

**GENDER AND MILITARY PROFESSIONALISM:
A “CASE” STUDY OF THE NAMIBIAN DEFENCE FORCE**

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ABSTRACT

The Namibian Government's commitment to the provision of equal opportunities and gender implementation in all Government institutions and agencies has brought a new significant dimension to the Namibia Defence Force (NDF) in terms of employment practice, thereby requiring change of attitudes in order to adapt to the new approach. This thesis, a case-study of the NDF provides detailed views and perspectives on gender in the country's military profession.

The study thus, portrays the perceptions of the General Staff officers towards equal opportunities for women and men in the NDF with regard to training, appointments and promotions to strategic positions and to positions of foreign exposures. The study also describes the experiences and viewpoints of the Senior and Junior Staff officers on the subject of the military services provided by women and men in the NDF; and compares the demographic characteristics of the members (i.e. gender, and years of service) with their military positions.

The study found that gender issues have been put into consideration in the NDF and indeed, Management cadres are aware of the gender imbalances in the Force. However, the general feeling is that the actual military part of NDF per se is the reserve for men only. Thus, the study recommends that more should be done to bring up greater gender awareness and increase the role played by women in the NDF.

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DEDICATION

For my children, Charles and Charlene, who continue to astonish me with their resilience, patience, and love. To my beloved parents, though not alive today, for their inspiration and making me love reading. My beloved husband and children, who accepted my long stays in libraries.

DECLARATION

I, Theophilia Shaanika, declare hereby that this study is a true reflection of my own research, and that this work, or part thereof has not been submitted for a degree in any other institution of higher education.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Affirmative Action
AU	African Union
AWCPD	African Women's Committee on Peace and Development
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
BDF	Botswana Defence Force
CDF	Chief of Defence Force
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CMR	Civil-Military Relations
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DoD	Department of Defence
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
MOD	Ministry of Defence
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MGECW	Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare
NAF	Namibian Air Force
NASCO	Namibia Standard Classification of Occupations
NNF	Namibian Navy Force
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NDF	Namibian Defence Force
PLAN	People's Liberation Army of Namibia
PS	Permanent Secretary
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADCBRIG	South African Development Community Brigade

SADF	South Africa Defence Force [before independence]
SANDF	South Africa National Defence Force
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organisation
SWATF	South West Africa Territorial Force
Sida	Swedish International Development Agency
TCCs	Troop Contributing Countries
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
US	United States
USAF	United States Air Force

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

- Any other rank:** A person other than an officer
- Empowerment:** Process of generating and building capacity to exercise control over one's life.
- Equal opportunity:** A balanced representation of both sexes. In this study, equal opportunity refers to the access to and share of employment opportunities, services and resources, as well as equality of treatment by the employer.
- Expected frequency:** A theoretical predicted frequency obtained from an experiment presumed to be true until statistical evidence in the form of a hypothesis test indicates otherwise.
- Force:** Any military force, i.e. Army, Air and Navy forces
- Gender:** Socially constructed roles and responsibilities assigned to men and women in a given culture or location and the societal structures that support them. Male and female gender roles are learned from families and communities and vary by culture and generation.

- Gender blind:** A term describing activities undertaken and services provided without regard to the gender of those who participate.
- Gender equality:** The absence of discrimination on the basis of a person's sex, in opportunities, in the allocation of resources or benefits, or in access to services. Men and women have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and potential to contribute to national, political, economic, social and cultural development. Therefore, gender equality is when society gives equal weight and value to the similarities and differences between women and men, and to the varying roles that they play.
- Gender Equity:** A condition in which women and men participate as equals, have equal access to resources and equal opportunities to exercise control. It is achieved when there is fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities between women and men, and often requiring women-specific projects and programs to end existing inequalities.
- General Officers:** Military officers from the rank of Brigadier General, Major General, Lieutenant General and upwards.
- Insignias:** Badge of leadership corresponding to the Military Ranks

Junior and Senior Staff Officers: Military officers from the rank of Lieutenant to Colonel.

Member: Includes an officer or any other rank. Any person subjects to the military laws of the country.

Military: Any Army, Air and Naval forces.

Mustering: The categories found in a variety of occupations known in the military as "mustering".

Observed frequency: The actual frequency that is obtained from the experiment.

Other Defence Force: A Defence Force of a country or state other than Namibia

Perceptions: How different people look at things or perceive them.

Professionalism: A combination of all the qualities that are connected with trained and skilled people in a given career.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Government of the Republic of Namibia has committed itself to face the challenges in addressing disparities in all its public and private sectors. It has realized that national development cannot be attained without the optimal development and use of all existing resources, including human resources. Gender inequalities have been recognized as an impediment to development. In an effort to address the above challenges, the Government of Namibia is committed to promoting gender equality and ensuring that women and men are treated equally in all spheres of life. The ratification of international and regional Conventions and Declarations on the promotion and protection of gender are such as Beijing Platform for Action, SADC Declaration on Gender and Development and the Addendum on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Women and Children are clear testimony to that effect.

The commitment of the Government to the Conventions and Declarations mentioned above is further demonstrated by laws that have been enacted to protect women from discrimination such as the Rape Act (No. 8 of 2000), the Domestic Violence Act (No. 4 of 2003), and the Affirmative Action (Employment) Act, (Act 29 of 1998) aimed at

redressing imbalances in the Namibian society arising out of the unfortunate apartheid situation. The efforts and initiatives to redress gender imbalances in the Namibian society have received, and are still continuing to receive, the support of development partners, non-Governmental organizations, civil society and the public at large.

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) shares many of the gender challenges like any other Government ministries. It is compelled to implement strategies leading to the promotion of full gender equality as part of the Affirmative Action programme in order to correct the social gender imbalances of the past. In this study, the views and opinions of the General, Senior and Junior officers of the Namibian Defence Force (NDF) are discussed. A theoretical overview of the various feminist positions on women in the armed forces is provided and related to current debates and policy decisions on gender equality in Namibia.

After this general introduction, the first chapter of the thesis presents the background of the study, specifies the problem, describes its significance, and presents an overview of the methodology used. It concludes by noting the limitations of the study.

The second chapter provides a review of findings from various researches done on gender and military profession in Namibia, in the region and in the world at large. Of course, it looks at the most influential theories on the military as a “profession” and on feminism in its broadest definition on the relations between women and men at home, at

school, at work and in the community. It focuses specifically on the involvement of women in the military.

The third chapter presents the methodology used to collect data. The objectives are presented and explained in detail indicating how the methodology was set to accomplish those goals and objectives. The reader also examines how the review of the literature was used to supplement information gathered through the other techniques. That methodology is followed by the presentation of the findings and, later on, by the conclusion and recommendations.

The fourth chapter, we find the data analysis and the presentation of significant results from the research. Relevant graphical presentations such as tables and figures are used to present the research findings. Research questions are introduced and included in the presentation of the results.

The last part of this study presents a discussion of the results in accordance with the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the literature. The chapter begins with a brief summary of the significant findings. Conclusions are then made, followed by recommendations for further research.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY AND THE NAMIBIA DEFENCE FORCE

1.2.1. Background of the Study

Women's concern with the issues of peace and security is not something new. Rather, such concern emanates from ancient times. The literature shows that many African Queens fought to defend their kingdoms against foreign occupation. Queen Majaji of Sudan, for instance, led her warriors in battle, armed with a shield and spear and is believed to have died on the walls of Meroe in 350 AD; Egyptian warrior queen Ahotep, all the seven Cleopatras and Arsinoe II & III ruled Egypt and led the army and navy through Roman times; Amina of Nigeria led her army of 20,000 soldiers into battle; Queen Mbande Zinga, the sister and advisor of the King of Ngola (today Angola) served as his representative in negotiating treaties with the Portuguese; Llinga, a warrior queen of the Congo, had standing armies of women armed with axe, bow and sword, and fought the Portuguese in 1640; Nandi, the warrior mother of King Shaka of the Zulu in South Africa trained her son to be a warrior and had an all-female regiment which often fought in the front lines of his army; Nehanda (1862-1898) was a priestess of the MaShona nation of Zimbabwe, a military leader of her people when the British invaded her country, and Yaa Asantewaa (1850-1921); the Queen Mother of one of the Asante states of Ghana led her army in continuous battles against the British. Kaipkire, warrior leader of the Herero tribe of the then Southwest Africa (Namibia) in the 18th century led

her people in battles against British slave traders, to mention but a few. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_the_military].

The demands of the Namibian liberation struggle under SWAPO forced men and women to abandon a rigid gender division of labour. Women in PLAN were incorporated into new roles, and PLAN encouraged many of them to discover new capacities within themselves. The notion of "equal rights for women" played an important place in the struggle. It asserts women's equal rights with men to take up arms against oppression and injustice in Namibia.

1.2.2 Birth and Development of the Namibia Defence Force

Shortly after the attainment of Namibia's independence, the creation of the NDF was among the Government priorities. On the 26th November 1990, the National Assembly passed the Defence Act [(Act 20 of 1990) which was an amendment to the South African Defence Act (Act 44 of 1957)]. This piece of legislation and was signed by the President in terms of the Namibian Constitution [1990, Article 23(2)] that provides for the composition and organization of a Defence Force under the umbrella of the MOD. The Act is complemented by a *Military Discipline Code*, which provides the practical framework for the administration of the armed forces. According to the Statement on Defence Policy (1996), the NDF's role is; to ensure the maintenance of sovereignty and territorial integrity; to provide assistance to the civil authorities and to the civil

community when required; to undertake ceremonial functions and to assist the process of reconciliation” (Lamb, 1999).

Since March 1990, some 7500 persons have been recruited into MOD and NDF. Through the Government’s policy of national reconciliation, the Ministry has managed to integrate the former enemies in a 23-year war of the Peoples Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) and South West African Territorial Force (SWATF) into a united NDF (White Paper on National and Sectoral Policies, 1991). The Force consists of the Army, the Air and the Navy. Its primary role is to protect the sovereignty, territorial integrity and people of Namibia, and to ensure a secure environment of peace and prosperity for all. Of the 7500 personnel recruited and inducted into the NDF, all the women fighters came from PLAN because SWATF did not have any women in its fighting all of whom ranks (Chilombo, 2005).

In this study, it is imperative to know that the Headquarters of the Defence Force is located in the Ministry of Defence. According to Lamb (1999), civil supremacy of the armed forces in a democracy embraces the idea that the will of the people is paramount. The military is subordinate and accountable to civilian officials who are elected by the people, in our case, the Minister of Defence. He [the Minister] is enforcing laws through the constitutional, legislative and budgetary mechanisms, as well as by means of military professionalism (Lamb 1999). In a democracy, military leaders obey the Government as they accept the basic national and political goals of a democracy and

because it is their duty and profession to fight [Janowitz, 1964:79]. The NDF must therefore be an institution that the whole Namibian nation can have confidence in, and every member be proud of, irrespective of gender, race, or origin as stipulated in the Namibian Constitution (Article 10 (23)):

“Nothing contained in Article 10 hereof shall prevent Parliament from enacting legislation providing directly or indirectly for the advancement of persons within Namibia who have been socially, economically or educationally disadvantaged by past discriminatory laws or practices, or for the implementation of policies and programs aimed at redressing social, economic or educational imbalances in the Namibian society arising out of past discriminatory laws or practices, or for achieving a balanced structuring of the public service, the Police Force, the Defence Force, and the Prison Service”.

Based on that provision, the MOD Code of Conduct states that the MOD is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all staff and potential recruits irrespective of a person’s sex, marital status, colour, ethnic origin and religious beliefs [Ministry of Defence Code of Conduct (1993)].

In this study, the research questions are approached within the framework of Civil-Military Relations (CMR). However, this does not mean that this thesis is a case-study of CMR. Generally, CMR examines both military and civilian (political, societal and economic issues), gender is but one of the issues.

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1.3.1 Significance of the Study

It is hoped that the study may serve as a starting point for future research on the subject and may assist in the strategic formulation and implementation of the NDF Gender Policy leading to the establishment of a Directorate of Equity in the MOD. Based on the recommendations of this study, the military in Namibia could provide career opportunities through personal education and technical training in military science, organization and management skills. Attitudes among top NDF management staff towards women empowerment could also be changed. In so doing, it would contribute to the successful implementation of policy on gender.

Therefore, the recommendations emerging from the study are likely to acquaint the NDF with the historical traditions and current thinking about gender in the military. The ultimate beneficiary of the knowledge to be provided by the study will be the NDF in that the service it provides will improve.

1.3.2 Limitations of the Study

The study was restricted to General, Senior and Junior Staff officers in the Defence Headquarters in Windhoek, Army and Air Force Headquarters in Grootfontein and Naval base in Walvisbay, due to financial constraints on traveling costs. Time devoted to research was also a limiting factor on collection of relevant data. Limitations also arose due to the unavailability of the minutes of the Defence management where issues related to discuss gender in the Namibian military were discussed. This is because minutes are classified.

