

CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

When the first democratic elections in the history of the country took place in 1994 South Africa captured the imagination of the world by plucking the country from the brink of imminent destruction. It succeeded in achieving a peaceful transition to democracy from the probability of protracted discord and violence that were extremely high. This was a laudable triumph for human dignity as well as a triumph against all forms of discrimination, more so because, for the first time in the history of South Africa, there was a common South African citizenship for all (Republic of South Africa (RSA), 1996, Clause 3(2) : 3).

A new Constitution was adopted which states categorically that **“To promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons, or categories of persons, disadvantaged by unfair discrimination may be taken”** (RSA, 1996, Clause 9(2) : 7). This ushered in a new set of values that led to an emphatic and fundamental break from the past. To meet the challenges enshrined in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, the principle of Affirmative Action was introduced which Fleming *et al.* (1978 : 3) so aptly describe as **“a natural extension of the long struggle for equal rights”**.

The Preamble to the Constitution spells out that the purpose of the new dispensation is to :

“... heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights; lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which

government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by the law; improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person, and build a united democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations.”

(RSA, 1996 : 1)

During the past eight years it has become apparent that the intent and spirit of the Constitution can only be realized through tremendous effort and purposeful action. One area that requires such tremendous effort and purposeful action is Higher Education. In establishing a non-racial society, based on the Constitution that embodies equal rights for every person, the need to establish an equitable and effective Higher Education system becomes a top priority. This requires a transformation process that will necessitate the management of cultural diversity and bring about organizational changes within institutions of Higher Education.

Education in South Africa, prior to 1994, was segregated along racial lines. The apartheid system of social engineering ensured that non-Whites were denied equal access to what was referred to as White institutions and an education of quality. The Higher Education system in South Africa is currently in a state of transformation and will, in the foreseeable future, be under pressure to provide access to both staff and students and quality education for all the people in the country.

New pieces of legislation, namely the Labour Relations Act, the Employment Equity Act, the Higher Education Act, the White Paper on Affirmative Action and other national documents such as that of the Council on Higher Education (CHE) on Size and Shape, present new challenges to Higher Education institutions especially with respect to employment and promotion of staff. Student demonstrations and union protests directly related to employment of academic staff have already been experienced at many institutions of Higher Education and continue to plague them as they make attempts to



meet the transformation challenges. Much, therefore, needs to be done to redress the imbalances caused by the apartheid education system. Although most Higher Education institutions would like to claim that they have amended their recruitment policies in order to align them to the new laws and policies, their academic staff structures still do not reflect the demographics of the South African society or, for that matter, even come anywhere close to it. This is underscored in the Education White Paper 3 of 1997 :

“Unlike the changing student profile ... the composition of staff in Higher Education fails to reflect demographic realities. Black people and women are severely underrepresented, especially in senior academic and management positions.”

(Department of Education (DOE), 1997(a) : section 2.94)

Redressing historical imbalances, relating particularly to academic staff (faculty) appointments, is, therefore, an imperative for South African Higher Education institutions. One of the strategies that must be adopted to accelerate the change process is Affirmative Action. Norris (www.immi.se/intercultural/nr3/norris.htm), however, argues that Affirmative Action on its own would not be the entire answer. He maintains that it is also essential that the diversity resulting from Affirmative Action be effectively managed by using a strategic management approach. The Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET) (1999 : 2) underscores this contention and maintains that it is necessary to ensure that the academic staff are, therefore, not appointed to positions merely for the sake of attaining the correct numbers as this would be tantamount to setting them up for failure. **“They must be given the support which they need”** to build capacity (CHET, 1999 : 2). This provides strong enough reason to assess the nature and role of Affirmative Action policies and programmes in effectively bringing about Employment Equity, which is one of the major aims of this study, and also to find out how the diversity emanating from it is managed in order to promote capacity, equity, equality, justice and racial harmony in South Africa.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

Perhaps no other issue in recent times has created such widespread controversy as the application of Affirmative Action policies and procedures for academics of colour and women at South African Higher Education institutions as a means of overcoming generations of discrimination. At the heart of this controversy fundamentally opposing viewpoints exist with regard to the best methods of bringing about Employment Equity, equality, justice and racial harmony in South Africa. Whether Affirmative Action provides the best means of achieving these long-held values of equality, justice and racial harmony has led to sharp debates on television, in newspapers, journals, etc. This has often led to student uprisings, industrial action and disagreement at local Higher Education institutions themselves.

