol and drug experimentation and abuse? These are identified by Wodarski and Hoffman (1984:70-72) and Ginsburg (1989:135) and discussed against a macrosystemic context as follows :

#### **1. Parental Influence**

Children are most likely to be introduced to alcohol by their parents who shape attitudes and values in the child from an early age (Wodarski and Hoffman, 1984). Thus parental norms provide the springboard for alcohol or illicit drug consumption. Parents model inappropriate use of these substances to their children, making it almost impossible to change ingrained beliefs and attitudes towards alcohol and drug use.

## **2. Peer Influence**

As children make the transition to adolescence, peer influence and pressure dominates. The relationship between adolescent substance abuse and peer influence is especially strong when the adolescent is a member of a subgroup that condones the abuse (Wodarski and Hoffman, 1984). Drugs with intensely damaging or lethal effect are generally taken in gangs or as a result of peer pressure. Glue sniffing and inhaling the fumes of methylated spirits are but two examples of illicit and harmful drugs taken in such gangs.

## **3. Environmental Influence**

According to Wodarski and Hoffman (1984) this variable influences drug and alcohol use to a limited degree because it has been found that if the environment prohibits use, there will be fewer users but more problems related to the abusers. It is presumed that abusers in prohibitive environments, face ostracism and are driven to secrecy and feelings of subterfuge which increases the reinforcement received by the abusing subgroup. Ginsburg (1989) however, advocates that stricter control is needed in schools to prohibit the trafficking of drugs. She believes that some principals do not take the necessary precautions timeously because of the stigma attached to substance abuse. The school population may benefit if it deals with drug pushers assertively and develops values amongst youth to enable them to acknowledge their problems to promote solution.

#### **4. Psychological Variables**

According to Wodarski and Hoffman (1984), youth see substance abuse as a symbol of adulthood and independence. However, as they progress to irresponsible use of alcohol and drugs, they experience increased isolation, normlessness and powerlessness. Psychological variables influencing disadvantaged youth would be related to a search for independence and escape from life's everyday traumas. As use turns to abuse, here again the youngster will experience powerlessness, with the addiction leading to crime and/or cheaper but more lethal abuse of substances that will afford him a similar effect.

##### **3.5.1 Practice Interventions**

Identifying substance abuse is a complex undertaking because of the link with a variety of related, socially unacceptable behaviour. Schwartz (1988:54) advocates that prevention be the strategy of choice to respond to "a growing intolerance of what is perceived as a costly national disgrace" Gonet (1990); Landress (1983); Schwartz (1988); Wodarski and Hoffman (1984) recommend the strategy of prevention.

Mensch and Kandel (1988) found that there was a strong relationship between early drug use and school drop-out. They conclude that preventing or at least delaying the onset of drug or alcohol use among youth, will reduce the incidence

of dropping out of school. Schwartz (1988) clarifies that the school is an ideal institution that can promote prevention because of its power to exert a broad influence over attitudes and behaviour of young people. Gonet (1990) asserts that the school is a logical place to initiate prevention because children spend so much of their waking time within its walls.

Efforts to curb substance abuse have spanned a wide spectrum of responses from increasing penalties for possessing or taking drugs, to drug use education to pupils and teachers. Interventions include the following :

1. Education in respect of alcohol and drug use to the school child is important. Wodarski and Hoffman (1984) found that many teenagers did not discuss alcohol and drug use with their parents, with the result that peers are approached for information - peers that are often misinformed. The school has the advantage of providing the information in a non moralizing, rational manner. To ensure receptivity to the education, a group approach is preferred as this utilises the inherent tendency of youth to collectively develop values based on peer support and group rewards. A Teams-Games-Tournament (TGT) is advocated by Wodarski and Hoffman (1984) for education of the youngster. This technique is an alternative teaching approach whereby group rather than individual achievement is rewarded. Knowledge on drugs and alcohol usage, their long term effects, motives for abuse, alternatives and recognizing and treating the problems, is imparted to the entire group. Thereafter, students test their retention of

the information through a competition. Teams are formed with the membership of the teams being such that there is an equal opportunity for each team to win. The group is used because when knowledge is imparted in the group context, it comes under the control of group norms and beliefs. Schwartz (1988) also suggests group education with a specific emphasis on use of a cognitive-behavioural model. This model assumes that adolescents need access to relevant information on which to base decisions and behaviour. They must perceive, comprehend and store this information accurately. They must personalize the information in order to make decisions and they need behavioural skills to implement the decisions. This can be achieved in the context of group education which allows for reception, analysis, personalization and application of the education. Ultimately the aim is to "psychologically inoculate" the child against being influenced to experiment with drugs or alcohol despite unflinching pressure from the media, peers and known or unknown adults (Gonet, 1990:208).

2. The teacher and change agent need to have adequate knowledge about substance abuse in order to make accurate diagnoses or help parents to diagnose the child. The manner in which the information is disseminated and the content of the information are significant to determining the success or failure of the effort. Schwartz (1988) criticizes education efforts of the teacher, saying that teachers are not provided with drug-specific information for class room use. Wodarski and Hoffman (1984) refer to education efforts being based on the assumption that pupils will be

receptive to the information. Their concern is for the drugged or inattentive child who will not benefit from such education. This concern is only applicable in the case of education personnel being insufficiently skilled in encouraging participation, or having little commitment and interest in the child.

Besides being armed with adequate knowledge on substance abuse to impart to the group, the educator is also expected to undergo instructor training. Educators are provided with pertinent reading material on alcohol and drug use and abuse, behavioural and self management techniques and are trained to conduct the education. At all times, the receptivity of the child is checked to ensure learning. Gonet (1990) points out that children of drug users often block the input of information because of their high anxiety levels or because they receive conflicting information from home. Therefore these children require the information to be provided at a slower pace, with additional printed material and an opportunity for processing the material (Gonet, 1990).

An important aspect of the education is accurate information on identification of the child. Graber (1990) points out that a behavioural checklist for teachers is important because teachers often refer a child for assistance when the behaviour disturbs them. Thus complaints frequently reflect the teacher's needs and experiences rather than the child's inadequacies. Ginsburg (1989) and Gonet (1990) identify the following



signs of possible substance abuse in the school child:

- sudden drop in grade or attendance;
- stealing or trying to extort money from school or home;
- belligerence to authority figures;
- not meeting schedules at home such as for meals or chores;
- running away from home;
- discord at home because of the child having undesirable friends;
- physical changes such as sniffles, red eyes, slurred speech, frequent requests to visit the lavatory and falling asleep at inappropriate times.

This education, aimed at preventing the onset of substance abuse, is termed primary prevention by Gonet (1990).

3. Secondary prevention according to Gonet (1990), is the centre of substance abuse counselling at schools. It consists of early identification of students who are at a high risk of using drugs or alcohol or who are experiencing problems with drug or alcohol use and may be chemically dependent. To effect these functions, the school social worker has to determine early users with the help of school staff, parents, pupils, employers or anyone else who is involved in the life of the young child. Referrals will only be forthcoming if the practitioner respects confidentiality and earns the trust of the referring agent.

Intervention is aimed at alleviating the problem or reducing its severity. The practitioner could use motivational counselling to help the user seek



assistance, group counselling or crisis intervention. Secondary prevention assumes that the school has access to the services of a school social worker. The merits of secondary prevention cannot be contested.

4. According to Gonet (1990), tertiary prevention is risk reduction focused on the avoidance of a chronic condition. It consists of engaging the chemically dependent youngster and referring him/her for appropriate treatment, supporting him/her during treatment, facilitating re-entrance to the school after treatment and preventing relapses. This is an important aspect of any interventive programme, as it can easily be ignored because primary prevention could take precedence.

Substance abusers who have been isolated during treatment, often return to school afraid and lonely. It may be the first time that they are sober and they need new, non using friends to aid their recovery. Active effort is required to rehabilitate the youngster using a combination of approaches.

Substance abuse, like the other problems presented in this chapter, occurs against a backdrop of individual and environmental deficits. Interventions are therefore varied with a combination of models or an ecological bias providing an adequate basis for performing a wide armamentarium of functions.

### 3.6 TRUANCY AND NON ATTENDANCE

Serious social problems such as illiteracy, unemployment, poverty, political powerlessness, alienation, social deviance and crime and racial discrimination are associated with truancy (Cnaan and Seltzer, 1989). Statistics quoted by the South African Institute of Race Relations in South Africa (1990) indicate that 60% of African school leavers were in the primary school phase and of these, 31% were in their first two years of schooling. These figures are expected to increase as the climate of unrest and instability gains momentum in South Africa. Truancy, non attendance and the problems associated with them, is a growing concern.

Illiteracy and unemployment result when youths drop out of school without an adequate education. Such youths are further disadvantaged if policies in their country prejudice them against securing certain positions in employment. Apartheid policies in South Africa have disadvantaged the black population in terms of education, welfare and employment. Trade unions in these sectors have attempted to address these concerns in a variety of ways. Van der Westhuizen (1993) refers to active and passive forms of resistance in the struggle to achieve education. He clarifies that passive resistance encompasses negative attitudes and perceptions and active resistance to strikes, boycotts and opposing viewpoints. Poverty is experienced as a result of inadequate education, poorly paid jobs or not securing any employment (Khosa, 1991). People who do not possess the skills to function effectively in a competitive society find themselves powerless, normless and isolated. Thus it is apparent that truancy is related to many social problems.

Franklin and Streeter (1992) express the concern that not all drop-outs fit the traditional model of coming from low income and low achievement backgrounds. These drop-outs were found to experience common problems such as substance abuse, pregnancy and the use of English as a second language. The authors suggest that this group of drop-outs requires different intervention programmes. Cnaan and Seltzer (1989) advise that an ecosystemic perspective be adopted to establish the multiplicity of forces that interrelate to produce truancy. Such a perspective allows for a multi-dimensional view of life situations and relationships between children and important suprasystems within which they function.

A close examination of the etiology of truancy and dropping out of school is crucial to the success of any interventive programme as follows :

#### **1. Environmental factors**

Environmental factors that contribute to truancy include: pressure from friends to drop out, local attitudes that school is irrelevant, frequent contact with substance abusers, lack of sex education, teenage pregnancy, the availability of paid positions for unskilled youngsters and interracial tensions (Cnaan and Seltzer, 1989; Levine, 1984). The street gang is cited by Levine (1984) as a major factor deterring the child from attending school. The relationship of the street gang to local community intimidation and preventing school attendance, is apparent. Interventions vary from an escort service that allows the child to attend school, to community education and transition programmes for children. Mensch and Kandel (1988) found

that drug use and dropping out were closely related because both problem areas share common antecedents. Both groups are characterised by similar attributes such as lack of commitment to school work and socially accepted norms, poor relationships with parents and authority figures, strong ties with peers, high risk taking behaviour and low self esteem. Cilliers and Smit (1993:66) refer to the phenomenon of juvenile delinquency as beginning with truancy, theft, substance abuse and vandalism.

## **2. School related factors**

A variety of factors related to inappropriate school conditions predispose the child to truancy. Some of these have been referred to in earlier discussions such as in teacher unpreparedness, school push-outs, irrelevant curricula and dysfunctional school policies.

In the first instance, the school has no time or inclination to differentiate excused from unexcused non attendance (Levine, 1984). Policies to encourage this differentiation often wither into a formality with little or no active attention afforded to follow up. Overly restrictive rules or unfair application of rules often creates disenchantment with school authorities and carries the risk of non attendance (Cnaan and Seltzer, 1989). This relates to Costin's observation that school policies are frequently applied for their own sake rather than because they serve a functional purpose (Costin, 1972). Inadequately trained teachers and irrelevant curricula, also increase the child's frustration for school and could lead to truancy. Graber (1990)

expresses the need for school teachers to be adequately trained to analyse behavioural descriptions in themselves and their pupils. She asserts that teachers are not allowed sufficient opportunity for personal and professional growth and therefore suffer from high levels of burnout, apathy and stagnation. This links to several other problem conditions that have already been pointed out viz. the need for the training of teachers in respect of racial awareness and the need for accurate information and training to identify substance abusers.

The school also has the responsibility of assessing the child's educational functioning and of placing the child in a suitable scholastic environment to accommodate his/her special learning needs. This is not achieved adequately since resources for accurate assessment and adequate placement are scarce. The child often waits so long, that dropping out results before an assessment or suitable placement can occur. If teachers match curricula to pupil needs, display enthusiasm for their duties, attend school regularly and use praise for good work, the chances of the child being enthusiastic about school are correspondingly improved.

### **3. Domestic factors**

Parents are a child's first role models and greatly influence their norms, values and expectations regarding life in general. Therefore, truancy is often found in families with several generations experiencing the problems associated with truancy (Levine, 1984).

Children who play truant are likely to come from overcrowded homes, lack strong emotional ties with responsive and responsible adults, perform domestic chores of adults and stay at home during the school day to resolve domestic problems (Cnaan and Seltzer, 1989). They often do not have the necessary school clothing, lunches, school materials and money for school trips because their parents can ill afford these (Barth, 1984; Levine, 1984). These factors point to a low socio-economic status in which unemployment, poverty and relocation are common. Frank (1990) discovered that there was a positive correlation between socio-economic status and drop-out rates, but that limited parental education rather than family income was responsible for truancy. Harris (1984) found that children who have experienced some trauma in their lives often drop out of school. These children experienced significant losses due to death of loved ones or divorce, and trauma related to disturbed family functioning e.g. physical or sexual abuse. Levine (1984) also cites child neglect and abuse as reasons for non attendance to ensure that tell tale signs of abuse are kept hidden.

#### **4. Individual factors**

Barth (1984), Levine (1984) and Cnaan and Seltzer (1989) discuss the complexities of factors within the individual that predispose him/her to truancy or dropping out of school. Regardless of the merits of an educational system, some children will not learn nor achieve their academic potential. Levine (1984) asserts that truancy is often an appeal for attention to assist the child with a variety of problems. Cited among the commonly



experienced problems of truants are some: unrealistic goals and self evaluations, low self esteem, lack of social skills, fear of competition or school, hyperactivity, a learning pace that is not consistent with that of the class group, health related problems and substance abuse. Ethnic or racial dissonance also features as a problem especially for children who are in the minority in a school that has opened its doors to integration. Chetty et al. (1992) researched integrated schooling in South Africa and recommended that programmes be developed to promote social and academic integration of the minority group child.

### **3.6.1 Practice Interventions**

The various factors linked to truancy and non attendance indicate a need for a multidimensional view of the problem and the use of a multi-faceted intervention programme. Epidemiological evidence also argues persuasively for the early identification of non attenders and the use of a range of interventions (Barth, 1984; Cnaan and Seltzer, 1989). These are :

#### **1. Interventions with the community**

Interventions with the community include work with both parents as well as other community participants. Some of the strategies that fall in this category have already been mentioned e.g. recruitment of employer participation in literacy upgrade efforts or the establishment of day care resources utilising parents and other interested persons. On a practical

level, Levine (1984) suggests that the child carry school bearing detail such as books in brown paper bags to prevent neighbourhood gangs from intimidating the child into non attendance. She also suggests an escort service to accompany the child to school to increase attendance.

On a more confrontative level, intervention with the community could involve the use of pressure groups to address broader societal deficits that impact on education e.g. organizing parents and teachers into unified groups to address the concern of unequal distribution of educational resources. Clearly, the school social worker cannot enter a school and agitate for intervention at this level. The trust and confidence of the community must first be won to accomplish this task, especially in a climate of social unrest and distrust (Gathiram, 1993).

## **2. Interventions with the school**

A variety of interventions are possible at the level of the school. The school milieu can be constructively changed to increase individualization of classroom instruction, reduce negative management techniques, increase pupil reinforcement from teachers, provide teachers with the opportunity for growth and change dysfunctional school practices (Barth, 1984; Costin, 1972; Graber, 1990). These changes include the use of the school change model which forms an inherent part of the ecological paradigm. Adoption of these interventions in South African schools has occurred despite educational authorities expressing resistance to change and



democratization. Mass mobilisation of teachers in striking against dysfunctional policies and a call for sacrifice to promote change are included in a minute issued to educationists in the southern Natal region by the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (17 June, 1993).

### **3. Interventions with families**

According to Barth (1984), supplying information to the family about the child's truancy is the cheapest and easiest form of intervention and is sometimes all that is necessary. Well timed information can help to prevent non attendance. Levine (1984) too, discusses parental involvement as a crucial factor in promoting compliance. Parents could meet school personnel in groups to ventilate their concerns and be informed of separation anxiety and how to handle it. Letting parents know that the school is concerned about the child or that the child was not at school, can also promote attendance. According to Frank (1990), school social workers can also work with families to recruit their school going children as child minders.

Intervention with families who place limited value on schooling and education, requires a more complex strategy. Because these parents are often uneducated or have a limited education, they could be encouraged to enrol for an adult education programme that the school social worker could be instrumental in developing. For this to be successful, liaison with employers is also necessary for the sponsoring of the programme and for employee release time (Frank, 1990). This strategy is clearly multi-

dimensional and makes use of the social interaction and ecological perspectives to engage significant parties in problem prevention and resolution. Howard and Anderson (1978) refer to education as a basic prerequisite for responsible citizenship and for successful entry into the complicated world of today.

#### **4. Interventions with children**

Children who avoid school because of fears of separating from parents, anxiety about school performance, fear of harm at school, or general reluctance to attend school following periods of legitimate absence, are termed school refusers or children with school phobias. Treatment should be quick and the child promptly returned to school. This must be followed by a conference with the parents and school personnel so that the issue can be carefully and caringly examined and resolved (Barth, 1984).

Franklin and Streeter (1991) suggest the use of mutual aid support through a positive peer culture group (PPC) and a psychosocial skills training group (PST) in intervening with the child. They found that when youth were encouraged to join a PPC group, they made remarkable academic progress, with the added bonus of reducing stress and improving self esteem. The PST group was found to decrease depression and led to improved family functioning. They conclude that a combination of mutual aid and skills training should be included in programmes aimed at improving academic performance and reducing the drop-out rate.

Non attendance, truancy and dropping out of school are interrelated concerns that have common antecedents. Adopting a circular perspective of causality is important to ensure comprehensive understanding. The ecological perspective provides an adequate backdrop for the performance of a wide variety of functions because attention could be afforded to the various ecosystems which influence the individual. Intervention could occur at various levels, depending on where malfunctioning and incongruence is found to occur. The local school social worker may work at the interface of systems that link with these problem conditions and choose interventions based on clear understanding of their etiology.

### **3.7 STRESS AND DELINQUENCY**

These problem areas are clustered together because of their general tendency to occur side by side and because practice interventions are similar. Continuous exposure to stressful situations frequently leads to delinquency.

Stress may be conceptualized as "the outcome of a struggle by an individual to gain some kind of balance following a life event or condition that causes strain" (Swanson, 1986:17).

Farnum and Powell (1986:71) refer to stress as "a reaction to an event", and indicate that stress could be positive or negative. From these definitions it is clear that a wide variety of conditions precipitate various kinds and degrees of stress.

Viewing the stressful event through the eyes of the child is important, giving due consideration to the developmental stage of the child.

What are the circumstances that precipitate stress, disturbance and delinquency in children? Constable (1988), in an editorial comment in the journal, *Social Work in Education*, refers to the adolescent as being vulnerable to almost everything, quoting statistics to indicate high incidences of chemical dependency, pregnancy, suicide, accidents and sexually transmitted diseases among adolescents. Specifically, some of the stressors and the accompanying behaviour amongst young people are :

#### **1. Stressors in the community**

Stressors in this area are similar to the environmental factors producing truancy and non attendance in section 3.6 in this chapter. Peer pressure to perform anti-social acts, local community attitudes towards a variety of issues and the dilemma of continuing with school in the face of poverty is also stress inducing (Friedman, 1992). For the South African school child, community and environmental stress is acutely experienced as the call for sacrificing education temporarily gains popularity in the quest for democracy and equal resource distribution (Minute from the Southern Natal South African Democratic Teachers' Union, 17 June 1993).

## **2. Stressors in the school**

The school is a complex institution and can be conceptualized as an organization, a social system and a societal institution (Swanson, 1986). As an organization, the school is goal directed and contains the organizational variables of structure, process and behaviour. As an institution, the school exists to perform educational functions that are valued by society. As a social system, the school consists of a series of interconnected parts that must work in harmony to achieve set objectives. Stress and malfunctioning can occur at all these levels, as has been pointed out throughout this chapter where issues such as racial concerns and uninvolvement of the community in decisions about school curricula or school practices, are discussed.

Swanson (1986) indicates that students who do not come from middle class backgrounds, face stress inducing conditions. This is not necessarily applicable to the South African school child because even the middle class child is exposed to the stress of transition into integrated schools, with school personnel being ill equipped to handle the change (Chetty et al. 1992). Swanson (1986) refers to the teacher as a powerful significant other, who can embrace or reject a child based on an expectation of the student's abilities. There may be large scale incongruence between the student's characteristics and teacher expectation. This can culminate in a process of negative interaction that produces stress in the school child.

LeCroy and Rose (1986) report on school stressors perceived by children as being a poor report card, being sent to the principal's office, getting lost and being ridiculed in class. The latter may be linked to Swanson's observation of the teacher having the power to produce stress inside and outside the classroom.

### **3. Stressors in the home**

According to Farnum and Powell (1986), stressors in the home have a negative effect on a child's personality development and mental health. Home stressors include marital discord, low social status of the family, overcrowding and parental criminality or psychiatric disorder.

Children from divorced families experience tremendous distress and anxiety in coping with their new family situations. Schreier and Kalter (1990) indicate that these children will experience disruption in their social, emotional and cognitive development. LeCroy and Rose (1986) offer more specific behavioural descriptions. They indicate that such children are more oppositional, aggressive, lacking in self control, distractible and demanding help and attention both at home and school, than were children from non divorced families.

A further stressor in homes is abuse which has reached the proportions of a "national epidemic" (Yungman and Hegar, 1986:107). This may take the form of serious physical abuse, emotional abuse or sexual abuse. The effect

of abuse is clearly evident in the classroom when the child's academic performance drops, he/she experiences difficulty socializing, does not participate in activities, experiences difficulty in concentrating and displays reactive acting out and/or unusual sexual behaviour. Sometimes the child may exhibit clinical depression, suicidal feelings or regressive behaviour. At other times he/she may become violent, run away from home and abuse alcohol or drugs. Reactions to stress are manifested in the child internalizing the abuse and displaying a reluctance to be alone with an adult, fear of bathrooms/showers, having fear or repulsion when touched and generally lacking trust. Alternately the child may become overly compliant or become pseudo-mature (Yungman and Hegar, 1986).

Unusual sexual behaviour is common amongst the abused, with the child displaying knowledge or simulating sophisticated sexual activity that is inappropriate to the child's developmental level. This may manifest in sexual play with peers or toys, sexual self consciousness, tendency toward promiscuity and suggestive behaviour with adults (Yungman and Hegar, 1986).

According to Yungman and Hegar (1986), physical indicators that abuse has occurred include changes in the child's appearance, changed eating habits, nightmares and sleep disturbances or medical symptoms such as venereal disease, penile or vaginal discharge, loss of bladder or bowel control and itching/swelling/ lacerations of the genitals.

### 3.7.1 Practice Interventions

A large variety of practice interventions are available in respect of stress and delinquency. According to Swanson (1990), they occur at various points along the stress continuum:

- before the event;
- between the event and the stress reaction;
- between the strain and the diminishing of self concept;
- at points prior to the outcome of stress.

Practice interventions ought to accommodate a wide variety of stresses. An ecological bias would offer the variation needed to ensure that micro, mezzo, exo and macrosystemic interventions are utilised. Possible interventions are :

1. Parental involvement in the prevention and treatment of stress and delinquency is an appeal of several authors. Bloch and Seitz (1989) suggest the formal involvement of parents in assessing their preschool children's progress as an effort to increase home-school collaboration. If parents are involved in assessing their children, they can be realistic about their children's potential. Chavkin (1989) also discusses parental involvement adding that further research is needed to match level and kind of involvement to need. Famiglietti, Fraser and Newland (1984); Fine and Brownstein (1983) specify some of the levels at which parents could become involved. These are:
  - parents being used as volunteer tutors to facilitate relationship building



between the school and the family;

- parents being members of the school management board which makes important decisions about the running of the school;
- parents becoming involved in monitoring and rewarding their children's school behaviour;
- drop-in centres that allow parents to call at a venue in the school to interact with professional staff;
- newsletters updating the parent on the school and the child;
- parent study groups that are led by parents with the aim of sharing information and problem solving;
- parenting programmes to teach parents skills in parenting.

Nystrom (1989) uses the term empowerment to express the need for parent participation in children's education. He clarifies that empowerment is both a concept and a process. There are five components of empowerment:

- empowerment of individuals;
- reduction of learned helplessness;
- enhancement of internal control;
- reframing;
- consultation.

Nystrom (1989) believes that conservative strategies encourage disempowerment, because the individual is inhibited from controlling and directing his/her life. Empowerment rests on the belief that individuals understand their own needs best. Nystrom (1989) refers to the process of

empowerment enabling parents to develop and implement organized responses to circumstances. In many violence torn communities, parental involvement does not even feature as a viable option in the absence of the parent (Friedman, 1992). However, where parents are available, Lee (1983) points out that parental involvement and empowerment can only serve to prevent and resolve the many social and educational concerns of the child.

2. In relation to the problem of sex abuse, prevention via education is the goal of most programmes. Van Rooyen (1989) found that only 52,08% girls and 24,32% boys received any form of sex education from parents in South Africa. Awareness may be increased by teaching children how to recognize and deal with inappropriate advances by adults. Parents and teachers must be enabled to recognize and deal with their prejudices in this area. Vulnerability may be decreased if children are encouraged to be assertive, independent and self reliant. Promoting disclosure by telling a trusted adult is also an aim of a sexual abuse programme, with the preventive element being the reduction of further incidences of abuse (Yungman and Hegar, 1986).

Collings (1990) indicates that sex abuse prevention programmes be presented in a culturally sensitive manner in South Africa to ensure adequate learning by the diverse groups in the country. Preventive education programmes could also accommodate AIDS awareness. Coomer (1988) suggests that sex education efforts include AIDS education since

education remains the only strategy in the absence of a medical cure. Beckmann and Prinsloo (1993) express the concern that legal questions concerned with AIDS in schools have remained unanswered. Cilliers (1989) suggests that a life skills education effort must be implemented by specially trained teachers and co-ordinated by the guidance counsellor in this regard.

3. In relation to specific stressful events, Farnum and Powell (1986) advocate that children be taught relaxation, guided imagery and biofeedback to reduce stress precipitated by events such as examinations or a test. These exercises not only encourage better performance in the test or examination situation, but could be generalized to other stress producing circumstances to encourage optimal performance in these areas as well. Such teaching could involve minimal adjustment to the curriculum and also benefits the teacher.
4. Increased social knowledge, cognitive skills and social skills conducted in groups, could facilitate stress reduction markedly (LeCroy and Rose, 1986). The parallel of this effort to the psychosocial skills training group (PST) and the positive peer culture group (PPC) of Franklin and Streeter (1991) is apparent. Schreier and Kalter (1990) also suggest the use of groupwork for children from divorced families.

Increasing knowledge and facilitating the development of cognitive and social skills, serves to "psychologically inoculate, immunize" and offer

"graded pre-exposure" to the child (Wodarski, 1988:12). The Teams-Games-Tournament (TGT) model is again advocated by Wodarski (1988) as an innovative small group technique to maximise learning of the facts and to cater for self-management about a variety of issues.

Fisher (1989:260) suggests the use of groupwork as a preventive strategy for young children suffering the onslaught of trauma, confusion and mixed messages. She uses the "Magic Circle" to activate listening, focusing on feeling, giving recognition, paraphrasing, reviewing, focusing on similarities and differences, involving everyone and transferring leadership. The discussion usually lasts one or two sessions unless there are indicators for continuation.