The fact that the researcher is a female may have contributed to the General officers' reluctance to fill the questionnaires or to be interviewed and quoted. Much of this research on the views of the General Officers on gender and military professionalism is, therefore, based on private off-the-record discussions and secondary source material. Poor participation of female officers in this research may also be regarded as a limitation because generally women often lack the confidence and the knowledge needed to participate in matters affecting their lives and remain silent on the sidelines.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Over 4000 years into the past, a lot of documents have been written on the history of women in combat throughout an enormous number of cultures and nations. Defence Forces of the world in countries like USA, Canada, China, Britain, Israel, Russia, Norway, Denmark, Nepal, France, Australia and Germany, provide literature on the roles of women in the military, from ancient warrior women, to the women currently serving in the Iraq conflict <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_the_military>

In Africa, there are a number of writings depicting female characters as fearless warriors who fought for their kingdoms against colonialism. There is a vast literature in the region on South African National Defence Force's experience on women participation in the military since 1970. Review of the literature on perceptions on gender discourses in the Namibian military shows that very little has been written on the subject specifically on the Namibian Defence Force.

This chapter analyses the literature in three categories; the first part looks at the influential theories on gender in the military profession in general, the second is

concerned with the literature relating to gender perspectives in various defence forces in the world and in the Southern African region; and the last section illustrates gender in the military profession in Namibia with the specific focus on women's roles in particular.

2.2 THEORIES ON GENDER

Theoretically, women are of the opinion that their capabilities to be in the mainstream leadership and managerial positions have been proven. Experts on gender equality are supportive of this view. These include Mwanje (2001: 27) who argues that the feminist theory seeks for women the same opportunities and privileges society gives to men. Young (1999:108), in her theoretical contribution to the debate, says that preferences and discrimination can equally be seen as critical aspects of the gendering process and can reinforce notions about fundamental characteristics and differences between men and women. In that case men, whether as representatives of capital or labour, may collude to exclude women from certain types of work involving duties that symbolize masculinity, that pay better and have career possibilities or represent elements of social power.

Research on the military profession may be approached using two general perspectives: systems theory and closure theory of Huntington (1957), Janowitz (1960), and Franklin, Bently, & Phyllis (2003) that date back to the 1950s and 1960s. Huntington expressed

the view that in order to function effectively, the military as a profession needs to remain a relatively closed system. As such it requires insularity from the social influences of liberal and democratic society. For Huntington, the military was to operate as a conservative institution that “stuck to its knitting” and developed professional values that were consistent with its traditional mission: fighting and winning wars on behalf of its nation, as directed and controlled by the Government and legislature. The military has excluded women, homosexuals and older persons on the basis of their hypothesized deleterious effects on social cohesion, which has been argued to be directly related to reduced levels of operational effectiveness (Franklin, Bently, & Phyllis 2003).

Janowitz (1960), on the other hand, viewed the military and the profession (which were, and are, to a large extent, organizationally fused) as a relatively open system that was becoming increasingly so, primarily owing to its necessity to incorporate both the values and the sensibilities of its host society, on whose support it depended for its survival and success. Whereas Huntington viewed the military institution as an independent, relatively static system that was integrated within society by political direction, Janowitz viewed the military as a dynamic, interdependent system that was integrated, controlled and legitimated by its ability to adapt to the requirements of its host society. For example, Janowitz held that the military profession must learn to develop political skills in order to better communicate with the public, and thereby maintain its legitimacy as an important social institution. While Janowitz considered that the military had a unique mission and therefore could never be identical to other societal institutions. He held the

view that it would operate more effectively if it kept its boundaries permeable (open) and permitted transactions across the military-civilian boundary. Indeed, from Janowitz's perspective, it was dysfunctional to attempt to do otherwise (Franklin, Pinch, William and Browne 2003).

In support of the system theory, Iiping and Lebeau (1997) commended that the Namibian Constitution (Republic of Namibia, 1990: 41) calls for the enactment of gender legislation to guarantee "equality of opportunity for women to enable them to participate fully in all spheres of the Namibian society." This research seeks to take on board these various theoretical views in the quest to probe the extent to which the NDF involves or excludes women as equal partners in all its operations and why.

To that end, the quest for gender equality has been topical for many decades, and has generated several investigative scholarly works. Among the pieces of such work is that of Heineken (1998) from the Centre for Military Studies, University of Stellenbosch. She says that one of the critical threats to gender equality within armed forces is sexual harassment, which raises a complex institutional challenge. Harassment refers to discrimination based on offensive, abusive, derogatory or threatening conduct directed at an individual or specific group of persons as a result of real or perceived gender or race attributes or differences. This is considered to be one of the potentially most debilitating obstacles faced by women in the military and calls for further study of the profession's operations (Franklin, Pinch, William and Browne 2003).

In democratic societies, the military organization and profession have been pushed toward a more inclusive model of military service, both for new entrants and those members who seek professional standing within the military organizations (Janowitz, 1960). Traditionally, only operational combat officers (Huntington, 1957) or, more broadly, all commissioned officers (Janowitz, 1960) have been considered true military professionals.

In the light of these historical imbalances between male and female soldiers, it is imperative to draw on international experiences in this area. It is also important to contextualize the issue within the whole feminist debate. Within the military sphere, feminists emphasize gender equality in the existing social order and argue that women's participation in all forms of military service and in combat roles in particular, is as crucial as their involvement in other spheres of society.

2.3 WOMEN'S ROLES IN OTHER DEFENCE FORCES

According to Walton (1975) in Grimwood, C. P. and Philipson, R. J. (1994: 30), the Second World War changed the whole concept of "women's work" and created new opportunities for them. Women took over men's civilian jobs, and were also more involved with the war itself than in the First World War. As "Rosie the Riveter" demonstrated her capabilities in previously male-dominated civilian industries, women in the American Army broke the stereotypes, which restricted them to move into

positions well outside of traditional roles. Women persisted in their service and significantly contributed to the war effort (Bellafaire, 2005). However, the functionalist perspectives argue that attitudes and expectations have changed much more slowly than social and economic conditions. To that end, Coleman (1998: 203) believes that the cultural lag is the principle source of today's problem. He further says that other functionalists see the present day problems as stemming from economic changes that upset the traditional cultural pattern.

Even though the military profession has been a male-dominated profession, the number of women joining the profession nowadays has increased in various defence forces in the world. Despite the fact that women are recruited to serve in the military in most countries, only few countries permit them to fill active combat roles. Amongst other countries those that fully integrate women into the infantry are Canada, South Africa, Israel and Russia. In 1995, Norway became the first country to allow women to serve on its military submarines, and to this date there has been at least one female commander of a Norwegian submarine followed by Australia in 1998 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_the_military>

In many parts of the world, Armed Forces have been undergoing profound changes over the past decade. Simply saying that the end of the Cold War coincided with the culmination of other shifts in the organization of Western, post industrial societies, has drastically altered the expectations on how the military profession will apply its

expertise. To that end, various studies done by previous researchers have raised several points' concerning gender and military professionalism. The United Society Deputy Defence Secretary, Paul D. Wolfowitz told members of Department of Defence's (DoD) military women's advisory group about American women's "spectacular display of military professionalism" during Operation Iraqi Freedom [Gilmore G.J. 16 May 2003, American Forces Press Service]. He praised the skill and tenacity of a female A-10 "Warthog" pilot who brought back her badly shot-up warplane on manual control. Lieutenant Brown, (April 15, 2005), in her reflections on gender issues, says, "In the efforts to achieve the pinnacle of professionalism, the only openly recognized distinction of gender occurs when a military student refers to them as 'Sir' or 'Ma'am.'" It clearly passes the message that most women do not want to be seen as just women, they want to be seen as professionals. They are frustrated with reports that stereotyped women as "'weak' and 'in need of protection,' and men as 'predator.'" (Brown, 2005)."

The growth of women's movements across borders thus, puts pressure on inter-governmental agencies such as the United Nations, AU and SADC to recognize women's rights as human rights (Amnesty International 2002). They also demand the implementation of affirmative action to promote the equal participation of women, including the equal representation of women in elected office, and calls for the equal representation of women in the judiciary and law enforcement agencies as an integral part of equal protection and benefit of the law. Articulating the right to peace, the women's movements also demands the recognition of the right of women to participate

in the promotion and maintenance of peace.

The debate also benefits from Anand (1983) who says that gender has been raised due to the increasing militancy of the developing nations. Consequently, the author argues that new concepts such as; “basic human rights,” “new directions” and more recently “growth with equity”, constituting a whole emerging new development jargon, have been developed. It falls in line with the International Economic Order, which is demanding a fairer share of the world’s resources and more input into international decision-making. As a result, in 1975, the International Women’s Year conference declared a decade that would concentrate on women the world over.

2.3.1 **United State Defence Force**

American women participated in various military operations in the world. During the Korean War of 1950–1953, 120 000 served in the Mobile Army Surgical Hospitals. More than 7 000 served in the Vietnam War and over 200 were involved in 1983 Grenada war. Several hundred women also took part in operations in Panama in 1989, and in the 1991 Gulf War and 2003 Iraq War. However, women were not permitted to serve in combat roles or to participate in Special Forces. They were mainly assigned to logistics, maintenance, intelligence, communication teams and medical units. They were assigned to forward support to units in the following specialties: transport of personnel by helicopter, equipment and supplies, air defence artillery, military police,

intelligence and special operations

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_the_military>.

2.3.2 **Israel**

Both men and women are conscripted in the Israel Defence Force. Most women serve in non-combat positions, and are conscripted for only two years. In 2001, Israel's first female combat pilot received her “wings”. Until 2005, up to 83% of positions in the Israeli army were open to women, and today, they serve in combat positions in the artillery, frontier guards and on Navy ships. Combat duty is voluntary for women

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_the_military>

2.3.3 **Canada**

In 1982, laws were passed ending all discrimination in employment, and combat related roles in the Canadian Armed Forces. All positions were opened for women, with no restrictions in place, with the exception of the submarine service. In 1987, promotion of Canada’s first female infantry soldier, first female gunner, and a female Brigadier-General was made, and in 1994 a woman was promoted to the rank of Major-General

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_the_military>.

2.3.4 SADC Defence Forces

In the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region, the number of women has increased in countries like South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Tanzania, as a result of their participation in the liberation struggles for independence and their involvement in the quest for peace and national reconciliation. The traditional perception that women could not be military combatants has indeed changed as attested to by their contribution towards achieving national security and development. Human transformation has become a crucial challenge with regard to its racial, ethnic and gender composition as well as human resource practices. Debates surrounding both the content and interpretation of “gender” have always been contentious (Sirleaf, 2002).

2.3.4.1 South Africa

In South Africa, the influence of international groups funding projects during the democratization process increased pressure to include policies that recognized gender issues in creating the new Government (Seidman, 2001). Earlier in the 1970s, the South Africa Defence Force (SADF) took a decision to accept nonwhites and women into the military as career soldiers, not only as temporary volunteers or reservists, but it did not assign women to combat roles. As a result, women constituted the majority of workers in the arms industry, which in the eighties made South Africa the fifth largest arms exporter in the world <<http://www.lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstty>>.

The Defence Act (Act 44 of 1957) as amended did not contain any discriminatory sections against women on any ground. White women were restricted to developing their career aspirations within the support mustering of the military. Thus, women were not appointed in positions, which could result in close combat, or positions of high foreign exposure, for example, military attachés. White women were then subjected to the global process of inclusion into military structures. Despite this process of increasing incorporation, women were under-represented in positions of leadership and authority (Cawthra, 1994:139-140).

Currently, as far as the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) is concerned, the armed force is committed to the goal of overcoming the gender discrimination. In pursuance of this policy, a Directorate of Equal Opportunity has been established with a Gender Sub-Directorate headed by a female Major General (Segwai, 2006).

2.3.4.2 **Botswana**

Botswana still remains one of the three countries in the 14-member SADC bloc that has no women in the military, although the new commander of the Botswana Defence Force (BDF), Lieutenant General Tebogo Masire, announced the possible induction of women in the military in March 2007

<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/November/Friday24/583611407539.html>>.

2.3.4.3 **Other SADC countries**

The other SADC countries that have no women in the military are Mauritius and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). According to the August 2006 SADC data, Tanzania, South Africa and Zimbabwe top the list with slightly more than 20 percent women in their military. Others with sizeable percentages are Namibia (14), Swaziland (10), and Lesotho (8.5)

<<http://www.mmegi.bw/2006/November/Friday24/583611407539.html>>.

2.4 **GENDER ISSUES IN MILITARY PROFESSION IN NAMIBIA**

The review of literature on gender and military professionalism in NDF aimed at understanding the different terms in question. This section will then be divided into three parts: The first provides the general background definition of the “military profession.” The second section examines the policy imperative behind gender implementation in Namibia and NDF. The literature here will deal with the policies that have been implemented in the different sectors of the Government. Finally, the third section examines the literature given on the importance of gender and military professionalism in the NDF.

