



## INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE, IT AND MANAGEMENT

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## A POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR MANAGING DIVERSITY IN THE DEPARTMENT OF THE PREMIER OF THE WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

**DESMOND VAN DER WESTHUIZEN**  
**MASTERS GRADUATE IN PUBLIC MANAGEMENT**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE & MANAGEMENT**  
**PRETORIA**

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**SENIOR LECTURER**  
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### ABSTRACT

*This article attempts not only to highlight the importance of the implementation of genuine diversity management policies, strategies and programmes that will equip employees with the necessary skills to interact with and value the contribution of employees from different cultural backgrounds and, in so doing, realize their full potential and that of the department but also to establish policy guidelines, which the Department of the Premier can utilize to improve the relationship and interaction between employees from different cultural backgrounds in order to ensure a competitive advantage with regard to service delivery. The article also acknowledges that a stable workforce is a prerequisite for the implementation of an agreed long-term plan, increased efficiency and effectiveness, improved quality and continued service delivery of a very high standard. Being from different backgrounds, each employee brings his or her own perceptions and experiences to the workplace. Encouraging the management of diversity of culture could help to generate new ideas and innovative approaches to tackle workplace problems. It is thus imperative that an instrument must be in place to harness the different perceptions and experiences and utilizing it to create a competitive advantage. Genuine diversity management policies, strategies and programmes will equip employees with the necessary skills to interact with and value the contribution of employees from different cultural backgrounds and, in so doing, realize their full potential and that of the employer*

### KEYWORDS

Managing diversity, HRM.

### INTRODUCTION

ociety consists of people who represent different races, cultures, backgrounds, etc. and the workplace is where they are thrown together in order to accomplish a common purpose. Managing this melting pot of diversity has become the topic of many books, which endeavour to define it and provide some insight as to how it can be addressed. Thomas (Harvard Business Review on Managing Diversity 2001:12), states that managing diversity does not mean that diversity must be contained or controlled but rather be utilised as an enabler where every member of the workforce is encouraged to perform to his or her potential. In South Africa different race groups were forced to develop separately pertaining to all aspects of their lives. With the establishment of the first democratically elected government in 1994 they could without fear, embark on a journey of discovery of each other. In most cases before 1994 the only interaction between different races was limited to the workplace within a specific context that did not allow for exploration of the person behind the face. The workplace also entrenched the notion of separate development as per legislative framework, which further polarised the relationship between people of different races.

Within the public service the same scenario played out with legislation allowing people of different races to only deliver services to people of that specific race. For people in these "own affairs" administrations, interaction with people of other races only occurred in exceptional circumstances and within a specific context. When the African National Congress (ANC) won the first democratic elections in 1994 the transformation of the public service in South Africa was an important consequence to ensure that the composition of the public service reflect representation of the country's population but also to amalgamate the various apartheid administrations created in terms of the policy of separate development. The amalgamation of all the various apartheid administrations in the Western Cape culminated in the establishment of the Provincial Administration: Western Cape. Employees rendering services to members of their own race were absorbed and placed in the new administration with the new mandate to render services to all South Africans irrespective of their race. Employees representing different population groups with different work procedures, different files and different backgrounds had to deliver services to citizens as a cohesive unit. The composition of the public service was such that the senior management positions were occupied by whites, which allowed for the culture within the public service to still reflect that of the white community. This state of affairs allowed for employees of different race groups to be assimilated into this existing culture which also applied to the Provincial Administration: Western Cape. However the differences, which people of different race groups brought to the new administration, were never explored and utilised as a competitive advantage to realize the full potential of every employee and that of the Department.

### A BACKGROUND TO MANAGING DIVERSITY IN THE DEPARTMENT OF THE PREMIER, WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

The transformation of the public service in South Africa was an important consequence of the first democratic elections in 1994 to ensure that not only the composition of the public service reflects representation of the country's population but also to amalgamate the various apartheid administrations created in terms of the then ruling National Party's policy of separate development. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (South Africa, 1996: 117) stipulates in article 195(1)(i) that "Public Administration must be broadly representative of the South African people, with employment and personnel

management practices based on ability, objectivity, fairness and the need to redress the imbalances of the past to achieve broad representation.' To give effect to the constitutional principle of redressing the imbalances of the past to achieve broad representation the Employment Equity Act, 1998 (South Africa, 1998: 5) was passed of which the preamble reads: " Recognising that as a result of apartheid and other discriminatory laws and practices, there are disparities in employment, occupation and income within the national labour market; and that those disparities create such pronounced disadvantages for certain categories of people that they cannot be redressed simply by repealing discriminatory laws, therefore , in order to promote the constitutional right of equality and the exercise of true democracy; eliminate unfair discrimination in employment; ensure the implementation of employment equity to redress the effects of discrimination; achieve a diverse workforce broadly representative of our people; promote economic development and efficiency in the workforce; and give effect to the obligations of the Republic as a member of the International Labour Organisation,...". The White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service, 1998 (South Africa, 1998: 11) determines that "a major human resource management objective will be the development of a genuine culture of diversity which builds positively on employees' differing cultural backgrounds".

