

**DISCRIMINATION AGAINST
WOMEN IN THE CONSTRUCTION
INDUSTRY IN SOUTH-AFRICA**

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DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY IN SOUTH-AFRICA

BY

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Declaration by student

I, the undersigned, hereby confirm that the attached treatise is my own work and that any sources are adequately acknowledged in the text and listed bibliography

Signature of acceptance and confirmation by student

Abstract

Title of treatise : Discrimination against women in the construction Industry in South-Africa

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This paper is aimed to discover if women are still being discriminated against, given fair and equal opportunities as their male counterparts in the South-African construction industry.

It also aims to provide possible solutions, should there be discrimination.

It will study the “employment acts” and policies that the government have set in place to ensure equality, and if these policies are being enforced.

Do women belong in the construction industry? Is a site a suitable working environment for women? How do women in the construction industry balance their personal life and careers and is the construction industry much different to other industries?

Table of contents:

CHAPTER 1: STATING THE PROBLEM

1.1. Introduction.....	8
1.2. Main problem.....	9
1.3. Sub-problems.....	9
1.4. Hypothesis.....	10
1.5. Delimitations.....	11
1.6. Definition of terms.....	12
1.7. Assumptions.....	13
1.8. Importance of the study.....	13
1.9. Research methodology.....	13

CHAPTER 2: AN OBSERVATION OF FEMALE REPRESENTATION IN A NON-TRADITIONAL OCCUPATION SUCH AS THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY IN SOUTH-AFRICA

2.1. Introduction.....	14
2.2. Female representation.....	15
2.3. Statistics.....	16
2.4. Conclusion.....	21
2.5. Testing of hypothesis.....	21

CHAPTER 3: CURRENT WORKING ENVIROMENT FOR WOMEN IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

3.1. Introduction.....	22
3.2. Women as foremen.....	22
3.3. Women working as quantity surveyors for contractors on site or other environments.....	25
3.4. Men working with women.....	29
3.5. Survey of men's views on women in the industry.....	31

3.6. Conclusion.....	33
3.7. Testing of hypothesis.....	34

CHAPTER 4: EMPLOYMENT AND GENDER POLICIES TO COMBAT DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE

4.1. Introduction.....	35
4.2. The employment equity act.....	36
4.3. Discrimination against women in the workforce and workplace.....	37
4.4. Problems of access to the labour market.....	39
4.5. The wage gap.....	40
4.6. Conclusions and recommendations.....	42
4.7. Gender equality.....	42
4.8. The Gender equity index.....	51
4.9. Conclusion.....	53
4.10. Testing of hypothesis.....	54

CHAPTER 5: ARE WOMEN CAPABLE OF BECOMING DIRECTORS OF CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES? WHAT ARE THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL OBSTACLES THEY FACE?

5.1. Introduction.....	55
5.2. The Physical and Mental obstacles women face.....	57
5.3. Women fighting for their rights.....	60
5.4. Conclusion.....	62
5.5. Testing of hypothesis.....	62

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

6.1. Background and stating the main purpose of this treatise.....	64
6.2. Summary.....	64
6.3. Conclusion.....	65

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Employment in the Construction Industry.....	16
Table 2: Percentage ratio's male versus female workers.....	17
Table 3: Survey of percentage female workers in the Industry today.....	19
Table 4: Active contractors by percentages.....	20
Table 5: Survey concerning women working as foremen.....	32

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS/FIGURES

Figure 1: Percentage male versus female.....	17
Figure 2: Percentage male versus female in services.....	18
Figure 3: Employment by status (permanent male versus female).....	18
Figure 4: The Gender and Equity Index by other regions besides South-Africa..	53

CHAPTER 1

STATING THE PROBLEM

1. INTRODUCTION

Women in construction face many problems and obstacles by choosing a career in the Building and Construction Industry.

Women, whether it be part of the professional team, or even nowadays working on site, are victims of unfair treatment, discrimination and disrespect.

What are the reasons for this behaviour of men towards women? Is this problem becoming worse or are men realising women's capabilities and willing to give women a chance to prove themselves?

Is there discrimination towards women in the difference between the salaries they earn, promotions, and the opportunities for becoming directors of construction companies or even contract managers and at the end of the day employers instead of employees?

What are the challenges that women face when working in an Industry that is male dominant? What happens to them? How many of them actually make it, and how many reaches a point in their career where men honour and admire them professionally?

But do women belong in a career as a foremen or site agent? Do women really belong on site? Can women successfully work on site and be a successful wife and mother?

These are only a few questions that will be researched and answered through out the chapters of this study. All women in the industry can relate to one or more of the above statements.

2. MAIN PROBLEM

The main problem of this research is to determine whether women are still being discriminated against in the South African construction Industry. And what are the general atmosphere between women, and also men on this specific topic.

3. THE SUB-PROBLEMS

The Sub-problems include:

- 3.1. An observation of female representation in a non-traditional occupation such as the construction industry in South-Africa. Statistics on any related aspects comparing men versus women. Is there still a major difference in number? Or is the number of women increasing yearly? What are men's views on women working on site with them?
- 3.2. How is the current working environment for women in the construction industry experienced? A view on how women and men currently feel and experience the current working circumstances for women whether they work on site or as a quantity surveyor or engineer for example.
- 3.3. Employment and gender policies to combat discrimination in the workplace. What does the law say on equity and fairness towards women and what types of discrimination could women experience?
- 3.4. Are women capable of being directors of construction companies? What are the physical and mental obstacles they face?

4. HYPOTHESES:

Expected outcomes:

- 4.1. An extreme difference in numbers is expected between female construction workers and even women working in the Industry as quantity surveyors, architects, engineers etc. compared to men. It is definitely a male dominant industry with the number of women entering the industry increasing slowly but surely.
- 4.2. It is expected that women working in construction are negative and that they are feeling discriminated against and that they are not granted the same opportunities and recognition for what they achieve compared to men. It is also expected that men will admit that women don't belong in the construction industry; especially working on site as foremen or site agents and that they believe women are not capable of achieving the same as men and therefore do not belong in the construction industry.
- 4.3. There are many acts to protect women and their rights, also to prevent discrimination against race, age, gender etc. Mostly these rights are not enforced and women are still not equally treated. After this chapter we should have a better understanding of women's rights and if they are enforced in the workplace.
- 4.4. Women are capable to start and successfully manage a construction company. Saying that, a woman in charge of her own construction company will have great difficulty to for full a tradition roll of mother and wife. Women should create their own opportunities but I think there is a limit to their responsibilities and a choice should be made early in a woman's life if she will be family or career orientated. Physically there will be a lot of obstacles of which some will definitely hamper women's chances of a successful career in the construction industry. Mentally the construction industry in South-Africa is still very conservative and a big mind shift needs to be made.

5. DELIMITATIONS

- 5.1. Delimitations are limited to women only.
- 5.2. Although references are made to international figures, the study is limited to South-Africa.
- 5.3. The study is limited to the Construction Industry including all professionals involved in a construction contract.

6. DEFINITION OF TERMS

- 6.1. Designated group: women, disabled persons, and blacks.
- 6.2. Discrimination: any act or omission, including a policy, law, rule, practice, condition or situation which directly or indirectly:
 - (a) Imposes burdens, obligations or disadvantage on; or
 - (b) Withholds benefits, opportunities or advantages from, any person on one or more of the prohibited grounds. [Promotion of equality and prevention of unfair discrimination Act, 4 of 2000]
- 6.3. Equality: includes the full and equal enjoyment of rights and freedoms as contemplated in the Constitution and includes de jure and de facto equality and also equality in terms of outcomes. [Promotion of equality and prevention of unfair discrimination Act, 4 of 2000]
- 6.4. Employment policy or practice: includes, but is not limited to:
 - (a) Recruitment procedures, advertising and selection criteria;
 - (b) Appointments and the appointment process;
 - (c) Job classification and grading;
 - (d) Remuneration, employment benefits and terms and conditions of employment;
 - (e) Job assignments;
 - (f) The working environment and facilities;
 - (g) Training and development;
 - (h) Performance evaluation systems;
 - (i) Promotion;
 - (j) Transfer;

- (k) Demotion;
 - (l) Disciplinary measures other than dismissal; and
 - (m) Dismissal.
- 6.5. Family responsibility: the responsibility of employees in relation to their spouse or partner, their dependent children or other members of their immediate family who need their care or support;
- 6.6. Gender: The term "gender" is not defined in any statutes, although in various statutory enactments, it is distinguished from "sex". In more general terms, depending on the context, gender may include the meaning often ascribed to sex. When it used / ascribed a more specific meaning, gender refers to the attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the socio-cultural relationships between women and men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialisation processes. They are context specific and changeable. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in activities undertaken, access to and control over resources as well as decision-making opportunities. Gender is part of the broader socio-cultural context, which also takes into consideration factors such as class, race, economic status, ethnic group and age. In this document the term gender includes the meaning ascribed to sex unless the context indicates otherwise. Strictly speaking, gender is distinguished from sex, which is biologically determined.
- 6.7. Harassment: unwanted conduct which is persistent or serious and demeans, humiliates or creates a hostile or intimidating environment or is calculated to induce submission by actual or threatened adverse consequences and which is related to:
- (a) Sex, gender or sexual orientation; or
 - (b) A person's membership or presumed membership of a group identified by one or more of the prohibited grounds or a characteristic associated with such group. [Promotion of equality and prevention of unfair discrimination Act, 4 of 2000]
- 6.8. Marital status: includes the status or condition of being single, married, divorced, widowed or in a relationship, whether with a person of the same or the opposite sex, involving a commitment to reciprocal support in a

relationship. [Promotion of equality and prevention of unfair discrimination Act, 4 of 2000]

6.9. Prohibited grounds:

a) Race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth; or

(b) Any other ground where discrimination based on that other ground:

(i) Causes or perpetuates systemic disadvantage;

(ii) Undermines human dignity; or

(iii) Adversely affects the equal enjoyment of a person's rights and freedoms in a serious manner that is comparable to discrimination on a ground in paragraph (a) [Promotion of equality and prevention of unfair discrimination Act, 4 of 2000]

6.10. Sex: refers to the biological and physical differences between men and women. Sex discrimination refers to discrimination based on the physical or biological differences between men and women.

7. ASSUMPTIONS

It is assumed that women are still being discriminated against in the Construction Industry.

8. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

It is important to know whether women are still being discriminated against in the construction industry because all genders should be treated equally in the workplace whether it is male- or female orientated. It is important to find out whether the problems are addressed in a serious manner.

9. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Information was gathered through interviews, questionnaires, literature, statistics, books and profiles.

CHAPTER 2

AN OBSERVATION OF FEMALE REPRESENTATION IN A NON-TRADITIONAL OCCUPATION SUCH AS THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY IN SOUTH-AFRICA

1. INTRODUCTION

There are many benefits for women working in a non-traditional occupation comparing to a traditional occupation where women are welcomed. But there are even more obstacles that they face in a male-dominant occupation.

