

# **Women Managers and their Perceived Barriers for Upward Mobility in Public and Private Sectors with Special Reference to the Selected Services in Sri Lanka**

by

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## **Abstract**

*The aim of this study is 'to explore the barriers that impede career development of Sri Lankan women managers in public and private sectors'. 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. The grounded theory analysis method was applied to analyze the data. The findings confirmed that women remain under-represented in top management positions. Organizational culture, situational and personal factors have affected these situation. However, the study confirmed that the Organizational cultural, situational and personal factors are not affecting managerial effectiveness of the women managers. Generally, they do not show dialectical behavior in their managerial positions and use their style in a non-traditional manner. There is still a need to push for equal representation of women in top management positions in both sectors.*

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

## **1. Background of the Study**

An important change in the social and economic fabric of Sri Lanka over the past few decades, is the increasing proportion of women in the labor market. Females, now comprise 55 per cent of the Sri Lankan workforce (Department of Census and Statistics 2000). 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 sectors. 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. The balance of female and male leadership positions remains unequal although the advantages and opportunities for females continue to expand. In other words,

gender differences in the level and type of formal education and in participation in the labour force are rapidly disappearing; but the rate of the advancement of women into higher positions in organizations is relatively slow. The rate at which women are ascending the corporate ladder to upper level leadership positions is confoundingly slow (ILO, 1998). Generally speaking, a growing number of women occupy managerial positions, but at top levels still very few women are present (ILO, 1998).

As the bias of organizations to incorporate female leadership decreases, an inquiry of the attitudes and perspectives of female leaders becomes pertinent in order to understand the organizational situation and culture, personal characteristics, leadership styles and the behavior of successful female leaders. Although the glass ceiling is an obstacle to women for career advancement, some women have successfully climbed the corporate ladder to the upper echelon despite this barrier. Theory maintains that organizational situation and culture, personal factors and leadership styles are important aspects of ascending the corporate ladder. However, the question remains whether the 'feminization of management' will lead to a larger proportion of women in management positions. The following sections (1.1 and 1.2) would discuss the current situation about the participation of women in management in public and private sectors in Sri Lanka.

### **1.1 Women in Management at the Public Sector**

Public sector employees can be divided into three sectors according to the classification of Department of Census and Statistics.

- State sector-includes all the ministries and departments which come under the purview of the central government.
- Provincial public sector-includes ministries and institutions functioning under the provincial councils.
- Semi-government sector / Statutory Boards.

In Sri Lanka, an examination initially in London and subsequently in Colombo was held to recruit to the prestigious Ceylon Civil Service (CCS) which was converted into the Sri Lanka Administrative Service (SLAS) in 1963 and opened to women. The introduction of free education in 1945 in Sri Lanka has ensured men and women equal access to primary, secondary and tertiary education. Higher education has opened up the doors for women to enter higher levels of employment in the variety of areas of public sector. More women than men have been entering Universities since 1996 (University Grants Commission 2000). However, the current literacy rate of 84 percent for Sri Lanka women is among the highest in the world and is nearly twice the average of 48 percent estimated for low-income countries (Jayaweera 2002). More women obtain the necessary qualifications to move up to decision making positions in the country. The proportion of women in government service increased from 26 per cent in 1985 and to nearly 38 percent in 1990. However, in this period nearly 58 percent of female government servants fall under the occupational category of professionals, which include teachers, nurses, midwives etc (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, 1997).

However, women's representation in decision making position such as senior officials, and managers in the public, provincial public and semi government sectors have respectively risen to 25.9%, 23.5% and 22.1% by 2002, so that around 75 of decision makers in the country have been men over that time. The first woman secretary was appointed only in 1995. The percentage of women District Secretaries decline to 8% in 2007. The percentage of Divisional Secretaries rose from only 1.6% in 1993 to 22.9% in 2006 (Sri Lankan Women: Partner in Progress 2007). The percentage of women in the Sri Lanka Administrative Service (SLAS) class 1