2.4.1 Military Profession in Namibia

Generally speaking, every profession has its special areas, standards and values that its practitioners respect and seek to protect. Military professionalism as discussed in that particular case is no exception. It is indeed a risky profession, yet one of the most important for any nation. The challenge is for every country to have its own people in the profession irrespective of gender, colour or race. "Professionalizing" the military, has the effect, according to Huntington [1957:84], of improving civilian control. As such, the process renders the armed forces "politically sterile and neutral".

This is a process whereby the professional characteristics of the armed forces are encouraged through enhancing the military's specialization and expertise in the management of violence, increasing the educational opportunities available to the officer corps, and boosting the corporate nature of the military (Lamb, 1999). This is in line with the Namibian Standard Classification of Occupations (NASCO, 1996) that defines professionals as those people who increase the existing stock of knowledge, apply scientific or artistic concepts and theories, teach about the foregoing in a systematic manner, and have acquired necessary skills and capability to supervise others.

The concept of "profession" has been changing, although the key themes have remained over time. Dickenson and Joyce (2002) summarized key conjectures and elements in the concept of profession. They have been:

[1. to “profess” religious vows to God and His service (13th, 14th century); 2. commitment to a “higher calling” or “vocation”, independent from a commercial “occupation”; 3. the notion of a higher calling to God was broadened to emphasize the notion of a higher calling to the service of society, i.e., the element of “selfless purpose” (16th, 17th century); 4. seen by many to constitute a stabilizing Force in society; 5. requires rigorous and extended training, primarily intellectual in nature; 6. the intellectual training included vocational content, enabling the professional to have a means of livelihood; 7. professional training required (for the most part) a university or college degree or diploma (19th century); 8. professional skill and expertise were derived from the learning and application of a “systematic body of theory”; and, 9. were given the right by society to control their work.]

Samuel Huntington (1957), the most often-quoted author on the military as a profession, though he wrote around the middle of the twentieth century, is still widely quoted today by research institutions of higher learning. He pronounced that any profession has three defining characteristics: expertise, responsibility, and corporateness. Expertise means; “specialized knowledge and skill in a significant field of human endeavour....” Responsibility emphasizes the professional as performing a service that is essential to society: “The client of every profession in society, individually or collectively.... The essential and general character of his service and his monopoly of his skill impose upon the professional man the responsibility to perform the service when required by society.” Corporateness is explained in part as: “The members of a profession share a sense of

organic unity and consciousness of themselves as a group. This collective sense has its origins in the lengthy discipline and training necessary for professional competence, the common bond of work, and the sharing of a unique social responsibility (Huntington, 1957).”

Huntington does not consider all military members to be military professionals. Firstly, in his view only officers are military professionals. He therefore does not consider enlisted (non-commissioned) members to be military professionals because they do not meet (in his view) the three defining characteristics of a profession. Secondly, only full-time, career, operational officers who are engaged in or are being groomed in “the management of violence” are true military professionals. He excludes Reserve Force officers (who are not engaged in a life-long, full-time military career), and non-operational officers (including those who are professionals in other fields, e.g., military doctors and lawyers), as only operational officers are engaged in the management of violence, which “distinguishes the military officer from the other specialists who exist in the modern armed services... they are basically auxiliary vocations.... (Huntington, 1957).”

Looking back over the changing and contemporary meanings of the concept of profession, both in general and as applied to the military, it can be generally said that the military is a “profession”. However, depending on one’s view, this may be applied to only officers who are engaged in the management of violence, for example, Huntington

(1986) said that officers and non-commissioned officers are those who demonstrate the attributes of a professional, while (Hartle, 1989) believed that any member of the military who is engaged in trying to support global order and security in peace and war can be regarded as a military professional as quoted by (Dallaire, 2000).

As a young Defence Force, NDF gradually developed into a profession, not only in the broader sense of what is professed by Huntington (1957) (formal education, high skills, and expertise in conflict management), but in the narrower sense of an occupation with a distinguishable body of specific technical knowledge and doctrine; a more or less exclusive group coherence; a complex institution; an educational pattern adapted to its own needs; a career structure of its own; and a distinct sector in the Namibian society. These fundamental elements of professionalism, the reader will recognize, are in place for the medical, legal and other professions. According to Hartle (1989), a profession is distinguished by five characteristics - systematic theory (open system), authority, community sanction, ethical codes, and a culture - and the Namibian military “appears to possess all five attributes [NDF Staff Officers’ Operating Manual, (1997)].

With that understanding, women are recognized as equal citizens with men; they can become soldiers and occupy leadership roles throughout the world since the old political ideology of nations as autonomous powerful actors is similarly being transformed. At the same time Lieutenant General Ira C. E. (1975) [United States Air Force (USAF) retired in 1947 after distinguished military career) once said, “It will be a better service

with more women for the simple reason that women are better people, as every man knows, remembering his mother, and giving his wife her due.”

2.4.2 Imperative Policy Toward Gender Balance Implementation in NDF

Generally, literature on gender debate about male perceptions shows that very little has been written on the subject in Namibia and in the region (Adei, 2000:90). In the NDF in particular, male considerations on gender discussions have not received any articulation. Few of the literature on gender have looked at the women’s roles in the civil society. In so doing, the exclusion of women as equal partners in the NDF is challenged by Webster (1983) who demands the integration of women into development in order “to form a whole”; “to incorporate into a larger unit, and to end segregation and bring into common and equal membership, in society or an organization in order to end an essentially sexist process of progress.”

The modern emphasis on gender equality and professionalism has meant that women are encouraged to enter the military profession in many nations. However, their presence does not mean that they also enjoy a high professional status. Sule Totkas (2002) argues that in some cases “women in military are as token, women representing gender equality for the sake of representing and visibility. It could also be argued that women in the military have led to the redefining of the gender roles and gender implication on military institutions. The phenomena apply to the Namibian military Forces as they grapple with

the issue of gender equality. An internal defence review and restructuring programme envisaged an optimal defence force comprising 10 000 personnel. The NDF aspires to be a highly mobile, robust, professional Force that can be deployed fairly rapidly (Shiweda, 1999). Of the 10 000 members, 5 percent are females. Compared to other Government institutions which have reached 50% women representation and above, the MOD is among Offices, Agencies and Ministries that are below the targeted 30% by SADC having only 1% females at the top and 4% in the middle management.

Cleaver & Wallace (1990: 6) concluded in an earlier study on Namibian women in the liberation war that women refused to be restricted to supportive functions such as medics and couriers. As a result, they were fully trained and equipped as combatants, which is a clear evidence of a change in the perception of women's role within the SWAPO movement. Consequently, they underwent the same training as men and occupied positions at all levels. The ruling Party SWAPO continues to seek gender equality using the Namibian Constitution (Article 10 (2)). It is hoped that accounts on that experience will one day emerge, and so will its [experience] consequences on women's perception of themselves and of their roles in independent Namibia.

It is believed that many of the rank and files had forgotten the fact that women had been an integral part of the liberation struggle and had suffered the same oppression as men at the hands of the South African colonial regime. Adei (2000:93) further said that women too, have fought alongside their male comrades on the front despite all sufferings and

psychological pain they endured as women such as separation from their children and families for many years, which most often affects women more intensely than men. Therefore, it is difficult to understand why women in the NDF occupy only positions with secondary military roles; positions that lead to their absence at executive courses and important meetings where issues on defence and security management are discussed.

With that in mind, stereotype view of women in the SADC region is challenged from the empowerment approach that was developed from the liberal, radical and Marxist feminist approaches (Adei, 2000:93-94). This approach advocates that women's material needs should be addressed as well as their empowerment to make decisions about their own lives at the personal and community levels. Women in the military are not excluded in this empowerment.

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security includes a number of general statements regarding the need for peacekeeping operations to take into account the impact of armed conflict on women and children as well as their specific needs. It includes a number of specific requests for gender dimensions to be included in peacekeeping activities such as mine clearing and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants. These provide a legislative basis for the integration of gender concerns into military activities. Paragraph 4 Resolution 1325 (2000) "... urges the Secretary-General to seek to expand the role and

contribution of women in United Nations field-based operations, and especially among military observers, civilian police, human rights and humanitarian personnel.” It is imperative that all member states should adhere to the UN Resolutions, Namibia included.

The current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) and United Nations cannot make requests based on the composition of contingents. Since the contingents are transferred in their entirety from the TCC to the mission area, the proportion of women in military contingents at all levels of peacekeeping operations is directly related to their representation in the national armed Forces units that countries contribute. Curiosity may tempt one to ask a question as to whether the NDF has complied with the instruction in her UN operation in Liberia, but this is not the question for this research to answer.

Currently, no women hold senior positions in peacekeeping operations such as Deputy Force Commander and Deputy Chief Military Observer. This is largely a reflection of the few number of women, with the requisite experience who hold senior positions in the armed forces of TCCs. However, a number of middle-ranking female officers, with a rank of Colonel and Lieutenant Colonel or its equivalent, who have the experience required to serve as Branch or Section Head at Headquarters is increasing. These female officers provide a pool of suitably qualified; middle-ranking service women who can serve in peacekeeping missions, provided TCCs nominate them. With continued

successful service, these women will add to the pool of qualified female personnel from whom a Force Commander and Deputy Force Commanders could be selected. Namibia as a member country should also prepare to add to this pool like other countries. <http://www.trinity.edu/mkearl/gender.html>

In an effort to address the above challenges, the UN is committed to promote gender equality and ensuring that women and men are treated equally in all spheres of life. Beijing Platform for Action stated that: “Equality between women and men is a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice and is also a necessary and fundamental prerequisite for equality, development and peace. A transformed partnership based on equality between women and men is a condition for people-centered sustainable development” (UNDP, 2003) To give equal contribution to that effort, the African Union summit in Maputo, Mozambique, adopted the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa on 11 July 2003. Articulating a right to peace, the supplementary Protocol recognizes the right of women to participate in the promotion and maintenance of peace (Anantnarayan, 2003).

The ratification of international and national instruments such as Beijing Platform for Action, SADC Declaration on Gender and Development and the Addendum on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Women and Children is a clear testimony to that effect. Nevertheless, the majority of the women in the NDF are limited

to secondary roles such as nursing, finance, chaplaincy and clerical jobs, positions that do not carry full military status. The practice is not in line with the NDF Policy, for example; Defence Act (Act 1 Of 2002); Statement of Defence Policy (1993), NDF Personnel Policy (1999); MOD/NDF Gender Plan of Action (2001) and the MOD Code of Conduct (1996: 9). However, there are no clear exclusion policies that women are not permitted to participate in ground engagements. The question is whether the NDF complies with the policy provisions or merely strives for political correctness and does not honour the concept of women integration at all levels of the Force in pursuit of equal opportunity in the profession. The author also discovered that implementation of the MOD/NDF Gender Plan of Action is not in line with the NDF policy but follows the National Gender Policy that is not legally binding, prompting the question: “What is the women’s correct leadership position in the NDF?”

In pursuance of the National Gender policy, the majority of the Namibian women are involved in the struggle for change in gender relations. A considerable number of reports have been written on how to address gender imbalances in our society, but little is said on gender equalities in the military. According to Becker (2000: 34), very few Namibian men are involving themselves in this pertinent issue and seem to lack an understanding of the issues. She further said that matters of gender violence, and many other issues are still regarded as a ‘women’s concern.’ The majority of researchers on gender and respondents at workshops and seminars to strategize gender and all related issues are always women. It is also taken for granted in most Government Ministries

(MOD included) that whenever an invitation to attend a gender related event arrives in the office, it is automatically assumed that a female employee will have to attend. Becker concludes that Namibian men are reluctant to speak out about their perceptions and perspectives on gender, their identities, and their roles (individuals' or groups') participation in the changing society. Men in the NDF are not excluded.

Also important to note is that the Windhoek Declaration on Gender stated that the gender dimension in peace processes has not been adequately addressed (UNDP, 2000). The statement supports Hillebrecht (1991:1) who believes that gender issues have been, and still are a grossly under-researched area of social science research in Namibia. She further remarked that, "... information about all aspects of the life of women and women's movement in Namibia is still fairly scarce..." It is evident that gender and security related matters have not been adequately discussed in the country, which leaves an informational gap that needs to be filled through research.

In her study, Manuh (1998), a Senior Research Fellow of the Institute of African Studies stressed that traditional practices and attitudes towards women have been carried over into public life. She argues that women are under-represented in high offices of state and positions of decision-making in Government, the military, central banks, finance and planning ministries and African regional organizations. But in her article, Mutume (2006), said that African women are ready to lead but social beliefs and attitudes hinder their quest. Strengthening the debate further was Inonge Mbikusita Lewanika of

Zambia, who in her interview with Africa Renewal, said that all across the world, numerous obstacles hamper women in leadership positions, including pervasive and often subtle attitudes and beliefs that women are unequal to men at home, at work and in Government. Feminists argue that regardless of race, class or ethnicity, women are consistently defined as political outsiders whose participation in public life is conditional upon their maternal roles. Professional women, for instance are obliged to manage the household and family while also performing their professional tasks. This is because many cultures in Africa, including the Namibian, view the raising of children as primarily the job of women with men not expected to have domestic roles. This often leaves women at a disadvantage in relation to their male counterparts. To demonstrate this phenomenon, Cawthra (1994: 139 - 140) pointed out that, in 1979 there were only two female Brigadiers, five Colonels and 581 women who held rank in the SADF. These senior female officers were responsible for tasks such as welfare, training of female recruits and personnel management. None took part in strategic planning and drafting of policy in the SADF.

