

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PERFORMANCE  
APPRAISAL IN THE NAMIBIA DEFENCE FORCE: A CASE STUDY OF THE  
GROOTFONTEIN GARRISON

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## **ABSTRACT**

Performance appraisal is a practice that is used to get enhanced results from the organisation, from teams and from individuals. The objectives underlying performance appraisal entail to review past performance of employees for a period under review, agree on future objectives, as well as identifying their training and developmental needs.

This study examines how a performance appraisal system is implemented in the NDF. It also seeks to identify the reasons the why the system did not meet its objectives. Data were collected by means of interviews and questionnaires directed to a selection of officers, non-commissioned officers and privates in Grootfontein Garrison.

The Namibia Defence Force (NDF) is charged with the task to defend the territory and the national interests. This demanding task require robust performance by all members, hence the need to maintain well trained and highly motivated soldiers. Low morale, poor supervision and unclear procedures on promotions undermine the efforts towards a highly motivated army. Although there is a performance appraisal system in place the desired results are not coming forth.

The study presents a discussion on the implementation process and, the effectiveness of the existing mechanisms of performance appraisal in the NDF. It discovered a problematic implementation of the process, often hampered by non-adherence to policy guidelines and a lack of accountability in the process. Finally, the study makes conclusions and recommendations in view of improving the situation.

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## **DEDICATION**

For my beloved wife, Saara, and my children who continue to inspire me and endured my long days away from home. To my brother, Denias, who supported me during the two years of my study.

## **DECLARATION**

I, Setson Shikodi Hangula, 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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Setson Shikodi Hangula

Date.....

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

CR	Confidential Report
GRN	Government of the Republic of Namibia
MOD	Ministry of Defence
NDF	Namibia Defence Force
OPM	Office of Prime Minister
PLAN	Peoples' Liberation Army of Namibia
PMS	Performance Management System
SWAPO	South West Africa Peoples' Organisation
SWATF	South West Africa Territorial Force
UN	United Nations
UNITA	National Union of Total Independence of Angola

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

#### **1.1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

The Namibia Defence Force (NDF) is mandated by the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia to defend the territory and the national interest of Namibia. The Ministry of Defence (MOD) was established soon after independence, in 1990, as the department of the state responsible for the organisation and administration of the NDF. MOD is tasked, amongst others, to implement the defence policy of Namibia, deliver professional services and provide administrative support to the NDF.

The primary objective of Namibia's defence policy is to ensure the security of the country, to allow it to pursue by just and peaceful means, its national interest and activities both at home and abroad (GRN, 2007, p. 1). To achieve these goals the NDF does not only require modernised equipments but a highly motivated, competent and well managed human resources. Performance appraisal is a human resources management tool that assesses results while at the same time identifies training needs and provides feedback to employees on their performance. It also helps to ensure that employees are properly trained, equipped and well motivated to achieve the organisation's strategic objectives.

Hawke (2001, p. 1) has noted that the public service exists to serve the government of the day. It is expected to deliver quality service to the community. This sector is expected to do its level best to help achieve the government's policy objectives.

It is against this background that this study will investigate the performance appraisal system within the NDF. It is felt that the NDF as a government institution is obliged to do its best to deliver quality service, thus enhancing the achievement of government policy objectives. This obligation demands effective measures and high performance by all members.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

William, Werther and Keith (1996, p. 341) have described performance appraisal as the process by which organisations evaluate individual performance. They went further that when it is done correctly employees, supervisors and ultimately the entire organisation, benefits by ensuring that individual efforts contribute to the strategic focus of the organization. Kempton (1995, p.153-155) linked performance appraisal to performance management when argued that performance appraisal is found in organisations that are concerned with individual development, self development and about ways of improving performance. While performance management is aimed at achieving better results in planned goals and objectives, performance appraisal provides a way of managing the tasks and motivating staff to achieve these.

From as far back as four years ago, the Government of the Republic of Namibia (GRN) has introduced the concept of "Performance Management System (PMS)" aimed at streamlining the public service performance appraisal system and embedding a culture of performance, customer

focus, quality service, value for money and measureable results. Through the PMS approach the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and the NDF are to work towards the implementation of the performance appraisal process to ensure performance improvement, high motivation and quality service delivery (MOD 2007, p.vii). To address the performance management objectives the MOD has put in place the NDF personnel policy that provides the methodology, instruments and guidance to the implementation of performance appraisal system in the NDF.

During its deliberations the MOD strategic workshop of 2007 identified one of the strategic problem areas for MOD was performance management. It was believed that problems with performance management led to other problems such as lack of motivation, underperformance and brain drain which were evident in the NDF. Further, it was felt that if this state of affair is not attended to then it would have negative impact on the realisation of MOD and NDF strategic objectives.

### **1.2.1 Performance Appraisal and the Namibia Defence Force.**

Performance appraisal in the Namibia Defence Force (NDF) is conducted on annual basis through what is called “the Confidential Report” (CR). This method has been in place since the 1990s but concerns are increasing that the level of performance by members is not up to the required standard (MOD, 2007, p.12). Underperformance has the potential to compromise the ability of the Force to fulfil its mandate to defend the territorial integrity of Namibia and national interests. The same would also affect the realisation of the NDF vision to become a professional and modernised force by the year 2030. The researcher as a strong supporter of professionalism

in the military considers it important to research on this topic in view of contributing to performance improvement in the NDF.

The NDF was established in terms of Article 118 of the Constitution (Constitution of the Republic of Namibia 1990, p. 59). The mandate of the NDF is to “defend the territory and national interest of Namibia”. The NDF was founded by former adversaries from the South West Africa Territorial Forces (SWATF) and from the People’s Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) who were integrated to form the NDF soon after independence. Currently, the NDF is made up of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force (Defence Act No 1 of 2001: Section 2).

To fulfil its mandate, it is expected that the NDF should be well trained and well equipped. According to its Vision Statement, the NDF aspires to be “a professional, highly trained, well equipped and highly mobile Defence Force” (Minutes of MOD Strategic Workshop 2008:11). Similarly, the government of Namibia envisions having a well-trained, well equipped and modern army (Namibia Vision 2030 2004, p.189).

Since its inception in 1990 the NDF has successfully conducted various internal and external operations. These include:

- The UN peacekeeping operation in Cambodia in 1993.
- The UN peace keeping operation in Angola from 1994 till 1996.
- The UN peace keeping operation in Liberia from 2004 until 2007
- The military campaign in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 1998.
- The suppression of the armed secessionist rebellion in Caprivi Region in 1999.

- The suppression of UNITA insurgents in Caprivi and Kavango regions from 1999 until 2002.

Beside operations, the NDF conducts various operational and administrative training courses at its military schools at Okahandja and Oshivelo. A number of its members have attended different training courses abroad in countries such as Germany, United Kingdom, United States, Canada, Brazil, China, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe and others. Despite the training, there are still some concerns over the performance level of members. The level of individual performance in the NDF is reported to be below standard (MOD, 2008, p.32).

### **1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Despite the success in the above indicated operations and other achievements, the NDF today is facing a number of challenges, some of which being of internal origin, while others are externally driven.

The report on the strategic workshop of the Ministry of Defence (MOD) held from 17-22 February 2008 indicated that despite the performance appraisal in place desired results were not forthcoming and that individual performance was on the decline. There is an increasing trend of underachievement, low morale, poor supervision, poor communication, poor staff relations, unclear procedures on promotions, lack of motivation and degenerating discipline. If such trends are allowed to continue it will have devastating effects not only on the effectiveness of the force

but also on its image as a professional force delivering quality service to the society (MOD 2008, p.38).

It is against this background that this study will investigate the performance appraisal system within the NDF. It is felt that the NDF as a government institution is obliged to do its best to deliver quality service, thus enhancing the achievement of government policy objectives. This obligation demands effective measures and high performance by all members.

#### **1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

This study is aimed at the following:

- To examine how performance appraisal is being implemented in the Grootfontein Garrison.
- To examine the reason why the performance appraisal system did not meet its objectives.
- To generate new knowledge in the field of performance appraisal in the military in general.

#### **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTION.**

This study will seek to answer the question: To what extent has the NDF performance appraisal system been effective in assessing staff performance and motivation?

## **1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study will help to identify most of the underlying problems with the implementation of performance appraisal system in the NDF. Since underperformance compromises the effectiveness and efficiency of the NDF. It is hoped that findings of this study will directly benefit the operational efficiency of the MOD. The outcome of the study would help the MOD management to understand particular problems and develop appropriate policies and strategies to improve the implementation of performance appraisal and the standard of individual performance in the NDF. It is believed that since performance appraisal in any organisation is crucial to the achievement of appraisal objectives, the study would contribute in assisting the MOD to achieve its strategic objectives.

The consideration of findings and the implementation of recommendations arising from the study would contribute to efficiency and effectiveness in performance management as well as professionalism, in the NDF and similar organisations. The study could generate new knowledge in the field of performance management in the military and other security organisations as well as interest for further research in the same field.

## **1.7 LIMITATION AND DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

Given the time frame and financial constraints this study was restricted to the Grootfontein Garrison. The researcher had a limited period of time to conduct the actual research and present the findings. For the purpose of this study, Grootfontein Garrison comprises the Army

Headquarters and all Army Units co-located in the town of Grootfontein. These include Dolphin Unit, Logistic Unit, Military Hospital and Brigade Headquarter. The Grootfontein Garrison was selected for two main reasons. Firstly, all units are located in the same area and no long journeys were required for the study. Secondly, the Army units comprise a large number of soldiers who served for ten years and above in the NDF unlike the Navy and the Air force who were only recently commissioned.

One limitation arose from the unavailability of sufficient respondents from some units to answer the questionnaires. This happened due to the low level of cooperation by some of the unit commanders to avail the required number of troops for the study.

The fact that commanders are responsible for the ultimate implementation of performance appraisal within their respective units may have contributed to the poor level of cooperation with the researcher. Some commanders were not comfortable with the nature of the study as it was bound to reveal their own weaknesses.

## 1.8 CONCLUSION

The NDF is a government institution with a constitutional obligation to defend the territorial integrity and national interests of Namibia. This task requires, among others, well trained and highly motivated personnel. In this context, the Government of the Republic of Namibia has provided the PMS to its line ministries while the MOD formulated the NDF personnel policy to ensure performance management.

Despite the performance appraisal system in place, the MOD has raised concerns over the performance appraisal within the NDF. Hence, the question over its effectiveness became obvious. Meanwhile, some scholars such as William et al. (1996, p. 341) and Kempton (1995, p.153-155) have argued that when performance appraisal is applied correctly would contribute to the strategic objectives of the organisation and to the management of staff performance respectively.

It is the purpose of this study to review the existing knowledge on performance consideration and try to understand why performance appraisal in the NDF is not yielding the desired results.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter analyses the literature in three categories. In the first place, it attempts to understand theories related to performance appraisal. In the second place, it traces the main

features in the process of performance appraisal and in the last place it examines the NDF documents related to performance appraisal.

Murphy and Cleveland (1995) have stressed that although the interest in and use of performance appraisal have increased over the past decades, the practice of formal evaluation of employees has existed for centuries. Performance appraisal dates back to the third century A.D. when Sin Yu, an early Chinese Philosopher, criticised a biased rater who was employed by the Wei Dynasty. The critics were on the ground that he rated men not according to their merit but always according to his own likes. The first industrial application of merit rating was probably made by Robert Owen at his cotton mills in New Lanark, Scotland in the early 1800s (p.3).

Performance appraisal has traditionally been viewed by organisational psychologists as a measurement problem. Its historical roots have shown that early research performance appraisal had focused on issues such as scale development, scale formats, reducing test and rater bias. In the modern world, much of the research on performance appraisal can be described as a search for better, more accurate and more cost effective techniques for measuring job performance.

Performance appraisal is described as the ongoing process of evaluating and managing both the behaviour and outcomes in the work place. Organisations use various terms to describe this process. Performance review, annual appraisal, performance evaluation, employee evaluation and merit evaluation are some of the terms used. In addition, performance management is an umbrella term, broader than performance appraisal. Performance management uses various management tools, including performance appraisal, to ensure the achievement of performance

goals. Other management tools such as reward system, job design, leadership and training can join performance appraisal for comprehensive approach to performance (Carrell, Grobler, Elbert, Marx, Hatfield and Van der Schyf, 1998, p. 258).

## **2.2 HOLISTIC DEFINITION OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL**

There is no single definition for performance appraisal. Armstrong (1996) defines performance appraisal as “the formal review of performance over a period covering achievements and problems as the basis for agreeing as necessary revision to performance agreement and performance plan” (p.236).

Further, performance appraisal is defined as “the ongoing process of evaluating and managing both the behaviour and outcome in the workplace” (Carrel et al. 1998, p.258). Meanwhile, Kempton (1995) defines appraisal as “a technique for getting better results from the organisation, teams and individuals” (p. 154).

Fisher, Schoenfeldt, and Shaw (1996) have defined performance appraisal as “the process by which an employee’s contribution to the organisation during a specified period of time is assessed” (p.450).

Performance appraisal is the name given to the regular formalised and recorded review of the way in which an individual is performing his job. This is the view of Hackett (1996, p.102-104) who argued that this is normally carried out by the employee’s immediate supervisor.

