

**FACTORS WITH REGARD TO THE ATTAINMENT OF
WORKPLACE EQUALITY AS PERCEIVED BY PEOPLE WITH
PHYSICAL DISABILITIES**

by

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the dissertation, FACTORS PERTAINING TO THE ATTAINMENT OF WORKPLACE EQUALITY AS PERCEIVED BY PEOPLE WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES, is my own work and all primary and secondary sources have been appropriately acknowledged, by means of a complete reference and acknowledgement.

Signature: _____

(MRS A.E. SNYMAN)

Date: _____

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ABSTRACT

Since 1994, various policies and guidelines, pertaining to the employment of people with disabilities have been promulgated. All of these policies highlighted the importance of employment equity and equality within the working environment.

Despite all these policies and guidelines people with disabilities are still experiencing barriers within the working environment. These barriers prevent them from functioning optimally and equally alongside able-bodied colleagues. The requirements of people with disabilities are still not integrated into the general considerations of the workplace.

In order to determine what factors people with physical disabilities perceive as important with regard to equality in the workplace, a combination of a qualitative and quantitative research approach were followed. Both convenient and Snowball/Chain sampling was utilised to identify the research participants. The data was gathered by means of an intensive literature study, as well as utilisation of surveys and interviews. After analysing the data, specific conclusions could be made. The sample was not representative of the total population, so these conclusions could not be generalised, it could however indicate certain trends. The conclusions with regard to the study could be utilised to improve the management of employees with physical disabilities in order to promote workplace equality. Certain recommendations in this regard have been made. Recommendations on how social workers could assist with the attainment of workplace equality for employees with disabilities have also been made.

KEYWORDS

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

PHYSICAL DISABILITY

EMPLOYMENT

EMPLOYER

PERCEIVE

EQUALITY

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

TAG	Technical Assistance Guidelines on the Employment of People with Disabilities
INDS	The Integrated National Disability Strategy
SETA	Services Sector Education and Training Authority
ILO	International Labour Organisation
PEPUDA	Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act
SA	South Africa
NAP	The National Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights
EEA	The Employment Equity Act
SAHRC	The South African Human Rights Commission
CEE	Commission for Employment Equity

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CHAPTER 1

GENERAL ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the researcher provides an explanation of the problem, the aim as well as the objectives of the research study. The research design, which will be used as well as the data collection method, are described. Descriptions of the validity of the research instruments, as well as the various techniques, which will be utilised to improve the validity of the study, are described. The sampling methods selected for the selection of the respondents for the study are described, as well as how the data will be analysed and interpreted. Limitations pertaining to this specific study are described. A brief outline with regard to the division of the study is provided.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

It is estimated that about 5% of the South African population constitutes people with disabilities (Statistics South Africa 2005:1). Since 1994 various policies and guidelines in South Africa have been promulgated to enhance and enforce employment equity for people with disabilities. These guiding and governing policies include:

-Constitution (Act No.108 of 1996). Chapter 2 in the Bill of Rights, section 9, specifically deals with the issue of equality and guarantees people with disabilities the right to be treated equally and enjoy the same rights as all other South African citizens. It guarantees the fundamental right of equality for everyone.

-White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (1997) facilitates the realization of the rights of people with disabilities to equality and dignity through full participation in a barrier-free society.

-White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service of 1994 states that people with disabilities should comprise 2% of government employees by 2005.

-The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000 promotes equality and gives effect and letter and the spirit of the Constitution.

-Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 attempts to outlaw discrimination and promote affirmative action in the workplace. Disability is mentioned as a ground on which people may not be discriminated against. The Act promotes equity in the workplace.

-Code of Good Practice on Employment of People with Disabilities of 2002 seeks to remove policies and practices, which result in inequalities, and protects people with disabilities in the workplace against unfair discrimination. It also directs and guide employers with regard to people with disabilities in the workplace.

-The Technical Assistance Guidelines on the Employment of People with Disabilities (Department of Labour 2004) of 2004 assists people with disabilities, employers and employees to understand the Employment Equity Act and the Code of Good Practice on the employment of people with disabilities.

All these policies and guidelines stress the importance of equality in the workplace for people with disabilities. Equality in the workplace is thus not just a legal imperative for people with disabilities but also a human rights issue. The Constitution, as already mentioned, protects the rights of people with disabilities. People with disabilities thus have the same rights as all South African citizens; they have the right to full and equal participation in all spheres of society, including employment. It is thus a Constitutional imperative that employees with disabilities rights with regard to equality in the workplace need to be addressed.

Despite the existence of all the relevant policies and guidelines, it is estimated that as many as 99% of South Africans with disabilities are not meaningfully employed (Development Bank of Southern Africa 2005:30). The Development Bank of Southern Africa (2005:18) released a research report, "The employment of people with disabilities in South Africa", during April 2005. This report indicated that according to information submitted by national and provincial governments, only 0, 25% of all employees were people with disabilities, which is far short of the 2% of people with disabilities that need to be employed by 2005, as stipulated in Chapter 10.6 of the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service of 1994, as well as sections 5 and 6 of the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998. According to the Public Service Commission's "Report on Disability Equity in the South African Public Service" (Department of Public Service and Administration 2002:19), the overall percentage of employment of people with disabilities for the national departments is 0,47% and for all Provincial Governments less than 0,5%. (Development Bank of Southern Africa 2005:18)

The Department of Labour estimates that only 1% of persons with disability are employed in the formal sector of the economy (Development Bank of Southern Africa 2005:32).

Taking these statistics into consideration, it seems as if legislation alone cannot lead to the improvement of equality and the assurance of the enactment of the human rights of people with disabilities. Legislation however provides an important and vital framework and guidance structure.

“Policies and procedures are important management tools that provide guidance by operationalizing government intentions. However, in the absence of strategic plans and leadership, they are sterile in transforming attitudes and organizational culture. Strategies and plans are effective tools for driving disability equity.” (Department of Public Service and Administration 2002:31).

Despite all the legislation that has been enacted since 1994, it seems as if employees with disabilities are still experiencing barriers in the working environment, which prevent them from functioning equally alongside their able-bodied colleagues. In the “Report on Disability Equity in the South African Public Service” (Department of Public Service and Administration 2002:5) it is stated that employees with disabilities experienced that their employers had a general lack of understanding of their disability related challenges. This resulted in unsupportive and isolated working environments for people with disabilities. It thus seems as if the requirements and the needs of people with disabilities are still not integrated into the working environment. During this study it was found that “the environment also does not encourage collegial support among employees nor does it promote the appreciation of diversity and difference. There are only a few examples of direct budgetary support for improving or creating a supportive work environment for people with disabilities.” (Department of Public Service and Administration 2002:35).

A study conducted by the Development Bank of Southern Africa (2005:39) indicated that 60% of employees with disabilities have not been integrated into the mainstream of the working environment despite many years of service. It was also found that depression was

prevalent amongst most of the respondents and that this was due to the lack of emotional connection and accommodation at work.

During the researcher's involvement with employees with disabilities, it seemed as if barriers are still preventing them from functioning equally alongside their able-bodied colleagues. It thus seems as if equality in the workplace is lacking and that there are quite a number of barriers preventing or hampering equality in the workplace. If these barriers could be identified and eliminated, employees with disabilities might be able to function equally and optimally alongside their fellow able-bodied colleagues. By performing optimally, the widespread myths that people with disabilities are not capable can be contradicted and proven wrong.

"We must stop seeing disabled people as objects of pity but as capable individuals who are contributing immensely to the development of society" President Thabo Mbeki, then Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa, started his Foreword to the Integrated National Disability Strategy document with these words. (White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy 1997:i)

The identification of these factors which are hampering equality in the workplace is thus of crucial importance. With this high emphasis on workplace equality the question is automatically raised about what constitutes equality in the workplace and what barriers are currently present in the working environment which prevents people with disabilities to function equally alongside their able-bodied colleagues. In order to promote equality in the workplace for people with disabilities, it would be imperative to know what people with disabilities themselves view as important factors pertaining to equality. It is important that we do not just rely on what experts have to say about these aspects, but we need to consult with people with disabilities. This is in line with the key slogan of the international disability movement "Nothing about us without us" (Swartz 2004:3).

This is the issue that the researcher wants to address, namely what employees with disabilities perceive as important factors in order to reach equality in the workplace. The

researcher decided to only concentrate on one group of people with disabilities, namely people with physical disabilities, as this is a grouping with which she has daily contact. People with physical disabilities constitute 30% of people with disabilities in South Africa (Statistics South Africa 2005:14).

The researcher will investigate the factors, which people with physical disabilities perceive as important with regard to equality in the workplace. She will also focus on how they experience equality in the workplace, as well as how this is influencing their psychosocial well-being. By addressing these aspects guidance could be provided to employers on how to manage people with physical disabilities effectively and how to increase equality for people with physical disabilities within the working environment. The researcher will focus her recommendations on the primary employer of people with physical disabilities and not on the role of Government, Non-Governmental Organisations or policies.

For the purpose of this study the researcher will investigate people with physical disabilities who have at least an educational level of Grade 12 (Matric) or equivalent. Only people with physical disabilities who have been employed for at least a year will be included.

1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the research is to establish the requirements for the effective management of employees with physical disabilities in order to promote workplace equality. The objectives are:

- To conduct a literature study with regard to the factors influencing employment equity of people with physical disabilities.
- To determine which factors employees with physical disabilities consider as being important with regard to equality in the workplace.
- To determine how people with physical disabilities experience equality in the workplace and how this influences their psychosocial functioning.
- To make recommendations with regard to the enhancement of work place equality for people with physical disabilities.

1.4 RESEARCH METHOD

This section describes the methodology that will be followed to address the research objectives and will address the research approach, the research instrument, the method of data collection, as well as the method of data analysis, interpretation and presentation. The researcher will make use of a combination of qualitative and quantitative research approaches.

1.4.1 RESEARCH APPROACH

The researcher will utilise a combination of both the qualitative and quantitative research approach. "Quantitative research is more structured than qualitative research in that sampling, research design, questionnaires and statistical methods are largely determined prior to the participants completing questionnaires." (Struwig & Stead 2001:17) Struwig & Stead (2001:6) mentioned that with quantitative research individuals are utilised as the source of data; the focus is thus on the individual. Surveys will be administered to individuals and the individuals' responses are required. With quantitative research the collected data could be expressed in numbers (Struwig & Stead 2001:7).

According to Patton (2002:14) the advantage of quantitative research is that a lot of people's reactions can be measured with a limited amount of questions and comparisons is thus possible, as well as statistical aggregation of the data. It is also possible to generalise these findings.

Qualitative research will also be utilised to gather information. According to Patton (2002:14) the researcher will be able to collect information, which is in depth and detailed by means of the qualitative methods. According to Struwig & Stead (2001:12-13) qualitative research is any research, which uses qualitative data. Qualitative data refer to any information that the researcher gathers that is not expressed in numbers. They also mention "qualitative researchers are very interested in understanding the issues being researched from the perspective of the research participants. In other words you are trying to see through the eyes of the participant."

By utilising this method, more emphasis is placed on the participants' perspectives and

descriptions of events, beliefs and behaviours. Participants are thus allowed to expand on statements given and thereby provide a more thorough explanation. By using this method the researcher will be able to understand much better what people with physical disabilities perceive as factors influencing equality in the workplace and why do they view it as important. Patton (2002:14) also emphasize that qualitative methods produce a wealth of detailed information about a smaller number of people, although the ability to make generalisations is reduced. By utilising a combination of these methods a wealth of information could thus be obtained. Patton (2002:54) explained the designs as follow “a questionnaire is like a photograph” and “a qualitative study is like a documentary film. Both offer images.”

1.4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The researcher will utilise the descriptive research design. According to Struwig & Stead (2001:8) descriptive studies are an attempt to provide a complete and accurate description of a situation; it attempts to describe something. The researcher will attempt to describe people with physical disabilities` perceptions with regard to equality in the workplace. The researcher will attempt to understand issues from the perspective of the research participants.

1.4.3 SAMPLING

According to Patton (2002:227) the researcher can “look at a narrow range of experiences for a larger number of people or a broader range of experiences for a smaller number of people.” He further stresses that there are no hard and fast rules available prescribing to a researcher how to focus the study. The focus of the study depends on the purpose of the study, the available resources, the time, which is available for the study, as well as the interest of the people involved (Patton 2002:228). According to Patton (2002:230) the technique for sampling utilised in qualitative and quantitative research differs.

In order to select the sample of research participants, or respondents who will be participating in the qualitative inquiry, namely the interviews, purposeful sampling will be utilised, whereby information-rich cases for in depth study will be selected. According to Patton (2002:230) “information- rich cases are those from which one can learn a great

deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry. “ This way a better insight and understanding is obtained, rather than empirical generalisations. Struwig & Stead (2001:122) quoted the characteristics of purposeful sampling as provided by Lincoln & Guba as:

*The sample size may change as the study progresses and for this reason it is not finalised before the commencement of the study.

*More sampling units are sought, as more information is required.

*More sampling units are obtained until new information becomes redundant.

Purposeful sampling is done in order to obtain research participants or respondents who can provide in-depth understanding and to focus on a small number of carefully selected respondents.

Snowball/Chain sampling will also be utilised in order to identify information rich cases for interviewing. According to Patton (2002:243) cases are identified by this technique by asking people who know what cases are rich in information. The researcher will thus identify possible respondents by asking people who have knowledge about disability and disability equity in the workplace for references.

Patton (2002:244) emphasized that “there are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry.” The researcher will however try to get as many as possible respondents to be utilised for interviewing by making use of the above-mentioned sampling methods.

In order to identify the possible respondents who will be utilised to complete the questionnaire, the researcher will make use of convenience sampling. According to Struwig & Stead (2001:124) convenience sampling is a common sampling method where cases that are easily obtained are selected. Due to the identified criteria, respondents for the study are not easily located. Due to this the researcher will have to make use of the available respondents who fulfil these criteria. The researcher will consult with informed individuals before hand, in order to find suitable respondents. For example the researcher will communicate with the Regional Director of the Northern Gauteng Services to People With Disabilities, the Chief Executive Officer of the Curamus Association, the National

Director of Association for People with Disabilities, various Regional Directors of Association for People with Disabilities, the National Director of Quadriplegic South Africa (QASA), as well as the Regional Directors of QASA, as well as the manager at the Meraka Institute in order to identify suitable people for the sample. The researcher will also be dependant on references.

All people with physical disabilities will not be suitable: the selected people must have employment experience of at least a year, irrespective of population group or gender. The selected members must also have an educational qualification of at least Grade 12 (Matric). For the purpose of this study people with physical disabilities will be considered as the loss or damage to bones, nerves, muscle etc; which often leads to difficulties with mobility or performing daily functions due to paralysis, amputation, spasms, spinal cord injury etc. (Disabled People South Africa 2000:8). Gender, population and age group will not be utilised as criteria for the sample.

Due to the specific requirements of the sample it is difficult to determine exactly how many people form part of the selected research population. It is thus difficult to estimate the total size of the research population (N) or to predict the sample size (n) that will be utilised for the study.

According to the Census 2001(2005:11) 2 255 982 people with disabilities are in South Africa. The Census (2005:18) also indicated that 54% of the total population of people with disabilities are in the age group 20-59, which the researcher considered as the working age group. Fifty four percent (54%) of the total population is thus 1 218 230, 28. Due to the limited availability of data, the researcher made some calculations herself with regard to the total size of the research population (N). The Census (2005:20) indicated that 30 % of all people with disabilities have secondary education and about 3% had higher education. This brings the population which has got secondary education or higher, who is of working age to more or less 402 016. Taking into consideration that people with physical disabilities form about 30 % of the total population, we can estimate that there is about 120 605 people with physical disabilities, of working age with a minimum of a secondary education. Taking in consideration that only 1% of people with disabilities are

employed in the open labour market we look at a total population size of 1206, people with physical disabilities who are employed in the open labour market and who have at least a secondary education. If 10% of these people are selected to participate in the study, it means that more or less 121 respondents will be selected. The researcher will thus endeavour to get more or less 121 respondents to complete the survey.

1.4.4 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT/ DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Patton (2002:228) emphasises that “the primary focus of data collection will be on what is happening to individuals in a setting and how individuals are affected by the setting.” This is exactly what the focus of the researcher will be during the data collection process.

According to Struwig & Stead (2001:80) there are two different types of data, which could be collected, namely primary and secondary data. They describe primary data as new data, which is collected, whereas secondary data is data which is available from resources other than data from the current research project.

Struwig & Stead (2001:80) stipulate that “secondary data can be classified into three broad categories, namely raw data already collected (e.g. traffic counts), summaries of numbers (e.g. figures supplied by Statistics South Africa) and written treatises (e.g. books, articles and theses).” In order to gather this data the researcher will conduct an intensive literature study by reviewing relevant text books on disability, research studies which were conducted, journal articles and have discussions with various people working in the disability field. The literature study will concentrate on aspects pertaining to the study, namely disability, employment for people with disability, the aspect of equality, social work and disability, as well as research. A detailed list of additional literature which could be consulted is attached.

In order to collect primary data, in other words new data, the researcher will make use of a combination of a survey as well as interviews as data collection methods.

Mc Donald & Mindell (in Grinnell 1988:300-301) mention that surveys could be utilised to collect data about people’s behaviour, thoughts and feelings. The researcher chose the

survey as a data-gathering method because the population of people with physical disabilities is very large and therefore too large to be personally interviewed. According to Mc Donald & Mindell (in Grinnell 1988:303) the survey is more than likely the best method to collect data if the population is too large to be directly observed or personally interviewed. The survey also provides a large degree of anonymity, which might motivate individuals to be more honest with regard to their feelings and opinions (Mc Donald & Mindell in Grinnell 1988:303-304).

Mc Donald & Mindell (in Grinnell 1988:307-309) describe four (4) principal data gathering techniques that can be utilised when conducting a survey, namely self-administrated and group administrated questionnaires, as well as telephonic and face- to- face interviews. The researcher will make use of a combination of these data gathering techniques.

When utilising the self-administrated questionnaire technique, the questionnaires are distributed to a sample of the population, the respondents then complete the questionnaires themselves. These questionnaires are usually mailed to the respondents. According to Struwig & Stead (2001:88) there are some problems experienced with this survey technique. The response rate is quite low. The researcher will attempt to increase the response rate, by sending reminders to the respondents. Due to the mailing of the questionnaires, quite a long time lapses between the distribution of the questionnaires and the receiving back of the completed questionnaires. The researcher will endeavour to solve this problem by making use of modern technological methods by mainly faxing and e-mailing the questionnaires. This could be problematic, as the respondents might not have access to this technology. With this study, one of the specified criteria is that they must be working and for this reason it is most likely that the respondents will have access to this technology.

Some other problems with this technique are that an interviewer will not be present to explain the purpose of the study and the respondents might not understand some of the questions. According to Struwig & Stead (2001:89) some of these problems may be clarified by enclosing a personalised letter, for this reason the researcher will enclose a personalised letter with each questionnaire, explaining the purpose of the study.

The advantages of this technique are that slightly longer questionnaires could be utilised and the costs involved in utilising this technique is much less than when utilising the other techniques. Mc Donald & Mindell (in Grinnell 1988:307) mentioned that this technique is convenient for the respondents, as they can decide when it is most convenient for them to complete the questionnaire. By utilising this technique, the anonymity of respondents is ensured.

The group-administered questionnaire entails the administering of the questionnaires to a group of respondents gathered at the same place at the same time. (Mc Donald & Mindell in Grinnell 1988:308). By utilising this technique some of the problems experienced with regard to self-administered questionnaires could be eliminated, as the researcher has some control over the response rate and the environment. The researcher will be present to explain the purpose of the study, as well as to address any queries. The researcher will utilise this technique if groups of respondents are available at the same time and place.

The telephonic interview is becoming more and more popular as it is inexpensive and saves time. Unfortunately this technique is limited to people who do have access to phones. As pointed out earlier one of the specified criteria for being included in the sample is that the respondent must be working. The chances are thus very good that most of the respondents will have access to phones. The researcher will utilise this technique to gather data.

Although the face-to –face interview is considered a better technique to gather data than the other techniques, it is quite expensive and time consuming and for this reasons the researcher will limit the amount of face-to face interviews. This technique has however quite a number of advantages. A higher response rate is ensured, because it is difficult to refuse cooperation. Due to the presence of the interviewer, the quality of the responses could be better, as the interviewer could explain all uncertainties and make use of probing questions, in order to better understand the respondents' thoughts and perceptions.

With both the telephonic and face-to face interviews the researcher will make use of standardised interviews. According to Struwig & Stead (2001:98) “the standardised

interview comprises a set of formally structured questions that are based on theory, research and/or experience of the interviewer. The questions are formally structured in that the wording is not altered from one participant to the next.” By utilising this structured interview the researcher will be able to make comparisons between participants and a lot of time can be saved. According to Patton (2002:27) observation and interviewing are integrated approaches, as observation skills are very important even if the researcher primarily concentrates on interviewing as a form of data collection. Any face-to face interview thus also involves and requires observation.

The purpose of these interviews is to assist the researcher to understand the respondents' perceptions, thoughts and behaviour. The researcher will be responsible to conduct the interviews. When conducting the interviews, the researcher will follow the guidelines as provided by Patton (2002:407):

- *Before the commencement of the interview, the interviewer will explain to the respondents the purpose of the study, the importance of the information, as well as the reason why this information is important.

- *The interviewer need to emphasise confidentiality as well as their voluntarily participation

- *The interviewer can provide clarity on the questions.

- *The interviewer must be aware of the flow of the interview and provide feedback to the respondent on the progress of the interview (Patton 2002:375).

- *The interviewer must have a reasonable control over the interview process. In order to have this, the interviewer must know what information he/she wants to find out and ask focussed questions, the interviewer needs to listen attentively and provide non-verbal and verbal feedback to the respondent.

Struwig & Stead (2001:89-90) provide some guidelines with regard to the design and development of a questionnaire, to which the researcher will adhere:

- *It must contain precise and clear instructions on how the questions must be completed.

- *The questions must be divided into logical sections, according to the subject.

- *The questions which are easy to answer must be asked first.

- *Start with more general questions, and then more specific questions could be asked.

- *More sensitive or personal questions should be asked last.

- *Technical or subject related words, should be avoided, as this could lead to confusion
- *The questions must be asked taking in consideration the vocabulary with which the respondents' are familiar.
- *Questions must be kept to the minimum.

In an effort to try and keep the respondents interested in the questionnaire, a combination of open-ended, multiple-choice, dichotomous, scale response and ranking questions will be utilised. Struwig & Stead (2001:92-95) provide a description of these different types of questions:

*Open-ended questions. With these types of questions the respondents are given the opportunity to answer in their own words, expressing their thoughts and ideas. According to Patton (2002:21) these open-ended questions help the researcher to understand the world as perceived by the respondents. These questions are useful when clarification with regard to a specific issue is needed and will thus be utilised to explore some of the issues pertaining to employment equality. These types of questions can allow respondents to go into much more detail and express greater depth in their answers. Open-ended questions will however be limited in order to prevent a too lengthy and time-consuming survey. To tabulate the answers could also be time consuming.