But Meade (1986) argues that, "...we conjure up an image, positive or negative, of groups. This image is very powerful and can strongly influence decision-making and other institutional behaviour. Such behaviours become discriminatory when people are (refused employment opportunities on grounds that are not related to their abilities." Meade's statement concurs with the statement by the former Mexican Ambassador to the UN, Rosario Green "n.d" that, "Men who were above me watched me to see if I

would make a mistake. Men who were at the same level would watch me to see if I could do things as well as they did. And my bosses, who were men, were always scrutinizing me and other women, because they were fearful of history's judgment: 'you made a mistake, you selected a woman!' But most often, to gain positions of authority, women have to be overqualified just to be noticed. And when women do get appointed, you hear people say 'She is just like a man.' In other words, they relate to you as a "man" if you are an achiever. This is how societies view women – as not as good as men (Lewanika, 2006).

Consequently, SADC has come up with two Declarations. These are; the SADC Gender and Development (1997) and the Addendum to the Declaration on Violence Against Women and Children (1998), to which Namibia is a signatory. Therefore, the Namibian Government is committed to rectifying the situation of gender imbalance in different spheres of life.

In an effort to address the gender challenges, the Namibian Parliament ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women [CEDAW] in 1992. The ratification of this Convention exemplified Namibia's commitment to ending discrimination against women, thereby paving the way for the implementation of affirmative action policies for women. In 1997, SADC member states adopted a declaration on gender and development that required each country to reach at least 30 percent female representations in decision-making by 2005. Only two

countries have achieved the SADC target, South Africa and Mozambique. On average women comprise 20 per cent of the region's legislators, second only to Scandinavian countries, where the average is 38 per cent but the region remained below the seven percent target set by the United Nations for developing nations to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) <<http://www.genderlinks.org.za>>

Moore, 1998 [an assistant professor of sociology at New York State in Buffalo] once said, "...while the military is leading in race integration, it is lagging in gender." Moore, who has served in the army, described the military as a microcosm of the whole society <<http://dailybruin.ucla.edu/DB/issues/98/11/13/news.military.html>>. In support of Moore's study, Adekumbi Abibat Sonaike, the Vice-Chairperson of the Nigeria's Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) said, "Progress has been slow and uneven because many African countries have not yet reached the international UN target of 30 per cent female representation in positions of power." (Sonaike, 2006). However, a study by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (2005) indicates that Namibia reached the 30% target by 2005. By then, 33% of its management cadre in the public service were women. The report further revealed that a new target of 50% to be reached by 2015 was set. The Ministry of Defence is the last of all the Ministries and Agencies lagging behind with only 5% women representation at the management cadres' level. Representation in other Government ministries range between 11% - 75 % (MGECW, a Report, 2005).

In Southern Africa, the proportion of women in parliament stands at 17.9 per cent, higher than the African average of 11 per cent. Three countries, including Namibia, selected female deputy speakers during the last decade. In addition, Mozambique and South Africa named women deputy presidents. In January, Liberians swore in Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf as Africa's first elected female leader. It is believed that she was elected on the basis of her perceived ability to do the job better than her male competitors (Mutume, 2006).

The NDF Statement on Defence Policy, (1993:8) articulates the NDF and MOD mission statement. It states that MOD and NDF will strive to maximize its operational effectiveness through the recruitment of the best young men and women who wish to pursue a military career (1993: 10, 39). The other pieces of literature consulted include a recent report by the Ministry of Gender and Child Welfare (2006) which gives comparative figures on the percentages of women and men in managerial positions in the different Government ministries. The highest disparity was observed in two ministries, of Defence and of Safety and Security in which women representation stood at 5% and 7%, respectively and the Central Intelligence Office (11%) where women make up a small proportion of top management level. The above alarming statistics are an indication that the wonderful laws put in place are not adequately translated into concrete action. It is thus, self-evident that the Namibian society, politics and the NDF in particular have hitherto been marked by male dominance.

Peter da Costa (1999), a Senior Communication Adviser in the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), said that African Women's concerns on the issue of peace are the outcome of a process that started with the Kampala Action Plan on Women and Peace (1993), the African Platform of Action on Women, Dakar (1994), the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing (1995), and the Johannesburg Women's Leadership Forum on Peace Johannesburg (1996). It was in this context that the OAU and the ECA jointly established and launched in November 1998, the African Women's Committee on Peace and Development (AWCPD) which is a major cornerstone of women's inclusion in peace processes and empowerment endeavours in the region since Beijing.

The Sixth Regional Conference on Women (1999) concluded deliberations on the issue of peace by reiterating its commitment to the Zanzibar Declaration and Agenda for Peace and by endorsing the Algiers Appeal and the Declarations of the Peace Tent during the Sixth Regional Conference on Women.

The following highlights the key concerns of African women that emerged from the various meetings and deliberations on the issue of peace, in the region:

1. Promoting the role of women in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peace-building in Africa

- Lobbying for the increase of women's participation in the areas of reconciliation, negotiation and mediation of conflicts and undertaking capacity building of women's organizations in the field;
 - Initiating peace missions led by women to war-torn societies ;
 - Advocating for the inclusion of women refugees and displaced persons in peace negotiations and conflict resolution;
2. Integrating women in decision-making and changing the mainstream perspective of security issues to include a gender perspective.
- Analyzing the OAU, SADC, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) mechanisms for defence and security from a gender perspective to assess the level of support given to women in their policy and institutional frameworks and their impact on the peace networks ;
 - Advocating for an affirmative action policy that guarantees at least 30% representation of women in decision-making mechanisms at all levels;
 - Establishing an observatory for peace and democratic governance.

2.5 CONCLUDING NOTES ON GENDER LITERATURE

In the context of development dialogue, gender has become an important issue of checklists, planning, and ‘political correctness’, not only in the civilian institution but in the military as well. Through the terminology of gender, women’s issues have become politicized. The language of gender has changed especially in male dominated communities and institutions, and worsens the trends that just describe the shift from women to gender. In doing so, the term ‘gender’ is associated with ‘women’ even though at the other hand, gender mainstreaming continued and gained in importance since the 1995 Beijing Conference.

Supporting the quest for gender equality was His Excellency, President Hifikepunye Pohamba when he urged General officers and senior staff members of the Ministry of Defence to ensure equal opportunity to all citizens in all the constituencies of the country regardless of gender, sex or ethnic origin at all times during his visit to the Ministry of Defence on the 18 July 2005 (NDF Journal, 2005, Vol 18, No 21). The statement challenged the seven promotions and appointments done in November - December 2005 where only one female was appointed to the rank of Capt (NDF Journal, 2005, Vol. 18, No 21).

Activists note that because women are often viewed as out of place in professional environment, they are subjected to more scrutiny at work than men of the same rank,

which slows down women's advancement into management positions. It is challenged to double its efforts to bring women on the same level with their male counterparts in taking decisions and managing the affairs of their ministries.

Another method of discouraging women from obtaining job or career training in the military, and for silencing them is unfair treatment at work that has been to make them feel unlucky even not considered or entrusted with a particular piece of important work. Despite the challenges, a growing proportion of women are breaking through the glass ceiling. In other defence forces in the region, women who have entered into leadership positions attribute their success to factors such as access to education and work opportunities, good mentoring by both men and women, support from family, employers, supervisors, teachers and colleagues, and successful lobbying by gender activists.

But on the other hand, the advancement of women into political positions of power does not, by itself, resolve the need to create equal opportunities in the military environment and allow women to make a real difference. It is very true as Pumla Mncayi, Director of the Gender Advocacy Program – South African lobby group has noted; “It is a reality that traditionally women have always been given positions as deputies to men, without any real power or significance.” Women in the NDF are assigned to traditional support roles, positions such as Directorate of Finance and Medical Service that never allow them to take part in decisions at middle and management levels or to exercise the full

military authority. The question remains – do they have power to improve women's lives in NDF?

Is this what the NDF policy terms the appropriate way to achieve their objectives of sustainability, reliability, efficiency and professionalism? Concerns were raised about the under-representation of women in top and middle-level officer positions and strategic planning. Other concerns were unequal opportunities in education and training. The NDF has placed barriers in women's career path in the military. The society equally placed barriers in women's paths, so that they often have to choose between improving their work situation but losing friends or self respect and achieving no career advancement but living out the traditional female role, which may be problematic but at least brings the reward of being regarded as feminism and unthreatening. Many professions, including the military, have excluded women on the basis of their hypothesized deleterious effects on social cohesion, which has been argued to be directly related to the lowering of operational effectiveness levels (Huntington, 1957).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 NATURE OF THE STUDY AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

This is a descriptive type of case-study used to provide opinions on gender and military professionalism in the NDF. The study is designed to examine the different perceptions held by males and female populations namely, General Officers (Management cadres), and Senior and Junior Staff Officers of all three Arms of Military Service. The study was anchored on interviews and survey questionnaire that were administered among NDF members in Windhoek, Grootfontein and Walvis Bay. As respondents, the officers' views and opinions constituted the basis of the study. The study also relied more on primary sources and secondary sources from foreign case studies in other defence forces. In other words, while the primary data involved the respondents who filled the questionnaires or were interviewed, the secondary sources relied on books, Government policies, journals, reports and other publications through internet and archival research.

The NDF is experiencing unequal representation between female and male members at all decision-making levels. Regardless of the Government efforts to rectify the gender imbalances in the Namibian Ministries, Offices and Agencies, women in the NDF are neither appointed nor promoted to strategic or influential positions such as Military

Attaché and Heads of Delegation to important local and international meetings. Up to 2005 there was only one female Brigadier, one Colonel and 81 women who held officer's rank. At the same time, most of these senior female officers are responsible for such affairs as welfare, finance and personnel management. Needless to say, women are excluded from the areas of strategic planning and drafting of policy in the NDF. In fact, they are limited to logistical roles and are prohibited from participating in active services.

Furthermore, women are not sent to Senior Staff Courses or Command and Staff War Colleges in spite of the NDF Policy Statement (Republic of Namibia, 1993: 8) which clearly states that "the mission of the MOD and NDF is to provide challenge and opportunity for employees, utilizing and enhancing their skills, abilities and creativity." In addition, MOD Code of Conduct (1996: 9) makes provision for equal opportunities for all members of MOD and NDF. NDF offers training and employment opportunities normally closed to them in civilian life. In addition to administrative work, women have been trained as pilots for non-combat flying, and, less than five attended Junior Staff courses. None attended the senior staff course or Command and Staff College.

This situation has serious implications on NDF female officers. In the case of UN Peacekeeping operations and AU Peace enforcement missions where gender representations is implemented, NDF will end up sending women who are not at the required military level compared to their male counterparts. In the endeavour to adhere

to the external and internal demand of gender implementation, such as UN and AU military observer missions, SADC (1997) that demanded 30% women representation in political and decision-making structures by 2005 and 50% by 2010, and the implementation of Affirmative Action policy, NDF may promote incompetent women to high positions for political correctness.

Despite all these, no investigation has been conducted to determine the factors contributing towards the barriers for women's advancement in the Force. The majority of NDF women was silent, remained on the sidelines during the war, and continues to be excluded from decision-making and peace negotiations. Implementing these policies would imply promotion of capable women to high positions and enabling them to participate in leadership roles that fulfill their desire to contribute towards the national military duties on an equal footing with men.

Therefore, the problem is that the existing policies that would guarantee gender balance at the NDF decision-making level are not implemented or reviewed in light of the challenges of gender and military professionalism. What are the implications of the overwhelming persistence of male dominance in the Namibian military? It may also raise the question as to whether the action by the NDF leadership is a result of cultural attitudes, societal norms, or other reasons.

3.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objective of this study is to point out the General and Senior and Junior Staff Officers' perceptions on current and future gender relations and military professionalism in the NDF. In order to achieve the objective, it is necessary to:

- 2 determine whether there are differences in the military orientation of women and men in the NDF;
- 3 describe the experiences and viewpoints of the General Staff officers vis-à-vis Senior and Junior Staff Officers towards equal opportunities for women and men in the NDF with regard to training, appointment and promotion to strategic positions, or to positions of high foreign exposures; and
- 4 establish whether the demographic characteristics of members (i.e. gender, culture, and years of service) influence their military perceptions.

3.3 STUDY POPULATION

The study targeted 200 NDF officers from all Arms of Services namely; the Army, Air and Navy Forces who are stationed at the Defence Headquarters in Windhoek, at Air Force in Windhoek Eros Airport and Grootfontein Air Bases, and at the Naval Base at Walvis Bay. Out of 200 targeted officers, only 48 successfully completed the questionnaires. One General and one Senior Staff Officers were interviewed. Quota

sampling was used to ensure that identified officers' rank groups are represented in the study.

