A STUDY OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICIES PRACTISED BY MEMBERS OF THE EAST CAPE MASTER BUILDERS AND ALLIED INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION

By JOEL KATZ

Paper presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Masters Degree in Business Administration in the Faculty of Management at the Port Elizabeth Technikon.

PROMOTER : T.S. Hutton

DATE : January 2001
DECLARATION

I, JOEL KATZ, hereby declare that:

- the work in this paper is my own original work;

- all sources used or referred to has been documented and recognised; and

- this paper has not been previously submitted in full or partial fulfilment of the requirements for an equivalent or higher qualification at any other recognised educational institution.

__________________________
JOEL KATZ

__________________________
DATE
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It would have been impossible to complete this study without the contributions and support of a number of individuals. Sincere gratitude and appreciation are extended to all those who have contributed by way of encouragement and assistance.

In particular, the assistance of the following is acknowledged:

• **Mr T. Hutton**, my promoter, whose friendly guidance and encouragement served as motivation during the entire study.

• **The staff of the MBA Unit** at the Port Elizabeth Technikon, for their help and support.

• **Mrs R. Katz**, for her linguistic expertise.

• **Mrs C. Bibby**, for her typing expertise.

• **The Management staff** at USM Building Supplies, for their assistance and understanding.

• **The respondents of the study**, who supplied the Empirical Data.

• **My parents, Mannie and Rina and other family members**, for always believing in me.

• **Karen**, for her encouragement and patience during the study.
ABSTRACT

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JOEL KATZ

PROMOTER : T.S. HUTTON

The research problem addressed in this study, was to determine what Affirmative Action policies are being practiced by Members of the East Cape Master Builders and Allied Industries Association. To achieve this objective, a literature study was conducted to cite and evaluate relevant literature, in the process of presenting the most theoretical and methodological rationale for the research.

The Empirical results obtained, indicate that most companies have implemented affirmative action policies.

In conclusion, various recommendations have been made with regard to the
findings ascertained in the Empirical Study.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION, PROBLEM STATEMENT AND DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Hilliard (1995: 6) states that one of the most controversial fields of affirmative action practice is, awarding contracts to the previously disadvantaged, regardless of whether their tenders are the lowest or not. The purpose of affirmative contracting, appears to be to uplift the neglected and marginalised business communities through the deliberate channeling of government business in their direction. In addition to this, Matunda Incorporated (1999: 12) continues that the Western Regional Council "wishes to identify strategic projects within its budget for which it wants to pursue, vigorously the question of Black Economic Empowerment, in the construction and building industry".

Over the past two decades, a paradigm shift has taken place in the management and development of employees. This has created a mind set of modern management perspectives that in South Africa, the upliftment of the previously disadvantaged and the introduction
of affirmative action programmes has taken priority since the 1994 election. According to Human (1991: 319), the terms "black advancement, affirmative action and managing diversity" are all terms employed to describe the process, by means of which Blacks, white women and the disabled, are provided the opportunity to participate fully in the organisation and the societies in which they work and live, without any forms of discrimination against them.

The purpose of this research, is to identify the extent of affirmative action practices and policies in the building industry, and to determine how organisations in the demarcated area of research could benefit from effectively managed affirmative action programmes.

1.2 MAIN PROBLEM

The main problem to be researched in this project, is as follows:

What is the extent of affirmative action practices and policies among members of the East Cape Master Builders and Allied Industries Association (ECMBA)?

1.3 SUB-PROBLEMS
In order to resolve the main problem, the following sub-problems will be posed:

- What does a literature study reveal, are affirmative action policies appropriate to the building industry?

- How can an organisation develop a strategy to successfully formulate and implement affirmative action?

- What do knowledgeable people feel is the extent of existing affirmative action policies in the building industry?

1.4 DEMARCATION OF THE RESEARCH

According to Leedy (1997: 59), demarcating the research, aims to make the research topic manageable from a research point of view. This study has been demarcated as follows:

1.4.1 Geographical Demarcation

The companies that will be researched, operate in the Port Elizabeth, Uitenhage and Humansdorp Magisterial Districts.
1.4.2 Size of organisation

Organisations whose annual turnover is more than R15 million per annum, will be used in this study.

1.4.3 Membership to the ECMBA

The companies studied, will be members of the ECMBA.

1.5 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

Before entering into the body of research, key terms need to be defined. The terms defined below are "affirmative action", "previously disadvantaged individuals" and "East Cape Master Builders and Allied Industries Association".

1.5.1 Affirmative Action

In defining affirmative action and examining the various perceptions of the term critically, there will be an attempt to prove that affirmative action cannot be equated in a simplistic manner with some of the concepts mentioned in the preceding chapters. A
detailed examination of the meaning and possible implications of affirmative action is an essential precursor to its design and implementation, as misconceptions will only serve to decrease the possibilities of success.
The words "affirmative action" and the interest shown in the concept, has grown exponentially over the last few years in South Africa. The term has as its root, according to Herholdt and Marx (1999: 10), the idea of giving preference or first privilege to those who previously had been disadvantaged or marginalised.

Affirmative action however, is a controversial term and the confusion which often surrounds its meaning, derives in significant part, from the vast array of policies and practices associated with the term. Affirmative action has different meanings for different people. For some, affirmative action means equal results or the redressing of wrongs caused by past discrimination. For others, it implies the general elimination of discrimination and the application of the merit principle when making employment decisions. In the first instance, reference is made to specific groups and to specific measures, aimed at reducing the backlog of these groups educationally, economically and politically (Charlton & van Niekerk, 1994: xv). Thus, when defining affirmative action, a distinction can be made between:

- Those passive attempts to promote employment equity through the elimination of discrimination;
Those special measures adopted to rectify social inequalities and thereby, redress the disadvantage from which designated groups have suffered due to past discrimination.

The term "affirmative action", according to Magwaza (1995: 1), was first coined by Lyndon Johnson at Harvard University when he said:

"You do not take a person who for years has been hobbled by chains, bring them up to the starting line of a race and say to them: "You are free to compete with the others"' and justly believe that you have been completely fair".

Affirmative action is therefore, a positive action which needs to be taken to enable the situation to be completely fair.

Klug (1991: 323) states that affirmative action, in general terms, is the conscious use of race or gender in an active attempt to overcome the effects of a history of discrimination. The overlying objective of affirmative action is therefore regarded as being the attainment of equality in society which is real and not illusionary.
(1991: 63) adds that affirmative action aims at creating a balanced civil service, whereby members of disadvantaged groups are placed in positions they would have occupied, but for discriminatory practices which put them at a disadvantage to other groups in society.

Affirmative action therefore, comprises preferences given to members of designated groups, typically defined by race or gender, and is held to be justified, because members of such groups have been discriminated against in the past, due to the imposition of unreasonable distinctions (Andrews, 1992: 37).

Wingrove (1993: 7) states, that affirmative action is seen as a means of addressing the disadvantages caused by a lack of proper education, prejudice, segregation, job reservation, racism, total lack of political rights and the unequal distribution of wealth. Affirmative action, according to this definition, is a proactive, conscious effort designed to redress disadvantages of the past and to increase the representation of marginalised groups of the population in leadership positions in society.
Gumbi (1993: 33) argues that affirmative action involves the empowerment of the whole society and not only disadvantaged groups, and therefore should be regarded in a positive manner. It is added, that affirmative action is based on characteristics such as race and gender, because these categories of persons have been denied equal access to benefits on that basis. Therefore, until the "playing field" has been levelled, the exclusion criterion has to be used as the inclusion criterion. This notion is supported by Klug (1991: 323) who writes that the guarantee of equality in the constitution will remain discredited, unless it includes measures to redress the effects of past discrimination.

From these definitions and a general understanding of affirmative action, the following common elements can be identified:

- It is a proactive process;

- It is a conscious effort;

- Its purpose and object is to redress the disadvantages/imbalances of the past;

- It is an artificial corrective action process;
• It operates in many categories and dimensions (including politics, sport, culture and the economy).
Proponents of affirmative action view it as a means of offsetting, not only the damages discrimination has inflicted on individuals, but also the institutionalised forms and processes that have perpetuated the low status of entire individuals and groups.

Opponents however, view it as reverse discrimination, which causes corrosive doubt in the eyes of both whites and blacks and according to Wingrove (1993: 8), contributes to discrimination in group status where the awarding of jobs and benefits according to group status rather than an individual merit is unfair and also lowers standards and organisational effectiveness and efficiency.

