

WOMEN IN THE MARITIME INDUSTRY

INTRODUCTION

As a maritime lawyer, I address this topic from the point of view of a service provider to the shipping industry.

I am also the president of the South African branch of the Women's International Shipping and Trade Association (WISTA) and as such I am familiar with the role played by women in the broader shipping community.

WISTA has an important role to play in addressing the gender imbalances within the shipping industry. The mission of WISTA is to develop, promote and support the interests of South African women in this industry, with a view to empowering these women so that they can advance their careers in the industry.

There are 20 WISTA member countries comprising more than 500 individual members. Membership extends from Europe through to Africa, the Middle East, Far East, Australia, Central America, the United States and Canada, attracting a range of diverse maritime skills.

The value of WISTA as an organization is in promoting the exchange of knowledge and information, sharpening the insight of our members into the businesses of shipping and international trade.

WISTA creates platforms for networking amongst our members. We are at a unique stage in South African history and in many respects the dynamics of our country differ from those of our fellow shipping nations. It is impossible for an organization such as WISTA to ignore the social and economic realities surrounding us, including the gender imbalances, particularly with reference to black women in shipping and well as skills shortages, lack of access to education and the failure of the shipping industry to highlight the career opportunities available.

As a country there is vast scope for improving the level of participation of women in business and opportunities for professional development amongst the majority of our population. Issues of gender equity are therefore very close to the hearts of WISTA members.

OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION

It is fairly obvious, without the need to resort to statistical analysis, that the gender makeup in different sectors of the shipping industry is not the same.

In an effort to engage the private sector in debate on equality in the workplace, the Commission on Gender Equality conducted an audit of gender in the private sector in the late '90's. The audit covered a sample of 103 companies and the following is reflected by available statistics:

Women constitute approximately 54% of the population and two-fifths or 38% of the paid workforce. Although women account for 38% of the workforce, they account for 68% of all service sector employees and more than half of all clerical positions.

Furthermore, women are also under-represented in positions that are perceived to be male-oriented. In the following jobs, women are represented as follows:

- 5% of artisans and apprentices;
- 6% of communication and related occupations;
- 3% of registered engineers; and
- 10% of judges and magistrates.

These generalized statistics are also applicable to the shipping industry, with low representation of women in positions such as engineering, and such as ship surveyors and seafarers, which have also traditionally been regarded as male-oriented.

Although women are generally concentrated in service, sales and professional sectors, the study by the Commission on Gender Equality also revealed that not all women are equally represented in the specific job functions and occupational categories. The disparities between males and females are also reflected, for example by the finding that male managers have twice as many subordinates as female managers.

The South African labour market is severely skewed. Occupational segregation clearly exists between men and women.

In addition to uneven representation of women in certain sectors, there is inequity concerning the issue of remuneration. According to Statistics SA (SSA), which has compared the incomes of households headed by women with those of households headed by men, over 37% of women-headed households in non-urban areas fall in the category of the poorest 20% of households in the country, as compared with 23% of male-headed households in non-urban areas. In urban areas, 15% of women-headed households are among the poorest 20% of households, as compared with 5% of male-headed households there.

Gender disparities in income is a structural feature of societies the world over. As the UN puts it " Women are over half the world's people, one third of the official workforce and do two-thirds of the world's work-hours. Yet they receive only one-tenth of the world's income and own less than one-hundredth of the world's property."

A study by Carolyn Winter revealed that the educational attainment of the South African population varies by race from an average of under six years for Africans and Coloureds to eight years for Indians and almost ten years for whites. But surprisingly it is relatively equal for both men and women, compared with many other countries, where men have more schooling than women.

Of those in the labour force, women have an average of 1,2 years more education than men. Globally, years of education is a predictor of occupation and occupation

is a predictor of wage levels. We would therefore expect that South African women would do reasonably well on the remuneration front, especially in professional and technical employment where 21% of economically active women are represented as compared with only 12% of economically active men. This strong showing of women in the professional and technical fields lies partly in their orientation towards teaching and nursing.

However, South African women's wages average only 87% of men's in the formal labour force. The breakdown by race presents a further surprise: African women's wages are actually identical to African men's. But African women average two more years of education than African men. On this basis their salaries should be 20% more. Moreover, white women's salaries average 67% of white men's despite having equal educational attainment. Coloured women's educational advantage over men also fails to translate into a wage advantage. Women's wages do not reflect their human capital.