Performance appraisal can serve a wide range of specific uses for the employee and the manager. Amongst such issues are: the identification of training needs, identifying key skills, improving present performance, enhancing commitment and improving communication. Here, the context of performance appraisal pays particular attention to the relationship between the employee and the employer as well as to the task at hand. The researcher sees the need and the importance of improving the context of relationship through performance appraisal.

Philp ((1990) defined that: “Performance appraisal is the application of a number of skills, which managers are required to put into practice to maintain and improve performance of all people who report to them. In the interest of the company, the appraising manager, and the person being appraised, it is essential that the skills are applied professionally” (p. ix).

In the context of GRN, performance appraisal is defined as “the systematic evaluation of individual staff member with respect to their performance in the job and their potential for development. Ordinarily this appraisal is made by each staff member’s supervisor” (OPM, 1997, p. 2).

In the context of this study “performance appraisal” should be understood as a system or a process for the routine assessment of employees’ acts with regard to the set standards and goals. This study aims at dealing with performance appraisal in a holistic manner: as a system, a process and a technique.

### **2.3 PURPOSES OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL**

Different scholars of human resources management have discussed the purpose of performance appraisal but with different approaches and content. “The overall purpose of appraisal, naturally, is to provide information about work performance. This information, again, can serve a variety of purposes, which generally can be categorised under the two main headings of administrative purposes and developmental purposes” (Swanepoel, Erasmus, Van Wyk, and Schenk, 2003, p.372). The administrative purposes are concerned with the use of performance data as the basis for decision making in human resources planning, reward, placement and personnel research. The developmental purposes focus on developmental functions on the individual as well as the organisational level. The individual development purpose includes providing employees with feedback on their strength and weaknesses to improve future performance, aiding career planning and development and providing inputs for personal remedial intervention. The organisational developmental purpose includes; facilitating organisational diagnosis and development, providing essential information for policies implementation and promoting communication effectiveness between superiors and subordinates.

Mello (2002, p.213) believes that organisations may determine the purposes of their performance appraisal depending on their specific strategy and environment. These would evolve around the basic functions of determining appropriate salaries and rewards, determining specific training to improve performance, enhancing employee motivation, facilitating legal compliance and human resources planning.

A slight different view comes from King (1989) who argues that cooperatives use performance appraisal to; translate their overall goals into objectives for individuals, decide on salary

increases and promotions, make a decision to fire someone, discover training needs, assess potential as input for personnel plans and validate employment procedures (p. 19). Even though, this view technically embraces some basic functions as indicated by Mello (2002, p. 214) it is not clear on the issue of motivation.

North (2006) wrote that an effective appraisal system contains two basic systems operating in conjunction: an evaluation system and a feedback system. The evaluation is to identify the performance gap (if any) and the feedback system is to inform the employee about his or her performance quality. The source went further that to appreciate the purpose of performance appraisal is to look at it from the viewpoints of the employee and the organisation. From the employee viewpoint the purpose of performance appraisal is four-fold:

- Tell me what you want me to do.
- Tell me how well I have done it.
- Help me improve my performance
- Reward me for doing well.

From the organisation's view point, one of the most important reasons of having a system of performance appraisal system is to establish and uphold the principle of accountability (<http://www.performance-appraisal.com/basic.htm>).

Based on the above views and ideas, the purpose of performance appraisal may as well be described as to manage employees' work worthiness and relations to the organisation. It is also regarded as an ongoing process that involves the planning, managing, reviewing and development of performance.

In the context of government the purpose and uses of performance appraisal systems are among the following:

- To communicate management goals and objectives to staff members and to set objectives for individual performance,
- To give staff member feedback on their performance, to communicate clearly to staff member how successfully he or she is in meeting the expectations required at his or her level and to discuss methods of improving, if applicable,
- To explain to staff members how performance, conduct and potential are appraised,
- To provide the basis for dialogue between staff members and their supervisors,
- To monitor delivery against objectives through the year,
- To identify staff members with above average potential
- To identify poor performers,
- To help match the right people with the right job,
- To project staff member for promotion purpose,
- To motivate staff member to improve performance,
- To distribute organisational rewards such as salary increases and promotions equitably,
- To conduct personnel management research (OPM, 1997, p.3).

In addition, performance appraisal is a fundamental management tool that can be useful as a basis for functions such as; making administrative decisions regarding personnel actions such as transfers, promotions and support for taking disciplinary actions; providing employees' feedback regarding their performance and, coaching employees in improving areas of weakness and

building upon their areas of strength. Performance appraisal's value may be increased further by linking it with other management tools such as performance planning, continuous performance monitoring and employee development. Overly, the appraisal process helps to clarify performance expectations, provide a framework for progress reviews and identify development needs Stredwick (2000, p. 236).

It is evident that organisations without an effective performance appraisal system or methods should not expect good result or automatic performance by employees. Nel, Gerber, Van Dyk, Haasbroek, Schultz, Sono and Werner (2004, p.475-476) have noted that the achievement of organisational effectiveness through performance management is anchored in effective performance appraisal programme. Thus, the existence of a good performance review system can be of great value to the organisation and its employees. Effective appraisal can significantly contribute to the satisfaction and motivation of employees. Hence, a standardised process should evaluate all employees in a consistent manner.

#### **2.4 PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL OBJECTIVES.**

The objectives for performance appraisal are to review the performance of a given period, agree on future objectives and identify training and developmental needs. This is the view of Kempton (1995, p.157). Carrel et al. (1998, p.260) argued that performance appraisal is a key element in the use and development of human resources. They argue further that the biggest part of performance appraisal objectives falls into two categories: evaluative and developmental. Evaluative objectives focus on the past performance of an employee for compensation. Managers

and supervisors have to make decisions concerning promotions, demotions, transfers and layoffs. Past performance appraisals normally help to determine which of the employee is most deserving of a promotion or other desirable job change.

Developmental objectives entail developing employee skills and motivation for future performance. Performance feedback is a primary developmental need. This is because almost all employees want to know how their supervisors feel about their performance. Motivation to improve current performance increases when feedback is received. Developmental performance appraisal is mainly focused on giving employees direction for future performance. The feedback given should recognise strength and weaknesses in the past performance and determine the direction for future performance. (Carrel et al. 1998, p.262)

It is essential for every performance appraisal system to bear both evaluative and developmental objectives (Molander and Winterton, 1994, p. 110). The NDF performance assessment framework provides supervisors a chance to look into the past performance of their subordinates to determine necessary changes and developmental needs.

Furthermore, Stone (2002, p. 269-274) believes that performance appraisal has four main objectives. These are: discrimination, reward, development and feedback. Discrimination means that a manager should be able to objectively discriminate between those who are effectively contributing to the achievement of the organisation's strategic goals business objective and those who are not. A performance-oriented organisation has no room for egalitarianism or inadequate performance is not acceptable. Underperformers should be given an opportunity and assistance

to improve but if, still, they cannot make the grade then a corrective action such as transfer, demotion or termination should be taken. Meanwhile, outstanding performers must be identified and rewarded accordingly.

Reward means that employees who have contributed most to the achievement of the organisation's business strategic objectives should receive the greatest reward. This should be done to motivate the employees and encourage high performance.

Development means to help employees to grow and perfect their skills. It comes about by building on strength and overcoming weaknesses. To achieve this, performance appraisal must be a positive and dynamic process.

Feedback objective is concerned with the accurate communication of the performance assessment. It requires the manager to identify the employee's deficiencies and determine how they can be overcome, and know what specialised training and development are needed. It is essential that communication is clear and provide both positive and negative outcome of the assessment (Stone 2002, p. 274).

The objectives underlying performance appraisal include reviewing past performance for a certain period, agree on future objectives, as well as identify training and development needs. The appraisal system and procedures provide a specific opportunity for dialogue between the employee and his/her immediate supervisor to exchange information and agree on the required performance standards. The system is beneficial to the organisation because it reinforces

manager-subordinate relationship to the employee because it affords an opportunity for expression and, to the managers because they have an opportunity to discuss work related issues with their subordinates (Kempton 1995, p.154-157).

It can be concluded that performance appraisal objectives are mainly concerned with the past, the present and the future performance of employees in view of achieving the organisation's strategic goals. The survival of an employee depends on whether he or she is productive and able to improve or not.

## **2.5 PERFORMANCE CRITERIA**

Carrel et al. (1998, p. 258) have given the three performance criteria as follow:

- Trait-based criteria which focuses on the personal characteristic of an employee, for example, loyalty, dependability, creativity, and communication skills. Here the focus is on what a person is and not what he or she does or accomplishes the job.
- Behaviour-based criteria: These are concerned with specific behaviours that lead to job success. For example, instead of ranking leadership ability (a trait), the rater is asked to assess whether an employee exhibits certain behaviours, e.g. “works well with co-workers”.
- Outcome-based criteria, which focuses on what was accomplished or produced rather than how it was accomplished or produced. It is important to note that this type of criteria

is not appropriate for every job and has often been criticised for missing important aspects of the job such as quality.

The above performance criteria are to a certain extent similar to those used in the NDF. The NDF Personnel Policy (2007, p. 61) shows that the performance assessor has to consider other important issues such as physical conditions, appearance and ambition.

## **2.6 APPRAISAL METHODS**

As mentioned earlier, various methods exist for performance appraisal. Depending on the nature and size of the organisation as well as the purpose of appraisal, managers should identify the suitable method that serves in the best interest of the organisation. Nel et al. (2004, p.477) have pointed out that employee performance can be measured on the basis of whether the type of judgement called for is relative or absolute. Relative judgements require supervisors to compare an employee's performance to other employee doing the same job. Relative judgements force supervisors to differentiate between their workers. Absolute judgements ask supervisor to make judgement about an employee's performance based solely on the set standards.

### **2.6.1 Relative Rating Techniques/Methods.**

Relative rating techniques and methods have been introduced by Nel et al. (2004, p. 481) as follows:

- **Ranking:** Ranking entails the ordering of individuals according to overall merit or a selected performance factor, from the best to the worst performer. It is a very simple technique and is usually very subjective. It is recommended to be used only when a small number of people are to be rated. This method compares performance amongst a group of employees, but is not directed at personal development.
- **Paired comparisons:** In this method each worker is compared with every other worker in a selected group. The final ranking of each individual is then determined by the number of times he or she was judged to be better than the others. This measurement instrument becomes cumbersome when a large number of employees are involved.
- **Forced distribution:** This method is similar to ranking. Forced distribution requires that supervisors spread their employee evaluations in a pre-described distribution. Categories usually rank from poor performance through to superior performance, for example, from poor to excellent. Administrators will use forced distribution to compare employees from different departments.

### 2.6.2 Absolute Rating Techniques.

- **Essay method:** The essay method requires the rater to write a report in the form of an essay, usually describing the strengths and weaknesses of the employee. It is a time consuming method, depend on the writing skill of the rater and reliant on comprehensive reporting. It can, however, be a valuable feedback tool.
- **Critical incidents:** This technique focuses on the continuous recording of actual job behaviours that are typical of success or failure. Incident reflecting good and bad performance are noted. It is a time-consuming method and can be influenced by incidents that are recorded towards the end of the review period, or by incidents that may have been omitted.
- **Forced choice:** The appraiser is provided with a list of paired job-related descriptions from which he or she is forced to choose the description that best fits the employee in each case. It is a partly objective method of evaluation, but the rater may be forced into making a choice between two descriptions, neither of which may fully describe the employee's performance.
- **Graphic rating scales:** These rating scales are some of the most popular absolute evaluation techniques. A rating scale is developed by selecting various characteristics that relate to the specific job. The rate makes a choice across a continuum between two poles, usually raging from a strong agreement to strong disagreement, or from exceptionally to poor. Graphic rating scales are popular because they are easy to understand and apply, they are standardised acceptable to users, are less time-consuming, and provide a higher degree of consistency, provided that all rates are trained to avoid rater-errors.

- **Behaviourally anchored rating scales (BARS):** The BARS technique combines graphic rating scales with examples of critical incidents. These rating scales are job specific and require a high level of participation from supervisors. The complex development procedure of BARS technique makes it time-consuming and expensive.
- **Management by objectives (MBO):** The MBO technique provides for an initial goal-setting phase, based on the formation of long range organisational objectives that are cascaded to departmental goals, and finally individual goals. The latter goals are set mutually by the employee and his or her manager. The aspect of joint participation in goal-setting is one of the major strength of the MBO technique, provided that the goals are measurable and achievable. Periodically, the manager will measure progress towards the goals, and will coach the subordinate if progress is lacking or slow. Popularity of the MBO is declining because it only addresses results but not how performance should be managed.

Analysing the above methods and techniques for performance appraisal, it is clear that each method or technique will suit a particular situation and condition. Often a combination of two or more methods may do better than a single one.

## **2.7 THE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL PROCESS**

In their analysis, Carrel et al. (1998, p. 263-264) have identified some guidelines for an effective appraisal process. They also acknowledge that there is a variety of techniques available to measure employees' performance. In creating and implementing an appraisal system

administrators have to determine what the process is going to be used for. Managers should be aware of employees' expectations and that the possibilities of legal ramification exist when employees feel that the appraisal is not taken seriously. Guidelines for the appraisal process indicated by them are:

- Determine performance requirements.
- Choose an appropriate appraisal method.
- Train supervisors.
- Discuss methods with employees.
- Appraise according to job standard.
- Discuss appraisal with employees.
- Determine future performance goals.