It is therefore, undeniable that the implementation of affirmative action will restrict the opportunities of certain individuals. Khoza, (1993: 78), however, argues that the restriction of opportunities is a consummation of the removal of a "privilege" or "special right", enjoyed by those who benefitted from the status quo.

Consequently, affirmative action measures need to be viewed as temporary measures to remove discrimination in the workplace; they are not designed to exclude whites.
Affirmative action can thus be described as comprising positive, remedial steps adopted by employers in an attempt to redress historic inequality and injustice. Furthermore, it should be conceived as part of a wider program of employment equity which seeks to remove discriminatory employment practices and in doing so, create a workplace which adequately reflects the diverse nature of the wider population.

Herbert (1994: 6) states that "Affirmative action is planned and is a positive process and strategy aimed at transforming socio-economic environments which have excluded individuals from disadvantaged groups, in order for such individuals to gain access to opportunities, including developmental opportunities, based on their suitability".

Thomas and Robertshaw (1999: 4) state that affirmative action is a means to accelerate the advancement of people from designated groups and includes specific plans that allow for preferential treatment, in order to achieve those aims.

1.5.2 **Previously disadvantaged individuals**
According to Matunda (1999: 30), previously disadvantaged individuals include individuals (who are South African citizens), who are socially, economically and politically disadvantaged by the legacy of the South African political dispensation prior to 28 April 1994. This implies that disadvantaged individuals are natural South African citizens who were racially discriminated against by the previous National Party Government.

1.5.3 **East Cape Master Builders and Allied Industries Association**

The ECMBA is affiliated to the Building Industries Federation of South Africa (BIFSA) and represents the interest of employers in the Building and Allied Industries of the Eastern Cape. The primary aim of the Master Builders Association (MBA), according to Zwart (2000: 2), is to maintain an equilibrium in trading conditions and to facilitate the smooth functioning of the industry, as an economic entity in the way that the members conduct their business.

Zwart (2000: 2) defines the MBA as an association that "embraces the recruitment, education and training of labour, advanced technical and academic education, the regulation of labour relations, accident prevention, tendering and contractual matters... maintenance of material supplies... cooperation with Government Departments in
drafting and administration of legislation... and a variety of other subjects...".
1.6 ASSUMPTIONS

It is assumed that it is possible to implement an effective affirmative action programme within the building materials industry. It is also assumed that the implementation of such a programme, will be beneficial to these organisations.

1.7 THE IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The political changes that have occurred within South Africa, has led to the re-entry of the country’s economy into global markets. To become an efficient and competitive nation should be a national goal. However, past imbalances and unequal opportunities in human resource development, as well as business development resting in the hands of a privileged few, did not support such a goal.

Recent legislation, in particular the Employment Equity Act, promulgated by the South African Government, attempts to eliminate unfair discrimination and establish specific measures to accelerate the advancement of Blacks, women and the physically disabled. One of the measures to accelerate the advancement of these "designated groups", is affirmative action.
In order for companies to gain a competitive advantage both nationally and internationally, this will be determined not only by the quality of services and products, but also by the extent to which they have transformed. Companies therefore, should start by focusing on understanding affirmative action and the implementation thereof.

1.8 **RESEARCH DESIGN**

In this section, the methodology to be followed in the research project, is described.

1.8.1 **Research Methodology**

In conducting the research project, the following procedure will be adopted to solve the main problem and the sub-problems.

1.8.1.1 **Literature Study**

A literature study will be conducted in order to identify the key elements of effective affirmative action programmes.
1.8.1.2 Empirical Study

The empirical study will consist of the following parts:

- A model of factors promoting effective affirmative action programmes, will be developed from the literature study;

- The measuring instrument to be used in testing the theory determined in the study, will be a comprehensive questionnaire, developed by the researcher, based on information gained from the literature study;

- A survey will be conducted in the delimited area to test the theory determined in the literature study;

- Information gained from the survey, will be used to test the degree of support the programme, developed in the study, received.

1.9 PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF STUDY

The research has provisionally been planned to include the following chapters:
Chapter 1: Introduction, problem statement, including sub-problems, definition of key concepts, significance of the study and broad methodology.

Chapter 2: An examination of the historical background of affirmative action, both internationally and within the South African context, will be discussed.

Chapter 3: An examination of various affirmative action models and based on the models examined, an effective affirmative action programme will be developed.

Chapter 4: This chapter focuses on the importance of Strategic Planning for affirmative action and also focuses on affirmative action strategy formulation and implementation process.

Chapter 5: The design of the empirical survey will be described. The results will be evaluated and discussed.
Chapter 6: The research findings are summarised upon which the conclusions are based and the recommendations made.
CHAPTER TWO
AN ANALYSIS OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

For millions of South Africans, affirmative action means an advancement to a better way of life, and together with this, a long overdue chance for self-development and improvement. For others, an injustice, a vengeful form of reverse discrimination with race quotas threatening their livelihood and security.

The disadvantages suffered by the victims of discrimination in the past and the need to grant these persons special treatment, can be viewed as a way of compensating for past wrongs and of enhancing equality in society. In this context, the system of separate development, enforced in South Africa, was unacceptable to the rest of the world, in that it resulted in a situation where certain population groups and categories of persons were classified as disadvantaged. With the South African society transforming from a previously discriminatory system towards a system which upholds principles, such as democracy, nonsocialism and nonsexism, there is often a
contemporaneous search for methods of subjugating the daily effects of inequalities caused by discrimination.

Affirmative action is a form of intervention undertaken with the express purpose of eliminating the harmful effects of apartheid, based on race and gender, by creating equal employment opportunities. This is rooted, according to Gawanas (1991: 65), in principles of justice and equity. Affirmative action has been implemented by several countries worldwide to achieve this objective, yet it has taken on a number of different forms depending on the particular circumstances of the country.

The objective of this chapter is firstly, to examine briefly the historical background of affirmative action, so as to highlight some of the possible alternatives available when implementing the process. A particular model for affirmative action cannot be transferred to all circumstances and for this reason, it is essential to design a model which suits the environment where affirmative action is to be implemented. Therefore, in planning for affirmative action, it is first necessary to be aware of the alternatives in order to increase the possibility of selecting a course of action which best suits the situation.
A theoretical approach was adjusted in attempting to achieve the objectives of this chapter. The purpose of the literature review, is to provide background knowledge, provide data and information, promote understanding of affirmative action, and to serve as a basis for the research process. A wide variety of books and journals were consulted to provide a critical and objective overview of the various perceptions of affirmative action.

2.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Affirmative action has been implemented in several countries in an attempt to redress historical wrongs and to promote equality of opportunity. The objective of this chapter, is to examine briefly, the historical background of affirmative action so as to highlight some of the possible alternatives available when implementing affirmative action. It is stressed, that a particular model of affirmative action cannot simply be transferred to all circumstances and, for this reason, it is essential to design a model which suits the environment where affirmative action is to be implemented. Thus, in planning for affirmative action, it is necessary to be aware of the alternatives, in order to increase the possibility of selecting a course of action, which best suits the situation.
2.2.1 **International perspective**

Weiner (1993: 82) writes that it is unfortunate that the term "affirmative action" has been imported to South Africa, since it is purely an American term used to address the problem of disadvantaged minorities. Klinger and Nalbandian (1993: 17) state that affirmative action programmes arose in the American public sector as a direct result of the civil rights movement of the 1960's and the women's rights movement of the 1970's.

The first affirmative action law was passed in the United States of America in 1964. The legal requirement for these programmes can be traced back to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. According to Goldman (1979: 204), the Civil Rights Act prevents discrimination on the basis of sex, race, religion, etc. by public and private employers. The immediate source of affirmative action programmes were issued by the Labour Department as a series of executive orders and had the force of law behind them. These executive order requirements included, ensuring non-discrimination and also stipulated that affirmative action be taken in setting goals and timetables for the employment of members of minority groups and
women in job categories where they are presently underutilised or not presented in totality.

Almost forty years later, the outcomes at best, are mixed. The position of Blacks in America has actually got worse. Jafta (1999: 2) states that in 1964, the ratio of white to black unemployment was 2:1, in 1999 it
stands at 2.76: 1. The economic status of minority groups and women have also not improved significantly. According to Jafta (1999: 2), a study of 138 American firms by Alison Konrad and Frank Linnehan, found that although companies with affirmative action policies had at least one woman at a higher rank, and more minorities in management positions than companies with neutral employment policies, in four other categories (the percentage of women in management; the percentage of women as a whole in the company; the rank of the highest-ranking minority; and the percentage of minorities in the company as a whole), the results achieved were identical for both types of company.

