CHAPTER 1

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION REGARDING WOMEN IN EDUCATION MANAGEMENT IN MPUMALANGA

1.1   INTRODUCTION

1.1.1   Women as part of the problem

As far back as 1965 the United Nations (UN) embarked on a long-term programme of improving the status of women in all walks of life. Obviously there were, and still are, a number of reasons why women are underrepresented in structural and community settings as will be explained in the next chapter.

In 1975 the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) held a World Conference of the United Nations International Women's Year. The Conference called for the adoption of the Declaration of the Elimination of Discrimination Againt Women. Since the Declaration was not a treaty, it has moral and binding obligations for the Member States (Commonwealth Secretariat 1996). This was the turning point for many governments to put women's issues on the agenda of all developmental programmes.

Various countries have put in place legislation and programmes to promote equality and have established national machineries to ensure the mainstreaming of gender issues in all their activities. Non-governmental, community-based organisations also played an important part and participated in advocating mechanisms aimed at ensuring the promotion of designated groups, namely women, disabled, youth at risk and the aged.

The quest for the equal rights of women in South Africa dates back as far as the 1950s when women questioned racial and gender discrimination as gross human rights violations. Since the South African system of governance at that stage was based on separatist and patriarchal ideologies, the struggle of women was based on and guided by equality and emancipation of

the oppressed.

It was only during the dawn of the new political dispensation in the 1990s that the problems of women were taken seriously by the government. Their concern was based on the assumption that they were underrepresented despite their multi-faceted social status of different societal roles and expectations, namely of being wives, mothers, home-makers and breadwinners. Apparently there were four main reasons why the concerns of women were not taken seriously, namely:

- their lack of participation and commitment in matters affecting their lives;
- their triple role as prescribed by society (productive, reproductive and community work);
- illiteracy coupled with traditional stereotypes; and
- the homogeneity of women which is context specific.

The Gender Equity Task Team Report, commissioned by the National Department of Education (1997:46), states that people carry with them culture-specific ideologies which construct the way in which they perceive each other, particularly with regard to gender differences. These differences are reflected in stereotypical roles that are perceived to characterise gender-specific behaviour and the different spheres in which people live their lives. Women, on the whole, behave in accordance with these roles and their identities are ideologically linked to home, caring and supportive behaviour.

Early campaigners for the rights of women strived to obtain equality with men because they viewed men as the norm. For example, women played hardly any role in the making of laws or in the administration or practice of the law (Unit for Gender Research in Law - UNISA 1998:4-5). Consequently the Women's National Coalition (WNC) was initiated in 1992, representative of different cultural, social, religious, economic and political organisations. The Women's Charter for Effective Equality was a document developed by the WNC with the aim of voicing women's demands, to entrench equality for women in the Constitution and to address inequality by bridging all disparities caused by differences in attitudes and beliefs regarding gender.

Within the school system these ideologies of differences are apparent amongst learners and educators. These ideologies are reinforced by the home, society and the way individuals prefer to be conditioned. For example, almost all senior management positions are occupied by males whereas middle and junior management positions are occupied by women and other designated groups (as defined in the Employment Equity Act of 1998). The leadership and management style of women differ from those of men. Hill and Ragland (1995) and Stone (1994) are of the opinion that, as women rise to upper management, they tend to share power and encourage participation, whereas their male counterparts exercise more formal authority.

The rural-urban divide in terms of education management also poses other related challenges which may directly or indirectly influence the leadership and management styles of women. Generally most women educators in urban areas are reluctant to move to rural areas even when they have been promoted to senior management positions. Women teachers in rural areas have no choice other than accepting senior posts since most of their husbands work in urban areas and they have to fend for their families. Mitchell (1996:25) describes this phenomenon as "... not a case of conditions but rather conditioning" as will be explained in paragraph 1.1.2 below.

1.1.2 Mpumalanga as a rural area

Conditions in rural African areas (of which Mpumalanga is one) present, to a large extent, a gloomy picture. People in rural areas are often socio-economically disadvantaged and are inherently viewed as inferior in terms of "development" as compared to people in urban areas. Illiteracy, poverty, famine, poor health care and education facilities, depopulation and/or overpopulation and numerous other factors contribute to harsh socio-economic conditions. The migrant labour system in which people from rural areas moved into the cities and the systemic resettlement of people from cities in rural areas are an added dimension to underdevelopment and low economic production.

The only state intervention is the provision of capacity-building projects, mainly in respect of agriculture and subsistence activities. Most of these community projects were initiated by women's non-governmental organisations with a view to lobbying or advancing legislation for the promotion of equality. Examples of such organisations are the Rural Women's Initiative (RWI), the Rural Women's Movement (RWM), Self Employed Women's Union (SEWU),

Farmworkers' Resource and Research Project (FRRP) and other sectoral organisations such as the Forum for African Women Educationalists (focusing on gender and education) and the Women's Health Project (focusing on gender and health) (Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency 1998:68).

In their pursuance of socio-economic stability, rural people have adapted various strategies for survival. For example, they are taught various skills and are empowered in areas such as primary health care, outcomes-based education in terms of life-skills, DIY programmes (do it yourself) and projects with which they can identify themselves. The community has to relate itself to the broad curriculum framework, be it formal, informal or non-formal schooling. These initiatives will assist women in abandoning the "dependency syndrome" attitude.

Critical questions are: Which types of programmes or projects will alleviate the existing inequalities in rural areas, particularly those affecting marginalised groups of people, *inter alia* women? What are lessons to be learned from other countries with similar experiences of inequalities? Will affirmative action programmes be adopted as strategies for change in advancing gender equality? Can education, training and development be used as vehicles for implementing affirmative action programmes?

Responses to such questions are vital as they will shed light on the common understanding of affirmative action programmes and projects and their implications for women who are at the receiving end of discriminatory practices within the school system. One of the far-reaching implications for rural communities in education is their tendency of educating boys better than girls and the way in which access to resources, patriarchy and the sexual division of labour discriminate against female teachers.

1.1.3 A case for implementing affirmative action

Affirmative action programmes were initiated in the USA about thirty years ago after the Civil Rights Act of 1964 came into effect. Title VII of the latter Act prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, religion or natural origin. In 1972 the Equal Employment Act was promulgated combining all previous legislation pertaining to affirmative action (South African Institute of Public Administration 1992:2).

Affirmative action policies can also be linked to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This was formulated in the 1940s by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and states that "... everyone is entitled to pursue his material well-being and spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity without discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political views, national extraction, social origins, property, birth or any other status" (Wingrove 1993:5).

Within the South African context affirmative action can be traced to two racial developments. For White South Africans it started in the 1920s when white miners went on strike against unsatisfactory working conditions. The civilised labour policy was then adopted and entrenched in the Wage Act of 1925. The Mines and Works Act, which was promulgated in 1926, entrenched a clause on job reservation for whites. For black South Africans, affirmative action can be traced to the 1970s when economic sanctions were imposed in South Africa, resulting in disinvestment triggered by the promulgation of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986 in the USA, introducing the idea of experimenting with the concept of Black advancement and/or empowerment (Madi 1993:3).

Current affirmative action debates arose out of a need to address discriminatory practices amongst members of different racial groups. The South African Law Commission and other committees (Adams 1993:4; Human 1993:2) made proposals to the effect that affirmative action policies be entrenched in the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of South Africa. The entrenchment of the Equality Clause in Chapter 2, Section 9 (2) will benefit an overwhelming majority of people, *inter alia* rural people and women who face the triple oppression of race, class and gender perpetuated by employers, tribal chiefs and husbands (People Dynamics, August 1994:19-20). The Equality Clause is aimed at eradicating and promoting fair practices amongst all organs of the civil society, namely, Parliament, Government and independent bodies.

Given the nature of the origin of affirmative action policies and programmes, coupled with the emotive and controversial debates within the South African context, it is an indisputable fact that affirmative action debates carry different shades of meaning. In other countries such as Sri-Lanka, Malaysia, Britain and the USA, affirmative action has had diverse meanings and

interpretations. For example in the USA, affirmative action was used to address inequalities in respect of minority groups like African Americans and non-ethnic women. In Sri-Lanka affirmative action was applied in relation to the Sinhalese who constitute three-quarters of the population. Malaysia constitutes a useful example of how affirmative action can be implemented and managed in South Africa. The native Malay population was entirely rural and poor compared to the Chinese and Indians who were rich and owned three-quarters of the country's wealth. Through the implementation of the New Economic Plan (NEP) there was a fundamental shift in the economic growth of the country (Emsley 1996:86-87; Madi 1997:46).

Two schools of thought emerged from the controversies surrounding affirmative action. In its narrower sense it was viewed as aiming at redressing past imbalances and providing opportunities to those previously denied them because of race and gender. In its wider context affirmative action refers to all facets of employment and human development aimed at socio-economic sustainability of the disadvantaged communities (*Die Suid-Afrikaan*, May/ June 1993:6; Mpumalanga Draft Policy Document on Affirmative Action, 1998).

For the purpose of assessing how affirmative action can be adopted as a strategy for addressing education management disparities in senior management positions in the Mpumalanga Education Department, both the abovementioned approaches will be explored as specific and generic mechanisms aimed at providing equal opportunities and fair treatment with regard to the allocation of, and access to resources by women managers, as will be explained in Chapter Four of this study.

1.1.4 Education, training and development as vehicles for implementing affirmative action

The question as to whether education, training and development can serve as facilitators of affirmative action can be positively answered based on the fact that they can be viewed as critical means for achieving personal growth for societal development. Affirmative action programmes are based on the assumption that they target individuals and/or groups that have been severely disadvantaged and that have the potential for change. There are arguments for

and against individual/group approaches. Propounders of the group approach ignore individual differences and base their argument on the fact that the majority of people have been disadvantaged due to the systemic nature of discriminatory practices by the ruling class. The individual approach focuses attention on individuals as having different potentials. It is based on the premise that each individual must be given an opportunity to develop and that opportunities for development must be based on merit.

Beckmann, Bray, Foster, Maile & Smith. (1999:74) are of the opinion that the following questions must be asked in order to determine whether a programme is an affirmative programme or not, namely:

- is the programme aimed at disadvantaged individuals or groups?
- is the programme truly ameliorative?
- is it reasonable in that it is not grossly unfair to others?

They further point out that if the answer is *yes* to all of these questions, then the programmes can be fully regarded as genuine affirmative action programmes. For example, the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) emphasises the participation and equal role of women in re-educating and empowering people in every aspect of our economy and society. The RDP singles out the role of affirmative action in unlocking boundless energies and creativity that were suppressed by discriminatory practices. In training it emphasises the focus that needs to be placed on the challenges of restructuring the world of work. It also points out that the aims can only be achieved through extensive development of human resources and attitudinal change (Beckmann *et al.* 1999:9).

Within the education sector, affirmative action programmes are aimed at providing access and opportunities to individuals and/or groups of people who were previously disadvantaged on the basis of race, gender, class and sexual orientation. The school system must provide intervenion strategies by creating an anti-discrimination framework for schools. A report on the workshop proceedings organised by the National Centre for Curriculum Research and Development (National Department of Education 1999) points out that such interventions are provided for by the South African Schools Act (1996) and Curriculum 2005. The report also suggests that programmes and materials about anti-discriminatory practices for use by educators in schools must be made available in the in-service and pre-service training of educators.

If affirmative action can bring about individual and/or group change in terms of empowerment and growth, it can be positively stated that education, training and development can be regarded as facilitators or vehicles for implementing affirmative action programmes. This can be explained in the following way: attitudinal change within society and the school system will require that stereotypes that were generated and reinforced by the system of patriarchy (male-dominance) be lessened.

The lessening of stereotypes within the broader community could be brought about by networking and lobbying for a forum that will address affirmative action through formal, informal and informal discussion groups. For example, the establishment of the National Affirmative Action Alliance of various stakeholders such as labour, community-based organisations, business and non-governmental organisations was established to ensure that there is uniformity in providing inputs for policy formulation on affirmative action legislation (People Dynamics 1993:13).

The education community can lessen stereotypes by establishing units, such as a Gender Equality Unit, Transformation Unit and a Special Programmes Units within the National and Provincial Departments of Education. Such units will be assigned the responsibility of changing attitudes and mind-sets for bringing about change in the lives of millions of learners and educators. Another strategy could be to develop specific life-skills training modules on sexuality education, HIV/AIDS and Gender and Population Education within the context of Curriculum 2005 (C2005).

The White Paper on Affirmative Action in the Public Service (1998) supports the above view. It suggests that the implementation of affirmative action will be based on adopting an integrated approach to ensure that every manager or individual, rather than a few designated staff members or a group, should be responsible for implementing affirmative action programmes.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Greyvenstein and Van der Westhuizen (1993:3) found that existing literature and the hypotheses relating to research on gender issues emphasised the general position of women in education and not specifically that of women in education management. A similar vision is

emphasised by Ozga (1992:2). She points out that management as practised by women is absent from discussions of education management.

This implies that there are various dimensions of uncertainties that require a thorough investigation into the underrepresentation of women in senior management positions, namely whether:

- women are actually discriminated against in educational institutions with regard to senior leadership positions;

- there are existing barriers related to women's underrepresentation in senior management positions;

- gender stereotyping has resulted in a majority of women being employed in areas such as education and health in which they occupy lower levels with minimal decision-making powers;

- affirmative action programmes can alleviate the existing inequalities and empower women to participate positively in decision-making processes as explained in Chapter Four paragraph 4.4.3;

- women in the Mpumalanga Department of Education will penetrate the "glass ceiling" as explained in Chapter Five, paragraph 5.1 by revealing strengths that will remove structural and attitudinal barriers that prevent women from taking opportunities in senior education management positions;

- male behaviour patterns are perceived to be the norm, and whether women often find it difficult to be accepted as equals; and

- the Mpumalanga Department of Education will develop programmes and strategies and an environment that is geared towards the empowerment of women.

1.3   RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

In this study an attempt will be made to identify the causes of inequalities and strategies that may assist in addressing the inequality problem of women in education management position as compared to men.

Within this context an attempt will also be made to:

- assess the position of women within the patriarchical society and explain why women are discriminated against in the workplace, home and society;

- identify institutionalised barriers and assumptions that can be regarded as contributory factors to discrimination against women in the workplace in general;

- highlight incidences of discrimination against women in education management and leadership positions in the Mpumalanga Education Department;

- identify processes established to address womenless leadership and propose policy recommendations aimed at bringing about change within the working environment;

- establish whether education, training and development can serve as vehicles for implementing affirmative action programmes and policies; and

- determine whether affirmative action programmes can motivate and empower women to transcend cultural stereotypes that have relegated them to sub-ordinate roles.

1.4   RESEARCH METHODS

Literature on existing debates about the position of women in the workplace is extensive but there is little on their position in education management.

Ozga (1992), Greyvenstein and Van der Westhuizen (1991) and the GETT-report (1997) pointed out that there is a need to conduct research on the position of women in education

management, particularly in rural areas (Mitchell, 1996) and to determine how cultural stereotypes can be overcome so that women can assume their rightful place of partnership with men in a society that is presently male dominated.

The research will be conducted by reviewing existing literature (documentation) on the position of women in education management and why they are discriminated against with respect to senior management positions. In addition to literature studies, a participatory action research approach will be adopted as a strategy to establish an interface between theory and practice. Participants consisting of ten female principals from both primary and secondary schools drawn from the ten existing education districts of the Mpumalanga Education Department will be used as a focus-group. This group will be used as a sample size in the Canada South Africa Education Management Programme (CSAEMP) in the course of this dissertation. It is envisaged that the focus-group will in turn train other female principals in their districts, circuits and schools through a cascading model. A "train-a- trainer" gender equity package will be developed as will be explained in Chapter Four of this study.

