GENDER BALANCE IN POSITIONS OF POWER AND DECISION-MAKING IN GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS: AN ASSESSMENT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL GENDER POLICY IN NAMIBIA

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

BY

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ABSTRACT

This study assesses the implementation of the National Gender Policy, with more emphasis on gender balance in position of power and decision-making. The topic, gender equality, was chosen on the understanding that equality and respect for Human Rights are major principles of democracy that the Namibian government has opted for. Namibia set herself a target of reaching 30% female representation in power and decision-making positions by 2005 in an effort to achieve an acceptable gender balance in national governance.

Analysis of the available data reveals that the National Assembly has 29.2% female representation thereby putting Namibia in the top twenty of IPU countries with many women in parliament. In addition, the country’s National Council boasts of 26.9% female representation, an improvement from 7.7% representation in the previous Council. In Public Service, the female representation in the Management Cadre has also increased from 20.8% in 1999 to 29.2% in 2004. However, at regional government level women remain under-represented. Before the elections of November 2004, representation of women in Regional Councils was 7.9%. It has since increased to 13.1% but still falls short of the government’s 30% target. It is only at local authority councils' level where female representation accounts for 43.4%. The result can be attributed to the legislative quota that compels political parties to nominate a specific number of women to serve on the council.
The study thus found out that of the three levels of government, namely central government, regional and local government, only at the local government level that the 30% representation has been achieved. National Assembly and the Public Service failed to meet the 30% target by less than 1%, while the National Council fell short by less than 3%. It is at regional government level and in parastatals where women remain seriously under-represented.
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Lastly, I would like to thank the University of Namibia for granting me an opportunity to study with them, and in the same vein I want to acknowledge my supervisor, for his guidance in the process of completing this research within the scope of the University.
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to three women, who are and shall remain the pillars of my existence:

- Late Mekulu Maria Ndilimeke Ndjab – Grandmom in your spirit I wonder.
- Me Theresia Naufiku Nunes-Kashanga – Mom in your strength I conquer.
- Me Victoria Ndinelimba Elifas – Mom through your spiritual nurture I grow.
DECLARATION

I, Johanna Ndilokelwa Manuel, declare herby 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 learning.

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(Johanna Ndilokelwa Manuel)
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<tr>
<td>AIDS</td>
<td>Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome</td>
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<td>AU</td>
<td>African Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women</td>
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<td>CEO</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
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<td>CROs</td>
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<td>DWA</td>
<td>Department of Women Affairs</td>
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<td>EEC</td>
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<td>Gender Focal Points</td>
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<td>HIV</td>
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<td>IDEA</td>
<td>International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance</td>
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<td>IPU</td>
<td>International Parliamentary Union</td>
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<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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<td>MGECW</td>
<td>Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare</td>
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<td>MP</td>
<td>Member of Parliament</td>
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<td>NEWF</td>
<td>Namibia Elected Women’s Forum</td>
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<td>NGCO</td>
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<td>NGOs</td>
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<td>NGP</td>
<td>National Gender Policy</td>
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<td>NGPA</td>
<td>National Gender Plan of Action</td>
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<td>NID</td>
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<td>OPM</td>
<td>Office of the Prime Minister</td>
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<td>OVC’s</td>
<td>Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children</td>
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<td>PLAN</td>
<td>People’s Liberation Army of Namibia</td>
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<td>SA</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
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<td>SADC</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<td>WAD</td>
<td>Women’s Action for Development</td>
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Statistically, women account for over half of the world’s population, yet they are fewer than men in positions of power and decision-making. This is a situation being experienced not only by developing countries, but also by all countries including Namibia. At independence (1990) when the new Namibian government took over, they found many disparities in development. There was an imbalance between whites and blacks in terms of education, remuneration, and service provision. Imbalance also existed between male and female genders regardless of race. Certain positions, in particular managerial, were reserved for men only, while women were mostly considered for lower positions such as secretarial and clerical to mention but a few.

With the achievement of independence, Namibia adopted a Constitution, which became the supreme law of the country. This new government realized that the best way to address the disparities that exist would be through Constitutional provisions and other legislations. The provisions include Article 10(2) of the Constitution, which prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex. Article 1(1) which states that the founding principles of the country are democracy, the rule of law and justice to all, and Article 21(1)(j) of the Constitution that states “All persons have the right to practice any profession, or carry on any occupation, trade or business” (NID, 2000:15).
In addition to the Constitution, the Namibian Cabinet in 1997 approved a National Gender Policy (NGP), which was subsequently adopted by Parliament in 1999. To that end, “The main aim of this policy is to contemplate on how the government can encourage and value the contribution of women in national development and the development of the society as a whole” (DWA, 1997:7). A National Gender Plan of Action (NGPA), which was to be implemented over a period of five (5) years (1998 – 2003), and has since lapsed, accompanies the NGP. This study is an assessment of how the NGP has promoted gender balance in positions of power and decision-making in Namibia. It is a study designed to evaluate the equilibrium between men and women in positions of authority, more specifically those of power and decision-making in government institutions.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The government aims to promote an equal representation of men and women in top positions of government where power and decision-making authority is concentrated. At independence (1990), there was only one female minister, a 6.7% women representation in a Cabinet of fifteen ministers. In 1999, the number of female ministers increased to three or 10% in a Cabinet of thirty members. As of 2005, there are six female ministers (27.3%) in a Cabinet of twenty-two members.

A similar picture of under-representation of women is depicted in the National Assembly. The first National Assembly had five (6.4%) women, while the second National Assembly
1999 had fourteen (17.9%). The first National Council had one (3.8%) while the second National Councils had two (7.7%) women representative (Interview with Ms. Ndahafa S. Kaukungua, Information Officer – National Assembly). In the Public Sector, the number of women in the management cadre level varied from 20.8% in 1998 to 29.2% in 2004 (Public Service Commission, 1998, 2002, 2004).

In 1999 women’s representation in local government was 42%. It rose to 43.2% in 2004. representation by women, which increased to 43.2% in 2004. By comparison, it was respectively 7.9% in 1999 and 13.1% after 2004 at regional government level (MWACW, 2004:23). It should be further noted that Namibia has forty-two (42) recognised traditional authorities, of which only two, namely the Sambyu of Kavango and the Bondelswats of the Namas, which constitute 4.8%, are led by women. The NGPA was designed to address these imbalances.

Hence, it was anticipated that a successful implementation of the NGP would result in:

1. 50% of regional and local authority representation by women,
2. Gender balance structuring in boards, commission and parliament, and
3. Gender balance in the cabinet and civil service management levels.

In spite of the above-mentioned observations, and that implementation of the policy began in 1999, a lot of issues remain unanswered. These include general improvement in
the gender balance and economic empowerment of women. The reasons for the situation include non-

availability of information that could assist women in understanding their rights, limited access to economic opportunities, and little eagerness by women to empower themselves. These constitute the problem underlying gender imbalance in Namibia; hence the need to critically assess the National Gender Policy.

1.3 Research Objectives

The three objectives of this study are to:

1. Assess the implementation of the NGP in an effort to understand how it has promoted gender balance in positions of power and decision making in government institutions in Namibia. This furthermore will indicate to the researcher whether the objectives of the critical area of focus have been met.

2. Investigate the perspectives on the NGP’s implementation by the various stakeholders who are involved in women’s empowerment or advancement, and

3. Provide recommendations to assist the policy implementation process in order to achieve its (NGP) stated goals.

1.4 Research questions

This study was guided by the following research question:

Did the implementation of the National Gender Policy bring about gender balance in positions of power and decision-making in government institutions?
The subsequent and supportive questions assisting in answering the above research question were:

i. Were the desired objectives of gender balance in positions of power and decision making, as outlined by the NGPA, achieved?

ii. To what extent is the problem of gender imbalance resolved?

iii. Are stakeholders satisfied with the implementation of the National Gender Policy?

1.5 Importance of the study

The call for gender equality has become a global quest; hence, the worldwide campaign to empower women as a matter of respect for Human Rights and Democracy. As a result, governments have adopted legislations and policies such as the Affirmative Action (Employment) Act and the Married Person’s Equality Act that advocate women’s advancement. What has transpired in this quest is that some countries or institutions are busy with “window-dressing” instead of tackling the situation as seriously as they should. This has resulted in the fact that one or two women are put in positions of power, and the institutions claim to have gender balance. When one looks at the statistics on Namibia, given the country’s population, the question that arises is whether what Namibia has is gender balance, or whether the prevailing representation is enough to satisfy the movement towards achieving gender balance.
As a strategy to address gender imbalance, the Namibian government has come up with a National Gender Policy to overcome the disparities between men and women. This policy has been in existence for almost six years. Yet, to date there is no study that has evaluated the NGP. Therefore, the researcher deems it necessary to undertake this study to evaluate the policy implementation. In addition, the study is also important in that it will assist in identifying problem areas, if there are any, in the effort to implement the NGP.

1.6 Justification of the Study

Although the National Gender Policy have been in existence since 1997, no study was undertaken to review its implementation and its benefits to the masses. Equality which a principle of democracy, have become a pre-requisite of good governance for all democratic States.

It is therefore hoped that this study will contribute to the better understanding of gender equality from a Namibian perspective. Equally important, the thesis will assist through recommendation with possible remedies to bring about gender balance in the country.
1.7 Hypothesis

If there is no desire among politicians to advance or empower women, then the emancipation of women will not take place, and the gender imbalance will always be retained.

1.8 Research Methodology

The research was based on interviews, questionnaires and documentary (annual report and progressive report to international organisation) data collection. The study used semi-structured interviews in order to get all the possible information that the interviewees could provide. The interviews were conducted with staff of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (MGECW) as well as selected stakeholders. The latter were selected from organizations that have gender equality as a core component of their vision, and are targeting the advancement or empowerment of women through their activities. To that end, the following organisations were chosen: Namibia Women’s Association, Men for Change, Namibia Girl Child Organization, Employment Equity Commission (EEC), and Women’s Action for Development. At the MGECW, two Deputy Directors were interviewed, plus four Chief Development Planners along with three Development Planners. Thus in total fourteen people were interviewed during the data collection.

Regional Gender Liaison Officers and Gender Focal Points (GFPs) were presented with questionnaires. Using the representative sampling method, about thirty (30) GFPs and thirteen Gender Liaison Officers were given questionnaires. However, some of the GFPs
declined to take part in the process because they were serving as GFP functionaries focussing on other areas of concern and not on gender balance in positions of power and decision-making. Some of those who were given questionnaires quit their positions before completing the questionnaires. Consequently, only seventeen GFPs completed and returned the questionnaires. In all a total of thirty questionnaires were collected.

Documentary research was based on various pieces of literature that the Namibia government has produced. Annual reports and reports to international and regional organizations constitute the majority of the documents.

1.9 Limitations and problems of the study
Due to limited time and focus of the study, data collection was confined to government institutions. Data from the private sectors and other organizations was not used. The study thus reviewed the positions or portfolios that wield power and make decisions within government institutions. Therefore, in the Namibian context, the positions include those of Deputy Director, Director, Under Secretary, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Permanent Secretary, Deputy Ministers, Ministers and all Councillors and their Chief Executive Officers.

Limiting the exercise further was an enormous lack of gender-disaggregated data in most government institutions. Analysis of the data revealed that the problem applies in particular at regional and local government levels. Hence, the statistics provided on this level do not cover the full period from the establishment of sub-national government to
date. The same problem was experienced with Public Service statistics, as the responsible office (Public Service Commission) at the time of the study only had reports from 1998 – 2004.
1.10 Organization of the research paper

This study consists of the following chapters:

- Chapter 1: This chapter provides the background and importance of the study as well as its objectives.
- Chapter 2: Literature Review
- Chapter 3: Establishes the historical context of the country and its demographics.
- Chapter 4: Reviews the gender legal framework and policy in Namibia and the various established institutions within government that advocate gender equality.
- Chapter 5: Presents collected data and the analysis thereof.
- Chapter 6: Concludes the report. Major findings are highlighted and possible remedies are given to overcome the identified problems.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Researching on a subject that theoretically combines gender, equality, human rights, and decision-making beckons the understanding of a wide range of social, political and economic concepts. To that end, this chapter defines and discusses some of the key concepts relevant to the study as understood and used by the experts in the field of gender, politics, and decision-making. Thereafter, it will explore the importance of women in positions of power and decision-making in an effort to justify why women should be in such positions, particularly in Namibia. Barriers that hinder them (women) from getting into such positions will also be reviewed.

It is, however, worth mentioning that gender disaggregated data that could be helpful to undertake this exercise focusing on Namibia is very limited. This could be said about other developing countries. This brings one to the point that although gender might be an issue acknowledged worldwide, scarcity of statistics to back up studies on the subject makes it difficult to regularly monitor policy implementation to effectively assess the achievement thereof.

Literature on the subject focusing on Namibia includes, The National Gender Study by Ipinge, Phiri and Njabili (Editors), Beyond Inequalities: Women in Namibia by Southern African Research Documentation Centre, Country Gender Analysis: Namibia by Hubbard
and Tapscott, Gender and Development by Ipinge and Williams, and Beijing +10: The Way forward – Introduction to Gender Issues in Namibia by Hunter. Most of this authors discuss gender in the general context and their discussion are not extensive enough on women in positions of power and decision-making to well informed the picture on the subject.

