

**CHALLENGES FACING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE APPOINTMENT OF WOMEN TO
LEADERSHIP POSITIONS: A CASE OF VHEMBE DISTRICT**

BY

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ABSTRACT

The challenges facing Department of Education in the appointment of women into leadership positions was investigated in this study. Women are slowly climbing the promotional ladder within the Nzhelele West Circuit at Secondary schools in Vhembe District. There is still a gap in the representation of women in leadership positions. The study seeks to describe the challenges facing the Department of Education in the appointment of women to leadership positions. It further investigates how the process of appointment affects women from being appointed into leadership positions in Secondary schools. The study is to explore the strategies that can be used to overcome the challenges facing the Department of Education in the appointment of women in leadership positions.

The researcher used the quantitative and qualitative approach. The purposive sampling method was used to select the study sample of 35 respondents. Questionnaires and interview was used to collect the data. Data was collected and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) computer software employing descriptive statistics, and the second method was thematic analysis.

The research contained the following as findings:

- Under challenges facing the Department of Education in the appointment of women in leadership positions, the largest number of respondents revealed that women do have management courses for them to qualify for appointment to leadership positions. There are few women in the leadership positions at Secondary schools which act as role models.
- How women are affected by the process of appointment into leadership positions at Secondary schools, the statistics show that when appointing the candidates, there is the notion of "son of the soil" which affect appointment of women and implementation of anti-discrimination.
- The strategies that can be used to overcome the challenges facing the Department of Education in the appointment of women in leadership positions, is that the Department must encourage educated community members to be members of School Governing Bodies. The

Department needs to train School Governing Bodies to consider Gender Equity Act and Anti-discrimination policies when appointing leaders.

The following were recommendations made based on the findings of the study:

- It was shown that women are few in leadership positions in secondary schools. It is recommended that gender sensitivity be recognized in secondary school management positions.
- The respondents show that gendered cultural factors impact substantially on the appointment of women as interviewing panels are dominated by males. It is therefore recommended that conditions on the composition of interviewing panels be reviewed as few women or no women are in managerial positions.
- It was shown that the stereotypes by SGBs are factors against women appointment into leadership positions. It is recommended that workshops are run for the SGBs to accommodate women into leadership positions.