The main aims of adapting the Participatory Action Research approach in preference to other possible approaches are:

i)   to move beyond what the existing literature studies on women's underrepresentation in education management have documented in other countries and confine the problem to the South African context, in particular the Mpumalanga Education Department;

ii)   to create an environment within which the focus group of female principals can be provided with a first-hand experience of lessons learned in the course of the implementation of the gender equity programme in the education sector;

iii)   to determine the types of problems female principals encounter in management positions and to find out why women are underrepresented in senior management positions;

iv)   to identify strategies that may assist the Mpumalanga Education Department to redress gender imbalances and women's underrepresentation in senior management positions.

This type of research is not often used in research studies in South Africa. The report does not follow the traditional structure of research reports. Reports on parts of the research (e.g. case study) appear in other chapters than in Chapter Five. The research methods will be discussed in detail in Chapter Five.

It is hoped that the findings of this research project will shed more light on identifying gaps and challenges with regard to improving the absence of representation of women in senior management positions in the Mpumalanga Education Department.

1.5 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

1.5.1 Affirmative action

There are various debates on the nature and meaning of affirmative action and its interpretation can mean different things to different people as will be explained in Chapter Four of this research project. Beckmann *et al.* (1999:63), in a draft CSAEMP-document on employment equity and related issues, maintain that to some affirmative action is an integral part of equality rights, to others a logical extension of the right to non-discrimination, to others a logical extension in extreme cases, and to others, an illogical extension that attempts to right one wrong with another wrong.

The legislative framework set in place by the Constitution of South Africa and in other legislation such as the Labour Relations Act (1995), the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (1997), and the Employment Equity Act (1998) as well as the White Paper on Affirmative Action in the Public Service, is aimed at institutionalising equitable democratic employment practices irrespective of race and gender.

Below are some definitions of what affirmative action entails:

- The White Paper on Affirmative Action in the Public Service (1998, Chapter 1, paragraph 1.5) defines affirmative action as: "... the additional corrective steps which must be taken in order that those who have been historically disadvantaged by unfair

discrimination are able to derive full benefit from an equitable employment environment."

- The Employment Equity Act (1998), Section 15(1), defines affirmative action as measures designed to ensure that suitably qualified people from designated groups have equal employment opportunities and are equitably represented in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce of a designated employer.

- The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP 1994:9) highlights another constitutional right with respect to affirmative action. It states that full and equal participation of women in every aspect of life points to the need for all affirmative action programmes to unlock energies and creativity that were suppressed by racism and discrimination.

Within the context of the above exposition, affirmative action can be viewed as a process and a strategy that target individuals who were previously disadvantaged by offering opportunities for them to be able to compete in the labour market. This statement is supported by Section 9(2) of the Constitution of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, which provides that, in order to promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures may be taken which are designed to protect or advance persons or categories of persons disadvantaged. Thus the goal of affirmative action is to create an enabling environment in which those who were previously disadvantaged by unfair discrimination could achieve their optimum potential.

1.5.2 Education management

Traditional management practices within education were embedded within its main functions, namely planning, organising, leading, co-ordinating and evaluating. Managers are assigned the responsibility of setting realistic, achievable goals, necessary to create a worker-friendly environment. Recently there has been a shift in the approach to education management. The new approach to management is that it is the responsibility of the school and its community and not only the task of a small group as will be discussed in Chapter Three.

The Department of Education has released a task team report on education management (1996) and has clearly pointed out that management should be seen as an activity in which all members of educational organisations are engaged in bringing about individual change.

From the above exposition it appears that education management is concerned with internal and external activities and operations that occur within educational institutions and their relationship to particular aspects of the community. In this particular instance, attention will be focused on the external and internal activities of education management viewed in relation to women in the Mpumalanga Education Department and how affirmative action programmes can be utilized to achieve gender equity in educational administrative positions as explained in Chapter Four of this research project.

1.6   RESEARCH STRATEGY

Chapter One deals with the background and significance of the research problem under investigation. It also explains why this study, based in particular on the assumption that women are discriminated against in societal structures, will be undertaken. The research methods used in gathering data must be useful in shedding more light on explaining why women have been discriminated against. The definitions of two basic concepts, namely affirmative action and education management will be explored on the premise that, for the education sector to begin to address the problem of inequity, it should examine the impact of these processes on women.

Chapter Two will focus on aspects of discrimination against women in the workplace in general. It will give a definition of core gender conceptual frameworks based on concepts used in gender debates. It will also identify institutional barriers that may be regarded as factors contributing to the oppression of women and discrimination in general.

Chapter Three will describe discriminatory practices against women in management positions, particularly in relation to their exclusion from senior management positions within the Mpumalanga Education Department.

In Chapter Four, the research project will focus on affirmative action and explain why it is regarded as an appropriate vehicle for empowering the marginalised sectors of the education community, in this instance, women.

Chapter Five will contain an overview of the research project, outline research findings, draw conclusions, make recommendations and devise strategies for change that will assist women to be included in decision-making processes, particularly in positions of authority in educational institutions.

1.7 CONCLUSION

The preceding discussions shed light on the discriminatory nature of societal practices regarding women and their underrepresentation in structural and societal settings. The problem may be partly attributed to the way society reinforces and entrenches cultural stereotypes and partly to the way women are socialised in terms of their roles and needs.

These discriminatory practices are also reflected in the school system, particularly in positions of authority where women are underrepresented. The situation is worse in rural areas where traditional norms and stereotypes are still practised and followed.

In order for women to be encouraged to participate in positions of authority, this research project will select some female principals in both primary and secondary schools. Through an action-participatory approach the study envisages to identify problems surrounding the issue of womenless leadership in positions of authority.

Affirmative action policies and programmes are recommended as strategies for empowering women and preparing them to be competent in the labour market. Although there are diverse interpretations of the concept of affirmative action both locally and internationally, there is a strong belief that they will have a multiplier effect if properly implemented.

As a result of past discriminatory practices in South Africa, there is a concerted effort on the part of the government and other service providers to address the phenomenon of

CHAPTER 2

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE

2.1   INTRODUCTION

Discrimination against women in the workplace has become a controversial issue within various organisational settings. The debate may be partly attributable to the prevailing need for a transformative environment in various organisations.

There are diverse explanations and often little or no agreement on what constitutes discrimination against women in management positions. Discrimination implies treating people differently, for example, treating women in such a way that women are prevented from exercising their rights. One perspective argues that, because women are a minority within certain organisations, they are often vulnerable to criticism and their behaviour is considered strictly within a male dominated setting. Another perspective argues that women bring alternative qualities to management which are of equal value to the traditional male norm-working environment (Unit for Gender Research in Law, Unisa 1998:138-139).

With the dawn of the new dispensation in South Africa, the position of women has been altered. Previous legislation and cultural norms that relegated women to low economic, political, educational status and participation in decision-making processes have been abolished. The Constitution of South Africa in its Bill of Rights protects political, educational, cultural religious and linguistic rights under the following sections:

- Section 19:   Political rights
- Section 29:   The right to education
- Section 31:   Cultural, religious and linguistic rights

The interpretations of these rights should take into consideration customary law as enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa (1996), Chapter 12, provided that it is not inconsistent with

the Constitution. There are certain limitations imposed by these rights (Legal Resource Centre 1998:26-41). The tabling of the Customary Marriage Bill in Parliament in 1999 brought about divided opinions on addressing gender equity matters. Proponents of this Bill argue that the law will play a vital role in addressing gender equality. Others dismiss the Bill as being irrelevant and inconsistent with traditional practices (*Sowetan*, November 13, 1998:7). The Bill has some implications for women married under customary marriages. What the Bill implies is that such women will be in a position to make decisions that are binding on the family. For instance, in the past rural women complained about their inability to decide to sell a cow or any form of livestock without the permission of their husbands for the purpose of paying children's school fees. From these observations it appears as if the government, non-governmental community-based organisations and other interested bodies and individuals are addressing all the inherited cultural stereotypes that resulted in socio-economic segragatory laws for women.

In the light of the above discussions, this Chapter will attempt to address issues relating to the patriarchal nature of society and why women are discriminated against in the workplace. It will also address the issues of a gender conceptual framework (taking into consideration gender and its related concepts, roles and approaches), and the institutionalised barriers impacting on discrimination against women, namely patriarchy, sexual division of labour and access to resources (Bhasin 1993; Moser 1993; Unit for Gender Research 1998; Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 2000).

The Constitution of South Africa in its Bill of Rights, particularly in the equality clause section (9), forbids any unfair form of discrimination on the grounds of *inter alia* race, gender, sex, ethnic origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, religion, culture or disability. However, discrimination is still routinely practised either directly or indirectly and it is taken for granted in the day-to-day management of various organisations (Department of Education 1997).

2.2   GENDER CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The impediments to improving the status of women and reducing gender disparity are partially due to the confusion that prevails with regard to the application of concepts related to gender, namely sex, discrimination, equality and equity within different social groups, societies and

countries (Department of Education 1997:38).

The concept *gender* is sometimes equated with *women* and *non-sexism* with *gender equality*. The use of such terms often expresses the underlying confusion as to what women are striving for. Gender implies more than the biological construct. It incorporates the societal, ideological and material factors beyond biology and the power relations between women and men in which women have been systematically subordinated and the way in which relations between the two categories are socially constructed (Moser 1993:3; Development Bank of Southern Africa 1994:1; Ostergaard 1992:5-6).

Females and males are brought up or socialised as women and men. Women and men, girls and boys are born as different sexes. The way the family, the community and society treat them as well as behaviour patterns associated with those of girls and boys and women or men reinforces these differences (Truscott 1994:4; Stone 1997:225). The following dualisms reflect gender symbolism and differences: subjective - objective; passive - active; proactive -creative; reproduction - production; body - mind; emotion - cognition; nature - culture; private - public and submission - domination (Mpumalanga Gender Equity Workshop 1997). The first elements describe feminine behaviour and the second ones masculine behaviour. Other examples of such gender binary oppositions include: follower - leader; weak - strong; compliance - competitive and nature - culture contrasts (Mpumalanga Gender Equity Workshop 1997).

Sex denotes the basic physiological or biological differences that exist between males and females. Males and females have different sexual and reproductive organs and other physical characteristics (e.g. beard - breast) that differ (Measor & Sikes 1992:5; Moser 1993:3; Truscott 1994:3; Development Bank of South Africa 1994:1). Sex is a given and is made up of fixed and unchangeable qualities (Ostergaard 1992:7; UNESCO February 1998:4). One is born a male or a female with particular genitalia (e.g. penis - vagina).

It is also useful to distinguish between *equality* and *equity*. *Equity* refers to the social justice or fairness that exists between different members of society and is based on ethical or moral judgements. For example, current policy intervention in operationalising gender issues like

the Women in Development (WID) addresses a need for equity for women in developmental processes. WID recognises the role of women in society and challenges the position of the subordination of women (Public and Development Management, Gender Policy Programme 1998). Within a school situation a learner who has difficulty with the curriculum normally feels isolated. The school should ensure that such learners are catered for so that they can be able to participate effectively in the normal day school activities.

Equality on the other hand, denotes a value judgement. It deals with the actual pattern in which something (e.g. income or education) is distributed amongst members of a particular group (Davies 1990:1, Stevenson 1990:1-2). Section 9(2) of the Constitution of South Africa denotes equality as including the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms. Such equality can be achieved through legislative measures designed to redress discrimination. For example, no person should be denied basic education as provided by Section 29 of the Constitution of South Africa. Both boys and girls should receive equal education and be exposed to the same resources. Such measures are aimed at providing equal chances and opportunities to learners and educators within all societal realms. The Constitution of South Africa in the Bill of Rights (Section 9) opposes any kind of unfair discrimination against any person (Constitution of South Africa 1996). The National Institute for Public Interest and Research (NIPILAR 1995:6) defines discrimination against women as preventing them from exercising their human rights and fundamental freedoms on the basis of equality between women and men.

With the ratification of CEDAW (Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women) on 15 December 1995 by the South African Government, the latter has committed itself to pursuing all appropriate means of eliminating discrimination against women. The Beijing Platform of Action (BPA) has also emerged as one of the mechanisms aimed at addressing the historical imbalances and providing sustainable women's empowerment strategies against discrimination.

Apart from these international conventions, regional conventions and conferences emphasise a need for women and girls to education, school access and attendance and the creation of gender sensitive material (Association for the Development of Education in Africa, 1999). At

a regional conference organised by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in Uganda on the "Empowerment of Women Through Functional Literacy and the Education of the Girl Child" Hoppers (1996) suggests that governments should use a variety of strategies to enhance female education, amongst others the development of a national plan of action to look into the following areas: social mobilisation, action research and training.

When reflecting on the above analysis of gender related concepts, it appears that an unambiguous definition of gender equity is not possible. To most South Africans gender equity has become a *leit motif* for redressing the imbalances perpetuated by separatist discriminatory laws, particularly those which discriminated against women such as the Family Violence Act [which has been replaced by the Domestic Violence Act (1999)]; the right to own property; women excluded from holding public office and influx control.

Gender equity is concerned with the promotion of equal opportunities for women and men, boys and girls in the personal, cultural and political arenas. It is also concerned with ensuring that they can compete in the formal and informal labour market and participate fully in all of civil society's decision-making levels without being discriminated against because of their gender (Gender Equity Task Team Report 1997).

It appears as if the primary thrust of equity and equality is to maintain justice for women and other disadvantaged members of society, namely the aged, rural people, youth at risk and the disabled. Malpractices cannot be divorced from other inequalities based on race, ethnicity, class and cultural stereotypes.

2.2.1 Gender and sex stereotypes

Gender and sex differences and how culture, through the socialisation process, oscillates between the two concepts were highlighted in the previous discussion in paragraph 2.2. Gender is regarded as a social construct and sex as a biological given. If gender stereotypes are the result of the socialisation process, then sex stereotypes are the result of biological determinants which purport that boys and girls are born as either males or females. Cultural norms shape their behaviour patters and predisposes them to behave and act as either boys/girls or men/women.

Measor and Sikes (1992:93) point out that messages about what it means to be a girl or boy, woman or man (to behave in adolescent and adult life) are both transmitted and reinforced by cultural influences. Social and normative roles govern and shape their behaviour patterns. For example, female groups will operate with a moral sense of what it means to be a proper girl and this implies a set of certain behaviours. Males are taught and assumed to demonstrate masculine traits of strength and determination whilst females demonstrate traits of subordination.

Research on sex-role stereotypes was conducted in the late eighties to explain why children can label themselves correctly as a boy or girl by the age of three or four and the role of parents in the child's upbringing has been conducted). The first approach involved presenting children with a number of stereotypical statements and then asking which of the two representative figures (one male, the other female) is more likely to have made or acted in accordance with the statement. For example, why it is that men rather than women usually repair cars? The most common explanation given was that men are stronger than women (Skelton 1989:23-25; Streitmatter 1994:50).

In another study (UNESCO Regional Training Seminar on Gender Sensitivity 1998) an activity on identifying participants' assumptions about female and male children and to examine how true and deep rooted these assumptions are, was conducted. The activity was based on participant's choosing the sex of their children. Each participant was given a piece of paper and asked to imagine being in this situation. Participants were asked to write down the reasons for choosing the sex of the child. This activity was conducted amongst grassroots women and men in Kenya. Almost all participants chose boys. Family planning became the centre of discussion because women and men continue to have children in order to have a boy. This activity raised a number of questions, such as, that the community looks at women and girl-children as separate individuals and the implication of succession and inheritance differences.

