In this paper I have not looked specifically at the issue of national development but the information provided on women and education obviously has an impact on the issue of development within South Africa.

BACKGROUND


The Statistician-General reports that South Africa is one of the few African countries with adequate data for purposes of the assessing the MDGs, in particular for MDG 3, 4, and 5, while for MDG 1, South Africa conducts regular income and expenditure surveys.

This measurement of the MDGs has highlighted some serious deficiencies in data quality as well as data gaps. In addition, in an endeavour to make the MDGs relevant to South Africa, a number of indicators were domesticated and a total of 95 indicators were addressed to address the eight MDG goals.

Trevor Manuel, MP, Minister in the Presidency (Planning) further notes that “while South Africa has a sophisticated infrastructure, a well-developed private sector and a stable macro-economy, it suffers inequality in education, specifically as regards access to quality education and access to quality health care. The latter especially, combined with the high prevalence of HIV and AIDS, explains why South Africa has not achieved some targets for those MDGs related to outcomes such as employment and income levels (these are impacted on directly by education), as well as life expectancy which is impacted by health conditions.”

Some Indicator Values quoted are:

Population Total: 49,320,500 (Male 23,868,700, Female 25,451,800)

0–14 years 15,500,700 15–34 years 18,447,000
(a youthful population)

GENDER EQUALITY

The South African Constitution and Bill of Rights is considered one of the best in the world. Legislation has been enacted, in line with local needs and conforming to The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform, and appropriate mechanisms put in place such as a national gender policy framework, including a Gender Commission and a Ministry for Women, Children and People with Disabilities. It has been recognised through these measures that women’s social, economic and political participation in national and local decision-making are important for women empowerment and for national development.

Linked with this is the further recognition that education is essential for women and girls to learn about their rights and how they can claim them, and for the opportunity to gain formal employment, thereby improving the quality of life and standard of living for themselves and their families.

EDUCATION

Schooling

According to the Report there is a slightly higher gross enrolment ratio (GER) for boys than girls at the primary level. The gender parity index (GPI) remains more or less constant over the period, at
slightly less than unity. However, at secondary level female GER is higher than the male GER for all years, resulting in a GPI greater than unity. The GPI declines after 1996, but remains above unity.

An issue to be noted and addressed is that the pattern in respect of the GPI differs across the provinces.

**Literacy**
The Report provides details on the ratio of literacy for females and males. In the age group 15-24 years of the women and men who had completed grade 7, a common measure of literacy, in 1996 and 2009 women fared better than men in both years, but there was a small decrease in the extent of the advantage, revealed by the drop in the female:male ratio as a percentage from 1.1 in 1996 to 1.0 in 2009. The female:male ratio for the Black African and coloured groups decreased, while the ratios for the other groups remained the same over the period. In terms of the percentage of the population who have completed Grade 7, Indian/Asian and white youth fared far better than coloured and black African youth in 1996. However by 2009, there was a marked increase in the percentage of Black African and coloured youths who had completed Grade 7. Nevertheless white and Indian/Asian youth were still ahead of the other two population groups.

**Tertiary**
At tertiary level comparisons are more complicated as institutions have been amalgamated and reformed. In 1990 women accounted for 47.8% of total university enrolment in South Africa. The old-style Technikon enrolments were heavily male-dominated. However, by 2008, the overall female:male ratio was 1.29:1.00. The ratio differed across types of institutions but was greater than unity, confirming the rapid shift in favour of women.

**Employment**
In both 1996 and 1999, the female share of wage employment was 43% if agriculture was excluded, 44% in 2005 and 45% by 2010. Provincial disaggregation reveals significant differences: in 2010 women in the Northern and Eastern Cape accounted for more than half of employees in the non-agricultural sector, while in North West they accounted for 38.2%. In terms of population group, the overall share is highest for coloured females, at 48.2%, followed by white females at 47.5%. For Black Africans it is at 44.7%, while for the Indian/Asian group it is at 40.5%. The female share of wage employment increased for the Black African and Indian/Asian groups between 2004 and 2010, while for the coloured group it declined slightly.

**Political**
The South African political structure includes the National Parliament (made up of two houses, the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces), the Judiciary and the Executive (with a President). There are nine provinces with a provincial legislature and a Premier, and local government structures with a Mayor.