gradually increased from 1.8% in 1979 to 27.2% in 2007, only 8.9% of the secretaries are women ( The Sri Lankan Women: Partner in Progress 2007). In the Sri Lanka Overseas Service three women ambassadors and one women high commissioner were headed in 2007. In Sri Lanka's Planning Service, the first women reached class 1 only in early 1990 s. The women in the class 1 in the Sri Lanka Scientific Service in 2006 were only 9.8%. Among the senior health administrators, 23.9% were women in 2003. In the Ministry of Education in Colombo, 25.5% of those in senior positions were women in 2005. This included the Senior Assistant Secretaries, Chief Commissioner / Additional Chief commissioners and Directors. In 2004 70% of teachers were women. Only 27.4% of members of the Sri Lankan Principal Service and 17.6% of the heads of the National Colleges' of Education were women. In Sri Lanka's Agricultural Service there were 16.6% in class 1 in 2006. Sri Lanka's Engineering Service 17.1% in class 1 in 2002 and in Sri Lanka's Inland Revenue Service 22.8% in class 1 in 2002. There were 15.3% in Sri Lanka Accountants Service in class 1 in 2006 (Changing Role of Women in Sri Lanka, 1997 Census of Public Sector and Semi-government Sector Employment 2002,2005). Judiciary Service too were only 8.2% of the judges of the Supreme Court, Appeal Court and High Courts, were women in 2000.

### **1.2 Women in Management at the Private Sector**

Research that proved as to why women fail to reach high decision making positions noted that socialization process influencing the occupational choices of women (Gunawardena and Lekamge 2002), gender discrimination, work culture, and the operation of the 'glass ceiling', especially in the private sector, women's role expectations and social practices that place a higher value on the career of a male than that of a female. The private sector has grown parallel to the public sector and has expanded since 1978 after Liberalization of the economy. According to the employment survey of the Department of Labor in 2005, the distribution of private sector employees by occupational groups indicated that only 1.3% of women employees and 5.6% of men employees were in administrative and managerial positions.

The Handbook of Listed Companies: 2005 published by the Colombo stock exchange in 2006 includes details of 233 establishments in 20 'sectors'. Accordingly in the banking, Finance and Insurance (19), Beverage, Food and Tobacco (8), Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals (2), Construction and Engineering (5), Diversified Holdings (2), Footwear and Textiles (0), Health care (8), Hotels and Travels (21), Information Technology (0), Investment Trusts (0), Land and Property (13), Manufacturing (9), Motors (4), Oil Palms (0), Plantations (4), Power and Energy (0), Services (2), Stores and Supplies (2), Telecommunications 1 and Trading (6) there were representation of women in Boards of Directors of Large establishment in Private Sector. Compared with the total number of establishments, the total number of directors were 1750 and numbers of women directors were 106. Accordingly the percentage of women directors were 6.1%. Research on women in private sector leadership has been limited by the same conditions as those found for women's leadership in general; that being the lack of focus exclusively on the president/ CEO position, the lack of consistent methodologies, and the use of non-homogeneous organizations and non-equivalent leadership roles/positions affecting generalizability across contexts and leaders.

## **2. Research Questions**

The problem identified show that, the gender differences in the level and type of formal education and in participation in the labour force are rapidly disappearing (Jayaweera 2000): but the rate of advancement of women into higher positions, in organizations is relatively slow. Even though there is an increasing number of women who enter the workforce and an increasing number of managerial positions women's access to leadership positions remains limited (Eagly et.al, 2003). Accordingly, this research examines the following research questions.

1. What are the perceived barriers that inhibit the career development of women managers in Sri Lanka?
2. What are the policy measures that could be taken to overcome these barriers?
3. How managerial positions in public and private sectors should be distributed across male and female employees?

## **3. Objectives of the Study**

The problem of the glass ceiling that the women management face and the invisible barriers that prevent them from advancing to higher levels of the managerial ladder in most countries of the world, have been analyzed and discussed extensively in a large number of research articles (ILO,1998). The gendered analysis of organizational cultures is considered, as reasons are sought for the higher representation of women in public sector, as compared with private sector management. The female participation rate in the public and private sector labour force in Sri Lanka has increased from 55.1 per cent in 1990 to 53.0 percent in 2011 (Department of Census and Statistics 2011). Despite such economic achievement, relatively little research has been done on the status of women, the general working environment of women in management, wage differentials, personal differentials, sexual segregation, discrimination, and perception and attitudes towards women as managers, etc. Based on this, the general objective of this study is *'to explore the barriers that impede career development of Sri Lankan women managers in public and private sectors'*. Accordingly the specific objectives of the study can be indicated as follows.

