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# “THINK MANAGER, THINK MALE: GENDER EQUALITY – THE LESS ACHIEVED PROMISES OF MODERNITY”. A CASE OF THE NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

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## ABSTRACT

For several decades, numerous legal, regulatory and social mechanisms have been adopted to accelerate the progression of women in higher managerial levels of organisations worldwide. In South African, there is a plethora of policies and practices related to gender equity. However, the equality of men and women in the workplace and shattering the glass ceiling is still a myth worldwide including in South Africa.

The article will investigate the barriers that hinder women from qualifying and attaining senior management positions and underlying factors and variables that relate to promotion of women into managerial positions in the National Department of Human Settlements in South Africa. The article used both interviews and questionnaires to collect empirical data.

The results of the study also show that there are significant inroads that have been made in the upward mobility of women but not significant enough to match their male counterparts in all levels of management. The article will also make recommendations to the department as to how they can improve the existing situation.

**KEYWORDS:** gender equality, gender mainstreaming, gender institutionalisation, employment equity, affirmative action

## INTRODUCTION

Despite the international and national commitments of countries towards women's rights and gender equality, as well as many committed Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), equality is a myth in many instances. Although the most obvious gender discrimination practises have been neutralised or eliminated, gender discrimination in more subtle forms is generally not detected, is naturalised and often corresponds to unintentional elements of everyday life or is the unintended effect of usual/desirable practices in organisations (Benschop, Mills and

Tienari, 2012; Lee-Gosselin, Briere and Ann, 2013). One of the subtle forms of discrimination is related to the promotion of women in higher echelons of management which is the focus of this article. Women make a huge number of junior managers in the South African public service, but as the ladder goes higher, there are fewer women as compared to men in high level managerial positions such as Deputy Director General and Director General. This is supported by Lee-Gosselin et al (2013) who purport that under-representation persists at higher organisational levels in most institutions. This is indeed the case in the National Department of Human Settlements in South Africa as this fact will be highlighted later in this article.

Furthermore, in South Africa, as Chiloane-Tsoka (2010) puts it “the new political dispensation in South Africa brought along employment equity, national policy frameworks for women emancipation, gender equality and affirmative action policies in businesses”. In addition, Booysen and Nkomo (2010) state that the South African context is unique due to the political and social history of the country. The authors say that although there has been aggressive employment equity legislation, there is still a persistent race and gender hierarchy in the South African labour force whereby women are still underrepresented in terms of their numbers in managerial positions.

In the private sector, the Business Women’s Association (2012) in their South African Women Leadership Census reported that women make up 52% of the South African population yet only 21, 4% make up all types of executive management. The figure is significant as it demonstrates growth from the 2010 study whereby women accounted for 18.1% of executive management in business. In the Grant Thornton International Business Report (2012), South Africa was ranked 12th out of forty countries that were researched to ascertain the level of women representation at senior management in the private sector.

In the public sector, the Ernst and Young Worldwide Index of Women as Public Sector Leaders (2012) ranked South Africa as ranked number 4 with 34% of women in public sector as leaders) out of the twenty G20 countries studied. Legislation that supports the advancement of women is existent and has been found to be a catalyst in promoting women to senior management. However, legislation is an important tool for transformation but it needs proper application, commitment and working systems to support it. According to the authors, the efforts for the promotion of women to managerial positions in both private and public sector in South Africa is existent, however this is not enough because as per the data from Statistics South Africa (2013), demographically, women represent 52% of the population, but when it comes to occupation of managerial positions, the representation of women leaves much to be desired. This situation is not only predominant in South Africa, but the pattern and trend is also evident in other countries as it will be discussed later in this article.

Therefore, this article seeks to establish the barriers which hinder womens’ promotion to top management posts in the public sector in particular. The study will focus on the Department of Human Settlement as a case study.

## BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Before 1994, in South Africa women were not empowered to work outside of the traditionally female jobs let alone hold managerial positions (Littrell and Nkomo, 2005). The advent of the new democracy brought about an introduction of legislation that was seeking to empower previously disadvantaged individuals and groups. Women were identified amongst the others, as a priority for advancement and empowerment (Chiloane-Tsoka: 2010). In a study conducted by the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) in 2007 on the Affirmation of women in the public service, they found that in 1996 only 10.4% of women held senior management positions whilst males held 89.6% (Mello and Phago 2007). Seven years later in 2003, males were holding 74, 4% of managerial positions. In 2013, the overall picture within the public service and administration was 28% representation of females at top management and a 40% showing at senior management levels (DPSA: 2013).

In addition, according to the Department of Public Service and Administration (2013) there is an inability for the various departments within the public service to promote women into managerial positions to match their male counterparts. In addition, the stereotype of the male boss is perpetuated as the statistics show a huge margin between males and females as managers (Booysens and Nkomo 2010). Therefore, this existing situation has necessitated a study which will investigate the underlying factors which prevent the upward mobility of females into management positions in the National Department of Human Settlements. This study will be in a form of a case study for this department. The study will also make recommendations on how the present situation at the National Department of Human Settlements can be improved.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

### Quantitative approach

This article has used a mixed method approach which involves both qualitative and quantitative approaches. According to Babbie and Mouton (2013), quantitative approach puts emphasis on the quantification of constructs; the quantitative researcher believes that the best way of measuring properties of a phenomenon is through assigning numbers to the perceived qualities of things. The quantitative approach is also compatible in producing more explicit analysis. Other advantages of quantitative data include the use of numbers which simplifies and facilitates comparison, aggregates and summaries. In addition, (Welman, Kruger and Mitchell 2010) define the quantitative research approach as using measurement and various scales, such as numbers and statistics, to compare and analyse different variables of social reality. The quantitative research technique measures objective facts and quantifies the phenomenon under study. Numbers, statistics and structures are used to simplify quantification. This aids the researcher to remain an invisible participant, able to unambiguously contrast, accumulate and condense the data under study in order to attain objectivity, independence and value-free conclusions (Sarantakos (2005). In this article, self-administered questionnaires were used to solicit information related to the barrier in the promotion of women in the department, factors that prohibit women from being promoted to senior management posts. The results of the data

collected will be discussed later in the article.

### **Qualitative approach**

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010), qualitative research studies typically serve one or more of the following purposes: 1) Description whereby they can reveal the nature of certain situations, settings, processes, relationships, systems or people; 2) Interpretation whereby they enable the researcher to gain new insights about a particular phenomenon, develop new concepts or theoretical perspectives about the phenomenon and/or discover the problems that exists within the phenomenon; 3) Verification which allows the researcher to test the validity of certain assumptions, claims, theories or generalisations within real world contexts; 4) Evaluation which provides a researcher with a means to judge the effectiveness of particular policies, practices or innovations. Through the use of face-to-face interviews of 5 key respondents within the department, the quantitative data collected satisfied the four purposes of qualitative as discussed above. These aspects will be discussed in details in the results section.

### **Case study approach**

Babbie and Mouton (2013) define a case study as an intensive investigation of a single unit involving multiple variables within that unit. In this case, the study investigated the factors that hinder women's progress to senior positions, the barriers that exist, and the dynamics influencing the workplace differences in promotion opportunities between female and male employees.

For the purposes of this study, the case study method was chosen as the most appropriate model to address the research problem. According to Leedy and Armrod (2010 and Sarantakos (2005) the case study method is highly suitable to be utilised in this study in order to identify patterns and make comparisons, to compare trends to theoretical propositions and to compare observations made in different contexts. Babbie and Mouton (2013), pattern matching and explanation building in the case study method can enhance the validity of the study. The case study is also ideal in studies that are qualitative in nature and aim to provide an in-depth description of a small number, usually less than fifty (Mouton and Babbie 2013). The article also used extensive literature review which forms part of the conceptual framework which is discussed in detail later in the article.