The Report highlights that the representation of women in the South African Parliament has increased from 27.8% in 1994 to 44.0% in 2009. The representation of women in Provincial Legislatures has increased from 25.4% to 42.4% respectively. The 2009 female representation in Parliament as well as in Provincial Legislatures puts South Africa amongst the leading countries in the world in terms of the number of women in important leadership positions. Local government is also showing improvement (40% in 2006). One reason for the most recent increase is the fact that the African National Congress increased their quota of women on the party list from 33% to 50%. 
Provincially, Limpopo has the highest proportion of National Assembly members who are women (49%) followed closely by Gauteng (48%) and Mpumalanga (47%). KwaZulu-Natal, North West and Western Cape have the lowest proportions at 36% respectively. The situation in respect of permanent members of the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) is less encouraging. From a base of 15% in 1996, the proportion rose to above a third in the early 2000s, but currently stands at only 19% in the post-2009 parliament. The Northern Cape has no permanent female representatives, 2 out of the 6 representatives in Gauteng and Mpumalanga are women, and each of the other provinces has only one woman representative.

One of South Africa’s domesticated indicators relates to the female share of seats in the nine provincial legislatures. For this indicator all provinces except the Free State have experienced an increase between 2004 and 2009. In Gauteng, the female share increased from 26% to 48%. Overall women currently occupy 42% of seats in provincial legislatures. The number of female premiers (the provincial equivalent of the president) has also increased from four out of nine after the 2004 elections, to the current five out of nine.

**REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY**

**Under five mortality:** According to the report on the 1998 South Africa Demographic and Health Surveys, the observed under-five mortality rates (not corrected for omission of deaths) were 59 per thousand live births during the period 1993 to mid 1998. Using the under-five mortality estimate from the 1998 South Africa Demographic and Health Survey as a benchmark, a reduction by two thirds implies that South Africa’s under-five mortality is expected to be about 20 per thousand live births or less by 2015 if South Africa were to meet the internationally set target. Unfortunately there is a lack of recent data but it has been extrapolated that the figure in South Africa in 2001 was 97 per thousand live births.

**Infant mortality rate:** This rate appears to have remained more or less the same despite the upward trend in the under-five mortality rate. Infant mortality rate is more correctly defined as the probability of a child born in a particular year dying before reaching the age of one year, expressed per thousand live births. Although there is no target set for infant mortality rate in the MDGs, it is useful to examine the level of infant mortality as it is an important component of under-five mortality. In some developing countries, infant mortality contributes a large proportion of mortality to overall under-five mortality relative to mortality between the age of one year and four years. Infant mortality is influenced by a range of endogenous factors, such as congenital conditions in the first month of life, and exogenous factors that include social factors relating to child-rearing practices as well as adverse environmental factors.

**WHAT CHALLENGES STILL EXIST**

Below is provided some of the discussion out of the abovementioned Report but I have also included information from two conferences hosted by the South African Association of Women Graduates (2012 Colloquium and 2013 “Enough is Enough” conference).

The Report stresses that the data provided confirms that South Africa has generally performed well against the international indicators for Goal 3. Indeed, South Africa could be considered to have reached most gender equality targets, if not exceeded them. South Africa’s performance has also improved for several of the indicators over the period. While the country performs well on the international indicators, South Africa does face a range of socio-economic and cultural challenges that continue to underpin aspects of gender inequality. The Report acknowledges that the South
African Government faces major implementation challenges in ensuring that constitutional, legislative and policy imperatives on gender equality and women’s empowerment are translated into substantive improvements in the lives of women and girls for especially those that live in disadvantaged environments.

The National Development Plan which the Government publicised on 19 February 2013 (http://www.info.gov.za/issues/national-development-plan/) states that the aim of the Plan is to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030. According to the plan, South Africa can realise these goals by drawing on the energies of its people, growing an inclusive economy, building capabilities, enhancing the capacity of the state, and promoting leadership and partnerships throughout society.

Discussion
Schooling crisis
The crisis in education in South Africa is well documented. Despite large financial resources being made available many other factors still exist which seriously reduce the quality of the educational experience.

