

**EVALUATION OF THE EMPLOYMENT AND INTEGRATION  
STRATEGIES OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN  
LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

**BY**

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**A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL  
FULFILMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTERS OF  
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (MPA)  
IN THE FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES  
AT THE  
UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO**

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**NOVEMBER 2006**

## **DECLARATION**

I, Sekepe Michael Komana, hereby declare that the mini-dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Masters' Degree in Public Administration at the University of Limpopo is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university.

.....

**SIGNATURE**

.....

**DATE**

## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to my beloved, beautiful wife, Magokga Lucy and children, Mapheto Chantel and Mokgadi Keneiloe for their unconditional love and support throughout my studies, and for the pain and suffering they endured during my studies when I was not there for them when they needed me most. Their love and encouragement meant a lot to me.

To my mother, Mokgadi and father, Lucas; you taught me the right values for prosperity and that nothing is impossible with God; and to my brothers, Marweshe Paul, Mochubi France and Seapo Charles for their moral support since my enrollment at a tertiary institution. I also dedicate my work to the Komana clan for their contribution towards teaching me the values and morals that are crucial to one's existence in society.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I wish to acknowledge

1. God who gave me the courage, hope, talent and strength to persevere;
2. Dr Ushotonane Useh for his supervision throughout the study, for his encouragement and the assistance he rendered; his insightful guidance has made it possible for me to complete my task with ease;
3. Limpopo Department of Agriculture, my employer, who granted me permission to conduct my research; and departmental employees who were very cooperative during data collection. I trust that this learning will benefit all of us;
4. My friends, Phuti Seloba, Phuti Kgomo, Ntshengedzeni Ramovha, Dillo Mashego and Tshepo Magoane and family for their ongoing support and encouragement;
5. Professor DR Thakhathi, Dr Johnny Machabaphala and Dr H Kanyane for their academic support;
6. Dr Laraine C O'Connell for editing this dissertation;
7. Sam Ntuli, Jerry Sigudla and Steve Mosito who assisted with data analysis and interpretation.

## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Discrimination against people with disabilities is evident in the social and economic environment. The categories of disabilities that are mostly affected by discrimination are physical, visual, hearing and mental impairment.

**Aim:** The study was aimed at evaluating the employment and integration strategies of persons with disabilities in the Limpopo Department of Agriculture. This was done by evaluating the recruitment and employment methods of persons with disabilities; investigating the level of participation of persons with disabilities in the departmental activities and by evaluating the accessibility of the work environment.

**Method:** The study was a descriptive, quantitative survey design. It described the perceptions of top management and senior management officials on the integration and employment of persons with disabilities into the mainstream of government activities. It described the available integration strategies and policies in the department as well as the physically accessible structures and environment to persons with disabilities. Out of a total of 33 senior managers that were surveyed in this study, only 18 responded.

**Results:** The study revealed negative attitudes and perceptions in the department towards people with disabilities. Persons with physical impairment seem to be the most easily employed at a higher rate than other categories such as the visually impaired and the deaf, this was mainly influenced by the accessibility of adverts. On the other hand, a significant measure appeared to be in place to redress the imbalances in terms of gender.

**Conclusion:** There was a general agreement that the method of recruitment was discriminatory against visual and hearing-impaired people, and therefore Managers must spearhead transformation and equity in their respective branches/sub-branches.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

The signing of the South Africa Constitution Act 108 of 1996 by former President Nelson Mandela generated a sigh of relief from the most marginalised people, particularly people with disabilities. The inclusion of the equality clause in the Constitution was the pillar upon which would rest the assurance that all citizens of the country, including people with disabilities, would have equal employment opportunities and should participate in the social, economic and political shaping of the country's growth. The government targeted at least 2% of persons with disabilities to be employed in the public service and this could only be achieved if government machineries were committed and prepared to uphold the principle of equal representation in the workplace.

Despite global recognition of the fundamental rights of persons with disabilities, people with disabilities are under-represented at all levels of the public service. Currently the proportion of employees with disabilities stands at 0.5%, with the lowest average reached in the public service and this shows that no progress is being made towards the 2% target. The Cabinet has confirmed that the 2% target for the employment of persons with disabilities remains and that it should be achieved by 31 March 2010. (DPSA Circular, 2006:1).

## **1.2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

South Africa is part of the global village, and has ratified International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Conventions III, that seeks to eliminate discrimination in the workplace regardless of gender, disability and race. In order to realise the objectives of the ILO, the South African government introduced the Constitution Act (1996), the Employment Equity Act (1998) and the Labour Relations Act (1995).

The legislation enshrines equality and places the employment of women and persons with disabilities high on the agenda for the first time in the history of South Africa. The Employment Equity Act (1998) prohibits unfair discrimination on the basis of disability and gender, and seeks to establish affirmative action strategies to address the disadvantaged position of women and people with disabilities. The enshrinement of the rights of people with disabilities with regard to employment and mainstreaming poses a serious challenge to the Limpopo Provincial Government departments as they are expected to align their activities with national transformation policies that seek to address the imbalances created by apartheid policies, by the acknowledgement of disability as a human rights and development issue (Employment Equity Act, 1998:14).

The South Africa Constitution Act (1996) prohibits any discrimination against persons with disabilities. The United Nations issued the United Standard Rules for the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities as well as the World Program of Action Concerning Disabled Persons that deals with the concerns of persons with disabilities to ensure that all signatories of the United Nations subscribe to the above-mentioned documents. South Africa, as a democratic and multi-cultural country, has aligned itself with the United Nations' mission on disability.

When the new government came into power in 1994, it inherited numerous imbalances in policies from the apartheid government and started to declare its obligation to strike a balance based on fair principles of democracy (White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy, 1997:15).

One of the central factors which contributed to the conditions described was the failure of the South African society to recognise the rights of persons with disabilities as equal to those of able-bodied persons. Moreover, policies and practices adopted by the apartheid government not only ignored these rights, but also set up and maintained mechanisms which contributed to further abuse and discrimination.

The situation faced by persons with disabilities in South Africa was characterised by extreme levels of inequality and discrimination. Social, economic and political barriers created conditions of underdevelopment, marginalisation and unequal access to the resources enjoyed by the rest of the population. With the advent of democracy in South Africa, the introduction of the Bill of Rights, the establishment of the Human Rights Commission and the authority of the Constitutional Court, state institutions were created to address past inequalities and to ensure that the rights of all people, including persons with disabilities, were protected (Human Rights, 1997:1).

South Africa had a legacy of systematic discrimination with regard to race, gender and disability that denied access to numerous places and institutions to the majority of South Africans. The Employment Equity Act (1998) was passed to address the imbalances of this legacy and has two main objectives, first, to ensure that workplaces are free of discrimination and, second, to ensure that employers take active steps to promote employment equity (User's Guide, 1999:2).

The presence of transformation policies that address disability matters is proof that the government is determined to ensure the total employment and integration of persons with disabilities into society. The highlight was the establishment of the Office on the Status of Disabled Persons in the Presidency of the country. This is an indication of government's commitment to the integration of persons with disabilities into mainstream society. This was then followed by the establishment of the Office on the Status of Disabled Persons (OSDP) in the Office of the Premier in all Provinces like Limpopo Province, to coordinate and monitor the mainstreaming of persons with disabilities in the government departments. The White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (WPINDS) is a step towards changing attitudes towards persons with disabilities.

The WPINDS is meant to be adopted by all spheres of government i.e. national, provincial and local government and therefore encourages non-discrimination and the employment of persons with disabilities at all levels. Government departments are expected to formulate regulations that will guide public officials to apply public service mandates effectively. The government has legislation in place that promotes equality in the workplace. It is against this background that this research was undertaken.

The researcher's focus was on the evaluation of employment and integration strategies of persons with disabilities in the Limpopo Department of Agriculture. The researcher also identified the barriers that impact on the employment and integration of persons with disabilities. Tables 1 and 2 below show the overall departmental workforce profile and the progress made in the employment of people with disabilities

**1.2.1 TABLE 1: DEPARTMENTAL WORKFORCE PROFILE  
(INCLUDING EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES) AS IN  
AUGUST 2006**

Occupational Categories	August 2006								Total
	African		Asian		Coloured		White		
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Provincial Legislature	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Head of Department	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
General Manager	2	4	0	1	0	0	0	1	8
Senior Manager	9	14	1	1	0	0	0	2	27
Manager	36	67	0	0	0	0	3	11	117
Deputy Manager	63	112	0	1	1	0	3	16	196
Junior Management	263	831	0	0	0	0	12	22	1128
Low Level Supervision	1398	2125	0	0	0	1	4	1	3529
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1772</b>	<b>3154</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>5007</b>

Table 1 above shows the workforce profile of all employees in the department, including employees with disabilities.

**1.2.2 TABLE 2: DEPARTMENTAL WORKFORCE PROFILE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AS IN AUGUST 2006**

Occupational Categories	August 2006								Total
	African		Asian		Coloured		White		
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Provincial Legislature	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Head of Department	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
General Manager	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Senior Manager	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Manager	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Deputy Manager	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Junior Management	3	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	16
Low-level Supervision	9	23	0	0	0	0	0	0	32
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>54</b>

Table 2 shows the total number of employees with disabilities in the department. The department currently has two senior management employees with disabilities. At middle management level the department has one manager and two female deputy managers. More males are employed as can be seen from the higher numbers in junior management and low-level supervision. The table shows an increase only at the lower level, at which it is highly unlikely that employees can have an impact on decisions. Following further analysis it was also observed that employees at low-level supervision had been employed prior to the new dispensation (1994). It shows that there is a great need to accelerate the employment of people with disabilities in decision-making positions as they can also contribute to the economic growth of the country.

### **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

In South Africa, the White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy was introduced in 1997 by the Government of the day to address disability issues. Disability was historically regarded as a predominantly health and welfare issue and responsibility for the 'caring' for the disabled thus generally fell on civil society. Non-disabled people, who provided services to persons with disabilities, usually controlled the organisations. The aim was usually to provide treatment or to create alternatives to begging or 'hiding away' (WPINDS, 1997:9).

According to the WPINDS (1997), social attitudes, which emanated from the perception of disability as a health and welfare issue, had invaded all areas of society. The result was that persons with disabilities and their families had been isolated from their communities and mainstream activities. Dependency on state assistance had disempowered persons with disabilities and seriously reduced their capacity and confidence to interact on an equal level with other people.

Despite the introduction of the WPINDS which sought to fast-track the integration and mainstreaming of disability activities in the workplace, there is still a level of alienation of persons with disabilities. It was the intention of the researcher to evaluate the integration of persons with disabilities in the workplace with special reference to the Limpopo Department of Agriculture. There were attempts to employ persons with disabilities in the Province; however, there were no clear and defined strategies. Very little was also done about the employment of those with visual and/or hearing impairment. This was observed over the years by the researcher who has a physical disability and had been involved in issues involving persons with disabilities as he was

nominated in 2000 to the Provincial Preparatory Committee for the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

#### **1.4 AIM OF THE STUDY**

The aim of the study was to evaluate the employment and integration strategies of persons with disabilities in the Limpopo Department of Agriculture.

#### **1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of the study were as follows:

- to evaluate the recruitment and employment methods of persons with disabilities in the Department;
- to investigate the level of participation of persons with disabilities in departmental activities;
- to evaluate the accessibility of the work environment and reasonable accommodation in the Department.

#### **1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

It is hoped that the outcome of the study will assist the Department in the following areas:

- furthering the integration of persons with disabilities into the mainstream activities of the Department;
- reducing all forms of existing barriers with special emphasis on attitudinal barriers against prospective employees with disabilities;

- assisting the Department in formulating and implementing strategies and policies on the employment and integration of persons with disabilities into the mainstream activities.

## **1.7 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS**

1.7.1 Employment: is remunerative work (Fox & Meyer, 1996:43). In the researcher's opinion it implies a situation where an individual enters into an agreement with the employer to undertake a specific task for which, at the end, the employer thanks the individual through payment for a job well done to sustain his livelihood.

1.7.2 Integration: is the process by which various groupings are joined into a single unit or are absorbed by the whole; also the fusion of various cultural/social groups into a single territorial unit or establishment of a national identity (Fox & Meyer, 1996:65).

1.7.3 Physical disability: refers to damage to muscles, nerves, skin or bones that leads to difficulties in moving about, and performing activities of daily living such as dressing, eating and cleaning (DPSA, 2001:19-20).

1.7.4 Visual disability: refers to the loss of sight that may be total or partial. People with visual disability have total or partial loss of eyesight. People with visual disability might experience difficulty in moving around and knowing where things are, carrying out some activities of daily living, such as writing, reading and following visual signs or commands (DPSA, 2001:21).

1.7.5 Hearing disability: refers to loss of hearing that usually results in difficulties in learning a spoken language, following verbal instructions, making friends in the neighborhood, and behavioural problems due to

frustration or accidents because warning signs were not heard. People with hearing disability use sign language or interpreters to communicate with others (DPSA, 2001:22).

1.7.6 Disability discrimination: refers to any act, practice or conduct which has the effect of unfairly hindering or precluding any person or persons who have or are perceived to have disabilities from conducting their activities freely, which undermine their sense of human dignity and self-worth, and prevent their full and equal participation in society (DPSA, 2001:31).

1.7.7 Top management: is the core of an institution which is responsible for the management of the institution in totality, including strategic management. This entails, among other things, the formulation of mission, strategy and aims, the compiling of strategic plans and organisational structures, control and decision making. It consists of the head of department, chief financial officer and general managers (Van der Waldt & Du Toit, 1997:159).

1.7.8 Middle management of a public institution: is responsible for the operational management of the institution. Every manager should ensure that policy is implemented and the aims of the institution are achieved. It consists of senior managers (directors) and managers (deputy directors) (Van der Waldt & Du Toit, 1997:159).

1.7.9 Reasonable accommodation: refers to any modification or adjustment to a job or working environment that will enable a person from a designated group to have access to, participate or advance in employment.

1.7.10 Assistive devices: refers to devices and ergonomic solutions capable of reducing the handicap experienced by an individual. Persons with disabilities have diverse needs depending on the nature of the

individual's disability, for example, visually-impaired people will need Braille while the partially impaired will require desktops that are able to enlarge the words on the computer.

1.7.11 A barrier-free environment: refers to an environment in which access to all facilities and services are equally available to all employees. Both public and private sector organisations are required to ensure that the workplace is accessible to make the employment of persons with disabilities much easier.

1.7.12 Rehabilitation: refers to a process aimed at enabling persons with disabilities to achieve and maintain their optimal physical, sensory, intellectual, psychiatric and social functional levels, thus providing them with the tools to change their lives towards higher levels of independence.

1.7.13 Affirmative action: is defined as the additional corrective steps which must be taken in order that those who have historically been disadvantaged by unfair discrimination are able to derive full benefit from an equitable employment environment (White Paper on Affirmative Action, 1998:4).

1.7.14 According to Charlton and Van Niekerk (1994:201), affirmative action and empowerment are defined as follows:

- Affirmative action: refers to the accelerated development of previously disadvantaged people in (managerial) positions of consequence through the development and implementation of a comprehensive strategic plan. This may involve identifying and removing all obstacles to productive behaviour; investing in comprehensive training for all people (trainees, coaches and organisational leadership); and thereafter promotion on the

basis of merit. The investment in human competence should benefit the individual, the organisation and the country.

- Empowerment: refers to the act of investing and authorising, where people and organisations are enabled to achieve goals. This involves the sharing of power and authorising people to think and make decisions. Moreover, empowering emphasises providing people with the skills and competencies needed to discharge their responsibilities and to remove organisational obstacles hindering personal and organisational development. In essence then an empowered person assumes responsibility for initiating change, both in him/herself and within the organisational environment. It is a long-term conscious process involving both the manager and follower, where the latter is developed into a position where he/she is able (competent), willing (motivated) and allowed (responsibility /authority) to perform to his/her full potential to the benefit of self and organisation.

1.7.15 Designated groups: are groups that are categorised in terms of the Employment Equity Act as people historically disadvantaged by past discriminatory legislation especially blacks, women and people with disabilities. Despite persons with disabilities being part of the designated groups, most employers have difficulty affording them equal employment opportunities.

1.7.16 According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), disability, impairment and handicap are defined as follows within the context of its health experience (Human Rights and Disabled Persons, 1993:11):

1.7.16.1 Disability: refers to any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being.

1.7.16.2 Impairment: refers to any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function.

1.7.16.3 Handicap: refers to a disadvantage for a given individual, resulting from an impairment or disability, that limits or prevents the fulfillment of a role that is normal, depending on age, sex, social and cultural factors for that individual.

1.7.17 Marginalisation is the process by which disabled people find themselves on the periphery of social life in various ways, only being considered as a side issue or as a necessary extra problem (Noon & Ogbonna, 2001:193).

## **1.8 CHAPTER FRAMEWORK/DISSERTATION PLAN**

In this study the researcher has attempted to advance certain vital facets of public/personnel administration. The study is composed of five chapters with different headings.