Why did these affirmative action policies produce such meager gains? Bolick (1996: 6), explains that rather than helping new job entrants into the labour market, these measures only shifted existing employees from certain employers to others. Another factor to take into consideration, was the deterioration of social conditions for black people. According to Jafta (1999: 2), only 20 per cent of black families were headed by a single parent; this figure staggered to 50 percent in 1993. One in four black men in his twenties was either in jail, on probation, or on parole. Illegitimate births also increased by 50 percent between 1959 and 1992.
However, in terms of earnings distribution, the black middle class prospered during the period 1970 - 1990. The percentage of black families earning more than $50,000 per annum, increased nearly 15 percent.

For South African purposes though, these expensive interpretations by the United States courts, is deficient in at least two respects. Firstly, according to Adams (1993: 36), the United States legislative formulas serve to pronounce and stress the race factor and to allow individuals who are "undeserving to benefit from these Affirmative Action programmes". Secondly, State and Federal legislation designed to promote equality of opportunity, is wide open to constitutional attack.

The first deficiency may be tolerated in situations where the beneficiaries constitute a minority. However, where beneficiaries are the majority, it begins to assume harmful proportions.
Figure 2.1: History of Corporate Affirmative Action in South Africa

Source: Madi (1993: 4)
2.2.2 South African historical context

South Africa itself has a long history of affirmative action. This historical context goes back to the days of Afrikaner nationalism and job reservation. Since then, affirmative action has taken a variety of forms, the most noticeable being grand apartheid introduced by Hendrik Verwoerd. South Africa, however, is currently undergoing a transition from a previously discriminatory system, to a nonracial, nonsexist democracy. Madi (1993: 4) illustrates the history of affirmative action in South Africa in Figure 2.1. This will now be discussed.

(i) Black Advancement

Over a period of time, names, attitudes and processes associated with affirmative action, have changed. The 1980's saw the introduction of black advancement. The literature on affirmative action reveals that black advancement and affirmative action are one, regarded as similes. Those proponents of black advancement argue that unless specific attention is focused upon advancing black employees within public institutions, the ideal of equal opportunities will not be realised
(Charoux, 1990: 15). Bayat and Wessink (in Bayat and Meyer, 1994: 281), contend that a democratically elected government needs to ensure that the factors hindering the advancement of blacks, such as low educational levels and discriminatory employment practices, are removed. As such, according to Innes (1993: 4), black advancement programmes are basically a form of affirmative action, designed to redress the past disadvantages suffered by blacks, caused by discrimination.

Those who were in favour of black advancement, argue that the need therefore, should not only be seen in the light of political changes, but should also be regarded as a proactive response to future manpower needs in the public sector.

Despite the apparent need for black advancement, many institutions have not responded adequately to the challenge of advancing blacks into management positions. Where black advancement programmes have been introduced, these have generally been characterised, according to Innes (1993: 5) by:

- An expensive focus on the advancement of only a few individuals;
• The absorption of blacks into an essentially unchanged, Eurocentric organisational culture.

The term "black advancement" is also frequently opposed in that it is regarded as racially discriminatory and inflammatory. It is argued that affirmative action in this sense constitutes reverse discrimination, since it serves to give a certain section of the population an advantage over other sections. Furthermore, black advancement is said to be too exclusive in that it precludes preferential treatment for other categories of persons who may also have suffered the effects of past discrimination.

In response to such arguments against black advancement, Louw (1993: 153) points out that the difficulties relating to inequality in South Africa, such as unemployment, poor quality of education, directly affected blacks. For this reason, it is stated that special attention should be devoted to the development and advancement of blacks to overcome these inequalities. Charoux (1990: 16) adds that cognisance should be taken of the fact that the case of the potential black manager within the organisation is different and therefore should be treated as such. Black employees frequently perform at a lower level to their white counterparts, not because they are inherently inferior, but because their background has rendered them
at a disadvantage. Thus, it is argued, that special measures need to be adopted to advance the educational attainment, training, and development of black employees.

Charoux (1990: 13) proposes an organisational entry decision model which outlines three basic phases designed to facilitate the integration of the potential black manager into the core of the organisation. These phases can be identified as:

- The preparation of the environment;

- Identification;

- Integration.

These three phases all aim at focusing the attention of existing management officials on the internal policies, practices and procedures, to take active steps in enabling the black employee with management potential to be advanced into a position of responsibility.

Human (1991: 1-2) criticises the black advancement model of affirmative action in that such programmes are often designed specifically to overcome the perceived deficiencies in existing or
potential black managers. For this reason, this approach is frequently referred to as the "deficit" model affirmative action. This model argues that the primary cause of the under performance of blacks, is a lack of skills, thereby necessitating training and development. Implicit to this approach, is the idea that the major obstacles to the development of black employees, are an inferior educational system and the limitations placed upon blacks due to their culture. Charoux (1990: 11-12) supports this view where statistics are often cited relating to differential educational provision and cultural differences, as the main cause of under performance.

It is apparent that, from the above, black advancement is a form of affirmative action which limits its focus specifically to blacks. There are various arguments in favour of black advancement, yet caution needs to be exercised in adapting this so-called deficit model of affirmative action, as it tends to over-emphasise the deficiencies of blacks as a justification for restricting preferential treatment to this category only. Another associated pitfall of this approach, is that its focus is too limited in terms of the beneficiaries of affirmative action and therefore tends to be exclusory and possibly even discriminatory.

Thus, it is suggested that there be a movement away from the tendency to equate affirmative action with black advancement. The latter is merely an option to be followed in implementing affirmative
action and, as such, should not be regarded as the only alternative available when planning for affirmative action.
(ii) **Equal Employment Opportunity**

From black advancement, there was a move toward equal employment opportunities (EEO) in the late 1980's. According to Sonn (1993: 30), the move from an ethnocentric, monocultural society, to a more democratic and inclusive society, must be accompanied with a rational policy providing equal access to resources in a proactive, affirmative manner. This can be achieved either through equal employment opportunity or affirmative action. According to Herholdt and Marx (1999: 37) equal employment equity programmes implemented in South African organisations, usually aim to eliminate all discriminatory barriers within organisations. These programmes also are used to ensure that all individuals are treated equally in the employment and promotion processes. McDonald (1994: 41) states that EEO implies that all applicants for a given position in the organisation, from the outside or within the organisation, are given an equal opportunity to apply for and be selected for the position. Affirmative action on the other hand, is a specific intervention directed toward ensuring that employment opportunities are indeed equal by actively correcting imbalances caused by past discrimination.
Maphai (1989: 1) further distinguishes these two terms by stating that EEO implies an absence of all discrimination, whereas affirmative action, denotes compensatory discrimination in favor of disadvantaged groups. Affirmative action therefore, is a supplement to, rather than an equivalent of, EO, because equality cannot be a genuine option where the effects of previous discriminatory practices have not been redressed.

Affirmative action and equal employment opportunity programmes should not be equated with each other, as they imply different approaches to overcoming the effects of previous discrimination. Affirmative action is a supplement to equal opportunity, in that it is necessarily not required to eliminate the barriers to real equality in the workplace. In this regard, it is important to note that affirmative action programmes are a means to an end, namely, equal employment opportunity, and should not continue after this end has been achieved.

(iv) Management of Diversity

With the introduction of numerous disadvantage groups in organisations because of affirmative action efforts, a huge cul-
tural diversity evolved at the workplace. It is this trend which has increased the popularity of the concept, "managing diversity" and, to avoid possible confusion concerning the relation of this concept to affirmative action, it is necessary to describe and explain it. The management of diversity, according to Herholdt and Marx (1999: 47), is an overall strategy which emphasises the importance of a situational and not behavioural approach to managing a diverse multicultural and multiworkforce. The emphasis is therefore, placed on managing the entire workforce so as to maximise the utilisation of all employees for the benefit of the entire organisation. Thomas (1995: 76), concurs with this notion and states that the management of diversity is a thorough managerial process for creating an environment which works for all employees and which allows diversities to be used as a competitive advantage.