While the metaphor of the 'glass ceiling' helps explain why women have poor representation in the power, leadership and decision- making arenas, it does not explain why a 'glass ceiling' actually exists. A number of explanations have been offered, for example, structural factors in organizations and women's personal aspirations and management styles (Still 1994). The study deals with the issue from a number of perspectives; organizational, managerial and personal. Based on this, one specific objective to be examined in this research is *'to construct a theoretical framework to study the significant factors which affect the career advancement for top level women managers'*.

The sex segregation has been a remarkably stable feature of the Sri Lankan workplace during the year 1980, 1985, 1990 and 1998. The index increased from 37.24% to 48.12% between 1990 and 1998 (Department of Census and Statistics 1980, 1985, 1990 and 1998). This index shows that, the job opportunities in top level management positions have not been distributed among males and females, equally. Therefore, another specific objective can be derived as *'to understand the factors which affect to the sex segregation in the managerial positions of public and private sector organizations in Sri Lanka'*.

#### **4. Research Methodology Overview**

The research approach for this study was a qualitative method with a feminist orientation for the purpose of describing and exploring women leaders' experiences of their perceived barriers for upward mobility. The intent of the study is to interview purposefully selected 40 women managers in public and private sector organizations in the major cities i.e Colombo, Gampaha, Kandy, Kurunegala and Galle in the occupational categories of Education, Accountancy, Engineering, Insurance, Banking and Medical. To gain these perspectives, qualitative interviews are typically used. The researcher develops semi-structured, open-ended interview questions which provide the participants the opportunity for in-depth discussion. When how and why questions are used, case study, experiments, or histories are appropriate (Yin 2003). The current study is exploratory and uses how and why questions. Yin (2003) posited that when the relevant behavior of the participants cannot be manipulated and contemporary events are examined, case study is the preferred research design; both are conditions of the current research. A Grounded theory data analysis method was used to explore and analyze the interview data to discover the central themes and meanings the women ascribe to their perceived barriers for upward mobility. 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. As a means of triangulation to ensure research validity (Yin 2003), the women were asked to review the analysis and make comments, edits, and additions to authenticate and validate the analysis used in the final report. The method is designed to give voice to the participating women leaders in the tradition of feminist research perspectives. The sex segregation of decision-makers in public and private sector organizations is assessed by secondary data using the sex segregation index.

#### **5. Limitations**

The sample size in qualitative studies typically is small. (Gall, Bory and Gall, 1996). "Qualitative inquiry typically focuses in depth on relatively small samples, even single cases (N=1), selected purposefully" (Patton, 2002). The intent of the study is to interview 40 women managers (20 from each sector) in Public and Private sectors. Due to this small number of participants, there is a concern that the findings may not be comparable or generalizable to the population of all women managers. This study is focused on women and findings are not generalizable to men.

The population of women managers is limited. Especially, in the private sector; therefore this study focused on women managers of six service sectors (Education, Accountancy, Insurance, Banking, Engineering and Medical), where there are more women managers. The findings cannot be generalized for all women executives from other sectors. Another delimitation is inherent in the geographic limitation of the study. The participants were drawn from 5 specific locations (Kurunegala, Colombo, Gampaha, Kandy and Galle) and findings should not be generalized to the entire country. Furthermore, there is a wide range of sizes and types of foundations ranging from one person offices to organizations with large and complex staff configurations. So findings may not be generalizable to highly structured large corporate settings.

Although all research methods have limitations, qualitative findings are highly context and case dependent (Patton, 2002): therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to a broader population.

Creswell (2003) notes a number of limitations to the use of interviews including, (a) indirect information filtered through the views of interviewees, (b) interviews in a designated place rather than a field setting, (c) possible bias introduced by the presence of the interviewer/researcher, and (d) the fact that people are not equally articulate and perceptive.