### **The unit of analysis: The National Department of Human Settlements in South Africa**

In the past five years (2009 – 2014) the Department of Human settlements has undergone two restructuring exercises which were meant to improve efficiency and the overall delivery model of the organisation. Each of the restructuring exercises was characterised by an expansion in the numbers of employees and creation of new roles and responsibilities. This necessitated that new employees to be recruited at levels of operation and selection of the best possible candidates to newly created management positions (Department of Human Settlements 2013).

The Department of Human Settlements operates within an environment where it is expected to comply with the relevant labour legislation and all affirming legislation like the Employment

Equity Act 55 of 1998, the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination act 4 of 2000 as a government department. The Department is expected to meet the national targets of ensuring representation of all previously disadvantaged groups in the workplace and these should be clearly communicated and attempts made to meet them (DPSA: 2013). Therefore, this study will determine if the department has reached the national targets as determined by various legislation in South Africa.

### **Conceptual framework: the existence of the glass ceiling**

The glass ceiling is defined by Forbes, Fuqua & Cangemi (no date) as a term that was coined by the Wall Street Journal in 1986 to describe the invisible barriers that existed as women approached the top of the corporate hierarchy. The reason it is called a glass ceiling is because the barriers or obstacles exist but they are not formally institutionalised or communicated within the organisation. Furthermore, the glass ceiling seemed to be gender biased as it affected women in the main.

Cotter, Hermsen, Ovadia, and Vanneman (2001) quote the definition of the glass ceiling from the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission as the “artificial barriers to the advancement of all women and minority men into management and decision making positions”. Gorman and Kmec (2009) define the glass ceiling

*“as a particular pattern of gender disparity in upward mobility through hierarchical levels of an organization. In this pattern, women are selected into top positions in the organization—positions that involve responsibility for long-term policy and strategy—at a rate distinctly lower than that of men. Moreover, the relative rate at which employers promote women into such policymaking positions, compared to that of men, is lower than the relative rate at which employers hire women into entry-level positions on ladders leading to the top”.*

### **International picture of gender equality**

Internationally, women do not fare any better than South African women as Catalyst (2011) found that 47% of the total labour force in Canada were women. However, women only comprised 35% of all management and 22% of senior management.

In other developing economies like Argentina, Israel and Malaysia there has been a strong move in the last couple of years to strengthen the role of women in the workplace through enacting legislation that supports women in the workplace and prevents unfair discrimination (Hurn 2013).

Germany, which has the lowest number of females in management in all of Europe, has touted introducing quotas to stimulate the representation of women into management as there are barriers which result in the slow rate of advancement of women (Sandberg: 2013). The role of legislation cannot be overlooked as enabling legislation has been shown to work for countries like Denmark and Sweden where quotas for the advancement of women were set in the 1970s (Hurn 2013). However, in spite of the existence of legislation and possible penalties for non-compliance women are not necessarily advancing as quickly or reaching those quotas as expected (Pellegrino, D’Amato & Weisberg (2011).

Davidson and Burke (2004) say that according to research conducted by the Norway Centre for Gender Equality; it will take 62 years to achieve gender equality in senior management and 115 years for equality to be reached at board level. These projections are based on the current rate at which women are promoted and prevailing circumstances in most organisations. They further argue that countries and companies should care about the empowerment of women as there has been clear evidence that there is a link between closing the gender gap and higher economic performance in various countries like Japan and Latin America.

According to Tlaiss and Kauser (2010) in Middle Eastern Asia countries, the participation of females is the lowest with less than 33% of the workforce being female with female representation at the top level being only 2%. In European countries like France, 47% of the total labour force are women and only 17.2% are female and it is noted that on average women receive 32% less than their male counterparts (Evans 2010).

In Germany, less than 10% of women hold management and just 2.2% hold senior management positions (Sandberg : 2013).