Given the enduring pervasive racist heritage of South African institutions of Higher Education, it is argued that male academics of colour and women have never had the opportunity to compete fairly for the benefits and opportunities in education. Hence, to compensate for past injustices and to afford them the opportunity to compete fairly, supporters believe race and gender must be taken into account. They maintain that special opportunities should, therefore, be provided so that the historically disadvantaged groups achieve parity with the previously advantaged Whites. Racially neutral or colour-blind institutions, so typical of the majority of our institutions of Higher Education of recent times, are seen only to perpetuate the severe handicaps and deep seated discrimination of the past since the Whites, because of the preferential treatment they enjoyed in the past, were already advantaged. The response of the Association of Vice-Chancellors of Historically Disadvantaged Institutions in South Africa (ASAHDI) to the Council on Higher Education (CHE) document on Size and Shape highlights this point when they argue that the document pays credence to the issue of Equity but not of redress (File and Goedegebure, 2000 : 1-149).

Yet it is precisely this colour-blind society that opponents of Affirmative Action espouse as the only standard for a democratic society. They maintain that special treatment

based on gender or race goes against the ideals of being judged on the basis of individual merit and violates the constitutional guarantee of equal protection under the Constitution. On this issue Subotsky draws attention to the vital distinction between equality (or simple equality) and complex equality (or Equity). He argues that :

“Equity is not just a matter of equalising employment. It also crucially entails ensuring retention and development through providing enabling conditions, opportunities and institutional practices which address the obstacles and barriers experienced by marginalised groups. This implies recognising ... and addressing relevant differences with the aim of reducing inequalities (through interventions which provide such enabling conditions). Pursuing justice therefore implies the conceptualisation of a complex notion of equality, or equity, which accommodates both equality and difference.”

(Subotsky, 1998(a) : 3)

Alluding to the argument presented by Subotsky, Justice Harry Blackmun of the United States of America (USA) in the Supreme Court’s 1978 *Bakke* case, presents a most eloquent argument for Affirmative Action based on colour to eradicate discrimination:

“I suspect that it would be impossible to arrange an Affirmative Action program in a racially neutral way and have it successful. To ask that this be so is to demand the impossible. In order to get beyond racism, we must first take account of race. There is no other way. And in order to treat some persons equally, we must treat them differently. We cannot - dare not - let the Equal Protection Clause perpetuate racial supremacy.”

(Blackmun, 1978: ace-webtest.nche.edu/bookstore/descriptions/making_the_case/critics/counter.html)

The substitution of group rights for individual rights, the argument goes, contributes to racial polarization and often stigmatizes those given preferential treatment. Employment at institutions of Higher Education, opponents claim, thus becomes the result of membership of a group rather than on individual merit.

The same controversies arose in Australia, Canada, United States of America, India and other countries where Affirmative Action programmes were introduced (Boulle, 1988 : 4). The consequent emotion-laden terms, such as institutional racism, sexism and reverse discrimination, make the very agonizing moral dilemma about how best to achieve justice and equality at South African institutions of Higher Education even more complicated. Seen in this light none of the arguments for or against Affirmative Action is intrinsically right or wrong. They are **“merely premised on different conceptions of justice”** (Boulle, 1988 : 5). It would, therefore, be interesting to evaluate the Affirmative Action and Employment Equity programmes, their implementation procedures, the response of the respective administrators of institutions of Higher Education, previously disadvantaged women and other academic personnel towards it. Hence, the need for and the relevance of this study.