*Multiple-choice questions. Specific alternatives to the question are provided and the respondent must choose one or more of these alternatives.

*Dichotomous questions. Respondents are only given two options to choose from e.g. Yes or no. These types of questions are easy to record, but no provision is made for a in between answer, e.g. "I do not know"

*Scaled- response questions. These types of questions are specifically utilised in order to gather data with regard to the attitudes and perceptions of the respondents. A "Linkert-type" scale is linked to a number of statements and the respondents must then attach a specific value to the given statements.

*Ranking questions. The respondents are requested to list specific items from most to least important, example 1 = most important.

The researcher will be able to obtain both qualitative and quantitative data. Patton (2002:14) specifies that "...both qualitative and quantitative data can be collected in the

same study.” He describes qualitative data as data which is descriptive of nature and which describes the respondents’ experience in his/her own words (Patton 2002:47). Direct quotations of the respondents will thus also be utilised as a source of raw qualitative data. This will assist in revealing the respondents’ emotions, thoughts and perceptions. According to Patton (2002:5) a “questionnaire or interview that asks both fixed-choice (closed) questions and open-ended questions is an example of how quantitative measurement and qualitative inquiry are often combined.” He also specifies that “qualitative findings may be presented alone or in combination with quantitative data.”

1.4.5 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION

When the raw data has been collected it is not always easy to make sense of the data. Due to the amount of data, the deductions and connections between the data is not always evident. A process will thus be followed in order to convert the data into information, which is meaningful and interpretable. This is called data analysis.

In order to analyse the data Struwig & Stead (2001:150) emphasise that it is necessary to first edit and encode the data which has been obtained from quantitative research. The researcher will do this in order to eliminate errors, which might occur in the raw data, and to place the data into specific categories, this way it will be much easier to tabulate and interpret the data. The researcher, will through this process, establish certain data categories or classifications. By determining these categories, the purpose of the study, as well as the research objectives, will be considered. After encoding the data, it will be computerised.

Accurate data entry is very important in order to make accurate findings and conclusions. After computerising the data it will be tabulated. By tabulation the researcher will be able to obtain descriptive statistics. These statistics attempt to describe and summarise the sample group (Struwig & Stead 2001:158). These statistics thus provide an overall picture of a large amount of data. With the interpretation of the data the researcher will examine each and every result and provide explanations according to theories and research findings. If there are conflicts between the findings and prior research or theories, according to Struwig & Stead (2001:168) “either the study’s methodology is flawed or such

prior theory and research inadequately provides an explanation of the findings”.

According to Patton (2002:432) the challenge with analysing data obtained from qualitative studies is to try and make sense from these masses of data, which were obtained. According to Patton (2002:432) the analysing of this data “includes reducing the volume of raw information, sifting trivia from significance, identifying significant patterns, and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal.”

With the analysing of data obtained from qualitative studies there are no rules, according to Patton (2002: 433), as each study is unique. The analyses of the data will thus depend on the researcher, and thus involves creativity, intellectual discipline, analytical rigor and a great deal of hard work (Patton 2002:442).

The researcher will start with the data analysis process by the development of some sort of manageable classification, categorisation or coding system (Patton 2002:463). During the coding and categorization, the researcher will need to figure out which items fit together. This technique is called convergence. After analysing the data to determine what fits together the data will be analysed to determine what does not fit together. This technique is called divergence (Patton 2002:466). After this pattern, theme and content analysis will take place. This means that the data will be searched and studied in order to find some core consistencies or recurring themes or patterns. The primary patterns in the data will thus be identified, coded, categorised and labelled. By doing this a framework for the organisation and description of the data collected can be provided. This analysis will form the basis for the interpretation of the data.

When analysing the data it is important to determine whether the findings and conclusions are substantively significant. According to Patton (2002:467) the following questions need to be addressed, in order to determine what can be seen as substantively significant:

- “* How solid, coherent, and consistent is the evidence in support of the findings?
- * To what extent and in what ways do the findings increase and deepen understanding of the phenomenon studied?
- * To what extent are the findings useful for some intended purpose?”

After organising, describing and linking the data, the data will be interpreted. As stated by Patton (2002:480) the interpretation of data involves more than merely describing data. He describes it as “attaching significance to what was found, making sense of findings, offering explanations, drawing conclusions, extrapolating lessons, making inferences, considering meanings and otherwise imposing order on unruly but surely patterned world.”

According to Struwig & Stead (2001:172) with the interpretation of qualitative research data the focus is not on prediction, generalisation and casual determination, but on “holistic illumination, understanding and extrapolation.”

The findings and the interpretation of the data will be focussed on the research aims and objectives and will be compared to what was found in other relevant research. The reader will be provided with insight, which were not obvious at first. With the interpretation of the data the researcher will, as Patton (2002:480) has quoted Schlechty & Noblit, “make the obvious, obvious” or “make the obvious dubious” or “make the hidden obvious”.

1.5 VALIDITY

According to Patton (2002:14) “validity in quantitative research depends on careful instrument construction to ensure that the instrument measures what it is suppose to measure. In qualitative inquiry, the researcher is the instrument. The credibility of qualitative methods, therefore, hinges to a great extent on the skill, competence, and rigor of the person doing fieldwork.” He also emphasised that “both qualitative/naturalistic inquiry and quantitative/experimental inquiry seek honest, meaningful, credible, and empirically supported findings” (Patton 2002:51).

In qualitative studies it is thus important that the researcher must provide an accurate picture of how the world of the respondent really is and not how the researcher imagines it to be. It is thus crucial for validity, reliability and consequencey that with the gathering of data, the actual words of the respondents, as well as their perspectives are captured as fully and fairly as possible (Patton 2002:53).

According to Patton (2002:247) triangulation can be utilised to strengthen the study.

Triangulation means the combination of various methods or data, including the utilisation of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The researcher will be utilising a combination of the quantitative and qualitative research approach, as well as various sampling methods, qualitative and quantitative data and various methods of collecting data. In order to describe the importance of triangulation Patton quoted Denzin's (Patton 2002:247) explanation of triangulation as "the logic of triangulation is based on the premise that no single method ever adequately solves the problem of rival casual factors. Because each method reveals different aspects of empirical reality, multiple methods of observations must be employed." According to Patton (2002:248) studies that only utilise one method are more prone to errors, which are linked to that method, than studies which uses multiple methods. This way cross-data validity checks can be done. With triangulation it can thus be tested whether different sources of data provide the same results.

Mc Donald & Mindell (in Grinnell 1988:309) pointed out that the external and internal validity factors must be considered when constructing a measuring instrument to be utilised in a survey.

1.5.1 EXTERNAL VALIDITY

External validity refers to the "degree to which the answers given by a sample randomly drawn from a population can be generalized to population from which the sample was drawn." (Mc Donald & Mindell in Grinnell 1988:309) The response rate of the respondents is very important with regard to external validity. The way in which the instrument is designed can lead to an increased or decreased response rate. Mc Donald & Mindell (in Grinnell 1988:309-311) provide some guidelines on the improvement of the response rate, as well as the external validity, with the design of the survey instruments:

*Purpose of the study. Respondents may respond more easily if they know the purpose of the study, it is thus important to include this in the study itself or in a covering letter accompanying the survey. The researcher will include, in an accompanying letter the purpose of the study. When making use of interviews as a data collection method, the respondents will be informed prior to the interview of the purpose of the study. The researcher will also conduct discussions with some organisations and individuals working

in the disability related field, in an effort to explain to them the purpose and advantages of the study. The researcher will endeavour to convince these influential people about the importance of the study in order for them to motivate the respondents to participate in the study.

*Sensitive questions. Surveys usually include sensitive and personal questions. Respondents often fear that they could be identified. Efforts will thus be made to eliminate the fear of respondents that they might be identified by reducing the amount of personal or sensitive questions and by assuring the respondents' anonymity or confidentiality in a covering letter. For this reason, the respondents will not be required to supply their name in the questionnaire. When an interview is utilised to obtain data, the interviewer will inform the respondent about the confidentiality, as well as the anonymity utilised in the study.

*Socially desirable answers: Some respondents might be providing answers which they think are socially acceptable and that will not make them seem ignorant or undesirable. In an effort to motivate respondents to respond honestly the researcher will attempt to phrase the questions sensitively. The researcher will also request respondents in the covering letter to complete the questionnaire honestly. When utilising the interview to gather data the respondents will be reminded that there are no right or wrong answers and for this reason their total honesty will be required.

*Relevant questions. Only relevant questions must be asked and lengthy questionnaires should be avoided. The researcher will attempt to only include questions, which are relevant to the research problem.

The researcher has thus to an extensive degree endeavoured to enhance and increase the external validity of the research instrument.

1.5.2 INTERNAL VALIDITY

Mc Donald & Mindell (in Grinnell 1988:311) describes internal validity as "the degree to which the questions contained in the survey instrument can accurately and reliably measure the underlying concept being studied. The problems of internal validity are basically concerned with reducing and eliminating measurement error within the survey instrument itself." Mc Donald & Mindell (in Grinnell 1988:311-314) provides some guidelines on how to ensure the internal validity of a survey instrument:

*Clear questions. Questions contained in a survey should be relevant to the research problem and should be clearly worded in order to ensure that there is clarity on the meaning of the question. The researcher will endeavour to state questions very clearly and accurately in order to avoid ambiguity.

*Simple language. The language utilised in the survey must be simple enough in order for the least educated respondent to understand and at the same time not insult the intelligence of the most educated respondent. The researcher will thus endeavour to utilise simple and understandable language when compiling the questions.

*Double-barrelled questions. Double-barrelled questions contain two questions in one and should be avoided in surveys. When analysing these questions it is not possible to say to which one of the questions the respondent has provided the indicated response. In order to establish whether double-barrelled questions are present in the survey, the researcher will re-examine all questions containing the words “and” and “or” in order to establish whether two questions are not contained in one.

*Knowledge level of respondents. When the survey instruments are developed the researcher will take the knowledge level of the respondents in consideration. For this reason the respondents are required to all have at least Grade 12 (Matric).

*Short questions. In order to avoid problems with regard to question construction, questions must be kept short. This way, respondents will be more prone to read the questions thoroughly. The researcher will thus try to keep questions as short as possible.

*Negative questions. In order to minimize error, negative questions will be avoided. In other words the word “not” must not be contained in questions, as this word is often overlooked and this could cause a considerable error.

*Instrument Pre-test. In order to ensure that the survey questions are clear and internally valid, it could be pretested on a sample of individuals who will not be included in the sample. This pre-test is done to determine what difficulties were experienced with the answering of the questions. With the pre-test attention will be given to a number of aspects, as mentioned by McDonald & Mindell (in Grinnell 1988:319-320). These are:

- Whether the questions measured what they were intended to measure.
- Whether all the words were understood.
- Whether questions are well understood.
- Whether the close-ended questions have adequate response categories.

- Whether the questionnaire created a positive impression, motivating respondents to provide answers.
- Whether the questions could be answered correctly, in the sense that there was clarity on the meaning of the question.
- Whether all areas are covered by the questions.
- Whether any part of the questionnaire suggests bias on the part of the researcher.

Colleagues, as well as individuals from the identified population were utilised in the pre-testing and their inputs were incorporated in the final questionnaire. The pre-test was done in order to increase the validity, that is if the instruments' score measure what they are suppose to measure (Struwig & Stead 2001:246) and the reliability, that is the instruments' score consistently measure the same construct (Struwig & Stead 2001:244) of the instrument. The researcher has thus to an extensive degree endeavoured to enhance and increase the internal validity of the research instrument.

1.6 LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

This study only focussed on what people with physical disabilities perceive as important factors pertaining to equality in the workplace. For the purpose of this study people with physical disabilities refers to an impairment, which is caused by damage to muscles, nerves, skin, or bones that leads to difficulties with mobility and in performing daily activities (such as eating, dressing, cleaning, etc). This criterion was included within the sampling process. Employees with other disabilities, for example employees with hearing, visual, intellectual, mental, speech and other impairments, have thus not been included in the scope of this study. The findings of this study can thus not be generalised to other people with disabilities.

The sample of respondents was also confined to only employees with an educational qualification of Grade 12 or higher, which constitutes only 30% of the total disabled population, in other words quite a number of employees with disabilities are excluded as quite a number of people with disabilities have a very limited education.

According to Struwig and Stead (2001:115) the convenience sampling method that will be utilised to get the respondents to participate in the quantitative study, limits the generalisation of the data beyond the sample.

In order to establish the requirements for the effective management of employees with physical disabilities, this research study will focus only on the primary employers of people with physical disabilities and not on the role of Government, Non-Governmental Organisations and policies. The scope of the study is thus limited in this regard.

1.7 CLARIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

In order to have congruency, with regard to the meaning of specific concepts, a few of these key concepts are defined.

-People with disabilities: The Employment Equity Act (1998:Sec 1) defines people with disabilities as “people who have a long-term or recurring physical or mental impairment which substantially limits their prospects of entry into, or advancement in, employment.”

-Disability: The Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998 defines people with disabilities as “people who have a long-term or recurring physical or mental impairment which substantially limits their prospects of entry into, or advancement in employment.”

-Physical Disability: Physical disability refers to an impairment, which is caused by damage to muscles, nerves, skin, or bones that leads to difficulties with mobility and in performing daily activities (Disabled People South Africa 2000:8).

-Employment: Employment and work are seen as synonyms, referring to “what a person does to earn a living” (Hawkins 1983:783).

-Discrimination: Discrimination means “any act or omission, including a policy, law, rule, practice, condition or situation which directly or indirectly: imposes burdens, obligations or disadvantage on; or withholds benefits, opportunities or advantages from, any person on one or more of the prohibited grounds” (Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act No.4 of 2000).

-Reasonable accommodation: The Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998 describes reasonable accommodation as “any modification or adjustment to a job or to the working environment that will enable a person from a designated group to have access to or participate or advance in employment.”

-Employer: The Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998 refers to an employee as any one or more person/s who provides remuneration to employees for conducting his/her/their business including and economic enterprise, contractor, government department or non-governmental organisation.

-Perceive: “To become aware of, to see or notice” (Hawkins 1983:484).

-Equality: The concept of equality is closely linked to human dignity and is based on the idea that all human beings are equal in terms of value and importance, regardless of physical, mental or other differences (International Labour Organisation 2004:18).

1.8 DIVISION OF THE STUDY

The contents of the research report will be organised as follows:

-Chapter 1 provides a general orientation to the study. The aims and objectives of the study, as well as the research methods, validation and limitations of the study are provided. The key concepts pertaining to the research study are defined.

-Chapter 2 contains a literature review of the concept and definition of disability, as well as a discussion on the different types of disability as well as the prevalence of disability in South Africa.

-Chapter 3 provides an overview of the importance of work to people with disabilities, as well as the applicable legislative and human rights framework, both internationally and in South Africa. Various aspects pertaining to the employment of people with disabilities, such as barriers, discrimination and reasonable accommodation are discussed. Statistics of the employment rate of people with disabilities are provided.

-Chapter 4 provides a discussion of the different viewpoints and different forms of equality, generally, and specifically in South Africa. A brief description of the legislative imperatives guiding equality is provided.

-Chapter 5 describes the importance of environmental factors with regard to the rendering of social work services to people with disabilities. The vital skills, knowledge and qualities necessary to effectively render social work services to people with disabilities are also described.

-Chapter 6 contains a discussion on the research findings, in terms of the specified research objectives as well as how the research findings compare to what was found in other relevant research.

-Chapter 7 contains the conclusions and recommendations made by the researcher.

CHAPTER 2

DISABILITY: CONCEPT AND PREVELANCE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

When discussing disability, it seems as if society has quite different ideas about what constitutes a disability. It is thus imperative to clarify what is meant by disability in the context of this study.

This chapter will cover the concept of disability, which includes a discussion on the various South African definitions of disability. The definition utilised for this study is discussed in more detail. An overview of the different types of disabilities, as well as a discussion with regard to the prevalence of disability in South Africa, is included.

2.2. THE CONCEPT OF DISABILITY

Although disability was traditionally viewed according to the medical model, this view is sometimes still prevalent. According to this model, disability was seen as predominantly a health and welfare issue. It was viewed as a problem of the individual, with the focus of intervention with the individual (Watermeyer, Swartz, Lorenzo, Schneider & Priestly 2006:8). Disability was also defined and assessed in medical terms, resulting in the classification of people with disabilities according to their medical condition. According to this viewpoint it was believed that disability is associated with illness and this made employers very cautious to employ people with disabilities, as they could be absent from work regularly due to their illness (Gardiner 1997:6). During this period of approaching disability in terms of the medical model, the philosophy was that people with disabilities were not to be hated or feared, but rather pitied or helped as part of the “deserving poor”. The understanding was that the causes of disability were attributed only to medical conditions. The result was that many people with disabilities and their families were isolated from communities and mainstream activities. People with disabilities relied heavily on state assistance and this led to their disempowerment. This has seriously reduced their capacity and confidence to interact on an equal level with other people in society. Rothman (2003:3) refers to this medical model as the individualistic model, whereby disability is viewed as a problem of the person with a disability.

During the early eighties people with disabilities in South Africa started to mobilise themselves in order to form a strong civil movement of organisations controlled by people with disabilities, emphasising the value of self-representation. This has led to a paradigm shift in the South African society, from the medical to the social model of disability. They emphasised that disability is also a human rights and development issue. This implies that people with disabilities must be recognised and acknowledged as ordinary citizens and should therefore enjoy equal rights and responsibilities. This social model approach focuses on the removal of barriers, which hamper equal participation and to eliminate discrimination based on disability. This social model of disability is based on the assumption that society creates the barriers, as well as the discrimination with which people with disability are faced and that this has little to do with the impairments of people with disabilities. The emphasis of the social model of disability is inter alia on the shortcomings of society to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities. It also focuses on the abilities and capabilities of people with disabilities. The social model argues that most of the daily problems, which people with disabilities experience, are due to the fact that the environment is designed for able-bodied people (Disabled People South Africa 2000:5).

In the South African context, The Integrated National Disability Strategy (INDS) is in line with this model, as it clearly states that “by accommodating the structures of society so that they function in a way that meet the needs of all, society mobilizes the potential of all its citizens, and consequently, strengthens its developmental potential.” (White Paper on Integrated Disability Strategy 1997:21). Unfortunately many people are still attached to the individualistic approach towards people with disabilities, ignoring the important and central role of environmental factors in creating disability (Watermeyer et al 2006:8).

It is important to take into consideration that disability includes both external environmental factors, as well as internal personal factors. If one wants to describe a person’s experience of disability accurately and comprehensively, it is important to take both the individual and environmental aspects into consideration. The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) refer to this as the bio -

psychosocial model of disability. Disability is thus an experience that arises out of the interaction between the health condition of the person with a disability and the environment in which they live. It thus means that if the environment changes, the experience of disability also changes (Watermeyer et al 2006:8).

2.3. DEFINING DISABILITY

There are quite a variety of definitions of disability (Disabled People South Africa 2000:1). The question immediately arises why it is necessary to define people with disability. Disabled People South Africa is of the opinion that definitions of people with disabilities have resulted in becoming mechanisms to exclude and marginalize people with disabilities. Disabled Peoples' International has however acknowledged that defining people with disabilities is necessary for statistical, as well as legislative and anti-discriminatory practices. They have however emphasized the importance of defining disability within the correct context. If these definitions focus on the inabilities of people with disabilities, it could lead to stigmatization and categorization. Mr Mzolisi Ka Toni, Executive Director of Disabled People South Africa (International Labour Office 2006 (a):14) has pointed out during a Tripartite Workshop in 2006 that a definition of a person with a disability is a pertinent issue to clarify in order to move forward with regard to the achievement of equality for people with disabilities. Wen & Fortune (1999:xvi) have in their report "The definition and prevalence of physical disability in Australia" also mentioned the need for the development of a relatable and operational definition of disability in order to gather comparable data.

The South African Human Rights Commission has also emphasized the importance of correctly defining disability. If disability is not appropriately defined, this could lead to limited understanding, as well as discrimination and inequality (Ngwena 2007:153). Defining disability is thus of utmost importance, not only for legislative purposes but also for the collection of data and statistical purposes.

During a study conducted by the Public Service Commission, a problem was identified with regard to the lack of existence of a standardized definition of disability. Due to this lack of a standardized definition, over-counting, or under-counting of people with

disabilities in the workplace, could result (Department of Public Service and Administration 2002:17).

During the 2001 Census in South Africa (Whitehead 2004:17), disability was defined as “a limitation or a lack of ability that prevents a person from performing an activity within the range considered normal, or from behaving in a manner considered normal.”

During 2006, the South African Cabinet has adopted the definition of disability as “the loss or elimination of opportunities to take part in the life of the community equitably with others that is encountered by persons having physical, sensory, psychological, development, learning, neurological or other impairments, which may be permanent, temporary, or episodic in nature, thereby causing activity limitations and participation restriction within the mainstream society” (Department of Public Service and Administration 2007: 3).

The American Disability Act of 1990 describes an individual with a disability as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; has a record of such an impairment or is regarded as having such an impairment (Wilkinson and Frieden in Blanck 2000:5). This definition is very similar to the definition of a person with a disability in the South African employment context as it is defined in the Employment Equity Act of 1998 (Employment Equity Act 55/1998:Sec 1). The Act defines people with disabilities as “people who have a long-term or recurring physical or mental impairment which substantially limits their prospects of entry into, or advancement in, employment.”

As this study will focus on people with disabilities in the South African employment sector, this definition as contained in the Employment Equity Act, will be utilised for the purpose of this study.

The Technical Assistance Guidelines (TAG) on the Employment of People with Disabilities (Department of Labour 2004:8-9) provides detailed guidelines on the classification of a person with disabilities under the Employment Equity Act. It elaborates on the definition as provided within the Employment Equity Act. According to the TAG a person must meet all

three criteria as stipulated in the Act, in order to be classified as a person with a disability. The three criteria are:

- * **Criteria 1:** A person must have an impairment, which might be physical, mental or a combination of the two. A physical impairment means a total or partial loss of a bodily function. Included is hearing, as well as visually impaired. A mental impairment is a clinically recognised condition affecting an individual's thought processes, judgements or emotions. Included are intellectual, emotional and learning disabilities.
- * **Criteria 2:** The impairment must be long-term or recurring. Long-term refers to a period of twelve months or more, in other words the impairment must be of such a nature that it is or will persist for at least twelve months. Recurring means that the impairment may go away for a period of time but is never cured; it is likely to happen again and is substantially limiting. Constant chronic conditions are included. Progressive conditions are those conditions which are likely to develop or change or recur, and are only regarded as a disability when it is substantially limiting.
- * **Criteria 3:** The impairment must be substantially limiting. Impairment is considered as substantially limiting if its effects, duration or nature substantially limits a person's ability to perform essential functions of the job. If impairment is physical or mental, as well as long-term or recurring but not substantially limiting, the impairment is not considered as a disability under the Act.

