

## CHAPTER 4

### AFFIRMATIVE ACTION REGARDING WOMEN IN EDUCATION MANAGEMENT IN MPUMALANGA

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Socio-cultural disparities relating to race and gender have been internalised and reinforced as acts of discrimination within societal institutions and it will probably take some time before any positive changes can become visible. Such inequalities have had a deep impact on the disadvantaged members of communities, in particular women, rural people, the disabled and the youth at risk. The end result for many was caused by a lack of provisioning and access to education, information communication technology infrastructure and participation in decision-making processes.

The resulting tension created by these exclusionary decision-making processes has multiplied to such an extent that certain members of the communities are fearful of any change that will bring about and promote equity and tolerance with regard to gender, race, class, culture and sexual orientation. It will require some effort on the part of individuals and organisations to create a new organisational culture.

Wingrove (1993:62) maintains that "change is not comfortable and can often be painful. The extent to which the work environment will be changed when a successful affirmative action process is operational must not be underestimated. The major challenge for management will be changing the environment and its impact on the employees' attitude and performance". Equally important is a need to identify constraints and opportunities and to propose policy recommendations aimed at eradicating gender stereotypes, particularly in the way society views women as incompetent in leading and managing institutions as was discussed in Chapter Three.

In Chapter Four, the dissertation will investigate the historical background of affirmative action

and lessons learned from other countries, concepts related to affirmative action, myths, objectives, principles and models of affirmative action. It will also outline an overview of the manifestation of affirmative action within the South African context, citing the Mpumalanga Education Department as an example, where the Gender Equity Programme as an affirmative action programme in education management was implemented. Lastly, it will elucidate reasons that may contribute to the failure of the implementation of affirmative action programmes in certain organisations and recommend education, training and development (ETD) as vehicles for operationalising affirmative action.

Human Rights initiatives have globally called upon governments and non-governmental organisations to be held accountable for failing to pursue the full enjoyment of social justice and non-discrimination of its citizens in terms of the legal instruments that are indicated below:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC - 1989)
- Vienna World Conference on Human Rights (WCHR - 1993)
- United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW - 1997)
- The African Charter on Human and People's Rights (1981)

These human rights initiatives are aimed at protecting human values such as equality, equity, non-discrimination, non-sexism and freedom. All these endeavours are a *sine non quo* that men, women and children from all walks of life are prompted by the same desire to live in peace and full respect for their human rights and fundamental freedom. Apparently, the best ways of reaching the minds and hearts of all people and encouraging everyone to make a direct contribution and participation in the human rights culture is through information and education (Raoul Wallenberg Institute, 1995).

Section 39 of the Constitution maintains that, when interpreting the Bill of Rights, a court must have regard to international human rights. Some of these international conventions have a particular importance to women. For example, in 1993 the South African government signed

the United Nations Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriage; the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women. The latter became the first of these conventions to be ratified by the South African government on the 15 December 1995 (Unit for Gender Research in Law, Unisa 1998:235).

Of particular importance to the advancement and empowerment of women is the Beijing Platform for Action, which resulted from the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women. The Conference was held in Beijing (China) in September 1995 and all governments which participated in the Conference, including the South African government, committed themselves to ensuring that all their policies and actions will be geared towards the advancement of women to equality with men and empowerment.

#### **4.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND LESSONS LEARNED**

The concept "affirmative action" (AA) can mean different things to different people. Due to the historical problems experienced in the 1960s in the United States in addressing inequalities in respect of a minority group, the process of legislating affirmative action was met with criticism and is still being debated within many South African organisations.

In Sri Lanka, affirmative action was applied in relation to the Sinhalese who constitute three quarters of the population. The Tamils, a minority advantaged group was disempowered as a result of affirmative action when the Sinhalese, the majority, took power and used it to narrow the political, economic and educational opportunities of the Tamils. The Sri Lanka context is relevant to South Africa and should not be confined to racial prejudices but should also highlight gender, class, religious and cultural prejudices (Charlton & Van Niekerk 1994:28).

Malaysia also shared similar experiences with South Africa in the sense that affirmative action policies were adopted in favour of the Malays who constitute about 54% of the population as compared to 35% Chinese and 10% Indians. The Chinese were largely concentrated in the

urban areas and were relatively wealthy. Statutory affirmative action and special clauses were introduced in the Constitution to favour the Malays. During the transition period the Chinese continued to play an active role in pressing for economic growth policies and in return accepted the fact that the Malaysians would get a larger share of the social and welfare resources (Adams 1993:38; Charlton & van Niekerk 1994:45; Emsley 1996:25-72).

In terms of the geographic location, Namibia is the closest country from which lessons on affirmative action can be drawn. In its treatment of equality and affirmative action, the Constitution of Namibia, in Section 10, endorses that no person may be discriminated against on the grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed or socio-economic status. Apart from incorporating such measures, it is unfortunate that to date no further concrete legislation has been enacted in that country (Adams 1993:41; Charlton & Van Niekerk 1994:42).

In light of the above discussions, it is quite evident that the nature, severity and the unfolding of affirmative action occur differently in different countries. This is based on the rationale that the practical process of discrimination as well as the socio-economic and political backgrounds differs from country to country as has been explained earlier. South African organisations are also engaged in the process of implementing affirmative action due to the pressure emanating from the government. This was the result of the legacy of discrimination in relation to race, gender, and disability that has denied access to opportunities for opportunities for education, employment, promotion and wealth creation to the majority of South Africans (Department of Labour n.d.).

The pros and cons of affirmative action in South Africa should be debated from a relevant standpoint based on the historical, political and economic realities of the country. Equally important is to look into the do's and don'ts of the measures to be taken to reduce imbalances and disparities amongst different groups of people irrespective of race, gender, class or sexual orientation. Contrary to the United States for example, which instituted affirmative action programmes as a means of providing the disadvantaged with equal opportunities, affirmative action in South Africa was focused on capacity building, training, development and

empowerment, mainly for the disadvantaged groups black people, women, the disabled, youth at risk and rural people (Technikon South Africa 1995).

It seems that affirmative action in South Africa will only occur if opportunities for growth, based on a sound policy framework, are created for people to develop. Although this cannot be achieved overnight, it is important for South African policy makers to learn lessons from countries which have implemented successful affirmative action policies.

#### **4.2.1 Affirmative action: concept definition**

Below are some definitions of what affirmative action entails:

Innes (1993:4) defines affirmative action as a "set of procedures aimed at proactively addressing the disadvantages experienced by certain sections of the community in the past." This implies that affirmative action constitutes a process with clearly defined operational practices aimed at assisting those who were marginalized in the past by creating opportunities for them to develop. For instance, in education management it has been echoed that women are underrepresented in senior management positions of the education system. If the education system is truly committed to change, then it is imperative that a sound organisational culture that encourages the marginalised people to develop, in this particular instance women, should be created.

The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) (1994:33) defines affirmative action as: "... special programmes based on accelerated development and on a review of the criteria for recruitment and promotion which will be designed to address the underrepresentation of specific categories of persons at different levels of the public service." The argument is based around the moral fairness of recruitment, selection and promotion criteria. The debate calls for special programmes to be created for those who were disadvantaged, so that they may be able to compete effectively in all spheres of life. Great caution should be taken that these programmes should not become mere tokens or "tailor-made" programmes. South Africa has no choice but to uphold quality and to maintain standards. The fact that the South African education system, particularly in rural areas, is characterised by womenless leadership in

positions of authority is not an excuse for appointing "any woman" to such positions. Meritocracy coupled with training, education and development will ensure that those women who have been identified as having the potential to hold such positions, be given their rightful place. It should be noted that the RDP concerns itself with the public service.

According to Wingrove (1993:7) affirmative action is defined as a "productive conscious effort to redress disadvantages of the past and to increase the representation of marginalised groups of the population in leadership positions in society." There is an assumption that suggests that women are less capable in managerial positions than men because they are preoccupied with familial responsibilities. Whether this assumption is justified by the small number of women who occupy senior positions as reflected in Table 3.5 - 3.8, is a matter to be debated, particularly with regard to quality versus quantity. This discourse centres around implementing the best method for the advancement of women in organisations either by increasing the numbers of black and female managers in order to redress past inequalities or to promote on merit. Charlton and Van Niekerk (1994:55) maintain that "... for most positions it is not necessary to get the best man or woman for the job, but the right person for the job."

Human (1993:7) states that: "Affirmative action is a temporary intervention designed to achieve an equal employment opportunity without lowering standards and without unduly trammelling the career aspirations or expectations of current organisational members who are competent in their jobs." According to this definition, affirmative action is viewed as having entry points and exit points with definitive objectives in mind. Once the identified objective has been achieved, a new one should be targeted. However, this does not mean that the achieved objective should be abandoned once a new one is identified. For example, the Mpumalanga Education Department in its gender equity management programme was initiated with an aim of ensuring that opportunities were created for growth and development for the designated group, in particular women in leadership position. For example, the gender equity training programme's objectives as discussed in paragraph 4.4.3, are to:

- redress gender inequalities in leadership roles by identifying programmes such as assertiveness, mentoring, leadership etc.; and

- support the whole school development initiative based on the changing role of management by focusing on programmes such as team-building, diversity and change management.

Another element expressed by this view of affirmative action is that, in implementing affirmative action programmes, care should be taken to ensure that competent people within organisations are not sacrificed at the expense of incompetent people for the sake of affirmative action. Inherent job requirements which the employer expects from an employee in order to institute a particular job should be considered in recruitment, selection and promotion of potential candidates. This raises a further debate on direct and indirect discrimination as contained in Section 6(1)(2)(3) of the Employment Equity Act (1998).

The White Paper on Affirmative Action in the Public Service (1998, Chapter 1, paragraph 1.5) defines affirmative action as "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) defines affirmative action measures 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." These two definitions raise a number of concerns, namely whether affirmative action is an individual or group concern. Who should benefit - an individual or group concern? Who should benefit - an individual or a group of people in an organisation? The two approaches are not mutually exclusive in the sense that, by affirming an individual, one actually affirms a group within a particular organisational setting. For example, the potential appointment of women to senior management positions, in the case of the Mpumalanga Education Department head office staff as discussed in paragraph 3.5.3 (Table 3.6) will surely make a difference. Organisations should reflect the larger society where sexism and gender inequity exist. This implies that affirmative action programmes and policies are context specific, i.e. they have entry points and exit points. Care should be taken that affirmative action programmes and policies are not implemented without proper planning because they tend to be difficult to remove once instituted. For example, in the case of Malaysia they yielded undesirable effects such as

dependency and resentment (Emsley 1996:8).

In the light of the above definitions affirmative action implies a programmatic set of interactions with entry and exit points, aimed at providing equal opportunities for the disadvantaged sectors of the community, in this instance women in education management in the Mpumalanga Education Department. They suffer double oppression and discrimination in terms of gender and traditional rural stereotypes.

#### 4.4.2 Concepts related to affirmative action

As has been mentioned in paragraph 4.2 on the historical background and lessons learned on affirmative action, different people attach different meanings to the definition of affirmative action and that it impacts differently on different groups of people under various conditions. Emsley (1996:11) and *Die Suid-Afrikaan* (May, June 1993) point out that affirmative action may be considered in two senses: broad affirmative action seeks to reduce disparities by creating equality of opportunity (education, health, job growth) whereas narrow affirmative action tends to create equality of outcome within organisations.

Based on the above explanation, the following concepts are sometimes used synonymously or interchangeably with the concept of affirmative action:

Preferential treatment; proportional representation; reverse discrimination; equaliser; corrective strategy; developmental strategy; remedial action; focus strategy; meritocracy; quota system; compensation; redistribution; enabling strategy; righting wrong; socialisation process; equal opportunities, etc. (South African Institute of Public Administration 1992; Beckmann 1995).

The use of these concepts is context specific and mechanisms should be set in place to regulate affirmative action programmes by translating them into legislation. The Bill of Rights in the Constitution of South Africa (1996) enshrines an affirmative action clause in section 9 (2) which reads as follows:



"Equality includes the full and equal employment of all rights and freedoms. To promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons, or categories of persons disadvantaged by unfair discrimination may be taken."

According to de Wet (1996:122), section 9(2) is necessary to address the large backlogs in certain communities in South African society. It allows (negative) legislation that prevents private employers from discriminating on the grounds of gender and/or race. It also authorises positive legislation that, for instance, introduces quota systems for specific disadvantaged groups and favours the disadvantaged in the allocation of resources.

