JOB SATISFACTION, GENDERED WORK-LIVES AND ORIENTATIONS TO WORK

by

Ranjan Michael Jeyadas George

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Dedicated to

My wife, my mother and in memory of my father.

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Statement of Authentication

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in whole or on part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABS	Academy of Business Studies
ACFFTU	All Ceylon Federation of Free Trade Unions
AGM	Assistant General Manager
BOI	Board of Investment
CENWOR	Centre for Women's Research
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
DGM	Deputy General Manager
EOI	export-oriented industrialisation
EPV	Export Processing Villages
EPZ	Export Processing Zone
FTZ	Free Trade Zone
GOS	Gender-Organisation-System (approach)
HRD	Human Resource Development
IAWID	Institute for Agriculture and Women in Development
ICASL	Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka
ICOR	Incremental Capital Output Ratio
IPM-SL	Institute for Personnel Managers - Sri Lanka
IPZ	Investment Promotion Zone
ISCO	International Standard Classification of Occupations
KIPZ	Katunayake Investment Promotion Zone
MIS	Management Information Systems
NARESA	Natural Resources, Energy and Science Authority of Sri Lanka
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIE	Newly Industrialising Economy
OPA	Organisation of Professional Associations
PCI	Per Capita Income
Rs.	Sri Lankan Rupees US$ 1 = Approximately Rs. 71.69 (July, 1999)
SLBFE	Sri Lanka Bureau for Foreign Employment
SLIM	Sri Lanka Institute of Marketing
WCIC	Women's Chamber of Industry and Commerce
WIN	Women in Need

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of gender and organisations in Sri Lanka, a society where ethnicity, language and religion interweave, constituting diverse cultural identities in the process. The research question addresses factors related to women and men's orientations to work. The research question develops from theory influenced by institutional perspectives. It develops its institutional theory by going back to one of the neglected sources of more recent views of organisational 'embeddedness' developed in the British 'action frame of reference' pioneered by Goldthorpe and Lockwood and their associates (1968), and applied to organisational analysis by Silverman (1970). Thus, the research question addresses the extent to which institutional factors, located in the broader societal context of Sri Lankan organisations, add explanatory power in analysis of the degree of job satisfaction and work perceptions. While using Silverman's (1970) action frame of reference and Goldthorpe *et al. 's* (1968) orientations to work perspective, the thesis also investigates the relationship between organisational level attributes and the understanding of managers' work perceptions, as well as seeking variation at the institutional level.

The thesis uses quantitative data generated from field surveys of 382 Sri Lankan male and female managers. The main research instrument was a questionnaire. The data is stratified randomly, forming a sample of top-, middle, and junior level managers. These managers belong to diverse Sri Lankan organisations in terms of size, ownership, and line(s) of business. The findings illustrate that organisational level attributes have greater explanatory power in interpreting the work perceptions of male and female managers in Sri Lanka than do the institutional factors. However, qualitative interviews that were conducted for the research do reveal the salience of institutional factors to explain aspects of work perceptions. Organisational policies and recommendations that can be derived from this finding are elaborated in the conclusions.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE THESIS

The research reported in this thesis studies job satisfaction, work and gender perceptions of male and female managers in Sri Lanka. It seeks to discover not only the range of variation of these perceptions, and whether they vary significantly on gender lines, but also to test theory. Within organisation studies there are many rival explanations of these issues. The thesis focuses on two: is organisational behaviour better explained by organisationally contingent factors or by institutional factors? Contingency theory provides the former, while the latter draws on the Anglo-Saxon versions of institutional theory to be found in Goldthorpe *et al.'s* (1968) and Silverman's (1970) work. It uses the concept of 'orientations to work' (Goldthorpe *et al.*, 1968) and the 'action frame of reference' (Silverman, 1970) as theoretical models. The concept of orientations to work argues that first, people bring motives and expectations into the organisation from the society in which they live. Second, it argues that experiences within the organisation equally influence variations in the motives and expectations. The action frame of reference and the orientations to work concept argue that both internal and external factors need to be considered in understanding organisational behaviour.

Applying these two models, the thesis argues that both the external (institutional level) and internal (organisational level) attributes be considered in understanding job satisfaction, work and gender perceptions of male and female managers in Sri Lanka. The purpose of applying these models is to analyse to what extent institutional, as well as organisational level attributes, increase explanatory power in understanding work perceptions. To the extent that the key explanatory factors are

institutional they are outside the scope of management's ambit; to the extent that they are organisational, they are not.

Sri Lanka provides a unique cultural and institutional setting for such a project. Sri Lanka is a multi-cultural society in which complex dimensions of social stratification interweave amongst its people: for example, in addition to gender, ethnicity and religion are also potent sources of differences. The Sri Lankan attitudes towards women differ between Buddhists and Muslims, for example. Thus, in this study of work perceptions among men and women managers in Sri Lanka one would anticipate that cultural factors would be an important influence.

Sri Lanka is a unique society but one little understood outside its borders. To understand these cultural factors, it is necessary to sketch a broad picture of Sri Lanka's culture in order to understand 'how' and 'why' these complex dimensions might influence Sri Lankan society, organisations, management and people. The next step focuses on the examination of interactions between work perceptions and each of these cultural dimensions.

One possibility is that a significant relationship might exist between the work perceptions of Sri Lankan managers and these complex cultural dimensions. For instance, one would find that managers vary, systematically, depending on their communal identity. If this were the case, and one wanted to manage change effectively, then there would need to be a 'cultural revolution' in order to bring about change. The problem, however, is that not only would such a phenomenon be beyond the control of individual organisations, managers, practitioners and academics but also that outside of Weber's (1976) 'Protestant ethic' thesis, few successful examples exist of 'cultural revolution.' It was for instance, a notoriously unsuccessful strategy in Maoist China. If, on the contrary, there is no significant relationship between these complex cultural dimensions and aspects of organisational performance, then Sri Lankan managers, practitioners, and academics can identify and concentrate on elements that are within their control – those factors conventionally referred to as contingencies. In this thesis, therefore, I address both the institutional factors and organisational contingencies.

The thesis begins by describing the distinct Sri Lankan cultural context to provide important elements of the framework for this research. Having discussed the culture of Sri Lanka, the thesis then examines the theoretical resources adequate to an understanding of the effects of this culture on management and organisations. These resources are used to support an approach that includes both the institutional *and* the organisational levels of analyses as possibilities.

The plan of the thesis is thus simple: Chapters 2 to 5 elaborate the cultural dimensions of Sri Lankan society and organisations. Chapters 6 to 10 discuss the theoretical arguments in the literature, the methodology, findings, and conclusions.

Chapter 2 introduces the reader to Sri Lanka, its agricultural, industrial, and contemporary history, synoptically considering the changes to the socio-economic and political life of its people over four centuries of colonial rule with a particular emphasis on the period before and after the Second World War. The chapter's focus is on the contribution of women to the Sri Lankan economy and society.

Chapter 3 introduces the reader to the major social cleavages in Sri Lanka, in terms of its ethnicities, castes and religions.

Chapter 4 begins to zero in on women in the economy and society. It does so by sketching the contours of the dual labour market in Sri Lanka, as expressed in gender terms. In particular, it focuses on women in the secondary segment. These women, the bulk of the female labour market, are managed rather than managers in the conventional sense. Thus, the chapter focuses on three groups of Sri Lankan women who, as part of the secondary labour market segment, are of significant importance to the economy of Sri Lanka. They are the women in the Investment Promotion Zones, tea plantations, and housemaids in Middle-Eastern countries.

Chapter 5 discusses management in Sri Lanka. The chapter discusses the different sectors, the influence of religion and tradition, family and society, agriculture and plantations, as well as work ethics. The purpose of chapters 2 to 5 is to build an appreciation of the distinct institutional and cultural context of Sri Lanka.

Chapter 6 reviews and contextualises the literature relating to gender, as well as organisational behaviour, in relation to Sri Lanka. It is here that the contingency framework that will be applied to the research questions is developed.

Chapter 7 outlines the research design and identifies the different components of work perceptions in relation to gender and organisational behaviour that provides the thesis research with its focus.

Chapter 8 presents the research methodology.

Chapter 9 presents the findings of the survey data analysis.

Chapter 10 discusses the conclusions drawn from the previous analysis and their implications for Sri Lankan organisations and society.

This thesis endorses the contribution, relevance, and applicability of the concept of orientations to work and the action frame of reference for the 1990s. But it does so in a limited way. While institutional factors are important, they do not determine organisational behaviour variables as much as do organisationally contingent factors. It uses the model that Silverman (1970) and Goldthorpe *et al.* (1968) offered to provide a test of the influence of both institutional and organisational level attributes in the understanding of work perceptions. This thesis questions the model constructed, using a wide array of institutional as well as organisational level attributes, in data drawn from a sample of 382 male and female managers in diverse Sri Lankan organisations.

This thesis makes important empirical contributions to management in Sri Lanka. The findings reveal that organisational level attributes have a greater explanatory power in the understanding of work perceptions. Hence, managers, practitioners, and academics can focus attention on elements that concern them – those that are within the control of organisations. A 'cultural revolution' at an institutional or cultural level is *not* necessary to address the issues of gender and organisational behaviour. Rather, what is important is the transformation of organisational culture.

This thesis provides original insights to a relatively under researched area in Sri Lanka. The strength of this thesis is that it has robust data from managers, belonging to diverse organisations. It tests rigorously a theoretical model that has been used largely in the European context. The thesis also illustrates the applicability of the action frame of reference as well as the orientations to work concept to a society such as Sri Lanka, while demonstrating their limits.

This thesis argues that organisational level attributes have a greater explanatory power in understanding work perceptions among Sri Lankan managers. Institutional level attributes have a greater explanatory power in respect to just three variables. Hence, management policy makers and practitioners in Sri Lanka must focus their attention on excellence in management *within* organisations in terms of a practice that is equal or better than other industrialised or industrialising countries. Managers need to have a greater awareness concerning gender and the potential benefits of opening the door to women managers. Thus, Sri Lankan managers, practitioners and academics need to develop organisational level practices and strategies in relation to job satisfaction, work and gender perceptions instead of a broader change in the societal culture of the country.

Chapter 2

THE RESEARCH CONTEXT: SRI LANKA

It has been well said that the position which women hold in a country is, if not a complete test, yet one of the best tests of the progress it has made in civilisation (James Bryce) (quoted in *The Daily News*, 1996a).

The above quotation appeared in a leading Sri Lankan newspaper on International Women's Day, 1996 under the caption, 'Thought for the Day'. In the context of Sri Lanka, where people live in a largely patriarchal society and culture, its purpose was to create greater awareness and sensitivity for issues concerning the role and contribution of women to the society.

Organisations are embedded within socio-cultural and economic forces that operate and interact with one other in a given environment: "Organisations are concocted out of whatever recipe-knowledge is locally available", as Clegg (1990: 153) suggested. Such 'locally available knowledge' provides for the context of this research in Sri Lanka. Billing and Alvesson (1994: 3) note in a similar vein that, "an understanding of the processes which create 'women' and 'men' in work and in careers will benefit from the study of different social contexts (organisations) in which they are embedded". Thus, the socio-cultural influences and realities that operate within Sri Lankan organisations and within which they are embedded are important components that will apply to male and female managers. This chapter introduces Sri Lanka and its cultural and institutional attributes. It constitutes these as embedded in traditional agricultural and industrial operations. In addition, it discusses the socio-economic and cultural changes that occurred as a result of colonisation.

2.1 Sri Lanka – introduction and background

The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka is a developing country, with an average Per Capita Income of US $ 837 (*The Sunday Observer*, 1999). It is an island off the southern coast of India. The land area of Sri Lanka is 65,610 square kilometres. The contemporary name in Sinhala for Sri Lanka means 'resplendent land'. Sri Lanka was also once widely known as Ceylon. These are not however, the only names it has enjoyed.

During the time of Augustus Caesar, the Amasian stoic Strabo named the island *Taprobane*, while Ptolemy called it *Selandive* (*dive*, meaning 'island'). Later, Nicolo di Conti, a Venetian traveller of the fifteenth century, named it *Zeilam*. Sri Lanka has also been called *Serandib, Seilam* and *Seilediba* by El Edrisi (a Nubian philosopher in the 12th Century), Marco Polo, the 13th Century Venetian traveller and Cosmas, the Egyptian merchant respectively. The Sinhalese called it *Lakka, Teve Lanka* (meaning famous land) and *Deve Lanka* (meaning holyland). They attached importance to Buddhist belief and culture in the country. It was the British who called it *Ceylon* [See Bennett (1843)]. It retained this name till 1972, when the island became a Republic.

Climatically, Sri Lanka divides into a wet zone covering about a third of the island, especially the southwestern quarter, and a drier zone, over the rest of the island. Topographically, Sri Lanka has lowlands covering the coastal areas and highlands in the central and interior parts. Sri Lanka holds a strategic position in the main sea route network of the world. Koddiyan Bay, in Trincomalee, in Northeastern Sri Lanka, for example, because of its location in military terms, continues to thrive because it is one of the finest natural harbours in the world. Sri Lanka became famous as a trading place and a commercial hub well before European colonisation (Johnson, 1983; Natural Resources, Energy and Science Authority of Sri Lanka [NARESA], 1991). Today, with the highest literacy rates in the South Asian region, the economy attracts overseas industrial investment. However, the ethnic conflict that has plagued the country for the last two decades has adversely affected both economic growth and the priorities of that growth.

In 1995, Sri Lanka had an estimated mid-year population of 18.1 million and population growth was 1.4 per cent per annum[1] (*Central Bank of Sri Lanka*, 1996). In terms of ethnicity and religion, according to the last reliable census (1981), Sri Lanka comprises a small number of significant communities (*Department of Census and Statistics*, 1996. See Table 2.1 and Table 2.2):

Table 2.1: SRI LANKA'S ETHNIC DIVERSITY

Ethnic Group	Percentage (%)
Sinhalese	74.0
Sri Lankan Tamils	12.6
Indian Tamils	5.5
Moors	7.1
Others (Burghers, Malayalees, Veddhas, and Chettiars)	0.8
Source: Department of Census and Statistics, 1996	

Table 2.2: SRI LANKA'S RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY

Religion	Percentage (%)
Buddhist	69.3
Hindu	15.5
Muslim	7.5
Christian	7.6
Others (Borahs)	0.1
Source: Department of Census and Statistics, 1996	

In terms of economic sectors, 72.2% of economic activity is rural, 21.5% occurs in urban areas and 6.3% occurs in estates. The estate sector refers to the plantation system producing commercial cash crops, such as tea, rubber and coconut. Typically, the estate sector is considered to be part of the rural or non-urban sector because of its agrarian features and location (Jennings, 1948; Karunatilake, 1987). The plantation system consists of:

> large-scale agricultural units with a 'capitalist' type of organisation. They represent a specific way of organisation, specialised production of a cash crop for export, territorial units relying on extensive land areas, large, residential (often imported) unskilled labour force, depend on large capital investment (in factories), well developed management, authoritarian system of labour relations based on strict supervision and control in production (Hollerp, 1994: xvii).

The continuing importance of the plantation economy for Sri Lanka is a clear indicator of its incorporation into the world economy as a cash crop exporting region.

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[1] After the last census in 1981, a subsequent census has been impossible because of the ethnic conflict in the North and East of Sri Lanka. Therefore the government releases periodic population estimates.

Sri Lanka is also an important region for export-oriented manufacturing in goods such as garments, the basis from which its Newly Industrialising Country (NIC) status emerges, whilst also remaining an economy in which traditional rural activities still occur.

Sri Lanka's 1995 Gross Domestic Product at current market prices was Rs. 661.9 billion (equivalent to US $12 billion) and the Gross Domestic Product, at current market prices growth rate, was 14.3 per cent (*Central Bank of Sri Lanka*, 1996). The sectoral composition in percentage terms of GDP accounted for the following shares: agriculture 20.0 per cent (including plantations), mining and quarrying 2.4 per cent, manufacturing 20.4 per cent, construction 6.9 per cent and services 50.3 per cent (*Central Bank of Sri Lanka*, 1996).

Today, Sri Lanka aims to be a newly industrialising economy (NIE), despite several problems. Gunatilleke (1993: 41) defines a NIE as:

> The Newly Industrialised Economy is one in which the manufacturing sector is assuming the leading role; in doing so it achieves a high degree of international competitiveness in a wide range of products initially using its comparative advantage of an abundant trainable labour force; it evolves a macro-economic policy framework. . . . which provides the motivation and incentive for the rapid expansion of private enterprise . . . it achieves a rate of investment of about 25 per cent of its GDP and along with it a level of productivity which keeps the incremental capital output ratio (ICOR) at around 3.5:1 . . . This means that the Newly Industrialised Economy will move rapidly away from aid and rely on its domestic savings and foreign investment.

More specifically, the World Bank defines a NIE as "[a] country whose per capita real income (at 1982 prices) is greater than US $1,100 per annum, and more than 20 per cent of its GDP and total exports is contributed by manufacturing" (Indraratna, 1994: 51). In 1992, the then Prime Minister, Hon. D.B. Wijetunga, stated that Sri Lanka hoped to join the ranks of the Newly Industrialised Countries (NICs) by the year 2000 (*The Financial Times*, 1992). The Sri Lankan government, in a recent budget, set out several policies to achieve this end:

> The reduction of import duties will help to improve [sic] economic growth which means more jobs and higher incomes, and will encourage industries to operate more efficiently. This would then create an environment that will stimulate the higher rates of industrialisation which

will move Sri Lanka's economy into the rank of industrialised nations (Ministry of Finance, 1995: 65).

However, there are indications that import duties alone are not the only impediments to development. L. Jayawardena (1995: 77) suggests that,

> It is not unreasonable . . . to hope that what East Asia has achieved, Sri Lanka can do too, within a roughly similar time frame of 20 to 25 years. By the year 2000 AD, certainly, Sri Lanka could well be on the way to becoming a NIC, even though parity with today's achievements of the East Asian NICs may not be reached until early in the 21st century – assuming of course, the implementation of the right policies.

Sri Lanka's major hindrance to becoming an NIC revolves around its import-substitution policy in comparison to the export-expansion programmes that some other South East Asian countries have followed. Sri Lanka also has yet to develop a comparative advantage in terms of technological effort and productivity growth on par with other NICs (L. Jayawardena, 1995).

2.2 Traditional agriculture and industry

Sri Lanka's geography and climate have historically enabled the construction of irrigation facilities (Johnson, 1983; Snodgrass, 1966). These facilitated two harvests per year, *Maha* and *Yala,* forming a strong foundation for paddy and rice cultivation. There is evidence that this trend has prevailed for two millennia (Johnson, 1983; Snodgrass, 1966).

> The [drainage] system fully expressed the well-known dictum by the King Parakramabahu (AD 1153) that 'not a single drop of water received from rain should be allowed to escape into the sea without being utilised for human benefit' (NARESA, 1991: 5).

The people involved in rice cultivation consumed their produce in a peasant economy and were obliged to give the surplus to the kings and feudal landowners. The entire family worked at activities such as filling, ploughing, levelling, sowing, weeding, transplanting and threshing. During harvesting, additional labour entered from the neighbourhood, for which payment was in kind. Paddy cultivation sustained the Sri Lankan economy and was the traditional crop of the peasant. Society, culture and religion were closely interlinked and embedded with people's occupations through the caste system. The tradition of rice cultivation is also practised in all parts of Sri Lanka.

The contribution of women was central to Sri Lankan agriculture. In terms of the division of labour in the traditional Sri Lankan paddy cultivation, women performed some of the most important and labour intensive activities of cultivation, such as sowing or transplanting. Paddy cultivation requires soil that retains water on level ground in small patches of land with water flooding inside. Before sowing or planting, men prepared, hoed and ploughed the soil with the help of buffaloes until the soil was wet and heavy. After harvest they threshed, to separate the wheat from straw. Men were also responsible for storing, while sharing tasks of winnowing and clearing with women.

Women, on the other hand, transplanted seed paddy from previous harvests or sowed paddy seeds. They also weeded paddy shoots. After three to five months, women were responsible for the harvest and preparation of food for peak seasons. This separation of agricultural work and roles showed clear distinctions between males and females in the labour and tasks that each gender typically performed (Karunatilake, 1987; Ponnambalam, 1980; Ryan, 1952; Snodgrass, 1966; Samarasinghe, 1989; Suraweera, 1989). This gender division of labour pattern continues to this day.

Momsen's (1991) data, in Figure 2.1, represents the percentage of workload a female has in relation to a male in a modern rural Sri Lankan setting. It shows that females spend more time in both the domestic and income-earning activities of their day-to-day lives. For example, females prepare food, winnow rice, fetch water, collect firewood, maintain the home and care for family members. But there are more important implications that follow from this evidence. Females in a rural-setting work in labour-intensive and repetitive activities all year round. In contrast, males involve themselves once or twice a year in the storage of grain after harvest. Thus, it is evident that in agricultural activity, the woman's role was pivotal.

Figure 2.1: GENDER ROLES IN RURAL SRI LANKA
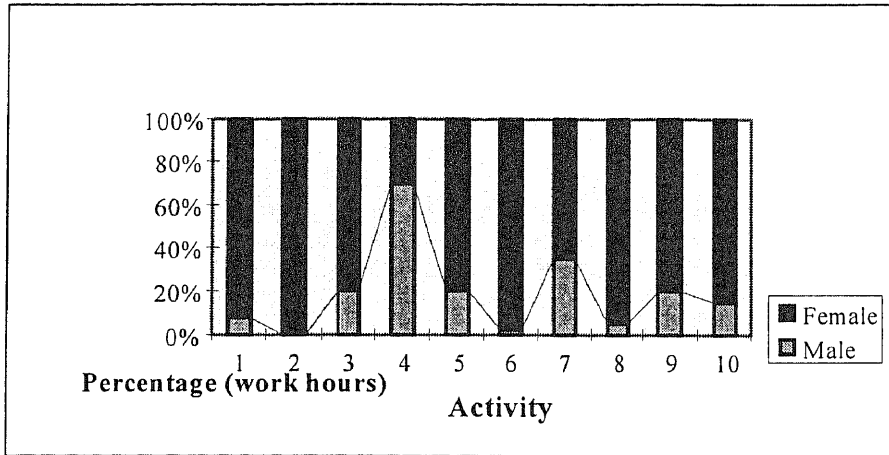
Source: Momsen (1991: 38)

Legend:	
1	Food preparation
2	Winnowing and parboiling rice
3	Preserving food for the hungry season
4	Storing grain at harvest time
5	Production of fruits, fibres, greens and vegetables for home consumption
6	Fetching water
7	Collecting firewood
8	Upkeep of house and yard
9	Bringing up children
10	Attending to sick in family

Apart from paddy fields, the slash and burn technique known as *chena* cultivation was another common agricultural operation in Sri Lanka. A *chena* is a plot of jungle-land, cleared for cultivation of mainly dry grains. Prevalent mainly in the dry zone, peasants shifted from cultivating one crop to another and repeatedly used different plots of land, interchanging plots every two or three years. Chena cultivation of chillies, cowpea, maize, millet and the like was large-scale and not very labour intensive. The drawback was the need for wet weather and the lack of proximity between where the peasants lived and cultivated. Here again, cultivators chose to employ their kith and kin, thus a collective community effort where they helped in cultivating each other's adjoining land plots. The entire operation was generally supplementary to the main paddy cultivation and entailed the central role of women in agricultural operations (Karunatilake, 1987; Wasumperuma, 1986).

Industries took the form of traditional cottage-based manufacturing, handed down from generation to generation. These industries were largely indigenous and home made with the active though different involvement of both males and females. These activities centred around pottery, spinning and weaving, handlooms, mat-making, baskets, brushes and brooms, coir-spinning in the low-country, while brassware, lacquer, curio and wood work dominated the up-country areas. Specialising in no more than one area, the villagers had to abide by caste restrictions among the Sinhalese and Tamil communities that kept skills exclusively to his or her trait, many of which exist even today (Karunatilake, 1987; Johnson, 1983).

Women held a subservient position in society due to patriarchy. This did not mean, however, that, they lacked important socio-economic, political and religious roles. Though largely occupationally circumscribed by caste and tradition, they were still very active economically. In Buddhism, the majority religion, there was a relative absence of religious restrictions on women. The absence of restrictions in the religious sphere supported and favoured their economic participation, such that they could even surpass men in some spheres of economic activity, as Figure 2.1 indicates (Kiribamune, 1990).

2.3 Impacts of colonisation

The Portuguese arrived on Sri Lanka's southern coast in 1505 and began to colonise the coastal areas. The Portuguese were the first European settlers in Sri Lanka's colonial history. Colonisation saw a transformation in the socio-economic, cultural, religious and political lives of the people. The Portuguese, and later the Dutch, who took over the colony in 1658, traded in commodities such as cinnamon (for which Sri Lanka was the main producer and supplier for the world until the nineteenth century), elephants, pearls, precious stones, pepper and arecanuts[2].

The Dutch later introduced Roman-Dutch Law, bringing significant changes to the position of women, some of which diminished the traditional rights of women embedded in indigenous law. Sri Lanka still has a diversity of legal systems that apply to various ethnic groups. The British took over Sri Lanka from the Dutch in 1796 and captured the entire island in 1815. Sri Lanka then became part of the British Empire. One of the notable economic features of colonisation in Sri Lanka was the shift in economic activity from subsistence paddy cultivation to an economy principally producing goods and commodities for international markets. Commercial cash crops, starting with coffee, entered the economic system of Sri Lanka with increasing importance, while the importance of traditional cultivation declined.

Commercial production of coffee began in 1830. The estate or plantation system came into existence in Sri Lanka at that time. It developed after the Colebrook-Cameron Reforms were introduced (Kurien, 1982). The capital and entrepreneurial activity was primarily British. The coffee industry flourished until 1885, when a leaf disease spread rapidly, causing the collapse of the entire plantation coffee crop (Ponnambalam, 1980). After the coffee disaster the plantation system replaced coffee with tea; still the dominant cash crop.

The plantation system, initially based on the production of coffee and later tea for export, initiated major changes in the entire economic system.

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[2] Orange or red egg-shaped nuts of tall palm trees of the genus *Areca*, which are native to South East Asia. They have white flowers and the nut is normally chewed with betel leaves.

The establishment of the estate system of coffee cultivation for export by foreign capital and management created in Sri Lanka for the first time a new economy vitally dependent on foreign trade, capitalist production, a permanent labour force and low wages – a structure which was the antithesis of the prevailing self sufficient rice growing village economy (Ponnambalam, 1980: 6).

Rapid changes began to take place after the 1860s. The once well-known destination for traders of tropical spices became the destination for essential foreign goods such as food, clothing, building materials and investment, while coffee, and later tea, was exported mainly to Europe. The new plantation system undermined and transformed the functioning of the traditional economic system. From this stage onwards, Sri Lanka came to be known as an 'export economy' (Corea, 1975). Snodgrass (1966) defines an export economy as a system in which productive activity is heavily oriented toward supplying a few primary commodities to the world market and consumption is largely made up of imported goods: an economic system often identified with colonialism. The plantation sector became the most agriculturally advanced and export-oriented segment of the Sri Lankan economy (Karunatilake, 1987). Cheap land and labour, foreign capital and entrepreneurship, high production standards and technology, as well as a high rate of efficiency and superior management systems, combined to make the plantations emerge as the 'modern sector' in Sri Lanka's economy (Karunatilake, 1987).

The British period saw the development of infrastructure [such as] road networks, railway and electricity. In terms of the structure of society, the colonial era had several effects. The most prominent feature was the tea plantations, the development of the employment of Indian Tamil labour in the tea and the rubber and coconut plantations, which were owned mainly by British interests (Johnson, 1983: 35).

The plantation sector was a catalyst for the development of ancillary services and sectors such as banking, transport, international commerce and trade. Initially, however, little interconnection existed between the traditional economy and the modern plantation sector (Ponnambalam, 1980; Karunatilake, 1987). The effects of the plantation economy on the broader rural economy of Sri Lanka were minor or had only indirect effects. The rural masses survived in an economy of self sufficiency based on rice from the paddy field and fresh fruits, vegetables and coconut from the garden (Snodgrass, 1966), rather than in a commodity-based economy. However, the apparent separation between the traditional and plantation

sectors gradually began to fade through the appropriation of peasant land and the encroachment of plantations on the traditional subsistence economy. This appropriation led to increased migration of Indian labourers to work in the plantations (Corea, 1975). The two other main commercial crops in Sri Lanka are rubber and coconuts, both of which are also grown in plantations. The coconut is a traditional crop native to Sri Lanka and is widely used in everyday life to cooking, eating and drinking of the milk. The wood from the coconut tree is used for construction. Coconut is consumed largely locally, thus it is not wholly an export crop (Corea, 1975). The development of coconut cultivation differed from the way that tea was marketed to international markets, in part because it was a traditional and indigenous crop, and in part because it was not a mass-consumed product in the industrial world (Snodgrass, 1966). Hence, modern management practices did not develop as extensively around the coconut crop.

The other major plantation crop is rubber *(Havea Brasiliensis),* introduced to Sri Lanka in the late 19th century. Other minor agricultural export crops led Sri Lanka to be once called the 'Spice Islands'. The crops included: arecanuts, tobacco, pepper, coffee, cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg and mace, cardamom, cashew nuts, betel leaves, sesame and other oil seeds, cocoa products, vegetables and spices (Karunatilake, 1987; *Central Bank of Sri Lanka,* 1996).

The emergence of the mercantile, commercial and industrial sectors in Sri Lanka developed from the plantation industry that grew around the cultivation of tea as the major cash crop for export. Systematic ideas about management were initially introduced into Sri Lanka from the early plantation industry. Subsequently, the state came to play a dominant role in economic development through the introduction of policies designed to shape the development of management in Sri Lanka during the post-independence period. Some governments promoted a liberal policy, encouraging private enterprise, while others adopted a highly interventionist policy over different time periods, thus, reducing the role of private sector capital and suppressing entrepreneurial initiative (Gunatilleke, 1993).

Linked to the development of Sri Lanka's modern incorporation into the world economy as a plantation economy was the development of warehousing, produce

processing and packing, grading, loading as well as commercial banking services (Corea, 1975). Hence it was from these areas that modern management practices spread throughout Sri Lanka. The dominance of the plantation sector, and its exports in the early decades of the 20th century, declined steadily with the emergence of industry and service sectors, but the plantation industry still remains significant.

Significant social changes in Sri Lanka emerged during British rule. Formal education, plantations and colonial administrative systems were introduced, thus helping to spread Christianity. With respect to women, missionary and boarding schools were introduced for girls, thus changing prevailing notions that formal education was unnecessary for women. Rigid caste consciousness was changed by opening education to all, although colonialism also gave rise to new forms of socio-economic differentiation. One result is that today, there is a comparatively reasonable literacy rate among women in Sri Lanka, as well as a relatively high rate of female participation in the workforce. Towards the end of the British colonial period at 1931, the doors of politics had opened to urban women as they successfully campaigned for voting rights (Metthananda, 1990). Such women were to be found primarily in Colombo.

The City of Colombo and surrounding districts emerged as the commercial capital of the island by the late 1930s. By this time, there was considerable population movement between the traditional and modern sectors. The wet zone was almost completely converted into modern sector operations while the dry zone remained relatively untouched. Meanwhile the modern sector was responsible for almost all of the country's foreign exchange export-earnings.

2.4 Sri Lanka immediately before and after the Second World War
Before the Second World War Sri Lanka had developed a dualistic export economy, in which the modern sector comprised plantations, employment in the state government, financial and mercantile institutions. These were located mainly in Colombo and in a few smaller towns. The traditional sector comprised about 14,000 villages, where agriculture, traditional craft industry and the provision of locally consumed services remained the main livelihood (Van den Driesen, 1954). At the time of independence in 1948, Sri Lanka's economy had, side by side, "a very

resilient and prosperous primary producing sector geared to export markets, and . . . a highly impoverished peasantry concentrated in inhospitable pockets in the rural areas" (Karunatilake, 1987: 7). Snodgrass (1966: 56) refers to this in terms of a series of polarities: "capitalistic vs. subsistence, monetised vs. non-monetised, export vs. domestic . . . ". It was a case of a classical colonially induced dualism, in which only the export-oriented and government élites flourished in a 'comprador' relation to external sources of capital.

Sri Lanka had an industrial base before independence, even though the primary focus of the economy remained plantations. Whilst the rapid transformation of Sri Lanka through commercial plantation development spurred the introduction of services such as warehousing, transport and finance, the industrial sector remained relatively stagnant. As a result, during the 1920s and 30s, entrepreneurs hesitated to venture into industrial operations. Already existing British companies in the estate sector were indifferent towards manufacturing as an investment opportunity. There was an acute shortage of funds among Sri Lankans to start industrial operations that were both capital and labour intensive. Foreign banking companies dominated the financial institutions and had a bias towards plantation-development, thus making capital difficult to borrow. Capital mobilisation occurred largely through savings by colonial officers and other investors from Britain. Companies channelled funds through foreign banks mainly to set-up, run and trade in plantations, as in other parts of the tropical world (Corea, 1975; Johnson, 1983). In addition, the traditional peasant activities of paddy cultivation or land leasing were resistant to the introduction of entrepreneurial activity.

Industrial and metropolitan operations emerged in their full forms only after the Second World War, independent of the 'dualistic economy' discussed above. Johnson (1983: 157) observes that "in terms of industrial development Sri Lanka began its independent existence almost devoid of a modern industrial base". This segment called for a new 'third sector' (Snodgrass, 1966). Industrial growth increased after 1959, when the government gave tax exemptions and rebates to people who started industry. They also restricted imports in an endeavour to encourage import-substitution.

The private sector participated in industrial development in Sri Lanka with the establishment of the first Industrial Estate in Ja-Ela, near Colombo, in 1959. The government took the initiative by participating in industry in order to speed up the pace of development of the private industrial sector through establishing publicly owned enterprises. Though the rationale for the development of these initiatives was predominantly political, social and economic goals of import substitution, such organisations produced goods and services as well as containing foreign competition (Karunatilake, 1987). Initiatives to foster industry development seemed inevitable if the country was to achieve forms of development other than the existing dualism stated above.

The plantations remained, however, the most prominent contributor to the coffers of Sri Lanka's economy because their performance was a 'strategic factor' in terms of foreign exchange generation (Corea, 1975). At the same time, the amount of foreign exchange income depended on influences outside the island, as it does to some extent today. Being a small nation, Sri Lanka is unable to command any variable in the world market for commercial crops, nor output, nor, more importantly, fluctuations in export prices. As Snodgrass (1966: 70) observes:

> This is the fatal flaw of economic growth within the classical export economy model: The 'spread effects' of modern sector growth to the traditional sector are very slight. Thus when world price movements or an exhaustion of supplies of good land coupled with technical stagnation bring an end to the estate sector's growth there is no other dynamic sector to fall back on and economic growth itself ceases.

The Second World War brought a steady annual demand for tea. However, price advantages were not translated fully into monetary returns from tea prices. While the prices of imports tripled, export prices increased by just 80 per cent (Snodgrass, 1966). After the Second World War and independence in 1948, the economy expanded and became more independent and centred more on industrial development, rather than being as dependent on the earlier colonial regime. Snodgrass identifies the time frame of 1946 to 1960 as 'transitional'. In this period, the dual features of the modern-rural sectors continued. There was growth in land, labour and capital, initiation of development planning, public policy changes and the emergence of an industrial sector, as well as, an attempt to raise the level of personal

savings. However, the country faced serious problems in developing industry and expanding the economy at this stage. Snodgrass suggests that the fundamental underlying problem was that no method was ever devised to allocate a sufficient quantity of resources for investment. This situation arose because of meagre remittances of funds from other countries. The most serious of all was the lack of resource mobilisation in the country that made domestic finance scarce (Snodgrass, 1966).

The political party in power during the periods 1948 to 1956 and 1965 to 1970 encouraged the view that the private sector had to take on the responsibility for industrialising. Governments during 1956 to 1965 and 1970 to 1977 were relatively conservative in their approach to development (Gunatilleke, 1993; Johnson, 1983). Economic development became subservient to social welfare programmes that successive governments initiated. For example, the considerable investment in rural health and medical care, subsidies on essential food items such as rice, free school and university education, subsidised public transport and housing facilities. Though welfare measures decreased over the years, welfare programmes in health, medicine and education, still prevail (Johnson, 1983; Karunatilake, 1987).

Karunatilake (1987) observed that the industrial segment stagnated in the 1940s due to a lack of leadership to bring about a change in industrial development. The economy resembled a closed economy by 1960. "Pragmatic considerations became secondary and political and economic expediency came to dominate economic policy" (Karunatilake, 1987: 42). Many public undertakings were inefficient because they were monopolies; they had considerable bureaucratic complexities and senior executives were political appointees (Karunatilake, 1987). The picture was one of state-led development, clientelist political appointments and large-scale organisational bureaucracies being built. Most members of these organisations were male, but women participated as active agents in the economy. They worked in the plantations, investment promotion zones, and from the 1970s onward, increasingly in domestic-service employment in the Middle East. Women also benefitted in some respects from the welfare measures (such as the health, education and food subsidies) that the government provided. Economic policies however, appeared insensitive to gender issues. Though there was significant participation by a limited number of

women in political leadership there was not much emphasis on promoting the role of women in the economy.

2.5 The role of women and the Christian Church

Of all the factors promoting social change during the four and a half centuries of colonisation, one of the most significant was the introduction of Christianity. The missions had a strong influence on Sri Lankan women, especially during the British period in the later part of colonial rule. In particular, the influence of Christianity put into question the existing cultural terms in which patriarchal social mores defined women in India and Sri Lanka. A part of the aim of the missions was to mould women through other cultural terms to become "good Christian wives and mothers" (K. Jayawardena, 1995: 25). To do this, missions sought to educate women, to make them literate, so that they could read the missionary texts that they promoted.

K. Jayawardena (1995) explains that education was forceful enough to create feminist thinking among some Sri Lankan women. Mission-schools and convents in South Asia produced a relatively large number of feminists. There was equal opportunity in education right up to University level. But these achievements were not the only objectives. Missionaries viewed Sri Lankan women as not merely deserving charity, health services or education, but that their acceptance of the Christian faith would change not only their faith but also their lifestyle, thus, removing many societal prejudices (K. Jayawardena, 1995). On the whole, however, these prejudices were less severe than those of their sisters in the Indian sub-continent. Sri Lankan women enjoyed a position of importance and did not have

> to suffer from many of the social evils that affected women in neighbouring countries, such as *sati* [self-immolation], *purdah* [the veil], child marriage and the ban on widow remarriage . . . and women in modern Sri Lanka enjoyed a better quality of life (Jayawardena, 1986a: 109).

Jayawardena (1986a: 109) also noted that the "Portuguese and Dutch occupiers suppressed the traditional religions and imposed new social, political and educational institutions in the people". The Dutch were instrumental in enforcing patriarchal Roman-Dutch marriage and inheritance law in the coastal areas, where the limit of their influence extended. Sri Lankan women were not passive vessels of colonial changes, their resistance was expressed in part through their refusal to adopt the

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western dress of their colonisers. The conservative *sari* was considered more modest and appropriate, despite western attempts to impose a different dress code in those spheres of life that they influenced or controlled. These included schooling, religious institutions, domestic and colonial service, amongst others (Jayawardena, 1986a). Despite severe opposition, the status of women improved in some respects under the influence of colonisation, as can be seen from some of the institutional innovations that occurred. In 1927, *The Women's Franchise Union* was formed by a group of women from among the middle classes, the professions and, in the country, women who were wives of union leaders. The main aim of *The Women's Franchise Union* was to win voting rights for women (Jayawardena, 1986b). Despite opposition their struggle quickly succeeded. "Sri Lanka was one of the first countries in Asia and Africa to achieve women's suffrage. The right was accorded to all women over 21 years of age by the Donoughmore Commission Reforms of 1931" (Jayawardena, 1986a: 128). Sri Lanka's women's movement was characterised by strong links with the struggle for national and political independence, as well as the achievement of women's suffrage and equality in law and education. Amongst some community groups, such as Burghers and Sinhalese, demands for the political emancipation of women was seen as steps in the political struggle for independence. Hence, demands to improve the status of women counted as means towards the greater end of achieving independence from the yoke of colonialism.

Sri Lanka's history bequeathed a society where the strong prejudice expressed against women in other South Asian societies was more muted. The reason was primarily the strength of Buddhism, as a relatively gender-egalitarian religion, compared to Hinduism or Islam (Jayawardena, 1986a). Hall's (1985) comparison of Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Christianity suggests that, while Hinduism organised social relationships patriarchally, Buddhism negated or reduced such patriarchal relationships. Consequently, in Sri Lanka feminism was not imposed on the Third World by the West. As Jayawardena, (1986b: 2) goes on to say, it was "historical circumstances [that] produced [the] important material and ideological changes that affected women, even though the impact of imperialism and Western thought was admittedly among the significant elements in these historical circumstances". It is important that:

Recognition . . . be made of the role of western women, who introduced various ideological strands of opinion which influenced Asian feminist consciousness. For example, women missionaries played a significant part in the process of education, in mitigating discriminatory practices and in putting forward alternative religious ideologies and social practices (Jayawardena, 1986b: 20).

Some western women lived permanently in Sri Lanka after marrying union or political leaders whom they met in their own countries. Often this occurred when these leaders were studying abroad, while others were affiliated to lobby groups and politics. Jayawardena (1986b: 23) also acknowledged that the:

development of capitalism in Asia brought the participation of women in the labour force, and women's emancipation struggles were geared towards further acceptance of such participation in all major sectors of the society.

While western religion may have played some role in the emancipation of women, sometimes it was unwitting. Resistance could be strengthened through the maintenance of traditional sources of the emergence of cultural identity, such as dress. Resistance could also be expressed through contrary belief-systems such as theosophy, which was another source through which women expressed their defiance against prejudices in Sri Lanka.

Theosophy refers to the many schools of thought that are based on spiritualism, occultism, or freethinking. It contests the traditional roles and restrictions that women faced in a patriarchal society in the 1880s. Its followers spread ideas through stories, drama, writings and their travels across the land. They observed no barriers, such as ethnicity, creed, caste, colour, operating instead as a fraternity or sorority in which no formal distinction applied to being a brother or a sister in the movement: Gender status was equally regarded. Theosophy's influence was and remains significant, and evoked interest in religious bodies and social movements overseas (Jayawardena, 1990).

Sri Lankan women have seen radical changes in the last three decades in attitudes towards themselves, their families and in their broader society. Nonetheless, the mass media (cinema, literature, drama, music and the like) and state machinery (government policy) still reflect the subservient position, role and status of women in many forms. Despite the new realities of socio-cultural stratification that are

emergent, the dilemma that confronts one in tracking, identifying and quantifying these changes is that gender statistics are few and far apart, making analysis uneven and difficult.

Sri Lankan women have the highest literacy rate in South Asia. More women than men continue in higher studies. Women tend to continue education while economic pressures sometimes force men to join the workforce to earn a living for themselves or their families. Nevertheless, there are fewer and different employment opportunities for women than for men. Unemployment statistics show evidence that young women with at least GCE Advanced Level qualifications suffer more unemployment than equivalently qualified men. The reason is that the overall supply of qualified labour is plentiful (*The Daily News*, 1995c). Even though education is free, poverty remains the root cause for children dropping out of school. Not only do school necessities, such as books and pencils, cost money, income is also foregone by both male and female children from the contribution to the household budget that such children might otherwise make from agricultural and traditional work. Hence, gender has to be seen in the wider socio-economic context.

Obstacles to Sri Lankan women developing in their economic roles appear at both extremes of society. The lower end is an everyday reality of abject poverty and war. Poverty compels women to survive, even at the cost of endangering their own interests, in activities such as prostitution, illegally selling new-born babies, or looking for employment in the informal sector. War has crippled the work-lives of many rural and urban women, either due to death, disability, displacement as refugees, or destruction of property. War has also opened doors for women to join the military for combat duties, many sacrificing their lives, both as terrorists (for instance, as female suicide bombers) and as state military personnel.

Outside the extraordinary conditions of civil war, the promise of economic liberalisation was to increase growth, and thus reduce poverty. Despite the promise that economic liberalisation held as a means to alleviate poverty, women in South Asia have suffered as a result of it. For example, measures to mechanise agriculture, as well as the growth in the textile industry, have affected indigenous agriculture and handloom work alike. The pressing need for lower status women today is the

economic and social fundamental right of freedom to participate in a full range of civil, public and workplace roles (Aloysius, 1996b).

At the upper end of the labour market for women the obstacles are often seen not only as institutional and organisational but also as self-imposed: supposedly due to non-assertiveness that manifests itself as reluctance and fear of being seen to be assertive. From this perspective, women's role would be in question if they held authority resulting from non-traditional activities outside the familial and domestic sphere (*The Daily News*, 1995b; Iriyagolle, 1996; *The Sunday Observer,* 1995).

Irrespective of their social standing in Sri Lankan society, women face the risk of domestic violence, usually at the hands of their husbands. The extent of the problem of domestic violence rarely comes to light but is thought by informed commentators in NGOs that specifically address this issue, to be a widespread problem. Among a sample of two hundred urban-slum women in Sri Lanka, from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds, with monthly family incomes of less than Rs. 1,500 (US $25), sixty percent of the sample reported being victims of domestic violence (Aloysius, 1996a; *The Daily News*, 1995e; Deraniyagala, 1992). Human rights violations against women by military personnel frequently occur in war areas (arrests, detention, mystery deaths, disappearances and violent crimes such as rape). Similarly, sexual harassment and violence against women occur in public transport, workplaces and on streets, as well as domestic rape and incest (Aloysius, 1996b; *The Daily News*, 1995a; *The Daily News*, 1995d; Roberts, 1996).

From the rural hinterland to the city centre, women, irrespective of their domestic situation and its contingencies, are economic agents in both formal and informal economic terms. Rural women break blue metal in the quarries, using their hands and a hammer, mould clay pots and pans and make coir out of coconut husks. Others carry sand from the river bed in gunny bags to trucks, grow fruits, vegetables, flowers and mushrooms, rear poultry and dairy, weave packaging material out of leaves, make coir rope and pluck tea leaves to eke out a living. In the urban areas, women sell food, clothing, engage in trade and work in garment factories. Still other women travel to Middle Eastern and other destinations to work as housemaids.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the reader to Sri Lanka and its cultural and historical embeddedness in terms of traditional agriculture and industry. The development of plantations and management and mercantile systems occurred as a result of colonisation. Although industrial development began in Sri Lanka after the Second World War, and towards the end of colonial rule, the country lacked a sound industrial base. Nevertheless, colonisation brought some social changes such as formal education and the introduction of Christianity to Sri Lanka.

The introduction of Christianity in Sri Lanka was limited in its numerical influence as it occurred largely in the coastal areas first and thereafter in the central hill country after the British captured the Kandyan Kingdom in 1815. Until then, the central region was free from colonisation. Thus, far-off rural areas had very little exposure to Christianity. The status of women in Sri Lanka improved to some extent during colonisation due to education and the grant of adult franchise. However, some cultural and institutional attributes of peoples' social lives still prevail in the country.

The historical and cultural context discussed above provides the setting within which research on job satisfaction, work and gender perceptions among male and female managers in Sri Lanka should be seen. The research presented here seeks to analyse to what extent institutional as well as organisational level attributes increase explanatory power in understanding work perceptions. The next chapter discusses the cultural and social diversity of Sri Lanka and the extra-organisational contexts this diversity provides that may shape orientations to work and gender perceptions in organisations.

Chapter 3

THE MAJOR FRAMES OF SOCIAL CLEAVAGE IN SRI LANKA

The irony of the Sri Lankan situation is that multi-culturalism has a far longer history and much deeper roots in the island than it has in some western societies which proclaim themselves centres of multi-culturalism. In Sri Lankan history departures from the support of multi-culturalism came under western colonial rule, especially under the Portuguese and the Dutch . . .. Indeed, one of the paradoxes of the Sri Lankan situation that needs careful examination by scholars is how violent ethnic conflict could erupt despite the strength of multi-culturalism in a polity (De Silva, 1997: 1).

3.1 Sri Lanka: a diverse and stratified society – introduction

Sri Lankan ethnic, religious, caste and regional identities have a strong influence on the lives of its people (Gamage, 1997). This chapter discusses Sri Lanka's diversity and the identities of its people. Additionally, it brings out the prevailing views and attitudes towards women in Sri Lanka. De Silva (1997: 5), observed, "[t]hrough most of its long history Sri Lanka has been a multi-cultural society. The elements of diversity have increased over the centuries". Sri Lanka's social fabric has an inter-woven cultural complexity in terms of its society and relationships among its people, with more than one dimension of stratification. Diversity in ethnicity, language, religion, caste, occupation and class are the common dimensions reflecting the complexity of civil society in Sri Lanka. Such diversity influences attitudes, beliefs, practices and customs. From an orientations to work perspective, one would expect that the more complex the civil society, in terms of such markers as identity, the more one would find that actors' frames of reference impact on organisational behaviour variables.

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Marx and Engels regarded European capitalist society as stratified in terms of two major social classes: owners (*bourgeoisie*) and non-owners (proletariat) of property. They did, nevertheless recognise the existence of cultural diversity (Bottomore, 1966; Clegg *et al.*, 1986). However, such class stratification on the basis of ownership and non-ownership of property has limitations in a society such as in Sri Lanka. As Siriwardena (1994: 17) argues:

> I want . . . to question the classical Marxist view that it is economic power – or more rigorously, ownership of the means of production – that is the fundamental basis of all other forms of social power. In many societies, cultural stratifications have been no less important than economic differentiation in determining the distribution of power. Often, of course, there is a correspondence between cultural privilege and economic dominance, but it can also happen that they do not coincide.

A complex web of identities cuts across all forms of stratification in Sri Lanka. The web is complex (complexity is also through hierarchy) because stratification may take the forms of ethnicity, gender, caste, and of language and/or religion, as well as region or place of origin. As Bauman (1996: 93) suggests:

> . . . contemporary sociologists are not inclined to accept that one dimension of stratification subsumes all others. Identity is generally treated as multidimensional, and the ability of individuals to construct and deconstruct their social identities is acknowledged . . . No principle of division or stratification is believed to apply to all members of a society.

These civil cleavages are not absolute. It would be incorrect to characterise Sri Lankan society as one with virtual apartheid. Although members of each ethnic group usually socialise within their own community there are inter-ethnic marriages. Such relations are rare but they do occur. As Myrdal (1968: 346) observed, "Community, class, language and religion are by no means perfectly correlated".

3.2 Ethnicity
This section describes the ethnic communities of Sri Lanka and the attitudes that various communities have towards the role of women. On the basis of ethnicity, Sri Lanka has four major communities: the Sinhalese, the Tamils, the Muslims, and the Burghers. Bandaranayake (1985: 4, 8) defines an 'ethnic group' as a

historically defined self-conscious community, which has its own distinctive history and culture of which language and religion often constitute important aspects, and which has or had definite territorial affiliations in the present and/or in the past . . . The ethnic identity and the supposed racial and cultural distinctiveness of each of these nationalities is validated by simplistic unilinear theories of migration and unmixed descent.

Sri Lanka's ethnic communities have powerful lines of identity through history, language, religion, culture and territorial or regional linkages. Language and religion often combine to contribute to ethnic identity and group formation.

Common language and ritual regulation of life, as determined by shared religious beliefs, everywhere are conducive of feelings of ethnic affinity, . . . (Weber, 1978: 390).

Ethnic identity and intra- and inter-ethnic relations are historically circumscribed, rather than naturally existing.

those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonisation and migration; this belief must be important for the propagation of group formation; conversely, it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists (Weber, 1978: 389).

However, even though ethnicity is historically constituted, it often appears to the participants, as a timeless category, through such elements as collective memory, subjective affiliation or affinity, costume, food and division of labour, in addition to language, religion, and descent, it takes on almost 'essential' qualities. One powerful source of identity in Sri Lanka resides in the nature of language as it emerged among Sri Lanka's ethnic communities especially in the last four decades. Siriwardena (1994: 17) notes that

Language is not just . . . a reflection of social life. Language is a practice, an activity which is not just a way of thinking about and describing other social activities, but one which constitutes, manages, negotiates all kinds of social relations – from those of the family to those between citizen and state.

Also, "Language is often closely linked with social power: the possession of a particular language (or sometimes a particular language dialect) is often one of the

attributes of a dominant class" (Siriwardena, 1994: 17). Language has considerable influence throughout virtually every Sri Lankan social group, as well as, it has a collective socio-economic, cultural and political impact upon lives of its people. It is through language that the major ethnic groups are characteristically defined.

3.2.1 The Sinhalese

The Sinhalese are defined as those who speak the Sinhala language as their dominant community language. There is evidence to suggest that this community traces its lineage to Prince Vijaya who moved to Sri Lanka from the Eastern part of India, *circa* 500 BC (Casie Chitty, 1988; Institute for Agriculture and Women in Development [IAWID], 1995; Ryan, 1993). The Sinhala language has close affinity in usage with the Dravidian languages that are exclusive to South India, as well as to the Pali language. The Sinhala language originated from ancient Prakit vernacular; however, it has a distinct identity. Sinhala is a vernacular language that is exclusive to Sri Lanka; is not found in other parts of Asia. Sinhala culture shares some commonalities with those of Hindu India. With Aryan roots, the majority of Sinhalese people are Buddhists while the others are Christians. The affinity of this community with Buddhism occurred at the time of its arrival from India around 300 BC. Today, the Sinhalese people live in most parts of the country, except the north and eastern provinces.

Early in the history of the Sinhalese, women appear as important historical figures. Notable in the history of Sinhalese women was the supreme monarch, Queen Anula (AD 12 - AD 16), who ruled the entire country. She is the earliest recorded queen in the whole of Asia (IAWID, 1995; Iriyagolle, 1994; Wickremesinghe, 1964).

3.2.2 The Tamils

"The word 'Tamil' refers to the language and users" (Kailasapathy, 1984: 124). Tamil is spoken in South India, Singapore, Mauritius and Fiji. Tamils came to Sri Lanka from neighbouring South India, migrating at different periods ranging from BC 2588 to BC 237. However, it is difficult to identify precisely from where and when the Tamil community originated. Tamil etymological sources do not clarify the situation, as such sources are difficult to trace. It is clear, however, that Tamils consider themselves an ancient group (Casie Chitty, 1988). In terms of population,

Tamils are the largest minority ethnic group in the country, and today the majority of Tamils are Hindu while the others are Christians.

There are at least two groups of Tamil-speaking people in Sri Lanka, each of which has a distinct socio-cultural characteristic. One group comprises the Sri Lankan Tamils whose origins are in the Northern and Eastern parts of the island. Within this group there exist two further sub-groups: Tamils of the northern districts of Sri Lanka (Jaffna Tamils) and those of the Eastern districts (Batticaloa Tamils).

Though Tamils of Jaffna and Batticaloa speak the same (Tamil) language, significant differences separate them as communities (Sivathamby, 1985). The first difference is that one group considers the other alien. The two groups of Tamil-speaking people have their own legal systems. Jaffna Tamils have *Theswalamai*, while Batticaloa Tamils have *Mukkava* Laws. Jaffna Tamils have significant participation in the public sector and influential occupations in Sri Lanka while the participation of Batticaloa Tamils is not as significant. Batticaloa Tamils oppose the domination of Jaffna Tamils. Batticaloa Tamils participate in agriculture in their ancestral lands while Jaffna Tamils participate in both agriculture and fishing.

Typically, the occupations of Tamils in Sri Lanka, whether in the island's North or the East, were based on agriculture. Sri Lankan Tamils had achieved a degree of affluence and power by the end of the eighteenth century. They became warriors, merchants, cultivators, artisans and seafarers, as well as agriculturalists. The existing occupational division of labour began to change as Western languages and lifestyles influenced the economy and culture of peoples now subject to colonial subjugation, first at the hands of the Portuguese, followed by the Dutch and then British. Sri Lankan Tamils now reside in most parts of the country, having moved out of the regional enclaves that they originally settled, although they remain predominantly in the north east of the country.

IAWID (1995) suggests that though Sri Lankan Tamil society saw many changes in the recent past, male-domination continues as the norm. However, as women slowly enter into management positions, signs of change are apparent, often to the discomfort of some others, who seem to be more traditional in their views.

In certain professional fields such as education and medicine, Sri Lankan women including Tamil women have acquired a status equal to that of men. But by and large the movement toward emancipation and upward social mobility is slow, coming about as more women take on managerial positions in administration and business. Despite such changes, women traditionally continue to be treated in a subordinate fashion (IAWID, 1995: 20).

The process of change is however, extremely slow. In the past women accepted their subordinate role and position as both a fact and as a socially legitimate value. Today, women may rise to positions of influence and authority in their professional or public role. The dominant view of women's domestic subservience, while evidently patriarchal, should not be thought of as a dismissal of women's status in society. In fact, this situation seeks to ensure that a specific but limited status is preserved for women. Whilst women are apparently subservient to men in Tamil culture, they are respected. Traditionally women have accepted this subservient role as their lot and status. The legitimacy that their compliance and acceptance of the present communal order of things provides has helped not only to maintain patriarchy but also to slow the pressures for change arising from outside of communal relations (IAWID, 1995). Amongst the main communal pressures is enhanced education opportunities for both males and females:

Education [specially introduction of free education] has weakened the caste [and class] structure in Tamil society, producing an achievement based socio-economic class structure and created equal opportunity of access to employment, raising the career aspiration of the Tamil women. It has also changed traditional attitudes, values and norms (IAWID, 1995).

Although traditional Tamil ideals and values suggest that the primary role of a woman is the home, work outside the home has nevertheless brought changes in attitudes among Tamil women and those around them.

The second main group of Tamils are those who are of more recent Indian origin (Indian Tamils). They were transported to the central hill regions from the Southern parts of India during colonial rule to work in the plantation economy. Indian Tamils have a distinct identity in Sri Lanka even though they may share a common language and culture with the Tamils of Sri Lankan origin. It is significant to note that Indian

Tamils have neither collective part in, nor agreement with, the ongoing ethnic conflict in the North and East of the country. Jayaraman (1975: 16) observed that, "[Indian Tamils] living in the estate [plantations], particularly persons belonging to Vellalan, and other Non-Brahman castes, reveal a strong antipathy to [Sri Lankan] Tamils". Even in economic, political and socio-cultural affairs the Indian Tamils are distinctive. Their social and political interests were more confined to the plantations and with the Indian community. However, this community also has both experienced and been made victims of violence.

The Indian Tamils are mainly resident in the plantation areas of the island's central regions but a small percentage have moved to other urban and rural areas for employment and business (Kailasapathy, 1984). The relative isolation of the plantation system from the rest of the economy emphasised the distinct identity of this community from the outset (Jayaraman, 1975).

3.2.2.1 The Sinhalese and the Tamils: Uncommon Cleavages
In 1956, the Sri Lankan government enacted *The Official Language Act*, promoting Sinhala as the country's only official language. This created a division between the majority Sinhalese and minority Tamil communities. The growing discontent among some Tamils sowed the seeds of the future ethnic conflict. The Tamil community also faced alienation from mainstream political and economic life because of the official language issue. By the late 1980s, in response to the growing civil war, reformed language policy made both Sinhala and Tamil the official languages of Sri Lanka. Tamil nonetheless remains the language of the Tamil and Muslim communities in official communication in the country (IAWID, 1995).

From the late 1950s ethnic violence began to occur in the Northern, Eastern and sometimes, other parts of Sri Lanka. The violence was instigated by smaller groups within the majority Tamil population in the region, who sought to secure an identity that was not subordinated to the *Official Languages Act (1956)*. The implications of this Act for a region of the country where Tamil was the norm of everyday life, spoken amongst people who were principally, if not exclusively, Tamil, were severe. The dominant Sinhalese saw it as an attack on their whole culture and way of life from the south, because it proscribed Tamil.

During the period from the 1950s to the 1980s the violence escalated, as did the claims to cultural distinctiveness, thus culminating in an attempt to form a breakaway independent state of Tamil Eelam in the North and East of the country. The attempt at succession was treated as a hostile act by the Sinhalese dominated state, and a civil war emerged. From the late 1970s separatist militant groups ceased to obey the administrative and civil functions of the government and ancillary machinery, virtually wresting away from the state control of the Tamil areas and population. Subsequently, the central government used both military force and negotiations to try and solve what is now a conflict of over twenty years' duration. Approximately fifty thousand lives have been lost as a result of this war. In addition, millions of displaced refugees, belonging to all communities in Sri Lanka, have had their lives uprooted.

The conflict began with claims that Sri Lankan Tamils experienced discrimination in employment and education based on the 1956 Act, a claim that the separatists advanced through the use of violence to campaign for a separate homeland. Two landmarks of this ethnicity-based violence are significant. The first was the flare up of riots in the capital city, Colombo, in July 1983, when some among the majority Sinhalese attacked and destroyed businesses, offices and residences of Tamils. This flare up began in retaliation for a Tamil attack that led to the death of some Sinhalese military personnel on the northern battle-front. The second landmark was the intervention by, and subsequent failure of, the Indian government in its brokering of a peace accord through the Indian Peace-keeping Force in 1987. Since 1990, and the withdrawal of the Indian Peace Keeping Force, the burden of additional defence has been the sole responsibility of the central government, significantly constraining its capacity to develop and invest in infrastructure and welfare measures and the economy (Grobar and Gnanaselvam, 1993).

In the late 1980s, Sri Lanka also saw the rise of an insurrection by youthful Sinhalese rebels in regions outside the North and East of the island. Although members of the dominant ethnic strata, they were unable to find jobs commensurate with what they believed to be their status, as a result of economic slowdowns. This insurgency was crushed in 1990. Today the problem of civil disobedience is mainly a result of

activities of the Tamil Tigers movement based in the North and Eastern parts of the country. There has, however, been several instances of violence that have seriously affected economic, political and socio-cultural life in the national capital - Colombo.

The socio-cultural and economic features of the entire country changed radically as a result of the violence taking different proportions and forms in different parts of the island. It is significant to note that families whose breadwinners have been victims of violence, either in the armed forces or as civilians, often compel women (either as mothers, relatives or daughters), to actively participate in the workforce in order to support the family. Thus, the civil unrest has inadvertently been a major factor in hastening change in the roles and identities of women within Sri Lanka.

As a result of the violence in Sri Lanka, large numbers of Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims and Burghers have migrated to developed countries in North America, Europe and Asia. One consequence of these migrations has been a considerable loss of skilled personnel in Sri Lankan organisations. The migrants were usually those most able to move elsewhere, hence they tended to be those highly qualified in technical areas such as medicine, engineering, law, education, accountancy and management. The favoured destinations for migration have been the United States of America, Canada, United Kingdom, Germany, Australia, New Zealand and Nigeria.

3.2.2.2 *The Sinhalese and the Tamils: Common Grounds*

There are common threads between Sinhalese and Tamil culture – all central for an understanding of the role of women. Jayawardena (1986b: 13) clarifies these threads in terms of an ideology:

> The essence of 'Brahmin ideology' in both Sinhala and Tamil cultures, is that woman's role is that of wife and mother, that women have no brains, are fickle, emotional and cunning, leading men astray and also that women have prime responsibility to look beautiful. Thus a woman emerges as a devoted mother, a beauty queen, an evil temptress and a stupid housewife.

