Towards Affirmative Action: Issues of Gender, Race and Equality at the SABC: Case Studies of Natal Women Broadcasters

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Declaration

I, Susan Manhando, do hereby declare that the work presented in this dissertation is my own. Any work done by other persons has been duly acknowledged.

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Abstract

Given the current emphasis on affirmative action in many sectors of employment and business, this dissertation has attempted to address issues of gender, race and equality in broadcasting employment practice. Since the move to reconstruct a new democratic South Africa in 1990, it is important to analyse the process of incorporating both genders into public employment. It is assumed that reconstruction embraces the inclusion of women in the democratic process.

Data and information gathered has been assessed against the background of women broadcasters employed by Natal Broadcasting Services. Natal women broadcasters have served as case studies to analyse:

* how 'affirmative' has affirmative action been between 1990 and 1994;
* how issues of gender and equality have been handled in relation to the diverse racial groups found in the Natal Province; and
* who has, and who will, benefit more from affirmative action at the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC).

The study explores the relationship between gender, race and equality and the concept of affirmative action. It has investigated whether issues of gender and race have significantly influenced the allocation of assignments and job opportunities within the SABC.

The study has also attempted to address the possibilities of, and the limitations on, women breaking the stereotypical roles socially assigned to them. Women are beginning to appear increasingly on the television screen and at the radio microphone. It is also important to analyse the extent to which they are involved in production and in management.
Recent feminist media studies have focused on how the mass media can serve the needs and interests of women. A possible way of doing this would be to have women in positions of power and control in media organisations (UNESCO, 1987). I make use of feminist theories to investigate the participation of women within the media industry. This analysis will be done within the Natal Broadcasting Services, one of the regional branches of the SABC covering the Kwazulu\Natal region, in the context of the SABC as a whole.

The objective of this research has been to investigate the participation and views of women in the media from 1990 to 1994. This period coincides with the change in the SABC and the move towards post-apartheid era after February 1990. The method used to analyse this involved:

- analysis of data which may give an indication of how employers and policy formulators have dealt with issues of gender, race and equality in allocating jobs, salaries and other benefits;
- identification of the consequences of the employers’ way of dealing with these issues.
- analysis of data available on issues of gender, race and equality as well as work done on South African broadcasting regarding recruitment, role models and social roles. This has been determined by analysing the SABC records regarding:
  - kinds of positions held by women;
  - the overall percentage of women at the SABC;
  - the ratio of men to women; and
  - the ratio of racial groups.
The implications of such ratios will be examined among women at the SABC through semi-structured and administered interviews.

A programme was launched by UNESCO which aimed to promote the equality of women and men. The Programme's theme was, "The Contribution of the Media to Promoting Equality between Women and Men and strengthening Women’s Access to and Participation in Communication" (UNESCO 1987). As a result of this project, five case studies were carried out covering different parts of the world, namely Canada, Ecuador, Egypt, India and Nigeria. These studies dealt specifically with women in media employment and media decision-making. However, these case studies did not deal significantly with the question of race relations, mainly because in these countries, race is not as problematic a concept as it is in South Africa.

Therefore, it is the objective of this study to marry the concepts of equality, gender and race already touched upon by other writers to try and understand the concept of affirmative action in relation to women broadcasters in South Africa's Natal Province.
INTRODUCTION

Whatever women do, they must do it twice as well as men to be thought of as half as good. Luckily, it’s not so difficult. (Charlotte Whitten: First woman Mayor of Ottawa: Canada)

The SABC is a Public Broadcasting Service whose functions include the dissemination of information, education programmes and entertainment to the public. In the South African context SABC programming and composition must reflect the regional, language, racial, ethnic, class and gender diversity of the society (SABC Staffing Committee Report 1994:2). This study has focused on the participation of women in the formal sector, using the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) as a referent. Previous feminist studies which have dealt with issues of women have concentrated on how women have been portrayed in the media. The political shifts which came about in 1990 with the release of Nelson Mandela from prison also brought significant changes for women when issues of gender and equality gained a foothold alongside the struggle for equality and the end to apartheid. With the advent of majority rule, the representation of women in government rose from a mere 2.7 percent to a record 26.5 percent. This means that South African women are even better represented than their British and American (10%) counterparts in these countries. Between 1990 and 1994, women have been increasingly admitted into the decision-making process. Discrimination on the basis of gender, race or creed is now unconstitutional. Despite this gain, the top echelons of power and decision-making positions in South Africa and Africa in general remain the domain of males.

Many educated women who had been the victims of apartheid found it relatively easy to enter employment after 1990. In fact, there have been instances where women, especially black and Indian women, have been sought
relentlessly to fill posts which were formally the preserve of white women in particular and men in general. Arguably, this has led to the employment of women who lack proper qualifications and experience in order for certain organisations to add "colour" into their establishments. These policies have also raised fears in men and white women who fear replacement by the previously disadvantaged races and groups at which affirmative action is targeted. Thus a theory which takes into account the needs of the new less experienced employees, without isolating all men and white women, is needed. An exploration of feminist theories is important in order to locate a theory that will suit the South African situation in relation to women broadcasters in Natal.

In South Africa, the fight for equal rights is being publicly championed by women within political parties. With the failure of women’s parties to obtain significant votes in the first democratic all race elections of April 1994, the fate of women remains in the hands of the mainstream parties like the African National Congress, National Party and Inkatha Freedom Party. In other countries, women within political institutions have been diverted from women’s and gender issues as they have become more co-opted into the system. They have failed to demonstrate that they are both political and social actors with their own agendas, thereby compromising women’s basic issues and rights that they have gained. This happened in Tanzania where women’s equal participation in the management of society has been jeopardised by the women’s party wing which chose to accept ‘positive discrimination’ introduced by the government to ensure the participation of some women in Parliament (Mannahoko in Meena 1992:74). The allocation of a few seats to women in Parliament (especially in South Africa where a women’s ministry does not exist) could be aimed at maintaining the status quo in the male dominated decision-making positions.
The Premise of the Dissertation

Studies that have been done on the SABC have dwelt on racial aspects of the media and the portrayal, rather than the participation of women in the media. Previous research on women in South African broadcasting has largely analysed the ideological and economic division of labour according to gender. These studies have also focused on how representation of women assists in maintaining the system of their domination (van Zyl & Elion 1989; Friedman 1990; van Zyl & Shefer 1990:181). Feminist media studies have shown that discrimination against women has become more subtle since the 1980s due to the increased participation of women in the labour market. In the mass media, previous research has indicated that there are very few women found near the centres of power and control in media organisations (Unesco 1987:10). The underlying assumption has been that an increase in the number of women employed by the media organisations will lead to change. However, this has not been the case in most media organisations. To take under consideration, is the diversity of the composition of South Africa's population. As a result, gender and race issues are of importance when analysing the South African situation.

Mere formulation of policy has not removed negative stereotypes about women. Publicising the struggles of women is the necessary starting point for destroying the stereotyping of women as weak. This approach may greatly assist in bringing the social ideology, which sees women as inferior, more into line with the political ideology which promotes ideals of equality. This study has investigated ways in which affirmative action could be implemented without being counter-productive by causing resentment among the bulk of the workforce. There is also a danger that affirmative action may create a situation of reverse discrimination, one where women are employed as 'window dressers' to satisfy government calls for race and gender equality in
the workplace. Affirmative action is a problematic endeavour, which remains ambiguous both as a concept and as a policy.

Although the volume of research in the portrayal of women in the media is phenomenal, very little has been done to reflect the participation of women in the media industry. The main reason for this is the difficulty encountered in gaining access to what most media organisations regard as confidential information. In analysing gender, race and equality issues, focusing on one region, Natal, it has been the aim of this study to add to the little research done on the participation of women in the media industry (UNESCO 1987).²

The battle for equality is far from over. Feminist studies face an even greater challenge because discrimination is no longer blatant but has become more subtle. Identifying areas of discrimination has become more problematic as the basis for identifying it has been legally removed. A new feminist perspective has to be found to address the new problems that come with majority rule for working women in South Africa. On the forefront is the whole concept of affirmative action.

Notes

1. Gender division is legitimated through ideology. Although van Zyl and Elion analyse the ideological and economic divisions of labour, they do not tackle the issue of race as a factor which divides women.

2. This study, sponsored by UNESCO, marked the decade for women. It is the first study that deal with the participation of women in the media industry. Due to the lack of access to information regarded as confidential, only those closely linked to media organisations have been able to gain access to information. See de Camargo’s study on Media Management in Ecuador, Irukwu’s study of women in Nigerian Broadcasting and Joshi’s study on Women at Senior Levels in Indian Television. Susan Green’s (1987) study on the Canadian Broadcasting Services’ efforts to establish an equal opportunities programme is also of particular interest.
CHAPTER ONE: THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

If badly applied, the principle of affirmative action may end up having a tense relationship with principles of non-racialism and non-sexism. (Innes at al 1993a:8).

This chapter will explore the concept of affirmative action and how it relates to women and the issues of gender, equality and race at the SABC, using women at Natal’s SABC offices as case studies. Affirmative action is a controversial and complex concept with both positive and negative connotations, meaning different things to different people. Before defining affirmative action in the South African context, it is perhaps important to locate its history.

