THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION IN SOUTH AFRICA : QUO VADIS?
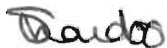
by

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PROMOTER : PROFESSOR M.KASIRAM
JANUARY 2004

DECLARATION

I, Samantha Naidoo, Registration Number 8831277 hereby declare that the thesis entitled *The Social Work Profession in South Africa: Quo Vadis?* is the result of my own investigation and research and that it has not been submitted in part or in full for any other degree or to any other University.

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SAMANTHA NAIDOO(MS)   **JANUARY 2004**

DEDICATION

To my late father, who did not live to share in the successes of my studies. Your fond memories constantly spurred in me a sense of motivation, knowing that you would have been proud.

&

To my loving mother who has been my pillar of strength. You have been with me through the valleys, mountains and the waters in every step of the way.

I am ever so grateful !!!

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ABSTRACT

The overall aim of this study was to research the status of social work in South Africa by examining what factors contribute towards social workers in South Africa leaving their country to seek employment in the UK. Further, current frustrations, problems and needs of social workers in South Africa and those working in the UK were investigated. The benefit of the study therefore was to evaluate the status of the social work profession at present, and to expand future professional services.

The study utilised both the qualitative and quantitative research methods. The research was undertaken in two phases utilising three different sample groups. The two phases were: (1) Phase One – in which the researcher quantitatively researched social workers frustrations, problems and needs in South Africa and (2) Phase Two - in which the researcher qualitatively explored the difficulties, experiences and accomplishments of South African social workers who have relocated to the UK.

In sample group 1 in Phase One of the study, eighty social workers who had applied to work in the UK were selected. While, in sample group 2, in Phase One of the study, eighty social workers who were remaining in South Africa, were randomly selected. In sample group 3, in Phase Two of the study, thirty social workers were derived from the social work relocation list of a known Recruitment Agency.

The research tool was a mailed questionnaire for the two sample groups in Phase One of the study. Reasons to relocate or remain were asked of both sample groups, along with their suggestions for improving the image of social work in South Africa and contributing to its survival. In Phase Two of the

study the researcher chose the qualitative method of data collection, namely focus group interviews. Within the focus group interviews social workers in the UK were able to share their experiences of relocation. Focus group thematic questions guided the group discussions to generate a rich understanding of the social workers' experiences and beliefs.

In this study, research evidence was provided on the concerns plaguing the profession such as safety and security, service conditions, poor salaries, staff turnover, lack of supervision and support from agencies, ineffective graduates/educators, curriculum change, and continuing education. Alongside this research results also indicated that culture, family, social ties and climate were significant factors preventing social workers from leaving the country. Recommendations were made by social workers to improve the image of social work as a way of contributing to its survival. These recommendations included a unifying role to be played by the Council of Social Service Professions to tackle cogent issues such as service conditions; staff development/training in accord with the need for continuous professional development; relevancy of training curricula to the new developmental paradigm; competent educators; research, and using auxiliary workers in service delivery. These recommendations need to be incorporated into policy/plans set up to address relevancy, image and survival issues facing the profession.

Other general recommendations for the profession to survive, was the need for a partnership to be established between employers, workers and educators working together to create new supportive structures and develop knowledge and skills on an on-going basis. A further component to consider in addressing the exodus of social workers was for policy-makers, employers, educators and the South African Council of Social Service Professions (SACSSP) to prevent any further under-valuing of the profession and its practitioners. Social workers need to be presented as valued and crucial role players in our newly developed democracy.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

South Africa has emerged from many years of apartheid rule which has left huge discrepancies between groups of people - largely divided along racial lines, and urban and rural lines - in relation to employment opportunities, income, education and training, and provision of basic services, including social welfare.

The democratisation of South Africa in 1994 brought to the fore new challenges in all spheres of life and social relations. Since the first democratic elections in 1994, the socio-economic and political environment in which South African social work functions has changed dramatically. GEAR arrived in 1996, the White Paper for Social Welfare was approved in 1997, the Non-Profit Organisations Act replaced the Fundraising Act in 1998, and the new South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) came into being in 1999 (Weyers, 2002). These are examples of policies that were introduced to meet the new challenges in South Africa favouring the developmental approach.

According to Gathiram (2000), state departments and social welfare agencies in South Africa are presently involved in and working to overcome the past unjust system of racial and social discrimination in welfare. The growing complexities of the social welfare system, the pressures, constraints, opportunities provided by the social welfare system, ethical dilemmas, and the development and refinement of social

work theory, knowledge and skills, all combine to make social work in South Africa demanding and sometimes frustrating (Germain, 1984:8).

The White Paper of Social Welfare was developed as a conceptual framework for welfare in South Africa and has been concluded after intensive participation by welfare agencies and administrations. According to the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997:2), South Africa "has experienced declining economic growth rates over the past two decades, with the annual growth rate of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) falling below the annual population growth rate". This has had an impact on the *per capita* income. In *per capita* terms, South Africa is an upper-middle-income country, but most South African households either experience outright poverty or are vulnerable to poverty (May, 1998:55).

The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) recognises that the country has serious problems of poverty and underdevelopment, especially in rural areas. Declining economic growth, large scale unemployment, and lack of access to land and social services are all indicative of a depressed state of social welfare (Rankin, 1997:185). Inflation has affected the capacity of poor families to meet their needs. Great poverty is found to exist alongside extreme wealth, with large-scale unemployment. This has thereby increased the pressure on the welfare system to meet basic human needs.

At present, social work in South Africa needs to undergo a major paradigm shift in order to rise to the challenge of declaring war on poverty. The new paradigm shift for social work in South Africa is the social development approach, which is clearly entrenched in government policy and the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997). This challenges social work to become engaged in the wider socio-economic, environmental and geo-political arenas in order to fundamentally change the circumstances under which the poor, the unemployed and the

marginalised find themselves and improve the quality of life they experience.

The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997:14) refers to developmental social welfare as an "integrated and comprehensive system of social services, facilities, programmes and social security to promote social development, social injustice and social functioning of people". This has aimed to generate a comprehensive, integrated, equitable, multi-disciplinary, developmental approach.

At the World Summit on Social Development held in Copenhagen in May 1995, South Africa committed itself to the eradication of poverty. In doing so, it created the need for internal, national anti-poverty strategies in line with global anti-poverty programmes (Gray, 1996). The White Paper for Welfare emphatically states that welfare should contribute to the eradication of poverty through the developmental approach.

In adopting a social development model, Anderson and Wilson (1994: 75) identify four characteristics of social work as being salient and posing new challenges to South African social workers:

- The social development model is one based on direct services and not reliant on conventional casework methods. These services must take into account factors such as traditional religious beliefs, the role of village headmen and chiefs, extended family and tribal systems, and cultural values.
- Practical development skills include those related to setting up and managing rural co-operatives.
- Social workers should be able to deal with the effects and ramifications of dire poverty and engage in economic development activities aimed at providing for basic needs.

- Social work must reflect the principle of 'indigenisation' and be appropriate to the people and the country.

In addition, Gray (1996:11) describes developmental social work as a type of social work which affirms commitment of the social work profession to the eradication of poverty, which is accompanied by socially-related diseases such as tuberculous, HIV/AIDS, malnutrition, homelessness, high caseloads, budget constraints etc. Just as Anderson and Wilson (1994) argue that social workers cannot rely on conventional casework methods, advocates of developmental social work admonish South African social workers for focusing too heavily on individual therapeutic work at the expense of more macro interventions such as community and policy development (Gray, 1997:361).

In summary, in adopting a social developmental model, Anderson & Wilson (1994:75) identify that social workers should be able to deal with the effects and ramifications of dire poverty and engage in economic development activities aimed at providing for basic needs. According to Mamphiswana & Noyoo (2000), social work in South Africa, because of its origin and closeness to the poor, must take a leading role in changing society's view of how to address social problems.

Social workers in South Africa will have to rethink their changing role within a framework emerging from a social services perspective to a developmental perspective. In view of social workers' deeply-embedded perception of the curative role of social work, Rankin (1997:189) recommends a radical paradigm shift. A shift is needed to make social workers more receptive to the idea of development, especially as far as the economic component is concerned. The social development model stresses greater involvement on the part of social workers in tasks of social policy and planning, programme evaluation and community organisation.

It seems as if social work, more than any other profession, tends to be vulnerable to shifts in the social climate. Lombard (2000:313) cites the core reasons for this, and can be found in the Encyclopaedia of Social Work (1987:353):

> *"Social work is a kind of human suspension bridge, sustained by its cables of respect for human dignity and the right to self-realisation of every individual. The profession is anchored on one side by service to and empowerment of those in acute need, and on the other by the dominant segments of society that control the resources and sharing of power essential to meeting that need. In its more expansive cycles, society tends to view social work as a mirror of its own open-handedness and optimism. However, in times of statis, contrived shortage, or divisiveness, when self-aggrandisement, bias, and punitive are ascendant, the values and practitioners of social work become unwelcome reflections on societal priorities and injustices. At such times, the profession's members face difficult choices about the extent to which they serve as arms of the institutional structures or advocates of the excluded".*

It can be noted from this that social workers adapt their role and knowledge base to the societal context in which they practise.

A direct result of South Africa's socio-political climate is the development of relevant policies, such as the Policy for Social Welfare (1997). When the socio-political context of society changes, the social work profession needs to adapt accordingly. That means finding appropriate approaches for a specific context (Lombard, 2000). Similarly, social workers need to adapt to a developmental role in the delivery of social welfare services in South Africa.

Gray, cited in Matlhabe (2001: 60), affirms that this challenges social work to become engaged in wider socio-economic and geo-political arenas in order to fundamentally change the circumstances under which the poor, the unemployed and the marginalised find themselves, and to improve the quality of life they experience. Moreover, it challenges social work to shift from a traditionally rehabilitative emphasis to a developmental one. This requires working co-operatively with other professions in full recognition of the link between welfare and economic development. This changing practice environment has certain implications for social workers. Social workers now need to transcend their traditional casework roles and make greater impact on the problem of mass poverty, unemployment and social deprivation through greater use of diverse social work methods such as advocacy, community development, empowerment, consultation, networking, action research and policy analysis (Gray, 1997).

McKendrick, cited in Matlhabe (2001: 60), asserts that this changing practice environment has implications for social work education as well. Social work educators are faced with the major task of critically exploring the nature and intellectual foundation of "social development" and "developmental social work" and unpacking the real meaning of their constituent concepts as well as their implications for social work practice. Hence, social work education, like practice itself, is in a state of flux. This has repercussions on social workers placed in the field direct from tertiary institutions.

Furthermore, McKendrick, cited in Matlhabe (2001), affirms that the social work profession has an obligation to accept the challenges brought about by these political and social changes, more especially since the new democratic government has declared itself an ally to those professions and organisations that believe in the fair distribution of resources and services.

The social worker is therefore at the cutting edge. It has never in the history of social welfare been as relevant and vital that social workers in South Africa re-evaluate their profession and become a united and empowered body with a heard voice to enable the profession to impact on the country's social welfare policies.

Further, because of the very nature of social work and its broad field of service, there are other issues that require repositioning of social work (Weyers, 2002:11). While there are critical challenges and a great emphasis by the government on service delivery by social workers in line with social development, Luvhengo (1996) asserts that the social work profession and the welfare system in South Africa are struggling with the question of survival and relevance. Similarly, Gathiram (2000) reveals that welfare is in crisis.

Research has revealed that social workers are being marginalised and given low priority on government agendas, and that lowly-paid social work professionals are unhappy and discontented (Luvhengo, 1996). Gray and Van Rooyen's (2000:186) study on political participation of social workers in KwaZulu-Natal reinforces Luvhengo's (1996) research findings. The study reveals that social workers are perturbed with their low status, and poor salaries relative to other professions. Most social workers were found to be frustrated and de-motivated.

Declining subsidies to private welfare organisations is another serious concern. As a result there are serious financial problems which have resulted in staff cutbacks and lack of expansion in human resource capacity without a concomitant reduction in the demand for services, especially statutory services. This has left social workers totally disempowered by high caseloads at a time when the demand for welfare services is increasing, government is vigorously pursing its de-

institutionalisation policy, and development is the order of the day (Gray, 1997).

South Africans have been ravaged by social, political and economic upheaval in the past few years. Adjustment to a changing order has manifested itself in vicious criminal activities, breakdown in family life, high stress levels and mass movements of people seeking greener pastures (Kasiram, 1999: 22). Statistics have revealed that an estimated 233 609 people emigrated between 1989 and 1997, with many skilled people emigrating to countries such as the United Kingdom (UK), the United States, Australia and New Zealand (*Daily Mail & Guardian*, 1999). Among these professionally skilled people are social workers. South African social workers have become the latest target of international social work recruitment agencies (*The Star*, 24 January 2000).

Ramasar (2000:6) alerts the profession to the active recruitment of South African social workers by the British Social Services. If the British regard South African social workers as competent and highly professional, they should receive the same professional status in South Africa. However, the profession is losing workers. Many are disaffiliating themselves and leaving the country to seek social work positions internationally. It is argued that the social workers have invaluable knowledge and skills and the success of the developmental welfare model depends on them. To lose, neglect or marginalise social workers is, as Gray (1996) describes, "throwing the baby out with the bath water". The profession needs to survive and cannot afford to lose social workers. The pool of social workers needs, rather, to be augmented.

1.2   **Motivation**

Africa was suffering a continuing 'brain drain' of professionals while battling poverty, civil strife and endemic diseases, lamented U.N. Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, at a meeting at the U.N. Headquarters (*Daily Mail & Guardian*, February 1999). According to the Central Bureau of Statistics, between 1,1 million and 1,6 million people in skilled, professional and managerial professions have left South Africa since 1994 (*Business Day*, August 2000).

The Durban newspaper, *The Daily News*, dated 12 February 2001, reported that the Minister of Education, Kader Asmal was concerned about the high turnover of educators and their relocation to the UK. The report states that there is an increased exodus of educators to the UK to work in the education sector. Similarly, there has been a pattern emerging of social workers leaving South Africa to seek employment in the UK.

A UK newspaper, *Independent*, dated 24 February 2001, reported that Social Work departments are being forced to recruit social workers from as far as afield as South Africa and offer generous golden handshakes to overcome vacancy rates of up to 40 per cent in Essex and its surrounds. It further reports and claims that the chronic shortage of social workers has caused an "epidemic of stress and burnout" among remaining staff. The article refers to confirmation from the Essex Social Services Department that 46 South African social workers have been recruited on four-year contracts, with options of permanent residency. Essex paid its 1,000 social workers £1000 golden 'handshakes' at the start and end of last year. South African social workers are therefore seen as a lucrative feeder to ameliorate the shortages of staff in the UK (*Independent Newspaper*, February 2001).

A UK journalist, Foxcroft, in the UK (*Independent Newspaper*, June 2001) confirms that social work is in a crisis in the UK, this being reflected by the falling number of postgraduate applications for the Diploma in Social Work. According to the Central Council for the Education and Training in Social Workers (CCETSW), there has been a staggering decline of 45% since 1995. As a result, two-thirds of social service departments report recruitment difficulties, and there is a national vacancy rate for social workers of 15,9 %. The need for social workers has never been stronger, and South African social workers are seen as eager recruits to work in the UK. The move highlights a growing trend for UK councils to look abroad, especially to South Africa, in their recruitment drive.

Culminating from this vacancy, there has been a mushrooming of recruitment agencies across South Africa seeking and recruiting South African social workers to work in the UK.

The researcher's personal involvement in the interviewing and recruitment of South African social workers for relocation to the UK for a UK recruitment agency further substantiates this emerging trend of the exodus of social workers to the UK.

From the statistics of one UK recruitment agency that the researcher was involved with in 2000/1, for the period December 2000 to February 2001, four hundred and twenty-five (425) social workers seeking work permits in the UK were on their database. It must be noted that this was merely one agency's database. At present, there are approximately ten other recruitment agencies based in South Africa.

The question arises as to what is driving or motivating social workers to register or apply for employment in the UK. What is the UK offering social workers in order for them to leave their country to seek social work employment in the UK?

This study will investigate factors causing South African social workers to leave their country to seek employment in the UK. The study will also assess the status of the social work profession in South Africa, will explore and enlighten on what is lacking in the social work profession in South Africa in comparison to what is offered in the UK.

According to McKendrick (1992:1), South African social workers are under tremendous stress and pressure to change and adapt their interventions in order to become more "relevant" and "appropriate" and devise "innovative social policies, strategies, and methods of service delivery which will impact on mass poverty and inequality".

In addition to the pervasive influence of endemic violence in South Africa, social workers are exposed to very rapid change - constitutional, political, economic, societal and personal (macro, mezzo and micro factors). Living at a time of rapid change can produce feelings of apathy, powerlessness and alienation. Against the background of micro, mezzo and macro system contributors, it is not surprising that social workers themselves frequently become depressed and demotivated, since their most energetic efforts seem to have little impact on some social problems presently prevailing in South Africa.

There have been various contentions from different researchers regarding the challenges and obstacles in social work service delivery. According to Noyoo (2000), one of the present challenges for social work lies in extricating itself not only from the colonial legacy but also from entrenched obstacles such as lack of finance in Government ministries and welfare organisations, the brain drain, and political instability, all of which undermine social work practice.

Mamphiswana & Noyoo (2000) maintain that poor emphasis on community work in South Africa is becoming apparent in the manner in

which welfare professionals, service consumers and the Ministries of Health and Welfare and Population Development, at both provincial and national levels are tackling poverty. It is concluded that there is great apathy among professionals about doing community work and about their involvement in social development. These are but two researchers' (Mamphiswana & Noyoo, 2000) observations. Therefore, the researcher foresees that by investigating the needs, problems and frustrations of social workers across South Africa, the study will contribute to evaluating the status of the social work profession as viewed by social workers and make recommendations for the future survival of social work in South Africa.

It is important for South African policy-makers to review the situation so that they can learn from experiences. The research findings will be of benefit in the following ways:

a) Findings of the study will lead to an evaluation of the status of the social work profession at present and the scope for expansion of future professional services.

b) The study will expose the dilemmas, needs and frustrations of social workers.

c) Findings would have significance for future policy-making and revision of service conditions and remuneration of social workers.

d) The study will identify the problems, needs and benefits experienced by social workers who have relocated to the UK.

e) The study will also provide insight into whether present social work education prepares the social worker to deal with the changes in social work roles and the complexity of social problems that confront them.

f) Findings and recommendations from the study would be available to the social work sector, the Ministry of Social Welfare

and Population Development, and key role players in Social Welfare settings, especially to those instrumental in future restructuring plans for social work in South Africa.

There has been an abundance of research that indicates that welfare organisations and social workers are still grappling with the process of transformation and with new policy demands. How do social workers cope? What are their needs, problems and frustrations in working within the changed process that requires not only leadership but also a paradigm shift in the attitudes and behaviour of those involved? Have there been changes in the fundamental attitudes of social workers in their service delivery? Do they really cope with the overwhelming confrontations of social problems encountered in their communities?

According to Gathiram (2000), social workers have become frustrated in being unable to reach developmental goals. Could this lead to their increased disillusionment with the social work profession? What makes remaining social workers continue to offer services and remain within the social work profession in South Africa? These are some of the questions/areas that will be explored in the study.

1.3 Theoretical approach to the study

The theoretical framework of the research is the eco-systemic and ecological approach. The theoretical framework is summarised in this chapter to facilitate conceptualisation of the research process. This is essential since the literature review presented over the next three chapters utilises these broad approaches. Details of the research methodology and sampling procedures are presented in Chapter Two.

According to Kasiram (1993), any research endeavour aims to explore and acquire knowledge in respect of a particular area of concern. This study aims at acquiring more information on the problems, frustrations and needs of social workers working in South Africa and the UK. Existing policy and implications in the social work profession will be explored.

According to Okun (1997: 138) the major premises of the ecological system perspective are that (1) an individual is a system in himself or herself, comprising interacting components or subsystems such as cognitive, affective, and physiological arenas; (2) an individual is a component of past and current family systems, which, in turn, are components within larger social systems such as the school, work place, and community; and (3) an individual's problems are likely to derive from poor personal or environmental fit rather than from internal pathology.

The ecological perspective is, therefore, multicontextual. An individual's problems have meaning in the larger social system. All behaviour is relational and communicative, and there is a mutually reciprocal influence between one's problems, one's life circumstances, and the interactional patterns of family, school, workplace, and community. It is therefore important to acknowledge that environmental variables do play an

important part in the creation and maintenance of the social worker's problems, needs and frustrations.

Thus, according to Okun (1997:139), the identification and clarification of an individual's problems require consideration of both individual and system as contributing factors. An individual's problems affect his or her family, just as the family affects the individual. This is the notion of circular causality (events are related through a series of interacting loops or repeating cycles and codetermine each other). The ecological perspective emphasises that social/political/economic/cultural variables impact on individual development.

Fiedeldey (1995) contributes to the ecological perspective by maintaining that people are assumed to live in different, yet related, experiential worlds. The relatedness of these worlds may be seen as residing in the correspondence of the structural organisation existing between one individual and different environments. The concept of person-environment fit is an important aspect in environmental psychology. It refers to the possibility that there are certain types of environment that are somehow more suited to the human experience, more appropriate for human activities, and better suited to certain kinds of endeavour than to others (Fiedeldey, 1995).

Ford & Lerner (1992) inform that an ecological approach to the concept of the person-environment fit explicitly recognises the ecology of ideas within which humans function, and towards which they continually contribute. A recursive process of transaction exists between people, the environments in which they live their daily lives, and the ideas that they have about those environments. Human ideas about the environment are a small part of a much larger body of continually evolving ideas. Our present understanding of the essential interrelatedness and

interdependence of people and the environment is shaped by ecology of ideas (Ford & Lerner, 1992).

In practice, social workers address social concerns that threaten the structure of society and redress social conditions that adversely affect the well-being of people and society. Social work thus encompasses the professional activities of helping individuals, families, groups, organisations and communities to enhance or restore their capacity for optimal functioning, and of creating societal conditions favourable to this goal. According to Mazibuko (1996:153), the definitions of social work generated during the 1980s emphasise the ecosystems approach.

Even with the amendment of its target group for service, South African social work is still criticised for having an inclination towards making people the object for change. In some instances, this is of course appropriate, yet many human problems have their antecedents beyond individual and families, rather in wider social, economic and political circumstances. Similarly, the social work profession is now under siege, with social workers experiencing their own problems, needs and frustrations in their professional and personal lives. This research therefore focuses on and acquires more information on the problems, frustrations and needs of social workers working in South Africa and the UK using an eco-systemic perspective.

According to the ecosystems approach as advocated by Germain & Gitterman (1980), people's needs and problems are located at the interface between person and environment, which are defined as maladaptive transactions within the life space. Gitterman & Germain (1984) assert that people's needs, problems or predicaments fall into three interrelated areas:(1) life transitions involving developmental stages, status role changes, and crisis events; (2) the unresponsiveness of the social and physical environment, which may be the social worker's

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main dilemma; and (3) communication and relationship difficulties in families and other primary groups.

Germain & Gitterman (1980) describe transactions as continuous reciprocal exchanges in the unitary system of a person's environment by which each shapes, changes or otherwise influences the other over time. They are circular feedback processes taking place in the person: environment interface, giving rise to reciprocal contemporaneous causality. This continuous exchange in the unitary system occurs within various systemic levels; namely, micro, mezzo, and/or macro systemic levels (Germain & Gitterman, 1980).

In this study, the exodus of social workers will be recognised as having a multi-causal basis, that is, a variety of reasons cause social workers to relocate, and one must appreciate the interconnection of the different causes. These causes can be contained in two broad categories: personal and professional, within the Micro, Mezzo and Macro systemic levels.

Pennekamp and Freeman, cited in Kasiram (1993), identified the key elements of the ecological paradigm in relation to the subject with which it is involved as follows:

In this study the frustration and changes experienced by the social workers occur at different systemic levels and are seen as interconnected, resulting in social workers' relocating.

Micro Systems Level

According to Fiedeldey (1995) the micro systems level refers to the smallest ecosystem within which the person interacts or performs most of his/her work, as well as those elements of the larger environment such as family within the person's life space.

Changes/frustrations occur within the family and the agency. This contributes to the problems/needs experienced by social workers within their own family systems and also while working with clients. High caseloads at agencies, frustration with the lack of resources, and the continuous impact of the diverse and frightening/complex problems encountered in the field all contribute to the problems experienced by the social worker.

Ross (1993) emphasises that there is an interaction, interdependence and spill over of frustrations/ problems between work and family life.

Mezzo Systems Level

The mezzo systems level includes those elements of the larger environment such as the neighbourhood and community.

Conflict/frustrations occur within the neighbourhood. Social workers experience problems/frustrations working in insecure/dangerous/resistant or apathetic neighbourhoods. Frustration/conflict results from inadequate resources/recreational facilities within the neighbourhood in which the social worker lives/or works. This in turn affects the life of the client and social worker. Owing to these conflicts/frustrations, the service delivery of

the social worker is affected. The role of trade unions and professional associations also impact on service delivery because of the frustrations experienced from interaction with trade unions. Lack of staff incentives and lack of employer assistance programmes can also be viewed as contributing to problems, frustrations and needs that lead to social workers' relocating.

Macro Systems Level

According to Carroll & White (1993), the macro system represents the broader socio-cultural elements within the individual's life space and beyond the boundaries of the mezzo system.

The social worker may experience conflict/frustration, which can be found in the present government, political system and changes within the country. The present judicial and security systems can be identified as contributing to frustrations, problems and needs encountered by social workers in their personal and professional lives. Policies and service conditions can also contribute to professional problems, frustrations and needs experienced by social workers.

According to McKendrick (1990:241), South Africa is an industrialising, urbanising and developing society. Among the economic, political and social stressors which seem particularly relevant to the South African context are recessions, inflation, poverty, unemployment, education policies, racial discrimination, over-population, housing shortages, violence, crime and unrest. The social worker therefore may experience conflict or frustration owing to such stressors.

According to Kasiram (1993:66), the eco-systemic approach has been advocated as useful in 'unifying' various theories and offering a multi-dimensional view of causality. The ecological perspective, however, crosses traditional 'methodical boundaries' and identifies methods and skills to encourage its use. In this study, the eco-systemic approach is used to help 'unify' perspectives or causality, and the eco-systemic perspective offers specific guidelines regarding levels where multi-causality must be sought.

1.4   Aims and Objectives

The overall aim of this study is to research the status of social work in South Africa by examining the following objectives:

a) Ascertain what factors are contributing towards social workers in South Africa leaving their country to seek employment in the UK.

b) Investigate current frustrations, problems and needs of social workers in South Africa.

c) Investigate the needs, problems and frustrations faced by South African social workers now working in the UK.

d) Determine and assess what South African social workers employed in the UK are gaining from the UK experience.

e) Ascertain what makes some social workers remain in South Africa.

f) Ascertain the impact of the high turnover of social workers in agencies in South Africa.

g) Provide researched evidence that would inform future policies that would strengthen the social work profession in South Africa.

For the purpose of insight into the study method, a summary of the research method utilised has been covered below. A detailed discussion is contained in Chapter 2 concerning the research methodology of the study. The researcher has utilised both the qualitative and quantitative research methods.

According to Benoliel (1990: 45), qualitative research is based on the premise of gaining knowledge about humans, and this is impossible without describing human experience as it is lived and as it is defined by the actors themselves. The goal of qualitative research is to enhance one's general knowledge about complex events and processes. In this study, the research will assess the problems, frustrations and needs of social workers in South Africa and UK. The study will qualitatively explore the difficulties and frustrations experienced by social workers in South Africa and investigate what makes certain social workers remain in the profession. It will also explore the difficulties experienced by South African social workers in the UK.

The study comprised two phases: (1) Phase One - Researching Social Workers in South Africa; (2) Phase Two - Researching Social Workers in the UK. In Phase One there were two sample groups. The researcher intended to use 120 respondents in each sample group. However, the return rate of questionnaires yielded only 80 respondents in each sample group. Therefore, one sample group (Sample Group 1) comprised 80 social workers who applied to recruitment agencies to relocate to the UK, and the second sample group (Sample Group 2) was 80 social workers that had not applied to any recruitment agencies to relocate and are remaining in South Africa. The researcher qualitatively explored the problems, frustrations and needs through the two phases. Phase One also quantitatively researched 160 social workers in South Africa in respect of

their frustrations, problems and needs. Phase two qualitatively researched 30 social workers who recently relocated to the UK.

Although the study was essentially exploratory in nature, some comparative analyses were made in comparing findings from the different phases and sample groups.

1.5   Key Questions

There were several key questions in this study. The key questions will be listed under the two phases in the research. A detailed discussion on the sample procedure and methodology will be discussed in Chapter Two under research methodology.

Social Workers in South Africa - Phase One

There were two sample groups in this phase. One sample group was eighty social workers who applied to recruitment agencies to relocate to the UK, and the second sample group was eighty social workers who did not apply to any recruitment agencies to relocate.

a)   What are the key frustrations, problems and needs or benefits experienced by social workers in South Africa?

b)   What is the social work profession in South Africa not offering social workers, causing them to leave?

c)   What makes certain social workers remain in South Africa?

d)   Is social work education adequately preparing social workers in their current practice?

Social Workers in the UK - Phase Two

This sample group comprised thirty social workers who recently relocated to the UK.

a) What are the problems experienced by social workers who have left South Africa and are working in the UK?

b) What are the needs and benefits experienced by the social workers who have relocated to the UK?

c) What does the social work profession in the UK offer that is different from South Africa?

d) How well did the South African training equip emigrating social workers for work in the UK?

1.6 Explanation of Key Concepts

Certain concepts central to the thesis will be discussed below :

a) Social Work

Barker (1995:xvii) defines social work as " the applied science of helping people achieve an effective level of psychosocial functioning and effecting societal changes to enhance the well-being of all people".

b) Social Worker

For the purpose of participation in the study, a social worker must be registered to practise social work as a professional person and authorised in accordance with the Social Work Act, 1978 (Act 110 of 1978).

c)   Ecology

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

Germain, cited in Kasiram (1993:62), says that "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 can attend to the complexities of the environment just as we attend to the complexities of the person".

d)   Ecosystem

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

e)   Micro Systems Level

Functions with a micro or micro systemic focus are in accordance with the traditional emphasis of social work with interventions aiming at the family, agency and social worker (Pennekamp & Freeman, 1988).

f)   Mezzo Systems Level

Functions with a mezzo or mezzo systemic focus aim on strengthening partnerships between the agency, neighbourhood, community at large, and social agencies/bodies (Pennekamp & Freeman, 1988).

g) Macro Systems Level

Functions with a macro or macro systemic focus aim at identifying dysfunctional policies with intervention at the level of national, legislations, policy and funding patterns, judicial and security systems, and political system and changes (Pennekamp & Freeman, 1988).

h) Community Work

Terminology from the Committee for Social Work (1995) defines community work as planned action of members of a community and a social worker to promote the social functioning of the community as a whole. Promotion of the social functioning of the community as a whole can be attained by increasing knowledge and ability to cope at a micro level, ensuring at a mezzo level that effective resources exist which are directed to the needs of the community and, lastly, to make possible democratic participation by the community at macro-level in formulating welfare policy.

i) Developmental Social Work

This is described as: "a type of social work which affirms the social work profession's commitment to the eradication of poverty; recognises the link between welfare and economic development; construes welfare as an investment in human capital rather than a drain on limited resources" Gray (1996:11)

j) Burnout

Maslach and Jackson (1986:99) defines burnout as "a syndrome of emotional exhaustion and cynicism, that occurs frequently among individuals who do 'people work' of some kind. The key aspect of burnout

is increased feelings of emotional exhaustion, development of negative cynical attitudes and feelings about one's clients and a tendency to evaluate oneself negatively, particularly with regard to one's work"

1.7 **Limitations of the Study**

The research methodology has yielded a comprehensive understanding of the topic however some limitations may be identified as follows:

a)   The study did not include an equal distribution of social workers practising in the rural and urban sectors; therefore generalisations in respect to these two categories of social workers could not occur.

b)   The researcher did not use a sample based on race and did not qualify how many of each race group existed in the sample. However, in the sampling procedure it was found that most of the social workers were Coloured, Indian, or African, with a very small percentage being White. Perhaps, a comparison of the different race groups would have yielded significant data, for the purpose of the study.

c)   Only one recruitment agency was used in the study, although the researcher could have used more agencies for a wider representation. Therefore, differences in the experiences of these agencies were not explored.

d)   Further, in the data collection of the focus group interviews, interviewer bias might have played a role in the way the questions were directed. To avoid this, the researcher ensured that both positive and negative questions were equally directed to the respondents.

e)   Respondents might not have been truthful in the discussion of reasons for relocating. Responses could have been exaggerated to substantiate their departure.

e)   Another issue is that working in different environments might affect service delivery of social workers, as there could be unequal distribution of resources and services and differing racial group exposure. In this study, only three geographical areas were explored, making generalizations in respect of all working environments difficult.

1.8   **Division of the Report**

This report comprises eight chapters and is divided as follows:

➤ **Chapter One : Introduction**

This chapter introduces the study with explanations of the particular context in which the study was conducted, the outline of the aims of the research and summary of the theoretical approach selected.

➤ **Chapter Two : Research Methodology**

This chapter comprises the research methodology and sampling procedure utilized in the study. This includes both the qualitative and quantitative research approaches.

- > **Chapter Three : Social Welfare Services in South Africa**

The literature includes a discussion of the historical context of social welfare services in South Africa. It includes the social policy in South Africa with reference to both past and present social policy as affecting services.

- > **Chapter Four : Social Problems in South Africa and the Infra-Structural Support within the Social Work Profession**

This chapter of literature review focuses on two significant areas namely social problems in South Africa and the impact of these social problems on job satisfaction; and an exploration of infra-structural support within the social work profession in South Africa.

- > **Chapter Five : Social Workers' Exodus from South Africa**

The main themes explored in this chapter are the impact of the brain drain in South Africa and the social work profession in the UK.

- > **Chapter Six and Seven : Analysis and Discussion of Findings of the Present Study**

These chapters set out the results of the study. The data from the three sample groups were analysed through a process of content analysis and statistical comparisons.

- > **Chapter 8 : Conclusions and Recommendations**

Chapter eight contains the conclusions drawn from the study. The chapter also includes recommendations to the findings of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1   Introduction

This chapter focuses on methods that the researcher used in collecting data for this study. It deals with relevant extracts from literature reviews, sampling procedures, data collection methods and data analysis information. According to Bless & Higson-Smith (1995:99), "a research project stands or falls on the quality of the facts on which it is based. An excellent research design and a very representative sample are not sufficient if an analysis rests on incorrect data. The importance of constructing an appropriate and accurate instrument for measuring and collecting data is an absolute necessity".

Vogt (1999:69) considers data as any organised information collected by a researcher for the purpose of solving a particular problem. Data collected for social research purposes can either be expressed in words or in figures. If data is verbal, the methodology used in collection is referred to as qualitative, and when data is numerical, quantitative methods of data collection are employed. It is in consideration of this that Leedy (1993:139) posits that the nature of the data and problem for research dictates the research methodology.

2.2 Research Method

The study utilises both the qualitative and quantitative research methods by exploring and assessing the problems, frustrations, experiences and needs of social workers working in South Africa and the UK. Rubin and Babbie (1989: 365) state that "you are on the safest ground when you use a number of different research methods in studying a given topic". Triangulation was used here. They advocate the combination of the qualitative and quantitative methods.

Creswell, cited in De Vos et al (2002: 365), states that a researcher can design a study that combines the qualitative and quantitative paradigms in a single project, through a model he refers to as the two-phase approach. Using the two–phase approach, the researcher conducted a qualitative phase of the study and a separate quantitative phase. Each of the phases of the study also included a blend of research methods. (1) Phase One – in which the researcher quantitatively researched social workers frustrations, problems and needs in South Africa and (2) Phase Two - in which the researcher qualitatively explored the difficulties, experiences and accomplishments of South African social workers who have relocated to the UK. Further, the researcher qualitatively explored the problems and needs of social workers through the two phases.

According to Creswell (1998: 10), qualitative research can be described as "modes of systematic inquiry concerned with understanding human beings and the nature of their transaction with themselves and with their surroundings". Qualitative research is often described as holistic in that it is concerned with humans and their environment in all their complexities. Qualitative research is based on the premise that gaining knowledge about humans is impossible without describing human experience as it is lived and defined by the actors themselves (Benoliel, 1990:26). In the

study the researcher was able to gain knowledge qualitatively about social workers' difficulties, frustrations and needs. The researcher was able to ascertain what makes some social workers remain in South Africa and to gain knowledge about the experiences, benefits and difficulties experienced by social workers who are now working in the UK.

According to De Vos (1998:243), the qualitative research paradigm refers to research that elicits participant accounts of meaning, experience or perceptions. It also produces descriptive data in the participant's own written or spoken words. The goal of qualitative research is to enhance one's general knowledge about complex events and processes. According to Bouma (1995:207), "qualitative research is relatively unstructured". In this study, the researcher assessed the problems, frustrations and needs of social workers working in South Africa and the UK. The study qualitatively explored the obstacles, difficulties, frustrations and accomplishments of social workers.

Through the qualitative data collection method of using focus groups, the researcher was able to elicit participants' experiences and perceptions of living in the UK. Open-ended questions allowed for descriptive data to be collected in participants' own written and spoken words. The study was also able to explore qualitatively the difficulties and accomplishments experienced by South African social workers in the UK.

De Vos (1998:241) posits that the quantitative paradigm's main aims are to measure the social world objectively and to predict and control human behaviour, while the qualitative paradigm is holistic in nature, and its main aim is to understand social life and the meaning that people attach to everyday life. Further, quantitative research takes universal propositions and generalisations as a point of departure, whereas qualitative research aims to understand a phenomenon within a particular context. Consequently, the researcher in the study used the qualitative

and quantitative data collection methods in eliciting in-depth information from social workers that could be exposed to statistical procedures.

In Phase One, the researcher quantitatively researched social workers' problems, frustrations and needs via a questionnaire that allowed the researcher to detach from the participants, therefore allowing the researcher to be objective. By comparison, in Phase Two of the study, through the qualitative paradigm of using focus group interviews, the researcher interacted with the sample group, focusing on the needs and benefits experienced by social workers who had relocated to the UK.

2.3 **Research Design**

Thyer, cited in De Vos (1998: 123), views a research design "as a blue print or detailed plan for how a research study is to be conducted". Huysamen (1994:10) refines this definition by specifying that this plan, or blueprint, offers the framework according to which data are to be collected to investigate the research hypothesis or question in the most economical manner.

The research design in this study took the form of an exploratory design. According to De Vos et al (2002: 337), the goal in exploratory studies is the exploration of a relatively unknown research area. Grinnell & Williams (1990: 170) add that exploratory designs are used when data is gathered in an effort to find out "what's out there". Mouton and Marais (1990:43) further add that the aim in exploratory studies may be:

- To gain insights into the phenomenon. The study explored what the South African social work profession is not offering in comparison with the UK social work profession. The

researcher also ascertained what makes some social workers remain in South Africa.

- To undertake a preliminary investigation prior to a more structured study of the phenomenon. The researcher undertook an intensive literature review to explore social welfare policies within South Africa and abroad, and the impact of socio-political changes within a country and the implications of these for the social work profession and social workers. Further, the literature review focused on research evidence of social workers' experiences, difficulties and challenges experienced within the South African context and abroad in relation to the research topic.
- To explicate the central concepts and constructs regarding the frustrations, problems and needs of the social workers.
- To determine future priorities for future research in the social work profession.
- To develop new hypotheses about an existing phenomenon.

The study utilised qualitative and quantitative measures within an exploratory design. In Phase One of the study, the research design took the form of the exploration design, with the purpose of precise investigation into and examination of limited data on frustrations, problems, needs and benefits experienced by social workers in South Africa; further to explore what the profession in South Africa is not offering social workers, and the possible reasons for the exodus of social workers to the UK. Further exploration occurred into what factors make certain social workers remain in South Africa. Findings focused on the social work profession in South Africa and the different sample groups leaving and remaining in the profession.

In Phase Two of the study, the research design was exploratory in nature, with the purpose of investigating and exploring the needs, problems and benefits experienced by social workers in the UK.

There was also comparative analysis in respect of the findings from the different phases and sample groups.

Babbie (1992:42) further adds that exploratory research is usually conducted for the following purposes:

a)   To satisfy the researchers' curiosity and desire for better understanding. In this study, the researcher explored and obtained a better understanding of frustrations, problems, needs and benefits experienced by social workers in their profession and service delivery in South Africa.

b)   To test the feasibility of undertaking further studies.

c)   To develop and recommend methods that can be employed for further studies.

All the above have been explored within this research.

2.4   **Sampling**

As discussed in the research method, the study comprised two phases:

(1)   Phase One, which researched social workers in South Africa in respect of their frustrations, problems and needs; and

(2)   Phase Two, which explored the difficulties, experiences and accomplishments of South African social workers who have relocated to the UK.

Sampling differed in accordance with the different phases conducted by the researcher.

According to De Vos (1998: 191), a sample is the element of the population considered for actual inclusion in the study. A sample is studied in an effort to understand the population of interest. A sample is not an end in itself, but rather a means for helping to explain some facet of the population. Bless & Higson-Smith (1995:86) add that sampling is the study of the relationship between a population and the samples drawn from it. Since the aim of the research was to determine characteristics of a certain population, one of the objectives of sampling was to draw inferences about the unknown population's parameters from known sample statistics, obtained by collecting data from the sample.

In the study, inferences are made from the sample of social workers in South Africa and from a sample of South African social workers practising in the UK.

Bless & Higson-Smith (1995: 87) maintain that good sampling implies:
   a)   a well-defined population;
   b)   an adequately chosen sample; and
   c)   an estimate of how representative the whole population is of the sample, i.e. how well, in terms of probability, the sample statistics conform to the unknown population's parameters.

The sample group 1 in Phase One was derived from a UK recruitment agency's database of social workers who had applied to work in the UK. The researcher had access to this database as she was employed by this agency. The sampling procedure was therefore availability sampling. Thereafter, cluster sampling was used to secure representation from different provinces and geographical settings.

The sample group 2 in Phase One of the study was also obtained from the first source in that all agencies from which the first sample group was obtained were used to elicit a randomly selected sample of social workers. Again cluster sampling procedures were employed to obtain representation of the various geographical and racial groups.

Further, the sample in Phase Two was also derived from the same UK recruitment agency's database of social workers who had recently relocated to the UK. In this phase, the researcher used non-probability sampling, in particular availability sampling.

Bless & Higson-Smith (1995: 88) distinguish between probability and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling occurs when the chances of including each element of the population can be determined. Non-probability sampling refers to the case where the probability of including each element of the population in a sample is unknown. Some elements might even have no chance of being included.

In the study, sampling occurred as follows :

Phase One: Social Workers in South Africa

As previously noted Phase one of the study comprised two sample groups namely:

Sample Group 1: _Social Workers that have listed with a_
                   Recruitment Agency to Relocate to the UK

The sample size of this group was initially one hundred and twenty (120) social workers that in 2001 to 2002 applied to a known UK Recruitment Agency to relocate and work in the UK. However only 80 social workers

responded to the mailed questionnaire. The final sample size therefore of this group was 80 social workers. The sample was derived from a UK recruitment agency's database of social workers who have applied to work in the UK. Social workers were chosen from the three main provinces of South Africa; namely, Cape, Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal. From the recruitment agency database, social workers were identified from various agencies as recorded/listed on the Recruitment schedule. It was noted that the various agencies listed on the Recruitment schedule were predominantly urban agencies. The sampling procedure was therefore firstly availability sampling. Thereafter cluster sampling was used to secure representation from different provinces, geographical settings and racial groups.

Sample Group 2 : Social Workers Remaining in South Africa

The initial sample size of this group was one hundred and twenty (120) social workers from the three main provinces of South Africa, namely Cape, Gauteng and KwaZulu Natal. The return rate of questionnaires was similar to sample group 1, with only 80 social workers responding to the study. The researcher utilised the same known Recruitment agency database from which the first sample group was obtained in order to identify the various agencies from which social workers had applied to relocate. From this listing of agencies, those social workers not leaving the agencies/country were invited to participate in the study. Non-probability-availability sampling was used initially in this sample selection. Thereafter, cluster sampling procedures were used to elicit a randomly selected sample of 120 social workers to obtain representation of the various geographical and racial groups. The researcher telephonically contacted social workers from the various agencies listed on the database. On confirmation that they have not applied for relocation, and depending on their availability, they were invited to participate.

Phase Two: Social Workers in the UK

The sample size of this phase was intended to be fifty (50) social workers that relocated to the UK. The researcher used the non-probability-availability sampling method in this phase. From the social work relocation list of the known Recruitment Agency, and the researcher's personal contact with social workers in the UK, the researcher invited social workers to participate in this phase. The sample group size, however, reduced to 30 respondents owing to non-attendance of social workers at the focus group interviews.

2.5 Research Tool

Data collection forms an important part of any research because it does not only provide detail of what data will be collected and how it will be collected, but also constitutes the basic information from which conclusions can be drawn (Monette, et al, cited in Motshumi, 1997:19). It is important that sound data collections are employed.

2.5.1 Questionnaires

In Phase One of the study the researcher chose a quantitative method of data collection method, the questionnaire. The *New Dictionary of Social Work* (1995:51) defines a questionnaire as "a set of questions on a form which is completed by the respondent in respect of a research project". According to Bless & Higson-Smith (1995: 124), in a quantitative study the questionnaire would focus more on factual questions which are straightforward rather than on opinion questions.

In the study, the researcher used the mailed questionnaire as the data collection method. This was considered necessary since the sample size was large and variously distributed. A mailed questionnaire is, according to Grinnell & Williams , cited in De Vos et al (2002: 172), "a questionnaire that is sent off by mail in the hope that the respondents will complete and return it". The advantage of the mailed questionnaire is that the costs are relatively low, and the extent of the geographical area to be covered by the researcher does not increase the cost level. Using the mailed questionnaire led to costs of the study being reduced, especially when taking into account that the researcher had included a large geographical area comprising three provinces in South Africa, and that the sample size was two hundred and forty (240) social workers.

The two questionnaires in the sample groups contained many similar, but also several different, kinds of questions, as will become evident from the discussion in the study. Reasons to relocate or remain were asked of both sample groups, along with their suggestions for improving the image of social work in South Africa and contributing to its survival. An exhaustive literature search yielded a wealth of information on the status of the profession, issues of relevance and survival, and the frustrations, needs and problems of social workers. These issues informed the content of the questionnaires.

It was found that using the mailed questionnaire allowed the respondents in the study a high degree of freedom in completing the questionnaire, and information was obtained from a large number of social workers within a brief period of time. According to Snyman , cited in De Vos et al (2002: 173), what is most important in the mailed questionnaires is that the same stimuli are offered to all respondents and that the possible "contaminatory" influence of a fieldworker is eliminated. Since there was no fieldworker, the researcher ensured that the mailing of the

questionnaire was carefully organised, which ensured good return rate and which also facilitated the processing of data.

Grinnell & Williams (1990: 216) argue that mailed questionnaires also have certain limitations, especially with regard to the response rate. According to De Vos et al (2002), the non-response rate might be very high, especially with regard to long questionnaires and unclear or open questions. Complex questions requiring in-depth thought also show a low response rate. Also, some mailed questionnaires are often left unanswered or wrongly interpreted. This was evident in the study, where the researcher found that a few respondents left certain questions unanswered or wrongly interpreted the question. To increase the return rate in both sample groups in the study the researcher encouraged the respondents to complete the mailed questionnaire, by including a detailed covering sheet with the necessary instructions. The return rate in both sample groups was high, viz. 80%, as the researcher used a courier service and self addressed envelopes, together with a contact person at each agency to co-ordinate the return of questionnaires. This contact person did not know which of the social workers had applied for work in the UK and which of them had not, thus preserving confidentiality.

2.5.2   Focus Groups

In Phase Two of the study, the researcher chose the qualitative method of data collection, focus group interviews. According to Babbie & Mouton (2001), focus groups can be used within the qualitative paradigm. Owing to time constraints, and travel costs for both social workers and the researcher, the researcher conducted focus group interviews in the UK, during which groups of social workers were able to share their experiences

of relocation. Focus groups guided the group discussions to generate a rich understanding of the social workers' experiences and beliefs.

Krueger (1990), quoted in De Vos et al (2002: 307), define the focus group "as a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment". Morgan (1998: 6) describes focus groups as a research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher. Further, Babbie & Mouton (2001: 292) claim that the effective way of using focus groups is to use the group to find information you would not otherwise be able to access collectively. The focus group was useful because it gave space to social workers to get together and create meaning regarding their relocation and to share experiences among themselves, about their present needs, problems and frustrations.

According to Krueger & Casey (2000:7), the purpose of focus groups is to elicit what people really think and feel. Focus groups are useful when multiple viewpoints or responses are needed on a specific topic. The researcher used the focus group interviews in order to gain multiple insights into and viewpoints about the needs, problems and frustrations experienced by social workers, and group discussions were facilitated around the similarities and differences of these experiences. Focus groups create a process of sharing and comparing among the participants. The interaction among participants often consists of efforts to understand one another. The focus group was especially useful in attempting to understand diversity among the social workers, since they can help one understand the variety of others' experiences since the relocation.

Morgan and Krueger, cited in De Vos et al (2002: 311), mention that deciding on the right number of participants means striking a balance between having enough people to generate a discussion, but not having so many people that some feel crowded out. In making decisions about

group size, it is useful to think practically about how much time each participant will get to talk in the group.

In the study, the researcher found that the number of social workers that eventually attended the focus group interviews was approximately 10 social workers per group. The possible reasons for the non-attendance of the focus groups could be related to many factors: social workers residing and employed across a wide geographical area; transport constraints; financial difficulties in travelling to the venue; bad weather conditions, etc. According to De Vos et al (2002) whatever the size selected, it is important to over-recruit by 20 % to allow for non-attendance. This was, however, difficult to accomplish as accessibility to a larger sample was restrictive, owing to social workers' being so widely located in UK.

The focus group interviews are designed to do exactly what the name implies: focus. The topics of discussion in a focus group interview are carefully predetermined and sequenced in an understandable and logical way. Within the study, the focus group allowed for spontaneous discussions of experiences by the social workers in respect of their relocation, work exposure and experience. The focus groups provided opportunities for the researcher to understand the background of people's thoughts and feelings by encouraging discussion around similarities and differences in opinions, through what Morgan (1998:12) refers to as a process of "sharing and comparing". This enables social workers to explain why they may feel differently from another person in the group and provides insights into how people construct their perceptions of particular issues.

Before planning the content of the interview, the researcher defined the concepts to be discussed into selected themes. The interview therefore focused on identified themes and critical questions that captured the

intent of the study: the problems, needs and experiences of South African social workers that have relocated to the UK.

Three focus groups were held with the South African social workers in Wandsworth, London, during December 2001. The group sizes comprised approximately 10 per group. The area, Wandsworth in London, was chosen as the venue for the focus group interviews as it was central to both outer and inner London, where the social workers resided or worked. The focus group interviews began by the researcher thanking the social workers for their presence and explaining the purpose of the research. At this point, the researcher gave the participants an opportunity to ask questions regarding clarity of the purpose. Once everyone was satisfied, the researcher explained the procedure to be used. Thereafter, thematic questions were posed as per the questions in the annexure.

Participants were encouraged to begin by brainstorming ideas, and their responses were written on cards and placed on the table for all to see. This helped to focus the discussion and reduce repetition and provided a record of issues that were considered important. They were encouraged to discuss each question in detail. The groups tended to adopt a "round robin" format, with each member of the group speaking in turn. There appeared to be no dominant member, and each person spoke freely. The researcher's experience as a group worker was invaluable in handling this group, as the researcher was able to acknowledge the responses and facilitate discussion. All group sessions ended with refreshment, as a token of appreciation and socialisation.

The focus groups were not tape-recorded as initially intended. When they realised that the discussions were to be recorded via a tape recorder, the social workers became nervous, and this would have hindered communication. In view of this, the researcher opted not to use a tape recorder.

Record of Participants :   During the focus group sessions, participants were asked to complete a brief questionnaire in order to collect relevant identifying or demographic information (such as gender, years of experience, and type of visa on which they had relocated).

2.6   **Data Analysis**

Monette et al, cited in Motshumi (1997:22), state that data analysis could be both challenging and interesting. Data analysis refers to the process of unlocking information hidden in the raw data and transforming it into something useful and meaningful. For speed, reliability and accuracy, a computer was used to capture the data in statistical form. Frequencies, percentages, cumulative percentages and averages were calculated on computer. Appropriate graphs in the forms of bar and pie charts were also derived from the data, after the necessary coding had been done. Further, analysis of data occurred via cross-tabulation exercises.

The qualitative data presented were discussed and explored in detail in the research report. Qualitative data on the frustrations, needs and problems of social workers were transformed from raw data into meaningful information.

In summary, this chapter has considered the methodology applied in the collection of data for the study under consideration. It has indicated the need to use both qualitative and quantitative methods of data gathering, and has justified the use of random and availability sampling. It has also explained how the fieldwork was carried out.

CHAPTER THREE

SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES

IN SOUTH AFRICA

3.1 Introduction

The following three chapters represent a summary of literature that the researcher viewed as having significance for the research study. These areas are:

- ➢ historical context of social welfare services in South Africa;
- ➢ social policy in South Africa - reference to both past and present social policy as affecting services;
- ➢ social problems/issues that impact on job satisfaction in South Africa;
- ➢ infra-structural support within the social work profession;
- ➢ brain drain and its effects within the social work profession; and
- ➢ the United Kingdom (UK) experience of social work.

The function of reviewing relevant literature is to "look again" at the research reports of others in a related area: an area not necessarily identical with, but collateral to, the current area of study or subject matter. In accomplishing the above, various writers offer insights into the tasks and benefits of the process.

A literature review can reveal investigations similar to those of the researcher and give further indications of how other researchers handled

these situations. Apart from this, it has the capacity of disclosing to the researcher sources of data with which he/she might not be familiar. Further, it can demonstrate a method of approaching a problem situation that might suggest or reveal other methods of approaching similar problems. It also helps the researcher to see his/her own research study in a historical and associational perspective and in relation to earlier and other attempts in solving similar problems. Providing the researcher with new ideas and approaches to the problem under consideration that might not have occurred to him/her is another benefit of a literature review. It is also capable of making it possible for the researcher to access his/her own research efforts by comparing these efforts with those of other researchers (Leedy, 1993: 87-88).

Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:23) posit that the benefits of a literature review include acquainting the researcher with the problems, critical questions posed and results obtained by other researchers. Further, it avoids duplication of effort and widens and deepens research into the problem. It can also bring about identification of gaps in knowledge, as well as lapses in previous work, as the researcher attempts to determine what has already been done and considers new areas or areas where further research is warranted. Finally, it will bring about familiarity with conceptual and operational definitions used in previous studies as well as attributes of the population dealt with, in an attempt to adapt them for the new research.

This chapter reviews the following sections:

- ✓ Historical Context of Welfare Services in South Africa;
- ✓ Post – Apartheid Era Changes in South Africa;
- ✓ Theoretical Framework for Developmental Social Welfare in South Africa;
- ✓ New Social Welfare Policy;

✓ Implications for Social Work – The White Paper for Social Welfare; and

✓ The Consequence for Social Work.

3.2   Historical Context of Welfare Services in South Africa

Writing about social work in South Africa at the present time is a daunting task because of the rapid societal changes taking place on a daily basis. These are exciting and challenging times in which everything is being questioned (Gray, 1998:1). According to Drower (2002:8) until the 1920s, social work as a distinct profession did not exist in South Africa. Social welfare needs were addressed at the family and community level. During this period there was growing concern about poverty among the white population which culminated in an investigation into this problem (Drower, 2002:8). The Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa co-ordinated this investigation and was funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Subsequently, the 1929 Carnegie Commission of Enquiry report was released in 1932, with two major recommendations. These recommendations were directly related to the development of social welfare in South Africa. The recommendation in the report was for the establishment of a social welfare department (Drower, 2002:9). Subsequently, in 1937 the formal institutional sanction of the Department of Welfare in South Africa took place. However, prior to this formal institutional sanction, there was already a proliferation of private or voluntary welfare agencies rendering services to the needy. Their structure and function was modelled on the charity organisation societies which arose in Britain in the 1860s and later spread to the United States of America (Gray, 1998:7).

The second recommendation by the 1929 Carnegie Commission of Enquiry was the training of social workers. These social workers would be capable of making social diagnoses "through the scientific study of individual cases of destitution" (cited by McKendrick in Drower, 2002:9). From the aforementioned, it was clear that the development of social work as a profession and the nature of its professional activities in South Africa were driven by concern for white poverty, addressed through the training of practitioners with an approach entrenched with values and ideologies of the Western society.

In 1948, a period of legislated segregation occurred with the assumption of power by the National Party, ushering in the apartheid era (Drower, 2002:8). Their policy was to implement separation in every aspect of South Africa's population. Separate development, as it was later defensively termed, was based on a belief in the national distinctiveness of the various ethnic groupings within the African population. The gross violation of human rights under apartheid in South Africa had an impact on every sphere of South African life, including the welfare sector. In the welfare sector, segregation was reflected in welfare policy, the delivery of social services, and the training of social workers. In terms of the policy of separation in 1960, the Department of Bantu Administration and Development took over the welfare function for Africans from the Department of Social Welfare. The Department of Coloured Affairs and Indian Affairs were then made responsible for Coloured and Indian welfare respectively. According to Patel cited in Lombard (2000:124), "whilst welfare systems worldwide were designed to support and promote human development, social justice and peace, the South African welfare policies of the past violated universal principles".

Under apartheid, the prevailing laws and policies grossly distorted South African social services. Injustices, which had been in place under earlier colonial systems, were entrenched and compounded. As part of this

process, the core values of social work were betrayed, and the profession failed to carry out key aspects of its functions in society (Loffell 2000:55).

During the minority rule, the partnership between the State and private welfare organisations for meeting welfare needs was strengthened in a highly repressive way. Further, the partnership between State and non-governmental sector was abused and became the basis for social control and the abdication of responsibility on the part of the State (Kaseka, 1998: 144).

The Department of Social Welfare further suggested that white organisations should sponsor and guide organisations of other racial groups towards independence (McKendrick, 1990:15). The State was able to exert its separate development policies by legislating rules for the registration of welfare agencies and threatening the withdrawal of subsidies if these organisations did not adhere to these rules. Some were unable to survive economically without government subsidy and split their services on racial lines in order to survive. It would seem that silence and complicity were 'bought' in exchange for state subsidies for services. The social work profession was torn apart. There were those who fought to uphold the concern of the profession with issues of mass poverty, social injustice and human rights, and those who interpreted the role of the profession within the dominant apartheid ideology (Lombard, 2000).

According to Loffell (2000: 54), social services are built around concepts such as respect for the inherent worth and dignity of the human being, the right of people to self-determination and fulfilment of their potential as human beings, the nurturing of the family as the primary unit of society, and the building of communities as the context in which individuals and families develop and provide mutual support. In South Africa, however, within the apartheid era the worth and dignity of the human being and the right to self-determination and fulfilment were focused merely on the

minority group, the white sector. The needs of the majority of South Africans were totally disregarded.

For the social work profession, the fundamental value underlying all these principles is social justice. In South Africa under apartheid, social service values were increasingly at odds with politics and, in order to survive, organisations and individuals compromised with or accommodated prevailing laws and policies.

Social justice requires that basic human needs are met, and that resources are equitably distributed. Social workers thus have to ensure equal access to public services and social welfare provision in accordance with the resources of national and local governments. The welfare system in the past has for decades allocated national welfare resources unequally. Vast discrepancies prevailed in the amounts paid for all forms of social security provision, including old-age pensions, disability grants, single-care grants, foster-care grants and maintenance grants. Gray (1996) argues that social work is political; firstly, because it is regulated by and deals with the implementation of social policy and, secondly because it seeks to change both policy and social structure, which gives rise to, maintains and exacerbates social problems. She further states that the political nature of social work derives from the activities in which social workers engage to remove social injustice (Gray, 1996: 35).

From this it can be deduced that social work in South Africa evolved out of a political process which gave it legitimate sanction to offer social welfare services. In fact, according to Gray (2000: 99), the development of social work as a profession was intimately tied to the development of social welfare provisions.

Howes (1996:209) pointed out that values are not abstractions that social workers prefer to adhere to, but are enacted in practice. Values are

reflected in the principles of practice that are direct and command action, and it can therefore happen that conflicts of values and duty arise. Throughout the profession's history, social workers have embraced a set of values central to the profession and have been concerned with ethics and values. Of these, social justice seems to be a core value of social work. Social justice is the primary principle which guides the relationship between equality and equity. Social justice is defined as the "ideal conditions in which all members of a society have the same basic rights, security, opportunities, obligations and social benefits" (*New Dictionary on Social Work*, 1995:58). Under apartheid, South Africa's social service became grossly distorted by laws and policies which emanated from this system. Injustices which had been in place under early colonial systems were entrenched and compounded during this period. Workers were subjected to or dictated to by apartheid constraints.

According to Lombard (2000), discrimination took the form not only of inequalities in the social welfare benefits paid, but also of various differences in the procedures and policies applied by the different State departments. An example of this was revealed in the greater Johannesburg Welfare Social Service and Development Forum which submitted in 1998 to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) that all black payouts were made on a fixed date at communal payout points often in inhumane conditions. Loffell (2000) claims that social service values were trodden underfoot in favour of policies founded on racial domination and the preservation of privilege.