Affirmative action is the result of anti-discriminatory measures triggered by the legacy of the past and was created to assist those who were previously disadvantaged and denied access to resources and opportunities to participate meaningfully in the economy of the country. Qunta (1995:6-16) is of the opinion that some of these discriminatory laws date back as far as the 17th century and continued almost without interruption for close on two centuries. These laws included the following:

- The Native Land Act of 1913
- The Native Labour Settlement of Dispute Act of 1951
- The Urban Areas Act of 1945
- The Bantu Education Act of 1955

These pieces of legislation had far-reaching implications for women, particularly rural black women, who were subjected to triple oppression, namely the discriminatory laws promulgated by the State, oppressive traditional cultural practices and the pressure of home and family life.

The dawn of the new dispensation in South Africa has brought about new changes to the lives of many people irrespective of race and gender. Legislative measures such as:

- The Constitution of South Africa in the Bill of Rights (1996)

- The National Action Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (1998)
- The Labour Relations Act (1995)
- The Employment Equity Act (1998)
- The Basic Conditions of Employment Act (1998)

opened up new avenues for development. Adams (1993:1) pointed out what the State President of the first democratic dispensation alluded to in 1991 about affirmative action, namely that, "To millions affirmative action is a beacon of positive expectation. To others it is an alarming spectre which is viewed as a threat to their personal security and a menace to the integrity of the public." This implies that there will always be arguments for and against the implementation of the affirmative action programme within South African communities. Each of the arguments has its own pros and cons, as will be explained later in this chapter.

#### **4.2.3 Myths about affirmative action**

The debates around affirmative action are explained in terms of binary oppositions from both the advocates and detractors who hold different and strong emotional views, fuelled by myths about affirmative action. Supporters often question any attack on affirmative action as racist and/or sexist. Detractors condemn it and argue that it promotes incompetence and will hamper the economic recovery of any country (Institute for Democracy in South Africa 1995:3).

Other myths about affirmative action are that it is viewed as a programme for the disadvantaged; a matter of charity; a reversal of discrimination; a lowering of standards; window dressing; the fulfilment of quotas; tokenism; an add-on-strategy; a numbers game; an exclusive strategy and an embarrassing and demeaning strategy for women and blacks who are regarded as "affirmative action appointments" (Horne 1992; Technikon South Africa 1995; Black Management Forum n.d.).

The most talked about myths of affirmative action are the reversal of discrimination, lowering of standards and tokenism. This view is often propagated by the detractors of affirmative action who are afraid of change, more especially when change requires a great deal of radical

adjustment. This view has serious implications for women. The socio-economic and cultural imperatives of affirmative action and their principles and strategies for effective implementation are not taken seriously by most organisations. The Employment Equity Act (1998) Section 13(1-2) stipulates the duties of designated employers which should consider the socio-economic and cultural imperatives of the designated groups. The White Paper on Affirmative Action in the Public Service (1998) outlines a number of principles which should guide the implementation of affirmative action in the Public Service. These principles are contained in paragraph 2.11 and include aspects such as: communication, participation, transparency, accountability, reasonable accommodation and relative disadvantage. Since the Employment Equity Act targets the designated groups, namely, blacks (Africans, Coloureds and Indians), females and persons with disabilities, programmes designed as affirmative action measures must "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" (section 15(1)).

Qunta (1995:21) is of the opinion that, listening to some of the objections about the implementation of affirmative action, one gets the feeling that the speakers are proposing that things should remain the same and run as they are for the foreseeable future. They do this by suggesting a very slow, almost imperceptible pace of reform. What women managers should strive for is to discuss these issues publicly so that it should become clear that they deserve the same treatment as other members of the society. Qunta (1995:22) proposes that in the near future ability and not sex or race should be the sole criterion for selection.

Whatever the arguments are for or against affirmative action, there is no absolute or successful affirmative action formula that can be guaranteed as the best approach and as a balanced programme that will not discriminate against blacks-whites and women-men and girls-boys. The contentious issue is: the demanding of a right to an equitable slice of the economic pie.

#### **4.2.4 Objectives and principles of affirmative action**

Affirmative action programmes and strategies are based on the premise that there are previous

social practices that have been discriminatory in nature and that mechanisms should be put in place to increase opportunities for those who were previously disadvantaged, particularly designated groups such as blacks, women and the disabled.

The purpose of the Employment Equity Act (1998) as stipulated in section 2(a) is "... to promote equal opportunity ... through the elimination of unfair discrimination by implementing affirmative action measures to redress disadvantages in employment ...". In section 5 it further stipulates that "every employer must take steps to promote equal opportunity in the workplace by eliminating unfair discrimination in any employment policy or practice." This implies that those who were previously disadvantaged for one reason or another should be afforded an opportunity to participate equally and develop their skills and/or abilities, in order for them to make a positive contribution in their world of work. This can only be achieved through the implementation of affirmative action measures.

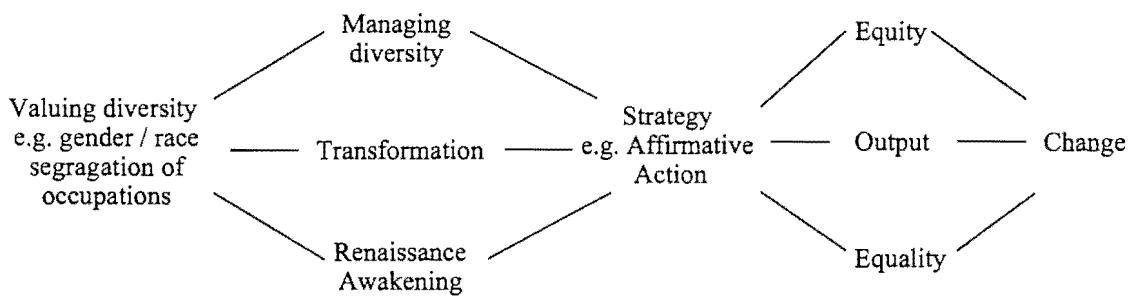
Affirmative action strategy objectives include:

- commitment to create employment equity;
- reducing collective guilt by admitting past wrongs;
- assisting and organising people to value and manage change in its value system;
- creating a favourable climate for cross-cultural integration and acceptance;
- eliminating all forms of employment discrimination, both formal and non-formal, aiming at bringing about equity;
- developing new modes of co-operation and tolerance in the work environment; and
- facilitating access to economic resources and support structures within the organisation and the community (Wingrove 1993; South African Institute of Public Administration 1992; Human 1993; Technikon South Africa 1995).

The White Paper on Affirmative Action in the Public Service (1998) highlights a number of "core principles" that form a framework for the successful implementation of affirmative action in Chapter 2 paragraph 2.11, namely: communication, participation, transparency, accountability, reasonable accommodation and relative disadvantage. For example, in a school

situation, when a senior management post is being advertised, e.g. Head of a School or Subject Head, mechanisms should be put in place to ensure that the advertisement is **transparent** to the public and **communicated** to every individual or group in the school community, particularly those groups who were disadvantaged. This positive action will enable them to **participate** positively and be accountable to their actions.

Given the above exposition of the affirmative action concept, Figure 4.1 depicts elements that are strategic in institutionalising affirmative action programmes in any organisational setting. However, this will involve examining the deeply held cultural assumptions that lead to inequality.



**Figure 4.1** Elements of the web for institutionalising affirmative action in the Mpumalanga Education Department (Adapted from Levy 1996).

The different elements of the web reflected above depict entry points for institutionalising affirmative action in any organisational setting, in this instance the Mpumalanga Education Department (MED). They are interrelated and context specific. The activities of different role players in an organisation for each element may differ. The first element of **valuing diversity** entails **understanding**, **accepting** and **respecting** differences. Harris and Meyers (1996) support this view and assert that because people are unique, they differ in their values, perceptions and how they communicate and solve problems. These differences must be valued and be viewed as strengths rather than as weaknesses. It also requires stepping off the conventional path and

walking into a new territory wherein men/women, boys/girls respect each other by taking a challenge to make a difference to their organisation. This requires the guidance of an educator. Mullen (1994:17) points out that "educators are powerful agents in a child's socialisation, development and education. They should provide a learning environment that allows choice, student involvement, freedom to explore and flexibility". She further goes on to say that: "It is up to today's educators to ensure that this happens. We owe it to our children, ourselves, and to society."

Depending on how individuals and organisations prioritise their needs, organisations may either opt to reinforce diversity or transformation or renaissance as a second element. If the second element of managing diversity is opted for, then it will be logical that an enabling environment should be created wherein each individual within the organisation, irrespective of race, culture or gender can develop to their full potential. Organisations with diverse individuals should develop mechanisms that will ensure that everyone will be afforded the opportunity to perform effectively and to the best of their abilities. The second option may entail moving from the valuing diversity element onto the transformation element. Transformation may occur at an individual or organisational level in terms of providing opportunities for change. It relates to adopting corrective measures that will enable individual members within organisations to compete equitably for employment. Transformation itself is a short-term intervention strategy with certain entry and exit points. Once a particular need has been identified and strategies are implemented for change, then it follows that a new point should be pursued. For example, through the quantitative and qualitative data collected for the Mpumalanga Department on a need to encourage women to be represented in senior management positions as explained in Chapter Three, it became clear that training programmes for capacity building and/or human resource development ought to be developed. The second need was based on mainstreaming gender into departmental policies, programmes and projects.

The third option could be to move from valuing diversity to the renaissance (awakening) element. Within this element individuals are encouraged to understand who they are and how they could relate to others within a particular milieu. Organisations are also encouraged to develop their own vision, mission statement, operating principles, objectives and strategies for

change. Initiatives of this nature help organisations to monitor and evaluate their progress for sustainability in the marketplace.

The first four elements of the web (Figure 4.1) namely, valuing diversity, managing diversity, transformation and renaissance can be regarded as elements "that level the playing field" for the effective implementation of affirmative action programme or measures. The end result of implementing affirmative action programmes is to ensure that designated groups are afforded equal opportunities in terms of resources within the workplace and that there is a fair and equitable distribution of resources to all members, irrespective of gender, race, age or disability as reflected in Figure 4.1. The end result is the creation of a healthy organisational environment which is sensitive to the needs of women/men, girls/boys aimed at instituting organisational change.

The government of South Africa has released a White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (1995) which is regarded as a key strategy to improving delivery of service. Through the "Batho-Pele" (meaning "People First") programme, the government is aiming at meeting the needs of its "customers". Within the education sector, Batho Pele presents an exciting opportunity to the Department of Education and forms the foundation for meeting the education and training needs of the country. The goal is to assist learners and to get them to commit themselves to quality education through life-long learning (Department of Education 2000).

The White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (1995) also sets out a number of transformation priorities, namely:

1. Representativity and affirmative action
2. Employment and affirmative action
3. Rationalisation and restructuring
4. Transforming service delivery
5. Information technology
6. Promoting a professional service ethos
7. Institution-building and management

## 8. Democratising the state.

Transforming service delivery from a gender perspective within the Mpumalanga Education Department will require that the Department translate the transformation objectives into action.

Transforming service delivery is the key to the transformation process because the transformation of the Public Service depends on whether government departments can meet the basic needs of all citizens of South Africa. The successful implementation of Batho Pele will require a systemic resourced and programmatic approach geared towards providing the best services to all citizens of South Africa.

The role of education and of managers in particular is to commit themselves to change, innovate, create and willing to work differently with regard to how things were done in the past with respect to traditional management roles within the evaluation sector. For instance, the traditional practice of management was embedded within its functions, namely planning, organising, leading, co-ordinating and evaluating to create a worker-friendly environment. The new approach to management, as described in paragraph 3.3.1 regards management as the responsibility of the school and its community and not the task of a few. Management should be seen as an activity in which all members in the educational setting are engaged in identifying needs and priorities, namely policies, strategies, structures, ethos and practices, skills, knowledge, diversity and equity issues in the education sector as a whole.

Quantitative and qualitative data highlighted in paragraphs 3.5.3 and 3.5.4 indicated that the Mpumalanga Education Department is to a larger extent still influenced by traditional gender stereotypes with regard to senior management positions. Women still occupy the lower levels of management positions. There is a need to include new trends geared towards creating greater opportunities for career-pathing and developing. This can be achieved through flattening bureaucratic structures and decentralising decision-making to include women managers.



