

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Chapter 7 sets out the conclusions, limitations and recommendations of the research. As indicated in chapter 1, the last part of phase 2 will be discussed next.

#### **7.1 CONCLUSIONS**

Conclusions are formulated in terms of the literature review and empirical study.

##### **7.1.1 Conclusions: Literature review**

Chapter 2 gave a brief historical overview of the development paradigms that shaped the history of South Africa and had an effect on employment practices in South Africa. These development paradigms provide the pre- and post-setting of a reality-related context in which the principles of employment equity have evolved and will continue to evolve in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in South Africa.

Sub-variables of employment equity were discussed, namely racism and discrimination, as these core components form the building blocks of employment equity principles.

The concept of affirmative action was discussed in detail as it is a precursor to employment equity practice and legislation. Racism, discrimination and affirmative action are all embodied in employment equity practice and legislation. They are not exclusive components, but form a cohesive basis in the understanding and implementation of employment equity processes and legislation.

Chapter 3 gave an explicit overview of employment equity, the understanding thereof and the legislation applicable to employment equity in South Africa, as from 1998. It may be concluded that the literature on employment equity is very specific, relevant and provides exacting processes for organisations to tailor their employment equity practices and procedures to comply with legislation and to ensure that their demographics are

morally acceptable in relation to the population demographics of their geographical location.

Chapter 4 discussed gender issues in depth. The literature pointed out why men and women are treated so differently in the working environment. Pertinent literature dealt with the dilemmas and myths that hold women back in the working world. The concept of discrimination, as discussed in chapter 2, was linked to gender discrimination in chapter 4. Feminist theory was discussed and finally equal pay for equal work was presented and linked to the unequal situation that women find themselves in the working world. This concluded the specific aims of the literature review.

### **7.1.2 Conclusions: Empirical study**

Conclusions in the study were drawn from six factors namely, development; discrimination based on race and gender as well as general discrimination; attitude towards female employees; relationship amongst race groups; equality of remuneration and employment equity.

The conclusions can be listed as follows:

- Males and females feel completely opposite to one another on the factors of development, discrimination based on race and gender, and general discrimination;
- Males in senior positions in the organisation are the most positive on development, discrimination based on race and gender, and general discrimination;
- Males on the staff levels of the organisation are the least positive on development, discrimination based on race and gender, and general discrimination;
- Women occupying senior managerial positions in the organisation are the least positive on development, discrimination based on race and gender, and general discrimination;

- Afrikaans males are the least positive towards discrimination based on gender and race;
- Afrikaans females are the most positive towards discrimination based on gender and race;
- English females are the least positive towards discrimination based on gender and race;
- Males are more positive in their attitude towards female employees than females are towards female employees;
- Male senior management employees are the most positive in their attitude towards female employees;
- Employees with postgraduate degrees (only senior female management employees) are the most negative in their attitude towards female employees;
- English and Black males are the most positive in their attitude towards female employees;
- Afrikaans males are the least positive in their attitude towards female employees;
- Males in the lower levels of the organisation, with lesser qualifications, are the least positive towards relationships amongst race groups;
- Males with better qualifications are the most positive towards relationships amongst race groups;
- Better qualified females in more senior positions are the most negative towards relationships amongst race groups;

- African males are the most negative towards relationship amongst race groups, whereas female Indian employees are the most negative towards relationships amongst race groups;
- Females were generally more positive than males with regard to equality of remuneration;
- Males in senior positions are the most satisfied about their remuneration, whereas females in senior positions are the least positive about their remuneration;
- Older staff are the most satisfied about equality of remuneration;
- Older employees are also more positive about the employment equity process.

### **7.1.3 Overall conclusions: Empirical study**

The following overall conclusions have been reached from the study:

- Senior female managers are more negative towards development than are male senior managers;
- Female senior managers are the least positive towards equality of remuneration;
- Blacks are not as negative towards the employment equity process as would have been expected;
- Implementation of employment equity legislation is a trigger mechanism that does lead to gender equity; however, it is a slow and arduous task bringing equitable processes into parity in an organisation;
- Males are generally well disposed towards the female fraternity and that bodes well for the employment equity process.