2.2 Definitions and discussion of Key Notions

2.2.1 Gender

Humm (1989:84) defines gender as “a culturally-shaped group of attributes and behaviours given to females or to males”. According to Golombok and Fivush (1994:3), it means “those social traits and characteristics that are associated with each sex”. Whereas Scott in Glover and Kaplan (2000: xxiii) defines it as a social category imposed on a sexed body. Although not necessarily agreeing with Golombok and Fivush, S. Ruth (1988:17) states that gender is composed of socially defined character traits. The researcher agrees with Humm’s definition by that gender is culture-shaped, because what may be perceived to be appropriate behaviour in one cultural group might not necessarily be acceptable to a different cultural group. Hence, one is persuaded to concur with Humm’s definition that gender is a culture-shaped phenomenon, arguable as it may be.

Given the above definitions, it could be argued that gender is a socially constructed phenomenon, and that its implications on social issues assign responsibilities based on sex. To that end, one can conclude and rightly so, that some positions are associated with
one sex or another. The general practice is that positions of more influence are more often perceived to be for men, while those with less influence have often been reserved for women.

In the midst of confusion among some people as to whether or not the word sex and gender are interchangeable, “Sex refers to certain biological categories; female or male …based on a variety of factors including chromosomal patterns, hormonal makeup, and genital structures”. S. Ruth (1998:17) argues also that gender refers to those attributes that society expects each sex to portray in their behaviour.

Therefore, concepts of sex and gender entail different cultural, social and behavioural practices or perceptions. Consequently, when one talks about sex, one refers to the person as being a man or woman. When the subject of gender comes up, for example in the Owambo culture, one is making reference to the fact that girls are expected to help with meal preparation and looking after the younger ones, while boys go hunting with their fathers and look after livestock.

### 2.2.2 Gender Balance/Gender Equality

What then is gender balance? According to the Manila Conference report, “Gender balance in politics is about women’s full, equal and active participation in politics. It is about getting equal representation or at least 30% of women in positions of power and decision-making so that they can change the nature and practice of politics to genuinely
respond to society’s problems” [http: www.cld.org/ManilaConference.htm].

However, some writers use gender

balance and gender equality interchangeably. The same applies to this research exercise. At the same time gender equality is looked at from three perspectives. Firstly, that women and men enjoy the same status. Secondly, that women and men have equal opportunities for realizing their full human rights and potentials to contribute to national, political, economic, social and cultural development and to benefit from results thereof. Thirdly, this includes both quantitative and qualitative aspects. To that end, the quantitative perspective concerns the physical numerical terms and thereby looks at the number of women and men comparatively. For example currently in Namibia, there are five (5) female ministers as opposed to seventeen (17) male ministers (IDEA, 2002:3). With regards to qualitative perspective, it is argued that gender equality focuses on the equal distribution of power between women and men, but at the same time differentiates responsibility on the basis of cultural perceptions on power. For example, women are assigned to ministries such as those responsible for gender equality, child welfare and health, while men are assigned to the ministries of defence, road construction and so forth. This is the experience of Namibia. (IDEA, 2002:3).

2.2.3 Gender biasness

It is generally agreed “Gender bias refers to differential treatment given to people on the basis of their sex, that is being born a ‘male’ or ‘female’” (DAW, 1997:5). In other words, because a person is male, he is treated differently from a female on the grounds of
his sex. Consequently, certain positions such as being a nurse or secretary are considered as women’s positions, while being a medical doctor or engineer are considered as men’s positions.

However, gender bias is not limited to the less-influential positions. It is also prevalent at high levels of government such as Cabinet where Ministries of Health, Education and Gender/Women’s Affairs are usually assigned to women.

2.2.4 Power and decision-making

(i) Power

Power is a word that we use daily to refer to the concept of a person who most of the time has the last say compelling others to do or not to do certain things. Greenberg and Baron (2000:410) refer to power as “the capacity to change the behaviour or attitudes of others in a desired manner”. Meanwhile Fox and Meyer (1995:99) define it as the ability of one actor to bring about an outcome in a relationship with another political actor in a way that is contrary to the latter’s desire. The two definitions are broadly correct because they refer to the relationship between the giver and recipient of instructions, and to the subsequent action prompted by the instructions. Nothing could be truer than the fact that those with power are the ones whose decisions are acted upon (Greenberg and Baron, ibid).

(ii) Decision-making
Decision-making can be defined as the ability to make a choice between several alternatives to resolve a situation. In the opinion of Greenberg and Baron (2000:649) decision-making is “the process of choosing among several alternatives”. However, Fox and Meyer (1995:33) define it as a management technique used to accomplish objectives after analysing information, evaluating alternatives and choosing the best option or line of action.

This study will not look at power and decision-making as mere concepts, but rather as positions or portfolios that people hold within government institutions. In the context of the Namibian government, positions of power and decision-making are those positions in management, for example deputy directors and directors. These are normally the people who take decisions and make sure that action is taken by using the power vested in the offices they occupy.

2.2.5 Government Institutions

Government institutions refer to the institution falling under the public sector and those classified as parastatals. The latter “are affiliated to government, but are generally run like and have structures similar to private enterprises (FES, 2004:29)”, and there are only twelve in Namibia. The public sector refers to that position of an economy whose
activities are under the control and direction of the State (Meyer and Fox, 1995:107). The Namibian State is made up of three main organs, namely the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. For the purpose of this study, the focus will be on the legislature and executive.

All these concepts are frequently used in the quest to achieve gender equality in positions of power and decision-making in Namibia.

2.3 The importance of women in positions of power and decision-making

The advice to global regimes to strive for democracy is based on a number of universally accepted fundamental principles of the concept of democracy. However, this study focuses only on two principles, which are equality and human rights. In democratic societies, equality and human rights normally go hand in hand. This implies that both women and men may not be discriminated against because of their sex. Likewise, both men and women should be granted equal opportunity to participate in anything that comes up within a democratic society.

Gender equality, as defined earlier, broadly entails equal opportunities between women and men. Therefore, it is an important aspect of any democratic society because

“Contemporary democracy requires the full participation of all sections of society not just in casting the vote, but also in the decision-making process and allocation of resources. It is in this spirit that the expansion of democracy in the past decade has been accompanied by increased demands from civil society, especially
women’s organizations, for greater power sharing, protection and promotion of human rights (SADC, 1997:129)”.

It should be further noted, that human rights mean those values that reflect respect for human life and human dignity [http://www.streetlaw.org.democlesson.html]. Hence, it is imperative for a democratic nation such as Namibia to respect all its citizens while at the same time upholding their rights, which carry the same sentiments as gender equality. Given the fact that women make up the majority of the population, it is unacceptable that they remain a minority in positions of power and decision-making in the country. Therefore, the current situation should be corrected, so that it reflects the reality on the ground.

2.4 Reasons why women should be in positions of power and decision-making

The reasons why women should be equitably represented in the positions of power and decision-making in a democratic country are many. Some of them have been articulated at different international fora. For example the Asia Pacific Workshop on Gender Balance in Political Representation (March 21 -22, 2001) came up with five reasons why women should be in power, namely democracy and egalitarianism, legitimacy, difference in interest, changing of politics, and efficient use of human resources. Of these five reasons, Kanwaljit Soin (1993) agrees with four in her paper entitled “Why Women, What Politics?”
2.4.1 Democracy and Egalitarianism

Democracy and egalitarianism as discussed at the Asian Pacific Workshop entail proportional representation of women in power. If instituted, the present gender imbalance would not exist, and if women were excluded from positions of power and decision-making, it would not reflect a true democracy. [http://www.cld.org/ManilaConferene.htm]. Hence, the call for gender balance is in essence a call for democratic representation between men and women in positions of power.

2.4.2 Legitimacy

In the Namibian Constitution, there is a provision for equal treatment between women and men. For example, Article 10(1) states that all persons are equal before the law. Furthermore, Article 10(2) prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex (2002:8). It is thus not wrong to conclude that the call for gender equality is a legitimate call in Namibia, in line with the Constitution, which is the supreme law of the country. Moreover, the realisation of having women in power cannot be a question in a democratic society. It is therefore expected that a just and democratic society will grant all members equal opportunity to positions of power and decision-making.

2.4.3 Difference in Interests

Human perceptions on issues and phenomena are usually determined by different interests that are in turn shaped by culture. Consequently, interests play a major role in
differentiating social roles, thereby conditioning people in terms of what they do in society. “Since women are conditioned to have different social roles, functions and values, they are more aware of their own needs and are better able to solve and succeed in attaining them” [http://www.cld.org/MilanConference.htm]. That means women and men perceive issues from different angles. Collectively, therefore, equitable representation in positions of power and decision-making will provide a broader perspective and reflect a wider range of interest, which is good for policy formulation.

2.4.4 Changing of Politics

“There is evidence that when women enter decision-making in significant numbers to create a critical mass, the focus of politics is changed. Issues such as childcare, reproductive health and protection from sexual violence become priorities in the policy agenda [http://cld.org/ManilaConference.mth]”. Soin argues that with the involvement of women in power, the resolutions on conflict will be by non-violent interaction and mutual learning, and not by force or threat [http://www.capwip.org/resources/soin/SoinPaper.htm]. Evidently, general observation indicates that women in power do indeed bring to the fore women’s issues such as violence and social welfare. For example, since her inauguration as the Deputy Prime Minister of Namibia 2005, Honourable Dr. Libertine Amathila has been touring the country visiting the Sans and highlighting their situation in life that needs urgent attention. When the Domestic Violence Act was being discussed in the National Assembly, the women parliamentarians were taking the issue seriously as opposed to
some men parliamentarians who saw it as another instance of bringing up private issues in public (NA, 2000: 120).

2.4.5 Efficient Use of Human Resources

It is argued, and correctly so, that “Women are major contributors to national economies through their paid and unpaid labour. To exclude women from positions of power and decision-making impoverishes public life and inhibits the development of a just society” [http://cld.org/ManilaConference.mth]. Not only are women part of the national labour force, but they are also hard workers who are able to manage office tasks and homestead duties effectively. Official labour statistics on the informal sector attest to the fact that women play a dominant role, thereby contributing to the national revenue sources. As a result, their involvement with the informal sector necessitates employment of more people in both the informal and formal employment sector. This is evidence enough to prove that if equitably represented in positions of power and decision-making, women can contribute towards efficient use of human resources.

2.5 Barriers that hinder women entering positions of power and decision-making

The major factors that prevent women from acquiring positions of power and from participating in decision-making include cultural constraints, religious beliefs, lack of will on the part of the political leadership, limited economic capacity and educational training. It is difficult for women to access positions of power and decision making due to
several factors such as culture, religion, lack of political will, economic and educational factors and lack of monitoring mechanisms.

### 2.5.1 Cultural constraints

As earlier stated, gender refers to culture-shaped attributes and behaviours. Historically, culture is known for inculcating inflexibility in terms of people’s behaviour. Therefore, culture is a major barrier for women who wish to occupy positions of power and to participate in decision-making, because these have always been considered as tasks reserved for men. The result is that most women find themselves in less influential positions. As per African custom, women are not perceived to be leaders. In the former days, only men were elected or chosen as kings or chiefs of their tribes. However nowadays there are women who

are heading various tribes. In Namibia, the Bondelswarts from the Namas and the Sambyu from the Kavango tribes are led by women (MRLGHRD, 2005). With new developments, the cultural traditions of only men being suitable for positions of power and decision-making are also changing. Unfortunately, the change is very slow. Hence, culture remains a barrier to women’s access to positions of power, decision-making and politics. Namibia is not an exemption.

### 2.5.2 Religion

About 90% of the Namibian population is Christian. The Bible in Ephesians 5: 23 -24 reads that “For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is the head of the church …
Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husband in everything”. Some fundamentalist people are using the Bible to justify the view that they do not allow women to lead men. This practice is not limited to fundamentalist Christians only but also prevails in the more traditional Muslim communities. It is stated in the Quran that “Men are more perfect than the women in creation, and intelligence, and in the religious sphere, such as the suitability to be a judge, and a leader in worship…(Quran 4:11)”. In the same book it is stated that “Men are superior to women, and a man is better than a woman (Quran 4:34)(http://www.debate.domini.org/newton/womeng.thml)”. Religious beliefs also affect politics, as lack of gender balance is also reflected within the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) where women are under represented. When one reviews the International Parliamentary Union’s women’s representation, one notices that most of the Muslim countries are at the bottom of the table with low representation of women (http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm), thereby showing the effects of the above-mentioned religious beliefs in the superiority of men over women or husband over wife.

2.5.3 Lack of political will

Political will is the driving force behind change in any country. If the politicians who have the power and authority to change whatever they perceive to be wrong would act accordingly, then more women could find themselves in positions of power and decision-making. Hence, Reyes and Yancha (2000: 4) state that
“Political will must translate to both policies and resources if they are to be effective. At the same time government policies must address the need to give women access to career patterns to develop and strengthen their capacity as political leaders, develop media relations and generate own resources”.

As stated above, political will is the force behind any form of change in any country. Politicians are the ones who decide on who takes positions within a society. Therefore, if there is no desire among politicians to advance or empower women, then the emancipation of women will not take place, and the gender imbalance will always be retained.