It is obvious from the above guidelines that if performance requirements are not determined and appropriate methods are not used then the process will never yield desired results. Equally, if employees do not understand the methods and are not aware of required standards of performance the process may cause misunderstanding, and conflict in the organisation. It is therefore critical that employees are clear on what is expected from them and what is due to them.

## **2.8 CAUSES OF UNDERPERFORMANCE**

Several authors have commented on the causes of underperformance. Carrell et al. (1998) noted that exploring causes of performance problem is “often quite challenging” (p. 520). Many factors are said to be beyond the control of workers although some observers have blamed the workers. The latter tends to blame external factors. This tendency is known as actor/observer bias. Carrell et al. (1998, p. 345) also identified three reasons why the causes of performance deficiencies must be determined accurately:

- Determination of causes can influence how performance is evaluated.
- Causal determination can be unspoken and underlying source of conflict between supervisors and their subordinates, and
- Causal determinations affect the type of remedy selected.

Pollard (2005, p. 5) argued that there are many reasons for underperformance. Both employees and supervisors can do harm to the organisation if they are not performing well. He identified some factors that mainly originated from managers’ failures and then degenerate to workers. In the view of Pollard (2005, p. 5), managers may display negative characteristics such as procrastination, perfectionism, disorganisation, analysis paralysis, wrong priorities or lack of commitment. Consequently, employees may become either not knowing why they should do the job or they do not know how to do it or they may not see any positive consequence for doing the job.

This is true that negative attitudes or bad management will affect performance. Managers are supposed to ensure better performance by discharging their duties professionally. Military

commanders are trained in leadership to perform their duties effectively and efficiently. They are supposed to control and motivate their subordinates to ensure high level of discipline and performance. Commanders have to ensure that their troops have the necessary skills and abilities to perform tasks. If commanders display negative characteristics as argued by Pollard (2005, p. 6), or weak in any aspect, then underperformance in the force becomes obvious.

## **2.9 PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL**

Swanepoel et al. (2003) identified four general problems that are inherent to performance appraisal systems. Firstly, there are problems related to appraisal system design. These occur when there are deficiencies in the design of performance appraisal system. Such deficiencies, especially in appraisal instruments, are mostly related to concerns regarding their reliability and validity. Reliability in assessment refers to the consistency and stability of the measurement process. Validity addresses the “what” and “how well” an instrument measures and whether it really measures what it is supposed to.

Secondly are problems related to conflicting purposes and roles. This is because the roles and purposes of administrative and developmental objectives differ. Administrative objectives focus on the evaluation of the past performance of an employee to enable the manager to make decisions regarding the differential of pay increases, candidates for promotion and others. To allow supervisors to make comparison between employees, an appropriate system will have to utilise some relative rating format such as ranking procedures. Then, the nature of such employee-to-employee comparison makes the process of appraisal feedback difficult and

provides little information for the identification of individual performance deficiencies and how to address them.

To address the developmental objective, an appraisal system needs to focus on absolute rating formats where each individual is evaluated against specific performance standards. Since these formats require the rater to evaluate the employee without direct reference to other employees, valid comparisons across individuals or groups are not possible and administrative purposes cannot thus be effectively served.

Thirdly are problems related to rating errors or judgemental biases. These occur because managers are human beings and may not be experts in all operational fields in their departments. The appraisal process may become prone to distortions and biases. Also managers may not have enough time to walk around and observe their subordinates at work. Infrequent observations may lead to invalid and subjective evaluations.

Lastly are problems related to the human interaction process. These are encountered when raters feel uncomfortable about confrontation with their subordinates. They may trivialise the findings if they perceive the assessment as a blow to their self-esteem. In addition, many situational factors, such as stress, sexual and racial biases, leadership style and others, have been implicated in contaminating accurate and valid ratings (p. 377-380).

In addition, Dowling, Shuler, and Welch, (1994, p. 108-110) considered that factors such as environment, task and personality have effects on performance. People may change their

performance as a result of new environment, new manager or unfamiliar task assigned to them. These factors should be considered during performance assessments.

McCourt and Awases (2007) noted that the old performance appraisal system in the government of Namibia failed in 1998 because it was implemented subjectively. “Friend of bosses got notches while some managers were giving everyone a notch because they were just afraid to say no” (p.2).

## **2.10 MEASURES TO ADDRESS UNDERPERFORMANCE.**

The same authors mentioned above suggested measures to address underperformance. Their views will be used in the researcher’s own recommendation. Kempton (1995) argued that “appraisal is a technique for getting better results from the organisation, from the teams and from individuals, which is achieved through managing performance within an agreed framework of planned goals, objectives and standards”(p. 154). The same sentiment was echoed by Carrell et al. (1998) when they indicated that effective performance appraisals, if used correctly, can significantly contribute to the satisfaction and motivation of employees (p. 260).

Evidently, Carrell et al. (1998) and Kempton (1995) pointed out that the solution to performance deficiency lies with performance appraisal. This implies that when ever there is a performance problem then there should be a problem with performance appraisal system. However, it can also be emphasised that other factors such as bad climatic conditions, social problem and diseases

may as well contribute to underperformance in organisations. Nevertheless, performance appraisal remains to be the focal point of this study.

## **2.11 THE IMPLEMENTATION AND MAINTENANCE OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL**

The successful implementation of performance appraisal system requires training for the raters which could be foreseen during the development phase. The intensity of the training would depend on the competence of the raters. It should allow the active involvement of raters to master the instruments, methods and techniques of performance appraisal.

The maintenance of performance appraisal system entails the following activities.

- Monitoring the consistent application of performance ratings.
- Reviewing pay decisions and recommending disciplinary actions.
- Devising and arranging training and development interventions indicated by review results.
- Monitoring the internal and external environment for changing circumstances that may necessitate a review or adjustment of current practices.
- Auditing and evaluating the effectiveness of the programme on annual basis (Swanepoel et al., p.384).

## **2.12 THEORIES ON PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL**

French (1982, p.79-96) summarised certain aspects of contemporary theory and research pertaining to motivation and satisfaction and their relation to work performance. Motivation theories are concerned with the nature of motivation, i.e., what motivates employees and what organisations can do to enhance motivation and improve performance.

According to French (1982, p. 87), two social exchange theories or social comparison theories are influential to performance. These theories are the consistency theory and the expectancy theory. Consistency theory says that people will seek roles that are consistent with their self images. They will be most satisfied by the activities that maximise their sense of consistency or cognitive balance. Hereby individuals will be motivated to perform in a manner consistent with their self-images, to such extent that their self-concepts concerning job or task require effective performance in order to result in “consistent” cognitions. Then to that extent they will be motivated to engage in effective performance. The expectancy theory presumes that people have expectancies about the likelihood that an action on their part will lead to intended behaviour or performance.

Importantly, French (1982, p. 90) has pointed out that performance and personal satisfaction are not necessarily correlated. Consistent with the law of effect, if good performance is perceived as a means of achieving need-satisfying goals and given the skills, will probably result in good performance

### **2.13. THE NDF RATING SYSTEM**

Relating to the NDF Personnel Policy (2007) it is clear that the NDF appraisal system is multi-method based. It is basically a combination of the essay, graphic rating scales and forced distribution methods. This makes the process flexible and more accommodating. In its chapter six the policy makes provision for a member to be assessed at least once every year.

The NDF appraisal forms are divided in three categories. Firstly, is the form for the rank of lance corporal equivalent and below, substantive major and below and for substantive major and above. The forms cover the assessment on personal and supervisory qualities. Personal qualities include issues such as team spirit; ability to get things done, general conduct, determination, physical stamina, appearance bearing and self confidence. Supervisory qualities include leadership, organising ability, instructional ability and ability to command respect, power of discipline and acceptance of responsibility. The assessor is required to evaluate past performance and make recommendations on promotions. The assessed is allotted space to agree or disagree with the assessor.

### **2.13.1 The NDF Personnel Policy and Performance Appraisal**

The NDF personnel policy outline in detail, the major principles those are applicable to the NDF. According to the policy document all headquarters, services, formations and unit commanders are responsible for ensuring that the policy is well published, understood and implemented by all ranks within their units.

The document derives its legitimacy from article 118 of the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia that provides the establishment of the Defence Force and its objectives. The document stipulates that the Ministry of Defence has the responsibility of formulating policies as well as terms and conditions of service for personnel who serve in the NDF. The terms and conditions of service are complementary to the Public Service Act, (Act 13 of 1995) and the Defence Act, (Act 1 of 2002). The document covers major personnel issues such as; terms and condition of service, promotion, personnel administration measures, posting, pay and allowances and confidential reports or performance appraisal (MOD. 2007, p. 1-2).

In its chapter two the document has outlined the promotion policy for the force. The promotion policy calls for an efficient and fair promotion system and points out that the sole basis for determining a member's promotion is his/her CR. It further lays down the eligibility for promotion that before a member is granted substantive promotion he/she must:

- Have completed a required period of service in present rank.
- Have an unqualified recommendation in the most recent CR.
- Have passed the requisite exams and courses.
- Be selected by the appropriate promotion board.

Meanwhile, chapter six of the document deals with performance appraisal issues under the confidential report or "CR". "The aim of the CR is to provide the information necessary to ensure that each member can have a full and useful career and reach the highest rank compatible with his/ her qualities and experience"(p.51). In the same context the document provides some of the following principles:

- It is the duty of the officer responsible to ensure that every soldier under his/her command, eligible for a CR, receives one each year.
- A CR should produce a clear assessment of a soldier's qualities and potential for promotion and employment based on his/her performance during the period under review.
- Honest and objective reports are essential, not only for the benefit of the member but for the NDF as a whole.
- Reports are intended to reflect the performance and the standards achieved over the full reporting period, of up to one year. Reporting officers when expressing shortcomings in a CR should previously have counselled the member and allowed sufficient time to improve his/her performance.

## **2.14 CONCLUSION**

The literature reviewed in this chapter provides significant information to support this study. It has outlined the critical points on performance appraisal, most importantly its purpose and objectives. These will be the guiding beacon of the study investigation and argument to try to find the right answer to the research question.

Despite the fact that different scholars of human resources management have discussed the purpose of performance appraisal in different ways, Swanepoel et al. (2003) gave it's natural and encompassing purpose. It is "to provide information about work performance" (p.327). It could, therefore, be argued further that performance appraisal system is indispensable in the capturing performance data that, in turn, would facilitate in the perfection of the employees' performance.

The success of performance appraisal in any organisation depends on its design, procedures, constant application and the training of raters. Thus, the appraisal system in the NDF would equally be required to meet such needs if success is to be achieved.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

It was stated by the Ministry of Defence that performance appraisal in the NDF was not meeting its objectives (MOD 2008, p.38). This study examines how performance appraisal is implemented and investigates the reasons behind the failure of the performance appraisal system in the NDF to meet its set objectives. This chapter outlines the methods used by the study to achieve its objectives.

#### **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The emphasis of the study is on examining the implementation of performance appraisal in the NDF using the quantitative approach. This has been done in view of discovering the reasons why the performance appraisal system is not meeting its objectives. Due to the time limitation the study concentrated on the Grootfontein Garrison alone. Data has been collected by means of questionnaires, semi-standardised interviews, as well as a survey of records.

### **3.3 POPULATION**

The Grootfontein Garrison has a contingent of about 2000 personnel. It comprises all units under Army Headquarters in Grootfontein military base. For the sample, a total of 206 participants from all units of the Garrison participated in the study as respondents. The researcher obtained permission from the Chief of Defence Force, unit commanders and formation commanders, who availed their officers and men for the survey.

### **3.4 SAMPLING**

To collect the study information participants were classified in two specific categories. The first category consisted of officers with military ranks from captain to colonel. The reason for this selection is that officers in this category have the responsibility to ensure the implementation of performance appraisal within their respective units. They exercise direct supervision over the

juniors in their units. They are also the ones involved in conducting performance appraisals to their immediate subordinates.

The second group includes non-commissioned officers (NCOs) from the rank of Warrant Officers class one to Lance Corporal as well as privates. They are to be seen as subjects of the appraisal system by their commanders. In this light, they were asked to give their views on the implementation and the effectiveness of the performance appraisal system as applied to them. Different groups were sampled as shown in the table below.

***Table 1: Sampling of the Study Population***

Unit/Formation	Category 1 (Captain-Colonel)	Category 2 (Private-1) Warrant Officer Class	Total
Army Head Quarters	8	22	30
Logistic Unit	6	42	48
Dolphin Unit	6	72	78
Brigade Head Quarters	6	20	26
Military Hospital	6	18	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>206</b>
<b>Percentages</b>	<b>15.5%</b>	<b>84.5%</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **3.5 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS.**

The data were collected using semi-structured interviews. Two types of semi-structured interviews were then conducted. The first category was directed to officers, including

commanding officers of units, who regularly conduct performance appraisal. These interviews were aimed at obtaining data about the implementation of performance appraisal, effectiveness of the existing appraisal mechanism and procedures, problems as well as opinions on what measures should be taken to improve performance. The second category of semi-standardised interviews was directed to the ranks from warrant officer class one to privates who were assessed. These interviews were aimed at obtaining data about their views on the implementation, effectiveness and problems of performance appraisal within their units.