**Table 4.1 Logical framework of the transformation objectives: translating commitments into action in education management from a gender perspective**

Transformation objective	Questions	Commitment	Action	Output
1. Restructuring and rationalisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How should the resources be rationalised and distributed to ensure that both males and females are not discriminated against?</li> <li>How should the fragmented system of education be integrated into a unified whole?</li> <li>Who are the beneficiaries in terms of staffing and administration?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Putting into place mechanisms for restructuring and redistribution of power and resources</li> <li>Changing the fragmented system of education to an integrated system</li> <li>Ensuring that the right people, irrespective of race and gender are appointed to the right place or position</li> </ul>	<p>Developing indicators to measure the success of the rationalisation and restructuring process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishing planning tools to ensure that an integrated and functional management system are established</li> <li>Developing diversity programmes and training modules valuing and managing diversity</li> </ul>	<p>50% of female managers employed in senior management positions by year 2002</p> <p>An integrated system of education that ensures that both males and females are treated equally</p>
2. Institution building and management	Who should be involved in organisational change and management?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify stakeholders to develop strategies to effect organisational change and management which are sensitive to the gender needs of its clientele</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing programmes on leadership, presentation skills, negotiation skills, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An increase in the number of disadvantaged people in leadership positions, in this instance women and girl-children</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acknowledge different work styles associated with feminine and masculine behaviour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring that educational institutions are willing to change their managerial patterns by positively acknowledging their strengths and weaknesses</li> </ul>	

Table 4.1 / Continued

Table 4.1 / continued

Transformation objective	Questions	Commitment	Action	Output
<p>3. Representivity and affirmative action</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which members of society have been marginalised?</li> <li>• Which process ought to be put in place in order to make organisation representative of the population?</li> <li>• Which processes ought to be put in place to bring about fundamental changes?</li> <li>• Who are the beneficiaries of affirmative action?</li> <li>• Who should monitor these programmes?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designing programmes aimed at curbing discriminatory practices in the workplace</li> <li>• Putting women in positions of authority based on merit</li> <li>• Designing tools aimed at uprooting cultural stereotypes that perpetuated discriminatory practices</li> <li>• Developing indicators to measure the success of such programmes</li> <li>• Challenging incidences of sexist and gender practices in schools</li> <li>• Mainstreaming gender considerations in the department's plans, priorities and programmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Putting into place anti-discriminatory practices, legislation and reforms</li> <li>• Using education and training as a vehicle for implementing successful affirmative action programmes and policies</li> <li>• Implementing programmes in such a way that women/men and boys/girls are treated equally in the workplace</li> <li>• Developing institutional frameworks and programmatic frameworks aimed at institutionalising gender in the workplace</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A balanced workforce</li> <li>• Greater involvement of designated groups in ensuring that women are represented in major decision-making activities</li> </ul>

Table 4.1 / Continued

Table 4.1 / continued

Transformation objective	Questions	Commitment	Action	Output
4. Human resources and development training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which types of skills are required for life-long learning development and for whom?</li> <li>• Which types of programmes should be initiated for empowering individuals for institutional change?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing capacity building programmes aimed at developing skills for individual and organisational change for the disadvantaged groups in particular women</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementing programmes and initiating career paths mentoring and networking strategies within educational institutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A safe worker-friendly environment</li> </ul>
5. Transforming service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who should be responsible for service delivery?</li> <li>• Should equity and/or equality prevail in service delivery?</li> <li>• Who should benefit?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transforming the external and internal environments if educational institutions are to be responsive to the needs of the community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting the basic needs of individuals by providing opportunities for development and participation</li> <li>• Promoting partnership, accountability and ownership of services delivered</li> </ul>	Quality services delivered
6. Promotion of professional ethos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which mechanisms should be put in place to internalise the code of conduct for learners and educators?</li> <li>• Who will be responsible for developing a code of conduct for learners and educators?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inculcating values of integrity, honesty and efficiency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring that learners both understand and abide by the code of conduct of learners and educators by organising workshops and information sharing sessions</li> </ul>	Disciplined communities

Table 4.1 / continued

Transformation objective	Questions	Commitment	Action	Output
7. Democratising the workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who has power and who is positioned where in the organisational setting?</li> <li>• Does the organisation adhere to international, national and regional standards of human rights?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring that institutions inculcate an environment which asserts a human rights culture</li> <li>• Developing a space for women's inclusion in decision-making processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that all people participate in major decision processes affecting their lives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender sensitive environment</li> </ul>
8. Conditions of Employment and Labour Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do the conditions of service favour both males and females?</li> <li>• Is there any differential wage gap between males and females?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring that multi-skilling programmes, competency based training and collective bargaining are implemented as constitutional imperatives</li> <li>• Involving women managers in bargaining intervention processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct research on recent trends about women's career paths in "traditional" occupations which are normally in inferior positions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participatory management</li> </ul>

### **4.3 AFFIRMATIVE ACTION MODELS**

The White Paper on Affirmative Action in the Public Service (1998) is a document that indicates that the government is committed to creating a representative and equitable Public Service that enables people who have been historically disadvantaged and discriminated against by unfair practices to fulfil their maximum potential and contribute positively to improving service delivery.

Wingrove (1993), Peoples Dynamics (1994) and the Technikon Study Guide on Affirmative Action (1995) identified the following affirmative action models which can be used by organisations to implement their affirmative action programmes and policies. These models are commonly used by organisations in South Africa. Madi (1993) uses the analogy of animals, reptiles and birds to illustrate the main characteristics of organisational approaches to affirmative action:

#### **4.3.1 Assimilation/integration model**

This model is based on the assumption that employment decisions should be based on meritocracy and that other factors such as race, colour and gender should play no role in the recruitment and promotion processes. According to this model, intervention in the form of training and empowerment is not essential since it is assumed that allowing persons equal opportunities will be sufficient to bring affirmative action into operation.

#### **4.3.2 Displacement model**

The displacement model is based on the premise that socio-political movements are crucial to the affirmative action process. It sees organisational changes as a reflection of societal changes. As people of a different race gain more power in the socio-political arena, they will increasingly fill senior positions within organisations, replacing people from other racial groups in the process.

#### **4.3.3 Job insertion or wedge model**

In this model job categories are created or inserted between the upper limits of the black job hierarchy and the lower limits of the white job hierarchy. It becomes essential that the gap between the two should be minimised or bridged to avoid competition and conflict. Although conflict is a natural occurrence based on interpersonal relationships, it will be ideal for members to identify strategies that will assist them in resolving their conflicts.

#### **4.3.4 Vertical differentiation/separate development model**

Within this model separate specific divisions are earmarked for affirmative action appointees. Training and capacity building are used as an intervention strategy until such time that these appointees are ready to be reintegrated into the mainstream.

According to this model, affirmative action is used to facilitate growth. In that way support structures are made available and a conducive working climate is created so that affirmative action can be promoted. The model focuses on the global development of an individual irrespective of race and sex within a group setting for the realisation of the organisational objectives.

#### **4.3.5 Equity model**

This model calls for a careful definition of affirmative action. The equity model focuses on binary oppositions, namely black-white, men-women, the haves and the have-nots so that equality can be achieved for both groups.

The core of the above-mentioned affirmative models is the removal of formal and informal discrimination, the creation of pro-active intervention programmes and support structures and the changing of mind-sets to bring about equity. For example, the intention of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was to move as quickly as possible towards reducing disparities in a variety of social and physical infrastructures, e.g. housing, education, health care etc. (Emsley 1996:88). Other government initiatives such as Batho Pele ("People First") are aimed at improving the delivery of public service. The White Paper on

Transforming Public Service Delivery (the Batho Pele White Paper) lays down eight principles for the transformation of public service delivery, namely:

- **consultation:** people should be consulted about the level and quality of services they receive
- **service standards:** citizens should be told what level and quality of public service they will receive so that they are aware
- **access:** all citizens should have equal access to the services to which they are entitled
- **courtesy:** citizens should be treated with courtesy and consideration
- **information:** all citizens should be given accurate information about the services they are entitled to
- **openness and transparency:** citizens should be informed how national and provincial administrations are run, costed and who is in charge
- **redress:** all citizens have a right to be offered an apology if a promised standard is not delivered
- **value for money:** citizens should expect that public services are provided as economically and efficiently as possible.

Although the principles for the transformation of the Public Service are simple to state, they are difficult to implement. For example, although the Mpumalanga Education Department is committed to effecting radical changes in long-standing inequity issues, the pace of effecting these changes is slow. This implies that the MED should perhaps put itself in the shoes of the recipient, i.e. schools, and look at the services through the eyes of the "customer".

Madi (1993:11-29) cited the animal in the jungle analogy to illustrate how organisations can transform their service delivery strategies, particularly through the implementation of affirmative programmes and policies. He used the animal, reptile and bird symbols to illustrate how organisations respond to the affirmative action debate. Organisations that adopt the peacock (bird) approach usually embark on a "cosmetic" implementation of affirmative action programmes by employing a few token blacks in the management echelons. Like a peacock, the political pressure forces such organisations *to get their colours looking better*, but they will remain unchanged unless somebody like a political organisation or trade union, challenges the beautiful colours that are kept undisplayed. In the tortoise (reptile) organisation, change is very

slow and when challenged about the slow pace of implementing affirmative programmes and policies, the organisation retreats into its thick shell and refuses to debate the issue. Organisations that adopt the rhinoceros (animal) approach accept the need to implement affirmative action by using multi-pronged strategies. Like the rhinoceros, such an organisation normally confront affirmative action issues head-on, usually based on political correctness and the entitlement culture of the previously disadvantaged groups.

#### **4.4 THE GENDER EQUITY MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME AS AN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION STRATEGY: CASE STUDY**

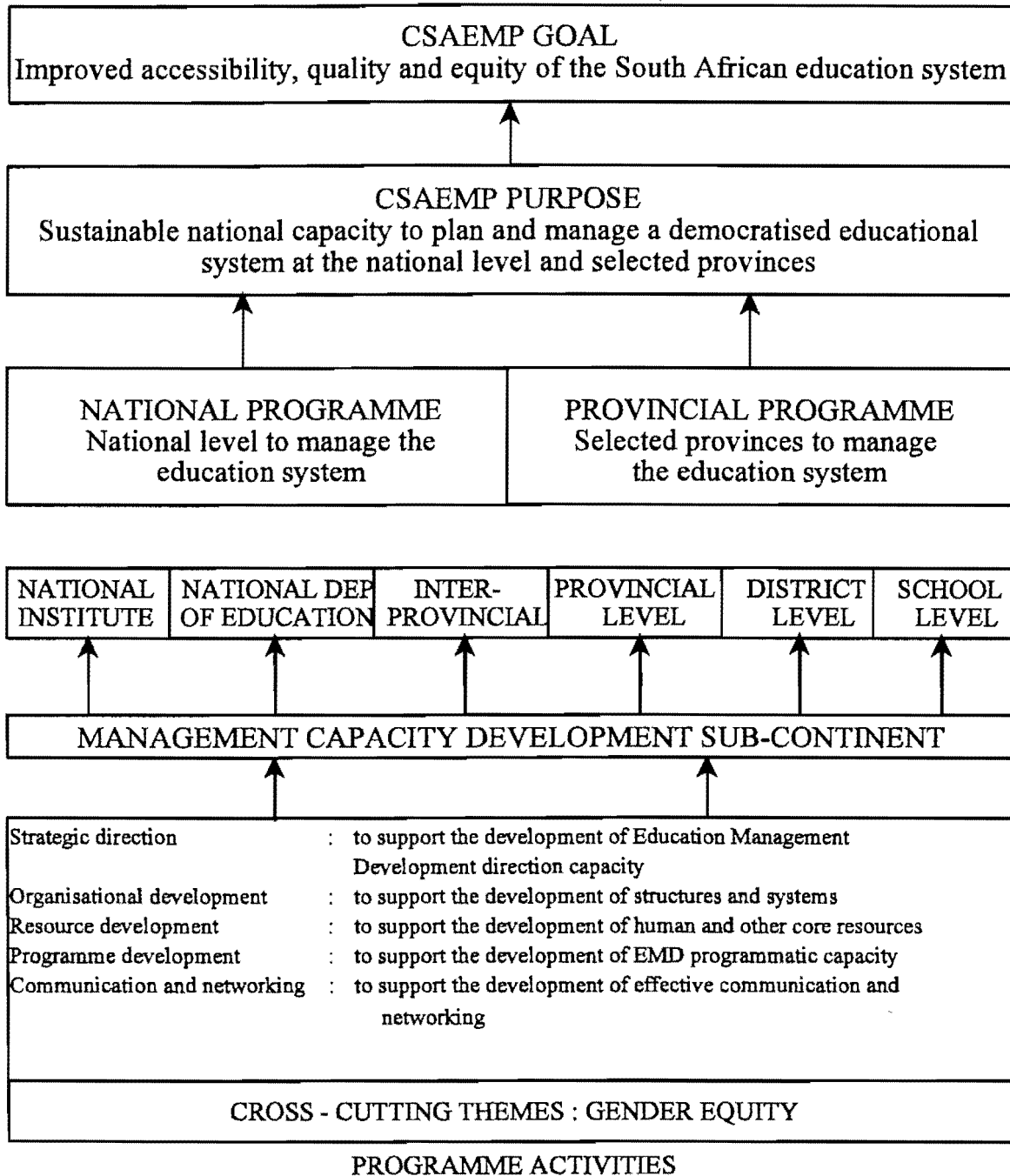
##### **4.4.1 Background**

The Canada-South Africa Education Management Project (CSAEMP) is a partnership venture between the government of Canada and McGill University and the government of South Africa and the National and Provincial Education Departments. The CSAEMP supports various education management initiatives based on the "result-based" model as will be shown in Figure 4.2. The rationale behind the "result-based" model is that learners will be assisted by educators to develop their skills, critical thinking, attitudes and understanding within a particular context. The "result-based" model is equivalent to the Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) which has been introduced by the South African Department of Education. The OBE approach focuses not only on what the learner has learned. This implies that the teaching and learning processes become a mix of both educational and real-life benefits. Learners are partners in the progress of their own development and interest is engaged and maintained throughout the education system (Department of Education 1997).