It has been said that non-traditional jobs for women often pay 20% to 30% more than traditional female jobs. According to the Construction Industry Development Board or the CIDB, between 1988 and 1997, the number of women in non-traditional jobs remained relatively unchanged at around 3% of the total number of women employed.

Women work in all aspects of the construction Industry. They work as architects, quantity surveyors, engineers, administration, even on site as foremen or site agents. Women were introduced in the Industry in more traditional jobs as in administrative support and ordering, but numbers are increasing and women are doing more hands-on jobs. Today women are involved in every occupational category of the Industry.

2. FEMALE REPRESENTATION

According to dr Ingrid Verwey (2009), specialist in contract development at the Development Bank of Southern Africa and founder of the South African Women in Construction Association, the database of women contractors had grown from 60 at its inception in 1997 to over 1000 in 2007. A 2005 survey commissioned by the body had revealed that, in Gauteng province alone, the association boasted seven member companies involved with in million-rand deals, 13 medium-sized construction companies owned and managed by women and 43 smaller companies that were gender compliant.

In August 2007, Gauteng Premier Mbazima Shilowa said that, since 2004, the provincial government have awarded tenders worth over R359-million to women-owned companies for the construction of thousands of RDP-houses.

In 2008, 50 houses built by three women-owned companies – Ndilekaluzuko cc, Kopano Creative Concepts and L&R Welding and Suppliers – were handed over to beneficiaries of the Gauteng government’s Doornkop Thulani Housing project in Soweto.

Gauteng Housing MEC Nomvula Mokonyane, who handed over the houses, said these three women-owned firms were awarded contracts worth around R200-million by her department in 2007.

Banyane Makwebu is the first women to earn the title of site manager at Cape town-based construction company NMC. She said that “The moment you walk onto a construction site, you have already been judged as a woman. So I focus on what is possible rather than on what is impossible. I don’t hear what I don’t need to hear, instead I use the communication skills I have as a woman to manage my site.” (www.nmc.co.za; april 2008 news)

3. STATISTICS

The following statistics were collected in order to assess male versus female ratios in the Construction Industry in South-Africa.

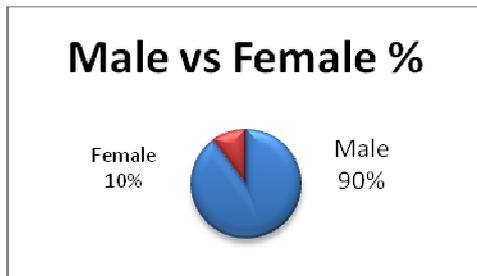
STATS SA as at 10 December 2008 – In the construction Industry

Table no.1

Employment in the Construction Industry at the end of June 2007

Type of service	Construction workers			Other workers			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Site preparation	13 642	179	13 821	1 505	353	1 858	15 147	532	15 679
Construction of buildings	137 039	12 720	149 759	13 839	8 009	21 848	150 878	20 729	171 607
Construction of civil engineering structures	97 542	5 717	103 259	15 666	4 901	20 567	113 208	10 618	123 826
Construction of other structures	10 511	450	10 961	2 384	567	2 951	12 895	1 017	13 912
Construction by specialist trade contractors	26 181	980	27 161	4 526	923	5 449	30 707	1 903	32 610
Plumbing	11 344	1 383	12 727	1 367	1 249	2 616	12 711	2 632	15 343
Electrical contractors	35 938	1 849	37 787	3 933	3 514	7 447	39 871	5 363	45 234
Shop-fitting	3 271	51	3 322	257	141	398	3 528	192	3 720
Other building installations	14 289	709	14 998	6 354	2 023	8 377	20 643	2 732	23 375
Painting and decorating	8 309	221	8 530	1 046	521	1 567	9 355	742	10 097
Other building completion	58 524	4 524	63 048	8 429	2 303	10 732	66 953	6 827	73 780
Renting of construction or demolition equipment with operators	9 579	192	9 771	4 008	724	4 732	13 587	916	14 503
TOTAL:	426 169	28 975	455 144	63 314	25 228	88 542	489 483	54 203	543 686

Fig no.1



From above table it can be seen that the number of male workers compared to the female workers in the Construction Industry still varies to extreme numbers. As a conclusion the female workers only make up 10 percent of the total number of workers in the Construction Industry.

Table no.2

% Ratios male versus female workers at the end of June 2007

Type of service	Male	Female	Total	% Male	% Female	% Male more than Female
Site preparation	15 147	532	15 679	96.61%	3.39%	93.21%
Construction of buildings	150 878	20 729	171 607	87.92%	12.08%	75.84%
Construction of civil engineering structures	113 208	10 618	123 826	91.43%	8.57%	82.85%
Construction of other structures	12 895	1 017	13 912	92.69%	7.31%	85.38%
Construction by specialist trade contractors	30 707	1 903	32 610	94.16%	5.84%	88.33%
Plumbing	12 711	2 632	15 343	82.85%	17.15%	65.69%
Electrical contractors	39 871	5 363	45 234	88.14%	11.86%	76.29%
Shop-fitting	3 528	192	3 720	94.84%	5.16%	89.68%
Other building installations	20 643	2 732	23 375	88.31%	11.69%	76.62%
Painting and decorating	9 355	742	10 097	92.65%	7.35%	85.30%
Other building completion	66 953	6 827	73 780	90.75%	9.25%	81.49%
Renting of construction or demolition equipment with operators	13 587	916	14 503	93.68%	6.32%	87.37%
TOTAL:	489 483	54 203	543 686	90.03%	9.97%	80.06%

Stats SA as at 10 December 2008

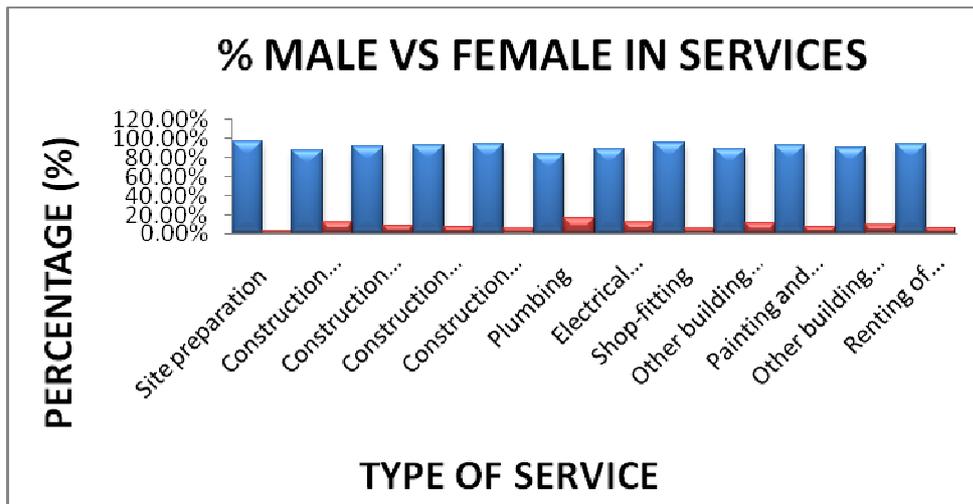


Fig no.2

From the above tables and graphs, it is evident that there are remarkable differences in the percentages of female workers compared to the male workers, even in the different departments of the Construction Industry.

Employment by status (permanent male versus female)

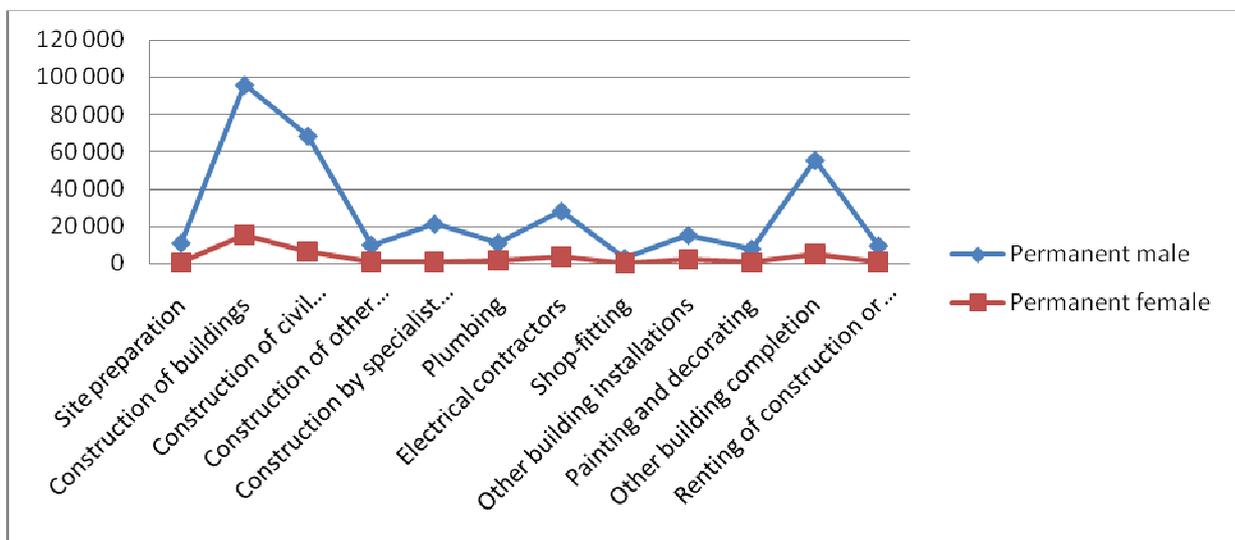


Fig. no.3 – Statistics South-Africa 2008

Percentage female workers compared to men (excluding labour force and administrative workers) in well-known Contracting and Construction related companies:

Table no.3 – Survey of % female workers in the industry today (2009)

COMPANY	Trade	Number male employees (excl labour and admin)	Number female employees (excl labour and admin)	Female trade	Total male + female	% Female
Axe Developments	Developments	2	0	N/A	2	0%
ODC - Office Design Contractors	Contractors	6	0	N/A	6	0%
Scribante Construction	Contractors	87	0	N/A	87	0%
Steyn Construction	Contractors	9	1	Quantity Surveyor	10	10%
PCC Pta	Quantity Surveyors	15	4	Quantity Surveyor	19	21%
Van Heerden Architects	Architects	4	1	Architect	5	20%
Moseme Construction	Contractors	52	1	Estimator	53	2%
Lone Rock Construction	Contractors	64	0	N/A	64	0%
Schoombie Hartmann QS Joburg	Quantity Surveyors	7	3	Quantity Surveyor	10	30%
Seome Quantity Surveyors	Quantity Surveyors	2	1	Quantity Surveyor	3	33%
GD Irons Construction	Contractors	133	3	1xQuantity Surveyor; 1xSite Agent; 1xPlanning-coordinator	136	2%
Van Vuuren en Vennote	Quantity Surveyors	7	1	Quantity Surveyor	8	13%
Norvell Wentzel Steinburg	Quantity Surveyors	15	9	Quantity Surveyor	24	38%
Pentad QS Pta	Quantity Surveyors	5	2	Quantity Surveyor	7	29%
LKV Engineers	Engineers	3	1	Engineer	4	25%
ZW Klopper	Quantity Surveyors	2	1	Quantity Surveyor	3	33%
Beckers	Contractors	47	3	2xQuantity Surveyors; 1xForemen	50	6%
Taljaard Meyer Storm	Quantity Surveyors	5	4	Quantity Surveyor	9	44%
PBNS QS	Quantity Surveyors	3	1	Quantity Surveyor	4	25%
HPM Project Managers	Project Managers	4	3	Project Managers	7	43%
Venn & Milford QS	Quantity Surveyors	20	5	Quantity Surveyor	25	20%
De Leeuw Group QS	Quantity Surveyors	8	6	Quantity Surveyor	14	43%
CAQS	Quantity Surveyors	3	1	Quantity Surveyor	4	25%
Steff Stocks Building	Contractors	198	0	N/A	198	0%
TOTAL:		701	51		752	7%

Information gathered from questionnaires completed by a group of people

The above table gives us a good indication of the following:

- Firstly the percentage of women compared to men is quite extreme. Only 7 percent represents women and 93 percent men. It is not really surprising, but still a case of extreme difference in the numbers.

