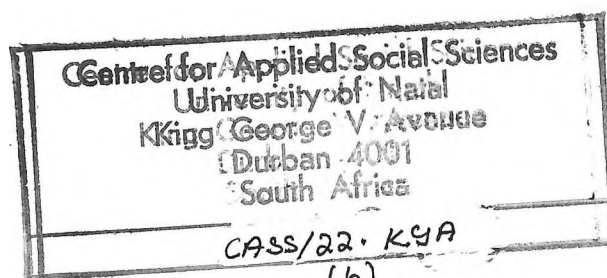BLACK SOCIAL WORKERS

AND ROLE CONFLICT

A brief study of role conflict and work attitude of black
social workers in Welfare Agencies.

Project submitted as part of the requirements for the
Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Social Sciences in the
Centre for Applied Social Sciences, University of
Natal, Durban.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

C O N T E N T S

-oOo-

INTRODUCTION

For the purpose of this study, a Black Social Worker has been narrowly defined to refer to African Social Worker.

When a young Social Worker enters the field of practice, he, like any other professional, brings to his job attitudes and beliefs shaped by his back-ground and training. Some of these attitudes and beliefs will be re-shaped by his experiences as a professional operating within a bureacratic structure. There are however, professionals whose beliefs and attitudes will remain unchanged in their pursuit of professional ideals as the gap between these ideals and the external social realities becomes evident.

Since social work is a relatively young profession in South Africa, a lot of problems are still being encountered regarding the professional status of Social Workers generally, and of Black Social Workers in particular.

A professional has been variously defined but most of the definitions include the following characteristics:-

a) Attainment of formal qualification as prerequisite for membership of a profession. As a form of compromise, some professions give special recognition to people who have not had formal training but have acquired, through years of practical experience, necessary skills in a given field of practice. Such people are often given "associate" membership of professional organisations.

b) Use of skills and application of a body of theoretical knowledge when performing their work.

c) Because of their exclusive access to their knowledge and skills, their professional actions can only be evaluated by their professional peers.

d) The right to make autonomous decisions subject only to peer group discipline.

e) Their decisions are made and skills exercised primarily in the interest of their clients.

f) Practitioners are bound by a Code of Ethics.

The Code of Ethics of the South African Black Social Workers' Association reads thus:-

"1. I believe that I am a member of a profession which strives to promote the social wellbeing of my fellow-man.

2. I believe in the worth of every person and his relative capacity for development worthy of a human being.

3. I believe that every human being should be given the opportunity to fulfill his human potential and that he should be able to rely on professional support and guidance if his own capacities are inadequate.

4. I recognise the right of every human being to make his own decisions in conducting his life within the framework of the standards of behaviour accepted by society.

5. As a professional Social Worker, I will therefore strive:-

    a) to conduct myself responsibly and with integrity;

    b) to place professional interests before my personal considerations;

    c) to use in a responsible manner, respecting the privacy of the people I serve, information gained in professional relationships;

    d) to respect the accepted institutions and codes of society as well as the laws of the land, and where necessary to suggest amendments in an appropriate manner;

    e) to co-operate in a positive professional manner with colleagues in my own and other professions;

    f) to achieve the highest possible standard of professional services.

DECLARATION:

I do, therefore, solemnly undertake to serve with dignity, honour, diligence, and faith in this profession which I am making my own, to endeavour to promote and advance it; to be conscientious, sincere and unselfish in my work. I believe it is my sacred duty to serve my fellow-man. I believe in the dignity of man; in his capacity for self-improvement; but I acknowledge his ultimate right to self-determination." (1)

Social Work in South Africa has, for many years, been having a semi-professional status. Although social workers were required to register as social workers in terms of the National Welfare Act No 79/1965, this was not compulsory. The Act only laid down that:

a) No person shall be appointed as a professional officer (Welfare) in the public service unless he is registered or provisionally registered.

(1) South African Black Social Workers' Association Annual Conference Brochure

1st - 4th September 1978

Therefore, should any person presently employed by the Department of Social Welfare and Pensions resign, such person shall not be re-appointed unless he/she is registered in terms of the Act.

b) Any social worker employed by a welfare organisation will not be subsidised should he/she resign to take on another position.

In 1978 Council for Social and Associated Workers was established in terms of section 19(i) of the Social and Associated Workers Act No 110 of 1978. With the establishment of this council, social work profession acquired the full professional status similar to that of medical practitioners, nurses, pharmacists, accountants, etc.and the registration of social workers became compulsory.