The Sector Education and Training Authority for the Transport Industry (TETA) have compiled statistics, which may clarify the question of the extent of the participation of women in the maritime sector. The attached table "A" reflects the race and gender makeup of 308 South African companies including port operations, port authorities, merchant shipping and salvage, fishing, ships agents, stevedoring, warehousing, forwarding, clearing and international courier agents. This table does not include people employed as seafarers, as they are mainly employed abroad. These figures reveal that roughly 25% of the workforce employed by these companies are women, but that the gender balance varies markedly between different sectors, occupations and levels within organizations.

As a maritime attorney I do not feel that gender discrimination has been a major obstacle for me, in my career. In preparing this paper, I wondered whether the reason for this was a more gender blind atmosphere in this small sector of the shipping community. I have conducted a mini-survey in my home city, Durban, amongst our maritime lawyers.

I found that there is a significant difference in the gender makeup of different levels of seniority within the legal sector of the shipping community. At the more senior level of partnership / directorship, women make up almost 22% of the maritime lawyers in Durban. At the less senior level of associates, practising attorneys or candidate attorneys the ratio of women to men is 9: 5, which means that women represent 69% of the total at the more junior level.

Statistically women are fairly well represented within Governmental and Parasitical entities. The centrality of the public sector, both as the site at which employment policies are made and where all aspects of national decision-making and planning takes place, is worth emphasising.

The table attached to this paper, marked "B", is taken from the Department of Trade and Industry's Annual Report from 2002 – 2003, and it demonstrates that women employees outnumber men in the DTI. You will also note that men still outnumber women at the higher level positions.

The high level of participation of women in this department is not accidental. The recognition of the relevance of gender issues is demonstrated by the Department of Trade and Industry's own Gender and Women's Empowerment Unit. In addition, two initiatives aimed at bringing women into the economic mainstream and led by the Deputy Minister, namely the South African Women Entrepreneurs Network and the Technology for Women in Business initiative, were implemented in 2002.

But how has this increase in the number of female employees affected the performance of the Department of Trade and Industry? The table may hide a practice of employing women who may not be properly qualified/experienced and who consequently do not perform as well as may be required - the gender equivalent of "window-dressing". According to the internal assessment of performance, the Department of Trade and Industry clearly do not believe this to be the case. Table "C", attached hereto, sets out the numbers of performance rewards given by the Department and shows how, as a group, females in their employ are performing better than men.

What is interesting from Table "C" is that the average cost per beneficiary, that is the amount paid to employees in respect of performance rewards, is significantly higher for men, than for women.

It should be noted that all Ministers are compelled, in terms of the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act of 2000, to implement measures within the available resources which are aimed at the achievement of equality by eliminating any form of unfair discrimination or the perpetuation of inequality in any policy or practice and by preparing and implementing equality plans.

In the same way, any person directly or indirectly contracting with the State or exercising public power is responsible in terms of Section 26 of that Act, to promote equality by adopting and enforcing appropriate equality plans and other appropriate measure for the effective promoting of equality.

A similar obligation exists in terms of the Employment Equity Act, namely to analyse policies in order to identify employment barriers which adversely affect members of the designated groups (including women), to prepare an employment equity plan and implement affirmative action measures.

WHY STRIVE FOR GENDER EQUITY?

Human beings aspire to improve their standard of living. In the modern age it is inevitable that the trend of women joining the workforce, rather than concentrating on the traditional domestic work, will continue and increase, as people strive for higher and higher standards of living. The pool of women striving to attain success within the workforce will grow with the growth in urbanisation.

When the state of the economy is such that finding employment is difficult, families cannot afford to insist that the women stays at home, if it is she and not the man of the house, that manages to find a job. Therefore difficult economic times should

provide an incentive for greater numbers of women in the workplace, although many may enter the informal sector, rather than the formal sector.

Studies also show that money in the hand of women is better spent than in the hands of men, when considering the upliftment of the family from a life of poverty and hardship!

In an article published in a 1997 issue of *Agenda*, a South African women's journal, the economist Dori Posel discusses her research on the expenditure patterns of households in SA. She has found that households headed by women spend more income on the nutritional needs of children than male-headed households. She found also that women, even in households that they share with men, tend to spend more on children on items other than food. Unlike men, who even in poor households withhold income for personal consumption of things like beer and cigarettes, women's income is more tied up with the collective needs of the family. A woman would be more likely than a man to spend her overtime pay or bonus on something like a winter coat or school fees for her child.

Such evidence is telling. An income in the hands of a woman has a bigger multiplier effect in terms of greater benefits to child health and family welfare and education than the same income in the hands of a man. Put differently, women's incomes go further towards household survival and human capital investment than men's.

Because women spend a greater proportion of their income on family nutrition and welfare than men, raising their incomes amounts to accelerating poverty alleviation and the quality of life of their families more rapidly than doing the same for men. This means quicker improvements in productivity and economic output.