Social workers and welfare personnel at every level of authority were involved in the daily implementation of all the racial aspects of the various welfare statutes. They were required on a daily basis to implement statutes which formed the foundations of the apartheid system (Lombard, 2000:129).

All social services rendered by the apartheid government were linked to the ideological paradigm of Afrikaner Nationalism. According to this approach, the white person's need was regarded as a priority. According to Van Eeden et al (2000), the apartheid government, however, felt it was subjecting each community to equality and democratic principles. The proponents justified racial separation by noting that 'separate' does not mean unequal, and that welfare must be culturally sensitive. While the opponents argued that human beings have important common needs whatever their cultural outlook, the unequal distribution remained in force. This was how racial discrimination occurred. According to Van Eeden et al (2000), by the 1980s this was replaced by softening of racial discrimination and a selective racial group inclusion. Apartheid legislation was gradually relinquished. Afrikaner Nationalism was less evident, and space was created for a more liberal version of Afrikaner Nationalism.

Thus, for forty years social work enjoyed government support and played a dominant role in the provision of organised welfare services, both government and private. According to Gray (2000), in keeping with apartheid policy, their focus was mainly, though not exclusively, on white urban populations. A turning point in the history of South African welfare was the issuing of Circular 29 of 1966 by the Department of Social Welfare and Pensions. The document clearly stipulated that government policy on welfare organisation was based on the principle that each population group should serve its own community in terms of welfare. Although Circular 29/1966 was a policy document and not a statute, it had a powerful effect on service delivery in the voluntary sector (Lombard, 2000). The content of Circular 29/1966 clearly indicated that social work could not operate in a political vacuum. Lombard (2000: 125) cited the Greater Johannesburg Welfare Social Service and Development Forum (1998) which emphasised that "as apartheid laws and policies proliferated, racial separation and inequality became steadily more entrenched in every sphere of life - the social services were no exception".

The policy for welfare reflected in Circular 29/1966 not only had a severe impact on the delivery of social welfare services, but also resulted in a split within the formal welfare sector and created a huge gulf among professional colleagues.

According to McKendrick (1998:100), any country's social policy concerning the well-being of its citizens and, in particular, the state's role in this, is reflected in its welfare system. Welfare is therefore a political statement, and both its formation and changes to it are political processes. Despite the profoundly political nature of the welfare system, the past South African government had gone to extreme lengths to separate 'welfare' from politics conceptually and to depict the former in apolitical charitable terms. According to McKendrick (1990:12), in any rational analysis of the welfare system there was a reflection of a different picture where the welfare system was racially segmented, and quality of care and services differed by race; that is, less than 20% of the population who were white had more than four times as much state money paid for their welfare than the 70% of the population who were African.

In 1980, the South African Statutory Council for Social and Associated Workers commenced operation. Subsequently, associations developed, such as the Social Workers Association of South Africa (SWASA), comprising conservative white social workers. Their philosophy was that social work was apolitical, and that social workers should therefore distance themselves from politics. The Society for Social Workers (SSW) was set up as a non-racial society, and its membership consisted of mainly white, Coloured and Indian social workers. The South African Black Social Workers Association (SABSWA) was for black social workers, but *de facto* African (Lund, 1998:5). Throughout the oppressive years, social work associations were comparatively weak and racially divided, and resistance to welfare policy was minimal.

According to Drower (2002:9) among all other functions, the Council was empowered to determine (1) the minimum standards for social work education, (2) to exercise control over the professional conduct of social work students, and (3) to determine the qualifications which a person must possess in order to gain entry into the profession. Dlamini (1995) contends that social workers reinforced the policies of the past State by their implementation of its social policies. Social workers did not make any effort towards changing them. They wittingly or unwittingly became allies "by working within the insidious policies, administration and the worldview of the government of the country" (Dlamini, 1995:26). According to Drower (2002:9), as "a quasi-government body in a country which at that time was characterised by increasing State repression, the Council received minimal support from the broader social work community and did little to facilitate the development of a conceptualisation of social work which was geared towards responding to the daily reality of the majority of the South African people".

While certain sectors of social workers, such as the South African Black Social Workers' Association and Concerned Social Workers, united in their attempts to challenge the status quo, there was a general blindness among social workers in addressing the basic needs of the majority of the population and the empowerment of disadvantaged communities. The social work profession in South Africa during the 1980s was reflected as being in disunity. Lund (1994:7) points out that some welfare organisations continued to operate on a multi-racial basis, while endeavouring to rectify "shortfalls in their organisations, for example parity in salaries of their social workers. There had always been racial and gender discrimination in the subsidy given for social workers' salaries, with White men receiving the highest, followed by White women, then Coloured and Indian men, Coloured and Indian women, then African men, with African women receiving the lowest subsidy" (Lund, 1994:7). Any rebellion was suppressed through banning and detentions.

During the 1980s, welfare gradually became more organised. The State began to realise the importance of reform and in 1989 there was a convened conference of non-governmental organisations to debate "the Place of Social Welfare in the Future in the Republic of South Africa". It was, however, criticised for the lack of representation from smaller grass-root organisations. According to Jaggernath (1995:144) the conference stressed (a) the need for a single Department of Welfare, (b) the rationalisation of National Councils, (c) the development of grass-root services, (d) improved research input, (e) improved primary care and work in rural areas, (f) parity between grants and pensions, and (g) the development of a national welfare scheme. Once the African National Congress (ANC) was un-banned in 1990, the welfare agenda for a new South Africa gained momentum.

In conclusion, it was clear that welfare policy in South Africa developed essentially along two parallel systems, one being for whites and the other for blacks. The ideologies and rationalisation of the policy was often contradictory. It is apparent that the system for whites was institutional and based on Western style social welfare, while the system for the other race groups was residual. The State also realised the importance of the relationship between economic and social development for the white community. Race was unfortunately entrenched in every segment of South African society, and welfare became a mechanism of control. Resistance to the apartheid-based welfare policies was slow to gather momentum. The State created racial divisions and also used force to impede the mobilisation of the people.

In South Africa there could be little doubt that welfare policies suppressed the development of the majority of the population. Therefore, to understand the role of welfare at that time, one has to question how the public and private institutions of welfare were used to support apartheid, instead of questioning whether there had been a welfare policy.

3.3 Post-Apartheid Era Changes in South Africa

1994 ushered in a new political era under a constitutional democracy. The African National Congress (ANC) became the ruling party, with South Africa reaching a milestone in its history with its democratisation. The 1994 elections marked the beginning of the transformation of South African society, based on the principles of equality and equity. The principle of equality was entrenched in the Bill of Human Rights. Subsequently, a united Department of Welfare was established with the vision of upliftment, focusing on historically disadvantaged communities. These communities mainly reflected the black, Coloured and Indian communities (Gray 2000). Van Eeden et al (2000) however argue that this approach is similar to the ideology of Afrikaner nationalism which was followed during the apartheid era, but is now moulded in black nationalism. The former government had prioritised white interests, while the latter currently regards upliftment of mainly black communities as the priority.

The first task of the newly united Department of Welfare in 1994 was the establishment of a new social welfare policy framework capable of tackling the problems of the respective communities. The principles of the new social welfare framework were that services must be accessible and responsive to all in the welfare field. Stakeholders were to participate in the process in a transparent, accountable and cost-effective manner (Welfare Update, 1998:3). According to Triegaardt (2002: 326), the formulation of a new welfare policy was influenced by international and national considerations. These included the curtailment of social expenditure by advanced industrial nations, slower national economic growth rates, reducing dependency on welfare, the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action (United Nations, 1995), and the Beijing Platform of Action (1995).

According to Van Eeden et al (2000), to attain this goal, a sub-directorate Policy development was instituted to compile a specific welfare policy. A Welfare Summit was convened to create a social agenda for a democratic South Africa. The National Welfare, Social Services and Development Welfare Forum (NWSSDF) was launched at this summit. The Forum can be viewed as a link between the State and civil society on specific issues relating to welfare, serving as one of the organised and coherent structures on policy, and restructuring matters affecting social welfare (Mazibuko, 1996:11). The forum therefore played a critical role in the White Paper process. For the first time there was an institution with government and non-government representation, with broad legitimacy, and which was representative of the welfare sector (Lund, 1995:10).

The Department then, set about the task of redressing past imbalances in facilities for the respective communities. Work groups were appointed to investigate a national welfare developmental strategy, comprehensive welfare legislation and the establishment of social welfare programmes. The new developmental paradigm was adopted in legislation and included in welfare programmes (Van Eeden et al, 2000).

3.4 Theoretical Framework for Developmental Social Welfare in South Africa

The function and practice of social work is "substantially dependent on existing structures and are to a great extent affected by the various processes of change within them" (Triegaardt: 2002). According to Drower (2002:9), "recognising the ambiguous location of social work within society and the inter-dependence with its social surroundings allows an avenue to both understanding of its past and future development". Drower (2002:10), aptly commented that "today the challenge for South

African social workers is to discern the location of their profession in the light of the rapidly changing nature of their country's social structures and to rectify a heavy reliance on their interpretations of the nature of social work, which has not emerged from Africa, but from values and ideologies of the Western society".

One of the fundamental challenges in South Africa according to Woolard & Barbeton, cited in Drower (2002:10) is to reduce poverty and inequality.

Although Drower (2002:10) agrees that poverty is the main issue which confronts South African social work practitioners in their service delivery, five other interrelated concerns were identified by Potgieter cited in Drower (2002:10) namely:

- In 2000, the Department of Social Development identified *unemployment rate* approximately at 33% of the total possible labour force (cited in Drower, 2002:10).
- There is an unacceptable *high incidence of malnutrition,* infant mortality and teenage pregnancy (cited in Drower, 2002:10).
- There is concern over *backlogs in the provision of housing*, safe water, adequate sanitation and non-polluting energy supplies in both rural and urban areas of the country (cited in Drower, 2002:10).
- Estimates suggest that 10-15 million adults in South Africa are *functionally illiterate* (cited in Drower, 2002:10).
- It has been found that the incidence of reported *violent crimes* in and outside of the home, abuse and neglect of minor children, and children living on the streets has increased markedly since the beginning of the 1990s (cited in Drower, 2002:10).

Chapter Four of the study elaborates further on the social problems, such as poverty, crime, violence with which the social worker is confronted and

explores the impact of these social problems on the social functioning of individuals, families, groups and communities.

According to Drower (2002:11), the 1994 elections resulted in two important events within the broader South African context. This has had wide-ranging implications for social work theory and practice. The first event was the signing into law of the new Constitution of South Africa in December 1996 and, the second was the shift from the people-driven Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) to the neo-liberal Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) macro-economic policy (Drower, 2002: 11).

Many new policy initiatives have emerged in post-apartheid South Africa. Social policy is the instrument for social change designed to correct past imbalances. According to Triegaardt (2002: 326), social welfare policy was to be informed by the Constitution of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996); the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) (African National Congress, 1994); the White Paper for Social Welfare (Department of Welfare, 1997); and the Financing Policy for Developmental Social Welfare Services (Department of Welfare, 1999).

In South Africa, there were raised expectations that with liberation, people would have a right to services. The new Constitution marked a high point in the country's development as a young democracy. The Constitution is unique in its anti-poverty focus. Through its Bill of Rights, it gives all South Africans basic socio-economic rights.

Welfarism was enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996):

a)   Everyone has the right to have access to:

   (i)   health care services;
   (ii)   sufficient food and water; and
   (iii)   social security, including, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependents, appropriate social assistance.

b)   The State must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of each of these rights (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996:13).

The Constitution (1996) makes provision for welfare as a concurrent function. The policy implications of this are that welfare (social security and welfare services) is a concurrent responsibility of both the national and provincial spheres of government. The national government develops policies, norms and standards, and provincial spheres of government have an administrative function; that is, the delivery of services.

To meet the needs of the people, the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was adopted by the government as a policy framework for socio-economic development and was envisaged as a response to addressing the inequalities caused by apartheid. According to Blake, cited in Drower (2002:11) addressing poverty was the "first priority" of the government. Its aim was to transform all existing welfare services so as to ensure that all South Africans especially the 'historically disadvantaged' would enjoy basic welfare rights (African National Congress, 1994:52). These rights were linked to basic needs for shelter, food, health care,

work and income security and to all those aspects that promote the physical, social and emotional well-being of all people in our society (African National Congress, 1994:52).

The RDP was based on six interlinking principles which made up its underlying political and economic philosophy and was wholly in accord with social work values: an integrated and sustainable programme, a people-driven process, peace and security for all, nation-building, the linkage of reconstruction and development, and the democratisation of South Africa (African National Congress, 1994: 4-7).

The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) provided the Department of Welfare with a paradigm shift which moved from viewing welfare from a personal-deficiency perspective to a social development perspective.

However, this icon for the new South Africa was short-lived for three reasons: it ignored South Africa's position in relation to the global economy; it was "user unfriendly"; and the administrative failures of the RDP Ministry led to overall failure of delivery (Munslow & Fitzgerald, 1997: 47). Accordingly, the RDP could not be translated into practice and was replaced as the strategic development centrepiece by the plan for Growth Employment and Re-distribution (thereafter referred to as GEAR) in mid-1996 (Munslow and Fitzgerald, 1997: 42).

Growth Employment and Re-distribution (GEAR)

When the ANC came into power in April 1994, it inherited an economic system that favoured the white minority. The wealth and resources were, and continue to be, controlled by a few big monopolies. The ANC-led government had to strike a balance between the rich and poor. Some of the problems in the economy needed to be faced were: development and

growth, debt and deficit, the size of the civil service, the currency, job creation, research and development, productivity, and lack of skills. Towards the end of 1995, it became apparent that if the economy continued to grow at around 3% per annum government would not be able to deliver what it had promised in the RDP (Mayibuye, 1997).

In 1996, within the context of the RDP failure and the latter economic concern, the Minister of Finance, Trevor Manuel, presented a macro-economic framework, "Growth Employment and Redistribution"(GEAR). According to Triegaardt (1996) the strategy seeks to shift the South African economy onto a new path, one that will ensure:

- a competitive and fast-growing economy which creates enough jobs for all work seekers;
- a redistribution of income and opportunities in favour of the poor;
- a society in which sound health, education and other service are available to all; and
- an environment in which homes are secure and places of work are productive.

Woolard and Barbeton, cited in Drower (2002:13), describe the purpose of GEAR as that of outlining a "macro-economic policy framework that makes all other policy objectives subordinate to creating macro-economic conditions that will persuade foreign and domestic investors to invest in the South African economy". In essence, GEAR is a strategy to earn more and spend less, so that some immediate gains are sacrificed to longer-term sustainable development. Compared to the RDP, GEAR curtails distribution in order to encourage greater investment and competitiveness (McKendrick, 1998:100).

Nevertheless, the government continues to reiterate its commitment to the principles of the RDP, and these principles have remained highly influential in the formation of policy within the welfare sector.

3.5 <u>New Social Welfare Policy</u>

According to Drower (2002:12) while the GEAR and the new Constitution are shaping the fiscal and governmental contexts of South Africa, the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) is pivotal to a new conceptualisation of social work within the country. The White Paper for Social Welfare was approved in 1997 and established a different policy framework for the sector (Louw, 2002). The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) set as its primary goal the shift from dependency, creating remedial and reactive services for developmental social welfare. It embraced social workers and several additional social service professions that have a contribution to make in the new era (Louw, 2002). Thus, in contrast to the residual features of the past, it was the political-economy approach and the social development framework that shaped the current policy change process.

The priorities in the process of changing social welfare policy in the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997:3-4) are as follows :

a) building consensus about a national social welfare policy framework;

b) creating a single national welfare department, as well as provincial welfare departments, and exploring the potential role of local government in service delivery;

c) the phasing out of all disparities in social welfare programmes;

d) developing representative governance structures to build up the partnership between government, organisations in civil society, religious organisations and the private sector;

e) restructuring the partnerships among stakeholders to develop a system which is socially equitable, financially viable, structurally efficient and effective in meeting the needs of the most disadvantaged sectors of the population, and involving communities in planning/delivery of services;

f) legislative reform at all levels of government;

g) human resource development and the re-orientation of personnel where this is necessary towards establishing a developmental social welfare framework;

h) restructuring and the rationalisation of the social welfare delivery system towards a holistic approach which will include social development, social functioning, social care, social welfare services and social security programmes;

i) developing a financially sustainable welfare system;

j) developing strategies and mechanisms to translate the aims, objectives and programmes of the Reconstruction and Development Programme into action in the welfare field. The development of inter-sectoral arrangements within the welfare sector and between the welfare sector and other government departments is a key priority.

k) The ability to translate these strategies and aims into implemental budgets requires better information and modelling alternatives so that decision-makers can make more informed decisions.

The vision and mission statements for a national developmental social welfare strategy (White Paper for Social Welfare, 1997: 7) therefore image a welfare system which facilitates the development of human capacity and self-reliance within a caring and enabling socio-economic environment and aims to serve and build a self-reliant nation in partnership with all stakeholders through an integrated social welfare system which maximises its existing potential and which is equitable, sustainable, accessible, people-centred and developmental.

While the White Paper for Social Welfare proposes that social welfare services should be available to all South Africans, it makes special mention of those who should receive priority. The aim of the new social welfare policy is to "facilitate the provision of appropriate developmental social welfare services to all South Africans, especially those living in poverty, those who are vulnerable and those who have special needs" (White Paper for Social Welfare, 1997:16). There is a particular emphasis on welfare as a means of poverty alleviation.

The process has also produced an indigenous set of principles to undergird the new policy. These are contextually meaningful principles which distinguish the pursuits of the future from the past.

The following table summarises the principles encapsulated in the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) which guide the provision of welfare services and programmes:

Table 1 : Principles of developmental social welfare

PRINCIPLE	EXPLANATION
Securing basic welfare rights	The government will create conditions which will facilitate the progressive achievement of every citizen's right to social security, and social assistance for those unable to support themselves and their dependants.
Equity	Resources should be equitably distributed and should address racial, gender, geographic, and sectoral disparities - inequalities should be addressed.
Non- Discrimination	Social welfare services and programmes will promote non-discrimination, tolerance, mutual respect, diversity and the inclusion of all groups in society.
Improved quality of life	The welfare system should lead to an improved quality of life, especially for the disadvantaged, the vulnerable and those who have special needs.
Democracy	Public participation in decision-making and management of welfare services is important.
Human rights	Social welfare services and programmes will be based on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms as articulated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.
People centred policies	Just and people-centred policies are needed to replace the policies of the past.
Investment in human capital	Focus is to be placed on the social development of individuals, families and communities.
Sustainability	Welfare programmes need to be financially viable, cost-efficient and effective.
Inter-sectoral collaboration and partnership	Civil society, private sector and government need to work together.
Decentralisation of service delivery, accessibility and appropriateness	Welfare should be devolved to local government level, and services must be co-ordinated, accessible and responsive to local needs.
Quality services	All social welfare programmes will strive for excellence and for provision of quality services.
Transparency and accountability	All welfare organisations and institutions, both public and private, will be transparent and accountable at all levels, including levels of delivery.
"Ubuntu"	The principle of caring for one another's well-being should be promoted and should underlie all welfare programmes. It means that people are people through other people.

The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) also highlighted the way in which social welfare policy should be translated It was identified that a comprehensive generic service should be emphasised within the relationship between the person and his/her social environment. In achieving this integrated service, it was emphasised that there would be restructuring of the social welfare delivery system towards a holistic approach. The holistic approach included social development, social functioning, social care, social work services and social security programmes.

The challenge for social workers in South Africa is therefore to base developmental social work on holistic, planned, development strategies which place people and human rights at the centre of social planning. Ferguson-Brown & Partab (1999:138) maintain that social workers are challenged to become engaged in the wider socio-economic, environmental and geo-political arena in order to change fundamentally the circumstances under which the poor, the unemployed and the marginalised find themselves and to improve the quality of life they experience.

Further, the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) highlighted that a partnership between stakeholders also needed to be restructured in order to develop a system which would be socially equitable, financially viable, structurally efficient, and effective in meeting the needs of the most disadvantaged sectors of the population. To achieve this, involvement of communities in all planning and delivery of services is required.

It would seem, therefore, that inter-sectoral social development both within the welfare departments and in collaboration with other government departments and non-governmental stakeholders was highlighted. Striking a balance between rehabilitative, protective, preventative and developmental aspects, would ultimately affect the delivery of services by social workers. It can be seen, therefore, that a

developmental approach to social welfare highlights a departure from previous notions of the contribution to society of social welfare and social work as primarily remedial and rehabilitative. Gray (2000) claims that political-ideological factors also affected the social work profession.

Having clarified the policy framework and principles for this sector, the Department of Welfare formulated its Social Welfare Action Plan (1999), which spells out the *modus operandi* for these policies. By identifying "goals, deliveries, Social Welfare Indicators of Policy (SWIP), objectives, outputs, criteria, strategies, intermediate priorities and key performance indicators, the Social Welfare Action Plan (1999) document provides a strategic plan to convert the White Paper for Social Welfare into reality."

It would seem that the emphasis on a developmental approach to social welfare highlights a departure from previous notions of social welfare and social work as primarily remedial and rehabilitative. It can be deduced that, while both the White Paper for Social Welfare and the Social Welfare Action Plan are committed to the re-orientation of existing services and social welfare programmes and describe a new paradigm for the meeting of social need within the changed South Africa, it is now incumbent on the social work profession to identify its contribution to this process. In view of the fluidity of the present context of practice, it is foreseen that urgent tasks face the social work profession in South Africa to conceptualise social work that is appropriate. This poses a challenge to social work to redefine its role in society. This study investigates how social workers are equipping themselves to deal effectively with the diversity of problems in the South African communities, within the changed emphasis. The study also explores the impact of the new paradigm shift on social workers' practice.

3.6 Implications for Social Work - The White Paper for Social Welfare

The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) identifies the target groups for the new socio-political change and paradigm to include communities, families, groups and individuals. The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) specifically includes the target groups as:

- the most disadvantaged sectors of the population;
- children in pre-school who come from disadvantaged families and need out-of-home care; those with disabilities and chronic diseases; those who suffer abuse/neglect; those who are on the street; those affected by substance abuse; and those who are nutritionally vulnerable;
- the youth, and women;
- the disabled and the elderly;
- families (especially the poor); and
- people living in under-serviced areas and those living in rural areas, informal settlements and on farms.

The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) and the Social Welfare Action Plan (SWAP) stressed participation in decision-making. The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) was the culmination of an extensive process of consultation among stakeholders in the welfare sector.

According to Gray (1997:360), the development of the White Paper for Welfare marked the acceptance of the developmental approach. It brought about a comprehensive, integrated, equitable, multidisciplinary and developmental approach.

It can be deduced, therefore, that the main challenge confronting the welfare system as identified by the White Paper for Social Welfare is devising appropriate and integrated strategies to address the alienation and the economic and social marginalisation of vast sectors of the population who are living in poverty, are vulnerable, and have special needs. It can be concluded that, for too long, social work has been associated with residual, individualistic, therapeutic interventions designed to maintain an unjust social system. To achieve the vision outlined in the White Paper for Social Welfare, the social work profession must guide social workers towards accepting their developmental role. It can be said that the therapeutic, statutory and rehabilitative work of the formal welfare sector is as necessary as the developmental work of the progressive welfare sector. A fusion of these activities within the context of a developmental welfare plan is required. In essence, social work in South Africa does not need any more incompatible polarities.

According to statistics revealed in the White Paper for Welfare (1997:2) South Africa has experienced declining economic growth rates over the past two decades, with the annual growth rate of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) falling below the annual population growth rate. This has had an impact on the per capita income, thereby increasing poverty and putting pressure on the welfare system to meet basic human needs. Inflation has affected the capacity of poor families to meet their needs. Great poverty is found to exist alongside extreme wealth, with large scale unemployment prevailing. There is also a close association between poverty and a lack of education (White Paper for Welfare: 1997). Statistics from the White Paper for Welfare (1997) cite the illiteracy rate as being 27% in metropolitan areas and 50 % in rural areas.

In view of the aforementioned, it was evident that social welfare services in South Africa needed to undergo a major paradigm shift, with a definite commitment to a social developmental model, or developmental welfare.

Social workers are no longer the key providers of welfare, but share the welfare setting with community development workers, child-care workers and volunteers. If social workers are to remain relevant, it is clear that they will have to orientate themselves to developmental social work. It would seem that a developmental social welfare approach denotes a commitment to eradicating or at least alleviating poverty and has as its major goal the achievement of social justice. The researcher believes that social workers can play a proactive role in the reconstruction and development of our country. South African social workers face challenges to develop new localised programmes and services so that they can contribute to the eradication or alleviation of poverty. Whether social workers believe that they have a role to play in social development is an area that will be covered in the study.

The White Paper for Welfare (1997) states that social and economic development are two interdependent and mutually reinforcing processes. Equitable social development is the foundation of economic prosperity, and economic growth is necessary for social development. Midgeley (1995:1) refers to the social developmental approach as transcending "the residualist-institutionalist debate by linking social welfare directly to economic development policies and programmes".

According to the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997:7), "the goal of developmental social welfare is a humane, peaceful, just and caring society which will uphold welfare rights, facilitate the meeting of basic human needs, release people's creative energies, help achieve their aspirations, build human capacity and self reliance, and participate fully in all spheres of social, economic and political life".

In order to understand the paradigm shift demanded by the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997), it is necessary to understand where the term 'development' has come from and how its meaning has been influenced by

events in society. During what has now come to be known as the first development decade (the 1960s), Western governments opted for a capitalist model of development (Roodt, 1996). Simply put, it was believed that pre-industrialised, under-developed and poor countries could move through a number of stages to become mature industrialised societies with the help of investments in urban industrial programmes. The benefits of this would be increased prosperity and improved conditions, which would then 'trickle down' to those sectors that were underdeveloped. However, it became increasingly clear that this theory was flawed. Economic growth did not automatically impact positively on people's lives. The assumption that development was a linear process proved simplistic and incorrect. In addition, this view of development did not take into account structural aspects such as the status of women, the caste system, and issues related to access to land, all of which would need to change in order for development to be successful (Elliot, 1993).

From these beginnings, the notion of social development, with an emphasis on social justice and human rights, began to emerge. Midgeley (1995:25) defined social development as a "process of planned social change designed to promote the well being of the population as a whole in conjunction with dynamic process of economic development".

Writing in the South African context, Gray (1996) describes social development as :

- committed to eradication of poverty;
- recognising the link between welfare and economic development;
- encouraging investment in human capital rather than a drain on limited resources; and
- including non - remedial forms of intervention.

A number of writers have pointed to the commonalities between social work and social development. According to Paiva cited, in Simpson (2001), readers are reminded that social work has always attempted to look at the whole person and has tried to integrate all that was needed for successful functioning. Based on this, social work therefore had much in common with social development. Elliot (1993) argues that the values of social development such as human dignity, social justice and participatory democracy are consistent with social work values and proposes a model for social work practice that combines social development theory and general systems theory.

It can be deduced that the developmental model of social welfare involves social work in a process of structural change aimed at redressing inequalities in the society through improving the responsiveness of institutions to the needs of the people. Social work strategies appropriate to this model are advocacy and empowerment, both of which aim at promoting client control and involvement in all aspects of their lives. The social work profession has been criticised for being irrelevant and ineffective in meeting needs. Its focus on remediation rather than development, on the individual rather than on social change, and on social control rather than poverty alleviation, has elicited many comments. However, there is a shared value base in respect of the target areas and theoretical foundation between social work and social development. It can be deduced that both approaches focus on the eradication of poverty and the enhancement of people's well-being.

3.6.1 Strategies of Social Development

Midgeley (1995:104-131) outlines that the strategies of social development entail an individualistic, communitarian and government

focus. Lombard (1996:167) claims that the proponents of the *individualistic approach* believe that small enterprises will lead to the growth of the economy and will provide excellent opportunities for the poor to engage in productive economic activities. According to Lombard (1996), the approach strives to formulate a treatment approach for poor people to function more effectively in the community. It is believed that social work is well placed to provide assistance with personal problems that impede on an individual's capacity to cope. In this context, it is advocated that social development strategies rely on social work interventions.

According to Lombard (1996:167), in the *communitarian approach* it is advocated that people themselves, working within their local communities, can best promote social development. Co-operation and sharing are regarded as an important common purpose. Lombard (1996:167) identifies that the strategy to achieve this is community development since it offers an extensive means for promoting social development within the context of economic development. Community action, participation and development together form another strategy that focuses on the empowerment of local people's, taking full control over community development activities and relying on their own initiative. It represents a more politicised and activist approach and targets the poorest and most powerless group (Lombard, 1996).

History has shown that social development should be especially targeted at those living in poverty, those who are vulnerable and those with special needs.

The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) identifies that the restructuring of social work towards a holistic approach would need to include social development, social functioning, social care, social welfare services and social security programmes.

The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) emphasised that in South Africa there needed to be a restructuring of partnership between stakeholders to develop a system which is socially equitable, financially viable, structurally efficient, and effective in meeting the needs of the most disadvantaged sectors of the population, and the involvement of communities in planning and delivery of services.

From the aforementioned, it is clear that welfare policy in South Africa is being rewritten, and that the role of the social worker is changing rapidly. This implies that social workers are required to become actively involved in community development. Community development is not new to social workers, as there is a whole body of theory within social work which is devoted to community development. It is evident that social workers in South Africa can no longer prefer practising casework instead of community work. The community development approach has become as important as individual, specialised services, which have long been linked to professionalism in social work. Lastly, social workers are ideally placed to play an important role in community development, since community development is consistent with social work's ethical theory, embodying a set of humanistic values and promoting social justice. Social work places the interests of people first and acknowledges their right to participate in their own development.

Social development by government - This strategy advocates that governments, their specialised agencies, policy-makers, planners and administrators can best promote social development. In South Africa, the White Paper for Welfare (1997) makes it clear that inter-sectoral social development needs to occur both within welfare departments and in collaboration with other government departments and non-governmental stakeholders. According to Lombard (1996), strategies to achieve this involve redistribution of resources as a basic requirement for social development.

The White Paper for Welfare (1997:14) identifies a need for re-prioritisation of existing social welfare programmes. The re-prioritisation would entail redressing racial discrimination in the delivery of services, the re-allocation of resources to identify social priorities, and a better balance in the financing of programmes to meet the wide range of needs of people in South Africa. In this approach, the government would need to be charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the basic needs of all citizens are met. Sustainable development requires that the government needs to promote policies that protect the environment and safeguard the interest of future generations (Lombard, 1996). In the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997:14), the National Department of Welfare in collaboration with all stakeholders would have to develop a National Information System for Social Welfare in order to inform policy formulation, planning and monitoring.

Further, to secure sustainable development, the White Paper for Social Welfare maintains that a five-year strategic financial plan will be developed for social welfare. The critical areas of equitable and sustainable financing will be addressed in the strategic plan:

- equitable allocation of funds between the provinces to address disparities;
- the allocation of resources to address rural development needs;
- the phasing in of financing of social welfare programmes which will be sustainable and based on approved business plans and performance audits;
- capacity-building, the promotion of competence, economic empowerment and community development programmes to address poverty;
- an increase in employment opportunities for particular target groups; and

- the development of social welfare programmes that will facilitate literacy as well as access to economic and social resource systems through creative strategies that will promote self-sufficiency and independence.

In summary, it is clear that to achieve the latter the Government requires consensus on the building of a national social welfare policy framework. The urgency in creating a single national welfare department alongside provincial welfare departments, and exploring the potential role of local government in service delivery, is necessary in order to achieve equitable and sustainable financing of social welfare. Partnership between the government, organisations in civil society, religious organisations and the private sector are important for achieving the secure, sustainable development of social welfare.

a)   Levels of Development

According to Lombard (1996), social work has traditionally worked on various interventive levels, all of which are seen to be crucial to the solution of personal and social problems.

Global - international   :   This entails the participation of social work in international forums and conferences.

Macro – national level   :   This involves social policy, political empowerment and social provision.

Mezzo – community level : Communities work together mainly through the medium of groups of varying sizes and through the use of communication development as a strategic intervention method.

Micro - individual level   : This focuses on development through individual interventions for personal problems which result from broader social problems.

As discussed, the clear objective of social welfare policy is developmental welfare, which is an approach that transcends the traditional helping purpose of welfare. It views social welfare as part of the broader socio-economic initiative to improve the quality of life of citizens and to access necessary services that enhance the quality of life. Social welfare and social work have therefore become agents of change in addressing the macro-issues of socio-economic development. A more proactive role is needed to develop approaches and models that create opportunities for social advancement, especially for those groups that were marginalised and destabilised by the former political order.

According to Gray (1997:361), the social development strategies of policy analysis and formulation; community development, community organisation and community work; organisational change; individual treatment; multi-sectoral work; and rural development are required within the following levels:

Macro: This level is regarded as the normative level where social workers participate in policymaking and become shapers of policy. At the macro-level, social workers strive towards social change by attempting to change social policies. Social workers may be involved in policy change by acting as advocates for disadvantaged or oppressed groups.

Mezzo: Within the community level, creative, proactive, preventative programmes are achieved through community development. It is also the level of organisational change. It is a strategy, which is increasingly being practised by social workers in South Africa as they attempt to broaden their services to problems relating to poverty and under-development.

According to Gray (1996:11), because social work is a first-line, primary preventative approach, it is entirely compatible with, and therefore uses the strategy of, community development as a means of bringing services to the poor.

Micro: This is the rehabilitative, remedial level where individual treatment is required. This includes the smallest units of society and encompasses individuals, individuals in small groups, and families. Any of these could be the social workers' target of change.

Just how social workers could operationalise social development in practice has proved challenging and, as Elliot (1993) pointed out, social development is somewhat illusive and difficult to operationalise. It was found however, that more recent attempts to operationalize social development have adopted an inclusive micro-macro perspective and have suggested that social workers intervene at different levels to promote social development.

The following table summarises this approach :

Table 2: A micro-macro perspective of social development

LEVEL	METHODS
International	World building - promotion of internationally guaranteed human rights and social justice through participation in international forums and conferences.
National	Nation building - integration of a nation's social, political, economic and cultural institutions through policy formulation, political empowerment and social provision.
Regional	Region building - integration of a region's social, political, economic and cultural institutions through policy formulation, political empowerment and social provision.
Local	Community building - building communities through community development, community action and the establishment of co-operatives.
Organisational	Institutional building - building organisations and institutions through humanising existing organisations, and establishing new ones to respond to new needs.
Individual/family	Individual and group empowerment - helping individuals to cope better with their lives through individual and group remedial interventions, empowerment and conscientisation strategies, self- help and mutual aid.

(Adapted from Elliot, 1993; Estes, 1993; Lombard, 1999)

According to Elliot (1993), the process includes assessment, analysis, goal-setting and planning, implementation, evaluation and withdrawal. For each of these processes, three sets of skills are important:

- analysis skills such as the development of connections, the transfer of learning, policy analysis, assessment and evaluation;
- communication skills such as co-ordinating, facilitating and conscientising; and
- action related skills such as planning, goal setting, and negotiation.

Eade (1998) asserts that social work needs a practice that will focus on both the immediate needs of people and the larger social and economic changes necessary to prevent future individual disruption and improve future quality of life for all. In summary, this means linking together and integrating the knowledge and skills of the micro, meso and macro levels of practice.

In conclusion, social workers, with their holistic understanding (ecosystems perspective) of human conditions, interconnectedness with the environment, and experience of working with people, are ideally placed to be able to function within a social developmental framework. Social development focuses on the relationship between social and economic development. Those who advocate a social development approach believe that unless social workers simultaneously address social and economic issues, real development and social change will not take place. Adopting a holistic, ecosystems perspective has certainly brought improvements to social work owing to the fact that a circular view of causality takes into account the reciprocal influences of all the systems (individual and context) which affect the problem. Therefore, through developing an awareness of the interacting systems, we are forced to consider multiple factors which affect the well-being of clients. This is consistent with the social development approach.

Finally, it is the opinion of the researcher that social workers are ideally placed to play an important role in community development, being

located, as they are, within the institution of social welfare and therefore forming part of the social forces that influence change.

b) Who takes responsibility for Social Development in South Africa?

The White Paper for Welfare (1997) clarifies that the government cannot take sole responsibility for redressing past imbalances and meeting basic physical, economic and psychosocial needs. Collective responsibility and the co-operation of civil society will be promoted. Partnership between government (within welfare departments and with the collaboration of other government departments), the community, and organisations in society and in the private sector that are involved in delivery of social services should be promoted and strengthened. These also include the formal and informal welfare sectors, religious organisations, the business sector, informal support systems and community networks (White Paper for Social Welfare, 1997).

According to Lombard (2000), the importance of the partnership is that it is complementary, leaving room for the autonomy of parties, joint decision-making, joint responsibility, representation and commitment to excellence. Furthermore, effective and appropriate mechanisms can be developed to facilitate participation and consultation in policy development, the planning and evaluation of social programmes, intersectoral collaboration in social programmes, and the development of criteria for the financing of programmes and services (Gray, 1997).

The White Paper for Welfare (1997) identifies service providers as including the government (the formal welfare sector), non-government organisations, community-based organisations, the informal sectors, and

social workers employed by the business sector. Major service providers include planners, social workers, social auxiliary workers, community and social development workers, and volunteers, as well as children and youth care workers. The White Paper for Welfare (1997) maintains that the latter categories are essential since there is an over-reliance on professional social workers.

The withdrawal of much government support for social work led to the elevation of allied occupational groups, such as child and youth care and community development workers, to professional status. The end result of this has been the replacement of the previous South African Council for Social Work with the South African Council for Social Service Professions. This statutory body regulates the registration of social workers and through its code of conduct, ensures the professional conduct of social workers. It is envisaged that this Council will eventually serve as an umbrella body for all social service professions. New categories of social service professions at present include child and youth care workers, community development workers and probation officers. In reality, with the exception of child and youth care, none of these groups was affiliated to any national professional boards.

There is a perception that social workers have been marginalised within the welfare sector (Gray, 2000; Coughlan, 2000) and, in particular, that the establishment of the category child and youth care workers' has caused concern for social workers. The background to this is as follows: there was concern regarding shortcomings in the child and youth care system in South Africa, which led to the establishment of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Youth at Risk (known as IMC). The lack of trained personnel in residential child-care facilities, concern that children were being removed from their families too easily and remaining in the welfare system for too long, and the lack of facilities for black children (as a result of apartheid policies) were identified as core problems for the

establishment of the committee. The purpose of the committee was to formulate "an integrated framework for services for the child and youth care system that emphasises prevention and early intervention and minimises residential care" (IMC, 1996:3).

Few social workers objected to the ideals of the IMC, but of concern was the extent to which social work was blamed for problems in this field. Rather than focus on the context which led to overloaded, under-paid social workers' working in an under-resourced welfare system, the IMC accused social workers of being inadequately trained to undertake child and youth care work and of limiting themselves to clinical or therapeutic intervention roles (Gray and Sewpaul, 1998). The leadership of the National Association for Child Care Workers played an important role within the IMC and lobbied vigorously for the professional recognition of child and youth care as a profession. Many of the tasks were identified as being in the domain of child and youth care workers, such as counselling children and families and conducting a range of preventive, educational and therapeutic groups, which in fact were already tasks that social workers were competent to undertake (Gray and Sewpaul, 1998). Social workers did not respond to the allegations, but rather allowed themselves to be alienated and marginalised.

Within the context of embracing the principles of the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997), the researcher is of the opinion that social workers should not feel marginalised. In order to implement a developmental welfare system, a comprehensive, multi-sectoral/disciplinary approach is required wherein different skills and disciplines with varying levels of competence would be of utmost importance. Occupational diversity within the welfare sector therefore does make enormous sense, since it would require different and varying levels of skills to provide both the functional flexibility and cost-effective staffing needed to drive a developmental

welfare system. However, occupational exclusion or 're-inventing the wheel' achieves neither of these outcomes.

In addition, the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997:3) claimed that although some social workers received training/practice in the community development approach, social workers' approach in their service delivery was still predominantly rehabilitative. Their approach relied on institutional care and not developmental care. The White Paper for Social Welfare also referred to existing social work training as being urban-biassed and therefore required existing curricula to be given urgent attention. It further emphasised that welfare services should be accessible and responsive to the needs of all people. Ntusi (1998:385) suggests that social work's relevance was being questioned because the very nature of its social work practice has been largely reactive, recognising already-existing problems and designing specific (reactive) programmes to attempt to solve them. Likewise, McKendrick (1998) describes social work practice as having often been overwhelmingly therapeutic, remedial, restorative and unresponsive to the needs of the very poor. Rankin (1997:189) attributes this to social work in South Africa being largely Western- and American- oriented. Mupediswa (1997) agrees that social work is irrelevant because its theory is based on Western models, it is too casework-orientated, and not geared sufficiently towards development. Therefore, Louw cited in Gray (2000:101), saw great value in a fundamental shift from individual casework to developmental social welfare and that social welfare in South Africa should experience its own greatest liberation from oppressive casework domination to achieving balanced inter-sectoral development.

According to Gray (2000), such criticisms seem to be made without formal research substantiating their validity. Gray (2000: 101) claims that efforts made within the voluntary and non-governmental sectors to transform organisations and introduce developmental welfare programmes received

scant attention and financial support. Similarly, the need for change within university departments of social work which were teaching development was clearly overlooked.

It would seem that criticisms of social work and statements that it was no longer relevant to the changing socio-economic and political context came from all directions: from within the profession and from non-social work sectors, including from emerging occupational groups waiting to establish their own legitimacy. Further, the increasing number of non-social workers occupying leadership positions within the Welfare Ministry should have accelerated the challenge to social work. Certainly, there are mixed messages regarding welfare from the old and new guards, and neither augurs particularly well for social work. It is now more important than ever before that social workers redefine their role. They need to establish their essential place in reconstruction and development. A paradigm shift to a conceptualisation of social work consistent with a developmental approach should be a major priority.

The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) makes it clear that social work training did not equip social workers for developmental work, and that there is an over-reliance on professional social workers (1997:48). There is a need to extend the human resource capacity of welfare by using other categories of welfare personnel, such as child care workers, and youth care workers.

According to Gray (2000), to justify this course of events and to make it politically possible, social work needed to be dis-empowered, its divisions capitalised on, and supporters found from within its ranks, the best way to begin the process being to criticise its relevance and to make social workers feel ill-prepared for social development.

Given that social work's development depends on political and economic forces within society, it follows that a withdrawal of government support for social work can lead to the weakening of social work as a profession. In South Africa, the dominant political view was that social work was no longer relevant. Further, Midgeley (1981) has long pointed to the inappropriateness of casework–dominant programmes for social work in Third World contexts and the relevance of social development (Midgely, 1995). Therefore, with the political will to address poverty and no longer to accept a band of welfare services catering only for a particular sector of the population, it stands to reason that social work, which was largely associated with urban issues and problems, would come under fire.

It would seem that in South Africa this is happening at a time when the various occupational groups are at very different stages of professional development. While the relatively small profession of social work cannot, by itself, take on the challenge of social development, there is no concrete evidence that any other groups are better prepared for it.

The researcher notes that social work has a history of change and reform which has somehow been lost in a pre-occupation with individualised approaches. What social development required was a change in focus and application rather than in theory or methodology. Hence social development provided a multi-dimensional, macro-policy perspective which could enable social workers to transcend their traditional casework roles. It can be argued that social work focusing on the individual is as relevant to developmental social work as it was to 'traditional ' method-based approaches. The main change within the social development approach, and its most positive value for social work, is that it re-emphasises the importance of intervention at all levels of the environment. The problem with casework, as investigated by the researcher, is in its overuse and misuse rather than a negation of its importance or worth. This means that attention should be refocused on

the wider range of human needs and on social provision to cover the human life span. Gray (1998) agrees that social work focused on the individual remains a vital part of social development. It has been argued that, despite the inability of individual-focused work to address structural change, there is nonetheless a real and important role for this level of social work.

Further, the researcher notes that social workers are uniquely equipped to respond to both parts of the person-environment transaction (ecosystems approach). McKendrick (2001), too, argues that developmental social work does not mean that casework is dead. Social work's extensive repertoire of knowledge and skill in working with individuals and families - what is called social casework - is a vital component in developmental social welfare. The difference for the future lies in how this huge helping resource is to be used: instead of casework being everything, as it has been in some organisations in the past, casework needs to become *one* important ingredient in the developmental social work mix. Similarly, community work, advocacy, participatory research, programme design and other major means to change environments constitute a further foundation area of social work knowledge and skill, and these approaches have high legitimacy in promoting more hospitable environments in which people can meet their needs (McKendrick, 2001: 109).

Gray (2000) adds further that social development calls on social workers to make a greater impact on the problems of mass poverty, unemployment and social deprivation. Social workers would need to achieve this through greater use of diverse social work methods, such as advocacy, community development, empowerment, consultation, networking, action research and policy analysis. Thus, the adoption of the developmental welfare paradigm has forced social workers to think seriously about the form and nature social work should take in this new vision. Gray (2000: 106) maintains that, despite the lack of clarity in its

conceptualisation of the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997), social workers have revisited their values relating to social justice and have attempted to redirect their services to the poor by finding effective ways of addressing poverty, including the practice of community development on a broader scale. The participation of many social workers in the retraining programmes offered by the Department of Welfare was a reflection of their seriousness about and their commitment to the developmental welfare process (Gray, 2000: 106).

A further concern for social workers has been the change in name of the Department of Welfare to the Department of Social Development. Social development is an abstract concept. It reflects a philosophical and policy framework from which practice skills and values may emanate and, as such, should underscore all sectors of government. According to Simpson (2001), the change of name from Welfare to Social Development minimises the placement of welfare in our national context, reflecting the paradoxes and contradictions inherent in the various policy documents. If South Africa is serious about people-centred development, welfare ought to remain at the centre of its development policies, for as Asmal (1995:2) asserted:

"The social welfare policy of a country is where the real heart of the country can be assessed. If the Constitution is the head, social welfare is the heart. It is by looking into the social welfare policy of a country that you can assess whether a nation is putting its money where its mouth is ".

In summary, social work appears to have had difficulty in responding strongly to a changed focus and has instead become marginalised and criticised.

3.7   The Consequence for Social Work

Patel (1996:1) claims that the implementation of the new welfare paradigm has raised many questions and concerns for welfare service providers, and for social workers in particular. Gray (2000) claims that the adoption of social development as a dominant paradigm in South Africa had far-reaching consequences for social work. According to Gray (2000: 358), there is great emphasis on social workers' needing to be re-skilled, since it is found that social workers cannot and often will not do what is required of them, as they have not taken the new paradigm on board.

The study by Ferguson-Brown & Partab (1999:148) is illustrative of the problem. From the agencies the researchers surveyed, a reasonable proportion of the agencies were involved in social development activities, some focused predominantly on the delivery of social services, and almost none were involved in networking with other sectors in the provision of basic needs. Gray (2000), claims that the adoption of the social development paradigm has also led to the marginalisation of social workers in South Africa, a withdrawal of government support for social work, an undermining of the social profession and a questioning of social work's relevance.

As discussed previously, it would appear that the new Social Welfare policy now in place saw social work being placed under more and more criticism and being sidelined and maligned each step of the way. There followed a powerful political force, advocating that what South African welfare needed was not social work, but social development. According to Lombard (2000), when the socio-political context of society changes, a profession needs to adapt accordingly. This means finding appropriate approaches for a specific context. Social work therefore has to maintain its relevance in keeping with the demands and needs of the South African community.

Many social workers feared that the new approach to welfare diminished their role. This was disputed by McKendrick (2001:108), who noted that social workers are uniquely qualified to make an effective contribution to developmental social welfare for many reasons: their knowledge of the ecosystems approach (which is consistent with social development); their well-developed skills in developmental group work; their community work expertise; their proven ability to advocate; their programme design and evaluation skills; their strength-based perspective; their traditional emphasis on the empowerment of others; and their notable capacity not only to work in teams, but to facilitate the effective teamwork that inter-sectoral activity requires, among other factors in their favour (McKendrick, 2001).

Lombard (2000:315) notes that the adoption of the social development approach, or new paradigm shift, for welfare naturally led to a questioning of the status of the social work profession. Lombard (2000) claims that it is not owing to social development, as referred to by Gray (2000:100), that has led to the marginalisation of social workers in South Africa, as well as a withdrawal of government support for social work, an undermining of the social work profession, and a questioning of the social worker's relevance. According to Lombard (2000:315), the questioning is rather attributed to the professional movement of social work asserting a "scientific knowledge base, as well as specialised skill, technique and function which clearly differentiates them from the layman or volunteer".

In fact, according to Lombard (2000:315), social workers who believe that their profession has been marginalised by change in approach certainly do not understand the context and theory of the new approach. Social work cannot be replaced by social development; it can merely adopt it as an additional approach.

The concept of de-professionalism has led to the marginalisation of social workers in South Africa, withdrawal of government support, an undermining of the social work profession, and a questioning of social work's relevance. Gray (2000) has gone to the extent of hinting at a deliberate conspiracy to denigrate social work, and this might be so. However, if this is correct, what are the possible grounds that might have led decision-makers and policy formulators to sideline or marginalise social work?

McKendrick (2001: 106) claims that marginalisation of social workers can be attributed to many aspects, namely: "Social work was associated with apartheid; the profession did not prioritise black poverty but was associated with helping white people; also was associated with casework and social control and lastly social work was excessively pre-occupied with professional status and in keeping others out of their field". Some of these reasons have been alluded to before in this chapter.

McKendrick (2001) claims that the latter characteristics have led to power groups and decision-makers doubting social work's commitment to new policies of social development and to questioning the ability of the profession to contribute to, and deliver upon, social development goals. This has resulted in the de-throning of social work from its position of pre-eminence in social welfare, the introduction of new occupational groupings into the area of developmental welfare work, and the casting of doubt on social work's abilities.

The researcher agrees that the latter characteristics have contributed to the marginalisation of social work. However, the researcher agrees with scholars in social work that social workers have the ability to be the major players in social development. Social workers need to be challenged now to overcome the shortcomings of the past, and to progress. Social workers in South Africa can no longer afford to choose the luxury of individual,

specialised services over the developmental approach. Both are equally important. Gray (2000) adds that social work could counteract the forces rallied against it by being a positive contributor and taking direct steps to justify its continued relevance. It can provide services at all levels of intervention as part of broader developmental programmes, which include community development and other macro-intervention strategies.

.However, most importantly, social work needs to become better organised professionally. Further, according to Coughlan (2000:354), there appears to be a lack of a concerted and unified defence of the profession. Gray (1999), too, argues that "social workers have themselves participated in their own marginalisation because they do not have a strong, unified professional body and therefore were incapable of withstanding the onslaught of the powerful political processes bearing down on them".

At a community level social work has established itself as a recognised profession, but at an organisational or institutional level it needs to regain its standing as a legitimate dispenser of welfare services. A point has been reached where there is no other way back in but through political and practical means. This can be accomplished only if social workers become more politically aware, if they understand the processes marginalising them, and the consequences for the profession of their endorsements of the changes which have been made.

The present study will focus on the concerns, difficulties and frustrations experienced by social workers in this changing socio-political scenario. The factors impinging on the formation of a strong united professional body will be explored. The marginalisation concept and the adaptation process of social workers to the new emphasis of developmental welfare will also be investigated. The possible relationship or correlation of the latter factors contributing to the present exodus of social workers will be explored.

It must be highlighted that the extent of marginalisation varies from region to region. According to Coughlan (2000: 356), in the Eastern Cape, one director has argued that social workers cannot do what is needed in the new programmes and, furthermore, that they will not do what is required of them. At the same time, the submission to the personnel Audit Oversight Committee from the Provincial authorities includes a recommendation that the number of social workers in the province be drastically increased. Similarly, at a workshop in 1999 the only other occupational category raised by the department was 'probation' and it was referred to as a "form of social work". Whatever the regional confusion there is entrenched marginalisation of social work in the implementation of the new welfare policies.

Luvhengo (1996:184) argues that the marginalisation of social workers has partly to do with lack of understanding of the role of social workers in the welfare of our society. To an average South African, a social worker is some-one who deals with marital problems, maintenance of children and distribution of food to the poor and hungry. While these services are within the domain of social work, they constitute a very narrow view of social work activity. Luvhengo (1996:184) notes that prominent politicians and decision-makers in government also hold this view, indicating that social work and its relevant role in the changed socio-political scenario are being confused.

It would seem that the de-professionalism concept undertaken by the current government corresponds with international trends of not entrusting welfare services only to professional persons. Van Eeden et al (2000) refer to this as a "continuing cycle of competing values" where participation becomes a dominant value when trust in leaders and professional persons has been lost, and when leadership and expertise are perceived as unresponsive. At present in South Africa it would seem that confidence in professional people is low. The White Paper for Social

Welfare (1997:48) makes it clear that social work training does not equip social workers for developmental work, and that there is an over-reliance on professional social workers. While, at the same time, many writers in social work have called for the transformation and radicalisation of social work roles in response to the socio-economic conditions that prevail in South Africa.

According to Lombard (2000), in terms of the professional status debate, the question of whether to move away from casework is itself a deliberate attempt to become less professional. Phrased differently, does a social development approach to social work imply lower professional status for the social worker? In the process of attending to people's diverse needs, social work has increasingly become more specialised and, in the process, has been criticised for its "professionalism".

Lombard (2000:319) further questions how social workers deal with the conflict of being faithful to the roots of their profession, or servicing the poor, while at the same time contributing to the massive, specialised needs of society. Does this mean social work should remain on a lower level of professionalism and deliberately not grow in professionalism, rendering more specialised services? On the other hand, professionalism demands a body of knowledge, high standards, autonomy, self-regulation and other attributes, and this reinforces the need for social work to achieve greater unity (Lombard, 2000).

What does this dichotomy imply for social work practice? Taking the South African context when dealing with the poorest of the society, it is most often here that the social worker encounters social problems that require specialised knowledge; for instance, HIV/AIDS and Mental health. A social worker with a generalist training will be able to provide basic skills to deal with relevant societal issues, but if the client or community needs specialist inputs, they can be either referred to other professionals, or to

social work professionals with specialised knowledge and skills. According to Lombard (2000), if specialised fields in social work are not recognised and practised, social workers will be responsible for their own marginalisation as a profession. Gray (2000), too, agrees that social work needs to find a balance between dealing with the poor and the disadvantaged on the one hand, while at the same time making provision for their specialised needs. Social work services and programmes should therefore be an inclusive, complementary process with regard to all target groups in need of such services (Lombard, 2000).

The role of the social worker needs to change. Social workers need to become strong, vigorous players in social development and as Rankin (1997:186) asks: "How do we begin to turn the ship around in the welfare field from a charity model towards development?" Social workers have always played a crucial role in the delivery of social services in South Africa. The emphasis placed on development in the country will affect the roles of social workers. The key role played by social workers in the past can no longer be guaranteed. Social work will have to prove that it has a role to play in social development. Otherwise it will run the risk of dying.

Borenzweig in the *Encyclopaedia of Social Work* cited in Lombard (2000), states that the issue of class stratification and the potential strength of its effect on practice is a matter of concern to the profession because clients of private practitioners tend to be in the middle-to-upper income groups, and clients who receive agency-based services are more likely to be of low socio-economic standing.

This is a major concern because social workers should never forget their commitment to the plight of the disadvantaged and poor. On the other hand, it is argued that specialist knowledge could also be relevant for assisting the poor and disadvantaged. Ramasar (2000:6) claims that this is not only owing to the dire need to specialise, but also evident within the

socio-political context of social work practice, influencing the status of the profession; that is, job opportunities, salaries, and the current crisis in welfare agencies that employ social workers, as well as in the settings of employment. The latter socio-political context of social work practice is investigated in the study, and its contribution to present social workers' frustration, concerns and difficulties will be explored.

· According to Lombard (2000), if social work wants to continue growing as a profession, a classification-declassification solution needs to be found for not neglecting the poor, while at the same time attending to those who can afford services. Clarity in respect of social workers' roles in the respective social services professions is therefore needed. The White Paper for Welfare (1997) has provided for the entry of new professions and a diminished social work influence. Gray (2000:101) comments that the new Welfare policy provides the opportunity for allied occupational groups to gain professional status but has, at the same time dis-empowered social work. According to Thackeray, Farley, & Skidmore (1994: 4), the emergence of other professions is a response both to society's needs and to the need for other untrained personnel in welfare.

Lombard (2000) asks how social workers can be marginalised if they actively participate from within the welfare sector. It is when social workers remain spectators from the outside that they risk marginalising themselves. By participating in the debate on determining and establishing boundaries for various social services, and occupational and emerging professional groups, the unique domain of social work can be protected. This will help acknowledge other role players' contributions to welfare (Lombard, 2000:319). Gray (2000:102) claims that, given that social work's development is dependent on political and economic forces within society, it follows that a withdrawal of the current socio-political and economic support could lead to the weakening of social work as a profession.

In conclusion, few would disagree that, overall, social work is at present a demoralised profession. Part of the reason is that previous comfortable ways of doing things have changed: we have not only to learn new ways of using ourselves, but to 'unlearn' old patterns; we are no longer "the top kids on the block" in social welfare; job tenure has become insecure as a result of a change from State subsidisation of social work posts to subsidisation of wider time-limited programmes; and we are being challenged and criticised for what our profession has done (or not done) in the period of democracy. Owing to these and other circumstances discussed in this chapter, social work has become marginalised.

Social work has accepted the need for transformation (Ramasar, 2000:6), which is vital if the profession is to remain relevant as the socio-economic climate changes. The question for us, as McKendrick (2001) points out, is whether social workers are sufficiently confident to address the new challenges and opportunities of developmental social welfare. For this the answer is, yes, the profession has the ability to shake off present negativity and insecurity, and there is no doubt that social work with its unique strengths and assets can become a powerful and respected partner in developmental social welfare. But to make this happen, we must believe in and have confidence in ourselves, in our profession, and in our profession's value to South African society (McKendrick, 2001).

CHAPTER FOUR

SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN SOUTH AFRICA AND THE INFRA -STRUCTURAL SUPPORT WITHIN THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION

4.1 Introduction

The second chapter of the literature review focuses on two significant sections/areas, namely:

Section A: The Social Problems/Issues in South Africa and the Impact of these Social Problems on Job Satisfaction

Within this area of discussion, the researcher will be focusing on specific current social problems such as poverty, crime and violence in the country and communities and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) identified the latter social problems as special needs and problems that require social work intervention. The research study explores the impact of these social problems on the social workers' job satisfaction.

Section B: An Exploration of Infra-structural Support within the Social Work Profession in South Africa

Within this section, the researcher will provide a detailed discussion on different infra-structural supports that exist for social workers in South Africa.

The researcher included in this discussion:

a) education and training in social work within a changing socio-political dispensation;
b) supervision in South African social work and its impact on practice;
c) the role of professional associations
d) the role of the statutory body – the South African Council for Social Service Professions; and,
e) lastly, service conditions of social workers in South Africa.

In each of the above areas, the researcher explored supportive roles and efforts aimed at forging unity among South African social workers. The present research study explored the actual support provided, as well as recommendations on how to improve existing infra-structural support.

4.2 Section A

The Social Problems/Issues in South Africa and the Impact of these on Job Satisfaction

4.2.1 Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapters, South Africa is undergoing transformation after two democratic elections, one in 1994 and the other in 1999. The government is faced with enormous challenges to improve the existing socio-economic conditions of the electorate. Removal of apartheid has not eliminated inequalities. Poverty is still extensive. The democratic elections have raised the morale of South African citizens; however, social problems such as an unacceptably high level of crime and

violence, slow delivery of basic services to the poor, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and poverty-stricken communities remain prominent causes for concern. Triegaardt (2002:325) argues that protracted neglect of basic services to the vast majority of the people, coupled with the previously entrenched apartheid system, has contributed to structural violence: violence against women and children; homelessness; increasing rates of crime; poverty; and increased unemployment, among other factors.

Pozzuto (2001) adds that social work in South Africa faces a number of dilemmas. Pozzuto (2001:161) metaphorically asks whether you feed the starving or teach them to procure their own food? However, the question to be asked is: do social workers in South Africa have the confidence to meet this challenge? Or are we to agree with Ferguson-Brown and Partab (1999:139) that "for some social workers, there is a loss of faith that social work can produce the much needed practical services to alleviate poverty and its effect".

The researcher explored the impact of social work in South Africa further, with respect to the social problems of poverty, crime and violence and the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the country.

4.2.2   Poverty

Poverty is an issue of great concern throughout South Africa. The African National Congress (1994:14) identified poverty as the single greatest burden of the South African people. It has been described as "the single most powerful circumstance inhibiting human, social and economic development" (Maforah, 1994:95). The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) recognises that the country has serious problems of poverty and underdevelopment, especially in rural areas. Declining economic growth, large-scale underdevelopment, and lack of access to land and social services are all indicative of a depressed state of social welfare (Rankin, 1997:185). In per capita terms, South Africa is an upper-middle-income country, but most South African households either experience outright poverty or are vulnerable to poverty (May, 1998:55).

According to Triegaardt (2002) South Africa has one of the highest income inequalities in the world. The Department of Social Development's Annual Statistics Report (2001) estimated that 50% of the South African population lives in the "poorest" 40% of the households, and are classified as poor, while 27% of the population live in the "poorest" 21% of the households and are classified as the ultra-poor. While poverty is not confined to any single race group, it is most prevalent in the African population. In a study by May (1998:55) it was revealed that 61% of Africans and 38% of Coloureds are poor, compared with 5% of Indians and 1% of Whites. Three children in every five live in poor households, and many children are exposed to public and domestic violence, malnutrition, and inconsistent parenting and schooling. Further, the poverty rate among female-headed households is 60%, compared with 31% for male-headed households (May, 1998:55). From these statistics, it is evident that social welfare services have to meet the needs of a population emerging from the ravages of apartheid and poverty.