5. Family therapy or the family being the unit of therapeutic attention is recommended by various authors. Constable (1986) suggests family therapy, indicating that the family has changed into a smaller, more vulnerable and isolated unit, being less certain of its function and having fewer members to assist in the socialization of the child. All too often, problems overlap, giving the individual a feeling of powerlessness and being overwhelmed (Steward and Zaenglein-Senger, 1986). Presenting problems provide a camouflage for other problems which the identified patient may consciously or unconsciously attempt to conceal. Family therapy allows for the uncovering of interacting systems and problems which then provides impetus for resolution. Diccoco, Chalfin and Olson (1989) specify the use of

systemic family therapy to effect lasting solutions to stressed children with a variety of presenting problems. They present the Special Education and Treatment (SET) programme which aims to maximise the child's educational progress and to use behaviour modification. The multidisciplinary team is the core of this programme. Major changes in the family's functioning are brought about through a circular focus and the use of innovative tactics to promote change. Christian, Henderson, Morse and Wilson (1983) advocate a multi-generational approach in viewing dysfunctional behaviour using family therapy. Thus historical information is not a formality as in obtaining information on the development of a problem, but a tool to glean understanding of relationships, patterns of behaviour and the variety of influences in the family. Successful family therapy requires commitment on the part of the therapist, the family and the team serving the child. Local resources in this regard are relatively scarce to provide adequately for family therapy at all schools.

## **SUMMARY**

The problems discussed in this chapter are wide ranging and often interrelated. They typify the problems that appear in most schools, both locally and abroad. Those problems, that have particular significance for South Africa, are afforded specific attention such as the problem of homelessness, racial tensions and poverty. It is apparent that no single approach would adequately accommodate such a widespread field. An overarching framework to comprehensively

conceptualize and contain a rich variety of interventions at different levels, is identified as the ecological perspective. Such a perspective offers the practitioner a wide choice of implementing several interventions side by side in an effort to deal with problem clusters that cannot be separated. In addition, the ecological perspective offers the practitioner scope to intervene at various different systemic levels and at the interface of these systems. Thereby, proactive as well as therapeutic responses could be combined to facilitate effective intervention.

Problems presented in this chapter, typify the "problem human condition" in schools countrywide. Reviewing practice interventions in respect of these problems coincides with Thomas' (1985a:489) "state-of-the-art review" operational step. Both these steps form part of the analysis phase which feeds the development phase of the research wherein a "new technology", is developed.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

Because school social work is not established in all schools in South Africa and to a limited degree in most schools, there is insufficient knowledge on the nature and scope of the service for the future. The school is an obvious venue for the provision of social services to the school child (Candotti and Mason, 1992). However, more information is required before the school can be utilised as a point of entry regarding service provision. Haphazard service delivery will not withstand the pressures of a falling economy and thus it becomes necessary to research the service in relation to its existence, relevance and future shape.

Before refining the topic for this study, it was necessary to obtain information on the status of school social work in the different racial groups, countrywide. This information was included in the analysis phase of the study in accordance with the developmental research design proposed by Thomas (1985a; 1985b). Reports from the different educational and welfare departments indicated varying levels of establishment of the service in these departments. In the Department of Education and Training (DET), school social work is non-existent (Reports obtained from the Department, 1992). School social work services in the House of Delegates were at a "pilot study" level where 5 schools were served. In the House of Assembly, the service was supplied through school psychological clinics and in the House of



Representatives, it was established at 44 primary schools countrywide (Reports from these departments, 1992). Policies governing school social work services also differed in the different Houses and in the different provinces in the same Houses. Therefore, whilst some departments served only primary schools, others focused on secondary and special schools, or teachers and socio-pedagogics were utilised to offer "social work" to the pupil in some departments as compared to the use of school social workers in others. Owing to such wide discrepancies in policies and practices in relation to school social work, it was essential to utilise exploratory and evaluative procedures within a developmental paradigm to accommodate the variety of levels at which school social work provision exists in South Africa.

## **4.2 THE RESEARCH DESIGN**

A developmental research design which included the use of formative or process evaluation was employed to examine the nature and effectiveness of school social work service delivery and then to develop a model for future service provision. Rosenthal and Rosnow (1984) describe the essence of formative research as providing feedback for model - building efforts. This feedback often takes place in the early stages of a programme so that change and improvement can ensue - hence the term "formative" evaluation (Selltiz, Wrightsman and Cook, 1981). School social work programmes in South Africa, being in an early stage of development, benefit from such a research strategy.



A developmental research design which was used in the present study, is defined by Thomas (1985a:468) as: "those methods by which interventional innovations and other aspects of social technology are analysed, designed, created, and evaluated".

Thomas (1985a: 487), distinguishes the developmental and utilization research model (DR and U model) from the social research and development model (R and D model). He points out that in the R and D model, the phase of research precedes development; in the DR and U on the other hand, the phase of **analysis** precedes the development phase. This emphasis on analysis is important to school social work research in South Africa since there are varied sources of information, produced as a result of separatist policies, that could be analysed before developing the "new social technology" (Thomas 1985a:484). Thomas' developmental model was thus employed in this study and terminology used is consistent with his model.

The model described by Thomas (1985a; 1985b) comprises 5 phases, each achieved through several operational steps as follows:

ANALYSIS PHASE consisting of the following 5 operational steps:

1. Problem analysis and identification
2. State-of-the-art review
3. Feasibility study
4. Selection of technological objectives
5. Selection of information sources.

DEVELOPMENTAL PHASE consisting of the following 3 operational steps:

6. Gathering and evaluation of information
7. Designing of technology
8. Technological realization.

EVALUATION PHASE consisting of the following 4 operational steps:

9. Trial use
10. Collection of evaluative data
11. Evaluation of social technology
12. Redesigning as necessary and repeating the steps in the development and evaluation phases.

DIFFUSION PHASE consisting of the following 2 operational steps:

13. Preparation of diffusion media
14. Dissemination of product information.

ADOPTION PHASE consisting of implementation by users.

Table 4.1 summarises Thomas' (1985a: 488) developmental research model as it was applied to the present study. In the present study, only the first 3 phases of analysis, development and evaluation were implemented.

Table 4.1: Application of the Developmental Research Model to Present Research Design.

PHASE	OPERATIONAL STEPS	INFORMATION SOURCES/SAMPLE
1:ANALYSIS	1.Problem Analysis and Identification	Survey of literature; policy makers in welfare and education; national councils of welfare; universities who completed questions 1-3 of Appendix A; & analyses of pupils' problems via Appendix B, section B.
	2.State-of-the-art Review	Educationists & school social workers who completed sections B, C, D and E-1 of Appendix B; the researcher's experience of the field; attendance at & delivery of papers at conferences
	3.Feasibility Study	Educationists and school social workers who completed section F of Appendix B and policy makers and universities who responded to question 5 of Appendix A.
	4&5.Selection of Technological Objectives and Information Sources	Literature in respect of a changed emphasis; findings in respect of surveys conducted through Appendixes A & B.
2:DEVELOPMENT	6-8. Gathering/ evaluating technological resources; designing & realizing technology	Data from educationists and school social workers who completed section E-2 of Appendix B and question 4 & 6 of Appendix A.
3:EVALUATION	9.Trial Use	Trial use of the model in pilot project using student school social workers
	10-12.Collection of evaluative data; evaluation of technology; redesigning as necessary	

4:DIFFUSION	13.Preparation of diffusion media	
	14.Dissemination of product Information.	
5:ADOPTION	15. Implementation by users.	

Thomas' developmental model was applied in the following manner to the present study :

### **The Analysis Phase**

#### **Step 1: Problem Analysis and Identification.**

The problematic human conditions were identified as social problems experienced at schools and inadequate or non existent school social work services. As outlined by Thomas (1985a: 490), several routes could be taken to determine problem conditions and identify gaps in services. Policies governing school social work practice nationwide were analysed first. This was achieved through the use of a questionnaire (Appendix A) which was directed to policy makers in the departments of education and welfare, political groups and universities. These groups were included in the sample since they were in a position to provide valuable information about possible future policies relating to school social work, even though all may not have been involved with service provision or policy determination at the time of the study. The choice of the sample was influenced by the peculiar circumstances experienced in the country - the threat of privatization of welfare and education and the entry into an era wherein democratic decision making is valued.

The problems experienced by pupils were investigated through the use of a questionnaire (Appendix B) directed at 253 educationists and school social work personnel. Section B, question 2 contains the list of problems that were rated on a five point scale.

## Step 2: State-of-the-Art Review.

This step of the study involved reviewing and evaluating existing school social work services, assessing literature on the subject, making firsthand observation of school social work and having discussions with persons involved in the delivery and receipt of school social work.

Section C, D and E-1 of Appendix B assessed the adequacy/inadequacy of school social work services in addressing the problems in these schools. Data were obtained from a sample of educationists and school social work personnel. A total of 253 school personnel and school social workers from the administrations of Representatives, Delegates and Assembly participated in this phase of the study. Details of sampling procedures are provided in section 4.3 of this chapter. Black schools in the homelands and those that were under the control of the Department of Education and Training (DET) had already indicated that there was no school social work being undertaken at their schools. Therefore, it was not possible to include these schools in this operational step of the study. It may be argued that these schools could have been used to obtain opinion regarding a future school social work service. However, the researcher noted that limited or no school social work experience does not provide the background to enable respondents to offer meaningful contributions on the **details** of a future service (Recommendation from the pilot study, 1992). Black schools are engaged in the struggle for equal educational opportunities, having been actively disadvantaged through a separatist policy. It is likely that they would need to obtain some semblance of appropriate education first before considering the value of support services such

as school social work. Having considered this a limitation to the study, a different questionnaire (Appendix A) was utilised to obtain data from respondents who were disadvantaged in this way in respect of limited/no experience of and/or exposure to school social work.

The researcher also attended several workshops and planning meetings in relation to the establishment or improvement of school social work services in the various administrations. These experiences widened the knowledge base of the researcher and enabled her to obtain detailed information on services offered. Experience and knowledge of contemporary school social work was also valuable in the development phase of the research.

### Step 3: Feasibility Study.

According to Thomas (1985a: 492), this step involves examining whether the technological effort is "technologically feasible". Data supplied from the sources of information in step two of the analysis phase provided the basis for such examination. Respondents used in this step of the study were requested to identify conditions that would promote the establishment of a relevant school social work service in the country. Questionnaire B, section F yielded data in this regard. The future model for school social work was then developed. Aspects such as the auspices of school social work, the number of schools to be served by a school social worker, the economic constraints of a falling economy and the nationwide call to redress historic imbalances were carefully considered in the formulation of a model for the future. It is conceded that the rapid changes taking place in the

country make economic, welfare and educational predictions difficult. This may be accepted as a limitation in the present study.

#### **Step 4: Selection of Technological Objectives.**

The technological objective of this study was identified as the development of a new thrust in school social work service provision. This resulted in the development of a new and relevant school social work model for future use. Such a development necessitated the creation of an infrastructure to contain the model. Other technological objectives were the establishment of school social work policies and education policies to adequately cater for the implementation of the model.

#### **Step 5: Selection of Information Sources.**

This step consisted of selecting the most appropriate information sources. As already noted, several sources of information were tapped in the present study. Literature, responses of education and welfare policy makers, universities and educationists and school social workers were all instrumental in shaping the model presented in the development phase of the study.

### **The Development Phase**

#### **Step 6: Gathering and Evaluation of Technological Resources.**

Using the information sources listed above, data were codified into suitable categories, consensus findings constructed and appropriate conclusions drawn regarding the selection of the "technology". Different categories were necessary in order that the developed model was adequately supported within a structure that

was in itself also researched using the developmental paradigm.

#### Step 7: Designing of Social Technology.

This step involved the conversion of "descriptive generalizations to action prescriptions" (Thomas 1985a:495). Several sources of information were utilised in this step, some of which were available for technological transfer through computer aided analyses. Tests of significance and correlation were used to ascertain the significance of findings and/or whether certain variables were associated (Kurtz, 1983). These were translated into "action prescriptions" in producing the future model.

#### Step 8: Technological Realization.

This step consisted of actually formulating the "new technology". Since this study aimed at producing a different service programme, it involved "mounting a pilot program" to lead to the eventual establishment of a new model for school social workers (Thomas 1985a: 496). A programme was produced for trial use which had different emphases to current school social work practice. Aspects of the service programme were taken from existing models of practice, but new functions were also added, thereby providing for a more relevant and effective model. Thus, it must be noted that the model that was realised was both "different" and "new" because it contained a different emphasis and several new functions to keep abreast of rapid societal changes in the country.



## The Evaluation Phase

This phase essentially embraces evaluative research with the end product being part of a **process** rather than being separate from the activities of the earlier phases. The ecological model, which was the devised "technology" was evaluated by using the experience of school social work students who employed the model in their fieldwork training.

### Steps 9 and 10: Trial Use and Collection of Evaluative Data.

The "product" was tested as a pilot project before recommendations could be made on its future deployment. Thomas (1985a:496) clearly outlines that trial use should begin with "pilot implementation". He explains that large-scale evaluation efforts are usually undertaken "later", when the technology/model is "demonstrated" before it can be adopted and accepted for use on a more extensive level. Therefore, at this early stage, the researcher used the experience of student school social workers who implemented the model at five different schools in three different geographical areas. Evaluative research procedures were employed to systematically "study ... the operation of ... interventive programs and their impact" (Hornick and Burrows, 1988:402). Programme testing is distinguished from variable testing in that the former is concerned with the test of a total product with the aim of determining whether exposure to the programme was accompanied by certain desired effects. In comparison, variable testing aims at singling out specific components of the programme as indices of some generalizable stimuli and testing the effectiveness of these variables (Suchman, 1967:77). The ecological model as a total product or programme was evaluated to determine

whether application of the model resulted in certain desired effects. Specific aspects of the model were also identified as indices of effectiveness, using guidelines suggested by Raymond (1985). However, it was not possible to obtain detailed information on the specific effects of the different variables in the model at this stage because the technology was implemented as a pilot project, and viewed as being in an early stage of development.

Using the guide which appears as Appendix C, objective and clear reporting with some measure of uniformity in style was requested. The guide served the purposes of the evaluative phase despite the claim that evaluative research which satisfies "even the most elementary tenets of the scientific method are few and far between" (Suchman, 1967:74). Evaluative procedures as suggested by Raymond (1985:432) were used during the trial run of the model to :

1. discover whether and how well objectives were fulfilled;
2. determine the reasons for specific successes and failures;
3. uncover the principles underlying a successful programme;
4. direct the course of experiments with techniques for increasing effectiveness;
5. lay the basis for further research or to determine the reasons for the relative success of alternative techniques;
6. re-define the means for attaining objectives and to re-define sub-goals in terms of the research findings.

The success of evaluative research depends on how specific, clear and measurable service objectives are. Therefore specific steps as outlined by Raymond (1985:435) were followed :

1. determination of service objectives - these objectives were broken down into their constituent parts;
2. establishment of outcome procedures - service objectives were assessed according to degree of attainment;
3. identification of independent variables - the question of why the outcome occurred, was addressed;
4. use of a design to measure the effect of interventive efforts - this was self report by students (refer to Appendix C);
5. assessment of the efficiency of the service in dealing with the problem.

Final year student school social workers were involved in the trial use of the ecological model at schools where they were undertaking their fieldwork training. Altogether five fourth year school social work students from the University of Durban-Westville were provided with the opportunity of participating in this phase of the study. This was viewed as a feasible proposition because :

1. The researcher was able to train and monitor students' use of the ecological model, through fieldwork instruction and lectures on the subject. As this had potential for introducing subjectivity in the use of the model and in reporting, monitoring was necessary as was the construction of the guide which incorporated suggestions by Raymond (1985).

2. A student school social worker had been involved at each school for a period that was long enough to warrant the co-operation of school personnel. This is viewed as serving the purposes of the study, as the use of a different model means being innovative and creative in a host setting (Pamperin, 1987). Creativity of the change agent may be easily stifled within a non supportive working climate.
3. All but one of the students had been in the Social Work 111 course and continued with their fieldwork training at the same school in the fourth year. This was helpful in launching the ecological model, as minimal time was spent on establishing relationships to facilitate the establishment of the model. The practice of the model at the fifth school was not expected to suffer any undue establishment problems because the school had enjoyed the services of a student school social worker in previous years.
4. By monitoring efforts of student school social workers, problem solving was facilitated. This was viewed as promoting the purposes of the study in that careful consideration was afforded to implementation difficulties which were expected to offer a comprehensive understanding of the feasibility of the model.
5. Suchman (1976:82) points out that evaluative research designs and techniques represent a "compromise between scientific requirements and administrative needs and resources". School social workers in the field were viewed as being tied by policy dictates that allowed use of predominantly traditional functions. Feedback from school social workers generally reflected much anxiety because of exceptionally high workloads and feelings

of helplessness with regard to using innovative work strategies. Student school social workers being free from such dictates, were thus able to implement the new ecological model without much restraint.

Students were required to practise the ecological model over the two years that they were placed at the school. In the student's first year, adjustment to the school and the student occurred. The student was at the school once in the week in the third year and thrice in the week in the fourth year.

#### Step 11: Evaluation of Social Technology.

The model was appraised using evaluative procedures discussed in the previous step. Since evaluation is considered as an ongoing process, it is necessary for the model that is recommended for future use, to undergo further evaluation and adjustment before being widely accepted. As school social work programmes develop with more sophisticated knowledge foundations and with better structural arrangements, developmental research is likely to play an even greater role in determining which features of school social work programmes are ineffective and which should be retained (Weatherley, 1982).

Steps 12 - 15 as suggested by Thomas (1985a) are:

Step 12: Redesigning and Repetition of steps 6-12.

Step 13: Preparation of Diffusion Media.

Step 14: Dissemination of Product Information.

Step 15: Implementation by Users.

Steps 12 to 15 were not undertaken rigorously, although school social workers and educationists have invited the researcher to disseminate findings regarding a relevant model at several workshops. Preliminary information has therefore been shared regarding use of the ecological model with the expectation that final results will become available once this study is completed. The eagerness with which results are being awaited by school social workers and policy makers in the education and welfare departments, is indicative of the tremendous need for a "new technology" to direct future practice in school social work.

### **4.3 THE SAMPLE**

As already outlined, there were many sources of information used to obtain data in this study in accordance with the developmental model as proposed by Thomas (1985a; 1985b). A summary of the various groups of respondents and the sources of information used during the different steps in the study, are reproduced in Table 4.1 for easier referencing. Only the phases implemented in the present study are tabled.

Table 4.1: Application of the Developmental Research Model to Present Research Design.

PHASE	OPERATIONAL STEPS	INFORMATION SOURCES/SAMPLE
1:ANALYSIS	1.Problem Analysis and Identification	Survey of literature; policy makers in welfare and education; national councils of welfare; training institutions who completed questions 1-3 of Appendix A; & analyses of pupils' problems via Appendix B, section B.
	2.State-of-the-art-Review	Educationists & school social workers who completed sections B, C, D and E-1 of Appendix B; the researcher's experience of the field; attendance at & delivery of papers at conferences
	3.Feasibility Study	Educationists who completed section F of Appendix B and universities and policy makers who responded to question 5 of Appendix A.
	4&5.Selection of Technological Objectives and Information Sources	Literature in respect of a changed emphasis; findings in respect of surveys conducted through Appendixes A & B.
2:DEVELOPMENT	6-8. Gathering/ evaluating technological resources; designing & realizing technology	Data from educationists and school social workers who completed section E-2 of Appendix B and question 4 & 6 of Appendix A.
3:EVALUATION	9.Trial Use	Trial use of the model in pilot project using student school social workers
	10-12.Collection of evaluative data; evaluation of technology; redesigning as necessary	



The first set of respondents who completed the questionnaire (Appendix A) were policy makers, training institution personnel and political groups. They reported on school social work service provision. The wide variations in the control of support services meant that educational and welfare authorities had to be involved in this aspect of the study. As expected, responses were varied, providing the researcher with knowledge to select samples for the remaining phases of the study.

It was found that schools under the control of the Department of Education and Training did not have any school social work offered at any of the schools under its jurisdiction. The Department reported that it was in the process of setting up a PIDA (Panel for Identification, Diagnosis and Assessment) system, aimed at assisting the child with social problems. The Panel consisted of a team of "teachers who address problems experienced by specific children" (Report received from the Transvaal Provincial Administration November, 1991). This system was seen as an "alternative for school social work". The services offered by this panel were spread over many schools and pupils and involved curative services only. Teachers were the care-givers in this system and when "deemed necessary", the child was referred to a social worker. Much as is the case with services provided by private welfare agencies, the services offered by PIDA were external to the school, offered by non social workers, and therefore are not considered as school social work services.



School administrators from the homelands reported that due to financial constraints, they could not afford any form of school social work and that the priority was to provide for the educational needs of children first. However, their vision as regards a school social work service was researched along with the views of other educationists, school social workers and policy makers when the development phase of the research was undertaken.

The House of Representatives administration reported that it offered school social work services to 44 primary schools, 3 schools of industries and 2 reform schools in the country. They employed 30 school social workers to serve these schools. They clarified that this number fell short of their ideal "due to a shortage of funds" and that "all possible means and ways to meet the need is being investigated on an ongoing basis". (Report from the House of Representatives administration, 20/12/91).

The House of Assembly administration reported that it offered a school social work service via the school psychological clinics in all provinces except for the Transvaal. The Transvaal administration employs socio-pedagogics who provide for the social needs of children referred by the psychological clinics. In the other provinces, school social workers are employed by the administration and based at these clinics. Details of the number of schools served via these clinics varied, depending on the geographical area. School social workers offered a service to more than 7 schools in one area, with one school social worker reporting that she was responsible for 29 schools and a hospital in the area.

Indian school childrens' social needs were met through a pilot school social work project in Natal where 5 schools were serviced at the time when completed questionnaires were received from the House of Delegates administration (Report received from the House of Delegates, 4/2/92).

This uneven distribution of school social work services in the country and in the different administrations made sample selection in respect of Appendix B complicated. It was necessary to have a representation of responses corresponding to the different levels of experience of and exposure to school social work. Therefore, the first step in the study was to analyse the extent, variation and policy determinants in respect of school social work services nationwide, via Appendix A.

The respondents who were selected to complete Appendix B were derived from schools where the service was implemented for a minimum period of at least two years. This was stipulated as a requirement since these respondents were expected to provide specific data regarding current and future school social work service provision. This criterion was necessary as school personnel who do not have much exposure to school social work, are generally ignorant of the specific role of the school social worker (Kasiram, 1987; Recommendations from the pilot study, 1992). Hence they would have been unable to offer either a **detailed** evaluation of current service delivery or recommend **specific** functions within a future practice model - both of which formed the bases of the study. It must be noted that despite this apparent shortcoming of respondents being restricted to those with

experience of school social work, the researcher strove to include as wide a representation of **general** opinion on which to base a future model as possible. Thus all departments, irrespective of race, were included in the analysis and development phases and their contributions heeded during the formulation of the "new technology". The latter sample group completed the questionnaire which appears as Appendix A in the report.

Comparative evaluation of existing services could not form the main thrust of the study since there were such obvious differences in service provision so as to render comparisons a farce. The main aim of the research had to provide for a post apartheid South Africa where it is envisaged that equal opportunity would provide the basis for service provision. Therefore, model development on which future school social work services could be based, formed the main thrust of the study. In considering the particular aims of this study, black educationists and school social workers could not be represented in the sample that analysed the details regarding current school social work because of not having any experience of school social work or school social workers at their schools. This was unfortunate because blacks form the majority in the country and their representation was considered essential to the model's successful adoption. Therefore, the researcher ensured that both the analysis and development phases of the study included investigation of all black educational bodies who reported on the exact nature of "school social work" at black schools and on a model of and vision for school social work. Although information obtained at this juncture was not too detailed, it was incorporated into the study in order that the future shape of school social work

services could be determined by as representative a number of significant participants as possible.

With these limitations in mind, the researcher employed stratified sampling procedures to ensure a wide representation of respondents from different strata. Firstly, the sample was required to represent as many population groups as possible in order that findings could be useful to all population groups. To this end, the sample was chosen from primary and secondary schools under the auspices of the House of Delegates, the House of Assembly and the House of Representatives. Schools under the control of the House of Delegates, where student school social workers undertook fieldwork practica, were also included in the quota for the House of Delegates' schools as they fulfilled the criteria of having school social work for a minimum of two years and because the administration's pilot scheme constituted too small a number of schools from which to derive an adequate sample.

The researcher chose 15 schools each from the 3 administrations, having considered the number of schools that were served by school social workers and student school social workers, according to the responses from these administrations. This number accommodated those administrations where limited school social work was practised. A further stratum which needed consideration was the province in which school social work was operant, since differences in the nature and severity of problems were expected in different provinces and geographical areas. Thus, the sample was chosen to ensure adequate

representation of the various provinces. Other variables that influenced results of the study were the wide discrepancies in the policies governing practice, differing problems in the various schools and differing practices regarding control and number of schools served by each social worker. These could be cited as limitations in a study that aimed at comparative analyses. However, in the present study, the aim was not to compare service delivery but to develop and refine a model for school social work nationwide. These different experiences served to enhance the development of a relevant school social work model during the analysis phase of the study.

From each school, 7 respondents were selected: 2 management personnel, 2 personnel involved with guidance, 2 teachers and the school social worker. Thus 45 schools multiplied by 7 respondents each gives a sample of 315 respondents. After analysing the returns, it was found that 253 respondents participated in this aspect of the study which involved completing the questionnaire which appears as Appendix B. The non- returns were attributed to insufficient commitment to the aims of the study or to possible practical problems in the collection of all responses. It must be noted that the questionnaire catered for both the analysis and development phases of the study. Analysis of problems experienced at the schools in the study and of current school social work practice was achieved through sections B and E-1 of Appendix B. For the development of a future model, data were used from section E-2 and F of the questionnaire. The principal was requested to select the 7 respondents with the help of the school social worker. The principal was included to ensure that tasks delegated to staff members would



be completed. Principals were encouraged to consult with school social workers to identify respondents as many schools experienced services where the visibility of the school social worker was poor and where minimal service was provided. Together, both the school social worker and the principal identified those personnel who had some experience of school social work. The latter was a criterion that was found to be essential for respondents to carefully evaluate school social work services and recommend changes for a future model. A possible limitation of the study was that the principal's authority may have introduced an element of intimidation which could have affected the results of the study. However, it is anticipated that since anonymity and confidentiality were requested in each covering letter of the questionnaire and discussed with principals and school social workers, it is expected that this limitation was minimally experienced.

The sample of schools in the evaluation phase of the study consisted of 5 schools where student school social workers undertook their fieldwork practica. The schools were from three main geographical areas viz. Chatsworth, Tongaat and Phoenix all of which are in the Durban metropolitan area. It is important to note that each school is in racial terms an "open school" which was initially established for Indian pupils but which now accepts all pupils irrespective of race. Unlike the sample from phase one and two of the study, this sample was restricted in terms of availability of practitioners and the need to train them in and monitor use of the new technology. Thomas (1985a:496) explains that pilot testing of the new technology precedes demonstration of the product which is then followed by large

scale field testing in further evaluative studies. In accordance with this perspective, pilot testing of the ecological model involved a small sample of schools and practitioners.

#### **4.4 THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS**

The research instruments are given in Appendixes A, B and C. Each instrument was designed to cater for the level of experience of and exposure to school social work of respondents. Thus Appendix A is less complex than B, the latter being meant for respondents with limited or no experience of school social work. Both these questionnaires yielded data for the analyses and the developmental phases of the study. This was important since the respondents used in both phases were considered as having valuable information pertaining to an analysis of the problem conditions and the development of the new technology.

The questionnaire which appears in Appendix B contains several category partition scales to assess the severity of problems at schools, to identify current levels of service provision and to establish the importance of functions considered essential to a future model. These scales do not yield data on exact frequencies of the categories being measured since detailed data were impossible to obtain considering that records of pupils' problems are not kept and that the school social work service was inadequately established at most schools. Hudson (1985:199) describes this limitation aptly: "In the social sciences, it is extremely difficult to assign values for a single item" to adequately measure the occurrence of that

variable, especially at the level of exploratory research. Use of these scales introduced the possibility of different interpretations of the different categories, thereby possibly affecting the validity of results. Under the circumstances already described, this was considered unavoidable. Even an operational definition to describe each category would have made little difference to improving the chance of uniform interpretation, as this would have necessitated the employment of frequency categories. As already outlined, specific data on the variables being measured were unobtainable because the information on problems and their resolution was not recorded systematically. Respondents were required to make intelligent estimations and offer opinions in this regard. This was considered as acceptable because the research design was formative and because exploration of the field is first needed before more rigorous research designs may be successfully employed.