Jayawardena (1986a) for example, identifies the Sinhala cultural concept of *Pancha Kalyani,* which refers to the five attributes of beauty – namely hair, teeth, body, skin, and youthful appearance. She compares it with the Tamil concept of *Natkunam* or

four great qualities: fear, shame, ignorance (of bad things) and pretence (not revealing too much knowledge of reality).

The perception of women among Tamils and Sinhalese appears similar to the Australian ideology of women in the past (Summers, 1994: 67):

> The women who are called God's Police are those who do not . . . resist their female socialisation . . . more accurately . . . colonial mores. The women who are called Damned Whores include those who were . . . prostitutes, lesbians and women in prison – . . . who. . . contravened the code of femininity (Summers, 1994: 294).

> Each . . . sex-role stereotype . . . exaggerates the characteristics of the basic dualistic notion that women are either good or evil: this judgement is based on whether or not women conform to the wife/mother roles prescribed by the *bourgeois* family.

Summers suggested two basic stereotypes for Australian women, the damned whore stereotype, of women who were considered mere sexual slaves (prior to 1840). The second suggested a stereotype as God's police, where emphasis was placed on the concept of family as the guardian of morality and society. The underlying notion was that women could not be independent and outgoing in their personality and outlook. "Women, as women, cannot be too much or too well educated . . ." (1994: 373). These Australian colonial limitations to knowledge and learning appear similar to the *Natkunam* among Tamils in Sri Lanka. The point is that the stereotypes that emerged in Sri Lanka were not unique: parallels can be found in other colonial societies with a very different set of ethnicities, religions and languages.

Stereotypical attitudes begin early, during childhood, among Sri Lankan women. As Iddamalgoda (1991: 72) observes, "Society gives much importance to chastity and modesty in females, generation after generation . . . myths are perpetuated and in adult life, even with education, females tend to avoid unaccepted behaviour patterns". Such behaviour patterns include those that discourage self-confidence among women. The implications of such stereotypes among women have a significant bearing on the questions this research will explore. Characteristics such as modesty, subservience and lack of self-confidence stand in stark contrast to the qualities of women entering management positions in Sri Lanka. Women who enter

management positions have to develop self-confidence and independence. Findings and conclusions in later chapters will look at both sides of this debate.

One common feature shared between the Tamil and the Sinhala communities is that of the dowry, a marriage ritual where the bride's parents offer a gift of money, or a fixed asset, to the groom. Marriage is a sacred and an important event in the lives of both Tamil and Sinhalese women in Sri Lanka. Samarasinghe (1996) observes that virginity and chastity in women is a treasure and a virtue. Religious norms and legends also emphasise the importance of such virtues. The traditional *Brahminic* ideology prescribes that:

> a classical model of female behaviour is projected that involves subordination to the male. The do's: chastity, modesty, servility, self-sacrifice, confinement to home, pre-occupation with children, husband and relations and husband's friends. The dont's: loud talk, laughing, running, idling, and keeping company of independent (therefore bad) women (Jayawardena, 1986b: 13).

The extent to which economic development affects the classical model of female behaviour is not clear, but one aspect that employment may directly affect is the choice of a woman's marriage partner by her parents or elders. There are community perceptions that independent, employed and 'modern' women will not conform to the usual 'arranged or proposed' marriage. As a result of such fears, parents may be reluctant to encourage their daughters to be independent.

The research examines the extent to which dimension of cultural identity, such as ethnicity influences work perceptions of male and female managers in the context of these traditional views and pressures shaping them. Do men have a favourable or unfavourable view towards women's managerial participation? Are women managers seen as an advantage to an organisation? Are men more conservative or liberal in their attitudes towards women? What are the reasons for such attitudes? The findings and conclusion chapters will illustrate the extent to which ethnicity and culture might influence such perceptions.

3.2.3 The Muslims

The Muslims of Sri Lanka fall into three groups. The first group refers to Arab merchants who migrated or settled with their families in Sri Lanka. The Portuguese referred to them as Moors. The second group arrived from South India to settle in Sri Lanka. They may be referred to as Tamil Muslims. The third group refers to Malays, whose origins are from Java. Muslims have a distinct identity based on the profession of Islam as their religion (Markazi, 1984). In Sri Lanka, the Muslims usually speak Tamil and, therefore have a common language with the Tamils of Sri Lanka. Their culture and values, however, are distinct.

Muslims reside in small groups of communities in almost every part of Sri Lanka. The largest group of Muslims is in the Eastern Province District of Amparai. Muslims in Sri Lanka take a predominant role in trade, small-scale business and entrepreneurship. There is no caste system among Muslims.

3.2.4 The Burghers

Brohier (1994: 16) defined the Burghers by reference to the colonial context, which gave rise to mixed populations.

> When the treaty of Amiens in 1802 transferred control of Dutch-company regions of the island to the British, the community of Dutch and European origin, which had served the Dutch rulers found themselves in an insecure situation. Some with capital left for Holland while others shifted to Batavia (Java). But many remained and had little choice but to serve the British. Those persons of European origin who chose to stay behind 'came to be designated on a generic basis as Burghers – a transliteration of the Dutch term *Vryburgher* or free citizen.

The Burghers are descendants of the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British, all of whom had exercised power during their respective periods of colonial rule. Additionally they may be German or French, or have Eurasian origins, or may be of mixed backgrounds. They usually speak English and most are Christians. They are spread over most parts of the country, other than the North and the East, in very small numbers. Roberts *et al.* (1989: 26) noted that the Burghers

> . . . had limited knowledge about, and little sympathy with, the Buddhist or Hindu religions. Their occupations were mostly genteel and white

collar. They enjoyed relatively high status. They were, in brief, one part of the emerging Ceylonese 'middle class' . . . they became a subordinate segment of British colonial society and had limited influence on the process of decision making'.

Bandaranayake (1985) observes that the Burghers were instrumental in creating a middle class lifestyle that emerged during the colonial regime in Sri Lanka. The importance of the Burghers in terms of their contribution to the socio-economic and cultural life of Sri Lankans is significant. The contribution was in inverse proportion to the numbers of Burgher people in Sri Lanka.

The most striking effect the Burghers had on the people of Sri Lanka was the way in which other community groups copied their lifestyle as exemplary of 'high status'. Roberts *et al.* (1989: 110) list some of these aspects:

> . . . eating habits, attire, consumerism, [Christian] naming practices, conspicuous consumption (such as tennis), a growing proletariat, – a veritable army of domestic servants, gardeners, sweepers, hawkers, masons, carpenters and other labourers, theatrical and other musical performances.

The Burghers introduced elements of their lifestyle that were new to Sri Lanka at that time. During leisure time, the Burghers played tennis and golf or went to musical shows and concerts. They were sufficiently affluent to have servants, gardeners and other helpers to run and maintain their households. They ate meat and consumed alcoholic drinks, such behaviour drew considerable criticism from the other communities. Western dress was another element of change that influenced Sri Lankan lifestyle. The inclusion of Christian and Western names, even among non-Christians, proved to be another significant influence of the Burghers on Sri Lankan society.

Apart from lifestyles, the Burghers had their own social networks and exclusive recreation and sports clubs that locals were not permitted to join. The Oriental Club, even today, is but one example. The Burgher Recreation Club (BRC) has its own sports grounds in Colombo where membership is now open to all communities. Similarly, other Sri Lankan communities followed suit by forming their own sports clubs, such as the Sinhalese Sports Club (SSC) and Tamil Union.

Large numbers of Burghers left Sri Lanka during the 1960s as a result of the increasing communal tension between the majority Sinhalese and the minority Tamils. They migrated mainly to Australia. Today, Burghers comprise just 0.3 per cent of the Sri Lankan population.

3.2.5 Other minorities

In addition to the major communities of Sri Lanka, there are small numbers of Malayalees of Kerala (South Indian) origin and Chettiyars, also of South Indian origin, who are moneylenders by tradition. During the rise of the British colonial regime in Sri Lanka, some members of the Indian *bourgeoisie* settled in Colombo. They had close ethnic and caste networks of their own and belonged to the Parsee, Borah and Sindhi communities, all of North and North-western India. Their main profession was retailing, centred on the central Colombo suburb of the Pettah (Roberts *et al.*, 1989). The predominance of minority North Indian trading communities is prevalent even today in Colombo's commercial district of Pettah.

This section aimed to illustrate cultural and linguistic differences and similarities among Sri Lanka's people. In this Chapter questions of ethnicity of the survey respondents in the sample were outlined. The researcher was largely successful in obtaining information on the principal ethnic community to which respondents belonged, but not the sub-groups, especially in the case of the Tamils and Muslims. The following sections consider other aspects of social structure, identity and ideologies such as caste and religion among people as they relate closely to each group.

3.3 Caste in Sri Lankan society

The caste system has always been an important and distinctive part of stratification systems in the non-Muslim and non-Burgher peoples of the Indian sub-continent. This section lists different definitions of caste and describes the implications, mechanisms and structures of caste that may influence Sri Lankan people. The term 'caste' emerged when the Portuguese introduced the system in India during the colonial period as a method of domination-subordination relationship. Some features of domination and subordination in the caste system consequently have withstood the test of time.

According to Beteille (1969: 274),

> . . . caste may be defined as a small and named group of persons characterised by endogamy, hereditary membership and a specific style of life which sometimes includes the pursuit by tradition of a particular occupation and is usually associated with a more or less distinct ritual status in a hierarchical system, based on the concepts of purity and pollution.

Farmer (1983: 20) adds, "Clearly the occupational mobility and the urbanisation of modern life, together with other of its features, can give a great fillip to caste mobility, just as it can weaken the joint family system". There are traces of the caste system for Sri Lanka, as is evident in Hollerp's (1994: xxv) statement. "Caste implies a specific way of thinking (hierarchical versus egalitarian norms), involving values and evaluations about oneself and others, what is changing are the context, situations and social domains in which it may become relevant". According to Argyle (1994: 28), "The relations between castes are defined by their occupational roles, so that interaction and co-operation are demanded. The system is basically hierarchical, the higher castes enjoying greater power and perceived as exploiting the lower ones".

Dias (1979: 7) suggests that caste, " . . . bears relevance to the status of women in both Sinhalese and Tamil societies, by virtue of the control it imposes on economic participation and the decision making abilities of women". Dias discusses the effects of caste on economic participation and decision making, however, she asserts that modern Sri Lankan organisations do not use caste as a primary consideration. Industrial and commercial employment opportunities are normally based on educational or professional qualifications and/or experience that the job may call for. This research considers that caste is not an important consideration in contemporary organisations. Caste cleavages no longer seem salient for the most developed parts of the economy and organisations, although their traces remain. Ethnic considerations are more prominent today than in earlier times.

What is caste? Skjonsberg (1982) and Ryan (1993) discuss the salience of the characteristics of caste cleavages in the context of the Sri Lankan Sinhalese and Tamils. Skjonsberg studied the caste structure of the Tamils of Sri Lankan origin

(with specific reference to the Northern Province village of Thoppukkadu) while Ryan analysed the caste structure among the Sinhalese in Sri Lanka.

The first consequence of caste is a clear division of labour among caste groups. The division of labour links a caste group's production system. This division of labour is also a mechanism that helps the caste system to function effectively where caste members have specific groups of occupations. The occupations, in principle, are defined because a member is born into the particular caste that practises such an occupation. The occupation is permanent: there is no entry for other castes and no exit for those in one specific caste. The rigid caste system assigns to each caste occupation a 'purity' to perform that occupation. For example, it gives the higher caste group 'more moral worth' compared with a lower caste, thus defining a very uneven distribution of rights and duties, opportunities and power among caste groups (Andreski, 1983; Beteille, 1969; Skjonsberg, 1982).

Division of labour also refers to rules for the conduct of civil life and how members of one caste interact with another caste, either from an altogether different status within the hierarchy (or strata) or a caste-group within the same strata. There are meticulous regulations for interaction. For example, rules lay down whom caste members can dine with, or what distance an 'outcaste' has to maintain to a member of a higher caste. Additionally, there are also symbols of social distance that caste members follow. Such symbols may range from expressions of salutations and regulations in clothing, to worshipful behaviour towards members of higher castes (Argyle, 1994; Beteille, 1969; Ryan, 1993; Skjonsberg, 1982).

Apart from rules that regulate interaction with other caste groups, caste members have specific relationship patterns with each other. There is, for example, a patron-client relationship between higher and lower caste members. This relationship emerged when lower caste members worked for higher castes for many generations. Under such circumstances, payment for work was usually in kind. The numbers of people belonging to higher caste groups was larger than among those in the lower castes. Additionally, there was conflict between the higher and lower caste members. Higher castes oppressed lower castes as a mechanism to ensure lower castes co-

operate with them. Conflicts also caused formation of new castes and sub-castes. Therefore, it would be appropriate to say that caste was, and is, dynamic.

Castes are also endogamous. Marriage takes place normally within caste groups. Marriage also takes place only between men and women. Those who 'marry' [not a quote] others of their own gender are outcastes, no matter what caste they may belong (Beteille, 1969; Hollerp, 1994; Skjonsberg, 1982).

In the caste system, men take all public roles that go with a caste occupation. Women are usually assigned to unpaid work within the family. In higher castes, women sometimes actively participate in caste occupations and even manage other women. Among the outcastes, men and women work together, the women taking additional domestic responsibility (Skjonsberg, 1982). Outcastes are the lowest rungs in the caste structure. They consider themselves as virtual slaves to higher castes and outcaste occupations are those that higher castes consider 'impure, polluting, and demeaning' (Beteille, 1969; Skjonsberg, 1982).

Poverty unites almost all outcastes. The perception of the higher castes towards the outcastes is that suffering and poverty was the natural lot of those outcasts. Outcastes also saw no chances of improvement in their lives. The higher caste's objective was that they remained that way.

The importance of the caste system and its mechanisms are fading today due to the increasing monetisation, specialisation, industrialisation, urbanisation and economic development of Sri Lanka. Such changes promote economic freedom irrespective of one's caste. Sri Lanka witnessed considerable social mobility in terms of a 'caste to class transition' in the 1980s, when the country opened up its economic opportunities. As a result of such transformation, the class structure also has witnessed considerable 'downward mobility' (Farmer, 1983; Skjonsberg, 1982). It would be incorrect, however, to say that caste is totally absent in Sri Lanka. For instance,

because the lower class, in contrast to the lower castes, will contain a far higher proportion of the total population and will thus consist of not only

of numbers from the lowest castes but some from higher castes as well (Skjonsberg, 1982:30).

In keeping with the economic changes, Sri Lanka passed a *Social Disability Act* in the late 1950s formally designed to diminish caste and caste differences, prohibiting caste-based discrimination. However, the effects of this legislation in the short term were modest, merely relegating the concept of caste to disuse in terms of public statistics, but making little immediate material difference.

In Sri Lanka the caste system, in general, refers to indigenous occupations and the relations of these people with those in other castes. The social, cultural and economic changes that Sri Lanka has witnessed over the last five decades have produced modern industrial and professional employment that calls for academically and professionally qualified and educated men and women of high calibre. Hence, the shift is in the classical direction of a move from an ascriptive to an achievement orientation. Caste is not a consideration directly, although indirectly, through the way that access to opportunity is distributed, it may be. The rise in intermarriages across caste, ethnic and religious groups has also weakened caste cleavages, at least in the urban areas. People of all castes, in principle, have equal access to better their lives, irrespective of gender, ethnicity or religion. The reality may differ, of course.

Although the caste system in Sri Lanka functioned along similar lines to the traditional Indian system, there were some variations. The Sri Lankan caste system was distinct and different to the Indian system (De Silva, 1983). Within Sri Lanka, the caste structure of the Sinhalese was different to the structure of the Tamils of Sri Lankan origin. The Sinhalese have their own distinct caste structure. The Tamils of Sri Lankan origin also have an entirely different caste structure. The second difference is that in Sri Lanka, caste cleavage among the Sinhalese was free from religion and religious practices (De Silva, 1983) whereas religion is integrated into caste among the Tamils of Sri Lankan origin.

The Sinhalese caste system applies to people of the Sinhalese community only, and is based on occupations. Ryan (1953) summarises the classification of castes and sub-castes among Sinhalese in approximate rank order as follows:

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Table 3.1: CASTE HIERARCHY AND STRUCTURE OF THE SINHALESE

Rank	Name of caste	Occupation
1.	Govi-vamsa (Goyigama)	Cultivators of the Soil (dominant)
	Subcastes*	
	Radala	King's office holders and village aristocrats
	Mudali	Leaders of the people
	Patti	King's cowherds
	Katupulle	King's clerical servants
	Nilamakkara	Temple Servants
	Porovakara	Wood cutters, axemen to the king
	Vahal	"Slaves" household workers to Radala
	Gattara	Goyigama outcastes
	Goruvo ++	Conch blowers (particularly confined to North Central Province)
2.	Karava +	[Fishing Caste]
	Subcaste	
	Karava Porovakkara	unknown
3.	Salagama+	[Originally weavers]
	Subcastes	
	Hevapanne	Soldiers
	Kurundukara	Cinnamon Peelers
4.	Durava+	Toddy tappers
5.	Navandanna (Acari)	Artisans including smiths of all types
6.	Hannali*	Tailors
7.	Hunu	Chunnam (lime) burners
8.	Hena or Rada (Dhoby)	Washers to higher castes
9.	Vahumpara (Hakuru)	Jaggory makers
10.	Hinna+	Washers to Salagama
11.	Badahala	Potters
12.	Panikki+	Barbers
13.	Velli-durayi *	Guardians of sacred Bo-tree
14.	Panna-durayi*	Possibly grass cutters
15.	Berava	Tom tom beaters
16.	Batgam Berava*	-do-
17.	Kontadurayi*	Unknown
18.	Batgam (Padu)*	Possibly King's Palanquin bearers
19.	Oli	Dancers
20.	Pali*	Washers to low castes
21.	Kinnara*	Mat weavers
22.	Gahale-berava*	Funeral drummers and executioners
23.	Rodiya*	"Outcastes" or beggars
	Hierarchically unclassed	
24.	Karikara*	Devale (temple) dancers and chanters
25.	Demala-guttara+	Tamil "outcastes"

Sources: Ryan (1953: 93-94) and Roberts (1981).
* Refers to castes found mainly in the Kandyan (central hill country) areas.
+ Refers to castes typically found in low country areas.
++ Refers to caste groups found in the North Central Province.

Table 3.1 highlights caste as a structure delineated according to occupations. For example, the Govi-vamsa or Goyigama caste adopts the most respected occupation of farming. Even the case of the *Rodiya* caste, though the lowest, is only a *quasi*

'equivalent' of an untouchable caste – and yet not an untouchable caste (Meththananda, 1988) because, 'untouchables' are people who were not allowed to enter places of religious worship because of their caste membership. *Rodiya* caste members beg as an occupation. They are considered outcastes in relation to the other ranks in the Sinhalese caste hierarchy. The caste structure shows that there was a clear distinction in the lines or occupations that each caste practises. However, Farmer (1983) suggests that there were changes to castes and formation of sub-castes as a result of conflict within the caste and between one hierarchy and another.

The Sinhalese caste system is significant also, because castes reflect cleavages in traditional occupations. The cleavage among the Kandyan Sinhalese peasants, for instance, was so strong as to resist changes introduced by the plantation economy. Manual and supervised wage labour was a stigma for people in the Kandyan (Central hill) country. They disliked serving an alien (colonial) master. Tradition dictated that they follow caste occupations, regarding wage labour as slavery. The main reason for the dislike of colonial occupations by the Sinhalese was their experience and memory of the abuses of forced labour by colonial leaders. The emergence of the estate system of plantation created opposition from the Sinhalese. Sometimes Sinhalese people were chased away from their lands. They felt that their land and lives were subject to intrusion through brutal treatment, poor wages, or no wages at all. For the few who did work for a wage in the early coffee plantations, made them most reluctant to join plantations. They were unwilling to live inside plantations. There was no real need for cash as they depended mainly on what they produced on their own (Van Den Driesen, 1954).

The influence of the Sinhalese caste structure has changed the attitudes of the people considerably. Caste is invisible to any visitor to Colombo City and the urban areas. Caste is not as important a consideration as in the past, except as a marriage custom. The last census of Sri Lanka to include caste classification was in 1810, reflecting a tradition that has been far from active practice. Caste is, therefore, an issue that is increasingly more secretive than outspoken (Ryan, 1993).

Some authors are of the view that the caste structure of the Tamils of Sri Lankan origin fits the traditional Indian caste system (IAWID, 1995; Casie Chitty, 1988; Farmer, 1983). The traditional Indian caste system comprises the following: Brahmins or Pirama (priests, teachers, royal advisers and the like), Kshatriyars or Sathriya (kings, rulers, warriors and the nobility), Vaishiyas or Vaisiya (cultivators, cowherds, traders and merchants), and Sudras (workers, farmers and labourers including untouchables). The caste structure of the Tamils of Sri Lankan origin is not perfectly orthodox (as for example, the Indian caste structure) in terms of hierarchy, (referred to as 'varnas') (IAWID, 1995; Casie Chitty, 1988; Farmer, 1983).

Just as the caste system of the Sinhalese, the caste structure of the Tamils of Sri Lankan origin has also been rigid, hierarchical and occupation-based. Pfaffenberger (1982) describes the caste structure of Tamils of Sri Lankan origin in the terms of Table 3.2.

Caste cleavages remain strong among Indian Tamils in India. However, the caste cleavage is somewhat more restricted in its scope and function among Indian Tamil people in Sri Lanka. Indian Tamils live mainly in the Sri Lankan tea plantations in the Central Province districts. Their main occupation is in the tea plantation sector. As a result of exclusion, in terms of geographical location, the full caste structure did not take effect for Indian Tamils in the same way as it did for the Sinhalese and the Tamils of Sri Lankan origin.

The Indian Tamils brought their caste structure and practices from the southern Indian State of Tamil Nadu during the colonial period. The caste structure of the Indian Tamils is different to the structure of Tamils of Sri Lankan origin. Jayaraman (1975) observed that the Indian Tamils did not develop the entire structure of their caste system (as in Tamil Nadu, India). The Indian Tamils who came to Sri Lanka generally belonged to low castes. Jayaraman (1975) also observed that the Indian Tamils found difficulty in identifying a hierarchy due to the absence of other

Table 3.2: CASTE HIERARCHY AND STRUCTURE OF THE TAMILS OF SRI LANKAN ORIGIN

Rank	Tamil Name	English Name	Traditional Occupation	Status[1]
Touchables				
1.	Piraman	Brahman	temple priest	-
2.	Saiva Kurukkal	Saiva priest	temple priest for non-Brahman shrines	-
3.	Vellalar	-	Landholder farmer and aristocrat	-
4.	Pantaram	Garland maker	temple helper	-
5.	Cirpacari	-	temple sculptor	-
6.	Koviyar	-	domestic servant	Atimai
7.	Tattar	Goldsmith	goldsmith	Kutimai
8.	Karaiyar	-	deep fish farmer	-
9.	Taccar	Carpenter	carpenter	Kutimai
10.	Kollar	Blacksmith	blacksmith	Kutimai
11.	Nattuvar	Musician	auspicious music	-
12.	Kaikular	Weaver	weaver	-
13.	Cantar	Oil monger	sesame oil maker	-
14.	Kucuvar	Potter	potter	Kutimai
15.	Mukkuwar	-	lagoon fisher	-
16.	Vannar	Dhoby	washerman	Kutimai
Untouchables				
17.	Ampattar	Barber	barber	Kutimai
18.	Pallar	-	praedial labour	Atimai
19.	Navalar	-	-do-	-do-
20.	Paraiyar	-	drummer	Kutimai

Sources: Pfaffenberger (1982: 231-233) and IAWID (1995).

traditional members of the caste structure. For example, artisan castes such as Kollan (blacksmith), Thattan (goldsmith) and Kosanan (potter) are absent among Indian Tamils in Sri Lanka.

Another peculiarity in the case of Indian Tamils was that they were unable to continue their traditional caste occupations in Sri Lanka. They migrated to Sri Lanka specifically to work as labourers in the plantations. "On the estate there is no clear correlation between a labourer's caste and his/her occupational role as they are all

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[1] The status groups "Atimai" and "Kutimai" refer to the following:
"Atimai - 'Aboriginal' or 'stranger' castes in the Jaffna caste system defined as 'slaves' in the Dutch colonial period (probably inaccurately). These castes were incorporated into the rural framework of Vellalar domination by coercion, as were the 'left-side' agricultural labourers of South India.
Kutimai - 'Professional castes' (conventionally 18 in number) in the Jaffna caste system; each is presumed to possess some inherited fitness that qualifies it for a specific traditional occupation (both 'religious' and 'secular') (Pfaffenberger, 1982: 231-233).

wage workers [except the barber and the washerman]" (Hollerp, 1994: 222).
Jayaraman (1975: 79) also noted that

> the majority of occupations available on the [plantation] estates are not
> highly specialised. The recruitment of workers to jobs such as washing,
> shaving and scavenging is determined by membership of caste whereas
> performance of various other tasks in the estates is caste-free.

Indian Tamils were "not required to sacrifice caste practices for taking up occupations on the estates" (Jayaraman, 1975: 77). Caste differences, however, formed the basis for lower caste loyalty and respect to supervisors and middlemen who belonged to higher castes. The higher caste men recruited lower caste men and women into the plantations from their villages in India. The difference in the caste system allowed the people of higher castes to have control over the lower caste people (Jayaraman, 1979). Caste differences were essentially building blocks for the authoritarian labour system in a plantation sector. Therefore, the case of the Indian Tamils in Sri Lanka differs from the other caste structures in Sri Lanka.

Today, caste cleavages are strong among certain Sinhalese and Tamil families of both Indian and Sri Lankan origin, normally in relation to marriage for their children. The only consideration for caste cleavage is that the parents are aware of a probable partner's caste prior to proceeding with marriage arrangements. Although caste is an important form of social cleavage in Sri Lanka, it is one that is difficult to research. As Ryan (1993: 309) observed, "Nor would any investigator be sufficiently bold to attempt random inquiries on so delicate a subject" – that of asking for the name of a (Sinhalese or Tamil) respondent's caste. In fact, we even had some minor problems obtaining the ethnic identity of some respondents. Even though caste in Sri Lanka has diminished in importance nevertheless, it has been significant historically, particularly in structuring divisions of labour and social identities. The following section will discuss the significance of religion as a cultural attribute.

3.4 Sri Lanka's religions

> For though the development of economic rationalism is partly dependent on rational technique and law, it is at the same time determined by the ability and disposition of men to adopt certain types of practical rational conduct. When these have been obstructed by spiritual obstacles, the development of rational economic conduct has also met serious inner resistance. The magical and religious forces and the ethical ideas of duty based upon them, have in the past always been among the most important formative influences on conduct (Andreski, 1983: 29).

This section discusses the role religion plays in Sri Lanka's cultural diversity with specific reference to women. The four main religions in Sri Lanka are Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. As the above quotation demonstrates, religion shapes and influences people's social construction of reality (Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Berger, 1973), and therefore, we hypothesise their work roles. Religion provides symbols through which people integrate their actions and meanings of reality in any society. Indigenous and pre-colonial societies were characteristically religiously integrated but became subject to new forms of intervention and influence during colonial rule (Berger, 1973). This feature is significant for Sri Lanka in particular and for Asia in general, for several reasons. Religion, tradition and culture interlink with one another. For a meaningful and realistic picture of socially constructed realities one has to link religion, other traditions and culture together.

One of the major factors to consider is the role of gender, for as De Silva (1985: 127) observes, "the position of women in respect of the power they wield is basically similar in all religions. They sustain religion, but have little authority". Religion in its intersection with gender is important in the context of any other factor or variable influencing women's status. As Eck and Jain, (1986: 3) observe "In many societies of Asia, religion is more than law books and Scriptures. It is a whole way of life . . . social networks run parallel to and sometimes counter the process of modernisation and political organisation". Even though Western influences produced social changes in Sri Lanka, as in the spheres of education and employment, the effects are dissimilar among the various religious/ethnic groups.

The unilinear approach to development and social change, often encouraged by Western social science has been completely inadequate for the understanding of the persistent dynamism of religion and culture in Asian societies . . . Religion is both a problem where its structure of dominance has oppressed women as well as a solution where its vision of liberation or equality has generated powerful movements for social change (Eck and Jain, 1986: 3).

Religion and culture provide a society with its inspiring and creative expressions. They are often the basis for community and networking. They are the support systems and valves for escape. They provide for the human bond of shared values and a shared heritage (Coomaraswamy, 1986: 4).

Coomaraswamy (1986) claims that religion and tradition have sustained patriarchal institutions, which have constrained women's social action. In addition, most religious philosophies relegate women to a subordinate status (Siriwardena, 1987). The intersection of gender with the dominant religions in Sri Lanka will be addressed next.

3.4.1 Buddhism

Buddhism was founded by Gautam or Siddharta, also known as the Buddha, who attained enlightenment under the pipal (peepal) tree at the age of thirty-five in Northern India. Its origin is Indo-Aryan, some 2,500 years ago. It reached neighbouring Asian countries three or four centuries later as a result of the then King Asoka's mission. In Sri Lanka, Buddhism is the majority religion and most Sinhalese are its followers. Those (Sinhalese) who are not Buddhists tend to be Christians. A significant feature of Buddhism as a religion is that it does not profess such a rigidly hierarchical caste system as does Hinduism. Sri Lankan Buddhists practise *Theravada* Buddhism that traces itself to the Pali Canon. This canon refers to Buddhist laws, codes and dialogues, written by Buddha's disciples after his death.

Buddhist faith involves an ardent love for the Teacher, the Buddha. There is no initiation of any sort needed to profess Buddhism. Belief in Buddhism constitutes the concepts of the universe and cosmic time, of rebirth and *karma* (or belief in the inescapable consequences of one's deeds) (Karunatillake, 1979). "To understand karma and the transmigration of the soul, it is necessary to understand the Buddhist perception of the natural or phenomenal world, the spiritual world and the causal

connection between karma and atman" (Truong, 1990: 43). Buddhism teaches values such as the Four Noble Truths, the Eight-fold path, the non-practice of violence, controversy, sacrificial rituals, caste and the profession of *nirvana* (objective of ultimate salvation), *karma* and righteous conduct. The Buddhist Scriptures are the *Thipitakaya*. Their rituals denote three aspects: merit acquisition (through offerings), securing prosperity and averting calamities (through *pirith* chanting and *bodhi puja* and the like), and adopting folk religion (*tovil* ceremonies and the like). The Buddhists revere the Triple Gem: The Buddha, the *Dhamma* (basic universal law and principles for emancipation in Buddhism) and the *Sangha* (the Buddhist order). Their worship may be personal, at home, or communal in a temple or monastery. Worship may involve flower offerings to the Buddha, respectful worship with hands together, reciting poems and songs in offering or lighting of oil lamps. There are also sound offerings such as the beating of drums and dancing with horns and incense and food offerings where they prepare and serve a meal.

Buddhists worship in a temple is open to both males and females, without distinction. Buddhists in Sri Lanka venerate the 'Sacred Bo Tree' (a pipal tree: *ficus religiosa*) that is 2,200 years old, historically one of the world's oldest. It is common belief that this tree was originally a sapling from the Bo tree under which Buddha attained enlightenment. It arrived in Sri Lanka around 300 BC during the rule of Devanampiyatissa. It was planted in Anuradhapura at the *Maha Bodi*, the sacred town, and still survives today.

Buddhists practise and believe in the influence of horoscopes, especially during important events in their personal lives. Buddhists follow the lunar calendar. The most important worship occurs on the full moon *Poya* (or fast) days (Table 3.3). These monthly holy days are public holidays, each month signifying an important event in Buddhist history in Sri Lanka and in India (Kariyawasam, 1995; Truong, 1990).

Table 3.3: BUDDHIST FESTIVALS IN SRI LANKA

MONTH AND POYA DAY	SIGNIFICANCE AND MEANING
May – *Vesak*	Commemorates the birth, Enlightenment and passing away of the Buddha. Significant, because in the eighth year after this Enlightenment, the Buddha paid his third visit to Sri Lanka; annual procession held at Kelaniya where he journeyed to commemorate the event.
June – *Poson*	Emperor Asoka's son, the Arhant Mahinda officially introduced Buddhism to the island in the 3rd century BC. Devotees flock to Anuradhapura for it was there that the then ruler, King Devanampiyatissa who was converted, set the way for Sri Lanka to be home of Theravada Buddhism. The exact spot was Mihintale, and receives reverential attention from devotees, called *Mihindu Perehera*. Processions commemorating this event are held elsewhere in the country too.
July – *Esala*	Buddha's preaching of his first sermon at the Deer Park near Banares [India], inauguration of public ministry. Conception of the Bodhisatha in the womb of Queen Maya. First local ordination of a Sri Lankan Prince, Arittha, nephew of the king, entered the [Buddhist] order at Anuradhapura. Kandy Esala Perahera is observed. Conducted at the Temple of the Tooth [Kandy] and the abodes of the fair Buddhist deities, Vishnu, Kataragama, Natha and the Goddess Pattini. Elaborate processions in the Kandy Esala Perahera. Kandy Esala Perahera, in patronage to the Tooth relic bought from India in the 4th century BC. Also considered a rains retreat.
August – *Nikini*	Monks who failed to enter the retreat join on this day.
September – *Binara*	Solemnises the inauguration of the order of Bhikkunis (nuns) with the ordination of Queen Mahapajapathi and her retinue.
October – *Vap*	Concludes the 3 months rains retreat. Beginning of the 'month of robes'.
November – *Il*	Concludes the month or robes. Dispatch of first 60 disciples of Buddha.
December – *Unduwap*	Commemorates the visit of Theri Sangamitta, sister of Arahant Mahinda, from India in 3rd century BC. Establishment of the order of Nuns in Sri Lanka. The (Theri Sangamitta) ordained Queen Anula and her entourage of 500 women at Anuradhapura.
January – *Durutu*	Commemorates the first visit of Buddha to the island. There is a Perahera [procession]. He visited present day Mahiyangana (Badulla District).
February – *Navam*	Buddha's appointment of the two disciples Sariputta and Moggallana. The Buddha decides to attain Parinibbana in 3 months' time.
March – *Medin*	Buddha's first visit to his parental home after his Enlightenment during which he ordained princes Rahula, Nanda and others as monks.
April – *Bak*	Not a full moon day, but a new moon day signifies Buddha's second visit to Sri Lanka when he visited Nagadipa on the day preceding the full moon day in the fifth year after his Enlightenment

Source: Kariyawasam (1995: 26)

In Sri Lanka, the ambiguities of Buddhist tradition create a potentially powerful ideological framework for the realisation of women's equality (Perera, 1993). Buddha himself said to Mallika, the wife of Pasenadi, a ruler, that "A female offspring, Oh king, may prove even nobler than a male" (Dewaraja, 1996: 20). Iriyagolle (1994) suggests that women were able to take an active part in public life, equally with men, because they had an independent identity. They were able to make decisions for themselves freely, with regard to their personal lives. Buddhism opened the doors for women to join monastic life as nuns, at least from 100 BC after some of the earliest of agitation against discrimination (Goonetilake, 1990). Two groups of *Bhikkunis* (nuns) of the early Buddhist order in Sri Lanka travelled to China, where they had been invited to ordain nuns there. The indigenous legal system of Buddhists in the Kandyan region allows for women to bequeath property.

The Buddha's message that when the first born was a girl, it was a noble event. This event meant that daughters, despite preferences for male offspring, were given respect and recognition from birth - as a birthright. In South Asian culture this preference has cultural roots, associated with the need for a dowry, protection and care during old age, patrilineage, and performance of funeral rites. But in Buddhism, a male need not perform a funeral rite. Also, except for those in religious orders, Buddhist culture does not enforce dress regulations (Dewaraja, 1996). Buddhism negated and undermined the prohibitions on women joining religious orders, as well as a few other aspects, such as the belief in *karma,* that prevail in Hinduism (Jayawardena, 1986a). Although aspects of Buddhism appear to create favourable conditions for women, there are ambiguities and contradictions. Relevant here is the relation of the karma doctrine to women in Buddhism (Goonetilake, 1990: 24).

> The doctrine of *karma* and rebirth was interpreted to establish the supremacy of the male. According to the *karma* principle, one's status, beauty, wealth and power and even gender in the present birth have been determined by one's action in the past birth. One is born a woman, it is believed due to the deeds of demerit [sins: physical, verbal and cognitive] committed by a person in a previous birth. Thus the inferiority of women and the superiority of men are legitimised by the doctrine of *Karma.*

Truong (1990) has noted that only through rebirth as a man can a woman achieve enlightenment. It is not only that women have to be reborn as men to achieve

nirvana, Buddha specified the home as the place for the woman. Yet, while Buddha's teaching imposed limits on women, it also gave rights. A mother, for instance, is entitled to equal exercise with the father to a child's acceptance into priesthood (Goonetilake, 1990).

Women have reached eminence in historical literature as a result of Buddhism. For instance, Theri (Nun) Sanghamitta came from India to establish a nun's order, while Buddha himself had a female disciple, Visakha (Dewaraja, 1996). Guruge (1965) illustrates the role of an 'ideal wife' according to Anagarika Dharmapala, a Buddhist revivalist (Guruge, 1965: 345):

> The Aryan husband trains his wife to take care of his parents, and attend on holy men, on his friends and relations. The glory of a woman is in her chastity, in the performance of household duties and obedience to her husband. This is the Aryan 'ideal wife'.

Also, Goonetilake (1990: 25) illustrates the duties of husband and wife to each other:

> In five ways should a wife be ministered to by her husband – By respect, by courtesy, by faithfulness, by handing over authority to her at home, and by providing her with adornment. In these five ways does the wife minister to her husband . . . love him; her duties are well performed by hospitality to the kin of both; by faithfulness; by watching over the goods he brings, and by skill and industry in discharging all her business.

In general Buddhist culture perceives the wife as a 'comrade supreme'. Buddha laid down virtues that women should possess, such as religious devotion, a sense of shame and fear, being free from malice, animosity, jealousy and miserliness, having a pure, virtuous, and moral conduct, being learned and well versed in knowledge, as well as ardent, zealous, wise, sagacious and mentally alert. On the other hand *suttas* (original dialogues between Buddha and disciples) and *jataka* stories (stories about the life and birth of Lord Buddha and disciples) perceive women as evil, greedy, lustful and an obstacle to men seeking to attain nirvana (Goonetilake, 1990). The doctrinal attitude towards polygamy and prostitution in Buddhism is noteworthy. "Polygamy and prostitution are sanctioned in Buddhist discourse. A *Jataka* story shows the absence of condemnation of prostitution in a social as well as a religious sense. For women, sexual misconduct is consequential to their karma" (Truong, 1990: 46). The *Vinaya* (the code of monastic discipline) gave a list of ten kinds of wives.

There are two kinds of marriages in the Buddhist tradition in Sri Lanka (Kandyan Law). They are *Diga* and *Binna*. In the *Diga* marriage, which is the most common, the women moves to live with her husband and the husband has control over the property. In the *Binna* marriage the husband moves to be with the wife and the wife has complete control over the house and property. She is also free to terminate the marriage relationship at her will. The woman is also free to use her maiden name and her legal position remains sound (Iriyagolle, 1994).

Buddhism appears to prescribe contradictory perceptions of roles for women. In addition, the status of women in Buddhism declined over the years because of wars, invasions and colonisation. Other reasons were the winding up of the *Bhikkuni Sasana* (Order of Buddhist nuns), proselytisation and education by colonial rulers and the lack of free movement for women during Dutch rule. Punishment, due to failures of their husbands, as well as the introduction of the Roman-Dutch legal system, also stand out as significant in mitigating the equalising tendencies of Buddhism (Iriyagolle, 1994).

In sum, women under Buddhism live in a socially constructed reality where their life world is less socially constrained than in some other religions. Yet, this research will explore whether there is any influence of the Buddhist religion as a cultural attribute on managerial perceptions and attitudes towards women in management in Sri Lanka.

3.4.2 Hinduism

The Indo-Aryan Hindu religion traces itself to the River Sindhu (or Indus Valley, civilisation), in India, from which region its name derives. Hinduism has an unclear beginning. It has neither a founder, nor a central authority, a hierarchy nor organisation. Hinduism was evident in Sri Lanka even during the early history of the Sinhalese. In Sri Lanka, a large part of the minority Tamils (of both Sri Lankan and Indian origin) are followers of Hinduism. Usually, non-Hindu Tamils are Christians. A significant feature of Hinduism is the observance of tradition, ritual and custom (such as applying holy ash on the forehead) and the worship of the cow (Renon, 1961) around which the religion and its practice revolves (Pathmanathan, 1979).

The *Veda* is the sacred text of Hindus. Hindus worship numerous deities. The Hindu 'trinity' or 'tridev' is *Brahma* (the Creator), *Vishnu* (the Preserver or absolute spirit) and *Shiva* (the Destroyer), and is the basis of Hindu worship (Perera, 1993). Hinduism also has the distinct feature of female deities, counterparts, wives or goddesses. The female 'trinity' are *Saraswati*, (the goddess of knowledge), *Laxmi* (the goddess of prosperity) and *Durga* (the eliminator of misery). *Durga* is also worshipped as *Parvati* (the consort of *Shiva*), *Kali* and *Gauri*, among other names. *Ganesh*, the son of *Shiva* and *Parvati* is also a deity symbolising steadfastness and endurance.

Tamils practised Hinduism in Sri Lanka originally from the *Saiva Sidhantists*, following the *Tirumoolar* School of Saiva monotheism, later turning to the polytheism of *Sivagana Siddhir*. They sometimes call themselves *Smarta* (or liberal) Hindus (IAWID, 1995). Hindu customs include "abstention from meat, particularly beef; absolute refusal to slaughter cows, total abstinence from intoxicating drinks . . ." (Andreski, 1983: 86). Hindus are supposed to refrain from killing any living creature (Suseendirarajah, 1979). In Sri Lanka, because of some of the common features of Hinduism and Buddhism, certain temples and deities are open to worship for both faiths. Hindu belief has many meanings of significance (See Table 3.4).

Weber noted of Hinduism religion that though considerable importance is attached to the caste system and its implications in Hindu religion, it was not conducive to a modern capitalist system. By the same token, it probably would not be conducive to the rational employment of women on an achievement basis. Evidence of resistance to modern capitalism exists in India because of the caste system (Andreski, 1983).

A few instances of outstanding and extraordinary feats by Hindu women are available that relate to the issues and constraints they face, and that have an important role in shedding light on changes in perceptions in society (Coomaraswamy, 1986: 17-18).

Table 3.4: FEATURES OF HINDU BELIEF

FEATURE	MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE
Atman-Brahman and Maya	There is the belief in an uncreated, eternal, infinite, transcendental and all-embracing principle, which is sole reality – the ultimate cause and foundation, source of all existence, called the Brahman. It is in all things and is the self (Atman) of all living things. Maya is an illusion – as a creative power it brings forth the whole objective universe and all that it contains.
Ishtadevta and trimurti	Ishtadevta refers to the choice the Hindu follower makes regarding his deity. Trimurti refers to the singular power with plurality of Gods: Shiva, Vishnu, and Brahma.
Veda and Brahmin class	Veda refers to the oldest religious literature that shows fundamental and unassailable truth. The possession of spiritual supremacy because of birth is another important feature that is declining in importance.
Transmigration and Karma	This feature refers to the doctrine of rebirth and the determination of future life according to one's past acts.
Dharma	It is a law, regulation, code that upholds moral and religious order.
Caste system	" . . . the caste order is religiously and ritually oriented to a degree not even partially attained elsewhere" (Andreski, 1983: 95). It is not possible to become a Hindu other than being born in a caste. The caste system is integrated into Hinduism in preserving culture and tradition. In recent times, numerous new castes have appeared. The caste system connects with the Karma belief. A person is born to a higher or lower caste as a consequence of past deeds (Argyle, 1994). A Hindu can renounce caste.
The four Asramas	This refers to the four stages in life: Brahmacharya – religious studenthood Grahasthya – householder Vanaprastha – forest dweller Sanyasa – renouncer
The Trimarga	They refer to the three ways of finding God's path: Karma Yoga – The path of action through dedication to God; Bhakti Yoga – The path of devotion which is the simplest and most accessible to all; and Jnana Yoga – the most difficult where one feels and behaves as god.

Sources: Adapted from Indiaxs (1996) and Argyle (1994)

> Sita, the long-suffering wife of Lord Rama who suffered deprivation and humiliation only to accept the rejection of her husband . . . [and] . . . Savithri, the virgin bride who through love of her husband even though he had taken the vow of celibacy, follows the Lord of Death and forces him to return her husband to her.

Basically, the ideal of womanhood in Hinduism is self-sacrifice through service to man. Marriage in Hinduism means an unbroken tie that even transcends the death of either the husband or wife (Hussain, 1969). It suggests that women in Hinduism are not allowed to re-marry after her spouse's death. Men have dominance over women.

In sum, the social construction of Hindu women is different from that of women in the Buddhist religion. Hindu belief appears to be more conservative than Buddhist belief. However, there are Hindu women who work as managers in Sri Lankan organisations. This research will explore whether their religion and/or profession of

religious belief has a significant part to play as a cultural attribute in their managerial work perceptions.

3.4.3 Islam

Islam is a Semitic religion whose name, in Arabic, stands for submission, obedience, commitment and peace. Islam preaches the teachings of the Holy Prophet [his name] 14 centuries ago, as well as those of others considered prophets before him, including the followers of Abraham and Moses and Jesus Christ. Muslims claim to govern most of their affairs on the basis of the Holy *Qur'an*, their Holy Scriptures (Abdalti, 1984; Hussain, 1969; Siriwardena, 1987). Piety, Prophethood, Life, Religion, Sin, Freedom, Equality, Brotherhood, Peace, Community, Morality and Universe are some of the concepts on which the Islamic faith stands. Muslims apply faith in daily prayer, fasting, alms and the pilgrimage. Islam does not specify a dress code but that men should not wear attire of a feminine nature, silk clothes with gold, or garments symbolic of other religions.

Economic and political life is also based on Islamic foundations and instruction (Abdalti, 1984; Haeri, 1993; Hussain, 1969). The Islamic faith has its own legal structure known as 'Shariah Law'. Some of the other sources of Islamic law are *Ijma* (or consensus), *Qiyas* (or analogy), *Sunnah* (a system, path, or example), and *Fiqh* (science of Islamic law or jurisprudence). The Islamic faith follows the Islamic calendar of lunar months. The lunar year is ten days shorter than the solar year. Muslims celebrate festivals in profession of their faith. These festivals show how their culture is rooted deeply in the religion (Table 3.5).

Historically, Muslim women participated actively in public life and their role proved significant during war, when both men and women were active in battle. The Prophet Mohammed also said that an exemplary family should give a high place to the woman. "Men shall take care of women, because God has given the one more strength than the other and because they support them from their means" (*Qur'an* 4.34). Also, the *Qur'an* (4: 15-42) says,

Table 3.5: ISLAMIC FESTIVALS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

FESTIVAL	SIGNIFICANCE AND MEANING
Idul Fitr	This festival is observed at the end of the month of Ramadan by congregating in an open place, hall, or mosque to give gratitude to Almighty Allah for enabling them to observe fasting which is a very useful rigorous training programme. They cook special dishes, visit friends and relatives, give presents and wear their best clothes.
Idul Adha	They celebrate this festival to commemorate Prophet Ibrahim's readiness to sacrifice his son Ismail (Ishamael) on the command of Allah. These are referred to as the days of the Hajj. Hajj has two parts. One can observe Umrah at any time of year. But Hajj is observed on one day only. The steps to observe Hajj are: Ablution: Wearing two seamless pieces of white cloth, they enter the sacred area. After undertaking rituals, for 8 days, the Hajj festival draws to a close. This pilgrimage is the most central event for Muslims all over the world. The completion of Hajj is celebrated on the following day. Apart from the spiritual benefits to the individual, Hajj is also a major social, cultural and political marketplace of universal proportions. It is here that all Muslims meet, greet, interact and embrace each other. The Black Stone, the physical and symbolic point of unity, witnesses and records their parting kiss (Abdalti, 1984). Hajj has always greatly influenced the life of Muslims for it brings a powerful mass of people together with the express purpose of abandoning this world in pursuit of the knowledge of the creator of the world. The festival takes place in Mecca, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
Prophet Muhammad's birthday	This festival celebrates the birth of the Prophet Muhammad.
The Jummah Prayer	This observance occurs each Friday in a mosque and is a weekly festival.

Sources: Abdalti (1984) and Markazi (1984).

while the decencies of family life should be enforced, women should be held in honour and their rights recognised, in marriage, in property and inheritance and this principle of goodness should be extended to all human beings great and small.

Some scholars claim that Islam recognises a woman as a full and equal partner of man without inferiority, both in the dealings of personal and common responsibilities and rewards. Female equality also takes the form of freedom to express and educate herself, to enter into contracts, enter into an enterprise, to earn money, to possess goods independently and to inherit property and wealth (Abdalti, 1984; Hussain, 1969). Women also enjoy certain privileges. During menstrual periods and confinement for example, they are exempt from obligatory prayers, fasting and financial liabilities. The *Qur'an* specifies that a mother enjoys recognition and higher honour in the sight of God than a non-mother (31: 14-15; 46: 15). In principle, Islam does not compel a woman to work or share family expenses with her husband. As a daughter she has this same privilege because the father or brother

provide her security. However, she is free to work, support herself and participate in family responsibilities as long as she keeps her honour and integrity. Women are free to worship in the mosque, except that they congregate in a separate area exclusively for women. Some interpretations of Islam require women to wear a veil (Abdalti, 1984: 214).

> It is Islamic that the woman should beautify herself with the veil of honour, dignity, chastity, purity and integrity. She should refrain from all deeds and gestures that might stir the passions of people other than her legitimate husband or cause evil suspicion of her morality. The veil, which she must put on, is one that can save her soul from weakness, her mind from indulgence, her eyes from lustful looks and her personality from demoralisation.

Women should cover their whole body except the face, hands and feet while indoors and a part of the face when outdoors, although some relax this rule and let the face remain uncovered.

Traditionally, there is evidence of women-warriors in Islam who stand out as exceptional in the context of the Islamic system of governance. Solayem Bint Malhan, Sakina, and Aisha are three such examples (Coomaraswamy, 1986: 21, 32):

> Solayem Bint Malhan tied a dagger around her belly and joined the prophet on the battle-field.

> Aisha, one of the prophet's wives was known to have argued and contradicted him in many occasions.

> Sakina, a woman of the upper class insisted before the Prophet that her marriage be accepted as an equal partnership. She also refused to be veiled.

These examples show that Solayem Bint Malhan, Sakina and Aisha opposed certain Islamic religious norms and defied regulations that were applicable to women.

Islam disallows celibacy and monastic life as it considers such a lifestyle a violation of nature: it promotes married life as duty. Married life is supposed to bring completeness and co-ordination in personality, laying the foundation for a family, the fundamental unit of human society. Marriage is a solemn agreement and a written civil contract between the husband and wife in which divorce is open to either party.

Polygamy is prohibited in Islam except under the following circumstances: protection of children (or orphans), protection against physical, moral and spiritual maladies, peace of mind and availability of a loving companion and widening of the circle of relationships. In such cases a man can have up to four wives, provided the husband gives equal treatment to each of his wives. However, a woman cannot have more than one husband at a time. No stigma is attached to polygamy because each wife and child is supposedly equal. In an Islamic marriage, the wife begins her married life as an owner of property with the aim of raising her status. She is entitled to ask for a 'dower' from her intending husband. It could be any property but it must be paid on marriage. The bride has complete control over the property and can give it to anyone she likes except when she divorces. Islam discourages divorce, however, where a divorce seems likely, there is initially an attempt at reconciliation by two interested parties on the part of the husband and wife (Hussain, 1969).

It is evident that different interpretations of the *Qur'an* influence the status of women in Islam. In some areas of Sri Lanka, Muslim women are free to participate in the work force, while in some other areas, they are not. However, there is evidence to suggest that the 'veil' or the *purdah* sometimes inhibits women's work participation (Dias, 1979). This research will attempt to explore whether religious beliefs of Muslim managerial women influence their perceptions in non-traditional occupations and their organisational realities.

3.4.4 Christianity

Christians are the smallest religious minority in Sri Lanka. Christianity is found among small groups of Sinhalese, Tamils and Burghers. There are Roman Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Baptist, Pentecostal, Dutch Reformed, Seventh Day Adventist, Presbyterian and numerous charismatic and secular denominations in Sri Lanka. The earliest available evidence of religious precedence of Christianity in Sri Lanka was in the ancient capital, Anuradhapura (around 1000 AD) where, during excavation, a Nestoriam Christian cross was claimed to be found. It suggests that there were Christians in that city, probably within a sector set apart for foreigners. However, the religion spread during Portuguese rule in the sixteenth century (Fernando and Somaratne, 1992). The spread of Christianity meant widespread changes among

both men and women and in gender relations. As Thillayampalam (1945: 184) specified:

> As a result of the Christian education that young men and women received in . . . schools and colleges there rose up new families with a Christian background and outlook on life. Many of these Christian families received their education in English, in mission schools. The teachings of Christ taught them that all men are equal in the sight of God. This struck the very foundations of caste. Many of the Christians from the backward castes realised their own innate possibilities and tried to better their worldly lot by seeking employment outside their villages. The result was a new community of the Middle Class, which was unknown in the history of Ceylon before. From this class of people also came a great number of teachers, doctors, lawyers and clerks. The Christian community . . . was therefore found to be an influential group with considerable amount of wealth and prestige. The abolition of *rajakariya* [compulsory service to the monarch] is a landmark in the history of Ceylon, which was greatly influenced by missionary effort and missionary ideals.

Due to Christian missionary work in Sri Lanka, there arose a printing industry in the country. Books, tracts and newspapers were some of the means through which people were able to keep up to date with world events (Thillayampalam, 1945).

Christians observe various rituals in profession of faith. Baptism, for instance, is the channel of communication for initiation of a person to the faith. Confirmation admits full membership in a church through the partaking of the Holy Eucharist. It is also customary for this practice at one's deathbed. The Holy Eucharist commemorates Christ's crucifixion, His sacrifice and symbolises His Flesh and Blood as bread and wine. Catholics commemorate this ritual for children as young as seven years and consider the Mass as a supreme form of worship. Catholics also venerate Saints, shrines, images, relics and celebrate feasts and festivals, through processions, pilgrimages and devotions. Among the Sinhalese, Christianity saw some parallels emerge between Buddhist traditions and those of the Church. Sri Lankan festivals, food and costume were some aspects that the Church apparently welcomed and appreciated (Samarasinghe, 1945).

The Bible specifies in Proverbs 31: 10-31 the role of a woman. A woman is free to work and earn a living through trading and enterprising, independently, ultimately

serving her husband. Some other examples of women who became famous in the Bible are Queen Esther, Mary, Martha, Lydia, and Deborah. Many denominations consider such women as witnesses to faith and call upon Christians to follow and practise Christianity in the same way as women in the Bible bore witness. The Christian Church in Sri Lanka extols the role of women, and allows for their participation outside the home. From at least 1887, the Ceylon Bible Society employed "Bible Women" (*Colporteurs*) to distribute Bibles in Sri Lanka's outlying regions. This practice continued until 1947 (Fernando and Somaratne, 1992).

Christian doctrine prohibits adultery and divorce. The Christian faith considers marriage as two people becoming one flesh. The Church preaches the sanctity of marriage and the necessity of its seriousness. It takes the message of the 'ideal home faith' to be a situation where the man and wife educate their children and live in love. It also speaks of the responsibilities of a woman in the home. The church emphasises marriage as a solemn and consecrated step in a Christian's life (Thillayampalam, 1945).

The role of Protestantism in relation to Capitalism (Giddens, 1971) has long been a topic of sociological interest, since Weber's (1976) *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism:*

> Protestantism, rather than relaxing the control of the church over day-to-day activities, demanded of its adherents a much *more* vigorous discipline. . . and thereby injected a religious factor into all spheres of the life of the believer (Giddens, 1971: 125, original emphasis).

The influence of Protestant belief was therefore not meant only on non-work life but on work life as well. Again, "The Protestant Ethic is concerned only with discovering 'whose intellectual child that particular concrete form of rational thought was, from which the idea of a calling and devotion to labour in the calling has derived . . .'" (Giddens, 1971: 127). A devotion to labour meant that the believer had to profess belief in the form of one's occupation or work orientation. The recognition that "The calling of the individual is to fulfil his duty to God through the moral conduct of his day-to-day life" (Giddens, 1971: 127) aptly suggests the environment in which the Christian faith emerged and operated in a largely non-

Christian Sri Lanka. Whether or not Christianity, has had a similar organisational impact in Sri Lanka to that observed by Weber nearly a hundred years ago in Europe, is a moot point. This research will explore the extent to which the Christian belief as a cultural dimension significantly influences work perceptions.

3.4.5 Conclusions

This section illustrated the differences and diversity in religious faith among Sri Lankans. It is noticeable that Buddhism and Hinduism have similarities just as do Islam and Christianity. However, the role of women in the family and society stand out as clearly distinct in each. It is significant that traditional and conservative thinking have waned through the years and even the most conservative of customs are changing for women in Sri Lanka.

The social reality in which women construct their life worlds begin from non-work factors that influence their work according to Goldthorpe *et al.,* (1968). This reality, it is proposed, then translates into social action. Social actions arise out of meanings. Meanings become recognition, and recognition becomes a collectivity. A collectivity negotiates a role. The role finally shapes what women should and should not do (Silverman, 1970).

In this research the researcher was successful in collecting primary data about the religious faith each respondent claimed to profess. Hence it is possible to analyse the basis of religious belief to see the extent to which such belief is significant in shaping the work perceptions of women and men in management. Does the social construction of reality in and through religion have a significant effect on contemporary Sri Lankan women's orientations to work?

This chapter has provided a detailed context for the research by looking at the major social cleavages that cross cut gender in Sri Lanka by analysing the historical and cultural aspects for each such cleavage. Although the research is about women in management, the study does not confine itself to gender alone but includes wider perspectives such as ethnicity and religion, as they intersect with gender in terms of social roles and perceptions. The inclusion of such a wider perspective is to look at

orientations to work through their constructs of reality. Constructs of reality may emerge because of influences beyond the organisation. Ethnicity, caste, religion, or age could have significant influences on organisational realities of women through their social construction of reality that Berger (1973) and Silverman (1970) propose.

Influences of the past have clearly impinged on modern Sri Lankan society. As this research is about contemporary Sri Lankan management issues, are the traces of the past embedded in the orientations to work? Do ethnicity, religion and gender significantly influence organisational realities of today's managers? Such issues explored in this chapter aim to help the reader better understand the benefits to the status and role of female managers in Sri Lanka. The next chapter will focus on three groups of women in Sri Lanka that presents women's significant role in the country's economy.

Chapter 4

WOMEN IN EMPLOYMENT IN SRI LANKA

One hundred and nineteen seconds to fix a pair of sleeves on a hospital cloak . . . (a very rough cloth . . .) thirty pairs (or more) an hour . . . black flags over machines that fail to complete tasks . . . display of piglets (and such pictures) as a reprimand . . . Cost of one product US $40. . . . Monthly wage of a young unmarried woman is Rs. 450 (approximately US $9). It is entirely her wage that keeps the rest of her family alive. It is the so-called Mecca for workers with promise for a high salary and perks (Aloysius, 1995a; Weerasinghe, 1989; Mitter, 1986).

4.1 Introduction

The central topic of this research is women in management in Sri Lanka. Women managers account for a share of less than 1 per cent of the entire national labour force. The purpose of this chapter is, therefore, to present a broader picture of how cultural and institutional attributes embed the participation of Sri Lankan women in the economy. Women working either as employees in Investment Promotion Zone (IPZ) factories, or tea plantations or as migrant workers in the Middle East, form a large share of the Sri Lankan working population. Their participation also provides a considerable resource base for the country (*The Daily News,* 1997a).

A potential research question in relation to male and female managers in Sri Lanka, is the extent to which work perceptions and realities might differ across IPZ and non-IPZ organisations. Regrettably, it was not possible to investigate such a question because the issue of what manager belonging to what organisation in the IPZ was too sensitive a political issue to solicit an answer. The researcher was made aware that support for responses to the questionnaire would not be forthcoming if he asked any question in relation to whether an organisation was IPZ or non-IPZ.

4.2 Women in the Investment Promotion Zones (IPZs)

This section investigates the significant roles that women play in the investment promotion zones in Sri Lanka, analysing the cultural and institutional attributes that embed their employment. Women in the IPZs are sometimes referred to as 'Juki girls'. 'Juki' is a famous brand name of industrial sewing machine and is widely used by Sri Lankan garment manufacturers. It is normal to find notices such as "Wanted Jukis" or "Vacancies for Jukis available" in Sri Lankan rural and urban areas, signifying the demand for young women to work as machine operators. Some of the significant aspects of women's employment in IPZs are: their increasing participation, impact of international division of labour, wages, work environment, standard of living, legislation and the adversities these women encounter. Approximately 285,000 women work in the investment promotion zones in Sri Lanka (Jayakody, 1993). There are three such investment zones in Sri Lanka. They are the Katunayake IPZ (established 1979), Biyagama IPZ (1984), and Koggala IPZ (1990). In addition, there are other factory-type industries and industrial investments across Sri Lanka in non-IPZ areas employing around 73,000 young women (Rasanayagam, 1995).

IPZs increase the number of women in industrial employment in developing countries, due to the relocation of female-employment industries from industrialised countries. The goods are mainly for re-export to the developed countries. Sri Lanka became integrated into the world economy, over and above its role as a cash crop plantation producer, and in part through its increased integration into the international labour market, as a cheap labour provider among the developing countries (Jayaweera, 1989; Stichter and Parpart, 1990). Sri Lanka's partial IPZ industrialisation began in 1977 and Free Trade Zones in the context of IPZs have been major sources of employment creation. Therefore, there have also been potential sources of management jobs for women with appropriate educational qualifications and work experience. However, despite the existence of labour legislation, this international labour source has been characterised by a rather extreme form of the gender division of labour. This gender division of labour has posed considerable restrictions on women moving from non-management to management positions in this sector.

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4.2.1 Labour force, the role of women and wages in IPZs

The increase in employment opportunities for Sri Lankan women in IPZs has been significant. According to an interpretation of the Census Statistics data of 1953 and 1971, Goonathilake and Goonesekere (1988) observe that wage earners increased from 18.5 to 81.6 per cent while own account (self-employed) and unpaid family workers slumped from 15 to 2.1 per cent in the same eighteen year period. The census-to-census shift in importance from the agricultural to the industrial and services sector was greater for women than for men. This feature was common in much of the developing world in the same period. Women influence the socio-economic structure of the country to a great degree as a result of such sudden changes in their working lives (Goonathilake and Goonesekere, 1988; Stichter and Parpart, 1990). Women have shifted from traditional agriculture to formal industrial labour participation. Women in Sri Lanka typically participate in fast-growing areas such as electronics, food preparation, garments and tourism.

