

Empowered Women in Water Management

**BY
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Mini-Thesis
A mini-thesis submitted to the Faculty of Sciences, University of the Western Cape, in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for Master of Philosophy in Integrated Water
Resource Management

UNIVERSITY *of the*
WESTERN CAPE

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Dedication

To the special men in my life John, Koshesai and Takunda Kachambwa



Declaration

I declare that *Empowered Women in Water Management* is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any university, and all the sources I have used have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Name: Date:

Signed:



ABSTRACT

Following South Africa's independence from apartheid rule, there has been progressive developments in policies that promote equity in all spheres including the water sector. Equality in the water sector is not only limited to water access, but also management of the water. This study investigated the factors that empower women in the water sector as an example of gender equity. In particular it examined the attributes of women in water management through a case study of fourteen women in management in the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) Western Cape regional office, South Africa. Although women's critical role as managers of water at the domestic realm is well articulated, women's role as strategic managers at the helms of power is not fully articulated. The study findings suggest that implementation of equity legislation has contributed to adding the quantitative value and not so much the qualitative value to transform and challenge the institutional culture and practices. Women managers occupying senior positions are well qualified and bring diversity into the management of water resources. Yet, they are faced with both internal and external challenges in their positions. It was recommended that organizational transformation needed to be broadened and women managers required more support systems to ameliorate the challenges they faced.

KEY WORDS

Water

Women

Management

Gender

Empowerment

Equality

Transformation

Decision-making

Participation

South Africa



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Acronyms

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
DAW	Division for the Advancement of Women
DWAF	Department of Water Affairs and Forestry
GAP	Gender and Advocacy Programme
GWA	Gender and Water Alliance
ILO	International Labor Organization
IRC	International Water and Sanitation Centre
IWRM	Integrated Water Resource Management
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Advances in science, information and technology of the modern day world and the dissolving of borders with the advent of globalization, ironically suggest a world moving towards improved living conditions, yet this oversimplified paradox seemingly excludes a whole sector of the population, largely women, in the governance of water resources. According to UNICEF (2003), one in ten school-aged girls in Africa do not attend school during menstruation or simply drop out of school at puberty because of the absence of clean and private sanitation facilities in schools. Every day 6,000 girls and boys die from diseases linked to unsafe water and women are the main caretakers of sick children and adults.

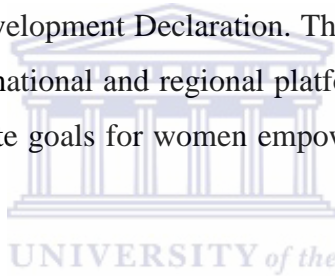
These struggles often place women's bodies at risk of national, racial, ethnic, and class conflicts in the water and sanitation systems. For example, women in developing countries may spend six to eight hours per day collecting water and each carrying up to 20 litres on their heads per each journey (Budlender, 1998; Morna, 2001). This denotes some of the gender dimensions that work against women of the South in exercising their rights to water and sanitation. As such, this is the driving force for an ongoing advocacy for increased women's empowerment in the management of water resources at all levels.

Furthermore, as debates become more acrid in tone in the 21st Century over the role of water in our increasingly fragile environment, such concerns are likely to persist. To this end, it is now widely recognized that progress is unattainable if women are not empowered through effective participation in decision-making positions in water and sanitation management (UN, 2005; Steele et al., 2005).

Francis (2000) attests that the growing awareness of a gender approach to water resource management is centered on the global discourses and that gender equality and women's empowerment are essential for equitable and sustainable management of water resources.

Emphasis in international policies on the role of women and gender relations in water systems is well recognized. This has been presented at international conferences such as the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (1992), International Conference on Fresh Water (2001), Third World Water Forum in Kyoto (2003), and they have also been articulated in policy statements such as the Dublin principles, Agenda 21 and Goal 3 and 7 of the Millennium Development Declaration (DAW 2005).

South Africa has not only featured prominently in and contributed mostly to, these global events, but has already ratified and acceded to a number of declarations and instruments that promote women empowerment and gender equity. Such instruments include; the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), The Beijing Declaration, The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the SADC Gender and Development Declaration. The participation of South African women and men in these international and regional platforms is reflected in the national policies, which clearly articulate goals for women empowerment in all sectors including the water sector.



The constitutional change in 1994 paved a way for enabling policies of transformation and affirmative action for previously marginalized and discriminated groups such as blacks and women. As contained in the 1996 Constitution of South Africa Section 1 (b) prohibits discrimination against women and addresses equality and non-sexism setting the agenda for non-discriminatory legislation and prompting gender sensitive national priorities and gender considerations into government policies and interventions (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). Apartheid laws coupled with repressive customs and traditions, and unequal gender, race and class relations disempowered women and influenced their access to basic needs such as education, fuel and water (Beall, 1998; GAP, 2005). The women's organizations significant history of struggle contributed to the crafting of the Constitution to the extent that it is rooted in rights based language and dubbed progressive and explicitly refer to gender equality (Budlender, 1997; Beall, 1998).

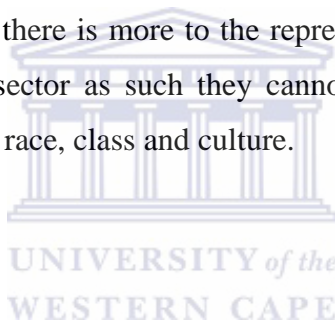
In practice however, implementation of this overarching policy agenda has been elusive despite the global and national rhetoric. Various practices of gender discrimination perpetuate the subordination of women in relation to men, through customs and traditions that reinforce discriminatory practices such as patriarchal institutional arrangements, historical legacies of colonialism and apartheid as well as domination of men who preserve patrimonial roles in the supply and management of sanitation and water resources (Zwarteveen, 1997; Dunker, 1999; WRC, 2003). In upholding the privileges that are in favour of men, women are not accorded equal opportunities but are regarded as inferior or second-class citizens. As a result women are disproportionately discriminated against, and are absent from the enclaves of critical decision-making.

In an attempt to meet these challenges and ensure gender equality, a number of water sector policies and legislation with reference to gender issues have been drafted. The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) is the custodian of South Africa's water and forestry resources and is primarily responsible for the formulation and implementation of policy governing these two sectors. DWAF developed a gender policy that is premised on Article 9 of the Constitution, which prohibits discrimination. In its preamble, the need for 'feminization of the water sector' was implored as a precondition for women's empowerment and gender equality (DWAF Gender Policy, 1997).

Furthermore, attempts to have women's representation in high positions in the water sector have been also made with the appointment of a female Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry and 3 out of 5 Deputy Director Generals being women (DWAF, 2006). The equality legislation drawn in 1998 to address preferential recruitment and appointment of women, blacks and people with disability also contributes to increased representation of women in the department. Significant to women's empowerment, the department's regulation stipulates that women should represent 30 percent in all water boards and other water committees. To this end, there is over 30 percent representation of women employed in the department, with the majority of the employed women in low paying, intensive labor and temporary positions (Steele et al., 2005).

Although affirmative measures have increased women's representation in the previously male dominated sector, Budlender (1997) argues that where affirmative action has not been broken down in terms of gender and race, there is a likelihood of it promoting white women and black men. This proposition was confirmed by a study done by Morna (2001) that indicated that increased female representation in the water sector was predominantly an increase in the proportion of white females, rather than black females and the increasing black representation in the sector was mostly an increase in the proportion of black males, as opposed to black females. Schreiner et al. 2003 contends that while there have been an increase in the appointment of black women to more senior positions in the water sector, there are still a few women in decision-making positions regardless of race.

Such a backdrop suggests that there is more to the representation of women managers in senior positions in the water sector as such they cannot be viewed as a homogenous group due to the intersection of race, class and culture.



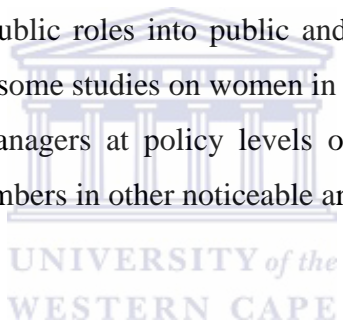
1.2 Problem Statement

The paucity of women in management is a long standing phenomenon that is not only prevalent in the water sector, but in all other sectors globally as stated by Adler (1993) "The single most uncontroversial, incontrovertible statement to make about women in management is that there are a few of them." As such, suggested explanations of the nominal number of women abound and they include cultural, social, legal, educational and organizational factors (Adler, 1993; Fagenson, 1993; Davidson and Burke, 1994; Booyesen 1999). Over the past five decades, there have been attempts to redress the situation thereby resulting in an increased trend in the number of women entering workplaces (Davison and Burke, 2004; Mathur-Helm, 2004 a.).

In South Africa, the historical legacy of patriarchy entrenched in a racist backdrop assigned women to the position of minors in both public and private life. As such, this influenced their ability to lead in decision-making positions and therefore relegated them

to low positions at most workplaces. Despite the increased trend in the number of women in decision-making positions, women are still being sidelined as gender issues are always relegated as 'softer issues' in the predominantly 'male' sectors. The water sector is largely male dominated and fashioned along technical and engineering lines. The past history, and patriarchal notions that disadvantaged women from taking technical courses also exacerbated the problem such that there is still a low representation of women at management levels in the water sector (OSW, 2003 a.).

Additionally, as noted by GWA (2003), there is sometimes resistance to the positioning of women at the centre of the water resource management initiatives. The most important contributing factor is usually the perception that women in the water sector are unqualified and unsuitable largely because they are seen to be stepping outside their common traditional and non-public roles into public and technical areas. GWA (2003) further attribute the absence of some studies on women in water management to either the short history of women as managers at policy levels or due to the focus on women empowerment at increasing numbers in other noticeable areas such as politics.



1.3 Aim of the Study

The overall aim of the study is to analyze the factors that contribute to women occupying decision-making positions in both managerial and technical positions in the water sector in South Africa.

1.4 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To identify the attributes of women in decision-making positions in the water sector.
2. To determine the extent and effectiveness of frameworks used to empower women when occupying these strategic decision-making positions and identify the challenges.

1.5 Rationale

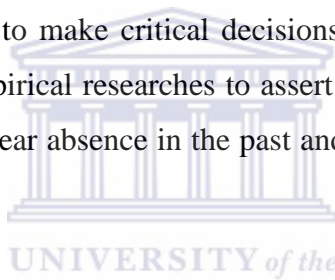
The justification for equal representation of women in decision-making positions can be argued from three perspectives (Sadie, 2005). First, within the context of fair democratic principles, women as citizens have a fundamental right to be involved in all structures of governance and decision-making. Second, there should be some considerations based on the fact that women's interests are implicitly different from those of men and therefore they are most likely to emphasize some priorities that are different to men. As stated in the UN Beijing Platform for Action (1995 par 183), women's representation is a precondition to ensure that their interests are taken on board. The absence of women in decision-making positions results in the creation of policies that fail to address their needs and concerns.

The third utility argument is based on the economic need for use and development of human capital. Based on the fact that women do constitute half of any population, they must therefore be represented in equal proportions to men as "society cannot afford not to use its available talent" (Sadie, 2005). According to the UN Beijing Platform for Action (1995), a 30 percent representation of women is needed to form a critical mass that can transform institutions, challenge stereotypes and create role models. The basis of this figure is inclined on the observation that women less than 30 percent cannot form a critical mass that can effectively alter the status quo rather they are assimilated into the existing systems with the likelihood of adopting masculine characteristics. In South Africa, the percentage of economically active women decreased from 41 percent in 1991 to 39, 4 percent in 1996, presenting a skewed representation of women in management as compared to the demographics of the general population in which women constitute a larger percentage (52 percent) when compared to men (Mathur-Helm, 2004 a.).

Attainment of gender equality and empowerment is guided by the interplay of attributes such as policy and institutional frameworks and those inherent to individuals. A lot of focus on women's representation particularly in politics, have through successful advocacy by gender activists, been well researched (GAP, 2000). In water supply and

sanitation, there has not been much focus on the success of women as managers nor the impact of women as decision makers in water institutions. Wherever the importance of having women in decision-making positions in the water sector is considered, it is usually within the context of participation in decentralized structures (Mjoli, 1999; Maharaj, 2003; Tapela, 2004; Manase et. al., 2005), or on gender roles in the context of division of labour in accessing water in irrigation or dam construction, for example (Baden and Green, 1994; Dunker, 1999; WCD, 2000; Monyai, 2003).

Furthermore, research on the implementation of the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) Gender Policy has mostly focused on the external aspect without looking at the internal component and its implications (Dunker, 1999; Morna, 2001; Monyai, 2003; Steele et al. 2005) thus leaving a gap as to whether women in the water sector are empowered enough to make critical decisions and the purported differences. Surprisingly, there are few empirical researches to assert the impact women in the water sector are making given their near absence in the past and increased need for them in the current global discourse.