It should be noted that, views and opinions of Colonels are associated with the General Staff Officers because they are all Management Cadres.

3.4 RESEARCH PROCEDURE AND QUESTIONNAIRE ADMINISTRATION

Concerning the research instruments, closed and open-ended questionnaires (attached) and guided interviews were the main instruments used for data collection. The questionnaires were based on the research questions and were distributed to, and received from, the target groups through the Registry office and they were hand delivered. The research questions were divided into four parts; Part 1 focused on the background information and definition of professionalism in the NDF context; Part 2 on Gender Policy and gender perspective. Part 3 focused on the effectiveness of National Gender Policy in the NDF while Part 4 asked about causes of gender imbalances. Individually, the questionnaires sought the officers' perspectives towards gender inequality for improvement. It was hoped that the responses would provide a wide range of views that give meaningful help to determine the main causes of the problem. The research questions were as outlined below.

The following basic questions were used to gather research information;

1. How do you evaluate gender equality in NDF?
2. Is gender and military professionalism addressed in your Unit?
3. What are the causes of gender imbalance in the NDF?
4. Is it true that women in the NDF are limited to secondary roles?
5. Are women in NDF empowered to make military decisions?
6. Is there a chance of equal gender representation in NDF in the near future?
7. Should women be given equal opportunity to prove themselves?
8. What can be done to minimize gender imbalance in the NDF.
9. Has NDF done enough to alleviate gender imbalance?
10. Would motivation of male colleagues to become equal partners be regarded as a key challenge to gender equality in the NDF?
11. Does NDF deploy women infantry personnel on operational duties?

In addressing these questions, the thesis will firstly review the literature on gender equality (equal opportunity) and the basis of NDF policies and guidelines on gender. Secondly, it will review the literature on military profession in relations with the NDF approach on gender implementation. Thirdly, it will present the current status of female officers at the top and middle management levels. The findings will be presented and compared to what is pertaining to the male counterparts. It is hoped and expected that the findings will indicate how gender equality is implemented in the NDF.

With regard to the procedure, the researcher obtained permission from the Chief of Defence Force (CDF) (see attached letter) to conduct research in the NDF, have access to gender related information from the MOD/NDF data base and to interview the NDF members.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis consists of examining, categorizing, tabulating, and / or combining the evidence collected to address the initial propositions of the study. Cross tabulations were used to explore the differences in responses of the officers representing all rank categories. Chi- square tests were done to determine if the differences that appeared among the female and male officers in different categories, were statistically significant. The Spearman's correlation coefficient for each cross tabulation was used to indicate the strength of the relationship. The frequencies of the Likert-type scale that was used point out variations in perception of issues according to sex, rank, length of service, etc.

Chi-square and Kruskal-Wallis tests were used to analyze the baseline data to determine whether observed frequencies are significantly different from expected frequencies (Shaklee, Salini, and Garrett, 1993: 685-701). The tests enable the researcher to compare objectively observed and expected frequencies with regard to gender versus military professionalism since it is not always possible to tell just by looking at them whether they are "different enough" to be considered statistically significant just by

looking at them. The t-tests were used to compare the means of the two genders in different rank groups. This statistical technique computed the likelihood that two different sets of samples are actually drawn from populations with equal true means. This enables to investigate whether the difference in the observed means is real or due to chance. The Chi-square test was done for all the variables against gender and in all cases the condition of more than five expected counts in each cell was violated. Hence, the results of the Chi-square tests are not conclusive. In such cases the Kruskal-Wallis test was used instead. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test if rank (viz. General Staff versus Senior and Junior Staff) has any “blocking” effect. Description of experiences and views on equal opportunities with regard to training, appointments and promotions and to strategic positions and to positions of high exposure was used in that effort. Other statistical techniques that were used in this study include Spearman’s Rank correlation, and Regression Analysis to measure the strength of relationship between variables.

All analyses were carried out using SPSS version 7.1 on an IBM Pentium 75 megahertz PC compatible running Windows 95. The researcher created the programs to validate the data as it was entered so as to minimize data entry errors. Applying the case-study to the Officers in the Defence Headquarters, and headquarters of Army, Air, Navy Forces, and the analytic generalizations could be informative to the rest of the Forces.

To facilitate the understanding of the data presentation, each research question that appears before the table or graph is discussed.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION THE CHAPTER

In this chapter, the research findings from the two groups of officers; namely, General Officers (Management cadres) and Senior and Junior officers (Staff Officers) are presented. The two groups describe their perceptions on gender equality and gender equity implementation in the NDF. Specific focus is placed on the provision of equal opportunities in capacity building and representation at decision-making levels. The research outcome, recommendations and conclusions will apply specifically and directly to the NDF. However, the researcher anticipates that recommendations will also be relevant in their broader thrust to the other security and law enforcement agencies and defence forces in the region.

The views and opinions of the Generals as well as Senior and Junior officers illustrate the top and middle leadership perceptions on gender and military profession. Furthermore, their sensitivity and stereotypes on gender can determine the current and future gender perspectives in the NDF.

4.2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS

The following tables (Tables 1 and 2) present the background information about the General Officers (Management Cadres) and about the Senior and Junior Officers. As it was pointed out in the previous chapter (Methodology), views and opinions of some Senior Staff Officers (SSO) – Colonels, for instance, in this case-study, are linked to those of the General Officers for the reason that both are members of the Management.

Table 1: Category of Respondents (General Officers) by Gender, Rank and Arm of Service

Category of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Females	1	14.3
Males	6	85.7
Total	7	100
Rank		
Major General	1	14.3
Brigadier General	2	28.6
Colonel	4	57.1
Total	7	100

Several attempts were made by the researcher either to interview or have the questionnaire completed by the Service Commanders of Air and Navy Forces but these were unsuccessful. The reasons could have been the distance between their work stations and the Defence Headquarters where the researcher is, or their hectic office schedules. Therefore, views and ideas of Management Cadres presented in this research

reflect mainly the Army's perceptions, as 100% of the respondents were from the Army. The other point worth mentioning is that the number of females in the different rank categories was very small. Up until the time of the compilation of the research findings, there was only one female Brigadier General. Hence, the research findings might be gender biased at this level of respondents.

Table 2: Background information On Junior and Senior Officers

Category of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Females	7	14.9
Males	35	74.5
Not stated	5	10.6
Total	47	100
Rank		
Lieutenant Colonel	5	10.6
Major	15	31.9
Captain	13	27.7
Lieutenant	9	19.1
Not stated	5	10.6
Total	47	100
Arms of Service		
Army	29	61.7
Air Force	5	10.6
Navy	7	14.9
Not stated	6	12.8
Total	47	100

The officers' rank in the NDF is made up of three groups. Firstly, "General Officers" are comprising of Brigadier Generals, Major Generals, and Lieutenant General;

Secondly, “Senior Officers” who comprise of Majors, Lieutenant Colonels and Colonels; and thirdly, “Junior Officers” made up of or consisting of 2nd Lieutenants, Lieutenants and Captains. By combining these rank groups, female officers occupied the following ranks as shown in Figure 1 below.

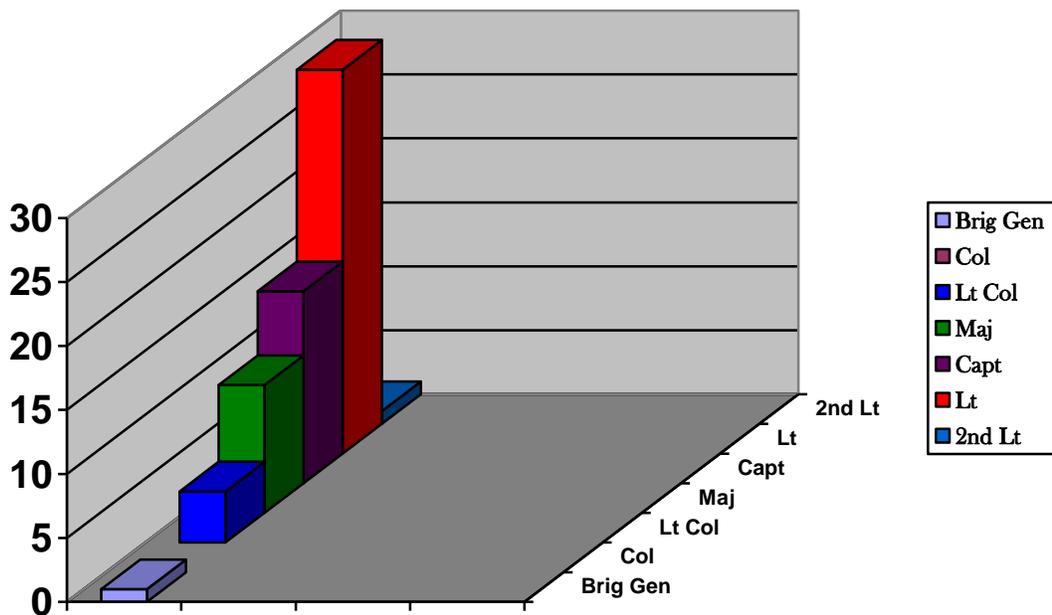


Figure 1: NDF Women Rank Structures (2005)

The significance of the data given here will be discussed in comparison with the views and opinions given in the sections below.

The following table (Table 3) gives an outline of women representation at the senior management level of the NDF as extracted from the MGECW report of 2005 (as amended). Data obtained from the NDF Human Resource data – base corresponded with the figures given in the report of the MGECW. The report indicates that there was

only one female officer with the rank of Brigadier General representing women at the Senior Management level.

Table 3: Women representation at Senior Management Level of NDF in 2005

Job category	Total	Male	%Male	Female	% Female
Chief of Defence Force (Lt General)	1	1	100	0	0
Major-Generals	2	2	100	0	0
Brigadiers	6	5	83.3	1	16.7
Colonels	27	27	100	0	0
Captain (Commander-Navy)	1	1	100	0	0
TOTAL	37	36	97.3	1	2.7

Source: MGECW report of 2005

Furthermore, the table above presents women representation at the top and middle management of NDF in December 2006. The importance of this data is to compare the distribution of women throughout the officers' rank in the NDF between to 2005 and 2006.

Regardless of the Government prompted efforts to equalize opportunities for men and women at all levels of our society, the data presented in the table above shows that there are visible unequal opportunities between female and male members at the top and middle management of NDF. The prolonged limitation of women's access to resources and decision-making in important military functions such as operational planning,

exercises and administration of the military personnel hamper women's contribution to peace and development of the country. The data presented in Figure 2 is given to check whether the views and opinions of the Officers correspond with the current gender perception in the NDF.

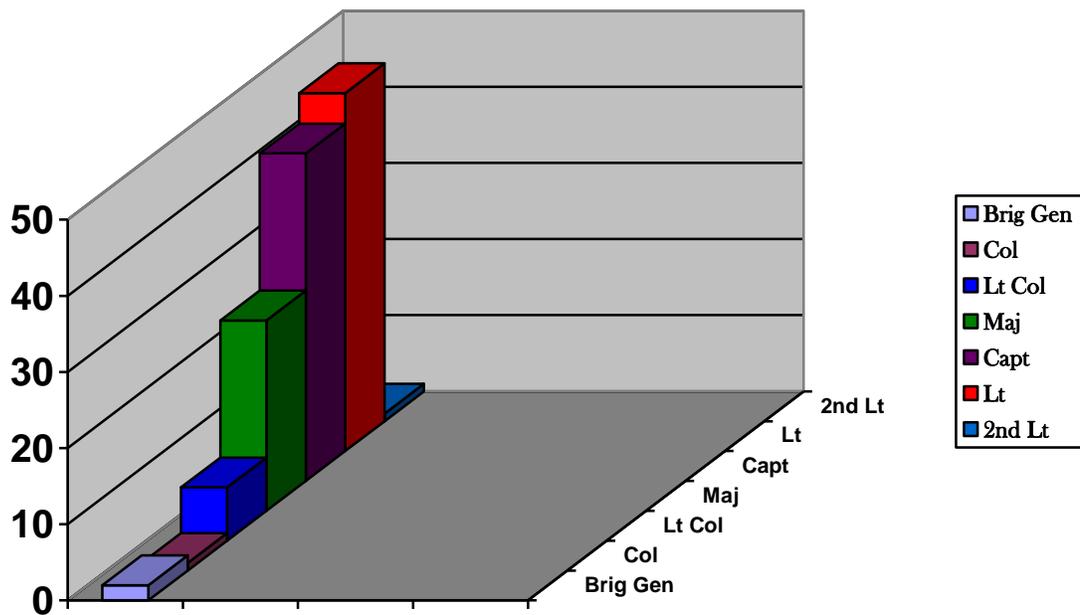


Figure 2: Rank Distribution of Women Serving in the NDF in December 2006

The number of women serving in the NDF has slightly increased at the Junior Officers' rank compared with that of 2005, but still keeping the general trend of unequal representation at decision-making levels at the top and middle management [MOD Database].

Additionally, it is interesting to know whether the years of service could have potential influence in one's views and opinions on gender and military professionalism in the Force.