## **7.1.4 Correlation of findings with other studies**

### *7.1.4.1 Development*

There are a number of areas in chapter 4 that make reference to development. These are as follows:

- Bhatnagar (1988, p. 349) points out that the carryover effect of the traditional perception of women as caregivers and nurturers is that women, even competent women, are absorbed into unchallenging jobs and very often into service environments. These women are often bypassed by men of similar potential but with a proven track record. In the present study, however, female staff are the most positive about development, and feel that they are integrated into the working world.
- In studies done in the 1960s and 1970s (section 4.3.1.1), Barnett (1996, p. 28) found that work was only emotionally relevant to men. This definitely does not tally with the findings under the development factor.
- One of the reasons why employment equity legislation has been introduced in South Africa is so that more Blacks, Coloureds, Asians and female economically active individuals would be employed in organisations. The organisation studied definitely believed, as did Pearlin (1975, p. 202), that women's contributions in the working world would be "less robust" (section 4.3.1.1). That is why employment figures of the organisation under review, in appendix A, show an employment ratio of male to female as 75% to 25% respectively. This also ties in with Kanter's (1977) statement that job structure, rather than the gender of the job holder, explains differential achievement and outcomes and therefore, women's subordinate status in the work force.
- Smith (1999, pp. 21-22), speaks of the glass ceiling for women. Smith states that the glass ceiling for women is below the floor for the men above it. Because there are so few women in top positions in this organisation, they are the most negative about development. Staff females are so low on the hierarchy that they

can still look forward to some type of promotion. Middle management and senior management males are the most positive about development; they are happy with their positioning in the organisation.

#### *7.1.4.2 Discrimination based on race and gender*

- Controlling for race, Gurin and Pruitt (1978) found that African American women are less subjected to discrimination than are African American men. Controlling for sex, African American women are less subject to discrimination than are White women. The combination of racism and sexism in the workplace means that the African American woman is more exposed to discrimination than Black men or White women. Hooks (1981) point out that African American see sexual discrimination as a by-product of the racial discrimination practiced by White men and that sexism is not associated with African men at all. Morse (1983) points out that African American women are still the most underpaid and underemployed adults in America. Wallace (1980) writes that to be employed, African American women needed higher qualifications than White women competing for the same positions. This would naturally affect career choices, and many would make “specific choices that would probably be thwarting their aspirations within the labour market”. This perspective on Black women could not be found in the current study.
- In the study done by Snizek and Neil (1992, pp. 404-405), the following hypotheses were tested:

Hypothesis 1: A greater proportion of men, when compared to women employees, adhere to gender stereotypes.

Hypothesis 2: A greater proportion of senior men in administrative, as compared to those in research work contexts, will express stereotypical gender attitudes.

Hypothesis 3: There will be significant differences in the perceived day-to-day and promotional discrimination of women who are members of groups with high proportions of men who espouse stereotypical gender attitudes, compared to that

of women in work groups with low proportions of men who espouse stereotypical attitudes regarding women.

Hypothesis 4: Those women in positions previously considered a male domain, or in positions with the greatest prospects for advancement, will be significantly more likely to experience perceived discrimination, when compared to women whose job characteristics are not of like kind.

Snizek and Neil (1992) made the following findings:

- 37 and 41 percent of the women surveyed stated that they had frequently experienced “promotional or day-to-day discrimination” (Snizek & Neil, 1992, p. 403).
- The first hypothesis: That a greater number of men would adhere to gender stereotypes was supported. The greatest gender stereotypes were found to be centered around domestic roles, and not inherent abilities.
- The second hypothesis: Senior men in both administration and research were compared on their display of stereotypical gender attitudes. The data revealed no clear support for gender stereotypes as being held more strongly in competitive (administrative) versus non-competitive (research) work contexts (Snizek & Neil, 1992, pp. 421-422).
- The third hypothesis: It was found that women were not overly concerned about the stereotypical views by male workers. This did not significantly affect their perceived experience of day-to-day discrimination. However, it did affect their feelings of “promotional discrimination” (Snizek & Neil, 1992, p. 422).
- The fourth and last hypothesis: Was partly supported. If a significant amount of the perceived discrimination by women workers may be explained by job characteristics which are perceived as a threat to male vested interests.