The concept of affirmative action is an importation and has been applied in several countries in the world. In the United States of America (USA), affirmative action was introduced in 1965, where the majority introduced welfare policies, especially in education and access to jobs in favour of minorities, victims of slavery, colonialism and racism (Asmal 1994). Women were only added later, after much protest from this group. Directed towards the advancement of blacks in the USA, the success of affirmative action is doubtful because a significant number of blacks still live in ghettos and a victim mentality has been propagated amongst blacks who have not benefited. In Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe and some African countries, affirmative action was introduced to favour victims of colonialism and women who had been disadvantaged by policies that favoured the employment of men, regardless of race, and white women who wanted to work and whose husbands would allow them to work. The Namibian Constitution actually guarantees equal rights for women (Hassim 1991-2:11). In some instances
affirmative action has led to reverse discrimination, for example in Malaysia, the majority of the Malaysians achieved economic success while the Chinese and Indian minorities were discriminated against (Adams 1993:77). In all countries where affirmative action has been practised, affirmative action has either had limited success or has failed to address the problems which it set out to achieve. For the purposes of this dissertation, affirmative action has been restricted to how it affects women in media employment in South Africa. Closely linked to the concept of affirmative action is the issue of race.

The Concept of Race

The concept of "race" is a socially imagined rather than a biological reality and it is an ideological notion used to construct and negotiate social relations. According to Miles (1989)

When the idea of race is employed, it is the result of a process of signification whereby certain semantic characteristics are attributed with meaning and are used to organise populations into groups which are defined as 'races.' People differentiated on the basis of the signification of phenotypical features are usually also represented as possessing certain cultural characteristics, with the result that the population is represented as exhibiting a specific profile of biological and cultural attributes (Miles 1989:71).

The fact that only physical characteristics are used to determine a person's racial group indicates that 'race' is an aspect of the social construction of reality by society. Even though in this dissertation race is perceived as part of the process of constructing reality, it does not mean that it is seen as less real or effective. Race as a category, is used to maintain the existing international social structure and utilises discrimination as part of its armour.³

The differences in skin colour have been used to define which people are seen as superior and the white skin has been seen as better than the black
skin. Discrimination on the basis of race, is morally unacceptable, but that is not to say that it does not exist in societies. The process of affirmative action is geared towards trying to correct these misconceptions which were the basis of the apartheid regime in South Africa. The emphasis of affirmative action will also be on gender equality and as a result, it is essential to analyse the concept of gender equality.

The Concept of Gender and Equality

In the 1970s, the concept of gender emerged in Marxist and anthropological circles as a way of conceptualising the social construction of masculinity and femininity (Horn 1991:53). The biological (sexual) man/woman, male/female was abandoned in search for a concept that would explain the social relations as people become increasingly divided over artificial boundaries of sex, class, race/ethnicity and nation (Horn 1991-2:53-4). One’s function in society is defined and in cases determined by the above categories. Because of the focus of Marxist scholars to concentrate on class relations, they have limited their ability to understand and appreciate how gender, class and race facilitated the exploitation of neo-colonies. Marxists associate men with production and women with reproduction. Engenderisation involves the incorporation of perspectives which consider the relationship between women and men as expressed in terms of power, ideology and economics (Tsikata in Meena 1992). Since gender is socially constructed and not biologically determined, the social construction can be deconstructed. Gender analysis therefore involves the examination of social relations and identifies among individuals, the intricate connections among gender, imperial and race-ethnic relations (Mbilinyi in Meena 1992:34).

In the field of mass communication, especially in Europe and America, there seems to have been a gender switch, with women comprising the majority of the workforce (Creedon 1989). However, this "female majority"
does not translate into superior power and influence for the women. This has been translated by feminist scholars to mean a decline in salaries and status for the field and this is illustrated by the label "pink collar ghetto" attached to predominantly female news editorial positions (Creedon 1989:17). This analysis corresponds with George Gerbner's (1978) view of cultural resistance. According to Gerbner, when the dynamics of a social movement threaten to overpower or restructure a particular set of social values and relations, the dynamics of cultural resistance come into play. He identifies the three main ways of resistance to change as 'isolating,' 'discrediting' and 'undercutting.' Women have, to some extent, met with such reactions and resistance from men as they entered decision-making processes (Creedon 1989:21).

Defining gender and equality

The term gender has been mentioned above and is crucially interlinked with feminist studies. Issues of race, class and social relations are embedded in gender relations. The term gender has replaced the traditional one of sex which is only limited to the biological aspect. A possible starting point to examine gender and equality issues is the examination of the role of language in constructing reality, namely, who determines what new words and phrases should be used or added and what meaning should be attached to them. Feminist theorists have used gender relations as an analytical tool and have looked upon language as a symbolic system closely tied to the patriarchal social structure. They argue that the "theft of language" is part of women's condition of relative powerlessness and that women need to rework traditional forms in order to create a woman centred language and meaning. The term "gender" has connotations that expose cultural assumptions about masculinity and femininity.
Whereas sex identifies the biological difference between men and women, gender identifies the social relations between men and women. It therefore refers not to men or women, but to the relationship between them and the way this is socially constructed. Sex is distinguished from gender by what one is born as, that is, female or male and is therefore a biological concept (Meena 1992:72). However, gender relations are contextually specific and often change in response to altering economic circumstances. Gender is defined as:

*Social relations between and among women and men, usually asymmetrical divisions and attributes, connoting relations of power domination and rule. Gender is a relation of domination although not all gender relations are dominating* (Manicom 1990 in Meena 1992:72; Flax 1989:69).

Gender relations are therefore historically changeable, subject to abolition and transformation through everyday happenings as well as periodic moments of crisis and transformation (Mbilinyi 1992:49). Gender studies in Southern Africa, have been heavily influenced by the British model. As colonised nations by Britain, the colonised people tended to look to the British system for demands on adult suffrage, taxation, equality, freedom, liberty and justice (Gaidzanwa 1992:99). The concepts used by the liberal bourgeoisie in Britain were adopted by the colonised in Southern Africa to legitimate their struggles against all forms of oppression. (Gaidzanwa 1992:99).

Participation of women in the labour force has been greatly affected by gender and sex stratification both within the homes and in the market place. Recent research has shown that the participation of women in the labour market is in some way curtailed by their familial responsibilities. In trying to understand the concept of gender, (Molyneux 1986) discusses gender interests. These gender interests is divided into two, Strategic gender interests and Practical gender interests (Horn 1991).
Strategic gender interests are the needs women identify because of their subordinate position in society. They derive from the formulation of an alternative, more satisfactory, set of arrangements to those that exist. These interests vary according to particular contexts related to the gender division of labour, power and control, and may relate to legal rights, violence, equal opportunities and women's control over their bodies (Moser; Levy 1984-1990:230). Meeting these strategic gender needs would allow women to achieve greater equality and change existing roles.

Practical gender interests are the needs women identify in their socially accepted roles in society and arise from concrete conditions of women's positioning by virtue of their gender within the division of labour. These interests are primarily economic, relating to daily and public welfare (Molyneux 1986:284). These needs are practical in nature and usually concern inadequacies in living conditions, health care and employment.

Women should be able to identify their needs and defend both their immediate practical needs and their long-term strategic gender interests to attain a position of equality in society. The term equality has been mentioned before and since it will be used throughout the dissertation it is perhaps appropriate to define it.

Equality can be defined as both a goal and a means whereby individuals are accorded equal treatment under the law and equal opportunities to enjoy their rights and to develop their potential talents and skills. This will enable the people to participate in the national, political, economic, social and cultural development both as beneficiaries and as active agents (Pietila; Vickers 1990:46). For women in particular, equality means the realisation of rights that have been denied them as a result of cultural, institutional, behavioral and attitudinal discrimination (ibid). Equality before the law includes laws, programmes or activities that have as their goal the amelioration of the
conditions of the disadvantaged, including those disadvantaged on the grounds of gender. The equality clause in the Charter of Fundamental Rights also provides for affirmative action. This is described as the "adequate protection and advancement of persons disadvantaged by the unfair discrimination, in order to enable their full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms (Section 8 (3) (a)). There is currently no major legislation that provides comprehensive protection against inequality or discrimination.

The original WID approach used in the 1975 to 1985 UN Women's Decade aimed to gain equity for women and challenges women's subordinate role in society. It recognises the triple role of women (i.e. reproductive, productive and community) and seeks direct state intervention giving political and economic power to women in order to achieve an equal balance (Moser; Levy 1984-90:231). This policy is unpopular with governments and is considered threatening to the society's culture and the status quo. The major shortcoming with this, is that the WID approach seeks to share that same system instead of changing it, women becoming equals in a man's world.

Defining Affirmative Action

The South African conception of affirmative action incorporates some of the ideas from other countries, especially as far as it tries to address the imbalances in society caused by past discriminations. In this dissertation, affirmative action in South Africa has been understood as an attempt by the government, together with some non-governmental organisations and institutions, to give the previously under-utilised and disadvantaged sectors of the society access to decision-making structures of the country. The aim and purpose of affirmative action is to equalise employment opportunities and employee development. This process is justified by patterns of past discriminations and shall not in itself be judged as discriminatory (Meer 1992:2). The principle of affirmative action involves the redressing of
inequalities between groups which were defined on an ethnic, racial or sexual basis; where there are groups which have been disadvantaged in relation to other groups. Disparities in incomes and wealth have arisen as a result of discrimination by one group against another. An affirmative action programme sets out to ensure that persons in designated groups enjoy equal opportunities and are equitably represented in the various positions of employment (Innes et al. 1993a:5).