As recently as 1993 the National Party Government’s approach to Higher Education ensured that academics and senior management in South African institutions of Higher Education were overwhelmingly White. Even in Historically Black Institutions (HBIs), a significant majority of staff were White (Peacock, 1993 : 64). The racial segregation among Higher Education institutions, which Peacock (1993 : 4) described as **“vertical racial separation”** of the Higher Education system, was also apparent in ex-own affairs institutions. For example, the University of Durban-Westville (UDW) and the University of Western Cape (UWC) retained their so called Indian and Coloured staffing profile respectively in addition to having a significant number of White staff, who in the case of UDW, constituted the majority in 1990 (Peacock, 1993 : 4). Within the university system itself there was also a **“horizontal racial separation”** with Whites dominating senior positions in the majority of institutions (Peacock, 1993 : 4). Presently **“there are [still] indefensible imbalances in the ratios of Black and female staff compared**

to Whites and males” (Department of Education, 1997(a) : section 1.4).

For more than four decades institutions of Higher Education have lagged behind or resisted assuming total responsibility for designing, monitoring and managing Affirmative Action/Employment Equity programmes and equal access interventions for people of colour. It is, therefore, clear that preparation of institutions of Higher Education for the changing expectations of the South African society has been minimal. As recently as 1993 no university possessed clearly defined, written, staffing and admission policies aimed at changing the racial composition at their institutions. In fact Peacock (1993 : 22) found that **“written policies and implementation strategies were conspicuous by their absence”**.

The majority of institutions appeared to be unaware, intentionally or otherwise, that their non-discriminatory procedures with neutral selection criteria would reinforce the vertical racial separation that already existed at their institutions. In 1993 the policy of the majority of institutions of Higher Education was one of non-discrimination with a small minority describing themselves as equal opportunity institutions or Affirmative Action institutions. Yet none of them could provide any evidence of a formal institutional policy or implementation strategies related to non-discrimination, equal opportunity or Affirmative Action for people of colour. In fact it was revealed that by 1993, of the twenty one universities in South Africa, only about six had a written Affirmative Action policy on recruitment and none had an implementation strategy (Peacock, 1993 : 36). Further, none of the universities collated or maintained usable data on the effects of their employment policies or had undertaken research into the effectiveness of their existing recruitment policy.

The following statistics extracted from the CHET report (1999 : 3-4) reveal that the position is still bleak. The racial composition of academic staff at the historically non-African universities and technikons changed very little over the decade 1988-1998. In 1998, at the six Historically White Afrikaans-Medium Universities (HWAUs) taken together, 97% of all permanent academic staff were White. At the four Historically

White English-Medium Universities (HWEUs) taken together, 87% of all permanent academic staff were White. In 1998, at the seven Historically Advantaged Technikons (HATs) taken together, 90% of all permanent academic staff were White.

Given the aforementioned profile Affirmative Action and Employment Equity in Higher Education could be regarded as largely uncharted territory, providing strong enough reasons to adopt a set of corrective measures to expedite an increase in employment of disadvantaged academics of colour and women at all levels. A great deal of water has passed under the bridge since the Union of Democratic University Staff Associations' (UDUSA) 1993 study (Peacock, 1993 : 1-170). Nevertheless, the extreme racial imbalances that have existed and still exist both between and within institutions of Higher Education necessitate a critical review of all policy options and perhaps require changes in Affirmative Action and Employment Equity strategies. This is one of the aims of this research.

Consensual Affirmative Action and Employment Equity policies, implementation plans and monitoring systems, constraints and challenges, if unveiled by this study, can serve as reference points for the future and provide institutions with some sort of framework within which to work. It would obviate the conflict, confrontation and confusion that would probably arise if there is no written policy, institutional clarity or wide ranging interpretations as was the case in the recent past. Ultimately, it is hoped that such strategies or policies would help redress the historical imbalances and injustices of the past.