Social workers have long been criticised for their failure to reach the poor. Poverty is no longer centred in remote rural areas inaccessible to social workers. It is increasingly a phenomenon of the urban environment, too.

A major characteristic of urban poverty is the emergence of sprawling informal settlements comprising illegal squatters. In the 1980s, urban squatting began to emerge in response to violence and overcrowding in townships, rural poverty, social constraints and proximity to job opportunities (Triegaardt, 2002). Informal settlements are often found to be on land that is unsuitable for human settlement and often their location makes them prone to the negative effects of natural disasters. Homes are built on riverbanks that collapse during floods, and shacks/informal dwellings are often built closely together, relying on gas and paraffin which has become a source of frequent accidental fires.

A general perception is that informal settlements lack basic services. While this is true in many cases, it must also be acknowledged that a concerted effort has been made in the past few years to improve the delivery of essential services to informal settlements. Pre-paid meters for electricity supply and communal standpipes or water kiosks have been instrumental in improving the supply of these services. Problems continue to be experienced, however, with people in some communities damaging water kiosks and pipes (causing leaks from which they can get free water), making illegal connections to the electricity grid and assaulting officials who install electricity (May, Newton, Persad and Stavrou, 1994).

Many informal settlements lack sewerage systems, and health implications are enormous. High rates of parasitic infections, which are directly linked to inadequate sanitation and clean water, are prevalent in informal settlements (Grant and Meicklejohn cited by Chetty,1999). Crime and violence are also rife.

The social work profession is facing a number of fundamental challenges. It has to decide not only how to change its orientation in the eradication of poverty, but whether it should do so at all. Do social workers view themselves as frontline social development workers? Or should they continue with therapeutic functions? For the researcher, the reality is that social work will continue to be disrespected and disregarded until large numbers of social workers are prepared to leave the comfort zone of base camp (traditional social work settings) and confront an entirely new wilderness (non-traditional social work settings). The need for an integrated method of practice is expressed by Chetty (1999:75) who notes that a social worker "cannot casework a client out of poverty. By the same token, the need for casework services will remain since one cannot community-organise a person out of trauma".

Although literature concerning social work in informal settlements in South Africa is fairly sparse, Rothmund and Kela (1992) identify the tasks and roles of social workers in informal settlements as including empowering the community, developing community involvement and participation, understanding community dynamics and structures, networking and making oneself known and marketing one's agency's services. These authors warn that having the correct attitude is important. A correct attitude would include a willingness to treat residents as equals and with respect.

There are, however, many challenges and obstacles facing social work in informal settlements. Rothmund and Kela (1992) point out that residents of informal settlements might feel exploited, and dis-empowered and might have a poor self-image. This could lead to mistrust of strangers, including social workers. Often, social workers are greeted with hostility because residents identify social work with "authority".

Some of the practical problems experienced by social workers when working in informal settlements are:

a) Time is a problem. People living in informal settlements are involved in a day-to-day struggle for survival. Where there is no water, fetching water from communal taps, and washing clothes in nearby streams or at a communal tap all takes time. Further, many are casually employed and cannot afford to miss the opportunity of work. It would be unrealistic to expect them to have time to attend meetings or take on responsibilities in the community.

b) Lack of electricity makes it very difficult to organise meetings at night.

c) Lack of resources, such as adequate venues, makes it difficult to organise meetings at all.

d) Communication is difficult because of a lack of telephones and postal services in informal settlements.

e) Low levels of literacy and education prevent people participating in meetings through, for instance, minute-taking, and a few literate people get to take on all the responsibility.

Working with people in informal settlements can be extremely challenging. Community members often have unrealistic expectations of what social workers are able to achieve, and this can impact on participation, or lack of it, in community projects. Conflict between community leaders also can impact on social work services and hamper service delivery. Cultural differences present further challenges to social workers as they struggle to make sense of traditional practices that do not cohere with human rights (Simpson, 2001).

The study by Simpson (2001:313) with regard to social work in informal settlements in the Durban Metro region reveals other experiences and frustrations of social workers working in informal settlements:

- ❖ Social workers have adopted a dis-empowered position and have accepted appalling working conditions, such as no toilets.
- ❖ They have agreed to work with unacceptably high caseloads (ranging from 76 to 200 per social worker), which they acknowledge has compromised standards of care and possibly ever constitutes malpractice. Feelings of lack of accomplishment and pride in their work were widely experienced.
- ❖ Many worked in physical conditions that were far from ideal and often felt harassed.
- ❖ Offices were often made from "containers" and lacked essential furniture.
- ❖ They reported that organisational structures were unsupportive.
- ❖ They have been targets/victims of criminal behaviour by residents.
- ❖ Many revealed that the work was emotionally draining, with no debriefing or support from supervisors.
- ❖ Social workers felt impotent in dealing with funding requirements for their programmes/activities.

Social workers experienced frustrations with the difficult organisational conditions under which they work. The need for affirmation as professionals was not being met and this was impacting on the social workers' sense of self-worth (Simpson, 2001). These are probably common difficulties that many social workers in today's climate face and are not peculiar to those working in informal settlements. Social constructionism places emphasis on understanding the context which influences how people experience reality. The organisational constraints

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facing social workers impact considerably on how they experience their work as social workers.

Finally, like the majority of people in South Africa, social workers have been socialised into bureaucratic and patriarchal structures, and the experience of apartheid stifled participation and decision-making (Sewpaul, 1992). Social workers working in poverty-stricken communities at times feel the same hopelessness and despair as their clients and need, through a process of reflection, to understand their own sense of where they have come from and where they are going.

4.2.3   **Crime and Violence**

Murder, rape, vehicle hijacking, vehicle theft and violence reflect the state of the country at present. Millions of people have banded together and protested against the Government's refusal to re-impose the death penalty. It is impossible to meet someone in South Africa today who has not had a brush with one of the above-mentioned crimes. *The Natal Mercury* (13 January, 1999) states that "South Africa now has the dubious distinction of being among the world's most corrupt and crime-ridden countries". According to Kasiram (1998:307), South Africa has held the attention of the world during its phenomenal break-away from oppression and the policies of separate development. Now, however, terror and trauma wreak havoc in South Africa as hundreds of people flee the crime and violence that have infiltrated almost every part of the country. According to Shapiro cited, in Gray (1998: 151), people have responded to the perceived crime wave by barring their homes, arming themselves, calling for heavier sentences and even forming vigilante groups. Prisons are full to overflowing, and daily the media carry stories of incompetence in the police services, and of increasingly horrifying and vicious crimes.

Police, justice officials, social workers, neighbourhood watches, community forums, and non-governmental organisations all point fingers at one another, passing blame for what is seen as the rot of South Africa (Shapiro, cited, in Gray, 1998:151). Endless commissions and committees sit in an attempt to plan effective change while drug lords, syndicates, gang leaders and individual offenders increase their grip on an already anxious nation. Crime in South Africa seriously hampers development (Gray, 1998). Like most transitions, the new dispensation has brought with it a time of instability. As soon as the citizens of South Africa had won back the right to be treated with respect and dignity, crime was seen to threaten the stability of the country. There is little doubt that crime is of major concern to most South Africans. The perception that crime in South Africa is out of control, whether real or fuelled by the media, is having a detrimental effect on economic and social development. Apart from assisting in addressing poverty and equalising power relations, social work has a more specific role to play in these crime-ridden communities and in changing the culture of crime in South Africa.

The question is whether social workers are ready for this challenge and are equipped to deal with this role effectively, either on a professional or personal level.

Besides poverty and crime, one of the single most important social issues facing social workers in South Africa today is that of violence. According to Letsebe (1995), violence is virtually an accepted part of everyday life in South Africa. Gray (1998: 267) claims that social workers are constantly confronted with the harsh reality of an increase in violence against women and children. It is estimated that in South Africa a woman is raped every three minutes. Gray (1998) quotes the occurrence of rape in South Africa at a million a year but, in reality, the figure is unknown since it is a punishable offence which carries a stigma for victims and is therefore often concealed or not reported. Gray (1998:267) quotes from an article

in the *Daily News* (11 April, 1997): "...so rife is the problem that it has been said that rape has become a national sport in South Africa". This has led to public outcry demanding better responses, more favourable to women, from the criminal justice system. In addition there has been an alarming increase in domestic violence and a greater public awareness of the frequency of this behaviour.

According to Van Niekerk (1998), the fundamental problem of South African society has always been a problem of values. Van Niekerk (1998) claims that crime; violence and corruption are identified as the main indicators of the demise of important, basic, societal values. Facts and figures usually referred to include the following, as quoted by Van Niekerk (1998:62 -63):

- South Africa has the highest rate of rapes in the world. According to official figures, 142 people are raped daily in South Africa; that is: 51 830 per year (an average of 5,9 rapes per hour of every day of the year). Rapes and attempted rapes increased from 47 506 in 1995 to 51 830 in 1998 (Bigalke, cited in Niekerk, 1998:62).
- Apart from rape, other crimes of violence such as armed robbery, murder, gang wars, taxi violence, assault and car hijackings are clearly out of control. According to official figures, an average of 67 people per day was murdered in 1998 and another 37 per day died as a result of acts of culpable homicide (Bigalke, cited in Niekerk, 1998:62).
- Further, official statistics show that in 1997, 642 people per day were victims of assault with the intent to cause grievous bodily harm, a rise of 13 564 compared to the 1995 figure. An average of 190 armed robberies per day took place over the same period (almost eight per hour). An average of 36 people per day was victims of car hijackings (Bigalke, cited in Niekerk, 1998:63).

These facts and figures have increased substantially over the years, and it is clear that we are facing a serious crisis of values in South Africa.

McKendrick and Hoffman (1990:3) claim that in South Africa violence emerged as a consequence of the struggle around the erstwhile socio-political system, apartheid, and its legacy. Lauer cited in McKendrick and Hoffmann (1990:3), regard violence as the use of force to harm, injure, or abuse others on a personal or on an inter-group level. In inter-group situations, the violence usually involves confrontation between individuals themselves, individuals behaving violently because of their group affiliation rather than because of interpersonal difficulty. This situation is found in South Africa with a large number of gangs operating as in, for instance, the Western Cape and Gauteng.

Letsebe (1995:99) claims that the violence being experienced in South Africa can also be explained in the context of socio-political transformation and change. According to Cronje (1994:247), change is constant, and the nature of it tends to be incremental, although it could be radical and occurring in quantum leaps. The author further maintains that uncertain political and economic conditions, inter-organisational competition, the level of government intervention, scarcity of natural and other resources, and the diversity of cultural norms and value systems create an increasingly volatile environment. Referring to change in South Africa, Cronje (1994:248) rightly says that "the social welfare institution in general and direct service agencies in particular is an extricable part of the political, economic and other social institutions and they are therefore affected by changes in these institutions".

One of the most tangible social consequences of poverty is crime (Wilson and Ramphele, 1989). Where work is difficult to find and where communities are in a state of upheaval, people are more likely to rob and assault others, sometimes to make a living and sometimes out of anger,

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frustration and despair. Living in a community characterised by violence and crime, feeds into feelings of hopelessness and powerlessness.

Similarly, social workers, being major players in the provision of social services, cannot escape the impact of the societal dynamics referred to above. According to Kasiram (1998:171), it is well-nigh impossible to remain unscathed by these real life horror stories. Some express their stress and anxiety by resorting to alcohol or drugs, some engage in sport, and some develop neurotic or psychotic disorders, but all come back to the same point to face the stresses again.

In the past, not many social workers were involved in violence work at the macro-level. However, at present social workers have to live with violence at the micro-level, in families and in their communities. The situation of social workers in the country is captured by Drower (1991:38) in referring to the dilemmas posed by personal versus professional social work values: "The individual practitioner can always remove herself from the profession, but she cannot remove herself as easily from her personal position in society". Whether by choice or by default, social workers are living and working in violent communities and they have to be involved in some way with work related to violence: this is the reality of South Africa. According to Kasiram (1998:172), in order to be optimally effective, we have a responsibility for healing ourselves. The problems encountered by both our clients and ourselves are at their ugliest worst today. Fiction does not remotely compare with true-life dramas. We are people, too, and need to maintain or regain our strength and balance by whatever works best for us (Kasiram,1998:172).

Letsebe (1995:100-101) states that inter-locking frameworks can inform the analysis of violence in South Africa, namely the Life Model as propounded by Germain and Gitterman (1980) and the Societal Practice Framework by Garvin and Tropman (1992). Both these frameworks hold

the view that peoples' needs and problems are located at the interface between person and environment, and are defined as maladaptive transactions within the life space. This dictates that the professional intervention be formulated in terms of reciprocal adaptive processes (Germain & Gitterman, 1980).

In the Life Model, Germain and Gitterman (1980:13) assert that "people's needs, problems or predicaments fall into three interrelated areas: 1) life transitions involving developmental stages, status role changes, crisis events; 2) the unresponsiveness of social and physical environments; and 3) communication and relationship difficulties in families and other primary groups". Violence in South Africa, in the context of this, was borne out of a multiplicity of factors, including issues related to a society in transition, crisis events, and the unresponsiveness of social and physical environments. These were some of the main features which resulted in the maladaptive transactions between people and their environments, thereby creating problems.

Societal change as a term used by Garvin and Tropman (1992) cited in Letsebe (1995:100), refers to "a kind of social change uniquely identified as the product of individual and collective effort". In South Africa, working with macro-level violence constitutes societal change work, as the criminal violence that engulfs the country is integrally linked with macro-political changes. In another sense, it is aimed at changing the face of social work practice by challenging social workers to respond to contextual problems.

Further, working with victims of violence or direct involvement with violence can produce certain stresses. Life stress refers to either a positive or negative person: environment relationship. It is positive when the environmental demand, process or event is experienced as a challenge and is accompanied by positive feelings, or it can be a negative relationship when actual or perceived environmental demands, harm,

losses or conflicts exceed the actual perceived capacity for dealing with them (Germain & Gitterman, 1980:5).

According to McCann & Pearlman (1990: 133), one of the experiences can be burnout, which is "the psychological strain of working with difficult client populations". In the case of social workers in South Africa, their experiences in South Africa include dysfunctional persons: environment transactions within the country, incorporating poverty and wanton destruction of human life and property. According to Letsebe (1995:103), stresses by social workers can be symptomised by initial fear, depression, discouragement and feelings of incompetence and helplessness. McKendrick and Hoffmann (1990) identify some of the impacts of violence on people. They include damage to relationships, dehumanisation, alienation, psychological disruption and moral atrophy.

Finally, one of the most serious outcomes of violence for everyone is that it engenders fear. Where there is violence, there is fear. With the existence of fear there is the abandonment of intimacy (Nouwen, 1989) and a loss of commitment to remain engaged with others. There is the temptation to turn away, to withdraw, to become isolated, to deny, to get on with one's own life by creating a safe haven behind high walls with access to armed response. With fear, there is an escalation and spiralling of all kinds of distancing behaviours and choices. Similarly, this fear and the persistent violence and crime that have infiltrated South Africa can constitute one of the factors that have resulted in the exodus of social workers to 'safer havens' abroad.

In conclusion, crime and violence in South Africa challenges our professional commitments and our choice of lifestyles, either to remain in the country or to leave for 'safer environments'. It is clear that the South African environment challenges social workers to play an important role in value transformation. But the concern is whether social workers are ready

for this challenge or whether this increase in crime and violence will result in a situation that is unwieldy and hopeless, exacerbating the 'brain drain' in the country.

4.2.4   HIV/AIDS Pandemic

South Africa is experiencing one of the most serious HIV problems in the world. More than 3,6 million South Africans were already HIV-positive by the end of December 1998 (Beeld, March 1999, cited in Strydom, 2002)). The Health Organisation declared at the end of 1998 that at least 30 million people throughout the world were HIV-positive, that 11,7 million had already died, and that 83% of them were from Africa (*Beeld*, February 1999, cited in Strydom, 2002). It was further reported that one out of every 10 people diagnosed HIV-positive in that particular year were from South Africa. According to Whiteside and Sunter (2000), South Africa's situation is different from the rest of Africa as infection rates have not yet reached a plateau, but instead continue to rise. It is estimated that on average 1500 people are becoming infected each day in South Africa and that over the next five years HIV prevalence is expected to rise to 5,7 million South Africans (Evian,2000).

Further, AIDS is a new, but very significant, factor affecting family life. As yet the full impact of the epidemic on families in South Africa has still t unfold. As a result of the growth in HIV prevalence, and the failure control the spread of HIV, South Africa faces a major AIDS epidem Instead of being able to focus purely, or even largely, on prevent activities, the country is having to deal with the far-reacl consequences of large-scale conversion from HIV to AIDS.

HIV and AIDS recognise no boundaries, and this epidemic the presents social work with an array of challenges, regardless

practice context. Social workers in South Africa need to be able to respond to these challenges and to recognise HIV and AIDS as multifaceted problems that are more than just medical conditions. Social workers dealing with the problems surrounding HIV and AIDS in South Africa are called upon to deal with a unique mix of people and cultures in the context of a unique time and place in history.

In 1994 the National AIDS Convention of South Africa (NACOSA) adopted a national strategy programme for HIV/AIDS. This included welfare as one of six main components where urgent action was needed (White Paper for the Transformation of the Health Systems in South Africa, 1997). The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) also recognises the need for action. It spells out the need for partnership between government and non-government organisations to devise "appropriate and innovative" welfare services for people affected by HIV/AIDS. It again underlines the principle of community-based care strategies as the "preferred options for coping with the social consequences of HIV/AIDS".

Social workers in South Africa dealing with the problems surrounding this pandemic are likely to discover that creativity and innovation become key qualities in devising methods of intervention. It would also be true to say, however, that there are certain challenges posed by HIV and AIDS that are universal. HIV/AIDS forces people in all communities to confront issues relating to sexuality seriously, which under normal circumstances are often left unattended. These include the wide variety of possible sexual behaviours, the incidence of multi-partner sex, the young age at which sexual activities begin, and the complexity of power relations between men and women, people of different ages and people of different sexual orientations. Further, HIV/AIDS forces communities and individuals to confront human mortality and, in particular, the illness, the death and dying of young, economically active people. It highlights the limitations of human medical interventions and reminds people of their ultimate

powerlessness in the face of death, despite current belief to the contrary (Woods, cited in Gray, 1998: 194).

Social workers, operating as they do in the wider human sphere from the interpersonal through to the level of social policy-making, cannot ignore challenges such as those outlined previously. According to Woods cited, in Gray (1998:194), in many ways, social work's response to AIDS can be, in this period of the pandemic, a reasonable indicator of the state of social work itself.

Saloner (2002) refers to the comments of Pincus & Minahan in 1983 that social work practice may vary in its method (casework, group work or community work), in its orientation (primary, secondary, tertiary prevention) and in terms of the system which is worked with (resource system, change agent, client, target and/or action system). However, Saloner (2002:155) maintains that in the South African context characterised by the high HIV/AIDS prevalence, social workers might increasingly experience an inability to continue in their current roles with the same effectiveness. With changing external demands there is a greater pull on social work resources and, of course, a negative but common reaction to change is fear, defensiveness or resistance.

Social workers would need to allow themselves to move in the same direction as these forces. Social workers need to reassess their own resources and perform an audit of the various skills, knowledge and attitudes that they possess.

Currently, there are fewer than 10 000 registered social workers (South African Council for Social Services Profession, 2001) working in a context where 4,2 million South Africans are infected with HIV. Even though some social workers may not choose to work directly in the field of HIV/AIDS, there is no way of avoiding the epidemic. It is becoming imperative that

social workers' roles involve an education and training component in service delivery. The stresses placed upon the social worker dealing with the challenges of HIV/AIDS are great.

According to Saloner (2002: 158-159), in order to play an effective role in the HIV/AIDS struggle, social workers in South Africa need to ensure that they face the following challenges:

- the development of relationships between the social worker and other professionals in order to strengthen networks and inter-member communication;
- an awareness of trans-cultural aspects such as approaches to discussing sex and sexuality in order to be able to discuss sexual issues openly;
- discussion on the use of language of emotions, vulnerability, sexuality and mortality;
- confronting their own stereotypes and intolerance with regard to intellectual abilities and education levels of auxiliary services and their potential. In view of the fact that the majority of South Africans are illiterate, social workers are required to be creative in the service methods/programmes they draw upon.
- confronting their own biases and prejudices about specific HIV/AIDS related issues;
- confronting the challenge of death, human mortality and loss; and,
- constantly monitoring and evaluating the social worker's role and the programme. Social workers need to be aware of not transplanting their programmes as a standard package to each community group. It is essential to ensure that the programmes meet the indigenous character of each unique community.

From the aforementioned challenges, it is clear that social workers can be at the cutting edge of HIV/AIDS interventions and should continue to be

proactive by placing themselves in such positions. Social work can also facilitate communication between various sectors by using the social work focus on person-in-environment transactions, on interventions process as well as outcome, and on a wide range of practice methods. If social workers work together and focus on networking, then social work as a profession can make a worthwhile contribution to the war on HIV/AIDS.

In accomplishing these challenges, it is important that all social workers involved in HIV/AIDS-related work give consideration to their own levels of stress and well-being. According to Woods, cited in Gray (1998), the epidemic consistently addresses each person's vulnerability, mortality, security level and power potentiality. Sherr (1995) adds that as the number of AIDS cases grows so, too, will the strains on service providers as they watch the devastating impact of this disease. A study by Horstman and McKusick cited in Sherr (1995) finds that, for all the therapists in their study, the higher the percentage of time they spend in contact with AIDS patients, the more likely they are to experience psychological distress. Stress and burnout appear to be more a function of concentrated exposure to, rather than longitudinal contact with, the disease. It appears that the intensity rather than the chronicity of work contributes to AIDS care workers' morbidity (Sherr, 1995).

In summary, social workers need to recognise the need to care for themselves. Organisations in which they work should encourage and support this recognition. Woods, cited in Gray (1998: 208 -209), claims that this might contribute to "preventing burnout and limiting the sad situation of South African social workers rapidly dropping out from active practice".

Within this environment of societal problems, it is clear that social work in South Africa is at a very critical stage in development. Concerns are for other occupational groups also providing counselling, group care and

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social development, and the marginalisation of social work in development. Social work is faced with a major challenge to make its many potentially useful contributions to the country's development efforts. But, at the same time, we need to acknowledge that these social workers themselves, while being challenged to make developmental contributions to the country, are like their clients, being exposed to the harsh realities of social problems such as crime and violence. Dilemmas for the social worker are therefore both professional and personal.

The long-standing massive problems of unemployment, homelessness, crime, violence, HIV/AIDS and poverty in South Africa are subjecting social agencies and social workers to wrenching adjustment in their outlook and responsibility. Social workers in South Africa can no longer afford to allow themselves to see only the singular problems of the individuals who seek their assistance and need to stand back from time to time and bring into focus the larger picture these individual problems combine to form. Luvhengo (1996:186) aptly comments, that "social workers can no longer afford to just shake their heads and wring their hands in the face of these societal problems". However, at the same time, it is argued that social workers have invaluable knowledge and skills, and the success of the developmental welfare model depends on their commitment. The crisis is that the profession is losing workers; many are disaffiliating themselves and leaving the country to seek social work jobs internationally.

4.3   <u>**Section B**</u>

<u>**An Exploration of the Infra-structural support**</u>
<u>**within the Social Work Profession in South Africa**</u>

The new South Africa has brought many challenges to the lives of citizens and to social work. Sweeping changes have taken place in the political environment. These changes impact on social workers and the communities they serve. Further, several changes initiated by the Government and Department of Social Development had far-reaching consequences for the social work profession. Among them are the transformation and democratisation of social services, the denigration of social work, and an emphasis on social development rather than social work. The full impact of these events on social work has yet to be realised.

New demands are presenting themselves to social workers, who might not have had the training to respond to these demands. Further, the social worker is challenged to provide optimal services to communities where severe social problems such as poverty, crime, violence and HIV/AIDS are rife. Terror and trauma wreak havoc as hundreds of people flee the crime and violence that have infiltrated almost every part of the country. How can the therapist offer professional help to those devastated by acts of violence and injustice (Kasiram, 1998:307)?

Social workers need to take stock and see if they are in the right place, providing appropriate services and addressing appropriate issues. Social workers appear to be overwhelmed by the transition in the country, and

fleeing the stress often seems the only option. Infrastructural support is clearly needed.

The following discussion researches the various infra-structural supports that exist to provide support to social workers.

4.3.1 Social Work Education in a changing socio-political dispensation

How should social workers be prepared for the complex roles and functions of practice in the changing socio-political dispensation? As previously discussed it has become clearly evident that today's social workers face many challenges such as poverty, poverty-related illnesses, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, homelessness, and crime. According to Mamphiswana and Noyoo (2000), the challenges facing the country cross-sectorally and institutionally cannot be treated in an isolated manner but have to be synchronised with the challenges currently facing the profession of social work as well.

The watershed question emerging from the new welfare dispensation is: How can the profession of social work and welfare organisations best be of service to the community? Van Delft (2000) answers this question as follows: "By developing and implementing the kind of welfare programmes and service delivery practices strongly supported by and based on research. As well as the development of curricula for the training of social workers that are policy and educational policy compatible and merit based university education." Mamphiswana and Noyoo (2000) add that in the pursuit of relevant social work practice in the new order, social work eduction must be transformed.

4.3.2 Past social work Education and Training and its Impact on present Practice

The majority of experienced social work practitioners were trained and graduated during the apartheid and oppressive regime. This training has had an impact on their adaptability and adjustment to the new welfare dispensation and their own services. This researcher highlights the deficiencies of past social work training to expose gaps in training and skills. In the past, social work training was skewed towards the maintenance of the status quo of colonial apartheid and did not provide social workers with the relevant skills to deal with the problems of the majority African population. Of the 21 universities in South Africa, six served the needs of Africans and people of mixed race (Coloureds/Asians/Indians). Of the remaining 15, 13 were for white Afrikaners and white English-speakers. Historically, black universities were always seen as 'bush' or 'rural' universities and their graduates were perceived as ill-prepared for social work practice compared with their counterparts from historically white universities or so-called 'urban universities' (Mamphiswana and Noyoo, 2000).

Social work education and training also mirrored the welfare system, which was not inclusive. Social work curricula did not reflect the needs of the larger African population group. According to Mazibuko et al (1992), it was for this reason that social work education was almost totally concerned with the preparation of highly skilled social workers to deal with First World types of problems. The pressing problems of the African population, such as poverty and unemployment were not highlighted during the training of social workers. Consequently there was a failure on the part of social work practitioners to be responsive to the challenges facing the majority African population.

Mamphiswana and Noyoo (2000: 24) also suggest that these shortcomings of social work education were exacerbated by the reluctance of South African universities to transform social work curricula which were imbued with norms of discrimination. Furthermore, there was no uniformity in social work curricula throughout South African universities. It was found that the Joint University Committee (JUC) and the previous South African Council for Social Work were not proactive in providing a responsive paradigm for social work education and practice (Mamphiswana and Noyoo, 2000).

According to Triegaardt (1996), the Council set minimum standards for social work education and training at universities but, despite this, every university had its own curriculum. It became the responsibility of each individual university to restructure its own programme. This curriculum independence in education and training can arguably be justified under the banner of academic freedom and allows for innovation and experimentation in education and training. It should, however, be remembered that the universities educate and train students, the majority of whom must be able to deliver welfare services within structures of welfare organisations. However, it became evident that social work education was being tailored to produce caseworkers or managers. It is evident in practice that there is still a strong emphasis on this approach. Group work and community work were least preferred.

According to Mamphiswana and Noyoo (2000: 26), poor emphasis on community work in South Africa has become apparent in the manner professionals, service consumers and the Ministry of Health and Welfare and Population Development, both at national and provincial levels, are tackling the whole pervasive issue of poverty. There is great apathy regarding the practice of community work and community development. Work in rural areas is avoided as many professionals do not want to work in the rural areas. According to Mamphiswana and Noyoo (2000), this is

attributable to a lack of resources, the distances from the cities or towns, crime, poor support from their supervisors, or lack of commitment from their directorates in community development.

4.3.3   The Transformation of Social Work Education

The democratisation of South Africa brought to the fore new challenges in all spheres of life and social relations. Lebakeng (1997) asserts that South African universities need to enter immediately into an open and dynamic debate on the relationships between education, training and development appropriate for the changing techno-scientific, socio-political and cultural environment.

Social work education needs to be responsive to the needs of the people of South Africa, and Mamphiswana and Noyoo (2000) advocate an integrated and holistic approach to social work education. In a diverse country like South Africa with its long history of both racial and ethnic divisions, social workers should be prepared for anti-discriminatory social work practice. Issues such as social work in a diverse society, women and development, and social work and rural development will be relevant components for inclusion in the new curricula (Mamphiswana & Noyoo, 2000).

There is also a great need for the re-orientation of practising social workers. Some social workers were not trained to work *with* people but *for* people. Mamphiswana & Noyoo (2000) add that some social workers were not trained to understand the importance of consulting people and how vital the encouragement of active and meaningful participation by people

at each and every step of the development process can be in shaping living conditions and facilitating national social development.

Hall (1996), and Mamphiswana and Noyoo (1997) contend that social work education also needs to deal with structural problems such as mass poverty, poor housing and malnutrition. The climate has never been as conducive as it is now for social work education to move towards developmental avenues. At present, both educators and social workers face many challenges. Ramphal (1994:340) agrees by saying that rapid changes taking place in South Africa in recent years pose major challenges for the social worker and social work education. Mazibuko, cited in Lombard (1997:12), states that the RDP, and the White Paper of different sectors related to social welfare, as well as the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997), have laid down a foundation and established a vision for the type of socio-economic development and social services that South Africa will pursue. The challenges facing educators and social workers are numerous. Some of these challenges will need to be achieved by educators themselves, some by field practitioners within their ranks and others jointly. Hoffmann, cited in Lombard (1997:16), claims that good practice is demonstrated in the application of theory to practice. Compromise and clarity of obligations in field practice education is therefore best reached when both parties enter into discussion, plan together and understand common objectives.

According to Kotze (1998:125), social work as a profession is faced with a major challenge within the context of developmental social welfare. The fundamental question is whether practising social workers can adapt to this new approach and apply developmental strategies to social problems.

Van Rooyen (1996:332) contends that recently social work academics in South Africa have identified the need for curricula that are responsive to the environment within which social workers practise. Hartman (1980)

adds support to the environment relationship and suggests that a central issue in curriculum development was the training of social workers for practice in the diverse contexts that social work demands. Mamphiswana & Noyoo (2000) question the number of universities that are prepared to shed their old curricula and move at the pace of the government's proposed developmental paradigm. Mamphiswana & Noyoo (2000:28) argue that, in order for the educators to become relevant in the new socio-economic and political environment, they have first and foremost to unlearn past teaching methods and become conversant with developmental trends. Letsebe and Grobbelaar (1996) suggest the need for macro-practice training, working with diversity, and training for practice according to the developmental approach.

Mamphiswana and Noyoo (2000:28) contend that academics are not grounded in theories of development and are also averse to developmental social work or social development because they have neither practised in this realm nor been directly acquainted with it. Mazibuko (1996:16) claims that developmental social welfare, which implies a shift from traditional social work methods to social development, "does not imply that the therapeutic, rehabilitative and specialised services are illegitimate or irrelevant", but rather that there must no longer be an over-emphasis on the old methods as they occurred in the past. Mamphiswana and Noyoo (2000:28) claim that current transformation in South Africa is being met by an equal resistance from various segments, institutions of higher learning included. The authors also argue that there is a general notion that the government has imposed a developmental paradigm on academics without consulting them, but at the same time many universities have divorced themselves from the government's endeavours, even though there have been attempts from the government to bring universities into the mainstream of policy formulation. Mamphiswana and Noyoo (2000) maintain that this "situation has made many universities either passive recipients of government policy

or forced them to withdraw into their little cocoons". Universities in this new era must be shapers of government policy by informing as well as advising the government.

Ramphal (1994) makes a strong point for social work curricula change - which she refers to as "the social matrix" in South Africa. This viewpoint was strengthened by the study conducted by Ramphal and Moonilall, cited in Van Rooyen (1996). The majority of the social workers that took part in the study felt insecure and dissatisfied with their ability to provide relevant services in the changing environment in which they work (Van Rooyen, 1996). According to the study, social workers expressed the need for further revision to the curriculum.

Within the context of developmental social welfare, the most likely approach for social work appears to be a community-based approach (Kotze, 1998:125). Kasiram (1998:119) focuses on key interventive strategies used to implement developmental social work. Kasiram (1998:119) refers to Gray (1996), who suggests community development, Midgley (1995) who emphasises social development as promoting wider community and societal development, and the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997), which refers to the need for "sustainable improvements in the well-being of individuals, families and communities". According to Kasiram (1998), the targets for intervention should be individual, family and community, but with a fresh approach directed towards promotion of economic growth in the individual, the community, promotion of people participation and multi-sectoral collaboration. In addition, Kasiram (1998) maintains that as long as academics are able to link their syllabi with features of a developmental perspective, there will be justification for the existence of multiple targets and levels of intervention.

Kasiram (1998) maintains that planning an innovative curriculum today is daunting, given the lack of clarity on what constitutes 'being

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developmental'. Kasiram (1998:119) conducted a study in respect of postgraduate social work programmes offered at the University of Durban-Westville. The purpose of the investigation was to formulate programmes based on market needs. The study revealed that the two highest needs of practising social workers were community development and community work (57%) and developmental social work (52%). These results clearly indicate a need for and interest in equipping practitioners for working within a developmental paradigm.

Lombard (1997:19) recommends that training institutions take the initiative in drawing up course contents for the retraining of practitioners in the knowledge and skills required for social development.

4.3.4   Attempts to transform social work Education

Mamphiswana and Noyoo (1997; 2000); Mazibuko (1996); Ramphal (1994); and Kasiram (1998; 2000) have all highlighted and critiqued the attempts of social work educators at transformation in the new socio-political dispensation.

In 2001, the Joint Universities Committee for Social Work highlighted the attempts at social work education transformation. A report was compiled by the Joint Universities Committee for Social Work in June 2001 and was presented to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Social Development. The report data comprised feedback from 15 universities - departments/schools and centres for social work in South Africa. The feedback provided in respect of curriculum was as follows:

✓ Most departments of social work have taken significant steps to align their curricula with and meet the requirements of change at

the macro policy level in South Africa by rooting their programmes within the paradigm of social development.

✓ The curricula reflect a clear focus on knowledge of and strategies and training directed towards the target groups identified in the White Paper for Social Welfare.

✓ Conscientious efforts are made to contextualise theory within a South African framework. This includes locating course content within the unique socio-economic circumstances of specific provinces.

✓ Education and training programmes are aimed at being relevant to the realities of the challenges facing practitioners.

✓ Poverty alleviation, rural development and HIV/AIDS are priority areas for a number of training institutions.

✓ Learners are taught to work with individuals, families, groups and communities and develop skills in community development, social planning, social work administration, policy formulation and social work research.

✓ All departments have focused on preparing learners for beginning generic practice within the South African context.

✓ Distinct common themes informing all course content are those of capacity building, working from a strengths perspective and facilitating the empowerment of individuals, families, groups and communities, with the focus on understanding the consequences of structural sources of oppression and inequality in the lives of people.

(Joint Universities Committee for Social Work, 2001)

The report is clear concerning aspects of transformation in the curricula of the training institutions. However, Matlhabe's (2001) study on the transition from students to social workers in their first year revealed conflicting information as to whether training institutions succeeded in their goals. This study focused on the transition of 25 newly-graduated

Gauteng social work students (sample) into the world of social work in their first year of practice and investigated the extent to which they assessed their professional education and training as having equipped them with the knowledge and skills to function effectively within their work situation.

The study revealed that the majority (68%) of the respondents believed that their education was "not effective" in some areas that might have been critical to their effective functioning in specific jobs in social work practice. These included theory and practice skills in social development (60%), skills in specialised fields (68%), and theory of social work and the law (54%). The respondents in Matlhabe's (2001:68) study further identified the following major educational priorities which deserve special attention from the schools/departments of social work regarding achieving a "better fit "between education and practice:

- Social work education needs to locate itself within the socio-political reality of South African society (72%).
- Social work educators and social work practitioners should jointly share the responsibility for curriculum planning (68%).
- The education focus should be on preparing students equally for therapeutic and social development roles (64%).
- Social work departments should provide a wider range of specialisation options at postgraduate level since generic social work is limiting (56%).

The study findings and recommendations from the respondents shared some commonalities with findings in Kasiram's (2000) study. Kasiram et al (2002) also reveal similar findings, where students recommended curriculum change to address the needs of the South African context, having identified that there is still a perceived gap between theory and actual practice. It may be concluded that social work education has at

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least in part effectively equipped these respondents for the kind of social work activities they are presently doing, but not necessarily for the kind of social work activities that practising social workers think they should be doing, having come face to face with some South African practice realities.

It is also imperative to note that the social work educators' responsibility should extend beyond curriculum delivery to include specific strategies for assisting students to understand what the transitions to the workplace really entail and should provide for the developmental needs of graduates and the broader environmental factors that influence both the student and the transition process. Matlhabe (2001) concludes by affirming that social work educators have to take particular note of graduates' ability to deal with uncertainty and ambiguity.

The Joint Universities Committee for Social Work (2001) also highlighted the factors that hinder the transformation. The following is a list of these factors that the researcher considers relevant to this study.

a) At this time of growing social crisis, student numbers have dwindled in some departments. One of the reasons for this is that prospective students do not perceive the Department of Social Development /government as taking social work seriously. Compounding this situation is the decline in a service orientation among the general public. Many do not see studying social work as a worthwhile educational investment.

b) The inherent contradictions of policy proposals, and the gap between policy and practice diminish the legitimacy of welfare in a nation.

c) The poor image and low morale of social work practitioners, together with the severe financial difficulties experienced by many non-governmental organisations (NGOs), impede the continuing education of social workers. This in turn results in,

inter alia, lack of a shared conception of social development among academics and some practitioners. Subsequently, this frustrates learners in their field instruction experiences.

Further, Kasiram (2000) suggests that social workers may be regarded as study-shy. According to Kasiram (2000:266), several factors contribute to this including the fact that, opportunities for promotion are linked to minimal financial gains, and that there is minimum opportunity for upward mobility even if further study is undertaken.

Lastly, whatever the dimensions of social work, it is evident that a new welfare policy and socio-political dispensation create an environment in which social workers must struggle to survive. There is clearly still opportunity for tertiary institutions to improve curricula and empower qualified and undergraduates students in dealing with realities of the South African society. It would seem that curriculum planning is not a joint endeavour of social work practitioners and social work educators. For the social work profession to survive, a partnership between social workers in practice and social work educators is essential. Then the gap between theory and practice realities can be narrowed.

4.3.5 The Input of Welfare Organisations in the Training and Education of Social Workers and Social Work Practice

The power that universities have is embedded in departments/schools of social work in South Africa having the authority to decide their curriculum as long as they adhere to the legal requirement of four consecutive social work courses and other subjects in the human sciences (Van Delft, 2000).

It should, however, be remembered that the universities educate and train students, the majority of whom must be able to deliver welfare services within the structures of welfare organisations. Social work education and training must therefore also have direct bearing on the issues social workers have to deal with in their professional careers. The question can indeed be asked how social work practice influences the curricula pertaining to the education and training of social workers in concrete terms. At present, academics rule social work education and training. The entrance requirements for students, and their motivation for their chosen profession, are therefore primarily decided upon and examined by academics. According to Van Delft (2000) there are only a few training institutions that have truly effective and well-staffed practical supervision programmes developed in close collaboration with selected welfare agencies. These universities represent an ideal situation, but this is not the norm (Van Delft, 2000).

Van Delft (2000) argues that presently welfare organisations employing newly qualified social workers are "buying what the universities produced". Welfare organisations in general have little impact on the curriculum and teaching of social work students, apart from those organisations that enter into formal practical work arrangements with

universities and in this way are able to impact on the training of the students. Universities, however, are at liberty to consult or not with the welfare organisations concerning the development and/or validation of their curriculum. It is true that the annual Joint University Committee of Social Work conference does invite social work practitioners from welfare organisations to be involved in the conference where the validity of curricula and other related matters are discussed, but this is a self-appointed body and not mandated by any other body than academics themselves, least of all by organised social work practice.

In analysing the existing relationship between education and field practice in general, Ramphal (1994:344) points out that tensions indeed sometimes arise between these two groups because the service goal of agencies is not always compatible with the educational goal of social work departments at universities. Practitioners sometimes challenge the appropriateness and effectiveness of social work education, while social work educators and students, in turn, question the appropriateness of certain goals and methods practised to address current problems and needs of clients.

Lombard (1997:13) cites from various studies (McKendrick (1994,1980); Comaroff (1997); Collins (1985); O'Brien (1990), and Ramphal & Moonilal (1993) which show that there is consistent evidence that a substantial body of informants (either employers, supervisors, or new graduates themselves) believe that there is gap between what is achieved by university training in preparation for professional social work practice and the knowledge and skills actually required in practice.

Since academics are powerful role players in education and training, the question is whether welfare organisations are at the mercy of powerful academic institutions. The answer should be no, especially in view of the new welfare dispensation. According to Van Delft (2000), this 'receiving

end' position in which welfare organisations find themselves will change in the near future owing inter alia, to the nature of welfare services in terms of the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997), as well as the financing policy of Developmental Social Welfare. The researcher agrees that welfare institutions are not at the mercy of academic institutions, but that academia needs to take into consideration that, with the introduction of other related occupational groups such as child care and youth care workers to the welfare scenario, welfare organisations are in no way any longer obliged to employ only social workers in order to deliver welfare services.

The new welfare dispensation requires welfare organisations to deliver developmental welfare services according to business plans within the policy-designated fields of child, youth and family care, the aged and women (White Paper for Social Welfare, 1997). This paradigm shift with the focus on development instead of therapy is embedded in the White Paper for Social Welfare. This is supported by the South African Council for Social Service Professions now registering other professional categories in the welfare field (for instance, child and youth care workers).

According to Van Delft (2000), welfare organisations have reached the stage where they can choose the people that will best implement the organisation's welfare programmes, provided that legal requirements are met concerning specific service delivery, such as statutory work. Letting the above discussion reach its full consequence, one arrives at the conclusion that universities will not necessarily, as was in the case in the past, have a guaranteed market for their product with social welfare organisations. Therefore welfare organisations will now have far more power in influencing the education and training curricula of universities because these organisations can choose to employ the persons best suited to their needs. According to Van Delft (2000), welfare organisations can therefore contribute significantly towards a balanced theoretical and

practical education and training curriculum for social workers in order to meet the needs of welfare organisations that are developing programmes in congruence with the developmental welfare policy of South Africa.

Hence departments of social work at universities will have to take serious note of the power welfare organisations are gaining. Training institutions will have to redefine their relationship with social welfare organisations so as to remain vital role players in the South African social welfare scenario. The 2001 report to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Social Development by the Joint Universities Committee for Social Work has in fact identified co-operation with the public sector. The report indicated that all departments of social work in higher education are involved to some extent with local, provincial and national government departments. In this regard, a common trend is the presentation of workshop, in respect of the continuing education of social workers employed by the government. Some training institutions have participated in the Department of Social Development's re-orientation programme for their social workers, while others have initiated their own continuing education programmes for social workers. Staff members of social work training institutions serve on government committees and planning teams (Joint Universities Committee for Social Work, 2001).

Similarly, social welfare organisations are equally confronted with the task of redefining their relationship with universities. Welfare organisations must ensure that the education and training of social workers and other welfare professionals take note of the practice realities of social work and build these into the curriculum (Patel, 1998). Of utmost importance for welfare organisations is to remain active partners in promoting research at universities in social welfare matters so as to empower social work practice with the necessary empirical and conceptual basis from which to operate.

In conclusion, the essence of what social work as an independent profession stands for, positioned within the parameters of developmental social welfare in South Africa, can benefit from a strong, trusting and productive partnership between practice and educational authorities. This partnership can meet the challenges confronting social work practice.

4.4   **Supervision in Social Work**

Social work is difficult, demanding and a contemporary discipline. Sheafor, Horejsi and Horejsi (1988: 57) declare that the very nature of helping people interact more effectively with their environments requires that the social worker be in tune with the world. A social worker cannot be empathic and creative in working with a wide range of clients while holding a narrow and uninformed view of life. The social worker must continuously seek growth and development, both professionally and personally (Van Zyl & Botha, 1997). To become a knowledgeable and skilful social worker who is deeply committed to social work values, according to Sheafor, Horejsi and Horejsi (1988:150), is a lifelong endeavour.

The social worker should have expert knowledge and should be skilful in applying a wide variety of methods, theories and techniques. It is impossible for any educational institution to teach a social worker all he/she will ever need to know. The onus of keeping abreast with social work knowledge therefore rests with the practising social worker. Accountability to the profession, and to the consumers of the service, demands this commitment from the social worker (Van Zyl & Botha, 1997). Frey and Edinburg (1983: 345 -346) stress that a key professional attribute is engagement in continuous learning in order to ensure a high quality of service rendering. In South Africa, for some social workers there are many

opportunities for continuous learning, while choices for others, especially in rural areas might be very limited. Where there is a lack of opportunities, the social worker is confronted with creating self-directed learning and mobilising others to develop formal programmes in which all can participate. According to Van Zyl & Botha (1997:24), whether there are abundant or limited options, the social worker must create a self-directed learning plan which indicates clearly that the social worker has accepted responsibility for an orderly process in his/her continuous growth and development. In addition, supervision in social work is considered an essential source of professional development and growth for the social worker.

According to Lowly (1985:56), supervision is a learning and teaching process designed to incorporate and integrate the various dimensions of the professional role of social workers such as values, ethics, purpose, knowledge, method and skills in working with individuals, families, groups and organisations. On the other hand, Hallowitz (1962:257) defines supervision as an important means of helping social workers to attain a better understanding of themselves and to resolve personal as well as emotional problems that interfere with their ability to learn and to provide effective services.

In social work practice in South Africa, there is great confusion and uncertainty concerning the meaning of supervision. In practice, it appears that each welfare organisation has developed a distinctive word to describe the task of the supervisor (Botha, 2000). In the *New Dictionary of Social Work in South Africa* (1995:64), supervision is defined as a "process whereby the supervisor performs educational, supportive and administrative functions in order to promote efficient and professional rendering of services". Kadushin (1985) argues strongly that all three functions are necessary. "Administrative supervision provides the organisational structure and access to agency resources that facilitate the worker's job; educational

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supervision provides the knowledge and skills required for doing the job; supportive supervision provides the psychological and interpersonal context that enables the worker to mobilize the emotional energy needed for effective job performance".

From the aforementioned definitions, the researcher deduced that it is quite evident that supervision is a teaching-learning process that occurs within a specific reciprocal relationship between the supervisor and the social worker. It is also an important means of helping the social worker to incorporate various dimensions of the professional role of social workers with the purpose of providing effective services to clients. The aim is also the development of skills and insight necessary for successful professional practice.

According to Botha (2000:1), shifts and changes in social work policy in recent years in South Africa, the announcement of new welfare programmes, and speculations that the profession may not succeed in this fast changing and developing environment, tend to focus attention on the existence and effectiveness of supervision. In South Africa, with less and less financial aid available, limited facilities and reduction in manpower, it has become imperative for social workers to receive continuous supervision for the attainment of personal and professional needs and goals. This situation requires an emphasis on supervision and better education for supervisors. Social work supervisors are often the only source whereby social workers' professional abilities can be enhanced to satisfy demands for accountability.

According to Naidoo & Kasiram (2002), social workers are burnt out much of the time and do not believe that supervision fulfils its care-taking function. Miller (1999), cited in Naidoo & Kasiram (2002), has argued for social workers' need to receive support through supervision in order to cater

for the emotional burden of caring and to demonstrate recognition and value for the work.

Botha (2000:1) argues that supervision in South Africa does not receive the rightful and dedicated attention and study it deserves. Botha (2000) emphasises that every educator, supervisor and social worker should personally accept responsibility and seek out and develop ways of putting supervision in its correct perspective.

Supervision in South Africa is currently practised in some or other form in welfare organisations. In South Africa recent opinions were given that supervision appeared to be an unnecessary expensive service, ineffectual and tending to encourage social workers to becoming and remaining dependent (Botha, 2000; Botha, 2001). Despite requests that supervision be abolished because it is apparently no longer meaningful, supervision continues to be practised in agencies.

According to Botha (2000), this negative concept originated in South Africa from the appointment of supervisors by organisations that have no set supervision and consultation policy. Botha (2000) comments that supervisors are not formally trained to perform this specialist task, or are appointed without receiving any formal training or in-service training to execute this highly specialised function and this contributes to negativity.

In South Africa a position in supervision is regarded as a promotional opportunity. Social workers that have a sufficient number of years' experience are eligible for promotion, whether they are equipped for the position or not. Botha, cited in Adams (1998: 103), states that the subsidisation of a supervisory post by the State to non-governmental subsidised organisations requires supervisors to have at least the following experience: a Master's (M.A.) degree with five years' experience; an Honours degree with five years' experience; or a Bachelor of Social Work

degree with six years' experience. According to Botha (2000), many social workers are loath to accept the position of supervisor, because they are not interested in it, but they accept it because it is the only promotional opportunity available to them.

4.4.1   The Importance/ Benefits of Supervision

Supervision is said to be important for a number of reasons. According to Simpson (2002), supervision is important for accountability in the spending of public money, to co-ordinate the activities of social workers within bureaucratic structures, to protect clients, to share decision-making in cases where such decisions have a major impact on the lives of people, and to provide support in the context of the emotional nature of social work practice. Kemp (1985), Van Biljon (1970) and Van Zyl (1995), cited in Van Zyl and Botha (1997: 26), found in their research that social workers rely heavily on the knowledge, experience and support of their supervisors, and that only a small percentage of social workers expand their knowledge through self-study. The reasons cited in Van Zyl and Botha (1997:26) for these findings were:

- The supervisor is more readily available than theoretical resources.
- Social workers value practical experience more than theoretical knowledge.
- Social workers do not have sufficient time for self-study.
- The wide variety of services that the social worker needs to render, and the variety of social problems that the social worker needs to address, seem to de-motivate the worker regarding self-study.
- High workloads, time pressure and lack of finances militate against the workers' undertaking self-study or from using other methods for their professional development.

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In order for them to learn job-related tasks and procedures and to develop as skilled professionals, they must therefore make appropriate and effective use of supervision. Although social workers seek growth and development professionally and expect the supervisors to play a meaningful role in this goal, it was found that South African supervisors often lack or have limited knowledge. Kadushin's (1992) study on supervision reaffirms supervisors' limited or lack of knowledge in supervision.

Botha (2000) states that recent opinions expressed in South Africa were to the effect that supervision appeared to be unnecessary, expensive and ineffective. Botha (2000) argues, however, that the problem does not lie with the necessity or otherwise of supervision, but with supervision that is either faulty or weak. Various authors have stressed the importance of the education of supervisors. Erera and Lazar (1993) and Gregoire, Propp and Poertner (1998), cited in Botha (2000:5), are of the opinion that supervisors need additional knowledge and skills to become competent in supervision.

Simpson (2002), also cited in Simpson's (2001) study, found that supervisees in South Africa were dissatisfied with supervisors who were predominantly casework-orientated and who were supervising community workers whose training was more up to date and relevant. In South Africa, changing political and social conditions have seen the emergence of community work as a preferred method of intervention in many situations. Social work supervision, which seeks to support and guide social workers in their professional development, must take into account this paradigm shift and refocus on the significance of community work intervention through a structured programme of supervision. The past apartheid training of existing supervisors also plays a role in the supervision provided being outdated, casework-orientated and inefficient. Many supervisors themselves have not been exposed to tertiary training in the new paradigm shift and

find themselves limited in supporting and guiding their supervisees in the new paradigm shift.

Contrary to the findings of Van Zyl and Botha (1997), Simpson (2001) cited in Simpson (2002) finds that social workers working in informal settlements found supervision "burdensome" because of inflexible demands. Simpson (2002) describes how supervisors "yelled" at social workers when their records were not up to date. Further, it was revealed that supportive supervision appeared to be lacking in practice. For most of the social workers in the study cited in Simpson (2002), supervision was not a source of support and encouragement. Many of the social workers in the same study expressed a great deal of anger and frustration at being expected to do work that their supervisors were not prepared to do. In the study, the respondents (South African social workers) "spoke of inviting their supervisors to community programmes and being told that they were too scared of being hijacked". One group of social workers in the study based in an informal settlement had no supervisor because the supervisors were too scared to enter the settlement (Simpson, 2002: 4). Clearly this indicates that supervision does not provide an effective supportive function, while social workers are criticised for their lack of commitment and low morale. Supervision in South Africa seems unable to provide the psychological and interpersonal context that enables the worker to mobilise the emotional energy needed for effective job performance. Workers should leave supervision feeling motivated and enthusiastic about their work. Acknowledging stressful situations and providing encouragement and support is another way of motivating workers.

Another consideration highlighted by Simpson (2002) was that supportive, administrative and educative supervision was simply not compatible. Adams (1998) study also highlights that many South African supervisors and supervisees have a limited understanding of the three functions of supervision, and that the three functions of supervision are not rated as

equally important. Adams (1998) argues that this is a short-sighted view which requires critical appraisal and attention before good supervisory and client-service practices can be established.

The researcher is of the opinion that the administrative, educative and supportive functions of supervision should be directed towards providing the environment in which workers can feel supported as they develop professionally. There is a considerable body of opinion that people perform best when they feel supported and appreciated. The question is whether social workers would confide their work-related difficulties to a supervisor who has the power to institute disciplinary measures against them or to deny them their promotion.

A study by Ross (1996:108) again elaborates perceptions of supervision in South Africa. The study on how South African social workers cope with occupational stress revealed that only 8,2% of the respondents in the sample used supervision in their agency as a stress-coping strategy. Supervision was perceived to be only moderately beneficial to social workers who received supervision. Those respondents who utilised supervision as a stress management strategy maintained that sympathetic supervisors helped to support workers and diffuse stress. Effective supervision was perceived as enabling workers to ventilate and offload, and promote personal growth and professional development. In addition, respondents in the study maintained that well-read, well-qualified supervisors with good managerial skills could potentially invest their skills in the supervisees. These findings were consistent with the findings of Veeran and Moodley's (1994) study on stress and burnout among child care workers which indicated that supervision was found to be only moderately effective in helping the workers to de-stress and empowering them with coping strategies to deal with burnout.

In spite of recent opinions that supervision appeared to be unnecessary and should be separated from social work (Botha, 2000; Botha, 2001; Simpson, 2002), there are numerous pleas for the retention of supervision in social work practice. The retention of supervision was supported further by the SA Council for Social Service Professions (2002) in the Guideline Document of Service Condition and Human Resource Management in the Social Service Professions (2002). Emphasis was for departments/organisations to have a policy on supervision in place.

Within the South African context, social workers are clearly demoralised, frustrated and highly stressed (Van Rooyen, 1996; Ross, 1996; Ross, 1997). This is compounded by demands on social workers to participate meaningfully in the changing political-socio environment. Social work will therefore have to find ways and means of enhancing the standard of social work supervision and, consequently, also the standards of social work practice (Botha, 2001). According to Botha (2000) improving standards are not achieved accidentally, but have to be planned. Supervisors clearly need to develop skills in their education as regards administrative tasks, casework, group work, community work and community development.

4.5   **Professional Associations**

Professional associations are also discussed in this chapter, as the researcher found that professional associations represent a vital infra-structural support system that is available to the South African social worker.

The historical context of the Social Work Professional Associations in South Africa is relevant in this study insofar as it helps to shape progressive development of how social workers have been organising and mobilising

themselves (Mazibuko, 1998). It is therefore a history one cannot simply forget, but at the same time one must not become entrapped in it.

From 1945 there were three professional associations, all of which maintained independent identities and cautious relationships with one another. The South African Black Social Workers' Association (SABSWA) was started in 1945 to act as a "mouth-piece" for black social workers, to make representations to the government or any other body on any matter concerning social welfare in black communities, and to ensure that black social workers maintain a high standard of conduct and integrity in accordance with the code of ethics (Mazibuko, 1998:31). SABSWA deleted "Black" in the title in 1996 at the Annual General Meeting (Resolution 1/96).

The Social Workers' Association of South Africa (SWASA), on the other hand, was formed in 1951 for white social workers. Their focus was mainly on social work as a career, community work and the professional concerns of its members. SWASA deleted "White" from its title in 1979 (Hare, 1980).
The Society for Social Work (SSW) was established in 1980 with "open" membership. Its activities focused on educational programmes and professional enrichment activities.

As previously mentioned, these associations had independent identities and cautious relationships with one another. They, for instance, invited one another to their annual general meetings, seminars and workshops, exchanged publications like newsletters and journals, and presented joint statements on matters relating to salaries, welfare legislation and policy. The "unity in action" strategy was applied during the 1980s and the early 1990s (Mazibuko, 1998).

In May 1989, Concerned Social Workers, the Society for Social Workers (Witwatersrand), the Johannesburg Indian Social Welfare Association (JISWA), SABSWA, the Social Worker's Forum (Cape Town), and the

Welfare Policy Committee (Durban) organised and participated in a conference: "Towards a democratic welfare system - options and strategies". This conference made a clarion call for unity within the social welfare movement. In the same year, the Society for Social Workers (Wits), SABSWA and Concerned Social Workers issued a joint statement calling upon welfare agencies to act in accordance with social work ethics by defying apartheid policies and providing non-racial services (Society for Social Workers Newsletter, 1989). Mazibuko (1998) cites *The Star* (26 March) and the SABSWA AGM Report (1990) in reporting that in 1990 the Welfare Policy Co-Coordinating Committee, comprising Concerned Social Workers, SABSWA and the Society for Social Workers (Wits), organised a social workers' mass protest meeting against the welfare budget and increased subscriptions to the South African Council for Social Workers at the Central Methodist Church in Johannesburg. The same co-ordinating Committee and JISWA organised a picket protesting against inequalities in welfare (Society for Social Workers Newsletter, 1989).

It was apparent that during the 1980s the professional associations and other social work formations engaged in collective action on issues like violence, welfare legislation, the welfare system of the country, salaries and service conditions. There was a common ethical obligation to engage in some form of activism. They dealt with issues which confronted the oppressed and other marginalised groups in society and those that affected them directly as service deliverers and trainers. These forms of action are in line with what Mullaly (1993:194-5) identifies as "sensitising the other members of the profession to the needs, problems and issues that affect each group, along with the social causes of their disadvantages and oppression and to interface with the larger socially disadvantaged populations". In other words, a professional formation is not necessarily a purely ethnocentric and self-serving entity.

According to Mazibuko (1998:33), significant observations that one can make are that all issues addressed by the various social work formations of social workers, remain legitimate and relevant current issues to date; that is, salaries, service conditions, continuing education, research, social work education, human resource development and shaping welfare policy. Governance within social welfare dictates a need for a powerful and well-organised social work formation. Drower (1996:13) reports that membership in these associations was voluntary and reflected the ideological positions found at various times in the broader socio-political context. According to Drower (1996:13), "bearing in mind South African social workers' apathy and resultant non-commitment to any association, and because a number of social workers have never been able to identify with any of the existing organisations, the spectrum of social work associations has emphasised the polarisation characteristic of the South African context". To date, successful united action among social work associations has occurred only when ideological compromise has not been required.

For example, in 1983 the Liaison Committee for Professional Associations was constituted and inaugurated. One of its major goals was to achieve better salaries and service conditions for social workers (Gray, 1990). However, this committee received lukewarm support, especially from SABSWA. At its 39th Annual General Meeting, the president of SABSWA acknowledged the Association's participation in the Liaison Committee of Professional Associations, action for salary increases and the resultant benefit to the former Association's members by way of salary increases. The President, however, also highlighted that SABSWA regarded the Liaison Committee for Professional Associations as an ad hoc Association and that SABSWA would not trade its identity for material gain and had an option to withdraw at any time (Mazibuko 1998). Unity within the profession remains an essential issue. Social reality and history demonstrate that we need one

another to confront and address such issues as salaries, service conditions, continuing education and research.

Mazibuko (1998) recommends the need to establish a national formation for social work practitioners. A professional formation can provide a wide variety of services, including bargaining for salaries and service conditions, continuing education for members, shaping and influencing social policies, and publications. A further benefit would be assisting social workers to deal with frustrations/difficulties and addressing the recent exodus of social workers from South Africa.

Interim Committee of Social Workers Associations (ICSWA)

The Interim Committee of Social Workers' Associations (ICSWA) is a group of representatives from the various professional associations working towards unifying professional associations in South Africa. The aim of ICSWA is to facilitate the development of a strong, inclusive, representative structure which can speak on behalf of all social workers. Through this body, South Africa was granted membership of the International Federation of Social Workers on 3 July 1998 at a meeting in Israel (Lombard, 2000:136).

In conclusion, history continually dictates that there is a need for South African social workers to organise themselves under a representative national structure. The onus lies with the social work profession to decide how they want to organise themselves and become a powerful force within the welfare sector.

4.6   South African Council for Social Service Professions

A number of different professional bodies affect the unification of the social work profession in South Africa, including the statutorily empowered SA Council for Social Service Professions. Prior to the inauguration of the SA Council for Social Service Professions in 1999, the South African Council for Social Work existed. The researcher discusses the previous Council's role and its credibility in order to highlight the transformation attempts that have been accomplished. The South African Council for Social Work was established as part of Social Work Act No. 110 of 1978 which required that all practising South African social workers and social work students register on an annual basis with the Council.