- Secondly it is obvious that where there is a woman in a Construction company, she mostly represents a career as quantity surveyor. There is obviously a few female architects and engineers, but a choice for a woman as foreman or site agent is very rare but still present.

Table no.4

Active Contractors By Percentages								
As at Wednesday, September 02, 2009								
All Regions								
Designation	Black Owned	%	Women Owned	%	Youth Owned	%	Total Grades	
1	77893	97%	38840	48%	26337	33%	80677	
2	4182	90%	2163	46%	1201	26%	4653	
3	1041	86%	578	48%	285	24%	1208	
4	1352	78%	714	41%	325	19%	1727	
5	808	69%	421	36%	199	17%	1166	
6	633	66%	303	32%	145	15%	952	
7	207	48%	90	21%	38	9%	431	
8	34	25%	13	9%	3	2%	137	
9	7	6%					112	
TOTAL:	86157		43122		28533		91063	

Construction Industry Development Board, September 2009

According to South African census 2004,(Stats SA, 2004) women make up 52 percent of the adult population in South Africa, they make up only 41 percent of the working South African population constitutes only 14.7 percent of all executive managers and only 7.1 percent of all directors in the country are women. Of the 3 125 directorship positions held, only 221 are held by women. Only 11 women hold chairs of boards out of a total of 364 and there are only 7 female CEOs/MDs in comparison to 357 males. Although the above information is based on companies listed on the main board of the JSE Securities Exchange, the dilemma is nationwide and covers most professions in general and it also impacts on the Construction Industry.

4. CONCLUSION

- It is clear that male representation in the construction industry is more dominant to extreme numbers and that those numbers are increasing but not at drastic measures.
- Male workers represents approximately 90 percent of the workforce in the Construction Industry in South-Africa. But women would probably represent an estimate of 95% in Industries such as beauticians, hairdressers, administration, personal assistance, nursing etc.
- It is evident that construction is a majority male industry, but in modern times, as society progress and South-Africa in particular develops, it is inevitable that women representation in the construction industry will increase. The construction industry will never be female dominant and remain strongly male dominant due to the nature of the industry.

5. TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS

As expected, there are extreme difference in numbers between female construction workers and even women working in the Industry as quantity surveyors, architects, engineers etc compared to men. A survey proved it to be as extreme as 90 percent male dominant. It is definitely a male dominant industry with the number of women entering the industry increasing slowly but surely. The hypotheses were quite accurate.

CHAPTER 3

CURRENT WORKING ENVIROMENT FOR WOMEN IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

1. INTRODUCTION

Women's success in the workplace can be summed up by the quote about Ginger Rogers — “that she did everything Fred Astaire did, but backwards and in high heels”.

The Construction Industry makes provision for various sectors and occupations. Some are more physical and some more administrative. Some are more women orientated and some more male dominant. For example an architect or quantity surveyor compared to a construction manager or foremen.

Interviews with a couple of female and male professionals in the industry gave a general idea of how women are treated and feel in their respective environments within the construction industry. A few interesting remarks follows below from questionnaires and interviews with women working as foremen, men working with women as foremen, and quantity surveyors working on and off-site.

2. WOMEN AS FOREMEN

Lynette Louw is a 26 year old woman working as a foreman on a major construction site. Consulting with her was very interesting and hearing her opinion on some common topics and problems women might face in a male dominant construction industry.



2.1. Why would any woman decide to take on a job as a foreman or site agent? My career choice was somewhat of a surprise, I never grew up dreaming of becoming a builder when I'm older. I wanted to start a career in nutrition science but when I got to London, I made a last minute decision to work in the construction industry. I started as a concrete technician (a term used for a person who pours the concrete, tests it and does the orders) in London and worked my way up as a section supervisor and from there on gained more experience while also studying.

2.2. How are you treated by your co-workers and the people working under your supervision?

At first it is really difficult; men are not use to having women on site, especially not in a hands-on position. Men usually work with a female Quantity Surveyor at most but not really a woman as a foreman or site agent. I have learned that it is important to make your mark from the start and let men know that you will not be messed around. New foremen always struggle with the idea of listening to a woman and even worse a young woman. But as any other person we learn new things every day and we should all learn from each other and through each other's experiences.

2.3. Do you believe women really receive the credit they deserve in the Industry?

Definitely not. Your hard work and long working hours never receives the recognition it deserves compared to men. I have experienced men receiving promotions more often compared to women, and there is a definite difference in salaries between myself and a man in my position of the same age, with the same experience and qualifications.

2.4. What are you working towards in your career?

My aim is to be a project manager before I turn thirty. I am very confident and know I can take on the challenge. From there, I would like to start my own construction business.



2.5. Do you fight for women rights in the Industry or isn't it necessary?

I hope so and yes, it is definitely necessary. But slowly things are changing for women. If we can't stand up and prove ourselves as women, men would never give us the respect we deserve. It all starts with how the workers on site treat women. I also try to protect the workers when they are treated unfairly, this often happens. I try to gain their respect wherever I can. They sometimes have a harder time than I do.

2.6. Do women in your industry need to work harder than men to achieve the same goals?

Yes, 10 times harder. You have to know more, understand more. Your technical knowledge must be excellent. Most men see you as an inferior; they disregard our ideas as mindless or absurd. The more I know the better off I'll be. That is how I win respect from the older men in the Industry. I'm not really scared of asking questions, how else would I learn? But I always expect sexist comments when asking questions or presenting new ideas. But I believe that I can achieve what anyone else can achieve in half the time, twice as good! I'm not scared of getting my hands dirty or doing any physical work when necessary, and through that I already gain a huge amount of respect from the men.

2.7. How do people outside your Industry react when you tell them that you work on a construction site as a Site Agent?

My family and friends don't understand the technicality of my job and what it entails. I've tried to explain, but they still see me as a female builder on site in a male industry or sometimes people just assume I am a Quantity Surveyor.

2.8. You worked in the Construction Industry abroad, how does it compare to South Africa in the sense of how women are treated by men?

I worked in London, England for a few months and in Canada for just over a year. Canada and England are both first world countries and there is a day and night difference between them and South-Africa. There women can fix steel, plaster, lay bricks or even pour concrete. As long as she can do the job, no-one complains. I have only worked with one female project manager in my career of 7 years working in the Industry. It was in London in 2003. She had a strong personality that

intimidated some men. She was technically brilliant. She offered me a job by asking one question: "Do you mind getting dirty?" That's when I knew I'm in the right industry.

She further explained that life on site is completely different to an office job or the work of a quantity surveyor or architect for example. She deals with different people and races, each with their own way of doing things. You get to know people on another level and she also confirms that the Industry changed her as person. You have to learn to be tough. She has learned to stand up for herself, being tough without being rough, being strict without being unreasonable.

The men on site you work with become your friends, and if you work hard you become part of a team and they don't see you a woman anymore, but rather as member of the team. Of course there are days where you ask yourself, 'why am I in this Industry?' but it is the end product that makes me so proud, and being proud of myself for succeeding in a "man's world" without any favours or advantages because you are a women, makes it all worth it.

3. WOMEN WORKING AS QUANTITY SURVEYORS FOR CONTRACTORS ON SITE OR OTHER ENVIRONMENTS

3.1. Truana Brits is a 32 year old female quantity surveyor working on site for a major construction company. She has a little baby girl, and still works full time on site. Her views on women in construction were as follow:

3.1.1. Have you ever felt discriminated against as woman on site in the construction industry?

Definitely. Never direct discrimination, but underlying discrimination. Mainly about working hours and site walks. For example; to miss the traffic, I need to leave my house early in the mornings and start my day on site early. For any woman it is quite dangerous to be working on site while it is still dark. It is really a scary experience if you do not have anyone starting as early as myself on site. Now that I have a little baby girl, the men do not understand how difficult it sometimes is to be on a site that

is quite far from home. Construction hours doesn't really suite the life of a female or a mother for that matter. I am in a lucky position, I'm working for a very understanding director and he now allows me to work flexy hours. But even this causes men to make remark and to look down on me, even by the site agents. Even though they earn more than female quantity surveyors and they are compensated for the hours they put in on site, they still find a problem with us. Some directors discriminate against women by paying them less than they are worth, even if they deliver the same quality work as any other person working on site. I find site walks difficult for women. It's never a great feeling when you have hundreds of men staring at you as you walk through site alone. Most of them don't understand it and make remarks about the amount of time you don't spend on site and that you don't spend enough time on site to properly record all the extra's etc. If you have a good contracts manager and he understands it, he will make sure that it will never be necessary for a woman to walk alone through the site and he will arrange for a site agent or himself to accompany you.

My feeling has always been that women get paid less, even our starting salary at companies are less than would be offered to men, just because we are women and the older directors decides beforehand that we are not capable of handling the same amount and quality of work than men are because we have responsibilities towards our husband and children. Male quantity surveyors of my age with the same amount or even less experience, gets compensated with bonuses, shares etc just because they are men and can stay after work for a beer or two. If you work flexy hours, or leave work at 5pm, it will mean less bonuses and less chances of any advantages, even if you perform better than they do. I know for sure that site agents who have worked a shorter period for our company receives higher car and travel allowances. I have never heard a satisfying answer to date. I have heard the defence that they need to drive to site a lot. So twice a week that they could possibly go to site more than I do, Saturdays and Sundays, means that they should receive a higher allowance to be able to buy bigger cars and myself as woman need to suffer on my own. For some reason some of the directors argue that women at least have husbands who are the main breadwinners and therefore they can pay the women less on their car and travel allowances. For me that doesn't make any sense. In my household I am the main breadwinner, therefore my husband can't buy me big safe

cars, and as result it has to come from my salary and my car and travel allowance.

