

**GENDER EQUALITY IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION ARENA: A  
PUBLIC POLICY PERSPECTIVE**

**By**

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## ABSTRACT

International research has shown conclusively that the struggle for employment equity and gender equality is a major challenge to both the private and the public sectors. In South Africa, with the legacy of colonialism and apartheid fresh in one's mind the question of gender equality and equity has been debated thoroughly both in academic and other intellectual forums as well as in political platforms. The reality is that both the elements of equity and equality in terms of gender are elusive in terms of actual implementation in South Africa.

The present thesis is a policy-oriented examination of the process and implementation of gender equity at a "Historically Black Institution", the University of Durban Westville, which in 2004 will join the University of Natal to create the University of KwaZulu Natal. It is thus, a case study of the implementation of existing legislation associated with affirmative action and employment equity.

The thesis recognises the reality that women in South Africa face a great number of challenges because they still lag far behind in the equity stakes at all levels of society and economy. This reality is based on a number of macro and micro roots and present circumstances. Thus one of the reasons for choosing UDW as a case study was to uncover such reasons and roots, examine and analyse their dynamics and draw significant lessons. This was because UDW had led provincial and national struggles for transformation for many years. UDW staff, for example, was in the forefront of the creation of UDUSA and its relentless efforts for transformation in education, before and after 1990.

The concepts of affirmative action and gender equity are examined in their national and international dimensions in the literature review. As affirmative action has its supporters and detractors, the debates were examined in their social and historical contexts. The various theories and societal applications of the quota and target strategies were touched upon in this section of the thesis that utilised both international and national literature as its guide in the understanding of the dynamics of a much debated, disputed and challenging phenomenon.

The post-1994 South African legislation that made gender equity and affirmative action an inseparable ingredient of the new democracy was examined in direct relation to the measures, rules and regulations that inform public policy on these phenomena. The Employment Equity Act and the Skills Development Act were scrutinised in order for the reader to comprehend their vital role in the shaping of new relationships and societal and legal dynamics.

The relevant historical and recent South African literature dealing with gender equity was examined in order to give the reader the picture of the debates and viewpoints that informed the process from apartheid to the post 1994 period. This section acclimatised the reader with the various initiatives and forums that were to become the stepping stones for the policy strategists of the post-1994 Department of Education. The empirical component of the thesis was based on both comparative quantitative and qualitative methods. Primary documents related to

human resource realities at UDW were analysed. There followed a thorough scrutiny of the “3 Year Rolling Plans” of the University, i.e. the official documents that unveiled the strategic initiatives of its leadership to implement affirmative action and gender equity. Additionally, the empirical, mostly qualitative analysis of a large number of interviews of key stakeholders and role players, revealed a set of social, historical, administrative and political dynamics associated with these processes. In the pursuit of the empirical realities characterising gender equity at UDW, the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. Although there were affirmative action initiatives there was a narrow focus on race that excludes gender equity as a powerful ingredient of equity within the institution.
2. The participation of stakeholders and role players at UDW regarding gender equity initiatives was limited.
3. The dissemination of information regarding major steps to address affirmative action and equity at UDW was restrictive.
4. There were limited efforts to review and monitor equity targets and plans.
5. The non-existence of gender-related forums, committees, monitoring and review structures was a major impediment in the achievement of gender equity.
6. Gender equity never became a key priority area at UDW.
7. Capacity building efforts at UDW for all levels of staff were limited
8. There was no tangible research or other such incentives for women researchers at an institutional level at UDW.
9. Monitoring and review mechanisms to ensure the advancement of women to decision-making and leadership positions were non-existent.

Following the empirical analysis, at both qualitative and quantitative levels, it was shown that all hypotheses were confirmed in their entirety. Some reasons for such a reality were identified in the study as historical legacies; apathy amongst staff in general; poor management and leadership, a lack of political will on the part of management etc. This seems a disturbing picture; however, it cannot disguise the achievements that several UDW constituencies have gained through their relentless struggles and continuous sacrifices.

The new paradigm of transformation in terms of gender equity and equality cannot be based only on a number of legal measures promulgated by the new government. In fact, it is up to the leadership of institutions, stakeholders, and role players to ensure implementation of progressive legislative frameworks.

There was change at UDW but it lacked solid policy guidelines, direction of energy, as well as the honest, continuous and active participation of all the stakeholders and role players. There was little evidence of well-coordinated cooperative efforts that could carry transformation forward.

The legacy of struggle of UDW should not become a burden to the new institution, but its management culture and organisational dynamics could.

## **DEDICATION**

*This study is dedicated to my husband, Alan Tudge, without whose unending patience, loving attention, material and spiritual support this study would not have been possible.*

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- My son, Sarushen Tudge, for being independent and self-sufficient.
- Alan Tudge, my husband, for standing by me in the last ten years.
- My friends who encouraged me to complete this study.

## DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, **Rajie Tudge**, declare that this thesis is my own work, and has not been submitted previously for any degree in any university.

.....

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**Date:**.....

.....

**Promoter**

**Prof. E.A. Mantzaris**

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Motivation for the Study**

The struggle for employment equity and gender equality is a major challenge to international humanity. The under-representation of women in management positions in both the private and public sector is a widely accepted international phenomenon that needs to be rectified. In South Africa, celebrating 10 years of democracy, gender equity has been long debated and discussed; and it has been legally a formal part of the social landscape of our country for more than five years. It is enshrined in the Constitution and in a series of fundamental labour laws that supplement the paramount legal document of South Africa.

Despite the fact that South Africa is one of the few countries in the world that can boast a large number of women in its parliament; a designated desk in the Office of the President of the country and the some of the most progressive legislation in terms of gender, South African women have made little progress in real terms in their fight for gender equality and equity.

It needs to be said that women in South Africa face a large number of challenges as statistics reveal that they still lag far behind in the equity stakes, both in the private and the state sectors. South Africa, a democracy in transition and an emerging economy of note, has poor representation of women in top management positions, despite concerted efforts on all fronts to remedy this reality. This is also true of education institutions, including those in the tertiary sectors, i.e. universities and technikons. Universities, with their core function of research, are expected to be in the forefront of change. Given the history of the struggle against apartheid and the role of universities in their lobby for transformation, their silence on matter of gender equality and gender equity requires investigation. Hence there is need for both institutional and national strategies to remedy such a situation in accordance

with the laws of the country and the dictates of economic and social principles of equality and affirmative action. There is a dire need for the progressive legislation to be transformed into practical realities for the previously disadvantaged groups, especially women.

The study of gender equity at a historically black university, the University of Durban Westville, is a social policy case study that will attempt to examine and analyse the dynamics of equity, affirmative action, systemic and administrative measures and power relations as they determine and are determined by the various societal and other forces associated with these realities. The choice of this university in a comparative perspective was the result of a number of motivating factors:

- The researcher has been a staff member of this institution, both in academic, research and administrative capacities, including those of Assistant Academic Registrar and Strategic Planner. She has been party to and has witnessed numerous attempts over the years to address gender issues at the Institution and nationally. The minimal success achieved despite these efforts need to be analysed and recorded.
- Because of the university's historical past and continuous struggles, the existing contradictions have been perpetual, which has direct effects on power and other relations. Since its inception, the history of the University of Durban Westville is "punctuated with some of the most powerful moments in South African politics" It has been a "site of struggle" since the late 1960s, successfully employing boycott strategies to bring about change (Way to Go 2003). UDW was therefore expected to have a strong transformation agenda that addressed gender issues.
- Because of its racial and ethnic composition as well as its struggles at many levels it could be assumed that transformation, including affirmative action and gender equity would be in the forefront of implementation measures.

The key motivational question in this regard then was whether major policy initiatives informed by the transformation agenda of the successive governments of national unity, in this case those of affirmative action and gender equity were implemented in the microcosm or at the micro level of this unity. If not, what were the main reasons for such a failure, what was the role of power and other relations, how were influences shaped, what were the dynamics associated with the actions of the various stakeholders etc.

It is an important study, also because its findings are submitted during the last year of existence of the University of Durban Westville. In 2004 it merges with the University of Natal to create the new University of KwaZulu Natal. This merger is part of the transformation of the South African Higher Education landscape. The communities served by these universities will justifiably expect the transformation agenda to include issues of race and gender. There have been significant shifts in policy at all levels of both institutions, in society, the market and beyond. The fundamental question is whether these policy changes have been implemented, if not, for what reasons, if yes how efficiently and successfully. The findings of the study can be utilised as a guideline for future corrective action.

## **1.2 The Research Problem**

The aftermath of the 1994 democratic elections created a new era of hope and expectations amongst the disadvantaged across the land, across racial, ethnic and class divisions. One of the most seriously disadvantaged social categories is that of women, especially Black women, as designated groups identified in the Constitution and other new legislation in South Africa. This legislation has created social, economic and institutional frameworks for the implementation of affirmative action and gender equity. The research question of this thesis is whether the legal and societal paradigms became tangible realities at an institution of higher learning.

It is inevitable that the new paradigm shift is a radical departure from the past as the transformation agenda at all levels of society have been based on concrete legal steps undertaken by the new government. In this new reality the leadership of institutions, business, the whole society, in fact, is expected to fall into line with a

new non-racial, non- sexist, democratic society where the inequalities of the past will be remedied.

The affirmative action and gender equity priorities at UDW as well as the whole society were to follow the legal requirements set by the new democratic government and thus prepare a sustainable, developmental and equitable future for the institution, especially before its merger with Natal University. The key research question then is whether this process of affirmative action and gender equity became a reality at UDW following the passing of progressive legislation that made these imperatives a *sine qua non* of institutional transformation and democratisation.

This is inevitably a research exercise on change process that requires a large number of ingredients, such as solid leadership, the existence of solid administrative and organisational structures, transparency, accountability, cooperation and unity. Whether these important characteristics were evident at UDW during the period under investigation is a key research question, because the delivery as a part of the process of equity was to be founded on such principled realities.

Change needs to be holistic, an amalgam of solid policy guidelines, direction of energy and activity, honest participation of the stakeholders and role players, compliance with coordination and cooperation. Were these ingredients evident at UDW? These are key and fundamental questions that shaped the thoughts, theory and empirical realities related to this thesis. Obviously the first step towards analysing these dynamics is the creation of the hypotheses upon which this study will be based.

### **1.3 Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses will be examined and tested in the context of this thesis:

1. Although there were affirmative action initiatives, there was a narrow focus on race that excludes gender equity as a crucial ingredient of equity within the institution.

2. The participation of stakeholders and role players at UDW regarding gender equity measures and initiatives was limited.
3. The dissemination of information regarding major steps to address affirmative action and equity at UDW was restrictive.
4. There were limited efforts to review and monitor equity targets and plans.
5. The non-existence of gender related forums, committees, monitoring and review structures was a major impediment in the achievement of gender equity.
6. Gender equity never became a key priority area at UDW.
7. Capacity building efforts at UDW at all levels of staff were limited throughout the period.
8. There were no tangible research or other such initiatives for women researchers at an institutional level at UDW.
9. The implementation of monitoring and review mechanisms to ensure the advancement of women in terms of achieving decision-making and leadership positions was non-existent.

#### **1.4            Structure of the Study**

This study is an attempt at the marriage of the theory of affirmative action and gender equity and the empirical manifestation thereof. This first chapter provides an overview, starting with the motivation for the study. It attempts to give an understanding of the researcher's position and the reasons for selecting the University of Durban Westville as the choice of case study. It then sets out the hypotheses that the researcher has formulated from her reading of the literature, her own experiences and intuitions as well as the thorough examination of the institutional documentation. These hypotheses then informed the interview questions which were used to test these hypotheses within the institution and beyond.

The second chapter sets out the research methods employed in the study. The chapter begins with the key questions that are looked at in the study and the literature review that was undertaken. It describes the method of data collection, the formulation of the interview questions and the sampling techniques used. It also sets out how the question of ethics was addressed in the study.

Chapter three attempts to provide a theoretical understanding of historical realities and present challenges of affirmative action and equity. It begins with the definitions of terminology and concepts as it is used in current literature in the field. The theoretical and empirical parameters and a historical background of discrimination and affirmative action are given. This is followed by the current debates on affirmative action in South Africa and abroad.

Chapter four focuses on transformation forums and their impact on gender equity. It traces the evolution of transformation forums in the university sector in South Africa. Such an understanding is deemed important as they set the scene and provided the impetus for the current legislation pertaining to gender, and thus shaped the way in which universities addressed transformation in general and gender in particular. The chapter also gives a background to other gender initiatives in the South African Higher Education sector: the Gender Equity Task Team of the Department of Education, the Gender Network and the Women in Research Project.

Chapter five is an examination of the legislative framework of gender equity in South Africa. It gives a brief background to the legislation and then looks in considerable depth at two recent pieces of legislation that pertain to gender: the Employment Equity Act and the Skills Development Act. Chapters two to five constitute the theoretical aspect of the study.

Chapters six and seven constitute the empirical aspect of this study. In these chapters the researcher scrutinises the three-year rolling plans of the University of Durban Westville. First a close analysis is provided of the interviews that were carried out among key role-players, both in the university and outside. This is followed by a background to the rolling plans and an analysis of the 1999 to 2001 and then the 2000 to 2002 three-year rolling plans of the university. These are analysed in detail, focusing on the race and gender statistics, projections and implementation plans.

The final chapter draws conclusions and makes recommendations on affirmative action and equity as it pertains to gender in this thesis.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **RESEARCH METHODS**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

When it was decided to undertake the present project a number of key issues were paramount in the mind of the researcher:

- The University of Durban Westville is a historically Black University that has been in the forefront of struggles against apartheid, despite the fact that it was one of the regime's creations, established in order to cater for the South African Indian community.
- Throughout the years the university has excelled in many areas of research, teaching and administration.
- Since 1994 it has been in the forefront of transformation, especially in registering large number of poor and middle class African students.
- It has been prone to internal struggles between management, unions (especially the Combined Staff Association (COMSA) in the mid-1990's and the Academic Staff Association (ASA) since the late 1990's) and students. Thus it can be said that it has a difficult, if not turbulent, history.
- Despite the problems facing it, the staff has carried out research and teaching responsibilities and it is possibly the most advanced Historically Black University (HBU) in terms of research output.
- Equity in general and gender equity, despite UDW's mission statement and subsequent key documents, do not seem to be a priority. This will be one of the key hypotheses of the study that will follow.
- The forthcoming merger with the University of Natal will have serious repercussions at all levels of employment, teaching and research as well as the balance of gender equity.

These are very important reasons for undertaking such a localised and institution-based study, which will become obvious in the process of this undertaking. There are obvious historical and contemporary theoretical and empirical parameters associated with such an effort. These cannot, and should not, be separated from their comparative repercussions and dynamics.

Gender equity is a *sine qua non* of transformation, especially when dealing with an institution of higher learning as challenging and diverse as UDW. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to re-invent the university given its impending merger, but this study will hopefully pinpoint realities, perceptions and attitudes that show the historical significance of a lost opportunity.

It needs to be stressed from the outset that the general axiom that each research effort demands its specific method of inquiry applies to the present project (Bailey 1987; Frankfort Nachmias and Nachmias 1992). In our case the method employed needs to be developed and articulated in order to examine the subject based on the historical and social particularities of UDW as an institution of higher learning. Thus the methodological tools employed need to elicit original useful and useable data that will lead to analysis, interpretation, conclusions and recommendations for the future.

## 2.2 Literature Review

The first step undertaken was a literature review associated with the study. This has been described as a very vital component of any solid scientific inquiry in methodological literature (Ferreira 1988; Babbie 1989; Patton 1990). In the context of the present study this consisted of a thorough study and analysis of the following sources:

- **Primary documents:** This step included a thorough scrutiny and analysis of all relevant policy documents relating to official state legislation as well as comparative analysis of official institutional documents of UDW as well as other universities and technikons in South Africa. The study of legal documents was important as it set the parameters within which the concept of gender equity

becomes a reality in its implementation stage. The study and analysis of the institutional documents would help the researcher understand the existing visions and plans as well as the implementation realities in the institution.

- **Secondary documents:** This step included the thorough scrutiny of books, articles in academic and other journals and magazines, existing research reports and findings, as well as the Internet. This study and analysis helped the researcher in gaining a very wide stock of knowledge and in the understanding of existing realities in a comparative perspective.

### 2.3 Method of Data Collection

The method of data collection for this thesis was primarily the face-to-face interview as well as the analysis of primary and secondary documents in their historical and present contexts. Sociological and social policy literature abounds with serious debates regarding the correct selection of an appropriate tool for gathering information, as it is a very crucial issue in terms of ensuring a streamlined and comprehensive interpretation and analysis (Ackroyd and Hughes 1981; Mitchell and Jolly 1988; Babbie 1989).

The face-to-face interviews conducted lasted between one and one and a half-hour to complete. This particular method of data collection was selected for a good number of reasons as it has the following advantages over other or similar instruments:

- It is **flexible**, as there are opportunities and time for the researcher to probe the interviewee when or if he/she is dissatisfied with an incomplete answer. Thus further clarity can be sought on possible vague answers. The appropriateness of the question could also be adjusted accordingly, as there is always the possibility that some interviewees are more knowledgeable than others in the field of inquiry.
- **Control** over the environment in which the interview takes place could be ensured. For example most interviews in this study took place in the privacy of the respondent's office.

- There was always a high, if not absolute **response rate** as the researcher ensured that the interview was set up with the consent of the potential interviewee and at pre-arranged times. Thus the interview yields a far better response rate, especially when the process is thoroughly interactive in nature.
- The researcher was able to observe **non-verbal behaviour**, a fact that cannot be said in the case of structured or semi-structured questionnaires.
- The interviewer could **control the sequence of the questions**, unlike the questionnaires where the order is rigid. Thus an experienced interviewer can switch questions around to suit his purpose and response agenda accordingly.
- The interviewer could easily **ensure that all questions were answered**, a fact that cannot be guaranteed in a questionnaire. Additionally, the interviewer could entice the respondent to complete the required questions when the need arises.
- There is always an element of **spontaneity** in this form of responses, as the whole process is less rigid and normative when compared with a structured, semi-structured or mailed questionnaire.
- The researcher had the opportunity to **phrase and rephrase the questions**, depending on the level of knowledge and expertise of the interviewee. This cannot occur with a structured or mailed questionnaire (Mitchell and Jolley 1988; Babbie 1989; Frankfort Nachmias and Nachmias 1992).

#### 2.4 The Questions

There is no doubt that the foundation of all interviews is the structuring of the questions. The content of the question and the format are important criteria that determine the success or failure of the interpretation, analysis and the final product in its totality.

In the context of this study the vast majority of the questions asked were factual, which were designed to elicit objective information from the respondents. Information was sought regarding the extent of gender equity in a particular environment, the strengths and weaknesses of the approach and implementation, the structural or factual inaccuracies of the strategies used in the application of the laws etc.

Of course such an approach can in theory encounter several problems such as the lack of information on the part of the interviewee, or reluctance on his/her part to answer a particular question. However this was hardly evident in the context of this study as the interviewees were very knowledgeable on the topic and the questions were not controversial or double-barreled. Additionally several steps were undertaken by the researcher to guarantee the accuracy of the answer, especially through corroboration of the responses with other primary or secondary sources.

The open-ended questions were chosen as the principle instrument of data collection after much thought. Close (or structured) questions are easy to ask and in most cases elicit quick answers. However as practical research experience has shown they introduce bias and incomplete answers on the part of the respondents (Babbie 1989; Frankfort Nachmias and Nachmias 1992). Open-ended questions, because of their nature and structure, require complete answers on the part of the interviewee; he/she has no choice but to answer concretely and without preconceived answers. This is a major virtue in research, analysis and interpretation of the collected data. The respondent is not forced or co-opted to answer such questions, where the researcher determines the responses and the interviewee has limited choice of responses. Thus the interviewee has the opportunity to express his/her true feelings, perceptions, facts, ideas and opinions. Even in the case of unclear answers, the interviewer can probe for clarity, thus clearing up misunderstandings, gaps etc. (Mitchell and Jolley 1988; Babbie 1989).

## **2.5            Sampling**

Empirically based research such as the present seeks information from potential interviewees in order to study, analyse and interpret information that ultimately leads to several conclusions. Sources are sought that will provide factual and other information that will be analysed in the process.

In the context of the present research, it became evident from the outset that the thorough study and analysis of documents relating to the subject were in need of supplementary information based on the knowledge, expertise and experience of individuals such as policy analysts and practitioners, human relations practitioners

of various and diverse hues and university administrators. Under these circumstances it became inevitable that a **non-probability-sampling** frame was required. In such a sampling frame not every person within a given population has an equal chance of being selected (as in the case of a **probability sample**).

There has been a historical and contemporary debate amongst researchers and research practitioners regarding the advantages and disadvantages of these two main sampling frames (Babbie 1989; Frankfort Nachmias and Nachmias 1992). However, there is a general agreement that a well-selected and designed sampling, irrespective of its nature is of vital importance to the success of a research project. In this sense non-probability sampling is used when a sampling population cannot be precisely defined and when a list of sampling population is not available (Babbie 1989; Frankfort Nachmias and Nachmias 1992). This was obviously the case in respect of the present project.

The **judgement**-sampling frame (which on many occasions is also called **purposive** sample) was utilised in the context of this research. Potential interviewees were subjectively selected by the researcher because they were considered to be individuals who had the knowledge, expertise, information and experience to contribute to the success of the project. The selection of these particular potential respondents was thus based on the judgement of the researcher alone. In several ways this was a representative sample as those selected were judged to have certain characteristics and attributes that could contribute significantly to the success of the present endeavour.

Purposive samples have been used extensively in many countries in the world, including the United States of America especially in the measuring of “exit polls” in local elections (Frankfort Nachmias and Nachmias 1992).

## 2.6 The Analysis of Data

The analysis of data was obviously based on the principles and experience of the qualitative frame and can be described as an ongoing process.

Initially, the secondary data analysis was based on the wide-ranging literature review and utilised the researcher's understanding and experience in public and social policy issues for interpretation. It is common knowledge in the social sciences that the utilisation of secondary sources can be seen as vital in the comprehension and analysis of complex public and social phenomena. In the analysis of existing primary and secondary data the investigator examined a wide range of scientific and government-released material, which adds scope and depth to the understanding of the subject in its various angles. In such a process the historical and present context of a phenomenon is better understood. Such a qualitative approach to analysis has comparative connotations, as particularities of a phenomenon, event or process can ultimately lead to concrete generalisations.

In terms of the qualitative analysis associated with the interviews conducted, the researcher utilised a number of internationally accepted methods of interpretation. This analysis was used in a comparative perspective and related directly to the existing hypothesis, aims and objectives of the study.

## 2.7 The Ethics of the Research

Research ethics are inextricably related to the humanity inherent in social sciences. There have been major issues associated with the rights and welfare of the participants in a specific project and these need to be protected. Reliable and substantial data is the prerogative and expertise of the researcher, but this process needs to be planned in such a way as not to violate the rights of the respondents associated with the study.

**Consent** must always be sought from the interviewees and no co-option methods must take place. These principles were always adhered to, without deviation, by the researcher in the process of the study. Additionally the following principles were followed:

- Initially the relevant research authorities at the University of Durban Westville granted an ethical clearance. This is a compulsory first step, outlined by the rules and regulations of the National Research Foundation and the Human Science Research Council.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **HISTORICAL REALITIES AND PRESENT CHALLENGES OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND EQUITY**

#### **3.1. Introduction and Definitions**

An Affirmative Action policy is a planned, positive process and strategy aimed at transforming socio-economic environments which have in the past denied individuals from disadvantaged groups equal opportunities in economy and society. In this process disadvantaged individuals are helped in gaining access to opportunities which have been denied to them. On the other hand, affirmative action should be seen as the supporting mechanism for a more equitable and humane society. It should be the process that provides the insurance policy against the closing of doors, opportunities, possibilities and aspirations to large sections of the population in a given society. The past president of South Africa, Dr Nelson Mandela, described affirmative action as a beacon of positive expectation (SABC 1994). To many others, it is an alarming sphere, which is viewed as a threat to their personal security and a menace to the integrity of public life.

In fact, affirmative action is viewed in several instances as a means of overcoming existing or future impediments to equal employment opportunity rather than as a means of unfairly advantaging the interests of various groups and individuals at the expense of others.

Affirmative action is thus a process of eliminating discrimination; rather than a process through which one form of discrimination is replaced by another. In the United States of America, where the process has its historical roots, affirmative action is seen as a means of overcoming barriers to equal employment opportunities. In this sense affirmative action programmes have been described as temporary interventions, which will cease as soon as equal employment

opportunities have been achieved in a particular society (Thomas 1991; Maphai 1992).

Fraudez (1994:16-17) commented that affirmative action can be defined in terms of the following principles:

- Firstly, affirmative action policy should not unduly trample on the reasonable and legitimate interests of competent white men (or, in other words the interests of the group 'privileged' by past discrimination).
- It needs to be temporary and flexible.
- Affirmative action policy should not be equated with rigid quotas.
- A sense of proportionality should prevail within the qualified labour pool.
- Affirmative action is a means of creating equal employment opportunity.

Affirmative action has been defined as a policy that is set to reverse the disadvantages caused by a number of societal phenomena such as:

- Poor education of sections of the population due to social, political, economic and historical circumstances in a particular society.
- Social, economic or historical and present prejudice.
- Segregation,
- Job reservation,
- Racism,
- Lack of political rights, and
- Unequal distribution of wealth.

In other words, affirmative action is a policy and implementation process that is planned to redress the past imbalances in a given society, and thus ameliorate the existing conditions of individuals and groups who have been disadvantaged on the grounds of race, gender or disability. These policies are set to promote practices, the main aims and objectives of which are to empower the majority of the population in a given society. It is a process designed and implemented to ensure that persons who were hitherto prejudiced by past policies or unequal access to education, training, professional and job opportunities or subjected to disabilities,

racial or gender discrimination, are permitted to acquire employment, advancement and training appropriate to their skills and needs (Crosby, 1996:193).

In this context affirmative action can be seen as a policy and implementation strategy that intends to dismantle existing institutional, race and gender discrimination by encouraging or legally obligating public institutions and the private sector to move beyond the cessation of formal practices of discrimination and embark on their own programmes that will lead to the end of discriminatory practices in the workplace. In engaging in affirmative action and equity programmes the leadership of institutions and private organisations need to act affirmatively, positively, and on occasions aggressively in order to achieve their aims and objectives, especially the removal of all barriers that historically or at present have prevented people from designated groups from having equal access to all levels of society's institutions, organisations, and associations.

Most societies have adopted several forms of affirmative action and equity at different historical conjunctures. This is because workplace inequalities have been the characteristic of not only colonial societies, but also highly industrialised and modernised states (American Council on Education 1996; Barber 1995). Affirmative action and equity have been highly emotive issues, and have created serious intellectual and political debates, as both individuals and social groups have their own ideas, attitudes, fears and aspirations. It is a complex issue with serious repercussions not only for individuals and groups, but for the whole systemic existence of economies and societies (Crosby 1996:45). In this context it becomes apparent that affirmative action and equity policies and their implementation present a major challenge for the respective leadership echelons that are obligated to undertake them diligently. The relevant legislative frameworks presented in another section of this thesis will demonstrate the envisaged and planned changes in the South African occupational and professional landscape, especially at senior levels. These legislative measures require that the past policies and practices be reviewed and addressed sincerely in a transformation process. This process will ensure that there is no unfair discrimination and that those previously excluded from the mainstream of business and other institutions are given every opportunity to develop and advance to their highest potential. Women in this instance need to

be seen as a crucial element of affirmative action and equity (Burchell and Millman 1988; Budlender and Sunderland 1995).

The debates surrounding affirmative action and equity have been tense and highly diversified. There have been opinions stating that Affirmative Action and equity can be regarded as promoting a lowering of standards or as reverse racism, while the opposite viewpoint identifies the process as a remedy for the injustices of the past and a necessary means of compensation of designated groups and individuals. These shades of opinions can be viewed as extreme, and there have been “intermediary” ideas and solutions such as the acceleration of training, mentorships for the previously disadvantaged, developmental plans, fast-tracking or more carefully-designed and implemented promotion routes and the adoption of new, innovative criteria, rules and procedures (Cork 1991; Gornia 1987).

South Africa has developed various affirmative action and equity policies after the first democratic elections in 1994, because its leadership has realised that the globalisation process is unstoppable and new human resource development needs to be implemented in order to face the challenges of the New World Order. Given the social, economic and racial imbalances of the past, it was inevitable that the previously disadvantaged majority should become an integral part of the new conditions. The government introduced affirmative action and equity measures in order to eradicate previous discrimination based on racial or other social characteristics.

### **3.2 Historical Background of Discrimination and Affirmative Action: Theoretical and Empirical Parameters**

Discrimination has been described as any treatment, restriction of opportunity or differentiation based on race, gender, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, religious conviction, disability or disadvantaged background or other generalisations and stereotypes. It is any special provision or limitations in service conditions, which are not based on the intrinsic requirements and value of a specific job (Abercrombie Hill and Turner 1984; Jary and Jary 1991).

Affirmative Action, which includes equity and equal access, is an American term described as an anti-discrimination measure. It was first introduced by the John Kennedy presidential administration in 1961. In the American context it referred to the employment of women and racial/ethnic minorities, which included African Americans, Hispanics and Asians (Wingrove 1995: 23). It needs to be said, however, that Affirmative Action has its roots in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by the United Nations on the 10<sup>th</sup> of December 1948. The declaration states that everyone is entitled to pursue his or her material well-being and spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity without discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, gender, language, religion, political views, natural extraction, social origins, property, birth, or any other status (Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948; Articles 1 and 2). At the time of its implementation, the diversified views outlined briefly above were at their peak and were later developed as the process unfolded. The implementation of affirmative action policies adopted by the USA administration, were envisaged as a form of appropriate compensation for the designated groups. The same approach was adopted by the South African Government after the 1994 elections and the creation of the Government of National Unity.

The historical example of the application of the “Sullivan Code of Conduct” imposed on American companies operating in South Africa, can be described as an “embryonic attempt” towards affirmative action in South Africa. The Reverend Leon Sullivan, an active civil rights campaigner in the Zion Church in Philadelphia, USA masterminded this code of conduct in order to lay the foundations for the reduction of racial inequalities in South Africa in the midst of one of the darkest periods of the apartheid regime.

The key Sullivan code principles can be summarised as follows:

- Equal and fair employment practices for every employee.
- Non-segregation of races in all eating, recreational and work facilities.
- Equal pay for equal work for all employees performing equal or comparable work for the same period of time.

- Increasing the numbers of Blacks and other “non-Whites” in management and supervisory positions.
- The initiation and development of training programmes that would pave the way to Blacks and other “non-Whites” for supervisory, administrative, clerical and technical jobs in substantial numbers.
- The improvement of the quality of employees’ lives outside the work environment in aspects such as housing, transport, schooling, recreation and health (Sullivan Code of Conduct 1978).

Affirmative action policies, including equity measures, became an integral part of the steps undertaken by South Africa’s first democratically elected government. Legislative frameworks and public statements by various senior politicians and functionaries of the new regime highlighted the fact that the key motives behind the implementation of affirmative action and equity were based on the transformation agendas envisaged by the government following the historical compromises reached between the old and new regimes. The application of affirmative action was a moral obligation for the gradual abolition of apartheid and its replacement with a more egalitarian and humane society. After all the African population in the country constitutes the majority of her inhabitants, unlike the United States of America, where the designated groups from the period of JF Kennedy were clearly the minority.

Affirmative Action and equity could be described as a temporary intervention designed to create equal employment opportunities, especially for the previously disadvantaged. This would be achieved without the lowering of existing standards of economy and in some ways without threatening the positions of the present competent incumbents if possible. In short, affirmative action would be an integral part of a thoroughly revised human resources strategy based on more egalitarian principles aspiring to remedy the discrimination of the past (Department of Labour 1997; Department of Public Service and Administration 1997a; Department of Public Services and Administration 1997b).

Critical research and analysis of skills development or underdevelopment in the country had shown conclusively, as early as 1992, that high level management, as well as professional and technical skills were in short supply and economic and social growth depended on the rapid re-development of the previously disadvantaged groups. The brain drain of technical, professional and even blue collar and highly skilled people during the period of political and economic transition would be a burden to productivity and the growth of South Africa's productive forces (South African Chamber of Business 1993; South African Chamber of Business 1996).

Affirmative Action and equity presupposes that every individual possesses unique personality traits, talents and productive capacity, and can thus contribute positively in the workplace. This uniqueness can be utilised for the benefit of the whole. Historically there has been no workforce that has been homogenous anywhere in the world, thus this uniqueness demands diversity management. Affirmative Action does not mean assimilation, but the ultimate harmonisation of different cultures, customs and traditions of a diversity of people that will contribute to optimum utilisation of opportunities and challenges within both economy and society. The accommodation and exchange of skills cannot be seen as an impediment to development and growth (Kagiso Trust 1992; Kenway and Willis 1995).

Affirmative Action and equity allocates resources to the previously disadvantaged in a non-discriminatory fashion and basically prescribes to the employer the line and rules of corrective action that needs to be adopted in order for the inequalities of the past to be redressed. In the long run affirmative action is seen as a process that would restore societal and professional equilibrium in the workplace. This is a reason that affirmative action has occasionally been called 'reverse discrimination' (Wilson 1982; Wilson 1989).

Affirmative Action and equity, of which gender equity is a very important component, have been treated as synonymous with empowerment, and has meant the creation of opportunities for disempowered groups to develop their educational, economic, spiritual and professional potential in a continuous and sustainable process. For this to become a reality, the creation of mechanisms, legislation and

procedures that would lead to the ultimate success of the process is of importance. The legacy of poor and unequal education, prejudice, racism, job reservation, the erosion of human and civil rights and the unequal distribution of wealth have been historical impediments of major significance in South Africa. Affirmative Action and equity can be seen as the antidotes of these past and present legacies.

Affirmative Action and equity cannot succeed unless they take a pro-active, conscious and well-planned and implemented route. The increase in representation of historically marginalised youths or unemployed and poor adults in the productive sector, trade, school governing bodies or University Councils can gradually lead to a more balanced demographic representation of the society. For these to be achieved there are certain requirements and pre-conditions that need to supplement the existing legislative frameworks. Employers could set quota systems for women and disabled, for example, or create skills developmental courses for lower ranked but deserving employees. Affirmative Action and equity need to be designed, not only for the much desired upward social and financial mobility of certain sections of the marginalised groups, but also for sustainable job creation and upgrading.

According to the new South African government, the affirmative action policy is aimed at fighting discrimination in this country. This is despite the fact that the system of population classification in South Africa is often referred to as 'race' classification, especially during the period of apartheid but even today. However, the social engineering paradigm that had its roots and foundations on the colonial conquests of South and Southern Africa and became the official ideology of the state after the National Party's victory in 1948, has been replaced by what has been described as a "social category system". In this sense the term "African" is treated officially as a "social category" and not a racial classification. The ideology of a series of white leaders from Hertzog to FW De Klerk, who cemented the apartheid ideology amongst all segments of white society (Wolpe 1988; Stadler 1987; Simkins 1983), has been replaced by an ideology of a new, united "Rainbow Nation" even in the official statistics of the country.

This is evident in the language and understanding of key affirmative action and equity legislation. Thus the Employment Equity Act no. 55 of 1998, defines 'black people' in a generic mould, meaning Africans, Coloureds and Indians. These are in fact the historical and social groups that were directly discriminated against during apartheid through a series of racist and inhuman laws. This act states that every employer must take steps to promote equal opportunity in the workplace by eliminating unfair discrimination in all employment practices.

These realities have set a series of key questions related to the interpretation and practical applications of the existing laws. Thus there is a general belief that there is a contradiction between the affirmative action policy and the application or implementation of the Employment Equity Act. This perception is created because there is a strong belief amongst sections of South Africa's population that affirmative action favours only the indigenous African people in the workplace and seems to exclude Coloureds and Indians. In fact, it is commonly known that individuals and groups within these social categories perceive affirmative action as a reverse discrimination against them ("Affirmative Action" Files, Independent Newspapers Library). On the other hand there are many African people who believe that Coloureds and Indians were beneficiaries of apartheid. Such attitudes and perceptions have the potential to create animosity amongst that could lead to conflict.

The fact remains that there is confusion amongst previously disadvantaged black groups for many reasons. Africans definitely have very strong expectations while the other groups have fears that frequently become evident. However, one of the key issues in this situation is that there is great ignorance regarding the dynamics and intricacies of the existing legislation. This is a very serious problem and challenge.