According to Drower (1996:12) in 1992, the role of the Council was outlined as being to (1) ensure that within the provisions of the Act, Regulations and Rules, a proper social work service be rendered to the country and all its people, (2) promote the standard of tuition and training of social work, (3) encourage the study of the subject social work, (4) protect the interests of social work consumers and practitioners by setting and regulating the requirements for and admission to the practising of the profession, (5) protect the interests of social work consumers and practitioners by setting standards of professional and proper conduct for social workers and (6) to ensure that the latter are maintained (cited by Eloff, in Drower,1996:12).

During 1993, pending the April 1994 democratic elections, the Council embarked on a process of consultation with the broader social work community. The purpose of the consultation was to reassess Council's role and function in a changing South Africa. These consultations confirmed the inability of South African Council for Social Work to maintain credibility among the majority of South African social workers (Drower, 1996:12). Two central reasons for the ambivalent relationship between the South African

Council for Social Work and the social workers were identified by Drower (1996:13) as being: firstly, Council was a statutory body and was regarded by the social workers as being closely associated with the State. Secondly, one of Council's central functions had been the formulation and enforcement of a code of conduct for social workers to subscribe to, which was referred to since 1990 on the Council's recommendations as a code of ethics. In addition, it needs to be acknowledged that the old Council was not fully representative of social workers in South Africa (Drower,1996:13).

After the process of consultation, the Social Work Amendment Act was promulgated. According to Drower (1996:13), this aspect of legislation paved the way for the election of an interim Council. One of the key functions was to make recommendations to the Minister of Welfare concerning the constitution of the new South African Council for Social Work. Subsequently, elections for the interim Council occurred in February 1996. In 1997, the South African Interim Council for Social Work was established for the aim of making recommendations to the Minister of Welfare and Population Development on the constitution of a transformed Council and how best to amend the Social Work (cited by Department of Welfare Annual Report, 1995/96 27 in Drower,1996:13).

Thereafter, on 1 April 1999, the Social Work Amendment Act, 1998 (Act 102 of 1998) came into operation. This Act made provisions for the establishment of the South African Council for Social Service Professions, which replaced the South African Interim Council for Social Work. After the election and appointment of the Council members, the first SA Council for Social Service Professions was launched in June 1999. The Minister of Welfare and Population Development heralded this occasion as a milestone in the transformation of welfare, and a significant step in paving the way for the registration of all social service professionals (Lombard, 2001:viii).

The new and representative Council immediately set to work to realise the Council's vision of being a professional Council striving for social justice through the promotion and enhancement of developmental social welfare (Lombard, 2001: viii). One of the objectives that the new Council began to deal with was the establishment of the professional boards for the various social service professions in terms of section 14A of the Social Service Professions Act, 1978 (Act 110 of 1978). These boards are meant to promote the interests of the professionals they represent and to engage in activities which promote their professions so as to give them recognition and standing in the wider community (Gray, 2000:104). Therefore two sets of draft regulations respectively providing for the procedure in which members of a professional board should be elected and for the functioning of professional boards were prepared and furnished to the Department of Social Development for submission to the Minister of Social Development (Lombard, 2001). These draft regulations are still under consideration.

According to Gray (2000), the Council for Social Service Professions will eventually serve as an umbrella body for a group of social service professions, each with their own professional boards.

Apart from its activities relating to the establishment of professional boards for social service professions, Lombard (2001: x-xi) and the SA Council for Social Service Professions Newsletter (2001) highlight the following actions of the new Council:

-    The Council will facilitate the establishment of the Standard Generating Body (SGB) for Social Work in terms of the National Qualification Framework and the South African Qualifications Authority Act, 1995. The main purpose of the SGB was to formulate new unit standards and qualifications for social work and social auxiliary work.

- In order to meet the requirements of the Employment Equity Act, 1998, the Council has implemented the new organisational structure for the personnel of the Council. Three new affirmative appointments were made to change the demographic profile of the Council.

- New regulations were formulated for the registration of social workers in terms of the new modular system that has been introduced at most educational institutions.

- While the Council does not determine salaries and service conditions for social service professions, the Council's advocacy intervention at ministerial level resulted in a revision for the social service sector in the Civil Service. An assessment is currently being made of what Council's recommendation would be in respect of a norm for the employment of professionals in the social work sector (SA Council for Social Service Professions Newsletter (2001).

- The Council became aware that serious problems were being experienced with the content of Code of Remuneration for the Occupational Category: Social Services and Support Personnel developed by the Department of Public Service and Administration. Consequently, the Council became involved in collaboration with government departments, and the document was revised.

- Various task teams are attending to the investigation of a number of applications to establish certain specialities and specific modes of intervention in social work in terms of the Social Service Professions Act, 1978.

- The Council is formulating a new disciplinary policy and procedure by revising the current Rules relating to unprofessional or improper

conduct, the Ethical Code, and the procedures followed when a complaint is lodged with the Council.

- In the interest of effective communication with its stakeholders and role players, as well as transparency and empowerment, the Council redesigned the format and content of its Newsletter. It has been found that the "new face" of the Council has already had the positive effect of members of the constituency paying more attention to its contents, especially to the latest developments of the Council, and responding in contacting the Council about matters pertaining to their professional needs.

- The Council has recently conducted research in order to obtain a clear profile of the members of its constituency, obtain data on matters such as their work-related needs and the conditions under which they practise, and ensure the Council is in a position to take a well-informed policy resolution on matters which could affect the persons registered with the Council. The Council is presently constructively utilising the information received from the latter research.

It is quite clear that the new South African Council for Social Service Professions has already, in the relatively short period of its existence, made significant progress in executing its brief in terms of the Social Service Professions Act, 1978 (Act 110 of 1978), as amended. Whether social workers have responded favourably or unfavourably to the actions of the new Council or are aware of the progress made by the new Council, is still open to question. Social workers' participation and input is limited in South Africa, and it is anticipated that the present research study will provide insight into social workers' perceptions of the new Council and its achievements. The study will identify whether the exodus of social workers relates in any way to the effective functioning of the Council. The research

study will be able to elicit information from social workers on perceived benefits of being affiliated to the Council.

4.7 Remuneration and Service Conditions for Social Workers

4.7.1 Remuneration

The situation regarding salaries, remuneration and service conditions of the occupational group within the social service profession has in the past and to date been regarded as decidedly inequitable. This has been contrary to the principle of parity between occupational groups within the public sector as well as within the non-governmental (NGO) sector and the public sector. The imbalance, inequity and discrepancies in the remuneration of professionals in the social service sector are of great concern. This impacts negatively on professionals and is detrimental to the growth of the profession.

According to the SA Council for Social Service Professions' (2002) guideline document for remuneration and service conditions in the social service professions, the inequity that exists is as follows:

a)   Among professionals with four-year qualifications

In the public service, professionals such as educators, state prosecutors and nurses are appointed on level 7 while professionals in the social services, such as social workers, are appointed only on level 6. In both instances, a basic four-year qualification is required, and social service professionals have to be academically on par with other professionals. In terms of the Public Service Regulations (2001), individuals are graded

according to their job evaluation and qualifications. In terms of Section 15 of the Social Service Professions Act (Act 110 of 1978), a social worker may only be employed and practise as a social worker if registered with the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP). According to Regulation 2(1)(a) and (h) of the Public Service Regulations (2001) regarding the Registration of Social Workers in terms of the aforementioned Act, this registration as a social worker is subject to the person being in possession of a four-year degree at a recognised tertiary institution. Persons with a social work qualification are employed in the public service, nationally and provincially, according to a number of designations that include social worker and probation officer. However, the four-year degree is common to all.

In terms of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), a social work qualification is recognised as a professional degree and is pegged at Level 7 on the NQF. This means that the qualification of social workers is on the same NQF level as other professional degrees such as educators, nurses, lawyers, physiotherapists, etc. Despite this, the current situation in the public service is that persons with a four-year professional social work qualification are remunerated at entry level 6 (i.e. R62558,00 per annum). In comparison, other groups with a four-year professional degree are remunerated at entry Level 7 (R77937,18 per annum). This discrepancy means that social workers are remunerated as if they have only a three-year degree, which is not the case.

b)   Among persons appointed in different government departments

It is found that social service professionals employed by Local Government, the South African Police Service (SAPS) and the Department of Social Development are on different salary scales. Social Workers employed by the South African Police Service earn R66 322 per annum, a salary difference of R3 764 per annum, compared with the Department of

Social Development. This situation is assuredly inequitable and has been for many years.

c) Among persons employed by NGOs and the civil service

Social workers employed by the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are remunerated substantially less than their colleagues in the civil service. These discrepancies generally disadvantage the social service professionals; hence the negative impact on these professions and, in particular, on social work.

The task team investigating realistic remuneration and service conditions of personnel in the social service for the SA Council for Social Service Professions (2002) revealed prevailing levels of remuneration among three large individual non-governmental organisations and, in turn, compared this with the current situation in the public service. The findings were as follows:

It is understood that the figures given below are typical of the vast majority of NGOs and that individual organisations may well pay less, or only marginally higher. The table below shows the current remuneration at entry level of qualified social workers at large organisations operating in all provinces of South Africa and employing many social workers and is compared with the current situation in the public service.

Entry Level	Organisation A	Organisation B	Organisation C	Current Public Service Levels
Social Worker	R 40 680	R 38 820	R 40 200	R 62 558

The aforegoing information strikingly highlights the huge discrepancy that currently exists in the remuneration of these groups in the NGO sector compared with those in the public sector. Further, if levels are raised in the public service and not for NGOs, the discrepancies will be exacerbated, and social workers employed by NGOs will earn an average of R31 602 per annum less than their colleagues in the civil service (SA Council for Social Service Professions, 2002). According to the *Sunday Times* (April, 2003) social workers confirmed that newly-qualified social workers employed by an NGO earn R3 190,00 per month compared with their public service counterparts who earn R5 166,00 per month, excluding medical aid, pension and housing benefits. These discrepancies do not exist only at entry level, but also within higher category workers. The article further highlights that there has been a spate of resignations over poor salaries.

In addition, it should be noted that frequently, when an NGO is experiencing financial problems, personnel have to accept a decrease in their existing salaries. Senior personnel often accept no annual increase in order to be able to pay junior personnel a more competitive remuneration. These vast discrepancies in remuneration have the following effects: NGOs employ newly-qualified social workers, invest in their work-related training and development, and then lose them to the public sector after a year or two as a result of the higher salaries paid by the public sector. The

result is that they are constantly training new employees and are unable to retain more experienced personnel. This impacts negatively on service delivery.

4.7.2   Service Conditions/Personnel Benefits

There are also severe discrepancies with regard to personnel benefits.

In terms of the Public Service Regulations 1 of 1994, the personnel/service benefits for the Public Service sector include :

> ➢ a 13th cheque;
> ➢ medical aid scheme (towards which the State contributes R 752 per month);
> ➢ pension contributions;
> ➢ a housing allowance which is calculated at totalling 28,8 % of the employee's salary;
> ➢ annual leave - 22 days per annum;
> ➢ sick leave - 36 days per annum;
> ➢ maternity leave - full salary payment for four months.

In contrast, it is found that service/personnel benefits in the **non governmental organisation (NGO)** sector are generally as follows:

> ➢ Pension contributions are made but at a lower rate.
> ➢ Medical Aid scheme contributions are not always a benefit.
> ➢ A housing allowance is never given.

> The 13th cheque is conditional on the financial situation of the organisation and frequently personnel do not receive a bonus.

> Salary scales do not exist, as annual increases are dependent upon the organisation's financial situation and are only negotiated at the very end of the financial year.

> Contributions to the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) are made via equal portions from the employee and employer.

> Maternity leave is not paid by the employer, and employees would be required to claim maternity benefits via an Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) contributions, which is considerably less than a full salary.

There are a number of reasons for the discrepancies in remuneration and service conditions between the NGO sector and the public service. The main factor is, firstly, funding of NGOs. NGOs are dependent on a variety of funding sources for their very existence. They cannot function without funds and they must raise these funds themselves. Developmental social services are personnel-intensive and personnel expenditure for community-based developmental services is generally between 70-80% of total expenditure (SA Council for Social Service Professions, 2002).

Secondly, the level of financing gives rise to the following conclusion: NGOs are raising more than half the costs of their services from sources (such as fundraising) other than government, but these sources are not guaranteed. Furthermore, NGOs cannot increase remuneration rates without assistance from the State.

In response to the widespread concerns regarding salaries and service conditions voiced by the social service professionals, specifically the social workers, the SA Council for Social Service Professions initiated the formation of a task team to research and make proposals regarding

realistic remuneration and service/working conditions of personnel in the social service professions in the public sector as well as the non-governmental organisation (NGO) sector. The task team was representative of members from the social service professions, the public sector, labour, community-based organisations (CBOs) and NGOs.

These matters concerned were researched and discussed to reach a consensus at which stage a guideline document was drafted. The guideline document, entitled: "The Remuneration of Social Service Professionals in the Public Service at entry level "and "The Remuneration of Social Service Professionals employed by the Non-Governmental Organisations" was submitted to the Minister and Department of Social Development in March 2002 (SA Council for Social Service Professions, 2002). However, a year has passed at the time of recording this, and to date there have been no changes, although the principle of parity remains the same. Social workers remain discontented over their low and inequitable salary structure and service conditions.

CHAPTER 5

SOCIAL WORKERS' EXODUS FROM SOUTH AFRICA

5.1 Introduction

The third chapter of the literature review focuses on two significant areas. The areas to be discussed are:

Section 1 : The Impact of Brain Drain in South Africa

In this discussion, the researcher will be focusing on statistics on migration, its impact on the South African economy, and the emigration trends in the social work profession in South Africa. The researcher provides an in-depth discussion on the reasons for the exodus of social workers and other professionals. The researcher further includes information on the vigorous attempts made by UK recruitment agencies in recruiting social workers. Also highlighted is the actual impact of the exodus of social workers to the UK.

Section 2 : The Social Work Profession in the UK

In this section, the researcher provides a brief overview of social work practice in the UK, the educational basis of UK social work, and the similarities and differences in social work practice in the UK and South Africa. It is the intention of the researcher to ascertain which factors of

social welfare and training in South Africa allow for South African social workers to adapt and work within the changed socio-economic and political environment of the UK.

5.2.1   **"Brain Drain" – the South African Context**

"Brain Drain Claims Thousands More", - *Cape Times* (October 2002), reported that more than 7400 South African graduates and professionals, "most not even stopping to complete their airport departure forms, hit the runways for the pound seats" in the first half of 2002, as the country's brain drain continued unabated. The latest migration figures released by Statistics South Africa, collated at the country's three international airports in the first half of 2002, show no reversal of a skills diaspora that began fast-tracking in mid -2001.

According to the *Financial Times* (July 2002), emigration has emerged as one of the greatest challenges to post-apartheid South Africa. It is reported that skilled South Africans find it easy to work abroad, where their skills are 'eagerly snapped up' and this flow is now seriously undermining the country's efforts to rise above the 3% economic growth level. A study by the University of South Africa (UNISA) estimates that 39000 South Africans left the country in 1999 to join the 1,6 million already abroad, and the likelihood of more joining them is high. The study revealed that about 70% of skilled South Africans consider emigrating; and an estimated 20% have already left (*Financial Times*, 2002).

Most of the emigrants have gone to the UK, the United States, Australia, Canada and New Zealand. Many of these emigrants are highly qualified in the academic, business or cultural fields (*Daily Mail & Guardian*, October 1999). The *Independent on Saturday* (April, 2003) reported that

hardworking South Africans are found to be in increasing demand in Britain, and that labour laws are being changed to make it easier to enter the UK job market.

The causes of this exodus are many:

> Some are propelled by the uncertainties of the majority rule (the *Financial Times*, July, 2002);

> others cite fears about crime/ violence (*Financial Times*, July 2002; Crush et al, 2001; *Cape Times*, October 2002; *Sunday Times*, December 2002; *Daily Mail & Guardian*, October 1999; *South African Times UK*, February 2001);

> fear of the AIDS pandemic (*Financial Times*, July 2002; Crush et al, 2001);

> massive unemployment (*Financial Times*, July 2002; *Cape Times*, October 2002; *South African Times UK,* February 2001);

> the government's policy of affirmative action favouring Black South Africans (*Financial Times*, July 2002; *Cape Times*, October 2002; *South African Times UK*, February 2001);

> declining standards of health care and education (*Financial Times*, July 2002; Crush et al, 2001; *South Africa Times UK*, February 2001);

> the lure of opportunities thrown up by South Africa's reintegration into international business after apartheid-era isolation (*Financial Times*, July 2002); and,

> the opportunity to earn in a 'strong' foreign currency (*Financial Times*, July 2002; *Cape Times*, October 2002; *Sunday Times*, December 2002; *South Africa Times UK*, February 2001)

The brain drain costs South Africa R2.5bn a year. With the loss of each skilled professional, as many as 10 unskilled jobs (Crush et al, 2001; *Business Day*, August 2001) are destroyed. Statistics South Africa, the

government's data agency claims that 10 262 people emigrated from the country in the first 10 months of 2001 (*Financial Times*, July 2002); close to 9000 emigrated in the first nine months of 2002 (*Sunday Times*, December 2002); and in 2000 the emigration figures were 9908 (*Financial Times,* July 2002). Independent researchers say the real figure is three times as high. Researchers at the University of Cape Town argue that the brain drain in South Africa is more significant than the government admits. Their study tallied 41 496 professional emigrants from South Africa between 1989 and 1997, almost four times more than the official figure of 11 255 (McClelland, 2002). However, neither figure includes the many young South Africans who never officially emigrate, but simply leave the country a few years after graduating and never return.

The *Sunday Times* (December, 2002) reported that Education Minister Kader Asmal has accused British recruiters of "raiding" South African teachers, while Health Minister Manto Tshabalala-Msimang is suggesting that the Treasury come up with incentives to keep health professionals in the country. The *Daily News* (10 November 2003) reported that the health sector had devised strategies to curb the exodus of nurses to the private sector and overseas market. Their strategy of offering higher salary packages, including attractive benefits, and often better working conditions to lure professionals to remain, seems to have paid off. Perks included 100% annual bonus, substantial housing allowances, well-subsidised pension and medical aid, and generous leave benefits (*Daily News*, 10 November 2003).

A pattern has emerged, similar to that in the teaching and health professions, of social workers leaving South Africa to seek employment in the UK.

5.2.2   __UK Recruitment Drive__

In September 2000, the Department of Health in the UK and the Local Government Association provided researched evidence of a serious social work staffing crisis in the UK (Jerrom, 2001a). The research was provided by the Local Government Association to the Chief Inspector of Social Services in August 2001 and revealed the following (White, 2001; Jerrom 2001a) :

- Sixty per cent (60%) of local authorities were struggling to recruit social workers.
- The Essex County vacancy rates were at twenty per cent (20 %).
- Buckinghamshire Social Services department had a twenty per cent (20 %) vacancy rate in one department, and the Children and Families department had an alarming forty per cent (40%) vacancy rate.
- One county recorded a vacancy rate of fifty-three per cent (53 %), and a London borough, forty-six per cent (46%) of unfilled posts (Wellard, 2001a).

A further study of social services departments in England in October 2001 by the Association of Directors of Social Services found an overall vacancy rate for field social workers' posts in child protection of 15.5% - indicating 2000 vacant posts (Jerrom, 2001b). In addition, Foxcroft (2001) reported that social work in the UK was evidently in crisis, as many social workers were disillusioned about the profession and showed no interest in furthering their qualifications. According to the Central Council for the Education and Training of Social Workers (CCETSW), there has been a staggering decline of 45% at admission level to social work studies since 1995. As a result, two-thirds of social services departments report recruitment difficulties, and there is an average national vacancy rate for

social workers of 15,9 %. The need for social workers has never been stronger (*Community Care*, September 2001).

The research by the Local Government Association and other researchers suggest that the most important factors in deterring/ retaining social workers in the UK were:

- Professionals believe the problem is the misconception about what social workers really do and/or the total lack of knowledge among the public about what social workers really do (Foxcroft, 2001; Jerrom, 2001c).
- An intensely negative image surrounds the profession (Jerrom, 2001).
- Social work staff are poorly paid in comparison with other professional disciplines (Wellard, 2001b; Jerrom,2001c).
- There are problems of low morale (Wellard, 2001b).
- Stressful working conditions and tensions arise from the employment of agency staff, who are often on higher rates of pay than permanent workers (Wellard, 2001b).

Further, Duckworth (2001) reports that union leaders claimed that the chronic shortage of social workers has caused an "epidemic of stress and burnout" among remaining staff, a similar predicament to that existing among South African social workers.

Subsequently, owing to this staff shortage crisis, work entry regulations to work in Britain were unveiled, in October 2000, making it easier for foreigners to work in the UK. The changes that took place after months of discussion in Whitehall were designed to reduce the skills shortage that was blighting sections of the economy. The Minister for Employment and Equal Opportunities announced changes which covered two categories of workers: classed as Shortage Skills and Key Workers (*Daily Mail*, 1

October 2000). The social work profession fell within the Shortage Skills Group. Further, the amendments in the rules allowed for overseas applicants' period for a work permit to be extended from four to five years, after which many foreign workers can apply for indefinite leave to remain in Britain (*Daily Mail*, October 2000).

This provided an initial opening for South African social workers to apply for social work positions. Subsequently, in October 2001, the UK government took further steps to address the sector's severe staff shortages with the launch of the first-ever national social work recruitment campaign (Jerrom, 2001). Funding to the value of £2 million was to be injected into the three-year initiative, which was launched by the Health Secretary, Alan Milburn, at a National Social Services Conference in Harrogate in October 2001 (Jerrom, 2001d).

The campaign's aim was to dispel the negative image associated with the profession and purposively intended to dispel myths about social work after research had shown that lack of understanding of the profession hindered recruitment. Its aim was, further, to educate the public about social work and provide information on career options. It was effected via national press and radio coverage, with emphasis on areas where recruitment and retention problems were more acute (Douglas, 2002). Simultaneously, the recruitment drive for social workers was also directed abroad to South African social workers (*The Star*, 2000; Roberts, 2001).

In order to attract South African social workers, local authorities offered generous golden handshakes of £1000 as an incentive in their attempts to overcome the vacancy rates up to forty per cent (40%). Duckworth (2001) reported in the *Independent* UK newspaper that the Director of Essex social services recruited forty-six South African staff on four-year work contracts – between the beginnings and end of 2000, also providing golden handshakes of £1000 to each social worker upon recruitment.

Further, at the end of 2001 the Essex Council recruited another 34 qualified South African social workers, which meant that eighty South African social workers were recruited during a two-year period. Essex where the vacancy rates were running at twenty per cent (20%) at the beginning of 2000, decreased to fifteen per cent (15%) across the department by the end of 2001 (White, 2001). According to the Directorate Support Manager for Essex Council, the "move is one of several that the authority is pursuing". The Directorate further adds that "our own social workers welcome the South Africans because they bring a whole new perspective and that adds to the wealth of knowledge and experience of people we have here" (cited in White, 2001:8).

In May 2001, the South African Minister for Social Development, Dr Zola Skweyiya, who gave the keynote address at Community Care Live, announced that his country was losing key personnel and urged those working in health and social care in the UK to resist the temptation to see South Africa as a recruitment pool (*Community Care*, May 2001). Dr Skweyiya highlighted further that "South Africa is desperately short of both social workers and nurses, yet in one way and another South Africa is being 'robbed' of its talents and skills by UK social service employers who are aiming to solve the care sector recruitment crisis." He ended his keynote address by urging, "It would be better for these skilled staff to remain at home (South Africa) to serve our communities". An appeal to the British government was made to "discourage this trend as much as possible" (*Community Care*, May 2001).

The latter statements in the keynote by Dr Skweyiya are confusing, since in South Africa social workers are not clearly acknowledged by government for their "skill and talent" and the role they play in welfare. In fact, the majority of social workers at present in South Africa feel they have been marginalised, while abroad the government proudly

acknowledges them for their "talents and skill" and their importance in helping the communities of South Africa.

Even after the South African government's appeal, and also despite the UK government's attempts to discourage recruitment from developing countries, the recruiting of South African social workers has neither stopped nor decreased. Recruitment agencies and councils such as the Essex Council justify their recruitment actions in South Africa by claiming that "It is not our intention to go to countries and take away their qualified people so that those countries' own people suffer as a result. But there are many social workers who are unemployed in South Africa and are looking for employment opportunities - there are simply more social workers in South Africa than there are jobs, therefore a recruitment drive to South Africa would be beneficial to us and the South African social workers" (cited in White, 2001).

Just days after the South African government raised concerns about essential health, education and social care professionals being lost to the UK, a social work recruitment agency opened offices in Pretoria and Cape Town to meet the growing UK demand (*Community Care*, 2001). In response to Dr Skweyiya's keynote, Recruitment Solutions Group (RSG) admitted to *Community Care* that "recruitment was at times to the detriment of foreign countries. It's not good for the country, but it is good for the individual". It further adds that it is their business to recruit, and they have a responsibility to their clients (social welfare agencies) in the UK (*Community Care*, June 2001). However, it was also noted that the experience, knowledge and career development workers gained while in the UK helped them if they returned to South Africa.

According to the Local Authorities in the UK, integrating South African social workers is not a problem. The social issues (between the countries) may be different, but it is claimed that fundamental family issues are the

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same, and that the skills are therefore eminently transferable (*The Star*, January, 2000).

At present, recruitment of South African social workers has become a competitive business with all recruitment agencies offering attractive packages in order to recruit the South African social worker. To date there are approximately fifteen recruitment agencies based in South Africa, each canvassing for social workers. Advertisements are placed in newspapers, social work magazines and newsletters, social work journals and even in the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) newsletters. Each agency offers competitive packages, which is often viewed as irresistible. This often leads to enquiries and ultimately to consideration being given to work in the UK.

Apart from the basic salary offered to the social workers, recruitment agencies offer the following, although conditions might vary:

> ➢ free flights to the UK;
> ➢ free accommodation;
> ➢ support and assistance with spousal employment applications;
> ➢ golden handshakes of £ 1000;
> ➢ free personal tax advice/opening of bank accounts, etc;
> ➢ entry clearance advice;
> ➢ free household removal costs;
> ➢ excellent benefits;
> ➢ support throughout the entire process.

It is clearly evident that the recruitment of South African social workers is rife, with many South African social workers still on waiting lists for prospective posts.

5.3   Social Work in the United Kingdom (UK)

This section covers a description of social work practice in the UK, the educational basis of UK social work, and the possible differences and similarities in social work in both the UK and South Africa. As previously noted, the intention of the researcher in providing an overview, and then a discussion on the differences and similarities, was to explore or ascertain what aspects of social welfare and training assist South African social workers to adapt to the UK context.

Internationally, social work is practised around the world in many different contexts. What links social work in different social contexts is its role as mediator between the individual and the State or the wider society (Washington and Paylor), cited in Lawrence et al (2003). According to Lawrence et al (2003), there are essential similarities and differences in the role and knowledge base of social work wherever it is practised. Social workers adapt their role and knowledge base to the social context in which they practise. Similarly, social workers from South Africa who have relocated to the UK are able to adapt their knowledge base and role to the socio-economic, political and cultural context of the UK.

Lawrence et al (2003) identify integration, representation, and mediation as core activities of social workers. Social workers' knowledge base is drawn from a range of theories that enables them to carry out activities relevant to their social context. The focus of social work interventions will therefore vary from one context to another; however, the core elements of the social worker's knowledge and skills will be identified across different social contexts.

5.3.1   Social Work Services in the U.K – Past to Present

According to Glastonbury et al (1998:10), social work in the UK "includes all services which are designed to promote the welfare of individuals and groups within society, such as health, housing, education, income maintenance, and personal social services". Within the social work sector, there is a category known as "personal social work services" which includes those services whose primary focus is the meeting of individual and special needs arising from the relationship between individuals and the social environment and from intra-personal stress (Glastonbury et al, 1998). Gladstone (1996:162) further added to the definition of personal social work services that it is "concerned with a range of services for children, for elderly people and those with physical disabilities, mental health problems and learning difficulties". Local authority Social Service Departments (SSDs) are regarded as the principal providers of these services, which include social work, domiciliary, day care and residential care.

Social workers within the personal social work services are found to be directly involved in face-to-face service provision are known as 'front-line staff', and operate within teams. Glastonbury et al (1998:11) describe the team as a " a group of staff from the same agency (either by employment contract or secondment), where the members obtain their work from a group workload, and are subject to managerial action to secure cohesive functioning, and should, if running effectively, provide a mutual support system". From the viewpoint of work load management, the essential characteristic of a team is the ability to identify a team workload as a coherent entity and source of individual workloads. A 'multi-disciplinary team' might have this feature, but is unlikely to occur unless all members belong to the same agency.

Within the delivery of personal social work services, the policy framework that guided social work services was the Community Care Policy. When social work departments in the UK were formed, the intention was to co-ordinate their activities as far as possible with health services. The 1988 Griffiths Report on Community Care proposed a different kind of arrangement. The report recommended that rather than depending on co-ordination and integration of services, there should be one service with clearly defined responsibility, which would commission services from others (Gladstone, 1996). This function, in the case of community care, would be performed by social service departments. Each budget would be redirected to come under the Social Service Department's (SSD's) control (Gladstone, 1996:25). Therefore, in principle, the role of social services departments was the purchasing of care from a range of providers. The departments were to develop the range of provision they needed by making contracts with providers for services. Care managers were responsible for allocating resources and setting priorities; practitioners would assess individual cases and guide the selection for each person (Gladstone, 1996: 163).

According to Adams & Shardlow (2000:130), social workers in the UK act as assessors to help clients (known as service users) identify their needs. Brokers help devise a care package; financial managers purchase packages of care; and evaluators monitor and review the viability, utility and effective function of the complete package (Adams & Shardlow, 2000:130).

Adams (1998) reports that, to ensure that the quality of provision is maintained, local authorities have been required to set up inspection units to ensure that particular services meet minimum levels of provision. According to Adams (1998), these changes in the organisational provision of care have generated opportunities for significant changes in relationships between social workers and clients. It was found that clients

have found inspiration to advocate their own needs on their own behalf, with or without the assistance of social workers.

It can be seen that care in the community in the UK is unique, and marked by First World standards. From the discussion, it is evident that the clients who utilise the system of care are already empowered with rights and have abundant access to resources in the community. Further, it is evident that each community is able to integrate all services from the different disciplines, with a multi-disciplinary approach being emphasised. Further, social workers have a variety of resources for their clients. An additional support to social workers in their service delivery is that social workers are required to work within a team, not necessarily of the same profession, thereby increasing assessment and referral options. It was also found that knowledge/familiarity with the different resources was a pre-requisite for social workers. Clients are therefore empowered with the ability to choose their own services, which is the direct opposite in South Africa.

5.3.2   The Educational Basis of Social Work

In May 2002, the UK Government announced plans for a new social work degree that was to commence in September 2003. The Association of Directors for Social Services and the British Association of Social Workers welcomed the news of the government's plans for a new social work degree. However, both bodies claimed that still more was needed to ensure that newly-qualified staff are supported and competent (Challis, 2002).

According to Challis (2002), the new three-year Social Work degree was to focus on practical training, with students required to undertake a rigorous 200 days of academic training plus practical placements. The new degree course was to be structured to include theory and research that directly informed and supported practice. The Social Services Minister announced that the new degree "must produce social workers who are able to work in new and changing settings, such as in the private and voluntary sectors, as well as in more traditional settings. Further, that they must work effectively with other professionals for the benefit of those who rely on social services" (Challis, 2002:8).

It would appear from the latter statement that the Government had previously not viewed social work training in the UK as equipping newly-qualified social workers to be competent in the field. It can be deduced that social workers from South Africa are exposed to a far more detailed tertiary education than their UK counterparts. The theoretical and practical training of social workers in South Africa is comprehensive.

Leveridge (2002:360) adds that the move from diploma to first–degree level as a minimum requirement for qualifying programmes was welcomed as a positive step in enhancing the profession – particularly by changing the traditional view of theory and its relationship to practice. Leveridge (2002) adds that the new registration requirements in the UK included incorporating continuing professional development which was to be built around the existing post-qualification award structures that currently value a reflective development of practice. The introduction of continuing professional development within the social work profession is also under consideration and debate in South Africa. The introduction of a continuing professional development point system in both countries would provide for practitioners to refresh their knowledge and keep them updated.

5.3.3   Comparison of Practice Methods in the UK and South Africa

At present social work in the UK tends to focus on the individual society. In the late 1960s and 1970s community development was the focus in addressing structural issues related to poverty (Payne, 1995:8).

In the 1980s, as previously discussed, the UK experienced the rise of New Right policies. This resulted in the reduction of the role of government in the provisions of welfare, and welfare services became a "mixed–market" of care in the community (Griffiths, 1988). The political aim, therefore, was to reduce state intervention in welfare and to shift responsibility of welfare to individuals, thereby reducing dependency. According to Lawrence et al (2003:6), the purpose of this was to promote efficiency, the "commodification" of services through privatisation, "managerialism", and an emphasis on the value of money. This is in line with a residual model of welfare which was practised in South Africa.

In the UK, statutory social work currently focuses mainly on cost restriction and individual need. With the introduction of care management, as previously described, there was a fragmentation of prevention and provision of social welfare services. Community and prevention work are now seldom practised by social workers in statutory agencies (Dustin, 2000). Community and prevention work have become the responsibility of youth and community work departments or voluntary agencies.

Recent criticism has been that South African training has been Euro-centric and oriented to working with the individual. It therefore stands to reason that South African social workers would not experience great adjustment problems in working in the UK context. The theoretical paradigms that are used mostly in the UK are empirical-analytic,

ecological systems and construction theories (Payne and Shardlow, 2002). According to Lawrence et al (2003), these perspectives seek to objectify client situations and focus on the individual. Social work interventions in the UK are short-term and aimed at achieving measurable outcomes.

From the latter, it is clear that South Africa is at a different stage of national development from the UK. Lawrence et al (2003) regard South Africa currently as a new post-colonial country. Since 1994, with the democratisation of South Africa, nation–building has been an important goal of the South African government. Community development work, group work and community theory are therefore important in social work in South Africa in order to build bridges between the diverse peoples of the country. In comparison with the UK context, UK social workers are working in a restricted individualised way that tends to pathologies and excludes the individual from the mainstream of care. According to Payne and Shardlow (2002:35), in the UK, "Care in the Community" policies involve the care of individuals in the community (where "community" means outside institutions). It can therefore be deduced that the practice methods of social workers working in the South African context are very different from the practice methods of the UK context. According to Lawrence et al (2003), UK social workers would prefer to return to preventative community-based work, but are restricted in doing so because of the current socio-economic and political climate.

Social workers in South Africa are clearly being called to work towards promoting inclusion, community-building and nation-building. With the introduction of the developmental perspective, social work in South Africa is moving away from an era when it was strongly associated with individualised methods of work within a psychodynamic theoretical base. Social work in South Africa now serves the new anti-oppressive practice, integration, cohesion and developmental goals of its society.

While these differences may exist, social workers in South Africa are surely in an advantageous position when relocating and working in the UK, since their South African knowledge base and training have clearly empowered them to work within a Western socio-economic and political context. They also have some experience of working in a developmental perspective and will be prepared to meet the challenge of a changed emphasis, should this be forthcoming, as predicted by Lawrence et al (2003).

CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION PHASE 1

6.1 Introduction

The presentation and analysis of data in this study is covered in two chapters. In this chapter, phase one of the study will be analysed. Phase two will be discussed in chapter 7. Data were collected by means of questionnaires and focus group interviews and are presented in tabular and graphical forms and then analysed. Monette et al cited in Motshumi (1997:22), state that data analysis could be both challenging and interesting. Data analysis refers to the process of unlocking information. The objective of interpreting and analysing data collected for research purposes lies in seeking to identify similar trends with the aim of generalisation in the case of quantitative data, and developing further understanding in the case of qualitative data.

Bell (1993:125) illustrates the importance of analysis of data by positing that data from questionnaires, interviews and other instruments are of little meaning until they are analysed. Analysis as a concept is seen by Vogt (1999:7) as the separation of a whole into parts with the intention of deliberating on them. De Vos (1998:336) refers to the process of engaging in an exposition of a strategy with the objective of taking a complex whole, breaking it into parts, isolating the constant variables and then understanding the phenomenon. Bailey (1994:378) sums it up by stressing that data analysis is the culmination of the process of hypothesis formulation, instrument construction and data collection. To complete any study it is therefore appropriate to analyse and interpret the data so that

the researcher can properly answer key questions and be able to present the results of the study in an understandable and convincing way.

Within this chapter, it was noted that some themes appeared to emerge repeatedly in various sections.

6.2   Analysis of Phase One of Study

There were two sample groups in this phase. One sample group was eighty social workers that applied to a recruitment agency to relocate to the UK and the second sample group was eighty social workers that did not apply to relocate. In this chapter, the frustrations, problems and needs of both sample groups were quantitatively and qualitatively analysed.

In this study, data on the frustrations, needs and problems of social workers were transformed from raw data into meaningful information. For speed, reliability and accuracy, a computer was used. Frequencies, percentages, cumulative percentages, chi-square and averages were calculated with the use of a computer. Appropriate graphs in the forms of bar and pie charts were also derived from the data. Further, data were cross-tabulated and put to further statistical testing, where appropriate.

6.3 Sample Characteristics

6.3.1 Gender

In the study, both the sample groups comprised male and female respondents. The sample group leaving South Africa is graphically presented beneath with the gender distribution.

For easier reading, the two different sample groups will be referred to as sample group 1 (representing social workers considering leaving) and sample group 2 (representing social workers remaining).

Figure 1: Sample Group Leaving– Gender Representation
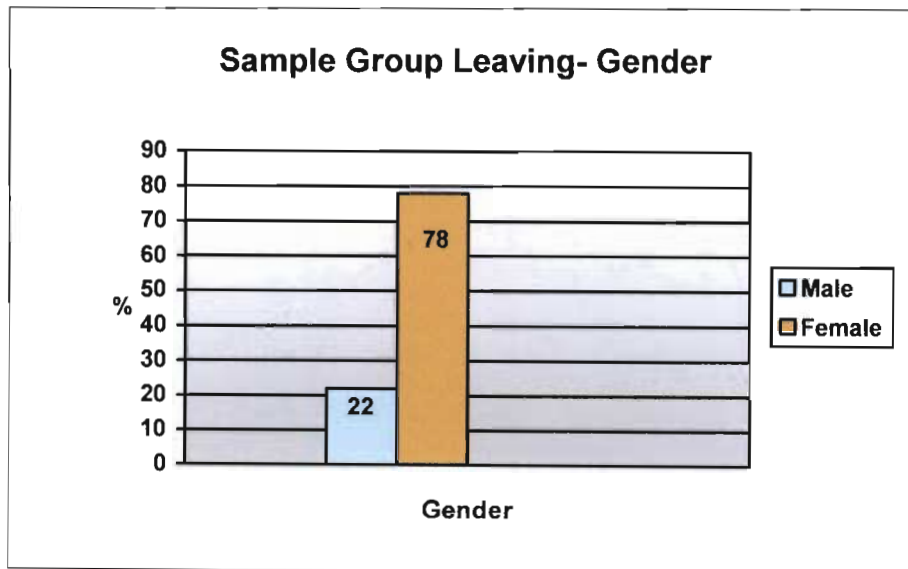
Females comprised 78% (N=62) this being the majority of the sample, while there were 22 % (N=18) male respondents. The gender distribution of the sample group remaining revealed a similar gender distribution to the sample group leaving, with females being in the majority.

Figure 2 : Sample Group Remaining– Gender Representation
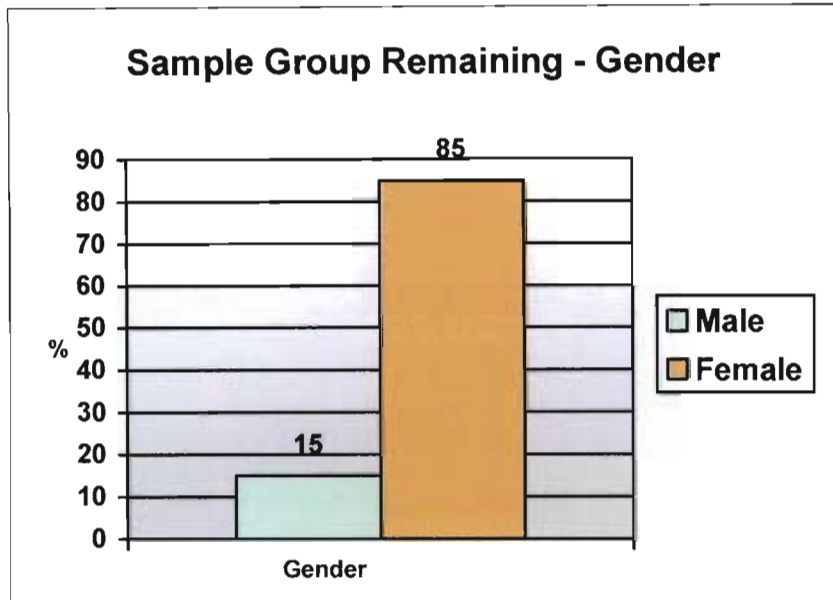
Females comprised the majority 85% (N=68) of the sample, while the male sample comprised the minority 15% (N=12) of the sample.

The female majority in both samples clearly indicates that female social workers are predominant. This female - dominated gender distribution is also consistent with the observation by Lund and Ardington (1996:109) of a typical South African welfare institution.

6.3.2   Number of Dependants

Figure 3 : Number of Dependants for Both Sample Groups
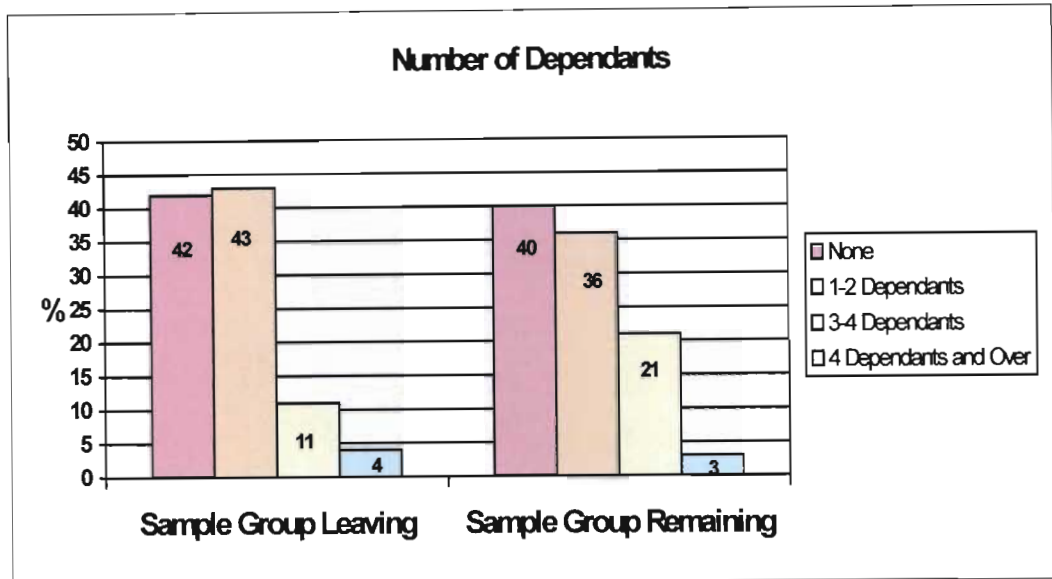
Figure 3 depicts the number of dependants per respondent in each sample group. In the sample group leaving, the majority of the respondents, 43% (N=35), had between one and two dependants, while 42% (N=33) of the respondents had no dependants. The remaining nine respondents (11%) had between three to four dependents whereas only 4% of the respondents (N=3) had four or more dependents.

In the sample group of social workers remaining in the country, it was revealed that the majority (40%) of the dependants had no dependants, followed by with 36% (N=29) of the respondents having one to two dependants. Compared with the sample group leaving, a fairly large percentage of respondents (21%) in sample group remaining had three to four dependants, whilst only 3% of the respondents had four dependants or more.

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Overall within both groups, 69% of the respondents (N=111) reported having between one and four dependants (children). This finding suggests that the average family size for the respondents in the study corresponds to the nuclear family type to be found in the more developed world. This information is significant in exploring respondents' motivation to seek employment in the UK.

6.3.3   <u>Area of Work</u>

Figure 4 : Area of Work
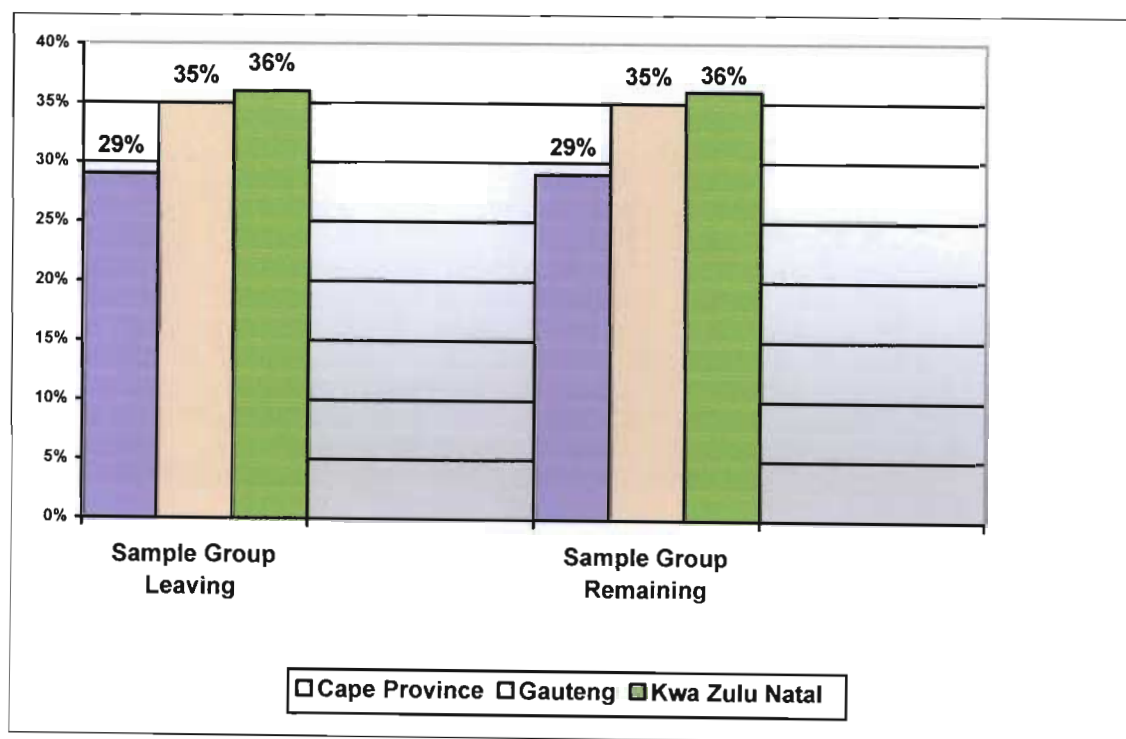
In both sample groups, the respondents were represented proportionally from all provinces, as seen from Figure 4. So, although the percentage of

respondents from the Cape was slightly lower, it is still possible to draw generalisations across the three provinces.

6.3.4   Type of Work Setting

Figure 5 : Work Setting

Work Setting of Respondents
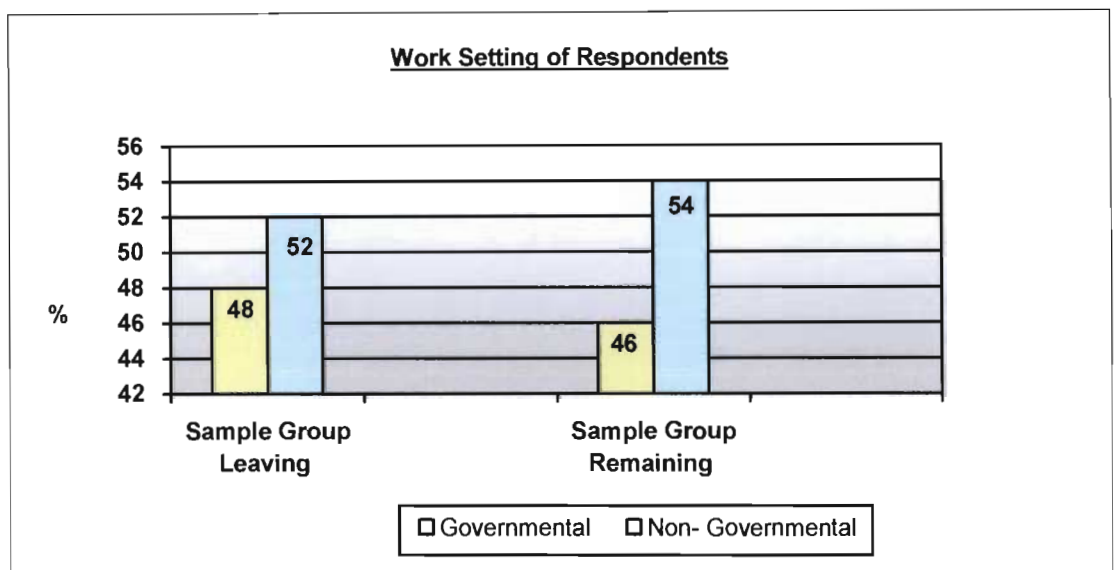
Figure 5 represents the organisations in which the respondents were employed. Of the respondents from the sample group leaving, N = 42 (52%) were employed in non-governmental organisations, while N = 38 (48%) were employed in governmental organisations. Social workers from non- governmental agencies constituted the majority of the respondents in the study.

6.3.5   Years of Experience

Figure 6 : Years of Experience as a Social Worker
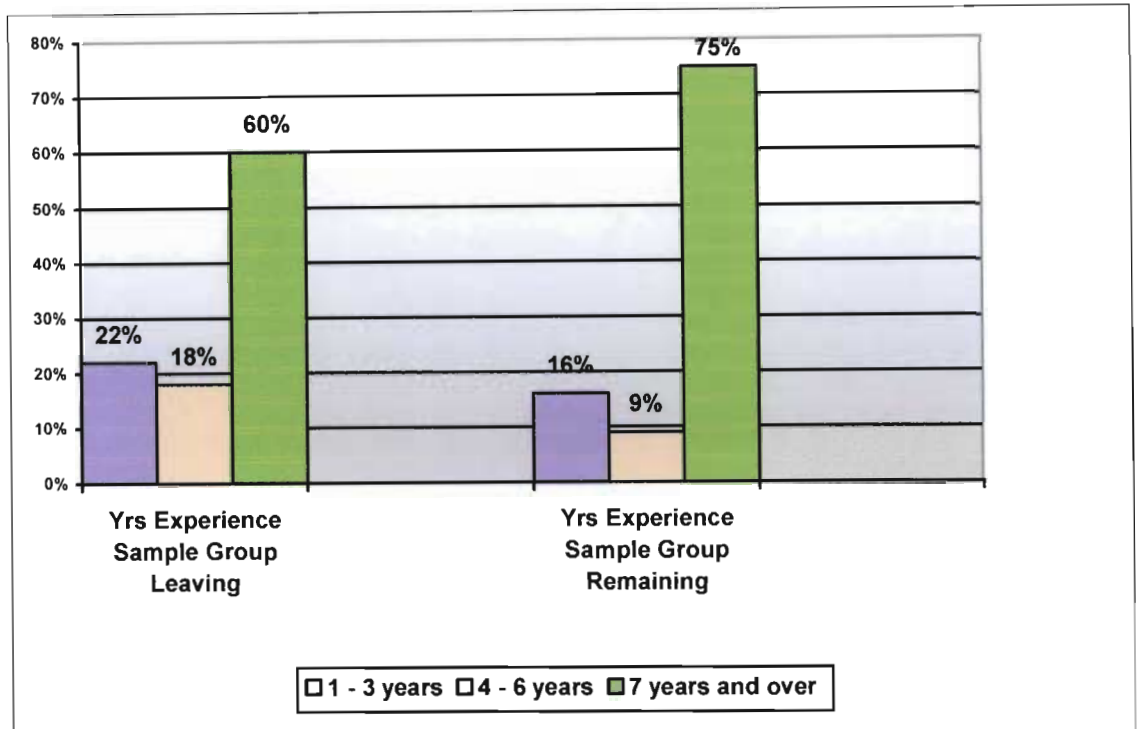
The years of experience of the respondents are illustrated in Figure 6. In both sample groups, the majority responses were for more than seven years experience (N=48 or 60% in the sample leaving, and N=60 or 75% in the sample remaining). These findings reveal that social workers with considerable experience are contemplating leaving even though they have decided on making social work in South Africa their "home". It is clear that a wealth of experience is being lost to the UK. It would seem that work in the UK is not restricted only to the young social worker who wants a new experience while attachments are few, but also the older, more experienced social worker.

In comparison, the sample that was leaving consisted mainly of social workers (41%), senior/chief social workers (34%) and only three (4%) were directors. According to Naidoo & Kasiram (2002), this finding is significant in that it suggests that limited promotion opportunities could contribute to social workers' considering leaving the country, a key finding in Gathiram's (2000) study of agencies not providing for the upward mobility of staff.

6.3.6   Present Designation

Figure 7 : Designation of Social Workers
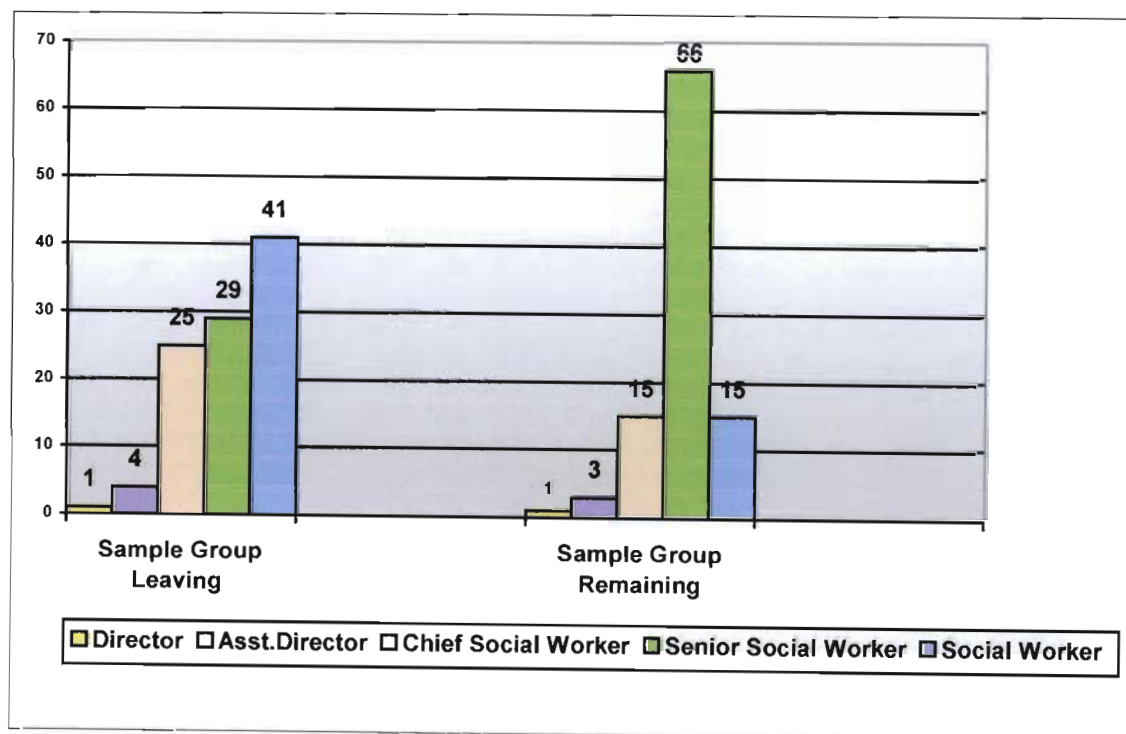
The largest proportion of the respondents in the sample group leaving (N=33) was the designation "social worker"; that is, 41%.

Cross tabulating revealed that although the majority (60%) of the respondents in sample group leaving had over seven years' experience, they were not promoted to senior social workers. Only 29% of the respondents held the position of senior social worker, compared with 60% of the respondents who had over seven years experience. This finding suggests that limited promotion opportunity could be a contributory factor for social workers in this group who are considering leaving the profession.

This finding is consistent with Gathiram (2000) who found that smaller agencies cannot provide adequate promotion opportunities, owing to limited subsidy.

In the sample group remaining, it was revealed that as many as N=53 or 66% of the respondents were designated as senior social workers. The years of experience and respective designation/promotion to senior social worker in the sample group remaining is consistent with respondents having seven years' experience and over. This comprised the majority (75%) in the sample and corresponded with the majority of senior worker positions held by the sample.

Limited promotion opportunity clearly becomes a source of frustration for social workers. This limited opportunity can be seen as contributing to burnout, demotivation and lack of interest to continue. Limited promotion opportunities can also negatively affect consideration of post-graduate studies since no promotion rewards will be attached. Stagnation in careers often results in boredom, demotivation and unwillingness to change, thereby seriously impacting on service delivery.

6.3.7　Qualification

Figure 8 : Present Qualification of Respondents

Present Qualification Sample Group Leaving

25

75

M.A. Social Work　B.A. Social Work

Present Qualification Sample Group Remaining

12

88

M.A. Social Work　B.A. Social Work
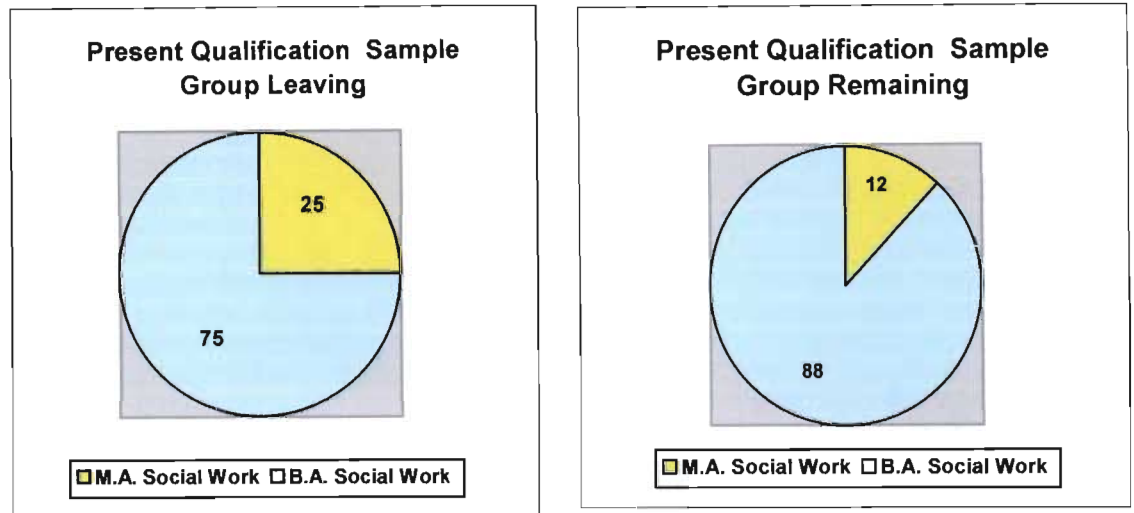
Figure 8 illustrates the present qualifications of the sample group leaving and of the sample group remaining. In the sample group leaving, it was revealed that the majority of the respondents (75%) had an undergraduate degree, namely B.A. Social Work. Only a small sector (25%) had post-graduate qualifications (Master's degree). A similar trend was revealed in the sample group remaining (Figure 10) where 88% of the respondents had an undergraduate degree, while only 12% had a Master's degree. Because post-graduate study among social workers considering relocating is more than double that of those remaining, it is possible that the former group is more interested in challenge and innovativeness than the latter group.

In both sample groups the majority of the respondents have not furthered their studies, therefore risking stagnation. The latter concern was explored by Kasiram (2000:266), who identified the reasons for limited further study as minimum opportunity for upward mobility and minimal financial gains. High

burnout and disillusionment with practice and service conditions also frustrated social workers. Kasiram (2000) concluded that social workers might be regarded as study-shy, and the present study supports this observation.

6.4. Caseload and Work Setting

6.4.1 Present Caseload

Figure 9 : Present Caseload of Social Workers Leaving
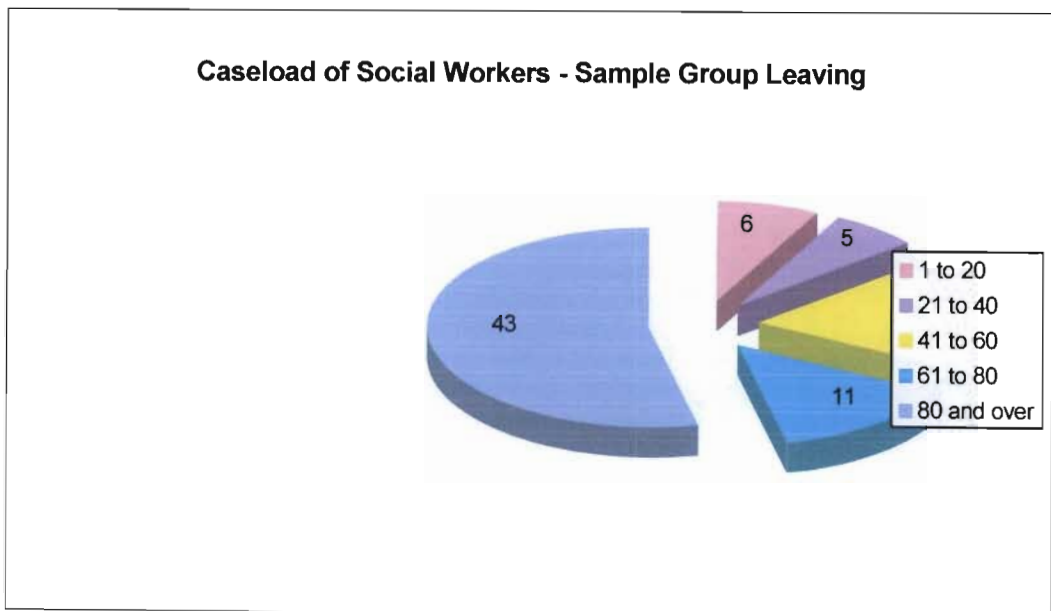
Figure 9 illustrates the casework load of the sample group leaving. The study revealed that 53, 8% or N=43 of the respondents who were

considering leaving the country had been allocated over 80 as a case load, whilst 13, 8% (N=11) had a case load of 61 to 80.