All these initiatives are an indication that the Department is committed to improving the standard of education with the aim of making the vision of life-long learning a reality.

The management capacity development subcomponent of the CSAEMP focuses on the following core issues: strategic direction, organisational development, resource development, programme development, communication and networking activities. Within all these programme activities, gender equity should be viewed as a cross-cutting theme.





**Figure 4.2** The CSAEMP results- based model (adopted from the CSAEMP work-plan for Gender Equity 1998-1999)

The CSAEMP is two-pronged: the National Programme is aimed at the National Department of Education and the Provincial Programme at selected provinces that manage the education system. Its main goal is to develop improved accessibility, quality and equity of the South African education system through sustainable national capacity programmes aimed at planning and managing a democratised educational system at the national level and selected provinces.

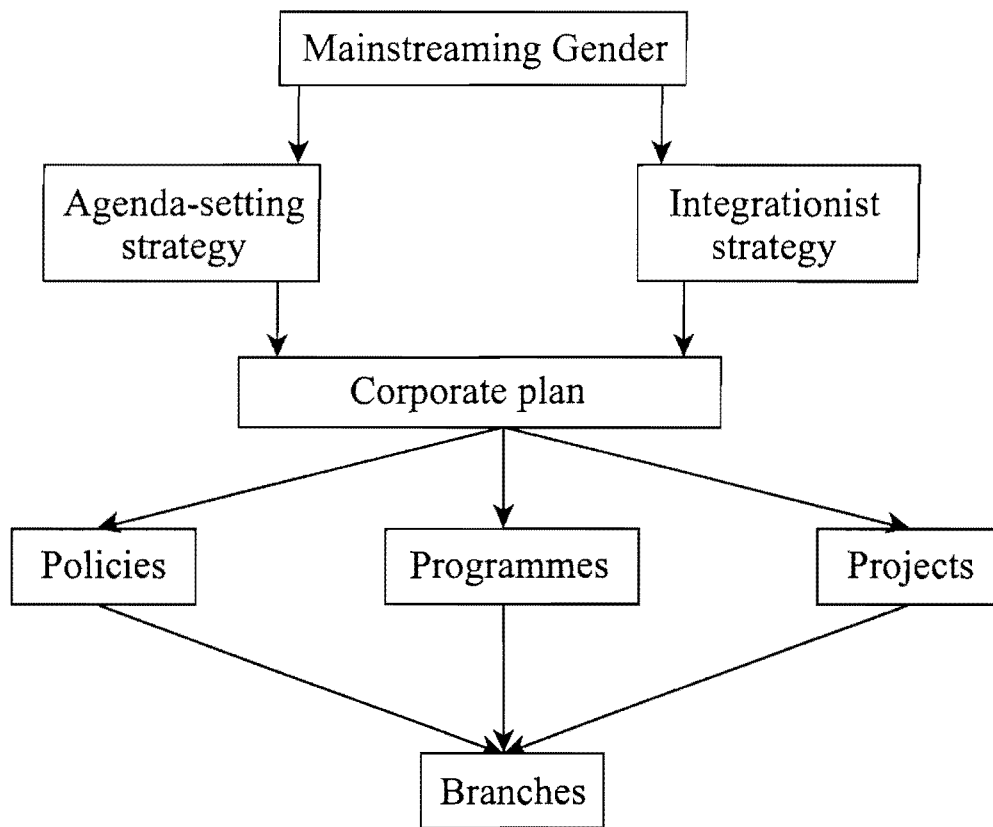
The successful implementation of the gender equity CSAEMP will depend to a larger extent on the transformation of management in education institutions and how gender sensitive these structures are in terms of institutionalising gender in their organisation (National Department of Education 1996).

#### **4.4.2 National, provincial and inter-provincial gender equity programme**

The Canada-South Africa Education Management Programme is offered as a package for the national, provincial and inter-provincial gender equity activities. The National Gender Equity Management Programme is aimed at supporting the following activities:

- policies and implementation issues related to the Gender Equity Task Team Report published by the National Department of Education (1998);
- strategic planning and managing gender in the provinces;
- initiatives pertaining to monitoring gender in the provinces;
- examination of gender equity, e.g. mainstreaming gender and addressing gender as a separatist strategy; and
- devising institutional and programmatic strategies for mainstreaming gender.

The Provincial Gender Equity Programme for the Mpumalanga Education Department is based on the "mainstreaming" or integrated approach. The rationale behind this strategy is to ensure that all gender related issues are integrated into the departments, policies, programmes and projects as reflected in Figure 4.3. The focus on mainstreaming stems from a need to be part of the mainstream which is defined by the English language dictionary as the "prevailing current, direction of activity" or the principal, dominant course, tendency or trend. The idea is to incorporate or integrate gender issues in as many sectors as possible so that the needs of women could become part of the mainstream (Rounaq 1992).



**Figure 4.3** Mainstreaming gender into the department's policies, programmes and projects (adapted from Rounaq 1992).

How can mainstreaming gender fit into the departmental corporate plan? There are two ways in which gender can be mainstreamed and incorporated into the department's daily activities, namely, agenda-setting and integrationist strategy. As an **agenda-setting** strategy, women themselves voice their concerns. This implies that participation of women as decision-makers in determining development priorities is key to changing the nature of organisations to be gender sensitive to the needs of girls and women.

As an **integrationist strategy** gender issues become part of different branches of the Department of Education, namely Educational Services (S), Higher Education (HE), General and Further Education and Training (GFET) and Education Human Resources and Corporate Services (HR). This implies addressing gender issues within existing development strategies and priorities so that the overall development agenda does not become transformed but each issue is adapted to take into account women and gender concerns. The main challenge for women is not simply to be part of the existing mainstream, but in the process to re-orient the nature of the mainstream (Rounaq 1992). Table 4.2 also explains how the mainstreaming approach can be incorporated into the department's plans.

**Table 4.2 Gender mainstreaming approach**

	<b>Agenda setting strategy</b>	<b>Integrationist strategy</b>
Problem	Women excluded in developmental processes	Unequal power relations and authority between men and women
Focus	Women	Relations between men and women
Approach	Women in Development (WID)	Gender and Development (GAD)
Outcome	Equity	Equality

In order to be responsive to the provincial educational priorities and to the overall gender equity strategy, the gender equity activities were created in consultation with the Gender Focal Person (GFP) and the Provincial Education Management Task team.

The inter-provincial programmes were designed to strengthen partnership between provinces, information-sharing and changing management style to be responsive to the needs of women and men to ensure that both live in a society which ignores traditional stereotypes. One of the achievements of the inter-provincial gender equity programme is the publication of a newsletter entitled *Gender Matters*, an initiative of the inter-provincial component of CSAEMP and three provinces, namely Gauteng, Mpumalanga and Free State. It is envisaged that it will be a launching pad for discussing gender equity issues in education.

#### **4.4.3 The Mpumalanga Gender Equity Management programme as an affirmative action intervention strategy: a case study**

The debates for or against affirmative action are not new in the province nor in the country as a whole. Such debates revolve around the issues of race and gender. The manifestations of these two phenomena are almost identical. For example, race was based on the system of separate development and gender on the system of patriarchy (male dominated).

The way policies and programmes were designed, favoured males and boys rather than girls and women. For example, there were no mechanisms put in place to ensure that both girls and women were retained within the school system when they fell pregnant. This resulted in a high drop-out rate for girls in secondary schools and indirectly fewer female teachers in secondary schools. Girls in secondary schools were expelled due to pregnancy related issues and the unmarried female teacher's contract was terminated. In the case of married female teachers, their contracts were also terminated. Sometimes their salaries were temporarily suspended depending on the number of days leave they had to their credit.

The socialisation process prepares boys and girls to behave differently under certain socio-cultural context and this could be attributed mainly to the way they were brought up. The latter has serious implications for boys and girls within the school system. The school system often operates differently for boys-girls and men-women. Boys and men were prepared for leadership positions and women for follower roles (Mpumalanga Education Department 1997; Kane 1996). This may be due to the sexual division of labour which determine different traditional roles and occupations for both men and women as explained in paragraph 2.3.2. Other common problems related to binary preferences are:

- unequal gender balance in school admissions, for example there are more girls than boys who enter school at the primary level, but due to institutionalised barriers (explained in paragraph 2.3) only a small percentage complete their secondary schooling;
- gender stereotyping through historical curriculum structures, for example boys doing natural science and girls human science;

- sexual harassment and violence associated with power relations; and the
- timing of extra-curricular activities which disadvantaged working mothers (Hilladay 1995:88).

The collation of the quantitative and qualitative data depicted in Table 3.5 - 3.9 reflects minimal participation of women in senior leadership positions. This can also be attributed to the way boys and girls were socialised to assume gender roles within the school system. Mitchell (1996:15) points out that:

"... unless there is a substantial 'tampering with' the very structures which in the past have empowered males and disempowered females, the same conditions which today's teachers experienced as pupils will be reproduced: boys will continue to see males in leadership positions of power and decision-making and females in follower roles where they lack access to decision-making and power."

The implication of the above statement is that most of the inequalities and discriminatory practices in the school system are learned through the process of socialisation embedded within cultural and attitudinal stereotypes.

Given the above exposition, the Mpumalanga gender equity management programme, as an affirmative action intervention strategy, was designed with the aim of ensuring that opportunities are created for growth and development for the designated group, in particular women in leadership positions.

The gender equity training programme's objectives were to:

- redress gender inequalities in leadership roles;
- support the whole school development initiative based on the changing role of management;
- focus on change-management and how to manage change, outcome-based education (OBE), shared leadership, team-building on the development of more effective and administrative procedures (CSAEMP Gender Equity Workplan for 1998-1999).

A draft Train a Trainer (CSAEMP gender equity) package consisted of the following modules reflected in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3 Gender equity management programme package (Mpumalanga Education Department 1998)**

Module	Themes
One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal, conceptual, institutional and implementation framework</li> </ul>
Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender and Language</li> <li>• Gender and Information Technology</li> </ul>
Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender and policy analysis, formulation and development</li> </ul>
Four	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender and human resource development and management</li> <li>• Gender and the curriculum</li> </ul>
Five	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applied projects based on the needs and priorities of a district</li> </ul>

The training programme was targeted at women managers holding positions of authority and responsibility. The main thrust of the programme is to develop management skills aimed at removing cultural barriers associated with the underrepresentation of women in positions of decision-making and power. It was also envisaged that the programme would have a multiplier effect, as those who were trained were expected to train other female principals in a cascading model as explained in Chapter Three.

It must be noted that the programme did not exclude male principals as they were also sensitised concerning gender-related matters in the entire process of mainstreaming gender within the Whole School Development Programme.

#### 4.5 GAPS AND CHALLENGES

The most significant gaps and challenges that may hinder progress in terms of redressing gender imbalances and to improving the absence of representation of women in senior leadership and management positions in the Mpumalanga Education Department are:

- the internal and external transformation processes failing to encompass gender equity

issues;

- lack of commitment and support by senior managers such as divisional heads;
- failure to establish a permanent gender unit within the departmental organogram and the appointment of a gender equity co-ordinator and staffing;
- failure to develop programmes that will address customary practices within the education sector and how they impact on women and girl-children;
- developing and identifying programmes that will eradicate or minimise the incidences of violence and sexual harassment in schools;
- failure to establish a support group for women that will actively address gender imbalances in education, for example, in Botswana where a Women in Education Management (WIEM) support group exists; and
- lack of participation of target groups in the design of programmes and the fact that they are minimally consulted.