2.4. TYPES OF DISABILITY

People with disability are not a homogenous group. Disability is a very broad concept. Disabled People South Africa has categorised the different types of disability (Disabled People South Africa 2000:8-12).

- * **Physical disabilities.** Physical disability refers to an impairment, which is caused by damage to muscles, nerves, skin, or bones that leads to difficulties with mobility and in performing daily activities (such as eating, dressing, cleaning, etc). Some examples of physical disabilities include cerebral palsy (resulting from damage to the brain), quadriplegia (a functional loss in all four limbs), paraplegia (a functional loss in the lower part of the body), hemiplegia (a functional loss on one

side of the body, arm and leg) and post-polio paralysis (weakness in some muscles and under-developed limbs). People with physical disabilities experience barriers in the environment limiting their participation in activities, for example, in the built environment steps prevents people using wheelchairs from entering buildings. Assistive devices are tools utilised by people with physical disabilities to overcome some of these barriers, for example, prosthesis and wheelchairs.

* **Visual disability.** Visual disability refers to the loss of sight, which could be a total or a partial loss. The total loss of sight is called “blind”. People with a total loss of sight might experience problems with regard to moving around, knowing the location of various items, reading and doing some basic daily activities, for example shopping. Assistive devices could be utilised to overcome some of these barriers, for example specialised computers, white canes, Braille writing tools etc. People, who still have some degree of limited sight, are referred to as having a “low vision” or “visual disability”. Assistive devices are available to assist these members to overcome the barriers for example, specialised spectacles and large print.

* **Hearing disabilities.** As with visual disability, hearing loss could be mild, severe or total. Loss of hearing, whether acquired at birth or later in life, usually results in difficulties in learning a spoken language, following verbal instructions, participating in social activities and various other work related problems. South African Sign language is the first language of Deaf South Africans. The dialects however differ depending on the geographic location of the individual. Assistive devices such as hearing aids could assist people who are hard of hearing to communicate more easily.

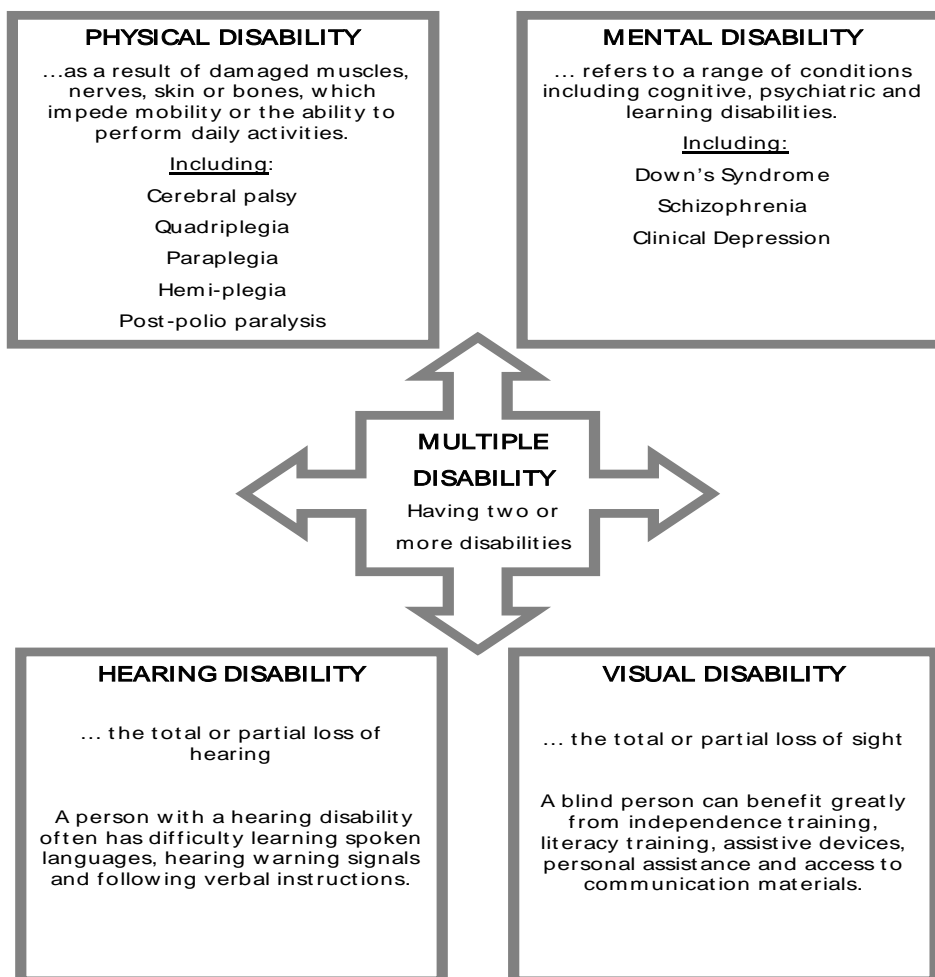
* **Mental disabilities.** Included in this category are people with cognitive, psychiatric and learning disabilities, as well as physical head trauma.

* **Intellectual disabilities.** People with intellectual disabilities experience problems with regard to learning, retaining new information and adaptation to new situations. An example of an intellectual disability is Down Syndrome. Children with intellectual disabilities develop slower than their peers and require additional support to develop. Augmentative and Alternative communication strategies are essential communication tools for people with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities; included is special communication boards and adapted computers.

- * **Psychiatric disabilities.** People with a psychiatric disability usually experience problems to perceive and interpret reality, to cope with daily activities, to form and maintain relationships, to cope with emotions and feelings or often visualise things that do not exist. To assist people with psychiatric disabilities to function more independently in the community, medication, counselling, peer and family support, as well as personal assistance are available enabling mechanisms. Unfortunately the medication prescribed to reduce symptoms could cause other symptoms, which can in turn present as further signs of mental illness.
- * **Multiple disabilities.** People who have multiple disabilities are people who have two or more of the disabilities already described, for example Deaf-blind. Assistive devices, specialised equipment and personal assistance are essential to enable people with multiple disabilities to function as independently as possible.
- * **Epilepsy.** Epilepsy is a neurological condition, which affects the nervous system. Epilepsy is also known as a seizure disorder. Epilepsy is a physical condition characterized by unusual electrical activity in the brain. It is a symptom of a neurological disorder and presents as seizures. Epilepsy is the tendency to have recurrent, unprovoked seizures. Seizures are caused by a temporary change in the way the brain cells (neurons) work. Epilepsy is a disorder, not a disease, illness, psychiatric disorder nor a mental illness; and it is not contagious. Controversy currently exists with regard to the classification of epilepsy as a disability. Some say that only people with certain forms of epilepsy could be considered as a disability, whereas other groupings view all forms of epilepsy as a disability.
- * **Albinism.** Disabled People South Africa mentioned this as a category due to the controversy that exists about whether Albinism could be seen as a disability. They however specified that Albinism is not a disability per se. Albinism is merely an inherited condition where a person is unable to produce normal colouring of the skin, hair and eyes. Although people with albinism have a normal lifespan and normal intelligence, they tend to develop visual disabilities that have an impact on their daily functioning. Only when they develop these limitations, could they be considered disabled.

In the 2001 Census (Whitehead 2004:17) provision was made for various categories of disability, namely sight, hearing, communication, physical, intellectual and emotional disabilities. These broad categories are more or less the same as the categories as utilised by Disabled People South Africa, as discussed above. Services Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) have developed a diagram to provide a schematic presentation of the different categories of disabilities (Services Sector Education and Training Authority undated:8):

DIAGRAM 2.1
SCHEMATIC PRESENTATION OF DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF DISABILITIES



The categories of disabilities, as presented by SETA, are very similar to the categories as provided by Disabled People South Africa. SETA, as well as Disabled People South Africa, both refers to physical disabilities as an impairment, which is caused by damage to

the muscles, nerves, skin, or bones, which leads to difficulties with mobility or the ability to perform daily activities. For the purpose of this study, this is the description, which will be utilized to describe people with physical disabilities.

According to Nagler (1993:50) people across all different types of disabilities might experience some common social problems of stigma, marginality and discrimination, but each different type of disability produces quite different functional difficulties. The tendency of society is to view people with disability as a single group; whereby the diversity of disability and the variety of needs experienced by people with different type of disabilities are ignored. There is a tendency to associate people with disabilities with people in wheelchairs (White Paper on Integrated Disability Strategy 1997:58). Every person with a disability is an individual and needs to be treated as such.

2.5. PREVELANCE OF DISABIITY

Due to the wide divergences with regard to the definition of people with disability, not only between different countries but also between Governments and programmes within countries, there is no consistent internationally comparable data on people with disabilities. Different countries do have varying data available with regard to people with disabilities. Data however varies not only because of differences with regard to what constitutes a disability, but also because of the variety of approaches used to gather and compile such data (Perry 2003:64). It is estimated that ten (10) percent of the world's population has a disability and that most of these people live in developing countries (Akerberg 2001:3).

A serious lack of reliable information about the prevalence and nature of disability is also evident in South Africa. Statistics in South Africa are unreliable because "there are different definitions of disability, different survey technologies are used to collect information, there are negative traditional attitudes towards people with disabilities and there is poor service infrastructure for people with disabilities in underdeveloped areas, and violence levels (particular areas at particular times) have impeded the collection of data, affecting the overall picture"(White Paper on Integrated Disability Strategy 1997:4-6).

Even the most recent Census 2001 report (Statistics South Africa 2005:7) mentioned that there is a lack of reliable information pertaining to the nature, prevalence and the profile of people with disabilities in South Africa. This report also indicates that the census data does not provide accurate figures with regard to the prevalence of disability.

For the purpose of this study, the Census 2001 statistics for people with disabilities were utilised, as this was the latest updated and most comprehensive statistics available in South Africa. This Census was the second census, which was conducted within the democratic South Africa. This specific census aimed to gather data on specific social and economic variables; data on disability was therefore included. Census 2001 (Statistics South Africa 2005:1) indicates that there were 2 255 982 people with various disabilities in South Africa, this figure constitutes 5% of the total population enumerated in this census. It was indicated that this figure should be taken as the baseline due to the way the question was posed to the respondents. Apparently people with disabilities who were able to perform normal activities, regardless of their disability might have been excluded. The provincial prevalence figures show that the province with the most people with disabilities is the Free State where people with disabilities constituted 6, 8 % of the total population in the province. The province with the least number of people of disabilities was Gauteng, where people with disabilities constituted only 3, 8% of the total provincial population. The disability with the highest prevalence was sight disability (32%), followed by physical disability (30%), hearing (20%), emotional disability (16%), intellectual disability (12%) and communication disability (7%). Comparing the demographic and socio-economical characteristics of people with disabilities and non-disabled persons showed that about 30% of people with disabilities had no education, while only 13% of the non- disabled population was in this category.

The Census 2001 (Statistics South Africa 2005:18) provides estimates, according to percentages, with regard to the age group distribution of people with disabilities compared to non- disabled persons.

TABLE 2:1
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF DISABLED AND NON-DISABLED PERSONS
BY AGE GROUP IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN POPULATION

AGE GROUP (YEARS)	DISABLED PERSONS	NON-DISABLED PERSONS
0-9	8,5%	21,4%
10-19	13,6%	22,9%
20-29	12,6%	18,7%
30-39	13,8%	14,3%
40-49	14,8%	10,3%
50-59	13,2%	6,0%
60-69	10,7%	3,8%
70-79	7,7%	1,9%
80+	5,1%	0,7%
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%

It is interesting to note that 63% of the non-disabled is in the category below 30 years, compared to the disabled where only 35% is in this category. In the older category, above 50 years, the non-disabled constitutes only 12%, while 37% of the disabled is in this category. As expected, the percentage of people with disabilities increases, as people grow older.

According to Census 2001 (Statistics South Africa 2005:20), about 30 % of people with disabilities had no schooling compared to 15% of the total population. Only 30% of people with disabilities had secondary school qualifications, compared to 42% of the total population.

In the United Kingdom, which is a well-developed first world country, it is estimated that about 11% of the total population constitutes people with disabilities (Gardiner 1997:4). When at first considering these statistics, it seems as if the prevalence of people with disabilities are more than double than in South Africa, which is a developing third world country, where people with disabilities constitute only 5% of the total population. Unfortunately it is not possible to make these statistical deductions without considering

how other countries define disability. This again emphasises the need for countries to have a consistent definition of disability, otherwise comparisons might not be reliable.

Demographic information about the distribution and prevalence of disability is very important for social work practice, as it is utilised to make decisions with regard to resource allocation, program planning and areas of unmet need. This information is also assisting social workers to better understand the unique circumstances of clients with disabilities (Rothman 2003:53).

2.6 SUMMARY

Various definitions and models pertaining to disability are available. An overview of the concept of disability was provided. There are different types of disabilities, namely physical, hearing, visual, mental, intellectual, psychiatric and multiple disabilities. Disability, as defined by the South African Employment Act, is described as a long term or re-curing physical or mental impairment, which is substantially limiting. This definition is the definition, which will be utilised for the purpose of this study. According to statistics provided by Census 2001, approximately 5% of the total South African population has a disability. Knowledge pertaining to the prevalence of disability is an important factor with social work service rendering.

CHAPTER 3

EMPLOYMENT AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Hawkins (1983:783) describes work as “what a person does to earn a living, employment”. For the purpose of this study employment and work will be utilized as synonyms. Employment and work play a very important role in every human being’s life.

In this chapter the researcher endeavours to demonstrate the importance of work for a person with a disability. A summary of both the international and South African legislative and human rights frameworks pertaining to the employment of people with disabilities is provided. With regard to the employment of people with disabilities, the hampering factors are identified and the advantages of eliminating these barriers are discussed. Discrimination against people with disabilities in the employment sector is also discussed. An explanation of the concept of reasonable accommodation of people with disabilities, within the employment environment is included. The employment statistics of people with disabilities in South Africa is provided.

3.2. IMPORTANCE OF WORK FOR A PERSON WITH DISABILITY

The work that people do and where they work largely determines a person’s standard of living, prestige, social status and self-image. Schneider and Ferritor (in Bolton 1982:33) emphasize that work also implies independence and that it empowers individuals to achieve their life goals. Work also plays an important role with regard to an individual’s self-respect. Work thus has economic, social and personal value.

According to the International Labour Office (ILO) (International Labour Office undated:3). “Work is central to a person’s well-being. In addition to providing income, work can pave the way for broader social and economic advancement, strengthening individuals, their families and communities. “

“The meaningfulness of a person’s life is largely determined by the measure in which that person deploys his/her talents in society, particularly in a work situation “ (Hamilton,

Theron & Olivier 1989:2). This is especially true with regard to people with disabilities. This research report indicates that meaningful employment is a cardinal factor with regard to determining both the quality of life and the rehabilitation of people with disabilities. It also improves the individual's sense of human dignity and contributes to the establishment of a positive self-image. Satisfying employment has a therapeutic effect on everyone, but especially on people with disabilities. Through employment isolation is prevented and this is conducive to a healthy home life. Unemployment can result in a loss of human dignity and other problems.

Work is just as important for able-bodied people as well as for people with disabilities (Akabas, Gates & Galvin 1992:5). Schneider and Ferritor (in Bolton 1982:35) emphasized that "The person with a disability not only values work highly but perhaps values it more highly than does the able-bodied worker."

De Meyer, who is an international labour standards and labour law specialist, noted at the ILO Sub-Regional Office for East Asia in Bangkok, during the Tripartite Consultations about the "Employment of people with disabilities- A Human Rights issue" (International Labour Office 2006(a):16) that employment is the most important tool to reintegrate people with disabilities into society.

During a Disability Conference, which was held by the Department of Defence and Services to People with Disabilities, Gauteng North, Mr S. Hoffman, a guest speaker with disability, emphasized that the employment of a person with a disability can be advantageous to both the employee as well as the employer. According to him the benefits of employment to a person with disability are (Hoffman 2007):

*"The person gets the opportunity to become **financially independent** thus making him or her able to pay his/her own way. Lighten the financial burden on friends and family members who would otherwise be responsible to provide for any need that person might have.

*Get to know oneself as part of the working society with personal motivation to excel, ability to persevere and privilege to contribute to the country's economy.

*Grows **self-esteem** and makes the person with a disability focus on what he is able to do and not what he/her is unable to do.

*Gets to be a **teacher / marketer of disability** to others. The person with a disability gets to his/her co-workers about issue around his/her disability thus barriers that were formed because of negative connections and myths about being disabled. Thus making the able-bodied community more open to disabled people in the workplace and society in general.

*Become a **specialist** on the specific job being executed. It is often said that because people with disabilities are disadvantaged in employment, they are dedicated and committed once they are employed.

*I have lived in a residential Home for People with Disabilities the past eight and a half years but with friends and due to the fact that I am employed, I just recently moved into my own flat, having contracted a builder, **supervised** the construction process and I am now responsible for running the entire household by myself – including the care giving services I need on a daily basis. Being employed has made all this possible”

Work does not only provide economic independence to people with disabilities but also plays an important role with regard to the individual’s social and psychosocial well - being.

3.3. HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK WITH REGARD TO EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Disability was previously viewed as primarily a social welfare issue. “This reflected the widely held belief that people with disabilities needed care and assistance, being unable and incapable of living their own lives...people with disabilities were seen as objects of social welfare and not as subjects in their own right, let alone entitled to the full enjoyment of the right to work” (International Labour Office 2004:7). They were not considered as equal citizens who were able to fully participate within the community. Due to this viewpoint, people with disabilities did not fully enjoy their human rights, including their right to work.

O’Reilly (2003 (a):1) emphasized in his ILO report on “The Right to Decent Work of Persons with Disabilities”, that human rights and fundamental freedom are the birthright of all. “All human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated. It is the

duty of States, regardless of their political, economic, social and cultural systems, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedom...all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized.” The ideal is thus that people with disabilities around the world will experience these human rights.

The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (The Vienna Declaration 1993:Article 71 of Part 2) emphasises that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated and that democracy, development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing.

3.3.1 INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS AND LEGISLATIVE IMPERATIVES PERTAINING TO THE EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

From as early as the 1970s, discrimination and social exclusion against people with disabilities, internationally, have been increasingly perceived as a human rights issue. This shift in approach to a human rights issue is reflected in the legislation of quite a number of countries around the world, as well as in international and national human rights instruments. (International Labour Office 2006(a):1) If human rights are entrenched by the different Governments, then people with disabilities have a much better chance to be part of the employment pattern of the country. These countries will most probably also have a policy regarding education and employment of people with disabilities. Unfortunately, not all states and countries accept and entrench human rights.

Legislation thus plays a very important role with regard to the enforcement of human rights. It is thus necessary to investigate the international human rights and legislative imperatives with regard to employment and specifically to the employment of people with disabilities.

The main international instruments (International Labour Organization 2002(a):10) related to employment, including the employment of people with disabilities, include the ILO

Convention No. 159 on Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) of 1983, and Recommendation No. 168 of 1983, Convention and Recommendation No. 111 on non-discrimination in employment and occupation of 1958, the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work of 1998, the United Nations (UN) Standard Rules of 1993, the UN Covenants of 1996 and the UN Convention on the Rights of People with disabilities, 2007. Other international initiatives with regard to the employment of people with disabilities, include the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons 1982, the UN Decade of Disabled Persons 1983-92, the Council of Europe Coherent Policy for the Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities, the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons 1993-2002 and the African Decade of Disabled Persons 1999-2009. All these initiatives aim to promote the full participation of people with disabilities in all spheres of society and view disability related issues as rights issues.

There are documents and declarations, which specifically address the situation pertaining to people with disabilities (Akerberg 2001:8-9). The most important document in this regard is the UN Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, which was adopted in 1993. The basic idea in this document is the participation and equality for people with disabilities in all spheres of society. It contains 22 Standard Rules, representing a moral and political commitment on the part of countries to adapt society to people with disabilities. These rules are however not binding to countries but can be seen as guidelines. At present there is no generally binding international instrument specifically addressing the rights of persons with disabilities. The United Nations Standard Rules, can however in future, due to being endorsed by so many states, possibly eventually acquire the status of customary law.

Despite all these international human rights pertaining to people with disabilities the human rights of people with disabilities are still violated. A study conducted by the Swedish Organisation of Disabled Persons International Aid Association, SHIA Human Rights and Disability Network (Akerberg 2001:13) with regard to the violations of human rights of people with disabilities in various countries have shown that in all the countries who participated in the study people with disabilities were extensively deprived of the opportunity of fully participating in community life.

Despite these International Conventions, rules and regulations, people with disabilities are still prevented from enjoying the rights and liberties that so many countries, as signatories of conventions and suchlike, have pledged themselves to respect. In April 2000 the Commission adopted resolution 2000/51 for Human Rights, this stipulates that countries must redouble their efforts to improve the situation for people with disabilities. This resolution also stipulates that all forms of discrimination against people with disabilities are a violation of human rights (Akerberg 2001:25).

3.3.2 HUMAN RIGHTS AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK PERTAINING TO THE EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

Due to the fact that South Africa is a member state of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and have ratified various employment related Conventions, international laws have quite an impact on South African employment legislation.

According to Dupper (in Strydom 2004:29) conventions are designed to create obligations for the states that ratify them. With the ratification of the conventions the country agrees to two important things. At first they agree to implement the Convention, by for example, including it in an Act of Parliament. Secondly they agree to the supervisory measures laid down by the ILO with regard to the implementation of the Convention. This entails reporting back on a regular, periodic basis with regard to the measures taken to give effect to the measures of the Convention.

In South Africa the Government has since 1994 endeavoured to eliminate chronic unemployment and poverty. The Government (specifically the Department of Labour) has attempted to do this through a number of Acts, policies and programmes, which are aimed at empowering groups who were disadvantaged by the previous apartheid system. Included in these designated groups, are people with disabilities. People with disabilities have been excluded from participating in society and employment for various reasons. Some of these reasons are associated with lack of access to education, training and employment opportunities, as well as negative attitudes of society towards people with disabilities. People with disabilities are thus more likely to be unemployed or economically inactive than the general population (International Labour Organisation 2006(b):5).

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa is the highest law in the country and provides a strong basis for all new policies and legislation aimed at reducing unemployment and poverty. It clearly stipulates, "The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including...disability." (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa No. 108 of 1996:Sec 9(3)). All South African citizens' rights are protected and entrenched by the South African Constitution and the Bill of Rights. In South Africa the rights of people with disabilities are protected in its constitution and by legislative imperatives (Christianson in Strydom 2004:154).

