

## ABSTRACT

An important change in the social and economic fabric of the Sri Lanka over the past few decades is the increasing proportion of women in the labor market. Female now comprise 55 per cent of the Sri Lanka workforce. The empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of women's social, economic and managerial status is essential for the achievement of transparent and accountable public and private sector. However, the level of female participation in management and leadership positions is still unrepresentative of the number of females in the workforce. The aim of this study is 'to explore the barriers that impede career development of Sri Lankan women managers in public and private sectors'. The research questions asked 'what are the perceived barriers that inhibit to career development of women managers in Sri Lanka?', 'What are the policy measures to overcome these barriers?' and 'How managerial positions in public and private sectors should be distributed across male and female?'

In this study, an interpretivist philosophy as the researchers view and the respondents view has adopted. Qualitative case study methodology with feminist-oriented research method was used to answer the questions. By this study, it has been analyzed the experiences of 40 Sri Lankan women who are holding senior-level management positions in five public and five private sector organizations in the occupational categories of Education, Accountancy, Engineering, Insurance, Banking and Medical Service. The sample was a purposefully selected group of 20 women from the public sector and 20 women from the private sector organizations in major cities i.e Colombo, Gampaha, Kandy, Kurunegala, and Gall. The grounded theory analysis method was applied to analyze the data. Analysis of the 254 pages of interview transcripts through open, axial and selective coding yielded a picture of the participant's barriers for upward mobility.

The literature review stated that, there are more women employed as managers in the public sector than in the private sector, findings confirmed that women remain under-represented in top management positions. The Sri Lanka Department of Labour reported that women comprised 29 per cent of the total persons employed in executive, administrative and managerial occupations in 2012. The sex segregation index value for Administrative and Managerial category is 21.3 percent in 2011. This indicates that the relevant managerial positions are not being equally distributed among the males and the females. Organizational culture, situational and personal factors have affected to these situation. It appears as per analysis data that organizational sub culture has thus far been a barrier that has stymied the advancement of women's career and it is a major barrier to women's progress into senior management. All the women managers agreed on

organizational working environment, negative perception and stereotypes, commitment to career constitute, lack of support by people, pay attention to say at meetings, coping with new technology and organization encourage women for leadership positions as main barriers as situational factors. According to the personal factors there are barriers in organizational support, number of task and working load, nearest colleagues and friendship and fellow managers and support. However, study confirmed that the Organizational cultural, situational and personal factors are not affecting to managerial effectiveness of the women managers. Generally, they do not show dialectical behavior in their managerial positions and use their style in non-traditional manner. There is still a need to push for equal representation of women in top management positions in both sectors. Policies and programmes have to be focused to promote equitable gender relations and division of labour within the household and the economy.

**Key Words:-**Women, Managers, Public Sector, Private Sector, Organizational Culture, Situation, Personal, Effectiveness, Management Style.