After 1994 the new government led by the ANC made the reconstruction and development of the country a priority, which included the public service. The democratisation of the Public Service has been a concerted effort to correct past imbalances and discriminatory practices within the public service. The active introduction, monitoring and promotion of employment equity and affirmative action have seen a greater diversification of the Public Sector. White males dominated the public service so no meaningful representation by members of other cultural groups existed, especially in the senior management. Improved human resource management practices, combined with effective affirmative action should redress these imbalances within a relative short period of time however; achieving numerical balance will not be enough to create a culturally diverse workforce because cultural diversity is wider than race, gender and disability. Other cultural differences also needed to be taken into account. The White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service (2001) (South Africa, 1998:25) highlights the fact that organisations are characterised by a corporate culture, reflecting attitudes to the way work is done and to the way the people within the organisation are expected to behave. It states that for most part the public service still reflects the culture developed prior to 1994 with some of the following characteristics:

- An emphasis on regulation and adherence to centrally determined processes.
- The rigid classification of tasks and lack of workforce mobility.
- A strong sense of hierarchy and a reluctance to question those in higher authority.
- Formality in inter-personal relationships.
- The valuing of formal qualifications and seniority over other skills and experiences.
- Lack of workforce and "customer" participation.
- A tendency to exclude and discount the views and values of those outside the dominant group.

After 13 years of democracy the Public Service Commission (PSC) (South Africa. Public Service Commission, 2005: 41) still finds it necessary to include in its "State of the Public Service Report" that the Western Cape was the least transformed in contrast to all the other provinces. The integration of the different races still did not take place, because the trust that is needed to foster diversity in the workplace is not there. Another barrier that prevented diversity from being effected properly is language in that Afrikaans was the dominant language utilised in the Western Cape Government. The position of the Department of the Premier was the same as what occurred in the rest of the public service. With the implementation of employment equity, people of the disadvantaged groups were appointed to posts on a higher level. Organisational customs assumed that what was successful in the past would be successful in the future and as a result newcomers who joined the department were expected to adjust to the traditions, norms and values of the previously dominant group. The Department of the Premier: Western Cape as an instrument of government has a responsibility to ensure that its composition reflects all sections of society and also facilitate the development of a genuine culture of diversity which will contribute to the increase of productivity by maximising the contribution of all employees.

The Department of the Premier: Western Cape has undergone a process of re-engineering in order to improve on the execution of its mandate. The process of re-engineering was also utilised to improve on the representivity of all sections of society especially in the senior management services. Although the re-engineering process improved the numerical affirmative action targets, people were still operating in silos and the interaction between staff were limited to the bare essentials to get the job done. The diverse cultures, backgrounds and experiences, which the employees brought with them, needed to be managed in order to ensure that the goals of the Department were achieved optimally.

## UNDERSTANDING THE NEED FOR A POLICY FRAMEWORK TO MANAGE DIVERSITY WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF THE PREMIER, WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

According to Erasmus et al (2005:26) "People are central to government effort to execute its functions and to render services to the public. The manner in which employees interact with each other have a considerable effect on the effectiveness and efficiency of services being rendered to citizens." In its legislative frameworks the government indicated that a major human resource management objective would be the development of a genuine culture of diversity, which builds positively on employees' cultural backgrounds as outlined in the White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service (South Africa, 1997: 11). How the development of the diverse culture should occur and what strategies needed to be put in place has not been defined. Guidelines in respect to how this should be accomplished were not stipulated with the consequence that departments do not give much attention with regard to the improvement of diversity.

The *core problem*, which this article addresses, revolves around the absence of genuine diversity management policies and programmes that will assist the Department of the Premier: Western Cape to use the diversity of its workforce as a competitive advantage to realize the full potential of every employee and that of the department. The implementation of diversity programmes may assist to neutralize and change the organisational culture of public institutions, which would improve service delivery to all sectors of citizens being served. Service delivery occurs within the guidelines of prescribed policies and frameworks to ensure consistency and also accountability for actions taken. The implementation of a diversity management policy would ensure that consistency in its application among employees in the department would occur, but will also ensure that employees could be held accountable if the requirements of the policy were not adhered to.

The implementation of strategies and programmes would ensure that structured processes were undertaken to change people's attitudes and behaviours in a positive manner that would accommodate differences of others, but also lead to understanding their own differences and how it is perceived by colleagues and citizens. Managers responsible for diverse employees should ask themselves the question, "Am I fully tapping the potential capacities of everyone in my department? If the answer is no, they should ask this follow-up question, "Is this failure hampering my ability to meet performance standards?" The answer to this question would undoubtedly be yes. (Harvard Business Review on Managing Diversity 2001:6). Affirmative action is utilised by the government as a strategy to transform the public service to be more representative of the population it serves. People of the disadvantaged community were employed however something else would have to get them to perform to their potential. This something can be classified as managing diversity. In the absence of formalised diversity management policies and strategies the responsibilities for diversity in the Department of the Premier were left to supervisors who could decide how they wanted to ensure a diverse workforce. The haphazard addressing of diversity issues is not enough to change people's mindsets and behaviours.

## DEFINING THE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT IN THE DEPARTMENT OF THE PREMIER, WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

Thomas (1999:5) defines diversity as: "... any combination of individuals who are different in some ways and similar in others." He alludes to the challenge posed to 'abandon our accustomed ways of thinking about diversity which refers to the "main" people and then the "others" where the "others" constitute the diversity. Thomas (1999:5) further indicates that "... diversity is not a function of race or gender or any other us-versus-them dyad, but a complex and ever

changing blend of attributes, behaviours and talents." When we refer to diversity in the workplace we ultimately relate to the staff with regard to the different races, cultures, etc. they represent, and how their composition is further improved through policies of employment equity and affirmative action. Managing diversity for many means the ability of organisations to improve the number with regard to people of the disadvantaged group whom they employ.

The concept of diversity is based on individual acceptance and respect. It is an understanding that individuals are unique and different. Diversity includes race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, culture, age, physical ability and religious, political and other beliefs. Other terms and concepts that can be linked include the following:

(a) Managing diversity

Thomas (1996:10) defines managing diversity as a "planned systematic and comprehensive managerial process for developing an organisational environment in which all employees, with their similarities and differences, can contribute to the strategic and competitive advantage of the organisation and where no-one is excluded on the basis of factors unrelated to productivity. Accordingly, the process of managing diversity:

- is a means of creating an organisational environment which promotes the sustainability of well constructed programmes of affirmative action;
- is linked to individual and interpersonal interventions;
- is linked to training and development; and
- is linked to sound business reasons which ensure the achievement of organisational objectives."