Women in the IPZ projects appear to have peculiar socio-economic features not shared by the plantation and migrant workers. The first is that they are perhaps the most economically susceptible segment of the working population. The women are young, generally looking for a start to their working lives, and earn a wage out of necessity. In economic terms, they are in a disadvantageous position. They fall under the category of 'secondary workers' and have highly specific areas of operation in the factory. The industrial work in third world countries is essentially assembly-type work, requiring manual dexterity and "feminine qualities", such as knowledge of sewing. There is also a limit on the kinds of jobs that are available. They learn to work extremely fast and concentrate on repetitive manual operations for long hours.

In addition, women in the IPZ factories usually come from far-off rural areas. They often find difficulty in adapting to life in an urban context when they move for employment to IPZ factories, as they are leaving their hometowns probably for the first time in their lives.

> Most of them come from very rural backgrounds and get bedazzled by the city lights. For a lot of them, it is an opportunity to lead a free life, while not being accountable to any family mores. This is the reason a lot

of girls go astray, and as a result find it difficult to return to their homes (Handunnetti, 1997: 7).

The above quotation shows that young women may fall prey to social evils in IPZs as they are, for the first time, free of parental control. The IPZ woman's exposure to freedom arouses suspicion and stigma in society, although only some women end up being victims of these fears.

Women working in IPZs tend to have up to at least ten to twelve years of education. Although ten to twelve years of schooling seems a substantially high achievement, Sri Lanka's case is different in comparison to other countries. The level of unemployment among women is high, especially among those who have this level of education. For instance, in 1992, the Labour Force Surveys revealed that 31.5 per cent and 28.3 per cent of women qualified up to GCE (Ordinary Level) and GCE (Advanced Level), respectively were unemployed, excluding the North and East provinces (Jayaweera, 1995). Handunnetti (1997: 7) makes the relevance of education clear:

> Her A/L [Advanced Level] qualification was not politically valid, and she was forced to seek employment in a non-IPZ factory. As Neluni, who hails from a tiny village in Polonnaruwa described, it was rather depressing to realise that she could not find suitable jobs having successfully completed her A/L [Advanced Level] examination. "I got heartily sick of waiting for a job that would be in keeping with my education. I gulped down my humiliation before coming here. But I had the duty cast upon me as the eldest child to support my younger brothers. My father was paralysed and I decided that waiting will not bring a red cent home, and left [my home to join work in the IPZ]".

Although IPZ work is perceived as humiliation among Advanced Level qualified women, whose next step probably is to seek a university education, some find satisfaction in their jobs. As a result of steady formal income-generating employment, these women have achieved considerable status, resources and freedom, both for themselves and for their poor families. Status derives from income, however meagre (Aloysius, 1995a; Jayaweera, 1989). Women in IPZs receive a meagre income to live on and send to their poor parents. They also enjoy economic empowerment to some extent through the work experience that may provide some career and/or social mobility (Jayakody, 1993; Rasanayagam, 1995).

Though this is a positive feature for women in Sri Lanka, there are several disadvantageous features. The most striking feature of this form of multinational investment is the basis of low wage cost on which it is premised (Safa, 1981). The wages of Sri Lankan women are among the lowest in South Asia (Weerasinghe, 1989).

Women tend to be placed, as indicated above, in low-skilled jobs. As Rasanayagam (1995: 33) observes, "[e]vidence from several countries including Sri Lanka, suggests that women are taking jobs no longer acceptable to men, namely, low-skilled work with no prospect of wage increases or promotions. This transformation is called the 'feminisation' process". As a result of this transformation, there tends to appear a general decline in women's wages and the ineffectiveness of minimum wage regulations (Rasanayagam, 1995). There are instances of abuse of cheap labour by management through 'casualisation' where young women continue to work as apprentices at lower wages with no job security beyond the specific time period (Lee, 1984). The gender division of labour precludes women moving into much beyond line supervision. The relocation of the international division of labour to third world countries proved effective as the labour process was essentially standardised and streamlined (Stichter and Parpart, 1990). Women who are employed are replaced by new employees once their productivity begins to decline as they grow older (Rasanayagam, 1995). The jobs in themselves are not of a long-term nature. Thus, such employment does not offer job security or career advancement.

Lim's (1980) observation (quoted in Lee [1984: 14]) becomes relevant because:

> The low wages . . . do not reflect lower labour productivity. Rather, productivity is believed to be higher than comparable categories of male workers in their own countries and . . . at least equivalent to that of workers in the same industries in the developed countries.

Although productivity is low in Sri Lanka compared to other South East Asian countries, investor companies want a productivity level at least equal to that of developed countries, but for lower wages (Lee, 1984; Lim, 1980).

4.2.2 Work environment

Not only do women employees in IPZs have very few possibilities for career advancement, they are replaced by younger groups of women as they get older. If

tardy for work, they face penalty deductions from their wages. Punctuality is often ruthless in enforcement. Leave entitlements are mostly reduced to one day per month. Attendance bonuses also apply to women workers only to be lost if they are late for even one day. In Smith's (1993) study of the Katunayake IPZ workers, the respondents' longest period of service in a company was between 1 and 2 years.

Relevant to the impact on employment is a gender specific hiring policy. Women are viewed most favourably for recruitment as factory workers. The reason might appear to be their lower wages. However, " . . . hiring practices favouring women do not reflect simply the fact that women's wages are lower than men's, though it is so, thus, it is an important fact requiring explanation" (Stichter and Parpart, 1990: 17). Although there is a comparatively lower wage for women than for men, the actual reason is not just the wage issue but much more. Female factory worker dexterity is not achieved through mere training in the industry itself: neither is it a natural feature. Rather, it comes from the routines of domestic chores in the preparation of food and crafts (Stichter and Parpart, 1990; Elson and Pearson, 1981). It is the social context that embeds the skills the organisation requires.

Another aspect of the employment of women in the investment zones is their apparent docility. Women in IPZs " . . . are more amenable to discipline [and] control and are less demanding than the male work force . . ." (Ramanayake, 1984: 232). There are structural and organisational features that explain this apparent docility, however. Work in an IPZ is characterised by little or no mobility within and outside the industry. Employment as a factory worker in an investment zone also means little chance of union membership and organised trade union action through protests and work stoppage although such action does occasionally occur. Chiefly, the factors responsible for docility are previous socialisation in the home and school; authoritarian management; restrictions of the labour market, and restrictive legislation (Chapkis and Enloe, 1983; Elson and Pearson, 1981; Fuentes and Ehrenreich, 1983).

The average work an IPZ woman does is monotonous. There are few career options for the skill she gathers and the efficiency with which she does her task. On an average day, she works long hours. There are production targets that each woman

has to reach. The work is evidently 'punishing' and arduous, with work being done in more or less the same posture. The working environment appears hazardous, with dust and pollution. The strain of work affects eyesight and general well-being, both mentally and physically. Urinary infections are common due to lack of toilet breaks. In addition, IPZ workers experience unusually high production targets, long working hours and compulsory overtime.

Some companies use treacherous provisions for leave facilities. For example, two hundred and fifteen workdays in the current year might make one qualify for leave the following year, while many have no leave even after two years of service. Extremely demanding punctuality, toilet use restrictions, fines, humiliations and punishments, job insecurity and low pay, lack of a proper working environment, unscrupulous administration (for example, Employees Trust Fund and Employees Provident Fund violations) are some of the adverse factors that make up a factory woman's work reality. Working conditions reach intolerable levels during peak order time when employees sometimes experience working for three days in an unbroken stretch. A normal day might extend past nine hours with a fifteen-minute lunch break (Weerasinghe, 1989; Lee, 1984; Ramanayake, 1984; Smith, 1993). The following quotations describe the work experiences and the environment which IPZ women encounter on a daily basis.

> They are made to work on a double shift often, which is physically exhausting. They are spoken to as dirt, and made to work at breakneck speed. Despite being entitled to one hour's lunch break, they are compelled to gulp down the food and return to work. They have to put up with many undesirable working conditions. After an eight-hour shift, they are required to work extra hours if the situation so demands.

> Most of them [the women] work for about five years and no more. Few return to their homes and settle down. Many cannot return home, for the various experiences they have had while in Colombo. Some have given birth to illegitimate children, lost jobs and due to abject poverty turned beggars or prostitutes. A small percentage of them get affected by venereal diseases while the majority develop weak eyesight and spinal problems. This is the routine world of garment factory workers known as *Juki girls.*

> Several girls told us the most difficult task was to meet the production target set for them. If they fail to complete the task within the allocated time overtime is not paid despite the long hours they put in to complete

work. Even novices are expected to meet the same demand after short training (Handunnetti, 1997: 7).

The work life of an IPZ woman is one of sweat and tears. She has no option but to continue her job undeterred by the adverse conditions surrounding her. However, a woman might gladly take upon herself the burden of being an IPZ worker before she leaves the world of work to be married and then take on the burden of being a housewife or mother of a family, as some kind of 'respite'.

The women in investment zones in Sri Lanka have a poor living standard. They live in small rented rooms far away from their factories. As many as five to ten women share this cheap form of lodging. They get just enough space to place their mats on the floor to sleep on, in conditions unconducive to a proper night's sleep. There is no certainty that the room adequately provides for privacy, ventilation and light. A woman has to share the kitchen, water-well and toilet with many others. They cook meals together and again lack proper facilities. The food they eat is generally of poor quality. They suffer from fever, diarrhoea, coughs, eczema, laryngitis, malnourishment and anaemia, according to medical authorities. There are reasonable transport facilities but they walk (as much as two kilometres to the factory) to save the most they can. They train themselves to be happy with the little they earn, not otherwise wanting to burden their parents. They are exhausted, with little comfort and no other option but to work. Management in IPZs screen letters sent by women to anyone and they must gain clearance by management prior to delivery to recipients. The reasons are those of censorship, that is, their despicable work and living conditions could be publicised widely, if censorial pressure was not present. The women tend to be suspicious of visitors, especially of journalists and researchers, fearing that contact with them may threaten their jobs (Aloysius, 1995b; Goonathilake and Goonesekere, 1988; Weerasinghe, 1989).

4.2.3 Legislation

The labour legislation that applies to protect the welfare of women in the IPZs is another important aspect framing their employment. According to Goonathilake and Goonesekere (1988: 204),

> Gender-discriminatory legislative provisions are however found in the isolated areas of statute laws that regulate provident funds, and minimum

wages and allowances in industry. These statutes reflect the philosophy that a woman worker is a secondary earner, and thus her manual labour deserves lesser earnings than a male's work. Women workers also suffer discrimination when their employment, particularly in home based industries is not brought within the scope of labour laws that regulate employment aspects such as wages and conditions of employment. The Sri Lankan practice of enacting different regulatory controls for different grades and types of employment also operates to prejudice women workers in industry, since their employment can fall outside the scope of legislative safeguards available to male workers.

The above quotation shows that although some legislation attempts to protect workers, it is either discriminatory or women workers do not get the full benefit of protection. For example, in the case of minimum wages, there is in-principle equality between the wage rates of women and men, as they are not classified by gender, but by job grades and seniority. However, even here, women tend to fall into the lower grades that earn lower wages.

> The legal right to receive a minimum wage even in limited areas of industrial employment is undermined by the . . . procedure . . . for enforcement of these rights. Sri Lankan labour statutes place the responsibility for monitoring violations and initiating criminal prosecutions on the Commissioner of Labour. Offending employers must be prosecuted by his Department on a complaint by an employee. The Department has access to the IPZ [free trade zone] . . . and is entitled to monitor the performance of employees. However, it is a well-published fact that there is official apathy in this regard. Inevitably inspections are cursory and prosecutions are not initiated. Employers can thus violate the regulatory controls on payment of minimum wages with impunity. The lack of consistency in legislative policy in areas where a uniform approach is relevant, and the fact that most laws are out-dated and do not address current concerns and problems in employment. . . . women industrial workers within or outside the IPZ are largely unaware of or do not resort to the Labour Tribunal for legal protection (Goonathilake and Goonesekere, 1988: 205).

Even if workers complain to the Department of Labour and Vocational Studies, the Department conducts an examination of the complaint, often by visiting the zone. However, the enforcement machinery is inadequate to protect the numerous cases of violations in factories.

> Industrial peace [is] ensured for TNCs though labour control by non-enforcement of labour legislation and discouragement of Trade Unions in the zones and the suppression of labour unrest. The compelling

acceptance of 'piece work' rate [is] much below the minimum wage (Jayaweera, 1989: 7).

There are instances where women workers in Sri Lankan IPZs, often in anonymity, come forward to express a violation by their employers. Minimum wage regulations are flouted while women are kept under probation, and therefore with lower pay for excessively long periods. IPZ women find that labour laws are hardly enforced in their factories. For instance, in garment factories workers have to manufacture a fixed number of pieces. IPZ factories insist on this quantity as a 'production norm' for every employee. Often, these norms are arbitrarily high. If an employee does not complete or reach her norm she has to work after normal hours of work.

> In order to attract investment, a peaceful climate free from industrial disputes had to be guaranteed. This was achieved by means of restrictions and the denial of political and social rights of the zone workers. It is important to understand the repression of the trade labour organisations within the KIPZ in the context of the hostility shown to trade union action as a whole (Weerasinghe, 1989: 315).

The Board of Investment, the organisation that attracts foreign investment to Sri Lanka, is also responsible for industrial peace and 'smooth' management-labour relations (Weerasinghe, 1989; Ramanayake, 1984). However, smooth industrial relations often represent the arbitrary suppression of rights of workers. The absence of unions in the IPZ factories makes employed women vulnerable to arbitrary dismissal. Women are often unaware of the dangers of their dismissal and that there is no job security. Absence of a trade union also inhibits demands for improving the living conditions of workers or bargaining for higher wages (Rasanayagam, 1995).

Women face severe hardship due to the suppression of trade unions and the slack law enforcement in the IPZs. Despite the fact that women may, inevitably and willingly, accept their disadvantageous role, even as active economic agents in the country's industry, they have expressed opposition at times. The example of Atlas Glove (Private) Ltd, a joint Australian, Canadian and Filipino Company, in April 1993, is a case in point. A dispute arose as the management reduced the festival bonus by half. The workers resorted to trade union action until the management met their demands (*Voice of Women*, 1993).

Another peculiar feature is the suppression of trade union formation in the investment promotion zones. The reason is that "full labour rights do not prevail in some zones since the guarantee of 'good' industrial relations is perceived as an important part of the inducement to investors in the zones" (Lee, 1984: 12). The nature of continuous casualisation is typically associated with a lesser tendency to join unions (Mitter, 1986).

A significant development that takes the form of both a blessing and a bane, in women's labour participation through investment promotion zones in Sri Lanka, is the considerable flexibility that they provide for both the employment of women and their working hours. From 3rd August 1984, Sri Lanka repealed a provision that would otherwise have prevented women's working at night. Women are eligible to special protection under the Sri Lankan Factories Act, where security, food and resting facilities are supposedly, mandatory. The Department of Labour of the government of Sri Lanka provides special permission upon the request of the organisation. Officially at least, the worker's free consent is conditional for night work. Other provisions are the additional wage payment, the limit to night work per week or per month and restrictions on work the following day. However, the removal of these restrictions was not free from criticism as women are now more often forced to work both night shifts and continuously. "None of the protection for the safety of these women workers that were promised with this withdrawal from the Convention [on night work] has been enforced" (Rasanayagam, 1995: 36). Night work also meant considerable danger to women, as they were more vulnerable to thieves and attackers. The removal of the ban on night work did not however, grant any discretionary powers to women (Government Information Bureau, 1980; Jayaweera, 1985).

Women face tremendous hardship as a result of the systematic manipulation of legislative provisions, the effect of which is to work against their interests. They continue to work long hours and suffer ill health. The grim spectacle of suffering is often the result of the blind eye cast by the government and the corporate community, despite women's lobby groups voicing concern and raising awareness. Lack of protection of worker interests, ineffective or slack legislation, violations regarding leave, ineffectiveness of educational qualifications, personally punitive

consequences for women of trade union participation and a lack of facilities, face women in the IPZs.

> Despite the Katunayake IPZ having been set up in 1979, it has taken two decades to create a female worker force to combat their various problems and to properly implement the labour standards, which have existed as part of the legislative framework of this welfare state.

> We get holidays when curfew [because of some terrorist activity] is imposed or when we are asked to leave [the job]. They work all seven days a week, and sometimes even on May Day dedicated to the working class. The ones who are not willing to comply are asked to leave, for there are so many unemployed who are waiting to fill those vacancies. Those who value their jobs put up with the agony rather than risk the only source of income they happen to have.

> She got involved in trade union work and was promptly dismissed.

> There are no hostel facilities provided, nor transport after work and these girls, have to walk two miles in the dark to reach the main road. Despite the labour laws in the country, there are no matrons or nurses available if they need anything while on the night shift (Handunnetti, 1997: 7).

Ineffective legislation and blatant violation of legislation are common experiences of Sri Lankan IPZ employees. The above quotations from a recent survey among IPZ workers illustrate the plight of young women in factories in Sri Lankan investment zones. The quotations appeared in a widely read weekly newspaper. The article highlighted a former female IPZ employee's effort to create awareness about the problems young women face.

4.2.4 Adversities

There is evidence of high labour turnover in these industries. Fonseka (1993) estimates labour turnover at 10 per cent per month and absenteeism at 8 to 10 per cent per day. Sexual harassment, intimidation, violence, rape, molestation and theft are part and parcel of factory work-life. Research and reports by women's lobby groups on IPZs, or the government itself, are highly sensitive. Women are reluctant to speak out, fearing repercussions to their jobs. Assaults and crime as a result of night work are common. The employment status of these women is at stake as they stand at risk of employers retrenching them. The relatively stagnant economic situation of women hinders protests or unionisation (Edgren, 1984; Weerasinghe, 1989).

The export promotion zones have no doubt provided employment to thousands of women. But IPZ surveys reveal gender disparity, such as the differences in the averages of the wage that men and women earn. Additionally, there are relatively large numbers of women compared to men in IPZs (Ramanayake, 1984). However, the overall benefits of IPZs for industrialisation are questionable. To make IPZ projects more meaningful to employees and communities, a number of social scientists [for example, Hettiarachchi (1994)] urged that the International Labour Organisation promote trade union rights in these industrial zones. The integration of more career orientation in terms of the jobs and career ladders is another pressing need. Such an orientation appears a distant dream to the average Sri Lankan factory worker as it is precisely the unskilled operations that have moved to the country, strategic management and value added activity remaining more or less with the corporation's home country overseas.

Positive factors should be acknowledged. Some companies provide breakfast, sports and recreation facilities and try to make sure that their employees have job satisfaction. Where facilities such as breakfast are provided some employees may be able to send as much as 25 percent of their earning home (Ferdinand, 1996). The Department of Labour has acted as a hostel and welfare provider with the assistance of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), International Labour Organisation (ILO), and three companies in the IPZ. Costing Rs. 200 per month (US $3.50 approx.), a few employees have furnished rooms, with a television, gas and water, plus other facilities. However, they can accommodate only thirty-six women at a time (Wanigasundara, 1996).

IPZ jobs for women have brought factory employment opportunities. Though dead-end jobs, there appears to be considerable formal sector participation. However, it remains the case that these positions do not lead to significant managerial openings for women. Lim (1984) suggests that IPZs cannot be the ultimate solution to all the employment problems of a country as too many individuals and organisations expect an IPZ to perform in their interests. There needs to be development parallels in the other sectors of the economy such as agriculture, commerce, services and manufacturing outside IPZs (Edgren, 1984; Fuentes and Ehrenreich, 1983; Lim, 1984).

The All Ceylon Federation of Free Trade Unions (ACFFTU), with sponsorship from the Asian American Free Labour Institute studied a comprehensive weighted sample survey among approximately 60,000 workers in the three IPZs. The results revealed that two thirds of the women in IPZs had very low job satisfaction, while 62.8 percent of workers worked overtime by compulsion. Nearly 11.1 percent worked overtime without any payment, and 25.8 percent experienced some form of punishment for failure to meet targets. In addition, 24.5 percent suffered injuries at workplace and of these 71.8 percent did not receive medical attention in their companies. Also, 22.4 percent admitted that they had experienced sexual harassment at the workplace. Other aspects of the jobs included threats of dismissal if the worker married, as well as restrictions on leave, even when it was medical leave (Aloysius, 1995b).

Irrespective of the quality of the employer in 'human relations' terms, though women attempt to secure a status of their own through factory work, at a significant sacrifice to their own personal lives, their work is often stigmatised.

> 'Juki girls' are shunned by society; it is a job you hold because you have to, not because you like to. They are castigated as either rebels who left home over petty brawls, or immoral enough to stand the garment factories' treatment of women. . . We are here out of compulsion and stay for the same reason. Who would want to willingly sacrifice mental and physical well-being, be treated with prejudice and face difficulties in returning to villages because you are looked upon as 'queer animals?' Villagers believe that you have to be a prostitute in order to survive here. Some have fallen prey to professional lovers . . . but there are girls who toil hard to earn a living and save for their future. Many are the dutiful daughters who maintain their parents at the risk of their own future. I have chosen to risk my reputation and care for my aged parents rather than let the castigation of the villagers judgement affect me. Over sixty per cent of the girls are extremely susceptible to men, mostly from outside and some from their places of work. Many have lost employment due to misconduct (Handunnetti, 1997: 7).

The pressures of poverty on one side and the social stigma on the other often makes the fact of employment of women in IPZs something to be kept secret amongst family circles (Weerasinghe, 1989).

In sum, one may note that the mechanisms of the gender division of labour as well as cultural mores and early socialisation, entrench severe segmental and cultural constraints on the chances of women moving into management. IPZs throughout the NICs of South, East and Southeast Asia share many of these same characteristics.

4.3 Women in the tea plantations

> Estate [plantation] women are perhaps the most neglected segment of Sri Lanka's women population. . . With a take home pay that is one of the lowest for any working woman in Sri Lanka (Aloysius, 1997: 1).

This section describes and analyses the tea industry in Sri Lanka. It brings out in particular, the role of women in the industry. It is important to examine and understand the organisation and mechanism of the plantation social system because it not only introduced the first forms of gendered division of labour into the country but also introduced modern management to Sri Lanka.

The term 'plantations' refers collectively to the entire Sri Lankan tea, rubber and coconut industries. Individual plantation companies are called 'estates'. Almost the entire low-, middle- and high-altitude hill country became operational land for tea plantations. In terms of land mass today tea plantations account for 192,524 hectares. In the 1840s, the colonial government passed laws that demarcated all lands (forest, so-called waste, unoccupied, uncultivated, grass and bare lands) previously used for traditional rural agriculture and animal husbandry by peasants for plantations. This land was later sold to entrepreneurs, who were mainly corporate owners or partners. As mentioned earlier in Chapter 2, plantations are extensive agricultural units characterising a specific way of organisation. Plantations produce a cash crop for export, involving large capital investment and an imported labour force (Hollerp, 1994). A few examples for plantations are coffee, tea, sugar-cane, rubber, bananas, cocoa, coconuts, groundnuts, cotton, tobacco, fibres (sisal, jute, and hemp), citrus, palm oil, cinchona and pineapple (Kurien, 1984).

Tea plantations conform to many characteristics of plantations worldwide and have peculiar characteristics within Sri Lanka, in terms of their socio-cultural set up. The tea plantation industry is one of the largest employers in Sri Lanka, and has growing importance as an employer of women (De Silva, 1982; Department of Labour, 1977;

Kurien, 1982; Mendis, 1992; Van Driesen, 1953a; Van Driesen, 1953b).
Nevertheless, plantations remain characterised by a gendered division of labour and unfavourable working and living conditions for plantation workers and their families.

4.3.1 The plantation as a social institution

The plantation sector is a social institution where its members are positioned, and position themselves, in specific organisational and socio-cultural norms and practices. An authoritarian system of labour relations premised on strict supervision and control of production prevailed in tea plantations in Sri Lanka. Plantations the world over are characterised by strict demarcation of tasks, roles, leadership and authority. Owners or managers controlled workers through powerful expressions of authority in their day-to-day relationships. The superintendent was the top-most figure in the plantation hierarchy. The next level comprised numerous tea-makers, accountants and clerks. The *kangany*, or 'worker middleman,' who supplied the required numbers to the labour force from sub-contracted labour hired in India and made sure there was a smooth labour turnout, was next down the hierarchy. As part of the gendered division of labour characteristic of plantations, the *kangany* is a male occupation. Below him were the cheap migrant labourers. The *kangany's* role, even today, is central to the lives of estate workers, as he is a master of the situation, able to take or implement final decisions on behalf of the workers. The *kangany* performed and performs a critical role of intervention between labour and management and in the private and social lives of workers. He handles grievances, problems and quarrels, both related to work and non-work situations. He lived with the workers and functioned as a paternalistic supervisor (Goonetilake, 1982; Heidemann, 1992; Kurien, 1982).

Men and women have specific roles in the socio-economic life in an estate. Women work the most, eat little, and rest the least (Kurien, 1982). The earnings of the women go directly to their husbands or fathers and are generally at the latter's disposal often to drink and gamble away, minimising potential family benefits such as food and nutrition for the home. The socio-economic context, derived from India, where plantation women originally came from, helps to condition and reinforce stereotypical ideologies of male superiority, as do abject poverty, caste-consciousness and other traditional beliefs (Atkin, 1995).

Apart from their poor standard of living, plantation workers have a lower status among Sri Lankan peasants. The Indian immigrant plantation workforce appeared more docile, amenable, organised, attached and disciplined towards work and their employer, perhaps because they were far away from their homeland. Another reason that they appeared more docile was because of the implication of caste. In principle, caste cleavage is less rigid in Sri Lanka than in India. However, because the *kangany* (or labour middleman) came from an upper caste, commonly from the same village in India as those of the workers, the workers showed respect and vowed to support him (Atkin, 1995; Hollerp, 1994; Kurien, 1982; Myrdal, 1968; Wasumperuma, 1986).

4.3.2 The plantation labour force

Fifty three per cent of Sri Lanka's plantation workers are women. For this group, gender and caste combined to support patriarchal domination of tea pluckers, irrespective of their marital status and age. To ensure a plentiful labour supply, the British colonial regime sought to repatriate families from famine stricken villages of neighbouring Southern India. The workers migrated in fairly large numbers to Sri Lanka, often as families. For example, during the 25 years 1843 to 1867, there were 1,447,000 migrants to Sri Lanka of whom 350,000 (24.1 per cent) never reached their intended destination due to the rigours of the journey (Omvedt, 1980). Migration data for a few other years are also available. Migration of Indian Tamil plantation workers began in 1828 and ended in the 1950s. The labour force for the estates came from South Indian villages. The labour was extremely cheap and still is today. In 1995, a woman's daily pay averaged Rs. 75.00 (US $1.36).

Table 4.1: SOUTH INDIAN LABOUR MIGRATION, 1851 - 1854

Year	Men	Women	Children	Total
1851	28,224	1,003	273	29,500
1852	50,843	2,226	770	53,839
1853	36,582	2,042	653	39,227
1854	54,014	9,006	4,301	67,321

Source: Van Driesen (1960: 244).

Migrant labourers from India were resident on the estate plantation. There was little or no desertion. The *kangany* supplied the required workforce. The workforce was comprised largely of unskilled Tamil women. In principle, the local (mainly Sinhalese) peasant population avoided the plantation industry as it was regarded as a

source of dishonour to work under supervision and for a wage. Local peasants had their feudal relationships and agricultural and subsistence farming to sustain themselves. Still, despite the stigma and tradition, in practice some Sinhalese people from villages neighbouring the plantations also worked on them in small numbers. The increase of Sinhalese workers was more pronounced in the period 1931 to 1946. There was a 59 per cent and 109.7 per cent increase of country Sinhalese and Kandyan Sinhalese, respectively, in plantations. In the period 1871 to 1891, Sinhalese workers ranged from 3.3 per cent to 7.2 per cent of estate population (Meyer, 1978; Bandarage, 1983). One of the reasons for Sinhalese women joining in plantation work force was poverty. The participation of the Indian Tamil migrant workforce, however, remained unaffected throughout plantation history as a result of local workers joining. Neither the Indian Tamil labour force nor the plantation system itself had substantial linkages with the then rural economy of Sri Lanka, as Sinhalese participation was always somewhat marginal.

> . . . On the tea plantations in Sri Lanka, work was available for [a] large force of female and child labour, especially in tea plucking and weeding. In fact, in such work, the tea planter found female and child labour cheaper, more efficient and more amenable, . . . than male labour (Wasumperuma, 1986: 90).

The success of the Sri Lankan plantation sector was thus largely dependent on an Indian immigrant labour force, which had developed into a migration and recruitment system in itself. Women working in the plantations created a second source and opportunity to combine family income. The colonial privilege that allowed for elderly family members to migrate ensured considerable family stability. Plantation workers lived permanently in the estate residences, working in the agricultural operations for a wage. A plantation job generally involved relationships of indenture, which ensured, for long periods that families remained geographically immobile (Atkin, 1995; Karunatilake, 1987; Ponnambalam, 1980; Van Driesen, 1960; Wasumperuma, 1986).

The plantation workers have a distinct social and work organisation. The estate sector work organisation is differentiated from both the urban and other rural sectors of Sri Lanka. For instance, people born in the plantations, until recently and with few exceptions, lived and died in the plantations and were even buried within the

plantation itself. Plantations largely stand apart from the rural sector. Several socio-economic indicators of life in the plantations suggest life chances that are among the worst in the country.

The plantations sector has seen limited socio-economic changes as a result of technology and development outside it. Though Sri Lanka has a high adult literacy rate, the least literate women are from the plantations, where hardly 20 per cent are literate. Of the rest, those who are illiterate, most women drop out from school education around the age of ten. By fourteen, they are active in the plantation workforce, or else at home, looking after the younger children while the mother is away, or else they work as servants in the city. All these factors sum up the pressures of poverty. Partially, as a result of illiteracy, the status of these women remains stagnant. They are unable to understand their rights and privileges, sometimes even unable to read the number of kilograms of their daily plucking on the weighing scale. Education for a girl child past ten, means, stoppage of a potential family income source, or a loss of a source of income from work, as a domestic help. The men and management of estates always recommend the girl child should work in the estate. Educating a girl is regarded as a luxury as they will marry, and eventually leave the family.

Estate women are eligible for maternity leave. Some estates have limited crèche and childcare facilities. Many women continue working even when they are about to give birth. An older child looks after the baby and brings the child to the estate gardens for feeding during the break. Schools in estate areas came under the government's purview in the 1980s. However, education in estate schools faces serious handicaps because there is a shortage of about 4,000 qualified teachers. Teachers who are willing to work in often far-off estate settings are few and far between. Land and buildings in which to house and run classes are in short supply. Donor agencies try to improve educational facilities in estates. However, the benefits tend to go to Sinhala schools rather than to Tamil schools, where the need is most pressing. Housing is another area where the estate workers face much hardship. The various credit facilities that banks offer are inadequate to construct a house for an average plantation family. Due to the privatisation of the plantations, many resources of an estate, such as estate housing, have come under the joint ownership of other estates.

The housing and accommodation (line rooms) that the estates provide are far from hygienic. There is hardly any free flow of air or light, adequate sanitation, and many line rooms are nearly a hundred years old. They might have just one door and window, with a space for cooking. Due to lack of maintenance and the age of the rooms, they are likely to have leaking roofs, holes in the walls and poor sanitary facilities. Amongst Sri Lankan people, those on estates have the least floor space. The Sri Lankan per capita average floor area in square meters is 12.5 (urban), 11.5 (rural), and 4.3 (estate). An estate family, including all members of a typical extended family, lives in this tiny average space.

Health statistics in the plantations are alarming. A study of pregnant women indicates that 53 percent of women showed below-acceptable hemoglobin levels and 23 per cent presented with severe anemia. Iron-deficiency and infections through hookworms, for example, are common causes (Aloysius, 1997). Poor primary health causes twice the amount of chronic under-nutrition among children when compared to non-estate areas. As many as 86 percent of women in the child-bearing age and 90 percent of children between three and twelve years have suffered at least one kind of nematode infection (Aloysius, 1997). This figure is three times the number of urban cases. Direct reasons for under-nutrition include the fact that there is little or no education for mothers and, lacking effective contraception, shorter birth intervals. Other common conditions among plantation women include stress; anxiety over the future, such as marriage (for unmarried women); disharmony in marriage (for those married); low income; husband's addiction to alcohol, and the responsibility of looking after aged relatives. The average estate woman is typically in poor health. Bowel disorders, due to lack of access to potable drinking water, boils, fever, headache, coughs, chest pain, shivering, respiratory difficulty, neck swelling and fainting due to fatigue, are common ailments. Typically, a plantation woman's husband and children receive the best and first serves of food. The estate woman silently suffers domestic violence when she fails to meet the responsibility in each of her roles to her husband. Her husband's drinking or gambling habit, or her own sickness or inability to work are regarded as no excuses.

Transportation, medical, postal, telecommunication and electricity facilities need radical change in estate areas to keep abreast of developments elsewhere in the

country. However, some results are flowing from efforts to improve facilities and the health of women. To empower and raise the quality of life of plantation women, the group *Penn Womochana Gnanaodayam* (PWG) operates as a non-governmental organisation, raising awareness about issues such as domestic violence, sexual harassment, alcoholism and sexual violence, such as rape and incest. Other facilities being developed are in the areas of health and nutrition, pre-schools, leadership, childcare and adult education. There are trade unions, but almost all are under the domination of men (Aloysius, 1997; Atkin, 1995; Hollerp, 1994; *Human Development Organisation,* 1995; 1996; Kalaimagal, 1991; Kuhathasan and Beddewela, 1991; Ponnambalam, 1980).

4.3.3 Wages
Another striking feature of the plantations is the low wages. In recent years, trade unions and lobby groups have, however, attempted to protect estate worker interests. In principle, from the year 1984-85, women were eligible to equal pay for equal work. For example, according to the Wages Board Ordinance, the rate of minimum daily wages in a tea estate in December 1996 were Rs. 83.00 (US $1.40) for an adult (male or female). Along with other emoluments it amounted to Rs. 115 (approx. US $2.02) per working day. The daily rate for a child was Rs. 78.00 (US $1.32) (Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training, 1996). However, wages and earnings tend to remain differentiated according to gender (Atkin, 1995). Men get work that has higher income earning potential while women get the most labour-intensive work of plucking.

The work is highly casual: not every estate will provide work every day. In 1996, several agreements and rules were developed to protect the workers so that they secure a minimum number of days' pay irrespective of work availability. On average, there are 18 to 20 working days a month. While it is difficult to move, finding work from one estate to another, estate workers are under considerable financial strain and indebtedness. The burdens of earning an income and survival become very severe when a woman heads the household.

There are several reasons for low wages. One is the maintenance of a piece-rate production system. Women earn their daily income on the basis of a minimum

number of kilograms of plucking per day. There is a bonus system during heavy plucking seasons. For instance, work during a heavy plucking season requires the plucking of tea leaves according to the norm (a certain number of kilograms). Any amount above this minimum entitles them to extra wages. However, the norms are high or the rate for the extra plucking is not worth the effort. Low wages as a principal element of the total cost of production have also been associated with the lack of technological innovation.

In addition to the wage, plantation workers are eligible to receive "free" facilities such as accommodation, medical (in large estates, maternity care) facilities, school education, crèche or nursery care, limited food concessions (rations), temples and churches, gardens, laundry, barber saloons, transport and gardening equipment. The wages entitle women to pension benefits. Estate women also earn income through vegetable cultivation, dairy farming, poultry keeping, selling liquor, lending credit, and trading.

Apart from the gendered division of labour and the conditions of servitude of plantation workers, Sri Lanka's place in the international division of labour maintains downward pressure on wages. Sri Lanka's inability to command a premium price in the international market due to the smallness of supply causes the economy to act as a price-taker as there are several large-scale competitors such as India, Kenya and Indonesia. Sri Lanka's market share has declined compared to some of its major competitors.

4.3.4 Gender Division of Labour in the Plantations

Historically, there is a gendered division of labour based on the capitalist organisation of production and the paternalist management of labour, using traditional cultural mores and gender roles to reinforce the paternalistic-authoritarian management system and the gendered division of labour. The work that men and women typically do would fit the following classification, according to Hollerp (1994).

: DIVISION OF LABOUR AMONG MEN AND WOMEN IN TEA PLANTATIONS[1]

Men	Women
'ork operations such as pruning, draining, ig holing, forking, weeding, terracing, ng, thatching, new planting, chemical g and in-filling: all these tasks are manual ins and require simple hand tools only. Hollerp (1994: 62-64).	Plucking of tea leaves The tea bush is allowed to grow and reach a level that one could pluck with hands; spreading out to provide maximum plucking points and tipping of newly pruned bushes.

sification (Table 4.2) shows that women do monotonous, repetitive and

work. Such work causes exposure to severe working conditions, such as

l hard terrain, inclement, cold, windy and wet weather. In addition, such

olves lifting heavy loads (usually on one's head), walking on foot for

it distances to and from work and within plucking areas and manual

with precision so as to pluck only the tender 'two leaves and a bud'. A

annot be tardy for work as ten minutes are sufficient to stop a day's work

: except, in certain estates, if she is pregnant (Kurien, 1982).

time a girl is born in an estate she is sure to become a tea plucker. By the

i or even less, she actively helps her mother in household chores. In three

ears, she is a tea plucker. She works till she reaches the age of sixty, when

ies the age of retirement. Older women say that they have benefitted from

ges that have taken place over the years. They claim that work is not as

s it used to be in the past (Kurien, 1982). Younger women say they have no

it to work, though the effort is not worth the reward. Among the Tamils,

of the dominant view that women have to work in the field as much as they

can. Women's extra- or double-burden of the home and chores are regarded

ral part of their life, however hard and arduous other factors are.

mmary

ary, tea plantations are a production system that uses forms of unfree and

labour mainly for production for international markets, using an

rian structure of labour relations and domination by merchant capital for

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:fers to the process of renewing and stimulating growth of the tea bush, and maintaining its
andard of perpetual yield. Weeding refers to cleaning of the ground from where weeds
v rapidly during rains. Sometimes women and children do this but mainly men perform it.
and manuring refer to protecting against soil erosion and exhaustion from the bright
because trees providing shade are scarce. Draining refers to the function of removing
er collection on surface and protect against soil erosion (Hollerp, 1994).

highly labour intensive (mainly extractive and harvesting) activity. Labour productivity is low, as there is a low level of mechanisation. Hard terrain, steep hills. rocky ground and the necessity for sound selection of a tea plucking area, as well as cheap labour, are some factors that have hindered possible mechanisation or automation of tea plucking activity. The labour force recruitment usually consists of family units and there is little socio-economic or geographic mobility. The plantation society lives within a finite network of social relations. They make up a plantation proletariat. There is significant coercion or restraint on plantation workers by use of authority. There is evidence of small-scale efforts to introduce machine plucking. This method replaces hand plucking but still needs women and their labour to a considerable extent (De Silva, 1982; Hollerp, 1994; *The Daily News*, 1996b). Nonetheless, tea remains a major crop. Tea exports earned a revenue of Rs. 26 billion (approximately US $0.5 billion) for the first eight months of 1997 (*The Daily News*, 1997b). In conclusion, women in the tea plantations will not be found in management positions of plantation companies or elsewhere in the country.

4.4 Women in the Middle East

> The country has hardly spent anything on her, but she has contributed to the coffers of this country much more than any of those on whom this poor country has spent a fortune (Fernando, 1996: 2).

> Of South Asian countries Sri Lanka has been the most lax in [terms of imposing] regulations on emigration of women (*The Daily News*, 1996c: 23).

This section discusses the role of labour migration to the Middle East as a facet that also reflects the status and role of women in Sri Lanka. It seeks to illustrate the economic background, implications, working conditions, societal and cultural effects and dilemmas that migration has brought about in the economy, society, the family (spouse, children and relatives) and most of all, for the women themselves.

4.4.1 Role of migrant women

Asian women have formed a significant share of international migrant workers with Sri Lanka showing a high growth rate, especially to the Middle East region. Women from Indonesia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand were the forerunners of migrant labour to the Middle East. The usual destinations in the Middle East are Saudi Arabia and Kuwait and other Middle East countries. However, in recent

developments, female migrant workers, mainly domestic workers, have added Singapore, Malaysia, Japan, Taiwan, Brunei, Hong Kong and South Korea as other destinations (*The Daily News*, 1996c; *The Sunday Times*, 1995). Of the total of 430,000 migrants Sri Lanka sent to the Middle East in 1995, 84 percent were women and of these, 94 percent were domestic servants (Dias, 1987; Fonseka, 1991; Gunatilleke, 1986). In 1978, when migration began, the corresponding figure for domestic servants was just 12 percent (Seneviratne, 1996; *The Daily News*, 1996c). In terms of marital status, 78.9 per cent of female migrant workers were single. In addition, 84.2 per cent of female migrant workers were between the ages of 20 and 40 years (Sri Lanka Bureau For Foreign Employment [SLBFE], 1995; *The Daily News*, 1996c; *The Sunday Times*, 1995).

The details of marital status and age groups relating to female migrant workers illustrate that family commitments and marriage are not deterrents to Middle East employment. The female migrant worker segment of the economy is peculiar. Unlike the tea plantations and the investment promotion zones, which are somewhat 'restrictive' in geographical and residential location, there are no such barriers for migration. Migrants to the Middle East come from almost every part of Sri Lanka, irrespective of ethnicity, religion, urban or rural location, or level of development. Migrant women come even from the war-torn North and East of the Island (SLBFE, 1995).

Migration to the Middle East is of considerable economic importance to Sri Lanka, as it generates foreign exchange through migrants' regular inward remittances to Sri Lanka (Eelens and Speckmann, 1992). It is a very effective way of mitigating the country's adverse balance of payments. Middle East migration is the number one national income earner, for, in 1996, remittances beat tea exports, accounting for Rs. 47 billion (approximately US $839 million) involving about 500,000 workers. Migration income represented nearly 6 percent of the country's GDP for 1996, for which the only other competitor was garment export income (Fernando, 1996; *Reuters*, 1996).

Women who aspire to Middle East employment are vulnerable economically. They are often illiterate or with fairly basic education, poor, unemployed (locally) and in

need of earning a livelihood for family needs. However, the growth and effects of labour migration have assumed such national importance that they became strategic issues in the planning of the economy's labour from the 1980s. The Sri Lankan economy has begun to promote and depend on the pattern of labour migration to a large extent. In terms of its effects, labour migration has caused a redistribution of income among people. Purchasing power, affluence, lifestyle, values and attitudes are changing continuously. The majority of labour migrants are unskilled workers for whom neither a minimum qualification nor any training is necessary. Peculiar economic ramifications flow from this situation. The applicants usually opt for work in the Middle East, often being unsuitable for jobs within Sri Lanka, except for work as domestic servants. Women's predominant share of the Middle East migrant job sector arose in part as a result of constraints on their employability within Sri Lanka.

4.4.2 Background to Middle East migration

The main reason for the prominence of Middle East employment in the late 1960s was the attractive salary package. Thus, decision to serve outside the country was instrumental: poor salaries in the state sector in particular, and the numerous facilities in other countries for income and career advancement. After the flare up of ethnic violence in the late 1970s, migration to the Middle East also appeared as a platform for onward or subsequent migration to developed and industrialised countries. Similarly, in a survey of Middle East workers in 1984, attractive wage rates and the intention to improve living standards were the two main reasons for migration (Ministry of Plan Implementation, 1985; also see Eelens and Schampers, 1992).

In Athukorale's (1986) study the wage differentials between Sri Lanka and the Middle East were found to be wide. Professionals (doctors, engineers and managers) earned twelve times more in the Middle East, while technical personnel (foremen, nurses, clerks and typists) earned eleven times more than did comparable employees in Sri Lanka. Skilled personnel (masons, carpenters and drivers) and unskilled workers (cleaners, labourers and domestic workers) made seven times more wages, while housemaids, earned six times the wages in Sri Lanka (Athukorale, 1986).

Other factors 'pushing' migration were the enforcement of Sinhala as a compulsory and working language in the Sri Lankan public sector, instead of English and the

slow pace of economic expansion during the 1960s. There was considerable unemployment, especially among skilled personnel. The conservative nature of foreign trade, mainly through import substitution and restrictions on imports was another reason for people to opt for more lucrative employment opportunities. The government even brought in a provision so that its state sector employees could work in the Middle East and return to the job without losing seniority. However, these measures have not proved effective in terms of the objectives. More recent data reveal that wages for female domestic workers in the Middle East range anywhere above Rs. 6,875 (US $125 approx.) per month, which is the minimum. However, when changes to an agreed minimum occur, Sri Lanka risks losing demand for labour, as there are other competitors elsewhere willing to provide cheaper labour (Seneviratne, 1996; Shadid *et al.*, 1992).

4.4.3 Impacts on family and migrant

Labour migration to the Middle East is of a temporary nature. In other words, it is contractual with a specific time period for work, normally two years. The migration permit applies generally for the individual migrant only. Only in rare circumstances, where the skill is highly professional would a job entail family migration. Even here, it is of a temporary nature. There is a heavy psychological cost to both the aspiring candidate and the family members on account of the overseas employment. Additionally there is the huge monetary cost of travel, which is beyond the reach of the average Sri Lankan job applicant. Another cost of migration is felt in terms of children's welfare, as there are many young mothers with children among migrant labourers whom they have left behind. While it is customary that alternative care arrangements are made to ensure the smooth organisation of the household there are cases where women, intending to earn more, abandon their children, abusing legal child protection measures (Weerasinghe, 1989).

There are several dilemmas that women face on their return from the Middle East. The societal influences of Middle East labour migration makes them reluctant to join occupations (usually as servants) they may have held prior to their departure. They experience as inferior the switch to a low paying job from a high paying one. The principal reason is the difference in wages, as well as the impact of earning in foreign currency. Some women remain unemployed voluntarily, often not finding the need

for employment urgent after a period of migrant work. Those women who have substantial savings are able to afford a reasonable livelihood as an immediate solution, rather than looking for other avenues. Still others invest their savings in entrepreneurship, mainly small business within Sri Lanka. The savings earned can nonetheless be consumed by an unexpected or sudden death of a family member, or through day to day expenses. For some others, another migration attempt appears attractive to try newer and better avenues in other Middle East countries. More experience and a greater orientation to plan careers can act as stimuli for having a second try at Middle East jobs.

There is evidence of instability in the relationship between the husband and wife where the wife has gone abroad for employment. Alcoholism and gambling are perceived as common vices of husbands whose spouses have remitted funds for the maintenance of the household and children (Cumaranatunga, 1990). It is customary for a close relative or grandparent to actively care for the children. The hard-earned money may therefore never be made use of for the purpose the mother would have it serve. There is also evidence to suggest that children of those mothers who have left the country to find employment show declining performance in schools because of the instability at home (De Bruijin *et al.*, 1992).

4.4.4 Working conditions

Exploitation of women is common in the destination countries, varying from poor working conditions to harassment. Other problems attach to overseas work. It has been suggested by Seneviratne (1996: 9) that:

> . . . 80 percent of the women [domestic workers] . . . must sleep with their masters. They are merely regarded as sex slaves . . . There is little possibility that they will speak out . . . because of the fear that their family will break up . . . they will lose a relatively well paying job and [there is no solution available to this dilemma].

The pervasiveness of sexual assaults and violence of one kind or another on migrant women can cause severe strains on marital relationships and in the family. Patriarchal values governing the household makes the husband lose faith in a wife who has gone abroad. Members in the household, especially men, find it difficult to understand that the income that their wives remit is not a result of something other

than legitimate migrant employment. Sexual fears, premised on patriarchal norms are prevalent. Returning migrant women sometimes also see the results of patriarchal neglect on their return, especially on their children (Dias, 1987; Fonseka, 1991; Gunatilleke, 1986).

There is also evidence of considerable exploitation in Sri Lanka by agents and middlemen, who cheat migrants of money and extort fees for recruitment. Illiteracy and use of credit cause immense economic hardship to many aspiring Middle East bound women. The government of Sri Lanka responds to this situation by attempting to regulate agents and their businesses. Many women who travel also face cultural difficulties, as these countries are essentially Islamic. The language, food and dress codes appear difficult for Sri Lankan women to adapt to. The work entails arduous tasks and use of sophisticated household equipment, which these women had no knowledge of or experience in using. The government of Sri Lanka responds to this problem in several ways. For instance, the Sri Lanka Bureau for Foreign Employment (SLBFE), functioning under the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Studies, conducts free compulsory training programmes prior to departure for every housemaid (Gunatilleke, 1986).

While women migrating to the Middle East often take the role of a sole breadwinner they do not have the easy access to relatively attractive wages or working conditions that were anticipated. The women work extremely long hours doing washing, cleaning and childcare work in the households of their employers. They lack privacy and contact with home and fellow workers as this creates employer suspicion of their imminent desertion or their passing on information about work hardship. Women often have to demand the payment of their wages. Employers, in many cases, are reluctant to give letters that a migrant woman receives from home, as it may contain an excuse or reason for them to return. Additionally, there are many media reports of harassment, violence and even cases of death among domestic workers and housemaids serving in the Middle East. In 1995, Sri Lanka recorded 106 cases of deaths among migrant women and 2,268 reports of sexual harassment (Seneviratne, 1996). Table 4.3 shows a cross section of complaints that were reported to the Sri Lanka Bureau for Foreign Employment.

Table 4.3: DETAILS OF REPORTED COMPLAINTS – 1994

Nature	Number	Per cent
Harassment	490	11.8
Non-payment of wages	782	18.8
Breach of contract	853	20.5
Lack of communication	1,338	32.2
Deaths	37	0.9
Stranded	263	6.4
Others	389	9.4
Total	4,152	100.0

Source: Sri Lanka Bureau For Foreign Employment (SLBFE), 1995.

Women face considerable hardship with immigration affairs, as not every country has a Consulate or High Commission. The Sri Lankan High Commission or Embassy often has only limited powers in influencing work conditions. Despite the problems and hardship migrant women undergo, there are cases of success. Women return after completing the full two-year contract, with exposure to domestic employment in an overseas country, and a different sense of lifestyle and culture (Brochman, 1992; Jayaweera, 1979; *The Daily News*, 1996c).

4.4.5 Government measures

The Government of Sri Lanka has adopted several measures to attempt to regulate the migration and welfare of migrant workers. In 1985 it set up the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE) as a supervisory body. The SLBFE operates under the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training with full time staff, office, training facilities and hostels for migrant women, mostly housemaids. This organisation seeks to act as an apex body for Middle East job recruitment agencies. Additionally, the SLBFE also operates as an independent recruitment agency whose services are available to potential job applicants in Sri Lanka (Dias, 1987; *The Daily News*, 1996e; *The Daily News*, 1996d).

The SLBFE also provides free and compulsory job training to all migrant women prior to departure, as mentioned above. The training lasts five days for Middle East jobs and twenty days for Singapore. Some subjects of training are: personality development, safety awareness, personal health, childcare, food preparation, spoken English, spoken Arabic, first aid, familiarisation with modern electrical appliances and airport formalities. The investment in training amounted to Rs. 4 million (US $70,000 approx.) for the first nine months of 1996 (Dias, 1987; *The Daily News*, 1996e; *The Daily News*, 1996d).

The Complaints Section of the SLBFE handles stranded cases, death, mediates for disputes between employers and workers, non-payment of wages, harassment and unfair working conditions. From April 1995, Compulsory Registration by the migrant with the SLBFE prior to departure serves as a record of migration. Registration details sometimes help the embassy or high commission to trace the migrant woman in the Middle East. The SLBFE also acts on behalf of the interests of migrant women's relatives, people who are often poor, illiterate and unaware of procedures and conveys information to relatives in Sri Lanka, as to the whereabouts of migrants. This function entails considerable expenses, such as communication and air travel or even, in rare cases, transport of the deceased migrant's body (Dias, 1987; *The Daily News*, 1996c; *The Daily News*, 1996d).

From October 1994, the SLBFE offered an insurance scheme, *Suraksha*, with a premium of Rs. 500 as a gift to every migrant worker. By August 1996, there were 302,830 migrants with free insurance, at the cost of Rs. 157,347,277 (US $2.76 million approx.). Other assistance takes the form of welfare measures such as scholarships to children of migrants and lodging facilities close to the (Colombo) Katunayake International Airport (Dias, 1987; *The Daily News*, 1996e; *The Daily News*, 1996f). Workers also engage in their own informal insurance schemes, such as lotteries.

4.4.6 Conclusions
Discrimination, exploitation and abuse have become synonymous with the experience of the work lives of Sri Lankan women embarking on jobs to the Middle East. Undeterred, many attempt this migration several times, making considerable sacrifice to their personal lives. Conservative and traditional culture defines a woman primarily as a housewife. However, women continue to throng the Middle East job market. Pressure of economic hardship has increased the number of women who travel to the Middle East, thus leaving their homes and families.

The migration of women to the Middle East highlights the cultural issues that centre on patriarchy. Women try to improve their own lives as well as those of their families and children by often going against patriarchal values that define women primarily as a homemaker. Additionally, the nature of work as a servant itself

suggests the presence of a division of labour by gender. Women are invariably drawn into such employment because of their ability to manage a household. Additionally, women migrating to the Middle East fit into the international division of labour in oil-rich countries of the Gulf. Migrant women have little or no avenues to further their careers by moving to other more lucrative employment in the Middle East. They continue to migrate to earn an income as domestic workers, and hence have little upward occupational mobility.

This chapter has explored three groups of women in Sri Lanka: women in IPZs, plantations and those who migrate to the Middle East. They are active participants in the Sri Lankan workforce, but, essentially, part of the Sri Lankan secondary labour market segment, rather than women in the lower rungs of a managerial career. A general portrayal of Sri Lankan women shows that while women are economically vulnerable, the development of the Sri Lankan economy tends to be dependent on women's participation. Women find themselves largely in low-income, labour-intensive jobs. The role of women in the Sri Lankan economy is a considerable resource base to the country and development policies (political, economic or otherwise) should not lose sight of the significance of such a contribution.

While women from these three sectors constitute the majority female labour force in Sri Lanka, they have very few opportunities to move into management positions because of three main reasons. The casual and low-status nature of employment limits their access to managerial occupations. Additionally, the IPZ, plantation and Middle-Eastern migration sectors offer very little choice to women in terms of occupational diversity. Employment in each of these sectors fails to provide adequate skills to women limiting their upward occupational mobility as the majority of women in these sectors come from low-income backgrounds.

However, in addition to these and other structural features mentioned in this chapter, there are critically important societal and cultural features, which constrain women's potential to move into managerial positions. In particular, this chapter has highlighted the very strong gender division of labour where women are concentrated in low-paying and low-status occupations.

Organisational and cultural constraints present in the dominant sectors in the Sri Lankan economy and major employment generators for women are therefore strong and deeply embedded. Thus, it is pertinent and important to ask the question in line with the argument of this thesis, whether such constraints also impinge upon the perceptions, orientations to work and organisational realities of male and female managers. The next chapter discusses the embeddedness of the practice of management in the culture and traditions of Sri Lanka.

Chapter 5

MANAGEMENT IN SRI LANKA

Attitudes and ways of thinking of employees always depend on their culture (Fernando, 1991: 1).

The mystique of management lost its gloss as the management miracles, which were expected to happen, did not materialise. One of the main reasons for this new era of disenchantment was that it was not adequately appreciated that management involved hard work, often unrewarded (Fernando, 1980: x).

Some managers in Sri Lanka try to imitate some of the systems and the methods that come from the West, which has led to a certain amount of confusion (Mathupala, 1984: 62).

Different countries have specific issues and problems of management grounded in their reality. They need to be understood in the particular social, cultural, and business environment of the country rather than in a global universal sense (Parikh and Farrell, 1991: 6).

The previous chapters discussed the role and status of women in Sri Lanka and related issues embedded in the context of Sri Lanka's socio-cultural environment. The discussion of the Sri Lankan economy threw light on how industry, plantation, and agriculture were integrated into the world economy. This chapter examines Sri Lankan management, and discusses the apparently strong cultural embeddedness of the practice of management in Sri Lanka.

Granovetter (1985: 481-482) noted two extremes in relation to the functioning of organisations. The first extreme was that "[m]uch of the utilitarian tradition, including classical and neoclassical economics, assumes rational, self-interested behaviour affected minimally by social relations . . .". The second extreme was

the embeddedness argument, that is, "the behaviour and institutions to be analysed are so constrained by ongoing social relations that to construe them as independent is a grievous misunderstanding". Accordingly, this chapter focuses on the practice of management in Sri Lankan organisations as an example of the embeddedness of culture and tradition.

Hewarathna (1988: 32) suggests that "Sri Lankan managers cannot escape from cultural barriers". Cultural indicators suggest differences among societal norms, values, power relationships, orientations, differentials of social stratification, meanings and attitudes to work, preferences, relationships in organisations and management (Fernando, 1991). Nanayakkara (1988a: 1) also notes:

> The proposition is that the concepts of management development in a given cultural context will embody certain elements of the corresponding cultural environment. Therefore uncritical transfer of a cultural concept from one culture to another will result in a value conflict, which, in turn may produce results at different levels of efficiency and effectiveness, or the new concept could be dysfunctional in the latter cultural setting.

This discussion will also examine the effects of tradition in the context of the changes that colonialism and plantation enterprises introduced to management in Sri Lanka. There are several aspects of the traditional views and vestiges that apparently continue to be active in the attitudes of people even while a more modern managerial culture has also taken root in Sri Lanka.

5.1 Management sectors and the origins of management thought

Sri Lanka's management encompasses the private and the public sectors, as well as a few semi-government organisations. The public sector in Sri Lanka comprises state organisations that conduct manufacturing, services, trade, administration, regulation and welfare as companies, departments, ministries, corporations and statutory bodies. The private sector comprises domestic (both large and small) and foreign organisations (Lakshman, 1984). Until 1977 the Sri Lankan government had a socialist or at least a statist orientation that favoured the presence of large public or state owned enterprises. The government discouraged private entrepreneurship and private sector expansion. Profit-consciousness was discouraged.

However, since 1977 the private sector has become much more important, with a growing emphasis on it as an engine of growth (Lakshman, 1984). Economic liberalisation introduced policies for exchange and monetary control, taxes and tariffs, removal of subsidies, and privatisation. The private sector is now seen as the means to achieve faster economic growth, especially through export-led industrialisation (Fonseka, 1993). The public sector has declined in industrial importance over the last decade with the increasing privatisation and divestiture of public corporations and enterprises to the public, employees (through peoplisation) and sale to overseas buyers. (The term 'peoplisation' refers to part ownership of a company's shares by employees of the organisation.)

However, the role of the public sector remains notable in Sri Lankan management. Historically, the public sector operated as large-scale organisations and also aimed at industrialising the economy in the post-independence period. Managers and administrators in this segment of the industry and administrative machinery enjoyed a favourable status in the society (Fernando, 1980). However, public sector managers tended to have less autonomy than their counterparts in the private sector (Herath, 1992). Being primarily under state ownership, public undertakings provide social and economic benefits while private enterprises operate solely for profit. The functions of private sector organisations are generally considered superior to the operation and function of public sector organisations. Managers reportedly demonstrated a greater sense of motivation, as well as service orientation in private sector companies (Gunawardena, 1984). Therefore, the public and private sector managers operate independently and in different environments within the economy of Sri Lanka.

Although most management concepts, functions and techniques have come from the West, Parikh and Farrell (1991) argue that managers in the third world find an inherent disparity in Western management. For example, a 'task-based' leadership and management approach in Western management appears culturally inappropriate, as such an approach may not respond favourably to formal leadership and motivation in the third world, including Sri Lankan organisations. Similarly, "[d]efinitions of management structures and systems borrowed from the West have

an intellectual appeal but their implementation creates considerable stress" (Parikh and Farrell, 1991: 10). Therefore, techniques and methods of management, leadership, motivation and control that come from the West require adequate skills for application. The introduction of a new method that does not take account of the existing situation, losing sight of existing cultural paradigms and hierarchies, is unlikely to create willingness and co-operation among participants.

Mathupala (1984) offers an appropriate Sri Lankan example of an incident illustrating how a worker reacted to a task-based approach to increase production. A daily work norm of 135 units was applicable to 'X', an employee in a Sri Lankan organisation manufacturing agricultural implements. In order to enhance production, the management arbitrarily recruited another employee 'Y' whom they considered suitable for the position. Thereafter, total production increased to 400 units per day. The management examined the reasons behind increased production, calling for the views of 'X'. Expressing his strong opposition to the appointment of Y, X retorted that he was willing to produce even 500 units, provided Y was not an 'outsider'. A further analysis of the case revealed that Y did not belong to the blacksmith caste, to which X did. The management's apparently arbitrary appointment of Y offended X. X's production increased as a result of his intention to prove his superior skills and capability to the management because of his caste. X made it clear to management that Y's caste was an important consideration to him, although it was not the case for the management. A task-based approach to increase production through the appointment of an additional employee affected the morale of X, despite increasing overall output.

Most Western management techniques relating to issues such as decision making, motivation and control tend to enter the third world through management development programmes and workshops aimed at improving the management practices of managers in the third world. Concepts borrowed from the West may create disagreement among managers in third world organisations, as such concepts may not be congruent with pre-existing management systems. Additionally, management concepts that come into third world organisations through programmes often do so under patronage from developed countries. However, such programmes

often lack appreciation of the culturally embedded strengths and the weakness of the existing management system. Lack of foresight in identifying pre-existing cultural influences often leads to a negative evaluation and builds resistance to change (Parikh and Farrell, 1991). Therefore, management theories tend to be adapted before they find acceptance in the socio-cultural context of Sri Lanka.

5.2 Religion and tradition

Sri Lanka's management systems are thought to have close cultural and organisational linkages with Indian civilisation, as a result of invasions as well as through religious and cultural similarities. For instance, historical inscriptions in Anuradhapura reveal the concept of leadership in *paramuka* (meaning leader) when kings ruled from this ancient capital city during the period 437 BC to 729 AD. The concept of *paramakalu* (meaning female leader) applied to women who held positions of leadership. Such historical inscriptions specified roles, tasks, privileges, and duties of a leader. In other inscriptions, such as *adeka, ahara adyaksha,* and *loha adyaksha,* there are translations that showed evidence of the use of 'departmentalisation' as a practice during the ancient period, where the leader divided the different tasks in the administration of affairs in the country. These traces point to the possibility that some women held high positions in institutions in ancient times. Additionally, such evidence shows that there were procedures and customs that had specific religious (often Buddhist) or linguistic (Sinhala) features, that were of profound cultural significance.

The evidence of these ancient managerial features and procedures occasionally bear a striking similarity to contemporary concepts. For example, Buddhist scriptures such as *Sigalovadha Sutra, Maha Samaya Sutra* and *the Maha Paranibbana Sutra* specified many management styles, decision-making techniques, concepts and approaches many of that have striking similarities to contemporary management thoughts. These scriptures specified the importance of consultation, especially between kings and the clergy, bearing a strong resemblance to the contemporary management consulting function.