South African society, with its separated communities and institutions, has created, for a Black social worker, a "Black experience" that continually shapes and re-shapes his perceptions of his role as a member of a larger South African society, of his community and of his profession. His position is determined by social policy.

The concept 'Social Policy' has been defined by many sociologists as a philosophical concept, a product, a process, and a framework of action:-

" 1. Social Policy as a philosophical concept - in an abstract sense, social policy is a principle whereby the members of large organisations and political entities collectively seek enduring solutions to the problems that affect them - almost the opposite, that is, of rugged individualism.

2. Viewed as a product, social policy consists of the conclusions reached by persons concerned with the betterment of community conditions and social life, and with the amelioration of deviance and social disorganisation......which lays out the intended policy for an organisation or political unit.

3. As a process, social policy is the fundamental process by which enduring organisations maintain an element of stability and at the same time seek to improve conditions for their members. Existing social policies are usually modified in the face of changing conditions and values.

4. As a framework of action, social policy is both product and process. It assumes the availability of a well-delineated policy which is to be implemented within the context of potential changes in the values, structure and conditions of the group affected. " (2)

According to Peter Townsend, "we must define social policy not just as the strategy of development of the social services as defined by government, but as the underlying as well as the professed rationale for institutionalised control of present and future development. Included would be measures adopted and organised by government but also by industry, voluntary associations, professions and other bodies to meet specifically social objectives - the achievement of social equality or justice, the redistribution of wealth, the adjustment of income to meet the need of dependency, equality of people of different races or religions and so on........" (3)

As it is important to understand the behaviour of human beings in all spheres of life, and how they are motivated, and then conditioned by their inherited constitution, their life, experiences and the entire social environment in which they live, it is equally important to isolate the position of a Black Social Worker as a professional.

The view taken here is that although the problems a Black Social Worker faces are broadly speaking, the same as those faced by other Social Workers (in terms of broad categories) when it comes to specifics, his are to a large degree peculiar. The system within which he lives and operates, creates for him a unique environment. It is clear therefore, that although specific social policies are conceived of as societal responses to specific social needs or problems such as income insufficiency, child neglect and abuse, poor health and education, substandard housing, delinquency, etc., where such policies are based on racist principles and ideology, they turn out to be the dynamic source of all or most of the social problems especially in communities that are discriminated against. This is because social problems are rooted in the fabric of a society which in turn derives from, and is constantly maintained by, its system of social policies.

(2) FREEMAN H. & SHERWOOD C.C. - Social Research and Social Policy, 1970 p.2 - Prentice Hall, New Jersey.

(3) TOWNSEND, P. : Strategies in Meeting Poverty (A paper presented at an International Conference on Family, Poverty and Social Policy, in Manchester England, Sept. 20 1969) in Gil D : Unravelling Social Policy, p.7, 1973. Schenkman Publishing Co. Cambridge Mass.

The problem area of a Black Social Worker is a typical example of
how social policies are not merely potential solutions of social
problems, but are also powerful underlying causes thereof.   The
inequality of welfare services and resources puts social work
practice among Blacks at a disadvantage.

E X A M P L E S

TABLE I — Page 6/.......

TABLE 1   SOCIAL   GRANTS   AND   PENSIONS (Per month)

	WHITES	INDIANS	COLOUREDS	AFRICANS
Old Age, Blind, Diability and War Veterans' Pensions	97,00	54,00	54,00	33,00
Supplementary Allowance payable to War Veterans	10,00	5,00	5,00	2,50
Attendant's Allowance	10,00	5,00	5,00	4,00
N.B.No pension is paid if annual income/other means exceed the amount of				348,00
No pension is paid if annual income/other means and pensions will exceed	1668,00	900,00	9,00	–

CHILD PROTECTION

* TABLE II —PARENTS AND CHILDREN'S GRANTS (per month)

a) For Africans

Maximum amount payable to parent	R28,75
plus	
Additional Amount	2,50
plus	
Special Additional Amount	1,75
TOTAL	R33,00

Grant payable in respect of a child	7,15
Further amount per child	0,50
Maximum amount of State grant per family (Excluding additional amounts)	57,35
Maximum amount of State grant per family (Including additional amounts)	61,60

N.B.