Duggett and Beptucci (as cited in UNDESA – Managing diversity in the Civil Service (2001:2) define managing diversity in the context of the public service as: "the policies, programmes and practices set in place to ensure that diversity exists and is a positive force enhancing the purposes and the structure of governance."

(b) Cultural diversity

Diversity includes cultural diversity. According to Sonnenschein (1997:11) culture refers to the system of beliefs, values, customs and institutions that create a common identity and ways of behaviour for a given people. Cultural diversity includes (but is not limited to):

- Language.
- Race.
- Ethnicity.
- Dress.
- Values.
- Religion and religious practices.
- Social and community responsibilities.
- Family and family responsibilities.
- Political views.

(c) Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is based on the acceptance, respect, understanding and appreciation of different cultures in the community. According to Caleb Rosado (1996:2) "Multiculturalism is a system of beliefs and behaviours that recognizes and respects the presence of all diverse groups in an organization or society, acknowledges and values their socio-cultural differences, and encourages and enables their continued contribution within an inclusive cultural context which empowers all within the organization or society".

(d) Affirmative action

"Affirmative action can be seen as a means of correcting historical injustices..." (Thomas; 1996: 6). According to Erasmus et al (2005: 163): Taylor indicate that "Affirmative action refers to specific steps, beyond ending discriminatory practices that are taken to promote equal opportunity and to ensure that discrimination will not recur. The goal of affirmative action is to eliminate non-legal barriers to equal employment opportunity, including intentional discriminatory policies and practices, and unintentional (structural or systemic) discrimination. Affirmative action is best understood as a diverse continuum of more or less severe responses that attempt to overcome discrimination." According to Erasmus et al (2005: 163), Sachs state that "Affirmative action in the South African context has extremely broad connotations, touching, as apartheid did and still does, on every area of life ... affirmative action covers all purposive activity designed to eliminate the effects of apartheid and to create a society where everyone has the same chance to get on in life. In terms of the African National Congress (ANC) draft Bill of Rights, all anti-discrimination measures, as well as all anti-poverty ones, may be regarded as constituting a form of affirmative action."

(e) Assimilation

According to Loden (as cited in Managing Diversity Course Pack (2002: 30), assimilation reinforces the rightness of traditional ways of doing things and often creates an organisational myopia that either mandates conformity or creates confusion, isolation and tension among those who do not conform. The goal of assimilation is to eliminate cultural differences, or at least the expression of the different cultures at work. To accomplish this, entering members who are culturally different from the organisation's culture must reject or at least repress the norms, values and practices of the socioculture from which they have come.

(f) Organisational culture

According to Bennet (as cited in Pekeur, (2002:25) organisational culture is defined as "the totality of the attitudes, norms, beliefs and perspectives shared by the majority of the members of an organisation". Denison (as cited by Cox (1993:161) define organisational culture as the "underlying values, beliefs and principles that serve as a foundation for the organisations management system as well as the set of management practices and behaviours that both exemplify and reinforces those principles." Edgar Schein, (1993: 373-374) define organisational culture as: "A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems".

(g) Prejudice

According to the Macdonald series (as cited in Pekeur, (2002:23) prejudice is defined as a "set of beliefs and includes a belief in inherited characteristics". Eyes, hair and other physical traits can be inherited. Family, friends, peers, schools, teach beliefs. Prejudices also include ethnocentrism, which is the tendency to judge all other cultures by one's own standards. Cox (1993:161) defines prejudice as referring to attitudinal bias and means to prejudge something or someone on the basis of some characteristics. Prejudice may be manifested as either a positive or negative predisposition toward a person; however most experts on the subject define it in terms of negative attitudes toward certain groups and their members."

(h) Stereotyping

According to Londen & Rosener (as cited in Pekeur (2002:23) stereotyping is defined as a "fixed and distorted generalisation made about all members of a particular group. It ignores individual differences and also represents rigid judgements made about others that do not take into account the specifics of the person or the situation". Cox (1993:88) defines stereotyping as a "perceptual and cognitive process in which specific behavioural traits are ascribed to individuals on the basis of their apparent membership in a group".

(i) Discrimination

According to the Macdonald series (as cited in Pekeur, (2002:23) discrimination is defined as "behaviours that are based on prejudice. It includes any treatment which puts a group at a disadvantage, for example, intentional discrimination whereby certain groups are deliberately excluded, or unconscious or systematic discrimination where policies or qualifications discriminate inadvertently against people". Article 1, paragraph 1, of the International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of racist discrimination (General assembly resolution 2106A (XX) annex 1965:3) define discrimination as "any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national, or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition,

enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.”

(j) Attitude

“According to Chapman (as cited in Pekeur (2002:24), most psychologists define attitude as a mind set that causes a person to respond in a characteristic manner to a given stimulus. Fox and Meyer (as cited in Pekeur (2002:24) define attitude as the “tendency or preparedness of an individual or a group to react in a predictable manner.”.

(k) Diversity awareness

According to Pekeur (2002:21) diversity awareness is defined as “having knowledge of or being informed about differences among various groups in the workplace”. According to Thomas (as cited in Pekeur (2002:21), diversity awareness also focuses on creating awareness, acceptance and understanding of individual differences in the workplace.

(l) Valuing of differences

According Londen & Rosener (as cited in Pekeur (2002:22) valuing of differences is defined as “a management philosophy that assumes that we will be more successful as individuals, work teams, organisations, and a society if we acknowledge, respect and work with the differences that we have”.