Using DWAF Western Cape Regional office as a leading water institute in the formulation and implementation of policies as a case study, the current study rationalizes that an in-depth reflection on the attributes and challenges of women in senior decision-making positions will shed light on their impact either as empowered agents of transformation, or as disempowered people in relation to their role in water sector.

1.6 Scope of the Study

Senior management forms the nexus of power of institutions and it is at this level where fundamental policies and decisions that affect society are designed and implemented (Hanes, 2003). Given that most of the water institutions do not have women in senior decision-making positions, the extent of this study was limited to women in senior and middle management positions in DWAF Western Cape Regional office.

1.7 Study Design

In this study, both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used. Primary data was obtained from a field research in which the adopted method of data collection was through semi-structured interviews. Documents were also reviewed and analyzed to substantiate the study.

1.8 Definitions of Key Terms and Concepts Used

There is widespread debate and contestation on some of the terms and concepts used in the study, hence working definitions of some of these terms will be made at this stage.

Gender is a social construct. It defines and differentiates the roles, rights, responsibilities, and obligations of women and men. The innate biological differences between females and males form the basis of social norms that define appropriate behaviors for women and men and that determine women's and men's differential social, economic, and political power.

Gender is distinct from sex and can be viewed as a set of social relations and processes embodied in a variety of institutions, such as families, communities, markets or legal systems that underpin everyday life. Gender relations are dynamic and context-specific. In South Africa, historical processes have all left their mark, as have the socio-cultural norms that define gender identities (Baden et al., 1998).

Gender Equality refers to a situation where women and men have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and potential, are able to contribute equally to national, political, economic, social and cultural development; and benefit equally from the results. Gender Equality entails the identification and removal of root causes of discrimination in order to give men and women equal opportunities. Equality is understood to include both formal and substantive equality not just equality to men (Oxaal and Baden, 1997).

Gender Equity refers to the fair and just distribution of all means of opportunities and resources between women and men.

Gender Awareness refers to a state of knowledge of the differences in roles and relations of women and men and how this results in differences in power relations, status, privilege and needs (Oxaal and Baden, 1997).

Gender Mainstreaming is a strategy whose main goal is to use gender perspectives to transform processes, policies, and programmes for the equal benefit of men and women

Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) can be defined as a holistic approach, which promotes the coordinated development and management of water, land and related resources in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems. According to the South African National Water Resource Strategy (2004:4) water as a “resource cannot be considered separately from the people who use and manage it, a balanced mix of technological and social approaches must be used to achieve integrated management”



1.9 Limitations of the study

The number of women in senior decision-making positions according to the level of classification in Water Institute as a whole is minimal. Most of the women occupying senior positions are mainly located at the national office and gaining access to them was very difficult and geographically challenging. Hence this study was therefore limited to the regional level. Although the findings are specific to the case study, certain aspects can be generalized for other water institutes with the same structure and operation.

Conducting the study was also time-consuming as DWAF Western Cape regional office is severely short staffed and most of the women there always had busy schedules. This also made it very difficult to go back and verify some of the issues raised in the interviews.

1.10 Outline of the Thesis

The thesis is presented in five chapters as outlined below:

The first chapter provides a contextual background and introduces the problems, stating the reasons why women's role in the management of water in water institutions is a gender issue, and it also elaborates on the rationale of the study.

The second chapter serves the purpose of literature review and examines the theoretical framework and concepts governing the study. Three major facets of literature are discussed; first gender mainstreaming and the integration of women in developmental frameworks, and the definition and evaluation of empowerment. The second facet discusses women's role in water management and the third will outline the approaches used in the study of gender diversity in management.

The third chapter elaborates on the empirical research design and methodology used in the study.

The fourth chapter presents the findings of the study from the interviews undertaken. The first section presents the attributes of women under study, the second section thematically presents the challenges and experiences of women as managers in a water institution.

The fifth chapter is a concluding one that outlines the summaries that have been arrived at in terms of the attributes of women in the water sector, the challenges they face and the extent and effectiveness of policies and frameworks used to empower them. The chapter culminates in making suggestions for further research.

1.11 Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the study. It highlighted the background to the study, the aim, objectives, limitations and the rationale for the study. Chapter 2 outlines the relevant literature, which informs this study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The under representation of women in public life as politicians, managers and decision makers has sparked a lot of debate and contestation, triggering research in diverse sectors. The debates around women's representation are also rampant in governance and policy-making in many countries around the globe. Within the water sector, current concerns with participation and governance of water consist of aspirations to include more women in water management institutions.

Although there is consensus on the important role women play in managing water resources at all levels it is usually within the collective achievement of national development goals. To this end, women's roles in water management have been well documented but as argued by Tortajada (2000), while the active participation of women is critical for ensuring sustainable use of water resources these roles have been seen only in the context of the provision or use of water in households and communities. She further contends that: "though these roles are important, women can play larger and more significant roles in relation to water management, namely as decision-makers, planners, managers and research scientists."

Empirical studies on women in technical and male dominated fields such as the water sector are still minimal and focus primarily on resistance factors and barriers to women's entry in these fields. Other than elaborate case studies found mostly in Latin America, there is a dearth of literature on women's profile and experiences in water resource management, particularly within the African context.

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the theoretical underpinnings associated with women in water management. The first section will provide the international policy framework on women's role in water resource management. This will be followed by the South

African policy and legislative framework on gender issues within the water sector. A discussion on the theoretical aspects of gender approaches in development will ensue. This will be followed by an overview of gender perspectives in water resource management in general and South Africa in particular. Thereafter the focus will shift to a discussion on women in management in general and then women in water resources management. This will be followed by a discussion on the concept of women's empowerment. An outline of some of the key challenges faced by women in management will be made. The chapter will conclude by summarizing the diverse concepts that will inform the study.

2.2 Women's Role in Water Resources Management

Literature on women's role in water resources is posited on the widely accepted recognition of women as primary users of domestic water at both global and national levels.

2.2.1 International Perspectives on Women's Role in Water Resources Management

The concern with women's water needs arises from the global recognition of the centrality of women's role as water providers and managers, which began at the 1977 UN Water Conference in Mar del Plata, Argentina (UNESCO, 2003). Thereafter it has been recognized and reiterated at several global forums. However, these global forums were largely dominated by male technocrats and engineers who influenced the agenda, such that women's issues and their role in water resources management only started gaining significance in the water debate in the early 1990's (Rico, 1998; Dunker, 1999; Morna 2001).

In 1992 one of the four principles in the Dublin Declaration specifically stated the important roles played by women in the water sector and the need to take measures to include women at local, national and international levels (Rico, 1998; Singh et al., 2005).

In addition to women being recognized as being at the interface of water and prime users of “domestic water”, women were also acknowledged as key to using water for food production. Action under this concern was intensified during the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade 1981–1990 (Singh et al., 2005).

An urgent call to mainstream gender in water interventions was given prominence at the Second World Water Forum in The Hague. At this forum it was concluded that women’s involvement was critical to improving water governance. Motivated by these developments, the Global Women’s Alliance (GWA) was then formed in 2000, (Morna, 2001). The Third Water Forum in Kyoto 2003 emphasized participatory approaches and gender perspectives in water policies. Commitments to promote women’s empowerment in the activities specified in Agenda 21, the Millennium Development Goals (Goal 3 and 7 in particular) were made and reinforced at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002.

Arnfred (2005) argues that while the global conferences have strengthened women’s voices and transformed policies, they have created a unified developmental language that sanitizes the power struggles presenting barriers to critique dominant policies.

2.2.2 Gender Approaches in Development

The participation and empowerment of women in all sectors including the water sector is informed by gender approaches to development. There have been various attempts by mainstream feminists and development practitioners to include women in the development processes. Since the 1970s the Western thinking has, notably driven the historical progression of approaches on women and development.

The Women-In- Development (WID) approach was first advocated for in the 1970s following Ester Boserup’s publication on Women’s Role in Economic Development, which examined the sexual division of labour and argued that women were excluded from development, processes (Pearson 2005). Central to the WID approach was the integration of women into development. Moser (1983) developed a framework based on

three policy approaches: equity, anti-poverty and efficiency. According to this framework, distinctions were made between practical and strategic gender needs. The derivation of women's practical and strategic needs from an analysis of gender interests is of theoretical significance. According to Molyneaux (1995), women's interests assume similarity of interests based on the premise of (biologically) being women. This notion assumes false homogeneity of women's interests as uniform yet differences occur in terms of ethnicity, race and class. Gender interests are developed by virtue of women or men's social positioning and through gender attributes. Gender interests can either be strategic or practical (ibid).

Practical gender needs are the needs women identify in their socially accepted roles in society. Although they arise from gender divisions of labour or women's subordinate position in society, they do not challenge them (Moser, 1993; Kabeer, 1999). Strategic gender needs are the needs women identify because of the underlying structural inequalities and subordinate position to men in society. These needs vary according to the context and relate to gender divisions of labour, power and control (Moser, 1993; Kabeer, 1999).

In practice, debates on whether it is possible to separate strategic from gender interests persist. Pearson (2005) argues that Molyneaux's distinction between strategic and practical gender interests is significant for gender analysis while the distinction between strategic and practical gender needs is an important tool for gender planning. For instance some scholars argue that policies that make it possible for women to carry out their gendered roles such as supply of domestic water and sanitation for example are responding to women's practical interests on one hand, whereas policies which address gender relations between men and women thus challenging the traditional and structural practices of subordination are seen as refereeing to women's strategic gender interests on the other hand (Green and Baden 1994; Kabeer, 1999). In terms of water resource management, the distinction plays out significantly in the discourse on women and men's role in water management.

The WID approach was ultimately unsuccessful. It was largely criticized for integrating women into the development process as a homogenous group without challenging the societal structures, such that often the approach increased women's workloads, reinforced inequalities and widened the gap between women and men (Karl, 1995; Rathgeber, 1990). Parallel to the emergence of WID approaches, attempts to construct a more people-centered approach to challenge the mainstream development concept and planning was ongoing.

The Women- And-Development (WAD) approach emerged and its main focus was on the relationship between women and development rather than on strategies for integrating women in development (Rathgeber, 1990). The WAD approach is not widely distinguished as an approach on its own. As with the WID approach, it did not address the underlying gender inequalities. Rathgeber (1990) further asserts that WAD approach does not provide much analytical attention to the social relation of gender within classes.

The Gender-And -Development (GAD) approach emerged in response to the WID and WAD shortcomings. GAD lies within Third World Feminists organizations such as Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) who challenged notions that "women's main problem in the Third World has been insufficient participation in an otherwise benevolent process of growth and development and that increasing women's participation and improving their shares in resources, land, employment and income relative to men is necessary and sufficient to effect dramatic changes in their economic and social position" (Karl, 1995:101).

2.2.3 Gender Perspectives in Water Resources Management

According to Steel et al. (2005), a number of development organizations have developed guidelines on gender and empowerment in an attempt to transform existing gender relations through more equitable control of resources and division of water related work burdens.

The gender approach was adopted in the water sector with the aim of achieving equity in terms of access to information, participation, and control over resources (Singh 2006, Francis, 2000; GWA, 2003). Cornwall and Gaventa (2001) argue for a shift in this approach from essentialist role where women make choices on the utilization of water towards a more strategic role where they have influential roles in the formulation of policies. This has led to strategies aimed at mainstreaming gender in water resource management. The literature in this domain is still focused within the area of women's access to water.

The role of women in water management particularly in decision-making capacity has a distinct geographical, historical and socio-political context. In the developed countries where water is portable, and easily accessible, women play a particular role in monitoring the water quality and alerting society to problems of water pollution (Sudman 1998). In developing countries, where the majority of women and girls in rural and poor urban areas walk long distances carrying water, their roles are mostly in accessing water for domestic use (Morna, 2001). Much has also been said about women's role in agriculture particularly irrigation (Zwaverdeen, 1997). In some instances women engage in illegitimate activities such as diverting irrigation pipes in the evening because they are unable to negotiate water use with men during the day (Manase et al., 2004). Women's role has also been articulated in terms of participation in decentralised catchment councils (Tapela, 2000; Manase et al. 2004).

Evidence on the consequences of over-looking women's concerns and roles in water management, particularly with regards to water access and sanitation initiatives have also been strongly highlighted, ranging from engineering designs of latrines and water points, to large dam construction projects (WCD, 2000). For instance, Dube and Swatuk (2002) explain that women's exclusion from formal structures of water management is fashioned by an institutionalized stereotypical masculine agenda that emphasizes highly sophisticated technology as a solution to water access. Proponents for the adoption of a gender approach in water resources management support this argument and through a plethora of case studies, they have documented the negative implications of gender blind

policies within the water sector (Cleaver and Elson 1985; GWA, 2003; Francis, 2003; Maharaj 2003).

Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that projects and programmes that involve both men and women in decision-making, have a better chance of success and sustainability. Implementation of the gender biased Working for Water Programme by DWAF, which specifically targeted women as managers, has so far resulted in well-acclaimed positive outcomes. Studies by Mvula Trust and Water Research Commission also highlight how gender blind policies impact on women's access to water and sanitation (Dunker, 1999; Steele et al., 2005).