Additional data has been collected by conducting a survey of personal files from personnel office branches in the Garrison. A sample of 90 files was surveyed: 10 files from the officers, 30 files from the non-commissioned officers and 50 files from privates. These files were selected regardless whether the owner has participated in this study or not. These data were analysed in order to examine the consistency in the implementation of the appraisal system as well as to assess how appraisal data on individual members were used in practice. Records completed from 2000 until 2008 were examined.

The interviews and personnel records were compared with the stipulations of the NDF personnel policy, the Defence Act, (Act 1 of 2002) and other relevant literature.

### **3.6 PROCEDURES.**

Permission to enter the Garrison for research and to conduct interviews with selected respondents was obtained from the office of the Chief of the Defence Force before the collection

of data commenced. Commanders of units and formations were requested to nominate and avail participants consisting of all ranks as indicated in table 1 on page 21. Information about the dates for questionnaires and interviews was communicated in advance to all targeted units.

The researcher administered questionnaires and conducted interviews at specific venues as allocated by commanders. To maintain confidentiality during research respondents were not required to provide their names. During interviews the researcher read the questions to the individual respondent and ticked the chosen responses in the appropriate box. In the case of open-ended questions responses were written down in verbatim in the allotted spaces. Interview participants had the choice to remain anonymous.

### **3.7 DATA ANALYSIS.**

After the collection all questionnaires were edited and categorised in two categories; one for officers and the other for non-commissioned officers and privates, to facilitate the analysis of data. Data analysis was conducted using a simple manual design by tabulating and converting into charts. Questionnaires and interviews results were compared for corresponding responses and integration, and data were tabulated and presented in tables, charts and figures.

### **3.8 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF DATA**

#### **3.8.1 Reliability**

Data was collected from two different categories: first the group of officers and second the group of non-commissioned officers and privates. Each respondent was interviewed separately. Questions were read to respondents for clarity and they were allowed to ask question if something was not clear.

### **3.8.2 Validity**

Interviews were directed, firstly, to commanders and officers who were responsible for the implementation of performance appraisal within their respective units and secondly, to their subordinates who are the subjects of performance appraisal. Samples of personal files were selected from each category for a record survey. Files were selected randomly in the two categories regardless whether the owner had participated in the interviews or not. Only files for members who have been in service since or before the year 2000 were surveyed.

## **3.9 CONCLUSION**

The population of Grootfontein Garrison was selected because it houses several units those, given the time factor, would give reasonable representation to the study. The study population was divided in two groups in order to obtain the views in both the senior and the junior perspectives. Two types of semi-structured interviews were used in this regard. Additional data was collected by means of a survey of randomly selected personal files.

The methodology used was quantitative in nature with exploratory techniques. This approach facilitated the analysis of data as well as ensuring the validity and reliability of the data collected.

## **CHAPTER 4**

## **DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the research findings from the two categories of respondents. The respondents represent all ranks including senior officers who are mainly responsible for the implementation of the process as well as the middle and junior ranks who are the subjects of performance assessment. They express their views on the implementation of performance appraisal within their respective units.

The main focus is, firstly, on the implementation of performance appraisal, secondly, the effectiveness of the existing appraisal mechanism and, thirdly, the examination of the reason why performance appraisal is not meeting its objectives. To try to answer these questions the researcher attempted, firstly, to examine how performance appraisal is implemented in selected units, secondly, to establish why the system was not meeting its objectives and thirdly, to establish the effectiveness of the existing mechanism of performance appraisal.

The views of respondents and participants of the research are presented in tables and graphs depending on the category and a particular question at a time.

The research outcome and recommendations will apply directly to the Grootfontein Garrison. However, the researcher anticipates that recommendations will also be relevant to the rest of NDF units as well as other similar institutions in the country and region.

## **4.2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT RESPONDENTS**

The study focused on groups that were selected for data collection, as indicated in the previous chapter (Methodology). The first group is the category one directed to senior officers, mostly commanding officers. These are superiors who are responsible for the implementation and management of performance appraisal. The second group is category two consisting of non-commissioned officers and privates who are to be seen as subjects of the performance appraisal or the assessed ranks. Either groups or categories have expressed their views on the implementation of performance appraisal, its effectiveness and whether it was meeting its objectives or not in their respective units.

As shown in the methodology chapter, respondents to this study were selected from five army units in Grootfontein Garrison namely; Army Headquarters, Logistic Unit, Dolphin Unit, 26 Brigade Headquarters and the Military Hospital. Each unit was requested to provide participants as shown in the table below.

**Table 2: Number of Respondents per Rank and Unit**

Unit	Officers	Assessed Ranks	Total
Army Headquarter	8	22	30
Logistic Unit	6	42	48
Dolphin Unit	6	72	78
Brigade Headquarter	6	20	26
Military Hospital	6	18	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>206</b>

After the collection of data by interviews the forms were edited and sorted according to ranks in order to facilitate their integration and data analysis.

The first sample (category 1 interview) was the smallest part with only 32 participants or 15.5% of all respondents. This group only consisted of senior officers who were responsible for the management of the units. The second sample (category 2 interview) had 174 respondents or 84.5% of all respondents. This was the sample for the assessed which provided views and experiences as subjects of the implementation of performance appraisal. The number of respondents per category was as shown in the table below.

**Table 3: Number of Respondents per Category**

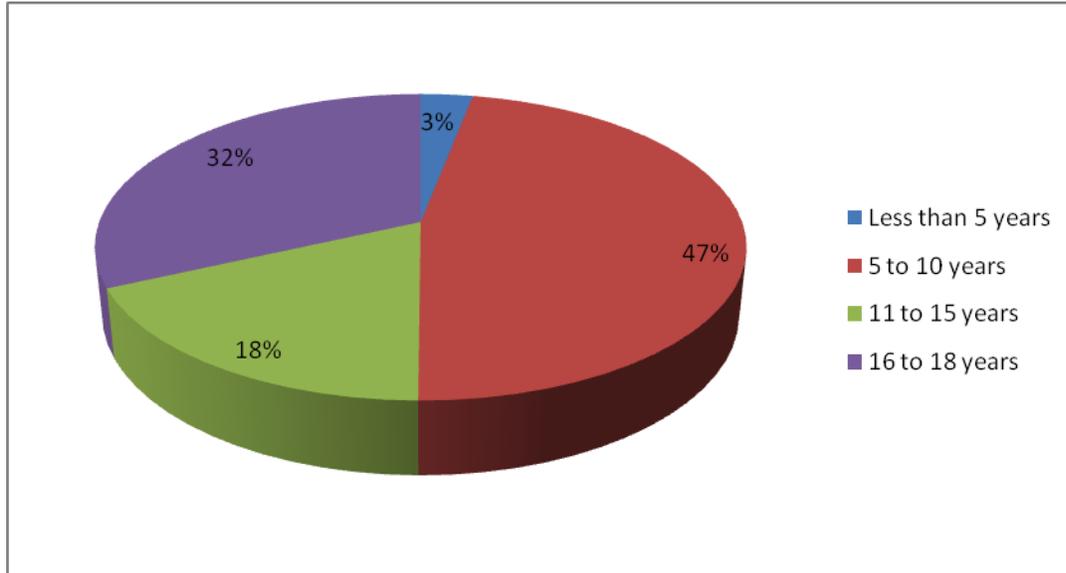
Categories	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Category 1	32 ( <i>Superiors only</i> )	15.5
Category 2	174 ( <i>Assessed Ranks only</i> )	84.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>100</b>

### **4.3 MAIN FINDINGS**

This section presents views and opinions of the two categories on the implementation of performance appraisal in their respective units. As indicated before, key questions were posed to all two groups to examine how performance appraisal is implemented and to examine the reasons why it is not meeting its objectives. Also, an attempt was made to see whether existing methods are effective enough. It is, then, against this background that the findings are presented along the issues of implementation, effectiveness and the reasons of not meeting desired objectives. Key questions on each issue were asked to each group and the answers will be presented according to the response obtained from each category.

#### **4.3.1 Findings on the Length of Service of Respondents**

During this research an attempt was made to establish the length of the period of service of respondents in the NDF. The result revealed that 47% have served between 5 to 10 years, close to 18% served between 11 and 15 years while over 32% of respondents have been in the service between 16 to 18 years. Only 3% of respondents have served less than five years in the NDF. Figure 2 below shows the average of years of service by respondents.



*Figure 1: Respondents' Years of Service in the NDF*

#### **4.3.2 Findings on Officers' Views**

This section presents the findings of the views of officers on the implementation of performance appraisal within their respective units, the effectiveness of the existing mechanism and on whether performance appraisal was meeting its objectives or not.

##### **4.3.2.1 Responses on the Implementation of Performance Appraisal**

Respondents were asked to answer the following questions: “**Are you familiar with the performance appraisal system in the NDF?**” The results show that 100% of respondents have answered they were familiar with the appraisal system. This is because all officers in this category are responsible with the implementation of performance appraisal within their respective units. The details of the results are as shown in the table below.

**Table 4: Officers’ Familiarity with Performance Appraisal System**

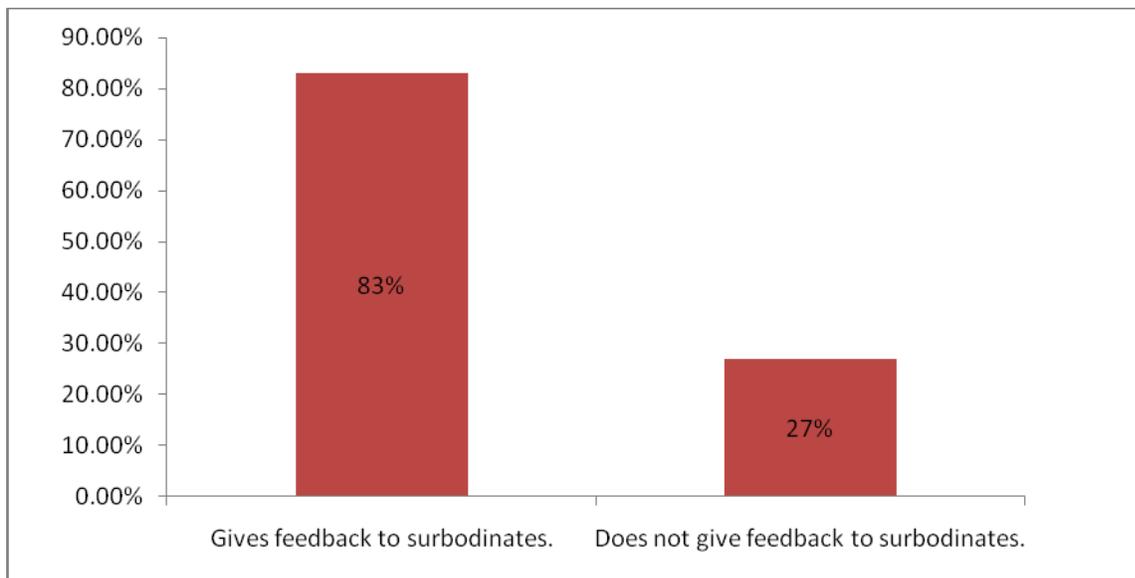
<b>Unit</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Familiar to PA</b>	<b>Not Familiar to PA</b>
Army Headquarter	8	8	0
Logistic Unit	6	6	0
Dolphin Unit	6	6	0
Brigade Headquarter	6	6	0
Military Hospital	6	6	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0</b>

The second question to this group was: “**Is performance appraisal conducted in your unit every year?**” 100% of participants have responded negatively to the said question. The results are in contrast with the NDF Personnel Policy which directs annual assessments. These results had prompted another sub question: “**Why not?**” to which the respondents gave different answers. The main reasons listed were that even when conducted; good performers were not rewarded accordingly, seldom feedback came from Army Headquarters or, there was less or no interest to do conduct performance appraisal.

A third question: “**How is performance appraisal conducted in your unit?**” was asked. The answer by all respondents was that it was conducted using the CR forms. This is in agreement with the Personnel Policy.

On the question: **What did you do with the data in completed CR forms at your unit?**” all respondents claimed that all the data were processed and sent to the Army Headquarter for action. This was done according to the policy directives.

The fourth question: “**Do you give feedback to your subordinates after the appraisal?**” 83% of respondents said yes while 37% said no. Results were as illustrated in the chart below.