### **CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides a reflection on the background of and introduction to the study. It is also in the introduction and background that an overview of the departmental workforce profile including persons with disabilities is provided in order to indicate the progress made by the department with regard to integration. The statement of the problem, aims of the study, objectives of the study, significance of the study, clarification of the main concepts and chapter framework/dissertation plan are discussed.

## **CHAPTER TWO: AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AS A TOOL TO ADDRESS IMBALANCES**

This chapter discusses affirmative action as an essential tool used by both public and private institutions in their endeavour to redress any racial discrimination or under-representation in their organisation. The success of affirmative action requires commitment from management and legislative frameworks that would accelerate implementation.

## **CHAPTER THREE: MANAGING DISABILITY IN THE WORKPLACE**

This chapter discusses in detail the management of disability in the workplace. Disability is a challenge to all managers in the workplace and therefore managers must be acquainted with the new direction the country is taking with regard to diversity by inclusion of persons with disabilities.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The researcher reflects all research design and approaches applied in this study. This chapter was structured under the following subtitles; target population, data collection, reliability and validity of the instrument, scope and limitation of the study, data analysis and ethical consideration.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS**

This chapter entails data analysis and interpretation of data. The findings from this study have specific reference to the Limpopo Department of Agriculture. A larger study involving more Departments might be conducted so that the outcome might be generalised to all departments since all public institutions are constitutionally required to provide equal employment opportunities for all, including persons with disabilities.

## **CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION**

The chapter discusses in detail the findings as per chapter four and how the department and managers are committed to the equalisation of opportunities for all, including persons with disabilities. The researcher will further provide recommendations and strategies that will ensure full integration of persons with disabilities in the departmental programmes.

### **1.9 CONCLUSION**

People with disabilities are the most marginalised sector in the society. It is within this premise that the principle in Chapter 9 of the Constitution requires that public administration must be broadly representative of South African people, with employment and personnel management practices based on ability, objectivity, fairness and the need to redress the imbalances of the past to achieve broad representation. People with bona fide disabilities must be given opportunities to participate in the economic growth of the country.

This chapter provides a reflection on the background of and introduction to the study. It is also in the introduction and background that an overview of the departmental workforce profile including persons with disabilities is provided in order to reveal the progress made by the department with regard to integration. Statement of the problem, aims of the study, objectives of the study, significance of the study, clarification of the main concepts and chapter framework/dissertation plan are discussed.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AS A TOOL TO REDRESS IMBALANCES**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter deals with affirmative action and how it can be applied. It also deals with equity policies that can be used effectively. The chapter further looks at Zimbabwe, which was also colonised, and the affirmative action steps they have taken to ensure broad representation in that country. In a heterogeneous country like South Africa, diversity management is essential for recognising the diverse residents of the country. One of the principles of public administration in Chapter 9 of the Constitution states that the public administration must be broadly representative of South African people, with employment and personnel management practices based on ability, objectivity, fairness and the need to redress the imbalances of the past to achieve broad representation.

#### **2.2 KEY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED BY AFFIRMATIVE ACTION**

According to Nkuhlu (1993:12), the most obvious key issue which needs to be addressed by affirmative action is the removal of all forms of discrimination, formal and informal, and all obstacles to equality of opportunity. He further states that the real issue is to challenge the behaviour of people because South Africans have been conditioned by apartheid over many decades, such that they see each other not as individuals but as members of different racial groups and as a result of that, racism is ingrained in the minds and hearts of many South Africans.

Nkuhlu further reiterates that in order to achieve equality of opportunity, blacks should, firstly, be afforded preferential support to enable them to attain a higher level of technological and managerial capability. Secondly, they must

be enabled to access economic resources and provided with appropriate support. Thirdly, they must be given space and opportunities to make contributions and change the mindset of white managers and the manner in which organisations approach black advancement (Nkhuhlu, 1993:12).

### **2.3 LEGISLATIVE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION: EMPLOYMENT EQUITY AND LESSONS FROM DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

Thomson (1993:22) reveals how racial discrimination was one of the defining features of the apartheid order in South Africa, and was entrenched in a range of statutory provisions for many decades. The legislative framework during apartheid was used to exclude most black people. In the area of employment, the most telling legislative measures designed to maintain racial privilege were those that lay the basis for the policy of job reservation, section 77 of the Industrial Conciliation Act and section 12 of the Mines and Works Act. Systematic policies favouring white over black workers were developed by the coalition government of the National Party and Labour Party during the 1920s. These policies were even worse for people with disabilities. They were extremely affected as they were not afforded any opportunity to participate in the mainstream economy of the country. It was not surprising when the government of the day repealed all legislation that was discriminatory and the highlight was the Constitution which advocates equality for all. For most people with disabilities it was a relief because they could now be regarded as full citizens with human rights (Thomson, 1993:22).

### **2.4 THE ZIMBABWEAN EXPERIENCE: BLACK OCCUPATIONAL ADVANCEMENT IN THE 1980s**

In a country that, like South Africa, was colonised for decades where most benefits were enjoyed only by the minority, affirmative action is the only measure which can be used to advance the historically disadvantaged groups.

Most African countries were colonialised and when the political power was in the hands of the whites, the public service was populated by whites and most key positions were also occupied by them. According to Vincent Maphai (1992:72), affirmative action refers to a variety of programmes and measures, and is characterised by attempts to redress historical and gender inequalities and he asserts that it would involve disadvantaged groups' (blacks and females) receiving preferential admission to certain positions. The same dilemma faced by South Africans was experienced by Zimbabwe and they also had to come up with mechanisms that would ensure the advancement of black people. The government had to intervene after whites were increasing their presence in the Zimbabwean public service. President Robert Mugabe issued a directive that would accelerate black advancement. It was found that whites occupied 90% of senior and middle management positions. Most whites were prepared to relinquish their positions to facilitate the rapid advancement of blacks.

The directive to the Zimbabwean Public Service Commission to accelerate black advancement included the following:

- recruitment of staff to all grades of the public service in such a manner as to bring about a balanced representation of the elements that make up Zimbabwe's population;
- providing more rapid advancement to suitably qualified Africans to senior positions in the public service;
- maintaining efficiency and satisfying career aspirations of existing public servants in carrying out these directives.

According to Bennel and Strachan (1992:26-7), the experiences of the Zimbabweans are similar to those of the South Africans in the sense that they inherited a public service that was mostly white, especially in the management

echelons. This posed a serious challenge to redressing the imbalances. In South Africa the Constitution Act 108 of 1996 was passed which provided for equality for all and pieces of legislation such the Employment Equity Act, the Labour Relations Act and the White Paper on Affirmative Action in the Public Service were passed to support the requirements of the constitution. South Africans were cautious in their approach after lessons learned from some African countries whose economies declined after achieving independence.

## **2.5 LEADING AFFIRMATIVE ACTION**

According to Charlton and Van Niekerk (1994:117-118), affirmative action or the accelerated promotion of competent people into meaningful managerial positions, will never become a reality unless leaders at every level of national and organisational life are developed. They further state that successful affirmative action requires the support and commitment of the leadership of the organisation.

Charlton and Van Niekerk further identify the following reasons for their assertion that affirmative action is dependent on effective leadership:

- Leaders are responsible for providing hope and direction during times of exponential change. Increasingly, political and economic leaders are required to articulate a clear, hopeful vision of the future which encompasses a specific and detailed view of the end result of affirmative action and the type of new society envisaged. It is vital that the purpose of affirmative action is presented in a way that inspires commitment rather than inducing resentful compliance.
- Economic growth, which is vital for affirmative action, can only occur in a society that is relatively stable. Perpetual violence born out of power struggles and rising unemployment will scare away potential investors.

- Leaders need to ensure that the wealth generated is redistributed in the form of increased opportunities for black people and women through constructive programmes that impact constructively on people's quality of life.
  
- Visionary leadership is the single most important resource for effecting national and organisational change. Public officials within public institutions are there to implement policies. It is important for top management to show commitment to ensure that equal employment opportunities are afforded to people with disabilities. It is obvious that the government has liberated all categories of people and managers must bring about the changes in culture and attitude which are the precursors of developing people through affirmative action.

## **2.6 THE EVOLUTION OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAMMES**

According to Boston (1999:10), racial discrimination and segregation around the globe have been issues that engulfed developed and undeveloped countries. Africans in all countries had been sidelined as was evident even in countries like America, where it took social protest to ensure that African Americans were also regarded as bona fide citizens. He further says that the federal government made an issue of ending employment discrimination and obliged recipients of federal contracts to have written affirmative action plans, undertaking not to discriminate in employment and to undertake affirmative action steps to recruit and upgrade minority groups and women. It is obvious that in a colonised country like South Africa, affirmative action was the only measure that could be applied to ensure the integration of Africans into both the public and the private sector. The introduction of Black Economic Empowerment would ensure that historically disadvantaged individuals would take pride in the economic growth of the country.

According to Human (1993:1), in his book *Affirmative Action and the Development of People*, affirmative action in employment is regarded as a means of creating equal employment opportunities and not as reverse discrimination. The term has been used to describe various policies which were pursued in countries such as India, Malaysia and Sri Lanka. He further says that distinction should be made between affirmative action as a means of redressing inequality and reverse discrimination which preferentially advantages certain groups at the expense of others.

## **2.7 CONDITIONS FOR THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION**

According to Human (1993:12), the following aspects are crucial for the effective realisation of affirmative action objectives:

- The development of blacks and women should be part of the general development of people within an organisation. Once they are in the organisation, blacks and women should be promoted according to workforce, succession and career plans which take into account the backlogs of blacks and women in specific positions.
- Development should not be seen simply in terms of providing education and training for the disadvantaged. Development depends on ability but also on motivation and context. Equally important to the process of development are the expectations, prejudices and people management skills of current managers.
- Affirmative action should take place at the selection and recruitment stage. Thereafter, all employees should be developed and promoted according to workforce, succession and career plans which take backlogs into account. People development should be identified as a key strategic

objective and top management should be actively committed to both implementing and monitoring it.

## **2.8 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES OR DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT**

According to Cornelius, Gooch and Todd (2001:32), much diversity management has evolved from the area of equal opportunities, and the two concepts are often used interchangeably. It would be fair to say that the common, traditional understanding of equal opportunities is closely associated with the legal aspects of managing equality of opportunity and making good of different treatments that are grounded in biases and inequality. Typical activities include the auditing of sources of direct and indirect discrimination and interventions aimed at rectifying historical imbalances in access to opportunity, such as positive or affirmative action interventions. Equal opportunities policies and practices are usually aimed at those groups, whose rights are reinforced by law, including women, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities (Noon & Ogbonna, 2001:32-4).

A major concern is that the equal opportunities initiatives approach has too often failed or run out of steam and not delivered any real equality of opportunity. In some organisations, diversity management is no more than equal opportunities re-labelled. However it can be described as an approach to managing differences more closely aligned with managing cultural diversity, inclusiveness and business objectives. The authors further define diversity management as an approach in which differences between individuals and groups are proactively highlighted and marshalled. The aim is to enhance employee participation and to utilise a diversity of views to identify and exploit business opportunities within the context of a more inclusive organisational culture (Noon & Ogbonna, 2001:32-4).

## **2.9 MANAGING DIVERSITY AND DISABILITY LEGISLATION**

According to Cunningham and James (2001:103-4), there are two positive and interrelated pressures that exist to reduce discrimination against people with disabilities. The first is the movement for managing diversity, which focuses on organisations responding to the individual needs and aspirations of all disadvantaged people in the labour market as a way of eradicating discriminatory practices. The second is through legislation which provides a statutory right for employees or job applicants with disabilities not to be discriminated against on the grounds of their disability (Noon & Ogbonna, 2001:103-4).

The term 'disabled' reveals little about the nature of a person's disability, or the consequences that it has for the type of work they can undertake. Moreover, a person's disability is not necessarily static but can change over time, as is the case with such progressive conditions as multiple sclerosis. Indeed, as a result of accidents and the onset of ill-health, workers may be disabled or non-disabled at different times of their lives, and for different purposes and activities (Doyle, 1995:6).

Traditional approaches to equal opportunities stress the importance of treating people equally irrespective of sex, ethnic group and disability. Individuals are appointed on the basis of job-related criteria, and the policy response should be based on uniformity of treatment for all. In contrast, managing diversity encourages organisations to recognise and value differences among employees. The primary focus of policy development is to evaluate and meet individual needs and desires among employees to ensure that people work to their full potential.

## **2.10 EXPERIENCES OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

Work is essential to all societies because it produces the means of sustaining life, and those excluded from work are also excluded from vital social relationships. Despite concerted efforts by some employers to seek equality of opportunity for disabled people, and notwithstanding recent growth in technology as an enabling resource, criticism remains high regarding the level of unemployment for people with disabilities. The government has enacted pieces of legislation aimed at advancing people with disabilities and public officials who are implementers of policies are still struggling to ensure their employment in their respective departments.

According to Reynolds, Nicholls and Alferoff (2001:191) in Noon and Ogbonna, the experiences of people with disabilities regarding employment and the labour market take place within a wider context. There are six factors that are relevant, irrespective of general or local employment conditions:

- There is overwhelming evidence that people with disabilities experience substantially poorer quality of life than their able-bodied peers.
- Widespread discrimination, institutionalised into the very fabric of our society, is largely responsible for this quality of life.
- The majority of people with disabilities are trying unsuccessfully to find work.

Disabled people have historically been categorised not only as those unable to work, but also as those who are hard to employ. The introduction of disability discrimination policies means that they should have equal opportunities in all areas of (re)training and employment. This would require a massive investment

in the workplace, transport, the built environment and education of the able-bodied population.

## **2.11 BARRIERS TO CAREER PROGRESSION**

According to Reynolds, Nicholls and Alferoff (2001:195), people with disabilities, both nationally and locally, are concentrated in the skilled non-manual and semi-skilled manual groups. Some of the issues raised are related to experience and training, something which is applied widely but affects the deaf differently from other groups because of a regional shortage of qualified sign-language supporters. A major barrier to career progression lies in the perceived lack of support people receive from line managers and, indeed, the importance of supportive managers was cited by disabled people as the main resource for survival in a hostile workplace.

## **2.12 CONCLUSION**

Affirmative action is the process of ensuring that historically disadvantaged groups are provided with opportunities to participate in the mainstream economy. Affirmative action is the only measure that can be used in any country that was marred by racial discrimination and segregation. It is also aimed at addressing the imbalances created by discriminatory policies. The effective implementation of affirmative action must be supported by policies which will enable reluctant employers or employees to comply with the government directives.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **MANAGEMENT OF DISABILITY IN THE WORKPLACE**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter three deals with the management of disability in the workplace. Management of disability is a challenge for both employers and managers in the workplace. It is therefore important for managers and decision makers to provide equal opportunities for people with disabilities since they are full citizens and their rights to employment must be respected as enshrined in the Constitution Act 108 of 1996 and the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998. The chapter discusses factors and themes such as the recruitment and employment of persons with disabilities, participation of people with disabilities in the mainstream activities, accessibility of the work environment, and models of disability. On the models of disability the researcher discusses both the medical and social models of disability.

With regard to recruitment and employment, the study looked at the international and national trends on the adoption of disability as right and development. Pieces of legislation and policies such as the White Paper on Integrated Disability Strategy, Inclusive Education, Labour Relations Act, Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act and the Technical assistance guideline on the employment of people with disabilities were discussed to provide a broader view of the South African experience.

### **3.2 THE RECRUITMENT AND EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

According to Swanepoel, Erasmus, Van Wyk and Schenk (2003:259), recruitment can be described as those activities in human resource management that are undertaken in order to attract sufficient candidates for the job who have the necessary potential, competencies and traits to fill job needs and to assist the organisation in achieving its objectives. By means of the recruitment process the organisation aims to attract and retain the interest of suitable applicants and to project a positive image of the organisation to outsiders.

According to Swanepoel et al. (2003:184 & 326), Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs highlights the importance of the existence of individual employees. These include a great deal of creative and imaginative energy, ingenuity to want to take on more responsibility, and ambition and commitment to organisational goal achievement – as long as they can satisfy their self-actualisation needs in the process.

Maslow's self-actualisation model is based on the work of existential philosophers who assert that man has the innate drive to achieve his full potential, but that the conditions of everyday life place constraints on the instinct for self-actualisation and cause him/her to perform sub-optimally. People with disabilities are like any other individual human being. They have aspirations and it is therefore important that a barrier-free environment that recognises and values the potential of people with disabilities be created. It is important for employees and society to focus on their ability rather than their disability (Swanepoel et al., 2003:184 & 326).

### **3.2.1 Equal opportunities**

The Employment Equity Act (1998) further requires employers to implement the provisions of the Constitution to achieve equality in the workplace by promoting equal opportunities and fair treatment in employment policies and practices through the elimination of unfair discrimination and implementing affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantages experienced by designated groups such as women and people with disabilities in order to ensure that they are equally represented in all occupational categories and at all levels.

