# INVESTIGATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EMPLOYMENT EQUITY PLAN AT AMATOLA WATER BOARD IN THE PROVINCE OF THE EASTERN CAPE.

## Z.G. GOTYI

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# INVESTIGATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EMPLOYMENT EQUITY PLAN AT AMATOLA WATER BOARD IN THE PROVINCE OF THE EASTERN CAPE

BY

## ZAMIKHAYA GLADWELL GOTYI

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**Supervisor: Dr. Wela Manona**

# DECLARATION

I, **Zamikhaya Gladwell Gotyi**, hereby declare that this treatise is my own work and that it has not been previously submitted in its entirety or in part for assessment or completion of postgraduate qualification or another qualification in any university.

Signature: _____          Date: _____

**Zamikhaya Gladwell Gotyi**

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# ABSTRACT

With the advent of democracy in South Africa in the early 1990s, the new government had to introduce major social, economic and political changes in order to undo the damages inflicted by many years of both colonialism and apartheid. These changes included the scrapping of discriminatory legislations and drafting of new laws to regulate employment practices. Amongst the pieces of legislation that the new South African government put in place, the Employment Equity Act, (Act 55 of 1998) was a major turning point in the elimination of discrimination at the workplace and redressing the injustices of the previous regimes. The Act is aimed at regulating the employment practices in an attempt to make the workplace a true reflection of the South African demographics. As a result, the promulgation of the Act had a major impact on the organisations in South Africa and has affected the way they now do business.

Although the Act has been in existence for 14 years, progress in the implementation of employment equity and affirmative action in organisations in South Africa has been far less significant, particularly in the representation of women in managerial positions. In South Africa, an overwhelming majority of managerial positions are still occupied by men, with marginal women occupying management positions. Thus, women are still experiencing discrimination and under-representation at the workplace. Noting this trend at Amatola Water Board, the researcher decided to investigate the extent of progress the organisation has achieved in the implementation of its Employment Equity Plan 2009-2014. The objectives of the study were to identify factors that could assist the organisation to effectively implement the Plan, identify the impediments that pose challenges to effective implementation of the Plan in the organisation, and establish the perceptions of employees on the implementation of the Plan in the organisation. To collect data for the study, the researcher used a qualitative research approach. In this regard, the researcher used questionnaires and interviews to collect qualitative data. A sample of fifty employees was selected for the administration of questionnaires and four additional employees were selected for interviews. Both samples were selected by purposive sampling.

The study has established that employment equity is still a challenge that South African organisations are struggling to implement. The study has revealed that, at Amatola Water Board, there are indeed various factors that contribute to the low representation of women in managerial positions. These factors include the lack of management support for the implementation of the Employment Equity Plan, recruitment processes that fail to recruit sufficient numbers of qualified applicants, training and development practices that fail to produce the required number of qualified employees, unconducive organisational culture, veiled racial and gender stereotypes, and inadequate communication. Suggestions and recommendations to address these challenges have been espoused.

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# CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

**Act,** means Employment Equity Act, No. 55 of 1998.

**AW**, refers to Amatola Water

**Black People** is a generic term which means Africans, Coloureds and Indians.

**CEE**, means the Commission for Employment Equity, established by Section 28 of the Employment Equity Act, No. 55 of 1998.

**Designated employer,** means a person who employs 50 or more employees.

**Designated groups** mean black people, women and people with disabilities.

**D.O.L** means the Department of Labour.

**EE** means Employment Equity.

**EEA** means Employment Equity Act, No. 55 of 1998. This will be used interchangeably with the "Act" as they refer to the same thing.

**EEP** means Employment Equity Plan.

**HR** means Human Resources

**HRD** means Human Resource Development

**HRM** means Human Resource Management

## 1.1. INTRODUCTION

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) has maintained that the South African labour market discrimination and inequalities are direct results of labour market policies that predated apartheid (COSATU, 1997: 2). According to Sonn in Mosimanegape (2003: 2), this has not only marginalised Blacks from political power, but from economic participation as well. He further argued that successive governments have used legislation to inhibit the economic advancement of Blacks and State budgetary allocations to promote the development of Whites through better education, health facilities and housing. Blacks' access to jobs and economic resources, such as land, capital, and technology, was severely restricted through a plethora of laws and regulations. This has relegated the African majority into low-paying and unskilled occupations (COSATU, 1997: 2). In addition, the National Party government has used the Public Service to create jobs for the White minority (Ring, 2002: xv). It is for this reason that the public sector is still regarded as having a catalystic and leading role in achieving broader social and employment equity.

With the advent of democracy in South Africa in the early 1990s, the new government was faced with a challenge to bring major social, economic and political changes in order to undo the damages inflicted by many years of both colonialism and apartheid. As a result, in the early 1990s, both the government and the business sector realised the need for a change in policies that prohibited certain groups of the population from full participation in the labour market and mainstream economy of the country (de Jong and Visser, 2000:5). Subsequently, scrapping of discriminatory legislations and drafting of new laws to regulate employment practices were given a high priority by the new South Africa regime (Joseph, 2006:2). This, ultimately culminated in the promulgation of one significant piece of legislation, the *Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998.* This Act is aimed at redressing the imbalances of the past by recruiting, developing and promoting African people and removing discriminatory employment policies and practices (Bowmaker-Falconer, Horwitz, Jain and Taggar, 1999: 223).

Although the Act has been in existence for a quite a reasonable time, it has been noted that progress in its implementation to address the inequality of representation has been far less significant (*Commission for Employment Equity,* 2010: iv). This is an indication that the pace of transforming the South African workplace is still disappointingly slow, considering the various pieces of legislation that the government has put in place to facilitate this process. It was expected that at this point a remarkable progress would have been achieved. It is on these bases that the following research problem was formulated.

## 1.2.   RESEARCH PROBLEM

Like any other state-owned enterprise, Amatola Water Board is expected to play a leading and exemplary role in the transformation of the South African workplace (Sebola and Khalo, 2010: 204). Although the Amatola Water Annual Report (2011: 39) has indicated some progress regarding the implementation of employment equity at the organisation, however such progress is not yet satisfactory as women representation in management level is still invisible, particularly at middle to top management. Based on this observation, the following aim of the study was conceptualized.

## 1.3.   AIM OF THE STUDY

This study is aimed at establishing the progress achieved regarding the implementation of Employment Equity Plan at Amatola Water Board. In this regard, this study will attempt to:

- identify the enabling factors in place that facilitate the process;
- establish the barriers or challenges that hinder the process;
- Establish specifically what hinders the progression of women to management positions.

From this aim, the following objectives have been developed.

## 1.4.   OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- *To examine the role of the Department of Labour in the implementation of the Employment Equity.*
- *To establish the extent to which Amatola Water Board has implemented Employment Equity Plan.*

- *To identify factors that could assist the Amatola Water Board in implementing effectively and meaningfully the Employment Equity Plan.*
- *To identify factors that could inhibit the successful implementation of the Employment Equity Plan.*
- *To establish the perceptions of employees on the implementation of the Employment Equity Plan at Amatola Water Board.*

On the basis of these objectives, the following research question is proposed:

## 1.5.   RESEARCH QUESTION

**To what extent has the Amatola Water Board implemented the Employment Equity Plan?** In trying to address this research question, the following sub-questions will be addressed:

- ***What specific requirements of the Employment Equity Act (No. 55 of 1998) regarding the implementation of Employment Equity are in place at Amatola Water Board?***
- ***What challenges Amatola Water Board encountered in trying to implement Employment Equity Plan?***
- ***What interventions have been made to overcome the challenges encountered?***

## 1.6.   MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

The study is undertaken because of the under-representation of female employees in management levels, particularly at senior and middle management. As the researcher is also an employee at Amatola Water Board, the choice of the topic is dictated by a deep-seated interest in the plight of fellow employees in the organisation. The proposed study is likely to provoke a debate on the issues raised, which in turn will raise interest in scholarly work in this field.

Amatola Water Board as a statutory state-owned enterprise established in terms of the *Water Services Act No. 108 of 1997* to operate bulk water services in the Eastern Cape Province, is expected to play an exemplary and leading role in the workplace transformative agenda. It appears that the Amatola Water Board is struggling to achieve this legislative obligation.

It is therefore necessary that a study of this nature is undertaken to identify the challenges that impede the process in order to formulate interventions to overcome such challenges.

Although progress has been noted at Amatola Water Board with regard to employment equity, however the pace of transformation has been slow in certain categories. To overcome this, Amatola Water Board in accordance with the stipulations of the Act, has put in place the Employment Equity Plan: 2009-2014 to drive and direct the employment equity process. As the plan is on the middle of its term, the time is now ideal for its evaluation to establish how much progress has been achieved in its implementation. This assessment will provide the much-needed information for the review of Employment Equity Plan and suggests some remedial interventions that could enhance its implementation. This is crucial as every programme undertaken in any organisation needs to be periodically reviewed, evaluated and amended to ensure that its implementation is still in line with current organisational vision and objectives.

## 1.7.   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In compliance with ethical requirements of the study, the following activities will be undertaken:

- An application for ethics clearance will be submitted to the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University Sub-Ethics Committee.
- A request for permission to gather empirical data at Amatola Water Board premises has been already submitted and approved.
- Prior to the administration of the questionnaire and conducting the interviews, the researcher will seek the permission of the targeted participants and ask them to complete a consent form.
- All participants will be given a freedom of choice to participate in the research and to withdraw their participation at any time of the study should they so wish.
- A permission to record the interview will be requested from the participants before commencing with interviews.
- All participants have the liberty to refuse to answer the questionnaire.
- Confidentiality of the contents of the interviews and the answers to the questionnaire will be guaranteed.

- The anonymity and confidentiality of participants will be guaranteed as no names of participants will be mentioned in the research report.

- No physical, psychological, stressful or any other form of harm that the participants will be subjected to.

- Participants will not be coerced to divulge any confidential information.

- The researcher will avoid providing misleading information to participants.

- The researcher will at all times and under all circumstances maintain honesty by ensuring that the contents of interviews are reported truthfully, unbiased and correctly.

- No plagiarism will be involved in the study as all sources of information used will be acknowledged.


## 1.8.   DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

According to Hofstee (2006: 6), every academic work has its delimitations, and in that sense this study will confine itself within the Amatola Water Board. Cognisant of the fact that there are numerous challenges confronting the Amatola Water Board, this study will focus mainly on the implementation of Employment Equity Plan at Amatola Water Board. Time constraints within the confines of this study will not allow for the exploration of information that does not fall within the ambit of this study, but such information will form the basis for further study.

As the study will be strictly confined to Amatola Water Board, its findings will largely be specific and relevant to the organisation and cannot be generalised to other similar organisations in South Africa. The study will be strictly restricted to the Amatola Water Board employees that are based at its Head Office in East London, as well as at its four Regional Offices in Fort Beaufort, Nahoon Dam, Umtata and Sterkspruit. It must also be equally noted that this study will exclude from in its sample the employees categorised as *unskilled labour* as these employees do not have access to emails and the questionnaire for this study will be distributed online. However, it is assumed that such exclusion will not have a significant effect on the validity of the results since the majority of these employees are not targeted by the Employment Equity Plan.

## 1.9.    RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 1.9.1.  Research Design

Mouton, Auriacombe and Lutabingwa (2006: 579) argue that there are various kinds of research designs that can be followed in a research process. Some are qualitative, others are quantitative, and some combine both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The research question that this study attempts to address dictates that a qualitative research design should be adopted. According to Webb and Auriacombe (2006: 597), a qualitative research design is an approach to the study of the world, which seeks to describe and analyse the behaviour of humans from the point of view of those being studied. Essentially, this research approach attempts to understand phenomena from the subject's point of view (Auriacombe, 2005:389).

### 1.9.2. Research Method

The study will use a case study research methodology. A case study is a strategy for doing research that involves empirical investigation of a particularly contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, using multiple resources of evidence (Robson, 2002: 178).

### 1.9.3. Population and Sampling Methodology

Burger and Silima (2006: 657) argued that the most important reason for sampling is feasibility as it is often too costly and impractical to study an entire population and researchers make use of sampling to save time and resources. In this regard, a *purposive non-probability sampling* methodology will be used to determine the sample. This sampling method is appropriate for this study as it allows the researcher to select those unique cases that are especially knowledgeable and informative (Neuman, 2006:222). For this study, a sample of 50 subjects from a population of 290 employees will be chosen for the administration of the questionnaire and another sample of 4 subjects will also be selected for face-to-face interviews.

### 1.9.4. Data Collection

Mouton *et. al.* (2006: 579) argue that one of the key questions to address during the research design is the nature of available data and data required. Similarly, Struwing and Stead (2001: 134) maintain that data collection techniques to be used in a research study are often dictated by the research design. For qualitative research designs, Henning *et. al.* (2004: 33) identified *questionnaires, interviews, observations and documentary analysis* as data collection methods. In this study, data will be collected largely by the use of a questionnaire and face-to-face interviews.

### 1.9.5. Data Analysis

The gathered data will be subjected to a variety of data analysis techniques. The data from the questionnaires and interviews will be subjected to descriptive analysis in order to obtain and describe the sample in terms of the relevant biographical aspects, as well as to content analysis.

## 1.10. EXPECTED OUTCOMES AND RESULTS

The study is expected to establish the extent of progress achieved at Amatola Water Board regarding the implementation of the Employment Equity Plan. This analysis will be based on the employment equity numeric targets achieved so far. The study is also expected to identify enabling factors that could facilitate the implementation of the employment equity process in the organisation. Further to that, the study is also expected to reveal the challenges that the organisation has encountered that could have hindered or inhibited or frustrated the implementation of the Employment Equity Plan. The study is further expected to provide an insight on the perceptions of employees on the progression of Black female employees to management positions. Generally, the study is also expected to reveal the perceptions of employees on the general implementation of employment equity in the organisation. Subsequently, the study will provide the Amatola Water Board with the necessary information that could be utilised in reviewing the current Employment Equity Plan.

## 1.11. REPORT STRUCTURE

Chapters in the final research report will be arranged as follows:

### CHAPTER ONE:  GENERAL OVERVIEW

This chapter will first introduce the research problem by providing a background on workplace discrimination which has subsequently led to the promulgation of the Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998. This historical background on legislated workplace discrimination and injustice in South Africa will lead to the formulation of the research problem, which will then be discussed in more detail. Out of this discussion a problem statement will emerge. This section will then be followed by comprehensive outline of the research problem, which will then state the objectives of the study, delimitation of the study, the research method adopted to investigate the problem. This chapter will then be followed by a chapter on general theoretical framework.

### CHAPTER TWO:  GENERAL THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The chapter will first provide a summary of the Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998. Thereafter, experiences from similar studies conducted on the topic will be highlighted. Following this chapter will be a chapter on research design and methodology.

### CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The research design and methodology used in the study will be explained in detail. The motivation for selecting such a research method will also be provided. The steps involved in the research strategy used will be outlined. The sampling methodology used will be explained and justified. Data collection instruments used in the study will be mentioned and motivated. This chapter will be followed by chapter on data collection and analysis.

### CHAPTER FOUR: INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this chapter, various types of data collected will be detailed. The processes by which such the data was collected will be explained. The results obtained from the various data analysis techniques will be outlined and discussed. The limitations encountered during the research and the areas for further research identified in the study will be mentioned. This chapter will be followed by the final chapter of the research report, which will be on conclusions drawn and recommendations made.

**CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**.

This chapter will start by providing a summary of the entire study, the deductions and conclusions drawn from the study. Lastly, recommendations on the effective implementation of the employment equity at Amatola Water will be provided. The following chapter provides an in-depth exploration of relevant literature reviewed in relation to the topic of this study.

# CHAPTER TWO: GENERAL THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

## 2.1. INTRODUCTION

According to Majam and Theron (2006: 606), literature review enables the researcher to sharpen and deepens his or her theoretical conception; familiarises the researcher with the latest trends in the field of study; assist to identify gaps in knowledge; identify correlations, connections, contradictions and variables, and the definitions of key analytical concepts to be used. Thus, the information contained in this chapter is directly derived from the number of relevant and related sources on the implementation of employment equity plan that have been reviewed.

The discussion in the chapter starts with a short background to employment equity in South Africa. Following this section, is a brief summary of the *Employment Equity Act, (Act 55 of 1998)*. Thereafter, a discussion on the factors enhancing the implementation of employment equity is provided. The chapter then concludes with a discussion on the barriers and factors impeding the implementation of employment equity in South Africa.

## 2.2. BACKGROUND TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EMPLOYMENT EQUITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Providing a brief background on the origins of the current labour transformation impasse in South Africa, Groenewald (2006: 1) argues that during the apartheid era both in public and private sectors, employment practices in organisations in South Africa systematically discriminated against Black and women employees. This discrimination was based on race and gender. During apartheid, the top management in the Public Service in South Africa was strictly and overwhelmingly dominated by White Afrikaans males, even though there were some Blacks in the Bantustans, but they were still overshadowed by White males who were over-represented (Milne, 2009: 970). Black people were denied opportunities to advance up to management positions as the majority of them were forced to do menial work with low pay (Miller, 2005:71). During this time, gender stereotyping resulted in the majority of women, especially Black women, being employed in lower level positions

(Kahn and Louw, 2011: 673). Hence there are few women in senior management positions in South Africa (Milne, 2007: 971). As a result of the system of apartheid and discrimination in the labour market against Black people, women and people with disabilities, major inequalities in income distribution and distribution of jobs were created. These inequalities manifested themselves both in labour market discrimination and non-labour market discrimination. Within the labour market, discrimination has taken place in:

- Occupational segregation.
- Discrimination in recruitment, promotion, selection for training, transfer and retrenchments of employees.
- Inequalities in pay and benefits.
- Lack of access to training and development opportunities (Sebola and Khalo, 2010:203).

Outside the labour market, inequalities in income and job distribution in the disadvantaged groups manifested themselves through social practices such as:

- Lack of education and training.
- Distribution of assets.
- Distance to work from the place of residence.
- Access to household infrastructure.
- Division of labour within the household (Sebola and Khalo, 2010: 204).

The argument by Sebola and Khalo (2010: 203-204) clearly depicts the magnitude by which apartheid and discrimination in the workplace has unjustly dehumanised Black people. As a result, the South African government has since 1994, accorded priority to redressing the years of the injustices and workplace discrimination of the previous regimes. In this effort, soon after 1994, the new government embarked on a transformative programme, promulgating a plethora of policy and legislative framework, aimed at transforming all organisations to make them representative of South Africa's demographics. In addition to introducing legislation aimed at protecting the worker's rights, the new government has enacted laws aimed at eliminating unfair discrimination, and promoting equity in the workplace.

Supreme to the pieces of legislations that the South African government promulgated in its efforts to redress the injustices of the past and alter the political landscape, the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, (Act 108 of 1996)* provides an overarching policy on employment equity. The Bill of Rights as expressed in Chapter 2 of the Constitution provides a framework on which all other equity policies should be founded. Moreover, Section 195 (1)(i) of the Constitution states that the Public Administration must be broadly representative of the South African people, with employment and personnel management practices based on ability, objectivity, fairness and the need to address the imbalances of the past to achieve broad representation. Consequently, the promulgation of the *Employment Equity Act, (Act 55 of 1998)* was a major turning point in the elimination of discrimination at the workplace and redressing the injustices of the previous regimes.

## 2.3. THE EMPLOYMENT EQUITY ACT, (ACT 55 OF 1998)

Recognising the historical context in which it was founded, the Employment Equity Act contains clear references to the reasons behind its promulgation, as well as its aims. In this regard, the Act recognises that:

- As a result of apartheid and other discriminatory laws and practices, there are disparities in employment, occupation and income within the national labour market.
- These disparities create such pronounced disadvantages for certain categories of people that they cannot be redressed simply by repealing discriminatory laws.

Considering these reasons, it was necessary that the Employment Equity Act was put in place in order to:

- Promote the constitutional right of equality and the exercise of true democracy.
- Eliminate unfair discrimination in employment.
- Ensure the implementation of employment equity to redress the effects of discrimination.
- Achieve a diverse workforce broadly representative of country's people.
- Promote economic development and efficiency in the workforce.

- Give effect to the obligations of the Republic as a member of the International Labour Organisation.

### 2.3.1. The Aim of Employment Equity Act (Act 55 of 1998)

The purpose of the Employment Equity Act (Act 55 of 1998) is to achieve equity in the workplace by:

- Promoting equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment through the elimination of unfair discrimination.
- 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.