The report which appears in Appendix C was devised with the assistance of guidelines suggested by Raymond (1985) and was successfully employed by school social work students. Essentially, these students were required to employ the ecological model and then evaluate where and why implementation was possible. Student school social workers served each school for a period of two years. In this time, they served the school once per week in their third year of study and thrice per week in their final year of study. Therefore, they were able to employ the ecological model for a relatively short period of time. This may be cited as a limitation in the study and it is expected that when the model is evaluated in future, more extensive use would allow for the application of more sophisticated



evaluative procedures. It must be noted that the focus of the ecological model is different from the focus of existing models of practice. Historically and at present the emphasis in school social work continues to be on traditional functions, so that policy changes and demonstration of the model will be necessary before qualified school social workers will be prepared to utilise a different model with a changed focus. Students were chosen as they could evaluate the effectiveness of the model first and were not governed by policies that restricted a wider focus of attention at schools. An infrastructure to house the new technology needs to be developed alongside the new technology. In this regard policy change, pertaining especially to the number of schools to be served by a school social worker and the auspices of school social work, would be necessary before evaluating the model in the field.

#### **4.5 THE PILOT STUDY**

The research instruments were developed by the researcher after consulting literature, incorporating suitable questions from similar overseas studies and consulting persons involved in school social work administration, supervision and service delivery. A pilot study in respect of the questionnaire which appears in Appendix B in the report, was conducted for the following reasons:

- to ensure that the language used was clearly understood;
- to gauge the appropriateness of the length of the questionnaire;
- to test reactions to the different questions.

The researcher used a school where a school social work student had been placed for her fieldwork practicum. The school satisfied the criteria that the researcher

used regarding sample selection.

## **CHANGES AS A RESULT OF CONDUCTING THE PILOT STUDY**

There were no changes made to the questionnaire as a result of the pilot study. However the principal of the school emphasised that due to the specific nature of the questions, respondents had to be carefully chosen. They needed to have had the opportunity of working with, of being referred to, or of being consulted by the school social worker. Only then could they respond to the questions with understanding. This was carefully noted as it was evident by the number of "uncertain" responses, that the value of the study could be seriously undermined if this factor was not controlled. The researcher therefore requested principals and school social workers to take cognisance of this recommendation when selecting the respondents to be used in the study.

### **4.6 TIMING**

The fieldwork for the study was undertaken during 1991 and 1992. The research report was compiled in 1992 and 1993.

### **4.7 DATA ANALYSIS AND ORGANIZATION**

Data from each of the phases of the study were analysed either manually where the sample size was small or with the assistance of a computer programme where the size was large. Simple frequencies were mainly used, although a test

measuring correlation (Kendall Tau B test), was employed when correlations amongst different sample groups contributed significantly to the results in the study. The chi square, measuring significant difference in responses of the different sample groups, was also employed when the cell frequency allowed for the use of this test. Tables were constructed to tabulate these statistics to facilitate clarity in presentation. Where necessary, results were further explained after the tabulations.

The remainder of the report follows the sequence of the developmental paradigm as outlined by Thomas (1985a; 1985b). Results from the analysis phase are first presented, followed by results in relation to the development and then the evaluation phases of the study.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK AND THE EVALUATION OF A FEASIBLE MODEL FOR FUTURE PRACTICE**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, findings from the survey (Appendix A) with universities and welfare or education policy makers as well as with educationists and school social workers (Appendix B) are presented. Following the developmental model as discussed in chapter four, findings in respect of the analysis phase are first presented in section one, followed by findings in respect of the developmental phase in section two and the evaluation phase in section three. An excerpt from Table 4.1 (Chapter four) is reproduced here, in order to clarify those aspects of Thomas' (1985a:488) model which are dealt with in this chapter. The various sources of information are also presented as are the samples used in respect of the two Appendices (A and B).

Table 4.1: Application of the Developmental Research Model to Present Research Design.

PHASE	OPERATIONAL STEPS	INFORMATION SOURCES/SAMPLE
1:ANALYSIS	1.Problem Analysis and Identification	Survey of literature; policy makers in welfare and education; national councils of welfare; universities who completed questions 1-3 of Appendix A; & analyses of pupils' problems via Appendix B, section B.
	2.State-of-the-art Review	Educationists & school social workers who completed sections B, C, D and E-1 of Appendix B; the researcher's experience of the field; attendance at & delivery of papers at conferences
	3.Feasibility Study	Educationists and school social workers who completed section F of Appendix B and universities and policy makers who responded to question 5 of Appendix A.
	4&5.Selection of Technological Objectives and Information Sources	Literature in respect of a changed emphasis; findings in respect of surveys conducted through Appendixes A & B.
2:DEVELOPMENT	6-8. Gathering/ evaluating technological resources; designing & realizing technology	Data from educationists and school social workers who completed section E-2 of Appendix B and question 4 & 6 of Appendix A.
3:EVALUATION	9.Trial Use	Trial use of the model in pilot project using student school social workers
	10.Collection of Evaluative Data	

In analysing the results, specific terms were used to describe problems at schools and to assess the current and future performance of school social work functions. These require an operational definition. The meanings of the various terms are used consistently with the Oxford dictionary meanings attributed to them as follows:

**Never** - at no time; on no occasion.

**Seldom** - rarely.

**Occasionally** - happening irregularly as occasion presents itself.

**Frequently** - numerous; common. In describing specific problems such as drug taking, this term was interpreted as "occurring twice per week".

**Very Frequently** - In describing specific problems, this term was interpreted as "occurring more than twice per week".

**Important** - carrying with it great consequence; consequential.

Therefore, "**unimportant**" meant not carrying any consequence. The term "**very important**" on the continuum describing the degree of importance, extended beyond an item being considered as having consequence to having very significant consequence. The term "**somewhat important**" along the same continuum was used to indicate that the item had an appreciable quantity of importance.

These operational definitions do not provide for adequate quantitative measurements of differences between the terms, this being cited as a limitation in chapter 4.

## **5.2 SAMPLE DETAILS OF RESPONDENTS WHO COMPLETED APPENDIX A**

The researcher wrote to training institutions, national welfare councils, education departments and key political players in the country on the nature and scope of the study. A brief questionnaire was enclosed for completion in order that there be a uniform response (see Appendix A).

Political groups that were approached were: the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), the African National Congress (ANC), the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB), the Natal Indian Congress (NIC) and the South African Communist Party (SACP). Each of these groups was approached telephonically to request participation in the study, followed by a mailed questionnaire. It is interesting to note that not one of these groups returned the questionnaire. The researcher believes that these groups are so preoccupied with grave social, economic and political concerns, that they have not made time for academic research. This may be counter productive since research can provide substantiating evidence towards the resolution of many issues and towards keeping abreast of an ever changing context (Hare, 1988).

Details relating to respondents from training institutions, national welfare councils and education departments are indicated in Table 5.1.

**TABLE 5.1: SAMPLE DETAILS OF RESPONDENTS WHO COMPLETED  
APPENDIX A**

INSTITUTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
University	12	48
Welfare	9	36
Education	3	12
Uncertain	1	4
TOTAL	25	100

Twenty five respondents offered information in respect of Appendix A. Although this is a small number, it must be noted that twelve universities and twelve welfare/education councils control, render services and/or train a sizeable population. Institutions that were not involved in school social work, appear not to have forwarded any response despite questions also being related to the future shape of the service. This suggests that there are relatively few interested parties concerned with the plight of school social work development in the country.



### **5.3 SAMPLE DETAILS IN RESPECT OF RESPONDENTS WHO COMPLETED APPENDIX B**

This section of the study involved the distribution of questionnaires to 253 educationists and school social workers in the Departments of Education in the Houses of Assembly, Representatives and Delegates in South Africa. Chapter four contains the rationale and justification for sample selection in this phase of the study.

These respondents were required to evaluate school social work services at their schools, and efforts regarding the initiation of the service at the school and then to offer opinions regarding a suitable future model for South Africa. Some of these aspects are covered in Appendix A, with the difference being that respondents who completed Appendix A had limited or no experience of school social work.

#### **Area and Control**

The researcher set out to obtain a representative sample of educationists and school social workers who were experiencing school social work services, countrywide. However, this was no easy task since school social work is unequally distributed across the country. Even within the same Department, it is unequal in terms of the extent of the service in the different provinces in the country. The researcher aimed at obtaining a proportional representation of all three Education Departments in all the provinces in which the service was being implemented. Responses from the Department of Education and Training indicated that no

social work was provided at any school within this department's control. Instead, a system referred to as the PIDA system (Panel for the Identification, Diagnosis and Assessment), consisting of a team of teachers, was being set up to address the social needs of children. Thus, an uneven distribution by province and Education Department exists in the final sample.

In the Cape Province, the sample size was N=84 or 33.2% with both the Houses of Representatives and Assembly offering school social work in this region. At the time when responses were sought regarding school social work service provision, the House of Representatives served 35 schools and the House of Assembly, 12 in the area (Reports from the House of Representatives and Assembly, 1992).

In the Transvaal, the sample was small (27 or 10.7%) because only the House of Representatives offered the service to 4 schools in this region.

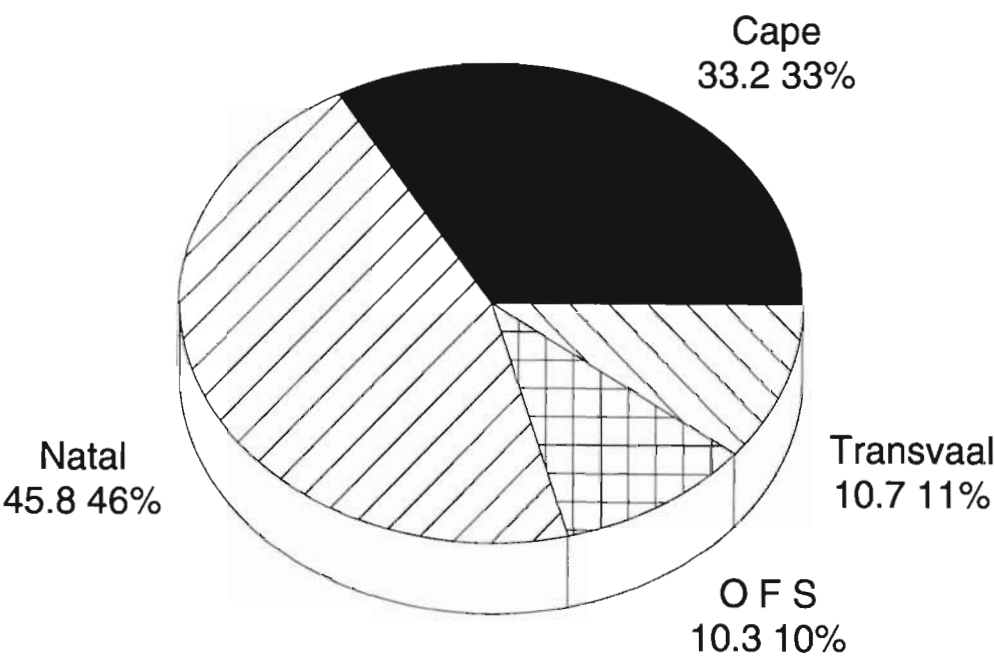
In the Orange Free State, the sample was the smallest (26 or 10.3%) because of the limited extent of the service and poor returns of the questionnaire - both the Houses of Representatives and Assembly offered a service in this region with the former offering services to only 2 schools in the province and the latter offering a service to schools via 5 school psychological clinics that served the whole province.

In Natal, the sample size was the biggest (116 or 45.8%) because of good returns of the questionnaire. Schools under the auspices of the Houses of Delegates and Assembly were used from Natal. The House of Representatives' schools were not

included because only 2 schools were involved with the service as from mid 1991. These two schools were not included because of their limited exposure to the service at the time when the fieldwork for the study was undertaken. It must be noted that the Natal sample almost constituted the population currently receiving/providing school social work services except for three schools that were not included because of the service being offered for less than two years or because the school was a specialized institution. A graphic representation of the sample distribution is presented in figure 1, overleaf.

# Figure 1

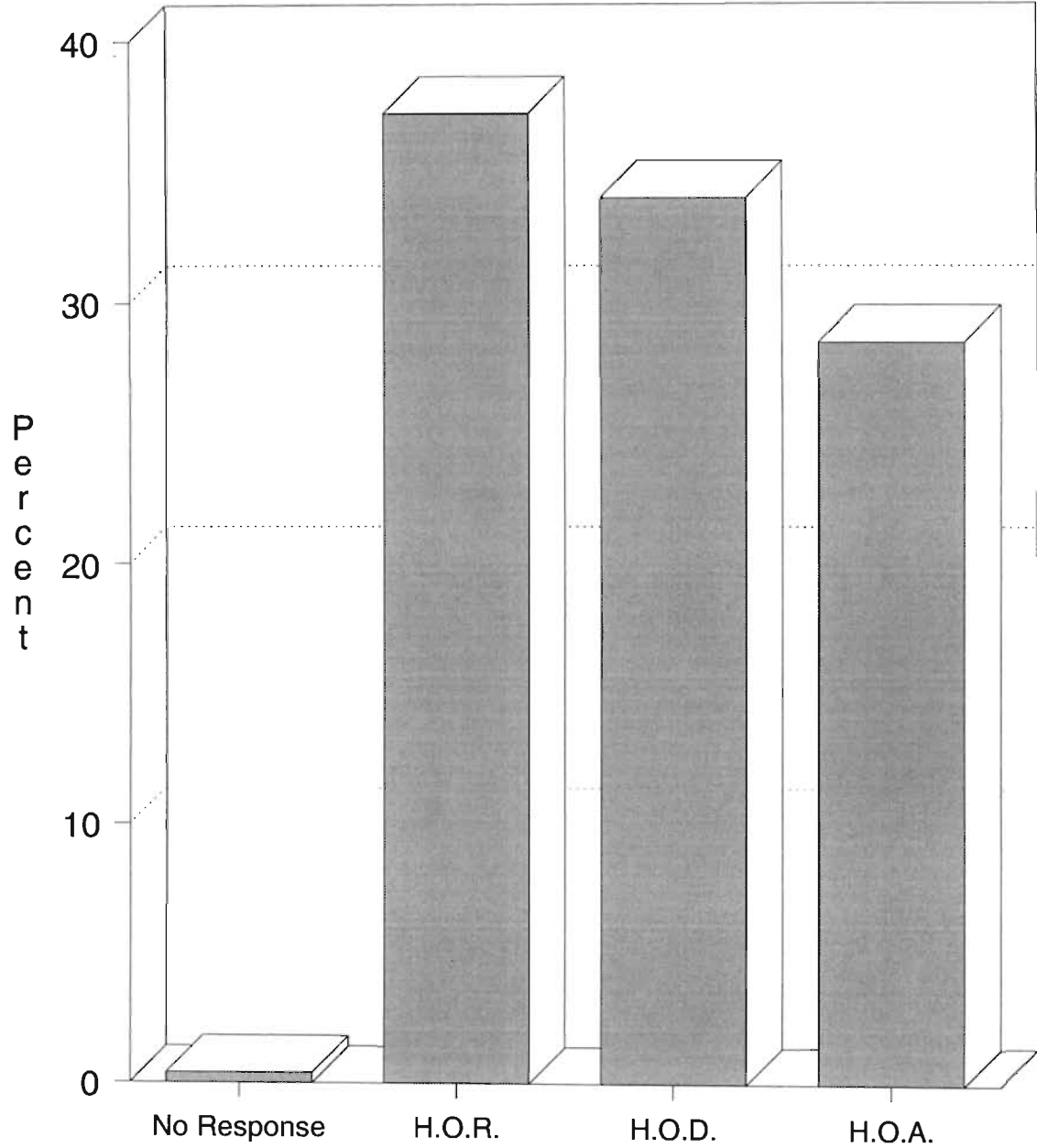
## Provision of School Social Work in SA



Sample Distribution by Province

According to the distribution by Education Department, the sample is somewhat more even with 94 respondents (37.2%) from the House of Representatives, 86 respondents (34%) from the House of Delegates and 72 respondents (28.5%) from the House of Assembly (see graphic presentation of the sample details in figure 2, overleaf).

Figure 2  
Sample distribution by Controlling Body



The researcher aimed at obtaining a representation of respondents from at least 10 schools each from the Education Departments used in this phase of the study. This distribution was more even, allowing the researcher to draw conclusions based on policies that regulate practice in these departments. These policies are determined by the different Education Departments rather than by the provinces although some variations of policy interpretation are likely to occur in the different provinces.

### **Respondent Designation**

Distribution of the sample according to status was varied, with teachers forming the largest group (44.3%) of the sample. This is in keeping with the proportion of respondents that is expected to experience school social work. Table 5.2 contains a more detailed analysis of sample distribution by occupational status.

**TABLE 5.2: OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF SAMPLE**

<b>OCCUPATIONAL STATUS</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>No Response</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1.6</b>
<b>Student Social Worker</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4.3</b>
<b>Social Worker</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>11.5</b>
<b>Principal</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>8.3</b>
<b>Deputy Principal</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5.1</b>
<b>Head of Department</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>18.6</b>
<b>Guidance Counsellor</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>6.3</b>
<b>Teacher</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>44.3</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>100</b>

**Number of Years of Experience of School Social Work**

In terms of the number of years of exposure to school social work services, the sample is again varied. The highest response (N=143 or 56.6% of the sample) came from the 1-6 years category, clearly indicating that school social work is a new and developing service. This is an important aspect that must be considered when conclusions are drawn regarding the quality of services in the analysis of current service delivery and recommendations for the future. Only a few schools (N=43 or



17% of the sample) had a service that exceeded seven years and these were found to come from schools under the control of the House of Representatives.

### **Number of Schools Served by School Social Worker**

Responses to the number of schools the school social worker served varied markedly, revealing wide differences in the implementation of the service. The majority (62.1% or 157 responses) fell within the category of "two or more schools in the area". Some of these respondents qualified the number of schools they served as exceeding 20. These respondents were found to come from social workers in the employ of the House of Assembly who operate from school psychological clinics that serve a varying number of schools (Report from the House of Assembly, 1992). Also in this category of serving "two or more schools in the area", were school social workers from the House of Representatives serving one or two schools in a specific geographical area.

Only 40 (15.8%) respondents indicated that the social worker served one school which was either a primary or secondary school. Nine respondents (3.6%) indicated that their school social worker served one secondary school and the feeder primary school.

Nine respondents offered responses in the "other" category of the same question. Amongst these were: a single social worker serving 29 schools; 30 schools; 16 primary schools, 6 secondary schools and 2 special schools; and 29 primary schools and the hospital in the area. When some of these social workers returned the

questionnaires to the researcher, they expressed appreciation that an attempt was being made to expose their plight. Many expressed surprise that respondents in their schools did not have sufficient knowledge about their work. The South African experience of school social work is markedly different to the experience in countries such as Britain and America where one social worker serves a limited number of schools and where the service enjoys high visibility (Rocher, 1983). School social work cannot hope to have any therapeutic or preventive value if it is too diluted.

### **Provision of School Social Work Services**

The number of respondents who indicated that a school social work service was provided by student school social workers was 59 as against 186 indicating that they were served by the school social worker. Eight (8) respondents did not answer the question. These statistics suggest that training institutions accept school social work services and place their students at schools for fieldwork practice.

Comparing the number of school social workers and students serving schools, there is clearly some disproportion. Although there are three times more school social workers than students, this figure reflects the limited number of schools being served by qualified school social workers. The paucity of attention and personpower afforded by welfare and educational authorities to employing school social workers, is apparent.

These details describing various aspects of the samples used in the study, provide a backdrop against which to assess responses which follow.

## **SECTION ONE: THE ANALYSIS PHASE**

This phase of the study provided detailed information to facilitate the development of a future model for school social work practitioners. It covers several operational steps according to Thomas' (1985a:488) developmental design.

### **PROBLEM ANALYSIS AND IDENTIFICATION**

The first step of problem analysis was directed at various aspects of school social work practice and achieved through a survey of published and unpublished literature and from different sections of Appendixes A (questions 1-3) and B (section B, question 2).

#### **Policies Governing School Social Work**

Policies that govern school social work are varied. As can be noted from Table 4.1, Appendix A was used to obtain information in this regard. Local literature in the form of reports obtained from education and welfare departments also yielded information on policies governing practice. Some of these policies have already been outlined in chapter four to provide the rationale for sample selection. These policies concerned the control of school social work and the number of schools served by a school social worker. School social work in the House of Assembly is controlled by the department of education from school psychological clinics that serve different geographical areas (Report from the House of Assembly: Natal, Cape, Transvaal and Orange Free State Education Departments, 1992). In the House of Representatives, there is teamwork between the departments of

education and welfare who have regular "evaluative or monitoring meetings for the development and promotion of school social work services nationally" (Theron, 1991:9). Thus, although school social workers are employed by the welfare section, "control" is not restricted to welfare alone. School social workers from this administration serve at least two schools from the same geographical area. In the House of Delegates, at the time when investigations were being conducted, the service was offered as a pilot project at 5 schools. Three school social workers participated in the project, with the ratio of school social worker to pupil being approximately 1:1300 (Report from the House of Delegates, 1992). Although the service was not expected to expand, due to a "cabinet policy decision", the pilot project was expected to be "consolidated" and "approaches and modus operandi refined into a feasible and practical guide" for future practice (Report from the House of Delegates, 1992:1). Contact with education and welfare departments in this administration has revealed that the pilot project was withdrawn in the latter part of 1992 as part of a rationalisation effort to cut costs.

Of the respondents who completed Appendix A, 22 indicated that they had no policy and only 2 had a clear policy in relation to school social work. One respondent was unsure of whether or not the organization he/she represented, had any school social work policy. These results suggest that school social work does not appear to feature as a field requiring special policies to guide future decision making on its scope and practice. This conclusion needs to be made against the consideration that training institutions and welfare councils are not generally involved in policy formulation although they may be instrumental in stimulating

change or re-formulation of dysfunctional policies. The purpose of a policy is generally accepted as being that of informing and guiding practice. According to Anderson (1991), a policy also guides future decision making and creates mechanisms to achieve set goals. The two universities that indicated that they had a policy in relation to school social work reported that they were involved in teaching school social work and promoting the field as having value. This was evidenced through the placement of student school social workers at schools, the teaching of the subject to cover "all perspectives" and in general comments such as "supporting the importance" of and offering "respectful recognition" to school social work. The interpretation of "policy" by these two universities appears to be broad, covering the aspect of policy creating mechanisms to achieve set goals.

At the second annual general meeting of the South African Democratic Teachers' Union, the guest speaker, T. Mhlomi, appealed for active participation of all players and for the democratisation of education (SADTU, Second AGM Report, 17/6/93). The call to take initiatives in redressing imbalances in education through policy reformulation or creating new educational policies, was clearly outlined.

### **The Importance of School Social Work**

As regards school social work being viewed as essential, 24 out of the 25 respondents who completed Appendix A indicated that they believed in its relevance and importance. Some of the statements made in support of their responses were :



"school social work focuses on the psycho-social aspects of the pupil: thus it complements what the educational aspect may not cover as it is often curriculum oriented"

"...services are long overdue"

"...to render preventative services and to identify problems at an early stage"

"...early identification and preventive education...(for) problems in later life"

"children bring their total being to school...negative experiences tend to ...prevent the child from making maximum use of school"

"...need to reinforce the culture of learning in certain deprived areas"

These comments reflect the essential worth of early identification, prevention and changing a culture that de-emphasises education.

### **Analysis of Pupils' Problems**

Respondents who completed Appendix B were required to identify problems that occurred at the schools used in the study. The choice of these problems was based on literature pertaining to commonly experienced problems at schools, the researcher's experience of school social work and on discussions with experts in the field.

The sample consisted of 161 primary schools and 84 secondary schools. Eight respondents did not indicate the category of school they served. Frequency tables are used to describe the occurrence of problems, with figures for both primary and secondary schools provided so as to indicate differences or similarities between the

two school groups.

**Underachievement** had the majority of responses (N=118 or 46.6%) in the "frequently" category. This incidence is high when compared with other responses in the same category. Table 5.3 contains the details of responses in relation to underachievement.

**TABLE 5.3: PROBLEM OCCURRENCE: UNDERACHIEVEMENT**

RESPONSE	TOTAL FREQUENCY	PRIMARY SCHOOL	SECONDARY SCHOOL	TOTAL PERC.
No Response	11	7	2	4.3
Never	2	2	0	.8
Seldom	14	14	0	5.5
Occasionally	65	42	21	25.7
Frequently	118	73	42	46.6
Very Frequently	43	23	19	17
TOTAL	253	161	84	100

These findings are commensurate with the literature presented in chapter three of this study where underachievement is cited as a symptom of various clusters

of problems of disadvantaged communities. Underachievement is associated with racial disadvantage, vandalism and violence, substance abuse and truancy (Friedman, 1992; South African Institute of Race Relations, 1990; Wodarski and Hedrick, 1987).

**Truancy** as a problem had 83 responses in the "occasionally" category. Further details of the distribution of responses appear in Table 5.4.

**TABLE 5.4: PROBLEM OCCURRENCE: TRUANCY**

RESPONSE	TOTAL FREQUENCY	PRIMARY SCHOOL	SECONDARY SCHOOL	TOTAL PERC.
No Response	6	3	0	2.4
Never	13	13	0	5.1
Seldom	55	39	13	21.7
Occasionally	83	48	33	32.8
Frequently	63	39	24	24.9
Very Frequently	33	19	14	13
TOTAL	253	161	84	100

The combined frequency if the "frequently" and "very frequently" categories are



collapsed is 96, indicating the extent of truancy as a problem in South African schools. Truancy and dropping out of school are growing problems in South Africa. Results in respect of the occurrence of truancy compare favourably with the findings of the South African Institute of Race Relations (1990) where 60% of South African school leavers and truants were in the primary school phase of their education.

These results reflect the current state of schooling and incentive for education amongst children, countrywide. According to Cnaan and Stelter (1989), truancy is also a feature of societies that are considered economically and politically sound. Therefore, truancy may not be a passing phenomenon of a changing South Africa. Implications for the development of preventive and therapeutic strategies in relation to this problem area are evident.

**Dropping out** of school is demarcated from truancy in the questionnaire since truancy does not necessarily culminate in dropping out of school. In the present study, it was found that 99 or 39.1% of the sample indicated that dropping out occurred "occasionally". Details of the distribution of frequencies in relation to dropping out appear in Table 5.5.

**TABLE 5.5: PROBLEM OCCURRENCE: DROPPING OUT**

<b>RESPONSE</b>	<b>TOTAL FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PRIMARY SCHOOL</b>	<b>SECONDARY SCHOOL</b>	<b>TOTAL PERC.</b>
<b>No Response</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2.8</b>
<b>Never</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11.9</b>
<b>Seldom</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>26.5</b>
<b>Occasionally</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>39.1</b>
<b>Frequently</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>15.4</b>
<b>Very Frequently</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4.3</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>100</b>

Comparing the categories in which most responses fell for both truancy and dropping out, it would appear that both problems assumed similar trends. Truancy and dropping out of school are problems which are closely associated with increases in immorality, teenage pregnancies, substance abuse and interracial tensions (Cnaan and Steltzer, 1989; Levine, 1984;). Since racial conflicts have escalated in South Africa alongside increases in crime rates (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1993:27,33), implications for the prevention of truancy and dropping out become apparent.

One hundred and five respondents indicated that **poor concentration** occurred "frequently". Poor concentration amongst pupils manifests in inattentiveness to lessons, inability to participate in classroom discussions and non verbal indications of loss of interest in the task at hand. Further details of the distribution of responses for poor concentration appear in Table 5.6.

**TABLE 5.6: PROBLEM OCCURRENCE: POOR CONCENTRATION**

RESPONSE	TOTAL FREQUENCY	PRIMARY SCHOOL	SECONDARY SCHOOL	TOTAL PERC.
No Response	8	6	0	3.2
Never	1	1	0	.4
Seldom	14	8	5	5.5
Occasionally	71	39	30	28.1
Frequently	105	65	38	41.5
Very Frequently	54	42	11	21.3
TOTAL	253	161	84	100

Poor concentration and underachievement could be related, with results in the present study reflecting similar tendencies viz. both had most of the responses fall in the "frequently" categories.

111 or 43.9% of the sample indicated that **ill health** occurred "occasionally". A more comprehensive frequency distribution of ill health is contained in Table 5.7.

**TABLE 5.7: PROBLEM OCCURRENCE: ILL HEALTH**

RESPONSE	TOTAL FREQUENCY	PRIMARY SCHOOL	SECONDARY SCHOOL	TOTAL PERC.
No Response	5	3	0	2.0
Never	7	3	2	2.8
Seldom	60	31	26	23.7
Occasionally	111	73	37	43.9
Frequently	62	44	18	24.5
Very Frequently	8	7	1	3.2
TOTAL	253	161	84	100

Considering the responses in all the categories, ill health appears to occur relatively frequently at schools, indicating that there is a paucity of health care services in South Africa. This finding is commensurate with the recommendation by Khosa (1991) for the mobilization of efforts to eradicate poverty and the health and social problems associated with it.