In the current study conducted, none of Snizek and Neil’s (1992) findings were found to apply to the findings.

#### *7.1.4.3 Equality of remuneration*

- In a study by Cassirer and Reskin,(2000), they found that pervasive discrimination is evident in the labour market, and women are more likely than men to benefit from the organisations' use of objective promotion criteria. This ties in with the fact that women are more positive than males about their feelings about equality of remuneration.
- Hesse (1984) indicated that women's jobs are lower paid than men's jobs, even when they require comparable effort and training. "Overall, the average woman's pay relative to the average man's is between 60% and 80%, but has been improving in developed countries."

"Some recent data from the U.S. show that women's average wage relative to men is 63%, up from 59% in 1978" (Blau & Ferber, 1985). Trieman and Hartmann (1981) did an extensive survey of pay differentials in the United States and concluded that discrimination definitely leads to women earning less than men. In this study, however, female middle management were the most positive about equality of remuneration; the most negative were female senior managers. That is most probably not what would have been expected.

This concluded the specific aims in terms of the empirical study.

## **7.2 LIMITATIONS**

The limitations of this research will focus on the literature review and the empirical study.

### **7.2.1 Limitations: Literature review**

The literature review, in chapter 2, on paradigms relating to the development of disadvantaged employees focussed on the South African scenario. Literature on affirmative action was generally of South African origin; however, studies done on

affirmative action were of American origin. It would have been more comprehensive to include studies on affirmative action conducted in South Africa.

In chapter 3, the literature on employment equity emanated from South Africa, which is of particular relevance. The cultural diversity model was an American model, whereas the systems approach to managing diversity model was a South African model. It would have been interesting to compare these models, if they had all emanated from the South African context.

In chapter 4, the majority of the literature was drawn from overseas sources, with the exception of the section dealing with equal pay proposals for women. The main reason for this is the literature review dealt with articles and books post 1998 (promulgation of the Employment Equity Act No 55 (1998) in South Africa), and the researcher found literature on gender written in South Africa and on South African women to be severely limited. Comparative overseas literature on gender was not included in the body of the research, because of the limited scope and because the literature specifically deals with the country perspective on a macro basis and not a micro basis as is required in terms of employment equity comparisons.

### **7.2.2 Limitations: Empirical study**

- The empirical study was restricted to only one organisation, the organisation being a parastatal. Thus it would be very difficult to verify the results and interpretations against similar studies in other organisations. One would generally only be able to compare results against a similar study in other parastatal organisations. The study was conducted post implementation of the Employment Equity Act No 55 (1998). It was thus a cross-sectional design that gave the organisation results at a single point only. As the process of employment equity is embedded into the functional running of the organisation over time, employees could feel differently about the processes. Thus if a longitudinal study were conducted over time, or coincided with time lines as stipulated by the Department of Labour on a yearly basis, employees' interpretation about employment equity and gender equity could be regularly monitored. This study has thus provided the

organisation with a starting point, and other similar studies could form a basis of ongoing research on the topic of employment equity and gender equity.

- The study was conducted in a small industry circle, that of the communication, which also makes it very difficult to generalise to the rest of the population.
- The organisation has for many years practised sex segregation. Thus the precursors to discrimination were already well entrenched in the organisation before the study was conducted.
- The organisation has been male dominated for many years, and the ratio of male to female is 75% to 25% respectively.
- The empirical study was conducted three years after the Employment Equity Act was promulgated. Thus employees' feelings and perceptions relating to employment equity and gender equity were not formulated in the initial phases of the intervention, which is a great pity.
- A significant part of the literature review on gender highlights the differences between men and women and why their integration within the working world is so different. This was not elicited in the employment equity questionnaire.
- In the literature review on gender, dilemmas and myths that women face in the working world were discussed in great detail. This could have been explored in more detail in the employment equity survey, as could have the feelings of women in the organisation about the "glass ceiling".
- More work needs to be done to obtain further information on the employment equity factors of relationship amongst races and attitude towards female employees.