The Act regards designated groups as being mainly blacks, women and people with disabilities. Disabled people of all races, i.e. whites, blacks, coloureds and indians, are mostly affected. Overall, disabled people were denied educational and employment opportunities. Black disabled people suffered double discrimination on the basis of both their skin colour and their disability. Similarly, black disabled women suffered both racial discrimination and discrimination on the basis of gender. Disabled people were not utilised profitably due to the inequalities of the past policies while capable people were frequently reduced to receivers of disability grants from the government.

The White Paper on Affirmative Action (1998) provides that it is necessary for departments to have a longer time frame for achieving full representativity for people with disabilities. Currently, people with disabilities constitute 1% of the staff complement of the Limpopo Department of Agriculture.

### **3.2.2 Career management for persons with disabilities**

The employment and career management of persons with disabilities should be given special attention due to the fact that their self-actualisation is still hampered by the legacy of past discrimination. This calls for a paradigm shift

in human resource employment policies and practices to redress the residual discrimination.

Due to the prevailing stereotypes and ignorance about disability, management should commit resources to deal with negative attitudes, inaccessible and unsupportive working environments as well as inadequate training and development opportunities which make it difficult for people with disabilities to actualise their talents (White Paper on Affirmative Action, 1998:25-26).

### **3.2.3 Technology in the workplace for employees with disabilities**

According to Annold, Cooper and Robertson (1995:97), who wrote a case study about a disabled worker and attitudes at work, because of the attitudes of other non-handicapped workers, disabled workers are sometimes stigmatised in the work situation. They argue that the technological programmes for enhancing the competencies of disabled workers e.g. the deaf, blind and visually-impaired, are sometimes unavailable because of management's negative attitudes towards providing support devices to handicapped workers. This argument is supported by Spicker (1994:63), who identified people with disabilities as the most stigmatised people especially at work, as they sometimes feel that they are not completely accepted as responsible people.

### **3.2.4 Enabling the disabled to benefit all round**

The Employment Equity Act defines people with disabilities as having an impairment that is either physical or mental, or both. The disability must be long-term or recurring, meaning that it has lasted or is likely to persist for at least a month, or is chronic or progressive in nature. The definition is important because it determines the eligibility of an individual as an employee and the representivity of the workforce profile. The management of disability in the workplace requires a proactive approach by coming up with interventions

in order to accommodate people with disabilities. This includes complying with the International Labour Organisation's Disability Management Code: adopting an enterprise-wide interdisciplinary strategy; and establishing strategies for managing disability in the workplace. Among them are methods to retain employees, and managing sick leave and incapacity.

Employers are required to ensure reasonable accommodation measures, such as devices to assist persons with disabilities, re-assignment and modification of work schedules, job modification or relocation. Necessary changes in physical environment and infrastructure are put in place. These measures vary according to the disability and should be treated on a case-by-case basis, with input from the individual concerned being crucial to the solution. Contrary to the fears of many employers, such measures are not necessarily costly. Including people with disabilities in the employment equity strategy of the workplace would mean that the human value and potential of this historically marginalised group will finally be recognised. The ultimate purpose is to enhance opportunities for qualified persons with disabilities to be or to remain employed. The benefits apply not only to the individuals in question but to a skills-starved nation (Sunday Times, Labour Matters), 2004:21).

### **3.2.5 Achieving equal employment opportunities for persons with disabilities through legislation**

South Africa is part of the global village and signatory to the United Nations Resolution. In 1994, to reaffirm the rights of disabled people, the United Nations produced a set of rules or guidelines in an attempt to influence international policy and practice. Many of the ideals embodied in the document reflect the changes in thinking about disability that have occurred over the past ten years. There has been a theoretical shift, though not generally a concomitant shift in practice:

- from movements for disabled people to movements of disabled people;
- from a dependency model to one where disabled people have the same rights and responsibilities as all citizens;
- from disabled people having to fit into regular society to society changing to include everybody;
- from following a path on leaving school that is determined by others to one which they determine for themselves;
- from being seen as a perpetual child to being accorded full adult status.

In respect for and acknowledgement of international resolutions, South Africa introduced various legislation, policies and guidelines to assist employers in their endeavour to redress the imbalances of the past created by past legislations (UNESCO, 1999:4).

### **3.2.5.1 The changing concept of disability**

The disabled individual was seen as necessarily dependent on others. There was a growth of charitable organisations established to care for disabled people, and as a result education was considered purposeful or necessary. The disabled movements were prepared and continued to voice their opinions about a change in attitude towards their education. The social significance of education, the disabled learners' needs the content of educational programmes and the training of teachers all had to be considered. Society's attitude towards disabled people had been unfair in the past, even preventing them from doing what they could do well. It is true some disabilities do not permit certain activities. As a consequence of this, disabled groups have begun to point out

that barriers facing disabled people are not considered to be inherent in the individual impairment of the disabled person but are socially created by environmental restrictions and social attitudes (UNESCO, 1999:5).

### **3.2.5.2 International and national contexts**

The changing perceptions of disability need to be set within a broader socio-economic context. It is necessary to remember that both the United Nations and European Union have produced policy statements on the rights of persons with disabilities which incorporate many of the theoretical ideas of disability. The United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (1994) reaffirm the rights of disabled people to equal opportunities, full participation in society, and equal partnership in the planning and implementation of those policies which affect their lives.

The United Nations statement was an attempt to improve the status of disabled people by influencing the customs and practices of nation states. However, it was not binding and must be seen in the context of the effects of the global economy. The social policy tried to adjust to the demands of the global market; it is increasingly difficult in this context for individual countries to maintain social justice and equity, even where there has been a strong tradition. International bodies have sought to safeguard the rights of disabled people. One of these safeguards is the Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons, which states that “Disabled persons have the right to medical, psychological and functional treatment, including prosthetic and orthetic appliances, to medical and social rehabilitation, education, vocational training and rehabilitation, aid, counselling, placement services and other services which will enable them to develop their capabilities and skills to the maximum and will hasten the process of their social integration or reintegration (Article 6 of

the Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons, proclaimed by the General Assembly Resolution 3447 (XXX) of 1975)” (UNESCO, 1999:5).

The changing view of disability has led to corresponding changes in thinking on the provision of adult education for disabled people as well as on policy and practices issues including the role of disabled people in formulating policies and practices, equal opportunities, inclusion, transition and adult status (UNESCO, 1999:5).

### **3.2.5.3 International human rights standards**

In accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and International Bill of Human Rights, not only are persons suffering from any form of disability entitled to exercise all civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights embodied in these and other instruments, but they are recognised as being entitled to exercise them on an equal basis with other persons.

These two statements are found both on general provisions, such as Article 55 and 56 of the Charter of the United Nations which refer to the fact that all Member States have undertaken to promote “higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development” and on specific provisions, such as article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which recognises that everyone has “the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family” as well as the “right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control” (Human Rights and Disabled Persons, 1993:4).

In 1975 the General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons, which proclaimed that disabled persons have the same civil and political rights as other human beings. The Declaration states that disabled persons should receive equal treatment and services which will enable them to develop their capabilities and skills to the maximum and will hasten the process of their social integration or reintegration.

#### **3.2.5.4 Prejudices and discrimination against disabled persons: areas, form and scope**

The maximum degree of autonomy and independence for the disabled is the only route towards their self-reliance. This means developing the capacities of the individual to the full, rather than adopting the traditional approach of emphasising disabilities or handicaps to classify individuals, since this tends to be the direct or aggravated result of the attitude of the community itself towards persons with disabilities.

##### **3.2.5.4.1 Areas and scope of discrimination**

According to *Human Rights & Disabled Persons* (1993:25), the four main areas in which discrimination abound are:

- (a) **Education:** In many countries educational institutions are not always accessible to disabled persons and in many cases such persons are not admitted to the same schools as other people. The same applies to vocational training and to academic studies.
  
- (b) **Employment:** In addition to the fact that many workplaces are not physically accessible to severely disabled persons, employers often fail to understand that a physical disability does not necessarily involve mental

impairment and even fellow workers themselves may be opposed to the employment of disabled persons.

(c) **Transport:** Attention is drawn to the highly discriminatory effect of the failure to provide accessible means of transport and the obstacle which that presents to an independent life for disabled persons.

(d) **Buildings in general:** Buildings which are not accessible to persons with disabilities are still being constructed. The use of wheelchairs, for instance is extremely difficult, or even impossible in many apartment buildings (*Human Rights & Disabled Persons*, 1993:25).

### **3.2.5.5 International Labour Organisation**

Under this section, various Acts and the constitution of the Republic of South Africa will be reviewed.

The ILO was the first international organisation to acknowledge the right of people with disabilities to work opportunities. The ILO stated unequivocally that disabled workers, whatever the origin of their disability, should be provided with full opportunities for rehabilitation, specialised vocational guidance, training and retraining and employment in useful work. The ILO further said that persons with disabilities should, wherever possible, be trained with other workers, under the same conditions and the same pay, and called for equality of employment opportunities for disabled workers and for affirmative action to promote the employment of workers with serious disabilities (ILO, 2003:3).

The primary goal of the ILO is to promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and dignity. The ILO has four principal strategic objectives:

- to promote and realise standards, fundamental principles and rights at work;
- to create greater opportunities for women and men to secure decent employment;
- to enhance the coverage and effectiveness of social protection for all;
- to strengthen tripartism and social dialogue (International Labour Organisation, 2003:9).

### **3.2.6 The South African Experience**

#### **3.2.6.1 South African Constitution Act, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996)**

The South Africa Constitution Act No 108 of 1996 was signed by former President Nelson Mandela on 18 December 1996. Chapter 2 of the Constitution states that all people must be equal before the law and that all must be entitled to equal protection by the law. Section 9 (3) further states that “The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including disability, gender, race, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, religious conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.”

Chapter 10 of the Constitution (1996:116-117) identifies the basic values and principles governing public administration that must give effect to some of the values of the founding provision. Among these is the principle that states, “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 redress the imbalances of the past to achieve broad representation”.

### **3.2.6.2 The Labour Relations Act, 1995 (Act No. 66 of 1995)**

The purpose of this Act is to advance economic development, social justice, labour peace and democratisation of the workplace by fulfilling the primary objective of the Act. In Part B of Schedule 7 (Residual Unfair Labour Practices), it states that “for the purpose of this item, an unfair labour practice means any unfair act or omission that arises between an employer and an employee, involving: (a) unfair discrimination, either directly or indirectly, against an employee on any grounds, including, but not limited to race, gender, sex, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, political opinion, culture, language, marital status or family responsibility”. The promulgation of these pieces of legislation shows the government’s commitment towards eradicating any discriminatory practices in the workplace, and therefore managers in both the public and private sectors are obliged to provide equal employment opportunities for persons with disabilities by removing all barriers that will limit their employability.

### **3.2.6.3 The Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998**

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

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

### **3.2.6.4 The White Paper on Affirmative Action in the Public Service, 1998**

The purpose of the White Paper is to set out the mandatory requirements and provide guidance on the steps which national and provincial administrations should take to develop and implement their affirmative action programmes, and to sketch out the accountability, monitoring, coordination and responsibilities of various players within affirmative action programmes (WPAPS, 1998:3).

The objectives of the affirmative action policy within the framework of the Employment Equity Act and other relevant labour and public service legislation are to:

- enhance the capacities of the historically disadvantaged through the development and introduction of practical measures that support advancement within the public service;

- inculcate in the public service a culture which values diversity and supports the affirmation of those who have previously been unfairly disadvantaged;
- speed up the achievement and progressive improvement of the numeric targets set out in the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service.

### **3.2.6.5 White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy, 1997**

The purpose of the WPINDS (1997:19) is to assist employers in understanding the needs of people with disabilities. People with disabilities were marginalised and the new government found it necessary to develop the strategies for employers to include disability matters in their planning process in a society that embraces diversity. People with disabilities are a natural and integral part of society as a whole, and should have opportunities to contribute their experience, talents and capabilities to national and international development. The objectives of the integrated National Disability Strategy include:

- the facilitation of the integration of disability issues into governmental developmental strategies, planning and programmes;
- the development of an integrated management system for the coordination of disability planning, implementation and monitoring in the various line functions in all spheres of government;
- the development of capacity-building strategies that will enhance Government's ability at all levels to implement recommendations contained in the Strategy;

- a programme of public education and awareness raising, aimed at changing fundamental prejudices in South African society.

### **3.2.6.6 Technical Assistance Guidelines (TAG) on the Employment of People with Disabilities**

One of the challenges faced by employers is the employment of people with disabilities. The Department of Labour developed the guide to assist employers and trade unions to better understand people with disabilities. The guide provides better ways to reasonably accommodate people with disabilities and it is additional to employment equity and code of good practice. The aims of the TAG for employers and persons with disabilities are as follows:

#### **3.2.6.6.1 Employers**

The TAG aims to assist employers by helping them to understand:

- their obligation to implement non-discriminatory and affirmative action measures in respect of people with disabilities in the workplace;
- their right to generate economically viable enterprises and/or organisations which effectively provide services and products without discriminating against people with disabilities;
- the opportunities that are afforded to them and their enterprises/organisations through the employment of people with disabilities;
- practical ways to move forward that are relevant to their enterprises and that ensure the application of non-discrimination and affirmative-action measures for potential and existing employees with disabilities.

### **3.2.6.6.2 People with Disabilities**

The TAG aims to assist people with disabilities by helping them to understand:

- their right not to be discriminated against in all aspects of employment;
- the affirmative-action measures to which they may be entitled through the provisions of the Act;
- their obligation in participating as an informed partner with an employer in the process of employment;
- their right to the provision of reasonable accommodation if required;
- opportunities that exist to prepare for entering and advancing in the workplace;
- practical ways to move forward in preparing for and accessing employment opportunities that may exist.

### **3.2.6.7 Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act No. 4 of 2000**

The introduction of this Act and others liberated most persons with disabilities from an inferiority complex and placed them as rightful citizens of the country. The purpose of the Act is to give effect to Section 9 read with item 23 (1) of Schedule 6 to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, so as to prevent and prohibit discrimination and harassment; to promote equality and eliminate unfair discrimination; to prevent and prohibit hate speech; and provide for matters connected therewith.

### **3.2.6.7.1 Prohibition of unfair discrimination on grounds of disability**

Section 6 states that no person may unfairly discriminate against any person on the grounds of disability, including:

- (a) denying or removing from any person who has a disability, any supporting or enabling facility necessary for their functioning in society;
- (b) contravening the code of practice or regulations of the South African Bureau of Standards that govern environmental accessibility;
- (c) failing to eliminate obstacles that unfairly limit or restrict persons with disabilities from enjoying equal opportunities or failing to take steps to reasonably accommodate the needs of such persons (Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination, 2000:4)

### **3.2.6.8 Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education, Building an Inclusive Education and Training System**

The institutionalisation of persons with disabilities contributed to the marginalisation of the disability sector. Persons with disabilities were becoming strangers in their own communities. Coupled with cultural beliefs, it became difficult to be accepted by the communities and they also found it difficult to interact with their non-disabled counterparts. There is an understanding that not every person with a disability can attend school in an inclusive environment. It is important that even family members of persons with disabilities should be educated so that they should not feel cursed or hide when a woman has given birth to a person with a disability.

The introduction of the White Paper on Inclusive Education will assist much in changing the mindset of the community. The fact that a person with disability will be attending school with non-disabled persons in the same environment, will make it easier for them to interact with one another and focus on the ability rather than the disability.

The White Paper outlines the Ministry of Education's commitment to the provision of educational opportunities, in particular for those learners who experience or have experienced barriers to learning and development or who have dropped out of learning because of the inability of the education and training system to accommodate the diversity of learning needs, and those learners who continue to be excluded from it. The White Paper is founded on democratic principles and common citizenship, the values of human dignity, the achievement of equality and on the advancement of human rights and freedom (Section 1a). These values require all of us to take up the responsibility and challenge of building a humane and caring society, not for the few, but for all South Africans. The Ministry has made an undertaking to carry a special responsibility to implement these values and to ensure that all learners, with and without disabilities, pursue their learning potential to the fullest (Education White Paper 6, 2001:11).

#### **3.2.6.8.1 Education and Disability**

Different perceptions of inclusive education have been documented (Duhaney & Salend, 2000:21; Palmer et al., 2001:481). In accordance with the international trend of providing quality education for all learners within the mainstream of education, South Africa has set a firm foot on the road towards realising this goal. The various international policy documents disseminated during the 1990s place considerable emphasis on the rights of all children and young people to have equal access to education. In spite of all laudable policies, however, the operationalisation of inclusive education is hampered by many

problems. Some of the problems among many, are that parents and community groups are not making adequate and responsible contributions to the process of inclusive education, especially in developing countries, and marginalised and excluded voices are not heard (Prinsloo, 2001:344-5). According to Prinsloo, various special educational needs have been identified. These needs result in barriers to successful learning.

In 1994 South Africa held her first democratic elections, officially ending the apartheid era. The National Education Policy Report was introduced that proposed five goals for education which included a non-discriminatory democratic process and governance, development of a unitary system, establishment of equity and effecting redress. Inclusion was seen within the paradigm of democracy describing the development of and commitment to democratic values of liberty, equality and civil rights within the paradigm of human rights linked to other minority issues as the only ethical path in society.