Mathupala (1984) and Nanayakkara (1984) have argued that the similarity of cultural influences embedded in ancient historical accounts helped the relatively rapid diffusion of some of the more Western management approaches as they came into the country in the 19th and early 20th century. Some of those management concepts and techniques that were different and unrelated to cultural influences and settings failed to take ground. For example, the *Dasaraja Dharma* (or ten cardinal principles preached to kings, managers, and chieftains, centuries ago) bears a strong resemblance to Henri Fayol's principles of management.

Fayol's principles of management bore a strong resemblance to the traditional management practices that most kings and leaders encountered (see Table 5.1 for examples). For example, the term *parithyaga* (sacrifice) was synonymous to Fayol's terminology 'subordination of individual interest to general interest'. *Avihinsa* (non-violence) is synonymous to Fayol's conception of 'order'. *Murudhubhava* (justice and kindness) was synonymous to Fayol's term 'equity'. Similarly, other terms correspond to Fayol's terms directly or indirectly.

Table 5.1: CONCEPTS SIMILAR TO THE ANCIENT SRI LANKAN INSCRIPTION *DASARAJA DHARMA* (TEN CARDINAL PRINCIPLES) AND FAYOL'S PRINCIPLES OF MANAGEMENT

Term	Meaning or relationship	Fayol's Term
1. Dana	Generosity	Division of work
2. Seela	Discipline	Discipline
3. Parithyaga	Sacrificing of individual interest to general interest	Subordination of individual interest to general interest
4. Irugubhava	Straightforwardness	Initiative
5. Murudhubhava	Kindness and justice	Equity
6. Thapasa	Self-control, similar objectives for those with similar work.	Unity of direction
7. Maithriya	Compassion towards peers or subordinates	Stability of tenure
8. Avihinsa	Non-violence, material and social order	Order
9. Ivaseema	Patience or no conflicting lines of command	Unity of command
10. Avirodhatha	Harmony	*Esprit de corps*

Sources: Adapted from Mathupala (1984) and Pugh and Hickson (1989)

In addition, some authors claim that a good deal of the Human Relations School fitted well with the majority Buddhist culture (Mathupala, 1984; Nanayakkara, 1984). However, Taylor's Scientific Management, for instance, came from a non-religious background and was a shift away from ancient and predominantly

Buddhist beliefs. Some Sri Lankan management theorists claimed that due to the absence of an affinity with religion, especially Buddhism, Taylorism failed to take ground in Sri Lanka (Mathupala, 1984).

Another important management issue that has failed to make ground in Sri Lanka is planning. Functions such as planning and organising have little relevance as managers often think, " . . . it is someone else who plans. The manager keeps the system going . . ." (Mathupala, 1984: 62). Fonseka (1993) did observe evidence of planning in managerial circles in Sri Lanka. However, the scope and influence of planning was mainly present only in routine, operational, and production planning in almost all the organisations that professed its practice. Top managers were unaware of the advantages of planning and various planning tools and methods. As a result, they faced time and resource constraints in making use of their conceptual skills and roles for the benefit of the organisation. The orientation towards trial and error methods of managing is common in the history of contemporary Sri Lankan organisations, especially in a context of governmental restrictions and an absence of a conducive environment for growth.

According to the literature on Sri Lankan management, there appears to be a high degree of influence of religion and tradition in the running and functioning of organisations. For example, there is a

> Respect for tradition and the orientation to look backward than forward: Tradition (and history) is worshipped: History is great and [the] future is gloomy. History provides standards for future, but planning for the 'historical future' is not serious. Standards perform a function of idealism (Nanayakkara, 1984: 141).

Additionally, there is reluctance on the part of managers to perform any action that may go against their religious beliefs. According to Nanayakkara (1984: 141), the aims and objectives of employers and employees tend to become obscured as a result of religious and cultural beliefs.

> In an agricultural society [such as] Sri Lanka the meaning of work is conditioned by religion as well. For the many, it can be assumed, work is

nothing more than a grim necessity, and for the few it means more, a means for advancement, and an opportunity for economic gain – accumulation. *While Protestantism promoted work ethic for accumulation and discouraged holidays, Hinduism and Buddhism promoted the value of leisure, while accumulation was not actively promoted* (original emphasis).

Sri Lanka had 25 public holidays during 1998, a relatively large number compared to a developed country such as Australia which had 8 national plus 2 State holidays in New South Wales. In many business and economic forums in Sri Lanka, the need for cutting down holidays has emerged as an issue. However, as most holidays are religious holidays, the government has experienced difficulty and opposition in trying to curb their number. Hindus, for instance, opposed the lifting of a public holiday by the government on one of their festival days in February. The cultural rationalisation that Weber (1976) saw Protestantism fulfilling in early industrialisation in Europe has not occurred in Sri Lanka. There is still an orientation to factors other than economic development or growth. Such an inclination may militate against a primary orientation to work and effort, or an achievement orientation. For instance, there is a

> Lack of concern for perfection: Half is one, and today means roughly this week . . . [as well as] a pretended knowledge: One is expected to know [the subject] or know something about [the subject]. Acknowledgment of ignorance is a weakness (Nanayakkara, 1984: 141).

The importance of leisure and life-style factors outside the work environment is of considerable importance in managers' work lives (Hewarathna, 1988: 33). The *karmic* influence, for example, incorporates the following dictum:

> The present status is the result of good or evil . . . done during . . . past births adversely affects . . . inquiring mind, . . . readiness for discovery and . . . innovative powers which are really the most essential qualities of a manager or leader.

Some authors claim that another pervasive influence is the Buddhist consideration superiors tend to show to employees below them, irrespective of the nature of their work (Hewarathna, 1988; Mathupala, 1984). Managers sometimes tend to sacrifice dynamic organisational goals and targets because managers have other inclinations and considerations. The 'personalistic' influence operates in the bottom-up direction

as well, when employees depend on authority and functions from superiors. Hewarathna (1988: 32) noted that:

> As a consequence of the influence of the family, Sri Lankans are inclined to respect their employers and superiors. They have a low level of experience in decision making. Family structure obstructs the development of self-confidence and the autonomy of the individual.

Additionally, "the uncritical deference to authority is likely to be reinforced by such aspects as respect for age" (Nanayakkara, 1984: 143). The 'personalistic relationship' orientation towards superiors and the organisation tends to reflect a reduction in insecurity of their roles as employees.

Parikh and Garg (1990) noted that in Western organisations there is a tendency for affiliation relationship, plus merit and performance, to prevail. In Sri Lankan organisations, however, affiliation holds sway. Task interdependence also tends to be sacrificed:

> . . . Those who exchange favours [in the form of] employment, promotions very often refer to 'personal and informal' relationships originating from their own social circle, without being sensitive to the fact that bureaucratic administration [or] management is supposed to be 'impersonal' and 'formal' (Hettige, 1984: 165).

There is a tendency for preferential treatment of a specific group of people who enjoy a greater status in Sri Lankan society. There are also cultural barriers to the application of rules and formal policies in an objective manner. Bandarage (1984: 196) offers another example:

> In determining annual increments for employees, there are some socio-cultural factors that are being considered in private firms. . . [such as] loyalty, family burden are taken into consideration. In [some Sri Lankan] organisations there are no clear goals or objectives to measure or compare the performance of employees. The employees have a tendency to [become] offensive when they are evaluated badly. This affects the management of organisations.

However, some managers consider workers and subordinates as mere employees in an authoritarian manner. They lack the perception that subordinates and workers are often full of resources that would enable the organisation to achieve goals and

objectives. The pursuit of personal and group stability sacrifices organisational growth and change (Nanayakkara, 1988b). "Managers' readiness to consult subordinates may be seen as demonstrating ignorance or weakness on the one hand, [and], over-eagerness of subordinates to consult the manager may be appreciated on the other" (Nanayakkara, 1984: 143). These orientations reinforce centralisation and power relations from top management.

As a result of religion and tradition, Sri Lankan managers are also seen by some management writers as highly bounded in their approach to decision making and management. Although there are exceptions to traditional thinking, many are claimed to prefer past actions and precedents. They may be deterred from trying newer methods. Employers and employees alike seem to be resistant and reluctant towards change. Tradition, rather than best practice, manifests itself as a standard (Hewarathna, 1988). It is argued that Sri Lankan management typically manifests both subjective and objective attitudes (Mathupala, 1984). Objectively, decision making acts as an important tool in management. However, equally powerful is the subjective side to decision making such as the ritual fanfare, drumming and dancing, boiling of milk, planting of tree saplings, serving of milk rice and jaggory, observance of auspicious times for important decisions, organising religious observances such as *pirith*[1] ceremonies by workers (Jayawardena, 1984). These are invariably linkages to deities and worship (Mathupala, 1984).

Respect for tradition rather than best practice quality standards has meant that lack of quality consciousness has cost Sri Lankan industry through poor quality goods. East Asian economies emphasise supposedly cultural work-related values, discipline and respect for authority. However, Sri Lankan research tends to indicate that work is seen as a means to attain personal status and power as well as to fulfil familial obligations: a family related work ethic. Industrialists in Sri Lanka, as elsewhere are anxious about concerns such as unauthorised absence, tardiness, and the relative lack of appreciation for time, despite modest leave privileges. The call for industrial growth comes with a need to change values from an agricultural orientation to values

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[1] *Pirith* is a Buddhist ritual that invokes blessings from deities. It may range from a simple ceremony to an elaborate celebration, as the worshipper desires.

that warrant discipline, efficiency, and profitability in an industrial age (Fonseka, 1995), but without a religious ethic to deliver these benefits.

In sum, Sri Lankan managers tend to respect and profess tradition and religion as a way of organisational life and a number of management writers have claimed a unique cultural basis for some facets of management. However, some beliefs may create adverse influences on effective management. One such drawback is the lack of a perception to plan for the future. Another is the orientation to disregard an active work ethic. A strong familial and patriarchal influence pervades organisations and relationships between superiors and subordinates. Favouritism and a tendency to centralise decision making to superiors cause ineffective management of human resources.

5.3 Family and social influences

Although there are changing contexts and exceptions in many urban middle class circumstances in Sri Lanka, family and kinship relationships show a powerful influence on management. Typically, the oldest married male evinces the most respect from all others, males and females alike, in a family. The forceful cultural influence of the family as a social unit seems to preserve past practices and controls the activities of younger children (Majumdar, 1972). Similarly, employees perceive superiors, managers and employers as people who deserve respect. The family is also hierarchical and this feature is again reflected in organisations where employers and superiors are held in high esteem: both by themselves and apparently by employees.

The influence of the eldest male in the family, the father, grandfather, uncle or an elderly relative, decides most family matters, such as selection of studies or career or marriage partners for children. The family structure stands in the way of developing self-confidence, self-evaluation, risk taking and autonomy, while promoting parental dependence. Notably, even where change seems to occur, a typical pattern of parental consent appears. This pattern apparently has a striking similarity to management realities in organisations as well. Research has shown that Sri Lankan managers need to develop more autonomy both in the organisational structure and in

the organisational culture. Authority delegation, innovative thinking, creativity, and greater subordinate participation are relatively weak in the routines of Sri Lankan management, with the consequence that to 'wait for instructions from above' becomes a norm (Fonseka, 1995; Herath, 1992; Hewarathna, 1988; Nanayakkara, 1988b).

The relationships between employer and employee assume a paternalistic nature, similar to father and child, drawing from influences of religion, family, and agriculture (as a traditional occupation). The social guardianship suggests that an employer limits the employee's social insecurity and in return the employee limits his or her alienation. It also suggests that the fact that an employer gives employment becomes more important for employees than securing meaningful employment on account of competence (Carson, 1996; Fernando, 1980; Fernando, 1991). Therefore, the familial and paternalistic nature of Sri Lankan culture also apparently pervades organisational culture.

Relevant to the important role of the Sri Lankan family is the discouragement of being individualistic in one's actions. Collectivism discourages an entrepreneurial spirit and initiative. As a result, being punctual to work, systematic, precise, and efficient do not always receive the importance a typical management situation would suggest (Hewarathna, 1988). Nanayakkara (1988b) suggests that, according to Hofstede's (1984) representation of culture, collectivism, high power distance, high uncertainty avoidance and a low masculinity value system characterise elements of Sri Lankan management culture. The reason for this pattern is the origin of Sri Lankan culture from Indian civilisation (Fernando, 1991; Nanayakkara, 1984, 1988b). An attempt to create an individualist work ethic, for instance, does not easily fit into a collectivist culture such as Sri Lanka (Wilpert, 1993).

Another variable that has a striking significance on management in third world countries, as elsewhere, is its operation in a social system. Applications of organisational techniques, innovation and technology reflect the orientations of people and the social systems that they fit into. Ethnicity, caste, religion and culture mould values and motivations (Fernando, 1980). For example, a spinning mill was

set up in a rural town, Minneriya, with the intention of providing employment, but with little regard to the cultural, geographical or social aspects of the largely agricultural community. The three shift work system in an agricultural setting was hard for the people to understand as they were used to working only throughout daytime (Mathupala, 1984). This example shows how the influence of a shift system in a predominantly agricultural rural setting might negate the objectives for which a factory began operations to provide employment. Eventually, the organisation employed people from elsewhere to work in the shifts and the original purpose of setting up the factory remained unfulfilled.

Social distance as a symbol of respect is another influence of Sri Lankan society on the practice of management in the country. It is customary that a superordinate maintains a superior status to subordinates. While the perception or practice of a status difference or distance is essentially a product of the social system, such symbols maintain the social system itself (Nanayakkara, 1984). A typical example is the salutation while addressing people in Sri Lanka. People who have status are referred to by name as 'Mr.' or 'Mrs.' or 'Miss.' or 'Dr.' while others are referred to by name, except when they are older.

5.4 The influence of agriculture and commercial plantations on management

Fernando (1991) stressed the importance of both the traditional agriculture, or subsistence farming that the people practised prior to colonisation, and the impact of plantation agriculture on Sri Lankan managerial culture. Traditional agricultural activities centred on the village, reservoir, and the temples. The most common public activities were the celebration of the Sinhala and Tamil New Year that were tied to religious and linguistic (Sinhala and Tamil) rituals, and the linkage of festivals to the paddy harvest season. Festivals serve symbolically to condense much that remains meaningful in the everyday world and culture of Sri Lankan people. As such, they constitute orientations to the world that are not left at the office or factory door. Indeed, a symbolic life-world framed by traditional agricultural lifestyles and practices is pervasive. For instance, Sri Lankan time is not necessarily synonymous with the clock time. A much looser and contingent sense of time, of future events in time, frames the way that people manage and work (Fernando, 1991).

The emergence of commercial coffee and later tea plantations was a more powerful change agent. It framed management practices and culture during colonial rule that was highly Western influenced. The management practices and organisational structures that governed these plantations resembled those of Europe at that period of time. In particular, they resembled the military bureaucracies of Britain. The 1830s may be regarded as a landmark, in terms of the first ever practice of professional management in the country. It is relevant to note that prior to the plantations, peasants served feudal masters. Plantations furthered the development of monetisation and the exchange of trade and merchandise. The monetisation of social relations sounded a death-knell to feudal relations. Loyalty to a master expressed through the form of a wage-exchange came to dominate social relations at work rather than the exchange of reciprocal obligations expressed through the tendering by the peasantry of something in kind to the noble. However, a personalistic orientation was transferred from the feudal to the agrarian capitalist form of the plantation. As Fernando (1991: 96) notes, " . . . the sense of belonging to an organisation over personal interest evolved in the early stages of this cultural setting and continues to prevail".

5.5 Work ethics

The Sri Lankan educational system and structure tend to influence the perceptions towards the type of job one should look for. Education in Sri Lanka serves primarily to make a candidate academically eligible for a job, to earn an income for survival. The education system is not tightly coupled to the needs of industry and society (Nanayakkara, 1988b). From 1945 onwards free primary, secondary and tertiary education expanded alongside the economy at a pace that could not provide suitable employment for all those who had been educated to a particular level, contributing to the insurrection of 1971 (Gunawardena, 1984). Aspiring employees orient towards jobs in the pubic sector, as the education system caters for this end. White-collar jobs, dignified positions and power are almost synonymous with school education. Demands for skills in the labour market, such as initiative, problem solving, communication skills and knowledge application, find little relevance in the

educational system. The education system inhibits innovative thinking (Gunatilleke, 1993; Nanayakkara, 1993c).

Fernando (1991) notes that in general, there is a low tendency for employees to have a career orientation in Sri Lanka. The reason for this tendency is that the concept of career does not suggest a symbolic representation for most people in terms of the society and its cultures. An orientation to making money scores far above the orientation to embark on a career and this trait is evident even in the fields of engineering, medicine and teaching. As a result of the orientation to make quick money, managers tend to move from one organisation to another, without any career planning in mind. Only small numbers of managers have a sense of career orientation and planning. To most, a career is secondary to personal objectives (Kumarasinghe, 1995). As Jayasundera (1993: 26) observed, " . . . a number of middle-level executives . . . have no precise idea of where they want to go, except vaguely say, 'go up'". Therefore, the Sri Lankan education system is another cultural trait that creates candidates solely on the basis of academic qualifications to join in the management positions that organisations offer.

The orientation to profit at the cost of the customer and employee is also characteristic of Sri Lankan management. Gains, whether ethical or not, have in several cases, become more important than organisational objectives. For example, Sri Lanka lost its export market share of cashew nuts several years ago after an unscrupulous businessman shipped broken nuts pasted together with glue. The domination of the profit motive in Sri Lanka expresses itself through Nanayakkara's (1984: 141) observation. "Desire for effortless returns: Characterised by pre-capitalist, mercantilist tradition the Sri Lankan business mind is short-sighted: interested in quick return, quick recovery of investment; sales minded than cost minded; and oriented to gambling than innovating". Government and training institutions, such as the Industrial Development of Board of Sri Lanka and the National Institute of Business Management, have recently emphasised the necessity to be productive and innovative, using long-range time frames and strategic approaches. The promotion of such concepts are becoming more widespread through media and training initiatives within Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka's productivity in comparison with other countries in the region suggests comparatively low sectoral and trade scores (see Table 5.2). An early emphasis on the achievement of labour productivity is necessary as a means to industrialisation. Weber (1976) stressed that traditional values and attitudes have to give way to a more rational orientation to work that stresses productivity as an end in itself, if modern rational capitalism is to take root. In Sri Lanka, workers would need to develop values and attitudes that are more oriented to productivity than is the case at present, if national statistics are to match those of comparable countries. Work values of Sri Lankan workers and managers seem underdeveloped, according to the results of one of Sri Lanka's premier management research institutions (Fonseka, 1995). Absenteeism, and a lack of discipline in terms of time, cost Sri Lankan industry valuable resources and opportunities.

Table 5.2: ASIAN PRODUCTIVITY ORGANISATION LEAGUE TABLE
LABOUR PRODUCTIVITY INDICES – 1990

Country	National	Agriculture	Manufacturing	Trade*
Thailand	137.0	97.1	153.4	NA
South Korea	134.7	113.4	129.5	144.3
Singapore	127.6	125.9	138.2	134.7
India	119.8	109.5	127.2	120.8
Japan	117.9	111.7	127.3	110.6
Malaysia	116.4	NA	NA	NA
Pakistan	114.0	105.8	129.5	112.6
Indonesia	111.6	94.4	124.9	126.9
Philippines	110.2	111.4	111.7	NA
Sri Lanka	101.4	91.3	94.8	120.4

Source: Fonseka (1995: 29) Base Year 1985 = 100
NA = Not Available
* An index for service sector is not available.

Entrepreneurs were of the view that the Sri Lankan work ethic was inferior to that of South and East Asia. The reason for the low scores in terms of a Sri Lankan work ethic pattern tended to reflect the roots of colonial plantation and traditional agriculture in Sri Lanka's recent past. The transition to an industrial work ethic necessary for meeting the requirements of industry and services has not yet fully materialised (Fonseka, 1995; Gunatilleke, 1993).

Sri Lankan research suggests that if a manager withdraws supervisory control, nearly 80 per cent of the work force would do just the minimum expected of them

(Nanayakkara, 1993c). Sri Lankan managers need to make work an interesting, pleasant, challenging and meaningful experience for their subordinates and colleagues in organisations, concludes Nanayakkara (1993c). Additionally, "In Sri Lanka, the most violated standard is time" (De Silva, 1993: 311). A sense of priority towards valuing time as a resource is imperative if Sri Lanka is to emerge as a competitor in the Asian region in the 21st century.

5.6 Conclusion

Despite the prevalence, as an adage, of the sentiment that "Sri Lankan managers do not have to hang on to outmoded organisational arrangements of yesteryear" (Dediyagala, 1995: 18), deep-seated influences are apparently present among Sri Lankans, both managers and non-managers. For instance, some of the common but outmoded attitudes that Dediyagala (1995) observes are that:

- Managerial success depends on luck.
- Good managers are born.
- 'Carrot and stick,' is the best approach for achieving anything.
- An educated manager must work miracles while the organisation remains unchanged, if one is to prove the value of management education.
- Managing organisations is the work of specialists, not generalists.

Management in Sri Lanka has suffered many setbacks. There has been a considerable lack of insistence on managerial performance. There is neither a mechanism to make performance essential nor a reward system to acknowledge performance. The absence of this mechanism is a basic factor that constrains management in Sri Lankan organisations, rather than the lack of infrastructure, training or capital, as one might assume. There are several influences that impede appropriate and proper management of organisations, especially in the public sector. For example, political interference; insufficient proficiency in management skills; lack of consensus and the extent of polynormativism; as well as a strong influence of pressure from trade unions and such other groups that might affect management decisions and operations (Carson, 1996; Fernando, 1980; Gunatilleke, 1993; Nanayakkara, 1993b).

In the past, the reason for political interference was the increasing role of the state government in the industrial and economic decisions of the country, in the form of

'random particularistic control at all levels' (Goonetilake, 1980). In part, as a result, the discipline of management in Sri Lanka is 'underdeveloped' (Nanayakkara, 1993a). Managers have been referred to as 'acrobats without safety nets' (Wickremasinghe, 1993). There is a lack of recognition of the relevance and meaning of competition. Management, as a practice, centres on crises and problem-solving rather than organising itself (Nanayakkara, 1993b). While Sri Lankan management has exceptional educational qualifications it lacks managerial skills (Wijayapala, 1997).

> Whilst the theoreticians in the West are improving and sometimes rejecting their basic premises of the nature of management, we have fallen by the wayside, and failed to develop, a management theoretical framework appropriate to the social, cultural and economic development of Sri Lanka (Dediyagala, 1995: 19).

Sri Lanka's management apparently shows influences of its pre-colonial system and culture that continued during colonialism as well as post-colonialism. There is a continuity of the pre-colonial cultural values and social systems including patriarchy (for example, the importance of male family members) and family orientation. Nevertheless, colonialism introduced modern management through plantations. Some aspects of modern management tend to coexist with ancient traditions in organisations. As such, it may be said that there are diverse, overlapping cultural dynamics influencing management and its orientations. Thus, the practice of management in Sri Lanka is culturally embedded. The next chapter will review the literature in relation to this thesis using the concept of orientations to work (Goldthorpe *et al.*, 1968) and the action frame of reference (Silverman, 1970).

Chapter 6

THE LITERATURE REVIEW

A complete analysis of the impact of growing numbers of women requires an analysis of dynamics internal to organisations as well as an analysis of external cultural, social, and political forces (Jacobs, 1992: 282).

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters we have discussed the 'embeddedness' (Granovetter, 1985) of Sri Lanka in relation to social institutions, such as its religiosities, ethnicities, education, management practices, economy, its past and contemporary history, society, and culture. We have discussed the role of Sri Lankan women in the economy. Although women's labour market participation rates, as well as most other social indicators, are higher in comparison to those in other South Asian countries, the density of women in higher management positions remains low (Iddamalgoda, 1991). In this chapter, we consider the possible reasons for this phenomenon, exploring theoretical arguments that address the research question formulated in terms of the definition of a 'complete analysis' suggested by Jacobs (1992): that is, in terms of both organisational dynamics as well as external, institutional factors. For the purposes of this thesis, institutional accounts include concepts usually signalled by terms such as embeddedness, and that addressed in both the action frame of reference as well as the orientations to work literature. In short, the thesis deals with those perspectives that anticipate that societal, cultural, extra- and non-organisational influences will have a decisive impact on what happens in organisations: All refer to institutional level factors or determinants.

This thesis will, as a result of its data analysis, question the extent to which these institutional factors related to the orientations to work of male and female managers in Sri Lanka, that is developed from an 'embedded' and 'action frame of reference,' increase the explanatory power of understanding the degree of job satisfaction and work perceptions of male and female managers in Sri Lanka. Hypothetically, as a result of the institutional factors already sketched, in the arguments from 'embeddedness' and the 'action frame of reference' one would anticipate clear cleavages on key organisational variables, not only on gender, but other institutional lines, notably ethnic and religious. Given the focus on 'orientations to work' in the Cambridge studies, job satisfaction and work perceptions are the appropriate dependent variables. Accordingly, we consider two levels of analysis: the organisational level as well as the societal level, to build a framework for the research.

An evaluation of the literature on gender and organisation focuses on two levels or broad perspectives. The first perspective refers to organisational level determinants while the second level extends further to include a focus on the wider social system (Adler and Izraeli, 1994; Fagenson, 1993; Kanter, 1977). Some organisational theorists have noted the drawbacks of the organisational level perspective. Adler and Izraeli (1994), for instance, observed that the emphasis on organisational context ignored broader societal influences on both the organisations as well as on women in the organisation. Similarly, Fagenson (1993) emphasised the need for a gender-organisation-system (GOS) approach. She considered that systemic factors contributed to organisational experiences of males and females, including individual as well as organisational factors. Some of the factors that constitute systemic factors include laws, policies, gender role stereotypes, values, tradition, and histories. In a similar vein, Wolff (1977) stressed the importance of 'extra-organisational influences' such as women's position in society as being inseparable from women's position in organisations. Mills (1992: 94) argued that "[t]he case for linking gender and culture in analysis of organisation is a compelling one". He argued that gender was culturally determined and that "people do not leave their cultural perspective at the gates of organisations, they enter with them, and that this has an important bearing upon organisational perspectives" (Mills, 1992: 98). In addition, Billing and Alvesson (1994: 7) acknowledge the importance of "gendered connotations of

deeper, cultural layers as well as the gendered bias of ideas, social arrangements and practices of organisations". The institutionalist arguments on gender are forceful in the literature.

The concept of 'orientations to work' (Goldthorpe *et al.*, 1968) and the action approach (Silverman 1970) offer a theoretical model for understanding the link between inter-organisational as well as extra-organisational influences. Factors that stem from non-work influences guide and shape orientations to work. In other words, action tends to have a two-way effect, between the society and the individual. "On the one hand, it seems, Society makes man, on the other, Man makes society" (Silverman, 1970: 141). Silverman proposed that as meanings become shared, they tend to become 'shared orientations' that are "institutionalised and are experienced by later generations as social facts" (1970: 127). Additionally, Silverman (1970: 150) shows how orientations tend to differ among people.

> Orientations differ, firstly, because actors bring different ends and expectations to their membership of an organisation. These derive from their various historical experiences (e.g., unemployment, rural background, experience of a paternalistic management) and from the multiple statuses, which they hold at the time (e.g. husband, member of official or voluntary association, member of ethnic or religious minority). These variations arise, secondly, from the different experiences of actors within the organisation, which encourage or discourage certain ends and expectations and generate others.

Variable factors external to the organisation, such as past employment, personal history, place of origin, experience of patriarchy, and the individual's life-cycle context, in addition to ethnicity and religion, are likely to predict orientations to work of organisational members and managers. However, the above discussion does not ignore the importance of organisational experience. The experience of different realities by managers within the same organisation may prove to be an important internal factor within any given organisation. Therefore, two sets of factors warrant attention: factors within the organisation as well as broader factors outside the organisation. As Silverman emphasised:

> Thus in the study of organisational behaviour, both sets of factors, the internal *and* the external, need to be given their due attention before we can understand the sense that the actors make of their situation (Silverman, 1970: 166, original emphasis).

> In a wider sense, it [the Action perspective] contributes to an understanding of the relationship between work and non-work and, thereby, since occupational position is normally taken as a crucial predictor of behaviour, to a fuller picture of the nature and consequences of social stratification (Silverman, 1970: 164).

Clearly, non-work factors such as gender, ethnicity, and religion are some of the cultural elements that translate societal culture into orientations to work and organisational identity. Several later identity theorists support this proposition. For example, Nkomo and Cox (1996) relate different identity theories to organisational issues. They emphasise, much as does the action frame of reference, that " . . . individuals don't leave their . . . gender, or ethnic identities at the door when they enter an organisation" (1996: 342). Social identity is constituted through many processes: thus a variety of concepts relating to it may be studied through a wide array of research foci, including organisational demography, embedded inter-group relations, race, ethnicity and gender. Group identities such as age, tenure, education, cultural differences, nationality, religion, class, and work and functional backgrounds can all enter into the constitution of identity. Organisational outcomes and organisational behaviour issues such as job satisfaction, leadership styles, motivation, attitudes to work, and job outcomes, ethnic and gender discrimination, may all be related to issues of identity in organisations (Nkomo and Cox, 1996). Identity is reducible neither to the effects of intra-organisational variables nor merely an effect of extra-organisational variables, but will always be an effect of the interaction of biography and context, identity and organisation. Thus we must consider both organisation, or work, and non-organisational factors, in the constitution of identity, according to Nkomo and Cox (1996).

Goldthorpe *et al.,* (1968) first delineated the action frame of reference that Silverman subsequently developed:

> . . . an action frame of reference would direct attention systematically to the *variety of meanings* which work may come to have for industrial employees. And this in turn would then compel recognition of the fact that in modern society the members of the industrial labour force, form a highly differentiated collectivity - in terms, for example, of the positions and roles they occupy in their non-working lives, in their subcultural

characteristics, and in the pattern of their life histories and objectives for the future (Goldthorpe *et al.*, 1970: 184, original emphasis).

Managers frame their actions, meanings, and orientations to work on the basis of diverse cultural influences outside their workplaces. In other words, factors that stem from the non-working lives of managers influence the meanings and actions that individuals define in their organisational realities. Some of the cultural aspects, apart from gender, are ethnicity, religion, life cycle stage or context, employment history, and experience. The action frame of reference is thus a non-reductionist approach to examining and analysing identities and social relations in organisations.

The 'action frame of reference' and the 'orientations to work' concept emphasise the institutional and organisational levels of analysis, and have found validity among organisation theorists in terms of their importance and relevance to the study of management. Brown (1976: 31) referred to orientations to work as the "outcome of processes over time". Clegg and Dunkerley (1980: 405) referring to female managers, observed that "[t]hese processes are those of the female's socialisation, her choice in the labour market, her life cycle, and her adaptation and reaction to work experiences". In other words, a woman's orientations to work are inseparable from broader societal forces, in addition to her experience of organisational realities. Similarly, Lockwood (1986: 19, 20) observed the importance of the influence of culture and ideologies that influence women's status in work.

> Women occupy a fairly distinctive status situation because their life-chances, including their chances of entering employment and specific kinds of employment, are determined substantially by customary and ideological (if not juridical) constraints; and, furthermore, because these outcomes may be interpreted in significant measure as the result of men's deliberate attempts to monopolise positions of occupational authority and to secure domestic benefits.

Crompton and Harris (1998: 119) studied changing gender relations and employment patterns in Britain, Norway, France, Russia and the Czech Republic. They argue that "women's employment behaviour is a reflection of the way in which women actively construct their work-life biographies in terms of their historically available opportunities and constraints". Similarly, Ely (1995: 589) observed that gender is "an on-going social construction, the meaning, significance, and consequences of

which vary as a function of the power differences reflected in the [gender] composition across levels of an organisation's hierarchy" [also see Ely (1994)]. Thus, the continuing importance of the analysis of institutional and organisational level determinants is clearly evident. In addition, the application of perspectives grounded in the 'action frame of reference' and 'orientations to work' literature has gained currency in the 1990s.

In addition to emphasising the importance and influence of societal and cultural influences on gender orientations, organisation, and organisational behaviour, [for example, Brown (1976), Goldthorpe *et al.,* (1986) and Silverman (1970)] there are other empirical and theoretical studies that justify the inclusion of societal variables in gender research. I shall now review some of these studies.

6.2 Societal level factors: The argument from societal culture

Hearn and Parkin (1992) emphasise that the study of gender and work needs to link non-organisational divisions of labour and organisational divisions of labour before one considers internal organisation dynamics. The presence of women managers in organisations needs also to be considered in its culturally specific context. As Mills (1992: 103, 104) suggests,

> [O]rganisational life exist[s] in a dialectical relationship to the broader societal value system, each is shaped and reshaped by the other. . . Culture is essentially composed of a number of understandings and expectations that assist people in making sense of life. In organisations, . . . such understandings have to be learned and they guide people in the appropriate or relevant behaviour, help them to know how things are done, what is expected of them, [and] how to achieve certain things . . ..

Mills (1992) goes on to illustrate how social values and rules influence organisational behaviour, both overtly and covertly. Overtly, women managers seem to be more present in positions that have low pay and a gender-equity disparity with respect to authority. Covertly, women managers encounter constraints on their career advancement because of pre-existing stereotypes and societal attitudes. In addition, the cultural dimension emphasises the work-home or public-private domains and all their embedded characteristics. A man's traditional breadwinner role in the public or work domain seems to characterise the male role as one of domination, assertiveness and aggressiveness, while a woman's home-maker role is

often suggested to be best expressed through a passive and nurturing attitude. Hence, "'[s]ocial regulative rules' are 'hegemonic' forms of control located within social arrangements of production and organisational processes" (Mills, 1992: 109). Powell (1993: 86) adds that, "stereotypes may also be based on such factors as age, race, ethnic group, class, religion, and geographical region of origin", as well as gender.

How, and in what forms, do cultural beliefs, attitudes, traditions, and gender manifest themselves in organisational realities? Bell and Nkomo (1992: 236) emphasise that gender and organisation studies require acknowledgement of the importance of explanatory conceptualisations of

> the differing experiences of women due to their gender, racial-ethnic and class identities. In this context, we must begin to recognise the power of the historical forces that influence the roles, status, and opportunities available to women managers.

They consider that although gender, ethnicity, and class, have an important influence on women managers, women should not be considered as a uniform group. As Bell and Nkomo (1992: 239) argue, "[t]he idea that theories developed on the experiences of white women managers are congruent with the experiences of women of colour have yet to be justified". They consider that gender perspectives within the remit of organisation studies need to include the ways and means through which, as well as the cumulative aspects of how, women make sense of their lives. Some other elements of identity that have been suggested as being equally important are profession, age, emotional makeup, or physical characteristics (Bell and Nkomo 1992).

Sheppard (1992: 152) noted that organisations are "social constructions derived in part from gender-based experiences of social actors", rather than being gender-neutral or devoid of the presence of gender. Gender was an important predictor of Sheppard's study of organisational experiences, perceptions, and pressures among 15 women managers in 10 public and private Canadian organisations. In terms of organisational realities, women managers seemed to be more person oriented with greater likelihood of working towards good relations in the organisation. Sheppard's results gain support from Calás and Smircich (1992: 230) when they suggested that

"[w]omen . . . conceive of themselves as embedded contextually in an interpersonal network where the primary imperative is to be responsible to others and caring to maintain the web of connections". Sheppard's results support this proposition.

One area in particular where there were gender differences in Sheppard's study was decision-making. Women tended to be slower and sometimes seemed to have less confidence because they admitted that they would run the risk of making a mistake. Women managers experience the pressure of career advancement and mobility, sexual harassment/discrimination, lack of gender role models and networks, having to work harder than their male colleagues, and often coping with their dual roles as both mother and manager. The influence of gender in work perceptions is an example of "[t]he embeddedness of sexism in social structures beyond a particular organisation continu[ing] to profoundly shape the reality of the individual workplace" (Sheppard, 1992: 166). Sheppard's conclusions are in keeping with Bell and Nkomo's (1992: 241) conception, where "[m]ore than merely being a biological classification of the sexes, gender includes the societal orientations, values, and roles distinguishing women from men and the interactions between them". This research will similarly question work perceptions and managerial realities.

A societal level influence that some organisations attach importance to with regard to recruitment and career progression of managers, and especially of women, is their marital status. Situational factors, such as life-cycle stage, marital status, number and age of children, all influence managerial realities, especially among women. For example, Sutton and Moore (1985) noted that women managers were more likely to remain single than their male counterparts. Even when married, they were less likely to have children. Powell (1993) views situational variables as important factors that are sometimes more likely to predict differences in work perceptions than gender. In addition, Brown (1976) has emphasised that the life-cycle changes among women are important predictors of orientations to work. Factors such as marriage, birth of a child, a child starting school, or leaving home can have a significant impact on women's orientations to work.

A key reason why the status of male managers is relatively advantaged when they have a family and children is the domestic role and labour committed by their

spouses or partners. On the other hand, where women managers are married this may be disadvantageous for them, during both initial recruitment and subsequent career progression in organisations (Powell, 1993), because of the way the interface between home and work responsibilities of women manager plays out. Women managers with family responsibilities may encounter difficulties in displaying the level of commitment that the management position may entail, or the perception of such a commitment that exists within the organisation. Another example of the disadvantages women managers may face is the requirement to be mobile. Thus, male or female managers who are single or without family responsibilities may have greater chances for career advancement in organisations than do women holding management positions and having families and children.

The literature relating to women and management seems to highlight that the majority of those holding positions of authority are either single or single parents. For example, in Powell's (1988) study of American organisations, single women (never married, widowed, separated or divorced) accounted for 42 per cent of all women managers while only 25 per cent of male managers were single. Similarly, in a British Institute of Management survey, in Europe only 58 per cent of women managers were married whereas among men 93 per cent were married. Among the married women, only half had children, while 90 per cent of men had children (Vinnicombe and Sturges, 1995).

There is empirical support in the literature for Bell and Nkomo's (1992) argument that women should not be seen as a homogenous group, and that extra-organisational factors play a role in that regard. Greenhaus *et al.'s* (1990) study of job satisfaction among managers in the United States found that African-American women in the study experienced greater levels of job dissatisfaction and isolation than did white women. Fagenson and Jackson (1993) argued that women of colour experienced discrimination not only because of their gender but also colour and race/ethnicity, resulting in managerial under-representation.

More recent theorists have followed Bell and Nkomo's (1992) lead in studying the influence of race and ethnicity as well as gender in organisations. For example, Cianni and Romberger (1995b) in their study of White, Black, Hispanic and Asian

employees argued that race and ethnicity, in addition to gender, may influence access to specific development opportunities provided by supervisors. In addition, Donnellon and Kolb (1994) noted that as more people from different backgrounds enter organisations and progress through a career, conflict on the basis of gender, ethnicity or race might become a salient issue for organisations to deal with. Cianni and Romberger (1995a), in their study of 3,106 junior managers in the United States, revealed that ethnicity, race, and gender differences may influence their perceptions of interactions with senior managers in organisations. Women and Asian managers were of the view that they lacked interaction to a greater extent with senior management in relation to their career development, than did Black, Hispanic and White managers. However, there are other theorists who argue for certain advantages that cultural diversity may bring into the workplace. For instance, Parker et al. (1997) argued that a supportive equal opportunity/affirmative action perception for women and workers who were ethnic minorities in the United States, influenced their perceptions of organisational justice and increased their career development opportunities. Bell et al. (1993: 110) argued for the importance of recognising the influence of ethnicity and gender in work perceptions:

> Many researchers fail even to mention the racial composition of the sample or question whether their findings are universally applicable. Even in studies where minority women are part of the sample, issues surrounding race or ethnicity are not explored.

Examples of such research that seem to miss crucial issues in the USA, supports the importance of institutional level determinants on work perceptions and realities. Perhaps as a result of the reception of the Cambridge studies, and the development of the Action frame, in the British context, researchers from this culture were more receptive to the issues than were those North Americans who were largely unaware of the research tradition in question. Clegg (1994: 25) observed that, Silverman's (1970) institutional theory developed in 1970 was well embedded in the British context but that "it scarcely had any influence at all in the United States of America". Institutional theory and its application became evident much later in USA [for example, Scott (1987)], but in many ways, as Clegg argues, Silverman is a 'missing link' between the older and the newer institutionalism.

Religious beliefs also play a part in the experience of gender and managerial realities. Baker and Terpstra's (1986) study showed that people who attended church regularly tended to be more traditional in their attitudes towards women because they seemed to relate more to traditional religious teachings rather than consider rational alternatives. In addition, age, as well as education and work experience, seem to influence attitudes towards women (Baker and Terpstra 1986). Such studies provide further evidence for societal level influences on orientations to work and organisational identities.

The evidence in support of the influence of extra-organisational variables on work perceptions offers a theoretical foundation that suggests testing the strength of institutional level influences in work perceptions of male and female managers. Much of this research is generated from the United States and European contexts; none has been systematically tested in a developing country such as Sri Lanka. As the first five chapters elaborated, this thesis postulates that diverse cultural influences, in the forms of ethnicity, religion, and the effects of education, history and colonisation, intersect the roles of women in Sri Lankan society. Hence, one would anticipate effects on both male and female managers. In order to analyse organisational behaviour fully a model should not use intra-organisational level determinants alone: extra-organisational or institutional level determinants are also important.

The study of Sri Lankan organisations provides a pertinent example of a cultural and traditional context where societal influences might be expected to permeate into organisations. As we have seen in Chapter 5, much of the Sri Lankan literature on management strongly supports the view that extra-organisational and institutional factors influence the orientations and perceptions that males and females bring to the organisation. Iddamalgoda (1991) argued that one reason for Sri Lankan women's experience of difficulties while seeking opportunities for career, training, and advancement, was because of the traditions and prejudices established through many generations. For example, gender stereotypes and traditions dictate that women perform familial obligations. Such influences stem from deep-seated cultural roots that exist to some extent even today. Historically, Sri Lankan women generally had a subordinate role in the economy, mainly participating in agriculture and the

subsistence economy, as we saw in Chapter 2. The effects of colonisation undermined some of the traditions and cultural beliefs in varying degrees, and precipitated some changes. In addition, the provision of welfare services, such as education and health, have helped Sri Lankan women have a relatively higher socio-economic status in comparison to others in the South Asian region. However, as mentioned at the outset of this chapter, although Sri Lanka has a relatively higher labour force participation rate for women than elsewhere in the South Asian region, yet, the percentage of women managers in organisations remains low as compared to men. Although women are present in the labour force, the majority lack proper working conditions, wages, and career opportunities, particularly among women in the IPZs, plantations, and those travelling to the Middle East for work as housemaids.

The complex social structure of Sri Lankan society discussed in Chapter 3, provides a foundation for analysing how the different experiences of gender, ethnicity, and religion might influence work perceptions and attitudes towards women managers. Do factors that relate to ethnicity, or religious beliefs, have any part in contemporary work perceptions, attitudes towards women, and orientations to work as suggested by the Sri Lankan literature and the literature on gender and organisations discussed above? These research questions will be addressed and answered.

Thus, the action frame of reference framework allows for analysis of societal or extra-organisational level influences on women's orientations to work in Sri Lanka. Apart from the influence of personal characteristics, Iddamalgoda (1991) observed that negative cultural aspects relating to Sri Lankan women often appear in relation to their self-perceptions. She noted that despite the benefits of the advancement of education, industrialisation, and urbanisation, Sri Lankan women seemed to accept male domination as a norm. Such self-perceptions among women seem to mirror some of the realities that they face both in the workplace and outside. For example, some men discourage their wives becoming breadwinners, which in turn has a negative impact on their career orientations. In addition, women may have to fall in line with the notion that their jobs need to be 'family-friendly'. In other words, the woman's job may interfere with familial obligations which, once again, may be at odds with a career orientation. According to Iddamalgoda (1991) some organisations

in Sri Lanka reported that women managers lacked punctuality, reliability, and the willingness to work for long hours and during weekends. This thesis will question whether such perceptions towards managerial work and women managers remain valid in present day Sri Lankan organisations. In addition, it will look at gender role attitudes among male and female managers and identify the extent to which Sri Lankan managers and organisations embody these traditional attitudes to gender.

The action frame of reference suggests that the work domain may not be the only source of pressure that Sri Lankan women managers experience. Non-work domain pressures may exist as well. For example, Iddamalgoda (1991: 72) explained that "[c]oncepts of shared housework or partnership in family responsibilities, [such as] rearing children are still alien to the attitudinal framework of many Sri Lankans". In addition, many Sri Lankans lack labour-saving devices, childcare, transport, and housing facilities. Women managers may be expected to experience the pressure of their dual roles as both homemakers and managers. As a result of these dual roles, women managers may orient themselves to finding and working in jobs that enable them to create a balance between home and work. Once again it can be argued that cultural attributes and attitudes emerge to guide and shape women's orientations and actions.

Iddamalgoda (1991: 72) makes strong claims concerning the impacts of the extra-organisational factors on Sri Lankan managers:

> In the conflict [between home and work], they accept the family role. Because of the cultural upbringing, which make women to feel that they have no other option short of breaking up the family, and leaving the children stranded, which they are reluctant to or are afraid to do because of social stigma.

In response to Iddamalgoda's (1991) claim, the thesis will analyse the patterns of domestic division of labour in the households of male and female managers. At issue will be the impact for women managers of the arrangement they make for the domestic division of labour through either the presence of servants or extended family members, in addition to considering whether or not they have understanding spouses who share domestic work.

Many Sri Lankan women in management remain single or are divorced or widowed, or have children above 15 years of age (Weathersby, 1987). In Obeysekere's (1987) study of women in top management, of the five respondents, two were unmarried, another two were married but had no children, and only one was married and had children. Albeit that one cannot generalise from such a small sample, this does suggest that family life cycle and marital status will be significant, in line with theoretical arguments from the 'action frame' perspective, as developed by Brown (1976). The thesis will explore the situational factors influencing work perceptions and organisational realities among male and female managers in Sri Lankan organisations. In sum, the first research question that the thesis will address is:

To what extent do institutional level determinants influence work perceptions of Sri Lankan managers?

The institutional level determinants used are:
- *Gender*
- *Ethnicity*
- *Religion*
- *Age*
- *Marital status*
- *Life-context stage*
- *Education*

6.3 Organisational level factors: The argument from organisational culture

While the theoretical arguments from institutional perspectives, such as the action frame, orientations to work, and embeddedness (Granovetter, 1985), seem plausible, there do exist strong empirical counterfactuals suggesting, as this thesis will, that one needs to consider both institutional and organisation level phenomena. For example, in a study of job preferences by Bigoness (1988), women managers were more interested in the intrinsic aspects of the job such as the challenging nature of work, responsibility, and the use of skills. In contrast, men preferred extrinsic aspects such as salary, career opportunities, pleasant working conditions and recognition for work. However, a more recent study by Mason (1995) in the United States, among 130,000 employees from 130 organisations, revealed that male and female managers had similar sources of job satisfaction. Lefkowitz (1994) in his study in the United Sates of 371 men and 361 women (managers and non-managers) noted that males and

females reacted similarly to work as long as the differences in the jobs and income were controlled. Earlier, Manhardt (1972) observed that the reason for the similarity in the attitudes among males and females was that females enjoyed equal or higher levels of career satisfaction to their male counterparts. He noted that such an attitude stemmed from the level of commitment they attached to their management careers. When women managers were committed to their careers and jobs, their attitudes and perceptions towards work seemed to be similar to men.

According to Lacy et al. (1983) both males and females considered meaningful work to be the most important aspect to their jobs. The next in order of importance were career prospects, job security, and working hours. In the experience of conflict between the home and the workplace, women managers seem to experience greater levels of conflict than men. This latter finding, of the greater work-family conflict experienced by women, has been widely supported in the literature (Cooper and Davidson, 1982; Davidson and Cooper, 1980; Parasuraman and Greenhaus, 1993; Sheppard, 1992). However, both males and females may seek organisational policies that provide for a balance between work and family. Women managers typically seem to experience greater pressures in coping with dual roles. Powell (1993) observed that while there may be a marginal difference in work perceptions, attitudes, and reactions on account of gender, the salience of differences based on occupational prestige, education, and income was much higher.

In its strong version, the argument exclusively from organisation-level variables is called the 'culture-free hypothesis'. Child and Kieser (1979: 251) support the culture-free hypothesis by arguing empirically in favour of organisational level attributes. They state that:

> In recent years, . . . a contrary view has developed to the effect that patterns of organisations will be free of cultural influence, especially in industry, because contingencies of scale, technological development and so forth impose a common logic of work and administration which it becomes functionally imperative to adopt in terms of institutional performance.

Such a view argues that institutional level attributes seem not to influence organisational experiences. Donaldson (1995) has also argued in favour of the

organisational structure determinants, rather than those from the broader culture, as a rational approach for the study of organisations.

The literature on gender and organisation has acknowledged the importance of other factors as well as determinants at the organisational level. Kanter (1975 and 1977) argued that an individual's position in the organisation structure predicted his or her work behaviour and attitudes. For example, power structure within organisations seems to predict the levels at which women managers are present. Organisational practices and processes are another source that may influence gender issues in relation to pay, segregation, subordination, and hierarchies. According to Albert and Whetten (1985), an important factor constituting organisational identity is a shared understanding of the organisation's character. Such a character is a central, distinctive, and enduring essence of the organisation, taking the form of shared values and beliefs, missions, structures and processes, organisational climate and the like. Thus, from this perspective, and in line with the arguments from organisational culture studies, it may well be organisational rather than societal culture that is of most significance.

Kono and Clegg (1998: 3) used the term 'corporate culture' "to emphasise the values shared by members, their method of decision-making or way of thinking, and their overt behaviour patterns". At least two different ways of conceptualising corporate culture in an organisation are relevant to this thesis. The first is stratification, namely, the different levels that constitute the organisation's hierarchy. The hierarchy or level is an important dimension in the analysis of organisation's corporate culture. The second dimension for the analysis of corporate culture is in relation to the subcultures composed by gender groups. The gender composition of managers in an organisation influences the perception of a manager in the study of corporate culture. The overall presence of women in management in the organisation will be another determinant of corporate culture. Therefore, the organisational level and the gender composition of management are two important independent variables in this thesis.

The importance of the organisational structure or hierarchy that Kanter (1977), as well as Kono and Clegg (1998), have emphasised, has been a neglected aspect in

gender research (Billing and Alvesson, 1994). In addition, Billing and Alvesson (1994) argued that gender research should consider the nature of differences between organisations such as industry, sector, size, and the occupational skill area of the manager. Accordingly, this thesis will examine the extent to which the organisational structure may influence work perceptions of male and female managers in Sri Lanka.

The perceptions that individuals hold of equal employment opportunities in organisations in relation to males and females may be important. Equal employment opportunity perceptions in relation to recruitment, promotion, supervision, performance appraisal, and salary issues among male and female managers may explain how management exercises control of gender issues within the organisation, and the factors that guide such policies, according to Billing and Alvesson (1994). The thesis will explore the extent to which organisational level factors influence equal employment opportunity perceptions.

Cooper and Davidson (1984) acknowledged the need for greater depth in research that identifies specific pressure that male and female managers experience at *all* management levels. They agree with the recurrent and consistent results of research that show that female managers encounter greater work pressure in comparison to male managers (Davidson and Cooper, 1980; Cooper and Davidson, 1982, Vinnicombe and Colwill, 1995). Cooper and Davidson's (1984) study of 696 female and 185 male managers in Britain also looked at stress arising out of work relationship pressures. Their research suggested that women managers are unfairly treated, lack role models, and experience discrimination, because male managers will favour their male colleagues. As Billing and Alvesson (1994: 8) also observed, " . . . [t]he presence of women in management positions can put many important dimensions of gender relations into close focus; the traditional subordination of women to men being removed, or even reversed." This thesis will identify those factors that most significantly predict work and work relationship pressures in relation to the gendered nature of Sri Lankan management.

The gender composition of managers, either as colleagues, or in terms of the organisation as a whole, may be another important predictor, as the gender and

organisation literature suggests. In one of the most significant studies of gender in the literature, Kanter (1977) elaborated the significance of the gender composition of managers as a factor that influences their work experiences. Additionally, Martin (1985) observed that mixed groups in organisations were helpful not only for women but for men as well. The thesis will determine the extent to which the gender composition of Sri Lankan organisations favours either men or women managers as well as the extent to which women managers have greater job satisfaction, where there is a greater presence of other women in the organisation.

In sum, the second research question that the thesis will address is:

> *To what extent do organisational level determinants influence work perceptions of Sri Lankan managers?*
>
> *The organisational level determinants used are:*
> - *Manager's level in the organisation's hierarchy*
> - *Length of a manager's service*
> - *Length of a manager's past experience*
> - *A manager's income level*
> - *Total number of organisations the manager has served*
> - *Manager's present span of control*
> - *Gender of the manager to whom the respondent manager reports*
> - *The proportion of males and females who are colleagues of a manager*
> - *The work force of an organisation*
> - *The proportion of women managers in the organisation*
> - *The organisation's line(s) of business*

6.4 Conclusion

The argument of this thesis is based on institutional perspectives derived ultimately from the 'action frame of reference' as well as the concept of 'orientations to work' (Goldthorpe *et al.*, 1968; Silverman, 1970). The action frame of reference and orientations to work literatures call for an investigation of both the extra-organisational as well as intra-organisational level determinants in the analysis of work perceptions among organisational actors. Accordingly, in this study of Sri Lankan male and female managers' work perceptions and orientations, the thesis will include institutional or extra-organisational level influences as well as intra-organisational level influences.

The research questions will identify the extent to which institutional level determinants or organisational level determinants increase explanatory power in analysing work perceptions of male and female managers in Sri Lankan organisations. In other words, the first research question will focus on the extent to which institutional level determinants such as gender, ethnicity, religion, age, marital status, education, and income level, explain work perceptions. The second research question will focus on the extent to which organisational level determinants explain work perceptions. Organisational level determinants include the organisation's hierarchy or level, length of past and present service, income level, number of organisations served, span of control, gender of the superior, gender composition, size of the work force, the level of presence of women managers, and the line of business.

Having analysed the extent to which both institutional level and organisational level variables influence work perceptions, the thesis will examine which level of analysis best increases explanatory power in regard to work perceptions in a Sri Lankan managerial context. A rigorous test will be conducted at both levels of analysis in order to determine the greater explanatory power of either the organisational or institutional level determinants on a nationally framed sample that presents an exemplary case for the salience of the institutional perspectives. The next chapter will discuss the research design for the thesis.

Chapter 7

THE RESEARCH DESIGN

> If we are ever to reach a greater understanding of the experience of women in organisations, we must begin to investigate the complex nature of realities – both the internal (intra-physic) factors and the external conditions – influencing their lives (Bell and Nkomo, 1992: 236).

The previous chapter discussed the literature in relation to the research questions after exploring the international, as well as the Sri Lankan, literature on gender and organisations. The research questions address, first, the extent to which institutional perspectives, developed by 'embedded' and 'action frame of reference', increase the analytical power in explaining the degree of job satisfaction and work perceptions in Sri Lankan organisations. Second, one keeps an open mind that as the chapter also showed, there is the culture-free hypothesis seeking empirical evidence for the importance of organisational level factors. This will in fact be the empirical argument, as the quotation at the start of this chapter suggests, that one needs to consider both institutional level and organisational level attributes to explain work perceptions. Although the literature suggests that institutional level attributes are important, there may be counterfactual evidence which suggests that organisational level attributes may be equally or more important. The last chapter considered this theoretical argument, using the action frame of reference (Silverman, 1970) and the orientations to work concept (Goldthorpe *et al.* 1968). This chapter builds a model that frames different hypotheses about gender and organisation in Sri Lanka, while it also uses the organisational level literature to pose a counter-hypothesis.

7.1 Theory – the action frame of reference in an organisational context

Silverman (1970) acknowledged that, in addition to non-work factors, other factors, stemming from within organisations, influence actors' orientations and actions. Actors' different experiences, such as their management level, work experience, job specialisation and length of work experience tend to influence work perceptions and action. Clearly, the action frame of reference, and its parent frame of social constructivism, is extremely broad. Silverman's (1970) theoretical framework shows that actors' finite provinces of meaning *and* the organisational role-system have a bearing on the nature of involvement, orientations, expectations, and the action approach. Silverman (1970) referred to 'finite provinces of meaning' as the historical and multiple statuses an actor belongs to a particular point in time. As the previous chapter explained, this thesis includes aspects such as age, gender, ethnicity, religion, life-stage context and education in these.

When Silverman (1970) referred to the concept of the 'organisational role-system,' he considered different components constituting organisational dynamics among members. For example, according to Silverman, 'nature of involvement' took the form of the relationships and behaviours that members experienced in the organisation, either as superiors, subordinates, or colleagues as well as authority flowing from superior power. Silverman (1970: 152) refers to the organisational role-system as:

> . . . the rules of the game which all groups tend to accept for the time being, either because they feel they can do nothing to alter them or, more importantly, because of the rewards which stable group relations offer to all those concerned.

Another aspect of the organisational role system is the pattern of interaction in the organisation, the manner of its historical development, and the extent to which there is a representation of a 'shared value' among members. The 'organisational role system' could entail a less constrained meaning. In relation to gender, it could include at least the organisational level or hierarchy, the gender composition (Kanter, 1977), as well as the nature and characteristics of the organisation (Billing and Alvesson, 1994). This thesis will use such a concept of the organisational role-system to include the organisational hierarchy, work experience, the span of control.

the organisational gender composition, and the organisation's size as well as line of business. Given that the focus of this thesis is on gender, any consideration of the organisational role-system has to be discriminative, showing significant differences on gender lines.

7.2 The organisational context

How and in what forms do work perceptions manifest themselves in organisations in relation to gender? Prior research has validated the use of scales and variables relating to work perceptions with specific focus on gender and organisation. This thesis specifies important variables and scales drawing from past research and literature. The following section considers the variables that are used in this thesis.

7.2.1 Job satisfaction

There has been considerable debate on the question how and to what extent job satisfaction might differ across gender. Herzberg *et al.* (1957) pioneered the study of job satisfaction and concluded that men tended to derive greater satisfaction from intrinsic rather than extrinsic factors than did women. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, this finding has been challenged by contemporary organisational behaviour literature. Women managers seem to enjoy equal or greater levels of job satisfaction than their male counterparts (for example Parasuraman and Greenhaus [1993]). In addition, women derive job satisfaction from their work relationships with others (Billing and Alvesson, 1994). Thus, it is important to identify from the literature, the different constructs that constitute job satisfaction.

This thesis uses intrinsic as well as extrinsic job factors as constructs to measure job satisfaction, drawing from Collinson's (1987) study. Collinson's study is important because his survey successfully generated considerable data that would otherwise have been difficult to collect qualitatively despite the fact that, as he acknowledged questionnaires, in general, sometimes lack depth and dynamism. Collinson (1987) studied changes and practices in equal opportunity of a major insurance company in the United Kingdom. He conducted a questionnaire survey among 1,652 female and 1,344 male employees. The questionnaire served the purpose of exploring equal opportunity perceptions in a large organisation. The response rate for the survey was 61 per cent. The questionnaire for this thesis was drawn up in a similar manner, to study work perceptions as well as organisational level determinants. Thus, this thesis

used a questionnaire that had been successfully trialled and tested in previous research.

Three of the original constructs in Collinson's study were replaced to make the questions more relevant to Sri Lankan managers. The changes are as follows:

Original constructs	Replaced with
Freedom to define content/pace of work	Use of experience and abilities
Communication from management	Use of skills and knowledge
Trade union representation	Opportunity for enjoying leadership of superiors

I decided to replace these constructs relating to job satisfaction with regard to freedom to define content/pace of work, communication from management and trade union representation, with ones that respondents would feel more comfortable to answer, given the Sri Lankan context in which the questions were being posed. I preferred to avoid questions that were debatable and those that might hinder a response from the sample. For example, Sri Lankan managers are likely to have little or no freedom to define content/pace of work on their own. What was more relevant therefore, was how they might use their experiences and abilities to derive job satisfaction. Thus, I found it more appropriate to ask how satisfied they were in their use of experiences and abilities rather than to ask how they felt about freedom to define content/pace of work. Perhaps, their experience and abilities could influence what they felt about freedom to define content/pace of work.

Similarly, the construct "communication from management" can become a debatable issue. If I had had this original construct in the questionnaire, some organisations would have disallowed permission to conduct the sample survey, as it is a very sensitive issue in Sri Lankan organisations. Therefore, I decided to ask a completely different, yet more relevant question in relation to an important managerial reality – the use of their skills and knowledge in terms of their job satisfaction. I decided to include a construct that would generate robust data rather than one that will lead to lack of co-operation from the sample.

Trade union representation is another question that is very sensitive. Some organisations may not have trade unions at all. In some other organisations, authoritarian managers may suppress trade unions using various tactics. Thus, the

need for robust data in relation to this construct was highly questionable. Therefore, I decided to ask for a completely different yet relevant construct that might result in a comfortable answer from every respondent. Although the changes are unrelated, the purpose of the changes justifies them because I could not afford to take any risk with the constructs. Thus, the thesis used the following list of constructs in the questionnaire in relation to job satisfaction and included eleven different constructs[1]:

- Interesting and enjoyable work (1a; js1a)
- Responsibility (1b; js1b)
- Career prospects (1c; js1c)
- Job security (1d; js1d)
- Monetary reward (1e; js1e)
- Relations with colleagues (1f; js1f)
- Relations with superiors (1g; js1g)
- Recognition from management (1h; js1h)
- Use of experience and abilities (1i; js1i)
- Use of skills and knowledge (1j; js1j)
- Opportunity for enjoying leadership of superiors (1k; js1k)

7.2.2 Preferences for work values/characteristics

The organisational behaviour literature emphasises the importance of analysing the extent to which gender might influence differences in preferences for work values and characteristics. For example, Taylor and Spencer (1988) emphasised that women managers seemed to give first priority to the family rather than career, while men considered their careers to be most important. In other studies, men and women considered meaningful work as most important, while monetary rewards, job security and work hours came next. This thesis adopts Collinson's (1987) questions including three additional constructs, to incorporate the balance between home and work, service orientation and open communication. Thus, preferences for work values/characteristics consist of the following constructs:

- Interesting work (2a; imp2a)
- Career prospects (2b; imp2b)
- Responsibility (2c; imp2c)
- Job security (2d; imp2d)
- Monetary reward (2e; imp2e)
- Relations with colleagues (2f; imp2f)
- Recognition from management (2g; imp2g)
- Autonomy to define content and pace of work (2h; imp2h)
- Service orientation towards organisation (2i; imp2i)

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[1] The numbers in parentheses refer to the question number in the questionnaire and the variable names as they appear in the data analysis.