The Global Gender Gap report measures how well countries are doing in removing obstacles that hold women back (Brand & Laiho (2013). The Scandinavian countries have with Iceland holding top spot being rated 2013 best countries in the Global Gender gap report by the World Economic forum. This is a spot Iceland has held for five years in a row. Undeniably progress has been made but not to the desired levels. According to the Grant Thornton International Business report (2012) Scandinavian countries have acted as trailblazers in promoting women to senior management but still only 23% hold management positions. There have to be reasons behind this lacklustre scenario in spite of enabling conditions which will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

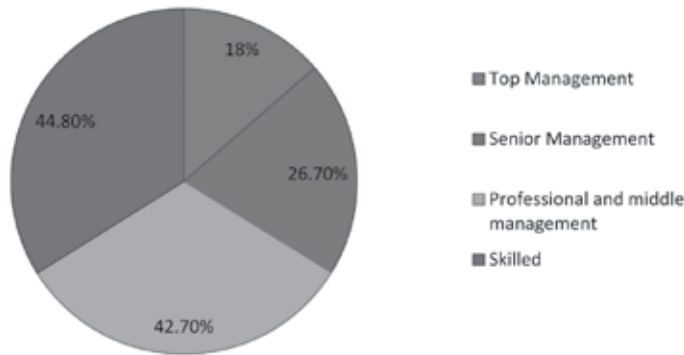
### **The existence of the glass ceiling in South Africa**

It is the view of the researchers that there are barriers which exist that directly and indirectly impede the advancement of women into senior positions in the organisation under study. This view is supported by literature which purports that there are obstacles or barriers which stand in the way of women from achieving success in climbing the corporate ladder all the way to the top, the proverbial "glass ceiling". Murray (2010) says that "While men may be able to fast track their way to the top, women are more likely to have their experience scrutinized and diminished, and a woman without sufficient experience is unlikely to be credible". The statement seems to capture the essence of the glass ceiling phenomenon which is played out in both the private and public sectors whereby women are unable to access the highest echelons of management simply because they are women.

In a study conducted by Landelahni recruitment services in South Africa in 2010, they found that at the rate at which women are earning top management positions which averages at 5%, it will take 75 years to reach parity between males and women (Landelahni 2010). Figure 1 depicts the picture of the present situation in both private and public sectors in South Africa.



**FIGURE 1: Female representation across Public and Private Sectors**



Source: Landelahni Recruitment Services: November 2010

Figure indicates that in both the private and public sector, women do not occupy more than 50% of managerial posts although it is clear that 44.80% of the workforce in both private and public sector is women. 42.70% of women are at professional and middle management; 26.70% are at senior management whilst only 18% are at the top management. This figure clearly shows that as the management echelons grow higher, the number of women decreases. Hence, this study seeks to determine the barriers that hinder women to be promoted to managerial positions although they are fairly skilled as it is depicted in figure 1. This figure is a clear sign that there is a glass ceiling which women have to break before they can be promoted to senior management posts.

In addition, the Employment Equity Act (EEA) of 1995 was brought about a year after South Africa's new democracy. The major aim of the Act is to achieve equity in the workplace for all designated groups through redress and to eliminate unfair discrimination in the workplace. The designated groups are women, Africans and people with disabilities. The Act gives broad guidelines on how employees should ensure a representative workforce and also to report on progress made with the set targets of representativeness of the designated groups. The set targets for employment equity compliance are 40 % women in the workforce, 4% people with disabilities and 60% Africans. However; the EEA act does not stipulate the percentages for women in management (Department of Labour: 2010).

This has led to the gazetting of the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill in 2013 as legislation that deals directly with women issues in the workplace. The Bill seeks to establish a legislative framework for the empowerment of women and to ensure the appointment and representation of women into decision making positions. Furthermore, the bill stipulates that at least 50% representation of women should be achieved and plans should be put in place to achieve this by both private and public entities (Department of Labour, 2010). However, due to the existence of the glass ceiling, 50% of women representation is still not achieved in South Africa.

### Discussion of the results: questionnaires

The Department of Human Settlements has the following number of managers as depicted in Table 1.

**TABLE 1: Statistics for managers at the Department of Human Settlements**

JOB TITLE	NUMBER	SALARY LEVELS
Director General	1	16
Deputy Director –General	6	15
Chief Directors	12	14
Directors	48	13
<b>Totals</b>	67	

The questionnaires were emailed to 30 managers within the Department of Human Settlements and 14 were received back which is 46.66% return rate which is satisfactory. A total of 19 responses were received in the form of 14 self-administered questionnaires and 5 interviews. The section below discusses the results of the data collected through the questionnaires.

