

AN ANALYSIS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION
POLICY IN THE NAMIBIAN PUBLIC SECTOR: A CASE STUDY OF THE
OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

A RESEARCH THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
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Abstract

It is usually expected for post-independence governments to rectify past injustices committed by the former colonial masters. These could be injustices in relation to social, political economical, gender, race etc. Of interest to this study is the issue of affirmative action. The study investigates the impact and consequences of the affirmative action policy in its quest to eradicate past imbalances in the employment sphere. The purpose of the study is to assess the impact of the Affirmative Action Policy in the Namibian public sector, focusing on the Office of the Prime Minister. In order to get an in-depth understanding of the impact and consequences that emanate from implementation of the said policy, a case study approach was adopted. The study employed research instruments such as questionnaire, interviews (both structured and semi- structured) as well as documentary analysis of available reports on the subject matter. The findings show that, although the implementation of the policy has placed previously disadvantaged groups in significantly and strategic managerial positions, it has also blocked those at lower positions because of the non-movement of the previously advantaged, resulting in career path diversions. It also became evident that affirmative action is viewed as unfair as it limits qualified personnel from promotions because organisations have to comply with the policy. Such a situation has resulted in many employees being demoralised, and feeling that the progress in their careers is blank as preference is given to previously disadvantaged groups. The study finally made some recommendations that will help to smoothen the implementation of the policy.

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Fabian Sisamu and two sisters Inonge Sisamu and Chaze Sisamu. To you I say a big thank you for your support and encouragement.

Dedication

Dedicated to my loving Mother

Margareth Lumba Sisamu

Declaration

I Glodean Ntelamo Sisamu, declare hereby that this study is a true reflection of my own research, and that this work, or part thereof has not been submitted for a degree in any other institution of higher education.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the study by providing the background information of the research, the research problem, the research question, the aims and objectives and the significance of the study. This chapter also provides an outline of the chapters in this thesis.

1.2 Background of the study

Affirmative action or positive discrimination (known as employment equity in Canada, reservation in India, and positive action in the UK) is the policy of providing special opportunities for, and favoring members of a disadvantaged group who suffered from discrimination (Anderson 2004). According to him, the nature of positive discrimination policies varies from region to region. Some countries, such as India, use a quota system, whereby a certain percentage of jobs or school vacancies must be set aside for members of a certain group. In some other regions, specific quotas do not exist; instead, members of minorities are given preference in selection processes.

Unequal employment opportunities have been observed in many countries around the world, therefore this has caused those countries to develop an intervention policy in the name of affirmative action to address this problem. However, in developing countries (African and those in South Asia), the motives for embarking on such a policy was part of the independence process and the promotion of equality for all citizens. In Namibia for example, the affirmative action policy was introduced in order to correct past segregation of races which were influenced by the apartheid era.

It should be noted from the onset that, before Namibia's independence in 1990, many people did not enjoy equal employment opportunity due to the apartheid system that existed at the time. The country was characterised by inequality dominated by one race over others, hence it was perceived that there is a need for affirmative action to bring about change and equality in society. The pre-independence system was perceived (by the previously discriminated and the outside world) as not only unfair but also unjust.

After Namibia's independence in 1990, the affirmative action policy act (Act 29 of 1998) was introduced with the aim of addressing employment opportunity and bridging the gap between the previously advantaged and disadvantaged groups. The purpose of the policy was to reform and transform the society by redressing the past imbalances in terms of employment opportunities to previously disadvantaged groups.

It is important to note that the implementation of the Affirmative Action Policy should be seen as an important attempt to remedy the situation and not to discriminate any particular group of society. In fact, Article 23 (2) of the Namibian Constitution attests. The said article reads “Nothing contained in Article 10 hereof shall prevent Parliament from enacting legislation providing direct or indirect for the advancement of persons within Namibia whom have been socially, economically or educationally disadvantaged by discriminatory laws or practices, or for the implementation of policies and programmes aimed at redressing social, economic or educational imbalances in the Namibian society arising out of past discriminatory laws or practices, or for achieving a balanced structuring of the public service, the police, the defence force, and the prison service” (Government Republic of Namibia, 1990, p.14). This article has among others given birth to the Gender policy, Affirmative Action Policy Act (Act 29 of 1998), the Employment and Equity Act (Act No. 55 of 1998), etc.

What is affirmative action then, one may ask? According to Rossouw and van Vuuren (2010), Affirmative Action is a temporary intervention of preferential treatment to rectify the consequences of discrimination in order to enable people to compete as equals for opportunities. They further stated that objectives of affirmative action is to bridge the gap between an unfair past and future dispensation of fair employment, to address imbalances caused by prolonged discrimination, to identify who has been adversely affected by discrimination and what kinds of deficits have been imposed

upon them and to eradicate or alleviate the consequences of discrimination and those who were affected detrimentally need to be given special opportunities. The history of this policy emanated from the United States of America in 1961 where the then President, Mr John N Kennedy came up with an initiative of encouraging non-discrimination of people in employment because of their colour. Many countries around the world adopted the use of this policy for the same purpose.

Namibia like many other African countries has introduced the policy, adopting it at all levels of government including the Office of the Prime Minister. The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), like any Government institution in Namibia is committed to transform the Public Service into an establishment whose employment practices are influenced by equity. However, despite striving for equal employment opportunities for previously disadvantaged groups, the OPM still faces challenges because previously disadvantaged groups continue to be victims of the legacy of past discrimination. Even in circumstances where women are qualified and experienced, the dominance of males at management level has resulted in a culture in which male behavioural patterns are perceived to be the norm and women frequently find it difficult to be accepted as equals by their male colleagues when appointed in management positions. This is evidenced by looking at the top structure of the organisation. The senior management consist of 63% men and 47% women and no people with disability, pointing to the fact that The Office of the Prime Minister still has a great task of accommodating the previously disadvantaged like women,

disabled people etc. The underrepresentation of these groups is due to, among others, their educational disadvantage and other social and physical barriers which work against them. Male, especially black male on the other hand seem to have cashed in on the policy if the number in management is anything to go by.

The other important aspect relates to the lifespan of affirmative action. For most countries, affirmative action seems to be indefinite with no time line; it has been in existence for a long time and as a result it is negatively affecting those that are not catered for in the policy. Some now view it as a reverse discriminatory policy that punishes not only those who were previously on the advantaged side, but also their offspring. Affirmative action policy is seen as the solution to bridge the gap of opportunities between the previously advantaged and disadvantaged groups. But the question that remains is; how long should the process last to bridge the perceived gaps? Namibia in particular, introduced an affirmative action act of 1998 with the aim of addressing employment opportunity. This act has been around for 14 years. The act was introduced in order to promote the constitutional rights of equality. The idea was to abolish unfair discrimination in employment, attain a diverse workforce which is represented by all ethnic groups. The question that one needs to answer is, do these inequalities still exist, and for how long will the process last and at what cost?

It is also important to note that, there seems to be a downward trend in the implementation of policy. it is feared that the policy, if left unchecked could affect the

hiring and level of skills in the workforce, because employers may want to hire simply to comply with the policy. The policy also runs a risk that can cause people who are not catered for to migrate out of the public service and indeed the country as the loss of hope for employment, resulting in skilled labour deficiency which can ultimately affect the economy.

The study looks at how the affirmative action policy is being implemented by government, particularly the Office of the Prime Minister. Equally the study carefully appraised the consequences in implementing the said policy. The relationship between the intent of the affirmative action policy and the subsequent result of its implementation was assessed, in the quest of understanding the effect and consequences of the policy.

1.3 Problem Statement

Being largely a multiracial country, with the past that was characterised by discrimination and inequality between different groups (race) of society, affirmative action is an expensive but necessary reality that Namibia has to deal with. The country encompasses two groups of society; the previously disadvantaged group who were victims of the past discrimination legacy on one hand and the previously advantaged group that benefited from past discriminatory system on the other. Inequality is therefore always a possibility and subsequently lack of representation of one group is ever a present constraint in Namibia.

The affirmative action policy was introduced by Government in 1998 after Namibia's independence through line Ministry, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare with the purpose of redressing employment inequality within society that emanated from apartheid and bridging the gap between the previously advantaged and disadvantaged groups of the Namibian people. It gave advantage to previously disadvantaged groups to apply for any job that they qualify for without facing any form of discrimination.

However, efficiency and effectiveness service delivery requires, among other things skills, experience and qualification which most of the disadvantages groups do not possess, thus the biggest challenge facing the Namibian government is how to implement the affirmative action Policy without compromising performance.

The policy has a negative impact on both groups. It breeds resentment between blacks and whites, women and men and various ethnic groups. Previously advantaged individuals who are denied jobs or promotion might wonder if the outcome of employment opportunity might have been different in the absence of the policy and naturally, they begin loathing the individuals and groups who benefit from the policy and as a result these ill feelings can have a negative impact on the performance of an organisation. Ill-feelings bred by affirmative action can affect service delivery of an organisation if not properly managed.

Similarly, the previously disadvantaged group on the other hand may feel that they do not deserve the appointment or promotion because they were not appointed or promoted on merit but rather just to fulfilling the requirements of a policy. This can also demoralize individuals to perform to their utmost best and consequently, productivity of an organisation suffers.

Yet affirmative action is believed to be one of the most effective tools for readdressing the injustices caused by apartheid. The policy was simply introduced with the notion that all Namibians will have an opportunity for employment equality. The ultimate test of the policy is how its intentions should not be viewed as creating reverse discrimination while solving past injustices.

This study seeks to identify and characterize the various issues connected with the implementation challenges of the policy in an attempt to assess its consequences in terms of institutional impact and the broader social and economic implication. The policy will be judged positively if it can achieve the balance of equality and social justice of all Namibians without compromising performance and economic development of the country.

1.4 Research Questions

In trying to answer/address the research topic, the study addresses the following main research question:

- What are the effects and consequences of implementing affirmative action policy in the Office of the Prime Minister?

1.5 The objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are to:

- Assess the implementation of the affirmative action policy in the Public Sector, at the Office of the Prime Minister.
- Critically assess the impact of the affirmative action policy on past imbalances, and
- Examine the consequences of the affirmative action policy on previously disadvantaged and advantaged groups.

1.6 Significance of the study

Affirmative action is believed to be one of the most effective tools for readdressing the injustices caused by apartheid. The benefits often include efficiency, sound business practice, better service delivery (as all citizens receive equal treatment),

harmony among different groups, etc. affirmative action has, however, also given birth to other social and economic problems. Some groups that are not the direct recipient of the policy now feel discriminated against which many have negative impacts on the performance of organisations.

The above situation justifies the need to study and carefully appraise the available policy options when dealing with affirmative action policy. The study gives insight on the effectiveness of the implementation of the policy and the focus on the Office of the Prime Minister will help the Namibian Government to interpret the policy so that it motivates all employees in delivering their services effectively as well as to give direction to future high level initiatives.

It is also hoped that the study will provide sound information to policy makers and decision makers to come up with possible strategies to address short comings in the process of implementing the policy. The study will ultimately contribute to the body of knowledge on the subject matter and also serve as a guiding tool for future researchers who would wish to conduct research on the similar subject matter.

1.7 Limitation of the study

The public sector is one of the more complex systems in terms of its vastness and it involves many players, hence a need to constrain the research scope. The first

limitation is institutional, as the research only looked at the Office of the Prime Minister, not at the entire Public Service.

The second limitation is time, as the research was only conducted for the period of three months in Windhoek, hence not covering all necessary areas that need to be covered in this study. The third limitation was cost constraints, as the researcher needed funds for logistical purposes such as travelling to the institution for interviews, typing and making copies of the questionnaire, printing and binding of the thesis.

1.8 Outline of the thesis

The thesis is structured into five chapters as described in detail below;

Chapter 1 gives the introduction and background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions and limitations of the study.

Chapter 2 presents a theoretical framework based on a review of literature that is found to be relevant for this research.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodology of how the thesis will be carried out. It discusses a theoretical framework for the research design which was selected for this study. The study also focuses on the research population, particularly on the research setting and sampling followed.

Chapter 4 illustrate the data presentation and interpretation of the findings collected through interviews and document analysis under various themes.