A similar activity was conducted for female participants in a train a trainer Gender Equity Management Programme in Mpumalanga (1997). Each participant was given a piece of paper to write down male and female sex and gender stereotypes next to each column. In terms of sex-roles, functions such as child-bearing, rearing and lactation were linked to females and functions such as fertilization and producing sex chromosomes to determine the sex of children

were linked to males. Gender roles for females included functions such as housekeeping, fetching water, sewing and for males included functions such as repairing cars and houses, breadwinner or herdboy-men. In most instances sex-roles are biologically determined, this implies that boys/girls or men/women are born as either males or females and that such roles can be performed by one member of the sexes. Gender roles are determined by society's evaluation of behaviour as either masculine or feminine, implying that cultural norms shape the behaviour patterns of males and females and predispose them to behave and act as either boys/girls or men/women.

Within the school system gender stereotypes have been used to determine and to perpetuate educational provisioning for learners as separate groups through school curricula. For instance, the school system was designed in such a way that boys were encouraged to enrol for natural sciences whereas girls were encouraged to enrol for humanities. This implied that boys were encouraged to study subjects such as mathematics and physical science whereas girls had to study home economics and commercial subjects, thereby making it difficult for girls/women to penetrate the occupational fields traditionally considered as male prerogatives (General Teaching Council for Scotland 1991:3). The situation has completely changed with the inception of Curriculum 2005 with its emphasis on life-long learning for learners throughout the school system.

With regard to educators, senior management positions are reserved for males and females are regulated to middle and lower management positions as indicated in Chapter 3, Tables 3.5 - 3.8. From the analysis of these tables it appears as if women are not encouraged to take leadership positions in senior management positions. The advancement of women to higher positions is significant in two ways. Firstly, it serves as an index of male-female equality and secondly, it means that women can participate in decision-making processes (University of the Witwatersrand 1998). This could be attributed to internal and external blockages inherent in institutionalised attitudes and perceptions of the society that prevent women from occupying senior management positions. In most instances, female teachers are positioned in middle and bottom management echelons of the organisational structure. Such types of behaviour are largely learned and not inborn.

2.2.2 Sexual harassment and violence against women and children as discriminatory behaviour

Equally as important as other issues of discriminatory behaviour in the workplace, schools and home are the incidences of sexual harassment and violence which are endemic and are on the increase in South Africa, Mpumalanga is no exception. For example, one of the priorities of the South African government is to put in place strategies which will curb the high incidence of crime associated with violence. Projects such as "safe schools" aimed at curbing the high incidence of violence in schools have been initiated in various provincial education departments (Department of Education 2000).

The rural nature of the Mpumalanga Provincial Government, characterised by high incidences of illiteracy, unemployment, poverty and lack of parental guidance due to migrancy are some of the factors which contribute to high incidences of such abusive acts. Govender (1994:44) estimated that only 2,8% of sexual harassment cases, such as rape, are reported. The reason why some of these cases are unreported is that most victims prefer to remain silent for fear of intimidation by the perpetrators. Furthermore, they often experience guilt feelings.

The existence of various human rights instruments adopted or ratified by States Parties as instruments for advancing women's equality and advocating for women's rights, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNESCO 1948), the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW-1979), the Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC) (UNESCO 1989) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Declaration on the Elimination of Violence (SADC 1993) categorised gender-based violence as discriminatory and inequality acts. The South African Government has taken measures to include sexual harassment and violence in anti-discrimination legislation. Section 12 of the Constitution of South Africa, which enshrines the freedom and security of the person and section 16 on the freedom of expression are examples of such anti-discrimination legislation.

Sexual harassment and violence against women can occur in different forms. Most of these types of behaviour are reinforced by society and are usually context specific and may differ from country to country, but the common causes and consequences are the same and are

obstacles to sustainable human development. For example, in Zulu customary behaviour, the use of sexist language in certain circumstances is not regarded as discriminatory behaviour. If an extremely obese woman passes by a group of men, the following remark may be made: "*Dudlu*", meaning *fatty* which is uttered as a sign of appreciation. The victims are neither intimidated nor hurt nor angered because such behaviour is culturally regarded as normal. The rationale behind it is that an obese women is an ideal woman who portrays an image of a healthy and stable state of mind. A lean women portrays images of an unhealthy, weak and poverty stricken individual. The opposite may hold true under different circumstances. For example, if a group of boys shouts at girls playing soccer that they are hopeless, they are certainly engaged in behaviour that may be regarded as sexual harassment (Department of Education 1997:218).

If sexual harassment and violence are context specific, what then is a generic connotation of these terms? Sexual harassment is normally regarded as behaviour which is unwarranted and has the effect of oppressive intent on the victim. Such behaviour deprives the victims of the right to move through their lives with the same freedom of expression and choice as the other members of society. The Ontario Human Rights Commission, in its policy on sexual harassment (1996:7), defines sexual harassment in its broader context to mean unequal treatment based on gender. It may refer to instances where behaviour is not overtly sexual in nature, but is related to the person's gender and demeans or causes humiliation or embarrassment to the recipient.

Violence is regarded as behaviour that is abusive, threatening or hurtful to people. It is often manifested through patriarchal power relations and control over the lives of women and children (McKelvey 1996:5). Violence can take many forms including sexual, verbal, emotional, social and economic types of behaviour. The manifestation of these cultures of violence is of particular interest to the education system because it is through education that the nation seeks to provide the basis of the right of all citizens to develop according to their capacities and to participate fully in the life of the nation (Department of Education 1997: 219; 276).

Due to the increasing severity of sexual harassment and violence in our country, organisations such as the National Network of Violence against Women, People Opposing Women Abuse

(POWA), People Opposing Human Abuse (PAHA), the Sexual Harassment Education Project (SHEP) and Women Against Women Abuse (WAWA) have embarked on campaigns to redress these gross violations against women. Amendments to the Prevention of Family Violence Act, 1993 which has now become the Domestic Violence Act (1998) have also brought some major changes with regard to violence between partners. For example, a protection order may be granted against the perpetrator, preventing him/her from harassing the victim.

Public awareness campaigns entail preventative strategies focusing on breaking the cycle of violence against women. Campaigns such as the White Ribbon Campaign, Taxinet, Men's march for "Real Men Do Not Abuse Women and Children", International Day of No Violence Against Women which is celebrated on 25 November, the International Human Rights Day celebrated on the 10th of December and Women's Day (9th August) are aimed at addressing the needs of victims and perpetrators in the fight against violence as a discriminatory act.

The government has drafted a framework for a National Plan of Action on the Protection of Human Rights. This initiative is co-ordinated by the Department of Justice and involves other line-government departments, NGOs and Institutions supporting constitutional democracy such as the Commission on Gender Equality, the Human Rights Commission and others. Within the context of the National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS), intervention strategies in the form of pilot projects have been initiated, namely the Victim Empowerment Project (VEP) led by the Department of Welfare. The Department of Health has also initiated the Violence Surveillance and Referral System. The National Guidelines for Dealing with Survivors of Rape and other Sexual Offenses (1998) have been developed by an interdepartmental team consisting of the Departments of Justice, Safety and Security, Health, Welfare and Correctional Services (South African Delegation at the SADC 1998).

In 1997 the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development strongly condemned violence against women and children in all its forms and resolved legal, social, economic, cultural, political, educational and training and awareness raising be adopted by member countries as integral measures aimed at breaking the cycle of violence against women. This implied that each member country should develop a National Plan of Action and an Implementation Strategy on issues affecting women and girls with regard to violence.

Another noteworthy initiative is the Domestic Violence Programme which was developed as one of the ways of tackling generational cycles of violence, repeat victimisation and repeat offending. The Domestic Violence Programme was developed as the result of the new Domestic Violence Act (1998) which replaced the Prevention of Family Violence Act and is led by the Department of Safety and Security consisting of a team including the Departments of Justice, Welfare, Health, Correctional Services and Education. The nature of domestic violence is very complex and it reqires a series of interventions. The following key components have been identified, namely implementation strategy for domestic violence; development of interdepartmental protocols and guidelines, targeted local pilots; ongoing risk factors and management information and public awareness (Department of Education 1999).

What are the implications of violent behaviour in schools? Sex and gender-based violence and harassment are terms that are often used in educational circles (Larkin 1999). It is necessary for the school system to understand how sex and gender-based harassment operates and how it manifests differently in respect of boys/girls and male/female teachers. Harassment in respect of boys is more homophobic whereas it is sex-based for girls and can lead to extreme kinds of violence. Children who witness violence are likely to develop symptoms of violent behaviour. Girls often accept violence as a normal part of a relationship even later in their adult lives and boys are more likely to be violent as adults to their partners.

Sexual harassment and violence against children can lead to poor academic performance, truancy, difficulties in concentration, aggressive behaviour towards peers and unwillingness to do school work. Most of the children who witness violence often endure psychological suffering. They display symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder, turn to alcohol and drugs to numb their emotional pains and often become isolated and withdrawn. An abused woman finds her role as mother and educator overshadowed by miseries of violence and becomes terribly deficient (SADC 1998).

The national Department of Education has embarked upon the School Safety Programme and Violence Prevention in Schools by initiating a number of programmes and projects aimed at intensifying the urgency and participation to its commitment to curbing violence in schools, for example the Public Awareness Campaign and Victim Empowerment and School Safety. The Gender Equity Task Team Report (1997) made recommendations to the effect that

legislation on sexual harassment within the workplace and for schools should be developed. As a response to this need, the CSAEMP has developed a module on sex-based and gender-based violence. The module has been developed in conjunction with the National Department of Education and the Provinces of Mpumalanga, Gauteng and Free State. To date several seminars, workshops and conferences have been held with the aim of raising awareness about the effects of violent behaviour of learners and educators.

Sex-based and gender-based violence and the spread of HIV/AIDS are the result of the socialisation process and assigned roles which determine how boys and girls experience reality and how they learn appropriate gender roles and stereotypes. Inherent in the strategies for minimising violence in the education system and the spread of HIV/AIDS (as an example of gender-based violence) is the commitment of the national and provincial Departments of Education and non-governmental organisations and labour in the spirit of *Tirisano* (working together) aimed at bringing about organisational change by developing an education system which will enable all learners and educators to value, have access to and succeed in life-long education and training of good quality (Department of Education 2000).

Creating and maintaining safe schools by reducing the incidences of sex-based and gender-based violence can be brought about through systematic planning which includes multiple strategies aimed at ensuring that all stakeholders have a share in making the entire school a safe place.

2.2.3 Gender planning and diagnosis from a theoretical perspective

Ostergaard (1992), Moser (1993) and the Wits Gender Policy Management Programme (1997) are of the opinion that the goal of gender planning is the emancipation of women from their sub-ordination and achievement of equality, equity and empowerment. Of particular importance is the need for government to initiate policy through the formulation of a gender policy at international, regional, national and non-governmental level as well as the integration with sectoral planning. This implies that, for gender planning to be practical and implemented, institutions need to put in place mechanisms that will ensure that gender issues are operationalised throughout all societal structures. This suggests a need to identify mechanisms and tools that will be instrumental in bringing about gender planning and diagnosis within the

parameters of the transformation process unfolding in the country. South Africa, like other Third World countries, has adopted the mainstreaming approach as a tool for integrating gender issues in various policies, programmes and projects. This trend emanates from current assumptions about women's and men's roles, their needs and different policy approaches that may be adopted as means of addressing discriminatory practices as will be explained later in this Chapter.

Gender planning and diagnosis requires active participation and capacity-building for both women and men at the initial incorporation of the process. Participation by the affected groups or individuals forms the core of gender planning and diagnosis. Based on the reasoning that women and men have different needs and roles, the following sets of tools can be used for implementing gender awareness interventions, namely:

i) The triple role of women (reproductive, productive and community managing) and the dual role of men (productive and community politics)

ii) Gender needs which are related to gender roles and the distinction between practical and strategic gender needs. Strategic gender needs refer to those needs that challenge women's existing roles and their subordinate position and practical needs.

iii) Policy approaches are determined by gender roles and needs, for example the Women in Development (WID) approach and the Gender and Development (GAD) approach as will be explained in paragraph 2.25 below. According to Ostergaard (1992) and the Cape Town City Planning Department on Gender (1993) gender planning and diagnosis are central to translating commitments into actions. It is aimed at addressing gender inequalities by involving all stakeholders throughout the planning and implementation process of policies, projects and programmes.

How can gender planning and diagnosis be operationalised within the school system? This will require that the gender needs and roles of both learners (boys and girls) and educators (men and women) be identified before mechanisms can be put in place to actualise or address the perceived gender practices. For example, it has been mentioned in paragraph 2.22 above, that there is a need to develop legislation on sexual harassment in schools. Such discriminatory

practices affect both males and females. Apparently male learners and educators are more likely to be perpetrators whilst female learners and educators are victims of such offenses.

Sexual harassment as a form of discriminatory violent action and practices makes it difficult for learners and educators to create safe schools and violence free learning sites. Raising awareness through professional and curriculum development can help put sexual harassment on the agenda through explaining, giving facts and figures and bringing educators and learners together for information sharing (CSAEMP 2000).

2.2.4 Gender needs

Women cannot be treated as a homogeneous group due to the fact that they have different needs which are culture- and context-specific. For example, black women in particular, as compared to women belonging to other racial groups (whites, Indians and coloureds), experience various sorts of oppression linked to a variety of criteria such as class, ethnicity, religion and politics. Traditional practices such as polygamy and forced marriages are regarded as acts of infringements of human dignity.

Practical and strategic gender needs are of significance when analyzing the discourse in gender planning and diagnosis. Male and female gender needs and interests differ from society to society and this necessitates that all affected groups should be involved in the initial planning phase. Moser (1990:40 and the Gender and Aids Planning Workshop 1999) refer to practical needs such as training for women as those that women identify with in their socially-accepted roles. Such practical needs are seen as a response to practical perceived needs concerned with inadequacies in living conditions, e.g. water, provision of health care and employment. Such needs are also articulated in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) which sets out five key programmes aimed at rebuilding and developing our country, namely meeting basic needs, developing our human resources, democratising the state and society, building the economy and implementing the RDP (ANC 1994:7).

Gender needs stem from the division of labour and the subordinate role women play in society. Practical gender needs can be minimised through alternative approaches that may assist women to achieve equality with men. Strategic needs are the needs that women identify because of

their subordinate position in society and which varies according to particular contexts. Strategic needs challenge the existing roles of women and their subordinate position (Moser 1994:39).

2.2.5 Policy approaches

As early as the 1950s there were various intervention strategies designed to address the needs of women. Moser (1993), Ostergaard (1992) and Karl (1983) argue that although there has been a proliferation of policies, programmes and projects designed to assist low-income women, little systematic classification had been done before the 1950s. This could be attributed to the fact that women do not represent a homogenous group and that there are differences in terms of social stratification. Within the South African context there are urban-rural dichotomies and the rural women are mostly affected by traditional and customary practices. Rural communities still conform loyally to customary practices and pay their utmost respect to traditional kings. Although the Constitution of South Africa in its Bill of Rights discourages discriminatory practices, it also recognises that cultural practices, such as customary marriages, grant a wife equal status to that of her husband as stipulated in the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act (1999).

Development programmes will depend on the gender needs and participation of women although there has been a linear process of policy intervention on gender issues. The two most commonly used approaches are Women in Development (WID) and the Gender and Development (GAD) approach. The WID approach is based on the assumption that, since women have been marginalised in development programmes, there should be projects and programmes that target women separately from men. The GAD approach moves from the premise that both women and men should benefit equally from developmental projects (Development Bank of South Africa 1994:3).