The researcher, in qualitative research, is the data collection instrument (Patton, 2002). The researcher's education and experience as well as personal biases, values, attitudes and beliefs enter into the research and pose an intrinsic limitation.

## **6. Discussion**

### **6.1 Gender Differences in Upward Career Mobility and Sex Segregation**

In the emerging realities of globalization and liberal business environment of Sri Lanka, and the influx of women into the labour market, create more opportunities for Sri Lankan women to reach management positions. As a consequence of progressive policies such as free education and the establishment island wide of co-educational schools, over 50 percent of students in secondary schools and universities and 60 percent to 70 percent of those employed in the institutions are girls and women. As a result of these changes, the women in management perform and achieve the barriers to corporate ladder would decrease and new opportunities be created. Therefore, the proportion of women in management of different levels of the organizations has increased. The Department of Census and Statistics (2011) indicate that only around 20 percent of employees who have reached the highest decision making positions in the public and private sector are women. Towards the end of year 2013, the participation of women in decision making at various levels in the public and private sector is very low and the women in the highest management levels have increased only by 20 percent. The sex segregation index value for Administrative and Managerial category has been gradually decreased in last decade. The index took its sharpest drop from 32.2 percent to 21.3 percent between 1996 and 2011. This decrease was primarily due to the increased number of females in Administrative and Managerial category. However, in 2013, index value 21.3 percent indicate that the managerial job opportunities are not being equally distributed among males and females. The study found that smooth progress in upward career mobility was impeded by,

- Cultural factors
- Some adverse factors in the work situation and
- Personal factors.

### **6.2 Cultural Factors and Women in Management**

Corporate culture refers to the values, beliefs and norms shared by organizational members that govern how they behave towards each other and outsiders. Organizational culture or 'the way we do things around here' influences what employees can do and how they conceptualize, define, analyze and address. Sex roles and norms have long been visible in Sri Lankan society. Men are typically raised to be aggressive and independent, while women are raised to be more social and dependent. A woman's primary duty is at home and a man's is at work. Child-rearing, home-making and domestic organizing are a woman's primary responsibilities. In organizational context women are expected to behave like men and to conform to the male norms in the business world. These masculine traits pose a major barrier to women. Industrialization and urbanization, democratic principles and legislative change, the influence of the west and the shrinking globe have brought about many and varied changes in Sri Lankan society. These changes manifest themselves variously. Parents encourage their daughters toward higher education and want equal employment opportunities for them. Socially, women are rejecting traditional paradigms for western ones-choosing their own mates, opting out of unsatisfactory marriages, staying single and changing the role they play in the home. It is argued that the education, occupation and income of the family have a considerable impact on women

being educated and taking up employment. Being a professional woman, brings with it financial independence that contributes to a woman's confidence and self-esteem, and recognition within the community and family. However there are formidable barriers of entry for women into professional careers. Those who do gain access, are often segregated in female occupations, delegated to lower ranks in organizations, and barred from moving up the hierarchy because the promotion criteria are conditions they cannot meet. Accordingly this study has sought to probe the perceptions of Sri Lankan women managers regarding the impact of organizational culture on their career advancement.

Before discussion can begin, it is important to define what is meant by a 'Cultural Dilemma'. A 'cultural dilemma' exists when something is not part of, or presents a threat to, the established order, meaning, values etc. of an organization, society or nation. Translating this definition into acceptable organizational terms, it means managing the 'inclusion' of previously excluded individuals such as women and ethnic minorities so that the dominant culture, or accepted ways of doing things, is not altered in any way. In other words, the existing paradigms or status quo continue to exist because the 'outsiders' learn to adapt to the prevailing culture in order to both function, and to be accepted, even if only in a cursory way. However, women become especially threatening to men as they near senior management because they are perceived to want to change the dominant culture whether or not this is so. There is no doubt that organizational cultures are essentially gender biased. All organizations embody a male managerial culture because, when both organizations and management systems were first formed, only males were in the workforce. Despite the advent of women into both the workforce and management, and the introduction of anti-discrimination, equal opportunity and affirmative action laws, there have been little fundamental changes to the underlying culture. Accordingly it can be concluded that the organizational culture affects the women to go to top positions in management hierarchy. Organizational culture hasn't changed significantly to accommodate women as a working force. Therefore organizational culture has changed to encourage the women participation in managerial positions.