In order to qualify for the maximum amount of maintenance grant, the family means plus State grant must not exceed (excluding additional amounts)   70,35

b) For Whites, Indians and Coloureds — Children's Grants

	WHITES	INDIANS	COLOUREDS
Max. Grant in respect of each child (White)/ each of the 1st four children (Indian & Coloured)	25,00	11,65	11,65
Grant payable in respect of each scholar	8,00	-	-
plus An amount per child in respect of the 1st three children(Whites)/the 1st four children (Indians & Coloureds)	17,33	12,65	12,65
An amount per child in respect of the fourth and each subsequent child (Whites)	15,00	-	-
NOTE: Max. amount of children's grant that may be paid	-	46,60	46,60

* TABLE III

FOSTER CARE AND PLACES OF SAFETY GRANTS

	WHITES	INDIANS	COLOUREDS	AFRICANS
Foster Care Grant (monthly)	66,00	42,60	42,60	24,00
Place of Safety Grant (daily)	2,16	1,42	1,42	0,79

It is inevitable, due to the often diametrically opposed values of a profession and forces determining social policy, that a social worker, as a professional will sometimes experience conflict between his professional norms and the demands of the system within which he operates.

Being and seeing oneself as neglected, unfairly and unequally treated is a serious source of alienation and growth prevention for many individuals and sub-groups. The distrust and hostility or withdrawn passivity which is a consequence of these perceptions is a major source of erosion of aspirations, hopes, personal commitments to growth and participation. Perhaps one of the greatest pollutants of human motivation and commitment is the early and frequent experience of disconnection or discontinuity regarding goals or values, intentions, and action.

One area of conflict is the nature of institutions through which social work services in the Black community have to be channelled. This is because government-created institutions are generally being rejected and to many social workers, serving through them implies support to, and recognition of such institutions. Some social workers serve through them with reservations because in many areas such institutions are the onlysocial welfare channels. It must be accepted that if one serves with reservations, one's commitment to that service is normally kept at a minimum.

In a community with many political divisions and organisational factions, paralysis sets in and this makes community development and community organisation methods very difficult to practise. It is difficult, almost impossible to have a programme that cuts across organisational or associational differences.

* 1980 figures.

In a situation like that, it is expected that some professionals will make a choice of the organisation(s) they would feel comfortable working with on ideological grounds. Others will choose to work with whatever organisation regardless of its basic philosophy as long as it undertakes or can undertake community development projects. Yet others resign to the role of caseworker within bureacratic structures and accept the day's events as they come. There is also a group that will try to seek solutions by seeking membership of professional organisations/associations where strategies for change are continually being formulated and reviewed to keep the professional informed of current developments and issues within his profession,

Council for Social and Associated workers, as mentioned earlier, has lifted social work from semi-professional to full-professional status. As a statutory body, it has a risk of joining the ranks of bureaucratic structures. One unfortunate effect of bureaucratic structures is that they tend to have a controlling function rather than a developmental one. They seem concernced more with efficiency rather than with effectiveness. If the council becomes a mere bureaucratic structure, it will become another underlying source of a social worker's professional conflict and frustration.

In a society kept in check by a network of security legislation, social action as a strategy for bringing about social change involves paying a very high price. It can be expected that professionals conveniently omit it from their lists of alternative courses of action. This lowers professional practice and leads to a kind of professional practice where the professional merely treats the symptoms rather than the causes of social problems.

Black social workers receive their basic training from the University of Fort Hare, University of the North, University of Zululand, and the University of South Africa. Before the introduction of ethnic university Black Social Workers were trained at the Jan Hofmeyr School of Social Work, the only independent School of Social Work for Blacks which was closed down in 1960, and at English Language universities. These English Language universities admit Blacks for post-graduate programmes aimed at improving the quality of social work practice in the various social work methods.

In addition to these programmes, countries like the United States, Britain, Canada and West Germany provide, through their embassies, cultural exchange programmes from which Black Social Workers benefit a lot.

The view taken in this study is that social policy in South Africa, presents for a Black Social Worker, a set of unique circumstances and it is hoped that this study will show the extent to which this "Black experience" continually acts upon his motivation, his attitudes towards himself and his profession, his job satisfaction or lack of it, his frustrations, his expectations, his persistence and his despair.

M E T H O D O L O G Y

A questionnaire was designed which would help explore Black Social Workers' perceptions of their occupation - their attitudes, and beliefs, and give and indication of how these perceptions within the background of their "Black experience" help shape these attitudes and beliefs.

