

Women in Management: Public and Private Sectors as Sites of Advancement in Sri Lanka

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There are significantly more Sri Lankan women in senior management positions in the public sector than in the private sector. 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 posts. However the participation of women in decision making at various levels in the public and private sector have increased only by twenty percent. The study attempts to identify, describe, and analyse the factors relating to the participation of women in private and public sector management. The sample included the experiences of thirty-five Sri Lankan women who were holding senior – level management positions in either sector.

Survey results reveal that a variety of factors of personal, interpersonal and organizational level influence the career pattern and attitudes of women in management. According to the study the public and private sectors have distinguishable organizational cultures; both of which provide parallel but different sites for advancement. The private sector has focus on competition and the public sector has a strong ethos of service. There is still a need to push for equal representation of women in top management position in both sectors. It may promote more realistic expectations for women choosing employment in either sector.

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