#### Barriers to women advancement

*Question: Do you think that there are barriers to advancement of women into management positions?*

**TABLE 2: Are there barriers to women advancement**

Question 6	Number of responses	% of responses	Male	% of responses	Female	% of responses
Yes	8	58	4	30	4	30
No	5	36	2	13	3	21
Not sure	1	6	-	-	1	6
<b>Totals</b>	14	100	6	43	8	57
<b>Totals</b>	67					

58 % of the respondents indicated that there are barriers to the advancement of women into management positions while 36% indicated that there are no barriers. The remaining 6% was not sure where there are barriers or not to women advancement. There was a 50 -50 split between female and male respondents who said there are barriers.

*Question: List the following according to barriers which you think are most prevalent (5 highest and 1 lowest)*

The respondents who indicated that there are barriers to women advancement had to indicate the barriers which they thought were more prevalent. Further to that they were requested to rank the barriers with five being the highest ranking and one the lowest ranked barrier. In the table below, the respondents ranking are listed.

**TABLE 3: Ranking of barriers (from highest to lowest)**

Respondent	Number of responses	% of responses	Male	% of responses	% of responses
1	4	3	4	4	4
2	2	2	5	3	3
3	3	5	3	3	3
4	1	3	3	1	1
5	2	3	3	1	4
10	3	4	3	1	2
12	3	3	3	3	4
14	3	2	4	1	1
Mean	2.65	3.1	3.5	2.17	2.75
Standard deviation	0.91	0.99	0.75	1.24	1.28
Variance	0.83	0.98	0.57	1.55	1.64

On average the respondents rated organisational culture below three but above two which means that this particular barrier is rated as being fairly low. Therefore as much as organisational culture is a contributing factor it is not a highly rated barrier. The second listed barrier which is lack of management support was rated quite high by the respondents and had the second highest average after the third listed barrier which is lack of recognition. The lack of recognition was linked to lack of management support, as when managers recognise the good job performed by an individual one of the ways of recognising performance is promoting an individual to a higher position.

Educational qualifications were rated very low as a barrier with half of the respondents rating it very low, mainly because they cited that women were highly qualified and in some instance better qualified than their male counterparts. The issue of ambition rated better than organisational culture as the respondents cited that women had different ambitions than eventually occupying management positions. There was deviation identified between the mean and the responses provided however the deviation seemed to support that all respondents agreed that there were barriers, some higher than others.

#### **Factors that hinder promotion of women**

During the data collection, the following factors were identified as hindering the promotion of women to senior management promotions: Implementation of legislation, promotion opportunities for women, existence of target groups for promotion (which will focus on women in this case) and top management support. The results for each factor are discussed below:

*Question: Does your organisation have policies on employment equity and affirmative action?*

**TABLE 4: Policies on employment equity and affirmative action**

Question 1	Number of responses	% of responses	Male	%	Female	%
Yes	13	93	6	43	4	30
No	1	7	0		1	7
Totals	14	100	6	43	8	57

93% of the respondents agreed that there are policies on employment equity and affirmative action. The other 7% indicated in their response that there are no employment equity and affirmative action policies in the department. Further, to this 50% of females agreed that there were policies while 43% of males agreed with the question.

*Question 2: To what extent are these policies implemented?*

**TABLE 5: Extent of policy implementation**

Question 2	Number of responses	% of responses	Male	%	Female	%
No implementation	2	14	2	14	-	
Partial implementation	10	72	4	29	6	43
Not sure/Neutral	2	14	-		2	14
Total implementation	-	-	-		-	
Totals	14	100	6	43	8	57

The majority who indicated that there is partial implementation further highlighted that the partial implementation was due to the following:

- A lack of understanding on how to implement the policies
- Lack of incentives for implementation of the policies and punitive measures for non implementation
- Implementation was only for compliance with statistical targets

*Question: Have there been opportunities for promotion in the past five years?*

**TABLE 6: Promotion opportunities**

Question 3	Number of responses	% of responses	Male	%	Female	%
Yes	9	64	4	29	5	36
No	5	36	2	14	3	21
Totals	14	100	6	43	8	57

Nine respondents said there had been promotion opportunities in the past five years while five said there were none. Five females said there were opportunities against the four males who agreed. Five respondents said there had not been opportunities for promotion. Three females

and two males said there were none.