A further historical imbalance often neglected is the discrimination against women. In the past regulations at most institutions of Higher Education, especially universities, prohibited or limited full time employment of married women. In some universities this practice continued until the mid-1980s and, in at least one case, the regulation has never been repealed and is still being ignored. The findings of a survey, conducted by UDUSA in 1993, which revealed that women occupied the majority of Junior lecturer positions (61,2%), is evidence of this (Peacock, 1993 : 40). Recent statistics extracted from the CHET Report (1999 : 3-4) reveal that the position has changed very little over

the last decade. In 1998 women comprised approximately 35% and 38% at universities and technikons respectively. They were, however, still particularly underrepresented in the senior ranks and somewhat overrepresented in the lecturer and junior lecturer categories. By contrast male academics were spread fairly evenly across professor/senior lecturer/ lecturer categories with approximately a third in each. Almost all institutions of Higher Education maintain that there was little possibility of any gender bias that could have inhibited entry or progress of women (Peacock, 1993 :38). Merit is stated as a key criterion for recruitment or promotion. Personal experiences of women reveal otherwise.

Peacock (1993 :38) found that, whilst senior management at most institutions of Higher Education in South Africa indicated willingness to discuss gender issues, the majority were unable to provide even **“the most basic statistical data on gender and staffing”**. This lack of institutional research into gender issues (with the exception of a few institutions of Higher Education) raises severe doubts about the possible forms of discrimination as well as whether the issue was treated with the concern that it deserves. The degree of difference or reasons for such differences in positions held by women compared to their male counterparts is difficult to identify because not much research has been done in the area. It does, however, become clearly apparent that **“to ensure successful advancement of women ... effective enabling conditions, practices and opportunities must be provided”** (Subotsky, 1998(a) : 20-21). It is obvious, however, that there are probably many reasons for these differences as well as many enabling conditions that can be provided through Affirmative Action and Employment Equity policies; hence, the need for research in this area.

Further, in the 1990s, management-driven initiatives on gender issues were minimal and the responsibility for gender issues was generally entrusted to informal and often institutionally unrecognised committees. Findings of such committees and others revealed many subtle forms of discrimination, viz., gender was not regarded as part of an Affirmative Action/Employment Equity programme. Such issues are widely researched internationally yet, research in South Africa is limited. The present study

proposes to make a contribution in this area.

Another area in which this study can make a contribution is in developing of human resources in our country. This was one of the five major policy areas outlined in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) in which both education and training were emphasised as key issues (African National Congress (ANC)1994 :8). Development of human resources via Affirmative Action and Employment Equity programmes is regarded as one of the critical mechanisms available to support democratic transformation in South Africa. This study will serve as a contribution to that end.

Although a great deal has been written about Affirmative Action abroad there is a relative paucity of South African studies on the subject. The few studies conducted locally have concentrated predominantly on the business world to the almost complete exclusion of the world of Higher Education, especially with regard to faculty hiring, recruitment, promotion, etc., inspite of the growing awareness of the phenomenon as well as the increasingly vociferous claims for and against it in this country.

Over the last three years institutions of Higher Education were requested to submit their three year rolling plans to the Department of Education indicating, in particular, their recruitment and Equity plans (DOE, 1997(a) : section 2.96). More recently (2000) the Department of Labour requested Equity plans of all employing organizations, stressing that their plans will be scrutinized, monitored and may be challenged by the courts if the plans did not meet with the required stipulations. The Labour Court in particular and the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA), to a lesser degree, have been kept busy with prospective employees challenging employers on appointments and promotions that, they claim, ignored or were not in line with Affirmative Action and Employment Equity policies.