A World Bank report entitled 'Enhancing Women's Participation in Economic Development' starts from the premise that economic development is best served when scarce public resources are invested where they yield the highest social and economic returns. It shows, on the basis of worldwide studies that it has carried out, that such returns are, on the whole, greater for women than for men.

For example, in countries where modern agricultural technologies have been introduced, returns on an additional year of women's education range from 2% to 15%, more than the returns for the same educational investment in men. Policy experiments in Kenya suggest that primary schooling for women agricultural workers raises their agricultural yields by as much as 24%.

Improving women's educational levels also lowers fertility and slows population growth, which is a return central to sustainable development.

The increased participation of women in the labour market and in the economy in general is essential in developing a strong and broad skills base for the economy. No country can afford to exclude any segment of the economically active population and expect to grow and compete successfully.

The African feminist, Rotimi Sankore (Co-ordinator of CREDO an NGO focusing on rights issues in Africa) writes "a key index for measuring the march of civilisation in any society is its comprehensive recognition of, defence and promotion of women's economic, socio cultural, civil, human and political rights. By this measurement, all human societies have failed to achieve full civilisation. The only difference is that some have failed more spectacularly than others and some have been more successful at disguising their failure with sophisticated deception." [Defining an Agenda for Women's Rights in Africa].

Sankore emphasises that women's rights cannot be developed and secured in a sustainable way in isolation from the general development of society and human rights.

A developed economy and a democratic society, with rights awareness, are features which are more likely to enable women's advancement. However, a developed economy and awareness of rights issues is not decisive. It appears that higher levels of economic development and democracy facilitate better education and job opportunities, higher incomes for individual women, whilst women collectively will remain discriminated against until the social, economic and political frameworks that sustain discrimination are dismantled.

In understanding the repression of women in the economy, it must be remembered that there is a profit motive for denying women equal rights: societal discrimination leaves women open to unequal pay, low paid jobs and lack of opportunity in traditionally "male" jobs.

CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN IN SHIPPING

MALE DOMAIN

Well-entrenched and rigid attitudes, which label the shipping industry as a male domain, continue to exist. These attitudes are still prevalent across South African society. The result is that, possibly unconsciously, parents and teachers steer girls away from considering a career in this industry. Those few girls that choose to swim against the stream, face prejudice again when they seek access to tertiary education and again when they begin looking for jobs.

In preparing for this paper, I conducted a series of interviews with young women engineers employed by the NPA. One of these women expressed an opinion which I have come across many times in writing on the subject of gender in the economy. In response to the question whether she felt that she was treated differently by her co-workers, as a result of being female, she explained that in the first few years following her employment she was constantly reminded by male colleagues that she had been appointed because of her gender, rather than necessarily on merit. She feels that she has had to work harder than the males in her position to prove herself, but now feels that she is taken seriously by her male counterparts. When I asked what challenges she felt was faced by women in business, she replied that the single biggest challenge was being awarded the job. She obviously feels that through personal commitment, she can overcome any

prejudices that may follow, provided she gets the job first, enabling her to prove herself.

CAREER OPTION

There is a lack of awareness and promotion of this industry as a career option for women. In my experience, with very few exceptions, women who have established themselves in this sector of the economy have "fallen" into this purely by accident, that is, this was not part of their career plan when they set out into the commercial world. The obvious drawback of relying on such a haphazard means of increasing female representation in the shipping industry is that these women probably have not followed the ideal educational path from the outset. They have to rely on experimental learning alone or alternatively, find support for appropriate education at a later stage. Employers looking to identify female candidates for employment in shipping face the very real problem of a lack of suitably trained and skilled people.

ROLEMODELS

There is a lack of female role models in this industry. Worldwide, there are very few high level/high profile women in this industry. In Europe those women who hold senior positions, for example in ship owning companies, are most often daughters, sisters or wives of the original owners of these companies. They are the members of an extremely elite group, who can hardly be said to represent perfect role models with whom the general population can identify.

MENTORING BY MEN

Mentoring by men of young women in this industry is very sporadic. The vast majority of senior, more experienced people within the industry are men. Societal pressures, fear of the conclusions that may be drawn by colleagues (or spouses) relating to sexual interest, and lack of common interest (such as having attended the same school or an interest in sport) may encourage these more experienced men to choose to mentor young men rather than young women.

MENTORING BY WOMEN

Why do women in the industry not play a greater role in mentoring young women? I regularly come across an interesting phenomenon among women who have reached some level of success in shipping. They explain their attitude as follows:

"we entered this industry at a time when it was even more exclusively male dominated than it is now. We had to struggle very hard to find our place and we did this by portraying ourselves as "one of the boys". We studiously avoided drawing attention to the fact that we are women. If we associate ourselves with other women, we may jeopardise the image which we have created in order to forge a path for ourselves in this industry."