- Balance between work time and time for personal and family matters that the job allows (2j; imp2j)
- Open communication (2k; imp2k)

7.2.3 Experience of work realities

In a study of 696 female and 195 male managers in the United Kingdom, Cooper and Davidson (1984) identified gender as well as organisational level differences in the work performance behaviour. Their results guided later management training and development programmes to focus on ways and means of developing confidence and skills in relation to difficulties that managers faced in their performance and behaviour. This thesis adopted Cooper and Davidson's (1984) approach to identify work performance behaviour. However, as the original questions consisted only of negative constructs, the constructs for this thesis were modified to include eight positive and five negative constructs. Three repetitive constructs were deleted. The main reason for these modifications was to make the questionnaire interesting for respondents to read and answer. Thus, the variable 'experience of work realities' includes four parts:

With respect to managing one's work (Positive):
- Results justify my decisions significantly (3a; mgt3a)
- Deadlines and targets are met (3b and 3c; mgt3b and mgt3c)

With respect to managing one's work (Negative):
- I could have done better quality work (3d; mgt3d)
- Planning and organising tasks are difficult for me (3g; mgt3g)
- I react too emotionally when faced with problems at work (3k; mgt3k)
- I make mistakes (3l; mgt3l)

With respect to managing work relationships with other people (Positive):
- I can manage or supervise people well (3e; mgt3e)
- I am confident in putting forward my view at meetings (3f; mgt3f)
- I easily influence and persuade people (3h; mgt3h)
- In competitive situations I 'sell myself' (3i; mgt3i)
- I cope well in situations of conflict (3j; mgt3j)

With respect to managing work relationships with other people (Negative):
- I feel threatened by others at work (3m; mgt3m)

7.2.4 Management/leadership styles

Another important aspect of analysis in the gender and organisational behaviour literature is the attitude towards leadership and leadership styles. Loden (1986) argued that women tended to have a complementary or different leadership style that contained special advantages over the typical 'male' leadership style. In addition, Bayes (1987) held the view that women managers tended to be more participative

and democratic in their leadership style. Cooper and Davidson (1984) identified in their study that male managers tended to be less sensitive, sympathetic and co-operative than did women. Such studies emphasise the importance of analysing leadership styles among managers. This thesis adopts a simplified version of Cooper and Davidson's (1984) original constructs that constituted management styles. Four of the original constructs were deleted, as they were similar in meaning to others. Thus, management/leadership styles include being:

- Flexible (4a; sty4a)
- Task-oriented (4b; sty4b)
- A giver of decisive instructions (4c; sty4c)
- Sensitive/sympathetic (4d; sty4d)
- Consultative (4e; sty4e)
- Co-operative (4f; sty4f)

7.2.5 Experience of work and work relationship pressure

One of the most important aspects of work realities and experiences of gender and organisation is work pressure. Cooper and Davidson's (1984) study concluded that women managers not only experienced pressure arising out of work but also from the home, society, and individual arenas. Male managers were not free from the experience of work pressure. However, men tended to experience pressure arising from factors within the work arena. The variable 'experience of work and work relationship pressure' was adapted from Cooper and Davidson's (1984) study. However, the original questionnaire contained 80 constructs. For the purpose of this thesis, the original list was simplified to comprise 42 constructs in the variable. The variable 'experience of work pressure' includes four different parts, as follows:

(a) With respect to the nature of work itself:
- Overload (5a; q5a)
- Promoted beyond trained work capacity (5b; q5b)
- Too much travel (5c; q5c)
- Pressure to take home work (5d; q5d)
- Pressure to attend meetings (5q; q5q)
- Long working hours (5r; q5r)
- Too much responsibility (5s; q5s)

(b) With respect to work relationships with other people:
- Lack of power by managers over others (5f; q5f)
- Lack of influence by managers over others (5g; q5g)
- Lack of consultation and communication (5h; q5h)
- Lack of support from superiors (5i; q5i)
- Conflicting job demands and loyalties (5j; q5j)
- Lack of support from peers and subordinates (5k; q5k)

- Verbal or physical sexual harassment (5v; q5v)

(c) With respect to one's career
- Gender discrimination and prejudice (5n; q5n)
- More favourable treatment for colleagues of opposite gender (5p; q5p)
- Need to move location to further career (5t; q5t)
- Unclear career progress prospects (5u; q5u)

(d) With respect to the work environment:
- Lack of proper controls (5e; q5e)
- Pressure to keep up with new technology (5l; q5l)
- Inadequate resources (5m; q5m)
- Inadequate job training and experience (5o; q5o)

Similarly, the variable 'experience of work relationship pressure' consists of three different parts. They are as follows:

(e) With respect to factors within the organisation:
- Working relationships with:
    Superiors of the opposite gender (12a; rp12a)
    Colleagues of the opposite gender (12b; rp12b)
    Subordinates of the opposite gender (12c; rp12c)
- Lack of gender role models (12d; rp12d)
- Discomfort on the part of members of opposite gender because of respondent's gender (12e; rp12e)
- Discomfort on the part of respondent because others belong to opposite gender (12f; rp12f)
- Members of the opposite gender forcing respondent to behaviours associated with gender (12h; rp12h)
- Experience of prejudiced attitudes from members of the same gender because of respondent's gender (12j; rp12j)
- Experiencing discomfort during training courses because respondent belongs to minority gender (12k; rp12k)

(f) With respect to factors outside the organisation (home/society):
- Spouse's negative attitude to respondent's career (12l; rp12l)
- Work demands on relationship with children (12m; rp12m)
- Work demands on relationship with spouse (12n; rp12n)
- Dependents (other than children) at home (12o; rp12o)
- Business travel and staying outside home (12p; rp12p)
- Lack of emotional support at home (12q; rp12q)
- Lack of domestic support at home (12r; rp12r)
- Work demands on public/social life (12s; rp12s)
- Conflicting responsibilities associated with running a family, home and career (12t; rp12t)

(g) With respect to career progression:
- Respondent's gender as a disadvantage to career progress prospects (12g; rp12g)
- Respondent having to perform better than colleagues of opposite gender in the job (12i; rp12i)

7.2.6 Ideal management characteristics

Another important development relating to the growing presence of women managers, is the relevance of pre-existing management stereotypes. Some of the literature relating to gender and organisations has questioned the validity of stereotypes such as 'think manager – think male,' suggesting that a 'good manager' be seen as androgynous. However, Powell (1993: 153) noted that "women's stereotypes of women have changed, but not their stereotypes of managers". Virginia Schein's (1973 and 1975) pioneering work on requisite management characteristics has suggested that "successful middle managers are perceived to possess those characteristics, attitudes, and temperaments, more commonly ascribed to men in general than to women in general" (1973: 99). Schein's later studies (Brenner *et al.*, 1989; Schein, 1994) showed that while male middle managers continued to adhere to male managerial stereotypes, female middle managers seemed to adhere to gender-neutral managerial stereotypes.

For research on management characteristics, this thesis adapted the study of Strivers and Campbell (1995). They studied the perceived characteristics of successful management accounting consultants in a questionnaire survey among 156 male and female accountants in North Atlanta. The response rate was 31.2 per cent. The questionnaire consisted of 95 descriptors of ideal management characteristics including the 92 descriptors that Virginia Schein (1973 and 1975) had previously developed. In this thesis, it was not possible to include all 95 descriptors with the other questions because their inclusion would have meant that the questionnaire would become too long for respondents to answer. Hence, the questionnaire included an open-ended question asking for the five most desirable and the five least desirable characteristics of a manager. Thus, the question on ideal management characteristics comprised five open-ended responses each relating to:

- Most desirable management characteristics (mdc1 to mdc6)
- Least desirable characteristics (ldc1 to ldc6)

7.2.7 Equal employment opportunity perceptions

The gender and organisational behaviour literature has highlighted the recurrent inequality in the career advancement prospects for women managers, not only

because of broader societal factors such as marital status but also due to organisational practices and culture. There are several aspects that may constitute equal opportunity for men and women managers in an organisation. For example, an important aspect of equal opportunity is with regard to pay and promotion. Perceptions towards equal employment are influenced both by organisations as well as individual managers, both men and women (Powell, 1993). Hence, equal employment opportunity perceptions are an important aspect for examination in gender and organisation. Adapting Collinson's (1987) study, two constructs relating to absence and job evaluation were deleted while a new construct for pay was added. This thesis includes the following constructs in relation to equal employment opportunity perceptions.

- Recruitment (7a; eeo7a)
- Supervision (7b; eeo7b)
- Training (7c; eeo7c)
- Performance to be appraised (7d; eeo7d)
- Promotion (7e; eeo7e)
- Pay (7f; eeo7f)

7.2.8 Perception towards women managers in the organisation

There are diverse views in the literature promoting favourable as well as unfavourable perceptions of women managers. For example, Devanna (1987) was of the view that women managers experienced slower career progression despite equal work characteristics to their male counterparts, including pay. Pre-existing gender stereotypes seem to suggest the view that women have to prove themselves to advance in a career. In some cases, women managers experienced discouragement to further their careers because of maternity and domestic reasons (Billing and Alvesson, 1994). However, in some other cases women managers have a favourable position in organisations, especially among male managers. Collinson's (1987) study suggests that men seem to hold a more favourable attitude towards women than women themselves do. Hence, this thesis will examine both the favourable as well as unfavourable perceptions towards women managers at work. Thus, the variable 'perception towards women managers in an organisation' includes three different parts. They are:

(a) With respect to women's advantaged or favourable position:
Women:
- Are encouraged to 'get on' with jobs as do men (8e; waw8a)
- Perform better than men in routine jobs (8n; waw8n)

- Suffer the same career blocks as do men (8o; waw8o)
- Achieve career progression primarily as a result of self-determination, as do men (8q; waw8q)
- Experience sexual inequality, such as their absence in higher positions, as the product of history that will gradually disappear over time (8t; waw8t)
- Managers are managers, so that it really makes no difference what gender the managers are (8u; waw8u)

(b) With respect to women's disadvantaged or unfavourable position: Women:

- Choose not to further their career (8a; waw8a)
- Lack qualifications and experience for the job (8b; waw8b)
- Lack of interest in a career (8c; waw8c)
- Leave just at the point at which significant progress is possible (8d; waw8d)
- Experience more discrimination and prejudice than men (8f; waw8f)
- Choose lower paid/lower status jobs and work for 'pin money' (8g; waw8g)
- Tend to be stuck in certain jobs while men receive training (8h; waw8h)
- Do not want to take responsibility for the job (8i; waw8i)
- Are not promoted to management because of the child bearing issue (8j; waw8j)
- Are not encouraged to be ambitious to move to management (8k; waw8k)
- Are not encouraged to be trained to move to management (8l; waw8l)
- Have no career paths between work force segments (8m; waw8m)
- Don't progress because, frequently, they absent themselves from work due to domestic reasons (8r; waw8r)

(c) With respect to other general issues:

- Managers have their favourite employees of either gender (8s; waw8s)
- Promotion for long-standing employees depends on where new recruits are placed (8p; waw8p)

7.2.9 Resignation decisions of men and women managers

The gender literature has highlighted the importance of analysing the intention of employees to leave jobs. For example, Weisberg and Kirschenbaum (1993) investigated an Israeli sample of 506 male and female textile workers and found that women were more affected by their ethnic-family orientations while men were more concerned with aspects of their career. In addition, Price and Meuller (1986) were of the view that women heading households tended to have lower turnover intentions because of their need for economic survival. A similar situation tended to apply for

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men who had large families. Additionally, Erickson (1977) observed that women changed work for jobs that helped them be closer to their home because of the work-family role conflict. Bose (1985) showed that women managers with relatively higher education levels tended to have a higher turnover rate because they were orientated towards career paths as well as career moves. Using the constructs developed by following Collinson's (1987) study, this thesis developed the following sets of constructs: The first deals with:

(a) Perceptions of men and women managers of reasons why male managers are likely to leave an organisation (with respect to work nature or characteristics):
- Higher pay (9a; rdm9a)
- Greater job satisfaction (9b; rdm9b)
- Less pressure/stress (9e; rdm9e)
- Career development opportunities (9f; rdm9f)
- Work closer to home (9h; rdm9h)
- A greater sense of achievement at work (9j; rdm9j)

(b) Perceptions of men and women managers of reasons why male managers are likely to leave an organisation (with respect to work relations with others):
- Better relations with superiors (9c; rdm9c)
- Better relations with colleagues (9d; rdm9d)
- Avoid gender discrimination (9g; rdm9g)
- Avoid frustration in a female dominated culture (9i; rdm9i)

The second construct concerns:

(c) Perceptions of men and women managers of reasons why female managers are likely to leave an organisation (with respect to work nature or characteristics):
- Higher pay (10a; rdf10a)
- Greater job satisfaction (10b; rdf10b)
- Less pressure/stress (10e; rdf10e)
- Career development opportunities (10f; rdf10f)
- Work closer to home (10h; rdf10h)
- A greater sense of achievement at work (10j; rdf10j)

(d) Perceptions of men and women managers of reasons why female managers are likely to leave an organisation (with respect to work relations with others):
- Better relations with superiors (10c; rdf10c)
- Better relations with colleagues (10d; rdf10d)
- Avoid gender discrimination (10g; rdf10g)
- Avoid frustration in a male dominated culture (10i; rdf10i)

7.2.10 Superior preference

The growth in presence of women managers has led to a greater occurrence of employees working and reporting to a woman superordinate. Therefore, it is

important to examine the perceptions of managers in relation to their superior's gender. Past studies of attitudes towards women managers have shown that perceptions towards women have changed favourably, to a greater extent by men than by women (for example, the *Harvard Business Review* studies [Bowman *et al.*, 1965 and Sutton and Moore, 1985]). This thesis uses a construct in the form of a question to identify such a manager's perception. The construct is as follows:

- If you were given the option of choosing whether your next superior is a male or female, what would be your preference? (supr11)

7.2.11 Gender role attitudes

There has been considerable evidence in the gender and organisation literature of an association between work perceptions and gender role expectations relating to a women manager (Cooper and Davidson, 1984; Offermann and Armitage, 1993; Parasuraman and Greenhaus, 1993). For example, Alpern (1993: 46), referring to the US labour market noted that " . . . stereotyped assumptions followed women into the work force, such as the assumption that women worked for luxury items or 'pin money'". The most important reason for the emergence of such a stereotype lies on the separation between women's private worlds and men's public worlds. Gender role attitudes in the USA during the early nineteenth century encouraged women to be homemakers. However, the rise in levels of education encouraged more women to question such stereotypes. Despite the lack of easy access to management positions, some women became entrepreneurs, becoming role models for other women wanting to enter organisations. Therefore, structural, institutional, and attitudinal barriers seem to have predominated the shaping of expectations relating to gender roles (Alpern, 1993).

This thesis investigates the gender role attitudes of Sri Lankan managers using items sourced from Baxter's (1993) study. Baxter (1993) studied gender role attitudes and patterns of domestic division of labour among Australian men and women in the 'Class Structure of Australia Project,' as part of an international study. The sample consisted of 669 men and 256 women across Australia. Her questionnaire included detailed aspects of the domestic division of labour. For the purposes of this thesis, it was possible to include only five questions on gender role attitudes from Baxter's study because the question that addressed child-care services was excluded on the

grounds of its irrelevance for Sri Lankan conditions. The following were the two sets of constructs relating to gender role attitudes:

(a) Traditional
- Husband is primary breadwinner and wife has primary responsibility at home (13a; gr13a)
- It would be better for Sri Lankan society if fewer women worked in jobs outside the home (13d; gr13d).

(b) Non-traditional
- If both the husband and wife work, they should share housework equally (13b; gr13b)
- There should be as many women as men in important positions in organisations (13c; gr13c)
- A woman who works in a paid job can be just as good a mother as one who does not (13e; gr13e)

7.2.12 Domestic division of labour

The domestic division of labour has been an interesting area of research in the gender and organisation literature. Women managers experience greater levels of stress than their male counterparts because of their conflicting demands at home and at work. In addition, women seem to bear the burden of having to organise work at home because they lacked domestic support (Cooper and Davidson, 1984). This thesis examines patterns of domestic division of labour among Sri Lankan managers. For this purpose, constructs used in Baxter's study were simplified to suit the length of the questionnaire as well as the Sri Lankan context. The variable 'domestic division of labour' includes constructs with respect to who does the different tasks at home, as follows:

- Spending time with children (14a; ddl14a)
- Settling children to bed (14b; ddl14b)
- Playing with children (14c; ddl14c)
- Going out to a movie or sport (14d; ddl14c)
- Taking children to visit relatives (14e; ddl14e)
- Taking children to and from school (14f; ddl14f)
- Helping children with studies (14g; ddl14g)
- Preparing meals (14h; ddl14h)
- Cleaning up after meals (14i; ddl14i)
- Shopping for groceries (14j; ddl14j)
- Cleaning the house (14k; ddl14k)
- Putting out garbage (14l; ddl14l)
- Washing clothes (14m; ddl14m)
- Ironing clothes (14n; ddl14n)
- Doing gardening (14o; ddl14o)
- Doing maintenance and improvement (14p; ddl14p)

This thesis uses measures and scales previously validated by research. In addition, the measures and scales relate to arguments and theories grounded in the gender and organisation literature. The main reason for adapting some of the original constructs to the Sri Lankan context was to ensure that the principal data collection tool, the questionnaire, was not unduly long. Some respondents even complained that the 12-page questionnaire was too long. Had I used the lengthy constructs, for example, in the question on ideal management characteristics, perhaps I could have collected more robust answers but this inclusion would have hindered the purpose of an efficient and concise questionnaire that encouraged completion. Hence, the length of the questionnaire was the biggest limitation. Apart from the length, there were very few problems in understanding the meaning of management and non-management terms in the questionnaire as I had ensured that the English Language used was very plain and simple.

In sum, the important issues arising from the literature that this thesis collectively refers to as 'work perceptions' are as follows:

- Job satisfaction,
- Preference for work characteristics,
- Work realities,
- Leadership/management styles,
- Work and work relationship pressure,
- Ideal management characteristics,
- Equal employment opportunity perceptions,
- Attitudes towards women managers,
- Resignation decisions,
- Preference of a superior by gender,
- Gender role attitudes, and
- The pattern of domestic division of labour.

Having discussed the dependent variables and their constructs relating to work perceptions, the following section recapitulates the institutional as well as organisational level attributes that the thesis will use as independent variables to analyse the data.

7.2.13 Institutional level determinants

As previously elaborated in Chapter 6, institutional level determinants include the following:

- Age (Question 15; Age)
- Marital status (Question 16; Marital)
- Life context score [This is a re-coded variable using questions (16), (20), (21), and (22), that include marital status, the number and ages of children, and whether women are the sole/principal breadwinners or not] (Context).
- Gender (Question 17; Gender)
- Ethnicity (Question 18; Ethnic)
- Religion (Question 19; Religion)
- Educational and professional qualifications (Question 24 and 25; Eductn)

7.2.14 Organisational level determinants

As previously elaborated in Chapter 6, organisational level determinants include the following:

- The manager's level in the organisation's hierarchy (Question 37; Level).
- The length of a manager's service (Question 26; Prsexp).
- The length of a manager's past experience (Question 27; Pasexp).
- The total number of organisations the manager has served (Question 28; Orgnos).
- Salary (monthly) (Question 31; Pay)
- The manager's span of control (number of subordinates) (Question 32; Suprse).
- Gender of the manager's supervisor (Question 33; Supr).
- The gender proportion among colleagues of a manager (Question 34; Colls).
- The overall work force (number of employees) (Question 35; Wrkfrc).
- The proportion of women managers in the organisation (Question 36; Wim).
- The organisation's line(s) of business (Question 39; line).

This thesis has used the 'action approach' of Silverman (1970) as the theoretical model, guiding the construction of the different variables, together with the 'orientations to work' concept of Goldthorpe et al. (1970), closely related to Silverman's action-frame of reference.

7.3 Hypotheses

The first research question focuses on the relative weight of institutional factors in the influence of gendered work perceptions. Consequently, the first hypothesis is as follows:

Hypothesis 1:
Institutional level determinants will influence the job satisfaction and work perceptions and actions of men and women managers in Sri Lankan organisations.

Table 7.1 shows the different dependent and independent variables for Hypothesis 1.

Table 7.1: DEPENDENT AND INDEPENDENT VARIABLES FOR HYPOTHESIS 1

Dependent Variables	Independent Variables
Job satisfaction (Question 1).	Age (Question 15)
Preferences to work characteristics (Question 2).	Marital status (Question 16)
Experience of work realities (Question 3).	Life context score [This is a re-coded variable
Leadership/management styles (Question 4).	using questions (16), (20), (21), and (22), that
Experience of work pressure (Question 5).	include marital status, the number and ages of
An 'ideal manager's' characteristics (Question 6).	children, and whether women are the
Equal employment opportunity perceptions	sole/principal breadwinners or not].
(Question 7).	Gender (Question 17)
Perceptions towards women at work (Question	Ethnicity (Question 18)
8).	Religion (Question 19)
Resignation decisions of men (Question 9).	Educational qualifications (Question 24)
Resignation decisions of women (Question 10).	
Gender preference of a superior (Question 11).	
Experience of relationship pressure (Question	
12).	
Gender role attitudes (Question 13).	
Domestic division of labour (Question 14).	

Data analysis for Hypothesis 1 will identify the level of influence of each of the dependent and independent variable listed in Table 7.1, and determine which of these are important.

Again, in line with the theoretical framework of the 'action frame of reference' and 'orientations to work,' this thesis argues that both institutional and organisational level attributes will influence work perceptions in relation to gender. Having constructed Hypothesis 1 in relation to institutional level attributes, Hypothesis 2 will relate to organisational level attributes.

Hypothesis 2:
Organisational level determinants will influence the job satisfaction and work perceptions and actions of men and women managers in Sri Lankan organisations.

Table 7.2 shows the different dependent and independent variables for Hypothesis 2.

Table 7.2: DEPENDENT AND INDEPENDENT VARIABLES FOR HYPOTHESIS 2

Dependent Variables	Independent Variables
Job satisfaction (Question 1).	The Manager's level in the organisation's
Preferences to work characteristics (Question 2).	hierarchy (Question 37).
Experience of work realities (Question 3).	The length of a manager's service in present
Leadership/management styles (Question 4).	organisation (Question 26).
Experience of work pressure (Question 5).	The length of a manager's past experience in
An 'ideal manager's' characteristics (Question 6).	other organisations (Question 27).
Equal employment opportunity perceptions	The total number of organisations the manager
(Question 7).	has served (Question 28).
Perceptions towards women at work (Question	Salary (monthly) (Question 31)
8).	The manager's span of control (Question 32).
Resignation decisions of men (Question 9).	Gender of the manager's superior (Question 33).
Resignation decisions of women (Question 10).	The gender proportion of colleagues of a
Gender preference of a superior (Question 11).	manager (Question 34).
Experience of relationship pressure (Question	The overall work force (Question 35).
12).	The proportion of women managers in the
Gender role attitudes (Question 13).	organisation (Question 36).
Domestic division of labour (Question 14).	The organisation's line(s) of business (Question 39).

Similar to Hypothesis 1, data analysis will identify the influences for each the dependent and independent variables listed in Table 7.2, and determine which variables are significant predictors.

This thesis has gone to great lengths in developing an appropriate institutional perspective premised on the 'action frame of reference' and 'orientations to work' frameworks to discuss gender and organisation in Sri Lanka. Therefore, it seems appropriate to test for the strength of institutional as opposed to organisational level attributes. Because the thesis has been framed within an institutional perspective, this perspective contributes to the overall hypothesis in its terms. Thus, Hypothesis 3, on the principle of the null hypothesis, will be as follows:

> *Hypothesis 3:*
> The organisational level determinants (factor) will be a more powerful source of explaining the influence of job satisfaction and work perceptions and actions of men and women managers in Sri Lankan organisations than the institutional level attributes (factor).

Table 7.3 shows the different dependent and independent variables for Hypothesis 3.

Table 7.3: DEPENDENT AND INDEPENDENT VARIABLES FOR HYPOTHESIS 3

Dependent Variables	Independent Variables
Job satisfaction (Question 1).	Institutional level attributes (factor).
Preferences to work characteristics (Question 2).	Organisational level attributes (factor).
Experience of work realities (Question 3).	
Leadership/management styles (Question 4).	
Experience of work pressure (Question 5).	
An 'ideal manager's' characteristics (Question 6).	
Equal employment opportunity perceptions (Question 7).	
Perceptions towards women at work (Question 8).	
Resignation decisions of men (Question 9).	
Resignation decisions of women (Question 10).	
Gender preference of a superior (Question 11).	
Experience of relationship pressure (Question 12).	
Gender role attitudes (Question 13).	
Domestic division of labour (Question 14).	

Hypothesis 3 will use relative weightings of the two levels of analysis (institutional vs. organisational), in relation to work perceptions among Sri Lankan managers. The relative weightings, in turn, will determine the extent to which institutional or organisational level attributes have a greater explanatory power in relation to work perceptions of men and women managers in Sri Lanka. From the point of view of Sri Lankan managers and management educators, if the institutional attributes were determinant in the data analysis, then the conclusion would be a fairly pessimistic picture for practitioners and educators. It is harder to change the institutional arena than the organisational arena, which can more effectively be managed by Sri Lankan managers. If the institutional hypothesis is not disconfirmed, then the task becomes much more difficult – a 'cultural revolution,' at the societal, rather than organisational level would be required.

7.4 Conclusion

Using the hypotheses presented and discussed above, this thesis will investigate and examine several issues. This thesis will examine the extent to which factors within or outside the scope of the management to manage effectively influence the job satisfaction and work perceptions of Sri Lankan managers, on a gender basis. Using managers' responses, we look for significant differences in managerial realities, management styles, stress factors and ideal management characteristics. We relate various internal as well as external factors to explain managers' equal opportunity perceptions in relation to men and women in management.

The thesis will develop arguments to explain the perceptions that the data suggests are found in the sample. In doing so, it identifies the probable basis of gendered perceptions – whether they stem from within the organisation or from broader socio-cultural factors. Additionally, the data will explain some of the constraints that Sri Lankan women managers encounter in their organisational realities, observed from the points of view of men as well as women. The research methodologies whereby this will be accomplished are the subject of the following chapter.

Chapter 8

THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

I hope senior managers will be more flexible when . . . [a] Ph.D. student, asks to do some research in their company. The only cost is a managerial time cost; the minimum reward is that managers – for a short while – will reflect on what they are doing. The potential benefits, for all of us, are high. We might be opening the door to the person who will 'get it all together' (Fernando, 1980: 5).

The above quotation suggests the difficulty that an organisational researcher might have to face when attempting fieldwork and primary data collection in Sri Lankan organisations. This chapter gives a detailed account of the sample, sample structure, sample size, classifications, definitions, data collection methods, data collection procedures and problems one faced as a researcher while conducting field work for the thesis.

8.1 The sample and the sampling frame – Description of Individuals

A sampling frame denotes the collection or 'list' of every component or member measured in field research, enabling sample drawing. All these components or members, when put together, comprise the population (Bailey, 1982; Bryman, 1989). The sampling frame in the field research in Sri Lanka referred to a large number of individuals – managers of organisations. Identifying and contacting these managers was done through various means to ensure the success of data collection and field research (Bernard, 1988). The means of access and identification employed included: introductory letters, formal networks of professional and social associations, informal networks of friends and relatives, and informal self-introduction. A detailed description of each method follows later in the chapter.

The sample for the research consisted of 382 respondents taken from a sampling frame consisting of managers of Sri Lankan organisations. As explained below, the sample was stratified into three major levels: top, middle, and junior management levels. Thereafter, the sample was classified by gender.

The sample was taken from management personnel in organisations in Sri Lanka, both from private companies and government organisations. The sampling frame comprised respondents who held managerial or executive positions, and were permanently employed at the time of data collection. Employees such as partners, temporary managers, consultants, managers working on temporary or on contract basis, clerks, personal and staff assistants, secretaries, sales and medical representatives, and factory supervisors or operatives, were not included in the sample.

There were several reasons for these exclusions. The first was that the data collection instrument (the questionnaire) contained questions principally about work done by management and executive personnel and therefore personnel other than these could not have completed the questionnaire completely, logically and consistently. Second, while there may be cases where people do managerial work without having a managerial designation or title, as a rule, I removed such cases to maintain uniformity among all the other respondents. Such action therefore resulted in the exclusion of a few cases of non-managerial employees who did do some managerial work.

Some personnel were designated as 'Acting' – which denoted that they were on probation for a particular period prior to taking up the permanent post. They were accepted as suitable for the sample. The first reason for this inclusion was that they usually did managerial work and were in the process of being appointed to the permanent cadre and it made virtually no difference that they were not yet in a permanent position. Second, it is customary in Sri Lanka, especially in the state sectors, to place a senior management position on probation for at least three months, to enable both the manager and the organisation to adapt and adjust to the new

environment. Third, an 'Acting' position arises when the senior manager is on leave or on overseas travel and another manager from a higher, or at least the same level, is appointed for the period concerned. The 'Acting Manager' mainly does executive managerial tasks.

Management and executive trainees were acceptable as components of the sample. The reason for their inclusion was that management trainees are the first and junior-most levels among all management positions. As the name itself implies, they are trained to work in both the managerial and non-managerial levels, subject to certain expected managerial performance levels. The purpose of management training is for the trainee to be absorbed into a permanent management position in the organisation on successful completion or after a specified time, or both. Company, Ministry or Board Secretaries were included in the sample because they held senior executive positions supervising the legal and managerial affairs of organisations.

The range of managers sampled therefore stretched from the highest to the lowest in any organisation – Chief Executive Officer to Management Trainee. As for the occupational background of managers, they composed accountants, engineers, and lawyers as well as professionally qualified managers. All personnel sampled held managerial posts, though their focus was varied in terms of their occupational skills. Doctors, independent lawyers, notaries, and tax and management consultants were not included. The reason for their exclusion was that they were usually self-employed and worked with organisations on a contract basis. The nature of their work was also generally highly technical, such that the amount of actual managerial work involved varied widely form person to person. These personnel were also excluded from the sampling frame to enable uniformity in the sample.

Entrepreneurs were not included in the sample even though many could be termed managers. Since the research involved questions relating to management careers, only people for whom the concept of management career was relevant were selected for the study. Weber focused on the 'official' in his discussion of bureaucracy whose characteristic features were: enjoyment of distinct social status, appointment by superior authority, life-time position, regular income on the basis of rank and

experience together with a pension, and a set career (Gerth and Mills, 1970). Gerth and Mills (1970: 203) define a person (a male) in a 'career' in the following terms:

> He moves from lower less important and lower paid to the higher positions. The average official naturally desires a mechanical fixing of the conditions of promotion: if not of the office, at least of the salary levels. He wants these conditions fixed in terms of 'seniority' or possibly according to grade achieved in a developed system of expert examinations. Here and there, such examinations actually form a character *indelelebilis* of the official and have lifelong effects on his career. To this is joined the desire to qualify the right to office and the increasing tendency toward status group closure and economic security.

This concept of a career may not relate directly to entrepreneurs although they are essentially managers running their own business. Farook (1993: 116) identifies entrepreneurs as follows:

> The primary difference between an entrepreneur and a professional business manager, is one of attitude. The entrepreneur, especially when starting out, knows that he is operating on the threshold of success or failure . . .. He has to reach a certain market, make a stipulated amount of sales, and earn enough money to carry him forward. While others leave the office . . . he stays behind and works to solve . . . problems that beset his business. He must manage. He takes his problems home with him. He lives his business twenty four hours a day. All too often he manages by the book.

Farook shows that an entrepreneur may not have a career to develop over a period of time in the same way that a manager has a career. An entrepreneur has mainly to manage the business, taking full responsibility for his or her managerial actions. Profits or losses incur exclusively for the entrepreneur as a result of risk-taking.

Many women can also be found as managers of their own entrepreneurial firms. Here, they have no career paths as in other organisations. Goffee and Scase (1983) point out that women may attempt to free themselves from gender discrimination by setting up their own firms and businesses. In sum, as entrepreneurs do not have a direct relationship to a career, in the sense appropriate for this thesis, entrepreneurs are not included in the research sample.

Table 8.1 summarises the numbers of respondents on the basis of management levels and gender.

Table 8.1: THE SAMPLE FRAME OF MANAGERS

	Males	Females	Total
Top	62	51	113
Middle	77	65	142
Junior	68	59	127
Total	207	175	382
Source: Survey Data			

In the sample, there were a total of 382 respondents, including 207 men and 175 women managers. There were 113 top-level, 142 middle level, and 127 junior managers.

8.2 The sample and the sampling frame – Description of Organisations

All organisations from which managers were drawn for the sample were going concerns at the time of data collection, and were actively involved in the economic functions of Sri Lanka. The one exception, included, was one that halted its operations due to security reasons, on orders from the military. They were private companies, public companies, government and semi-government companies, government departments, government corporations and government statutory bodies. In this thesis a private company is defined in a similar manner to the *Companies Act of Sri Lanka*, as one with more than two and less than fifty shareholders, that has restricted ownership. Transfer of shares is restricted. A public company, meaning a 'publicly quoted company', is a company which has free transfer of shares in a stock exchange. A public company does not have any restrictions on its membership. Government departments are organisations that come under direct ministerial supervision and control. Government corporations are established for specific purposes by the government as separate organisational entities, distinct from government departments. Statutory bodies are set up through laws in the Parliament of Sri Lanka.

In order to facilitate the representation of a diversity of viewpoints among respondents the sample included managers from the public, private and the semi-government (jointly owned by the state and private) sectors. They also included local (Sri Lankan), foreign, and multinational companies, banks, hotel, airline, and

manufacturing companies. Local (Sri Lankan) organisations included government departments, statutory boards, corporations and government-owned companies.

Non-governmental organisations, universities, educational institutions, trade unions, associations, charitable institutions and sole trader firms were excluded from the research sample. However, some organisations that were not classified as a company were taken into consideration because they functioned on commercial lines. One club, (involved in the hotel industry), was included in the sample. Both private and public companies formed part of the sample of organisations of the private sector. Tables 8.2 and 8.3 describe the organisations from which respondents in the sampling frame came from.

Table 8.2: ORGANISATIONAL SECTORS OF THE 134 KNOWN
ORGANISATIONS IN THE SAMPLE – PRIVATE SECTOR

Type of Organisation	No. of Organisations
Private Limited Company	19
Public Limited Company	64
Foreign Company	7
Other	1
Total	91
Source: Survey Data	

Table 8.3: ORGANISATIONAL SECTORS OF THE 134 KNOWN
ORGANISATIONS IN THE SAMPLE – PUBLIC SECTOR

Type of Organisation	No.
Ministry	1
Department	7
Statutory Board	4
Commercial Corporation	13
Fully owned Govt. (Public) Company	9
Fully owned Govt. (Private) Company	1
Associate Government Company	2
Subsidiary Government Company	3
Company jointly owned by 2 commercial corporations	1
Other Institution	2
Total	43
Source: Survey Data	

Table 8.4 and Table 8.5 describe the line(s) of business organisations in the survey. I added one group 'Conglomerates', to mean organisations that were involved in business in more than four of the lines of business mentioned in the table. Table 8.5 shows the size of the organisation in terms of the number of employees.

Table 8.4: LINES OF BUSINESS OF ORGANISATIONS IN THE SAMPLE

Line of Business	No.
Agriculture	3
Banking	11
Conglomerates (more than 4 lines of business)	4
Construction, Housing, Electricity, and Water	11
Engineering	4
Finance	4
Hotels	9
Manufacturing	29
Services	28
Trade	17
Venture Capital	6
Other	8
Total (excludes respondents whose organisations could not be identified by name = 34)	134
Source: Survey Data	

Table 8.5: WORKFORCE OF ORGANISATIONS IDENTIFIABLE BY NAME IN THE SAMPLE AS DISCLOSED BY RESPONDENTS

No. of Employees	No. of Organisations
less than 10	4
11 to 50	20
51 to 100	14
101 to 200	24
201 to 500	17
501 to 1,000	17
1,001 to 2,000	14
2,001 to 3,000	7
3,001 to 5,000	4
5,001 to 10,000	3
10,001 to 15,000	5
15,001 to 20,000	1
20,001 to 25,000	1
25,001 and above	3
Total	134
Source: Survey Data	

Tables 8.4 and 8.5 show the diversity of organisations that are represented in the sample in terms of lines of business and size. In the sample, organisations run as family businesses, but not entrepreneurial firms, were included.

There is a methodological problem with regard to whether family business organisations would fit the sample frame for managers (Obeysekere, 1987). Considerable importance is attached to family and small-scale business in Sri Lanka, as they are very common in the country, especially among women who are in business. However, career paths might be different in family firms as family

members have a privileged chance for career advancement. They may not have as much difficulty in competing with other candidates as in other organisations. However, only a part of this argument is valid for this field research. Family business organisations were included because of their size and structure. Though management executives have a 'birth-right' to climb to the top positions, they need to possess the necessary skills and experience. Family businesses may be one avenue for women who aspire to rise to top management. Family firms may not have the strict career paths that large organisation normally would have. Alternatively, women may start their careers in family firms and move ahead to larger organisations (Symons, 1984; Beech, 1983; Yoshihashi, 1984).

In the Sri Lankan management literature, there is an emphasis on the prominence of Sri Lankan family businesses established from the 18th century on. Perera and Buddhadasa (1993) found that in a study of four Sri Lankan companies that were at least one hundred years old, patrilineal kin power bases accounted for 87 per cent of all forms of kin power bases. Perera and Buddhadasa (1993: 88) also argue that " . . . it is inevitable that the power bases of organisations founded by entrepreneurs would contain large numbers of the kin". It was common for a senior family member to head the organisation while family members were managers. The authors argue that 'family-centredness' could inhibit innovation as a result of high power distance and the reluctance to part with responsibility to subordinates while taking risks. Some non-family members do join positions of influence. However, the family network is still relied upon as a source of capital and business relationships (Perera and Buddhadasa, 1993). In sum, the general principle for including such organisations in the sample was that they actively participated in the mainstream economy of Sri Lanka. Family business organisations were included in principle, even though their career advancement policies may favour family members.

8.3 The Sample Structure and the Sampling Method

A Stratified Random Sampling technique was used in the research. The three strata denoted the three levels of management, namely Top, Middle and Junior. I made the decision to place respondents into the various strata on a case by case basis. No two organisations had the same organisational structure and the structure varied according

to size and the line of business. Some organisations claimed that they had a flat structure, implying that there were no such management levels in these organisations. However, certain principles were drawn on to facilitate ease of identification, to apply uniformity to the entire sample. For this purpose, the manager's title or designation helped me to ascertain which level the manager belonged to. Where there was ambiguity, I looked for the title of the respondent manager's superior to find some contextual cues. Such a cue helped me to place each respondent in the relevant strata. For example, the designation 'Assistant Manager' meant that he or she reported to another Manager or a functional or specialist manager, such as Marketing or Finance Manager. 'Assistant Manager' thus fell into the junior strata and the specialist managers fell into the middle management strata.

There was a need to clarify two organisational structures the researcher encountered during fieldwork. They were the structures with the titles of 'Manager' and 'President' as key categories. I found that there were mainly two types or organisational structures. The differences between the two types are significant as they decide where one draws the line between the middle and junior levels.

The first type of organisation had the traditional 'Manager' designations. Typically, the organisation structure would appear as in Figure 8.1. In the case of organisations having a structure similar to Figure 8.1, the junior level comprised either 'managers' or 'assistant managers'. Middle level managers were specialist managers. Such organisations had a British-style structure. The second type of organisations had a structure similar to Figure 8.2. Managers from the junior level need to put in considerable effort (in terms of seniority and work experience) to enter middle level management and become a senior manager. The second type of organisations tended to reflect an American-style structure.

Figure 8.1: ORGANISATION STRUCTURE – TYPE I
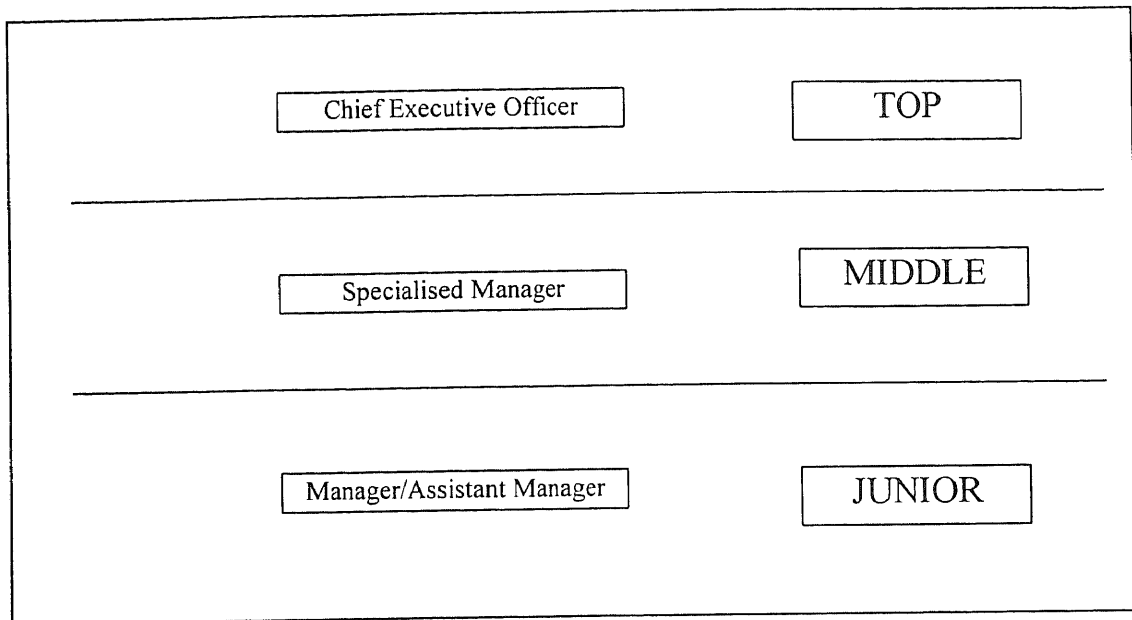
The second organisation structure had the title 'President' as the key word among various designations. Typically, the organisation chart would appear as in Figure 8.2:

Figure 8.2: ORGANISATION STRUCTURE – TYPE II
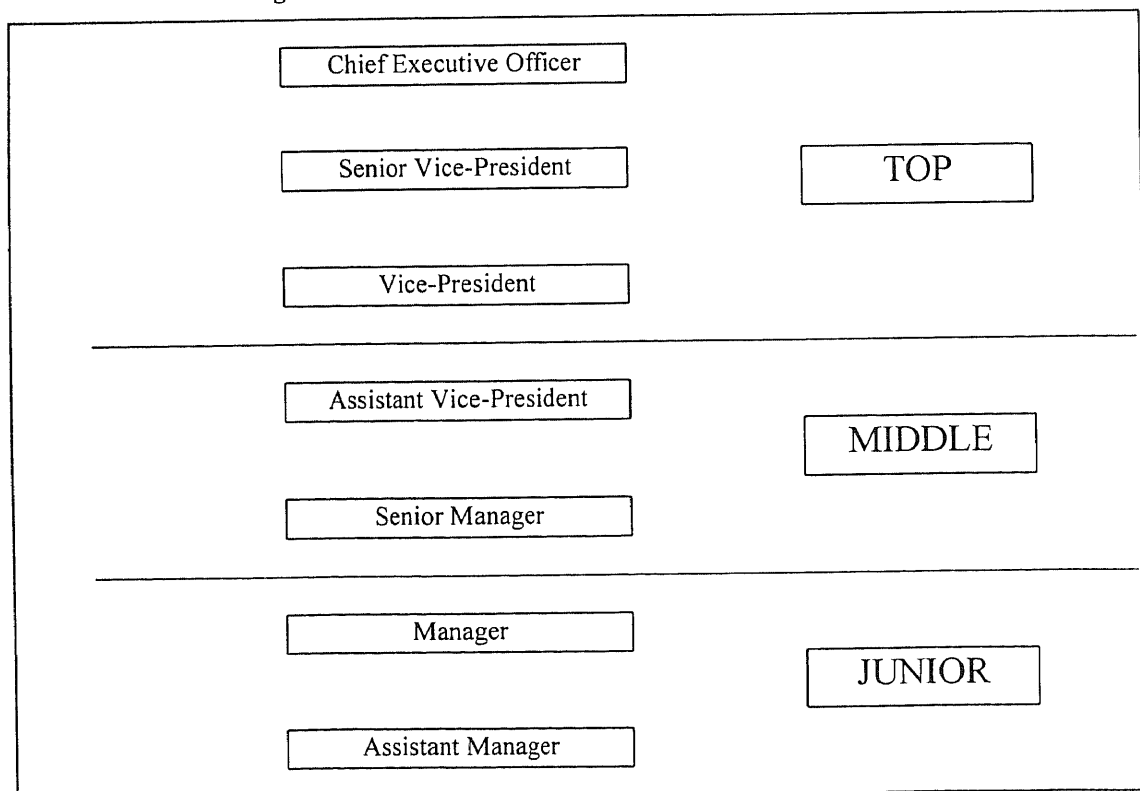
The following section shows how I classify managers forming part of the top, middle, and junior levels of management segments or strata for the purpose this research. It needs to be stressed here that in Sri Lankan organisations, both organisational hierarchies and structures are extremely confidential and not readily divulged to outsiders, either due to reasons of privacy or of business secrecy. So I had to make the best and most effective use of those titles that I was able to obtain.

8.4 Definition of various levels of management

As indicated above, the sample for the field research was stratified according to three management levels – top, middle, and junior. I attempted to delineate the range of managers that would typically fall under these three categories. I examined the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO). With some difficulty, I had access to the Standard Classification of Occupations in Sri Lanka. I approached the Demography and Social Statistics Division of the Department of Census and Statistics. I found that this document was similar to the Revised International Standard Classification of Occupations set out by the International Labour Organisation in 1988. Unfortunately, this list, though incorporating many Sri Lankan designations, was not comprehensive enough to include all occupations in Sri Lanka. This document also was difficult to obtain for reprographic purposes and I had to copy it by hand with pen and paper at the Department of Census and Statistics office. It was considered officially unsuitable to release it for electro-reprography.

From the nine major and subsequent sub-major, minor, and unit groups, I observed a few pointers that helped me stratify the sample of managers. For example, I chose 'Directors and Chief Executives' from Major Group 1 – 'Legislators, Senior Officials and Managers', Sub-major Group – 12 'Corporate Managers', Minor Group 121 – 'Directors and Chief Executives', and Unit Group 1210. Similarly, 'Specialised Managers' appeared under Minor Group 122 from the list of occupations. This helped me determine that 'Directors and Chief Executives' were clearly in top-level management and that 'Specialised Managers' belonged to the middle managerial level classification. A copy of Major Group 1, under the Standard Classification of

Occupations in Sri Lanka appears under Appendix 1. The following section is a discussion of the classifications:

8.4.1 Top-level Management

The following discussion demonstrates the means I used to identify and define managers who belonged to the top-level management strata. Top-level managers are those managers who hold a job title, designation, or position ranging from Chief Executive Officer to Deputy General Manager. All other designations found in Table 8.6, are the equivalents to the range between Chief Executive Officer to Deputy General Manager.

The term 'Director' needs careful explanation as it denotes different levels in public and private sector organisations. In private sector organisations, 'Director' or, a specialised director, (such as Director – Finance or Director – Client Services), undoubtedly belong to the top management. In the public sector, however, it is different. Because a junior manager is often termed as 'Assistant Director', when he or she is promoted to the next level, he or she becomes 'Deputy Director' or 'Director' for example, Director – Marketing. The highest management officer has the title of Director General. There are exceptions because some public sector organisations do not have 'Deputy Director' as a level.

Hence these principles have to be applied on a case-by-case basis. Obeysekere (1987) remarks that case-by-case assessment is necessary to identify which level a manager belongs to, as organisations are bound to differ in structure. Normally, top management would comprise the " . . . chairman, the Board of Directors of the company and the directors of the subsidiary companies within a holding company" (Obeysekere 1987: 3). Table 8.6 shows the designations and titles of managers whose responses would fall into top-level management.

Table 8.6: PERSONNEL IN TOP MANAGEMENT BY DESIGNATION AND GENDER

Designation	Men	Women
Chief Executive Officer	2	
CEO and Director	2	
Chairman/Chairperson	1	2
Chairman and Managing Director	2	
Director	11	11
Director and General Manager	4	2
Director and one other Portfolio	3	2
(Deputy) Director/Postmaster-General	1	3
Managing Director	3	2
Deputy Managing Director	1	
(Additional) General Manager	19	7
GM and Company Secretary	1	1
(Acting) Deputy General Manager	8	10
DGM and CEO	1	
DGM and Company Secretary		1
(Group) Financial Controller	1	1
(Additional) Company or Board or Ministry Secretary		3
Secretary and Legal Officer		1
(Senior) Vice-President	1	1
(Deputy) Commissioner	1	3
Chief Legal Officer		1
Total	62	51

Source: Survey Findings

Top-level managers in the sample included Chief Executive Officers, Directors, Chairpersons, Managing Directors, Directors, General Managers, Deputy General Managers, Company Secretaries, Financial Controllers, Commissioners and a Chief Legal Officer.

8.4.2 Middle level Management

All specialised managers in the private sector and specialised directors in the public sector are considered to be middle level managers for the purpose of this research. For example, Manager – Finance, Manager – Human Resources Development, Manager – Member Accounts, and Director – Marketing, fall into this category. In highly structured organisations such as banks, mid-level managers are identified as Assistant General Managers – reporting to Deputy General Managers. Therefore, AGM – Credit, or AGM – Fixed Deposits, or AGM – Legal are all mid level managers. Tables 8.7 to Table 8.13 show the wide and extensive range of specialised managers that come under middle level management in the research. The different fields of specialisation include marketing, projects and products, production and

operations, finance and banking, human resources management, planning and technical, and information technology.

Table 8.7: PERSONNEL IN MIDDLE MANAGEMENT BY DESIGNATION
AND GENDER – MARKETING AND RELATED FIELDS

Designation	Men	Women
Manager/Director – Marketing	5	1
Manager – Marketing and Sales	1	
Manager – Marketing Services		1
Manager – Sales	4	
Manager – Area Sales	1	
Manager – Retail Sales	1	
Manager – Sales Division	1	
Director – Community Relations	1	
Manager – Merchandising	1	
Manager – Promotion	1	
Manager – Business Development and Training		2
Manager – Dealer Training and Promotion	1	
Manager – Corporate Communications		1
Manager – Public Relations		1
Manager – Product Development		1
Manager – Consumer Services		1
Manager – Marketing Research		1
Total	17	9
Source: Survey Data		

Middle Managers participating in the survey in the area of marketing held the portfolios of marketing, sales, merchandising, promotion, public relations, communications, consumer services and marketing research. In all, there were 17 male and 9 female managers in this field of specialisation.

Table 8.8: PERSONNEL IN MIDDLE MANAGEMENT BY DESIGNATION
AND GENDER – PRODUCTS/PROJECTS AND RELATED FIELDS

Designation	Men	Women
Manager – Hygiene and Household	1	
Manager – Product Group	1	
Manager – Tea	2	
Manager – Commercial	1	
Manager – Postal Banking		1
Asst. GM/Manager – (Postal) Fixed Deposits		2
Asst. General Manager – Credit		1
Manager – Engineering Products and Purchase	1	
Asst. General Manager (Special) Project		1
Total	6	5
Source: Survey Data		

In the specialist area of product and project management, there were 6 male and 5 female middle managers. They held positions related to products, product groups or

projects such as household and hygiene, tea, commercial, postal banking, fixed deposits, credit, engineering products, and special projects.

Table 8.9: PERSONNEL IN MIDDLE MANAGEMENT BY DESIGNATION AND GENDER – PRODUCTION/OPERATIONS AND RELATED FIELDS

Designation	Men	Women
Factory Manager	2	
Manager – Production and Information Management	1	
Chief Engineer – Construction	1	
Chief Engineer – Rural Water Supply	1	
Chief Engineer		2
Asst. General Manager – Tenders and Contracts		1
Asst. General Manager – Western Province		1
Director/Manager – Contracts Management	1	
Manager – Member Accounts	1	
Manager – Enforcement	1	
Manager – Operations	1	
Manager – Chartering and Agency		1
Manager – Media		1
Manager – Prosecutions		2
Manager – Consultancy		1
(Chief) Manager – Exports/Foreign Trade		4
Manager – Energy	1	
Manager – Mills	1	
Deputy Director – Irrigation		1
Total	11	14
Source: Survey Data		

There were 11 male and 14 female managers in the field of production and operations management. They were holding portfolios relating to middle management positions such as chief engineer, prosecutions, media, consultancy, foreign trade, energy, mills, as well as irrigation.

Table 8.10: PERSONNEL IN MIDDLE MANAGEMENT BY DESIGNATION AND GENDER – FINANCE/BANKING AND RELATED FIELDS

Designation	Men	Women
Relationship/Chief Manager – Corporate		3
Manager – Securities Services		1
Asst. General Manager – Legal		2
(Senior) Manager – Treasury/Shipping	1	2
Senior Manager – Development Finance		1
Manager – Finance (and Adm.) [not included elsewhere]	6	5
(Senior) Manager – (Bank) Branch	3	2
(Senior) Manager – Investment Analysis	2	1
Manager – Accounting		1
Chief Accountant/Chief Admin Officer	1	1
Manager/Deputy Chief – Internal Audit(or)	2	
Manager – Actuarial Services		1
Manager – Corporate Credit	1	
AVP Corporate Finance	1	
Officer-in-charge – Accounts		1
Total	17	21
Source: Survey Data		

In the finance and banking industry, there were 17 men and 21 women who were middle managers. They held positions in relation to chief manager, investment analysis, accounting, administrative officer, actuarial services, corporate credit, and corporate finance.

Table 8.11: PERSONNEL IN MIDDLE MANAGEMENT BY DESIGNATION AND GENDER – HR/PERSONNEL MGT. AND RELATED FIELDS

Designation	Men	Women
Manager/Officer – Personnel./HRD	7	2
Manager – Training	1	
Manager – Recruitment		1
Manager – Group Legal and Personnel		3
Manager – Personnel/Admin./Finance/Imports (not included elsewhere)	3	1
Total	11	7
Source: Survey Data		

In the human resource management area, there were middle managers in the areas of personnel, training and recruitment. There were 11 men and 7 women in the middle management sample in this area of expertise.

Table 8.12: PERSONNEL IN MIDDLE MANAGEMENT BY DESIGNATION AND GENDER – PLANNING/TECHNICAL AND MIS RELATED FIELDS

Designation	Men	Women
Manager/(Deputy) Director – Planning/Development	1	2
Manager – Corporate Planning	2	
Asst. General Manager – Planning/Progress/Designing		2
Deputy Director/Asst. General Manager – Technical	1	1
Manager – MIS	1	
Manager – Systems and Software Services	1	
Manager – Data Processing	1	
Manager – Computer Services		1
Total	7	6
Source: Survey Data		

There were 7 men and 6 women in the middle level management group relating to planning and technical areas of management. They held portfolios relating to corporate planning, management information systems, data processing, and computing services.

Table 8.13: PERSONNEL IN MIDDLE MANAGEMENT BY DESIGNATION AND GENDER – OTHER FIELDS

Designation	Men	Women
Director – Research/International Affairs	1	
Asst. General Manager	5	
Asst. Vice-President		2
Senior Manager	2	1
Total	8	3
Source: Survey Data		

There were a few other middle managers holding positions relating to research, in addition to other management posts. In sum, there was a diverse group of middle managers in the sample, in terms of their area of expertise in management.

8.4.3 Junior level Management

The residual segment of management is relatively easy to identify. It comprises all managers working under specialised managers, who thus comprise junior managers. They may take the designation of 'Manager', Senior Manager (without any specialisation, as in middle management), Assistant Manager, Accountant, Executive, Assistant Director (in public sector organisations), Officer, Brand Manager and Management Trainee: all fall under this category.

The only exception to the rule is the case where 'senior managers' belong to organisations having 'Structure II' (Figure 8.2). They belong to the mid-level as 'senior managers' and in such organisations are assigned specialised tasks. Promotion to mid-level management is also considered only after the candidate proves that he or she has several years of seniority and work experience (See Figures 8.1 and 8.2). Table 8.14 explains the range of managers who came under the junior management level of the survey.

Table 8.14: PERSONNEL IN JUNIOR MANAGEMENT
BY DESIGNATION AND GENDER

Designation	Men	Women
Manager/Brand Manager and related	17	6
Assistant Manager and related	5	6
Executive	24	14
Assistant Director	8	5
Accountants and related	3	6
Assistant Accountants and related	-	5
Engineer	2	1
Management Trainee	-	2
Officer/Investment Analyst	8	6
(Group) Management Auditor/Internal Auditor	1	1
Legal and other technical	-	5
Reservation Agent	-	1
Senior Training Officer	-	1
Total	68	59
Source: Survey Data		

Junior managers were comprised of brand managers, executives, assistant managers, assistant directors, accountants, engineers, management trainees, analysts, internal auditors and a training officer. In the sample, there were 68 men and 59 women who were junior managers.

Managers of all levels have differences in their job characteristics. Similarly, junior managers, even if not comparable in all respects and characteristics of their employment, are comparable at least to some approximate extent and this approximation is what helps the researcher to categorise the strata for the sample. Typically, junior managers will have less than two years of work experience. They will be relatively young and have served in only one or two organisations. Career opportunities need not be the only differentiating characteristic among junior managers. There can be a host of other attributes, for example, such as salary levels and type of organisation. For example, it is not always the case that multinational

organisations encourage a life-long career. Local (private), government-sector, entrepreneurial and family business organisations can sometimes be more competitive than multinational organisations encouraging sound career prospects among junior managers in Sri Lanka.

The purpose of identifying junior managers on the basis of an approximation serves to pave the way for comparing like with like samples. It is always likely that minor differences are bound to occur. Nevertheless, such differences have not adversely affected data analysis.

8.5 Pilot-testing and field work

I pilot tested the questionnaire among 10 individuals drawn from the Sri Lankan community in Australia in July 1995, because time and financial constraints prevented me from carrying out such a test in Sri Lanka. All pilot survey respondents were of Sri Lankan origin, but were residing in Australia and had recent Sri Lankan experience. They included former schoolmates, members of University academic staff, migrants, and members of the Sri Lankan consulate staff in Sydney. The pilot test helped me to simplify and shorten the length of the questionnaire, deleting repetitions and ambiguous questions, while incorporating valuable feedback from the pilot sample.

During the fieldwork, the researcher was aware of the difficulties that may arise in doing a successful questionnaire survey in a country such as Sri Lanka. This difficulty arose because organisational research is not common in Sri Lanka. There is considerable suspicion placed on researchers, as organisations fear they may give business secrets away. There is also the suspicion that competing firms are trying to use researchers, under the guise of doing research, to solicit information that would not, and should not, otherwise be freely available. In these cases, some organisations debar researchers from entering their premises. Some managers fear that disclosing their income levels would mean that information about how much income they earn will be passed on to taxation officials in the country. Still others are simply not interested as it will not directly help their busy work schedules – meaning that answering a questionnaire or spending time with a field researcher is a waste of time.

Field researchers are often the centre of ridicule because some managers perceive researchers' motivations incorrectly. Managers sometimes think that organisation researchers come to them for a favour – to fill a questionnaire, because the research would help the researcher receive a promotion or a better job. Sri Lankan managers work under tremendous pressure, often in competing lines of business both within and from outside the Island, making access difficult. The difficulty of accessing top-level managers is acknowledged in the Sri Lankan management literature. "The problem with the top-level managers is that they are so busy that access to them is practically denied for research work" (Upasena, 1993: 177).

Problems of access make organisational research more complicated and difficult. Valid, complete and consistent responses to questionnaires are essential to make field research complete and successful. In addition, the researcher has to make the best possible use of as many organisations and managers as possible. For the research in this thesis, there are also only a limited number of corporate organisations to choose from that would fit the sample frame well. To enhance the reliability of the data collection instrument through better co-operation from respondents, the researcher explored the possibility of giving a complimentary lottery ticket or a souvenir. I decided against a compliment or a gift as the respondents might skew the data in some way, thinking that to do so would be an occasion for reward. No compliment or gift, of any sort, monetary or otherwise, was given to any respondent in the field research.

I prepared myself for field research where I anticipated that I might have to face much opposition and non-co-operation. How should I overcome the suspicion, reluctance and hesitation of potential respondents? The questionnaire, my principal data collection instrument, asked for opinions on Likert-scale type responses and several of the questions were on the respondent's personal demographics. I anticipated that there would be reluctance on the part of some respondents to part with particulars such as their salary, their age, and their marital status.

My most difficult but important task and challenge in carrying out field work was establishing sufficient contact and access with managers in Sri Lankan organisations.

Gaining access had two aims: the first was to provide me with an introduction to an organisation. I thought it was best for me to know one manager, or a group of managers, from each organisation, through an introduction. This would help me find as diverse a cross section of managers as possible. I was able to approach virtually every corporate organisation in Sri Lanka. I also took into consideration the multiplicity in kinds of ownership, origins of business, places of operation, size and lines of business in constituting the sample. Finally, successfully gaining access to respondents helped to provide a cordial relationship and atmosphere for successful data collection.

I encountered not only a generally discouraging organisational research environment but also one in which there were other local and situational problems. In the section that follows, I describe the realities I had to face as a field researcher. These problems arose mainly as a result of the dangerous security situation, the electricity crisis that arose because of the failed rains, and the labour unrest in the country.

As discussed in Chapter 3, Sri Lanka has been in the midst of an on-going civil war since 1977. The most recent phase, from October 1995 onwards, saw the Government of Sri Lanka embark on a massive military operation to capture parts of the North of the Island, until then virtually under terrorist control. This military operation was inevitable as all negotiations between the Government and the terrorists had failed. The terrorists attempted, and in some cases succeeded, in disrupting not only military operations in the northern areas through their attacks, but also economic life in the rest of the country. In particular, they targetted the commercial capital of Colombo, where much of the national economic activity takes place. Another reason for the dangerous situation was the sensitive location of defence, political, state, and commercial apparatus in and around the City of Colombo.

During the period of field research, I had to contend with the reality that the city of Colombo was going through its highest danger level of a terrorist attack. In mid-October 1995, two oil storage installations that store and supply nearly all of the fuel for the country were attacked and destroyed by a group of suicide truck bombers.

About 30 armed forces personnel lost their lives. The entire country came to a standstill. In November 1995, an abortive attack on the military headquarters in Colombo blew up a railway station, killing scores of people. The armed forces nevertheless captured the Jaffna Peninsula in December 1995. But the worst was still to follow. In January, a bomb completely destroyed Janadhipathi Mawatha (Presidential Avenue) in the heart of Sri Lanka's commercial, economic and industrial centre. The Central Bank of Sri Lanka was the target of the attack that cost the lives of at least one hundred employees of the Bank and neighbouring private and public sector offices.

Terrorist attacks always have international ramifications, and for a relatively small and developing economy such as Sri Lanka, it was hard to absorb the magnitude of the consequences. The first area to suffer was the lucrative tourism industry, which dropped to a trickle. Yet the ramifications have been far greater. Security threats became common and so also were security measures and checks. Traffic diversions, restrictions, and no-entry zones were the rules of the day. Visitors to offices and buildings were thoroughly checked and screened, making field visits extremely dangerous, unpleasant, and difficult. Security checks along roads to and from the City of Colombo became a routine. Once signalled to stop, the vehicle has to halt in the area set apart for inspection. The vehicle is searched and the identity of occupants verified. The driver is usually expected to show the boot and the engine of the vehicle to the military personnel. After a few minutes, on recording the check on the military log sheets, one carefully drives away to reach one's destination.