**Figure 2:** *Superiors’ Feedback to Subordinates*

#### **4.3.2.2 Responses on the Effectiveness of the Existing Mechanism**

On the question: “**Do you think that the existing appraisal mechanism is effective?**” almost 41% of the respondents said that the mechanism was effective while 59% said that it was not. The question wanted to bring out the state of the existing mechanism of performance appraisal. This includes the methods, the instruments to be used and the procedures to be followed. The response given generally indicates that the mechanism was not effective

***Table 5: Officers’ Views on the Effectiveness of Appraisal Mechanism***

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Not Effective</b>
Army Headquarters	8	5	3
Logistic Unit	6	2	4
Dolphin Unit	6	1	5
Brigade Headquarter	6	2	4
Military Hospital	6	3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>40.63</b>	<b>59.37</b>

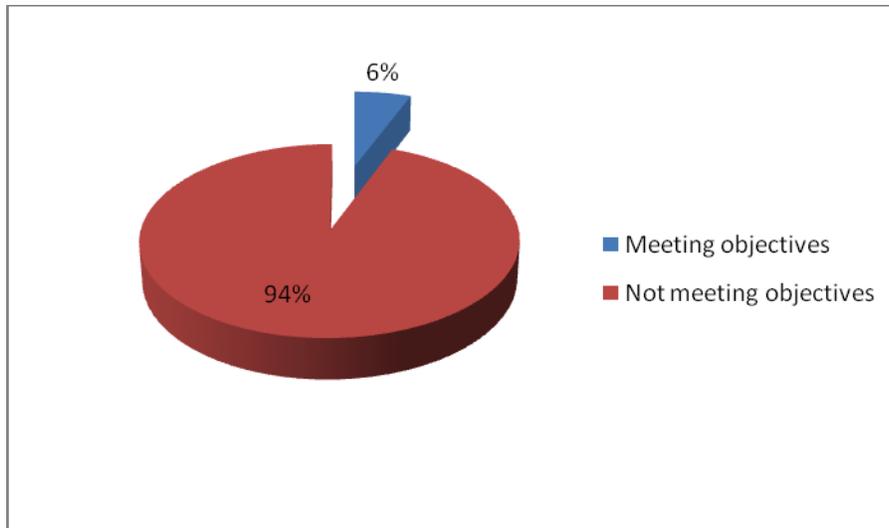
The problems put forward by officers did not imply anything wrong with the design of the appraisal process per se but simply with the implementation of it. This leads to the question implementation. The answer to this question is very important not only to the effectiveness of the process but to the reason why the process is not meeting its objectives.

#### **4.3.2.3 Responses on Problems Experienced with Effectiveness of the Existing Mechanism**

On the question: **“Have you experienced any problem with the current appraisal system?”** all indicated some form of problems with the system. Participants were asked to specify the problems they have experienced. Amongst problems given were: inconsistent implementation, good performers not rewarded accordingly, assessment data not utilised and lack of commitment by the Army Headquarters to provide feedback.

#### **4.3.2.4 Is Performance Appraisal in the NDF Meeting its Objectives**

As mentioned earlier in Chapter 2, performance appraisal objectives are twofold, namely; evaluative and developmental. Evaluative objectives are concerned with compensation, which include merit increases, bonuses and promotions. Developmental objectives are concerned with developing employee skills and motivation for future performance. As managers of their units, officers and commanders were asked: **“Do you think that performance appraisal is meeting its objectives in your unit?”** The majority of 94% said no. 6% said yes. Respondents pointed out some reasons such as; poor or inadequate implementation, good performers not rewarded accordingly, lack of interest or commitment to for full implementation to explain why performance appraisal was not meeting objectives.



*Figure 3: Officers' Views on Meeting of Objectives*

#### **4.3.2.5 Recommendations by Officers**

Officers were asked to give their suggestions on what needs to be done for performance appraisal system to achieve its goals. The following recommendations were given:

- Army Headquarters to organise and conduct refresher training for officers on the implementation of performance appraisal.
- Performance appraisal should be conducted consistently on annual basis.
- Army Headquarters to give prompt feedback on CR based recommendations.
- Army Headquarters to monitor the implementation of performance appraisal consistently.

#### **4.3.3 Findings on the Non-Commissioned Officers and Privates' Views**

As was indicated earlier in this chapter, the second category consists of participants who are the subjects of performance appraisal. Their responses on implementation of performance appraisal, its effectiveness and whether it is meeting its objectives or not, are presented under this subsection.

#### 4.3.3.1 Responses on the Implementation of Performance Appraisal

Respondents were asked to answer the following questions: “**Are you familiar with the performance appraisal system in the NDF?**” 60.92% of respondents said yes while the rest (39.08%) have indicated that they were not familiar with the system. This prompted the researcher to ask why they were not familiar with the system. All these respondents said that the system of performance appraisal was never explained to them. The table below presents the statistics of respondents’ familiarity with performance appraisal in the NDF.

***Table 6: Assessed Ranks’ Familiarity with Performance Appraisal***

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Total Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Familiar</b>	<b>Not Familiar</b>
Army Headquarters	22	13	9
Logistic Unit	42	24	18
Dolphin Unit	72	45	27
Brigade Headquarter	20	11	9
Military Hospital	18	13	5
Total	174	106	68
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>60.92</b>	<b>39.08</b>

From the above information it is clear that almost 40% of respondents were not aware of the appraisal system in their respective units. They have also indicated that they were never informed about the performance appraisal in their units. Carrel et al. (1998, p.264) clearly indicated the importance of an employer discussing the appraisal process with the employees. This implies that all employees should be informed or made aware by the employer of the appraisal process in place.

The question was asked: **“Were you ever assessed in a CR form during your NDF career?”**

The results in table 7 show that 60.92 of the respondents have indicated that they were assessed while the rest (39.08%) were never assessed. Statistically this figure represents a significant number of employees who were never assessed in the Grootfontein Garrison. This information is important for consideration in explaining why the performance appraisal process is not yielding desired results.

***Table 7: Responses on CR Assessments***

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Assessed</b>	<b>Never Assessed</b>
Army Headquarters	22	13	9
Logistic Unit	42	24	18
Dolphin Unit	72	45	27
Brigade Headquarter	20	11	9
Military Hospital	18	13	5
Total	174	106	68
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>60.92</b>	<b>39.08</b>

It seems that the number of respondents who are not familiar with the performance appraisal system in their units (Table 6) are the same respondents who were not assessed in Table 7. This shows a complete lack of explanation of the CR system to lower ranks.

Those who responded that they were assessed were asked further to indicate whether they were being assessed annually or not. The response was that none of them were assessed annually as shown in Table 8. There was no reason given why respondents were not assessed every year. This is contrary to the NDF Personnel Policy as discussed earlier. According to this policy every member should be assessed at least once every year. The above information has far reaching consequences, as far as consistency in the implementation of performance appraisal is concerned.

**Table 8: Responses on Annual Appraisal**

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Assessed Annually</b>	<b>Not Assessed Annually</b>
Army Headquarters	13	0	13
Logistic Unit	24	0	24
Dolphin Unit	45	0	45
Brigade Headquarter	11	0	11
Military Hospital	13	0	13
Total	106	0	106
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100</b>

Respondents were asked to evaluate the implementation of performance appraisal in their respective units by answering the question: **“How do you rate the implementation of performance appraisal in your unit?”** Respondents were given the scale of; *excellent, good,*

*poor, bad and very bad* to rate their units. The results show that 48.28% rated the performance appraisal in their units *poor*, 32.18% at *very bad* and 8.62% at *bad*. Only 10.91% have rated their units at *excellent* or *good*.

**Table 9: Rating of Implementation of Performance Appraisal by Specific Unit**

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Bad</b>	<b>Very bad</b>
Army Headquarter	22	0	2	10	2	8
Logistic Unit	42	0	3	19	4	16
Dolphin Unit	72	3	8	34	3	24
Brigade Headquarter	20	0	0	8	6	6
Military Hospital	18	1	2	13	0	2
<b>Total</b>	174	4	15	84	15	56
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2.29</b>	<b>8.62</b>	<b>48.28</b>	<b>8.62</b>	<b>32.18</b>

#### 4.3.3.2 Responses on Effectiveness of the Existing Mechanism

About the question: “**How do you rank the effectiveness of performance appraisal method used in your unit?**” respondents were given a ranking scale reading; *very effective, fairly effective, not effective* and *I don't know*. The results are as shown in the table below.

**Table 10: Rating of the Effectiveness of Appraisal Method**

Unit	Number of respondents	Very effective	Fairly effective	Not effective	I don't know
Army Headquarter	22	0	2	11	9
Logistic Battalion	42	0	3	21	18
Dolphin Battalion	72	2	5	38	27
26 Brigade Headquarter	20	1	3	7	9
Military Hospital	18	0	2	11	5
<b>Total</b>	174	3	15	88	68
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1.72</b>	<b>8.62</b>	<b>50.58</b>	<b>39.08</b>

As seen in the table above, 50.58% from the participants has indicated that the current method was not effective, 8.62% are saying that the current method is fairly effective while 39.38% had no idea. This may be an important indication that there was something wrong with the actual mechanism. It is also apparent that the number of respondents that has indicated that it has no idea on the effectiveness of the appraisal method is the same number that was not familiar with appraisal system.

#### 4.3.3.3 Responses on whether Performance appraisal was Meeting its Objectives or Not

Respondents were asked: “Do you think that that performance appraisal is meeting its objectives in your unit?” and options of *yes*, *no* and *I do not know* were given. The results in Table 10 below show that 16.1 % saw performance appraisal meeting its objectives while the

majority of 44.82% said that it was not meeting its objectives. The rest, 39.08% had no idea. It also came out clear that total figure with no idea is the same that is no familiar with performance appraisal (see Table 6).

**Table 11: Views whether Performance Appraisal is Meeting its Objectives or Not**

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Meeting Objectives</b>	<b>Not Meeting Objectives</b>	<b>I Don't Know</b>
Army Headquarter	22	2	11	9
Logistic Unit	42	3	21	18
Dolphin Unit	72	7	38	27
Brigade Headquarter	20	4	7	9
Military Hospital	18	2	11	5
<b>Total</b>	174	<b>18</b>	<b>88</b>	68
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>10.34</b>	<b>50.58</b>	<b>39.08</b>

Further, respondents were asked a question: **“Were you ever promoted during your NDF career?”** 77.6% said yes. This is an indication that the majority of the respondents were promoted. Those who said yes were asked to indicate the reasons that led to their promotions by choosing the relevant answer on **“What led to your promotion?”** As shown in the table below, only 28% indicated that they were promoted as a result of their CR assessment. 25.93% of respondents were promoted at their commanders’ decision. [Unit commanders under certain circumstances, and with the approval of the Chief of Defence Force, may decide on the promotion of certain members Defence Act, (Act 1 of 2002, section 6.).] [Special promotion is done in accordance with the Defence Act, (Act 1 of 2002, section 6.) that gives power to the

Chief of the Defence Force to promote members of the Defence Force when he/she deems it necessary.]

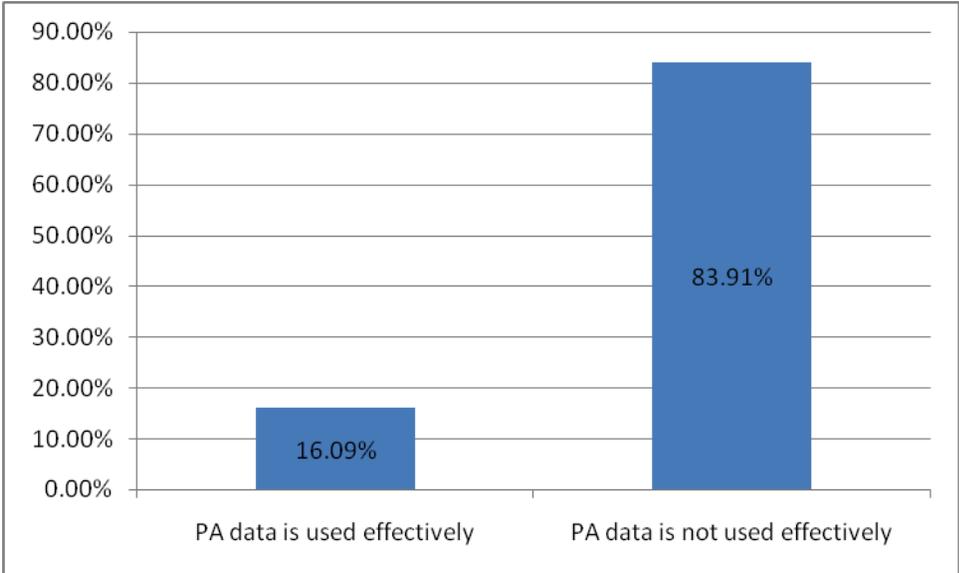
**Table 12: Views on Causes of Promotion**

Unit	Number of Respondents	Causes of Promotion					
		CR Assessment	Automatic Promotion	Commander decision	Special Promotion	My own initiative	I don't know
Army Headquarter	20	6	2	7	2	0	3
Logistic Unit	33	4	1	11	4	3	10
Dolphin Unit	53	9	6	12	13	1	12
Brigade Headquarter	15	6	1	3	1	0	4
Military Hospital	14	3	4	2	2	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>20.74</b>	<b>10.37</b>	<b>25.93</b>	<b>16.29</b>	<b>3.70</b>	<b>22.97</b>

Notable in the table are the 22.97% who did not know the reasons for their promotions. This can be linked to the lack of awareness of the system indicated earlier in this chapter. Of interest is the 3.7% who were promoted by virtue of their own initiative. According to the respondents who were promoted on their initiative, they had complained to their commanders that they have served a long period (more than 5 years) without promotion. What is important here is the fact that members had to take it upon themselves to ensure that they were promoted. Special and automatic promotions are in line with the provisions of the Defence Act, where the Chief of

Defence Force is mandated to promote members when he deems it necessary. However, the fact that some members have to take it upon themselves for promotion and a significant number that was promoted to commanders' discretion or those who are not clear on why they were promoted is an indication that performance appraisal objectives are not worth their salt in this case.