According to Praisner (2003:135), inclusive schools provide general education, do not relinquish responsibility for students with special needs, but instead work cooperatively with special education to provide quality programmes for all students. Eloff et al. (2002:83), citing Dyson (2001), indicate that inclusive education is a seemingly uncomplicated term that is often wrongly used. There is in fact no commonly accepted notion of inclusion. They identify inclusion as placement, as education for all, as participation and social inclusion. The new constitution of the Republic of South Africa promotes the achievement of equality in all spheres of life, human dignity, and legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons or categories of persons disadvantaged by unfair discrimination (Constitution Act 108 of 1996).

Some conflicts on inclusive education are documented by Farrell (2000:154-7), who says that conflict within inclusive education is related to the following:

- that there might be times when a child's right to a good education and to have individual needs met might be better in special schools;
- that parents might choose special education for the security and specialised attention they perceive it offers over inclusion;
- that inclusive education protects the rights of the parents, children, schools or other learners;
- that there are benefits of social inclusion over academic skills.

Anderson et al. (2003) documents comments from parents regarding attempts to place their wards with a disability in a school in Orange Farm, Soweto. The comments included the following : refusal of school to admit the child with disability; problems with transportation of the child, child could not find his/her way back from school; the child needed special attention which could not be provided for by the school because of limited human and material resources. Gaigher et al. (2002:5-10) mentioned that informed parents, teachers and health professionals could help children to explore new and positive ways of responding to teasing, rejection and other forms of discrimination. They also reiterated that special schools, dealing with children with albinism, should have the necessary facilities and specially-trained teachers to deal with both the physical and psychological effects of albinism. This would to a large extent, enhance inclusiveness. According to Kromberg et al. (1987:915), shame is also a reason for keeping children with physical disabilities away from the public.

### **3.3 PARTICIPATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE MAINSTREAM ACTIVITIES**

#### **3.3.1 The restrictive environment at work**

Barnes (1992) in his Disability and Employment paper said that the traditional explanations for the disadvantages experienced by disabled people in the British labour market are no longer considered appropriate by the disabled and their organisations. This traditional explanation for disproportionate economic and social deprivation experienced by disabled people rests on the assumptions of the individual medical model of disability. This approach suggests that disabled individuals are unable to achieve a reasonable standard of living by their own efforts due to the physical and psychological consequences of impairment.

It is no longer seen as an adequate explanation for the problems associated with impairment but is currently rejected by the majority of disabled people and their organisations. They, along with a growing number of professionals and policy makers, particularly overseas, acknowledge that it is not the impairment which prevents disabled individuals from securing a lifestyle from non-disabled people, but restrictive environments and disabling barriers; a perspective generally known as the social model of disability.

The need for achieving representativity in the public service is a requirement of Article 9 of the Constitution. Based on this article and broad policy documents such as the White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy and the White Paper on Affirmative Action in the Public Service, provide an institutional framework and implementation guidelines for achieving demographic representation and improved service delivery.

### **3.3.2 The rights of persons with disabilities in the workplace**

The South Africa Constitution Act (1996) provides the central foundation from which the policies and programmes of the Department should derive. In this respect, the following aspects of the Constitution, which are especially important in the observance of, respect for and protection of the rights of people with disabilities, will be mentioned.

**Application of the Constitution:** It is important to note that the Bill of Rights enshrines the rights of all people in the country. This means that the rights of people with disabilities are afforded equal status and recognition with the rights of other people. Furthermore, the Constitution's applicability extends to natural and juristic persons as well as to all organs of state, the executive, the legislature and to all laws. The application of the rights of people with disabilities extends to protection from discrimination within both the public and private spheres (South Africa Constitution Act, 1996:7).

**Equality Clause:** Section 9 (3) of the Bill of Rights specifically prohibits direct and indirect discrimination against anyone on the basis of disability, by both the state and individuals. The Constitution, therefore, not only recognises disability as a basis for discrimination which warrants particular attention, but it also implies that the denial of any other right contained in the Constitution on the basis of disability, constitutes a violation.

It is important to recognise that the Constitution accepts that discrimination against persons on the basis of their disability is automatically unfair, unless a case can be made out by the body/individual concerned that the discrimination was fair. The onus to prove unfair discrimination does not therefore rest with the disabled person but with the one in authority (South Africa Constitution Act, 1996:7-8).

Every organisation or institution must ensure that its employment policies or practices are not in conflict with the prescriptions of the Constitution. The rights and equality of people with disabilities are enshrined in the Constitution and also provide for equal employment opportunities for disabled people since they were severely affected by previous policies that denied employment for them.

The challenges facing management are to ensure that the Department's employment and integration strategies take into account solutions developed through the processes proposed in the White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (WINDS).

In terms of the White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (1997:10), there is an urgent need to understand, celebrate and appreciate disability as a human right and development issue, which:

- leads to recognition and acknowledgement that people with disabilities are equal citizens and should therefore enjoy equal rights and responsibilities;
- implies that the needs of every individual are of equal importance, and that needs must be made the basis for planning;
- further implies that resources must be employed in such a way as to ensure that every individual has opportunities for participation within society and should be given the necessary support to enable them to exercise their responsibilities;
- implies that people with disabilities should have equal obligations within society and should be given the necessary support to enable them to exercise their responsibilities;

- a human rights and development approach to disability focuses on the removal of barriers to equal participation and the elimination of discrimination based on disability.

In order to improve the status of disabled employees, management should ensure that their representation is increased at decision-making levels. Since disabled people were not given enough opportunities, management must make resources available such as funds, taking into account the capability of each individual, and provide the necessary training and development for leadership or management level. This should be guided by the equity plans of the department and the targets, and this will prevent tokenism or window-dressing appointments of people with disabilities.

Through the effective implementation of the Employment Equity Plan (2005), the department is obliged and committed to the following:

- to enable persons with disabilities to access, participate and advance in employment;
- to encourage self-reliance and empowerment of persons with disabilities;
- to create an environment that values and supports diversity;
- to eliminate prejudices and stereotypes about persons with disabilities.

**Self-representation and dignity:** In the past disability was regarded as a purely 'health and welfare' issue, with disabled people being seen as individuals in need of 'care'. Such perceptions were reinforced by a social, political and economic infrastructure, which marginalised people with disabilities and entrenched their status as lower than those of second class citizens. One of the ways in which such perceptions were perpetuated and

inequalities entrenched was through the failure of decision makers to consult with disabled people themselves. Able-bodied people whose knowledge and awareness of disability was often extremely limited made the decisions.

The key principle, which is fundamental to the realisation of the rights of people with disabilities, is recognition of the right of disabled people to represent themselves in all processes of decision making which affects them in any way. Such a principle includes the rights of mentally disabled people to be represented by an advocate such as a parent or friend. The principle of self-representation not only remains fundamental to realising the rights of people with disabilities, but is also an essential strategy to remove marginalisation and ensure that the needs of disabled people are included with those of the whole population (Human Rights, 1997:6-7).

### **3.4 THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE WORK ENVIRONMENT AND REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION**

#### **3.4.1 Accessibility of work environment**

According to the Code of Good Practice (2002:7), employers should reasonably accommodate the needs of people with disabilities. The aim of the accommodation is to reduce the impact of the impairment of the person's capacity to fulfill the essential functions of a job. They should also adopt the most cost-effective means consistent with effectively removing barriers to performing the job, and to enjoy equal access to the benefits and opportunities of employment. Employers are further required to accommodate employees when work or the work environment changes or impairment varies which will affect the employee's ability to perform the essential functions of the job.

The Code of Good Practice on the Employment of People with Disabilities (2002:1-9) further stresses that it is also important for the employer to consult the employee and, where reasonable and practical, technical experts to establish appropriate mechanisms to accommodate the employee. It is also the employer's obligation to provide reasonable accommodation when an applicant discloses a disability-related accommodation need or when such a need is reasonably self-evident to the employer. The inaccessibility of the work environment, poor work adjustment and failure to provide technological devices contribute to the non-recruitment, retaining and promotion of persons with disabilities.

### **3.4.2 Discrimination in the workplace**

Harmful and negative attitudes are the biggest barriers persons with disabilities are faced with, whenever trying to access the mainstream programmes (WPINDS, 1997:30). Because of their disabilities, able-bodied people tend to look down upon persons with disabilities. This situation dates back in the life-time of human nature. In the past a woman who gave birth to a person with a disability was perceived as a curse and the kings or families would order that the disabled person be eliminated from the society. Such perceptions still exist, being held by some employers who view persons with disabilities as a burden and incapable of performing their normal functions.

According to the Code of Good Practice (2002:16) it has been a normal trend in departments to release employees who became disabled in the course of their employment with the department and replace them with able-bodied persons. This was due to the unavailability of retaining strategies for persons with disabilities in the workplace. They would be given early retirement packages and left to rot at their homes with their skills and potential. The situation has culminated in society not encouraging persons with disabilities to participate in the mainstream economy.

### **3.4.3 Accessibility of workplaces**

Persons with disabilities are faced not only with the problem of getting employed, but should they manage to secure a job the problem will be how to get to the next or second floor due to the unavailability of lifts and ramps. Those without vehicles will not be able to use the current public transport since it does not cater for them at all. The public transport system, i.e. taxis, trains and buses, does make provision for use by persons with disabilities. The commuters and drivers of these means of public transport are impatient towards persons with disabilities and do not know how to handle disabled customers.

### **3.4.4 Layout of workplaces**

Depending on the impairment, different adaptations to the work environment might be necessary; but given the fact that most companies are worried about issues like competition, production, profits and costs, they might be less worried about having to redesign the layout of the workplace. Structural layout would definitely require redesign in order to accommodate persons with disabilities, despite the effort made by the government in developing legislation and policies aimed at improving the economic and social situations experienced by persons with disabilities.

### **3.4.5 Workplace redesign and culture change to accommodate persons with disabilities**

Depending on the impairment, different adaptations to the work environment might be necessary. These will ensure that persons with disabilities are accommodated. Thus interventions should be put in place to entrench the paradigm shift.

### **3.4.5.1 Organisational culture change**

The organisational culture and values should promote the social acceptance of persons with disabilities in line with the overall focus on accommodating employee diversity. The organisation must be able to show that it is one which offers and provides employment and career opportunities for persons with disabilities. When most managers are asked to consider applications from persons with disabilities, the excuse is that they do not receive any, and this would require management to include appropriate means to attract applicants with disabilities by indicating in the advertisement that persons with disabilities are encouraged to apply.

Management, as the transformation agents of the government of the day's policies, should be seen to walk-the-talk by actively encouraging and ensuring that persons with disabilities are treated with dignity. This would be visible when management undertakes initiatives to integrate persons with disabilities through the redesigning and implementation of programmes towards changing attitudes to persons with disabilities, for with the management not setting an example, persons with disabilities will forever be marginalised in government departments.

### **3.4.5.2 Dealing with stereotypes**

Government departments are microcosms of the community. What happens in the broader community ultimately gets carried out by government departments. The society shuns persons with disabilities in general and women in particular due to perceptions held in those communities that are influenced by cultural heritage. According to Tallmadge (1998:9) in the African culture, when a person has a disability, their people think their parents did something wrong, that the evil spirits are there, or that it is punishment of the parents. These lead to parents hiding the person with disability and not wanting to

invest money for education in a child who will likely have few money-earning prospects when he/she has finished school.

To deal with such stereotypes and to change people's mindset will go a long way to ensuring that persons with disabilities actively participate in the mainstream economy. Departments should engage their employees in training programmes that are aimed at educating employees about disability management in the workplace in order to accept persons with disabilities, as they too can perform certain functions competently. For as long as management and employees view persons with disabilities as "aliens", there will not be a place for them in the workplace. Their disability is no justification for them to be discriminated against. If they were viewed differently, they would be likely to perform as well as any able-bodied person. Negative stereotypes only demotivate and discriminate against persons with disabilities.

#### **3.4.5.3 Barrier-free access**

The way in which the environment is developed and organised contributes, to a large extent, to the level of independence and equality that people with disabilities enjoy. There are a number of barriers in the environment which prevent disabled people from enjoying equal opportunities with non-disabled people, for example, structural barriers in the built environment, inaccessible service points, inaccessible entrances due to security systems, poor town planning and poor interior design. The purpose of Section S of the National Building Regulations and its associated Code 0400 includes regulations setting out national requirements for an accessible built environment. Costs are often cited as the reason for failure to provide a barrier-free environment. The National Environmental Accessibility Programme was formed in 1993 by the various agencies working in the field of environmental accessibility. It is a programme of action designed to ensure a barrier-free environment including access to information and communication especially for persons with

disabilities (White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy, 1997:30).

Mobility-impaired people need physical accessibility to buildings and facilities like toilets, canteens and parking. Government institutions are required to employ persons with disabilities and this can be made easier by structural redesign to accommodate them in the work environment. According to Frieden (1998:16), several comments centre on the employers' fears of costs associated with hiring people with disabilities.

The removal of barriers inhibiting easy access to the workplace by persons with disabilities is viewed by many public or private institutions as another expense which is aimed at accommodating just few individuals, not considering the benefit that it will have for persons with disabilities. Departments that are genuine about employing persons with disabilities view structural design differently and believe that persons with disabilities should not be disadvantaged.

#### **3.4.5.4 Designated special jobs**

There is a common mindset among employers, management and employees that persons with disabilities are only suitable to work as switchboard operators and this has seen a number of them not being given opportunities for training. This mindset has hampered the development of persons with disabilities, whereas it is necessary to keep an open mind in terms of which jobs persons with disabilities can perform. According to Schabracg et al. (1996:291), when special jobs are only comprised of tasks that have proved to be easy for persons with disabilities, the approach may actually be counter-productive because it may result in impoverished jobs.

The focus should be on ability rather than disability in the process of recruiting and promoting employees with disabilities. Specific and realistic appraisal of the specific job situation must replace vague and emotive assumptions. It should be borne in mind that persons with disabilities may be able to do jobs differently from other employees but just as effectively through the use of assistive devices, re-engineering of the work process or restructuring of the work area.

The worst thing is that designated special jobs tend to be regarded as a kind of parking place or dustbin for persons with disabilities. Their performance declines drastically as they derive no satisfaction from the jobs they are assigned to. Management should therefore take precautions when designing and allocating certain jobs to persons with disabilities.

#### **3.4.5.5 Managing diversity**

The government included the equality clause in the Bill of Rights that entrenches people with disabilities as full citizens of the country. The government initially felt that the inclusion of equality would be sufficient to break down barriers that prevent the economic progress of women and people with disabilities. With the passage of time, it became apparent that simply forbidding discrimination was not enough. In 1998 the government passed the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 that would push employers to take proactive or aggressive measures to increase the number of women and people with disabilities. The government's initiative is supported by Mentzer (2005:255-6) on writing about "How Canada Promotes Workplace Diversity".

According to Mentzer (2005), the Canadian Parliament passed the Canadian Human Rights Act in 1977, which forbids discrimination by federally regulated employers on the basis of race, gender and other grounds. It was also hoped that it would be break down the barriers that prevented the economic progress

of women and minorities. It did not; hence they came up with employment equity in order to compel employers to comply. In Canada, to avoid the confusion surrounding affirmative action, the term employment equity was created to cover such proactive measures as aggressive recruiting among women and minorities, providing child-care facilities and accommodating the needs of people with disabilities.

The Canadian Employment Equity Act of 1986 was mainly symbolic, relying on persuasion and embarrassment, so that employers would be more serious about creating workplaces that value diversity. The initiatives taken by Canada were also utilised in South Africa by shaming or embarrassing companies that were not complying with employment equity requirements. Both public and private institutions are required to submit annual employment equity reports and that is where the Minister of Labour identified non-compliance; hence he embarrassed them in the media. The employment of people with disabilities can promote diversity in the workplace, taking into consideration the heterogeneity of the country.

South Africa is a heterogeneous country and diversity management has become a major challenge to public service managers due to apartheid policies which divided people according to their ethnic origins. In Limpopo diversity is more complex because during the transition, four administrations had to be amalgamated, namely Provincial Administration, and Lebowa, Venda and Gazankulu governments. Because of its uniqueness, the officials were very sensitive and in some instances cooperation was minimal especially if the supervisor did not speak the same language as colleagues. The Department employed officials from different ethnic groups, which was in line with Chapter 10 which requires that public administration should be broadly representative with employment and personnel management practices based on ability, objectivity, fairness and the need to redress the imbalances of the past to achieve broad representation.

According to Hoecklin (1994:27), the post-1994 government inherited the public service characterised by inequitable distribution of services, inaccessible basic services, poor accountability and non-transparent, inadequate consultation on the required service standards; inaccurate information on services, unresponsive and insensitive attitudes towards public complaints and discourteous staff.