### **6.3 Situational Factors and Women in Management**

The term 'organizational climate', is commonly used in the literature to refer to prevailing corporate perceptions of women's professional capabilities and commitment to their career. It also includes attitudes towards women that could result in unsupportive and discouraging work environments. Given that women are reported in the literature to be often subject to negative attitudes and stereotypes at work questioning their participation, contribution, commitment and capabilities, the literature suggests that organizational situation is a barrier to women's advancement. Little research has been done on the status of women and the general working environment of women in management, wage differentials, sexual segregation, discrimination and perception and attitudes towards women as managers. Therefore in this research it has tried to understand and include organizational working environment (wage, sexual segregation, discrimination), negative perception and stereotypes, commitment to career constitute (recruiting, selecting, promoting, training and compensating managers), co-operation as a team, lack of support by people, negative attitudes towards women, pay attention for what women managers say at meetings, coping with new technology and organizations encouraging women for leadership positions as the situational factors.

According to the study it was found that there were no wage differentials in male and female salary scales at the managerial level, so that this level there was generally equal pay for work of equal value. However most of them agreed that male and female in the same category in top positions of the private sector are receiving higher salary than public sector. The interviewees reported at least one specific incident in which they

encountered discriminatory behavior. Women still face discrimination and are not equally represented in managerial positions especially at senior levels. According to the sample, stereotyping is the biggest hurdle for women's advancement to top level administration positions. Gender stereotypes play a major role in long range potential than performance rating, and is the biggest barrier for their advancement to top level managerial positions. Women receive less training and educational opportunities than men at all levels of the organizations. However according to most of the women no discrimination has taken place while hiring. It has found that social stereotype of the manager remains masculine, leading to biased decisions against women when it comes to recruiting, selecting, promoting, training and compensating managers.

According to the findings in this study, around two third of the women have ability to work as a team in their organizations. They are working as a team, sharing the duties and responsibilities. When working in an organization, support of others is an important factor. If not it won't be able to perform own duties. Over study found that half of the managers agreed that women do not get enough organizational support. Most women report satisfaction with existing levels of support, yet more perceive a need for more support in order to successfully manage their role. The interviewees agreed that generally, more Sri Lankan women including themselves are getting education and working outside the home. Although women agreed that societal expectations are changing, several of them expressed reservations that women could easily commit to both family and a career. Women have also become more independent due to financial security. Paying attention to say at meetings is one of the important situational factors for promoting women to managerial posts and remain in such posts. According to the views, fifty per cent agreed that others are listening for their voice. According to the one third of women managers, they are not familiar with technology. It is much difficult to familiarize with new technology. Another one third of the women managers have failed to get familiar with new technology. Another one third of women managers, they are very familiar with technology, especially with computers. However, majority of women stated that they received fewer opportunities for professional development. According to the view of many women managers, there are no separate training in their institution to go to the leadership positions.

#### **6.4 Personal Factors and Women in Management**

Personal factors are the common obstacles faced by women when they accede to top positions. Therefore in this research it has tried to understand and include job satisfaction, judgment of women's work performance, accomplishments and efforts to be promoted, professional development at work, domestic responsibilities and double role, number of tasks and the heavy work load, psychological well-being (life satisfaction, psychosomatic symptom, emotional exhaustion), different problems deal, nearest colleagues and friendship, fellow managers and support and loneliness in the job as the personal factors.

However many researchers suggest there are gender differences in job satisfaction (Leung and Clegg 2001, London 1983). However in this study, women in the sample appear to be highly motivated and highly committed to their careers. Research has found that women reporting higher levels of job satisfaction in both extrinsic and intrinsic features. It was observed that, the judgments of top level management are given equally and fairly for the women officers when evaluation of performance is done. Promotion is an important matter to almost all the women in the sample. According to the agreement of thirty five women, 'accomplish more and push hard' is not applicable for that purpose. Women advancement to top management is directly related to their increased knowledge and skills and professional development opportunities made available to them



throughout their careers. The eighty per cent of women managers considered that the opportunities for professional development made available in the context of their organizations were adequate.