Chapter 5 presents the conclusion and recommendations of the study

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

As indicated in chapter one, the purpose of this study is to analyse the implementation of affirmative action policy in the Public Sector in Namibia in the Office of the Prime Minister. In order to get a better understanding of the concept of affirmative action, this chapter explores the different definitions and concepts of affirmative action according to various researchers as well as debates around on the advantages and disadvantages of policy. Secondly, the researcher focuses on the implementation of affirmative action in some international and African countries as well as challenges faced during the implementation phase.

2.2 Definition of the concepts of Affirmative Action

Jauch (1999) is of the view that the different perceptions of affirmative action have resulted in many confusions on the policy. He points out that it is necessary to clearly define affirmative action in terms of the intended beneficiaries, as well as the scope and aims of such a policy. He further states that explicit affirmative action legislation and policy documents seem essential to clarify what the policy aims to achieve.

Ramphele (2007, p.33) defines affirmative action as a measure taken to remove impediments to the full realisation of the potential of individuals or communities. He

further states that it is a tool or strategy to achieve goals and enable individuals and groups to utilize the equal opportunity made available to them in the transformation environment.

Sadler (1996) refers to affirmative action as an effort to increase education and employment opportunity for minorities and women. He further revealed that it applies to various policies and programmes designed to increase the number of minorities and women hired by government and industry and admitted into colleges and universities.

Rossouw & van Vuuren (2010) define affirmative action as a temporary intervention of preferential treatment to rectify the consequences of discrimination in order to enable people to compete as equals for opportunities. They further indicate that his description is normative because it establishes certain criteria and components that need to be met in an affirmative action programme. They also mentioned that the following are the components of the definition that need additional clarity.

- Temporary Intervention

Affirmative action is a mechanism intended to bridge the gap between an unfair past and future dispensation of fair employment. As such it has the character of a temporary intervention. Once the major deficits have been eradicated, affirmative action should be phased out in favour of an equal opportunity dispensation.

- Preferential treatment

The purpose of affirmative action is to redress imbalances caused by prolonged discrimination. It requires that constructive action be taken to redress these imbalances. This consists of targeting the most disadvantaged groups for preferential treatment; special treatment is being paid to them in order to assist them in overcoming the constraints of the past.

- Consequences of discrimination

Affirmative action is an attempt to rectify the imbalances caused by discrimination, it is extremely important to identify who has been adversely affected by discrimination and what kinds of deficits have been imposed upon them.

- Enable to compete as equals

In order to eradicate the consequences of discrimination those who were affected detrimentally need to be given special opportunities. This will often take the form of being offered preferential education and training opportunities.

Sadler (1996) indicates that affirmative action is not “quotas” or the substitution of numerical dictates for merit based decisions. He points out that the policy include management tool of numerical goal or target for representation of women or minorities and timetables for meeting those objectives. He also stated that affirmative action programme makes a difference and the reason why it works is that it is an effective way to neutralise biases, stereotypes and prejudices that often set into the recruitment process. He further mentioned that society needs affirmative action policy

to fight and mitigate discrimination. Jauch (1998) argues that the policy compensate for the various difficulties suffered by the majority of the Namibian population. He further added that affirmative action does not necessarily eradicate socio-economic inequalities; instead inequalities may be shifted from the basis of race, ethnicity or gender to the basis of class. He argues that affirmative action in Namibia has to go beyond the goal of representative to become a meaningful instrument of change.

Adam (2000) states that despite the attention affirmative action has received in post-apartheid South Africa, there is little consensus among its advocates as to the precise meaning of the term. He further revealed that the policy is referred to as a “corrective action”, “black advancement” or “positive action” which can be understood as a remedial strategy which seeks to address the legal, historical exclusion of a majority. He also points out that unlike most other countries in which minorities form the target group, in South Africa a previously disenfranchised majority are the beneficiaries of affirmative action.

In the Namibian context, affirmative action is defined under Section 17 of the affirmative action act of 1998 as “a set of measure designated to ensure that persons enjoy equal employment opportunities at all levels of employment and equitably represented in the workforce of a relevant employer (Government Republic of Namibia, 1998, p.18).

Now that the concept of affirmative action which is core to the study is well defined, it is imperative to talk about one significant concept that is usually associated with policy implementation, the term. The Concise Oxford Dictionary (2002) defines impact as a strong effect or influence of something over the other. This effect could either be positive or negative. This paper will borrow and use the two definitions. An impact statement will be used to analyse how the affirmative action policy is being implemented by the Office of the Prime Minister policy.

2.3 History of Affirmative Action

Affirmative action policy was introduced as an effort to ensure that all people in a certain society have the same prospect to succeed. The term affirmative action was introduced by United States President John F. Kennedy in 1961 and expanded by President Lyndon Johnson. Wingrove (1995) argues that affirmative action is an antidiscrimination measure that is reinforced by legislation and judicial intervention. He points out that the policy finds its roots in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights formulated in the 1940s by the International Labour Organisation which states that everyone is entitled to pursue his material wellbeing and spiritual development in condition of freedom and dignity without discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political views, national extraction, social origins, property, birth or any other status.

The purpose was to create equal education, voting and employment for groups who were in the past discriminated against. The development of the policy was also aimed to ensure that steps were taken so that previously disadvantaged groups are represented in organisations and educational institutions. It was viewed as a temporary intervention to abolish discrimination in employment and education. Kellough (2006) however argues that the development and application of affirmative action in the United States is a more complex issue that has been acknowledged. He further states that the debate and confusion are not surprising given the variety of meanings attached to the term, the fact that affirmative action involves the highly charged issue of the distribution of employment and education opportunities and the complexity of court decisions on the subject.

2.4 Advantages of Affirmative Action

Thus far, affirmative action is one of the most effective tools for redressing the prejudices caused by historic discrimination against people who were previously discriminated at, and for flattening what has long been an uneven playing field. Rossouw & van Vuuren (2010, pp. 182-183) points out several advantages of affirmative action policy:

- Affirmative action redresses imbalances and inequalities caused by discrimination.
- Affirmative action breaks down discrimination practises and stereotypes.

- It enables members of previously disadvantaged groups to compete with competence in the employment market.
- Affirmative action helps raise the level of diversity in businesses by giving jobs to more minorities.
- Affirmative action translates into equal justice for all, which is the linchpin of our democracy. Plus it guarantees that the golden rule is in practice. There is nothing wrong with extending a helping hand to others less fortunate and we are morally obligated to do so.
- Affirmative action is a way of ensuring that diversity is obtained and maintained in the workplace. In so doing it also helps create tolerant communities because it exposes people to a variety of cultures and ideas that are different from their own.
- It helps disadvantaged people who come from areas of the country where there are not very many opportunities to be able to advance where they otherwise could not. In other words, it gives everyone an equal playing field.
- Affirmative action is a way to help compensate for the fact that due to many years of oppression, some races started late in the race. Again it helps level the playing field.

2.5 Disadvantages of Affirmative Action

Rossouw & van Vuuren (2010) argue that even though there are advantages to affirmative action, there are also disadvantages levelled against it. They further pointed out the following as disadvantages of affirmative action policy:

- Affirmative action can generate negative feelings of envy, hatred and resentment among previously advantaged groups. They may feel affirmative action is an injustice, because despite their contribution to the organisation they stand little chance of being promoted or rewarded for their performance.
- Affirmative action can harm those it is supposed to help. The argument is that those who have been targeted for preferential treatment will always know in their hearts that they have not been promoted on merit. They might suffer psychologically as a result and feel inferior to their peers who had been appointed on merit.
- Affirmative action appointees can be stigmatised because those promoted through the policy might have difficulties gaining respect from co-workers. They will always be regarded as token appointees.
- The past discrimination against certain minority groups does not justify present discrimination against non-minorities. All people are equal under the laws of the United States of America and should be treated accordingly.
- It destroys the idea of a meritocracy and instead puts race as the dominant factor in admissions and hiring procedures. The best people for the position should be put there, regardless of race.
- Students/workers who are put into a position through affirmative action often are not fully ready for the task. Not only is this not good for the university/company, but it is also not good for these students/workers as well because it lowers self-esteem.

- Affirmative action reinforces stereotypes and racism because of the previous point. People given a position purely because of affirmative action often are not qualified. Also, it presupposes that all people of the same skin colour are from the lower class, and therefore need help. This also reinforces stereotypes and even embeds them permanently into the system.
- Simply having people of different races or ethnicities in the workplace/university does not necessarily mean diversity of opinion. People with the same skin colour are not necessarily the same in opinion or even culture.

2.6 Debates around the Affirmative Action policy

The term affirmative action originated from the United States of America where its purpose was to help African Americans to become full citizens and to eradicate racial discrimination in access to voting. Bergmann (1996) state that in the United States of America (USA), the affirmative action policy was developed with the purpose of eradicating discrimination against black Americans and it was later extended to other minority groups and women. Bergmann (1996) states that affirmative action in the USA was implemented to deal with systematically discrimination in hiring policies, access to education and in career opportunities. Australia is one of the countries in the world first to develop legislation on affirmative action. Kern (2011), states that the major features of Australia's affirmative action require all employers of 100 or more people to develop and implement an affirmative action programme to provide equal employment opportunity for women.

In the Namibian and South African context, the Policy was developed with the intention of eradicating imbalances in employment opportunities for groups who were previously disadvantaged such as women, the disabled and groups who were previously disadvantaged because of their colour. Edley (1998) revealed that most of the affirmative action policies in various countries are too broad. He observed that the policy advocates for equality but no time frame is attached to it about when these different countries anticipate achieving it. He further pointed out that as a result it has resulted in decreased morale because many black people wonder whether they are appointed for their skills or for their colour while previously advantaged people are frustrated by a narrow window of opportunity, thus decrease in their morale.

Darity (2005) observed that affirmative action constitutes a set of positive antidiscrimination measures intended to ensure that members of groups who would be excluded or underrepresented in preferred positions in society are taken care of. Katznelson (2005) in his study concluded that the policy makes provision for equal access to employment prospects. He also states that the policy aims at fair employment as well as distribution of resources in an equitable manner. Charlton & van Niekerk (1994) argue that even though affirmative action creates equal access to employment, it may equally damage the economy of a country because employers might employ less qualified people just to comply with the policy. They argue that affirmative action feels just like apartheid because it perpetuates racial discrimination and exacerbates tensions.

Janch (1999) points out that affirmative action may close the gap between various groups but it may increase the gap as only certain members will benefit while others remain marginalised. He notes that affirmative action plays an insignificant role in the realisation of democratic justice as it cannot alter the injustices which are entrenched in the prevailing socio-economic system. Adams (1993) argues that the most obvious issue to be addressed by affirmative action is to remove all forms of discrimination and all obstacles to equality of opportunity. He urges that for affirmative action to work it requires a national commitment to a policy of effective equal opportunity and to measures aimed at facilitating and supporting the participation of previously disadvantaged groups. He further points out that managers must show commitment towards the implementation of the affirmative action policy in order to ensure its success.

According to Burton (1991) it was initially intended that affirmative action would be developed and adopted as a temporary measure to redress and compensate women for past discriminatory practices and to help working women take their place in the working world on a more equal footing with men. Using various conceptual categories such as equal opportunity, sexual equality and positive action, legislative reform was initiated in most western countries to challenge existing social and work relations that led to and exacerbated discrimination in the workplace (Bacchi, 1996). Burton (1991) state that attention was to be directed to the identification and removal of discriminatory practices and the development of policies, programmes and strategies to assist and enable women to be employed across occupational groups and

to make their way through organisational hierarchies from which they had previously been excluded.

In reviewing how affirmative action was faring, several years after implementation, Bacchi (1996) conducted an extensive study in several western countries reputed to be leading the way in affirmative action (The Netherlands, the USA, Australia, Canada, Norway and Sweden). Bacchi's study yielded some interesting insights and identified a number of important issues that emerged across and within these countries. In all the countries studied, the consistency with which women and women's issues were sidestepped or displaced from the political agenda was striking. Bacchi's study also revealed that no one country boasted success in instituting equal opportunity for women, choosing instead to engage in a series of political debates about the possible interpretations of affirmative action and the reforms it should encompass. Overall, women as a targeted group were not a priority in any of the countries studied. Bacchi's research found that women's equal participation in the workplace was often pitted against other priorities such as economic stability and political survival.