Essentially, the Employment Equity Act is aimed at eliminating discrimination in relation to race, gender and disability that has denied most South Africans access to opportunities in education, employment, and promotion and wealth creation (Employment Equity Act, 1998). The main aim of the Act is to redress the present effects of South Africa's unfortunate past and bring about a diverse workforce that is broadly representative of South Africa's demographics (Swanepoel, Erasmus, Van Wyk and Schenk, 2003: 128). The Act was put in place to facilitate the implementation of fair workplace practices that will correct the imbalances of the past as well as creating a workforce that reflects the demographics of the country (Ring, 2002: vi).

The Act is aimed at addressing the inequalities in the employment patterns and practices with respect to access to employment, training, promotion and equitable remuneration especially for black people, women and people with disabilities (Employment Equity Act, 1998). In this regard, Sebola and Khalo (2010: 203) argue that the Act is primarily aimed at reversing the disadvantages emanating from past racial policies and to ensure the accommodation of differences among employees in the workplace. The Act is purposefully designed to accelerate the appointment and promotion of people who have been historically discriminated against in the workplace (Thomas and Turpin, 2002: 21). To achieve its aims, the Act has two main objectives, namely:

- To ensure that workplaces are free of discrimination.
- To ensure that employers take active steps to promote employment of people from designated groups, in order to ensure their equitable representation in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce (Employment Equity Act, 1998).

De Jong and Visser (2000: 31) note that the Employment Equity Act is aimed at ensuring that all designated employers take steps to promote equal opportunities in the workplace and eliminate unfair discrimination. In this regard, Leonard and Grobler (2006: 395) maintain that the rationale for the government to introduce the Employment Equity Act was to enforce transformation on the basis that organisations would not empower sufficient numbers of Black employees on their own free will. As a result for many years, this diversity was not reflected in the composition of the South African labour force (Joseph, 2006: 2). It is evident from the literature that many organisations are still struggling to effectively implement employment equity as the majority of senior positions are still dominated by White males, including the Public Sector. However, it is anticipated that the correct implementation of Employment Equity Act will eventually have a major impact on changing the demographics of many organisations in South Africa.

### 2.3.2. Affirmative Action

Swanepoel *et. al.* (2003: 129) point out that the Employment Equity Act is aimed at 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. Thus, affirmative action as corrective steps used to create an equitable environment, specifically for people who experienced racial and gender discrimination, have to be implemented in South African organisations (Milne, 2009: 971). In this regard, affirmative action should concentrate on the employment, development and promotion of the previously disadvantaged people, by redressing the imbalances and identifies positions that have been inaccessible to the previously disadvantaged groups (Wingrove, 1993:5). This entails identifying positions in the organisation's management structure for previously disadvantaged people and thereafter establishing specific training and development drives for these people.

Accordingly, the Employment Equity Act stipulates that every employer is obliged to take steps to promote equal opportunity in the workplace by eliminating unfair discrimination in any employment policy or practice. In this regard, the Act specifically states that it does not constitute unfair discrimination for any employer to take affirmative action measures in order to give employees from historically disadvantaged groups equal employment opportunities in the workplace (Employment Equity Act, 1998). Although the Act calls on designated employers to implement affirmative action measures for people from designated groups, it makes it clear that employers are not required to adopt employment policies that adversely affect people who do not come from historically disadvantaged groups. According to the Employment Equity Act, affirmative measures must be designed to ensure that suitably qualified people from designated groups have equal employment opportunities, and are equitably represented in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce. These measures include:

- Measures to identify and eliminate employment barriers that adversely affect people from designated groups.
- Measures designed to further diversity in the workplace based on equal dignity and respect of all people.
- Making reasonable accommodation for people from designated groups in order to ensure that they enjoy equal opportunities and are equitably represented in the workforce of a designated employer.
- The retention and development of people from designated groups and implementation of appropriate training measures (Employment Equity Act, 1998).

Essentially, these measures are meant to impose a duty on employers to eliminate unfair discrimination and provide a framework that facilitates the attraction, development, advancement and retention of human resource talent, particularly from disadvantaged groups (Groenewald, 2006:21).

## 2.4. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EMPLOYMENT EQUITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

The implementation of employment equity is a comprehensive planning process adopted by an employer to identify and remove discrimination in employment policies and practices; remedy effects of past discrimination through special proactive measures; and ensure appropriate representation of designated groups throughout an organisation (Bowmaker-Falconer, Horwitz, Jain and Taggar, 1999: 223). This process entails implementing a policy that ensures that a fair and equitable workplace is attained, where all races, both genders, people with disabilities and all religious or cultural identities are represented (Leonard and Grobler, 2006: 392).

With regard to the implementation of the employment equity in South Africa, the literature reveals that the process has not yet progressed as it has been anticipated. Although the Employment Equity Act has been in existence for a reasonable time, progress in implementing employment equity and affirmative action in South African organisations to address the inequality of representation, has been far less significant (Thomas and Jain, 2004: 41). Concurring, the Commission for Employment Equity's Annual Report (2010) also notes that the transformation of workplace has been topical long before the Employment Equity Act was enacted, yet after so many years the Act has been in existence; progress in the transformation of the workplace is still disappointingly at the minimum. White males still dominate the top echelons of the South African workplace, and the majority of recruitment and promotions into higher levels still reflects White male dominance (Commission for Employment Equity's Annual Report, 2010). Similarly, training and development processes in many organisations also portray that White males still continue to benefit the most (Joseph, 2006: 107).

Arguing along similar lines, Montesh (2010:76) points out that, ever since transformation process was started in the South African Police Service in the mid 1990s, only 30 percent of the employment equity target has been achieved. Similarly, Op't Hoog, Siebers and Linde (2010:66) note the same trend in the South African mining industry, where progress in the transformation of the workplace is not progressing as fast as it had been anticipated. The mining sector still continues to trail other South African industries when it comes to employment equity, particularly

at top executive and professional levels (Op't Hoog *et. al.* 2010:66). This slow pace of workplace transformation inevitably creates a suspicion that there is either a resistance from employers to change or the work environment is not yet conducive for Black people to progress, particularly those with exceptional talent (Commission for Employment Equity's Annual Report, 2011). This could be equally interpreted as the lack of commitment from the labour market to transformation. To expedite the effective implementation of employment equity, Thomas and Jain (2004: 49) suggest that South African labour market should seriously consider *inter alia*, the following issues:

- Top management's commitment to the employment equity process.
- The development of holistic human resource practices.
- The recognition of the importance of employee diversity.
- The creation of inclusive organisational cultures.

## 2.5. FACTORS ENHANCING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EMPLOYMENT EQUITY

From the literature, the following factors strongly emerged as having a potential to enhance the implementation of employment equity. These are the factors that organisations in South Africa need to incorporate in their employment equity strategies in order to effectively implement employment equity, as the exclusion or mismanagement of the factors have the potential to seriously impede the employment equity process.

### 2.5.1. Communication Strategy

Communication has been largely identified as one of critical factors in the implementation of the employment equity. In this regard, Leonard and Grobler (2005:43) view it as the key ingredient in corporate transformation, which without it organisations would not be able to comply with their information responsibilities towards stakeholders, or implement their unique employment equity strategies. For effective implementation of employment equity, Leonard and Grobler (2006: 394) note that there is a need for organisations to clearly communicate the underlying purpose of employment equity and the entire organisational workforce has to be involved in the transformational initiatives.

It does not assist the employment equity process to limit communication only to employment equity beneficiaries or the organisational management as this would perpetuate the stereotyping of racial groups and misunderstanding about the real intentions of employment equity (Leonard, 2004: 34).

De Beer (1998: 51) states that to enhance the implementation of employment equity, communication within the organisation should be contextualised within the broader organisational transformation programme. This helps to dispel the misconception that the Employment Equity Act is only about addressing the past racial injustices, rather than contributing to the development of South Africa's human capital as a whole (Van der Westhuizen, 1998: 17). This essentially demands that the socio-historical context of the Employment Equity Act is always incorporated in the organisational communication strategy, in order to further dispel the misconception that the Act is primarily concerned with punitive measures for those organisations that do not achieve their annual employment equity targets (Leonard and Grobler, 2006: 393). Furthermore, Leonard (2004: 34) believes that communication efforts to facilitate the implementation of employment equity cannot be a once-off incident, but repetitive communication efforts are sometimes required in the organisation to facilitate the understanding and active participation in the transformational goal. For this to occur, all managers in the organisation irrespective of the level and status, should be well acquainted with the organisational employment equity plan, to assist in the attainment of organisational employment equity numeric targets (Joseph, 2006: 109). Thus, the employment equity communication strategy needs to be meticulously incorporated into broader organisational business strategy.

### 2.5.2. Organisational Culture

Organisational culture is the importance that is attached to the development of people and their norms, values and beliefs that reinforce or discourage people development in general, and the advancement of the historically disadvantaged people in particular (Human, 2005: 14). An inclusive organisational culture that supports people development is characterised by:

- Positive expectations of individuals and their competence.
- Open, honest and constructive feedback on performance.

- Evaluation of performance based on results achieved in terms of short and long term objectives (Human, 1996:49).

In any organisation, changing the institutional culture to reflect a more inclusive ethos should be central to any employment equity programme (Ramphele, 2009: 45). In contrast, most organisations fail to pay much attention in addressing the systematic discrimination associated with the culture of the workplace when implementing employment equity programmes (Agocs, 2002: 260). To eliminate this, Thomas (2003: 28) suggests that the monitoring of the workplace culture should comprise an integral part of the organisational compliance monitoring process.

To enhance the implementation of the employment equity, Thomas and Jain (2004: 49) recommend that organisations in South Africa should break the power relationships associated with the 'club culture', which ensures that the dominant White male group always succeed in business. This could possibly happen when organisations engage themselves in consistent diversity education and training sessions, open discussion forums and dialogues on organisational culture, to change it to an inclusive and diversity-valuing one (Booysen, 2007: 65). This type of organisational culture is critically essential for a correct and speedy implementation of employment equity, which needs to be viewed rather strategic to the organisation than as mere legislative necessity (Thomas and Robertshaw, 1999: 139).

Illustrating the adverse effects of negative organisational culture on employment equity, Booysen (2007:65) attributes the exodus of newly appointed Black people from White dominated organisations to the lack of an institutionalised organisational culture valuing diversity. This culture develops when employment equity policies and strategies are not yet internalised by an organisation (Human, 1996: 54). Invariably, this could be attributed to a lack of shared understanding of employment equity, its communication and the transformation-resistant organisational culture with a White male-dominated organisational character (Thomas, 2003: 23). Consequently, racial fault lines in power structures and labour are institutionalised, thus denying Blacks opportunities to access high visibility projects or positions, and subsequently relegating them to soft positions (Subotzky, 2006:58).

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To enhance the implementation of employment equity, Leonard and Grobler (2006:395) propose that any framework for the management of employment equity should indicate how corporate values will be addressed in the process, as employees are expected to embrace a new set of organisational values as a first step towards organisational transformation. This is crucial as corporate transformation is a complex process and the dynamics of an organisation embarking on transformational process are often underestimated, forgetting that organisational transformation is an arduous and infinite process (Leonard and Grobler, 2006:396). In addition, Subotzky (2006: 60) argues that organisational cultural transformation is not a simple and uncomplicated process, as organisations are required to transform into something radically different from the entity and set of values that existed previously. Thus, organisational transformation requires an individual transition towards acceptance of corporate values or goals, which in turn requires psychological commitment (Human, 1996: 58).

Emphasising the importance of an inclusive culture in organisational transformation, Human (2005: 17) argues that other organisations are often treating employment equity as a numbers game, and are underestimating the extent to which it requires fundamental changes to organisational culture and the way in which people are managed. To avoid or eliminate this, Wingrove (1993: 21) suggests that organisations should be making use of the work environment where co-existence occurs to cultivate a relationship of trust between people of vastly different ideologies and cultures. To establish an inclusive organisational culture, Collier, Idensohn, and Adkins (2010: 20) recommend the following activities:

- No discrimination based on race, gender or disability.
- The development of people must be a key result area for managers and performance must be measured and rewarded or sanctioned in a meaningful way.
- Managers must understand the process of development and their roles in this process.
- Managers must have the necessary skills to perform their roles effectively.
- On-the-job coaching must be taken as an effective and primary means of people development.

### 2.5.3. Holistic Human Resource Management Strategy

Few managers have noticed the strategic competitive advantage that diverse workforce brings to the organisation (Greeff and Nel, 2003: 24). For organisations in South Africa to successfully implement employment equity, they should embrace a holistic human resource management practice that complements target setting (Oosthuizen and Naidoo, 2010:8). According to Bowman-Falconer *et. al.* (1999: 226), a holistic human resource management strategy that complements employment equity should consists of the following attributes:

- Training and attitude change for senior managers.
- Clarification of values and corporate philosophy.
- Consultation in policy formulation and performance improvement.
- Line management ownership and accountability to facilitate learning transfer.
- Development targets.
- Two-way communication.
- Non-discriminatory practices.
- Monitoring and review.

In addition, Thomas and Robertshaw (1999: 137) suggest that an integrated human resource management strategy that incorporates employment equity should be comprised of:

- Leadership by top and senior management to establish the new vision and values.
- Review of the human resource policies, practices and company structures.
- Organisational diagnosis to identify potential barriers to transformation effort.
- Employee involvement that should permeate corporate transformation effort.
- Broad-based intervention by means of ongoing programmes and revision of values.
- Ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

Bowmaker-Falconer *et. al.* (1999: 224) further state that the effective implementation of employment equity as part of human resource development strategy requires a robust strategy, with a planned and holistic set of objectives to enhance skills capacity and provide real job responsibility.

In addition, Human (1996: 50) suggests that such employment equity strategies should be developed in consultation with trade unions and non-unionised employees, and need to be regularly monitored and evaluated. These strategies should not only involve the recruitment, development, promotion and retention of qualified individuals from disadvantaged groups, but should also involve the development of those with the potential to become qualified, either within the organisational setting or through educational and community projects (Human, 1993:34).

### 2.5.4. Commitment by Management

The employment equity policy of any organisation needs to be driven by top management, as without this commitment minimal progress will be made in achieving employment equity in the workplace (Ring, 2002: viii). In support, D'Netto and Sohail (1999: 542) point out that lack of commitment to employment equity by senior and top management has been identified as one of the challenges that impede its implementation in most organisations. Leonard and Grobler (2006: 392) attribute this lack of commitment to the fact that many organisational leaders reduce employment equity to a matter of legal compliance. Thomas and Jain (2004: 49) believe that the failure to implement employment equity could also be attributed to the disinterest of management to the employment equity process, where the task of achieving employment equity has been delegated to members of the Human Resources Department that seldom have the authority or necessary mechanisms to ensure progress. In this regard, Thomas and Jain (2004: 49) recommend that organisations in South Africa need to approach the employment equity issue as a holistic business strategy that has a commitment of top management. In support, Booysen (2007:66) suggests that there should be a demonstrated commitment to employment equity implementation process from all levels of management, starting from the top. In addition, Booysen (2007:65) points out that in some organisations there seems to be low leadership commitment and inconsistent employment equity implementation processes, with resultant double standards in implementing employment equity at lower, senior and top management levels. As a result, there is a lack of meaningful engagement of White males in the employment equity process in order to gain their commitment and allay their fears and resistance to the implementation of employment equity legislation.

For organisations to improve on the implementation of employment equity, Groenewald (2006: 2) suggests that whilst formulating an integrated holistic strategy for employment equity, management should ensure that the organisation has the capacity to design and lead the process of creating fair, equitable and tangible actions that showcase their commitment to employment equity. Experiences from other countries like Britain and Zimbabwe have proved that the commitment by the organisational top management is crucial for the successful implementation of employment equity programme (Thomas, 2002: 251). To enhance this, managers should be informed that employment equity and affirmative action are a strategic priority that demand their maximum commitment (Human, Bluen and Davies, 1999: 31).

### 2.5.5. Managing Diversity

Managing diversity implies the management of people irrespective of race, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation and so on (De Beer, 1993:23). Managing or valuing diversity encompasses a range of activities aimed at making managers more aware or mindful that members of other cultures or subgroups, due to their upbringing, may espouse different values and assumptions which can affect the way they cooperate, compete, communicate, plan, organise and get motivated (Bowmaker-Falconer *et. al.* 1999: 225). For effective implementation of employment equity programmes, meaningful and effective management of intercultural, inter-ethnic, inter-gender and inter-class situations is required in its broadest sense (De Beer and Bradley, 2000: 45).

Since managing diversity is such a complicated and sensitive issue, Thomas and Turpin (2002: 27) contend that top management of the organisation should carefully consider how change is introduced within the organisation, and how different racial groups may respond to such a change. In cases where change strategies are to be introduced, such a process needs to be managed in a well structured and predictable manner so that particular groups do not feel marginalised in the process. Thus, the achievement of targets should go hand-in-hand with the management of people and the organisation's culture (Human, *et al.* 1999: 29). Perhaps, it could be for this reason that Human (2005: 18) argues that the ability to manage diversity is the competence that all organisational managers should have in order to effectively

implement employment equity. Accordingly, Jongens (2006: 35) argues that managing diversity requires skilful, informed and extensive managerial training in interpersonal skills, conflict resolution, appropriate systems and an understanding of both ethnic and corporate cultures. It also requires situational adaptability and communication skills that affirm the values of diverse people and communicate positive expectancies (Apon and Smit, 2010: 349).

Thus, the goal of valuing diversity is to capitalise on the strengths of each individual or subgroup to ensure that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts (Bowmaker-Falconer *et. al.* 1999: 225). This could possibly be achieved through leadership changes and moves towards a more representative and inclusionary workforce (Thomas, 2002: 251). For this to occur, it is important that both Black and White employees are trained together, in order to eliminate feelings of inadequacy or inferiority, and to assist in addressing cultural problems (Human, *et. al.* 1999: 29). The South African society is diverse, and organisations are multicultural in their workforce compositions, then valuing diversity extends beyond understanding cooperation and should seek to improve organisational effectiveness (D'Netto and Sohail, 1999: 540). Diversity management should aim at building capacity, and the failure to understand cultural and other differences can lead to misguided assumptions, poor working relations, underperformance and discrimination (Human, 2005:17). All these factors have adverse and undesirable effects on the implementation of employment equity process.

## 2.5.6. Gender Equity

The Millennium Development Goals, signed by world leaders at a United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000, declared gender equality as critical in creating an equal society (Penceliah, 2011: 870). Similarly, the South African Constitution (Act 106 of 1996) provides a foundation for measures to counter the effects of the historic disadvantage suffered by women and other marginalised groups based on gender, race and physical ability (Penceliah, 2011: 869). Although South Africa is a democratic society, women are still experiencing discrimination and under-representation at workplace (Kahn and Louw, 2011: 677). In this regard, the literature indicates that the overwhelming majority of management positions are still occupied by men, with marginal women occupying management positions.

Consequently, the predominance of males at management level has created a culture in which male behaviour patterns are perceived to be the norm, and in which women often find it difficult to be accepted as equals by their male counterparts (Kahn and Louw, 2011: 678). In general, women are facing a manifold of organisational barriers that deny them access to top management positions, which include less support for career-making decisions than their male counterparts enjoy, and are being excluded from important networks that are crucial to their careers (Mathur-Helm, 2005: 59). This could largely be attributed to the historical patriarchy that prevents opportunities accorded to women in the workplace, and which in turn prohibits women's advancement in the South African labour market (Mello and Phago, 2007: 147).

Transforming a patriarchal society into one, aligned to gender equality, requires a radical shift from traditional comfort zones, and addressing the legacy of sexism requires holistic approaches to help both men and women redefine themselves, and women have to assert their rights to equality as citizens (Ramphele, 2009:109). Equity legislation has been in existence in South Africa for quite some time, but the inequality in career development and job segregation still remains a problem (Mello and Phago, 2007: 148). Notwithstanding this, Penceliah (2011: 872) commends the efforts made by the government in promoting gender equity in the Public Sector. To support this argument, Penceliah (2011:872) claims that, judging from the appointments made to Cabinet and State-owned enterprises, it is clear that the government is committed to gender equality in the workplace. Although this could be the case, Levenberg (2009: 30) maintains that women in senior management positions are still struggling to gain access to corporate boardrooms, where an elite group of male directors dominate power. On this aspect, Penceliah (2011: 868) agrees that the rate at which women are appointed to senior management positions in government is still slow. This trend demonstrates that the corporate advancement of South African women continue to be restricted (Kahn, 2009: 290). Although the development of women in general is still being neglected and seen as subordinate to the development of Black African men and White women (Mathur-Helm, 2005: 61), women of different racial groups do not experience equal opportunities in the South African labour market (Kahn and Louw, 2011: 677).