The expectations and values in workplace cultures may conflict with the values and expectations of work and family for Sri Lankan women. However domestic and motherly responsibilities do not indirectly affect the career progression of women managers by causing delays in obtaining qualifications in the sample. As per twenty two of the women however much the work load is, they try their best to obtain the qualifications required for their career progress. According to 55% of them they did not receive more organizational support in order to manage their professional work and their domestic responsibilities. According to 90% of the women interviewed, number of tasks and the work load is much more. This situation has been indirectly affected for their career development. All agreed that, even though the work load is high, it has not greatly affected to their health. It was observed that women managers interviewed are in good psychological well-being. They have to deal with variety of problems when they are performing their duties. They are carrying on their duties solving the problems they face.

Nearest colleagues and friendship are essential when doing a job. The answer given by one fourth of the women managers were that, even though, there are some problems with peer groups, work is carried out in a cooperative manner. According to another two fourth, there is no any friendship with nearest colleagues. However, according to another one fourth of women managers, they associate with nearest colleagues as friends to delegate some duties and solve some problems. Fellow managers and support is also an important aspect when doing a job. According to one third, support is given by fellow managers and according to two third fellow managers aren't meeting regularly. Therefore their support is in a minimum level. Accordingly, one second of the women in the sample feel alone while the other does not.

### **6.5 Gender Differences in Managerial Effectiveness**

The current results have relevance to the debate about why more women are not advancing in organizations. According to the literature, several researchers have argued that there are multiple factors influencing women's advancement through an organization. These included gender-related as well as structural opportunities, values of the organization, and organizational interpersonal and individual factors and attribution of success to their own ability. The current results would seem to indicate that what female managers do and their effectiveness do not generally distinguish them from their male colleagues. There are eight roles that have been taken to consideration. They are innovator, broker, producer, director, co-ordinator, monitor, facilitator and mentor.

The female managers agreed that they displayed four roles significantly more than did their male counterparts. The roles were innovator, co-ordinator, monitor and mentor. Female managers indicated that they were more effective in their roles than the male managers. Staff of the female managers agreed that their managers displayed five roles significantly more than did staff of the male managers. The roles were innovator, producer, broker, director, co-ordinator and mentor. The staff did not agree any significant difference in the level of effectiveness of their manager. Bosses of the male and female managers did not perceive any significant difference in the roles they displayed or their level of effectiveness. Peers identified two roles where there were significant differences between male and female managers. They are broker and mentor and in both cases they were displayed more by the female managers. Peers indicated that female managers were significantly more effective than male managers. There were some similarities in the perceptions of the three groups, manager themselves, staff and peers. Mentor was identified by all three and co-ordinator by the

managers themselves and their staff. The female managers and their peers also regarded the female managers to be more effective than did the male managers and their peers. It has been found that the women managers and their peers agreed that female managers were more effective than male managers.

### **6.6 Leadership Behaviour and Leadership Styles**

The interviewees in this exploratory study were part of a new wave of Sri Lankan women who practice a non-traditional management style. The research revealed that if the female are given equivalent levels of responsibility within the organization women did not exhibit more traditionally female attributes. Their leadership style differs from the traditional command and control style. Women's management style is centered on communication. They share power and information. These findings were confirmed in our study. They have good listening skills, maintain an open door policy, discuss problems as they arise, and keep everyone informed. According to the research, nonabrasive problem solving found substantial agreement among the women handling problems quietly and without shouting: being assertive with others as necessary and working effectively with difficult people.

Women are better motivators than males. Women managed effectively using influencing skills rather than authority, giving performance feedback and setting clear direction. This study looked at a number of different aspects of supporting employees and found that women's style shared more a common the supportive and participative style. They are friendly, helpful and supportive of employees, understand people's work problems as well as personal problems, and respect each individual. They know how and when to delegate work, holding people responsible for tasks as a modern trend, being organized and attentive to details of the job, and making sure that people understand tasks and appropriate behavior. All of the women managers in the sample have agreed on staff training to encourage employees and assume responsibility to discuss problems and to improve their skills. According to the findings it was found that women leaders coach and develop subordinates and organize and monitor other's works. Women motivate others by transferring their self-interest in to the goal of the organization. Women leaders develop and motivate employees. These leaders believe that people perform best when they feel good about themselves and their work, and they try to create a situation that contribute to that feeling. However, their style of human relationships and their sensitivity and help in employees problems are characteristically Sri Lankan. However, there were not to be seen the difference between their management behavior and it proved that the management styles of women do not affect the sex segregation in management position in the public and private sector organizations.