(m) Dimensions of diversity

The human race consists of people of different shapes, sizes, colours, etc. Through their differences people can be distinguished from one another, which helps to differentiate them. Londen and Rosener (as cited in Pekeur 2002:32) distinguish between the primary and secondary dimensions of diversity. He indicates that the word dimension is used to describe the properties and characteristics, which constitute the whole person. According to them all individuals have a number of characteristics or dimensions by which they are measured and no style or dimension stands alone.

#### PRIMARY DIMENSIONS OF DIVERSITY

According to Pekeur (2002:32) primary dimensions of diversity are those human differences which are inborn and which exert an important influence on our early socialisation and an ongoing input throughout our lives. They represent the core of our identities, which are:

- Age,
- Ethnicity,
- Gender,
- Physical ability/qualities,
- Race,
- Sexual orientation.

#### SECONDARY DIMENSIONS OF DIVERSITY

According to Pekeur (2002:33) secondary dimensions of diversity refer to those things, which can be changed. They represent differences that are acquired, discarded and / or modified throughout people’s lives. They include but are not limited to:

- Educational background.
- Geographical location.
- Income.
- Marital status.
- Work experience.
- Parental status.
- Religious status.

#### THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MANAGING DIVERSITY, VALUING DIVERSITY AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

According to Galagan (as cited in Pekeur (2002:34) managing diversity can be described as a behavioural approach with the emphasis on building specific skills and creating policies, which draw the best from every employee. Effort forms the yardstick for monitoring progress towards the achievement of objectives and goals. The valuing of diversity is more of a qualitative approach while affirmative action is a quantitative approach. In the valuing of differences the main emphasis is on appreciating differences and the establishment of environments in which every person will feel accepted and valued. According to Thomas (as cited in Pekeur (2002:34) the valuing of differences endeavours to foster greater awareness and acceptance of individual differences and greater understanding of the nature and dynamics of individual differences. Valuing of differences assists participants in understanding their own feelings and attitudes towards people who are different, in exploring how differences could be tapped as assets in the workplace, and in enhancing work relations between people who are different. According to Thomas (as cited in Pekeur (2002:34) by accepting, tolerating and understanding diversity however is not by themselves enough to create an empowered workforce. In order to empower a diverse group of employees to perform to their full potential managing the diversity within the group is needed. Affirmative action has as its purpose to achieve equality of opportunities in the workplace. According to Jenner (as cited in Pekeur (2002:34) diversity management focuses on the diverse needs of employees such as childcare, family leave and flexible holiday schedules, not the cultural diversity of employees. Pekeur (2002:35) further stipulates that diversity management also requires the putting in place of policies and procedures that empower managers to meet the diverse needs of employees. Valuing of diversity centres on interpersonal qualities, such as race, gender and language, and affirmative action directs attention to laws, which guide recruitment and promotion.

#### LEGISLATION IMPACTING ON DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT IN THE DEPARTMENT OF THE PREMIER, WESTERN CAPE

Article 195(1)(i) of the Constitution (South Africa:117) determines that a basic value and principle that must govern public administration is that public administration must be broadly representative of the South African people, with employment and personnel management practices based on ability, objectivity, fairness and the need to redress the imbalances of the past to achieve broad representation. To give effect to this principle the following legislation and policy directives were initiated and implemented by government to impact on the structure and composition of the public service:

- (a) Employment Equity Act.
- (b) Public Service Act.
- (c) White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service.
- (d) White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service.
- (e) White Paper on Affirmative Action in the Public Service.
- (f) Employment Equity Act

The Employment Equity Act, South Africa (1998:5) was implemented to remove the past legacy of discrimination in employment and to redress the effects of discrimination in order to achieve the diverse workforce as demanded by the Constitution. The Act aims to help redress the disadvantages emanating from past racial policies and to ensure the accommodation of differences between people in the workplace. The Act also seeks to redress the disadvantages of the past created by apartheid through providing for affirmative action. Through the Act the employment of members of the disadvantaged groups are enhanced which contributed to the diversification of the public service as envisaged by the Constitution.

According to Erasmus et al (2005: 185) the two main aims of the Act are to achieve employment equity by promoting equal opportunity and fair treatment and the implementation of affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantages in employment experienced by designated groups in order to ensure their equitable representation in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce.

(b) Public Service Act

The Public Service Act, South Africa (1994:1) provides for the appointment and the filling of posts in the public service where due regard should be given to equality and the other democratic principles enshrined in the Constitution. The implications of this is that the evaluation of persons shall be based among other factors on: "the need to redress the imbalances of the past to achieve a public service broadly representative of the South African people, including representation according to race, gender and disability Erasmus et al (2005: 177)." Erasmus et al further indicate that as all appointments of public service employees occur in terms of the Act, it becomes legally possible to start with the implementation of the affirmative action targets as envisaged in the White Paper on the Transformation of the public service.

(c) White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service

According to Erasmus et al (2005: 176) the White Paper focuses among other things on representativeness and affirmative action in the South African Public Service. They further state that the point of departure for the documents chapter on representativeness and affirmative action is that "representativeness ... a necessary precondition for legitimising the public service and driving it towards equitable service delivery." He further state that the main target group for affirmative action programmes have been identified as black people, women and people with disabilities.