From the foregoing it is clear that there is an urgent need to address the problem of Affirmative Action and Employment Equity at South African institutions of Higher Education. An immediate start should, therefore, be made to gather information in a

scientific and systematic manner, taking into account local circumstances and peculiarities. This study can, therefore, be seen as a critical contribution to this end. The ultimate aim is to find how best to implement Affirmative Action and Employment Equity programmes in South African institutions of Higher Education in order to achieve Employment Equity, justice, harmony and racial equality against the injustices and discrimination of the past with special reference to recruitment, employment, promotion and creating and providing for a diversity of academic staff.

In summary the following are the motivation for this research :

- 1.2.1 Given the enduring pervasive racist heritage of the past at institutions of Higher Education, disadvantaged male academics of colour, women and the Disabled have never had the opportunity to compete fairly in the distribution of benefits and opportunities in general and in employment in particular. This would provide strong enough reason to assess the nature of Affirmative Action and Employment Equity policies and programmes that would promote Employment Equity, equality, justice and racial harmony in South Africa.
- 1.2.2 Up until 1993, written policies, implementation strategies and monitoring procedures of Affirmative Action and Employment Equity were **“conspicuous by their absence in Universities”** (Peacock, 1993 :22). Hence, the need to determine the perception of constraints and challenges facing institutions of Higher Education and to identify ways and means of overcoming them in order to expedite transformation in Higher Education.
- 1.2.3 Major research with regard to Affirmative Action and Employment Equity in Higher Education, including perceptions and attitudes of Higher Education administrators and academics, is limited in South Africa.
- 1.2.4 Consensual Affirmative Action and Employment Equity policies, implementation procedures and monitoring systems, challenges and constraints that would be

identified in this study could serve as reference points for the future and provide institutions with a framework within which to work.

- 1.2.5 Past experience reveals that gender issues, apart from not being given priority at South African Institutions of Higher Education, are often not regarded as part of Affirmative Action plans. On the contrary gender issues are widely researched internationally while in South Africa there is a dearth of research especially in the field of Higher Education.

1.3 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The legacy of apartheid has resulted in the appointment of preferred groups of people (Whites) to selected institutions of Higher Education in South Africa. The New South Africa has embarked on legislative change, *inter alia*, the Employment Equity Act, the Labour Relations Act, etc., to address this anomaly. The Ministry for Education in particular has set up task teams, namely the Gender Equity Task Team (GETT) and the Task Team on Size and Shape, to develop policy and procedures to reverse the discriminatory landscape of the present Higher Education sector. To date numerous discussion documents have been developed and the debate around the contents of such documents continue, but consensual implementation of the said policies is still to be achieved. This thesis will attempt to develop/find the best practice model/s for an efficient implementation of such policies linked to Affirmative Action and Employment Equity.

Much has been written about the American, Australian and Canadian experience of Affirmative Action and non-discrimination in terms of appointment and admission with regard to gender and race at institutions of Higher Education. This study will focus on analysing and evaluating the policy and procedures of Affirmative Action and Employment Equity and attitudes and perceptions of academics in the South African context. It will also focus on developing a systematic and consensual approach/es for an effective and efficient implementation of the policies within the legislative framework

of South Africa.

1.4 AIMS OF THE PRESENT RESEARCH

The general aim of the present study is to gather objective and scientific data about Affirmative Action (AA) and Employment Equity (EE) policies and their implementation procedures, as it pertains to academic staff within institutions of Higher Education in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). The researcher proposes to :

- 1.4.1 review the literature, tracing the efficacy of international Affirmative Action/ Employment Equity experiences related to the previously disadvantaged in general and, more specifically, to those academics employed at Higher Education institutions with a view to using their experience and expertise to make recommendations that would contribute to the successful implementation of Affirmative Action and Employment Equity at Higher Education institutions in South Africa;
- 1.4.2 gain an overall insight into the Affirmative Action and Employment Equity profile of the respective institutions of Higher Education in KZN with reference to the nature and procedures of the programmes implemented at these institutions in order to achieve Employment Equity;
- 1.4.3 analyse the attitudes and perceptions of Higher Education academic staff in KZN towards the practices and procedures related to Affirmative Action/Employment Equity. In this regard the more specific aims are :
 - to determine academic staff perceptions and attitudes towards Affirmative Action/Employment Equity related to specific biographical details;
 - to assess the knowledge and understanding of academic staff of the basic principles/concepts of Affirmative Action/Employment Equity;