There is still confusion about what to do and mainly, how to apply affirmative action. Should affirmative action be left to the initiative of organisations to correct the wrongs of the past? Should the government intervene and provide incentives to organisations or should they force the issue and apply legal quotas? The major debate also involves the identification of the major beneficiaries of affirmative action. The argument by the ANC and IFP has been that since blacks have been the main victims of apartheid oppression, they should explicitly be identified as the main beneficiaries (Innes et al. 1993a:4). The term black would incorporate both men and women.

For the ANC, affirmative action came into the agenda in 1988 as a means of overcoming inequalities created by past race and gender discriminations, although no concrete implementation strategy existed up to the time of the elections in April 1994. The target is the black population, women, because of their triple oppression (as women, black and workers) "coloureds" and Indians. Due to the initiatives of women in ANC, there were attempts to implement quotas for women within the congress. There was a lot of resentment and hostility from women stemming from the fact that the proposed quota of 30% would be treated as an upper limit instead of a minimum (Innes et al. 1993b:8). Resentment would arise from men, who would feel that leadership positions within the party would be taken over by less-deserving persons (women) if the quota system was introduced (Innes et al. 1993b:8; Cowling et al. 1994:3).
Whilst the IFP agrees that the inequalities of apartheid must be addressed, IFP Information Officer, Suzanne Vos says the party does not favour a quota system of implementation (Innes et al 1993a:8). IFP believes that merit and competence must be taken into account and the government should be active in education and skills training to people who have not had access. Where the issue of a quota system is concerned, the party does not believe that a percentage should be reserved for women, but the law should ensure equal access to political, economic and social opportunities. Ironically, Suzanne Vos says that the party will lobby for the establishment of a women’s ministry under the new government and one wonders whether, in terms of the logic of her argument, this will not be unfair and discriminatory against men who will not have a men’s ministry.

To turn back centuries of discrimination is no easy task, especially when racism has been part of South African society. The whole concept of affirmative action raises fears amongst the business sector of falling standards, token appointments and South Africa’s rapid decline into a "banana republic." Economists are pessimistic over what they see as the "unnecessary" costs of affirmative action on the economy (Innes et al 1993a:4). After all, many black South Africans have been denied and deprived of education and training required for highly skilled work and it is doubtful that they can be employed as decision-makers, unless they are returning exiles (Alperson in Innes 1993b:18).7  Affirmative action as it stands discriminates against those people who have not had the opportunity to get education, especially those in rural South Africa. Policies being proposed by different parties and organisations do not seem to have anything to offer rural people as far as employment opportunities and equity are concerned.

Black business sees affirmative action as necessary for black advancement, upliftment and meaningful participation. Black business advocates for economic empowerment, that is, access to ownership and control of the means of production. Although training programmes need to be set up
for all people, black business organisations maintain that blacks will have to uplift themselves and should not expect much help from corporate South African business (Mkwananzi in Innes 1993b:221). However, the shortage of resources to implement policies and the lack of a centralized bargaining capacity among the blacks cannot be ignored.

**Affirmative action for women** has been geared towards the dismantling of the gap that exists between the number of women in decision-making positions and that of men. Affirmative action can enable women from a variety of backgrounds to participate in policy-making and as a result bringing in a different range of experiences. Women have to be given access to resources through the redistribution of resources so that they can reach the same levels that men have reached. Affirmative action is a means of overcoming the structural consequences and deeply embedded discriminatory values and practices, especially with respect to race, gender and disability (SABC Policy on Affirmative Action 1994:1). A major worry of this "positive discrimination" is that affirmative action could create a situation where women are just tokens, having been admitted because they are women and can even up the numbers between men and women (Serote 1992:6). Changes within local authority power structures and political representation of women by women would be a start, although this would not guarantee that the needs and aspirations of women at large are addressed. In South Africa, given the race and class differentiation amongst women themselves, women's representatives would most likely have difficulties negotiating these needs. An ongoing debate amongst South African women involves the issue of whether white women can represent black women. Apartheid has divided black and white women to an extent that they do not know each other (Gouws 1993:67). It is therefore problematic for either racial group to represent each other and the differences are even accentuated by different classes.
All feminist research and practice must inform itself of the divisions that exist according to class, ethnicity and race. Even though there is general agreement in South Africa that black women have been more oppressed and disenfranchised, one cannot ignore the oppression of women of all races. The level of oppression is also determined by race and class and as a result, 'women' cannot be taken as a homogeneous category.

The Theoretical Framework

Some African scholars consider feminism to be a foreign importation with little relevance to the African situation and is looked upon as a middle class ideology (Gallagher 1987; Meena 1992; Reddock 1991). Feminism has been seen as a threat by most men and some women, to the stability of the black community which thrives on the subordinate role of women. Feminism has relevance in Africa because women have always been aware of oppressive gender relations and where ever possible have challenged and fought against such oppression.

Although there are many different kinds of feminist theories in Southern Africa and worldwide, they all have a common goal:

*to question and challenge the origins of oppressive gender relations and attempt to develop a variety of strategies that might change these relations for the better and also offers a critique of male dominated institutions, values and social practices that are oppressive and destructive* (Mannathoko in Meena 1992:71.)

Feminist theories are therefore directed at changing the conditions of women in the society and subverting gender relations which are oppressive to women.
Defining Feminism

Feminism incorporates many theories which all advocate for the empowerment of women. Feminism involves the recognition that women are systematically discriminated against on the grounds of gender and is committed to working towards change (Tsikata in Meena 1992:2). Mitchell and Oakley (1986) point out that feminism takes its meaning and definition from the moment, that is, what is happening in society.

Feminism is also determined by the position of the researcher and the context of that research. Various feminist perspectives can be identified and while this dissertation has argued that only a combination of these different perspectives will provide a more holistic picture, this is not to say a homogeneous theory of feminism can be arrived at. Different feminist approaches will be identified and analyzed in order to understand both their contributions towards the empowerment of women and their weaknesses.

Having given a brief analysis on race, gender and equality, it is therefore important to analyse how gender, race and equality issues have impacted upon the South African women in the "era" of affirmative action. The analysis of these concepts will be done in the framework of feminist theories. Being a broad-based group of theories, an overview of feminist theories has been provided.

Liberal Feminism has a long history which dates back to the 18th Century when liberal theorists like Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1799) pinpointed discriminatory practices and the dependency of women on men (Mannathoko in Meena 1992:72). Liberal feminists wanted equal opportunities and equal rights, access to opportunities and participation in education and training. Feminist ideas were greatly influenced by the bourgeois revolutions and the championing of a public sphere, which propagated ideas of free access to
information and equal participation in society regardless of gender or social standing (Ryan in Calhoun 1992:259). Liberal feminism focuses on increasing opportunities and equality within the society as it is presently constructed (Mbilinyi 1992:44).

**Marxist Feminism** builds upon the concept of class and also focuses on economic issues, race and ethnicity. Women's oppression is explained in terms of class relations and in terms of who owns the means of production and for what purposes (Mbilinyi 1992:45). Traditional Marxist feminists, especially those who have been using Frederick Engels' theory of the "Origin of the Family," located women's oppression in their inability to participate in the public sphere (Mannathoko in Meena 1992:83). However, participation of women in the public sphere has not automatically led to their liberation. What it has done is increase women's empowerment and provide a platform for addressing women's issues. This theory, however, does not provide for the liberation of women from men, an aspect that socialist feminists (whose perspective will be analysed later) address.

**Radical Feminism** "emerged as a result of a breakaway of Marxist feminists who were frustrated due to their inability to apply social classes in analysing gender oppression" (Mannathoko 1992:75). The social institution of gender has been identified by radical feminists as the source of women's suffering. A power struggle exist between men and women because men have "constructed female sexuality to serve not women's but men's needs, wants and interests" (Tong 1989:72). Sexuality, reproduction and patriarchy have been identified by radical feminists as areas where women need to change. From a radical feminist point of view, male supremacy rather than patriarchy is the most appropriate term of description for the social systems where there is rigid gender division of labour (Mannathoko 1992:76). Radical feminists are
therefore advocating for the sharing of power with men and changing existing power relations.

Post-Structuralist Feminism has used discursive analysis and psychoanalysis to find a more comprehensive theory of gender analysis. Post-structuralist feminists maintain that women are not a homogeneous group and should be divided according to class, race/ethnicity, nationality, gender identity, marital status, age and individual psychology (Mbilinyi 1992:45). Another argument put across is that every individual woman has multiple identities. These are always conflicting with each other and through research and writing, each researcher has put himself or herself in an investigative position and can therefore deconstruct the myths that have been perpetuated about social roles.

Black and Critical Third World Feminism incorporates marxist, nationalist and post-structuralist feminism and considers all four social relations: gender, imperialism, class and race/ethnicity. The term "Third World" is used to locate the theory within neo-colonial nations. Black feminism emerged as an attempt by black American women to break free from feminist policies that were dominated by white women (Hendricks and Lewis 1994:65). The concept behind black feminism is that black women must develop theories that are relevant to their situation and "black feminist theory provides the basis for expressivism, consciousness-raising and a general form of emotional and psychological empowerment" (ibid:66). In South Africa prior to 1994, black women had to fight alongside men for political power and now they must fight with white women for gender equality. However, racial and class considerations create obstacles and an African feminist theory would isolate white women, the same that other perspectives have done.