Women are regularly discriminated against by making unfair comments or jokes about PMS etc. It is okay for men to get angry or to be irritated by their work, but when a woman gets angry, they laugh and blame it on PMS. They always expect you to do your work and keep quiet and you should let them make the decisions and handle the problems.

3.1.2. Do you think women have a place in the construction industry?

Depending on a number of things, women might have a place in the industry. Maybe if the industry would allow woman to work flexy hours like many other companies allows their employees to do. A women's chance of becoming a director in a construction company is less than zero percent. They won't even admit that the women contributed to the growth of the company. If you don't work twelve hours a day for seven days in a week and commit all your free time to the company and spend it on site, you should not expect any recognition or won't be considered for a higher position in the company. If they forget the old rules and start looking at the quality of work you do instead of how many hours you put in, then a woman would have a better place in the construction industry.

Because we are women, I believe that it is our right to be treated differently than men. Most women I know did not choose a career in construction to become a man or be treated like a man. It is also a career choice due to interest and qualification as any other industry. Just because 99 percent of the workforce in the company are male, does not mean there is no place for a woman. But it still stays very difficult for a woman. I believe it has changed though as younger people move into higher positions, but there are still some of them who are blind to changes of any sort and who will still elude you with bonuses and benefits if you dare do your work and run a household successfully. If only they would realise that a woman who is happy at home, will be happy at work and give 101 percent input in the company.

3.1.3. What are your views on woman working as foremen or site agents?

I don't really think it is such a good idea, reason being all of the above mentioned problems and she will never get the appreciation and credit she deserves. If a woman really have a passion for working on site and do not mind that her household and work can't both be successfully organized by her, then she can do it. Young employees who just finished their studies, don't always realise at first how difficult it is to spend so many hours on site. At the beginning you feel that your career is growing and that you will achieve great things, but the moment you have other commitments; a husband, kids etc, you quickly get judged on the amount of hours you spend on site. A quantity surveyor can work from 7 to 5pm without having to spend it on site, whereas a foremen or site agent has to work after hours or even till late in the morning to finish a concrete pour. Then it is dark, cold, and not really the place for a woman.

3.1.4. Do you think that a woman has to work much harder to achieve the same recognition than a man in construction?

Definitely. Because men won't admit that women do some much more than just their 8 to 5 job. Therefore women have to put much more effort in for men to take them seriously. In construction it is really all about the amount of hours you spend on site instead of the quality of work you deliver. Men wake up in the mornings, take a shower, grab his lunchbox that his wife prepared and drives to work. He concentrates on his work throughout the day, drinks a beer after work and when he gets home, a delicious plate of food awaits him. If he doesn't work on a Saturday or Sunday, he sleeps late because his wife will look after the baby and all of the house work and responsibilities while he rests after a week of long hours and hard work.

3.2. Lizette van Eden is a 42 year old Quantity Surveyor and she has worked for several quantity surveying companies including De Leeuw Group as well as construction companies and is currently employed with BKS Engineering Consultants. Her views on the different aspects of discrimination in the construction industry were as follow:

3.2.1. Is there discrimination against women in the construction industry?

There is definitely discrimination against women especially if you are working on site as a quantity surveyor or foremen. If you work off site in a consulting office, the discrimination is much less because your work entitles more theory. In the 1990's men earned much more than women for the same position and work description. Some male quantity surveyors believe that women are only good enough to measure and not able to handle an entire contract. Measuring is below them.

3.2.2. Must women work much harder than men to achieve the same recognition?

Women must work much harder than men and she must prove herself before any man will accept her in the construction industry, especially at a more senior level. I think it is a cultural influence that the laborers won't listen to a woman on site if she is a foremen or site agent giving them instructions. They will ignore you because in their culture a woman is less than a man and only good for raising children.

4. MEN WORKING WITH WOMEN

Grant Wood, 33 year old senior construction manager



1. How many female co-workers have you worked with on site in your career?
 - a. Are these numbers increasing?

Approx 6 – Not really increasing

2. Do you think that women belong in the construction industry?

Construction is a rather tough industry even for men, it is definitely much harder for a women to gain respect from her subordinates or sub-contractors. Saying that, women like Lynette seem to have done just fine. Another worry is a woman's safety on site! Especially in South-Africa.

3. Does a female foremen need to work much harder than men to advance in their careers?

No, I feel the structure has proved itself to be fair.

4. Is there still a lot of discrimination against women?

Not as much as in the past, but there is still some around. Construction has traditionally been a man's world.

a. If so, what can be done to better the situation?

Young employees, male and female, get discriminated upon all the time. I think once you gain a person's respect the discrimination will disappear. Women could be compared to a youngster in this regard.

5. How does someone like Lynette compare to a man in a similar job position with similar experience and qualifications?

You have to be a "Tough Cookie" otherwise you will be walked all over, especially in her type of position. Women are fortunately/unfortunately very emotional individuals; this probably is their only weakness in this type of industry. So, to answer the question: I'd say she is probably on par with a male with her qualification and experience.

6. Would it have an effect on you if you were to work below a female construction manager?

I suppose it depends, if I worked below a male boss who was unreasonable then it would not be great! This would be the same with having a woman boss. And Vice Versa.

Chris Liebenberg, a 57 year old Quantity surveyor has worked as professional quantity surveyor as well as for construction companies including GD Irons Construction and Group 5.



1. With how many female co-workers have you worked on site before?

Are these numbers increasing?

Quite a few. The numbers are definitely increasing.

2. Do you think that women belong in the construction industry?

Yes, but only in certain positions where she does not have to work on site the entire day and also where there is not too much physical work involved.

3. Do female foremen need to work much harder than men to advance in their careers?

Yes. It is not traditionally a women occupation. The numbers are increasing though and therefore it is something that everyone needs to get use to and also try and accommodate these women.

4. Is there still a lot of discrimination against women?

Yes.

a. If so, what can be done to better the situation?

A mind shift needs to be made in the construction industry.

5. How does a woman compare to a man in a similar job position with similar experience and qualifications? (as foreman or site agent)

It is very hard for women to have the same amount of experience compared to men because women are fairly new in the industry in those positions. It will change in future as women are accommodated more. But at this stage I would say no, women can't be compared to men.

6. Would it have an effect on you if you were to work below a female construction manager?

No, as long as she is competent in her position.

5. SURVEY OF MEN'S VIEWS ON WOMEN IN THE INDUSTRY

A survey was done to get an overall feeling from men working on site about their opinion and view's on whether women belong in construction. Two questions were asked:

a. Do women belong on site as foremen or site agents?

b. Do women belong in the industry as quantity surveyors, architects, engineers or any other construction project related occupations

A total of 45 men working on different sites all around Gauteng and in different positions from foremen to construction managers were questioned. The information

varied from a wide age group and the survey ranged from age 20 to as old as 63 years which gave a very good idea of the overall feeling under men in the Industry.

Table no.5 – Survey concerning women working as foremen

NAME	SURNAME	POSITION	DO WOMEN BELONG ON SITE AS A FORMEN OR SITE AGENT		DO WOMEN BELONG IN THE INDUSTRY AS A QS, ARCHITECT OR ENGINEER	
			YES	NO	YES	NO
Carel	van Eck	Foremen		X	x	
Terry	Blignaut	Foremen		X	x	
Earl	Buys	Foremen		X	x	
Kobus	Malan	Site Agent	X		x	
Willie	Voges	Site Agent		X	x	
Ivan	Fick	Junior Foremen		X	x	
Mervin	Adams	Foremen		X	x	
André	Clouts	Foremen		X	x	
Dan	Lourens	Foremen		X	x	
Herman	Steyn	Foremen	X		x	
Eddie	Farelo	Foremen		X	x	
Jacques	du Preez	Foremen		X		X
Hannes	Joubert	Foremen	X		x	
Nico	Erasmus	Foremen		X	x	
Abel	Botha	Construction Manager	X		x	
Christoff	van Huyssteen	Junior Site Agent		X	x	
Leon	Brugman	Junior Construction Manager		X	x	
Jonas	Mosana	Drawing clerk		X	x	
Temba	Sibanyoni	Foremen		X	x	
Isaac	Padi	Storemen		X	x	
Christo	Boshoff	Site Agent		X	x	
Martin	Cassell	Foremen	X		x	
Gregory	Hill	Material buyer		X	x	
Trevor	Hofsta	Foremen		X	x	
Willem	Pretorius	Site Agent		X	x	
Charles	Beukes	Foremen		X	x	
Rudolph	Strydom	Junior Construction Manager		X	x	
Craig	McNair	Junior Construction Manager		X	x	
Piet	Visser	Construction Manager		X	x	

Ron	Pretorius	Quantity Surveyor		x	x	
Jan	du Preez	Yard Manager		x	x	
Russel	Mashifana	Foremen		x	x	
Hein	Groenewald	Quantity Surveyor	X		x	
Julio	Silva	Site Agent		x	x	
Lourens	Erasmus	Construction Manager		x	x	
Roger	Kim Fley	Foremen		x	x	
van Zyl	Waugh	Construction Manager		x	x	
Harro	Backeberg	Accountant		x	x	
Sam	Hlungwane	Foremen	X		x	
Clifford	Adams	Foremen	X		x	
Louis	Cloete	Quantity Surveyor		x	x	
Marcel	du Preez	Foremen	X		x	
Jacques	Nel	Foremen		x	x	
Pieter	Pentz	Site Agent		x		X
Filipe	da Silva	Quantity Surveyor		x	x	
TOTAL:			9	36	43	2
PERCENTAGE:			20%	80%	96%	4%

From the above table, it is obvious that 80 percent of men feel that a woman should not be working on site as a foremen or site agent. 96 percent of them have no objection to a woman working on construction projects as quantity surveyors, architects or engineers. There is still a very small percentage (4 percent) that's completely against women working in the construction industry.

6. CONCLUSION

- It is evident that women still feel they are being discriminated against and that they have to work harder than men to achieve the same respect and success.
- Men on the other hand know that discrimination against women has been a problem in the past but that this image have been changed significantly.
- There will always be an obvious hierarchy in the construction industry. Ego's roam on site, older men versus younger men, experience versus new ideas, race versus race etc. It could also be that women take these power struggles personal and automatically think men are being sexist.

- There will always be discrimination in the construction industry, whether it be against race, age or gender. The construction industry is a tough industry and if you want to be part of it, you should be prepared.
- Obviously discrimination is not approved but sometimes it is misread.
- As South-Africa and our industry develop, cases of discrimination will become less. Professionalism and the younger generation will ensure fairness but at this stage discrimination against women are stills a big problem.

7. TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS

- The initial hypothesis was correct as women are clearly still being discriminated against.
- Generally men still believe the construction industry is not an industry women belong in, sometimes with a valid reason and sometimes clearly unfair.
- The Industry is however slowly starting to show positive change.

CHAPTER 4

EMPLOYMENT AND GENDER POLICIES TO COMBAT DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE

1. INTRODUCTION

Approximately 37 percent of architectural students are women and the percentage is increasing. This figure is however not reflected in the architectural profession; women only represent 13 percent of architects in the industry and analysis revealed that women are leaving the profession after qualifying.

A number of survey's, interviews, questionnaires etc were done to try and find out what the reasons could be. It was found that the biggest influences were that women felt they were under paid, had poor promotion prospects, were discriminated against, and being victims of sexist behaviour.

(Manley, 2005,23)

Female architects are not alone, women in the construction Industry have it worst. Women all over the world and in South-Africa feel discriminated against.

Will this general perception of women in construction change? What policies have been put in place to promote gender equality and are these policies being enforced by the government and the private sector and more specifically in the South-African construction industry.

2. THE EMPLOYMENT EQUITY ACT

The purpose of this Act is to achieve equity in the workplace by-

- a) promoting equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment through the elimination of unfair discrimination; and
- b) implementing affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantages in employment experienced by designated groups, in order to ensure their equitable representation in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce.

Every employer must take steps to Promote equal opportunity in the workplace by eliminating unfair discrimination in any employment policy or practice (**Employment Equity Act, 1998 Chapter II Prohibition of Unfair Discrimination; 5. Elimination of unfair discrimination**)

From the Employment Equity Act, 1998 Chapter II Prohibition of Unfair Discrimination 6; Prohibition of unfair discrimination it concludes that:

- 1) No person may unfairly discriminate, directly or indirectly, against an employee, in any employment policy or practice, on one or more grounds, including race, **gender**, sex, pregnancy, marital status, family responsibility, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, HIV status, conscience, belief, political opinion, culture, language and birth.
- 2) It is not unfair discrimination to-
 - a) take affirmative action measures consistent with the purpose of this Act; or
 - b) distinguish, exclude or prefer any person on the basis of an inherent requirement of a job.

- 3) Harassment of an employee is a form of unfair discrimination and is prohibited on any one, or a combination of grounds of unfair discrimination.

3. Discrimination against women in the workforce and the workplace

One of the basic rights women have is not to be discriminated against in the workforce and in the workplace. Unfortunately, reality does not always comply with the law and even in South-Africa and all around the world, women continue to be discriminated against in manifold ways.

- The first problem which women encounter is a lack of access to the labour market.
- The second problem is the wage gap.
- The third problem is the “glass ceiling”.

The main reason for all these problems is discrimination against women. This problem will not resolve itself. The elimination of discrimination requires deliberate, focused and consistent efforts and policies by all parties concerned over a sustained period of time.

(Report Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. 2008; Čurdová,)

3.1. The first problem which women encounter is a lack of access to the labour market. In general, far more women than men work in part-time jobs (not only of their own choosing) and many women are overqualified for the work they do. In addition, many women are what the International Labour Organisation (ILO) calls “discouraged” workers: workers who are not included in the unemployment statistics of their country because they do not actively seek work although they do want to work because they feel that no work is available to them or they face discrimination or structural, social or cultural barriers.

3.2. The second problem is the wage gap. Women are often paid less than men for the same work or work of equal value – on average at least 15%

less (up to 25 –30% less). High educational achievements are no safeguard. In many countries, the wage gap widens the better the woman is educated. In general, women also earn less than men in their lifetime and thus they have worse pension insurance conditions and also receive smaller pensions when they retire, although they live longer.

In South-Africa however, government encourages women management and there has been a positive increase in women's average salaries.

- 3.3.** The third problem is the “glass ceiling”. Women are routinely passed over when it comes to promotions. The higher the post, the less likely a woman – even one as qualified as or more qualified than her male colleague – is to get it. Women who manage to break through this so-called “glass-ceiling” into decision-making positions remain the exception to the rule as even in female-dominated sectors where there are more women managers, a disproportionate number of men rise to the more senior positions.

The main reason for all three problems – lack of access to the labour market, the wage gap and the “glass ceiling” – is discrimination against women. In most cases, women pay a gender penalty as actual or potential mothers. Many employers wrongly fear the cost and hassle motherhood may entail. In fact, according to recent ILO research, the additional cost of hiring a woman is less than 1% of the monthly gross earnings of women employees. But women are not only discriminated against for economic reasons – they are mainly discriminated against because of stereotyping and misguided preconceptions of women's roles and abilities, commitment and leadership style.

These stereotypes lead to women often being offered employment that is precarious, ill-paid, without any possibility of career advancement and not gratifying as not allowing for the full development of their abilities. Women are often excluded from informal networks and channels of communication (the “old boys network”). In

addition, some of them suffer from an unfriendly corporate culture and can become victims of moral and sexual harassment, bullying and mobbing. Finally, family responsibilities (housework, childcare, looking after elderly relatives) are not equally shared between women and men, leading to additional barriers for women to enter and stay in the workforce and have a career.

In the end, women's lower labour force participation and higher unemployment contribute to the economic loss and inequality which forms the basis for a broader inequality between women and men and can translate into economic dependence and poverty (in particular in old age) for the affected women. However, it is not only women who suffer when they are discriminated against. Discrimination against women in the workforce and the workplace contributes to lower economic growth, diminishing tax income and higher outlays in unemployment and social benefits. The elimination of this discrimination is thus also a sound economic policy goal and improves social cohesion.

The special situation of handicapped women and women belonging to minorities should also be addressed as they often suffer from double discrimination.

It is necessary to point out that discrimination at work will not resolve itself; neither will the market, on its own, take care of its elimination. The elimination of discrimination requires deliberate, focused and consistent efforts and policies by all parties concerned over a sustained period of time.

4. Problems of access to the labour market

- 4.1.** The first problem which women encounter of lack of access to the labour market is shown up in two figures: the labour force participation rate and the unemployment rate. The labour force participation rate of women continues to improve though.
- 4.2.** In most European countries, women are not only less likely to participate in the labour market, they are also more likely to be unemployed. Although the situation varies from country to country and region to region, on

average, in December 2008 9.8% of women in the 25 EU member states were registered as unemployed. (Watkins, 2009)

5. The wage gap

- 5.1.** There are several dimensions to the problem of the wage gap: First, there is the classic case of a man and a woman doing exactly the same job (whether in a factory or on the stock market floor), but the woman being paid less for it. This used to be a common problem, and many countries have outlawed this type of wage discrimination. But, even this type of classic wage discrimination persists in many countries.
- 5.2.** Women are often paid less than men for work of equal value. This type of discrimination is usually based on “horizontal occupational segregation by sex”. For example, the level of education and experience required to work in a certain job might be the same, but women are paid less (e.g. chauffeurs/taxi drivers are usually paid more than cleaners or receptionists). In some countries, wage levels have gone down in certain professions when more and more women enter them. Around one-third of the female-male pay differential is due to occupational segregation by sex, and that about 10 to 30% of the gender pay gap remains “unexplained” – i.e. due to discrimination. (Watkins, 2009)
- 5.3.** Women work less during their lifetime (calculating periods of maternity leave and part-time work) – and women have less of a career, as they are often discriminated against when it comes to promotions to higher-earning posts: this is usually called “vertical occupational segregation by sex”. Women’s lower educational attainments and intermittent career paths are not, contrary to conventional belief, the main reason for gender differentials in pay. Other factors, such as occupational segregation, biased pay structures and job classification systems, and decentralized or weak collective bargaining, appear to be more important determinants of inequalities in pay.” (International labour organization, 2009)
- 5.4.** Apart from women’s lower pensions, it is important to see the tight interrelation of female length of life and feminization of poverty: since women live longer, for some period of their life, they share their pension

with their partner; however, when he dies, they are left to live on their pension which is usually much lower than their living standards. One example connected to women's pensions is pension insurance – as women live longer and although they generally earn less, to attain a final sum similar to men they are expected to pay higher sums for their monthly pension insurance.

- 5.5.** Furthermore, economic recessions often affect women more than men as far as unemployment is concerned (many companies unfortunately still believe that it is more important to keep a male “breadwinner” in employment), and women's needs or the determination to keep on working therefore leads them to accept levels of pay not consonant with the principles of equality and fairness or dissuades them from reporting cases of discrimination for fear of losing their jobs.

- 5.6.** There are a number of barriers to women's career development - here are a few examples:
 - 5.6.1. lack of management or line experience;
 - 5.6.2. lack of mentoring and role models for women at the highest levels;
 - 5.6.3. exclusion from informal networks and channels of communication (the “old boys network” is apparently still going strong in many countries);
 - 5.6.4. stereotyping and preconceptions of women's roles and abilities, commitment and leadership style;
 - 5.6.5. sexual and moral harassment, bullying and mobbing;
 - 5.6.6. unfriendly corporate culture.

- 5.7.** Many companies and administrations apply affirmative-action programmes to fight against the inherent prejudice against women in high posts: the under-represented sex (usually women) are to be hired/ promoted in the case of equal merit of the male and female candidates. However, the men at the top taking these decisions have become very adept at arguing that the male candidate has more merit than the female candidate to circumvent such rules. What is worse, in some countries, men are openly

opposing affirmative-action programmes on the grounds of discrimination against men. As a result, some companies/ administrations no longer apply these rules.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

- 6.1.** Firstly, it is stressed that one of the basic rights women have is not to be discriminated against in the workforce and in the workplace.
- 6.2.** Unfortunately, reality does not always comply with the law – as we have seen, women continue to be discriminated against in many ways: they have less access to the labour market than men, they earn less than men (even in the same job), and they continually bump their heads against the “glass ceiling” in the promotion race. When women try to defend their meagre successes, such as affirmative-action programmes – according to which preference is given to the candidate of the underrepresented sex in cases of equal merit – men cry foul. The most important task ahead of us is to make it clear that women have the right not to be discriminated against.

7. Gender equality - the forgotten component in employment equity initiatives

The increased participation of women in the labour market and economy in general is essential in developing a strong and broad skills base for the economy. The challenge is to ensure this leads to women's economic empowerment and does not further exacerbate inequalities between women and men. Ensuring gender equality is a social and constitutional imperative for individuals and business entities alike. The purpose of a gender policy and code of practice is to:

- Advance the goals of equality, development and peace for all women.
- Acknowledge the voices of all women everywhere, taking note of the diversity of women and their roles and circumstances.
- Recognise that the status of women has advanced in some important respects in the past decade but that progress has been uneven, inequalities between women and men have persisted and major obstacles remain.