Bacchi (1996) also stated that affirmative action was resisted and treated with suspicion. He further points out that affirmative action was seen as leading to rampant tokenism, interfering with the notion of merit, and challenging well established workplace indicators for promotion. As a result of this resistance, issues relating to women's structural disadvantage, such as the domestic division of labour were largely

unaddressed. Despite a flurry of international literature evaluating this legislation in the public sector Eisenstein et al. (1985) argue that there is little empirical evidence outlining what affirmative action policies have delivered and yielded desired results.

Eggins (1997) examined numerous case studies of women in UK universities and identified several obstacles that make it difficult for women to achieve promotion to senior positions. He stated that first, many women do not want to enter the fray; others make decisions in regard to family responsibilities that interrupt their career path; while other women reported that they lacked the tenacity to become more ruthless in terms of self-publicity and self-advancement. Many feel that women who aspire to join this boy's club have had to learn new rules in order to fit in, and have found they have had to disown some feminine traits in the process.

Smith (1990) identifies the discomfort and disjuncture's women feel as they are forced to work within a workplace culture that is not of their own making. Bown (1999) argues that it is important for women in universities to move from being objects such as teachers and junior researchers to being subjects who share in the crucial decisions and rulings which determine the experiences and successes of both genders, either as students or staff. It is clear that the formalisation of procedures to ensure equal treatment is not enough; attitudes and expectations need to change.

Noble and Mears (1995) state that although commitment and understanding of affirmative action varied considerably across the universities studied, most senior

managers could identify some positive achievements and some strategies that had been helpful. They further pointed out that the achievements mentioned included, the introduction of flexible work practices; the redefinition of merit to include teaching as a criteria for promotion; the inclusion of women as members of decision making committees; the establishment of child-care on campuses and programmes providing support and mentoring for women seeking promotion.

Much of the criticism of affirmative action and its inability to redress women's disadvantage in the workplace is attributed to the avoidance of any discussion of the structural disadvantages inherent in the way work is organised (Burton, 1991; Harding, 1998). As the result, the gendered practices that surround and influence policy development and implementation are largely left unaddressed (Taylor, 1994). Harding (1998) argues that the dominance of neoclassical economic assumptions and the troublesome concept of merit, as currently organised, work against any improvement in the status of women and other minorities. In fact, she argues, central to the debate around the application of merit is the assumption that women act in the market as free individuals, as rational, independent players who achieve success only through hard work and their own talent.

Affirmative action legislation was developed and implemented in Australia in 1986 to enhance and promote employment opportunities for women. This was in recognition of the continuing gender gap in women's wages and promotional opportunities in the workforce generally. Industry and employers were to be forced to take responsibility

for providing a more equitable workplace for women workers. Companies failing to satisfy sufficient progress in implementation of affirmative action would be denied government contracts. Although government departments and state and federal advisory units dedicated to responding to the needs of women were created in most states across Australia and equal employment opportunity committees were set up within large organisations to advise on and steer this policy change, overall much less attention has been given to women's issues than anticipated (Kenway and Blackmore, 1988). This lack of attention can be attributed to a deficiency of clear policy guidelines in the implementation of the legislation and a lack of any structural analysis of women's disadvantage in the workplace.

According to Adams (2000), the Indian experience with affirmative action dealt with both racial, ethnic and class all at the same time. It also led to a lot of violence and bloodshed. In 1950, India adopted a constitution in which positive measures aimed at advancing the employment and educational opportunities for members of specified castes (the untouchables) and scheduled tribes (those isolated in remote areas) were provided for. Other disadvantaged groups had been added to the list subsequently at different times. These positive measures were designed in the form of quotas and reservations for members of these designated groups with regards to government employment and education (Thomas, 2002).

According to Sowell (2004) there were basically, two kinds of preferential policies in India: policies for national minorities classified as less fortunate and policies for

different local groups in their respective states. The former was designed specifically to address the discrimination and severe social disabilities faced by India's untouchables as well as other tribal groups outside of the social mainstream of the country. The latter policies were designed to address the needs of other groups who although they do not fall with the two groups mentioned above, also face similar disadvantages.

Saha (2006) compared the employment equity and affirmative action situations in India and Canada and found that some post graduate students in India were more favourable towards the hiring of women over lower caste candidates despite the fact that females were not target group members in India's reservation policy. In 2005, the Indian government attempted to strengthen the Reservation System, which, as could have been predicted by any observer of the past public reaction to the reservation system, did result in mass unrest and demonstration.

According to Blackmore (1999) the affirmative action act placed the major responsibility for introducing mechanisms for correcting discrimination with senior management. In the main, management's response was to locate "equal opportunity" within the personnel function, aligning affirmative action alongside existing management practices designed to ensure a productive and appropriately skilled workplace. This was to ensure that affirmative action policies, practices, strategies and initiatives positioned senior managers to develop and oversee its introduction and be responsible for its on-site monitoring.

According to Mathur-Helm (2004) a varied number of employment policies and laws that promote proportional representation and intend to eradicate the effect of past discriminatory employment practices have been instituted in several countries. In South Africa, the purpose of the Employment Equity Act 55 passed on 12 October 1998 but effective on 1 December 1999 is to achieve equity in the workplace by:

- (a) Promoting equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment through the elimination of unfair discrimination.
- (b) Implementing affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantages in employment experienced by designated groups, in order to ensure their equitable representation in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce

In South African, women, irrespective of their racial identity, have always stood in the secondary echelon of society. Past policies and laws deliberately favoured men, particularly white men. The socio-cultural stipulates of all groups' defined women to be inferior to men and as such assigned to them the position of minors in both the public and private spheres of life (National Gender Policy Framework, 2003). This created inequality of power between women and men, and inevitably led to the unequal sharing of resources such as information, time, and income. Present-day South Africa is trying hard to meet global needs by transforming rapidly to gain respect and promote the rights of all its citizens irrespective of race, gender, class, age, and disability (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). Its new

policies and strategies are aimed at implementing equal and unalienable rights of all women and men and at improving the status of women in the workplace. Emerging from a long period of struggle for a democratic society, after its first democratic elections in 1994, South Africa implemented equal opportunity and affirmative action legislation as a system of national strategy, to redress the past imbalances created by apartheid (Mathur-Helm, 2004).

In the Namibian and South African context, affirmative action policy came as a result of apartheid that discriminated against black people. “In contrast to the situation in the USA, where the minorities suffered discrimination, in Africa, the majority suffered discrimination”, (Beckwith and Jones, 1997). They stated that discrimination against black people coincided with extensive discrimination against women and this gender discrimination was and still is being caused by cultural beliefs and gender stereotypes among other factors.

Namibia is in the process of implementing affirmative action which is an obligatory model by legislation. In his study, Jauch (1998) states that under the Namibian Government, employers are required to give preferential treatment to suitably qualified persons in designated groups. He also pointed out that they are forced to meet staffing targets unless it is impossible to find qualified personnel in these groups. According to the affirmative action act (1998) the purpose of affirmative action act in the Namibian context is “to achieve equal opportunity in accordance with Article 10 and Article 23 of the Namibian Constitution; to provide for the establishment of the Employment Equity Commission; to redress through appropriate

affirmative action plans the conditions of disadvantaged in employment experienced by persons in designated groups arising from past discriminatory laws and practices; to institute procedures to contribute towards the elimination of discrimination in employment and to provide for matters incidental thereto". To ensure that this policy is adhered to in Namibia, the affirmative action act, 1998 (Act 29 of 1998) stipulates that "Employers shall analyse their workforce to determine whether persons in designated groups are equitably represented, review and evaluate his or her employment practices". This report should be submitted to the Labour Ministry on an annual basis.

The affirmative action act (1998) also stipulates that the Employment Equity Commission, which is under the Ministry of Labour is responsible with monitoring the application and implementation of affirmative action programmes; investigating unfair labour practices and conduct research the structure package. According to Charlton & van Niekerk (1994) Namibia has worked broadly within the American model. They also state that the system is more comprehensive in that it requires a more sophisticated internal mechanism of monitoring and control.

Namibian government is faced with challenges in implementing the policy without compromising effective service delivery. Delivery of efficient and effective services requires skills, experience and qualification which most of those that were previously disadvantaged do not possess. Thus the biggest challenge facing the Namibian

Government is how to address past injustice without compromising on service delivery and performance.

2.7 Examples Affirmative Action elsewhere in the world

Affirmative action is not a new concept and has been undertaken in various countries. The condition which triggered other countries to embark on this programme is also found in Namibia. As a result therefore, there are lessons that Namibia can learn from other countries in order to implement the policy effectively. Sonn (1993) argues that affirmative action can mean many things. He states that, it can mean racial preferential treatment and could also mean the redistribution of resources and opportunities by business to institutions of those who have been disadvantaged. Affirmative action has been undertaken in a number of countries to achieve equality in education, employment and distribution of resources.

2.7.1 United States of America

In the United States of America the concept of affirmative action was introduced in the early 1960s, as a way to combat racial discrimination in the hiring process and in 1967 the concept was expanded to include gender, particularly women. The fourteenth revision of the USA Constitution allows equal protection and it also gives relief against legislatives and executive acts that allow discriminatory acts by private parties.

According to Anderson et al (2004) the motivation towards affirmative action in the United States was to redress the disadvantages associated with historical discrimination. Further motivation is a desire to ensure public institutions such as universities, hospitals and police forces are more representative by taking into consideration the previously disadvantaged people.

2.7.2 Malaysia

Malaysia is a multi-ethnic country which consists of Malays who are the majority followed by Chinese and then Indians. According to Puthuchery (1993) the alliance party in Malaysia recognised the need for equal rights for all citizens as well as the imperative of affirmative action to correct the socio-economic differences between Malays and the other ethnic groups.

The policy in Malaysia covers the majority group, which are the Malays because in they have lower income than the Chinese who are involved in businesses and industries. Furthermore, the group that benefit from affirmative action policy is the group with a majority of political power. This group is therefore not only in a position to implement affirmative action according to the law.

2.8 Implementation of Affirmative Action policy

Kellough (2006) argues that in order to develop a better understanding of the policy and dispute associated with it, three facts which are often neglected should be considered:

- A variety of policies options are placed that legitimately bear the label affirmative action. Care should be taken to recognise such variation in discussions of the policy. As will be seen, different approaches to affirmative action have vastly different implications for the concepts such as non-discrimination and equal opportunity.
- Affirmative action, regardless of its specific form, is primarily a policy intended to promote the redistribution of opportunity. Some people benefit directly, while others may not be as well off as they would have otherwise been. Many arguments are offered on each side in the affirmative action debate, but readers should remember that the policy is essentially about who wins and who loses in the distribution of valued resources, and that reality is frequently what motivates those who press the debate most vociferously. The struggle over affirmative action is truly a political contest consistent with Harold D. Lasswell's classic definition of politics as who gets what, when, and how.
- The legal foundation for affirmative action, as it has been articulated by the courts, cannot be understood unless it is reviewed systematically and pains are taken to distinguish cases on the basis of the different settings in which affirmative action occurs, as well as the precise nature of the underlying legal challenges. For example, arguments made to defend affirmative action in employment and higher education contexts are different in important ways. In employment settings, arguments often

focus on the need for an equitable distribution of opportunities. In educational admissions programmes, those arguments are present, but the focus is also on the educational value of having a diverse student body. In addition, challenges to affirmative action can be made on the basis of statutory law or, if a public authority is involved, on the basis of the U.S. Constitution. A failure to distinguish between the specific forms of the policy, and the legal bases for challenges to it, makes the process of trying to clearly define the boundaries of legally permissible affirmative action nearly impossible.

Kellough (2006) further states that the controversy over affirmative action is understood clearly with the realization that such policies are intended to redistribute opportunity from those who have been historically advantaged to those who have suffered disadvantages because of race, ethnicity and other traits or circumstances.

2.9 Implementation of Affirmative Action policy in Namibia

Affirmative action policies have been introduced in various countries some with greater success than others. Therefore, an evaluation of the implementation of affirmative action policy in Namibia will be conducted. Maphai (1992), states that the concept of affirmative action refers to a variety of programmes and measures, characterised by attempts to redress historical gender and racial inequality. The notion of equity is central to the whole enterprise of affirmative action. It is apparent that affirmative action targets are still far from being reached in most of the countries that introduced this policy.

Namibian independence introduced many initiatives and concepts into society. One of which was affirmative action. The aim was to raise socio-economic level of groups subjected to long standing patterns of discrimination. The policy helps to redress generations of lost opportunities for such groups. The implementation of affirmative action policy in Namibia is guided by the affirmative action (Employment) Act, 1998 (Act 29 of 1998).