As shown in Figure 3 below, 65 % of the male respondents served for more than ten years.

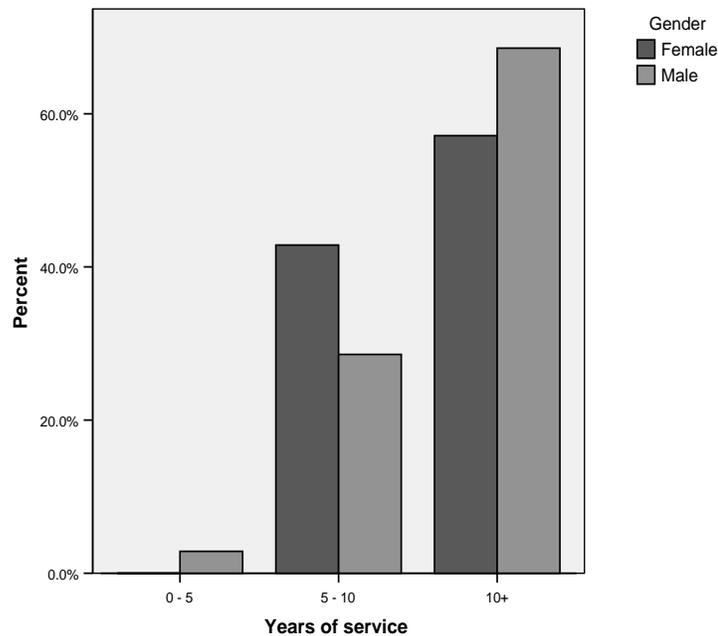


Figure 3: Years of Service of the Respondents

The majority of the male respondents are those who served for more than 10 years and may have been exposed to regional meetings where they met with officers from other countries in the region like South Africa, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, etc where gender equality enjoys the blessing of the top management. Others might have participated in various UN missions where gender balance is mandatory. Officers in this rank category

may have understood the gender sensitivity education where women's issues and concerns are discussed and supported by all. Therefore, the key challenge to gender equality would be to motivate male colleagues to become equal partners in the process of defining the visions and future plans for more equal society in the military services.

4.3 MAIN FINDINGS

This section presents views and opinions of the Generals, Senior and Junior Officers of the NDF on gender and military professionalism. In each sub-section, the question is given in brackets, followed by the answers as given by the respondents. The comparison of the Officer's perceptions on gender is done by rank, gender and Arms of service.

4.3.1 Gender Inequalities in the NDF

The respondents had to answer the following question: “**How do you evaluate gender equality in NDF?**” Data presented in Table 4 illustrate that more than 50% of the respondents among Senior and Junior Officers observed gender inequalities within the Defence Force, while less than 30% said the opposite. The respondents who indicated that they do not know compelled the researcher to pose the question as to why they don't know in spite of being officers. Information reveals that both female and male officers observed that there is no gender equality in the Force. However, the proportion of officers giving this opinion is higher among females than among males: 85.7% of

females as opposed to 48.6% of males. These views and opinions correspond with the data obtained from the 2005 MGECW report. The expected frequency of gender inequality in the NDF comes out clearly as it was observed.

Table 4: Respondents' evaluation of gender equality in the NDF?

Opinion	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Equal	1 (14.3%)	11 (31.4%)	12 (28.6%)
Unequal	6 (85.7%)	17 (48.6%)	23 (54.8%)
Don't know	-	3 (8.6%)	3 (7.1%)
Other	-	4 (11.4%)	4 (9.5%)
Total	7 (100%)	35 (100%)	42 (100%)

Lack of gender awareness might be one of the reasons why gender inequality is highly observed in the Force. This further revealed some officers' ignorance about the state of gender equality in the Force.

In the light of the Namibian Government's effort to provide equal opportunities to all men and women in different spheres of life, including defence and security areas, the application of the endeavour needs to be clearly understood. Equal opportunity means

much more than opening the top positions to those who have traditionally been excluded from the leadership positions as it is in this case-study. It also means removing the obstacles that prevent individuals from seeking opportunities that match their talents and ambitions. This raises so many questions of a practical nature; e.g. helping women and men to build a career and judging performance according to what people can accomplish rather than who they are. Gender equality is when equal weight and value is given to the similarities and differences between female and male members to the varying roles that they play in execution of their duties.

It should be understood that solutions to these problems do not just emerge by chance. They are a consequence of leadership and deliberate action. Women can only create more equal opportunities to achieve leadership positions by taking the lead in addressing such practical problems. If the NDF allows everyone to use his or her talents to the fullest extent, it is far more likely to be successful. Experience demonstrates that equality of opportunity is not only a right, but it is also practical. The views and opinions of the NDF members on how obstacles to gender equality derail contributions of women serving in the Force are discussed further in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

4.3.2 Unequal representation in the NDF

If there is recognition of existence of inequalities in the NDF, do people see a way out in

the near future? Those views are given by answers to the following question: “**Is there chance of equal gender representation in NDF in the near future?**” To this question, 83.3% of the respondents in the General Staff category said “No” with only 16.7% answering in the affirmative.

With reference to the reasons given by the General Officers, a grasp of the military context within which the NDF operates is vital to the understanding of attitudes and how they may change within the organization responsible for defence and security. A basic assumption that underlies this case-study is that dominant values, beliefs, power and gender relations are to a significant degree responsible for the gender imbalances. Gender and military professionalism provide the dominant references of individuals whose actions affect the military work environments of the Force.

Since MOD and NDF is a male-oriented organization wherein the shortage of women professionals allows traditional perspectives to go unchallenged, conservative attitudes towards women prevails in the NDF. The information (meetings, local, regional and international workshops) and services related to the defence force are attended and distributed by the male staff officers, largely neglecting female officers. Many of the male officers look down on women and doubt the latter’s abilities to work within the military especially combat-related work, despite the fact that the majority of the women participated in liberation struggle and worked hand in hand with their male counterparts. Women’s inputs and views are reportedly not valued and are not usually solicited.

At the same time, the indication of the importance of gender in the Namibian Constitution paved the way for the establishment of the MGECW to monitor all gender issues in all Government ministries including Defence. In this case, the MGECW, as a watchdog, has to ensure that the MOD and NDF comply with the principle as outlined in Article 10 (32) of the Namibian Constitution regarding gender equality. To that end, the continued absence of women at the top decision-making echelon will allow them to take “gender blind” decisions.

With regard to relations between the Parliament and the MOD, the latter has to respect the civilian supremacy of the Parliament on defence policy and practice. In keeping with the principle outlined in the Constitution of Namibia, the co-operative relationships with the regional (SADC) and international (AU, UN) bodies have to be fulfilled.

4.3.3 Women in NDF are Limited to Secondary Roles

As an example of inequalities within NDF, one can mention the fact that women are limited to secondary roles in the NDF. There are no specific policies that prohibit participation of women in all mustering in the NDF. However, systematic discrimination is applied to exclude women from participating in military decision-making and occupation of strategic positions. This situation excludes women to take part in the primary role of the military and makes them remain at the sideline playing a secondary role.

The Senior and Junior Officers were asked if they agreed with the statement that women in the NDF are limited to secondary roles (e.g. nursing and finance) that do not carry full military status. An overwhelming 57.1% responded in the positive and only 33.3% responded in the negative. Notice, however, that almost three-quarters (71.4%) of female respondents and much smaller proportion (54.3%) of male respondents agreed with the statement. This clearly points out a discrepancy of opinions according to sex.

Table 5: Dominance of NDF Women in Secondary Roles

Response	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
True	5 (71.4%)	19 (54.3%)	24 (57.1%)
False	2 (28.6%)	12 (34.3%)	14 (33.3%)
Don't know	-	2 (5.7%)	2 (4.8%)
Other	-	2 (5.7%)	2 (4.8%)
Total	7 100%	35 100%	42 100%

The reasons why the General Staff Officers think that women in NDF are limited to secondary roles are expressed in Table 6.

Table 6: Reasons why the General Officers think that women in the NDF should be limited to secondary roles

Reason		Frequency	Percentage
1	Women must stand up and fight for their rights	1	14.3
2	Female soldiers were always responsible for support services	5	71.4
3	Some females feel comfortable in those roles. Hence it's hard to change them.	1	14.3
Total		7	100.0

All in all, it boils down to the thinking that women can only play secondary roles in NDF because all the time, even in the defence forces of developed countries, women were always limited to those roles. Thus, in NDF we have one Lieutenant General who is a man; two Major Generals both of them men; one female Brigadier General out of eight officers of that rank; and seven Defence Attaches all of whom are males (See Table 3)

However, things have changed completely after the ratification of international and regional instruments such as Beijing Platform for Action, SADC Declaration on Gender and Development and the Addendum on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence against Women and Children. Any discrimination that does not conform to the legitimate requirements is deemed unconstitutional.

Since military members are also part of the general community, they transfer these perceptions into the military society. In the military, a male member is seen as commander, sub shooter, gunner, pilot, artillerist, etc, while a woman is a clerk, secretary and a nurse.

Throughout the military history, women have been shielded from the heat of battle with the argument that women are less physically capable and more injury-prone. Thus they were given more lenient conditions, which is disastrous for morale and military preparedness. The role of women has been limited to supporting men who do the actual fighting, but now all that has changed. With the sophisticated military equipments, females have taken their place on the frontlines.

The question about a woman serving in the combat arms of her country's military is not only about her 'right' (female member) to do so. It is not about whether she can do so as well as a man. It is not about simple equal opportunity or equal representation. It is about whether women ought to serve in the combat arms of the NDF, and if that is good for a country. The Senior and Junior officers as well have the same opinions as given by the General officers that women are limited to secondary roles.

Several reasons have been put forward as to why women should not be in combat positions such as; "men would protect them" (Interview with Col B Kadhila, 2006). As was argued earlier, it is evident that division of labour is a form of social separation and

allocation of work to women and men with different ranks and responsibilities. Different cultures and communities construct rules about different capabilities and abilities of women and men and determine gender differentiated roles and responsibilities.

On the other hand, war or conflict is an extension of policy by violent physical means. It is a human attempt, and if a standing professional defence force wages the war effectively, it will win. But since the above is true, we can conclude that the war fighters must be well-trained. Having women in the military (infantry) does not mean lowering the international military standards. Anyone who does have the necessary capacity should get a place. In compromising the standards of the infantry, gender should not be considered as a disqualifying factor.

There is an informational gap on how the Namibian public views women in the military. It would be of great assistance if an extensive nationwide survey on attitudes concerning women's participation in the military was conducted to hear whether women should be allowed to serve in the traditional female jobs (secondary roles) or be allowed to participate in exercises that expose them to direct, ground, hand-to-hand combat. More so, it would be interesting to hear what women in the military think about the issue. Among the respondents in the General Staff category, there was only one female while there were only seven females out of 42 Senior and Junior Officers. Therefore, opinions of such few females may not be conclusive.

4.3.4 Causes of gender imbalances in the NDF

Through the previous questions, we found out that gender imbalances are there and they are not addressed enough to be rooted out. What are the reasons of their existence? Where do they come from? The following table presents views and opinions of the General Officers on the question: **“What are the causes of gender imbalance in the NDF?”**

Table 7: Causes of Gender Imbalances in the NDF according to General Officers

	Cause	Frequency	Percentage
1	“Natural” dominance of men over women	5	62.5
2	Men have gone through the ranks. Women should do likewise.	1	12.5
3	Women have been behind all along. They cannot suddenly come to the top	2	25.0
Total		8	100.0

On the same question, the Senior and Junior officers pointed out that male supremacy over women is the dominant cause of gender imbalances in the Force. This idea is more supported by members of the Air Force who might have observed that other Arms of Service, like Navy and the Army, are lagging behind in providing equal opportunities to female members in their Forces. There are female engineers and pilots for non-combat flights in the Air Force.

The other dominating cause of gender imbalance mentioned by the respondents is culture. This might be because traditionally sailing is more associated with men whereas in the Army, women have been warriors.

It is evident that division of labour is a form of social separation and allocation of work to women and men with different positions and responsibilities. Different cultures and communities construct rules about different capabilities and abilities of women and men and determine gender differentiated roles and responsibilities. To instil organisational loyalty and obedience, most military organisations develop a culture unto themselves, distinguished by an emphasis to hierarchy, tradition, rituals and customs, and distinctive dress and insignias. These cultures support women's and men's differential claims, rights and obligations.

4.3.5 Key challenge to gender equality in the NDF

Gender activists argue that one of the key challenges to gender equality would be to motivate male colleagues to become equal partners in the process of defining the visions and strategies for a more equal society. One of the possible key challenges to gender equality in the NDF is to motivate male colleagues to become equal partners in the process of defining the visions and strategies for a more equal society. As a concern to alleviate gender inequality in the Force, the question was raised probing responses in that regard. Research findings are as given in Table 8 below.