## **7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **7.3.1 Recommendations on affirmative action**

Affirmative action is a two step process, involving an analysis of the employer's work force to determine whether percentages of sex, race, or ethnic groups in individual job classifications are substantially similar to the percentages of those groups available in the relevant job market who possess the basic job related qualifications. The organisation needs to assess if the elements of the selection process have an exclusionary effect, and if so need to establish affirmative action steps to remedy the situation. These steps can be race conscious and include the following:

- The establishment of a long-term goal and short-range interim goals and timetables which takes into account the availability of qualified persons in the relevant job market;
- A recruitment program to extract qualified members of the excluded groups, a systematic effort to organise work and redesign jobs in ways that provide opportunities for those lacking the knowledge or skills to enter and progress in a career field;
- Validation of selection instruments such as tests according to the guidelines regulations;
- Systematic efforts to include candidates from excluded groups in the selection pool;
- Systematic efforts to provide career advancement training for employees in dead end jobs. These recommendations are also supported by Greene (1989).

### **7.3.2 Recommendations on development**

A few practical recommendations are as follows:

- The organisation needs to develop a comprehensive skills development plan coupled with each employee's personal development profile. The areas where employees lack certain expertise should be documented and training provided systematically to augment the employee's skills profile;
- All types of courses should thus be offered to the employees in line with the organisation's long-term goals and business requirements. As Greene (1989) points out this should not only be company specific but industry specific;
- The organisation must continue to offer degree and technikon bursaries for all levels of staff;
- The organisation has to date not sponsored bursaries for MBAs. This should be reconsidered, as many employees, even at the senior levels, have found the cost of this tuition to be onerous and unaffordable.

### **7.3.3 Practical guidelines on dealing with discrimination**

A number of authors suggest specific guidelines on discrimination, making diversity pay and issues on remuneration relating to the gender gap. All these recommendations are applicable to organization studied. The recommendations and guidelines are as follows:

Lie (1999, p. 13) proposes 10 practical guidelines to prevent discrimination from occurring in the workplace:

- Treat all employees in an equal and unbiased manner;
- Never retaliate against an employee for filing complaints concerning discrimination;

- Eliminate any illegal screening practices. Illegal discrimination can often occur when an organisation's policies or employment testing have an unfair and negative impact on a protected class;
- Hire, fire, and promote without bias;
- Set the example for appropriate behaviour, managers should express the organisation's intolerance to discriminatory conduct;
- Regularly confer with employees regarding discrimination concerns;
- Never ignore inappropriate comments or behaviour. Take immediate action against discriminatory conduct, no matter how minor it may seem;
- Involve employees. Share the responsibility of maintaining a discrimination-free workplace with employees;
- Make reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities;
- Encourage diversity.

Added to these are the comments by Hemphill and Haines (1998, pp. 55-56):

- When confronting discrimination in the workplace: stop the denial. The first step in changing inappropriate behaviour is to admit that discrimination and harassment practices exist in the workplace;
- Don't call it diversity training. White males end up feeling stereotyped and blamed. Women and minority trainers use the session as a forum for their own hostile personal and political agendas. Participants are forced to expose their feelings, biases, personal values, religious beliefs, political differences, and/or sexual orientation issues in a public forum with no processes in place to deal with the wounds they open.

- Have a written policy on discrimination and enforce it. Have a zero tolerance policy and enforce it.

Verespej (1997, p. 26) states that a diversity programme will not succeed unless it has the visible support of the CEO. It is thus recommended in the current organisation that the CEO should be more visible in the process, especially as she is a woman, and that she should be the champion of the women's cause within the organisation. As a result senior women employees would probably not be as negative as portrayed in the results of the study.

"The culture must be zero tolerance every time there is misuse of a word or phrase — in public and in private, even in jest. The senior person must step forward and make it understood that that type of conduct will not be condoned" (Verespej, 1997, p. 27). Another important point is for companies to concentrate on "rules of civil behaviour rather than focus on matters of diversity" (Verespej, 1997, p. 28).

#### **7.3.4 How to make diversity pay**

Rice (1994, p. 44-48) makes some recommendations on how to make diversity programmes a success:

- Get the CEO's commitment;
- Make diversity a business objective;
- Adopt a plan for addressing concerns of White males;
- Scrutinise compensation and tracking for fairness;
- Celebrate differences;
- Improve the supply of diverse workers.