2.2.4 Mainstreaming Gender in Integrated Water Resource Management

During the last decades, there has been a global increase in debates and events around increasing participation; horizontal and vertical integration and adopting human rights based approaches to programming. Specific to the water sector was the shift from traditional engineering oriented water development to a more contemporary integrated, holistic, and multidisciplinary integrated water resource management (IWRM) approach. For instance, the shift was from supply-driven to demand-driven approaches, from centralized to decentralised power and from top down to bottom up water governance models (Singh 2006, Francis, 2003; Maharaj, 2003).

The shift hypothetically pointed to an inclusive, equitable and sustainable access to water resources whilst maintaining the integrity of the ecosystems and hydrological cycle (Savenije 2000). Emphasis was made on the right to water in order to ensure equal access particularly to previously disadvantaged groups, with equity being a basic tenet not only from the standpoint of the end user but also within the water sector itself, its structure, composition, efficiency and contribution to appropriate sustainability of this precious resource (Gleik, 1998).

However, the reality in terms of the IWRM approach being gender sensitive was different. Studies by Tapela (2000) and Manase et al (2003) on women's roles in the

transformation of the water sector to an IWRM approach revealed that gender inequities emerged and there was subversion of women's voices from the male dominated catchment councils for instance. Although the IWRM framework purported to equity, access, efficiency and sustainability, the frameworks were gender blind, women formed a very small component relegated to actors in the participation proponent (Tapela, 2000). In addition, gender was not systematically incorporated into the IWRM framework; propagating gender imbalances in relation to decisions made at all levels.

Dube & Swatuk, (2002) further attest that rather than benefiting from the restructured water sector, poor women and men in particular black rural women were losing out in the whole acclaimed "participatory IWRM approach" largely because there was no information that adequately captured the need for gendered interventions. Additionally, most people centered and community interventions were in contradiction with gender equality in that they did not take cognizance of the competing interests of various groups. The basic assumption was that all individuals in a community have the same ability, power, influence and rights to their needs (UN, 2003; Cleaver and Elson 1985; Zwarteveen, 1997).



Advocacy by women's groups particularly from the South highlighted the shortcomings in the IWRM paradigm particularly the role women played in water management and the differences involvement of women and men would contribute to development (DAW, 2005). As much as women have been identified as playing a major versatile role in the provision, use and safeguarding of water, they are not well recognized in the mainstream structures, neither do they substantially participate in decision-making processes. Tapela, (2000) argues that where gender has not been systematically mainstreamed gender stereotypes are perpetuated within the structures negating the goal of ensuring water security even where an integrated water resources management framework that purports to ensure economic, social and political security is employed.

Underlying the challenge this view offered to current orthodoxy, which assumed that benefits of IWRM be inclusive of disadvantaged groups such as women, scholars contend

no explicit tools were provided for (Green and Baden, 1994; Francis, 2003; Maharaj, 2003). The IWRM framework was gender blind and arguably this can be attributed to the minimal representation of women at the formulation and conceptualization of this framework. Only after much lobbying did international agencies such as Global Water Partnership, UNDP, SIDA and World Bank design programmes like The UNDP PROWESS and Guidelines for mainstreaming gender in the water sector, IRC went so far as accommodating GWA with a desk and space for pursuance of the gender agenda in the water sector. These gender-mainstreaming tools came as an appendage to the frameworks (Green and Baden, 1994; UNDP 2003, Steele, 2005).

Mainstreaming gender in water resource management is posited in the guidelines developed by international organizations that have been the driving force for IWRM such as UNDP, UNIFEM, SIDA and The World Bank (Steele et al., 2005). Monyai (2003) in reference to her study on the gender dimension and impact of the Water Policy on water and sanitation provision in the Eastern Cape argues that gender has not been systematically mainstreamed in water and sanitation projects, rather programmes that make gender consideration do so as requirements from the donors. However despite this little emphasis is placed on positioning women in the management of water at institutional levels, as it requires structural changes that go beyond women's participation.

2.3 Women in Management

Studies on women in management constitute a well recognized body of literature within management studies which according to Nkomo, (1998), grew out of a challenge to the prevailing paradigm in management where the manager was epitomized as male. A majority of empirical studies on women's progress in management are pre-dominantly found in the context of developed countries particularly North America and Scandinavia, a few are found in developing countries such as South Africa for example (Marthur Helm 2004 a & b.; Boyesan). Aycan (2004) contends that the majority of the published studies are based on 'anecdotal and impressionist' evidence selected from collective essays. It has also been noted that the bulk of literature on women in management until recently

implicitly omitted black women by generalizing findings of studies of exclusively white women to all women (Bell et al. 1993).

An explanation for the absence of a body of literature on the progress of women in management within the Third World can be attributed to the lack of women in the formal workforce. Another reason could be that the majority of research in this field is assigned to stereotypical service fields of care and nurturing such as education, and health. In South Africa for example Naidoo (1997) attests that women are over represented in ‘pink collar’ jobs such as nursing, teaching, domestic work and hair dressing in contrast to technical and specialized fields such as engineering, communication and technology and legislation. Discourse on women in management emerges from a gender and development framework, which focuses on women’s empowerment and gender equity in the context of their reproductive and productive roles.

2.3.1 Conceptualizing Women’s Empowerment

In South Africa, empowerment is currently central to post-apartheid transformation and has both political and theoretical significance. Following the political dispensation of 1994, women’s empowerment in terms of political participation and representation gained prominence and provided much information about women’s attributes in decision-making positions resulting in a growing literature on women’s leadership roles (De la Rey et al. 2003; Sadie 2005). This further provided a critical discourse that questioned the extent of implementation of the quota system and affirmative action used to advance women’s empowerment in various sectors such as the corporate and public sectors (Booyesan 1999; Marthur-Helm 2004 b.) and the parliamentary support programme for example (Lewis 2002).

There are various contestations and discourses on what empowerment is and to whom it is intended for and how it is measured. Empowerment has been defined in various disciplines and contexts that reveal both diversity and commonality. Zimmerman (1984) has stated that asserting a single definition of empowerment may make attempts to

achieve it “formulaic or prescription-like”, contradicting the very concept of empowerment. The fluidity of the definition has been criticized. However some scholars argue that the vagueness is an advantage as it allows constant review and redefinition (Kaber,1999; MacEwan., 2006).

Empowerment is a complex and dynamic construct that is multi dimensional existing at individual/psychological, organization and community levels. Rowlands (1997) identifies three levels: personal involving a sense of self-confidence and self-reliance, relational implying the ability to negotiate and influence relationships and decisions and the collective level. Central to definitions of empowerment is gaining power and control over decisions and resources (Rappaport 1984). According to Karl (1995), empowerment can be defined as a process of awareness and capacity building leading to greater participation, to greater decision-making power and control and to transformative action.

The concept of empowerment is related to gender equality but distinct from it Agarwal (1995:276) defines empowerment as “a process that enhances the ability of disadvantaged individuals or groups to challenge and change existing power relationships that place them in subordinate economic, social and political positions”. She further contends that the promotion of equity in the short term ensures ongoing equality in the long term (Agarwal 1995).

Empowerment is often understood as a redistribution of power from the powerful to the powerless. However, this understanding of empowerment according to Khosa (2002) can actually be disempowering. Kabeer (1999) defines disempowerment as the denial of choice hence to be empowered entails the ability to make a choice in a situation where there is the possibility of choosing otherwise. Rappoport (1984) has noted that it is easy to define empowerment by its absence but difficult to define in action as it takes on different forms in different people and contexts.

Centre to empowerment is the understanding of power. There are three dominant views in defining power within the context of women’s empowerment. The ‘power over’ view

suggests that women gain power at the expense of men. Karl (1995) and Rowlands (1997) concur that this approach accepts existing social structures rather than seeking transformation. The 'power to' view does not create a zero-sum situation where women's benefit is men's disadvantage; rather the increased empowerment of women benefits the whole community (Kaber 1999). Rowlands (1997) argues that the 'power from within' is the most important form of empowerment as it challenges the self-perceptions and understandings of women, allowing them to improvise alternative ways of existing, such that they generate a belief in their own abilities and have some role in the enactment of this change.

Congruent with these arguments, Kabeer (1999) further attests that the core of empowerment lies in the ability of women's capacity to exercise strategic life choices, which she defines as access to resources, agency and outcomes. This implies that to be empowered women must not only have equal capabilities (such as education and health) and equal access to resources and opportunities (such as land and employment), they must also have the agency to use those rights, capabilities, resources, and opportunities to make strategic choices and decisions (such as those provided through leadership opportunities and participation in political institutions). In order to exercise agency, women must live without the fear of coercion and violence.

Empowerment in management terms depends on the context and structure of the organization. According to Wilkenson (1997), empowerment is when one is given power to control their contribution to an organization or process without much intervention of management, here individuals have the authority and responsibility to complete or implement their initiatives without much management. Alimo-Metclafe (1995:6) further suggests that empowerment has increasingly gained importance in leadership literature and has been described variously as a process of 'increasing autonomy, personal control, accountability and increasing self esteem.'. However, she argues that most management definitions of empowerment are not gendered rather they are "dressed in humanistic language" which adopt 'masculine' notions that promote increased autonomy and separateness at the expense of 'feminine' notions of interconnectedness and

interdependence” (Alimo-Metclafe 1995:6). Morley (1993:28) supports this argument by stating that feminist analysis of empowerment is concerned with “patriarchal power and the extent to which women have been socially constructed to fulfill prescribed social roles.” She further contends that women's access to power has been systematically, historically and culturally denied by male control over dominant institutions.

The prevailing legal, political and social structure are also key determinates in empowerment processes. Empowerment tools such as affirmative action and gender mainstreaming are used to empower previous disadvantaged groups however structural transformation of the whole organizations need to occur for them to be effective because the inequalities are usually institutionalized. In the case of South Africa for example most of the natural resources were and are still dominantly owned by a white minority community.

Given the preponderance of policy rhetoric in reference to empowerment of women in the water sector, empowerment will be defined as having the power and ability to choose from a range of alternatives that are well informed as to meet the individual's desires and choices. In this case for instance, the individual has first, a choice to withdraw available offers if they do not meet their requirements, passion and goals and second can wait without fear, insecurity, prejudice or discomfort to make the right decision and execute their desired plan of action.

At the global level, discourses on women's empowerment in natural resources like water are rooted within the sustainable development debates that seem to have taken centre stage in recent decades. Various case studies elucidate to the challenges faced by women in water management, where women's issues in relation to water resources are considered, it is usually within the context of water access or stakeholder participation (Francis 2003; Maharaj 2003), without much reference to characteristics and challenges faced by women in decision-making positions within the male dominated water sector. McEwan and Bek (2006) contend that there is a lot of rhetoric about the need to

empower, yet there is less agreement on factors operating to disempower women in the workplace, particularly in relation to the intersection of gender, race and class.

2.3.2 Women in Water Resources Management

Empirical studies on empowered women in technical and male dominated fields are still minimal and focus primarily on resistance factors and barriers to women's entry in these fields. Although there is consensus on the important role women play in managing water resources at all levels, it is usually within the collective achievement of national development goals. There are however exceptions of empowered women's profiles documented for example in newspaper articles, magazines and for women achievement awards such as the women and water awards.

Another set of literature on women in senior positions of management in the water sector is available from organizations' gender audits and reports prepared as contributions to progress made on gender policies and International instruments. In South Africa, each Ministry department prepares a report on women's status in relation to achieving the goals in the National Gender Policy. The aforementioned literature is derived from process reports of mainstream approaches such as gender mainstreaming, affirmative action and implementation of quota systems and positive discrimination of previously marginalized groups. While a critical mass of women is important to make an impact in decision-making, there are dissenting views on the emphasis on "quantity" as opposed to the "quality" of management or leadership roles (Dunker 1999; Morna, 2001). Central to international and political debates is whether increased representation of previously disadvantaged men and women particularly black women will result in a better representation of interests of black men and women in the community.

The few women in decision-making positions are often characterized as a homogeneous group all subscribing to the advocated principles presented at the global and policy levels. However observations by Tortajada (1998) demonstrates the differences in mind sets of senior women professional working in the water sector as compared with women

professionals who are active in gender issues. Both agree that water resource management is inclusive of social and political facets and not just the technical also there seems to be consensus on increasing women's participation in water and development. The difference is that professional women in the water sector focus on the achievement of women while professional women active in gender issues focus on discrimination faced by women and argues for increased participation of women in the "corridors of power" without providing suggestions as to how this can be achieved (Tortajada 1998).

Tortajada (2000) attests that more women are currently working as decision-makers, managers, and researchers in water-related issues in Latin America, than in other regions of the world. She contents that the main issue emerging from symposiums and meetings on the contribution of women in water management in Latin America is discrimination faced by women to become senior decision-makers, given that there are a few women in the engineering profession, which is an essential prerequisite for attaining senior ranks in the water profession.