Table 8: Male Motivation as the Key Challenge to Gender Equality Expressed per Rank

Response	Rank				Total
	Lt Colonel	Major	Captain	Lieutenant	
True	4 (80%)	12 (80%)	9 (81.8%)	5 (62.5%)	30 (76.9%)
False	-	2 (13.3%)	1 (9.1%)	2 (25%)	5 (12.8%)
No idea	1 (20%)	1 (6.7%)	1 (9.1%)	1 (12.5%)	4 (10.3)
Total	5 (100%)	15 (100%)	11 (100%)	8 100%	39 100%

The overwhelming majority, 77% of the respondents, have the same opinion that there is a great need to encourage male colleagues to accept change and become receptive to policy changes meant to promote gender equality in the NDF. The attitudes of male officers and other ranks to isolate themselves from gender workshops and seminars should be discouraged. It is observed with great concern that invitations to gender meetings and workshops are given to women to attend since some men associate gender with women. Consequently, most men lagged behind in gender education.

It is interesting to note that the majority of the respondents who identified the need for gender awareness are male Officers. More than 80% expressed the importance of gender equality and creation of equal opportunities for all the military members.

Subsequently, respondents' years of service can also be identified as potential contributing factor to the responses.

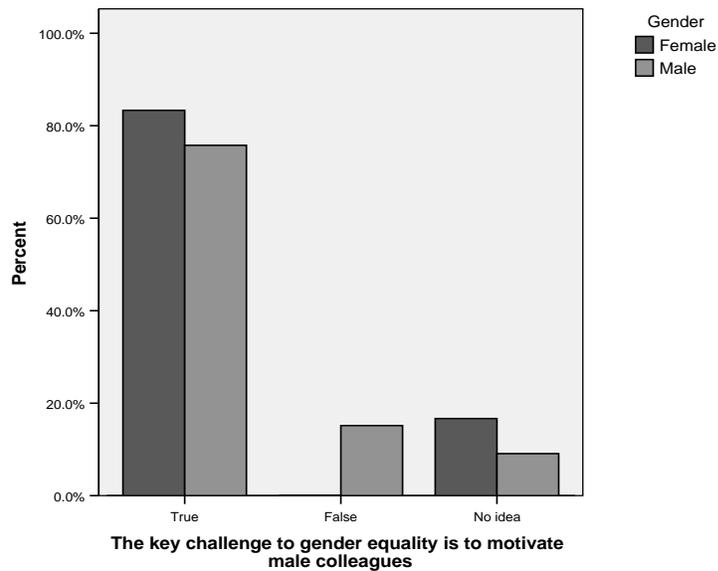


Figure 4: Key Challenge to Gender Equality Expressed by Gender

4.3.6 NDF Women in Combat Duties versus Equal Representation

The abilities of women in combat duties may be seen as a challenge to gender equality implementation in the army. When the Namibian case is compared with other established Defence Forces in the region, for example in South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe and even Lesotho, it appears that gender mainstreaming in the NDF is lagging far behind not only in women representation at the decision-making level, but also in terms of training, promotion and appointment. The SANDF, for example, is one of the few armed forces in the world which accepts the right of women to serve in combat. The 5th South African Infantry Battalion in KwaZulu – Natal deploys women infantry personnel on operational duties.

The question the investigation had to answer is a critical one. **“Does NDF deploy women infantry personnel on operational duties?”**

Table 9: Opinions of Junior and Senior Officers about NDF Women in Operational Duties per Rank

Response	Rank				Total
	Lt Colonel	Major	Captain	Lieutenant	
Yes	1 (20%)	8 (53.3%)	6 (50%)	2 (22.2%)	17 (41.5%)
No	2 (40%)	5 (33.3%)	3 (25%)	3 (33.3%)	13 (31.7%)
No idea	2 (40%)	2 (13.3%)	2 (16.7%)	3 (33.3%)	9 (22%)
Other	-	-	1 (8.3%)	1 (11.1%)	2 (4.9%)
Total	5 (100%)	15 (100%)	12 (100%)	9 100%	41 100%

The above table shows that although there are slightly more officers who say that NDF deploys women infantry in operational duties, the responses are somewhat evenly distributed between those who say “Yes” and those who say “No”. This phenomenon may be due to the fact that the question was simply about women deployment in operational duties, without specifying deployment for actual combat. Indeed, NDF deploys women in operational duties but they are assigned to traditional secondary roles.

Examples from other defence forces, such as the U.S. Navy, the job assignments for Navy woman are restricted by statute and Navy policy: “women cannot serve on ships,

or fly aircraft that are designated as ‘combat’ by the Navy although women are allowed to serve temporary duty on combat ships as well as to train men to fly combat planes. Female medical, dental, chaplains, and other such professionals are specifically exempted from this prohibition [<http://feminism.eserver.org/women-in-the-military.txt>].”

Reading through several questionnaires, the researcher observed that many male members of the NDF expressed a lack of faith regarding the expected success of women in non-traditional jobs. "*Women are too weak to be in the combat arms*" was a phrase often stated by respondents. This attitude was prevalent particularly among male members of the Army and Air Forces.

4.3.7 Gender and Military Professionalism Addressed in Units

Now we know that gender inequality issues exist in the NDF. The question is, are they addressed correctly in order to alleviate the situation? The figure below presents the responses as given in the three Arms of Service.

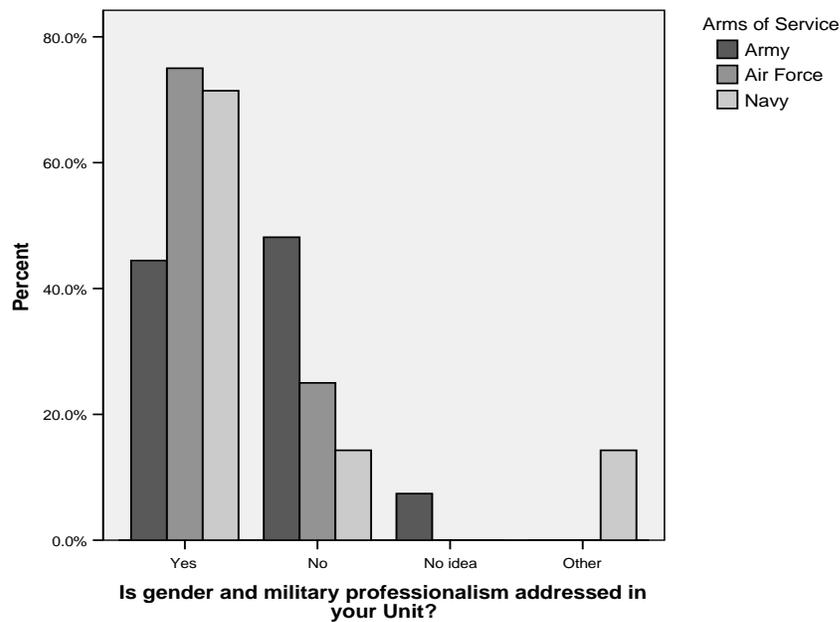


Figure 5: Gender and military professionalism in NDF Units

The figure shows that the majority of respondents in the Navy and Air Forces indicate that gender and military professionalism are addressed in all NDF Units. But in the Army, more than 50% disagree.

For this thesis, inclusion of gender and military professionalism does not necessarily mean increase in number of women in the NDF. It demands the inclusion or creation of effective structures that lead to a “new” NDF which is professional, efficient, and effective and gender representative.

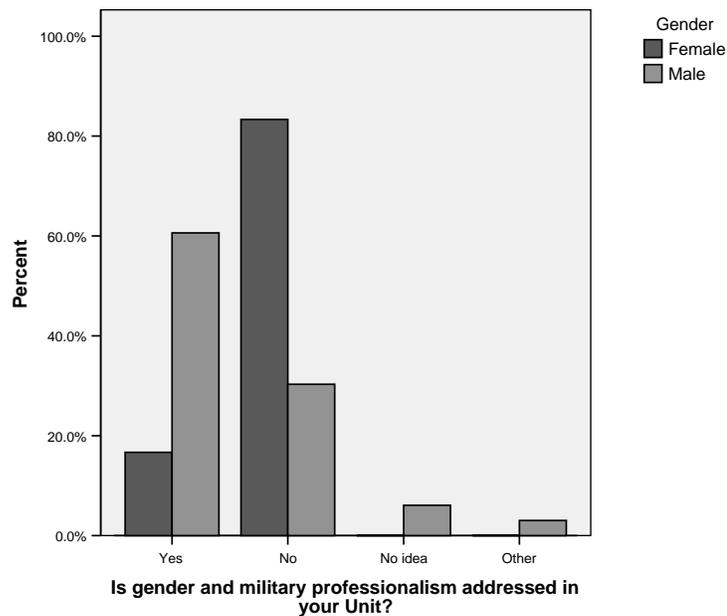


Figure 6: Ways of addressing gender issues in Arms Service

The comparison of data obtained from women and men respondents in the above graph demonstrates that more than 80% of women disagree with the point that gender and military professionalism is addressed in all NDF Units.

Given the response to focusing on pursuit of gender and military professionalism, it could be argued that the NDF needs to provide special education and training programs relating to equal opportunity and affirmative action. Apart from standardizing the procedure following gender implementation in the NDF, extensive education and training programs are needed for effective equal opportunity program to upgrade the military skills of the female soldiers.

4.3.8 Women's Empowerment in the NDF as a Way to Minimize Imbalances

Something has to be done to alleviate imbalances so that men and women can contribute to the national well-being together. The following questions were directed to the General Officers because they are the people responsible for all military decisions. Hence, their thinking reflects better what is likely to take place based on these questions. On the question “**Are women in NDF empowered to take part in military decision-making?**” Two-thirds of the respondents said “No”, and only one-third said “Yes”. The General Officers mentioned that there is only one female Brigadier General in the Defence Force, but she does not have full military decision-making powers. Her duty is to give advice to the Permanent Secretary (male) who is the principal Accounting Officer of the Ministry of Defence. Findings from the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (MGECW) survey of 2005 verified the gender situation in NDF (see Table 3).

The research outcome from the answers given by the General Officers reveals that women in the NDF are not empowered to make military decisions. This situation might also be caused by lack of policies and programmes to recognise that women representation in the decision-making bodies play a vital role. It is equally important to note that the NDF does not have a Gender Policy but an attempt was made to draw an MOD and NDF Gender Plan of Action (2001 – 2005) from the National Gender Policy, but this plan did not yield the intended fruits for the following reasons: there is no

structural provision of a Gender Desk in the Ministerial structure; and the Gender Focal Person is under the office of the Permanent Secretary (PS) and not the office of the Chief of Defence Force (CDF) where she/he can address gender imbalances in the Force.

The Constitution of Namibia states that it is illegal to discriminate against a person on the basis of his/her sex and it also recognises the previous disadvantaged position of women by encouraging affirmative action initiatives with particular emphasis on women. One of the goals included in the Constitution is the enactment of legislation to guarantee "...equality of opportunity for women to enable them to participate fully in all spheres of Namibian society".

The table below reveals that the General Officers also see the need for gender equality in the NDF. They illustrate that there is a need for NDF to create a framework for gender equality and equal representation, develop fast-tracking policies, delineate human resource practices to enhance Affirmative Action (AA) programmes, and avoid "tokenism" in the empowerment of women in the Force. The question is: "What can be done to minimize gender imbalance in the NDF?"

Table 10: Suggested actions necessary to minimise gender imbalances in the NDF

	Action	Frequency	Percentage
1	Develop a specific training programme for women.	4	28.6
2	Politicians should come in and order affirmative action.	4	28.6
3	We should talk about “fair representation”. Not just 50/50.	2	14.3
4	Women must prove that they can do what men can do.	1	7.1
5	Attract educated and capable women during induction.	2	14.3
6	Give more women access to education.	1	7.1
Total		14	100.0

In the view of the researcher, and as a female senior officer in the NDF, it is difficult not to concur with the views that gender balance should not be addressed by simply fitting females into positions for the sake of acquiring balance in terms of members. It should be addressed with utmost care and professionalism, which means looking at their difference in terms of experience in the military profession.

To correct the imbalances in terms of gender, there is a need for programmes of Equal Opportunities and AA with special attention given to the considerable improvement of opportunities for women in the NDF. It is through these programmes that the answer the question on how long it will take to produce a female qualified Colonel, pure infantry, or General other than a Support Service Staff such as Medical and Finance as it is the case with the current female Generals who qualified to be at those ranks because of the technical expertise they possess in their fields will be found. This is the way to create a stronger and more professional defence force. What is needed are qualified officers,

men and women in the Force, who will be able to rise to the top on merit. In the absence of NDF Gender Policy, gender imbalance remains a concern; and women may lose their efforts to achieve the pinnacle of professionalism. Gender programmes serve to shed light, analyse and present solutions in order to overcome gender barriers; create a defence force that is modelled on, and promote, positive and flexible gender roles, a culture of gender equality and equity.