2.5.4 Limited Economic capacity and Educational Training

Once a person has no purchasing power, he or she cannot afford to educate him or herself. Education is always the force behind economic, social and political advancement. More importantly it underlines the necessity for all citizens to understand the importance of gender equality. Women are unquestionably a very important variable, in terms of national economic variants. This in reality suggests that “… educational opportunities such as formal education and training should be granted to women as they are important preconditions for individual professional advancement in politics and for gender-balanced political representation (Reyes and Yancha, 2000:5)”.

In summary, therefore,
education is a pre-requisite for economic advancement, and the latter opens the door for women’s equal participation in all aspects of national development.

To that end women, in particular mothers, need to be educated enough to understand that education is a necessity for both sons and daughters. It goes without saying that there are still parents who prefer to educate their sons rather than their daughters. That often leads to future disadvantages that the women ultimately face. Young girls end up facing various challenges due to lack of education. The challenges include a girl-child being forced to abandon her schooling once she get pregnant, thereby, cutting short the realization of her empowerment through education; the pandemic of HIV/AIDS compelling women, mostly the young, to take care of the sick or to become heads of families prematurely. These facts reduce women’s representation in positions of power and decision-making.

2.6 Global situation of women in power and decision-making

When reviewing the global situation on women in positions of power, one usually sees that the percentage of women in parliament is small. That, however, is not to ignore or deny that “…despite the achievements of the legal fronts at both international and national level,

however unequal, gender participation in politics is evident in the predominance of men as parliamentarian, cabinet ministers and heads of government [http://archive.idea.int/newsletter/2003_01/focus.htm]” as indicated below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Lower or single House</th>
<th>Upper House or Senate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Seats</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>609</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>601</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Guyana</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Belarus</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“</td>
<td>Seychelles</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Namibia</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Clearly evident from the above figures is that women’s representation in parliament globally is 15.7%. Representation in the Nordic countries as a region stands at 39.9% and in Sub-Saharan Africa it is 14.8%. These statistics further indicate that women’s representation in parliament is lowest within the Arab States, where it stands at 6.5% followed by the Pacific groups of countries, where it is 13.2%. The Sub-Saharan Africa’s representation is the third lowest. The disparities are comparatively self-evident. [http:www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm].

Out of the top twenty (20) countries used for this exercise, only three countries, namely Belarus, Namibia and Seychelles have not yet reached 30% women’s representation in parliament. However, it is interesting to note that an African country, namely Rwanda with 48.8%, occupies the top position in terms of female representation in parliament, yet it was ranked 21st in 2002. The only other country that comes close to having 50% female representation in parliament is Sweden (see Table 1).

It should be further noted that three other Nordic countries in addition to Sweden, are among the top five with more than 35% female representation in parliament. Information available also indicates that Nordic countries have better female representation in the lower house than some of the world’s oldest and richest democracies such as the Australia, Canada and United States of America (http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm).
In addition to Rwanda, which occupies the top position, other African countries are also in the top twenty, namely, Mozambique (34.8%), South Africa (32.8%), Seychelles (29.4%) and Namibia (29.1%). Of these five, four are from Southern Africa and three are SADC member states, namely Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa. As already mentioned, SADC has set a target of 30% female representation in positions of power and decision-making to be achieved by 2005. These countries also have a high female representation in the upper house (senate). Of the thirteen (13) SADC member-states, two (Mozambique 34.8% and South Africa 32.8%) have met the target. Namibia (at 29.2%) is almost there, followed by the United Republic of Tanzania (21.4%). The rest of the other SADC member-states have less than 16% women’s representation in parliament.

The global situation further indicates that the first female president was in Mongolia. She served as Head of State from 1953 to 1954. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_women_heads_ofStates]. Since then, there have been six (6) female presidents from Germany, Finland, Ireland, Latvia, Philippines and Sri Lanka. The new additions are Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia and Michelle Bachelet Jeria of Chile.

Africa prides itself on two, one from Burundi who served as an interim president from 1993 to 1994, and the recently elected Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf expected to serve a term of five years. Out of 32 women presidents in history, Africa had one woman president and
an interim president, who was from Burundi and served as an Interim President from 1993 – 1994 [http://www.geocities.com/capitolhill/lobby/4642]. At a lower level there are four female Vice-Presidents, who are all from Africa, namely Burundi, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe, and five female Prime Ministers who are from Bangladesh, Mozambique, New Zealand, São Tomé Príncipe and Ukraine. It should also be noted that Namibia has a female Deputy Prime Minister. The positions that these women occupy signify recognition by male politicians that effective and balanced participation by men and women enhances and upholds the spirit of gender equality as a necessity for equitable national development in all spheres of life.

2.7 Women in power and decision-making in the Namibian government institutions

Namibia has a two-tier government, namely national and sub-national level. Whereas at national level representation manifests through parliament which in turn has two houses, at sub-national level representation is realised through Regional Councils and Local Authorities. Being a democratic country, the government comprises an executive, legislature and judiciary. The executive, who is also known as the Cabinet consists of the President,

Prime Minister and his or her deputy as well as Ministers. The overall function of the executive is mainly to administer and execute the functions of the government. Furthermore,
Article 40 of the Constitution outlines the duties and function of the Cabinet to include directing, co-ordinating and supervising activities of the Ministries; to formulate, explain and assess the State budget to the National Assembly; to advise the President on the state of national defence and the maintenance of law (2002:27).

The legislature, also known as Parliament, consists of two houses namely the National Assembly and National Council. The National Assembly has 72 elected members and 6 appointed (by the President) members. It has the power to make laws that are in the best interest of the people of Namibia. The National Council consists of 26 members (two per region), and it is there to advise the National Assembly about the laws that the National Assembly is considering (Hubbard, 2001:13 and 15). The Judiciary is the system of courts, which administers justice and provides a mechanism for the resolution of dispute. The judiciary arm of the Namibian government consists of the Supreme Court, High Court and lower Courts (Magistrates).

2.7.1. Central Government

The key positions of the national bureaucracy consist of Ministers, Deputy Ministers and the Permanent Secretaries. Tables 2 and 3 depict gender representation pertaining thereto.
Table 2: Top Positions in Central Government (2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Ministers</th>
<th>Deputy Ministers</th>
<th>Permanent Secretaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>5 (22.7%)</td>
<td>5 (26.3%)</td>
<td>5 (22.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>17 (77.3%)</td>
<td>14 (73.7%)</td>
<td>17 (77.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22 (100%)</td>
<td>19 (100%)</td>
<td>22 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MGECW, 2005

Table 3: Top Positions in Central Government (1999)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Ministers</th>
<th>Deputy Ministers</th>
<th>Permanent Secretaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>3 (13.0%)</td>
<td>3 (17.6%)</td>
<td>1 (5.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>20 (87.0%)</td>
<td>14 (82.4%)</td>
<td>19 (95.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23 (100%)</td>
<td>17 (100%)</td>
<td>20 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DWA, 1999

As already indicated, the first Cabinet appointed in 1990 had one female minister as compared to the Cabinet that took office in 2005 in which there are six female ministers out of a total of 22 Cabinet members, giving us a 6.7% and 29.4% female representation scenario respectively. It is also important to look at what Ministries the female ministers occupy. The reasons being that there are certain Ministries that are considered suitable for women only and there are those that are reserved for men only. It could be argued that the
difference has always been based on gender. Hence, female Ministers are usually appointed to the Ministry of Health, Education, Gender Equality and Child Welfare and Social Welfare. The tasks of such Ministries can obviously be compared with motherhood responsibilities. By contrast, Ministries such as that of defence, finance, security, home affairs, road construction and mining are usually reserved for men, for exactly the same reasons that the other Ministries are reserved for women, that is, gender consideration associated with physical attributes.

However, in Namibia, it is only the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare that has been given to a woman on a gender-stereotype basis. The Ministry of Justice and Attorney-General, Finance and Home Affairs and Immigration are now headed by female ministers, which is considered a positive movement towards women in positions of power and decision-making. Namibia also boasts five deputy female ministers assigned to the Ministry of Health and Rehabilitation, Foreign Affairs, Gender Equality and Child Welfare, Education and Home Affairs and Immigration, and five female Permanent Secretaries. The developments indicated above are summarised in Tables 2 and 3.

When one compares Namibia to other Southern African countries the situation is not that much different. For example, the South African Cabinet consists of 27 members of whom 9 (33.3%) are women. In addition, there are 27 deputy ministers, and 14 (57.1%) are female. Whereas in Botswana 4 (26.7%) of a 15 member Cabinet are women and two out of six
deputy ministers are female (FES, 2004:72 and 91). These statistics present a commendable development in both countries. However, Namibia is not far behind her neighbours.

Namibia has also shown positive development in terms of female representation in the National Assembly. Available information indicates that from 1999 to 2004, there were 20 (27.7%) females in the National Assembly. The percentage rose to 29.2% following the 2004 general elections. Also important to note is that during that same period the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly were both men. That changed when the new government installed in 2005 witnessed the appointment of a female Deputy Speaker.

By comparison, the women’s representation in the National Council has not been impressive over the past years. During its last term of office (1999 – 2004) the National Council had only two (7.7%) females. The representation rose to 7 (26.9%) following the last regional elections in November 2004 (Interview with Ndahafa S. Kaukungua, Information Officer, National Assembly). What has not changed is that for the past ten years the Chairperson of the National Council has been a man and his deputy a woman. Table 4 tabulates the representation from 1996 to 2005.
Table 4: Women’s representation in Parliament

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>104</td>
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<td>2002</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>2003</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Minutes and proceedings of National Assembly

As indicated above, from 1996 up to 2000, women’s representation in Parliament was either 12.5% or below 20%. The situation changed in 2001 when the representation rose to 22%, and remained static until the end of 2003. However, the representation decreased to 22% in 2001 and increased to 27% in 2005. Yet, when you look at the management cadre within the Public Service, the picture is totally different. Table 5 below depicts three scenarios showing contrasting trends between women’s and men’s representation.
Table 5: Management cadre in Public Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1998</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>89 (20.8%)</td>
<td>146 (29.7%)</td>
<td>155 (29.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>339 (79.2%)</td>
<td>346 (70.3%)</td>
<td>375 (70.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>428 (100%)</td>
<td>492 (100%)</td>
<td>530 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


It can be argued, however, that as the number of public servants grew, so did the number of women in the management cadre. Although the benchmark of 30% women in positions of power and decision-making positions has not yet been met, Namibia is on the verge of achieving the target. Management cadre in the Public Service refers to the positions of the Deputy Director, Director, Under Secretary, Deputy Permanent Secretary and Permanent Secretary. While management cadre in regional councils refers to the Councillors, Chief Regional Officer (CROs), Director and Deputy Director. It should be noted that the management cadre of public service excludes data from Namibia Defence Force (Military), Namibia Police Force and Prison and Correctional Services.

2.7.2. Sub-national structures

The sub-national structure of the Namibian government comprises Regional and Local Authorities Councils, each established by an act of Parliament.

(i) Regional Council

For the purpose of regional governance, the country is divided into thirteen regions governed by regional councils. The first regional council election was held in 1992.
Unfortunately, those tasked with the regional governance affairs did not take the aspect of gender into consideration. Thus, one cannot really say what the ratio of men to women was in this first term of office.

With the 1992 elections, there were four (3.7%) women regional Councillors as compared to 102 male regional councillors. However, from 1999 to 2004 women Councillors in the whole country were 8 (7.9%) as opposed to 95 (93.1%) male Regional Councillors (FES, 1999:20). For the current term of office (2005 -2010) the female/male representation is 14 (13.1%) and 93 (86.9%) respectively. From this data, one can see that the number of women Regional Councillors has doubled. It should also be noted that the Khomas Regional Council is the only council with women in the majority (six women compared to four male Councillors). Ohangwena Regional Council has at least two women Regional Councillors, while Caprivi, Omaheke, Kavango, Karas, Kunene and Hardap all have one woman Regional Councillor. The rest of the Regional Councils (Omusati, Oshikoto, Otjozondjupa, Erongo and Oshana) are composed of men. Table 6 focuses on the number of governors in terms of gender representation between 1994 and 2005.

Table 6: Governors of Namibia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1994</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>13 (100%)</td>
<td>11 (84.0%)</td>
<td>10 (77.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (16.0%)</td>
<td>3 (23.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13 (100%)</td>
<td>13 (100%)</td>
<td>13 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is evident that it was not until 1999 that Namibia installed a female governor. They were two in all, namely Grace Uushona of Otjozondjupa region and Laura McLeod from Omaheke region. However, the number increased to three in 2005. That situation compared well to the event in South Africa, which at the same time had four female provincial governors out of a total of nine. Governors are assisted by Chief Regional Officers (CROs) in running the affairs of the region. Chief Regional Officers (CRO’s) are the persons who head the administrative staff of a Regional Council. Of the thirteen CRO’s only two are women (from Omaheke and Otjozondjupa Regional Councils) (MRLGHRD, 2005), which makes it 15.4% women’s representation. When one goes down the Regional Councils’ organograms, it is apparent that women are becoming dominant in middle management (Deputy –Directors).

