

**CHALLENGES REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EMPLOYMENT EQUITY
ACT WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND THE MANAGEMENT
THEREOF: A CASE OF STUDY OF VHEMBE DISTRICT.**

BY

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ABSTRACT

The general objective of this study is to investigate challenges regarding the implementation of Employment Equity Act within the Department of Health and the management thereof: A case of study of Vhembe District. The Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998 was put in place by Government to facilitate the implementation of fair workplace practices, which will correct the imbalances of the past as well as creating a workforce, which reflects the demographics of South Africa. The inequalities in employment patterns and practices with respect to access to employment, training, promotion and equitable remuneration especially for black people, women and people with disabilities are addressed in the said Act. The Employment Equity Act is quite specific about the minimum requirements of an organisation's Employment Equity Plan, which make it easy to identify what progress is being made towards ending discrimination in the workplace. The question arises as to whether South African organisations are merely implementing Employment Equity policies to adhere to the basic requirements and deadlines of the Act. Or, are these policies genuinely based on commitment to the principles of equality and equal opportunity for all in the workplace.

The study uses both quantitative and qualitative techniques for data collection and analysis. Qualitative techniques were mostly used in that they provide the researcher with an understanding of experiences and challenges regarding the implementation of Employment Equity Act within the Department of Health and the management thereof. Purposive sampling was used for the selection of sample for the study. Both primary and secondary data was used for analysis in this study. Secondary data were obtained from government publications, research publications, and reports. Primary data was obtained through personal observation, and household's questionnaires. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and documentation.

The research contained the following as findings:

- Strategies for enhancing the consultation process. Participants proposed the involvement of employees on development and implementation of operational plans at business unit levels
- Provision of reasonable accommodation. Participants proposed strategies such as assistive devices for people with disabilities, training and development programs, participation in exchange programs with other institutions and diversity management
- A need for a holistic approach to people management and alignment to the HR Plan, which in turn is linked to Departmental strategic objectives
- The participants indicated that there was misalignment of training and development programs with EEP. The importance of aligning these two programs has been greatly emphasised in both the Literature Review and the legislative requirements.

The following were recommendations which were:

- Enforce management commitment to facilitate implementation of the EEP and develop strategies for holding them accountable, such as inclusion of EE in Performance Agreements
- Increasing EEP awareness and empowerment programs to enable effective and active participation of employees
- Strengthen Monitoring and Evaluation Processes to clarify and reaffirm roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, with specific reference to active functioning of EAC