In March 1996, the Government imposed power cuts to attempt to conserve electricity, as the supply was running out. Until 1996, Sri Lanka depended mainly on hydroelectric power. Due to the failure of monsoon rains in 1996, the water levels in the hydroelectric reservoirs ran low. The government temporarily encouraged the use of generators to tide over the situation but it had to resort to introducing power cuts for as long as 10 hours a day, in three different stages, to various parts of the city and country. These power outages created much delay and difficulty during fieldwork, as often it was not possible to stick to interviews with managers as planned. The electricity power crisis went on till September 1996.

In October 1995, there was a strike by state postal employees on account of a wage demand. These trade union actions brought postal and mail services to a standstill. Huge piles of letters and mail were destroyed or lost. It was difficult to carry out fieldwork activities, as letters could no longer be delivered through the post. This affected response rates to a considerable extent. Again in May 1996, the employees of the state-owned Ceylon Electricity Board resorted to a strike protesting against the government's attempt to open up electricity-generation in the country to a foreign company. Electricity, and later, water supply, ceased, again bringing the country to a virtual halt until demands not to allow foreigners into the market for electricity generation were met. No fieldwork for the research was possible on these days. In addition, specific activities of the financial calendar of Sri Lanka had their effect on the survey. The most striking was the period of year-end financial statements from 1st April 1995 to 31st March 1996. Many Finance Managers were reluctant to extend their co-operation to the survey during this period because of their workload. Public holidays in the months of December, April, and May, and the World Cup Cricket matches, were other events that slowed the pace of the survey. In the section that follows, I explain how I approached and had access to the samples.

Field research work among Sri Lankan managers is difficult to predict and plan. Nevertheless, in this research, I realised that female respondents were generally more supportive and co-operative in the administration and completion of the questionnaire. Even though I considered that my approaching a female respondent might appear culturally inappropriate, I was surprised at their willingness to suggest names of other female and male managers they knew well. Female managers were also impressed because a male Lecturer of a Sri Lankan University was embarking on research among Sri Lankan female managers and were apt to extend their fullest co-operation.

On the other hand, some of the male respondents were supportive while others took no serious note of the questionnaire. Perhaps, if I had sent a female research assistant I could have solicited a better response. I had no resources or time to consider this alternative: I decided to collect data myself. The questionnaire was also helpful as an

artifact. Many respondents preferred to have another copy of the answers to the questionnaire because it was something unusual to their day-to-day realities (George and Clegg, 1998).

In spite of all the constraints and problems, I managed to complete fieldwork by May 1996 – in a period of 6 months. The data collection and fieldwork was carried out in Colombo, Ja-Ela, Katunayake, and Nuwara Eliya between the period 20th November, 1995 and 20th December 1995 and again from 16th January, 1996 to 31st May, 1996.

8.6 Category A: Approaching as many individual organisations as possible by means of an introductory letter to the CEO

As a field researcher I prepared and posted an introductory letter to the Chief Executive Officers of companies signed jointly by myself and my supervisor (as Professor), together with a 'Response Form'. These letters appear in Appendix 2 and Appendix 3. A copy of the Response Form appears in Appendix 4. The purpose of this letter was to solicit contacts from potential organisations. We thought that this introductory letter would also facilitate the objective of the CEO introducing the researcher to the management personnel in his/her organisation. This was also a means to seek formal permission from an organisation to conduct the research. It helped clear misconceptions or suspicions on the part of some Sri Lankan organisations about the purpose of research. In our request we made it clear that we only wanted opinions on the work perceptions of managers in Sri Lanka. Moreover, we assured the organisation that their individual names and organisation names would not be identified and that our survey was anonymous. We also promised to provide feedback from general conclusions of the research. We took all these efforts because we had to be extremely careful at this stage to attract every organisation to the sample and to making our objectives clear.

The 'Response Form', which was to be returned to me, asked for names, designations and telephone numbers of the individuals the CEO was willing to nominate from their organisations. In the response form, we did not ask for any manager's signature as we thought that the response form should be used solely as a tool to identify suitable cases as samples for the research survey. Using the *White Pages* section of

the 1995 *Sri Lanka Telephone Directory (Greater Colombo Area),* I selected 572 addresses – of companies, boards, corporations and other organisations. This was a fairly comprehensive population of all the business and government establishments in Sri Lanka. Most headquarters or branch offices of organisations have locations in Colombo. Thus I covered the population sufficiently using the addresses of the Colombo directory. I made the decision to use the Greater Colombo telephone directory for access reasons. It would have been dangerous to sample respondents in far-off places, given the precarious security situation in the country. However, I did sample a few managers who worked in far off places, when they came to Colombo or when I went to a hill-country resort.

The introductory letters were sent in two batches – Batch I and Batch II. Batch I consisting of 55 letters was sent from Australia in early September 1995 to be posted in Colombo, Sri Lanka. I sent the first batch to see how effective the response might be. I also did this first small batch with just 55 letters because I was not in Sri Lanka to attend to any question or clarification that may have arisen. The first batch proved to be successful. Responses with names of approximately 50 managers began to pile up.

I began to prepare the list for Batch II on my arrival in Sri Lanka in November 1995. The introductory letter for Batch II was slightly different (See Appendix 3 – Copy of introductory letter for Batch II). Batch II consisted of 517 letters and was prepared and posted from Colombo, Sri Lanka in mid November 1995. The response was good, with telephone requests for information and regrets for being unable to participate, and expressions of regret for not being able to.

There were 80 positive response letters that provided access to 503 individuals. This means that the Response Rate for the introductory letter was (80/572*100%) = 13.98%. These contacts helped the researcher to collect 210 valid, complete and consistent responses. Therefore the Success Rate for this method (Category A) was (210/382*100%) = 54.97% which means that this method was the principal source of contact for the entire survey. The following section discusses the limitations and drawbacks that the researcher experienced with this method.

8.6.1 Drawbacks and problems in the survey using Category A method

1. Unsuitable samples

Some individuals nominated in the Response Form were unsuitable as cases for the sample. For instance some secretaries and personal assistants were nominated. Though very few in number these had to be handled tactfully by the researcher. I had to politely thank them for their co-operation in the survey and ignore the response. This led to distraction of time and effort during data collection. The researcher avoided this situation as much as possible by calling the potential respondents directly to ensure they conformed to the criteria for the sample population.

2. Changes in organisations

Between the time of nomination and actual data collection there were several changes in organisations. Some personnel were on maternity leave (at least three cases), some were promoted to higher posts, while there were several cases of resignations, retirements and transfers to offices abroad. These changes were often sudden and unexpected. There were also pending resignations. It was difficult to find replacements when this happened – so there was some statistically random drop out from the sample as originally identified.

3. Distinction between managers and entrepreneurs

After the survey interview the researcher realised that some respondents could only be viewed as entrepreneurs and not as managers and such responses had to be rejected. In addition, entrepreneurs said that they could not think of an answer to certain questions in the questionnaire. This was another difficult situation commonly found among respondents. The partly completed questionnaire was accepted from the respondent to maintain good faith but was not included in the sample.

4. Inability to answer Question 6

Some other respondents could not answer certain questions. The researcher persuaded the respondent by explaining points many times with clear and simple language. No examples were given so as not to bias any answer.

A common problem occurred with one specific question – Question 6 on ideal managerial characteristics (See Appendix 5 – Sample Questionnaire). Question 6 required the respondent to list five most desirable and five least desirable characteristics of a manager. It was an open-ended question. Some respondents left

the question blank while others thought that the responses (especially the least desirable characteristics) would offend others. Some others appeared not to understand what the question meant. Additionally, Question 6 was different from most others, as the respondent had to write down words, while they only tick-marked almost all other questions. It was difficult for some respondents to answer Question 6 completely.

5. Non-completion due to pressure of work

There were respondents who did not return the questionnaire to the researcher after completion. Others returned it – but it was either partly filled or not filled at all. Considering their workload and responsibilities the respondents could not find time for this exercise. In this regard many potential respondents were not even approachable. The researcher organised to follow-up the responses in the shortest possible time through letters or telephone calls. Where this follow-up failed, after a reasonable period of time the case was considered unforthcoming.

6. Loss in mail

Losses in the post might seem improbable but during follow-up the researcher found that many responses had been posted a reasonably long time previously. The mail system in a less developed and politically troubled country such as Sri Lanka does not allow the researcher the same certainty that one might expect in a much more developed and politically stable country such as Australia. The researcher resorted to personal collection of responses and used the mail system only if it was absolutely necessary and then by registered post when possible. Fortunately one respondent whose response was lost in the mail had kept a back up copy of the questionnaire which proved very useful.

7. Certain questions offending some respondents

Some potential respondents (mainly males) were offended because they claimed that the research applied only to married people, as it asked questions concerning the domestic division of labour. They refused to participate. The researcher made it very clear that a data collection tool had to be uniform and comprehensive, accommodating every possible case and circumstance. The researcher also explained that there were many unmarried males participating in the survey and that it was not necessary to be puzzled. It was sufficient that this response set be left blank, when inapplicable.

8. Respondents unaware of study

The researcher contacted potential respondents directly by telephone. Most respondents were unaware of the research study when approached by the researcher. This was because potential respondents nominated by the Chief Executive Officers or their respective Human Resource Managers had received no intimation whatsoever of my research or their suggested inclusion as samples. Therefore the researcher had to clear the confusion by explaining in detail how he had got their names. This involved lengthy telephone conversations. At times, the researcher was asked to show evidence by letter from the organisation or company concerned that he had a legitimate research project. There were cases where potential respondents became aggressive because no immediate answer could be given to the question 'Who gave you my name?' or 'How did you get my name?' Some even refused to co-operate. The response was cordial and friendly among management personnel with prior knowledge. Yet there were several managers who voluntarily co-operated even without any prior knowledge. Those who had been educated abroad tended to show more interest and co-operation than some other respondents without exposure to overseas education.

9. Organisations in high security zones

Organisations in security sensitive areas were approached only when necessary, as access to them was restricted. In addition, organisations affected by terrorist violence were excluded from the study unless the organisation's operations had returned to complete normalcy. The reason was that the effects of shock and trauma could affect the survey responses and results.

10. Frequent visits

In some organisations there were large numbers of nominees. The researcher had to try and achieve a quick completion of the survey work in these organisations, by making frequent visits. However, there were certain employees who requested the researcher not to come so often in view of the serious security threat. The researcher had to immediately call off further data collection and look for other organisations and avenues.

11. Appointments

There were potential respondents who did not honour their appointment times. When the researcher reported at the office he was not given any information or message.

Sudden meetings, electricity power-cuts and busy schedules affected appointments and caused unanticipated delays and rejects. Such, unfortunately, is the ordinary experience of life in Sri Lanka today.

12. Lack of access to the organisation

Of all the organisations that gave a favourable response one company that participated in the research requested the researcher not to come to their premises for the purposes of data collection. The reason officially cited in writing by the manager was that the organisational field research would affect the workload in the organisation. Going through research notes and information I obtained through informal sources, I found that there was much job dissatisfaction among executives and managers in this company. There was high executive turnover in the organisation. The top management, aware of the dissatisfaction, perhaps attempted to avoid the chance of an outsider coming into contact with managers that would entail them passing on information of their job dissatisfaction. I had to post to each respondent copies of the questionnaire with a covering letter giving a month's notice and a stamped self-addressed envelope. After two months the researcher tried to follow up the responses but was not successful. The response was very poor. There were two series of follow up calls. Several reasons might explain this poor response: One, the potential respondents could be managers under extreme work pressure. The respondents could even receive instructions not to respond to the survey. This example is, again, an illustration of another strange reality an organisational researcher finds in a country such as Sri Lanka. Yet, the organisation is a multinational brand leader of world repute.

There were two other reasons for lack of access to some organisations. One, referring to of the security situation, was where the organisation prevented 'an outsider' from coming into its premises, fearing bombs. Second, the organisation had technology and innovation of international repute and preferred complete secrecy of its processes, capacities, production equipment, and assets, rather than sparing managerial time for organisational research.

13. Special requests

On the other hand, some individuals requested that copies of the questionnaire be posted to their addresses, or sent to them through their secretaries. Individual

requests such as these were effective and the response tended to be good. For example, in these cases, even though I had no personal contact with the respondent, the respondents seemed to understand the questions and co-operated with me to the fullest extent.

8.6.2 Lessons and experiences of Category A method

1. *Focussed sample*

The researcher thought that managerial perceptions might be best identified from among those in management positions in commercially run enterprises including government organisations that formed part of the mainstream economic activities of the country. This observation arose because commercially run organisations tend to adopt more modern management practices. My questions in the research instrument were relevant to managers in commercially run organisations. The respondents had no difficulty in answering the questions. It made them think and reflect upon difficult questions. Some respondents related their personal experiences and anecdotes while completing the questionnaire. However, as the questionnaire was approximately 12 pages in length, it did not provide space for respondents to write these down observations and comments. I typed their comments and conversations on computer immediately after I returned home from fieldwork. These conversations and qualitative data will appear in Chapter 10. However, the identity of respondents and their organisations will remain anonymous.

2. *The dangers of translation*

The researcher decided against translation of the questionnaire into the Sinhalese and Tamil languages. It would have involved additional effort to ensure its quality in terms of meaning and content. Hence it was difficult to communicate with those who were not fluent in English. Some responses had to be rejected, as there were pages left blank or respondents showed reluctance to filling in the questionnaire. It must be emphasised here that the reluctance occurred in spite of the researcher's ability to clarify words and phrases that may have been difficult to understand. At times the interview would be in the vernacular – either Sinhalese or Tamil. The problem was their discomfort at what may well have been seen as my superior social skill through the use of English, as a highly valued piece of social capital, that they did not necessarily have. I realised that respondents with whom I used the vernacular found it

difficult to write in English though they understood and answered most Likert-type attitudinal questions.

3. Question on 'gender role models'

The question on 'a gender role model' – Question 12 (d) (See Appendix 5 – Copy of Sample Questionnaire) created a minor problem of understanding the sub-question. The term was difficult to understand even among those who knew English well. I developed a quick solution by verbally explaining, wherever possible, that 'a gender role model' referred to another person of the same gender as the respondent whom the respondent liked to emulate as a model. The 'gender role model' could be known or unknown to either of them. The 'gender role model' may be a person within or outside the respondent's organisation. This short explanation helped the respondents to answer the sub-question easily.

4. Refusals and regrets

A few organisations politely declined to participate in the survey. Their reasons were a) the competitive nature of their business, b) the recent recovery of operations due to strike action that had occurred previously, and c) the winding up of operations due to privatisation. The latter government organisation was closed down because its operations were handed over to a number of private sector companies as part of the privatisation programme. Yet some others were hostile in their approach to the research. This hostile attitude arose when the researcher began communicating with managers in a few companies. The managers concerned not only asked how the researcher got their name but also sounded threatening and abusive in the way they spoke. This problem arose because there was a communication failure between the manager who nominated the potential respondent and the respondent himself. The researcher had to be prompt to avoid unpleasantness by excusing himself or by ending the telephone conversation more abruptly than usual. There were certain organisations whose personnel were very particular in seeking to verify that the researcher was indeed a Ph.D. student. The researcher had to present letters from his Professor/Supervisor from the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur, and from the Dean, Humanities and Social Sciences, Open University of Sri Lanka to vouch for his candidature. At least one potential respondent demanded the researcher's employment (Open University) Identity card.

5. *Special requests*

On the other hand, some individuals who became respondents either through formal introduction or other forms of introduction, such as among friends and relatives, requested that the copies of the questionnaire be posted to them. Individual requests such as these were effective and the response also was good.

8.7 Category B: Approaching professional and other associations

Another set of letters similar to the letter sent to the CEOs of organisations (Category A), were sent to 10 professional bodies in Sri Lanka, some exclusively dealing with women's issues and interests. These bodies are as follows:

- Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA)
- Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA)
- Organisation of Professional Associations (OPA)
- Women's Bureau of Sri Lanka
- Sri Lanka Women's Congress
- Women's International Club
- Zonta Club
- Women's Chamber of Industry and Commerce (WCIC)
- Sri Lanka Women Lawyers Association
- The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce

The response was poor, with only three of the bodies showing interest: The YMCA, Sri Lanka Women Lawyers Association, and WCIC. Another professional body, The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, referred the matter to two other agencies: National Congress of Women – Sri Lanka, and the OPA of which the National Congress of Women – Sri Lanka, which showed interest. The rest did not reply. During fieldwork the researcher was referred by some of the respondents to four other associations and professional bodies. They were as follows:

- The Sri Lanka Jaycees
- Sri Lanka Institute of Marketing (SLIM)
- Institute for Chartered Accountants – Sri Lanka (ICASL)
- Academy of Business Studies (ABS)
- Women in Need (WIN)
- The Institute for Personnel Management – Sri Lanka (IPM-SL)

Four of these organisations, ABS, SLIM, WIN, and IPM-SL helped the researcher in accessing potential respondents to the survey. Access to professional associations required constant telephone contact and follow up. These associations needed to have approvals from various boards and governing bodies before they would, or could, help. The researcher was able to concentrate on particular groups of people such as young adults and senior personnel managers through groups such as these. The main advantage here was that the contact with respondents that I was able to approach meant more than one potential respondent at one time could be contacted. In the case of Category B method, the approaches were varied, as explained below.

8.7.1 Meeting with professional students of SLIM

The researcher was permitted to enter 5 classes of professional examination students, numbering about 275, of the SLIM. After a brief introduction he was given ten minutes of each lecture time to hand over a copy of the questionnaire to each student present along with a brief introduction. He was allowed to collect the completed questionnaire the following week. During spare time the researcher was able to collect additional data from these respondents in order to fill in missing information.

8.7.2 Personnel Managers

In another instance the researcher was called upon to hand over one hundred copies of the questionnaire to a general meeting of a professional association of Human Resource Managers. The researcher was not allowed to be present, as he was not a member. I arranged that the questionnaire be delivered to each member, and later collected the responses from the association's office.

8.7.3 Seminar for businesswomen

In a third instance the researcher was given thirty minutes at the final session of a seminar for businesswomen and professionals. The questionnaire was handed over and administered. A fee of Rs. 5,000 was paid to the organisers, but as mentioned above, no respondents were compensated for answering the questionnaire. Other members who were absent for the seminar, were introduced by letter. The association mailed a letter to all its membership informing them of the research, introducing the researcher, and requesting their co-operation for the administration of the questionnaire.

8.7.4 Drawbacks and problems in the survey using Category B method

1. Definition of manager

One of the professional organisations that came forward to help was a group of businesswomen and entrepreneurs, the WCIC. They gave me a list of their membership. It was however, hard to trace managers from this list. Though there were a few, the list was outdated and contained several wrong telephone numbers. When the researcher tried to call some members over the telephone the answer was often negative ('Sorry, wrong number'). The researcher's target audience was managers of organisations, not entrepreneurs. The researcher spent considerable effort verifying who could be suitable as samples for the survey from this source.

2. Networks

There was one member of the association who worked as a high-ranking official at a state-owned manufacturing institution. This person's co-operation and response helped a great extent in finding many more respondents. Networking and references were by and large the most favourable method of reaching respondents.

3. Names and organisations

A minor drawback in the Category B responses was that the researcher could not identify the name of any organisation which the respondent worked for. Question 39 of the questionnaire (See Appendix 5 – Copy of Sample Questionnaire) only asks for the line(s) of business. A few respondents specifically told the researcher where they worked. Since the questionnaire itself assured respondents that both their, and their organisation's identity would not be disclosed nor identifiable, they were accepted to the sample, provided they were valid, consistent, and complete. This did not prove to be a serious problem.

8.7.5 Lessons and experiences from Category B method

A total of 64 responses were collected contacting professional and other associations. The responses of junior professionals and managers were significantly higher and so also was their co-operation, because they were part-time students who attended the SLIM and ABS. Therefore the success rate for this method was (80/382*100%) = 20.94%.

8.8 Category C: Approaching respondents through the researcher's personal contacts

The researcher was able to approach a significant number of respondents using personal contacts. The researcher's relatives, friends, past and present neighbours, and their close acquaintances, assisted in the task of finding suitable cases as samples to the survey. The researcher had the flexibility to be informal in communicating with this group. It was possible to arrange interviews and meetings over the telephone without any previous introduction. The data collection was relatively successful under this category because the researcher was able to chase up the questionnaires from the person known to him. The success rate for this method was (64/382*100%)=16.75%.

8.9 Category D: Through references of respondents in Category A

This method arose as a result of the co-operation and enthusiasm shown by respondents under Category A. As many as 30 names were suggested by these respondents. However, this category yielded only 24 valid responses for the researcher. Though insignificant, it must be pointed out that some respondents were helpful to the researcher in seeking more respondents and thus helping the success of the study.

8.10 Category E: Self introduction

Towards the end of data collection the researcher approached a few respondents without any references from others, in order to save time and speed up the completion of the survey. Names were traced from the Government organisation section of the *Sri Lanka Telephone Directory (1996), Greater Colombo Area.* The researcher first verified the name with the telephone operator and then approached the individual concerned. All respondents were top-level women managers. The researcher found the responses and co-operation useful and was able to complete the survey using this method.

Table 8.15 summarises the overall details of the different categories I used to approach the respondents for the survey.

Table 8.15: ACCESS TO RESPONDENTS

Level/Gender	Category of access					
	A	B	C	D	E	TOTAL
Top Men	39	2	19	2	-	62
Women	30	8	3	6	4	51
Middle Men	47	20	9	1	-	77
Women	42	5	14	4	-	65
Junior Men	23	33	7	5	-	68
Women	29	12	12	6	-	59
Total	210	80	64	24	4	382

A = Contact established through letter to CEO of organisations
B = Contact established through professional bodies/associations
C = Contact established through the researcher's personal contacts
D = Contact established through references of respondents in Category A
E = Contact established through self introduction
Source: Survey Data

Table 8.15 shows that all five methods of establishing contact proved to be useful during data collection.

8.11 Data collection steps

With the exception of respondents coming under Category B, the fieldwork usually involved the following steps:

STEP A: An introductory telephone call and request for an appointment.

STEP B: Introduction of researcher and his employment at the Open University of Sri Lanka, exchange of cards, handing over of questionnaire and explanation of purpose of the study.

STEP C: Follow up, clarification and collection.

During interaction with the respondent to fill in the questionnaire, various methods were employed. Some respondents found time to fill the questionnaire in their offices. Often they were interrupted by telephone calls, secretaries and other personnel. Certain others completed their responses in the Boardroom. These were relatively free from interruptions. Some respondents filled in their responses independently – without any assistance from the researcher. Others wanted an interview-type environment. The researcher had to help out with some explanations of the questions where these were needed. In a few other cases, both the respondent and the researcher went through the questionnaire. Here the respondent read out the numbers (of the keys to the various questions) while the researcher marked them on

the questionnaire. This was probably the fastest method of completing the questionnaire. It also ensured that no items were omitted.

Sometimes the respondent completed the response in the absence of the researcher. The quality of the responses through this method was better than the personal interviewing method. It seemed that the respondent gave his/her candid opinion more freely. In addition, the response was complete and consistent, probably due to three reasons. First, the respondent extended his/her fullest co-operation to the researcher in sparing time and effort through participation in the survey. Second, the respondent was free from bias, probably on account of the researcher's presence. Third, the respondent was able to grasp the meaning and content of the questionnaire without difficulty, irrespective of its length. Achievement of a few perfect responses without any face-to-face researcher involvement, indicated that the questionnaire was an effective instrument.

8.12 Other problems and general issues

8.12.1 Clarification of Questions

There were at least 15 cases where respondents did not co-operate with the researcher to clarify certain questions that had been omitted. The researcher rejected many incomplete responses of this nature. Only fully and reasonably completed responses were acceptable in the sample and the validity, completeness and consistency rules were strictly adhered to. In some cases, a missing figure (such as '0' or a blank space) was a sufficient replacement to a question or a sub-question left blank. These cases were included in the sample.

8.12.2 Use of a voice recorder

The researcher was successful in recording opinions and conversations of respondents, with their full consent, in only three cases. In many other cases, security personnel disallowed my bringing the voice recorder inside their organisations. The researcher took notes carefully or transcribed conversations at the end of the day's work. Even having the consent of the respondent to be recorded did not help because they were often reluctant to speak freely. The researcher therefore decided that it would be better not to use the recorder. It must be noted that the researcher assured that all recordings would be anonymous.

8.12.3 Timing

Time taken to complete the questionnaire varied between 25 to 75 minutes. The researcher normally had to leave the questionnaire with the respondent and arrange another appointment either to collect or follow up the progress. This helped the researcher to ask for response to and to clarify incomplete questions when he came to collect responses. Some respondents sent the completed questionnaire by post. Due to cases of loss in the mail I sought to minimise use of this arrangement. Some respondents mailed the questionnaires because it was more convenient for them. Additionally, some respondents made us of personal home deliveries and registered post deliveries.

8.12.4 Ideal Managerial Type

Question 6 on 'Ideal Managerial Type' created some controversy. There were several reasons for this problem:

a) The English was plain but did not give any *specific* clues to an answer and the sentence was long, running to three lines.

b) The question gave three *vague* clues (physical, psychological or attitudinal). Many who did not understand the question repeated these words. Such responses were rejected. Still others wrote 'good' characteristics in the 'Least Desirable Characteristics' section. For these wrongly written responses for particular questions, I decided to reject the wrong response alone, by putting a missing figure notation, thus saving the rest of the response that had correct answers.

c) Another confusion was the view that there was nothing called 'least desirable characteristics'. There were even top-level personnel who strongly held that they were always positive and that there was nothing negative in any part of their lives. They believed their religious values and faith prohibited faultfinding – namely, suggesting least desirable management characteristics. The researcher had to clarify the objective behind the question – i.e. to identify problem areas where management tends to fail. After this explanation the respondents came out (some very reluctantly) with several very interesting answers. Some respondents simply wrote the opposite of the 'most desirable characteristics'. Some even wrote the expression 'opposite to this'. Such responses were accepted. All other responses with this Question No. 6 incomplete and partly completed were placed with a missing value for Question No. 6 alone, and the remainder accepted. There were cases where respondents left

Question No. 6 blank. The researcher decided to place the missing value to maintain uniformity with the other circumstances that are mentioned above. This saved several rejected responses. Some respondents wrote more than five answers to each of the two sub-questions coming under Question No. 6. The researcher accepted each of the additional responses.

8.12.5 Specific samples

After the data collection reached a count of 200 to 250 responses in the survey, the researcher was able to pick specific stratified samples that he knew he was in need. This helped prioritise data collection activity, given the time and resource constraints. The segment requiring the most effort involved access to top-level women managers. Many held high positions related to Finance, Legal and Administration and had a particularly heavy workload.

8.12.6 Long delays

Cases of long-delaying respondents, or those who were 'unapproachable,' and thus difficult to get an appointment with, were common. These necessitated routine and regular follow up. After a considerable period of time had elapsed, the researcher decided to discontinue further communication as the willingness and co-operation of the respondent seemed doubtful. The researcher usually gave three reasonable chances for the respondent to show interest. An introductory telephone call, a reminder call, or a letter, were a few of the means of communication. The busy schedules and meetings, end of financial year accounts, unfavourable economic and business climate, long festivals and state holidays, frequent foreign travel and work overload were some reasons cited by their secretaries. Those on foreign travel were approached upon their return.

8.12.7 Poor response rate at mid-stage

Towards the mid-stage of the survey the researcher found that the response rate among male junior level executives was very poor. The responses lacked seriousness and consistency. The researcher considered why the response should be discouraging. Looking at the personal demographics of the respondents the researcher identified that the problem group consisted of very young men with less than five years of work experience. In order to get over this problem, the researcher had to adopt a different technique while approaching young respondents. Such an

option was inevitable to make best use of the field work opportunities and to evince better interest among these young respondents.

For example, I used the classroom sessions (under Category B) to target this group of people, effectively, with my modified script. I explained to them what was involved in doctoral research. I did this intentionally in a way that sounded very serious in order to obtain honest and consistent responses. I also explained that the most critical point of research was to obtain primary data, meaning that even they, as potential respondents, would be in a similar position to mine if they were to do research in the future. Then I explained how questionnaires are administered and the importance of having a 'perfect' response. I emphasised that if they were to contribute primary data to my thesis, the best way would be through a valid, consistent and complete response. Anything short of this would be a reject. This advice proved its worth and responses from the junior management level were successful.

8.12.8 Questionnaire filled 'in absentia'

When the researcher was not present when the questionnaire was filled in there were sometimes questions and sub-questions that were found to be incomplete. For approximately 10 cases, the researcher took advantage of the name and postal address disclosed and posted it back to the respondent with a self addressed and stamped envelope. A friendly letter thanking them and requesting that the questions be completed was enclosed. The response was favourable. The researcher was able to reduce the error and reject rate in this manner. This remedial measure was inevitable and took place through the mail as a 'telephone call correction' was not very suitable for all circumstances. The respondent had to think and a question could not be asked off-hand. They also preferred to have the questionnaire before them.

8.12.9 Anonymity and overall response rate

The questionnaire used for the research specified that the respondent had no obligation to disclose any name. However, there was a section at the end of the questionnaire which said that a 'general results feedback' would be sent if they gave a name and a postal address. The majority (78% of the respondents) chose to disclose their name and address in the survey. It also reflects the high degree of co-operation extended by the respondents who participated. Only 84 respondents did not disclose

their names and preferred to be anonymous. Table 8.16 describes the number of usable responses from the survey.

Table 8.16: NO. OF QUESTIONNAIRES USED IN THE SURVEY

Outcome of questionnaires	No.
Valid	382
Rejected	41
Not returned (includes lost in post)	383
Sent as samples to companies	5
Remaining	189
Total	1,000
Source: Survey Data	

Response Rate = Number of Valid Responses/No. of Questionnaires given out * 100

= 382 / 811 * 100

= 47.10 %

The survey resulted in a response rate of 47.1 per cent. In other words, for every 100 questionnaires I distributed, there were 47 usable responses.

In sum, understanding the fieldwork to produce the data for this survey produced an interesting research story. On the one hand, the circumstances in Sri Lanka made it difficult for me to do the field research. On the other, it was difficult for the respondents to know what being a researcher meant. Doing field research on management in Sri Lanka is significantly different to such research in advanced industrialised countries. One cannot count on even the basic amenities such as electricity, security, or transport. Gaining access to win interest and co-operation of respondents was crucial for the success of the survey. Even having had access and co-operation, there were two respondents who did not recognise their role as 'managers,' although their designations clearly did so. Such an experience was unusual to the researcher because it was under-reported in the literature on organisation studies. Some respondents requested a personal copy of the questionnaire. They considered the experience of filling a management questionnaire as a source to new ways of thinking, while the questionnaire itself was an innovative artefact.

The previous discussion in this chapter hints at the dangers and difficulties of research in a country such as Sri Lanka. Despite the fact that the experience of

dangers and difficulties was normal, the research was successful in collecting the primary data for this thesis. Having completed the field research in Sri Lanka, when I met with my Supervisor in Australia, I began to share my research experiences. He advised me to write a Research Story. I then outlined 25 anecdotes, good and bad experiences that I came across while I did the field research. In fact, during the following meeting, we sat together and began to discuss and type these experiences on the computer in the form of a research story to illustrate the flavour of research in a developing country as Sri Lanka. This research story originally appeared in *Organisation Studies* (George and Clegg, 1997) entitled, *An Inside Story: Tales from the Field – Doing Organisational Research in a State of Insecurity*.

8.13 Conclusion

The data collection and field research was a very crucial stage of the thesis. The fieldwork was extremely dangerous in terms of personal safety. I understood the task with determination, having had to face some of the most difficult and disappointing realities in the research. The research data collection was successful and possible only because of the 382 respondents to the survey, as well as the nearly 134 organisations which volunteered to assist through nominations and through other means. Their consideration proved very helpful, particularly when the economic climate turned out to be adverse in Sri Lanka towards end 1995, early 1996 and then right through to the end of that year. I will next focus on the findings and data analysis to bring out possible answers to the research questions that were raised in Chapter 7 – The Research Design.

Chapter 9

THE RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

. . . the challenge for future research in [gender and organisation] is to illuminate the group- and organisation-level processes that interact with individual attitudes and human capital variables to create the variation in gender integration in management and other positions that is observed at the organisation level (Blum *et al.*, 1994: 261).

This chapter presents the findings from data analysis of the sample of 382 men and women managers in Sri Lanka, on the basis of the hypotheses that the research design previously specified. There are two main data analysis methods. The first method uses stepwise regression analysis to investigate the salience of Hypotheses 1 and 2. Regression analysis refers to the estimation of a linear relationship between independent variables and a dependent variable. The stepwise variable entry and removal examines the variables in the block at each step for entry or removal. This is a forward stepwise procedure. A further step of analysis is inserted to investigate multiple variables across the two levels of analysis, that is, institutional as well as organisational (Hypothesis 3). The AMOS structural equation modelling analysis package (Arbuckle, 1997) is used to graphically represent the relationship between dependent and independent variables in each model. AMOS assigns relative weights representing such relationships.

For the purposes of this chapter, it is necessary to understand the meaning and representation of the Figures. Figures 9.1 to 9.17 appearing in this chapter show the graphical representation of the institutional as well as organisational level variables using the AMOS structural equation modelling analysis. The rectangles

on the left-hand side refer to (institutional and organisational level) independent variables. The rectangle on the right-hand side refers to the dependent variable. The two large ovals denoting 'institutional level' and 'organisational level' refer to the two levels of analysis. These two ovals represent a cumulative or composite variable in relation to the 7 institutional and 11 organisational independent variables. Each rectangle has an error value. Such a value is necessary for the computation of relative weights during the iterations in AMOS structural equation modelling. Each independent variable is connected to the dependent variable by a line, either straight or curved. The figure appearing in the middle of each line is the relative weight and is important for data analysis in this chapter. The figure appearing on the top right hand corner of each rectangle is an estimate. AMOS generates this figure automatically but is unimportant for the data analysis. The most important figures for drawing conclusions from data analysis are those relative weights that appear in the middle of the lines connecting the institutional and organisational level ovals to the dependent variable. These two values vary in each figure while all the others remain the same throughout. The value between the two ovals and near the curved line connecting 'institutional level' and 'organisational level' is 1.51, for most of the figures in this chapter. The other figures are straightforward and easily understandable. For example, in Figure 9.1, the institutional level has a relative weight of -0.12 while the organisational level oval has a relative weight of 0.08. Because the organisational level has a higher relative weight, the data analysis concludes that organisational level attributes better explain career satisfaction.

For the purposes of this chapter, it is also necessary to have a clear understanding of the term 'level' as it could connote at least three different meanings. The first connotation refers to the level(s) of analysis – institutional or organisational. The second connotation is with regard to the management *level* (top, middle, and junior). The management *level* is a component (attribute) that comes under organisational level factors. While organisational level refers to a broader level of analysis, management *level* is a much smaller component. The third connotation is with regard to the statistical level of significance. A regression model achieves a level of significance when p (the significance) is less than or equal to 0.050. In addition, for the purposes of this chapter, the names of dependent and independent

variables will appear as italics. Table 9.1 shows the two sets of independent variables representing the institutional and organisational levels of analysis.

Table 9.1: TABLE SHOWING INSTITUTIONAL AND ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL VARIABLES

Institutional Level Attributes	Organisational Level Attributes
Age (Age)	Management *level* (Level)
Marital status (Marital)	*Present experience* (Prsexp)
Life *context* score (Context)	*Past experience* (Pasexp)
Gender (Gender)	*No. of organisations* served (Orgnos)
Ethnicity (Ethnic)	*Span of control* (Suprse)
Religion (Religion)	*Supervisor's gender* (Supr)
Education (Eductn)	*Group gender composition* (Colls)
	Workforce (Wrkfrc)
	Presence of women managers (Wim)
	Line of business (line)
	Pay (Pay)

In sum, there are 7 attributes in the institutional level and 11 in the organisational level of analysis.

9.1 Job satisfaction

9.1.1 Institutional level influences

The analysis of job satisfaction constructs will centre on one major construct relating to *career satisfaction*. A regression model was run incorporating the 7 institutional level attributes mentioned in Table 9.1. The model achieved a level of significance ($F = 10.966$, $df = 377$, $p = 0.001$). The variable that most contributed to the significance in this model is *age* ($B = -0.168$ standardised, $p = 0.001$). These findings imply that *younger* managers tended to enjoy greater *career satisfaction* than their *older* counterparts.

9.1.2 Organisational level influences

A regression model was run incorporating the 11 organisational level attributes mentioned in Table 9.1. The model achieved a level of significance ($F = 5.981$, $df = 267$, $p = 0.001$). The three variables that most contributed to the significance in this model are management *level* ($B = 0.160$ standardised, $p = 0.012$), *number of organisations* served ($B = -0.255$ standardised, $p = 0.001$), and the length of *present experience* ($B = -0.125$ standardised, $p = 0.048$). These findings imply that managers in higher management *levels* were more likely to enjoy greater *career satisfaction*
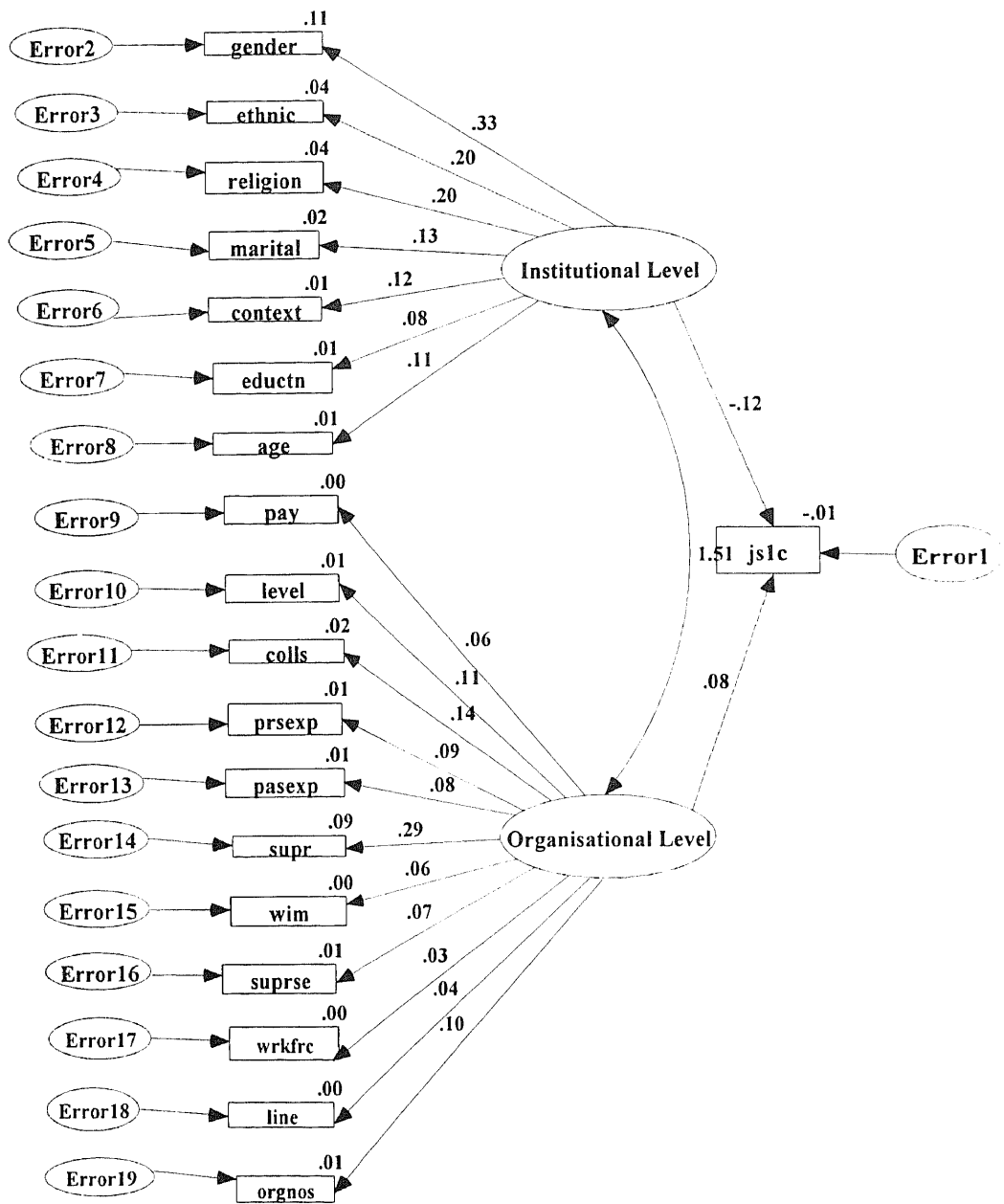
Figure 9.1: Conventional linear
modelling for *career satisfaction*
(Standardised estimates)

than their junior counterparts. However, managers who worked only in a *few* (different) *organisations* over the years seemed to experience greater levels of *career satisfaction*. In addition, managers who had a relatively *shorter* period of work experience in the organisation they presently served seemed to enjoy a greater level of career satisfaction than did those who had a *longer* experience. In other words, managers who enjoyed job satisfaction in terms of a *career* were likely to remain in the *same* organisation but have a *shorter* service period for the present organisation they worked for.

9.1.3 Institutional vs. organisational level influences

Figure 9.1 shows the pattern of influence of both the institutional as well as organisational level influences on career satisfaction. The figure shows the relative weightings for both levels of analysis, and their sub-components that constitute the two levels of analysis. From Figure 9.1, the relative weighting for institutional level attributes is – 0.12 while the relative weighting for organisational level attributes is 0.08. The figure shows that the relative weightings represent the view that organisational level attributes have a greater explanatory power in understanding *career satisfaction*. Even though regression analysis shows that there are significant predictors in each of the institutional and organisational levels of analysis, linear regression modelling using AMOS shows that organisational level factors have a relatively greater weighting and thus a greater explanatory power in understanding job satisfaction. Looking at the organisational level itself, the superior's gender seems to represent the largest component towards the organisational level of analysis (0.29). In the institutional level, the gender of a manager contributes a large extent (0.33).

Although the institutional level of analysis falls short of explaining job satisfaction, gender seems to be a salient predictor in terms of its relative weighting (Figure 9.1). Such a finding implies that women managers seem to enjoy equal if not greater job satisfaction in terms of their career to their male counterparts. Therefore, the experience of job satisfaction (especially career) among Sri Lankan women managers seems to be similar to other countries where men and women appear to have similar levels of satisfaction (see Mason, 1995). The following section presents the findings of preferences for work values/characteristics.

9.2 Preferences for work values/characteristics

9.2.1 Institutional level influences

Data analysis here will focus on the construct *open communication* in the organisation. Open communication as a preferred work value or characteristic refers to a manager's perception of the ability and freedom to convey his or her opinion openly and frankly to his or her superior. A regression model was run incorporating the 7 institutional level attributes mentioned in Table 9.1. The model achieved a level of significance (F = 5.526, df = 62, p = 0.006). The variables that most contributed to the significance in this model are *context*, (*B* = -0.473 standardised, p = 0.002) and *marital* status (*B* = 0.356 standardised, p = 0.017). This finding implies that managers with a higher life *context* score seemed to attach lesser importance to *open communication*. Managers who had a higher life *context* score are those who are likely to be single parents (especially women), with considerable pressure for economic survival. Hence the regression analysis shows that the higher the life *context* score, the lesser the likelihood for attaching importance to *open communication*.

9.2.2 Organisational level influences

A regression model was run incorporating the 11 organisational level attributes mentioned in Table 9.1. The model achieved a level of significance (F = 7.323, df = 38, p = 0.001). The variables that most contributed to the significance in this model are *span of control* (*B* = 0.397 standardised, p = 0.003), *pay* (*B* = -0.284 standardised, p = 0.027), and *present experience* (*B* = -0.366 standardised, p = 0.008), and *past experience* (*B* = -0.591 standardised, p = 0.001). The finding implies that managers who had a larger number of subordinates reporting to them were more likely to consider *open communication* as an important work value. However, managers with higher salary levels and longer *past* as well as *present* work *experience* tended to attach lesser importance to open communication.

9.2.3 Institutional vs. organisational level influences

Figure 9.2 shows the pattern of influence of both the institutional as well as organisational level influences on *open communication*. The figure shows the relative weightings for both levels of analysis, and their sub-components that constitute the two levels of analysis. From Figure 9.2, the relative weighting for institutional level attributes is – 0.46 while the relative weighting for organisational level attributes is 0.33. The figure shows that the relative weightings represent the
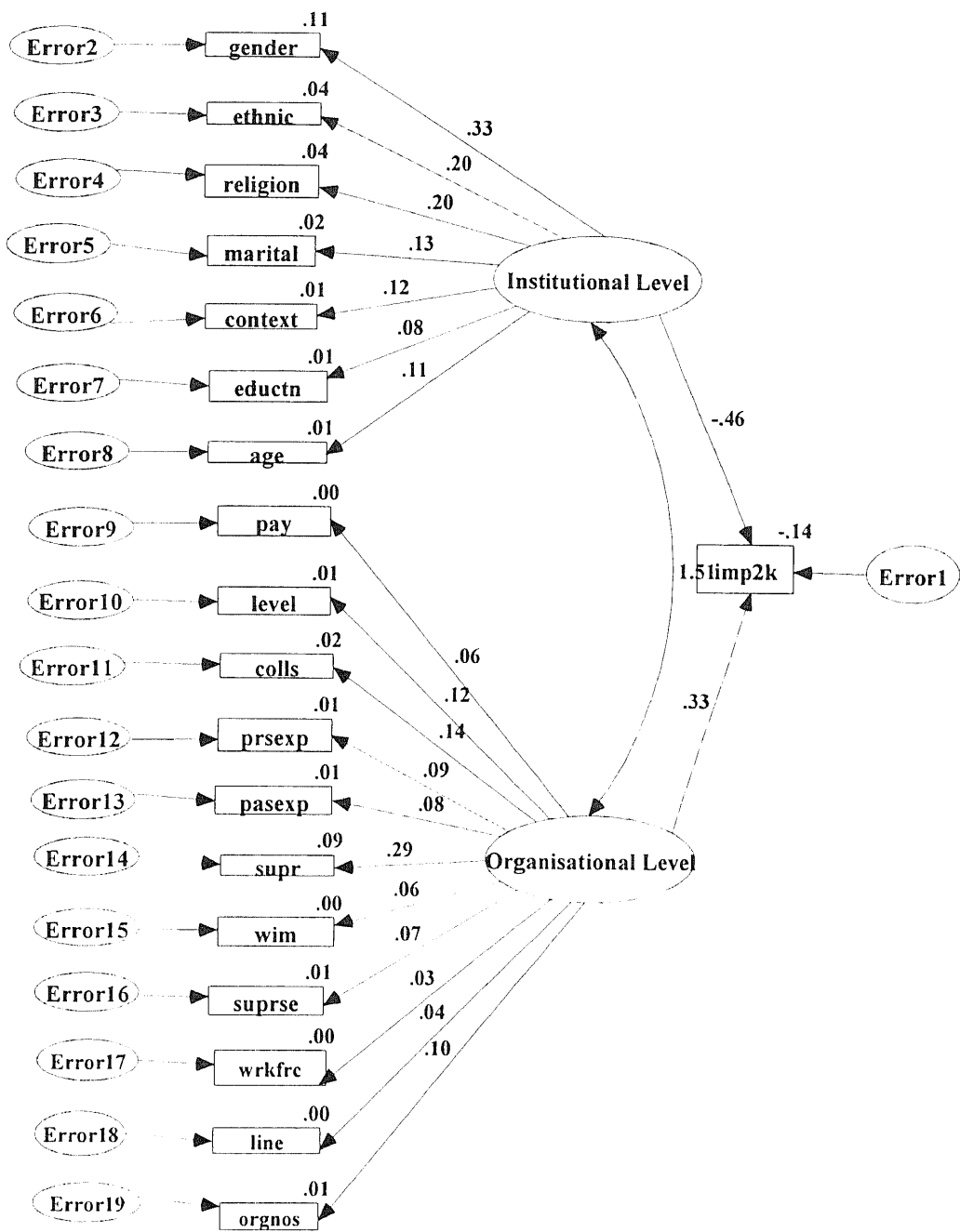
Figure 9.2: Conventional linear modelling for
open communication
(Standardised estimates)

view that organisational level attributes have a greater explanatory power in understanding *open communication.*

9.3 *Experience of work realities*

9.3.1 Institutional level influences

Data analysis will focus on two constructs. They are *targets set, are targets met* and *I make mistakes.* A regression model was run incorporating the 7 institutional level attributes mentioned in Table 9.1. For the construct *targets set, are targets met,* the model failed to achieve a level of significance. For the construct *I make mistakes,* the model achieved a level of significance (F = 8.637, df = 375, p = 0.001). The variables that most contributed to significance in this model are *gender* (B = 0.184 standardised, p = 0.001), *age* (B = 0.148 standardised, p = 0.004) and *education* (B = -0.124 standardised, p = 0.015). The finding implies that *women* managers and those who are *older,* irrespective of gender, were more likely to admit that they *made mistakes.* On the other hand, managers with higher levels of *education* were less likely to admit *making mistakes.*

9.3.2 Organisational level influences

A regression model was run incorporating the 11 organisational level attributes mentioned in Table 9.1. For the construct *targets set, are targets met,* the model failed to achieve a level of significance. For the construct *I make mistakes,* the model achieved a level of significance (F = 6.259, df = 267, p = 0.001). The variables that most contributed to the significance in this model are *workforce* (B = 0.161 standardised, p = 0.012), *present experience* (B = 0.139 standardised, p = 0.027), and *line of business* (B = 0.131 standardised, p = 0.031). These findings imply that managers with long work *experience* and those who worked in *larger* organisations (no. of employees) and those in *service* organisations rather than exclusively industrial organisations were more likely to admit *making mistakes.*
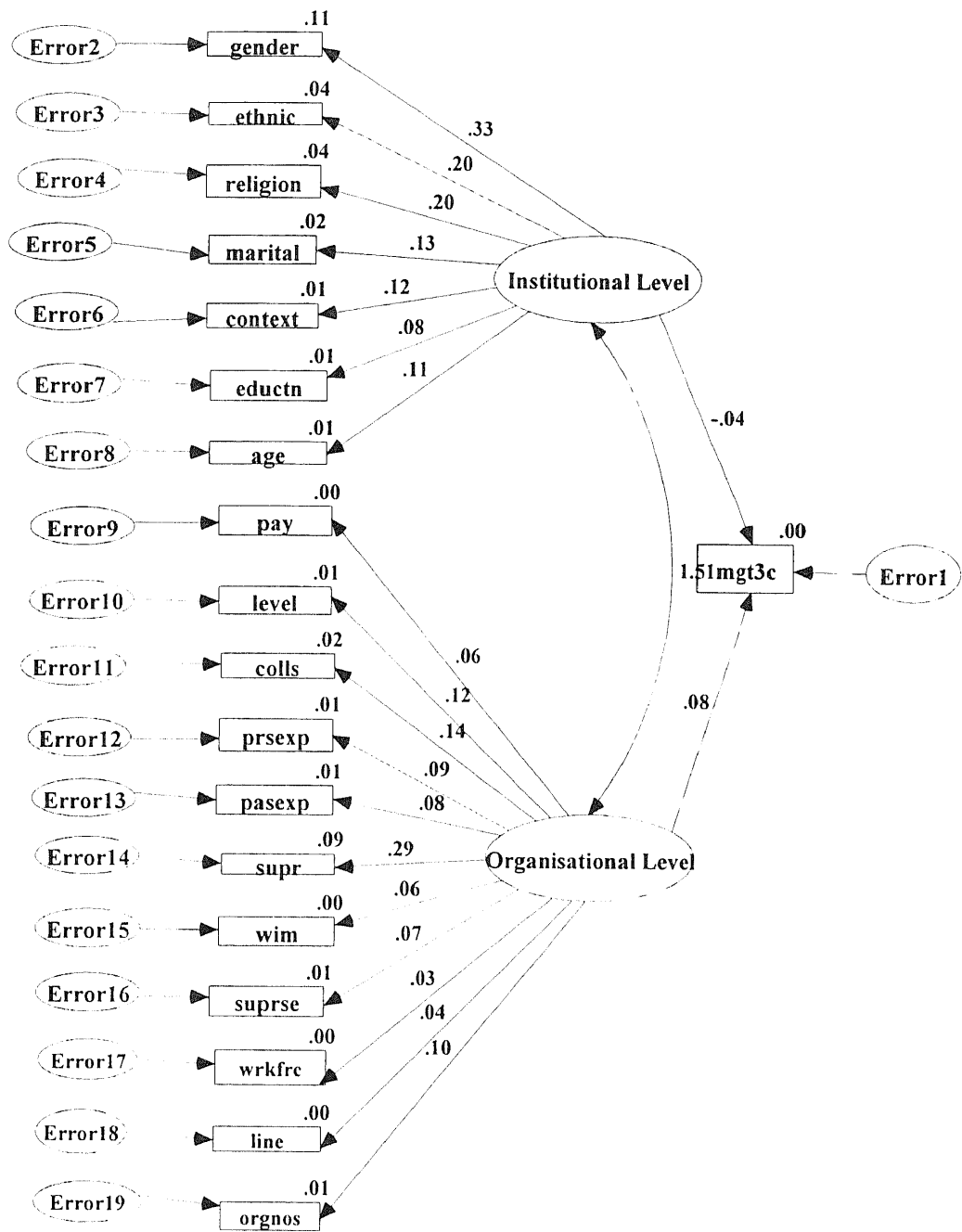
Figure 9.3: Conventional linear modelling for
targets set, are targets met
(Standardised estimates)
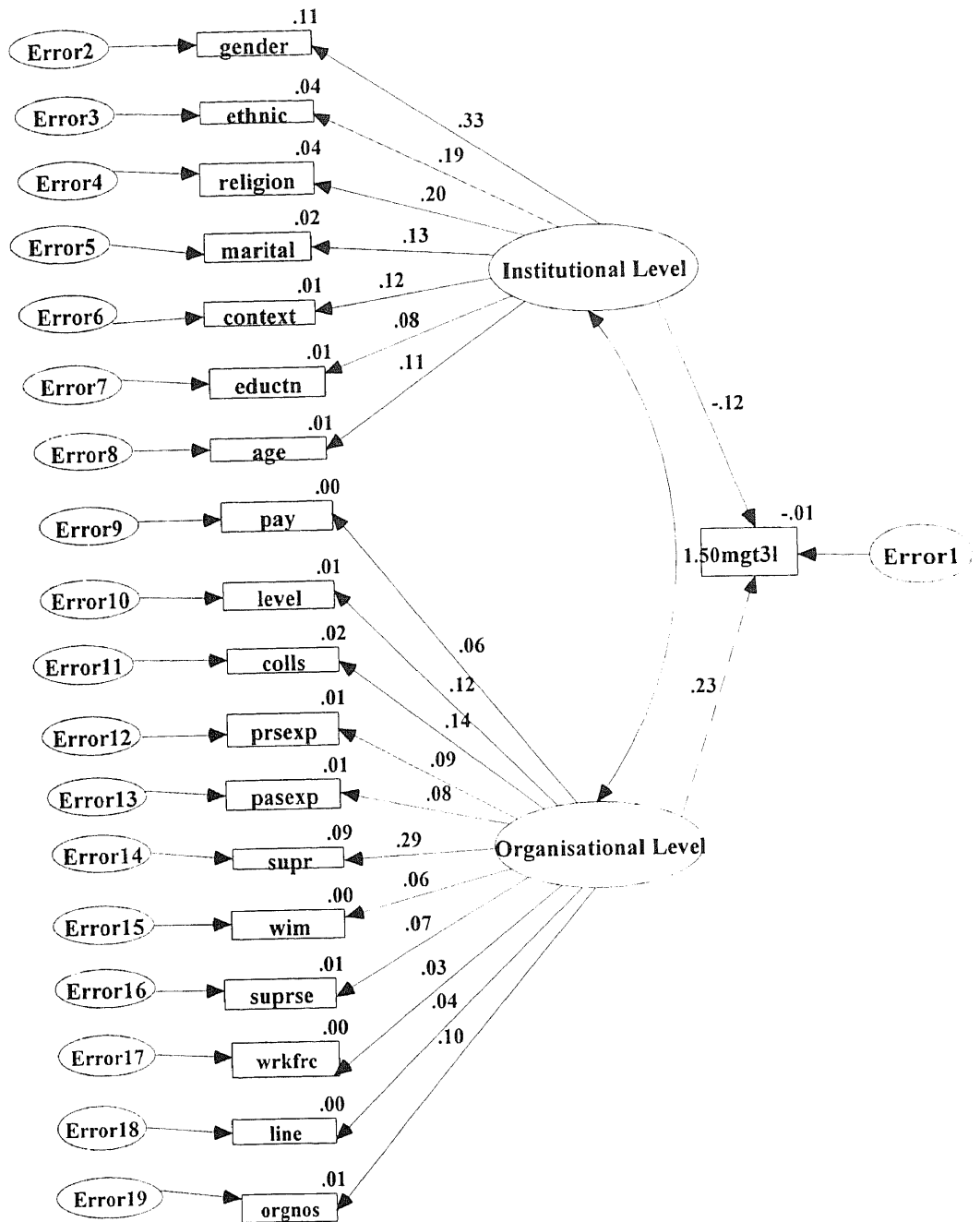
Figure 9.4: Conventional linear modelling for
I make mistakes
(Standardised estimates)

9.3.3 Institutional vs. organisational level influences

Figures 9.3 and 9.4 show the pattern of influence of both the institutional as well as organisational level influences on the constructs, *targets set, are targets met* and *I make mistakes*. The figures show the relative weightings for both levels of analysis, and their sub-components that constitute the two levels of analysis. From Figure 9.3, for the construct *targets set, are targets met* the relative weighting for institutional level attributes is –0.04 while the relative weighting for organisational level attributes is 0.08. Figure 9.4, for the construct *I make mistakes* the relative weighting for institutional level attributes is –0.12 while the relative weighting for organisational level attributes is 0.23. The figures show that the relative weightings represent the view that organisational level attributes have a greater explanatory power in understanding setting and meeting targets and admitting mistakes in organisations. Even though regression analysis shows that there are significant predictors in each of the institutional and organisational levels of analysis, linear regression modelling using AMOS shows that organisational level factors have relatively greater weighting and thus a greater explanatory power in understanding managerial realities. Looking at the organisational level itself, the superior's gender seems to represent the largest component towards the organisational level of analysis (0.29). In the institutional level, the gender of a manager contributes a large extent (0.33).

The findings for managerial realities among Sri Lankan managers parallel findings evident in the international literature. For example, the international gender literature attaches a gender dimension to work realities. Women managers are sometimes seen as lacking confidence and capability in their work performance behaviours (Cooper and Davidson 1984). Although gender appears to be significant in the admission of *making mistakes* the organisational level of analysis, rather than the institutional level largely explains such an admission. The findings for the exercise of different management styles will be the next focus of data analysis.

9.4 Management/leadership styles

9.4.1 Institutional level influences

Data analysis will focus on the construct of *decisively instructing others what to do*. A regression model was run incorporating the 7 institutional level attributes

mentioned in Table 9.1. The model achieved a level of significance (F = 16.340, df = 374, p = 0.001). The variable that most contributed to the significance in this model is *age* (B = 0.205 standardised, p = 0.001). This finding implies that older managers were more likely to admit that they were decisive in their instructions to others on what they should do.

9.4.2 Organisational level influences

A regression model was run incorporating the 11 organisational level attributes mentioned in Table 9.1. The model achieved a level of significance (F = 4.930, df = 268, p = 0.027). The variable that most contributed to the significance in this model was *past experience* (B = 0.134 standardised, p = 0.027). This finding implies that managers with longer work *experience* in the *past* were more likely to admit that they *decisively instructed others what to do*.