(d) White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service

Erasmus et al (2005: 177) contend that human resource management is regarded as one of the strategic instruments of the transformation agenda for the public service and for this reason the white paper was published in 1997. According to Erasmus et al (2005:77) one of the points of departure for this white paper was the perceived discriminatory nature of existing personnel management practices leading to a situation in which, although 79% of public servants were black, only 38% of staff were in the management echelon. Erasmus furthermore indicates that although the formal barriers to advancement for previously disadvantaged groups had already been removed in 1997, various levels of the public service were still effectively closed to external applicants. He also stipulates that diversity seemed to be one of the key principles of the white paper, not only to create a representative workforce, but also to make a contribution to improved service delivery. He concludes that the white paper proposed the following main aims for a diversity management strategy:

- Identify and raise awareness of cultural differences within the workforce.
- Analyse the existing corporate culture and identify practices and behaviour which (a) support and (b) which undermine cultural diversity.
- Develop processes and behavioural norms to manage diversity which strengthen the positive and redress the negative aspects of the existing culture.
- Institutionalise diversity management by integrating it with the organisations management practices.

(e) White Paper on Affirmative Action in the Public Service

Erasmus et al (2005:180) contend that the purpose of the white paper is to convey the government policy on the implementation of affirmative action programmes in the South African public service. He further states that the policy document sets out the mandatory requirements and provides guidance on the steps for national departments and provincial administrations to take in developing their affirmative action programmes. It also outlines the accountability, monitoring, reporting and co-ordinating responsibilities of various role-players. The objectives formulated in the policy were firstly to enhance the capabilities of the historically disadvantaged, secondly to inculcate a culture which values diversity and supports the affirmation of those who have previously been unfairly disadvantaged and thirdly to speed up the achievement and progressive improvement of the numeric target set out in the white paper on the transformation of the public service.

### CREATING A CULTURE FOR MANAGING DIVERSITY IN THE DEPARTMENT OF THE PREMIER, WESTERN CAPE

According to Dwivedi (2001:7) public servants are perceived to be the interpreters of societal conscience and are also the people who turn the public's moral values into fair results by operationalizing public morality in action. He further contends that for a liberal democracy to flourish, it is crucial that its public service exhibits a sense of fairness and a sense that everyone (irrespective of their colour, creed, race, language and culture) is entitled to that fairness. Based on that fairness, Dwivedi (2001:7) feel that we protect other values in the society such as integrity, compassion, tolerance, courage and idealism and that all these values are an integral part of shared values that a nation has. According to Dwivedi (2001:7) only when the public servants exhibit such values through their deeds, will public respect and history's gratitude be theirs and is it up to them to make the dream of cultural equality, equity and justice come true. Dwivedi (2001:7) stipulate further that it is in this sense that the cultural diversity in the public service is worthy of our attention, because without the commitment of public servants to diversity management in government, the public would not feel duty bound to practice what it does not see its own government doing. According to Dwivedi (2001:7) for that dream to be realized, some concrete steps must be taken to create a culture of diversity in the public service. Among these he suggested the following:

- (a) First and foremost, governments set the stage by endorsing the value of diversity by enacting enabling legislation, by creating a corporate culture that embraces diversity, preparing policy document and programme directives to all ministries and departments and creating structures and institutions to implement such policy and programmes;
- (b) A systematic process of awareness generation and cultural change by education for cross-cultural management and relevant training programmes for all managerial and supervisory positions;
- (c) Nurturing an inclusive administrative culture by maintaining ongoing assessment for measuring the degree of acceptance and implementation to control organization's cultural rigidity and resistance for change; and
- (d) Strengthening top management commitment and demanding results as well as revisiting the goals.

Dwivedi (2001:8) feels that for diversity initiatives to survive and flourish, appropriate change in the administrative culture of a nation must take place so that the full potential of the diverse workforce can be harnessed to the benefit of the entire society. The emphasis for creating a culture for managing diversity in the department of the Premier, Western Cape should for example include an understanding of diversity issues, the importance of building of employee relationships, identifying the barriers to diversity and focussing on the benefits of diversity management.

### UNDERSTANDING DIVERSITY ISSUES

According to Sonnenschein (1997:10) the workplace is society in a microcosm and tends to reflect the issues, concerns and tensions in society at large. He further indicated that what these issues were, need to be understood in order to respond to potential positive forces or recognise problems. Sonnenschein (1997:11) highlight the following issues:

(a) Race

He contends that race and ethnic characteristics, such as skin colour and accent can be the centre of a number of serious issues in the workplace. Respect, equality, fair treatment, and understanding are major concerns he highlights. As example he refers to a young Native American accountant who might feel that he or she isn't mentored and doesn't get other help like young white accountants because of his race. A further contention is that differing perspectives of race is another concern. African Americans for instance often say that whites don't understand the extent of the harm caused by racial discrimination while whites tend to feel that race-related problems have, on the whole, been "solved" or that past grievances have largely been addressed satisfactorily. These differing perspectives reveal a serious lack of understanding between blacks and whites.

(b) Culture

According to Sonnenschein (1997:11) culture refers to the system of beliefs, values, customs and institutions that create a common identity and ways of behaviour for a given people. The cultural issues at play include different styles of communication and behaviour, misunderstandings concerning favouritism, uses of time and family matters.

(c) Gender

According to Sonnenschein (1997:12) issues involving gender in the workplace include different communication styles, perceptions of values, equality of opportunity, sexual harassment and other kinds of discrimination.

(d) Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is defined by Sonnenschein (1997:12) as any unwelcome sexual advance of any kind, or any conduct related to gender that creates a hostile, offensive or intimidating environment that no reasonable individual should have to endure.

(e) Age

Sonnenschein (1997:12) stipulate that age is the focus of a variety of issues, including the relevance of age (or lack thereof) to job performance and communication problems related to age differences.

(f) Sexual orientation

Sonnenschein (1997:13) indicate that in recent years, gays and lesbians increasingly have gone public and made their presence known in organisations and the result has sometimes been conflict.

(g) Physical characteristics

This refers to employees living with a disability. According to Sonnenschein (1997:13) many of their issues deal with physical barriers, yet many involve communication.