### **7.3.5 Recommendations on attitudes towards females: The gender gap**

Ragins, Townsend and Mattis (1998, p. 29) suggest strategies for women to follow in order to break the glass ceilings. These are very applicable and 13 strategies are detailed below: Women need to:

- Consistently exceed performance expectations;
- Develop a style that men are comfortable with;
- Seek difficult or high visibility assignments;
- Have an influential mentor;
- Network with influential colleagues;
- Gain line management experience;
- Move from one functional area to another;
- Initiate discussions regarding career aspirations;
- Be able to relocate;
- Upgrade educational credentials;
- Change companies;
- Develop leadership outside of the office;
- Gain international experience.

It is important to give women who are high performers stretch assignments to develop their abilities in their own functional areas and in disciplines outside of their functional expertise.

### **7.3.6 Recommendations resulting from Organisational assessment**

Given the results of the organisational assessment obtained in this study, the following recommendations are made:

- Interim surveys should be conducted on a yearly basis to determine the progression of the negative feelings certain of the staff groupings have;
- Of particular concern is the very negative stance of the female senior managerial grouping. Once their concerns have been addressed in terms of narrowing salary disparities and putting more focus on development, continuous follow-up by way of additional assessment will continue to strengthen the cause of gender equity.
- An organisational assessment of female staff members only, on a longitudinal basis, to track their concerns about employment and gender equity could also be considered.

### **7.3.7 Development of women within the organisation**

A number of tactics could be used to speed up female development in the organisation. These concepts are backed by Ragins, Townsend and Mattis, (1998, pp. 33-34).

- The organisation should assess the lack of significant management or line experience amongst the female grouping. This will give high-flying women coming through the managerial ranks an opportunity to do projects in other departments and let them deputise under close supervision. This will allow them the freedom to develop, with the safety net if they feel that they are scared that they will make mistakes;

- Women who have not been in the pipeline long enough should be encouraged to stay longer in the department/organisation, either by way of monetary incentive or by way of motivational assignments;
- In order to address male stereotyping and preconceptions, the organisation should develop bridging programmes to dispel old stereotypical viewpoints. This can also be done by way of cultural diversity workshops;
- Females within the organisation should be allowed to develop their own networks. This could be encouraged by formal committees or by way of sports committees, such as a female golf committee, sponsored by the organisation;
- Male managers are often intimidated by or have difficulty in managing women. The organisation should develop programmes for them specifically to give them skills in dealing with their fears and /or stereotypes;
- Men and women should be treated exactly the same in the organisation, irrespective of the type of work that they are doing.

### **7.3.8 Recommendations on equal pay proposals for women**

In chapter 4, on gender issues, mention was made of equal pay for equal work and equal pay for work of equal value (Meintjies-Van der Walt, 1997, p. 45).

It is not clear from the Employment Equity Act No 55 of 1998 what criteria would be applied in the assessment of an equal pay claim. Even if South Africa were to follow the example of the US and UK and require such criteria as effort, skills and decision, the interpretation of these criteria themselves could lead to divergent results and disputes. It is essential that whatever criteria are decided on, they should be applied in tandem in determining the equal value of the job, and not in isolation (Meintjies-Van der Walt, 1997, p. 46). The effort, skills and decision criteria are very applicable to the current organisation, and the recommendations should be applied to human resources practice within the organisation.

#### *7.3.8.1 Assessment of value*

In the US and UK, the main criterion for job comparability is found in the value of the job content. The evaluation of job content is usually based on four elements, namely skill, level of responsibility, physical and mental effort and the conditions under which the work is performed. Giving precise definitions to what constitutes equal skill, equal effort and equal conditions is also problematic. If these criteria are used in equity legislation or in interpreting ‘equal pay for work of equal value’ it should be in line with the overall purpose of the law- to rectify historical imbalances and inequalities. Future legislation should attempt to give guidelines for both employers and employees on these elements of assessment in the form of a code of practice. Elements of value of job content – equal skill, equal responsibility, similar working conditions and equal effort are as follows:

Meintjies – van der Walt, (1997, p. 46-47).