In the Namibian context, the affirmative action (Employment) Act, 1998 (Act 29 of 1998) was published in Government Gazette No. 1962 of 24 September 1998. According to the long title of the Act, its purpose is: “to achieve equal opportunity in accordance with Article 10 and Article 23 of the Namibian Constitution, to provide for the establishment of the Employment Equity Commission; to redress through appropriate affirmative action plans the condition of disadvantaged in employment experienced by persons in designated groups arising from past discriminatory laws and practises; to institute procedures to contribute towards the elimination of discrimination in employment and to provide for matters incidental thereto”

According to Jauch (1998) an important requisite of the Namibian affirmative action act is that pertinent employers must consult with the representatives of their employees, as well as with the trade union, if present, concerning the preparation, implementation, and revision and monitoring of affirmative action plans. He further stated that employee representatives reflect on the interests of all occupational categories as well as of designated and non-designated groups. It is apparent from the

above that consultation comprises a virtually permanent feature of affirmative action. He also stated that a suitable vehicle for this would be a standing management/employee committee commissioned with the task of implementing affirmative action for the organisation. He also points out that management is expected to be pro-active and take the initiative in implementing the policy and they also have to guard against any tendencies which can become demeaning in the process.

According to the affirmative action act (1998) employers who employ more than 100 staff members must write an affirmative action report to the Employment equity commission each year stating whether they complied with the policy. The act also states that upon receipt of a report the Commission appoints a review officer from amongst the staff of the Ministry of Labour who is required to evaluate the affirmative action report. The review officer will send the findings to the commissioner who will approve, conditionally approve or disapprove the report.

The implementation of affirmative action is a management obligation to be carried out in consultation with employees. Hence the stipulation in section 23 of the Act, which states that a senior employee must be identified, who will have overall responsibilities for the implementation of such affirmative action plan. Obviously that individual will have been part of the orientation, policy and planning initiatives right from the beginning. Effective communication is a vital aspect of implementation. It is best achieved through similar methods employed in consulting

with employees during the policy and plan drafting phases, namely: discussion groups, workshops, newsletters or circulars.

According to van Rooyen (2000) decisions on appropriate affirmative action implementation methods in Namibia are usually determined by variables such as the size of an undertaking, its line of business, location, organisational structure, financial resources and the extent to which existing policies and practices already embody the basic ingredients of employment equity. He further states that the situation with regard to these variables will differ from one enterprise to another and will dictate the level of effort and the time-span required to make affirmative action work. Where employers approach affirmative action correctly, such factors will, of course, already have been clearly reflected in the company's policy and affirmative action plan, discussed above.

Van Rooyen (2000) also states that during the practical implementation of affirmative action special attention must be given to aspects which could influence the process in either a positive or negative manner. He also points out that an important principle to observe when implementing affirmative action is to avoid quick-fix solutions. He further states that whilst discriminatory elements, whether direct or indirect must be eliminated forthwith, the pool of available skills in certain managerial, professional and technical spheres is still extremely limited.

It may be a better alternative to identify existing employees with potential and to prepare them for promotion to higher level positions in the undertaking. Not only would one be investing in people whose employee attributes such as basic integrity, work habits and relational maturity are known factors, but one would be rewarding their loyalty and motivate colleagues to follow their example. New appointments would, nevertheless, comprise an important secondary strategy to supplement developing employees from within the organisation. Recruitment should then preferably focus on candidates with potential but who are still at a relatively junior stage of their careers or have only just entered the labour market. Such individuals can be systematically inducted, motivated, trained and advanced to satisfy the particular requirements of the enterprise. They will become true assets to the enterprise, while at the same time having been granted a fair opportunity to optimise their own positions in the organisation and society in general.

Van Rooyen (2000) points out that it is of paramount importance that affirmative action should not be implemented as if it were something unique and standing on its own, separated from the rest of the organisational processes. If that were to be the case, affirmative action would acquire an unwanted aura of artificial imposition, which would be in the interests of neither the employees nor the organisation. Instead, affirmative action should be viewed and practised as an integral component of the undertaking's overall response to the challenges of a changing business environment. It should be closely intertwined with other elements of strategic management to enhance efficiency and competitiveness, whilst simultaneously promoting

employment equity in its various guises. Monitoring, updating and making necessary adjustments where needed, are on-going processes in which the full affirmative action management teams hold participate on a regular basis.

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter provided a better understanding of the concept of affirmative action and how various researchers view affirmative action policy. The aim of implementing affirmative action policy around the world is basically to redress past discrimination in education and employment because of race, gender or any other factors. It focuses on equal employment opportunity for all.

However, it was also determined that many researchers see affirmative action as a policy which brings more damage than good. The policy is considered as reverse discrimination because it does not cater for individuals who were previously advantaged in terms of opportunity in employment and education. The next chapter presents the research methodology of the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores and analyses the different research methods used in conducting this study. The research methods and approaches selected were determined by the objective of this study, which is to investigate the implementation of affirmative action in the public sector in the Office of the Prime Minister. The study is based within qualitative research design, and first section of this chapter explains the qualitative research design and case study. Secondly, the research population, sampling procedures followed in selecting the research participants. Thirdly, the chapter focuses on research instruments used to collection of data which include interviews and document analysis. The remaining sections will provide a brief description of how data was collected, recorded, analyzed as well as ethical issues.

3.2 Research design

Leedy (1989) as cited in Melville & Goddard (1996) argues that research is a systematic quest for undiscovered knowledge. This is a case study; here qualitative research design was adopted as the method to use in investigating the implementation of affirmative action in the public sector in the Office of the Prime Minister. Royce & Bruce (1993) argue that qualitative research design gives the researcher an

opportunity to interact with individuals or groups whose experiences the researcher wants to understand.

The research design focuses on fostering a relationship of trust and empathy between the research and research subjects. Interviews and document analysis were used to collect data. These were planned and conducted in a way that encourages research participation to feel that they can speak freely. De Vos & Schulze (2002) argue that in a qualitative approach, procedures are not formalized. A qualitative research approach is the appropriate approach because it complements attempts to investigate the phenomenon in a natural setting and focuses on understanding the social phenomenon holistically in its entirety. According to Bassey (1995), the qualitative research approach is characterized by description and interpretation of the world of the participant in context of the study in an attempt to get shared meaning with others. In doing so, it complements the interpretative orientation by giving the researcher the opportunity to explain and describe the phenomenon as perceived by the participants.

3.3 Case study

The researcher used a case study as an appropriate method in qualitative research. A case study has been described as a useful approach to a study process, programme or individual in an in-depth, holistic way that allows a researcher to get a deeper understanding (Merriam, 1998, p.19). As Merriam states, a case study design is

employed to gain in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved.

Merriam (1998), Stake (2000) and Creswell (2002) each emphasise a case study as a process of investigation to understand a situation. In order to understand this study, researcher addresses the following question:

- What are the visible effects and consequences of the Affirmative Action Policy in the Office of the Prime Minister?

From the above view point the researcher finds Patton's suggestion relevant that a case study is helpful in gaining deeper understanding of particular people, problems and situations in comprehensive relevant ways (Patton, 1990).

According to Bell (1993), the greatest strength of the case study method is to allow the researcher to concentrate on a specific instance or situation and to identify the various interactive processes at work. In this regard, case study method helps the researcher to identify such factors and to determine the implementation of affirmative action policy in the public sector in the Office of the Prime Minister. In this light, the researcher uses the argument of IIEP (2003) that in the case study methods, "the events speak for themselves rather than being interpreted or judged by the researcher."

3.4 Research population

Melville & Goddard (1996) state that a population is any group that is the subject of research interest or one wants to study. It further says that it is not practical or possible to study an entire population thus; the researcher can determine the average of a group to consider for the study and to make general findings based on a sample. “Sampling is the method used to select a given number of people or things from a population” (Mertens, 1998). Research endeavours to collect information from a small group or subset of the population in such a way that the knowledge gained is representative of the population in the context of the study (Cohen & Manion, 1994). The research population for this study consists of about 260 permanent staff members employed in the Office of the Prime Minister.

3.5 Sampling procedures

This is a small scale study conducted in the Office of the Prime Minister. This study will use a purposive non-probability sampling. The study targeted 30 respondents who were purposefully selected from the Office of the Prime Minister. These included: Permanent Secretary (1); Public Service Commission (3); State Owned Enterprise Governance Council Secretariat (1); The Department Public Service Management (8); The Department Public Service Information Technology Management (6); The Department Administration and Information Management (5); The Directorate Efficiency Charter Unit (2); The Directorate Disaster risk

Management (1); The Disability Unit (1); San Development (1) and The Division of Internal Audit (1)

Table 1: Population sample of the research participants

Office of the Prime Minister				
Division	TOT AL 30	Top Mana geme nt	Middl e Mana geme nt	Opera tional Mana geme nt
Permanent Secretary	1	1		
Public Service Commission	3	1	1	1
State owned Enterprise	1		1	
Department Public Service Management	8	2	2	4
The Department Public Service Information Technology	6			

Management				
Department Administration and Information Management	5	1	2	3
Directorates Efficiency Charter Unit	2		1	1
Directorate Disaster Risk Management	1	1		
Disability Unit	1	1		
Division San Development	1	1		
Division Internal Audit	1		1	

3.6 Research instrument

The researcher used multiple instruments and techniques within the qualitative approach of data collection. The following research instruments were employed: semi- structured interviews and documentary analysis.

3.6.1 Interviews

The research interview has been defined as a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research relevant information and focused by him/ her on content specific by research objective of systematic description, prediction or explanation (Cannel & Kahn, 196

According to Patton, cited by Merriam (1998) we cannot observe feelings, thoughts and intentions. We cannot observe behaviours that took place in previous points in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer. The purpose of interviewing is to allow us to enter into other person's perspective. For Tuckman (1972) as cited in Cohen & Manion (1994), the interview provides access to the mind of the interviewee and makes it possible to understand the perceptions, opinions and thoughts of the interviewee.

Contrary to the above, Kerlinger (1970) argues that although research purpose governs the questions asked in an interview, essentially their content, sequence and working are entirely in the hands of the interviewer. For Borg (1963) the direct interaction of the interview is the source of both its advantages and disadvantages as a

research technique. One advantage is that it allows the research far greater depth of understanding on the one hand, while on the other hand, it is prone to subjectivity and bias on the part of the interviewer and the participant. Lansing, Ginsberg, & Braaten (1961) (cited in Cohen & Manion, 1994) agree that there are problems surrounding the use of the interview in research which could result in invalidity and bias. They define it as a system or persistent tendency to make errors in the same direction, that is, to overstate or understate the “true value” of an attribute.

In this respect, Cohen & Manion (1994) argue that the sources of bias are the characteristics of the interview and the respondent, the substantive content of the questions, more particularly including the attitudes and opinions of the interviewer towards the respondent and preconceived notions on the part of the interviewer towards the respondent, and preconceived notions on the part of the respondent to what the respondent is being asked. The researcher finds the argument of Cohen & Manion (1994) useful to minimise the amount of bias. Cohen & Manion (1994) argue for interviewing various role players in the context being studied and they suggest that keeping a constant core of questions will give the interview greater validity.

This study used the semi-structured interview which allowed the researcher to collect rich data and get deeper understanding of the individual perception and experience of the phenomenon. According to Bell (1993) semi-structured interviews allow the respondents a considerable degree of latitude. Even though certain questions were

asked, the respondents are given freedom to talk about the topic and give their view in their own time.

This is unlike structured interviews, where the respondents are limited to a range of responses previously developed by the researcher. Therefore, the semi-structured interview serves as an effective tool in allowing the respondents to talk freely. The researcher was then able to probe specific aspects based on the information raised in the questionnaires.

3.6.2 Document analysis

For Lincoln and Guba (1985), document analysis is important because it gives the researcher a general background on the subject that is being studied. The researcher collected and explored official documents such as the Affirmative Action Report for the financial year 2010/11 and 2011/12. Goddard and Melville (2002) argue that document analysis is important because it gives the researcher a general background on the subject that is being studied.