The questionnaires were sent to all welfare organisations employing Black Social Workers in the Durban area, namely:-

1. Department of Co-operation and Development - both Durban and Pinetown office

2. Durban African Child and Family Welfare Society

3. Durban Marriage Guidance Society

4. Durban Mental Health Society

5. King Edward VIII Hospital.

6. Kwa Mashu Child and Family Welfare Society

7. Kwa Zulu Govt.'s Dept. of Health and Welfare - both Kwa Mashu and Umlazi Offices

8. National Institute for Crime Prevention & Rehabilitation of Offenders.

9. Pinetown Child and Family Welfare Society

10. Port Natal Administration Board

11. S.A. National Council for Child and Family Welfare (Regional Office)

12.   S.A. National Council for the Deaf

13.   S.A. National Council for Higher Education (SACHED)

14.   Urban Foundation

The questionnaires were personally delivered and collected a few days later. Fifty questionnaires were distributed.

Ideally the questionnaires should have been sent to all Welfare organisations employing Black Social Workers throughout the country. But since the social work setting for Blacks is the same throughout, high costs would have been incurred in order to obtain results that would not be significantly different (if at all). The difference in setting is only between urban and rural areas since none fo the voluntary agencies have been extended to the rural areas. Social workers serving rural areas are those employed by Homeland Governments and only serve as probation officers.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

A copy of the questionnaire distributed to social workers can be found at the end of this chapter. It is divided into FIVE sections:-

SECTION A: An attempt to establish motivation and occupational mobility.

SECTION B: This section tries to establish the basic occupational or work orientation. The idea is to try and find out the extent to which respondents find their job rewarding or frustrating.

SECTION C: A follow-up on Section B with respondent required to spell out areas of satisfaction and frustration.

SECTION D: An attempt to get respondents' ideas with regard to integration of theory and practice, and his idea of what forces are responsible for whatever problems are encountered in this respect.

SECTION E: Concerned with the professional status of social work and of a social worker as a professional.

QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A

1. At what University/School of Social Work did you train as a Social Worker?

2. What were your major subjects?

3. What motivated you to become a Social Worker?

4. At what stage in your schooling did you decide to become a Social Worker?

5. Name the agencies where you have worked (including the present one) in chronological sequence.

	AGENCY	PERIOD	POSITIONS HELD	REASONS FOR LEAVING
(i)				
(ii)				
(iii)				
(iv)				
(v)				

6. Do you expect any changes in your work situation?

    If so,:- a) in which direction?

              b) when do you expect these changes?

7. Are your expectations (in item 6) subject to any limitations?

    If yes, specify:

    If no, elaborate:

SECTION B

Please rank the following statements from 1 - 10 from the most to the least important:-

1. One should derive personal satisfaction mainly from one's job. ☐

2. One should derive personal satisfaction mainly from one's home and leisure activities. ☐

3. At work, I like to participate in the general planning of my department or unit. ☐

4. At work I like to perform successfully, the tasks assigned to me. ☐

5. Through my job I can conrtibute to the general wellbeing of my community. ☐

6. Through my job I can pursue my own interests. ☐

7. I detest being supervised by unqualified or inexperienced persons. ☐

8. I respect authority regardless. ☐

9. A job should make demands which stimulate and extend one's capacities. ☐

10. A job should give one enough time for leisure activity and for one's family. ☐

SECTION C

List three aspects (in order of importance) of your present job you find:

    a)   Most rewarding:-

    b)   Most frustrating:-

SECTION D

1. Do you feel that your social work training is relevant to the problems you face in your professional practice?

YES	NO

2. If your answer to Item 1 is NO, which of the following areas do you think need more attention than they presently receive? (indicate priority)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
CASEWORK						
GROUPWORK						
COMMUNITY WORK						
SOCIAL RESEARCH						
SOCIAL WORK ADMINI-STRATION						
OTHER						

(N.B.: THE NUMBERS 1 - 6 INDICATE THE RANK ORDER)

3. Give brief suggestions regarding the social work training programme.

4. According to your experience, is social work practice in line with its basic democratic principles?

YES	NO

5. If your answer to Item 4 is NO, which of the following would you identify as the cause of the discrepancy? (in order of importance)

	1	2	3	4	5
AGENCY POLICY					
GOVERNMENT POLICY					
LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE PEOPLE					
PERSONAL INADEQUACY OF SOCIAL WORKER					
OTHER (SPECIFY)					

SECTION E

1. Do you feel that Social Work is generally given the professional recognition it deserves by:-

	YES	NO
GOVERNMENT AGENCIES		
THE COMMUNITY		
OTHER PROFESSIONS		

2. Is your present supervisor a Social Worker?

YES	NO

3. If your supervisor is not a Social Worker, how do you feel about being supervised by an unqualified person?

4. Are salary scales in your agency differentiated along racial lines?

YES	NO

5. Are you registered as a Social Worker as required by law?

YES	NO

6. Do you see the professional status of Social Workers enhanced by statutory provisions such as Council For Social and Associated Workers?