(ii) Local Government

At local government level, women are well represented, and this can be attributed to the legislative quota as stipulated in the Local Authority Act. For the last term of office (1999 – 2004) women’s representation stood at 41.3% after which with the May 2004 Local Authority elections women’s representation increased to 44.4% (FES, 2004:84). Tables 7 and 8 provide the data on the development pertaining to the changes with regards to gender representation. It should be noted that the Namibia local government is comprised
Municipalities, Town Councils and Village Councils. In total there are 47 Local Authorities in Namibia. Only Municipalities and Town Councils have a mayor, while the head of a Village Council is referred to as the Chairperson. Tables 7 and 8 focus on the statistics of mayors excluding the Village Council’s Chairperson.

*Table 7: Mayors in 1999*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>5 (16.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>25 (83.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DWA, 1999

*Table 8: Mayors in Namibia (2005)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>10 (32.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>21 (67.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MRLGHRD, 2005

The percentage of female mayors in Namibia stands at 32.3%, whereas Mozambique has only one female mayor out of a total of thirty three (33) (MRLGHRD, 2005 and FES, 2004:78). The total number of female mayors in Namibia has doubled since 1999 when there were five (5) female mayors compared to 10 currently. Women account for 32.3% of mayors in Namibia as compared to Mozambique with one-woman mayor out of thirty
three (33). General observation is that at local government level women’s representation among Councillors is as high as the number of mayors. It should be noted that a mayor is the principle head of the Local Authority Council and a governor is the principle head of a Regional Council (OPM, 2000:11). A Chief Executive Officer (CEO) heads the administrative arm of the Local Authority Council, and Namibia has only four women CEO’s in Local Authorities.

2.7.3 Parastatals

Table 9: Women’s representation in parastatals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chief Executive Officer</th>
<th>Senior Mangers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>1 (8.3%)</td>
<td>7 (10.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>11 (91.7%)</td>
<td>57 (89.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12 (100%)</td>
<td>64 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: FES, 2004:84

From the above data, one can see that women are very much under represented at the Chief Executive Officer level. The 8.3% is far from the benchmark of 30% that the government is targeting. Although at senior management level women are better represented than at Chief Executive Officer level, the number of senior managers is also way below the benchmark of 30%.
In a summary, as stated earlier gender and sex are not the same phenomena. Gender is about the cultural or social roles assigned to a particular sex, while sex refers to the biological differences between the two groups of living organisms, either female or male. Furthermore, gender balance is about equal participation of both women and men in positions of power and decision-making. Therefore, it is important for women to participate in positions of power and decision-making because Namibian is a democratic society in which equality and respect for Human Rights are considered as the basic principles of national governance. Hence, to address gender inequality one needs to start by addressing the barriers that hinder women from occupying positions of power and decision-making, which range from cultural to religious.

Globally women make up 15.7% of parliamentarians. On the IPU parliamentary list, Rwanda (48.8%) is ranked as the country with the highest number of women. Namibia comes in at position number seventeen (17). The only other African countries to be above Namibia (29.2%) are Mozambique (34.8%), South Africa (32.8%), and Seychelles (29.4%). Women are not only parliamentarians but there are quite a number of them who are heads of state. To date the world has had 33 women heads of state of which six are currently in office, and they are from Germany, Finland, Ireland, Latvia, Liberia, Philippines and Sri Lanka. The female president-elect of Chile will take office in March. At lower level of vice-presidents and prime ministers, there are currently nine in office. Six of them are from African states,
namely, Burundi, Mozambique, São Tomé and Principle, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

Of the twenty-two Ministers in Namibia, only five are women, and of the nineteen Deputy Ministers five are women. At National Council women’s representation increased from 7.7% (1999 – 2004) to 26.9% (2005 - 2010) following the 2004 elections. The number of Regional Councillors also increased from 7.9% to 13.1% after the elections.
CHAPTER 3: HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND DEMOGRAPHY OF NAMIBIA

3.1 Introduction

Namibia shares common borders with Angola, Zambia and Zimbabwe in the north; Botswana in the east; and South Africa in the south. The Atlantic Ocean forms the western and longest border. Forming part of the country’s marvellous landscape are two deserts, the Kalahari Desert in the east and the Namib Desert in the west. Politically Namibia is divided into thirteen regions, namely Caprivi, Erongo, Hardap, Karas, Kavango, Khomas, Kunene, Ohangwena, Omaheke, Omusati, Oshana, Oshikoto and Otjozondjupa. Colonially known as German South West Africa from 1884 to 1915, and as South West Africa, it later became South West Africa/Namibia from 1915 to 1989. The country became Namibia upon attainment of independence in 1990 (Cohen, 1994).

3.2 History of Namibia

Namibia went through two colonial phases. The first was from 1884 – 1915 under the German rule, while the second phase was from 1915 – 1988 under the South African (SA) occupation. The League of Nations awarded Namibia to South Africa as a “C” class mandate. “This meant that South Africa could administer it as an integral part of its own territory”. As a mandatory requirement, however, SA was obliged to “promote to the uttermost the material and moral well-being and the social progress ideal of the inhabitants of the territory (Cohen, 1994:40)”. During the colonial phases, local inhabitants’ land was appropriated. Moreover, under the occupation of SA the apartheid practice was introduced as
well as the Bantustan administration. Bantustan, as defined by Tötemeyer (2001), is “ethnically or tribally defined communal areas or geo-political units defined on the basis of assumed cultural, political, socio-economic, and ethnic difference”.

Because of land appropriation and the oppression experienced, the local inhabitants organised resistance and a liberation struggle. Through this resistance, several war heroes emerged. These heroes included Hendrik Witbooi (late 1880 – 1905), King Mandume Ndemufayo (1911 – 1917), Jacob Marengo (1904 – 1907) and Samuel Maharero (1890 – 1923) (Katzao, Mbumba, Patemann and van Staden and Tait, 1992:9,19,22 and 33).

As from the early 1960’s the South West Africa People’s Organisation (SWAPO) spearheaded the liberation struggle and it lasted up to 1988. For the purpose of the struggle, SWAPO established a military wing known as the People’s Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) in which women also served (Cohen, 1994:51). From 1989, Namibia was in transition to independence under the guidance of United Nations Transitional Assistance Groups (UNTAG) (Cohen, 1994:56). The independence of Namibia was achieved on the 21st of March 1990, and only one woman served in Cabinet at that time.

3.3. Women’s contribution towards the resistance and the liberation struggle

In a conventional study of Namibian history, the only one woman to be mentioned by name for her bravery in the resistance and liberation struggle is Kakurungaze Mungunda. She is the woman who set the then Windhoek mayor’s car on fire in retaliation for the forceful
removal from the Old Location to Katutura (Katzao et al, 1993:15). SWAPO has attempted to document women’s participation in the liberation struggle. The volume of attempts and the records available do not do justice to the efforts nor the lives of who were sacrificed to see this country liberated.

Kakukuru (2003:35 – 49) summarised women’s roles during the struggle into three main activities namely:

**Reproductive roles:** These are social activities assigned to women, which include child bearing and rearing, taking care of children, fostering children, cooking, pounding, fetching water and firewood. These activities were initially performed by women only especially in the African traditional set-up. However, with the advocacy of gender equality that has started to change as men are also becoming involved in some of these activities.

**Productive roles:** Both men and women in exchange for income or professional jobs undertook productive roles. These include teaching, nursing, agricultural activities, carpentry, welding, mechanical work, brick making, construction work, tailoring and weaving. The first three are again mostly women-dominated, while most men are associated with the others. It is usually argued that women fulfilled these roles because men were more often in the battlefields. Hence, the women had to take on men’s roles to see to it that the communities received the services they needed. People needed food, and with men at the battlefield, the women had no option but to plant their own food. Things such as chairs and tables were needed for schools and when they broke, the women had
to repair them themselves. Bricks were needed for accommodation, for houses, classrooms or offices.

Tailoring and weaving are still the roles that by nature are mostly assigned to women. However, men are taking over as best tailors and weavers.

*Community work:* Marth *et al* in Kakukuru (2003:39) define community work as “activities that included the collective organisation of social events and service – ceremonies and celebrations, activities to improve the community”. According to Kakukuru, these include activities such as “participation in military and combat, collecting food, medical and ammunition supply, information gathering (spying) and communication”.

### 3.4 Current Demography of Namibia

#### 3.4.1 General Population Composition

The Census taken during 27 – 28 August 2001 revealed that Namibia had a population of 1,830,330 of which 942,572 are females while 887,721 are males (NPCS, 2003:4). This constitutes 51.5% and 48.5% female and male population respectively. By comparison, the 1991 Census indicated that the total population of the country was 1 409 920 of which 51.3% were female and 48.7% were males. That means women have always been numerically in the majority since independence of a population growth rate of 2.6% in 2001 giving a sex ratio of 94 males per 100 females.
It should also be noted, that about 40% of the population in Namibia is below fifteen years of age; thus, almost half of the population are children, taking into account that in Namibia a child is any person under the age of sixteen years – Constitution, Article 15(2). Furthermore, the majority of the Namibian population lives in rural areas, between 67% and 72% since 1991. It is also an established fact that employment opportunities are very scarce in rural areas. In terms of the status of families, the statistics reveal that currently 45% females and 55% males are heads of households (NPCS, 2003:45).

3.4.2. Education and Literacy

Literacy is defined as the ability to “…read and write in any language with understanding (NPCS, 2003:34)”. In Namibia, the literacy rate is 87% for those above fifteen years. About 7% of the population never attended school while those currently in school constitute 7% of the population. At the same time 77% of the population have left school and the remaining 9% is unexplained (NPCS, 2003:32). Statistics have also revealed that between the ages of six to fifteen years, more girls (52%) are attending schools as compared to boys (48%). Yet, only 43.8% and 38.8% respectively complete primary school (Ibid. 2003:32). It should also be noted that 2.3% of the country’s population hold university degrees.
3.4.3. Labour Force

In terms of the Census Report of 2001, the size of the potential labour force (which refers to persons above 15 years) is 1 100 425 (NPCS, 2003:36). The population is grouped into two categories, namely the economically inactive population and the economically active (labour force). The economically inactive population is estimated to be 432 882 (39.3%) as opposed to 594 849 (54.1%) who are economically active. The outstanding 6.6% are not explained. Of the economically inactive population, 151 889 (35.1%) are students, and homemakers are 186 646 (43.1%). Income recipients, disabled, old age, retired and others make up 94 350 (21.8%). By contrast economically active (Labour Force) consists of 409 591 (68.9%) employed and 185 258 (31.1%) unemployed persons.

The same Census Report (NPCS, 2003:38) revealed that 18.8% of the labour force is in the public sector while 42.7% is in the private sector, and 5.3% make up the subsistence/communal-farming sector, where they are mostly not paid for their labour. Females are most often employed (as opposed to males) in Government/parastatals (19.2%) and unpaid family workers are subsistence/communal farmers – (16%). Furthermore, the report indicates that at the level of subsistence/communal farmers (of paid employees) 6 216 (2.7%) are male and 2 425 (1.3%) are female. The Census also revealed the fact that the majority of professionals, 16 658 (9.2%), are females as
compared to 14,091 (6.1%) males, and that only 8% of the population which has completed tertiary education are employed (NPSC, 2003:39). Although the difference between females and males is minimal, more males are employed than females. Also worth noting is that close to 43% of those employed are in the public sector.

### 3.4.4 Unemployment

The rate of unemployment in Namibia is currently 31.1%. The youth, especially females, account for the greatest number of the unemployed. Females’ account for the majority of the unemployed people in both rural and urban areas, generally constituting 55% of the unemployed population in the country (NPCS, 2003:41 - 42). The majority of those who did not complete primary school are the ones who are unemployed, while those with tertiary education are almost all employed. This could perhaps be attributed to the fact that Namibia has a small employment market that cannot offer everyone a job. This argument is substantiated by the followings statistics. Those who have university qualifications are 13,459 (2.00%); those with technical training after secondary school are 15,771 (2.3%), and teacher training accounts for 9,009 (1.3%) (NPCS, 2003:34).

In a summary, the Namibian demography shows that although women constitute 51.5% of the total population, more than half (55%) are unemployed. It is also worth noting that of the total population, 1.8% females and 2.2% males have tertiary education qualifications. Those with post-school technical training constitute 2.1% and 2.6% females and males respectively. At the same time 1.4% females and 1.2% males have
obtained teacher training qualifications. Thus, the difference between women and men is minimal, and does not match the situation at the workplace. The question that remains unanswered given the information is “Why is it that women are most notably the least represented in positions of power and decision-making?” This study aims to provide some answers.
CHAPTER 4: LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND NATIONAL GENDER MACHINERIES

4. 1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the various legal instruments that Namibia has adopted to assist in addressing gender disparities within the Namibian society. The starting point is the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia, which is also its supreme law. The chapter also reviews the various Acts of Parliament designed to protect and safeguard gender equality, and matters incidental thereto. At the international forum, the study looks at the SADC Gender and Development Declaration in view of the fact that the government of Namibia has a target of 30% representation by women in positions of power and decision making by 2005, in tandem with all SADC member states. The selection is followed by an analysis of the concept of Vision 2030, which is a policy framework outlining where Namibia would like to find herself by the year 2030. Lastly, the chapter explores the various gender machineries that exist in the government structures.