These women are desperate not to be shut out of the "boys club". But how will young women ever feel comfortable in this industry if those who should lead the

way are intent on blending in and distancing themselves from other women? Who will agitate for women friendly company policies, if the select few women at the top are nervous to speak about the difference between men and women's needs in the workplace?

Perhaps, in the light of current anti-discrimination and affirmative action legislation, where gender is openly admitted as a factor to be taken into account in the decision to employ a woman, this new generation of South African businesswomen will feel less pressure to play this game.

Fortunately this is not an attitude shared by all women in shipping. WISTA, for example, has embarked on a programme aimed at giving young entrants into the industry a broad understanding of the workings of the industry as a whole. The WISTA Mentorship Programme's goal is to assist young women to gain local and international exposure through mentoring by established WISTA members. This will assist in facilitating the skill transfer and development of these women in the South African shipping industry. In 2004 two young women participated in the programme and gained an overview of the shipping industry, first in South Africa, before enjoying further exposure overseas in areas such as ships agency, insurance, ports, ship owning, ship broking and shipping law.

Last year WISTA received over 800 applications from potential candidates, which is indicative of the dire need for this kind of programme.

There is, in the South African economy generally, a lack of practical support for working mothers. A career in shipping requires much more than an 8 – 4.30 commitment. This is particularly pertinent for this industry because of the international nature of the industry and time differences between various role players. Depending on the job description, international travel may be an important facet of a job in shipping. In the absence of an extremely flexible support structure behind her, a female is going to find it difficult to dedicate herself fully to advancing her career in shipping.

Studies by academics into gender economics in general suggest that these issues may be more perceived than real. Academic studies by Akuffo (1990) Hollway and Mukurasi (1991) and Badri (1991) concerning gender and the economy in Africa, all acknowledge the effect of women's "double burden" on their career advancement. These studies show that while many women are taxed by their multiple responsibilities, there is no evidence that they actually perform any less efficiently as a result of them, although this is what many employers believe. The special demands in many aspects of the shipping business probably make this problem appear even more pertinent. This does not mean that women in this industry do not find ways of overcoming these difficulties or that employers cannot facilitate solutions.

MECHANISMS FOR IMPROVING FEMALE REPRESENTATION

Societal changes are necessary before women can conceive of themselves pursuing a career in shipping and are also necessary for the recognition of the need to create support structures and women friendly corporate policies. Mass

education and enlightenment can take place through formal education systems and also informally, through the media. One of the undertakings embodied in the Maritime Charter is for stakeholders to develop an industry wide awareness campaign to showcase the Maritime Transport Industry and its inter-related activities and demonstrate its impact on the economy through facilitating trade, economic growth and development, BEE and job creation.

An example of harnessing formal education as a means of introducing young women to the career possibilities within the shipping industry is the Take a Girl Child to Work Day initiative. Last year SAPO hosted 25 students from disadvantaged schools as a part of its tertiary education sector drive that aims to educate and inform students about the organization with the view of exposing them to the wide range of careers offered by the maritime industry. The girls "shadowed" senior staff including the CEO Tau Morwe as they dealt with clients and service providers and participated in department meetings or strategic planning sessions. The departments involved are Human Resources, Finance, Procurement, Legal, IT, Engineering, Marketing, Environment and Corporate Affairs. SAPO's corporate affairs department also involved its suppliers in the day's exercise.

In some countries legislative reform may be required to remove anti-women legislation. Section 9 (3) of the Constitution sets out rights to equality. In doing so, it lists prohibited grounds of discrimination (race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origins, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religious, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth). Differentiation based on any of these listed grounds by individuals or the State will be presumed to be unfair. In addition to Section 9 of the Constitution, South Africa has international obligations under binding treaties including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act has re-enforced this section of the Constitution. Section 8(i) of the Act specifically prohibits unfair discrimination against any person on the ground of gender, including systemic inequality of access to opportunities by women as a result of the sexual division of labour. The Act also makes it clear that unfair discrimination based on a ground that it is not specifically listed in the Constitution, is prohibited where discrimination causes or perpetuates systematic disadvantage, undermines human dignity or adversely affects the equal enjoyment of a persons rights and freedom in a serious manner that is comparable to the listed grounds of discrimination. Section 14 of the Act declares that it is not unfair discrimination to take measures designed to protect or advance persons disadvantaged by unfair discrimination. One of the factors to be taken into account in determining whether discrimination is unfair is whether the discrimination reasonably and justifiably differentiates between persons according to objectively determinable criteria, intrinsic to the activity concerned.