Wiggil (1994: 13) defines managing diversity as a means of achieving employment equity in that it serves to enhance inclusivity within the organisation. Venter (1994: 28) agrees, and states that the success of affirmative action lies in the ability to understand and accept cultural differences, and to
break down the barriers between the Western (dominant) and African cultures.

The management of diversity, according to Thomas (1996: 12), is a long-term strategy where commitment from top management is essential. The strategy therefore, highlights the importance of situational leadership abilities of managers. Fuhr (1992: 28) states that managers should seek to instill a sense of pride in their black workers, in their efforts, their value systems and their culture. Managers should also realise that differences do not necessarily imply weaknesses. However, if managed correctly, strength could be created from diversity.

The management of diversity strategy therefore, aims to integrate and constrain the human originality inherent in organisations, for the benefit of the organisation, managers and its employees.

As a result, it can be deduced that while managing diversity has its advantages, institutions contemplating affirmative action programmes, need to be aware of its associated problems in a culturally diverse organisation. It may be advantageous to recognise the benefits of diversity, yet care should be taken to
avoid categorising employees according to the cultural grouping to which they belong. In this regard, it may be necessary to adopt a mind set which fosters receptivity to diversity, while not ignoring the real disadvantages experienced by certain groupings within the organisation, due to past discrimination.

2.3 CONCLUSION

The chapter has served to highlight several important issues with regard to the meaning of affirmative action. A brief description of the historical background of affirmative action reveals that affirmative action can take on various forms, depending on the particular circumstances.

In conclusion, it can be deduced that affirmative action is a multifaceted concept which is often accompanied by controversy and debate. However, it is significant that irrespective of the arguments against affirmative action, it remains a form of active intervention aimed at enhancing equality of opportunity where previously it has not been a reality. In Chapter Three, the need for affirmative action will be discussed, and the various models of affirmative action will be examined.
CHAPTER THREE
THE THEORY OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter Two, it was discovered that affirmative action comprises those special, remedial steps undertaken by employers to promote equality of opportunity in the workplace. It was asserted that the lasting effects of previous discrimination have rendered certain categories of persons as disadvantaged, and that active interventions are required to redress these inequalities.

The main objective of this chapter, is to explore the need for affirmative action and also evaluate the main principles of objectives of affirmative action.

3.2 THE NEED FOR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Prior to 1994, the reasons for implementing affirmative action programmes within organisations, were largely political in nature. However, Charoux and Moerdyke (1997: 33) identify six motivating factors for the implementation of such programmes in the post-apartheid era. These include:
• The implications of employment equity legislation were, by far, the strongest factors motivating organisations to embark on affirmative action drives. In this respect, the Labour Relations Act (Act 66 of 1995) and the Employment Equity Act (Act 55 of 1998), are pertinent;

• The second reason for implementing such programmes, is the assumption that organisations' relations and interactions with State and parastatal bodies, will be determined by the organisations' employment equity track records;

• The third motivating factor is the so-called client base rationale. This pressures organisations to restructure their workforce, to reflect the composition of their customer profile;

• The skills shortage in South Africa and the resultant need to draw on and develop all available skills, represents the fourth reason for the implementation of affirmative action projects;

• A fifth reason, is the increasing pressure from black trade unions and other stakeholders to participate in the process of reconstruction and development;
• A final reason, is the ethical obligation, on the part of the employer organisations, to abolish the injustices of the apartheid era.

3.3 PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

The main principles and objectives, according to Charlton and van Niekerk (1994: 205), of affirmative action, include:

• It is a holistic multifaceted approach;

• To get the right people in the right place at the right time;

• To accelerate the development of employees into meaningful, responsible positions, to the benefit of both the individual and the organisation;

• To produce competent employees to deal with present and future organisational needs;
• Identifying and removing obstacles that impede the development of employees and also providing opportunities for previously disadvantaged groups;

• Creating a working environment that is conducive to learning, personal growth, and productivity.

3.4 AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND LEGISLATION

There is presently much discussion and debate surrounding the implementation of some form of affirmative action legislation in South Africa. In March 1995, a preliminary workshop was held for members of Business South Africa (BSA), organized labour, the Women's Coalition, the National Youth Development Forum, Disabled People South Africa and the Black Management Forum. The main objective of this workshop, was to discuss issues relating to affirmative action and the possible drafting of some forms of legislation.

Human (1993: 6) lists three main categories that affirmative action falls into in overseas countries:
• Minimal legislation which, as the name suggests, makes affirmative action voluntary and leaves the definition of the limits of affirmative action to the courts. The United States constitutes an example of this system. Unless the organisation concerned is under contract to the federal government or has had an affirmative action order imposed by the courts, affirmative action in the private sector is largely voluntary.

• Detailed legislation which specifies the scope of affirmative action. In countries, such as Canada, France, and Australia, the law requires that employers of companies above a certain size, commit themselves to equal opportunity programmes, conduct research into the numbers and distribution of particular groups in order to identify discriminatory practices and artificial barriers, put together plans and programmes (with timetables and goals), to overcome these practices and barriers, and finally, prepare regular reports which monitor conditions and progress.

• Legislation which allows the collective bargaining process to define the scope and limitations of affirmative action. The Scandinavian countries are instructive in this regard.
• It must be noted, however, that although no formal legislation exists, there are many other pieces of legislation that have an impact on affirmative action. Some of these include, the Occupational Health and Safety Act (Act 85 of 1993), the Wage Act (Act 5 of 1957), the Unemployment Insurance Act (Act 30 of 1966), the Public Service Act (Act 103 of 1994) and the Employment Equity Act (Act 55 of 1998).

3.5 THE RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (RDP)

Affirmative action measures must be used to end discrimination on the grounds of race and gender and to address the disparity of power between workers and management, and between urban and rural areas. The measures utilised must, according to Magwaza (1995: 9):

• Entail a massive program of education, training, retraining, basic adult education and recognition of prior learning to overcome the legacy of apartheid;
• Empower not only individuals, but committees and groups;

• Establish principles for the hiring and the promotion of workers with similar skills and/or jobs, which will prevent discrimination against people previously disadvantaged by apartheid or gender;

• Make use of collective bargaining programmes to accelerate the eradication of discrimination in each and every workplace;

• Ensure that the development of special expertise among South Africans takes priority over the import of outside personnel;

• Establish legislation to monitor and implement affirmative action measures.

The principles stated in the Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) are similar to those of the Bill of Rights, although the RDP places more emphasis on the practical aspects, rather than the issue of rights. Affirmative action within and beyond the workplace, is strongly emphasised and this will have a major impact on business and society in
South Africa, especially, because the RDP is a government endorsed initiative.

3.6 **AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND THE ORGANISATION**

Herholdt and Marx (1999: 16) view the organisation as a dynamic organism which is in constant interaction with its external and internal environment. In order for the organisation to prosper, it must respond to these external factors, including, for example, moral issues, social demands and the affirmative action legislation. It is therefore, necessary for the organisation's management to respond to these external factors, by taking the necessary action to adopt new affirmative action policies, or to modify existing ones. These affirmative action policies it has chosen will then be implemented, either as a result of its own moral convictions or due to coercion.

The implementation of these policies will in turn, impart the organisational processes and structures and in particular, on employees, who will respond in a typical human way, by resisting the change and also by demonstrating animosity towards affirmative action beneficiaries.
The way in which the organisation's employees react to the implementation of affirmative action, will directly impose and effect the interpersonal relations within the organisation, its functioning and eventually on its goal achievement.

The complex nature of an affirmative action process can be demonstrated further, by viewing it within the framework proposed by Kast and Rosenzweig (1974: 139). This takes the form of a multi-dimensional systems approach to organisational functioning. This approach is represented diagrammatically in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: The Relationship between the Macro and Task Environments and the Organisational System
Source: Kast and Rosenzweig, 1974: 13a
This diagram conceptualises the organisation as a sub-system of its wider environment. The organisation is therefore, viewed as an open system, which exchanges information, energy and materials with the environment. According to Herholdt and Marx (1999: 18), Kast and Rozenweig state that the organisational environment comprises of both macro and task environments.

3.6.1 Macro environment forces

Herholdt and Marx (1999: 18) state that according to Kast and Rozenweig, organisations are influenced by many forces on the environmental level. These forces include cultural, educational, legal, political and demographic dimensions. These forces, applied to the South African context, are linked to the demand for and success of affirmative action. These environmental forces will now be discussed.