Of particular importance in the South African context is whether WID or GAD approaches can be institutionalised and implemented without any marginalisation of other groups. Apparently both approaches are seen as cross-cutting issues at the heart of the policy development, planning and monitoring and evaluation processes. One other factor to mention is the discourse on the realities facing African women's struggles *vis-a-vis* Western women's struggles on the issue of breaking the yoke of silence against any form of oppression. For

example Modope-Kolawale (1997:4) asserts that:

"Several factors mediate the location of African women in gender discourse and some of these are personal, others are communal. One faces a problem in any attempt to generalise about all the women in a continent as diverse and vast as Africa. Colonialism brought different kinds of affiliation to different parts of the continent... Nonetheless these women are not only speaking back, they are fighting back as they deconstruct existing distorted images or misrepresentation of African women."

Donor Agencies such as the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in partnership with the South African Government, have identified projects whose thrust is to provide intervention strategies aimed at alleviating the plight of disadvantaged groups, in particular women and children.

2.3 INSTITUTIONALISED BARRIERS

Traditional beliefs and assumptions perpetuated by culture and the socialisation process and practices can be identified as contributory factors that discriminate against women in the workplace. It is also worth mentioning that these barriers are real and are both attitudinal and systemic. According to Cassin (1997:2) systemic discrimination in employment refers to authorised practices which appear to treat people the same way yet treat them differently and to the lack of adherence to uniform application of authorised practices.

The following practices have traditionally been viewed as institutionalised barriers in achieving employment equity:

2.3.1 Patriarchy

Patriarchy is a system of gender domination by males over females and has been institutionalised to emphasise the preservation and division of roles, attitudes and social stereotypes between males and females (Bhasin 1993:3). The manifestation of male domination

can be ascribed to different social-cultural and economic practices. Marilyn French (1985) traces the evolution of patriarchy through time, custom and society. She points out that the two central tenets of patriarchy are *power* and *control* and that there is a relationship between man and nature. She supports her argument by pointing out that nomadic societies depended on nature and, as they created tools for digging and for storing and preservation over a longer period, they began to control nature. Their life became hierarchical and competitive. Ultimately men came to be nomads, superior to women and all the things women valued and represented. These hierarchical structures were designed to retain and transmit power, that is power to remain supreme (Schmidt 1992:1-2).

In patriarchical societies men control women's productive and reproductive roles and their sexuality. This subordination often leads to discrimination and oppression. As part of their productive roles within the household, women are expected by society to be employed in paid work in the labour market in order to augment their family income. In many instances they are paid meagre salaries and their husbands may prevent them from entering the labour market. The control of males over the reproductive rights of women entails deciding how many children they should have and how often should they engage in sexual activities.

According to Bhasin (1993:7) the patriarchal state controls reproductive rights of the women through family planning programmes and it even controls the size of the country's population. Within the South African context, the earliest whites and indigenous people lived in highly traditional societies in which patriarchy, ethnicity and culture were the key to the subordination and discrimination of women. For example, Section 21 of the former Kwa-Zulu Self-governing Education Act made provision that an unmarried female teacher must resign if she falls pregnant. If she did not resign, she was discharged from her position. There was no Kwa-Zulu law which punished the male who caused the pregnancy (*The Star*, 11 November 1993:19).

Currently discrimination on the basis of fulfilling maternal roles is not allowed. The Labour Relations Act (1995) and the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (1988) constitute a regulatory framework that prohibits dismissal on the basis of pregnancy. Should a dispute arise in this regard, the complainant can refer the matter to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) (Unit for Gender Research in Law 1998:147).

Customary practices are patriarchal in nature and associate male roles with power and prestige while female roles are considered subservient (Streitmatter 1994:29). The South African Rural Women's Movement challenges patriarchy and argues that the traditional notions of "motherhood" are those that exploit women the most because customary practices and apartheid created a situation where women were abandoned more often than they were protected (Democracy in Action 1993:22). This implies that masculine roles are held in higher esteem than feminine roles. For example masculine gender roles such as fishing, hunting are more valued than feminine gender roles such as cooking and childcare. Equally so, male sex roles of ovum fertilization and the production of spermatozoa which determine child's sex is held in higher esteem than the female sex role of lactation and gestation (UNESCO 1998:8).

Customary law as a patriarchal system is based on the notion of power relations between the two sexes whilst apartheid was based on the unequal power relations between various racial groups. The manifestations of the two systems are identical and have had far-reaching implications for the disadvantaged sectors of the community, in particular women who have least access to resources as reflected in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1   Similarities between apartheid and patriarchy

	Apartheid	**Patriarchy**
Manifestation	Power relations based on race	Power relations based on sex
Social attitudes	Patronising attitudes based on colour (whites, coloureds, blacks and Indians)	Patronising attitude of men
Violence	Human rights abuses	Domestic abuses

(Source: Commission on Gender Equality: Draft gender policy document n.d.)

2.3.2 Sexual division of labour

The sexual division of labour is often determined by the gender roles that have been

institutionalised by society. What determines women's work and men's work is often based on sex stereotyping. The triple role of women, namely reproductive (childbearing and rearing), productive (paid/unpaid) and community managing is central to the subordination and oppression of women and perpetuates inequalities. On the other hand the dual role of men, namely productive (waged) and community politics (Moser 1993:23) refers to activities undertaken primarily by men organising at community level within the framework of national politics.

The sexual division of labour determines different traditional occupations for both men and women. The jobs that men and women do at home and at the workplace are different. In order for women to be accepted in the male domain, they should work harder and be competitive. In certain instances women should play the rules of the game, that is: behave and act like men.

The labour laws provisions as entrenched in the Labour Relations Act of 1995 (Chapter 2) guarantee human rights in the workplace but do not necessarily improve the position of women in the workplace nor alter the sexual division of labour (Citizen, May 11, 1995:8). Other legislation such as the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (1998), the Employment Equity Act (1998) and the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (2000) entrenches issues such as gender discriminatory protection for the designated groups in the workplace. Such legislation is aimed at alleviating the low level of participation of the designated groups particularly in decision-making processes.

The Gender Commission as a state institution supporting constitutional democracy (Constitution of South Africa, section 9) has to periodically review Constitutional provisions including all discriminatory customary and traditional laws or any other legislation that would affect the state of women and the attainment of gender equality.

2.3.3 Access to resources

Access to resources has been a major problem in developing communities, even in areas where legislative mechanisms have been put in place. Countries like the USA, which subscribe to

the equity model in terms of equal distribution of resources between males and females, still have a problem of access. Even Sweden with its support for the complementary contribution model where men and women are assumed to be different and therefore capable of making different but equally valuable contributions to the community, still applies discriminatory practices that hinder the progress of women in terms of allocation and equality in the workplace (Karsten 1994:222; Unit for Gender Research in Law, UNISA 1998:138-139).

Although more women are joining the labour force, they are still subject to their husbands' approval to enter the job market. Even if the wife is promoted to work in a different geographical area, she still has to negotiate with the husband, despite laws professing the equality of the sexes. Within organisations the inequitable distribution of resources is caused by gender-related traditional practices that restrict women to careers and positions which extend their nurturing and emotional supportive role as compared to men. Table 2.2 illustrates the traditional occupations by sex which are reinforced by traditional gender-related practices.

Table 2.2   Traditional occupations by sex

Male	Female
Headmaster	Teacher
Doctor	Nurse
Chief Executive Officer	Office Secretary
Farmer	Farm Labourer
Tailor	Seamstress
Pilot	Air hostess
Manager	Waitress

(Source: Mpumalanga Education Department Workshop, 1997)

Too often these different choices in career opportunities are the result of selection criteria for entry in a particular occupation or the result of socialisation. For example, in typical farming communities men are often in charge of the livestock activities and women assist in providing water and food for the animals, the latter not being recognised as work. Girls, on the other hand, work as child domestic workers and are expected to care for younger siblings, wash

clothes, cook and walk long distances to fetch heavy loads of water and firewood, thereby perpetuating their limited advancement into skilled jobs (United Nations Children's Fund 1998).

The education system also perpetuates occupational stereotypes. Girls are often excluded or are led to choose less diverse technically advanced studies than boys (Department of Education November 1998). The Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs funded a project on a baseline quantitative study, based on boys' and girls' experiences of school. The study revealed that schools do not purposefully manage gender stereotypes with regard to the curriculum and classroom practice nor do they create opportunities to deal with gender conservatism over subject choice.

The emphasis on educating girls in the same way as boys has changed the perception of society about the relations between girls and boys particularly in terms of career opportunities and advancement. Working outside of the home was not seen as a way of attaining the autonomy of women. Although girls and women have professional ambitions and constitute about a third of the work force, equality between men and women is still a long way off (*City Press* January 2000:14).

In a study undertaken by the Human Sciences Research Council in 1984 five factors were identified by South African working women as important considerations for starting working: a higher living standard, an opportunity to contribute to the family income, achievement and an opportunity to use skills and an opportunity to make social contacts (Shope, Ackermann, Moya & Kamkhwami 1994:23).

2.4   IMPLICATIONS OF DISCRIMINATION FOR WOMEN

Certain organisational practices such as appointing males to senior management positions and females to middle or lower echelons of managerial structures indicate a preference on the part of organisations to favour males to females. Gender conservatism with regard to subject choice for boys and girls also indicates that the school system encourages feminine and masculine streams. This could be attributed to the traditional gender and sex roles, which are

based on presumed deficiencies like for instance, assertiveness and leadership skills, which have implications for women.

Sex roles and stereotypes tempt organisations to treat men and women differently which explains why women are discriminated against in the workplace and why some careers are "non-traditional" for women. Prekel (n.d.:5) refers to "non-traditional" occupations as those which were previously virtually restricted to men and where women are still a minority. With the advent of affirmative action programmes and the Employment Equity Act (No. 55 of 1998) and other equal opportunities legislation, more women are now entering the non-traditional occupations and the numbers of women in professions such as medicine, pharmacy, accounting and engineering are increasing.

Patriarchy, which has as its root problem power relations based on sex, should be challenged and be addressed from a position of massive systemic reform which requires skills in site-based management in which all people in the organisation are involved (Capton & Slick 1996:139). Opportunities will be created for women to take part in decision-making processes affecting their lives. This implies that women should be involved in the planning and implementation phase of any project that affects their lives so that they can be able to make informed choices.

2.5 CONCLUSION

In order to understand the root cause of discrimination, particularly with regard to women in the workplace, it is necessary that an exposition of some gender-related concepts should be outlined. Such conceptual frameworks form the basis of the dynamics of gender-related debates and how mechanisms should be put in place to promote equity in the workplace.

From the above discussion it is quite evident that discrimination in the workplace is a systemic process which can be attributed to a number of factors including, amongst others, patriarchy, sexual division of power and access to resources.

Institutional barriers perpetuated by the socialisation process and practices that discriminate against women are also attitudinal and systemic in the sense that they are internalised and

based on presumed deficiencies like for instance, assertiveness and leadership skills, which have implications for women.

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viewed as normal.

By promulgating equal opportunities in the form of Affirmative Action measures enshrined in the Employment Equity Act (EEA) and other similar initiatives, the government is committed to breaking down the past effects of inequity within the workplace. Organisations and institutions are expected to develop and implement such policies with the aim of promoting equity and equality in the workplace.

Chapter Three will highlight incidences of discrimination against women from a theoretical and practical view. It will examine processes established to correct womenless leadership in position of authority and will also identify constraints and opportunities, propose policy aimed at bringing in a new paradigm shift with regard to the position of women in senior management structures.

CHAPTER 3

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN IN EDUCATION MANAGEMENT POSITIONS WITHIN THE MPUMALANGA EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

3.1   INTRODUCTION

Chapter Two focused on discrimination against women in the workplace in general. It also explored the conceptual gender framework and institutionalised barriers that may be identified as contributory factors to the underrepresentation of women in senior management positions.

Chapter Three will highlight the incidences of discrimination against women in education management and leadership positions in the Mpumalanga Education Department. It will also examine processes established to address the underrepresentation of women in senior management positions. Furthermore it will identify constraints and opportunities and will propose policy recommendations aimed at bringing about change within the work environment.

From the literature review (Ostergaard 1992, Moser 1993, Ozga 1997, Schmidt 1992, Prekel n.d.) and through observation during a Canada South African Management Programme (CSAEMP) workshop on Gender Equity in Education (August 1998) it became evident that the failure of women to aspire to leadership positions is linked to traditional assumptions and constraints. The failure is perpetuated by patriarchy and the socialisation processes that have suppressed the right of women to attain equal opportunities and prevented adequate participation of women in all aspects of education leadership and management positions.

Identifying and addressing all these issues require women to be committed and be involved in all stages and levels of policy formulation and development. This will depend on whether the institutions are ready to challenge conventional practices with regard to womenless leadership and the underrepresentation of women in senior management positions within the Mpumalanga Education Department.

3.2   BACKGROUND

The Mpumalanga Provincial Government was established in terms of Chapter 6 of the
Constitution of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996). It covers an area of about 78 000 square
kilometers, stretching from Komatipoort in the East to Kwa-Mhlanga in the West, Piet Retief
in the north and Orighstad in the south. It has a population of about 2,9 million (1994 census).
Africans represent about 89%. The unemployment rate is estimated at 16% which is lower
than the national rate of 19%. A large percentage of illiterates are women (Mpumalanga
Education Department 1996:viii).

Figure 3.1 reflects the Mpumalanga Provincial Government territory and its neighbouring
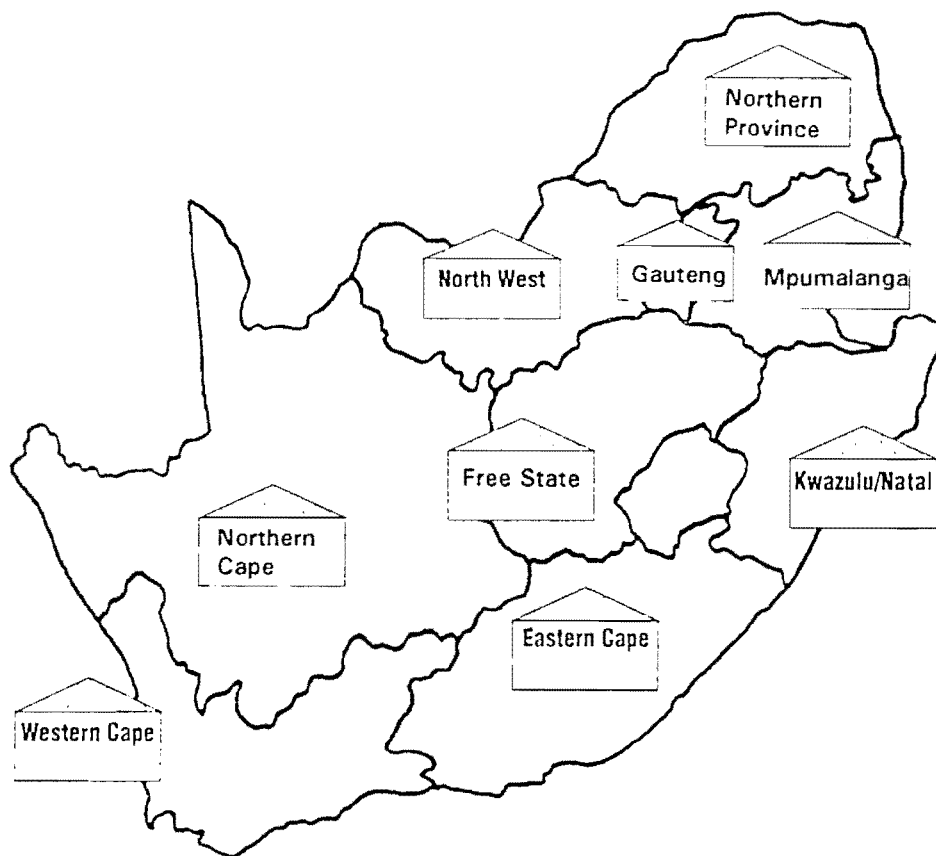provinces.