Noting the continued marginalisation of women in the workplace, Montesh (2010:76) maintains that women in the South African Police Service are still marginalised, as they are not yet fully integrated into the mainstream policing, but are largely concentrated in much smaller numbers than men and are substantially under-represented in specialized units. Similarly, Oosthuizen and Naidoo (2010:8) point out that after so many years of democracy and the institutionalisation of Employment Equity Act, the previously disadvantaged groups are still experiencing race and gender prejudices in the workplace. This trend is further noted in the implementation of employment equity at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University by Draai and Theron (2007:113) that, only a small number of women had been promoted to supervisory positions in the institution. According to Draai and Theron (2007:109), gender representivity is mainly concentrated in the lower academic ranks, and this does not indicate a holistic approach to employment equity. This gender inequality is often justified on the basis that suitably qualified Black women could not be easily found or were competitively sought after by the industry (Draai and Theron, 2007: 112).

Employment equity and affirmative action methods are supposed to be generally applied to redress the injustices committed under apartheid rule, however, it has been noted that these methods are often inconsistently applied in the workplace, thus resulting in negative perceptions from both White and Black females. These negative attitudes are further exacerbated by the fact that these methods are seldom aligned with any specific skills development programme (D'Netto and Sohail, 1999: 542). For organisations in South Africa to achieve their employment equity targets, it is incumbent that they should see and treat female employees as equivalent to male employees and afford them the same employment opportunities as men (Kahn and Louw, 2011: 671). For this to happen, Kahn (2010: 69) suggests that organisations should structure their gender equity implementation strategies around the following three key elements:

- The elimination of unfair discrimination in human resource policies and practices.
- The efficient implementation of affirmative action to achieve equitable representation of women in all managerial levels.
- Empowering women and accelerating their advancement.

As women are still regarded as secondary to men in South Africa, employment equity and affirmative action policies alone cannot remove persistent barriers to women's advancement (Mathur-Helm, 2005: 59). For women to enjoy substantive equality in South Africa, they need political, social and economic equality, which would allow them to enjoy full and equal rights (Kahn and Louw, 2011: 672). Women can be more efficient and effective, provided men change their attitudes towards having women in influential positions (Kahn, 2009: 291). This would not only bring about substantive equality and equity in the labour market, but would also permit women equal access to the decision-making processes (Kock and Burke, 2008: 214). Consequently, the increase of women in decision-making levels will lead to greater sensitisation of the workplace on gender issues (Milne, 2009: 974-975). Thus, women should be given more advancement opportunities, which would not only allow them to occupy management positions, but also to achieve self-actualisation (Kahn and Louw, 2011: 680).

### 2.5.7. Shared Vision and Understanding of Employment Equity

For effective implementation of employment equity, management needs to have a shared vision of what the organisation ultimately wants to achieve through its employment equity policy (Agocs, 2002: 263). In most organisations, the business case for employment equity is generally not communicated effectively because there is no shared understanding of the value of employment equity implementation, but is rather seen as a compliance issue (Booysen, 2007: 56). To enhance the implementation of employment equity, De Jong and Visser (2000: 21) suggest that the top management of organisations should have a creative vision fully tapping into the potential of all employees in the workplace. In order for organisations to reach this shared vision and understanding, Booysen (2007: 66) recommends that the following activities should be put in practice by organisations implementing employment equity:

- Re-stating the business case, by using all possible communication media, as well as open discussion forums that will also give people who feel threatened an opportunity to express and deal with their fears.
- Training workshops, geared at understanding the business imperative and employment equity legislation.

- Organisation-wide diversity training.
- Ensuring that black employees are fully integrated, and have real responsibility and authority.
- Celebrating the positives, thus building on wins and positive developments, and capitalising on initiatives that are going well.
- Making sure that existing initiatives are actually inclusive, linking initiatives that are going well with positive employment equity outcomes, publishing employment equity success stories, and creating role models.
- Ensuring that the internal communication media cover and represent all groups.

### 2.5.8. Training and Development

The role of training and development in the implementation of employment equity can never be overstated. In this regard, the *Employment Equity Act, (Act 55 of 1998)* states that every employer has to develop written policies and practices that reflect commitment to training and development. Section 15 (2) of the Act states that, the effectiveness of training interventions has to be ensured through the development of people from designated groups and the implementation of appropriate measures. In addition, Section 2 of the *Skills Development Act, (Act 97 of 1998)* stipulates that organisations should ensure that employment equity is reinforced through training and mentorship measures to provide affirmative action candidates with an opportunity to acquire new skills. In reference to these statements, Rankhumise and Mello (2011: 788) argue that it is imperative that organisations improve the employment of people who have been previously disadvantaged by unfair discrimination and to redress those disadvantaged through training and education. Making an emphasis on this, Groenewald (2006: 25) maintains that development and training are key strategies to enable designated groups to advance and reach equitable representation in all occupational categories and levels. One way of retaining new employees brought by affirmative action is by providing adequate training and development opportunities (Thomas, 2003: 10). Thus, it is imperative that the previously disadvantaged people are given the necessary training, development and opportunities to fill the organisations' future personnel requirements with competence and confidence (Wingrove, 1993: 15).

In organisations where new African and female managers have been appointed in terms of employment equity, the development of formal, structured mentoring and support programmes to enable these managers to effectively integrate into the organisation, and to learn the underlying assumptions of the organisational culture is of fundamental importance (Thomas, 2002: 251). Arguing along similar lines, Meyer and Fourie (2004: 12) state that, for effective implementation of employment equity, management needs to develop training interventions that would ensure that affirmative action candidates become successful in their new positions. In this regard, Apon and Smit (2010: 349) suggest that individual training needs have to be identified and related development plans designed in line with organisational goals and objectives. Training and development of Black employees needs to be accelerated, as this is not taking place in most organisations as fast as it should (Oosthuizen and Naidoo, 2010: 4). This is necessary as the majority of Black employees in South Africa were historically and denigratedly subjected to a low quality Bantu education system, which provided them with no competitive skills. Thus, training and development for these employees is pertinently critical for their advancement to management positions, as well as for their adjustment to these newly acquired positions. To facilitate this training and development, Ring (2002: lvii) suggests that a pressure should be exerted on managers to acquire the necessary skills needed for coaching and developing subordinates.

### 2.5.9. Performance Management

Performance management in South Africa as a strategy to train and develop people from designated groups into fully productive employees is poor (Hofmeyer, 2001: 121). This is widely prevalent in the areas of:

- Managerial commitment to performance management.
- Recognition of potential and non-traditional skills.
- Mentoring, coaching, and career planning (Hofmeyer, 2001:122).

To alleviate this, Joseph (2006: 110) suggests that all organisational managers should have the achievement of employment equity targets forming part of their performance plan and assessment to assist in the attainment thereof. Similarly, Herholdt and Marx (1999: 176) recommend that management should consider rewarding those managers who demonstrate efforts to implement employment equity

at their divisions or sections. Furthermore, Cornelius (1999: 44) argues that employee contribution can be maximised and business objectives achieved through effective performance management, where managers challenge stereotypical thinking that Black employees do not have the 'right skills' to move into management positions. To change these stereotypes, Clutterbuck (2003: 24) suggests that diverse panels should be constituted in order to evaluate, select and promote managers. Essentially, management of workforce diversity is one of the criteria on which managers should be assessed (D'Netto and Sohail, 1999: 538).

## 2.6. BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF EMPLOYMENT EQUITY

The literature has identified the following three common misconceptions, which largely impede the effective implementation of employment equity in most South African organisations.

### 2.6.1. Employment Equity is only a Compliance Issue

Several organisations implement employment equity only as a strategy to avoid the punitive implications of the Employment Equity Act. In this regard, Leonard (2004: 44) maintains that strategies to achieve employment equity have been implemented as a response to moral or legal compliance issues, and as a result, employment equity strategies are regarded as a 'necessary evil', which business has to contend with. Leonard and Grobler (2006:399) point out that, although there is some evidence of transformation of the workforce, the implementation of the Employment Equity Act is often reduced to a question of legal compliance.

The failure to properly implement employment equity stems from the fact that most South African organisations regard employment equity mainly as statutory compliance issue, forgetting that employment equity as a whole and affirmative action in particular, are crucial part of business strategy (Sebola and Khalo, 2010: 212). Arguing along similar lines, Jongens (2006:37) states that, the implementation of the legislation and the severe consequences for organisations that fail to comply with legislation, have forced managers into compliance mode. For many organisations, the need to comply has overshadowed the need to transform because of the financial implications that accompany non-compliance (Booysen, 2007: 61).

Concurring, Oosthuizen and Naidoo (2010: 5) point out that the majority of South African organisations are implementing employment equity merely to comply with legislation. In these organisations, management believes that employment equity is simply a political imperative that they are compelled to fulfil, otherwise it is a waste of time to spend so much time coaching people, without achieving immediate results (Collier, *et al.* 2010: 14).

### 2.6.2. Employment Equity is only for Previously Disadvantaged People

Agocs (2002: 251) points out that there is a prevalent misconception in many organisations that employment equity is related to 'target-setting within a timeframe' versus 'quotas' for appointees from previously disadvantaged groups. Many organisations believe that employment equity is only concerned about the recruitment and promotion of previously disadvantaged groups (Leonard and Grobler, 2006:393). In contrast, Vinassa (2001: 19) points out that the Employment Equity Act does not require organisations to impose barriers to the employment of White men, but rather requires a balancing of the interests of all employers as to how to effect transformation in their workplace. Basically, the Employment Equity Act specifically states that no employer is under any obligation to implement quotas of employees from any specific race or other forms of diversity, whether its gender or disability. Forced appointments of employees from previously disadvantaged groups may also lead to renewed racial polarisation and distrust, causing further misconception about employment equity process (De Beer and Radley, 2000: 3).

### 2.6.3. Employment Equity is Mainly Concerned About Numeric Targets

Many organisations appoint people from designated disadvantaged groups irrespective of competence; merely to increase the numbers of affirmative action employees (Human, *et. al.* 1999: 28). In these organisations, the focus of employment equity is mainly in numbers rather than on issues relating to training and development, mentoring and coaching, competence transfer to those recruited into organisations (Thomas, 2002: 251). Dismissing this practice, Ring (2002: lvi) asserts that tokenism is detrimental for employment equity as it sets Black people up for failure and then reconfirms the already negative stereotypes White people have for Black people.

Although numerical targeting is important, equally important are the practices of training and development, mentoring and coaching, and competence transfer for those recruited into companies (Thomas and Jain, 2004: 49).

## 2.7. CONCLUSION

The Employment Equity Act (Act 55 of 1998) is a generic law that applies equally to both public and private sectors, but the literature evinces that the private sector is less adhering to the principles enshrined in the legislation. Most studies indicate that, generally the previously and non-previously disadvantaged groups are still experiencing prejudices associated with race and gender in the workplace. It was never anticipated that after so many years of democracy and the institutionalisation of Employment Equity Act, these issues would still remain unresolved.

Although the employment equity and affirmative action have been largely applied by most organisations to redress the injustices committed under apartheid, the literature reveals that these methods are often inconsistently applied in number of organisations, and in most instances, they are not aligned with any specific skills development programme. This tends to create negative perceptions both by White and Black people alike on the relevance and necessity of employment equity. For employment equity to be successfully implemented, these negative perceptions need to be properly managed and meticulously addressed through an organisational integrated human resource management strategy, before they validate resistance to employment equity process. Hence, it is necessary that organisations must have a clear vision as to why and how they will pursue an employment equity strategy, even before they contemplate implementing it.

The literature has further revealed that many organisational leaders and managers only have a superficial comprehension of the true intentions of the Employment Equity Act. Thus, the underlying purpose of an organisational employment equity policy needs to be clearly communicated to all employees and contextualised within the broader organisational transformation programme. In addition, it is also essential that organisations ensure that their employment equity policies are properly aligned, well coordinated and perfectly integrated with all other organisational strategies or programmes.

Furthermore, the entire organisational workforce has to be involved in the transformation initiative, with all managers in the organisation irrespective of the level and status well acquainted with the organisational employment equity plan, to ensure that they all assist in the attainment of organisational employment equity numeric targets. The next chapter focuses on research design and methodology used in gathering the empirical data for this study.

# CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

## 3.1.   INTRODUCTION

Research is an attempt to increase a body of knowledge through the discovery of new facts and relationships by a process of systematic enquiry (Olamilekan, 2010: 108). It is a systematic process of collecting, analysing and interpreting data in order to increase people's understanding of the phenomenon about which they are interested or concerned (Leedy and Ormrod, 2010: 2).   Thus, a research investigation has to be logical, systematic, scientific, and be concerned with seeking solutions to problems and answering the research question (Olamilekan, 2010: 108). Any research undertaken has to be guided by a well-defined research methodology, as the quality of research findings directly reflects on the research methodology used. A research methodology is the application of a variety of standardised methods and techniques in the pursuit of valid knowledge, committed to the use of objective methods and procedures that will increase the likelihood of attaining validity (Mouton, 2002:36). It is the general approach that the researcher used in carrying out the research, which dictates the specific tools that the researcher should use in the research process (Leedy and Ormrod, 2010: 12). The purpose of research methodology is to show the appropriateness of the techniques used to gather data and the methodological approaches employed (Hart, 2008:14). Thus, it is to control the study and dictates the acquisition of data (Collis and Hussey, 2003: 14).

The central focus of this chapter is to discuss and explain the research design and methodology used in this study. Thus, it explains and describes the manner in which the research was planned, structured and executed to comply with scientific criteria. Besides the introduction, the chapter starts by outlining the procedure by which the permission to conduct the research was obtained from Amatola Water Board. Thereafter, an elaborate discussion on the research design and methodology used in the study is provided. After this section, a sampling procedure used for the selection of the sample is explained. Following this section, the discussion focuses on data collection instruments used. The chapter is then concluded with a section on ethical principles complied with during the study.

## 3.2. PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Prior to conducting the empirical research at Amatola Water Board premises, a request for a permission to conduct the research was forwarded to the Director of Corporate Services. The letter specifically requested a permission to interact with employees and access to organisational documents for the purposes of collecting data for the study. It was explicitly stated in the letter that the information obtained during the research would be strictly used for the purposes of the study. The permission to conduct the survey was promptly granted by the Director of Corporate Services at Amatola Water Board.

## 3.3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

### 3.3.1. Research Design

Research design is a plan for collecting and analysing data to make it possible for the researcher to answer the research question (Flick, 2011: 65). Similarly, Polit and Hungler (1993: 445) define it as a process of designing the overall plan for collection and analysis of data. Collis and Hussey (2003:113) view it as a planning process for procedures to conduct studies to get the most valid findings. Tukuta (2011: 124) regard the research design as a plan of procedures for data collection and analysis that are undertaken in a research process. Thus, a research design provides a theoretical background to the methods to be used in the research (Hofstee, 2006: 120). It provides a detailed plan to guide and focus the research (Groenewald, 2006: 74). Seemingly, there is general consensus amongst the scholars that research design is a plan by which data is collected and analysed in order to answer the research question. Thus, it provides a framework that specifies the type of data to be collected, the sources of data and the data collection procedure (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport, 2005: 132). According to Maykut and Morehouse (1994:64), a research design includes the overall approach to be taken and detailed information about how the study is to be carried out, with whom and where. In this way, a research design dictates the boundaries of the research activity (David and Sutton, 2011: 165). It spells out the strategies and techniques that can be adopted to develop information that is accurate, objective, and interpretable (Mbotoloshi, 2011: 26). It is a plan by which research participants (subjects) are obtained and information collected from them (Welman and Kruger, 1999: 460).

The choice of research design centres on the nature of the research, the setting, the possible limitations and the underlying paradigm that informs the research project (Olamilekan, 2010:112). Thus, the research design is situated between the research question and the theoretical approach, the research strategy, research setting and the methodology of the research (Punch, 2009 cited in Schurink, 2009: 805). This means that the research question should be clearly related to the research approach and the research strategy to be used (Schurink, 2009: 805). The research setting (sample) chosen and the methods of data gathering and analysis must enable the researcher to answer the research question, and to deal with possible threats related to the quality of the research (Maxwell, 2005 cited in Schurink, 2009: 805). In this regard, Schurink (2009: 805) maintains that the following are fundamental elements of a qualitative research design:

- The research question to be answered.
- The research approach to guide the study.
- The research strategy to be used.
- The research setting (sample chosen) to be studied.
- The methods to be used to gather and analyse the data.

In simple terms, a research design could be regarded as the basic plan that guides the entire research process, by specifying the types and the sources of data to be collected, data collection and analysis techniques to be used. In line with the elements identified by Schurink, the research design illustrated by the diagram below has been used in this study.

Figure 3.1: Research design used in the study
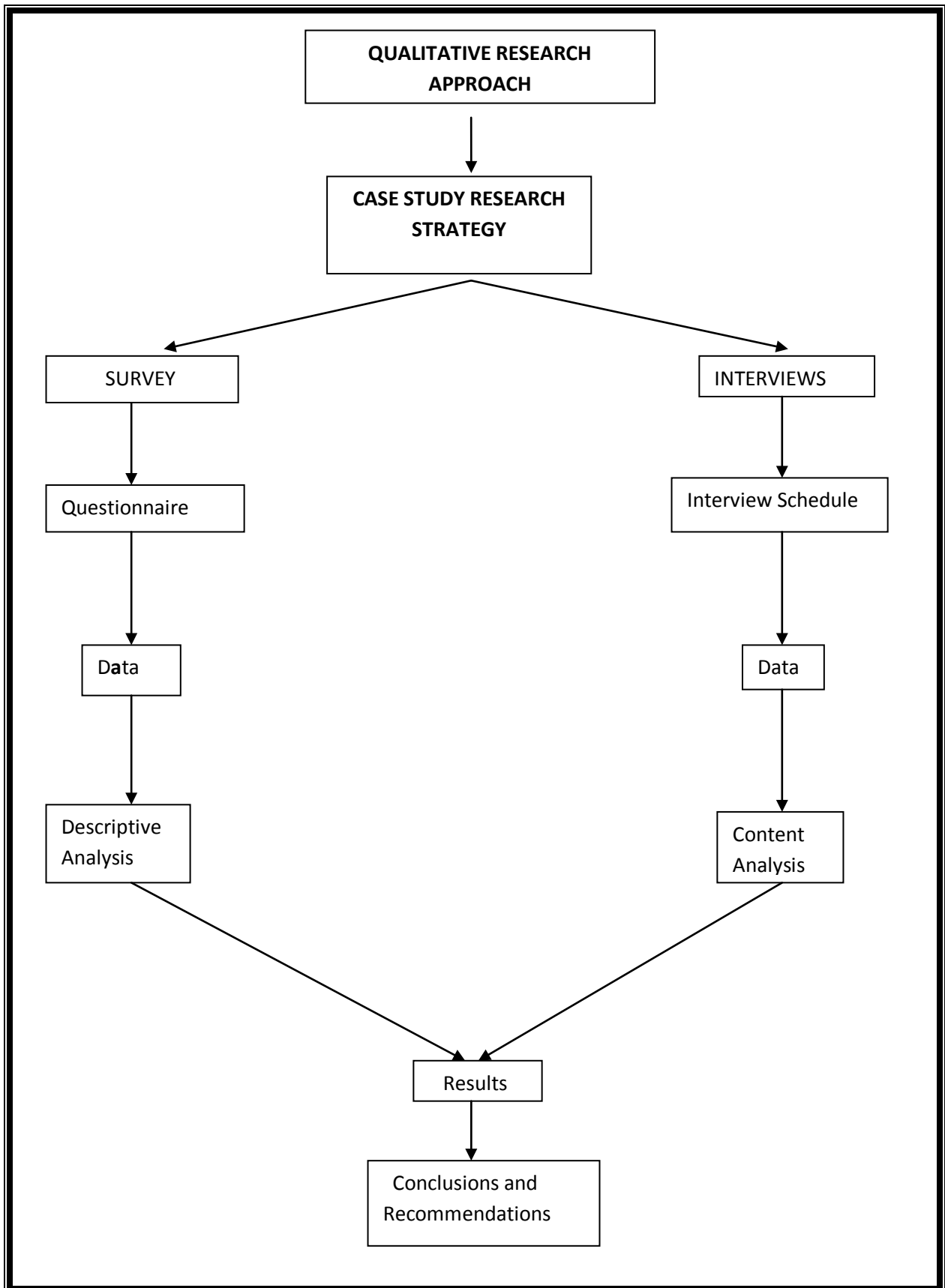
### 3.3.2. Research Approach

There are various kinds of research approaches that one can follow in a research process. Some approaches are qualitative, others are quantitative, and some combine both qualitative and quantitative approaches (Mouton, Auriacombe and Lutabingwa, 2006: 579). The research approach one adopts usually depends on the nature of the inquiry and the type of information required (Bell, 2005: 8). Similarly, research methods and approaches differ as they are also influenced by the type of problem to be researched, and the area in which the research is being conducted (Olamilekan, 2010:113). In this regard, the research question that this study attempts to address dictates that a qualitative research approach is used.