### **6.7 Possibilities for Gaining Prominence at Higher Positions in Public and Private Sectors**

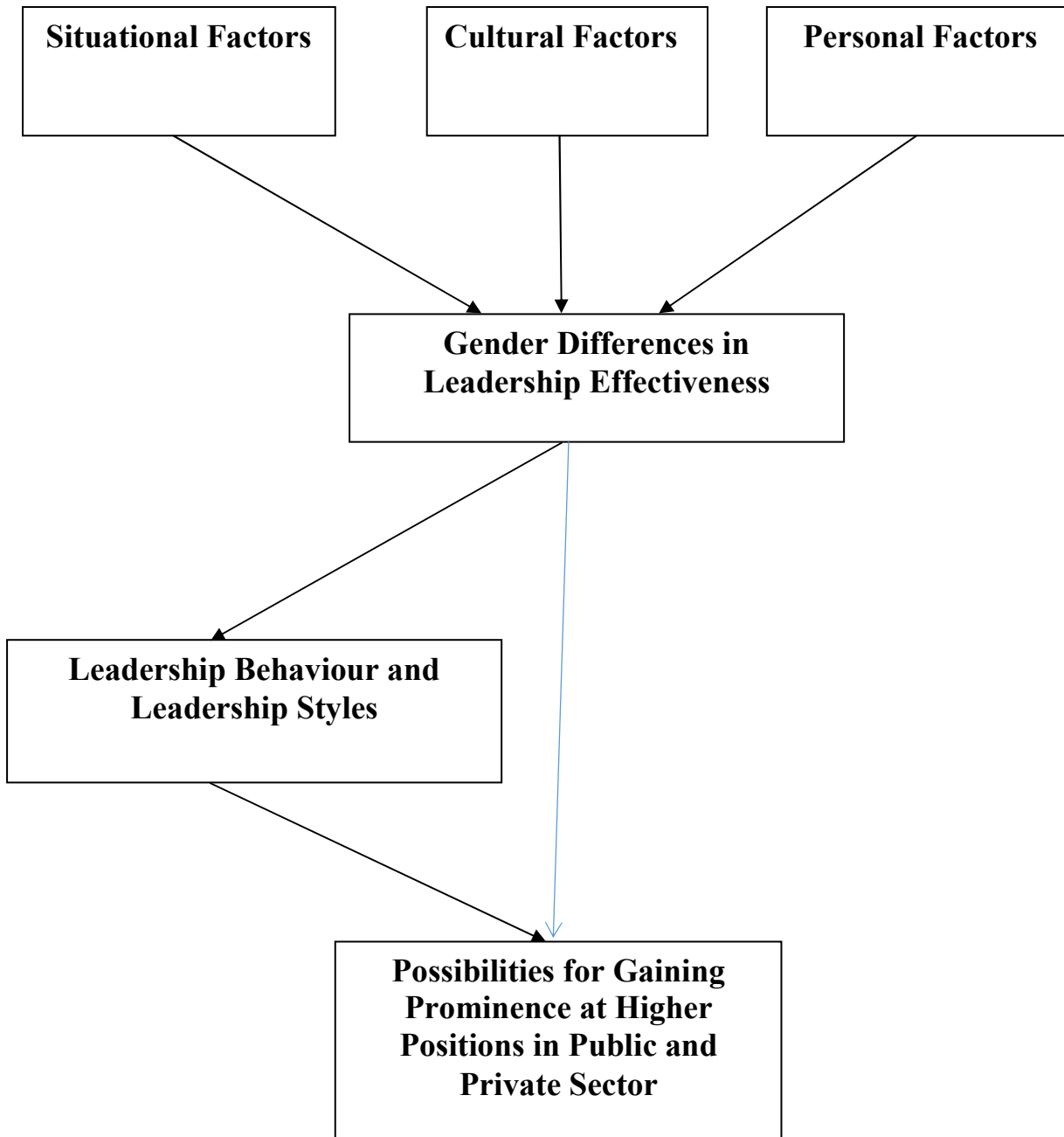
While women generally continue to be under-represented in top management positions, particularly in the private sector, the executives in this study celebrated their achievements and their contributions to management. It can be seen that the female participation to the total employees has increased from 1990 to 2011. However, the total female workers show a proportion decrease during 1991 to 2006 (Department of Census and Statistics 1990-2009). Decreasing trend is observed in the percentage distribution of public sector female workers during the period concerned and an increasing trend is observed in the percentage distribution of private sector female employees during this period. Privatization of state industries led to the retrenchment of female workers. Females in Administration and Managerial workers category has been increased from 17.8 percent in 1996 to 28.7 percent in 2011 (Department of Census and Statistics, 2011). In year 2000 while women's share in total employment was around 47 percent their share as Administrative and Managerial