The constitution advocates equality and representivity in the public service. The role of managers, employees and employee representatives should be clarified and agreed upon to ensure a coherent approach to the management of disability in the workplace. Every employee in the organisation should be sensitised to the plight and discrimination persons with disabilities have for a long time been subjected to. The legal implications of discriminating against them should also be clarified as this could save organisations from paying thousands in lawsuits. For as long as able-bodied people have the right to belong to the organisation, so do persons with disabilities. Leadership and management programmes should also focus on equipping managers and supervisors with the skills to manage a diverse workforce and disability remains a challenge to many managers and employees due to the attitudes and mindset about persons with disabilities.

### **3.5 MODELS OF DISABILITY**

The perception of disablement has been viewed through different models of disability. Some of these models are medical, psychosocial, sociopolitical, etc. The models of disability have been influenced by the definition of disability. Finkelstein (1993:34-43)) is of the opinion that the medical interpretation of disability is widely experienced as dominating service provision models for disabled people. The medical interpretation of disability does not provide outstanding principles that govern understanding and servicing of people. The approach to disability issues is sometimes blamed on an illness or seen as a

tragedy. According to Oliver (1993:62), if disability is seen as a tragedy, then disabled people will be treated as if they are the victims of some tragic happening and circumstance. This treatment will occur not just in everyday interaction but will also be translated into social policies which will attempt to compensate these victims for the tragedy that has happened to them. Oliver reiterates that it logically follows that if disability is defined as social oppression, then disabled people will be seen as collective victims of an uncaring or unknowing society rather than as individual victims of circumstances. Such a view will be translated into social policies geared towards alleviating oppression rather than compensating individuals.

The South African Government's official policy framework for disability equity has adopted a socio-political approach to disability, whereby disability is located in the social environment. This takes cognisance of disabled people's viewpoint that disability is a social construct and most of its effects are inflicted upon people with disabilities by their social environment. People with disabilities can therefore actively contribute to changing the social construct by fighting for improvements in their material and legal situation and, at the same time, taking pride in who they are and what they are fighting for, proudly identifying themselves with their human rights struggle (Disabled People South Africa, 2001:7).

### **3.5.1 Medical model**

Medicine over the years has been known to place more emphasis on the body, and fails to acknowledge the cognitive and emotional factors shaping illness and disability. Psychologists also tend to locate disability within an individual person who has failed to adjust to and overcome impairment. This approach has been challenged by many victims as victim-blaming. The concept of adjustment to loss has been applied to those who have failed to mourn the losses experienced as a result of impairment (Szivos & Griffiths, 1992).

Lenny (1993:233) argues that the disabled have no more need of counselling than anyone else. Imrie (1997:263) reiterates that people with disabilities remain at the mercy of society, often depicted as pitiful and tragic characters worthy only of the charity supplied by their able-bodied counterparts. Those involved with rehabilitation have criticised this narrow medical approach because it fails to assess the potential for improving function, by collaborating with other professionals (Goodwill & Chamberlain, 1995). Some psychologists have criticised the medical model for failing to report the psychological experiences of disability.

The medical model focuses on individual pathology and attempts to find ways of preventing, curing or caring for the disabled person only. The focus therefore is on the individual. A central concern of the medical model is to make an accurate diagnosis of the condition of people with disabilities. Policy makers tend to rely on medical definitions of disablement in order to assess the prevalence of disability to provide treatment, services and benefits, which fail to acknowledge the role of the social and physical environment of the physically disabled person. Again with the medical model there is no consideration for the immediate next of kin - parents and the family. Mothers are not able to obtain full-time employment because they have to care for the child with a disability. The medical definition has no place for the role of parents and other members of the family.

Disability has historically been regarded as a health and welfare issue and state intervention has therefore been channeled through welfare institutions. The responsibility for “caring” for disabled people has thus generally fallen on civil society. The medical model of disability means that an organisation for people with disabilities is usually controlled by non-disabled people who provide services to people with disabilities. The vast majority of organisations for people with disabilities were founded by people concerned about creating a more “caring” environment for different groups of disabled people. Their aim

was usually to provide treatment or to create alternatives to begging or “hiding away”. The philosophy was that disabled people were not to be hated or feared, but rather to be pitied or helped as part of the deserving poor. People with disabilities very seldom had any say in the aims, objectives and management of these organisations.

The medical model put more emphasis on dependence and the focus was on the nature of impairment. This meant that all interventions were based on assessment, diagnosis and labelling, with therapy programmes developed separately and through alternative services. The dependency created by the medical model disempowers persons with disabilities and isolates them from the mainstream of society, preventing them from accessing fundamental social, political and economic rights. The medical model encourages dependency on state assistance (disability grant) and has seriously reduced their capacity and confidence to interact on an equal level with other people in society.

(White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy, 1997:9).

### **3.5.2 Distinction between impairment and disability**

The aspect that perhaps created most understanding about disabled people is the distinction between disability and handicap. At a basic level, part of the problem arises because the description of what constitutes a handicap has to some degree been explained in terms of disability (Badley, 1993:161). According to the WHO (1997), the overall distinction between impairment and disability is fairly clear. Some difficulties have arisen where a problem could be described appropriately as either an impairment or a disability. For example, someone who is blind might equally well be described as having ocular impairment, such as absence of an eye or profound impairment of visual acuity or alternatively, as a disability in seeing. In a health-care setting, impairment may be an important focus; the response to such problems could be medical or surgical interventions, or the prescription of spectacles. In the context of other

service provision, it is often the number of people with disability in seeing that may be of more relevance, particularly bearing in mind that not all blindness is the result of ocular impairment. The response might variously be the provision of talking books, Braille or raised numbers in lifts. A further example is the contrast between focusing on the absence of a limb (skeletal impairment) or on the possible consequence of locomotor disability. Once again, the type of concern will dictate the way the problem is described.

### **3.5.3 Impairment, disability and functional limitation**

Functional limitation can be thought of as providing functional links between impairment and disability in everyday life activities. It describes limitations in functions or actions that are integral to the performance of purposeful or more complex activities such as dressing, acting, serving food, shopping, using public transport and so on, which are sometimes referred to as activities of daily living (ADL) or instrumental activities of daily living (IADL) (Badley,1993).

#### **3.5.3.1 Functional limitations and gender**

Badley (1993) indicates that the degree of handicap may vary depending on the circumstances of the person. For example, compare a woman and a man who are unable to carry out any household activities. In a society where such instrumental activities of daily living are identified as women's work, the man's inability to carry out these activities would not put him at a disadvantage, and only the woman would experience handicap, although technically they have the same abilities. These contrasts highlight a further ambiguity that has caused some difficulties, and this is the concept of social role. There has been confusion between the activities that make up social roles and the social roles themselves; this is part of the distinction between disability and handicap. Disabilities in the so-called instrumental activities of daily living include

limitations in activities such as housework, laundry, shopping and cooking. To some degree, these activities can also be seen as reflecting social roles.

The solution to this may be to realise that disabilities are a description in a relatively neutral way of what a person can do. In theory, people may be tested as part of a formal disability assessment of the performance activities of daily living, regardless of whether they carry out these activities in their real life or not. This is often done in the setting of a rehabilitation facility. It is the impact of the inability to carry out the activities which takes the disability into these activities in the social and cultural setting in which individuals find themselves. For example, as indicated above, whether a person who is unable to carry out instrumental activities of a daily living, such as cooking or shopping, will experience physical dependence or occupational handicap will depend on their age, gender and cultural setting.

### **3.6 SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH TO DISABILITY**

#### **3.6.1 The social model of disability**

In contrast to individualising approaches, the social model locates disability not in an impairment or malfunctioning body, but in an excluding and oppressive social environment. The social model is a theoretical elaboration, which developed out of substantive struggles for independent living and citizenship or civil rights for disabled people. Many restrictions imposed on disabled people are not a natural consequence of their impairment but are products of a social environment which fails to take account of their differences (Longmore, 1987; Finkelstein, 1990). Barnes (1994) therefore defines disability as the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the normal life of the community on an equal level with others due to physical and social barriers. Marks (1997:85-91) reiterates that the social model sees the oppression of disabled people as being institutionally based, rather than a product of actions

of individual prejudiced people. The social model is therefore quite critical of those professionals whose aim is to change disabled people. Too much attention has been given to therapy, corrective surgery and elaborate prosthetic devices to make disabled people normal, and far less attention has been given to disabled people's priorities. Given the complex nature of contemporary society with a highly specialised workforce, every one is dependent on a range of services to meet their needs. All human societies are characterised by interdependence and the physically disabled are part of this co-existence.

People with disabilities in South Africa came together in the early eighties to mobilise and organise themselves. Their aim was to build a strong civil movement of organisations controlled by people with disabilities themselves. Central to the disability rights movement is the assertion of disability as a human rights and development issue.

The social model further implies that the reconstruction and development of our society involves recognition of and intention to address the developmental needs of people with disabilities within a framework of inclusive development. Nation building, where all citizens participate in a single economy, can only take place if people with disabilities are included in the process. The social attitudes which resulted from the perception of disability as a health and welfare issue have invaded all areas of society. The result is that disabled people and their families have been isolated from their communities and mainstream activities.

Dependency on state assistance, for example, the disability grant, has disempowered people with disabilities and has seriously reduced their capacity and confidence to interact on an equal level with other people in society. The social model is based on the belief that circumstances of people with disabilities and the discrimination they face are socially- created phenomena and have little to do with the impairments of disabled people. The disability-

rights movement believes that the “cure” for the problem of disability lies in restructuring society. The social model ignores biological features and places an individual within a society. The environments are not designed for disabled persons. This model acknowledges that people are different and the environment must respond to the different needs of the individuals, for example:

- It is not the person in a wheelchair who cannot get access into the building, but it is the design of the building that hinders the person in a wheelchair from getting access to it.
- It is the stairs leading into a building that disable the wheelchair user rather than the wheelchair.
- It is the defects in the design of everyday equipment that cause difficulties, not the abilities of people using it.
- It is society’s lack of skill in using and accepting alternative ways of communicating that excludes people with communication disabilities.
- It is the inability of the ordinary schools to deal with diversity in the classroom that forces children with disabilities into special schools.

The medical model emphasises what the individual cannot do, while the social model looks at what the disabled can do. As a result of this, disability is viewed as a human rights and development issue. This means that disabled people have rights and are entitled to development. Development implies that barriers must be removed within the society and the environments to enable a disabled person to live a normal life (White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy, 1997:10-11).

### **3.6.2 The socio-political model of disability**

The implication of the minority approach or the socio-political definition of disability is the way it develops a social-construct position by placing disability with the oppressive and coercive attitudes of society where attitudes are reinforced and perpetuated by the practices and discourses of the dominant institution. The underlying political message is the need to transform formerly devalued attributes to positive sources of dignity and pride.

According to Imrie (1997), the contrasting approaches to the theorisation of disability indicates a gradual move from the presentation of disability as an individual pathology towards a social construct or one which places the understanding of disability in a wider social and political context. In particular the failure of the medical or rehabilitation model of disability has led some authors to place understanding of disabled people's position in society in the values, attitudes and policy programmes of institutions and their actors. Hahn (1986) suggests that one of the keys to understanding the disability society rests with an exploration of the determined institutions and the solution must be found in laws and policies to change the milieu, rather than in unrelenting efforts to improve the capacities of disabled individuals.

## **3.7 HUMAN RIGHTS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

### **3.7.1 Disability as a human rights and development issue**

An understanding of disability as a human rights and development issue leads to recognition and acknowledgement that people with disabilities are equal citizens and should therefore enjoy equal rights and responsibilities. This implies that the needs of every individual are of equal importance, and that needs must be made the basis for planning. It further implies that resources must be employed in such a way as to ensure that every individual has equal

opportunities for participation in society. In addition to rights, people with disabilities should have equal obligations within society and should be given the proper support necessary to enable them to exercise their responsibilities (White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy, 1997:10).

### **3.7.2 The social model and disability rights**

No person is completely self reliant, since we all live in communities characterised by the exchange of goods and services. The concept of need is socially constructed. What comes to be a need depends greatly on social organisation. When we talk about someone's needs the connotation is the helplessness and passivity of any individual who is in need (Woodhead, 1990). People who are identified might have resulted from abnormal distribution of resources. If for example steps rather than ramps were built at the entrance of buildings, access into such building by able-bodied persons would be denied. In contrast, if people need to catch a train in order to gain access to their place of work, they are not considered to be dependent on public transport. Some needs are met automatically, while others are not. Disability movements are therefore calling for rights, not charity (Campbell & Oliver, 1996).

Morris (1993) mentions that many disability activists define independence as autonomy over decision-making rather than the capacity to carry out mundane tasks such as dressing oneself. The implications of this are quite important for the concept of integration or normalisation. The focus for change becomes social rather than individual. We need to rethink our culture, institutions and relationships in order to create a more inclusive society, which can tolerate a high degree of differences. Marks (1997) indicates that studies become the analysis not of disabled people, but the study of the way in which we think and live in society. This claim is supported by some cultural and historical examples.

### **3.8 CONCLUSION**

The employment of people with disabilities is a constitutional obligation and they must be seen as citizens who can also contribute to the socio-economic growth of the country. The employment of persons with disabilities poses a serious challenge to both private and public institutions. This is despite the government's commitment to eradicate any discrimination against persons with disabilities by developing legislation and policies such as the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998, the White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy, Technical Assistance Guidelines on the Employment of Persons with Disabilities, Code of Good Practice: Key Aspects on the Employment of People with Disabilities, and the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service to assist employers to provide employment opportunities to persons with disabilities. Attitudes, cultural beliefs and stereotypes seem to be the main problems hindering the employment of the disability sector due to their physical disabilities, being wheelchair bound or blind. The management of disability in the workplace requires managers who are committed or understand the transformation agenda of the government of the day. The employers always cite constraints especially whenever a disability issue comes into the picture.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The success of conducting a research study depends on various available methods of gathering data and other factors. The study was conducted in the Limpopo Department of Agriculture. A series of steps such as population identification, sampling, instrument design, data collection and data analysis were taken. This chapter describes those steps in detail and how they were used to achieve the objectives of the study.

#### **4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND APPROACH**

This was a descriptive survey design. It was descriptive because it described the perceptions of top management and senior management officials on the integration and employment of persons with disabilities into the mainstream of government departments. It also described the available integration strategies and policies in the department as well as the physically accessible structures and environments to persons with disabilities.

A research design is defined as the systematic application of logical strategies and observational techniques for purposes of developing, modifying and expanding knowledge about social phenomena (Tripodi, 1974:8). On the other hand, Grinnell (1988:219) states that a research design is a plan that includes every aspect of a proposed research study from the conceptualisation of the problem right through to the dissemination of the findings.

### **4.3 TARGET POPULATION**

According to Huysamen (1997:1), population is defined as the total collection of individuals who are potentially available for observation and who have the attributes in common that a particular hypothesis examines. Target population refers to the entire group to which the experimenter wishes research findings to apply (Huysamen, 1997:104).

The target population for this study was the top and senior management levels in the Limpopo Department of Agriculture because of their ability to take decisions on the integration and employment process. The departmental organisational structure consists of ten branches and sub-branches. Branches are headed by general managers whereas sub-branches are headed by senior managers. The population of the study would consist of officials from different branches and sub-branches, for example, Branch: Human Resource Management consists of sub-branches such as Human Resource Services, Labour Relations Services, Human Resource Development and Transformation Services, whereas Branch: Corporate Services consists of sub-branches such as Communication Services, Legal Services, Government Information Technology Services, Security and Risk Management Services and Logistic Services.

### **4.4 SAMPLING METHODS AND SIZE**

All thirty-three (33) senior managers were to participate in the study. All the senior managers would form the sample of this study. The researcher has extensive knowledge of the institution and its management because he is an employee of the department where the research was undertaken.

## **4.5 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION**

A questionnaire (see appendix A) was used in this study as the main source for data collection.

### **4.5.1 Questionnaire**

A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data; the questionnaire consisted of both open and closed questions. The questionnaire had the following sections: Section A: Demographic characteristics. This was aimed at obtaining the demographic information of respondents. While section B investigated the experiences of the respondents in dealing with people with disabilities, Section C of the instrument evaluated the different methods of recruitment and employment. Section D evaluated the respondents' knowledge on equity in employment. Finally, section E of the questionnaire evaluated access to the work environment and office accommodation. The researcher distributed the questionnaires to all respondents and collected the completed questionnaires from the respondents or their assistants after two months.

Reminders about the questionnaires were sent to the respondents through their personal assistants.

### **4.5.2 Observation**

A checklist was used to observe the presence of an accessible environment and office accommodation. The availability of accessible environment and software was also observed. The progress and structure of the equity plan within the Department was observed.

## **4.6 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF THE INSTRUMENT**

The instrument of this research was validated by means of literature on disability. A pilot study was also used to determine the reliability and the

validity of the instrument. Data from the respondents was checked by colleagues, and statisticians examined and supervised the whole process.

#### **4.7 PILOT STUDY**

A pilot study was done by the researcher on managers from different sub-branches and districts. The pilot study was done on five male managers from different sub-branches and districts, and five female managers. The researcher distributed the questionnaire to managers in different divisions: transport, logistics, human resource development, restitution and development, Bohlabela district, financial management and procurement. The managers' inputs towards the study assisted the researcher in understanding the views of managers despite their not forming part of the population, and their perceptions on the employment and integration of persons with disabilities in the workplace.