#### 3.3.2.1. Qualitative research

Qualitative research describes and analyses the social phenomenon from the point of view of those being studied (Webb and Auriacombe, 2006: 597). It attempts to understand phenomena from the subject's point of view (Auriacombe, 2005:389). Thus, qualitative research aims to understand the participants' subjective meanings and interpretations to explain the social phenomena (Schurink, 2009: 788). Generally, qualitative research methods are naturalistic, interpretive and concerned with understanding the meanings that people attach to phenomena, such as actions, beliefs, decisions and values within their social worlds (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003: 3). Qualitative research intends to approach the world 'out there' and to understand, describe and sometimes explain social phenomena 'from the inside' in a number of different ways, by analysing the experiences of individuals or groups, their interactions and communications in the making, as well as documents (Flick, 2007: ix).

Essentially, qualitative research aims to unravel how people construct the world around them, what they do or what is happening to them in terms that are meaningful and offer rich insight (Babbie and Mouton, 2001: 270). It accomplishes this by studying things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret the phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005:3). In this way, qualitative research values context sensitivity, thus understanding the phenomena in all its complexity and within a particular situation and environment (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994:13).

This means that, the way in which people that are studied understand and interpret their social reality is one of the fundamental motives of qualitative research.

### 3.3.3. Research Strategy

This study adopted a qualitative research approach. Research strategies are the methods or techniques required to execute a certain stage in a research process (Mouton, 2002:36). Generally, these methods are tailored to address different kinds of research questions (Schram, 2006: 48). The most common types of research strategies are experiments, surveys, archival analysis, historical studies and case studies (Walliman, 2005:271). Creswell (1998:23) identifies biography, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography and case study as five strategies of inquiry that can be used to design qualitative research. Similarly, Webb and Auriacombe (2006: 598) mention ethnography, phenomenological studies, grounded theory and case studies as qualitative research methods. A qualitative research strategy focuses primarily on the kind of evidence that enables the researcher to understand the phenomenon under investigation (Gillham, 2000: 10). David and Sutton (2011: 165) point out that the main question one has to answer when choosing a research strategy is whether it will answer the research question truthfully. In this regard, this study has chosen a case study as the most appropriate strategy to investigate the implementation of employment equity plan at Amatola Water Board.

A case study is a methodology that concentrates upon singular or small numbers of individual instances, which can be individuals, institutions, or discrete, definable part of an institution, situations or programmes (Birley and Moreland, 1998:36). Naturally, case studies examine singular phenomena with the aim to describe and understand the phenomena 'in depth' and in completeness (Lune, Pumar and Koppel, 2010: 79). Case studies can either be single case, double or multi case but they all allow the investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events, such as individual life cycles, organisational and managerial processes (Yin, 2009: 4). In support, Schell (1992) and Yin (2003:4) both believe that a case study is the most flexible of all research methods as it allows the researcher to retain the holistic characteristics of real-life events while investigating empirical events.

Robson (2002: 178) points out that a case study allows for an empirical investigation of a particularly contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, using multiple sources of evidence. A case study research method allows the researcher to use a variety of sources, a variety of types of data and a variety of research methods as part of the investigation (Denscombe, 2003: 31). In this regard, Bickman and Rog (2009: 233) maintain that a case study research method can simultaneously use interviews and documentary analysis, whilst at the same time questionnaires can be used to provide more information on a particular point of interest. Thus, the versatility of a case study method provides the researcher with the opportunity to study one aspect of a problem in some detail using a variety of methods.

### 3.3.4. Population, Units of Analysis and Sampling Frame

#### 3.3.4.1. Population

A population is a group of potential participants or cases from which the researcher draws a sample and to which results from the sample are generalised (Neuman, 2006: 224). Similarly, Burger and Silima (2006: 657) define a population as a group of subjects from which a sample is drawn and generalisations are made. It is a collective term used to describe the total quantity of cases which are the subject of the study (Walliman, 2005: 276). Aiyegoro (2011:69) describes it as the set from which the individuals or units of the study are chosen. It is the aggregation of elements from which the sample is actually selected (Babbie and Mouton, 2001: 174). Simply described, a population is any group that is the subject of research interest (Goddard and Melville, 2001: 34). According to Brynard and Hanekom (1997: 43), it refers to objects, phenomena, cases and activities that the researcher would like to study and identify data.

For the purposes of this study, a population would be the body of people that have been considered for research purposes (Collis and Hussey, 2003: 155), who actually possess the information sought by this research and qualify as respondents (De Vos, *et. al.* 2005: 190). In this regard, Amatola Water Board employees located in Head office and various Regional offices in East London, Fort Beaufort, Nahoon Dam, Port Elizabeth, Sterkspruit and Umtata constitute the population of the study.

### 3.3.4.2. Units of analysis

In any study, the unit or units of analysis to be studied are specified by the research design (Patton, 2002: 228). In this regard, units of analysis can be a unit, units, case, or any part of social life that is under consideration (Neuman, 2006:58). Similarly, unit of analysis can be objects being studied, such as individual people, groups, geographical units, or any other issue on which information can be gathered (Auriacombe, 2005: 384). Essentially, the unit of analysis is the person or object from whom the researcher collects data (Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee, 2006: 72). This means that the primary focus of data collection will be on what is happening to individuals in a setting and how individuals are affected by the setting (Patton, 2002: 228). For this study, the units of analysis are individual human beings.

### 3.3.4.3. Sampling frame

A sampling frame is defined by Welman and Kruger (1999: 49) as a complete list on which each unit of analysis is listed only once. Bless, *et. al.* (2006:100) define it as the list of all units from which the sample is drawn. In this study, to formulate a sampling frame, a list of employees with company-issued e-mail addresses supplied by Amatola Water Board's Information Technology Unit was used, particularly for the selection of the sample for the administration of the questionnaire. The list supplied also contained employee designations, thus making it easier for the researcher to identify the most relevant respondents.

## 3.4. SAMPLING AND SAMPLING DESIGN

### 3.4.1. Sampling

In any empirical research, to answer the research question, a certain number of respondents have to be selected from a larger population, either for participation in an interview or for the administration of a questionnaire (Polit and Hungler, 1993:445). This representative group of subjects chosen from a larger population with the aim of collecting information from the population as a whole is called a sample (Leedy and Ormrod, 2010: 205). The process by which this representative group is selected from the larger population is called sampling. According to Aiyegoro (2011:70), sampling is the process of selecting a portion or a sub-set of the population to represent the entire population.

It is the act, process, or techniques of selecting a suitable sample or a representative part of a population for the purpose of determining parameters or characteristics of the whole population (Cooper and Schindler, 2003: 45). Sampling is a process of selecting subjects, such as people, organisations, events, activities, et cetera, from a population of interests in such a way that by studying the sample, the researcher may be able to fairly generalise the findings back to the population from which the sample was drawn (Leady and Ormrod, 2010: 211).

The most important reason for sampling is feasibility as it is often too costly and impractical to study an entire population, and researchers make use of sampling to save time and resources (Burger and Silima, 2006: 657). The selection of a sample is a fundamental element of any research study as it allows the researcher to draw conclusions and generalisations about the entire population as it is impossible to study all relevant subjects in the population (Collis and Hussey, 2003: 155). Generally, sampling is done when data cannot be gathered from the entire population, but from a fraction of the population of the study (Walliman, 2005: 276). In qualitative research, sampling is mostly conceived as way of setting up a collection of deliberately selected cases, materials, or events for constructing a corpus of empirical evidence for studying the phenomenon of interest in the most intrusive way (Flick, 2007: 27).

### 3.4.2. Sampling Design

The quality of a sample is judged in terms of the sampling design that produced it (Burger and Silima, 2006: 658). Sampling design is the procedure by which the respondents are selected to constitute a sample from a larger population. There are two major types of sampling designs used in research, probability and non-probability sampling.

#### 3.4.2.1. Probability sampling

Probability sampling entails a sampling process, where all subjects in a population have a known and equal chance of being selected for the sample (Babbie and Mouton, 2001: 173). Probability sampling occurs when the probability of including each element of the population can be determined (Bless, *et. al.*, 2006: 100).

Subjects of the sample are chosen from the population by random selection, and the representativeness of the sample to the population is critical. The purpose of probability-based random sampling is generalisation from the sample to population and control of selectivity bias (Patton, 2002: 230). In most cases, probability sampling designs are associated with quantitative research, where emphasis is on the quantification of constructs (Burger and Silima, 2006: 659). The following are examples of different types of probability sampling designs; simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling, cluster sampling, multi-stage sampling and probability proportionate to size sampling (Burger and Silima, 2006: 661).

### 3.4.2.2. Non-probability sampling

In contrast to probability sampling, non-probability sampling is not based on determining the probability of an element being included in the sample (Burger and Silima, 2006: 662). In non-probability sampling, the probability of including each element of the population in a sample is unknown (Bless *et. al.* 2006:100). Thus, some members of the population have little or no chance at all of being selected for the sample. In non-probability sampling, the researcher cannot forecast or guarantee that each element of the population will be represented in the sample (Leady and Ormrod, 2010: 211). It is not possible to determine the likelihood of the inclusion of all representative elements of the population into the sample (Bless *et. al.* 2006:100).

In non-probability sampling, samples are not selected by random selection but by their relevance to the phenomenon under investigation. It is on this basis that Babbie (2010: 193) maintains that non-probability sampling allows the researcher to select the sample using his or her judgment, based on his or her knowledge of the population, its elements and the purpose of the study. In non-probability sampling, it is not the representativeness of the sample that determines the way in which people to be studied are selected, rather than their relevance to the phenomenon under investigation (Neuman, 2006: 220). Essentially, in this form of sampling, subjects are deliberately selected to reflect particular features of the sampled population (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003: 78).

The following are frequently used non-probability sampling designs; accidental sampling, purposive or judgemental sampling, quota sampling, and referral sampling (Burger and Silima, 2006: 662). Generally, non-probability sampling techniques are associated with the selection of samples in qualitative research designs (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003: 78). In this form of sampling, the primary aim of the researcher is to get an in-depth description and understanding, rather than the quantity of understanding (Burger and Silima, 2006: 662). For the purpose of this study, a non-probability sampling method has been used. Thus, in this study the representativeness of the sample was not considered as a criterion by which the sample was selected, but the relevance of the selected subjects to the employment equity processes taking place at Amatola Water Board was fundamental.

### 3.4.3. Sampling Technique

In qualitative studies, non-probability sampling methods are used and, in particular, purposive sampling techniques are used rather than random sampling (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport, 2005: 328). Similarly, this study has used purposive sampling technique for the selection of the sample. In purposive sampling a particular case is chosen because it illustrates some feature that is of interest to the study (De Vos *et. al.*, 2005: 328). Thus, the logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich subjects for the study (Patton, 2002: 230). In this sampling technique, the researcher has to first think critically about the parameters of the population and then choose the sample accordingly (Patton, 2002: 230). Thus, clear identification and formulation of criteria for the selection of respondents is of cardinal importance (De Vos, *et. al.,* 2005: 328).

Through this sampling technique, the researcher is able to purposely select certain individuals based on their relevance to the issue being studied (Gray, Williamson, Karp and Dalphin, 2007: 105). Purposive sampling enables the researcher to deliberately select particular settings and subjects with important information that cannot be possibly obtained from any other source (Bickman and Rog, 2009: 235). Thus, purposive sampling enabled the researcher to identify relevant settings (locations) where research participants were easily found. It made it easy for the researcher to identify which Amatola Water Board sites proved revealing regarding the implementation of employment equity.

Purposive sampling has assisted in identifying participants that were especially knowledgeable and informative on the issue under investigation. From these information-rich subjects, the researcher can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the study (Patton, 2002: 230). Studying information-rich subjects yields insights and in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalisations. The advantage of using purposive sampling in this study was its ability to sample participants in such a way that the sample is relevant to understand the phenomenon being studied and answering the research question as truthfully as possible.

### 3.4.4. Sample Size

The correct sample size in any study depends on the nature of the population and the significance of the study (Goddard and Melville, 2001: 43). Notwithstanding this, the size of the sample can be variably determined by the approach the study has adopted, as quantitative studies normally require larger samples than qualitative studies. In actual fact, there are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry (Patton, 2002: 244). In this regard, a sample size depends on what the researcher want to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what is at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility, and what can be done with available time and resources (Patton, 2002: 244). Furthermore, the validity, meaningfulness, and insights generated from qualitative study have more to do with the information richness of the subjects selected and analytical capabilities of the researcher than with sample size (Patton, 2002: 245).

In this study, two separate samples of different sizes have been selected from the target population of 290 subjects. Firstly, a sample of 50 employees was selected for the administration of the questionnaire. Thereafter, a second sample of 4 subjects (3 managers and 1 labour representative) was exclusively selected for individual face-to-face interviews. Essentially, subjects constituting this second sample were particularly those serving on the Amatola Water Board's Employment Equity and Skills Development Committee, a structure established solely to drive and monitor the implementation of employment equity plan in the organisation. Thus, the subjects were therefore regarded as adequately informed about the issue under investigation.

## 3.5. DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Designing an empirical research proved to be a challenge as the researcher is required to decide on the best methods of collecting data that will result in meaningful and insightful conclusions and generalisations. One of the key questions to address during the research design is the nature of available data and data required (Mouton *et. al.* 2006: 579), as data collection techniques used in a research study are often dictated by the research design (Struwing and Stead, 2001: 134). Similarly, data collection and analysis methods are always determined by the nature of what the research want to find out, the particular characteristics of the research problem, and the specific sources of information (Walliman, 2005:270).

Generally there are two basic methodologies, quantitative and qualitative by which data is collected in a research (Kanyane, 2005: 50). Moreover, all research involves the collection and analysis of data, whether through reading, observation, measurement, asking questions, or a combination of these or other strategies (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 2010: 183). On this aspect, Kanyane (2005: 50) states that both quantitative and qualitative methods use specific techniques to collect data, *inter alia*, document analysis, interviews, questionnaires and direct observation. Similarly, Henning, Van Rensburg, and Smit (2004: 33) identify questionnaires, interviews, observations and documentary analysis as data collection methods used in qualitative research. In line with this study, Schell (1992) maintains that most case studies use interviews, observation, documents and structured surveys as methods to collect data. As a result, this study has systematically used both the questionnaire and face-to-face interviews to collect empirical data.

### 3.5.1. The Questionnaire

Asking questions is an obvious method of collecting both quantitative and qualitative information from people (Walliman, 2005: 281). Hence a questionnaire has become a convenient, popular and flexible tool for data collection. Subsequently, questionnaires are one of the most widely used social research techniques (Blaxter *et. al.* 2010:201). A questionnaire can be simply described as a set of formalised questions to obtain data from respondents. Wheather and Cook (2000) cited in Olamilekan (2010: 122) define it as a structured sequence of questions designed to draw out facts and opinions that provide a mechanism for recording the data

generated from a research. According to Babbie (2010: 256), a questionnaire is a document containing questions and other types of items designed to solicit information appropriate for analysis. It is a tool for collecting information to describe, compare, or explain knowledge, attitude, behaviours and socio-demographic characteristics of a particular group (Olamilekan, 2010: 122).

Questionnaires were considered appropriate for this study as they enabled the researcher to organise the questions and receive replies without actually having to talk to every respondent (Walliman, 2005: 281). They also made it possible that data is collected from a relatively larger population within a shortest possible time. Compared to other methods, questionnaires are relatively economic in cost and time (Crouch and Housden (1997) cited in Olamilekan, 2010: 122). They also facilitate easy comparison process amongst the respondents (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003: 78). They do not only elicit data that can be easily processed and analysed (Walliman, 2005: 281), but they also collect relevant data (Wheather and Cook (2000) in Olamilekan, 2010: 122). Questionnaires increase the speed and accuracy of recording (Olamilekan, 2010: 122). They enable the respondents to remain anonymous and be honest in their responses (Gerring, 2007: 34). Questionnaires are also effective in preventing the personality of the interviewer to interfere on results (Walliman, 2005: 284).

### 3.5.1.1. Questionnaire design

To ensure that the questionnaire would be relevant to the target population, elicit the required data, maximise the response rate and minimise error and bias, careful consideration was taken during its design. The researcher made the effort to ensure that the overall appearance and the format of the questionnaire had a positive effect on the respondents. In this regard, Babbie and Mouton (2007:239) state that the format of the questionnaire is just as important as the nature of wording of the questions asked. An improperly laid-out questionnaire can lead to respondents to miss questions, confuse them about the nature of the data desired, and even lead them to throw the questionnaire away (Babbie and Mouton, 2007:239).

In trying to make the layout of the questionnaire appealing, the questionnaire was spread out and uncluttered. Olamilekan (2010: 122) believes that most problems with questionnaire analysis can be traced back to the design stage. In this regard, Olamilekan (2010: 122) argues that the layout of a written questionnaire can have as much to do with response and error rates as the actual questions. To enhance the appearance and the layout of the questionnaire, the following factors were strictly considered:

- Determination of information needed.
- Specification of questions to be asked.
- Choosing an appropriate question structure, scale and wording.
- Proper sequencing of questions in the questionnaire.
- Variables that the researcher wished to gather data about were clearly established. This enabled the researcher to identify the questions to be asked and formulate them with such precision that they elicit the required response.
- Effort was expended to make the language in the questionnaire clear and unambiguous.
- No inappropriate assumptions were included in the questionnaire.
- The researcher made the effort to make the questions short and simple.
- To enhance the response rate, the layout of the questionnaire was made clear, simple and professional.
- Generally, the questionnaire was made short so that it minimises time that respondents would take to fill it. The length of the questionnaire was restricted such that respondents only take less than 15 minutes to complete it.

Generally, all these efforts were expended to make the questionnaire look professional, simple and unambiguous to enhance the response rate.

### 3.5.1.2. Structure of the questionnaire

The questions in the questionnaire were divided into section A and B. Section A dealt with biographical information, whilst section B consists of 30 structured close-ended questions covering the six major themes in employment equity, namely: communication, recruitment and selection, training and development, organisational culture, management of diversity and gender equity. Questions in the questionnaire were kept simple and phrased without using social-scientific jargon.

Ambiguous, leading, loaded and double-barrelled questions were avoided. Logical sequencing and ordering of questions was maintained. The entire questionnaire consisted of restrictive closed-ended questions, which restricted the respondents to choose from the list of five answers given. Normally, close-ended questions can be dichotomous, multi-choice or scaled-response questions. In this study, scaled-response questions were used in the questionnaire.

In designing the questions, particularly for Section A, the researcher made the effort to be exhaustive in providing a broad range of responses so that every possible answer to the question could fit into categories given. In section B, the researcher has ensured that questions on the same subject are generally grouped together to keep the respondent thinking about the same material. As close-ended questions are easy for coding and data analysis, and their use in this study was mainly based on limited time constraints.

### 3.5.1.3. Likert Scale

The Likert scale is a type of response scale often used in research questionnaires. The five point Likert scale was used in designing the questions for the questionnaire for this study. A Likert scale item is simply a statement which the respondent is asked to evaluate according to any kind of subjective or objective criteria (Olamilekan, 2010: 126). The scale measures the level of agreement or disagreement. In this regard, respondents for this study were expected to specify their level of agreement or disagreement to given statements in the Likert-scaled questionnaire. All the statements in Section B of the questionnaire were either positively or negatively phrased. The study used the Likert scale for the following reasons:

- The Likert scale eliminates the development of response bias amongst respondents.
- The Likert scale makes the response items standard and comparable amongst respondents.
- The Likert scale can be used to access attitudes, beliefs, opinions and perceptions.
- Responses from Likert scale are easy to code and analyse directly from the questionnaires.

- Questionnaires are administered more quickly.
- Interviewer bias is reduced in Likert-scaled questions (Cooper and Schindler, 2003: 421).

### *3.5.1.4. Distribution and collection of questionnaires*

Questionnaires were distributed by e-mail to all respondents. To every e-mailed questionnaire, a covering letter and the copy of the written permission from the Director of Corporate Services were attached. The covering letter expressly explained:

- The purpose of the study.
- That the respondents have a right to decline to participate in the study.
- That the questionnaire is anonymous. Thus, the identities of respondents will not be disclosed to anyone except to the supervisor of the study.
- That the participants' responses will remain confidential and will strictly be used for the purposes of the study.

The majority of returned questionnaires were emailed back to the researcher, while a small number of them were faxed. The choice to use email to distribute questionnaires was based on the following reasons:

- It is very convenient, simple and neat, no bulky paperwork is involved. Thus, it saved both the costs and time of producing large volume of hard copies.
- It is very quick and all the questionnaires were emailed at once.
- It is very cheap, huge postage expenses were saved.
- Easy to track and monitor the response rate.