Figure 3.1   Mpumalanga Provincial Government Territory and its neighbouring
provinces

Figure 3.2 reflects the Mpumalanga Education Department Districts.

Figure 3.2   The Mpumalanga Education Department Districts

3.2.1 The Provincial Education Department

The Mpumalanga Education Department (MED) with its Head Office in Middelburg is an establishment emanating from an amalgamation of seven previously autonomous education departments, namely the Department of Education and Training, the Transvaal Education Department, the Departments of the Houses of Delegates and Representatives, the Departments of the former homelands: Kwa-Ndebele, Ka-Ngwane and Bophuthatswana. The MED consists of the districts as reflected in Figure 3.2 above.

The MED had a total number of approximately 25 115 educators and 914 523 learners and an estimated budget of about R2 billion for the 1997/1998 financial year. For the year 1999/2000 the total number of educators was 20 456 and 1 003 658 learners with an estimated budget of R2,7 billion. Gender equity issues in education were not adequately addressed in the amalgamation process due to a number of other volatile issues, for example the absorption and rationalisation process, right-sizing, redeployment and voluntary severance packages (Commission on Gender Equality, 1998; Mpumalanga Education Department, 1998).

Apart from the above-mentioned issues, the process of addressing womenless leadership and their underrepresentation in senior management positions has been approached from a position of strength in that there were institutional frameworks and programmes that were set in place. Other international, national and provincial initiatives and institutions were adopted as mechanisms aimed at targeting or integrating gender issues as either separatist or corrective approaches into the department's plans, projects, programmes and policies. To mention a few:

- World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA) 1990
- Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (1979), ratified by South Africa in 1995
- The Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC), ratified by South Africa in 1995
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
- Beijing Platform of Action (1995)
- African Charter

- South African Development Community (SADC) on Gender and Development (1994)

- The Constitution of South Africa (Act No 108 of 1996) - Bill of Rights and State Institutions Supporting Democracy (e.g. the Human Rights Commission, Public Protector, Commission on Gender Equality, etc.)

- Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), (1994)

- Women's Charter for Effective Equality (1994)

- Office on the Status of Women in the State President's Office

- National and Provincial White Papers on Education

- The South African Schools Act (1996)

- The National Education Policy Act (1996)

- Women's Budget Initiative (1996)

- The Culture of Learning and Teaching Campaign (COLTS) (1996)

- The Canada/South Africa Education Management Programme (CSAEMP) project on gender equity

Although diverse perspectives, initiatives and practices were adopted as indicated above, the process of addressing womenless leadership is far from complete. There are relatively few chances of promotion for women in rural areas compared to urban areas. This could partly be attributed to the traditional roles of leadership held by males in rural areas as compared to males in urban areas. Urbanization and industrialisation had a great impact on the roles that were regarded as predominantly male-oriented and/or female oriented. Wilson (1997:210) is of the opinion that women's chances of promotion are higher in metropolitan rather than rural areas, arguably because of prevailing political forces.

3.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3.3.1 Education Management

Evarard and Moriss (1990) as well as Smit and Cronje (1999) are of the opinion that there are various definitions of what constitutes education management and criticism has been levelled at some of these definitions as being too theoretical, academic, impractical or even irrelevant.

In defining education management, it appears necessary to firstly define what management is, secondly how it is operationalised within the education system and, thirdly, its emerging challenges within the education transformation paradigm. It will also be important to highlight the traditional management practices and new shifts regarding management within the education transformation process. The shifts indicate that the function of management is now on how to improve the quality of teaching and learning within the education system (Department of Education 1996:8).

The thrust of traditional management practices is embedded within its main functions, namely planning, organising, leading, co-ordinating and evaluating (Koontz & Weirich 1990:7, Bush & Middlewood 1987:22, Evarard & Morris 1990:54). Within this traditional practice of management, managers are faced with a task of setting realistic achievable goals necessary to create a "worker-friendly" environment. The focus is on management functions rather than on developing leadership, organisational and Total Quality Management (TQM) skills as will be explained below (Herman 1993).

Within traditional management practices, management is defined as a social science based on both science (research and theory) and art (experience and intuition). It describes the core feature of educational administration, which is aimed at the dynamic-interactive and executive action which is chiefly concerned with the immediate fulfilment of a calling (Smit & Cronjé 1999:34).

The report of the Task Team on Education Management Development (Department of Education 1996:8) outlines the new approach in management and points out that the primary focus of the new approach to management is the school and its community and not the task of a few. Management should be seen as an activity in which all members of educational organisations are engaged.

The vision of the Task Team is viewed as loosely characterised by a focused managed network,

a dedicated core group of researchers, practitioners, university teachers, policy makers, representatives of government authorities, non-governmental organisations, teachers and community leaders who form a professional network supported and financed to some extent, and sustained from a principal locus (Department of Education 1996:9).

The report (Department of Education 1996:33) further discusses the implication of the new decentralised management approach in education management and the elements embedded within this new approach. It points out that these elements are interrelated and it calls for a participatory and holistic approach to the management of schools involving:

- the development of managers: the education, training and long-term support of managers;
- the development of management: articulating and operationalising the principles of good management practice in South Africa; and
- the development of organisations: developing and sustaining effective structures, systems and procedures for improved management.

This new approach moves away from the traditional concept of viewing management in terms of its controlling and delegating functions to a more collaborative and integrated approach of individual and organisational development.

Bush (1989:1) provides an integrated version of the traditional and new approaches to education management. He asserts that education management in a narrower sense hinges on two facets, namely, professional management (curriculum, teaching methods, resources etc.) and institutional management (governance, administration etc.). It refers to carrying out and executing tasks within an educational institution aimed at whole school improvement. There are specific management functions, roles and skills needed at different levels of management as indicated in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1   Management functions, roles and skills (adapted from the Mpumalanga Education Department 1996)

Roles	Conceptual	Senior Management
Functions	Interpersonal	Middle Management
Skills	Technical	Low Management

The roles, functions and skills of individuals at senior management level should be viewed at a conceptual level, those of middle management at an interpersonal level and those at low management levels at a more technical level (Smit & Cronjé 1999:124).

The report on Education Management Development (Department of Education 1996:25) acknowledged key challenges facing education within the existing management systems, processes and structures and called for a better understanding of education management needs and priorities, namely policies, strategies, structures, ethos and practices, people with skills and knowledge and diversity and equity in the education system as a whole.

Apparently there is a need for education institutions to draw on experiences of successful management from non-educational organisations because they have a longer tradition of sound management practices as has been set out in paragraph 2.3.1. In this paragraph reference was made to the role of donor agencies which have made greater strides in the alleviation of disadvantaged groups, particularly in providing gender intervention.

Of particular concern in this dissertation on education management is the issue of diversity and equity in education. These two elements are concerned with the eradication of all forms of discriminatory practices based on race and gender (namely stereotypes, sex-roles and sexual harassment, etc.), hence the focus on women in education management and how affirmative action programmes can be adopted as strategies to address the absence of women in senior management positions, particularly womenless leadership and management within the context of the Mpumalanga Education Department.

3.4   WOMEN IN EDUCATION MANAGEMENT: SOME OBSERVATIONS

Although women are the majority of employees in educational institutions, their absence in senior management positions is remarkable as will be reflected later in this chapter. Davies (1990:610) asserts that female underrepresentation in positions of decision-making and power within education is of crucial concern at four levels:

a)   for boys and girls to be able to see women in decision-making capacities;

b)   as a question of equal rights for teachers;

c)   to query masculinist definitions of appropriate management; and

d)   to challenge the male domination of the selection of school personnel.

Womenless leadership in management positions finds its root in the school system and in gender roles and inequities perpetuated by the division of labour between the two sexes. Theories linked to this socialisation process regards the male image of leadership as the norm.

Davidson and Burke (1999:17-20) identified three approaches based on male and female managers, namely the gender-centred approach, observable differences in managerial behaviour approach and the gender-organisation-system approach. The gender-centred approach is based on the assumption that organisational practices favour men almost exclusively as managers, operating on the belief that women managers are believed to be less likely to possess the skills and abilities needed for management. A second perspective on observable differences in managerial behaviour argues that differences with respect to how women manage at work, may be due partly to the situational differences in the work-place or due to the features of the organisation. The third approach argues that situations affect individual behaviour but that individuals may also differ from one another on the basis of gender.

The Unit for Gender Research in Law - UNISA (1998:138-138) supports the above approaches by suggesting that there are two approaches or models to sex equality, namely the liberal human rights model and the radical human rights model. According to the former model,

women should be treated equally and receive the same treatment as their male counterparts, e.g. a pregnant woman should be treated in the same manner as a man who has been temporarily disabled. The radical human rights model maintains that true equality between the sexes can be achieved only if their differing needs are taken into consideration.

Criticism has been levelled at these theories. One argument has been put forward by Schmuck (1986). He maintains that if the male image theories of leadership are accepted as the norm, it follows that women should be trained to make up for this deficit and adopt a "male leadership model" and devalue a range of qualities that are associated with women and adopt a more collaborative and empowering style of leadership.

Another argument is based on the blind theory which Jamieson describes in relation to women in leadership positions as synonymous with a catch-22 situation, namely that women who strive to be leaders are seen to be trying to adopt masculine attributes and women who try to lead as "good-girls" are regarded as ineffectual leaders (Mitchell & Correa 1996:10). Another important aspect worth mentioning is that women do not represent a homogenous group and may under different circumstances act differently in management positions depending on the educational context they find themselves in.

The implication of these theories and/or approaches suggests that it is possible for both women and men to hold positions of authority and that stereotypes should no longer be regarded as criteria for promoting women to senior management positions.

The obvious absence of women in education management positions can be attributed to what Ozga (1992) refers to as structural and societal obstacles. For example, structural constraints within the education system range from financial to policies relating to the working conditions of women. Affirmative action is just one means of working towards equity but by no means constitutes the main thrust of the measures required (Department of Education 1997).

Other researchers make a distinction between internal and external obstacles (Karl 1983, Moser 1993, DBSA 1993, Prekel n.d.). They explain that external roadblocks are inherent in

institutionalised attitudes and perceptions of society to discriminate against women aspiring to senior leadership. Internal obstacles are usually generated from a low perception that women have of themselves.

There has been a growing demand to challenge the conventional trends of women's oppression based on the socialisation process. This includes policies of recruitment, selection, career pathing, induction affirmative action programme. Identifying aspects of the curriculum that reinforce gender stereotypes and that maintain traditional gender differences is complex.

There is also a need to have more women leaders who act as role models for girl-children to emulate irrespective of the competitive labour market and the constraints of their triple role, namely that of reproduction, production and community organisation (Davies 1990:61, Truscott 1984:15).

3.5   WOMEN IN EDUCATION MANAGEMENT: POLICY DIRECTIONS

3.5.1 National initiatives

Although there are statutory provisions on anti-discrimination measures or unfair discrimination as required by Section 9(4) and item 23 of Schedule 6 of the Constitution of South Africa (Act No 108 of 1996), such as the Beijing Platform of Action, the Prevention and Prohibition of Unfair Discrimination Act (2000), the Sexual Offenses Amendment Bill (1999), the Affirmative Action White Paper (1998), the Employment Equity Act (1998), few organisations and institutions appear to be committed to addressing inequity issues. For example, the national machinery within government departments is faced with various challenges with regard to the establishment of "gender equity units" and the appointment of gender officers within such units. The main function of the gender units will be to ensure that gender issues are considered in strategic decisions, reflected in business plans, that gender desegregated data is used, gender training is integrated into departments, national gender policies are implemented and mechanisms are established to deal with civil society (National Department of Education 1997).

Given the slow pace of change and the reluctance of both the national and provincial departments to make too many appointments in newly established posts, it is unlikely that the situation will change in the near future. It is clear from the experiences of other countries that the issue of status and authority will be an area of ongoing of contestation within governments. The real challenge will be to fight marginalisation while at the same time devising strategies for moving forward on plans of action (Commission on Gender Equality 1997:2-3).

The Commission on Gender Equality (CGE) and the Office on the Status of Women (OSW) are some of the institutions that are concerned with the eradication of all forms of discrimination against women. They are also concerned with the promotion of fair labour practices that will better the lives of designated groups. An added advantage of these measures is the promulgation of legislation such as the Labour Relations Act (1995), the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (1998) and the Employment Equity Act (1998) as explained in paragraph 2.3.

The National Assembly has promulgated the South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996. SASA makes schooling compulsory for all children whether female or male for ten years beginning from the year they turn seven until they reach the age of fifteen or the ninth grade (Section 3(1)). The Act also provides that parents or guardians who do not ensure that their children attend school are liable on conviction to a fine or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months (section 3 (6) (a) (b)). No child may be turned away from a school because of the inability of parents to pay school fees (section 5 (a)). This will prevent poor parents from sending their boy-children to school in preference to girl-children.

During the 44th session of the International Conference on Education (1995) the Ministers of Education of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Member States adopted a Declaration and Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy. Some of the objectives of this Declaration are, amongst others, to take action to eliminate all direct and indirect discrimination against girls and women in education. They also resolved to take specific measures to ensure that girls and women achieve their full potential (UNESCO 1995:4).

In its commitment to promote gender equity, the National Department of Education appointed a Task Team on Gender Equity in accordance with paragraphs 63-69 of its White Paper (No 16312 of 1995). Upon completion the Task Team released its report entitled "Gender Equity in Education" (1997).

The report covers all critical issues in education from general to further and higher education and can be used by the provincial governments and other organisations to address equity issues. Chapter 9 of the report deals specifically with gender and educational management. The report states that gender and education is more than ensuring an increase in the numbers of women in management positions through affirmative action. It is about the nature of institutional cultures, the value system of decision-makers, whether they are women or men and taking cognisance of the gender roles of women and men in a way that facilitates them to perform well in their work (Department of Education 1997:11).

3.5.2 Provincial initiatives

The Mpumalanga Education Department White Paper (par 2.1.5: 1995) highlighted a need that a redress of the past imbalances be effected with maximum speed by emphasising:

> "... inequities, inequalities and [the] discriminatory nature of the content of separatist policies and the damage they have caused to black people of South Africa in general and to women in particular."

This statement reflects the Department's commitment to promote equity in eradicating all forms of discrimination and in particular those discriminatory practices that affect women, the disabled and youth at risk.

Apart from setting up legal and institutional frameworks to address discriminatory practices that prevent women from participating in the economic growth and development of the country, the Department has recognised that there were certain traditional and customary

assumptions and practices that contribute towards the underpresentation of women in management leadership positions, for example the perception that women are sub-ordinate to men and cannot lead. Such stereotypical behaviour patterns are linked to the identity of women of caring and supportive behaviour whilst the identity of men is linked to aggressive dominant roles.

Gender equity issues were also seen by the Mpumalanga Education Department as part and parcel of the transformation process unfolding in the country. The question of addressing the subordination of women in positions of authority within the workplace and elsewhere is based on the equality clause (Section 9) of the Constitution of South Africa, Act No 108 of 1996, which requires the creation of a new order where there will be equality between all people.

3.5.3 The process of addressing inequities

As part of the transformation process unfolding in the country the Mpumalanga Education Department has embarked upon the process of addressing inequities which may impact on the lives of both learners and educators. For example, the Mpumalanga Education Department created an enabling environment and identified structural and functional areas which were sensitive to meeting the special needs of learners and educators. This readiness was demonstrated by the establishment of the Transformation Directorate which was tasked with the responsibility of dealing with policy, research, planning, education management information systems, special programmes and gender equity.