In the same context, respondents asked to give their views on whether the information or data in completed CR forms were used effectively. As shown in the graph below, over seventy 83.91% said no.

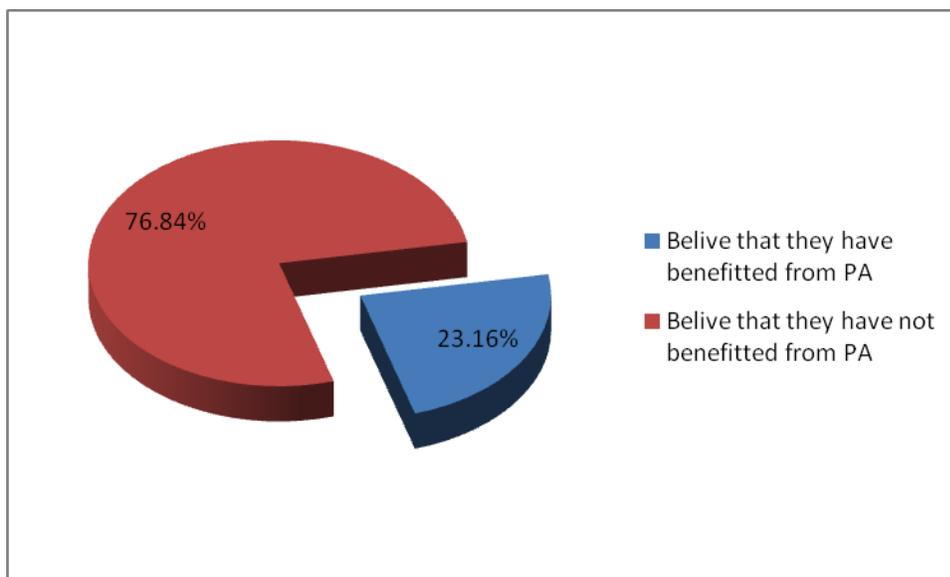


**Figure 4: Views on Effective Use of Appraisal Data**

In terms of performance appraisal objectives employees would theoretically benefit in various forms depending on the appraisal results. Benefits include promotions, salary increments, award of prizes, medals and others. Developmental objectives encompass developing employee skills and motivation for future performance. When employees are evaluated below average in past

performance a decision on training and development may be taken. Employees will then benefit for being accorded a training opportunity to improve their skills, acquiring new knowledge and improve their own performance.

About the question; “**Have you benefited from your assessments?**” 76.84% have indicated that they did not benefit anything. Others had benefits in the form of either promotion or further training in a specific field. The 76.84% who perceived that they benefitted nothing is an indication of low confidence in appraisal.

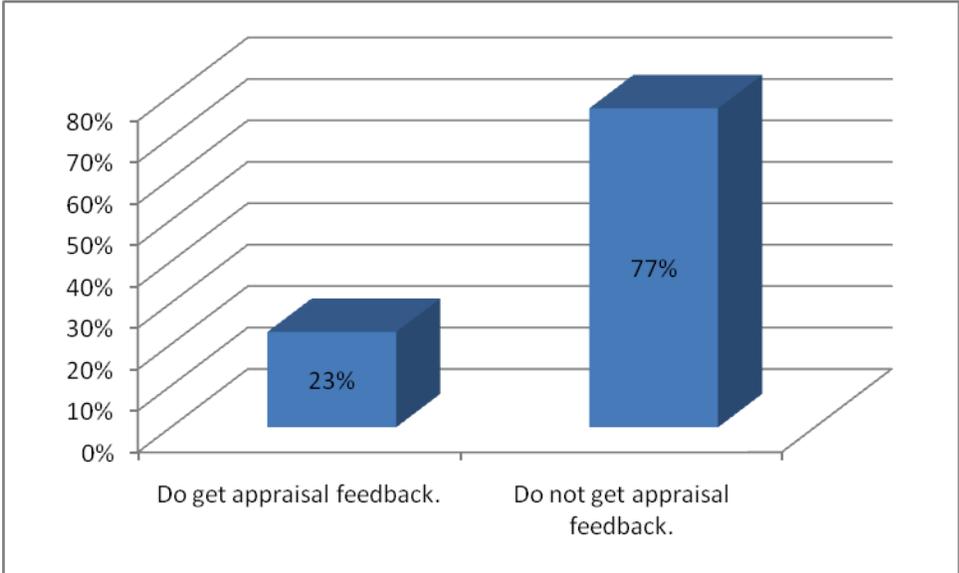


**Figure 5:** *Views on Benefits from Appraisal Assessments.*

As discussed earlier, a performance appraisal system should ideally give feedback to employees on their strength and weaknesses. Feedback provision to employees is also part of developmental objectives of performance appraisal.

Regarding the question: “Do you receive any feedback on your strength or weakness on your past performance?” 77% have said no.(See Figure 6). This could be another indication that the system is not doing enough to adequately achieve its key objectives.

As the results shows, a two-third of respondents do not know whether they are performing well, neither how their supervisors feel about their performance. They do not know whether they need to improve in certain areas of performance nor whether they qualify for any advancement. Lack of feedback on the past performance to the majority of employees would affect not only the motive to improve performance but the level of performance and motivation within the entire organisation. The graph below illustrates the participants’ perceptions about appraisal feedback.



**Figure 6: Views about Appraisal Feedback.**

Of interest in the above chart is the 23% that said that they got sufficient feedback. One respondent has referred to informal methods of feedback as remarks made by their supervisors

during occasions like year-end parades while some are on assumption that since nothing was said then everything was just fine.

#### **4.3.3.4 Recommendations by the Assessed Ranks**

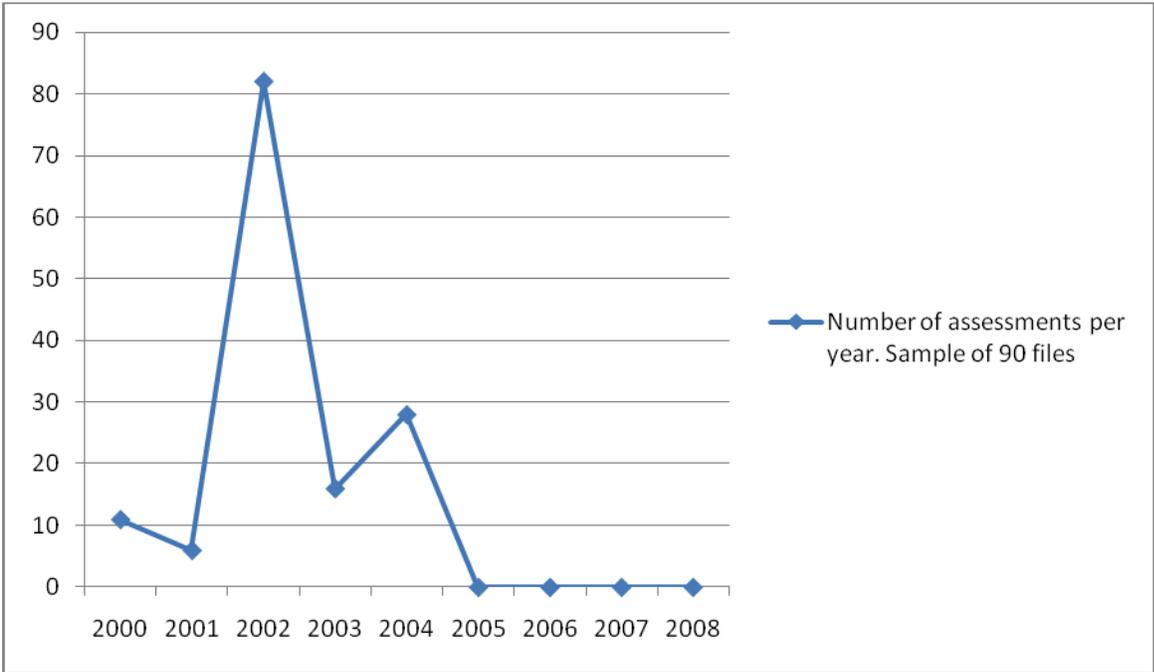
When asked to give their suggestion or recommendations in view of improving the situation of performance appraisal in their units, respondents have proposed the following:

- Performance appraisal should be conducted annually.
- Commanders should be well trained in appraisal methods and procedures.
- Promotions should be done in accordance with the NDF personnel policy.
- Appraisal data should be used effectively for performance improvement.
- Feedback should be given after every appraisal.

#### **4.4 SURVEY OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL RECORDS**

A brief survey was conducted on some performance appraisal records. The purpose of the survey was to examine the consistency in implementation of the appraisal as well as to assess how appraisal data on individual members were used. A sample of 90 files, of members who were in service before or since the year 2000, was drawn in three different categories, namely: officers, non-commissioned officers and privates. These files were surveyed regardless whether the owner has participated in the study or not. The number of files per category was as shown in Table 13.

To establish the consistency the researcher looked at how many performance appraisal assessments were done from the year 2000 until 2008. The findings reveal that only a few assessments were done during the period under review. It was also discovered that the trend of appraisal has been inconsistent and fluctuated over the given period. The figure below illustrates how the trend has been between the year 2000 and 2008.



**Figure 7:** *Fluctuation of Performance Appraisal Assessment from 2000 until 2008.*

It was expected that, under normal circumstances, each person should have 8 CR assessments. The finding was that files with the highest number of CR appraisals had 3 non-consecutive years of annual assessments while the rest had less than 3 non-consecutive assessments, or no assessment at all (See Table 13). This was found to be in contrast with the provisions of the NDF policy that prescribes at least one assessment every year.

**Table 13: Performance Appraisal Assessment from 2000 until 2008.**

Category	Total number of files	Highest number of CR assessments (per one file) from 2000 until 2008	Files without any assessment from 2000 until 2008
Officers	12	3	3
Non-Commissioned Officers	26	3	4
Privates	52	3	24

Further, to ascertain whether the appraisal data were used, the researcher had considered the situation of promotions in the reviewed files. This assessment has revealed that the higher number of promotions was carried out without CR recommendations while some recommended promotions were never considered (see table 14). Again, this came out in disagreement with the Personnel Policy which clearly stipulates that for a member to be eligible for promotion he/she must have unqualified recommendations from the most recent CR.

**Table 14: Situation of Promotions from 2000 until 2008**

Category	Total	Promotions as per	Promotions without	CR recommended
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	number of files	CR assessments Recommendations	CR assessment recommendations	promotions but never effected
Officers	12	4	*14	3
Non- Commissioned Officers	26	7	*32	8
Privates	52	0	0	21

\*Include persons promoted more than once during the period under review (2002-2008).

#### **4.5 DISCUSSIONS OF THE FINDINGS**

The section above presents the results obtained from the two categories of respondents or participants in this study. Also, it considered the findings of the perusal of appraisal records. This section seeks to provide a detailed discussion based on the results and findings in the previous section. The discussion is centred on three main questions of the study, namely; the implementation, the effectiveness of the existing mechanism and why the objectives are not met. It is very important to note that only the total percentage in the tables is reflected in the discussion. To support the discussion, arguments from relevant literature and other sources are considered.

##### **4.5.1 Discussion of Findings on Officers' Responses on the Implementation of Performance Appraisal.**

The first finding on the officers' responses shows that all officers who were asked whether they were familiar with performance appraisal in the NDF, were actually familiar with the system. It can be argued that because officers undergo a number of combat and administrative courses

before they are appointed to take various responsibilities, they should be aware of the appraisal system in the force. Moreover, officers are the ones responsible for the conduct and implementation of performance appraisal within their respective units.

Molander and Winterton (1994, p.110) emphasised that it is important that managers are familiar with performance appraisal systems within their organisations. This would enable them to provide the circumstances and environment in which employees feel encouraged to operate effectively. Based on that idea, officers as managers of their unit should provide the necessary circumstances and environment for their subordinates to operate effectively through the implementation of performance appraisal.

Respondents have further indicated that performance appraisal was not conducted at their units on annual basis. The reasons given were less convincing that there was less interest or less commitment to implement performance appraisal. The NDF Personnel Policy (2002, p. 51) says that it is the duty of the responsible officer to ensure that every soldier under his/her command is assessed by CR every year. The fact that performance appraisal was not conducted annually is in contrast with that policy. However, other reasons which were given for not conducting appraisal annually were that, even when conducted, the Army Headquarters hardly provide the necessary feedback and that good performers were habitually not rewarded accordingly. These could, however, be discouraging factors for officers to carry out the task of conducting appraisals on annual basis, thus, hindering the implementation process. The NDF Personnel Policy (2007) states that “all headquarters, services, formations and unit commanders are responsible for ensuring that the comments of the policy are well published, understood and implemented” (p.1).

This could be understood as a clarion call to all responsible officers and headquarters to ensure the full implementation of performance appraisal.

It was observed that the CR forms were used when performance appraisal was carried out. This indicates an adherence to the personnel policy. The policy says that all appraisals should be conducted by means of the CR and that the effectiveness of the CR depends on the skills and the courage of the appraising officer (NDF, 2007, p.54).