- Cultural characteristics relate to historical issues, ideologies, values and norms;

- Educational characteristics include the literacy level of the population and the proportion of people with a high level of specialised training;
• Political characteristics relate to the political party system, the general political climate and the degree of concentration of political power;

• Legal characteristics;

• Demographic characteristics.

3.6.2 The Task Environment

The task environment, according to Herholdt and Marx (1999: 18), relates to particular forces that impact on decision-making and operational processes of organisations. The customer and the socio-political components, in particular, are relevant to affirmative action and are listed below.

• The customer component relates to the distributors and actual users of products and services, and has a bearing on the client base rationale for the implementation of affirmative action;
• The socio-political component includes regulatory control of the industry and relationships with organisations and labour unions, which have jurisdiction in the organisation concerned.

From the above, it can be concluded that the successful implementation of affirmative action, is a complex process and is dependent on multifaceted factors present in the organisational environment, as well as on the organisation's internal sub-systems.

3.7 THE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION MODELS

The following models have been in use by many South African organisations for a number of years. Set out below is a discussion of each of the major models.

3.7.1 The Assimilation/Integration/Osmosis Model

This model promotes assimilation into existing company norms and standards. Roosevelt Thomas Jnr, (according to Wingrove, 1993: 74), quotes a popular bureaucratic management view that promotes assimilation into existing company norms and standards:
"We have determined in the company that there is a specific culture, and that people who fit a given mould do better than those who do not. As you join us, we are going to hold up a mirror in front of you."

"In this mirror, you will note that we have sketched the outline of the mould that works here. If you fit, fine, come on in. If you don't, we invite you to allow us to shape you to the appropriate mould. This is for our mutual benefit, as it will help to ensure that you have a productive relationship with the company."

This model, according to Wingrove (1993: 74), is based on the assumption that the relative position in the organisation is based only on merit and competency of job performance, irrespective of race, colour or any other such considerations. The only criterion is the achievement principle. The main objective of the process (within the South African context), is to encourage an osmosis in both directions, across all lines of diversity.

This would therefore, ensure that these divisions would become increasingly obscured to ultimately achieve an organisation with assimilated norms and values.
The realities of previous oppressive policies and systems that brought about inequalities of education, development and opportunities, make the fairness of competition suspect. The entrenched resistance to cultural diversity that is prevalent in South African Society, will make the success of this model reasonably problematic.

3.7.2 Displacement Model

Wingrove (1993: 75) states that this model is based on the premise that socio political developments in the country will result in senior positions within organisations, being more frequently taken up by Blacks. This will result in the displacement of Whites upwards, or out of the system.

Short-term success is urgently needed with this model. The economic situation within the country makes unnecessary costs prohibitive. White resistance could cause covert sabotage and therefore, serious damage to the Affirmative Action process. This will, in turn, result in unnecessary costs and time spent on a failed project.

3.7.3 Job Insertion/Wedge Model
This model is based on the lifting of barriers between Blacks and Whites, via the creation of additional job categories between the bottom existing job hierarchy and the top. There is, according to Wingrove (1993: 76), an optimum rate at which individuals can be introduced into an existing group, without serious repercussions. If the penetration rate is low, the newcomers feel isolated and stressed. If the penetration rate is high, a resistance or backlash against perceived intruders can result.

3.7.4 The Vertical Differentiation/Separate Development Model

The objective of this model, according to Wingrove (1993: 76), is to achieve development in an environment that is void of stress and supports growth within the organisation.

Specific departments, divisions or plants are selected for the advancement and accelerated development of Black employees. These allocated sections can be seen as nurseries, in which previously disadvantaged groups can develop away from the mainstream until they are ready to be reintegrated. These previously disadvantaged individuals, have the opportunity of gaining valuable experience
within a sheltered environment, without being threatened by the normal dynamics and being intimidated by the more experienced employees.

Wingrove (1993: 77) states that the problem associated with this model, is that it firstly, creates an unnatural environment. It does not expose, and therefore, does not equip these individuals to deal with the unpleasant realities that will be experienced when re-entering the mainstream.

The second problem associated with this model, is that the nursery area could be downgraded in the eyes of the employees. Once this occurs, these individuals will not be prepared to be taken up in this section and the main objective of this model will be defeated.

3.7.5 The Organic Growth Model

The Organic Growth Model, according to Wingrove (1993: 77), is based on the natural principle of growth, moderately and regularly, by small increments, over a period of time.

This model therefore, entails the gradual development of an individual, irrespective of race or sex and by consent, in a group or
team setting. Realistic objectives are also set that need to be attained by these individuals, and it is also important that these objectives keep pace with the macro- and micro-environment.

The main rules, according to Wingrove (1993: 78), for supporting the organic growth model are:

- Invest regularly in money, skill and effort;

- Realistic and appropriate objectives must be chosen;

- Communication across all levels is essential;

- A flexible approach is seen as a necessity;

- Holism - all the dimensions must be mapped out and manageable goals must be chosen;

- Reports must be of a supportive and constructive nature;

- Success is made possible from a balance between top-down and bottom-up activities.
The main proposition of this model, is based on the principle that growth must be facilitated and not forced.

Artificial goals and quotas are considered supportive benchmarks to assist pacing. However, an excess would yield false results through "window dressing". The important "goal setting" role enforced by management, can ensure enough emphasis and could clarify management's intention.

The literature above describes the five models of Affirmative Action that is in use in South Africa. According to Wingrove (1993: 80), deciding on the most suitable model for an organisation, depends on the following:

- The current infrastructure of the organisation, together with the organisational culture, will influence the organisation's decision. It is, however, important to note that the model that will be chosen is not as important as, whether it will yield measurable results.

- The most suitable affirmative action process is not about compensating for historical debt, but about orientating pre-
viously disadvantaged individuals to employ its full potential and so become competitive within the job market.

- In order for the process to be successful, total commitment, cooperation and approval of every member of the organisation from top management to the lowest level is essential.

Consequently, it therefore can be concluded, that organisations must not be seduced by the most intricate, academic, theoretical models available, but need to consider the culture of the organisations, the environment and the various options available. The correct decisions therefore, need to be taken on the alternate objective for success and then to design a process that will achieve this with as much speed and total commitment from every employee within the organisation.

3.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter sets out to explain the need for affirmative action within organisations. The main principles and objectives of affirmative action were discussed. It was determined that a creative working environment that is conducive to learning, personal growth and productivity, must be created. The relationship between the macro
and trade environment and the organisational system was also ascertained.

The various models of affirmative action were discussed and evaluated. It was concluded that organisations need to consider the culture, the environment and the options and resources available, when deciding on the most suitable affirmative action model. In the next chapter, the importance of strategic planning for affirmative action will be discussed.
4.1 INTRODUCTION

The internal and external environment of organisations, according to Ivancevich and Matteson (1999: 56), are changing rapidly. There is therefore, increased pressure on top management to respond. In order to respond accurately on a more timely schedule and with a direction or course of action in mind, managers are increasingly turning to the use of strategic planning. Ivancevich and Matteson (1999: 56), state that strategic planning is a process that involves the review of market conditions, customer needs, competitors strengths and weaknesses, socio-political, legal and economic conditions, technological developments and the availability of resources that lead to the specific opportunities or threats facing the organisation. In practice, according to Donnelly, Gibson and Ivancevich (1995: 183), strategic plans are developed by taking information from the environment and then deciding upon an organisational mission and objectives, strategies and a portfolio plan.
The objective of this chapter, is to examine the importance of strategic planning by organisations for implementing effective affirmative action programmes.

4.2 STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Bezuidenhout (1993: 16) points out that the need for affirmative action as a "survival strategy", has emerged as a result of factors such as, political pressure, the increasing demand for skilled employees, and the need for public institutions to expand the pool of management talent to include members of disadvantaged groups. An affirmative action strategy should adopt a holistic, multifaceted approach in "getting the right people in the right place at the right time" (Charlton and van Niekerk, 1994: 205). Thus, by establishing an affirmative action strategy, organisations are aiming to produce competent personnel to meet future personnel requirements, to identify and remove obstacles to equal employment opportunities, and to accelerate the development of disadvantaged group members into management positions.
Figure 4.1: The Affirmative Action Strategy Formulation and Implementation Process

Source: Charlton and van Niekerk (1994: 208)
Strategic planning for affirmative action is specially beneficial for organisations in that it adopts a long-term perspective, and assists the institution in bridging the gap between the demand for and supply of suitable qualified members of disadvantaged groups, by stressing the need for adequate development of personnel.