### **3.3 The Necessity for Affirmative Action and Equity**

In a country such as South Africa, affirmative action and equity are necessary in order to achieve the de-racialisation of society as well as the equalisation of the positioning within the labour markets. Given the fact that Black Economic

Empowerment has not spread as widely as it should, and that the control of the country's economy is still in the hands of the white elite, the tangible realities of informal and inadvertent marginalisation and discrimination can be adequately addressed by affirmative action and equity.

In a society such as South Africa, where a liberation movement became the leader of the Government of National Unity and has, through words and deeds, become an integral and willing partner of the New World Order, workers experience different types of labour market discrimination. Theorists of change and adversity management have identified four types of labour market discrimination.

- Human capital discrimination,
- Employment discrimination.
- Wage discrimination and
- Occupational discrimination.

The human capital discrimination is referred to as market discrimination (Human et al; 1986:7) in other words, it occurs before the individuals seek employment and therefore before they become fully productive in the labour market. The last three categories are referred to as being within the confines of market discrimination because they are encountered after the individual has entered the labour market.

Griffith & Jones (1989:143-196) point out that inequalities and discrimination are neither unique to South Africa, nor can they be ascribed fully to discriminatory laws or policies associated with the apartheid regime. Such realities are evident in most free enterprise, and market-driven capitalist societies. There are also creations of inequalities inherent in market mechanisms even in so-called social democratic, welfare capitalist formations ( Heilbrunner 1988; Buchanan 1986) .

Given the labour flexibility conditions in South Africa, reinforced by labour legislation such as the Labour Relations Act of 1995 and its recent amendments, it has become common for employers to undertake supervision of temporary workers in the workplace. It is believed that labour problems are minimised by the wider regime of control, which envelops the temporary labour process (Conrad,

1988:134). In most cases temporary workers have no union representation. This leads to the lack of effective means of redress against their placement and/or employer and no basis upon which to re-negotiate the terms of their working conditions. Their terms of employment render them subordinated within the dual control labour processors, the agency and the employer. Temporary, casual and contract workers are obligated to co-operate, be obedient and even subservient, for which they may be rewarded in the form of slightly increased wages and limited employment continuity. But there is a remarkable degree of placement continuity within the highly unstable employment contest of the temporary contract (Mallet 1975; Man 1994). In such extreme labour conditions, even under the protection of the South African Constitution and a series of progressive labour laws affirmative action and equity measures become a necessity.

As early as 1993 the South African Chamber of Business (SACOB), the largest employer organisation in the country, openly propagated the necessity for affirmative action and equity by stating that the impending establishment of a democratic government in South Africa would necessitate an alignment of the business sector with the demographic composition making up the private sector and the parastatals (South African Chamber of Business 1993). This was an acceptance on the part of the official umbrella mouthpiece of the private sector in South Africa that besides the political correctness of affirmative action, its necessity could provide a positive impetus to the country's economy. Additionally, such a clear statement of intent could be seen as a safeguard for the future perpetuation of the free enterprise system, given the prevailing anxiety and suspicion that the majority of Africans did not trust the capitalist system. It needs to be said that affirmative action and upward mobility amongst the previously disadvantaged sections of the population, coupled with creation of sustainable jobs, would ultimately lead to a serious expansion of the Black consumer market.

The inevitability of a thorough implementation of affirmative action and equity was also necessitated by the demographic decline of the White population. There were the increasing immigration patterns of this group which led to the need to recruit extensively within Black groups so that the human resources revitalisation was on track. This could obviously not occur without the upgrading of educational

standards, training intensification, developmental initiatives and creation of employment opportunities.

### **3.4 Affirmative Action in South Africa**

Affirmative action policies were introduced in South Africa because of historical, social and economic prerogatives, the most important being that there was a serious lack of human development and a need for a transformation programme that would create the necessary conditions for the building of a new, united, non-racist and non-sexist society, where the imbalances of the past would be eradicated. South Africa is thus faced with the challenge of a fundamental transformation from apartheid colonialism to a nation where the basic needs of the majority of the population would be fulfilled. Therefore, the affirmative action policies were introduced as an integral part of a broader strategy leading to organisational and societal restructuring and development. There are differing degrees of acceptance amongst South Africans who have linked affirmative action to a broader social transformation, while others have perceived it in its narrower American meaning.

Affirmative action in the South African context needs to be seen as an uninterrupted process, targeting the deep-rooted socio-economic disadvantages of the majority. This is more pertinent as far as gender equity is concerned. It is well known that the statistically high level participation of women in the labour force disguises the undoubted fact that they are employed mostly in menial and badly paid jobs. This creates a serious economic disadvantage for hundreds of thousands of families throughout the country as in many instances employed women are the sole breadwinners of their extended families. Hence opportunities created by affirmative action and equity for semi-skilled, skilled and better paid jobs will contribute to growth and development both at the economic and societal levels.

Black people can generally look forward to access to more opportunities, job creation growth and development. The serious managerial skill shortages in the South African economy cannot be met only from the ranks of the disadvantaged people. The key economic challenge facing the country's private and public sectors is for them to become globally competitive. This spirit is encapsulated in the new

economic blueprint of the ANC-led Government of National Unity: the Growth Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) programme. Due to poor education and other forms of deprivation that have prevented Black people from full and motivated participation in the economy, excellence and competitiveness cannot be achieved without affirmative action and equity measures, and therefore the social and economic gaps will still be intact. For this legacy to be reversed, a well-planned and thoroughly implemented affirmative action policy is needed as an increasingly important aspect of social policy in the public and private sectors. In other words, affirmative action encapsulates the need to address the obstacles to non-racialism in South Africa at all levels, the workplace, the workforce, the economy and society in general. Therefore, there is a dire need to apply affirmative action policy in South Africa.

This need was identified very early by the leading labour federation in the country, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), which was manifested in a point by point affirmative action proposal which were thoroughly integrated in a broader human resources policy advocated by the umbrella organisation. The most important elements of this policy were:

- An integrated, certificated education and training system linked to economic planning and restructuring. This meant that according to the federation the proposed education and training system could only be seen and analysed in conjunction with the levels of productive capacity in the country and the process of development and restructuring.
- Paid education and training leave.
- Retraining for retrenched or unemployed workers.
- Linking of training with grading, wages and salaries.
- Training as an integral part of career path.
- Recognition of the acquired skills.
- Strong emphasis on Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) amongst workers as well as communities.
- The vital need for the training, proper childcare, and other services and facilities for women workers.

- The need to pay women equal wages for work and skills of equal value (Kraak 1992; Wolpe and Underhalter 1990; Wolpe 1991; Wolpe 1992).

The full circle of discussions, debates, and disagreement at both theoretical and practical levels related to affirmative action and equity found its realisation in the South African Constitution, which was approved by the Constitutional Court of the country on the 4<sup>th</sup> of December 1996 and took effect on the 4<sup>th</sup> of February 1997. As the supreme law of South Africa and because of its historical significance vis-a-vis the foundation of the phenomenon, the constitution will be examined in this section instead of in chapter five, which analyses the legislation affecting employment and gender equity. In other words this supreme legal document constitutes the legal basis upon which all subsequent laws are realised, and no law can supersede it.

The South African Constitution guarantees the fundamental rights of equality, equal and full enjoyment of all human rights and freedoms. Thus Section 8 (Sub-section 3a) of the document describes Affirmative Action as:

**“measures designed to achieve the adequate protection and advancement of persons, groups and categories of persons disadvantaged by unfair discrimination, in order to enable their full enjoyment of all rights and freedoms”.**

The constitution (Section 23) states that every person shall have the right to free and fair labour relations practice, and every person shall have the right to strike on condition that the right of the employer to lock out employees under certain circumstances is also recognised. Inevitably the implementation of such conditions underlying labour relations will have serious effects in the future landscape of human resources development and growth. This is because there are several fundamental aims in the constitution in terms of affirmative action and equity. They are:

- The healing of the historical social and economic divisions and the creation of a society based on democratic values, social justice and equal rights for all.

- The promotion of the achievement of equality through legislative and other measures, established to protect and advance persons or groups of persons who are historically disadvantaged and discriminated against.
- The elimination of unfair direct or indirect discrimination against any person or group of persons on the grounds of race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, religion, social origin, sexual orientation, age, disability, conscience, culture, language or birth. This is unless it is established that the discrimination is fair.

Despite these noble intentions enshrined in the country's constitution, one needs to understand that the fundamental repercussions that evolve in the workplace in terms of human resources development, need to be seen in the context of the differing educational and training capacities of the country's labour force, especially the African population. Inevitably, the lack of qualifications, skills and learning experiences would prevent large numbers of people, especially amongst the disadvantaged, from progressing socially, professionally and financially, given the structural constraints of the past. In this context, affirmative action and equity measures should be seen as a temporary intervention healing the social and economic wounds of the past through the achievement of equal employment opportunities to disadvantaged persons, without lowering standards and without hindering the career expectations of current employees of other groups who are competent in the performance of their duties.

### **3.5 The Case against Affirmative Action**

Inevitably issues and realities such as Affirmative Action and equity have been bones of contention between proponents of affirmative action and those against it, precisely because one cannot eliminate the existing societal contradictions affected through a history of inequalities inherent in South Africa for centuries (Terreblanche 2002). This means that the antagonisms created throughout centuries of exploitation need to be eliminated. It is obvious that those who have benefited historically through better education, the acquisition of privileges and wealth as well as employment opportunities perceive Affirmative Action and equity as a threat.

Additionally one cannot dispute the fact that the previously advantaged section of the population (mainly Whites) would argue that affirmative action and equity would ultimately harm its younger generations, who through no fault of their own, would suffer the consequences of their parents' historical past. They are seen as beneficiaries of past practices and as such considered to be "non-beneficiaries" of present employment policies, as they do not form a part of the "designated groups".

In its content and appearance affirmative action and equity policies and implementation are indeed reverse discrimination at several levels of societal interaction. It has been argued that policies which reverse past legislation and practices cannot create an equitable society and cannot dismantle discrimination (Thomas 1991). However the counter argument is that affirmative action and equity need to be seen firstly, as a temporary measure that will give the opportunity to Blacks in general and Africans in particular to reach the professional levels achieved by their white counterparts through a legislative and business cycle process. Simultaneously, affirmative action and equity will ultimately provide an extended pool of human resources capital that is urgently needed in South Africa.

However, such a position regarding reverse discrimination has been challenged. It is argued that affirmative action and equity in terms of race or gender is not necessarily discriminatory. On the contrary it is indeed discriminatory not to practice such measures, as historically Blacks and women have been denied development and personal growth as well as advanced business opportunities. Such a process creates an additional professional and human resources hurdle *en route* to equity and transformation in a variety of societal levels and institutions (Human 1992 cited in Mantzaris 1993a; Mantzaris 1993b; Social Policy Programme Files 1996).

Affirmative Action and equity, especially in terms of gender, have been perceived as reinforcing a social stereotype of Blacks and women as being inferior, because they are in need of assistance in order to succeed in their careers (Social Policy Programme 1997). Such an argument, however, is incorrect as far as affirmative action and equity are concerned, as their salient features are not to aid Blacks and women, but to provide them with the opportunity to succeed. The previous regime

did not open the doors of advancement and the opportunity for beneficiaries to prove their worth in institutions or the private sector. The reality of such attitudes is that affirmative action and equity ultimately place beneficiaries under serious pressure to prove their calibre and competence so that the negative stereotypes are not perpetuated. Affirmative action and equity should ultimately lead to the creation of an environment where beneficiaries excel and the doubts on their abilities and qualifications do not permeate the business environment. The pressure on these individuals to destroy their own self-doubt on what has been called “tokenism” is immense and presupposes a determined effort for excellence and high performance levels.

The question of the “merit principle” is synonymous with the assertion of “lowering of standards”, and hence capacity building for the disadvantaged communities, both within institutions in civil society as well as the state and private sectors is of crucial importance. This reality has been expressed at provincial, local and national levels (KwaZulu Natal Budget Votes 2002: KwaZulu Natal Budget Votes 2003-2004: Ethekewini Municipality 2003). The President of South Africa had the following to say in relation to the intertwined nature of affirmative action, equity and capacity building as integral parts of economic and social transformation:

**“We have a huge capacity problem in South Africa and I think it is worse elsewhere in Africa” (Mbeki 2003).**

When “qualified” people are glossed over in appointments or promotions (i.e. in cases where the “merit system” is not followed), the result is “lowering of standards” and subsequent inefficiency both at organisational and societal level. This amounts to an assumption that members of the designated groups are basically unqualified and that appointing Blacks and women leads to low quality in service, lost production, and thus stagnation of development within organisations, institutions and the economy in general.

The opposing view is that a new society born out of the ashes of the old **redefines standards** (Mantzaris 1993a). This means that the standards of the past legacies are outdated and seriously flawed, as historically both state institutions and the private

sector were the domains of White male supremacy. Hence access to such positions was easy for this particular social category of people. The re-definition of acceptable standards is associated with new standards of qualifications that would measure a prospective applicant's capacity, capability and future potential.

A new democracy will bring to the fore different sets of norms, values and patterns that will be an integral part of affirmative action and equity. Employers in the private sector, institutions of the state and civil society will be encouraged to implement affirmative action and equity measures which will lead to the re-evaluation of qualification standards. This does not mean the advancement of under-qualified persons, but the creation of processes that will encourage those who have been historically denied access to qualifications to have the opportunities to become qualified, and those who have qualifications but were overlooked because of past discriminatory practices, to be given the opportunities they deserve (Mandela, quoted in Mantzaris 1993b).

Fraudez (1994:187-188) cites the criticism levelled at Black women as the primary designated group benefiting from affirmative action. The criticism sees this social category as a whole group taking advantage of such processes. In fact, affirmative action and equity target this group because of their superior educational and mental capabilities, while large sections of the same group receive no benefits from the affirmative action and equity. Such a process is, in fact, both counter-productive and shallow, as it denies opportunities for further education and training to large numbers of the mainly disadvantaged members of designated groups. This leads to an exacerbation of existing inequalities amongst disadvantaged groups. In fact such arguments could be seen as an integral part of the existing realities within developed industrial societies such as the USA. However, South Africa would be seen as an exception if equity and affirmative action measures are implemented, because Black women are a distinct majority in the country.

This process needs to be related to the concept and practical realities of equal opportunities in all segments of the market. Equal employment opportunity can be seen as a short to medium term strategy that is associated with the removal of all barriers and obstacles in the occupational arena. It would provide the future

beneficiaries with a fair chance to compete on an equal footing with the advantaged section of the population (in the case of South Africa, the Whites). In such a process the historical hurdles are removed, but not redressed. Equal opportunities is a “safe option” for transitional societies, as it is a practice that is non discriminatory, and easily implemented. However, it does not redress the existing educational gap and this practice does not allow historically disadvantaged groups to compete on an equal footing with other groups (Social Policy Programme 1998).

One of the most misunderstood dynamics of equal opportunities is the perceived or real difference between “quota” and “target”. Quota has been described as an absolute minimum, usually related to some notion of proportion of the existing or potential workforce within an establishment. Target, on the other hand, is seen as a mere guideline related to proportion. These definitions have been empirically verified by international research undertaken in societies where affirmative action and equity have been implemented (Social Policy Programme 1998). Several theorists of affirmative action, equity and equal opportunities have identified three models associated with such processes:

- The first assumes that equal opportunity is an equal chance where competing individuals have similar possibilities and opportunities in their competitive endeavours. It is, however, assumed that discrimination will take place at some point.
- The second assumes that equal opportunity equates to equal access. Such a process does not take into account the historical or present realities of discrimination that have direct or indirect effects on the lives of disadvantaged groups, especially in cases where they do not have access to equal educational and employment opportunities.
- The third assumes that equal opportunity is an equal share, which means that access and representation are guaranteed. This process presupposes recognition of the history of the designated groups which safeguards equal share of opportunities in the workplace (Social Policy Programme 1998; Mantzaris 1993b).

Equal opportunities can be described as a strategy and a well-planned programme of action, which tends to differ significantly in the public service and the private sector. They are associated, not only with changes in the existing legislative framework of a specific country, but also with changes in the workforce due to the adoption of rules and procedures, which in turn call for change and diversity management that combat the injustices of the past and create a completely new culture in the workplace.

Affirmative action is basically an instrument of national reconstruction and transformation, or a measure undertaken and designed to eliminate or initially reduce existing inequalities of past discrimination. Affirmative action in South Africa is viewed as an instrument of reconstruction and not just a superficial adaptation of the system. In other words, affirmative action is a labour market policy aimed at redressing past social and economic imbalances that have been historically the direct result of discrimination against Black people (Thomas 1991; Eide 1992; Social Policy Programme 1997).

Employment equity, on the other hand, can be seen as a labour market policy aimed at preventing future discrimination both in the public and the private sectors as well as other societal institutions at large. It is aimed at the transformation of the workplace at all levels, especially middle and higher management. This process creates a continuous growth of human resources with an underlying ethos of equity for the disadvantaged sections of the population. In the short and medium terms, employment equity is an integral part of the strategy and culture of organisations in all sectors. It is a process that, when implemented in a well-planned manner, can lead to the eradication of unfair discrimination in employment, work practices and retrenchment. It is based on measures that encourage employees to be an integral part of organisational transformation aimed at ultimately removing unjustified barriers to employment, through the acceleration of training, promotion and advancement of disadvantaged groups.

The term “employment equity” became an integral part of sociological and social policy analysis through the writings of Judge Rosalie Abella in her seminal Royal Commission Report on Discrimination, which dealt extensively with the

employment of women, ethnic minorities, aboriginals and persons with disabilities in Canada in 1994. Employment equity is generally considered diversity change management at the organisational level, designed to prevent and remedy past and existing discrimination in the workplace. This process is undertaken through the identification and ultimate removal of job barriers associated with the practices and culture within an organisation. In this process there is an improvement of the numerical representation and the occupational advancement of designated groups. Opportunities are thus created through fair recruitment practices, selection procedures and the creation of a supportive organisational culture (Eide 1992; Wingrove 1995).

In this process the main emphasis falls on the desegregation of the workplace. The human rights of all employees are recognised, including the right to form and join employee associations such as trade unions, and the right to the promotion of equality for employees belonging to all social and race groups. In such social and public policy measures there is an inevitable requirement, especially in a country such as South Africa, that the promotion of equal opportunity, equity and affirmative action be the major stepping stones in the effort to eliminate the injustices of the past and promote the advancement of Black people, women and the disabled. In this process the end result (the “product” as it is known in recent transformation literature) is important. Equally important are the processes that are followed in the efforts to turn an apartheid driven economy into a solid competitive player, based on a changed and transformed workforce that is skilled, educated and productive. Disparities in employment based on the historical legacies of colonialism and apartheid will inevitably perpetuate economic and social contradictions that could lead to societal upheavals and tensions.

### **3.6 The Case for Affirmative Action**

Thomas, (1991:67) argues that affirmative action policy can be viewed as a proactive development tool aimed at overcoming constraints and more effectively mobilising latent resources. Affirmative action in employment guidelines can be seen as a means of overcoming impediments to equal employment opportunity rather than as a means of advancing the interests of some groups at the expense of

others. Affirmative action is envisaged as a process planned and implemented with a view to eliminating or initially remedying discrimination and not necessarily as a process whereby a new form of discrimination or reverse racism replaces older forms of discrimination (Thomas 1991:45).

The guidelines of the Equal Opportunity Commission in the United States of America as well as a series of Commissions set by the Australian Government through the years, have described affirmative action as a means of overcoming the effects of past or current barriers to equal employment. This is achieved through the planning and implementation of a broad variety of activities relating to selection and recruitment; human resource development; continuous training; and the acceleration of equitable promotion practices (Social Policy Programme 1997).

A shared feature of most affirmative action programmes is that they seek to increase the opportunity of formerly excluded groups without reference to tokenism (in other words the recruitment and development of unqualified persons). Affirmative action programmes and policies have been described as a temporary intervention, which will cease as soon as equal employment opportunities have been attained (Feagin 1978; Harish 1981).

It has been asserted that affirmative action policy in South Africa cannot be based on the principles and implementation practices of the American model because in the U.S. it was a minority that negotiated the resultant changes in legislation and implementation of affirmative action. The process was guided by the majority, which held the reigns of political and legislative powers. On the contrary, in South Africa, the majority was historically disenfranchised and the minority set the laws, procedures and rules. Following the political changes of the 1990 De Klerk seminal reforms that culminated in the first democratic elections in 1994, the political representatives of the majority of the population hold political and legislative power (Wingrove 1995:78).

In this context equal employment opportunity needs to be seen as the point where the affirmative action process has eliminated disparities between employees. At this point all employees have been brought to a level where they can compete equally

and are given equal opportunity to employment and recruitment. In this sense the equal opportunity process is a process whereby an organisation embarks in an effort to develop an action plan that will establish equal achievement opportunities for all its employees (Wingrove 1995:39).

There is a shade of opinion that believes that black organisations that favour affirmative action policies do not have sufficient reasons to support such initiatives. The reason is: only 21% of the total assets in the private sector are owned by blacks, while over 90% of top managerial positions are held by whites (Business Map 2000). It is thus imperative that in a society that has committed itself to equality and transformation, affirmative action policy needs to change these realities, which are rooted in the inequalities created and perpetuated by the legacy of apartheid (Mantzaris 1993a; Mantzaris 1993b; Maphai 1992).

The above quoted percentages have not changed significantly since 1989 despite the significant changes that have taken place in the political landscape of the country since 1994. It is for these reasons that both private and public sectors in the international community will continue to insist on business transactions being conducted only through organisations that are seen to be actively remedying or eradicating past injustices through a vigorous affirmative action policy (Qunta 1995:45).

Affirmative action is considered by supporters to be a strategy that is destined to develop new skills for the rejuvenation and renewal of economy and society, with special emphasis on the changes in the workplace. In the quest for a robust economy that is internationally competitive, companies and public institutions need to position themselves in such a way that they will be able to deal both speedily and comprehensibly with affirmative action demands. Inevitably solid and comprehensive human resources development is an integral part of the future growth and development in South Africa at all levels of both the private and state sectors. The processes associated with affirmative action and equity will create the necessary environment of diversity and change. All employees will be encouraged to accept and respect economic and societal harmony in South Africa, and thus become aware of the diverse qualities that can be applied to the advantage of the

whole community (Boulle 1986:96). Similarly, Kress (1990:123) argues that women and the disabled are accepted, together with Black people, as legitimate beneficiaries of affirmative action and equity measures.

In the United State of America, affirmative action has been on the political, legislative and practical arenas for over 35 years, but the debate continues regarding the merits and demerits of the phenomenon. Thus analyses and examination of the different perspectives regarding the issues associated with it are always useful. This is particularly true as regards South Africa, because of the peculiar and brutal nature of colonialism and apartheid. While it is widely accepted that there have been historic inequalities in our country, the specific ways in which these have affected the lives of Africans cannot be depicted only in the historical, anthropological or sociological treatise of inhumanity and degradation. The majority in our country consist of the African people and they need to be seen as equipped for high offices as were their white counterparts.

Utilising sociological and historical literature Simon (1986:23) has examined the painful experiences of African American executives in white corporate American companies. Simon terms the use of discriminatory merit, “false meritocracy”, and he shows how this “false meritocracy” not only perpetuated severe limitations to African-American entry into corporate firms, but also slowed down their advancement in such business environments, despite affirmative action. These comparative perspectives are instrumental in identifying key issues that will be a pertinent feature of future developments in South Africa.

The Employment Equity Bill of 1998, which will be explored more fully in chapter five of this thesis, set in motion the implementation of affirmative action and equity. This contrasts with the previous labour market policies of the apartheid regime, which were characterised by oppression, exploitation and unfair discrimination against employees of colour. The Bill set the legal measures, rules, regulations and realities as well as the social, employment and economic benchmarks for change and transformation in the South African economy and society.

Maphai's exploration of affirmative action and equity defines these priorities as an attempt by the new state apparatus to redress historical gender and racial inequalities (Maphai 1992). He wrote that affirmative action is based on two fundamental tenets:

- Fair equality of opportunity, and
- Preferential hiring.

The former places blacks in a position that merits appointment. The latter is adopted in cases where equal opportunity has proved inadequate. The meaningful implementation of affirmative action requires a national commitment to a policy of effective equal opportunity and to measures aimed at facilitating and supporting the participation of previously disadvantaged groups at all levels of public and private enterprises. South Africa, at the time of Maphai's writings, was in transition from apartheid to a non-racial, non-sexist democracy. This was a time when the CODESA talks had collapsed and the tragedies of the massacres of Boipatong and Bisho were still fresh in the minds of the whole nation (Maphai 1992: 87).

Affirmative action has been seen as a business and political inevitability in South Africa, both in the workplace and beyond. This is the view of business leaders, politicians and academics. Hundreds of conferences, seminars, training sessions and workshops have been organised on the topic both before and after the passing of the relevant legislative frameworks. The African National Congress, the party that became the first democratic government of National Unity, played a major role in the debate and implementation of the affirmative action process. Historically, the release of the ANC Policy Guidelines for a Democratic South Africa has highlighted the need for the private sector, in particular, to bring forward viable options of which affirmative action and equity are integral parts (Innes 1993:16).

For a society such as South Africa, where the majority of the African people are poor and unemployed, a comprehensive strategy is essential for sustainable growth, development and progress. Affirmative action cannot exclude the disadvantaged and the poor. It is primarily these masses that need to be empowered through the creation of structures and mechanisms that will enable them to be involved in

decisions affecting their lives and through increased access to economic resources and income generating activities (Innes 1993:21). This group of people (estimated by Statistics South Africa and economic and political analyst S. Terreblanche to be 15 million) have faced even more extreme levels of poverty since 1994. This is despite the fact that the democratic government spends more on social grants and other such poverty reducing initiatives (Terreblanche 2003) than its predecessors.

It has been assumed that the private sector has a very important role to play through business and/or professional associations. There have been calls throughout the echelons of business and political leadership for the support of black advancement through the promotion of the previously disadvantaged. It has been said that for the process of transformation to become a reality, initiatives and mechanisms for the promotion and advancement of African people need to be in place. It is widely accepted that the process of black advancement will not take place overnight, but is an inevitable process forward.

Comparative affirmative action and equity studies have shown almost conclusively that human resources development is crucial to sustainable economic growth, development, progress and prosperity (Mantzaris 1993a). In this sense, human resources development in South Africa needs to include all her people. The process of human resource development is inextricably intertwined with affirmative action and equity. The increased supply of high-level, skilled and educated person-power benefits both the private and the public sectors by removing a bottleneck to future development, growth and prosperity (Kress 1990; Thomas 1991; Innes1993).

The present research seeks to establish whether and how affirmative action with specific emphasis on gender equity is being implemented in the public sector by means of a case study. There are several crucial issues around affirmative action policy and gender equity in South Africa, especially in a sensitive sector such as post- secondary education. Comparative research findings that have been examined in the context of this thesis indicate that in the pre-1994 period, most organisations felt that affirmative action should benefit all employees. Affirmative action is still a myth, as blacks experience an array of serious problems in the workplace, in most cases at the lower and middle ranks of employment. As it will become apparent in

the course of the thesis, the situation is even more serious in the case of women in the tertiary education institutions. Blacks, and especially Africans, as well as women are still less advantaged by affirmative action policy in the public sector.

The issue of targets is a serious problem in the workplace in terms of affirmative action and gender equity. The question of setting targets creates strong reactions and attitudes. Those supporting affirmative action and gender equity policies argue that this is the only route to progress and development because targets measure what has been achieved. Those opposing such measures believe that adopting a quota system undermines the objectives of the equity and progress as focus falls on quantity rather than quality. Such a process leads to the ultimate failure of both individuals and organisations at large (Seligman 1983:43). There are many who are dissatisfied with quota or target systems in the equity process. It needs to be stressed, however, that affirmative action and equity is not only about meeting or setting quotas or targets, it is a process in which intertwined and carefully planned steps need to be undertaken and followed. In short this is a well-thought and carefully implemented approach.

The question of standards is a vital issue for debate on affirmative action policy and equity, both internationally but more specifically in South Africa. This is due to the historical and present realities as outlined above. A common concern over the years has been the question of whether or not performance standards will drop following the employment of previously disadvantaged employees. However, such a debate cannot even start without a proper understanding of the legacies of history. It has been strongly argued that a lowering of standards is more or less a certainty because of the historical gaps in education, training and development between the advantaged middle and lower classes and the disadvantaged. Given this undoubted reality it is believed that the training and development of the previously disadvantaged groups would inevitably be a hurdle in the process for all sectors of the economy, including the public sector (Mantzaris 1993a; Mantzaris 1993b).

The “lowering of standards” debate needs to be assessed in its proper perspective. The whole process revolves around the distinction between work and performance standards. Work standards have been described as a major challenge for

productivity that has to be attained. Performance standards have been described as a way of rating the employee's performance or achievements. It has been said that work standards need to be clearly defined, while performance standards may have to drop in the short term. However, it has been stipulated that no compromise in the work or output standards would be accepted. For an economy to be continually in the path of growth and development as well as internationally competitive there cannot be a question of the lowering of standards; excellence is a vital necessity (Conrad 1988:86). Management qualities are also vital in the question of standards, as the question is posed as to who qualifies to be in the top echelons of a company, and what are their relations with employee organisations, including trade unions.

At present there is a far greater pressure for the management structures to become more open, transparent and accountable to the workforce and their clientele. In some instances employees and their organisations have an increased influence in recruitment, development and promotions of equity candidates, through various structures in the workplace. This means that employees and their organisations have assumed a watchdog role in the process of affirmative action and equity. In this sense, employees and their organisations are able to oversee the correctness, transparency and accountability of various norms and procedures associated with recruitment, employee movement and promotions. Such realities have the potential to create friction within a company or the public sector as the conflicting interests of the parties become apparent in the process.

In the case of South Africa's approach to affirmative action and equity, equality in the workplace is promoted both through the elimination of unfair discrimination and the implementation of affirmative action. The relevant laws of the country, especially the Employment Equity Act, stipulate that the company is not required to appoint or promote employees who are not suitably qualified. This puts the various debates regarding standards and quotas in the proper perspective. However, this has not stopped the debate amongst various academics, researchers, human resources practitioners or the general public. Debate on such issues in a democratic society that aspires to become internationally competitive, while simultaneously building a solid nation is healthy and necessary.

Glazer (1975), a sociologist of note, was one of the most notable proponents of such a debate in the United States of America, as he was vehemently opposed to what he called “positive discrimination”. He was of the opinion that affirmative action and its practical implementation within American society has meant that the senior political and legal leadership had betrayed the most important principle of a liberal democracy: the individual’s interests and welfare as the ultimate test of a “good society”. His was a direct and scathing attack on the 1964 Civil Rights Act that introduced social and legislative measures such as affirmative action and favourable treatment of historically disadvantaged groups in terms of employment, education and housing. It was hoped that such steps would reverse historical inequalities and remedy the discriminatory practices of the past. He wrote that the benefits of the affirmative action were for individuals because of their race, colour and national origin. However, Glazer and his contemporaries basically ignore a very important historical fact, that these steps were the effects of a gallant and relentless civil rights campaign throughout America led by well-known activists such as Martin Luther King, A. Young and Jesse Jackson. This means that these measures and their subsequent implementation were not “manna from heaven”, but the result of protracted social and political struggles that shaped new opinions and debates.

Theories and practical considerations dictate that a transitional society that aspires to plural democracy, non-racism and non-sexism, needs to develop the mechanisms that will lead to the ultimate removal of all forms of discrimination in terms of employment procedures, recruitment, advancement and promotion. However, in South Africa the short-term consequences of such a practice would be the entrenchment of the existing status quo. In a country such as ours, given the historical legacies of the past, such a reality would be politically, economically and socially disastrous. Hence the passing of legislation that facilitates affirmative action and equity was absolutely necessary. The country’s democratic constitution, stipulates clearly that discrimination in the workplace on the grounds of race, sex and disability is illegal. Affirmative action and equity, on the other hand, are an open call to management of companies or institutions to first identify the impediments to the employment for various categories of people, especially those who have been historically disadvantaged.

In a nutshell the main aim and objective of affirmative action and equity policies is the establishment of mechanisms that will ultimately allow individuals to develop their educational potential and economic capabilities. This will lead to the creation of job opportunities and societal advancement. In the South African context, such policies underlie a conscious effort to create opportunities for 'Blacks' to gain education, training and capacity in the workplace. Such a process will ultimately create the circumstances that will lead to development and growth, both for the individuals concerned as well as the companies and institutions associated with them. It can be understood, thus, that this is a two way process forward, and the collaboration, co-operation and co-ordination of all parties concerned is of paramount importance.

It has been said that the main aim of establishing a strategy for affirmative action was basically to eliminate the hurdles associated with 'black advancement'. This process did not provide a preferential treatment for 'blacks'. In fact, it cleared away the racial obstacles inherited from the past so that the disadvantaged groups would be able to utilise their own skills and initiative in order to advance in the workplace and beyond (Helen 1993).

It has been widely debated and accepted that very few people in South Africa can be seen as neutral in relation to affirmative action and equity policies. This is understandable as this is an emotive political, social and moral issue. Hence a careful consideration of all aspects of the legislative and public policy debates is imperative. The differences in perceptions, attitudes and opinions regarding the fundamental realities and characteristics of such measures are of importance for the future human resource requirement of the country (IDASA 1995).

One of the strongest proponents of affirmative action and equity, asserts that the criticism against preferential support to enable blacks overcome the disadvantages of the past is based on false assumptions and thus it become an impediment to transformation (Maphai 1992:53). Social scientists such as Wolpe (1988) and Davies (1979) have shown conclusively in their works that White males took full advantage of the existing laws during the colonial and apartheid eras in order to secure, maintain and perpetuate the advantages they accumulated in the process of

discrimination of other social categories during the period. This was obviously an application of affirmative action of a different kind, where only one racial category benefited.

Affirmative Action policy is a social and public policy that has been defined in international literature as a "proactive conscious effort to address disadvantages of the past and to increase the representation of marginalised groups of the population in leading position in the society" (Krislov 1986:68). Affirmative action policy, in other words, is implemented through carefully planned and executed corrective action that would ultimately lead a particular society into becoming more demographically representative at all levels. In this uninterrupted process, employers would be requested to set quotas, time frames and benchmarks that would guide the process. Internationally, this process assumes the form of preferential hiring of employees belonging to disadvantaged groups or is associated with intensive management development and training courses for black and other marginalised groups ((Feagin 1978; Eide 1992). In such processes there is acceleration of the professional and social upward mobility of these individuals.

The democratisation and prospective transformation of South African society have led to a great deal of speculation about affirmative action and employment equity. The debates, related to the nature of the existing legislation, have created confusion basically because of the ignorance regarding the importance of affirmative action and equity. Some of them do not take into account the historical and present particularities of South Africa, such as the existing inequalities in the workplace that are still prevalent today.

In this instance, one needs to heed the basic tenets of the Guidelines of the Equal Opportunity Commission in the United State of America. Affirmative action, in these guidelines, is described as a means of overcoming the effects of past or current barriers to equal employment opportunity. In the process of its implementation affirmative action is a combination of compliance with the law and the innovative application of the policy (Thomas 1991:76). In such a process there will be an inevitable increase in the opportunities afforded to formerly excluded groups without succumbing to tokenism. One of the most illuminating exponents of

such theories (Blumrosen 1985:86) has described affirmative action programmes as temporary interventions, which will cease as soon as equal employment opportunity has materialised.

The maximisation of the potential of all employees and the proactive addressing of the disadvantaged sections of the workforce demands a set of affirmative action rules and procedures that will advance the implementation of carefully planned and strategically devised steps. Such processes are not planned or implemented to create barriers to the employment prospects of people who are not from the designated group. They need to be based on merit and competency, so they are not seen as discrimination in reverse, but as a serious attempt to redress historical, social and economic imbalances. In such a process the ultimate objective is the levelling of the playing fields for all players to participate equally. It has been argued that affirmative action and equity would ultimately fail if they turn into window dressing and if it is based on the assumption that recruiting, employing and developing blacks is only an issue of social responsibility and not a serious investment in the future of the firm or institution (Charlton 1994:66).

Thorough evaluations and assessment of the company or institution is a necessity if affirmative action is to succeed. This could be performed through internal functions or through the services of outside agencies. Such assessment is part of “diversity” management and leads to the identification of development and training needs. The subsequent training needs to take a top-down approach and ultimately incorporate all sectors of the organisation. Research has indicated that it can be a daunting and expensive effort, but it is possibly the only way to reap long-term rewards. The ultimate achievement in the undertaking of such an exercise is the removal of all forms of formal and informal discrimination in the workplace and the elimination of all obstacles to opportunities for the previously disadvantaged. Inevitably, such a process presents a challenge to change of behaviour and attitudes of management. As it has been shown such a painstaking process can be described as a real challenge to South Africa as large segments of the population have been victims of the ideological and political consequences of colonial and apartheid policies over a significant historical period (Charlton 1994: 64).