Evaluating performance and giving feedback is an ongoing process. Feedback is essential in facilitating performance improvement. Though the majority of officers have said that they give appraisal feedback to their subordinates, there is a 23% margin that does not provide feedback. This margin cuts back the full implementation of the appraisal process. Appraisal without feedback falls short from its purpose and objectives. The employee would never know what the organisation thinks of his/her performance while the organisation's performance management strategy would be compromised. It should be the responsibility of every manager to ensure that appraisal feedback is given on the appropriate manner and at the right time. Poorly handled feedback could be detrimental to the organisation and the working relationship (Martin & Jackson, 2002, p. 188).

#### **4.5.2 Discussion of Officers' Responses on Effectiveness of the Existing Mechanism**

According to Carrell et al. (1998, p.292-295) the effectiveness of the performance appraisal system lies in the methods, the instrument and the appraisers. In their responses, officers have

identified some deficiencies in the performance appraisal system. According to the findings there is inconsistent and intervallic implementation of performance appraisal in their units. This, however, should be the responsibility of superiors to ensure the constant or regular appraisals for their subordinates (NDF, 2007, p 1). Nevertheless, they maintained that the problem lies with the Army Headquarters which hardly provide the necessary feedback.

What was important in this question is the effectiveness of the existing mechanism. The majority of respondents have indicated that the existing performance appraisal mechanism was not effective. Their views were more concerned with the reaction by the Army Headquarters. At the end, the whole process is discouraged or compromised by the implementers who do not provide feedback in order to complete the process. Therefore, in the final analysis the mechanism is rendered ineffective.

The similar problem was identified by Murphy and Cleveland (1995, p. 380) when they indicated that most managers were unwilling to provide accurate appraisal to their subordinates or to communicate accurately their evaluation to the organisation. This is because they assume to know who is performing well or poorly and may decide not to report this information in the appraisal form.

Analysing this problem, a reference can be made to Swanepoel et al. (2003, p. 377-380) when they said that some institutional factors such as leadership style have implications in the conduct of performance appraisal. Therefore, based on that argument, it seems that the situation in

Grootfontein Garrison (regarding the effectiveness of performance appraisal) might be influenced by such institutional factors.

#### **4.5.3 Discussion of Officers' Responses on Whether Performance Appraisal was Meeting Objectives or Not**

It appears from the responses that the answer to the research question; why performance appraisal is not meeting its objectives, was found. However, for better precision the study attempts to investigate further to see whether the little that has been done so far could meet the objectives or not. In this context, it became necessary to, briefly, revisit the purpose and general objectives of performance appraisal in the milieu of this study.

The most obvious purpose of performance appraisal system is as a decision making aid. Performance appraisals provide the basis for deciding who should be promoted, terminated, given raise, trained and so forth. They are probably not the only basis for such decisions. Promotion decisions may depend as much on a prediction of future performance as on assessments of past performance. Salary decisions may depend as much on market forces on assessments of job performance. Nevertheless, high quality performance appraisal systems are an important consideration in making a wide range of human resources decisions in many organisations (Murphy and Cleveland 1995, pp. 88-91).

The objectives of performance appraisal encapsulate the revision of performance over a given period of time to determine future management of employees. Carrel et al. (1998, p.260-263)

categorised performance appraisal objectives into two, namely; evaluative objectives and developmental objectives. Evaluative objectives are concerned with the past performance of an employee for compensation. They lead to decisions for promotions, demotions, transfers, layoffs and others. Developmental objectives, on the other hand, focus on developing employee skills and motivation for future performance. In this context, performance feedback becomes a primary developmental need. Employees would want to know how the organisation feels about their past performance and, their motivation to improve on past performance only increases when feedback is received. The feedback given should identify strength and weaknesses of the past performance.

Findings on the officers' responses indicate with 94% that performance appraisal was not meeting its objectives. They cited poor or inadequate implementation; good performers not rewarded accordingly, lack of interest or commitment to for full implementation and neglect of appraisal information as reasons for performance appraisal not meeting its objectives.

Given the findings above, it can be proposed that performance appraisal should be a mechanism to reinforce the values and culture of the organisation. It has a strategic importance in the human resources management system therefore efforts should be made to ensure its optimal functioning. This is the view of Fisher at al. (1996, p.451) when they argued that without performance information, managers of an organisation can only guess as to whether employees are working towards the right goal, in the correct way and to the desired standard. They went further that if managers are held accountable for developing their people by being judged on this task in their own performance appraisal, they are likely to spend more effort developing subordinates.

Equally, if commanders are held accountable and judged on this task they will do more to ensure that performance appraisal is fully and strictly implemented in their units.

#### **4.5.4 Discussions of Recommendations by the Officers**

Stredwick (2005, p. 323) emphasised that training, on the implementation of performance appraisal, is essential. The findings have it that respondents (officers) have recommended for a workshop on performance appraisal. This is a clear indication that respondents have recognised the need for training on the part of supervisors. Training, in my view, is a pre-requisite for a successful implementation of any performance appraisal system.

There is a general agreement that training will improve the performance of the ratter. Therefore appraisal techniques and processes should include training programmes for supervisors. Topics normally included in appraisal training are:

- The purpose of performance appraisal;
- How to avoid appraisal problems (bias, halo effects, central tendency etc.);
- How to conduct non-discriminatory appraisals;
- The ethics of appraisals;
- How to conduct effective appraisal interviews (Carrell et al. 1998, p.293).

Stredwick (2005, p. 308) gives emphasis on the provision of feedback. Respondents have also realised the importance of appraisal feedback by urging the Army Headquarters to react promptly on the appraisal process. Therefore, it is agreeable that the provision of feedback and the training of superiors would enhance the realisation of performance appraisal objectives.

According to NDF Personnel Policy (2007, p. 54) every member of the NDF should be assessed at least once every year. This is the same view in the officers' recommendations that performance appraisal should be carried out annually. Respondents have also realised the need for the Army Headquarters to monitor the implementation of performance appraisal in units under its command. Stredwick (2005, p. 108) emphasised that monitoring of managers would ensure the achievement of performance management objectives.

#### **4.5.5 Discussions of Findings on Responses of the Assessed Ranks on the Implementation of Performance Appraisal.**

Organisation managers are to ensure that all employees are informed and aware of the existing performance appraisal methods and procedures. This would enable employees to realise what the organisation expects from them with regard to their performance. This is the same view with Kempton (1995, p.154-157) when he argued that the appraisal system is there to provide a specific opportunity for dialogue between the employee and his/her immediate supervisor to exchange information pertaining performance. This implies that the supervisor and the employee should be in regular contact to exchange information about policies governing their working relationship. It places the supervisor in a position to take initiative in communicating with his subordinates. Equally, the NDF Personnel Policy (2007, p.1) urges all headquarters, services formations and unit commanders to be responsible in ensuring that the content of the policies are well published, understood and implemented by all members within their units.

Nevertheless, the results of subordinates' familiarity with performance appraisal show a considerable number of employees. 39.08% of respondents have indicated that they were not aware of such system or process within their respective units. This is clear evidence that a significant number of employees have no knowledge of performance appraisal systems in the NDF although the majority of respondents were aware of the systems.

Taking into account the findings on the length of service of the respondents, only 3% that have served a period less than 5 years (See Figure 1 on p. 45) in the NDF while the rest have served between 5 and 18 years. Therefore 39.08%, of respondents who were unaware of the existing performance appraisal system, cannot be taken for granted.

On the other hand all senior officers, in their capacity as unit commanders or supervisors were well aware of the policy and the appraisal process (See Table 4 on p. 46). This indicates a discrepancy between the policy and its actual dissemination to lower ranks. Therefore, the findings point out the shortfall by supervisors not only in informing their subordinates on the appraisal process but in carrying out their responsibility of ensuring that all members are aware and understand the process as required by the policy.

It could, therefore, be emphasised that the dissemination of information to the lower ranks by the superiors is a prerequisite for the implementation of performance appraisal. The contrary to this draws back the achievement of the desired results.

The results indicate that over 60.92% of the respondents were assessed while 39.08% were never assessed. Also, the findings indicated that performance was never contacted annually (See Table

8 on p. 54). Taking into account the fact that by far majority of the respondents have been in the service for a period longer than five years, the frequency of conducting performance appraisal come into question. This finding denies the implementation of performance appraisal on regular basis. The NDF Personnel Policy (2007, p. 54) calls for annual appraisal or at least once every year. Also, Carrell et al. (1998, p.258) have emphasised that performance appraisal is a continuous process of evaluating and managing the behaviour and outcomes in the work place. Based on that argument, it is arguable that the required continuity circle, for the implementation of performance appraisal, has been broken in Grootfontein Garrison.

89.7% of respondents indicated that the process was *poorly* or *badly* implemented. Major reasons given were lack of commitment and confidence on the part of superiors. Respondents gave similar reasons for their answers that the major dilemma in this process rests with implementers, in this case, commanders or supervisors. The manager of unit is responsible for representing the organisation and implements the policy. His/ her task is that of fulfilling the objectives and reminding employees of their contractual obligations. This requires that the functional manager provides an organisational design that facilitates the performance of the organisational task while ensuring that employees have opportunity to realise their self actualisation (Vroom, 1988. p.37). For example, in a manufacturing plant it was found that management and professional employees had relatively low tolerance of ambiguity and preferred stronger direction from their supervisors. Based on this view, commanders as functional managers should not allow the process of appraisal to stall by tolerating indecisiveness. They should, by all means ensure that they implement all organisational contract without compromise.

The findings have uncovered a number of problems that hinder the process. The commanders and staff officers, who are responsible for the entire implementation of the process, were found deficient in most cases. A significant number of subordinates were found to have no idea on what performance appraisal is. Appraisal was not conducted on regular basis as directed by the NDF Personnel Policy (2007, p.54). Rather, it is conducted irregularly and subjectively. Though commanders have enough theoretical knowledge on implementation procedures they lack commitment, initiative and have no active guidance from above. Thus, the whole implementation process is flawed

#### **4.5.6 Discussions of Findings on Responses of the Assessed Ranks on the Effectiveness of the Existing Mechanism.**

To complement the findings on the actual implementation of performance appraisal policies the study further investigates into the existing mechanisms, the diagnostic tools and procedures, to see whether they were effective enough to produce the desired results. To this end the study explored the perceptions of the subordinates, or subjects of appraisal, on how they perceive the significance and the effectiveness of the existing policy of performance appraisal less the human factor. The finding shows that, in this category, a simple majority of 50.58% ranked the mechanism not effective. This was the same view with officers on the effectiveness of the mechanism (See Table 5).

#### **4.5.7 Discussions of Findings on Responses of the Assessed Ranks on whether Performance Appraisal was Meeting its Objectives or Not.**

French (1982) stressed that “people have expectancies about the likelihood that an action (effort) on their part will lead to the intended behaviour or performance” or “people have expectancies (instrumentalities) about the likelihood that certain outcomes will follow their behaviour”. Instrumentality here is meant that successful performance will lead to certain outcomes (p. 87). French argued further that if an employee perceives that high performance will lead to an outcome of promotion (the performance-outcome link) and that there is a high probability that extra effort will lead to higher performance (the effort- performance link), the motivation is likely to be great. On the other hand, if an employee perceives that better performance would probably lead to a promotion that is desired, then higher performance is likely.

Respondents have indicated by 50% that performance appraisal was not meeting its objectives (Table 11) and that the promotion criteria were complex and difficult to understand. Despite the fact that some criteria such as automatic and special promotions are sanctioned by the policy there is no clear standard being followed. The fact that some respondents were in a dilemma on what led to their promotion leads to uncertainty in promotion outlook and poor motivation leaves a lot to be desired. This state of affairs is in contrast with the NDF Personnel Policy, frustrating to subordinates and defeating the purpose of performance appraisal. Therefore, since performance appraisal has little or no impact on the promotion policy it cannot be a motivating factor for higher performance.

According to Nel et al. (2006, p. 477) appraisal data are very essential for performance evaluation. The purpose of performance evaluation is to measure the ability of an employee with

regard to his/her job performance and identify his/her strength and weaknesses. The majority of respondents, 83, 91%, from this category believe that appraisal data was not used effectively and that decisions on promotions were not informed by the CR forms.

The outcome of performance appraisal has to be beneficial both to the organisation and its employees. This is the view of Armstrong (2005, p.4) when emphasised that performance appraisal has the benefits to the organisation, the supervisor and the employee. To the employees it helps to find out how they are working, provides recognition for accomplishment and encourage them to take responsibility for their performance and progress.

Mager and Pipe (1984) stated that “people do not perform if no consequence for doing it right” (p.94). The findings indicated that 76.84% of respondents believe that they have not benefited from appraisal assessments as opposed to 23.16%. Every employee is entitled to certain benefits regardless whether he or she has performed well or poorly. Good performers can benefit in the form of promotions, salary increments or other rewards. Poor or bad performers can also benefit, for example in the form of training to improve his or her skills, coaching or in the form of transfer to a more suitable position. Bad performers may also benefit by getting warnings for their wrong deeds for them to avoid further wrong-doing and risking loosing their jobs King (1989, p.20). This is also in the same view of both evaluative and developmental objectives of performance appraisal.

