

TV still targets Homemakers, Women complain

by Mario Osava



RIO DE JANEIRO—Brazilian TV shows false images of women and fails to respond to women's needs, according to a survey by TVer, a group of academics and social activists whose aim is to improve the quality of programming.

Of a total of 253 women between the ages of 15 and 54 interviewed over a two-week span in February in the state of Sao Paulo, 79 percent said the images of women presented by TV were "neither real nor true."

A full 76 percent said TV programming failed to address their demands, while 59 percent said it did not reflect their reality.

TV continues to target the homemaker, based on a vision of women outdated by at least three decades, and neglects to take into account the fact that many women work outside the home today, said psychologist and former parliamentary deputy Marta Suplicy, the founder of TVer.

One of the results is that 51 percent of respondents said they watched less television—confirmed by the latest survey by the Brazilian Institute of Public Opinion and Statistic, which measures ratings.

The Institute found that from 1991 to 1998, the number of women viewers dropped eight percent in Sao Paulo and 10 percent in Rio de Janeiro.

The 253 women who participated in the TVer study were single and married women who divide their time between a variety of activities.

But the respondents were all from what publicity agents classify as categories A, B and C, the more affluent sectors of society. The poorest sectors are grouped in categories D and E.

In category C, the lower middle class, 51 percent said TV depicted women as "more cultured," compared to 47 percent of the respondents from categories A and B—wealthier women, generally with more years of schooling.

A full 88 percent of respondents complained about programmes that "eroticise young girls," while 87 percent protested "excessive" images of sex.

Three-quarters of respondents said TV was more concerned with pleasing men than women.

But that is based on the logic of the market, because as a group, men have greater buying power and are the main market for publicity, psychoanalyst Paulo Roberto Ceccarelli told the daily *Folha de Sao Paulo*.

For that reason, programming continues to insist on "sex symbols" who draw the ire of women, like Susana Alves, the dark 'Tiazinha' who suggests sadomasochistic sex, and Carla Perez, a well-endowed blonde dancer.

But respondents praised the positive role models provided by some of the veteran soap-opera stars like Fernanda Montenegro and Eva Wilma, or female news anchors and program hostesses.

And the interviewees gave Brazilian TV good marks in several areas. According to 69 percent, TV provides programming for all tastes; stimulates reflection (64 percent); provides excellent entertainment (62 percent); and is relaxing (55 percent).

Source: Inter Press Service, 8 March 1999