### 3.5.2.    Interviews

A research interview is a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research relevant information, and focused by the interviewer on content, specific to the research of systematic description, prediction of explanation (Olamilekan, 2010: 130). An interview could be also referred as a joint product of what interviewee and interviewers talk about together and how they talk with each other (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994:78).

Interviews are mostly suitable for sensitive topics (Walliman, 2005: 284), hence it is important that the researcher should establish a rapport with the respondent to gain trust. This study used interviews to complement the shortcomings of the questionnaire. In contrast to questionnaires, interviews provided the researcher with the opportunity to probe respondents to obtain additional information and clarities. Furthermore, interviews put the researcher in a good position to judge the quality of the responses provided by respondents through their facial expressions and gestures. During the interview, the researcher was able to notice if a certain question has been improperly understood and quickly rephrased the question. The interview also afforded the researcher with the opportunity to persuasively encourage and reassure the respondents to provide full answers.

Generally, an interview is used in social science research for searching data through face-to-face associations, which aid in gaining 'a portrait of human personalities' broad enough to encompass the social background that influences behaviour and deep enough to reveal inner strivings and tensions, attitudes and wishes (Young, (1956) cited in Kanyane, 2005: 55). Individual face-to-face interviews were held with three managers and one labour representative. All interviews were conducted in private, preferably in the offices of respondents, with only the researcher and the respondent present. All the interviews were recorded in a voice recorder and written notes were taken during the interviews. All respondents gave the researcher a permission to make a follow up call if the need arises. Essentially, there are three types of interviews that are commonly used in research. These are structured, unstructured and semi or partially structured interviews. These types of interviews solely differ on the degree of their rigidity with regard to presentational structure (Berg, 2004:78). This study has used semi-structured interviews to investigate the implementation of employment equity process at Amatola Water Board. Semi-structured interviews were particularly useful in this study in allowing the interviewer to probe the respondent with the view of clearing up vague responses, or ask for elaboration on incomplete answers. In this regard, De Vos, *et. al.*, (2005: 328) mention that the researcher is able to follow up particular interesting avenues that emerge in the interview and the participant is able to give fuller picture. They were also useful as they allow the respondent to bring up any relevant information that the researcher may have missed during the design of interview schedule.

Prior to the interview process, formal introductory letters were written and e-mailed to all the respondents for the interview. The purpose of the introductory letter was to:

- Explain the purpose of the research.
- Request an appointment for an interview with respondents.
- Request a written consent from respondents for the interview.
- Inform the respondent of his or her right to decline to participate in the interview.
- Inform the respondent about the anonymity of the interview. It explained that under no circumstances that participants' identities would be disclosed, except to the supervisor of the study.
- Explained that participants' responses would remain confidential and would be strictly used for the purposes of the study.

In addition to the introductory letter, an interview schedule was prepared to direct and drive the interview process. The interview schedule contained the scope of specific themes in which key questions were developed, which the interview should cover. Although the scope of the interview was limited to certain themes and key questions that were developed in advance, respondents were given the liberty to disclose any information that they perceived relevant to the implementation of employment equity plan at Amatola Water Board.

## 3.6. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

To comply with the ethics of research, the following ethical principles were considered and implemented during the undertaking of the study:

- Prior to commencing the study, the research proposal was submitted and approved by the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University's Research Ethics Committee.
- A written permission to conduct empirical investigation at Amatola Water Board premises was requested and obtained from the Director of Corporate Services.
- No violation of any kind or form occurred during the collection of data.
- Informed consent to participate in the study was obtained from all respondents prior to their participation in the study.

- Permission to record interviews was requested from respondents before starting interviews.

- All respondents were treated with dignity and respect.

- No respondent was placed in any dangerous, harmful, stressful, embarrassing and anxiety-producing situation.

- All interviews were conducted in privacy in closed rooms, with only the researcher and respondent present.

- Anonymity of the respondents and confidentiality of the results were guaranteed in the covering letters that accompanied questionnaires and introductory letters sent to participants.

- Deception of respondents was strictly avoided. Accurate and precise information on the purpose and nature of the study was provided to all respondents both in the covering and introductory letters.

- Plagiarism was also strictly avoided as all sources used in the study have been acknowledged.

## 3.7. CONCLUSION

The discussion in this chapter has shown that sampling method used is always dependent on the research approach adopted. In this regard, non-probability sampling methods are mostly suitable for qualitative research designs, since these studies are largely interested in getting in-depth description and understanding of the phenomenon rather than its quantification.

A research design and research methodology used in the study is provided. The choice of research methodology used in the study is justified. Population and the sampling frame from which the samples of the study were drawn are also mentioned. The sampling methodology used in the study is explained and justified. Data collection instruments used in the study are mentioned. Finally, the ethical principles observed and complied with during the empirical investigation are noted. The next chapter provides an interpretation and analysis of empirical findings of this study.

# CHAPTER 4: INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS OF EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

## 4.1. INTRODCTION

Generally, qualitative data is in the form of text, written words, phrases, or symbols describing or representing people, actions and events in social life (Neuman, 2006: 457). Qualitative data analysis is the process of selecting, sorting, sharpening, focusing, modelling, discarding and transforming this data into useful information that can be used for suggestion, conclusion and decision-making (Olamilekan, 2010: 132). This process includes the interpretation of research findings in the light of the research question and determines if the results are consistent with the research problem (Cooper and Schindler, 2003: 88). Thus, data analysis is a process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data (De Vos, *et. al.* (2005: 333). This involves reducing the volume of raw information, sifting significance from trivia, identifying significant patterns and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal (Patton, 2001: 432). This implies that, qualitative data analysis is a search for general statements about relationships among categories of data (De Vos *et. al.,* 2005: 333). Essentially, data analysis begins by going back to the purpose of the study, as the depth and intensity of analysis is always determined by the purpose of the study (de Vos *et. al.*, 2005: 311).

The process of qualitative data analysis takes many different forms depending upon the nature of the research question and design, and the nature of the data itself (Bless, *et. al.*, 2006: 163). However, qualitative data analysis is fundamentally a non-mathematical analytical procedure that involves examining the meaning of people's words and actions (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994: 121). Thus, there are no formulas or absolute rules for determining significance in qualitative analysis. Neither there are straightforward tests that can be applied for reliability and validity in qualitative analysis (Patton, 2001: 433). In this regard, Blaxter *et. al.* (2010: 213) point out that there is no single 'right' strategy for carrying out research, or ordering and analysing data.

Invariably, Leedy and Ormrod (2010: 158) maintain that there is usually no single 'right' way to analyse data in a qualitative study. The responsibility lies with the individual researcher to fairly present data and communicate what the data reveal, given the purpose of the study (Patton, 2001: 433). The appropriateness of analytical methods used is determined by the nature of the research problem and the specific aims of the research (Walliman, 2005: 301).Thus, data analysis must be carried out in relation to the research problem. Essentially, the purpose of qualitative analysis is to transform data into findings, although there is no formula for this transformation.

This chapter presents the data analyses conducted on the results obtained from the two data collection instruments used in this study, namely: empirical survey and interviews that have been discussed in the previous chapter. Preceding the analysis of the results from the empirical survey is a brief discussion on the response rate obtained. Thereafter, data from semi-structured interviews is analysed. Following this section is the documentary analysis. The chapter is concluded by a discussion on the implications for further research. This is preceded by a discussion on the limitations of the study.

## 4.2. THE RESPONSE RATE

From the questionnaires that were distributed to a sample of 50 respondents for this empirical survey, a total of 43 responses were received, thus giving a response rate of 86%. This high response rate could be largely attributed to the fact that the researcher works for the same organisation where the study was conducted and had already established good relations and rapport with some of the respondents prior to the distribution of questionnaires. Secondly, the questionnaire was distributed online, thus giving the researcher the ability to track and monitor respondents that have received, opened and returned the questionnaire. Those respondents who failed to return the questionnaires were sent e-mails as a friendly reminder for the return of the questionnaires. For interviews, all the four officials who were earmarked for interviews honoured the appointments. The response rate of the empirical survey is reflected in the Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1 below.

**TABLE 4.1 RESPONSE RATE OF THE EMPIRICAL SURVEY**

| QUESTIONNAIRES | NUMBER | PERCENTAGE |
|---|---|---|
| Distributed | 50 | 100 |
| Returned | 43 | 86 |
| Non-returned | 7 | 14 |

Source: The results of the empirical survey.

**FIGURE 4.1 RESPONSE RATE OF THE EMPIRICAL SURVEY**
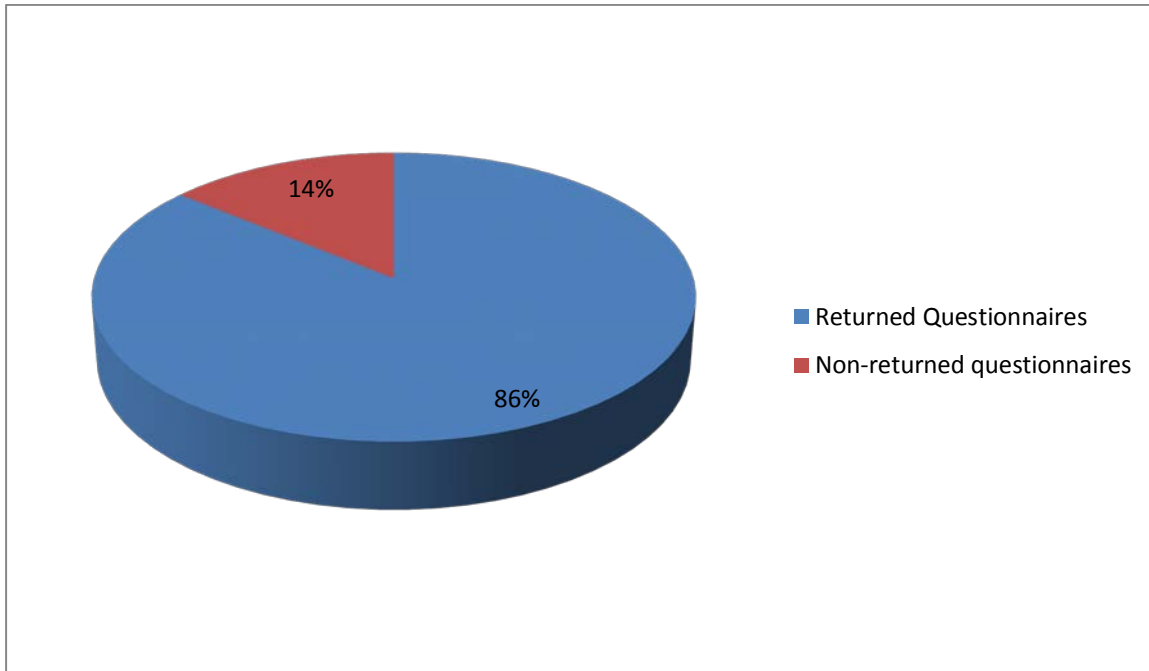


Source: Table 4.1 above converted into a Pie Chart.

## 4.3. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF SECTION A OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Section A of the questionnaire required the respondents to complete general biographical data. The key biographic characteristics that were relevant for this study included region, workplace, department or section, occupational designation, race, gender and years of service in the organisation. The results for Section A are presented in Tables 4.2 to 4.8 and in Figures 4.2 to 4.8. A brief discussion of the data is offered immediately underneath the respective figures.

### 4.3.1. Responses According to Regions

Table 4.2 and Figure 4.2 below display the survey responses received according to Amatola Water Board regions.

**TABLE 4.2 RESPONSES ACCORDING TO REGIONS**

| REGION | NUMBER | PERCENTAGE |
|---|---|---|
| Head Office | 15 | 34.88 |
| Eastern Region | 3 | 6.98 |
| Western Region | 2 | 4.65 |
| Southern Region | 13 | 30.23 |
| Northern Region | 10 | 23.26 |
| **TOTAL** | **43** | **100** |

Source: Results from empirical survey

**FIGURE 4.2 RESPONSES ACCORDING TO REGIONS**
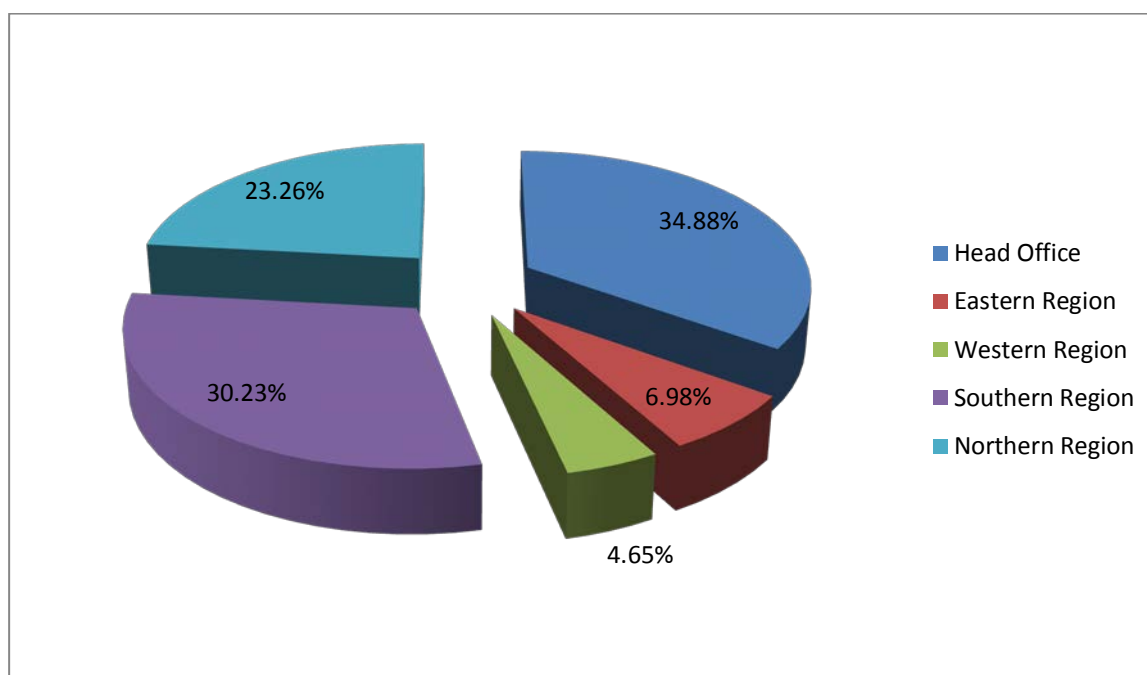


Source: Table 4.2 above converted to a Pie Chart.

Table 4.2 and Figure 4.2 above show that the majority of respondents came from the Head Office, Northern and Southern Regions. These three regions have collectively accounted for 88.37% of responses. This high response rate from these regions could be attributed to the fact that both the Head Office and Southern Region have a high number of employees compared to other regions.

With regard to the Northern Region, the researcher for this study is based at this region and this may have positively contributed to the response rate.

### 4.3.2. Responses According to Work Centres

Table 4.3 and Figure 4.3 below show the distribution of survey responses according to various Amatola Water Board Work Centres.

**TABLE 4.3 RESPONSES ACCORDING TO WORK CENTRES**

| WORKPLACE | NUMBER | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------|--------|------------|
| Head Office | 15 | 34.88 |
| Nahoon Dam | 8 | 18.5 |
| Sandile Dam | 1 | 2.33 |
| Laing Dam | 3 | 6.98 |
| Kei Road | 1 | 2.33 |
| Port Alfred | 2 | 4.65 |
| Fort Beaufort | 1 | 2.33 |
| Sterkspruit | 10 | 23.26 |
| Other | 2 | 4.65 |
| **TOTAL** | **43** | **100** |

Source: Results from empirical survey

**FIGURE 4.3 RESPONSES ACCORDING TO WORK CENTRES**
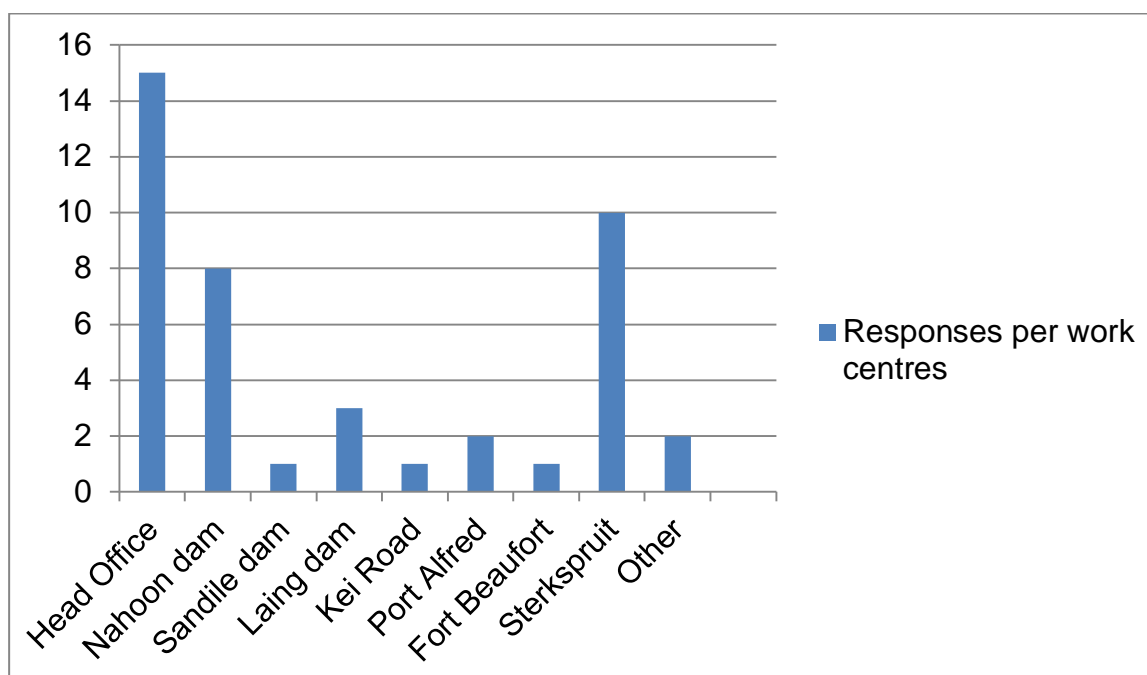


Source: Table 4.3 above converted into a Bar Graph.

The distribution of respondents still displays the same trend in which the Head Office dominates the response rate. Similarly, Sterkspruit and Nahoon that are located in Northern and Southern Regions respectively have a high number of responses compared to other centres.

### 4.3.3. Responses According to Departments

Table 4.4 and Figure 4.4 below display the responses as obtained from the various Amatola Water Board's Departments or Sections.

**TABLE 4.4 RESPONSES ACCORDING TO DEPARTMENTS OR SECTIONS**

| DEPARTMENT | NUMBER | PERCENTAGE |
|---|---|---|
| Operations | 15 | 34.88 |
| Maintenance | 9 | 20.93 |
| Human Resources | 4 | 9.30 |
| Finance | 4 | 9.30 |
| Business Development | 1 | 2.33 |
| Planning & Development | 6 | 13.95 |
| Marketing | 1 | 2.33 |
| Other | 3 | 6.98 |
| TOTAL | 43 | 100 |

Source: Results from empirical survey

**FIGURE 4.4 RESPONSES ACCORDING TO DEPARTMENTS OR SECTIONS**
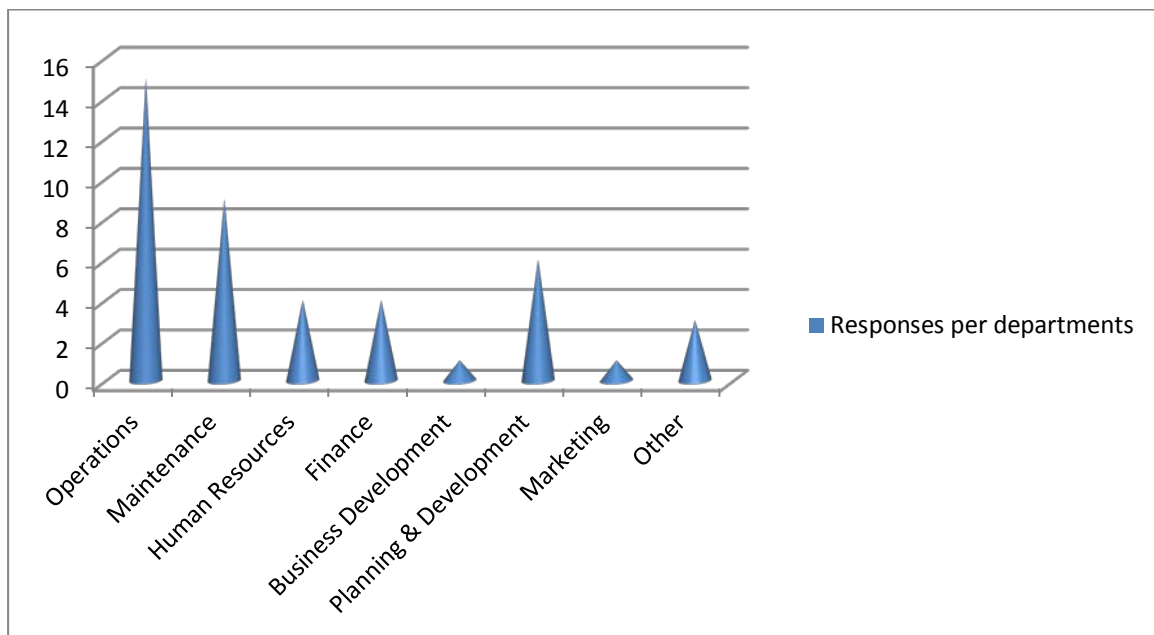


Source: Table 4.4 above converted into a Pyramid Graph

Amatola Water Board is a technical-intensive organisation, with the majority of its workforce concentrated in Operations and Maintenance departments with other departments or sections offering administrative support services. Hence, collectively these divisions have accounted for more than 50% of respondents.