In South Africa women constitute only 25 % of all the managerial positions. In 1999 for instance only 23% of DWAF employees were women. Although there has been some increase as compared to 1997, where women accounted for 8% of management, there are still disparities along racial lines. In 1997 black women engineers accounted for less than 1% while white women engineers were 7%. (Morna 2001:12). Equality is far from being achieved. Women, particularly black women are far from being represented and still disproportionately discriminated.

2.3.3 South African Water Resources Policies on Gender

According to Steele, there are a number of water sector policies that make reference to gender issues in South Africa. . The South African National Gender Policy states that women's empowerment is a means to achieving gender equality. The 1994 White Paper on Water Supply and Sanitation recognizes the fundamental role women play in the provision and maintenance of basic water services and further implores all statutory bodies within the water sector to comprise a minimum of 30% women. The White Paper

on National Water Policy for South Africa (1997) recognizes the importance of women's empowerment and emphasizes equal representation and meaningful participation of women at all levels of water management. Similarly this clause is further stated in The National Water Act of 1998 and expounded in the Strategic Framework for Water Services of 2003. The National Water Act of 1998 focuses on redressing past racial and gender discrimination. It further provides guidance on gender representation and participation in water governance institutions particularly Catchment Management Agencies and Water User Associations.

The National Water Resources Strategy of 2004 further recognizes that the disparities between men and women impact on women's equal and meaningful participation in decision making. The strategy postulates that such disparities need to be addressed through capacity building and states that: "Special emphasis must be placed on the involvement of women in water resources management institutions and in policy development." The strategy states that the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) established a Water Sector Capacity Building Strategy Task Team to develop a capacity building strategy for the water sector that incorporates gender considerations.

DWAF also developed a gender policy in 1997 with the aim of instituting principles and administrative machinery for recognizing and tackling gender issues both within and outside the Department. This was in response to the requirements of the National Gender Machinery for the Advancement of Gender Equality. The policy is guided and informed by constitutional rights, international conventions and sectorial policies these include: Principles of respect for human dignity and equal rights enshrined in the Bill of Rights of the Constitution and other principles set out in The Reconstruction and Development Programme White Paper (1997); Women's Charter for Effective Equality (1995); White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (1995); and international conventions and declarations such as the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 1995; the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC); Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action (1995); Report on the UN

Conference on Environment and Development the “Earth Summit”, (1992) and Agenda 21 Chapter on Action for women.

The DWAF Gender Policy is seen as an important component in the larger transformation process hence it is integrated within transformation elements concerned with race and equality. The DWAF Gender Policy is divided into two discrete components: external and internal. The internal gender policy is concerned with gender equity for DWAF employment policy. Other equity legislation and affirmative action policies outside DWAF that supplement this cause are: the Black Economic Empowerment which was instituted to address preferential recruitment and appointment of previously disadvantaged groups such as blacks, women and people with disabilities (Hanes 2003); The Employment Equity Act of 1998 for workplaces to be more democratic and inclusive environment; The Code of Good Practice on the Handling of Sexual Harassment Government Notice 1367 of 1998 emanating from provisions in The Labor Relations Act No 66 of 1995 Section 203 makes visible affirmative action to ensure a safe working environment for women (Hanes 2003). South Africa has also acceded to the ILO Convention, which calls for equity in employment.

Van Donk, (2000), argues that an enabling policy environment is vital where there are differences in social groupings, because some are more empowered to maneuver into political and decision-making spaces than others. Thus in the water sector, it is anticipated that despite a well-articulated policy framework, movement of women into decision-making positions is not homogeneous but will vary with individual attributes.

2.3.4 Key Challenges Faced by Women in Management

Challenges faced by women in water management are viewed in the context that women in management in the water sector are likely to face more or less the same challenges as women in management in general. A major issue that has been cited as facing women in management worldwide is how to break through the metaphorical glass ceiling that restricts women’s access to top jobs and in advancing their careers (Evetts 1993). This

challenge is further compounded when racial, ethnic and class backgrounds are considered particularly when women are integrated into significant decision making positions as has been in the South African water sector. McEwan and Bek (2006) contend that there is a lot of rhetoric about the need to empower, yet there is less agreement on factors operating to disempower women in the workplace, particularly in relation to the intersection of gender, race and class.

The Office of the Status of Women in a situational analysis of the sector noted that while the DWAF's policies were progressive in terms of mainstreaming gender and ensuring equal representation between men and women in the sector, there were limited training and empowerment programs to prepare women as managers and custodians of natural resources (OSW 2003 a.).

Organizational studies in the past neglected gender issues, until recently where feminist studies by Ferguson, (1984) and Acker, (1990, 1992) for example developed the concept of patriarchy to explain the structured subordination of women in the workplace (Foley 2001). According to Walby (1986), patriarchy can be defined as a mechanism of societal or organizational structures and practices wherein men dominate exploit and subjugate women. Patriarchy in institutions persists and is a major barrier to women's full and meaningful participation in management.

According to Van Donk (2000) a number of gender barriers that militate against women's equal participation in decision-making processes can be identified as:

- Social values and prejudices (for example ignoring constructive contributions simply because they are made by women);
- Personal (lack of confidence or information);
- Practical (for example gender roles of women childcare, time to attend meetings)

She further argues that the distinction between these barriers is to some extent false as the obstacles are a result of gender socialization of men and women. In a study on municipalities Van Donk (2000), attests that gender blind approaches in a patriarchal context do not recognize the disadvantaged status of women particularly black women. Steele et al. (2005) in a situational analysis of gender mainstreaming in the water sector

identified similar barriers to women's effective participation and further argued that: where women were located in the institution, gender insensitive work environments, training and capacity building as well as gender stereotypes prevalent in water sector institutions were an impediment to women's advancement.

Another barrier is gender stereotyping in organizations, where groups of people are given attributes based on generalized assumptions due to inadequate knowledge and/or information. Evetts (1993) argues that due to stereotyping, men and women are required to conform and adapt to the image of a 'dedicated manager' as this is what management is often portrayed as. As such women managers in particular, face major challenges in trying to uphold the 'defined' image, given their reproductive responsibilities.

As studies on women in management have increased, various approaches to management have been developed within the context of managing diversity, highlighting the feminine leadership styles and challenging masculine management styles. Powell (1998) in an assessment of the power of the cultural stereotypes in organizations concluded that the best model consisted of a combination of masculine and feminine characteristics.

Conclusion

This chapter identified a gap in literature with regards to attributes that are required for women to be effective managers and make meaningful contributions within the water sector. The literature is focused on a narrow range of women's role as managers of domestic water without much consideration given to women's role in water management within institutions. Much of the literature refers to women as a disempowered group yet to be integrated into water resource management, making no distinction between the attributes of successful and empowered women shaping policy and women who have successfully implemented "water related projects". In this study, key challenges faced by women in management will consider diversity in the context of race, age and ethnicity given the historical backdrop of South Africa. The next chapter is concerned with the methods and data collection tools used for the study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the factors that contribute to women occupying decision-making positions in both managerial and technical positions in the water sector. The study is case-specific to women occupying senior decision-making positions in DWAF Western Cape regional office in South Africa. Both qualitative and to a lesser extent quantitative methods were used in the study. Qualitative methods were used as the methodological approach to profile women's experiences and influences in 'traditionally male positions' of management while quantitative methods were applied in the analysis of women's representation at different levels of management within DWAF.

The study was informed by both primary and secondary data. Primary data consisted of information derived from interviews that were conducted with 14 women in senior and middle management and key informants in DWAF. The purpose of the interviews was to provide insights with regard to; the factors that contributed to them occupying their positions, the effectiveness of policies and frameworks as well as to determine the challenges they faced. Secondary data sources consisted mostly of policy documents; personnel records and published literature on women in management from other sectors such as education and local government.

Drawing on feminist approaches to gender diversity in management; the study used the gender-organization-system (GOS) perspective as the underpinning theoretical framework for its analysis. According to Fagenson (1993:7) the GOS uses systematic, organizational and individual levels of analysis "to explain the experiences, actions and impact of women managers."

The first section of the chapter provides an insight of the research design and underlying research paradigms that informed the study and why these were the most suitable. Thereafter, the following sections provide an outline of the methods used in data collection and a description of how data analysis was undertaken. Finally, the ethical considerations relating to the study are provided

3.2. Research Paradigms

The study adopted Feminist approaches as used in the education landscape, to reveal concealed elements and nuances in organizations that constitute barriers to the advancement of women (Hanes 2003), since similar elements can be related to the water sector. Central to feminist research theory is that women understand the world of women better due to their experiences as females, particularly in the division of labor. According to Harvey (1990) as cited in Sarantakos (2005:55), feminist research is emancipatory taking “personal, political and engaging stances in the world” it also highlights women’s perspectives, challenges, and the society’s notions on consensus. It is premised on the principles that women have been marginalized and male superiority is still being perpetuated despite policy assurances and political promises. Both Keller 1995, Sarantakos 2005, further suggest that women and men due to their social status differ in their perceptions and that gender equality is still a long way to be achieved.

Critiques to feminist approaches, argue that the feminist standpoint is largely biased and subjective in nature. However, Keller (1995) argues that objectivity does not challenge but justifies the status quo where the male’s worldview is taken as the norm. Feminists also use quantitative research approaches (believed to be more objective) to clearly demonstrate how women were discriminated against within the social (educational), economic (income, type of employment) and political (decision-making, parliamentary representation) arenas (Barbie, 2001).

The feminist standpoint informed the research design and data analysis. A case study approach, used extensively as a tool in feminist research was used. The purpose of case

studies is to focus the study on a specific unit and allow in-depth and detailed research. Reinharz (1992) maintains that case studies have the capacity to address specificity as opposed to generalizations; she further asserts that they are appropriate for documenting women's views and bringing out their voice.

Case studies like any other research method have both strengths and weaknesses. The major strengths of case studies are that a variety of interrelated methods and sources can be applied and long term contacts and personal experiences in the field are enabled. Weaknesses associated with case studies are that the unit of analysis restricts inductive generalizations unless several studies are undertaken, and biases can be made by the presence of the interviewer (Yin 1994). In this study, the case study approach allowed for a detailed analysis of the relationships between policies and frameworks for advancing gender equality and how practice relates to the policies, the organizations' dynamics and the participants' experiences.

3.3 Research Methods



The researcher applied multiple research methods. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used as complementary and enabled the researcher to determine the attributes of women in senior management positions and the challenges they face in the water sector. Quantitative research methods provided the numerical comparison of the cohort of women and men in terms of representation at senior management level within the different sections of DWAF. Qualitative methods on the other hand provided insights on the relationships between the women in terms of their experiences.

Qualitative research is fashioned by a series of broad frameworks and provides insights on how the social, environment and cultural contexts influence human behavior. The qualitative method facilitates the studying of all aspects of reality using personal views and interpretations in the process. Mouton (2001:195) acknowledges that:

“... individual experiences are subjective since these experiences are influenced by the social, physical, cultural and political contexts of the individuals

involved... this methodology facilitates the capturing of the complexities, richness and diversity of the lives of the subjects under investigation by describing what really goes on in their everyday lives.”

One of the advantages of using the qualitative approach is that it allowed a relationship with the participants and assisted in drawing out their critical views particularly the challenges they faced in the water sector

3.4 Methods of Data Collection

Data for this study was collected using a combination of two data gathering methods namely; documentary review and semi structured individual interviews. These methods generated substantive information for the researcher to explain the phenomenon under investigation (Yin 1994).

The initial stage of the study entailed documentary review of policy documents such as DWAF’s Gender Policy; Transformation Policy; Employment Equity and select Water and Sanitation policies and Strategic Frameworks. All the policies were obtained from the Internet save for the Gender and Transformation policies. The latter policies were not available online or from the DWAF’s intranet or regional office, they were then obtained from the national office. A limiting factor was that the Gender Policy was only available in draft form. Also reviewed were available minutes from the Employment Equity Consultative Forum and the Gender Coordinating Committee.

The documentary review provided information on the goals, status and mechanisms that were in place for the implementation of the gender and equity strategies. Gaps in policy and implementation were also identified.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in the second stage of the study. Semi-structured interviews are useful methods within a qualitative study as they provide “voice to the interviewee as well as recognizes that the interviewer is an active participant in the

research” (Rubin and Rubin 1995: 31). The purpose of using semi- structured interviews was to obtain specific qualitative information from the participants and gain a range of insights on specific issues. The researcher selected interviews as a mode of enquiry because of her interest in understanding the experience of women in the water sector and her desire to make meaning out of their experiences. As stated by Siedman (1998:7):

“As a method of enquiry, interviewing is most consistent with people’s ability to make meaning through language. It affirms the importance of the individual without denigrating the possibility of community of enquiry ... it is deeply satisfying to researchers who are interested in others’ stories.”