##### *i        Issue of bias*

“ The use of job evaluation schemes that use standardized terminology may be a way of resolving wage discrimination. Care should be taken, however, that the scheme is not itself biased. There is the danger that the upgrading of certain criteria specific to male jobs will be at the expense of other characteristics which are considered more ‘feminine’: for example, physical effort rather than mental stress, physical strength rather than dexterity or ability to communicate, responsibility for product quality rather than moral responsibility.” Meintjies – van der Walt, (1997, p. 47-48). Women workers described in Women Organise (NUMSA, undated:25) show how the Patterson System, used in many factories, actually discriminates against women, as the amount of decision-making a worker has is used as the criterion for job grading.

##### *ii        Justifying pay differentials*

The employment equity Act does not contain any specific suggestions regarding the situations, where pay differentials will be permitted. Guidelines on situations which do warrant pay differentials, either in the proposed legislation or in a code of practice, could facilitate the implementation of employment equity legislation. Three possible situations where pay differentials are permitted in the US and UK – seniority, merit and marker forces.” Meintjies – van der Walt, (1997, p. 48).

### **7.3.9 Mentoring programme**

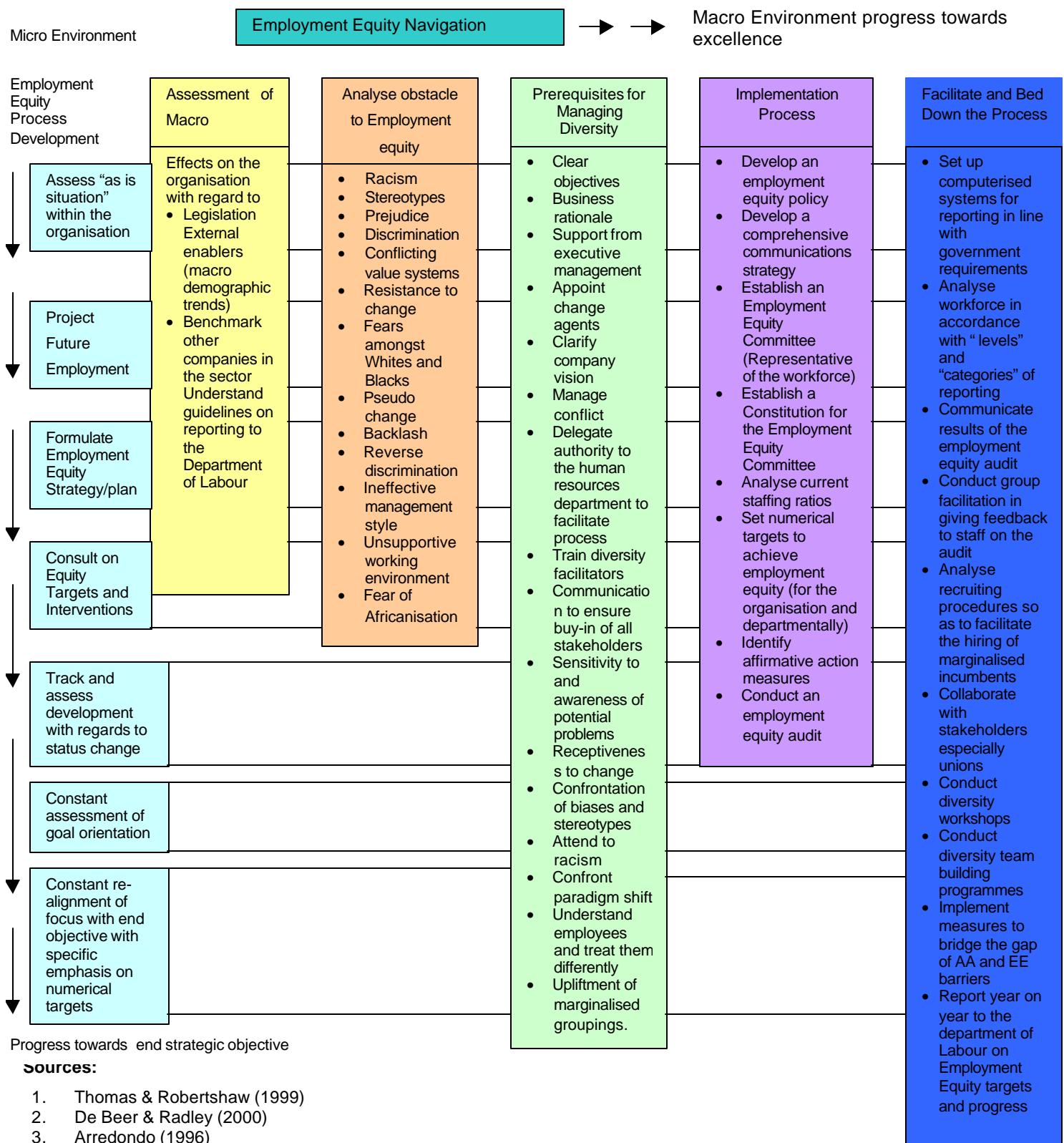
A mentoring programme should be introduced specifically for the women in the organisation. The following guidelines are given on managing the process:

- The CEO should be the champion of the mentoring programme;
- The organisation should consider having mentors from outside of the organisation. These should be influential female icons in the business world;
- Female employees should be placed on accelerated development by way of courses, degree and one-year certificate programmes;
- Assignments should not only be organisational specific/industry specific, but should encompass other industrial disciplines;
- Female employees should be assessed by means of a development centre and their shortfalls in competencies and skills fast tracked in the mentoring programme;
- The resident industrial psychologist should facilitate the process.

### **7.3.10 Systems diagram presenting an integrative employment equity implementation solution**

The recommended model, Figure 7.1 below, depicts a recommended process for the implementation of an employment equity Model. On the left is the initial analysis of the organisation, assessment of the micro and macro enablers and stumbling blocks that the organisation will face in order to achieve employment equity. The progressive movement to the right of the page is the micro processes that the organisation needs to address and implement in order to achieve employment equity in terms of the requirements of the employment equity Act. The movement downwards is the process of continued improvement in terms of processes within the organisation in the alignment of employment equity processes.

**Figure 7.1 Employment equity systems model**



### **7.3.11 Opportunity for further research**

A few aspects for further research are mentioned below:

- Studies could be conducted in organisations with greater numbers of females from the outset of the study.
- It would be interesting to see the results yielded in commercial entities.
- The study could be conducted in other organisations, using the same validated survey. It would be interesting to see whether the data yielded different meaningful factor results.
- Research could be conducted once an organisation had implemented the employment equity systems model in section 7.3.10 for their employment equity process.
- Multivariate studies could be conducted as well.

## **7.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

In this chapter, the conclusions, limitations and recommendations of this research have been discussed.

The specific aim was to formulate recommendations that will assist the organisation to successfully strive towards developing in terms of employment equity principles and legislative requirements, making it an organisation that is free of gender bias and gender stereotypes and that embraces gender equality and equality in the workplace for all its employees.

## **7.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

Recent developments in social theory have given priority to the transformation of the relationships between men and women. They suggest a move beyond ‘emancipatory politics’ which has been here described as the ‘equality agenda’ towards the “reflexive project” of the self: “modernity … is a post-traditional order, in which the question, ‘How shall I live?’ has to be answered in day-to-day decisions … as well as interpreted within the temporal unfolding of self-identity” (Giddens 1991:14). Giddens’s arguments are echoed by those of Beck (1992), who similarly identified the “reflexiveness” of “late modernity”. All individuals construct their “own identities”, but the tasks which women face are even greater than those facing men:

Women today have the nominal opportunity to follow a whole variety of possibilities and chances: yet in a masculinist culture, many of these avenues remain effectively foreclosed. Moreover, to embrace those which do exist, women have to abandon their older, “fixed” identities in a more thorough-going way than do men” (Giddens, 1991, p. 106).

In a parallel fashion, Beck, (1992) has stressed the developing tension between the universal principles of freedom and equality and the ascriptive principles of the gender order which have systematically denied these freedoms to women. Thus a very significant element in this process of “abandonment of fixed identities” is the increase in paid employment amongst women which has taken place in all advanced industrial societies.