One of the gaps identified was the inability of the government's Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) to allocate a specific budget to address the needs and interests of women. The MTEF is the government's systemic three-year action plan that sets out the economic and fiscal framework within which the budget will be outlined. Since the interests and needs of women and girls were not accommodated, lobbyists began to lobby for a way in which "gendered" allocations could be addressed. To date the Women's Budget Initiative (WBI) led

by the Ministry of Finance in conjunction with the National Department of Education, Labour and Trade and Industry has been set in place with the aim of being responsive to such needs.

The Commonwealth Secretariat has developed various policy options with which governments can adopt as tools for gender integration into the MTEF. The gender-aware medium-term policy framework is formulated based on a variety of economy-wide models which are gender-blind. The Commonwealth Secretariat (June 1999:37) identifies some of the approaches that can be used for integrating gender to include: disaggregated data using various variables; incorporating new variables with a gender perspective constructing new models that incorporate both national income accounts and household accounts reflecting unpaid work.

Since most departments do not have budget allowances to mainstream gender, there is a tendency to rely on donor funding to support gender equity components of departmental budgets (SIDA, Country Gender Profile: South Africa 1998:15). For example, the MED depends much on the Canada-South Africa Education Management Programme for funding gender equity programmes as will be explained later in this Chapter.

In order to implement the process of institutionalising and mainstreaming gender issues in the daily activities of the Mpumalanga Education Department's priorities and plans, a Provincial Gender Equity Action Plan with specific time-lines allocated for all activities was developed. Table 3.2 highlights the Gender Equity Action Plan with five main phases, namely: content, context, implementation plan pilot, monitoring and evaluation. This process will yield positive spin-offs, provided all the relevant stakeholders, namely government, civil society, labour and the business sector are committed to bring change in their quest for translating the Action Plan into reality.

Table 3.2   **Gender equity action plan for the MED** (Mpumalanga Education Department 1997)

	Activity	Time-line
Phase 1	Conceptualise through awareness raising, training, and developing institutional arrangements	1997
Phase 2	Contextualise through developing policy considerations and training programmes	1998
Phase 3	Implementation strategy and communication plan in line with curriculum 2005 (C2005)	1998-1999
Phase 4	Pilot in sample schools particularly in Grades 1 and 7	2000
Phase 5	Implement and institutionalise in the education sector	2001

Although various challenges were encountered in terms of setting the process in place, there was a commitment on the part of the government to put gender issues on the agenda of the transformation process. One major challenge facing the Department was the question of putting in place the Gender Unit as a functional unit. It is important to outline and explain processes, systems and procedures embedded within the operationalisation of the gender equity programme in education management in the MED operational plans. Figure 3.3 is a diagrammatic representation of the gender equity framework upon which the five phases of the gender equity action plan are based.

The four elements below, namely institutional arrangements, policy considerations, implementation strategy and goal are interrelated and complement each other. Depending on which level of development a particular organisation is in terms of initiating or implementing gender equity commitments in practice, each organisation will have a particular entry and/or exit point as discussed below.

Institutional arrangements refer to the establishment of an enabling environment and the structural arrangements of a particular organisation. For example, the Mpumalanga Education Department through the political will and commitment to gender equality at the highest level,

the co-ordination of gender equity issues through the Office on the Status of Women (OSW) and the identification of a gender focal point, facilitates the establishment of a policy process on gender equity. The involvement of other institutions in providing technical support in the development of a gender policy for the MED indicates their readiness in gender representation in decision-making processes.
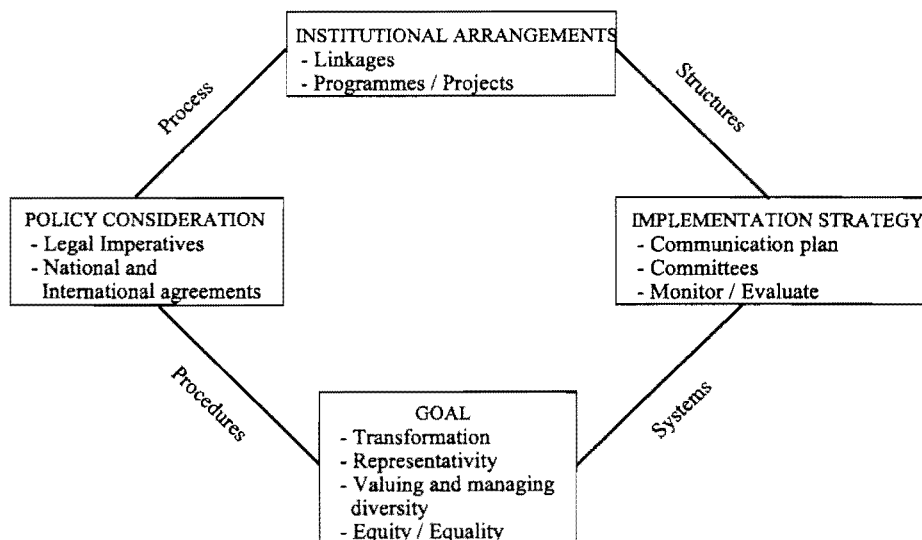
Figure 3.3   The MED gender equity framework (Mpumalanga Education Department 1997)

The implementation of the above gender equity framework within the MED at head office, district level, circuit level and school level requires a clearly defined communication plan or strategy since it forms part of the normal functioning of the MED priorities, plans and activities on how gender equity issues can be operationalised within the education system.

In order to gain a full picture of the goals of implementing gender equity policies in the Mpumalanga education sector, one needs to gain a fuller picture of gender imbalances and

inequalities as perpetuated through the school system.

Phase 1: **Institutional arrangements for the Gender Management System** (See Table 3.2)

Institutional arrangements can be referred to as a collection of structures (i.e. various bodies) and their relationship with each other and the whole system within a particular organisation or institution. The Commonwealth describes these institutional arrangements as the Gender Movement System to imply an integrated network of structures, mechanisms and processes designed to make government more gender-aware, increase the numbers of women in decision-making roles within and outside government, facilitate the formulation of gender-sensitive policies, plans and programmes, and promote the advancement of gender equality and equity in the broader civil society (Commonwealth Secretariat 1996:21 & 1999:33).

In line with the Gender Management System (GMS) the MED established an enabling environment and structural linkage. There were a number of enabling factors that contributed to the GMS, for example:

- international, national and regional initiatives such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform of Action, the Convention on the Rights of Children, etc;
- commitment to gender equality at the highest level;
- constitutional and legal imperatives (Constitution; SASA);
- technical assistance and support by donor agencies (USAID; CIDA; SIDA); and
- human resources development (workshops, seminars, formal training courses on gender such as the Policy Management Programme).

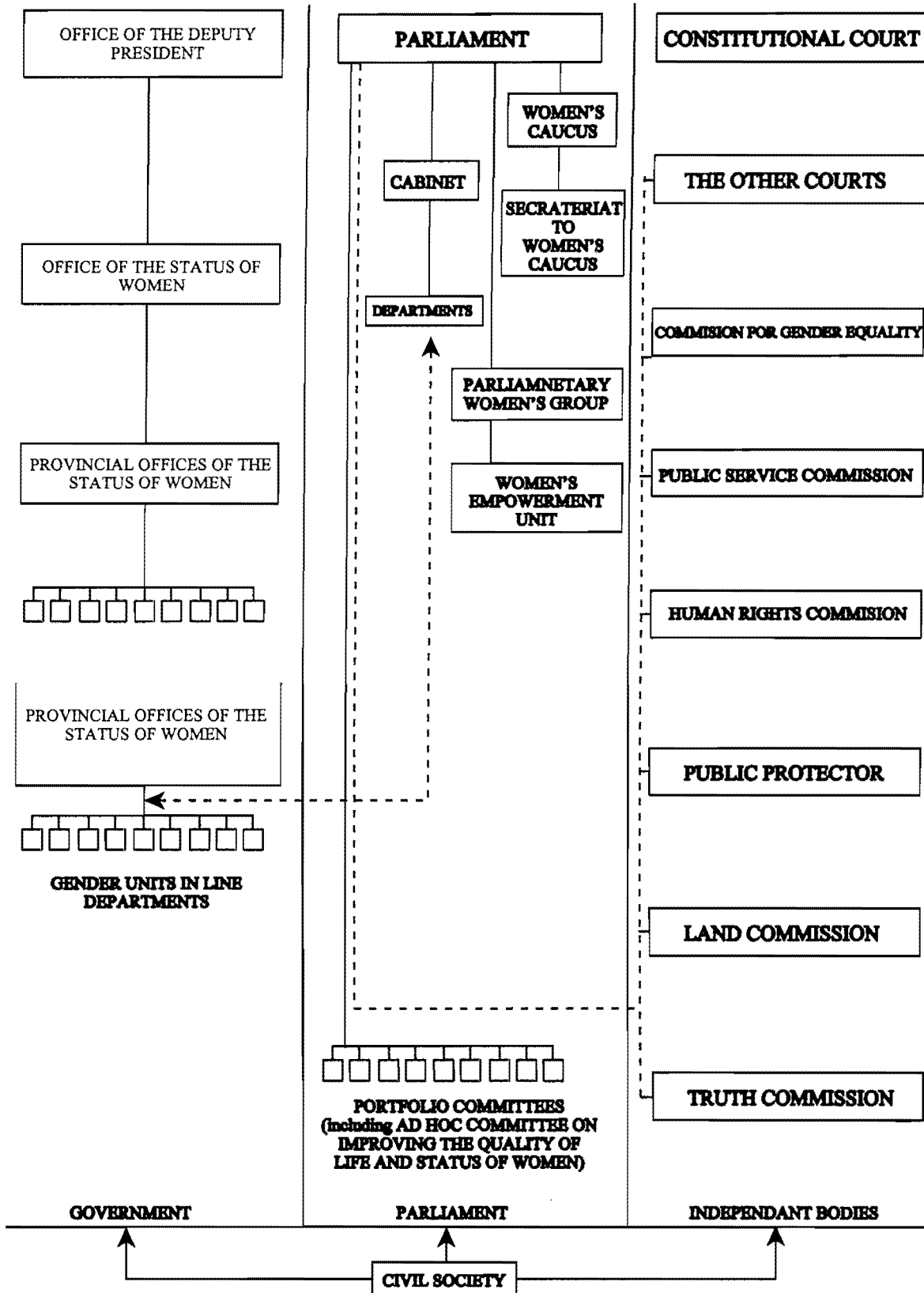Institutional arrangements consist of various linkages as reflected in Figure 3.4.

Figure 3.4   **National machinery for advancing gender equity** (adapted from CALS model, SIDA Country Gender Profile: South Africa 1998)

The National Gender Machinery in South Africa is divided into various components as explained in Figure 3.4 (SIDA, Country Gender Profile: South Africa 1998:11; Unit for Gender Research in Law - UNISA 1998:245-252).

i) **The legislature:** The national assembly has established two structures, namely the multiparty Parliamentary Women's Group and a Committee on Improving the Quality of Life and Status of Women tasked with the responsibility of monitoring and implementation of CEDAW. The Portfolio Committee on Education also questions gender imbalances in the school system.

ii) **The government:** Government departments at the national and provincial level are co-ordinated by the Office on the Status of Women (OSW) located in the President's Office. The OSW has similar offices in the provincial departments and such offices are located in the Premier's Office of the provinces.

iii) **Independent bodies** such as the Commission on Gender Equality (CGE) are tasked with the responsibility of promoting gender equality and monitoring the implementation of the commitment of governments towards gender equality. Other bodies such as the Human Rights Commission (HRC), Public Protector, Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), Public Service Commission and Land Commission have a public and investigative role in gender equity issues.

iv) **Civil society:** The above structures liaise and consult with civil society in terms of ensuring delivery of services which impact on gender issues.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

With the development of this phase the MED gender activities were aimed at:

● revisiting, reviewing and reflecting on political commitments articulated in various international, national and provincial initiatives;

- operationalising legal imperatives as enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa, particularly the Bill of Rights (Chapter 2);

- establishing a gender management system which will entail developing a flexible action plan with strategies for implementing gender equity in education;

- developing capacity-building and training programmes aimed at addressing quantitative and qualitative gender disparities; and

- liaising with other departments, NGOs and other stakeholders in identifying and agreeing on mechanisms aimed at promoting gender equity in education.

ACTIVITIES

The following activities provided leverage for spearheading the process, namely:

- awareness-raising campaigns through information sharing sessions, conferences, meetings, workshops and seminars;

- conducting a gender audit for the department; and

- developing a comprehensive gender action plan and monitoring indicators to measure progress.

TRAINING

Training is divided into the following areas:

a)   **Canada-South Africa Education Management Programme**

The Canada-South Africa Management Programme (CSAEMP) was initiated through bilateral negotiations between the governments of Canada and McGill University in partnership with the South African Government and the National and Provincial Departments of Gauteng, Mpumalanga and Free State as will be explained in paragraph 4.7.

Programme structure

The gender equity management programme structure is divided into five modules which can be used separately for any particular situation at any given point in time. The module will be explained in detail in paragraph 4.4.3.

The programme is aimed at education managers in the primary, secondary and teacher education training sectors. It provides participants with the skills and information they require for effective management and leadership in their organisations.

b)   **The Gender Policy Management Programme**

The University of the Witwatersrand offers a Gender Management Programme Certificate based on the process which a gender public policy follows from inception to evaluation and on policy analysis using different analytical tools, for example the Harvard analytical tool or the Gender and Development tool. The point of departure in these methodologies is to systematically analyse how power relations and imbalances regarding the roles, needs and interest of women and men are systematically entrenched and reinforced in their daily activities. These include in-depth analyses of what prevents women from applying for, and progressing to senior management positions, conditions with regard to the regulatory framework, human resource policies, conditions of service with regard to institutional positioning, access and control over resource. The course/programme content will be explained in detail in paragraph 4.4.3.

c)   **The Women and the Law Certificate Programme** is offered by the University of South Africa. The programme focuses on women's issues in relation to the law. Issues such as Family Law, Child Law, Violence Against Women, Women and Employment, Women and Health and Women, as well as human rights and democracy.

The programme highlights issues such as what the latest legal developments are in relation to the themes mentioned above. The programme also offers to help South African Women to understand their rights so that they can be able to understand and demand their rightful place, particularly in instances where they are discriminated against. The programme also offers practical solutions with case studies to help women to understand how they can improve their legal position and challenge laws that reflect the male view of women.

Phase 2:   **Policy considerations**

The Mpumalanga Education Department's commitment to policy and legal imperatives as enshrined in the Bill of Rights are found under the following sections:

Section 9:   Equality

Section 28:   Children's rights

Section 29:   The right to basic education

Section 30:   Language and culture

These sections require the Department as a service provider to prevent and design measures aimed at addressing unfair discriminatory practices and promoting equity in the workplace.

The South African Government has been a signatory to various international conventions and agreements. It is for this reason that institutions at regional, provincial and national level are not exempted from these agreements. These agreements include the Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC - 1989) which the South African Government ratified on 16 June 1995 and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW 1997), ratified by the South African Government on 15 December 1995 and were mentioned in paragraph 3.2.1 of this Chapter.

State institutions supporting constitutional democracy, such as the Public Protector, Human Rights Commission, the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of

Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities and the Commission for Gender Equality (Chapter 9 of the Constitution of South Africa, Act No 108 of 1996) are independent bodies charged with the responsibility of dealing with specific types of human violations. For example, the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) investigates and challenges laws, practices and customs that discriminate against people because of their gender. Cultural practices that discriminate against girl-children and violate their right to basic education and the right to adult basic education for adult women and impede women from occupying senior management positions (sections 29 and 30 of the Bill of Rights) can be referred to the above-mentioned state institutions (South African Human Rights Commission 1998:23-24; 32).