4.2 The National Constitution

At independence, Namibia adopted a Constitution, with provisions that guide all laws in the country. Among its most important provisions are Article 1(6) and 1(1). The latter states that “The Republic of Namibia is hereby established as a sovereign, secular, democratic and unitary state, founded upon the principles of democracy, the rule of law
and justice for all,’” thereby making the Constitution the supreme law of the country. Being the custodian of the Constitution, the Namibian government is thus mandated and obliged to ensure that Namibian society is a just society for all its citizens regardless of gender.

Under Chapter 3 of the Constitution – also known as “THE BILL OF RIGHTS”, Article 10(1), declares everyone in Namibia equal before the law. Equally important, under the same Chapter is Article 10(2) that prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex (NID, 2002:8). This should be highlighted, because of the levels of oppression and subordination the majority of women experienced before independence. Women are pillars and not just mere members of the society. Taking cognizance of the fact that every country, society and family is made up of women and men, Article 14(3) of the Constitution defines a family as a natural and fundamental unit of society and calls for the protection of families by the State and society itself. Therefore, the State is herewith mandated and obliged by the Constitution to protect families, vis-à-vis women and men who make up the families. Obligation is thus not only with the State, but also with the society within which the family exists.

Furthermore, Article 23(3) makes specific provision for Parliament to promulgate laws that will improve the people “… who have been socially, economically or educationally disadvantaged by past discrimination laws or practices, or for the implementation of policies or programmes aimed at redressing social, economic or educational imbalance …
Therefore, it is appropriate to state that the provisions of this Article substantiate the National Gender Policy’s existence. That means, Article 7 and 8 of the Constitution go further by respectively calling for the protection of all individuals’ personal liberty, provided that they do not infringe on or contravene other laws, and by stating that “The dignity of all persons shall be inviolable”. To that effect, no person or institution including the State shall be allowed to violate the dignity of any citizen.

In addition to the above-mentioned provision, Article 95 under Chapter 11 entitled PRINCIPLES OF STATE POLICY, encapsulates gender equality better. The Article 95(a) states that “The State shall actively promote and maintain the welfare of the people by adopting inter alias policies aimed at the following: (a) enactment of legislation to ensure equality of opportunity for women, to enable them to participate fully in all spheres of the Namibian society”. Therefore, the State under the Constitution is mandated to ensure that gender disparities in Namibia are addressed more specifically to transform the country into a society where women partake in all activities equitably.

4.3 Gender Responsive Acts

Namibia has drafted, passed and amended various laws designed to make the country’s legal framework gender responsive. This study aims to analyse and report on those that have made the most significant contribution towards achieving gender equality:

Beside specific Constitutional provisions that address gender issues, and in compliance with Article 23(2) of the same (Constitution), the Married Persons Equality Act (Act no. 1 of 1996) could be said to be the first of the various laws referred to above. Prior to its promulgation, husbands had marital powers over their wives. As a result, married women could neither, amongst other things, register immovable property in their names, nor act as trustees of estates or directors of companies. In brief, once a woman got married she was automatically treated as a minor by the law and subsequently by some institutions such as the banks. The husband had to give consent to all legal activities, which the wife wished to undertake (except for those already prohibited). The Act abolished such marital powers that husbands had over their wives and prescribed equal powers between the spouses (GRN, 1996:4-5). The Act came into effect on 28th May 1996, and became applicable to all spouses irrespective of when the marriage took place.

On the whole, the Act sought to give married people equal rights. “This includes the right to enter into contracts without being treated as a minor in the eyes of the law (Hunter, 2004:31)”. Unfortunately, local studies on gender indicate that Namibians, especially women, do not understand the purpose of the Act not to mention its content (Hunter, 2004:31-34). Therefore, one way of overcoming inequalities would be by educating those that are being suppressed about the laws that protect and guarantee them their rights. Once the women know the Act and its content, the women themselves could start to protect themselves and assist Government to ensure that all comply with the Act.

This Act was promulgated on the 24th of August 1998. It, like others already discussed, also attempts to address Article 23(2) of the Constitution. The Act is important to the process of addressing a gender imbalance situation, in which Namibian women found themselves. Accordingly, Section 17(1) of the Act defines Affirmative Action as “a measure to ensure that persons in designated groups enjoy equal employment opportunities at all levels of employment and are equitably represented in the workforce of relevant employers”. The designated group is made up of the racially disadvantaged persons, women and individuals with disabilities. Before independence, these were usually not considered when filling employment positions. The importance of the Affirmative Action Act in Namibia is affirmed in the Constitution, Article 23 under Chapter 3 entitled FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS and again in Article 95 under chapter 11 entitled PRINCIPLES OF STATE POLICY. The Act is important in that it serves as an instrument for adjudicating state laws and policies that seek to achieve gender equality.

As a result, the Affirmative Action Act requires employers to prepare a three-year Affirmative Action Plan. The plan has to indicate the measures the employer is going to follow in order to redress the imbalance that the people from designated groups are faced
with. The Act also makes provision for the establishment of the Employment Equity Commission, for monitoring of compliance as per section 17 of the same Act. Hence, all employers are compelled to submit to the Commission a three-year Affirmative Action Report. However, employers are required to submit yearly progress reports to the Equity Commission, which, in terms reviews the reports and advises the employers accordingly.

(iii) **Combating of Domestic Violence Act 2003 (Act no. 4 of 2004) promulgated 24 June 2003**

The call for gender equality stemmed partly out of violence women had experienced at the hands of society. This Act was promulgated, as women across the country demanded it, since they could not protect themselves from society’s violent elements. Violence experienced by women comes in different forms and thus, it is difficult to define without referring to the form in which it occurs. The Cambridge Dictionary defines violence as “action or word, which intends to hurt people (Porter, 1995:1625)”.

The Combating of Domestic Violence Act does not provide a clear definition of the concept. Instead, the Act classifies the type of violence. Nonetheless, the Domestic Violence Act has a sub-section that is divided into two parts. The first part deals with the general concepts that are used in the Act, and the second part defines the various types of violence that the Act refers to. Not only are the types of violent acts defined, but they are also discussed to the extent of classifying the nature of violent acts under each type. For example, section 2(a) states that physical abuse includes
i. Physical assault or any use of physical force against the complainant;

ii. Forcibly confining or detaining the complainant;

iii. Physically depriving the complainant of access to food, water, clothing, shelter or rest.

Section 2(b) states that sexual abuse includes:

i. Forcing the complainant to engage in sexual contact;

ii. Engaging in any sexual conduct that abuses, humiliates, degrades, or otherwise violates the sexual integrity of the complainant.

The Act makes it the responsibility of every citizen to report an act of violence being committed. Thus, one does not need to be a victim of violence to report a case. If one merely witnesses a violent act, the Act gives the witness the responsibility to report the incident to the authorities.

4.4 International Instruments

Namibia is a member of the United Nations (UN), African Union (AU) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) just to mention a few. These international and regional inter-governmental bodies have also mainstreamed gender equality into their activities, and have allocated gender activities to a specific department within their overall structures. For example, the United Nations has the Department for the Advancement of Women, the African Union has the Social Affairs Commission and the Southern African Development Community has the Gender Unit.
Besides the establishment of gender units within their structures, inter-governmental organisations have legal instruments, which member-states adopt. Likewise, the majority of these member-states have accepted and/or ratified the legal instruments. Some of the gender related legal instruments of each organisation are as follows. The United Nations has the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) with its Optional Protocol, Beijing Platform for Action and Millennium Declaration and

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The African Union has the African Charter on People’s Human Rights of Women, while the Southern African Development Community has the SADC Gender and Development Declaration.

This study focuses only on the SADC: Gender and Development Declaration since the Namibian government has set its target to reach 30% women’s representation in decision-making by 2005 which is the SADC benchmark. SADC Heads of State adopted the SADC Gender and Development Declaration on the 8th of September 1997 in Blantyre, Malawi (SADC, 1997:1). The principle behind the Declaration is based on the SADC Treaty’s Article 6(2) call “…not to discriminate against any person on grounds of gender amongst other…” (SADC, 1997:2). It has also been noted that the concept of gender is integrated within most inter-governmental organisations and institutions in the region. However, results that are more tangible remain to be seen specifically by women.
As evidence of their commitment to non-discrimination, SADC Heads of State agreed under Section F (ii) of the Declaration to “[put] into place an institutional framework for advancing gender equality consistent with that established in other areas of co-operation, but which ensure that gender is routinely taken into account in all sectors (SADC, 1997:3)”. With this provision, SADC Heads of State together with their governments endorsed that institutional frameworks would ultimately be put in place to ensure that gender awareness is mainstreamed into government activities.

The Namibian Government had, by 1990, already established the Department of Women Affairs (DWA) within the Office of the President. Subsequent to the SADC Declaration of 1997, the government passed the Affirmative Action (Employment) Act that made provision for the establishment of an Employment Equity Commission. The National Gender Policy and National Gender Plan of Action were also adopted and came into effect in November 1997 and 1998 respectively (MWACW, 2004:20). Furthermore, in 2000, the DWA was made a full-fledged Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Welfare (MWACW) headed by a Minister with voting powers in Cabinet. When it was a Department, it was headed by a Director General whose rank was at the level of Deputy Minister but with no voting rights in Cabinet.

In addition, the SADC Heads of State endorsed “the establishment of Gender Focal Points (GFPs) whose task would be to ensure that gender is taken into account in all sector activities, and that gender issues are placed on the agenda of all ministerial meetings” (SADC, 1997:4). GFPs in Namibia, as per Cabinet decision (no. 21 of 1998)
were established in all ministries and government agencies (Hunter, 2004:8). The efficiency and effectiveness of this initiative will be addressed in chapter 4. At their meeting in Blantyre on the 6th of September 1997, the Heads of State also committed themselves to their decision to “ensure the equal representation of women and men in decision-making within members states and SADC structure at all levels, and the achievement of an at least thirty percentage target women in political and decision-making structures by the year 2005 [sic]. (SADC, 1997:4)”.

This is the target that the Namibian government, under the auspices of the MGECW, is striving to achieve.

### 4.5 National Policy framework

Generally, Namibia has committed itself to gender equality and the mainstreaming of gender equality into ministerial and sectoral activities. This can be substantiated by the various documents that government has produced to address gender imbalances. The documents include:

- Vision 2030
- Second National Development Plan (NDPII)
- National Gender Policy (NGP)
- National Gender Plan of Action (NGPA)
- National Gender Mainstreaming Programme (NGMP)
However, the existence of these documents has not necessarily brought about a significant change in the status quo. This study will focus on Namibia Vision 2030, with NGP and NGPA.

4.5.1 Vision 2030

Vision 2030 is Namibia’s long-term policy framework prefaced by His Excellency, former President Sam Nujoma, in the following words:

"The goal of our Vision is to improve the quality of people of Namibia to the level of their counterparts in the developed world by 2030. In order to get there, we need a framework that defines clearly where we are today as a nation; and where we want to be by 2030 and how to get there (Office of the President, 2003: 9)."

To that end, Vision 2030 “serves to guide the country's five-year development plans from NDP II through to NDP VI.... Namibia’s Vision 2030 creates policy synergies which will effectively link long-term perspectives to short-term planning (Office of the President, 2003:9)”. Therefore, it serves two distinct purposes. First, it guides long-term planning. Secondly, it pairs Namibia with her counterparts in the developed world, thereby making provisions for policy synergies that the government should undertake to achieve the objectives of the vision. One of the objectives of the Vision is "to mainstream gender in development, to ensure that women and men are equally heard, and given an equal opportunity to exercise their skills and abilities in all aspects of life (Office of the President, 2003:110)". The Vision thus advocates gender equality and calls for both
women and men to be given equal opportunity to display their capabilities through, among others, education, employment, and sport. The Vision’s main objectives are to:

- Ensure that women occupy important roles and perform essential functions in society.
- Guarantee that opportunities for equitable social and economic development and employment creation available for men and women throughout Namibia are achieved.
- Create minimum standards and conditions that ensure the achievement of equitable access by men and women to services.
- Ensure that women and men are well represented in the workplace at all levels and in decision-making positions including the political arena (Office of the President, 2003:110). These goals are expected to be achieved by the year 2030.

In a summary, Vision 2030 would like to see Namibia at a developed stage. Namibia would like to be seen at par with counterparts in the developed world. In order to achieve that goal Vision 2030 advocates the necessary synergies and an appropriate time schedule. Each sector has a responsibility to strive to meet the objectives of the Vision. The execution of sectoral tasks as well as the implementation of all the programmes under the Vision is the responsibility of the National Planning Commission Secretariat under the Office of the President.

4.5.2. National Gender Policy (NGP)

In 1997 Cabinet approved the NGP and in the policy document’s foreword by the former Head of State, President Sam Nujoma. The document stated that
“The National Gender Policy is aimed at re-addressing the inequality between women and men. It provides vision to improve women’s living conditions including practical and forward-looking guidelines and strategies for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of constitutional provision of gender equality (DAW, 1997:3)

The policy strives to address Article 23 of the National Constitution. Furthermore, the policy provides guidelines and strategies that need to be followed during implementation in order to achieve the targeted outcome. The custodian of the policy is the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare.