#### **4.6 SUCCESS STORIES AND/OR ACHIEVEMENTS**

There are best practices and experiences gathered in relation to addressing gender inequity issues in the Mpumalanga Education Department, amongst others:

- a five-year phased-in programmatic action plan with time-lines was developed and it provided leverage for institutionalising gender at head office level, district level, circuit level and school level as explained in Table 3.2;
- a web of structures and linkages inside and outside the department were established with the aim of putting gender issues on the agenda of developmental processes as explained in Figure 3.4;
- developing a gender equity framework as explained in Figure 3.3. The gender equity framework provided a base for diagnosing, analysing and implementing gender considerations in the department's priorities;
- a gender focal person (GFP) was identified to spearhead the process of integrating gender issues within the transformation process unfolding in the Department and elsewhere;



- the implementation of education management programmes on leadership, information technology and governance provided women managers at all levels of the education sector with skills aimed at reinforcing their careers;
- an enabling environment was created with the aim of institutionalising gender issues and integrating gender concerns into the departmental business plans. Enabling factors such as the political will of senior managers to effect change, international and national initiatives such as agreements and conventions, technical support and assistance by donor countries and the critical mass of women in middle and low management who are committed to bring change as explained in Chapter 3 (paragraph 3.5.2); and
- opportunities were created for women managers in middle and low management echelons to attend capacity building skills in the form of formalised structured courses and certificates as explained in paragraph 3.5.2 on training (Mpumalanga Education Department).

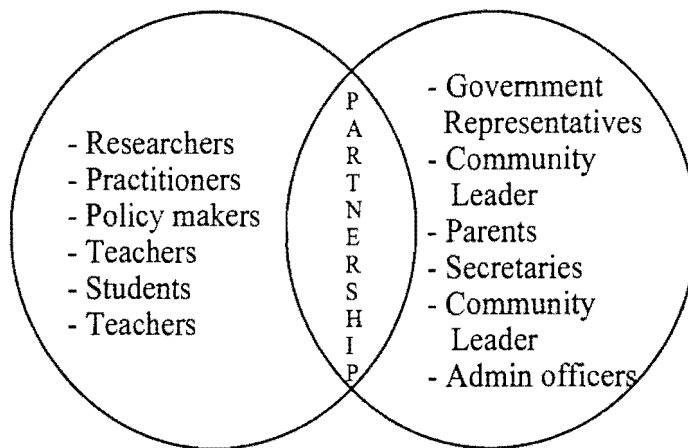
#### **4.7 EVALUATION OF THE CSAEMP GENDER EQUITY INITIATIVE IN THE MPUMALANGA EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

Apart from the gaps, challenges and achievements discussed in the previous paragraphs, it is necessary to outline the impact of programmes engineered by donor countries and to assess their impact in relation to the recipient country.

The CSAEMP was initiated through bilateral negotiations and agreements between the governments of Canada and McGill University in partnership with the South African Government and the national and provincial education departments of Gauteng, Mpumalanga and Free State.

Prior to the project proposal a needs analysis exercise was conducted by CSAEMP and the National Department of Education and the Provincial Departments of Education in terms of assessing the status quo of education management practices in South African schools. A general consensus was reached by South Africa and Canada that there was a need to map out a business proposal with strategies that will challenge the existing absence of a culture of

teaching and learning in the school system (COLT). This move was based on the assumption that the deterioration of learning and teaching in the schools is partly attributed to the way the education sector views education management, namely as a task of a few people and not as an activity in which all members of the education institutions are engaged, namely researchers, practitioners, teachers, policy makers, representatives of government authorities, non-governmental organisations and community leaders are involved. Figure 4.4 reflects how education management can be depicted in an educational institution, be it in primary, secondary or higher education, non-formal and informal environments.



**Figure 4.4 Education Management Partnership** (adopted from the National Department of Education 1996).

The CSAEMP programme consisted of several projects, namely whole school development, twinning, governance, student leadership, information technology and gender equity in education. The challenge facing the gender equity project was on how to integrate or mainstream gender issues in the other projects. The implementation phase of the CSAEMP programme was inundated with various challenges. To mention a few: project managers had different opinions on how the programmes should be implemented, some were of the opinion that projects should run separately and some were of the opinion that they should run concurrently as an integrated whole. Each of these diverse views had its own advantages and disadvantages.

At the initial inception of the projects it was agreed that projects should be implemented separately in order to conceptualise and gather more reliable data and strategies for change. Apparently this move was adopted as a short term strategy for operationalising the projects. What was overlooked was how the project would impact on the long-term objectives of the whole school improvement initiative, namely, access to and equitable distribution of resources to all learners (irrespective of race, gender and disability) for life-long learning.

The second stage consisted of integrating the projects whereby gender was specifically identified as a cross-cutting issue. Apparently this second approach yielded positive results in the sense that all the projects were geared towards improving the culture of teaching and learning within the education system for both learners and educators.

Failure to come to grips with educational realities in terms of adopting viable approaches can defeat the positive spin-offs of a project or programme. Some of these gaps were related to the fact that the participants of the programmes or the beneficiaries were minimally consulted and in certain instances not consulted in the design and process issues pertaining to the CSAEMP programme. The involvement and participation of beneficiaries are essential for maintaining sustainability. Other gaps were related to lack of continuity of project managers or beneficiaries. Some project managers and beneficiaries could not continue with the project due to promotions, resignations, transfers and other related factors.

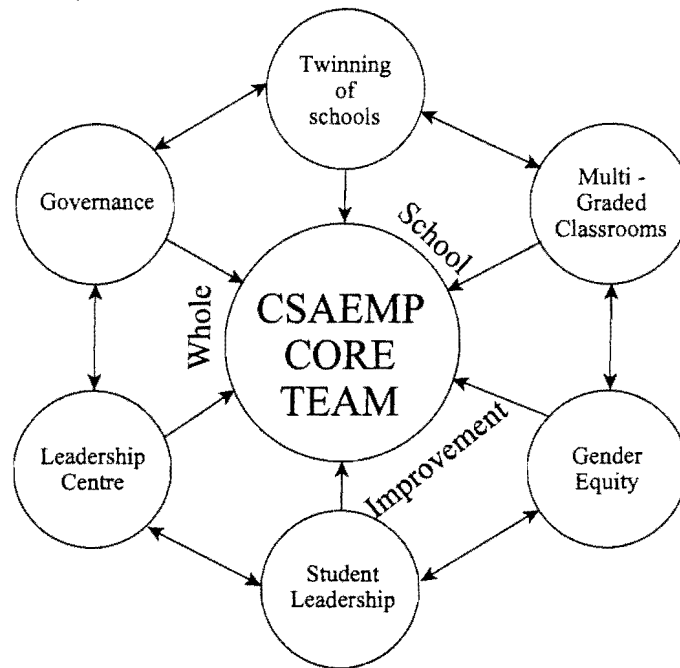
With regard to the Gender Equity Management Programme a positive achievement was the development of a draft training manual for gender trainers, a handbook on mainstreaming gender and a school-based module on sex-based and gender-based violence in schools. These manuals were developed through the concerted efforts of inter-provincial gender co-ordinators from Mpumalanga and Free State. A newsletter entitled "Gender Matters" whose aim is to articulate gender matters within the three provinces has been initiated.

It is also envisaged that training manuals focusing on issues such as leadership, management, team-building, assertiveness, negotiation skills, *et cetera* will be developed by the CSAEMP-teams for training purposes.

The multiplier effect of the CSAEMP-project is basically attributed to the following measures:

- constant collaboration of CSAEMP-project co-ordinators with their teams in the form of meetings, seminars, workshops, study visits;
- a detailed plan of action based on the result based model explained in Figure 4.2 of this Chapter;
- ownership of the CSAEMP-programmes by the recipient country in terms of identifying the type of training skills needed by the beneficiaries;
- training through the use of the cascading model as explained in paragraph 1.5, Chapter 1;
- developing materials in co-operation with beneficiaries, for example training manuals as explained above assist beneficiaries to develop their own learning material in line with Curriculum 2005 with its emphasis on outcome-based education;
- assisting trainers to develop their own training material in collaboration with course participants; and
- developing monitoring and evaluation indicators to measure progress.

Figure 4.5 reflects how the CSAEMP-programme can be sustained in the Mpumalanga Education Department.



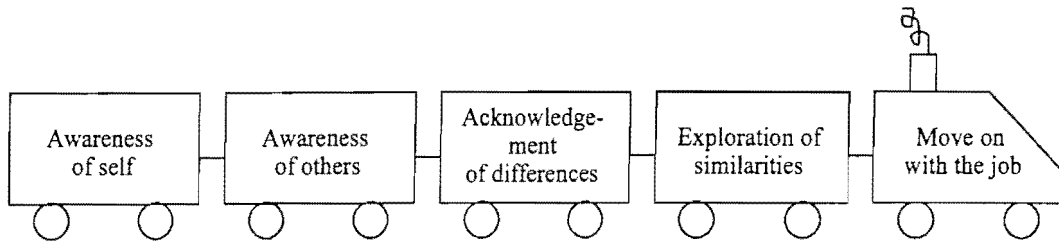
**Figure 4.5** Sustaining the CSAEMP initiative within the context of whole school development

#### 4.8 WHY AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAMMES FAIL

If properly implemented, affirmative action programmes can minimize organisational constraints and open up windows of opportunities for individual and organisational development. If not properly implemented, affirmative action programmes are likely to fail under the following circumstances:

- When they are seen simply in terms of offering quotas in recruitment rather than in terms of the development of the individual within the organisational context (Adams 1993:82; Charlton & Van Niekerk 1994:64). For example, the bone of contention within the Mpumalanga Education Department was not about numbers, i.e. appointing an even number of women and men in senior management positions. The aim was to identify competent women with basic skills and the potential to perform equally as well as men. What is needed as Qunta (1995:25) puts it: "... is the upgrading of the person's basic skills and the development of his or her potential."

- When beneficiaries of affirmative action are placed in positions of authority without any proper training, development and qualifications. For example, precautionary measures were taken by both the Gender Focal Person and the District Heads to appoint qualified people and proper training and development with regard to gender equity matters was conducted (Qunta 1995:25; Human 1993:8).
- When organisations make the mistake of viewing affirmative action as an additional policy rather than as a total organisational development intervention which evaluates, and often changes, the way in which people are recruited, selected, trained, developed, promoted and retrained (Human 1993:12). For example, developing the Gender Equity Policy for the Mpumalanga Education Department is not a coincidental process but rather a mandatory process proposed by the National Ministry of Education and the Constitutional imperatives of the South African Constitution as contained in the Bill of Rights.
- Non-committal of decision-makers to affirmative action programmes. In the absence of legislative pressure governing the employment and development of women, it is difficult to be anything but pessimistic about programmes to combat gender inequality (Adams 1993:83). For example, the political and socio-economic pressure present in the country has necessitated a need to develop institutional pressure to regulate affirmative action programmes such as, *inter alia*, the Employment Equity Act (1998), the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (1998) and the Skills Development Act (1998).
- When cultural diversity issues are not receptive to affirmative action within the organisation (Wingrove 1993:154) and changing the mind-set of managers with an aim of assisting the disadvantaged person to overcome her/his deficiency (Adams 1993:13). For example, training on valuing and managing diversity is critical to the understanding of self, of others, as well as their differences, similarities and how people can work together as a team. Figure 4.6 illustrates the cultural diversity pattern.



**Figure 4.6 Diversity awareness** (adapted from Chang's model of building diversity awareness 1996:75)

The implementation of a successful affirmative action programme will depend partly on how organisations develop their people within a conducive working environment free from prejudice and discrimination. Like a train, if well implemented, affirmative action programmes will assist the organisation to move forward in terms of growth and development.

#### **4.9 EDUCATION, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT (ETD) AS VEHICLES OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION**

As soon as organisations have identified their business strategy and implementation plan, they normally embark on a comprehensive programme of reviewing and developing employment policies and practices. The main aim is to focus on people who were disadvantaged so that they can begin to move quickly into positions from which they were previously excluded (Charlton & Van Niekerk 1994:39) and be compensated for past discrimination (Collins 1995:137). For example, it is not a matter of overcoming such situations as the Department and the schools must encourage a change in attitudes through education, public statements, media presentations and the like. The school can tackle such issues by organising meetings and inviting both parents to attend and be addressed on topics such as:

- the curriculum structure, showing its relevancy to the needs of both girls and boys;
- availability of bursaries and/or grants;
- physical facilities for girls and boys;

- personal, social and vocational guidance programmes; and
- parental roles in school gender policy formulation (Halliday 1995:89).

Education, training and development (ETD) are dependent variables of affirmative action in the sense that they can empower and create an environment where individuals who were underprivileged can learn to accept and understand each other. ETD are regarded as important mechanisms for promoting equal opportunities and democratising the workplace.

In planning and setting up education, training and development programmes for implementing affirmative action, the following areas are critical:

- organisational context;
- training needs analysis;
- defining objectives and standards;
- preparing programmes / content and materials;
- trainer / training preparations;
- trainee selection; and
- evaluation and monitoring (Coussey & Jackson 1991:12).