- to determine how well informed the academic staff are about the Affirmative Action/Employment Equity policies at their institutions;
- to ascertain the extent of satisfaction/dissatisfaction of the academic staff about the manner in which Affirmative Action/Employment Equity is being implemented at their institutions;
- to gain an overall assessment of the provisions made by the respective institutions to ensure the success of Affirmative Action/Employment Equity programmes;
- to analyse the academic staff responses to institutional and personal issues related to the implementation of Affirmative Action/Employment Equity; and,
- to identify the constraints, barriers and challenges facing Affirmative Action/Employment Equity implementation at the respective institutions of Higher Education and the implications of these for staffing and management practices at South African institutions of Higher Education.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.5.1 Nature of the Study

The present study is both qualitative and descriptive. This descriptive approach is defined by Behr (1973: 10), Borg (1967 : 202) and Good (1963 : 244-45) as a method that precedes all other types of research. Such research, they argue, goes beyond the mere gathering and tabulation of data; it also involves interpreting data and the meaning or significance of what is described. The descriptive survey of which the present study is an example, typically gathers data at a particular point in time with the intention of :

- ❑ describing the nature of the existing conditions;
- ❑ identifying standards against which existing conditions can be compared;
- and,

- ❑ determining the relationships that exist between specific events.

(Cohen and Morton, 1980 : 71).

The question and answer method is used to obtain information and data. The questions directed to a representative cross-section of a population at a specific time is used in all areas of life as part of everyday decision-making. According to Seaman (1987 : 125) and Nieswiadomy (1987: 144) the descriptive method has the following advantages :

- ❑ it can be used to investigate problems in realistic settings;
- ❑ the cost involved is reasonable when one considers the amount of information that can be gathered;
- ❑ a large amount of data can be collected with relative ease from a variety of people; and,
- ❑ it allows the researcher to examine a large number of variables which can be analysed with the help of multivariate statistics.

It is precisely for the abovementioned reasons and also because of the nature of the data (qualitative and quantitative) to be collected that the descriptive method was selected for use in the present study.

1.5.2 Methods of Data Collection

Johnson (1981 : 101) maintains that whilst the descriptive method is considered to be very good it becomes sophisticated when used in combination with other methods. Hence, a triangulation of methods is used to gather the data needed for this study. They are :

- ❑ a questionnaire, completed by the target sample of academic staff, to obtain quantitative data;

- a personal interview schedule, used to obtain qualitative and descriptive data from the respondents; and,
- a content analysis document, used to analyse the Employment Equity and Affirmative Action plans of the institutions under study.

The triangulation method assists with verifying the position with alternative data acting as a check on chance occurrence, coincidence and fortuitous circumstances (Babbie, 1973 : 283). In addition, triangulation attempts to locate research in time and space and thus gives it a more secure frame of reference. The aim of this research, is to control error and arrive as close as possible to the truth.

1.5.2.1 The questionnaire

The advantages of the questionnaire, outlined by Mahlangu (1987 : 84), motivated the researcher to use this technique in order to collect data pertaining to the attitudes of academic staff towards Affirmative Action/Employment Equity policies and procedures at their respective institutions. Like Mahlangu the researcher is of the opinion that this method :

- permits a wide coverage at a minimum expense of time and money;
- reaches people who are difficult to contact;
- could be used when it is well nigh impossible to interview individuals personally;
- would elicit more candid and objective replies because of its impersonal nature;
- permits well considered and thoughtful answers;
- eliminates influence of the interviewer on the respondents; and,
- allows for uniformity and makes for answers that are more comparable.