In 1995 The Labour Relations Act, Act 66 of 1995 was promulgated. It expressly prohibits discrimination based on various grounds, including disability, in the workplace. It also protects employees against dismissal on the basis of the employee's disability; this is considered as automatically unfair (Christianson in Strydom 2004:159).

The National Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (NAP) was launched in December 1998 (The National Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights 1998:18). The NAP was developed as a response to the recommendations, which was made in The Vienna Declaration, and Programme of Action as adopted at the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, Austria in 1993.

With regard to people with disability, one of the most important guiding documents was the Integrated National Disability Strategy (INDS). One of the main objectives of the INDS has been to facilitate the inclusion of disability related issues into every aspect of governance. Unemployment is one of the aspects that the INDS address. It advocates the removal of barriers that result in discrimination in the workplace (White Paper on Integrated National Disability Strategy 1997:v).

During 1998 the Employment Equity Act (EEA) was promulgated. The purpose of the EEA is to achieve equity in the workplace by redressing the disadvantages in employment experienced by the previously disadvantaged groups, namely Black people, women and people with disabilities. It also makes provision for the prohibition of unfair discrimination and the implementation of affirmative action measures to ensure that the designated

groups are adequately represented in the workplace. The Commission of Employment Equity is also appointed to monitor, evaluate and advise the Minister of Labour on the implementation of the Act. The EEA also provides a definition for people with disabilities (The Employment Equity Act 1998).

The Promotion of Equality and the Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act No.4 of 2000 (PEPUDA), is another significant breakthrough for the employment of people with disabilities. The aim of the Act is to give effect to the Constitution, in order to prevent and prohibit unfair discrimination and harassment; to promote equality and eliminate unfair discrimination; to prevent and prohibit hate speech; and to provide for matters connected herewith (The Promotion of Equality and the Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act No.4 of 2000, Section 2). This Act is also sometimes referred to as the Equality Act. All people from South Africa are included in this Act, including the people who are excluded from the EE Act, such as the unemployed and members from the different Government Departments such as members from the National Defence Force, the National Intelligence Agency and the South African Secret Service. Should employees with disabilities who are employed in these spheres or whose employers are not designated employers as stipulated in the EE Act need to they can seek redress in respect of affirmative action issues through PEPUDA (Christianson in Strydom 2004: 163). The Act also addresses issues such as environmental accessibility and reasonable accommodation in the workplace.

During 2002 the “Code of Good Practice on the Employment of People with Disabilities” was issued. The Code is an expansion of the EEA and has been developed to assist employers and employees to understand both their rights and responsibilities with regard to the employment of people with disabilities. The Code also provides a detailed explanation of the definition of disability, giving an explanation of each 3 criteria, as encompassed in the EEA. It also describes measures that employers must take to ensure equitable representation and fair treatment of people with disabilities in the work environment. Included measures are reasonable accommodation, recruitment and selection, retention of employees who got disabled while employed, as well as confidentiality and disclosure of disability. The Code also reiterates the fact that when

opportunities and reasonable accommodation are provided to people with disabilities, they can contribute valuable skills and abilities to every workplace and render a contribution to the economy of our society.

The Technical Assistance Guidelines on the Employment of People with Disabilities (TAG) was issued in 2004. The purpose of the TAG (Department of Labour 2004:ii) is to assist employers, employees, trade unions and people with disabilities to have a better practical understanding of both the EEA and The Code of Good Practice on the Employment of People with disabilities. Practical step-by step guidance is provided with regard to the implementation of employment equity measures in the workplace.

Employment equity of people with disabilities is thus not just a legislative imperative but also a human rights issue, internationally as well as in South Africa.

3.4 BARRIERS TO THE EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

“Even under today’s more enabling legal environment, entering and staying in the labour force can be a major battle for people with disabilities. The path to employment is littered with obstacles and closed doors. That is why whether or not people with disabilities believe they are limited or prevented from working depends upon their environment, as much as it does upon their disability. Attitudinal barriers are often the greatest hurdle disabled people have to overcome to access their rights, enlarge their choices in life, or expand their level of independence“(Services Sector Education and Training Authority undated:21).

During 1998 a South African Baseline survey on disability was conducted, it indicated the major restrictive barriers for people with disabilities with regard to the performance of their social activities as inadequate transport, architectural barriers, policy and practice barriers which lead to unemployment, communication barriers, attitudinal barriers, unsafe, inaccessible and segregated low-income housing, and inadequate school-based opportunities for social participation during and after hours (Schneider in Swartz, Watermeyer, Lorenzo, Schneider and Priestly 2006:17).

According to the INDS (1997:23) one of the most important barriers which people with disabilities are confronted with, is a negative attitude. Attitudinal barriers lead to the social exclusion and marginalisation of people with disabilities. People with disabilities are often viewed as helpless and dependent, as ill and in constant need of care and medical treatment, or as tragic victims. They are also perceived as different or “outsiders”. More focus is placed on the disability than on the person. People tend to stereotype people with disabilities. Some able-bodied people assume that physical disability automatically implies intellectual disability; some assume that people with disabilities cannot speak for themselves and for this reason they will not address a person with a disability directly. In addition some able-bodied people have the perception that physical disability also implies that the person has an intellectual disability (Schneider in Watermeyer et al 2006:396). These stereotypes have a very negative influence on the employment of people with disabilities. The mistaken assumptions of the public about the capability of people with disabilities are also barriers in the social environment, which is a major obstacle.

The way in which the environment is developed and organised plays a crucial role in the level of independence and equality which people with disabilities experience and enjoy; the environment itself can thus be seen as a barrier. The INDS promulgates a barrier free society. The structural environment was however developed to cater for the needs of able-bodied people and did not take the needs of people with disabilities into consideration. (Swartz & Schneider in Watermeyer et al 2006:235).

Services Sector Education and Training Authority (undated:24), in their toolkit for employing and managing people with disabilities, provides a list of examples of barriers which people with disabilities in South Africa, are experiencing in the external environment of the workplace. Although these barriers are mostly in the environment external to the workplace, it is important to note, that these factors do impact on the employment environment.

TABLE 3.1

EXAMPLES OF BARRIERS IN THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

EXTERNAL FACTORS	EXAMPLES
Family	Family members may be embarrassed to have a disabled person in their home and thus tend to hide them away from the community. They might also be unaware of support programmes and laws pertaining to people with disabilities. As a result, they may discourage people with disabilities from any community involvement.
Physical Environment	Buildings in the physical environment might not be accessible for people with disabilities. Examples include ramps for wheelchairs, appropriate toilet facilities, service counters of an appropriate height, etc.
Public Services	Public transport in South Africa does not cater for the needs of the majority of people with disabilities. For example, most buses are not equipped to cater for the needs of wheelchair users.
Education Level	Most children with disabilities are often sent to special schools. These special school programmes mostly concentrated on basic vocational training in areas such as sewing, basket weaving, gardening, etc.
Communication	Sometimes communication with people with disabilities could be problematic, for example with deaf people. Instead of making an effort to communicate with them, a lot of able-bodied people tend to ignore them. This could lead to a feeling of social isolation.

The Services Sector Education and Training Authority also provide examples of the barriers which people with disabilities are experiencing in the working environment (Services Sector Education and Training Authority undated:25).

TABLE 3.2
EXAMPLES OF BARRIERS IN THE EMPLOYMENT ENVIRONMENT

WORKPLACE FACTORS	EXAMPLES
Misinformation	Some employees have misconceptions with regard to people with disabilities. They may believe that people with disabilities are being punished for something that they, or their family, did wrong. These beliefs are likely to influence how those employees interact with disabled people.
Discriminatory Attitudes	Some employees have the viewpoint that employees with disabilities are given an unfair advantage. Some managers and employees assume that an employee with a disability is unable to do certain tasks without even discussing it with them first.
Discriminatory Practices	Managers and co-workers may have misconceptions about the abilities of people with disabilities and for this reason might ignore or mistreat them in the working environment, or not recruit them.
Physical Environment	The physical environment where the employee with disabilities work, might not be sufficient according to his/her needs.
Professional Environment	Employees with disabilities are sometimes seen as appointments due to tokenism, while their professional ability is not taken into account. Sometimes employees with disabilities capability are evaluated according to their appearance and not according to their professional knowledge and capabilities.
Inadequate Training	Most of the training programmes are developed according to the needs of the able-bodied and not according to the needs of people with disabilities. Consideration must be given to whether such things as the subject content, methodology, learning materials, expected outcomes and venue are appropriate for people with disabilities.
Poor Communication	Sometimes other employees may have misconceptions about people with disabilities and their abilities. If the policies and information pertaining to people with disabilities are not clearly communicated to all employees these misconceptions might remain, leading to more discriminatory practices.
Lack of Commitment	A committed company will regularly monitor and evaluate efforts to implement company policy on disability.

The following barriers to the employment of people with disabilities were identified by the International Labour Office (O' Reilly 2003(a):49):

*The lack of appropriately skilled people with disabilities was one of the barriers, which hampered the employment of people with disabilities. Due to social isolation and very limited education which people with disabilities experienced in the past, they often lack the necessary skills for a specific job.

*In industrialized countries, many of the jobs for which people with disabilities were traditionally trained, do not exist any more. This was also identified as another barrier.

* Physical accessibility was identified as a major barrier to job seekers with a disability; this applies to the training, the workplace and the local built environment- public transport, housing, shops, restaurants, places of recreation- which are utilized by the other employees.

During 2006 the ILO conducted a study in South Africa to determine the vocational skills acquisition and employment experiences of people with disabilities. In the study the following barriers to finding work were the most frequently mentioned: lack of jobs, lack of awareness from employers, lack of skills training, the view that people with disabilities are less productive and the cost of reasonable accommodation and assistive devices (International Labour Organisation 2006(b):viii).

The White Paper on Affirmative Action in the Public Service (1998:13) mentions that negative attitudes, inaccessible and unsupportive working environments, as well as inadequate training and development opportunities are obstacles towards the employment of people with disabilities.

3.5 DISCRIMINATION IN THE EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

“For generations, unfair discrimination has served to undermine the dignity, as well as impoverish the socio-economic well-being, of people with disabilities.” (Ngwena 2007: 118). Baldwin and Williams (in Thomas, Burton, Douglas and Hyatt 1998:41) describe discrimination in employment as “... can be expressed as refusals to hire, job terminations in response to reductions in the demand for labour, or refusals to rehire workers after they are absent because of an illness or injury.” Ngwena (2007:151) states that “disability discrimination.... is the result of unfair treatment, negative attitudes and indifferent social

structures.” Gardiner (1997:12) said “good practice employers are recognizing that discrimination stems from a lack of knowledge and from prejudice, rather than from specific characteristics which make an individual seem different.”

Gardiner (1997:1) acknowledges that many people experience discrimination on the ground of disability. According to him quite a number of people with disabilities are unable to utilize their skills and experience in appropriate jobs due to practical and attitudinal barriers. This results that very few able bodied employers have experience of people with disabilities as colleagues or as customers. This has also led to the reinforcement of certain stereotypes with regard to people with disabilities, for example, that people with disabilities are marginal participants in the economic and social spheres of life.

Ngwena (2007:207) states that “the built environment, transport and communication systems, workplaces, recreational amenities, and so on, all routinely exclude people with disabilities and serve to perpetuate systemic inequality, marginalization and social exclusion.... to require people with disabilities to conform to an adverse environment, is in itself, unfair and discriminatory...”. “Despite legal protections, prejudice and bias continue to exist and have a tremendous influence on people with disabilities’ ability to work and succeed” (Miller in Blanck 2000:4-5).

During a Disability Conference, which was held on 28 September 2007, Mr W. Dibakwane (2007) had the following to say with regard to being a person with a disability in South Africa in the year 2007 “Being disabled is a huge challenge in South Africa. Although our beloved country has wonderful laws relating to people with disabilities, few of these laws are ever implemented. On paper they look great but on the ground...”

According to the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (PEPUDA) (Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000, Section1) “discrimination means any act or omission, including a policy, law, rule, practice, condition or situation which directly or indirectly:

-Imposes burdens, obligations or disadvantage on; or

-Withholds benefits, opportunities or advantages from,
Any person on one or more of the prohibited grounds”.

Landman (in Strydom 2004:294) points out that this Act directly prohibits unfair discrimination on the ground of disability, with regard to the following aspects:

*“Denying or removing from any person who has a disability any supporting or enabling facility necessary for their functioning in society;

*Contravening the code of practice or regulations of the South African Bureau of Standards that govern environmental accessibility;

*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.”

The Employment Equity Act of 1998 in Chapter 2, paragraph 6, makes provision for the prohibition of both direct and indirect discrimination. Although these terms are however not defined within the Act, they are well defined and recognized within international discriminatory laws.

Dupper & Garbers (in Strydom 2004:39) describe direct discrimination as situations where some people are treated differently on the ground of their race, sex, religion or other protected traits, including disability. Indirect discrimination refers to the use of employment practices, which seems neutral but disproportionately affects members of the disadvantaged groups in circumstances where it is not justifiable.

These authors stipulate (Dupper & Garbers in Strydom 2004 (a):40-41) that in South Africa direct discrimination occurs when people are not treated as individuals. Generalized assumptions about groups of people are assigned to each individual who is a member of that group, irrespective whether that individual portrays the specific characteristic or not. As a rule it is easy to recognize direct discrimination. Direct discrimination thus occurs when people with disabilities are deliberately denied access, training or advancement, even if their impairment would not hamper their ability to perform (Services Sector Education and Training Authority undated:14).

According to Dupper & Garbers (in Strydom 2004(a):46) the difference between direct and indirect discrimination is founded within a statistical concept. In order to prove indirect discrimination, the complainant must be in a position to prove that the seemingly neutral policy or practice has a disproportionate impact on a protected group. Statistics are thus needed to show the disparity in number between the protected and non-protected groups who can comply with the policy or practice. These statistics thus aim to show the links between a seemingly neutral policy or practice and the impact on the protected group, as well as to show that the impact on that group is disproportionate (big enough to constitute discrimination).

With direct discrimination cases unequal treatment immediately translates to a certain employment practice or policy. In contrast indirect discrimination is about the effect of the apparently neutral requirement or condition, which is not always easily identifiable. Due to the definition of employment policy and practice, which is given in the Employment Equity Act, it is easier for the complainant to specify exactly where the discrimination has taken place.

The indirect discrimination model originated in the United States of America and has had a significant impact on the worldwide employment context. This has been utilized to challenge quite a number of seemingly neutral requirements or conditions set by employers for employment, transfers, promotions and other benefits. It was found that the concept of indirect discrimination has been utilized world wide to challenge quite a number of employment practices (Dupper & Garbers in Strydom 2004(a): 45).

This model of indirect discrimination has also been incorporated into South African labour laws and is distinctively prohibited by section 9 of the Constitution Act 108 of 1996, as well as by section 6 (1) of the Employment Equity Act and section 187 of the LRA (within the context of dismissals).

When an employer does not provide reasonable accommodation and fails to provide a credible explanation on how this will impose an unjustifiable financial hardship on the company, the employer is guilty of unfair discrimination (Services Sector Education and

Training Authority undated:16). Section 6 (1) in the Employment Equity Act prohibits unfair discrimination, both indirect and direct, in any employment policy or practice. According to section 1 of the Employment Equity Act "...an employment policy and practice includes, but is not limited to

- (a) recruitment procedures, advertising and selection criteria;
- (b) appointments and the appointment progress;
- (c) job classification and grading;
- (d) remuneration, employment benefits and terms and conditions of employment;
- (e) job assignments;
- (f) the working environment and facilities;
- (g) training and development;
- (h) performance evaluation systems;
- (i) promotion;
- (j) transfer;
- (k) demotion;
- (l) disciplinary measures other than dismissal; and
- (m) dismissal." (Dupper & Garbers in Strydom 2004(a):54 -55).

Furthermore discrimination is also classified as discrimination based on listed grounds and discrimination based on unlisted grounds. When discrimination is based on listed grounds, the discrimination will be presumed to be unfair, which means the employer must prove the fairness of his/her conduct. With discrimination that is based on unlisted grounds the employee needs to prove the unfairness.

In section 9(3) of the Constitution 16 grounds for discrimination are listed and section 6(1) of the Employment Equity Act adds 3 more grounds, namely family responsibility, HIV status and political opinion. Due to all these grounds specified by name, it is relatively easy to identify a ground on which to base a claim of discrimination (Dupper & Garbers in Strydom 2004(a):59).

It is interesting to note that from all these specified grounds, only disability, family responsibility and pregnancy are defined in section 1 of the Employment Equity Act.

The only ground for fair discrimination, as identified by legislation is summarized by Dupper & Garbers (in Strydom 2004 (a):66):

- An inherent job requirement. This is mentioned in both the Employment Equity Act and the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995.
- Affirmative action as stipulated in the Employment Equity Act, as well The Promotion of Equality and Prohibition of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000(PEPUDA).
- The normal retirement aged, as agreed to. This defence is mentioned only in the Labour Relations Act.

Inherent job requirement as fair discrimination is unfortunately not defined in either the Employment Equity Act or the Labour Relations Act. This concept has been taken from the International Labour Organization's Convention 111 of 1958, concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation.

When, however, other countries are studied with regard to their interpretation of inherent job requirements, Dupper & Garbers (in Strydom 2004(b):83) aim to provide guidelines with regard to the interpretation of inherent job requirements. They point out that the concept "inherent job requirement" contains two important words, namely inherent, which means permanent and essential quality or attribute and requirement, which refer to an element of compulsion. This concept thus refers to essential job duties, which have to be met; otherwise, if these requirements are not met the job cannot be done.

In order to determine the inherent requirements of the job, it is essential that the employer must conduct an honest and valid evaluation of the essential functions of the job. Included in this evaluation should be an evaluation to determine whether the essential functions of the job could be performed should the person with a disability be allowed to use an assistive device. If it is determined that the individual would be able to perform the essential functions of the job with an assistive device, the employer cannot discriminate

against the person, should he/she be otherwise suitably qualified (Services Sector Education and Training Authority undated:17).

3.6 REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN THE WORKPLACE

In most of the legislation pertaining to people with disabilities, the concept of reasonable accommodation is mentioned. This concept is not unique to South Africa. It has been accepted world wide that people with disabilities might experience the need for assistance in the workplace, at some times.

The Employment Equity Act defines reasonable accommodation in section 1 as "... reasonable accommodation means any modification or adjustment to a job or to the working environment that will enable a person from a designated group to have access to or participate or advance in employment" (Employment Equity Act 1998 section 1). From this definition it is clear that reasonable accommodation is also designed for the other designated groups as stipulated in the Employment Equity Act; it is however mostly associated with the employment of people with disabilities.

During a Disability Conference which was held on 28 September 2007 Mr P. Mushi (2007), a guest speaker with a disability, mentioned the following with regard to reasonable accommodation: **"Disabled people are capable, all what we need is for you to remove all the obstructions; help and support us through internal training and probations to perform our duties to the best of our ability..."**

According to Section 6.3 of The Code of Good Practice on the Employment of People with Disabilities, reasonable accommodation is applicable to both employees as well as applicants for a job. "Reasonable accommodation requirement applies to applicants and employees with disabilities who are suitably qualified for the job and may be required during the recruitment and selection processes, in the working environment, in the way work is usually done, evaluated and rewarded; in the benefits and privileges of employment"

Reasonable accommodation must thus be considered at all stages of employment, namely recruitment, selection, during the employment process and in the working environment as well as during performance appraisals, promotions and for the evaluation of employment benefits (Christianson in Strydom 2004:178).

Christianson (in Strydom 2004:178) notes that reasonable accommodation can only be applied by the employer should he/she be aware of the employee's disability. In order for the employer to be aware of the disability, the employee needs to disclose his/her disability, unless the disability is obvious. The employer has the duty to consult with the employee with regard to his/her reasonable accommodation. Section 6 of The Code of Good Practice on the Employment of People with Disabilities stipulates that it might be necessary to consult with a technical expert in order to attain which reasonable accommodation measures is most suitable for the employee. It also stipulates that the reasonable accommodation could be temporary or permanent, depending on the nature and extent of the disability.

Section 6.9 of The Code of Good Practice on the Employment of People with Disabilities, explains which types of accommodation might be reasonable; the list is however not restricted to only these measures. Reasonable accommodation thus include the adaptation of facilities to make them accessible; the adaptation of existing equipment or the acquiring of new equipment (included is computer hardware and software); the reorganizing of workstations; the adaptation of training and assessment materials and systems; the restructuring of jobs as well as the re-assigning of non-essential functions; the adjustment of working hours and leave, as well as the provision of specialized supervision, training and support in the workplace. Reasonable accommodation could also possibly be needed with regard to the employment policies or practices of the organization (Dupper & Garbers in Strydom 2004 (a):54 -55).

Sometimes people with disabilities do not request reasonable accommodation due to a fear of being singled out and being labelled as someone who is demanding special considerations. Many people with disabilities are also reluctant to request reasonable accommodation as they fear that they would be requested to disclose their disability.

Some are unaware of their right to request reasonable accommodation. Due to this quite a number of people with disabilities in the workplace are trying to perform their functions within the accepted norms of the organization without receiving any accommodation. This is also affecting their performance and opportunities for advancement significantly. The perception in society is still that people with disabilities cannot truly compete in the workplace, unless they can be “cured” or rehabilitated (Wilkinson & Frieden in Blanck 2000:71 - 72).

It is important to note that employers need to adopt the most cost effective means to effectively remove barriers, which hampers job performance and equal access to the benefits and opportunities of employment. Section 6.11 of The Code of Good Practice on the Employment of People with Disabilities, 2002, specifically mentions that an employer has no duty to accommodate in circumstances where there is unjustifiable hardship upon the employer’s business. Section 6.12 of this code defines unjustifiable hardship as “... action that requires significant or considerable difficulty or expense. This involves considering, amongst other things, the effectiveness of the accommodation and the extent to which it would seriously disrupt the operation of the business.” It is important to take note that an accommodation, which imposes unjustifiable hardships on one employer at a particular time, may not be an unjustifiable hardship for another employer.

Lee & Thompson (in Thomas, Burton, Douglas & Hyatt 1998:169) emphasized that research indicated that the cost of accommodating employees with disabilities is modest. They also refer to a survey conducted during 1982 whereby 2000 federal contractors were involved. During this survey it was found that most accommodations, which were made for people with disabilities, involved no cost or only a moderate cost. Reference is also made to another study where it was found that 54% of accommodations were cost-free. The excuse used by various employers of not employing persons with disability due to the costs involved with regard to reasonable accommodation is thus a misconception, which needs to be clarified.

