

# Women in mining: a conceptual framework for gender issues in the South African mining sector

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#### **SUMMARY**

**Keywords:** affirmative legislation; core mining activities; gender equality; gender inequality; transformation; mining industry; women in mining

The Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act (28 of 2002) (MPRDA) and the accompanied Broad-based Socio-economic Empowerment Charter aimed to rectify previous inequalities and disadvantages in the mining sector and specifically provide for the inclusion of women in core mining activities. According to the Act and the Charter, the mining industry was supposed to reach a quota of 10% women in core mining activities by 2009. The amendment of the Broad-based Socio-economic Empowerment Charter for the South African Mining and Minerals Industry (launched in 2010) set further requirements in terms of employment equity targets; the Charter requires a 40% historically disadvantaged South African representation in core and critical skills by 2015. Although well intended, the establishment of gender equality in the male-dominant mining sector remains one of the biggest equity challenges in the country and numerous problems accompany the deployment of women in core mining activities.

Against this background, the main objective of the study was to critically analyse gender issues in the mining sector and to subsequently develop a conceptual framework that will enable the mining sector to contribute to and ensure the sustainable employment of women in the mining sector. A literature review was done, firstly to provide an understanding of persistent inequalities in society and the workplace, and secondly to gain an in-depth understanding of the variables that have an impact on women in the world of work in general and in the mining sector specifically. An empirical study was conducted to determine and investigate relevant gender-related issues in the mining sector. Quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative (semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and direct observation) research paradigms were used.

From the literature review as well as the empirical study, it is evident that the deployment of women in core positions is still accompanied by various challenges, not only for managers but also for male co-workers as well as the women themselves. Although the numbers of women in the South African mining industry have risen, there is still a long way to go to successfully and sustainably ensure women's participation in the industry. Through the literature study and the empirical research, it became clear that various

factors need to be considered for the successful and sustainable deployment of women in the mining sector. The study concludes by making recommendations and offering a conceptual framework, with the main pillars being company policies, workplace opportunities, infrastructure facilities, physical ability, health and safety and workplace relations. This framework can be implemented and used by various stakeholders in the mining sector to contribute to the successful and sustainable deployment of women in the mining sector.

#### **OPSOMMING**

Sleutelwoorde: regstellende wetgewing; kernmynaktiwiteite; geslagsgelykheid; geslagsongelykheid; transformasie; mynbedryf; vrou in mynwese

Die Wet op Minerale- en Petroleum-hulpbronontwikkeling (28 van 2002) (MPRDA) en die gepaardgaande Handves vir Breedgebaseerde Sosio-ekonomiese Bemagtiging is gemik op die regstelling van voormalige ongelykhede en benadeling in die mynsektor en spesifiek op die insluiting van vroue by kernmynaktiwiteite. Ingevolge die Wet en die Handves was die mynbedryf veronderstel om teen 2009 'n kwota van 10% vroue in kernmynaktiwiteite te behaal. Die wysiging van die Handves vir Breedgebaseerde Sosio-ekonomiese Bemagtiging vir die Suid-Afrikaanse Myn- en Mineralebedryf (in 2010 uitgevaardig) het verdere vereistes met betrekking tot mikpunte vir diensbillikheid gestel; die Handves vereis 40% verteenwoordiging deur histories benadeelde Suid-Afrikaners in kern- en kritiese vaardighede teen 2015. Alhoewel die bedoeling goed is, bly die vestiging van geslagsgelykheid in die mynsektor, wat steeds deur mans gedomineer word, een van die grootste uitdagings in die land en hou die benutting van vroue in kernmynaktiwiteite steeds verskeie probleme in.

Teen hierdie agtergrond was die vernaamste doelstelling van hierdie studie om geslagskwessies in die mynsektor krities te ontleed en gevolglik 'n konseptuele raamwerk te ontwikkel wat die mynsektor in staat sal stel om by te dra tot die volhoubare indiensneming van vroue in die mynsektor. 'n Literatuuroorsig is uitgevoer om eerstens begrip te bewerkstellig van volgehoue ongelykhede in die samelewing en werkplek, en tweedens om 'n grondige begrip te verkry van die veranderlikes wat 'n impak het op vroue in die wêreld van werk in die algemeen en spesifiek in die mynsektor. 'n Empiriese studie is uitgevoer om geslagsverwante kwessies in die mynsektor te bepaal en te ondersoek. Kwantitatiewe (vraelyste) en kwalitatiewe (semigestruktureerde onderhoude, fokusgroepbesprekings en direkte waarneming) navorsingsparadimgas is gebruik.

Uit die literatuuroorsig en die empiriese studie is dit duidelik dat die benutting van vroue in kernposisies steeds verskeie uitdagings inhou, nie net vir bestuurders nie, maar ook vir manskollegas en die vroue self. Alhoewel die getal vroue in die Suid-Afrikaanse mynbedryf toegeneem het, lê 'n lang pad na die suksesvolle en volhoubare versekering van vroue se deelname aan die bedryf steeds voor. Uit die literatuurstudie en die

empiriese navorsing blyk dit duidelik dat verskeie faktore in ag geneem sal moet word ten einde die suksesvolle en volhoubare benutting van vroue in die mynsektor te verseker. Die studie sluit af met aanbevelings en 'n konseptuele raamwerk, met die volgende hoofpilare: maatskappybeleide, werkplekgeleenthede, infrastruktuurfasiliteite, fisiese vermoëns, gesondheid en veiligheid en werkplekverhoudings. Hierdie raamwerk kan deur verskeie belanghebbendes in die mynsektor geïmplementeer en gebruik word om by te dra tot die suksesvolle en volhoubare benutting van vroue in die mynsektor.

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