By combining and incorporating historical analyses, critical feminism provides a multi-disciplinary approach, combining the subjective and the objective aspects. Various scholars have shown how gender is constructed and
reconstructed (Mahanty 1987; Malson 1989; Imam and Mama 1988; Stamp 1989).

**Women in Development (WID) and Women and Development (WAD)**

The concept of WID, located within the liberal framework, was promoted by the United Nations Decade of Women (1975-1985). The concept argues that women of the world, especially those in developing countries, are oppressed as ‘women’ and have been left out of ‘development.’ Most theorists, being ‘European/white heterosexual middle class women, have views which are limited by their locations in society, although many have working and research experience in the ‘Third World’ (Mbilinyi 1992:47). Women had to fight against the inferior position that was attributed to them as housewives and had to get into paid employment. It cannot be argued that the majority of women in Africa lack formal education and the WID approach was designed to address this issue by promoting self-sufficiency through income generating projects which were donor-funded.

The WID approach has not led to the empowerment of women in a real sense because the development projects have been run and controlled by donor agencies in conjunction with national governments (Meena 1992:20). The status of women has not improved, but women have continued to be exploited rather than developed.

The Women and Development approach (WAD) which replaced WID concentrated on women’s practical needs, for example maternal, health and education services, rather than aspects which contributed to gender inequalities, such as unequal division of labour, legal discrimination and sexual harassment (ibid:21).
Socialist Feminism arose out of the failure of Marxist feminism to address the issue of gender and dismissing "women's oppression as not nearly as important as workers' oppression" (Tong 1989:173). Marxist feminism has been superseded by socialist feminism which combines liberal, radical, Marxist and post-structuralist views. One of the arguments put across by the socialist feminists is that women should have an understanding of oppression on both their private and public domain. This has implications of widening the role of women, from the traditional one of wife and mother, to being a participant in the labour market. Entering the labour market does not mean that women can automatically achieve equality. A possible solution according to Zaretsky (1974) is to break the dichotomy between family and work, male and female and all work done should be regarded as valuable to others and to society at large (Tong 1989:67). As will be demonstrated later in this research, women have to keep on asserting their rights to get equal treatment on gender and racial grounds.

Socialist feminists are seeking ways to break the hierarchy of wages, positions by establishing that women's occupations require as much knowledge and mental ability as male positions do (Tong 1989:190). These theorists are therefore advocating a unified labour market that promotes equal wages and worth, rather than a dual labour system where women and minorities are paid less. In the South African context, women and the majority, who are black, have historically been paid less due to the discriminatory policies of apartheid. They should now be the beneficiaries of a unified labour system. Socialist feminists have developed two different approaches; dual-systems theory and unified-systems theory, in an attempt to provide a complete explanation of women's oppression and to try to overcome the shortcomings of other feminists theories (ibid:175).

Dual-systems theory, which attempts to link Marx and Engels' analysis of production and reproduction, maintains that patriarchy and capitalism as
forms of social relations, unite to oppress women (Tong 1989). On the other hand, unified-systems theory attempts to analyse capitalism and patriarchy together because of the theorists' belief the two are intertwined. The above theories attempt to adopt a holistic approach to explain the oppression of women, but at the same time acknowledge that awareness of oppression is not sufficient. The racial, ethnic, class and individual differences between women have to be addressed and the dialectic that exists, that differences are both necessary and a hindrance, has to be acknowledged. Socialist feminism is an overarching theory, that if successful has the potential to resolve existing differences among feminism by its advocacy to end the alienation of women.

Critique of Feminist Perspectives

Feminist theories have brought to the fore the problems faced by women and possible solutions, although their views on how to combat the problems differ. A general weakness of all feminist perspectives is in trying to isolate men. Although liberal feminism is committed to fighting for equal rights and equality, it does not question the structural inequalities prevailing in societies. It does not look upon the relations between the sexes as specific power relations. This modernisation and reformist approach to changing gender inequalities tend to perpetuate the status quo (Mannathoko 1992:73). Although nationalist governments challenged the anthropological approach to gender issues, nationalism did not really provide a point of departure to liberal feminism. Rather it has continued to compromise women's rights by not considering the structural gender imbalances in the division of labour and access to property, including land.

For Marxist feminists, women's emancipation depends on their ability to enter wage employment and become part of the working class. Marxist feminists tend to overlook gender as a source of male power independent of social class and to recognise that women are oppressed regardless of the class
which they belong to. The difference is the type of oppression and also the extent of it. Marxist Feminists argue that housework is disregarded by male-dominated societies.

For the liberal feminists, equal education opportunities are a prerequisite, while the challenge for radical feminists is both the quality and quantity of education for women. A useful insight from radical feminists is the identification that the oppression of women as women continues even in a liberal society where men and women have the same legal rights (Tong 1989:137). This is because, while it is possible to change laws to favour women in a society, it is not so easy to change people’s attitudes towards equality. Constraints are also due to class differences, but even where class distinctions are not so pronounced (for example in a Marxist state) equality difficult to achieve. In an unequal society, equality of opportunity is not sufficient. In Africa, Botswana and Tanzania, studies have shown how educational stereotyping has perpetuated the marginalisation of women, by making some subjects unsuitable for women (Mbilinyi 1991; Mannathoko 1992). The disempowered must be provided with channels and strategies to
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Radical feminists can be criticised for attempting to share male dominance and power instead of changing it. Radical feminists do not link up the economic needs of women and do not view the participating of men as essential to the emancipation of women. The reluctance to include men has prevented men from participating in the struggle for equality. WID\WAD theorists, by focusing solely on women, have isolated men who are part of the gender relations. Radical, liberal and WID\WAD feminism have ignored social class disparities in their analysis of gender issues. Although black feminism
is concerned with practical rather than theoretical considerations, its idealism which is also expressed through slogans is a major weakness (Hendricks and Lewis 1994:66). A distinction between peasants and working class women is essential in order to deal with women’s different needs, since peasants are economically exploited in a way that working class and bourgeois women are not.

The perspective that raised more problems than it solved is the WID approach. WID studies seemed to view ‘Third world’ women as victims whose consciousness needed raising by middle-class intellectual women, rather than as equals who would formulate a strategy together (Mbilinyi 1992:49). As a result, WID looked upon women, especially African women, as a homogenous group. They did not challenge the growing gap between the rich and the poor. Instead the more liberated, modern and rich "experts" adopted a "we"/"they" discourse and saw the "rival", "poor" women as the "other" needing emancipating. These weaknesses have been realised by some WID programmes that have started to define what sort of development is needed for women and also for men. Hence the WAD and Gender and Development (GAD) approach which analyses the relationship between men ad women.

The above perspectives have been useful in identifying areas of oppression and the possible solutions. No one perspective can take into consideration the various aspects of oppression (although socialist feminism incorporates most perspectives) which also differ in each nationality, according to class, race/ethnicity, social consciousness and orientation. Most feminists seem to have blended and incorporated different feminist viewpoints and have emerged with an approach that champions the empowerment of women. A theory that in many ways combines all these perspectives is socialist feminism and this dissertation will make use of this theoretical perspective to discuss women’s perceptions of affirmative action at the SABC in Natal.
The following chapter examines the role of women in media employment.

NOTES

1. A case study is a detailed examination of a single example of a class of phenomena (Abercrombie et al 1984:28). Many case study investigations often use more than a single case to obtain a wider picture of the population under consideration. In case study research, what is of importance is the quality of the study rather than the size or quantity of the sample (Silverman 1993:22). Case studies may provide data of a richness and detail that are difficult to obtain from broader surveys (Abercrombie et al 1984:28).

A case study involves the observation, description or reconstruction of a phenomenon of interest and it is a descriptive type of research in which individuals, groups and organisations are interviewed or observed. A list of advantages and disadvantages of case studies has been compiled using Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) and Williams et al (1988).

Advantages

A case study can describe complex relationships, personal interpretations and historical narratives. There is more flexibility in doing case studies because research activities can be modified as the research progresses. A case study can freely mix quantitative and qualitative approaches and it is done within a real life context.

Disadvantages

...
5. This information is obtained from recommendations made by Professor Fatima Meer to the SABC on August 3 1993 in her capacity as a Board member of the SABC and as Convener of the Staffing Committee. Meer maintains that justified differentiation shall not be seen as discriminatory and will apply where factors such as culture become important considerations.

6. Promises of affirmative action, reconstruction and redress were also designed to win election votes for the ANC, especially when women make up more than 51% of the South African population. Whether these promises will be honoured remains to be seen.

7. About 56% of the labour force in South Africa is functionally or is totally illiterate in construction camps, which creates a problem for the company needing to develop from within. Such companies may be forced to seek management personnel from outside.

8. This section on feminism relies on ideas from Mbilinyi and Mannathoko in Meena (1992).

9. Ryan applies Habermas' concept of the public sphere to feminism. Although women won the franchise and official access, they found themselves conquerors of a hollow fortress. Access did not automatically lead to gender equality.