4.3.9 Perceptions about Steps taken to alleviate of Gender Imbalance in the NDF

The question below was intended to seek opinions of the officers as to whether NDF has developed programmes that tackle gender barriers and create favourable conditions for women's empowerment. We are aware that inequalities cannot be removed in one day. They must be dealt with progressively. The issue is to find out if NDF has done enough to alleviate the gender imbalances illustrated above. So the question is: **“Has NDF Done Enough to Alleviate Gender Imbalance?”**

Table 11: Alleviation of gender imbalances in NDF?

Response	General Officers		Senior & Junior Officers	
	Number	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	3	42.9	21	47.7
No	4	57.1	21	47.7
No idea	-	-	2	4.5
Total	7	100.0	43	100.0

The General Staff have a definite opinion about gender imbalance in the NDF whereas 4.5% of the Senior & Junior Staff are uncertain about the issue. The table above shows that more of the General Staff respondents (57.1%) think that the NDF has not done enough to alleviate gender imbalances; while opinions of the Senior & Junior officers are evenly distributed on the issue. The General Officers think that NDF has done enough to alleviate gender imbalance because of the following reasons:

Table 12: Reasons why General Officers think enough was done by MOD and NDF to alleviate gender imbalances

	Reason	Frequency	Percentage
1	Gender Desk was established to do away with imbalances	3	50.0
2	We have many females in the Force Lt. Col's, Majors, Captains and Lt's.	2	33.3
3	Like mining, traditionally it is a male job; not that women are discriminated.	1	16.7
Total		6	100.0

For both ranks (i.e. General Staff and Senior & Junior Officers), those who think enough has been done to alleviate gender imbalances see things from the traditional view point that the Defence Force is, primarily, a male job. Notwithstanding this, MOD and NDF have gone even further to establish Gender Desks and several women have been promoted to the ranks of Lieutenant, Captain, Major and even Lieutenant Colonel. Furthermore, respondents argued that things have to change gradually. Since there have

not been women at the top ranks, one cannot expect things to change overnight.

Those who said that not enough has been done attributed this phenomenon to the fact that presently those who are at the top are males and these are the people who make the decisions. Hence, they cannot be expected to decide on things favouring women.

The reasons why officers think that NDF has not done enough to alleviate gender imbalances are many but the main one is that all the decision-making is in hands of men. The cultural and historical background are also considered as very important factors contributing to keeping inequalities between men and women in the army. Answers from both categories of NDF officers are given in the next table.

Table 13: Reasons Why NDF has not done Enough to Alleviate Gender Imbalance

	Reason	Frequency	Percentage
1	Decisions are made by men. No one considers women favourably.	5	41.7
2	It's unfair to expose unprepared females to situations and expect them to succeed.	1	8.3
3	Start by including women in delegations and later give them responsibilities	1	8.3
4	There are two female Lt. Col's who can't be considered for decision-making positions.	1	8.3
5	Cultural and traditional history are hindrances	3	25.0
6	There is open discrimination. Women are not given chances to prove themselves	1	8.3
	Total	8	100.0

Officers in both rank groups have a strong view that gender imbalances need to be recognized first at the leadership level before gender balance policy is implemented in the whole Force. This cannot happen if numerous obstacles still exist in the career path for women.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSIONS

In the sixteen and half years since Namibia's independence, literature on the life of women in the Namibian military is still scanty. There is dearth of literature on gender and military professionalism in Namibia particularly because no study has ever been conducted on this topic. Reasons for this deplorable lack of research on the military might be the result of the fear of breaking the cultural wall built around the military and military issues. Without any doubt, the Namibian society, politics and the state have hitherto been marked by male dominance. The Ministry of Defence (MOD) seems to be one of the few that are striving to maintain that status quo, despite the Government program on women's empowerment. The alarming state of gender imbalances at the decision-making levels is a clear indication that the progressive laws such as Affirmative Action, National Gender Plan of Action, put in place are not adequately translated into concrete action.

Literature from other countries in the region and from the world at large was of great assistance in pointing to the barriers to equal opportunities for women and men in the forces. The barriers include culture, male traditional supremacy over women and the physical differences between men and women. The research results presented in this thesis revealed that the situation of women in the NDF is largely limited by two factors:

NDF does not have an authoritative definition of the concept “profession” for its Forces; and it is evident that despite all declared intents by the Government, the military authority is not so far eager to initiate changes promote with gender equality and equity in the Force. There is a reluctance to tackle cultural behaviours, attitudes and practices among the military members. As such, understanding the connection between “gender” and military “profession” in the perspective of NDF, led to unsatisfactory answers during the survey. As it is, and as it has been, information about military aspects for the life of women and women’s issues in the NDF is still fairly scarce.

Undoubtedly, the Namibian society, especially the military and other state security organs, have up till now been marked by male dominance. This situation hampers the success of women’s development and contribution towards issues of national defence and security. Women remain invisible in the upper echelons of power and decision-making, resulting in blockage of mainstreaming gender and empowerment processes in the Force.

For purpose of this research, “profession” was defined as;

“A group of people, who acquired knowledge and skills from training, education and experience, with a special responsibility to fulfil their function competently and objectively for the benefit of the society, governed by a code of ethics that stipulates standards of conduct, enforced by them and contains values that are accepted as legitimate by society at large, Huntington (1957).”

Literature on women in the military was surveyed both internationally and regionally. The literature showed how gender issues are handled differently in various defence forces internationally. For example, when the U.S military ended male conscription, the Volunteer Force began and the percentage of women increased. Five NATO nations: Canada, Denmark, Luxembourg, Norway and Portugal, have no combat exclusion laws and policies; while Italy and Spain are the only NATO nations that exclude women from military service (Becraft, 1990).

Within the SADC region, South Africa does not have a restricted rule for women in the military service (Motumi, 1999) and Botswana is ready to recruit its first women soldiers to private and officers' ranks in March 2007 (Masire, 2006). Although the Africa liberation struggle opened more combat roles for women, the practice did not continue after independence, which is the case in Namibia.

The demand for the alleviation of restrictions or hindrance of equal representation of women on issues of defence and security requires effective structures. Doing so, appropriate institutional and managerial structures will accept the inclusion of women in all mustering of the Force. These include; equal opportunity for training, appointment and promotion to strategic positions and equal representation at top decision-making level. After examining the views and perceptions of the General officers and the Senior and junior officers of the NDF, the first conclusion that can be drawn from the literature is that there is no literature on MOD and NDF focusing on gender and military

professionalism. As a result, information on most of issues facing the military (except the recent report of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare on statistics on men and women in management positions in the public sector of Namibia) is lacking. The second conclusion is the lack of authoritative definition of “gender” and “professionalism” in the context of NDF. The absence of Gender Policy in the MOD/NDF caused the significant gap in the literature.

There was no other assessment of gender equality and equity in the NDF. Thus, it is vital to have a workable definition of “professionalism” in the Defence Force. Gender has become an important issue in the world today that demands a review of the defence structures to respond to the new organizational performance requirements of the defence forces.

In terms of effecting appropriate changes in organization and behaviour, the MOD has embarked on a drive to manage its diverse workforce equitably and with rational fairness. According to Brigadier General of Personnel, the barriers that were alluded to in the evaluation report, included recruitment, training, appointment, promotion, organizational infrastructures and human resource management strategies. However, there are new challenges that emerge as trade-offs or opportunity costs emanating from the implementation of the AA Policy that need discussion, and may call for the reform of the statute itself.

Gender equality and gender equity in the NDF should not just be addressed blindly for the sake of fitting females into positions to acquire gender balance. More clarification needs to be made on the NDF understanding of *gender equality and gender equity*. *Gender equality* implies equal opportunity accorded to women and men, so that they can enjoy same status and benefits, whilst *gender equity* is a condition in which women and men who participate equally, and have equal access to resources and opportunity to exercise control of the NDF institution. Such would prove the ability and capability of the individual, be it a woman or man. Therefore, it will be wrong to assume that all women have the same interests just because they are women. Some women may have different opinions due to their social upbringing, social location and race as well as their individual desires and aspirations, to mention but a few.

It was also observed that the MOD/NDF Gender Plan of Action (2001-2005) didn't yield fruits because of lack of its legal mandate to enforce and monitor gender implementation. It was not designed around an understandable meaning of gender equality and women empowerment action plan in the NDF. As regards to the NDF's current situation on gender in the Force, the data obtained from Senior and Junior officers indicate that MOD/NDF should continue to engender its programs and to focus action on new organizational development strategy that envisages the application of affirmation policy and constitutional mandate regarding human resource development program. Furthermore, the majority of women in the NDF are limited to secondary roles as indicated by the data obtained from male officers. The officers' opinion is that

women should not be given equal opportunity with men because it will break Units' cohesion. The male officers feel that men would be forced to protect women because they are relatively weak (Kadhila, 2006). In spite of this, it is unfair that only men are asked to lay down their lives in defence of their country while females look on at the sideline. With today's weaponry and materials, the difference in physical strength cannot be clinked on any longer because there are many historical examples of women achieving much on the battlefield in combat roles <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_the_military>.

The above-mentioned state of affairs, impact directly on the future of women in the military profession in Namibia, particularly given the efforts by the African Union (AU) as a continental umbrella organization to collective security. How will the Namibian female military members contribute towards the security of the continent if they are left out? The same question was asked following the establishment of the South African Development Community Brigade (SADCBRIG), should NDF continue to leave women at the sidelines, watching men.

Arnfred ("n.d") once said, "it became clear that changing gender relations, as being relations of power, was bound to be contested, and thus to be a struggle." (Arnfred, "n.d"). He further said that such changes were likely to be perceived as threatening to male privileges, and they would cause male resistance.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has attempted to describe the concept of gender equality in the context of NDF, and presented a proposal for an implementation of a gender program in the NDF. Consequently, as a means to an end, such a program would be acceptable to the extent that it achieves what it sets out to do. The study presupposes the existence of a discriminatory setting, and is primarily designed to redress the gender imbalances created by that setting. It is an interim bridging device, a strategic intervention in an abnormal situation that should be abandoned as a strategy as soon as circumstances permit. Its success cannot be guaranteed and will depend mostly on the way in which the programme is designed, managed and monitored.

The conclusion can be made that compared to gender mainstreaming in the Namibian public sector and agencies, gender equality in the military still has a long way to go, especially to meet the recent Gaborone (2005) target for 50% women representation by 2015. MOD/NDF momentum needs to be increased by striving to rise from 5% and achieve the required women representation in decision-making positions.

As far as the gender situation is concerned, it is progressing in the NDF. Information from the General officers indicates their dissatisfaction with the current gender imbalance with the provision that more can be done. On the other hand, limitations to reach this target are beyond the scope of this paper.

In answering the research question “How do you describe gender equality in the NDF in terms of equal opportunity to military training, workshops, seminars, executive meetings, postings, appointments and foreign exposures?”, two answers can be given. Firstly, when compared to other defence forces in the region, very few women are promoted to the higher ranks of the NDF. Up to the time of writing this paper, there were only one female Brigadier, one Colonel and about 30 women who have Officer ranks. At the same time, most of these senior female officers are responsible for such tasks as welfare, the training of recruits and personnel management. Needless to say, women are also excluded from the areas of strategic planning and drafting of policy in the NDF.

Important to note is the fact that, women in NDF are offered training and employment opportunities which are close to females work in civilian life. In addition to administrative and clerical work, they are trained as radio and tele-fax operators, and as pilots for non-combat flights. Others have received training in topographical work. A significant number of women are enrolled at institutions of higher learning for qualifying courses, fully sponsored by the organisation (Chimwandi 2006). Indeed,

they are limited to logistical roles and are prohibited from participating in active military service.

Given the research findings, analysis and operational implications, it is recommended that addressing gender imbalances in the NDF demands actions. Therefore, the researcher came up with the following recommendations to the NDF management in consideration with the provision of equal opportunity in the Defence Force.

- a. Redress the skewed proportion of women to men especially at the decision-making levels;
- b. Determine measures to be introduced by the MOD/NDF to overcome the gender barriers in training, appointment and promotion;
- c. Develop NDF Gender Policy that will ensure coherence and guide gender mainstreaming in the defence force;
- d. Increase gender awareness and preparedness to deal with military compliancy particularly in deployment situations. The mindset of people should be changed through gender sensitivity training so that women can be treated as equal to men.
- e. Increase opportunity for equal participation and full involvement of

women to maintain and promote national, regional and global peace and security and in decision-making at all levels. All efforts should be made to broaden women participation in local, regional and international meetings of defence and security.

- f. Create supporting structures to ensure gender implementation in the Force. Engage women beyond core defence and security areas, for example in conflict prevention (diplomacy).
- g. Create enabling environment for gender mainstreaming, and guarantee compliance with military standards.
- h. Provide military training and carry out training needs analysis for female officers in order to acquire the necessary education, skills and experience, in order to play a professional military role.

Of important concern to the Namibian Parliament and to the NDF, is the issue of research on the public opinion on female participation in the main military roles such as combat duties. Further studies on the contribution of Namibian women to the national defence and security should be done.

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APPENDICES

1. Authorization letter
2. Letter to the respondents
3. Questionnaire for the General Staff
4. Questionnaire for the Senior and Junior Staff Officers
5. Interview guide
6. Military Ranks