YES	NO

7. In your opinion, are such statutory provisions useful channels of communication for a Black Social Worker?

YES	NO

8. Are you a member of any professional association?

YES	NO

9. If you answer is yes, which association?

10. If your answer is no, please give reasons:

DEMOGRAPHICS:

a) SEX:

b) AGE:

c) QUALIFICATIONS:

d) LENGTH OF TIME IN PRACTICE:

e) EMPLOYING AGENCY:

DISCUSSION

THE SAMPLE

Using a directory of black social workers in the Durban area as a guide, 14 welfare agencies, both government and private were identified. The target agencies had to have in their employ, black social workers. In accordance with the number of black social workers employed at these agencies, 50 questionnaires were distributed among them.

Of the 50 questionnaires distributed, 34 were returned i.e. 68% of the target. This response was fairly high considering the fact that this was done at the time when many social workers are usually on leave.

The ages of the respondents ranged from 21 to 48 as follows:-

21 - 25	8
26 - 30	15
31 - 35	5
36 - 40	3
46 +	3

82,4% of the respondents received their professional training from the University of Zululand. A distinction is not made here between social workers who qualified at this university when it was still under the University of South Africa. Drawing a distinction would only reduce the number without having any significant bearing on the method of training and consequently on the products.

8,8% were trained at Fort Hare, 2,9% at Natal and 5,9% at the Jan Hofmeyer School of Social Work.

It is very clear that having conducted this study in Natal, it tends to be heavily loaded with University of Zululand products. This has deliberately been overlooked on the following grounds:-

1.   Social Work Service delivery system in the black community is similar throughout the country and cuts across provincial barriers.

2.   Social work training institutions follow the same curriculum and training format with the same combination of major subjects.

3.   Black universities share to a great extent the same socio-political outlook. Unlike white universities, the difference that distinguish an Afrikaans university from an English university are non existent.

It therefore, would not have made any significant difference whether the study has a Fort Hare or Turfloop bias, or whether the study was done in the Cape or Transvaal.

The popular combination of major subjects is as follows:-

Social work	-	Psychology				55,9%
Social work	-	Sociology				23,5%
Social work	-	Psychology	-	Sociology	-	11,8%
Social work	-	Psychology	-	Other	-	5,9%
Social work	-	Sociology	-	Other	-	2,9%

Although the majority of social workers in the sample were employed by private welfare organizations (41,2%) 35,3% had had experience in both private and government agencies. Only 23,5% were employed by government agencies.

A significant aspect of the job mobility is that social workers move from government service to private welfare organizations and then to industry. The movement to industry had until very recently, been slow but more opportunities are increasingly being opened up for black social workers.

The reasons given for this job mobility are:-

-	Better prospects	20,6%
-	General/Personal	17,6%
-	Unsatisfactory working conditions	14,7%
-	Financial	5,9%

41,2% gave no reasons. Most of these had not changed jobs.

Although the financial reason rated lowest, it forms an important part of the package termed "better prospects". Those social workers who at this point have confined their job mobility within welfare agencies i.e. from government agencies to private organization and from one private organization to another may be doing it mainly for two reasons viz. unsatisfactory working and financial reasons. This would remain the case until they reach the maximum pay level payable by these organizations. Thereafter, the exit of social workers from welfare agencies will increase sharply as they search for better prospects in industry. Within 5 years Welfare organizations will rely on the newly qualified social workers, with the experienced workers taking up jobs in industry.

The more experienced social worker finds that a ceiling on his development within the agency is put too low. For example, whereas:

8,8% have been in practice 6 - 10 years;
23,5% have been in practice 11 + years; only
17,6% held senior positions.

This position suggests that:-

a)   there are few senior positions available; and/or

b)   much fewer senior positions are open to black social workers.

Although financial reasons were not rated the most important, the fact that
a black social worker is paid less than his White, Coloured and Indian counter-
part is a source of discontent within the profession. The subsidy from the
government has traditionally been determined on the following formula:-

WHITE	COLOUREDS	INDIANS	BLACKS
4	2	2	1

A new system based on departmental budgets has been introduced for the Whites
and Coloureds with the Departments of Indian Affairs and of Co-operation and
Development still working out details for new formulae.