Given the historical imbalances and the fact that some communities suffered a relative disadvantage regarding access to education particularly in social mobility and equality of opportunity, Emsley (1996:38) is of the opinion that it is imperative that such imbalances in the distribution of jobs will have to be dealt with through training. Education, training and development (ETD) are the quickest ways of enabling all the disadvantaged people to benefit from equal opportunity until such time as the effects of a uniform education system filter through for women and men who have been disadvantaged by the discrimination of the past (South African Institute of Public Administration 1992:50). Training can also impact directly or indirectly on the organisation's long-term and short-term productivity and profitability (Charlton & Van Niekerk 1993:178). For example, the government - through the Office on the Status of Women (OSW) and line departments, donor countries - through the non-governmental organisations, have been running workshops to disseminate and share information and raise awareness on gender issues. Through its implementation strategy, the Mpumalanga



Education Department will conduct research on gender equity related matters with the aim of assessing the magnitude of the problem at hand. This can be done through creating popular awareness programmes, making use of meetings, conferences, workshops, newsbriefs, as well as the radio and television media.

Affirmative action can be applied not only in the context of job selection but also in respect of education, health, socio-economic and other political sectors. Beckmann (1995:8-9) quotes Jos Gerson as saying: "The solution lies in education, training and acquisition of skills." He further maintains that affirmative action in education is concerned about the well-being of all the citizens of the country. This implies that all previously disadvantaged groups should be given opportunities to develop and participate in all spheres of life, irrespective of race, gender, sex and disability.

Charlton and Van Niekerk (1993:178) and Madi (1993:119) are of the opinion that bridging the gap between supply and demand of competent people and productive organisations is not simply training. It is the right kinds of learning or accelerated development done in the right way, at the right time. For example, competencies can be learned through modules on team-building, inter-personal skills, assertiveness, leadership and diversity. Adams (1993:102) supports Charlton and Van Niekerk by asserting that "... making managers will depend on a variety of needs driven training modules, implemented to equip staff for self-motivated advancement within a company." This implies that in a school situation where, for example most women occupy low management positions, training programmes aimed at self-development and assertiveness should be identified by the school. Such programmes should be implemented with the aim of assisting women to develop assertiveness and leadership skills which are central in senior management positions.

#### **4.10 AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR WOMEN**

Why is there such a relatively low representation of females in positions of power and decision-making? Karstens (1994:24), Hill and Ragland (1995:5-6) give the following explanation: lack of role models, difficulty in obtaining mentors, stereotypes and biculturalism. Other explanations given in Chapter Two are institutionalised barriers such as patriarchy, access to

resources and the sexual division of labour. Such problems are magnified by diversity issues. For example, white women are confronted by sex-based stereotypes whilst black women must deal with the myths based on both race and sex (Karsten 1994:24). These conditions are even more exaggerated amongst black women who have to face cultural stereotypes based on customary traditional practices.

What is the root cause of such conditions? Due to cultural stereotypes prevailing in many communities the situation is that girls receive more of primary education and boys more of secondary education. Girls are socialised to be underachievers whilst boys are socialised to be achievers. This has serious implications for women and men educators. Similarly, there are more women educators in primary schools than in secondary schools. This is directly or indirectly attributed to the triple role of women (productive, reproductive and community managing) as compared to the double roles of men (productive and community politics) (Moser 1993:230).

Although women have been lobbying for and advocating equal opportunities in the workplace, the attainment of gender equity within the education sector is far from complete. Bodies such as the Commission on Gender Equality, the Office on the Status of Women, the Women's Caucus in Parliament and the Standing Portfolio Committee on Gender Equality have been tasked by parliament and government to address inequity issues and to eradicate all forms of discriminatory practices within the workplace and elsewhere. International initiatives such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1997), the Convention on the Rights of Children (1989) and the Beijing Platform of Action (1995) are human rights instruments aimed at eradicating all forms of discriminatory practices against women and girls. The World Conference on Education for All 1990 held in Jomtien made a commitment to the effect that access to basic education of a satisfactory quality is an effective way of improving equity and that both girls and women are encouraged to stay in basic education until they reach at least the agreed level of learning and be encouraged through special measures designed, wherever possible, to expand their learning opportunities. The Sub-Saharan Africa Conference on Education for All held in December 1999 in South Africa reiterated that about 12% of the children age 6-11 living in Africa (41 million - almost 60% of them girls) remain out of school. It urged that all the countries who are in the driving seat and

the World Bank should play a catalytic role for innovation and change with an emphasis on ensuring that poor and disadvantaged groups have access to education (Doryan 1999).

How then can both girls and boys be empowered and be put on the agenda of the transformation process unfolding in the country? It must be acknowledged that the advancement of women seemed to be one of the weakest areas of the transformation process. It is for this reason that the government's priority in addressing racism should be followed by the eradication of sexism and gender. For example, the status quo in relation to the senior management ratio between males and females in the Mpumalanga Education Department is 5:1, favours men.

In the light of the above discussions there is a need for management to create a conducive and enabling environment that will facilitate growth and a need for developing positive measures aimed at redressing imbalances of race, gender and geographical discrimination. During a Strategic Planning Workshop (1997) it was reiterated that change is a slow process. President Lyndon Johnson was quoted as follows:

"You do not take a person who for years has been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him up to the starting line of the race and then say: 'You are free to compete with others and still justly believe that you have been completely fair.'"

The same sentiments for emphasising the need for affirmative action are echoed by Beckmann et al. (1999:74). They maintain that Gibson (1990), in his reports, used the U.S. President Lyndon Johnson's (1970) analogy of the foot race to point out that:

"... Would it not be better justice to allow the previously shackled runner to make up the forty yard gap; or to start the race all over again? That would be affirmative action towards equality."

This implies that, since women have been disadvantaged, women managers, irrespective of race or creed should be given the necessary support to enable them to contribute positively to the economic, political, educational and cultural wealth of the country.

#### 4.11 CONCLUSION

Current political, economic and legislative imperatives have put pressure on organisations and institutions to develop equity policies for their employees and to come up with implementation strategies as well as evaluation and monitoring mechanisms for creating equal opportunities for all.

Promoting equal opportunities for women in education management and elsewhere must be aimed at giving them the same considerations that are accorded to other people. Women managers in rural areas like in Mpumalanga Province are the most disadvantaged majority and employment opportunities in positions of power and decision-making should be created for them.

Various affirmative action models mentioned earlier in paragraph 4.3 can be grouped into two categories based on assumptions about the role of women in management. The first assumption is based on the belief that women are professionals as men are and are therefore equally capable of contributing in ways similar to men. The bone of contention is access to resources and opportunities for both men and women. Karsten (1996:221-222) ask this in relation to this assumption: "... are women given the opportunity to demonstrate their competence?"

The second assumption argues that men and women differ and are therefore capable of making different but equal contributions to the organisation. Both of these assumptions focus on a particular aspect of society that have an impact on sex and gender relations. What is of particular interest is the fact that this research project revealed that for affirmative action to be successful, opportunities should be created for designated groups. It is important that an institution should conduct an audit on affirmative action to ensure that both males and females are afforded the same opportunity to develop and contribute positively to the economic development of this country.

Equity in the workplace can be achieved if the organisation can change from a patriarchal domain to more gender flexible and responsive institutions. An injection of a combination of male-female values through education, training and development can facilitate the

implementation of the affirmative action programme, making organisations more gender sensitive. In this way a substantial number of women in leadership and management positions would gradually increase depending on patience and time. There are no quick-fixes! There are risks and opportunities involved. The greatest challenge is not how we manage affirmative action programmes but how we implement them to the benefit of all, irrespective of race and gender.

The next Chapter will give a detailed description of the research methods and design used in the course of this investigation on womanless leadership.

## CHAPTER 5

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding Chapters One to Four provided a background to the problem under investigation, namely, if and how affirmative action programmes can be used to address the underrepresentation of women in senior management positions in the Mpumalanga Education Department.

Chapter Five will present a detailed description of the research methodology and design which were used to investigate how ten female principals in the Canada – South Africa Management Programme (CSAEMP) on gender equity were used in an experimental affirmative action programme. The thrust of the programme was to address womenless leadership in senior positions of authority.

Chapter Five will discuss the research methodology. The two types of methods commonly used by researchers to collect data are the qualitative and quantitative methods. The Chapter will highlight some aspects that will justify the rationale behind the choice of Participation Action Research (PAR) as a method for data collection.

It will also explain why a case study was used as a data collection technique and how the participants for this research problem were selected. Lastly it will look into the limitations of this study.

#### 5.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

It has been mentioned in Chapter One paragraph 1.4 that one of the functions of research is to **gather knowledge** and **make statements** about reality (Mouton & Marais 1990:3-6). These

functions are relevant to this investigation, namely, on womenless leadership for two reasons. First, knowledge is gathered on why women are discriminated against in senior management positions in general and subsequently on how women in the Mpumalanga Education Department in particular, face the same problem. Second, statements on the observed realities with regard to institutionalised barriers to women in leadership such as patriarchy, sexual division of labour, lack of access to resources and other factors are partly responsible for gender disparities.

Before any attempts can be made to discuss the various methods of research that scientists employ to gather knowledge; it will be useful to explain what the concept **research** entails. Research may be defined as a collaborative activity by means of which a given phenomenon in reality is studied in an objective manner, with a view to establishing a valid understanding of that phenomenon (Mouton & Marais 1990:156). For instance this investigation focused on a given phenomenon, namely, womenless leadership in the Mpumalanga Education Department. The phenomenon was studied as objectively as possible through the use of the qualitative approach. PAR and case study methods were used as techniques for data collection and analysis.

The next paragraph deals with the two recognised approaches to research, namely qualitative and quantitative.

### **5.2.1 Quantitative and qualitative approaches**

Qualitative research refers to a situation where the researcher investigates a phenomenon in its natural setting by attempting to make sense of it or to interpret it in terms of the meanings people bring to it. It also implies that the emphasis is on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured. The aim of qualitative research is not to explain human behaviour in terms of universally valid laws and generalisation, but rather to understand and interpret the meanings and intentions that underlie every human action (De Vos 1998; Denzin 2000; Blaxter 1996).

Quantitative research, on the other hand, is highly formalised and occurs in a controlled setting.

Quantitative studies emphasise the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables but not processes. The main aim of quantitative research is to objectively measure the social world, to test hypotheses to predict and control behaviour (Denzin 2000; Blaxter 1996; Berg 1998).

The difference between the two approaches is that qualitative researchers use the **inductive** form of reasoning whilst quantitative researchers use the **deductive** form of reasoning. In the inductive approach, data collection and analysis take place simultaneously, that is, the researcher does not wait until the data are collected before she/he begins to interpret them. That is the reason why some aspects of this research are reported earlier on as explained in Chapter 1. From the beginning of the observation the qualitative inquirer is reflecting on the meaning of what he/she has heard or seen, developing hypotheses (hunches), confirming or discarding these hunches in subsequent interviews or observations. According to Ary, Jacobs & Razavich (1990), this process of data collection and analysis is inductive in nature because it proceeds from data to hypotheses and to theory. This implies that hypotheses emerge from the data during the process of doing research. In contrast the quantitative researcher uses the deductive form of data collection and analysis, that is, she/he proceeds from theory to practice.

In qualitative research, the researcher takes the universal propositions in generalisation as a point of departure. Qualitative researchers attempt to understand the phenomenon (for instance, as in the dissertation, womenless leadership in positions of authority) within a particular setting (i.e. in the Mpumalanga Education Department). Briefly stated the bone of contention is “why” it is that few women if not none at all occupy senior management positions in the Mpumalanga Education Department?

The above statement can be explained in this fashion. In quantitative research the researcher’s question starts with the what, how, when and where of a problem so that the initial focus on the topic describes what is going on. In qualitative research the question starts with “why” and looks for comparisons within groups (Greswell 1998; Berg 1998). In this instance the comparison between men and women in senior management positions and the subsequent discriminatory practices perpetuated by the socialisation process such as patriarchy, sexual division of labour and lack of access to resources can be regarded as some of the institutionalised barriers to gender equity in positions of authority.



For the purpose of this research study a qualitative approach using PAR and case study methods were used as data collection techniques as will be explained below.

### 5.2.2 The Participation Action Research (PAR) method

The PAR concept is sometimes used interchangeably with the Action Research (AR) method. Action research is a term coined by social psychologist Kurt Lewin in the 1940's to describe a particular kind of research that united the experimental approach of social science with programmes of social action to address social problems. It involves a spiral of interlocking cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting (Schwandt 1997:1).

What makes PAR especially relevant to this investigation is that it bridges the gap between theoretical and practical knowledge and between research and action (Gauteng Department of Education 2000). This implies that it starts from data and then proceeds to hypotheses and to theory. For instance, in this investigation the data collected from a literature review and from case study observations involving ten female principals, was based on the hypothesis (hunches) that women were discriminated against in positions of authority. It further confirmed the generalisations or theory that such discriminatory practices were the result of the socialization process, amongst others, patriarchy, lack of access to resources and the sexual division of labour.