The ideological and political foundations of apartheid were based on the belief of creating “racial identities” where people were not seen as individuals but as members of different race and ethnic groups. Racial identities and racism were deeply rooted in the mindset of millions of South Africans. In this historical and social context, it is very important to understand such constructions of reality in order to establish steps and strategies that would ultimately promote an environment where equal opportunities will flourish. The promulgation of laws that lead to the creation of formal equality of opportunity is of importance, but channels and mechanisms need to be created in order to tackle the hidden and informal forms of discrimination that have strong roots in the culture and organisational structures of institutions.

It has been stressed that affirmative action in corporate South Africa is considered synonymous with the employment of numerical quotas of black men and women (especially Africans) in middle and senior management positions. Such appointments are often based upon proposed formulas (Thomas 1995:34). In such cases affirmative action and equity policies are considered short-term strategies that are designed and implemented in order to open the corporate doors for previously disadvantaged people. It needs to be said that affirmative action and equity are essentially attempts to correct historical, social and economic imbalances and thus create new opportunities for the designated groups. Internationally, affirmative action policy has never been regarded as an indefinite process (Kennedy 1993:39)

Affirmative action and equity are not policies designed to provide compensation to individuals or groups of people, but they need to be planned and implemented in order to eliminate the existing disparities in opportunities and wealth distribution. This will ultimately lead to the creation of equal opportunities for everyone (Theo 1995:53). Affirmative action and equity need to be seen as an uninterrupted process that leads to substantial changes in any organisation's value and normative systems. It is understood, then, that such a process would have various degrees of impact on every employee in the institution, inevitably requiring everyone to re-assess their own values and approach towards these necessary changes.

One of the most knowledgeable and penetrating analysts in the sphere of workplace changes has commented that because of the fact that affirmative action and equity are integral components of human resources development, several organisations have already attempted to integrate their relevant proposals and implementation plans into their human resources policies since the early 1990's (Innes 1993:36). In the process it became obvious that a substantial number of such companies have implemented such policies for opportunistic reasons, while others genuinely believed that the adoption of such initiatives could enhance their credibility, profitability and future expansion and development.

Affirmative action policy is seen as a short term, immediate strategy that is a positive step forward in the long road to social transformation. Blumrosen (1985:25) has commented that it would be a serious mistake to denounce affirmative action and equity as failures in countries that have accepted them as serious matters of policy implementation.

It has been pointed out that affirmative action programmes undertaken by companies mainly stress individual empowerment. On the other hand, it is well known that unions stress the need for collective empowerment of workers that would result in positive effects on employees as a group, rather than individuals (Alperson 1993:136). This is a serious point of debate amongst researchers, employers and employees. Given the activities and strength of trade unions in South Africa, despite the continuous loss of formal employment, it becomes almost inevitable that affirmative action requirements at this level would be mostly on a collective/group basis as opposed to individual levels. On the other hand, however, the private sector, especially firms and companies see and implement affirmative action at individual rather than the collective level (Thomas 1995).

One of the most constant supporters of equity policies in South Africa, Professor V. Maphai, argues convincingly in favour of a narrow version of affirmative action policy that can be described as 'temporary preferential treatment' for women and blacks, especially Africans. He asserts that the wide meaning of affirmative action that includes reconstruction and the eradication of overall inequality and poverty should be rethought since these activities should in any case constitute "an ordinary

permanent feature” of a responsible government. However these are long-term objectives of the new social order in South Africa (Maphai 1992:45).

On the other hand, Zimbabwean intellectual, Mandaza (1993:48) who represents the Africanist stream of thought, believes that the term affirmative action was never used in other parts of Africa. On the contrary, Africanisation and indigenous remedies were the most important instruments through which newly independent states hoped to overcome the inequalities that resulted from the colonial historical legacies. This position underlies the general issue of “African solutions to African problems’ as exemplified by theorists of Africanism and Panafricanism. This is a debate that has not taken root in South African intellectual discourse, given the fact that affirmative action is seen as a “foreign” concept in the African milieu. An opposing view to that of Mandaza is that one needs to exercise serious caution given the apparent failures of Africanisation and indigenous remedies. The present state of Africa cannot be described as very encouraging and the implementation of “African solutions to African problems” can be seen as one of the root causes of such circumstances (World Bank 2000).

Young (1986:193) is critical of affirmative action debates in America, which she sees as an application of the distributive paradigm of justice. She defines racial and gender justice in terms of the distribution of privileged positions among groups and fails to bring into question issues of institutional organisation and decision-making power.

The General Secretary of the South African Communist Party, Blade Nzimande has asserted that the demand for justice in post apartheid society cannot be considered separately from the demand for equality since the question of justice is often understood as equality of treatment in relevant areas of social relations in the so-called era of the “national democratic revolution” (Nzimande 1996:51). In such a process affirmative action and equity cannot be separated from the realities of present and future justice in the workplace and in society at large.

Historically, struggles for emancipation, social justice and equality have centred around demands for equal rights. These include seminal eras in the history of humanity such as the struggle against slavery, political and ideological authoritarianism, economic exploitation, colonialism and neo-colonialism as well as racial oppression (Vlastos 1984:41; Schaar 1981; Wallerstein 1975). The anti-apartheid struggles were but one of the most significant moments in these struggles.

Both opponents and proponents of affirmative action invoke key criteria and principles, mainly associated with distributive justice. The idea that preferred jobs and the subsequent rewards have to be distributed according to qualifications, experience, talents and training in a social context featured by equality of opportunity has been widely accepted as a basis for justice in a global system. However, this takes cognisance of diverse particularities, strengths and inefficiencies that are inextricably linked to social and economic relations in the workforce (Taylor 1991:7).

### **3.7 Affirmative Action: Possibilities and Challenges for South Africa**

Blanchhard & Crosby, (1989:10) have aptly described affirmative action and equity programmes as a set of specific and result oriented procedures, norms and steps to which a contractor/employee commits to implement faithfully and comprehensibly. The aims and objectives of such procedures result ultimately in various effects that lead to equal employment opportunities. The key issue however, in the success of such steps is the careful and well-planned implementation of a given set of objectives.

No one can dispute the fact that in today's highly technological business environment, the way free enterprise and the public sector operate, has changed radically. Key management figures that make the ultimate strategic decisions, be that the Vice Chancellors of a University or Chairpersons of the Board of a listed company, have to rely on line managers and an array of employees for success.

This means that people are the institution's intellectual property and add value leading to either success or failure. As the market changes, the values, rules and norms of an institution need to change. Given the fact that the vast majority of consumers of commodities and services in South Africa are the indigenous population, it makes sense that the staff complement of companies, corporations and public institutions need to change. These are the demands of the market, and one cannot dispute such a reality. Affirmative action and equity are integral parts of such a reality.

Eide (1992:9) has asserted that affirmative action is synonymous with preference, through the implementation of special measures designed for certain groups. Members of designated groups secure advancement in their workplace thus attaining not only professional status, but also the advantages of economic and social mobility through the acquisition of material wealth and higher societal status.

In cases where affirmative action and equity do not take place in an institution, the relevant authorities in South Africa have planned concerted steps to rectify the situation. The key role player in such steps is the Department of Labour that has the responsibility of cracking down on employers who disobey the relevant legislation. It has become apparent that employers who do not follow the dictates of the existing laws would face the wrath of the authorities and in many instances there has been panic measures in their efforts to improve their racial demography.

One needs to carefully scrutinise the salient features of the Employment Equity Act in order to distinguish between affirmative action and unfair discrimination. The Employment Equity Act is to be supplemented by the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, (1998) (PEPUDA). This Act prohibits parties other than employers (i.e. recruitment and other agencies) from discriminating unfairly against job applicants.

Discrimination based on arbitrary or subjective criteria such as race, religion, gender, age, disability, ideological or political grounds etc is unacceptable (<http://www.polity.gov.za>).

The perceived or real lack of experience of an applicant can be considered unfair discrimination under certain circumstances. This is a reality that has negative consequences for large numbers of newly qualified, young and highly skilled prospective job applicants who enter the market seriously disadvantaged.

On the other hand, the Employment Equity Act, upon which affirmative action and equity are based, makes exceptions to its anti-discrimination provision. These include a provision that discrimination for purposes of affirmative action would not normally be unfair. This means that if an African woman or man or a disabled person is appointed in a particular job ahead of a better qualified White male this is not necessarily a discriminatory decision (<http://www.polity.gov.za/EEA>).

It has been widely accepted, even by opponents of affirmative action, that under the National Party regime the majority of the country's people were treated unequally and thus they were denied many economic opportunities for advancement (Caldwell 1990:11). However, it is believed that the democratically elected government labels people and treats them unequally through the process of affirmative action and equity. This, according to Caldwell, amounts to institutional racism. The affirmative action racists, he writes, are more ingenious. "They hoist high the pleasant sounding banner of 'non-racialism' while their actions are against it" (Caldwell 1990:13).

Maphai (1992:74), on the other hand, argues that while affirmative action and equity aim to raise the level of qualifications so that historically disadvantaged groups can compete on merit, it is in most cases difficult to delineate what counts as a qualification. For example, a White male with a Certificate of Accountancy (CA) and three years experience historically had a much better chance to compete with an African CA graduate without experience. Under present circumstances, and given the scarcity of African people with a CA, the process of affirmative action and equity would play an important role in the employment stakes.

Both authors, with their diverse views, ask penetrating questions about the challenges of affirmative action and equity which need to be the focus of serious theoretical and empirical investigation as the historical process unfolds. These

divergent views on the realities facing the South African society need to be seriously interrogated and advanced.

It has been said that affirmative action has not really benefited the most underprivileged sections of the black community, especially its majority African segment. On the contrary, its beneficiaries have been those who have advanced within companies and the public sector; those who have enjoyed better educational facilities and those in the middle classes (Hugo 1986:69). This points to the lack of opportunities amongst the children of the working class, the unemployed and the poorest of the poor. Given that the National Party policy was designed to deal with the advancement of minority racial or ethnic groups, with special focus on the White population, the new democratic government is faced with the challenge of implementing affirmative action as a historical and social factor in South Africa. Political power, without Black and especially African economic empowerment, will mean very little for the vast majority of the people in the country. In this process of growth, development and redistribution of resources, affirmative action and equity need to be seen as the tools of economic freedom and prosperity for the previously disadvantaged and exploited.

It has been stated that affirmative action in South Africa is an integral part of many well planned strategies designed for social and economic transformation and political emancipation. The country needs to build its future in economic initiatives that will be based on a wide community-driven process of growth and development. Affirmative action and equity are fundamental strategies to redress the historical imbalances in all spheres of human endeavours (Ohmar 1991:20-21).

### **3.8 Conclusion**

Affirmative action and equity policies in South Africa and internationally, have created a series of debates amongst practitioners, academics and researchers. This chapter attempted to enlighten the reader with some of the salient points of view, both at the empirical and theoretical levels. It has been established, thus, that affirmative action policies are seen as an element of positive discrimination directly related to efforts in rectifying the imbalances of the past. On the other hand, it is a

short-term objective, which can cease after a certain period of time. Affirmative action in South Africa is, or ought to be, designed and implemented in such a way as to ensure that the social and economic relations of the past cannot continue. All South Africans need to be united in a vision of effective equal opportunities without societal or economic distortions that will undermine productivity, growth, development and equality in the future. Affirmative action initiatives can only be successful if they are well planned and implemented and above all, compatible with the long-term economic growth and prosperity of the new democratic society.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **TRANSFORMATION FORUMS AND GENDER EQUITY IN SOUTH AFRICA**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter will explore the various attempts and documents, produced before and after the 1994 first democratic elections, relating to gender equity and affirmative action and which have direct bearing on the promulgation of legislation. This is considered necessary, as most of these documents were the result of research on previously un-researched fields relating to these two phenomena within the South African educational and social context. It is against these documents that the comparisons in the following pages of this dissertation are set.

#### **4.2 The Evolution of Transformation Forums**

The creation of the Union of Democratic University Staff Associations (hereinafter UDUSA) in 1990, by various groups of University employees aligned or sympathetic to the progressive political organisations in the country opened various opportunities for supporters of gender equity to take leadership of such a project.

Instrumental in this process was the establishment and mobilisation of what is historically known as “transformation forums”. These were established on a decision of the UDUSA Executive Committee to persuade its branches to enter into alliances with various stakeholders within the universities of the country, so that pressure could be exerted on managements to speed up the process of transformation of which gender equity was a fundamental ingredient. The key allies in these forums were the South African Students Congress (SASCO), the student wing of the newly unbanned African National Congress (ANC) and trade unions aligned to the largest workers federation in the country, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). The key trade

union in the alliance was the National Education and Health Workers Union (NEHAWU).

The most important effort of this alliance was to mobilise all constituencies, promote participation in mass action in order to engage the respective managements and councils and persuade them to move efficiently, transparently and speedily towards transformation of the tertiary educational sector. This was attempted in a historical period of uncertainty as the key liberation movements were entangled in negotiations with the National Party regime in CODESA, trying to establish a blueprint upon which the future of South Africa would be based.

The transformation forums played a significant role in this transitional period of the country's history, as it was obvious that reform was inevitable for the future of the institutions and education in general. It was inevitable that change was forthcoming in all aspects of the country's social fabric and the contestation on the shape of these changes was a reality.

The 1992 UDUSA Transformation Conference took a resolution calling for the creation of transformation forums in all universities in the country (UDUSA 1992). This conference can be seen as a milestone in the history of the organisation as it was there that the basic foundations were laid for UDUSA's adoption of the national policy underpinned by the four pillars of transformation in the higher education landscape in South Africa:

- Equity
- Democracy
- Effectiveness
- Development (UDUSA 1994a).

In fact, gender equity and affirmative action were the most elaborated upon proposals from the umbrella union. This was later supplemented by UDUSA's Policy Proposals document in 1994.

Gender equity then became *a sine qua non* of the implementation of change within the broader parameters of transformation in the educational arena. Obviously gender equity was never seen as an abstract concept, but rather as a galvanising point that could lead to policy implementation in the near future.

Initially there were eight universities that moved to create transformation forums (the universities of the North, Venda, NorthWest, Orange Free State, Port Elizabeth, Cape Town and Vista).

The forums were not welcomed by certain sections of the institutional organs of authority within these universities, especially the senates, while the councils and the Rectors reacted differently to their functions and activities. Additionally, the different interests they purported to serve turned them into slow, bureaucratic mechanisms (UDUSA 1994b). This was despite the fact that after 1990 the balance of social, political and educational forces had shifted seriously. The final step envisaged by UDUSA was that the forums would be ultimately transformed into advisory mechanisms that would play an important role in the unfolding realities of the future.

In fact these forums introduced a series of fundamental issues to be debated and contested: among them being that of gender equity and representation as well as affirmative action. The correction of the imbalances of the past was of paramount importance, hence the forums were perceived to be key elements of future institutional change. This matter alone led to them being considered contested mechanisms on the part of senior management (UDUSA 1994b).

The establishment of Transformation Forums was based on a solid understanding of the prevailing situation for a series of reasons, the most important being that the existing official mechanisms were still riddled with the legacies of the apartheid past. The creation of the forums, in fact, challenged the existing statutory governance and policy-making structures, which were seen as representative of the apartheid regime, hence undemocratic in nature.

Other basic ingredients upon which the transformation forums were based:

- The future redress of past inequities especially in terms of gender equity needed to be challenged.
- Access and support to Black staff and women became an urgent priority.
- Staff needed to be more representative of the racial and gender composition of the population.
- The relationship between staff equity and reconstruction and development needed to be enhanced.
- Provincial and national co-ordination of transformation was of importance (UDUSA 1994a).

The realities confronting the structures and functions of the forums were in fact determined by the particularities facing the various institutions. In fact, as the process unfolded, most of the forums turned into bureaucratic entities where the fundamental elements of accountability and transparency did not exist (UDUSA 1994b). This was despite the fact that the first forums were established as early as 1991 and one would expect that the passing of time would have a beneficial influence on them in terms of solid operational bases. This reality was reinforced by the deliberate attempts by senior management and senates to procrastinate and put a series of impediments in the functioning and operational prerogatives of the forums (UDUSA 1994b).

In several cases, community structures became involved in the functioning and structures of the forums, with fluctuating levels of success. The University of the North reported greater cooperation between stakeholders within the university and active participation of communities around the university (UDUSA 1994b).

Transformation Forums were contentious from the start, but it is an axiom that anything new would face teething organisational, logistical and administrative problems. The change in the composition of university councils, that took place at most universities after 1990, did not affect the existing landscape radically, although there were several interesting processes at work, especially regarding different levels of

engagement between the various stakeholders.

This is evident in the process of setting up of these forums, especially regarding the creation of a culture of negotiations and debate, changes in the selection process at some institutions, a more participatory approach to university management, but above all a serious attempt to develop strategies and policies for transformation.

Transformation forums struggled hard to identify problems within their own institutions and nationally and searched for ways to rectify the existing problems through policy formulation and the creation of policy frameworks that would ultimately have serious consequences for the future. The forums galvanised different constituencies into a mode of debate and discussion by creating a platform where transparency and accountability were seen as vehicles for monitoring, but not determining changes within the university.

The forums attempted to introduce “changes from below”, while challenging the existing policy of a process that was based on the principle of “change from above”, whereby senior management created and reproduced planning and implementation mechanisms of control and authority within most, if not all institutions in the country.

One needs to say that historians, educationists or researchers of different disciplines have not engaged in examining or analysing the existing circumstances, relationships of power and authority, and the social and educational conditions within which the Transformation Forums operated. However, it is an undoubted fact that at these institutions serious questions were tabled for future deliberations, debate and policy-making. Gender equity was one that surfaced as a key element of any future transformation agenda, both nationally and institutionally.

The Transformation Forums, later called the Broad Transformation Forums (BTFs), were the forerunners of the current statutory structures called Institutional Forums. Every Higher Education Institution is obligated by the Higher Education Act of 1997 to

establish an Institutional Forum. The primary function of this forum is to serve as an advisory body to the Council of the institution, monitoring and advising it on matters pertaining to race and gender equity and other issues of transformation.

It is an urgent necessity for the gap in our knowledge regarding institutional forums, their history and efforts, success and failure to be investigated, not only for the sake of posterity, but also for drawing serious lessons for the future.

#### **4.3 UDUSA's Race and Gender: Race and Gender in Employment Patterns (1993)**

UDUSA's "Race and Gender" research was in several ways a pioneering project:

- It was undertaken by an employee's organisation, a university staff association, despite the fact that the research was internationally sponsored.
- It was the first step towards understanding and conceptualising the concrete circumstances of human relations dynamics in respect of gender at South African universities.
- It exposed, in many ways, the inertia of feminists and other progressive women regarding concrete initiatives to address inequalities.
- It exposed the appalling conditions at universities regarding the position of women at all levels.
- It pinpointed the role of senior management and the apartheid, male-dominated apparatuses that kept women in low and subservient positions in the university hierarchies.
- It paved the way for legislation that established statutory structures of transformation at all Higher Education Institutions.

The research findings of this project were included in a document published under the auspices of UDUSA and the Ford Foundation, the main international sponsor (Peacock 1993).

The project's findings pointed to a series of observations and realities that appeared in print for the first time. The report will be utilised in the context of this thesis at several levels of conceptualisation and analysis. This is because its qualitative analysis opened new ways of thinking in relation to gender equity and affirmative action in general. It attempted to identify factors that had historically impeded black and woman staff in their entry into and advancement within tertiary institutions, particularly universities. One of the strengths of the report was the researcher's effort to utilise comparative methods as exercised in industrialised countries such as the UK and Australia. Such an analysis could also be proved to be a serious weakness as there was no attempt to compare such gender and affirmative action attempts in societies with comparable levels of development as South Africa.

One of the main reasons for undertaking such a project was the belief that such solid empirical evidence and knowledge of the existing circumstances would ultimately lead to the adoption of future policies and legislation that would seriously address the key issues of gender equity and affirmative action. In fact, the terminology adopted in the report, which was drawn widely from international literature was subsequently utilised in all White and Green Papers as well as the acts of Parliament that determined gender equity and affirmative action. These included the concepts:

- Direct and indirect discrimination,
- Equal opportunities
- Positive discrimination.
- Reverse discrimination.
- Quotas.
- Targets and goals.

The changing political circumstances in the country were conducive to such a research, especially as all layers of leadership at universities had realised that the future political dispensation was destined to take serious legislative measures in order to create new balances in favour of the previously disadvantaged groups, communities and individuals. This is because apartheid had created racially classified and stratified

universities through processes of “rational self-exclusion and vertical racial separation” (Peacock 1993:5-6).

The report made a series of assertions and predictions regarding changes in the composition of university personnel and staff turnover, employment patterns and the overall national business and economic cycles with special reference to the recession prevalent in the country at the time. However, its key significance lies in the fact that for the first time an empirical manifestation of areas of gender and racial discrimination became public knowledge. In this sense a socio-historical exposition of the development of a racially segregated university system was undertaken at various levels of analysis through the utilisation of concrete examples emanating from institutions throughout South Africa. This analysis took into account the various segregation efforts of the Apartheid regime and utilised existing and previously unexplored statistical data related to staff and student components of tertiary institutions.

The project also explored the racially determined salaries to be found in all tertiary institutions throughout the country as well as the horizontal segregation in terms of executive, administrative and managerial positions (Peacock 1993:11-20). The conditions associated with the competition and the market forces as well as the question of "merit" in appointments at tertiary institutions were also examined (Peacock 1993:21-27). The dynamics of "meritocracy" in the personnel selection process at universities and other tertiary institutions was up to then a relatively unexplored issue in the social and educational sciences especially in its anthropological and sociological dimensions. In reality, this was a process that was seen as constituting one of the key challenges of the future in terms of affirmative action and gender equity in public policy.

This fundamental reality was based on the historical legacy of apartheid legislation and social practices, but also on the assumption that future legislative corrective measures needed to be articulated in such a way as to utilise a widely accepted Code of Practice

that would encompass the following areas:

- Evaluation of the requirements of the post.
- Advertising methodologies.
- Design and presentation of information packs sent to candidates.
- Shortlisting methods.
- Interview techniques.
- Selection process.
- Induction of new staff (Peacock 1993:30).

These parameters would ultimately take into account “positive action advertising” in all areas of university functions (academic, research, administrative and support), interviewing techniques, serious training and remunerative issues (Peacock 1993:31-37).

The report brought the "gender factor" to the fore as it empirically pinpointed the historically skewed male-dominated domain as well as the severe under-utilisation of women staff members at all levels of tertiary education. It became evident in the findings that women were very seriously under-represented at higher and middle levels of the academic profession with significant variances between universities (Peacock 1993:38-40).

International comparative research is cited that pinpoints the positive role of women as role models throughout university structures as well as their increasing niche in top management positions internationally (Peacock 1993:40-41). One needs to examine such realities in South Africa from the perspective of their proper social and historical contexts. The examples provided in the report under examination were illuminating, especially in terms of the analysis of advertising, appointments and promotion of women at different universities, the composition of selection panels and the formation of selection committees (Peacock 1993:43-44). All these relevant steps leading to employment attested to many particularities evident amongst tertiary institutions throughout the country. Thus, despite the existence of the various University Acts i.e.

the university statutes and other legal requirements, there have been many instances where selection criteria, procedures and rules militated against capable women. Consequently, it became evident in the report that debates on equal gender opportunities at a few universities only became a reality in 1993 (Peacock 1993:44-45).

In terms of promotions, the reality was that different universities used a wide variety of methods and requirements which mainly concentrated on publication records and achievements, experience and formal qualifications, without taking into account serious community involvement and contribution, academic and teaching excellence as well as other significant academic, social and intellectual virtues (Peacock 1993:45-47).

Several of the interviews with women university staff members presented in the report are important testimonies of the difficulties and inequalities that faced them in terms of appointments and promotions as well as open or hidden discrimination in the workplace (Peacock 1993:45-47). The same is true of the realities and hardships in the work environment, which were shaped historically by the employment conditions facing women as well as the relationships with the male-dominated management structures. These conditions prevailed at different levels and were evident by facts such as the lack of childcare facilities and the inequalities of the maternity leave dispensation, amongst others. This was despite the fact that several universities had taken certain initiatives to rectify such inequalities and discrepancies (Peacock 1993:49-50).

The report also included a large number of discrepancies that surfaced in the analysis in relation to the disproportionate number of women relegated to junior lectureships and tutorships with contracts, who were obligated to teach and tutor for long hours without possibilities of doing research and thus benefiting from the existing and future opportunities for advancement. Thus they were trapped into junior positions (Peacock 1993:51-53). Such realities were perpetuated through an entrenched "male culture" evident in many departments within the university establishments. This was also

evident in the process of overt sexism, which in many instances was justified by the perpetrators as a part of "cultural traits" (especially the so-called "African culture") (Peacock 1993:54-55). Such justifications were seen as a smokescreen for existing power relationships and were described as a serious impediment to future transformation.

One of the most important aspects of the research report was the widely quoted position of male managers that "women were not really disadvantaged anymore" (Peacock 1993:57). There was a widely held belief that there were several affirmative action programmes in place, which rectified existing problems (Peacock 1993:57-58). These perceptions, however, as the overall findings indicated through empirical evidence, were incorrect. The UDUSA report quotes the first female African Vice Chancellor of a South African University, Dr. M. Ramphele, as saying that:

**"We are not going to make affirmative action appointments and promotions because they have been proved to be wrong"**

(Peacock 1993:65, emphasis in the original).

This was the dominant position of senior management at most (if not all) South African universities during the period under investigation (1991-1993). However, the inevitability of the ANC's coming to power in both elections, 1994 and 1999, signaled the promulgation of legislation that seriously affected (or ought to have affected) the staff landscape at all South African universities. There were no policies, at that time, affecting affirmative action and gender equity. Hence different and divergent strategies to achieve equality were not possible. However, the authors of the UDUSA report quote extensively from the Namibian affirmative action laws with details including institutional objectives, criteria, standards, as well as effective monitoring and feedback systems (Peacock 1993:63-67). This was possibly seen as a benchmark for future South African legislation.

Future government intervention was called for despite the expressed opinions of senior university managers to the contrary. This was based on the possibility of reversing the existing discriminatory practices of the apartheid regime and their social and historical legacies. In this context, the apartheid-inspired Wiehahn Commission is quoted, supplemented by various legal requirements and codes of the International Labour Organisation, as well as UK and USA laws including the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Peacock 1993:68-70).

The researcher also utilised various statements and positions adopted by senior university managers in the UK supporting equal opportunities and equity, coupled with the promotion and skills training of previously disadvantaged individuals and groups. The same is attempted in relation to existing circumstances in countries such as Australia (Peacock 1993:70-73).

The document had a very serious effect on most stakeholders associated with tertiary education in the country. It was studied, debated and evaluated well before the first democratic elections in the country. It was seen as a very significant contribution to the understanding of the university landscape and fuelled serious debates on gender equity and affirmative action. It was seen and described as a possible blueprint for future changes in education in South Africa. After all, there lies the significance of solid empirical research, it does not only open new ways of understanding of existing realities, but attempts to discover and devise new strategies that could rectify existing weaknesses of societies or societal functions and systems.

#### **4.4 The Department of Education Gender Equity Task Team (1996 to 1999)**

The Department of Education, under the leadership of Minister S. Bhengu, established a Gender Equity Task Team (hereinafter GETT) in order to set the foundations of a future policy that would play a role in rectifying the injustices of the past. This was a step emanating from the basic laws of the country, including the constitution and the

White Paper on Education and Training (1995), which amongst other provisions pinpointed the following:

- There was a very poor representation of women in educational management.
- There was evidence of strong male chauvinism in all echelons of the educational system in the country, including the tertiary sector.
- There should be a change to all discriminatory practices.
- Gender equity was fundamental for transformation and the future.
- There should be a strong partnership between all stakeholders as well as all Departments of Education in the country in order for inequities and injustices to be rectified.
- For these reasons the Equity Task Team was to be created (White Paper on Education and Training 1995, clauses 63-57).

This Task Team would be the key instrument in shaping policy and advising on future guidelines leading to gender equity at all levels of the educational system, including tertiary education. In this process affirmative action strategies ought to be devised, with the main aim of increasing woman representation in professional management. The establishment of legislation was another objective of the team.

It was thus envisaged that the Task Team would be advising the Ministry of Education on future plans and policies relating to gender equity, including infrastructural, organisational and administrative changes to the existing apparatus.

The plan envisaged a chairperson and seven members who would be nominated by all stakeholders within the educational fraternity and appointed by the Minister. The closing date for the nomination was the 14<sup>th</sup> of June 1996.

In May 1997 the GETT team, comprising ten members, produced its first progress report, which pinpointed correctly that gender equity in education not only entailed a quantitative balancing of males and females in all aspects of the existing system but also a qualitative reworking of gender stereotypes and assumptions (GETT 1997:1).

During the year in review, consultation with all stakeholders was achieved and a series of leaflets prepared by the team were distributed widely to politicians and policy-makers.

The needs and priorities of stakeholders were identified in the process and research steps were undertaken in order to streamline the future efforts of the team. The various institutions, NGOs and representative groups that would help GETT to streamline its efforts, requested Organograms. Submission dates for documents were set in this process (GETT 1997:2).

Bodies such as the Committee of University Principals (CUP) were addressed and canvassed in relation to existing inequalities at all tertiary institutions, and the same process was followed with the Committee of Technikon Principles (CTP) and the Committee of Colleges of Education in the Republic of South Africa. Additionally various members of the Task Team visited the USA and the UK and consulted with various experts and practitioners on the field. This was done in order for the GETT members to familiarise themselves with international trends pertaining to the problem; both in terms of theoretical and practical experience (GETT Report 1997:3-4).

It was thought that the policy and other strategic interventions and proposals should be both short and long-terms. Amongst the most important priorities were:

- Training of all stakeholders, especially women, on the importance and necessity of gender equity.
- The devising of programmes for assessing, evaluating and monitoring the success, or failure of implementing gender equity.
- The disaggregating of statistical data to reflect gender differences.
- The identification of possible and necessary research.
- The identification of legislative measures to create the conditions in which gender equity may be attained.

- The suggestion of affirmative action measures that could ensure those women made progress in all institutions and professions (GETT Report 1997: 4-5).

The final findings and report of the Gender Equity Task Team were produced in 1998 and make interesting reading. The report comprises of an analysis of various levels of education of which universities form an integral part.

It became obvious in the White Paper 3 of 1997: Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education, that the main aim of the political leadership of the Ministry of Education was the transformation of higher education which would:

- Redress past inequalities,
- Serve a new social order,
- Meet pressing national needs, and
- Respond to new realities and opportunities (Quoted in GETT 1997: 129).

The present exposition of the GETT proposals and recommendations will concentrate on the aspects relevant to the theme of the present thesis, and no other aspects will be tackled despite their importance on the landscape of education in South Africa. It needs to be said that the relevant analyses and recommendations in relation to Technikons and teacher colleges are also of importance, but limitations of space does not allow us to touch upon them.

The GETT team accepted the definition of the National Commission of Higher Education (NCHE) that universities engage in basic scientific research, technikons engage in developmental scientific research and colleges are not expected to do research (GETT 1997:130). This relates to the gender dynamics in their social and educational contexts. The mainly artificial and narrow divisions will not be integrated in the context of the present thesis, but the fact that the Higher Education White Paper called for an "integrated system" basically addressed several key weaknesses and generalisations to be found in such definitions.

The NCHE report, as well as the White and Green Papers, were thoroughly scrutinised and debated by GETT, which subsequently submitted comments and recommendations to the various relevant authorities. Some of these were included in the third White Paper. There was a general agreement that gender issues were of importance and needed to be integrated in future legal frameworks associated with public policy initiatives (GETT 1997:134).

Several international, historical and contemporary comparisons were utilised in order to strengthen the case for more equitable representation of women in employment at universities, especially in what was described as traditionally male dominated domains. Such a process was seen to have a direct positive effect not only on education but also on the Reconstruction and Development Programme (known as the RDP), which was adopted by the first government of national unity in order to improve the lives of the majority of people (GETT 1997:136-137). The linking of education with the RDP, which was at that time already scrapped and replaced with the Growth Employment and Redistribution Programme (GEAR) (Lehurere 1997; Bond 2001), was unclear in the various White and Green Papers, as were the efforts to create "responsible and critical citizens", and "produce knowledge of the highest caliber" (GETT 1997:137).

Based on an outdated (1992) but thorough study, it surfaced that there were 10,4% African females, 2,1% Coloured females and 2,7% Indian females working as academic staff at Historically Black Universities (HBUs). The number of White females in those institutions was 16,6% (GETT 1997:140). These figures became more revealing when it was discovered that the employment of Black females in Afrikaans medium universities was 0,6%, while the corresponding figure for English medium Historically White Universities (HWUs) was 4%(GETT 1997:141).

Additionally, the number of women in senior academic posts was very negligible with ratios of 10 men to 1 woman in English speaking universities, 15:1 in Afrikaans speaking universities and 9:1 at HBUs. It surfaced that women were employed at the lowest levels on the overall university hierarchy. In terms of qualifications, academics

at HWUs were considerably better qualified than those at HBUs (GETT 1997:141). Thus there were very striking differences throughout regarding gender imbalances. This was true in most cases with the notable exception of Vista University, where women predominated (GETT 1997: 141).

There were several historical, economic and social reasons advanced for such wide disparities evident in the country's university system. Amongst them were the women's familial responsibilities, the lack of facilities such as such as crèches, the limited maternity leave, housing subsidies and allowances, and lower academic and research performance (GETT 1997: 144-147). There was also evidence presented that women were subjected to discriminatory practices which were perceived to be embedded in cultural and other social practices. In several universities pregnancies were seen a serious problem for female staff and students (GETT 1997:148).

In a more global picture, women's studies have been advanced tremendously in the last few decades in all spheres of human and intellectual endeavour and their contribution at all levels of society have been researched and duly acknowledged. Thus, according to the GETT report, the establishment of women's studies within the higher education system would play a constructive and highly innovative role in the advancement of a range of disciplines. This process obviously requires active encouragement on the part of administration and academic planning groups in the various institutions of higher learning. Such programmes should be nation-wide and supplement the already existing ones at Natal University and the University of the Western Cape (GETT 1997:149-152).

The GETT report ended with a series of suggestions and recommendations based on the analysis that has been summarised above. The most important and those relevant for the present project were as follows:

- Any human resource development concerned with equity and growth should earmark funds and pay special attention to the specific needs of all women academic and support staff.

- The specific needs of women staff should be included in all formulae developed in the course of redress funding.
- The Department of Education should liaise closely with the Department of Labour to ensure that all aspects of employment, including women's employment in education, are in line with national developments. These need to be evaluated and monitored closely.
- Data should be compiled that take into account gender and ethnic categories at all levels of university employment, promotions etc.
- Specific data should be kept and returned in respect of women academic staff including appointments, promotions, earnings, levels of qualifications etc.
- The Quality Assurance process should assess the relevance of the curriculum to the career needs of women and the development needs of women.
- Serious steps need to be undertaken to ensure a more women-friendly environment by:
  - i. Taking into account the historical discrimination against women that needs to be eliminated.
  - ii. Providing crèches and after care for children of women employees.
  - iii. Taking care of maternity leave and housing benefits.
  - iv. Standardising selection procedures to include female representation.
  - v. Scrutinising and standardising promotion criteria, which would take into account factors militating against the promotion of women.
  - vi. Developing procedures that would pay particular attention to the needs of women in terms of their qualifications, research capacity and sabbatical requirements.

It was also recommended that:

- The development of women's studies, including gender and planning, would become a top priority in the course of academic development.
- Institutions should seriously consider the development of a generic course for all students on how to overcome racism and sexism in our society.
- Liaisons should take place with distance learning and other institutions that would

develop women's studies with particular reference to the needs of national and provincial departments to assist them in their work to combat racism and sexism.

- Promote research activities within universities that take account of the gender differences and realities. All these activities need to be monitored. Bodies such as the HSRC and the CSD should be formally installed and thorough networking should be initiated between the various institutions that are committed to a gender equity programme (GETT 1997:156-159).