- Reaffirm our commitment to the equal rights and inherent human dignity of women and men and other purposes and principles enshrined in the Bill of Rights, employment laws and international conventions and recommendations;

The legal case for implementing gender equality policies and practices is clear by reference to numerous Acts, Codes of Good Practice and ILO Conventions and Recommendations. (Watkins, 2009)

7.1. Discrimination

A gender sensitive approach to workforce management is not a goal in itself, but a means to achieve equal rights between women and men, and to promote women's rights in particular through appropriate workplace interventions. (Watkins, 2009)

In doing so, it lists prohibited grounds of discrimination (race, **gender**, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language, and birth). Differentiation based on any of these listed grounds by individuals or the State will be presumed to be unfair.

The Constitutional Court has held that differentiation on grounds analogous to those listed in s 9(3) will also constitute discrimination. The Promotion of equality and prevention of unfair discrimination Act, 4 of 2000 has reinforced this Constitutional Court principle by providing that prohibited grounds of discrimination includes any grounds where discrimination based on that other ground:

- Causes or perpetuates systemic disadvantage;
 - Undermines human dignity
 - Adversely affects the equal enjoyment of a person's rights and freedoms in a serious manner that is comparable to the listed grounds of discrimination.
- [Definitions: "prohibited grounds", Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act]

Analogous (or comparable) grounds of differentiation, which may give rise to a claim of discrimination, could include physical characteristics such as weight, height, or even "looks".

7.2. Types of Discrimination

Discrimination is differentiation based on illegitimate grounds. Not all types of discrimination are necessarily unfair. The Constitution, as well as, for example, the Employment Equity Act provides for legitimate grounds for differentiation, namely, 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 [s 9(2), The Constitution].

Section 15 of The Employment Equity Act exhorts employers in general and compels designated employers in particular to adopt affirmative action measures, which must include:

- Measures to identify and eliminate employment barriers, including unfair discrimination, which adversely affect people from designated groups (which includes women)
- Measures designed to further diversity in the workplace based on equal dignity and respect of all people
- Discrimination based on an inherent requirement of the job does not constitute unfair discrimination.

At the outset it is important to realise that employee behaviours are equally important in ensuring a fair and equitable workplace. No matter how fair an organisation's policies may be, if individual managers do not apply them consistently and fairly, the organization will not be equally accessible to everyone.

Attitudes are one factor in shaping behaviour, and the attitudes and behaviours of individual employees help form the organizational climate as a positive or negative experience for designated group members.

That fact that an employer has identified and removed employment barriers to the selection, promotion and, development of employees from designated groups may

not be sufficient to prevent unfair discrimination claims. The discriminatory behaviour of individual managers, unless addressed by the employer through its grievance and disciplinary procedures, may still give rise to discrimination claims by employees.

7.3. Discrimination may take many forms

Discrimination is to make a choice, a distinction, or some of differentiation. We all make choices every day. Discrimination becomes illegal when choices, based on prohibited grounds, limit possibilities of some groups or some individuals.

- **INTENTIONAL DISCRIMINATION** is open or conscious behaviour, which is intended to be, or to result in, unfair or inequitable treatment based on the prohibited grounds. It may include harassment. Some examples are:
 - a. Intimidation, name-calling, slurs, jokes, threats, graffiti, social exclusion, physical assault, refusing service, repeated "teasing", materials that degrade, humiliate, or exclude.
 - b. Unequal or differential treatment is treating individuals differently on the basis of the prohibited grounds. For example:
 - c. Asking women (but not men) about family status and childcare arrangements; requiring only people with physical disabilities to have employment medicals; automatically requiring language proficiency tests for members of designated groups.
 - d. Systemic discrimination, on the basis of the prohibited grounds, is built into the policies and practices of an organization so that it is perpetuated automatically. It is consciously or unconsciously carried out and it unintentionally or intentionally excludes individuals or groups of individuals. Examples are:
 - e. Inflated educational requirements (credentialism) for positions; tests which do not measure real job skills but have the effect of screening out women and members of other disadvantaged groups; lack of appropriate transportation; physical barriers; excessively lengthy experience requirements; etc.

- Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination refers to situations or treatment that is obviously unfair or unequal. For example, if an employer won't hire someone just because they are a woman.

- Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination refers to differentiation on grounds, which on the face of it, may be innocent, yet the impact of such differentiation is discriminatory. This may occur where the effect of certain requirements, conditions or practices imposed by an employer has an adverse impact disproportionately on one group or other.

For example, an employer who says that they need a person over 6 feet tall to do a job is likely to end up discriminating against women and some ethnic groups. This is because women and people from some ethnic groups are less likely to be this height than men or people from other ethnic groups. If it is possible to show that the job does not need someone 6 feet tall, or that it could easily be adapted to suit people who aren't that tall, then they could claim indirect sex discrimination or indirect race discrimination.

With Indirect Discrimination an employer can argue that there may be discrimination, but that it is actually required for the job. This does not happen very often, but circumstances where it might occur are, for example, actors who are needed to play certain characters for authenticity. The same can be true for restaurants, for example an Indian restaurant will want Indian staff rather than white staff. Or where race or gender is a genuine occupational qualification for the job, for example, employing women in an all female hostel.

- **SYSTEMIC BARRIERS** include policies and practices, which intentionally or unintentionally exclude, limit and discriminate against individuals and groups. Attitudinal barriers create an environment where people may act out their prejudices, assumptions and biases. These types of barriers may be addressed through education, training, organizational change and organizational development programs.

Systemic discrimination is much subtler. It is sometimes difficult to detect because, unlike intentional discrimination, systemic discrimination is often unintentional. Even a policy or practice that was never designed to exclude the designated groups may result in systemic barriers. Employment policies and practices, which appear neutral and are applied equally may have a disparate effect on different groups. Understanding the concept of systemic discrimination, as well as other types of employment discrimination, is key in assessing the impact of systemic discrimination on your organization's employment systems.

Consider the following examples:

- a. Your workplace does not have ramp entrances or washrooms that are accessible to wheelchair users. Qualified candidates in wheelchairs are therefore excluded from working for your company even though no one set up a policy to deliberately exclude them.
- b. Your company has weight and height requirements (in terms of physical strength) that were instituted years ago but are no longer job related. These excessive requirements eliminate the majority of women who do not meet the height or weight requirements.

7.4. Policy formulation

The first step towards developing a company gender awareness policy would be to:

- a. Firstly, to fully comprehend the broader implications of what constitutes gender equality; and
- b. Secondly, to conduct an employment systems review of policies, procedures and practices.

7.5. Conclusion: a 'primer' of gender terminology

Discussions on gender equality have given rise to a number of specific concepts which need to be understood to ensure that there is a common understanding on gender issues. These are some of the common concepts that are employed.

GENDER ANALYSIS: Refers to the systematic process of identifying the differences in, and examining the related needs of, the roles, status, positions and privileges of women and men.

GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT (GAD): Refers to a planning process, which is based on an analysis of the different situations and needs of women and men. In empowering women to their position relative to men in a way that will benefit and transform society, the GAD approach seeks to base interventions on an analysis of women's and men's roles and needs - including a focus on women to address inequity.

GENDER AWARENESS: Refers to a state of knowledge of the differences in roles and relations of women and men, and how this results in differences in power relations, status, privileges and needs.

GENDER EQUALITY: Gender equality or equality between women and men means the equal employment by men and women of socially valued goods, opportunities, resources and rewards. Because what is valued differs among societies, a crucial aspect of equality is the empowerment of women to influence what is valued and share in decision making about societal priorities.

Gender equality entails that the underlying causes of discrimination are systematically identified and removed in order to give men and women equal opportunities. The concept of gender equality recognises women's subordinate position within social relations and aims at the restructuring of society so as to eradicate male domination. Therefore, equality is understood to include both formal equality and substantive equality, not merely simple equality to men.

GENDER ISSUES: Are revealed when the relationships between men and women, their roles, privileges, status and positions, are identified and analysed. Gender issues arise where inequalities and inequities are shown to exist between people purely on the basis of their being female or male. The fact that gender and gender differences are socially constructed is itself a primary issue to deal with.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING: Involves the incorporation of gender considerations into all policies, programmes and practices so that at every stage, an analysis is made of the effects for women and men. There is no area of work, which is gender-neutral.

GENDER PAY GAP: Closing the gender pay gap is an investment in a productive factor. Not only does it address a major source of inequality between women and men, but also it improves motivation for women workers, which can lead to increase labour productivity. It also helps desegregate the labour market and change traditional roles. The reasons for gender pay gaps can be occupational and sectorial segregation (women and men doing different jobs in different sectors), education, age or factors such as discrimination, glass ceilings, or other.

GENDER PERSPECTIVE: Refers to an approach in which the ultimate goal is to create equity and equality between women and men. Such an approach has a set of tools for and guidelines on how to identify the impact of the relations and roles of women and men on development.

GENDER PROFILING: Includes the practice of ascribing criteria or characteristics (usually discriminatory) to a person solely based on his or her membership of a particular class or category of people. Other forms of profiling (stereotyping) are equally discriminatory (all black people are naturally prone to criminal activity, all people over 65 years of age are mentally and physically incapable).

GENDER RESPONSIVE: Refers to a planning process in which programmes and policy actions are developed to deal with and counteract problems, which arise if the needs arising out are socially constructed differences between women and men are not adequately met.

GENDER SENSITIVE: Refers to the state of knowledge of the socially constructed differences between women and men, including their different needs, and use of such knowledge to identify and understand the problems arising from these differences and to act purposefully to address them.

GENDER-SENSITIVE INDICATORS: Refers to those pointers that help point out the extent and manner in which development programmes have met their (gender) objectives and achieved results that advance gender equity

TRANSGENDER: Transgender is a term used to describe anyone who lives or wishes to live as a member of the opposite gender to his or her birth gender. It may also encompass, under a broad definition, anyone who presents or behaves ambiguously in relation to commonly accepted male/female gender expectations.

7.6. South African Human Rights Commission

South African Human Rights Commission [SAHRC] means the South African Human Rights Commission referred to in Chapter 9 of the Constitution.

The South African Human Rights Commission must:

- >> Promote respect for human rights and a culture of human rights
- >> Promote the protection, development and attainment of human rights
- >> Monitor and assess the observance of human rights in the Republic.

7.7. Commission for Gender Equality

Commission for Gender Equality [CGE] means the Commission for Gender Equality referred to in Chapter 9 of the Constitution.

The Commission for Gender Equality must promote respect for gender equality and the protection, development and attainment of gender equality.

The Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities established in terms of Chapter 9 of the Constitution.

The primary objects of the **Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities** are to:

- a. Promote respect for the rights of cultural, religious and linguistic communities
- b. Promote and develop peace, friendship, humanity, tolerance and national unity among cultural, religious and linguistic communities, on the basis of equality, non-discrimination and free association
- c. Recommend the establishment or recognition, in accordance with national legislation, of a cultural or other council or councils for a community or communities in South Africa.