A total of fourteen participants were interviewed. Participants were selected purposively on the basis of their position within DWAF. In addition to personnel records obtained from the Human Resources department, the researcher used the snowball technique to identify other participants (Barbie, 2001). This entailed asking participants after the interviewing process, to identify and recommend other women who could be approached for an interview. The majority of the women approached serve for one did not agree to be interviewed, in most instances, the participant introduced the interviewer to the recommended incumbent. Potential participants were also selected from lists of women who had once been nominated for receiving awards of outstanding work in the water sector such as the Women and Water Awards.

Data collected from key informants provided insights on the organizational structure and history as well as the institutionalization of policies particularly within the context of the restructuring of the institution. A junior officer was also interviewed to augment and share her experiences as a young woman aspiring to be in a senior position within the water sector.

Informed consent was obtained from the participants. They were approached by telephone to ascertain their interest in and availability for participating in the study. An email giving a brief background and explaining the objectives of the study as well as the

purpose of the interview was sent to each participant. The e-mails also served to confirm appointments with participants.

The interviews were conducted within a fairly open framework. This ensured that key questions were asked but also facilitated the pursuance of arguments and ideas with the participants. It further allowed the researcher to clarify answers when unsure. An interview guide containing a series of broad questions (see appendix 1) that were informed by literature and pre-tested with four participants prior to the interviews was used in the administration of interviews. The questions inquired about individual, organizational and policy related factors that contributed to women occupying senior positions of management in the water sector.

The majority of questions were created during the interview, allowing both the researcher and the participant the flexibility to probe for more details or discuss issues. Semi-structured interviews according to Barbie (2001) constitute “a general plan of enquiry but not a specific set of questions that must be asked with particular words or in a particular order.” In this respect, attempts were made to ask more or less the same questions but there were variations depending on the participant’s experience.

The participants were asked questions about how they started their careers, how they experienced their new positions, whether they got into their positions because of their gender or affirmative action, what role they played and the extent to which they exerted influence the organization. They were also asked whether policies supported their advancement, whether they knew about the gender policy and if they had any gender training. In addition they were asked whether the organization supported them in their career advancement, if they had a mentor and whether or not they considered themselves a role model and what attributes contributed most to their success. Questions on the participant’s demographic characteristics were asked in the introductory phase of the interviews.

The researcher found that the semi-structured interview had major benefits as participants were allowed to ask the researcher questions. As such, some of the participants elaborated and raised more issues that had not been included in the interview. This gave further insights to some of the gaps in the questions asked.

Each interview ranged between 45 and 90 minutes. All the interviews were conducted in English although, in at least 4 instances the participants made expressions in Afrikaans or Xhosa. The interviews were audio taped and brief notes were recorded during the interviews. Following the interview, the researcher elaborated upon the notes and transcribed the interviews verbatim. Follow up to interviews was made mostly by telephone given the participant's busy schedules.

The data from all the available sources were utilized during the research process, integrated and collated, to conclude the data collection stage. The data collection process lasted over three months from July to September 2006.

3.5 Data Analysis

The dominant approaches to case study analysis according to Yin (1994:106) can either be by using a theoretical proposition or a descriptive approach. The study was shaped by adopting the gender-organization-system (GOS) proposition by Fagenson (1993), which suggests that the presence of women in management positions has diversified the water sector. One of the tenants of the GOS approach is that systematic factors "that influence individuals and organizations include but are not limited to laws, policies, sex role stereotypes, expectations, ideologies, cultural values and histories" (Fagenson, 1993:8). Also suggested by the GOS approach is that individual's behaviors, experiences, and orientation is affected by the organizational context which includes: "cooperate policies, history, ideologies, and culture" (ibid).

Using Miles and Huberman's (1994) analytic techniques, transcribed interviews were coded in two phases and then organized into a matrix of categories and content analyzed. In the first phase, the transcripts were read to identify the key attributes related to the

individual personality, organization, and policy factors. From the broad categories, subcategories were identified and put into themes. Following this, the number of respondents who provided similar answers or emphasized similar responses were counted and weighed. Thematic excerpts were drawn to substantiate the results.

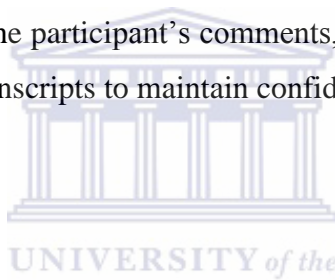
3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance was obtained from the University of the Western Cape Higher Degrees Committee. Informed consent was requested from the participants. It was explained at the onset that participation in the study was anonymous and voluntary, and that the information obtained would be highly confidential. Participants were also assured that the study was being conducted for academic purposes only.

Due to the sensitive nature of the participant's comments, most of the personal identifiers were also removed from the transcripts to maintain confidentiality and anonymity.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter presented a critical approach for the choice of methodology, the research paradigm and methods of data collection for the research as well as the research process. The research approaches used were both qualitative and quantitative. The major limitation was the sample size, which was limited to one institution; another constraint was time and availability of participants that did not allow for in-depth interviews. The next chapter presents the findings and comment on the key attributes and challenges faced by women in the water sector.



CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The study is located in a transforming water sector that was once predominantly male but over the past years women are now in senior positions of management. The attributes and challenges faced by women in the water sector are framed through an exploratory case study drawing on the experiences of women in management in DWAF Western Cape regional office which functions in part and responds to the priorities of a central office at national level.

DWAF is responsible for both water resources management and water services provision. Technical expertise of DWAF was until 1994 directed towards servicing the water needs of the apartheid state, resulting in an inaccessible centralized bureaucracy (Schreiner et al. 2004). Progressively, DWAF has undergone internal transformation, which is reflected in its implementation of employment equity policy, and a gender policy.

In this study, management is classified using a scale from level 8 (lowest) to level 15 (highest). The seniority of a position is usually defined by the functions or status given. Overlaps may exist in terms of the levels, for instance a senior manager may be at level 8 but serving a greater portfolio than another manager at level 9.

In this chapter, I present findings from semi-structured interviews that were conducted with fourteen women in DWAF. The chapter consists of two broad sets of data. First is quantitative data describing the representation and status of women within the institute under study, the second set is qualitative data describing in detail the themes and anecdotes that emerged from the study. The chapter will end with a summary of the analysis of the findings. It should be noted that observations are limited to the women's

own experience and should not be considered as expert opinions about the challenges and key attributes of all women.

4.2 Key Attributes of Women in Water Management

The women in water management formed a rich confluence of diversity, with 64% of the respondents being black and 36% being white, half of the respondents were aged between 28 and 40 years and the other half was aged 40 years and above. The respondents came from various regions, the majority, 71 %, came from other provinces while 29 % had been born, educated and only worked in Western Cape. The number of years the women had been in the institution ranged from a few months to over 15 years. However, none of the women had been in their current position for more than 10 years. Most of the women were either occupying their positions as the first females or first blacks to be in those positions.

The current study asked respondents to describe the attributes they possessed without reference to a pre-existing model as the use of such a model would limit the attributes to be investigated to those identified in the model. The key attributes that contributed to women occupying senior positions in the water sector were identified as the women's background, organizational gender equity policies and psychosocial factors.

4.2.1 Background

The respondents came from diverse backgrounds and brought varied experiences with them to the positions they currently occupy, from working in civil society; educational institutes; private and public sectors. Working in the water sector for most of the women (86%) had been circumstantial, that is, the women had either entered into the organization because there was a job opening, or because they had received a bursary from the institution, hence had to work in the sector. Only 14% explicitly expressed that their career choice in the water sector was linked to their interest or use of water, for example one respondent indicated that her interest and activism in water stemmed from her experiences as a farmer, another respondent also indicated that she had grown up

close to a river and had always wanted to pursue a career in water. In this regard it can be deduced that, although the respondent's background was important, it was not a major factor to women occupying senior management positions in the water sector.

Table1: Key attributes of women occupying senior positions

Respondents	Education				Race		Marital Status		
	Post Grad	BA BSc	Diploma	Matric	Black	White	Married	Single	Children
1.	√				√		√		
2.	√				√		√		
3.	√				√		√		√
4.			√		√			√	√
5.	√					√	√		√
6.		√				√		√	
7.	√				√			√	√
8.			√			√		√	√
9.		√			√			√	√
10.	√				√			√	√
11.				√	√		√		√
12.		√				√	√		√
13.	√					√	√		√
14.	√				√			√	
Percent of total respondents	57%	22%	14%	7%	65%	35%	50%	50%	71%

¹ Black includes the categories of Colored and Asian

4.2.1.1 Education

Education emerged explicitly as a major factor contributing to women occupying senior positions. As illustrated in table 1 above, 57% of the respondents had a post graduate qualification at Masters level with one studying for her Doctor of Philosophy, 22% had a first degree, 14 % had a diploma and 7% a Matric qualification. These statistics indicate that women in senior positions are highly qualified. This indicates that women in senior

water management positions have the qualifications to be in the various management positions they are currently occupying.

4.2.1.2 Marital Status

The study sought to establish the marital status of the respondents in order to find out whether there was a relationship between the marital status with other variables such as the furthering of education, job mobility and career advancement. From the results shown in table 1, above, 50% of the women in senior management were married and 50% were single, one might deduce that marriage was not a contributing factor.

However, a deeper analysis indicated in table 2 below shows that in terms of seniority and level in the organization, women in senior management were either single, widowed or divorced while the bulk of women in middle and junior management were married. Further analysis indicates that there was a substantial group of new managers who were between the ages of 28 and 35 who were recently married without children, suggesting possible delay in marriage and childbearing in order to pursue a career. This correlates with observations made by other researchers (Nkomo 1988; Davison and Burke 2004; Suraj-Narayan 2005) that marriage and children have a bearing on women's career advancement and that most workplaces are designed along ideologies that accommodate traditional men who have supportive wives and well functioning families. Thus the findings suggest that senior positions are still not supportive for married women with families.

Table 2: Marital status of women at various management levels

Level in organization	Marital status	
	Married	Single
Level 11 - 12	0%	29%
Level 9-10	36%	14%
Level 8	7%	14%

4.2.1.3 Mentors and Role Models

Respondents were asked whether they had been influenced by a role model to be in their positions and whether they considered themselves as role models as they were in a male dominated field and occupying positions of leadership for the first time. 86% of the respondents stated that they had been influenced by either their male or female parent while the other 14 % indicated that they had not been influenced by any role model or event. This is consistent with the literature that having mentors provides guidance and influences success in career advancement (Kanter 1977, Newman 1993, Gilbert and Rossman 1987, Keeton 1996). All the respondents except two regarded themselves as role models who influenced other women to be empowered.

Given the structure of DWAF, all the respondents either reported to or were supervised by a male colleague. These largely male supervisors served as mentors to the women managers. Only 29% of the respondents had a female mentor who provided guidance and support in their work, 57% of the respondents mostly white were mentors in their respective sections. The presence of a large number of female white mentors could be attributed to their long presence in the water sector. Unlike the much younger respondents, most of the older black respondents had started their career much later and did not see the benefits of mentorship, as they had not received any mentorship.

The study results indicate that role models had an influence in the women managers' ascent to senior management positions, choice of field and work ethic. Mentors had minimal influence given that the majority of the women were in these positions without being mentored. The increase in senior women managers provides a cadre of role models for younger women aspiring to be in senior positions. The lack of mentors presents challenges for women who are in these positions. The presence of largely male supervisors and mentors further suggests that women in the water sector only have male role models to learn from and are likely to reproduce their management styles.

4.2.2 Organizational Support Mechanisms for Promoting Women

DWAF had a series of policies in place for promoting the advancement of women. Asked to what extent policies supported the advancement of women, the respondents unanimously agreed that policies were in place but their implementation was not very effective. The study analyzed the effectiveness of employment equity policies and the gender policy as contributory factors for women's advancement in the water sector.

4.2.2.1 Employment Equity Policies

On aggregate, women in senior management (level 9-13) in DWAF were 39% as compared to men who were 61%. Women in mid management that is level 8 were almost at par with men they were 45% compared to men who were 55%.

Previous studies on the representation of women in the water sector showed that gender equity contributed to women occupying managerial positions, however the majority of women were white (Seperepere 1998, Morna 2001). The results of this study indicate that there is an increase in the number of women but there are more black women in management as 65% of the respondents were black as compared to 35% white, this is indicated in the table 1.

The greater representation of black women in senior management positions concurs with similar observations made by Schreiner et al. (2003), who noted that while black women predominantly occupied senior positions, technical positions were still dominated by white men. This can be attributed to transformation policies targeted specifically to non-whites. Thus in the context of this study, race is a factor that has contributed to the increased number of women in the water sector albeit black women. The increased trend is also indicative of the increased access of black women to higher education. This view was expressed by 25% of black women aged between 40 and 50 years who furthered their studies following the 1994 political dispensation that allowed them access to higher education.

The current study established that there were differences in terms of the respondents' areas of expertise. As illustrated in Table 3 below, there were more black women in technical and administrative fields as compared to white women. Black women engineers are still absent in the water sector despite their presence in more technically skilled areas.