The NGP focuses on ten critical areas of concern, namely:

1. Gender, Poverty and Rural Development

2. Gender Balance in Education and Training

3. Gender and Reproductive Health

4. Violence Against Women and Children

5. Gender and Economic Empowerment

6. Gender Balance in Power and Decision-Making

7. Information Communication and Education

8. Gender and the Management of the Environment

9. The Girl-Child

10. Gender and Legal Affairs
To highlight the importance of gender balance and women’s participation in decision-making the policy states that

“Equality in political decision-making performs a leverage function without which it is unlikely that real integration of gender dimension in Government policy making is feasible. Women’s equal participation in decision-making is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy, but also ought to be seen as a necessary condition for women’s interest to be taken into account and for social and economic development (DWA, 1997:23)”.

4.5.3 National Gender Plan of Action (NGPA)

The NGPA is the implementing arm of the NGP, and its main aim is to speed up the implementation process of the NGP (DWA, 1999:3). The action plan was adopted in 1998 and had an implementation period of five years. The NGPA clearly outlines the actors responsible for the implementation of the various aspects of the NGP and the events to be followed for successful implementation. Its overall national goal is to promote gender equality in positions of power and decision-making. That goal includes “[promoting and facilitating] equal representation of women and men at all levels of decision-making structures (DWA, 1998:4)”. The NGPA is a very comprehensive document that outlines various issues designed to make the implementation of the NGP a success. The plan of action outlines the following national goals, objectives, planned activities, targets groups, role players and expected output.
The national goal for gender balance in positions of power and decision-making “is to promote and facilitate equal representation of women and men at all levels of decision structures (DAW, 1998:4)”. The goal calls for equal representation in a country where 51.5% of the population are women but they are widely under represented. Yet there are more women professionals then there are men. As previously stated, the National Gender Plan of Action (NGPA) outlines objectives for the various critical areas of concern. The objectives for the area of concern on gender balance in positions of power and decision-making are:

- To promote awareness of women's equal status to men
- To advocate or lobby for equal representation at all levels
- To build capacity in management and leadership including the promotion of women
- To change the negative attitudes towards gender equality for both women and men
- To evaluate, advise and monitor equal representation of women and men and people with disabilities

A review of the above objectives will hereafter precede the assessment of the implementation of NGP.

### 4.6 National Gender Machineries

In order to mainstream gender into all sectors of the Namibian society, the government set up the following machineries:

- Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (MGECW)
• National Gender Mainstreaming Task Force
• Employment Equity Commission (EEC)
• Public Service Commission (PSC)
• Parliament Standing Committee on Human Resources, Equality and Gender Development
• Namibian Parliament Women’s Caucus
• The Namibian Elected Women’s Forum (NEWF)

Each has its own objectives, mission and strategies contributing to the national goal on gender equality.

4.6.1 Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (MGECW)

As already discussed above, the specific tasks of DWA which later became MGECW were “to address gender inequalities in Namibia and to facilitate communication between women and the Government, and help in identifying priority areas for action on issues related to the status of women (DWA, 1997:1)”.

In early 2000, the DWA was transformed into a fully-fledged Ministry and became known as the Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Welfare (MWACW). In March 2005 the Ministry was once again renamed the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare. Being responsible for child welfare as an additional responsibility transformed the
Ministry and the new mandate became that of “[ensuring] gender and equitable socio-economic development of women, men and children, - to create and ensure an enabling environment to achieve gender equality and the well being of children (MWACW, http://www.mwacw.gov.na)”. In the absence of a Gender Commission, the MGECW is both the co-ordinating and monitoring institution of the NGP. The Ministry is headed by political office-bearers, namely a Minister and a Deputy Minister who are both members. of the National Assembly (MWACW, 2004: 22-23).

4.6.2 National Gender Mainstreaming Task Force

According to the National Gender Plan of Action (1998:4), the monitoring mechanisms for the NGP and NGPA implementation are the Gender Network Co-ordinating Committee, Gender Sectoral Committee, Gender Focal Points (GFPs), National Information Sharing Forum and Gender Commission. The latter two, National Information Sharing Forum and the Gender Commission, were proposed, but they were never really established. The Gender Network Co-ordinating Committee consists of selected Ministers, while the Gender Sectoral Committee is made up of Permanent Secretaries from the selected ministries. The latter reports to the Gender Network Co-ordinating Committee while the Co-ordinating Committee reports to Cabinet (interview with Ms. Belinda Karuera, Development Planner, Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare).

As per Cabinet decision (no. 21 of 1998), GFPs were established in various government sectors, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and in the private sector. They (GFPs)
report to the Gender Sectoral Committee. One of the major tasks of the GFPs is to raise the levels of gender awareness in their respective institutions (Hunter, 2004:8). As a result of the GFPs’ establishment, some institutions developed institutional gender documents or Gender Desks. For example, the Ministry of Defence has established a Gender Desk and developed a Gender Strategy and Action Plan (MWACW, 2004: 10). The Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry has also established a Gender Desk. The Namibian Police has successfully managed to establish a gender division, which has representatives in the regions (MAWCW, 2004:23). Although there are some successes by GFPs, as per information from the Ministry, the majority of GFPs experience difficulties with regard to the implementation of their tasks. This is brought about by the fact that the majority of GFPs are below management level, which makes them less influential.

Over a period of two years (2001 – 2002), the MGECW conducted a review of the NGP, which resulted in the compilation of the National Gender Mainstreaming Programme (NGMP). The NGMP recommendations included a suggestion that a National Gender Mainstreaming Task Force comprising the Gender Sectoral Committee and GFPs be established, which it was.

4.6.3. Employment Equity Commission (EEC)

The Employment Equity Commission was established in accordance with section 3 of the Affirmative Action (Employment) Act (Act 29 of 1998). It consists of fifteen members of
whom one is a representative of women as per Section 18(1) (b) of the Affirmative Action Act. Its mission is “to achieve employment equity through the elimination of employment barriers against persons in designated groups and to ensure that all categories of employment within the workforce of every relevant employer reflect our national demographic profile (EEC, 2004: iv)”.

The EEC has succeeded in achieving its mission by enforcing the provision of Section 4 of the Act, which requires relevant employers to adopt and implement an Affirmative Action Plan. Those not complying with the Act are dealt with accordingly (EEC, 2004:16).

4.6.4 Parliament Standing Committee on Human Resources, Equality and Gender Development

As per Article 59(1), the Parliamentary standing committee was established with the mandate to:

- Address women’s issues across party lines

- Promote women’s empowerment and recommend measures to improve the status of women in Namibia

- Scrutinise legislation and policies affecting women and children

- Ensure that gender is considered in all legislation

- Ensure that the Human Rights of women and children are not abused or violated
- Liaise with NGOs which promote women’s issues and women in the private sector.

In executing its duties, the committee is expected to hold public hearings where members of the community are invited to air their views on an identified bill under national debates. They have to conduct such hearings in all regions of the country and come to the National Assembly to reports their findings.

4.6.5 Namibian Women Parliament Caucus (NWPC)

According to the working document that includes NWPC’s terms of reference, the committee consists of women parliamentarians responsible for identifying issues of importance to all Namibian women. Its main task is to ensure that the issue of gender is considered in all legislation that passes through Parliament. In doing so, it liaises with all Parliamentary Standing Committees on issues affecting women and children.

4.6.6 Namibia Elected Women’s Forum (NEWF)

The formation of the Namibia Elected Women’s Forum (NEWF) was initiated by NWPC. The forum consists of all elected women from Local Authority Councillors to Cabinet Ministers (FES, 1999:1). The objectives of the NEWF are to:

- Act as a pressure group on society and to head the call for women’s empowerment
- Strengthen women’s network and advocacy
- Build confidence in women regarding their leadership abilities
• Share problems and concerns of elected women with their colleagues at the grassroots

• Disseminate information with regard to government policies and how they affect women, and

• Promote the participation with grassroots women in policy formulation concerning women’s issues.

These activities are carried out through regional fora and annual meetings organised to discuss gender issues.

In conclusion, Namibia has thus attempted to address gender disparities experienced through various means. Nationally the call for gender equality in Namibia is being addressed in the National Constitution and more in Acts of Parliament. In addition, Inter-governmental bodies (such as the UN and SADC of which Namibia is a member) have come up with gender related instruments such as the CEDAW and SADC: Gender and Development Declaration, which Namibia has ratified. Efforts have been undertaken by government to meet the provisions of these international instruments. As a result, gender machineries have been established to assist the government with the mainstreaming of gender equality into all sectors and spheres of life.

CHAPTER 5: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS
5.1 Introduction

In order to achieve the objective of the study, questions focusing only on the current situation with regard to gender balance within the Public Service were prepared. The data was gathered from four main groups namely, MGECW officials, Regional Gender Liaison Officers, GFPs and stakeholders. Interviews were conducted with MGECW and stakeholders, while GFPs and Regional Gender Liaison Officers were presented with questionnaires. Interviews of the MGECW were with the Directorate of Women/Gender and International Affairs and included the two Deputy Directors, one Chief Development Planner and two Development Planners. These officials were sampled on the grounds that their Directorate is tasked with the coordination of the implementation of the NGP. Regional Gender Liaison Officers are MGECW officials based in the regions. Currently as per MGECW record, there are ten Gender Liaison Officers, who were all supplied with questionnaires. Due to labour turnover, some regions such as Kavango, Kunene and Khomas Regions are without Gender Liaison Officers.

The stakeholders are those institutions that are also targeting the advancement of women in their activities. For the study, the interviewed stakeholders included the Employment Equity Commission (EEC), Namibia Girl Child Organization, Namibia Men For Change (NAMEC), Namibia Women Association (NAWA) and Women’s Action for Development. To that end,
the following is a discussion of the feedback to the questions asked [see annexure A, B and C on page 99 - 104].

5.2 Data from MGECW Officials

For the purpose of providing comprehensive analysis of the response to the questions asked, the paper divided the respondents’ views into five categories. These are stakeholders’ perception of the objectives of areas of concern, gender sensitivity within the Namibian society, platforms to discuss gender issues with MGECW, description of MGECW’s effort to achieve gender equality, and MGECW’s plan of action to maximise benefit from NGP.

5.2.1 On the MGECW’s mandate with regard to the implementation of the NGP

All respondents have their own perspectives on their mandate with regard to the implementation of the NGP. Their responses ranged from ensuring equality, coordinating the implementation and monitoring the work to popularising the policy. What should be noted from these responses is that there is not a common understanding among the officials as to the mandate of the Ministry with regard to the implementation of the NGP. This can also be concluded from the fact that each respondent had her or his own explanation with regard to the NGP’s implementation, whereby some cited the overall mandate of the Ministry instead of their mandate with regard to the implementation of the NGP.
5.2.2. The perceptions on the achievement of the five objectives for the area of concern

The National Gender Plan of Action indicates that the area of concern on Gender Balance in Power and Decision-making has five objectives namely:

- To promote awareness of women’s equal status with men
- To advocate and lobby for equal representation at all levels
- To build capacity in management and leadership including the promotion of women
- To change the negative attitude towards gender equality for women and men
- To evaluate, advise and monitor the equal representation of women and men in government institutions

As for accomplishment of the objectives of the area of concern on Gender Balance in positions of Power and Decision-Making, all respondents said that they have been met. On the objective of promoting awareness of women’s equal status with men most respondents believe they have met this objective through the various gender awareness workshops that they conducted for men and women and the establishment of GFPs in various institutions. The conducting of legal literacy workshops, which aim at advocating gender equality from a legal perspective to community members, is also perceived as an effort towards the objective. The policy of Affirmative Action and the subsequent promulgation of the Affirmative Action (Employment) Act is perceived to be directed towards this objective. As for advocate and lobby, once again some officials cited the
legal literacy workshop, while others perceived the establishment of working groups that comprise GFPS as a strategy towards the objective. One official mentioned the training of women in decision-making, which is basically in the format of sensitisation. As 2004 was an election year, the Ministry wrote to all political parties lobbying them to put more women on their party lists in order to meet the SADC benchmark of 30% women in power and decision-making positions.

With capacity building in management and leadership the MGECW has something in the pipeline. Meanwhile they encourage institutions to accord their female staff with training opportunities (Interview with Ms. Mabakeng – 26/11/2004). However, it has been communicated to the Ministry that some women decline to attend training, as they perceive training to be aimed at the incompetent personnel. To meet the objective of changing negative attitudes towards gender equality there were sensitisation workshops conducted for community members. The Ministry has a data bank on women that has details of women and their occupations. Collection of such data is aimed at evaluating the extent to which the Ministry is meeting the objective of monitoring and evaluating equal representation of women and men including people with disabilities. Some respondents were sceptical that the Ministry has no specific reliable monitoring mechanism except for the data bank when submitting progress reports on gender activities to relevant inter-governmental institutions. Overall, the Ministry saw the objective of equal representation as having been met at local government level, while at national level the representation of women is perceived as satisfactory since with the recently concluded election the
representation of women in parliament stands now at 29.2%. However, for the past ten years women’s representation at regional level has been as low as 7%.