Attached to the Act is a schedule illustrating some practices which are or may be unfair, that are widespread and that need to be addressed. These include

- creating artificial barriers to equal access to employment opportunities by using certain recruitment and selection procedures;

- applying human resource utilisation, development, promotion and retention practices which unfairly discriminate against persons from groups identified by the prohibited grounds;
- failing to respect the principle of equal pay for equal work
- Perpetuating disproportionate income differentials deriving from past unfair discriminations.

In essence, the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act would be classified as anti-discrimination legislation, rather than employment equity or affirmative action legislation.

Studies have shown that legislation affirming women's equality (or put differently "anti-discrimination" legislation) have not gone far enough to address inequalities at various levels within corporate entities.

It is extremely difficult to prove that an employer has discriminated against someone on the basis of gender. It is very easy for the employer to explain away the failure to appoint or promote a woman. After all, so many factors play a role in the decision – education, experience, inter-personal skills and other abilities, which are difficult to measure. In many cases, the discrimination is unconscious and certainly not explicit. Also if members of the pool of candidates are not equally well educated or experienced, then the choice of a man over a woman may not amount to discrimination based on gender.

Using anti-discrimination legislation to promote gender equity is an approach which is likely to create resentment and a negative perception of this issue, because it is premised on the concept of parties utilising the legislation in litigating over alleged discriminatory practises. It may not be the ideal means of fostering an environment where women are appointed fairly, mentored generously and given opportunities to study further and to gain valuable experience.

At best, one can say that anti-discrimination legislation is necessary, but on its own, will not bring about gender equity in shipping or any other sector of the economy.

In an article entitled "Equality at Work and the Limits of the Law: Symmetry and Individualism in Anti-Discrimination Legislation" Catherine O'Regan highlights that the reasons for inequity in the workplace are complex. They include discrimination by employers against women, as well as the fact that women's domestic responsibilities (which are not born by men and women in equal shares) make it more difficult for them to operate equally in the formal employment sector, and the fact that women may lack skills or experience required for some jobs. Anti-discrimination legislation is aimed at changing employer behaviour only and is therefore a limited strategy for promoting equality in the formal economy.

Furthermore the underlying right which anti-discrimination legislation seeks to protect is a comparative right to equal treatment. Concern is focussed on differential treatment of individuals but the legislation is a less effective tool for changing patterns of social disadvantage, which is, after all, the wrong which it is designed to address.

Anti-discrimination legislation requires that women must be treated in the same way as men. Where men and women are different for example, in relating to childbearing, it is difficult to determine what treatment will be symmetrical. This legislation requires a woman complainant to show that she has been treated less favourably than a male in a similar situation, and the problem arises that in many instances, because of the pervasiveness of gender discrimination, she will be unable to find a similarly situated male, in the same subordinate position, with the same level of education and experience.

O'Regan concludes that the more unequal women are to men, the less likely that anti-discrimination legislation will be of any assistance to them. For example, if women in any society are less well educated than men, then these women will never be able to show that it was on the basis of gender, rather than education, that they suffered discrimination.

Some advocate a more pro-active approach by way of legislation and/or a system which rewards pro-women choices. Two approaches are possible in the category of affirmative action legislation. The first obliges employers to analyse the demographic patterns of their employees and to prepare flexible goals and timetables to improve the representation of members of a disadvantaged group. The second approach is so-called quota legislation which imposes fixed quotas upon employers. An example of the first approach is the Employment Equity Act. An example of the quota approach is the points system applied to fishing industry quotas and the Maritime Charter.

In terms of the Maritime Charter, South African shipping companies undertake to seek opportunities to broaden the ownership base of their companies and ensure that at least 25,1% of equity is in black hands within 5 years with at least 10% of that earmarked for women and 5% for people living with disabilities within the next 5 years. With reference to representation at management level, private enterprise is to strive to attain within 5 years, a target of 40% of the position on executive boards being held by black people, with 16% of that being earmarked for black women and 5% for people with disabilities. Government is to ensure that parastatals procure at least 60% of the discretionary spending from BEE suppliers within the next 5 years. A percentage of 30% of discretionary spending is expected by private industry.

A further example already referred to in passing concerning pro-active steps taken to increase women's participation in one sector of the shipping community is that relating to the awards of fishing quotas. The points system applied to quota applications awards the highest number of points to transformation measures, that is, measures that ensure equity and/or employment for the previously disadvantaged.

The Employment Equity Act provides for legitimate grounds for differentiation, namely to promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons, or categories of persons, disadvantaged by unfair discrimination, including women. Although there is some overlap with the provisions of the equality act, the Employment Equity Act focuses on the arena of

the workplace, and is also more accurately described as affirmative action legislation, rather than anti-discrimination legislation.