#### **4.5 The Gender Network**

The Gender Network was an initiative of various groups of women in higher education who sought to establish a provincially and nationally based gender network consisting of both men and women. A consultative process was to be undertaken that would determine the decision-making powers and implementation mechanisms at all levels. Thus a collective voice of women would be established, as it was thought that even at that conjuncture women were voiceless, and unsupported in South African tertiary education institutions (Draft Outline 1996:1).

The envisaged network would function in such a way as to develop capacity among women by:

- Serving as a support structure.
- Serving as a tool for collaboration while also preventing duplication.
- Building women's confidence in themselves and their abilities, as well as fostering leadership development (Draft Outline 1996:1).

A set of organisational goals was envisaged based on workshops and seminars, discussions and forums with representatives of tertiary institution stakeholders, the media, NGOs and similar organisations. Within this framework the creation of organisational capacity would be enhanced, through the creation of frameworks, development of strategy for further development, the setting up of a website, the creation of a secretariat and the employment of staff (Draft Outline 1996:1-2).

The development of this framework was seen as a fundamental step in the creation of gender equity at all levels of education, with special reference to tertiary education. This process was planned in such a way as to increase participation of women in science and research; increase the publication record of women, and also to develop leadership capacity amongst women.

These would be achieved through media interventions, regular meetings and seminars, the establishment of resource material and databases and the development of training materials. Workshops and symposia would end up with the launching Conference of the Network (Draft Outline 1996:2).

#### **4.6 The Women in Research Report (1999)**

The “Women in Research” report was produced by the Centre for Science Development (CSD) of the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC). It was an audit of women researchers and academics in the Humanities and Social Sciences and was a collaboration of the CSD and a number of women in the wider research and academic community.

In its introduction it is stated that for the report to become a reality a large number of men and women went through series of workshops, seminars and group discussions before the final questionnaire was developed (CSD 1999:1). This introduction meant that serious preparation was undertaken before the empirical work got off the ground. This detail signified the seriousness of the effort.

Of the 1323 respondents to the questionnaire, close on half were from HWUs, 28% were from HBUs, 13% from HWTs and 9% from HBTs. Close to three quarters of the respondents were Whites, one in six African, 8% Indian and 3% Coloured. The overwhelming majority of respondents, (92%), were involved in teaching students. A little under half of those with teaching duties were involved in graduate research projects, while 42% were enrolled for a higher degree or diploma. Close to six on every

ten respondents were engaged in research other than for degree purposes and a further 37% said they intended to undertake such research in the next two years. There were several impediments quoted regarding the lack of research efforts on the part of the interviewees, the most important being the lack of time; child-minding duties and the lack of support from other women.

Over three-quarters of the respondents indicated they would like further training in research related skills, including computer skills.

A number of regional workshops were set in order to discuss the draft report and set recommendations for the future (CSD 1999:1-4). The researcher who undertook the project utilised both primary and secondary sources of data in the analysis, including official documents.

In terms of rank and positions, the report indicated that even during the last years of the 20th century, and despite the existence of new progressive legislation, women were in a very disadvantaged position when compared to their male colleagues. Thus 45% of the respondents were in the lecturer/researcher position/rank, 6% were Associate Professors, 7% were heads of Departments/Directors and only 5 (0%) were Deans. There were 5 African Professors and one dean, while there was not even one Indian professor or Dean. However, there were 66 White female Associate Professors as well as 4 Deans (CSD 1999:13-14). The disproportionate number of White respondents in the study could be seen as a significant reason for such findings, but the realities of gross inequalities at all levels are very evident.

It was reported that women were active in research, research related activities such as participation in conferences, their institutions research structures and recorded various achievements over the last five years such as academic and research publications, attendance of national and international conferences, curriculum development projects and similar activities (CSD 1999:25).

There were conflicting findings in relation to the perceptions and realities of the levels of institutional support as expressed by the interviewees while there were no serious problems with racism as an impediment. Employees at Black universities had serious complaints regarding the existing institutional library resources and support for their research efforts as well as some lack of access to computer facilities. In regard to the latter case, it became obvious in the research findings that the facilities at HWUs were of a much higher quality when compared to those of the HBUs (CSD 1999:31-32).

There was very wide interest on the part of the majority of respondents in relation to computer and non-computer related training, while a wide variety of reasons were advanced for doing research (CSD 1999:33-34). There were also serious complaints from a number of respondents regarding the workloads in both teaching and administration, while weak and inadequate funding on the part of institutions such as the HSRC was stressed. The number of research grants awarded by the CSD for the period 1997/1998, were heavily skewed in favour of men (66% as compared to 34% of women) (CSD 1999: 39). These were factors that stressed the existing inequalities and needed to be addressed seriously at all levels.

Mentorship and supervision, as well as networking and collaborative research, were seen as key components of a continuous and incremental process that could bear fruits for the future. Based on the empirical findings of the study under examination, these were seen as important.

A long list of recommendations was produced upon the finalisation of the report and the various regional workshops that followed identified a large number of technical, administrative and logistical components that could be streamlined and rectified in the process that was to follow the findings of the study. In those proposals and recommendations some of the most important issues raised were:

- Women should be encouraged to research women's issues.
- Forums should be established for women to present their proposals before they were submitted to the CSD.
- There should be quotas for women in research.
- There should be encouragement for more women to apply for rewards.
- There should be more awards for women.
- Names of women researchers should be circulated to other institutions and researchers.
- CSD should encourage further investigation into the issue of women researchers and academics.
- CSD could establish a regional center for women researchers.
- There should be serious and consistent networking between all women researchers.
- Women should collaborate consistently.
- Women need to protect their research time.
- Women should demand that their institutions ensure access to time, resources and technology.
- Women should lobby for the provision of crèche and other similar facilities.
- Women should lobby for additional funds for research and substitute lecturers.
- Women should lobby for mentorships.
- Women should lobby for institutional awards for females throughout the disciplines.
- Young female researchers should be encouraged in their endeavours.
- Women should be encouraged to investigate ways that they can work through existing professional organisations for their research advancement.

This chapter examined in considerable detail the various attempts by researchers, institutions and forums to identify the different aspects and realities, both present and future, of women researchers in higher education institutions. The Women in Research project looked at the position of women in the institutional hierarchies, the factors relating to their difficulties in academic career progression, and the impact on gender equity in general. It is in the broad historical context that the present thesis took shape.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **THE LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK OF GENDER EQUITY IN SOUTH AFRICA**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter will attempt to assess the legislative framework associated with gender equity, the key aspect of this dissertation. There is a series of legislative measures, undertaken by the two consecutive Governments of National Unity after 1994, that set the parameters for fundamental change that would substitute the restrictive and unfair legislation and practices of the apartheid government with new progressive equivalents that would lead the country and its highly diversified workforce to the future.

#### **5.2 The Background to Legislation**

One of the fundamental realities associated with the new legislation was, and still is, the perceptions of the range of stakeholders affected by them. There is a general agreement amongst all quarters that the legislative measures adopted by the governments after 1994 were strongly reformist in nature. They were neither revolutionary nor conservative (Interviews with F. Barchiesi; Van der Walt). Thus the attitudes and the actions of the diversified body of stakeholders were, as expected, varied.

This reality is based on both historical and contemporary grounds. No one could expect the workers and their organised expressions, especially trade unions, not to be critical of the new laws, even though they felt the significant changes in their everyday lives in respect of unfair dismissals, disciplinary codes, gender equity and affirmative action amongst others.

There were very crucial and substantial differences between the Labour Relations Act of 1995, its 2002 Amendments and the Employment Equity Act of 1998 on the one hand and the repressive legislation of the apartheid regime such as Industrial Conciliation Act and similar counterproductive laws, on the other. However, on the part of the employers, there was an understanding that the new political dispensation that was realised after the 1994 elections would have inevitable repercussions on employer/employee relations at all levels of production, organisation and administration. Thus the new labour laws were seen as inevitable.

The formation of debating and mediating bodies such as NEDLAC played a serious role in bringing together historically antagonistic social forces, especially employers and employees with the state. In such a forum exchange of ideas, debates and final decisions are made in a model that has been described in sociological and public policy debates as “corporatism” (Maller 1992; McLagan and Nel 1995).

There have been serious debates relating to the inconsistencies of the various laws introduced by the post 1994 governments, which will be touched upon in the context of this thesis. These debates revolve around various crucial aspects of the acts either in their totality or partly.

The Government, however, was completely determined to show to the country’s population and the international community that several key social and national expectations were paramount in the process of the promulgation of these laws:

- Alleviation of poverty.
- Creation of new jobs.
- Economic growth.
- Redistribution.
- Efficiency.
- Equity at all levels, especially gender equity and affirmative (corrective) action.

(Statement released by Minister of Labour M. Mdladlana 29/6/1999)

The key issue facing the state, the country as well as the two main antagonistic classes (labour and capital) is the tacit and successful implementation of the various laws that will be explored in the context of this thesis. In fact, the foundation and key element of this effort will be the existence or not of gender equity, one of the most crucial aspects of the new public and social policies of the new government. The President of South Africa, in a recent interview on the South African Broadcasting Corporation, was adamant that the most important undertaking of the ruling party and the Government is the implementation of the progressive laws that have been promulgated in the last eight years (SABC 2 THE PRESIDENT SPEAKS, Thabo Mbeki interviewed by Freek Robinson and Vuyo Mvoko12/12/2002).

The scarcely debated five year framework of the Government plan as articulated by the Ministry of Labour in 1999, has set a number of target areas that need to be developed and streamlined in order to have increased flexibility and stabilisation of the labour markets by the year 2004. The key points of this plan can be summarised as follows:

- Job creation was the most important challenge facing the government and South African society. Hence job creation is a top priority.
- A balance must be struck between labour flexibility and market security.
- There must be legislative modifications that will ease the way forward for small business, or SMMEs.
- There must be efforts to create sustainable jobs for youth.
- All labour policies should supplement the fundamental policies and legislation of the government.
- A skills revolution should take place in South Africa in order for the skills shortage to be turned around in the country so that it can become more competitive and productive.
- **Gender and racial inequalities need to be challenged and combated in the workplace through the effective utilisation and consistent implementation of the Employment Equity Bill (our emphasis).**
- Vulnerable workers must be protected through the correct implementation of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act.

- The Unemployment Insurance Fund must be restructured as an urgent priority, so that benefits can accrue to workers in clearer terms.
- Legislation associated with accidents, safety and health in the workplace must be implemented.
- Peaceful industrial relations and the elimination of conflict between antagonistic parties must be promoted.
- The increase in productivity with the assistance of all stakeholders including institutions such as the National Productivity Institute must be developed.
- Dialogue and debate that goes beyond the confines of the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) must be established among all stakeholders, and social and economic partnerships strengthened.
- The position of South Africa in the globalised division of labour, development, trade, industry and growth must be reinforced.
- The vital issues of growth and development must be discussed with institutions such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO).
- Capacity and resources need to be created both nationally and internationally.
- There needs to be a strengthening of institutional restructuring according to the Act, so that it can be an integral part of the growth, development and redistribution in the country.

(Interview with the Minister of Labour M. Mdladlana, SABC 2, 28/6/1999 taped by Johannesburg Workers Library; Media Statement by Ministry of Labour 29/6/1999; Statement of the Department of Labour, Pretoria 29/6/1999).

It can be seen, then, that gender equity was and still is one of the most fundamental aspects of labour and social and public policy reform in terms of law and practice. In fact, it is one of the foundation stones of the new progressive legislation enacted since the emergence of the Government of National Unity in 1994.

Hence the next step is to outline the relevance of gender equity in the various laws of the country in order to set the parameters of the context within which the thesis will unfold. The key aspect of this analysis rests with the researcher's understanding of the significance of the laws in the sphere of gender equality.

Hence the analysis will concentrate on those laws that are considered the most highly significant in terms of the aims and objectives of the present project.

### 5.3 The Employment Equity Act

This is the most fundamental legislation upon which gender equity is based. This Act has introduced a series of mechanisms that ensure an end to unfair discrimination based on various social characteristics such as race, religion gender etc. in the workplace. The implementation of affirmative action in the workplace is the second fundamental characteristic of the act.

It is a very wide-based legislation as it covers even employers of so-called “domestic labour”. According to the act, every employer needs to remove any existing remnants of discrimination existing in the workplace and in the employment practices. It basically deals with what is known in policy circles as “solid personnel/human relations management” (Maller 1992; Salamon 1996). This process includes a series of interrelated and intertwined processes such as:

- Recruitment.
- Selection Training.
- Job description.
- Job classification
- Remuneration.
- Key performance areas.
- Evaluation.
- Monitoring.
- Dismissal (Albrecht 1983; Kiggundu 1989).

According to the Act, it is the prerogative of every employer to scrutinise the company’s employment and human resources strategies and implementation in order to ensure that unfair discrimination does not occur. If it does, the employer will face the legal consequences of his/her actions.

One needs to understand this law properly, as according to it, not all discrimination is unfair. There is also what is called “fair discrimination”. The following is an example of what is regarded as fair discrimination. An advertisement for a housing project manager for the eThekweni Municipality Housing Department stipulates, for example, that “knowledge of isiZulu is essential”. This needs to be understood in its proper historical and contemporary legal and practical significance. A Zulu speaker with a Technikon degree in Project Management and three years practical experience will have a serious advantage over a non-Zulu speaker with an equivalent degree and years of experience for a number of reasons:

- He/she understands the mentality, economic and social conditions of the potential beneficiaries of housing projects (the historically disadvantaged communities) much better than his competitor.
- He/she is able to communicate directly with the communities.
- He/she is historically disadvantaged.

The requirement for such a vocation needs to fit the criteria of the legal framework that in the end determines the choice of the candidate, based on the principle of “fair discrimination”. Such an occurrence is seemingly contradictory to what has been called direct or indirect discrimination. Direct discrimination occurs when, for example, an accountant’s job is advertised and there is a stipulation that a White male is required. Indirect discrimination would occur when a civil engineer’s job is advertised without stipulating the gender of the prospective employee and the job is given to a male while his female competitor had better experience and qualifications. The new laws have set a series of steps to be undertaken in case of such indirect discrimination.

The laws of the country were seriously violated in the case of the retail giant, for example, that directly discriminated against a pregnant woman, who was refused the job precisely because of her condition. She was the best candidate for the job according to industrial relations criteria as stipulated by the very same company, and her non-appointment was in direct violation of the country’s laws. This instance has been correctly described as unfair direct discrimination (Labour Law Update

Seminar, Center for International and Comparative Labour Law, November 1999, Paper 3).

The second major aspect of the Act under analysis is affirmative action, which must be implemented by “designated employers”, i.e. those who employ more than 50 people, or whose annual turnover equals or is more than the annual turnover benchmark as set by the law. This is set up by the Act in accordance with ten designated sectors and fluctuates from R2 million to R25 million a year.

The obligation on such employers is to take special action in relation to the “designated” groups which are “Blacks” (which includes all the previously historically disadvantaged groups i.e. African, Coloured and Indian), women and the disabled. The latter are described as those who have a long term or recurring physical or mental impairment. The logic behind the placement of these designated groups in the labour market is the reparation for historically disadvantaged groups that have been the main targets of the apartheid regime and its social engineering of the marketplace. The key issue of the process of affirmative action is that every workplace must be representative of the demographics of the area where the business operates.

There is a stipulated process that will achieve such a representation of the groups. The process requires the following steps to be undertaken: consultation, analysis, planning and reporting.

The first step means that consultation must take place amongst all stakeholders within the confines of the business operation (i.e. the employers or their representatives, the representatives of the workers that is the trade unions and designated parties). It needs to be stressed here that employees who do not belong to trade unions must also be represented.

The analysis is related to the steps undertaken by the employer before it decides how to approach and plan the process of affirmative action within the next five years. Obviously such a process is associated with research of the organisational

structures of the company, the areas needing improvements according to the acts and future implementation plans.

The plan, as the third part of this process is related directly to the previous two steps, and the employer decides after the consultation and analysis in what particular sections to employ new people belonging to the designated groups. Thus the targets (and not the quotas) are set in relation to the existing human resources allocation within the company. Decisions on the re-allocation and implementations of the plan need to be taken in consultation with all stakeholders within the establishment.

The Act came into effect in August 9, 1999 and the section relating to affirmative action came into effect in December of the same year (**Star 11/8/1999; Mercury 11/8/1999; Star 22/12/1999**, at <http://www.iol.co.za>). As from those dates employers classified as “larger” (i.e. those with more than 150 employees) were obligated to deliver their plans to the Department of Labour in six months, while smaller employers were given twelve months (<http://www.tdynamicx.co.za>).

The Employment Equity Act is structured in such a way that it gives enough opportunities to employers to achieve the legal objectives and aims underpinning it. However, the responsibility of achieving these objectives rests with the employer, who needs to make the final decisions in relation to employment equity as required by the law. In achieving the obligatory targets stipulated by the law, the employer shows the commitment to the reversal of unfair discrimination and the legal application and implementation of affirmative action.

The law stipulated that employers are obligated to produce thorough and comprehensive target reports annually. In cases where the required targets have not been met, there are a series of steps to remedy the situation; the alternative is heavy penalties for those who do not comply with the law.

Inevitably such clauses in the new legislation set a series of questions associated with a number of crucial issues that are instrumental in the success or failure of a business enterprise:

- How can equity be related to the lack of skills to be found in certain “designated groups”?
- How would new equity plans and its implementation affect the financial viability of companies?
- What were the yardsticks/benchmarks within certain sectors (i.e. finance, high technology etc)?
- What were the benchmarks signifying the term “suitably qualified”?
- How would the Department of Labour be able to assess the “unsuccessful efforts” of companies to recruit “designated groups”?
- What would the role of “prior learning”/experience be in the process of recruitment and selection in respect of “designated groups”?
- What benchmarks were relevant in the selection and recruitment of “designated groups” with “potential”?

(Questions asked to be found in <http://www.mikemiles.co.za>)

A careful scrutiny of the Act indicates without doubt that in terms of public policy, it considers affirmative action as a *sine qua non* of the new dispensation in the workplace and in society in general. The drafters of the Act were aware that affirmative action is a highly emotive issue, especially given the social and historical legacy of apartheid. One of the key issues associated with the present and the future implementation of the Act is the fact that it has created serious expectations amongst the previously disadvantaged, especially the young black men and women who have graduated from institutions of higher education and face the sword of unemployment due to the structural constraints of a highly globalised economy.

What would have become a very beneficial aspect of the implementation for companies, are the incentives that the law provides for those who adhere to the Equity Act in terms of state procurement procedures. After the passing of the Act, all state departments at all levels were obligated to follow strict equity criteria for state procurement such as the awarding of tenders. This was definitely a plan to boost Black Economic Empowerment, but also an added bonus to White-owned

companies that had adhered to the legal requirements of the Act. Thus, when the KwaZulu Natal Department of Public Works awards a tender for the purchase of a fleet of fifty trucks, companies such as Mc Carthy Motor Holdings, the biggest of its kind in the country, might find itself at a disadvantage due to the lack of progress in implementing the Act. For this reason the company decided to appoint an Equity Officer as early as 1998. This example was followed by most large companies in the country (Interview with Ms. J. Bhana, Mc Carthy Motor Holdings Equity Officer, Durban).

Despite the fact that the department of Labour is on record as saying that businesses at all levels would be educated and encouraged to make the implementation of the Act work, this never materialised in significant ways (Interview with J. Bhana, op.cit).

What the Minister did, however, was to appoint the Commission for Employment Equity, a part time commission set to oversee the implementation of employment equity in the country (**Star 11/9/1999** at [http:// www.iol.co.za](http://www.iol.co.za)).

It can be understood that the Act was promulgated in a serious attempt to remove workplace discrimination inherent in apartheid legislation and ensure in the long term that everyone, irrespective of race, gender, disability, religion and other personal characteristics, has an equal opportunity to compete for a job, training, remuneration, and promotion within his/her work environment.

Additionally the progressive nature of the Act was obvious in the fact that it stipulates that all employers must ensure that the necessary steps are undertaken for the elimination of direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, HIV status, beliefs (both political and ideological), culture, or birth. In terms of AIDS, the Act goes further as it states that medical testing of employees and job applicants as well as HIV testing is strictly prohibited.

The compliance with the Act was initially one of the contentious issues faced after its promulgation. It stipulated that it would be enforced through administrative and adjudicative measures. Thus officials of the Department of Labour or specially designated inspectors could visit workplaces where they could interview any of the stakeholders available, inspect or take away documents in order to determine the compliance with the existing regulations (Interview with Mr. D. Pillay, senior researcher, Department of Labour, Pretoria). The Director General of the Department of Labour can undertake a compliance review in order to examine whether employers act in accordance with the Act. In the process of this review the Director General examines the various parameters associated with the designated groups in relation to existing skills shortages in order to determine the commitment and implementation levels on the part of the employer.

Finally, the Labour Court can be approached as the last resort to enforce compliance orders and recommendations made by the Director General to employers that fail to follow the stipulated targets. The Labour Court has the authority to award damages for discrimination and to impose fines to non-complying employers.

In conclusion, it can be argued strongly that the Act was promulgated in order to change the way of operations within the market, and was positively biased towards a number of disadvantaged social groups and categories, especially women and the disabled. It was an Act that aspired to create a new business ethos within the South African labour market, which engendered respect irrespective of race, gender, religion, culture or sexual orientation. It has been a major challenge to all employers, employees and other stakeholders at all levels of private business as well as the state sector, including the universities and other tertiary institutions of higher learning.

#### **5.4 The Skills Development Act**

It has been said time and again that the skills profile of the South African labour force is poor in comparison to, not only the developed world, but also to a number of developing countries. This reality has a direct and negative effect on

productivity, competitiveness and generally, it is an impediment to development and growth. There are a significant number of new, promising emerging sectors of the economy that lack the necessary skills to exploit growth opportunities.

Education, and especially its tertiary sector, is the basis of the re-invention of skills development and growth. A highly skilled and innovative teaching, research and administrative staff will guarantee the developmental, intellectual and mental abilities of the young people who, after graduation, will be capable of meeting the challenges of the labour market at all levels. The development and growth of the economies of countries such as Singapore, Hong Kong and South Korea was the result of high investment in both education and skills development. In South Africa, the legacy of apartheid and its inequalities at all levels of social and economic life has prevented large segments of the population from obtaining high education or highly developed skills. This differs from a country like Ireland, which in the last ten years has become a shining example of steady and increasing human and economic development and growth. It is well known that this country has a very strong education system with an abundance of graduates. It has developed a series of labour market reforms heavily based on skill development.

The promulgation of the Skills Development Act of 1999 took place in order to alleviate the existing problem associated with the lack of skills within the South African society and the market. It aimed to enhance skills training and development in the workplace through the mobilization and integration of resources.

One of the key aims of the Skills Development Act was to “*encourage employers to employ persons who find it difficult to be employed*” (Chapter One “Definitions, Purpose and Application of Act, Clause 2 (iv)). Another aim was to “*improve the employment prospects of persons previously disadvantaged by unfair discrimination and to redress those disadvantages through training and education*” (Chapter 1, Clause 2 (e)).

Both these clauses are directly related to the question of gender equity in terms of training and skills development, as it is well known that women, especially Black women, were disadvantaged and oppressed throughout the country's history. This lack of skills and training is understood, not only as pertaining to the large number of illiterate women in South Africa, but also in the historical and contemporary lack of opportunities in work-related as well as life-skills and social skills training.

These inequalities and injustices were addressed in the letter of the Act under discussion as it promulgated mentorship schemes across the work spectrum, peer-training initiatives and learnerships. The latter is one of the innovations introduced in the Act as work experience opportunities that were lacking in most sectors of the labour market and in society, including the tertiary education sector. It was hoped that these initiatives would help employees to develop new skills.

Development strategies in the form of legal frameworks would enhance and strengthen relationships in the workplace. It would create a unity of purpose for future development. In this sense, skills development for the previously disadvantaged groups is seen as a societal imperative, especially given the demographics of South Africa. The changing workplace environment is indicative of a changing society and the educational arena is of primary importance in shaping the growth and development of the country.

In this equation the development of new public partnerships for the implementation of skills development is of great importance. Legislation alone is not really sufficient; implementation is the key to future success and the restoration of a more racial- and gender-balanced society.

The Ministry of Labour has tried through various means to implement several important initiatives outlined in the Skills Development Act as well as the Skills Development Levies Act of 1999. In these efforts the initial assistance of the European Union (R 276 million), the South African Government (R50 million) and several millions from the National Skills Fund was pledged to keep the implementation phase intact (**Mercury 8/10/1999; Star 8/10/1999** at <http://www.iol.co.za>).

Six parallel projects were envisaged and planned by the Department of Labour, which would have established management capacity and put in place various technological systems introduced by the South African government and its social partners, including business and labour. This process would lead to the full operation of the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and the National Skills Authority as envisaged in the Skills Development Act. All these projects were planned to facilitate the progress of the relatively complex process associated with the legal framework.

The Skills Development Act was a path-breaking legislative framework that gave an opportunity to previously disadvantaged Black groups, especially women, to reclaim their right to work and their right to continuous education and skills development. There was an expectation that women in the tertiary education sector would benefit from this legal framework, given their historically disadvantaged position in this sector and the opportunities opening up for them.

## **5.5            Conclusion**

These two seminal pieces of legislation were selected as they form the foundation upon which gender equity as a part of economic and social transformation is based. All other laws, including those dealing with educational matters, are based on the two Acts as well as the Constitution of South Africa.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF INTERVIEWS**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the first of the two streams of empirical research upon which the study is based, viz. an analysis and interpretation of the interviews that took place among key players within the University of Durban-Westville and outside it. It provides an in-depth analysis of the views and opinions offered by the interviewees.

There are a number of parameters, conditions and realities evident in the implementation of equity in tertiary education, including at UDW.

The prioritization of gender has been a focal point of both official pronouncements and existing legislation in South Africa. There have been several powerful women's groups in all echelons of society, business and politics. A study of the literature presented earlier in this thesis will make it abundantly clear that gender equity is an integral part of the grand societal plans of the government, and its agencies that struggle valiantly to move from apartheid to a non-racial, non-sexist, all inclusive society 10 years after the attainment of political freedom.

It has been hypothesised that neither at the national level nor at institutional levels were recommendations and pronouncements regarding gender equity and the advancement of women seriously prioritized in the transformation agenda, while serious steps were undertaken for race equity and affirmative action. Policy-makers, then, played their role in setting the foundations for equity implementation, as they set out the legislative frameworks. Thus, the onus for the transformation agenda to become a reality fell on the shoulders of the management and leadership structures of particular institutional entities, in our case the University of Durban Westville, a Historically Disadvantaged University. It had been in the forefront of staff and student struggles against the apartheid regime and had experienced serious

confrontations between management and unions, students and management as well as students and unions at different periods of its historical existence. Such struggles had become major impediments for the continued and sustainable development of the institution as a whole, especially impeding equity, transformation and affirmative action. As the last Principal of the institution put it at a meeting of the highest academic body of the University “how can UDW develop and excel if it is in continuous struggle with itself?” (Cooper 2003).

The key questions regarding the lack of transformation as far as gender is concerned are related to a number of pertinent realities and dynamics associated with the following:

- The narrow focus on race as a prioritization in equity.
- The institutional power dynamics.
- The location of decision-making.
- The role of women in decision-making structures or the lack thereof.
- The power, or the lack thereof, of gender advocacy groups within the institution under examination.
- The participation or marginalisation of such groups vis-à-vis the decision making process.
- Financial and infrastructure constraints.
- The patriarchal organisational culture of the institution.
- The dissemination of information regarding equity policies.
- Processes of reviewing and monitoring the implementation of the key legal documents associated with equity and transformation, i.e. the three-year rolling plans.
- The process of staff recruitment, appointments, promotions, as well as staff skills development.
- The operationalisation of a number of equity structures within the institution such as:
  - \* Equity Office.
  - \* Gender Equity Office/Committee.
  - \* Gender Policy Committee.
  - \* Gender Monitoring structures.

\* Gender Forum/s or/and Committee/s.

- The role and objectives of institutional structures associated with equity.
- The existence or non-existence of a “quota” system.
- The building of capacity of designated groups deserving affirmative or corrective action.

These are the key questions associated with affirmative action and gender equity that are directly related to the aims and objectives of the study as well as the various hypotheses that were structured as the theoretical basis of this attempt at the marriage between theory and empirical manifestation. The basic fundamental steps underpinning the transformation, affirmative action and equity programmes of the National Department of Education as well as the various tertiary institutions, including UDW, were:

1. A commitment to achieving equity in the workplace by promoting equal opportunity, and fair treatment.  
It was believed that such achievements would pave the way in providing all students with quality education, while simultaneously changing the demographic profile of all institutions.
2. The implementation of affirmative action measures.
3. The elimination of unfair discrimination.
4. The creation of an effective education system.
5. The establishment of professional, scholastic and administrative expertise amongst women.
6. The redressing of disadvantages in employment experienced by designated groups, especially women
7. Ensuring equitable representation throughout the workplace (Department of Education 2000).

The empirical component of this thesis is the attempt to uncover the existing and past realities at UDW in relation to the above principles and hypotheses, and this presupposes a systematic un-packing and analysis of the interviews in a comparative perspective.

## 6.2 The Three -Year Rolling Plans

In chapter 7 of this thesis, the three-year rolling plans of the University of Durban-Westville will be scrutinised in considerable detail. These plans were the legally required steps that needed to be undertaken by the university's management. Such radical steps designed to be implemented for transformation and equity obviously needed to be communicated to all stakeholders in the institution. It required debates on the merits, demerits, strengths and weaknesses of the plans and finally consultation amongst the major stakeholders and role-players in the institution. The fact that the new Vice Chancellor of the institution was an African female who was very new to this responsible high position and lacked the necessary experience as a university administrator due to her absence from the country, added further impetus for thorough debate and consultation.

The responses to the series of questions set to the interviewees regarding the three-year rolling plans and their significance in the realities of UDW were as follows:

In regard to the first question *Are you satisfied that all stakeholders at your institution were briefed and aware of the significance of the 3-year rolling plan targets and the equity plans? Can you elaborate on the processes of debates and discussion that was followed in the drafting of these documents within university structures?*, the responses are indeed illuminating:

It was generally accepted by all interviewees that the three-year rolling plans were key determinants, not only of the transformation agenda, but also key legal requirement that had to be met and implemented. There is an opinion advocated by the University's Equity Officer (later to be elevated to Director of Equity) that there was a "serious attempt" on the part of the university to create "the channels" of debate, discussion and dissemination of information regarding equity issues. These

would “ultimately” lead to “some sort of implementation” of affirmative action and equity. This would be done through the parameters and functions of the Human Resources Department within which the Equity Officer was located, albeit in a low position within the professional hierarchy.

In this context, then, it was the contention of the Equity Officer that there were several workshops on equity in 2001. This followed a process where all academic and non-academic departments were invited; a plan was drafted and circulated to all Heads of Departments and a feedback was called for on the strengths, weaknesses, merits and demerits of the documents.

(Interview with Ms.F. Mbanjwa)

The attendance at such meetings was extremely poor, with less than a handful of people attending. There were several reasons advanced for such a “historical”, or “traditional” absence of potential stakeholders and role-players at these meetings. These were:

- A perceived “**apathy**” amongst general staff, both academic and support/administrative, as well as key officially designated stakeholders such as the Council and the Senate. Apathy was seen as the reason for the pathetic attendance at what can be described as significant meetings that could shape the future of equity at UDW, as well as for the complete lack of responses to the call for feedback on the three-year rolling plans and their strengths and weaknesses.
- The “**lack of understanding**” of the “seriousness” of these documents, debates, discussions and decision-making processes that could lead to steps towards the attainment of equity.
- The “**composition and historical background of the drafters**” of these documents created serious questions in the minds of a good number of people, given the fact that the new Rector at the time (Dr. M. Ramashala) had surrounded herself with a relatively fresh and untested strategic team, some members of which were not even senior academics. As one senior academic and trade-unionist commented:

**“We were asked to debate things and documents and make comments the next day. These documents were drafted by some academics and administrators who were historically not trusted by senior personnel and unions because of their active participation in the various unprincipled internal struggles, especially during the period 1995-1997. How senior professors and Senate members could in fact debate and make decisions and recommendations on documents written by such people whose whole history is known to everyone? They were known to everybody because of their wars amongst the union groups and not really for academic discourse and excellence or activities.”**

(Interview with senior academic, who prefers to remain anonymous for professional reasons)

- The **“lack of wider consultation”** of stakeholders in the drafting of the plan was seen as a main reason for the lack of interest. As one senior academic, researcher and administrator said:

**“The three-year rolling plans were developed by a group of people and then circulated for discussion. This is a typically problematic process at UDW, since broad participation in the development of a policy is non-existent, and if you are lucky to be in some of the senior committees and structures, such as the Senate then, and only then, your views can be heard and incorporated”.**

(Interview with Prof. U. Bob, Director of Research. This was a recent appointment. Earlier Dr. Bob was a Senior Lecturer in Geography and an activist in various forums dealing with equity and transformation at UDW; Interview with Mr. T. Singarum, COMSA Executive Committee member and member of the Training Department at UDW).

Prof. Bob’s view is a new angle in the interpretation of the question under consideration. It has been outlined already that even such bodies as the senate did not have an active and informed participation in the process associated with the drafting and implementation of the three-year rolling plans. This points to the fact that although there was some indications of consultation and discussion within the

senior management of the institution and the 'strategic team', this process never filtered down to the existing constituencies, role players and stakeholders, let alone the grassroots members of the various departments both academic, non-academic and support. In the end the only participation of the general staff in this process was the provision of personal and professional details that were captured in the various data bases in the Human Resources Department which in turn formed the bases of the three-year rolling plans (Interview with Mr. Y. Moodley, Director Research Administration and a long-serving and respected member of the COMSA leadership).

- **The dissemination of information was marred by the lack of a coherent plan.** The dissemination of information regarding the three-year rolling plans was not done in a well-organised and planned fashion and no reminders were sent to prospective participants during the period in which staff had to debate and respond. The dissemination of information has been described as “quiet”, as it was planned in such a way as to be another bureaucratic step towards the implementation of equity initiatives. It has been asserted that the plans were produced and disseminated “quite late” with only a few people having access to them even within the higher and upper middle echelons of administration. This was also done long after the three-year rolling plan was submitted to the Department of Labour (Interviews with Ms. Banjwa; Mrs. R. Singh, Acting Manager, Human Resources, UDW).

It was also strongly believed that the team that drove the process was a non-representative group, and the process was passed through channels that were “designed not to object” (Interview with Professor M.S. Maharaj, President of the Academic Staff Association for several years).

The key question regarding the process is basically related, not only to the various steps undertaken for planning and implementation of these legally required rolling plans and their future ramifications, but above all, to the hasty submission of the document to the relevant legislative authorities without the completion of serious and informed debates. In fact, all interviewees were unanimous that the real debates

had not even commenced and they questioned the logic of the submission to the Ministry of Labour.

Another important question relating to three-year rolling plan submission was the logic of putting out a document for debate when it was already submitted?

At the University of South Africa (UNISA), where a number of interviews were conducted in order to have a comparative perspective on the question and processes under consideration, African female academic staff felt strongly that despite the introduction of new management, under the leadership of Vice Chancellor Dr. B. Pityana, there would be no real need for debate regarding such issues. Historically, these were aspects that were debated primarily in the higher decision-making bodies of the institution, such as the Senate and the council. This meant that there was no real debate or discussions on the three-year rolling plans amongst academic staff or administrative and support staff (Interview with Dr. D.T. Nkwe). Other female members of the academic staff at the institution, to whom the three-year rolling plans were an unknown document, expressed similar sentiments. However, there was a feeling that the new UNISA leadership was ready and prepared to work closely and transparently with all constituencies at the institution towards transformation and gender equity. There was a feeling of optimism that the new African leadership of the university would address and implement affirmative action and gender equity in the future (Interview with Dr. L Pretorius, UNISA).

It became evident from an interview with a senior female Professor who is a member of the Senate and Council that the process was basically driven through the efforts of the Human Resources Department at the University without serious debates and interventions of various constituencies at UNISA. The document was tabled for discussion at the Council of the University, and it was thought that UNISA's Gender Committee was aware of it (Interview with Prof .R. Finlayson).