*Question: Were there any targeted groups for these promotions i.e. women or previously disadvantaged groups?*

**TABLE 7: Target groups for promotion**

Question 4	Number of responses	% of responses	Male	%	Female	%
<b>Yes</b>	3	21	-	-	3	21
<b>No</b>	11	79	6	43	5	36
<b>Totals</b>	14	100	6	43	8	57

The respondents (79%) indicated that there was no top management support for the promotion of women into management positions. 21% said there was top management support for women into management positions. More males (43%) than women (36%) said there was no management support.

*Question: Does top management publicly declare support for upward advancement of women?*

**TABLE 8: Top management support**

Question 5	Number of responses	% of responses	Male	%	Female	%
<b>Yes</b>	5	36	3	21.5	2	14
<b>No</b>	9	64	3	21.5	6	43
<b>Totals</b>	14	100	6	43	8	57

Respondents cited the ratification of the Employment Equity plan and employment equity forum recommendations by management, top management support and encouragement of females to improve themselves through study aid (bursaries) to afford them an opportunity to apply for top positions. However, these respondents seem to agree that although support exists, more still needs to be done. Respondent seven said that the support is "verbal, but no action taken in as far as I am concerned".

The next section will discuss the interview results.

## DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS: INTERVIEWS

The utilisation of more than one source of data collection is referred to as triangulation in qualitative research. According to Babbie and Mouton (2006:275), triangulation is considered one of the best ways to enhance the validity and reliability in qualitative research.

Five face to face interviews were conducted in addition to the fourteen questionnaire respondents. This was done to improve the results of the study by utilising complementary methods, to corroborate the research findings. The five interviewees were interviewed as they

were viewed as critical to the outcomes of the study. It is important to note that four of the interviewees are Chief Directors except for the one who is a Deputy Director.

*Question: Are you aware of the term glass ceiling and if so how it affects the workplace?*

Four out of the five interviewees were aware of the glass ceiling. They mentioned that due to the glass ceiling, qualified and experienced females exited the organisation due to not being recognised. The respondents indicated that females who left were frustrated but even the ones who remain are also frustrated as they are overlooked for promotions although they are qualified. One of the respondents indicated that the whole concept of a glass ceiling was a fallacy, it did not exist but that the main reason women felt marginalised was due to their own attitudes and inadequacies which made them feel insecure. The respondent went on further to say “there are no barriers, people need to change their attitudes especially women”

The interviewees understood the term of the glass ceiling and understood it to mean stumbling blocks to the advancement of women and said in the public sector it was common for women to reach a point where they cannot progress further due to a lack of buy in from top management, an organisational culture that favours men and political interference in promotions or appointments at senior management positions. Furthermore, the interviewees felt that the legislation that supports women to advance was good only on paper but the application was different. In her personal experience, the boys club and cliques within the organisation were making it difficult for the female manager to perform and advance.

The interviewees understood the concept of the glass ceiling and felt that this is what causes the loss of valuable skills and experienced officials as they leave when they become frustrated by lack of recognition and appointment into higher positions. The interviewees highlighted that males were equally frustrated at not being recognised and promoted but felt that it was especially difficult for females. The issue of political interference was highlighted during the interview as follows “it happens all the time that someone who deserved to be promoted was not promoted due to their gender, political appointments are favoured rather than internal appointments”.