Similar findings were revealed in the sample group remaining (55% of the respondents having a casework load of over 80 cases, while 23,8% indicated that they had a casework load of 61 to 80 cases). The findings demonstrate that social workers have high caseloads, a possible source of frustration that contributes to their decision to leave the country.

On further analysis, it was revealed that social workers in non-governmental organisations have higher caseloads (58, 5% have 80 and over cases) than government department workers (48% have 80 and over cases). In general, the study clearly indicates that social workers in South Africa are overloaded with high caseloads. Studies by Van Zyl and Botha (1997) and Simpson (2001:313) corroborate these findings.

The question that begs an answer is: if the majority of social workers are expected to carry such a high caseload, what time and energy is available for other methods, such as community development? And to what extent do these social workers subscribe to the principles encapsulated in the White Paper for Social Welfare?

6.4.2   Community Work Projects

When community work was undertaken respondents from both groups qualitatively described an array of community work projects as follows:

- ❖ Economic Empowerment Projects
  - Gardening projects
  - Sewing projects

- Baking projects
- Garment-designing and -making
- Income generation programmes e.g. hairdressing, carpentry, block-making etc
- Banking projects for woman

❖ Development of Human and Social Capital
- Domestic worker empowerment groups
- Conflict resolution techniques between employers and employees
- Crèche development in informal settlements
- Feeding schemes in rural areas
- School upliftment programmes

❖ Poverty Alleviation
- Outreach programmes
- Social relief – hamper distribution
- Feeding schemes in schools and crèches

❖ Preventative Programmes
- Peer counselling in schools
- Establishment of advice desks
- Foster care recruitment programmes
- Networking with policing forums
- Establishment of support centre for children
- Sexual education programmes
- HIV/AIDS awareness
- Substance abuse
- Victim empowerment

From the study, it is evident that social workers dealt with a wide range of problems such as poverty, crime and HIV/AIDS. The White Paper for

Welfare (1997) advocates a social development approach to welfare and emphasises participatory and community-based programmes. From the list of projects, it would appear that when community work was undertaken these principles were respected. Even those social workers who were primarily caseworkers saw the need for community-based interventions that addressed macro issues. However, with their large caseloads, they felt unable to do justice to this aspect of their work. Compounding the problem was lack of funding and poor working conditions which rendered developmental welfare difficult!

6.4.3   Ability to Handle Workload

Table 1 : Ability to Handle Workload Effectively

Ability to Handle the Workload Effectively	Sample Group Leaving	Sample Group Remaining
Almost Always	30%	3,8%
Often	13,8%	21,3%
Sometimes	22,5%	32,5%
Almost Never	33%	42,5%

Thirty-three per cent of the respondents in the sample group leaving revealed that they were "almost never" able to handle their workload effectively, compared with 30% (24) of the respondents in the same group being "almost always" able to handle their workload effectively. It was clearly evident that a larger percentage of respondents in the sample were not able to handle their workload effectively.

Similarly, the latter trend was found in the sample group remaining, where 42,5 % of the respondents in the sample group remaining were "almost never" able to handle their workload. Social workers in both groups, were clearly unable to handle their high workload effectively. The

indications for curriculum change to include time management need to be considered. Possibly, with further policy and funding changes, social workers would begin to feel less overwhelmed by the high workloads. Under-staffed agencies result in more responsibilities being placed on existing staff, ultimately resulting in social workers being unable to meet the challenge of the new policies and their workload.

It was interesting that there was a contradictory response from both groups regarding the percentage of respondents indicating "almost always" being able to handle their workload effectively. The study showed that only 3,8% (N=3) of the sample group remaining were "almost always" able to handle their work effectively, in comparison to 30% of the respondents in the sample group leaving. The latter findings indicate that respondents in the sample group leaving appeared to handle their workload far more effectively. More specifically, social workers who are remaining in South Africa are experiencing greater difficulty (42, 5%) in handling their workload than the sample of social workers (33, 8%) leaving. Is it possible that the social workers remaining have developed a sense of apathy in managing their workloads? This might be borne out in the finding that social workers leaving had more initiative and commitment, regarding further study, as found earlier in this study.

Similar findings are discussed by Van Zyl and Botha (1997) and Gray (2000) where social workers were found to be unable to handle high workloads. The study by Simpson (2001) also highlighted that social workers had unacceptably high workloads, which compromised standards of care. Feelings of lack of accomplishment and pride in their work were experienced. It is understandable that this would lead to disillusionment among professionals, leading some to search for work elsewhere.

6.4.4   Work Load Management

The following is a cross tabulation of the relationships that exist between respondents' present workload and their management of this workload. Later, there is also an exploration of the differences that exist between governmental and non-governmental organisations and social workers' ability to handle their workloads.

Table 2:

Cross Tabulation : Ability to handle present workload in Governmental Department

Governmental Department		Are you effectively able to handle the workload?				
		Almost Always	Often	Sometimes	Almost Never	Total
Present Workload **1 to 20**	Count	1	3	2		6
	% of Total	1,3%	4,0%	2,7%		8,0%
21 to 40	Count			3		3
	% of Total			4,0%		4,0%
41 to 60	Count	5		7	1	13
	% of Total	6,7%		9,3%	1,3%	17,3%
61 to 80	Count		2	11	4	17
	% of Total		2,7%	14,7%	5,3%	22,7%
80 and over	Count		1	21	14	36
	% of Total		1,3%	28,0%	18,7%	48,0%
Total	Cou	6	6	44	19	75
% of Total		8,0%	8,0%	58,7%	25,3%	100%

Cross tabulations show that respondents in governmental organisations having more than 60 cases were predictably experiencing difficulty in effectively handling their workload. Twenty eight per cent (28%) of the

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respondents having 80 cases and over "sometimes" handled their workload, and 18, 7% "almost never" handled their workload. Overall, cross-tabulation revealed that 58,7% of the respondents in the governmental departments with high workloads were not able to handle their workload effectively.

Table 3 :

Cross Tabulation: Ability to handle present workload by Non-Governmental Organisations

Non-Governmental Organisations		Are you effectively able to handle the workload?				Total
		Almost Always	Often	Sometimes	Almost Never	
Present Workload **1 to 20**	Count	5		1		6
	% of Total	6,1%		1,2%		7,3%
21 to 40	Count	3		2		5
	% of Total	3,7%		2,4%		6,1%
41 to 60	Count	3	5	2		10
	% of Total	3,7%	6,1%	2,4%		12,2%
61 to 80	Count	4	2	3	4	13
	% of Total	4,9%	2,4%	3,7%	4,9%	15,9%
80 and over	Count	6	15	9	18	48
	% of Total	7,3%	18,3%	11%	22%	58,5%
Total	Cou	21	22	17	22	82
	% of Total	25,6%	26,8%	20,7%	26,8%	100%

Interestingly, through cross-tabulations, respondents in non-governmental agencies were able to handle their workload more effectively than governmental department respondents. The study revealed that 25,6% of respondents in non-governmental agencies

"almost always" handled their workload effectively, while in governmental departments only 8% of respondents were "almost able" to handle their workloads. Governmental departments might have been expected to have faired better, considering that they are far better staffed, and have fewer financial constraints compared to non-governmental agencies. The reason for this discrepancy may be that there is more supervisory support in non-governmental organizations, as found and discussed later in the report.

6.4.5   Relationship between Workload and Ability to Handle Workload

Table 4 : Relationship between Workload and Ability to Handle Workload

CHI – SQUARE TESTS :

Relationship between present Work Load and Ability to Handle Workload

	Value	Df	Asymp.Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi Square	39.695[a]	12	.000
Likelihood Ratio	45.462[a]	12	.000
Linear–by-Linear Association	28.160	1	.000
N. of Valid Cases	160		

*p < 0.01

The chi-square was used to analyse the relationship between workload and ability to handle workload in both sample groups. As expected, there was a significant (p = .000) Pearson's correlation coefficient between present workload and effectiveness in handling this workload. The higher the workload of social workers, the more difficulty they experienced in handling their workload.

Lombard (2000:323) found that social workers who had high workloads and high levels of stress dealt only with crises and neglected services. According to Lombard (2000), high work loads exacerbate problems such as accumulating administrative work, neglect of record-keeping and formulating inappropriate treatment plans. All these impact negatively on services and ultimately the image of social work.

6.4.6 Support received when unable to handle the workload

Table 5 : Support received in both Groups

Support Received	Sample Group Leaving	Sample Group Remaining
Almost Always	10,8%	7,5%
Often	13,8%	22,5%
Sometimes	30%	28,8%
Almost Never	46,3%	41,3%

In this study, it was found that in both sample groups respondents were not receiving support from the agency. Forty-six per cent (N=37) of respondents in the sample group leaving "almost never" received support while in the sample group remaining, 41,3% (N=33) of respondents "almost never" received support from the agency.

As mentioned previously, Ross & Fridjhon (1995:266) too found lack of recognition, acknowledgement and positive feedback from management to be primary stressors for social workers. This lack of support from the agencies was also indicated by Simpson (2002) where social workers described organisational structures as unsupportive in the extreme.

Of concern was that a number of social workers in this study have adopted a disempowered position. This might not be the scenario of only

this study, but might reflect the bleak picture of the majority of social workers in South Africa. For example, they have accepted poor working conditions and have agreed to work with unacceptably high caseloads which, they have acknowledged, compromise standards of care. Even within this study, possible examples of unprofessional conduct among social workers were suggested.

Table 6 : Relationship between present Workload and Support received when unable to handle Workload

CHI – SQUARE TESTS :

	Value	Df	Asymp.Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi Square	52.833[a]	12	.000
Likelihood Ratio	51.308[a]	12	.000
Linear –by-Linear Association	30.901	1	.000
N. of Valid Cases	160		

*p < 0.01

In both sample groups the chi-square test was used to analyze the relationship between social workers' present workload and the amount of support they receive when unable to handle the workload. As expected, it was revealed that there was a significant (p = .000) relationship between high workload and not receiving support from the agency or staff.

It can be deduced that support, supervision, guidance and backup from senior staff and agencies were seriously lacking. Many found their work emotionally draining and sadly could not obtain support from senior personnel. When there is limited evidence of support over a period of time, it is to be expected that there would be a search for more appreciation and support elsewhere.

Van Zyl and Botha (1997:26) found that social workers relied heavily on the knowledge, experience and support of their senior staff/supervisors, and that only a small percentage of social workers expand their knowledge through self-study. How is self-study ever possible if social workers are overwhelmed with high workloads, time pressure, and non-supportive attitudes from senior staff and welfare agencies?

Ross's (1996:108) study found that South African social workers receive moderate beneficial support from supervisors to support them and diffuse stress. It was clearly evident in this study that social workers cannot rely on their senior staff/agency for such support and stress relief.

6.4.7   Nature of Problems dealt with by Social Workers

The following types of problems were attended to by social workers in the sample group leaving:

a) Financial
   - Unemployment (55%)
   - Homelessness (35%)
   - Poverty (67, 5%)

b) Family related Problems
   - Marital discord/violence (40%)
   - Family violence/conflict (16, 3%)
   - Depression/suicide (10%)
   - HIV/AIDS (55%)
   - Sexual issues e.g. promiscuity/prostitution (10%)
   - Substance abuse (20%)

- Abuse: physical/emotional/sexual (38,8%)
- Racial tension/violence (10%)

Similar findings were revealed in the sample group remaining:

a) Financial
- Unemployment (45%)
- Homelessness (22,5%)
- Poverty (53,8%)

b) Family Related Problems
- Marital discord/violence (38,8%)
- Family violence/conflict (32,5%)
- Depression/suicide (31,3%)
- HIV/AIDS (45%)
- Sexual issues e.g. promiscuity/prostitution (20%)
- Substance abuse (43,8%)
- Abuse: physical/emotional/sexual (43,8%)
- Racial tension/violence (10%)

The most frequent problems encountered in both sample groups were poverty, unemployment, marital discord and violence, HIV/AIDS and abuse (physical/emotional/sexual). It can be seen that social workers are confronted by an array of serious social problems. Most clients experience multiple problems that are often interrelated. According to Gathiram (2000), since the introduction of the new Child Support Grant, which sharply reduced the support for children in the case of White, Coloured and Indian people to a flat rate of R100, there are more cases related to poverty than ever before. Such a combination of social security and social services was also advocated in the Finance Policy (1999). This surely has implications for social workers, whose functions are extended, and this against the frustration of existing high workloads. One has to question

how social workers confronted with an array of social problems can be effective with additional tasks and without support or recognition?

As discussed in the literature review, poverty is an issue of great concern in South Africa. Social workers have long been criticised for their failure to reach the poor. The study clearly revealed that poverty is no longer centred only in remote rural areas inaccessible to social workers. This study has proved that social workers were extensively involved with the poor.

In this study, both unemployment and poverty were commonly experienced problems. Without support, social workers could feel the same hopelessness and despair as their clients. While the White Paper for Social Welfare spelt out the need for partnership between government and non-government organisations to devise "appropriate and innovative welfare services, the economic and social marginalisation of the vast sectors of the population who are living in poverty are vulnerable and have special needs" (Ministry for Welfare and Population Development,1997:7). Social work professional training was also criticised for not equipping social workers to handle developmental work. The critique concluded that there was an over-reliance on professional social workers. From this study, it can be seen that social workers are confronted by many serious social problems. Therefore, extending the human resource capacity of welfare by using other categories of welfare personnel (White Paper for Social Welfare, 1997:48) might well be justified and would ultimately help social workers to cope with their tasks.

The study clearly revealed that the HIV/AIDS pandemic is a major challenge for social workers. Fifty-five per cent of the respondents in the sample group leaving and 45% in the sample group remaining were confronted with this social problem. Saloner (2002:155) warns social workers to re-examine their service strategies. This study has already

indicated that social workers were not only unable to cope with their high workloads, but were also required to cope with the consequences of this epidemic. The findings correlate with the statement of the South African Council for Social Services Profession (2001) which concludes that there are fewer than 10 000 registered social workers working in a context where 4,2 million South Africans are infected with HIV. Even though some social workers may not choose to work directly in the field of HIV/AIDS, there is no way of avoiding the epidemic.

It is clear that social work in South Africa is at a critical stage in development. The long-standing social problems identified in this study of unemployment, poverty, HIV/AIDS, violence, etc., call on social workers to become proactive and to re-examine their service strategies.

6.4.8 Ability to Deal with the Diversity of Social Problems

Pertinent findings in the study showed that 80% of the respondents in the sample group leaving and 76% of the respondents in the sample group remaining were not equipped to deal with the diversity of the problems encountered. Questions in this regard are: How have social workers been functioning and meeting the needs of clients? Are they lacking essential skills and knowledge? Some of the qualitative reasons provided by the social workers for the lack of knowledge/skills were:

- Social workers have not received formal training to deal with such interrelated social problems.
- Social work agencies are inundated with a high volume of cases requiring crisis intervention. There is therefore not enough time for "quality work".

- Training/staff development is very limited.

However, respondents did indicate that they attempted to improve their knowledge and skills in the following way:

Figure 10 : Type of Training/ Learning received in Respect of Social Problems
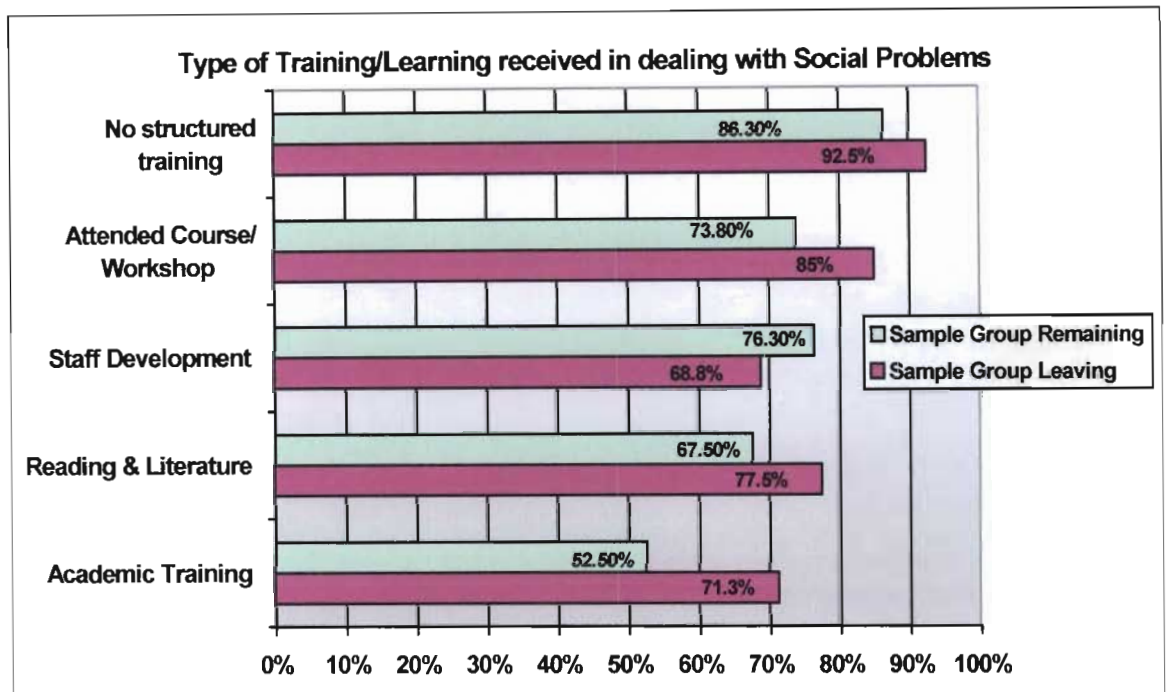
The results indicated that in both sample groups the majority response was for "no training" in dealing with the social problems. Ninety-two per cent of the respondents in the sample group leaving and 86,3% in the sample group remaining had no structured training in dealing with the social problems encountered. Interestingly, it was revealed that social workers considering leaving (71, 3%) had received substantially more academic training than the 52,5% of the respondents remaining.

Questions exploring the training were asked. It was found that 77,5% in the sample group leaving updated themselves via reading and literature, while 67,5% of the respondents in the sample group remaining were similarly exposed. Courses and workshops were attended by 85% of the respondents in the sample group leaving and 73,8% in the sample group remaining. However, the overall findings correlate with those of Van Zyl and Botha (1997) where it was found social workers are generally de-motivated regarding self-study.

The study clearly indicates that social workers leaving the country appeared to be more experienced/ trained in dealing with social problems than their counterparts who are remaining in the country. This is worrying as it suggests that those leaving the country are committed to self-growth and ongoing learning, a loss we may feel acutely given the need for changing our service strategies. Neugeboren (1991:116) is of the opinion that lack of training might be a factor in role conflict and ambiguity, which can lead to burnout and dependency. These trends among social workers are evident in the present study as well and appear to have resulted in social workers' considering leaving the country.

In this regard, Luvhengo (1996:186) admonishes that "social workers can no longer afford to just shake their heads and wring their hands in the face of these societal problems". This study reveals that, at present, social workers are confronted with the stark realities of poverty, violence, crime etc. at the macro and micro levels. Now we are being challenged even by legislation such as the White Paper for Welfare, to intervene meaningfully. It is more important than ever for social workers to redefine their role.

6.4.9 Recommendations to equip Social Workers to handle the Diversity of Problems

The following suggestions were provided by both sample groups in order to equip social workers to deal effectively with the diversity of social problems encountered:

- Attendance at relevant seminars, training workshops and courses in order to keep abreast of current trends in social work and social welfare policies.
- Regular and effective staff development programmes.
- Practical workshops on specialised skills.
- Academic training.
- Increased reading of literature.
- Empowerment of supervisors and social workers.
- Improved, effective and regular supervision.
- Self-development.
- Subscription to social work journals.
- Appropriate practical training, rather than emphasis on theory in tertiary education.
- Networking with other social workers.
- Liaison with other stakeholders.

These suggestions are good, but how often do social workers really make the effort to practise their own suggestions? From this study, it would seem highly impossible for social workers to implement the recommendations as they are study–shy (Kasiram, 2000), overburdened with unacceptably high caseloads (Van Zyl and Botha (1997); Simpson (2001), and are given no support for their unmanageable workloads (Gray, 2000). Only a small percentage of social workers are likely to expand their knowledge via the above recommendations. This limited

opportunity for self-development surely adds to the frustration and difficulties social workers face and to the poor image of social work in South Africa.

6.4.10   **Work Satisfaction**

Table 7 : Satisfaction Levels at Work

Enjoyment of work presently doing	Sample Group Leaving		Sample Group Remaining	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Almost Always	21	26,3%	26	32,5%
Often	33	41,2%	26	32,5%
Sometimes	18	22,5%	23	28,7%
Almost Never	8	10%	5	6,3%

Although the respondents in the study experienced frustrations with high workloads that they were unable to handle effectively, they surprisingly indicated that they still enjoyed the work that they were doing. It was revealed that 32,5% of the respondents in the sample group remaining "almost always" enjoyed their work, while 32,5% "often" enjoyed their work. Similar findings were revealed in the sample group leaving, with 26,3% "almost always" enjoying their work, and 41,2% "often" enjoying their work. In both sample groups, less than 10% of the respondents indicated that they "almost never" enjoyed their work. What makes social workers perceive their work as being enjoyable, while at the same time feeling frustrated enough to leave South Africa? Perhaps, as was found in the study, respondents find social work attractive since they are able to work with colleagues who have knowledge/experience; they are part of the empowerment process; they see

themselves making an impact on impoverished communities; they enjoy the specialisation and work is never monotonous. These benefits might be there but they still want to leave, possibly because of being paid "peanuts as monkeys" (Otte,2003).

It was interesting to note that social workers who were leaving appeared to enjoy their work far more than social workers who were remaining, an enigma that could be explored further once more information is available from the study. This may be attributed to social work in South Africa offering diversity, challenge and stimulation. Ross (1996:109) adds, that social workers engage in work that is generally diverse, interesting and challenging and appeared to find the ability to reduce occupational stress arising from any aspects that might be tedious, difficult and monotonous.

6.4.11   Social Work Method

Figure 11 :   Method most frequently used
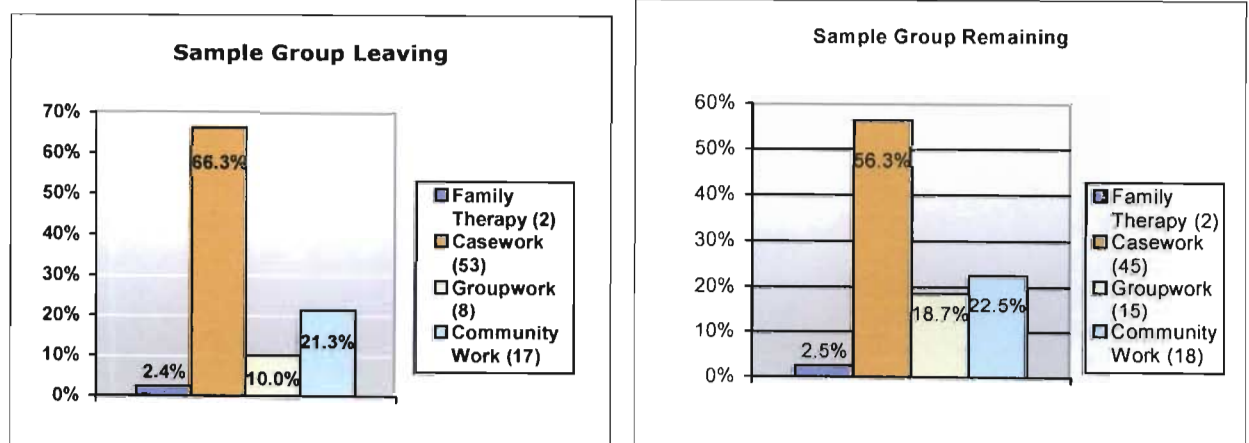
The new paradigm shift in social welfare is the social development approach, with the emphasis on more holistic, preventative approaches.

Although the White Paper for Social Welfare emphasises the need for community programmes, it would seem, based on the findings of this study that casework is still the most frequently used method. It was revealed that 66,3% of the sample group leaving and 56,3% of the sample group remaining used casework most frequently, while community work was used frequently only by 21,3% of the sample group leaving and 22,5 % by the sample group remaining.

The latter findings contradict the dramatic changes that South African welfare has had to make. Midgeley (1981) has long pointed to the inappropriateness of casework-dominant programmes for social work in Third World contexts. The persistence of social workers in continuing to use casework surely warrants admonishing! Mupediswa (1997); Louw (1998) and McKendrick (1998) also found that social work is too casework-oriented and rehabilitative, and not geared towards development.

Social workers need to look at creative ways of helping people. They need to adopt and adjust to a developmental paradigm. Generalist social workers, with sound micro skills and expertise in group techniques can empower communities to act on their own behalf.

6.4.12   <u>Obstacles in meeting the Objectives of the Developmental approach</u>

Respondents from both sample groups provided qualitative responses with respect to obstacles they experienced in adopting a developmental approach. These were as follows:

- Agencies are inappropriately located; decentralised offices are needed.
- The reduction of subsidies places unrealistic demands on social workers.
- Social workers are required to travel long distances.
- Service delivery and quality of work are comprised.
- Community apathy and a culture of entitlement place unrealistic demands on social workers.
- Social workers are expected to extend their services without any increase in resources.
- Insufficient transport at agencies results in inadequate delivery of service.
- There is a lack of initial start up funds to finance projects.
- Community support is lacking and there is resistance to change.
- Service deliveries in communities are affected by violence and high crime rates.
- Social workers work in fear of being hijacked/robbed. Access to police escort is difficult.
- Racial intolerance and language barriers hinder service delivery.
- Management places unreasonable demands on workers.

These responses clearly demonstrate the frustration experienced by social workers. It is no wonder, then, that they have not adopted, and cannot

accommodate new approaches such as the developmental model in their approach.

Simpson (2001) also found that social workers were targets of crime in communities; offices for interviewing were made of "containers" and were lacking essential furniture, and that communities often greeted social workers with hostility. These factors contributed to disillusionment and reluctance to be creative in servicing communities.

6.4.13   The Developmental Approach

Figure 12 :   Are you in favour of the developmental approach?
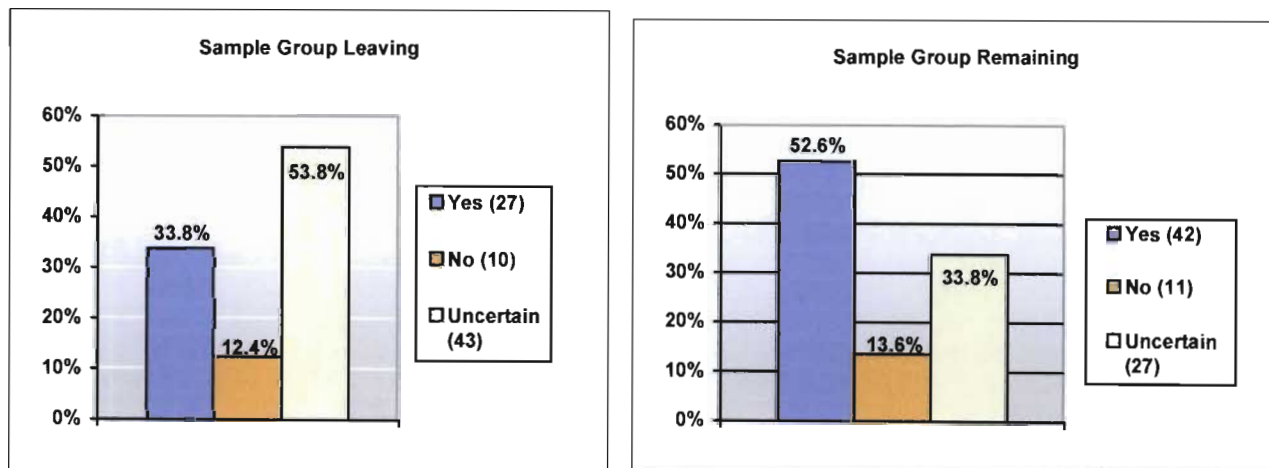
The study revealed that 53, 8% of respondents in the sample group leaving were uncertain as to whether they favoured the developmental approach, while 52, 6% in the sample group remaining favoured the developmental approach. It was noteworthy that more social workers leaving did not favour the developmental approach. From this, one can question whether the call to adopt the developmental approach

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contributes to the decision to leave the country. Can it be deduced that many of these social workers feel marginalized or uncertain as to whether this new approach to welfare diminishes their role, as claimed by Lombard (2000)? More social workers remaining are in favour of this approach and appear to have accepted their changing role.

6.4.14 Changes made by the Agency regarding the Developmental Emphasis

Respondents in both sample groups described the following changes that their agency had made in order to adopt a developmental model:

- Strategic planning.
- Change in focus from individualised to community and group work.
- Communities are now informed and consulted on programmes.
- Emphasis on community work in rural areas.
- The multi-disciplinary approach with networking encouraged.
- Social welfare planning sections have expanded.
- Specific developmental units have been established, focusing on developmental issues.
- Programmes focus on cultural diversity.
- Development of accredited development programmes.
- Focus on preventative work.
- Staff encouraged to attend courses on developmental social work.
- Structure of the organisations has changed, with greater focus on early intervention, prevention and capacity building.

Some respondents claimed that their agencies have not attempted any changes. One respondent sarcastically said that the agency provides "lip service" to the developmental approach. Others commented that agencies

could not implement the developmental approach as they experience resistance from the community, the State and other agencies. The problem of limited finance was frequently cited as hindering developmental services. This makes it difficult to provide services to communities that are impoverished and poverty-stricken. Respondents claimed that it is also almost impossible to fund-raise in poor communities, a concern raised by Gathiram (2000), who stated that the current economic recession is making fund-raising difficult.

Further, some social workers claimed that while agencies encouraged them to attend courses and workshops, "red tape" or "management" or "limited manpower" often prevented this from materialising. Limited manpower also appeared to hinder the extension of services to previously disadvantaged communities. Gathiram (2000) found too, that agencies experienced problems with the transformation process, as cuts in State subsidies disrupted services and prevented projects that were initiated from being sustained.

6.4.15   Attempts at equipping oneself to adopt a Developmental Approach

The following attempts at equipping themselves for a changed emphasis were recorded from both sample groups:

- Attend courses/ workshops/ in-service and staff development programmes on transformation and the developmental approach.
- Read journals and literature on developmental social work.
- Keep updated with policy and legislative changes.
- Study memoranda and circulars on developmental social work.
- Learn skills to empower community members.

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- Membership of forums subscribing to developmental work.
- Participate in programme development in the agency.
- Keep informed by obtaining information from colleagues/ supervisors
- Network with and learn from communities.
- Attend development assessment training and developmental quality assurance training.
- Understand the principles of the White Paper for Social Welfare.
- Become involved in holistic development.
- Subscribe to the principles of developmental social work.
- Set goals yearly and evaluate achievement and performance.

The White Paper for Social Welfare and the Social Welfare Action Plan commit to the re-orientation of existing services and programmes, and social workers have identified their contribution in this regard. This poses a challenge to social work to redefine its role in society. Now it is time to translate ideas into action.

6.4.16   Description of Community in which Social Workers Provide Intervention

This question was asked in order to assess the characteristics of the community in allowing for the adoption of the developmental design.

Figure 13 : Description of Community
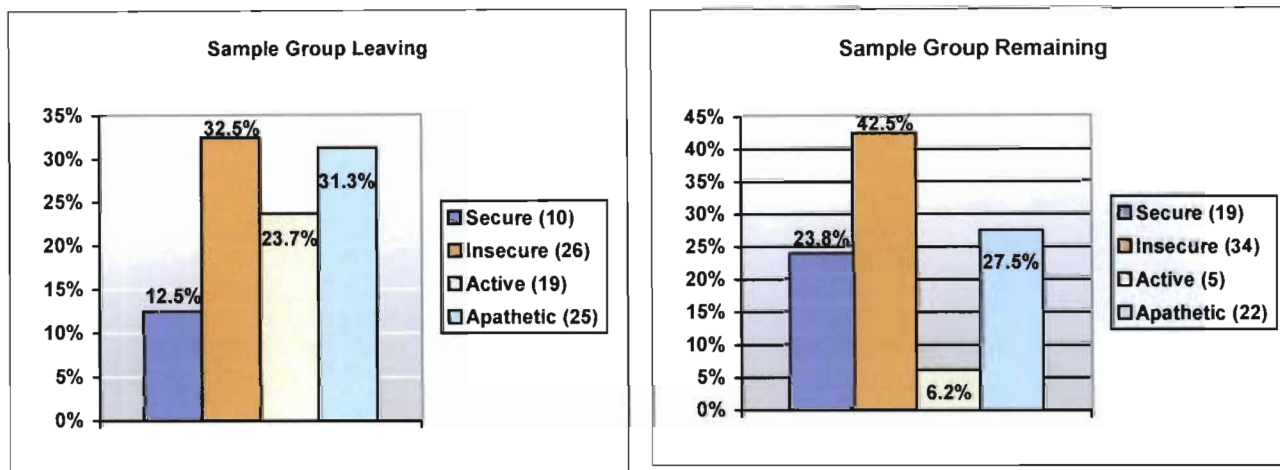
Crime and insecurity in communities are major deterrents to adequate service delivery. The study revealed that the majority of respondents in both sample groups felt insecure in the neighbourhoods in which they worked. It was found that 32,5% of social workers in the group leaving and 42,5% in the group remaining described their neighbourhoods as insecure. This correlates with a study conducted by Moller et al (1996) in KwaZulu-Natal which also showed that three-quarters of the sample were of the opinion that the RDP could be delivered only if peace and security prevailed. The study cited crime and violence as major obstacles to development of the community. Gathiram (2000) too, found that violence and crime added to social workers' frustration and hindered service

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delivery. Simpson (2001) found that conflict among community leaders also hampered service delivery.

Cultural differences in the study presented further challenges to social workers as they struggled to make sense of traditional practices that did not cohere with human rights. There are clear indications that curriculum change should include cultural diversity.

Another community characteristic found in this study was apathy. Twenty-five respondents (31,3%) in the sample group leaving and 22 (27,5%) respondents in the sample group remaining regarded their communities as apathetic. Gathiram (2000) too, found that community apathy and a culture of entitlement resulted in unrealistic demands being placed on social workers.

It is possible that when social workers are constantly exposed to apathy in communities, they themselves might feel similar hopelessness and despair as their clients. Working with people in poverty-stricken, informal communities can be challenging. Community members often have unrealistic expectations of what social workers are able to achieve and this can impact on their participation, or lack of it. Molefe (1996) claimed that illiteracy creates an inferiority complex. People are afraid to take part or to be fully involved, believing that they cannot make valuable contributions. Further, Molefe (1996) adds that people might accept their poverty and misery as a way of life and become fearful of trying any innovation because it carries risk.

Working in neighbourhoods that are insecure and apathetic produces certain stresses. It was found by McCann & Pearlman (1990), cited in Letsebe (1995:103), that burnout was prevalent among social workers who experienced the psychological strain of working with difficult client

populations. The stresses were symptomised by initial fear, depression, discouragement and feelings of incompetence and helplessness.

The present study also explored respondents' feelings regarding safety and comfort in the neighbourhoods to which they were allocated. The majority of the respondents (46,3% in the sample group leaving and 46% in the sample group remaining) found that that they "almost never" felt safe and comfortable. Rothmund and Kela (1992), too, pointed out that community members might feel exploited and dis-empowered and might have a poor self-image. This could lead to mistrust of strangers, including social workers. Social workers are often greeted with hostility because such residents identify social work with "authority". These were also some of the problems cited by social workers in the present study.

Table 8 : **Relationship between Neighbourhood and Work Comfort**

CHI – SQUARE TESTS

	Value	Df	Asymp.Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi Square	81.617ª	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	87.696ª	9	.000
Linear–by-Linear Association	9.917	1	.002
N. of Valid Cases	160		

*p < 0.01

The chi-square test was used to analyse the relationship between neighbourhood and work comfort of both sample groups. As expected, there was a significant (p = .000) Pearson's correlation coefficient between description of neighbourhood in which social workers work and

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feeling comfortable working within these areas. This meant that the more unsafe and apathetic the neighbourhood/community was found to be, the less comfortable and safe the social workers felt.

Simpson (2001) also found that social workers were insecure in the community in which they worked. Many were targets/victims of crime and described their work as emotionally exhausting.

Finally, one of the most serious outcomes of violence for everyone is that it engenders fear. With the existence of fear, there is the abandonment of intimacy (Nouwen, 1989) and a loss of commitment to remain engaged with others. There is the temptation to turn away, to withdraw and become isolated, to deny, or move forward by creating a safe haven behind high walls. With fear, there is an escalation and spiralling of all kinds of distancing behaviours and choices. Similarly, this fear, and the persistent violence and crime that has infiltrated South Africa, can be one of the factors that has resulted in the exodus of social workers to their "own safer havens" abroad.

6.4.17   Features of Neighbourhood affecting Services

Figure 14 : Features in Neighbourhood

Features in neighbourhood that impact on service delivery

Legend:
- Poor Housing (29)
- High Crime Rate (52)
- Overcrowding (28)
- Vagrancy (23)
- Lack of Resources & Recreational Facility (47)
- Substance Abuse (45)
- Poverty (48)
- No/Limited Safety & Security (50)
- Apathy (28)
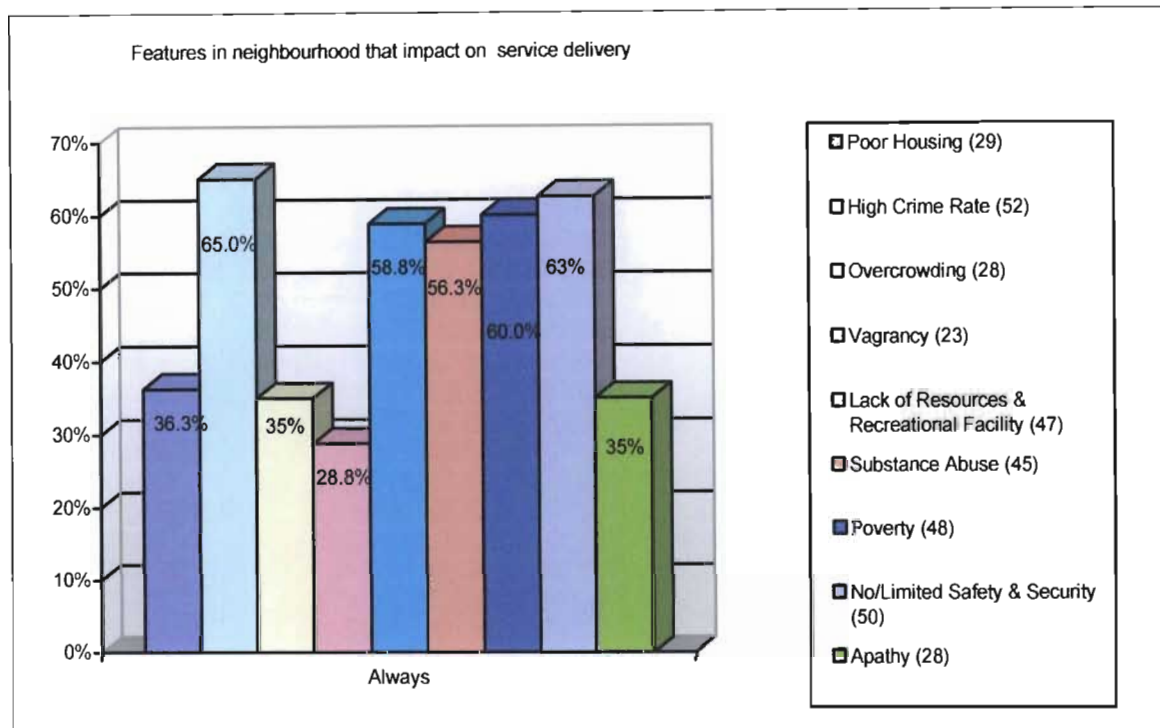
Like most transitions, the new dispensation has brought with it instability. As soon as the citizens of South Africa won back the right to be treated with respect and dignity, crime threatened the stability of the country. There is little doubt that crime is of major concern to most South Africans. Apart from assisting in addressing poverty and equalising power relations, social work has a more specific role to play in crime-ridden communities, and in addressing the culture of crime in South Africa.

The combined sample group response revealed the following salient features of neighbourhoods which hinder/ impact on social workers' service delivery:

- High crime rate and violence in the community (65%)
- No, or limited safety, and security (63%)
- Poverty (60%)
- Lack of resources and recreational facilities (58, 8%)
- Substance abuse (56, 3%)

Crime, violence, limited safety or security, and poverty are daily crises. Gathiram (2000), Moller et al (1996), and Gray (1998) also found crime and violence to be major deterrents to adequate service delivery. The question to ask is: How are social workers expected to provide effective service when the high crime rate and level of violence in communities (65%), and limited safety and security (63%), remain persistent obstacles to the effectiveness of their work?

The perception that crime in South Africa is out of control, whether real or fuelled by the media, is having a detrimental effect on economic and social development.

Further, besides poverty and crime, one of the single most important social issues facing social workers in South Africa today is that of violence. According to Letsebe (1995), violence is virtually an accepted part of everyday life in South Africa. Gray (1998: 267) claims that social workers are constantly confronted with the harsh reality of an increase in violence against women and children. Lack of resources compounds this problem, calling on social workers to provide preventative and rehabilitative services in apathetic and crime-ridden communities.

According to Wilson and Ramphele (1989), one of the most tangible social consequences of poverty is crime (Wilson and Ramphele, 1989). Where work is difficult to find, and where communities are in a state of upheaval, people are more likely to rob and assault others, sometimes to make a

living and sometimes out of frustration and despair. Living in a community characterised by violence and crime, feeds into feelings of hopelessness and powerlessness.

According to Kasiram (1998:171) it is well nigh impossible to remain unscathed by these real-life horror stories. It is clear that social workers being affected by high levels of crime and violence are seeking greener pastures abroad.

In the past, not many social workers were involved in violence work at the macro-level. However, at present social workers have to live with violence at the micro-level, in families and in their communities. This is captured by Drower (1991:38) who points out that 'the individual practitioner can always remove herself from the profession, (but) she cannot remove herself as easily from her personal position in society'. Whether by choice or by default, social workers are living and working in violent communities and they have to be involved in some way with work relating to violence; this is the reality of South Africa.

Kasiram (1998:172) aptly encourages social workers to take responsibility by healing themselves. The 'problems encountered by clients and social workers are described as being at their ugliest best today. Fiction does not remotely compare with true life dramas. We are people too and need to recover and/or regain our strength and balance by whatever works best for us' (Kasiram,1998:172).

Crime and violence in South Africa challenges our professional commitments and our choice of lifestyles, either to remain in the country or to leave for 'safer environments'. It is clear that the South African environment challenges social workers to play an important role in value transformation. But the concern is whether social workers are ready for this challenge or whether this increase in crime and violence in the

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communities will result in a situation that is unwieldy and hopeless, resulting in the 'brain drain' of social workers from South Africa.

6.4.18   **Dealing with Obstacles / Frustrations**

Varied responses were received as to the way in which obstacles/frustrations were handled. To differentiate the responses, the researcher separated them into two categories, namely: accomplishments, and difficulties in dealing with obstacles.

Difficulties in dealing with obstacles/frustrations

Qualitative responses were :

- Remaining apathetic and providing inefficient services.
- Concentrating only on safety.
- Suppressing anger.
- Becoming emotionally drained, this having a ripple effect on relationships.
- Ignoring the obstacles.
- Becoming disillusioned.
- Feeling helpless.
- Police escort frequently used to enter neighbourhood, resulting often in confidentiality being breached.
- Work becoming difficult, and leading to frustration.
- Poor involvement, resulting in a detachment from communities.

Once again, in this study violence and crime were identified by respondents as adding to their frustrations and hindering service delivery. Of concern again were the dangers associated with work in problematic areas.

Otte (2003) described social workers as being at "saturation levels" regarding experiencing abuse/neglect and feeling "emotionally blackmailed". These are serious allegations that the profession must address forthwith.

Accomplishments in overcoming obstacles/frustrations

- Involving communities in decision-making.
- Involving the community, community-based organisations and non-governmental organisations to participate in programmes.
- Increasing networking.
- Receiving support from colleagues and supervisors.
- Assessing each situation individually and becoming creative.
- Making informed decisions.
- Seeking professional or specialised help.
- Involving community forums.
- Establishing support systems.
- Focusing on positives instead of homing in on negatives in the community.
- Handling obstacles professionally.
- Using problems as sources of challenge and motivation.

6.4.19   **Benefits of working in Neighbourhood**

Respondents from both sample groups offered some information on the benefits of working in their neighbourhoods as follows:

- Some community members are actively working towards change, and this encourages social workers to strive.
- Some clients/communities are friendly and hospitable.
- Resources are available, though limited.
- One has the opportunity to work within a multi-cultural environment. Leads to cross cultural exposure and enriches your work experience.
- Enables social workers to build bridges and relationships among communities.
- Networking with other organisations becomes possible.
- After one receives community support, one experiences good working relationships.
- Work is challenging.
- One learns how to deal with different crises.
- Teaches one to be responsible.
- One is better able to focus on the contrast between rural and urban settings.

In contrast to the challenges and difficulties of social workers working in poor working conditions, the study has provided evidence of good practice. The study also provided examples of innovative projects and reflected some positive attitudes and visions on the part of many social workers. Some social workers in this study continue to work under difficult conditions with courage and commitment. It is these qualities that will possibly see social work survive, and they need affirmation by the agency and the profession.

6.5   Infrastructural Support

6.5.1   Agency Orientation

Figure 15 : Orientation received

Did you receive Orientation at Your Agency?
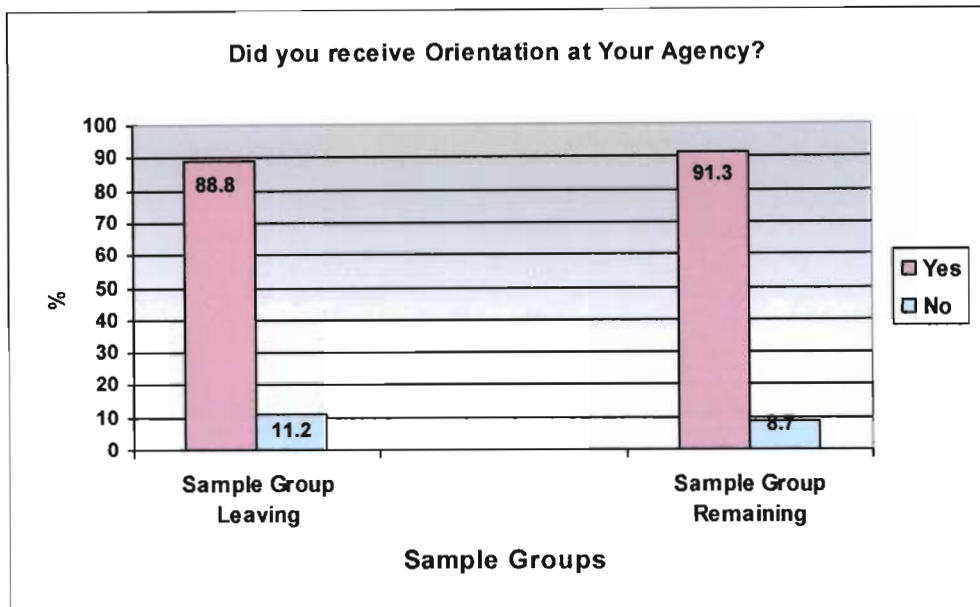
In both sample groups the majority of the respondents received orientation at their agency when they commenced work.   Figure 15 illustrates that 88,8% of the respondents in the sample group leaving received orientation, compared to a slightly larger percentage (91,3%) of respondents in the sample group remaining. It is clear that social welfare agencies in South Africa are providing orientation/induction for their staff, and that this is regarded as important in equipping workers for a new work environment.

6.5.2 Length of Orientation

Table 9: Length of Orientation – Sample Group Leaving

Length of Orientation Sample Group Leaving	Frequency	Valid Per cent
One week	21	29.2 %
Two weeks	24	33.3 %
Three weeks	12	16.7 %
Four weeks and over	15	20.8 %

Table 9 illustrates the length of orientation received by respondents considering leaving the country (sample group 1). It was revealed that the majority of the respondents (33.3%) received two weeks' orientation. However, the length of orientation yielded responses that might not be viewed as too dissimilar, suggesting only that orientation was of varying duration.

Table 10: Length of Orientation – Sample Group Remaining

Length of Orientation Sample Group Remaining2	Frequency	Valid Per cent
One week	45	60 %
Two weeks	9	12 %
Three weeks	2	2.7 %
Four weeks and over	19	25.3 %

In the sample group remaining, 60% of the respondents received one week's orientation. It was found that a smaller percentage (12%) received two weeks' orientation compared to the sample group considering leaving.

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It is clear that orientation averaged between one to two weeks in both sample groups. The shorter orientation period can be attributed to many factors, such as limited staff to conduct orientation, or that staff is urgently required to commence work. Short orientation programmes may also be favoured by organisations as they assume that new social workers do not require intensive orientation as they already have a sound knowledge base. The concern is whether one to two weeks' orientation is adequate for a newly-qualified social worker. This may impact on the new graduate's work performance and adaptation.

6.5.3   Effectiveness of Orientation

Figure 16 : Effectiveness of Orientation
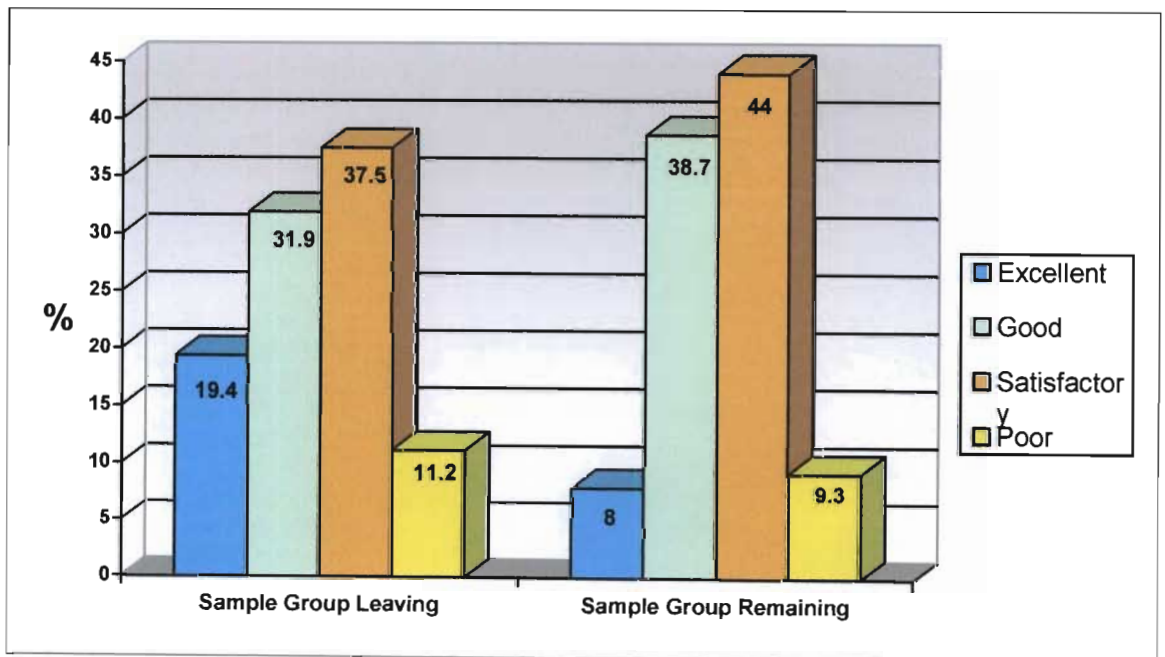
In both sample groups, the respondents rated the effectiveness of the orientation received as favourable, but not exceptional. In the sample group leaving, 37,5% regarded the orientation received as satisfactory while

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19,4% rated the orientation as excellent. Similar findings were revealed in the sample group remaining, where 44% of the respondents rated the orientation received as satisfactory, with only 8% of the respondents rating the orientation as excellent.

The latter findings point to the conclusion that the majority of respondents in both sample groups benefited from the orientation. The low frequency that considered orientation as "excellent" suggests the need for agencies to extend their efforts further. Perhaps then, newly-qualified social workers would be more prepared for work realities and less inclined to seek greener pastures overseas.

Table 11 :

Cross Tabulation – **The Effectiveness of Orientation received in the different Work Settings**

Work Setting	Effectiveness of Orientation				
	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Total
Governmental Department Count % Total	7 4%	20 13%	30 19%	8 5%	65 41%
Non Governmental Agen Count % Total	20 13%	32 20%	35 22%	8 5%	95 59%
Total Count % Total	27 17%	52 32%	65 41%	16 10%	160 100%

A cross tabulation of the effectiveness of orientation against various work settings was conducted to gauge similarities or differences that might exist

across such work settings. Respondents in non-governmental organisations rated the effectiveness of their orientation to be far more effective in comparison to the orientation received by respondents in governmental organisations. The study indicated that 20% of the respondents employed in non-governmental agencies rated the effectiveness of their orientation as good, as compared to 12% in governmental agencies.

The findings clearly suggest that the orientation provided by non–governmental agencies is far more effective in meeting the needs of social workers. Non- governmental organisations are under threat for a variety of reasons, such as funding; loss of staff to government and industry and lack of an enabling environment for NGOs, including difficulties in accessing facilities of government (Patel,1998). The latter problems experienced by the NGOs themselves have not negatively impacted on the provision of effective orientation to their staff. Despite not experiencing these problems, government organisations were found to be unable to provide effective orientation to their staff, resulting in lack of support and frustration experienced by workers in adapting to their work setting.

6.5.4   **Overall Orientation**

The study revealed that the orientation received was comprehensive. The respondents identified many areas that were included in their orientation:

- 82,3% of the respondents identified administrative functions such as recording requirements by agency, supervision requirements and filing expectations as having been included in their orientation.

- 64,6% of the respondents indicated that the relevant legislation pertaining to the functioning of the agency and its service delivery was included in orientation.
- 83% of the respondents confirmed that lines of communication and organisational structures were emphasised in their orientation.
- 73,5% of the respondents reported that the methods of intervention utilized in the organisation had been included.
- 68,7% of the respondents indicated that their orientation had included comprehensive literature and up-dated readings for understanding the nature of work/specialised field of practice within the organisation.
- 76,9% of the respondents confirmed that their orientation had included the mission and constitution of the agency.

The identified areas support the conclusion that orientation by social welfare agencies in South Africa is fairly comprehensive and beneficial to social workers. However, what appears to be lacking is orientation to prepare social workers for harsh realities such as the poverty, violence and crime that they would experience. If this omission is addressed, it is likely to contribute to better job satisfaction and ultimately reduce the brain drain of social workers in the country.

6.5.5   Supervision

Figure 17 :   Frequency of Supervision Received
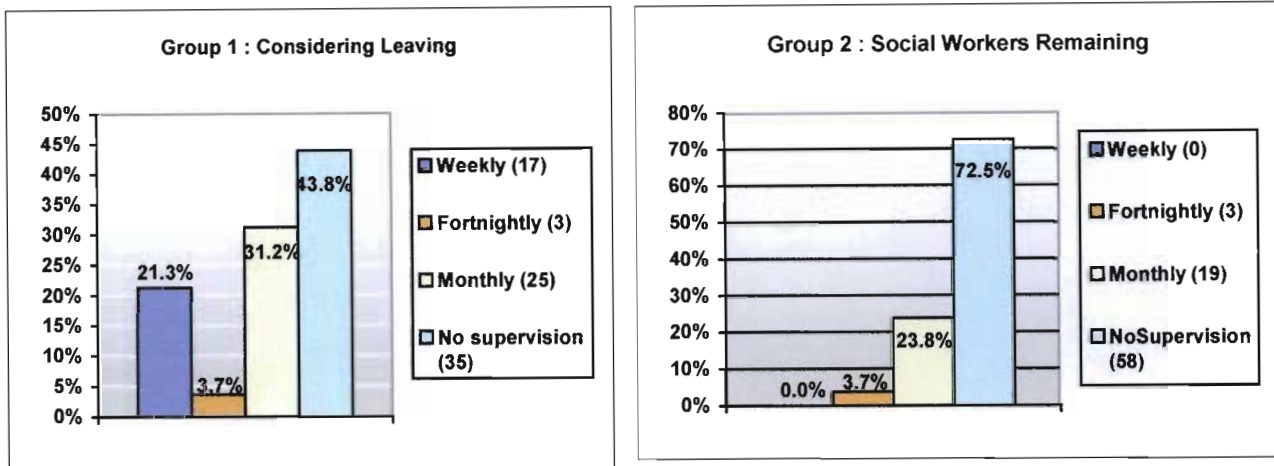
The study also found that 43,8% (35) of the respondents leaving South Africa and 72,5% (58) of the sample remaining did not receive any supervision. This confirms Botha's (2000:1) argument that supervision in South Africa does not receive rightful and dedicated attention.   Even weekly supervision for respondents was not sufficiently provided. In the sample group remaining, none of the respondents received weekly supervision, while in the sample group leaving, only 21,3% (17) respondents received weekly supervision. How then can we hope to prevent or deal with burnout if the necessary supportive functions of supervision are not fulfilled?

Table 12 : **Relationship between present Workload and Supervision**

CHI – SQUARE TEST

	Value	Df	Asymp.Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi Square	79.379[a]	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	50.067[a]	16	.000
Linear–by-Linear Association	.305	1	.580
N. of Valid Cases	160		

*p < 0.01

The chi-square test was used to analyse the relationship between present workload and supervision in both sample groups. As expected, there was a significant (p = .000) Pearson's correlation coefficient between workload and usefulness of supervision. It was confirmed that the higher the workload, the greater the need for effective supervision. From previous findings, it was clear that the majority of the respondents had a high workload which they were unable to handle adequately. Exacerbating this problem was the fact that they received very limited support from their agency.

Within the South African context, social workers are clearly demoralized, frustrated and highly stressed as a result of high caseloads (Van Rooyen, 1996; Ross, 1996; Ross, 1997), and also owing to demands to participate meaningfully in the changed socio-political environment. Supervision is therefore crucial. Findings in this study revealed that social workers were not receiving supervision, were frustrated and de-motivated and were not practising developmental social work to intervene at a socio-political level.

The study revealed that some supervision was received, but mainly only on a monthly basis. In the sample group that was leaving 31,3% (25) of respondents received monthly supervision, with similar findings in the

sample group remaining where 23,8% (19) of respondents received monthly supervision. The lack of regular supervision could be attributed to the recent funding problems, cutbacks in resources and freezing of social work posts.

6.5.6   Usefulness of Supervision

The study has already shown that supervision was not provided frequently to social workers. It also revealed that the majority of the social workers rated the usefulness of the supervision as poor, viz. 53,8% in the sample group leaving and 52,5% of respondents from the sample group remaining. Botha (2000) also found supervision to be faulty, weak or ineffectual.

Ross (1996:108) revealed that social workers needed supervision as a means to 'ventilate', offload and promote personal and professional growth; however, the results of the present study suggest that this much needed service was not available to fulfil these functions, causing serious frustrations and disillusionment. The evident lack of effective support and absence of attempts by organisations to alleviate these frustrations can be considered as directly contributing to decisions to relocate.

6.5.7   Staff Development

Staff development was offered to 92,5% (N=74) of the respondents in the sample group remaining, while only 71,3% (N=57) of the respondents in the sample leaving received staff development.