Larger private welfare organizations pay the rate for the job regardless of
race. 32,4% of the respondants are employed in such organizations. 47,1%
are employed by organizations where race still determines the social worker's
salary. 20,6% indicated that their agencies e.g. KwaZulu government, employed
only black social workers. Whereas their salaries are low, they felt that
there wasn't enough justification in the assertion that they were racially
determined although they are almost at the same level as those that are
racially determined.

MOTIVATION TO BECOME A SOCIAL WORKER

The stage at which one decides to become a social worker is closely related
to motivation to become a social worker.

20,6% of those studied decided at Junior Certificate level to become social
workers, 61,8% at Matriculation level and 17,6% at the university level.
Because of lack of career guidance in black schools, it is safe to assume
that this pattern is common in all career choices. The situation is much
more serious when one considers that 17,6% decided at the university to do
social work.

The stage at which one decides to become a social worker has significant
implications for one's commitment to social work. Those who decided at

university level are likely to be less committed to the profession than
those who made the decision fairly early in their educational career.

The following were given as motivating factors:-

(a)   Desire to serve the community   55,9%

(b)   Interest in the profession   11,8%

(c)   Influence by Social worker model   11,8%

(d)   No motivation at all   8,8%

Table IV   (Page 22)

SOCIAL WORKERS JAKE KGARE JANUARY 1981

FILE   JAKE   (CREATION DATE = 01/14/81)

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *   C R O S S T A B U L A T I O N   O F   * * * * * * * * * *
     ITEM44   AGE   BY ITEM3   MOTIVATION SW
* *

	ITEM3	COM SERV	INTEREST	MODEL	ACCID	ROW TOTAL
COUNT ROW PCT COL PCT	0	1	2	3	4	
ITEM44						
2 21-25	3 37.5 75.0	3 37.5 15.8	1 12.5 25.0	0 .0 .0	1 12.5 33.3	8 23.5
3 26-30	1 6.7 25.0	9 60.0 47.4	1 6.7 25.0	2 13.3 50.0	2 13.3 66.7	15 44.1
4 31-35	0 .0 .0	3 60.0 15.8	1 20.0 25.0	1 20.0 25.0	0 .0 .0	5 14.7
5 36-45	0 .0 .0	2 66.7 10.5	1 33.3 25.0	0 .0 .0	0 .0 .0	3 8.8
7 46+	0 .0 .0	2 66.7 10.5	0 .0 .0	1 33.3 25.0	0 .0 .0	3 8.8
COLUMN TOTAL	4 11.8	19 55.9	4 11.8	4 11.8	3 8.8	34 100.0

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WORK ORIENTATION OF RESPONDENTS

The respondents were asked to mention the most rewarding and most frustrating aspects of their jobs. Most of them felt the feeling of being of service to others was most rewarding followed by goal achievement and then by enjoyment of co-operation from colleagues and clients.

The most frustrating aspects of their jobs were given as follows:-

shortage of resources and poor working conditions were rated equally as the most frustrating aspect of the job, followed by agency policy. Many felt that the agency policy has a restrictive influence over their professional functioning.

The respondents were asked to rank 10 statements from 1 - 10 from the most to the least important.

The following table shows the most important and least important frequency scores for each item. (Taking only the two extremes i.e. 1 and 10).

TABLE V - See Page 24 ....

TABLE V

ITEM		FREQUENCY (%)	
		MOST IMPORTANT	LEAST IMPORTANT
1.	One should derive personal satisfaction from one's job.	5,9	2,9
2.	One should derive personal satisfaction mainly from one's home and leisure time activities.	8,8	2,9
3.	At work, I like to participate in the general planning of my department or unit.	8,8	2,9
4.	At work I perform successfully, the tasks assigned to me.	14,7	2,9
5.	Through my job, I contribute to the general wellbeing of my community.	14,7	2,9
6.	Through my job I can pursue my own interests.	5,9	26,5
7.	I detest being supervised by unqualified or inexperienced persons.	17,6	14,7
8.	I respect authority regardless.	8,8	17,6
9.	A job should make demands which stimulate and extend one's capacities.	5,9	8,8
10.	A job should give one enough time for leisure activity and for one's family.	14,7	8,8

Item 7 was rated most important by the majority of respondents and this indicates the importance of social work administration, not only in the efficiency and effectiveness of the agency's programme, but also in determining the social workers working conditions.

The keystone for optimum efficiency and effectiveness in the achievement of social work goals is the administration of social work. The need for educationally prepared social work administrators cannot be overemphasised. It is not enough to promote social workers to positions of adminstrators without giving them a backup training in social work administration. It is worse to leave this responsibility in the hands of unqualified people, and this social workers resent.