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims and objectives of putting the process of policy formulation on gender equity in education took into account the following issues:

- developing a draft gender policy discussion document based on lessons and experiences learned in phase one of this process;

- outlining core issues to be highlighted in the gender policy framework such as rural schools, disability, women in education management, sexual harassment and violence, sexual orientation (gays and lesbians), teenage pregnancy, information technology and the curriculum;

- advising senior management about the most effective ways that can be adopted in remedying the existing practices and attitudes in respect of employment and promotion opportunities for female principals, such as networking and establishing support groups for women managers, identifying role models and mentors, as well as developing guidelines on policies such as sexual harassment. Table 3.9 below highlights some of the strategies that can be identified as catalysts for overcoming systemic and attitudinal barriers;

- constant reviewing and revision of the draft gender equity policy in education and the political commitment of the Ministry of Education to declare it as policy on gender equity for the Mpumalanga Education Department. The aim is to redress the gender imbalances and inequities that discriminate against the designated members of the communities, in particular girl-children and women in education management positions.

Phase 3:   Implementation framework

The main thrust of this phase is to develop a functional and viable gender implementation strategy for the Mpumalanga Education Department as illustrated in Figure 3.3. This will be done through:

- linking phase one and phase two of the gender equity action plan for the MED (as shown in Table 3.2) with an appropriate communication plan so that all education sectors are familiar with the gender equity process and programmes. This will enable various education sectors such as Early Childhood Development, General Education, Further Education, Higher Education and Adult Basic Education to design their action plans based on the needs and priorities of their organisations;

- identifying risk factors that may constitute barriers to the professional and personal advancement of managers may enhance individual and organisational change and development, which are central to the transformation of the education system; and

- developing a set of indicators for evaluating and monitoring the implementation phase of the action plan which will enable planners and policy makers to effect the necessary changes.

Phase 4:   Piloting policy recommendations in sample schools

Phase four of the gender equity action plan process will be based on random sampling methodology. Random sampling is a method of drawing a portion (sample) of a population or universe which has an equal chance of being selected. A sample drawn at random is unbiased in the sense that no member of the population has any more chance of being selected than any other member (Kerlinger 1986:110-111).

The size of the sample will be 40 female principals drawn from the ten districts that constitute the MED. About 20 of the female principals will represent the experimental group and the other 20 will represent the control group. Of the first group of 20 female principals, 50% will be selected from the ten schools drawn from each of the districts, particularly those whose female principals were trained on the gender equity theory and practice in education management. Since the projected outcome of the CSAEMP on gender equity was based on training other female principals, using the cascading model, the remaining ten principals will be drawn from those schools whose principals were trained by the first group of principals who were nominated at the first inception of the project.

Of the 20 female principals who form the control group, about ten will be drawn from schools adjacent to those of the first principals who form the experimental group and the other ten from the schools whose principals received training through the cascading model. The samples are given in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3   Experimental and control group

Experimental Group		Control Group	
A Initial training	B Cascading training	C No training and adjacent to A	D No training and adjacent to B
10	10	10	10
		TOTAL	40

Expertise and skills will be required by the Mpumalanga Education Department to utilize the existing resources more effectively so that a well-informed and well-researched gender equity framework and strategies for sustaining the process are put in place.

In piloting the gender programme, the MED should also take extreme care in studying the impact of the programme before its final implementation. The reason is that data within the education sector are sometimes not reliable due to a number of limitations, for example the methodology of data collection (Ostergaard 1992:24), lack of continuity, financial constraints and political commitments entered into by the government of the day. Other factors include cultural stereotypes based on the assumption that women cannot lead and girls cannot participate in activities traditionally regarded as for boys only; lack of access to and control over resources based on the notion of patriarchy as well as the deterioration of the culture of teaching and learning based on the realities of poor academic performance. Each of these conditions are possible causes of womenless leadership in positions of authority as will be explained in the research findings explained in paragraph 3.5.5.

Phase 5: Implementing the gender equity framework within the Mpumalanga Education Department

The thrust of phase five is to put in place all the anticipated objectives as set out in phases one to four of the plan. The whole process of implementing the gender equity framework should not be seen as aspects representing separate entities, but rather as entities that complement each other. Levy (1996) is of the opinion that, since gender relations represent a set of power relations, it seems unlikely that any policy or planning process to integrate gender into departmental activities would be linear in nature. This implies that it will depend on which level or entry point a particular institution/organisation is, namely diagnostic or analytical. At the diagnostic level, the organisation will be involved with identifying the needs of the user, e.g. training, policy research or programme implementation. The analytical phase is concerned with the direction a particular element can take to reshape elements, thereby promoting the institutionalisation of gender.

A constant review and revision of the gender equity programme in enhancing individual and organisational change and development should be done by the MED. Individual and organisational change and development are central to the transformation of the education system. It is for this reason that the education system should be responsive to the needs of the marginalised groups, in particular girls and women. Creating an environment conducive to individual and organisational development will enable the MED to transform its internal system to transcend beyond external service delivery systems.

Based on the gender equity framework as depicted in Figure 3.3 it appears as if the institutionalisation of gender equity in the MED will only be realised if the following are taken note of by both policy makers and implementors:

Strengths such as:

- The MED White Paper wherein the department commits itself to promote gender equity at the systems and operations level by eliminating all forms of discriminatory practices.

- The identification of a gender focal person (GFP) to deal specifically with education management development programmes at the provincial and school level. The GFP ought to have the relevant qualifications, experience and skills in steering the gender equity management programme and process.

- Designing corrective (GAD) and separatist (WID) programmes enabled the MED to mainstream gender into departmental policies, programmes and projects.

- Developing a three- to five-year plan based on the needs and priorities of the Mpumalanga Education Department and linking them with the gender equity priorities.

Weaknesses such as:

- a lack of a "gender-home" or a gender equity unit within the department;
- gender equity matters are regarded as an "add on" on the part of the gender focal person who has been allocated other duties to perform; and
- no clearly defined performance indicators

In a survey conducted by the Gender Equity Task Team (Department Education 1997) the study found that eighty percent of duties performed by gender focal persons was allocated to the job he/she was hired for and the other twenty percent was reserved for dealing with gender issues. This arrangement has serious implications for the instutionalisation of the gender equity programme.

In a situation like this it is unfair and unnecessary for one person to perform two jobs at one time as taking two jobs will not enhance one's career prospects. The common trend in South Africa and elsewhere is to co-opt a woman who can be expected to administer and manage the job in accordance with the principle of representativity, namely that women should be represented in various echelons of the management structure.

There are no gender guidelines developed for monitoring and evaluating gender programmes. The end result of institutionalising gender equity issues within the Mpumalanga Department of Education plans is the fact that the gender focal person will not be sure whether the programmes will yield the expected outcome or not, for example, there are more women employed in education institutions than men and only a small percentage occupy senior management positions (see Table 3.4 for projected outcomes).

OPPORTUNITIES

- The beginning of 1997 marked the inception of the CSAEMP with gender equity as one of its entry projects. The purpose was to provide specific interventions aimed at correcting gender imbalances and inequities with regard to education management.

- Of the 824 female principals to be trained by the year 2000 as reflected in Table 3.4, about 10 were identified and selected from each of the 10 education districts and were trained by gender experts from the University of McGill on issues such as gender conceptual frameworks as well as mainstreaming gender and sexual harassment. The Gender Focal person was also involved in the training of female principals in the province. The Gender Focal person received her training on gender issues from the University of the Witwatersrand on the Gender Policy Programme and on the Women and Law Programme from the University of South Africa in Pretoria. The CSAEMP training strategy was premised on the fact that there were more women than men

employed in education institutions but only a small percentage of women occupied senior management positions as reflected in Tables 3.5 - 3.9. As a short-term intervention strategy, coupled with the need to transform the education system of the Mpumalanga Province to be gender sensitive, the separatist methodology (WID) was initiated as an entry strategy. Core basic gender issues include topics such as barriers leading to womenless leadership and strategies to overcome these barriers, gender conceptual frameworks, linguistic semiotics and binary oppositions linked to gender stereotypes. It was envisaged that through the cascading model an estimated outcome of about 835 female principals would be trained by the year 2000 as reflected in Table 3.4 below.

Table 3.4   Projected outcome: Cascading Model

Year	1997-1998	1998-1999	1999-2000	Total
No	60	500	275	835
%	7,28	60,7	33,25	100%

The following diagram depicts the projected outcomes of the number of female principals who will have been trained on gender programmes by the year 2000.
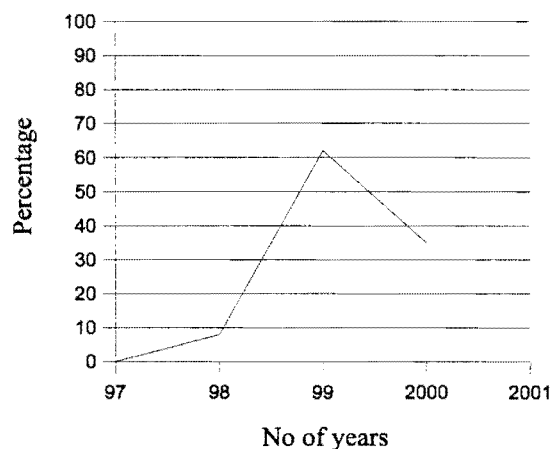
Figure 3.5   Projected outcomes: Gender Programmes

The projected outcome will be achieved only if proper systems with monitoring and evaluating mechanisms are put in place to effect the necessary changes. Free (1998:4) highlighted the role of the principal in managing equity in the school situation. She emphasised a need to put in place a system that monitors personnel to ensure that policies are implemented. Setting in place a system that monitors change has its own difficulties. The principal may have difficulty in implementing pro-active equity initiatives without alienating some of the staff. School policies also tend to be slow to change, partly because the policy-making body, namely the School Governing Body (SGB), meets less often than other structures in the school and partly because changing policy usually requires a fairly long period of consultation (Free 1999:4; Department of Education 1999:22).

In this regard a number of questions come to the fore. What are the department's priorities and targets within the next three years with regard to gender equity? What kind of training and reporting systems should be put in place? How should the gender equity management programme be linked to COLTS (Culture of Learning and Teaching Services)? Responses to these questions ought to be context specific.

3.5.4 Quantitative data

The underrepresentation of women in senior management positions represents gross inequity and a violation of human rights practices. Although women work equally as hard as men and qualify for senior management and leadership positions, they are often relegated to positions that have a minimal power base, often denying them access to positions of authority and knowledge. This can be attributed to sex stereotypes and cultural practices that reinforce inequity practices.

Within institutions, government departments and non-governmental organisations routine practices are a way of getting things done and often these practices create social inequity, for example differences in pay, positions and working conditions have implications for women in terms of economic power, influence and authority. Systemic discrimination creates social inequality and is prohibited by law. Human rights movements have identified discrimination as an act that can be produced by both intentional or unintentional acts where no single

individual or a group of individuals is engaged in creating discrimination (Cassin 1998).

Evidence of systemic discrimination can be measured through statistical measures or qualitative discrimination cases. Although data collected through quantitative and qualitative methods can "prove" how management systems within organisations contribute to systemic discrimination, they do not adequately show how social inequality is constructed, as will be reflected in Tables 3.5 - 3.8.

Table 3.5   Total staff at Head Office 1999

Category	Male	%	Female	%	Total
Professional	37	21,4	20	12,5	57
Support	136	78,6	140	87,5	276
Total	173	100	160	100	333

The total staff of the Mpumalanga Education Department at Head Office in 1999 reflects that there were 333 people employed as professional and support staff of which the majority are women. Disaggregated data with regards to professional staff indicate that most women occupy middle or bottom positions of the management echelon. Such data will enable analysts to discern various constraints based on factors such as socio-economic, ethnic and age variables (Ostergaard 1992:176).

Table 3.6   Professional staff: Senior Management Disparities at Head Office

Category	Male	%	Female	%	Total
HOD	1 (acting)	14,3	0	0	1
Chief Director	2	28,6	0	0	2
Directors	4	57,1	0	0	4
Total	7	100	0	0	7

Table 3.6 reflects that the participation rate of women in senior management echelons is minimal. Perceptions, beliefs and attitudes within the system continue to be barriers to change. Apparently the empowerment of women to reach senior management positions could be achieved through training women or training packages such as leadership, management, assertiveness, conflict resolution and by establishing support groups such as FAWESA (Forum for African Women Educationalists South Africa).

Table 3.7   Principals in Primary and Secondary Schools

Category	Male	%	Female	%	Total
Primary	523	56,7	546	91,9	1 069
Secondary	399	43,3	48	8,1	447
Total	922	100	594	100	1 516

The data reflected in Table 3.7 suggest that there are far fewer male principals in primary schools than there are female principals. The situation changes, however, in secondary schools where male principals far outnumber female principals. This could be attributed to the sexual division of labour between men and women, namely that women by nature of their child-bearing and rearing roles are concentrated more in primary schools than in secondary schools. In such incidences sex stereotypes determine that it is natural for women to bear and rear children.

Table 3.8   Rectors

Category	Male	%	Female	%	Total
Colleges of Education	2	18,2	0	0	2
Technical Colleges	9	81,8	0	0	9
Technikons	-	-	-	-	-
Total	11	100	0	0	11

Womenless leadership in positions of authority is a situation experienced by women leaders in management positions. Table 3.8 suggests that the more senior the position is, the less likely it will be held by women. This situation could be ascribed to the role of men and interests as compared to the roles and needs of women in society, i.e. the unequal division of labour between men and women.

In a study conducted by the Federation of Women Teachers' Association of Ontorio (1992) it was found that some women educators are uninterested in promotion because of the leadership model which they have observed, a model which implies that being a vice-principal or principal takes one "away from the children", i.e. learners, and therefore does not appeal to women who choose teaching as a career. The study also revealed that although there has been an increase of women at vice-principal level, there are identifiable barriers to their promotion beyond that level. In another study conducted by the Mpumalanga Education Department (1989) on obstacles that prevent women from occupying senior management positions at Colleges of Education in Mpumalanga, most of the respondents were of the opinion that the organisational structure and recruitment do not make special efforts to encourage applicants from women in various level of management to apply to senior management positions.

Tables 3.6 - 3.8 reflect one of the disparities inherited by the Mpumalanga Education System with regard to gender imbalances and the absence of women in senior decision-making areas.

Cultural practices and norms, inaccessibility of resources and other concomitant factors that institutionalise gender disparities in the workplace perpetuate these conditions. Greyvenstein and Van der Westhuizen (1991:3) are of the opinion that the maxim that holds that "women teach and men manage" is sometimes a true reflection of what society portrays and teaches. This is due to the division of responsibilities that women have to face and their experiences as teachers and managers within a school system. Mitchell and Correa (1996:23-24) are of the opinion that most of the research that focuses on and utilizes an historical approach to examine the experiences of women as teachers and administrators, tends to examine the differences between female and male teachers as well as administrators rather than their commonalities.

3.5.5 Qualitative data

The debates on whether women can manage and lead organisations as well as men do and whether women have leadership styles different from men are contentious issues. Women are inherently expected not to lead and manage organisations and/or institutions as men do. Their leadership and management skills are often questioned and they normally do not receive the respect accorded to men in senior management positions.

Schmidt (1992), Ozga (1993) and Ostergaard (1992) maintain that literature on the management and leadership style of women differs regarding their generalisation. This is due to the fact that women are not a homogenous group and have different needs and roles. Their leadership style normally depends on the situations they find themselves in and on their commitment to promoting gender equity. For example, females in managerial positions do not encourage other women to further their careers and are threatened by seemingly other powerful women. The latter concern was also reiterated during a symposium on "Challenges facing women in managerial positions" (Ndebele College, April 1999).