workers at just over 20 percent was less than half of this proportion (ILO, 2004). Women in Administrative and Managerial worker category have been increasing gradually. However still their presence was limited to decision making positions. This study suggests that both public and private sectors in Sri Lanka are sites of hope for advancement, but perhaps for different kinds of women. In the public sector, the 1978 constitution is coupled with a commitment by women senior executives to support and build the confidence of staff. In the private sector there was a targeting of individually talented women, who demonstrate confidence and ambition, as well as being blatantly high achievers. There is still a need to push for equal representation of women in top management positions in both sectors. In effect; the major factors that have emerged in the study as constraint to upward mobility particularly of women are cultural, situational and personal.

According to the research framework found in the field, there are relationships between situational, cultural and personal factors. These factors are affecting to the gender differences in leadership effectiveness. The gender differences in leadership effectiveness directly affect to the leadership behavior and leadership styles and indirectly affect to the gaining prominence at higher positions in public and private sectors. The leadership behavior and leadership styles directly affect to the gaining prominence at higher positions in public and private sectors. Another research could be undertaken in the future to ascertain whether this findings are correct.

**FIGURE1**

**A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY OF WOMEN MANAGERS IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS**



Source- Research Model developed by the researcher.

## **7. Summary**

In this study the first attempts were made to understand the demographic characteristics of women managers and second attempts were made to understand the culture effect on women in management in public and private sector organizations in Sri Lanka. It appears as per analysis data, that organizational 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. Therefore organizational culture has changed to encourage the women participation in managerial positions.

Thirdly, an examination was made to verify the situational factors effect on women in management. Accordingly all the women managers stated their different views. Similarly they 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 organizational encourage women for leadership positions as main barriers as situational factors. However to break the glass ceiling, these women had to develop assertive strategies to surmount many impediments and to seek out organizational situation that permitted the career advancement.

Fourthly, an examination was made to verify the personal factors effect on women in management. This study looked at a number of different criteria for managerial effectiveness and found out that there are barriers in organizational support, number of task and working load, nearest colleagues and friendship and fellow managers and support.

Fifth, the study found that the self-perception of all women managers was that the female managers displayed innovator, co-ordinator, monitor and mentor roles more than their male counterparts. It has found that the women managers and their peers reported that female managers were more effective than male managers. However, study confirmed that the cultural, situational and personal factors do not affect the managerial effectiveness of women managers and they have better managerial effectiveness.

It appears as per analysis data that women are more likely to adopt a participative style. They share power and information, are interactive, connective, being assertive as others as necessary, working effectively with difficult people. Employees believing in their own competence and ability to succeed and conveying a positive attitude towards employees and others. Further, it can be seen that they are friendly, helpful, supportive of employees, understand peoples work problems as well as personal problems, respect each individual, know-how and when to delegate work and prioritize staff development. Generally, they do not show dialectical behavior in their managerial positions and use their style in non-traditional manner.

Sixth, 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. Cultural, situational and personal factors have affected to these situation. There is still a need to push for equal representation of women in top management positions in both sectors. Finally, in this chapter the theoretical framework behind the study is build, compared and reviewed with prevailing literature.

## 8. References

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