

## **Gender Equity in South African Higher Education Leadership: Where Are We Twenty Years After Democracy?**

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**ABSTRACT** Gender equity (GE) in relation to the representation of women forms part of policy within South African legislature, as part of a democratic society. Despite GE policy, leadership within Higher Education (HE) is still male dominated. This paper reflects on a desktop review of 23 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in South Africa, looking at selected middle and top management levels, as presented on their websites. The findings reveal that gender equity is not practiced within HE leadership and suggest that HE leadership is male dominated; with the glass ceiling a reality for women. A discussion based on a literature review is presented, reflecting that cultural and structural conditions and practices impact on GE leadership in HEIs. It is recommended that HEIs need to be challenged to review leadership and characteristics, and that they should be leaders in changing the perspectives of leadership and the role and place of women in society.