Grade 9 is when learners have the option to leave school (supposedly to continue in a non-academic stream); it is reported that more than half who leave school decide to drop-out. According to the Department of Basic Education, 60% of youths have no qualification beyond the Grade 9 level. When they leave, job opportunities available to them are limited (as are many of the courses they might wish to later follow) and they fail to reach their full potential. A further factor to take into consideration is that of teenage pregnancies. There is research which has shown than teenage pregnancies can often be either the result of girls dropping out of school or the reason why they drop out. (As reported in “Teenage Pregnancy in South Africa (especially for school-going learners)” published by the HSRC in collaboration with UNICEF and the South African Department of Basic Education (www.universityworldnews.com and www.info.gov.za/view/downloadfileaction?id=12270),

Of the learners who continue to Grade 12, only 39% of the original Grade 1’s successfully complete it. It has been widely reported that students finishing school do not have sufficient skills including reasoning and thinking skills necessary for lifelong learning, continuing education, and/or gainful employment. They also have not always developed the ethical values such as punctuality, accountability and responsibility needed to strengthen their role as productive citizens. A large percentage of learners who finish school are not meeting the minimum requirements necessary for entry and success in higher education. Nan Yeld, Dean of the Centre for Higher Education Development at the University of Cape Town made reference to the fact that in the 2011 matriculation national examination, only 23.5% of candidates gained a university exemption. (http://www.timeslive.co.za/thetimes/2011/01/10/matric-results-expose-truth-about-education).

This leads to psychological and social implications and a basic lack of confidence which further impedes the learners success and options for the future.

Whatever the cause, an intervention is required to motivate the girls to remain in school and continue with further education. There are a number of Non-Profit Organisations which provide various forms of intervention. SAAWG offers a programme in Johannesburg (life orientation based) and in Cape Town (Gr 9 academic literacy, career planning, gender education and personal development
Academic Advancement

SAAWG COLLOQUIUM ON WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS (June 2012).

Prof Beverley Thaver from the University of Western Cape provided the following data:

The shifts in the gender and race profile of academic staff over 24 years are indicated in the table below (Higher Education Management Information System - HEMIS):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>11357</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>14029</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>15809</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>16684</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the figures show an increase of 16% in the proportion of women in higher education the rate of change for racial equity has been greater. Furthermore, examination of the publication count (one of the most important criteria by which academics are assessed) over the period 1990 – 2001 has shown that only about 30% of those publishing were women; of these 90% were white and their average age was around 40. The reason for the discrepancy between the proportion of women publishing and the proportion in higher education is that women are largely concentrated at the bottom of the ladder.

Prof Amanda Gouws, Professor of Political Science and Gender Studies at the University of Stellenbosch, posed the question: What has happened to the glass ceiling? Are women still struggling to get through such barriers? She then cited a PhD thesis by Constance Zulu (2009): The glass ceiling is not the problem; much change has taken place. What then is the problem? The issue is that there are now some women in management positions in universities but many women choose not to be there because of the toll it will take on them. So, the glass ceiling is not so impenetrable but there are other factors that are a problem:

She listed some of these factors:

- Lack of change in institutional cultures, which have been male-dominated for many years.
- There are exclusions whether deliberate or not.
- Using feminist measures, she identified certain problems:
  - Not many women are promoted to high ranks; they tend to be concentrated at lower levels.
  - Policies of institutions regarding maternity leave, child care and flexitime are not always favourable.
  - What is the possibility of having a balanced life for a woman who is in a leadership position? Can it be combined with family life? Here she commented that this problem exists for men also, but men usually have support structures at home.
- Women in leadership positions are generally co-opted into the institutional culture and do nothing to improve conditions for other women.
Expanding on the last point, Prof. Gouws emphasized that being an agent for change calls for feminist consciousness – a more diffused type of leadership role but one that acts as the conscience and the memory of the institution. She warned that this was likely to lead to unpopularity and labelling. No rewards were to be expected, apart from the satisfaction of preventing the institution from becoming too comfortable with the old order.

It was agreed that

- Submission should be made to the National Research Foundation regarding funding for women researchers (women’s budget) as well as the lifting of age restrictions; also, to the DHET (Department of Higher Education & Training) for capacity development

- Submission should be made to Higher Education Institutions and the relevant bodies regarding security issues on campuses (as well as issues around secure and appropriate accommodation for female students and child care for staff).

- A Compendium of Best Practices within Higher Education in relation to gender advancement needs to be compiled.

- A Higher Education task team is, at the moment, looking at funding but is only considering the current formulae (which encourage competition between institutions): no new questions are being asked and small departments are facing closure, for example those providing gender-friendly spaces. Submissions should be made regarding the development of new funding models which also provide a more co-operative/collaborative approach.

- Women should be encouraged to focus on their career development and also to offer adequate and appropriate mentoring support to other women

- An academic network/caucus should be established to monitor the above issues and, especially, to ensure that gender is put back on the agenda in Higher Education and discussions held with Higher Education Vice-Chancellors and the Department of Higher Education.