The Employment Equity Act exhorts employers in general and compels designated employers in particular, to adopt affirmative action measures which must include measures to identify and eliminate employment barriers including unfair discrimination, which adversely affects people from designated groups and to implement measures designed to further diversity in the work place based on equal dignity and respect of all people.

Discrimination based on an inherent requirement of the job does not constitute unfair discrimination.

It is important to realise that unfair employee behaviours are equally important in ensuring a fair and equitable workplace. No matter how fair and organised the nation's policies may be, if individual managers do not apply them consistently and fairly, the organisation will not be equally accessible to everyone. Attitudes are one factor in shaping behaviour, and attitudes and behaviour of individual employees help form the organisational climate as a positive or negative experience for designated group members. The fact that an employer has identified and removed employment barriers to the selection, promotion and development of employees from designated groups, may not be sufficient to prevent unfair discrimination claims.

Just like affirmative action in the context of race, the pro-active promotion of women does create resentment in some quarters of those who traditionally "ran the show". CEO's of top companies around the world commonly point to a skills shortage and a lack of training and experience amongst women, as their reason for failing to appoint more women, particularly in the high level corporate positions. Affirmative action, on its own, will not address this problem. Another failing of affirmative action legislation which is often highlighted is the ease with which these requirements can be manipulated, commonly termed "window dressing" or "fronting".

Despite the criticisms of affirmative action legislation, evidence in the USA suggests that employment equity legislation produces better results in terms of improving the proportional involvement of disadvantage groups in the work force, than anti-discrimination legislation does. See J S Leonard's article "The impact of affirmative action on employment" (1984) 2 J of Labour Economics 439.

Affirmative action legislation is by no means unique to South Africa and are not foreign to developed countries. For example, the Swedish Government is currently considering legislating minimum quotas for women serving on the boards of listed companies. Since shipping represents a significant percentage of Swedish business, this legislation will have far reaching effects for shipping in that county. Women make up only 14% of members of the boards of listed companies. The Government has set a target of 25% and it appears that legislation will be used to enforce this change.

Government guidelines in Norway require 40% female representation on executive boards. Meeting these standards will require considerable upheaval within the next year. Major players have very little female representation; Wilh Wilhelmsen has 1 female out of 8 Directors, the Bergsen board consists of 5 men, Odfjell has 1 woman out of 6 board members and Leif Hoegh scores only 1 out of 9. The commonly held belief is that if companies fail to heed the Government's recommendation, they face the threat of these being made into law.

Scandinavian countries are generally regarded as progressive in regard to gender equity. Even so, it appears that a pro-active approach by Government is required before those in decision-making positions take steps to change their traditional views and policies.

Recent legislative actions of the European Community include the Treaty of Amsterdam which states that the principle of equal treatment shall not prevent any member state from maintaining or adopting measures providing for specific advantages in order to make it easier for the under-represented sex to pursue a vocational activity, or to prevent or compensate for disadvantages in professional careers. In a 1991 report by a high-level group of experts to the Secretary-General, calls have been repeated for structural adjustments and change of dominant gender roles needed to realise the full and equal participation of women at all levels. There is a growing trend in Europe of extending the responsibility of the state in eliminating discrimination.

Proponents of legislatively enforced change in the gender balance in the economy will point to these northern hemisphere examples. They argue that in the absence of being forced to become genuinely representative, companies will not change their gender bias, even if the society in which they operate is fairly enlightened in that regard.

One last comment in regard to the principle of the quota system in the context of gender in business: it is not only men that disapprove of the principle. Many women who have achieved success, or who are on an upwardly mobile career path, also resent the implication that their advancement arises from positive discrimination rather than individual merit.

One must accept that legislation does not operate in a vacuum. Laws are nothing more than wishful thinking, if practical difficulties render their application impossible. There is a recognised skills shortage in many areas relevant to the shipping industry, and this must be addressed before equity plans and similar initiatives can have any hope of success.

In the 2003 report on Sustainability Practices at the National Ports Authority that organisation reported on its strategies concerning improving the gender equity of its own workforce, as well as that of its suppliers.

The NPA implemented certain training initiatives with a view to empowering women identified as have the potential to advance within that organization. These initiatives fall into the type of affirmative action measures which employers are required to implement in terms of the Employment Equity Act, namely measures to

eliminate employment barriers, that is lack of training and skills by being directed to seek to remove disadvantages experienced by disadvantage persons.