Since official records are vital sources of data, it is necessary to include the documents which enhance the interviews. The documents were scrutinised and analysed based on the background of the research as mentioned in chapter one. This was done to get a deeper understanding of the policy and helped the researcher to

analyse the findings. It also helped the researcher to verify what is happening in the regard to implementing the affirmative action policy. Most Government initiatives require the analysis of document evidence. Therefore, document analysis assisted the researcher to understand the implementation of affirmative action policy in the Public Sector, with specific reference to Office of the Prime Minister.

3.7 Data collection procedure

Both primary and secondary data will be used to collect data from the respondents. The researcher used primary data by means of semi-structured interview questions. Interviews were used to obtain views and opinions from the staff members of Office of the Prime Minister. Responses of face to face interview were be recorded on a tape recorder and then transcribed. Secondary data such as documentary analysis and books was explored. Informed consent was obtained from the Permanent Secretary of OPM and selected respondents before personal interviews were conducted. The identity of the researcher, aim and purpose of the study was disclosed to the respondents' prior taking part in the study.

3.8 Data analysis

Thorne (1997) defines analysis of data as an explicit step in theoretically interpreting data collected by using specific strategies to transform the raw data into a process form of data. For Bogdan & Biken (1982, p. 145) “analysis of data involves working

with data, organizing it, breaking it down, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important, what is to be learnt and deciding what a researcher will tell others”.

To analyze the data collected from respondents, the researcher made use of coding, transcription and thematic analysis. Data is presented through tables and charts and it is interpreted in a narrative form. Face to face interviews was tape recorded and then transcribed. The researcher classified similar responses and put them into themes and categories. This helped the researcher to examine the interview transcript and documentary notes before identifying the pattern and organizing the data into categories

Document Analysis also helped the researcher to evaluate the implementation of affirmative action policy by analyzing documents such as the affirmative action act and affirmative action report for the Office of the Prime Minister.

3.9 Ethical issues

The purpose of the study was first explained to participants and only after their consent was given did they partake in the study. The researcher strived for honesty, confidentiality and anonymity which include keeping the identity of respondents private. The researcher acknowledged authors whose work is reflected in the research paper.

3.10 Conclusion

This Chapter provides a theoretical framework of the research methodology which the researcher considers as an umbrella of the study. The research design, which includes the qualitative research approach and case study method emphasized and guided this study. The research population and sampling procedures and research instruments were presented and described. The research instruments used to collect data such as interview and documentary analysis were described.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study gathered through both interviews and document analysis. The purpose of this study was to investigate the implementation of affirmative action policy in Namibia, case study of the Office of the Prime Minister, the findings relate to the following main research question:

- What are the effects and consequences of the affirmative action policy in the Office of the Prime Minister?

The data collected through interviews were organized into categories guided by the above main research question. This chapter is organized in relation to the categories as indicated: Personal Information, working experience, general knowledge on the policy, training on the policy, pace on implementation affirmative action policy, affirmative action on reaching its aim and objectives, service delivery, reverse discrimination, contribution factors impacting on the policy in a positive and negative way and the conclusion.

4.2 Distribution of questionnaire

A total of 30 questionnaires were distributed, the researcher managed to receive 24 back from the respondents. Three of the questionnaires which were received from respondents were not completed, whereas three of the questionnaires were not returned back and no reasons were provided.

Table 1 Questionnaire distribution

	Total number	Percentage
Questionnaire received back	24	80%
Unreturned questionnaire	3	10%
Unanswered questionnaire	3	10%
Total	30	100%

4.3 Interview findings

The interview results are presented according to the categories identified above:

4.3.1 Personal information of participants.

A total of twenty-four (24) participants responded to the questionnaire, who ranked according to gender as ten (10) males and fourteen (14) females. The gender composition was almost balanced, giving a balanced view of both sexes.

Table 2: Gender of participants

Gender	Number
Male	10
Female	14
Total	24

4.3.2 Working experience of research participants

This table presents the findings on working experience in Office of the Prime Minister of twenty-four research participants. The study revealed that years of experience of the research participants varied from two to above sixteen years of working experience.

Table 3: Years of experience of research participants

Years of experience	Number of participants
0-5	6
6-10	7

11-15	8
16 and above	3

The working experience of six participant ranges between zero to five years. It was also found that one is at senior management level, three of them are at middle management level and two are at operational level. While the working years of experience for 7 participants range from six to ten years. It was found that one is at senior management level, one is at middle management level and five are at operational level. The working experience of eight participant ranges between eleven to fifteen years. It was also found that one is at senior management level, two of them are at middle management level and five are at operational level. Furthermore, the working experience of three participants ranges from sixteen years and above. Two of the participants are at senior management level and one is at operational level.

4.3.3 Understanding of respondents on affirmative action policy

This question presents the interview results as reflected by the answers responded by the research participants on their general knowledge on affirmative action policy. The views of the respondents about the knowledge on affirmative action varied from individuals.

Table 4: Some views on understanding the affirmative action policy

RESPONDENTS	VIEWS
Respondent 1	<i>“The policy is not clearly understood by all staff members. Staff members need be educated on the policy mostly those who involved in implementing the policy”.</i>
Respondent 2	<i>“I have not seen the policy thus not in the position to comment”.</i>
Respondent 3	<i>“I have heard about it but I’m not interested in knowing what it’s about because to me it serves no purpose”.</i>

The interview results above reflect that the research participants have general knowledge of affirmative action policy. However, their views about this implementation varied from individual to individual. When asked to explain their understanding of the policy, the majority of the respondents briefly described affirmative action as a policy that aims at redressing the past discrimination against certain groups such as women, the disabled and those who were discriminated based on race.

The views on implementing the policy was however interesting as the research found that some respondents were of the opinion that it was not being well coordinated and executed properly, only men from previously disadvantaged group occupied top leadership positions

while women and the disabled employees are still not well represented in senior positions. It was shocking to find that about one (1) of the respondents had not seen the policy and was not in position to comment.

The finding revealed that there is a general knowledge on the affirmative action policy found in relation with the definition of various researchers mentioned in chapter two such as Jauch (1998), Ramphela (2007) and Sadler (1996). Further analysis seems to support the arguments that the affirmative action policy is not clear to all staff members and this was clearly supported by a respondent from middle management who mentioned affirmative action as a policy with no clear vision.

The revelation of misunderstandings and confusion in regards to the policy is not surprising as validated by Bolick (1996) who stated that affirmative action is a general topic, because there are usually a lot of misinterpretations and misunderstandings such as making groups privileges very critical rather than promoting opportunities for all. Bolick argues that fairness is the answer to inequality in society as opposed to racial reform. It should take a positive stand for democratic principles and minority development.

Generally, the study revealed that, even those who gave a different picture on their knowledge on affirmative action, agreed with the rest of the respondents by stating that affirmative action is a good policy only if it is understood by all and its objective is made clear to all citizens of a country.

4.3.4 Provision of training on affirmative action policy

The research question asked participants if they had received training on the subject matter and if so, to explain whether it was helpful. The results as reflected by the answers provided by the respondents were somehow mixed. But what is training, one may ask? According to Swanepoel et al (2000, p.?), “training refers to a planned effort to facilitate the learning of the job related knowledge, skills and behavior by employees.”

The study discovered that some of the respondents on middle management and few from operational level attended training on affirmative action. A respondent on middle management indicated that *“the training focused more on how to write an affirmative action plan and reports. It was useful indeed”*. Another respondent on operational level stated that *“the training was on training the trainers and it focused on how to draw up an affirmative action policy report. The aim of the training was to train Personnel Officers who were supposed to train others in their Ministries”*. Respondents on middle management indicated that the training focused on how to analyze affirmative action plans and report. Some respondents further pointed out that

“the training was helpful because it gave an idea on how to identify barriers on affirmative action report”

However a respondent from operational level stated that he attended the affirmative action training, but the training did not have a focus on what it was trying to achieve, therefore it left a lot of people confused including him. He also stated that if the equity commission could train masses on the purpose of affirmative action policy, where the nation is (now) in terms of implementing the policy, where the nation aims to go as well as what it is trying to achieve, then a lot of people will understand the objectives of affirmative action policy. He further stated that *“the training I attended did not help much but rather complicated matters”*.

Another respondent pointed out that he did not attend any training, but he read the policy and materials on affirmative action on his own. He said that reading on his own was very helpful as he understood what the policy wants to achieve. He further states that reading on his own was very useful as the policy made it clear as to why it is redressing employment opportunity for the three groups which are identified.

The study also revealed that a respondent attended an information sharing session on the implementation of affirmative action policy in Namibia. The aim of this information sharing session was to get opinions from private and public institutions on how they are implementing the policy, challenges faced in implementing the policy and crafting future strategies on how to move forward. The respondent further

said that *“even though this was not training, I learned a lot of things on affirmative action during this session. I think these types of sessions should be held frequently so that institutions learn from each other and also spread the understanding of the policy to individuals who still have little or no knowledge of affirmative action.*

Human (1993) states that people development should be identified as a key strategic objective and top management should be actively committed to both implementing and monitoring affirmative action policy.

Based on the above findings, the researcher of this study realized the importance of training and developing staff members on affirmative action. The researcher agrees with Human (1993) who advocates that a committee should be established consisting of representatives from the employer, employee and the unions. The committee's mandate should be derived from consultations held with staff members.

On the other hand, De Grauwe (2009) argues that capacity development is a process of change and there needs to be value in it. He also stated that the capacity of staff to commit and participate in a change process may at times be the greatest challenge when the working environment offers little motivation and when the public service seems too powerless in severe development challenges. He further points out that the capacity adapts as vehicle to change environment and to be ready for the unforeseen as the key element in the profession. Cloete (2002) is also in favour of capacity building for the successful implementation of the policy.

4.3.5. Perceptions on the pace in implementing affirmative action

This section discusses the perception of the research participants regarding the pace on which affirmative action is being implemented. Varied responses come out of this question. During the interview, majority of research participants indicated that the Office of the Prime Minister was doing well on the pace of implementing the policy whereas nine respondents indicated that the office is not implementing the policy at an expected pace. While some respondents indicated that they were not sure whether OPM is doing well or not.

The study found that certain targeted research participants on operational level are of the opinion that Office of the Prime Minister is taking proactive steps towards encouraging equal opportunities for previously disadvantaged group. They further stated that the policy is geared towards creating a leveled playing ground for all in employment. Even though the policy was developed as a temporary remedy for equal employment for previously disadvantaged groups, its aim and purpose still needed to meet its goals.

A respondent stated that *“Office of the Prime Minister is moving at an acceptable pace in implementing the policy because they is visible equal employment opportunities for women and the disabled”*. This was supported by another respondent of senior management level who stated that *“the implementation of affirmative action policy has resulted in having a diverse team. The diverse team in OPM has led to innovation and creativity and it has opened up the possibilities of*

different perceptions. This is one of the benefits that affirmative action policy has brought in our office”.

Interestingly, this study also revealed that majority of the respondents argued that affirmative action policy is not implemented at an acceptable pace in the Office of the Prime Minister. A respondent on senior management level stated that *“the implementation of the act is not done in a systematic manner. Human Resources Division does not conduct annual assessments, nor does it report on a regular basis to management. Reports are not always done timely hence it is not efficient. No induction is done to new people to understand affirmative action in Office of the Prime Minister and specific agenda on the policy in OPM”.*

Some respondents on operational level stated that the future for affirmative action policy remains uncertain. They also pointed out that although there are many women in OPM today due to the policy, they stated that several controversies still surround the policy such as causing contrary discrimination. They believe that the policy causes discrimination against previously advantaged groups. Another respondent on management level pointed that the purpose of affirmative action policies is far from being met because majority women and people living with disabilities still possess the lowest paying jobs.

Another question asked was on the perception of respondents on whether the affirmative action policy should have a time frame and if so how long the policy should be in effect. Majority of the respondents were of the opinion that the policy should not have a time frame attached to it, and ten respondents thought that there should be a time frame to the policy. A respondent on operational level stated that *“the disadvantage of timing the policy is that once the time frame lapse, things might just go back to how there were previously. For as long as it is in effect, there will be no chance for women and the disabled being discriminated against”*. This was supported by another respondent on operational level who stated that *“Affirmative action should be in effect indefinite or until all employment barriers are addressed and monitoring and evaluation is done in terms of training and structures in most organizations are balanced”*.