It is in this respect, that it is advisable to examine the process of planning strategically for the implementation of affirmative action. It is noted that a process constitutes a series of steps in a specific sequence, aimed at the attainment of a specific objective (these steps are diagrammatically represented in Figure 4.1). The overlying aim of all these steps is therefore, to ensure that the objectives contained in an affirmative action policy are identified, and met in the most effective and efficient way possible.

4.2.1 **Strategic Planning Process for Affirmative Action**

Planning for the implementation of any policy in organisations has as its overall aim, the maximisation of outputs using minimum inputs in the form of human resources, finances and equipment. To ensure this is the case with the implementation of affirmative action in organisations and that standards of efficiency and effectiveness are suitably maintained, it is proposed that organisations adopt a
strategic, proactive approach. Such an approach to plan for the realisation of affirmative action objectives, would typically comprise the following steps:

- Identifying and clarifying institutional objectives;
- Analysing the external environment;
- Conducting an affirmative action audit;
- Formulating an affirmative action strategy;
- As well as, implementing and evaluating the affirmative action strategy.

Each of these steps will be described in more detail to provide an overview of the strategic planning process.

4.2.2 Identifying and clarifying organisational objectives

The mission of the institution will indicate the raison d'être of the institution or the social justification for its existence. In developing its mission, the organisation should conduct a stakeholder analysis to
identify all persons, groups, or other institutions that can place a claim on the outputs of the organisation, or are affected by that output.

With a mission statement in place, it is essential for the organisation to identify and clarify its objectives.

In formulating these strategies and objectives, managers, according to Charlton and van Niekerk (1994: 151), need to take cognisance of the fact that their departments function within the broader context of the external environment. Thus, it is essential to analyse the external environment, especially in respect of its potential influence on the availability of suitably qualified members of disadvantaged groups, in the future.

4.2.3 Analysis of the external environment

An external environmental analysis entails the systematic identification and assessment of key trends in the external environment having a potential impact on the provision and utilisation of personnel. This would include an assessment of political, social, economic, and technological trends, in order to identify possible future threats and opportunities arising from these. Charlton and van
Niekerk (1994: 149) elaborate by stating that the public sector environment is characterised by a skills shortage in certain occupational categories, as well as, increasing demands for equal employment opportunities and improved quality of life for public employees.

Added to this, public institutions are competing with the private sector enterprises in recruiting, appointing, developing and promoting members of disadvantaged groups who are in short supply.

It is therefore, apparent that organisations need to plan strategically when implementing affirmative action, since trends in the external environment are placing increasing demands on public and private institutions to increase their utilisation of disadvantaged groups, especially in the management echelons. Related to an analysis of the external environment and an acknowledgment of the impact of environmental trends on personnel demand and supply, is an assessment of the existing personnel situation within the institution itself. In this respect, it is required of organisations to conduct an affirmative action audit to ascertain the current utilisation of disadvantaged group members, as this will form the basis of the affirmative action strategy to be formulated at a later stage.
Conducting an affirmative action audit forms part of an analysis of the internal environment of the organisation. Bryson (1988: 76), is of the opinion that, following a systems perspective, three assessment categories can be identified, namely, input (resources), present strategies and programmes (processing), and output (performance). Applied to the personnel process, this internal analysis takes place on a micro- and a macro-level. A micro-analysis includes factors such as the current demographic composition of the workforce, job-related skills and potential performance of existing employees. A macro-analysis, on the other hand, focuses on broader aspects, such as the organisational culture, the structure of the municipal departments, and the current inter-relationships between management and subordinates (Nkomo, 1988: 15).

An internal analysis, on both the micro- and macro-levels, will be of assistance in conducting an affirmative action audit. This audit constitutes an assessment of the current status in relation to employment equity, and indicates the strengths and weaknesses of the institution in this regard. The information provided by this audit, according to Human (1993: 19-20), is vital to the process of
setting affirmative action objectives, targets and timetables, in that it highlights the critical areas which need to be addressed within departments to achieve a greater level of employment equity.

From this it is evident, that an analysis of the external and internal environment of the organisation is an essential precursor to the development of an affirmative action strategy. Taken together, these environmental analyses identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the organisation and are therefore, commonly referred to as a SWOT analysis. Such an analysis cannot be dispensed with, since an effective affirmative action strategy will build on strengths and exploit opportunities, while it will strive to overcome or minimise weaknesses and threats.

4.2.5 Formulating an affirmative action strategy

According to Human (1993: 43), the formulation of an affirmative action strategy basically entails two core components, namely:

- The formulation of objectives to eradicate problem areas identified during the audit phase;
The formulation of objectives to achieve a more representative workforce.

Bryson (1988: 77) asserts that, for an affirmative action strategy to be effective, it must fulfill certain criteria. Firstly, the strategy must be technically workable. Secondly, it must be politically acceptable to the key stakeholders and, thirdly, it must accord with the mission and overall objectives of the institution.

To ensure that these criteria for success are met, the formulation of an affirmative action strategy could follow a five-phase process:

• Identify practical alternatives to resolve problem areas and to achieve objectives;

• Enumerate the possible barriers in implementing the alternatives;

• Prepare proposals for implementing the alternatives and overcoming the barriers;

• Identify specific actions required over the next one to two years to implement the proposals;
• Establish a detailed work program, spelling out the specific actions required and the time period within which certain objectives have to be achieved (Bryson, 1988: 77).

An affirmative action strategy will serve to indicate the objectives of the organisation, with regard to increasing the utilisation of members of disadvantaged groups. For this reason, it is likely to include the development of recruitment, selection, training and development, and promotion procedures which aggressively address problems relating to the under-utilisation of disadvantaged groups.

Human (1993: 47) adds that in addition to the above, an affirmative action strategy may make provision for:

• An affirmative action policy statement, clearly expressing the commitment of key decision-makers to affirmative action and indicating institutional objectives, in this regard;

• An affirmative action steering committee, comprised of representatives of various stakeholders, e.g. management, municipal unions, personnel specialists, to oversee the implementation of affirmative action and make recommendations to the municipal council in this regard;
• An affirmative action support person to take responsibility for issues relating to affirmative action, on a day-to-day basis;

• A communication strategy, aimed at informing all employees of the rationale and potential benefits of implementing affirmative action.

Nkomo (1988: 70) states that, once objectives have been defined in an affirmative action strategic plan, programming should take place to identify the functional activities required in each of the personnel functions, to give effect to affirmative action objectives. The end result should be a well-integrated and consistent long-term plan of action to achieve greater employment equity within organisations.

4.2.6 Implementing an affirmative action strategy

Charlton and van Niekerk (1994: 150) state that in order to give effect to the objectives contained in the affirmative action strategic plan, various activities are required, namely:

• The broad objectives in the plan need to be broken down further into lower-order, operational objectives;
• The names of the persons responsible for achieving these objectives, as well as the dates by which they should be achieved, should also be noted;

• Those responsible for giving effect to affirmative action objectives, need to be sufficiently informed of their specific roles and responsibilities in this regard.

The critical focus of an affirmative action strategy is to produce competent members of disadvantaged groups to meet the future personnel requirements of the institution, and to achieve the objective of increased representatives. For this reason, the emphasis in implementing affirmative action should primarily be placed upon the training and development of members of disadvantaged groups to equip them for future positions of responsibility (Charlton and van Niekerk, 1994: 196). However, the need for human resource development, as part of the implementation of affirmative action, will be the focus of a later chapter, and will not be elaborated upon at this stage.

From the above, it is clear that an affirmative action strategy is of no value, unless it is implemented in an effective and efficient manner by the management officials in the various organisations. The
implementation of affirmative action is chiefly concerned with undertaking those concrete steps, required to give effect to the objectives contained in the affirmative action strategic plan. However, it is stressed that it is not sufficient to merely commence with these activities, since it is essential to ensure that mechanisms are established whereby these activities can be monitored and evaluated, in terms of their contribution, or lack thereof, to actually achieving the objectives of the affirmative action strategy.

4.2.7 Monitoring and evaluating an affirmative action strategy

The monitoring and evaluation of affirmative action are crucial aspects of the strategic planning process. Human (1993: 69) presents the following steps that may be used in the strategic planning process of an affirmative action process:

- Confirm continued commitment to the implementation of affirmative action;

- Facilitate the assessment of individual employees in this area;

- Facilitate the assessment of institutional progress in meeting affirmative action targets;
• Highlight areas where corrective action is required.