10. With the collapse of the communist bloc and the crisis in Eastern Europe, Marxism seems to have failed in providing an explanation and solution to the oppressive socio-economic systems.

11. These experts adopted a stance which became truth among different feminists in the western world and among Marxist feminists that women's oppression was grounded in their economic position. They have also defined what has become known as development among feminist studies, although their interpretation is now being challenged.
CHAPTER TWO: WOMEN IN EMPLOYMENT IN THE MEDIA

For a woman to make as much in a day as a man, she would have to work till 10:30 at night ... then who would make dinner? (Sue Lafky 1989).

This chapter explores the developments that women have made in the labour market, with special emphasis on the media industry. The move from the stereotypical role of women in the media industry to one of women in decision-making positions will be analyzed.

Conceptions of Women in Media Employment: International Trends

A woman’s place in early broadcasting and the media in general was in advertising beauty commodities, household hints, singing and acting. Behind the scenes the woman’s place was in writing and research. It was not in announcing, news reading, managing or owning a radio or television station (Cramer in Creedon 1989:214). It was in America that firstly, World War Two and later, affirmative action and the Contemporary Women’s Movements in the 1970s ushered in a period of change. The broadcasting industry in America had its first woman news reader in 1936, Egypt in 1934 despite the outcry that a woman’s voice was neither low enough nor authoritative enough to be giving the news (Cramer 1989). With the wartime shortages women found employment in radio as ‘Script girls,’ a position called production assistant when held by men. Despite these achievements women earned less (and still do in some cases) than their male counter-parts (Smith et al 1989). In their study on Television: Sex Discrimination in the Newsroom in USA, Smith et al (1989) quote figures from the USA Department of Commerce in
1984 confirming that women were earning less. They discovered that professional women often earn less than men doing the same job. For example, incomes for males were $470 per week compared to women’s $385 per week and over-time for men was $1.00 and 82 cents per hour for women (Creedon 1989:214).

This discrepancy in salaries is widespread and applies to most countries in the world. There has been a phenomenal increase in the number of women employed in the media, mainly as presenters. Television presenters have to look ‘presentable’ and this requirement has become important now that local and international network news have become profit centres. The misconception that certain types of positions are not suitable for women still exists. This stereotyping can possibly explain the near absence of women in technical jobs, senior media management and in programme making areas where women are relegated to do women’s educational and children’s programmes, while men do current affairs programmes (Gallagher 1987:13). For example, one interviewee at the SABC, who has a nursing background has been employed to specifically produce programmes relevant to women and children. Some studies done show that women are concentrated in certain types of employment, earning less because society does not regard them as breadwinners (Joshi 1987; de Camargo 1987). In a study done by Joshi on Women in Indian Television, she discovered that of the eighteen production station directors, one was female and no woman has ever become Director-General or Secretary for Information and Broadcasting (Joshi 1987:19). One of the important invisible barriers observed, that has to be done away with, is therefore the stereotyping or type casting of women in terms of the jobs they can/should or cannot/should not do.

There is a visible lack of sensitivity to the physical and emotional burden on women who must reconcile professional and domestic responsibilities. Yet ironically there is a worrying belief that because of the
burden women carry at home, they are ineffective; fragile, superficial, lacking in authority and are lacking when it comes to taking and implementing decisions.

There have been women who have advanced in the media to occupy senior positions but they maintain that they have had to fight and work harder than their male counterparts. Irukwu’s study on Nigerian Women in Broadcasting discusses access to decision making positions, where women make up more than 51% of the 100 million population and illustrates how women have struggled to get to the top (Irukwu 1987:63). At a time when the participation of women in the media was seen as being totally at odds with the role of wife, mother and home-maker, women made their entrance into broadcasting in the 1950s (Irukwu 1987:67). In Nigeria, the woman who has risen highest, a Director in Radio Broadcasting, has spent a total of thirty-two years in broadcasting, fourteen of these in senior management (Irukwu 1987:70). Male counterparts with fewer qualifications and less experience have advanced faster.

In South Africa, amidst political and social change, the role of women in broadcasting has strengthened as a significant number (mainly white women) have now advanced to senior positions. For example at the SABC, the head of News Production in Natal is a woman, the head of Radio Zulu is also a woman and in other provinces women have advanced into decision-making positions.

The South African Situation: The Position of Women in the Media

The interaction between class, gender and race/ethnicity has been one of the greatest challenges of Marxist feminists in Southern Africa (Mannathoko 1992). South African feminist scholars have been particularly attracted by Marxist feminism which they have used to challenge male/white dominated
ideologies and to demand the development of black feminist theories (Hendricks and Lewis 1994). Black feminists have developed a critique which springs directly from their own struggles against hegemonic theories, exploitative politics and research (Hendricks and Lewis 1994:65). In South Africa, there is increasing debate on the concept of "difference," focusing on whether white women can write about black women's experiences or vice versa (Hassim and Walker 1992, Gouws 1993, Nkuleko 1987, Hendricks and Lewis 1994). There has been an attempt to locate the oppression of black South African women within specific classes and the process of apartheid which has led to their disempowerment, firstly as black and secondly as women. What can be established is that one is never only a woman, but a working-class or rural, heterosexual or lesbian woman. These differences make it impossible to regard women as a homogeneous group.

Racial and class interests among women in South Africa have had the effect of distinguishing and putting women in categories. White women have had the franchise from as early as 1930 and the majority of black women (including 'coloureds' and Indians) only voted for the first time in April 1994. The granting of political equality to white women did not represent gender equality (Walker 1990:316). White women had the vote, they still subscribed to the traditional, stereotypical role of women in the labour market and within households. The black women were caught in the middle and since they could not fight two battles they had to choose between the national and the gender one. The issue of franchise was closely tied with liberation from apartheid rule. They had to have democratic rights first before they could assert or fight for their rights as women, let alone join their better off white counterparts in the struggle for gender equality.
Women's Struggle within Political Parties

Black women in South Africa have entered politics through major political parties like African National Congress (ANC), Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), Communist Party of South Africa and later the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). The struggle led by individuals from predominantly patriarchal systems was aimed at obtaining the rights of the blacks in a white dominated system and the subordination of women was not seen as a major issue (Gaidzanwa 1992:101). Women in the parties, who tended to be Western-educated, felt that national freedom would be adequate and would solve the problems of black women. Within the ANC, women were non-voting members but despite this discriminatory practice, black women saw their struggle as synonymous with that of black men against the white regime. Women secured the right to vote in the ANC in 1943 and it was only in the 1950s that women’s organisations, both black and white, emerged as formidable groups fighting for women’s rights (Gaidzanwa:103). The women’s organisations wanted equality in education and wages. They realised that their subordination went beyond oppression due to apartheid. Women required equal rights with men in relation to property, marriage and the removal of traditional norms that oppressed them and kept them in a subordinate position (Gaidzanwa 1992:103). Although women desired peace for the sake of their children and society and recognition by the world, they were becoming increasingly aware of the battle for equality that had to be fought, even after South Africa become a democratic state.

The 1990s

The release of Nelson Mandela from prison in February 1990 and the opening up of negotiations between the apartheid regime and African-led political parties meant the road towards reconciliation. With the advent of
independence and a record representation of women in the government, (i.e. 26.5%), women can now concentrate on women's issues (Beijing Conference Report 1994). It is hoped that South African women will learn from the lessons of other Southern African countries which at independence sacrificed women's issues by allowing themselves to be co-opted into a patriarchal system.

The policy of affirmative action being promoted in South Africa is aimed at redressing the imbalances created by the apartheid system among the different races. This approach does not address class inequalities within a racial group. The system of affirmative action is supposed to reduce the current racial and gender imbalances and women have been identified as beneficiaries, especially those who are also black.

Concern has been expressed that by focusing on women's rights, women are excluding not only men but themselves from the mainstream political debates. However, women should not seek to adopt a WID approach which does not involve the participation of men, but should work in conjunction with men and society at large to achieve an equitable position. As government officials, women have to make sure that women are not forgotten or given special treatment due to the fact that as women, they are viewed as weaker and ineffectual in need of welfare assistance. The question that South African women had been asking themselves before April 1994 was: Which struggle is more important: the protection of cultural rights or the protection of women oppressed by particular cultural practices? The same question is still being debated but most women, at least those educated and in urban areas, are becoming aware of cultural practices that oppress them. They are beginning to fight against such practices. Most women still have not realised that they have a right to fight such practices. After all, a right is only a right if people know they have it. There is therefore a great urgency to educate all women on exercising their rights.
Since there is equality before the law and discrimination is legally dead, one is prompted to ask why women feel that they are not equal to men? A guarantee of basic human rights does not really encompass the rights of women. Women need control over their lives, bodies and ideas that are circulated about women. This can be promoted by the mapping out of policies by women to redress the situation. Dabi Nkululeko (in Hendricks and Lewis 1994) argues that women, especially black women, should determine their own liberation and not remain organised within the male dominated sections of society (Hendricks and Lewis 1994:66). As long as women fail to exercise the right to define their own destinies and participate on equal terms in society, they are being oppressed by the system and in some cases by themselves. There have been arguments that women themselves do not want change, but want to be controlled by men (Horn 1991:62). This position has been rejected by women (for example those interviewed at the SABC) who, in fact, advocate for equal pay for work of equal worth, the reorganisation of the work environment and a review of working hours. Whatever policies are advanced, they should be gender sensitive, providing for adequate maternity leave and facilities for children’s day care close to the workplace. That is, after all, what equality is all about, provided they are qualified for the work that they are employed to do.