Latham and Wexley (1994, p.4-6) have pointed out that appraising performance serves as an audit for the organisation about the effectiveness of each employee and that performance

appraisal is a fundamental requirement for improving the productivity of human resources. It is through an appraisal that each individual's productivity is evaluated (p.4-6). It can be further said that productivity requires motivation and that performance appraisal lies at the centre of motivation. Therefore, any benefit from appraisal in whichever way is critical to the motivation of the worker and the productivity of the organisation.

In addition, where performance appraisal is conducted properly both supervisors and subordinates find it beneficial and positive. Appraisal offers a valuable opportunity to focus on work activities and goals, to identify and correct existing problems, and encourage better future performance. Thus, the performance of the whole organisation is enhanced. On another hand, performance appraisal can have a profound effect on the level of employee motivation and satisfaction, for better as well as for worse. It provides employees with recognition for their work efforts. The power of social recognition as an incentive has been long noted. There is evidence that human beings will even prefer negative recognition to no recognition at all. The existence of an appraisal programme indicates to an employee that the organisation is genuinely interested in his or her individual performance and development. This alone can have a positive influence on an individual's sense of worth, commitment and belonging. The strength and prevalence of that human natural desire should not be overlooked (<http://www.performance-appraisal.com/benefits.htm>).

Giving appraisal feedback to employees is essential for performance management. It is the process for relating the effects of behaviour for the individual's benefits and learning. Without feedback it can be difficult to progress. The purpose of giving feedback is to improve

performance in the future. It is recognised that appraisal feedback directs behaviour and performance at work (<http://www.totalsuccess.co.uk/appraisa-giving-feedback.htm>).

77% of the respondents have said that they did not get appraisal feedback as opposed to 23%. Referring back to the developmental objective of performance appraisal, performance feedback is a primary developmental need. The employees need to know about their achievements and failures on their past performance so that they can improve performance. Therefore, the feedback should identify the strength and weaknesses. This argument is supported by Fisher et al. (1996, p.455) when they suggested that supervisors could use performance appraisal data to identify areas in which employees may perform better in the future. They also recommended that supervisors could point out the strength and weaknesses and help employees to identify more effective ways to accomplish important tasks.

In the final analysis, since performance feedback enables the performance appraisal process to fulfil its developmental goals, then, the fact that 77% of respondents did not receive feedback on their strengths and weaknesses is a significant compromise in the realisation of performance appraisal objectives.

#### **4.5.8 Discussion of Recommendations by Assessed Ranks.**

Murphy and Cleveland (1995) pointed out that “societal values will probably have a weak impact on the frequency with which an organisation conducts appraisal. The practice of annual appraisal is a strong norm and these value could affect an organisation that tries to conduct appraisal less or more frequently than once a year” (p. 39).

In their recommendations, respondents have recognised the importance of conducting performance appraisal on annual basis. They have as well realised that promotions should adhere to the NDF personnel policy and that appraisal feedback should be given accordingly. Murphy and Cleveland (1995, p. 29) stated that performance appraisal is not simply judgements but a means of communication between the organisation and the worker. Therefore, the consideration of this recommendation is likely to strengthen communications between supervisors and their subordinates

#### **4.5.9 Discussion of Findings on the Survey of Performance Appraisal Records.**

The appraisal records that were surveyed revealed a great deal of inconsistency in the conduct of performance appraisal, neglect of appraisal data and non-adherence to the personnel policy in assessments and promotions. The number of appraisal assessments, between the years 2000 and 2008, started low at 12 assessments in the year 2000, declining to six in 2001, reaching the peak at 82 assessments in 2002, declining again to 16 in 2003 and rising slightly to 28 in 2004. There were no assessments conducted from 2005 until 2008. It was further discovered that the majority of promotions were done without CR recommendations.

Similarly, a close examination of personal files of members who were assessed has revealed that all members were not assessed every year. Some officers who rose from junior ranks such as lance corporal to senior ranks such as major were assessed once in eighteen years and were promoted further without any written recommendation. Some members who were recommended

for promotion to certain ranks were never promoted. Others were promoted without any recommendation in their CR forms.

Morrisey (1984) warned that “failure to adequately document the justification for certain personnel actions, favourable or unfavourable, has come back to haunt many managers in both private and public sectors” (p. 16). It appeared from the survey of records on performance appraisal that there were no annual records regarding appraisal assessments of members of Grootfontein Garrison units. Therefore, if not addressed, this situation may cause serious administrative problems in the future.

#### **4.6 CONCLUSION**

It appeared from the discussion of this section that there are several reasons why performance appraisal is not meeting its objectives in the target of this study. Firstly, respondents’ perceptions have confirmed that supervisors are not doing enough to achieve the given objectives. Secondly, the fact that performance appraisal has little or no impact on current promotions it is not serving its purpose as a performance motivating factor. Thirdly, the fact that the majority of employees feel that they are not benefiting from the appraisal process there is a little sense of worth, commitment and belongingness. Hence, a setback in self-actualisation and compromise to organisational productivity is imminent. Fourthly, if employees are unaware of their strengths or weaknesses there is no room for performance improvement. Hence, the purpose and goals of performance appraisal are totally undermined. Lastly, inconsistencies in the conduct of performance appraisal, neglect of appraisal data and non-adherence to the Personnel Policy in the

assessments and promotions have devastating effects to the realisation of performance appraisal ideals.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.**

#### **5.1 CONCLUSIONS**

Performance appraisal could be described as a systematic process of evaluating an employee's worth and performance of duties with a view of improving it. It is a management tool in the

hands of managers that helps to make informed decisions on the development of human resources. If used correctly, but effectively, optimal exploitation of human potential at work could be achieved. If used inappropriately, it can have disastrous effects on the organisations.

This study has attempted to investigate the implementation of performance appraisal in the NDF units based in Grootfontein Garrison. It sought to bring out the factors that are hampering the realisation of performance appraisal in the target of the study. It also attempted to explore relevant literature to generate an impeccable guide for the investigation.

“The battle field of managers is littered with the carcasses of dead appraisal systems. Untimely death is frequently due to lack of thought as to the most appropriate system for the organisation, lack of consultation at the acceptance stage, leading to misunderstandings as to motives, inadequate training for both manager and jobholder are pitfalls in the process” (Molander and Winterton, p.119). The outcome of the study discovered not only reluctance but lack of authority, accountability and motivation on the part of senior officers in the line of implementation. Probably, further research on these issues might be required to establish the causes. It also discovered that the guiding principles for the implementation of the performance appraisal process have been overlooked. It was also discovered that; a considerable number of the respondents were not familiar with the appraisal system due to lack of official dissemination of information in this regard. The appraisal was not only applied inconsistently but it was completely abandoned after the year 2004. The instruments in place were not fully used to prove whether they are effective or not. Most promotions were not done according to the personnel policy and that no feedback was given to members who were assessed.

The poor implementation of this process has many negative implications. It is evident from the findings that the yardstick to measure employees' performance is not working effectively. In a situation like this commanders, and all other officers involved are unable to evaluate and develop their subordinates objectively, thus, creating the room for biased appraisal and subjective evaluation.

The majority of promotions were done without appraisal recommendations. Commanders used their discretions to decide who was to be promoted. This state of affairs has devastating effects not only to the motivation and development of the subordinates but to the achievement of strategic objectives of the entire organisation. This situation needs to be changed.

Without knowledge about their performance subordinates are left to guess what their superiors' perceptions are about them. They are not sure about their strengths and weaknesses or whether they are meeting the required standards of performance, or not. There is no distinction between good and bad performers. This is not only discouraging but undermining the whole idea of performance improvement. It has the potential to affect the combatants' morale in the event of war, therefore, influencing the possible outcome of future battles. ["Teams of highly skilled, trained and motivated employees will always overcome most of the difficulties created by external forces while a poorly motivated, untrained and unskilled labour force will nearly always fail to take advantage of favourable external opportunities" (Stredwick 2000, p. 236).]

Therefore, it can be concluded that performance appraisal in the NDF is currently failing to meet its objectives because of lack of responsibility, accountability and non-adherence to the policy. Strategically, this failure has negative effects in the realisation of organisational objectives and the delivery of quality services.

## 5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS.

Given the research findings, analysis and operational implications and in view of remedying the situation, it is recommended that the Directorate of Human Resources in the Defence Headquarter considers the following:

- a. Ensure that unit commanders and staff officers take full responsibility and to be held accountable for the implementation of performance appraisal within their respective units by conducting regular inspections;
- b. Ensure that unit commanders are adequately trained for the implementation of performance appraisal system within their units.
- c. Ensure that all promotions are strictly carried out within the provisions and framework of the personnel policy;
- d. Ensure that members who perform outstandingly are promoted or rewarded accordingly;
- e. Ensure that members who underperform are regularly informed about their weaknesses and that appropriate measure, such as training or redeployment, are applied to help them to improve their performance;

- f. Ensure that there is consistent and effective monitoring mechanism of the performance appraisal process to detect and resolve arising problems.

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### **CATEGORY 1 SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW**

This interview is directed to Senior Officers and designed to collect data about the implementation of performance appraisal within their units, its effectiveness and problems of the existing appraisal mechanism.

**Introduction.** I am a post graduate student at the University of Namibia, pursuing a Masters Degree of Arts in Security and Strategic Studies. For my thesis, I am conducting an investigative

study on the implementation of performance appraisal in the NDF. I would like to kindly request you to assist me in providing your views in this regard. Please note that all your information will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Your name will not be revealed without your permission.

Rank..... Full Name: ..... Unit.....  
 Gender..... Appointment: .....  
 Do you prefer your name to be revealed in the study?

<b>Yes</b>	
<b>No</b>	

Signature.....

**QUESTIONS**

1. For how long have you been serving in the NDF?

Less than 5 years	
5 – 10 years	
10 – 15 years	
15 – 18 years	

2. Are you familiar with the performance appraisal in the NDF?

<b>Yes</b>	
<b>No</b>	

2.1 If not, why not? .....  
 .....  
 .....

3. Is performance appraisal conducted in your unit every year?

<b>Yes</b>	
<b>No</b>	

3.1 If no, why? .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

4. How do you conduct performance appraisal in your unit?

<b>CR form</b>	
<b>Informal method</b>	

5. What do you do with the completed CR forms at your Unit?

<b>Send them to high HQ</b>	
<b>Process myself</b>	
<b>Just keep them</b>	





**CATEGORY 2 SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW**

This interview is directed to the ranks from warrant officer class one to privates. It is aimed to obtaining data views on the implementation of performance appraisal in their units, its effectiveness and whether it is meeting its objectives.

**Introduction.** I am a post graduate student at the University of Namibia, pursuing a Masters Degree of Arts in Security and Strategic Studies. For my thesis, I am conducting an investigative study on the implementation of performance appraisal in the NDF. I would like to kindly request you to assist me in providing your views in this regard. Please note that all your information will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Your name will not be revealed without your permission.

Rank..... Full Name: .....Unit.....

Gender..... Appointment: .....

Do you prefer your name to be revealed in the study?

<b>Yes</b>	
<b>No</b>	

Signature.....

.....  
**QUESTIONS**

1. For how long have you been serving in the NDF?

Less than 5 years	
5 – 10 years	
10 – 15 years	

2. Are you familiar with the performance appraisal in the NDF?

<b>Yes</b>	
<b>No</b>	

2.1 If not, why? .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. Were you ever assessed in a CR form during your NDF career?

<b>Yes</b>	
<b>No</b>	

3.1 If **yes**, how many times? .....

.....

3.2 If **no**, give the reason why? .....

.....

.....

.....

4. How do you rate the implementation of performance appraisal (CR) in your Unit?

<b>Excellent</b>	
<b>Good</b>	
<b>Poor</b>	
<b>Bad</b>	
<b>Very bad</b>	

5. How do you rank the effectiveness of performance appraisal method used in your Unit?

<b>Very effective</b>	
<b>Fairly effective</b>	
<b>Not effective</b>	
<b>I don't know</b>	

6. Do you think that performance appraisal is meeting its objectives in your unit?

<b>Yes</b>	
<b>No</b>	

6.1 If **no**, why not? .....

.....

.....

.....

7. Were you ever promoted during your NDF career?

<b>Yes</b>	
<b>No</b>	

7.1 If **yes**, what led to your promotion?

My CR assessment	
Automatic Promotion	
Commanders' decision	
Special Promotion	
My own complain	
I don't know	

7.2 If not promoted, why not? .....

.....

.....

.....

8. Do you receive a CR form for your assessment every year?

<b>Yes</b>	
<b>No</b>	

8.1 If **no**, explain why? .....

.....

.....

.....

9. Who conducted your last CR assessment?

Senior Officer	
Junior Officer	
NCO	

10. Have you benefited from your assessment?

<b>Yes</b>	
<b>No</b>	

11. Is the CR assessment conducted in your unit every year?

<b>Yes</b>	
<b>No</b>	
<b>I don't know</b>	

12. Do you think that all information in completed CR forms in your unit is effectively used?

<b>Yes</b>	
<b>No</b>	

12.1 If **no**, why not? .....

.....

.....

.....

13. Do you receive feedback on your strength or weaknesses in your past performance?