Table 3: Departmental division of women by race

PERSONNEL GROUP	Race	
	Black	White
Management ¹	2	0
Engineers	0	2
Scientists	2	2
Technicians	2	0
Administration	3	1

¹ Management is defined as Deputy Director and above Source: DWAF Human Resource Department

While there are a substantial number of women in management in DWAF, as illustrated in table 3, the number of this same cohort at senior management level is still minimal as demonstrated in Table 4. This confirms the study by Seperepere (1998) that vertically women are not in management positions but predominate horizontally in administrative positions such as human resources as opposed to policy planning. This has implications in terms of participation of women in management meetings. For instance, before December 2005, there was only one black woman in management, currently the two female managers still do not form a critical mass despite the overall 39% of women in senior management suggesting that the location of women within an institution determines their effective participation and execution of their roles.

Table 4: Division of Departmental Staff in Management by race and gender

PERSONNEL GROUP	REPRESENTIVITY			
	Black Females	Black Males	White Females	White Males
Management	2	1	0	4*
Engineers	0	0	2	14
Scientists	2	0	2	6
Technicians	2	1	0	5
Administration	3	1	1	1

*Two of the Deputy Directors are Chief Engineers. Source: Human Resource Department of DWAF

Favorable employment equity policies could have also contributed to the female presence. However there were various responses when the respondents were asked whether gender or affirmative action had contributed to the appointment to their positions. All the respondents denied that they were appointed because of their female gender. They all considered that women should not be hired or appointed to senior positions because they are women, the overwhelming view was that having token women was unlikely to transform the organization rather they all agreed that it was likely to increase pressure for them. The majority 71% believed they possessed the necessary qualifications and exposure and hence were appointed on the basis of merit. Of the 29% that admitted that affirmative action had being a deciding factor for their appointment, one was a white woman who stated that affirmative action had been stereotyped for black woman only but had benefited her despite her race, another respondent indicated that she was proud to be the first black affirmative action candidate in the Western Cape region.

Women have ascended to positions of power largely through appointments and affirmative action, hence it can be said that the enabling policy environment has facilitated a large proportion of women to occupy these positions. The statistics indicate that more women have occupied senior positions in the water sector but they are still few in terms of their position at the echelons of power and decision-making. The new political dispensations in the water sector have evidently supported women to access education and pursue professional careers.

4.2.2.2 DWAF Gender Policy

The respondents were asked whether they were aware of the DWAF gender policy and if they had read and used it in their work. More than half, 58% of the respondents had not seen or used the gender policy. 42% (6 of the 14 respondents) indicated that they had actually seen and read the contents of the gender policy. Of the 6 respondents who had seen and partially read the gender policy, only two used it extensively in their programme largely because it was designed with a gender bias, the other reason for use was because the respondents were in administration and their work entailed an understanding of the gender policy. At least two of the respondents within the technical section alluded to having browsed through the gender policy, one had done so during induction while the other was actively involved in the transformation committee.

The respondents were more familiar with equity legislation such as affirmative action in recruitment and equal representation in programmes, in most instances they confused and equated these provisions with the gender policy.



In relation to the gender policy, it was observed that it was not easily available, or packaged in a reader friendly manner. Moreover unlike other process such as the restructuring of the sector where a newsletter update informing staff was available, gender-mainstreaming processes that were ongoing were not been accorded similar attention.

As required by the Gender Management System of the National Machinery, DWAF should appoint a gender focal person to assist in the formulation and implementation of the effective action plans to promote women's empowerment and gender equality in the operationalisation of gender in the Department (OSW 2003 b.: 6). To this end, a director for special programmes responsible for gender and disability was appointed in 2006 at national level. The directorate is located within Human Resources but has direct access to the Minister in areas of priority and interest (DWAF Gender Policy 1997). Members of

the Employment and Equity Consultative Forum were the same with members of the gender coordinating committee.

In the regional office, the task of gender mainstreaming was relegated to one officer whose portfolio was overloaded; a gender committee was functional at the national office but did not trickle to the regional level. Work on gender was also not incorporated in the performance evaluation or job descriptions of the managers. This structure was an impediment to integrating gender issues the in DWAF as observed by other studies (Morna 2001, Monyai 2003 and Steele et. al, 2005). It was also observed that the Directorate for gender together with a small staff compliment had just been newly appointed at the time of the study and therefore the effectiveness of the gender policy could not be fully ascertained as various changes were ongoing. However, in terms of the current study, the results from the respondents indicate that the gender policy was rhetorical and minimally contributed to women's advancement.



4.2.2.3 Gender Training

The majority of the respondents 72% had not had any gender training only 28% of the respondents had received gender training either as part of the transformation committee or gender programme. Only one training session had been conducted for the department in the past five years. This suggested that gender training was not a priority. Although not asked about their understanding of gender, there was also little evidence that suggested that women in senior management were gender aware. Although the respondents indicated that there were a lot of capacity building courses and trainings specific to their work, it was mostly technical without capacity building or training on effective management in senior positions.

4.2.2.4 Networks

Formal and informal networks have been recognized as important spaces for sharing information within and outside institutions particularly in specialized sectors such as the

water sector. Within DWAF, attempts to disband the existence of an ‘old boys club’ (Morna 2001) were made with the establishment of social clubs where both men and women could interact on less formal basis. In terms of water related professional networks or associations such as Gender and Water Alliance and Water Institute of South Africa (WISA), only 36 % of the respondents were active members while the majority (74%) was not members of any professional association. Socially, 57% of the respondents were part of the netball ball team although they were not very active. The major reason stated by respondents for not belonging or actively participating in a network was lack of time. Indicatively, the ‘old boys club’ still remained as an integral source of networking and exchange of information despite shift in policies.

4.2.3 Psychosocial Factors

The respondents in this study pointed out key psychosocial factors listed in table 5 below as being significant for women in water management. The majority of respondents (85%) regarded diligence and competence in one’s work as critical attributes. The other most important attributes, mentioned, by about 50% of the respondents were self-confidence, assertiveness, willingness to learn and interpersonal skills. All the other attributes listed in the table below were critical but not necessarily dominant.

Table 5: List of the key psychosocial factors identified by respondents

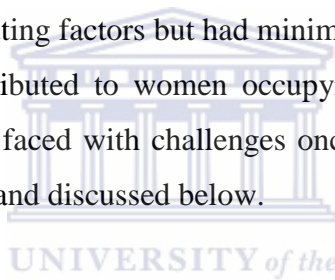
Passion for job	Not too polite	Decisiveness	Ability to make choices
Interest in water issues	Assertiveness	Empathy	Having your own voice
Being organized	Conflict resolution	Self belief	Going the extra mile
Enjoy field work	Responsibility	Perseverance	Willingness to learn
Programmatic skills	Hardwork		Ability to negotiate
Asserting your rights			

NB: It should be noted that the respondents were not asked directly about the factors above, neither were they asked to rank their importance but this was deduced from the interviews conducted.

From the interviews conducted, the majority of the respondents seemed to think that psychosocial attributes were the most important factors that had enabled them to occupy their current positions. However, while psychosocial factors are important, alone they would contribute minimally to women occupying management positions due to other factors, which were not particularly raised by the respondents. Thus from the analysis done, the factors can be ranked as follows:

1. Education – The high level attained represented by 79% of the women having a bachelor degree or higher.
2. Employment equity policies - indicated by the number and racial composition of women who are currently in the positions.
3. Psychosocial factors.
4. Marital status, mentors and role models, networks, gender policy and training were important contributing factors but had minimal influence.

While the above factors contributed to women occupying senior positions within the water sector, the women were faced with challenges once they were in those positions. These challenges are clustered and discussed below.



4.3 Challenges Faced by Women in the Water Sector

Respondents were asked what challenges they faced in terms of occupying decision-making positions in the water sector and what challenges they experienced in their current positions. The respondents were very vocal in their responses. Most of the personal identifiers have been removed from the transcripts in an attempt to maintain confidentiality.

4.3.1 Balancing Family and Work

The majority of the respondents indicated that balancing family and work was a major constraint that hindered their advancement two respondents remarked that:

I often have to work late here doing several things; sometimes I attend meetings, or events. Some times I work from home and also travel a lot. Being a mother with children it's not easy it comes with its own challenges in that you miss the

development of your child on one part and the other part the work must be done. The professional world does not make provision for women in that regard.

We need support for women with small kids and babies. I don't think the professional sector has really given enough toward that. If your kids are purposefully looked after you don't have to worry all the time, you can focus on your work. It's better now for me but I still regard my kids as my priority. That is always my challenge. I don't want to compromise my family for work, if I am working too hard I am always feeling guilty that I am neglecting my family and if I pay attention to my family then I feel guilty that I am not working hard enough. I think you always have this conflict within yourself as a woman. I think we have actually paved a very difficult road for ourselves in fighting for equal rights, because although we want to be treated equally we still see ourselves as having key responsibility in rearing raising our children and running a home and other domestic chores. We are also constantly challenged with the balance between family and work. *[End of comment]*

Balancing family and work is difficult because my husband works very long hours he comes back at night. So I don't have that luxury of working late. Before we had my son, I worked till late, not because I hate it I love it, before it was nice when we both worked very hard till late. I can't afford the luxury of being able to work late to keep and finish jobs that I want to finish. So I have got more pressure on myself now. Now I have the extra responsibility of children and have to give up work because my pay is not as much as his. My family life is important to me. It's the most important thing to me [softens voice] my son must grow up with a mum and dad which is the other reasons why I have decided to spend more time at home and feel that I am under control, because at the moment it is hectic, it doesn't feel like I have anything, not at work and not at home. *[End of comment]*

Women who were much older could afford to work more hours and seemed not to have many problems between their work and family. While family pressure was a concern for all the women with young children, there were slight differences in terms of race and class for instance one respondent had support from her extended family, which allowed her to work for extra hours.

I manage my family without any complaints because I struggled to be where I am. I think what also makes it easy for me is that when I got my education I already had children. I take care of my cousin who assists with the children when I am not there. If I put my family before my work, the section that I am heading can be a disaster. I can't say I receive any support from work. *[End of comment]*

Respondents were also asked about spousal support. The much younger women indicated that their spouses were very supportive of their careers.

4.3.2 Equity in Recruitment

The findings from the study indicated that there is discontent when placing women into senior positions through promotions and secondments. For example one respondent remarked how she was bypassed for promotion.

For quite some long time now there were not clear career path lines. Which in a way could open other opportunities but what happened when we restructured into catchment teams four guys were taken up as catchment managers and that caused a lot of unhappiness, because it was never advertised nor were interviews undertaken, it was just like, “you can do it so you become the manager”. I think I can equally do the job well but was not considered. *[End of comment]*

Another woman vehemently expressed how unhappy she was:

One of the things that I can tell you is that four catchment managers all male and white were appointed. That is something that I defiantly do not agree with. I also put in a grievance with the body. It is so difficult to be in a situation where you must fight the system all the time and explain that you are not happy with some of the things, so that is quite difficult.

Because I wasn't appointed as a catchment manager I thought maybe there is something wrong with me. Maybe there is something that I don't have that the other person has. I think the other guy got the position because he can say what is politically correct. Maybe that is something that I don't have, I don't feel like talking if I don't have enough information or if I don't feel comfortable about the topic I won't just get in and start talking about something that I don't know enough about. Maybe that is something that managers should have, they must put on a face so that nobody else knows what they are talking about or something like that. *[End of comment]*

Another respondent noted there were negative attitudes towards appointing women as managers:

When it comes to management you still find managers who say that they don't want to employ women because of maternity leave and because when the kids are sick women rush to stay at home [changes intonation and frowns] we have that kind of thing and some managers don't like that. *[End of comment]*

In terms of implementing equity legislation two respondents raised challenges that were faced. One white woman expressed her concerns in terms of implementation of equity legislation as:

I think legislation is good but it is the way it is interpreted and implemented that is critical. We had a case where we advertised two posts and two internal candidates one black the other white women, applied and were absolutely tops compared to the other candidates. It frustrated me that I had to go through a major thing to motivate why the white lady should also get the job. The black lady was fine and I can live with that but I feel they both deserved the position. *[End of comment]*

One of the respondents involved in the transformation committee expressed some of the difficulties faced in recruiting senior managers, particularly with regards to the transformation officer's position within the institute.

We have a transformation panel that ensures implementation of the Act. However, when it comes to senior levels we struggle because the transformation officer is not part of the panel. This is because you can only be on the panel if your position is higher than the one being advertised or you are on the same level. So sometimes we just go with what is according to the plan without her influence. We are working on having the transformation officer to be part of the panel regardless of her salary level. *[End of comment]*

4.3.3 Intersection of Sexism and Racism

Women working in a male dominated field are likely to experience sexist remarks, but unlike their male counterparts, they suffer the brunt of racism more on the basis of their gender. The multiplicity of experience and discrimination encountered by women managers is complex and varied. Black managers are more vulnerable to being demoralized and disempowered (Suraj-Narayan 2005). Most of the respondents in the study indicated that racism was rampant but subtle, creating a very unfavorable environment.