**Physical disability** did not feature as a major problem in the schools used in the study. Table 5.8 contains details of the distribution of responses in this category.

**TABLE 5.8: PROBLEM OCCURRENCE: PHYSICAL DISABILITY**

RESPONSE	TOTAL FREQUENCY	PRIMARY SCHOOL	SECONDARY SCHOOL	TOTAL PERC.
No Response	5	3	0	2
Never	38	24	13	15
Seldom	146	94	47	57.7
Occasionally	55	34	21	21.7
Frequently	6	4	2	2.4
Very Frequently	3	2	1	1.2
TOTAL	253	161	84	100

Only 9 respondents indicated that physical disability occurred "frequently" or "very frequently". Correspondingly, most responses fell in the "seldom" category (N=146).

This finding is consistent with frequencies obtained in the cross tabulation of the primary school sample with the secondary school sample. Both sample groups had most of their responses (N=94 for the primary school sample and N=47 for the secondary school sample) in the "seldom" category.

**Dishonesty** had a response frequency of N=111 in the "occasionally" category. Examples of dishonesty amongst pupils are petty thieving and cheating during tests and examinations.

**TABLE 5.9: PROBLEM OCCURRENCE: DISHONESTY**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PRIMARY SCHOOL	SECONDARY SCHOOL	TOTAL PERC.
No Response	9	6	0	3.6
Seldom	49	32	16	19.4
Occasionally	111	70	39	43.9
Frequently	58	34	22	22.9
Very Frequently	26	19	7	10.3
TOTAL	253	161	84	100

The distribution of responses (refer to Table 5.9) over the different categories, suggests that dishonesty is a problem occurring in the schools used in the study. Farnum and Powell (1986) refer to dishonesty as a reaction to a stressful situation, thereby suggesting that dishonesty is commonplace because of the varieties of situations which produce stress. In keeping with this, dishonesty featured as a relatively extensive problem with only 19.4% of the sample indicating that dishonesty occurred "seldom".

In comparing primary and secondary school responses in relation to dishonesty, a large cell frequency allowed for the use of the chi square statistic which was calculated as 4.47 at the 95% level of significance. This indicated that there was no significant difference between the responses of primary and secondary schools at 4 degrees freedom in relation to dishonesty. It would appear from this statistical result that dishonesty as a problem is age indiscriminate.

**Smoking** as a problem had most of the responses fall in the "occasionally" category (N=74 or 29.2%). Further details of the distribution of the responses are contained in Table 5.10.

**TABLE 5.10: PROBLEM OCCURRENCE: SMOKING**

RESPONSE	TOTAL FREQUENCY	PRIMARY SCHOOL	SECONDARY SCHOOL	TOTAL PERC.
No Response	5	3	0	2
Never	22	21	1	8.7
Seldom	66	55	10	26.1
Occasionally	74	51	18	29.2
Frequently	52	23	29	20.6
Very Frequently	34	8	26	13.4
TOTAL	253	161	84	100

Comparing responses in primary and secondary schools, the most number of responses occurred in the "seldom" category for primary schools (N=55) and in the "frequently" category for secondary schools (N=29). The chi square statistic yielded a value of 60.6 at the 95% level of significance at 5 degrees freedom. Interpretation of the value suggested significant differences in the responses of the two sample groups. It is reassuring to note that smoking may not be widespread in primary schools, given the vulnerability of youth to almost any precipitating circumstance (Constable, 1988).



The most number of responses for **drug taking** occurred in the "never" category followed by the "seldom" category (N=85 and N=83 respectively). Table 5.11 contains the complete distribution of responses for drug taking.

**TABLE 5.11: PROBLEM OCCURRENCE: DRUG TAKING**

RESPONSE	TOTAL FREQUENCY	PRIMARY SCHOOL	SECONDARY SCHOOL	TOTAL PERC.
No Response	7	5	0	2.8
Never	85	69	14	33.6
Seldom	83	56	25	32.8
Occasionally	51	19	30	20.2
Frequently	15	7	8	5.9
Very Frequently	12	5	7	4.7
TOTAL	253	161	84	100

A comparative analysis of the primary and secondary school groups revealed that in primary schools, the highest number of responses for drug taking occurred in the "never" category (N=69). In secondary schools, the highest number of responses occurred in the "occasionally" category (N=30). This finding is similar to the trend in respect of smoking in the two school groups with the exception of the highest

number of responses for drug taking in the secondary school sample, falling in the "occasionally" category. A possible explanation may be that smoking occurs more overtly than drug taking amongst youngsters. Wodarski and Hoffman (1984) refer to the secretive use of alcohol and drugs in prohibitive environments.

The taking of **alcohol** as a problem had the majority of responses in the "seldom" category in 32% of the sample. Table 5.12 contains the details of the responses for taking alcohol.

**TABLE 5.12: PROBLEM OCCURRENCE: ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION**

<b>RESPONSE</b>	<b>TOTAL FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PRIMARY SCHOOL</b>	<b>SECONDARY SCHOOL</b>	<b>TOTAL PERC.</b>
<b>No Response</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3.2</b>
<b>Never</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>24.5</b>
<b>Seldom</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Occasionally</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>26.9</b>
<b>Frequently</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8.3</b>
<b>Very Frequently</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5.1</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>100</b>

Comparing the primary and secondary sample groups, the highest frequency of responses for alcohol consumption occurred in the "seldom" category for primary schools (N=58) and in the "occasionally" category for secondary schools (N=36). This finding is expected since older adolescents are more inclined to experiment with items considered dangerous than their younger counterparts in the primary schools. The finding also follows the trend assumed by drug taking and smoking, these problems all being related to substance abuse.

Thus one can conclude that substance abuse is a bigger problem in secondary schools than in primary schools, with implications for the focus of intervention programmes in these schools being apparent.

**Child abuse** as a problem had the majority of responses in the "occasionally" category where N=99 or 39.1% of the sample (refer to Table 5.13 overleaf).

**TABLE 5.13: PROBLEM OCCURRENCE: CHILD ABUSE**

<b>RESPONSE</b>	<b>TOTAL FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PRIMARY SCHOOL</b>	<b>SECONDARY SCHOOL</b>	<b>TOTAL PERC.</b>
<b>No Response</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4.0</b>
<b>Never</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3.2</b>
<b>Seldom</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30.4</b>
<b>Occasionally</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>39.1</b>
<b>Frequently</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>19.8</b>
<b>Very Frequently</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3.6</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>100</b>

Examination of the overall distribution of responses suggests that child abuse is a distinct problem in the schools used in the sample. Yungman and Hegar (1986:107) indicate that abuse has reached "national epidemic" proportions, overseas. This is not the finding in the present study, although several local researchers such as Collings (1990) and Cilliers (1989) have referred to its growth as a problem and the need for including culturally sensitive programmes into school curricula to prevent abuse.

Comparative data of the two school groups pointed to the majority of responses occurring in the "occasionally" category (N=66 for primary schools and N=31 for secondary schools). Comparing these figures, primary schools appear to experience more abuse than secondary schools. This may be attributable to younger children being more likely to internalise abuse rather than actively breaking the abuse cycle (Yungman and Hegar, 1986).

**Promiscuity** as a problem had the majority of responses in the "seldom" category (N=93). Details of the distribution of responses for promiscuity are found in Table 5.14.

**TABLE 5.14: PROBLEM OCCURRENCE: PROMISCUITY**

<b>RESPONSE</b>	<b>TOTAL FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PRIMARY SCHOOL</b>	<b>SECONDARY SCHOOL</b>	<b>TOTAL PERC.</b>
<b>No Response</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10.3</b>
<b>Never</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>19.8</b>
<b>Seldom</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>36.8</b>
<b>Occasionally</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>24.1</b>
<b>Frequently</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8.3</b>
<b>Very Frequently</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>.8</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>100</b>

Sixty one (61) respondents indicated that promiscuity occurred "occasionally".

Comparative analyses indicated that promiscuity occurred more frequently in secondary schools than in primary schools. This is deduced because the combined value of the highest number of responses in both schools occurred in the "never/seldom" category (N=95) for primary schools and in the "seldom/occasionally" (N=58) category for secondary schools. The difference in responses of the two school groups is further supported in the chi square value

being 15.683, indicating significant difference at the 99% level of significance at 5 degrees freedom.

The higher occurrence of promiscuity in secondary schools could well provide support for a life skills education programme as suggested by Cilliers (1988). Since such a programme has much preventive value, it may be necessary to introduce the programme at a primary school level.

**Pregnancy** as a problem had the majority of responses in the "seldom" category (N=100 or 39.5% of the total sample). Table 5.15 contains further details of responses in this category.

**TABLE 5.15: PROBLEM OCCURRENCE: PREGNANCY**

<b>RESPONSE</b>	<b>TOTAL FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PRIMARY SCHOOL</b>	<b>SECONDARY SCHOOL</b>	<b>TOTAL PERC.</b>
<b>No Response</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2.4</b>
<b>Never</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Seldom</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>39.5</b>
<b>Occasionally</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>22.9</b>
<b>Frequently</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3.2</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>100</b>

Comparative analyses indicated that primary schools experienced pregnancy as a problem less frequently than secondary schools. A logical explanation for the difference is that more girls reach puberty at secondary school level than primary school. Van Rooyen (1989) attributes the slightly higher occurrence of pregnancy in secondary schools to a lack of sex education amongst youngsters. The highest number of responses for both school groups was N=74 in the "never" category for primary schools and N=45 in the "seldom" category for secondary schools. This finding is consistent with findings in respect of promiscuity.

The majority of responses for **depression and suicide** occurred in the "never" category in N=93 or 36.8% of the sample. Details of the distribution of responses are found in Table 5.16.



**TABLE 5.16: PROBLEM OCCURRENCE: DEPRESSION/SUICIDE**

<b>RESPONSE</b>	<b>TOTAL FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PRIMARY SCHOOL</b>	<b>SECONDARY SCHOOL</b>	<b>TOTAL PERC.</b>
<b>No Response</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Never</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>36.8</b>
<b>Seldom</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>34.8</b>
<b>Occasionally</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Frequently</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4.7</b>
<b>Very Frequently</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2.8</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>100</b>

Comparing primary and secondary schools, it was found that the highest number of responses for primary schools occurred in the "never" category (N=82) and in the "seldom" category (N=31) for secondary schools. There appears to be moderate association in general responses of the two school groups, taking the Kendall Tau B value of 0.375 into consideration. This points to a similar low frequency of occurrence of depression/ suicide in both primary and secondary schools.

**Homelessness** as a problem had the majority of responses in the "seldom" category (N=87 or 34.4%), followed by N=71 or 28.1% in the "occasionally" category. Further details of responses for homelessness are found in Table 5.17.

**TABLE 5.17: PROBLEM OCCURRENCE: HOMELESSNESS**

<b>RESPONSE</b>	<b>TOTAL FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PRIMARY SCHOOL</b>	<b>SECONDARY SCHOOL</b>	<b>TOTAL PERC.</b>
<b>No Response</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2.4</b>
<b>Never</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16.6</b>
<b>Seldom</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>34.4</b>
<b>Occasionally</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>28.1</b>
<b>Frequently</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12.6</b>
<b>Very Frequently</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5.9</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>100</b>

These findings conflict with studies conducted by the South African Institute of Race Relations (1990; 1993) where housing shortages are reflected as alarmingly high. The South African Institute of Race Relations (1993:614) estimates the number of illiterate adults in South Africa as 15 million or 50% of the total population which excludes the "independent homelands". It is likely that many homeless children simply do not attend school, hence the number of homeless

children being reflected as minimal in this study.

Comparative analyses for homelessness yielded a chi square value of 10.672, indicating no significant difference (at the 95% level of significance at 5 degrees freedom) in the scores of primary and secondary schools.

The majority of responses for **poverty** occurred in the "frequently" category (N=83 or 32.8%). Details of the distribution for poverty are contained in Table 5.18.

**TABLE 5.18: PROBLEM OCCURRENCE: POVERTY**

<b>RESPONSE</b>	<b>TOTAL FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PRIMARY SCHOOL</b>	<b>SECONDARY SCHOOL</b>	<b>TOTAL PERC.</b>
<b>No Response</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Never</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Seldom</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>11.1</b>
<b>Occasionally</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>22.9</b>
<b>Frequently</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>32.8</b>
<b>Very Frequently</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>29.2</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>100</b>

These findings are commensurate with figures cited by the South African Institute of Race Relations (1990) where more than 80% of South African families earn below the minimum subsistence income. In comparing results in respect of homelessness and poor concentration, it is evident that both problems follow similar trends (both have a high number of responses in the "frequently" category - N=105 for poor concentration and N=83 for homelessness). Findings in respect of homelessness and poor concentration in the present study compare favourably with those of Scharf, Powell and Thomas (1986:269) who found that homeless children in the Cape experienced major school related problems that affected concentration in school work.

**Unemployment** as a problem yielded a frequency of N=86 in the "very frequently" category. A more detailed account of the distribution of responses for unemployment is found in Table 5.19.

**TABLE 5.19: PROBLEM OCCURRENCE: UNEMPLOYMENT**

<b>RESPONSE</b>	<b>TOTAL FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PRIMARY SCHOOL</b>	<b>SECONDARY SCHOOL</b>	<b>TOTAL PERC.</b>
<b>No Response</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2.4</b>
<b>Never</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1.6</b>
<b>Seldom</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7.5</b>
<b>Occasionally</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>22.1</b>
<b>Frequently</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>32.4</b>
<b>Very Frequently</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>100</b>

These findings link well with literature on unemployment, poverty and homelessness (The Detainees Committee, 1986; Khosa, 1991).

Comparative analyses of primary and secondary school scores in relation to unemployment yielded a Kendall Tau B value of -0.335, indicating a moderate association in the responses of the two school groups. High frequencies of unemployment and poverty in this study imply an association of these problems which is discussed by several authors (Bloomfield and Holzman, 1988; Gewirtzman and Fodor, 1987; Moroz and Segal, 1990; O' Connor, 1989; Scharf, Powell and Thomas, 1986; Stäudt, 1987).

**Racial tensions and conflicts** had a high number of responses in the "never" category (N=119 or 47%). Further details of the distribution are found in Table 5.20.

**TABLE 5.20: PROBLEM OCCURRENCE: RACIAL TENSIONS/CONFLICTS**

RESPONSE	TOTAL FREQUENCY	PRIMARY SCHOOL	SECONDARY SCHOOL	TOTAL PERC.
No Response	7	3	2	2.8
Never	119	84	31	47
Seldom	77	43	32	30.4
Occasionally	32	22	10	12.6
Frequently	12	4	8	4.7
Very Frequently	6	5	1	2.4
TOTAL	253	161	84	100

These statistics indicate a limited degree of racial tensions occurring at schools. The findings are in contrast to those of Jeffery (1991) who identified as many as 48 schools in South Africa being disrupted by racial issues for the first half of 1991 alone. The South African Institute of Race Relations also quote school disruption, pupil boycotts and attacks on teachers as frequent indicators of "political

developments" (1993:417). The researcher attributes the discrepancy in findings to the timing of the fieldwork for the present study which occurred in mid 1992 when school disruption was moderate. Combined with the timing of the study, is the choice of the sample which excluded black schools for reasons that have already been outlined (refer to chapter four). Reviewing information presented by the South African Institute of Race Relations (1993:425) with regard to violence, it was apparent that disruption was most acutely experienced at black schools and colleges, rather than in open or uniracial schools.

**Aggressiveness/violence** had a majority response of N=78 or 30.8% in the "occasionally" category. Details of the distribution of responses for aggressiveness/violence are found in Table 5.21.

**TABLE 5.21: PROBLEM OCCURRENCE: AGGRESSIVENESS/VIOLENCE**

<b>RESPONSE</b>	<b>TOTAL FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PRIMARY SCHOOL</b>	<b>SECONDARY SCHOOL</b>	<b>TOTAL PERC.</b>
<b>No Response</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Never</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13.8</b>
<b>Seldom</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25.3</b>
<b>Occasionally</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30.8</b>
<b>Frequently</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>17.8</b>
<b>Very Frequently</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10.3</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>100</b>

In the present study, the occurrence of aggressiveness/violence was not found to be extensive and follows the trend of racial tensions and conflicts. These findings on the rather low frequency of aggression and violence do not correlate with existing literature on the subject (Friedman, 1992; Wodarski and Hedrick, 1987; The Vuleka Trust, 1992). The explanation provided for the results in respect of racial tensions and conflicts would be applicable for results in respect of aggression and violence at the schools.

In the "other" category of problem occurrence, a small number of respondents



(N=9) offered problems that were not included in the listed options. These were:

- parent disinterest in the child's academic achievement;
- uncontrollable hysteria (related to a child's alleged possession by an evil spirit);
- communication problems;
- vandalism;
- emotional trauma;
- sexual molestation.

Most of these problems were covered in the main question except for parental disinterest and communication problems. Communication difficulties could occur at various levels and attributable to several stress situations, some of which have been discussed already.

A lack of parent participation in schooling is often cited as a concern. Gathiram (1993) describes a community school model of service delivery as being essential for effective practice, achievable only if there is adequate involvement of parents. Lee (1983) refers to the need to empower parents and Pennekamp and Freeman (1988) to the need for a partnership between parents and the school.

The analysis of problems occurring at the schools used in the sample clearly indicates the need for social work intervention. In the state-of-the-art review which follows, results of the investigation into present school social work practice meeting the needs of the school population are presented.

## **STATE-OF-THE-ART REVIEW**

This operational step is described by Thomas (1985a:490) as reviewing and appraising existing social technology. For the purposes of this study, this meant reviewing current school social work practice - research, assessment of school social work meeting need, assessing methods used in service delivery, initiation of the service and functions performed by the school social worker.

### **Research at Schools**

Three questions were asked regarding research being undertaken at the schools used in the study. These pertained to whether or not research had been undertaken, who undertook the research and the aim of the research.

Seven (7) respondents did not answer the question on whether or not any research was undertaken at their school. A frequency of 139 or 54.9% of the sample indicated that research had been undertaken and 107 or 42.3%, that no research was done at their school.

One hundred and forty five (145 or 57.3%) of the total sample did not know who undertook the research. This suggests a lack of knowledge or uninvolved in the research. It is possible that due to the staff composition being inconsistent in schools, respondents had insufficient knowledge of research at their schools. Sixty (60) or 23.7% of respondents indicated that the school social worker undertook the research, 10.3% (26) that the student school social worker was responsible for the research and 8% (22) that educationists were responsible for the conduct of

research at their schools. These figures confirm a general trend by educationists towards apathy, a feeling of powerlessness and lack of commitment to changing the status quo (Lee, 1983). In particular, there may be active resistance by school personnel towards research as it may be perceived as a luxury that can be ill afforded in times of economic depression (Jankovic and Michals, 1982). The researcher agrees with Weatherley (1982) that research needs to be demystified so that it may be confidently undertaken by persons involved in problems. Weatherley points out that research is more often done "to school personnel than by them" (1982:336), this statement representing the findings of the present study.

As regards the aims of the research undertaken at the schools, it was found that again a majority response occurred in the "uncertain" category for the three options suggested in the questionnaire. "Yes" responses to the three options were: N=107 for the aim of obtaining statistics on the nature and frequency of problems at school; N=77 for the aim of setting up pupil welfare services and N=85 for the aim of improving pupil welfare services. Amongst the responses obtained in the "other" category of this question were:

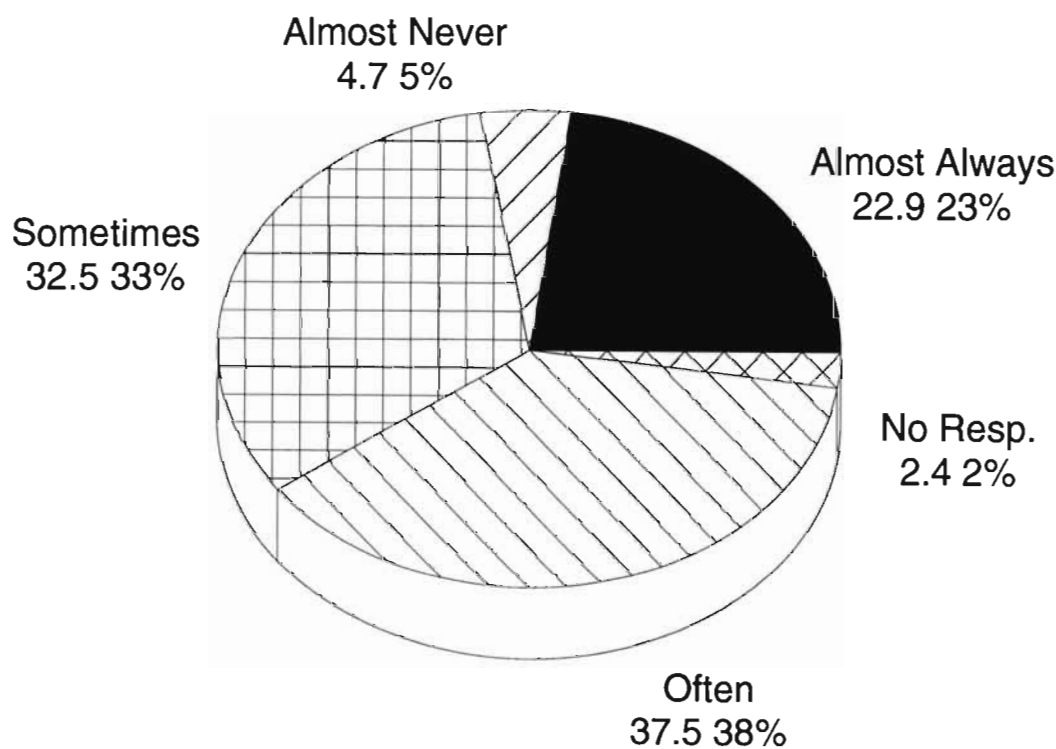
- research into pupils' living conditions;
- feeding of the poor;
- understanding the "child in need".

These responses all point to research being directed at the social problems of the child.

### **Services Meeting Need**

As regards the service meeting need, it was found that the majority response was "often" in 37.5% of the sample, followed by "sometimes" in 32.4% of the sample. These figures are graphically presented in figure 3, overleaf.

**FIGURE 3**  
Extent of Social Work Meeting Needs



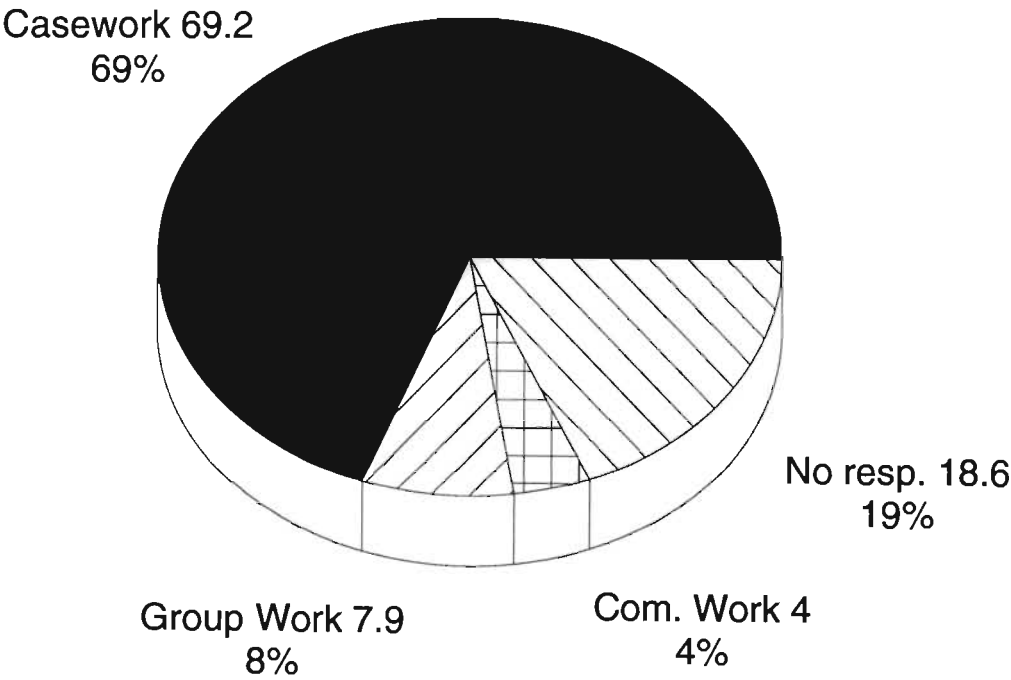
The wide range of responses are attributable to the varying policies of the controlling bodies that govern the different administrations. A comparison of responses regarding meeting needs by controlling body, offers a clear view of policies that have a positive influence on service delivery. Schools under the control of the House of Representatives recorded the largest number of responses in the "often" category in 20.24% of the sample; schools under the control of the House of Delegates had its largest number of responses of "sometimes" in 13.89% of the sample and House of Assembly schools had its largest number of responses in the "sometimes" category in 10.71% of the sample. These statistics imply difference in service delivery and difference in degree of satisfaction with the service. Support for the difference is confirmed via the Kendall Tau B value of 0.068 indicating low association of the three groups of respondents. It is apparent that policies that allow for a higher visibility of school social work by way of serving a limited number of schools, have a correspondingly better evaluation of the service. It is also clear that schools that have a short history of service provision, have a correspondingly unfavourable evaluation of services. These findings support Rocher's (1983) where high visibility and established school social work are described as features of successful school social work. Results of services meeting need thus vary in the different administrations, with no one administration appearing fully satisfied with the service.

### **Practice Method**

Regarding the methods commonly practised to achieve service objectives, it was found that casework was by far the most common method in 69.2% of the sample.

Groupwork was used by 20 or 7.9% of the sample. Details of the distribution appear in figure 4, overleaf.

**FIGURE 4**  
**Social Work Methods Used**





These findings concur with those of Costin (1969), Allen-Meares (1977) and Kasiram (1987) where the favoured method of intervention was primarily casework. Reasons for the bias in service method have varied from educationists favouring a casework approach (Kasiram, 1987) to school social workers' reluctance to keeping abreast of changing societal conditions (Hare, 1988). However, the reason that appears applicable to the present study, is that where services do not enjoy high visibility, it is difficult for the school social worker to be creative in service provision (Pamperin, 1987).

As regards the "other" category to the question on the method most frequently used, 24 respondents indicated the use of casework and group work; 9 respondents the use of casework and community work; 5 respondents, the use of casework, group work and community work; 4 respondents, the use of parent and family counselling; 3 respondents, the use of all three methods; 2 respondents, group work and community work and 1 respondent, the use of all methods and family therapy. It is encouraging to note that some school social workers offer a comprehensive service, suggesting that change from a traditional emphasis is feasible.

Respondents were asked about the number of community projects undertaken to gauge the extent of preventive and developmental work that was undertaken. Community work with such a focus, is highly valued by education and school social work personnel alike (Cilliers, 1989; Gonet, 1990; Rocher, 1977). The majority response of "none" occurred in 35.2% of the respondents, followed by

"three or more" in 26.9% of respondents. Table 5.22 contains details of responses regarding community projects undertaken at schools.

**TABLE 5.22: NUMBER OF COMMUNITY PROJECTS**

<b>RESPONSE</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENT (APPROX)</b>
<b>No Response</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>8.3</b>
<b>None</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>35.2</b>
<b>One</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Two</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>12.6</b>
<b>Three or More</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>26.9</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>100</b>

Comparing the responses of the three controlling groups, it was found that House of Assembly schools had their majority response in the "none" category in N=49 or 19.44% respondents. The House of Representatives schools had their highest response in the "three or more" category in N=46 or 18.25% of the sample. The House of Delegates schools had a similar distribution in several categories, indicating variation in practice - N=23 in the "none" category; N=21 in the "one" category and N=19 in the "two" category. The latter distribution is attributable to the short period (approximately two years) of existence of school social work in

House of Delegates schools and to student school social workers who served these schools being included in the sample for this administration. The pattern that emerged in relation to services meeting needs, is apparent here as well. Policy dictates clearly influence the nature of services by providing opportunity and incentive for the performance of certain functions using certain methods.

**Preliminary Tasks to the Provision of Services**

In this section of the questionnaire, information was obtained on which tasks were performed prior to the service being set up at schools. If the service is not appropriately launched, then it is expected to suffer poor visibility (Rocher, 1983). Table 5.23 contains the response details.