The fact that affirmative action might attract unqualified personnel because they are black and female is the fear that has been sweeping many companies not wanting to be seen as discriminating. It cannot be argued with certainty that this is not happening. In fact, one can hazard a guess that those corporations and companies who do not want to be left behind in reconciliation, and do not want to find the right woman or black person who is qualified, just hire a woman for ‘window dressing’ purposes.

The following section examines how affirmative action has affected women, specifically those at the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC).
Women and Affirmative Action at the SABC

Affirmative action has the aim of redressing the imbalances caused by past discriminations. Affirmative action refers to a range of programmes designed to help disadvantaged minorities to gain access to institutions which would otherwise remain closed to them because of discriminatory traditions (Degenaar in van der Merwe and Schrire 1980:42). The cornerstone of affirmative action is to bring historically disadvantaged groups into competition. Positive discrimination for women has involved and is involving the redistribution of resources within power structures at all levels. The argument for such a policy is that women have to be helped to reach the levels that men have and that men should shoulder some of the social responsibilities that women have, that is, should combine parenthood and career (Gwagwa 1992). This is one of the strengths of socialist feminism, because it acknowledges the important role that women play both in the home and in the workplace. Women suffer both at home and at work and the status of women has to change in these institutions if women are to achieve equality (Tong 1989:6).

Fatima Meer (1992) defines affirmative action as a process which has as its aims and purpose to equalise employment opportunities and employee development. Justified differentiation shall not be seen as discriminatory and will only apply where factors such as culture become important considerations (Meer 1992:1).1 All selections for recruitment, transfer or promotion will be based on the requirements of the post and the ability of the individual to perform that job adequately. The aim of such policies for the SABC is to have a labour force that reflects the demographic composition of the South African population, but also taking into consideration the specific skills required for different positions. This is in itself a contradictory aim since the majority of the black South African population is illiterate. A small percentage of black
women are educated, let alone having skills for such positions. As the SABC has observed, it might take up to thirty-five years to correct gender and race imbalances unless affirmative action is considerably accelerated (Report on the Staffing Committee to the SABC 1993:5) As a result, if the SABC is to immediately employ qualified personnel, then it cannot look to the black population, let alone black women whose education still depends to a large extent, on there being 'extra’ money to send a female child to school.

The SABC Policies on Staffing

With the advent of the restructuring process at the SABC from 1986 and political and social changes in South Africa from 1990, the SABC has started mapping out new strategies to redress staff imbalances. The staff composition of the corporation is not demographically representative, both racially and according to gender. The SABC has a staff of over 5 000, 1000 of those are black, concentrated in the lower ranks (Report on the Staffing Committee to the SABC Board 1993:4). These statistics do not reflect how many of the black employees are foreigners. It is no secret that over the years the SABC has employed a significant number of blacks, mainly from neighbouring countries and also from abroad who are highly trained. To try and achieve an equitable balance on racial and gender lines, the SABC will have to provide training and staff development of all members of staff who may have been disadvantaged by poor and/or discriminatory educational systems (Meer 1992:2). Members of staff recruited from a disadvantaged community will be equipped with skills through training programmes provided by SABC. How such training programmes will be structured to apply to blacks and women is not outlined because the SABC’s data base does not enable a breakdown of trainee figures according to race and gender (Report on the Staffing Committee to the SABC Board 1993:2). This shortcoming has worrying implications concerning how race and gender equality will be monitored. For affirmative
action to be implemented effectively, a data base providing gender and racial ratios is essential.

On the issue of remuneration, the principle of equal pay for work of equal worth is said to apply at the SABC and the salary scales shall continue to be non-discriminatory (Meer 1992:1). The differences which exist in salary scales will only pertain to the level, status and content of the post, and the level of performance. The issue of performance is a contentious one in some positions and is therefore left to the immediate superior to determine an employee's level of performance.

The present race and gender imbalances are greatly tipped in favour of the white racial group and the male gender. The approximate gender ratio given by the SABC is 70:30 in favour of men (Report on the Staffing Committee to the SABC 1993:1). It is this imbalance that affirmative action wishes to correct. The ratio of white to black can be estimated to be 80:20 (the category black includes 'coloureds' and Indians). At the management level the racial ratio rises to 85:15 in favour of whites and the gender ratio is estimated to be 70:30 in favour of men (ibid). The SABC commits itself to achieve a target ratio of at least 50% of the people employed to be black by 31 December 1997 and with greater representation of women at senior levels (SABC Policy on Affirmative Action 1994:2). Management has responded to the imbalances by revamping the training programmes that existed to serve a wider group. Management is supposed to enact a policy that favours blacks and women but does not at the same time compromise high standards of professionalism. Whether this can be done remains to be seen. The SABC maintains that R10 million was spent training employees during the 1992/3 period, a figure which is 25% less than that spent by private corporations in South Africa and 50% less than that spent in Europe (Report on the Staffing Committee to the SABC Board 1993).

As a result one can hypothesise that the SABC has devoted very little to the development of human resources considering the wide gap in
inequalities in gender and race relations. Since 74% of the people trained were white and mostly male, the beneficiaries of training programmes remain white and male who, in turn, dominate the management structure (Report on the Staffing Committee to the SABC 1993:2-3). Consequently, the training programmes tend to serve management development rather than operational or functional training, where many women and blacks can be found. Of the 243 participants in the Management Development Centre, 115 were senior managers, 112 middle and 6 junior. Of the Senior Management participants, 97% were white men, 22% black men, 1% Indian men, 5% white women and 2% were black women (Report on the Staffing Committee to the SABC:3). It is only recently that figures for other races, mainly blacks and women have risen dramatically, although these statistics do not reflect the quality and training of the employees (Report on the Staffing Committee to the SABC 1993:2).²

As far as technical training is concerned, very little has changed where gender is concerned. The beneficiaries for these programmes, which are really too short, lasting between three to ten days, continue to be white and male. These courses range from camera work to script-writing, story-telling and directing. The shortness of the courses indicate that they are aimed at those who have some knowledge prior to this training and are refresher courses which cannot benefit new recruits.

Where an increase in black recruitment and women employment can be seen is in the mentorship programmes introduced in 1993 by the SABC (Report on the Staffing Committee to the SABC Board 1993:1). The mentorship programmes involve the selection of individuals who are then attached to an established employee of the SABC. The mentor will guide the 'protegee' so that his/her career can advance as quickly and smoothly as possible. The proteges and mentors are required to meet at least once a month to discuss and debate issues pertaining to the protegee's career performance. One assumes that the language used is English and/or Afrikaans since the
mentors are largely white. For the year 1993, 83 proteges and 69 mentors were selected. 69.4% of the proteges were black men, 8.2% white men, 20% white women, 10.6% black women (Report on the Staffing Committee to the SABC Board:3). The criteria used for selecting the individuals for mentorship is not disclosed. It is probable that the proteges would have to be those who are not a possible threat to the mentor's job or position, otherwise the programme would be unproductive due to fears of replacement.

The SABC also provides provisions for outside training at local Universities and technikons and also abroad. Of the 388 participants in this programme, 263 were white and 125 were black (Report on the Staffing Committee to the SABC Board 1993:4). Statistics were not available according to gender. Bursaries are awarded to individuals to study on different media aspects of their choice. Due to the inequalities in educational opportunities, it will take a long time for black South Africans to have equal access to the dispensation of business, management jobs and technical jobs. If in-house training is converted into hard-core training, then those disadvantaged by an unfair education system which now prevents them from advancing at higher levels at universities and other institutions, can benefit from in-depth training at SABC. The orientation of training programmes also has to change to serve a wide employment margin, not only management.

The SABC sees the most convenient way of staff equity as being through the process of retirement replacement. In the next eight years it is anticipated that a total of 334 posts will fall vacant when some employees retire at the age of 63, which is the SABC's retirement age. About 76 of these posts are held by blacks, leaving 258 positions which could be filled by blacks (Report on the Staffing Committee to the SABC Board 1993:4-5). However, it would take thirty-five to forty years to correct the existing racial imbalance. The prevailing trend seems to be a drive towards racial equality. Very few policies have been outlined which relate to the gender imbalance at the SABC, evidenced by the seemingly lack of statistics according to gender.
priority seems to be to achieve a racial equality. Management at SABC has proposed the introduction of measures which will reduce the black/white gap in management from the current 85:15 ratio in favour of whites to 63:38 within a year. There will also be an introduction of 28 scholarships for blacks in management skills. This is a strategic move. Since the SABC has more black personnel at the lower ranks, there will be a need for these people to be supervised by someone they relate to and also to evade the paternalistic picture that has characterised black and white relationships in most spheres of South African life and business.

In July 1994, the Board and Management of the SABC appointed a Committee of Management and a Board to report on the existing staffing structure and training programmes. This move is aimed at moving the SABC from its racial past to the non-racial future of reconciliation that the new government of national unity has embarked upon.