Staff development was provided weekly, fortnightly, monthly, bi-monthly and yearly. The study indicated the following in respect to the frequency of staff development:

Figure 18 : Frequency of Staff Development

Sample Group 1 : Social Workers Leaving

%	Weekly (4)	Fortnightly (1)	Monthly (14)	Bi-monthly (17)	Yearly (44)
%	5.0%	1.5%	17.5%	21%	55%

Sample Group 2 : Social Workers Remaining

%	Weekly(3)	Fortnightly	Monthly (19)	Bi-month	Yearly (36)
%	3.8%	7.4%	23.8%	20%	45%
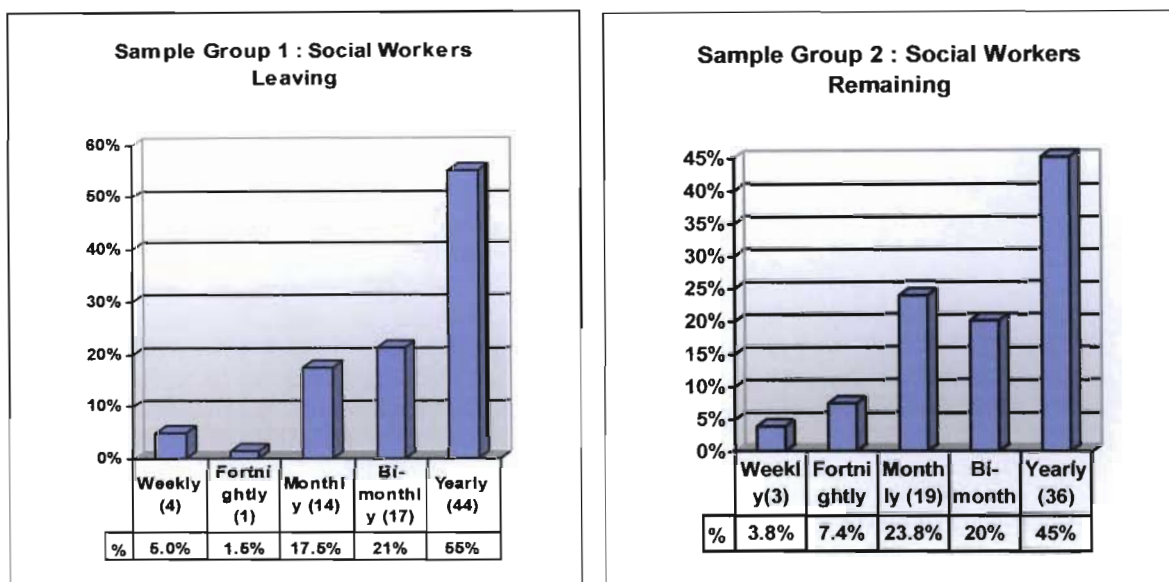
Fifty-five percent (55%) of the respondents in the group considering leaving indicated that they received yearly staff development programmes, compared to 45% of the respondents in the sample group remaining. Similar qualitative responses received earlier in the study indicated that exposure to training/staff development to deal with problems is very limited.

The pattern that is emerging in the study is most concerning: social workers have high workloads; they are unable to handle their workloads effectively; they do not receive support/back-up from senior staff; supervision provided is poor and limited; and staff development is offered mainly only once a year! It is clear that under these circumstances, social workers cannot offer quality services. Ross (1996:109) notes that regular in-service training programmes that provide regular opportunities to learn new skills, refine old techniques, or develop deeper theoretical insights can play a vital role in helping staff manage pressures and avoid occupational stress.

Limited staff development may be linked to Gray's (1997) findings of declining subsidies to welfare organisations, as services suffer in the face of shrinking human resources and reduction in service demand. Staff development is considered a source of infra-structural support for the social worker; it must surely be evident that yearly staff development is inadequate. Limited staff development can disempower and frustrate workers, especially when they are required to work within a changed socio-political environment.

This study explored topics for staff development. In the sample of social workers considering leaving, 70% of the respondents indicated that management was responsible for identifying staff development topics, while in the sample remaining, 67% of the respondents maintained staff should identify the topics for staff development. The concern is whether management would be able to identify accurately the needs of social workers, especially since it was found that management is not in tune with their workers. Management's choice of topics could be poorly received by social workers, especially in agencies where management comprised persons who were not qualified social workers (such as religious leaders/politicians, etc.). Furthermore, a top-down approach is contrary to the principles of democracy. The ideal scenario should be that staff suggests areas for staff development. Frey and Edinburg (1983:352) agree that staff members develop the

educational aspect of the staff development programme. Bunker and Wijnberg (1988:287) indicate that an education committee of professional staff and management (administrative and personnel) can be a team that works together to construct learning designs. Such a partnership could serve the added function of building bridges between management and social workers.

Thompson, Murphy and Strading (1994) aptly sum up the benefits of staff development training as a central aspect of human resource management and find that training can play a vital role in helping staff manage pressures and stress. Such support is crucial in the profession.

6.5.8 Staff Development Programmes implemented

Topics /issues addressed when staff development occurred were explored in both sample groups. These were:

Management-related

- Service excellence
- Understanding policies/agency regulations
- Unfair labour practices

Client Care and Social Work Services

- Home-based care for people living with AIDS
- Counselling of HIV/AIDS victims
- Trauma counselling
- Victim empowerment
- Spiritual counselling and counselling of rape survivors

- Use of play therapy
- Communication skills
- Substance abuse counselling
- Poverty alleviation
- Understanding current policies/legislation

Recommendations/needs identified by respondents in both sample groups in respect of equipping social workers to deal effectively with the diversity of social problems have already been discussed. In addition to those staff development issues covered in the previous section, further suggestions were provided for staff development as follows:

- Poverty alleviation strategies
- Improving services
- Developmental social work
- Labour relations
- Programme formulation
- Updating/refreshing of theory
- The resistant community
- Abuse : physical/emotional/sexual
- Marital Discord/violence

It would appear that social workers have not been exposed to the developmental paradigm and to updating of theory in staff development. These two areas have been previously identified as areas that prevented the adoption of a development model and or community development. Most of the needs identified above appear to focus on the problems of poverty, crime/violence, HIV/AIDS and social policy changes. How can there be effective services when staff development is minimal? Welfare organisations need honest stock taking (Kasiram, 1999) of their efforts in empowering social workers to deal with harsh realities of practice and a changed socio-political emphasis.

6.5.9 Recommendations to help Social Workers handle Problems

Social workers from both groups provided a variety of recommendations to handle the diversity of problems they encounter more effectively:

- Continuous and effective in-service training. Attendance at workshops.
- Improved self-concept of social workers.
- Continuous practical and theoretical update of social workers.
- Motivational talks given by experienced social workers.
- Support and supervision to be offered irrespective of years of experience. Problem of ineffectual supervision by organisations to be addressed.
- Case and group discussions.
- Social workers to take responsibility and have the initiative to change.
- Develop ways to de-stress.
- More specialised training to be offered at tertiary levels
- Introduction of non-diploma or degree courses.
- Research to be undertaken and task teams to be formed to identify the problems of social workers.

These recommendations contain repetition of core concerns plaguing social workers such as the absence of staff development, the need for supervision and the need to de-stress.

6.5.10   Service Conditions

Figure 19 : Rating of Service Conditions
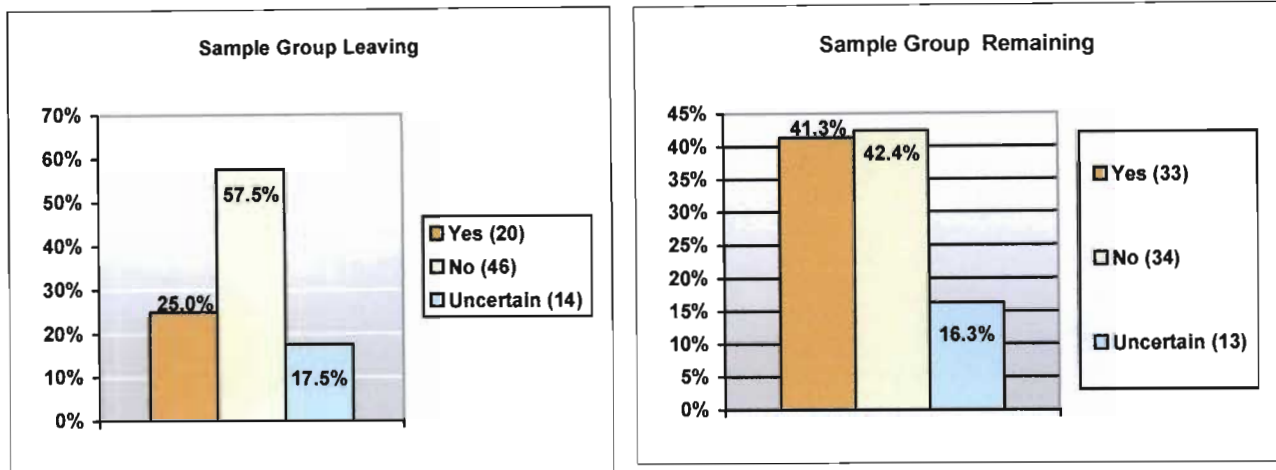
The study indicated that the majority of respondents in both sample groups were not satisfied with their service conditions. As expected, 57,5% (N=46) of the social workers leaving were not satisfied which was a higher percentage in comparison with the social workers that are remaining. This can be seen as a leading factor contributing to social workers leaving the profession in South Africa. Service conditions and salary packages (earning in pounds) offered in the UK appear to be a clear temptation luring workers from South Africa.

It can be further deduced that social workers remaining are far more satisfied with their service conditions, since 41,3% (N=33) of the respondents in the sample remaining indicated that they were satisfied with their service conditions, while only 25% (N=20) of the group leaving were satisfied. The study further showed that a fair percentage of respondents (17,5% in the sample leaving and 16,3% in the sample remaining) were uncertain as to whether they were satisfied with their service conditions. The

latter respondents are either uninterested in or apathetic regarding conditions of service.

Upon further analysis, the study revealed that social workers working in governmental and in non-governmental organisations differed in their opinions regarding service conditions. It was revealed that 49,3% of social workers in governmental departments were satisfied with their service conditions, compared with 28% of non-governmental agency social workers. This points to governmental agency social workers' receiving greater benefits than their colleagues in non–governmental agencies. There is therefore a direct link evident in this study indicating that those leaving the profession are the dissatisfied social workers employed in non-governmental agencies.

This discontent was also identified by the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) in their guideline on remuneration and service conditions in the Social Service Professions. It was found that in terms of the Public Service Regulations 1 of 1994, the service benefits for social workers employed in the public sector include: 13th cheque, medical aid scheme (to which the State contributes R752 per month), pension contributions, housing allowance, annual leave, sick leave and maternity leave (full salary payment for four months). By comparison, for social workers working in non-governmental organisations there are usually pension contributions but at a less favourable rate; Medical Aid contributions are not always a benefit; a housing allowance is never given; the 13th cheque is conditional on the financial situation of the organisation; and frequently personnel do not receive a bonus. Further, salary scales do not exist, as annual increases are dependent upon the organisation's financial situation and are negotiated only at the very end of the financial year. Contributions to the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) are made via equal portions from the employee and employer, and maternity leave is not generally paid by the employer. Employees are required to claim maternity benefits from their Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) contributions.

There are a number of reasons for the discrepancies in remuneration and service conditions between NGOs and the public service. The main factor is funding of NGOs. NGOs are dependent on a variety of funding sources for their very existence and cannot function without these funds. Developmental social services are personnel intensive and personnel expenditure for community-based developmental services are generally between 70-80% of the total income from funding (SA Council for Social Service Professions, 2002). Owing to the difficulties experienced by NGOs with respect to funding, the discrepancies in service conditions will continue to exist.

Secondly, NGOs are raising more than half the costs from sources other than the government, and these sources are not guaranteed. It therefore stands to reason that NGOs cannot guarantee salary increases. Social workers enter these jobs knowing about the financial status of the NGOs, but nonetheless accept the working conditions. When more lucrative jobs become available, they leave, causing a high staff turnover, an observation made by Patel (1998).

According to Patel (1998), in view of the lack of competitive salaries and service benefits in the non-governmental organisations, staff retention levels have been low. Social workers who are employed in these agencies might have initially attempted to find jobs in the public sector. When they fail to accomplish this, the UK becomes tempting, since the packages presented by the various recruiting agencies are very lucrative.

The low staff retention problem within the non-governmental agencies, and its relationship to poor in service conditions and salaries, was also highlighted in the *Sunday Times Extra* newspaper (April, 2003). According to figures supplied by the SA National Council for Child and Family Welfare in 2002, 113 social workers had resigned from various agencies, in KwaZulu-Natal, all as a result of poor pay.

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These discrepancies and their impact on staff retention have surely affected non-governmental organisations, organisational capacity and affirmative action programmes. Patel (1998:114) aptly states that organisations are faced with the challenge of providing services while at the same time developing new layers of leadership to promote service excellence. Without adequate leadership, services suffer, as does work morale, again leading to a search for rewards outside of the agency.

A similar trend in satisfaction was found in respect to salary packages of social workers.

6.5.11 Salary Scales

Figure 20 : Levels of Satisfaction with Salary Scales
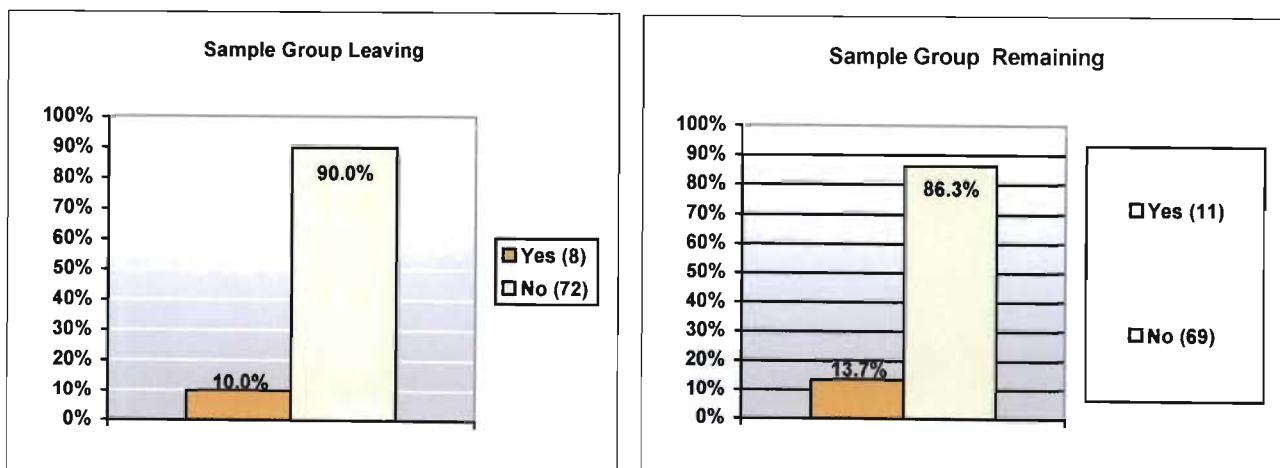
Inadequate salaries have been a bone of contention for many years. Studies by Gray and Van Rooyen (2000); Gathiram (2000); and Patel (1998) all revealed the same findings: that one of the major frustrations has been salary. The present study confirmed this finding. In both sample groups, the respondents strongly asserted that they are **not satisfied with their**

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present salary packages. Ninety (90%) per cent of the social workers considering leaving and 86,3% of the social workers remaining expressed clear dissatisfaction.

The effects of poor salaries and remunerations are noted by Gathiram (2000) as leading to demotivation.

Similarly, the report by the Joint Universities Committee for Social Work (2001) on Transformation of Social Work Education and Training since 1994 revealed to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Social Development that present poor salaries and service conditions of social workers have had a negative impact on student enrolment. For who would want to enter a profession where it was known that there was job dissatisfaction, low morale and poor salaries?

According to the SA Council for Social Service Professions (2002), of professionals employed by local government, the South African Police Service and the Department of Social Development are on different salary scales. Social workers employed by the South African Police Service earn R66 322 per annum, a difference of R3764 per annum, compared with the lower salaries of workers employed by Department of Social Development. This inadequacy is a sore point as both sets of social workers have a four-year degree.

Social workers employed by NGOs are paid substantially less than their colleagues in the civil service, further broadening the salary gap and resulting in serious dissatisfaction and, on occasion, in-fighting. According to the *Sunday Times* (April, 2003) social workers confirmed that newly-qualified social workers employed by an NGO earn R3190,00 per month compared with their public service counterparts who earn R5166,00 per month, excluding medical aid, pension and housing benefits. These discrepancies do not exist only at entry level but also within higher categories of workers. The

article highlighted that there was a spate of resignations over poor salaries in the social work profession.

The impact of this vast discrepancy in remuneration has the following effects: NGOs employ newly-qualified social workers; they invest in training and development and then lose the worker to the public sector after a year or two. The result is that they are constantly training new employees and are unable to retain experienced personnel.

Salary Structure comparable to other four -year Professional Qualifications

It was established in the study that 82,5% of the sample leaving and 72,5% of the sample remaining believed that their **salaries were not comparable to the salaries earned by other professionals with four-year qualifications.**

Social workers in the study also complained that, agencies seldom **include them in salary or service conditions negotiations**. Fifty-eight per cent of the respondents in the sample group leaving and 51,3% of those in the sample group remaining were not included in salary or service conditions negotiations.

Clearly social workers remain discontented over their low and inequitable salary structures and service conditions, and are being marginalised in salary negotiations.

6.5.12   South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP)

Respondents were asked their views of the functioning of the SACSSP. They were asked to identify the benefits of being affiliated to the SACSSP. Both sample groups identified the following benefits:

- Reviewing service conditions (54,4%)
- Providing a social work identity (84,4%)
- Providing training/workshops (44,9%)
- Improving poor service delivery (43,8%)
- Disciplinary issues (79,4%)
- Setting minimum standards (74,4%)
- Ethical guidelines (86,9%)

While there are benefits in being affiliated to the SACSSP, social workers do not consider the Council's role to be effective. Social workers in both groups rated the effectiveness of the present Council as follows:

Figure 21 :   **Effectiveness of SACSSP**
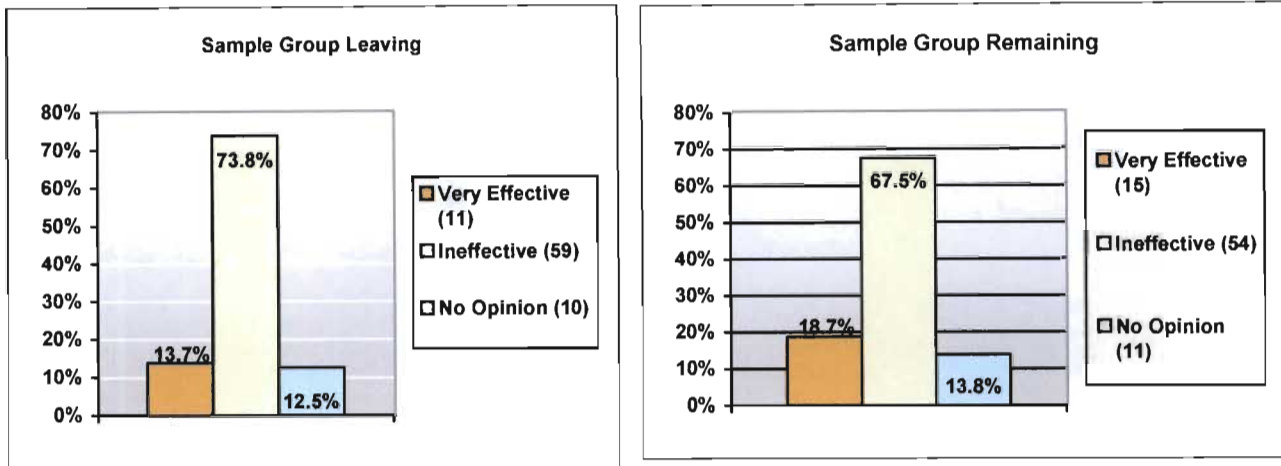
The Council was rated as being ineffective by 73,8% (N=59) respondents in the sample group leaving and 67,5% (N=54) in the sample group remaining. Even though the statutory body has changed to become more representative, social workers still appear to have little faith in the new body. The question is whether or not social workers are evaluating the Council's effectiveness based on Council's actions regarding salary and service conditions. The new statutory body has made numerous attempts via provincial meetings, newsletters and circulars to involve and update social workers; however, social workers are still dissatisfied possibly because no significant improvements have occurred in their salaries. It is also possible that their disillusionment with Council's ineffectual role in meeting their needs has given rise to apathy, and that they therefore do not participate in negotiations, with the result that they remain frustrated.

6.6   Positives in Remaining in South Africa

Figure 22 : Practice in South Africa : Social Workers Remaining
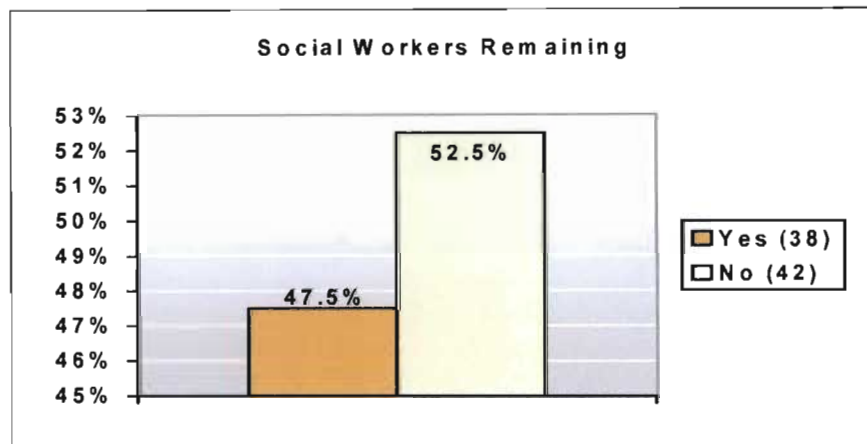
The study showed that 52,5% (N=42) of the respondents have not considered leaving South Africa to work overseas, while 47, 5% (N=38) have considered leaving the country. Although the percentage is higher in the group not considering leaving, it is noted that the difference in responses is minimal. The concern remains that almost half of the social workers surveyed considered leaving.

Table 13 :

CHI SQUARE : CONSIDERING LEAVING SOUTH AFRICA
TO WORK OVERSEAS

VARIABLE	CHI – SQUARE VALUE	Df	Asymp.Sig. (2-sided)
Present Workload	30.866[a]	12	.002
Receiving Support from Agency/Staff when unable to handle workload	32.499[a]	9	.000
Enjoyment of work presently done	58.298[a]	12	.000
Unable to handle workload	26.572[a]	12	.009

*p < 0.01

The chi-square test was used to analyse the relationship between their decision to leave South Africa and the following variables: present workload; receiving support from agency; enjoyment of work presently done; and inability to handle workload.

As expected, the statistics indicate significance in these relationships.

Each of these areas needs to be flagged nationally, in order for the profession to address them as a matter of urgency.

6.7   Reasons to work as a Social Worker in South Africa

Figure 23 : Benefits of Working in South Africa – Sample Group Remaining
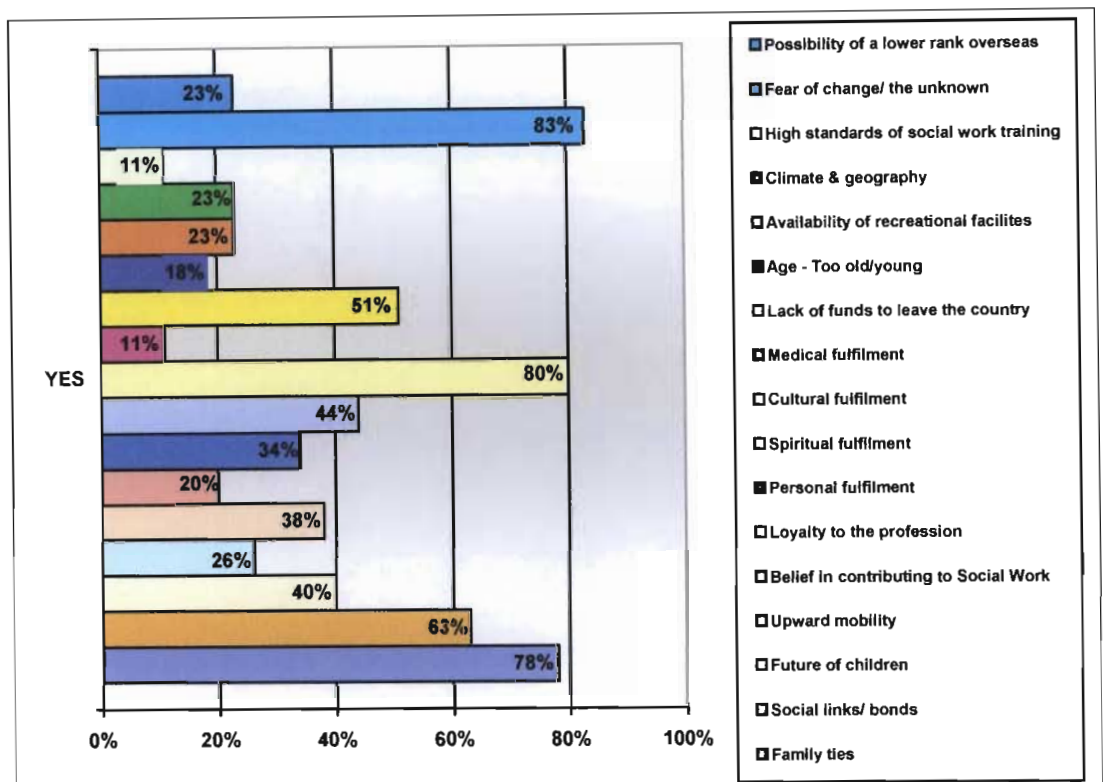
Many reasons for remaining in South Africa were identified by the social workers. Change often brings fear; it was revealed that 83% of social workers feared the unknown and the prospect of change. Social workers probably remain in a "comfort zone" in South Africa and fear commencing social work in a new environment and not coping. Eighty per cent also indicated that cultural fulfilment was undoubtedly offered within the South African environment. Family ties and social support were other important reasons for remaining in South Africa. Emigration may have financial rewards, but it comes at a price: that of relinquishing existing supports and

cultivating new roots and establishing oneself within a new social order (Naidoo & Kasiram, 2002). The financial constraints of relocating were also identified by 51% of the respondents. Lack of funds prevented many social workers from leaving the country.

Interestingly, loyalty to the profession, upward mobility, belief in contributing to social work and the high standard of social work training were not seen as significant reasons for remaining. It would appear that social workers' decision to remain in South Africa is not related mainly to their profession. This suggests that social workers are not particularly loyal to the social work profession.

Figure 24 : Benefits of Remaining in South Africa : Responses Sample Group Leaving
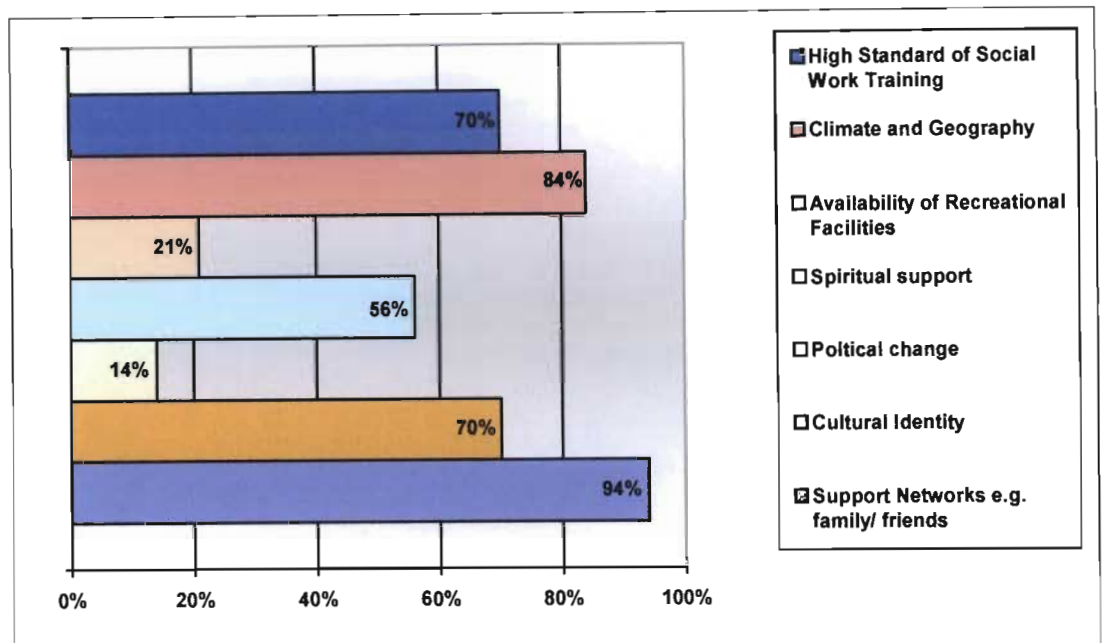
The social workers who were leaving also identified the following as positives in staying and working in South Africa: 94% of the respondents identified support networks such as family and friends as a key benefit of remaining in South Africa. Support networks are crucial to social workers who, as caregivers need these to prevent burnout, as discussed by Miller (1999). Eighty-four per cent also considered the climate and geography of South Africa as reasons for remaining in South Africa, indicating that social workers were aware of the dreary weather in the UK. Cultural fulfilment and cultural identity, as indicated by the previous group, were further attractions for many to remain in the country. Interestingly, 70% of this group also identified the high standard of social work training offered in South Africa as a clear positive.

In both sample groups of the study, family and social support and cultural and spiritual fulfilment were commonly cited reasons for remaining in the

country. It is evident that social workers do not consider contributing to social work or loyalty to the profession to be priority concerns. This is serious as, given the exodus of social workers from South Africa, it is envisaged that the shortfall will serve to stretch human resources to breaking point, further tarnishing the image of social work in the country (Ramasar, 2000). Naidoo & Kasiram (2002) ask: *Quo Vadis* the profession, as clearly the status and image of the profession, along with its future survival, are at risk.

Interestingly, it was revealed that there was a contradictory response from both sample groups regarding the standard of social work training in South Africa. Social workers that were leaving were impressed by its quality, while those that did not apply to emigrate, did not perceive their training as worthy. Naidoo & Kasiram (2002) claim that this difference points to the value afforded South African training in the UK. Social workers leaving had undergone the process of evaluation and appreciated that they did not need any further qualifications to work in the UK.

Lombard (2000) cites Ramasar (2000:6), who alerts the profession to the active recruitment of South African social workers who are viewed as well-qualified. Lombard (2000) elaborates that universities in South Africa are training social workers for international practice. If the British regard South African social workers as competent and highly-trained professionals and remunerate them accordingly, they must be accorded the same professional status and remuneration in South Africa.

6.8 Benefits of Working in South Africa

The respondents in the group of social workers remaining provided limited responses when describing what makes social work attractive for them. It was revealed that 60% of the sample reported that "nothing" in social work in South Africa was attractive for them. In comparison, it was found that 40% of the respondents remaining were more positive and were able to identify the positives of their work.

Qualitative responses to explain the benefits included :

- Personal growth.
- Multi-cultural and diverse community work.
- Being part of the empowerment process.
- Work is never monotonous – always crisis-oriented.
- Using the developmental approach.
- The increased possibility of entering private practice and ultimately earning more money.
- Working with colleagues who have an abundance of knowledge/experience.
- Making an impact on impoverished communities.
- Enjoyment of the specialisation.
- Ability to work with social workers who have the determination and courage to work in such trying times.

The study revealed that benefits included the excitement of culturally diverse work, and that work was often crisis-oriented and not monotonous. Some of the respondents appreciated using the developmental model. The changed emphasis of the developmental approach appears to be yielding interest, although practice is insufficient,

as was also found earlier in this study. This suggests that social workers are finally beginning to heed the call to address poverty and disadvantage (Mamphiswana and Noyoo, 2000). Naidoo and Kasiram (2002) aptly recommend that perhaps staff development could focus on these positive experiences to nurture hope and generate excitement in work, rather than focusing on failures/problems that produce despondency and despair.

6.9 Impact of Staff Turnover at Agencies

High staff turnover was considered serious, creating many other problems. These were recorded by social workers remaining in the country as :

- Disruption of staff development plans.
- Communities distrusting workers.
- Funding is wasted on incomplete projects.
- Retraining of new staff.
- Stress and frustration among workers – in house quarrels.
- Increased workloads for existing social workers who already are overloaded.
- Fear, insecurity and uncertainty about the future of social work in South Africa.

The latter concerns point to serious problems in ensuring effective service delivery. Gathiram (2000) and Patel (1998) too, found that high turnover of social workers affected the agencies' organisational capacity and affirmative action programmes.

Naidoo & Kasiram (2002) question how there can be an effective service if planning is derailed; funds wasted, and probably not forthcoming for

future projects; and staff fighting with one another instead of working as a cohesive unit. Honest stock-taking needs to occur as social workers increasingly project themselves as distrustful, not financially accountable, frustrated, and suffering from burnout (Kasiram, 1999).

6.10 Safety and Security in South Africa and Its Effect on Social Workers

The recommendations provided were similar to those identified in the discussion on how social workers dealt with obstacles/frustrations in working in their neighbourhoods.

The qualitative responses from social workers remaining in South Africa, with respect to the safety and security circumstances of the country, and how these affect service delivery, were:

- Learning to live with being a victim of crime and violence.
- Becoming apathetic like our clients.
- Not taking risks – avoid certain areas (resulting in certain areas not being serviced).
- Being paranoid. This in turn develops boundaries between client and worker.
- Becoming sectoral – offering no help to certain sectors of people for fear of being threatened.
- Always having to be alert and accept the frustrating truth of not being able to do anything.
- Constant fear of being hijacked or raped.
- Increased anxiety.
- Feelings of negativity and pessimism.
- Feelings of insecurity.

- Safety and security issues prevent social workers from providing an effective service.

The study clearly revealed that respondents have extreme concerns for their safety and security at work. Gathiram (2000) also found that crime was a major deterrent to providing adequate service delivery. Similarly, it was found in this study that social workers were no longer providing effective services because of safety and security concerns.

A study by Moller et al (1996:73) in KwaZulu-Natal also showed that three-quarters of the sample were of the opinion that welfare services could be delivered only if peace and security prevailed. Similar conclusions are reached in this study, because of findings that social workers were not providing services because of crime. Respondents in the group of social workers remaining were also concerned about the violence and crime that affected them at work and at home.

6.11   Reasons for Leaving the Country to seek Employment in the UK

The sample of social workers leaving was asked reasons for their decision.

Figure 25 : Reasons for Leaving South Africa
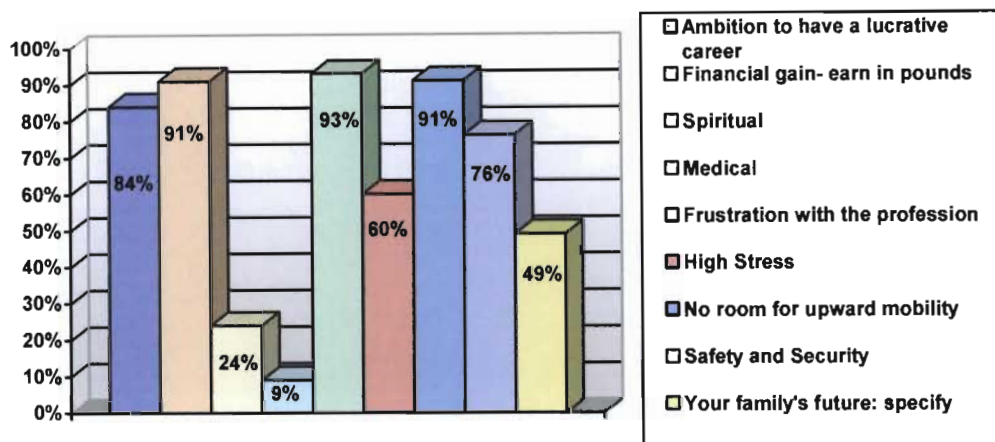
The following were identified as the major reasons for leaving the country and seeking employment in the UK:

- 93% identified that they were frustrated.
- 76% indicated safety and security concerns.
- 60% complained of high stress levels.
- 91% suggested there was no room for upward mobility in South Africa.
- 84% anticipated a lucrative career overseas.
- 91% indicated financial gain.

It would appear that having a lucrative career overseas that is earning in pounds, work and safety concerns featured most prominently in the study. These findings correlate with Gray and Van Rooyen's study (2000:186)

where social workers complained of low status and poor salaries. Luvhengo (1996), too, argues that social workers are marginalised, given low priority on government agendas, and poorly paid. These concerns and frustrations are not new, having been raised several years ago, yet little seems to have been done to address them (Naidoo & Kasiram,2002).

6.12   Recommendations

6.12.1   Changes that need to occur

The respondents remaining in South Africa were asked to identify key changes that needed to occur for them to continue working in South Africa.

Figure 26 :   Changes that need to occur to remain in SA –
Responses from Social Workers Remaining
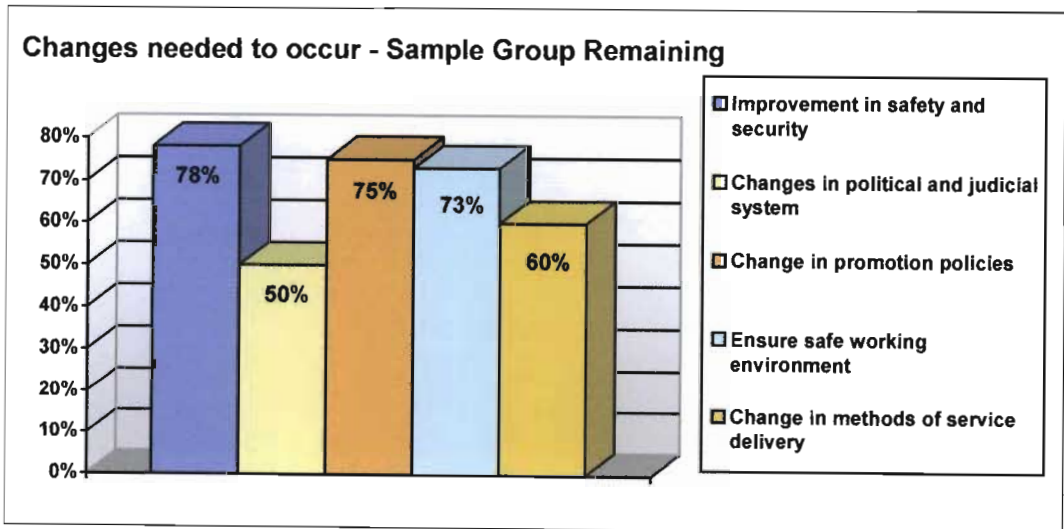
In order to continue working in South Africa, the respondents identified the following key changes:

- 78 % - Improvement in personal safety and security.
- 73% - A safer work environment.

- 75% - Changes in promotion policies.

Social workers who applied to leave for the UK also cited similar changes to reconsider their decision.

Figure 27 :   Changes that need to occur in order to reconsider their decision to remain in SA – Responses from Social Workers Leaving
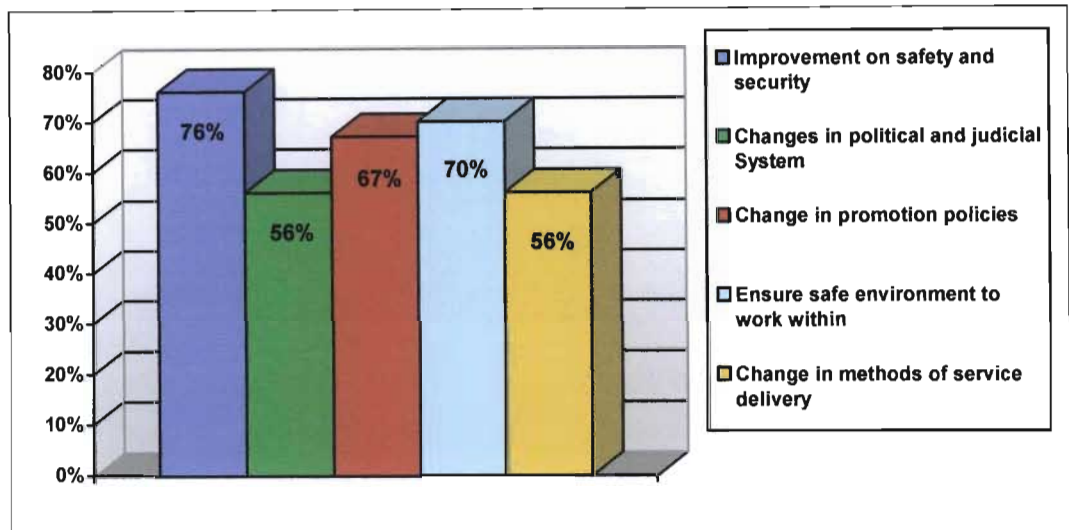
Seventy six per cent (76%) of the respondents identified assurance of personal safety and security and 70% indicated safer work environments as being prerequisites for reconsidering their decision.

Repeatedly, concerns for safety and security at home and work together with promotion policies, ranked highest. Respondents were of the opinion that the South African political and judicial systems were in disarray and did not offer protection to citizens. Approximately half of the respondents in both sample groups were dissatisfied with the political and judicial systems in the country (Naidoo & Kasiram, 2002). This is significant in

contextualising frustrations, as there appears to exist a feeling of despair among respondents that the Law and the State have failed them.

These and other concerns were further explored through open-ended questions, yielding a variety of information. A similar range of responses was offered earlier in other sections of this chapter. In summary, the open-ended questions responses point to inaccessible or absent resources, dilapidated agency vehicles, and unclean and unsafe office buildings. Concerns for safety and security were again noted. When social workers perceive their work milieu to be unsafe, it is very difficult to continue with "business as usual" (Naidoo & Kasiram, 2002). This also has an effect on their service delivery and job satisfaction.

Much of this latter data finds support in social work literature. Rothmund and Kela (1992), too, identified that infrastructure and resources are inaccessible or limited. They clarified that lack of resources (e.g. venues) or no electricity makes it very difficult to organise community meetings; and communication is difficult in the absence of telephones and postal services in informal settlements. It was found that community members often have unrealistic expectations of what social workers are able to achieve, and this can impact on participation, or lack thereof, in community projects.

The study by Simpson (2001:313) with regard to social work in informal settlements in the Durban Metro region revealed similar experiences/ frustrations of social workers as identified in this study.

It can be seen that social workers experience serious frustrations with the difficult organisational conditions under which they work.

High workloads, exacerbated by staff shortages and high staff turnover were clearly a concern, complicated by working with apathetic

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clientele/communities. Under these circumstances, social workers could not offer quality services, and accordingly perceived that they did not enjoy a good public image (Naidoo & Kasiram, 2002). The morale of social workers in the field requires urgent attention. The Minister of Welfare shares a similar view that the low morale of social service workers across the country is an area that needs priority attention (*Sunday Tribune*, Nov.1999).

Social workers also expressed frustration at the calibre of new graduates, citing inefficiency and a poor work ethic as problems. With reference to this observation, they suggest that educational institutions exercise more stringent control in accepting students into the social work programme. According to Naidoo & Kasiram (2002), it is possible that educational institutions are being prompted by financial concerns to accept academically weak or unsuitable students into their programme, as is the case at some Asian universities cited by Menachery and Mohite (2001) in Naidoo & Kasiram (2002). This is likely to weaken the social work workforce and further tarnish its image.

Figure 28 : **What is important for the Survival of Social Work in South Africa**
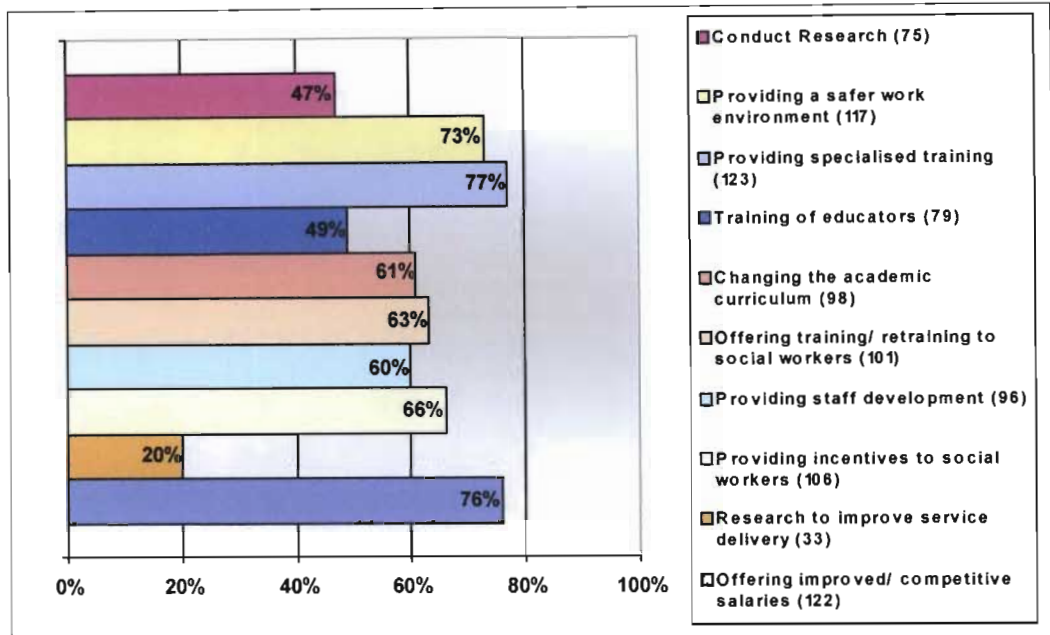
Both sample groups were asked to identify key areas that needed to be addressed for the survival of social work in South Africa. The responses from both sample groups were extensive. However the most salient/key areas identified were for the provision of a safer work environment (73%), providing specialised training (77%); and offering improved and more competitive salaries and conditions of service (76%).

Infrastructural changes that needed to occur were curriculum changes (61%); offering training or retraining to social workers (63%), providing improved staff development (60%) and providing incentives (66%).

The themes of concern for safety, professional development and improved salaries and service conditions, recur throughout this study.

Respondents indicated that they were burnt out much of the time and did not believe that supervision or staff development fulfilled its care-taking function. Naidoo & Kasiram (2002) cited Miller (1999) who has argued for social workers' need to receive support through supervision to cater for the emotional burden of caring and to demonstrate recognition and value for their work.

The study clearly indicated that social workers were not happy with their salaries and conditions of service, suggesting that the SACSSP was not addressing these concerns adequately. They indicated that no monetary allowance was made for stressful work conditions (Naidoo & Kasiram, 2002). Gray (1997), too, sees declining subsidies to welfare organisations, shrinking human resource capacity without a corresponding reduction in service demand as being disempowering and frustrating to social workers. Macro political and economic changes, racial equity targets in the workplace, retrenchment and inefficiencies have contributed to the exodus of workers from the profession, necessitating honest stocktaking and action (Kasiram, 1999:345).

Qualitative responses on the survival of social work in South Africa from both sample groups that have not been discussed previously were:

- Social workers to be proactive.
- Unity of social workers.
- Improved professional recognition.
- A strong professional association that addresses problems provincially.
- More social auxiliary workers to be trained.
- Forums to be developed to address the needs of social workers.
- Introduction of incentives for creativity/initiative in work.

It is clear that new demands are presenting themselves to social workers, who may not have had the training to respond to these demands. Social workers are requesting curriculum changes, conferences/workshops and accredited specialisation to empower themselves.

The study's findings and recommendations shared some commonalities with Kasiram's (2000) study. Kasiram et al (2002) found that students recommended curriculum change to address a perceived gap between theory and actual practice. It may be concluded that social work education has at least in part effectively equipped respondents for the kind of social work activities they are presently doing, but not necessarily for developmental social work, and for dealing with trauma and poverty.

Respondents also recommended that a strong professional association be formed to address salaries, service conditions, continuing education, research and social work education. Mazibuko (1998:33) made similar observations, suggesting the need to establish a national formation for social workers as a fundamental challenge to the profession. Such a body could assist social workers with their core frustrations and difficulties and in this way also address the exodus of social workers.

In relation to frustrations with their workload, respondents suggested that some of the work could be satisfactorily handled by social auxiliary workers. They felt that there was inadequate appreciation of the role that such staff could play in reducing burnout. This would require proper training and quality control of social auxiliary workers.

6.12.2 Tertiary Institutions

Recommendations on how tertiary institutions could contribute to the survival of the profession were as follows:

Table 14 : Recommendations on how Tertiary Institutions could contribute to the Survival of the Profession

Type of Offering	Sample Group - Leaving		Sample Group Remaining	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Curriculum Change	62	78%	60	75%
Non-Degree Courses	45	56%	55	69%
Modular Courses	56	70%	60	75%
Certificate Courses	65	81%	50	63%
Winter School Programmes	54	68%	52	65%

The absence of any mention of a post-graduate degree is noteworthy. Kasiram, too, (2000) found that social workers were more willing to consider short courses than complete a full post-graduate degree in continuing education.

Respondents also indicated the need for curriculum change and development to ensure relevancy of training. Ramphal (1994) and Van Rooyen (1996) made a similar plea.

Social workers today are still requesting curricula change, even though 5 years ago, Van Rooyen (1996) and Ramphal and Moonilall (1993) made

similar appeals. Changes therefore appear to not be rapid enough to meet the needs of social workers. Mamphiswana & Noyoo (2000) question the number of universities that are prepared to shed their old curricula and move at the pace of the government's proposal towards a developmental emphasis. Mamphiswana & Noyoo (2000:28) argue that in order for educators to become relevant in the new socio-economic and political environment, they have first and foremost to unlearn past teaching methods and be conversant with developmental trends. In light of this Letsebe and Grobbelaar (1996) claim the need for macro-practice training, working with diversity and training for practice according to the developmental approach.

Research and training of educators were other significant recommendations. Training institutions are indeed aware of the need to update their curriculum to keep abreast of an ever-changing context. According to Naidoo & Kasiram (2002), addressing relevancy has been the subject of many conferences of late, with the Joint Universities Committee including the topic, "Repositioning Social Work within a Changing Environment", at its 2002 National Conference.

According to Naidoo & Kasiram (2002), having competent educators has also featured among the many concerns needing to be addressed through the HEQC (www.che.org.za). Research too, requires attention, as social workers opt to *be* researched rather than to undertake research themselves. Tertiary institutions could assist with re-training social workers, while simultaneously adjusting their curricula to de-mystify research for students (Naidoo & Kasiram, 2002).

6.12.3   Policy Makers

Suggestions to the Ministry of Welfare in addressing the exodus of social workers from South Africa were:

Table 15 : **Recommendations on how Policy Makers could contribute to the Survival of the Profession**

Suggestions	Sample Group Leaving		Sample Group Remaining	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Improved Service Conditions	80	100%	80	100%
Staff Training	75	94%	78	98%
Incentives	71	89%	76	95%
Staff Development	70	88%	78	98%

These high response rates indicate a burning desire to see changes. Respondents recommended that incentives such as merit bonuses or loyalty bonuses be introduced in their conditions of service, for creativity in their work, loyalty to the agency and initiative. The inclusion of work/merit increases, transport allowance, flexitime and overtime were rated highly. This surely indicates that social workers feel restricted in having to complete their tasks within their working hours.

From the fact that they have requested compensation for such work, it can be deduced that social workers are willing to work overtime /flexitime. Presently, they are not being compensated, and this appears to be contributing to job dissatisfaction and burnout.

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As part of infrastructural support, 88% of the respondents requested staff development. Staff development was recommended to help social workers learn new skills, refine old techniques, and develop deeper theoretical insight as mentioned earlier. Interestingly, employee assistance programmes (EAP) were also favourably rated (87%) as being a necessity. Respondents suggested that employee assistance programmes be offered in respect of marital problems, financial problems, poor work performance, high stress levels and work-related problems that affect productivity. The majority of the respondents identified employee assistance as a means of helping resolve their own personal and work related problems. Ross (1997), too, found that stress and burnout seldom, if ever, affect the social worker only in the work situation. Family and work are interdependent, and stress spills over from the work setting to the worker's home life and from family life to the work milieu. Therefore, infrastructural support, such as employee assistance programmes to cater for the well-being of the social worker, is a clear necessity.

The responsibility for improved service conditions, re-training and salary increases were viewed as lying with policy-makers/politicians responsible for dealing with welfare, but what pressure is the profession bringing to bear on these powers to fulfil these responsibilities? This would surely be more effectively achieved if social workers were proactive and more involved in policy-making. In this vein, respondents indicated that the SACSSP could play a more active role in unifying social workers to stand strongly together in areas of commonly-shared problems (Naidoo & Kasiram, 2002).

CHAPTER 7

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION
PHASE TWO

7.1   Introduction

In this chapter, phase two of the study is analyzed. This phase explored the needs, problems and benefits experienced by social workers working in the UK. Also explored was what the profession in South Africa was lacking, along with possible reasons for the exodus of these social workers to the UK. Because qualitative data was required, focus groups were chosen as the preferred method to explore the frustrations, problems and needs of the social workers.

Neuman (2000:420) points out that themes and concepts, rather than variables, serve as the analytical tools for qualitative studies. In this study, themes served as a map for the path that was followed by the researcher when dealing with specific issues considered relevant to the field of study, namely to elicit the views and feelings of respondents' work experience in South Africa and in the UK. The themes covered the topics spelled out in the objectives of the study.

In December 2001, three separate focus groups interviews were conducted with South African social workers in Wandsworth, London. Each focus group comprised ten members, thus totally 30 respondents in this sample category. The following themes, which specifically dealt with respondents' perceptions and views, were discussed:

a)   What made social work in South Africa problematic for you?

b)   Benefits of working in the UK

c)   Negative experiences while working in the UK

d)   Relevance of South African education and training

e)   Recommendations for the survival of social work in South Africa

The researcher faced a challenge in data reduction. The amount of data collected in the focus groups was considerable. According to Krueger (1994:152), the "analysis process in focus groups is like detective work". One looks for clues, but in this case the clues are trends that reappear among the various focus groups. The researcher's task was to prepare a statement about what was found, a statement that emerges from and is supported by available evidence. In preparing the statement, the researcher sought primarily to identify evidence common to several participants. However, some attention was also afforded to determine the range and diversity of experiences or perceptions of the social workers. The researcher identified those opinions, ideas or feelings that were repeated, even though, sometimes these were expressed in differing words and styles.

In accord with the qualitative nature of this study, responses are sometimes recorded in respondent's own words to allow for a clear understanding of respondent's experiences.

7.2   Sample Characteristics

7.2.1   Gender

The focus group discussions took place with both male and female respondents.

Figure 29 : Gender Representation – South African Social Workers Residing in the UK
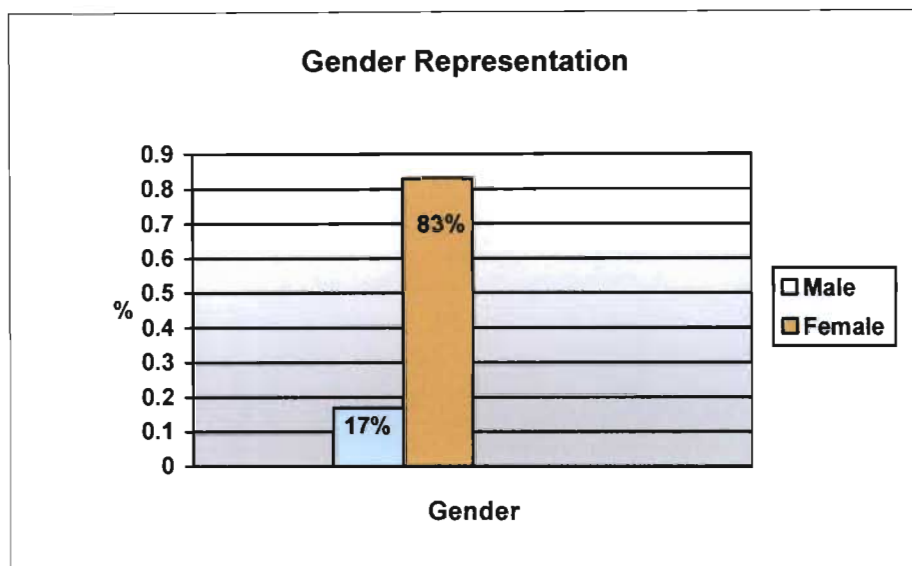
Females comprised 83% (N=25), this being the majority of the sample, while 17% (N=5) were male respondents. As previously observed, in Phase one of this study female social workers predominated within the social welfare setting both in South Africa and among social workers who relocated to the UK.

7.2.2   Marital Status

Figure 30 : Marital Status of Respondents in the UK
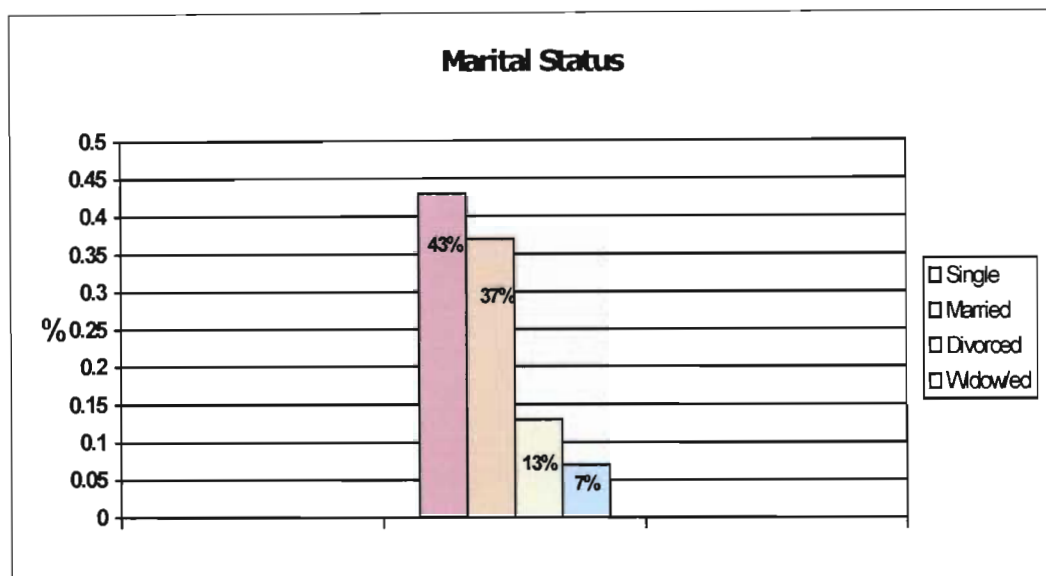
Figure 30 depicts the marital status of the respondents. In this phase, the majority of the respondents (43%) were single, while 37% of the respondents were married. This does not appear to be a significant difference. However, relocation to the UK would seem to have been a more viable option for social workers who are single. The majority of single status social workers seeking work in the UK are probably young newly- qualified graduates who have been unsuccessful in finding permanent social work employment in South Africa. Also, relocation was viable for this majority since they would be considered "commitment free" or their attachments would be likely to be fewer. Other possible reasons for this category seeking employment in the UK could have been to increase their limited work experience, earn pounds (financial rewards) or

even to have the opportunity to travel, with the intention, however of returning to reside in South Africa.

Depending on their ages, these categories of social workers invariably qualify more easily to enter the UK on a short term visa than do those in the married category. However, one must not overlook the substantial percentage (37%) of married social workers who have sought work in the UK. These social workers could possibly have relocated to have a lucrative career overseas (earning in pounds) with the purpose of securing the future for their families. Safety and security was probably also seen as being more assuring overseas. This sector of social workers might have applied for a longer term visa than the single sector. Often the long term visa (five -year work permit visa) allows for dependants (spouses and children) to be included in the permits, unlike the short term two -year working holiday visa. This information is significant in exploring respondents' motivation in seeking employment in the UK.

7.2.3   **Number of Dependants**

Figure 31 : Number of Dependants
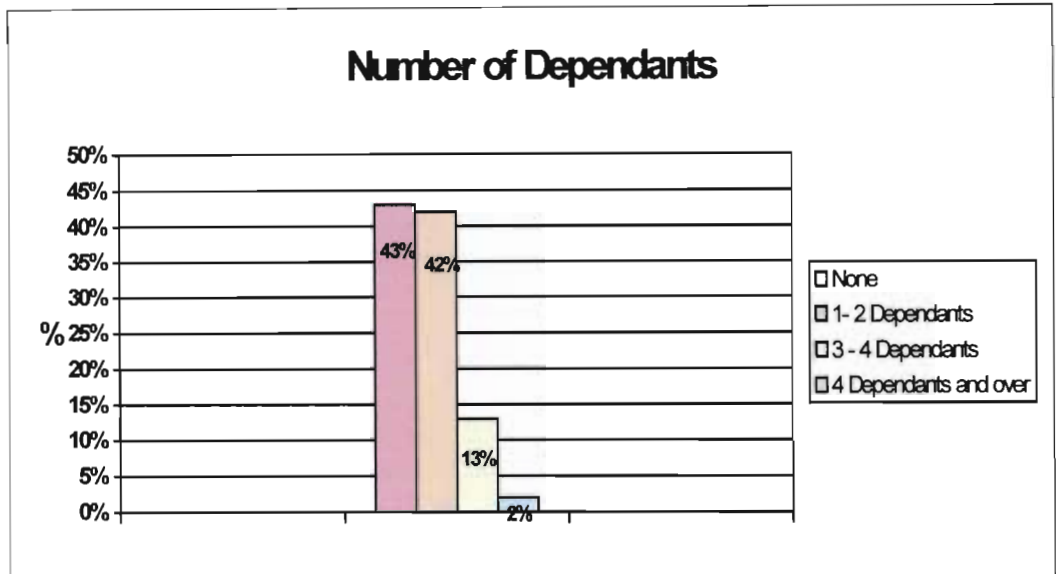
The study indicated that 43% of the respondents in this phase had no dependants, while 42% had between one and two dependants. The percentage difference was small. This may indicate that many social workers who have relocated have dependants that they have taken with them to the UK. The motivation/decision to relocate has already been discussed in the previous section.