The researcher administered a semi-structured questionnaire to solicit responses to questions on Affirmative Action/Employment Equity for the purpose of this study.

1.5.2.2 The interview schedule

An in-depth personal interview schedule (see Appendix 2) was administered to selected academic staff to collect data pertaining to the policies and procedures used at their institutions.

1.5.2.3 Content analysis

Content analysis involved the systematic classification and study of the documents for the purpose of drawing comparisons. The same method of data collection was used to analyse the data from the three year rolling plans of the six Higher Education institutions in KwaZulu-Natal. Hagen (1982 : 138) recommends this technique for comparative and historical studies and for discerning trends in existing phenomena. The basic procedure in content analysis involves the prior selection of categories, subjects to be analysed and rigorous establishment of criteria for inclusion to ensure possible replication by others. The researcher conducted a content analysis of the six rolling plans and identified Affirmative Action and Employment Equity plans, policies and procedures and projections as criteria for comparison.

1.5.2.4 Documentary study

A study was made of selected secondary sources of Affirmative Action and Employment Equity from the USA, Australia, Canada, Zimbabwe, Namibia and India. The literature survey comprised texts, monographs, journal articles, papers presented at conferences and workshops, Higher Education handbooks and manuals and research dissertations and theses. The theory and observations gleaned from these sources

provided invaluable information which constitutes the basis of this study.

1.6 WORKING DEFINITION OF TERMS

In this study several terms have been used in specific ways. Therefore, at the outset they need to be defined with respect to their usage in the context of this study. These are :

- **Racial Classification**

The use of the former apartheid government's racial classification of Indian, Coloured, African and White in this study has historical undertones and is sensitive and contentious in the present South African context. This is particularly so since South Africa strives to shed its apartheid legacy and has signalled its wish to move away from any form of discrimination in its new democracy. The researcher makes reference to such classification since the terms are commonly used in the literature on post-apartheid discussions and also since remnants of the apartheid past are still prevalent in many institutions of Higher Education in the country. The main objective in using this racial terminology in the present study, apart from facilitating concise discussion is to monitor changes in the effectiveness of Affirmative Action and Employment Equity measures and not to distinguish or label groups for discriminatory purposes. The following are the five classifications that will be used :

- **Blacks** : This is a collective term including all the non-White South Africans who were formerly classified as Indians, Coloureds and Africans under apartheid legislation.
- **Africans** : These are South Africans of African descent.
- **Coloureds** : These are South Africans of mixed heritage, usually Dutch, African,

Malay and Khoisan.

- **Indians** : These are South Africans who are descendants of Indians from India who settled in South Africa from 1860 onwards.
- **Whites** : South Africans of European descent.
- **Academic staff** : Personnel employed at institutions of Higher Education to perform mainly teaching and research duties.
- **Faculty** : This term is used abroad, particularly in the United States of America (USA), to describe personnel employed at institutions of Higher Education to perform mainly teaching and research duties. It is used synonymously with the term academic staff in the present study.
- **Affirmative Action** : This term refers to the additional corrective steps which must be taken in order that those who have been historically disadvantaged by unfair discrimination are able to derive full benefits from an equitable employment environment.
- **An Affirmative Action Beneficiary** : This is a person who benefits from Affirmative Action programmes and procedures.
- **Employment Equity** : This is a term driven by, related to and interchangeable with the concept Affirmative Action. It involves the equitable distribution of employees with regard to race and gender within a workforce which is free of discrimination and representative of the demographics of the population within which it operates.
- **Designated Group** : This term refers to Black South Africans made up of Africans, Indians and Coloureds who were previously disadvantaged and

discriminated against under the apartheid regime in South Africa.