(h) Reverse discrimination

Sonnenschein (1997:13) contend that a major societal and workplace diversity issue is a reaction to other diversity issues: diverse discrimination. He defines reverse discrimination as the belief that diversity policies have gone too far and that white men face discrimination today.

### EMPLOYEE RELATIONS IN THE WORKPLACE

Diversity issues, which include employee concerns about relationships with co-workers, need to be understood. According to Sonnenschein (1997:14) the general issues workers most commonly mentioned in focus groups and questionnaires pertain to how people relate with each other in the workplace, which include;

- Respect – understanding respect and respecting each other;
- Misunderstandings because of style differences;
- Lack of understanding of religious beliefs and their effects on the workplace;
- Not enough information on cultural backgrounds and differences;
- Too many cliques;
- Offensive jokes;
- No safe haven to discuss diversity issues;
- Too much emphasis placed on diversity; and
- Not enough emphasis placed on diversity.

### BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTING DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

According to the Diversity Management Course Pack (2002:50), when we accept our differences and learn to work with them we enrich our lives and improve the creativity and productivity of our organisation. Diversity itself is not a problem; however the core problem lies in people's attitude towards diversity. People who have negative attitudes toward other people's differences often engage in negative behaviour towards such people including:

- Prejudice.
- Stereotyping.
- Discrimination.
- Biased language.
- Grouping, etc.

Problems can also be experienced through:

- Lack of information.
- Fear of special interest groups.
- Reluctance to examine personal values.
- Institutional pressure.
- Lack of trust.
- Lack of commitment.
- Lack of openness.
- Lack of communication, etc.

### BENEFITS OF DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

According to Kenyon (2007:1) although some people think that diversity does nothing but create problems and challenges, it offers remarkable benefits. Kenyon further states that there is evidence that managing a diverse workforce well can contribute to increased staff retention and productivity. It can enhance the organization's responsiveness to an increasingly diverse world of customers, improve relations with the surrounding community, increase the organization's ability to cope with change and expand the creativity of the organization.

According to D'Netto et al (2000: 9), as the business environment becomes more global and organisations become leaner and flatter, they must accomplish more with fewer people: people who have different cultures, values, motivations, work styles, lifestyles and family roles. He further indicates that by leveraging the many facets of diversity in the internal and external environment, organisations can benefit from diversity. According to D'Netto et al (2000: 9) some of the benefits that flow from the effective management of diversity are as follows:

(a) Improved Organisational Performance

Cultural diversity can provide firms with diverse experience and knowledge, qualities that seem beneficial for firms with an orientation towards growth.

(b) Recruitment and Retention

In order to sustain competitive advantage, an organisation needs to attract and retain skilled and talented human resources. In a tight labour market, a company's ability to attract and retain outstanding people depends to a large extent on its corporate image. Talented people will be attracted to corporations that value their capabilities and will be more willing to contribute to the organisation's goals if they believe they are treated fairly.

(c) Lower Absenteeism Rates

If diversity is managed correctly, it can lead to reduced absenteeism rates. Individuals who are different from their work units in racial or ethnic background tend to be less psychologically committed to their organisations, less inclined to stay with the organisation and more likely to be absent

## (d) Increasing Creativity and Innovation

Cultural diversity enables employees to provide different perspectives for the performance of creative tasks. In addition, employees who feel valued and supported by their organisation tend to be more innovative.

## (e) Higher Quality Problem-Solving in Teams

Research shows that more innovative teams produce more innovative solutions to problems. As culturally diverse members have different backgrounds and life experiences, they can see problems from a variety of perspectives. Multiple perspectives stimulate greater discussion and lead to higher quality solutions.

**MODELS FOR MANAGING DIVERSITY IN THE DEPARTMENT OF THE PREMIER, WESTERN CAPE**

When choosing a model on how to address the managing of diversity in any organisation it is important to take into consideration the conditions and circumstances prevailing in the organisation as well as that of the employees. The following is a summary of published models of diversity management:

## (a) Gary Powell's model

Powell's diversity management model (as cited in Stockdale & Crosby (2004:58) characterises diversity management in terms of how organisations respond to equal employment opportunity issues. Powell contends that organisations may be proactive, reactive or benignly neglectful. According to Powell (as cited in Stockdale & Crosby (2004:58) the most advantageous attitude an organisation may adopt is to be proactive. Powell (as cited in Stockdale & Crosby (2004:58) stipulates that a proactive organisation does not have to be prompted by legislation to transform but on its own recognises the benefits a multicultural workforce held and act upon it. With regard to the reactive organisation Powell (as cited in Stockdale & Crosby (2004:58) informs that it needs to be forced through legislation and will only transform to adhere to the law. In respect to the benign neglectful organisation Powell (as cited in Stockdale & Crosby (2004:58) points out that it does not do anything to transform even in the light of legislation being promulgated. With this stance according to Powell (as cited in Stockdale & Crosby (2004:58), they risk lawsuits, boycotts of their products and services and loss of public goodwill.

## (b) Roosevelt Thomas's model

Thomas (as cited in Stockdale & Crosby (2004:59) categorizes organisation into one of three types on the basis of their response to the changing face of the workforce: affirmative action, valuing difference or managing diversity. Thomas (as cited in Stockdale & Crosby (2004:59) further stipulates that organisations that respond to the changing realities of the labour market with affirmative action are seeking ways to increase the representation of minorities and women in their organisations. Thomas (as cited in Stockdale & Crosby (2004:59) further states that organisations implementing valuing differences initiatives strive to improve the relationships among their employees by acceptance and understanding of diversity. According to Thomas (as cited in Stockdale & Crosby (2004:59) if organisations want to take advantage of the potential of a diverse workforce it must change its core culture and systems to sustain the coordinated efforts of a diverse workforce i.e. managing diversity. Thomas (as cited in Stockdale & Crosby (2004:59) outlines eight possible but not necessarily desirable actions that organisations may take for responding to the growing diversity in human resources:

(a) Include a greater variety and number of minorities and women.