Oakes (2005:167) agrees with this statement that it is a myth that accommodations for people with disabilities will require adaptations, which are too costly. Gardiner (1997:11)

also emphasises that in reality very few people with disabilities need special equipment to perform their duties.

3.6.1 REASONABLE ACCOMODATION MEASURES FOR PEOPLE WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITY

People with different disabilities have different needs, even people with the same disability, have their own individual needs, which must be considered. The Department of Public Service and Administration (2007:10,14-23) identified some specific ways in which people with mobility impairments could be accommodated in the working environment:

*Improvement of access by installing ramps and doors next to turnstiles and automatic doors. Security gates should also be wide enough in order to accommodate wheelchairs.

*Installation of voice activated computer software for those who cannot type.

*Make provision for the personal assistant or care attendance of the employee with disabilities in the working environment. They will render assistance to the employee with regard to his/her personal comfort needs and cannot be tasked with any official work.

*Provision of accessible office furniture, for example office desks need to be at the correct height in order to accommodate the person in the wheelchair.

*Installation of lifts, which are accessible for people in wheelchairs, for example, the lifts must be wide enough in order to accommodate a wheelchair.

*The floor surface must to be even and stable.

*Measures must be taken that there are no obstructions in the pathways for people with mobility impairments. An obstruction is any object, standing in the passage, which hampers free movement. An example is a cold drink machine standing in the passage, which hampers the free movement of a person in a wheelchair.

*Parking which is specifically designed and designated to people with physical disability must be available. Care must be taken that this parking conforms to the laid down standards of the South African Buro of Standards. These parking bays must be close to entrances and with ramps in order to make movement into the building easier. The parking bays must also be clearly marked and measures must be taken to ensure that these parking bays are only utilized by people with mobility impairments.

*Controls within the working environment which do not require fine finger or wrist movements or much pressure to be activated, need to be installed. For example, doors and windows should be able to open with minimum force.

*Official accessible transport, for example, an adapted motor vehicle which, allows a paraplegic to drive the vehicle.

*Flexibility with regard to working hours in order to accommodate the needs of people with physical disabilities, for example, allows time off for rehabilitation.

*Evacuation procedures and equipment must make provision for people with physical disabilities, for example, evacuation chairs must be available.

*Offices should allow enough space for an employee who is making use of a wheelchair to move and turn around.

*All doorways should be wide enough in order to allow entrance to an employee making use of a wheelchair.

*Ablution facilities, such as toilets, washbasins and other bathroom equipment need to be accessible to an employee making use of a wheelchair. The bathroom must conform to the requirements as set out by the South African Buro of Standards.

3.7 CURRENT EMPLOYMENT SITUATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Due to the medical model of viewing disability, people with disabilities tend to be viewed as ill, different from their non-disabled peers and in need of care. An emphasis is usually placed on their medical needs and in the process their wider social needs are ignored. This has resulted in severe isolation for people with disabilities and their families.

According to the White Paper on Integrated Disability Strategy (1997:7) the majority of people with disabilities in South Africa have been excluded from the mainstream of society and this has prevented them from accessing fundamental social, political and economic rights. On economical level an estimated 99% of people with disabilities are excluded from employment in the open labour market. These high levels of unemployment amongst people with disability can be attributed to inadequate education, discriminatory attitudes, inaccessible and unsupportive work environments, inadequate and inaccessible provision

of vocational rehabilitation and training, inadequate access to information, ignorance in society, and lack of enabling mechanisms to promote employment opportunities. It is thus evident that people with disabilities have in the past experienced exclusion from many spheres of society.

Even though an environment conducive to the employment of people with disabilities had been provided by the international and national legal frameworks, finding employment for people with disabilities is a problem which is affecting the majority of people with disabilities and their families. Piggot, Sapey & Wilenius (2005:600) refer to Oliver who stated, "There is a universal agreement that disabled people do not have the same access to jobs as the rest of the population. Estimates of the unemployment rates amongst disabled people suggest that this huge discrepancy cannot be accounted for solely on the grounds of impaired performance."

In South Africa, The Development Bank of Southern Africa conducted research over the period 1994 – 2004 with regard to "Key issues pertaining to the employment of people with disabilities in South Africa". It was found that in the public service only two thousand and seven (2007) of the 797 750 employees were people with disabilities and this represents an average of 0,25 % which is far short of the 2% that was supposed to be achieved by the year 2005. The Provincial Administrators who responded attained less than 0, 5 % of people with disabilities. According to the Annual Report of the Commission for Employment Equity (CEE) for 2002-2003, only 1% of all employees were people with disabilities (Development Bank of Southern Africa 2005:14).

According to the Commission of Employment Equity Annual Report for 2006-2007 (Department of Labour 2007:15) only 0, 7% of all employees were people with disabilities. This indicates that there are fewer people with disabilities employed than in the previous years. These employees account for about 1, 2% of representation at Top Management level and 0, 8% at Senior Management level. At the Professionally Qualified and Middle Management level there is a representation of approximately 0, 6%.

The Commission of Employment Equity Annual Report 2006-2007 (Department of Labour 2007:30) indicated that people with disabilities who have been recruited over this period represent slightly more than 0,3% of all who have been recruited in the workforce. This represents a decline from previous reporting periods. People with disabilities account for about 1,4% of all recruits at Top Management level and 0,7% of all recruits at Senior Management level, while at Professionally Qualified and Middle Management level they represent about 0,5% of all recruits.

According to the Census 2001 (Statistics South Africa 2005:21) information, 19% of people with disabilities between the age of 15 and 65 were employed compared to 35% of non-disabled people. It is also interesting to note that about 30% of people with disabilities had no schooling compared to 15% of the total population; where females were more affected in this regard than males.

The data in the Commission of Employment Equity Annual Report 2006-2007 indicate that people with disabilities represent more or less 0,3% of all people in the workforce who have been promoted; which indicates a decline of promotions for people with disabilities in all previous reports. (Department of Labour 2007:38). It is interesting to note that the number of people with disabilities who have received training represents 0,3% of the total workforce who have received training (Department of Labour 2007:46).

During a presentation by Ms R. Makhubela, Chief Director: Diversity Management from the Department of Public Service and Administration, at the Disability Conference on 28 September, (Makhubela 2007) the following statistics were provided with regard to the employment of people with disabilities in the public service:

- March 2002 - 0,11% across all sectors
- December 2005 - 0,16%
- April 2007 - 0,17%

She also mentioned that there was a 0.06% increase from 2002 to 2007, indicating a slow pace of growth. The Public Service did not meet its set target of 2% employees with

disabilities by 2005. The reviewed target date for a 2% minimum representation has been extended to March 2009.

3.8 SUMMARY

In this chapter the importance of employment for a person with disabilities was emphasized. Work is just as important for a person with disability as for an able-bodied person. Despite all the human rights and legislative imperatives guiding the employment of people with disability, discrimination towards persons with disabilities is still taking place. Various barriers are also present preventing people with disabilities from experiencing equality in the workplace. Statistics regarding the employment of people with disabilities also demonstrate that people with disabilities are not represented according to the Government prescripts. Literature has proven that a lot of people with disabilities can be just as productive and are capable to adequately perform their job functions if they are provided with reasonable accommodation measures. Reasonable accommodation is also part of the legislative imperatives pertaining to the employment of people with disabilities. People with disabilities are thus able and capable to economically participate in the labour market, if they are provided with the necessary assistive devices according to their specific needs.

CHAPTER 4

THE CONCEPT OF EQUALITY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Various explanations pertaining to equality are available. In this chapter the researcher aims to discuss a few of the viewpoints, as well as the different forms of equality as mentioned in literature. Equality within the South African context is briefly described. Specific reference is made of the legislative imperatives guiding the implementation of equality in South Africa. The impact of the Constitution, Act 108 of 1996, the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1998, the Employment Equity Act 108 of 1996 and The Promotion of Equality and the Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000 on equality is discussed. The role of the equality courts in the attainment of equality in South Africa is briefly discussed.

4.2 THE CONCEPT OF EQUALITY

According to the Encarta Dictionary (2007) equality can be defined as a state of being equal in terms of rights, treatment, quantity, or value equal to all others in a specific group; full equality under the law.

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2004:18) the concept of equality is closely linked to human dignity and is based on the idea that all human beings are equal in terms of value and importance, regardless of physical, mental or other differences. People with disabilities are thus also equal to able-bodied individuals.

Equality can thus mean quite a number of different things. It can be mathematical of nature, where the one must be equal to the other. Equality means much more than just the equal application of rules. Equality can also produce favour, whereby one receives more than the other in order to equalize past inequities. Equality could thus involve that favourable treatment be given to some persons or groups (Oakes 2005:9). Equality within the South African context thus entails that people with disabilities must receive favourable treatment in order to rectify inequalities from the past.

Dupper & Garbers (in Strydom 2004:281- 283) point out the following with regard to equality:

*With regard to discrimination a distinction is often made between three notions of equality, namely equality in treatment, equality in opportunity and equality in outcome.

*Equality in treatment is also called formal equality. It means that discrimination does exist where differentiation is present. This approach recognizes unfair discrimination but criticizes affirmative action.

*Equality in opportunity recognizes the danger of structural discrimination and the need to use transitional remedial measures. According to this view equality in outcome remains unacceptable, unless it naturally results from equal opportunities.

*Equality of outcome or substantive equality, sees that it is the duty of the State to redress past disadvantages and expressly approve of a group based approach in redressing past disadvantages. This view has as its primary purpose the elimination of these disadvantages.

According to Dupper (in Strydom 2004:3) there are two different forms of equality, namely substantive and formal equality. He explains that the prohibition of discrimination and the commitment to affirmative action is an expression of the goal of substantive equality. Fundamental to this form of equality is the acknowledgement that special treatment is required for specific groups of people in certain circumstances in order to rectify certain discriminatory practices, policies and laws from the past, which have resulted in inequality. Formal equality however refers to sameness in treatment, which means that everyone must be treated the same regardless of the circumstances.

The concept of equality of opportunity is the most frequently used concept in national legislation (International Labour Organisation 2004:19). Ngwena (2007:123) also refers to the form of substantive equality as “a more responsive tool for levelling the playing field.”

4.3 EQUALITY IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

A study conducted during 1992 by the ILO found that South Africa had the highest level of inequality of any country in the world for which they had data at that stage (Dupper in Strydom 2004:1).

In the Explanatory Memorandum to the Employment Equity Bill (1997:5) the following is said with regard to equality in South Africa: "Apartheid has left behind a legacy of inequality. In the labour market the disparity in the distribution of jobs, occupations and incomes reveal the effects of discrimination against black people, women and people with disabilities. These disparities are reinforced by social practices which perpetuate discrimination in employment against these disadvantaged groups, as well as by factors outside the labour market, such as the lack of education, housing, medical care and transport. These disparities cannot be remedied simply by eliminating discrimination. Policies, programmes and positive action designed to redress the imbalances of the past are therefore needed." People with disabilities must therefore also benefit from all these programmes, policies and positive actions. Ngwena (2007:153) summarizes equality as a process, requiring a holistic approach; as the presence of laws are not enough.

4.4 LEGISLATIVE IMPERATIVES FOR EQUALITY IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

27 April 1994 is a very important date with regard to equality in South Africa, specifically with regard to equality for people with disabilities. This is the date that the interim Constitution came into operation and when equality assumed central position in South African law. In the Bill of Rights equality is listed as the first substantive right in South Africa. According to the Constitution, Chapter 2, The Bill of Rights "Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms." Equality for people with disabilities thus means that they are able to fully enjoy all rights, in the same manner that able-bodied individuals are enjoying their rights. Included in these rights is the right to employment.

Dupper (in Strydom 2004:16) also emphasizes that equality, together with the notions of dignity and freedom, influence the interpretation and application of all other rights, which is protected within the Bill of Rights.

“Equality is entrenched both as a right and as a value in the South African Constitution. In addition to being the first substantive right in a comprehensive Bill of Rights, the importance of equality is recognized repeatedly throughout the text and in the operational provisions of the Bill of Rights. The attainment of an open and democratic society based on human dignity, equality and freedom is the yardstick for both interpreting and limiting other constitutional rights.”(South African Human Rights Commission 2006:7). According to the South African Human Rights Commission equality is thus a very important concept within the South African Constitution and is highly valued as it is impacting all other constitutional rights.

The Constitution can be described as the highest and most influential law in South Africa. This Constitution laid the foundation for the establishment of a society based on equality, dignity, democratic values, social justice, fundamental human freedoms and fairness to all of its citizens (The National Action Plan for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights 1998:17).

The right to equality is described in section 9 of the Constitution Act 108 of 1996 and in labour-equality legislation, such as the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995, the EEA, as well as in the PEPUDA. In this last mentioned Act the two strategies is specifically mentioned to achieve equity, namely the elimination of existing discrimination and the implementation of measures designed to protect and advance those groups of people who were disadvantaged by past discriminatory practices by means of affirmative action measures (Dupper in Dupper 2004:2). People with disabilities as part of the designated groups are thus included within these measures.

Equality is protected in the Constitution Act 108 of 1996. In Section 1 (a) it lists the achievement of equality as one of South Africa’s foundational values. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996: Section 9(2)) mentions, “Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms. “

One of the main purposes of the Constitution is the achievement of equality. According to Dupper (in Strydom 2004:18), the equality referred to in the Constitution refers to

substantive equality. The reasoning behind this conclusion is that in order to address the historical imbalance of inequality substantive equality needs to be instituted. According to Dupper (in Strydom 2004:18) this has been confirmed in various Constitutional Court decisions Dupper (in Strydom 2004:19) also refers to the Constitution section 9(2) as evidence that substantive equality is the aim of the Constitution, where it clearly states that: to promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons, or categories of persons, disadvantaged by unfair discrimination may be taken. The right to equality is thus more than prohibiting discrimination or unequal treatment; it means that everyone must enjoy all rights and freedoms fully and equally.

According to Dupper (in Strydom 2004:22) the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995, just as the Constitution, supports the notion of substantive equality as it refers to affirmative action as justifiable ground for discrimination.

The Employment Equity Act of 1998 was also enacted to comply with the same section of the Constitution and the aim of this Act is to achieve equality in the workplace (Employment Equity Act 55/1998: Chapter 1(2)) The Act also prohibits unfair direct and indirect discrimination, which mirrors the wording of the equality provision of the Constitution. (Employment Equity Act 55/1998:Chapter 2 (6)).People with disabilities forms part of the designated groups as specified within this Act and are thus also entitled to equality within the workplace.

The Employment Equity Act of 1998 embraces both a formal and substantive approach of equality. The substantive equality provision is again referred to in this Act, by making provision for affirmative action measures for designated groups, which include people with disabilities. The Act gives a broad definition of affirmative action, which defines it as any measure, which is aimed at ensuring equal employment opportunities and equitable representation of suitably qualified people from the designated groups in all categories of the occupational ladder (Employment Equity Act 55/1998:Chapter 3 (15)). Affirmative action does not imply merely giving designated employees preferential treatment with regard to appointments but also include:

- Identification and elimination of employment barriers, including unfair discrimination.
- The development and training of these members in order to better their chances to advance in their careers.
- The responsibility of employers to evaluate their employment policies and practices in order to remove any inherent barriers.
- Implementation of measures to better diversity within the working environment.
- The responsibility of the employer to make reasonable accommodation measures.

In order to achieve equality for people with disabilities in the working environment it will be necessary for the employer, to address all the above aspects and not just to provide employment opportunities to people with disabilities.

The Employment Equity Act of 1998 (Chapter 3 (13)) describes designated employers as employers who employ 50 or more employees; however employers who have less than 50 employees may also be bound to the Act, should they have a turnover of equal or above the applicable turnover as set out in schedule 4 of the Act. This figure varies from sector to sector. Other designated employers are municipalities, governmental organizations and any other employers who are bound by a contract as a designated employer. Dupper (in Strydom 2004:25) elaborates on what these designated employers are required to do according to Chapter 3 of the Employment Equity Act; they are supposed to:

- According to section 15 implement affirmative action measures (people with disabilities form part of the designated groups earmarked for affirmative action)
- According to section 1 ensure equitable representation of the designated groups, namely black people, women and people with disabilities
- According to section 16 and 17 have consultation with the employees with regard to varying aspects (people with disabilities must thus also be consulted with regard to their disability related needs within the working environment)
- According to section 19 analyze employment policies, practices, procedures and the working environment in order to identify employment barriers (barriers to workplace equality for people with disabilities thus need to be identified and addressed)

-According to section 20 prepare an employment equity plan and according to section 21 report annually or bi-annually to the Director- General of the Department of Labour on the progress made in terms of the implementation of the employment equity plan.

The PEPUDA of 2000 was enacted in order to comply with section 9(4) of the Constitution, which gives the State the responsibility to pass legislation to prevent or prohibit unfair discrimination and to promote the achievement of equality. In this Act both direct and indirect discrimination is prohibited (The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4/2000:Chapter 1(2)).

Landman (in Strydom 2004:303) specifies that according to the PEPUDA all persons, including the state, have a duty and a responsibility to promote equality. According to Section 25 (1) of the PEPUDA the state's duties are:

- The development of awareness of the fundamental rights in order to promote a climate of mutual respect, understanding and equality;
- The promotion of equality by means of developing and implementing programmes
- Development of action plans to address unfair discrimination, hate speech or harassment;
- To establish a legislative framework in line with PEPUDA's objectives;
- The promotion of equality by means of the development of codes of practice;
- The development of guidelines and codes with regard to reasonable accommodation;
- The provision of advice, assistance and training with regard to equality issues;
- Development of appropriate internal mechanisms to address unfair discriminatory, hate speech or harassment complaints;
- The conducting of information campaigns in order to familiarize people with PEPUDA.

When considering above, the State has quite an important role to play with regard to ensuring equality for all in the workplace. According to PEPUDA (of 2000 Section 25 (2)) the South African Human Rights Commission and other relevant institutions, such as the Public Protector, the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of

Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities, the Commission for Gender Equality, the Auditor-General and the Electoral Commission, may request any state component or person to provide information pertaining to the attainment of equality.

It is not only the state who must promote equality but all persons, non-governmental organizations, community - based organizations and traditional organizations. In other words, no one is exempted from the promotion of equality. The South African Human Rights Commission must, according to the PEPUDA, assess the extent to which unfair discrimination persists and report on it.

As people with disabilities form part of the designated groups, they are included in all these equality legislative imperatives and employers thus have to abide by these rules and prescripts. Equality for people with disabilities thus means much more than just appointing more people with disabilities.

4.5 THE ROLE OF EQUALITY COURTS IN THE ATTAINMENT OF EQUALITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

On 13 June 2003, Equality Courts were designated in terms of the Equality Act (The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4/2000: Chapter 4 (16)). These Equality Courts are an important component in ensuring that our constitutional values of equality and dignity are achieved. These courts assist in the eradication of unfair discrimination and the building of a national culture of tolerance and respect for diversity (South African Human Rights Commission 2006(a):1).

During a review of the South African Human Rights Commission in October 2006, (South African Human Rights Commission 2006(a):19) it was indicated that the Equality Courts have within three years finalized fifteen cases. Four of these cases were related to discrimination on the grounds of disability. These cases were related to the physical accessibility of the environment. All these cases were ruled in favour of the person with a disability. All equality matters are not placed before the Equality Court, but are handled via the Commission's complaints procedure. It is interesting to note that a total of 14% of all

complaints received by the Commission is related to disability, whereas 59% are related to race; 8% to age, 5% to sexual orientation and 1% to gender discrimination.

4.6 SUMMARY

In this chapter a brief overview of the concept of equality was provided. The different viewpoints pertaining to equality, as well as the different forms were discussed. In the South African context various laws guide equality. These laws are briefly discussed. When the South African equality legislative context is considered, it seems that substantive equality is embraced. Substantive equality sees that it is the duty of the State to redress past disadvantages and expressly approve of a group based approach in redressing past disadvantages. This view has as its primary purpose the elimination of these disadvantages. People with disabilities form part of the designated groups, legislative imperatives pertaining to equality are thus also relevant to this group of employees. T

CHAPTER 5

SOCIAL WORK AND DISABILITY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the author demonstrate the importance of considering environmental factors when rendering social work services to people with disabilities, specifically to employees with disabilities within their working environment. In order to render successful social work services to people with disabilities, the worker also require certain vital qualities, skills and knowledge. These skills, qualities and knowledge are briefly discussed.

5.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS IN RENDERING SOCIAL WORK SERVICES TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

Van Delft (2002:19) refers to the international definition of social work, as accepted by the South African Standard Generating Body (SGB) for social work as well as the SA Council for Social Service Professions, as: “The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work.”

Historically, disability was seen as an individual’s own “problem” and the focus was placed on the person with the disability and the problem was defined in individual terms. Nowadays, the challenge of disability is seen as being co- determined and created by society. Every person with a disability is affected by events and changes in society and also has an effect on the society. These events and changes also have a unique impact on the individual, depending on his/her life experiences (Rothman 2003:79-81).

The environment, in which people live and interact, constantly changes. According to Schneider (in Watermeyer et al 2006:9) the environment, in which an individual lives, consists of various components, namely the physical, attitudinal, as well as the social

world. In South Africa quite a number of changes have taken place in the socio, economic and political environment over the past few years. It is important for social workers to keep abreast of all the changes that are taking place in the South African living environment of individuals and to take cognisance of the impact these changes have on individuals. Social work must also be up to date with regard to actions and programmes which are available to promote people's social functioning. The context and environment in which people live does not consist just of things which you can see happening, but also consists of what people are allowed to do as prescribed by the laws of the country. These laws have an impact on the individual's environment and thus on the individual. The laws demand that one should behave according to a specific way, even if the person does not agree with these laws. This implies that the context in which one lives is thus very seldom under the total control of the individual (Van Delft 2002:19).

In South Africa, the working environment of the individual has dramatically changed during the last few years. Quite a number of changes and new laws were implemented over the past few years. Affirmative Action was one of the "buzz words" which affected everyone's lives. With regard to people with disabilities these changes also had quite an impact on their lives, as they form part of the designated groups earmarked for affirmative action laws and regulations. With regard to disability quite a number of regulations and laws were enacted since inception of the new democratic dispensation in 1996. These laws and guidelines' broad aim had to do with the enhancement of independence, empowerment and integration of people with disabilities into the social and economic spheres of life. In order to empower people with disabilities social workers need to be knowledgeable with regard to these developments and the needs of people with disabilities.

Miller (in Blanck 2000:4) pointed out that people with disabilities, just as women, people of colour and religious minorities, have had to fight for recognition of their civil rights, legal protection and integration into society.