The social work administrator must have knowledge of social work philosophy, concepts and practice, especially in those areas in which his agency operates. From behavioural sciences he needs to know how and why individuals feel, especially in relation to their functioning in groups. Specific knowledge is required of role theory, small group theory, the use of relationships, communication, and decision making in an administrative setting. He draws from political and social sciences, knowledge of the cultural, social, economic and political forces that constitute the local, national and international communities out of which social problems evolve and from which must be drawn the human and economic resources for providing social services and solving social problems.

Many agencies serving Blacks are administered by unqualified people. Social workers employed in these agencies are supervised by unqualified people. All welfare services for Blacks run by government or quasi-government agencies are administered by people with no social work training. These officers have, at local level, the final decision on all welfare matters and are the sole channel for the whole welfare service delivery system e.g. a magistrate in the homelands, a commissioner in the urban area, in prison the most senior prison officer, etc. These officials are entrusted with the supervision of social workers and are often ignorant about, and insensitive to all aspects of social work.

Until very recently, all welfare institutions for Blacks like Childrens homes, Places of Safety, Old Age Homes, etc. under government administration have been run by people whose major qualification was previous association with Blacks and a working knowledge of an African language. Because they could not measure up to the requirements of the task, these services deteriorated to the extent that they became part of the problems they were designed to solve. The replacement of these officials with qualified Black social workers has improved the services tremendously.

RELEVANCE OF SOCIAL WORK TRAINING

32,4% felt that social work training they received is relevant to the social problems they have to tackle, whereas 67,6% felt their training was irrelevant and that it was based on foreign models. It is felt that social work training lays more emphasis on social casework and neglects other

methods of social work particularly community work, social work administration, social groupwork and social research.

It was suggested that there be a balance in the curriculum in such a way that all the methods receive relatively equal attention even if this means an additional year, with practical work running concurrently. Another recognised major flaw was that training institutions are not independent schools of social work and consequently are restricted in the extent to which they can enrich their training programme. It was felt that these institutions are also situated far from major centres of activity and as such it is difficult to organise fieldwork on an on-going basis.

The table below shows the age split on the issue of the relevance of social work training.

TABLE VI   (Page 27)

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* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *    C R O S
     ITEM44       AGE
* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *
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                         ITEM20
                COUNT  I
                ROW PCT IYES        NO            ROW
                COL PCT I                         TOTAL
                        I       1 I        2 I
ITEM44          --------I---------I----------I
                    2 I        2 I        6 I         8
  21-25            I   25.0 I   75.0 I      23.5
                   I   18.2 I   26.1 I
                  -I---------I----------I
                    3 I        6 I        9 I        15
  26-30            I   40.0 I   60.0 I      44.1
                   I   54.5 I   39.1 I
                  -I---------I----------I
                    4 I        2 I        3 I         5
  31-35            I   40.0 I   60.0 I      14.7
                   I   18.2 I   13.0 I
                  -I---------I----------I
                    5 I        1 I        2 I         3
  36-40            I   33.3 I   66.7 I       8.8
                   I    9.1 I    8.7 I
                  -I---------I----------I
                    7 I        0 I        3 I         3
  46+              I    .0 I  100.0 I       8.8
                   I    .0 I   13.0 I
                  -I---------I----------I
                COLUMN      11        23           34
                TOTAL     32.4      67.6        100.0
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S T A B U L A T I O N   O F   * * * * * * * * * *
        BY   ITEM20   RELAVENCE OF SW TRAINING
* *

SOCIAL WORK AND DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES

Social work training in South Africa, as in many other places, relies on American literature and consequently, the basic principles of the profession have been formulated within the democratic principles and the spirit of Human Rights.

In a plural society structured along racial discrimination, the democratic principles of the profession will only apply to that sector of society that has power and therefore, control over community resources. Racially separate facilities are never and can never be equal and this immediately places limited resources at the disposal of the Black community and the Black social worker. As a result of this, the level of effectiveness of a Black social worker is greatly lowered. This results in frustration, low morale and alienation.

The majority of social work as practised in this country is not in line with the democratic principles on which this profession is based. Most of them believe that government policy, with its racial segregation ideology is responsible for this situation. Institutional racism makes it difficult for the Black community to utilise fully the resources that the country can offer and makes it even more difficult for the social worker to fulfil his role as a change agent.

Welfare agency policies have also been cited as problem areas. Agencies tend to be extensions of governmental institutions. They are registered and often funded in terms of certain rules, regulations and guidelines that must be strictly observed. The social worker is expected to operate within the limits of agency policy. He can make only minimal changes (if at all), otherwise the system just grinds on.

PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION

Recognising the fact that social work is still a young profession, the majority of respondents felt that although problems of recognition exist, awareness of social workers as professionals is rapidly increasing expecially from the community and other professions. It has been pointed out, however, that although the government recognises the profession, functionaries within government institutions particularly those involved in the administration of the affairs of Blacks, display strong resistance and tend to view Black social workers as interfering in the execution of their duties. This is partly due to ideological orientation and also ignorance of what social work is.

The establishment of Council for Social and Associated Workers is indicative of the government's thinking on the professional status of social workers. Although Black social workers are registering with this Council, they are doing so because it is a statutory requirement. The majority of respondents do not see it as a useful channel of communication for Black social workers. 14,7% feel that the Council is a new body and should be given a chance. They do point out, however, that the council has had a false start.

It is clear from the study that importance is attached to membership of voluntary professional associations. 79,4% belong to the South African Black Social Workers' Association. 20,6% were not members of any social workers' association although some pointed out that they have just qualified and intended applying for membership. There was no evidence of interest in the Society For Social Workers which is non-racial, but predominantly white association.

A very small number belonged also to professional associations like Association of Sociologists of S.A.
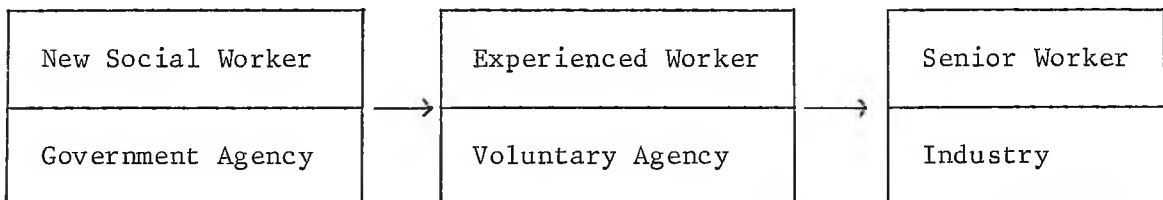
CONCLUSION

The assumption that social workers in their professional practice experience
conflict between their roles as professionals and as employees of welfare
agencies has been supported by this study. The study has isolated another
dimension of the problem i.e. that this problem is much greater for a Black
social worker who operates within a social system that has placed him and
the community he serves, against the stream.

The Black social worker is forced by circumstances to treat symptoms rather
than the causes of social problems because of restriction on his social
work practice by government legislation, agency policy and by the nature of
his professional training.

In addition to these problems, lack of community resources compounds the
issue and this leads to frustration and dispair. As a result experienced
social workers are increasingly leaving the services of welfare organisations
in pursuit of better prospects in industry. The noticeable trend is that
as social workers acquire experience they move to private welfare organ-
isations which have relatively better working conditions and pay higher
salaries with some paying the rate for the job regardless of the worker's
race. As they reach the pay ceiling they become attracted to industry.

The trend can be diagramatically illustrated as follows:-

New Social Worker		Experienced Worker		Senior Worker
Government Agency	→	Voluntary Agency	→	Industry

If this trend continues, all government agencies will be manned by
newly qualified social workers together with the old demotivated social
workers, with voluntary agencies and industry sharing the cream of the
social work profession.

One of the issues respondents came out strongly against is supervision of
social workers by unqualified persons. This is one of the factors that
make it difficult for social workers to function even within their given
problem situation. This is because unqualified supervisors are often
unresponsive to the worker's suggestions and show a tendency towards
hiding behind the bureaucratic screen.

It has been found, however, that despite these poor working conditions,
the desire to serve the community sustains the Black social worker. It
can be assumed that the popularity of the Black Social Workers' Assoc-
iation is a result of an attempt on the part of Black social workers to

have their own forum outside existing government created structures
as such statutory bodies are ruled out as useful channels of communi-
cation.

It is recognised that the sample in this study was not large enough to
be considered representative of all Black social workers in the country.
It is certainly representative of Black social workers in government and
private agencies in the Durban area because respondents are drawn from
all agencies in this area employing Black social workers.

In support of the sample, it is argued that the agencies are the same
e.g. the structure of a child welfare society is the same in any part
of the country, and the same can be said of all welfare societies.
Admitting that ideally, the study needed a national sample, it is
maintained that the results would not have been significantly different
(if at all).

It is also admitted that the sample had a university of Zululand bias
because of its localised nature. Here too, the argument given above
holds.

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