From the assembled data it looks as if the MGECW opted for sensitisation rather than embarking on projects that would lead to tangible outcomes. In the NGPA, the planned activities for the area of gender balance in power and decision-making are well outlined. The stakeholders to implement the activities are also mentioned. Had the Ministry followed the NGPA, it is believed that the expected output as outlined in the plan of action could have been achieved. Though some of the respondents acknowledge that equal representation is lacking at most governmental levels, they have no plans or strategies for addressing the situation.

5.2.3 Strategies to achieve Article 23(3) of Affirmative Action and relationship between the MGECW and Employment Equity Commission (EEC)

Except for the Ministerial Affirmative Action Committee that prepares Affirmative Action Progress Reports of the Ministry for submission to the Employment Equity Commission and the adoption of the NGP, the Ministry again is concentrating on gender sensitisation as a strategy to satisfy Article 23(3). The data bank on women with qualifications is also perceived as a strategy to meet the objectives of Affirmation Action. Moreover the only relationship that the Ministry has with the EEC is that one management cadre of the Ministry is required to serve on the Commission (Interview with Ms. Mabakeng – 26/11/2004).
5.2.4. Mechanisms in place to monitor and evaluate women’s access to senior levels and attempts to reach the SADC benchmark

Evaluation and monitoring of women’s access to senior levels is also done through reporting to international institutions. Some respondents perceive the Ministry’s invitation to be part of the interview panel as a means to monitor and evaluate women’s access to senior levels in government. Other respondents cited the data bank of the Ministry. From this limited response, it seems that the Ministry does not really have a monitoring mechanism in place. The data bank the officials keep referring to was collected in 1999 and has not been revised, nor has new data been added. Thus, to depend solely on this data would be misleading.

Attempts to meet the SADC benchmark is also done through advocacy, including workshops targeting women in parliament and those in decision-making positions. These workshops focus on various topics from confidence and public speaking to self-esteem. The Ministry officials could not cite other activities that the MGECW is doing except for the commitment of the President.
As 2004 was an election year, the Ministry wrote letters to political parties lobbying them to consider women for their party lists in order to meet the SADC benchmark. With the outcome of last year’s election (November 2004) the call to meet the SADC benchmark in National Assembly and on the National Council was not achieved. The National Assembly and National Council for the next term (2005 –2009) now have 29.2% and 26.9% women’s representation respectively. At the beginning of the National Council’s inception, there was only 3.8% woman’s representation, and today the figure stands at 26.9%.

5.2.5. Gender theories embarked on and training accorded for personnel

All respondents except for one could not mention a gender theory they used. The only respondent to mention the two theories – women in development and gender and development —stated them as she trains people and uses these theories as part of the training syllabus. The rest of the officials could not mention one, and some asked to have the different theories explained which they themselves would use to explain to others. Overall, the officials do not know the various gender theories.

Although there is a lack of knowledge on gender matters, people are sent for short-term courses, mostly on an *ad hoc*-basis. However, the Ministry intends to register all Regional Gender Liaison Officers at the University of Namibia (UNAM) to undertake the Post Graduate Diploma in Gender (Interview with Ms. Mabakeng – 26/11/2004). This can be perceived to be a good attempt, but the problem is that not only the Gender
Liaison Officers need training on gender. Headquarters’ officials also need gender training, including management.

5.2.6 Ratified gender related international instruments and progress report submission

The management respondents could mention up to four gender related international instruments that the Namibian government has ratified to assist women’s access to power. However, most staff officials below management cadre could only mention the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the SADC Gender and Development Declaration. Interesting is the fact that all officials could not correctly state the proper name: SADC Gender and Development Declaration; rather they would say the SADC Declaration. Only one person mentioned the African Charter on People’s Human Rights of Women, while one respondent mentioned the Addendum on Prevention and Eradication of Violence against Women and Children. No respondents could mention all the international gender instruments that Namibia has ratified, and this could be attributed to the fact that the respondents only know those instruments that form part of their tasked activities.

5.2.7 Establishment of the Gender Commission

The Gender Commission is not yet in place due to lack of an Act of Parliament that authenticates its existence. The respondents believe the establishment of the Commission
was further put aside due to the fact that other issues such as Violence Against Women, HIV/AIDS and Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children (OVC) have taken up the priority of the Ministry. But plans are still there to establish the Commission. Had the MWACW ensured the creation of the Commission, the Ministry would have less responsibility with regard to the monitoring and evaluation of the NGP implementation, as this would have been the responsibility of the Commission.

5.3. Data from selected stakeholders’ organizations

5.3.1 Introduction
The mandate of the selected stakeholders, such as the Employment Equity Commission, is to implement the Affirmative Action Act, which amongst other things advocated the advancement of women in employment, as they constitute persons of a designated group. The Women’s Manifesto on the other hand advocates for equal representation of women through their campaign of 50/50 or “zebra representation” as they refer to it. Furthermore, they popularize the NGP and CEDAW, while other organizations such as WAD are there “to serve, support and encourage disadvantaged rural women in Namibia” (WAD, 2004). Men for Change is an organization that sensitizes men and boys to change their behaviour against women. They mostly advocate for men and boys to end violence against women and girls. Therefore, the stakeholders with regards to this research include Employment Equity Commission (EEC), Namibia Girl Child Organization, Namibia Men For Change (NAMEC), Namibia Women Association (NAWA) and Women’s Action for Development
5.3.2 On stakeholders’ perceptions of the objective, in the area of concern on gender balance in power and decision-making, most of the stakeholders perceive the objective as having been met but not entirely. They see promotion of awareness of women’s status to be done through activities of various stakeholders. Some cited the legal framework, such as the Constitution and Affirmative Action Act that are in place to meet the objective of awareness of equal status. Although the majority of the stakeholders see the objective as having been met, they believe that awareness of the equal status of women is more evident at local governance level.

For the Advocacy and lobbying for equal representation objective, the majority of stakeholders believe that at Local Authority level there is an improvement as there are more than 40% women Local Authority Councillors. However, at national and regional level the picture is the opposite of the situation at Local Authority. Stakeholders are concerned about the fact that out of thirteen governors only three are female. Nevertheless, both the government and civic society do advocate and lobby various institutions for equal representation of women and men. Moreover, stakeholders saw the creation of a fully-fledged MGECW as a positive step towards equal representation.

Capacity building in management and leadership: Various companies are providing training for their staff. Although the training opportunities are open to all employees, men
are perceived to benefit more than women. Some institutions believe that women are not keen to go for training as they lack self-esteem and confidence. Stakeholders also noted that at tertiary institutions more women are now enrolling for various courses, and this they perceive as encouraging.

*With regard to the objective of changing the negative attitude towards gender equality,* respondents are of the opinion that the objective has not been achieved completely. Various laws have been put in place, but stakeholders believe that there is still an attitude against gender concerns. Most of the stakeholders cited the violence that women are faced with as an example of a negative attitude towards gender equality. All stakeholders do not see any *monitoring mechanism* in place. Some indicated that because data on the progress and equal representation of women are scattered and not being coordinated by one institution, it is difficult to state whether the equal representation objective has been met, especially at levels other than government.

5.3.3. *With regard to gender sensitivity within the Namibian society,* 50% of the respondents felt that the nation is not gender sensitive because most people lack the substantive understanding of gender equality, while others base their argument on the amount of violence that women still experience in the society. The low number of the girls in higher grades is also perceived as an indication of a gender insensitive society. Only 16% of those who responded to the questions believe that Namibia as a society is
gender sensitive. However they are skeptical, as they presumed that verbally the commitment towards gender is there, while when it comes to action, gender sensitivity and commitment are not seen. The rest of the people interviewed believe that to some extent the society is sensitive to changes in such aspects as the legal framework. However, many educated women are still resorting to careers which women were limited to traditionally.

5.3.4 Regarding communication between government and stakeholders, 50% of respondents indicated no common platform on which the Ministry and stakeholders can come and share ideas. Others, in particular members of Women’s Action for Development, revealed that they did approach the Ministry for a cooperation platform, but the Ministry did not come back to them on this request. In addition, the MGECW does not have a platform on which to share ideas with the Employment Equity Commission (EEC). The same applies to the EEC which does not have an official serving on any working group of the Ministry.

The NGPA recommended that a National Information Sharing Forum be established where stakeholders and the Ministry could meet. Although this was recommended, the Forum was never established and reasons for its non-existence could not be found.

5.3.5 In describing the effort of the government, especially the Ministry with regard to achieving gender equality, some of the respondents are of the opinion that the current
government has been observed to have done a lot more for the people than any other government (of pre-independence). They express a belief that the creation of the MGECW in itself was an achievement by the Namibian government. They are also of the opinion that the President did a lot for women’s empowerment. For example, he appointed a woman to head the Ministry of Finance, which is one of the most important institutions in the country. Furthermore, he elevated a female minister to the position of Deputy Prime Minister.

However, some of the interviewees perceive the MGECW to be doing very little as opposed to what should have been done. They feel that they have very limited knowledge about MGECW’s activities, and therefore, have come to a conclusion that little has been done.

They believe that had there been much done, people would have known about such accomplishments.

5.3.6. On the question of MGECW’s plan of action in order to achieve maximum benefits from the NGP, the responses of the participants centred around the following:

- The MWACW should review the NGP and revisit the strategies in the document, and replace those that are not working with achievable strategies.
- Since there is no monitoring body on the progress of gender equality in Namibia, the Gender Commission should be established and assume the role of monitoring.
- The policy is mostly used to the benefit of the elite and urban people; therefore the policy should be taken to the people in the rural areas where traditions are still dominant and the level of education and knowledge is limited.

- More advocacy and sensitization campaigns should be embarked on.

- The MGECW should include the stakeholders (more specifically NGOs) in their efforts to achieve gender equality, and not work in isolation.

5.4. Data from Gender Focal Points (GFPs)

5.4.1 Introduction

As stated in the previous chapter, GFPs were appointed as per Cabinet decision in 1998. Their major task is to ensure that gender is mainstreamed into their respective institutions. At the same time, they are supposed to meet and report on their progress to the Gender Sectoral Committee. However, it should be noted that these officials are not employed as GFPs but this is an added responsibility. Being an important part of the government institution they were also requested to respond to the questions designed for this study.

5.4.2 On the question of what is your mandate with regard to the NGP’s implementation and how do you mainstream gender into your activities, some of the GFPs could not single out their mandate, as they have no activity that is towards the implementation of the NGP. These are institutions like United Nations Children Fund, National Youth

Those that are mandated to mainstream gender into their activities include Namibia Planned Parenthood Association (NAPPA) and the Line Ministries. They express that they mainstream gender into their activities through sensitization campaigns that focus on Affirmative Action. Others offer training during which they advocate gender balance representation. Each GFP has its own training syllabus, which raises fears that it could be dangerous as someone might inform people of issues that are not correct, taking into account that no one approves their training content before implementation.

5.4.3 With regard to how many awareness campaigns the GFPs conduct each year

Most did not have a specific number. They capitalize on the various meetings and training activities organized by other institutions. Others say that they again advocate gender awareness when people are commemorating international days such as World AIDS Day

(Interview with Ms. Grace Hidinua – 30 November 2004). While NAPPA the Youth Club tries to achieve the same objective through drama plays.

5.4.4 Have the objectives of the areas of concern been met?

The respondents’ views on the effort to achieve these objectives are as follows.
5.4.4.1 On the need to promote awareness of women’s equal status with men.

In responding to the question as to whether this objective has been met some GFPs feel that this objective has not been fully met. However, from a legal perspective some GFPs feel that laws such as the Married Persons Equality Act and Affirmative Action Act guarantee equal status between women and men. Now women can buy property without the consent of their husbands and be considered for positions they are qualified to occupy. Although the law might provide for equal status, this objective, GFPs argue, has been achieved more in urban areas than in rural areas. In rural areas men are still perceived as heads of household, while the women are their subjects.

5.4.4.2 On the question of advocating and lobbying for equal representation at all levels, the GFPs opinion was that equal representation is not being observed at all levels, as most institutions’ top management is still dominated by men. However, there has been progress, as at independence there was one woman in Cabinet and today the number has increased to five.

5.4.4.3 In order to build capacity in management and leadership including the promotion of women, GFPs believe that this objective has been met to some extent, through initiatives such as the income generation activities for citizens by MGECW. Other institutions, such as the National Youth Council, expect their Regional Youth Forum to have an executive committee that is gender balanced, e.g. if the forum’s chairperson is a
man, then he should be deputized by a woman. Other initiatives are the “Business Woman of the Year Award” which brings about motivation and targets capacity building of women and encourages women to bring out their best skills in entrepreneurship.

5.4.4.4. On the question of negative attitudes towards gender equality for both women and men, most of the GFPs perceive that there is a change but it is minimal. Once again in the rural areas there still seem to be negative attitudes towards women, as wives are perceived to be properties of husbands. Although the above may be true, some men have changed their negative attitudes towards women, and this is the reason why an organization such as Men for Change could be established.

5.4.5 With regard to evaluating, advising and monitoring the equal representation of women and men

The majority of GFPs referred to the Namibia Women’s Manifesto – 50/50 campaign as the most notable effort towards achieving this objective. Although the GFPs managed to respond to the question, most of them do not seem to be familiar with the objectives. This is concluded from the fact that the GFPs were focusing more on violence against women than on gender balance in positions of power and decision-making.