According to Schneider (in Watermeyer et al 2006:8) "Disability is an experience that arises out of the interaction between a person with a health condition and the context in which they live. If the environment changes, then the experience of disability also

changes. Disability thus includes external environment factors and internal personal factors. In effect, one must look at both the individual and the environment if one is to describe a person's experience of disability accurately and comprehensively. Disability can no longer be seen as a static feature of an individual but rather as a dynamic and changing experience determined by the changing nature of the environment. "

Schneider (in Watermeyer et al 2006:9) emphasized the importance of taking in consideration and understanding all the elements, which led to the experience of disability. Information is thus needed with regard to:

- *The person, as well as his/her personal characteristics.

- *The external environment, as described by the person him/herself, as well as by another objective person.

- *The interaction process between the different elements (e.g. whether the environmental factors act as facilitators, or barriers and how they interact with each other).

- *The outcome of the relationship between the elements, whether they are leading to disability or to the functioning of the person.

If any of the first three aspects mentioned above, changes, it will result in a changed outcome.

The environment, in which an individual lives, consists of various components; including the physical, attitudinal, as well as the social world (Schneider in Watermeyer et al 2006:9). According to Sapey and Hewitt (in Blanck 2000:40) the environment, which consists of physical, social, emotional or political components can become disabling when the needs of people with physical disabilities are not considered. If barriers in the environment are created or ignored, the environment can become disabling, for example, lack of access to buildings, lack of access to communication and attitudes that view people with disabilities as non-productive employees.

Schneider (in Watermeyer et al 2006:9) mentions that the environmental factors can either facilitate the functioning of a person with a disability or it could act as a barrier to his/her

functioning. If the environment is accessible to a person with a disability the person's functioning can be improved, for example if accessible bathrooms and ramps are available a person in a wheelchair will be able to function more effectively. Inaccessible buildings for example can exclude people with disabilities from certain services and might lead to isolation.

The individual and the environment can thus not be seen in isolation, as both environmental and personal factors form the context in which the person functions. The results from the South African Baseline survey on disability, which was conducted during 1998, indicated that personal factors such as race, age of onset, and number of domains in which the person has difficulty, play a significant role in determining the outcome of the disability (Schneider in Watermeyer 2006:16).

Taking into consideration the definition of social work, it is the social worker's task to intervene with the environment in order to empower people with disabilities. The social worker also needs a thorough knowledge and understanding of the environment in which the individual functions, in order to intervene in this regard. According to Schneider (in Watermeyer et al 2006:13) environmental factors need to be included when a person's experience of disability is analyzed and when an intervention plan is compiled. When considering these factors a better plan can be formulated to redress the disadvantages and inequalities experienced by people with disabilities. These factors are not only important for an individual but also at national level, where policies are developed. These policies must ensure the empowerment of people with disabilities

For social work to effectively intervene with the environment, it is important to have knowledge about the environment as well as the perception, which people with disabilities have of the environment. This knowledge can only be obtained by means of research. Research is thus a very important factor in order to render effective services to people with disabilities.

5.3 RENDERING SOCIAL WORK SERVICES TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

When social workers as professionals are dealing with clients with disabilities, it is important to consider these clients holistically and not to focus on the disability as the main underlying cause of a person's problem, unless it is the client's perception (Rothman 2003:151).

In order to render effective social work services to people with disabilities, Rothman (2003:xiv) identified certain vital qualities, which social workers need to have:

- * Knowledge of theoretical constructs, history, various impairments and conditions, as well as about human beings' ways of adaptation and their identities.
- * Skills with regard to building of relationships, communication, assessment, assisting people to change, as individuals, or as communities, or as groups forming part of the wider community.
- * Self-awareness and a good insight into one's own personal feelings, experiences, stereotypes, biases and the possible impact of these on clients.

5.3.1 KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE DISABILITY

The competent social worker needs to have knowledge about disability and the major issues, which are affecting the person with a disability (Rothman 2003:151). The worker must learn as much as possible about disability in general, but also with regard to the specific disability and the problems experienced. Rothman (2003:180) however cautioned that this knowledge is generalised knowledge and that the worker needs to approach the client with a sense of openness in order to understand the client's unique situation and experiences. Caution must thus be exercised not to make assumptions with regard to the person with a disability's experiences and feelings.

When referring to a person with a disability, it is important to take in consideration that this person with a disability is a human being, a human being who forms part of a family, as well as an economic and social system. They are also human beings, just like able-bodied people, who value family, independence, recreation, friends, freedom, relationships and to have opportunities to reach their dreams (Rothman 2003:xvii). It is also important to remember that people with disabilities also have human rights, just as all other human

beings; rights which are often ignored due to negative perceptions and assumptions about their abilities.

Understanding how people with disabilities are perceived by the individual, the family and the community are important to social workers, as this will assist them to render a more effective service to people with disabilities. The way in which disability is perceived by the society has quite an impact on the person with a disability. Rothman (2003:xiv) states in this regard: "Positive, inclusive societal structures enhance self esteem, empower and value each individual, regardless of disabling conditions. Exclusive societal structures limit functioning, interaction and access to the goods of the society to persons with disabilities in many ways that may be environmental, societal, institutional, or any combination of these. Exclusion has a profound impact on any person, with or without a disabling condition, regardless of whether the exclusion is deliberate or unintentional."

The society thus influences individuals in all spheres of life, the way in which the individuals tend to perceive themselves, as well as their world around them, their goals and expectations, as well as their social affiliation (Rothman 2003:1). The way in which a person with a disability is thus experiencing his/her disability varies from individual to individual, depending on the kind of disability, limitations experienced, environmental factors, the family and social milieu, as well as the individual's personality traits. Adaptation to varying circumstances and environments is one of the distinctive qualities of a human being. Individuals can thus adapt to new schedules, parenthood, marriage, divorce, new homes, new jobs and many more changes, which occur in our daily lives. When an individual becomes disabled, he/she must also adapt to this changing situation (Rothman 2003:84-85).

As individuals adapt to their disability, they learn a sense of mastery over their condition, which in turn leads to an increase in self-esteem. In order to develop a positive, self-respecting disability identity, people with disabilities need to socialize with non-disabled people. This way they can feel and are being seen as normal. This, in turn can provide the individual with a sense of empowerment, mastery and self -esteem, which is necessary to experience life optimally. Development of a disability identity is a complex process, which

is influenced by a number of aspects such as age of onset of the disability, past experiences, type and severity of disability and personal choices. A strong disability identity can be a source of strength and empowerment to the person with a disability. Disability identity can be negative, when people attach a negative connotation to disability when they feel diminished and helpless to control their own lives.

Rothman (2003:92) refers to Rolland's three categories of disability identity, whereby he suggests that the way in which people relate to their disability and integrate the disability into his/her personal identity, have a strong correlation with the kind of disability. These three categories are as follows:

*Progressive disabilities: these disabilities are categorised by an ever-increasing degree of severity, such as Alzheimer's or diabetes. The individual needs to include not only the initial impairment in his/her personal identity, but also the greater degree of impairment, which is evident. Sometimes individuals tend to deny the impairment or the progressive condition of the impairment.

*Constant disabilities: these disabilities refer to disabilities, which remain the same throughout life; for example, spinal cord injuries, or the loss of a limb. When these disabilities have their onset later in life, the person has a memory of life and identity prior to the disability. Usually the change occurs suddenly and is of a permanent nature. Crisis intervention might be needed to assist these clients. These individuals might experience a problem with their identity. Other constant disabilities might occur at birth. This disability is then incorporated into the individual's personality and identity from very young.

*Relapsing or episodic disabilities: this refers to disabilities, which are not always present. Due to this, adaptation is usually a complex issue. An episodic disability, which is not very severe is easily forgotten or denied. These disabilities could also lead to a sense of anxiety.

The worker also needs to take into consideration that people with disabilities usually develop unique adaptation and coping mechanisms in order to cope with their disabilities. Rothman (2003:197) refers to a set of variables, which was developed by Appleby, Colon and Hamilton, which could be utilised to assess a person with a physical disability. These variables are the specific nature of the disability, the age of onset, the character and

personality of the person, the characteristic of the family, the characteristics of the environment, the socio-economic status, the ethnic group, as well as the cultural and societal interactions. According to them all these variables are in interaction with one another and are shaping and being shaped by the disability and the person, as well as other people's perception of the disability. Due to the stigmatisation and the degree of discrimination, which is experienced by people with disabilities, nearly all people with disabilities experience some degree of a negative self-concept (Rothman 2003:197).

In order to better understand the client with a disability the worker also needs to determine when the onset of the disability was, as this could have an impact on the way the client is experiencing his/her disability. Rothman (2003:198) indicates that people, who become disabled later in life, might experience major crises, as they were used to living without any functional limitations. This might have a major affect on the person's identity, which could lead to the development of a new identity, in order to incorporate the disability and the functional loss. The severity of the disability, the age of onset, social and environmental factors, as well as the person's personality and character, all impact on the person's ability to adapt and cope with the disability.

Not all people with disabilities identify themselves as disabled. Rothman (2003:93) provides a few reasons for this:

*People who work, or are retired sometimes do not see themselves as disabled, as disability is often closely associated with inability to work.

*Some people with disabilities do not have the need for assistance from public agencies or services for people with disabilities. If their needs are met within the family, among friends or through purchasing assistive technology, the disability can easily be overlooked.

*When the disability is of a relapsing nature or not visible, people tend to avoid identifying themselves as a person with a disability.

*Disability often has a negative connotation, namely inability, incompetence and dependence with the result that quite a number of people with disabilities tend to avoid to be classified as being disabled.

*Some people with disability might view themselves as able because they view disability in terms of severity.

5.3.2 IMPORTANT SKILLS FOR WORKING WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

When rendering professional social work services to people with disabilities, the same professional skills are needed, as when rendering services to able-bodied clients. However, in some areas special skills are needed, for example where there is difficulty in communication.

Due to the relationships being the cornerstone of all social work intervention, communication is essential for effective social work practice as it is a tool, which is utilised to build relationships, define problems, and develop and implement plans for change. Only part of communication is verbal. Non-verbal communication forms a very important part of communication. Social workers pay attention, not only to verbal communication, but also to the non-verbal communication of a client. When social workers are working with people who are mobility impaired, it is not always possible to observe the non-verbal communication cues. The extent, to which the person with a disability is able to communicate non-verbally, depends largely on the degree of mobility impairment of the individual. With some client's facial expressions or arm gestures are non-verbal cues of communication, whereas some other clients might not have this ability. If the client has limited ability to communicate non-verbally, the social worker should try to encourage the client to verbalise his emotions, feelings, attitudes and beliefs. It is also important to observe the client's eyes and facial expressions, as this could provide the social worker with some cues. Increased attention must also be given to the client's tone of voice and choice of words as cues (Rothman 2003:171).

According to Rothman (2003:173) the most important task in the beginning stages of the client-worker interaction, is to develop trust and a professional relationship. Rothman points out that the development of trust is a process, which develops over a period of time. He (2003:174-178) describes three components, which are important in this process, namely, belief in the competence of the worker to address the client's problem; a belief in the client's capability to incorporate change and a belief in the client's worthiness.

▪**Belief in the worker's competence to address the problem.** One of the major aspects in this regard is related to the disability of the client. They experience problems to trust other people who did not have similar experiences related to their disability. This is

why support groups play such an important role. Some organisations also tend to recruit people with the same disabling condition as their client population. This can also lead to problems, especially when the client's experiences differ from the worker's experiences. There are, however, ways in which the social worker could assist the client to develop trust in the worker's competence. The social worker needs to gain knowledge about the client's condition by researching books, articles, the internet, organisations, and films specializing in this field. The social worker can also request the client directly to explain his/her experience with regard to the disability. This is a very useful tool to utilise, as the client is placed in an expert position, which is very conducive in the relationship-building process. Over and above the worker's knowledge with regard to disability, the worker might be confronted with other aspects of service rendering such as his/her experience in general, experience with regard to the problem at hand, as well as other differences between the worker and the client.

▪**The worker and client's belief in the client's capacity.** Some people with disabilities have a strong belief in their own abilities to address their problems, while others might not have the confidence that they can overcome them. Clients might experience a sense of hopelessness that anything can change or that their situation might improve. The social worker thus needs to assist the client to believe that change is possible. It is also important that the worker believe that the client is capable of achieving the required change. When working with clients with disability the worker, this might be challenging, as the worker could perceive the disability as a barrier in obtaining the required change. It is thus imperative that the worker is very sensitive towards both his own perception about the place of disability in the overall problem, as well as the perception of the client.

▪**Belief in the client's worthiness.** If clients experience problems, their self-esteem and sense of self worth is usually very low. In order for the worker to assist the client, it is necessary that they be assisted towards accepting their own worth and value. By treating the client with dignity and respect, by addressing the client in a well - mannered way, by considering the client's well-being and comfort and by making use of non-verbal and verbal cues during the interview, the worker can communicate a sense of worth towards the client.

The demonstration of empathy is one of the tools used by social workers to build a good worker-client relationship. According to Rothman (2003:178) there are two steps involved in empathetic communication, namely empathic recognition and accurate reflection of this recognition. In order to empathetically understand what the client is saying, the worker need to be aware of the client's language, expressions, body posture, facial expressions and tone of voice, as this will provide an indication of the client's expressed and concealed feelings. It is also important to investigate the client's experiences and to understand the meaning the client attaches to these feelings. The worker must also communicate his/her understanding of this understanding to the client. According to Rothman (2003:179) "empathy is not the same as sharing the experience: Rather, it is sharing a recognition of the meaning of the experience to the client. Empathy conveys, "I understand "through tone, gesture, and words." Although empathy is utilised with all client systems, it is particularly important in working with clients with disabilities, as it will demonstrate to the client that the worker understands the client's feelings in his/her situation. By demonstrating empathy the client will be motivated to elaborate on his/her experiences and feelings.

When working with people with disabilities it is important that the worker must not assume that the problem experienced by the client is central to his/her disability. Only if the client has indicated that his/her disability plays a central role in the problem, can the worker use this assumption.

5.4 SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTION WITH EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES

Employment plays an important role in the lives of able-bodied people, as well as the lives of people with disabilities. Issues related to employment might be the reason why people with disabilities are seeking assistance. People with disabilities might seek assistance with regard to the improvement of job skills, improvement of job searching skills or the improvement of reasonable accommodation measures in the workplace.

Successful social work intervention to employees with disabilities thus entails knowledge with regard to the disability, the working environment, the current employment situation, as well as employment legislation pertaining to people with disabilities.

When workers are dealing with employees with disabilities, they must also consider them holistically and not consider the disability as the underlying cause of the problem, unless it is the client's perception that the disability is the cause of the problem (Rothman, 2003:151).

In order to advocate on behalf of clients with disabilities, the worker needs to keep abreast of the developments and perceptions of the employment sphere, as well as the impact and perceptions of the people with disabilities themselves. Research in this regard is thus imperative in order to render more effective social work services to clients with disabilities. By doing research the social worker will also have a better insight into the world of people with disabilities.

In Chapter 7 the researcher makes some recommendations on how social workers could assist employees with disabilities to reach equality within the working environment.

5.5 SUMMARY

When rendering social work services to people with disabilities, it is very important to consider the environment and the impact the environment has on the functioning of the person with a disability. It is sometimes imperative for social work intervention to focus on the environment. With social work service rendering to people with disabilities, the same skills are needed as with service rendering to able bodied clients. In order to successfully render social work service to people with disabilities, specific skills, qualities and knowledge are, however, required. An important factor to keep in mind with service rendering is that each and every person with a disability is a unique human being with his/her own needs and that their situation must to be evaluated holistically.

CHAPTER 6

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will cover the results of both the standardized interviews, as well as the results of the questionnaires. After discussing the general data obtained from both the standardized interviews and the questionnaires the results of this study will be presented according to the different research objectives, namely:

-Objective 1: To conduct a literature study with regard to the factors influencing employment equity of people with physical disabilities. The results of this literature study were presented in Chapter 2, where the concept of disability was discussed; Chapter 3, where the concept of employment and people with disabilities was discussed; Chapter 4, where the concept of equality was discussed, as well as Chapter 5 where the role of the Social Worker with regard to the employee with disabilities was discussed.

-Objective 2: To determine which factors employees with physical disabilities consider as being important with regard to equality in the workplace.

-Objective 3: To determine how people with physical disabilities experience equality in the workplace and how this influence their psychosocial functioning.

-Objective 4: To make recommendations with regard to the enhancement of workplace equality for people with physical disabilities. This will be discussed in Chapter 7 when the recommendations and conclusions of the research study will be discussed.

6.2 GENERAL DATA OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONDENTS

In order to establish the requirements for the effective management of employees with physical disabilities, questionnaires were distributed to a total of 328 companies and organisations working within the disability sphere. They were requested to assist with the identification of suitable respondents for the research study. These questionnaires were distributed to all 9 provinces in South Africa. Forty-eight (48) completed questionnaires were received back, unfortunately only 44 of the questionnaires could be utilised for the

research study. The 4 questionnaires were discarded as the respondents did not conform to the identified criteria; they had other disabilities than was specified within the sample.

Only people with physical disabilities, who have been employed for at least one year and who have an educational qualification of at least Grade 12 (Matric) were included within the sample. Statistics indicate that people with physical disabilities constitutes 30% of all people with disabilities, that only 1% of people with disabilities are employed and that only 30% of people with disabilities have secondary education. Due to this it was not easy to locate respondents conforming to all the specified criteria.

The total years of working experience of the questionnaire respondents varied from 1 year to 45 years. Table 6.1 provides an indication of the total years of working experience of the respondents:

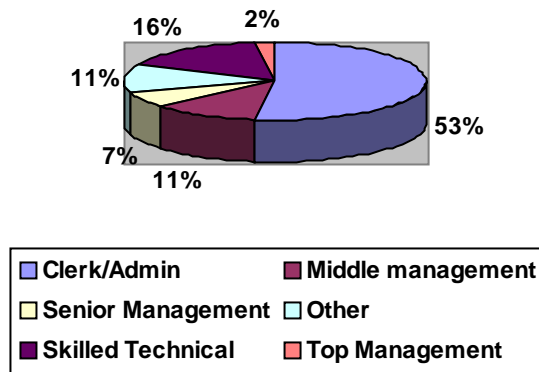
TABLE 6.1
WORKING EXPERIENCE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONDENTS (n=44)

AMOUNT OF YEARS WORKING EXPERIENCE	TOTAL AMOUNT OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1-5 YEARS	12	27,3%
6-10 YEARS	5	11,4%
11-20 YEARS	16	36,4%
21-30 YEARS	8	18,2%
31- 40 YEARS	2	4,5%
45 YEARS	1	2,3%
TOTAL	44	100%

Most of the respondents (21) were employed on an administrative/ clerical level. Only very few of the respondents were employed in Senior (3) and Top Management (1) level positions. These results correspond with the findings of the Commission for Employment Equity Annual Report for 2006-2007 (Department of Labour 2007:15), which indicated that very few people with disabilities are employed at top and senior management levels.

DIAGRAM 6.1

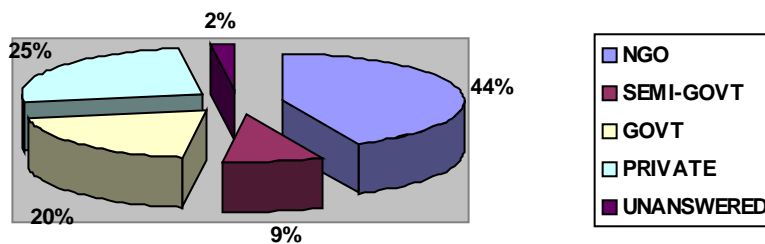
APPOINTMENT LEVELS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONDENTS (n=44)



The respondents were mostly employed at Non- Governmental Organisations (19), Private Companies (11), Government Departments (9) and Semi-Government Organisations (4). Although the respondents indicated the specific Government Departments, where they were employed, it will not be specified here in order to protect the anonymity of the respondents.

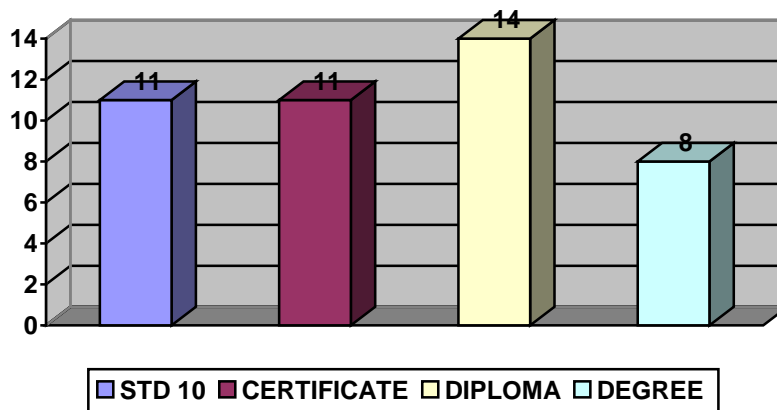
DIAGRAM 6.2

EMPLOYMENT ORGANISATIONS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONDENTS (n=44)



Although all the respondents had at least Grade 12 (Matric), most of the respondents had higher qualifications. Thirty- three (33, which is 75%) of the respondents either had a degree, a diploma or a certificate. It is interesting to note that although most of these respondents had tertiary education; most were still employed at administrative or clerical levels.

DIAGRAM 6.3
QUALIFICATIONS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONDENTS (n=44)



Although all of the respondents had mobility impairment, most of the respondents were paraplegics (17) and quadriplegics (9).

Nine (9) of the respondents were employed prior to becoming disabled. After becoming disabled, most of the respondent's employers (56%) wanted to either medically board them or discharge them. It is not possible to say why these employers were not willing to retain these employees with disabilities. These employees attitudes could however be seen as a barrier, which prevented people with disabilities to access their human right of employment.

The researcher did not specify gender, population group or province as criteria for inclusion in the sample, as it was not possible to determine what the composition, of the total disability population is. However the genders of the respondents are as follow:

- Gender: 25 females (57%) and 19 males (43%)
- Population group: 20 Whites (47%), 17 African (40%), 6 Coloured (13%)
- Province: 18 Orange Free State (41%), 11 Western Cape (25%), 8 Gauteng (18%), 5 Eastern Cape (11%), 1 Mpumalanga (2%), 1 Northern Cape (2%)

6.3 GENERAL DATA OF INTERVIEWEE RESPONDENTS

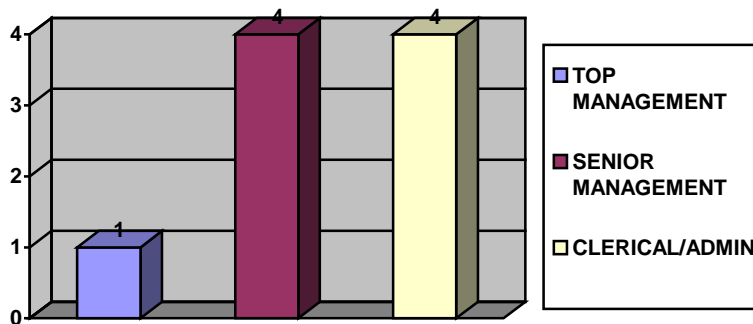
In order to find respondents to participate in the interviews, the researcher requested some referrals from organisations dealing with disability related aspects as well as the

respondents themselves. These interviews were conducted telephonically due to time and money constraints on the researcher's part.