### 4.3.4. Responses According to Job Designations

Table 4.5 and Figure 4.5 below illustrate the number and percentages of responses received in terms of job categories at Amatola Water Board.

**TABLE 4.5 RESPONSES ACCORDING TO JOB DESIGNATIONS**

| POSITION | NUMBER | PERCENTAGE |
|----------|--------|------------|
| Director | 0 | 0 |
| Manager | 7 | 16.28 |
| Superintendent | 4 | 9.30 |
| Supervisor | 7 | 16.28 |
| Technician | 8 | 18.60 |
| Artisan | 2 | 4.65 |
| Operator | 4 | 9.30 |
| Other | 11 | 25.59 |
| **TOTAL** | **43** | **100** |

Source: Results from empirical survey

**FIGURE 4.5 RESPONSES ACCORDING TO JOB DESIGNATIONS**
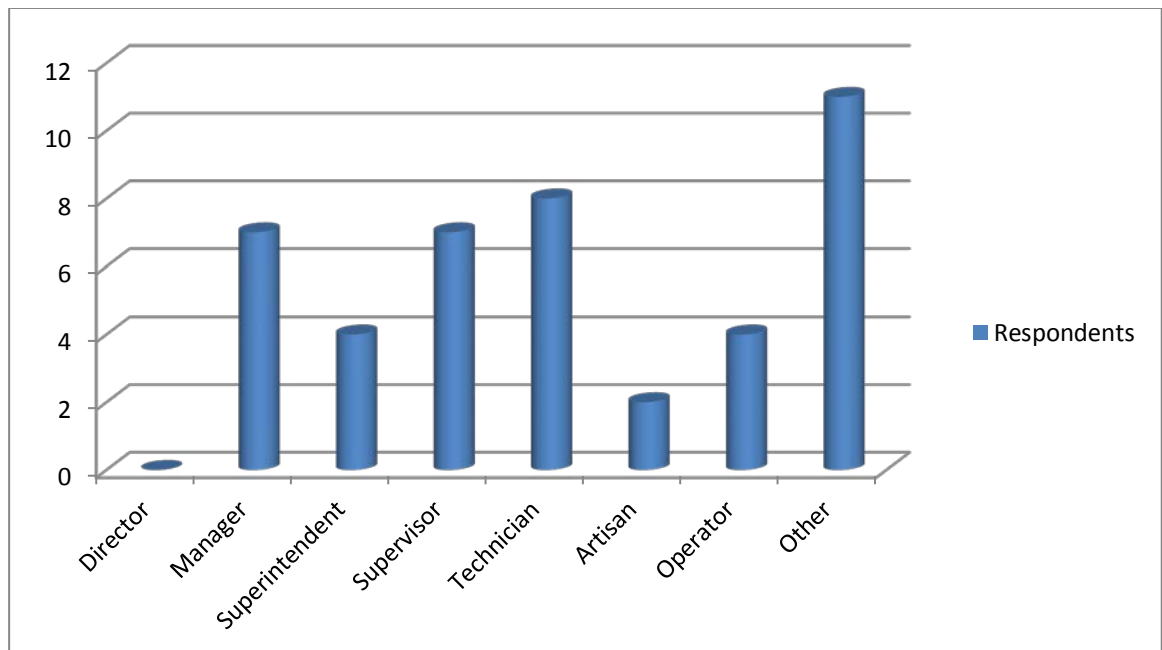


Source: Results in Table 4.5 converted into Column Graph.

Table 4.5 and Figure 4.5 above indicate a zero return rate in the level of a Director. This is because the top and senior management at Amatola Water Board were excluded from the survey with the purpose of including them in interviews. The empirical survey targeted the ranks from middle management to plant operators. The 'other' referred to all the support staff located mainly in the Head and Regional Offices responsible for secretarial services, finance, project management, human resource management, marketing, procurement, logistics, et cetera. Hence they constituted the majority of respondents. It is interesting to note that lower and middle level management (managers, superintendents, supervisors and technicians) have collectively constituted the majority of respondents. These are generally the people whom employment equity programmes should specifically target for advancement to middle and senior managerial positions respectively.

### 4.3.5. Composition of Respondents According to Race

Table 4.6 and Figure 4.6 below outline the results of responses categorised along the racial groups as found at Amatola Water Board.

**TABLE 4.6 COMPOSITION OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO RACE**

| RACE | NUMBER | PERCENTAGE |
|------|--------|------------|
| Black | 38 | 88.37 |
| Coloured | 3 | 6.97 |
| Indian | 1 | 2.33 |
| White | 1 | 2.33 |
| **TOTAL** | **43** | **100** |

Source: Results from empirical survey

**FIGURE 4.6 COMPOSITION OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO RACE**
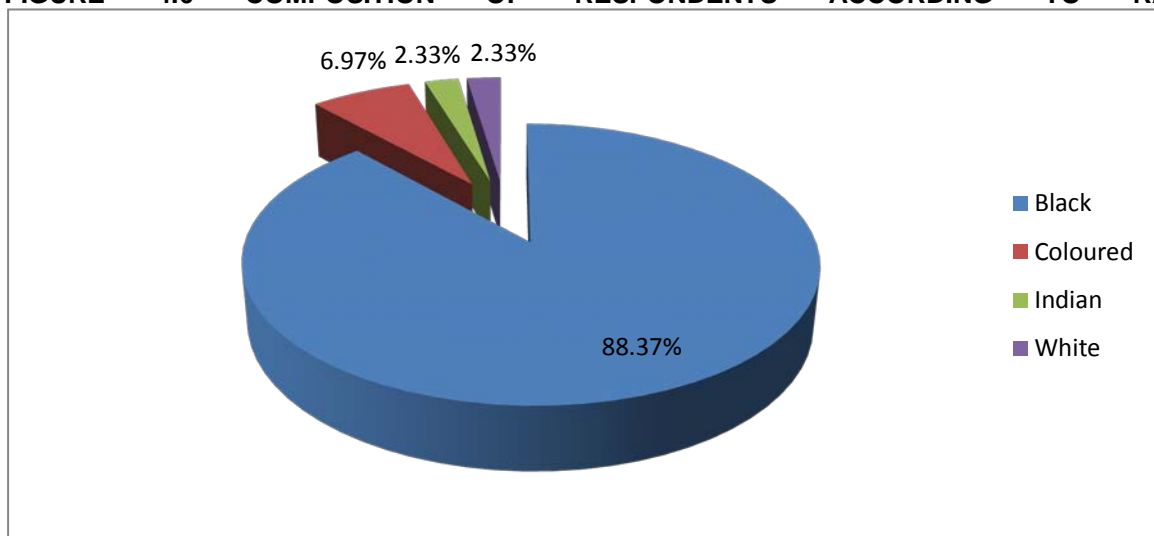


Source: Table 4.6 above converted into a Pie Chart.

Table 4.6 and Figure 4.6 above indicate that 88.37% of respondents are Black. These demographics could be attributed to the fact that the majority of employees at Amatola Water Board are Black. These results could reflect the actual demographics of the Amatola Water Board's workforce.

### 4.3.6. Composition of Respondents According to Gender

Table 4.7 and Figure 4.7 below illustrate the results of responses categorised according to gender.

**TABLE 4.7 A COMPOSITION OF RESPONDENTS PER GENDER**

| GENDER | NUMBER | PERCENTAGE |
|--------|--------|------------|
| Male | 23 | 53.49 |
| Female | 20 | 46.51 |
| **TOTAL** | **43** | **100** |

Source: Results from empirical survey

**FIGURE: 4.7 COMPOSITION OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO GENDER**
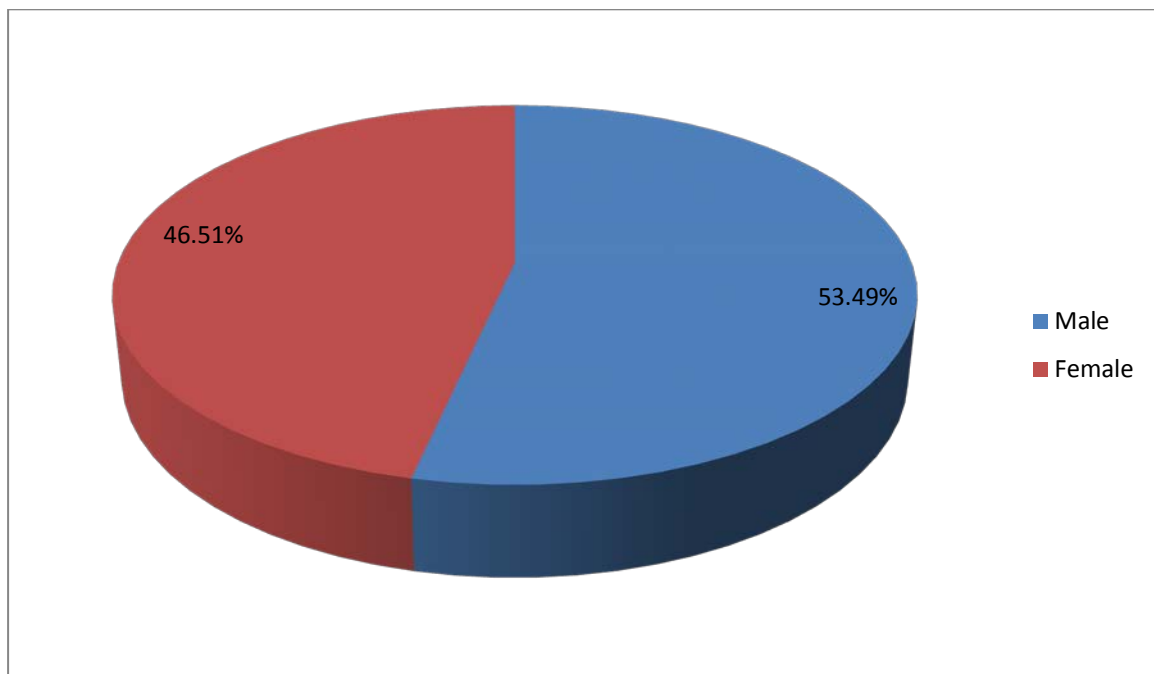


Source: Table 4.7 above converted into a Pie Chart

The results above indicate that responses from male employees were more than those received from female employees, although the difference was marginal.

This slight difference in the results could be attributed to the fact that Amatola Water Board is a technical-intensive organisation with the majority of its employees being males.

### 4.3.7. Service Experience of Respondents

Table 4.8 and Figure 4.8 below show the service experience of the respondents.

**TABLE 4.8 SERVICE EXPERIENCE OF RESPONDENTS**

| EXPERINCE IN YEARS | NUMBER | PERCENTAGE |
|---|---|---|
| 0 – 3 | 18 | 41.86 |
| 4-6 | 12 | 27.90 |
| 7-9 | 1 | 2.33 |
| 10-12 | 7 | 16.28 |
| 13-15 | 5 | 11.63 |
| **TOTAL** | **43** | **100** |

Source: Results from empirical survey

**FIGURE 4.8 SERVICE EXPERIENCE OF RESPONDENTS**
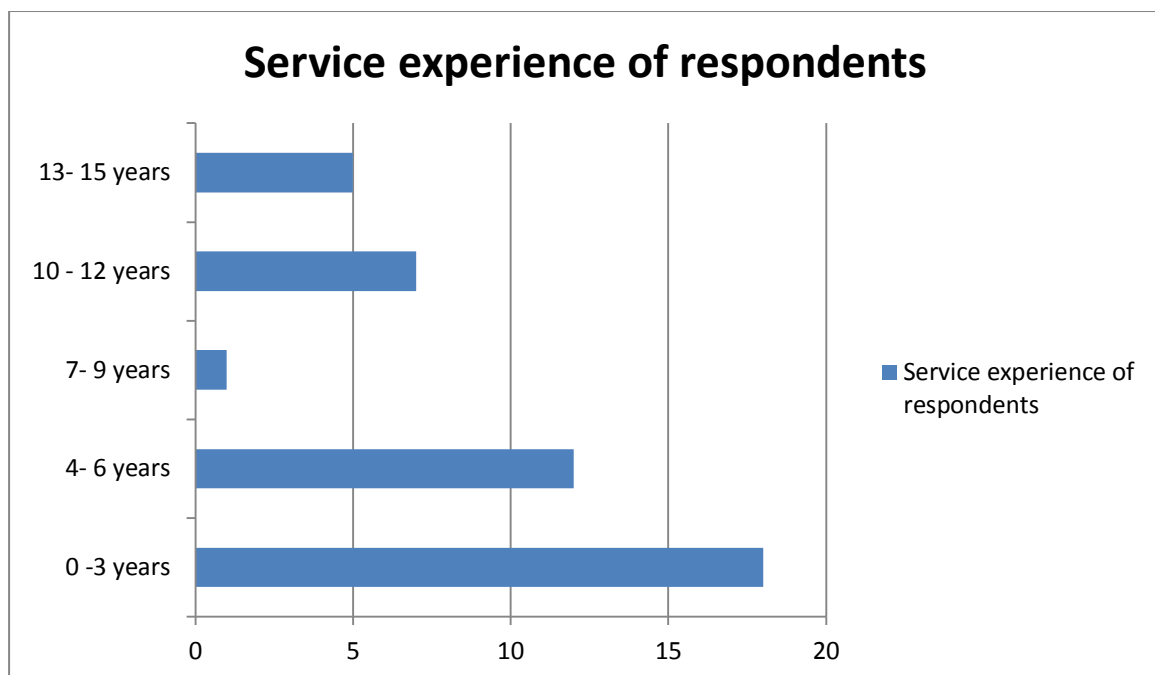


Source: Table 4.8 above converted into a Bar graph.

It is interesting to note that the majority of respondents (69.8%) have been with Amatola Water Board for a period of less than 7 years. Although the age of respondents was not considered a relevant characteristic for the study, however, it

can be assumed that the majority of these respondents are young and middle-aged adults who still aspire to ascend the corporate ladder. Thus, effective implementation of employment equity programmes may be of great benefit to these respondents.

## 4.4. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF SECTION B OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Section B of the questionnaire strictly focussed on the implementation of Employment Equity Plan at Amatola Water Board. The questions in this section consisted of statements grouped together under the following themes:

- Communication.
- Recruitment and Selection.
- Training and Development.
- Organisational Culture.
- Diversity Management
- Gender Equity.

### 4.4.1. Communication

Table 4.9 below displays the results on the views of respondents on the communication of Amatola Water Board's Employment Equity Plan.

**TABLE 4.9 RESPONDENTS' VIEWS ON COMMUNICATION**

| STATEMENT | | Strongly Agree | Agree | Uncertain | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Tot |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Amatola Water submits its annual Employment Equity Report timeously to the Department of Labour. | No. | 7 | 15 | 20 | 0 | 1 | 43 |
| | % | 16.28 | 34.88 | 46.51 | 0 | 2.33 | 100 |
| 2. AW has a formal Employment Equity Plan. | No. | 12 | 24 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 43 |
| | % | 27.91 | 55.81 | 13.95 | 0 | 2.33 | 100 |
| 3. I am informed about the AW Employment Equity Plan. | No. | 8 | 18 | 6 | 8 | 3 | 43 |
| | % | 18.60 | 41.87 | 13.95 | 18.60 | 6.98 | 100 |
| 4. Information about the Employment Equity Plan is displayed in the workplace. | No. | 3 | 5 | 15 | 14 | 6 | 43 |
| | % | 6.98 | 11.63 | 34.88 | 32.56 | 13.95 | 100 |

| STATEMENT | | Strongly Agree | Agree | Uncertain | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Tot |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5. Constant updates are provided on the Employment Equity processes taking place. | No. | 0 | 7 | 17 | 12 | 7 | 43 |
| | % | 0 | 16.28 | 39.53 | 27.91 | 16.28 | 100 |
| 6. Employment Equity issues are communicated in a way that is sensitive to the feelings and concerns of employees. | No. | 2 | 10 | 16 | 9 | 6 | 43 |
| | % | 4.65 | 23.26 | 37.21 | 20.93 | 13.95 | 100 |

Source: Results from empirical survey

More than 50% of the respondents agreed that Amatola Water Board submits its Employment Equity Plan on time, 46.5 % of respondents were uncertain and only 2.33% of respondents disagreed. Similarly, 83.72% of respondents agreed that the organisation had a formal Employment Equity Plan. Invariably, 60.47% of respondents agreed that they are informed about the organisational Employment Equity Plan. However, 46.51% of respondents disagreed that information on Employment Equity Plan is displayed at the workplace against 18.61% who agreed. Similarly, 44.19% of respondents disagreed that constant updates are provided on the Employment Equity Plan and a marginal 16.28% of respondents agreed. The majority of respondents (37.21%) are uncertain whether employment equity issues are communicated in a way that is sensitive to the feelings of employees. These results indicate that although the majority of the respondents at 83.7% agreed that the organisation had a formal Employment Equity Plan and 60.47% of respondents are informed about the Employment Equity Plan, more efforts are still needed to disseminate information on Employment Equity Plan. Thus, information on Employment Equity Plan must be displayed in all Amatola Water Board work centres and constant updates on the process be provided. This finding is in harmony with the observation made by Leonard and Grobler (2006: 394) that communicating the Employment Equity Plan cannot only be an issue of legal compliance, but rather as an organisational business strategy where employment equity is meticulously incorporated in it. It is now critical that Amatola Water Board clearly communicates the underlying purpose of its Employment Equity Plan to all stakeholders and the entire organisational workforce should be involved in the employment equity

processes. This entails that all managers and supervisors in the organisation irrespective of the level and status, are acquainted with the Employment Equity Plan to assist in the attainment of its numeric targets.

## 4.4.2. Recruitment and Selection

Table 4.10 below displays the results on respondents' views on Amatola Water Board's recruitment and selection policies and practices.

**TABLE 4.10 RESPONDENTS' VIEWS ON RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

| | STATEMENT | | Strongly Agree | Agree | Uncertain | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Tot |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | Recruitment and selection policies and processes are aimed at attaining Employment Equity targets. | No. | 14 | 15 | 8 | 2 | 4 | 43 |
| | | % | 32.57 | 34.88 | 18.60 | 4.65 | 9.30 | 100 |

Source: Results from empirical survey

It is interesting to note that the majority of respondents at 67.45% agreed that recruitment and selection processes are aimed at attaining employment equity targets. It is apparent from these results that although Amatola Water Board has not yet effectively implemented the Employment Equity Plan, its recruitment and selection policies and process are at least aimed towards attaining employment equity targets.

## 4.4.3. Training and Development

Table 4.11 below illustrates the results on respondents' views on training and development practices taking place at Amatola Water Board.