(b) Deny that differences exist.

(c) Assimilate minorities and women in the dominant culture.

(d) Suppress differences for the sake of the organisations overall goals.

(e) Isolate people who are different into special functional units, projects or geographical operations.

(f) Tolerate the co-existence of people with differences.

(g) Build relationships among people to overcome differences.

(h) Foster mutual adaptation, which may require changes to the organisational structure and the organisational policies.

According to Thomas (as cited in Stockdale & Crosby (2004:59) the first five actions are attempts to set aside the choices of those different from the majority and are most evident in organisations that are responding within the affirmative action paradigm. He further indicates that the next two actions are seen as accommodations and are typical responses by organisations that take a valuing difference approach. Thomas (as cited in Stockdale & Crosby (2004:59) contends that only the eight option represents acceptance and management of diversity.

## (c) Richard Allen and Kendall Montgomery's model for creating diversity

Allen and Montgomery's model (as cited in Stockdale and Crosby (2004:63) is advancement over earlier models advocated in that it conceptualises the diversity management process in terms of a change model. Allen and Montgomery (as cited in Stockdale and Crosby (2004:63) argue that managing diversity is first about managing the change process. They further argue that effective diversity management is an organisation development and change process targeting diversity related competencies. Their model bases diversity change on Schein's (1992) adaptation of Lewin's (1951) model of organisational development and change, in which organisations unfreeze from their current state, move to a new state and refreeze at a desired end state. Allen and Montgomery (as cited in Stockdale and Crosby (2004:63) identify several organisational practices at each state that are the focus of this developmental process and necessary for effective change. As examples Allen and Montgomery (as cited in Stockdale and Crosby (2004:63) list amongst others top management commitment and vision at the unfreezing stage, development and training programs during the moving stage and the establishment of appropriate diversity policies and procedures during refreezing. Their model also describe competitive advantage by organisations that effectively create diversity and that such organisations are characterised by improved creativity for decision making, a more adaptive workforce, a broader marketing capability and an overall increased market share.

## (d) Londen and Rosener's diversity model

The Londen and Rosener diversity model (as cited in Pekeur (2002:44) focuses on the building of a culture of diversity in the workplace. In terms of workplace, the model defines it as a place where the "institutional environment is built on the values of fairness, diversity, mutual respect, understanding, and co-operation; where shared goals, rewards, performance standards, operating norms, and common vision of the future guide the efforts of every employee and manager." The model consists of three phases, namely Phase 1 setting the stage, phase 2 education and change implementation, and phase 3, ongoing maintenance activity.

## (e) Percy W Thomas's cultural rapport model

Thomas's model stresses building rapport as an organisational intervention strategy that can be used to improve multicultural interactions. According to Thomas it is intended to assist organisations and individuals to establish productive working relationships and to transform their organisations into cultures of diversity. The model consists of a core dimension and three levels. In terms of the model the core dimension has three components, namely rational behaviour, emotional self-control, and flexibility. According to the model the levels are broken down to trust/trustworthiness, sensitivity and same wavelength, each one having its corresponding subset planning, problem solving and decision making, understanding, shared meaning and communications. The model is hierarchical and must be implemented in an ascending order to obtain maximum effectiveness.

## (f) Norton and Fox's change equation model

Norton and Fox's model integrates organisational change and organisational diversity. The key success factors of the model are the use of the organisational culture as the mechanism for bringing about effective change. Norton and Fox's model is divided into six phases namely buy-in, assessment, planning, change, outcomes and follow-up. The model differs from others in that it allows several initiatives to be integrated into a single process and makes the employee the critical element in bringing about change

## (g) Stockdale and Crosby's model

Stockdale and Crosby's full integration theory identifies the characteristics suggestive of an organisation that effectively manages diversity. Stockdale and Crosby's model show certain similarities with Cox's "multicultural" and Thomas's "managing diversity" organisation models. Where this model differs from others is in analysing the process by which organisational change occurs. Stockdale and Cox's model identifies diversity change management as a multi-level

systems-based three-stage process. According to the model organisations progress through three stages in their efforts to effectively manage diversity. The stages identified in the model are:

- a) Issue identification, during which organisations make diversity management a priority;
- b) Implementation, during which existing practices are adapted and new policies are implemented that support a diverse workforce; and
- 3) Maintenance, during which formal and informal processes are established that encourage and facilitate an organisational culture supportive of diversity.

According to Stockdale and Crosby during the issue identification stage, organisations become aware of the need for diversity management. Once awareness has occurred, top management must support diversity efforts through the institution of formal action such as structure change or changes to mission and goals, as well as informal actions in their interactions with organisational members. Stage 2 of the model is characterised by the implementation of structural and social practices, policies and procedures intended to support the integration of diversity. Stage 3, the maintenance stage of the model is a time of increasing stability. The model indicates that after diversity management policies and practices have been established, the primary goal is that they come to represent the organisational culture.