A pilot study was also done for the purpose of refining the logistics of this study. Ten subjects (managers) participated in the pilot study. These subjects were not part of the population to be studied. This was done to enable the researcher to acquaint himself with the instrument and establish the feasibility of the study. It was also intended to allow the researcher to test individual questions for reliability and validity and to change and adapt them accordingly. The instrument was validated by means of the literature.

#### **4.8 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The scope of this study was the Limpopo Department of Agriculture. Since the values of the study depended heavily on the willingness of the subjects to divulge their genuine values, perceptions and feelings, it was possible that this might influence the eventual outcome of the study.

#### **4.9 PROCEDURE FOR DATA COLLECTION**

The researcher distributed questionnaires to officials from the ten branches and sub-branches, and ensured that they were given time frames for the submission of the completed questionnaires.

The researcher had a discussion with each respondent before the distribution of the questionnaires and this was aimed at making senior managers aware, before distribution, of what to expect. The researcher gave the questionnaires to the personal assistants of top and senior management and gave them a period of two months to complete the questionnaires.

The researcher made follow-ups about progress on the questionnaires with the senior managers and personal assistants in order to check whether they had completed the questionnaire.

#### **4.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Permission to conduct the study was sought from and granted by the University of Limpopo and by the Department of Agriculture. At individual level permission was also sought from the participants prior to the interviews and questionnaires. A covering letter accompanied the questionnaire advocating for their consent. Ethical issues were therefore considered under the following subheadings: Confidentiality and Anonymity, and Voluntary informed participation.

#### **4.10.1 Confidentiality and anonymity**

The use of subjects (human beings) in such a study introduces an element of threat because of uncertainty. The researcher assured the subjects that information collected would be treated in strict confidentiality and anonymity.

#### **4.10.2 Voluntary participation**

It was ensured that participation in this study was voluntary. This was based on the information given by the researcher about the nature and scope of the study. The researcher explained the purpose of the study and the importance of their participation and assured them that there would not be any repercussions for those who were not willing to participate and that an individual was free to withdraw at any time without penalty. They were also informed about data collection procedure.

#### **4.11 DATA ANALYSIS**

Data was analysed using descriptive statistics of frequencies, percentages, and graphs of each category. Both SPSS and Microsoft excel were used for analysis.

#### **4.12 CONCLUSION**

Descriptive analysis was imperative in this study because it offered richly descriptive reports of individual perceptions, attitudes and beliefs. The questionnaire was used as tool to collect data. The questionnaire was self-administered. Ethical issues were considered under the following headings: Confidentiality and Anonymity, and Voluntary informed participation.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### RESULTS

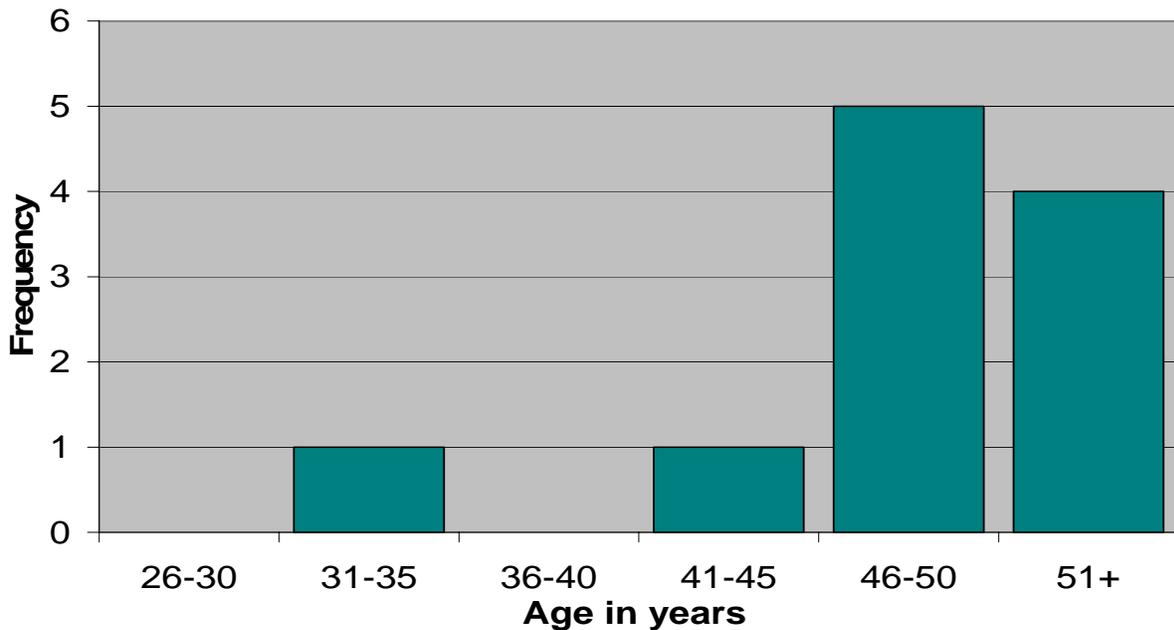
#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

Thirty-three (33) questionnaires were distributed to the subjects and only eighteen (18) were returned which represented a response rate of 55%.

#### 5.2 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

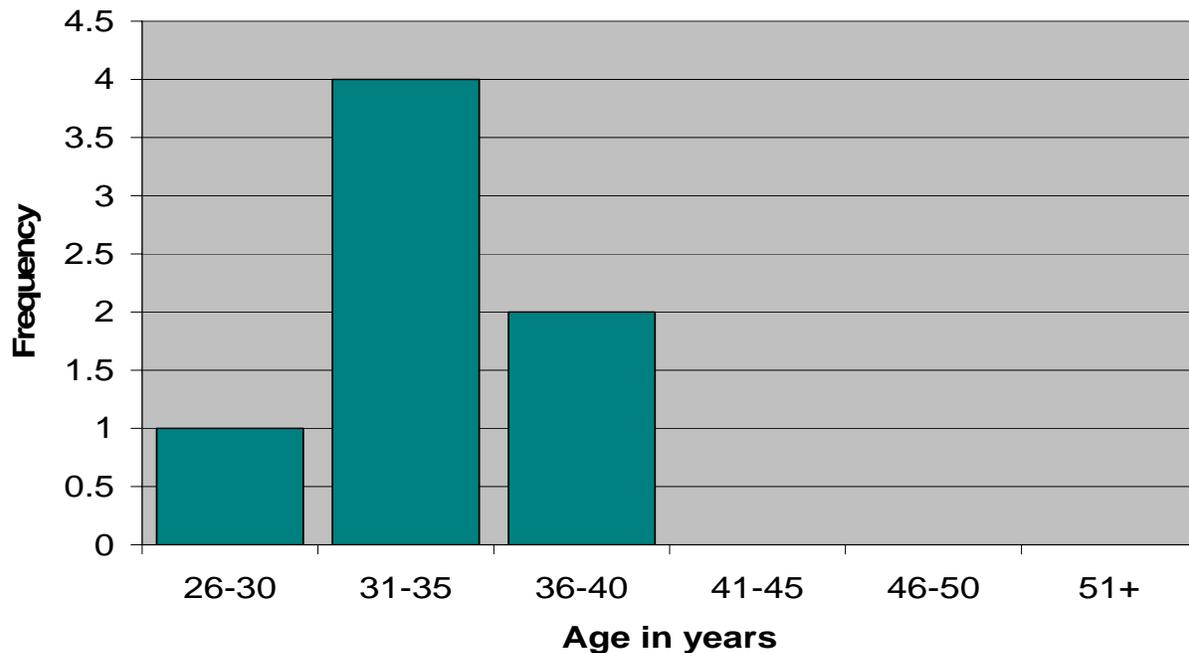
It was found in this study that about 61.12% of the respondents were males while females only constituted about 38.88%. Their age distribution is illustrated in figure 5.1 (A and B) below:

A)



**Figure 5.1(A): Gender and age distribution of male respondents**

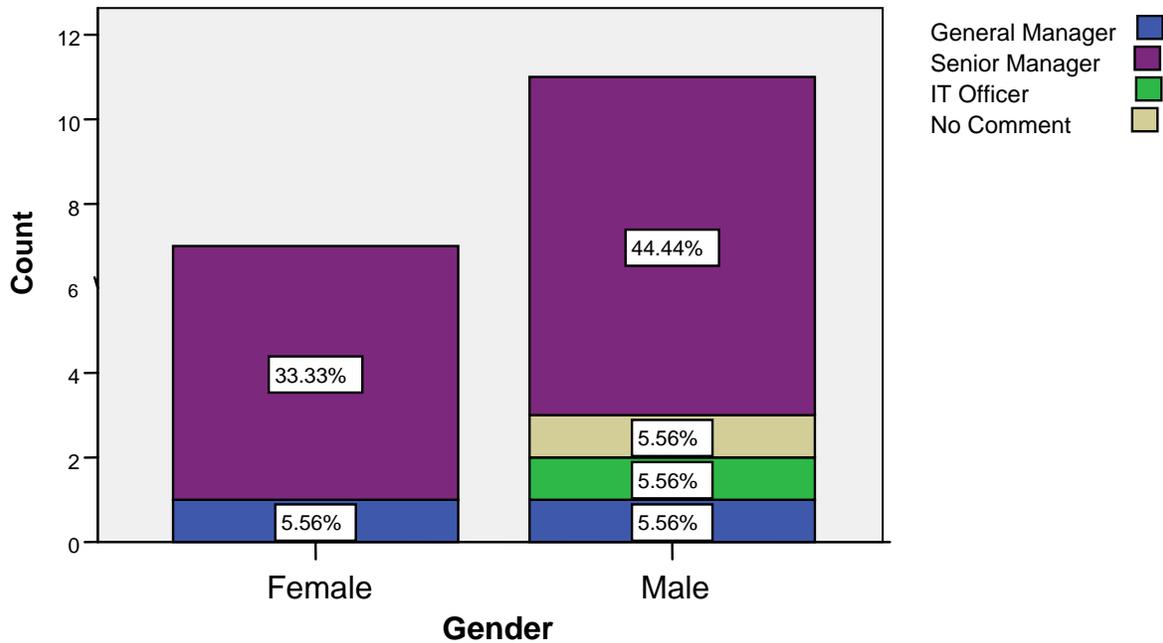
**B)**



**Figure 5.1(B): Gender and age distribution of female respondents**

In figure 5.1(A), the distribution of age in accordance with the respondent occupying senior managerial positions appeared asymmetrical with the figure skewed to the right, whereas figure 5.1(B) indicates an asymmetric data with the figure skewed to the left. This anomaly in distribution in both figures indicates that there is something going on in the process which is causing the quality problem.

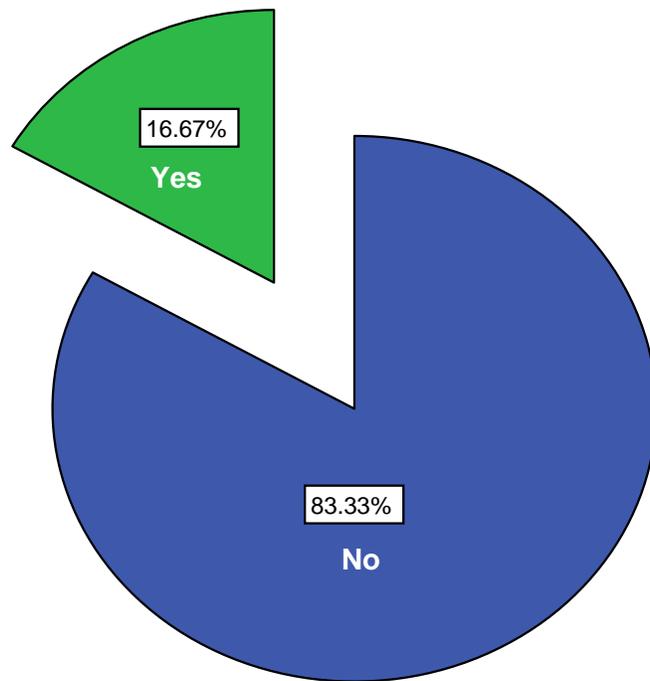
In order to investigate the distribution patterns of gender in relation to the position occupied by the respondent, a cross-tabulation was performed, and figure 5.2 below shows the results:



**Figure 5.2: The distribution of gender and position in the workplace**

About 80% of the respondents in this study were senior managers, while only 11% of general managers gave their views. A fraction of the respondents, about 6%, were IT officers.

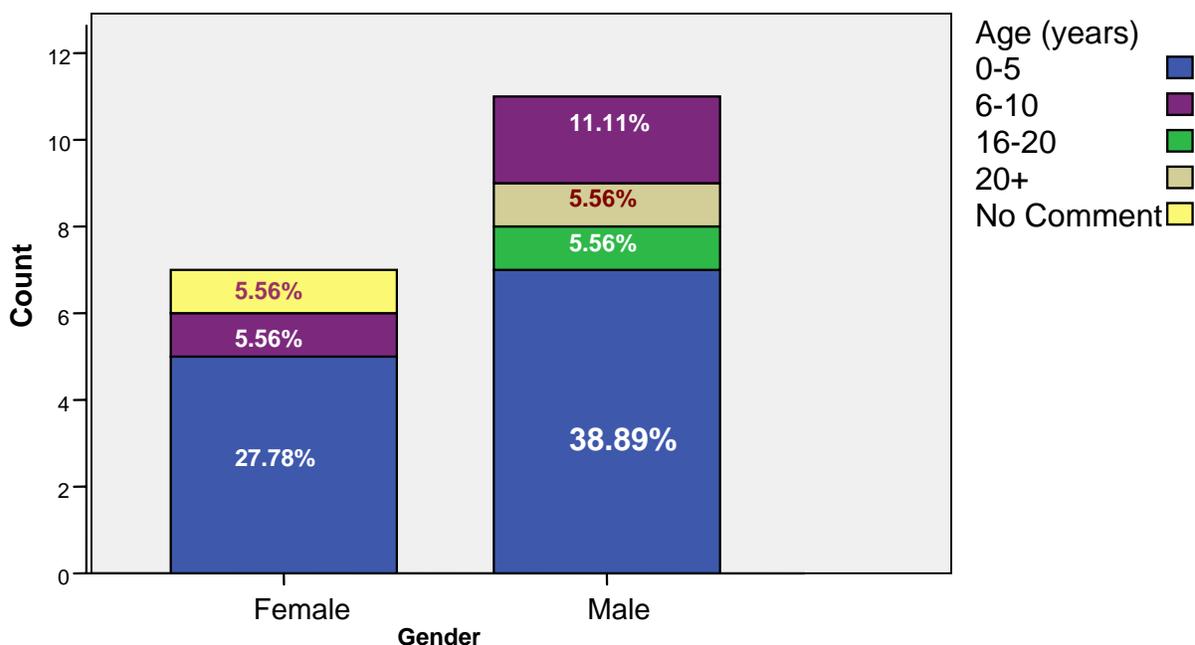
According to the information obtained as illustrated in the subsequent figure, it was found that 83.33% of the respondents had no employees with disabilities, while about 16.67% of the respondents had employees with disabilities in their place of work.



**Figure 5.3: Employee-disability profile of the respondents**

The qualification profile in this study revealed that approximately 61% of the respondents had postgraduate qualifications which were best situated for a position of this magnitude. The remaining 39% had at least a tertiary (junior degree) qualification.

In terms of experience, 67% of the respondents had 0-5 years of experience within their place of work and only 17% had about 6-10 years of working experience (illustrated in figure 5.4). It was also found that only about 11% of the respondents had experience of above 16 years of working within their post.



**Figure 5.4: Profiles of experience (age range) of the respondents in their place of work**

In comparison to experience gained in the public service other than the current position, it was found that only about 22% of participants said they had 0-5 years of experience in the public service and the other 22% said they had worked in the public service for about 6-10 years, while 2% had worked for more than 20 years.