**TABLE 5.23:PRELIMINARY TASKS TO SERVICE PROVISION (IN %)**

<b>FUNCTION</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>UNCER.</b>	<b>N.R</b>
<b>Explaining functions to school personnel at staff meeting</b>	<b>64.8</b>	<b>22.5</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>4.3</b>
<b>Inviting discussion from staff regarding scope of the service</b>	<b>53.8</b>	<b>28.1</b>	<b>11.9</b>	<b>6.3</b>
<b>Informing staff and pupils at assembly of service</b>	<b>26.1</b>	<b>54.2</b>	<b>13.8</b>	<b>5.9</b>
<b>Having a workshop with staff regarding services before initiation of services</b>	<b>22.5</b>	<b>56.9</b>	<b>14.2</b>	<b>6.3</b>
<b>Outlining referral procedures to facilitate efficient service delivery</b>	<b>52.6</b>	<b>29.6</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>5.1</b>
<b>Informing pupils individually or in class groups of the service</b>	<b>49.8</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5.1</b>
<b>Distributing pamphlets to pupils and staff to advertise the service</b>	<b>24.9</b>	<b>60.1</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>5.1</b>
<b>Advertising services on posters at school</b>	<b>12.3</b>	<b>73.1</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>5.5</b>
<b>Notifying parents of the availability of services</b>	<b>47.4</b>	<b>27.3</b>	<b>19.8</b>	<b>5.5</b>
<b>Obtaining a problem profile of the key problems at school</b>	<b>42.3</b>	<b>28.9</b>	<b>24.1</b>	<b>4.7</b>

From the table, it is apparent that school social work personnel were comfortable to explain functions to staff members at staff meetings and to invite participation from their audiences.

Addressing staff members and pupils at the school assembly appeared to be a formidable task. The researcher's experience of student school social work training over the past ten years also indicated a similar reluctance by student school social workers to addressing the school assembly. Training of social workers thus needs to focus on acquisition of communication skills with large audiences. Taback (1991) points out the need for social workers to become equipped to meet the demands of transformation, with the aspect of training for a changed emphasis becoming a necessity.

Organizing workshops with school personnel to clarify the role of the school social worker was also found to have a majority "no" response. This finding is not consistent with literature supporting the need for a strong educational component so that school personnel have a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the school social worker (Costin, 1969; Rocher, 1977). In fact, role overlap, poor teamwork and role confusion have been identified as distinct problems in local school social work practice (Hildebrandt, 1992; Kasiram, 1987).

Outlining referral procedures enjoyed a majority "yes" response from the general sample and in cross tabulations of the three administrations. If such a response did not occur, then it would spell certain death of the service in that no procedures

would be set up to cater for the volume and variety of work at a school.

Informing pupils individually or in class groups of the service had a high "yes" response. However, this response differed in the three school groups. House of Representatives and House of Delegates schools followed the trend of the general sample, but House of Assembly schools had their highest response of N=43 or 17.06% in the "no" category. This finding is in keeping with the policy of the administration being that of serving many schools from a school psychological clinic base. Social workers cannot hope to perform this function diligently, enjoying close contact with each class, if they are serving as many as 29 schools at a time! The difference in the performance of this function in the three groups is supported in the Kendall Tau B value being 0.106, indicating low association of responses.

Distribution of pamphlets was not favoured as a method of advertising the service at the school as it had a majority "no" response. This was also found to be the case with the use of posters on school walls.

Notifying parents of the service enjoyed a high "yes" response in 47.4% of the sample. Parental involvement in schools is cited by Bloch and Seitz (1989), Chavkin (1989), Gathiram (1993), Nystrom (1989). These authors advocate empowerment of parents and utilising parents as assessors in a collaborative approach towards helping children. The first step of informing parents of the existence of the service at the school, is crucial to the future effectiveness of service delivery.

Obtaining a problem profile of the key problems at the school was performed by 42.3% of the sample. This function rests on the use of organizational theory which is seen as essential to the success of the service (Costin, 1975; Freeman, 1985).

### **Models and Functions of School Social Work**

Results from section E-1 of the questionnaire (Appendix B) are presented to review and appraise existing functions performed by school social workers. Analysis of results yields data on the adequacy of current school social work practice. Functions occur within existing models of practice and are accordingly analysed.

Analysis of results accommodates responses of the general sample and cross tabulations with educationists, guidance counsellors and school social work personnel (school social work personnel formed one category, guidance counsellors another category and teachers, principals and heads of departments, the third category). Cross tabulations allowed for the development of a feasible future model which took cognisance of differing views of the service between social work and education personnel.

In most instances, cell frequencies allowed for the use of the Kendall Tau B statistic to measure association of responses. Cell frequencies that are highlighted, reflect the majority responses in the various categories.

# **The Traditional Clinical Model**

A complete distribution of responses for "present practice" of the traditional model is found in Table 5.24a. This model is the most commonly used and perceived to be very important (Alderson, 1972; Kasiram, 1987). Numerous functions are specified within the traditional framework.



TABLE 5.24a: PRESENT PRACTICE OF THE TRADITIONAL MODEL (N=253)

Function	Nvr.	Seld	Occa	Freq	V.F	N.R
1. Identifying problems of individual pupils	5	21	51	<b>100</b>	68	8
2. Obtaining information from pupils' home	1	22	50	<b>94</b>	75	11
3. Involving pupils' parents in problem-solving	4	23	53	<b>86</b>	76	11
4. Offering a therapeutic service to families of pupils	30	53	<b>60</b>	54	34	22
5. Offering casework services to individual pupils	6	25	45	<b>84</b>	76	17
6. Interpreting problems of pupils to teachers	30	43	58	<b>70</b>	41	11
7. Consulting with professional staff to co-ordinate services	19	48	<b>65</b>	<b>65</b>	41	15
8. Offering groupwork to pupils	53	47	40	<b>58</b>	40	15
9. Referring the pupil to another agency/professional	25	48	<b>80</b>	52	32	16

Identifying and assisting the individual pupil, obtaining information from pupils' homes, parent involvement in the treatment process, interpreting problems to teachers and groupwork functions all yielded majority responses in the "frequently" category. Family therapy, consulting with teachers and referral to another agency/professional had a majority response in the "occasionally" category. These findings suggest the popularity of traditional functions and are commensurate with literature indicating that functions with a traditional focus are most frequently used and least reluctantly changed to include use of other methods (Costin, 1969; Allen-Meares, 1977; Kasiram, 1987). A possible reason for the preference of traditional functions is suggested by Levine and Mellor (1988) as the educational authority preferring use of these functions. As regards parent involvement, findings are consistent with requests for parental involvement in school social work literature (Chavkin, 1989; Constable, 1986; Nystrom, 1989).

Cross tabulations of functions with the educational, guidance counselling and school social work groups yielded interesting differences. Responses in respect of the function of obtaining information from pupils' homes yielded a Kendall Tau B value of -0.128, indicating a low correlation of responses. The function of offering services to families was also perceived differently by the three groups. These differences are supported in the Kendall Tau B value being -0.133. The function of offering casework had a likewise different perception, this being supported in the Kendall Tau B value of 0.178. Social workers considered their performance of casework as occurring more frequently than credited by guidance counsellors. Lack of teaming, role overlap and professional guarding of "territory" are possible

reasons for the discrepancy in perceptions regarding casework services to the pupil.

Differences amongst the personnel groups were also apparent in respect of the function of interpreting problems to teachers, with support from the Kendall Tau B at -0.107. Allen-Meares and Lane (1983) noted similar differences in the perceptions of educational and social work personnel. Hildebrandt (1992), Kasiram (1987) and Radin and Welsh (1984) attribute the difference in perception of functions to role overlap, role confusion and poor interprofessional teamwork amongst pupil personnel team members.

### **The Community School Model**

The functions in this model have relevance for disadvantaged and deprived communities as discussed in the literature review in chapter 2 (Alderson, 1972; Allen-Meares 1977; Allen-Meares, Washington and Welsh 1986). Table 5.25a contains the complete distribution of responses for the present practice of functions within this model.

TABLE 5.25a: PRESENT PRACTICE OF THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL MODEL  
(N=253)

Functions	Nvr	Seld	Occ	Frqt	V.Fr	N.R
1. Identifying key problems in the school	27	40	58	<b>75</b>	39	14
2. Inviting community participation to resolve problems	<b>75</b>	71	59	20	14	14
3. Offering educational programmes to increase awareness of problems	56	51	<b>67</b>	42	23	14
4. Inviting community participation in awareness campaigns	<b>86</b>	75	44	23	12	13
5. Offering therapeutic programmes to address problems	<b>76</b>	73	49	24	16	15

Only the function of identifying key problems in the school yielded a majority response in the "frequently" category. Comparing responses of this function amongst the personnel group, guidance counsellors and educationists were found to have their majority responses in the "occasionally" category (N=6 and N=42, respectively). Social workers indicated that they performed this function

"frequently" (N=12 respondents). This discrepancy is supported in the Kendall Tau B value of -0.057 indicating a low correlation of responses. Since there is clear difference between the "occasionally" and "frequently" responses, it is concluded that educationists do not appear to notice or value the performance of this function.

The community was perceived as not participating in problem solving. The performance of this function was viewed quite differently by the personnel groups. The majority responses amongst educationists occurred in the "never" category; amongst guidance counsellors in the "seldom" category and amongst social workers in the "occasionally" category (N=60; N=7 and N=13 respectively). These differences are supported by a Kendall Tau B value of -0.010, indicating low association of responses amongst the personnel group. The function of offering educational programmes was also perceived differently by the personnel groups, this difference receiving support in the Kendall Tau B value of -0.010. Offering therapeutic programmes to address problems was a further function that yielded different responses in the personnel groups, with the Kendall Tau B value being -0.056, supporting the low association of responses. The finding that social workers perceive themselves to be performing some of these functions more frequently than educationists care to recognise, suggests once again that there is poor interprofessional teaming.

The responses for all the functions except for that of identifying key problems, indicate clearly that the performance of functions within a community school focus

is uncommon. This finding is commensurate with literature supporting use of traditional functions to the exclusion of functions within other models (Allen-Meares 1977; Costin, 1969; Kasiram 1987).

### **The School Change Model**

The focus of change in this model is the school as an institution and is discussed in section 2.6 in chapter 2 (Alderson, 1972). The distribution of responses for present practice of the functions in this model is found in Table 5.26a.

TABLE 5.26a: PRESENT PRACTICE OF THE SCHOOL CHANGE MODEL  
(N=253)

Functions	Nev	Seld	Occ	Freq	V.Fre	N.R
1. Identifying practices\policies which impede learning	62	57	<b>68</b>	41	9	16
2. Assisting school personnel to identify such practices	<b>66</b>	61	61	35	16	14
3. Forming problem-solving teams to address these practices	<b>103</b>	65	31	28	12	14
4. Consulting school administrators on pupil welfare	<b>65</b>	<b>65</b>	51	34	17	12
5. Offering a personnel service to staff	<b>106</b>	55	39	23	12	18
6. Assisting with in-service training	<b>132</b>	52	32	15	3	19

All functions in this model except for identifying dysfunctional school practices and policies, were considered as being practised "never" by the sample. Even this function cannot be considered as yielding too different a result, considering the frequency in the "never" category being quite high. These findings confirm the

study by Costin (1977) in which the reluctance of social workers to performing functions with a school change bias is examined. Limited performance of school change functions are attributable to the low visibility of the school social worker, school social work being new to many administrations and policies hampering full expression of a varied service.

Comparing responses on the present practice of functions within the school change model amongst the personnel sample, significant differences did not emerge. Only the function of identifying dysfunctional school practices, received support for difference through the Kendall Tau B value of 0.008. Other functions in this model indicated a trend towards similarities in perception with all three groups indicating limited or no performance of these functions.

### **The Social Interaction Model**

This model encompasses a wide spectrum of functions because it deals with the "reciprocal influences of the acts of individuals and groups" (Allen-Meares, Washington and Welsh, 1986:29). As outlined in the literature review (section 2.6, chapter 2), there are many groups that nurture and influence the school child, therefore this model contains a variety of functions.

Details of responses with regard to the present evaluation of functions within the social interaction model are found in Table 5.27a.



TABLE 5.27a: PRESENT PRACTICE OF THE SOCIAL INTERACTION MODEL

Functions	Nev	Seld	Occ	Freq	V. Frq	N. R
1. Developing sound working relations between the school and pupil	22	38	58	<b>84</b>	35	16
2. Facilitate the setting up of a pupil representative committee	<b>145</b>	30	20	28	11	19
3. Facilitate the setting up of a parent body	<b>140</b>	35	18	28	12	20
4. Encouraging pupils and staff to be represented at meetings	<b>123</b>	55	29	18	12	16
5. Including non-academic activities into the curriculum	<b>101</b>	43	37	32	23	17
6. Identifying problems which interfere with building sound relations between school and pupil	54	47	<b>60</b>	47	28	17
7. Setting up procedures to deal with such interferences	<b>69</b>	52	64	30	16	22
8. Maintaining trust between school and pupil	35	55	51	<b>62</b>	29	21

Only two functions in the social interaction model were found to occur "frequently", that of developing sound working relationships and maintaining trust between school and pupil. The function of identifying problems which interfere with building sound working relations yielded a majority frequency in the "occasionally" category. The remaining five functions were perceived as being minimally practised.

Findings in respect of functions with a majority response in the "frequently" category were incongruent with findings in respect of specific functions which were considered to be instrumental in their achievement. Two reasons for this disparity are possible. One is that respondents have a general opinion of the school social worker as needing to promote trust and sound working relations and therefore evaluated this function favourably. The other reason is that there may be different activities that were compatible with these functions which were not included in the questionnaire. Alderson (1972) asserts that functions within the social interaction model are varied, increasing the likelihood that some specific functions relating to the functions that were favourably viewed, were not listed in the questionnaire.

Comparing responses of the personnel group with regard to the occurrence of these functions in present practice, it was found that the two functions with a favourable overall view, had significant discrepancies amongst respondents. The function of developing sound working relations yielded a majority "frequently" response in both educationists and social workers (N=63 and N=14 respectively).

Guidance counsellors indicated that this function occurred "seldom" (N=6). The difference in responses is supported in the Kendall Tau B value of -0.054. Since there is a significant gap between a "frequently" and a "seldom" response, it may be concluded that guidance counsellors do not appear to notice that the school social worker helps to build sound relations between the pupil and the school. Such a discrepancy in perception points to poor teaming and possible fear by the social worker that sharing tasks may mean relinquishing responsibilities (Costin, 1969; Kasiram, 1987).

As regards the function of trust maintenance, discrepancies in the personnel group were again apparent, being supported in a Kendall Tau B value of -0.081. The variations of responses suggest different perceptions of the same service. Again, guidance counsellors considered the function of trust maintenance between school and pupil as occurring less frequently than did both social workers and educationists. This function yielded a high frequency of responses over several categories, suggesting several possibilities. It may be that respondents were confused about the exact nature of response that was required of them; it may be that they understood the function to incorporate a variety of different issues and therefore responded to cater for what occurred in their special contexts or it may be that practice of this function varies widely.

Comparative analyses in respect of all the other functions, pointed to similar responses amongst the personnel groups. This may be indicative of clear acceptance by respondents that these functions were not performed or performed

to a limited extent.

The analysis in respect of a state-of-the-art review points to preference of traditional functions with resulting gaps in service delivery. These gaps will be more clearly identified during the analysis of results in respect of favoured future practices. In developing a future model for practice, gaps in services, recommended future functions and the issue of feasibility will be carefully considered.

## **FEASIBILITY STUDY**

This step of the study focused on determining the feasibility of the "social technology" as having a reasonable chance of producing the intended improvement (Thomas, 1985a:492; Thomas, 1985b:50). Conditions that were viewed as necessary for the adoption of a new model were surveyed through Appendices A (question 5) and B (section F). These conditions included the readiness of respondents to adopt a changed emphasis, the number of schools to be served by the school social worker, recommended qualifications and skill, accountability and control and specific aspects to facilitate the establishment of a nationwide service. All these conditions were surveyed through Appendix B (section F) except for accountability which was also surveyed through Appendix A (question 5).

## **Readiness to Adopt a Changed Focus**

Confirmation of some of the findings of previous sections (section E of Appendix B) was possible in relation to testing the readiness of respondents to adopt a changed emphasis. Respondents' recommendations for a future focus being integrative and their views regarding a preventive focus were examined.

Respondents were requested to rank, by order of preference, functions that they considered important. Of the 8 listed functions, two were favoured by a majority of respondents as being very important. These were:

- prevention of social problems;
- offering help to individuals.

These problems had a response of N=65 and N=111 respectively and ranked first by the majority of respondents. The finding that 111 respondents favoured the function of offering individual help, confirms the earlier finding in section E-1 of Appendix B wherein respondents clearly favoured the performance of traditional casework functions. These findings are consistent with studies undertaken by Costin (1969) and Allen-Meares (1977) on the preference for functions with a traditional emphasis. It was also abundantly clear that prevention as a focus for the future was necessary, although it ranked as a first choice by a smaller number of respondents.

Offering help to groups of pupils, was selected by 73 respondents as a second choice. This finding is consistent with performance of this function in the future

as recommended by respondents in the survey (Appendix B, section E-2).

Functions that ranked as less important were:

- assist in improving school policies and practices to render them more functional;
- inviting community participation in school affairs.

Each of these functions ranked eighth in importance in N=74 and N=69 responses respectively. Although these functions both enjoyed majority responses as regards their performance in the future in section E-2, they ranked lowest in importance in this section. This may be interpreted as conflicting data, but it may also suggest ambivalence in that they could be practised if resources were less limited to incorporate an emphasis on holistic education. Expectations of these functions being performed in the future remain questionable as the economic situation remains bleak and budgetary cut-backs continue to infiltrate more services. Hare (1988) clearly pointed this out when she indicated the need for school social workers to respond to societal changes to ensure relevancy and survival in a depressive economic climate. There is clearly a paradox in the expectation of social workers ensuring relevancy during times of economic restraint, whilst risking cut-back if practice does not extend itself to meet changing societal conditions. Some compromise in service provision is inevitable, whilst the social worker attempts to serve clientele economically. It is also likely that these functions were considered less important because they are not performed extensively at present and therefore are not demonstrated as worthwhile, by school social workers (refer

to Table 5.25a).

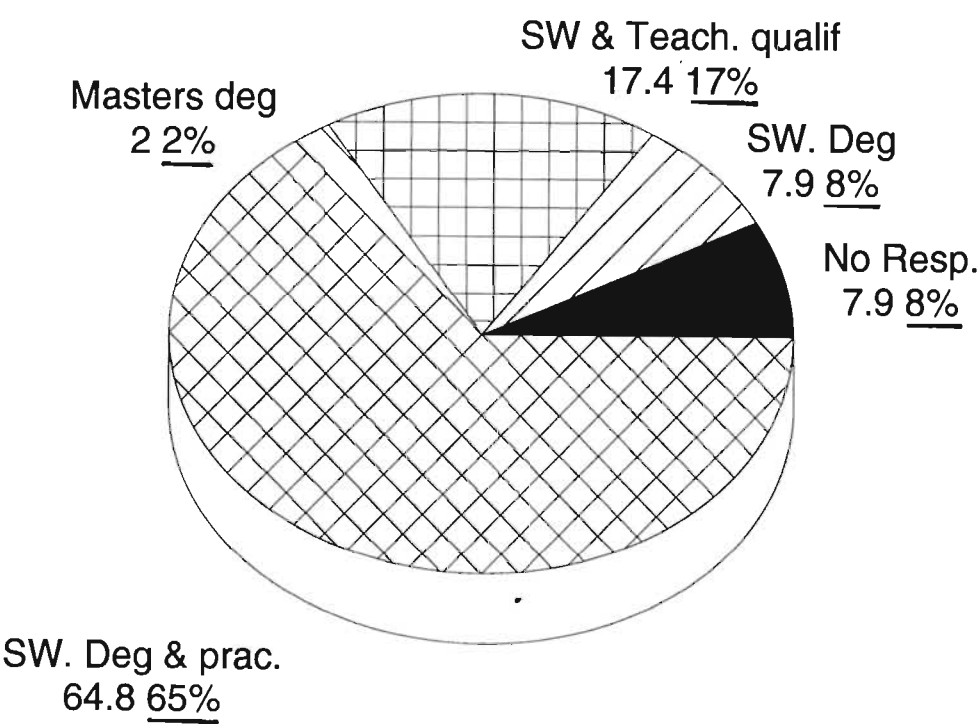
Conducting research to improve school social work services ranked as seventh in importance by N=60 respondents. This finding confirms the assertion made by Jankovic and Michals (1982) that educationists and practitioners display a lack of interest with regard to research in schools.

### **Criteria for Practice**

64.8% of the sample indicated that the school social worker should have a social work degree and practical training in a school to equip him/her for practice. Details of the responses are graphically presented in figure 5, overleaf.



**FIGURE 5**  
**Recommended Qualifications**





This finding contrasts with an earlier finding of Kasiram (1987) wherein respondents favoured a dual qualification in teaching and social work. Only 17.4% of the total sample favoured a dual qualification in the present study. Perhaps the change in attitude over the span of 6 years is indicative of the higher visibility of the school social worker in some schools. Thus educationists may be realising the value of the social worker with the existing requirement for practice being school social work qualifications with practical training in school social work. Costin (1981) too, discussed the need for specialized training at an undergraduate level, rather than dual qualifications in social work and education, to equip one for practice.

### **Number of Schools to be Served by the School Social Worker**

It was found that 39.9% of the sample favoured the school social worker serving a secondary school and a feeder primary school. The next highest frequency was in respect of "one primary school" in 28.9% of respondents. This finding is not consistent with Kasiram's (1987) study wherein respondents favoured the school social worker serving 3 to 5 schools. The reason for this change is possibly that school social workers are now demonstrating their worth in schools and enjoying greater visibility than previously.

Cross tabulations of the three administrations were effected to ascertain their preferences. It was interesting to note that House of Delegates and House of Assembly respondents both had a high response for "one secondary school and the feeder primary school" in N= 46 out of 86 and N=31 out of 72 respondents

respectively. House of Representatives respondents favoured the service being offered to one primary school in a majority of N=47 out of 94 respondents. These findings indicate that school social workers who are currently serving **more than two schools** see an ideal situation in serving **two schools only**. Those serving an average of **two schools** see an ideal in serving only **one school**. This implies that those who have experienced serving two schools do not see it as providing for the schools' needs adequately and therefore suggest one school to ensure maximum opportunity to provide a variety of services. This is a significant finding as it suggests that without experience, social workers may opt for "second best" if they were allowed to make decisions on the future practice of school social work.

In relation to the feasibility of serving only one school in an era of economic constraint, it may be more realistic if the school social worker served two schools (one secondary school and the feeder primary school) as suggested by the majority of respondents in this study. Results in relation to preferences of the different administrations could be considered in the future, if the economy improves in order that optimum assistance is offered to the school population.

### **Accountability and Control**

Both questions on the professional to whom the school social worker should be accountable and which department should control school social work, yielded majority responses for dual accountability and control (Appendix A, 23 out of 25 and Appendix B, N=114 for accountability and N=173 for control). These findings imply extensive teamwork if dual control is to be successful. In examining present

practices, it was evident that House of Representatives respondents considered school social work services as meeting the needs of the school "often" as compared to majority responses of "sometimes" in the other administrations. These differences are attributable to policy differences in terms of accountability and control in the different administrations. The House of Representatives administration has a clear mandate regarding control and the involvement of the education department in launching, monitoring and evaluating the service alongside welfare (Theron, 1991). The school social worker in this administration is "under the physical control of the school principal and professionally controlled by the supervisor of the Department of Health Services and Welfare" (House of Representatives Training Manual, 1991:4). Thus accountability and control in this administration is the dual responsibility of both education and welfare. Such control may thus be viewed as feasible to a future model of school social work where the expectation is that the technological effort produces improvement. Successful teamwork is difficult, but a necessity in social work in the host setting of the school (Hildebrandt, 1992; Kasiram, 1987).

Amongst the "other" responses received in these categories in Appendix B (section F) were the following :

- 12 respondents indicating accountability to the principal; welfare official and psychologist;
- 2 respondents suggesting that the guidance counsellor and psychologist control the school social worker's functioning;
- 4 respondents each suggesting that the school social worker be accountable

to the principal and the psychologist and the principal and the guidance counsellor;

- 2 respondents suggesting that accountability be to an interdisciplinary team;
- 4 respondents indicating that control of school social work be effected through education and psychological services only.

Except for the response regarding control by an interdisciplinary team, these responses sum up the value afforded to the welfare department as not being essential to controlling social work services. These respondents do not appear to consider school social workers as requiring professional supervision, staff development or training, which would be the responsibility of the welfare department.

### **Skills of the School Social Worker**

All the skills in question 6 of section F (Appendix B) had a majority "yes" response. A breakdown of the responses appear in Table 5.28.

**TABLE 5.28: SKILLS FOR SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE (N=253)**

<b>Skill</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>D\K</b>	<b>N.R</b>
<b>1.Ability to work as a team member with other professionals</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2. Assertiveness without being dominating</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>3. Flexibility to respond to changing needs</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>4. Diplomacy to ensure the maintenance of sound working relationships</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>5. Ability to co-ordinate all helping efforts</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>18</b>

These responses indicate some general knowledge by respondents of the skills needed by a professional in a host setting. The possibility of these skills being acquired through training is feasible since respondents in respect of Appendix A indicated a commitment to school social work and are accordingly expected to train students in this specialization.

## **Development of School Social Work Nationwide**

In this section, seven possible requirements that need to be met to facilitate the development of school social work services in the country were presented for comment. The researcher also provided for "other" responses in this question to include opinion that was not represented in the options.

A majority of N=201 respondents agreed that research was necessary to prove the need for school social work. Besides proving the need for the service, research could also indicate the future direction that the service must take to ensure relevancy (Hare, 1988).

Two hundred and twenty three (223) respondents indicated that specialized training was necessary to equip the school social worker to practice efficiently. This finding could be interpreted in the light of the findings in question 2 of section F (Appendix B) where training is specified as being a social work degree with practical training in a school.

A smaller number, N=193 out of 253 respondents indicated that the curriculum of educationists include dissemination of knowledge of school social work. This requirement was suggested to obtain an opinion on whether respondents favoured some general knowledge on school social work for efficient referral rather than for all respondents to offer services themselves. It is possible that the intention of the question may have been misunderstood.



One hundred and seventy one (171) respondents indicated that nationwide conferences were necessary to advertise school social work services. This frequency is smaller than the frequencies of the previous 3 responses, suggesting that respondents are not altogether convinced that the effort will promote establishment of the service.

A unitary education department received a majority "yes" response in 75% (N=188) respondents. This clearly indicates the need for correcting imbalances in education through the establishment of a unitary education department. It was interesting to note results of cross tabulations of this question with the different administrations. The House of Assembly had a majority "yes" response in only 13% of the sample whilst the figure for House of Delegates and House of Representatives was 31% in both administrations. A possible reason for the lower frequency in the "yes" response from HOA respondents is that a redistribution of resources during the establishment of a unitary system may disadvantage them since allocations have historically been in their favour. However, the finding that the majority respondents from the House of Assembly favoured such a step, is reassuring in the hope that adjustment to changes may not be fraught with too much resistance.

Governmental recognition and sanction of the service also received a majority response (N=230 and N=192 respectively). This finding is consistent with findings from respondents who completed Appendix A wherein opinions on a vision for the future of school social work featured governmental sanction and support of the

service.

Amongst the "other" responses to this question were the following:

- teachers and guidance counsellors to motivate for a school social work service;
- greater team understanding among professionals;
- more school social workers (perhaps to demonstrate their worth);
- research to prove the effect of the service.

Responses in respect of educationists joining social workers in the struggle to establish services, are consistent with the issue of dual responsibility of both welfare and educational departments. The value that educationists place on the service may be accordingly noted. Teamwork has been advocated as enhancing school social work services (Costin, 1975; Hildebrandt, 1992; Kasiram, 1987; Rocher, 1977).

The employment of more school social workers provides the opportunity of proving the worth of the profession. This is perhaps why the last response mentioned in "other", is one of research to prove the worth and effectiveness of the service. It is logical that an ineffective service merits no sanction and therefore, if school social work is to prove its worth, more evaluative research is necessary. This finding is confirmed by Jankovic and Michals (1982) and Weatherley (1982) who assert the importance of evaluative research.