It can be said that the brief to the stakeholders and role players within the institution regarding the significance and vital relevance of the three-year rolling plans at UDW was weak and various historical issues and traditions became serious impediments to the success of the initiative to plan and implement equity. Thus it



can be said, that the institution and its leadership did not follow the key requirements of the employers to take certain affirmative action measures in order to achieve employment equity. These as described in Chapter 3 of the Employment Equity Act are:

- Employers must **consult** with unions and employees in order to ensure that the plan is accepted by everybody.
- Employers must **analyse** all employment policies, practices and procedures and prepare a profile of their workforce in order to identify any problems relating to employment equity.
- Employers must **prepare and implement** an employment equity plan setting out the affirmative action measures they intend taking to achieve employment equity goals.
- Employers must **report** to the department of Labour on the implementation of their plans in order for the department to monitor their compliance.
- Employers must also display a **summary of the provisions of the act** in all languages relevant to their workforce.

(Employment Equity Act, Chapter 3, Sections 16 and 17).

### 6.3 Equity Policies: Dissemination of Information

One of the key issues regarding the policies of affirmative action within an institution is the patterns and trends of information dissemination that would lead to debates and plans and the ultimate implementation of the required policies. Processes that include these trends, have been described by theorists and practitioners in the field of organisational behaviour and communications, as vitally important (Johns 1999; Vitale 1999; Fox 2000; Roe 2001). Thus the second question (*Was there any dissemination of information regarding equity policies at your institution? How was this information disseminated? (Workshops, newsletters, senate, departments, memos, internet, etc). Can you briefly describe the process?*), was important in addressing this issue.

There were contradictory opinions amongst the respondents in relation to the question. The Acting Manager of Human Resources, who should have been at the core of the equity process, was “completely unaware” of any dissemination of information regarding equity policies at UDW or of workshops held within this institutions. This was despite the fact that the Equity Office falls within the functions of the Human Resources Department. Similarly, a senior member of the Industrial Relations and Training Department who has also been a very active leader of the trade union, COMSA, was also not aware of any circulars or workshops (Interviews with Mrs Singh and Mr. T. Singarum).

On the contrary, it was said that various hard copies of documents related to equity policies were distributed through the services of the Messengers Office to all staff. This was done, however, only occasionally and infrequently (Interviews with Ms. Mbanjwa, Mr. Y. Moodley; Mrs S. Pillay, Human Resources Department).

However, it became evident in the process of the empirical study that such dissemination did not translate into the creation of a debate or the discovery of ways of implementation. Similar reasons advocated for Question 1 were advanced for the failure of the dissemination process as outlined by the Director of Equity:

**“There was a plan for the complete dissemination of equity policies. [However] the response was very poor and came from the handful of people who participated in the workshops. This was in spite of the fact that the documents were circulated to all departments. The Equity Plan was drafted by the Equity Officer together with the Employment Equity Committee and the involvement of all stakeholders”.**

(Interview with Ms. Mbanjwa)

The Equity Committee had representatives from management, the unions, the Industrial Relations Department and persons with disabilities. However, as one of the “historical” participants of the committee indicated, there was a “deliberate attempt” on the part of senior management to emasculate the functions and decision-making processes associated with it:

**“As the Students Representative Council, we were invited occasionally to participate in this committee, which we felt was important. This we thought although we were at various stages at loggerheads and direct conflict with the Vice Chancellor and her Head of Student Affairs, who we felt was completely unqualified and incompetent to head such a portfolio. Ms Tengimfene was considered by all students as the real vice rector, even when senior people like Kekana and Professor Mthembu, the real Vice Rectors were around. She had great influence over Ramashala, and she did almost everything, she was also in charge of the Equity Committee, and she was running it as her Kingdom. This is how we understood the hierarchy. When there were meetings, very seldom and we were invited, we realised there was a deliberate attempt on the director’s part to sabotage the meetings and their outcomes. The same happened in the tender meetings, in fact, in all meetings she chaired, because she was chairing most meetings. This we saw as absolutely frustrating because most meetings were postponed because of her. In most of them there was no quorum and they were adjourned for a later date, which was never forthcoming. Then there were postponements, and in the end we lost faith and did not participate, because we saw them as a charade and a complete waste of time. Additionally, our relationship with Ramashala became extremely problematic, especially after the cold-blooded death of M. Makhabane in 2000 and all efforts to heal these wounds came to nothing”.**

(Interview with Mr. X. Shange, leading student activist and SRC member at UDW for two consecutive periods).

Thus despite the evidence that some equity documents as well as a “Sexual Harassment” policy were disseminated it can be concluded that there were serious impediments and hurdles in such a process. The Sexual Harassment policy was placed on the Intranet of the university to generate discussion by staff (Interview with Prof. U. Bob).

#### 6.4 The Review and Monitoring of Equity Proceedings

The Employment Equity Act, as well as various procedures associated with affirmative action, demand processes of review and monitoring of functions, policies and implementation. In the sphere of public and social policy such measures are seen as *sine qua non* of processes associated with affirmative action and equity policies (Spieler 1998; Mardoch 1999).

Thus an examination of such steps and procedures within the equity process at UDW can be seen as a key ingredient of the success or failure of the process. The third question (*“Can you briefly describe the process of review and the monitoring of the three-year rolling plan equity targets and the equity plans?”*) was structured in order to assess the existence, and the success or failure of such processes within the context of UDW.

There was generally a deafening silence on the part of the majority of respondents regarding the question due to the lack of knowledge. It became evident that the wider university community did not become involved in such procedures. The interviewees, including the trade union representative and the Manager of Human Resources, were completely unaware of such initiatives and processes. Their responses become problematic especially in regard to relationships (if any) between the Equity Office and the Human Resources Department. This was despite the fact that the Equity Office, from its inception, was an integral section of the Human Resources Department and the Equity Officer was under the line management of the Director of Human Resources. In such a situation, the key question remains why a Senior Manager of Human Resources is unaware of existing plans or/and evaluation of the existing equity plans? Such a disjuncture could signal any of the following:

- Internal raptures within the department.
- Lack of coordination and cooperation between personnel in different line functions.
- Allocation and separation of functions in a way that leads to ignorance.

- Bureaucratisation of the department to such a degree that everything, including equity emanated from the office of the Vice Chancellor and/ or her deputies.
- A top down approach that led to ignorance among the different line functions between different departments.

One can refer to the international experience in relation to such processes associated with public policy and management. It has become an international norm that the overall successful management of key departments is based on such ingredients as cooperation; coordination; knowledge of the different line operations within the same department or section; trust; and the building of mutual confidence between the different layers and hierarchy of functionaries (Serfest 1995; Travich 1999; Provist 2001).

The UDW Equity Plan is projected for 5 years (2001-2005). It has been recorded that it is the prerogative of the Equity Officer to review and monitor the processes and progress of affirmative action and equity at UDW. Her duties revolved around the procedures and processes leading to the achievement of pre-determined targets. However, there were several practical impediments to the achievement of “targets” and “quotas”. One of the main functions of the Equity Office was to compile statistics of the demographic profile of the university following new appointments, resignations and natural attrition. These were done according to the dictates and the procedures described in the 3-year rolling plans as has been outlined earlier. Additionally, one of the main duties and responsibilities of the Equity Officer was her active participation in all selection, short-listing and appointment panels of the university. This participation was of vital importance because the presence of the Equity Officer was (and is) compulsory at all levels of the selection process (from the first step of short-listing to the final outcome of the interview and selection).

Selection committees, as well as their final decisions, could be seen as mechanisms of review and monitoring of the processes of implementation of the three-year rolling plans and their targets. However, there were serious problems facing such selection processes for various reasons:

- There was a serious lack of well-qualified and experienced persons of designated groups applying for jobs.
- Most of the candidates from the designated groups did not even meet the minimum criteria.
- Those who met the job criteria and the minimum requirements did not apply.
- The university pleaded “financial constraints” and boosted the “savings” by adopting the “temporary /contract” policy instead of offering permanency. This had a direct negative effect on affirmative action and equity (Interviews with Y. Moodley; Ms Mbanjwa; Mrs. Singh; T. Singarum; Prof. M.S. Maharaj).
- Salaries to successful candidates did not match their professional and academic qualifications.
- The designated candidates who accepted job offers exited very early (as soon as they gained some experience) and moved to greener pastures.
- The “scarcity factor” did not really play a role as many of the African males and women who were employed were well qualified, but lacked experience on the job at different levels (Interview with Ms. Mbanjwa; Mrs. R. Singh; Mrs S. Pillay)

At UNISA there was no information regarding processes of review and monitoring of the three-year rolling plans regarding equity targets. The interviewees were completely oblivious of any concrete steps in this direction.

Overall it can be said that the process of review and monitoring of the three-year rolling plan equity targets did not take place as required by the various laws of the country as well as university rules and procedures. Various reasons were identified for such a reality.

## **6.5 Stakeholder Involvement in Equity Processes**

Stakeholder involvement is a key ingredient of a democratic, consultative and transparent process, especially when it deals with key personnel and development issues such as staff recruitment, appointments, promotions, and staff skills development. After all, these are processes that are instrumental in the affirmative

action and equity landscape within the institution. Given the historical legacies of UDW, i.e. its establishment and development as an “Indian” institution, as well as the numerical predominance of South African Indians in both academic as well as administrative and support staff, it became apparent that affirmative action and equity were to be seen, not only as mere legislative requirements, but as inevitable steps towards the correction of the injustices of the past and the change of the demographic profile of the institution.

In this process stakeholder involvement at all levels were seen as essential. Such a process, however, presupposes that the following elements exist: political will; determination; commitment, and the understanding of the key dynamics associated with such processes.

Hence the responses of the interviewees in the question “Was there any stakeholder involvement in the processes of staff recruitment , appointments, promotions and staff skills development? Can you describe the processes?” is of vital importance in understanding the existing dynamics associated with such realities.

It needs to be said that according to the existing rules and statutes of the institution, every committee dealing with personnel recruitment and employment matters, has some degree of stakeholder involvement, including Senate and council representation, union and management participation (Interviews with Mrs. R. Singh, Prof. Maharaj, Chairperson Academic Staff Association; T. Singarum). There are policies, rules and procedures that determine selection, recruitment and skills development and it is presumed that everyone who participates in such committees is aware of them.

The Equity Officer of the university believes that because of the fact that every stakeholder representative that sits in these committees is given the documents related to these rules and procedures, s/he ought to be familiar with them as well as their repercussions and the processes that are determined by such policies. However, she believed that many faculty representatives were not aware of the finer details and particularities of these documents. This lack of knowledge had a direct

negative effect on procedures and the whole process in general, and made the job of those in authority difficult (Interview with Ms Mbanjwa).

Within the domain of skills development (a field that is pivotal for the future growth and development of designated and other groups within the establishment), there were certain individuals that were handpicked for training and the acquisition of new and innovative skills and thus broader participation was seriously limited (Interviews with R. Singh, Prof. U. Bob).

While it was believed that there was stakeholder involvement in recruitment and selection through the participation of the trade unions as well as senate and other representatives, the same was not true regarding skills development. Very little involvement of stakeholders was evident. Thus the planning, decision-making and implementation became the prerogative of one or two persons (Interview with Y. Moodley).

However, stakeholder involvement needs to be associated with the realities of the processes involved in the final decision-making parameters and in assessing the determinants of such decisions.

It needs to be added that during Dr. Ramashala's reign, academic and administrative promotions were stalled for at least two years. The administrative promotions and salary scales were determined by an agreement between the management and COMSA, where it was stipulated that all salaries would be determined by "the market". The implementation of the agreement led to a number of staff having considerable salary increases while the majority did not receive an increase for two years (Interview with L. Vahed, Chairperson, Interim Executive Committee, COMSA). There was a wide perception that the stalling of promotions and the management-COMSA agreement was a serious attempt on the part of management to balance the books of the institution. There was loss of morale across the academic and administrative staff due to these realities, as the scrapping of the PEROMNES grading system in the administrative and support staff had serious future repercussions for the majority of them (Interview with Mr. Y. Moodley; Prof U. Bob).

At UNISA, besides the union participation in selection, appointment and recruitment committees, the Gender Forum was considered a very vocal and effective participant in such processes and has the reputation of fairness and dynamism in the decision-making procedures. Obviously, mere participation of a pressure group, which might always be in the minority, cannot change the status quo, but the existence and presence of a clear voice supporting gender equity is of importance in the wars of position taking place in such official forums (Interview with Dr. Pretorius).

It can be gauged, then, that although there were statutory procedures and rules in place in terms of selection, recruitment and promotions, there were both short and medium term impediments for their proper implementation. It can be said that all management regimes of the last ten years operated on a shortsighted policy, devoid of equity and affirmative action initiatives.

## **6.6 Equity Structures**

For affirmative action and equity to become a reality, the existence of several key structures and channels is necessary. These can obviously take various forms, such as desks, evaluating mechanisms, pressure groups, committees etc. The Post-Graduate Students Association, for example, was an initiative of the UDW Convocation Executive Committee and has achieved several important steps forward, such as bursaries, seminars, research grants, granting of facilities and a host of other initiatives (Interview with Ms B. Jojozi, Executive Member, UDW Postgraduate Students Association).

Such structures can initiate debates and discussions as well as exert pressure within and outside the organs of decision-making, management and the unions. Thus the responses to the next question were revealing. *“Was /is any of the following structures operating at your institution: \*Equity office, \*Gender Equity Office, \*Gender Policy Committee, \*Gender Mentoring Structure, \*Gender Forum/Committee.*

*If yes , what were their roles? If not , what were the reasons?*

Of these structures the Equity Office was in existence for several years with a variety of functions, such as participation in selection, promotion, and other similar personnel/human relations functions; monitoring of affirmative action and equity procedures, rules and implementation and various other functions associated with such processes.

There was also a Gender Forum for a year, in 1999, which was disbanded after six months due to lack of interest on the part of those participating. It was revived in 2003 but it was thought to be equally dysfunctional. All constituencies considered the negotiations for the merger with the University of Natal as the priority. The COMSA organiser explained it as follows:

*“There was a call for the union to appoint somebody in the Gender Forum sometime in 2003. COMSA appointed a woman to participate in this sub-structure. However, there were no meetings called, and when it [was] supposed to happen it was called off at the last minute, thus the interest evaporated. One of the most important reasons for this was that every constituency on campus concentrated on the merger issues. For the union, for example, there were several key issues such as the chronic grievances of over 200 staff members who had historical problems with promotions, market related salaries, grading, promotions etc, there was also the permanency of over 200 young, well educated people who were on contract, this was a pertinent issue. Given the fact that there were so many problems that were accumulated over the years and only one organizer, things were tough. It is very difficult to concentrate on so many difficult and diverse problems and do justice to them, these are immediate and medium-term problems. Gender equity is both a short term as well as a medium and long term issue and the union needs to look at it seriously and we do that, but the short term problems that need solution are an urgent priority for us, first and foremost”* (Interview with S. Ndlela).

The disbanding of the Gender Forum has been of serious concern to those interested in gender equity issues. The forum could serve as a serious platform that could raise vital issues and concerns at various levels and within the existing structures at the

university. It could develop various programmes aimed at building gender capacity and empowerment amongst both students and staff (Interview with U. Bob). One of the key issues, not addressed in this instance, relates to the existence of these various committees and forums and the lack of empowerment and capacity-building amongst women students in leadership positions, in postgraduate classes, or with leadership potential. The blame for this has been put squarely on the door of management, especially during Ramashala's time, as she was an African woman, who had vowed to empower young, dynamic and capable future female leaders at all levels. As one student leader explained:

**“Since 1998 we have raised with management, the lack of capacity amongst women leaders within the student population, those in positions in clubs and societies. We felt that the university was busy implementing the country’s existing laws regarding affirmative action and gender equity, thus we expected this to be including our women student population. In our discussions with the then union leadership, we established that management did not even bother to implement the existing laws amongst staff, how could we expect them to do it with students? We saw this as complete indifference, and this was obvious in the lack of enthusiasm and participation of women in SRC elections and general student governance issues. The participation was limited, and this perpetuates the stereotypes that student government is run by males, women are second-class leaders etc, but various SRCs were very serious about capacity-building and empowerment of women and we tried to push management hard to act on this serious matter. After the appointment of a young African woman in the position of Director of Student Affairs, there was a hope that things would change as such a person was expected to be sympathetic to equity, but exactly the opposite happened. The Director kept on postponing the debates because she was very busy, had other commitments etc. Her major contribution to equity was that she appointed a female student assistant as her secretary”.**

(Interview with X. Shange, SRC leader).

It seems that at UNISA the existence and vociferous action of the Gender Forum, especially in cases of appointments, promotions and similar processes has created new hopes for women in the fight for equity. As this is the only structure of those identified in the question, there is the belief that it can play a key role for the re-emergence of equity plans and implementation in the near future, especially after the change in top leadership that has the reputation of being progressive and forward looking (Interview with Dr. Pretorius). The Gender Forum, in fact, participates actively in recruitment and selection interviews, including appointments such as those of the Vice Principal, the Deputy Vice Principals and the Deans. This means that there is participation of this forum in decision-making bodies. In fact, it was recorded that the Gender Forum's strong objection to a Dean's appointments on the grounds that the equity criteria had not been followed properly, led to a change in the selection (Interview with Prof. Finlayson).

It clear that the non-existence of committees and a concomitant lack of debates, discussions, decision-making and implementation of affirmative action and gender equity have been a serious impediment to the advancement of designated groups at the institution. This was despite the pronouncements of the country's legislation, the three-year rolling plans and the alleged commitment of the university's management in addressing and rectifying the imbalances of the past.

#### 6.7 Affirmative Action and Gender Equity at UDW

Different groups of people and constituencies within the institution have, through their own knowledge, understanding and experience, developed different ideas and visions of the process of affirmative action and equity in the workplace. Some, because of their position within the establishment, have a more complete idea of the realities, while others possess impressions, opinions, and ideas resulting from their own understanding and calculations associated with the advances of the previously disadvantaged. Hence the responses to the question *“In your experience over the years, has your institution become a more equitable place in terms of race and gender as stipulated in the country's legislation? Can you provide concrete examples or elaborate?”*

It was felt that the most knowledgeable person to respond to such a question was the Equity Officer, primarily because of her key position in such processes. Her immediate reaction was that UDW had not become a more equitable place, precisely because the “statistics are very clear” on the matter. She stated that the “critical” and “crucial” positions at the “top” were dominated by Indians. This was also true of a number of important departments where **“100% of the staff was Indian”**. **“The only department that is 95% African was the Student Residents Department, but this is out of necessity, because 100% of the students in the residences are African”**. Other departments, such as Human Resources, Finance are 95% Indian, with Africans, including a good number of women operating as student assistants. Although the Director of Equity stated that there was an effort to implement the existing equity laws of the country at UDW, there were serious impediments that did not allow the process to succeed (Interview with Ms. Mbanjwa).

There was a belief that structures such as the Gender Forum, even those that were in existence, did not have clearly defined goals and objectives and in reality this led to their ultimate disbanding or failure. The university management was accused of not playing its role, not only in the setting up of such structures, but also of indifference and serious procrastination. This was particularly true of gender equity, despite the fact that the CEO of the institution was an African woman (Interview with Y. Moodley).

The Acting Manager of Human Resources felt strongly that the process was still biased towards males and the movement towards gender equity was slow and not sufficient enough. This was because, despite the fact that the CEO of the institution belonged to the disadvantaged gender, her management was **“top heavy [with] men”**. Indeed, when there was a permanent management structure in place during Ramashala’s reign, the top management consisted entirely of men (Prof. D. Soni, Dr. S. Kekana, Prof Mthembu as Vice Rectors and Mr. S. Govindsamy as the Chief Director of Finance responsible for Human Resources). The only female in a senior management position was the Director of Student Affairs. It was said that in the case of the Acting Manager of Human Resources her own responsibilities were murky and there was not even certainty regarding her own title and position in the

hierarchy. This followed the departure of the Director of Human Resources (Mrs F. Fynn) in 2002. All Heads of departments in the administration and support sections were males and the lack of female senior staffers was evident throughout the establishment. In 2003 there were only five directors (most of them in a temporary capacity), and two of them in the “Wellness Center”, a center that advises students on health and career orientation.

The interviewee felt that Dr. Ramashala was **“occasionally very supportive of females being in senior positions, because she did a lot for one of the Directors in Student Affairs”** (Interview with Mrs. R. Singh). Such statements do not only contradict the historical reality as explored above, but also the pronouncements of the very same interviewee as expressed earlier, together with her bitter complaints regarding the lack of gender equity.

On the other hand, the Director of Research, herself a gender activist, stated that there was a change in gender equity as **“more women have been employed and promoted”**. However, **“deep seated patriarchal tendencies are still in place, and such attitudes have not been addressed adequately. In such circumstances, often women find UDW a hostile place in which to work”**. (Interview with Prof. U. Bob).

At UNISA there was a general feeling that institutional power dynamics has changed in favour of women, as a senior female African academic stated (Interview with Dr. Nkwe). This meant that there were good numbers of gender equity appointments, despite the fact that the Gender Forum and other female academics still feel that gender equity does not feature prominently in the academic promotions, where “academic criteria” are strictly the norm. The women interviewees at the university felt strongly that these strict academic criteria should remain because they guaranteed that the expected high standards of the university are perpetuated. Men are senior professors in almost all departments, but this status is accepted as the men have been at the university longer than most women (Interview with Dr Pretorius). The elevation of some women to very senior positions, however, such as the Dean of Students, gives hope to women within the establishment and makes them feel confident about gender equity at UNISA

(Interview with Dr Nkwe). A senior academic, who is a member of the Senate and Council, expressed similar sentiments (Interview with Prof. Finlayson).

It can be said thus, that there are contradictory opinions and attitudes regarding affirmative action and gender equity at UDW. These are the result of knowledge (or lack thereof), different understanding of the prevailing circumstances and/or personal or other prejudices on the part of the respondents. The statistical figures that have been produced elsewhere in this thesis will set the existing record in its proper historical and present context in terms of such comparisons, parameters and realities.

## 6.8 The “Quota System”

In chapter three sections 3.5 and 3.6, the “quota system” as a strategic (or tactical) reality was examined in its various forms and its application in various societies was described. It can be seen as a step forward in relation to both affirmative action and gender equity, especially on occasions where the channels and mechanisms associated with such processes are not formulated officially or legally. There have been several obscure references to a “quota system” in the three-year rolling plans, but an implementation of such a process at UDW was not even debated.

The responses to the next question revealed a lack of written policies and *ad hoc* practices. **“Was a quota system implemented at your institution at any stage for the appointment of designated groups? If yes, who was responsible for the implementation and how was it implemented?”**

In fact it became obvious, even through the examination and analysis of existing official and other documents, that there was no official university policy regarding a quota system. Additionally, there was no concrete (or other) strategy to implement existing progressive visions as expanded in UDW’s “Mission Statement” and other documents related to affirmative action and gender equity. Thus the various selection panels for promotions, appointments and recruitment made the ratings according to the calibre and qualifications of the candidate rather than a “strategic quota plan or criteria” that would be beneficial to designated groups. The “ratings”

took the legalities of the designated groups into account as well as the “talents” that the candidate brought to the institution (Interview with Ms. Mbanjwa).

Interviews associated with placements, promotions etc took into account the existing statistics in the specific departments or within the university, but the quota system never featured at any stage of the selection process. The number of candidates for a particular position was a key issue as was the race or gender of the candidates who met the criteria of the advertisement and was from the designated group. For example if the number of candidates was large (as in most cases for administrative and other support jobs), inevitably, there was a large number of individuals from the designated groups who were in the reckoning. In the end the selection took place according to the “criteria” set in the advertisement and the “calibre” of the individual as indicated earlier (Interview with Mrs R. Singh).

However, there have been cases quoted in the interviews, where race and not gender was used as a **de facto** “quota system”. This means that in such cases due processes, procedures and rules were not followed during the selection steps and candidates of designated groups were appointed even without interviews. It can be said then that in such cases even the three-year rolling plans were violated. The case of the appointment of the Director of Student Affairs during the last two years of Dr.Ramashala’s reign was one of the most quoted instances of such decisions, despite the talents of the designated female incumbent. As one of the previous rector’s critics put it:

**“The SRC was always supportive of the 3-year rolling plans, which we saw as a step forward for the continuous development of young African talent both in the academic and other fields. We had several doubts about the implementation of the plans, but the fact that these were laws of the country made us believe that something good could come out [of it]. The development posts created for young African academics were hailed as one of Ramashala’s innovations, but they were in fact nothing more than a requirement of the laws of the country, such as the Employment Equity Act. We were always very much against the exploitation of the many student assistants who were obliged to pay**

most of their small salaries towards their fees. However, the appointment of an unqualified student of Psychology as Dean of Students/Director of Student Affairs with great influence and authority over all aspects of student affairs was simply unacceptable to us, even as an affirmative action appointment. This [was] because we knew there were better-qualified African people, especially women to play this role. This was not a quota system appointment or an affirmative action or equity step forward; it was just an arbitrary choice against the student movement”.

(Interview with X. Shange)

It can be said that generally there was no quota system in place at the institution that could have an effect on affirmative action and gender equity. Selection processes, rules and regulations took various forms where several aspects of affirmative action, demographics and statistics played a role. However, the lack of a coherent strategy that could lead to a solid implementation of the three-year rolling plan was absent.

## 6.9 Gender Equity as a Priority within UDW

UDW and especially its constituencies have claimed historically, not unjustifiably, a series of transformation achievements. These, however, were not without a series of protracted struggles. The concerted efforts of the student movement and the only union of the time, COMSA, led to the 60% first year African student intake in 1995, long before such steps were even thought of by other universities. Without the death of young student M. Makhabane in 2000, Dr. Ramashala’s leadership would not have acceded to the serious steps to accommodate the burning issues of destitute students (Interviews with S. Ndlela, X. Shange, N.A Ngcobo).

In such a university, one would expect that additional progressive equity measures could be widely welcomed and implemented. Thus the question “Was gender equity a key priority of implementation at your institution? Justify your answer with concrete examples or comments”, was of key importance as the responses of

the interviewees would be seen as a barometer of the existence of such transformation measures.

It became obvious in the process that gender equity was not a key priority for UDW and its management. It surfaced that gender issues were usually dealt with as an “ad hoc” aspect of human resource policies or transformation. When groups of women took up gender issues they considered important, it became evident to them that these were not integrated into the university’s policies and functions (Interview with Prof. U. Bob).

The Director of Equity boldly said that **“equity is synonymous with other priorities, i.e. race”**, meaning that gender was basically a secondary consideration in human resource (Interview with Ms. Mbanjwa). It surfaced that the lack progress regarding gender equity were not due to lack of effort. The Manager of Human Resources, for example, felt that there was serious emphasis placed on gender equity, albeit periodically and occasionally, although there was no official implementation plan, policy, or time frames that could boost such initiatives (Interview with Mrs R. Singh). Other members of the Human Resources Department interviewed, were clear that gender never became a priority at UDW, while there was some movement in relation to race equity and affirmative action (Interviews with Mrs S. Pillay; Mr. T. Singarum and A. Ramsaroop).

There were contradictory perceptions amongst the interviewees at UNISA, and although it was accepted that racial equity was much more prominent and evident than gender equity, there was a belief that women **“were given opportunities to apply for jobs at UNISA”**, which means that there are at present hopes for more gender equity in employment patterns (Interview with Dr. Nkwe). However, it never became clear from the interviews whether these opportunities were transformed into tangible employment practices at all.

The overall belief of the key respondents associated with the present project was that gender equity was not a key priority area of implementation at UDW. This reality was seriously affected by the lack of mechanisms, channels and policy initiatives that would play a key role in the advancement of women within the

existing institutional structures. In such a landscape, it became evident that the laws of the country and their meticulous descriptions and encouragement regarding affirmative action and gender equity were but an empty letter in terms of implementation measures at UDW.

#### **6.10 Racial Equity and Gender Equity**

Racism was historically the most blatant form of discrimination in South Africa and the world in general, and despite the equal emphasis affirmative action measures have put on both racial and gender equity, race has inevitably taken precedence over gender not only in South Africa, but internationally (Sellick 1995; Varon 1996). The next question (*“There is a general belief that racial equity has received priority over gender equity at South African institutions. Do you think this is a reality? If yes, what do you see as the reasons?”*), attempted to confirm or reject such assumptions/hypotheses.

There was a unanimous agreement on the part of the respondents with the assertion that race equity had received priority over gender equity in South African institutions. This was somehow justified as “race” was historically and at present “under-represented” at institutions. This means that racial categories (with Africans as the key social category) were historically prejudiced at tertiary educational institutions such as UDW. One respondent indicated that this was a tangible reality at UDW as Indian females were well represented at all levels of academic and administrative echelons of the university. Such a reality was exacerbated by the lack of African women applicants for advertised posts. Thus inevitably the focus was (and is) on race rather than gender equity. It was asserted by the Director of Equity that some departments were 100% Indians with a 50-50 gender ratio, while the Health Sciences were seriously dominated by Indian females (Interview with Ms. Mbanjwa). There was a belief that in such a situation a “narrow view” predominated in the selection and other processes and the practice and principle of race over gender equity was seen as a way out in terms of affirmative action (Interview with Y. Moodley).

Given the historical prejudices associated with the apartheid legacy, the emphasis on race rather than gender equity could be seen as justified because racism was described as the most pertinent form of discrimination that needed to be eliminated. Sexism, on the other hand, was seen as a social prejudice permeating all societies. In many ways the lack of mobilisation on the part of women has not yet led to a serious challenge in the same way racism has been challenged, both internationally and in South Africa (interview with Prof.U. Bob).

It was obvious that racial equity has received priority over its gender equivalent at UDW, as it has in other South African institutions. Several reasons were advanced for such a reality.

#### 6.11 Barriers to Employment Equity

Despite the affirmative action and gender equity measures as encapsulated in the progressive legislation and several levels of implementation, there are institutions and firms where barriers exist in regard to equity. The next question (*Were there any significant barriers to employment equity at your institution?*), was set in order to assess the opinions and ideas of the interviewees regarding such impediments.

- The first barrier to employment equity as identified by the Director of Equity was the **scarcity** of capable and experienced potential employees in the designated groups. There was the belief that this scarcity was exacerbated by the exploitation of student assistants and other contract staff who do not become a part of the establishment. This led to scarcity of skills at various levels and constituted a major impediment even in key departments.
- The **contract regime**, planned and implemented during Ramashala's reign, was described as a major barrier for employment of individuals from designated groups. This strategy of offering contracts and not permanent posts saw talented, well-educated, African people, including women, being

forced to move to greener pastures after acquiring skills and experience. The lack of a coherent human resources and employment policy that could have a significant effect on affirmative action and gender equity appointments was never in place. Thus the potential filtering of individuals from designated group into the system never occurred.

- The **low and non-competitive salaries** both at academic and administrative levels were identified as a serious impediment to employment and gender equity. Additionally, at various high academic levels the importation of African “expatriate” academics was seen and described as a serious barrier to South African Africans even in “development posts”. The latter felt that they could not compete with the foreign Africans who arrived in the country with very high academic qualifications and wide experience. Such a reality was described as another open violation of the three-year rolling plans (Interview with Ms. Mbanjwa).
- All these realities (or perceptions) were instrumental in the creation of various African staff forums, both academic and non-academic. All of them were short-lived, with the possible exception of the South African African Forum, which was established in early 2003 when Dr. S. Cooper became the Rector at UDW. As one of the key players in the effort to create African and South African African Forums said:

**“There has been a complete disregard of Africans at all levels of UDW’s life throughout the years. Ramashala was not running the university, as she was absent most of the time travelling the world, in fact the university was run by two Indian males, Prof Soni and S. Govindsamy. Those who could not see that were blind. South African Africans were almost absent from the leaderships of the two unions, COMSA and ASA, until recently. Thus the voice of South African Africans was completely lost. We missed all the opportunities to make UDW a representative place. However, I must say that it is also us to blame because we**

were not united. Every time we tried to do something there were internal fights and all efforts were unsuccessful. We lost all the opportunities to advance our people seriously and gave the opportunity to management to employ large numbers of African foreigners. These people are well qualified, but they feel very superior to us, they have a very wrong attitude. Some of them do not treat us, or our students, they look down on our own South African people. The scarcity of South African Africans is artificial, because we were never given the opportunity to advance, gain experience and excel”

(Interview with an academic and activist involved in attempts to unite “South African African” staff at the university in different forums. He prefers to remain anonymous).

- The same problems seemed to be prevalent at various levels of post-graduate students who have attempted at several instances since 1997 to organise themselves as a pressure group. It needs to be remembered that the 3-year rolling plans identified talented post-graduate students in various disciplines as potential members of “intellectual/academic pools” for employment equity purposes in the quest for growth and development according to race and gender. As one of the pioneers of such efforts said:

“For postgraduate students who were interested in the advancement of Africans at UDW, the 3-year rolling plans meant nothing because it was well-known that Ramashala and those around her were not serious about affirmative action and equity. This is one of the reasons we established the postgraduate student bodies, to operate as a pressure group, because we knew we had to fight for those who aspired to become academics in development posts, administrators etc, those who wanted to make a difference at UDW. However, things are always unclear at UDW, we started well, we had a good relation with the SRC, but the problem was that the supply of jobs and employment opportunities were much less than the demand. The majority of

postgraduate students aspired to work at UDW, because they did not see much chance for work outside. Many of them were also working as student assistants and they had gained some experience on the job. They had aspirations for these jobs to become permanent one day, despite the illegal contract system introduced by Ramashala. This expectation caused serious problems amongst the leadership and rank and file of the organisation. That is what led to its demise”.

(Interview with N.A.Ngcobo, first president of the UDW Postgraduate Students' Association).

- **Decision -making** mechanisms were historically in male hands at UDW. These decision-makers had little interest or understanding of gender and gender equity issues.
- Opportunities for **skills development** were historically limited for the UDW disadvantaged despite the existence of progressive legislation such as the Skills Development Act.  
(Interviews with Ms. Mbanjwa, Mrs. R. Singh, Mr. Y. Moodley, Mr. T. Singarum)
- The work environment tends to be restrictive, hostile and disempowering (Interview with Prof.U. Bob)
- There was **no serious implementation process** for existing rules and procedures that advance employment equity (Interview with Mr. Y. Moodley, Mr.T. Singarum).

At UNISA one of the main barriers to gender equity was thought to be the stereotypes that men have about women even at this time and age. It was felt that such stereotypes should be fought in all available platforms, because even at meetings women academics and other staff are treated without respect, and such attitudes need to be fought tooth and nail because they are outdated and retrogressive (Interview with Dr. Nkwe).

It became apparent then, that there were significant barriers to employment equity at UDW, which were rooted on a wide variety of different reasons and rationale. There were structural, personal, functional, historical administrative and procedural impediments to the serious implementation of affirmative action and gender equity. There was evidence of a serious lack of “political will’ to rectify the imbalances of the past.

#### **6.12 Capacity-Building and Existing Systems**

As already mentioned, the legacy of apartheid has created a serious lack of capacity amongst the previously oppressed majority of South Africa’s people, with the Africans facing the most important burden in the creation of a democratic, non sexist and egalitarian society. Thus, the following question (*Was your institution able to build capacity among the employment equity beneficiaries? What systems were put in place to ensure such capacity building? Can you provide concrete examples?*), was set in order to assess the possibilities and opportunities provided by UDW as an institution *vis a vis* capacity building amongst those who benefited from the existing legislation.

It became obvious that although capacity building was considered an institutional priority and all departments should have been providing training to all those who were entitled to it, this was not the case. The University has a department of training, which is obligated to co-ordinate and organise the various activities described in the Skills Development Act. These would take the form of seminars, workshops etc. A skills audit was carried out and the development processes associated with capacity building were determined by the responses received from the staff or the unions.

There is a belief that during the audit large numbers of people did not respond and thus the opportunities were missed. The audit unfortunately dealt with staff at higher levels of employment, meaning that those in the middle and lower ranks did not really have the opportunity to be trained for management or other specific jobs and technical skills. This was, in many ways, to the detriment of such employees (Interview with Ms. Mbanjwa).

It has become obvious that the section of staff that benefited from such initiatives were those in the “development posts” as identified in the three-year rolling plans. This means that administrative staff in dire need of skills development was ignored (Interview with Mrs R. Singh). It surfaced that there have been no monitoring mechanisms that could evaluate the existing skills development programmes and there have been no follow-up in regard to the existing initiatives. There is no performance evaluation after the skills development workshops. This is partly due to the fact that there is an under-staffed Quality Assurance Department. In such a process it becomes obvious that the existing shortcomings are perpetuated, while there is no system in place for training for those in higher positions. This creates problems as it has been assumed that those who have achieved a certain high or higher middle management position are not in need of training and capacity building. Such an assumption, however, does not take into account the new developments in technological advancement, administrative and research/academic endeavours etc (Interviews with Mr. T. Singarum, Mrs. R. Singh).