### **5.3 EXPERIENCE OF RESPONDENTS WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

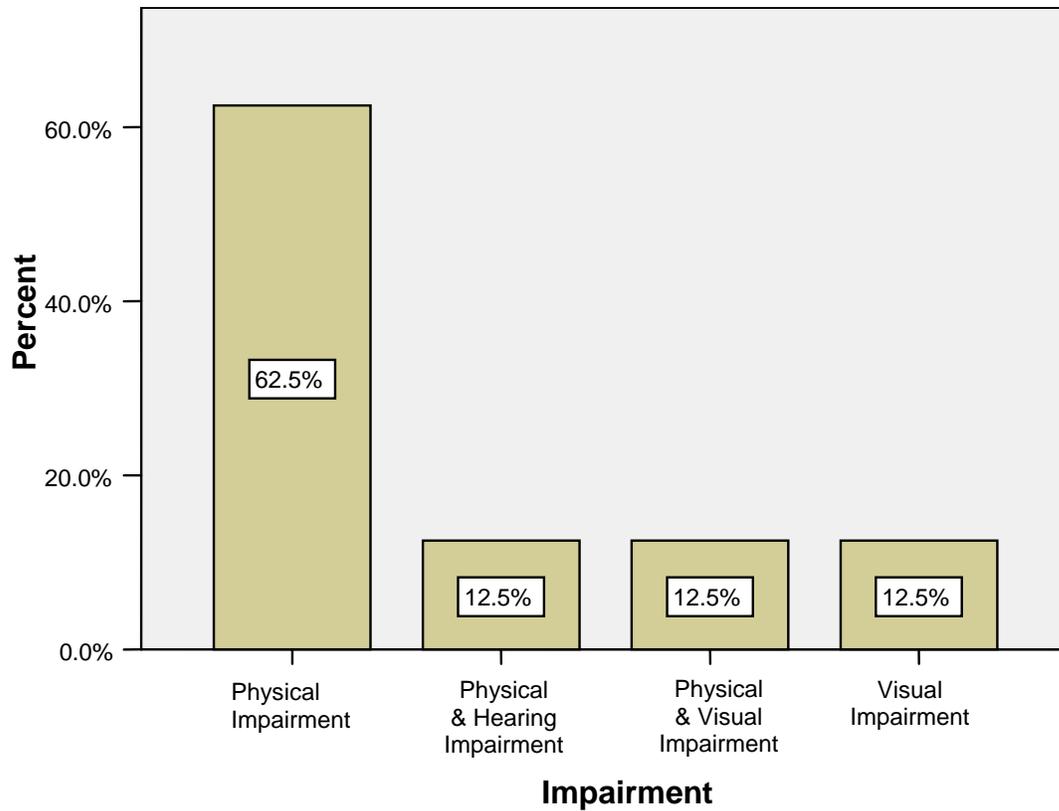
This section explores the experience of the respondents as managers in interacting with people with disabilities. It was intended to reveal the knowledge of the respondents about people with disabilities. It also covers briefly the general perceptions about the integration of persons with disabilities into the mainstream activities of the Department.

When asked whether they had people with disabilities in their workplace, approximately 66.7% said that they did not have employees with disabilities in their unit, 22.2% had individuals with disability in their unit and only 11.1% had people with disability in their workplace. The respondents were then asked whether they dealt closely with cases involving persons with disabilities, and table 5.1 below illustrates their responses.

**Table 5.1: Respondents' involvement with people living with disabilities**

		Involvement with employees with disabilities		Total
		No	Yes	
How often do they deal with people with disabilities?	No comment	10	0	10
	Sometimes	0	8	8
Total		10	8	18

According to the responses, approximately 44.44% said that they sometimes encountered cases involving employees with disabilities and 55.56% had never come across such cases. Respondents were found to deal more often with people with physical impairment. The figure below highlights the frequency of occurrence of cases with which the respondents deal.



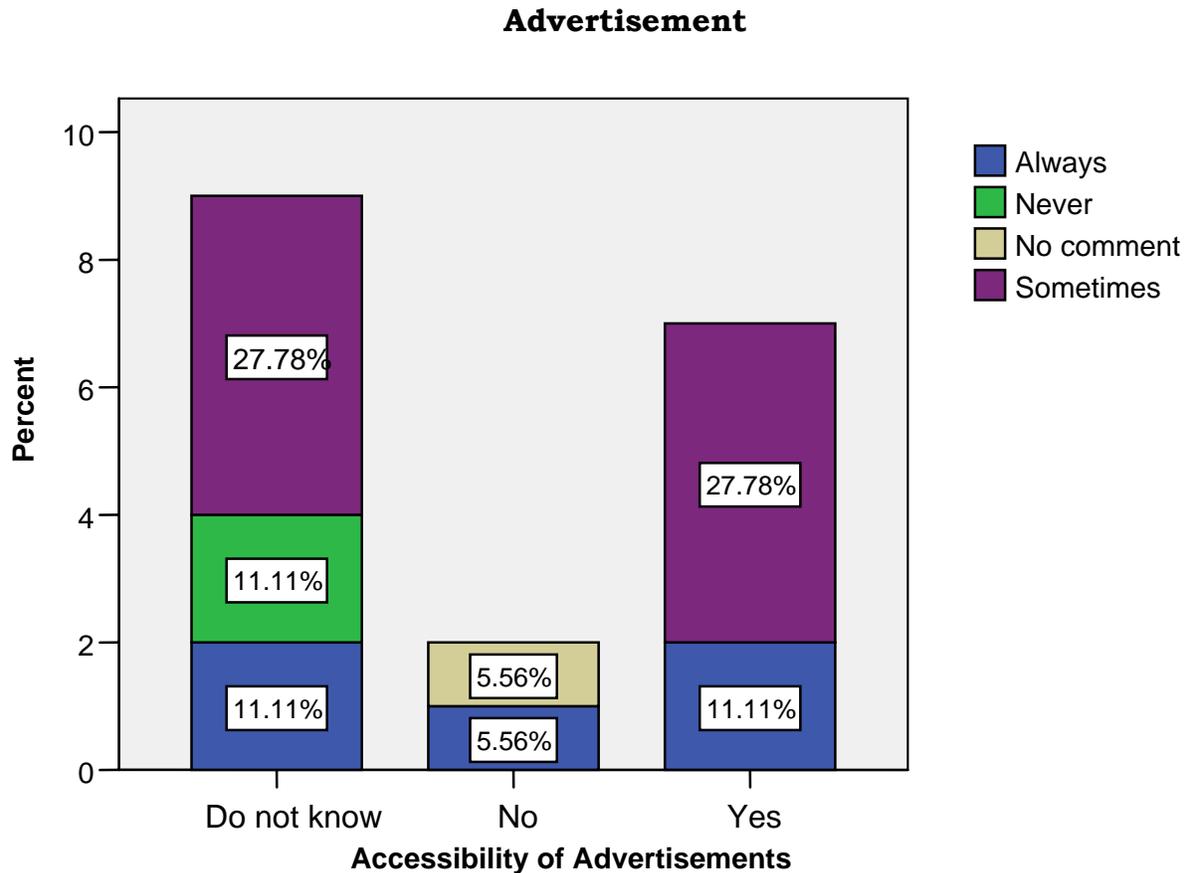
**Figure: 5.5 Common cases of persons with disabilities encountered**

Figure 5.5 clearly shows that 63% of the most common cases of disability encountered are physically-impaired people. It can be noted from the figure that there are complexities around integrating people with visual and auditory impairment into the mainstream activities of this department. They are both encountered in only about 13% of all the cases.

#### **5.4 METHODS OF RECRUITMENT AND EMPLOYMENT**

This section describes the methods used when posts are advertised; it seeks to clearly illustrate the accessibility of these posts to the general population in particular to people with disabilities. In addition, it explores the general

perception of the respondents about different employment methods. Figure 5.6 shows a schematic representation of the frequency of post advertisement.



**Figure: 5.6 Frequency of advertisements**

Figure 5.6 above indicates that 28% of the respondents said that posts were always advertised, whereas 56% were of the view that they were sometimes advertised. However, 11% said that posts were never advertised while the remaining 6% reserved their comment. In terms of the accessibility of posts to persons with disabilities, approximately 50% of the senior managers had no idea about the accessibility of posts to persons with disabilities, whereas only 39% were of the view that indeed these posts were accessible to people living with disabilities. The remaining 11% did not agree on the accessibility of advertisements to people with disabilities.

Table 5.2 below illustrates the methods of post advertisement and the type of selection criteria employed to fill the vacant positions.

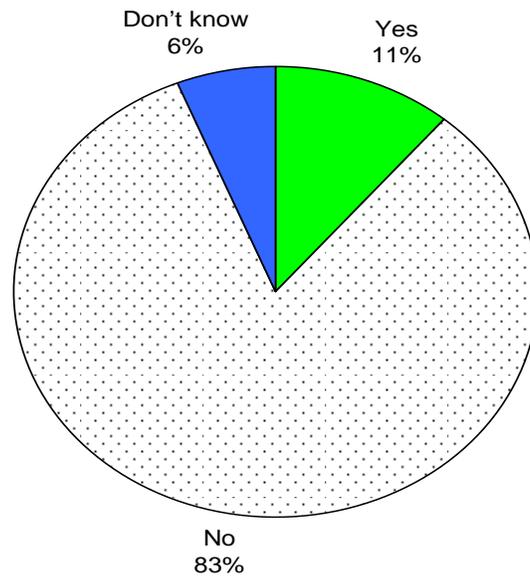
**Table: 5.2 Advertisement and selection criteria for posts**

Forms of Advertisement	Frequency	%	Job Selection Method	Frequency	%
Print	14	78%	Interviews	16	89%
Print and Electronic	3	17%	Interviews, headhunting and tests	1	5.5%
Do not Know	1	5%	Do not know	1	5.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100%</b>

The great majority of the respondents (78%) indicated that advertisement of posts was mainly done in the print media, and 17% said that both print and electronic versions were used. On selection criteria, 89% preferred interviews, and 5.5% said they would prefer headhunting. Approximately 88.9% mentioned the fact that it was a constitutional obligation to employ people with disabilities, while 5.6% said they did not know whether it was a constitutional obligation to employ people with disabilities. It was also found that all the respondents agreed that they had a comfortable working relationship with all employees with disabilities.

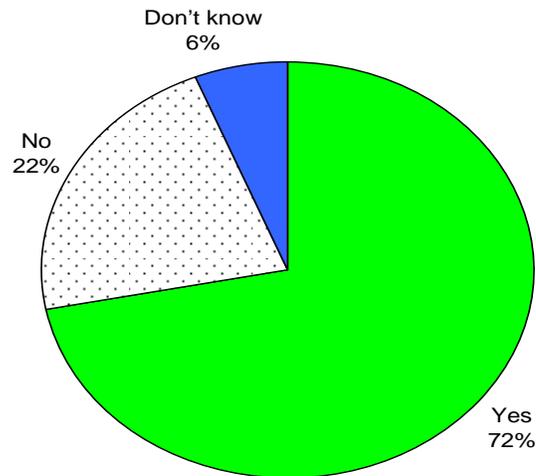
## 5.5 EQUITY IN EMPLOYMENT

This section describes the perceptions of the respondents in terms of equitable employment policies. In terms of the respondents being familiar with the Employment Equity Act, about 89% indicated that they had knowledge of the Act, whereas 11% had no idea about the Act. The respondents were asked whether they would consider treating people with disabilities with sympathy, and below is a figure indicating their response.



**Figure: 5.7 Sympathy for people with disabilities**

Of the respondents, 83% said they would not consider treating persons with disabilities with sympathy, whereas 11% said they should be treated with sympathy, and 6% said they did not know how they should be treated. On the other hand a substantial number of respondents were of the view that people with disabilities were still vulnerable, and therefore needed protection.



**Figure: 5.8. Protection of people with disabilities**

According to the above pie chart, 72% agreed that people with disabilities should be protected and 22% said people with disabilities should not be protected.

The table below (Table 5.3) lists some perceptions about persons with disabilities being integrated with the society in terms of social activities which the society undertakes. According to the result, approximately 77.8% agreed that people with disabilities should participate in all activities, and 16.7% said they should not participate in all activities, while 5.5% did not know whether people with disabilities should participate in all activities.

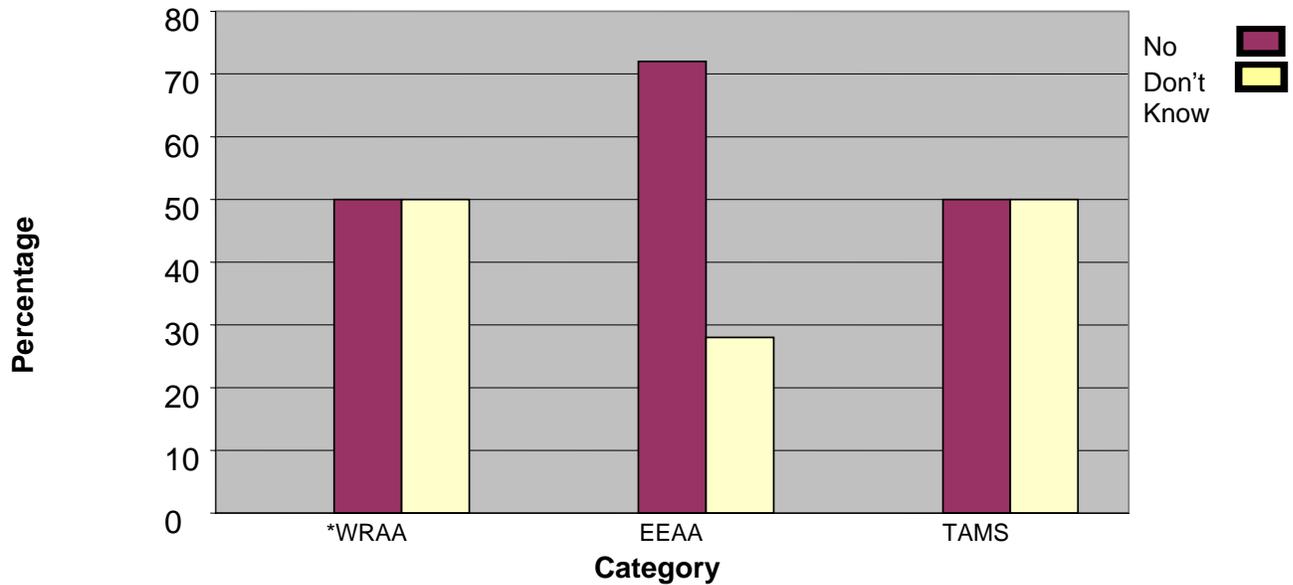
**Table: 5.3 Equity in employment**

<b>1. Should people with disabilities participate in all activities?</b>			<b>2. Should they participate in selected activities?</b>		
	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>		<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	14	77.8	Yes	7	38.9
No	3	16.7	No	7	38.9
Do not know	1	5.5	Do not know	4	22.2
Total	18	100	Total	18	100

38.9% said they should participate in selected activities and 22.2% said they did not know whether they should take part in selected activities, while 38.9% said they should not participate in selected activities. About 88.9% indicated that the workplace was adaptable and accessible to people with disabilities. However, 11.1% disagreed.

## **5.6 ACCESSIBILITY OF WORK ENVIRONMENT AND OFFICE ACCOMMODATION**

This section deals with fair and equitable employment conditions, and for that to be realised, it is necessary to enforce international norms. This is necessary to ensure that persons with disabilities can perform their work effectively and safely in appropriate conditions. About 33.3% of the respondents indicated that lifts were available in a number of public service buildings, while there were ramps at 16.7%. However, 11.1% felt a need for some offices to be shaped-up in terms of being accessible to people with disabilities.



**Figure: 5.9: Accessibility of work environment and office accommodation**

(\*Legends: WRAA: Are all workstations reorganised to accommodate all?

EEAA: Is all existing equipment adapted to include all?

TAMS: Have training assessment materials and systems been changed to include all?)

According to figure 5.9, 50% of the respondents were of the view that workstations were not accommodative to all people, especially people with disabilities, while another 50% of the respondents had no information with regard to work stations being accommodative to all. It appears that 72% of the respondents said the existing equipment was not adaptable to include all, with 28% of them saying that they did not have information. In terms of training assessment materials and systems being changed to include all, approximately 50% of the respondents said they did not agree, whereas the other 50% reported not to have information.

**Table 5.4: Accessibility of work environment and office accommodation**

	Is specialised supervision provided?		Is training provided to all?		Is support in place for people with disabilities?	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Yes	1	5.6	10	55.5	3	16.7
No	7	38.9	1	5.6	2	11.1
Don't know	10	55.5	7	38.9	13	72.2

According to the above table (Table 5.4), about 56% of the respondents indicated that they did not know whether special supervision was provided for people with disabilities. About 39% were of the view that there was no special supervision conducted. Only about 6% of the respondents agreed. About 56% agreed that training was indeed provided to all, whereas 39% said they had no information. The table also showed that 17% of the respondents agreed that there was support in place for people with disabilities, while 72% were without information.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

The White Paper on an Integrated Disability Strategy (1997) indicates that social attitudes emanating from the perceptions about disability as a health and welfare issue, have invaded all areas of our society. This has culminated in the isolation of persons with disabilities from their communities, let alone in the workforce, causing a serious reduction in their capacity and confidence to interact on an equal basis with their able-bodied counterparts.

It was upon these moot points that the study attempted to evaluate the recruitment and employment methods of persons with disabilities in the department, to determine the level of participation of persons with disabilities in departmental activities, and to evaluate the accessibility of the work environment and reasonable accommodation in the Limpopo Department of Agriculture.

#### **6.2 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS**

It was found in this study that there were 2 persons with disabilities (5%) occupying senior management positions, whereas at middle management there were 4, which made 1%. On the other hand, there was a significant improvement in terms of gender representation in the workplace at a rate of 3:2. A significant change was noticed in terms of the distribution pattern of age and gender, which showed that more females are at an entry level of occupying managerial positions in the Department. This further indicates that the Department had progressed towards achieving the National Government's

policy with regard to the employment of people with disabilities and other minority groups. It was hoped that with time this would be achieved. This highlights the commitment by the government as reported in the White Paper on Integrated National Disability Strategy (1997:15). To strike a balance based on fair principles of democracy, this translates to the elimination of all forms of discrimination, formal and informal, and all obstacles to equality of opportunity.