## **5.5 SECTION TWO: THE DEVELOPMENT PHASE**

In this phase, a model for future school social work practice is developed, with due consideration afforded to the survey of literature, findings from the previous steps and findings in respect of respondents who completed section E-2 (Appendix B) and question 6 (Appendix A). Table 4.1 which contains the application of Thomas' (1985a) developmental phase to the present study, is replicated to facilitate reading and contextualising of this phase into the rest of the study.

Table 4.1: Application of the Developmental Research Model to Present Research Design.

PHASE	OPERATIONAL STEPS	INFORMATION SOURCES/SAMPLE
1:ANALYSIS	1.Problem Analysis and Identification	Survey of literature; policy makers in welfare and education; national councils of welfare; universities who completed questions 1-3 of Appendix A; & analyses of pupils' problems via Appendix B, section B.
	2.State-of-the-art Review	Educationists & school social workers who completed sections B, C, D and E-1 of Appendix B; the researcher's experience of the field; attendance at & delivery of papers at conferences
	3.Feasibility Study	Educationists and school social workers who completed section F of Appendix B and policy makers and universities who responded to question 5 of Appendix A.
	4&5.Selection of Technological Objectives and Information Sources	Literature surveyed in respect of a changed emphasis; findings in respect of studies involving Appendixes A & B.
2:DEVELOPMENT	6-8. Gathering/ evaluating technological resources; designing & realizing technology	Data from educationists and school social workers who completed section E-2 of Appendix B and from question 4 & 6 of Appendix A.
3:EVALUATION	9.Trial Use	Trial use of the model in pilot project using student school social workers
	10.Collection of Evaluative Data	

**Recommended Functions/Models** (section E-2, Appendix B and question 4, Appendix A)

Respondents who completed Appendix B favoured all the functions within the **traditional-clinical focus** as important to a future model as indicated through the highlighted frequencies in Table 5.24b.

TABLE 5.24b: FUTURE PRACTICE OF THE TRADITIONAL MODEL (N=253)

Functions	Unimpt	Some Impt	Impt	V.Impt	N.R
1. Identifying the problems of individual pupils	1	4	51	<b>187</b>	10
2. Obtaining information from pupils' home	-	2	48	<b>195</b>	8
3. Involving pupils' parents in problem-solving	-	1	44	<b>200</b>	8
4. Offering a therapeutic service to families of pupils	-	13	69	<b>159</b>	12
5. Offering casework services to individual pupils	1	8	75	<b>159</b>	10
6. Interpreting problems of pupils to teachers	2	13	61	<b>170</b>	7
7. Consulting with professional staff to co-ordinate services	-	9	83	<b>154</b>	7
8. Offering groupwork to pupils	5	12	90	<b>139</b>	7
9. Referring the pupil to another agency/professional	3	17	84	<b>140</b>	9

These findings are consistent with literature citing the dominance of and preference for casework functions (Costin, 1969, 1977; Kasiram, 1987).

The function of offering family therapy was evaluated as occurring "occasionally" but recommended as "very important" to future practice. The discrepancy between the two responses is abundantly clear. Working with the family and offering therapy is a goal to which the school social worker could aspire. The practice of family therapy requires skill, commitment and time. Present policies that serve to dilute school social work practice do not allow for such an in depth focus. Winters and Maluccio (1988), Hare (1988) and Radin (1989) discuss the importance of family work in future trends of school social work. These findings support the need for family work but reflect gaps between current and future practice.

The discrepancy between present and future practice was found to be marked for other functions as well, these being referral functions and consultation with professional staff to co-ordinate services. Reluctance by the school social worker to delegate tasks could be a possible reason for referral and consultation functions to be evaluated as not reaching the recommended ideal (Costin, 1969).

Functions within the **community school model** were also considered as "very important" by the majority of respondents as evidenced in the frequencies that are highlighted in Table 5.25b.

TABLE 5.25b: FUTURE PRACTICE OF THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL MODEL  
(N=253)

Functions	Unimpt	Some Impt	Impt	V.Impt	N.R
1. Identifying key problems in the school	1	6	87	<b>151</b>	8
2. Inviting community participation to resolve problems	7	41	78	<b>118</b>	9
3. Offering educational programmes to increase awareness of problems	3	12	94	<b>135</b>	9
4. Inviting community participation in the awareness campaigns	3	31	91	<b>120</b>	8
5. Offering therapeutic programmes to resolve problems	1	20	97	<b>126</b>	9

The inclination to adopt a community school focus is interpreted as helpful to the transition that social workers are challenged to make, in the light of moving from the "here and now" to long term planning and clear identification of problems and objectives (Allen-Meares, 1977:200). The recommendations appear to heed the need for more community participation in the future (Friedman, 1992; The Vuleka Trust, 1992). Alderson (1972) notes the relevance of these functions to communities that are undergoing transition. It is abundantly clear that the South African community is in the throes of such transition and could therefore be served well, if such a focus were included into future practice.

Gaps between present and future practice in all the functions within this model are clearly evident. This is attributed to social workers not keeping abreast of changing societal circumstances (Hare, 1988) and policies that prevent social workers from intervening at macrosystemic levels.

Functions within the **school change model** were all considered "important" or "very important" for future practice. Details of the responses are shown in Table 5.26b.

TABLE 5.26b: FUTURE PRACTICE OF THE SCHOOL CHANGE MODEL  
(N=253)

Functions	Unimpt	Some Impt	Impt	V.Impt	N.R
1. Identifying school practices/policies which impede learning	8	14	105	<b>116</b>	10
2. Assisting school personnel to identify such practices	5	8	108	<b>123</b>	9
3. Forming problem-solving teams to resolve them	5	24	<b>112</b>	104	8
4. Consulting with school administrators on pupil welfare	7	21	<b>110</b>	103	12
5. Offering a personnel service to staff	10	27	<b>103</b>	<b>103</b>	10
6. Assisting with in-service training of staff	5	28	102	<b>105</b>	13

The finding of identifying dysfunctional policies being considered "very important" conflicts with an earlier study of Costin (1977) wherein intervention at a policy level, was assigned minimal importance. A possible reason for the present finding,



is that policy changes are seen as crucial to the introduction of change and redistribution of resources, countrywide.

As compared to the recommended functions within the previous two models, these functions had a high frequency of responses in both the "important" and "very important" categories. This suggests that respondents were somewhat less confident about the inclusion of these functions into a future practice model. Nonetheless, the favourable rating of these functions suggests optimism that adoption of a changed focus is possible.

Gaps between current performance of these functions and future recommended practice are significant. Making good the differences could lie with policy makers and training institutions who could ensure that adequate attention is afforded to changing the emphasis of school social work.

**Social interaction** functions all enjoyed majority responses in either the "important" or "very important" categories (Refer to Table 5.27b).

TABLE 5.27b: FUTURE PRACTICE OF THE SOCIAL INTERACTION MODEL

Functions	Unimp	Some. Impt	Impt	V.Impt	N. R
1. Developing sound working relations between the school and pupil	1	6	72	<b>164</b>	10
2. Facilitate the setting up of a pupil representative committee	27	45	<b>87</b>	83	11
3. Facilitate the setting up of a parent body	20	39	82	<b>99</b>	13
4. Encouraging pupils and staff to be represented at meetings	25	35	84	<b>99</b>	10
5. Including non academic activities into the curriculum	17	33	92	<b>101</b>	10
6. Identifying problems which interfere with building sound relations between school and pupil	10	12	95	<b>126</b>	10
7. Setting up procedures to deal with such interferences	11	12	100	<b>115</b>	15
8. Maintaining trust between school and pupil	5	9	83	<b>145</b>	11

Developing sound working relations was considered as very important for future practice in the present study. These findings confirm a study by Allen-Meares (1977) where this function was one of the four that ranked favourably in terms of importance. Gaps between present and future practice of this function were found to be minimal, suggesting limited re-orientation if included into a future practice model.

Gaps between the present and future practice of the function of setting up pupil representative committees were also significant. Possible reasons for limited performance of this function are that there may be confusion over the benefits of this function and mandates from educational authorities to set up pupil representative committees, having the effect of encouraging non-compliance.

Parental involvement in the child's education has been highly valued by several authors (Pennekamp and Freeman, 1988; Nystrom, 1989; Radin, 1989). The finding that there is willingness to include this function into a future model, suggests optimism for the transition from a traditional to a more community and ecology centred focus.

Encouraging pupils and staff to discuss concerns at meetings was evaluated as occurring to a limited extent or was considered as not occurring at all in current practice. Gaps between present and future recommended practice are again evident. If South African schools hope to remain open and provide equal education, they will have to rise to the challenge of engaging all significant players in

problem solving (Livingstone and Mabetoa, 1989).

Including non academic activities into the curriculum was considered very important for future practice. Besides maximising the pupil's enjoyment of the school experience, such inclusion could also aim at educating the child socially, preventing the onset of social problems and generally improving life skills (Gonet, 1990; van Rooyen, 1989).

The finding that all the functions within the different models were favoured by the majority of respondents is significant. Such a combination of functions could be practised effectively through the adoption of an ecological paradigm, which offers conceptual and methodological guidance to intervene at various systemic levels (Apter, 1982).

Models of school social work were proposed for comment by the sample that completed question 4 of Appendix A. These were the traditional model, the community school model, the school change model, the social interaction model and the eclectic model with an ecological bias. Details regarding responses are reflected in Table 5.29.

**TABLE 5.29: MODELS OF SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK CHOSEN BY RESPONDENTS**

<b>MODEL</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Traditional Model</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Community School Model</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>School Change Model</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Social Interaction Model</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Eclectic/Ecological Model</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>

Both the ecological and community school models enjoyed the most support. This finding is in keeping with the finding from Appendix B, section E-2 wherein all functions were regarded as important for the future. Findings are commensurate with literature advocating changes to move away from or add to traditional forms of intervention (Hare, 1988; Radin, 1989). The community school model was most favoured (72%), which is attributable to a call for community outreach services, social action and proactive responses to problem prevention and problem solving (Brown and Swanson, 1988; Cervera, 1990; Gathiram, 1993; The Vuleka Trust, 1992).

### **The Future of School Social Work** (question 6 Appendix A)

The expectation or vision of respondents regarding school social work was included as a question to study aspirations and hopes, in order that they could be considered for future school social work practice. Responses were as follows :

- "it should cater for the needs and aspirations of the pupil as a member of a particular community with a unique socio-economic background";
- "it should work hand in hand with other support services";
- "the implementation of school social work is very slow...should be speeded up";
- "... (it should help the pupil) to care for... fellow human beings, cope with (the) everyday social environment and (to have) knowledge of social resources";
- "...moet geprivatiseer word";
- "...be an integral part of the school system throughout the country";
- "...immediate attention to the Black community";
- "...legislation, policy and funding for the employment of school social workers in all schools in South Africa";
- "... become part of the educational system...and school social workers without an educational qualification should be appointed";
- "... recognition of the service";
- "...empower community members...(and) develop collaborative models";
- "... team approach and a joint responsibility";
- "...proactive approach, holistic approach and should be health rather than disease oriented";

These responses highlight a variety of issues that need to be considered for the successful establishment of school social work throughout the country, in all schools. A proactive response which is health rather than disease oriented is generally advocated which is in keeping with the proposed community school and ecological models of school social work. Empowerment of community members, racial awareness and racial tolerance, are suggested within this paradigm and discussed in reviewing literature for accommodating a changed emphasis in school social work.

A team approach, the necessity of the service and its relevance for black, disadvantaged communities are other recommendations made by these respondents. Legislation, funding and recognition of the service to facilitate its establishment, feature in the feasibility study as well. These recommendations have been made previously (Africa, 1977; Kasiram, 1987; Rocher, 1977), suggesting that the status quo has not been changed for a considerable length of time.

The suggestion of privatization of school social work is in sharp contrast to the general response of state funding and equal distribution of the service nationwide. It is possible that the motivation for the response was the "speeding up" of the service since privatization may be one way in which school social work could be offered to a few selected schools by the private sector. Clearly, this option is not viable for the majority of schools and communities in South Africa.



## **A NEW MODEL**

These recommendations, the literature review and results from the feasibility study point to the need for a changed emphasis in school social work. Analysis of problems occurring at schools clearly indicates the prevalence and multi-variant nature of these problems. The assessment of current school social work practice demonstrated the inadequacy of current services meeting the needs of the school. A feasible model incorporating a multi-dimensional, preventive focus, which is health rather than disease oriented, is needed to accommodate the variety of levels at which deficits and dysfunction occur.

An ecological paradigm accommodates several theoretical orientations, moves away from linearity and a one-to-one focus, to the wholeness, interdependence and complementarity of living organisms (Germain and Gitterman, 1980). In promoting appreciation of the unique qualities and needs of different ecosystems, this paradigm facilitates the establishment of culturally relevant services. The aim is to achieve congruence or balance within ecological systems, with the school social worker working at the interface of the school and the child, the family and the child and the community and the child. Greif and Lynch (1983:36) refer to the focus as being the "interface of the organism and the impinging environment". Intervention includes "conjoint activities at multiple levels of the system" (Levine and Mellor, 1988:235).



The ecological bias is preferred to an ecosystemic bias, although both accommodate various intervention strategies, because it provides conceptual and methodological guidance for practice (Refer to section 2.5.7, chapter two).

Key features of the ecological paradigm presented in chapter two (section 2.5.7) are summarised here to establish the relevance of ecological theory to school social work as follows (Apter, 1982:78):

- Focus on the child's entire community or ecological system;
- Effort to synthesize information from different social situations;
- Emphasis on individual adaptation and adjustment;
- Information from various aspects of the environment are used to facilitate congruence;
- Focus is on values or a value orientation.

The four systems at which intervention could be directed are the microsystem, mezzosystem, exosystem and the macrosystem. Ecological assessments which make use of ecomapping could be used to achieve congruence in these different systems.

Ecological theory could be used to develop a new model for school social work. Literature reviewed in chapters two and three refer to the relevance of **ecological theory** to school social work, rather than a **different model** with an all-encompassing focus. In the literature, the ecological model is not included as a model serving school social work. According to Alderson (1972:59), a model allows one to view practice against a theoretical backdrop, it provides a scheme or map

for making sense out of practice and it has practical significance for guiding further interventions. Using the dimensions in describing existing models, an ecological model for future practice is hereunder presented, being the culmination of the analysis and development phases of this study.

### **Focus**

The focus of the ecological model is broad and accommodates intervention at a multiplicity of levels. The focus includes all systems with which the child is linked - the school, the family, the community and the broader society/community which impacts on the child's functioning. Monkman (1981:142) divides the systems which affect the child into resources which could be formal, informal and societal; expectations which are patterned performance and normative obligations and laws and policies that control conduct.

Results from the present study clearly point to a needs-centred approach which includes all functions contained in existing models of practice. Recommendations for future practice also suggest that both a preventive and developmental-therapeutic bias are necessary for future practice to ensure relevancy. An ecological model incorporates all the functions within existing models of practice because its focus could extend to all systems that impact on the child.

## **Goals**

The goal of this model would be to achieve a goodness of fit between the pupil and the unique ecological systems of which he/she forms a part. This points to the need to intervene at a range of different levels, depending on where deficits and incongruence are identified in the systems with which the child is linked. The relevance of such an all-encompassing goal for school social work was abundantly clear during the analysis of recommendations which included individual, school, community and interaction changes.

## **Target System**

The primary target system is the pupil as he/she interacts with the environment. Because the forces that affect the pupil vary greatly, the target of intervention could also vary accordingly. Specific targets could be the child, attitudes and expectations of parents or teachers, resources or laws and policies. Micro, mezzo, exo and macrosystemic levels as outlined by Levine and Mellor (1988), provide the range within which different targets could be found.

## **View of Sources of Difficulty**

The main sources of difficulty are seen to lie within the individual, the institution or the community. Chapter three contains details of various problems, their etiology and possible practice interventions. It is apparent from both the literature review as well as the problem analysis step conducted in the present study, that schools experience a wide and disturbing variety of problems. Disturbance within the child is seen to originate from a disparity between the child's abilities and the

demands of the environment. Since sources of difficulty vary greatly, the school social worker could use knowledge of various theories to facilitate the development of accurate diagnoses on the sources of difficulty.

### **Social Work Tasks and Activities**

Social work tasks have been identified in the present study as being a combination of all functions contained in the existing models of practice. These activities utilise preventive, developmental and therapeutic strategies. Considering the findings in respect of the development of problems at schools, all strategies are needed to address the range of problems experienced at schools. An ecological model houses a variety of functions, enabling the school social worker to intervene without being tied to any particular model with a specific focus.

The specific tasks to be performed by the school social worker at the different systemic levels are as follows (Allen-Meares, 1977; Apter, 1982:70-71; Costin, 1969; Pennekamp and Freeman 1988:284):

Microsystemic interventions aim at working with the school, family or child as follows:

- build new competencies through direct service e.g. case, family or groupwork or indirect service e.g. personnel service to teachers;
- obtain/link resources to school or family;
- alter perceptions and activities;
- raise or lower expectations;

- increase understanding or knowledge.

Mezzosystemic interventions aim at working to strengthen partnerships between the school and the family as follows:

- developing new roles for the teacher;
- developing non academic programmes which serve the child's interests;
- setting up a pupil representative committee;
- setting up a representative parent body;
- encouraging pupil and parent representation at meetings;
- identifying and dealing with problems which interfere with maintaining sound relations between the school and family;

Exosystemic interventions aim at working with neighbours, social agencies, businesses and the community at large as follows:

- identifying key problems in the school;
- inviting exosystem participation to resolve these problems;
- developing co-ordinating ties with the exosystem.

Macrosystemic interventions aim at working with national values, legislations, policies and funding patterns as follows:

- identifying dysfunctional school policies and practices;
- consulting with school administrators on these policies;
- engaging support of significant others in addressing these policies.

## **Major Worker Roles**

Due to the complexity of roles and functions that are accommodated within this model, the school social worker could adopt a variety of roles. These are enabling, mediating and advocating on behalf of the client system.

## **Conceptual and Theoretical Base**

The grounding for the ecological model has been derived from ecological theory and systems theory. Practice interventions have a wider theoretical base and range from psychodynamic to organizational theories.

The ecological model may be viewed as a catalyst which brings together several theoretical approaches. Its value lies in its focus on health and harmony and on both proactive and therapeutic responses simultaneously serving schools. In the feasibility study of the present research, conditions that would serve future school social work practice were identified. Education and social work personnel were seen as motivated to adopt a changed focus. If the ecological model were adopted, qualifications and skills for practice, as well as adequate launching of the service, would be dealt with by those training institutions that have demonstrated a firm commitment to a relevant school social work service. The number of schools to be served could be changed by some departments to the secondary school and the feeder primary school. Since this is presently practised in some administrations, this arrangement is considered feasible and respectful of the economic crisis in the country. Accountability and control has been clearly demonstrated as needing to lie with both education and welfare. The present practice in respect of dual control

in some administrations, again points to the need for such teamwork. Differences in the perceptions of current services and differing views regarding future practice amongst the different personnel groups, point to a distinct lack of interprofessional teamwork. This problem could be resolved if clearer policies were formulated on teaming opportunities. Specific conditions such as research and conferences to prove the need for the service may be considered attainable. Uncertainty regarding meeting conditions such as governmental sanction and support or a unitary education department may render the model less feasible. However, South Africa is in the midst of change wherein historic imbalances are currently being addressed. A unitary education department may soon become a reality and governmental support for school social work, less of an ideal in the light of changing funding patterns.

The design of the innovation (the ecological model) should make it possible to prevent, change or remedy the problem (Thomas, 1985b:51). In relation to the present study, the ecological model is expected to prevent and remedy some of the social problems existing at schools by changing the focus of practice to ensure relevancy.



## **5.6 SECTION THREE: THE EVALUATION PHASE**

The ecological model which was developed in phase two of the study, was tested by final year school social work students. Trial use in the evaluation phase, as outlined by Thomas (1985b:53), involves implementation of the innovation in practice, to test the adequacy of the innovation. According to Thomas (1985a:496), "trial use generally begins with pilot implementation". Since social workers in the field would have first required demonstration of the adequacy of the model, followed by training to utilise the model, student social workers were used in pilot testing. Appendix C was used as a guide to ensure a measure of consistency in reporting. Evaluative procedures suggested by Raymond (1985:435) were incorporated into the guide (refer to Appendix C) to identify specific components of the model as indices of effectiveness. The ecological model as a total product or programme was also evaluated to gauge whether exposure to the model resulted in any desired effects (Suchman, 1967:74). Five fourth year student social workers participated in the evaluation phase of the study. They were trained in the use of the ecological model and their efforts monitored to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the feasibility of the model in the field. The five schools where these students undertook their fieldwork training were identified as sites for implementation of the model. Further details of sample selection and the research design in respect of this phase of the study, appear in section 4.3 of chapter four.

In relation to results from the feasibility study (section 5.4 of chapter 5), parallels may be drawn with the evaluation phase of the study. In the feasibility study,



each school was ready to adopt an integrative focus in social work. Schools in the evaluation phase have been used as sites for fieldwork over several years by the university and therefore have been exposed to and accept the university mandate of integrating methods. In respect of policy, schools had one student providing services three days per week over the academic year. This is not too different from the feasibility results suggesting that the school social worker serve one secondary school and the feeder primary school. As regards accountability and control, the student received fieldwork supervision from the university (the welfare component) and was physically controlled by the school administrator. Physical control, as discussed by Theron (1991), included the student notifying the school administrator of the general nature of services and obtaining sanction and support for various interventions. This is commensurate with findings in respect of the feasibility study where dual control of welfare and education was advocated. Finally, the qualifications of the students were in keeping with results of the feasibility study where a four year degree and practical training in the school were considered appropriate for practice.

Findings of the evaluation phase are discussed according to the ecological model that is presented as the "new technology" in the development phase in section 5.5 of this chapter. Different levels of social work intervention are used as a basis for reporting on the components of the ecological model. This is consistent with the discussion on tasks to be performed by the school social worker at different systemic levels when the model's features were outlined in the development phase. The different levels at which interventions were directed were as follows :

## **Microsystemic Functions**

Microsystemic interventions were aimed at the individual child, family or the school and were primarily individualistic in nature, except for groupwork which was included within this focus. Students were required to evaluate their use of microsystemic functions in five cases each. They identified the following problems:

- marital breakdown of parents;
- adultery in parent;
- withdrawal of child from social and academic activities at school;
- academic underachievement;
- sexual abuse;
- suicidal feelings in child;
- alcoholism of parents;
- mental institutionalization of father.

Service objectives in respect of these problems were accordingly aimed at :

- marital and family therapy;
- emotional support to deal with withdrawal;
- academic achievement;
- improved teacher understanding of child's problems;
- enabling the child to confide the sexual abuse to significant others;
- instilling feelings of self worth in child;
- dealing with the events that precipitated suicidal thoughts;
- constructive confrontation with the alcoholic and referral for specialized attention;

- enabling the child to cope with feelings of loss of father by facilitating regular contact between father and family members.

From this range of problems and service objectives, it is apparent that school children are exposed to a wide variety of problems. Attention may be drawn to the problem analysis step of the study, wherein a wide range of problems were found to occur with varying degrees of severity in schools, countrywide.

Professional intervention at a microsystemic level was viewed as successful in achieving many of these objectives. Students identified the following indicators of having met service objectives :

- the marital pair practised effective and constructive decision making;
- the child accepted the breakdown of his parents' marriage as evidenced in his grade levels improving and in him indicating verbally that he was no longer angry over the separation;
- child and teacher were made "aware of the child's weak spots", thereby facilitating specific attention to relevant problem areas;
- the child regained her self worth through groupwork, which was accomplished through building new competencies in the child during feedback from group members;
- admission by the client to having an alcohol problem and willingness to receive treatment; family communication also improved;
- child began helping other family members to cope with the temporary "loss" of the father.

Intervention in relation to these problems necessitated teamwork with the family, teaching staff and the referral agency in the area. Successful teaming was cited as being responsible for meeting service objectives and is commensurate with literature on the need for teamwork (Costin, 1977; Hildebrandt, 1992; Kasiram, 1987; Rocher, 1977) as well as with findings in respect of the value of teamwork in the development phase of the study.

Family work generally produced favourable results. By intervening at the level of the family, commitment to the problem-solving process was secured and the client's awareness of the severity of the problem was increased. When family therapy was practised, it was viewed as directing the course of therapy. Careful timing of home liaison functions was cited as promoting effectiveness especially in working with alcoholics who needed to be confronted when they were vulnerable, such as during their sick leave! Close monitoring and support of a client's progress after referral, having clear objectives and having knowledge of resources were also provided as reasons for improving service effectiveness.

Failure in accomplishing objectives was reported when a client threatened suicide on being requested to alert parents of sex abuse. Work with the family was not possible because the child refused entry into the home. To prevent further abuse, the pupil was advised on practical ways of dealing with and preventing the abuse cycle from continuing. Clearly, such a microsystemic intervention is inadequate in addressing the child's problem comprehensively, necessitating an exosystemic focus to complement the service. Sex abuse awareness programmes to increase

knowledge of the problem and to offer hope that the cycle may be successfully broken, were recommended and reported as having beneficial effects by Collings (1990).

Agency referral was experienced as disappointing since timeous follow up did not occur. Recommendations to facilitate referral, included effective communication and teamwork with the agency, achievable during the orientation period when the student is expected to familiarise herself with the school and surrounding community. This suggestion for close teamwork with the community agency is reiterated by local and overseas authors (Cervera, 1990; Gathiram, 1993).

Microsystemic interventions include groupwork functions (Alderson, 1977; Livingstone, 1990). Groupwork was employed by students, some electing to run several groups in one year because of the demand for the service from pupils and the job satisfaction experienced by students. Members of the group were derived from the caseload of the student. In several instances, both casework and groupwork methods were integrated, this serving to increase service effectiveness.

Problems experienced by group members included low self esteem and self concept, adjustment problems of black pupils into a primarily Indian school and communication difficulties between members and their families. Several groups focused on improving self concept, suggesting that many pupils experience problems linked to poor self concepts, presumably because of stress in their lives (Swanson, 1986).

Service objectives were accordingly linked to improving the pupil's self concept, facilitating adjustment and integration to the school and improving relationships with family members.

Success in meeting service objectives were attributed to programmes being planned according to the members' needs, support of change efforts by members, members being given tasks to perform after group sessions, the use of role play and drama to promote problem solving and use of innovative ice-breakers to build relationships.

Reasons for students not attaining some service objectives, were that it was not possible to enlist the help of teachers to provide extra tuition when this was indicated. The recommendation to counter the inability to provide extra tuition was that the teacher be invited to a session in order to have first hand experience of this. Having mixed race members was also cited as serving the objective of racial integration groups. Racial integration in South African schools is a new challenge (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1990), requiring effort to keep abreast of changing societal circumstances (Hare, 1988). Again, microsystemic responses to the problem are insufficient. The recommendation of mixed race groups is in keeping with McRoy and Freeman's (1986:173) suggestion of local racial mixing at schools. Another recommendation to facilitate racial integration made by students, was that of pupils being encouraged to discuss their racial heritages with parents, which is also suggested by Moroz and Segal (1990).



Microsystemic functions were successfully accomplished with a few suggestions for improvement, these mainly indicating the need to supplement the approach with mezzo, exo and macrosystemic interventions. These findings compare favourably with findings from the analysis and development phases where microsystemic functions were frequently and successfully undertaken.

### **Mezzosystemic Functions**

Mezzosystemic functions aim at strengthening partnerships between the school and the family (Pennekamp and Freeman, 1988). Students reported on the following problems that were experienced at this level :

- limited staff development to accommodate changes in the school structure;
- teacher resistance to instruction time being occasionally needed to resolve the child's social problems;
- no representation of pupil-related concerns at staff meetings;
- poor involvement of parents in their childrens' education.

Mezzosystemic interventions were performed through the following functions :

- linking the child and school via the home visit;
- interpreting the child's problem to teaching staff;
- developing new roles for the teacher through inservice training;
- providing a personnel service to staff members;
- facilitating school, family partnerships by educating staff members on the impact of social problems on academic performance;
- arranging parent meetings to increase parental involvement.

Providing for inservice training and offering a personnel service to staff members were considered as mezzosystemic functions because their accomplishment increased teaching effectiveness. Parents value good teaching, which in turn improves relationships between the school and the family.

Functions within the mezzosystemic focus met with differing degrees of success. The first two functions of linking the school and family through home visits and liaising with the teacher, may be regarded as having a microsystemic focus. In the discussion on microsystemic interventions, these functions were presented as being successfully accomplished through effective teaming.