There were also several other weaknesses identified within the training department, which needed to be rectified (Interviews with Mrs. R .Singh, Ms. Mbanjwa, Mr. T. Singarum). The basic problem was seen as the lack of a coherent set of policies that would pave the way towards solving problems of equitable selection of skills development candidates; evaluation; monitoring of systems and functions and the combination of administrative, support, research and academic capacity building.

It can be said, then, that UDW has been lacking in its efforts to build capacity amongst its staff members, especially those who ought to benefit from such initiatives, based not only on existing legislative frameworks, but also from the parameters set by the institution’s three-year rolling plans.

### **6.13 Research Incentives for Women Researchers**

As already stated, one of the key ingredients identified in the developmental arena for gender equity was the building of research capacity of women researchers and academics who have been historically sidelined. This field is considered a priority, due to the legacy of apartheid and gender discrimination. Hence, the next question *(Have there been any tangible research (or other) incentives for women*

researchers (staff) at an institutional level? If yes , please describe), was set in order to identify the existence (if any)of such initiatives at UDW.

It surfaced that all research initiatives undertaken at UDW as well as the systems in place, are for all staff without preference to women. All systems and procedures associated with research were geared towards such principles. Equity at UDW is seen as “**everyone is equal**” (Interview with Mrs. R. Singh). The available facilities and incentives that apply to those who qualify are the same across the board and special attention has been given to those who have been productive in research and publishing (Interview with Mrs. R. Singh). These realities exist despite the efforts undertaken to encourage women to participate more actively in various regional and national programmes, especially those initiated by the National Research Foundation (NRF). Even in such initiatives the participation of women has been described as limited (Interviews with Mr. Y. Moodley, Prof. U. Bob).

While there is a nationally recognised reward system for publications, there is no reward system at UDW. The research incentives for postgraduate students has been described as absolutely pathetic. Thus, for a Master’s degree the highest research grant is R5000 and for a doctorate, R10 000. This is in comparison with a R70 000 offered to a Ph.D student in the field of civil society research at the University of Natal ([www.nu.ac.za](http://www.nu.ac.za)). Such figures compare very poorly indeed with grants at universities such as the Universities of Cape Town, Witwatersrand, Pretoria, and Rhodes as interviews with members of the UDW Postgraduate Students’ Association has revealed (The interviewees wish to remain anonymous as they are still pursuing their studies).

A research reward in this sense needs to be seen as different from postgraduate student assistance that in most cases is extremely low (Interview with Ms. Mbanjwa). One part time staff member and researcher has said:

**“There have been great injustices done to women researchers, but also to all researchers at UDW, because of many reasons. Sometimes one feels completely de-motivated and demoralised when she applies for funds for postgraduate studies, either at UDW through her department**

or the NRF. There are no incentives for women and this is obvious when one discusses these things with those responsible in the Research Division or the NRF. When the NRF comes to visit, we challenge them, asking them how can we build excellence amongst young female researchers when staff members with distinctions apply for funds and are ignored? The UDW Research Division, on the other hand, always say their hands are tied, there are no funds etc”.

(Interview with staff member and postgraduate student. She prefers to remain anonymous).

At UNISA there have been various programmes associated with research incentives for academics and other staff members, but strict academic criteria were used for the funding, with the result that women did not benefit directly from such initiatives (Interviews with Dr. Pretorius, Dr. Nkwe). It was established that there were research funds available for both new and established researchers, but there was no visible preference to women (Interview with Prof Finlayson).

The general feeling at UDW was that, with a very few exceptions, there have been no tangible research or other incentives for women researchers at an institutional level. This was due to a variety of existing and past realities inherent to the institution.

#### **6.14 Monitoring and the Advancement of Women**

Nationally there have been a number of steps undertaken by the relevant authorities to monitor the advancement of affirmative action and gender equity. These have been stipulated in the existing legislation. The next question (*“Were there implementation or monitoring mechanisms to ensure the advancement of women in terms of achieving decision-making and leadership positions? Do you have any concrete examples or further comments?”*), was set in order to assess the opinions and ideas of the interviewees in terms of the implementation and monitoring that ensures the advancement of women within the institution.

The general response was that the institution has not taken gender equity seriously, nor race equity, for that matter. The Director of Equity indicated that the pronouncements about equity were not accompanied by action in the form of implementation of affirmative action and gender equity. It was strongly felt that both race and gender advancement was not even achieved in middle management levels as the statistics indicated, let alone in top management positions (Interview with Ms. Mbanjwa).

This reality was the result of the lack of a system as well as the lack of training facilities and opportunities even for middle managers. Thus, the Human Resources Manager at the university, i.e. the second most senior manager in the department, admitted that she has never been trained. There are no channels for professional and personal development and growth. There are no systems that would identify women to be groomed for future leadership positions. Given the rigidity of staff promotions within UDW, there have been no formal plans and procedures leading to succession. The lack of succession planning procedures, as well as the paucity of training opportunities, creates serious impediments to gender equity and advancement. The lack of mentorship within departments also has negative effects on the process of achieving gender equity. The example of the previous Director of Human Resources was cited as confirmation of the non-existence of training and succession planning. While it was understood that she would train someone in order to succeed her and lead the department, this never materialised. The problems facing the department in terms of reconstruction and operational initiatives were blamed squarely on the lack of planning and implementation of rules and procedures in terms of affirmative action and gender equity advancement.

## **6.15            Conclusion**

Interviewees were unrestrained in their responses to researcher's questions, answering frankly and freely. It was evident from the responses, especially to questions relating to empowerment and advancement of women that UDW had not prioritised these gender issues on its transformation agenda. The responses showed a clear bias for a narrow focus on racial transformation.

It is hoped that the same vigor with which racial equity is addressed can be directed at achieving gender equity at UDW. Although this does not seem probable in the near future, the researcher sensed that some interviewees at UDW were hopeful of change.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **ANALYSIS OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND FACULTY PROFILE**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the second of the two streams of empirical research upon which this study is based viz. an analysis of the past and existing employment structures of the university, which are utilized in a comparative form. A comparative perspective is also in use in this section of the analysis.

Initially, the background to the context within which the three-year rolling plans were drafted and submitted to the relevant authorities, is examined. This section is followed by an analysis of the employment profile of the university, as it existed before the drafting of the three-year rolling plans. Thereafter, the rolling plans are analysed in turn and conclusions are drawn. This analysis is followed by the interpretation and examination of the interviews with key stakeholders who were directly involved with the processes related to the equity context at the university over the years.

#### **7.2 The Background of the Three-year Rolling Plan**

The passing of the various equity laws and bills created a climate of anticipation and expectations amongst the disadvantaged groups at UDW. This was basically the result of the belief that the monitoring and evaluating mechanisms established through public policy measures would have a positive effect on the university's management in its anticipated efforts to adjust its personnel equity plans and implementation with the requirements of the legislation.

The equity component in the staff complements of the university was a crucial ingredient of the national plans for Higher Education, hence the collaboration between the key departments associated with this crucial aspect can be understood as a point of departure. As has been elaborated earlier, the various research efforts, forums, debates and networking amongst various historically disadvantaged sections of the Higher Education landscape had a direct effect on the structuring and promulgation of progressive equity laws. In this process a number of academics and researchers who had contributed positively to the debates and discussions subsequently played important roles in the shaping of the policy of the Education Department through its various phases and Ministers (from Minister Bhengu to the present incumbent, Kader Asmal).

In this process of debate and interrogation, equity was a fundamental component of the National Plan for Higher Education, which included amongst other things the following:

- Size and shape of the Higher Education system.
- Overall growth and participation rates at all levels.
- Financial forecasts for the Higher Education system.
- Financial aid targets.
- Broad student enrolment targets.
- Output targets for graduates.
- Other knowledge targets.
- Equity targets for staff
- Equity targets for students.
- Institutional and programme mixes.

For these parameters to be implemented within the required timeframes, institutional strategic plans were to be structured which would be influenced by student demands; labour market requirements; societal equity; the country's developmental needs; and new demands for specialized knowledge.

The three year rolling plans, which were the main documents expected to be produced by all universities in the country, would attempt to rectify the existing weaknesses within the various institutions by assessing and putting implementation processes in place regarding:

- Quality and performance improvement plans.
- Student access and development plans.
- Academic development plans.
- Staff recruitment, equity and development plans.
- Research development plans
- Infrastructural development plans.
- Capital management plans.
- Business plans.

In short, the three-year rolling plans were thought to be the panacea for the whole restructuring of the tertiary educational landscape with their concomitant ramifications for the future. These would include a series of radical steps such as institutional mergers, re-formulation of programmes, but above all financial cuts in the spirit of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR), the economic blueprint of the ruling ANC government. This economic blueprint, that replaced the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), the initial economic programme of the Government adopted in 1994, was based on the premise of serious social cuts, including those in education, welfare and social services.

UDW, under the new leadership of Dr. M. Ramashala, was informed like all other universities in the country that it had to submit its first three-year rolling plans to the Education Department by mid-August 1998. This was to be a substantial document that had to satisfy the parameters and requirements of the Education Department for continued future funding of the institution. It is interesting to note that one of the fundamental requirements of the Department was the meeting of the national student and staff equity targets. While UDW had for several years achieved its equity targets in

terms of students, the situation was completely different regarding the staff component. Other key issues to be addressed in the proposed rolling plan were the student enrollment profile; efficiency and effectiveness of the institution; and inter-institutional cooperation. The latter component was obviously an initial step for all those involved to start planning ahead for the already silently accepted merger debate and decision, which in KwaZulu Natal would mean the merger of UDW and the University of Natal.

### **7.3 UDW Approach to the Three-year Rolling Plan**

The three-year rolling plan for a tertiary institution such as UDW was a major self-evaluating process for a number of reasons:

- The university had a new top management with a widely accepted African woman at its helm. Dr. Ramashala was one of the key figures in the widely acknowledged Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), headed by Archbishop Tutu.
- There was a serious breakdown of communication between the new leadership of the institution and one of the two unions, viz. the Combined Staff Association (COMSA). Initially the Academic Staff Association (ASA) was in support of the new leader.
- There was still friction between the top management of the institution and large sections of the university staff due to the continued suspension of six trade union leaders following the recommendations of the Gautschi Commission of Inquiry into the disturbances of the period between 1995 -1996.
- There was some uncertainty amongst non-African staff members, especially in the university's support services, due to the perceived Africanisation advocated by the new equity laws, the tertiary education plans and the appointment of an African female rector with a short history in the country, but with close contacts with the ruling governing party. In addition, the Voluntary Severance Packages to a large number of middle and senior managers in various departments had created serious vacuums in a number of important sections of the university administration, including human resources.

Despite these realities, the UDW academic and administrative machinery produced the required research, and statistical and other relevant materials that would help the university authorities deliver the various documents within the stringent timeframes set by the Education Department. Given UDW's historical legacy of various types of struggles, the conflicting interests between management and staff, and a restless student population belonging largely to the poor and underprivileged sections of the population, the university's academic and support community had to assess, amongst other things, its own strengths and weaknesses at all levels of teaching and research; efficiencies and inefficiencies in terms of utilization of its resources; and its competitiveness at provincial and national levels.

There was a highly "structured plan of action" prepared by the Management Committee of the University headed by Dr. Ramashala, whose **first step** was to disseminate existing statistical information to the Deans of the various faculties. This information was to be studied by the various departments and units. The faculty members were then obligated to present verbal positions to management teams, together with a draft document regarding the current situation in the department.

The **second phase** focused on the systems data collection and analysis, with the main emphasis on assembling the South African Post Secondary Education (SAPSE) data for projections. These data were to become the foundation of the projections and analysis for the years 1999, 2000, and 2001. This phase was to be driven by the Registrar Academic and a "Task Team" including several academics and Management Committee (MANCO) members. This team was to prepare the first draft of the rolling plan, which was to be approved by the Vice Chancellor. This plan was then to be workshopped before its next phase.

The **third phase** was called **the refinement phase** and included a series of steps to be undertaken by faculty members at all levels:

- The first step was the distribution of the draft to all the faculties, which were obligated to debate, discuss and make various comments on the draft.

- The faculties were then obligated to give a feedback to the task team.
- Student formations (i.e. the elected Student Representative Council-SRC, as well as the various clubs and societies affiliated to it) were required to make comments and suggestions on the draft.
- The task team was to collect all these comments and feedback and incorporate them into the second draft of the 3-year institutional rolling plan.

It is interesting to note that one of the key differences in the approach to the consultative process, as it took place at Wits and UDW, was the participation of the unions. While at Wits the then Rector was seen as encouraging the full and active participation of the majority union on campus, NEHAWU, a COSATU affiliate, at UDW, the dominant union, COMSA, was never officially invited, but participated in several meetings as an observer. In fact, after 1997, the UDW management took away various institutional privileges from this majority union, such as its voting presence at the university council and in even minor selection committees for staff appointments. The fact that the Wits Vice-Chancellor privatised almost all support services at the university and all NEHAWU members were retrenched, while the UDW Vice-Chancellor closed down several academic departments as ‘uneconomical’, shows almost conclusively that the 3-year rolling plans were an exercise in futility given the wide-ranging mandates bestowed upon senior managements by the Department of Education. To be precise, as far as equity is concerned, the majority of the NEHAWU workers at Witwatersrand were, in fact, Africans, while at UDW the majority of academics retrenched from the academic departments were Black women.

UDW’s second draft of the 3-year rolling plan was to be studied thoroughly by the University’s Planning Committee and then by the equally powerful Finance Committee. These are important Committees where almost all university’s constituencies are represented (with the exclusions of the majority trade union, COMSA). They have the power to make decisions, which have to be ratified by the University Council, the highest decision-making body of the university. These Committees had historically a small number of experts who were instrumental in

shaping the opinion of other members and influencing them. This pattern of functioning and decision-making was also evident in similar committees at the University of the Witwatersrand (Interview with F. Barchiesi, Sociology Department, University of the Witwatersrand).

The 3<sup>rd</sup> draft of the 3-year rolling plan was to be completed after the deliberations and decisions taken by these two committees, following which, the Senate of the University was to make its decision on the document. The Senate is institutionally the body of senior academics and a few other representatives (COMSA and the Student Representative Council as observers) that make decisions on academic matters. These decisions also had to be ratified by the University Council. Following the Senate's decision, the final draft of the 3-year rolling plan was to be completed before it entered its final phase.

The presentation phase was to include the Management Committee's Final Report, a University Council Review and the subsequent submission to the Department of Education, which was to take place on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1998.

It needs to be said that nationally the planning, implementation and acceptance of the 3-year rolling plans did not involve many people in the faculties, as there was a general feeling amongst academics that any serious interrogation of the processes and questions involved could be seen as retrogressive, anti-government or even "reactionary". The structuring and restructuring of the educational landscape and future configurations were debated seriously only amongst senior management bureaucrats, some academics from Education faculties and academic and other activists who had a completely different understanding of the dynamics of this public and social policy than that of the Education Department consultants and functionaries.

There were several key questions associated with the three-year rolling plans, which the various faculties and departments had to answer after serious discussions and deliberations. Many of these questions could not be answered, however, as most of the

departments had never created the capacity amongst their staff to seriously research high failure rates; attitudes towards the taught subject; the performance of the lecturers and the content of lectures. The legislation that made Quality Assurance Offices compulsory in all universities was implemented much later at UDW. Historically, academics at universities such as UDW have much heavier lecturing loads than those in historically white universities because of staff limitations and financial cuts. This was also one of the reasons for a seriously skewed distribution of students in different courses at UDW. For many years, these academic staffing problems were the reason that postgraduate studies were not advanced, especially amongst the disadvantaged groups of students. Yet it is through solid post-graduate programmes and meticulous preparation of promising students that equity plans could be achieved: by employing young and talented African post-graduate males and females academic and administrative staff.

One of the most important hallmarks of comprehensive, quality instructions and lectures is the availability of instruction material for students at all levels of learning. In this sense the material resources and services of the library is of vital importance in the process of proper tuition and the acquisition of knowledge. Given the historical legacies of the past and the social composition and class stratification of the UDW students, it is accepted that the majority of them cannot afford to purchase even first year compulsory books, which are exorbitantly priced due to exchange control fluctuations. There have been some faculties at UDW, such as Engineering, Pharmacy and Commerce, where first and second year students have been obligated to purchase introductory first and second year books in order to successfully complete their first year. Other faculties, such as Arts and Humanities provide their students at all levels (including post-graduate) with study-guides and course packs, thus violating international copyright laws. Knowledge, however, cannot become the privilege of the few, especially at universities such as UDW, where historically the budget for library books and specialized journals was extremely limited when compared with historically white universities. The “Reserve section” of the UDW library has been the repository of lecture notes of departments of the university, where the vast majority of students

are obligated to study and photocopy additional reading and research material. It can be understood thus, that under such circumstances it would be very difficult for academic staff to have procedures in place for assessing the quality of instruction. The latter is not only dependent on the innovation, zest and enthusiasm of academic or research staff within a given establishment, but also on the conditions that allow for proper and comprehensive tuition and instruction and are conducive to acquisition of knowledge. In this sense, the innovative educational models employed in some departments and schools, which were not supplemented by technological and other material resources, did not have the expected developmental results.

One of the legacies of apartheid and the destructive educational system, especially in the African areas of the country, was the entry into university of large numbers of under-prepared students. This was one of the major problems that faced UDW historically, especially after the transformation process and the gradual “Africanisation” of first entry students. This was a problem that was also faced at Wits and other universities, but not as severely as at UDW or other historically Black institutions. It was hoped that teaching and research staff at UDW would be able to suggest innovative ways of addressing the crucial need of under-prepared students as part of the 3-year rolling plans.

It was obvious that the most important aspect of the proposed rolling plans was the issue of equity. The management of the university was well aware that there were serious problems in meeting the required staff equity targets in terms of race, gender and academic and educational credentials. Hence it was obvious that several decisive and even radical steps had to be undertaken to rectify these glaring imbalances. There was a serious need to undertake developmental steps in procedures leading to equity, and for the various departments to discover ways of addressing the situation.

In this sense the lack of equity could also be seen as the basis for the lack of community outreach programmes undertaken by most university departments. The attitude of staff was one of indifference towards such programmes if there was no

funding available, despite the exuberance and commitment displayed by various departments and academics following the first democratic elections of 1994. Community outreach programmes faced the same problems at other universities, such as Wits, despite the fact that there were a much larger number of political activists in the latter. In most cases such programmes cannot be sustained without at least the basic material and financial resources.

One of the important aspects to be tackled in the context of the 3-year rolling plans was the duplication of courses in various departments and faculties within the same university or in regional institutions. This was a terrain of knowledge that was contested by academics with different ideas and paradigms throughout the country. It was seen as a subtle way of bringing together various departments, institutes, faculties and even universities, so that the future merger plans could subtly become an integral part of a “long term programme”.

Research activities of each department and faculty were also tied to the supervision of post-graduate students, especially at Masters and doctoral levels. Although there were departments at UDW with large numbers of staff and undergraduate students, there was never a synergy and co-operation between them, with the result that large numbers of students never continued their studies to postgraduate level and subsequently dropped out. This was detrimental to the various facets of the SAPSE formula and the continued funding of the institution by the Department of Education. The lack of proper and scientific supervision of Masters and doctoral students had serious financial repercussions for the university and led to loss of revenue.

The three-year rolling plan at UDW hoped to assess the successes and failures of the University at the various levels of its “academic enterprise”. It was hoped that its implementation would create a new environment of equity at all levels, efficiency, accountability and excellence. Amalgamations, integration, and mergers of departments, institutes and programmes were envisaged that would ultimately lead to a restructuring and a rebirth of UDW.

In fact, these were the plans and aspirations of the new top management of the university. These documents formed a basis for equity, excellence and transformation. The question is whether this was done only on paper, or in reality.

## **7.4 The UDW Strategic Planning Initiative**

### **7.4.1 The Background**

The “Strategic Planning Initiative: Management Information” was the first step upon which the three-year rolling plans of the University of Durban Westville was to be based. This was an exercise undertaken by the University’s Human Resources Department in collaboration with academic faculties, departments, support units and institutes at UDW, as well with the various administrative units, such as student services, registration, and the postgraduate office. It was basically an audit of the university staff at all levels as well as student statistics in all faculties and levels of learning. This would hopefully give an opportunity to the senior management of the university and its task teams to assess, examine and analyse the existing statistical information and plan ahead.

The information at hand, which will be outlined in the following pages, pinpointed the extremely difficult task that lay ahead for the various groups trusted with putting UDW on the path to gender and racial equity, transformation and accountability, in short towards an African University of Excellence in accordance with its Mission Statement.

The audit and its results will be outlined in terms of both gender and racial composition and equity patterns in a systematic way, so that comparative figures and conclusions can be easily drawn. The first figures will be related to the various non-academic/support departments, where both gender and racial equity are presented.

Before the analysis proceeds, one needs to understand a number of important issues associated with these departments:

- A good number of staff in the departments under investigation took voluntary severance packages when they were offered in 1997. The majority of them were in the lower ranks and /or middle management in these departments, but there were a few of them in the upper echelons of service. Some of the latter were from the Human Resources/Personnel Department. This resulted in the short and medium term dysfunction and/or inefficiency of this department, despite the appointment of a full-time Director, following a highly visible and democratic process.
- There were a number of African labourers and artisans to be found in the Technical Services/Maintenance Division of the university, unlike other sections where the presence of African people was very scarce. Some of these workers were recruited from the privately run company, Technical and Support Services (TSS), on the insistence of the Combined Staff Association /COMSA in 1997. TSS was a company that was employed as a sub-contractor by UDW, and most of its workers joined COMSA to protect themselves from the various anti-labour practices of their employer. Ultimately the union ensured that a good number of these workers were absorbed as full-time employees of the University with all the benefits.
- Most of these departments were relatively small, especially after the introduction of voluntary severance packages.
- In some departments “student assistants” were employed, a practice which in later years became the norm in UDW’s administrative departments. This practice addressed the shortage of staff in such departments where the staff had taken early retirement packages.

#### **7.4.2            The Administrative Profile Statistical Data**

The following analysis will examine a number of departments within the administrative apparatus of the university so that a clear picture will emerge in terms of gender and race equity within the establishment.

#### 7.4.2.1 The Committees Department

Rank description	White			Coloured			Indian			African			<b>TOTAL</b>		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
GRADE 7	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
GRADE 9	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	3	0	3
GRADE 12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	3	3
GRADE 13	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>

In the year of the audit this was an 'all Indian' department without a single African person in a staff of nine. There were three Indian women in the Department, one employed as a secretary and two as Senior Word Processing Operators. These were the lowest grade jobs to be found in the Department, despite the fact that two of the women had a longer service history than several male colleagues in the Department (University of Durban Westville, Non-Academic Departments, Human Resources/ Financial Review, Committees 1998).

#### 7.4.2.2 Human Resources

Rank description	White			Coloured			Indian			African			<b>TOTAL</b>		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
GRADE 5	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
GRADE 7	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
GRADE 9	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	1	2	1	3
GRADE 10	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	1	2
GRADE 11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6	0	0	0	0	6	6
GRADE 12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	2
GRADE 13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>16</b>

This was the Department hardest hit by exits due to the voluntary severance packages in December 1997: all three Assistant Directors left the university. This inevitably led to serious problems, both in the short and medium terms. It became obvious that the synergy and continuity in the department was interrupted, even though the new Director of Human Resources was appointed on the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 1997 (University of Durban Westville, Non-Academic Departments, Human Resources/ Financial Review, Human Resources 1998:7).

It is interesting to note that the same White female staffer who was appointed as the Director was the only one in grade 5, while the next senior person in the department was an Indian male at grade 7, while one African male, one Indian male and one Indian female were in grade 9. There were no African staffers at all (male or female) in grades 10 to 13. There was only one Indian male in this category, with the rest being women. Thus of the 16 staff in the department 12 were females, including the Director and one other middle manager, with the rest of the female staff being in the lower grades. There were also two staffers in the Department who were recorded in the official audit as ‘unclassified’. Both were African females. (University of Durban Westville, Non-Academic departments. Human Resources/Financial Review. Human Resources, 1998).

#### 7.4.2.3 Computer Services /Administration

<b>TABLE 3: COMPUTER SERVICES/ADMINISTRATION EMPLOYEE RANK/GENDER/RACE STATISTICS FOR 1998</b>															
Rank description	White			Coloured			Indian			African			<b>TOTAL</b>		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
GRADE 7	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	4	0	0	0	4	0	4
GRADE 9	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	5	1	0	1	5	1	6
GRADE 10	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
GRADE 11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>13</b>

These services include the Administrative Computer Services, the Academic Computer Services, programming, computer systems and networks, telecommunications and facilities. The ITS packaged software introduced in 1997 shifted the focus of the section into end-user support for several years and thus an information technology infrastructure existed at UDW with getaways to various national networks. The department's staff also provided occasional training and support services to the wider university community. It was an amalgamated department that combined various technological sections scattered around various locations at the university for a number of years. This created a variety of serious logistical and organisational problems (Moodley 1998).

The Director of Information Technology (the Head of the Department) and his two assistant Directors took the voluntary severance package in 1997. Another three staff members in the department also received the package in 1997. Thus by mid-1998 the department had 13 full-time staff, of which three were Indian females, two of them in grade 11 and one in grade 9, one African male in grade 9, and no African females. The rest in the establishment were Indian males. However, all three "unspecified" staff in the establishment, were African males. (University of Durban Westville, Non-Academic Departments Human Resources / Financial Review. Computer Services/Administration 1998). In most cases "unspecified staff" were lowly paid student assistants who performed various duties in exchange for meagre daily allowances that were used to pay their university fees.

#### **7.4.2.4 Physical Planning**

Physical Planning was a major division within the university structure, which was responsible for the management and maintenance of all the grounds as well as a well-developed horticulture department. The voluntary severance packages depleted the section as a large number of mainly lower categories of employees left the university services, and ultimately the remaining staff members were absorbed into other existing departments, especially "Facilities".

<b>TABLE 4: PHYSICAL PLANNING EMPLOYEE RANK/GENDER/RACE STATISTICS FOR 1998</b>															
Rank description	White			Coloured			Indian			African			<b>TOTAL</b>		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
GRADE 7	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
GRADE 10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
GRADE 11	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
GRADE 13	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
GRADE 15	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	5	2	0	2	7	0	7
GRADE 17	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	6	2	0	2	8	0	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>19</b>

In 1998, according to the final human resources audit, there were 18 males in the section: four African males and fourteen Indian males, and one Indian woman. The four African males were grounds cleaners and horticultural assistants (two each in the respective job category), while the female was a secretary (University of Durban Westville, Non-academic Departments Human Resources Financial Review. Physical Planning 1998). It can be gauged then that the African staff and the only female in the Department were to be found in the lowest grades of occupational categories in the department's organogram.

#### 7.4.2.5 Technical Services

This was historically one of the well-staffed sections of the university. It included people involved in the technical, electrical, plumbing, building, air-conditioning, and maintenance services at UDW. For many years there was a highly structured hierarchy in the section with Whites controlling the senior management positions such as Director and Deputy Director, with an almost all-Indian male staff from senior maintenance technicians to the lowest paid 'factotums' and artisan's assistants.

**TABLE 5: TECHNICAL SERVICES EMPLOYEE RANK/GENDER/RACE STATISTICS FOR 1998**

Rank description	White			Coloured			Indian			African			<b>TOTAL</b>		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
GRADE 6	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
GRADE 8	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	2
GRADE 10	2	0	2	0	0	0	5	1	6	0	0	0	7	1	8
GRADE 12	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	7	0	0	0	7	0	7
GRADE 14	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
GRADE 15	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	9	12	0	12	21	0	21
GRADE 16	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>41</b>

As the demands of maintenance work increased in the mid 1990's, a number of outside sub-contracting firms undertook various technical responsibilities within the university. Prominent amongst them was TSS (Technical Support Services), which supplied a good number of African semi-skilled and skilled workers, who laboured under highly exploitative conditions, especially in terms daily remuneration. Upon joining the university-based trade union, the Combined Staff Association (COMSA), and following on a series of work-stoppages and industrial action, an agreement was entered into between the union and the university's management for a number of these African workers to join the permanent work-force of the university with all associated benefits such as housing subsidy, medical aid and pension. Their positioning was at the lowest echelons of the establishment, where they remained until the 1998 audit.

It is important to mention, however, that a large number of personnel in the department, including the Head took the voluntary severance package. Among those that left were some senior managers, middle rank artisans as well as lower paid personnel. The injection of new blood in the lower echelons of the section meant that despite these departures, there were no serious disruptions in the functions of the section.

In 1998 there were forty-one full time staff members: there was one Indian woman (a secretary), and forty males. Of them, twelve were African and all of them were in Grade 15, the second lowest grade in existence. (There was only one person in Grade 16, the lowest grade). This means that almost two years after their employment, all African workers were still in the same grade. One White male was the Head of the section (Grade 6), while there were four Indian males, two each in Grades 8 and 10 respectively. Nine Indian males were also in Grade 15. The only 'unclassified' employee in the department was an African male student assistant (University of Durban Westville, Non Academic Departments Human Resources /Financial Review. Technical Services, 1998).

Overall it can be said without doubt that the equity component in the non-academic departments was at low ebb, both in terms of race and gender. It was envisaged that this would be rectified according to national and university policy in terms of both race and gender.

#### **7.4.3 Faculty Profile Statistical Data**

The Faculty also experienced serious equity problems both in its top and middle management echelons as well as at the level of post-graduate students, some of whom were expected to provide a future pool for new equity levels in accordance with national and tertiary institution requirements. The following analysis will set the tone for the understanding of the importance of the three-year rolling plans both as significant policy documents and as a guideline for the future, where race and gender equity would be a major objective rectifying the legacy of the apartheid past.

##### **7.4.3.1 Faculty of Engineering**

The Engineering Faculty includes the departments of Chemical, Civil, Electrical and Control Engineering, General Engineering and Mechanical Engineering. Initially it attracted only Indian students, but from the early 1990's good numbers of African

students joined the Faculty, especially due to the introduction of preparatory foundation courses that were able to bridge the existing educational barriers for the previously disadvantaged students.

<b>TABLE 6: ENGINEERING EMPLOYEE RANK/GENDER/RACE STATISTICS FOR 1995</b>															
Rank description	White			Coloured			Indian			African			<b>TOTAL</b>		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
GRADE 7	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
GRADE 8	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	3	0	3
GRADE 9	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	5	0	0	0	5	0	5
GRADE 10	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	3	0	0	0	2	1	3
GRADE 11	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	6	0	0	0	1	5	6
GRADE12	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	4	0	0	0	4	0	4
GRADE 13	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	4	0	0	0	4	0	4
GRADE 14	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
GRADE 16	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
Unclassified	0	1	1	2	0	2	3	4	7	0	0	0	5	5	10
Professor	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	5	0	5
Associate professor	2	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	3	0	3	6	0	6
Senior lecturer	3	0	3	1	0	1	3	0	3	1	0	1	8	0	8
Lecturer	1	0	1	0	0	0	7	0	7	2	0	2	10	0	10
P/t lecturer	4	0	4	0	0	0	5	1	6	0	0	0	9	1	10
Demonstrator	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	3	9	0	0	0	6	3	9
Tutor	1	0	1	0	0	0	14	4	18	0	0	0	15	4	19
Graduate assistant	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>107</b>

The comparative figures in the Engineering faculty in terms of senior staff pinpoints a confirmation of the existing hypothesis as outlined earlier. In the period 1995 to 1997

there is a slight improvement in the percentages of Black Associate Professors and Professors in the Faculty. Thus, comparatively, the following patterns have emerged:

- In terms of ethnic composition there were four White and six African senior staff in 1995, with one Indian and one African added to this category in 1996. In 1997 there were six Whites, no Indian and Coloured, and the number of African decreased to six again.
- In terms of gender, however, the equity proportions continued to be completely loaded in favour of males. In the Faculty of Engineering there was not one woman to be found in the rank of Professor or Associate Professor in the period 1995-1997. This obviously compares very unfavourably with other faculties, but pinpoints mainly the legacy of apartheid (UDW Faculty of Engineering 1998:35).
- In terms of support staff the situation was evidently as dismal in terms of equity as the one described above. Thus in 1995 there was not one woman in this employment category, with one Indian woman in 1996 and again not one woman in 1997. Thus it can be said that there was minimal improvement in terms of gender equity for one year (UDW Faculty of Engineering 1998:38).

The broader picture in the Faculty in terms of the overall staff component pinpoints the confirmation of the existing hypothesis as outlined earlier, as several years after the first democratic elections in South Africa the following trends are evident:

- Of the one hundred and seven (107) staff members in 1995, nineteen were women. In 1996, sixteen out of the hundred and sixteen (116) staff members were women, and the same numbers existed in 1997. Thus there was an actual decrease in the number of women employed in the faculty over the years.

In terms of ethnic composition things seem to be different:

- Thus of the one hundred and seven (107) total staff members in the Faculty, there were seventeen White, three Coloured, seventy-eight Indian and nine African in 1995.

- The corresponding numbers in 1996 were twenty-three White, three Coloured, seventy-four Indian and sixteen African.
- The number of African staff increased to nineteen in 1997, while there were also seventy-three Indian, four Coloured and twenty White staff (UDW Faculty of Engineering 1998:40).
- The increase in the number of African staff was the result of the employment of highly qualified scholars from other parts of Africa, who sought new pastures in South Africa due to the political regime change and other professional reasons such as mobility, expansion of opportunities etc. (UDW Engineering 1998:24).

In terms of postgraduate students in the Faculty, during the period under investigation the following patterns are evident:

- There were no female White students throughout, while the number of White male students increased from one to three during this period.
- There were no Coloured female postgraduate students, with one male in this category.
- There were six Indian female postgraduate students in 1995, which decreased to five in 1996 and to four in 1997. The corresponding Indian male numbers for these years were fourteen, seventeen, and seventeen for 1997.
- There was one African male postgraduate student in 1995, one in 1996 and four in 1997. There were no African female postgraduate students in the Faculty in 1995 and 1996, but there were four in 1997.

It can be gauged then, that in Engineering some limited progress was achieved in terms of ethnic representation at postgraduate level, but this was not achievable in terms of gender, as despite very limited progress the number of women in Engineering was still very low (UDW Engineering 1998: 5-6).

### 7.4.3.2 Faculty of Arts

The Faculty of Arts, during the period under investigation, comprised of a large number of departments, including Indian Languages, Arabic, Music, Speech and Drama as well as Fine Arts, which were closed down in early 1998 following a controversial decision by the new Rector of the institution, Prof. M. Ramashala. It was historically a faculty that registered large numbers of students of all race groups.

Rank description	White			Coloured			Indian			African			<b>TOTAL</b>		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
GRADE 9	0	1	1	0	0	0	4	0	4	0	0	0	4	1	5
GRADE 10	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	4	0	0	0	3	1	4
GRADE 11	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	9	12	0	0	0	3	9	12
GRADE12	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	5	5
GRADE 13	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	2
GRADE 14	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
Unclassified	6	4	10	0	0	0	2	16	18	7	15	22	15	35	50
GRADE 13 (5/8)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
ASP tutors	6	3	9	0	0	0	8	10	18	11	6	17	25	19	44
Professor	8	2	10	0	0	0	3	3	6	1	0	1	12	5	17
Associate professor	2	2	4	0	0	0	3	1	4	0	0	0	5	3	8
Senior lecturer	5	5	10	0	0	0	9	7	16	1	2	3	15	14	29
Lecturer	12	26	38	0	0	0	25	15	40	4	2	6	41	43	84
Associate lecturer	6	2	8	0	1	1	4	13	17	4	3	7	14	19	33
P/t lecturer	18	17	35	0	0	0	5	10	15	1	4	5	24	31	55
Demonstrator	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Tutor	1	2	3	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	3	2	5
Graduate assistant	1	3	4	0	0	0	0	8	8	5	2	7	6	13	19
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>377</b>

The equity dynamics in the Arts Faculty compares favourably with most of the other faculties at UDW. This pattern can be seen as encouraging for the university and tertiary education in general.

In terms of race and gender equity the following trends can be seen in the historical period under investigation regarding the number of senior staff:

- Of the fifteen White Professors and Associate Professors in the Faculty, five (or one third) of them were women in 1995. The number of White women in this category decreased to four out of a total of thirteen for both 1996 and 1997.
- There were no Coloured men or women in this staff category for all three years.
- There were three Indian women out of nine senior positions (one third) in 1995, and five out of thirteen in 1996 and 1997.
- There was one African male and no African woman in this category in 1995, and three African males and two females in 1996 and 1997 (UDW Arts 1998:46).