7.2.4   Type of Visa

Figure 32: Type of Visa Obtained
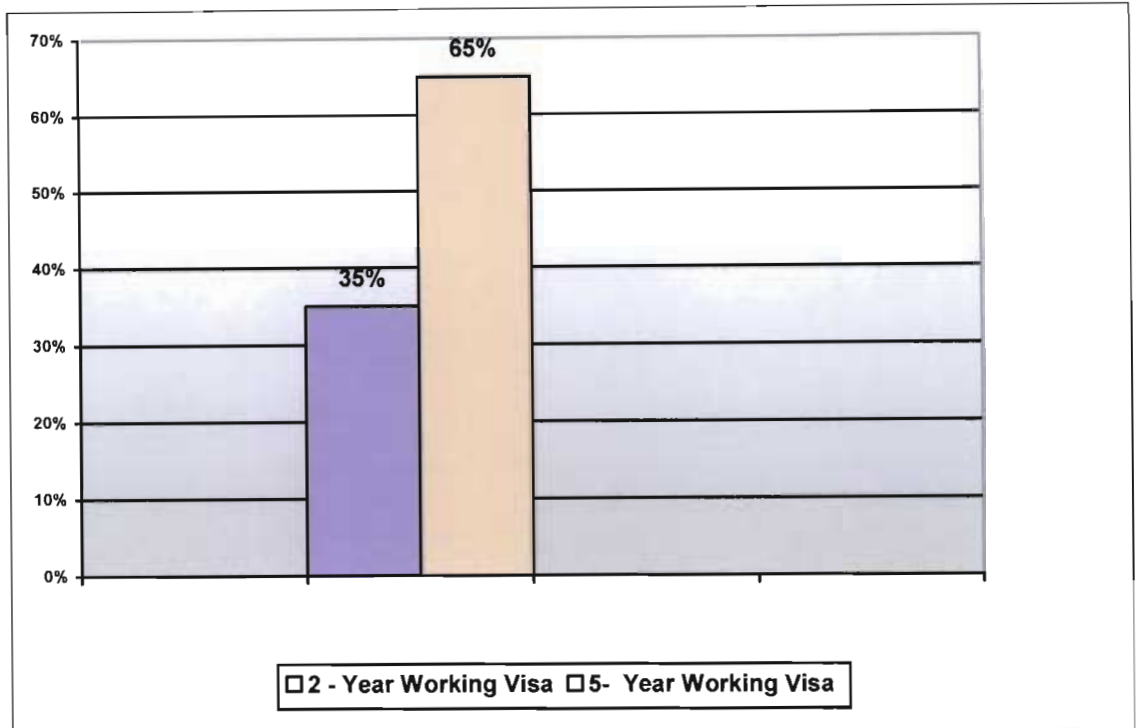
The majority of the respondents were awarded long-term visas. It was found that 65% of the respondents relocated to the UK on a five-year working permit, while only 35% were on a two- year holiday visa. That long-term visas were a preferred option for social workers could mean that they might be considering permanent residence in the UK; they appear not to be seeking short-term work experience; and might have relocated with their families. Possibly, the stark realities of poverty, violence and crime in South Africa; high unmanageable workloads; limited upward mobility, and serious frustrations with the profession have led social workers to opt for a longer term visa in order to escape these realities. It is clear that those social workers opting for long work visas

take with them to the UK a wealth of experience and knowledge which is desperately needed in South Africa. White (2001) agreed, saying that South African social workers are welcome in the UK on long placements because they bring a whole fresh perspective that adds to the reservoir of knowledge and experience of social work in the UK.

7.2.5   Years of Experience

Figure 33: Years of Experience as a Social Worker
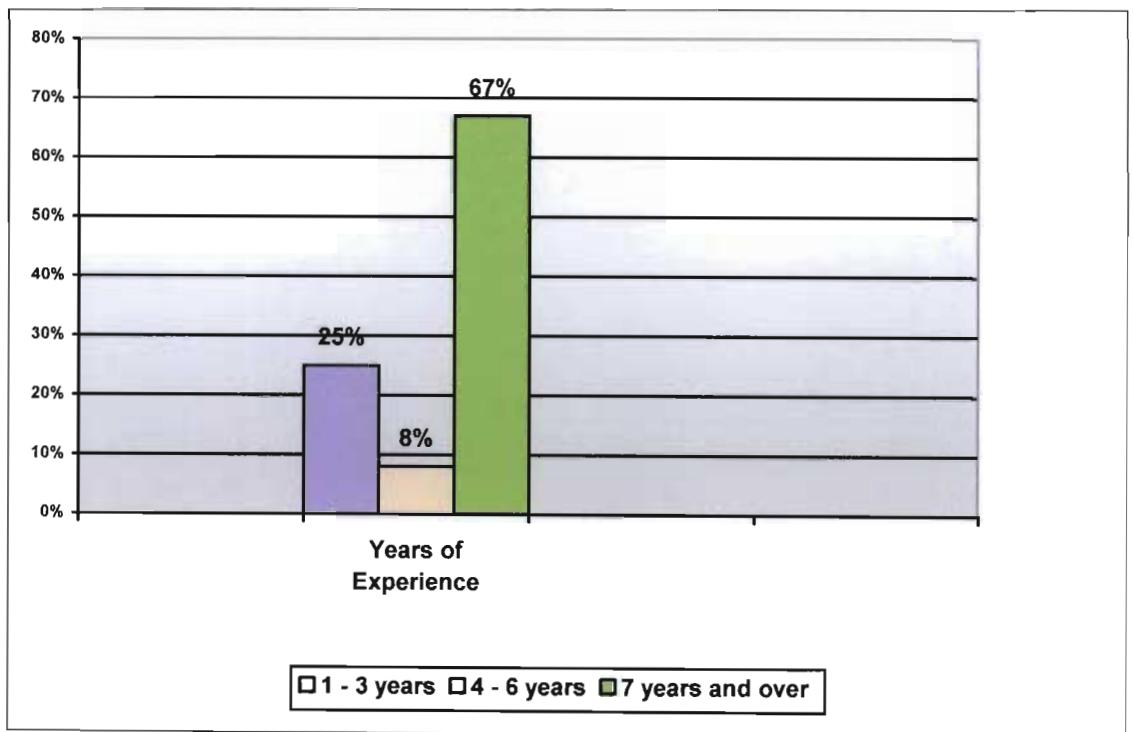
The years of experience of the respondents in this phase is illustrated in Figure 33. The majority of the respondents had more than seven years experience

(N=20 or 67%). Similarly, as revealed also in phase 1 of this study, social workers with a considerable number of years of experience are considering leaving as much as they have decided on making social work in South Africa their "home". As previously observed, it is clear that a wealth of experience has been and will continue to be lost to the UK. Social workers with more experience appear to be sought out by local authorities in the UK. Many experienced social workers are frustrated with stagnation in their positions in South Africa, and limited upward mobility, and have thus decided to leave the country as found by (Gathiram,2000).

7.3 Factors making Social Work in South Africa Problematic

In each group session, respondents cited a number of factors that made social work in South Africa problematic. The following four salient factors were mentioned most often:

- ➢ High workload
- ➢ Poor funding and Limited Resources for social work service
- ➢ The Socio Economic Condition – Poverty, Unemployment and Related Social Problems
- ➢ Service conditions, salaries of social workers
- ➢ Lack of client and agency co-operation
- ➢ Violence/having to enter crime ridden areas to provide services

7.3.1   Hiqh Workload

Social workers in this phase described the most frustrating problem in South Africa to be high caseloads, estimated at over 100 per social worker. One social worker reported: "Often I dealt with 80 family cases at any one time, of which approximately 70% involved statutory work. This was totally draining and taxing."

Other vociferous responses centred around too many demands and too little time available. Respondents described themselves as being inundated with cases, which resulted in poor quality work. They described themselves as "crisis workers" rather than professional social workers. It was practically impossible to keep track of the progress of their individual cases. Cases were given extra attention only when crises occurred in the family, or a statutory report was to be done, and often by that time it was too late for them to intervene meaningfully. Had the problems been identified earlier, they might have been able to resolve them, all this pointing to frustration in offering good quality services.

Many reported that "it was impossible to plan therapeutic goals or structured long-term intervention, because there was practically no time available". In this study, it is clearly indicated that therapeutic counselling and supportive services were being neglected.

Again owing to high caseloads, recording was reportedly neglected. Brief comments in case files had to suffice. All theoretical planning or intervention that had been emphasised in their studies was absent. Of serious concern was the finding that work pressures contributed to superficial investigations, where reliance was on hearsay witnesses rather than on verified information for reports.

The Lombard (2000: 323) study revealed similar predicaments among social workers in South Africa. Lombard (2000) pointed out high workloads and accompanying high levels of stress, leading to crisis work and neglect of administrative work and record keeping. It was clearly evident in this phase as well as in the previous phase of the study, that high workloads have had a negative impact on service delivery. The serious consequences of providing poor quality work and inadequate or non-existent recording are liability areas for which social workers can be found guilty of malpractice or unprofessional conduct. Lombard (2000) also added that professional misconduct/malpractice among social workers was increasing. Clearly, the quality of service in social work has been compromised.

These findings also correlate with those of Collings and Murray (1996), where it was reported that the pressure involved in planning and reaching work targets and high workloads was significantly linked to stress among social workers. They specifically pointed out that too much administrative and paper work and high caseloads were sources of stress.

Ross and Fridjhon (1995) added that when there are staff shortages, the problem of high caseloads becomes exacerbated. Many in this study reported that high staff turnover and staff shortages have had an impact on the workload of existing social workers.

It was also indicated that excessive work pressure and increased workloads were precipitated by socio-economic factors within the country and financial constraints in agencies. These views are echoed by Van Biljon (1994:191), who maintained that continued inflation, high levels of unemployment, and increasing financial pressures – particularly on poor families - have increased demands for social work services.

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One respondent sarcastically described her "normal day" at the Child Welfare Agency in South Africa: "My day often commenced with crises, either waiting for me in the reception area or related to statutory report deadlines. I was required to do intake, since there were staff shortages; the intake social worker had resigned and at the same time, in between these intake cases, I was to see about 10 people from my actual caseload by the afternoon. And this despite the fact that the afternoon was my "home visits" time of day. I would return to the office totally exhausted and at this stage would attempt to record all contacts I had had from the morning. Practically, I found this task impossible, because the day was almost over, and furthermore I was requested to do agency stats, which were impossible to update in the course of the day. There was too much pressure, paper work and frustration with handling high caseloads and no support from senior staff. The day usually ended with my transferring my recording duty to the next day, which in turn meant another chaotic day". Many reflected with amazement: "how on earth we managed!"

Other comments received were of interference and unreasonable demands by senior staff and Boards of Management. Support and co-operation from management was always lacking.

Social workers in the field are lacking the necessary infrastructural support. The scene in the profession looks bleak where social workers are "not acknowledged", "not valued", and "not given enough support by their employers" (Otte, 2003). At one agency, the social worker reported that there were many disciplinary hearings. Undue emphasis on administrative work took up valuable time. Otte (2003) also maintained that it was sometimes impossible and at most times difficult to fulfil bureaucratic requirements with 20% of working time being "abused" in ensuring that stats were up to date!

The truth is that many social workers find an eight hour working day too limited to manage their workloads. It is evident that quality of service is being severely compromised under these circumstances, and it can be deduced that excessively high caseloads has far reaching consequences. Social workers working in the UK have a maximum of 20 cases, which is considered extremely high and emotionally draining for the social worker (Pritchard, 2000). The groups described the standard of work provided in the UK as being of high quality, involved in-depth assessment and was definitely not crisis oriented.

One social worker said she was surprised that when she arrived in UK, "my team manager expressed concern that my caseload was to be high, and then I realised that my workload comprised only nine families!" The respondent reported that she was amazed at the amount of planning and reconstructive work that was done in the cases; as well as the support received by supervisors and management, which she described as "overwhelming". She reported that one can "only dream of doing therapeutic work or even receiving support from senior staff in South Africa, owing to the high caseloads".

The high caseload, led to demotivation, frustration, lack of interest in achievement, poor or faulty recording, and general apathy. It can be seen that, given these high caseloads, it is well nigh impossible to expect anything different. Added to this, there is pressure on social workers to do group work, and community work and to engage in developmental work. They claimed that, although the social workers might possess skills and knowledge in the developmental paradigm, they were unable to implement any such skills successfully, because of high caseloads. Social workers claimed that coping with a high caseload and, at the same time, being expected to engage in all methods of social work caused much discontent. They also complained that there was no opportunity for specialisation, since staff shortages caused existing workers to handle all

services. It would appear that the expectation that social workers should work in an integrated manner needs to be reconsidered. The integrated approach arose from attempts to overcome the specialised methods approach to social work and encourages social workers to focus on the total problem situation. Gray and Bernstein (1994) suggest that integrated practice is a misnomer because, in practice, social workers have not found a way to work at an individual, group and community level all at the same time. Similarly, Dominelli (1996:196) is of the opinion that "responding to individual needs while addressing the structural issues present in any one situation may call for greater specialisation within the team". It is the team, rather than the individual, that thus works in an integrated manner. In the absence of teamwork because of staff shortages, the idea of integrated practice is not achievable.

Lastly, they reported that there was always a feeling of lack of accomplishment and no pride in their work in South Africa. A repetitive response was: "You wish you could do more...but you can't". It was evident in this phase that the problem of high workload was clearly not present in the UK setting. It can be deduced that social workers are able to perform more effectively when they are provided support and backup from senior staff, and are handling manageable workloads. UK social workers enjoyed working as "professional social workers" instead of "crisis workers". High workloads in South Africa clearly contribute to decisions to leave South Africa and sadly, the sample revealed that this may well be on long term basis.

7.3.2   **Poor Funding and Limited Resources**

Another major source of frustration experienced by social workers in South Africa, in this phase was the lack of resources, or "dilapidated" resources while attempting to provide effective service delivery. Social workers claimed that they often felt "crippled" within their organisations in relation to funding. Funding for community and group work programmes was often difficult to access. Some social workers in the focus group expressed their disgust and anger, claiming "they wanted us to do developmental work, but we always had difficulty in accessing funds to implement projects". Social workers reported that this made them frustrated and apathetic. All social workers cited insufficient funds as the main obstacle to meeting the policy demands of the White Paper for Social Welfare. There was also criticism regarding poor government funding for social work services. Social workers claimed that they were expected to extend services with no increase in funding.

Further, social workers claimed that the vastness of areas that were to be covered, together with the reduction of subsidies, placed an unrealistic demand on the agencies and often compromised their services. One social worker was of the opinion that problems in South African communities are too great to be solved. "Lack of community support, unco-operative clients who are resistant to change, and limited funds are the obstacles". These cumulatively presented as insurmountable!

In general, social workers also felt that resources such as cell phones for social workers while on home visits, and well-serviced, reliable cars were essential, but often organisations were not in a position to provide these resources. Furthermore, the availability of physical, financial and human resources had an urban bias. According to Neugoboren (1991:293), technology promotes system co-ordination for inter-agency work, and

deprived agencies are therefore further disadvantaged because of the lack of technology. Social workers reported that there was a trend towards smaller agencies having less equipment, owing to limited funding. The agencies that originated in African communities were described as being less adequate in terms of office space and general facilities, than other communities. The condition of offices had an impact on the morale of social workers as well as on the quality of services rendered. Certain agencies had limited access to computers, and where these were available, they were for administrative use only and not for professional social work use. In this computer age, of electronic communication, the absence of technology only further proves how far away we are from efficiency, and thereby quality in services.

Developmental work requires professionals to go out to the people, and reliable transport is consequently a crucial ingredient in the implementation of social policies (Kaseka, et al. 1998:28). The lack of adequate transport was cited by social workers as a major problem. Social workers reported that vehicles for home visits were either limited or, if available, were in a dilapidated condition. Social workers were expected to drive these unreliable cars to communities, creating further stress for them. The limited number of reliable vehicles also restricted the number of home-visits that could be undertaken. It was reported that social workers often avoided going out on field visits for fear of being stuck with the agency vehicle and preferred to request clients to visit the office. Many social workers claimed that public transport or personal transport was sometimes used to undertake visits in the communities. They reported that agencies in deprived areas appeared to have even fewer roadworthy cars. Often, certain functions were neglected, as social workers were not able to access public transport and were afraid to use the agency's unreliable vehicles. Safety and security was constantly threatened. The problem of safety and security was repeatedly cited as a serious frustration.

One social worker claimed that it was a policy in the agency in which she previously worked that staff members needed to be in possession of a driver's licence for two years in order to qualify to drive the agency vehicles. The social worker, who was a newly qualified graduate, did not meet this requirement and was therefore, compelled to use public transport, which she was not comfortable using. Being mandated to continue to offer quality services using public transport, takes away from workers sense of "control" which also serves as a stressor.

The following are examples of verbatim responses that vividly reflect respondents' concerns and frustrations regarding lack of funding/ resources in South Africa:

> "Lack of funds often hampers the progress of the projects being implemented."
> "Although amalgamation had occurred in 1994, there is still unequal distribution of resources in urban and rural areas."
> "There is difficulty in fundraising and this affects the stability of our social work services."
> "Funds are lost because the State stipulates the way they have to be used, and the agency does not have the manpower or skills to use the funds in a prescribed way."

All the above factors were perceived as frustrating and restricting. It would appear that insufficient funds/resources are the main obstacles in meeting the policy demands of the White Paper for Social Welfare. Decrease in availability of resources, identified by the social workers in the focus group was also a recurrent theme in the study by Louw (1994) and Ross (1996) and were also revealed in phase one of this study.

The majority of respondents in phase two of the study reported that they were not fully equipped and competent to deal with these organisational

and community constraints and often tended to react to them in a non-adaptive manner. Many reflected that they experienced burnout and adopted conflict avoidance behaviour, which ultimately resulted in them leaving South Africa.

7.3.3 **The Socio Economic Condition**

The process of entering communities is vital to the social worker's acceptance by the community. Social workers reported that sometimes it was important to adhere to cultural protocol when entering certain communities. They reported that in South Africa they experienced resistance in entering certain areas and could sometimes enter only with police escort because of the areas being "rough". Sometimes entry into communities with police was perceived as forceful entry, resulting in services being resisted.

Social workers in the focus groups identified concerns that hampered their work at home. They were related to unemployment and retrenchment both in clients and themselves.

The following responses qualitatively illustrate some of these concerns:

- ➢ "It was devastating to see others known to us being retrenched"
- ➢ "There was always the threat of suffering retrenchments ourselves."
- ➢ "Unemployment: our clients struggle terribly, and this in turn gets to me."
- ➢ "Sometimes I feel immobilised with fear – poverty, intensity of people's problems, got more severe, and this required more intervention and help."

> "The economy of the country was slowly dwindling, and clients who visited my office were often victims of such circumstances. Much of my work stress was attributable to such factors."

> "Racial intolerance and language barriers also hinder service delivery."

> "Illiteracy and apathy within the community are seen as problems."

Social workers also reported that unemployment was often accompanied by related social problems such as alcoholism, poverty, and physical, mental and emotional abuse. Respondents complained of the difficulties they experienced in working with such clients, where basic needs were lacking. They reported that poverty was a major stressor for clients and colleagues – fears of unemployment, joblessness and rising costs of living, all contributed to people being insecure, anxious and generally pre-occupied with survival.

Most reported that owing to lack of employment, most community members were starving, and therefore often flocked to the offices of social workers. In most cases, social workers were unable to help, owing to lack of resources. It is clear that the socio–economic factors of the country played a role in contributing to the stresses and frustrations experienced by South African social workers who have relocated to the UK. In a study carried out by Ross and Fridjohn (1995:275), it was found that 84, 6% of the respondents agreed that socio-economic and politico-cultural factors played a decisive role in their stress. Thus, it would appear that socio-economic and politico-cultural change necessitates a developmental approach, which in itself was found to be absent or limited in practice. All of this further exacerbates the stress and low morale of workers.

The social workers in this phase also provided input on their perception of the obstacles in meeting agency objectives and utilizing a developmental paradigm (White Paper for Social Welfare) in South Africa. Many of the

responses obtained have already been covered previously, but are summarised to present a complete picture. They reported that they were expected to extend services to disadvantaged areas without any increase in resources; the vastness of areas to be covered, despite reduction of staff and subsidies placed unrealistic demands on the social workers and this often compromised service delivery. Further, inadequate delivery of services occurred due to insufficient transport for both clients and social workers, and lastly start –up funds to finance projects in communities were lacking.

Once again limited finance was the most important factor hindering service delivery, making it difficult to provide services to communities that are poverty-stricken. Also the current economic recession has made fundraising difficult. Limited manpower also hindered the extension of services to communities. Many social workers were of the opinion that problems in communities were too great to be solved. Two social workers claimed that they had been hijacked. In order to avoid similar situations, some social workers reported that they opted to use public transport. Clearly, this study reveals that respondents in this phase, similar to those in phase one, had serious concerns for their safety and security, as also outlined in the study by Gathiram (2000).

7.3.4   Service Conditions/ Salaries

As expected, 100% of the respondents reported their dissatisfaction with service conditions especially with salaries. They opted to work in the UK because earning in pounds, good service conditions and higher salaries were assured. They felt that discrepancies in the salaries of governmental and non-governmental organisations were frustrating as identified by Gray and Van Rooyen (2000). It is clear that there needs to be narrowing of

this gap. However, the question remains as to when this will be addressed, since it has been identified as a problem for many years with no clear action being taken to remedy the problem.

Social work salaries have also been affected by lack of government funding to subsidise social work posts. A number of social workers complained that there was always a feeling among social workers that when a better opportunity presented itself they should take advantage of this. This was the case with relocation to the UK, since the attraction of a lucrative career was regarded as an opportunity not to be missed.

Social workers reported that "often we felt inferior to other qualified persons, since our salaries were considerably lower". Many reported that other professionals with four-year qualifications were earning far more than they were. "How can one be motivated to produce one's best when one is not rewarded appropriately?" asked one social worker. She admitted that her interest in and service to clients were lower than her potential. Similar frustrations and concerns were identified by the social workers in Phase One of the study. The Gray and Van Rooyen (2000) study also reported that the current concerns of social workers were mainly their low status and poor salaries, relative to other professionals. Most social workers are frustrated and demotivated in their work, since they appear to be the lowest paid professionals in the country.

A respondent in the Gray and Van Rooyen (2000:189) study claimed: "I am leaving the profession as soon as I am finished with my studies, and most social workers are doing likewise." This might have been seen as a threat two years ago, but has now become a reality, because –as revealed in this study- many social workers have already left the profession owing to frustration and dissatisfaction with the salaries and service conditions of social workers.

Job satisfaction and congenial working conditions can, to some extent, partially make up for poor salaries, but when these factors are missing, low salaries becomes a major issue. The prospect of earning higher salaries overseas has therefore prompted these social workers and many more to leave South Africa, resulting in a high staff turnover at social work agencies in South Africa.

7.4   Relevance of University Training

Respondents in the focus group were asked specific questions in relation to the relevance of their South African university training. They were asked to comment on two areas; namely, relevance of university training for the UK context and for the South African context.

7.4.1   For the UK Context

Respondents were very positive in their responses concerning their social work training in South Africa, commenting that their South African training was comprehensive (four-year degree) in comparison to the academic training offered in the UK (2,5- year diploma). South African training was also regarded by the respondents as being "more academic" while their interaction with UK social workers revealed that UK training was found to be more "practice-orientated". Many respondents agreed that their education and training, combined with their South African experience had given them a solid base with respect to social work skills. When they joined the UK system, it was a question of using their basic skills to understand new systems, policies, procedures etc.

One respondent felt that an advantage South African social workers had was a "solid theoretical" knowledge base that sharpened their assessment skills and understanding of clients which was missing with the UK- trained social workers. Social workers in the focus groups reported that the image of the social work profession in the UK is negative, which they blamed on poor training. They claimed that "social work was often not seen as a profession, but rather as a hobby or a job before a person moves on to another more acceptable position." It would seem that UK training was criticised for not providing a solid theoretical foundation, and for not being recognised as a profession, while South African training was comprehensive, professionally geared and appropriate for use in the UK context. Another positive identified by respondents was that their South African training equipped them to work in a multi-cultural environment. It was found that the South African training enhanced and developed their understanding about diversity, which helped social workers adjust to working in UK communities.

Other verbatim responses received in this regard included:

> "South African training was most appropriate in working in the UK in that it focused on the Western or first world model."
> "South African training provided extensive training in casework and individual work, appropriate to the UK system."
> "My practical training, especially the quality of report writing, was most beneficial."
> South African training equipped us in our organisational skill and record- keeping."
> My training was excellent, but I still found difficulty grasping the UK system."
> "The curriculum was very generic"

From these verbatim responses, it seems clear that South African training has been most appropriate in equipping the social workers to work in the UK. From the responses in this study, it can be concluded that the South African university curriculum was viewed as Western- based, and this supported the criticism of Mazibuko et al (1992) that social work education was essentially concerned with the preparation of highly-skilled social workers to deal with First World problems. It would seem this attention to Western- based models of social work has been criticised by many researchers, and questions have been asked about curriculum relevance. This study also provided support for the latter criticism.

7.4.2   For the South African Context

Several of the respondents were very scathing in their comments about their university training being applicable to the South African context. One social worker's response was "Heavens, no!" Respondents reported that new demands in South Africa were presenting themselves and their training did not enable them to respond to these demands. Further, social workers claimed that they were confronted with providing an optimal service to communities where severe social problems such as poverty, crime, violence and HIV/AIDS are rife. This was extremely difficult, especially when they were not equipped to deal with these problems. They claimed that the curriculum relating to poverty, unemployment, violence, crime etc was limited. Many in the study therefore felt that they had not been adequately prepared to meet the demands of the South African context. Studies in support of this finding were by Ramphal and Moonilall (1993) where it was found that social workers in the Durban region felt insecure about their ability to deal with the kinds of problems that they were facing in the field. The McKendrick (1994) study also reported that new graduates were unprepared for the realities of practice. Similarly,

social workers in Van Schalkwyk's (1997) study felt that they lacked the skills to address the problems they were facing. As previously discussed, it has become evident that today's social workers face many challenges such as poverty, poverty-related illnesses, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, homelessness, crime and violence. According to Mamphiswana and Noyoo (2000), the challenges facing the country cross-sectorally and institutionally cannot be treated in an isolated manner, but have to be synchronised with the challenges currently facing the profession of social work as well.

One respondent sarcastically commented that for her "experience has been the best teacher". She felt that her university training had not equipped her appropriately, reporting that "maybe groupwork helped a bit, but other than that nothing really prepared me for these problems". Many respondents complained that university practice placements were very urban- centred and they often received their training in "privileged organisations" where harsh South African realities were not experienced. Yet, these respondents felt that their training equipped them for working multi-culturally. Perhaps it is the extent of curriculum devoted to development and diversity that needs to be explored or questioned.

Many claimed that they were not exposed in their field practical training to work in areas such as informal settlements and rural areas. This limited field practical training would appear to have had a negative effect on the social workers' adaptation when they qualified. They reported that their colleagues who were exposed to such field training – for instance, in informal settlements- were able to adjust and cope more effectively than those not exposed to such field practice. It appears, therefore, that while universities might have changed their curriculum to some extent, use of urban social welfare agencies in the practice placement, prevents students from being adequately prepared for harsh South African realities.

Social workers in the focus group also criticized the curriculum for its focus on clinical work, which they felt was not appropriate in South Africa. The clinical training definitely helped them in the UK context, but they saw limited room for utilization of this in South Africa.

It was also found that the majority of experienced social workers in the study were trained and graduated during the oppressive apartheid regime. They claimed that their euro-centric training had an impact on their adaptability to the new welfare dispensation. This study therefore also highlights the deficiencies of past social work training as being too Western and not preparing social workers for the new South African context. Criticism is also levelled against the present curriculum as not sufficiently addressing current problems faced in South African communities.

In contrast, however, there were a few social workers who felt that their university training was helpful in the South African context. Some social workers claimed that they were able to use the knowledge they had gained in creative ways to help them in practice.

Reflecting on changes that have taken place within the curriculum, newly-qualified social workers in the focus group were of the opinion that their training had to a certain extent been useful. The recent changes in curriculum, especially with exposure to developmental work, had been advantageous. Newly qualified respondents were found to be more supportive of their university training. It was clear that some universities had introduced developmental work more than others. This lack of uniformity of social work curricula was also identified by Mamphiswana and Noyoo (2000: 24) who suggested that the shortcomings of social work education were exacerbated by the reluctance of all universities to transform social work curricula.

Irrespective of the curriculum changes mentioned it would appear that social workers are still unprepared for the challenges facing them in the South African context. Curriculum changes to address the needs of the South African context suggest that curriculum development has not kept pace with broader changes. The White Paper for Welfare has also recognised that training does not equip graduates to respond to the social development needs of the country (Drower, 1999:237; Lombard, 1999:97). From the responses in this study, it would seem that, although curriculum development has occurred, there is still a gap between theory and actual practice.

Social work education has to respond to the needs of people. Whatever the dimensions of social work, it is evident that the new welfare policy and new socio-political dispensation creates an environment in which social workers must fight to survive. It would seem that curriculum planning is lacking. Joint input of social work practitioners and social work educators does not seem to be happening. It is most important that tertiary institutions do not fall into the trap of complying with Lombard's statement (2000:330) that "universities have started training social workers for Britain".

7.5 Benefits of Working in the UK

Respondents were asked to elaborate on the benefits of working in the UK. Responses were varied.

a) Abundance of Resources

All respondents agreed that, compared to the South African context, the UK has more resources, both financially and otherwise. They maintained

that the accessibility of resources had a positive effect on the social worker and client and that they suffered no stress in this regard. Also, as borne out in previous discussions in phase 1 and 2 of this study, social workers reported that the lack of resources can become a major source of frustration for social workers in their efforts to provide effective service delivery.

b) Teamwork

Many found that team involvement existed and was beneficial. They explained that social workers did not hold sole responsibility for cases. Many reported that it was helpful that social workers are required by legislation (Joint Working Together document) not only to work together, but to make joint decisions with other professions involved in the assessment of the family. All relevant professionals involved in the cases made joint decisions, thereby providing for a holistic, integrated approach. Although this might be identified as a benefit, it could be problematic, in that social workers might become dependent on the team.

Respondents maintained that this removes the stress associated with the job of the social worker and increases support in terms of direct work with the family. One respondent claimed that "co-ordination of services was excellent" in the UK. With reference to the South African context, even though the Financing Policy (1999:14) emphasises the importance of networking between agencies and institutions, social workers commented that team work or networking was often lacking. They claimed that since social workers in South Africa were held solely responsible for cases, this led to strain, pressure and frustration for the social worker. Otte (2003) noted that "frustration and stress was experienced since teamwork was 'non existent' and social workers are reallocated into different teams without prior consultation". Disregard for essential communication with

social workers in the South African context implies that the team approach is given little consideration.

Very different from the South African context, social workers in the groups reported that all social work managers in the UK were responsible for all statutory cases. Social workers were provided with extensive support and were assisted by a legal representative (lawyer) in compiling all reports and in presenting cases to court. They found that the added support received from the legal fraternity eased the stress of investigating and compiling reports independently. It can be deduced that the more support/back-up social workers received, the more effective they were in handling their workload. As mentioned previously, Ross & Fridjhon (1995:266) too found lack of recognition, acknowledgement and positive feedback from management to be primary stressors for social workers. This study emphasised once again that in South Africa support, supervision, guidance and back-up from agencies were needed.

c) Safer working environment

One respondent commented "we are now working in a First World setting, within which we feel safe to work." All respondents agreed that working in the UK brought them "peace of mind". Respondents claimed that there are various procedures, and policies that guide practice, and that these support and enable the social workers to practise social work safely. They found the idea implemented by Local Authorities in the UK to utilise interviewing rooms as excellent. Social workers did not interview in their offices, because they share communal offices. In order to protect the social workers, secured, well-monitored interviewing rooms were allocated. Panic buttons were available should the social worker at any time feel insecure. Having experienced the insecure and unsafe working environment in South Africa, social workers in the UK described their working environment as "heaven" in comparison with their past

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experience. Crime, violence and threat to security in South Africa challenge our professional commitments and affect decisions on remaining in the country or leaving for 'safer environments'.

d) Opportunities for upward mobility

Respondents all agreed that opportunities for upward mobility were always available in the UK workforce. Within a short space of time, many social workers reported being offered an opportunity to move up the ranks. Many reported that limited promotion opportunity in South Africa was a contributory factor for leaving South Africa (Naidoo and Kasiram, 2002). Opportunities for upward mobility fostered job satisfaction. Respondents maintained that they were dedicated, highly motivated to study further and were more goal directed in their work since being assured of opportunities for upward mobility. As revealed in phase 1 of this study, social workers have become demotivated and uninterested or have become apathetic because there was no provision for upward mobility. This has contributed to social workers' burnout. This was not found to be the case with the UK social work group. They were reported to be interested and motivated in their work, compared with when they were working in South Africa. Limited promotion opportunities can also have a negative effect on whether to undertake post-graduate studies, since social workers will not be motivated to pursue academic development when there are no promotion rewards attached. UK social workers were motivated to study further or develop professionally, especially when they were aware of the professional opportunities available to them.

It was also found that in the UK career growth was not restricted by race, age or experience of the social worker as in the South African context. Newly qualified respondents from the groups claimed that the UK offered stable, permanent employment for them even though they had no working experience. This had not been the case for them in South Africa,

since many respondents claimed they were unsuccessful in obtaining permanent stable employment, and therefore sought work in the UK. They were often refused positions owing to their lack of experience, their age or their race. In the UK, they said that they were gaining experience which they were not afforded back "home" – "I was not afforded this chance in South Africa even though I had post- graduate qualifications" reported one of the respondents. From this it can be deduced that policies such as the affirmative action policy in South Africa was also a contributory factor to social workers leaving the South African profession. Within the UK welfare sector, social workers claimed they were given recognition and were valued as meaningful role players in multidisciplinary teams.

e)   Training and Professional Development

All the respondents claimed that infrastructural support, *resources and training* provided for social workers in the UK, was excellent. It was reported that all UK employers for social care provided social workers with comprehensive and well-structured training and professional development which was encouraged, supported and paid for by employers. Social workers described training in the UK as ongoing. They reported that the conferences and training courses were specific and targeted to particular practice and service development needs. Each year a comprehensive training programme was drawn up to meet almost every need of a social worker from letter- writing and report-writing to computer skills, and even therapeutic techniques. The training also covered practice issues such as race equality and culture.

Many social workers maintained that training in respect of practice issues and computer skills was most often utilised when they first arrived to the UK. The latter training apparently helped social workers to adapt to the system of computer usage in the administrative and assessment areas of their work, since they had not been previously exposed to such

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opportunities. The social workers claimed that this opportunity for training also increased their knowledge and skills as practising social workers. It would seem that by offering social workers a comprehensive listing of training courses in advance, UK social welfare management is empowering social workers. It is clear that the UK encourages development of good social work practice, by promoting continuous professional development.

All training and professional development was accompanied by reading/literature and comprehensive manuals which they found to be beneficial. All respondents reported that the training was professionally conducted, and attendees were provided with accredited certificates of attendance. They regarded the certificates as a bonus which they proudly attached to curriculum vitae and which they were confident would stand them in good stead, in future job applications.

It was further revealed in the group discussions that South African social workers often attended more training courses than their UK colleagues, who seemed to perceive such training as unnecessary. They reported that they often advised their UK colleagues of their fortunate situation. They claimed that their reason for attendance was not always because they needed more information, but that they did not want to miss such opportunities, since in South Africa training courses were not provided for them under such "privileged" conditions. They complained that in South Africa, training was approved but was not provided free of charge. Many agencies did not have regular in-service training. This complaint also appeared in Phase one of the study, where the majority of social workers had only limited opportunities for attendance at workshops or training courses. Furthermore, staff development occurred infrequently or conducted unprofessionally and there were no incentives such as remuneration and upward mobility to encourage continuous professional development.

One respondent in the UK aptly reported that by being exposed to these opportunities, she has learnt that "there is a need to develop and that we need to keep abreast of new developments which can be usefully applied in practice". She also confessed that when she worked in South Africa, she was never motivated to attend any courses or modules to improve herself, but would constantly complain about the work. The unfortunate result is that many social workers in South Africa were criticised for their lack of interest in continuous professional development.

Despite the barriers identified by social workers, we owe it to our clients to maintain our personal and professional development and in this way contribute to the development and improvement of social work practice. In South Africa, this is not happening.

Supervision was also discussed under this theme. Social workers had very strong views about the supervision they received. Supervision began on commencement of work in the UK, and intensive weekly supervision was provided. Respondents were sarcastic about the supervision received in South Africa, many commenting that it was poorly conducted and ineffectual. Many claimed that supervision in South Africa was a stressor on its own. The Simpson (2002) study also corroborated this finding.

For some social workers in this study, their anxiety and frustrations about their work in South Africa was related to not knowing how to adjust to a new socio-political environment. Many of the social workers in this study described how emotionally draining they had found their work in South Africa. Thus supportive supervision, would be crucial but was absent in the experience of these social workers. Otte (2003) described his frustrations in this regard stating that he felt "bullied and sometimes emotionally blackmailed". He did not feel acknowledged and felt that his employer did not care about his interests or potential. As one respondent in the study said: "Social work employees in South Africa sometimes have

their basic human rights violated". Another social worker reported that "we were expected to achieve miracles without support or recognition". Similar sentiment was voiced by Otte (2003).

On their description of supervision received in the UK, all reported that supervision was structured and efficient. In the UK regular supervision is provided by a "Senior Practitioner or Team Manager". Newly qualified social workers receive two hours of weekly supervision for a period of six months; thereafter, supervision is offered fortnightly for all social workers. In addition to receiving supervision, each social worker is allocated a social development worker. In South Africa, lack of regular supervision was identified by the majority of respondents in Phase 1 of this study, as well as by Simpson (2002). In the UK the supervisor monitors and guides the social worker administratively with a focus on implementing policy, on practice, competency, and research. The staff development worker liaises with the supervisor, and together both determine the training needs of the specific worker. Thereafter, the staff development worker conducts case discussions focusing on intervention. It is clear that in the UK supervision is very structured compared to in South Africa. According to Adams et al (2002), supervision can become a management tool for accountability and efficiency. Equally, it can be used to enhance professional development and thereby practice and service provision. Frustrations, anxieties and needs are attended to efficiently through supervision ultimately preventing burnout of the social workers.

f)   Better working conditions

Not surprisingly, all social workers in the focus groups reported that their working conditions and salaries were definitely better than in South Africa. The salaries offered in the UK were competitive and were found to be equivalent to other professions with similar years of qualification. All agreed that relocating to the UK was mainly for financial gain. This was also

identified in Phase 1 of the study, where 91% of the respondents who were considering leaving identified financial gains and earning in pounds as their prime reason for relocating. Otte (2003) also identified the motivation for working overseas as being that of addressing financial disadvantage. As one respondent said: "Earning in pounds, especially if living here is a short-term plan, becomes an investment." Many considered this an opportunity to save and then return to South Africa with the pounds, either to open up a business or venture into another career. They also reported that their salaries were sufficient for them to be able to sustain themselves without needing an extra income. Clearly, these social workers were sufficiently discontented by their low salary and unsatisfactory service conditions in South Africa to immigrate to the UK.

Respondents also described certain working benefits that they enjoyed which were clearly lacking in South Africa. Respondents said that in addition to benefits such as pension, medical aid (National Insurance Fund) and London weighting allowance (an allowance provided to workers living in inner London to compensate for high rentals) - social workers were also allowed up to eight days a year dependency leave to support parents with young children who are ill. There was also opportunity for working flexitime, allowing workers to work around personal needs and preferences. Social workers also described the special benefits attached to attending training courses. They reported that social workers were provided time-off to attend the training; that four days study leave was granted prior to exams; and that subsistence allowances were provided. Other benefits provided were car allowances. Such benefits appear to be designed to take into consideration social workers' personal and professional needs.

In general, social workers reported that infrastructural support/resources such as cell phones, administrative staff and dictaphones were appreciated by them. All respondents reported that a personally assigned

typist was allocated to each team. Computers with Internet access and e-mail services were provided for all staff, and all were encouraged to utilise e-mail for communications. Even laptop computers were available to social workers should they wish to complete work after hours at home. By contrast in South Africa many respondents said that they were not provided with cell phones even when they worked in unsafe areas. Respondents further reported that computers were "non existent" for social workers in South Africa.

In South Africa, considering that immediate and basic needs are not being met, social workers might not have even considered this. However, there are ways in which technology could be used. Macarov (in Davenport and Davenport, 1998) suggests that computers could be used in the following ways: agency management (for example, in filing and record keeping); and case management (for example, in tracking client demographics and clinical data which could assist in planning). Access to the Internet could provide a rich source of information regarding policy trends, statistics and current research outcomes.

The UK respondents also mentioned that in-house library facilities were available at their offices, encouraging staff to access literature related to their services. It is clear that the UK has the financial backing to provide this service to their social workers.

g)   Personal Gains

Many UK social workers reported that one the greatest gains, was the opportunity to travel across Europe at very cheap prices. Most claimed that quality of life had improved tremendously. They no longer lived in fear of being hijacked, robbed or murdered and were able to live and work in safe and secure environments. As revealed in Phase 1 and in previous discussions in this phase, safety and security was a recurring concern.

This study revealed that there is little doubt that crime was of major concern to most South Africans. The perception that crime in South Africa is out of control, whether real or fuelled by the media, is having a detrimental effect. For example 76% of the respondents in phase one indicated that safety and security concerns in their work situations and in the country in general had contributed towards their decision to leave. These findings are consistent with the focus group responses.

Social workers expressed that their relocation to the UK had made them stronger people. The relocation, together with the adjustment to the new environment and the different work expectations, were seen as a challenge. The relocation has taught them to be independent, especially the younger social workers who had led very sheltered lives in South Africa, and the experience made them financially self –sufficient. Many reported that the UK was regarded as one of the most diverse and cosmopolitan places in the world, and that they had gained much understanding from being exposed to this lifestyle. For their families, especially their children, many benefits were identified by the respondents. Living in the UK has afforded their children a safer environment and a brighter future, with better educational facilities and reliable aftercare. Once again, the aspect of safety and security was the key benefit that attracted social workers to the UK.

It is clear from the focus groups and also from Phase one of this study, that apart from financial benefits, work and safety concerns featured prominently as benefits of relocation. As is evident in Phase two of this study, these social workers seem to be experiencing considerable recognition for their work, as well as support on a professional, personal and social level.

7.6   **Negatives of Working in the UK**

Although there were many benefits identified, respondents also shared some of their negative experiences while working and residing in the UK.

a)   Isolation from Family/Friends

Most of the respondents reported that relocating to the UK also brought sorrow and heartache to their lives. They claimed that by living overseas they have experienced isolation from their family and friends. This isolation was acutely felt during family crises, when family support was essential. They also maintained that living in South Africa brought many other benefits such as affordable aftercare services and family support to take care of their children while they were at work. This opportunity was denied them in the UK, and many respondents complained bitterly that aftercare services were very expensive but they had no choice since, family support was not available.

During their discussion of family and social links, respondents also elaborated on their cultural and spiritual needs. Most agreed that by relocating their cultural and spiritual needs were left unmet. Often they were not able to practise cultural rituals since many lived away from worshipping areas. One respondent said, "The cultural change was huge – we missed the cultural activities which we most often took for granted in South Africa.". They also reported that their children were losing out on cultural and spiritual exposure. They might have had the opportunity while growing up in South Africa, but in the UK, their children had no family support or access to cultural activities. Ultimately, they found that their cultural identity was either being threatened or lost. It is interesting that in Phase 1 of this study, social workers cited family, social support and cultural and spiritual support as reasons for remaining in South Africa.

Emigration might have financial rewards, and greater safety and security, but it comes at a price of having to relinquish existing social and family supports and cultivate new roots. Although the sample distribution was unequal in respect to the racial distribution, some trends more noticeable viz that it was the Indian and African social workers who missed family and cultural/spiritual support the most. The White social workers seem to have less of a culture shock as it would seem that they are going into a similar culture as their own.

b)   Accommodation / Climate

Many agreed that the most disappointing aspect for them when arriving in the UK was accommodation. They complained that accommodation was very expensive and that they often had to accept unsuitable accommodation because of financial constraints. Most reported that houses were small, especially in comparison with the spacious accommodation they were accustomed to in South Africa. Gardens in inner London were identified as a privilege. Many "groaned" with longing when they described and compared their South African outdoor areas with their present "dreary" outdoor environment.

Most agreed that they had been fully aware of the dreary weather in the UK prior to the relocation. They did admit, however, that they had never anticipated its effects. Many described the weather as "miserable", "ghastly", and "wicked". The climate in South Africa was also identified in Phase 1 of this study as one of the many positives of remaining in South Africa rather than relocating to the UK. It would seem that adjustment to the weather had been difficult for many.

c)   Work Structures

Most of the respondents in this phase complained that the UK had a very bureaucratic system. They indicated that it was stifling and frustrating and difficult to work within such bureaucratic structures. Even though many social workers were accustomed to bureaucratic systems in South Africa, they reported that in the UK these were extreme. As Otte (2003) reports: "The British invented bureaucracy." Administrative tasks were described as "stifling and time-consuming". One respondent said: "Sometimes we feel like clerks."

Work was described as demanding and stressful, given the various procedures and "massive amounts of paper and computer work" required to be completed for each family. Many social workers were of the opinion that the administrative systems and procedures served more to protect the agency than the client.

Social workers reported that clients in the UK were empowered to complain about poor services, and agencies were very cautious to avoid any "scandal". It would appear that although social workers found the systems too bureaucratic, they did however, acknowledge that systems in UK were far more efficient compared to those in South Africa. It seems that although in South Africa, they complained about completing statistics and performing other bureaucratic functions, here in the UK they tolerated administrative and bureaucratic requirements. The question is whether this is being tolerated because they were better paid or because the system actually works.

Other work - related negative comments were:

a) "UK staffs have very cold and unfriendly attitudes."
b) "Colleagues are not accommodating."
c) "Often staffs are ignorant about other cultures."
d) "Structures and channels of communication are very limited and structured."
e) "Very formal attitude at all times at work."
f) "If you do not have transport, you are compelled to use public transport for home visits. Agency transport is not available."
g) "Social workers are expected to work in open-plan offices – none of the privacy of having an office."

From these negative experiences, it would appear that social workers are experiencing some problems in cultivating new roots and establishing themselves within a new social order. Possibly, the South African multi-cultural context may have "spoilt" social workers in that they are comfortable working with colleagues with who they were able to identify and share culture. It is possible that the "ignorance" of the UK staff relate to colleagues' reluctance to accommodate cultural differences. It is expected that people living in cities in the UK should be familiar with cultural diversity, with London itself being well known for attracting multi-cultural communities.

Another area of concern identified by many social workers was that racism was present among UK staff. This is most concerning, since the UK constantly preaches against discrimination, as does UK social work training (Kasiram et al, 2002). The social work education curriculum in the UK emphasises the promotion of an equal opportunity society. Lynn (1999:948), cited in Kasiram et al (2002), advocates that social work training in the UK includes anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory perspectives. One is therefore entitled to question whether these anti-

discriminatory and anti –oppressive modules are in reality practised by social workers.

Social workers in the focus groups also experienced management in South Africa as being less formal than in the UK agencies. Social workers experienced problems adjusting to these formalities.

Another negative identified by many social workers was that they perceived their "team managers" (supervisors) to be threatened by the training and experience of South African social workers. They reported that often they found that their working experience, as well as their academic training, was far higher than that of their managers. The latter issue was a problem especially in case discussions and supervision where theoretical input was required. The South African social workers often experienced their "team manager's" theoretical knowledge as limited compared with their own knowledge. This problem was also identified previously where UK training was found to be more practice oriented with limited theoretical training.

Respondents found it uncomfortable to work in open-plan offices, which is not surprising since most of these social workers were accustomed to working in individual offices in South Africa, a privilege sorely missed.

Lastly, social workers in the various groups complained that UK clients were often very difficult. They reported that they often had negative attitudes towards social workers and were rude and threatening. Social workers also reported that UK clients, as part of the service, are empowered from their first session to complain if they are unhappy with services. Social workers saw this entitlement as having merits as well as pitfalls. The merit was that clients became empowered to participate in their treatment plans, which serves as a watch dog on service delivery. The pitfall is that clients use this empowerment as a "right" to verbally

abuse and threaten social workers. Many social workers agreed with one respondent who claimed that "UK clients expect too much and show no appreciation." Social workers also reported that UK clients' needs are very different from the needs of South Africans. Their problems were described as "minor" compared with the harsh social problems experienced by South Africans; UK clients were also described as having limited coping strategies in comparison with South Africans. Since South African face a harsher reality than residents in the UK, it stands to reason that we are more resilient and have learnt how to cope with problems.

Once again, racism was discussed, but this time the focus was on clients being racist. Many social workers in the group complained that often clients and communities made racist remarks or would question their ability. This was depressing and it often affected their service delivery. Social workers claimed that these difficulties were often brought up in supervision, but were always overlooked, much to the infuriation of many social workers. These social workers had recently left a post-apartheid democratic country, only to arrive in a country where racism is subtly practised! An important note is that as much as social workers appreciated supervision, all supervisory functions were not performed.

Interestingly, no social worker mentioned frustrations regarding the individual approach in service delivery. It would seem that most social workers prefer the individual approach, and possibly do not miss the community developmental paradigm emphasised in South Africa. Also, developmental functions were not performed by social workers. Other organs of the UK society take care of these functions.

7.7   Returning to South Africa

Respondents were asked whether they had any intention of returning to practise social work in South Africa. Interestingly, the majority of the respondents indicated that they would return to South Africa after expiry of their work permits, but not to work as social workers. It was revealed that 90% of the respondents had no intention of returning to the social work profession in South Africa. Many had decided to return to their "home" with their financial gains in order to invest in businesses; some indicated that they would go into private practice; others had decided to use their experience and knowledge to become consultants for welfare agencies; while some had decided on a complete change in their career paths. One respondent said: "Never again! Are you mad?" and she was applauded by many others for her sentiments. Sadly, only 10% of the respondents were ready to give South African social work another chance. A "fresh start with interest in business activities and private practice" was also Otte's (2003) intention. It therefore seems that most of the social workers who leave the profession ultimately leave forever with no regrets. Sad to say, the South African profession is unable to stop this exodus of valued, experienced social workers.

This is a huge concern, as the impression at the debate at the Joint University Conference in 2002 was around allowing social workers to experience work outside South Africa because of the perception that they would come back (Naidoo & Kasiram, 2002). This finding reflects otherwise.

7.8 Recommendations for the Survival of Social Work in South Africa

Respondents in this phase were asked to recommend key areas that needed to be addressed for the survival of social work in South Africa. Responses from the focus groups were extensive, and many were similar to the responses produced in the previous section (what made social work problematic in South Africa) of this phase. Recommendations included:

- Reviewing of high workloads;
- Offering improved service conditions;
- Providing a safer work environment;
- Changing the academic curriculum; and
- Improving resources.

Lengthy discussions in respect of the latter have also been covered in the first phase of this study.

Since the latter areas have already been discussed at length in this phase, only salient areas that have not been highlighted by these respondents will be discussed.

Respondents claimed that frustration, burnout and stress were alarmingly high in the social work profession. In order to improve service delivery and allow social workers to function effectively in South Africa, they recommended:

a) **Providing appropriate staff development** – The majority of the respondents claimed that staff development in South Africa was largely ineffectual and poorly attended by social workers. Staff development needs to be addressed in consultation with social

workers to ensure that practice needs are met. It was also recommended that staff development be offered more regularly, at least once a month.

b) **Regular, Intensive Supervision** – Many respondents claimed that, since they were exposed to a high calibre of supervision in UK, they strongly believe that supervision of social workers in South Africa needs to be addressed urgently. Senior social workers should be offered supervision in order to support and re-train them in line with the developmental paradigm. Support from senior staff was identified as a prerequisite for the effective functioning of the social worker.

c) **Workload Management** – It was generally recognised that social work in South Africa demands a great deal of time and energy from social workers. The suggestion was for social workers to be empowered with the requisite skills to allow them to manage a heavy workload. Clearly, workload management needs to be tackled alongside the problem of excessive workloads.

Other responses regarding the survival of social work in South Africa were:
- participation of social workers in policy-making;
- unity among members of the social work profession;
- emphasis on professional recognition; and
- active professional associations to be formed to address the needs of social workers.

It is clear from the recommendations that social workers also need to take responsibility for helping the profession survive. Yes, policy makers, tertiary institutions and employers all need to accept responsibility but if social workers themselves are not proactive then their voices will never be

heard, little will be accomplished, and the social work profession could be lost forever.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, the results of this study are firstly summarised and discussed and then followed by recommendations emanating from the findings. The study used three sample groups, with the value of triangulation being evident. Three different groups were researched, yet similar patterns emerged. These will be discussed later in the chapter.

The findings confirm that an ecological and ecosystemic paradigm provides the theoretical framework for understanding the status of social work in South Africa.

At the *micro-systemic level*, factors affecting the profession and the exodus of social workers were violence, crime and fear for personal safety; having to work with emotionally draining caseloads; frustration at the lack of resources; the continuous impact of the diverse, frightening and complex problems encountered in the field, and lack of support from the agency and senior staff.

At the *mezzo level*, factors such as working in insecure, dangerous and apathetic communities; inadequate resources in communities; poor condition of, or limited availability of, agency vehicles; high workloads, exacerbated by staff shortages and high staff turnover; unclean, dilapidated office buildings; pressures from management; inaccessible infrastructure; lack of staff incentives; ineffectual South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP), and ineffectual disciplinary action have all negatively affected the social work profession.

At the *macro level,* factors that have affected the profession are limited work benefits; unsatisfactory working conditions; poor salaries; the socio-economic and political changes in the country, such as recession, inflation, poverty, unemployment, and housing shortages; HIV/AIDS; and crime, violence, and unrest resulting in safety and security concerns.

8.1   Identifying Details

Sample Details

8.1.1   Gender

In all three sample groups there were more female respondents than male. In the sample group leaving, 78% of the respondents were females, while 83% of the respondents that have relocated to the UK were predominantly females. The gender distribution of sample group remaining (85%) revealed a similar gender distribution as the sample group leaving. This was not surprising since social work is a female-dominated profession.

8.1.2   Marital Status

In this study, in both the sample groups, leaving and remaining, the marital status of social workers was not explored. However, the marital status of respondents who have relocated was researched, and it was found that the majority (43%) were single, while 37% were married. The study suggests that relocation to the UK was a viable option for the category of social workers with fewer attachments. This majority may have comprised young graduates who have been unsuccessful in obtaining stable permanent employment in South Africa or were keen to work and

tour abroad. It was further found that the younger graduates were constantly canvassed by overseas recruitment agencies, resulting in them being tempted by offers of higher salaries, better working conditions, and so on. Working overseas is tempting since these young graduates, even prior to graduation, are already acutely aware of the poor salaries and working conditions of social workers.

The reasons for relocation in the married sector included a lucrative career and a safer future for their families.

8.1.3   Number of Dependants

It was necessary to establish the number of dependants the respondents had in the sample groups, in order to explore whether motivation to seek employment in the UK was related to family commitments. The study revealed that 43% of the respondents in the sample considering leaving had one to two dependants. A similar trend was noted with respondents that had already relocated. Social workers with smaller families therefore appeared to be more determined to relocate than those with larger families. As previously identified, increased crime and violence in South Africa might have been a contributory factor for these social workers leaving. Also, respondents with no or a limited number of dependants might find relocation less costly and emotionally draining.

Respondents with three to four dependants comprised only 4% of respondents considering leaving, and 13% of the social workers that have relocated. Financial costs such as relocation costs, accommodation and education for the whole family in the UK could be contributing to their remaining in South Africa. Larger families are also found to have firmer roots in their country of birth or origin, requiring a larger support network

to care for their dependants. The availability of home help and nannies is readily and cheaply available in South Africa.

8.1.4   Type of Visa obtained in Relocating

The majority of the respondents relocated on long-term visas. It was found that 65% of the respondents relocated to the UK on five-year working permits, while only 35% were on two-year holiday visas. The finding that long-term visas were a preferred option could mean that they might be considering permanent residence in the UK. Further, many have relocated with their families. High unmanageable workloads, limited upward mobility, and safety and security concerns appear to have prompted social workers to opt for longer-term visas. Also, having been depressed about work in South Africa, relocating social workers might have chosen the long-term visa because they felt it would be less easy for them to secure a second visa if need be, should they return to South Africa. Further, these social workers do not foresee an improvement in the present situation within the next two years.

Sadly, social workers opting for long-term work visas take with them a wealth of experience and knowledge that is desperately needed in the South African setting.

8.1.5   **Work Setting**

Fifty-two per cent of the sample group leaving and 54% of the sample group remaining were employed in non-governmental agencies. Non-governmental workers also comprised the majority that had relocated to the UK.

There are many possible reasons for the majority of exiting social workers originating from non–governmental organisations. The disparities that exist between the non-governmental and governmental sectors are historical. Poor remuneration, work benefits and working conditions in the non-governmental agencies have produced a higher staff turnover, a huge source of frustration also noted by Patel (1998). Further, NGOs are dependent on state subsidies and donor funding, which often results in uncertainty regarding salaries. This compounds the stresses experienced by social workers, making work in the UK a viable option.

Furthermore, for NGOs to remain relevant and receive State subsidies, they often engaged in more rigorous outreach programmes that often jeopardised safety. Safety and security threats were found to be poorly tolerated, contributing largely to the exodus of social workers from South Africa.

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8.1.6 Years of Experience and Designation of Social Workers

As regards years of experience, the majority of the social workers in Phase one of this study had more than seven years' experience (60% in the sample group leaving and 75% in the sample group remaining). This study indicated that social workers with a considerable number of years of experience have contemplated leaving. This study also highlighted that, although the majority (60%) of the respondents had seven years' and more experience, only 29% were promoted to the position of senior social workers. This finding was significant in pointing to limited promotion opportunities for social workers in South Africa.

8.1.7 Qualifications of Respondents

The majority of respondents in this study obtained only an undergraduate degree, despite practising social work for many years. In Phase One of this study, only 25% of the respondents in the sample group leaving and 12% in the sample group remaining had post-graduate qualifications. The frequency of post-graduate qualifications among the group leaving was double that of those remaining, which probably indicates that the former group was more interested in personal and professional growth. Social workers in South Africa could be regarded as study-shy, an observation made by Kasiram (2000).

Further, in South Africa, neither the governmental sector nor non-governmental sector encouraged social workers to continue with their studies, as they failed to subsidise and support studies.

8.2 Current Areas of Frustration, Problems and Needs of Social Workers in South Africa

The study highlighted many frustrations, problems and needs experienced by social workers who participated in this study.

8.2.1 High unmanageable Caseloads

In Phase One of the study, 53,8% of the respondents leaving and 55% of the respondents remaining had been allocated a caseload of over 80. Collings and Murray (1996) report that the pressure involved in planning and reaching work targets and high workloads are significantly associated with stress among social workers. They specifically point out that too much administrative work is a source of stress. Where there are staff shortages, the problem of high caseloads is exacerbated (Ross and Fridjhon, 1995; Van Zyl and Botha (1997); Simpson (2001)). These types of problems were evident in this study, and high caseloads were a source of great stress for the social workers.

A similar pattern was revealed in Phase Two of this study, where social workers complained that high, unmanageable caseloads contributed to their frustrations and stress, making social work in South Africa problematic. The respondents in this study vociferously claimed that there were too many demands and too little time available to meet them. This study confirmed that the majority of social workers with unmanageable caseloads provided poor quality of work; there was inadequate or non-existent recording; and often only superficial investigations were conducted. Similar findings were recorded by Lombard (2000) concerning

the impact of high workloads. Clearly, high caseloads were a source of frustration that contributed to social workers leaving the country.

A significant relationship was noted in this study between present workload and effectiveness in handling the workload. The findings confirmed that the higher the workload, the more difficulty was experienced in handling the work. In Phase One of the study, 30% in the sample group leaving and 42,5% in the sample group remaining were "almost never" able to handle their workload effectively, as indicated by Van Zyl and Botha (1997) and Gray (2000).

Interestingly, 30% of the social workers leaving in this study appeared to "almost always" handle their workload as compared with the 3,8% of the social workers remaining. It might have been expected that those leaving handled their workloads less well than those remaining! Social workers in this study appear to have adopted a disempowered and apathetic attitude. For example, they have agreed to work with unacceptably high caseloads. Apathy and frustration experienced by many social workers in managing the high caseloads would inevitably be transferred onto clients and affect intrapersonal relationships. This could ultimately convey a poor image to the community that social workers are inefficient and frustrated.

The study also highlighted that social workers working in non-governmental agencies handled higher caseloads (58,5% had over 80 cases) than social workers in the governmental agencies (48% had over 80 cases). Of this, 25,6% of respondents in non-governmental agencies "almost always" handled their workloads, while in governmental agencies only 8% were "almost always" able to handle their workloads. Even though this study indicated that governmental organisations had smaller caseloads, they were still not able to handle their workloads effectively. A possible explanation for this is the closer supervision and better support networks amongst non–governmental agency workers compared with

governmental organisations. It follows that there is a greater level of accountability within the former structure.

Governmental departments would have been expected to have fared better, considering that they have a bigger staff complement and limited financial constraints compared to non-governmental agencies. It is possible that the emphasis on production is far less in governmental agencies (although productivity stats are required, production levels are not challenged) than in non-governmental agencies where productivity is related to funding. Non-governmental agencies could also be handling their workload because they do not have excessive bureaucracy and hierarchy compared with governmental workers.