### **6.3 EXPERIENCE OF RESPONDENTS ABOUT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

There was a positive response in terms of relating to persons with disabilities. The result indicated a positive interaction among the respondents and people with disabilities. This might be related to the experience of senior managers in dealing with persons with disabilities. It was found that approximately 44.44% of the respondents had encountered cases involving employees with disabilities, and the majority of these were those with physical impairment.

Since this study did not set out to evaluate the relationship among the levels of interaction between the senior management and persons with disability, it is suggested that further research be carried out to investigate this. The overall purpose of the disability policy is to promote social integration of people with disabilities. Thus, persons with disabilities should not be isolated from the mainstream activities; there should rather be equal opportunities for all.

Persons with physical impairment seem to be the most easily employed at a higher rate than other categories such as the visually impaired and the deaf. This might be influenced by the fact that the Department had not created an enabling environment for those other categories of prospective employees. The department did not have a visually impaired or deaf person in its employ at the

decision-making level, hence Braille and sign language were not included as medium of advertisement for new recruits. The employment of these categories of employees would create awareness of the needs and integration of persons with visual impairment. The researcher wishes to commend the progress on the employment of persons with disabilities. Nevertheless, the employment policy/strategy on people with disabilities should be revisited. The WPINDS (1997) and TAG should serve as guidelines.

There is a need for the Department to formulate and implement strategies and policies on the employment and integration of persons with disabilities into the mainstream activities. The researcher strongly believes that there is a role that each person with disabilities, with relevant qualifications, can fulfill.

#### **6.4 METHOD OF RECRUITMENT AND EMPLOYMENT**

Access to information is the most fundamental aspect of the various arms of government as supported by the Promotion of Access to Information Act (2000:2). The purpose of the Act is to give effect to the constitutional right of access to any information held by the State and any information that is held by another person and that is required for the exercise or protection of any rights. The Act is further supported by the *Batho Pele* principle, which is access to information. It is therefore important to ensure that all legal and technical obstacles to it are removed and that positive measures are taken to facilitate access to departmental information for all people with disabilities.

There is a major imbalance in post advertisement as approximately 95% of the advertisements are printed. The accessibility of advertisements to persons with disabilities should be improved, especially to the visually impaired by ensuring that advertisements are also in Braille to include access to persons with visual

impairment. Another strategy for recruitment could be through headhunting. It might be possible, therefore, to include potential employees who reside in rural areas.

It remains a fact that not all persons with disabilities can follow information in mainstream media, and there is therefore an urgent need for a special form of information circulation to be established. For example, this special information can be provided in Braille for the visually impaired or through liaison with organisations of the disabled. It should be provided in categories according to the specific needs of persons with disabilities with different impairments.

## **6.5 EQUITY IN EMPLOYMENT**

It was notable about the respondents that they were familiar with the requirements of the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998. About 89% knew what it meant, and were able to narrate it using their own understanding of the Act. However, knowing the act and implementing it are two different issues. It is suggested that further study be done to investigate the implementation of this act at a later stage. Equitable employment conditions include special measures to ensure that persons with disabilities can perform their work effectively and safely in appropriate conditions. Therefore, to realise equitable rights for persons with disabilities, especially in the workplace, it is necessary to enforce international norms dealing with equitable employment conditions and fair wages.

According to the results, many of the respondents (about 70%) felt that persons with disabilities were still a vulnerable group, and therefore needed to be protected. It is important to change the perception about persons with disabilities because having a disability does not mean that they cannot work.

Attitudes and perceptions about persons with disabilities are major hindrances in ensuring that they are afforded opportunities to advance socially and economically. The government came up with guidelines and established Disability Units in all Offices of the Premier in the nine provinces, including the Office of the President (WPINDS, 1997). Every year the International Day for Persons with Disabilities is celebrated in Limpopo Province. The Premier always attends and emphasises the integration of people with disabilities in the socio-economic environment. This message will become meaningless if it is not supported by Heads of Department's ensuring that it is implemented. The Heads of Department and Senior Management in the public service should also be encouraged to attend disability celebrations as they educate the public about critical issues affecting people with disabilities.

Disability issues should be viewed from the social model which recognises them as human beings with rights in their respective communities and awareness is the key in this regard. Despite the government's efforts in creating mechanisms for awareness about people with disabilities, there are public officials (change agents) at decision-making level who are still having attitudes and perceptions about people with disabilities, which also contribute to their employability. This is supported by the fact that 78% of the respondents feel that persons with disabilities should participate in all activities. Before 1994, however, persons with disabilities were regarded only as recipients of disability grants and their skills and potential to contribute to the socio-economic development were sacrificed. This argument is supported by Spicker (1994:63), who singles out people with disabilities as the most stigmatised people, especially at work, as they occasionally felt in those days that they were not completely accepted as responsible people. The government of the day has created a society for all, including persons with disabilities with equal rights like other citizens.

## **6.6 ACCESSIBILITY OF WORK ENVIRONMENT AND OFFICE ACCOMMODATION**

The need for persons with disabilities to be given the necessary support to ensure that they perform their assigned tasks effectively, efficiently and safely cannot be over-emphasised. In fact, the Code of Good Practice on the Employment of People with Disabilities (2002:1-9) illustrates unequivocally the role that the employer should embark on, to consult with the employee with the disability in order to establish appropriate mechanisms to accommodate the employee. Buildings should comply with accessibility requirements for persons with disabilities. This includes all public buildings, government facilities and institutions, office buildings, residential buildings, commercial buildings, health facilities, educational institutions, restaurants, recreational facilities and any other building used by the general public. All these buildings should have elevators and ramps to be accessible to wheelchair users.

The result revealed that about 50% of the respondents were of the view that government was doing its best to provide services for persons with disabilities in the working environment. In terms of support, training and supervision being given to persons with disabilities, quite a considerable number of the respondents seemed to have no information. It is important to understand the training needs of people with disabilities and if there are visually impaired or deaf people among trainees, special provision should be made for Braille, proper audio systems and sign- language interpreters. However, about 39% think that there is no special supervision intended for persons with disabilities.

Most respondents felt that the Department should improve on the quality of resources and machinery given to people with disabilities, as most current machines, if not all, were not user friendly for people with disabilities.

Depending on the nature of disability, some might need reasonable accommodation and it is important for officials to understand these needs.

Most of the respondents said that they did not have people with disabilities in their branches/sub-branches, while some did not even know what computer hardware for the visually impaired looked like. The responsibility to ensure the employment of people with disabilities should rest with every branch or sub-branch head, while the overall accountability would rest with the head of department. In this way programme heads would strive to ensure their employment not as window dressing, but as employees with potential who could contribute towards the socio-economic growth of the country.

## **6.7 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Although the employment and integration of persons with disabilities has been enacted by the government, it seems that transformation will always be met with resistance. People and employees across the race groups should understand and acknowledge that persons with disabilities have the capabilities and potential to climb the ladder of success based on their abilities rather than on their disabilities.

The Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 was introduced by the government in order to address the imbalances created by apartheid policies that discriminated against women and people with disabilities. Among these discriminated-against groups, some had qualifications and experience that could even surpass those of their non-disabled colleagues. It was important that whenever they were appointed in higher jobs, cognisance should be taken of the fact that they had been appointed not on equity principles per se or because of the nature of their disability, but on their ability to compete fairly, coupled with the government's national imperatives which had affirmed them.

It is believed that this study will empower both people with disabilities and managements of various departments in government and the private sector with knowledge about the acceptable norms and standards to apply in order to improve service delivery and increase the number of people with disabilities in the workplace.

We therefore recommend the following to the Limpopo Department of Agriculture:

- Explore the measures that could be used to improve facilities for people with disabilities. Visually or partially impaired people require that lift buttons be in numbers, Braille and voice indicator to enable them to reach specific floors without being aided, whereas the partially blind would require that the steps leading to the offices be marked in red or yellow.
- Further research needs to be undertaken to measure the trend of employment for the persons with disabilities, especially in high positions.
- Working equipment such as computers should be improved, especially for people with disabilities who are visually impaired. Visually or partially impaired people would require Braille or computer devices that can enable the partially impaired employees to see enlarged words properly.
- Departments need to review their employment rate for people with disabilities and try to improve on their employment especially in management positions.
- Gender equity for people with disabilities, especially women, should be reviewed and implemented at management level across the board.

- Advertising of posts should have a common administrative structure organised for persons with disabilities. Programme managers should also develop equity plans that consider the intake of persons with disabilities and when the post is advertised, indications must be made from the outset that the post is targeted for people with disability or a female. By so doing it will avoid a situation where a lot of candidates are called for interviews whereas the interview panel or the department knows who their target is in terms of the equity plan of the department or sub-branch.
- Advertisements for employment should be in electronic and print media as well as in Braille. This will accommodate all categories of disabilities such as physical, visual, and hearing-impaired people. People with disabilities are also found in remote rural areas, where radios could be used as a communication tool to reach them. Failure to consider alternative means of communication could be perceived as another form of discrimination and a violation of the right of access to information.
- Managers are change agents and they must spearhead transformation and equity in their respective branches/sub-branches. Programme managers can contribute by developing equity plans in the sub-branches that promote representivity and diversity.
- A society for all, including people with disabilities, should be created and also ensure that measures are put in place so that the visually impaired may access advertisements in Braille.
- Service excellence awards should also be given at provincial departmental, district and municipality levels that strive to promote the integration and employment of people with disabilities in the mainstream activities of their respective departments.

- Branches/sub-branches should set targets for the employment of people with disabilities and in this way the responsibility for the achievement of equity in the workplace will be placed on the entire body of employees.
- The achievement of equity should be included in the performance instruments of senior management and assessment should be done of the compliance by the respective branches/sub-branches.
- All employees, senior managers in particular, should continually attend workshops on the integration and management of disability in the workplace. These will conscientise employees to the importance of diversity in the workplace. Disability issues in the workplace should top the agenda of the government like HIV and AIDS.
- The departments should report to the Executive and the Office of the Premier about equity progress on a quarterly basis. Most importantly, the Office of the Premier should have proper monitoring mechanism to oversee the implementation of employment equity in various departments. The Office of the Premier should establish an equity forum composed of representatives from various departments to monitor and evaluate the implementation of equity plans. The forum should be chaired by the Office of the Premier as the custodian of public administration in the province.
- There is also a need for managers to create an enabling and supportive environment for people with disabilities. This will help to enhance their self-esteem and lead to optimal performance. Provision of adequate resources and a positive attitude are some of the factors that could contribute to job satisfaction for the disabled.

- Departments, through human resources directorates, need to ensure that a panelist from the disability sector is included in the recruitment and selection processes. This official will serve as a watchdog together with the trade unions to ensure fairness. Most importantly, the official shall play an educational role for the rest of the officials in having a better interpretation and understanding of disability issues. This will blend beautifully with the phrase “*Nothing about us without us*”.
- Departments which under-perform on equity issues should be exposed and action taken against them because failure to comply is tantamount to sabotage of the government’s goals. It further dents the image of the department and the province at large.
- Line managers (branches and sub branches) should integrate disability into their day to day activities (functions). For instances, HR line manager should make sure that wherever appointments are made, disability is catered for. The same applies to line manager dealing with farming and procurement process, that as they empower SMME’s they should also consider persons with disabilities.
- Consultative forum on issues of disability/equity has the main function of monitoring the implementation of employment equity plan. It is therefore critical for members to oversee and monitor the integration of disability issues in the workplace.
- Accounting officer has the responsibility to ensure that the composition of the workforce represent the demographics of the country and the province in particular, by ensuring that all designated groups are represented. Disability issues should form part of the Performance Agreement of senior management services.

- Human Resource Development and training should develop workplace skills plans that target training for people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. This will empower them for effective service delivery.
- Bursary awards should also target people with disabilities. This will assist in de-stigmatising them and be seen as assets than liabilities in the organization. Exhibitions to potential students should be extended to people with disabilities through disabled organizations and institutions of learning.
- Human resource offices are expected to be drivers of change, therefore it is important for human resource officials to provide advisory and support roles to line managers. Among the functions of any human resources unit is to act in an advisory capacity to the department or organization on issues such as cultural changes, which is part and parcel of any meaningful transformation.
- Government departments operate within a common public service framework to ensure uniformity. They are all striving towards the transformation of the country economically, politically and socially by developing and implementing democratic principles, policies and programmes. Therefore, the findings could be perceived as relevant to any government department.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **INSTRUMENT FOR DATA COLLECTION**

#### **EVALUATION OF EMPLOYMENT AND INTEGRATION STRATEGIES OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

##### **INTRODUCTION**

This is an MPA study at the University of Limpopo, Graduate School of Leadership.

The purpose of the study is for postgraduate studies. It is aimed at getting an insight into the employment and integration strategies of persons with disabilities.

The results from this study will assist the Department in accelerating employment and the integration of persons with disabilities into departmental activities. The results of the study will be made available to the management of the Department.

##### ***INSTRUCTIONS***

There are three categories of information. Section A consists of Demographic Information, Section B Employment and Section C Work Environment and Accommodation.

You are requested to fill in the required information, tick off the appropriate box and supply as much information as possible. You are further requested to give honest, valid and reliable answers and note that in terms of this study there is no right or wrong answer.

**NB:** The supplied information will be treated with confidentiality

**NAME: MR SEKEPE MICHAEL KOMANA**

**TEL: 015-294 3000/3076**

**CELL: 082 478 6663/082 882 5851**

## SECTION A

### DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

District Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Branch: \_\_\_\_\_

Sub-branch: \_\_\_\_\_

**Post designation:**  **General Manager**  **Senior Manager**  **Other**  
**(Specify)** \_\_\_\_\_

---

1. Gender:  Male  Female

2. Do you possess any disability?  Yes  No

3. If yes, what type?

Physical  Visual/Hearing  Skin  Others (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

4. Age:  20-25  26-30  31-35  36-40  41-45  46-50  51+

5. Educational status (tick the highest qualification)

Matric  B.A/B.Sc.  Honours  M.Sc. /M.A  PhD  Others (Specify)

\_\_\_\_\_

6. In what field? E.g. Public Administration, B.Sc., General.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Years of experience within post

0-5  6-10  11-15  16-20  20+

8. Years of experience in public service

0-5  6-10  11-15  16-20  20+

## Section B

Experience with persons with disabilities

1. How many persons with disabilities are within your unit?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Do you deal with cases involving disabled employees?

**Yes**             **No**

3. If yes, how often do you deal with matters of disabilities?

Always     Sometimes  Never

4. What type of cases do you deal with? (tick one or more response)

Physically impaired  Visually impaired  Hearing impaired  Skin impaired  
 Others (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

## SECTION C

### Methods of recruitment and employment

1. Recruitment methods: How do you motivate for posts to be filled?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Advertisement: Unit advertises for posts to be filled (tick one response)

Always  
 Sometimes  
 Never

3. Are your advertisements accessible to all?

Yes     No  Do not know

4. What forms of advertisement are commonly used in the department?

Print  Audio  Electronic (what type) \_\_\_\_\_

To specific groups (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  Braille \_\_\_\_\_

Others (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

4.1 Reason for choice

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5. Selection methods/criteria used?

Interviews

Headhunts

Others (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

6. Do you think it is a constitutional obligation to employ people with disabilities?

Yes    No    Do not know

7. Are you comfortable working with a person with a disability in your branch or sub-branch?

Yes    No    Do not know

**Section D**

**Equity in employment**

1. Are you familiar with the Employment Equity Act?

Yes      No  

2. Summarise in your own words what you understand by the Employment Equity Act.

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3. Should people with disabilities be treated with sympathy?

Yes    No    Do not know

Give reasons

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4. Should people with disabilities be protected?

Yes    No    Do not know

Give reasons

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5. Should people with disabilities participate in all activities?

Yes    No    Do not know  

Give reasons

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6. Should people with disabilities participate in selected activities?

Yes    No    Do not know

Give reasons

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7. Which activities should they not participate in?

Give reasons

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**SECTION E**

3. Accessibility of work environment and office accommodation

1. Are facilities in your work place adapted and made accessible to people with disabilities?

- Yes       No       Do not Know

List accessible facilities

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2. If adapted, give examples of adapted facilities

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---

3. Are all workstations reorganised to accommodate all (including those with disabilities)?

- Yes       No       Do not Know

4. If yes, how?

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5. Is existing equipment adapted to include all (including computer hardware for the visually impaired)?

- Yes       No       Do not Know

Give reasons

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6. Have training, assessment materials and systems been changed to include all?

- Yes       No       Do not Know

Give reasons

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7. Is specialised supervision provided?

Yes  No  Do not Know

Give reasons

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---

---

8. Is training provided to all?

Yes  No  Do not Know

Give reasons

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---

---

9. Is support in place for people with disabilities?

Yes  No  Do not Know

10. If yes, name them

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**THANK YOU.**