Some respondents were of the opinion that giving a timeline may not be efficient at the moment given the challenges of overcoming discrimination in employment created by apartheid. They mentioned that women and people living with disabilities have been severely affected and these legacies still live on as men continue to enjoy supremacy and occupy senior management and executive positions. They further stated that putting a timeline will make the implementation of the policy not to be a success. A respondent on middle management level stated that *“as long as there are remnants, miscellanies of disparities, discrimination on the basis of gender, race and political conviction the existence of this policy should remain in effect. Its implementation is not impervious from biases resulting from favoritism and nepotism”*

perpetrated under the mask of affirmative action implementation". As for the respondents who were of the opinion that affirmative action should have a time frame, their views varied between a time frame of 15 to 30 years.

A question was asked for respondents to identify issues and shortcomings which are hampering with the implementation of affirmative action. During the discussions, the targeted respondents had different viewpoints on the issue. The following were pointed out as the main shortcomings and challenges in implementing affirmative action. Issues such as affirmative action regarded as a reverse discrimination, its negative impression on the free market system, the development of a few groups with no real uplift for the general population, feelings of marginalization by other ethnic groups, feelings of entitlement and the creation of unrealistic expectations by previously disadvantaged people. Some respondents also pointed out that they acknowledge the need for affirmative action in Namibia and fully indicated that even though they are aware of who should benefit, employees do not have an in depth understanding of affirmative action. They believe that there are a lot of negative associations to the policy and this has led to many organizations, both public and private sector not adhering to the policy.

A respondent on operational level indicated that *"affirmative action is reverse discrimination because it suggests and condone preferential treatment in employment opportunity of certain groups while leaving the other groups out. I view the policy as against a particular group. This can cause tensions in an organization because it*

place one group to be less privileged than the other. Everyone should be given an opportunity to prove themselves when applying for a position; appointments should be based on merits not on”.

A respondent on middle management level, however, argued that *“it is important for employment equity commission to emphasize through sensitization that affirmative action is not reverse discrimination as there was no equality during the apartheid era, and this is the time to correct past injustices”*. This was supported by some of the respondents on operational level who pointed out that the aim of the policy is to eliminate past injustices by ensuring that all the people in society are represented in the workplace. A respondent stated that affirmative action should not be a threat to anyone; it should be seen as aiming to make a better life to those who never had a chance in the past.

The above sentiments are supported by Degenaar (1980) who stated that the policy elevates the status of the people who were previously under privileged and it is aimed at redressing past wrongs and restore equal access to employment. Heilman et al (1987) on the other hand states that affirmative action policy should be implemented by both public and private employers to ensure that all candidates irrespective of their age, race, colour, gender or religious background are treated equally. He further pointed out that the objective is to maximize diversity in the workplace by improving the lives of previously disadvantaged groups.

4.3.6 Affirmative action on reaching its aim and objective

This section discusses the perception of research participants regarding whether affirmative action is achieving its purpose or not. Respondents were asked to share their opinion on whether affirmative action is a good initiative or not, if the policy is achieving its purpose or not, and whether respondents anticipate if the policy will achieve its purpose in future. Various responses came out of these questions.

The findings of this study revealed that twenty respondents think that affirmative action policy is a good initiative. Some of the respondents said *that “affirmative action encourages organizations to recruit people of different races and genders and it also encourages diversity in the workplace. It is important because it creates a society where no one is discriminated against”*. Without it, there would be very few people from previously disadvantaged groups in most organizations. It tries to correct inherent biases from the past.

Another respondent revealed that before independence in Namibia, it has always been racial hierarchies with previously advantaged groups were occupying positions at the top. The respondents further pointed out that the group was also dominating in most positions at all levels, while the previously disadvantaged were few in the workplace and they are the majority in society. The respondent further said *“they were no laws and policies that protected the previously disadvantaged people, it was more like an empire of one ethnic group and it was unfair. Now there are employment opportunities for all because of this policy, it helps with racial equality”*.

One respondent pointed out that *“racism will always be there and affirmative action policy gives the boost that previously disadvantaged groups need. They have the capacity and know how to succeed but they just need the boost”*. Another respondent stated that *“with affirmative action, if two equally qualified men apply for a job; preferential treatment will be given to the disadvantaged man because he did not enjoy such privileges previously”*.

A respondent on middle management and majority of respondents on operational level stated that affirmative action is an important policy as it will help correct past injustices. A respondent on operational level further stated that *“any country with a history of repression and suffering on employment discrimination should put measures in place on how to rectify such repressions. This will create a nation where all citizens are not overlooked or discriminated against in employment”*. The policy also brings diversity in the workplace. Curry (1996, p.76) concurs with this by stating that measures have been put in place to ensure that everyone irrespective of their gender and race can be considered for appointment.

A respondent on senior management level revealed that women have always been taught not to think and that all they could do is domestic work. The respondent also pointed out that the introduction of affirmative action has proven otherwise and without the policy, disparities between ethnicities and gender would have widened. The respondent further stated that it is natural to see that disadvantaged people of all races, ethnicity, and sexes, were going to have more trouble to get employment

opportunities without affirmative action. The respondent also said that everyone can now afford to get jobs of their choice if they qualify for such a job without any discrimination because of the advantage to level the playing field by the policy.

Most respondents were of the opinion that affirmative action policy is not a good initiative. A respondent on operational level stated that *“affirmative action is reverse prejudice against previously advantaged group because with the policy this group is looked less than other groups. Affirmative action was a good policy for the first 10 years after its inception when inequality in the workplace was a problem but for the most part that problem does no longer exist. Our country has grown and is no longer faced inequality in the workplace and this is unfair treatment to previously advantaged group”*. This was supported by a respondent on middle management level who stated that *“why should people from previously advantaged be punished for something his forefather did? Why should people from previously disadvantaged groups benefit because their ancestors were discriminated against? At the moment, this is nobody’s fault; we should look for measures to address this instead of making it a reverse discrimination against one group.”* Some respondents were of the opinion that affirmative action prevents employers to employ people who are well skilled from getting jobs that they deserve while permitting those who are less skilled or unskilled because they belong to a group that was previously disadvantaged. They also pointed out that employers should be given an opportunity to hire who they think is best suited for the job. Businesses may fall because they are employing people from previously disadvantaged groups just to comply with affirmative action policy.

They also said that nobody should be forced to lose out on employment opportunity because the company is forced to hire people from previously disadvantaged groups.

Most respondents on operational level stated that affirmative action policy is not a good policy because it is racist and sexist. Some respondents revealed that *“it is unfair to force employers to base appointments on race and sex. Organizations should be allowed to hire most qualified person for a job, not based race or sex”*.

Another respondent stated that affirmative action is not good policy because if it is employed, that means that the employers are hiring based on race, and not on capabilities and qualifications and that is unfair. The respondent also stated that *“if someone deserves the job, then that person should be given that job”*. This respondent pointed out that *“knowledge, skills and ability should not be overlooked when hiring people, otherwise an organization will end up with underperformers. “I believe it's also discrimination when one group is put above another. Getting a job should be based on performance and merits in the interview not on anything else”*.

Various responses were gathered on whether affirmative action is achieving its purpose or not, and if not, whether respondents anticipate if the policy will achieve its purpose in the future. Sowell (2004) states that affirmative action is projected to promote employment opportunities of groups within a society who were previously disadvantaged by giving them equal access like those who were privileged to attain employment. The respondent further stated that it is the responsibility of government to ensure that certain designated groups are included in employment opportunities.

Majority of the respondents stated that the policy is achieving its purpose. A respondent on operational level pointed out that affirmative action is achieving its purpose because many people from three identified disadvantaged groups in the policy have been affirmed in appointment across the public and private sector and they are really performing and yielding good results. This was supported by other respondents from operational level who stated that *“in the Public Service in Namibia, high positions are still occupied by men, but women and the disabled are also visible in most of the organizational structures”*. During the interview, one respondent from senior management level revealed that even though affirmative action policy is slow in achieving its purpose, there is clear picture that the people from designated groups are penetrating both senior and middle management especially in the public sector.

Another respondent on operational level also pointed out that affirmative action is achieving its purpose for ensuring that there is equality in employment for previously disadvantaged groups, but not enough to achieve total equality. A respondent on senior management level was of the opinion that *“since the implementation of affirmative action, we have seen radical changes in recruitment process and previously disadvantaged Namibians are slowly represented in high level positions within organization”*. The respondent further said that *“a lot still has to be done to successfully see the difference we are aiming to achieve”*.

The finding of this study revealed that some of the responses counter argued that the policy is not achieving its purpose. A few respondents said that they did not think the

policy will achieve its purpose in the future. A respondent said that *“affirmative action is not achieving its purpose at all and this is because of lack of preparations and clear strategies from the time of its inception on how to implement it. The policy is not well understood by its implementers. It will be very difficult to bring balance because in Namibian at the moment, senior and executive positions are still dominated by males”*. Another respondent on middle management level stated that *“the policy will not achieve its purpose simply because of the level of ignorance on the policy as well as culture of laxity in government. These combined with the lack of monitoring on the part of government agencies responsible for supervision, are serious impediments in its implementation”*. The respondent was however of the opinion that affirmative action will achieve its purpose in the future if it is implemented purely as per its purpose, under informed supervisors and ensuring the monitoring of the milestones of its implementation and closing disparity gap. He further stated that it will be achieved if all stakeholders work towards forming fair equilibrium in all facets of the workplace environment. This was supported by many respondents who stated that if affirmative action is applied correctly and right measures put in place, affirmative action will achieve its purpose in future.

Some respondents were of the opinion that not all designated groups are represented in the workplace because people living with disability are very few. They pointed out that more still have to be done to accommodate the disabled as per what the policy was initiated for. They further stated that the policy will only achieve its purpose once we see all three designated groups visible in both private and public sector.

Another question which was asked in this section was whether affirmative action motivates employees in the Office of the Prime Minister. Sundstrom and Associates (1999) state that for a work team to be a viable unit, individuals need to be motivated to station their efforts and ideas towards the achievement of goals. The findings of this study revealed that majority of the respondents were of the opinion that affirmative action policy does not motivate employees in OPM. They mentioned that the policy does not give morale and work fulfillment to male employees because it gives preferential treatment to women while men are neglected.

A respondent on operational level stated that *“affirmative action has discouraged me to the point where I think applying for a position is a waste of time. Positions are reserved for women and I think this is unfair. This policy has shattered dreams of many young men and the future does not look bright and promising for us”*. This was confirmed by other male respondents on middle management level and operational level who pointed out that the future for career advancement looks blank because there is no fair promotion since room has to be made for women and people with disabilities. They also stated that most people from previously disadvantaged groups who get promoted on a token on affirmative action do not show any commitment and passion for the job because they know that they do not deserve it.

On the other hand, Chacko (1982) found that women who believed their gender was the motive for their hiring reported low job commitment and satisfaction than women who did not believe gender played a role in their hiring. However Turner, Pratkanis,

and Hardaway (1991) and Turner and Pratkanis (1993) argued that selection on gender did not directly impair self-reported motivation for a task. The study established that some respondents agreed that affirmative action policy motivates employees in OPM.

Table 5: Views on affirmative action motivating staff members

Respondent 1	<i>“People from designated groups who are meeting the requirements are able to apply for positions have a good chance to be employed”.</i>
Respondent 2	<i>“Women are able to apply for management position without fear of being look down on”</i>
Respondent 3	<i>“It boost the morale of female staff members because there is room for career advancement for them”</i>
Respondent 4	<i>“It motivates employees because it brings diversity in the workplace”</i>

4.3.7 Affirmative action on enhancing performance and service delivery

The question on the issue of enhancing performance and service delivery was very interesting as there have been a lot of studies on lack of skills in the public service, but not specific on the impact of affirmative action on performance service delivery. The research could only find three studies that investigated the impact of sex based selection on performance. Brutus and Ryan (1994) established that performance varied with the interaction of selection procedure. Nacoste (1989) conducted a study where he told 48 male and 49 female participants that they were selected for

participation in the experiment on the basis of either merit or sex. There were equal numbers of male and female participants who thought affirmative action policies were fair or unfair. On a brainstorming task, Nacoste found no differences due to selection procedure or fairness perceptions.

For this study however, various responses regarding affirmative action enhancing performance and revamping the public service were advanced. Many respondents stated that they believe affirmative action enhances performance because it gives people the chance to prove what they are capable of. A respondent said that *“previously disadvantaged groups are being given the employment opportunity, therefore it is up to them to get better education so that they acquire knowledge and skills to perform their duties exceptional”*. Another female respondent on middle managerial level agreed by stating that *“three beneficiaries of the policy suffered from low-quality or no education at all and by being given second chance is an opportunity to prove their capability and blossom”*.