A total of 10 respondents were involved in standardised interviews, which was conducted by the researcher. Unfortunately only 9 of the respondents fulfilled in all the identified criteria. One of the respondents was not considered as she has not met the criteria of being employed for at least a year. She has only worked part time for a very short period of time, as she was still busy studying.

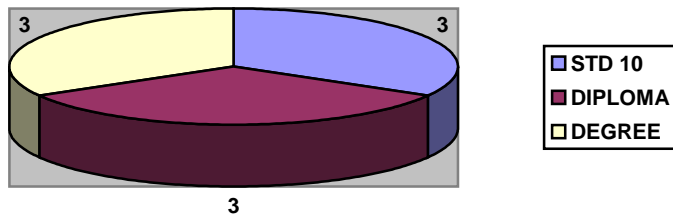
Only 1 of the interviewees was employed at Top Management level, whereas 4 were employed at Senior Management level and 4 were employed at Clerical / Administrative level. This corresponds with the findings of the Commission for Employment Equity Annual Report for 2006-2007(Department of Labour 2007:15), which indicated that very few people with disabilities are employed at top management levels.

DIAGRAM 6.4
APPOINTMENT LEVELS OF INTERVIEW RESPONDENTS (n=9)



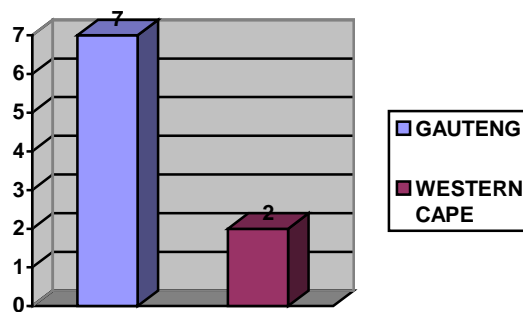
Most of the interviewees, 5 of the 9, had higher educational qualifications in the form of certificates, diplomas or degrees.

DIAGRAM 6.5
QUALIFICATIONS OF THE INTERVIEW RESPONDENTS (n=9)



The interviewees were mostly employed in Gauteng, 7 of the 9 and only 2 were from the Western Cape. Most of these interviewees were employed within the Government sector, only 1 of the interviewees was employed at a Non- Governmental Organisation.

DIAGRAM 6.6
PROVINCE DISTRIBUTION OF INTERVIEW RESPONDENTS (n=9)



The demographic data of the 9 respondents interviewed are presented in Table 6.2:

TABLE 6.2

GENERAL DATA OF INTERVIEWEE RESPONDENTS (n=9):

GENDER	POPULATION GROUP	PROVINCE	DISABILITY	EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION	YEARS WORKING EXPERIENCE	LEVEL OF POSITION	TYPE OF ORGANISATION
MALE	AFRICAN	GAUTENG	MOBILITY-LIMP	DIPLOMA	14	MIDDLE MANAGEMENT	GOVERNMENT
MALE	WHITE	WESTERN CAPE	MOBILITY-LIMP	GRADE 12	16	MIDDLE MANAGEMENT	GOVERNMENT
MALE	AFRICAN	GAUTENG	PARAPLEGIC	GRADE 12	8	CLERK/ADMINISTRATION	GOVERNMENT
FEMALE	WHITE	GAUTENG	MOBILITY-POST POLIO	GRADE 12	31	CLERK/ADMINISTRATION	GOVERNMENT
FEMALE	WHITE	GAUTENG	MOBILITY	DIPLOMA	23	CLERK/ADMINISTRATION	GOVERNMENT
MALE	WHITE	GAUTENG	PARAPLEGIC	DEGREE	27	MIDDLE MANAGEMENT	GOVERNMENT
MALE	WHITE	WESTERN CAPE	QUADRUPLE-GIC	DIPLOMA	16	MIDDLE MANAGEMENT	GOVERNMENT
MALE	WHITE	GAUTENG	PARAPLEGIC	DEGREE	22	SENIOR MANAGEMENT	NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATION
MALE	AFRICAN	GAUTENG	PARAPLEGIC	GRADE 12	7	CLERK/ADMINISTRATION	GOVERNMENT

6.4 RESULTS PERTAINING TO RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 2: FACTORS EMPLOYEES WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES CONSIDER AS BEING IMPORTANT WITH REGARD TO EQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE

One of the objectives of the research was to establish which factors are important to ensure workplace equality for people with physical disabilities. The concept of equality in the workplace has been discussed in depth in Chapter 4.

The questions of both the structured interview as well as the questionnaires were aimed at addressing specific aspects pertaining to equality. The results will thus be presented according to the questions that were posed in this regard, by both the questionnaires as well as the structured interviews.

6.4.1 Representation of people with disabilities in the workplace

With the questionnaire respondents, 14 (32%) were the only employee with disability in the specific section where he or she was working. Twenty-five (57%) of the questionnaire respondents were working in a section where between 2 and 5 people with disabilities were employed. Two (5%) of the questionnaire respondents worked in a section where between 6 and 10 people with disabilities were employed. Two (5%) of the questionnaire respondents were employed in environments where between 11 and 20 people with disabilities were employed and only 1 (2%) of the questionnaire respondents was employed in an environment where more than 20 people with disabilities were employed.

Most of the questionnaire respondents, 22 (50%), were working in relative small sections where between 1 and 25 other people were employed. It was however difficult to establish whether these companies do conform to the 2% legislative imperative of employment of people with disabilities, as respondents were requested to provide answers on the number of employees on a numerical scale and not exact figures. See Appendix B question 11.

With reference to the 9-interviewee respondents, all indicated that they were the only employees with disabilities in the specific section. During the interview an open question was posed with regard to the number of employees within the specific section, so the

researcher was able to establish the representativity percentage. Most of the respondents, 6 (67%), were working in organizations where their specific section conforms to the 2% legislative imperative pertaining to the employment of people with disabilities. Although this legislative imperative has been met within the specific section, it does not necessarily mean that the target has been met within the company at large. It is thus not possible to make any assumptions in this regard with regard to the company at large.

6.4.2 Company participation in employment and promotion of people with disabilities.

In order to obtain data with regard to the participation of the employment company in the employment and promotion of people with disabilities, specific questions were posed to the respondents in this regard. According to the respondents to both the questionnaires and the interviews, most of the employment companies did participate in disability awareness related projects. These projects were however mostly limited to participation in Casual Day:

- Most of the questionnaire respondents, 40 of the 44, mentioned that their employment company did participate in these awareness-raising projects
- Most of the interviewees, 8 of the 9, also indicated that their employment companies did participate in these awareness-raising projects

Nine (20%) of the 44 respondents who have completed the questionnaires have indicated that they were employed prior to becoming disabled. Most of these respondents' employers wanted to either discharge or medically board them after becoming disabled. Most of the interviewees, 8 (89%), were also employed prior to becoming a person with a disability. As with the questionnaire-based findings, most of their employers, 5 (56%), wanted to discharge them after they became disabled.

These findings, corresponds with findings from the Public Service Commission (PSC), which was released during 2008. In this study it was discovered that "public servants who sustain injury and as a result thereof are disabled are in many instances retired from the public service on the basis of ill health." (The Public Service Commission 2008).

Respondents were requested to provide feedback on how they viewed their employment company's participation with regard to the employment and promotion of people with disabilities. Most of the respondents to the questionnaires, did agree with the statement "According to my perception my employment company actively supports the employment and promotion of people with disabilities". Twenty (45%) of the questionnaire based respondents strongly agreed, while 9 agreed and 7 partially agreed with the statement. Five (5) of the respondents were uncertain and 1 of the respondents did not want to give an opinion in this regard. Only 2 (5%) of the respondents did not agree with the statement.

Respondents provided the following motivations why they were of the opinion that their employment company did actively support the employment and promotion of people with disabilities:

- “We have skills development workshops for people with disabilities”
- “People with disabilities are treated like anybody else.”
- “The company, where possible, gives preference to people with disabilities.”
- “Our company lead by example. We have people with disabilities employed in all our offices in the province. We also have a placement department that empowers people with disabilities.”
- “We have some posts that specifically target people with disabilities.”
- “I receive in service training and I am getting more responsibilities.”
- “They try their very best to see to it that you are comfortable.”

The respondents, who did not agree with the statement that their company is actively supporting the employment and promoting people with disabilities, motivated their points of view as follows:

- “I am often left to cope with my own problems and have to solve them myself, eg I can not go to the toilet at my office, company cars are not adapted so that I can

drive myself therefore I always have to get to rely on colleagues for transport, who often let me down.”

-“My general feeling is that companies employ the physically challenged to meet their Employment Equity quota. No development or key positions are provided.”

During the interviews 5 (56%) of the respondents were of the opinion that their employment company did not actively support the employment and promotion of people with disabilities, for the following reasons:

-“They see disability as a soft issue.”

-“They do not do anything additional.”

-“Although the adverts show that people with disabilities must apply, they do not really give preference to people with disabilities.”

-“Nothing put in place to promote people with disabilities, forced on them due to legislation.”

-“The evidence in front of me shows that to me.”

The other 4 (44%) interviewees agreed that their employment company did actively support the employment and promotion of people with disabilities and provided the following motivations:

-“There is a disability committee.”

-“New people with disabilities were employed.”

It is interesting to note that, with the exception of one motivation, all the motivations which were provided by both the respondents to the questionnaires, as well as the interviewees, focused on skills development, empowerment, in service training, accommodation of disability related needs, as well as attitudes and treatment of people with disabilities within the working environment. Only one of the motivations focused on the number of people with disabilities employed within the company. From this data it could be concluded that

people with disabilities wants to see equality within their working environment. This equality does not focus on the number of people with disabilities employed but on the way they are treated as people with disabilities. It is clear that the person with a disability do not want employment equity to be just a numbers game, where efforts are just concentrated on the number of people with disabilities employed and not on the people with disabilities themselves in terms of the provision of skills development, empowerment, in service training, accommodation of disability related needs, as well as attitudes and treatment of people with disabilities within the working environment.

6.4.3 Inputs requested from employees with disabilities with regard to disability related issues

When respondents were asked whether their employers did request them to provide inputs with regard to disability related aspects, 33 (75%) of the questionnaire respondents, indicated that they were asked to do so. Most of the interviewees, 5 (56%), were also requested to provide inputs with regard to disability related issues in their employment company.

Involvement of people with disabilities in disability related aspects, within the working environment is very important. Christianson (in Dupper et al 2004: 178) emphasized that the employer has the duty to consult with the employee with disabilities with regard to his/her disability related needs.

6.4.4 Provision of equal opportunities in the workplace to people with disabilities

When questionnaire respondents were asked whether they were granted the same opportunities as their able bodied colleagues, 19 (43%), were of the opinion that they always received the same opportunities as their able bodied colleagues, whereas 9 (21%) of the questionnaire respondents indicated that they did receive the same opportunities as their able bodied colleagues, most of the time. All of the questionnaire respondents indicated that they did receive the same opportunities as their able- bodied colleagues, the extent to which they received the opportunities however varied. When interviewees were

posed the same question, most of the respondents, 5 (56%), stated that they were not given the same opportunities as their able bodied colleagues.

Respondents, who were of the opinion that they did receive the same opportunities as their able bodied colleagues, motivated their answers as follow:

- “There is no difference in the way that I am treated.”
- “We can all apply equally for positions which come up”
- “They do not treat me as a disabled.”
- “Personeel is sensitief vir my gestremdheid. Help my in alle opsigte, koop toepaslike hulpmiddels aan indien begroting dit toelaat, word na kursusse saam met kollegas gestuur.” (Personnel are sensitive towards my disability. They assist me with everything. They provide me with relevant assistive devices, whenever the budget allows it. I am attending courses with my colleagues.)
- “I am given the opportunity to go on courses.”

Respondents who were of the opinion that they were not given the same opportunities as there able bodied colleagues, provided the following reasons for their answers:

- “People with disabilities are not provided with reasonable accommodation, they (employment company) is ignorant with regard to the needs of people with disabilities.”
- “People with disabilities are seen as lazy and not as people with an impairment.’
- “Course venues are not accessible, so I can not attend courses.”

It is interesting to note that the motivations which were provided by the respondents, all focused on either accessibility or on the perceptions and attitudes towards people with disabilities.

When asked what changes must be effected in their working environments in order for them to receive the same opportunities and treatment as their able bodied colleagues, most of the interviewed respondents, 6 (67%), mentioned that people's attitudes and perceptions towards people with disabilities had to change. The other respondents mentioned the importance of the accessibility of their physical working environment.

From the above data it could thus be concluded that – accessibility, attitudes and perceptions towards people with disability plays a vital role in the way they experience equality in the workplace.

6.4.5 Aspects which employees with physical disabilities perceive as important in the working environment in order to function optimally

Questionnaire respondents were requested to rate different aspects according to what they thought was important to enable them to function optimally in their working environment. See Appendix B question 30 in this regard. According to the ratings provided by the respondents the aspect of "being treated with dignity and respect", received the highest rating, namely 129, followed by "clarity provided with regard to duties and expectations", with a rating of 128. The aspects rated third highest, with a rating of 123, were "colleagues and supervisors are aware and sensitized with regard to my needs" Jointly in third place was the aspect of "training available for me as person with disability". These aspects were followed by 'attitudes of supervisor/ boss towards me as a person with a disability'(rating of 121), "accommodation of my needs associated with my disability" (rating of 120), "company having a policy with regard to the employment of people with disabilities" (rating of 118), "regular feedback with regard to my work functioning"(rating of 117), "attitudes of colleagues towards me as a person with a disability" (rating of 115) and last on the priority list was "boss/ supervisor regularly communicating with me with regard to my disability related needs and requirements in order to accommodate me in the workplace" (rating 107).

Although these aspects were ordered according to the ratings provided by the respondents, all these aspects could be considered as being very important with regard to the optimal functioning of people with disabilities, as the percentages of these aspects ranged from 98% (rating of 129 out of 132) to 81% (rating of 107 out of 132). These results correlates with a study conducted by Baldwin and Johnson (Thomason, Burton & Hyatt 1998:26) which indicated that the successful employment of people with disabilities, depended not only on his/her medical condition, but also on other factors such as the availability of reasonable accommodation within the working environment, the attitude of the employer and the characteristics of the work as well as the employee.

6.4.6 Reasonable accommodation provided to employees with physical disabilities in the working environment in order to accommodate their disability related needs

Respondents were requested to indicate which special working arrangements have been made within their respective working environments in order to accommodate their disability related needs. The questionnaire respondents were provided with scaled - response questions (Appendix B) in order to determine to what extend the specific reasonable accommodation measure had been provided.

Table 6.3 provides a summary of the special working arrangements, or reasonable accommodation measures, which were provided to the questionnaire respondents in their respective working environments, in order to accommodate their disability related needs.

TABLE 6. 3

EXTENT TO WHICH REASONABLE ACCOMODATION MEASURES WERE PROVIDED IN THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT TO QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONDENTS (n=44)

ARRANGEMENTS	ALWAYS	MOST OF THE TIME	SOMETIMES	NEVER	UN-ANSWERED	NO NEED	TOTALS
Allowed to work flexitime	12 (27%)	7 (16%)	11(25%)	10 (23%)	3 (7%)	1 (2%)	44
Duties adapted to accommodate needs	15 (34%)	2 (5%)	13 (30%)	11 (25%)	2 (5%)	1 (2%)	44
Bathroom was adapted	26 (59%)	4 (9%)	1 (2%)	10 (23%)	2 (5%)	1 (2%)	44
Special equipment was bought to accommodate needs	22 (50%)	3 (7%)	5 (11%)	7 (16%)	4 (9%)	3 (7%)	44
Special arrangements were made to access working environment	21 (48%)	3 (7%)	4 (9%)	9 (20%)	5 (11%)	2 (5%)	44
Changes were made to building to accommodate needs	21 (48%)	2 (5%)	6 (14%)	9 (20%)	3 (7%)	3 (7%)	44
Special arrangements made in order to attend training	21 (48%)	5 (11%)	5 (11%)	8 (18%)	3 (7%)	2 (5%)	44
Special transport arrangements	18 (41%)	5 (11%)	3 (7%)	15 (34%)	2 (5%)	1 (1%)	44
Allowed to work from home	6 (14%)	1 (2%)	6 (14%)	26 (59%)	4 (9%)	1 (1%)	44
Given time off in order to attend medical or rehabilitation sessions	19 (43%)	7 (16%)	3 (7%)	10 (23%)	4 (9%)	1 (1%)	44

From the feedback received from the respondents it is evident that reasonable accommodation was provided, to some extent, to all respondents. The reasonable accommodation measures which were provided the least of all was the allowance to work from home, followed by the provision of special arrangements with regard to transport.

It is interesting to note that all respondents indicated that some form of reasonable accommodation has been provided to them within the working environment. Quite a number of respondents indicated that they did not have the need for a specific form of reasonable accommodation, although all of the respondents had some form of physical disability, more specifically mobility impairment. This data indicate that people with physical disabilities might have some similarities with regard to their disability related needs, but that they all have their own unique, individual disability related needs within the working environment.

Most of the interviewees, 7 (78%), also indicated that some form of reasonable accommodation has been provided to them within the working environment. All of the reasonable measures mentioned by the interviewees were related to the accessibility of their working environment. This again demonstrates the importance of accessibility to people with physical disability, specifically people with mobility impairments.

6.4.7 Barriers in the working environment which employees with disabilities perceive as preventing them from receiving equal opportunities

The respondents, who had completed the questionnaires, were requested to indicate which aspects in their working environment, had to be addressed in order for them to be treated equally within the working environment. They were also requested to indicate what, specifically, need to be addressed in order for them to receive equal opportunities

It is interesting to note that all questionnaire respondents has indicated, with a prior question, that they did to some extent experienced equal treatment to their able bodied colleagues. Despite of this, questionnaire respondents have made quite extensive

recommendations with regard to aspects which could be changed within their working environments in order to increase their experience of being treated the same as their able bodied colleagues. This could be due to the fact that questionnaire respondents did experience equal treatment within the working environment to varying degrees and for this reason could experience some gaps in this regard within their working environments. Table 6. 4 provides an indication of the amount of questionnaire respondents who were of the opinion that a specific aspect had to be addressed, as well as comments on what specifically had to be addressed.

TABLE 6. 4

ASPECTS TO BE ADRESSED IN ORDER TO BE TREATED EQUALLY IN THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT AS INDICATED BY QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONDENTS (n=44)

	ASPECT TO BE ADRESSED	AMOUNT	COMMENTS BY RESPONDENTS
1	Attendance of courses/ training	16	More training opportunities; buildings for training to be made accessible
2	Attendance of seminars	14	Would like to attend seminars; venues to be made accessible
3	Sport opportunities	13	Opportunities to take part in sport to be created; sport venues not accessible
4	Accessibility of physical environment	13	Ramps need to be put in place; bathroom to be made accessible; lift buttons to be lowered
5	Recognition for work well done	13	It is important to get credit for work well done; you only hear when something is wrong
6	Disability awareness	11	More effort should be spend on sensitising top management; more information needed
7	Access to technology	10	Need internet and updated technology
8	Work related social functions	9	Accessibility should be a prerequisite for securing venue; give more opportunities
9	Attitude of supervisors	8	We are not treated equally; supervisor could give more recognition
10	Attitude of colleagues	7	They need to understand that my physical disability does not affect my mentality; they need to be more informed about needs of people with disability; their perceptions must be changed
11	Policies in working environment	7	Policies are contradicting; Need to know if there is any policies; could be more clear and be circulated
12	Changes with regard to job description	7	Does not have any job description
13	Access to work related information	7	Information must be accessible to everyone
14	Requests inputs with regard to disability related needs	6	Management need to be updated with regard to our needs
15	Personal assistant to assist in working environment	6	A personal assistant will really be helpful
16	Utilisation at work	5	I am under utilised
17	Stereotype with regard to ability of people with disabilities	4	People need to be well informed about disability related needs; society need to understand that we are "normal"

When assessing the comments made by the questionnaire respondents it is evident that accessibility plays a very important role with regard to the way people with physical disabilities experience equality within the working environment. Not just the importance of accessibility within the physical working environment was mentioned, but also accessibility of training, seminar, social and sport related venues, as well as accessibility of technology, work related information and policies. Another aspect, which was highlighted, by the respondents, was the importance of awareness raising and sensitization with regard to the needs as well as the abilities of people with disabilities.

Interviewees were requested, to indicate which aspects had to be changed in their working environment in order for them to experience equal treatment. Most of these respondents, 6 (67%), mentioned, that people's perceptions and attitudes with regard to people with disability need to change. The other 3 (33%) respondents, mentioned that the physical environment need to be made accessible, not only the working environment but also the training venues.

The interviewees, again, as with the feedback received from the questionnaire respondents, highlighted the accessibility aspect, as well as the way people with disabilities were perceived, as very important aspects within the working environment, which influenced people with physical disabilities, perceptions and experience of equality.

This data supports Swartz & Schneider's (in Watermeyer et al 2006:235) remark that the way in which the environment is developed plays a crucial role in the level of independence and equality, which people with disabilities experience. This data also support the statement made by the Services Sector Education and Training Authority (undated:21):" Attitudinal barriers are often the greatest hurdle disabled people have to overcome to access their rights, enlarge their choices in life, or expand their level of independence."

6.5 RESULTS PERTAINING TO RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 3: TO DETERMINE HOW PEOPLE WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES EXPERIENCE EQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE AND HOW THIS INFLUENCES THEIR PSYCHOSOCIAL FUNCTIONING

As with research objective 2 this objective focuses on equality in the workplace. This objective specifically aims at determining how respondents experience equality in the workplace, as well as the effect this has on their psychosocial functioning.

A number of questions in both the questionnaire, as well as in the semi-structured interview were designed to specifically address this objective. The results pertaining to this objective will thus be discussed according to the specifically designed questions.

6.5.1 Provision of equal opportunities in the workplace to people with disabilities and barriers in working environment which are perceived as preventing them from receiving equal opportunities

These two aspects pertaining to equality in the workplace were also addressed under objective 2 of the research and have thus been discussed extensively in Chapter 6.4.4 and 6.4.7.

6.5.2 Experiencing of discrimination in the workplace due to disability and the effect of the discrimination

Questionnaire respondents were requested, to rate how often they experienced discrimination in the workplace, due to their disability. Thirty (68%) of the respondents indicated that they have never experienced discrimination within the workplace. Twelve (27%) of the respondents indicated that they did sometimes experience discrimination, whereas 1 has indicated that she has always experienced discrimination and 1 indicated that she had experienced discrimination most of the time.