These training initiatives were targeted at those areas in which skills are scarce, and skills development in those areas of the business that are under represented by 'designated' employee groups, including women. During 2002, the NPA awarded a total of 16 bursaries to female students for full time study towards maritime-related courses. Of this number, ten students underwent cadet training with the NPA's development partners, Safmarine and Unicorn Shipping Lines in 2002, while the remaining six experienced practical exposure training in the ports. Based on this success, the company awarded a further thirteen bursaries during 2003 – ten to black women and three to black men.

In response to an area that is characterised by scarce skills and under representation of designated groups, the NPA has implemented two programmes:

- A "Women in Engineering Programme", aimed both at improving representation and at developing women in the management echelons of the engineering discipline. In this regard, the company appointed five women to undergo various forms of engineering-specific and generic management training in 2003.
- The NPA "Apprenticeship Programme", which addresses the need for technical skills at an operational level. This initiative continued successfully during 2002 with the appointment of a further six black female apprentices.

One of the success stories arising from participation in the "Women in Engineering Programme" is Sibongile Ngumbe, the acting Port Engineer at East London. She was awarded a degree in Civil Engineering, from the University of Natal in 1995 and acquired five years of engineering experience before joining the NPA. On joining NPA as a senior engineer she was tasked with the responsibility of port development and maintenance in East London. She is now the NPA's first Port Engineer.

Recognising the need for management training at all levels, the NPA embarked on three programmes:

- Emulating Transnet's women's development programme for senior managers, the NPA has implemented the "NPA Women's Development Programme" in partnership with the Gordon Institute of Business Science and the University of Pretoria.
- The second run of the NPA's "Business Leadership Programme", which had 35 NPA management enrolments, was presented over the 2003 calendar year.
- The need for supervisory skills for junior employees was also recognised and addressed through the "Junior Officer Development Programme", presented by the Port Academy.

Training is also regarded as a vital component of the empowerment process by SA Port Operations. At the start of year 2000 South African Port Operations (SAPO)

embarked on a major on-going training programme that will enable women to play a leading role in the future of its business.

With the development and implementation of its innovative *Women in Operations* initiative SAPO hopes to develop competent women to play a key role in its business.

Their approach was to select 12 women from ports across the country to undergo training that will provide them with an opportunity to compete with their male counterparts to secure management positions and functional roles at operational level.

The women have undergone an orientation programme that introduced them to the real issues facing the business and ensured that the candidates understood the entire operation.

Thereafter the training included a series of port visits and workshops. Two of the women spent nine months studying operations at the port of Rotterdam, one of the world's leading ports.

In June 2002 Tau Morwe, CEO of SAPO was quoted as saying- "For so many years businesses, including port operations, were structured in such a way that they prevented women from achieving their personal and professional goals.

"While we currently have a women at general management level and two women managers out of 13 at business unit level, women mostly fill non-core positions, e.g. on operational and technical grades.

"So we have made a conscious decision to change this and create a world-class port-based logistics management company where qualified women play a vital role in the operational and technical areas of our business.

"Our vision is to become an equity sensitive world-class employer by creating an working environment in which women are able to realise their full potential.

"Through this programme they will have the opportunity to pursue their aspirations and fulfil key roles, particularly in core operational and technical fields of our business," he said.

One of the participants in the programme - Sharon Mgqolozana - has been appointed Car Terminal Manager in EL. Another, Pholisa Magxunyana, is graduating in logistics in South Korea.

Lorraine Curia, support services manager, completed the Women's Development Programme which included logistics and management. She won the University of Pretoria top logistic student award and has completed the European Senior Logistician Programme. She is currently doing the European Master Logistician Programme.

However in the future the Women In Operations programme will change. They have undertaken a critical managerial needs analysis and will develop people for these positions. The areas of need are still very male dominated and SAPO plans to draw women into these areas.

Mr Morwe has said "Empowerment is meaningless without education and we see a direct link between the development of our people and the achievement of our targets to become a profitable world-class player in the logistics chain". The case for education and training could also be stated even more forcefully, as a necessary prerequisite to meaningful change in the gender makeup within shipping.

NPA's focus extends beyond its own employees, into the arena of Procurement. In order to ensure the involvement of previously disadvantaged suppliers, NPA has developed a policy supporting the involvement of Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) suppliers in the procurement process. Women owned suppliers obviously fall into this category.

Key elements of the policy include:

- Preference for BEE companies – Where the technical specifications are met by a BEE company, such a company would be given preference over a non-BEE company.
- Set aside tenders - A certain portion of all procurement tenders are set aside for specific groups. 'Set-aside' tenders would normally be reserved for areas where sufficient supplier capacity by previously disadvantaged groups exists.
- Proactive support and marketing – Where there is a shortage of BEE suppliers, the NPA will proactively develop new capacity. This is achieved through advertising, development of BEE skills, and through setting up of joint ventures between emerging and established suppliers.