Another identified concern was that even those social workers who were primarily caseworkers saw the need for community-based interventions to address macro issues. However, with their large caseloads, developmental work became difficult. Coping with a high caseload and being expected to engage in all methods of social work caused discontent in all sample groups of this study. All felt that it was well-nigh impossible to do community work and developmental social work with such high caseloads.

The study also found that, despite a high workload, social workers did not receive support from the agency. This was evident in all three sample groups. Forty-six per cent of the respondents in the sample group leaving "almost never" received support, while in the sample group remaining 41, 3% "almost never" received support from senior staff or agency. Detailed qualitative responses from social workers in Phase Two of the study also described organisational structures as unsupportive. Lack of recognition, acknowledgement and positive feedback from agencies were seen by social workers as primary stressors (Fridjhon, 1995). When there is limited evidence of support provided, it is expected that social workers

would become frustrated, burnt out, and would ultimately search for more appreciation and support elsewhere.

8.2.2 **Method of Social Work**

This study highlighted that social workers still have a bias towards casework. It was revealed that 66,3% in the sample group leaving and 56,3% in the sample group remaining used casework most frequently, and were not practising an integrated approach. Sturgeon (1998:26), too, found that social workers in South Africa felt most comfortable with casework. Further, focus on casework in training, its widespread use in statutory work, a subsidy system largely based on caseload numbers and the prevailing socio-political climate all discourage macro-level intervention (Sturgeon, 1998:26). Another, possible explanation for casework domination lies with the organisational structure of agencies, where only some teams are responsible for community development.

Social workers in this study appear to lack the "know-how" to shift to a comprehensive, integrated multi-disciplinary and developmental approach as stipulated in the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997).

Midgely (1981); Mupediswa (1997); Louw (1998) and McKendrick (1998) have long pointed to the inappropriateness of casework-dominant programmes for social work in Third World contexts. This persistence by social workers to continue focusing on casework surely warrants admonishing.

To achieve transformation and deal adequately with the problems facing South African communities, there has to be a change in how social workers operate. Social workers are intimidated by the paradigm shift and

are consequently trying to ferret familiar ground (viz. casework) which is practised overseas.

8.2.3 Obstacles in providing effective Services and adopting a developmental Approach

Although the majority of the social workers in this study used casework, some attempts in meeting the objectives of the developmental approach have also been undertaken. The following pertinent obstacles were experienced by both sample groups in Phase One and Phase Two of the study while attempting to facilitate change:

8.2.3.1 Crime

The study highlighted that violence and high crime rates in communities were a major obstacle. Sometimes services had to be stopped in certain areas because of crime. The majority of the respondents (46,3% in the sample group leaving, and 46% in the sample group remaining) found that they "almost never" felt safe and comfortable while working in the communities. Social workers expressed fear of working in crime-ridden or high-risk areas, since many have been either hijacked or robbed.

These findings correlate with Moller et al (1996); Simpson (2001) and Gathiram (2000), who also indicated that violence and crime in communities added to social workers' fears and frustration and hindered service delivery in developing communities.

Persistent violence, crime and insecurities in working in South African communities were also identified by respondents in Phase Two of the study. These served to contribute to decisions to leave and seek a safer employment environment in the UK.

It is evident that crime and violence in South Africa challenge our professional commitments and our choice of lifestyle, either to remain in the country or to leave for 'safer environments'.

8.2.3.2   Characteristics of Communities

The study indicated a significant relationship between key community features and what was making community work difficult.

A prevalent community characteristic was apathy. Thirty-one per cent of respondents in the sample group leaving and 27,5% in sample group remaining regarded their communities as apathetic, which often placed unrealistic demands on social workers. When social workers are constantly exposed to apathy in communities, they themselves begin to feel the same hopelessness and despair.

The study clearly revealed that working in communities that are unsafe and apathetic produces certain stresses. McCann and Pearlman (1990), cited in Letsebe (1995:103), also found that burnout was prevalent among social workers who experienced the psychological strain of working with difficult communities.

Another hurdle confronting social workers was illiteracy, which was seen as a major obstacle to community development in this study. Mbatha (1998:5) believes that the potential for improvement is slowest among

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the most disadvantaged. The experience of futile attempts among social workers has produced feelings of powerlessness. Many social workers in this study considered that problems in the communities were too great to be solved. Lack of community support and co-operation were also serious obstacles in developing communities.

Respondents in the study also viewed the type of clientele whom they serve as a source of stress, similar to the findings by Ross (1996). Ross (1996:86) reveals that social workers found it stressful to work with poor communities, people with limited potential and few resources, families with complex and multi-faceted problems, traumatised clients, and clients with limited emotional and coping resources. These descriptions typify most client populations in many South African communities.

8.2.3.3   **Lack of Resources**

Communities in which social workers worked varied in the extent to which resources were available. The study confirmed that availability of physical, financial and human resources had an urban bias, making developmental work in rural or informal areas challenging and frustrating. Lack of funds, which hampered the progress of projects; difficulty in funding-raising; the stability of welfare organisations; lack of facilities in rural areas; and lack of transport to undertake home visits were all factors that restricted social workers from helping clients and communities. This was also reiterated in 1994 at the Congress of the International Association of Schools of Social Work in the Netherlands (Louw,1994: 296).

8.2.3.4   Limited Finance

Social workers in this study made frequent reference to the problem of limited finance as hindering service delivery. Combined with their present high caseload, social workers were expected to extend their services to previously disadvantaged areas to do developmental work without any increase in resources. There was also criticism of low government funding for social work services. Further, reduction of government subsidies placed unrealistic demands on social workers and often compromised quality of work. In this study, social workers expressed impotence with regard to accessing funds for community and group work programmes.

So, as much as a paradigm shift is an obvious necessity, efforts are thwarted by the lack of funding and resources. Social workers are forced to become 'creative geniuses' in order to render services to impoverished communities.

8.2.3.5   Organisational Constraints

The study highlighted that resources for social workers, such as cell phones, and reliable and efficient agency vehicles, were essential, but were often lacking. The poor condition of offices in agencies was also identified as frustrating and humiliating. Agencies were often inappropriately located, and there was a call for more decentralisation. Limited manpower and high turnover of staff also appeared to hinder services to previously disadvantaged communities. The study confirmed that agencies experienced problems with the transformation process as cuts in subsidies disrupted services and prevented projects that were initiated from being sustained. All these constraints identified in the study

have had a serious impact on the morale of social workers. This scenario conveys to social workers that their work is either irrelevant or of no value.

It was noteworthy that 53,8% of the social workers leaving did not favour the developmental approach. One can therefore question whether their lack of interest in or resistance to the developmental approach was in fact in itself not an obstacle to their effective service delivery. Could it be deduced that many of these social workers either felt marginalised or uncertain as to whether this new approach to welfare diminished their role, as claimed by Lombard (2000)? A further question based on earlier findings is whether they might be failing to favour this approach because of threats or risks to their safety.

In understanding why a developmental approach was not being used, the findings lean strongly towards social workers' vented frustrations of having to deal with high caseloads, poor resources and limited funding. Some solace may be gained from the findings that 52,6% of the social workers remaining are in favour of the developmental approach.

8.2.4   Types of Problems dealt with by Social Workers

Problems have multiple causes and have to be seen holistically. In this study, poverty was highlighted as the root cause of most of the social problems encountered in South African communities. From the study, it was evident that social workers were confronted by an array of serious social problems such as poverty, unemployment, marital discord, crime, abuse (physical/emotional/sexual) and HIV/AIDS. A further concern articulated in the study was the sense of helplessness and powerlessness experienced by social workers in relation to broader societal issues. In

addition, many respondents experienced feelings of hopelessness in relation to the impact of the economic recession. The sense of wanting to help people but being unable to do so also contributed to feelings of frustration, burnout and wanting to leave the profession. McKendrick (1990:13) concurs that it is not surprising that social workers themselves frequently become depressed and demotivated since their most energetic efforts seem to have little impact on some social problems.

When community work was used, a wide range of projects were listed (vide Chapter 6), and it was evident that social workers subscribed to the principles of the White Paper for Social Welfare. However, 80% of the respondents in the sample group leaving and 76% in the sample group remaining were in fact not equipped to deal with the diversity of the problems encountered. The study highlighted that social workers lacked knowledge and skills to work with the range of problems in South Africa.

Some of the qualitative reasons provided by social workers for their lack of knowledge and skill were that they had not received appropriate training in these areas; neither had staff development equipped them to handle these problems.

Neugeboren (1991:116) is of the opinion that lack of training could be a factor in role conflict and ambiguity which can lead to burnout and dependency. Social workers are more comfortable dealing with work that is familiar to them. Much of the work social workers do also depends on the type of training they received, the amount of retraining, and human resource development.

Interestingly, the study suggested that social workers leaving (71,3%) received substantially more academic training than 52,5% of the respondents remaining. This clearly indicates that social workers leaving the country are more trained and experienced than their counterparts who

are remaining. This is worrying, as it suggests that those leaving are committed to growth and self-development, which clearly represents a loss to the profession in South Africa.

Numerous recommendations were made by social workers on how to handle the diversity of problems encountered. These included seminars, workshops, regular and effective staff development, and academic training. It can be concluded that it is highly unlikely that social workers will implement recommendations for continuing professional development as they are study-shy (Kasiram,2000), overburdened with high caseloads (Van Zyl and Botha,1997), and are provided with no support from agencies (Gray, 2000). Self-study is also a costly exercise in relation to a social worker's paltry earnings. The rewards for further study do not seem to merit the expense involved. Retraining and further training have to be subsidised and made compulsory and accessible. They can also be structured as an incentive to motivate staff. Short, in-house staff development is not the answer to providing adequate training opportunities. Organisations should budget for well-planned, quality training.

8.2.5   Infrastructural Support

8.2.5.1   Orientation

The study confirmed that orientation was provided for social workers in all the groups, but it was of varying duration. Weekly and fortnightly orientation was favoured by most agencies and supported the conclusion that orientation by social welfare agencies in South Africa is fairly comprehensive. A shorter orientation period was attributed to limited

senior staff available to conduct orientation and newly-employed social workers being urgently required to commence work. Orientation appears to be lacking in preparing social workers adequately for the harsh realities such as poverty, crime and violence that they would experience. If this omission is addressed it could contribute to better job satisfaction and would ultimately reduce the brain drain of social workers.

Further, in this study it was highlighted that orientation provided by non-governmental agencies was more effective in meeting the needs of the social workers than orientation by governmental agencies. It would appear that even though NGOs are under threat for various reasons (Patel, 1998), this has not negatively impacted on the provision of effective orientation for their staff.

8.2.5.2   **Supervision**

It was noted that the higher the workload, the greater the need for effective supervision. A significant 43,8% of respondents leaving and 72,5% of respondents remaining did not receive any supervision at all. Weekly supervision was also found to be insufficient. These study findings support Botha's (2000) argument that supervision in South Africa does not receive dedicated attention. In this study, social workers did not receive supervision and were frustrated, de-motivated and stressed when dealing with the magnitude of social problems encountered in communities.

Social workers in both Phase One and Two of the study rated the usefulness of supervision as poor and ineffectual. Many respondents in the study reported that supervision in South Africa was a stressor on its own. Supervisors were reported to be inexperienced, especially in

accommodating a developmental approach; they were unsupportive and often unavailable or unapproachable in times of need. Simpson (1993), cited in Veeran and Simpson (1996), also noted that only a small number of supervisors received supervision or did reading as a means of improving their supervisory practice.

From the findings, it was clear that the majority of respondents had a high workload, experienced anxiety and frustrations in adjusting to a new socio-political environment, and found their work emotionally draining. Thus supportive supervision was crucial, but was clearly absent in the experience of these social workers. In addition many social workers in this study were young and inexperienced, with an obvious need for support and guidance.

8.2.5.3   **Staff Development**

In this study, although staff development was offered to social workers, it was considered infrequent and ineffective. This is a concern, since social workers are overwhelmed by high, unmanageable workloads; support is lacking; they are experiencing difficulty in adjusting to the changed socio-political environment; supervision is poorly provided, and only limited staff development is offered. All this contributes to feelings of disempowerment among social workers.

Learning is a life-long endeavour, and if social workers are not involved in learning as a continuing process, it is a cause for concern. In a rapidly changing world, social workers need to keep abreast of developments in the field of social work and welfare generally, but also in related fields. The need for on-going professional development has been recognised by the South African Council for Social Service Professions, and it is

anticipated that continual professional development is necessary for continued registration as a social worker. This development is laudable and will make it mandatory that continued professional development occurs, with agencies having to support this initiative.

8.2.5.4   Service Conditions

As expected, the majority of the social workers were dissatisfied with their service conditions and salaries. An overwhelming 90% of the respondents leaving and 86,3% of the respondents remaining expressed clear dissatisfaction. Also identified were poor service conditions as a leading factor that contributed to their considering leaving or having left the profession in South Africa. Inadequate salaries have been a bone of contention for many years. Studies by Gray and Van Rooyen (2000), Patel (1998), Lombard (2000), and Gathiram (2000) reveal similar frustrations. Service conditions and salary packages offered in the UK appeared to be a distinct temptation in luring social workers.

The study also revealed that social workers working in governmental and in non-governmental organisations differed in their opinions regarding service conditions. The significant difference in the study indicated that 49,3% of social workers employed in governmental departments were satisfied with their conditions, in comparison to 28% in non-governmental agencies. This points to non-governmental social workers being more inclined to leave the profession and seek better prospects overseas than their counterparts in governmental agencies, this being borne out by earlier findings.

Discontentment in respect of salaries and service conditions were explored further, indicating that social workers employed by non-governmental

organisations (NGOs) were remunerated substantially less than their colleagues in the governmental sector; salaries of social workers were not on par with the salaries of other professions with four-year qualifications; and, lastly, most social welfare agencies did not include social workers in salary or service condition negotiations. These concerns and frustrations are not new, having been raised several years ago, yet little seems to have been done to address them. De V Smit (1994:10), too, found that morale was low among social workers because of the unstable social environment, lack of career paths and low salaries.

8.2.5.5   South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP)

It was found that while there are benefits in being affiliated to the SACSSP, social workers did not consider the SACSSP's role as effective. Despite the new statutory body's making numerous attempts to involve and update social workers, there remains dissatisfaction among the majority of social workers regarding SACSSP's efforts in respect of salaries and service conditions.

8.3 Benefits of Working in South Africa

It was expected that not all experiences of social work in South Africa would be fraught with problems. Respondents from both sample groups in Phase One were therefore asked for details of positive experiences. Surprisingly, although the respondents in the study experienced frustrations and stress with high workloads and were unable to handle their workloads effectively, many still enjoyed the work that they were doing.

Numerous benefits of working in South Africa were reported. Respondents enjoyed being able to work with colleagues who had vast knowledge and experience, being part of the empowerment process, making an impact on impoverished communities, and working in culturally diverse communities and commented that work was not monotonous. The changed emphasis of the developmental approach also yielded interest, although practice is insufficient, as indicated earlier in the study.

As previously mentioned, social support, culture and spiritual fulfilment were also commonly cited benefits of working and residing in South Africa. Miller (1999) confirmed that support networks are crucial to social workers who, as caregivers, require these to prevent burnout. Therefore, even though social workers are experiencing frustration, stress and burnout, they appear to cope by leaning on family and social support.

8.4 Needs, Problems and Frustrations of Social Workers in the UK

The social workers in Phase Two of the study identified a few concerns since leaving South Africa and working/residing in the UK. These were:

8.4.1 Isolation from family/friends

Most respondents indicated that by relocating to the UK they have experienced isolation from their family and friends, which was acutely felt during family crises. The cost of telecommunicating or frequent travelling to visit family was exorbitant. The study points to the need for a good support network at a time of relocation.

8.4.2 Lack of Cultural and Spiritual Fulfilment

The study highlighted that one of the consequences of relocating to the UK was that social workers' cultural and spiritual needs were neglected. Worshipping areas such as temples and mosques were sparse, and many had to travel great distances to partake in any spiritual or cultural festivities. Many reported that their cultural identity was being threatened or lost in the UK. They found that the younger generation (their children) was most vulnerable. The presence of family support to educate or to instil spiritual and cultural values in their families was clearly needed.

When people cannot experience their culture and are restricted from practising their religion, they require greater spiritual affirmation. People generally do not realise how important their culture is until they are removed from it. This appeared to be the case with the UK social workers.

Interestingly, in Phase One of this study, respondents also cited family, social support, cultural and spiritual support as reasons for remaining in South Africa and reconsidering their relocation decision. In the sample group leaving, 94% identified support networks such as family and friends, and 70% identified cultural identity as being some of the benefits of remaining in South Africa. A similar pattern was revealed in the sample group remaining, where 78% considered family ties and 80% cultural fulfilment as benefits of residing in South Africa.

8.4.3   Climate and Accommodation

Adjustment to the weather was difficult for the most of the UK social workers. Although most of the respondents had been fully aware of the dreary weather in the UK prior to their relocation, the extremities of the climate were definitely not anticipated. In all three groups in the study, the climate in South Africa was an attraction.

The sunny South African climate is very different from the grey skies and wet weather in the UK. Clearly respondents in the UK dreaded the UK weather and missed the sun back home.

The study also highlighted that the cost of accommodation was very expensive, many complaining that the "bulk" of their salary was spent on accommodation. Houses and flats were described as too small and "cramped". The social workers compared their previous spacious

accommodation in South Africa to their present situation and considered South Africans to be fortunate to have such spacious and affordable accommodation. Overall, they claimed that renting and buying homes in London were very expensive, revealing that the nearer they lived to "commons" (parks) or the city, the more expensive were the homes. Garden areas in homes were often sought. Social workers clearly missed their spacious and affordable homes in South Africa.

Satisfactory accommodation can create a sense of happiness and balance in one's life. Many of these social workers are deprived of this. Perhaps strategies to re-attract social workers could harness this need to bring our workers back home.

8.4.4   **Work Structures**

The study highlighted that the majority of the social workers found the UK system very bureaucratic. Although these social workers had been exposed to bureaucracy in South Africa, they described the bureaucracy in the UK as being extreme. Interestingly, many of these social workers had left South Africa complaining that the bureaucratic system was excessive. However, in the UK they were exposed to far more bureaucracy, although none indicated wanting to leave for this reason. Clearly, benefits attached to working in the UK system allowed social workers to tolerate the bureaucracy. Alternatively, to leave the UK for the same reasons that they cited for leaving South Africa would arouse speculation as to their fickleness and mental stability.

8.4.5   **Racism**

A worrying finding in this study was the allegation of racism. Social workers reported that racism was practised by their UK colleagues and clients. This is of great concern since the UK subscribes to non-discriminatory practice. Social work curricula in the UK emphasises an equal opportunity society (Kasiram et al, 2002) and include anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory perspectives. One is therefore entitled to question whether these anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive modules are in reality practised by social workers in the UK. Unfortunately, most 'old democracies' still practise some form of prejudice.

Many social workers in the study also complained that some UK clients made racist remarks and would even question their social work ability, especially since they come from an "African country". UK clients were found to be resistant to having "foreigners" provide social work services. There is also a preconceived notion that the English are "cold, unsociable" people. Hence, South Africans might experience difficulty in working with and integrating into this society.

8.5   __Positive Experiences Gained from the UK__

There were many benefits of working and residing in the UK.

8.5.1   __Personal Gains__

The study confirmed that social workers found that residing in the UK improved their quality of life. Fears of being hijacked, robbed or murdered were now the least of their concerns. They worked and resided in safer and secure environments and were proud that they were able to offer their children brighter futures (better educational facilities and reliable aftercare). The relocation also brought challenges such as adjustment to the new environment, to a new social order and different work expectations. Therefore, besides the financial benefits of residing in the UK, quality of life of the social workers was improved, and safety needs were fulfilled. It is clear that the respondents in this study ranked personal safety and continued professional development highly in contributing to relocation.

8.5.2   __Abundance of Resources__

As expected, all respondents in the study confirmed that the UK had an abundance of resources to offer the social worker and the client. It was evident that the accessibility of resources had a positive effect on the client and social worker's relationship. Social workers were no longer, as in the past, experiencing frustration, burnout and stress in providing effective services without sufficient resources.

8.5.3   Teamwork

In the study, teamwork was identified as a positive by the social workers. The practice of social workers working in a multi-disciplinary team, not holding sole responsibility for cases, and making joint decisions in the assessment of families was strongly favoured. It was acknowledged that this joint approach relieved stresses associated with the job of the social worker. Co-ordination of services and networking was described as excellent.

8.5.4   Safer Working Environments

The study indicated that various policies and procedures were provided in the UK that guide practice to support and enable the social workers to practise social work safely. Findings suggested that infrastructural support, such as separate, well-secured and monitored interviewing rooms, are one of many attempts by the UK to provide a safe work environment. It was clear that crime, violence and a threat to security in South Africa challenged our professional commitments and ultimately affected social workers' decisions regarding a place to practise their profession.

8.5.5   Opportunities for Upward Mobility

There was increasing evidence in the study that upward mobility was available in the UK workforce. The study confirmed that opportunities for upward mobility in the UK fostered job satisfaction, created interest and

dedication among social workers, and resulted in social workers becoming more goal-directed and motivated to further their studies. Limited promotion opportunity was evidently a source of frustration for many social workers in South Africa. Clearly, in the UK, social workers were given more recognition, opportunities for career growth, and stability, and were valued as meaningful role players in the welfare arena.

8.5.6   Better Working Conditions

The study indicated that all respondents were satisfied with their working conditions and salaries in the UK. Salaries for social workers in the UK were competitive and equivalent to other professions with similar years of qualification. The respondents' purpose for relocating to the UK for financial gain was achieved. Working benefits enjoyed in the UK are lacking in South Africa, including eight days a year dependency leave, working flexi-time to accommodate social workers' preferences and personal needs, and car allowances. In addition, social workers in the UK were provided excellent infrastructural resources such as administrative staff, cell phones and individual computers (with access to the Internet and e-mail service). Clearly working benefits that take into account social workers' personal and professional needs, competitive salaries and service conditions, and modern technology to assist in providing effective services are all the correct ingredients for job satisfaction.

8.5.7   Resources – Training and Professional Development

Resources and training provided to social workers working in the UK were excellent. It was clear that the UK encourages the development of good

social work practice. Social workers were afforded comprehensive and well-structured training and professional development, which was paid by their employers. Social workers in this study identified the worth of these training programmes and confirmed that this opportunity for training increased their knowledge and skills. They felt "privileged" to have such training. Although training might be offered in South Africa, it was never free, or paid for by agencies; and there was irregular in-service training and staff development. All this serves to demotivate social workers, create apathy and produce low morale, ultimately discouraging social workers from focusing on their professional development.

Supervision in the UK was also identified as excellent. Compared with the supervision received in South Africa, which respondents in this study described as being poor, ineffective, stressful and irregular, supervision in the UK was described as most beneficial, rewarding and supportive. Supervision in the UK, being regular and structured, was an effective tool for ensuring accountability and efficiency. Equally, supervision in the UK enhanced social workers' professional development and consequently their practice. It was highlighted that by way of regular, structured and supportive supervision, frustrations, anxieties and needs of social workers were generally attended to efficiently, and that this ultimately prevented burnout. This is surely a lesson for us in South Africa. However, the finding that racial concerns were not addressed in supervision points to gaps in the fulfilment of all supervisory functions

8.6   Impact of high Staff Turnover of Social Workers

In this study, high staff turnover was regarded as a serious problem for South African agencies and social workers. The study suggested that high staff turnover translated to several concerns such as the brain drain of

social workers; time wasted on providing continuous orientation and training programmes to new incumbents who eventually also leave; work overload and loss of manpower; organisational disruptions; funding wasted on incomplete projects; poor staff morale, and staff frustrated and stressed. Unless the high turnover of social workers is eliminated, a vicious cycle of negativity and chaos will prevail.

9.   Recommendations

Emanating from the results of the present study, several recommendations are made to address the problems, frustrations and needs of social workers and prevent a further loss of manpower in the profession. These recommendations are made in line with key themes that were explored.

9.1   Infrastructural Support

The morale of the social workers in this study was found to be very low, and infrastructural support was clearly limited or lacking in some respects. The following recommendations are made to improve infrastructural support to social workers:

9.1.1   Service Conditions/Salaries

Working conditions of social workers require urgent attention. South Africa requires an enthusiastic and optimistic workforce. Job dissatisfaction and

occupational stress were being aggravated by low salaries and poor working conditions. Lessons need to be learnt from the experiences of social workers in the UK.

Forums need to be created for social workers with regard to service conditions and salaries. A representative task team should be formed to investigate improvement in working conditions and salaries. The findings and recommendations of these investigations need to be forwarded to the Minister of Social Development for consideration and implementation. The Department of Social Development might need to pick up some 'tips' from the Department of Health, since it was reported in the *Daily News* (10 November,2003) that the Health sector has devised strategies to reduce the exodus of nurses to the private sector and overseas market. Their strategy of offering higher salary packages, including attractive benefits, and often better working conditions to re-attract professionals appeared to be successful. Perks included 100% annual bonus, substantial housing allowances, well-subsidised pension and medical aid, and generous leave benefits (*Daily News*, 10 November 2003).

Social workers experience burnout and this spills-over into their professional lives. Work pressures for social workers in the form of spill-over can also impact negatively on parenting and family-related functions. At present, neither statutory provisions nor employment-related fringe benefits provide much in the way of parent-related benefits in South Africa. Social workers need time out to de-stress in order to be optimally effective. It is therefore recommended that the following should be considered for inclusion in the service conditions of social workers:

a) Flexi-time working hours, for example :

- part –time working;
- term time working;

- flexible hours;
- compressed working week.

b) Additional leave arrangements:

- more compassionate leave (bereavement/marriage);
- more maternity leave (since we are a female-dominated profession);
- emergency leave;
- more family responsibility leave.

c) Voluntary breaks/authorised absence

Breaks away from current employment, with a guarantee of return to work within a certain period:

- employment breaks;
- career breaks /sabbaticals;
- carer's leave.

9.1.2   Supervision

The study indicated that supervision is neglected. Evidently, supervision in South Africa was ineffectual and a source of stress to many social workers. It is recommended that supervision should not only provide for advice and support, but help to identify and deal with learning areas.

In this regard, the following recommendations are made to agencies to ensure more effective supervision.

Agencies should offer supervision that is:

- regular and uninterrupted;
- well-structured and purposeful;
- recorded, and based on an agreement which includes how issues of power and differences will be addressed;
- periodically reviewed; and,
- within the context of an agency policy on supervision.

Supervision policies should outline agencies' interpretation of these principles for supervision practice. Supervision should encourage reflective practice among professionals.

In supervision, **supervisors** should:

- offer insights into working in certain communities and information about the legislative and procedural framework;
- outline and support communication with senior management;
- be sensitive to the frustrations of social workers occasioned by scarce resources;
- recognise and take into account the effect on their supervisees of a stressful working environment;
- be alert to situations of emergency; for instance, be able to anticipate and recognise stress and have the required listening, observation, diagnostic and evaluative skills;
- be accessible, empathic, positive and show confidence in the worker to boost supervisee morale; and,
- be aware that supervisees have personal lives which might affect their work.

Supervision should encourage worker autonomy and seek to empower supervisees. The supervisor should encourage maximum input from supervisees in planning the content of supervision sessions; for example, drawing up an agenda for the session. Greater involvement will be facilitated if the supervisor expects and welcomes questions and disagreements. Lastly, life-long learning should be encouraged. Supervisors should encourage reading and facilitate attendance at workshops, conferences, etc. Supervisors should also model good supervision by organising supervision for themselves and continuing to learn. This is particularly important when considering the newness of community work and the rapid changes taking place in the organisation and in South Africa.

9.1.3   Staff Development

In addition to supervision provided, welfare organisations should give attention to establishing well resourced human resource departments that function to support social workers. In consultation with social workers, such departments could facilitate the establishment of staff development programmes. Staff members have an important role to play in developing the educational aspect of the staff development programme. An educational focus should include a statement of overall goals and specific objectives for each programme. Another recommendation could be that an educational committee of professional staff and administrative personnel could jointly approach staff development by assessing learning needs first.

Staff development programmes could also pave the way for attendance at short courses and provide incentives for the completion of further study and higher degrees. In this way, social workers would be encouraged and rewarded for seeking improvement.

9.1.4   **Training and Ongoing Development**

In a rapidly changing world, social workers need to keep abreast of developments in the field of social work and welfare generally, but also in related fields. The need for ongoing professional development has been recognised by the South African Council for Social Service Professions, and it is anticipated that for continued registration, the social worker will be required to produce evidence of continuing professional education. If social workers develop themselves professionally, they will not only promote professional conduct, but also improve the status of social work.

It is therefore recommended that **social workers**:

- keep up to date with developments in their field of practice by attending relevant conferences and workshops;
- read professional books and subscribe to social work journals, in this way building a professional library;
- consider sharing journals with other social workers if they cannot afford the cost of subscribing to journals;
- subscribe to a journal club, which would entail a small group of professionals from one or more agencies agreeing to meet on a regular basis, weekly or monthly, to discuss professional literature, as recommended by Van Zyl and Botha (1997:31);
- should enrol as members of a professional association and participate in a meaningful manner in its activities. Attending meetings of professional associations is a means of staying informed and keeping abreast of developments in the field.

Similarly, educational institutions need to ensure relevancy in training social workers, and the following is recommended to **educational institutions**:

- Training needs to be relevant and to respond to the needs of social workers and the demands of the context. Urgent change of curriculum is therefore required. Innovations in the curriculum need to occur, such as entrepreneurship, policy analysis and formulation, anti-oppressive practice and more community development.

- Schools of social work have an important role to play in preparing practitioners to promote social and economic development. In promoting the social development approach, universities must include relevant curriculum content such as rural development, community development, socio-economic development, administration, social policy, project planning and management.

- Social work needs to become more politicised. Social workers need to change their methods by mobilising the marginalised and poor. This includes attacking structural injustices in society. *Social work training needs to address this issue and ensure that social work roles are extended to include involvement in advocacy and social action, policy, research and other more radical approaches to social development.* Within a developmental policy framework, social workers would therefore empower communities. Capacity building and training of social workers in this area is crucial. In addition, since *business plans are required for effective community development, economics as a subject in the social work curriculum should be encouraged.*

- Universities need to re-consider placements of students. The challenge in training institutions is for student placements to break away from more conventional settings and place social work students in rural and semi-rural/peri-urban areas to equip them for the harsh realities of practice.

- Universities need to partner with practice to determine emerging trends so that these can be incorporated into the curriculum.

- Social work education needs to take cognisance of future trends. To this end, there should be broad participation and consultation with all stakeholders, including researchers. Education cannot rely on untested assumptions about the challenges faced by social workers and the needs of the profession.

- Social workers are keen to become private practitioners. It is therefore suggested that education and training accommodate these needs by offering business management courses.

- The university should offer both long and short courses. Certificate courses and modular courses would be beneficial to ensure continuous professional development.

- There is also a need for competent educators. Social work educators need to reassess their roles within the changed South African context. There is a need for self–transformation in outlook and training methods. The emerging new societal problems must be understood by the educators, and teaching techniques need to be re-assessed.

- Educational institutions could assist with adjusting curricula to 'de-mystify' research for social workers and students.

- Curricula/courses should be accessible, perhaps decentralised, since social workers who are working need access to ongoing training.

9.1.6   Provision of Employee Assistance Programmes

The researcher established, as did Ross (1997), that stress and burnout seldom, if ever, affect the social worker only in the work situation. Family and work are interdependent, and stress spills over from the work setting to the worker's home life and from family life to the work milieu. There is therefore a need for employee assistance programmes so that independent counselling and supportive services could be provided for social workers. Employee assistance programmes should be offered in respect of marital problems, financial problems, poor work performance, high stress levels and work-related problems that affect social workers' productivity.

9.2   Dealing with Burnout

The study highlighted that South African social workers are highly stressed and 'burnt out'. Burnout is an extremely worrying and harmful phenomenon, for once it has established itself, and it becomes extremely difficult to remove it. Just as one bad apple can spoil the barrel, disaffected and demoralised workers suffering burnout can poison a whole team or staff

group, creating a seriously negative atmosphere and undermining commitment and good will. Burnout is therefore a problem worthy of serious consideration.

In order to guard against the very serious dangers of stress and burnout, **social workers** should endeavour to:

- be aware of the stress factors in their work and lives and attempt to keep them under control;

- lead a balanced lifestyle that will act as a buffer against the effects of work stress; and,

- access coping resources such as :

    i. *Physical stress-coping strategies* such as breathing and relaxation exercises, muscle relaxation, yoga, meditation, massage and reflexology, etc. Physical stress coping strategies will relieve tension, replenish resources, and strengthen the social worker's resistance to stress and illness.

    ii. *Emotional stress-coping strategies* such as ventilation of pent-up emotions, which can be practised with colleagues, supervisors or friends to reduce occupational stress; switching off one's thoughts and emotions from the work situation and focusing on a completely different, pleasant topic; using humour as light relief; or receiving counselling on how to nurture oneself.

    iii. *Social stress coping strategies* such as socialising with friends and colleagues and in this way getting away from

the stressful environment, and also taking vacations for time-out from work.

- Deriving spiritual strength and a sense of balance and perspective from their religious faiths/ spiritual beliefs.

Being well equipped to cope with stress and burnout does not depend solely on personal or individual factors. It also hinges on a range of organisational factors. Stress is a phenomenon which is simultaneously personal and organisational. Therefore, social welfare organisations have to develop interventions to minimise the stressors experienced by social workers as appropriate interventions play a crucial role in creating a supportive environment, promoting a positive culture and establishing staff care as a reality rather than mere rhetoric.

It is therefore recommended that *social welfare agencies*:

- create worker-friendly physical environments such as offices painted in colours that help to induce calmness and serenity, pictures depicting creativity and freshness, and so on;

- allocate certain days (such as every alternate Friday from 15h00 to 16h00) for staff get-togethers or staff socialisation time;

- arrange team-building sessions, which need to be informal and within a neutral environment, preferably away from the work setting;

- create a work environment in which social workers feel comfortable about off-loading concerns about work overload;

- use a participative style of management so that social workers are involved in policies that affect them;

- use 'climate surveys', such as attitude surveys or employee reaction surveys, to understand social workers' reactions and preferences with a view to implementing positive changes;

- develop action strategies that might improve organisational effectiveness and employee satisfaction;

- give recognition to community service when considering promotion; and,

- set goals and targets with incentives attached to all targets.

9.4 Proactive Role of Social Workers

Within the welfare sector, there is a perception that social workers are not relevant, especially in developmental work. The study confirmed that social workers are not proactive. Social workers therefore need to challenge the view that social work is not transforming. Social workers need to contribute actively in social welfare policy-making processes and not allow the State, together with other disciplines, to perform this function. Social workers should publicise their successes and make their voices heard on issues that affect the public. They need to demonstrate that the clinical and developmental aspects of work are not antithetical to each other, and that these should not be seen as dichotomous entities. Social workers need to illustrate how a comprehensive approach to social work services can incorporate therapy, social change and development.

Finally, social workers need to bring to the attention of policy makers and the State the obstacles they face in adopting a developmental framework and in accessing funds to implement projects. A new partnership has to emerge between welfare agencies and the State, in order to build initiatives to take forward the transformation process. Policy changes need to occur to overcome the problem of accessing funds to implement community work projects.

9.5   Strategies to deal with Social Problems

In order to cope with social problems, which are increasing in severity and complexity, social workers should be provided with opportunities to increase their effectiveness and efficiency. Social workers should also be compelled to conduct evaluative research to evaluate services and to attend networking meetings or lectures to improve their efficiency. The Department of Social Development and non-governmental agencies need to identify and acknowledge the importance of social workers and should assist in their development. Promoting continued professional development within the workforce is vital. A learning environment within an agency, focusing on development and empowerment is vital if services are to be improved and developed.

Since the study revealed a sense of helplessness and powerlessness experienced by social workers in relation to broader societal issues, it is recommended that multi-sectoral engagement is necessary. Thus educational curricula, policy change and unions have to co-ordinate efforts to change the status quo.

Lastly, since safety and security within the working environment featured as a frustrating concern among the majority of social workers, it is recommended that:

- A partnership should be formed between the police and social work agencies. Social workers should work closely with the police and enjoy the protection of the police while addressing social problems in the communities.

- Safe satellite offices should be set up within highly populated areas where there is existing infrastructural support (such as primary health care clinics etc.). This would prevent social workers from having to drive into high-risk areas to do home-visits, as clients could come to the satellite offices.

- Resources such as cell-phones, reliable vehicles, and access to two-way radio monitoring should be made available to social workers.

- Agencies should consider scrapping all unreliable vehicles.

- Social workers should communicate their concerns for safety and security to their Unions and the SACSSP and/or should lobby for action to change the status quo. Social workers will also need to partner with the government sector to handle their concern effectively.

9.6 High Workload

The social workers in the study highlighted that high, unmanageable caseloads contributed to their frustrations and stress, making practice of social work in South Africa problematic. There were also too many demands and too little time available to meet them. The recommendations in this respect are two-fold, namely, (1) for agencies and (2) for social workers.

For the agency, it is recommended that closer supervision and better support networks be provided for social workers with high caseloads. Further, some aspects of the social worker's work should be delegated to social auxiliary workers. In accordance with this suggestion, there is a need for proper training and quality control of social auxiliary workers. It is envisaged that social auxiliary staff could play a role in reducing burnout.

Recommendations **for the social worker** in handling a high workload focus on skills to assist them manage and co-ordinate a heavy workload. Social workers need to be empowered with management skills and setting of priorities.

The researcher is not suggesting that a social worker well-versed in the art of time and workload management should be able to cope with any amount of work, however large. Too much work is still too much work, however skilled we might be. Time management and maintaining a sense of control over the workload is an important avenue for managing stress and reducing work pressure. Specific suggestions of achieving this could include:

- planning for deadlines in terms of daily, weekly and monthly tasks rather than waiting for crises to occur;

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- setting firm time limits, making genuine efforts to organise and prioritise, and introduction of lists and diaries to determine tasks priorities;
- exercising self-discipline in handling administrative tasks systematically and expeditiously and not procrastinating or allowing them to accumulate.

9.7 Strategies to re-attract or retain social workers

There are many strategies for re-attracting/retaining social workers. These include:

- Better salaries; improved working conditions; flexible contracts; continuous professional development opportunities; opportunities for upward mobility and improved supervision and management. There is also a need for the development of a range of flexible working conditions, as discussed previously, to acknowledge a range of needs of social workers.

- Career and pay progress could be linked to qualification, competence, and merit.

- Consultant posts could be created for those who have higher qualifications in order that their worth be appreciated.

- Attention should be given to dealing with safety and security in the working environment.

- A progressive management culture that recognises and responds to the needs of social workers needs to be created.

- Part of a strategy to recruit returning social workers to the South African profession could include the use of "golden hellos" and reward their international experience and development financially.

- The profession could also consider the feasibility of compulsory community service to delay the departure of social workers.

- Family and support networks of workers were lost through emigration. Understanding this dynamic, the profession could re-attract social workers back to South Africa via a campaign that highlights their need for support networks.

- Cultural and spiritual fulfilment in South Africa was appreciated. When people are shut off from their own culture and are restricted in practising their religion, they require greater spiritual affirmation. People generally do not realise how important their culture is until they are removed from it. A re-attraction campaign could focus on this benefit in South Africa.

- The sunny South African climate is very different from the grey skies and wet weather in the UK. There is need to highlight the glorious South African climate in advertising campaigns to re-attract South African social workers.

9.8 Recommendations for further study

The following recommendations for future study are:

a) A comparative study to be undertaken to understand the obstacles experienced by social workers in State departments and non-governmental organisations in implementing the developmental paradigm.

b) As it is possible that urban and rural experiences of social work in South Africa are different, a further study should be undertaken to investigate urban versus rural needs and experiences of social workers.

c) A pilot study to investigate attitudes regarding a year's internship in social work.

d) Since this study pointed to racism and bureaucracy as problem areas, collaborative research with UK researchers to examine these concerns needs to be conducted to clearly identify the nature and extent of the problem.

e) Investigating efforts by the SACSSP to improve salaries and service conditions and explore why social workers in South Africa do not partner with this body.

f) Since crime and violence were found to influence decisions to work abroad, identifying the exact nature and incidence of crime and violence as it affects social workers in South Africa – both personally and in practice is necessary. This would provide statistical evidence of how unsafe the work environment is.

g)   There should be ongoing research to examine the trends emerging with respect to the status quo of the profession. It is expected that trends will change depending on contextual developments. In order to survive, it is vital for the profession to identify the trends affecting the profession.

h)   It is possible that adjustment and attitude changes would occur among relocated social workers after a five-year adjustment period. Therefore, research needs to be conducted with UK social workers after a five-year period to identify their needs and experiences after being in the UK for a longer period. This will help identify whether their reactions and experiences change over time.

Conclusion

This research study revealed that social workers, both male and female, from NGOs and governmental organisations across the various provinces, and with significant years of experience, were emigrating to the UK. Relocation is therefore not confined to a select group of social workers and should be considered a widespread problem to be addressed by the profession.

In this study, research evidence was provided on the concerns plaguing the profession such as safety and security, service conditions, poor salaries, staff turnover, ineffective graduates/educators, curriculum change, and continuing education, to highlight but a few. Juxtaposed alongside this data, we learn that culture, family, social ties and climate were significant factors preventing social workers from leaving the country. For the profession to

survive, a partnership needs to be established between employers, workers and educators working together to create new supportive structures and develop knowledge and skills on an on-going basis.

Recommendations were made by social workers to improve the image of social work as a way of contributing to its survival. These recommendations include a unifying role to be played by the Council of Social Service Professions to tackle cogent issues such as service conditions; staff development/training in accord with the need for continuous professional development; relevancy of training curricula to the new developmental paradigm; competent educators; research, and using auxiliary workers in service delivery. A moot issue that emerged from the study was that social workers were excited to embrace developmental strategies that made a difference to previously disadvantaged communities. This needs to be incorporated into policy/plans set up to address relevancy, image and survival issues facing the profession.

A further component to consider in addressing the exodus of social workers would be for policy-makers, employers, educators and the South African Council of Social Service Professions (SACSSP) to prevent any further under-valuing of the profession and its practitioners. Social workers need to be presented as valued and crucial role players in our newly developed democracy.

Lastly, since safety and security were found to directly affect decisions to emigrate, urgent attention must be afforded this concern. Social workers cannot wait apathetically for these to be addressed, but need to use their skills individually and collectively to lobby for change. We cannot afford to remain helpless spectators (Lombard, 2000). Then we will not need to question where we are going, but how far we have come.

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APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE

GROUP ONE: Social Workers Considering Leaving South Africa

Section 1 :   Identifying Details

1.   Gender

Male	Female

2.   Number of Dependents

None	1 - 2	3 - 4	4 and over

3.   Area of Work

KwaZulu - Natal	Cape	Gauteng

4.   Present Designation

Director	
Assistant Director	
Chief Social Worker	
Senior Social Worker	
Social Worker	

5.   How many years experience as a social worker?

1 - 3 years	
4 - 6 years	
7 years and over	

6. Work Setting

Governmental Department	
Non – Governmental Agency	
Community Based Organisation	

7. What is your present qualification?

Doctor of Philosophy	
M.A. Social work	
B.A (Social Work)	

Section 2 :   **Agency & Work Setting**

1. Did you receive an orientation / induction at you agency when you commenced work?

Yes	No

2. If Yes, How long was the induction :

1 week	2 weeks	3 weeks	4 weeks and over

3. Evaluate the effectiveness of the induction

Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor

4.   Your orientation included :

	Yes	No	Uncertain
Mission & Constitution of Agency			
Understanding nature of work /field of practice through Reading /Literature			
Methods of Intervention used at agency			
Hierarchy Lines of Communication			
Social Work Legislation pertaining to agency			
Administrative Functions e.g. Recording, Supervision, Filing			

Other : _____

5.   What is your present workload ?

a)   Casework :

1 - 20	21 – 40	41 - 60	61 - 80	80 and over

b)   Groupwork : _____

c)   Community Projects/Programmes : _____

d)   Describe the community work projects that you have implemented:

_____

_____

_____

6.   Are you able to effectively handle the workload?

Almost Always	Often	Sometimes	Almost Never

7.   Do you receive back- up / support from staff / agency when you are unable to handle the workload ?

Almost always	Often	Sometimes	Almost Never

8.   How frequently do you receive supervision ?

Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	No supervision

9.   Rate the usefulness of supervision :

Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor

10. Identify the nature of problems and frequency of dealing with them at your agency :

Never - N   Seldom - S   Occasionally - O
Frequently - F   Very Frequently - VF

	N	S	O	F	VF
Unemployment					
Poverty					
Marital Discord/ Violence					
Family violence					
Depression/ Suicide					
Homelessness					
HIV /AIDS					
Sexuality Issues e.g. promiscuity/prostitution					
Abuse : Physical/Emotional Sexual					
Substance abuse					
Racial Tension / Violence					

Other - Specify : _____

11a). Are you equipped to deal with the diversity of problems encountered ?

Yes	No

b)   Substantiate your answer:

_____

_____

_____

12.   Provide details on the type of training/learning you have had in dealing with such problems :

Academic Training		Reading & literature		Staff Development		Attended Course/Workshop		No Training	
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No

Other - Specify : _____

13. What recommendations would you make to help equip social workers to effectively handle/ deal with the diversity of problems ?

_____

_____

_____

14.   Does your Agency offer any staff development programmes ?

Yes	No

15. If yes, how often do you have Staff development programmes?

Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Bi - monthly	Yearly

16. Who Identified the areas / topics for staff development ?

	Yes	No
Management		
Senior Social Workers		
Staff		
Policy Guidelines		

Other - Specify : _____

17. Comment on the following staff development programmes in relation to the categories provided.

Staff Developments	Exposed	Never Exposed	Should be Exposed
Improving services			
Understanding Current Policies/ Legislation e.g. White Paper for Welfare			
Labour Relations			
Strategic Planning			
HIV/Aid's			
Trauma			
Victim Empowerment			
Updating /Refreshing on Theory			
Bereavement			

Programme formulation			
Spiritual Counselling			
Cross Cultural Counselling			
Poverty Alleviation			
Abuse : Physical Emotional / Sexual			
Marital Discord /Violence			
Substance abuse			
Conflict Resolution			
Life skills			
Work Motivation			
Communication skills			

Other – Specify : _____

18.   Do you enjoy the work you are presently doing ?

Almost Always	Often	Sometimes	Almost Never

19. What changes should be made to make your work more satisfying ?

_____

_____

_____

20. Which method of social work is most frequently used by you in your work ?

Casework	Groupwork	Community work	Family therapy

21. Are you utilizing the developmental approach ?

Almost Always	Often	Sometimes	Almost Never

22. What should be the main focus of developmental social work ?

_____

_____

_____

23. Are you in favour of this focus for social work currently ?

Yes	No	Uncertain

24. Are these methods serving the needs of your clientele ?

Almost Always	Often	Sometimes	Almost Never

25. What changes has your agency made regarding the changed emphasis towards the developmental approach ?

_____

_____

_____

26. What have you done to equip yourself regarding the changed emphasis?

_____

_____

_____

27. Describe the area/ neighbourhood in which you work :

Secure	Insecure	Active	Apathetic

28. Do you feel safe and comfortable to work in the areas ?

Almost Always	Often	Sometimes	Almost Never

29. The following are possible features of the neighbourhood you work in and could have an impact on your service delivery. Tick the appropriate column that applies to you.

	Always	Sometimes	Never
Poor Housing			
High Crime Rate			
Overcrowding			
Vagrancy			
Lack of Resources & recreational Facility			
Substance Abuse			
Poverty			
No/ Limited Safety & Security			
Apathy			

Other - Specify : _____

30. How do you deal with the aforementioned obstacles/ frustrations?

_____

_____

_____

31. Describe benefits in working in your neighbourhoods?

_____

_____

_____

32. Are you satisfied with your service conditions?

Yes	No	No Opinion

33. Discuss those conditions of service that you consider unhelpful /restrictive/punitive/or frustrating?

_____

_____

_____

34. Does your agency provide any incentives?

Yes	No

35. What type of incentives are offered:

	Yes	No
13th Cheque		
Holiday Bonus		
Merit Bonus		
Loyalty Bonus		

Other – Specify : _____

36. Do you believe your salary is comparable to other 4-year professional qualifications?

Yes	No

37.   Are you satisfied with your present salary package?

Yes	No

38.   Should salary increases be allocated according to:

	Yes	No
Experience		
Merit		
Initiatives		
Further Qualification		

39.   Salaries for social workers are very low :

Agree	Disagree	No Opinion

40.   Has your agency included/represented you in salary negotiations ?

Sometimes	Never	Always

Section 3 :South African Council for Social Service Profession

1.   The benefits of being affiliated to the South African Council for Social Service Profession:

	Yes	No	Uncertain
Assisting in reviewing service conditions			
Providing a Social Work Identity			
Providing training/workshops			
Improving poor service delivery			
Disciplinary Issues			
Setting Minimum Standards			
Ethical Guidelines			

2. How would you rate the effectiveness of the South African Council for Social Service Profession?

Very Effective	Ineffective	No opinion

Section 4 :Socio Economic - Political

1. Your decision to leave the country to seek employment in the United Kingdom was mainly because of :

	Yes	No
Ambition to have a lucrative career		
Financial Gain – Earn in pounds		
Spiritual		
Medical		
Frustration with the profession		
High Stress		
No room for upward mobility		
Safety and Security		
Your family's future : Specify		
Personal : Specify		

Other – Specify : _____

2. How does the safety and security circumstances of the country affect you ?

_____

_____

_____

3.   What makes social work in South Africa problematic for you ?

_____

_____

_____

4.   There are positives in staying and working in South Africa. Tick that
       which is applicable to you.

Support Networks e.g. family/friends		
Cultural Identity		
Political Change		
Spiritual Support		
Availability of recreational facilities		
Climate and geography		
High standard of social work training		

Other :

_____

Section 5 : Recommendation

1. What would you consider to be important for the survival of social work in South Africa? Rearrange the following in order of importance to you, using 1 for most important and 10 that least important.

Offering improved/competitive salaries	
Research to improve service delivery	
Providing incentives to social workers	
Providing staff development	
Offering training / retraining to social workers	
Changing the academic curriculum	
Training of educators	
Providing specialized training	
Providing a safer work environment	
Conduct Research	

2. What should the tertiary institution include / offer to assist social workers to keep abreast of changes in the field ?

	Yes	No
Change Curriculum		
Provide Non Degree Courses		
Modular Courses		
Certificate Courses		
Winter school programmes		

3. What should the Ministry Welfare offer social workers ?

	Yes	No	Uncertain
Continuous Staff training			
Improve Staff Development			
Improve Service Conditions			
Offer incentives			

4. What forums/pressure groups should be developed to address the needs of social workers ?

_____

_____

_____

5. What changes need to occur for you to consider returning/remaining in South Africa ?

	Yes	No	Uncertain
Improvement on safety and security			
Changes in Political And Judicial System			
Change in Promotion Policies			
Ensuring Safer Environment to Work Within			
Change in Methods of Service Delivery			

Other – specify : _____

6. What would you like to be included in your service conditions ?

	Yes	No	Uncertain
Overtime			
Flexitime			
Transport allowance			
Salary Increases to recognize further qualifications			
Work / Merit increases			
Housing allowances			

Maternity Benefits			
Medical Aid			
Pension			

Other – Specify : _____

7. What recommendations can you make in respect of making social work in South Africa thrive ?

_____

_____

_____

8. Any Other Suggestions :

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for your participation.

APPENDIX 2

QUESTIONNAIRE

GROUP TWO: Social Workers Remaining in South Africa

Section 1 :   Identifying Details

1.   Gender

Male	Female

2.   Number of Dependents

None	1 - 2	3 - 4	4 and over

3.   Area of Work

KwaZulu - Natal	Cape	Gauteng

4.   Present Designation

Director	
Assistant Director	
Chief Social Worker	
Senior Social Worker	
Social Worker	

5.   How many years experience as a social worker?

1 - 3 years	
4 - 6 years	
7 years and over	

6.   Work Setting

Governmental Department	
Non – Governmental Agency	
Community Based Organisation	

7.   What is your present qualification?

Doctor of Philosophy	
M.A. Social work	
B.A (Social Work)	

Section 2 :   Agency & Work Setting

1.   Did you receive an orientation / induction at you agency when you commenced work?

Yes	No

2.   If Yes, How long was the induction :

1 week	2 weeks	3 weeks	4 weeks and over

3.   Evaluate the effectiveness of the induction

Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor

4.   Your orientation included :

	Yes	No	Uncertain
Mission & Constitution of Agency			
Understanding nature of work /field of practice through Reading /Literature			
Methods of Intervention used at agency			
Hierarchy Lines of Communication			
Social Work Legislation pertaining to agency			
Administrative Functions e.g. Recording, Supervision, Filing			

Other : _____

5.   What is your present workload ?

a)   Casework :

1 - 20	21 – 40	41 - 60	61 - 80	80 and over

b)   Groupwork : _____

c)   Community Projects/Programmes : _____

d)   Describe the community work projects that you have implemented:

_____

_____

_____

6. Are you able to effectively handle the workload?

Almost Always	Often	Sometimes	Almost Never

7. Do you receive back- up / support from staff / agency when you are unable to handle the workload ?

Almost always	Often	Sometimes	Almost Never

8. How frequently do you receive supervision ?

Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	No supervision

9. Rate the usefulness of supervision :

Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor

10. Identify the nature of problems and frequency of dealing with them at your agency :

Never - N   Seldom - S   Occasionally - O
Frequently - F   Very Frequently - VF

	N	S	O	F	VF
Unemployment					
Poverty					
Marital Discord/ Violence					

Family violence					
Depression/ Suicide					
Homelessness					
HIV /AIDS					
Sexuality Issues e.g. promiscuity/prostitution					
Abuse : Physical/Emotional Sexual					
Substance abuse					
Racial Tension / Violence					

Other - Specify : _____

11a). Are you equipped to deal with the diversity of problems
encountered ?

Yes	No

b)   Substantiate your answer:

_____

_____

_____

12. Provide details on the type of training/learning you have had in dealing with such problems :

Academic Training		Reading & literature		Staff Development		Attended Course/Workshop		No Training	
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No

Other - Specify : _____

13. What recommendations would you make to help equip social workers to effectively handle/ deal with the diversity of problems ?

_____

_____

_____

14. Does your Agency offer any staff development programmes ?

Yes	No

15. If yes, how often do you have Staff development programmes?

Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Bi - monthly	Yearly

16. Who Identified the areas / topics for staff development ?

	Yes	No
Management		
Senior Social Workers		
Staff		
Policy Guidelines		

Other - Specify : _____

17. Comment on the following staff development programmes in relation to the categories provided.

Staff Developments	Exposed	Never Exposed	Should be Exposed
Improving services			
Understanding Current Policies/Legislation e.g. White Paper for Welfare			
Labour Relations			
Strategic Planning			
HIV/Aid's			
Trauma			
Victim Empowerment			
Updating /Refreshing on Theory			
Bereavement			
Programme formulation			
Spiritual Counselling			
Cross Cultural Counselling			
Poverty Alleviation			
Abuse : Physical Emotional / Sexual			
Marital Discord /Violence			
Substance abuse			
Conflict Resolution			
Life skills			
Work Motivation			
Communication skills			

Other – Specify : _____

18.   Do you enjoy the work you are presently doing ?

Almost Always	Often	Sometimes	Almost Never

19. What changes should be made to make your work more satisfying ?

_____

_____

_____

20.   Which method of social work is most frequently used by you in your work ?

Casework	Groupwork	Community work	Family therapy

21.   Are you utilizing the developmental approach ?

Almost Always	Often	Sometimes	Almost Never

22.   What should be the main focus of developmental social work ?

_____

_____

_____

23.   Are you in favour of this focus for social work currently ?

Yes	No	Uncertain

24. Are these methods serving the needs of your clientele ?

Almost Always	Often	Sometimes	Almost Never

25. What changes has your agency made regarding the changed emphasis towards the developmental approach ?

_____

_____

_____

26. What have you done to equip yourself regarding the changed emphasis?

_____

_____

_____

27. Describe the area/ neighbourhood in which you work :

Secure	Insecure	Active	Apathetic

28. Do you feel safe and comfortable to work in the areas ?

Almost Always	Often	Sometimes	Almost Never

29. The following are possible features of the neighbourhood you work in and could have an impact on your service delivery. Tick the appropriate column that applies to you.

	Always	Sometimes	Never
Poor Housing			
High Crime Rate			
Overcrowding			
Vagrancy			
Lack of Resources & recreational Facility			
Substance Abuse			
Poverty			
No/ Limited Safety & Security			
Apathy			

Other - Specify : _____

30. How do you deal with the aforementioned obstacles/ frustrations?

_____

_____

_____

31. Describe benefits in working in your neighbourhoods?

_____

_____

_____

32.	Are you satisfied with your service conditions?

Yes	No	No Opinion

33.	Discuss those conditions of service that you consider unhelpful /restrictive/punitive/or frustrating?

_____

_____

_____

34.	Does your agency provide any incentives?

Yes	No

35.	What type of incentives are offered:

	Yes	No
13th Cheque		
Holiday Bonus		
Merit Bonus		
Loyalty Bonus		

Other – Specify : _____

36.	Do you believe your salary is comparable to other 4-year professional qualifications?

Yes	No

37.   Are you satisfied with your present salary package?

Yes	No

38.   Should salary increases be allocated according to:

	Yes	No
Experience		
Merit		
Initiatives		
Further Qualification		

39.   Salaries for social workers are very low :

Agree	Disagree	No Opinion

40.   Has your agency included/represented you in salary negotiations ?

Sometimes	Never	Always

Section 3 :South African Council for Social Service Profession

1.   The benefits of being affiliated to the South African Council for
      Social Service Profession:

	Yes	No	Uncertain
Assisting in reviewing service conditions			
Providing a Social Work Identity			
Providing training/workshops			
Improving poor service delivery			
Disciplinary Issues			
Setting Minimum Standards			
Ethical Guidelines			

2. How would you rate the effectiveness of the South African Council for Social Service Profession?

Very Effective	Ineffective	No opinion

Section 4 :Socio Economic - Political

1. Have you ever considered leaving South Africa to work overseas?

Yes	No

2. Comment on the following as reasons to work as a social worker in South Africa rather than leave the country.

	Yes	No
Family Ties		
Social Links / Bonds		
Future of Children		
Upward Mobility		
Belief in contributing to Social Work		
Loyalty to the profession		
Personal fulfilment		
Spiritual fulfilment		
Cultural fulfilment		
Medical fulfilment		
Lack of funds to leave the country		
Age - Too old/young		
Availability of Recreational Facilities		
Climate & geography		
High Standard of social work training		
Fear of change /unknown		
Possibility of a lower rank overseas		

Other – Specify : _____

3.   How does the safety and security circumstances of the country affect you ?

_____

_____

_____

4.   What makes social work in South Africa attractive for you ?

_____

_____

_____

5.   Comment on the benefits of working in South Africa ?

_____

_____

_____

6.   Explain the impact of staff turnover at your agency :

_____

_____

_____

Section 5 : Recommendation

2. What would you consider to be important for the survival of social work in South Africa? Rearrange the following in order of importance to you, using 1 for most important and 10 that least important.

Offering improved/competitive salaries	
Research to improve service delivery	
Providing incentives to social workers	
Providing staff development	
Offering training / retraining to social workers	
Changing the academic curriculum	
Training of educators	
Providing specialized training	
Providing a safer work environment	
Conduct Research	

2. What should the tertiary institution include / offer to assist social workers to keep abreast of changes in the field ?

	Yes	No
Change Curriculum		
Provide Non Degree Courses		
Modular Courses		
Certificate Courses		
Winter school programmes		

3. What should the Ministry Welfare offer social workers ?

	Yes	No	Uncertain
Continuous Staff training			
Improve Staff Development			
Improve Service Conditions			
Offer incentives			

4. What forums/pressure groups should be developed to address the needs of social workers ?

_____

_____

_____

5. What changes need to occur for you to consider returning/remaining in South Africa ?

	Yes	No	Uncertain
Improvement on safety and security			
Changes in Political And Judicial System			
Change in Promotion Policies			
Ensuring Safer Environment to Work Within			
Change in Methods of Service Delivery			

Other – specify : _____

6. What would you like to be included in your service conditions ?

	Yes	No	Uncertain
Overtime			
Flexitime			
Transport allowance			
Salary Increases to recognize further qualifications			
Work / Merit increases			
Housing allowances			

Maternity Benefits			
Medical Aid			
Pension			

Other – Specify : _____

7.   What recommendations can you make in respect of making social work in South Africa thrive ?

_____

_____

_____

8.   Any Other Suggestions :

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for your participation.

APPENDIX 3

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Social Workers in the United Kingdom

Identifying Details

1.   Gender :   _____

2.   Type of Visa: _____

3.   Marital Status: _____

4.   No. of Dependants: _____

5.   Years of experience as a social worker: _____

Themes/ Thematic Questions

1.   What made social work in South Africa problematic for y

2.   Benefits of working in the UK.

3.   Negative experiences while working in the UK

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Social Workers in the United Kingdom

Identifying Details

1.   Gender :   _____

2.   Type of Visa: _____

3.   Marital Status: _____

4.   No. of Dependants: _____

5.   Years of experience as a social worker: _____

Themes/ Thematic Questions

1.   What made social work in South Africa problematic for you?

2.   Benefits of working in the UK.

3.   Negative experiences while working in the UK.

4.   Relevance of South African education and training.

5.   Recommendations for the survival of social work in South Africa