- HESA (Higher Education South Africa) and other committees which are debating gender/Higher Education issues should be engaged in order to rejuvenate their discussions and to ensure that satisfactory results are achieved.

The conference “Enough is enough” looked at the challenges still facing women in South Africa. Much of the above discussion was reiterated proving that core challenges exist at all levels of society and in all levels of the workplace. In addition, the following points were stressed:

- A key area which still needs to be resolved is that of eliminating violence and abuse against women and children, including in schools.

- An overarching lack identified is that there is no longer a women’s movement in South Africa. A new coalition of the various women’s groups needs to be launched to provide a more cohesive and concerted response to the challenges to gender equity – on the ground - which continue to persist and to emphasise the fact that there are different lived realities within the country.

- It was recognised that although many important laws had been enacted implementation was not, in many cases, sufficient and adequate.
In the early years after 1994 Parliamentary women ensured that the national budget was given a gender lens ie the Women’s Budget was not a separate budget but the provisions within the budget were examined for their implication and applicability to address the needs of women. This applied equally to the Children’s Budget. This innovation proved extremely useful within South Africa and was highly regarded internationally. However, these “exercises” are no longer undertaken. It is essential to resuscitate them to again be aware how the system can prejudice women and children.

Why would a Ministry be created to deal with three very important groupings – Women, Children and People with Disabilities? This Ministry operates on a small budget – used mainly on administrative salaries and “events” instead of activities which would impact on and transform the pervasively conservative approach within government and within South African society. Plus, this Ministry has no clearly defined representation at the Provincial level.

Performance agreements of Director Generals and other senior personnel must include issues on achieving gender equity and there must be consequences for non-performance.

Societal norms and standards, traditional laws and practices and issues of how the concept of masculinity is viewed are the main stumbling block to achieving gender equity. Currently women’s organisations are protesting the proposed Traditional Courts Bill. Perpetuated negative stereotypes which undermine dignity and security of the person in the home and the workplace. The power relationships between men and women remain the key factor.

Culturally women are frequently dissuaded from leaving an abusive home. Also women in research have often not been able to distinguish that there are various forms of abuse – they understand abuse to refer only to the physical. Good counseling has proved to be most beneficial.

Women need to be empowered about their human rights and reject cultural values which create barriers to this rights. Also, the upbringing of the “boy child” and “girl child” (socialization) needs to be revisited.

In the age range 5-15 HIV/AIDS death rate is double for girls compared to boys. This statistic emphasizes the ongoing problem of adult men using their authority or money to have sex with young girls.

We need to look at hidden structural violence, for example, the statistics show more children are born alive but how many are going to pre-school, how many are in abusive homes, how many are provided with home support in their school work etc.

Girls at school (and the families) do not often have enough understanding of what the current diversity is regarding career options.
• Although training and resources have been provided to court officials and the police, there is still a lack of proper implementation of a woman’s rights in cases of domestic violence and rape. Specialized sexual offences courts need to be reinstated and extended. A further complication is that abuse is also under-reported because of fear of the impact on a woman’s career.

• We need to mobilize the community – build momentum and move away from incidental outrage and from awareness raising events into more action based programmes.

• A reasonable gender balance, for example 40/60 ratio, should be mandatory in all decision-making bodies. Women should also be encouraged to be more supportive of other women. Those who move into decision making positions need to have some grounding in feminist theory or gender analysis to ensure substantial benefit is achieved.

CONCLUSION

It is recognized that there is a deep-rooted history of violence in South Africa. Positive peace is more than absence of war, it is about eliminating violence against women and violence generally. Added to this history is the ever pervasive influence of patriarchy and the unequal power relationships, culturally, between men and women. However, women should not be regarded merely as a “vulnerable” group and as victims but positive role models need to be constantly identified and promoted. Gender mainstreaming must not just be a “buying into” the male stream of hegemony. The strive for gender equality must not ignore the differences between men and women – women should be recognised “with our bodies and our brains”.

It is essential to recognize that gender shapes all aspects of society. The influence that all role players, such as parents, teachers, employers and the media, play within society should not be underestimated. It is essential to create an image of women which is achievable as well as create opportunities for women to fulfill their potential. It must be recognized that discussions and action regarding men’s rights are taking the space and funding from women’s space.

Education remains a key factor in achieving gender equity and development within a society. In order to achieve this, the question needs to be asked as to why and where we lost the momentum of women in South Africa.

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