To assist in addressing questions of gender equality it is essential that we have a common and agreed understanding of gender related concepts. The following represents some of the key concepts in the context of addressing gender equality.

8. THE GENDER EQUITY INDEX

According to Social Watch (2008):

More than half the women in the world live in countries that have made no progress in gender equity in recent years. This is the main conclusion of the Social Watch 2008 Gender Equity Index (GEI)

(Gender equity has many dimensions and it is not easy to measure, due to the lack of accurate, gender discriminated social indicators in many countries. In order to contribute to the understanding of gender-based inequities and to monitor the status and its evolution, Social Watch has developed the Gender Equity Index (GEI). This index is based on internationally available comparable data and it makes it possible to position and classify countries according to a selection of indicators relevant to gender inequity in three different dimensions: education, participation in the economy and empowerment.) which, for the first time, shows recent evolution and trends in bridging the gap between men and women in education, the economy and empowerment.

The GEI 2008 illustrates that the greater equity levels to be found in education are not paralleled by acceptable levels in the economic field nor in the empowerment of women. Political empowerment is the area where most progress has been made in recent years as a result of active policies, yet economic equity shows disparate results, with as many countries regressing as those where there is progress. In education equity is comparatively closer, but the trend for many countries is to regress.

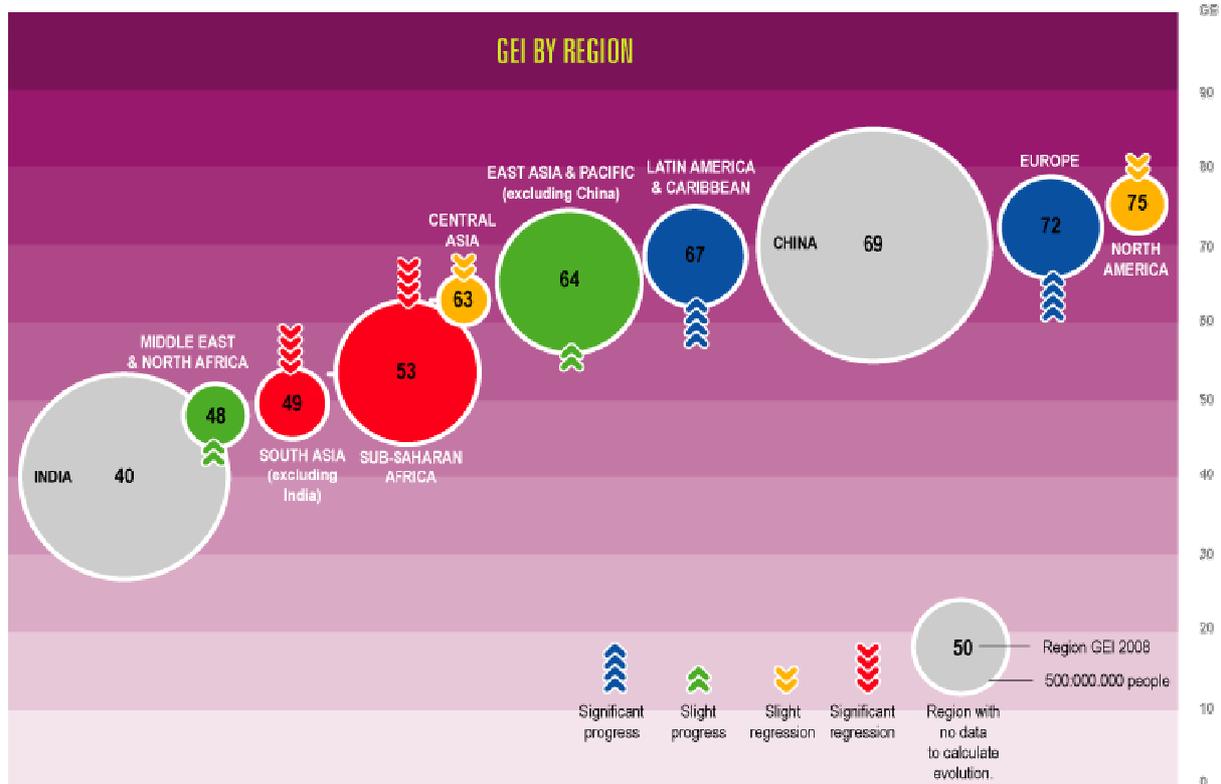
Difficulties in reaching equity cannot be justified by a lack of resources: the GEI mapping and that of each of its components show that – regardless of income levels – each country can reduce gender disparity through adequate policies.

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Difficulties in reaching equity cannot be justified by a lack of resources: the GEI mapping and that of each of its components show that – regardless of income levels – each country can reduce gender disparity through adequate policies.

Fig no.4



The Gender Equity Index by other regions besides South-Africa

9. CONCLUSION

- It is evident that the topic of gender discrimination and inequalities is a much discussed topic.
- South-African government have been very pro-active in implementing policies that promotes gender equality.
- The image of women in the workforce have also greatly improved. Top management of top companies are now being occupied by females.
- Programmes set in place also promotes women to demand fair treatment, and governments policies are clear about where they stand on discrimination.
- Obviously the situation won't change overnight and enforcing these policies is a difficult task. But we are heading in the right direction. The foundation have been laid and we need to build on this.

10. TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS

- Great policies and acts have been set in place by the government.
- To an extent, these policies are being enforced, especially in the public sector.
- In the private sector and more specifically in the construction industry, these policies are not fully enforced and we still have a long way to go before gender equality is a common practise in the construction industry.
- The hypothesis was correct in the sense that there are many acts on gender equality but these acts are not all enforced in the workplace.

CHAPTER 5

ARE WOMEN CAPABLE OF BECOMING DIRECTORS OF CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES? WHAT ARE THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL OBSTACLES THEY FACE?

5.1. INTRODUCTION

The glass ceiling is certainly not as impervious as it once was, when women were not allowed to enter certain professions or sectors. However, those who have made it to the top are still in the minority and have still had to overcome formidable obstacles.

As Sandra Burmeister (2009), chief executive of recruitment firm Landelahni Business Leaders, points out, not that much time has elapsed since the generation that saw the first woman doctor. Hence women should recognise the large strides that have been taken, while acknowledging that they still have a way to go.

Unfortunately, it is often other women who are the obstacles. Senior women do not go out of their way to increase the number of women in management ranks, according to Ilse Pienaar (2009), associate publisher of Top Women in Business and Government.

However, she does believe that today's workplace is easier for women than it was 10 years ago.

Burmeister cites women's career choices and family commitments as major defining factors when it comes to earning power. While men often earn more than women, she says it's usually not about getting different pay for the same work.

Burmeister says research undertaken by Landelahni has shown that there is a gender pay gap of just under 25% in South Africa. However, she says female engineers earn the same as male engineers — and the same applies to chief executives.

The pay differential comes in because “women tend to go into ‘softer’ professions” as a result of a cultural hangover.

According to Burmeister (2009), there are areas of the economy where women are more successful, such as human resources and recruitment, which are women-dominated sectors. Women tend to work off their intuition more than men, which gives them the edge when dealing with people.

But while the human resources departments of companies may be managed by women, the executive level is still mostly male, she argues.

Another issue that hampers women’s rise to the top is basic biology. Generally male and female graduates earn the same, but in their mid-to-late 20s women tend to earn less than men, says Burmeister, citing two reasons:

- This is the age at which women usually begin having babies. They stop working or work fewer hours, and some take on lower-paying work which allows them greater flexibility; and
- The men are becoming fathers. Hence they are more focused on being the sole breadwinners and furthering their careers to ensure that they can support their growing families.

Tracey Czakan (2009), group marketing director at Kelly, says that when women have family commitments they are forced to make difficult choices about their careers. If they are offered a promotion, they have to decide whether they can afford to put in extra time at the office to get up to speed with the new position.

And even once they are settled in the new job, they have to decide if they can deal with the loss of flexibility that often comes with a promotion.

In most households where both partners work, the woman still does most of the housework and child-related duties. But most men probably do more than their fathers did.

5.2. THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL OBSTACLES WOMEN FACE

The South African Construction industry seems to be a male dominated business, from the lowest level to the top. Females are mostly found in the more administrative and financial managing side of construction filling roles like quantity surveyors, financial controllers, administration etc. and very few are found on the physical construction sites themselves.

First the obvious aspect that comes to mind must be explored. This would be the physical characteristics of being a male or a female. The physical differences between male and female can't be ignored, with some exceptions to the rule, like there will always be, but in the majority of the population males have a stronger and more physically capable bodily make up. Many groups especially the feminist movement will want to fight this statement, but the statement of men being physically more adept than woman is not a discriminating one, but just one of fact and a trait that is part of life and being. It doesn't mean men or women are better or worse, it is just the way we are made up, each with its own benefits and drawbacks.

So what has all this got to do with construction?

Construction like all other businesses have more than one side to them. There is the physical side, the people on the ground working with their hands physically doing some form of manual labour. There is the lower management, where some physical work is involved and includes some administration and management tasks. Middle and upper management have some but very few physical labour tasks and more management and administration roles. Top management usually have a mainly administrative role.

Dependant on the business the labour could be either male or female. Textile industries usually have a larger female base of labour vs. the construction industry

with a mostly male-based labour force. This brings into consideration aspects of direct male and female physical characteristics.

Are males physically more able to do certain work in the construction industry than females? The answer here is a definite yes. As the majority of construction labour intensive tasks require physical strength and endurance, a male labour force dominates this side of construction, with few tasks done by females.

As we move up the management levels where the physical aspects of the work get less and more administrative and management tasks become more of the responsibility of the persons, we still tend to find very few females. Why is that? If physicality was the differentiating factor on the labour level and it has a very small to no impact on the management level, why do we still find very few females in these roles? The reasons here could sprout from a couple of causes.

Is the perception in the public eye and in that of most households that the construction industry is physical on all levels. Do woman get distracted by the thought or idea that physicality is part of construction and you have to be strong and tough to achieve? This might be a good argument.

Is it a fact that a lot of the management worked their way up the ranks of the industry, starting out as a labourer, artisan or low-level management, where physical work and activity was required? Is it because they have that physical experience and knowledge base that makes them more of a qualified manager. This is a compelling argument, but still lacks a convincer.

To explore this further it first needs to be explored as an aspect of not necessarily man vs. woman, but we need to look at it from a different angle, an angle of what psychologists call masculine energy and feminine energy. So lets step away from the norm for a bit and explore.

What is this masculine and feminine energy? When referred to masculine or feminine it doesn't mean it in the physical sense of being a man or a woman but more in the characteristics of a type of energy expressed by a person. There is no better or worse, there are just characteristics that serve different functions. It is not gender based; it is more of a way of being.