(h) Taylor Cox's revised model for work on diversity

In this revised model Cox (1993) builds on his earlier ideas and argues that the change to a multicultural organisation involves activities in each of five components. The five components delineated by Cox include leadership, research and measurement, education, alignment of management systems, and follow up. According to Cox the leadership component includes both broad activities such as the need to establish management philosophy and vision that support diversity, and more specific elements, as developing a strategy for communicating this vision throughout the organisation. Cox's model also incorporates important processes such as the need to assess organisational diversity competence (research and measurement), develop internal expertise and systems to enhance the learning process (education), ensure alignment of systems within the organisation with the management vision (alignment of management systems), and accountability to the process (follow up). According to Cox examining an organisations progress within each of the five components can assess success at diversity management. Cox indicated that progress is likely to be uneven such as an organisation being advanced in the leadership component but only beginning to develop education processes. Cox advocates that in order to become a multicultural organisation

### STRATEGIES FOR MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

According to Caiden and Caiden diversity management in the public service is a relatively new phenomenon which makes it difficult to predict which strategies will render the ideal results. Caiden and Caiden offered the following strategies regarding managing diversity in the public service:

- (a) Legal strategies
- (b) Educational strategies
- (c) Structural strategies and
- (d) Societal strategies.

(a) Legal strategies

According to Caiden & Caiden a legal strategy is an effort to use law and regulation to achieve representation in accordance with the demographics of the countries population. Caiden & Caiden specify that a legal strategy seek to ensure that underrepresented groups share in the benefits and power related to a career in the public service. This strategy according to Caiden & Caiden provides for a legal embargo on all manner of unfair discrimination and prejudice, as well as the eradication of all unnecessary barriers to equal opportunity. Laws and regulations provide the guidelines with regard to how recruiting, when retaining or promoting of staff should occur which could send clear signals as to what conduct are not acceptable. (Caiden & Caiden). Caiden & Caiden advocates however that an exclusively legal compliance approach is unlikely to bring about the desired diversity and may entail a number of problems, which may be experienced, which are as follows:

- a) Legal compliance is not self-enforcing
  - b) Legal compliance does nothing to allay conflicts in the workplace
  - c) In emphasizing "protected" categories, a legal approach actually entrenches those categories, rather than obliterating them
  - d) Even if regulatory policies do achieve their goal of recruiting minorities, there is no guarantee that these individuals will maintain a distinctive perspective, or do anything to represent the group from which they were drawn.
- (b) Educational strategies

Caiden & Caiden stipulates that an educational strategy aims to replace existing organizational culture with a multi-cultural vision. In terms of this perspective according to Caiden & Caiden, "an organization should move from an initial stage as a mono-culture, through a transitional stage as a non-discriminatory culture, to a multi-cultural perspective". A multi-cultural perspective according to Caiden & Caiden assumes that there is no common culture, but that an organization should value the differences among cultures and transcend them through a common set of values and a sense of purpose. Caiden & Caiden advocates that a primary strategy for transforming the organizational culture is educational which begins with a cultural assessment of the organization and then moves to increase the level of cultural awareness of the differences among people.

(c) Structural strategies

The structural approach to diversity according to Caiden & Caiden is concerned with the way public services are organized. According to Caiden & Caiden for diversity to become a reality, it is necessary to change the policies of the organization with regard to the way work is divided up and people are assigned to do it, which means that a new perspective is needed to redesign jobs and structures to encourage diverse recruitment, discourage narrowness, and facilitate greater flexibility.

(d) Societal strategies

According to Caiden & Caiden the three strategies outlined above share in common one factor in that they are all internal in direction, focusing on actions, which might be taken within public organizations. Caiden & Caiden stipulate that public services reflect the prejudices and social structures of their societies and for this reason public service diversity is valued not only for itself, but as a public policy designed to impact society at large. According to Caiden & Caiden the aim of a societal approach to civil service reform is social justice. Caiden & Caiden further stipulate that societal policies are controversial because they raise conflicts beyond the arena of personnel policy in the public service itself, however unless policies within the public service are supported from outside, it is unlikely that they can be successful. According to Greybe & Uys (2001:7) the following strategies could be applied to obtain a diverse corps of employees, developing a sensitivity regarding diversity within institutions and in maintaining sustainability in managing diversity:

- Creating a mission

According to Greybe & Uys (2001:7) a clear and effective mission serves as a bonding and directive strategy in order to operate optimally.

- Introducing creative leadership

Greybe & Uys (2001:8) stipulates that a combination of leadership and management is essential, as the dynamic, driving force of the leader should be maintained over a period of time in order to establish the management of diversity within the institution.

- Involving senior management actively

Senior management should set an example in managing diversity by being knowledgeable regarding the cultures and expectations of individuals in the institution.

- Integrating diversity management endeavours

Greybe & Uys (2001:10) indicates that evaluating and controlling objectives make it possible to demonstrate improvements and positive results while performance reports improve confidence of employees that could influence their willingness to improve service. If diversity endeavours are linked to aspects

such as products/services that have been developed, improved consumer services and effective operational costs it could justify the costs of particularly improving diversity management.

- Improving self-image

A positive image of institutions and communities in relation to other institutions and groups is important in order to function optimally and effectively.

- Ensuring effective interpersonal and inter-group communications

Greybe & Uys (2001:11) contends that the success or failure of management's strategies on diversity will largely depend on clear and unambiguous communication.

- Creating opportunities for positive diverse interaction.

Cultural isolation creates misunderstandings so it is imperative that interaction between cultural groups takes place for example in the form of sports.

- Developing partnerships

Public managers should determine what other role-players could be attracted through the creation of a conducive diversity environment.

## CONCLUSION

The public service is under pressure to deliver efficient and effective service in line with the promises of the government of the day. The study has as its purpose to investigate how managing the diversity of its employees can contribute towards this goal. The standard of service delivery and the optimal fulfilment of the department's objectives are tied to the employees who make up the department. The effectiveness and efficiency of that service have a lot to do with how employees interact with one another and how they utilised their differences as a competitive advantage. The implementation of strategies and programmes would ensure that structured processes are undertaken to change people's attitudes and behaviours in a positive manner that would accommodate differences of others, but also lead to understanding their own differences and how it is perceived by colleagues and citizens.

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