9.4.3 Institutional vs. organisational level influences

Figures 9.5 shows the pattern of influence of both the institutional as well as organisational level influences for the construct *decisively instructing others what to do*. The figures show the relative weightings for both levels of analysis, and their sub-components that constitute the two levels of analysis. From Figure 9.5, the relative weighting for institutional level attributes is 0.03 while the relative weighting for organisational level attributes is 0.14. The figure shows that the relative weightings represent the view that organisational level attributes have a greater explanatory power in understanding managerial realities in organisations. Even though regression analysis shows that there are significant predictors in each of the institutional and organisational levels of analysis, linear regression modelling using AMOS shows that organisational level factors have relatively greater weighting and thus a greater explanatory power in understanding management/leadership styles. Looking at the organisational level itself, the superior's gender seems to represent the largest component towards the organisational level of analysis (0.29). In the institutional level, the gender of a manager contributes a large extent (0.33). An important implication of the finding relating to management/leadership style is that *gender* is not a major variable. In other words, men and women managers in Sri Lanka seem to have similar management/leadership styles. In addition, the organisational level factors appear to influence management/leadership styles to a greater extent in that they increase the explanatory power of understanding such styles. The next section will focus on the experience of management pressure.
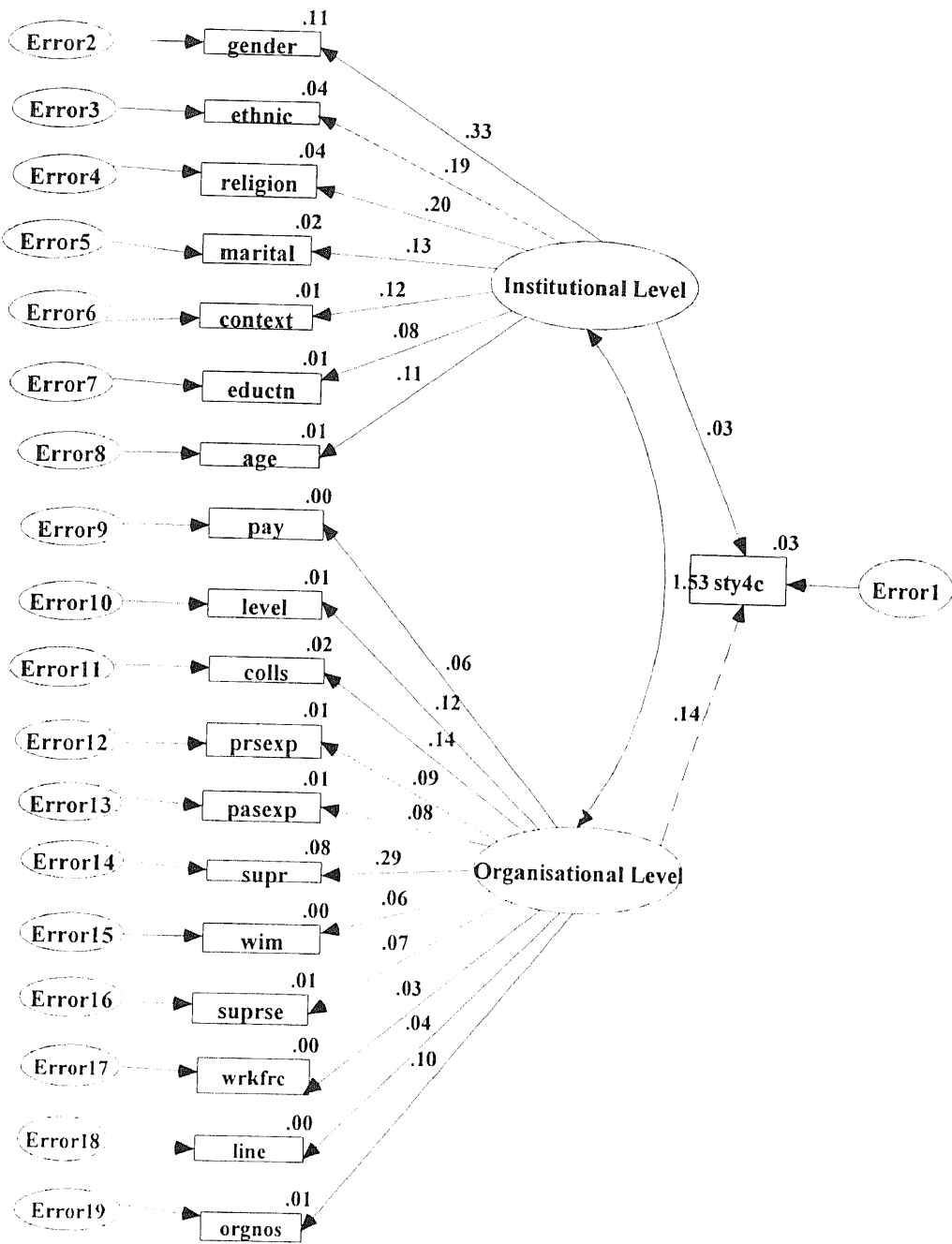
Figure 9.5: Conventional linear modelling for
decisively instructing others what to do
(Standardised estimates)

9.5 Experience of management pressure

9.5.1 Institutional level influences

Data analysis will focus on the construct of pressure relating to the experience of *verbal or physical sexual harassment.* A regression model was run incorporating the 7 institutional level attributes mentioned in Table 9.1. The model achieved a level of significance (F = 6.311, df = 155, p = 0.002). The variables that most contributed to the significance in this model are *gender* (B = 0.220 standardised, p = 0.005) and *context* (B = -0.193 standardised, p = 0.014). This finding implies that women managers were more likely to experience the pressure *verbal or physical sexual harassment.* In addition, managers with higher life *context* score (especially women managers who were single parents) were less likely to experience pressure due to *sexual harassment.*

9.5.2 Organisational level influences

A regression model was run incorporating the 11 organisational level attributes mentioned in Table 9.1. The model achieved a level of significance (F = 4.812, df = 111, p = 0.030). The variable that most contributed to the significance in this model was the length of *present experience* (B = 0.204 standardised, p = 0.030). This finding implies that managers (especially women) with longer *work experience* in the *present* organisation were more likely to experience *sexual harassment.*

9.5.3 Institutional vs. organisational level influences

Figure 9.6 shows the pattern of influence of both the institutional as well as organisational level influences for the pressure resulting from the experience of *verbal or physical sexual harassment.* The figure shows the relative weightings for both levels of analysis, and their sub-components that constitute the two levels of analysis. Figure 9.6 shows that the relative weighting for institutional level attributes is –0.72 while the relative weighting for organisational level attributes is 0.60. The figure shows that the relative weightings represent the view that organisational level attributes have a greater explanatory power in understanding managerial work pressures in organisations. Even though regression analysis shows that there are significant predictors in each of the institutional and organisational levels of analysis, linear regression modelling using

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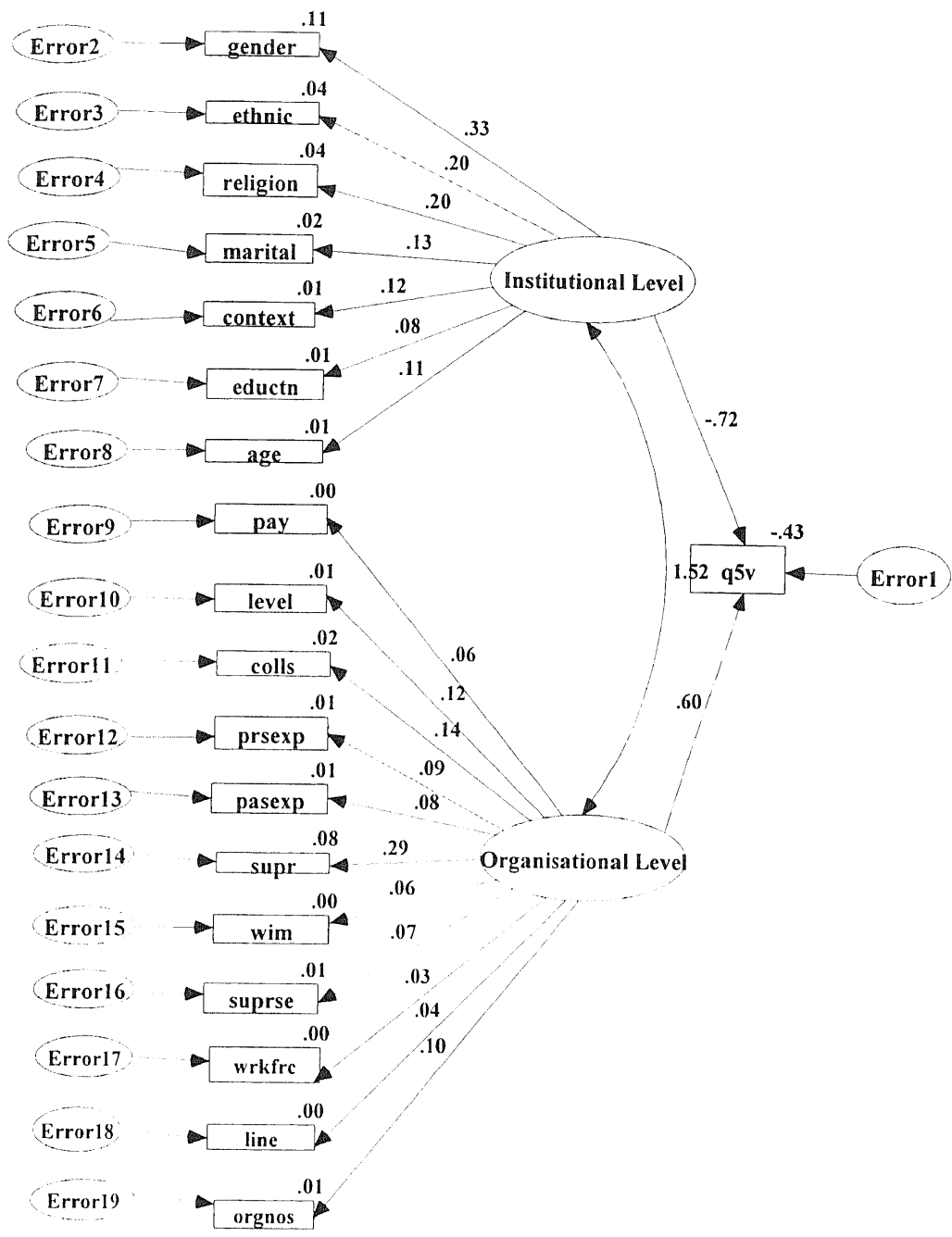
Figure 9.6: Conventional linear modelling for
pressure arising from sexual harassment
(Standardised estimates)

AMOS shows that organisational level factors have relatively greater weighting. Thus the organisational level of analysis seems to show a greater explanatory power in understanding managerial pressures, specially relating to the experience of *sexual harassment*. Looking at the organisational level itself, the superior's gender seems to represent the largest component in the organisational level of analysis (0.29). At the institutional level, the gender of a manager contributes a large extent (0.33).

The findings for pressure relating to the experience of verbal or physical *sexual harassment* imply that, Sri Lankan female managers, at least those with a higher life *context* score seem not to consider *sexual harassment* as a serious problem. A probable reason for this phenomenon could be the possibility that cultural and religious attitudes towards women permeate into organisations and organisational practices. In other words, female managers are respected in their organisations. The next focus of attention is on work relationship pressures.

9.6 Experience of work relationship pressure

9.6.1 Institutional level influences

Data analysis will focus on the construct relating to the work relationship pressure of *business travel and staying away from home*. A regression model was run incorporating the 7 institutional level attributes mentioned in Table 9.1. The model achieved a level of significance ($F = 9.306$, $df = 258$, $p = 0.003$). The variable that most contributed to the significance in this model is *gender* ($B = 0.187$ standardised, $p = 0.003$). This finding implies that *women* managers are more likely to admit experiencing greater pressure because of *business travel and staying away from home*, for short or long periods of time.

9.6.2 Organisational level influences

A regression model was run incorporating the 11 organisational level attributes mentioned in Table 9.1. The model achieved a level of significance ($F = 5.718$, $df = 186$, $p = 0.018$). The variable that most contributed to the significance in this model was the management *level* ($B = -0.173$ standardised, $p = 0.018$). This finding implies that managers (especially women) in higher management *levels*

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were less likely to experience the pressure of business and staying away from home.

9.6.3 Institutional vs. organisational level influences

Figures 9.7 shows the pattern of influence of both the institutional as well as organisational level influences for the pressure resulting from the experience of *business travel and staying away from home.* The figures show the relative weightings for both levels of analysis and their sub-components that constitute the two levels of analysis. From Figure 9.7, the relative weighting for institutional level attributes is -0.40 while the relative weighting for organisational level attributes is 0.42. The figure shows that the relative weightings represent the view that organisational level attributes have a greater explanatory power in understanding relationship pressures relating to staying away from home. Even though regression analysis shows that there are significant predictors in each of the institutional and organisational levels of analysis, linear regression modelling using AMOS shows that organisational level factors have relatively greater weighting. Thus the organisational level of analysis seems to show a greater explanatory power in understanding managerial pressures, especially relating to the experience of *business travel and staying away from home.* Looking at the organisational level itself, the superior's gender seems to represent the largest component towards the organisational level of analysis (0.29). In the institutional level, the gender of a manager contributes a large extent (0.33).

There are probable reasons for the relatively lesser pressure among managers at higher management *levels*, especially for women. Women managers, especially at top management either have 'contextual' or 'situational' advantages. Contextually, women are more likely to be single or if married, without children. In terms of their domestic situation, women managers are more likely to have domestic arrangements either with the help of servants or extended family members or a supportive spouse. The next focus of attention will be on ideal management characteristics.
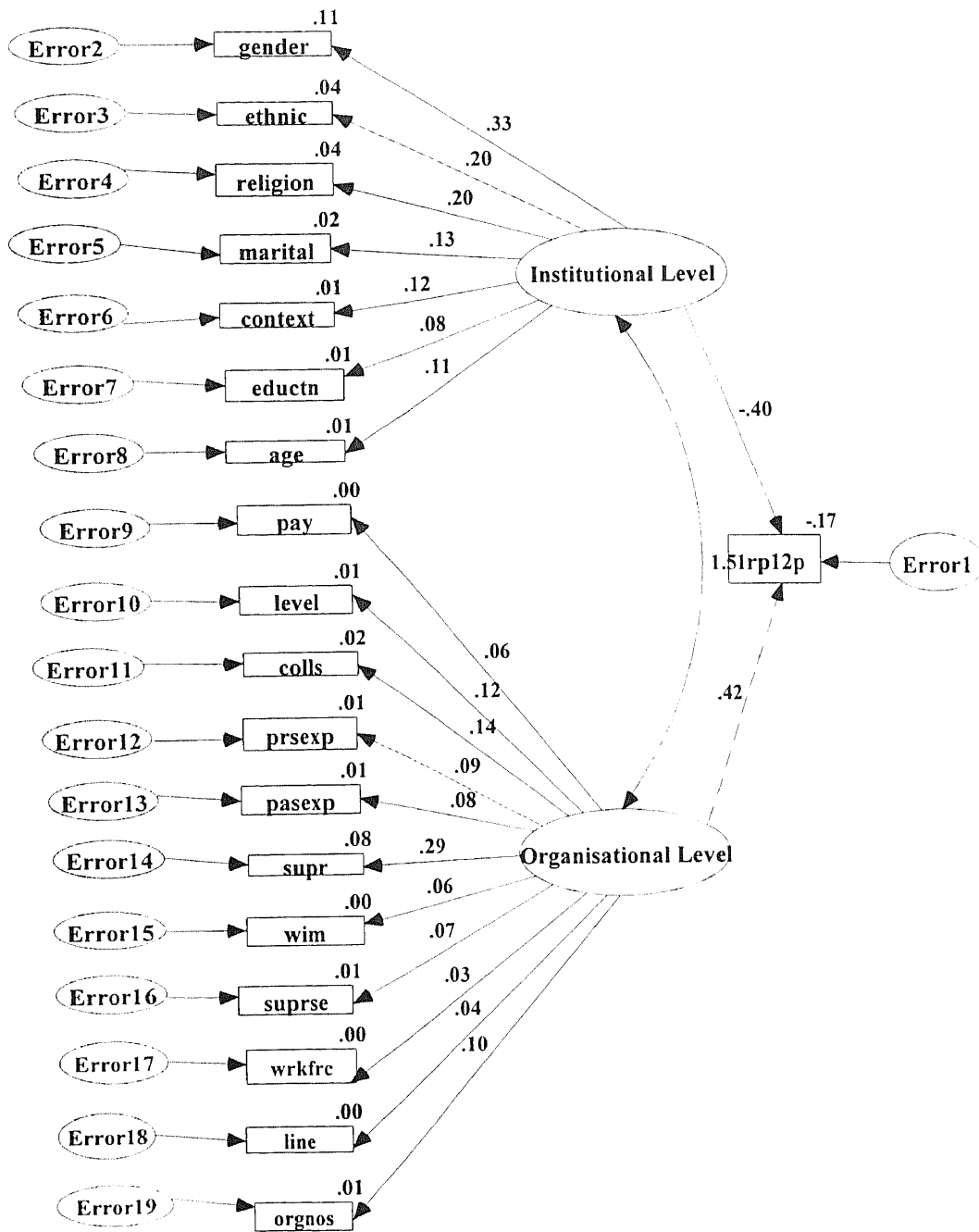
Figure 9.7: Conventional linear modelling for
pressure from business travel and staying away from home
(Standardised estimates)

9.7 Ideal management characteristics

9.7.1 Institutional level influences

Data analysis will focus on *most desirable* management *characteristics* and *least desirable* management *characteristics*. For the purposes of data analysis, open-ended responses were coded in three ways. Responses that were feminine in nature were coded as '1', while those that suggested a masculine element '2'. The remaining responses were coded as '3'. A regression model was run for *most desirable characteristics* incorporating the 7 institutional level attributes mentioned in Table 9.1. The model failed to achieve a level of significance.

A regression model was run for *least desirable characteristics* incorporating the 7 institutional level attributes mentioned in Table 9.1. The model achieved a level of significance (F = 7.269, df = 290, p = 0.001). The variables that most contributed to the significance in this model are *marital* status (B = 0.171 standardised, p = 0.003) and *education* (B = 0.123 standardised, p = 0.034). This finding implies that managers who have higher levels of *education* and who are *married* seem to consider *least desirable characteristics* to be those that are neither masculine nor feminine.

9.7.2 Organisational level influences

A regression model was run for *most desirable characteristics* incorporating the 11 organisational level attributes mentioned in Table 9.1. The model achieved a level of significance (F = 5.555, df = 264, p = 0.019). The variable that most contributed to the significance in this model was the *group gender composition* (B = -0.144 standardised, p = 0.019). This finding implies that managers in *mixed groups* (equal or more women) seem to consider those that are relatively more feminine as the *most desirable characteristics*.

A regression model was run for *least desirable characteristics* incorporating the 11 organisational level attributes mentioned in Table 9.1. The model achieved a level of significance (F = 5.291, df = 235, p = 0.022). The variable that most contributed to the significance in this model was the *group gender composition* (B = 0.148
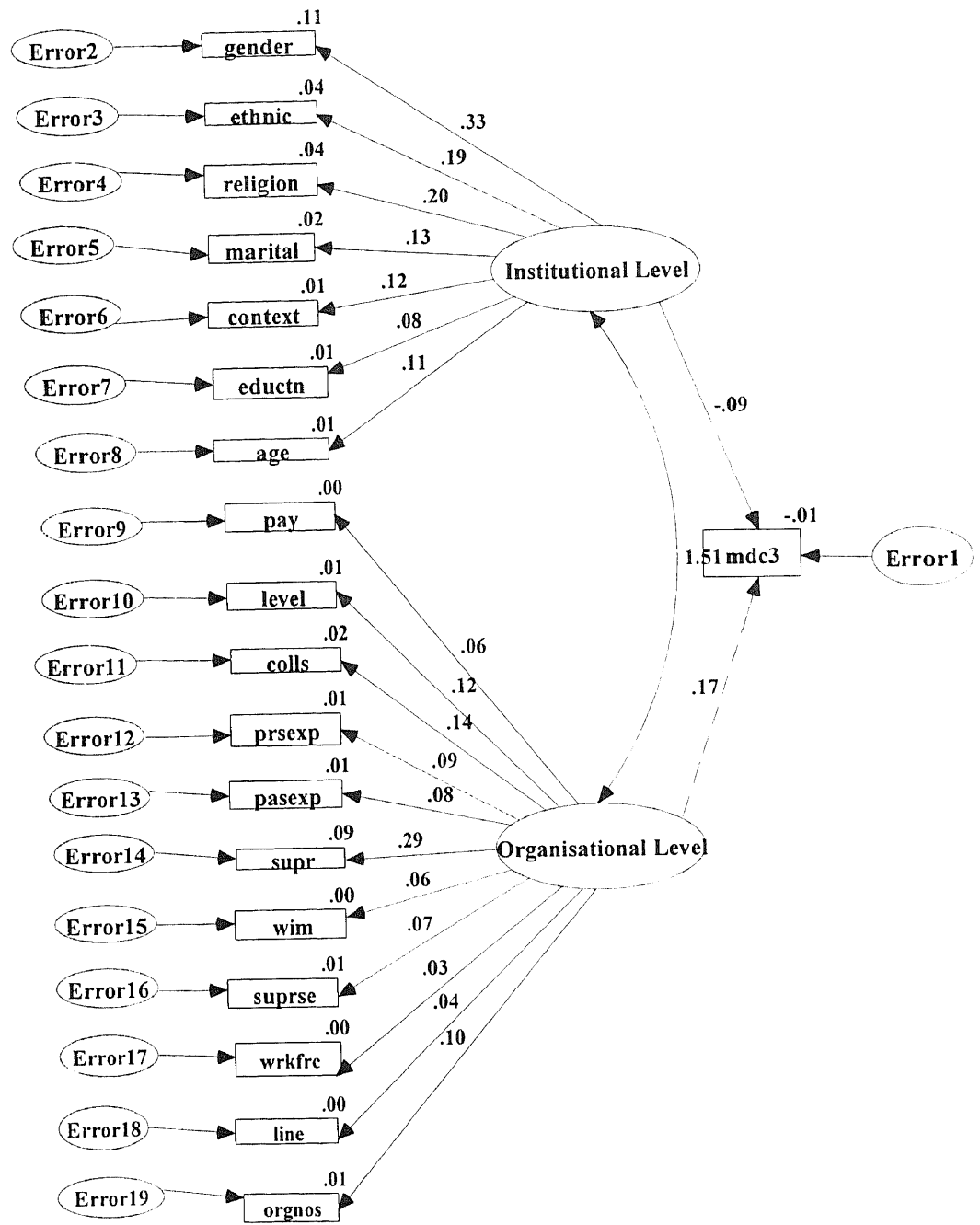
Figure 9.8: Conventional linear modelling for
most desirable management characteristics
(Standardised estimates)
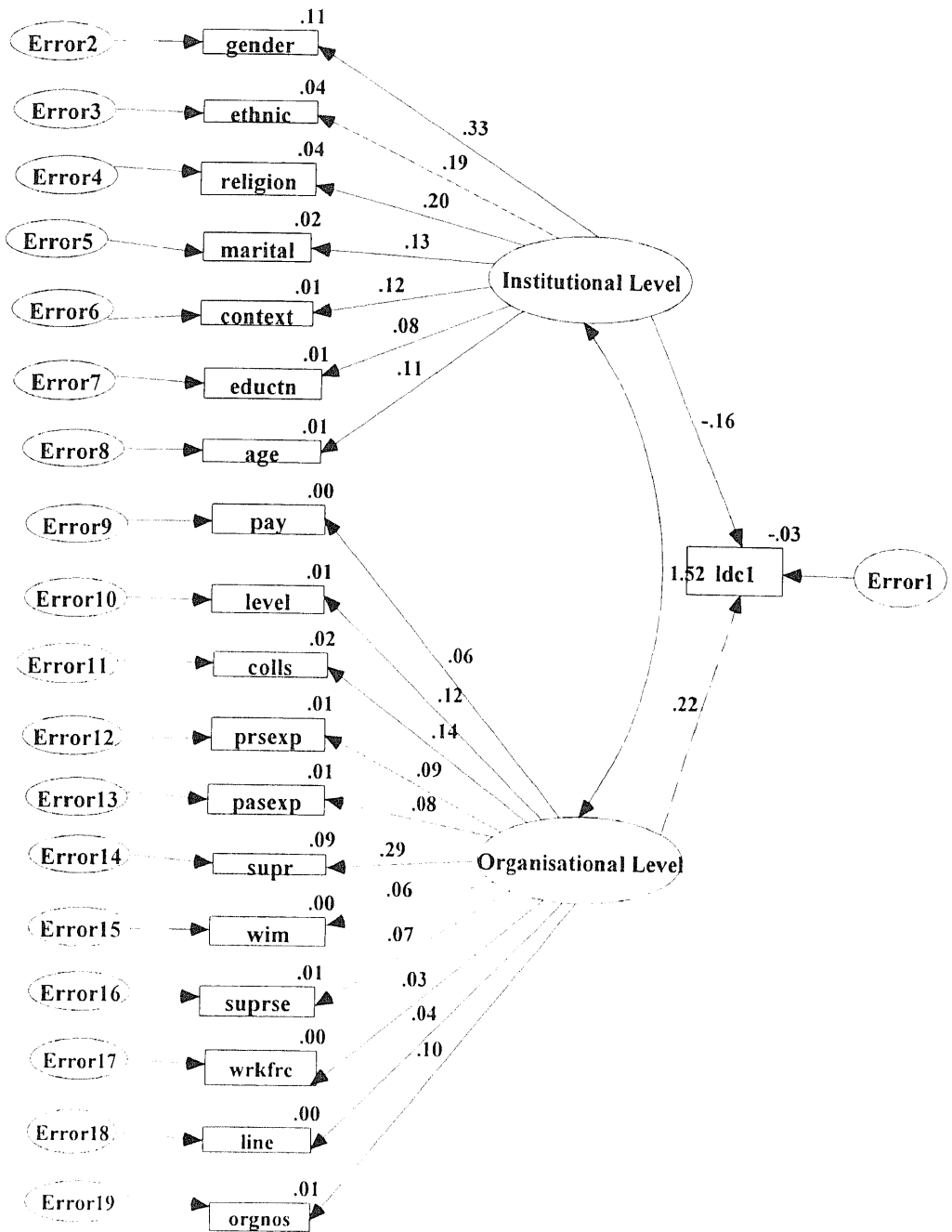
Figure 9.9: Conventional linear modelling for
least desirable management characteristics
(Standardised estimates)

standardised, p = 0.022). This finding implies that managers in mixed groups (equal or more women) seem to consider the *least desirable characteristics* to be those that are neither feminine nor masculine.

9.7.3 Institutional vs. organisational level influences

Figures 9.8 and 9.9 show the pattern of influence of both the institutional as well as organisational level influences for *most desirable* and *least desirable characteristics*. The figures show the relative weightings for both levels of analysis, and their sub-components that constitute the two levels of analysis. From Figure 9.8, *(most desirable characteristics)* the relative weighting for institutional level attributes is -0.09 while the relative weighting for organisational level attributes is 0.17. The corresponding weightings in relation to *least desirable characteristics* are, for institutional level attributes, -0.16 and for organisational level attributes, 0.22. The figure shows that the relative weightings represent the view that organisational level attributes have a greater explanatory power in understanding ideal management characteristics in organisations.

The general view of the findings for ideal management characteristics is that Sri Lankan managers seem to consider ideal management characteristics that are neither masculine nor feminine in a relative sense. Such a finding is in contrast to Schein's (1973 and 1975) original study that saw women managers identifying ideal management characteristics as generally masculine. Once again, a probable reason is the Sri Lankan cultural context. As discussed in Chapter 5, Sri Lanka's historical and cultural past has recorded the presence of male and female leaders and rulers in kingdoms and cities. In addition, the prevalence of certain management practices akin to Fayol's principles of management applied to both male and female leaders. Thus, management stereotypes were irrelevant on the basis of gender. The next focus of attention is on equal employment opportunity perceptions.

9.8 Equal employment opportunity perceptions

9.8.1 Institutional level influences

Data analysis will focus on the equal employment opportunity perception relating to *promotion*. A regression model was run incorporating the 7 institutional level attributes mentioned in Table 9.1. The model achieved a level of significance (F =

7.519, df = 376, p = 0.001). The variables that most contributed to the significance in this model are *age* (B = 0.148 standardised, p = 0.005) and *education* (B = 0.102 standardised, p = 0.049). This finding implies that *older* managers and those managers with higher *levels* of *education* are more likely to have greater levels of equal employment opportunity perceptions in relation to *promotion* of women to management. In other words, the findings reveal the likelihood for both male and female managers to hold a greater level of equal employment opportunity perception for promotions because of their maturity in terms of *age* and greater exposure to higher *education*.

9.8.2 Organisational level influences

A regression model was run incorporating the 11 organisational level attributes mentioned in Table 9.1. The model achieved a level of significance (F = 7.235, df = 267, p = 0.001). The variables that most contributed to the significance in this model were the *group gender composition* (B = 0.205 standardised, p = 0.001), the management *level* (B = 0.141 standardised, p = 0.018), and the *line* of business (B = 0.126 standardised, p = 0.033). These findings imply that managers in mixed groups (equal or greater numbers of women), managers in higher management *levels*, and managers in *service and mixed business* organisations (rather than exclusively industrial) seemed to have greater equal employment opportunity perceptions of *promotions* for women managers.

9.8.3 Institutional vs. organisational level influences

Figure 9.10 shows the patterns of influence of both the institutional as well as organisational levels for equal employment opportunity perceptions for *promotions*. The figure shows the relative weightings for both levels of analysis, and their sub-components that constitute the two levels of analysis. From Figure 9.10, the relative weighting for institutional level attributes is 0.44 while the relative weighting for organisational level attributes is -0.08. The figure shows that the relative weightings represent the view that institutional level attributes have a greater explanatory power in understanding equal employment opportunity perceptions in relation to *promotion*. Even though regression analysis shows that there are significant predictors in each of the institutional and organisational levels of analysis, linear regression modelling using AMOS shows that the institutional level has relatively greater weighting. Thus the institutional level of analysis
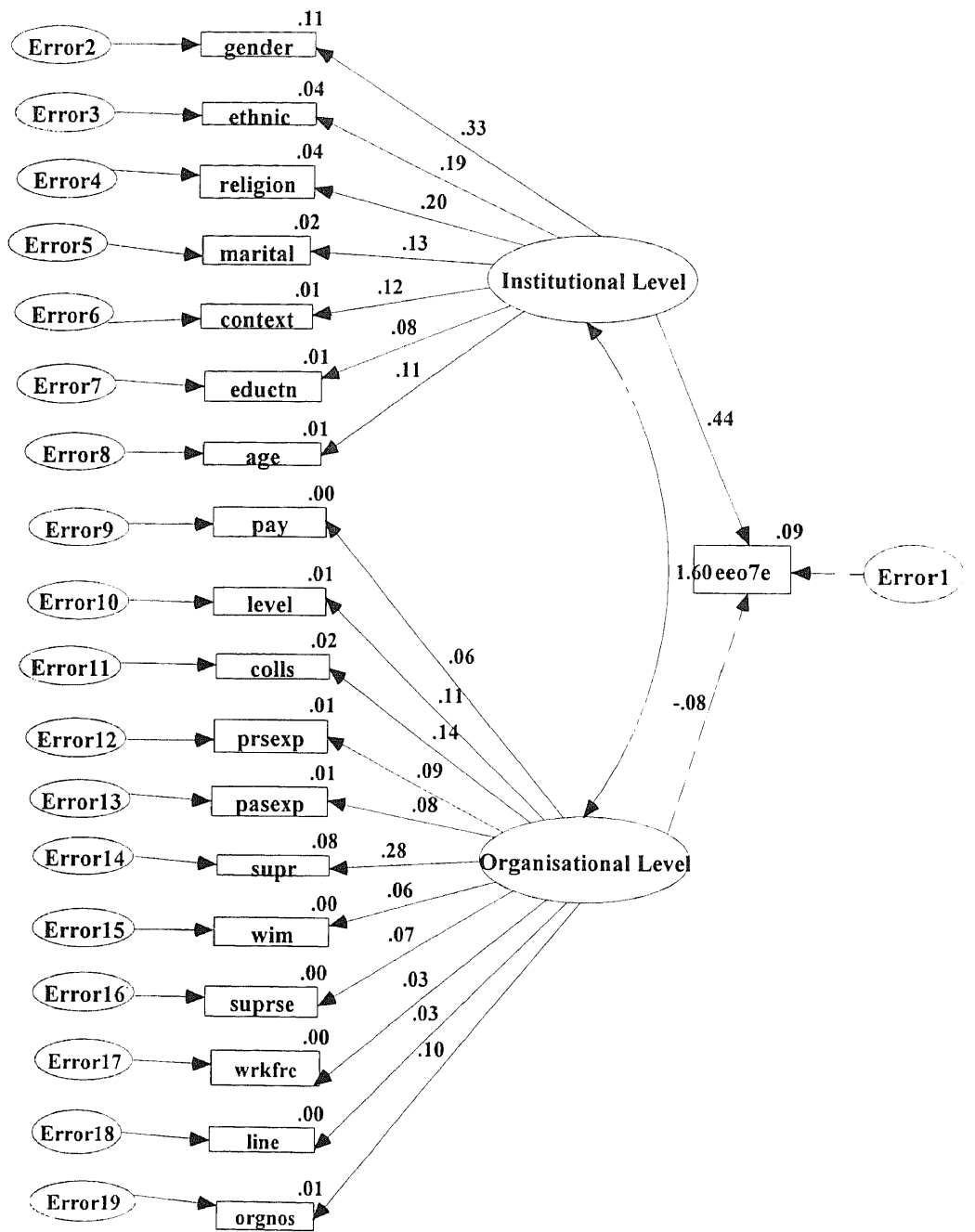
Figure 9.10: Conventional linear modelling for
equal employment opportunity perceptions for promotion
(Standardised estimates)

seems to show a greater explanatory power in understanding equal employment opportunity perceptions for *promotion*.

The comparative findings using AMOS structural equation modelling are interesting because the conception of 'equal employment' seems to be relatively absent in the Sri Lankan context either as a social policy or as legislation (except in the basic constitutional provision). The salience of institutional level attributes rather than organisational level attributes is likely to be the case because equal employment opportunity perceptions appear to be shaped by individuals themselves to a greater extent than organisations as a whole. Thus, equal employment opportunity perceptions in relation to *promotion* is one aspect of work perceptions where the structural equation modelling disproves the prominence of organisational level attributes that this these proposes. The next focus of attention is on perceptions towards female managers at work.

9.9 Perceptions towards women managers at work

9.9.1 Institutional level influences

Data analysis will focus on the construct relating to the perception that *gender inequality is the product of history and will gradually disappear over time*. A regression model was run incorporating the 7 institutional level attributes mentioned in Table 9.1. The model achieved a level of significance ($F = 10.161$, df $= 377$, $p = 0.002$). The variable that most contributed to the significance in this model is *ethnicity* ($B = -0.162$ standardised, $p = 0.002$). This finding implies that managers who belong to minority communities are less likely to agree with the view that *gender inequality is the product of history and will gradually disappear over time*. In other words, male and female managers who disclaimed any ethnicity, were Sinhalese (the majority), were more likely to agree with the view that *gender inequality is the product of history and will gradually disappear over time* than did managers from minority communities such as Muslims and Colombo Chetties. Minority community perceptions towards females appeared to not only influence but also justify gender inequality in contrast to those who were Sinhalese or did not consider belonging to any ethnicity in Sri Lanka.

9.9.2 Organisational level influences

A regression model was run incorporating the 11 organisational level attributes mentioned in Table 9.1. The model achieved a level of significance (F = 3.988, df = 269, p = 0.047). The variable that most contributed to significance in this model was the *present* management *experience* (B = 0.121 standardised, p = 0.047). This finding implies that the longer the *present* work *experience* of managers the more likely they were to agree to the view that *gender inequality is the product of history and will gradually disappear over time.*

9.9.3 Institutional vs. organisational level influences

Figures 9.11 shows the pattern of influence of both the institutional as well as organisational level influences for the view that *gender inequality is the product of history and will gradually disappear over time.* The figure shows the relative weightings for both levels of analysis, and their sub-components that constitute the two levels of analysis. From Figure 9.11, the relative weighting for institutional level attributes is -0.29 while the relative weighting for organisational level attributes is 0.14. The figure shows that the relative weightings represent the view that organisational level attributes have a greater explanatory power in understanding perceptions towards women managers in organisations. Even though regression analysis shows that there are significant predictors in each of the institutional and organisational levels of analysis, linear regression modelling using AMOS shows that organisational level factors have relatively greater weighting. Thus the organisational level of analysis seems to show a greater explanatory power in understanding perceptions towards women managers in organisations.

Even though Sri Lankan managers from minority *ethnic* groups such as Muslims, Burghers, and Colombo Chetties seem to disagree that *gender inequality will disappear over time,* organisational level attributes seem to predict a stronger relative weight in relation to such a perception. One of the strongest predictors in the AMOS modelling above in the organisational level is the *superior's gender* (0.30). In other words, managers who report to women in their organisations seem to consider that gender inequality will disappear over time. The next focus of discussion will examine resignation decisions of male managers.
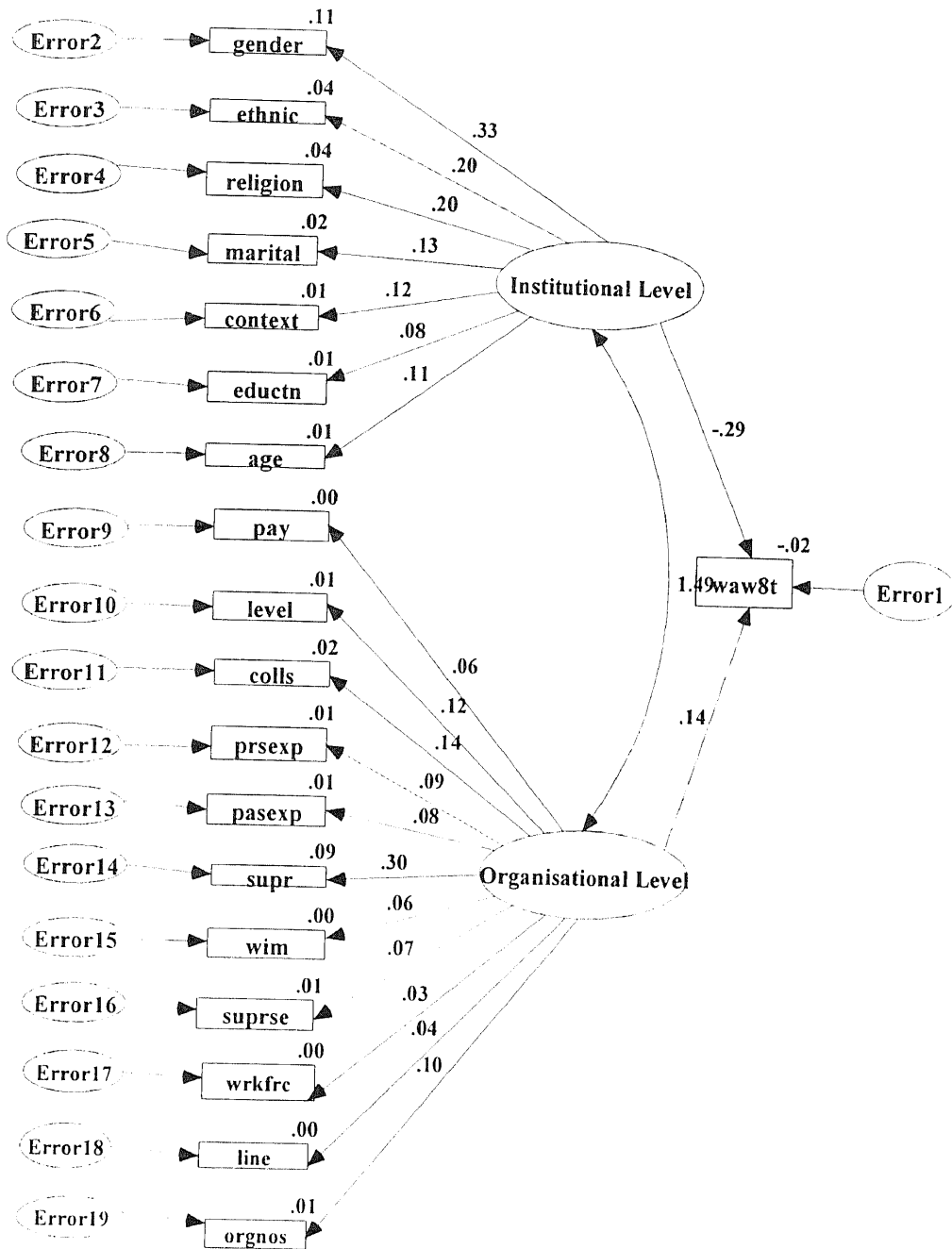
Figure 9.11: Conventional linear modelling for the view that
gender inequality is a product of history and will disappear over time
(Standardised estimates)

9.10 Resignation decisions of male managers

9.10.1 Institutional level influences

Data analysis will focus on the construct of the resignation decision of male managers relating to their *seeking a greater sense of achievement at work*. A regression model was run incorporating the 7 institutional level attributes mentioned in Table 9.1. The model achieved a level of significance (F = 5.038, df = 375, p = 0.007). The variable that most contributed to the significance in this model is *religion* (B = -0.130 standardised, p = 0.011) and *age* (B = -0.109 standardised, p = 0.034). This finding implies that *older* managers and managers from minority *religious* faiths are less likely to agree that male managers would change employment *seeking a greater sense of achievement at work*.

9.10.2 Organisational level influences

A regression model was run incorporating the 11 organisational level attributes mentioned in Table 9.1. The model achieved a level of significance (F = 4.058, df = 268, p = 0.045). The variable that most contributed to the significance in this model was the *span of control* (B = -0.122 standardised, p = 0.045). This finding implies that managers who supervise a *larger number of employees* below them are less likely to agree that male managers would change employment *seeking a greater sense of achievement at work*.

9.10.3 Institutional vs. organisational level influences

Figures 9.12 shows the pattern of influence of both the institutional as well as organisational level influences for male managers' resignation decision relating to their *seeking a greater sense of achievement at work*. The figure shows the relative weightings for both levels of analysis, and their sub-components that constitute the two levels of analysis. From Figure 9.10, the relative weighting for institutional level attributes is -0.09 while the relative weighting for organisational level attributes is -0.07. The figure shows that the relative weightings represent the view that neither organisational level nor institutional level attributes have any explanatory power in understanding resignation decisions of male managers in relation to *seeking a greater sense of achievement at work*.
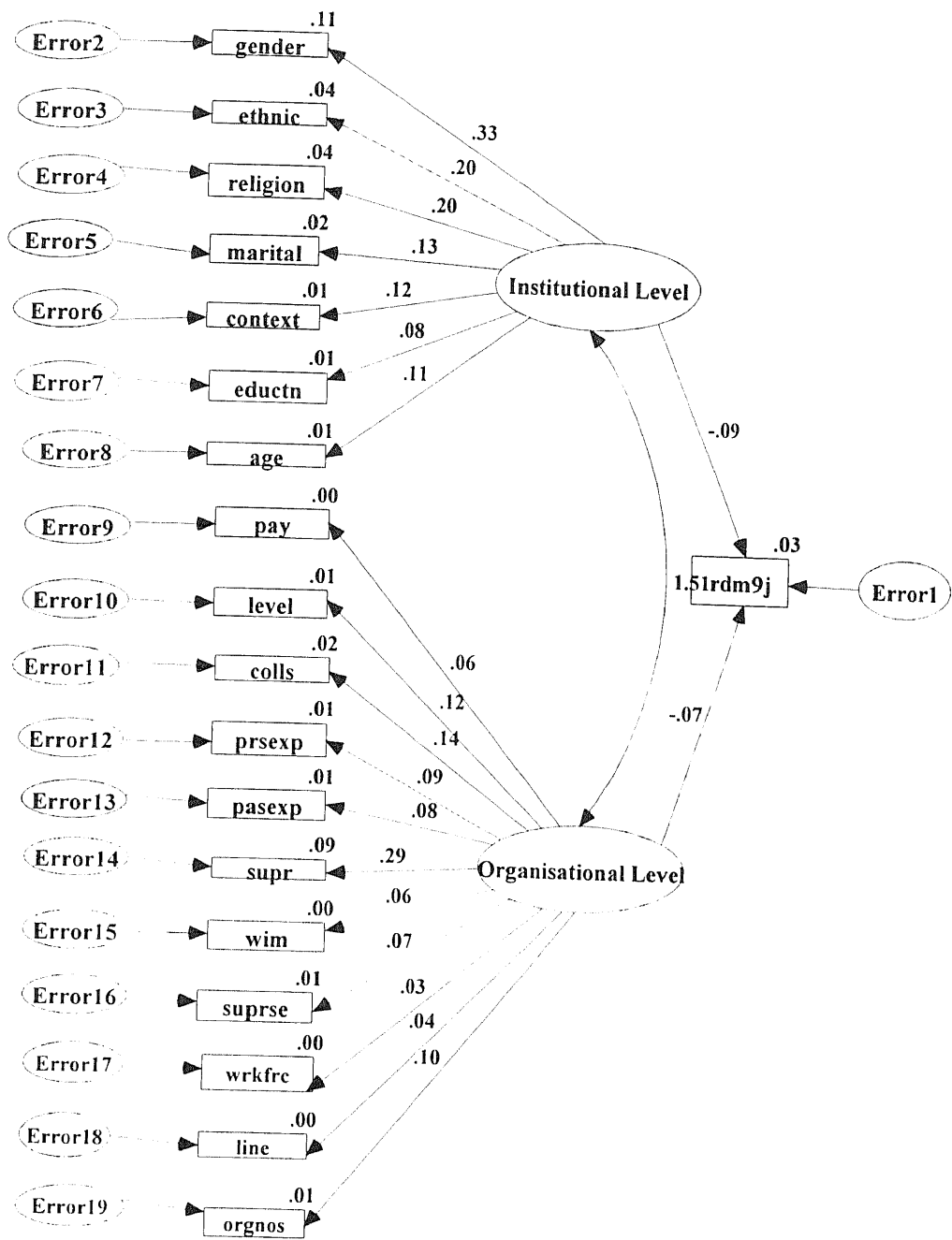
Figure 9.12: Conventional linear modelling for
*male managers' resignation decision seeking a
greater sense of achievement at work*
(Standardised estimates)

The finding relating to male managers' resignation decision is another interesting example where, neither of the two levels of analyses explains the probable reasons or orientations. However, the finding for the regression analysis at the institutional level implies that religious beliefs seem inversely to predict an opportunity for *greater sense of achievement at work.* Such a finding seems to attach importance to the elements of religiosity that constitute work ethics, as discussed in Chapter 5. Having presented the findings for resignation decisions of male managers, the next section will present the findings for resignation decisions of female managers.

9.11 Resignation decisions of female managers

9.11.1 Institutional level influences

Data analysis will focus on the construct of the resignation decision of female managers relating to their *avoiding frustration in a male dominated culture.* A regression model was run incorporating the 7 institutional level attributes mentioned in Table 9.1. The model achieved a level of significance (F = 5.013, df = 374, p = 0.026). The variable that most contributed to the significance in this model is *religion* (B = 0.115 standardised, p = 0.026). This finding implies that managers from minority *religious* faiths are more likely to agree that women managers would change employment, *avoiding frustration in a male dominated culture.*

9.11.2 Organisational level influences

A regression model was run incorporating the 11 organisational level attributes mentioned in Table 9.1. The model achieved a level of significance (F = 4.005, df = 267, p = 0.046). The variable that most contributed to the significance in this model is *group gender composition* (B = -0.122 standardised, p = 0.046). This finding implies that women managers belonging to mixed groups (equal or greater numbers of women) were less likely to change jobs *avoiding frustration in a male dominated culture.*

9.11.3 Institutional vs. organisational level influences

Figures 9.13 shows the pattern of influence of both the institutional as well as organisational level influences for female managers' resignation decision relating to *avoiding frustration in a male dominated culture.* The figures show the relative
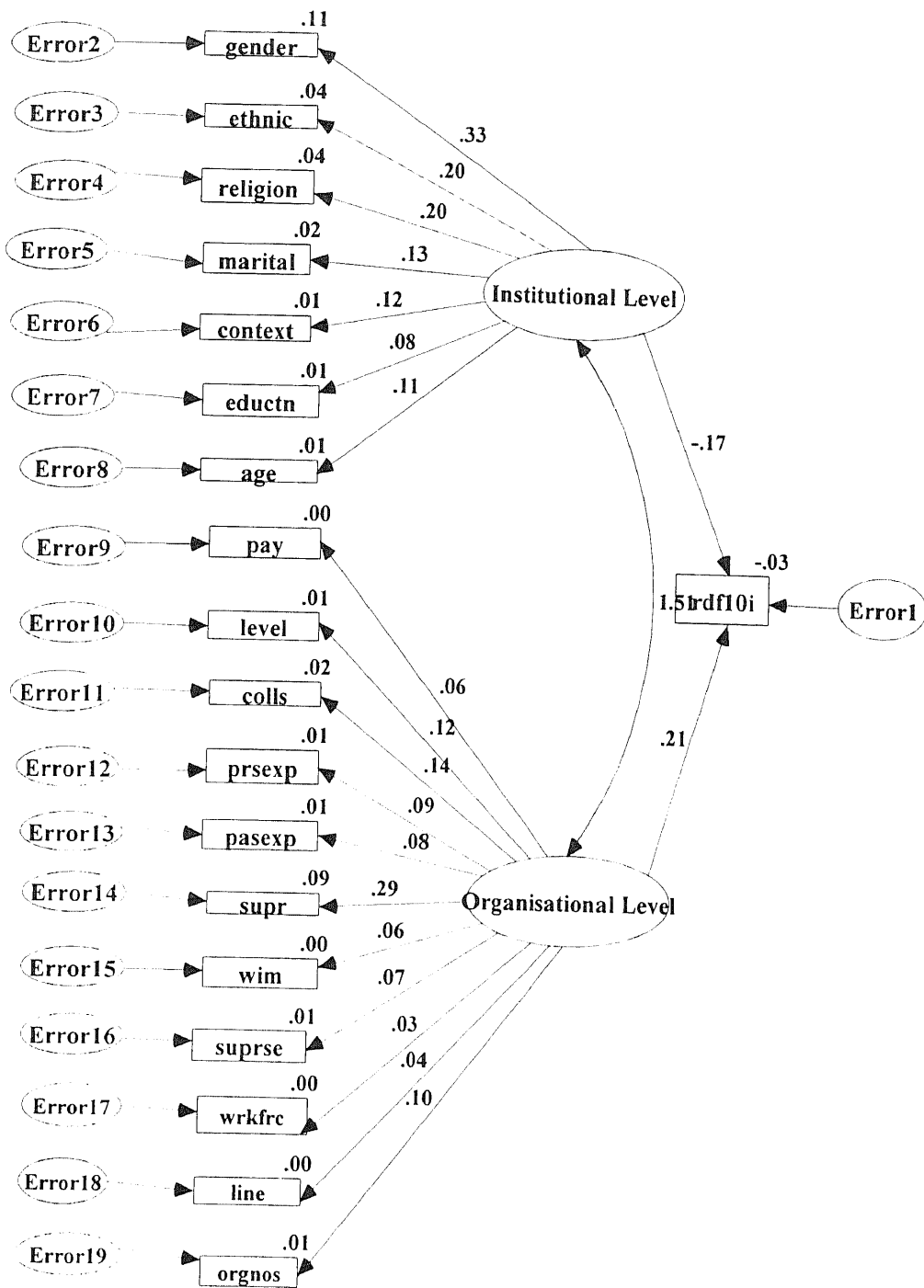
Figure 9.13: Conventional linear modelling for
*female manager' resignation decision avoiding
a male dominated culture at work*
(Standardised estimates)

weightings for both levels of analysis and their sub-components that constitute the two levels of analysis. From Figure 9.13, the relative weighting for institutional level attributes is -0.17 while the relative weighting for organisational level attributes is 0.21. The figure shows that the relative weightings represent the view that organisational level attributes have a greater explanatory power in understanding resignation decisions of female managers in organisations.

9.12 Preference for a male or female superior

9.12.1 Institutional level influences

A regression model was run incorporating the 7 institutional level attributes mentioned in Table 9.1 on the above variable, *preference for a male or female superior or either.* The model achieved a level of significance (F = 7.069, df = 374, p = 0.001). The variable that most contributed to the significance in this model is *education* (*B* = 0.154 standardised, p = 0.003) and *gender* (*B* = 0.117 standardised, p = 0.022). This finding implies that *women* managers and managers with higher levels of *education* were more likely to prefer *either a male or a female manager as superior.* Thus, male managers were more likely to prefer a male as their superior in contrast to female managers who preferred to work either for a male or a female superior.

9.12.2 Organisational level influences

A regression model was run incorporating the 11 organisational level attributes mentioned in Table 9.1. The model achieved a level of significance (F = 5.171, df = 268, p = 0.024). The variable that most contributed to the significance in this model was the *group gender composition* (*B* = 0.138 standardised, p = 0.024). This finding implies that managers who belonged to *mixed groups* (equal or greater numbers of women) were more likely to *prefer either a male or a female as their superior,* if asked to elect one. Such male and female managers were unlikely to have any specific preferences with regard to the gender of their superior.

9.12.3 Institutional vs. organisational level influences

Figures 9.14 shows the pattern of influence of both the institutional as well as organisational level influences for the *preferences for a male or a female, or either, as a superior.* The figures show the relative weightings for both levels of analysis,
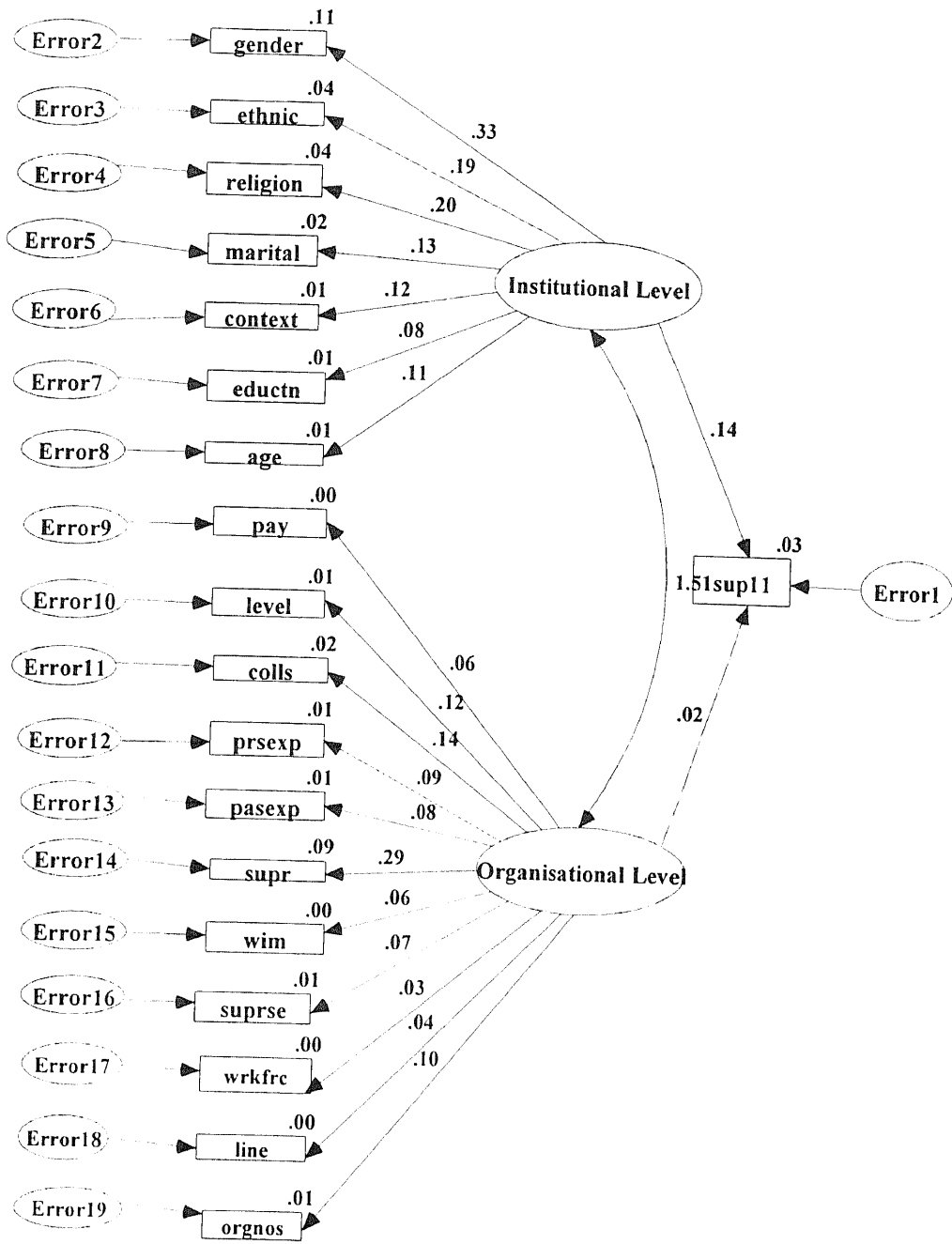
Figure 9.14: Conventional linear modelling for
preference for a male or female superior, or either
(Standardised estimates)

and their sub-components that constitute the two levels of analysis. From Figure 9.14, the relative weighting for institutional level attributes is 0.14 while the relative weighting for organisational level attributes is 0.02. The figure shows that the relative weightings represent the view that institutional level attributes have a greater explanatory power in understanding the preferences for *a male or a female as a superior or either*. Even though regression analysis shows that there are significant predictors at the organisational level of analysis, linear regression modelling using AMOS shows that institutional level factors have relatively greater weighting. Thus the institutional level of analysis seems to show a greater explanatory power in understanding the *preferences for a male or a female manager as superior*.

The findings for the *preference, for a male or female as superior or either,* is another interesting example where institutional level attributes have a greater explanatory power than organisational level attributes. Once again, *gender*, an institutional level element has emerged as a stronger predictor in this instance than organisational level attributes. Perhaps, in a patriarchal society, male managers who have had male colleagues throughout their careers would consider a female superior uncomfortable to work with. Although there is a significance in the predictor *group gender composition* in the organisational level attributes, the integrative approach seems to show that institutional level attributes have a greater explanatory power in understanding managers' preference for a male or female as superior or either. The next topic of discussion will focus on findings for gender role attitudes.

9.13 Gender role attitudes

9.13.1 Institutional level influences

Data analysis will focus on the gender role attitude construct relating to the view that *if both husband and wife work, they should share housework and childcare equally*. A regression model was run incorporating the 7 institutional level attributes mentioned in Table 9.1. The model achieved a level of significance (F = 11.875, df = 377, p = 0.001). The variable that most contributed to the significance in this model is *gender* (B = 0.175 standardised, p = 0.001). This finding implies that *women* managers are more likely to agree to the view that *if both husband and wife work, they should share housework and childcare equally*.

9.13.2 Organisational level influences

A regression model was run incorporating the 11 organisational level attributes mentioned in Table 9.1. The model achieved a level of significance ($F = 7.300$, df $= 269$, $p = 0.007$). The variable that most contributed to significance in this model was the *past* working *experience* ($B = -0.163$ standardised, $p = 0.007$). This finding implies that managers who had longer past work *experience* were less likely to agree to the view that *if both husband and wife work, they should share housework and childcare equally.*

9.13.3 Institutional vs. organisational level influences

Figures 9.15 shows the pattern of influence of both the institutional as well as organisational level influences for the gender role attitude relating to the view that, *if both husband and wife work, they should share housework and childcare equally.* The figures show the relative weightings for both levels of analysis, and their sub-components that constitute the two levels of analysis. From Figure 9.15, the relative weighting for institutional level attributes is -0.20 while the relative weighting for organisational level attributes is 0.26. The figure shows that the relative weightings represent the view that organisational level attributes have a greater explanatory power in understanding gender role attitudes among male and female managers in organisations. Even though regression analysis shows that there are significant predictors in each of the institutional level of analysis, linear regression modelling using AMOS shows that organisational level factors have relatively greater weighting. Thus the organisational level of analysis seems to show a greater explanatory power in understanding gender role attitudes among male and female managers in Sri Lankan organisations.

The findings for gender role attitudes are important because gender role attitudes usually stem from the institutional level factors. Factors such as childhood socialisation, education, and family influences shape either traditional or non-traditional gender role attitudes. Such an assumption might suggest that the institutional level have a greater explanatory power than the organisational level of analysis. Nevertheless, it is the organisational level attributes that have an overall greater explanatory power in understanding gender role attitudes among Sri Lankan managers. It will be
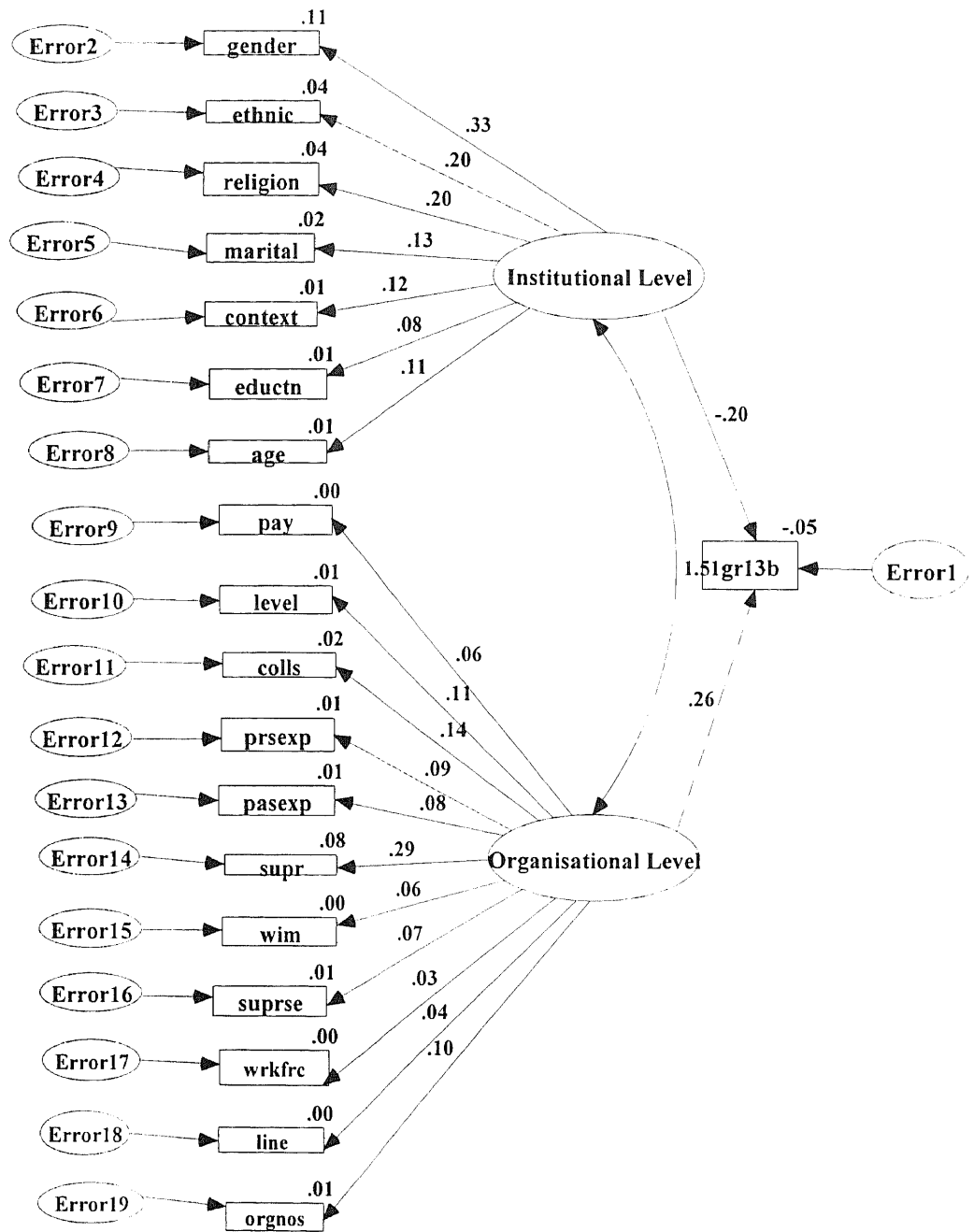
Figure 9.15: Conventional linear modelling for
gender role attitudes
(Standardised estimates)

interesting to see what the results are for the domestic division of labour, among Sri Lankan managers, which is the next topic of discussion.

9.14 Domestic division of labour

9.14.1 Institutional level influences

Data analysis will focus on two domestic division of labour constructs relating to *spending time with children* and *preparing meals*. A regression model was run incorporating the 7 institutional level attributes mentioned in Table 9.1. The model for *spending time with children* achieved a level of significance ($F = 9.612$, $df = 201$, $p = 0.001$). The variables that most contributed to the significance in this model are *gender* ($B = 0.165$ standardised, $p = 0.016$) and *age* ($B = -0.230$ standardised, $p = 0.001$). This finding implies that *women* managers who had children were more likely to have domestic arrangements for the care of their children. Such arrangements took the form of either servants or extended family members. *Older* managers were more likely to spend time with their children by themselves (either the husband or wife or both), without much external help.

The model for *preparing meals* achieved a level of significance ($F = 7.784$, $df = 304$, $p = 0.001$). The variables that most contributed to the significance in this model are *pay* ($B = 0.187$ standardised, $p = 0.001$), *gender* ($B = 0.142$ standardised, $p = 0.013$), and *marital* status ($B = -0.152$ standardised, $p = 0.007$). This finding implies that *women* managers and those managers who earned *higher salaries* were more likely to have domestic arrangements for meal preparation, such as a servant or an extended family member. However, managers who were married were more likely to prepare meals by themselves – either the wife or husband or both.