One of the participants remarked as follows: "I am a teacher at school X in district Y. Our problem has been how to establish a healthy working environment in our school, particularly amongst the staff members. There are always reported cases of teachers gossiping about each other. The situation is aggravated by the fact that our female manager is too authoritative and oppressive to an extent that we call her all sorts of funny names behind her back - one of them is Colonel 'Blimp'. The latter is symbolically used to refer to a person who is very authoritative and cruel."

The above scenario explains why female managers often tend to have fewer subordinates who support them, often experience peer jealousy, have inadequate, tense working conditions and less back-up service than male managers (Schmidt 1992:2).

This implies that women leaders experience various problems in their leadership roles. Ozga (1993:11) and Mitchell (1996:24-25) assert that there are differences between male and female

management and leadership styles. They suggest that the leadership style of women is less hierarchical and more democratic in nature. Woman managers communicate and use less dominating body language and procedures than male managers. They appear to be more flexible, sensitive and more successful. The Gender Equity Task Team Report (Department of Education 1997:204) asserts that for women to succeed in male environments, they are forced to adopt a hegemonic modus operandi. While there is a variety of different leadership and management styles and women have been associated with particular styles of management, any one style cannot be neatly defined as being totally male or totally female. Women managers have for some time been known to be as autocratic as their male counterparts.

One such argument which is commonly used to persuade managers that there are no differences between males and females in terms of work competencies is the "gender blind" theory. According to this theory a gender blind person makes no reference to individual-personal experiences. Gender blind persons assume that there is a level "playing field" at work where men and women can excel equally (Davidson & Burke 1994:34).

3.5.6 Research findings

The research methodology used in this study consisted partly of a participatory action research approach using focus groups of female principals from both primary and secondary schools drawn from the ten education districts of the Mpumalanga Education Department. The focus groups consisted of 10 female principals who were trained on a variety of gender equity management programmes. This focus group of ten female principals was used as the first sample size of the CSAEMP gender equity programme. As soon as they were trained they were expected to train other female principals in their districts as explained in phase 4 of the gender equity action plan (see above).

The main aims of adopting the participatory action research approach which entails the researcher becoming part of the problem and solutions by gathering first-hand information were:

i)   to move beyond what the existing literature studies on the underrepresentation of women in education management have documented elsewhere in other countries and locate the problems in the South African context, in particular the Mpumalanga Education Department;

ii)   to create an environment within which the focus group of female principals could provide a first-hand experience of lessons learned in the course of the implementation of the programme;

iii)   to determine the types of problems female principals encounter in management positions and to find out why women are underrepresented in senior management positions;

iv)   to present strategies that may assist the Mpumalanga Education Department to redress gender imbalances and the underrepresentation of women in senior management positions.

The findings show that the reasons for the underrepresentation of women in senior management positions by female principals can be explained in the following ways:

- Gender roles (reproductive, productive, community) and needs (practical and strategic) determine how males and females are socialised. Males have been socialised to lead and to be active in organisations whilst females are socialised to be followers and passive. Society tends to prepare girls for failure and boys for success. For example, the most powerful positions of authority in the school system are occupied by males and the less powerful positions are occupied by women.

- There is an equal number of girls and boys who enter primary school but fewer girls are retained in the secondary school due to a high drop-out rate associated partly with sexual harassment, violence and teenage pregnancy. The 1996 statistics show that, of the 49% girls and 51% boys who entered primary school, only 43% girls managed to

reach secondary school whilst 57% boys managed to reach secondary school.

- There are more female teachers and principals in primary schools than in secondary schools. There seems to be a coincidental trend with regard to lower representation of girls and female teachers or principals. There are fewer girl-children and female teachers or principals in secondary schools than in primary schools. The 1996 statistics show that about 49% of the girls were in primary schools as compared to 51% of the boys. About 33% of female teacher managers were in secondary schools as compared to 67% male teacher managers.

- Most women have a low perception of themselves and do not opt for challenging jobs nor do they encourage other females to apply for positions of authority.

- Capacity building programmes such as self-motivation, leadership skills, diversity management, assertiveness, team-building, stress management, gender policy, planning development and analysis modules are affirmative action programmes and can be adopted as strategies for empowering female teachers to cope with the demands of power relations within the school system, particularly where female teachers are relegated to subordinate positions and other discriminatory practices.

The discussions below will link up with research findings on the types of resistance that women are likely to encounter when promoted to senior management positions which have been traditionally reserved for males.

3.5.7 Constraints

A review of the literature (Moser 1993; Levy 1996; Ozga 1993; DBSA 1993; Prekel n.d.; Mitchell & Correa 1996) reflects the opinion that both internal and external factors can be identified as being contributory to the underrepresentation of women in leadership and senior management positions.

They refer to external blockages as inherent in institutionalised attitudes and perceptions of society discriminating against women in aspiring for management positions. These are sometimes referred to as structural or organisational barriers. Internal obstacles are those that are usually generated from the low perception that women have of themselves because they do not opt for challenging jobs.

During a Provincial Gender Equity CSAEMP workshop held in Mpumalanga for female principals in August 1997, the participants were given an exercise using the Visualisation in Participatory Programme (VIPP) to write down the types of resistance that women are likely to encounter when promoted to senior management positions which have been traditionally reserved for males.

The following responses were given, namely that women:

- lack experience and are not confident enough;
- cannot maintain discipline and cannot handle crises as they are emotional;
- are not strong and lack leadership qualities;
- cannot be promoted because they lack managerial skills and that promotion is for men; and
- take maternity leave every 2 years.

These responses suggest that the different perceptions held by society and individuals are both attitudinal and systemic and limit the advancement of women to career opportunities. Burke and McKeen (in Michelle & Correa 1996:66) highlight the following six factors as contributory to the success of women:

i)   help from senior managers;
ii)   a track record of achievement;
iii)   a desire to succeed;
iv)   an ability to manage subordinates;
v)   a willingness to take career risks; and

vi)   an ability to be tough, decisive and demanding.

They also identified the three most common factors that explain the failure of female managers:

i)   inability to adapt;

ii)   wanting too much; and

iii)   performance problems.

It is important for female managers to make use of the available support system and to challenge the existing stereotypes that hinder their career advancements.

3.5.8 Linking constraints to strategies

Within the South African context, particularly in Mpumalanga, there is a discrepancy in terms of the number of females and males who occupy leadership positions in institutions as reflected in Tables 3.5 - 3.8. This trend emanates from the fact that institutionalised barriers like the lack of access to information and decision-making processes have relegated women to inferior positions and denied them opportunities to develop on a par with their male counterparts.

The constraints and strategies reflected in Table 3.9 below can be regarded as catalysts for overcoming systemic and attitudinal barriers with regard to the womenless leadership positions in senior management positions in the Mpumalanga Education Department (CSAEMP Gender Equity Workshop August 1997; Mitchell & Correa 1996).

Russell (in Mitchell & Correa 1996:32) maintains that most barriers women face can be turned into strategies for success (opportunities). The implication is that individual organisations and societal constraints that impede women taking up positions of authority can be overcome only if women themselves are aware of such problems and are able to identify strategies. Such strategies can then be converted into opportunities and can be used as "a vantage point" for their voices to be heard and remembered.

Understanding and applying Table 3.9 on linking constraints to strategies will enable individuals and organisations within the Mpumalanga Education Department to improve their strategies to accelerate an increase in the number of women at senior management levels. Coussey and Jackson (1991:123) point out that evidence does not support the above standpoint on the increase of women in senior management positions and suggest that this depends on improving strategies for change known as a "glass ceiling" (the level at which most organisations and individuals seem to cease to progress). They maintain that it appears as if organisational cultures at the top of the pyramid and the effects of stereotyped attitudes about who "fits" at senior levels and the consequences of domestic pressures on women mean that senior levels are overwhelming white or black and male dominated. One major reason for this is the tendency for us all to select people who look and think like us. If more women had the skills, experience and confidence to compete equally, this could begin to change the decision-making process. For example, designing and implementing affirmative action programmes for women will remove some barriers that hold women back from occupying senior management positions.

More and more women managers are encouraged by the government to transcend the traditionally male dominated "glass ceiling" of management, through the application of affirmative action programmes. Bosset and Caran (in Beckmann *et al.* 1999:74-75) assert that valid affirmative action programmes should meet three criteria. They should:

- be directed to achieving equity for a group which has been the subject of past discrimination;
- be proportional to the goals being pursued;
- not be unreasonably prejudicial to those not embraced by it.

Table 3.9   Linking constraints to strategies with regard to womenless leadership in senior management positions (Mpumalanga Education Department 1997)

Constraints	Strategies

1.   Lack of:
      1.1   commitment/involvement
      1.2   support
      1.3   budget
      1.4   baseline-data
 	
      1.5   personnel
      1.6   roles and responsibilities
	1.1 Awareness raising, networking
	1.2 Role models and mentors
	1.3 Budget initiatives identified
	1.4 Research and computerised clearing houses
	1.5 Training people with potential
	1.6 Work plans tied to responsibilities

2. Underrepresentation	2. Empower women with assertiveness and competence skills
3. Women being marginalised	3. Identify mentors and role models and establish networks
4. Women feeling isolated	4. Establishing a web of relationships as support structures
5. Passing sexist remarks	5. Developing sexual harassment and violence guidelines

Opportunities	Outcome Indicators
1. Provisioning of legal and institutional framework on employment equity	1. Improvement with regard to women's employment opportunities at the end of a 3-5 year period
2. Specialised training and capacity building	2. More women assuming leadership positions at 10% incremental rate per year
3. Bilateral negotiations with donor countries and NGOs	3. Partnership established for equitable delivery of resources and ensuring the sustainability of programmes years after the end of donor agency and NGO's involvement
4. Mainstreaming gender into programmes, projects and policies	4. Establishing a Gender Management System (GMS)

In operationalising these criteria a clearly defined Employment Equity Plan should be drawn up. Such a plan should be practical, realistic, measurable and specific (Department of Public Service and Administration 1998: paragraph 3.2.3).

Mentoring of the designated groups plays a crucial role in the career development and success of women (Blatchford-Siraz 1993:147). Ramphele (in Mitchell & Correa 1996) alludes to the significance of mentoring strategies for the career advancement of women. They are of the opinion that, given the lack of a critical mass of women who are currently in senior positions, there is a need to investigate the ways in which males in senior management positions might mentor females.

3.6 IMPLICATIONS FOR WOMEN

Women educators are faced with a variety of challenges and opportunities in organisations. Women educators in education management in Mpumalanga need to deal with the politics of gender for professional and personal growth. The basic departure point will be that through education, training and development, society can be empowered about the needs and interests of women and multi-pronged strategies can be deployed to bring about change. Women must depend on their personal values and perceptions and should appreciate their differences with their male counterparts. As team members within organisations, women should learn to know others on a deeper level and not be influenced by first impressions (Chang 1996:81).

The necessity to integrate women into developmental programmes and projects goes back to the 1970s and 1980s when the national machineries for the advancement of women to equality fell short in influencing government policy and were often under resourced. Mainstreaming as an integrationist strategy arose after the Nairobi U.N. Women's Conference in 1985 as a "push towards systemic procedures and mechanisms with organisations, particularly government and public institutions, for taking into account gender issues at all strategies of policy making and program design and implementation" (Department of Education 1999).

At the UN Fourth World Conference on the Beijing Platform of Action held in 1995, gender

mainstreaming was adopted as a strategy in which women as well as men are taken into account in all stages of the planning cycle (Moser 1993:150; Levy 1996:1; Commonwealth Secretariat 1999:10).

The main problem with this, specifically in rural areas, is the authoritarian and patriarchical control perpetuated by traditional norms and practices that prevent women from advancing into leadership positions. Through the Constitutional Court and other independent State Institutions supporting Constitutional Democracy (Republic of South Africa 1996: Chapter 9), women can challenge these discriminatory practices.

Other problems affecting women in rural areas and particularly in Mpumalanga, are related to various challenges, for example, transport problems within districts, lack of information and access to institutions such as information centres for women which may assist them with a wealth of knowledge regarding self-empowerment and career appointments to positions of authority. Sometimes the infrastructure network within rural schools or institutions is very poor with the consequence that few women educators pursue skills that are self-empowering for career advancement. Their activities are normally centred on their daily routine of teaching and going home to assume the role of a mother and homemaker for their husbands and children.

Human (1993:28) contends that within the workplace most organisations are not providing an environment in which women can grow and develop on merit. Development should be viewed as a process of setting realistic goals and moderate risk-taking in line with individual strengths and weaknesses. Madi (1993:90) and Shope *et al.* (1994) indicate that rural women in particular need to be educationally and economically empowered in order to bring about radical but positive changes that were internalised by images of stereotypes that made women unaware and afraid of change. This could be achieved through carrying out an equal opportunities audit, spotting the potential for change, achieving success and defining equal opportunities, objectives and targets.

In defining equal opportunities, objectives and targets, organisations might consider the following:

i)   a group mission statement and objectives;

ii) target dates for the completion of particular projects or programmes of work; and

iii) numerical targets reflecting change and what the organisation will look like in 3-5 years'
     time (Coussey & Jackson 1991:21-25).

The Mpumalanga experience can be explained in the following way:

i)   A group mission statement and objectives. The MED mission statement reads as follows:

     "Working in partnership with all stakeholders, the Mpumalanga Education
     Department is committed to render a learner centred quality education through the
     maximum utilization of the existing resources."

     The objectives define a measurable outcome as "a learner centred quality education" and
     specify where they should be carried out - "Mpumalanga Education Department" and how
     they should be carried out - "*through the maximum utilization of the existing resources.*"

ii) Target dates for the completion of particular projects or programmes of work.

     Target dates for the completion of a gender equity action plan for the MED are reflected
     in Table 3.2 The action plan is tied to the department's plans, programmes and policies
     articulated in its White Papers of 1995, namely that of providing universal basic education
     which will be consistent with the national policy, norms and standards through the
     following mechanisms.

     •   guaranteeing access to learning institutions on an equitable basis

     •   providing physical, material, financial and human resources

     •   raising funds and other resources where necessary for developmental initiatives
         such as early childhood development, adult basic education, education support
         service and Library and Information Services (LIS).

iii) Numerical targets reflecting changes what the organisation will look like in 3-5 years' time.

These targets are set with a purpose of achieving a wider representation of women in senior management positions. For example, Table 3.4 estimates the percentage of women to be trained between 1997 and 2000 as follows:

1997 - 1998   =   7,28%

1998 - 1999   =   60,7%

1999 - 2000   =   33,25%

The above figures reflect that it is hoped that the 824 female principals occupying senior management positions will have been trained through various capacity building skills by the year 2000. Such capacity building skills will entail programmes on communication and leadership skills; confidence building; personal growth and development; time management; and stress, anxiety and fear management. However, one should not lose sight of the number of challenges encountered by the education system, namely the transfer, promotion or resignation of people involved in this process; the focus of the project might shift from the original Women in Development (WID) approach to the Gender and Development (GAD) approach where both men and women are regarded as equals in terms of power-sharing and participation in decision-making processes; budgetary constraints; the limitations imposed by donor countries and the multiplier effect of the project long after the donor country has ceased its services.

3.7 CONCLUSION

The allegations of incidences of discrimination against women in leadership positions are supported by practices prevailing within the Mpumalanga Education Department. In the course of the discussions it became apparent that cultural stereotypes and the power relations between different members of the communities inherently reinforce such stereotypical tendencies.