Questionnaire respondents were also requested to indicate the nature of the discrimination, which they experienced. Most of the respondents, who did experience discrimination, 7 (58%), indicated that the nature of the discrimination, were related to negative attitudes towards them due to their disability. The other respondents indicated that the discrimination was related to the lack of accessibility of the working environment.

An open question was posed to the interviewees (n=9) in order to determine whether they were experiencing discrimination within the working environment. Five (56%) of the respondents, indicated that they did not experience any discrimination, whereas 4 (44%) of the respondents, indicated that they did experience discrimination within the working environment. Half of the respondents indicated that they experienced discrimination due to negative attitudes towards them and the other half indicated that the discrimination experienced by them was related to the lack of accessibility of the working and training environments.

Both the respondents to the questionnaires, as well as the interviewees, indicated that the discrimination which they experienced within the working environment, were related to negative attitudes and accessibility. This data corresponds with Ngwena's statement (2007:151) "disability discrimination...is the result of unfair treatment, negative attitudes and indifferent social structures."

The important role which the two aspects, namely accessibility, as well as attitudes towards people with disability, play in the experience and perception of equality in the workplace are again highlighted by this data.

The effect of the discrimination, which the respondents had experienced within the working environment, has been probed in both the questionnaires, as well as the standardised interviews. The effect the discrimination had on the respondent's health, self-esteem and emotions, morale and relationships (with colleagues, their supervisor, as well as with his/her family), is as follows:

*Effect on health.

Most of the respondents to the questionnaires, 12 of the 14, who experienced discrimination indicated that the discrimination impacted negatively on their health, which resulted in headaches, stress related symptoms, as well as depression (in one of the cases). The data received from the interviewees, correlated with the data received from

the respondents of the questionnaires. The interviewees indicated that the discrimination had a negative impact on their health, which resulted in stress related symptoms.

*Effect on emotions and self-esteem.

Most of the respondents to the questionnaires, 11 of the 14, who experienced discrimination, indicated that the discrimination impacted negatively on their emotions. The discrimination elicited feelings of frustration, anger and sadness amongst these respondents. Two (2) of the questionnaire respondents indicated that the discrimination did not have any impact on their emotions.

Eleven (79%) of the questionnaire respondents who experienced discrimination, also indicated that the discrimination impacted negatively on their self-esteem, some of them feel that they had to work much harder in order to prove themselves. Two (14%) of the questionnaire respondents indicated that the discrimination did not affect their self-esteem, whereas one respondent did not answer this aspect.

The data obtained from the respondents to the questionnaires, correlates with the data obtained from the interviewees. All of the interviewees indicated that the discrimination impacted negatively on both their emotions, as well as their self-esteem. The discrimination elicited emotions of uselessness and frustration. This impacted negatively on their self-esteem. One of the interviewees described the effect as follows "I look at myself and say maybe I am useless."

The White Paper on the Integrated Disability Strategy (1997:23) support this data as it mentions that people with disabilities are often viewed as helpless and dependant, as ill and in constant need of care and medical treatment, or as tragic victims. Gardiner (1997:7-8) pointed out that these type of misconceptions are still prevalent in the community and constitutes a major barrier with regard to the employment of people with disabilities.

*Effect on morale.

Nine of the 14 questionnaire respondents indicated that the discrimination had a negative effect on their morale (their spirit); whereas the other respondents indicated that the discrimination had no effect on their morale. All of these respondents indicated that they experienced, despite their discrimination, work satisfaction, and did experience work motivation in varying levels. When these respondents were requested to indicate what aspects would lead to increased levels of work satisfaction, the attendance of training of courses, as well as seminars were indicated as the most important aspects which had to be addressed. These aspects were followed by communication with regard to disability related needs, as well as more awareness about disability related needs.

When asked which aspects had to be addressed in order to increase their work motivation, the attendance of training or course were again highlighted as the most important aspect, followed by more awareness about disability related needs and the attendance of seminars.

From this data it is thus evident that the attendance of courses or training, as well as the attendance of seminars and the awareness of disability related needs were perceived as very important to the respondents. According to them these aspects would lead to increased levels of work satisfaction and work motivation.

The interviewees all indicated that the discrimination had a negative impact on their morale. Some of the comments made by the interviewees describe this effect best "I am not able to act according to my potential"; "It makes me to sometimes feel down". All of these interviewees who did experience discrimination also indicated that they experienced varying levels of work motivation, despite the discrimination which they had experienced. These interviewees indicated that their levels of work satisfaction could however be improved by increasing accessibility for people with physical disabilities, as well as the change of perceptions and attitudes towards people with disabilities. Again the importance of aspects such as accessibility, as well as perceptions and attitudes towards people with disability is mentioned. Here it is highlighted as important aspects in determining work motivation of people with physical disabilities.

*Effect on relationships.

Half of the questionnaire respondents who experienced discrimination (7), experienced that it impacted negatively on their relationship with their colleagues. Five (36%) of the questionnaire respondents were of the opinion that the discrimination impacted negatively on their relationship with their supervisor, as well as their relationship with their family

During the interviews most of the respondents, 3 of the 4, indicated that the discrimination impacted negatively on their relationship with their colleagues. Some of the comments made by the respondents provides an explanation of these negative feelings “It creates a feeling of rejection and creates tension”; “It is bad, I have lost a number of friends due to my disability”. The one respondent indicated that the discrimination had a positive effect on her relationship with the colleagues, as they were very accommodative towards her disability related needs and this created a stronger bond amongst them. Half of the interviewees were of the opinion that the discrimination had a negative impact on the relationship with their supervisor, while the other half was of the opinion that it did not affect this relationship. The interviewees, who were of the opinion that their relationships with their supervisors were negatively affected, commented that their supervisors could be more accommodative towards their disability related needs. Most of the interviewees, 3 of the 4, were of the opinion that the discrimination impacted negatively on their family relationships, as they tend to take the work related stress home with them and this created more stress.

From all the data gathered from both the questionnaires, as well as the interviews the negative impact of discrimination is evident. It does seem as if some people were more negatively and widely affected by the discrimination than others.

This also highlights the importance of experiencing equality in the workplace, as discrimination could impact very negatively on all spheres of an individual's life. Hamilton, Theron & Olivier (1989:2) have indicated that meaningful employment plays a cardinal role in the quality of life as well as the rehabilitation of people with disabilities. It also tends to

improve the individual's sense of human dignity and contributes to the establishment of a positive self-image. According to them, satisfying employment tends to have a therapeutic effect on everyone, especially on people with disabilities.

6.6 SUMMARY

The data obtained from both the questionnaires, as well as the interviews, was discussed. The employment level, the type of employment company, the educational qualifications, gender, population group, as well as the province where the respondents were employed were presented.

The results obtained from both the questionnaires, as well as the interviews were discussed according to the specific research objectives, namely the factors which employees with physical disabilities perceive as important with regard to equality within the workplace, as well as the way they perceive equality within the workplace and how this influenced their psychosocial functioning.

The questions of both the questionnaires as well as the interviews were designed to address these research objectives. The results were thus presented and discussed according to these specific questions.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECCOMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a summary of the process the researcher has followed in conducting the research study. A summary of the main findings and conclusions of the research study is presented according to the set research objectives.

7.2 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH STUDY

In Chapter 1 the researcher provided an explanation for the necessity and applicability of this specific research study. The research study was conducted with the aim to establish the requirements for the effective management of employees with physical disabilities in order to promote workplace equality. The following objectives for the research study were identified:

- * To conduct a literature study with regard to the factors influencing employment equity of people with physical disabilities.
- *To determine which factors employees with physical disabilities consider as being important with regard to equality in the workplace.
- *To determine how people with physical disabilities experience equality in the workplace and how this influence their psychosocial functioning.
- *To make recommendations with regard to the enhancement of work place equality for people with physical disabilities.

For the researcher to reach the set objectives a combination of a qualitative and quantitative research approach with a descriptive design was utilised. The qualitative approach was selected, as detailed and in-depth information (Patton 2002:14) was required from employees with physical disabilities with regard to their respective perceptions on equality. By utilising this approach the researcher would be able to get more detailed information about how the research participants view equality within their respective working environments (Struwig & Stead 2001:12-13). Although a wealth of

detailed information could be obtained, generalisations would not be possible as the sample was not representative. The researcher has decided to obtain an even better picture of the perceptions of employees with physical disabilities with regard to equality, by also utilising the quantitative research design.

Purposeful sampling was utilised to obtain the research participants for the qualitative study, namely the interviews. Purposeful sampling was utilised in order to obtain information rich cases, from which the researcher could learn a great deal with regard to equality in the workplace (Patton 2002:230). In order to obtain these information rich cases the researcher requested people working within the disability field for referrals. The research participants were also requested for referrals. This specific sampling method utilised by the researcher was Snowball/Chain sampling (Patton 2002:243).

Convenient sampling was used to obtain the research participants for the quantitative study, namely the questionnaires. The researcher utilised convenience sampling, as the potential research participants were not easily obtainable due to the specified criteria for inclusion (Struwig & Stead 2001: 124). See paragraph 1.2 in Chapter 1.

The researcher collected secondary data, that is data that is available from resources other than data from the current research project (Struwig & Stead 2001:80), by conducting an intensive literature study. This literature study was focussed on disability, employment of people with disabilities, equality in the workplace, as well as social work and employees with disability. Chapter 2 to 5 contains a discussion with regard to this literature study.

For the collection of primary data, new data (Struwig & Stead 2001:80), a combination of a questionnaire, as well as interviews were utilised. The researcher adhered to specific criteria, as described in Chapter 1, with regard to the design and administration of the questions for both the questionnaire and the interviews. The questions for both the questionnaire, as well as the interviews, were formulated in order to address the aspects as specified in the research objectives.

After the collection of the data it was analysed, as described in Chapter 1. On completing the analysis, the data was interpreted and in Chapter 6 the results were discussed in terms of the specified research objectives, as well as how the research findings compare to what was found in other relevant research.

7.3 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section contains a summary of the research findings, as presented in Chapter 6, as well as the conclusions and recommendations, specific to the research objectives. It is important to note that the conclusions made cannot be generalised, as the sample was too small and not representative of people with the specific disability characteristic of the sample. The conclusions drawn could however indicate valuable trends.

Objective 1: To conduct a literature study with regard to the factors influencing employment equity of people with physical disabilities.

This objective has been reached, as the researcher did an intensive literature study with regard to various aspects pertaining to the factors, which could influence employment equity within the working environment of people with physical disabilities. The concept and prevalence of disability and more specifically people with physical disabilities in South Africa, was discussed in Chapter 2. The importance of employment for a person with a disability, as well as the international and South African legislative and human rights framework was investigated. Discrimination, as well as barriers within in the working environments of people with physical disabilities have been explored and discussed in Chapter 3. In order to have a better understanding of equality, the concept of equality, as well as the legislative imperatives guiding the implementation of equality have been investigated and discussed in Chapter 4. The importance of social work services to employees with disabilities, as well as the necessary skills in order to render this service have been explored and discussed in Chapter 5.

Objective 2: To determine which factors employees with physical disabilities consider as being important with regard to equality in the workplace

When questionnaire and interview respondents were requested to rate their employment companies' support with regard to the employment and promotion of people with disabilities, they rather focused their motivations on aspects such as the availability of skills development, empowerment programs, in-service training, reasonable

accommodation, as well as attitudes, perceptions and behaviour towards people with physical disabilities. The respondents did not focus their motivations on the number of people with disabilities, which their company has employed. It thus seems as if equality in employment is much more than just a “numbers game” to them.

When research participants were asked whether they received the same opportunities as their able-bodied colleagues, within the working environment, most of the respondents who participated in the questionnaires, responded affirmatively, whereas most of the participants of the interviews were not of the opinion that they did receive the same opportunities as their able-bodied colleagues. The motivations, which the research participants, provided for their respective answers, however all focused on either accessibility of the working environment, or the attitudes and perceptions, which is demonstrated towards employees with disabilities. It thus seems as if accessibility, as well as the perceptions and attitudes displayed with regard to disability, within the working environment, is a very important aspect for people with physical disabilities.

Most of the research participants have indicated that they did receive some form of reasonable accommodation within the working environment. Quite a number of respondents, who have completed the questionnaires, have however indicated that they did not need reasonable accommodation with regard to a specific aspect. It can thus be concluded that not all people with physical disabilities requires the same form of reasonable accommodation.

Research respondents were requested to indicate which aspects, within their working environments, were preventing them from receiving equal opportunities. Accessibility of the working and training environment, as well as accessibility of seminar, social and sport related venues, technology, work related information and policies were highlighted. Another aspect highlighted by research respondents as preventing them from receiving equal opportunities within the working environment was the negative attitudes and perceptions with regard to people with disabilities, within the working environment.

Accessibility, as well as the attitudes and perceptions displayed towards employees with disabilities, were highlighted more than once, as important factors with regard to equality within the working environment. It can also be concluded that accessibility of the working environment includes accessibility of training, seminar, social and sport related venues, as well accessibility of transport, technology, work related information and policies. Accessibility aspects for people with physical disabilities, can however not be generalised as people with physical disabilities have different needs and need to be addressed individually.

Objective 3: To determine how people with physical disabilities experience equality in the workplace and how this influences their psychosocial functioning.

As with the previous research objective, questions were specifically designed for both the interviews and the questionnaires, to address this specific objective. Some of the questions, have however, addressed research objective 2 and 3.

In order to determine how people with physical disabilities experience equality within the workplace, the research participants were asked whether they received the same opportunities as their able-bodied colleagues. The majority of the questionnaire respondents responded affirmatively, whereas most of the interview respondents was of the opinion that they did not receive the same opportunities as their able-bodied colleagues. The motivations, which the respondents provided for their respective answers all focused on either the importance of an accessible working environment, or the importance of positive attitudes and perceptions towards employees with disabilities. It thus seems as if accessibility, as well as the perceptions and attitudes displayed with regard to disability, within the working environment, is a very important aspect for people with physical disabilities.

Research respondents were requested to indicate which aspects, were preventing them from receiving equal opportunities. Accessibility, not just accessibility within the working environment, but also accessibility of training, seminar, social and sport related venues, as well accessibility of technology, work related information and policies were highlighted. Another aspect that was highlighted was the attitudes and perceptions with regard to people with disabilities, within the working environment.

Research participants were also asked whether they did experience discrimination due to their disability within the working environment and to indicate the nature of the discrimination. Most of the questionnaire, as well as the interview respondents indicated that they did not experience any discrimination within their working environments due to their disability. Those who did experience discrimination within their working environment indicated that the discrimination was related to the negative attitudes towards them as employees with disabilities and the lack of accessibility of the working environment. The lack of accessibility within the working environment, include accessibility of training venues, accessibility of information, technology and policies. Due to the lack of accessibility within the working environment people with physical disabilities experienced that they did not receive equal opportunities and are thus discriminated against.

The impact of the discrimination on the participants` health, emotions, self-esteem, morale and relationships were investigated. All of the research participants indicated that the discrimination impacted negatively on their health, which resulted in stress related symptoms. Most of them also indicated that the discrimination impacted negatively on their emotions and self-esteem, as it elicited emotions of uselessness and frustration. Most of the research participants also indicated that the discrimination impacted negatively on their morale, although they all experienced work satisfaction and work motivation in varying degrees, despite of the discrimination. When they were asked how their level of work satisfaction could be improved, increased accessibility within the working environment, as well as negative perceptions and attitudes towards people with disabilities were highlighted. Research participants also indicated that the discrimination impacted on their relationship with their colleagues, supervisor and family in varying degrees.

It is thus evident that discrimination impacts negatively on the psychosocial functioning of people with physical disabilities; some are however more negatively and widely affected by the discrimination than others. This could possibly be attributed to the support network of the person with a disability. Maybe the person who is less affected by the discrimination has quite a good support network. It could also be that people who is effected very negatively by the discrimination has perhaps not yet accepted their own disability and

limitations. Some of the people with disabilities who have experienced discrimination were able to despite their discrimination still experience work satisfaction and work motivation. This could possibly be attributed to the fact that some people with disabilities has quite a strong internal locus of control, in other words they are able to motivate themselves despite the negative external aspects.

The importance of accessibility, as well as the perceptions and attitudes which is displayed towards people with physical disabilities, has again been highlighted, as important aspects in order to increase people with physical disabilities work motivation and work satisfaction.

Objective 4: To make recommendations with regard to the enhancement of work place equality for people with physical disabilities.

Considering all data gathered the following recommendations with regard to the enhancement of equality for people with physical disabilities, within the working environment are made:

- The involvement of employees with physical disabilities, in aspects pertaining to their disability related needs, within the working environment is of utmost importance. This way their disability specific needs, as well as equality within the workplace could be addressed. This could also lead to minimising the feelings of “being treated as outsiders”.
- Employers must adopt a strategy for the management of employees with disabilities, according to legislative imperatives. Employees with disabilities need to be consulted in this regard.
- Within the disability strategy of the company, certain measures must be included on how employees with disabilities could be retained. The working environment must be of such a nature that employees with disabilities would like to stay on at the specific company.
- Employers must ensure that employees with disabilities are treated equally to able-bodied colleagues. This can be done by regularly evaluating policies and practices within the working environment.
- Awareness and sensitisation programmes with regard to the capabilities and needs of employees with disabilities should be provided within the working environment. These programmes should also focus on the manner in which people with disabilities should be

treated. The colleagues of the employees with disabilities, as well as their superiors should be included in these awareness programmes.

- Employees with physical disabilities must be awarded the opportunity to undergo the same training, in-service training and skills development opportunities than other workers. Accessibility of these opportunities is thus very important. The specific disability related needs of the employee with physical disabilities need to be considered in order to provide reasonable accommodation in this regard. If necessary, technical experts, for example occupational therapists, could be approached to assist to determine the most applicable reasonable accommodation measures.
- Employers should, as a matter of urgency, take steps to improve accessibility of the working environment, in co-laboration with people with physical disabilities and technical experts. An Environmental Access Audit could be conducted in order to determine the barriers to accessibility and improvements could be suggested.
- Employers must be flexible and creative with regard to reasonable accommodation measures within the working environment. The disability specific related needs of the employee need to be considered. Employees must not assume that all people with physical disabilities have similar disability related needs.
- Employers could utilise social workers employed within the company to assist with the attainment of equality for employees with disabilities within the working environment.
- Social workers could assist with the attainment of equality in the workplace by:
 - * Assisting employees if they become disabled to adapt to their new disability status and to negotiate with the employment company with regard to the further employment and possible reasonable accommodation measures in order to re-instate the employee in his/her previous job. Negotiating for possible re-training will also take place, if necessary.
 - * Establishment of disability committees, within the working environment (should a number of people with disabilities be employed). This committee will enable employees with disabilities to get together on a regular basis. During these meetings employees with disabilities would be able to voice their concerns with regard to equity issues pertaining to disability and to propose possible solutions. Employees will thus get the opportunity to be involved with regard to disability related aspects within the working environment. The Social Worker will then be

able to advise management and the employer on disability specific issues. These committee meetings could also be utilised as a support group for the employees with disabilities.

- * Life skills training can also be arranged or presented for the employees with disabilities. These life skills can include aspects such as conflict handling, communication skills, stress management, assertiveness, how to improve your work satisfaction, how to accept your disability, how to handle discrimination within the working environment and various other aspects. Employees with disabilities could thus be empowered on various aspects by means of these life skills.
 - * Awareness and sensitisation campaigns with regard to the capabilities and the needs of employees with disabilities can be launched. These campaigns could include various programmes such as participation in Casual Day, the International Day for People with disabilities, invitation of guests speakers, hosting of disability related conferences, distribution of various disability related information and much more. The aim of these campaigns is ultimately to change the attitudes of employers, managers, supervisors and colleagues towards employees with disabilities.
 - * Evaluations of the working environments could be conducted in order to determine which barriers are still prevalent and hampering equality for people with disabilities. Recommendations in this regard could be made to the management and employers of the company.
 - * Lobbying for equality for people with disabilities within the working environment will form part of the social workers responsibility.
 - * Lobbying at higher levels, for example at Government level, if necessary in order to ensure equality for people with disabilities within the working environment.
 - * Establishment of support groups for employee with disabilities. If difficult circumstances do arise employees will be able to have a relevant support network.
 - * Provision of individual counselling to employees with disability and their families.
- Before social workers could get involved with the assistance of attainment of equality within the working environment, in depth knowledge will have to be obtained with regard to the following aspects:
- Disability in general, as well as the psychosocial adaptation to disability.

- The working environment, as well as the employment situation at the specific company.
- The attitudes and perceptions of the company towards people with disabilities.
- The current legislative aspects pertaining to disability and the working environment
- Disability etiquette. This entails the manner in which people with physical disability would like to be treated, for example do not just push someone in a wheelchair, first ask whether you could assist the person.

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APPENDIX A

Dear Participant

I am Adele Snyman and busy with my Masters degree in Social Work at the University of South Africa (UNISA). I am currently conducting research in order to determine which factors are important in order to reach employment equity for people with physical disabilities. Your assistance in doing this research is requested. It will be appreciated if you would take some time to complete the accompanying questionnaire with regard to the employment of people with physical disabilities. It will take you more or less an hour to complete. For the purpose of this study people with physical disabilities will be considered as the loss or damage to bones, nerves, muscle etc; which often leads to difficulties with mobility or performing daily functions due to paralysis, amputation, spasms, spinal cord injury etc. .

Confidentiality

All questionnaires will be completed anonymously and confidentiality is therefore adhered to.

Consent

Your assistance with this research is completely voluntary. By agreeing to complete the questionnaire, you agree that you willingly and voluntarily participate in the study and grant consent that this data/ information may be used for the purpose of this research.

Further Referrals

I would really appreciate it if you could assist me in finding more participants for this study. People who would be eligible to participate must be physically disabled, employed for at least a year and have an educational qualification of Grade 12 (Matric) or higher.

Please complete the questionnaire to the best of your ability and as comprehensively as possible. You can complete it electronically by marking or typing in the required spaces, and can then email it back to me at lasnyman@webmail.co.za.com. Alternatively you can fill it in by hand and fax it to Fax: (012) 355 6259. Please mark it clearly "For Attention: Adele Snyman".

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me on my email address lasnyman@webmail.co.za or cell phone on 084 4910 614. Alternatively, if you have any questions regarding my conduct or the study itself, you are welcome to contact my Supervisor, Professor Wilfried van Delft at vdelfwf@unisa.ac.za or Telephone: (012) 429 6739.

Thank you very much for your assistance.

Kind regards,

Adèle Snyman

(Registered social worker with the SA Council for Social Service Professions

Registration number: 10-14897)