For the above reasons, management officials should be expected to monitor the affirmative action planned, and the programmes formulated for their particular organisation. These plans and programmes should be reviewed on a six-monthly basis, and the findings of these reviews fed back to the affirmative action steering committee for recommendations. Thus, a formal monitoring and evaluation procedure involves, assessing the results of the affirmative action programming activities and ascertaining the contribution, or lack thereof, in order to achieve affirmative action objectives and targets (Nkomo, 1988: 71).

Therefore, it can be deduced that continuous monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the affirmative action strategy, is a part of the strategic planning process which should not be overlooked. Management officials need to assume responsibility for the progress made, within their particular organisation, in attaining affirmative action targets. To determine the amount of progress made within a given time frame and to take corrective action timeously, should it be required, it is essential to ensure that affirma-
tive action plans and programmes are reviewed and evaluated on a continuous basis.

4.3 CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

The following critical success factors, identified by Magwaza (1995: 26), need to be present in order for an affirmative action programme to be implemented successfully.

- **The strategic nature of affirmative action** - affirmative action must be regarded as organisation-wide change, as opposed to adhoc change interventions and must therefore, assume strategic status within the organisation.

- **Vision** - this is to set the scene for the affirmative action process and provide some form of common goal and direction.

- **Objectives and targets** - the objectives should take into consideration the long term view, while the targets should be of a more, medium to short term nature.
• **Participation** - affirmative action is very dynamic and should not be implemented as a top-down process, but should be completely participative from the beginning.

• **Commitment** - full organisational commitment is needed, but in particular, commitment from senior management.

• **Communication** - as the affirmative action process involves the entire organisation, everyone must be continually informed of what is happening and given the opportunity to make suggestions or to voice objections.

• **Key roles in affirmative action** - the key roles that need to be played by the respective people within the organisation must be identified and clarified.

• **Responsibility and accountability** - if the affirmative action program is to succeed, there must be some clarification of responsibility and accountability.

• **Definition of terms** - as affirmative action implies different things to different people, it is important to develop some terms of reference (or definition of terms) within the organisation.
This is to ensure a common base and prevent confusion over the use of terms.

- **Budget** - the affirmative action program must like any other initiative, be planned and budgeted for.

### 4.4 PROBLEMS WITH AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

The main problems, according to Bendix (1996: 592), surrounding affirmative action, result not from the principles and objectives of affirmative action, but from the manner in which it is implemented. Thomas (1996: 35) adds that the major problems occur via the way in which these programmes have been instituted and managed. Incorrect implementation and management arise when organisations view affirmation action as a political and legal imperative with which organisations need to comply, and not as a business objective which needs to be achieved and sustained within the framework of the organisational objectives.

Affirmative action appointees are therefore, often selected by the organisation merely to window dress or to fill quotas, usually without any consideration of these individuals suitability for the position, or the possibility of support or development. Other em-
ployees within the organisation are often dissatisfied with these arbitrary appointments. Charlton and van Niekerk (1994: 13), refer to the subsequent demotivation of these employees. This often results in substandard work performance of these employees and even eventual resignations may occur.

These appointments, according to Bendix (1996: 593), are also unfair to the appointees themselves, since these individuals are either placed in meaningless positions, or in positions that require a more experienced and competent candidate. Therefore, unless affirmative action is related to valid selection procedures, which test the relevant competencies of the individual, the myth that affirmative action appointees are "incompetent", will become a reality.

**4.5 AFFIRMATIVE ACTION SUCCESS**

The basic assumption as stated before, underlying affirmative action, is the removal of discrimination. This removal involves eliminating all practices which discriminate against people on the grounds of race, colour, origin, culture, gender, age, physical disability, sexual inclination, and association with organised labour. Organisations should therefore, focus on removing all discriminatory barriers in planning affirmative action as an initial strategy.
The removal of discrimination as stated by the equal employment opportunity strategy and the Employment Equity Act (Act 55 of 1998) also has a bearing on employment practices. The purpose of the Employment Equity Act, according to Human (2000: 1), is to achieve equity in the workplace by promoting equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment through the elimination of unfair discrimination, and by implementing affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantages experienced by members of designated groups in the employment situation. The Act not only endorses the notion of equal treatment of employees, but also states that legal action can be implemented against organisations which fail to comply with its provisions. It is not, however, unfair discrimination to practice affirmative action (in the way outlined in the Act) or to distinguish, exclude or prefer an individual on the basis of the inherent requirements of the job (Section 6). Legal coercion is therefore, likely to have a far-reaching impact on affirmative action strategies, adopted by organisations. It will not only ensure that nondiscriminatory selection procedures are adopted by organisations, it will also ensure the actual employment and promotion of members of previously disadvantaged groups.
It is, however, apparent that organisations cannot implement equity strategies without investing in upliftment and development strategies which, according to Herholdt and Marx (1999: 82) focus on the particular needs of disadvantaged groups. These are then again reinforced by mentoring programmes and accelerated career advancement. According to Bierema (1996: 145), mentoring programmes can teach new employees about the organisational culture, it can facilitate personal and career growth, and development and mentoring programmes can expand and create opportunities for those traditionally hampered by organisational barriers.

These development programmes should, however, not be confused with black advancement strategies. A black advancement strategy, as stated in Chapter Two, usually results from pressure from black trade unions and involves the preferential appointment and promotion of Blacks. This strategy has proved counterproductive and is regarded as favouritism, tokenism, and window-dressing.

An organisation should therefore, not implement a forced black advancement strategy and should rather embark on a strategy that compliments an equal strategy, by focusing on the upliftment and development of beneficiaries. This strategy should be tailored to the particular needs of members of previously disadvantaged groups, and
should be strengthened by a programme of mentoring and accelerated career advancement. This strategy should ultimately enhance the achievement of organisational goals.

An analysis of the factors associated with the failure of affirmative action programmes, according to Herholdt and Marx (1999: 283), reveal that the main problems which usually arise, relate to the diversity it creates. Resistance to the process is often related to the inability of the organisation to cope with the change in the composition of the workforce, differences in cultures, values and work ethics resulting from it.

Organisation, therefore, must learn to manage the process in a proactive manner in order for affirmative action to be successful. Managing the process correctly not only entails implementing the strategies, but also influences the organisational culture to ensure that it will be receptive to the process and will accommodate it. Organisations should, therefore, prepare themselves to accommodate and integrate members of previously disadvantaged groups. Total top management commitment is also essential to ensure the success of affirmative action.
In conclusion, the eventual success of affirmative action depends on the total integration of affirmative action beneficiaries, and also the controlling and directing of the untapped potential inherent in a diverse workforce.

4.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter set out to explain the importance of strategic planning for affirmative action. In this respect, a strategic planning process was proposed, whereby organisations can ensure that the objectives set out in an affirmative action policy, are identified and achieved in an effective manner. Attention was devoted to a series of steps, namely:

- Identifying and clarifying the mission of the institution;

- Analysing trends in the external environment;

- Conducting an affirmative action audit;

- Formulating an affirmative action strategy to address the problem areas identified in the previous phase;
• Taking concrete action to ensure that this strategy is implemented and evaluated in an effective manner.

Problems associated with affirmative action and affirmative action success were also determined. It was deduced from this discussion, that the eventual success of affirmative action depends on the total integration of action beneficiaries and management at all levels. In the next chapter, the research methodology used in this study, will be discussed.
CHAPTER FIVE

THE EMPIRICAL STUDY, METHODS USED
AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature study conducted in the preceding chapters, was used to establish the answer to the first two sub-problems, namely, What does a literature study reveal are affirmative action policies appropriate to the building industry? and How can organisations develop a strategy to successfully formulate and implement affirmative action? According to Singleton, Straits and Straits (1993: 505), the main objective of the literature study, is to cite relevant literature in the process of presenting the most important theoretical and methodological rationale for the research.

The empirical study will help resolve the third sub-problem namely, What knowledgeable people feel is the extent of existing affirmative action policies in the building industry? The manner in which this sub-problem will be addressed, is explained in the following chapter.
5.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Welman and Kruger (1999: 2), define research as the application of various methods and techniques, used in order to analyse scientifically obtained knowledge by applying objective methods and procedures. They continue, that research is concerned with seeking solutions to problems or answers to questions. With this in mind, the research design for this study, was broken down into a main problem, with three sub-problems. The main problem is:

"What is the extent of affirmative action practices and policies among members of the East Cape Master Builders and Allied Industries Association?"