Students indicated that it was difficult to encourage parental involvement through adequate participation at meetings. Firstly, they were reluctant to attend meetings and secondly, when they did attend, they did not assert themselves nor represent their needs to the school. Reported reasons for insufficient parental involvement included parents being dominated by "teachers who made all the decisions" at these meetings. Together with the apathy experienced in many communities, the authoritarianism of the educationist may only serve to entrench a culture of uninvolved and disinterested parents in their children's education. Parental involvement and empowerment are important and discussed in the literature review as a means of redressing inequitable educational facilities (Gathiram, 1993; Lee, 1983; Pennekamp and Freeman, 1988). Students recognised the importance of parental empowerment and recommended that vigorous efforts to obtain parental support be made through advertising meetings timeously and then



deliberate effort be made to encourage participation at meetings.

Teacher burnout was acknowledged and fresh approaches to teaching suggested by outside experts during inservice training. However, teachers did not always respond favourably to changing their roles in accord with suggestions from experts. It is likely that inservice training lacked sufficient involvement of the teacher in the change process. It is also possible that the suggestions were not perceived as pertinent, indicating that alternative strategies were required to suitably address teacher burnout. Teacher burnout could be linked to teacher relevancy where teachers display job dissatisfaction because they recognise that they are not meeting the educational needs of the child. Inservice training to promote relevancy could mean changes in curricula as discussed by Livingstone (1990). This was not a service objective of any student, presumably because of the "learner status" of the student and students themselves lacking assertiveness in promoting inservice training along these lines. Students cited their short term of service at the school as a reason for not implementing macrosystemic functions, indicating that confidences of educationists had to be won first and trust developed. Arranging for or offering inservice training regarding changes in curricula also appeared to require the same conditions for successful implementation.

Teachers approached students readily when they had personal problems. Successful performance of this function was attributed to high levels of stress amongst teachers and to students displaying their professional worth when

performing microsystemic functions.

Teachers accepted the impact of social problems on academic performance when students discussed results of needs assessments with staff members at staff meetings. Through this effort, educationists were enabled to identify problem patterns that emerged in the school and to suggest problem solving strategies. This in turn promoted the development of a school-family partnership since the teacher was sensitised to the child's circumstances and needs. This function is discussed in the literature review in terms of bridging the gap in an "us/them" relationship to secure school-family partnerships (Pennekamp and Freeman, 1988:250).

Students evaluated the function of encouraging school-family partnerships as being minimally implemented. They indicated that more extensive performance of the function could have been possible if they were more assertive, if they were seen as service providers, rather than as students in a learner role and if they combined a needs-centred approach to problem solving without emphasising microsystemic interventions. It is possible, as suggested by Zielinski and Coolidge (1981), that students were not altogether comfortable in adopting the full range of functions within an ecological bias because of the school administration's preference for microsystemic functions.

## **Exosystemic Functions**

At the exosystemic level, students were expected to work with neighbours, social work agencies, businesses and the community at large. Functions focused on identifying key problems in the school community and inviting community participation towards their resolution.

Identification of problems was systematically undertaken through a needs assessment. Through this effort, a profile of problems at the school was established. Findings of the survey were interpreted to the staff at a staff meeting to alert educationists of the problem conditions in the school and to obtain their co-operation in forming problem solving teams to deal with identified problems.

In the needs assessments, substance abuse featured as the main problem in 3 out of 5 schools, suggesting that it was commonly experienced. This conflicts with findings in respect of the problem analysis phase of the study (refer to Tables 5.11 and 5.12 in chapter 5) wherein drug taking and alcoholism were regarded as occurring "never" and "occasionally". The researcher attributes the difference to the needs assessment survey involving pupils in assessing their own problems as compared to educationists evaluating problem occurrences in pupils in the analysis phase.

The main problems in the other schools were marital breakdown and poor academic achievement linked to both teachers and pupils having negative attitudes regarding pupils' ability to achieve academically. Identifying key

problems and sharing this information with educationists produced several desirable effects. Reports were made of right living and guidance lessons being structured in accordance with these problem themes. Thereby, teachers involved in these subjects were involved in the problems at the level of increasing awareness. Identification of key problems also provided impetus for intervention at micro and mezzosystemic levels. Integration of the various methods of social work was thus encouraged and in keeping with the multi-dimensional focus of the ecological model. Another reported benefit was the school administration being enabled to plan non academic activities effectively. These involved agencies in the area undertaking projects in respect of identified problems and promoting teaming.

Inviting the community to participate in the project was not as successful as identification of the problem. The "community" was seen to consist of parents of pupils, social work agencies in the area, resources in relation to the identified problem, pupils and school personnel. In most instances, involvement of school personnel was limited despite being considered as crucial to promoting the success of the project. Recommendations included the need for more staff support, especially where the principal did not sanction the project and where teachers were quick to assume minimal responsibilities/duties in respect of the project. Co-operation of educationists is significant in relation to successful school social work practice (Rocher, 1977). Launching the service effectively at the outset was recommended, to increase the likelihood that there would be understanding of and commitment to all school social work functions.

Involvement of parents and social work agencies often occurred simultaneously e.g. when parents were invited to the school and were addressed by experts on the key problems. Social work agencies were enthusiastic about offering an "expert" service when approached by the student or the school's administration. A significant recommendation was the need to "research" the effectiveness of the "expert" so as to ensure the best possible service.

Parental involvement in resolving identified problems was minimal as discussed for the performance of mezzosystemic functions. Reasons provided for poor parent participation were that the meetings were insufficiently advertised, parents were not motivated to sacrifice an evening with a focus on problems and that the school itself did not provide full support for the meeting because it meant expenditure of time and money. Apathy in many communities has been discussed in relation to mezzosystemic functions. Apathy amongst educationists was evidenced in their reluctance to spending time at school, after hours. Lee (1983) discusses this phenomenon in relation to the helplessness and powerlessness of teachers. In this regard, recommendations included "more time (being) spent on breaking through apathy" of educationists and parents.

Involvement of the pupil in community projects, was reported as very encouraging. Pupils were innovative, enthusiastic and energetic when they participated in planning and/or receiving service objectives relating to projects. Their efforts included performing "raps" which carried messages through song and dance gestures, and writing and acting in plays wherein contemporary television

characters were used to relay messages pertaining to the problem theme. A float procession was organised down the street on a busy Saturday morning to highlight the dangers of substance abuse - the floats being the joint efforts of teachers and pupils. Teachers and pupils were also exposed to learning the art of positive thinking to inspire optimum academic achievement. Successful projects often had a variety of different ways in which awareness and problem solving occurred. All these ideas were the product of team effort and highly recommended by students in the future performance of exosystemic functions. Participants understand their needs best, diagnose their problems accurately and are therefore in the best position to choose appropriate interventions regarding these needs/problems. The theme of "bridge-building" and involving the participation of all players, is considered important for marginalized and disadvantaged communities (Friedman, 1992; The Vuleka Trust, 1992). This assures the tapping of local energy and talent, whilst engaging the community in change efforts.

Exosystemic interventions involved creating awareness, offering education and setting up problem solving procedures in respect of the key concerns that were identified through the needs assessments. Moving beyond awareness to resolution of problems was accomplished to a limited extent. Students reported that their problem solving efforts were primarily microsystemic, involving casework and some groupwork functions. Efforts were also poorly timed, during pupils' tests or examinations. Students reported that more time was necessary for the complete programme to be implemented. Practical considerations may thus be important in determining the success or failure of performing exosystemic interventions.



In general, some difficulty was experienced in undertaking all functions within the exosystemic focus. This was attributable to students being uncomfortable about asserting their roles, to limited participation of all players involved in the identified problem and time constraints not allowing full expression of all functions.

### **Macrosystemic Functions**

Macrosystemic interventions include working with national values, legislations, policies and funding patterns (Pennekamp and Freeman, 1988). Students identified the following interventions for their schools:

- identifying dysfunctional school practices;
- consulting with school administrators on these policies;
- obtaining the support of significant others to deal with dysfunctional practices.

Students reported that they were not able to perform these functions to any significant degree because the school social work service was not "established for any length of time" to accommodate a macrosystemic bias. Students reported that macrosystemic functions required sufficient "trust between school and student" and the "short-lived nature" of the service did not permit the building of confidences. Dysfunctional school practices were specified as :

- teachers not being qualified to teach certain subjects and having to do so against their wishes;
- administration of severe corporal punishment by the teacher;

- unauthorised "visitors" entering the school premises;
- poor relationship between teaching and administrative staff.

These practices require change in order that the educative process is enhanced. The school social worker cannot intervene at this level directly but may be considered as a mediator in firstly facilitating the acceptance of these practices as dysfunctional and secondly, in promoting their replacement. Efforts in this regard required skill, diplomacy, maturity and good working relationships with all educationists in the school. Students negotiated with the school principal in respect of some of these practices as they did not feel that they had the power to form problem solving teams to address them directly.

Regarding appropriate security for the school, liaison with the principal produced favourable results with a guard being posted at the entrance of the school. Although it is expected that the principal, being the administrative head, would have his/her pulse on the school and have some knowledge of the problems/needs of the school, it is evident from this example that the school social worker is also knowledgeable of these problems/needs. Thus if both could work in tandem with each other, the school population would be optimally served.

Liaison with the principal did not always produce desired results as some dysfunctional practices were related to the abuse of administrative power. The observation of teachers being unable to assert themselves in respect of subjects that they wished to teach, reflects accurately the powerlessness referred to by Lee



(1983) and the communication barrier between the teacher and the school administrator. Powerlessness amongst school social work students was also evident in them reporting inability to assert themselves. Students did not address the problem of teachers teaching subjects that they were not qualified to teach, nor of them using corporal punishment. Limited attention was afforded to the problem of poor teacher-administration relationships. Students recommended that they needed more time to build relationships and earn the trust of the teacher and school administration in order to intervene at these levels. However, it must be recognised that responsible and timeous action to address conflicts and dysfunctional practices is needed (The Vuleka Trust, 1992). This has implications for the future deployment of macrosystemic interventions.

Students were requested to offer a general evaluation of the ecological model as a total product or programme. They reported success in performing microsystemic, mezzosystemic and exosystemic interventions. Macrosystemic functions were reported as difficult to accomplish, although they were positively valued. The use of "multi-dimensional assessment and interventive procedures" and facilitating "congruence between the child and his school and community environments" were reported as serving the interests of the child and environment. "Tapping all the systems in the ecology" to increase teacher and community participation, was advocated in adopting an ecological perspective successfully. Students asserted that if the model were implemented at all schools, then it would prove the value of school social work throughout the country.

It was noted that students did not make use of ecological diagnostic procedures such as the ecomap as discussed in the literature review (chapter 2). It is possible that use of the ecomap would have enhanced accurate assessment of problems and enabled interventions to be targeted at areas where dysfunction or deficit occurred. In this way, the tendency to over use microsystemic interventions to replace interventions at levels where discord was diagnosed, would have been checked.

In considering the redesigning of the ecological model according to the results of the evaluation of the social technology, it would appear that all the functions within the various levels of intervention were considered important. Therefore adjustment of the model itself is not necessary, instead conditions to increase the feasibility of practising the model were suggested. The training of the practitioner to assert his/her professionalism is indicated. Training could focus on acquiring skills in enlisting the participation of all significant others, in effective teaming and in supplementing microsystemic interventions with mezzo, exo and macrosystemic interventions. Policies that promote maximum visibility of the service are also needed to ensure that the ecological model may be successfully employed. These policies may be translated into specific conditions such as school social workers serving not more than two schools at a given time and serving schools for a minimum period of two years to facilitate the performance of macrosystemic interventions.

According to Thomas (1985a:497), "revision of the innovation combined with its evaluation may occur many, many times before a satisfactory technical

achievement is obtained". To this end, further implementation and evaluation of the model is envisaged to refine the social technology. This is to be encouraged as it will serve to promote relevancy.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

The aims of this study as set out in chapter one, were to research the nature and extent of problems which school social work must address, the adequacy of current school social work practice in dealing with these problems and in the light of the first two aspects, to finally develop an indigenous, relevant model for future practice. Local research in school social work has thus far concentrated on services in certain provinces, in certain race groups or on specific aspects of practice which was perceived as improving or accelerating the establishment of the service. The focus of the present study extended to all racial groups and provinces in South Africa and to developing an all encompassing model that was evaluated as feasible within the South African societal context. The study took cognisance of the call for relevancy in practice and transitions in the country promising racial integration and resource redistribution.

Thomas' (1985a:483; 1985b:50) developmental design was viewed as serving the purposes of the study. Conclusions in respect of each of the phases of the study are presented, followed by recommendations which are derived from the development and evaluation phases of the research.

## 6.2 THE ANALYSIS PHASE

During this phase of the study, policies, problems/needs and service provision in respect of school social work were surveyed. A feasibility study was also undertaken during this phase to take cognisance of local conditions that may influence the feasibility of the new model. Practical difficulties in implementing a changed emphasis were identified and recommendations made to accommodate them to increase the chances of using the developed model in fieldwork practice.

Educational and welfare needs of children are provided by several different departments following the separatist laws of "apartheid" which have characterised differential service provision in the country. Policies were thus found to be varied in nature. It was noted that no school under the control of the Department of Education and Training, in any province in the country, offered school social work services. When black children had social problems requiring professional attention, they were referred to the local social work agency or to a system described as the PIDA system (Panel for Identification, Diagnosis and Assessment - refer to chapter one). The PIDA system involved referral and there was no social worker on the school premises. The PIDA team consisted of a team of teachers who assisted the child or referred the child to a social worker when they "deemed it necessary". According to the Department of Education and Training (1991), the ideal would be to have a social worker in each PIDA team although this was considered as "not yet possible" due to financial constraints. Thus a school social work service in relation to either a resident social worker at the school or in the form of a

consistent member of the PIDA team being a social worker, was not in existence in schools under the control of the Department of Education and Training. Black schools in the homelands, reported that there was no school social work service at any of their schools. Such services were considered a luxury in relation to basic educational needs not being met in black schools.

The administration controlling coloured education and welfare offered school social work services in all four provinces. Each school social worker served an average of two schools in an area, with the welfare department being in charge of professional accountability and the education department being responsible for physical accountability. Joint control by both education and welfare was a policy that served this administration and had been put into operation from the inception, when the site for the service was determined and when the service was launched.

The administration controlling white education and welfare offered school social work services from psychological clinics. Each school social worker served several schools and institutions in the area. The control of the service came from the education department.

The administration controlling Indian education and welfare offered school social work as a pilot project in Natal at 5 schools. School social workers served a secondary school and the feeder primary school and were employed by the welfare department of this administration.

Varied policies in respect of the control and number of schools to be served by the school social worker reflect the inconsistencies resulting from separatist policies. School social work was non-existent for blacks, diluted for whites, in an experimental stage for Indians and providing a valuable service in some schools in respect of the coloured population. Visibility of the practitioner and the service was clearly a problem, especially where the practitioner served several schools and institutions in the area. Policies recommended during the development phase of the study to improve visibility of the service were having one social worker serving not more than two schools in the area. Rocher (1983) asserts that poor visibility correlates positively with ineffective service delivery, thereby indicating the need for changing policies that discourage optimum visibility. A further policy that was recommended for change concerned the control of the service. Both education and welfare components were suggested as requiring to jointly control school social work with professional control from welfare and physical control from education. School social work being practised in a host setting, needs to be jointly administered by both education and welfare to ensure that the practice is congruent with the aims of education. This aspect is discussed further in concluding results of the feasibility study in chapter five.

In analysing problems at schools, it was found that a variety of problems existed in both primary and secondary schools, suggesting the need for multi-faceted interventions. Problems such as underachievement and poor concentration occurred frequently in both school groups, confirming findings of the South African Institute of Race Relations (1990; 1993). Dropping out and truancy were found to



occur "occasionally" and did not appear to follow the trend of underachievement or poor concentration. These findings are inconsistent with the high drop-out rates amongst black school children (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1990). This suggests that drop-out rates amongst black children are higher than drop-out rates amongst children of other race groups. Literature cites a high incidence of violence, poverty and unemployment in black communities (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1990; 1993), suggesting that normal schooling cannot proceed in such a disruptive climate. Ill health and dishonesty were found to occur "occasionally", whilst physical disability and depression/suicide were not found to occur frequently at schools used in the study. The widespread distribution of responses in all categories indicates the need for adequate resources and programmes in respect of these problems.

Problems such as homelessness and poverty were not found to occur as frequently as suggested in the literature, and this is attributed to black schools not forming part of the sample in this aspect of the study, for reasons that have already been outlined (refer to section 4.3 in chapter 4). Of significance was the wide distribution of responses over many categories for homelessness, poverty and unemployment, suggesting that there were varying experiences of these problems. Children from different backgrounds co-exist in schools, implying that service objectives must accommodate this diversity.

Pregnancy, smoking, substance abuse and promiscuity occurred more frequently in secondary schools than in primary schools, confirming that these problems were



essentially experienced by older children. Implications for preventive services at a primary school level were advocated and in keeping with literature supporting a proactive approach (Cilliers, 1989; Gonet, 1990).

Child abuse, aggressiveness and violence were reported as occurring "occasionally", with a fairly widespread distribution of responses over several categories. This indicates once again that there were different experiences in relation to these problems.

Racial tensions and conflicts were uncommon in schools used in the sample. These findings are in sharp contrast to findings in respect of the escalation of political violence in black areas (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1993:27). Integrated schooling is a relatively new development in South African schools and has been implemented to a limited extent in some schools (Chetty et al. 1992). Thus, racial tensions and conflicts at schools in the present study did not feature as a major problem since black schools were not represented in the sample.

Evaluation of the differences in problem occurrence against the literature review, suggests that differences were largely attributed to the exclusion of black schools in this aspect of the study. Wide variations in responses over many categories suggest that some problems are more acutely experienced in certain areas or amongst certain race groups. Race, age and geographical location appear to influence the nature and severity of problems occurring at schools. A school social work service is necessary to address the variety of problems occurring at schools.

In addition, this service must be comprehensive in order that a rich armamentarium of interventions is offered to adequately accommodate the diverse nature and severity of problems existing in schools.

As regards research in the schools, it was found that there was limited or no research undertaken, confirming studies by Jankovic and Michals (1982) and Weatherely (1982) that little effort is afforded to research by educationists and school social workers alike.

Results of the assessment of school social work services meeting the needs of the school yielded widely varying responses. This was expected since each school is governed by different policies which had a direct bearing on the effectiveness of the school social work service. Services were generally viewed as meeting the needs of pupils "often" in the case of House of Representatives schools and "sometimes" in respect of schools from the other administrations. It seemed clear that policies which promoted teamwork between education and welfare and which allowed the practitioner to serve a maximum of two schools, were responsible for a favourable assessment. These results are supported in the development phase where dual control by education and welfare and school social workers serving not more than two schools were recommended for future practice.

The form of service delivery that was most commonly used was found to be casework, and this is supported by literature citing social workers' use or over-use of casework functions (Allen-Meares, 1977; Costin, 1969; Kasiram, 1987).

Correspondingly, community work was not viewed as a popular practice method. Commensurate with this finding, responses in relation to the specific functions currently performed by school social workers revealed that traditional, casework functions were extensively undertaken. Social workers should adopt a proactive stance to problem prevention, but find it difficult to adopt a changed focus. Their effectiveness is thereby reduced as the service is not keeping abreast of changing societal circumstances. In considering the need to utilise proactive strategies in the future, an infrastructure to accommodate the change needs to be developed. In this regard, policies that determine the existence of school social work and which promote the visibility of the service, need to be adjusted accordingly.

Tasks that were considered as preliminary to launching a school social work service, received varied responses. Most of the tasks except for advertising the service through pamphlets and posters, having workshops and announcing the service at the school assembly, were found to have been undertaken, by a small number of social workers. These findings support the study by Allen-Meares (1977) who indicated that social workers were indeed reluctant to perform preliminary functions in launching a school social work service. A reason cited in the evaluation phase of the study for a comprehensive service not being provided by practitioners, is time constraints placed on school social workers who serve many schools concurrently. This argument could also apply to preliminary functions not being adequately undertaken.

Findings in respect of current service provision in schools were as follows:

All the functions within the scope of the **traditional model** were performed frequently except for therapy to the family, consultation with teachers and referral for specialized services, which occurred "occasionally" (refer to Table 5.24a in chapter 5). Reasons suggested for the popularity of these functions are that educationists themselves favour and encourage the use of traditional functions and social workers not keeping abreast of changing societal circumstances. The finding that consultation with teachers and referral for specialized services occurred "occasionally" is indicative of a lack of teamwork amongst support service providers and reluctance by school social workers to delegate responsibilities.

It was also found that education and school social work personnel differed with regard to how they perceived the performance of traditional functions. These findings are significant in that they point to poor interprofessional teamwork, differing perceptions of functions in educationists and practitioners and possible guarding of professional territory because of role overlap. Allen-Meares and Lane (1983) and Radin and Welsh (1984) also found that differing perceptions of functions and poor teamwork between education and social work personnel were common.

Functions within the **community school model** that were found to be performed "occasionally" or "frequently" were those of identifying key problems at school and offering educational programmes in respect of these problems. All other functions in the community school model were given a "never" rating regarding their current

performance (refer to Table 5.25a in chapter 5). Offering therapy in relation to these problems or inviting community participation in problem solving was not implemented. These findings are similar to findings in respect of the evaluation phase where student school social workers also experienced difficulty in mobilising community and parental support in resolving problems. As noted by Livingstone and Mabetoa (1989), apathy is a typical feature of disadvantaged communities, requiring consistent effort to change the status quo.

Except for the function of identifying dysfunctional practices which was regarded as being performed either "occasionally" or "never", none of the functions within the **school change model** were performed by school social workers. Examination of these functions reveals the need for the school social worker to be an assertive member of the pupil personnel team. Therefore possible reasons for these functions not being performed, were that the service was too diluted and/or in existence for too limited a time period to allow the practitioner to assert his/her professional role.

All the functions within the **social interaction model**, except for functions relating to trust building, were not performed by the social worker (refer to Table 5.27a in chapter 5). Functions related to trust building were viewed as being performed "occasionally" or "frequently". This finding is incongruent with the specific functions indicating how the general functions were implemented. Reasons for this incongruence may be that school personnel expect social workers to establish good relationships and trust between pupils and educationists and

therefore responded without affording the questions further thought. It may also be that because of poor visibility, they were not aware of specific functions that served to improve school-pupil relations.

Results from the analysis phase point to the variety of problems/needs at schools requiring various proactive and therapeutic interventions. Only functions with a traditional or microsystemic focus were viewed as being performed to any significant degree. Changing the school, the community and/or significantly improving relationships between the school and the home/community were not adequately undertaken. It is apparent that a traditional or microsystemic focus is inadequate on its own in comprehensively addressing the needs of the school. The emphasis has to extend to the community, the school as an institution, and the wider society in order that a multi-faceted approach to problem prevention and resolution is adopted. In so doing, the call for proactive, developmental interventions will be addressed.

The feasibility study was undertaken to investigate circumstances that would promote the establishment of school social work, countrywide. This was viewed as essential not only to accommodate all the operational steps in the developmental design, but also to increase the chances of the new technology being feasible for future use.

Respondents favoured the school social worker having a social work degree and practical training in a school. They also suggested that the practitioner serve one secondary school and the feeder primary school. These findings must be viewed against findings in respect of responses from the administration in which social workers served not more than two schools, yielding the most favourable evaluation of the service. Thus when the school social worker serves not more than two schools, his/her visibility is heightened, leading to more effective service delivery (Rocher, 1983). The recommendation that the two schools constitute a secondary school and the feeder primary school has a logical base in that a whole community is thereby served from the time the child enters primary school to the conclusion of his/her schooling career.

Dual accountability and control by education and welfare departments was favoured by both sets of respondents (educationists and social workers) who completed Appendix A and B. Consistent with the request for dual control and teaming, was the finding that administrations practising teamwork generated favourable evaluations of the school social work service. Thus, policies promoting teaming of education and welfare are essential to serving the purposes of school social work in the future.

As regards skills that were considered essential for the practising school social worker, all the listed skills were afforded a high rating. Teaming skills, assertiveness, flexibility, diplomacy and the ability to co-ordinate activities were favoured by respondents. School social work training needs to afford sufficient

attention to the acquisition of teamwork skills and to adopting a flexible approach. Social workers and school social workers are not keeping abreast of changing societal circumstances and adopting a needs-centred focus. Challenges to academic institutions in preparing social workers for a new reality to meet the demands of a transforming society, were viewed as essential in order to ensure an effective, relevant service.

It was suggested that school social work would be established if the following activities were implemented: research, specialized training, educational syllabi adjusted to include knowledge on school social work to facilitate teaming and conferences to advertise the need for the service. Governmental recognition and support for the service and a unitary education department was also advocated in facilitating the development of school social work. It is expected that a unitary education department would release financial pressures of supporting separate, racially based administrations and provide income for support services. Provision of financial support for school social work is an important factor that could retard its establishment, in an era when economic cut-back is being acutely experienced. These requirements, if fulfilled, would heed the demand for equitable resource distribution in education and welfare.

### **6.3 THE DEVELOPMENT PHASE**

In this phase, the "new technology" (Thomas 1985a:494) was developed, using responses which yielded specific information on a future model and responses from



the analysis phase. Results on a future model of school social work indicated that there was a need for a broader focus of intervention to move beyond the traditional, microsystemic focus. Community outreach programmes, changing the school as an institution, developing sound relationships amongst the pupil, school and community and intervening at macrosystemic levels, were considered important in achieving relevancy in school social work.

Both training institutions and welfare departments recommended that school social workers utilise a community school and ecological paradigm to facilitate the redistribution of resources in deprived communities and to accommodate individual and societal deficits. These findings are consistent with the general call for proactive responses in school social work and re-examining roles to ensure relevancy (Hare, 1988; Levine and Mellor, 1988).

School social work and educational personnel favoured the use of all the functions contained in the **traditional model** for the future. It seems that school social work cannot turn away from responding to individual needs, this being the historical perspective of school social work (Radin, 1975). Promoting a goodness of fit between the individual and the environment has long been a goal of social work and a microsystemic focus lends expression to this goal. In keeping with this finding, gaps between current performance of traditional functions and their inclusion into a future model, were minimal.

Functions within the **community school model** were also favoured in a future

school social work model. This is in keeping with literature supporting the use of the community school model in deprived and disadvantaged communities (Alderson, 1972; Allen-Meares, 1977). The finding that training institutions and welfare departments favoured the community school model suggests that there is recognition and support for intervention at the community level. The escalation of unemployment, poverty, crime and violence in South Africa, (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1990; 1993) clearly demonstrates the need for intervention at broader community and societal levels.

Functions in the **school change model** were all considered as important for inclusion into a future school social work service. This is commensurate with the general call for institutional change in communities which have policies that disadvantage certain communities.

Although all respondents favoured the use of functions within the community school and school change models in the future, guidance counsellors appeared to place less value on some of the functions compared to social workers and other educationists. This may be explained in the counsellors' lack of confidence in the education system promoting the performance of these functions since they (the counsellors) have felt unappreciated and have had their services rationalised in the face of economic constraints. This finding is significant for school social work in that a similar lack of confidence or apathy may result if school social work is also rationalised. It is important that school social work practitioners and educationists keep alive their commitment and interest in school social work so

that they may fight for its survival in a form that they believe would best serve all children.

Gaps between the present and future performance of community school and school change functions were wide. Reasons for the gap lie in the diluted nature of school social work services, in poor interprofessional teamwork, in community apathy and in role overlap not allowing fuller expression of these functions. The need to bridge this gap by including macrosystemic interventions into the repertoire of social work functions, is important in promoting relevancy and in ensuring that community and societal deficits are adequately addressed.

Functions contained in the **social interaction model** were favoured by respondents for inclusion in a future school social work model. Gaps between the present and future performance of these functions were significant. The importance of building sound relationships as a strategy to problem prevention and solution cannot be disputed. Democratic decision making, empowerment and bridge building amongst all significant players is considered a prerequisite to negotiation and acceptance of change (Friedman, 1992; The Vuleka Trust, 1992).

