

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AS A STRATEGY TO
PROMOTE TRANSFORMATION TOWARDS EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN: A
CASE STUDY OF THULAMELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

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**A MINI DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF PUBLIC MANAGEMENT (MPM)**

SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

UNIVERSITY OF VENDA

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2013

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ABSTRACT

The South Africa Constitution, 1996 pronounce that no one should be undermined or discriminated because of his or her gender, race, religion or ethnicity. Everyone has a right to the Constitution which has broken the barriers and discrimination against women towards participation in the economy of the country. Countries that are undergoing fundamental political, economic and social transformation are making use of the skills of women. Women are contributing to the social, political or economic life of their countries. However, many women experience obstacles that prevent them from achieving their professional career goals. Majority of women are found in lower levels of management in both public and private institutions because of not being promoted to higher position.

The study "Implementation of Affirmative Action as a strategy to promote transformation towards empowering women" was initiated to investigate the effectiveness and efficiency of implementation of Affirmative Action by the Thulamela Local Municipality. The specific objectives of the study are to: (1) Assess the understanding of Thulamela Local Municipality with respect to the importance of affirmative action, (2) Explore critical issues faced by Thulamela Local Municipality in the implementation of Affirmative Action, and (3) Investigate strategies that can be used to combat gender inequality within Thulamela Local Municipality.

Combination of methodologies namely, qualitative and quantitative approaches were applied for the study. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected by the use of a structured questionnaire comprised of closed and open ended questions. Data collected was collated and analysed in line with the research objectives. Thulamela Municipality management employees formed part of the study and completed the questionnaires and participated in the interviews.

The study found that the municipality is doing very well in implementing affirmative

action policy towards empowerment of women. Leadership of the municipality namely, Council and Executive Administration Management has 50/50 representation. However, going down to middle and lower management levels, positions are dominated by men who are viewed as officials without necessary academic qualifications. It is in these levels where employees do not have a broader knowledge about Affirmative Action and its policy implementation requirements.

The study provides some recommendations that if they are implemented, may improve the implementation of Affirmative Action by the municipality. These include:

- Provision of training to managements about the policy and the implementation of Affirmative Action
- Conduct skills and qualification audit within the municipality to ensure efficient placement of employees in the right positions while considering Affirmative Action Policies.
- Develop framework to be implemented towards the satisfaction of Affirmative Action policies and regulations for the benefit of the municipality compliance and empowerment of women.