From the policies of the SABC outlined above, one gets the impression that no concrete policies yet exist to further the employment of women. Although one of the proposals made by the Staffing Committee is the changing of gender imbalances, the emphasis is on racial equality (Staffing Committee Report 1994). This has shown that more men than women are being promoted and the ratio between men and women reflects male superiority, a situation that affirmative should correct. The next Chapter explored some views of women broadcasters on how the policy of affirmative action is being implemented at the SABC's Natal regional offices.

NOTES

1. The following information on the SABC employment equity relies on information
from a paper by Fatima Meer, who is also a Board member and Convenor of the
SABC Staffing Committee (03 August 1993). See Appendix one.

2. Management was asked specifically to give a breakdown of the existing training
programmes as they applied to blacks and women. This information is not available
since the SABC’s data base does not enable a breakdown of trainee figures by race
and gender. Management has given 930 as the number of participants trained
between January 1992 and August 1993. Of this figure, 240 (i.e 25%) were black
and 74% white.

The above figures were obtained from the Report on the Staffing Committee to the
SABC Board 7 September 1993. The rest of this chapter also relies heavily on this
source.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH:
SABC WOMEN AS CASE STUDIES IN NATAL

I eagerly anticipated working for a female boss. I reasoned that another woman would be more empathetic, more supportive, more in tune with those problems specifically female. The past decade has disillusioned me. I have experienced Hitlerian rule at the hands of ‘liberated’ women, scant respect for me, my private life - in short, I have been treated like an automaton. I have experienced that the single, childless woman is the most ruthless of employers (Woman versus woman 1994:8).

It is difficult and almost impossible to generalise on the interests of women. However, it cannot be argued that all women favour equality between the races and between men and women. Most women do realise that equality is something they have to fight for and it is not a forgone conclusion that it is an obtainable goal. While all women can be said to be oppressed is one way or another, they are not equally oppressed. Affirmative action has the potential to create the circumstances in which it is possible for most women to empower themselves by removing obstacles to empowerment and by supporting the initiatives of those who wish to be empowered.

The aim of my research has been to investigate changes affecting women, coinciding with the restructuring changes at the SABC after 1986 and more particularly, the move towards the post-apartheid era after February 1990. The research has involved the analysis of data available on issues of gender, race and equality and work done on South African broadcasting. Of importance is to analyse the following:
* kinds of positions held by women in the media
* positions held by women within the SABC
* overall percentage of women at the SABC
* ratio of men to women
* ratio of racial groups.

The implications of whatever findings that emerged have been analyzed in relation to race, gender and equality issues.

The assumption behind the championing of gender equality is that women employed in the media as practitioners, policy makers and occupants of senior positions would introduce a new perspective that has been hitherto lacking. Women from diverse backgrounds with different experiences and ideas would provide a wider and more representative picture of society. This assumption has been examined in the course of the research. *Is the presence of women important only in a symbolic sense, to fulfil some inherent desire for an equitable distribution of women and men in all spheres of activity?*¹ This is a facet of affirmative action that needs analysis.

**Methodology**

Semi-structured and administered interviews were conducted with operational staff such as women reporters, news writers, producers and women at managerial level (see appendix 2). The questions administered to the interviewees were open-ended. Time was spent trying to make the interviewees feel comfortable and assuring them that their names would not be used in the final write-up of the research. This research utilises qualitative methods with the intention of obtaining an authentic understanding of the interviewees’ individual experiences, rather than providing a representative picture of all women’s views at the SABC. Qualitative research assumes that
systematic inquiry must occur in a natural setting, rather than an artificially constructed one (Silverman 1993:10). Qualitative research should also reflect the researcher’s empathy with the subject, but at the same time try to avoid romantic tendencies which might identify experience with authenticity.²

Any study done should be historically, culturally, politically and contextually sensitive.³ Historical sensitivity helps in establishing relevance and indicating how society is organised and governed. For example, in South Africa, the policy of affirmative action has been prompted by the need to correct a situation brought about by apartheid. Apartheid favoured one group, the white minority at the expense of the black majority.

Cultural sensitivity refers to how experiences have shaped individuals. South Africa, being a country with people of diverse cultural backgrounds has to be sensitive to the differences that exist, not only according to race and gender, but according to ethnicity. Among white women, differences exist between Afrikaner and non-Afrikaner women. Cultural differences among Zulu, Tswana, Sotho, Xhosa and Ndebele black women also have to be acknowledged. Any research done has to be aware of this cultural diversity in South Africa.

Political sensitivity, which takes into consideration how social problems arise, seeks to identify the politics behind the defining of a topic. The issue of affirmative action is of great political as well as social interest in South Africa because it seeks to address racial and gender imbalances. At the moment affirmative action is a politically correct policy to follow.

Research also has to be contextually sensitive and should be of use to the participants in the research, to the researcher and society as a whole. For the interviewees at the SABC, it was necessary to make them feel at ease and their workplace seemed to be the most logical location for conducting the interviews.⁴

Four major research methods, observation, analysing texts and documents, interviews and recording, are usually used by qualitative
researchers. These methods are often combined, for example in my research I used a mix of documentary/text analysis and interviews which I recorded using an audio tape recorder.

In doing the interviews, the interviewees were asked open-ended questions. The interviewees were chosen for their experience and were viewed as experienced subjects who actually construct their social worlds. This method in qualitative research is called interactionism, whose primary motive is to generate information which gives an authentic insight into people's experiences through unstructured and semi-structured interviews (Silverman 1993:91). There is a weakness to this approach which must be highlighted before analysing the interviews done at the SABC. Open-ended interviewing is in itself a form of social control which shapes what people say. As some of the interviewees kept on talking, expanding their views, at times I felt compelled to move to the next question.

The views of the women interviewed (although they may coincide with views of other women) are not to be taken as being representative of the views of women of a particular race, class or ethnic group at the SABC. The interviewees can only give an insight into some of the problems that face women at the SABC and what they feel ought to be done to address these problems. All the interviews were done at the SABC offices, the place where all the interviewees were based.5

Issues that were discussed focused on the following:

* conditions of employment
* allocation of assignments
* relationships with management and other employees
* issues of harassment in any form
* issues of discrimination
Criteria Used for Selecting Interviewees

Women of three racial groups were questioned on the above issues. Three women from each racial group were selected, that is

* Asian (Indian)
* Black
* White

'Coloured' women, who do not constitute a significant factor in Natalian demography, were left out (see Figure 3).

The initial aim was to interview women from different areas of broadcasting and those who had been working for the Natal Broadcasting Services since 1990, who have seen changes being made over the years. A list of broadcasting employees was provided by the Human Resources Department at the Natal regional offices of the SABC. From the list, women employees were isolated and a possible list of eighteen interviewees was drawn up. Problems were experienced in trying to get hold of certain individuals who were either too busy, sick or on leave. In the final analysis, out of the eighteen people on the initial list, only four, who made themselves available, were interviewed. The rest were contacted individually, on the basis of the positions they hold, experience in the media and the number of years they have spent at the SABC. A diversity of positions could not be obtained in certain cases. The main area of concern was finding suitable interviewees in the 'black' category. There were few black women employed by Natal’s SABC since 1990. Most of the black women were new recruits, having worked at the SABC for two years or less. All the women interviewed were chosen on the basis that they have been at the SABC for more than two years. Age, position and the number of years spent at the Corporation were determining factors. The qualitative approach based on interviews used in this research, aimed at gaining a comprehensive understanding of the women's different experiences at the SABC, which would otherwise have been difficult through
questionnaires. This method enabled the exploration of various points and also the analysis of the unspoken obtained through body language and other gestures.

The SABC’s attempt to introduce an equal opportunities programme, like that of the CBC in Canada, illustrates an organisation’s response to political and societal changes. The SABC may well be willing to introduce equality regardless of race or gender, but the whole process is fraught with difficulties if there are no means of ensuring that managers, (predominantly male and white) are held accountable for affirmative action’s implementation. The barriers that face women aiming at jobs previously the preserve of men or white women are no longer overt, but are invisible, displayed through attitudes and biases which even women themselves might not recognise as discrimination.

The Practicality of Affirmative Action in Natal’s SABC

In this research, the analysis of the SABC was concerned only with women employees, occupying all levels of employment in broadcasting. The research therefore focused exclusively on women employees’ attitudes and perceptions on affirmative action and is therefore biased towards women’s interpretation.

Statistics and staff lists on the structure of the SABC that were used in the research were compiled from information obtained from the SABC. A major aim of this study was to determine whether the policies discussed pertaining to affirmative action, have and are, being implemented. If there has been a significant increase in women employees, there is a need to assess the impact this change has had on the organisation and media output from the SABC.

There has been an increasing trend by the SABC to employ women, mainly blacks and Indians. Women have increasingly been employed as
presenters, editors, reporters and a few as producers. After Johannesburg, the headquarters, Natal has the second largest population of SABC employees. Figure 1 illustrates the distribution according to region, focusing on each racial group.