- **Non-Designated Group** : This term refers to White South Africans.
- **Minorities** : This term is used to describe minority groups, particularly in the USA, who were previously disadvantaged.
- **Historically Advantaged Institutions (HAIs)** : These are Higher Education Institutions which were advantaged under the apartheid regime in South Africa with regard to resources, funding, etc. and were exclusively for White staff and students. These were Historically Advantaged Universities (HAUs), Historically Advantaged Technikons (HATs), Historically White Institutions (HWIs), Historically White Universities (HWUs) and Historically White Technikons (HWTs).
- **Historically Disadvantaged Institutions (HDIs)** : These are Higher Education Institutions which were disadvantaged under the apartheid regime in South Africa with regard to resources, funding, etc. Being exclusively for Black staff and students, they are referred to as Historically Disadvantaged Universities (HDUs), Historically Disadvantaged Technikons (HDTs), Historically Black Institutions (HBIs), Historically Black Universities (HBUs) and Historically Black Technikons (HBTs).
- **Technikons** : These are Higher Education Institutions whose main task was to provide vocational-technical education in order to supply the labour markets with personnel with adequate technical and other job specific skills and practical knowledge related to specific jobs. Since 1995 they have been certified to grant Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral degrees in Technology.
- **Senior Executive Administrators/Managers** : They constitute the top level administrators/managers of Higher Education institutions such as Vice-

Chancellors and Deputy Vice-Chancellors (Vice-Principals).

- **Line/Middle managers** : They constitute Heads of Departments and Deans of Faculties in the present study.
- **Higher Education institutions** : This refers to any degree-awarding institution.

1.7 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

In Chapter One, an orientation of the research is presented. A brief reference to Affirmative Action and Employment Equity is made. The motivation which gave rise to the research and the aims of the study are then discussed. The method of study, the premises on which the study is predicated, are enunciated.

In Chapter Two, the nature and scope of Affirmative Action is examined and definitions of Affirmative Action and Employment Equity and related concepts are analysed. The general and specific objectives of Affirmative Action are presented and its importance and significance are evaluated. In dealing with the theoretical constructs of Affirmative Action, the general nature and scope of Affirmative Action as viewed by both its proponents and opponents are discussed and summarized by way of a mind map. This is followed by an organogram illustrating the general theoretical and conceptual framework of Affirmative Action as viewed by proponents of this concept. The chapter concludes with a theoretical and conceptual framework of Affirmative Action and a definition of Affirmative Action for the present study.

In Chapter Three, the perceptions of and attitudes to Affirmative Action/Employment Equity as well as the challenges and constraints facing their implementation are discussed. In order to elucidate such perceptions, attitudes, challenges and constraints, the Affirmative Action debate is analysed. The chapter concludes with an evaluation of the importance and significance of Affirmative Action.

In Chapter Four, a historico-comparative study of Affirmative Action is undertaken. The evolution of Affirmative Action and its implementation are reviewed in six countries namely USA, Australia, Canada, Zimbabwe, Namibia and India, all of which sought to redress inequalities among groups within their respective countries. This review was undertaken so that emerging South African policies and programmes related to Affirmative Action can be understood against the background of relevant international experience and critique.

In Chapter Five, a historico-comparative study of Affirmative Action and Employment Equity in South Africa is undertaken. In this chapter, the legacy of apartheid and its influence on Higher Education in the South Africa of the past is discussed. Thereafter, the discussion focuses on the initiatives undertaken by the present democratic government to bring about transformation in Higher Education institutions in South Africa in order that Employment Equity is expedited. In the process the challenges, constraints and barriers facing Affirmative Action and Employment Equity are also discussed.

The analysis of the results of an empirical investigation of perceptions of and attitudes to practices and procedures related to Affirmative Action and Employment Equity is undertaken in Chapter Six. This analysis is based on the responses to a detailed anonymous questionnaire by the academic staff of institutions of Higher Education in KwaZulu-Natal and personal interviews.

Chapter Seven constitutes the concluding chapter. Conclusions derived from the empirical investigation are synthesized and recommendations are discussed.

In the next chapter, the nature and scope of Affirmative Action is discussed. In this chapter the researcher develops a theoretical and conceptual framework of Affirmative Action for the present study.