Some respondents argued that women and other groups who are favored by affirmative action are always on the spot light because most of the people think that since they are appointed on affirmative action policy token, they cannot really perform according to required standards. They further pointed out that the groups favored by the policy are high performers because they want to prove that they were not appointed as a matter of fulfilling the requirements of affirmative action policy.

The above observation is supported by Turner and Pratkanis (1993) who demonstrated that performance is affected by selection processes and conceptualizations of task requirements. They conducted a study on Female participants (N = 60) who were told that they were assigned to a position on the basis of either merit or gender, and that successful performance on the experimental task required either effort or capabilities. Participants performed eight trials of a standard brainstorming task. Women who were told they were selected on the basis of gender performed better when the task required capability rather than effort. Various studies have surveyed how affirmative action policy, influence various measures of organizational effectiveness.

In a study of manufacturing firms, Leonard (1984) found that the percentage of women and minorities in a firm were not associated with measures of manufacturing productivity and efficiency. Lovrich, Steel, and Hood (1986) compared police departments in 65 cities that had substantially increased their percent of minority police between 1978 and 1984 to those of 56 cities that had shown little increase. The two groups of departments were equally effective. In a study using the same procedure, Steel and Lovrich (1987) compared performance of police departments from 1970 through 1980. They found no consistent differences in performance between departments with many or few female officers.

Majority of the respondents revealed that affirmative action policy lower standards because people who were appointed were not capable of carrying out their duties. It

was found that most of them were of the opinion that those employees from previously disadvantaged groups lacked ability, and that affirmative action recruits delivered poor quality services when compared to employees who fall under the category of previously advantaged group employees.

A respondent on operational level stated that *“affirmative action policy does not enhance performance because employers are only concerned with creating a balanced workforce that constitutes people from previously disadvantaged groups rather than recruiting people who are capable of performing and delivering”*

In support of the above, Garcia (1997) stated that those who use this argument have tended to assume that in the past, standards were the only criteria used to determine who got a particular job. He further states that job reservation ensured that previously disadvantaged people were legally barred from undertaking a wide range of work simply because of the colour of their skin, and regardless of whether or not they had the skills to undertake the job.

Another respondent pointed out that *“the introduction of affirmative action is big change in any country, and it is impossible to see change immediately because people are still resisting change. Fear and lack of understanding have resulted in poor performance from the previously advantaged whereas previously disadvantaged groups are not performing because of being looked down as being appointed to comply with the policy”*.

The study also interestingly discovered that in OPM, when previously disadvantaged persons are appointed while knowing that they have been appointed as beneficiaries of affirmative action, they will perform exceptionally well because they do not want to disappoint their employer as well as their colleagues.

4.3.8 Reverse discrimination

Is affirmative action a reverse discrimination was one of the study questions. According to Sowell (2004) reverse discrimination is discrimination against members of a dominant or majority group, or in favor of members of a minority or historically disadvantaged group. These groups can be categorized in terms of gender, race or other factors. He also states that this discrimination may pursue to redress social inequalities where minority groups have been deprived of access to the same treats as those of majority group.

Holzer & Neumark, (2000) concur with the above as they define reverse discrimination as the unequal treatment of members of the majority groups resulting from preferential policies in employment, intended to remedy earlier discrimination against minorities. There are various responses regarding whether affirmative action is discriminating against the previously advantaged groups and whether the previously disadvantaged groups are represented at all levels in OPM.

Some respondents stated that affirmative action is discriminating against previously advantaged groups. A respondent said that *“in the name of affirmative action, capable candidates are denied opportunity because positions are given to people who did not*

even perform and prove themselves in the interview just to fulfill the requirements of affirmative action. There is lack of fairness and professionalism in the application of this policy; it is an attempt to eliminate discrimination with discrimination”.

Most of the respondents who think affirmative action is discriminating against the previously advantaged argued that filling of vacant positions should be based on merits with measures and standards designed to identify those best-qualified. A respondent on operational level also suggested that the evaluation of the applicant should be in line with the specifications of the positions, based on the applicants’ knowledge of the job rather than criteria set by affirmative action.

A respondent from middle management stressed that the original purpose of the policy is aimed at normalizing the disparities emanating from previous injustices promoted by previous administration. He pointed that, however, misinterpretation of that purpose may cause its implementation to be obscure, because others may use it as a tool to revenge, hence creating more disparities. This was supported by a respondent from operational level who stated that *“even though affirmative action is aimed at balancing gender representation at key level in an organization, it can also still further disadvantage staff members or create new forms of discrimination. The issue of gender balance which advocates for gender balance by promoting females into critical positions may disadvantage capable/skilled males. Such a move does not only sideline those males, but it destroys the organization in the long run”.*

The above is supported by Smith (1992) who states that when members of a specific group are restricted from employment, this group will be less committed to their work because they are discouraged and demotivated and this can cause low productivity. This is supported by Holzer & Neumark (2000) who state that affirmative action causes reverse-discrimination leading to fewer jobs for the previously advantaged group, that it leads to lower productivity due to hiring of less skilled workers. He further points out that affirmative action creates two classes in the workplace, those who deserve the position and those who get position by means of complying with requirements of the policy.

The finding revealed that nineteen respondents indicated that affirmative action does not discriminate against the previously advantaged group. Five respondents from operational level pointed out that affirmative action is only trying to accord equal employment opportunity to the groups who did not enjoy such privileges in the past. One respondent on middle management level stated that *“affirmative action is not discriminating against advantaged groups because previously disadvantaged groups are not automatically given positions but rather they compete with others.”*

A respondent from middle management stated that *“affirmative action is not discriminating against previously advantaged groups because they have a better chance of getting positions and to be promoted if they apply. This perception has prevented majority of them from applying for jobs because they think jobs can only be occupied by groups in affirmative action. Affirmative action explicitly states that they should be a balance workforce, not just groups in the policy. Therefore affirmative*

action does not discriminate anyone, but promote a balanced structure in the workplace". This was confirmed by seven respondents who pointed out that affirmative action is not the source of discrimination, but the vehicle for removing the effects of past discrimination by seeking to reconcile injustices of the past and providing access to equal opportunity in employment.

Table 6: Some opinions on affirmative action not discriminating against previously advantaged groups

Respondent	Comment
Respondent 1	<i>"They are still well taken care of, mostly at the private sector"</i>
Respondent 2	<i>"Affirmative action advocates for equal opportunity, therefore they are not discriminated against"</i>
Respondent 3	<i>"They are not discriminated against but if we don't put a time line to affirmative action that might be the case".</i>

On the question of whether previously disadvantaged groups are represented at all levels in Office of Prime Minister, respondents had different views. The study revealed that three respondents were of the opinion that disadvantaged groups were indeed fairly represented at all levels in the Office of the Prime Minister. One of the

respondents stated that *“it is happening gradually in OPM as it is expected with any change. Men occupy most of management positions while women are less. Men occupy 63% of senior management positions while women are 37%. The middle management is better with 54% men while women are 46%. Specialized positions have 70% men and 30% women. So it is not so bad but there is a need for a plan at senior management level. All other lower levels have more women than men”*.

This is in agreement with Weiner (1993) who argues that employers have to ensure that the composition of their workforce reflect the composition of the population. He further said that if 10% of the population was black, then at least 10% of the workforce had to be black giving them a proportionate share in the workforce.

The above statement is also supported by Jauch (1998) who states that six years after Namibia's independence, in March 1996, about 70% of the management posts in the civil service were held by people from disadvantaged groups. Most of them were black men (52%) and only 13% were black women. He also pointed out that these figures indicate that affirmative action made the civil service more representative of the country's population but women continue to be under-represented.

Some of the respondents said that there is representation of previously disadvantaged groups in OPM because the representation of senior management and middle management is occupied by mainly black men and black women. Like the first respondent, they also mentioned that the majority of people who are occupying positions on operational level are women.

Majority of respondents stated that previously disadvantaged groups are not fairly represented at all levels in the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) because of lack of implementation of the affirmative action policy. One of the respondents believed that they are seriously overlooked and people living with disabilities are being discriminated against because they are very few in OPM. Some of the respondents agreed with the above and one stated that *“People with disability are not fairly represented at all levels; one of the contributing factors is the unavailability of suitable qualified persons. Government should send them for studies so that they can qualify for positions in the public service. OPM must put in place measures to develop staff members from designated groups as an important part of their Affirmative Action plans. These should include measures, such as understudy and sponsoring their studies in areas where they can be employed. If no strategies are crafted to help them qualify for positions, then there will be no fair representation of disabled people”*. Some respondents stated that they are not sure whether OPM has a fair representation of people from previously disadvantaged groups.

Table 7: Responses on whether there is a fair representation of disadvantaged groups in OPM

Yes	Three
No	Sixteen
Not Sure	Five

4.3.9 Perceptions on the contributing factors impacting on the implementation of affirmative action

This section discusses the perception of research participants regarding the positive contributing factors on the effective implementation of affirmative action policy and challenges observed in implementing the policy. During the implementation of affirmative action the Office of the Prime Minister should give attention to factors which could impact the process either, positively or negatively, and to search for ways in which these can be encouraged or deterred.

The targeted respondents had different viewpoints on this issue, as differentiating between the main contributing factors and major challenges that impact the effective implementation of affirmative action. Issues such as monitoring of its compliance during recruitment, barriers addressed in the policy not implemented, employees not well informed on the policy, ineffective planning as well as lack of system thinking.

In addition, other issues which were highlighted as impacting on the successful implementation of affirmative action included poor training and development on the policy, commitment from central government, lack of guidelines, lack of focus, nepotism and favoritism, lack of consolidated affirmative action report from employment equity commission, no time management to attached time frame to the policy as well as resistance to change.

A respondent from operational level pointed out that *“it is of supreme importance that affirmative action should not be implemented as if it were something distinctive and standing on its own, and not linked to other organizational processes.* From his view, he highlighted that the policy should be integrated as system thinking rather than linear thinking because its success and achievement depend not on one person but the whole nation. The issue of training and development was found to be very crucial in the interview because a respondent from middle management stated that *“for the implementation of the policy to be a success, as a nation we need to come up with clear guidelines as well as train all key stakeholders on how to implement this policy”*. He further pointed out that every stakeholder of the policy must be dedicated, cooperative and work as a team to ensure that its aim and purpose is achieved.

Another respondent stated that training modules should be developed in order to sensitize everyone on the importance and benefits of the policy. He further indicated that this will eliminate any resistance and fear that a lot of people have towards affirmative action policy. The issue of lack of understanding was confirmed by a respondent from operational level who stated that *“people don’t have a clue of what is really happening with affirmative action policy, and my conclusion is that this is because there is lack of framework and guideline on how to implement this policy. I have never seen a policy that comes without guidelines, and without these guidelines, we should forget about realizing the aim and purpose of affirmative action policy”*. He further said that *“communication and planning should improve between the*

employers and the employment equity commission. I'm of the opinion that the affirmative action report should take place on a yearly basis instead of every after three year. The current three years reporting arrangement does not do justice to the implementation of the policy”.

A respondent concurred with the above by stating that “affirmative action policy depend on the willingness of public servant support, regardless of whether they are beneficiaries of the policy or not. It is important that the aim and purpose of affirmative action policies is communicated, understood and accepted by all public servants. It could have been noble to develop policy in consultation with employees themselves so that they gain understanding from its inception. Employment equity commission should develop effective mechanisms for resolving conflicts and misunderstandings which may arise in the workplace as a result of implementing affirmative action policies”.

Some respondents stated that the only means of ensuring that public and private institutions are adhering to the policy is through the three years reports that are sent to the employment equity commission by all organizations who employ more than 50 employees. A respondent on middle management level stated that each organization should have a committee on affirmative action implementation. She further stated that monitoring the implementation of the policy and making necessary adjustments where needed, should be ongoing processes by the committee. The committee should

keep employees abreast of developments of affirmative action implementation on a constant basis.

The issue of planning came back out again from various respondents as indicated earlier in this chapter. A respondent from middle management level stated *that “there is lack of planning in the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and public service at large on how affirmative action is going to be implemented in each financial year. An affirmative action policy plan should set goals on how OPM or any other organization will eliminate employment opportunity barriers for previously disadvantaged groups. Affirmative Action Planning should aim to ensure that workforces in the public service reflect the diversity”*.