Other steps which can be taken in order to promote gender equity include entrenching the principle of equal pay for equal work as this will encourage female participation in the economy. Prevailing gender ideology in the early nineteen hundreds saw to it that wage levels were kept extremely low, because women workers were presumed to live as dependents of their families and to be working for "a little extra", rather than working for a living wage. This view still insidiously influences those setting pay packages for women at lower levels than those of men.

If a woman knows that she will earn significantly less than her husband, even if they perform the same job, she is more likely not to elect to strive for advancement in her career and may even elect to remove herself altogether from the workforce, concentrating on the more traditional role of the woman. If one of them, either the husband or the wife, must sacrifice concentrating on their career in exchange for managing the household and being the primary care giver to their children, then it is inevitable that the lower paid person will fulfil this role. Lack of parity in salaries is therefore an inhibitor to gender equity as well as being inequitable in its own right.

It is interesting to note that union membership is far lower amongst women and therefore that women are not as active as they could be in agitating for better or fairer working conditions.

The right to maternity leave should be entrenched. If a woman knows that she will not be entitled to be paid maternity leave, she is less likely to strive for advancement in her career. Although some women do not wish to have children, the majority of men and women do wish to have a family. If the perception is that woman must choose between her career and having children, then the majority will ultimately make do with a “job” rather than a “career”. Even where this alternative is not absolute, the prospects of no or very little income after childbirth as well as the lack of childcare facilities and other practical difficulties associated with working parenthood are likely to discourage women from pursuing a career (as opposed to doing a job whilst needs must).

CONCLUSION

Societal values are slow to change, but we have seen many improvements for women in the economy over the last century. Only time will tell whether, in South Africa, legislative incentives will have the desired effect, or whether there will be negative side effects.

Employers cannot afford to limit their options in these increasingly competitive times. Greater female representation in the economy means more money at home, and a broader skills base in the workplace.

TETA: OCCUPATIONAL PROFILE 04/02

	African		Coloured		Asian		White		Total		%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	F
Snr Officials & Managers	229	35	244	38	390	36	1427	493	2290	602	20.82
Professionals	59	24	139	25	104	27	519	213	821	289	26.04
Technicians & associated	478	111	542	203	437	182	1103	718	2560	1214	32.17
Clerical/Admin	1656	933	1025	1166	1310	726	1352	2168	5343	4993	48.31
Service & Sales	878	135	380	165	265	116	523	526	2046	942	31.53
Agricultural/Fishery	1417	164	1289	1212	3	0	203	0	2912	1376	32.09
Artisan & Trade	579	63	558	45	155	3	870	6	2162	117	5.13
Plant/Machine Operators	4765	143	1572	108	543	21	985	37	7865	309	3.78
Labourers	4734	409	1068	823	79	9	119	13	6000	1254	17.29
Non-permanent	1333	191	486	87	164	20	83	124	2066	422	16.96
Totals	16128	2208	7303	3872	3450	1140	7184	4298	34065	11518	25.27

TOTAL NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES PER OCCUPATIONAL BAND

Occupational Band	Males African	Males Coloured	Males Indian	Males White	Total Males	Females African	Females Coloured	Females Indian	Females White	Total Females	Total
Top management	0	1	0	1	2	1	0	0	0		3
Senior Management	36	4	7	21	68	26	3	3	16		116
Professionally qualified and experienced specialists and mid-management	82	14	16	77	189	73	7	13	43		325
Skilled Technical and Academically Qualified workers, junior management, supervisors, foreman	42	3	4	13	62	59	5	7	61		194
Semi-skilled and discretionary decision makers	20	1	0	7	28	57	4	2	17		108
Unskilled and defined decision making	13	0	1	0	14	363	19	1	2		37
Total	193	23	28	119	463	235	20	26	139		783

PERFORMANCE REWARDS BY RACE AND GENDER (1 APRIL 2003 – 1 MARCH 2003)

	Beneficiary Profile			Cost	
	No of beneficiaries	Total Employment	Percentage of Total Employment	Cost per R1000	Average cost per beneficiary
African Female	115	238	48.3	1084	9 426
African Male	72	186	38.7	868	12 056
Asian Female	10	26	38.5	135	13 500
Asian Male	8	28	28.6	156	19 500
Coloured Female	7	19	36.8	82	11 714
Coloured Male	9	23	39.1	217	24 111
White Female	99	137	72.3	1126	11 374
White Male	61	120	50.8	1304	21 377
Total Female	231	420	49	2427	11 503,50
Total Male	150	357	39.3	2211	19 261
Total	381	777	49	4972	13 050