Let's start by exploring feminine energy:

This is when a person expresses an open, free flowing, full of life energy, an energy that's free and sometimes a little more expressive and wild. Its essence is primarily moved by emotion. It is an energy that lives on sensations. It usually wants to create, take things and increase them, make them bigger. It tends to be stimulated by praise and wants to hang on to things.

Masculine energy:

Here the person expresses a rigid and centred energy. It's a directed energy that is focussed at a single task at hand. It recognizes problems and strives to fix them. It responds to challenge and wants to make big things smaller. It looks for barriers and strives to break through.

So these characteristics are not necessarily a man or a woman, but just ways of living and are in fact found in both men and women, but there is usually a dominant force of either one of them.

We all need both sides to function and live and survive in the world. We need to use both sides to communicate and relate to one another in business, social and in our relationships.

Let's look at these aspects, how do they apply to the construction field? Is it possible that the construction industry is itself more of a masculine energy driven field? If we look at the characteristics of the masculine energy this seems to be the case and it tends to be the energy behind business in general.

This though does not mean that business can't be done by females. If we look at successful woman in business they use more of a masculine energy to achieve but also have their feminine side where they can be more creative. This comes out in the creative side of the construction field where we find a lot of woman as architects and interior designers. The business side requires more of directed focussed energy, breaking through and achieving, where the creative side requires more free flowing expressive energy that wants to expand and generate more.

There are more than just the obvious gender based perceptions but many aspects to why we find men and woman in certain fields. At certain levels it does go down to physical ability but it stops when going up the so-called corporate ladder. A woman can be successful in any business, and although there might be physical aspects that could hamper her from achieving in an area, the management and administrative side of construction projects could be an area where more women can find themselves to be successful.

5.3. WOMEN FIGHTING FOR THEIR RIGHTS

Contrary to many assertions, the majority of black women have never been spectators in the struggle for their emancipation, as well as freedom in South Africa. Our proud and rich history about women's resistance may be well documented.

However, we cannot suddenly become tired, or shy away from talking about the sacrifices that women freedom fighters made for this freedom that we enjoy. Many of our women, who never even made head-line news, risked their lives so that one day all of us could live in a free, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa.

Fifty years may be a very long time ago; but more than 20 000 courageous South African Women marched to the Union Buildings in protest against apartheid and pass laws.

The story has been told over and over again, but footprints left during that march, led in the forefront by stalwarts Lillian Ngoyi, Nyembe , Rahima Mossa, Albertinah Sisulu and many others including our own, Mme Ruth Segomotsi Mmpati, will not be allowed to disappear.

Mme Mompoti, also a veteran of the ANC Women's League, is currently the Mayor of Naledi Local Municipality in Vryburg. In recognition of her role and contribution to the struggle, her birth place is today called, Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompoti districts.

In articulating the plight of women, former ANC president, Oliver R Tambo., said: "One of the fundamental tasks that the process of national liberation confronts is the liberation of the women of our country from their triple oppression on the grounds of sex, class and colour." (Mfoloe, August 2009)

That is why in our freedom, we must look at how we can speed up the implementation of programmes that will improve the lives of thousands of women who live in abject poverty. Women empowerment and gender parity is not only about numbers.

It has to be about opening space up. The space for women to influence meaningful change and make a difference in society. It is also not about empowering elite women to occupy senior positions in society and government. It is about changing the lives of millions of ordinary women in urban as well as in rural settlements.

Women are complaining that they are not awarded big tenders. There are issues about some black women used as fronts by established companies to get business.

Matshube Mfoloe (August 2009), for North West Public Works Department, said:

"Included in my brief is to reclaim back our mandate as Public Works. We are moving and this will create a platform for women in construction to showcase their skills in building and maintaining our quality infrastructure."

Gender equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance. In fact more countries have understood that women's equality and empowerment is a prerequisite for development.

Empowerment and affirmation of women has emerged as a defining feature of our democracy as evidenced also by the visible number of women entrusted with positions of leadership in the public sector. This has also been translated to the empowerment of women projects and some women will share their strategies, their strife and toil on ensuring that their voices are heard and efforts recognised.

5.4. CONCLUSION

- Women face many obstacles when fighting to reach top positions in many industries and specifically in the construction industry in South-Africa.
- Women making it to the top in the construction industry are still very much in the minority and whilst in top positions is still being doubted for their capability of being competent in those positions.
- Women's career choices are influenced by family commitments, working hours and physical skills involved.
- Most women prefer to choose a profession that is a little "softer" and has more flexible working hours.
- The male and female body and mind differs in a physical, emotional and mental way, which makes each unique and each one more capable of performing certain tasks.
- Construction as a labour intense position requires a lot of physical strength and physical body work.
- When moving up in the construction corporate ladder, physically intense work become less and the work become more administrative which makes women more capable candidates than doing physical work.

5.5. TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS

- The original hypothesis expected that women are capable to start and successfully manage a construction company. Saying that, a woman in charge of her own construction company will have great difficulty to for full a tradition roll of mother and wife.
- Women should create their own opportunities but I think there is a limit to their responsibilities and a choice should be made early in a woman's life if she will be family or career orientated.
- Physically there will be a lot of obstacles of which some will definitely hamper women's chances of a successful career in the construction

industry. Mentally the construction industry in South-Africa is still very conservative and a big mind shift needs to be made.

- The hypothesis was correct in saying that women are capable to start and successfully manage a construction company.
- A woman in charge of her own construction company will have great difficulty to for full a tradition roll of mother and wife.
- Women should create their own opportunities but there is a limit to their responsibilities and a choice should be made early in a woman's life if she will be family or career orientated.
- Physically there are a lot of obstacles of which I think some will definitely hamper women's chances of a successful career in the construction industry.
- Mentally the construction industry in South-Africa is still very conservative and a big mind shift needs to be made.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

6.1. BACKGROUND AND STATING THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THIS TREATISE

Discrimination against woman in the South African Construction Industry was the topic raised by this thesis. Are women still being discriminated against, why are they being discriminated against and are women capable of delivering in the same quality work as their male colleagues? What are the public and private sectors doing to ensure fair working environments for all employees?

6.2. SUMMARY

It was found that the South African Construction Industry is still extremely male dominant with women only contributing to ten percent of the total the workforce. However it was found that the numbers are increasing, especially in the last ten years. I do however believe that the ratio will always favour men.

The current working environment in the South African Construction Industry does not always favour women. Women still feel they are being discriminated against, they believe they have to work harder than their male counterparts to achieve the same acknowledgement. Most men still feel that woman do not belong in the construction industry, especially on site. They however feel that they do not discriminate against women and that they are being treated equal to men.

There are several policies and employment acts set in place by government that promotes gender equality. Public sector has set tough goals and policies to promote women empowerment. The policies are in place and government are adamant in creating fair working environments but unfortunately this is still very difficult to enforce in the private sector.

In the construction industry physicality will obviously play a huge roll in the ratio of women in the workforce. But what about top level management? At this level there is almost no physical element but rather mental obstacles. Women are just as capable of delivering the same quality work than men on management level but they are still eluded of promotions and fail to reach top management positions. The general perception around the construction industry is that it is still an industry for males only and there are a lot of obstacles facing women.

6.3 CONCLUSION

There is a definite difference in representation when comparing the number of females against male workers in the construction industry all over the world and also in South-Africa. The numbers are not really increasing drastically. Especially for women working on site but there is an increase in number of women working on construction projects. It is obvious and without any further research that the construction industry is a male dominant industry.

It is inevitable that women representation in the construction industry will increase. But the construction industry will never be female dominant and remain strongly male dominant due to the nature of the industry. This will never change, nowhere in the world.

Throughout the research, it is evident that women still feel discriminated against. Especially those working on site, whether it be as a foremen or site agent or even those in a more financial based position as a quantity surveyor working on site. Women feel they have to work much harder than the men

working with them, to prove they are capable of working in a male dominant industry. Women feel that men do not respect them, that men look down on them and that men do not believe they should be working on site. Women also feel that they can be successful at work and at home without having to work a lot of over-time or at least that is what they call the time they drink beer after work. Women believe it is about the quality of work they deliver instead of the amount hours spent on site. Men disagree with this statement. Men do not always realise that even if women can be competent in the construction industry, they will still always have a responsibility towards their husbands and children and I believe men should realise this and don't be so hard on women.

There will always be an obvious hierarchy in the construction industry. Ego's roam on site, older men versus younger men, experience versus new ideas, race versus race etc. It could also be that women take these power struggles personal and automatically think men are being sexist.

There will always be discrimination in the construction industry, whether it be against race, age or gender. The construction industry is a tough industry and if you want to be part of it, you should be prepared. Obviously I do not approve discrimination but I think sometimes it is misread.

South-African government have been very pro-active in implementing policies that promotes gender equality. South-Africa has some strong entities in the construction and government industries managed by women and many of these women encourages other women to achieve and strive for high positions and to prevent discrimination in any industry in South-Africa.

The image of women in the workforce have also greatly improved. Top management of top companies are now being occupied by females. Programmes set in place also promotes women to demand fair treatment, and governments policies are clear about where they stand on discrimination.

Women face many obstacles when fighting to reach top positions in many industries and specifically in the construction industry in South-Africa. The

male and female body and mind differs in a physical, emotional and mental way, which makes each unique and each one more capable of performing certain tasks. When moving up in the construction corporate ladder, physically intense work become less and the work become more administrative which makes women more capable candidates than doing physical work.

To increase the percentage of women in the construction industry we need to start at base level. We need to teach scholars that there are many different careers in the construction industry and change the perception that everyone in the industry are physical “builders”. We need do promote these professions and women working in the industry need to support initiatives that promote encouragement of women professions on all levels of industry. Campaigns at school and university level will defiantly improve the percentage of woman entering the industry. Woman need to know that there are a place for them, that they are needed and welcomed in the industry, only then will we see any real change in the ratios.

Men need to acknowledge that women can bring something to the table. Women are just as capable as men and where they do fall short the can make up in other areas. Women need to realize that they are not always being discriminated against, that their male colleague is probably better than her and that is why he got the raise. There is an underlining hierarchy on any construction site and women and men fall victim to them equally.

Private sector need to adopt the same strict policies laid out by the public sector. Only when private companies in the construction industry enforce and actively promote gender equality will their truly be a fair working environment for women in the industry. Private sector also need to adopt to woman’s rights and understand that women need special arrangements in order to balance their personal and career lives. Women need to be rewarded and acknowledged more often, this will not only encourage women in the industry but also young women considering a career in the South African construction industry.

The construction industry is a physically challenging profession. But at higher-level management and administrative levels there are almost no physical obstacles. However reaching that level might require physical experience, this may count against women but if more time is spent on practical training at university level this problem will be solved. With some professions within the construction industry the mere theoretical training will be sufficient in providing adequate background for them to advance to higher management positions.

The problem of discrimination will be improved or resolved if women are confident and competent in their specific positions in the construction industry and men start respecting women who are competent.

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