

Perceived discrimination of women in the mining sector

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ABSTRACT

Subject: Perceived discrimination of women in the mining sector

Key words: women discrimination, stereotyping, harassment, job segregation, glass ceiling

In the South Africa mining industry women have been subjected to unfair discrimination due to their gender or sex, for thousands of years. The aim of this study is to establish if women discrimination still exists in this sector by exploring the experiences of women in this mining sector. More and more women are being employed in the mines, but it is not clear if they are subjected to discrimination or not.

The research method for this study consists of a literature review and an empirical study. The aim of the literature review was to discuss the research done by others on the subject matter and their findings. Information gathered is used as a base for compiling the questionnaire which is used in the interviews that are conducted during the study. A qualitative phenomenological research method was used for the empirical study because of its effectiveness in identifying intangible factors, such as social norms, socioeconomic status, gender roles, and ethnicity, which are imperative for this study.

The results of the study confirm that discrimination still exists in the mining industry. The evidence of this form of discrimination is in men's negative attitudes which are a problem that women have to deal with on daily basis. Men's negative attitudes create a hostile work environment for women that comprise of: disrespecting women, undermining of their capabilities, unequal treatment of women versus men, physically and verbally harass and / or abuse them, sex segregation and glass ceilings

Few discrimination cases are reported to management because of fear of victimisation, fear of being seen as cry babies and because there is a perception that management is not supportive to women, therefore it's no use reporting a case because nothing will be done to discipline the perpetrator.

The conclusion reached is that most mining organisations are faced with challenges of effectively implementing and managing change. Transformation policies are implemented but there is no internal and external (from government) monitoring, evaluation and verification systems. There is also limited buy in from people (middle and lower management) who are supposed to implement the policies. For effective transformation to happen these are the key issues that must be addressed.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Affirmative Action
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
BBBEE	Broad-Based-Black- Economic Empowerment
BBSEE	Broad-Based-Socio- Economic Empowerment
BPA	Beijing Platform of Action
CCMA	Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEE	Commission for Employment Equity
CGE	Commission on Gender Equality
DME	Department for Minerals and Energy
EAP	Economically Active Population
EEA	Employment Equity Act
HDSA	Historically Disadvantaged South Africans
HDR	Human Development Report
HIV	Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus
HR	Human resources
LR	Labour relations
LRA	Labour Relations Act
MEPC	Minerals and Energy Policy Centre
MMSD	Mining and Minerals for Sustainable Development
NEASA	National Employers Association of South Africa
NEF	National Employers Forum
NUM	National Union of Mineworkers
OALD	Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary
SA	South Africa
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADCWMT	SADC Women in Mining Trust
SAWIMA	South African Women in Mining Association
STATS SA	Statistics South Africa