Another big challenge that we have at the moment is with regards to consultants. Actually there are some consultants who when it comes to the requirements where you are supposed to speak and communicate with them directly, they by pass you regardless of how many times you give them a response they still send all correspondence through the white person. . *[End of comment]*

Other respondents commented that, their capacity was often questioned on the basis of them being black and female both internally among colleagues and with external stakeholders:

Among staff there are people who look at you and they say you can't do certain things. I once wrote a motivation for interns and I copied it to all the catchment

managers. One of the catchment managers came to me and said, “Who wrote this motivation” and I said I did [changes tone to Afrikaner accent] “really didn’t somebody help you?” So he said that kind of thing. Basically they look at you and say [change tone] “Oh you have a degree” they say such things because they don’t expect it from blacks let alone women. . [End of comment]

You still find that in the Western Cape our water user associations that were previously the irrigation boards consist mostly of the white farmers. They struggled to take us seriously initially. They would make comments or say nothing really. It does not bother me that much. I have developed a good relationship with most of our clients that side. . [End of comment]

When you go out in the field you are alone and you need to be able to handle difficult clients and the public. One client threatened to shoot one girl that was previously here. It came out as a joke but you need to be able to handle it. [End of comment]

On the reverse side white women also commented that they faced challenges with male colleagues and when working with communities.

Often we go into public meetings and people would say. Ayke you white don’t know what you are talking about in terms of how people live in townships and that is true, I don’t regard that as racism at all. I think we must all sort of grow a thick skin, we must be open to each other and try and understand. [End of comment]

4.3.4 Gender Role Stereotyping

Being undermined and expected to perform stereotypically female reproductive roles was common with one of the respondent being asked to make tea in one of the meetings another experienced the following:

I have been to conferences where we are making a presentation and people would think that you are the secretary, they don’t see you for what you are. You get taken on face value all the time because you are a woman, you are supposed to be soft and sweet and all that. You are handled politely and not taken seriously, that frustrates me quite a lot and I think you just have to stand up and know what you are talking about and be persistent. [End of comment]

Contrary to the perception that a lot of fieldwork and amount of travel involved in the water sector would pose problems, the study found that some of the women interviewed enjoyed the technical aspects of the job but the perception still holds as one respondent remarked.

If you come in and you are sick they say, “Oh you are not okay, you are a woman you are not used to traveling” you know that kind of thing? If you are sick it’s because you are a woman and you are really not used to traveling but if men are sick they are sick, it has nothing to do with being male. But if you are sick it’s because you can’t cope with the stress of work and all. *[End of comment]*

Sometimes I used go to meetings with my male colleague, and the people would ignore me and direct all questions to him even when he was not the expert in the area. They just expected him to know everything because he is male, although he introduced me as the manager of the catchment and that they will be dealing with me they were still addressing him.

Some of the male clients don’t feel we are capable of doing the job. So definitely it’s still a male sector. The people you are dealing with are mostly men and I don’t think that will change very soon. It’s a sort of aggressive environment. At the beginning I was a little upset about it but you learn to handle and live with it. *[End of comment]*

Respondents also experienced gender biases in allocation of roles. One of the challenges that they encountered was that they were not able to exercise their full potential, which disadvantaged them when it came to promotion. One professional engineer had been relegated to menial tasks because she was not seen fit and competent enough. She remarked how she had lost an opportunity for advancing her career in the water sector.

I like the survey part of engineering and being out in the field and doing the construction phase and everything else. But then I was sort of like forced into a direction to be more involved in the design of structures, and doing the drawings and the report writing and minute taking and that sort of work while my male colleagues went out on site visits.

There was a lot of dam construction and building of pipes in the water sector, it was difficult for a woman in construction. You were not even allowed for site visits because that was just not allowed. It was quite traumatic for me in the sense that everybody else that was studying with me was now way in front of me. They had gained construction experience while I remained at the entry level sitting in the office doing the report writing and minute taking and everything else. So, I missed the opportunity to get that construction experience at this stage I am too old. I do not want to go into the construction phase anymore but still its lacking, you can’t get it back and you can’t you know. *[End of comment]*

4.3.5 Language

According to Hanes (2003) language can be a limiting factor in the recruitment of skilled staff outside the historical base of some institutions. The water sector entails interaction with different stakeholders from various backgrounds. In this regard language is likely to be a constraint. However the study findings indicate that language was not a major constraint as English was the mode of communication. Some of the respondents attributed language as a barrier they commented that:

Language is a barrier and that is maybe why I changed over to be involved with the Afrikaans speaking programmes. There are a couple of English speaking farmers it's not that difficult dealing with them as long as they understand me and as long as I can understand them. But in a managerial position my experience is that sometimes I keep quiet because I am not fluent in English. Sometimes I can't make my point because I am too embarrassed that my English isn't that good. .
[End of comment]

Another challenge is the language. The area that I am working in is more Afrikaans speaking and I do understand it particularly when it gets to the technical issues I find myself struggling to understand what they were trying to say. But when we talk about the general issues, the language is okay. Sometimes you go to meetings with clients and they insist on speaking in Afrikaans when you are addressing them in English. They will bypass you and continue as if you do not exist. . *[End of comment]*

4.3.6 Glass Ceiling

The respondents faced a glass ceiling as they saw other equally qualified (men) being promoted to posts that they were also qualified for. Moving into senior management is characterized by managing people who do the actual work that one was doing. Evetts (1993) in a study on women in management in engineering argues that management constitutes a career hurdle for women resulting in a problem of professional identity. Most of the women indicated that they wanted to specialize and become experts in their field rather than move into another position. This provided a glass ceiling in the sense that they were not interested in taking on new posts. Two respondents who were well placed to be in higher positions expressed this view.

I would definitely like to move up in the Department, there are often two things, you either go up in management which is the normal way you would do or you go in as a specialist in your field. At the moment I do enjoy the technical part of the work immensely. *[End of comment]*

I love working with people as well but in the current office, there isn't much opportunity to become an expert so the way that you can go further at the regional level is to get into management. *[End of comment]*

The hierarchical structure and extensive length of time it took for promotion also presented a barrier particularly for women in middle management and junior positions.

One respondent remarked that:

To try and get to the top is wonderful. I always say it's wonderful to dream and once you face reality and you see how far you can actually progress within the department. For women who come in at senior levels, its fine, it's good for them and they succeed and the progress. For women who are at the bottom structures it will take quite a while to climb that ladder. I have heard some colleagues talk about the glass ceiling. You can see the position but you can't get there. I hope to see myself in a higher position this department one day, maybe in ten years time after I have gained some experience. If I'm supposed to stay here then I would like to be assistant director or deputy director or something. I think that is what we are all aiming for even though we are not going to get there. *[End of comment]*

4.3.7 Lack of Job Orientation

The lack of job orientation coupled with resistance by subordinates resulted in most of the newly appointed managers experiencing powerlessness. Kanter (1997:186) contends that bureaucratic powerlessness is experienced "when people who have authority without system power ... are expected by virtue of their position to be influential over those parallel or below... especially when they were expected to mobilize others in the interest of a task they had little part in shaping or defining the results." One respondent joined DWAF as the first black woman in a particular senior position. She received no job orientation and faced enormous challenges. The narrative explains the process she was subjected to:

The problem that I encountered when I came here was that I had no support. I had to see everything for myself. My first experience was that I had to go to the staff meeting where I found I was the chairperson of 2 sections. A large number of people, about 18 people were sitting around a big table looking at me to chair, wanting to hear me as their manager who had been appointed leader of the

sections. They wanted to hear everything from me. When I asked for the minutes of the previous meeting they gave me 5 lines, and I did not know where to start. When I asked, who the secretary of the meeting was, I was informed that there was no secretary everybody in the meeting was a secretary. Matters could not be addressed because the people said we don't want a long meeting they had to go back because they are so busy. It is very hard to get cooperation especially among the white people who are the majority.

Managing white and colored people who have not been managed by a black person makes my seat thorny such that they give me hell and no chance to lead. They ask me 'so when are you leaving? Haven't you had enough, will you stay in this position for long?' They are sabotaging my programme. Subordinates are backstabbing me. They do not give me information. In most cases when auditing is happening, it does not concur so in the end it points at me. It takes a lot of my time because I need to do close supervision, which means I need to do more work outside my work because I am responsible *[End of comment]*

Another respondent remarked that:

My position had been vacant for a long period so when I joined I had to reorganize and shuffle things around because there was no order, systems or files. I am also bringing in new changes and structure but the people are not very cooperative it is very difficult. I have to work extra hard, I don't think I would like to stay here for long, there is not much support. I will give it a few more years though. *[End of comment]*

4.3.8 Effort on Job

One attribute that vividly stands out is that despite the challenges faced by the women interviewed, they were passionate about their jobs. Although DWAF had not yet transformed enough to accommodate some of the gender concerns, women were not likely to raise some gender issues because they wanted to be equally competent. One respondent narrates how she proceeded with her work at the risk of her child.

At one stage especially when I was pregnant I had to take samples at sewage works. It was not the best situation, you don't want to endanger your baby but you still have to do your work because you don't want to be less productive than the males so you just keep quiet and do it in peace. Despite this I think women actually do better in this job than men because women's negotiation and organizational skills are much better than men's. They know how to handle hot situations because water is a hot topic I mean if you go to a meeting, there is usually fighting about water service and support. So I think women know how to handle hot situations better as men tend to be aggressive. Not all of them [laughs]

I must my boss is very soft spoken he is very good at that but yah women are just as good as men. *[End of comment]*

Another respondent commented on the effort she had exerted to learn new skills.

When an in-house engineer left, I had to read up engineering practice books and ask questions and some of the questions. I am sure sounded very stupid [laughs]. Fortunately people were prepared to answer and I found out that if you ask, you will get the information. I also had to learn the engineering language and again that was tremendous. My driving force is putting effort in everything I do. *[End of comment]*

4.3.9 Ambiguity of Roles

In terms of the roles played by women in the institution, a notable discrepancy surfaced between what the women described and what was in the human resources records, even the titles were not entirely accurate as one respondent shared about the ambiguity of her position:

I am not entirely sure of my title/position and I don't think the human resources are either, I'm doing a scientific job but I am in an engineering post or something like that. *[End of comment]*

This suggests a mismatch between the evolving roles that the women see themselves functioning in and the actual job description they are enlisted to. Further to the ambiguity of the respondent's position could be related to the classification used for technical staff at that level which is limited to engineers. Another reason why she was given the title could be because she was seen to be performing at the same level with other men who have similar titles, secondly because her actual role is a blend of technical work with a social policy bias, there was no appropriate title to give the position and thirdly the respondent evolved into her position because it was not defined in the original structure. The fuzziness was at the onset but she had developed a presence and defined her programme that is a now one of the flagship programmes for the water institution.

Other women had gone as far as redefining new roles to their own specification. This was not without resistance as one respondent narrated.

I was approached to work for a water programme and my first reaction was No [says it emphatically with hand gestures] I refused because I was the water institute's biggest critique. I had taken every opportunity to highlight its shortcomings, I was not a bureaucrat and could not keep quiet where people had been shortchanged I also voiced my opinion. So they said oh that is the reason why we want you [laughs]. I actually came in to manage a certain unit within the institution.

I eventually resigned after sheer frustration of in house politics. I was then moved into another unit and that did not work out and then I resigned again. I was then asked if I would reconsider and then I was then moved into a new unit where I am now. This worked out much better because I am now interacting with people at different levels, including people at the community level. I have a great passion for people at community level because they are the ones that are always short changed even in today's environment where the politicians say all the right words but fall short when it comes to the actual delivery. *[End of comment]*

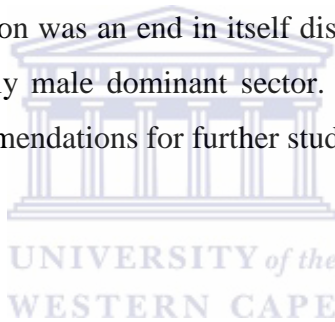
Another respondent working in a scientific unit also joined the institute with a background in art.

I think I was one the first water quality officers with a BA and not a BSc. When I started off I was very insecure, because I didn't know much about chemistry and the stuff, but you can teach yourself, you don't read up every singly thing to know. You have to do your homework so that people don't intimidate you with the knowledge that you don't have. So you need to empower yourself in this capacity and don't be fooled they is no course out there that actually encapsulates everything that you have to do. You have to be a model of all trades. It's very difficult to get in but like I said its one of the best jobs a man or woman can do. It is empowering [emphasis] for a woman to be able to do this kind of job. *[End of comment]*

Indicatively the ambiguity of the women's positions could relate to the structure of the water sector which has not made provisions to accommodate women managers, it also challenges the traditional jobs that were narrowly defined along engineering lines. While it is a constraint, it can be viewed differently as an opportunity for redefining the traditional roles. Evidently having women in management with interdisciplinary backgrounds brings diversity within the sector.