The status quo according to the interviewees is that in most instances males are overrepresented at management levels. This interviewee was also of the opinion that due to the hierarchical structure of the public service, it made it even more difficult for women to ascend to higher positions

*Question: Do you think women reach a point in this organization where they cannot progress further than where they are or find it difficult to progress to management positions?*

Four out of the five interviewees cited that females reach a stage where they can no longer progress within the organisation. One respondent indicated that it was not only females that reached the glass ceiling but males as well and the common denominator is that they leave due to the lack of promotions.

*Question 4: What do you think are the barriers to women advancement into management positions in the workplace?*

Four out of five interviewees indicated that there were barriers in the organisation that prevented women from attaining management positions. One interviewee indicated that there were no barriers. The barriers cited by the interviewees were closely related and were more around management issues and the organisational make up. One interviewee thinks that there are no barriers but that women need to change their attitudes and start taking advantage of the opportunities that are presented to them through favourable legislation and support within the organisation. The interviewee cites the increasing number of women cabinet ministers and company CEOs as an example of how women are encouraged and promoted to higher positions.

The role of labour unions in influencing who gets appointed was highlighted in the interview as a possible impediment to women ascending to senior management positions. Males are seen as a barrier to the females doing what “they are good at doing”. One interviewee thought that if relevant legislation was applied correctly, it would be easier to promote women into management

*Question: Are the policies and/or structures that support advancement of women within the organisation?*

All the interviewees indicated that there were organisational policies that seek to empower women and enable them ascend the ladder within the organisation. However the issue raised was around implementation of the policies. All the interviewees cited the lack of implementation of these policies properly as a major deficiency. Interviewee three said that “there are a lot of good policies that support women but they do not take advantage of this”, while interviewee one indicated “we have legislation that supports such advancement but the application thereof is different. The interviewees used words like “implementation is lacking, not properly followed, poor implementation” to describe that the policies and support structures for women advancement are not implemented as they should be.

The next section will focus on the conclusions of the study from the findings.

## **CONCLUSIONS FROM THE FINDINGS**

The following were main findings from the research conducted through the use of interviews and questionnaires:

- There are employment equity policies and legislation within which the department operates and there is awareness of the purpose of these policies.
- The implementation of employment equity policies is poor, partial and not making an impact or at least not achieving what they have been put in place to achieve. Implementation of these policies was mainly for compliance and for statistical reporting.

- Female managers are definitely underrepresented in the department from the level of senior manager upwards.
- The underlying barriers are internal in the organisation like lack of top management support, organisational culture and lack of recognition. And also external in the form of external influences like the role of labour organisations (unions).
- There is understanding of the glass ceiling and what it represents as an invisible barrier that hinders women from progressing upwards.
- There is a general perception that the glass ceiling exists in the department and women do get to a point where they cannot progress further in the department.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- The department of human settlements should utilise its current structures to filter information on the advancement of women from one level to the other to ensure buy in and commitment at all levels of management or influence
- Each level of decision making can have a role to play in advancing females in the workplace as senior managers can be made champions of the process in their own units with a responsibility to report to top management on how they are supporting the advancement of women.
- Programmes that are meant to empower women especially those aspiring to management or are at the entry level of middle management can be developed for implementation such as mentoring and coaching. Mentorship programme should be developed, where top managers mentor up and coming managers.
- Succession planning strategies can also be put in place and monitored so that they are not a once off exercise but a continuous process of development in order to enhance the women's chances of getting promotions to higher echelons of management within the Department
- Lack of recognition was cited as one of the barriers to advancement of women. Therefore, there should be recognition of women whose performance is exceptional, for example best female performer awards in various sections of the Department.

Although concerted efforts are being made around the world accelerate women managers into high positions through legislation and other corporate governance structures, females have to prove their worth (Rossouw and van Vuuren 2010). This has also been problematic as females appointed to higher positions are viewed as quotas, tokens or affirmative appointments and risk not being taken seriously by their male counterparts.

In conclusion, it is therefore evident that the department needs to fast track women into management positions through a systematic and developmental approach. The approach will include starting at the top with top management understanding why women managers need to be empowered and advanced. Further to that, managers at the top have to be seen as accessible, approachable and committed to the advancement of women. This can be done through a conscious effort to empower women rather than compliance.



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