Schwandt (1997:112) maintains that in PAR researchers work with groups and communities, for example experiencing or subject to control, oppression or colonisation by a more dominant group or culture. He further states that three characteristics appear to distinguish this practice from other forms of social inquiry, namely:

- **its participation character:** there is a co-operative collaboration between researcher(s) and other participants in problem definition, choice of methods, data analysis and use of findings. For instance the CSAEMP in gender equity within the Mpumalanga Education Department involved the participation of both the researcher and the 10 female principals who were selected as a case study in the production of the two training manuals namely "Starting Points for a Training Manual for Workshops in Gender Equity" and the "Training Manual for Educators on Gender Equity's explained in paragraph 5.3.

- ii) **its democratic impulse:** it embodies democratic ideals and principles such as equality and equity, but is not necessarily a recipe for bringing about democratic change. For instance consultation between the researcher and other participants was based on the premise that, although both (researcher and participants) were attached to different administrative levels, they worked as equal partners embodied with a spirit of fairness in their endeavour to bring about change in senior management positions within the Mpumalanga Education Department; and
- iii) **its objective:** it produces both useful knowledge and action as well as conscious efforts to the empowerment of people through the process of constructing their own knowledge. For instance knowledge gathered during the process of information gathering and the production of gender materials will have a multiplier effect for women managers in their quest for addressing womenless leadership in positions of authority.

Within the education sector, PAR is often used in a diagnostic manner for problems identified in schools in order to set corrective processes in action. PAR re-defines the role of educators as agents of education development and change and can improve classroom practice (Maruyama & Deno 1992; Gauteng Department of Education 2000). For instance within the Mpumalanga Education Department, womenless leadership in positions of authority can be addressed through the implementation of affirmative action programmes and policies as explained in Chapter 4, namely, the CSAEMP on gender equity.

From the exposition above it is clear that the choice of the PAR as a method of data collection and the use of a case study as a data collection technique elucidated a better understanding of why there are certain trends between male and female managers with regard to positions of authority and how this condition can be remedied as explained in Chapters Two, Three and Four of this study.

### **5.2.3 Rationale for choice of the methodology**

The rationale behind adopting the qualitative approach in this research study is that researchers using this approach usually investigate small groups and often use data collection techniques such as participation observation and case studies as explained earlier in Chapter 1 to focus on the phenomenon which they seek to understand. It also assists them to ask some important

questions on the topic and on other important topics to be pursued. These data collection techniques help the researcher to become more acquainted with the object under investigation and to establish rapport with the subjects under investigation for gathering more authentic information from subjects.

Schwandt (1997:12) is of the opinion that a case is typically regarded as a specific and bound (in time and place) instance of a phenomenon selected for study. Cases are generally characterised by their concreteness and circumstantial generalizability. Case studies attempt to describe the subject's entire range of behaviour and the relationship of these behaviours to the subject's history or environment. The emphasis is on understanding why the individual does what he/she does or how behaviour changes the individual's response to the environment.

Some of the advantages of using case studies in qualitative research are that the researchers are allowed to develop a concept or model to describe and analyse a situation or to identify a policy issue (McMillan & Schumacher 1993:375) In this instance, gender equity issues are a constitutional imperative as enshrined in various legislative measures such as the Constitution of South Africa (1996), the Labour Relations Act (1995), the Employment Equity Act (1998) and the Transformation of the Public Service Act (1995) and others.

Through the use of various methods for data collection in this study, based on the assumptions that there are discriminatory practices that hinder women from occupying senior management positions, it became apparent that there first was a need to conduct a study based on a small group of participants (i.e. 10 female principals) and second, that since the department consisted of ten district offices with few or no women managers in positions of authority as reflected in Chapter 3 there was a need to limit the sample size to a small group of participants with a view to describing an entire range of observed behaviour (identifying and describing institutionalised barriers leading to womenless leadership-Chapter Two) and to try to understand what interventions (eg CSAEMP as an affirmative action programme in the Mpumalanga Education Department - Chapter 3 and 4) can be used to change the *status quo* namely, transformation of the organisational environment to be gender sensitive within a period of three years (paragraphs 3.6).

### **5.3 BACKGROUND TO THE DESIGN OF THE STUDY AND SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS**

Wagenaar & Babbie (1992) are of the opinion that research design involves developing strategies for executing scientific inquiry. It involves specifying precisely what you want to find out and determining the most efficient and effective strategies for doing so. For the purpose of this research, it is important to outline the researcher's interest in this investigation.

First, the researcher was identified as the gender focal person for the provincial education department from 1996 to 1998 and also co-ordinated the provincial and inter-provincial CSEAMP gender equity activities for the three Provinces namely, Gauteng, Mpumalanga and Free State in 1999-2000 respectively. The tasks entailed amongst others co-ordinating and conducting research on gender-related issues at the provincial and national level.

Second, the CSAEMP on gender equity had been identified as one of the whole school development programmes aimed at challenging the existing absence of a culture of teaching and learning in the school systems as discussed in paragraph 4.7.

Third, looking at the way women were underrepresented in the education sector from institutional level up to the system level, as explained in Chapter Three Tables 3.5-3.8, it became necessary that such an investigation should be conducted as a way of minimising any distortion or bias of the research findings. Hence, the CSAEMP was identified as an affirmative action programme aimed at assisting the department to begin to look at ways and means of addressing womenless leadership in positions of authority.

It should also be mentioned that the researcher was part of the system that perpetuated gender imbalances with regard to occupational class, the choice of subject matter and other gender discriminatory issues. The researcher was part of the designated members of the society, namely women and disabled people, as explained by the Employment Equity Act (1998).

Creswell (1998) and Denzin & Lincoln (2000) are of the opinion that, in qualitative research, the situations are typically normal ones, reflective of the everyday life of individuals, groups, societies and organisation. It is necessary that the researcher should start to investigate where

his/her interest is, so that he or she may be able to answer the why of the problem under investigation. According to Ary *et al.* (1990:445), the ultimate goal of this kind of inquiry is to portray the complex pattern of what is being studied in sufficient depth and detail so that one who has not experienced it can understand it.

In line with the current debates on the transformation of the public service based on equitable and fair service delivery, the provisioning of affirmative action programmes to designated groups is of particular importance. In order to address the problem of affirming marginalised groups in terms of positions of authority, a sample size of ten female principals was selected, each representing the ten districts from both primary and secondary schools as shown in Chapter 3 Figure 3.2. The province is divided into ten district offices for the purpose of creating effective and efficient management at the institutional level. A district office is the first level of operation to which a school turns should assistance be required (Davies 1999:51).

In order to implement the process of institutionalising and mainstreaming gender issues in the daily activities of the Mpumalanga Education Department, the CSAEMP on gender equity was adopted as an affirmative action programme aimed at empowering women for senior leadership positions. It was for this reason that a small group of ten female principals to be used as a case study was selected. The selection of these ten female principals formed part of the activities of the Provincial Gender Equity Action Plan. Each activity was allocated a specific time line as explained in Chapter Three paragraph 3.5.2 and Table 3.2 of this research report.

With the assistance of the quantitative data collected (Chapter 3 Figures 1- 8) linked to the review of existing literature womenless leadership in positions of authority, the researcher planned and conducted all provincial workshops in collaboration with the 10 female principals who formed the focus group. The CSAEMP on gender equity was used as a point of departure as explained below.

### **5.3.1 Data collection and research findings**

The qualitative approach was used as a data collection method. A PAR design based on a case study of 10 female principals and review of literature methods was used as data collection

techniques as explained in Chapter 1 paragraph 1.4 of this study. It was envisaged that the CSAEMP on gender equity would have a multiplier effect, as those who were trained were expected to train other female principals in a cascading model as explained in Chapter Three.

### 5.3.1.1 Data Collection

Data was collected from the various workshops that were arranged by the researcher for the selected group of female principals. Through participation action research the researcher in conjunction with the group was able to develop training manuals as explained below.

The first workshop was conducted in August 1997. Part one of the workshop was basically an opening up a gender dialogue and was used as an attempt to reach a common understanding on what gender equity and its relationship to other gender related concepts is. This was due to the fact that different meanings were attached to the concepts explained in Chapter 2 paragraph 2.2. Other aspects included issues such as how language is often used as an oppressive mechanism and how education can be used as a site of struggle of oppressive theory and practice.

In Part two, participants were given an exercise using the Visualisation Participatory Programme (VIP) strategy to identify and record the types of resistance women may encounter when promoted to senior management position in traditionally male dominated occupations. Some of the stepping stones are reflected in Chapter 2 paragraph 2.3, Chapter 3 paragraph 3.5.7 and Table 3.2 of this research paper. The outcome of this workshop resulted in the production of a gender manual entitled “Starting Points for a Training Manual for Workshops in Gender Equity” (Mlamleli, Napo, Sibiya & Smith 1999).

The second workshop was held in July 1998. The focus was mainly on developing a “train a trainer” manual based on five modules, namely, Gender Equity Framework; Information Communication Technology; Gender and Policy Development; Gender, Language and the Curriculum and Women in Management. The outcome resulted in the production of a manual entitled “Mpumalanga Training Manual for Educators” (Mpumalanga Education Department: 2001). The main thrust of the manual is to develop management skills aimed at removing cultural barriers and redressing gender inequities in leadership roles.

Other publications that were developed are: The School-based Module on Sexual Harassment and Gender-based Violence and A Handbook on Gender Mainstreaming. The PAR technique for data collection was used in collaboration with other provincial departments, namely, Gauteng and Free State in partnership with the national department of education and McGill University (Canada).

### **5.3.1.2 Findings**

In the course of developing the training manuals it was found that most of the participants were motivated by the experience of being actively involved in the project and expressed their deepest wish that it should succeed. They wanted it to benefit women managers and those who sincerely hope to aspire for senior leadership positions.

The study also found out that the underrepresentation of women in senior management positions can partly be explained in the following manner:

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.

Institutionalised barriers such as lack of access to resources, patriarchy and the sexual division of labour are some of the challenges that prevent women from reaching the “glass ceiling”. There is an equal number of girls and boys who enter primary school but fewer 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. This has a serious implication for leadership roles of women in management positions.

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. Stone (1994:79) refers to this phenomenon as feminisation of the teaching profession which occurs in a society that believes that a women's place is at home and that the women's minds were inferior.

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. Gupton & Slick (1996: 135) maintains that underrepresentation is attributed to their (women) lack of aspiration for administrative positions, inadequate preparation and qualifications.

Responses made by women during capacity building programmes suggest that the different perceptions held by society and individuals are both attitudinal and systemic thereby limiting the advancement of women to career opportunities. For example responses such as women lack experience and are not confident enough; they are not strong and lack leadership qualities.

Capacity building programmes such as self-motivation, leadership skills, diversity management, assertiveness, team-building, stress management, gender policy, planning development and analysis identified by the female principals, are affirmative action programmes. Such programmes 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.

#### **5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH**

As reflected in Chapter One, as a point of departure, the study used a small focus group of ten female principals. The main purpose was to begin to understand, describe, analyse and interpret the reason why women are underrepresented in senior management positions in the Mpumalanga Education Department. Second, the study does not claim to have solutions for all questions in the sense that there are other diverse reasons which were not mentioned that



can explain why women are underrepresented in leadership positions of authority.

It is hoped that this research study will make a contribution to issues of womenless leadership in positions of authority in the Mpumalanga Province and elsewhere

## **5.5 CONCLUSION**

There are basically two approaches used by researchers for data collection, namely, qualitative and quantitative. The two methods differ from each other in the sense that in qualitative research the researcher conducts his/her research through an intense contact with a “field” of life situation whereas in quantitative research the research is highly formalised and occurs in a controlled setting.

The case study design and participatory action research were used as data collection techniques in this investigation on womenless leadership in positions of authority. There are various advantages and disadvantages that can be identified with regard to the use of these two techniques. One of the advantages of a case study is to provide an opportunity for an investigation to develop insight into the basic aspects of human behaviour leading to the discovery of unsuspected relationship. One of the disadvantages of case studies is that the preconceptions of an investigation can determine which behaviours are observed and which can be ignored.

The next chapter will give an overview, outline findings, draw conclusions and suggest possible recommendations for immediate and further change.

## CHAPTER 6

### OVERVIEW, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

The focus of this dissertation was on identifying discriminatory practices against women and institutionalised barriers that prevent women from occupying positions of power in senior management echelons of the education sector, specifically within the Mpumalanga Education Department as explained in Chapter Two and Three. Generally, the identified barriers were linked to strategies that may best empower women to be more assertive and be actively involved in transforming the education sector to be more responsive to the needs of girls and women. It also investigated how affirmative action programmes and policies can be adopted and implemented as mechanisms for effecting gender equity and redressing gender imbalances within the context of the Mpumalanga Education Department as explained in Chapter Four.

