

Local Government in Promoting Equity and Inclusion: The Road Ahead

Abstract

Diversity, equity, and inclusion is rooted on post-apartheid inequalities in communities and workplaces- and this is the greatest road ahead for South Africa to eradicate. This topic examines how selected local governmental jurisdictions are responding to the call for greater equity inclusion in organisations. Transformative approach is low in progress with the efforts to advance human resources policies and processes. There is acknowledgement that there is still a lot of work that still needs to be done- this work will interrupt the existing patterns that tend to maintain a status quo of structural disadvantages around the issues such as hiring, pay equity and advancement that limit a culture of inclusion, and the road ahead.

Introduction

National and local communities, interest awareness of challenges in promoting racial women equity have increased immensely because of many events in the country. On the government efforts, the presidency introduced the *Operation Vulindlela*, as an initiative to achieve rapid and inclusive economic growth by implementing structural reforms. It specifically focuses on addressing spatial inequality, strengthening local government, and accelerating digital transformation, all of which are key to promoting equity and inclusion. The initiative seeks to ensure that all South Africans benefit from economic growth, particularly those who have been historically disadvantaged – women and physically challenged.

Academic Literature

Overview of Themes

Human Resource (HR) and Public Administration (PA) have evolved past apartheid era and forms the focus on equal employment opportunity and affirmative action (i.e. BEE). To issues that go ‘beyond compliance’.

Diversity is a characteristic attribute that is available in all public institutions owing to the heterogeneous composition of the population of South African society. They further explain that public managers have a mandate to take

caution in addressing the issue of differences in the workplace to promote unity and solidarity (Van der Walddt and Du Toit, 1997). The local government has a mandate to address gender equality and women 's empowerment as the focal point for municipal practices and processes, that is the provision of household infrastructure and services, a creation of integrated cities, towns and rural areas, local economic development and community empowerment and redistribution.

Achieving Improved Results for Women and Disabled

The clear link between the interaction among the rights -approach based, mainstreaming as an implementation strategy, service delivery thus applying *Batho Pele principles of 1996*, focused on the vulnerable, marginalised and socially excluded groups (including women) and development as an output, with improvement of quality of life as process outcomes. Improved results can be achieved over and above what is expected, where there is more attention on equity and inclusion of women.

Piloting a Rights-based Approach

This is the most important approach, and it will necessitate strategy for local government level, most importantly in City of Joburg, Tshwane, and others. Piloting will bring cohesion of the following aspects:

- Capacity building- by giving the hand-on skills to work with a rights-based approach and mainstreaming strategy.
- Follow-up with implementation and intensive coaching -by providing hands-on support with practical implementation.
- A conclusive approach on organisational leadership (political and administrative)- by giving support to leaders to direct and monitor implementation.

Focus on leadership

This is the most crucial point for the success of all three spheres of government, focusing on the role of leaders should necessitate the importance as alluded by women' concerns. The focus should not be on low-

level public officials rather to ensure that the buy-in and commitment of political and administrative leaders have an understanding in dealing with equality concerns of women, and it highlights the connection among the social ailments experienced in our communities as a result.

High-ranking positions for post- 1994 era should be given to women who qualify. Women should not be left out for the fact that they are women. If they are, this will continue to widen the gap of inequality in the workplace and the communities. Should this point be attended to, we can see social ailments be limited. As women are called – *Imbokodo*. “You give one opportunity to one woman, the whole clan, life span evolves to improvement. Leadership can be seen in all roles that women take; be it home, church, politics, and workplace- you just have to give care guidelines. And this always brings about the figure in the workplace that possesses soft and hard skills, which are necessary to build the country and the communities at large. This is not the case that man, cannot give such traits, but it takes a lot of artificial training to arrive to that level.

Monitoring and evaluation and accountability

Monitoring, evaluation and accountability for equality will go along way to ensure that women see improved results. When women are given opportunity, they go all the way out, as they think not of the immediate but the entire community, who will benefit from the service delivery.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the intention of developmental local government should include women. - not just women, but the disabled too. Local government has the clear mandate to address the equality and service delivery through *Batho Pele Act* of 1996. This the starting point, and the road ahead.

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