

RARE

**GENDER AND LEADERSHIP STYLE : A COMPARATIVE STUDY
ON GENDER SPECIFIC AND LEADERSHIP STYLES OF SRI
LANKAN MANAGERS**

BY

**N.G.B.S. Kumara
(M.Com/96/16)**

**A Dissertation Submitted to the Master of Commerce Degree Programme of the
Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies, University of Kelaniya, in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master of Commerce Degree.**

ප්‍රවේශ අංකය	305
විෂය අංකය	

**Master of Commerce Programme
Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies
University of Kelaniya
Sri Lanka**

September, 2002

Abstract

Different Gender roles are prescribed for males and females in the Sri Lankan society. Males are encouraged to adopt an instrumental role and females are encouraged to assume an expressive role. As a husband and father, the male faces the tasks of providing for the family and protecting it from any harm and as a wife and mother, the female is assigned the task of raising the children. Males and females are required to cultivate personality traits be fitting their roles they are expected to play. Expressive role, because of the female's role as child bearer, stresses that one should be cooperative, kind, nurturing, and sensitive to the needs of others (feminine qualities). Instrumental role stresses that one should be dominant, independent, assertive, comparative and goal-oriented (masculine qualities). It is quite patent that the personality traits females are expected to cultivate are quite different from those prescribed for males. Since behavior is influenced by personality traits to a certain extent, one may be inclined to examine if there are any behavioral differences, between male and female managers in respect of their leadership styles. This study gains momentum in the context of the number of females joining the management profession being the increase.

The main objectives of the research were to examine as to whether Sri Lankan male and female managers differ in gender characteristics masculinity – femininity, to observe any distinctions in leadership styles adopted by Sri Lanka male and female managers and to determine the extent of influence of gender characteristics on leadership styles of male and female managers.

The analysis was based in the information collected from 64 managers (31 male managers and 33 female managers) and their subordinates (128 subordinates) were analyzed. The questioner survey method was used to collect information. The student's statistic (T-Test) and the multiple regression technique were used in data analysis.

The findings of the research revealed that Female managers are higher in femininity than male managers, and male managers are higher in masculinity than female managers, as envisaged. With regard to the leadership styles, data do not demonstrate that there is a significant difference between male managers and female managers in respect of the instrumental leadership style. But the study confirms that female managers are more participative and more supportive than male managers. Leadership styles are influenced by masculine and feminine traits to a certain extent. Though the extent of influence of the masculine and feminine traits on the leadership styles is not very much high it can not at all be disregarded given the complexity of human behavior.