**TABLE 4.11 RESPONDENTS' VIEWS ON TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

| | STATEMENT | | Strongly Agree | Agree | Uncertain | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Tot |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | Training and development of employees is widely encouraged by management. | Number | 2 | 12 | 8 | 13 | 8 | 43 |
| | | Percentage | 4.65 | 27.92 | 18.60 | 30.23 | 18.60 | 100 |

| | STATEMENT | | Strongly Agree | Agree | Uncertain | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Tot |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | Training and development practices are aimed at equipping and skilling black employees for senior positions. | Number | 2 | 10 | 13 | 9 | 9 | 43 |
| | | Percentage | 4.65 | 23.26 | 30.23 | 20.93 | 20.93 | 100 |
| 10 | I receive adequate job-relevant training in areas where I require it. | Number | 1 | 16 | 7 | 10 | 9 | 43 |
| | | Percentage | 2.33 | 37.20 | 16.28 | 23.26 | 20.93 | 100 |
| 11 | Training and development opportunities offered by AW are in line with my performance development plan (PDP). | Number | 1 | 13 | 6 | 12 | 11 | 43 |
| | | Percentage | 2.33 | 30.23 | 13.95 | 27.91 | 25.58 | 100 |
| 12 | I am satisfied with the training and development opportunities offered to me. | Number | 1 | 12 | 3 | 14 | 13 | 43 |
| | | Percentage | 2.33 | 27.90 | 6.98 | 32.56 | 30.23 | 100 |
| 15 | I still need more training to perform my job effectively. | Number | 15 | 16 | 2 | 6 | 4 | 43 |
| | | Percentage | 34.88 | 37.21 | 4.65 | 13.95 | 9.31 | 100 |
| 17 | AW cares about developing employee competencies for long term carriers, not just for their current jobs. | Number | 0 | 14 | 11 | 6 | 12 | 43 |
| | | Percentage | 0 | 32.56 | 25.58 | 13.95 | 27.91 | 100 |

Source: Results from empirical survey

It is evident from Table 4.11 above that the majority of respondents are dissatisfied with the training that is offered at Amatola Water Board. About 48.8% of respondents believed that management is not encouraging the training and development of employees. Similarly, 41.86% of respondents disagreed that training and development practices are aimed at capacitating Black employees for senior managerial positions. Furthermore, 43% of respondents believed that training provided is inadequate. In addition, 53.5% of respondents disagreed that training provided is aligned with performance development plans of employees.

Generally, an overwhelming majority of 62.5 % of respondents are dissatisfied with the training and development opportunities provided. These results corroborate the observation by Oosthuizen and Naidoo (2010:4) that training and development of Black employees needs to be accelerated, as this is not taking place in most organisations as fast as it should. This indicates that training and development practices currently implemented at Amatola Water Board are not entirely effective and relevant to individual employees' performance development plans. It is apparent that these training interventions need to be reviewed, refocused and aligned with the Employment Equity Plan. This entails identifying individual employee's training needs and designing employees' performance development plans in line with organisational Employment Equity Plan.

### 4.4.4 Organisational Culture

Table 4.12 below outlines the results on the views of respondents on organisational culture prevailing at Amatola Water Board.

**TABLE 4.12    RESPONDENTS'S VIEWS ON ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE**

| | STATEMENT | | Strongly Agree | Agree | Uncertain | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Tot |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13 | My skills and abilities are adequate for the job I do. | Number | 8 | 28 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 43 |
| | | Percentage | 18.6 | 65.12 | 4.65 | 6.98 | 4.65 | 100 |
| 14 | My job provides me with opportunities to grow and develop. | Number | 4 | 20 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 43 |
| | | Percentage | 9.30 | 46.52 | 13.95 | 13.95 | 16.28 | 100 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| 16 | I am given the right equipment and tools to do my job. | Number | 4 | 26 | 6 | 6 | 1 | 43 |
| | | Percentage | 9.3 | 60.47 | 13.95 | 13.95 | 2.33 | 100 |
| 29 | I am satisfied with Employment Equity processes and practices that AW has put in place. | Number | 2 | 12 | 15 | 9 | 5 | 43 |
| | | Percentage | 4.65 | 27.91 | 34.88 | 20.93 | 11.63 | 100 |
| 30 | I am happy with my job at AW. | Number | 6 | 20 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 43 |
| | | Percentage | 13.95 | 46.51 | 9.31 | 11.63 | 18.6 | 100 |

Source: Survey empirical results

Table 4.12 above indicates that the majority of respondents (83.72%) have adequate skills and abilities that are required for the jobs they do. Furthermore, 55.82% of respondents believed that their jobs provide them with opportunities to grow and develop. Similarly, 69.77% of respondents claimed to have the right equipment and tools for the jobs they perform. As a result, 60.46% of respondents are happy with the jobs they perform at Amatola Water Board. Despite this, only 32.56% of respondents are satisfied with the employment equity processes and practices that Amatola Water Board has put in place. These results indicate that although the prevailing culture at Amatola Water Board provides a conducive working environment for the employees, employment equity processes and practices taking place in the organisation are not yet satisfactory. This presents a challenge to Amatola Water Board to ensure that the existing Employment Equity Plan and associated Human Resource Management policies and practices are aligned and implemented.

### 4.4.5. Diversity Management

Table 4.13 below displays the results on the views of respondents on diversity management.

**TABLE 4.13 RESPONDENTS' VIEWS ON DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT**

| | STATEMENT | | Strongly Agree | Agree | Uncertain | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Tot |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 18 | AW strongly values diversity. | Number | 1 | 16 | 17 | 4 | 5 | 43 |
| | | Percentage | 2.33 | 37.21 | 39.53 | 9.3 | 11.63 | 100 |
| 19 | AW treats people with respect and dignity irrespective of their position, race, gender, etc. | Number | 4 | 16 | 10 | 8 | 5 | 43 |
| | | Percentage | 9.3 | 37.21 | 23.26 | 18.6 | 11.63 | 100 |
| 20 | At AW everyone is valued and appreciated for who they are irrespective of their position, race, gender, etc. | Number | 2 | 13 | 13 | 9 | 6 | 43 |
| | | Percentage | 4.65 | 30.23 | 30.23 | 20.94 | 13.95 | 100 |

| | STATEMENT | | Strongly Agree | Agree | Uncertain | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Tot |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 21 | All employees at AW are provided with equal opportunities to career development, training and promotion irrespective of position, race, gender, disability, religion, etc. | **Number** | 0 | 11 | 13 | 10 | 9 | **43** |
| | | **Percentage** | 0 | 25.58 | 30.23 | 23.25 | 20.94 | **100** |
| 22 | My manager listens to and values the suggestions of all employees, regardless of position, race, gender, etc. | **Number** | 6 | 18 | 12 | 5 | 2 | **43** |
| | | **Percentage** | 13.95 | 41.86 | 27.91 | 11.63 | 4.65 | **100** |
| 23 | AW promotes a non-racial environment. | **Number** | 3 | 20 | 13 | 4 | 3 | **43** |
| | | **Percentage** | 6.98 | 46.51 | 30.23 | 9.3 | 6.98 | **100** |
| 24 | Racial mistrust and tension is not experienced at my work place. | **Number** | 4 | 10 | 15 | 5 | 9 | **43** |
| | | **Percentage** | 9.3 | 23.25 | 34.88 | 11.63 | 20.94 | **100** |
| 25 | AW's policies are fairly applied to all employees irrespective of their position, race, gender, etc. | **Number** | 2 | 15 | 11 | 8 | 7 | **43** |
| | | **Percentage** | 4.65 | 34.88 | 25.58 | 18.6 | 16.29 | **100** |

Source: Survey empirical results

Table 4.13 above indicates that 39.54% of the respondents agreed that Amatola Water Board strongly valued workforce diversity. Interestingly, an equal percentage of respondents are uncertain on this variable, whilst a 20.93% of respondents disagreed. Similarly, the majority of respondents at 46.51% believed that Amatola Water Board treated its employees with respect and dignity irrespective of their positions, race, gender, et cetera. Paradoxically, an equal number of respondents at 34.88% agreed and disagreed that employees are valued and appreciated for who they are irrespective of the position, race, gender, et cetera, at Amatola Water Board, whilst 30.23% of respondents are uncertain. From these results, it is difficult to make a conclusive remark. Thus, it is not easy to establish whether at Amatola Water Board employees are valued and appreciated or not.

Approximately 44% of respondents disagreed that Amatola Water Board provides all employees with equal opportunities for career development, training and promotion irrespective of position, race, gender, disability, religion, et cetera, whilst a marginal 25.58% of respondents agreed. Regarding the valuing of employees' suggestions by management, the majority of respondents (55.81%) agreed that their managers listened to and valued their suggestions regardless of position, race, gender, et cetera, and 16.28% of respondents disagreed. Similarly, 53.49% of respondents believed that Amatola Water Board promoted non-racialism and 16.28% of respondents disagreed. At the same time, 32.57% of respondents disagreed that racial mistrust and tension are not experienced at their workplaces, whilst an equivalent 32.55% of respondents agreed, and a relative 34.88% of respondents are uncertain. With these mixed results, it is also difficult to establish whether racial mistrusts and tensions are experienced or not in the organisation.

Despite the mixed responses on racial mistrusts and tension, 39.53% of respondents agreed that Amatola Water Board policies are fairly applied to all employees irrespective of their position, race, gender, et cetera, whilst 34.89% of respondents disagreed. Although in some instances responses were inconclusive, overall the results indicate that Amatola Water Board promoted non-racialism and workplace diversity.

### 4.4.6. Gender Equity

Table 4.14 below provides the results of respondents' views on gender equity practices at Amatola Water Board.

**TABLE 4.14 RESPONDENTS' VIEWS ON GENDER EQUITY**

|  | STATEMENT |  | Strongly Agree | Agree | Uncertain | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Tot |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 26 | Management fully promotes the development of female employees for managerial positions. | Number | 5 | 9 | 13 | 11 | 5 | 43 |
|  |  | Percentage | 11.63 | 20.93 | 30.23 | 25.58 | 11.63 | 100 |
| 27 | AW strongly values non-sexism. | Number | 4 | 19 | 13 | 6 | 1 | 43 |
|  |  | Percentage | 9.3 | 44.19 | 30.23 | 13.95 | 2.33 | 100 |

| | STATEMENT | | Strongly Agree | Agree | Uncertain | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Tot |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 28 | Female employees are adequately represented in AW management levels. | **Number** | 5 | 14 | 11 | 7 | 6 | **43** |
| | | **Percentage** | 11.63 | 32.56 | 25.58 | 16.28 | 13.95 | **100** |

Source: Survey empirical results

Table 4.14 above indicates that 37.21% of respondents disagreed that management promoted the development of female employees for managerial positions as compared to 32.56% who agreed. About 53% of respondents agreed that non-sexism is strongly promoted at Amatola Water Board in comparison to 16.28% who disagreed. Interestingly, 44.19% of respondents agreed that female employees are adequately represented in the management structure, whilst 25.58% of respondents are uncertain and 30.23% disagreed. Although it is indicated in the results that management does not support the development of females for managerial positions, ironically 44.19% of respondents believed that there is an adequate representation of females in managerial positions. These results raise an interesting phenomenon, considering that the gender margin between the respondents was only 6.97%. This therefore means that, a considerable number of female respondents are satisfied with the representation of women in the organisation's management structure.


## 4.5. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW DATA

Face-to-face semi-structured interviews were held with three managers and one labour representative at Amatola Water Board. The interviews consisted of several questions covering the following major themes:

- Communication
- Recruitment and selection
- Commitment of management
- Organisational culture.
- Diversity management.
- Attaining of numeric targets.

### 4.5.1. Communication

The four respondents indicated that the process of formulating the Employment Equity Plan in 2009 was well communicated to all relevant stakeholders, who consequently participated in the drafting of the plan. It emerged from the interviews that subsequent to the formulation of the plan, the Employment Equity and Skills Development Committee was then elected to drive and monitor the implementation of Employment Equity Plan. The interviewees indicated that as from 2010, the organisation has timeously submitted its annual Employment Equity Plan report to the Department of Labour. However, the respondents indicated that from the onset, communication of the employment equity process was never a perfect process as updates and reports on Employment Equity Plan were only disseminated to employees through Amatola Water Board intranet. According to respondents, this was not an effective communication strategy as information was restricted only to those employees with computers. This was in contradiction with the principles stipulated in the Employment Equity Act (1998), that information on employment equity must be displayed at the workplace so that every employee in the organisation could have access to it. Regarding this selective access to employment equity information, Leonard (2004:34) notes that communication efforts to facilitate the implementation of employment equity cannot be once-off incidents, but repetitive communication efforts are sometimes required to facilitate the understanding and active participation in the transformational goal. Thus, communication of employment equity at Amatola Water Board cannot continue to be selective as it has been the case. Coordinated and systematic communication of employment equity would be beneficial to facilitate the understanding and active participation of employees in the process.

The respondents further revealed that as from the middle of 2010, the Employment Equity and Skills Development Committee members were no longer meeting according to schedule. This, according to respondents, adversely affected the communication of Employment Equity Plan as no updates were supplied to employees. The four respondents attributed this failure to hold meetings to the lack of support from some managers who refused to release their subordinates to attend committee meetings. Perhaps, it is for this reason that Joseph (2006: 109) maintain that all managers in the organisation irrespective of the level and status, should be

well acquainted with organisational employment equity plan, to assist in the attainment of organisational employment equity numeric targets. Respondents also indicated that communication on the employment equity process was further compromised in 2011 when the former Chief Executive Officer instructed that reports and updates be removed from the intranet. According to respondents, since then, no reporting or updating was provided to employees on Employment Equity Plan. These findings are in line with the findings from the survey, where the majority of respondents agreed that information on employment equity plan was not displayed at the workplace and no constant updates on the employment equity are provided.

### 4.5.2  Recruitment and Selection

The four respondents in the interviews opined that recruitment and selection processes at Amatola Water Board are in line with Employment Equity Plan. However, they felt that the role of the Employment Equity and Skills Development Committee in the recruitment and selection needs to be enhanced. They indicated that although the committee sits in the shortlisting and interviewing of candidates, it is not involved in the drafting of advertisements. The interviewees strongly felt that the committee should be involved in the drafting of advertisements as this recruitment activity is crucial in the employment equity process. They argued that advertisements can be designed in such a way that they are discriminatory or exclusionary for designated groups and preserve certain jobs for non-designated groups. Hence they wanted the committee to be involved to monitor the process.

Furthermore, the four respondents believed that the organisational recruitment and selection processes are largely aimed at attaining employment equity numerical targets, but these processes are frustrated by the inability or difficulty to recruit suitably qualified employees from the designated groups, particularly women. According to the respondents, Amatola Water Board is an engineering-intensive organisation and as such, it struggled to attract the limited number of Black professional engineers and technicians, particularly Black professional female engineers and technicians.

### 4.5.3. Commitment of Management

During the interviews, the four respondents indicated their disappointment with the support the Executive Board and the top management gave to the implementation of Employment Equity Plan. The interviewees were of the view that the Board and MANCO, which is the Management Committee, were not giving sufficient support to the implementation of the Employment Equity Plan. As a result, the respondents felt that the attaining of employment equity targets should be made part of every manager's performance contract to facilitate its implementation. According to respondents, although the Executive responsibility for the implementation of employment equity rested with the Director of Corporate Services, the day-to-day operational activities on employment equity were delegated to a middle manager, who has no authority over senior and equivalent managers.

To elucidate this lack of Executive support for Employment Equity Plan, the respondents cited an example that occurred recently, where the employment contracts of two White Directors were coming to an end, and suddenly the Executive Board unilaterally decided to extend their contracts for another five years without even advertising the positions. Respondents viewed this as defeating the same objectives of the Employment Equity Plan, as these positions were already earmarked for employment equity process. According to the interviewees, this lack of Executive support has also filtered down to middle and lower managers, who have refused to release employees to attend meetings of the Employment Equity and Skills Development Committee. The respondents claimed that this apathy has adversely affected the implementation of Employment Equity Plan and has paralysed the Employment Equity and Skills Development Committee; hence the organisation is faced with challenges of attaining certain numeric targets, particularly for women.

These findings directly point to the lack of support by the executive management on the implementation of Employment Equity Plan. They are in line with the observation made by Thomas and Jain (2004: 49), that the failure to implement Employment Equity Plan could be attributed to the lack of commitment by management to the plan, where the task of achieving employment equity is delegated to the members of the Human Resource Department who seldom have the authority or necessary mechanisms to ensure progress.

In this regard, Amatola Water Board is no different from other organisations as noted by D'Netto and Sohail (1999: 542) that, the lack of commitment to employment equity by senior and top management is one of the challenges that impede its implementation in most organisations. Thus, for effective implementation of Employment Equity Plan at Amatola Water Board, the top management and the Executive Board need to drive and support the process, as without this commitment minimal progress would be made in achieving employment equity in the organisation.

### 4.5.4  Organisational Culture

The four respondents who were interviewed indicated that the prevailing culture at Amatola Water Board was generally conducive for employment equity process. Their view was that most organisational policies, such as Succession Planning Policy, Employee Retention Strategy, Recruitment and Selection Policy, Training and Development Policy were all in line with Employment Equity Plan, although some of these policies were not yet implemented. The respondents thought that the training provided by the organisation prepared employees for upward mobility as they were always designed according to the individual needs of employees. Respondents indicated that working conditions in some of Amatola Water Board's remotely located Water Treatment Plants were sometimes unsafe for female employees, particularly for night shifts, which resulted in a number of these scarce and sought-after skills leaving the organisation. As a result of this safety risk and the maternity leave, the interviewees further indicated that some managers or supervisors were reluctant to employ females in their departments or sections. This, according to the four interviewees, has also contributed to the under-representation of women in managerial positions.

### 4.5.5  Managing Diversity

Although Amatola Water Board is largely a Black dominated organisation, the feeling amongst the four respondents in the interviews was that there were still few individuals who were bastion of White supremacy in the organisation. They indicated that these people thought that the employment equity was a reverse discrimination directly aimed at them. The four respondents expressed discontent with one particular department, where racist tendencies were frequently at play.

As a result, they viewed this department's working conditions as not conducive for the development of Black employees. They cited an example in this department of a White Director who insisted that applicants, although qualified for employment, must always be registered with the Engineering Council of South Africa. According to four respondents, this was a racial discrimination which was meant to exclude and marginalise Black applicants. Few Black graduates were actually registered with the Engineering Council of South Africa. The registration process is itself complicated and exclusionary as it required one to have prior engineering-related work experience. Generally, Black graduates struggled to obtain this experience as the industry preferred White graduates for internship or experiential training.

To further illustrate this veiled racism, one respondent mentioned that at one stage in this Department, two Black employees were recruited as Project Managers, but both resigned within a period of 6 months citing that the work environment was not conducive for their development. Another interviewee argued that the Executive Board and top management were continuing to undermine the employment equity processes, in the sense that, a manager from the non-designated group (White) had been seconded to the office of the Chief Executive Officer. According to this interviewee, this was a lost opportunity to employment equity process as this rare opportunity should have been given to capacitate a manager from designated group.

During the interview, two respondents indicated that the majority of managers from non-designated groups (White) are reluctant to give acting opportunities to their Black subordinates. The respondents also indicated that some White managers were refusing to give study opportunities to Black subordinates on the basis that their studies were not directly related to their work. According to respondents, this was not necessarily a valid reason to deny an employee a study opportunity. Employees were entitled to study opportunities as long as their studies were relevant to the organisation as a whole. The four respondents even accused certain Black managers of defeating the objectives of the Employment Equity Plan as they delegated White subordinates into acting positions and overlooked Black subordinates. The four respondents further alleged during the interviews that in some instances, White managers who reached their retirement ages had their tenure extended and offered short-term contracts, thus restricted and denied Black employees advancement opportunities.

It is clear from these findings that Amatola Water Board had a challenge to deal with on diversity management. The existence of veiled racist tendencies could be a result of the manner in which change was initially introduced in the organisation. The fact that some White employees are regarding employment equity as reverse discrimination aimed at them indicates a problem with the initial introduction and reception of employment equity in the organisation. This attitude reveals that transformation in the organisation was received with suspicions by employees from non-designated group. To avoid instances of this nature, Thomas and Turpin (2002: 27) suggest that from the beginning, the top management of the organisation should carefully consider how change is introduced in the organisation, and how different racial groups respond to such a change. In cases where change strategies are to be introduced, such a process needs to be managed in a well-structured and predictable manner so that particular groups do not feel marginalised in the process.

Thus, the existence of racism in the organisation could indicate that this approach may have not been properly utilised at the time the change was introduced. However, these remnant racist tendencies could still be effectively eradicated if Amatola Water Board could embark on a meaningful and effective management of inter-racial, inter-cultural, inter-ethnic, inter-gender and inter-class situations. This entails Amatola Water Board embarking on extensive training on diversity management, focusing particularly on interpersonal skills, capacity building, conflict resolution, teamwork and understanding of ethnic and corporate cultures. In addition, consistent diversity education and training sessions, open discussion forums and dialogues on organisational culture, to change it to an inclusive and diversity-valuing one could also be organised. This would help in eliminating both the feelings of superiority and inferiority, and assist in addressing racial and cultural problems. This would not only enhance the understanding of cooperation at Amatola Water Board but also help in improving the organisational effectiveness.

### 4.5.6  Attainment of Numeric Targets

The four respondents in the interviews were of the view that the majority of numerical targets set in the Employment Equity Plan in 2009 have been attained, except in the representation of women in the organisational management structure, particularly at senior and middle management levels.