**Fig 1: Distribution of Employees According to Region**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REGION</th>
<th>WHITE</th>
<th>INDIAN</th>
<th>'COLOURED'</th>
<th>BLACK</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JHB</td>
<td>3269</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>923</td>
<td>4288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EASTERN CAPE</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WESTERN CAPE</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATAL</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORTHERN CAPE</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAR NORTH</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORANGE FREE STATE</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>3771</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>1262</td>
<td>5192</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


It became clear from the statistics available that the distribution of employees at the SABC did not reflect the true demographic picture of South Africa. Natal’s population is made up of more blacks and Indians than whites. This concentration is not reflected in the employment of personnel at the SABC. The picture that emerged was one of unequal distribution and from these figures, the proportion of women employees could not be ascertained since figures according to gender were not available. From the figures provided by the SABC in Natal, women in broadcasting make up about a third of the total broadcasting staff.
As far as most of the interviewed employees were concerned, there is some discrimination at the SABC on the basis of gender or race. The general perception promoted by the SABC management was equal pay for work of equal worth. This has, however not been substantiated because it is organisational policy that employees should not discuss their salary packages and this seems to be an indication of fear on management’s part and with reason. There have been instances where salary discrepancies have been found to exist amongst female and male employees doing the same work, with similar qualifications and experience. Over the past four years, discrepancies in salaries according to race have been narrowed down and the SABC maintains that it practices equal work for equal pay. Statistics up to July 1993 have indicated that differences still existed according to one’s racial group.

Fig 2: Average Salary Distribution per annum (in Rands)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T.S.M. WHITE</td>
<td>107.262</td>
<td>118.244</td>
<td>128.144</td>
<td>139 488</td>
<td>152 995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLACK</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>125.000</td>
<td>136 245</td>
<td>160 095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. M. WHITE</td>
<td>65.756</td>
<td>75 286</td>
<td>82 090</td>
<td>91 910</td>
<td>101 075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLACK</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>63 000</td>
<td>69 636</td>
<td>77 978</td>
<td>88 001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. M. WHITE</td>
<td>54 356</td>
<td>62 543</td>
<td>67 943</td>
<td>75 183</td>
<td>712 249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLACK</td>
<td>45 830</td>
<td>53 828</td>
<td>62 373</td>
<td>67 679</td>
<td>46 829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. L. BLACK</td>
<td>9 267</td>
<td>10 823</td>
<td>12 239</td>
<td>13 079</td>
<td>17 194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. L. WHITE</td>
<td>29 647</td>
<td>34 532</td>
<td>38 269</td>
<td>42 679</td>
<td>33 790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLACK</td>
<td>20 969</td>
<td>26 669</td>
<td>31 994</td>
<td>46 829</td>
<td>39 465</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

52
Considering the discrepancies that still exist according to race, it is not difficult to figure out why employees are not ‘encouraged’ to discuss their salary packages. In fact, the category of unskilled labour which existed for the blacks did not exist for the white employees. The picture that emerged was that there were no unskilled white workers at the SABC. From the above statistics, it was only at senior management level that the salary gap was narrow and in 1993, black top manager(s) were earning more than their white counterparts. On the other levels, the blacks were earning much less and even less than what their white counterparts were earning the previous year before increments.

Reasons for these differences, despite being racial, could be attributed to the level of education and experience. One can only speculate as to the differences that arise when race and gender aspects are put together, since statistics according to gender were not available. It would seem that all white personnel are more skilled, educated and experienced than most of the black personnel. From statistics obtained from the SABC, evidence emerged that some black employees had more experience, having been working for the SABC for the past ten years, but still earn less than white employees.
### Natal Women Broadcasters: Their Perceptions on Affirmative Action

**Fig 3: Profile of Women Interviewed**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSITION</th>
<th>RACE</th>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>YEARS AT SABC</th>
<th>STATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SENIOR ANNOUNCER</td>
<td>WHITE</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>RADIO S. AFRICA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANNOUNCER/PRODUCER</td>
<td>BLACK</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>RADIO ZULU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SENIOR ANN/PRODUCER</td>
<td>INDIAN</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>IMPRESSIONS (TV-CCV)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SENIOR ANN/PRODUCER</td>
<td>INDIAN</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>RADIO LOTUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SENIOR PROGRAMME COMPI</td>
<td>INDIAN</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>RADIO LOTUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SENIOR JOURNALIST</td>
<td>WHITE</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>TV NEWS REPORTER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUNIOR JOURNALIST</td>
<td>WHITE</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>RADIO NEWS (EDITOR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUNIOR JOURNALIST</td>
<td>BLACK</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>RADIO ZULU (TRANSLATOR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUNIOR JOURNALIST</td>
<td>BLACK</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>RADIO ZULU (PRESENTER)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The case studies of the few interviewed women aimed to analyze how these women perceived the new policy of affirmative action, as it involved the participation of women in all sectors of broadcasting. In Natal, women have been recruited in decision-making positions, for example, the head of news gathering is a woman and who at the moment has filled a temporary post in
Johannesburg, the first time a women has ever filled such a position. The head of Radio Zulu is also a woman, the first black woman to hold such a post and has had to fight overt and subtle discrimination as a woman and as a black person.

There was general consensus that in principle, affirmative action is a noble policy. The following are some of the perspectives of the women interviewed.

A white senior announcer and producer with Radio South Africa defined affirmative action as:

A planned programme of staff changes, looking to redress any imbalances in the employment of staff members on the basis of gender or race in the country. It is a deliberate attempt to try and correct previous imbalances.

A white junior journalist stationed in the newsroom, had similar views:

My understanding of affirmative action is employing people who were not employed before because of policies of preference for a certain race or gender group. It is addressing the imbalances of that past discriminatory policy.

A black junior journalist, who works in the newsroom translating English
A black announcer and producer with Radio Zulu stated that:

*I thought affirmative action was to try and equalise job status among different racial groups, especially women. I thought that although it will be done, academic qualifications and competence would be considered. Now it is my perception that organisations are window dressing. Much as I am a black person, I think I would not be doing justice to myself if I ignored these faults.*

An Indian presenter and producer of the television programme *Impressions*, had the following to say about affirmative action:

*My understanding is that people will have the ability to do a certain task, who some reason have not had the opportunity to do so, will be given the opportunity, making certain that not race nor gender should come into question. We are talking about affirmative action, relating it to blacks and women in particular but this will create problems in the future. What about the white people, especially the young? Twenty years from now, we will need another policy to redress a policy that disadvantaged the minority. I cannot help but feel that we are going to live through this programme again, targeted at the white population.*

An Indian senior announcer and producer with Radio Lotus also outlined her misgivings concerning affirmative action:

*My understanding of affirmative action is that people who have been denied the opportunity due to past policies now have the opportunity to realise their potential, regardless of race or gender. I am very disturbed because everyone is talking about blacks and women. Unfortunately, employers are not looking at the skills that people have. Let me be blunt here, but blacks are being employed where they do not qualify because certain organisations, not specifically the SABC, want to be seen to be doing the right thing.*

The above three statements highlight the misgivings the some employees have regarding affirmative action, especially the racial groups that do not consider themselves to be the major beneficiaries of affirmative action. If the fears assailing some employees are not dispelled, by convincing them that only qualified personnel are being sought, a lot of resentment, on racial grounds, will result. Race has often been used to stigmatise and oppress minorities. In
the case of affirmative action, race plays a role in the process of identifying the disadvantaged. Thus, affirmative action cannot be racially neutral (Degenaar 1980:50). The SABC is trying to implement affirmative action in a logical manner, that is employing employees that are qualified and know something about broadcasting. However, few people have been exposed to such backgrounds and only recently have young black and Indian teenagers been exposed to the media as participants rather than receivers. The SABC has had to employ people that they train on the job and problems of competency have been encountered.

Some of the women interviewed felt that the SABC has tried to implement the programme too quickly with disastrous consequences. A black senior announcer and producer with Radio Zulu stated that Africans without any knowledge of broadcasting have been employed to even out the numbers, not only between men and women but also between blacks (including Indians) and whites to reflect the demography of Natal. A reporter with television news felt that more ground work is needed on mapping out affirmative action strategies to avoid tokenism. This view is in total contradiction to policies outlined by Management. According to Management, recruitment and promotions shall be done transparently and only competent individuals shall be employed (SABC Staffing Committee Report 1994:3).

Apart from two women in technically related jobs, women continue to occupy jobs seen as less strenuous. During my research, one of the two women had handed in her resignation to take up what she considered a lighter post, that is training other employees to edit and use computer technology. It stands out clearly from statistics that in some categories such as camera work and video editing, there are hardly any women (see Figure 3). One of the interviewees, a senior announcer with Radio South Africa, felt that women can do any job as well as, and even better than men. She did not feel that there were any obstacles that women could not overcome. According to her,
"It is society that dictates what women can and cannot do and it is up to us to change this view, otherwise we will continue to suffer. Of course, some of us even believe that there are jobs we should stay away from."

Her views seemed to have been proved correct by another interviewee. A news reporter, indicated that there are some occupations that are not suited to women, not because they cannot do them, but because they are too strenuous. She cited camera work as an example because women find it difficult to manoeuvre heavy equipment:

*For example, outside broadcasting requires physical strength for putting up lights. Women can do that too, but the problem is that everyone is used to men doing the physical work.*

Because of these technical aspects, such occupations become unsuitable for women and that is why few women are found in technically related jobs. This seems to be the trend in most media organisations world wide. In India, Ecuador and Nigeria (Unesco 1987), studies have shown that women have found it difficult to penetrate technically related fields. This is partly due to the cumbersomeness of the job, which involves carrying heavy equipment but it is mostly due to the type-casting of jobs considered by men and some women as being unsuitable for women. It is such that women have to fight and show that they can do such jobs.