It can be said then that overall there has been a comparatively steady, but slow improvement in terms of equity in the senior staff category in the period under investigation.

In terms of service staff in the Arts faculty, the following patterns can be seen:

- There was a complete absence of White support staff in the three years under investigation.
- The same is evident in terms of Coloured staff.
- There were four Indian males and no females in 1995 and 1996 and three Indian males in 1997.
- There were two African males and one female in 1995, three males in 1996 and seven males and one female in 1997(UDW Arts 1998:49).

In terms of overall gender composition, there were 221 females in the faculty out of a total staff of 417 in 1995, 208 out of 402 in 1996 and 182 out of 368 in 1997. Thus it can be gauged that there was a significant decrease of females in the period under investigation.

In terms of ethnic composition within the faculty, there were one hundred and forty (140) White, two Coloured, one hundred and eighty-seven (187) Indian and eighty-eight (88) African in 1995, one hundred and thirty-seven (137) White, four Coloured, one hundred and sixty-four (164) Indian and ninety-seven (97) African in 1996, and one hundred and eight (108) White, two Coloured, one hundred and fifty-two (152) Indian and a hundred and six (106) African in 1997(UDW Arts 1998:51).

It can be gauged then that while there were comparatively significant steps towards equity at all levels in the Faculty, these were not equal in terms of race and gender. The improvement was lower at the higher echelons of the staff component, especially in the category of professors.

In terms of postgraduate students there were thirty-three, twenty-five and twenty-five White students in the programmes during 1995, 1996 and 1997 of whom the minority in all cases were females (thirteen, eleven and nine respectively). Additionally there were six, two and three Coloured male postgraduate students respectively during these three years with the females in the majority (eight, six and five respectively) for the three years under investigation.

The majority of Indian females when compared to males were evident in these programmes as there were one hundred and twenty-one (121), eighty-three (83) and eighty-eight (88) of them compared with seventy-one, fifty-four and sixty males respectively. In terms of Africans, however, this pattern was reversed as there were eighty-two, ninety-five and a hundred and seventeen (117) males when compared to seventy-four, eighty-nine and ninety-six females registered for postgraduate degrees in the Faculty of Arts during the period under investigation (UDW Arts 1998:6).

7.4.3.3 The Faculty of Education

<b>TABLE 8: EDUCATION EMPLOYEE RANK/GENDER/RACE STATISTICS FOR 1995</b>															
Rank description	White			Coloured			Indian			African			<b>TOTAL</b>		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
GRADE 9	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	1	2
GRADE 11	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	5	0	0	0	3	2	5
GRADE12	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
GRADE 13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
GRADE 14	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	1	2
Unclassified	1	1	2	0	0	0	5	4	9	1	1	2	7	6	13
Lecturer (equivalent)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
ASP tutors	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	15	13	3	16	13	18	31
Professor	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	3	0	3
Associate professor	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	2
Senior lecturer	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	4	0	0	0	4	0	4
Lecturer	3	4	7	0	0	0	6	5	11	3	2	5	12	11	23
Associate lecturer	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	1	0	1	2	2	4
P/t lecturer	5	6	11	0	1	1	22	7	29	5	5	10	32	19	51
Demonstrator	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	6	8	0	0	0	2	6	8
Tutor	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	4	0	0	0	1	3	4
Graduate assistant	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	3	2	2	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>159</b>

The Faculty of Education has traditionally (together with the Faculty of Arts), attracted large number of students from diversified Black communities (especially Indian and African and to a lesser extent Coloured). This is because historically these communities viewed education both as a spiritual and vocational terrain of social advancement and upward mobility.

An analysis of the staff composition of senior staff during the period under investigation shows the following trends:

- In 1995 there were no women or African academics in this category of employment. There were two White and three Indian males.
- The same pattern and numbers were evident in 1996.
- In 1997 there were only four senior staff members employed in the faculty (two White and two Indian males).

In terms of total staff in the faculty during the period under investigation the following trends and patterns were evident:

- In terms of ethnic composition, in 1995 there were twenty-four Whites, one Coloured, one hundred and six (106) Indians and forty-four Africans for a total of one hundred and seventy-five (175). The total was reduced to one hundred and fifty-two (152) in 1996 with twenty-two Whites, eighty-nine Indians (a significant reduction) and forty-one Africans. There was a relatively significant increase in the number of Africans in 1997 (N=54), with seventeen Whites and ninety-one Indians.
- There were also various fluctuations in terms of gender in the overall number during this period. There were ninety-five males as opposed to eighty females in 1995, eighty-seven males and sixty-five females in 1996 and a hundred and one (101) males and sixty-one females in 1997. It becomes evident that during these three years the number of women in the Faculty decreased significantly, while the number of African staffers increased to a limited extent.

In terms of postgraduate students, the following patterns were evident:

- There were a limited number of male and female White students with seven males in 1995, five in 1996 and three in 1997, while the corresponding numbers for females were four, four and three.
- The same pattern was evident amongst Coloureds with sevens in 1995, five in 1996 and three in 1997, with the corresponding numbers for females being six, six and three.
- In terms of Indians, the female numbers were significantly larger than the males with seventy-six in 1995, eighty in 1996 and sixty-four in 1997. The corresponding

numbers for males were fifty-three, forty-three and thirty-eight. Thus it can be gauged that although there was a decrease of postgraduate female students during these years, there was a more significant decrease in the number of male postgraduate students. A similar pattern emerged in terms of African comparisons. While the numbers of female postgraduate students were one hundred and twelve (112), seventy-six and ninety-eight in the three years under investigation, the corresponding figures for males were eighty-three, sixty-five and sixty-four (UDW Education 1998:6).

The above analysis indicates beyond doubt that although there are several differences in terms of equity patterns amongst staff and postgraduate students in the faculty of Education, the disparity in terms of race and gender is significant. The improvement in race equity has been significantly stronger than its gender counterpart at all levels of staffing.

#### **7.4.3.4 Faculty of Commerce**

The Commerce faculty at UDW has always been a diversified entity with departments such as Economics, Accountancy, Public Administration and others, joining into an entity that encompasses a wide variety of academics affiliated to professional bodies, and thus benefiting more significantly than other academics, especially on financial and professional grounds. Throughout South Africa, chartered accountants or legal practitioners who belong to “professional organisations” have been historically on better remuneration packages when compared with their colleagues in the Arts or Theology for example. The faculty was therefore better able to attract staff.

During the period under investigation the equity profile of the faculty at senior staff level both in terms of race and gender was seriously flawed with a high predominance of White and Indian males. In 1995 of the ten White staff, only one was a woman, there were no Coloured senior staff, all six Indians were males and there was no African senior staff at all.

Rank description	White			Coloured			Indian			African			<b>TOTAL</b>		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
GRADE 9	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
GRADE 11	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	4	4
GRADE12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	4	4
Unclassified	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	2	3	2	1	3	3	4	7
GRADE 12 (5/8)	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
ASP tutors	1	1	2	0	0	0	4	2	6	7	4	11	12	7	19
Professor	5	1	6	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	6	1	7
Associate professor	4	0	4	0	0	0	5	0	5	0	0	0	9	0	9
Senior lecturer	4	1	5	0	0	0	5	0	5	0	0	0	9	1	10
Lecturer	4	1	5	2	1	3	8	7	15	2	0	2	16	9	25
Associate lecturer	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	2
P/t lecturer	10	2	12	0	0	0	3	1	4	2	0	2	15	3	18
Tutor	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	4	19	6	1	7	21	5	26
Graduate assistant	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	4	1	1	2	4	2	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>139</b>

Exactly the same numbers were evident in 1996 and 1997. Thus it can be said that the equity profile of the faculty in terms of both race and gender left much to be desired (UDW, Commerce 1998:35).

In terms of service staff no serious analysis can be undertaken in terms of gender and race equity as the numbers are extremely low for a serious comparative view (UDW, Commerce 1998:38).

In examining the overall staff picture of the faculty one can draw the following picture in relation to gender and ethnic composition:

- In terms of gender there were one hundred and seven (107) males and fifty-four females in 1995, in 1996 there were a hundred and seventeen (117) males and seventy-five females (a marked improvement in the numerical ratio) and in 1997, one hundred and thirty-four (134) males and seventy-nine females. It can be seen then that in the comparison between the last two years under consideration, the number of females increased significantly while the male number also increased.
- In terms of ethnic composition there were forty Whites in 1995, four Coloureds, eighty-six Indians and thirty-one Africans. In 1996 the number of Whites increased to fifty-five, there were five Coloureds, one hundred and six (106) Indians and thirty Africans. In 1997 there were fifty-two Whites, four Coloureds, one hundred and twenty-one (121) Indians and thirty-six Africans. It can be seen that while the numbers of Indians and that of Whites increased throughout the years, the number of Africans remained almost stagnant, even at the lower levels of employment (UDW, Commerce 1998: 40).

The picture regarding postgraduate student enrolment seems more encouraging, despite the fact that it is highly unlikely that African or other Black graduates would pursue a university career either in academia, research or university administration, given the wider professional and vocational opportunities offered within the private sector for these Commerce disciplines.

- During the three years under investigation there were thirty-three, thirty-four and thirty-five White postgraduate male students, with five, seven, and five females respectively.
- There were five, six and three Coloured postgraduate male students and three, four, and five females registered in the Faculty between 1995 and 1997.

- The Indian male and female postgraduates were the single most populous ethnic group with one hundred and sixteen (116), one hundred and eleven (111) and ninety-nine (99) males and seventy-nine, seventy-four and eighty-four females.
- There were also large numbers of Africans, especially in the Department of Public Administration. There were eighty-six African males in 1995, ninety-eight in 1996 and seventy-four in 1997, while the corresponding female numbers were fifty-five, fifty-seven and fifty-six respectively (UDW Commerce 1998:6).

It needs to be said that a good number of postgraduate students in the faculty, especially those in the Department of Public Administration were most likely to aspire to lower or middle management administrative and other positions within the university structures.

However, the brief overall picture given in regard to the Faculty of Commerce indicates beyond doubt that the gender and race equity at almost all levels, but especially at the top was at low ebb, and was in need of urgent redress.

#### 7.4.3.5 Faculty of Dentistry

Rank description	White			Coloured			Indian			African			<b>TOTAL</b>		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
GRADE 11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Unclassified	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	3	3
Lecturer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>						

The Faculty of Dentistry had throughout these years a very low number of staff (between ten and twelve), where (significantly) the women outnumbered the men. Thus the majority of staff in these years were women (UDW, Dentistry 1998).

7.4.3.6 Faculty of Health Sciences

<b>TABLE 11: HEALTH SCIENCES EMPLOYEE RANK/GENDER/RACE STATISTICS FOR 1995</b>															
Rank description	White			Coloured			Indian			African			<b>TOTAL</b>		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
GRADE 9	1	1	2	0	0	0	2	2	4	0	0	0	3	3	6
GRADE 10	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	2
GRADE 11	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	4	5	0	0	0	1	6	7
GRADE12	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	6	0	0	0	1	5	6
GRADE 13	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	1	2
GRADE 14	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	3	0	3
Unclassified	0	1	1	0	1	1	7	16	23	3	1	4	10	19	29
ASP tutors	1	0	1	0	0	0	3	8	11	1	0	1	5	8	13
Professor	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	2
Associate professor	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Senior lecturer	0	3	3	0	0	0	5	1	6	0	1	1	5	5	10
Lecturer	1	9	10	0	0	0	3	9	12	2	1	3	6	19	25
Associate lecturer	1	0	1	0	2	2	0	7	7	1	0	1	2	9	11
Senior lecturer-med	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
5/8 lecturer	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
P/t lecturer	8	21	29	2	0	2	35	23	58	0	3	3	45	47	92
Professor (medical)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
Lecturer (medical)	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	3	0	3
Research assistant	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1
Demonstrator	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	6	9	3	0	3	6	6	12
Graduate assistant	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>229</b>

The Health Sciences Faculty includes the disciplines of Anatomy, Pharmacology, Pharmacy and Physiotherapy, Optometry, as well as Speech and Hearing Therapy and Social Work. It operates with small numbers of highly qualified staff members, with

many lectures and practical usually performed by visiting and part-time staff in the various disciplines.

Thus in terms of senior staff (Professor and Associate Professor) there was one White female in 1995, no Coloureds, three Indian males and no Africans. In 1996 and 1997, there was one White female, four Indian males and no Africans (UDW Health Sciences 1998:34).

In terms of service staff there were only seven Indian males and one female in 1995, with the addition of an African male in 1996 (UDW Health Sciences 1998:36).

In terms of the overall composition of staff, the following picture was evident:

- In terms of gender there were a hundred and three (103) males and a hundred and thirty-four (134) females in 1995; eighty-eight (88) males and a hundred and twenty-four (124) females in 1996; and ninety-eight (98) males and a hundred and twenty-one (121) females in 1997. Given that the “care-giving” nature of the disciplines within this faculty are considered a female domain, these figures suggest that although in all cases women’s numbers were higher than those of the men, there were not really significant increases in the ratio over these three years (UDW Health Sciences 1998:39).
- In terms of ethnic composition there were fifty-one Whites, seven Coloureds, one hundred and sixty-one (161) Indians and eighteen Africans in 1995; forty-seven Whites, one Coloured, one hundred and forty-eight (148) Indians and sixteen Africans in 1996; and forty-three Whites, two Coloureds, one hundred and fifty-four (154) Indian and twenty Africans (UDW Health Sciences 1998: 40).

In terms of students, one of the most interesting phenomena is the large numbers of White young people in the undergraduate programmes, due to the fact that almost all disciplines in the faculty are not offered at the University of Natal. However, these trends do not continue at postgraduate level. Thus there were five, eight and even

White female postgraduate students in the faculty during the three years under investigation. On the contrary there were thirty-one, forty-two and thirty-six Indian female students during that period with thirteen, sixteen and eighteen Indian males having registered for postgraduate courses. There were also six, eight, and ten African females registered during that period with the corresponding numbers for African males being three, one and one (UDW Health sciences 1998:6).

It can be said that the Health Sciences faculty, especially in its higher echelons has no representation in its staff composition in terms of gender or race equity.

#### 7.4.3.7 Faculty of Law

Rank description	White			Coloured			Indian			African			<b>TOTAL</b>		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
GRADE 11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	4	4
Unclassified	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	1	2	1	3
GRADE 13 (5/8)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
ASP tutors	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	6	0	0	0	1	5	6
Professor	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	3	0	3
Associate professor	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	3	0	3
Senior lecturer	3	0	3	1	0	1	3	4	7	0	1	1	7	5	12
Lecturer	1	3	4	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	4	5
Associate lecturer	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	2	1	3
P/t lecturer	0	1	1	0	0	0	3	1	4	1	0	1	4	2	6
P/t lecturer -substitute	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	1	2
Graduate assistant	2	0	2	0	0	0	1	2	3	0	0	0	3	2	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>53</b>

The Faculty of Law includes the departments of General Law, Mercantile Law, Private Law and Public Law. During the mid 1980's the Faculty attracted large numbers of African students who saw the legal profession as their chosen career path. Historically,

the Faculty was more or less the domain of White and Indian males in terms of staff complement.

In 1995 and 1996 in terms of senior staff there were three White, two Indian and one African male professors or associate professors, while in 1997 there was only one Indian professor with the other two categories intact. Thus the full senior staff component decreased by one in 1997 (UDW Law 1998:33).

In terms of overall staff (there was no service staff in the Faculty of Law), gender-wise there were almost equal numbers in 1995 and 1996, but female staff outnumbered male staff by twelve in 1997. Thus in 1995 there were twenty-seven males and twenty-six females. In 1996 there were twenty-nine males and twenty-eight females and in 1997, there were twenty-four males and thirty-six females (UDW Law 1998:39).

In terms of the race composition of full-time staff in 1995 there were ten White males and four females, one Coloured male, thirteen Indian males and twenty-one females, three African males and one African female. In 1996 there were ten White males and two White females, no Coloured, fourteen Indian males and twenty-one Indian females, as well as two African females. No African male was full-time staff member on that year (UDW Law 1998:44).

In terms of postgraduate students there were several visible changes in equity ratios despite the fact that Indian students still predominate. Thus in terms of White students there were four, three and two males registered during that period with only two White females registering in 1995. There were more Coloured female students registered when compared to males: seven, ten and eight female students with seven, six, and five male students.

The Indian females once again were the highest with one hundred and twenty-nine (129), one hundred and three (103) and seventy-three (73) respectively for these years while the corresponding male numbers were fifty-four, fifty-seven and forty-seven.

There were eighty-eight, sixty-six and seventy-one African male postgraduate students as compared to fifty, forty-one and forty-one female students for 1995, 1996 and 1997 respectively (UDW Law 1998:6).

It can be seen then that despite some progress at gender and race equity at various levels, there is evidence that these changes have not touched the higher echelons of the faculty, especially senior staff.

#### 7.4.3.8 Faculty of Theology

Rank description	White			Coloured			Indian			African			<b>TOTAL</b>		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
GRADE 11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
GRADE 12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Unclassified	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	3	3
ASP tutors	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	2	2	0	2	4	1	5
Professor	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	3	0	3
Associate professor	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
Senior lecturer	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
Lecturer	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Associate lecturer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
P/t lecturer	9	1	10	0	0	0	2	0	2	1	0	1	12	1	13
Graduate assistant	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>34</b>

The Faculty of Theology was historically a relatively small unit that taught Biblical Literature, Church History, Systemic Theology and General Theology.

In terms of senior staff all but one of the five senior staffers were Whites, with one Indian, while there were no women during the three years under investigation There was no service staff (UDW Theology 1998:38, 42).

It can be gauged then that the Faculty of Theology was, in terms of equity, the most unequal entity at UDW, especially in its top echelons.

In terms of postgraduate students there were serious disparities in terms of gender and race equity. This was basically due to the nature of the courses that basically prepared priests and other people aspiring to join the clergy in one way or another. The Christian clergy being a predominantly male domain, there was only one female postgraduate student in 1995 and none in 1996 and 1997. There were sixteen, twelve and ten white males in the years 1995, 1996 and 1997 respectively. There were no Coloured students registered in all three years under consideration. However there were four, three and three Indian female postgraduate students during that period, as opposed to seven, eleven and eleven Indian males. The African group of postgraduate students consisted of mainly males with eighteen, eighteen and twenty-six for the three years with two females in 1995 and 1 in 1997 (UDW Theology 1998:6).

#### **7.4.4 Conclusion**

The chapter attempted to examine the equity patterns at UDW in terms of gender and race. Several parameters and narrative were utilised in order to examine and analyse the trends that existed in terms of various levels of staff and also postgraduate students who could in the process develop into academic or/and research or administrative positions within the university structures.

The narrative pinpointed that despite general attempts within some faculties, the situation regarding and race equity was far from satisfactory. Despite the fact that there were some encouraging signs in respect to race equity, the gender component was weak, with very few exceptions. There was, however, the overwhelming evidence that at senior levels both race and gender equity were at low ebb.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> of March 1999, the Vice Chancellor of UDW called for a complete overhaul of the existing structures and realities at the university. She called for action on transformation and emphasised the focus on excellence and the African vision and identity of the institution. In a specially convened Senate meeting Dr.M.Ramashala promised the institutionalisation of developmental transformation, careful and equitable resource allocation, and strategic planning that would guarantee excellence and meaningful institutional change (*Daily News* 3/4/ 1999, in [http:// www.iol.co.za](http://www.iol.co.za)).

Excellence in key areas advocated by Ramashala would be based on the audits, which have already been examined in considerable details in this thesis, as well as “comprehensive strategic plans under way”. She described publicly her wish to transform UDW into a university with its own unique character and identity, an African university of choice (Communiqué to the University Community, 6/4/1999).

While the previous year’s audits presented an almost complete picture of academic, student and support/administrative structures, a new Strategic Planning Task Team (SPTT) was appointed by the Rector, with herself as the Head. It included a group of four members of academic staff, three members of the University management and a student representative. No union representative was appointed. Additionally, a Strategic Planning Unit (SPU) was created, consisting of a University Strategic Planner and a Co-ordinator, who provided logistical support as well co-ordination of the planning activities of the various committees, sub-committees and teams (UDW Strategic Organogram 1999).

An additional “strategic planning audit” was called for by the Strategic Planning Task Team (SPTT) once the process associated with the new Rector’s “grant vision” was announced in the Senate (UDW Senate Minutes 1999). This time the audit would include key aspects of financial management and accountability, details of infra-structural developments and weaknesses, administrative systems, academic

programmes, a comprehensive student profile, as well as performance, evaluation, monitoring and future predictions (UDW Strategic Planning 1999).

The university's three-year rolling plan was informed and structured according to the already analysed review and audits of 1998. These audits were comprehensive efforts that could help the university in its feedback pathway advocated by the new head of the institution. The statistics from the previous audit were based on verification, debates and interviews throughout the structures of the institution. This existing data would have to be supplemented by audits of research activities of both academic and support departments, and would be followed by a vision for academic transformation. This had to be developed by the SPTT in conjunction with senior management (UDW Strategic Vision, 1999).

The Rector advocated the utilisation of "outside experts" in order to ensure the "professional integrity" of the proposed process, especially in relation to the developed vision and mission of the university. A blueprint for a strategic plan would be formulated by the Strategic Planning Task Team and then submitted to the University Planning committee for ratification, comments, debates and discussion (UDW Three Year Rolling Plan 1999:4).

The subsequent document had to be submitted to the University's Institutional Forum, which according to the Rector would guarantee "university-wide ownership". The said forum then would develop it into a vision statement (UDW Three Year Rolling Plan 1999:4-5). The Institutional Forum was representative of all constituencies at the university, including Senate, academic and support staff and students. It is a legally constituted entity at all tertiary institutions in South Africa (<http://www.polity.org.za>; Legislation related to education and educational transformation; yahoo.com Institutional forums / South Africa").

The Rector and the SPTT believed that the decision taken by the Institutional Forum should be debated and interrogated at a "bosberaad" comprising of 20 (twenty) participants drawn in the main from the university's Council, management, SRC, academic and non-academic staff. These participants would critically review the "consolidated plan" (as described in the official documents)

and identify focal areas for the next phase of the strategic planning exercise (UDW Three Year Rolling Plan 1999:5).

The first draft of the strategic plan would be based on the debates and interrogation of the bosberaad, but would, in fact, be formulated by the SPTT. Then it would be re-submitted to the “Committee of 20” for approval. Regional input would then be sought through the offices of esATI, the eastern seaboard Association of Tertiary Institutions, as a part of the national directives for regional rationalisation and co-operation with the University of Natal (UDW Three Year Rolling Plan 199:5). EsATI was created through the encouragement of various academics and intellectuals who were to play significant roles in the ANC-led Department of Education after the 1994 period. It was supposed to encourage and implement inter-institutional co-operation in the KwaZulu Natal Province (esATI Statement of Intent 1994). (EsATI’s process of co-ordination and consolidation in the province of KwaZulu Natal will be examined separately, as its role in the unfolding amalgamation /merger can be described as fundamental).

The final draft strategic plan was then to be formulated and submitted to the university council for ratification and adoption (UDW Three Year Rolling Plan 1999:5).

It can be gauged then that this was a process comprising of various steps, processes, consultations and debates. However, the fundamental reality was that the final decision-making processes were controlled by the small and highly centralised Strategic Planning Task Team which comprised of several senior academics such as Professor Jonathan Jansen, the Dean of the Education Faculty who led the break-away of several academics from the Combined Staff Association (COMSA), and some others.

Interestingly Dr. A. Habib, a COMSA stalwart of many years standing, who had joined the newly established Academic Staff Association (ASA), was a leading member of the team. ASA had publicly supported Ramashala from the start and agreed with the long-term suspensions of key COMSA leaders that took place in mid-1997 (<http://www.iol.co.za>; *Daily News*, January 1998).

There were fears amongst staff at both academic and administrative levels that the lack of senior and experienced leadership in COMSA would give the new Rector an open path to dominate the entire process, as the ASA and most senior academics, the Senate and council were completely under her control. They supported her openly and publicly. Her initial decisiveness and assertiveness were seen as the complete opposite of past senior managers who had operated in temporary management structures.

However, the first signs of Ramashala's understanding of UDW structures as articulated in the second chapter of the much awaited "Three-Year-Rolling Plan" seemed limited. In a vague, shortsighted and vulgar "Historical Background" section, it was said that due to the historically "Indian" character of the university, as planned and implemented by the apartheid regime, there was a "range of Asian-centred disciplines in the Faculty of Arts". It also averred that there was an "abnormally large range of Faculties", coupled with low fees in relation to other universities in the province, especially the University of Natal (UDW Three Year Rolling Plan 1999:6).

The Asian-centred disciplines, it was claimed, were introduced exclusively for the cultural needs of the Indian population and included languages such as Tamil, Hindi, Telegu, Sanskrit and Gujarati, as well as Arabic, Urdu and Persian. Islamic Studies, Hindu Studies and Indian Philosophy were also parts of the UDW curriculum at the time. It was clearly stated that these departments were unique in the Province of KwaZulu Natal: however, these departments were considered not viable because they did not attract sufficient numbers of students (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 1999:7). They were described as "under-subscribed".

According to the University authorities, the low fees at the university (in 1999 60% of those charged at the University of Natal), created a further burden to the university, with the result that UDW was unable to build up financial reserves. This meant that as the State funded UDW 100% in terms of infrastructure and buildings, funds unspent had to be returned annually to the fiscus. It was also stated that the Engineering Faculty, the only one operating in a Historically Disadvantaged Institution in South Africa incurred huge losses (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plans

1999:7). This was a seriously bleak picture emanating from official university documents written as blueprints for transformation, especially given the high expectations and euphoria that heralded Prof. Ramashala's arrival at the university.

To those who could read between the lines, the signs were very evident: transformation and equity in the tertiary sector had to start with closures of what were described as "unviable" departments. Thus the spirit of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR), the macro-economic blueprint of the ANC-led government was seen as superseding the priorities of learning enterprise. The shutting down of "unnecessary disciplines" proved to be a myopic move on the part of the new UDW management as subsequent developments have shown beyond doubt. Additionally a serious blow was evident in the equity stakes, as a large number of the academic staff to be retrenched in the months to follow, were Black women (Letter from F. Fynn to Mr L. Naidoo, Acting Chairperson of COMSA dated 21/04/2001)).

It became clear in the process of setting up the goals of the Three-Year Rolling Plans that the key objective of the new management and its strategic task teams was to keep UDW financially viable through the audit and analysis of all programmes. This would be according to the basic formulae advanced by the Department of National Education. Business development cycles were created through several accounting procedures including the Income Expenditure Ratio (IER), the Student Staff Ratio (SSR), and the Enrolment Student FTE (ESFTE). Based on these scientific accounting and auditing devices, future student enrolment projections were made. These prioritised the "sought after" faculties and departments seen by management and its strategic teams as been "marketable" (especially Sciences) (UDW Three-Year-Rolling Plan 1999: 11).

The idea behind the 'marketability' of several faculties was not explained in the text, despite its scientific pretensions in both spirit and letter. Given the abundance of career, disciplinary and other similar literature at the time (Friar 1997; Coleman 1997; Leady 1998), the abstract generalisations evident in this significant document, that would guide the university into the future, simply obscured verifiable realities. The marketability of faculties, departments and disciplines are

not determined by official strategic marketing teams, but by the demands of the specific markets, their flexibility, and above all, the quality of the knowledge acquired.

There was a projected increase regarding the proportion of science students from 30% in 1997 to 42% in 2001, as well as a similar expected increase in terms of postgraduate students from 16% in 1997 to 20% in 2001. Additionally, professional bodies were to be persuaded to participate in full-time “Continuous Education” (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 1999:12-13). This continuous education process would consist of “short cycle teaching programmes” for community leaders, local government and other executives, youths, and community leaders. Prof. J. Jansen of the Education Department was entrusted with preparing the policy and implementation documents for “continuous education” in 1999 (Jansen 2000). It was evident that the UDW senior management team saw this change in curriculum as both a potential growth point and a serious vehicle for transformation and equity, as previously disadvantaged groups would have an equal opportunity to get educated, acquire additional skills, develop and grow themselves in a conducive tertiary education environment. This would be achieved through intensive afternoon and evening classes open to the community as well as people who wished to improve their careers and education through useful modules in various disciplines and subjects.

The “Continuous Education” transformation programme was never implemented before 2001 as envisaged. In fact, it was still under consideration a few months before Ramashala’s departure in late 2002. The final draft of a specially appointed Continuous Education Committee was delivered to the then Rector in July 2002 and was debated “thoroughly” in the last “bosberaad” before Ramashala’s exit (Continuous Education Sub-Committee 2002). Nothing has been heard regarding possible implementation since then.

There were several executive, short and medium-term postgraduate and other diplomas in various faculties that played an important role in providing knowledge and skills to good numbers of previously disadvantaged groups at UDW, spearheaded by departments such as Public Administration, Public Policy and

Management. The on-going training of civil servants was a serious revenue generator for UDW and especially for the above-mentioned departments. For many years the local and provincial organs of the new democratic dispensation were in serious need of well-capacitated, able and non-corrupt bureaucrats (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 1999:13). It needs to be said that in this sphere UDW has contributed to the public service transformation.

The struggles for student and staff equity at UDW have a long history. As early as 1991 the Combined Staff Association (COMSA) openly called for increased access for African students in the first year of studies. This was a demand that went beyond any resolutions taken by unions, individuals or groups at the time, including the path-breaking Union of Democratic University Staff Associations (UDUSA). COMSA's call was in agreement with the university's mission statement, that education should be made accessible to all, especially students who are financially and educationally disadvantaged, thus developing and empowering them for the future (UDW Mission Statement /undated) In 1992 an accelerated admissions policy was adopted by UDW that reserved 60% of first year "new places" for African students from former Department of Education (DET) and "Bantustan" schools. This innovation had a direct effect on the demographics of the student population as the number of Indian students fluctuated significantly for several years. In 1999, 60% of the student population were Africans, while the same percentage was doing Engineering, especially after the establishment of a "bridging/foundation programme" in the faculty. It was projected that the numbers of African students in the Sciences would increase from 40% in 1997 to 60% in 2001; in the Health Sciences from 26% to 50% during the same period and to maintain the participation of African students in Engineering to 60%. This would be achieved through a wide and far reaching marketing campaign throughout the country as well as active recruitment and the strengthening of the existing bridging programmes, especially in Engineering (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 1999:18).

In terms of gender equity amongst students, it was stated that the female population had grown from 53.7 to 55.3% in 1998, which was slightly above the national demographic average of 54%. It was important that the promotion of female students in Engineering should result in an increase from 15% in 1997 to 30% in

2001 and an effort should be undertaken to maintain the participation of female students in Science and Commerce to levels consistent with student gender demographics in the University by 2001. These targets would be achieved through aggressive marketing, the awarding of scholarships to deserving students and the proper utilisation of the Upward Bound development programme (UDW 3 Year-Rolling Plan 1999:19). The Upward Bound was a programme, initiated at the university, to accommodate the learning needs of pre-university students from disadvantaged communities in KwaZulu Natal.

In terms of staff equity the authors of the “Three-Year Rolling Plan”, in a brief historical background, sketched the existing inequities in terms of both race and gender. It was accepted that despite the significant changes in student demographics there was little effort on the part of management to implement the affirmative action and equity legislation promulgated after the first democratic elections in South Africa. The authors of the plan indicated that after 1994 there were several appointments of African staff in both academic and administrative/support staff positions, but that most of them were in junior or semi-skilled capacities. This was primarily because UDW had not created capacity development programmes that would encourage African staff to participate and grow themselves within the institution. Thus, it was directly claimed that African staff did not have the opportunities to train and empower themselves by creating a competitive edge in their career paths. Additionally it was stated that there were a series of constraints in the process of appointing suitable African staff at UDW, namely, scarcity, competition from affirmative action programmes in the public and private sector and inadequate skills/credentials (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 1999:20).

The demographic equity details outlined in the plan both in terms of race and gender are similar in many ways to the characteristics and analysis already presented in previous chapters in considerable detail. However, as the “plan” was considered the most important blueprint shaping the projected progress and development of the university in terms of equity and transformation, it is important to interrogate both its figures and projections. Thus a comparative analysis of such a nature will enable both the researcher and the reader to draw serious conclusions regarding comparative statistics and correlations, projections and realities as well as

the confirmation or otherwise of the existing hypotheses which were articulated earlier in the thesis.

- Thus in terms of academic staff, the racial composition was as follows: there were 169 whites in 1984, 192 in 1993 and 160 in 1998, there were 99 Indians in 1984, 214 in 1993 and 238 in 1998, there was 1 coloured in 1984, 6 in 1993 and 7 in 1998 and there was 1 African in 1984, 26 in 1993 and 60 in 1998 (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 1999: 20 Table 4.3, columns 1 to 3).

It can be seen then that despite some progress the equity figures in terms of race were very low even after four years into democracy and the promulgation of a series of progressive legislation. As has been shown in earlier chapters, the situation regarding senior academic and management positions was even worse.

- In total in terms of academic staff, the gender composition was as follows: there were 191 males employed in 1984 as opposed to 79 females, 298 males and 140 females in 1993; and 301 males and 155 females in 1998. It can be said then that basically throughout the years there is little qualitative change in the gender composition of the academic faculty. It is particularly interesting that this pattern has really changed slightly in the five-year period 1993-1998 (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 1999:20, tables 4.3, 4.4, 4.5). In terms of gender then there is a difference of 1 percentile between males and females in the period 1984-1993 (the female percentage increased from 28% to 29% while during the period 1993 to 1998 it reached 36%). One needs to realise however, that this change was more evident in the support and administrative staff rather than the faculty as Table 4.3 indicates.
- In terms of administrative staff, the racial composition was as follows: there were 103 whites in 1984, 60 in 1993 and 25 in 1998, a significant decrease, mainly reinforced by the collapse of the Greyling /Heystek /Pretorius regime that was replaced by Prof. J.N. Reddy, as the rector. There were 509 Indians in 1984, 601 in 1993 and 575 in 1998, thus constituting the dominant ethnic group in the administrative and support structures. The numbers seem declining, but it

needs to be borne in mind that last number excludes the majority of personnel that received their severance packages before 1998. There was an increasingly significant number of Africans in such positions in 1998 (N=157), when compared with those employed in 1993 (N=71) and 1984 (N=28). There is thus an increase of over 120% in African administrative staff within five years, but as the earlier analysis has pinpointed most of these jobs were in the lower grades of the PEROMNES scale (i.e. the administrative grading scale used by the University until recently).

The question to be asked in terms of administrative as well as academic staff was: Given the transformation, affirmative action and African dominance of students since the mid-1990's, why was there no significant equity movement in terms of personnel, especially at middle and higher levels of the professional pyramids?

There were 2, 6, and 8 coloureds working in the administrative sector at UDW during the three years under investigation, another indication that the designated equity targets had not been reached (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 1999:20, Table 4.3, columns 4-6).

It can be said that the African administrative component moved from almost 3% in 1984 to 10% in 1993 and 20% in 1998, while there was no significant increase in the Indian administrative/ support component, which just dropped from 82% in 1993 to 77% in 1998. However, there was a significant decrease in the White administrative /support staff component from 18% in 1984 to 2,5% in 1998. In terms of academic staff there was an increase from 1 to 13% in terms of African personnel from 1984 to 1998, an increase from 37% to 52% amongst Indians (with 49% in 1993, the in-between date) and a decrease amongst Whites from 62% in 1994 to 35% in 1998 (with 44% in the in-between year 1993) (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 1999: 20, figures 4.5 and 4.6).

These can be seen as significant changes in terms of certain demographic as well as legislative, political and occupational mobility amongst academic and non-academic staff alike. However, there were still key questions to be asked in respect

of the historical conjunctures associated with such social, economic and transformatory movements:

- Was the African equity movement not slow and deliberately set back despite the fact that several senior managers before Ramashala were Africans (Dr M.Balintulo, and Prof.P.Ntuli in particular)?
- How could the complete dominance of Indian academic and non-academic staff be reversed in such a way that affirmative action and equity steps could be undertaken without serious ruptures and/or tensions associated with such changes?
- Could consensual procedures and avenues be found for equity to proceed smoothly and without serious interruptions and barriers?

The strategic planning task teams and the senior management of the university visualised bold steps forward in order to answer the above questions of staff equity, transformation and affirmative action associated with UDW.

Firstly, in the Three-year-rolling plan, there was no equity separation of race and gender. “African” and “women” were always used together as the two main equity “partners” in the projected efforts to implement legislative measures to transformation.

