

## **ABSTRACT**

The liberal business environment, emerging realities of globalization, extension of educational opportunities reduced the socio-economic and gender inequalities in Sri Lanka and raised the 'status' of women. Access to higher education changed the lives of many women and facilitated their gaining greater physical mobility and control over their lives. Therefore the significant progress has been achieved in the advancement of women over recent years, with their increasing movement in to the occupations. However, women have been occupied better in public sector organizations compared with private sector in Sri Lanka. Because the employment opportunities are open to women in government sector at every level without restriction and sometimes offers greater opportunities for access to higher-level positions.

Recent decades have recorded a widening of access of women to the employment in public sector organizations, but this trend has not been accompanied by a corresponding increase in the number of women occupying in management positions. Because the participation of women in decision making at various levels in the public sector is very low and the women in the highest management levels have increased only by twenty percent. Therefore, this exploratory study locates women managers within the context of gender relations and managerial ideology in Sri Lanka and it has tried to identify that how they have become dialectical in the arena of management in the public sector organizations. By this study, it has been analysed the experiences of twenty Sri Lankan women who are holding senior-level management positions in five public sector organizations in the occupational categories of Education, Accountancy, Engineering, Medical Service, and Sri Lanka Administrative Service. Mainly this study has placed in the interpretivist qualitative methodology and the feminist research approach.

The findings of this study reveal that Sri Lankan women have a non-traditional management style and they successfully manage the work-family interface. Accordingly,

the majority of the married women managers have successful marriage life. However, these women managers have pointed out two reasons as main dialectical with their organizations. They are stereotypical and traditional attitudes, employer's ignorance and lack of enforcement of the regulations. According to the study women still encounter with obstacles to their advancement and the organizational constraints have thoroughly affected to the sex segregation in the managerial positions in public sector organizations in Sri Lanka. The sex segregation index value has been gradually increased in last decade. This indicates that the job opportunities are not being equally distributed among females.

With the falling of fertility rates and the growing influx of women, the largest proportion of the new entrants into the Sri Lankan labour market will be women in the future. Therefore the policies and programmes have to be focused to promote equitable gender relations and division of labour within the household and the economy.