Following on from the main problem, three sub-problems were identified to assist with the solution to the main problem, namely

• What does a literature study reveal are affirmative action policies appropriate to the building industry?

• How can organisations develop a strategy to successfully formulate and implement affirmative action?
• What do knowledgeable people feel is the extent of existing affirmative action policies in the building industry?

The procedure used to solve the main problem and the sub-problems were as follows:

• In Chapter Two and Three, a literature study was conducted to determine the affirmative action policies that are appropriate to organisations within the building industry.

• In Chapter Four, a literature study was conducted to determine how organisations can develop a strategy to successfully formulate and implement affirmative action.

• In order to resolve sub-problem three, namely, what do knowledgeable people feel is the extent of existing affirmative action policies in the building industry, a questionnaire was developed and circulated to managers in the building industry.

• The results gained through the survey, were analysed and used to resolve the main problem, namely, what is the extent of affirmative action practices and policies among members of the ECMBA?
5.3 PLANNING THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

The empirical study was conducted by means of a mail survey with the use of a questionnaire. The results of the questionnaire were then statistically analysed. The process followed during the empirical study, is set out below.

5.3.1 The Questionnaire

Gummesson (1991: 118) states that according to Greiner and Metzger, the questionnaire is to be recommended as the researcher's most powerful tool for yielding information in the most effective and efficient manner. The questionnaire was developed as follows:

- **Types of questions used**

  Allison, O'Sullivan, Owen, Rice, Rothwell and Saunders (1996: 82) state, that there may be open and closed questions. When the responses are predetermined, it is only possible to use a closed question, which typically, requires the respondent to only tick the boxes. The questionnaire developed for this
empirical study, made use of this method. The questionnaire also made use of an open-ended question.

Open-ended questions are used, so that the respondents can formulate ideas and opinions that cannot be answered with a closed question.

The questionnaire was divided into two parts. Section A was made up of biographical questions. These questions offered the respondents choices which had to be ticked. Questions in this section surveyed the number of employees, geographical location, position in the company, race and gender of the respondent.

Section B was made up of closed questions, requiring the respondents to record the degree to which they concurred with certain statements. Allison et al (1996: 83) state that the most widely used form of scaled items where the respondent chooses a point on a scale that best represents his/her view, is the Lickert Scale. In this section, a five point Lickert-type scale was used. Scores for the scale is as follows:

1 - indicates, strong agreement
2 - agreement
3 - uncertainty
4 - disagreement
5 - strong disagreement

- **Wording of questions**

Welman and Kruger (1999: 174) state that questions must be formulated in terms of words and concepts which the respondents are familiar with. Grammar should also be straightforward and the items that the respondents have to keep in mind, in order to understand the question, should be limited. Specific terms should be used in preference to too technical or abstract ones, ensuring a clear understanding of the question by the respondents. Finally, the questions should be simple for the respondent to answer, for example, "tick one box only".

- **Length of questionnaire**

Thomas (1996: 121) maintains that a questionnaire should not be long and complicated. A questionnaire of several pages with a concise and also friendly design is preferable to one that has less pages, but with an overcrowded and intimidating
arrangement. The above principles were applied when formulating the questionnaire. In addition, a draft questionnaire was tested in a pilot study.
5.3.2 Pilot Study

Before conducting the pilot study, a lecturer who is a member of the MBA Unit at the Port Elizabeth Technikon, examined the questionnaire, and the necessary adjustments were made. After the changes had been affected, the questionnaire was presented to 10 Masters in Business Administration students at the Port Elizabeth Technikon. This population closely corresponds to the population to be used in the empirical study.

According to Cooper and Emroy (1995: 66), a pilot study is conducted to determine problems in the design and instrumentation of a probability sample. Welman and Kruger (1999: 140) have identified three purposes for conducting a pilot study, namely:

• To determine defects in the measurement procedure, such as ambiguous instructions and insufficient time limits;

• To identify obscurely formulated items;

• The pilot study simultaneously permits researchers or their assistants to notice non-verbal behaviour displayed by the
participants, which may indicate discomfort or embarrassment about the content or wording of the question.

5.3.3 Mail Survey

For the purpose of this study, a mail survey was selected. According to Cooper and Emroy (1995: 282), a mail survey is considered relatively cheap, one person can administer it, the respondent can take more time in completing the questionnaire and is considered more impersonal, providing more anonymity than the other communication modes.

5.3.4 Administering the questionnaire

The questionnaire was posted, together with a covering letter, on 30 October 2000. The aim of the covering letter was to provide the following information:

- The aim of the research;

- The questionnaire would take less than 15 minutes to complete;
• Reference to a fax number and/or e-mail address;
• An offer to make a summary of the findings available, if so desired.

The 13th of November 2000, was set as the cut-off date for the completion of the questionnaire. Thereafter, the researcher telephonically contacted those persons concerned who had not responded, in order to elicit a response.

5.3.5 The Population

A list of organisations who are members of the East Cape Master Builders and Allied Industries Association was chosen as the population to be studied. Because of the size of the population, it was decided to use the total population and not a sample. The population used in the study, may be seen in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 - Size of population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA</th>
<th>SIZE OF POPULATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Port Elizabeth</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uitenhage</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humansdorp</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: List of organisations who are members of the East Cape Master Builders and Allied Industries Association.

Of the 20 organisations selected, three organisations operated in all three of the demarcated areas.

5.3.6 **The Research Response**

The survey was posted on 30 October 2000 and a response rate of 90 percent was attained by the due date, which was 13 November 2000. A follow-up of the two respondents who did not complete the questionnaire was done, with a request to complete the questionnaire by 20 November 2000. No responses were received. Thus the 90 percent response rate remained unchanged. Table 5.2 shows the date collection procedure.
### RESULTS OF BIOGRAPHICAL DATA IN SECTION A OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Section A of the questionnaire required the respondents to provide general information regarding themselves and the organisation in which they are employed. This information is classed as independent variables or biographical details. This section is used to facilitate comparisons with the dependent variables which are the questions used in Section B of the questionnaire.
The results for Section A of the questionnaire are provided in Tables 5.3 to 5.7. A brief discussion of the data is provided, following each table.

Table 5.3 - Respondents by size of organisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIZE OF ORGANISATION</th>
<th>RESPONSE FREQUENCY</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 - 10 employees</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 - 30 employees</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 - 50 employees</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 - 100 employees</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 - 200 employees</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200 or more employees</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>55.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Results of analysis of organisation size

Table 5.3 shows that most companies that responded (55.56 percent), fall into the group 200 or more employees. The group with between 30 to 50 employees, represented 22.22 percent, whilst 16.67 percent of respondents, represented organisations with between 50 to 100 employees. Lastly, the group between 10 to 30 employees represented only 5.56 percent of the population.
Table 5.4 - Respondents by Magisterial District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT</th>
<th>RESPONSE FREQUENCY</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Port Elizabeth</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>83,33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uitenhage</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11,11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humansdorp</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5,56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
<td><strong>100,00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Results of analysis of response rate by magisterial district.

The three magisterial districts studied were Port Elizabeth, Uitenhage and Humansdorp. Table 5.4 shows that Port Elizabeth is represented by 83,33 percent, Uitenhage 11,11 percent and Humansdorp 5,56 percent. Table 5.5 shows an analysis of positions of respondents.
From Table 5.5, it can be seen that the Human Resources/Personnel Managers accounted for 44.44 percent of respondents. Other accounted for 33.33 percent and Financial Managers accounted for 22.22 percent. In Table 5.6, the gender of respondents is shown.

Table 5.5 - Position of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSITION OF RESPONDENTS</th>
<th>RESPONSE FREQUENCY</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources/Personnel Manager</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>44.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing Director</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Manager</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>33.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Results obtained from analysis of position of respondents.

Table 5.6 - Respondents by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>RESPONSE FREQUENCY</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Response</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>88.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Results obtained from analysis of response by gender

Of the respondents, 88.89 percent were males and 11.11 percent were females. No significance can be attached to this, as it is not known how many males or females were in the population. In Table 5.7, the race of respondents is shown.

*TABLE 5.7 – Respondents by race*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Response Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>