Thus the major ambition of the UDW management was to achieve national equity targets within 10 years, in 2008, and this would be achieved through the utilisation of a series of self-prescribed “strategies” devised by the appointed teams. It was decided that different jobs would be tackled “in a variety of ways”, so that the equity targets would be achieved within the designated period. Additional financial resources were to be found and used in the implementation of the various proposed “strategies”, which in a nutshell would consist of:

- Affirmative action appointments.
- Offering of early retirement to those at 55 years, so there would be an accelerated change in the staff profile.

- Creating development posts for promising African postgraduate students who would be employed in posts where they could develop their intellectual and academic profile and potential.
- Initiating staff development programmes for young African and female academics that would enable them to progress into senior academic jobs.
- Creating management capacity development programmes for women and African staff.

Another strategy would be to conduct searches and to headhunt African and female staff who could fill posts that could not be filled through the normal processes (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 1999:21).

These seemed to be normal step-by step processes that could be taken at any institution of higher learning, and in fact did not really give the impression of being properly or meticulously thought through. What was important, however, was the expressed commitment and determination of the university management to give priority to appointments of Africans and women. In fact, this was made very clear in the short sentence under the title “**Affirmative action appointments**”. It read:

*“The university has begun and will continue to prioritise the appointment of Africans and female staff to vacant posts”* (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 1999:21).

To facilitate more vacant posts the management envisaged the selective early voluntary retirement of people at 55 instead of 60 years. This meant that the university was obligated to meet the cost of the penalty imposed on the voluntary package recipient by the retirement fund.

The creation of “development posts” was hailed as a major innovation and challenge on the part of UDW’s senior management, as Ramashala’s own Public Relations machinery stated. In an undated Memorandum/Circular to all staff the Vice Chancellor indicated that UDW was totally committed to developing its own talent from the ranks of the post-graduate students, thus creating its own corps of

qualified staff. Equity was the main aim of such a strategy that was based on the identification of promising postgraduate students who would be appointed in development posts at associate lecturership level. These positions would be turned into permanent posts after the completion of the postgraduate studies (Memorandum, no date, possibly 1999). It was stated in the Three-Year Rolling Plan that the university had budgeted R3,5 million for investment into the future, by the creation of 27 academic development posts during the first year of the plan (1999). These were targeted specifically for African and female staff in Commerce, Science, Engineering, Technology and Social Sciences (Three-Year Rolling Plan 1999:23).

UDW management acknowledged in the three-year rolling plan, that 69 percent of all associate and full professorships were held by males, and this was one factor that needed to be rectified through the equity processes. These processes were not described in the document or other subsequent document of such nature, especially those dealing more specifically with equity. University authorities promised that an aggressive and strong stand would be taken to ensure that African staff and females acquire skills through training and capacity-building exercises. Both these designated groups were described in the three-year rolling plan document as “under-qualified” (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 1999: 21). Indeed such a term can take a variety of contradictory and varied meanings as the categories “Africans” and “women” are generalised and do not indicate staff designations, grades or other specific functions or responsibilities. Given the paucity of Africans in the academic fields, for example, the sentence might have indicated that the “under-qualified staff” was to be found primarily in the support/ administrative echelons. Thus the promise of an aggressive stand on the part of the university in its effort to enhance the skills of equity designated staff seemed rather shallow.

The implementation of a series of major steps was in the pipeline that would have a positive effect on the skills acquisition levels of designated staff. This process included amongst others:

- Management Development programmes for the groups (Africans and women).

- Masters and Doctorate post-graduate studies for young African and female academics which would enhance their qualifications for senior academic posts.
- Development workshops associate with research.
- Skills development programmes for non-academic African and female staff, and
- Programmes to re-skill certain displaced staff as part of a redeployment initiative (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 1999: 21-22).

These were several of the ideas and plans as expressed in the official document sent to the Department of Education, authored by a high-powered strategic group. The re-skilling process indicated that several members of the proposed closed departments would be re-deployed to positions fitting their expertise or in different capacities and positions within the faculty staff. In some cases there was the promise of financial assistance to staff in order to improve their credentials, while promotional posts were to be filled exclusively by African and female staff so that the dictates of the Higher Education Act could be fulfilled in terms of the equity (UDW Three-year Rolling Plan 1999:22).

The key question at UDW in the continuing debate on the process of equity and transformation was how the prospective jobs for equity incumbents, were to be created. This in fact was a very serious concern as the financial position of the university was described as being in a precarious position due to the Department of Education subsidy cuts (Interview with Prof. M. Maharaj)).

The answer seemed very simple to the strategic team authors: there would be expiry of contracts and/or resignations and the voluntary early retirement scheme briefly described earlier.

Further to these calculations and assumptions, the three-year rolling plan estimated that a good number of academic and administrative staff would be retiring in the three-year period (1999-2001). The total number of academics was calculated at 78 (18 in 1999, 25 in 2000 and 35 in 2001), while the corresponding number for administrative staff was 41 (5 in 1999, 18 in 2000 and 18 in 2001). Additionally, approximately 70 academics would have been retrenched from the closure of the

“unprofitable” departments, some of whom were promised re-deployment. There were also a total of 102 academic and administrative contract workers whose contracts were to expire during the designated period. The strategic team calculated that from a balance of 95 posts to be filled, 70 percent (67 posts) were to be filled by equity preference candidates (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 1999:22-23).

These seem scientific calculations based on well-audited and planned projections looking to the future equity achievements that were to be enhanced by a projected number of resignations (N=36 over the period) as well as 48 “strategically chosen” early retirees. Of the latter 70 percent (35 staff) of their replacements would be equity candidates. The earmarking of 40 promotional posts to be filled by African and female staff during the period 2000-2001 was one of the crucial points of the plan as were a number of undertakings:

- It was stipulated that 70% of all vacant posts would be used to achieve equity. The university’s official undertaking in this respect was to use 204 posts during 2000-2001 for this purpose. Thus the projected staffing patterns over the three-year period (1999-2001) would increase from 60 academics in 1998 to 164 in 2001 (an increase of over 270% in numerical terms) and from 157 administrative staff in 1998 to 249 in 2001 (an increase of over 150%).
- In terms of gender, however, the projected changes in equity did not look as tranformatory or equitable as in the racially designated groups. Thus there was 301 male academic staff in 1998, and 267 in 2001, while the corresponding projected number for females would increase from 155 in 1998 to 163 in 2001. In terms of administrative staff the number of males would decrease from 476 in 1998 to 410 in 2001, while the increase of females would be from 289 to 336 (UDW Three-Year Rolling plan 1999: 24).

It can be clearly seen that the equity-designated groups are seriously unequal in terms of numbers with Africans superseding females more than significantly. In this sense the pretensions and promises of the UDW three-year rolling plan that its

equity component would comply with the various legislative frameworks of the country, especially the Higher Education act, was precisely that.

- It was envisaged that the percentage of African employees at UDW would increase significantly in terms of the academic staff profile from 12% in 1998 to 38% in 2001. Simultaneously the percentage of Indian academic staff would decrease from 52% in 1998 to 37% in 2001 while the White numbers would decrease from 35% in 1998 to 24% in 2001.
- In terms of administrative staff the projected Indian population in 2001 would be 65% of the total as opposed to 75% in 1998, while the African component would increase from 20 to 32%.

The projected staff profile by percentages and in terms of gender would be 42% females as opposed to 58% males in 2001, while the corresponding figures for 1998 were 64% and 36% respectively. This would become 60-40 in 1999, 59-41 in 2000, before it reached its final year of the rolling plan (UDW Three-Year Rolling plan 1999:24-25).

It can be said that there were good intentions in the first three-year rolling plan of UDW, in terms of several transformatory issues dealing with equity and other important requirements stipulated in the existing legislative framework of the country. The careful reading of the plan gives the impression that, for whatever reasons, the issue of race equity is treated more favourably than its gender equivalent. Of course there are other grey areas in the strategic plan, which were pinpointed in the process of the present analysis.

In fact, the reality of race equity taking precedence over its gender counterpart is not simply a matter of numbers and quantity. In a competitive world, quantity is still important, especially when it deals with crucial demographics to be found in the Employment Equity Act and similar legislation. In our case the qualitative reading and thorough understanding of the spirit of the three-year rolling plan is of equal, if not greater, importance than its quantitative component.

Following the release of UDW's first three-year rolling plan (1999-2001) in 1999, the Department of National Education in its new guidelines for the consequent planning phase (Department of Education /undated) required further frameworks that redefined and updated the three-year rolling plans submitted by tertiary institutions. It became necessary, then, for the UDW Strategic Planning Task Team (SPTT) and other groups involved with such endeavours to re-define, re-calculate, re-plan and re-examine various key issues and parameters in the first three-year rolling plan. Given the fact that the strategies on the key requirements were already defined in the first three-year plans, one would think that the task of the various groups entrusted with the interrogation and strategic planning would be easier. This assumption is reinforced by a series of realities evident at the university during the period under investigation:

- The closure of a host of academic departments such as Indian Languages, Philosophy, Fine Arts, and Drama. This occurred without major disruptions or opposition from the two unions on campus (letter from F. Fynn to L. Naidoo, Acting chairperson of COMSA).
- The positions of almost all administrative staff that took the voluntary severance package were filled with temporary contract staff, especially student assistants who could not join unions and thus lived in a perpetual state of uncertainty.
- The unions seemed to be continuously on the defensive, despite the fact that there were some signs of the Academic Staff Association taking a more critical stance towards the senior management and especially the Vice Chancellor. As has been noted earlier A.S.A had warmly welcomed Ramashala's appointment as a Vice Chancellor and enjoyed a very cordial relationship with her at least during the initial stages of her reign.

The strategic planning process articulated in the second three-year rolling plan is described as the continuation of the "accelerated pathway to implementation of the Vice Chancellor's vision". The Strategic Planning Task Team (SPTT), a

“consultative forum” and various other parallel groups, which are unspecified in the document (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 2000:1), supported this.

It became evident in the process that the machinery of the University, run by the Director of Finance, had put on the agenda a number of important issues separate from the core teaching and research functions of the university, indicating possibly the new direction to be followed by the University in the three years to follow:

- It became obvious that “market demand” for courses, rather than the imperative of knowledge, was of paramount importance.
- Departments with small staff: student ratio had to close down despite their educational, spiritual or knowledge value.
- There was continuous talk of a “financial crisis of the institution”. Hence “streamlining” (in other words down-sizing) of administrative /support functions was a key issue for the future (UDW Three-year rolling Plan 2000:1).

There was a series of events and processes, which were described as “achievements”, underlying the second and final three-year rolling plan before Ramashala’s departure in 2002. These were:

- The review of “high risk departments” and the decision to close them down following the opinions of an “expert committee of seven”. The departments “under investigation” were those with deficits of R500 000. Although the plan does not specifically point out the actual closure, it mentions that a set of specific recommendations for each department was debated and “passed through all the university structures, including Senate and Council” (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 2000:1-2).
- There was a re-organisation of academic structures that reduced the seven existing faculties to four (Humanities; Science and Engineering; Law, Economic and Management; and Health Sciences).
- Sixty-nine academic departments were reduced to 21 schools.

- Over 200 programmes were designed in template forms and submitted to the Department of Education for approval in an attempt to reconfigure the existing structures (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 2002:2).

After long expositions on new technologies, the research outputs, quantifiable outcomes in higher education, the links between funders, research and the private sector and the globalisation of the higher education sector, the key thinking of UDW regarding the way forward and the future strategies is revealed in bold letters:

**“The nature of the target population of the university, i.e. disadvantaged, under-prepared students, will not change for at least another two three decades. This has very serious implications for the continuation of the University”** (Bold letters in the original text, UDW Three-Year Rolling plan 2000:3)

Statements regarding “financial crisis”, “the implications for the continuation of the university” and “severe subsidy cuts” became catch phrases of senior and middle management to justify closure of departments, casualisation of administrative, academic and support staff, and cuts in departmental expense. Simultaneously, such catch phrases and their practical implementation kept the unions in check regarding demands for job stability, grievances and salary disputes. Subsequently, the dramatic picture painted of the finances of the university indicated that there were new fears of job losses.

The next area of the restructuring process was spearheaded by the identification of the niche areas of the university, which were to receive development focus and keep up the sustainability of centers of excellence in higher education. These shifts were to be canvassed, debated and agreed upon in stipulated time frames and within a strategic framework.

There was a need, as expressed in the strategic plan, to further integrate the academic, administrative and service functions of the university so that “a more focused and meaningful development mission is established for the institution” (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 2000:3). The authors of the document never

elaborated on this vague and generalised plan. In fact, the assertion of poor integration of these three key functions of university work was never explained or elaborated upon in the context of the strategic document.

The implementation of the comprehensive student development and redress innovations, including the Upward Bound programme, the Engineering Partnership Degree programme and the various Foundation programmes were to continue and be streamlined so they could be efficient according to the document. These were considered a series of well-organised and fruitful initiatives that received substantial external funding and proved to be successful both in the short and medium term.

It was stipulated that these initiatives were to proceed in consultation with all stakeholders and constituencies, as they were to be the foundation stones for the development and growth of the University. In this endeavor, the key role players identified in the strategic document were the SPTT, the Faculty Restructuring Committee, the University Planning Committee and “special committees consisting of students, academics and administrators” (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 2000:4). The key question remains whether all these noble and comprehensive plans were implemented in the process and how successful they were. The vague special committees consisting of students, academics and administrators were never operative.

All these grand plans were in the pipeline in an atmosphere of declining student enrolment at UDW. This was also a serious national phenomenon in the mid- and late 1990's (Interview with L.van.der Walt 2003). Thus in 1999, the student enrolment at UDW hit an all time low in a three year cycle with 8 068 students. This was the lowest number of students registered since the early 1990's. In fact, in 1990 there were more students enrolled than in 1999. There were some faculties, however, such as Health Sciences and Engineering, which attracted high numbers of students, confirming the international trends in niche markets (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 2000: 5-6). Of course, there was an array of sociological and financial reasons advanced in the document for the decline in enrollment, such as the drop in matriculation pass rates, the growth of private institutions in all fields of education,

wrong perceptions about the university amongst prospective students as well as the “collapsing of the teaching profession” as a career prospect (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 2000:7). However, such trends did not disturb the growth of postgraduate students within UDW. Given the fact that many, if not the majority, of equity staff could be drawn from the university’s postgraduate pool, the projection of over 30% of postgraduates in 2002 as stipulated in the three-year plan was not unattainable. This compares well with the 20% in 1998 (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 2000:8-9).

The demographic profile of the student population at the university demonstrated that while there were no major enrollment shifts in terms of race in the last three years, the demographic profile of the broader society was certainly represented well in the demographic profiles of registered students. Additionally, the noble promise that UDW will make university education accessible to all, especially to those who are financially and educationally disadvantaged, was adhered to (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 2000:10). This was despite the management’s efforts to sideline poorer students by refusing them registration. Additionally, female enrollments increased steadily from 52,6 % in 1995 to 56,5% in 1999, and this was also evident in the Sciences, as well as in postgraduate studies. Thus, there was the belief that in the years to come these young, promising postgraduate students would be the nucleus of a new forward movement for equity and transformation.

Staff equity, as analysed in previous chapters, was one of the key failures at UDW. There were several historical factors underpinning the university’s human resources profile, and the new three-year rolling plan was structured in order to rectify the disparities and inequalities of the past. After all, the proposed changes were dictated by the legislative framework of the country.

The 2000-2002 rolling plan authors believed that there were several aspects of the equity steps, envisaged in the 1999-2001 rolling plan, that were in fact achieved, especially regarding race equity. Thus it was surmised that there was an increase of 5% of African academic staff. It surfaced that African comprised 18% of the academic staff by the end of 1999, from 13% in 1998. This was mainly due to the fact that the African staff was increased by 22, and the number of white and Indian

academic staff reduced by 26 during that period. Thus the number of African academic staff was 76 in 1999 as compared to 54 in 1998.

In terms of administrative and support staff there was also some progress with a gain of 36 African staff members, coupled with a combined loss of 48 Indian, White and coloured personnel. Thus in 1999, 21% of administrative and support staff were Africans as compared to 18% in 1998. This showed an increase of 3%, less than the advances achieved in the academic field (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 2000:12-13). One needs to bear in mind, however, the UDW top management's efforts to cut operating costs, which means that many of the available jobs vacated were filled with temporary staff and student assistants. This process proved a barrier to opening up of opportunities for African graduates, both within and outside the university. Another impediment to the growth and development of African support and administrative staff was that they were generally appointed at junior positions, mainly due to lack of experience.

On the other hand, it was obvious that there was no real difference in the overall ratio of male/female staff at the university. This had increased only marginally from 60:40 in 1998 to 61:39 in 1999. In fact, the number of female staff dropped instead of increasing as envisaged in the previous three-year rolling plan. The trend was similar in both the academic and administrative and supports levels. Thus, in the academic field the ratio of males to females in 1998 was 63:2 to 36:8 and in 1999, the corresponding figures for the administrative sector were 63:3 and 36:7 (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 2000:13). It becomes obvious that **equity was evident in terms of race, but was absent in terms of gender. In fact, in the latter instance the situation was seriously retrogressive.**

It was obvious that, at a university where the student population, both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels represented the population dynamics of the wider society, there were serious expectations at all levels of government that the equity targets were in need of affirmation. The three-year rolling plan had to set an affirmative action and an equity agenda. In order for this agenda to become a reality there was a series of steps undertaken as part of the UDW equity process. There were workshops hosted by the Industrial Relations Manager for members of Senior

Management; Heads of Departments; general departmental staff and members of the trade unions at UDW.

In these workshops, aspects of equity were discussed and identified in accordance with the legislation that was to be implemented within the pre-determined time frames. Staff in the Human Resources Department, according to the three-year rolling plan, consulted with other tertiary institutions as well as private commercial organisations, presumably on the various realities, substance and practicalities of equity and affirmative action. In early 2000, circular, requesting nominations to the Employment Equity Committee, marked the establishment of this committee, which would “guide the development of an equity policy and equity plan” (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 2000: 14).

Thus after several years of legislative measures, national, provincial and local debates, a first three-year rolling plan and consultations on a national basis, the truth was finally revealed: the “Employment Equity Committee would develop an equity policy and equity plan, as suggested in the second three-year rolling plan”. It was obvious then, that the blueprint set by the first three-year rolling plan was not really an equity strategy, and this is most likely why it did not work. This was despite the supposed mobilisation and hard work of strategic task teams, consultative forums and the many closed and open meetings. As late as February 2000 it was officially admitted that there was not even guidance, let alone an equity policy and an equity plan. Nevertheless, the university’s senior management indicated that UDW would meet the deadline set by the Department of Labour for the submission of the Equity Plan (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 2000:14).

There was a series of steps to be undertaken by the UDW senior management in its efforts to meet the equity requirements of the Department of Labour and the country’s stringent laws on the matter. Thus it was envisaged that aggressive affirmative action would be implemented in relation to “unfrozen posts”(posts which were initially ‘frozen’ or kept vacant due to financial constraints). These posts would be interrogated in order to create level-entry opportunities for the disadvantaged. Other mechanisms were the offering of early retirement schemes to selected employees who had reached 55 but were not yet 60 and the creation of

support bases for staff capacity building, internal promotion and supernumerary posts. The latter would be achieved through the establishment of a management and supervisory skills development programme (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 2000:14).

One of the most ambitious and controversial steps for supporting equity was the creation of “development posts” which, according to the document, were instituted by the Vice Chancellor herself. These posts were given to promising disadvantaged candidates with postgraduate qualifications who, after a probationary period and the attainment of a higher qualification, would become permanent staff members. This was stipulated in the first three-year rolling plan. These posts were in addition to other advertised jobs and the candidates were handpicked. A series of rules, policies and procedures were set and implemented for these prospective candidates. There were 21 such development candidates appointed in 1999 as stipulated in the first three-year rolling plans. Most of them were young people with Masters degrees or almost completing such degrees, and they were obligated to follow strict monitoring and evaluating procedures that in the end would guarantee them tenure in the institution. The second three-year rolling plan stipulated that:

**“the continuation of this practice is essential. Faculties and Schools are further required to provide suitably qualified and experienced mentors for this staff. Training programmes for mentors and students have been designed and implemented in areas such as learning to teach in higher education, and the roles of academic mentors”** (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 2000:14).

The equity plans and targets for the period 2000 to 2002 were to be boosted by the usual target planning at UDW and every university in the country, i.e. normal retirement, resignations, natural attrition and expiration of contracts. An early retirement scheme, which was also stipulated in the first three-year rolling plan, was planned to boost the creation of jobs for equity candidates. The projections at all levels of operations looked suitable for the proposed plans ahead. It was already announced in the new three-year rolling plan that the “University has made a decision not to offer under-subscribed courses in Drama, Fine Arts and History of Art and certain languages”. It was envisaged that eleven “retirements” in these

departments would not be filled, while thirteen posts (or 70%) of the “balance” (nineteen posts), would be targeted for equity candidates (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 2000:15).

It is indeed interesting to note the language used in regard to the retrenchments of over thirty academics and other personnel from these departments. In fact, no academics or other staff was “retired” from these departments. This becomes clear to those who study the three-year rolling plan thoroughly. It is evident that these departments were closed down after a series of steps explained in the strategic document (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 2000: 20-22). In these pages, the intricacies and various scenarios are described in considerable detail together with various alternative plans regarding revenue-generating new programmes, interventions to improve both undergraduate and postgraduate curricula, the rationalisation of duplicate academic units and the launching of more effective marketing strategies at all levels of operations (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 2000: 21). These realities cannot hide a series of contradictions evident in these closures and retrenchments:

- The University closed culture-related departments, staffed by some of the most talented academics in the country at a time when the President’s main ideological weapon was the “African Renaissance”, which addressed issues of financial, social, anthropological and cultural themes, aspects and aspirations.
- UDW closed down departments that represented some of the world’s most popularly spoken languages, such as Hindi, Tamil and Arabic amongst others. The leadership of the university, spearheaded by the Vice Chancellor who called these languages “cultural”, never really understood the essence of the globalised world they purported to adhere to in their verbose diatribes. These were primarily the languages of diplomacy, finance, trade and commerce, because besides being a “cultural reality”, language is above all an international code of human communication.
- It was purported that the decisions on the closures were based on both financial and academic or intellectual criteria. The process that was followed and subsequent developments have shown conclusively that the reasons for the

closure were purely financial, and in fact, a medium or long term view of African or international developments can show this decision to be myopic.

- The fact that several staff members in these departments were re-trained and re-deployed in different disciplines, especially in the languages, does not really change the existing landscape or the various dynamics associated with their programmes and their national and international appeal.

The calculations of the human resources department indicated 127 expirations of contracts between 2000 and 2002 (39 in academic and 88 in administrative and support positions). The rolling plan stipulated that 70% of these vacancies would be filled with equity candidates (89 posts). It was projected that UDW would experience at least 16 resignations of academic and 22 of administrative and support staff. 70% of these separations were to be filled with equity candidates (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 2000:15). There were also 33 academic staff members and 21 administrative and support members eligible for early retirement. They were over 55 years and it was planned that a “selective” voluntary retirement package was to be given to them during the planned period. It was estimated that at least 60% of these staff members would exercise the option (32 staff members). The university had decided to target 70% of these positions (23 staff) to be filled by equity candidates (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 2000:16).

According to the three-year rolling plan, the equity “battle” would be won or lost on the so-called “development posts”, on which UDW was to spend R2.5 million a year in order to create 27 academic development posts. For a university that has been described in the same document as going through a “financial crisis”, this is a noble and indeed achievable deed that could open the way to development in research and academia for a good number of Black and women candidates. The fact that most of these posts were to be created in Engineering, Science, Technology and Management Sciences indicated a certain degree of seriousness in the endeavour, given the limitations of affirmative action and equity in these spheres both at UDW and throughout the country. Thus the equity targets of the university for the period covered in the three-year rolling plan, were described as follows:

- 70 percent of all vacant posts would be used to achieve equity. It was calculated that there were 150 posts during the period 2000-2002.
- The university would utilise the 27 development posts to recruit and develop African and women postgraduate students over this period.
- UDW would earmark 40 promotional posts to be filled by African and women staff during the period 2000-2002.

It can be gauged then, from this summary that the university management and strategic task teams were committed (in planning at least) to equal representation of Africans and women at all levels of employment. Thus the following staffing patterns were envisaged for the period 2000-2002:

- In terms of academic staff the African staff would increase from 96 in 2000 to 110 in 2001, reaching 125 in 2002. Simultaneously the coloured staff would decrease from 7 in 2000 to 6 in 2002, the Indian staff would decrease from 175 to 150 in 2002 and the White staff from 119 to 97 in 2002.
- In terms of administrative staff the projected staffing patterns during the planned period would see African staff increasing from 210 in 2000 to 240 in 2001 and finally reaching 270 in 2002, the coloured staff remaining steady at 7, the Indian staff decreasing from 548 to 470 and the White staff from 30 to 20.
- In terms of women, it was projected that the academic staff will increase from 149 in 2000 to 151 in 2001 and finally to 157 in 2002. Among administrative staff, females will increase from 318 in 2000 to 319 in 2001 and finally 322 in 2002 (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 2000:16).

It can be gauged then, that the projected staffing patterns during the planned period reinforced the reality that race as an element of equity superseded gender by far. This trend, obvious in the official document of the university passed unnoticed even at the higher decision-making bodies of UDW, including the Council, which had in its composition several champions of women's rights and equity, including its chairperson, Dr. Magau.

Thus the various capacity development programmes that would support the equity plan appeared to be promises. The proposed programmes were to develop the overall competence of employees through skills upgrading, as well as the implementation of management and leadership training to fast-track successful appointees in terms of their upward mobility (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 2000:17).

Efficiency was seen a key feature in the last three-year rolling plan of the university. This was seen in the streamlining of programmes, rationalisation of non-viable academic programmes, the improving of teaching performance, the reduction of overhead and administrative systems and the increase in research productivity and output. These were the “theoretical” signs that the notion of the university as a corporate business unit had become rooted in the UDW management’s thinking. The practical reality of such foundation was the closure of the “under-subscribed”, “un-economic” departments and the retrenchment of over 35 academics. There was also a plan in the pipeline to streamline administrative expenses with a series of outsourcing exercises. These were described as successes to be emulated in the future as the outsourced departments were seen as successful in terms of financial savings. It was envisaged that in the period covered in the rolling plan there would be a cost reduction of 10% at UDW (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 2000:28).

On the academic front, the restructuring of departments into schools did not seem to indicate immediate retrenchments, but the absorption of disciplines such as Linguistics, Zulu, anthropology and Sociology into some repetitive and sometimes obscure “generalist” modules was seen as the beginning of the end for academic specialisations. The Faculties of Arts and Education were amalgamated into a Faculty of Humanities and the Faculty of Law and Commerce included disciplines such as Philosophy and Political Science. This was, nevertheless, an interesting faculty where the reconfiguration of programmes was based on their purported relevance to the dictates of the market (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 2000: 22-23).

Emphasis was given to the Development and Foundation Programmes, especially in Engineering and Sciences. Special attention was paid to the various Foundation Modules such as Academic Literacy, English Usage, Critical Thinking and Mathematics for Commerce students. The significance of the Upward Bound programme was reiterated as a basic foundation course for young African matriculants as well as a marketing tool for the university in the short term (UDW Three-Year Rolling Plan 2000:25-26).

A number of significant trends can be identified in the second three-year rolling plan of UDW (2000-2002). It became obvious that the university management was seriously addressing the equity profile of the university in terms of race, although the gender factor was also mentioned occasionally in the various steps to be undertaken in the period of these three years. These endeavours were in compliance with the legal frameworks of the country and the guidelines on equity as articulated by the Departments of Education and Labour. Additionally, the university management seemed determined to continue on a path of cost-saving, financially conservative and intellectually selective pathway. The retrenchments of tens of academics in various departments in the Faculty of Arts were not arbitrary, but a first step towards a further rationalisation that was the harbinger of the impending merger with the University of Natal. The key question everyone asked after the closure of the academic departments was “who will be next”, for if academics, who constitute the core of a university function, were fired with such ease what chance did the administrative and support staff have in a planned process of cost saving and continuous “budget restructuring” and “financial reconfiguring”?

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **8.1**            **Introduction**

The final chapter will include the conclusions and recommendations of the thesis, which will begin with the confirmation or not of the hypotheses as set out in chapter one of the study. The hypotheses are assessed and discussed in the order in which they are presented in chapter one. The assessment of the hypotheses is followed by a set of recommendations. These recommendations are presented in two categories: recommendations on the level of individuals; and recommendations at the level of the institution.

#### **8.2**            **The Hypotheses**

There was a set of hypotheses that were the theoretical assertions upon which the empirical component of the thesis was based. The confirmation or otherwise of the hypotheses was based on the different empirical findings evident in the study after the collection, analysis and interpretation of the variety of data.

**The first hypothesis** stated that although there were affirmative action initiatives at UDW, there was a narrow focus on race that excludes gender equity as a powerful ingredient of equity within the institution. The hypothesis was **confirmed**, as both the numerical data and data based on interviews showed that although the numbers of African people as well as other designated groups increased to a certain extent the same pattern was not evident in terms of gender. The interviews also revealed that respondents were unanimous in their belief that race takes precedence over gender at interviews, in promotions and in the implementation of institutional policies.

**The second hypothesis** asserted that the participation of stakeholders and role players at UDW regarding gender equity measures and initiatives was limited. This hypothesis was **confirmed** in the evidence provided by representatives of these stakeholders. The respondents were either unaware of such gender initiatives or they relegated these efforts to management or to organizational structures that, in many cases, did not exist at the institution. These management and organizational structures, in turn, claimed to be unaware or blamed the lack of initiatives on apathy and other institutional dynamics. This indicated the limited participation of stakeholders and role players across the institutional spectrum.

**The third hypothesis** stated that the dissemination of information regarding major steps to address affirmative action and equity at UDW was restrictive. This hypothesis was **confirmed** as evidenced from the interviews of participants. Respondents from different positions within the establishment were either unaware of processes or stated categorically that there was no flow of information on matters relating to gender at UDW.

**The fourth hypothesis** that asserted that there were limited efforts to review and monitor equity targets and plans was **confirmed**. It surfaced that there was very little monitoring and certainly no system in place to review the three-year rolling plan targets and implementation plans. The only monitoring was done by the Director of Equity in her attendance of the selection meetings for the appointment of new staff. At these meetings she would refer to the demographic profile of the department to which the appointment was being made.

**The fifth hypothesis** that asserted that the non-existence of gender-related forums, committees, and other structures was a major impediment in the achievement of gender equity implementation was **confirmed**. It is evident from the interviews that no structure other than the legally required Equity Office exists and that the Gender Forum that was established at the institution was short-lived. The fact that the Gender Forum at UNISA has impacted on senior appointments at the institution supports the hypothesis that the lack of gender structures is a serious impediment in the achievement of gender equity.

**The sixth hypothesis** stated that gender equity never became a key priority area at UDW. This hypothesis was **confirmed**. It became evident both from the analysis of the qualitative and quantitative material presented and the interpretation and analysis of the interviews that although race was specifically mentioned in the policies and the implementation plans of the institution, there was no specific focus on gender.

**The seventh hypothesis** that asserted that capacity building efforts at UDW at all levels of staff were limited throughout the period was **confirmed** through the empirical evidence provided and presented in the thesis. The one laudable effort was the identification of postgraduate women students for appointment in development posts.

**The eighth hypothesis** asserted that there was no tangible research or other such initiatives for women researchers at an institutional level at UDW. This was **confirmed** through the interviews undertaken. It became evident that this lack of incentives for women researchers was a shortcoming at other universities as well.

**The ninth hypothesis** stated that the implementation of monitoring and review mechanisms to ensure the advancement of women in terms of achieving decision-making and leadership positions was non-existent. This hypothesis was **confirmed** through the analysis and interpretation of the empirical data.

It can be said then that all the hypotheses set were confirmed, and that through the empirical analysis undertaken a set of interrelated dynamics emerged that can indeed pave the way to a number of suggestions and recommendations that can make a possible difference to the emerging merged institution of the University of KwaZulu Natal.

### 8.3 Recommendations

It can be said that the right to equality as enshrined in Section 9 of the South African Constitution has not been transformed into action on gender equity at UDW. This is an important conclusion in itself as the Constitution is the Supreme Law of the

country and it has been supplemented by a good number of solidly progressive laws that guarantee gender equity, affirmative action, skills growth and development.

It became obvious in the present thesis that under examination, UDW faced many problems in the implementation of most labour laws in terms of gender equity. The reasons for such a concrete reality were investigated in the context of this study and a series of theories and hypotheses were tested. It can be said without a doubt that UDW has been a historically disadvantaged institution that has produced a large number of outstanding graduates throughout the years, solid administrators at various operational levels as well a good number of top class academics and researchers. However, as the present study has indicated, gender equity has not been one of its priorities, despite the laws of the country and the expressed political will of the country's leaders to fast-track transformation.

Hence the following set of suggestions and recommendations can be seen as the culmination of this thesis, and can be considered a guide for the leadership and all stakeholders and role players at the new university that has resulted from the merger between UDW and Natal:

#### Recommendations for individuals

- First and foremost all women must believe in themselves and other women at all levels of university life. This first priority, will ultimately lead to co-ordination of efforts, co-operation and solidarity.
- Women need to understand and conceptualise sufficiently what it means to be a woman in the work environment, to comprehend the historical and legal necessity of gender equality at all levels both institutionally and the market.
- Women need to be committed to their cause as women, professionals, academics, researchers and administrators. Through their actions they need to convince the leadership of all institutions about this reality.
- Women need to create their own support systems and operations within their workplace environments.
- Women need to understand that there is no shame in being the beneficiary of affirmative action, which is their due.

- Women have their own management and leadership styles, which they should nurture instead of emulating their male counterparts.

#### Recommendations at the institutional level

- Young, capable women need to be nurtured for future leadership positions in academia, research and administration. This is a valuable investment in the future of the institution.
- Women need to nurture the political will of the male leadership at all institutions. This is only achievable if they act in a united and decisive way.
- Women need to strengthen their own collective space. Thus it is important that forums, discussion groups, think tanks, as well as formal and informal groups need to be established and strengthened.
- Institutions need to provide well-structured and professionally sound development opportunities for women leaders at all levels of the institutional establishment.
- Institutions must create forums, networks, committees and systems that will provide adequate and continuous support for women; and provide the funding for these structures.
- Institutions must continue promoting equal opportunity and gender equity relentlessly and systematically.
- Institutions must completely eliminate all unfair discrimination.
- Institutions must immediately implement affirmative action and gender equity measures according to the laws of the country.
- Institutions must establish monitoring and review structures that ensure the implementation of the institution's gender policies.
- Institutions must implement immediately their existing policies on sexual harassment.
- Institutions must establish the necessary mechanisms to accelerate the progression of capable women in the hierarchy of the institution.
- Institutions must create programmes that will educate their total workforce on the realities of affirmative action and gender equity.

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## APPENDIX A

### LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

- Barchiesi, F (Prof.): Professor of Sociology, University of Witwatersrand, Jhb.
- Bhana, J. (Ms): Equity Officer, McCarthy Motor Holdings, Durban.
- Bob, U (Prof.): Gender activist and Director of Research, University of Durban Westville
- Dlamini, Phaestus: Ministry of Labour, Pretoria
- Finlayson, R. (Prof.): Senate and Council member, University of South Africa.
- Jojozi, B. (Ms): Executive member, UDW Postgraduate Students Association
- Maharaj, M.S (Prof.): President of Academic Staff Association, UDW.
- Mbanjwa, F (Ms): Director of Equity, University of Durban Westville
- Moodley, Y.: COMSA member and Director of Research Administration, UDW
- Ndlela, S. (Mr.): COMSA organizer, University of Durban Westville
- Ngcobo, N.A. : Past president of the SRC and the first president of the Postgraduate Students Association, University of Durban Westville.
- Nkwe, D.T (Dr): Lecturer, University of South Africa
- Pillay, D.(Mr.): Senior Researcher, Department of Labour, Pretoria.
- Pillay, S. (Mrs.): Head of Dept. Wellness Centre, University of Durban Westville
- Pretorius, L (Dr): Senior Lecturer, University of South Africa.
- Ramsaroop, A. (Mr.): Dept. of Human Resources, University of Durban Westville
- Shange, X.: student activist and SRC member, University of Durban Westville.
- Singarum, T.: COMSA Executive committee member, HOD: Training Department, University of Durban Westville
- Singh, R. (Mrs): Acting Manager, Dept. of Human Resources, UDW.
- Van der Walt, L.: Department of Sociology of Work, University of Witwatersrand, NEHAWU member and trade unionist.