Current school social work services, clearly fall short of the service envisaged for the future. It is apparent that the traditional, school change, community school and social interaction models would all serve South African education. Such a multi-faceted focus is available via the ecological model of school social work (Apter, 1982). The ecological model was recommended and developed as the "social

technology" to serve schools in the future. Through the use of this model, interventions may be targeted at micro, mezzo, exo and/or macrosystemic levels, depending on where deficits are experienced. Therefore, if deficits occur at a microsystemic level, interventions would accordingly aim at the school, family or individual child. Interventions at a mezzosystemic level would focus on strengthening partnerships between the school and the family. Exosystemic interventions would target neighbours, social agencies, businesses and the community at large. Macrosystemic interventions would focus on identifying dysfunctional policies and work at the broader level of national values, legislations, policies and funding patterns. This feature of the ecological model to accommodate a broad spectrum of problems/needs because it has an all encompassing focus, would promote relevancy and improve the chances of school social work being valued as an essential support service.

#### **6.4 THE EVALUATION PHASE**

In this phase, the ecological model that was developed, was evaluated on a preliminary basis by student school social workers. According to Thomas (1985a:496), preliminary evaluation begins with trial use and could consist of "mounting a pilot program".

The ecological model was divided into its constituent levels of intervention, and students requested to report thereon. These levels are described in detail in the development phase (chapter 5). The performance of microsystemic, mezzosystemic,

exosystemic and macrosystemic functions were evaluated to test their feasibility and effect.

Functions with a microsystemic or traditional emphasis were well received. Of particular note was the rewarding use of family and groupwork functions which were reported in the analysis phase as not being as extensively undertaken as other functions with a microsystemic bias. Possible reasons for the difference are that schools in the evaluation phase received a less diluted service than some schools in the analysis phase and that students were trained and provided with a mandate to utilise all the functions within this focus. Implications for the adoption of all microsystemic functions within the ecological paradigm are that, given a policy which promotes a visible service, social workers may be trained to perform all microsystemic functions within an ecological framework.

Within the microsystemic focus, service objectives linked to agency referral were not achieved, and attributed to poor co-operation from teachers and agencies. Teaming skills to secure the co-operation of significant role players are clearly required and were also recommended during the feasibility study.

Several functions with a mezzosystemic focus were successfully undertaken during the evaluation phase. These included arranging inservice training for teachers, offering a personnel service to teachers, and sharing needs assessment survey results with staff members. Other functions such as increasing parental involvement and securing pupil representation at staff meetings were not

successfully accomplished. Apathy is found not only amongst parents, but teachers as well, and discussed in relation to results from the feasibility study and in the development phase of the study.

Students found it rewarding to perform functions with an exosystemic focus during the evaluation phase of the study. Conducting a needs assessment to secure a problem profile of the school community was successfully undertaken and efforts in this regard appreciated by educationists. In involving significant others in change efforts, obtaining the co-operation of parents and teachers proved more challenging than obtaining the co-operation of pupils. This restricted the implementation of all functions within the exosystemic focus during the evaluation phase. Further reasons for not accomplishing all functions within this focus are that students were not available to the school everyday and had to contend with the status of "student" and "learner". However, the viability of exosystemic functions within a future ecological model is envisaged because of some reported success of these functions, because of findings in the development phase clearly recommending such a focus and because "obstacles" preventing full expression of these functions could be adequately addressed if some policy change were introduced to promote visibility and relevancy of the service.

Macrosystemic functions were not successfully accomplished during the evaluation phase. This is supported by findings in respect of school change functions in the analysis phase of the study. Change efforts at macrosystemic levels require skill, diplomacy, maturity and good working relationships. Macrosystemic intervention

could be rendered possible if the service is undiluted and if teamwork enjoys more recognition than at present.

In examining the need to redesign the social technology according to Thomas' (1985a:497) developmental design, it was apparent from the evaluation of the model, that all the functions within the model were positively valued. Conditions to promote the deployment of the ecological model were recommended as requiring adjustment. These were related to policy changes to ensure that the service was in operation in each school for a minimum of two years and that the school social worker serve not more than two schools concurrently, in order that the full range of functions within the ecological paradigm be implemented. Training of practitioners to include the acquisition of teamwork skills, becoming assertive and applying mezzo, exo and macrosystemic interventions were advocated.

In contextualising this study, it was apparent that a traditional focus in social work and in school social work required supplementing in order to address deficits in various systems. During the analysis phase of the study, in assessing problems at schools and thereafter in evaluating the effectiveness of current service provision, it was apparent that a combination of approaches was essential for the future. An effective school social work practice model should redress imbalances in service provision, promote relevancy and facilitate the establishment of the service in a restrictive economic climate. The ecological model was viewed as supporting a comprehensive diagnosis and allowing for the use of proactive,

developmental and therapeutic interventions. The choice of the ecological model is expected to serve a diverse South African society. Both individual and environmental deficits will receive due attention to ensure that all ecosystems, with which the child is linked, are congruent. In effect, this combined focus of the ecological model includes the employment of functions within the social interaction, community school and school change models. The feasibility of practising a combined focus was considered possible if policies supported the full expression of all functions within an ecological framework. Then, despite economic pressure, school social work would be recognised as being cost effective and would be appropriately established.

In conclusion, it is apparent that school social work policy, training for social workers and teachers, and institutionalised patterns of thinking and behaving need to be changed if an ecological model is to be successfully adopted. This is in accordance with an ecological perspective, which indicates that change in any one system will affect the functioning of other systems. The ecological view, which derives from ecological and systems theory, underlies the need for all systems to co-exist harmoniously, to enjoy a goodness of fit, so that the whole may function effectively.

## **6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS**

South Africa is in the midst of transition. Children from all communities are expected to learn to prepare for their adult roles in society, against the backdrop



of large scale change in the country. The school is an institution where the child is socialized into preparing for future realities (Radin, 1975). If the child is adequately prepared for these roles, then society is assured of a member that is socially and psychologically well adjusted and economically productive. Ensuring the adjustment of the child is a complex undertaking. A traditional, clinical approach in this regard is inadequate because of the multiplicity of forces that impinge on the child. The ecological model which combines the use of the traditional, community school, school change and social interaction models, is viewed as serving schools comprehensively in the future. Using the ecological model, services could be directed at various systemic levels impacting on the child, depending on where deficits and dysfunction are found. The major purposes of the school would therefore be served and relevancy ensured. As discussed in section 6.3 of this chapter, microsystemic, mezzosystemic, macrosystemic and exosystemic interventions are essential to adequately address the multiplicity of problems facing South African school children. Intervention at all these different systemic levels provides the practitioner with a varied and rich armamentarium of interventions.

There are specific recommendations to facilitate the adoption of the ecological model into practice, having been derived from the operational steps of "technological realization" and "evaluation of social technology" (Thomas, 1985a:488; Thomas, 1985b:51). It is recommended that practitioners intervene at different systemic levels to impact significantly on the variety of problems that face South African schools. Several functions which were viewed as important to

adopting a changed focus and serving pupils comprehensively need attention. These are: liaison with the family, consultation with educational personnel to facilitate understanding of the child in the classroom and to ensure higher visibility of the school social worker, more groupwork, and teamwork with all significant participants at various levels - teamwork with educationists, with parents and with agencies in the hope of serving the child comprehensively.

Functions with an exosystemic focus within the ecological model and functions within the community school model are consistent. These functions clearly need adoption since the benefits are far reaching in prevention and offering therapy and in promoting the visibility of the school social worker. A community school focus is particularly relevant for South Africa to increase awareness, where there is ignorance or limited information, and to mobilise communities to take action in respect of identified problems/needs.

Mezzosystemic functions within the ecological model and functions within the social interaction model are congruent and also need to be adopted since they clearly serve communities experiencing relationship problems. These functions would be particularly relevant in promoting racial integration, in building trust and in empowering disadvantaged communities in South Africa.

Macrosystemic functions in the ecological model and functions within the school change model are consistent. Both aim to change the school as an institution by intervening at broader policy, legislative and national levels. Clearly,

macrosystemic interventions are necessary in order that dysfunctional policies which have historically disadvantaged certain communities be redressed, and equal, relevant education offered to all South African children.

To facilitate the practice of an all encompassing focus and optimum use of the ecological model, certain prerequisites need to be satisfied. These form the specific recommendations in this study as follows:

1. Policy makers in respect of education and welfare must consult with all significant players to ensure that policies are democratically formulated. Inherent in this recommendation is the need for social action to lobby for the support of political groups who could agitate for democratically determined school social work policies and legislation; and the need to arrange national conferences to increase awareness regarding the importance of establishing school social work countrywide.
2. Policies regarding the number of schools to be served by the school social worker should allow for the visibility of the school social worker. In accordance with results from the different phases of the present study, this entails that each school social worker serve not more than two schools in order that he/she is visible enough and has adequate time to assert his/her professionalism in the school.
3. School social work policies must allow the school social worker to serve the

school for a minimum period of two years in order that performance of all functions within the ecological paradigm may be undertaken. This is particularly necessary if mezzo, exo and macrosystemic functions are to be successfully implemented. In a post apartheid South Africa, it is incumbent on the school social worker to offer comprehensive services to accommodate the diversity of problems/needs of the school child.

4. School social work should be controlled by welfare and education departments to ensure dual responsibility towards the child. Professional accountability could be undertaken by welfare and physical control accomplished by education. Teaming could become operational from the inception of the service in launching the service and thereafter in monitoring its effectiveness. Teamwork must be viewed as desirable and possible and demonstrated by educational and welfare authorities, to stimulate successful teaming at field levels.
5. Considering the importance of dual control for the successful performance of the ecological model, mechanisms to ensure the practice of teamwork between education and welfare should be introduced. This could mean the development of a controlling body comprising representatives from education and welfare to develop policies to operationalise teaming and effective school social work practice.
6. Theories, knowledge and skills congruent with the ecological model should

be included in the education and training of school social workers. In particular, attention should be afforded to the acquisition of skill in undertaking mezzo, exo and macrosystemic functions within the ecological model, in teamwork and in preparing practitioners for new social realities.

7. Educationists should have their curricula adjusted to prepare them for integrated schooling and for teaming with support service personnel such as school social workers.
8. Preliminary tasks before the initiation of the service should be undertaken by the school social worker to: clarify the functions of the school social worker, to set up referral procedures, to promote the visibility of the service and to invite active exchange and sharing of ideas with educationists and pupils on the nature and scope of the service.
9. School social workers should undertake a needs survey in their schools to help inform practice and ensure relevancy. This could be conducted as part of the preliminary tasks in all schools where the service is initiated.
10. It is essential that there is adequate governmental sanction and support for school social work services, nationwide. The school site is an obvious "venue" for dealing with and preventing social problems and needs to be extensively used to reduce the risk of children developing serious social problems. Comprehensive education of the child to prepare him/her for

future realities is crucial, especially during times of social, economic and political instability in order that the child benefits from formal preparation and guidance through these times. School social work must be accepted as a "pedagogical necessity" (Le Roux, 1988:397), to promote comprehensive education of the child. Macrosystemic interventions to facilitate the development of an infrastructure for the existence of school social work nationwide is essential. Political groups and national councils of welfare and education need to become engaged in setting up procedures for the establishment of the service.

11. A unitary education department should serve educational needs comprehensively, equitably and responsibly. The establishment of a unitary education department is expected to release finances that have been otherwise allotted to maintaining differentiated and unwieldy education systems with deficits in the educational and pupil personnel service. Thus, funds supporting differentiated, racially based departments would become available for school social work services to all school children.
12. Research to evaluate the effectiveness of the ecological model needs to continue as discussed by Thomas (1985a:496) in order that the technology may be refined through further field testing. Demonstration projects and eventually large scale evaluation studies should be conducted as part of the evaluation phase. Successful efforts in this regard are likely to increase the chances of the model being "implemented by users" (Thomas, 1985a:498).

Research is also needed to determine school social work policies that would best serve a new South Africa and to maintain relevancy. In this regard, the recommendation of one respondent is quoted, that educationists join with school social workers in research efforts so that school social work become the joint venture of all significant players.

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## **APPENDIX A**

10 August 1992

Dear Sir \Madam

I am undertaking a doctoral study researching school social work services countrywide with a view to developing indigenous models for future practice. To this end, I require your input to ensure that my study is sufficiently comprehensive.

I am using approximately 350 school personnel in my main research. I would like to integrate my findings with views obtained from policy makers, Universities and National Councils. Therefore I would be much obliged if you would please answer the questions on page two and three and submit this to me by the 30 August 1992 at the following address:

35 Bologna Avenue  
Reservoir Hills  
Durban 4091

Any additional details will be most welcome.

I assure you that all information received will be used strictly to serve the educational and social needs of children.

Yours faithfully

**M I KASIRAM (MRS)**

Lecturer/Researcher



- (c) The **school change** model where the target for change lies in dysfunctional school practices, policies and regulations. / /
- (d) The **social interaction** model with the focus being the development of sound working relations between the school and the pupil. / /
- (e) An **eclectic model** with an ecological bias where the focus is **responding** to changing needs. / /

5. Who do you think should control school social work?

Education	/	/
Welfare	/	/
Education and Welfare combined	/	/
O t h e r ( s p e c i f y )		
.....		

6. What is your expectation and/or vision regarding school social work?

.....-

.....-

.....-

.....

From:.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION.

## APPENDIX B

Dear Respondent

Thank you for participating in this study. With your help , I aim to evaluate school social work services and develop models on which future practice can be based. These new models will be compatible with the changes that are taking place in South Africa.

Please note that there is no right or wrong answer as this is essentially an attitude study. **You are required to tick the appropriate responses.**

You may find the following explanations of social work terms useful :

**CASEWORK:** A method of social work practice where help is given to one individual at a time.

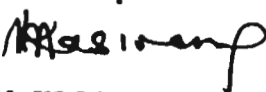
**GROUPWORK:** A method of social work practice where help is given to a group of individuals over a period of time.

**COMMUNITY WORK:** A method of social work used to assist a community. For the purposes of this study, the school and the community in which it exists could both be considered communities.

**COMMUNITY PROFILE:** A description of a community wherein key aspects are highlighted. These details provide an overall picture or profile of the community.

The principal will select the six personnel who will be completing this questionnaire. It would be appreciated if you would kindly complete and return the questionnaire to the principal as soon as possible. I assure you that I will uphold strict confidentiality. Thank you for participating in this study.

Yours faithfully

  
**M KASIRAM (MRS)**  
Researcher  
TEL. 821165

# **QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Please tick the appropriate response**

## **SECTION A**

### **IDENTIFYING DETAILS**

1. Area of School:

CAPE	1
NATAL	2
ORANGE FREE STATE	3
TRANSVAAL	4

2. Your school falls under the control of:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES	1
HOUSE OF DELEGATES	2
HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY	3

Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

3. Respondent - designation:

STUDENT SOCIAL WORKER	1
SOCIAL WORKER	2
PRINCIPAL	3
DEPUTY PRINCIPAL	4
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT	5
GUIDANCE COUNSELLOR	6
TEACHER	7

4. For how long has your school had a continuous school social work service?

1-2 YEARS	1
3-5 YEARS	2
5-6 YEARS	3
MORE THAN 7 YEARS	4

5. How many schools does your school social worker serve?

ONE PRIMARY SCHOOL	1
ONE SECONDARY SCHOOL	2
ONE SECONDARY SCHOOL AND A FEEDER PRIMARY SCHOOL	3
TWO OR MORE SCHOOLS IN AN AREA	4

Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

6. Who is offering a social work service at your school?

STUDENT SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER	1
SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER	2

Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

## **SECTION B**

### **PROFILE OF SCHOOL.**

1. Type of School:

PRIMARY	1
SECONDARY	2

2. Rate the occurrence of the following problems at your school.

Never - N              Seldom - S              Occasionally - O  
Frequently - F              Very Frequently - VF

	N 1	S 2	O 3	F 4	VF 5
1. UNDER ACHIEVEMENT					
2. TRUANCY					
3. DROPPING OUT					
4. POOR CONCENTRATION					
5. ILL HEALTH					
6. PHYSICAL DISABILITY					
7. DISHONESTY					
8. SMOKING					
9. DRUG TAKING					
10. TAKING OF ALCOHOL					
11. CHILD ABUSE					
12. PROMISCUITY					
13. PREGNANCY					
14. DEPRESSION/SUICIDE					
15. HOMELESSNESS					
16. POVERTY					
17. UNEMPLOYMENT					
18. RACIAL TENSION/CONFLICTS					
19. AGGRESSIVENESS/VIOLENCE					

Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

3. Has there been any research done regarding social needs and/or problems at your school?

YES	1
NO	2

4. If yes, who undertook this research?

1. STUDENT SOCIAL WORKER	1
2. SOCIAL WORKER	2
3. TEACHER	3
4. GUIDANCE COUNSELLOR	4
5. SCHOOL MANAGEMENT	5
6. HoD/HoR/HoA	6

Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

5. What was the aim of this research?

	YES 1	NO 2	UNCERTAIN 3
1. Obtaining statistics on the nature and frequency of problems			
2. Setting up pupil welfare services			
3. Improving pupil welfare services			

Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

## SECTION C

### *ASSESSMENT OF SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE.*

1. Are school social work services meeting the social needs of pupils at your school?

Almost always	1
Often	2
Sometimes	3
Almost never	4

2. Which method of social work is most frequently used at your school?

Casework	1
Groupwork	2
Community work	3
Research	4

Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

3. How many community work projects has the school social worker or other professional initiated at your school in the last two years?

None	1
One	2
Two	3
Three or more	4

## **SECTION D**

### **PRELIMINARY TASKS TO THE PROVISION OF SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK SERVICES.**

Were the following tasks performed by the student or social worker at your school when the service was started?

		YES 1	NO 2	UNCERTAIN 3
1	Explaining the functions of the school social worker to all school personnel at a staff meeting.			
2	Inviting discussion from staff members regarding the scope of the service.			
3	Addressing staff members and pupils regarding the service, at the school assembly.			
4	Organising a workshop with school personnel to clarify the role of the school social worker before the initiation of the service.			
5	Outlining referral procedures to facilitate efficient service delivery.			
6	Informing pupils individually or in class groups, of the initiation of the service.			
7	Distributing pamphlets to pupils and/or staff to advertise the service.			
8	Advertising the functions of the school social worker on posters at school.			
9	Notifying parents of the availability of the service.			
10	Obtaining a problem profile to assess the key problems at the school.			



## SECTION E

## FUNCTIONS OF THE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER.

The following range of functions need two responses:-

- a) Your evaluation regarding the occurrence of school social work functions at present, at your school.
- b) Your opinion regarding the importance of the function to future school social work practice.

Present Practice : Never - N Seldom - S Occasionally - O Frequently - F  
Very Frequently - VF

Future Practice : Unimportant - U      Somewhat Important - S      Important - I  
Very Important - VI

## The Traditional -Clinical Model

PRESENT PRACTICE						FUTURE PRACTICE			
N	S	O	F	VF		U	S	I	VI
					1. Identifying the problems of individual pupils.				
					2. Obtaining information from the pupil's home to assist in accurate diagnosing.				
					3. Involving pupil's parents in problem-solving.				
					4. Offering a therapeutic service to the families of pupils.				
					5. Offering casework services to individual pupils.				
					6. Interpreting the problems of pupils to teaching staff.				
					7. Consulting with professional staff involved with the pupil to co-ordinate services.				
					8. Offering groupwork services to pupils with similar problems.				
					9. Referring the pupil to another agency/ professional for ongoing services.				

The Community School Model

Present Practice						Future Practice			
N	S	O	F	VF		U	S	I	VI
					1. Identifying key problems/concerns in the school.				
					2. Inviting community participation to resolve these concerns.				
					3. Offering educational programmes to increase awareness regarding these concerns.				
					4. Inviting the community to participate in the awareness campaigns.				
					5. Offering therapeutic programmes to address the key concerns				

**The School Change Model**

Present Practice						Future Practice			
N	S	O	F	VF		U	S	I	VI
					1. Identifying school practices, policies and regulations which impede learning in the pupil.				
					2. Assisting school personnel to identify such dysfunctional practices.				
					3. Forming problem-solving teams to address these practices.				
					4. Consulting with school administrators on pupil welfare policies.				
					5. Offering a personnel service to staff members requiring the service.				
					6. Assisting with in-service training for school personnel.				

**The Social Interaction Model**

PRESENT PRACTICE						FUTURE PRACTICE			
N	S	O	F	VF		U	S	I	VI
					1. Developing sound, working relations between the school and the pupil.				
					2. Facilitating the setting up of a pupil representative committee.				
					3. Facilitating the setting up of a parent body that can represent parental opinion at school.				
					4. Encouraging pupils and staff to be represented at meetings where mutual concerns are discussed.				
					5. Facilitating the inclusion of non-academic activities, eg. keep fit, to be chosen by pupils to maximise pupil enjoyment of school life.				
					6. Identifying problems which interfere with building sound relations between pupil and school.				
					7. Setting up procedures to deal with such interferences.				
					8. Facilitating the maintenance of trust between school and pupil.				

## SECTION F

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. What would you consider to be important functions of the school social worker in your school? Rearrange the following functions in order of their importance to you, using 1 for the function you consider most important, and 8 for the function you consider least important.

1. Prevention of social problems.	
2. Offering help to the individuals.	
3. Offering help to groups of pupils with similar problems.	
4. Offering help to the whole school through community work projects.	
5. Conducting research to improve school social work service delivery.	
6. Assisting in improving school policies and practices to render them more functional.	
7. Encouraging parental involvement in school.	
8. Inviting community participation in school affairs.	

2. What criteria should the school social worker satisfy in order to practice as a school social worker?

1. Social work degree (4 year degree or 3 years plus honours)	
2. Social work degree and teaching qualifications.	
3. Masters degree in Social Work.	
4. Social Work degree with practical training in a school.	

Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

3. Schools to be served by the school social worker should be:

1. One primary school	
2. One secondary school	
3. One secondary and the feeder primary school	
4. Two or more schools in one area	

Other - give reasons for your answer \_\_\_\_\_

4. To whom should the school social worker be accountable?

1. Welfare official/Supervisor	
2. Principal at school	
3. Welfare official and Principal	
4. Guidance Counsellor	
5. School Psychologist	

Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

5. Who should control school social work?

1. Education	
2. Welfare	
3. Education and Welfare combined	
4. Psychological services	

Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

6. What special skills should a school social worker possess?

	YES 1	NO 2	UNCERTAIN 3
1. Ability to work as a team member with other professionals.			
2. Assertiveness without being dominating.			
3. Flexibility to respond to changing needs.			
4. Diplomacy to ensure the maintenance of sound working relationship.			
5. Ability to co-ordinate all helping efforts.			

7. What do you think will facilitate the development of school social work nationwide?

	YES 1	NO 2	UNCERTAIN 3
1. Research to prove the need for school social work.			
2. Specialised training for school social work.			
3. Training of educationists to include dissemination of knowledge regarding school social work.			
4. Nationwide conferences to advertise the need for the service.			
5. A unitary education department.			
6. Recognition by government of the need for support services such as social work and guidance.			
7. Governmental sanction for the implementation of the service.			

8. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX C

### EVALUATION REPORT: SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK SERVICES/MODELS DURING YOUR PERIOD OF STAY AT THE SCHOOL

The following guide must be used to determine the effect of your services at the school over the two year or one year placement (whichever is applicable) at the school.

#### Preamble

According to Raymond (1985:432), evaluation of social work intervention can have 6 major purposes. These are:

- \*1. To discover whether and how well objectives are being fulfilled.
- \*2. To determine the reasons for specific successes and failures.
- \*3. To uncover the principles underlying a successful programme.
- 4. To direct the course of experiments with techniques for increasing effectiveness.
- \*5. To lay the basis for further research or to determine the reasons for the relative success of alternative techniques.
- 6. To redefine the means to be used for attaining objectives and to redefine subgoals, in terms of the research findings.

Our evaluation has the purposes that have asterixes alongside them.

The success of evaluation depends on how specific, clear and measurable service objectives are. The steps in the evaluation effort are:



1. Determine the service objectives. For easy application, these objectives may be broken down into sub-objectives.
2. Establish outcome measures. This means that you have to assess the degree to which you have achieved the service objectives.
3. Identify independent variables i.e. assess why the outcome has occurred - was it because of your intervention? Was it because of a few other factors such as severity of problem\race etc.?
4. Use a design to measure the effect of your interventive effort e.g. use of an interview schedule.
5. Assess the efficiency of the service in dealing with the problem.

I have selected some service objectives (to which you are welcome to add), and request that you determine the outcome measures. I have attempted to design a research programme to evaluate effects and request that an assessment be made on the efficiency of your services.

Please use the following guide.

### **Evaluation of Traditional/Casework Functions**

Select 5 cases at random and report on the following:

- list the key problems in each of the cases.
- what were your objectives in offering a service to your clients? (these must be clear and specific)
- what were the specific effects of your objectives?

- how effective were these objectives in dealing with client problems? (clients must give you a measure of the success or failure of your effort and offer reasons thereof)
- comment on why your efforts succeeded or failed and offer recommendations based on your experience.

#### Home liaison functions:

- what specific purpose did contact with the home have?
- were these purposes achieved?
- what were the effects of the contacts?
- how effective were the home liaison efforts?
- comment on why your efforts succeeded or failed and offer recommendations based on your experience.

#### Helping the Family:

- if this was undertaken, what were the exact purposes of this function?
- were these purposes achieved?
- what were the effects of this function?
- how effective was this liaison in achieving your objectives?
- comment on why your efforts succeeded or failed and offer recommendations based on your experience.

#### Liaison with teaching staff:

- if this was undertaken, what were the purposes of performing this function?
- were these purposes achieved?
- what were the effects of this function?
- how effective was this liaison in achieving your objectives?

- comment on why your efforts succeeded or failed and offer recommendations based on your experience.

Referral to another agency:

- what was the purpose of referral?
- was this achieved?
- what was the effect of referral?
- how effective was referral in achieving objectives?
- comment on why your efforts succeeded or failed and offer recommendations based on your experience.

### **Evaluation of Community Work Functions**

Identifying key problems in the school community e.g. through a problem profile:

- what was effect of identifying the key problems at school?
- how effective was your effort in identifying the key problems at school?

(Question at least one staff member from management and one other person who was involved in identifying the problems at school)

Invitation to the community to participate in the community work project:

(Each of you had different community participants - parents, social work agencies, womens' groups etc.)

- who did you involve in achieving this function?
- what was the effect of your effort?
- how effective was your effort?
- comment on why your effort succeeded or failed and offer recommendations based on your experience.

Increasing understanding of problem conditions through the community project:

- did your programme involve increasing the knowledge base of your target?
- what was the effect of this effort? (obtain at least 3 independent reports of the level of increased knowledge and attempt to quantify this in percentage terms)
- how effective was your effort in achieving the objectives?
- comment on why your efforts succeeded or failed and offer recommendations based on your experience.

Therapy regarding the key concerns:

These could have been achieved through groupwork or community work.

- what were the therapeutic measures that were undertaken to deal with these key problems?
- what were the effects of your interventive efforts? (obtain at least 3 reports from your targets\clientele. If groupwork was undertaken, then interview all group members)
- how effective were your efforts in dealing with the key problems?
- comment on why your efforts succeeded or failed and offer recommendations based on your experience.

As you notice, the questions to be asked are very similar. Therefore I will not repeat them, but now request you to follow the same questioning procedure in evaluating the following functions:

**A. Functions concerned with changing the school's policies and procedures:**

- Identifying dysfunctional policies and procedures (evaluate)
- Dealing with the dysfunctional practices in a variety of ways (to be identified by you)
- Providing a personnel service to educationists (evaluate in the same manner as the traditional function)
- Arranging inservice training for staff members (note that deficit in functioning, has first to be confided to you or observed by you)

**B. Functions concerned with promoting good working relations amongst the school, pupil and the community.**

(As there is much scope for variation here, I am not going to give you the sub-objectives in this category). List each of your efforts here, and then follow the same procedure in evaluation as you did using the questions of the previous categories.

**General Evaluation of the Ecological Model**

Answer the following questions in respect of your practice of the ecological model which involves a combination of the afore-mentioned functions:

1. What aspects of the model did you use during your school placement?
2. How effective was this model in serving your school?

3. Which aspects of the model did you find helpful? Explain.
4. Which aspects of the model did you find to be unhelpful? Explain.
5. Comment on the success or failure of the use of the ecological model at your school and offer recommendations based on your experience.

Please note that your efforts are not to be based on self report alone, but wherever applicable, to be based on discussions with recipients of your services. In your reports, please identify who you questioned e.g. principal, pupil, teacher etc.

A document entitled "Evaluation", compartmentalized according to the categories I have suggested, would be appreciated by the **30 September 1992**.

**Thank You.**

**M Kasiram.**