Apart from the socio-cultural and economic factors that play a major role in determining discriminatory practices against women in education management, stereotypes are an added dimension as explained in Chapter Two. The rural nature of the Mpumalanga Province as explained in Chapter One has serious implications for women in education management, especially where traditional gender stereotypes are routinely practised and reinforced.

#### 6.2 OVERVIEW

Chapter One outlines the background of the study in terms of the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions. Factors such as why it was necessary to conduct such a research project in Mpumalanga as a rural area were highlighted. The research objectives, research methodology, strategy and why affirmative action as a corrective strategy should be implemented, were also pointed out.

In the second chapter the study focused on the discrimination against women in the workplace in general, pointing out the relationship between sex and gender related concepts. Institutionalised barriers perpetuated by culture and socialisation processes and practices were identified as contributory factors that discriminate against women in the workplace.

The organisational context in terms of discrimination against women in education management positions within the Mpumalanga Education Department was discussed in Chapter Three. Quantitative as well as qualitative data and strategies to overcome womenless leadership were also discussed.

Chapter Four investigated the historical background of affirmative action, drawing on experiences from other countries with relation to implementing it as a mechanism for bringing about change.

In Chapter Five the study focused on the research methodology used for the collection of data and the subsequent research findings.

### **6.3 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

The Mpumalanga Education Department, like other institutions, seems to be faced with the problem of womenless leadership in senior positions of authority. The low participation of women in senior management positions and the fact that they are seldom involved in decision-making processes has serious implications for their career advancement.

### **6.4 THE HYPOTHESIS**

The dissertation is based on the hypothesis that womenless leadership in positions of authority and the low participation of women in senior management positions can be attributed to the existing socio-cultural and economic factors. It appears as if the condition can be remedied through the implementation of affirmative action programmes and policies and that education, training and development are the vehicles for operationalising affirmative action programmes and policies.

## **6.5 THE AIM OF THE RESEARCH**

The aim of the research was to:

- 6.5.1 Assess the position of women within the patriarchal society and explain why women are discriminated against in the workplace, home and society.
- 6.5.2 Identify institutionalised barriers and assumptions that can be regarded as contributory factors to the discrimination against women in the workplace in general.
- 6.5.3 Highlight incidences of discrimination against women in education management and leadership positions in the Mpumalanga Education Department.
- 6.5.4 Identify processes established to address womenless leadership and propose policy recommendations aimed at bringing about change within the working environment.
- 6.5.5 Establish whether education, training and development can serve as vehicles for implementing affirmative action programmes and policies.
- 6.5.6 Determine whether affirmative action programmes can motivate and empower women to transcend cultural stereotypes that have relegated them to sub-ordinate roles.

## **6.6 METHODS USED IN THE RESEARCH**

- 6.6.1 The literature on the existing debates about the position of women in the workplace and in education management and why they are discriminated against with respect to senior management positions was reviewed.
- 6.6.2 Participatory action research to establish the interface between theory and practice and 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.

## **6.7 FINDINGS**

In the study it was found that:

- Women are substantially discriminated against in positions of authority as explained in

paragraphs 3.5.3 and 3.5.5. Tables 3.6 - 3.9 reflect one of the weaknesses, namely womenless leadership, inherited by the institutional and policy issues of the Mpumalanga Education Department.

- Institutionalised socio-cultural, political and economic barriers play a major role in determining discriminatory practices against women in senior management positions as explained in paragraph 2.3. For example, factors such as patriarchy, the sexual division of labour and access to resources highlight the fact that stereotypes are reinforced and perpetuated by the society through the socialisation process.
- Legislative imperatives regarding affirmative action are enshrined in the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of South Africa, national and international agreements/initiatives such as the World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA) and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. Independent bodies such as the Commission on Gender Equality and other state institutions supporting democracy mentioned in paragraphs 3.2.1, 3.5.2.2 and 3.6 are charged with the responsibility of dealing with specific types of human violations.
- Donor countries provide different perspectives in relation to experiences and lessons learned on gender equity programmes from donor agencies such as CIDA, SIDA and USAID were referred to in paragraph 2.2.5. The thrust of these projects is to provide intervention strategies aimed at empowering women with particular skills such as leadership, assertiveness, team-building, diversity, etc.
- Affirmative action programmes and policies can be used and/or adopted as mechanisms for alleviating gender disparities in education management position as explained in paragraph 4.4. The way policies and programmes will be designed should be done in such a way that both girls and boys, men and women receive equal treatment. For example, school policies on teenage pregnancies and sexual harassment should make provisions for protecting the girl-child against perpetrators.
- Education and training can be adopted as vehicles for implementing successful affirmative action programmes and policies for the empowerment of women in positions of authority

as explained in paragraph 4.9. The study revealed that education, training and development (EID) may be regarded as the quickest way of ensuring that the designated groups are afforded the opportunity and privileges they were previously denied.

## 6.8 CONCLUSIONS

To a larger extent this research project has shed more light on the problems relating to research on gender equity mentioned in paragraph 1.2 particularly on the position of women in education management and why they are discriminated against in positions of senior authority.

The study led to the following conclusions:

- that women are discriminated against in educational institutions with regard to senior management positions of the Mpumalanga Education Department. This is perpetuated by cultural stereotypes and the rural nature of the provinces. Traditional gender roles are still upheld and this impacts drastically on the career advancement of women to senior leadership positions;
- existing barriers such as patriarchy, sexual division of labour and access to resources can be identified as contributing to the underrepresentation of women in senior management positions. For example, statistical representation of senior management positions held by women is much less than that of men as reflected in Tables 3.6 - 3.9;
- affirmative action programmes can be adopted as strategies for alleviating the existing inequalities in the school system and can act as mechanisms for empowering women to participate positively in decision-making processes affecting their lives; and
- the Canada-South Africa Education Management programme provided opportunities for women managers to penetrate the "glass-ceiling" by revealing strengths that will remove structural and attitudinal barriers as discussed in paragraph 3.5.7.

Although women are lobbying for and advocating equal opportunities in the workplace and at

home, the attainment of gender equity within the education sector, in particular the Mpumalanga Education Department, will take more than a decade before any visible changes occur.

It is against such a backdrop that this research project revealed that cultural practices, norms, the inaccessibility of resources and other concomitant factors perpetuated gender disparities in the workplace in this instance, the underrepresentation of women in senior management position in the Mpumalanga Education Department. The solution for assisting and encouraging women to advance to senior management position is to use education, training and development as vehicles for implementing affirmative action programmes and policies.

## **6.9 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is a difficult and challenging task to attempt changing individual and institutional patterns, behaviours and trends from the inside, particularly when such patterns have been entrenched and embedded in the society's social system. For example, the education system of any country, be it formal or non-formal, usually reflects the norms and values of a given society and it is within this frame of reference that social relationships are established and maintained. The two oppressive systems of separatist development and patriarchy are entrenched and embedded within the societal system and are based on power relations between various racial groups and the two sexes (male and female), as explained in Table 2.1.

The question can be asked how the education system can move away from implementing inequity practices that view gender equity issues as an "add-on" element to the whole process of transformation? Gender equity issues are part and parcel of the transformation process and the implementation of affirmative action programmes and policies entrenched in legislative measures such as the Constitution of South Africa (1996), the Labour Relations Act (1995), the Employment Equity Act (1998) are mechanisms aimed at addressing discriminatory practices between men and women in the workplace as explained in paragraph 4.3 on why affirmative action programmes fail.

As part of the transformation process unfolding in the country, the following recommendations can be adopted as strategies for change by the Mpumalanga Education Department in its quest for addressing womenless leadership positions of authority (as indicated throughout the research project).

**6.9.1 Education institutions should be willing to change their managerial and behaviour patterns in terms of positions of authority. This could be done by:**

- positively acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of individuals and organisations;
- recognising the potential of the stakeholders and the skills each individual brings to the organisation for organisational development; and
- creating a responsive service delivery system that will assist the Department of Education in the Mpumalanga province to address gender inequities and imbalances.

**6.9.2 Commitment and interest on the part of all stakeholders should be generated in order to improve gender relations in the education system. This could be done through:**

- re-examining the existing gender programmes and policies within the Department and by creating new ones if they have not been developed;
- ensuring that senior management is committed to change and that it does not pay "lip-service" in creating a gender sensitive environment;
- developing an action-plan in institutionalising gender equity in the education sector; and
- ensuring that a gender policy for the education sector is developed by and implemented by the National and Provincial Departments of Education.



**6.9.3 Action can be successfully implemented to challenge incidences of sexism and gender inequity practices at home, in the classroom and by all stakeholders within the community. This could be achieved through:**

- treating girls and boys, women and men as equals and by ensuring that there is fair distribution of resources amongst all the stakeholders;
- creating equal opportunities within the education sector in terms of exposing both girls and boys to the same curriculum streams rather than encouraging them to take separate streams; and by
- setting up mechanisms within the education sector to ensure that promotable women are promoted to senior management positions, based on meritocracy.

**6.9.4 Gender considerations are mainstreamed in departmental policies, programmes and policies by:**

- developing institutional and programmatic frameworks for institutionalising gender issues and putting gender on the agenda of the transformation process;
- developing a set of indicators for monitoring and evaluating the progress in relation to redressing gender imbalances;
- obtaining the support and commitment of both employees and employers; and
- developing intervention programmes aimed at integrating gender concerns into the plans of the department.

**6.9.5 Cultural and gender stereotypes are reviewed by the Mpumalanga education department to assess whether they are in tune with the legal imperatives of the country (South Africa) by:**

- amending or repealing existing gender discriminatory laws and practices;

- minimising the authoritarian control of women, especially in rural areas;
- challenging the patriarchal nature of most societies that relegate women to subordinate positions and leading to their low self-esteem; and
- lobbying for a gender-sensitive society where both men and women are regarded as equals.

**6.9.6 The department can adopt affirmative action policies, taking into consideration other capacity building programmes such as participation, mentoring (shadowing) and lobbying by:**

- appointing mentors who will act as role models for young girls and women;
- encouraging women to form support groups, for example the Women in Education Management (WIEM) formed in Botswana and the Forum for African Women Educationalists of South Africa (FAWESA) which was formally launched in March 1997 at the University of Cape Town;
- establishing information centres and/or resource centres for cross-pollination of information; and
- developing training programmes that will assist women managers to deal with current patriarchal organisational arrangements as agents of change.

**6.9.7 The department should develop affirmative action programmes that will assist women managers to develop strategies and skills linked to the broader transformation process. This could be done by:**

- setting achievable quantifiable indicators, targets and time-frames;
- adopting an integrated intersectorial approach in redressing gender imbalances;

- developing programmes that will encapsulate the Whole School Development (WSD) perspective in the inculcation of leadership skills for both learners and educators; and
- identifying promotable women based on performance and merit.

**6.9.8 The department can acknowledge that education, training and development can be used as vehicles for implementing affirmative action policies in education management programmes. This could be achieved through:**

- identifying relevant programmes that will address the needs of disadvantaged and under-privileged groups;
- training potential women managers to positions of authority; and
- participating in the information "super-highway" that aims at providing accessible education in addressing the roles, needs and control of resources as explained in paragraph 2.2.3.

These observable strategies support the theoretical assumptions about women as workers and managers as highlighted in paragraph 3.4. The implication of these theoretical approaches and assumptions suggest 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 promotion to senior management positions.

### **6.9.2 Further Research**

Numerous studies have been conducted on the leadership styles of women and men and the cultural stereotypes, perceptions and attitudes which contribute to the underrepresentation of women in senior management positions (Ozga 1992; Greyvenstein & Van der Westhuizen 1993; Mitchell 1996; GETT-Report 1997).

Since women do not represent a homogeneous group it is imperative that research be conducted on the following areas:

change.

- ii) The resistance of women to support women managers in positions of authority as well as women managers in positions of authority failing to mentor or acting as role models for women in middle or lower management positions.
- iii) The role of gender in implementing Curriculum 2005 in the South African education system.
- iv) The Gender Equity Task Team (National Department of Education 1997) pointed out that there was a general lack of research on gender issues in South African schools and that research that has been conducted specifically on sexual harassment has mainly focused on sexual harassment in the workplace and that it is usually about policy issues. Currently the National Department of Education has embarked on projects such as safe schools and sexual harassment in secondary schools.

Based on the above it would be of interest to conduct a preliminary attitudinal assessment research project of young men and women, boys and girls towards sexual harassment before embarking on an intervention in schools in order to explore the ways in which young men and boys perceive young women and girls and *vice versa*. There is a need to find a methodology which allows both males and females to speak about their experiences.

- v) What does equality of opportunity, fair distribution of resources and participation in decision-making processes mean to a rural female teacher/manager who is subjected to the customary, oppressive and discriminatory practices of rural communities?
- vi) In implementing commitments made by the government on gender equity considerations are government departments committed to eradicating gender disparities or are they paying lip service to such commitments?