4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter specific attributes and challenges that are faced by women managers in DWAF Western Cape regional office were identified. These were analyzed to understand the factors and effectiveness of policies and frameworks that contribute to women occupying decision-making positions in the water sector. The respondents identified a series of psychosocial factors as contributing to their positions. Several challenges were acknowledged as barriers to their advancement despite favorable policies. In particular women in water management had to work very hard and they found balancing family and work and a lack of supportive structures as the major constraints. The respondents were also inundated with a lot of work and backlog, which they attributed to the bureaucratic and hierarchical structure of the institution. There was an overarching assumption that placing women in senior position was an end in itself disregarding the necessary support system required in a previously male dominant sector. The next chapter makes a few concluding remarks and recommendations for further studies.



CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The study set out to establish the factors that contribute to women occupying decision-making positions in the South African water sector. It focused on key attributes of women in senior and middle management positions in the Department of Water Affairs Western Cape regional office. Also considered was the extent and effectiveness of policies and frameworks used to empower women in senior management and the challenges they encountered.

In the concluding chapter, an attempt to pull together the findings that emerged from the study and recommendations for women's advancement to management positions within water institutions will be made. To a large extent, the recommendations revolve around areas for further, in-depth research in order to understand the causes and dynamics underlying the issues identified by this investigation.

5.2 Conclusion and Summary

The literature review found that the empowerment of women in the water sector is often considered in the context of water use or provision accessing water in households and communities, and increasing women's participation in local Catchment Management Agencies (Tortajada 2000). While critical, the study showed that in relation to water management, there is gap in terms of articulation of the larger and significant roles women play in decision-making positions in water resource management. For instance, two women from the study were acclaimed for their contribution in the water sector that integrated both social and technical aspects in water conservation. Furthermore, the literature review attempted to bring together women in water management into preview of the transformation and management discourse. Usually these are viewed as separate

categories but a convergence does exist and should be explored further as women in the workplace regardless of being in public, private sectors are likely to share experiences particularly where patriarchal practices and structures dominate.

The study has shown that the presence of women in senior positions within the water sector of South Africa has increased significantly over the past five years with the appointment of women into senior positions. Although representation of women in middle and senior management collectively forms a critical mass above 30 percent, the findings of the study showed that the majority of the women were in middle and junior management and only a couple were in senior management. Thus at the echelons of power, women in senior management are isolated. This also demonstrated that women in senior management rarely exist as a cadre, but rather as a handful of isolated individuals scattered throughout the water sector and as indicated by other researchers (Dunker 1999, Morna, 2001, Monyai 2003, Steele et al. 2005) white men still remain as the dominant profile of managers in the water sector.

Historically, management within the water sector was set in the engineering paradigm. As such, white men, mostly engineers, predominantly occupy the bulk of senior positions in the water sector. The study revealed that although still clearly disadvantaged in relation to their white counterparts, the presence of black women was beginning to be felt mostly in appointment to senior positions. Despite these positive trends, women in water management tend to be clustered in administration, scientific and technical areas and black women were still absent in engineering. More women were joining the sector from other disciplines. Thus as the water sector is increasingly requiring multidisciplinary teams to manage the future and current water resources challenges, there are increased opportunities for women to join the water sector.

Significant representation of women has been achieved by taking deliberate steps through affirmative action and equity policies. Implementation of equity legislation has contributed to adding the quantitative value, and not so much the qualitative value, to transform and challenge the institutional culture and practices. When uncontested, men

were still given preference to new management positions particularly when the transformation committee was bypassed, reinforcing the dominant white male profile and barring women from senior management.

There is a disjuncture between the attributes that women in water management perceive necessary for their advancement, and those used by DWAF. The former consider psychosocial factors as the most important while the latter consider merit as criteria for placement of women into senior management. From the findings of the study, other than equity legislation, deliberate consideration was made to ensure the women were well qualified and had the prerequisite education, technical, scientific or engineering knowledge. Thus movement up the rungs of management called for more than academic or technical skills.

In addition the findings from the study also suggest that water management at senior management requires more interpersonal attributes particularly when dealing with stakeholders. Women managers used their negotiation skills to resolve possible water conflicts with various stakeholders, reinvented their job descriptions and because they worked twice as hard, they were articulate in terms of policy and organizational requirements. Indicatively, women bring in diversity, enriching social aspects of integrated water resource management that were previously overlooked.

The quest to ensure equity puts additional workload and tremendous strain on the managers as a whole as vacancies are left open for long periods. This is exacerbated by the bureaucratic nature of the institute. As a result there is understaffing in addition there are tensions among the staff, given that most of the vacant positions are earmarked for (black) women. When appointed, the women managers come into a polarized environment facing resistance from both male and female colleagues from other racial groups who feel excluded because they were not appointed. Although all the women managers faced these challenges black women suffered the brunt more than white women.

The major challenge faced by women was balancing family and work. Although not new, the study found out that the typical profile of women in the most senior positions was single or divorced without children or with much older children and with either minimal family responsibility or extended family support. This suggests that senior positions within the water sector are patriarchal and still constructed along ideologies that accommodate traditional white men who have supportive wives and well functioning families and thus does not allow for women's reproductive roles of caring for the family (Nkomo 1988).

The findings from the study suggest that women assuming management positions in the water sector for the first time are under so much speculation; they are burdened with expectations of their failure and have to work twice as much to gain recognition and prove their competence. Getting acceptance as a black female water manager in the Western Cape was difficult particularly among Afrikaans speaking Water User Associations. Tied to this was the challenge non-Afrikaans speaking women faced with external stakeholders. Language was to a small extent also a barrier to Afrikaans speaking women who found it difficult to be articulate in meetings hindering their effective participation.

Women managers were also faced with other challenges such as gender-role stereotypes where for example they were expected to take minutes in meetings or excluded from site visits and relegated to office work stunting their career path particularly in engineering or other technical fields. Discrimination in terms of race and sex was present in the form of covert innuendos, which women in management dismissed indifferently as subtle. As a result it was left unchallenged.

The organizational structure and regional nature of DWAF presented a glass ceiling causing some of the women to consider leaving the water sector. Disparities in terms of the national and regional office were apparent with the national office perceived as offering better opportunities for the advancement of women than the regional office. This has several implications; first women entering the water sector or aspiring to be in

leadership roles in the water sector lose out in relation to skills transfer and role models. Second, there is a great possibility that the institution is reproducing itself without change.

Further, the choice of being a manager and being delegated to more office work emerged as a constraint for some of the women largely because they enjoyed and preferred fieldwork. Taking on new positions at the national office or any other region was also identified as a limiting factor because it required spousal support and consideration for children. However despite the family constraints, the women managers attested that they were capable of working hard to become successful professionals and could take on senior positions when they had support from family.

The study also showed that the gender policy was not systematically implemented. Although the majority of women in senior management had an idea of the existence of a gender policy, they had not read it; neither had they had any gender training, nor used the policy in their work. Women managers were more familiar with Equity policies possibly because they are more visible, and easier since they do not require much transformative change that challenges the status quo, as does the gender policy. Moreover, implementation of gender equality in dysfunctional institutions is very difficult.

Women in senior water management are qualified, work hard and their empowerment is recognized in policies. However their access to management does not give them enough space and time to acquire the necessary skills that are required to be in those positions. Induction processes that are instituted in the water sector are narrowly set along scientific lines or familiarizing new incumbents with the organization. While critical, women managers are ill prepared to deal with the challenges they encounter once in these positions despite passion for their work. Although capacity building and training programmes are present, women managers are either inundated with work and unable to attend or if they attend a gender training course for instance, there is no follow through or structures to ensure full implementation.

The women's limited influence while in senior and junior management positions, challenges the current orthodoxy which assumes that increase in women's representation in positions of decision-making will automatically result in a corresponding improvement of women's access to resources, water provision and participation in water governance structures.

5.3 Recommendations

It is suggested that placement of women be done carefully and gradually. A secondment to another office through an 'incubation' programme where the potential manager is groomed and taught the operations is recommended before assuming the position. Although this entails investing time and money and making choices in terms of family responsibilities, the merits are that the woman manager is empowered without a lot of pressure and her skills enhanced to handle some of the challenges identified in this study.

There is a need to broaden transformation of the whole institutional structure for gender equality by deliberately putting measures in place, and allowing national goals to trickle to the regional levels. Women are expected to look favorably on other women and address all the problems faced by women in terms of water access and provision, however if they are not trained, they are unlikely to articulate and transform gender relations or ameliorate gender issues. As such training on gender and provision of support structures such as childcare provision and flexible hours for women and men is recommended.

In order to ensure availability of a qualified and skilled critical mass of woman to balance the male dominance in the water sector, it is also imperative to encourage and support more women to enroll into scientific, engineering and integrated water resource management programmes. Role models, mentorship, bursaries and internship programmes as well as increasing women's participation in professional and informal water networks can aid this.

A systematic gender-mainstreaming framework for the water sector that challenges the existing power relations as suggested by Steele et al. (2005) is also recommended. This entails enhancing the capacity of both men and women in the water sector to understand the entitlements of gender approaches to water resources management and operationalising it in the execution of various programmes and projects.

Finally, it is inappropriate to expect women to shoulder all of the responsibility (and additional workload) of change. As Chant and Gutmann (2000), point out, apart from the fact that excluding men gives them little chance to challenge the constructions imposed upon them, dealing with ‘the problem’ through women, negates the self-reflection on the part of men that might be crucial to change in gender relations. (Chant and Gutmann 2000:24), men need to play their role and it is recommended that they be included in gender training as well.

5.4 Further Research

The limited literature and studies on women in water management in general particularly in the water sector calls for further studies that include:

1. Duplicate the study expanding the sample to include women from the broad water sector (public, private, local government, civil society and research commissions) at a national level or make comparisons between various water institutions.
2. In- depth investigation of the characteristics of successful women in water management.
3. Explore why women are leaving the sector and why women are joining the sector.
4. An analysis of the role professional women play and can play in the management, planning and operation of water resource systems.
5. Evaluate the implementation of DWAF internal gender policy.
6. An examination of sexual discrimination and marginalization of women managers in the water sector.

5.5 Summary of Concluding Remarks

In summary the concluding chapter drew together the conclusions, recommendations and areas for further research. The study revealed that compliance with equity targets while commended was not enough. Women were still few in the echelons of decision-making. Women in water management were faced with both internal and external challenges in their positions. It was recommended that organizational transformation needed to be broadened and women managers required more support systems to ameliorate the challenges they faced. Ideally gender aware senior managers were likely to effect change, spearhead and ensure implementation of gender responsive programmes and projects that contribute to the realization of global and national gender equality goals.



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Appendix A

The interviews were based on open-ended questions, which varied with the person being interviewed, and their responses. Below are examples of questions asked:

1. Could you please provide a brief background of yourself i.e. your age, status and where you come from?
2. Can you give me a background of your career history up to the position you hold?
3. Can you tell me about your position?
4. Why did you apply for your position?
5. How do you experience your current position?
6. Do you think you got the position because of affirmative action/your race or gender?
7. How do you experience the culture of your organization?
8. What do you bring to the organization as a woman?
9. Are your decisions and contributions taken on board in management?
10. What influence do you have in the organization?
11. What influenced you to take up a career in the water sector?
12. Do you have a mentor?
13. Do you have a role model(s)?
14. Do you regard yourself as a role model?
15. Are you in any mentorship programme or relationship?
16. What characteristics do you have that enable you to play your role in the organization?
17. What challenges do you experience in the execution of your work?
18. Have you experienced racism/sexism or sexual harassment in your workplace?
19. Do you think the current legislation enables the advancement of women in the water sector?
20. How familiar are you with the organizational policies on gender?
21. Have you read the Gender Policy?
22. Have you received any form of gender training?

23. What advise would you give other women who might aspire to become senior managers in the water sector?
 24. What achievements have you made in the water sector?
 25. Are you a member of any network or movements?
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Appendix B

Appendix B Questions for Transformation and Human Resources officers

1. How many women are in strategic decision-making positions?
 2. What gender equity policies are in place (empowerment, transformative)?
 3. What types of policies are used in recruitment?
 4. Is there a gender transformation committee?
 5. What is the composition and criteria for entry?
 6. When was the Director for special programmes on gender appointed?
 7. What is reporting structure?
 8. What are the supporting mechanisms in place?
 9. What is in place to ensure sexual and racial discrimination is addressed?
 10. Are responsibilities related to gender incorporated into job descriptions of women managers?
 11. Are there any flexible working hours or day care facilities that accommodate family concerns?
 12. What are the key challenges faced in gender transformation of the institution?
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Appendix C Questions for the Training Officer

1. What is the Department's strategy for gender training?
2. Are there any in-house training on methods for recognizing and addressing gender issues?
3. Do you collaborate with any departments or institutions for skills building towards advancing women to management positions?