5.4.6 Do they have any gender training and copies of the NGP and NGPA documents?
The majority of the GFPs seem to have been trained on gender concerning the difference between sex and gender. Other GFPs were again trained on gender sensitization and gender roles. All of the GFPs, except for one, have both the copy of the NGP and the NGPA. Even if the GFPs stated that they have copies of both the NGP and the NGPA, there is doubt as to whether they are familiar with the document. The NGPA indicates which activities need to be undertaken to achieve an identified national goal, yet GFPs seem to focus on sensitization and awareness campaigns.

5.4.7 Their views on how to ensure that more women are in positions of authority, especially those of power and decision-making were as follows:

In order for women to take up positions of power and decision-making, firstly for the GFPs their capacity needs to be built up. Secondly women should be groomed for the positions. Thirdly, women should be encouraged and supported to take up positions of authority. From the provided responses GFPs seem to see women in power and decision-making as not supported. Unfortunately, GFPs do not have strategies on how the women in positions of power could be supported.

5.5. Regional Gender Liaison Officers

Regional Gender Liaison Officers are employees of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare. They run the regional offices of the Ministry and report directly to the Director of Gender at the headquarters in Windhoek. The Ministry has thirteen regional
offices of which only Kavango, Kunene and Khomas had no regional officer, as the
ones that occupied the positions have resigned for other employment elsewhere.

5.5.1 On whether the objectives have been met
In order to meet the objective of *awareness of women’s equal status with men* the
Regional Gender Liaison Officers conduct community meetings where they inform
community members about gender issues, and they referred to these meetings as gender
awareness workshops. With regard to the *advocacy and lobbying for equal
representation objective and the objective to change negative attitudes towards gender
equality*, Regional Gender Liaison Officers do conduct gender sensitization meetings for
the community, which also include various leaders. Moreover, the appointment of Gender
Focal Points in government and non-governmental institutions as well as in parastatals is
perceived by Regional Gender Liaison Officers to be an effort to meet the objective.
Enterprise Workshops and Leadership Training for Regional Elected Women are offered
as activities of the objective of *capacity building in management and leadership*. In
Enterprise Workshops trainees are taught business skills, while in Leadership Workshops
the focus is on leadership skills.

The Regional Gender Liaison Officers also seem to be mainly conducting sensitization
workshops to meet the objectives. This could not be unexpected as those officials at the
Headquarters, under whose supervision the Liaison Officers are, do not have any projects
to achieve the objectives. However if the Gender Liaison Officers familiarize themselves with the NGPA, they could realize that activities to meet the various objectives are prescribed.

5.5.2 What are the affirmative action strategies that have been embarked on to achieve the provision of Article 23(3) and the relationship with the EEC?

The strategy that the Gender Liaison Officers have embarked on is conducting community meetings and explaining the importance of Affirmative Action to community members. They also use the legal literacy workshop, where traditional leaders are also in attendance, to deliberate on the compliance of the Affirmative Action Act. The Gender Liaison Officers do not have any contacts with the EEC.

5.5.3. How do you monitor women’s access to senior levels and attempt to reach the SADC benchmark?

One of the Gender Liaison Officers is collecting her own data while the other Gender Liaison Officers are holding meetings where they inform community members on the importance of mainstreaming gender into all sectors. To meet the SADC benchmark of 30% women’s representation in decision-making, Gender Liaison Officers encourage community women to compete in elections. Otherwise Gender Liaison Officers again go for deliberation with women to encourage them to strive for decision-making positions. Generally it looks like each Liaison Officer is doing her own activity to monitor women’s access to senior levels. Likewise there are no coordinated activities between all Gender Liaison Officers,
and they all seem to be focusing on awareness campaigns rather than on other tangible projects or actions.

5.5.4. *Name the regional and international instruments that you have acceded to and identify those that you have to report on*

All except one of the Regional Gender Liaison Officers could mention international instruments that Namibia has acceded. However, none of them could indicate which ones the country is required to report on. This makes one wonder whether the implementation of international instruments that contribute to the successful implementation of the NGP is done only by headquarter officials. If this is the case, the Ministry is then depriving the people in the regions of laws that they could use to mainstream gender into their activities and protect their rights.
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

This chapter draws conclusions on issues that this study focussed on and provides some recommendations that might be of assistance to achieve maximum benefit through the implementation of the NGP. The main focus of this study was firstly to assess the implementation of the NGP, on the area of concern on gender balance in positions of power and decision-making in government institutions, and secondly to ascertain whether the identified objectives have been met. The primary reason why this study was undertaken is that there has never been an academic study that assessed the NGP implementation process. At the same time, the NGP comes along with on NGPA, which had an implementation period of five years, starting in 1998 and ending in 2003.

Namibia as a SADC member state that also targeted 30% representation of women in positions of power and decision-making by 2005. Out of the three levels of government (central, regional and local level), only the local governments (at 44.4%) have women’s representation beyond the benchmark of 30%. At central government and the Public Service, the level of female representation is 0.8% below the set bench-mark. In the National Assembly, the percentage is 29.2, and at Cabinet level, the percentage has improved from 5.6% in 1990 to 22.7% at present. Nevertheless, women remain critically under-represented
at regional government level when one looks at the number of regional councillors and governors.

The graphs below depict the Namibian picture of women in positions of power and decision-making. Figure 1 portrays that the percentage of women in Public Service has been increasing over the period of review. Local Authority (Figure 3) is the only level to have achieved a women’s representation beyond 30% (which is the benchmark of SADC member states). The Regional Council is the only level with less than twenty percent female representation.

Figure 1: Management Cadre in the Namibian Public Service

![Management Cadre in Namibian Public Service](image1)

Figure 2: Regional Councillors in Namibia

![Regional Councillors in Namibia](image2)
Figure 3: Local Authority Councillors in Namibia

It should be noted that although there is a significant number of women in positions of power, that cannot all be attributed to the implementation of the NGP. One reason could be that people are trying to advance women in compliance with the Affirmative Action (Employment) Act, which is more enforceable than the NGP. As a result, some women’s groups are further marginalized because the Affirmative Action Act’s designated group includes previously disadvantaged persons, women and individuals with disabilities. In the group of previously disadvantaged persons, black men are included, giving women more competition when applying for positions of power and decision-making.

The objectives of the area of gender balance in positions of power and decision-making are partly met by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare. There is a lot of awareness campaigns being conducted by both headquarters and regional staff. However, when it comes to building capacity in management and leadership, little is done by the Ministry. The Ministry normally has one or two courses per year to meet this objective,
which is not enough as there are a lot of women who need this training. As for the objective of evaluating and monitoring equal representation of women and men, this is a weak aspect of the Ministry. The Research Unit within the Ministry does not have up–to-date gender disaggregated data. Very little is done to monitor women’s progress, because it is undertaken only when the Ministry is reporting to one of the international organizations, and not for internal utilization.

At the onset, the study concluded that at local government level, gender balance has been achieved. At central government level, the benchmark of SADC can be achieved before the end of the year if politicians are willing to change the current status quo. At regional level and parastatals there is a lot of work to be done to increase the number of women in power and decision-making. The government could have achieved the target of 30% during the 2004 National Assembly and Regional Council elections had the MGECW done its duties to inform the nation about the status quo of female representation. In fact, the Ministry was supposed to have made women’s empowerment the focus of the elections.

Furthermore, the study noticed that the NGP as a document has no weakness. The MGECW should be commended for taking a step further to come up with the NGPA, which outlines activities that need to be undertaken to ensure that objectives of each area of concern are met. However, the weakness is within the implementation stage. This is the case as activities that have been identified in the NGPA have not been undertaken.
Most of these activities could have brought about gender equality had they been undertaken. Moreover, platforms and institutions that have been identified by NGP and NGPA as a necessity to mainstream gender awareness were not established. This refers to the establishment of the Gender Commission, which was anticipated to monitor the implementation of the NGP. The National Information Sharing Forum, where stakeholders could come together with the MGECW and discuss issues with regard to gender, remains non existent. Despite the fact that the stakeholders are keen to assist the Ministry, they do not have a platform where they can come together with the Ministry.

6.2 Recommendations

- The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare should start working on tangible programmes such as those identified in the NGPA instead of only focusing on awareness campaigns.
- The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare should work on strategies on how to implement NGP and enforce legal requirements.
- The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare should try to transform the NGP into an Act of Parliament, thereby making it more enforceable and logical to comply with.
- The legislation quota on the number of women candidates in the Local Authority Act should also be added to the Regional Council Act so as to increase the number of women at regional government level.
• The Electoral Commission Act should be amended to include a compulsory gender quota of at least 30% women on the party lists when political parties submit their lists for elections.

• The Ministry should create the National Information Sharing Forum as proposed in the NGPA, as there are various stakeholders that are willing to assist the Ministry with the implementation of the NGP but do not have a platform where they can come together with the Ministry.

• The GFP’s meetings should be scheduled at the beginning of the year in order for them to have a reason to work on mainstreaming gender awareness. It is the belief of the researcher that once the GFP’s have prior knowledge of meetings where they are required to report, this will encourage them to work on more activities.

• The Headquarters should coordinate activities of Regional Gender Liaison Officers, as some of them seem to be attempting to achieve gender mainstreaming through means that others are not aware of.

• As stated, lack of monitoring systems is a barrier to the goal of women in power and decision-making. The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare should therefore enhance the capacity of its Research Unit, so that these officials can start monitoring the representation of women in power and decision-making positions.
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Annexure A: Questionnaires: MWACW Staff and Regional Gender Liaison Officers

1. What exactly is your mandate with regard to the implementation of the policy?

2. Can you explain as to how you met the following objectives?
   2.1. To promote awareness of women’s equal status with men.
   2.2. To advocate and lobby for equal representation at all levels.
   2.3. To build capacity in management and leadership including the promotion of women.
   2.4. To change the negative attitudes towards gender equality for women and men.
   2.5. To evaluate, advise and monitor the equal representation of women and men including people with disabilities.

3. Reference for Gender Balance in Power and Decision-Making is based on the Constitution’s Article 23(3) of the Affirmative Action. What strategies have you embarked on to achieve the provision of this article?

4. What is your relationship with the Employment Equity Commission?

5. Which mechanisms did your institutions create to monitor and evaluate women’s access to senior levels?

6. How are you attempting to reach the SADC benchmark?
7. In your effort to address gender equality, what theories, and/or approaches, are you embarking on to assist you to address the imbalance?

8. Do you send your personnel and stakeholders to refresher courses, and which institutions are you using for such courses?

9. Could you list gender-related regional and international instruments that you have acceded and ratified?

10. For which international instruments are you required to submit a progress report?

11. The NGP (13.2.5) states that there shall be a Gender Commission, to reinforce the implementation of the policy. Why is this Commission not yet in place? Take into account that subsequent para (13.3.) says that your institution is to see to it that this Commission would be in place six (6) months after NGP has been adopted.
Annexure B: Questionnaires to Gender Mainstreaming Task Forces (GFPs)

1. What is your mandate with regard to the NGP’s implementation?
   What is your relationship with the MWACW?

2. What do you do to mainstream gender into your institution’s activities?

3. How many gender awareness campaigns do you conduct per year?

4. How are you meeting the objectives of areas of concern on “Gender Balance in Power and Decision-Making”?
   4.1 To promote awareness of women’s equal status with men
   4.2 To advocate and lobby for equal representation at all levels
   4.3 To build capacity in management and leadership including the promotion of women.
   4.4 To change the negative attitudes towards gender equality for both women and men.
   4.5 To evaluate, advise and monitor the equal representation of women and men.

6. How regularly do you meet and report with the MGECW?

7. What training do you have on gender issues?

8. Do you have a copy of both the National Gender Policy and the National Gender Plan of Action?

9. What do you think should be done to ensure that more women are in positions of authority, especially those of power and decision-making
10. What can you single out as your achievement for this year with regard to the implementation of the NGP?

11. Is there anything that you would like to see done, in regard to achieving gender equality, especially regarding women in power and decision-making?
Annexure C: Interview questions for stakeholders

1. What are your organization’s mandate and mission?

2. Could you explain your perception on the objectives of the areas of concern? Do you think these have been met and how?
   2.1 To promote awareness of women’s equal status with men.
   2.2 To advocate and lobby for equal representation at all levels.
   2.3 To build capacity in management and leadership including the promotion of women.
   2.4 To change the negative attitudes towards gender equality for women and men.
   2.5 To evaluate, advise and monitor the equal representation of women and men including people with disabilities.

3. Do you think the Namibian society is gender sensitive? Could you elaborate on your answer?

4. What are your organizational goals and how are you striving to meet them?

5. What is your organization doing regarding the empowerment of women, especially access of women to power and decision-making?

6. Do the MWACW and you have any platform where you share ideas, to assist you with both gender balance and women in power and decision-making?

7. How would you describe the effort of the Namibian government, especially the MWACW, with regard to achieving gender equality?
8. What do you think or wish the MWACW should do in order to achieve maximum benefit from the NGP?

9. What would you like to see done more with regard to gender equality?

10. Is there any thing that you would like to share that you think this study should bring out in the end?