According to respondents, the majority of managerial positions in the organisation are held by men, except that at one stage the Chief Executive Officer was a woman. The respondents indicated the four senior managerial positions are exclusively occupied by males, except that three of the positions are held by Black males. From a total of 27 middle managers at Amatola Water Board, only 6 are females. The same trend applies to junior managers, where the majority of positions are occupied by males. Thus, there are not more than 10 female employees occupying the positions of Plant Superintendent and Junior Plant Superintendent in more than 35 Water Treatment Plants that Amatola Water Board operated in the Eastern Cape.

According to respondents, the failure to meet the numerical targets for women representation in managerial positions is largely attributed both to poor commitment of executive management to Employment Equity Plan, as well as the difficulty in the recruitment of women in scarce and critical skills. Furthermore, the respondents alleged that not all Directors and managers were involved in the implementation of Employment Equity Plan. Only one senior manager (the Director of Corporate Services) has the executive responsibility to ensure that the plan is implemented, as well as two managers (in Human Resource Department) who have the responsibility to ensure that the Employment Equity Plan is operationally implemented. For effective implementation of Employment Equity Plan, all organisational managers should have the achievement of employment equity targets forming part of their performance plan, to further assist in their attainment. These findings give credence to the research problem of this study that, women representation in management levels at Amatola Water is still invisible, particularly at middle to top management. Furthermore, the findings are in line with the observation made by Kahn and Louw (2011: 677) that, women are still experiencing discrimination and under-representation at workplace and the overwhelming majority of managerial positions are still occupied by men, with marginal women occupying managerial positions.

## 4.6. RECORDS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EMPLOYMENT EQUITY PLAN AT AMATOLA WATER BOARD

In the middle management level, only three Black female employees have been recruited into the organisation for the past three years as compared to seven Black male employees that were recruited in the same period.

Essentially, this was the only significant recruitment for Black female employees at management level. In the level of skilled technical and academically qualified workers, junior management, supervisors, foreman and superintendents, only three employees have been recruited over the past three years at an average of one employee per year. Thus, a deficit of nine employees has to be recruited over the next two years if numeric targets set in 2009 are to be achieved. Effectively, there are only six Black female employees that have been recruited at Amatola Water Board for managerial positions in the past three years, compared to sixty-seven Black male managers that have been recruited over the same period. Clearly, these figures indicate that there is a serious problem regarding the recruitment of female employees for managerial positions at Amatola Water Board.

## 4.7. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following constraints complicated the gathering of the data for the study:

- The revised Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University submission dates have imposed serious time constraints for the study. Very limited time was available for the collection of data and its subsequent analysis. As a result, only 86% of the questionnaires were returned. The researcher did not have time to wait for all the questionnaires to be returned. However, 86% was rather a good response rate for the validity and reliability of the findings of the study.

- Unskilled labour was excluded from the empirical survey as this group of employees does not have access to computers. This exclusion meant that the views from this group could not be considered for this study. However, their exclusion from the study could not compromise the validity and reliability of the findings as these employees fall outside the categories of employees that the Employment Equity Plan targeted.

- Four respondents failed to answer certain statements of the questionnaire. This threatened to reduce the total number of responses received per statement in the questionnaire. This forced the researcher to telephonically contact the respondent to correct and complete their responses on the questionnaires or return the questionnaire back to the respondent with the email that politely reminded the respondent about the left-out statements.

- The recording device malfunctioned in the middle of an interview process, forcing the researcher to resort to intensive note taking. This limited the amount of data that the researcher captured during the interviews, important information could have been missed in the process. However, the validity and reliability of the findings of the study were not compromised as four respondents were interviewed and the interviews were complemented by the empirical survey.

- Access to some organisational information was at times restricted as some officials were uncooperative and reluctant to release information without prior approval from their superiors, even in cases where this was not necessary. Considering the time constraints for the study, this made access to information a difficult and cumbersome process, which subsequently restricted researcher's access to some information that was relevant for the study. This created some gaps in the information collected; however most of these gaps were later filled during interviews.

## 4.8. CHALLENGES OF THE STUDY

In addition to the limitations identified above, the following challenges were also encountered during the study:

- Lack of co-operation by some of the selected respondents in returning the completed questionnaire by the stipulated deadline.
- Appointments for interviews were repeatedly postponed due to commitments of the participants and the researcher has to re-arrange the appointments

## 4.9. IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

On the basis of the experience gathered in this study, a number of recommendations can be suggested concerning future research in this field. Additional research on the field will complement the findings and knowledge gained from this study.

- The study was confined to an organisation that is operating as an independent Water Board, providing a bulk water services to the Eastern Cape Province. Similar studies could be conducted in other Water Boards

situated in other provinces to compare such data with the results obtained from this study.

- Allegations of racism in the organisation could provide a ground for further research on the matter.
- Appropriate training and development interventions that can alleviate challenges around the recruitment of women into managerial positions could be further investigated.

## 4.10. CONCLUSION

Generally, the findings from the empirical study corroborate the problem statement of this study. The findings have clearly indicated that female employees are not adequately represented at middle and senior management levels at Amatola Water Board. The findings of the empirical study also support the observations made in the literature review regarding the implementation of employment equity. Communication of the employment equity process, the commitment of management to the employment equity process, and the management of diversity in the organisation have emerged strongly from the empirical study as areas that mostly need attention at Amatola Water Board.

The two data collection instruments used in the study supplemented each other. Thus, the gaps encountered in the empirical survey were filled by the data collected from interviews. Essentially, there was some uniformity in most of the results obtained from the empirical study. Although there were some minor contradictions or mixed responses in the survey results, which made it difficult to reach a conclusive argument, overall, the results allowed for the conclusions to be made in almost all the themes. Actually, these contradictions were not significant to compromise the validity and reliability of the results. The following chapter wraps up the discussion of this study by providing conclusions reached in relation to empirical findings, suggestions and recommendations are espoused.

# CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 5.1. INTRODUCTION

It emerged from the empirical findings of this study that the implementation of Employment Equity Plan at Amatola Water Board is still a challenge. The findings of this study revealed that the majority of management positions are still occupied by males compared to their female counterparts, who are less visible in management positions. Thus, men still dominate the top and senior managerial positions in the organisation. This demonstrates that the corporate advancement of South African women continue to be a challenge as women are still experiencing under-representation in management positions.

This chapter starts by providing a summary of the empirical findings and thereafter, recommendations based on the gaps identified by the empirical research are espoused. At the end of the chapter, final conclusions on the findings of the research are provided.

## 5.2. SUMMARY ON THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

### 5.2.1. Communication

The findings of the empirical study have indicated that Amatola Water Board has managed to timeously submit the Employment Equity Plan Report to the Department of Labour for the past three years. However, the study has also revealed that communication on employment equity is not effective in the organisation, as respondents in the study have indicated dissatisfaction with the way the information is communicated. The information on Employment Equity Plan is not displayed at workplaces and no updates on Employment Equity Plan are distributed to employees despite such a requirement in the Employment Equity Act. As a result, the majority of employees in the organisation do not know or updated about the Employment Equity Plan.

### 5.2.2. Recruitment and Selection

The findings of the empirical study revealed that recruitment and selection policies and practices implemented by Amatola Water Board are in line with Employment Equity Plan. They are aimed at attaining the numerical targets outlined in the Employment Equity Plan 2009-2014. However, the recruitment processes are frustrated by the organisation's inability to recruit sufficient women for managerial positions. The study has also revealed that for the past three years, the organisation has only managed to recruit only six Black female employees for managerial positions as compared to sixty-seven Black male managers that it has recruited over the same period.

### 5.2.3. Training and Development

The majority of respondents in the survey indicated their dissatisfaction with training and development opportunities offered by Amatola Water Board. Management is perceived to be unsupportive of the training and development of employees. Training provided is perceived to be inadequate, ineffective and irrelevant to performance development plans of employees.

### 5.2.4. Organisational Culture

A significant number of respondents have indicated their satisfaction with the jobs they perform in the organisation. They felt that their jobs provide them with opportunities to grow and develop. They claimed that the organisation provides them with right equipment and tools to perform their jobs. They also believe that they have the necessary skills and abilities required by their jobs. Despite the overall perception that the organisational culture prevailing at Amatola Water is conducive, the working conditions at some Water Treatment Works are not safe and secure for women employees. The findings also revealed that some male managers and supervisors still harbour gender stereotypes that disadvantaged the recruitment of women into the organisation.

### 5.2.5. Diversity Management

Although a significant number of respondents believe that Amatola Water Board values workforce diversity and non-racialism, a considerable number of respondents are of the opinion that racism and discrimination is subtly practised by certain individuals in the organisation. Some managers are accused of failing to recognise and capacitate Black managers as they often prefer to delegate White subordinates in acting positions, thus disadvantaging Black employees in developing managerial skills. One Directorate (department) has been singled out in the interviews as the main culprit in practising racial discrimination.

### 5.2.6. Gender Equity

Although a significant number of respondents in the survey indicated that the principle of non-sexism is strongly supported and valued at Amatola Water Board, a considerable number of respondents indicated that the promotion of female employees to managerial positions is not fully encouraged by management. The interviewees have also voiced their dissatisfaction with the number of female employees that the organisation has recruited to managerial positions in the past three years. Few women are occupying managerial positions in the organisation and the majority of managerial positions are occupied by males.

### 5.2.7. Commitment of Management

It emerged from interviews that the commitment of management to employment equity process is doubted and questionable. Employees interviewed are convinced that senior management, including the Executive Board and the Management Committee, are not taking the Employment Equity Plan seriously. They even blamed the lack of Executive and management support to the employment equity process as the cause of the collapse of the Employment Equity and Skills Development Committee.

### 5.2.8. Attainment of Numeric Targets

The findings from the interviews revealed that numeric targets set for the recruitment of Black male employees to managerial positions have been attained. However, none of such success could be claimed for Black female employees.

Numeric targets for representation of women in management have been attained mainly in the middle management level. No numeric targets for women representation have been attained in senior management level. In all other levels, no numeric targets have been attained for women. However, on a positive note, in 2010/2011 financial year, the organisation was led by a Black female Chief Executive Officer, but unfortunately resigned at the end of 2011.

## 5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations can be made:

### 5.3.1. Communication

To improve communication on employment equity, frequent updates must be provided to employees. This can be done by displaying the information on employment equity in the notice boards at work places, as well as in the intranet. Regular staff briefings should be organised by the Employment Equity and Skills Development Committee to provide information and updates on employment equity to all employees.

### 5.3.2. Recruitment and Selection

The role of Employment Equity and Skills Development Committee in recruitment and selection need to be enhanced by involving them in the drafting of advertisements by Departments or Sections. This will ensure that advertisements released by the organisation do not exclude applicants from designated groups and are always in line with employment equity principles.

### 5.3.3. Training and Development

Training programmes need to be reviewed and aligned with performance development plans of individual employees, and must be informed by individual employee's training needs. All employee performance development plans must be in line with the organisational Employment Equity Plan.

### 5.3.4. Diversity Management

To deal with subtle racism, diversity management training should be organised for managers. In this regard, the training should largely focus on interpersonal skills, conflict resolution, team work, understanding and effective management of inter-ethnic, inter-racial, inter-gender and inter-cultural situations. The organisation has to put in place a system that would be able to detect veiled racist practices and gender stereotypes. In this regard, random surveys aimed at detecting racism and gender stereotypes could be organised. Culprits identified have to be subjected to disciplinary proceedings, as at this time of democracy, Amatola Water Board cannot afford to be associated with the scourge of racism. The issue of racism in the organisation needs to be attended urgently before it escalates into serious conflicts and confrontations.

### 5.3.5. Gender Equity

Robust and effective strategies for the recruitment of women into managerial positions have to be devised. Training and development policies and strategies have to be designed to achieve gender representation in management level. Promotion, mentoring and coaching need to be explored as interventions that can assist in attaining gender equity in the organisation.

### 5.3.6. Commitment of Management

The Executive Board and the Management Committee need to treat employment equity as an issue that demands their serious attention and support. A Member of the Executive Board and an additional Member of the Management Committee need to be deployed to serve on the Employment Equity and Skills Development Committee to give it the much-needed impact and moral support. Financial resources need to be made available for this committee so that it could be able to organise workshops and visit the various organisational work centres to brief and update on Employment Equity Plan.

### 5.3.7. Attainment of Numeric Targets

The current organisational Employment Equity Plan needs to be reviewed, considering the massive growth that the organisation has experienced in the past three years. The existing numeric targets need to be revised and new targets identified, based on the current growth strategies.

## 5.4. FINAL CONCLUSION

The drafting and the adoption of Employment Equity Plan at Amatola Water Board was a necessary step to ensure that the demographics of the country are reflected in the organisational workforce profile. However, this study has found that the implementation of Employment Equity Plan has been not without challenges, particularly with regard to the recruitment of women employees to managerial positions, establishing a conducive organisational culture, the management of workplace diversity and the commitment of management to the employment equity process. The findings of the study has given credence to the research problem of this study that women are not yet adequately represented in the management structures at Amatola Water Board. They have brought to the fore that the recruitment of women for managerial positions is the challenge that Amatola Water Board is currently confronted with. Similarly, the study has revealed that gender stereotypes still exist in the minds of few managers. Furthermore, the study has also revealed that Amatola Water Board is still faced with the challenge of removing the few remnant bastions of White Supremacy, who still practise discriminatory and racist practices in the organisation.

It must be noted that, the implementation of Employment Equity Plan is an enormous challenge that involves paradigm shifts, the challenging of stereotypes, and the creation and sustenance of an organisational environment in which people, representing a broad range of diversity, can effectively work together in harmony. Therefore, Amatola Water Board should relentlessly attempt to improve its efforts to implement the plan, but the implementation of the Employment Equity must be in no way result in the lowering and compromising of service standards that the organisation is renowned of.

Thus, the competitive advantage that Amatola Water Board has enjoyed in the water sector should be sustained.  It is believed that the adoption of the recommendations of this study by Amatola Water Board can result in a significant improvement on its current training and development strategies and overall impact of employment equity on the organisation. This will contribute positively towards training and development initiatives, which can ultimately assist in attaining the set numeric targets, particularly for women representation in management, whilst at the same ensuring a sustainable competitive advantage.

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# APPENDIX A                    QUESTIONNAIRE

**SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

The following details are required for statistical purposes and will remain confidential. Please select your answer by placing an X in the appropriate column.

### 1.  REGION

| Head Office | Southern Region | Western Region | Eastern Region | Northern Region |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |

### 2.  WORK PLACE

| Head Office | Nahoon Dam | Sandile Dam | Laing Dam | Kei Road | Port Alfred | Fort Beaufort | Sterkspruit | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | |

**If other, please specify:..................................................................……..**

### 3.  DEPARTMENT

| Operations | Maintenance | HR | Finance | Business Development | P & D | Marketing | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | |

**If other, please specify:..............................................................…….......**

### 4.  POSITION OR DESIGNATION

| Director | Manager | Superintendent | Supervisor | Technician | Artisan | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | |

**If other, please specify:...............................................................……........**

### 5.  RACE

| Black | Coloured | Indian | White |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

### 6.  GENDER

| Male | Female |
|---|---|
| | |

### 7.  YEARS OF SERVICE

| 0-3 | 4-6 | 7- 9 | 10- 13 | 13- 20 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |

## SECTION B: EMPLOYMENT EQUITY

Please complete the following questions by placing an X in the appropriate column.

| No. | Statement | Strongly Agree | Agree | Uncertain | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|-----|-----------|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| 1 | Amatola Water submits its annual Employment Equity Report timeously to the Department of Labour. | | | | | |
| 2 | AW has a formal Employment Equity Plan. | | | | | |
| 3 | I am informed about the AW Employment Equity Plan. | | | | | |
| 4 | Information about the Employment Equity Plan is displayed in the workplace. | | | | | |
| 5 | Constant updates are provided on the Employment Equity processes taking place. | | | | | |
| 6 | Employment Equity issues are communicated in a way that is sensitive to the feelings and concerns of employees. | | | | | |
| 7 | Recruitment and selection policies and processes are aimed at attaining Employment Equity targets. | | | | | |
| 8 | Training and development of employees is widely encouraged by the management. | | | | | |
| 9 | Training and development practices are aimed at equipping and skilling black employees for senior positions. | | | | | |
| 10 | I receive adequate job-relevant training in areas where I require it. | | | | | |
| 11 | Training and development opportunities offered by AW are in line with my performance development plan (PDP). | | | | | |
| 12 | I am satisfied with the training and development opportunities offered to me. | | | | | |
| 13 | My skills and abilities are adequate for the job I do. | | | | | |

| 14 | My job provides me with opportunities to grow and develop. | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15 | I still need more training to perform my job effectively. | | | | | |
| 16 | I am given the right equipment and tools to do my job. | | | | | |
| 17 | AW cares about developing employee competencies for long term carriers, not just for their current jobs. | | | | | |
| 18 | AW strongly values diversity. | | | | | |
| 19 | AW treats people with respect and dignity irrespective of their position, race, gender, etc. | | | | | |
| 20 | At AW everyone is valued and appreciated for who they are irrespective of their position, race, gender, etc. | | | | | |
| 21 | All employees at AW are provided with equal opportunities to career development, training and promotion irrespective of position, race, gender, disability, religion, etc. | | | | | |
| 22 | My manager listens to and values the suggestions of all employees, regardless of position, race, gender, etc. | | | | | |
| 23 | AW promotes a non-racial environment. | | | | | |
| 24 | Racial mistrust and tension is not experienced at my work place. | | | | | |
| 25 | AW's policies are fairly applied to all employees irrespective of their position, race, gender, etc. | | | | | |
| 26 | The management fully promotes the development of female employees for managerial positions. | | | | | |
| 27 | AW strongly values non-sexism. | | | | | |
| 28 | Female employees are adequately represented in AW management levels. | | | | | |

| 29 | I am satisfied with Employment Equity processes and practices that AW has put in place. | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 30 | I am happy with my job at AW. | | | | | |

**General comments and suggestions:**...............................................................

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Thank you.

**APPENDIX B          INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px;">

**<u>PRIOR TO THE INTERVIEW THE RESEARCHER SHOULD</u>:**

Introduces himself and the purpose of the study.

Confirms the confidentiality of the interview.

Confirms the anonymity of the participant.

Obtains the participant's written consent for the interview.

</div>

## SECTION A: EMPLOYMENT EQUITY PROGESS ACHIEVED TO DATE

1. Can you identify any major problems that you have experienced with regard to the implementation of employment equity at AW? (*The researcher should probe for issues besides the setting of numerical targets and their achievement*).
2. How these problems were mitigated?
3. Can you mention any opportunities that the introduction of practices to achieve Employment Equity has afforded AW?
4. Has complying with EE Act created any difficulties for the organisation?
5. Did AW manage to achieve the numerical targets set so far? (*Probe for verifiable details*)

## SECTION B: MANAGEMENT COMMITMENT

1. Who do you think is responsible for driving the EE process at AW? (*The researcher should probe whether this function rests with CEO or divisional director, line management or HR*).
2. Does AW have a group that monitors the implementation of Employment Equity? (*Probe for employee involvement and top management commitment*).
3. Are line managers assessed for achieving employment equity numerical targets?
4. Are they rewarded for achieving these numerical targets?

**SECTION C: CONSULATION AND COMMUNICATION**

1. What is the involvement of the trade union in driving the EE process? *(The researcher should probe for issues beyond policy formulation, but for issues such as monitoring, communication and raising EE issues with management).*

2. How is the EE process communicated to employees? (*Probe for top management and line management's involvement in communication, the involvement of employee representatives, and the use of intranet, memos, newsletters, face to face communication, forums, meetings with trade unions, etc.).*

**SECTION D: EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES**

1. How does AW mainly recruit new employees? *(Probe for media advertising, the use of recruitment agencies, internal recruitment, word-of-mouth recruitment, head-hunting, recruitment at universities).*

2. How is staff selection undertaken? (*Probe for involvement of line managers, diverse panel interviews).*

3. Do selection practices make provision for identifying potential in designated employees? (*Probe for what is looked for*).

4. What is the training and development philosophy of the AW for Black employees? (*Probe for its effectiveness and evaluation)*

5. Does AW have a mentoring programme? (*Probe for its composition and its system of operation)*

**SECTION E: MEASURES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

1. Is the physical structure or work environment of AW workplaces accessible to people with disabilities?

2. Have any special measures been introduced for people with disabilities? (*Probe for measures regarding recruitment).*

**SECTION F: ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE**

1. Has AW experienced the 'poaching' of Black employees?
2. Is there any overt or covert sabotage of the EE process at AW?