Another respondent from operational level agreed by stating that being a custodian of affirmative action policy, Human Resources Division should craft yearly strategies that will help OPM to implement affirmative action policy. He further stated that without an affirmative action implementation plan, OPM will be working in a vacuum without knowing how many people from the previously disadvantaged groups still have to be appointed in order to know if the groups are represented or not. This will help to evaluate the composition of the workforce and compare it to how HR wants the structure to be in future in order to claim full representation of previously disadvantaged groups.

Interestingly, the finding of the study also revealed that there are various positive contributing factors impacting on the effectiveness of implementation of the policy. During the discussions, the targeted respondents had variety of views on the issue. The following were pinpointed as the main positive contributing factors. These factors are, motivating previously disadvantaged people, they have an opportunity to improve their lives and grow; they are given an opportunity to effectively contribute to the economy of the country. A respondent from senior management stated that *“people from designated group will gain confidence, experience and recognition.* She further pointed out that government will deliver on its constitutional mandate by creating equal opportunities for all.

4.4 Document analysis

The aim of this section is to analyze documents which substantiate with the findings which were found during the interviews. Documents such as Office of the Prime Minister’s Affirmative action report for 2010/11 and 2011/11 were analyzed. The purpose of analyzing the two reports is to determine whether OPM is effectively implementing the affirmative Action.

This study found that the Human Resources Division is responsible for writing the affirmative action report after consultations are made with the management and staff members below management to get inputs on how best to address discriminatory conditions in employment of people in designated groups. The study revealed that the

Office of the Prime Minister has an affirmative action committee responsible with scrutinizing the annual reports that are written by the Human Resources Division. Another finding of this study is that in the financial year 2010/2011, a temporary committee was set to scrutinize the report for that financial year because majority of the people who served on the previous committee were no longer in the public service. For the financial year 2011/2012, a permanent committee was set and all designated groups were represented in that committee.

The study also found that for the two financial years the reports does not specify clear measureable targets that they wanted to achieve. It was, however, discovered that the Office set standards and also anticipated defined outcomes that they wanted to achieve for the two years. It was also found that the reports had similar objectives and these objectives were to eliminate employment barriers against persons in designated groups; make available positions of employment to designate groups as reasonably possible; and ensure that such persons are equitably represented in the various positions of employment.

The study found that for the period 2010/11, OPM had a total number of two hundred and sixty employees on their structure. Of that number, two hundred and forty nine were from designated groups. The data indicates that the majority of the employees in designated groups were on operational level. It was interestingly observed by the researcher that out of the two hundred and forty nine designated groups that were employed in the financial year 2010/11, only four were persons with disabilities. In

2011/12, two hundred and fifty six were from designated group and out of that number only three are persons living with disabilities.

The researcher observed that the Office of the Prime Minister come up with numerical goals to appoint people in designated groups for the next three years. The report indicated that the Office anticipates to increase the number of people living with disabilities from the current three to fourteen.

The researcher also observed that the reports identified the following barriers which hinder OPM to implement the policy successfully:

- Barriers in selection criteria,

Not all people from designated groups were represented on selection panel to allow preferential treatment.

- Barrier in allocation of job assignment,

Stereotyping such as women and those living with disabilities not as competent as men.

- Barrier in working environment;

Office of the Prime Minister building is not user friendly for people with disabilities, facilities, security doors and fire exits.

- Barrier in Training and Development

There are no training schemes in place for designated groups to enable them to function in jobs and not to sink or swim.

4.4 Conclusion

This study revealed the different views of the research participants on various themes as indicated above. There are various issues raised in relation to the implementation of the affirmative action policy in the Public service more specifically in Office of the Prime Minister. They include issues such as lack of training on the policy which results in misunderstandings about the policy by staff members, lack of annual planning on how to address affirmative action barriers is not addressed in the policy, employees not well informed on the policy, lack of system thinking and lack of monitoring the implementation pace of the policy and its compliance during recruitment by employment equity commission.

Overall, the research findings revealed that the policy has brought changes in the structure for Office of the Prime Minister because there are more men from previously disadvantaged groups in senior management while women are not as many, but they are represented at other levels within the structure. It was, however, sad to note that people living with disabilities are not well represented both at management level and below. The next chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations thereof.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the main conclusions from the finding of the study, emanating from the investigation on the implementation of affirmative action policy in the public service in Namibia, particularly in the Office of the Prime Minister. It finally makes recommendations that will hopefully assist in the implementation of the said policy.

5.2 Conclusion

As earlier indicated in the analysis above, a number of challenges still remain to be addressed if the affirmative action policy is to ever realise its intended purpose. The policy was adopted by government on the recommendation and under the supreme legal framework of the country, the constitution but other supporting instruments, such as awareness, social realities, acceptance of the policy and timeframe among others were not taken into consideration or at least given enough thoughts.

These realities cannot be ignored, as they will in one way or the other affect the implementation of the policy. Currently, the implementation of the policy is being affected because of non-compliance, lack of supporting policy instruments such,

vigorous training, understudy, attachments etc. The absence or lack thereof of such supporting policy instruments and atmosphere undermines the envisaged and intended outcomes of the policy.

The notion by some employees that the affirmative action policy is discriminating against previously advantaged groups because it lacks fairness and professionalism, attempt to eliminate past injustice is a worrying fact as this may impact of the general performance of employees and ultimately the economy. The need to assure those aggrieved should form part of the awareness drive so as to dispel the myth of reverse discrimination.

The absence of the timeframe is also one of the worrying factors that should be addressed by the policy. This will not only dispel the issues of reverse discrimination but it will also encourage performance and productivity as those that are given a chance should know that the honeymoon period will someday end and only their performance will see them through. Although this maybe a challenge because damage and the over a hundred year apartheid era, it is the research belief that it is a factor that needs to be considered sooner than later. After all it is practically impossible to undo all the past injustices, even if it takes the same period of redoing and correcting them.

Another point of consideration is how can one guard against development and uplifting of a few groups if performance is not factored in. Such, a situation if left unchecked can result in the general population, feeling marginalized by other ethnic

groups which may bring some undesirable consequences. The absence of a scientific and period review mechanism may result in some people developing an unhealthy attitude, feelings of entitlement and creating of unrealistic expectations, which in the long run maybe unhealthy for the Namibia society in terms of their competitiveness in the real global world.

It can generally be concluded that despite the challenges discussed in the paper entitled Affirmative Action Policy, is a necessary policy and need to be supported by all. The progress made so far by the office of the prime minster is commendable that although the Affirmative Action Policy has not made much progress in addressing and elevation of women and persons living with disabilities need proper attention. Overall, it can be said that the policy has had a positive impact on the Office of the Prime Minister as the previously disadvantaged, especially men, now occupies most of management positions than before the policy was introduced.

5.3 Recommendations

Some of the respondents are not well familiar with the affirmative action policy, it is important to consider training to all employees in order bring the understanding of staff members to be on the same level. The training will clarify all misunderstandings which are emanating from the policy. Induction and foundation courses should also be introduced for new employees. Employees from the designated groups in management positions should be supported by offering training opportunities for

them to be empowered with the essential skills. This will strengthen their management competences and allow them to make significant decisions

OPM should balance its structure by not only having majority of top managers to be from previously advantaged groups. They should ensure that people from designated groups are appointed on management positions. An increase in the number of employees from the designated groups would increase the ratio in total employment at management level and this should be encouraged. Equal distribution of job assignment should be promoted, each and every staff member should have an opportunity to be allocated with a task regardless of whether it is challenging or not.

OPM should work towards setting numerical annual targets for equal representation in employment opportunities. Achieving the equal representation target will help OPM realize its goals of affirmative action and lead to equitable allocation of resources in the economy.

The EEC should craft an aggressive strategy to ensure that employers honour the provisions of the Affirmative Action (Employment) Act of 1998. The affirmative action policy has to be obligatory to ensure compliance by employers by way of prosecuting offenders in accordance with section 47 of the Affirmative Action Act.

Monitoring and evaluation of the policy should take place on a regular basis to enable the EEC to assess the pace at which representation of the previously disadvantaged

group is taking place in both public and private sector. All stakeholders should be involved in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of affirmative action measures.

Office of the Prime Minister as the administrator of the Public Service and EEC as a custodian of affirmative action policy should ensure that the policy is implemented by first considering people under the designated group when they come for interviews. This should be supported by custom-made training targeting to empower the designated groups. The EEC should have a staff compliment that will allow it to support all the 14 regions of Namibia through establishment of cluster centers.

In conclusion, this chapter has broadly enabled the researcher of this study to have a better understanding in relation to the research area and also realize a need for further investigation on how people perceive the implementation of affirmative action policy in the public service in Namibia.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 - QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondent

My name is Glodean Ntelamo Sisamu a student of Postgraduate Masters in Business Administration (MBA) at the University of Namibia, Namibia Business School. The school is academically an integral part of the University of Namibia and is a department within the Faculty of Economics and Management Science.

My thesis is entitled “An analysis of the implementation of Affirmative Action Policy in the Namibian Public Sector: A Case Study of The Office of the Prime Minister”.

The participants will remain anonymous and will only be identified as A, B, C and D. I would very much appreciate your assistance in completing this research and look forward to receive your response. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information.

Kind regards

Glodean N. Sisamu

Instructions

1. Read the questions carefully and asks where you don't understand
2. Tick the appropriate answer

Section 1

A. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE ON AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

1. Gender

Male	Female
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2. What is your position level?

Senior Management Level	
Middle Management Level	
Operational Level	

3. How many years have you been working in Office of the Prime Minister?

0-5 years	
6-10	
11-15	
16 and above	

4. What are your comments on affirmative action policy?

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5. Have you attended any Training on Affirmative Action?

Yes	No
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If so, about what and please explain whether it was helpful?

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B. IMPLEMENTATION OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

6. In general, do you think affirmative action policy is a good initiative?

Yes	No
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Can you please elaborate?

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7. In your opinion, do you think it is a good idea to implement affirmative action policy in Namibia?

Yes	No
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8. In your opinion, how long should affirmative action policy be in effect?

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9. What are the shortcomings you have observed in implementing Affirmative Action?

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10. In your opinion, do you think affirmative action will achieve its purpose?

Yes	No
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11. If your answer is no, do you think it will achieve its purpose in the future?

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12. In your views, do you think affirmative action motivate all employees in OPM?

Yes	No
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Can you explain?

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C. SERVICE DELIVERY

13. Do you think affirmative action is effective in terms of service delivery in OPM?

Yes	No
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Can you please explain?

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D. REVERSE DISCRIMINATION

14. Are previously disadvantaged groups fairly represented at all levels in OPM?

Yeas	No	Not Sure
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Please elaborate

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15. In your views, do you think affirmative action is discriminating against previously advantaged groups?

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D. CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

16. In your views, what are the negative contributing factors impacting on implementation of Affirmative Action policy?

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17. What are the positive contributing factors impacting the effectiveness of implementing affirmative action policy?

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18. Do you think Affirmative Action policy is fair?

Yes	No
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Please explain further?

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19. Anything else you want to tell me?

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APPENDIX 2 -LETTER

Mrs. Nangula Mbako
The Permanent Secretary
Office of the Prime Minister
Windhoek
Namibia

23 January 2014

**SUBJECT: AUTHORIZATION SOUGHT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN OFFICE
OF THE PRIME MINISTER**

I hereby sought the Permanent Secretary's permission to conduct research for my Masters in Business Administration (MBA) qualification.

I was provided with financial assistance to pursue a Post Graduate Diploma in Business Administration (PGDBA) (Honors Degree) with the University of Namibia under Namibia Business School in the financial year 2011/2012. I excelled in my studies and I have decided to continue with **Masters in Business Administration (MBA)** specializing in **Management Strategy**, also still under **UNAM**. I excelled in the course work, and the only module remaining for me to obtain the aforementioned qualification is Business Research. The topic of my Research paper is An Analysis of the Implementation of Affirmative Action Policy in the Namibian Public Sector: A Case study of the Office of the Prime Minister.

I therefore request the Permanent Secretary to grant me permission to conduct my research in the Office of the Prime Minister.

Thank you in anticipation.
Yours Faithfully

Glodean N. Limbo
Chief Human Resources Policy Analyst
Department Public Service Management
Directorate: Management Services