9.14.2 Organisational level influences

A regression model was run incorporating the 11 organisational level attributes mentioned in Table 9.1. The model for *spending time with children* achieved a level of significance ($F = 5.749$, $df = 151$, $p = 0.018$). The variable that most contributed to the significance in this model was the *presence of women managers* in the organisation ($B = 0.192$ standardised, $p = 0.018$). This finding implies that managers who worked for organisations having a *higher presence of women managers* were more likely to have domestic arrangements at home for the *care of*

children. Such arrangements took the form of either servants or extended family members.

The model for *preparing meals* achieved a level of significance (F = 8.973, df = 215, p = 0.001). The variables that most contributed to the significance in this model were the *presence of women managers* in the organisation (*B* = 0.206 standardised, p = 0.002), and *pay* (*B* = 0.167 standardised, p = 0.012). This finding implies that managers who worked for organisations having a higher presence of women managers and earned a higher income were more likely to have domestic arrangements at home for the *preparing meals.* Such arrangements took the form of either servants or extended family members.

9.14.3 Institutional vs. organisational level influences

Figures 9.16 and 9.17 show the pattern of influence of both the institutional as well as organisational level influences for the domestic division of labour constructs relating to *spending time with children* and *preparing meals.* The figures show the relative weightings for both levels of analysis, and their sub-components that constitute the two levels of analysis. From Figure 9.16, the relative weightings for the construct *spending time with children* are institutional level -0.30 and organisational level 0.33. The figure shows that the relative weightings represent the view that organisational level attributes have a greater explanatory power in understanding the domestic division of labour among Sri Lankan managers. Even though regression analysis shows that there are significant predictors in each of the institutional level of analysis, linear regression modelling using AMOS shows that organisational level factors have relatively greater weighting. Thus the organisational level of analysis seems to show a greater explanatory power in understanding domestic division of labour patterns among managers in Sri Lankan organisations.

From Figure 9.17, the relative weightings for the construct *preparing meals* are institutional level, 0.09 and organisational level, -0.03. The figure shows that the relative weightings represent the view that institutional level attributes have a greater explanatory power in understanding the domestic division of labour among
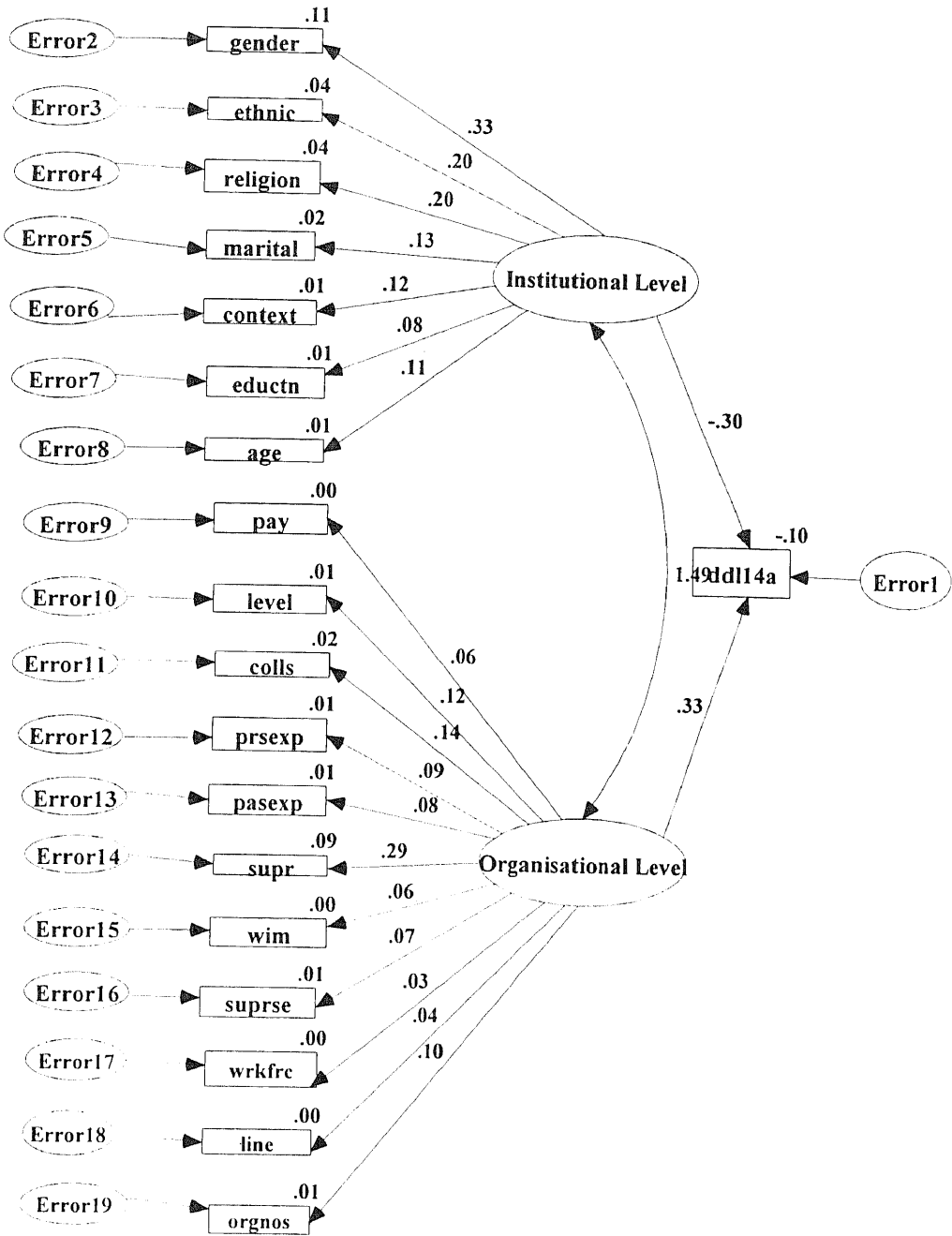
Figure 9.16: Conventional linear modelling for
domestic division of labour: spending time with children
(Standardised estimates)
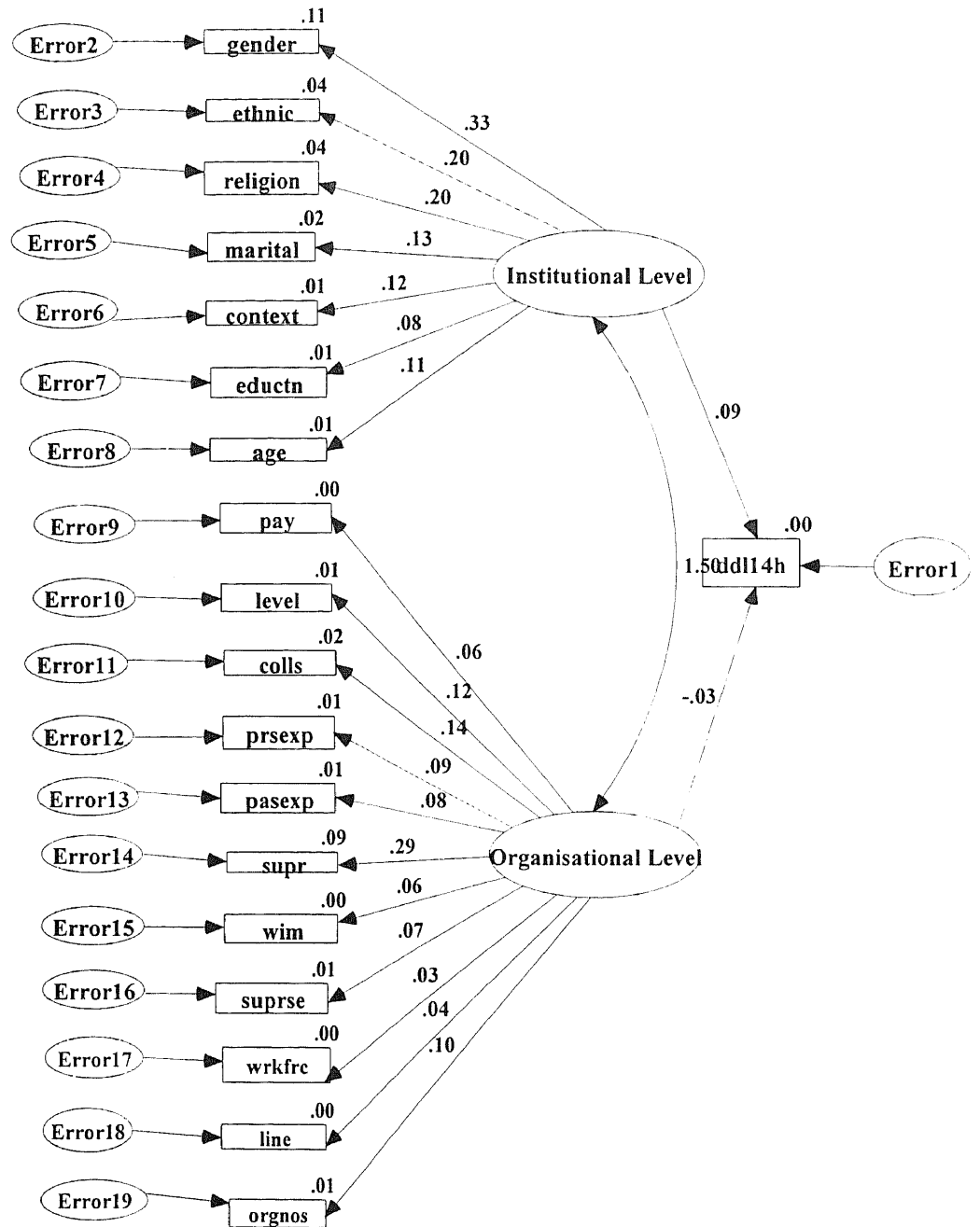
Figure 9.17: Conventional linear modelling for
domestic division of labour: preparation of meals
(Standardised estimates)

Sri Lankan managers. Even though regression analysis shows that there are significant predictors in both levels of analysis, linear regression modelling using AMOS shows that institutional level factors have relatively greater weighting.

The AMOS structural equation modelling shows that the institutional level determinants seem to have a greater explanatory power in understanding patterns of domestic division of labour in relation to meal preparation. The salience of domestic arrangements such as servants and extended family members have helped women managers interested in pursuing a career. As Clegg and Dunkerley (1980: 419) observed, "In women's careers . . . their participation would seem to be contingent on exploitation: either their own, as unpaid domestic labour or that of paid domestic labour hired on the market". Another development is the contribution of household technology. As Hamilton (1978: 79) observed, " . . . a recent occurrence resulting from the increased productivity of domestic labour [is] due to household technology in conjunction with the even greater increase in productivity in the market place. Such developments have helped Sri Lankan women managers in their career advancement even in the context where they have a family and children to look after.

9.15 Conclusion

Data analysis reveals that despite the significance of institutional level attributes predicting work perceptions, organisational level attributes have a greater explanatory power when one analyses the data using an integrative approach in relation to those variables that constitute work perceptions.

At this point, there is a likely question as to whether a natural regression could suggest relationships between the two levels of analysis. There *can* be a natural regression towards organisational influences as the questions focus largely on organisationally embedded questions. However, the same can apply to the institutional level influences as well. (There are only two exceptions where the regression model does not predict a significant relationship). But the core issue here is the research question. The research question goes a step higher than merely verifying the presence of such an organisational or institutional level link. It seeks

rigorously to verify if the organisational or the institutional level has greater explanatory power in understanding work perceptions of managers. The most important aspect therefore, is to look at which level of analysis better explains work perceptions. Clearly, there are three exceptions where the institutional rather than the organisational level apparently increases explanatory power.

The regression model is also not a foolproof approach for drawing conclusions. The mathematical computation is based on a single iteration (or operation). This is exactly where the AMOS Structural Modelling Technique proves its worth. During data analyses for the questions in this Chapter, there were iterations ranging from as many as 20 to 55 times using AMOS. Such a large number of iterations signifies that the software rigorously looked for ways and means of verifying the relationship between one level of analysis and another not just once, but continuously and repetitiously only stopping at a point where further explanation was impossible. Thus, the *relative weighting* of AMOS Structural Equation Modelling Technique serves this very purpose effectively, while giving the reader a graphic representation of the levels of analysis and their degree of explanation.

The summary of findings on Table 9.2 shows that having analysed both levels of interaction, work perceptions in relation to gender and organisational behaviour are shaped and influenced to a greater extent at the organisational level rather than at the institutional level, with the exception of four cases. The data analysis reveals that the action frame of reference and the concept of orientations to work are relevant theoretical resources for this thesis. While variations in some constructs relating to work perceptions and experiences emerge as a result of factors within the organisation, certain others emerge as a result of institutional or cultural factors such as gender and ethnicity.

In this thesis, gender is used *only* as an independent variable throughout the data analysis chapter. There are other constructs that appear as dependent variables in the analysis that serve the purpose of highlighting different gender issues. These constructs and their meanings are highlighted in Chapter 7. Both SPSS and AMOS disallow the use of one and the same variable concurrently as dependent and independent variables.

Table 9.2: THE BIG PICTURE – INSTITUTIONAL VS. ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL INFLUENCES

Variable	Institutional	Organisational
Job satisfaction	-0.12	0.08
Preference for work characteristics	- 0.46	0.33
Work realities *targets set, are targets met*	-0.04	0.08
I make mistakes	-0.12	0.23
Leadership/management styles	0.03	0.14
Work pressure	-0.72	0.60
Work relationship pressure	-0.40	0.42
Most desirable management characteristics	-0.09	0.17
Least desirable management characteristics	-0.16	0.22
Equal employment opportunity perceptions	0.44	-0.08
Attitudes towards women managers	-0.29	0.14
Male managers' resignation decisions	-0.09	-0.07
Female managers' resignation decisions	-0.17	0.21
Preference for a superior by gender	0.14	0.02
Gender role attitudes	-0.20	0.26
Domestic division of labour		
Spending time with children	-0.30	0.33
Preparing meals	0.09	-0.03
Source: Findings.		

In terms of research findings, the only exceptions where institutional level attributes seem to have greater relative weight are with respect to *equal employment opportunity perceptions, the preference for a male or female superior or either* and *the preparation of meals in the domestic division of labour.* Neither institutional nor organisational level attributes appeared to increase explanatory power of understanding *resignation decisions of male managers.* Having presented the primary findings for the Sri Lankan sample of managers, the next chapter will focus on research conclusions.

Chapter 10

THE RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS

Your study on 'gender' is a concept taken out of the [Sri Lankan] context. I don't know why they [the Australians] are abating you with this sort of study. Such a study, . . . in my opinion, is totally irrelevant [to Sri Lanka]. One factor that has caused all these problems [associated with gender issues] in America and the West is the power of the law. They have laws for everything. For example, in the [United] States, you can't talk to women in such a way that the conversation could be construed to have sexual advances. She can take legal action against you. I blame the culture and lifestyle also for this unfortunate thing in Western societies. I mean, why can't a woman work? What's wrong? Why all these problems and laws? And they call themselves a free society! In Sri Lanka, a woman can work without any fear against anyone. We don't have any of these laws and regulations! I hope my children abroad would know that life has a lot of 'values' added in the Sri Lankan context and environment. There has to be morality and values found in Sri Lankan life and culture (Male Chief Executive Officer, Venture Capital Co.).

The previous chapter presented the empirical findings of the thesis using sample data. Using the action frame of reference (Silverman, 1970), and the orientations to work concept (Goldthorpe *et al.*, 1968), data analysis revealed that organisational level attributes influence work perceptions to a greater extent than do institutional level attributes. There were, however, four exceptions. Institutional level attributes tended to influence equal employment opportunities for promotion, the preference for a superior's gender, as well as the meal preparation function in the domestic division of labour to a greater extent. Neither institutional level nor organisational level attributes significantly influenced resignation decisions of male managers. Thus, the quantitative findings revealed that one has to consider both the cultural *and* organisational attributes while understanding work perceptions of Sri Lankan male

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and female managers. This finding supports the theoretical framework of Goldthorpe *et al.* (1968) and Silverman (1970) in which they emphasise that action stems from meanings arising from the extra-organisational as well as organisational contexts.

The quantitative findings revealed that organisational attributes seem to have a greater explanatory power in the understanding of work perceptions. However, it is pertinent to reflect on the deeper meanings of the main findings, especially with regard to the significance of gender, because this thesis is a study of male and female managers in Sri Lanka. In other words, in what ways do male and female managers differ in their work perceptions? Female managers were more likely to admit that they made mistakes, than did their male counterparts. Such a finding seems to imply that women are more honest and forthright in their expression of a negative managerial reality. But this finding need not be taken in the negative perspective itself. Such an expression of honesty may also mean that women perceive their work seriously, and are more particular about their ways and means of goal achievement than are their male counterparts.

Another finding that differs significantly across gender is that female managers were more likely to experience the pressure relating to sexual harassment in the workplace. This is a serious issue that parallels the gender and organisation literature in other parts of the world, despite the influence of cultural and societal mores in the Sri Lankan community. On the other hand, such a pressure may arise due to the nature of Sri Lankan society as being patriarchal. Despite the social mores that Sri Lankan society seems to prescribe on women in general, the presence of sexual harassment is also an indication of the subordinate status of Sri Lankan women, and is compounded when women are likely to be in the minority members of the group. However, as the qualitative data explains, the issue of sexual harassment can be averted at the organisational level at least to some extent. It is necessary to note that in Sri Lanka, sexual harassment is a common problem in the wider public life as well. It is common, for instance, in public areas and public transport.

Female managers perceive that they experience a greater pressure relating to business travel and the need to stay away from home. This finding implies that female

managers, although enjoying job satisfaction in terms of career, often experience difficulty relating to travelling and being away from home. Once again, as the qualitative data explains, Sri Lankan culture highlights the importance for women to giving preference to family obligations (for example, see Iddamalgoda [1991]). Such a limitation does not apply to males, who can be away from home because of work without any such restrictions. This finding, again, suggests that female managers, irrespective of their marital status or life-stage context, are more likely to be open in admitting their experience of pressure relating to business travel and being away from home. They are aware of their familial obligations despite their career interests in the organisation.

Quantitative data analysis reveals that there is a significant gender difference in relation to attitudes towards the sharing of work at home where both spouses worked. Female managers were likely to agree to a greater extent than their male counterparts that both husband and wife share the work at home. However, in reality, the division of labour in Sri Lankan homes is still quite gendered. Women are more responsible for attending to the domestic chores such as cooking, housekeeping and the care of children. Once again, these findings show the cultural perspectives of Sri Lankan society, where for example, the *Brahminic* ideology emphasises that the role of the female is subordinate to the male. The female manager sacrifices her self-interests to her husband in the management of work at home.

Hence, the quantitative data highlights that organisational and cultural attributes are important in understanding work perceptions of Sri Lankan managers. In addition, some of the elements of the cultural nature of management in Sri Lanka are also relevant and important. The presence of female managers in Sri Lankan organisations itself has cultural and traditional linkages to history. For example, the principle and concept of leadership applied to males and females, was known as *paramuka* (for male leaders) and *paramakalu* (for female leaders), according to the historical records during the time when Anuradhapura was the capital of the country. This chapter will further elaborate and analyse the cultural perspective of the quantitative findings, using qualitative data to do so.

In this chapter I draw the argument of the thesis to conclusion, presenting the interesting, important and original implications of the findings for the theory and practice of management in Sri Lanka. In a culturally diverse society such as Sri Lanka, one would anticipate that the interaction of cultural elements with work perceptions would have a greater influence than would organisational level phenomena. Certainly, as discussed in Chapter 5, most of the writers on Sri Lankan management argue for or assume that Sri Lankan management is different because of the distinct cultural foundations of Sri Lanka. However, after having tested both levels of analysis I found that organisational level variables for the most part had the better explanatory power in understanding the work perceptions of Sri Lankan men and women managers. To what extent is this finding dependent or independent of the particular research methods – quantitative survey analysis – that I used to produce the data?

The principal empirical data for the thesis took the form of quantitative data. The security situation in the country made conducting extensive qualitative research extremely difficult. The research methodology literature, however, acknowledges the importance of qualitative research as well, especially its role in helping overcome some of the drawbacks of quantitative research. Although quantitative data allows the researcher to set parameters for important issues, it may lack the ability to capture the entirety of the research context. For example, there may be other variables that a researcher was unaware of (Bryman, 1989). Hence the application of qualitative research is pertinent to this thesis. As Bryman observed:

> The most central characteristic of qualitative, in contrast to quantitative, research is its emphasis on the perspective of the individual being studied. Whereas quantitative research is propelled by a prior set of concerns, whether deriving from theoretical issues or from reading of the literature in a particular domain, qualitative research tends to eschew the notion that the investigator should be the source of what is relevant and important in relation to that domain. Rather, the qualitative researcher seeks to elicit what is important to *individuals* as well as *their* interpretations of the environments in which *they* work through in-depth investigations of individuals and *their* milieux (Bryman, 1989: 24-25; emphasis added).

In the examination of institutional and organisational level attributes of male and female managers in Sri Lankan organisations an important consideration is that

individuals (managers) shape their perceptions towards their work and experiences in relation to gender in organisations. Therefore, when an *individual* manager is the shaper of situations and events, qualitative methods of data analysis become useful because qualitative methods encompass the dynamic situation, recognising the *individual's* life-world (Cassell and Symon, 1994; Miles and Huberman, 1994). An analysis of the individual perceptions and observations is therefore the key to understanding the salience of institutional level attributes of this thesis.

Therefore, in the discussion of the thesis' conclusions this chapter will present limited amounts of qualitative data using the responses of 11 male and 19 female managers conversed with during data collection. The conversations appear in this chapter, taking the form of stories, reflections, anecdotes, as well as questions and answers from male and female managers. An analysis of respondents' comments, stemming from their experiences and perceptions, will help the reader understand the links and deeper meanings that the empirical findings reveal in terms of *their* work perceptions.

What then, are the implications for Sri Lankan managers and management academics, both at the organisational as well as the institutional levels? Having examined and empirically tested work perceptions of Sri Lankan male and female managers, the next step is to develop a conclusion, in support of an argument that includes both the institutional, as well as organisational levels of analysis.

The quotation at the start of this chapter is one example of the influence of institutional (societal and legislation) as well as organisational level (workplace relations) variables. One sees a phenomenon from the United States shaping the perspectives of a male manager in Sri Lanka towards women managers and towards a researcher based in Australia. The quotation supports the view, as expressed by this male manager, that despite the absence of equal employment opportunity legislation in Sri Lanka, its culture, values and tradition encourage women managers not only as women in general, but also as managers contributing to the organisation. In other words, the perceptions of Sri Lankan women managers need to be seen through the distinct Sri Lankan societal and management culture.

In the US legislation is more important. The presence of legislation in the US seems to be the means to providing freedom for all people in that society, for advancing one's career, irrespective of gender or colour. However, in contrast to US legislation, the observation connotes that Sri Lankan societal and organisational culture and tradition apparently provide a stronger foundation framing the work-lives of male and female managers in the Sri Lankan context. According to the male respondent, legislation for gender discrimination seems to be a non-issue in Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan culture has paved the way for female managers to advance in their careers. Male and female managers work in an atmosphere where mutual respect and co-operation prevail. The values, beliefs and customs that operate in the society permeate to the work environment as well.

The unwritten Sri Lankan culture, according to this male respondent is more powerful than the letters in the legislation of USA. In Sri Lanka, the presence of female managers, holding positions of authority, is a tradition, because women leaders have ruled and held responsible positions as historical inscriptions (Mathupala, 1984) have recorded: it is not an alien phenomenon or one that has developed only very recently. Therefore, the presence of female leaders, albeit a relatively small number, in Sri Lanka's historical context is an element that corresponds to the cultural environment. The respondent highlights the value conflict arising from the difference in perception of the objectives behind an American legislation and its irrelevance to a cultural society such as Sri Lanka. Similarly, the following section analyses other examples of the perceptions and experiences of Sri Lankan male and female managers in terms of the distinct societal and management cultures that may sometimes favour or hinder perceptions relating to female managers.

10.1 Institutional and organisational issues

The main argument in this section is that although organisational attributes increase explanatory power of work perceptions, there are cultural and institutional aspects embedded in such perceptions. Some of the cultural attributes constrain female managers while some others are favourable to their status and contribution to the organisation and society. Female managers who counter such institutional and cultural pressures and constraints do so by holding radical or non-traditional

attitudes, values and even their actions appear to be at odds with what pre-existing stereotypes prescribe. On the other hand, the more favourable aspects encourage female managers in their work-lives significantly. Although the following section refers to male and female managers' work and gender perceptions of one another, such perceptions go a step further, shaping the very concept of *what* it is to be a 'woman' or a 'man'. In other words, such perceptions revolve around the prominence and contradiction of the social construction of gender among Sri Lankan male and female managers.

10.1.1 Perceptions of male managers

Organisational level attributes of managers suggest that women managers in Sri Lanka are likely to enjoy job satisfaction while experiencing considerable interest in, and commitment towards, their career. Female managers are likely to enjoy job satisfaction as much as do their male counterparts. A male manager endorsed his independent view in relation to how female managers show interest while advancing in their careers often overcoming cultural barriers to do so.

> I worked in . . . [a state owned] bank for about 22 years and I have come to know through experience that, women in Sri Lanka, today, are quite different to those in the past. For instance, [let us take the case of] transfers. In those days, an overseas transfer to the London Branch was never even dreamt by women. But today, women come forward and apply for transfers to places such as these. They even go to the extent of not asking the consent of their husbands and other family members. They are even prepared to go, and be on their own, leaving their families and homes to work in a different environment and country (Athula, Male Middle Manager, Foreign Bank).

A female manager's independent decision to advance in her career stands in contrast to the traditional and institutional view such as the *Brahminic* ideology that prescribes that the "classical model of female behaviour is projected that involves subordination to the male" (Jayawardena, 1986b: 13). The above quotation is an example of how female managers, despite their being married, have overcome cultural barriers and pre-existing stereotypes that society has placed before them. The violation of the *Brahminic* ideology takes two forms: the exercise of an independent decision to further one's career and followed by the failure to ask for the husband's consent. Female managers challenge cultural stereotypes and institutional expectations by becoming independent and self-confident in seeking

career advancement, both within the organisation as well as the wider Sri Lankan society.

Even though female managers may have an interest in a career, they are likely to face other barriers in terms of the perceptions that male managers hold. Data analysis revealed that organisational level attributes better explain the experience of managers in admitting that they make mistakes. However, such an organisational experience has deeper institutional connotations in relation to gender.

> Women are . . . a favoured lot at times. Take for instance, a male and a female are given the same tasks. Let's say that they make the same mistake. The man is treated more strictly than the case of the woman. The woman is 'excused'. If she is a single woman, then there is nothing [corrective action] at all. But if it is a married man, then he is 'scolded a lot' (Mangala, Male Top Manager, Produce Brokering Co.).

The above quotation, not untypical, shows that institutional level attributes such as gender and marital status may influence the level and degree of corrective or punitive action managers adopt, in relation to failure to achieve goals or negligence of duty. It shows a picture of the importance of institutional level attributes, although the quantitative analysis seems to show a greater explanatory power from the organisational perspective. The influence of gender, as well as marital status, is a demonstration of the cultural embeddedness of management in Sri Lanka, especially in relation to the tradition of preferential treatment of a specific group of people. For example, the level of family burden of an individual and his or her loyalty to the organisation form the basis for promotions as well as increments in Sri Lankan organisations, rather than performance goals as discussed in Chapter 5 (Bandarage, 1984).

Data analysis has also showed that the institutional level has a greater explanatory power in understanding the preferences that respondents expressed for having either a male or female superordinate. Nevertheless, the gender of the superordinate (an organisational level attribute) is also an important factor. For example, in relation to gender discrimination against *males*, a manager commented:

> Coming to talk from an organisational point of view, you know, I had an experience when one of our managers had a very bad time with a woman who was an accountant. She made his job so difficult. So [gender] discrimination is not against women only — it could be against men by women too (Mangala, Male Top Manager, Produce Brokering Co.).

Of course, gender discrimination may occur in many directions. However, in contrast to the experience of gender discrimination against women that a researcher might anticipate, such a comment was unexpected, especially in a patriarchal society such as Sri Lanka. Another male manager remarked that the gender of the superordinate does make a difference:

> Men are better in understanding than women. If you come half an hour late to work, you are understood better by a male superior. The child could be sick. Sometimes some female staff member comes to me and asks whether she could go home early. I don't refuse. I know the company will not lose anything had she gone early but for her to be half an hour early [at home] would mean a lot for her children and other family members. It is sometimes surprising to note that women, having passed through exactly the same problems as other women, don't have an understanding view. That is why women don't get along well with women and don't like to work under them (Mangala, Male Top Manager, Produce Brokering Co.).

The quantitative data analysis revealed that male managers were more likely to prefer a male as their superordinate. In addition, it revealed that the institutional perspective better explains the preference for a male or female superordinate, or either. Such an institutional perspective explanation has deeper connotations embedded in the gender of the respondent. In the above quotation, a male manager suggested that a male superordinate is better able to manage people. The reason for the importance of the superordinate being a male is due to the influence of the family in the management culture of Sri Lanka. It is customary that the employer-employee relationship is similar to that of family members perceiving the oldest married male member in the family as one who deserves respect in Sri Lankan families. In the same vein, male managers perceive that their employers or superordinates are also males, because of their supposed ability, experience, skills and maturity to handle work-related issues in the organisation because of their age (Carson, 1996; Fernando, 1980; Fernando, 1991).

In addition, there are other embedded aspects of Sri Lankan management in this response. The manager's grant of permission for an employee to leave work early signifies the sacrifice of dynamic organisational goals or targets because of personal or family considerations of the employee. Even though an early departure causes no apparent loss to the organisation, the organisation's impersonal and formal bureaucratic rules appear muted by personal and informal relations originating from the manager's social circles. In other words, the manager concedes organisational rules because he has an informal social network in addition to his formal status as a manager (Hettige, 1984). Another male manager remarked similarly:

> Talking of superiors, I like to work under a man. I think so because I feel that he should know more than I do. He should be more confident of what I am doing. Only then I would be motivated in performing. Women are too specific to detail. They complain that the spelling is not correct and that the note is not neat etc. I also feel that women are good at routine work. That is why you find many women in accounting professions. There is no field work – no need to work hard as we do, sales people. The work is also repetitive. Accounting is an area where women are found very much today (Shantha, Male Junior Manager, Multinational Co.).

This manager perceives another reason for Sri Lankan managers preferring a male superordinate. Although again, an influence from the family, in this instance the preference for a male superordinate relates to the cultural trait of management in Sri Lanka where superiors are held in high esteem. Male managers perceive that not only do male superordinates manage people, they evince respect and esteem because they motivate others in their capacity as superiors or employers. Additionally, his response indicates that he depends on authority and functions from superiors and his relationship is of a personalistic orientation. He prefers a reduction in uncertainty in his actions, tasks and roles as employee. The preference for 'downward instructions' and power relations implies the lack of the perception that subordinates and workers are often full of resources for goal achievement. 'Wait for instructions from above' is considered as the norm. The manager's perception that his superior has a greater knowledge implies the view that his superior enjoys a greater social distance to subordinates, and the respect for age and maturity reinforce such a perception (Fonseka, 1995; Herath, 1992; Hewarathna, 1988; Nanayakkara, 1988b). The comment about the way in which female managers demand accuracy in spelling and

neatness is another artifact of the embeddedness of Sri Lankan management practice. This artifact signifies the cultural inappropriateness of a task-based approach. The demand for neat and accurate work appeared to be an excessive and inappropriate demand, and suggests a preference for a male superordinate.

An apparent reason for the lack of encouragement for female managers in Sri Lankan organisations is that managers themselves (especially males) seem to hold traditional views in relation to women. Such views revolve around gender role attitudes and extend to the domestic division of labour.

> For a man such as myself, I believe that a woman should be at home looking after domestic matters and the children. My wife never works, although she likes working. Our parents brought us up . . . that [way]. In my family, my father worked and my mother looked after us. They have brought us up to a position where we could stand on our two feet. The mother spends the most time with the children. The father earns money for the family. He can somehow look for a job to meet ends. A family should learn to manage with the earnings the father gets. The family is the most basic unit in the country. It is necessary for the mother to take full care of the children so that they are well brought up to stand on their own two feet (Damitha, Male Middle Manager, Medical Co.).

While some husbands encourage their wives to work, there are others who discourage their wives as they consider that they should pay full attention to the welfare of the family and children. A deeply embedded cultural artifact present among the managers even in modern Sri Lankan organisations is that family structure obstructs the development of self-confidence and the autonomy of an individual towards work, initiative and enterprise. Cultural stereotypes and traditional gender role attitudes pervade perceptions of male managers, such as those of the respondent in this example.

Another forceful cultural influence of the family is the preserving of past practices. The fact that the respondent's mother was a housewife while his father was the sole breadwinner, seems to act as a rule that controls the activities of the next generation (Majumdar, 1972). Although a powerful cultural influence, such a claim to preserve past practice seems to ignore the necessity for potential income as an avenue to meet economic necessities, especially at a time of economic and financial uncertainties.

While some male managers hold traditional views about women in relation to gender roles, others consider maternity as a problem. They consider the economic impact of a woman's maternity leave on the organisation in terms of the following:

> Recruitment of women in Sri Lanka has to be considered in the light of very generous maternity leave (Eshan, Male GM, Insurance Co.).

The Sri Lankan legal system provides for maternity benefits to females in the form of leave with full pay. Although the law is applicable to all organisations, the organisation has to bear the full financial impact of the payment of salary to all female employees. As a result of the legal provision granting maternity leave some male managers consider the investment of recruiting and training a female manager as one that brings a poor return. A culturally embedded connotation for the reluctance to recruit female managers in Sri Lankan organisations on account of the maternity issue is in relation to the fact that the respondent worked for a private sector organisation. While public undertakings provide social and economic benefits, private enterprises operate solely for profit. The functions of private sector organisations are generally considered superior and more dynamic in comparison to the operation and function of public sector organisations (Gunawardena, 1984).

Data analysis has revealed that institutional rather than organisational level attributes have a greater power in explaining which partner prepares meals in the domestic division of labour. On the other hand, data analysis has revealed that organisational rather than institutional level attributes better explain gender role attitudes at work. Personal accounts of gender role attitudes and domestic division of labour patterns among households of managers reflect contrasting viewpoints, involving both extremes, where both share work equally, as well as the case where the woman bears total responsibility. Thus, it is necessary to look at both angles, institutional as well as organisational perspectives. For example, a manager noted:

> If you listen to the division of labour at [my] home you will be surprised. In the morning, my wife has to bring my breakfast to the bedroom. She has to keep a shirt, trousers, etc. and a tie to match – all ready for me to dress. I do all the shopping and she does all household chores. Talking of women at work, my mother had eleven children. How do you think she could have run a home [if she worked]? (Farook, Male Top Manager, Labour Services Co.)

The responsibility of women in the domestic division of labour extends beyond the meal preparation function. According to this male manager's response, he expects his wife's complete responsibility and contribution to the domestic division of labour. Such a view, once again, is indicative of the elements that constitute the cultural explanation stemming from the *Brahminic* ideal where the woman is pre-occupied with the husband's interests, rather than her own.

Another illustration of Sri Lanka's cultural embeddedness relates to the tendency as indicated above, for managers to think of practices and approaches of past generations. This male manager perceives that a woman should not work because of his particular family context where his mother had to care for a family of eleven children. He seems to be unmindful that families with eleven children are few and far apart in contemporary Sri Lanka. In addition, he seems to lose sight of the cases where many women are compelled to work out of economic necessity. Apart from economic necessity, women are increasingly interested in following a managerial career of their own. The salience of the institutional perspective for understanding meal preparation in the domestic division of labour is a particularly compelling issue for analysis. However, there is also evidence that spouses share work at home.

While some managers support traditional views in relation to women, there are others who consider the economic benefits flowing from a potential second source of family income. As a male manager observed:

> In a country such as Sri Lanka especially at this time of [political] problems, it is important that the wife also is employed because of the sudden rise in the cost of living. For example, the common man pays double the price for food items at the time of a curfew. This [expenditure for essentials arises] totally out of fear and if the father or husband is the sole breadwinner, it is going to be very hard (Gunasena, Male Top Manager, Travel Co.).

While some male managers consider that a spouse's employment adversely affects care of the family, some others seem to be supportive. They seem to consider that a second income is useful in the context of Sri Lanka's present political and economic turmoil. The reason for this male manager to respond relating to political and economic turmoil is because he believes that such a second income becomes useful to the family budget during an emergency. Sometimes, due to political and ethnic

violence the government is likely to declare a curfew in a particular area. Such a declaration often results in 'panic buying' of food and other essentials, which cost far more than the usual price. There is also the fear of shortages, as no one knows when the curfew would be lifted. The male manager seems to perceive that a second income helps the family to better handle unexpected expenses such as these. Another male manager added the limitations of a single source of family income:

> My wife is not working. If she had been qualified and found work, I am sure we could have had a better life in the sense that we could have done a few more things we like to do. I have four sons and I have to bring them up with my earnings. I think that money is important to help us realise some of the comforts in life. I think that women in our set up (in Sri Lanka) have a better chance to come up in life than men. There are many places where women have done very well. Except for some deficiencies that a woman might have she is as good a manager as a man (Hariharan, Male Top Male, Manufacturing Co.).

This male manager considers that his entire family would have benefitted in the event of his spouse's employment. The family would have enjoyed a greater level of purchasing power and standard of living. The respondent specifically attaches importance to comforts in life, implying that, even though he was a top-level manager in a large organisation, his life style seemed to be simple as the household had to rely on one source of income.

This respondent also acknowledges that the institutional and cultural set up enables and encourages Sri Lankan female managers to focus their attention and interest while advancing in their careers to reach senior managerial positions. As mentioned in the quotation at the start of this chapter, such a perception is indeed not an aberrant point of view. Rather, the statement validates independent perceptions stemming from managers with diverse organisational settings, realities, as well as experiences in Sri Lanka. However, the respondent specifies the need for female managers to develop themselves, overcoming certain disadvantages and deficiencies in terms of skills and experience that they may encounter.

Some managers seem to have a balanced view of attitudes as to whether women should work outside the home. Even though they may hold non-traditional views,

they continue to maintain the importance of family stability, where the woman is responsible for the care of children.

> Talking of women at work, I know it is important that women should be employed. The reason is the importance of having a second income to the family. But it should not be at the cost of neglecting children (Jayantha, Male Top Manager, Brokering Co.).

This male respondent attaches importance to one of the most serious problems that every Sri Lankan household faces, where both parents are employed: childcare. In the absence of organised childcare facilities in Sri Lanka, individuals have to make their own arrangements. Therefore, such a constraint poses the following questions that the Sri Lankan government and community have to answer:

- Will Sri Lankans really need an effective childcare system?
- Will parents patronise these services and will such a service be affordable for the ordinary Sri Lankan?
- Will a potential childcare system be culturally appropriate for Sri Lankan families?

As long as the childcare activity remains reliable, efficient, affordable, and above all, culturally acceptable, it reduces the hurdles for women to enter the world of work. Such institutional attributes seem to constrain female managers' ultimate orientations to work.

One possible reason for the greater explanatory power of the organisational level of analysis for gender role attitudes is the amount of exposure all managers have had to working with women as managers in their organisations. Findings in Chapter 9 reveal that male managers who have worked with or for female managers are less likely to experience discomfort. Some male managers respect and acknowledge favourably the presence of female managers in organisations.

> . . . There is no problem at all in Sri Lanka for women to work. Whether a manager is a man or a woman it is no problem at all. In Sri Lanka, women respect others too. They [subordinates] stand up when approached . . .[by a woman]. Women get along well with men and are a great resource to the country (Indran, Male Top Manager, Venture Capital Co.).

Once again, this male manager is of the view that institutional and cultural attributes embedded in the Sri Lankan life style encourage female managers to enter management and progress in their careers. Some of the cultural attributes take a subjective form of a ritual, where, for example, subordinates stand up in front of the female manager as a gesture of respect. Although this simple gesture might seem insignificant to an observer, the work relationship among male and female managers is one of mutual respect profoundly embedded in the cultures of Sri Lanka.

The absence of equal employment opportunity legislation in Sri Lanka means that because it does not exist as such, it seems inconsequential for the perceptions and organisational realities of managers. Such a view contrasts with Western societies where effective legislation aims at protecting the interests of women managers in organisations. A male manager remarked:

> Women are feared in western countries. As a result they are employed and may have the privilege of equal opportunity. In the Sri Lankan context, there is a cultural difference, because it is based on .. . respect. A woman is respected that she is first a woman and secondly that she is contributing to work (Indran, Male Top Manager, Venture Capital Co.).

The above quotation suggests that, even though Sri Lanka lacks formal equal employment opportunity legislation, male managers perceive that Sri Lankan culture respects and recognises the contribution of women as women, before considering them as managers in organisations. Perhaps, such a perception of women managers explains the greater power of institutional level attributes in relation to equal employment opportunity perceptions for promotions? The male manager criticises the presence of legislation as an ineffective and sometimes counter-productive measure. He perceives that although the West has equal employment legislation, it serves a mere instrumental purpose of securing employment to women and minority groups. As a result organisations grant employment opportunities out of fear of the legislation, because if they do not, they may have to face the consequences of the law. In contrast, Sri Lanka lacks specific legislation promoting equal opportunity.

Parikh and Farrell (1991) argue that management and organisational theories tend to be adapted before they find acceptance in the socio-cultural context. Therefore, in a

cultural context such as Sri Lanka, despite the lack of specific legislation for equal employment opportunities, there is still a presence of female managers in organisations and in higher managerial positions. Even though Sri Lanka lacks legislation, the attribute of respect that stems from Sri Lanka's cultural embeddedness is significant. Such cultural attributes appear to encourage female managers, finding socio-cultural acceptance and thus in terms of the organisational context as well. However, this is tempered by traditional mores, which also assume women's subordination.

10.1.2 Perceptions of female managers

The understanding of the work pressures of Sri Lankan female managers is a critical issue because they undergo greater pressure from both within and beyond organisations. As Chapter 9 elaborated, despite the greater explanatory power of understanding the work pressure of female managers through organisational level attributes, institutional attributes are important as well. The interest they show towards their careers seems to cause anxiety, especially in relation to their commitment to their family's well-being. In particular, women managers undergo considerable hardship in reconciling their roles as housewives, mothers, and career women. As a female manager remarked:

> As for me and my family my children are the biggest concern. My son is not at all attached to his school work. We think that this happens because both of us are always out of home. So actually he gets neglected because of our work in office. I have a son and a daughter. My daughter did her Ordinary Levels last time [year]. My daughter somehow or other manages to study but my son has always to [be given a] push. Otherwise he won't do anything. [He is] so mischievous. He has been going from the beginning to a very good school but he has not been interested in his studies. We think that it is because of our not giving full attention at home, it becomes a barrier for the children not to study. I think women should work. They should not stay at home and do only housekeeping. At the same time the partner should help the woman in the home. When I spend time in study he [my husband] helps me. My daughter also helps. My son helps only if he comes [into the kitchen]. He does it very reluctantly (Fareena, Female Junior Manager, Government Department).

The expression of concern over the welfare of children is a significant cultural component of Sri Lankan life [for example, see Iddamalgoda (1991)]. Therefore when female managers have family commitments in addition to their careers, institutional and cultural expectations begin to emerge. The concern for the care of

children and the household are particularly critical because of their primary responsibility for the domestic division of labour. In addition, as seen in the quantitative data analysis, female managers seem to be more likely to agree to the view that if both husband and wife work, they must share work at home equally. Therefore, the help and co-operation of the husband is vital for the effective running of the home. Thus, the institutional attributes influence career and work-related attributes of female managers significantly.

Another woman manager considered career advancement as a secondary issue, because of her inability of reconciling her career aspirations with the demands at home, especially children. She favoured organised childcare facilities in Sri Lanka as a means to focus greater attention towards her career.

> I refused two promotions to work outstations . . . in the recent past because of family commitments. I am agreeable to the idea of having professional child care facilities in Sri Lanka, which will help meet this problem. At the moment, I am finding things difficult because my children are looked after by servants at home. My husband also comes back late from work – he also is a . . . [professional] Gayathrie, Female Middle Manager, Natural Resource Co.).

The underlying assumption and reason for the refusal of the two promotions is the female manager's lack of a career orientation as well as career planning as is common among Sri Lankan managers in general. In addition, while female managers are in senior management positions, they may experience the dilemma of having to face opposition to pre-existing cultural stereotypes, that society places before them. Being a woman means that she has to take primary responsibility at home, according to the *Brahminic* ideal. There is guilt on the part of the respondent who admits that she has failed in her duty not only as a woman but also as a mother and housewife as servants look after the children, which is contrary to the cultural prescriptions. In addition, being a mother and housewife means that career progress is considered secondary, often at the cost of rewarding work and relatively trouble-free locations. The husband's career comes first because he is assumed to be the primary breadwinner for the family. The preference for the availability of child care facilities seems to be a viable alternative to a housewife to help her pay attention to her job and career at least to some extent. However, this is not the solution,

especially where she has to move her work location to accept a promotion. Often, a Sri Lankan family accords a greater level of importance to a change in the husband's work location in comparison to his wife's, once again because the husband's career comes first because he is assumed to be the primary breadwinner for the family.

In contrast to the two quotations above women managers who are single parents seem to consider their career most seriously. Managerial employment means a livelihood for them. The Sri Lankan and international literature suggests that women managers are more likely to be single or single parents. The work and non-work realities of such women are noteworthy:

> I am a single parent. I have a daughter who is doing her Ordinary Levels. Earlier, I was at . . . [name of organisation]. I was a legal expert there. I used to report to work at 7.15 am in spite of all my household problems. I used to go home at 9.30 p.m. [Then] I went overseas to a South East Asian country to work in a financial institution. Life was too fast there and the culture and environment for my daughter were not suitable. I wanted her to be brought up in our own lifestyle. My job there was excellent. I was a top-level manager and enjoyed a lot of privileges but gave them all up. I took this job because this is a small company and I am able to devote time with my daughter. I first made these [points] clear and told them [the management] that otherwise I would decline to accept this job. So my role is more than that of a man. I have to be both father and mother to my child and see that she does not suffer psychologically in any way. (Hemalatha, Female Top Manager, Venture Capital Co.)

The need for work and career for economic survival is a compelling factor for single parents as a divorce or separation would not normally entail the payment of maintenance, according to Sri Lankan legislation. Despite the rewards of work and career, there are costs as well. One is the concern that her child must have the same cultural upbringing as the mother's cultural values and principles. Thus, the female manager clearly specifies to management the limits in relation to her appointment for the job. Such a clear specification of conditions and the willingness to decline employment by the female manager's employment is an indication of the extent to which the top managers in Sri Lanka reinforce and centralise power-relations to other managers. The female manager, on the other hand, inclines to exonerate herself from such centralisation and power relations.

Despite her qualifications, work experience, and successful career in the past, her child's interest is first and her attention to her career is secondary. However there are other aspects of cultural embeddedness of Sri Lankan management practice in this quotation. As Bandarage (1984) has specified, as discussed in Chapter 5, management considers the level of family burden and loyalty of the employee to the organisation during performance evaluation. Management often grants single-parent female managers special consideration of their family circumstances. Such a family-related work ethic signifies the female manager's means to attain personal power and status through fulfillment of familial obligations. Management, on the other hand, orients its efforts to safeguard the status and employment of the female manager by focussing attention on factors other than the immediate growth and development of the organisation.

Another woman manager remarked that her situation enabled her to devote full attention to her career:

> I had a discussion with about five of my friends who were all working just as I am, to see whether a woman can be a good manager, a good mother, and a good wife. I could not come to a conclusion of an example for this question. It is very difficult to see such a person. Now I am unmarried and as a result I can devote my full attention to my job. I know it is not at all possible when you are married. Husbands demand a lot of attention and care from their wives. For example after a day's work it is the preparation of dinner. In the case of certain jobs where women are employed as secretaries, it is possible to both work and also run a family because of the nature of work (Roshinie, Female Middle Manager, Multinational Co.)

This response shows that being single may help Sri Lankan female managers to devote full attention to career. Even though this female manager attaches importance to her being single for success in career, she considers that finding a good manager who is also a good mother an impossibility or rarity. She seems to subscribe to the view that for a female manager to be successful, she must be single. In addition, the female manager's response suggests that married women are more likely to accept their traditional and subservient role in a culture-bound society such as Sri Lanka. For example, the cultural nature of preparation of meals is a significant example of the perception that the preparation of meals for the family is generally the responsibility of the woman.

While being single may be important, it does not mean that women are free from pressures in their non-work domain. As another female manager remarked:

> I am not married. But many people think that I have no problems or responsibilities. People other than my friends don't know or understand this. Only my close friends know. I had both my parents [who were] sick and taken care of by me in the past. It was a responsibility more than [that of] a mother caring for her children. So just because I am not married it does not mean that I have no responsibilities outside work. In cases of others, it could be living and caring for a sister or brother's child or children. It could be an invalid or an elderly parent (Shiranthi, Female Top Manager, Conglomerate Co.).

Female managers in Sri Lanka who are single, perceive that despite being single and free from the pressures of domestic chores and childcare, they too perform certain other 'maternal obligations'. The principle assumption that drives the respondent to make such a claim is that even though single female managers do not appear to have much domestic pressures, as much as do their counterparts who have children, they consider their service to their immediate family members as a significant contribution. In other words, they subscribe to the view that irrespective of their marital status, they do have their primary concern for home and the family, as cultural stereotypes prescribe.

Women managers experience pressure both from work and home fronts, in varying degrees, depending on their life-stage context. For women who have family responsibilities, arrangements for work at home are crucial and pivotal for both their satisfactions in the job as well as their contribution to the home and family:

> Every young mother faces a lot of hardship in Sri Lanka. If she works in an office the home suffers. If she is on leave, then, work suffers. For example, in my case, I am at the moment without domestic help. The first struggle as I get back home would be [the preparation of] dinner. By the time I have finished everything [domestic chores] it is well past midnight. And then we have to get up again at five in the morning to get ready for work. The work done for cooking is labour-intensive. For example you cook rice. You have to first de-stone the rice. The vegetables have to be washed clean. Then they have to be cut and prepared for cooking (Amara, Female Top Manager, Finance Co.).

Why should work 'suffer' if a female manager is on leave? Work does suffer in Sri Lankan organisations if a manager is on leave because Nanayakkara (1993c) contends that 80 per cent of employees will perform their barest minimum if direct supervision is withdrawn. Therefore, the dilemma between work and family becomes a critical factor for female managers who have family burdens. The respondent shows how she willingly accepts responsibility for the work she is expected to perform at home. She does not speak of or demand the husband's support in meal preparation. In addition, the cultural nature of meal preparation for the family, irrespective of what type and intensity of activity managerial work may entail is symbolic of a female manager's apparently 'natural' obligation once she reaches home from work. Once again, this female manager relates her obligation to the primary concern for home and the family, as cultural stereotypes prescribe.

Some female managers who have family responsibilities prefer to balance their career and family responsibilities. They attempt to strike a balance between their desire to be independent in a career and the responsibility of caring for the family. They seem to enjoy job satisfaction, especially with respect to job security: jobs in public sector organisations are particularly attractive. Even though jobs in the public sector pay lesser than those in the private sector public sector employees seem to enjoy more favourable status in society, as Chapter 5 illustrated. A respondent with considerable career potential, remarked, in the same vein:

> I have been in this company for a number of years. I am a fully qualified accountant and I don't feel like leaving this job because I am happy with everything this job offers me. This is a public sector organisation. The pay is not that good. But I am happy with it because of the job security. I am a working mother and for me I don't need a high salary. I can get a much better job outside for my qualifications but I will not have any job security. That is why I like this job (Bianca, Female Junior Manager, Manufacturing Co.).

Hence what is important for Sri Lankan managers such as these is that, although as female managers, they enjoy job satisfaction as much as males do, sometimes the context of the female manager seems to influence the level of interest that they have in their career. The context specifically refers to the level of urgency that a female manager experiences to earn an income for herself or her family. If she is widowed and has young children, the level of urgency is very high and has a greater likelihood

of preferring job security, rather than a career. In addition, this respondent expresses the sense of belonging to the organisation over personal interest with specific reference to her cultural context. Even though her pay is unattractive, she has job security and a 'nine to five' job. Such a perception is embedded in the practice of management in Sri Lanka (Fernando, 1991).

For women managers who have family commitments, including the care of children, the husband's support remains crucial. The presence of extended family members (or, if not, servants) advantages the care of young children as well as enabling women managers to care for their elderly parents.

> My husband gives me the fullest co-operation. My children are given all care. My mother is with them [us] for the past year. We arrange a tutor to help them with studies. A servant looks after them at home as well. As for me I also have another obligation – that of my studies. I am just completing my Masters in Law by research. My husband has made it clear that I should complete this (Umaranie, Female Middle Manager, Multinational Co).

The encouragement from husbands towards career advancement of their wives is significant and crucial for Sri Lankan female managers, as they face pressures in their dual roles as homemakers and managers. Apart from encouraging higher education, this respondent does not specify in what other ways her husband encourages her in her career and dual roles as mother and manager. There is no mention of the husband helping in meal preparation. Her response appears to suggest that the husband encouraged his wife symbolically, but the form and extent of the encouragement is unclear. Rather, the domestic division of labour appears to be gendered through the significant contribution of the elderly parent as well as the paid tutor. Another a female manager remarked:

> If the husband is co-operative and helpful then there is no problem. I know when it comes to child rearing and looking after the home matters anywhere in the world, it has to be the mother who has to be involved. I don't say that a helpful husband means that he has to do all the housework. It means that he co-operates and shares the work at home (Tharanga, Female Top Manager, Justice Department).

This female manager's perception of shared domestic division of labour has two important connotations. First, she considers that the crucial element for work at

home is the husband's co-operation and help. She is unclear as to which tasks the husband shares and which he does not, but nevertheless, she implicitly and willingly acknowledges that she has to make a primary contribution to domestic labour. The underlying assumption for this response seems to be that female managers would like their husbands to share domestic tasks, but nevertheless, they are reluctant to exonerate themselves of domestic chores completely: they consider it is theirs. One probable reason is that the patriarchal Sri Lankan society, in addition to the *Brahminic* ideal, stipulates that the woman has to take primary responsibility for work at home. Another probable explanation is the relatively low level of awareness and experience in participating in domestic chores among Sri Lankan men. As a result, the slipping of a cup inside the sink or the ignorance of some men to handle routine kitchen tasks such as cooking, for example, signifies the wife (or the servant) to perform these tasks without any other option. Hence, the rigid institutional and cultural trait that confines women to being responsible for housework is beginning to be transformed, at least to a small extent, among some managers and professionals in Sri Lanka. In addition, both male and female perceptions of female work roles are influenced by institutional attributes.

In a patriarchal society such as Sri Lanka, women managers seem to endorse the view that the husband has the final say on whether a woman should work for an income. As a female manager remarked:

> Whether a married woman should work or not is entirely dependent on what the husband has to say (Tharanga, Female Top Manager, Justice Department).

This female manager, while acknowledging the advantages of being employed tacitly expresses the hallmarks of the *Brahminic* ideal. In contrast to the response in the earlier part of this chapter where a female manager decided on overseas transfers without her spouse's consent, this respondent considers that the ultimate consent for or against employment has to come from the husband. The primary hallmark of the *Brahminic* ideal is subordination to the male. While the traditional *Brahminic* ideal seems to operate primarily in the domestic sphere, such as care for home and family, this manager's response seems to extend its influence beyond the confines of the home and family: on decisions relating to work. As such, the seeking of consent

from the husband extends to the cultural embeddedness of Sri Lankan management practices as well. Decision-making appears to be centralised, familial and patriarchal, where the husband has the ultimate say as to what the wife does.

While some women managers with family responsibilities attach importance to their husband's moral support and encouragement to their career, other managers consider their religious values as being an important influence to their world of work. A woman manager remarked that her religious beliefs were salient in her approach to managerial work:

> In my life I have realised that there is one quality required of any manager. And that is my affection to workers: Love for your employees and love towards your family and society. Everything else is forming part of this basic characteristic. I 'love' my workers. I go out of my way to help them. They come from very poor families. There is no one to look after them. They have no livelihood. As an individual I have to think in a split second what to do for them. You ask me whether a woman should work or not and what I think about it. But my answer to this is again [included] in this characteristic or quality. I love my family. I know how to cope with domestic affairs. I don't take any work home and my husband also does the same. My role is different at home. My work situation is such that sometimes there are problems – but I handle it with a lot of understanding and patience. I smile when I am found fault with. One day I was about to leave [from office] for a wedding. The people at home called and asked me to leave for home [soon]. As I was about to leave, a worker came crying to me with a problem. Now how can I just tell her that I am going [for a wedding]? I had to think of a solution. I did it. I was late at home. They were all shouting at me. But I was smiling. I was happy that I had helped and had done a good thing (Vidyamalie, Female Human Resource Manager, Manufacturing Co.).

While the cultural stereotypes such as the *Brahminic* ideal promote virtues such as chastity, modesty and primary confinement to the home, this respondent seems to consider that such an ideal might enter workplace relations as well. Management styles and approaches where one understands and cares for workers may sometimes cost the manager valuable time with her family but nevertheless it is a rewarding experience to help the organisation as well as the worker. Sometimes, organisational realities and experiences may motivate female managers to solve problems in unique ways that may affect their non-work lives as well. Such organisational problems can impact negatively on a woman's domestic role, but she may choose to concentrate on

the work commitment, in particular situations over the non-work or domestic commitment, even when it breaches institutional norms and expectations. In addition, the cultural embeddedness of Sri Lankan management practices suggest that managers are reluctant to perform actions that contravene their religious beliefs and convictions (Nanayakkara, 1984) is another underlying assumption for this female manager's attitude towards work and employees, as discussed in Chapter 5. In the case of this respondent, the influence of Christianity and Buddhism appears to condition managerial work realities.

There may still be other salient aspects that shape the organisational realities of women managers. While some women managers with families attach importance to their marital status or religious beliefs or husband's support for achievement of managerial success, another manager considered that the nature of her work itself made her develop a different perception towards managerial work as well as non-work realities:

> Women take their work as a challenge while men take their position for granted. When a task is given to a woman she has to think in terms of performing the task in such a way that her capabilities and skills bring out similar results as if done by a man. This is the point where discrimination could start. A man is not allowed to think that if he were in the position of a women manager he would have done better. That is why I say that a woman is even able to perform better than a man. Work roles help you face home front roles as well with maturity and boldness. I got courage at work and used it in my non-work life. If I had been at home I would have been timid and fearful.
>
> Men have the freedom in terms of time. This is not always the case of women managers. Let me give you an example. We have dealings with foreigners. They come to sign contracts and have negotiations. In the case of women, we always make it a point to do all these during working hours. Now men have the freedom to do it leisurely even after work. They can go to any place. A woman cannot do so because of the culture in Sri Lanka. It turns out to be advantageous also because work is over at the close of day and you go home with the work done. The foreigners also respect us on this and are particular in keeping to time (Shiranthi, Female Top Manager, Conglomerate Co.).

The respondent indicates that had she been a housewife, she would have been timid and fearful in coping with her day to day activities. She subscribes to the *Brahminic* ideal where women have primary concern for the home and family. Such an ideal

exhorts being chaste, modest, servile, confined to the home, pre-occupied with children, husband and relations and husband's friends and sacrificing her interests, as virtues. Such an ideal considers that the association with women who are independent in their status and outlook towards work and life (such as those of managers) is evil. However, this respondent's attitudes and perceptions have changed considerably as a result of her exposure to managerial experience at the workplace. Such a transformation occurred mainly as a result the respondent being at odds with the pre-existing cultural stereotypes that the Sri Lankan society has placed before her. Opposition to existing cultural stereotypes has paid rich dividends. The institutional context and in particular, the social perception of females may impact on their orientations to work. In this case, it acts as a motivator for performance. They have transformed the typical norms and ways of thinking that male managers would tend to adopt. How did this happen? The determination of the female manager to develop her personality and initiative was perhaps as a result of the cultural embeddedness of management practices in Sri Lanka as well. One such attribute of embeddedness as Chapter 5 illustrated, is that managers in the private sector experience a greater sense of motivation as well as a service orientation, in comparison to their counterparts in the public sector.

Another important cultural artifact in Sri Lankan management circles in relation to female managers is the respect towards their own cultural identity. Just as female managers think and act in terms of how their male colleagues would do so in the work domain, male managers think and act in relation to the cultural expectations and obligations that Sri Lankan society might place on their female colleagues.

The respondent's example is a normal occurrence in Sri Lanka, where organisations typically discourage female managers having to work outside business hours and beyond the business premises. There is also an influence of religious norms that promote virtues such as virginity and chastity as Chapter 3 illustrated (Samarasinghe, 1996). Such a perception to promote and protect virtues of females appears to be significantly higher among managers, in comparison to female secondary labour-market employees, such as IPZ, tea plantation and Middle-East migrant workers, as Chapter 4 illustrated. Although societal mores apply to all Sri Lankan women relatively equally, managerial women enjoy far greater protection than do secondary

workers. As Chapter 4 illustrated, female employment in the secondary labour market, itself, was considered as a constraint and stigma on their status and mobility in the society. Parallels or equivalents of such efforts to protect the status and interests of female employees in the secondary labour market will be a distant dream in Sri Lanka.

Similarly, other organisations also practise or adopt institutional level expectations that influence managers in organisations in framing policies that guide women managers in relation to their character and conduct. One example is the salience of such community expectations when work involves outstation travel and overnight stay away from home.

> In our company we do not have any form of discrimination. I can say that women have the same opportunity as men do. The only area I could think of is where outstation work is concerned. Our managers think a lot when they have to send women to outstations to work for two or three days at a stretch (Nilmini, Female Middle Manager, Venture Capital Co.).

Overt gender discrimination seems not to be the ordinary experience among some female managers in Sri Lankan organisations. However, organisations themselves tend to lay down rules and regulations governing their conduct. Such rules and regulations are instrumental in protecting the interests and safety of female managers, for example, in the case of outstation duty. Senior managers in organisations are reluctant to send female managers to outstations because their absence from home, even for a short period, may result in far-reaching implications to their households, especially children. In addition, senior managers have to accept responsibility for the transport and safety of female managers in their organisations, who are away from home on duty and are without the protection of their spouses. Managers and organisations collectively begin to practise cultural and institutional attributes and prescriptions such as chastity and modesty, that Sri Lankan society lays down. Thus they respect female managers either by avoiding female managers in outstation work or by arranging for such work with minimal disruption to the family, after careful consideration and thought as the respondent observes. Thus, institutional level attributes such as cultural norms and mores serve as measures that some Sri Lankan organisations adopt in relation to exceptional circumstances, such

as work involving women in outstation locations. This response is another example where organisations and top managers themselves initiate measures to protect the interests of female managers in their organisations, so that they are free from any form of hardship either to themselves or their families. As mentioned before, such a protection remains unavailable to female secondary labour market employees (Chapter 4).

However, some female managers experience overt gender discrimination. A female manager remarked that gender discrimination sometimes became a complicated issue, particularly in relation to the issue of political interference.

> If you ask me whether there is gender bias in Sri Lanka I would say 'yes'. There is gender bias against women [discrimination] who occupy very senior posts. When it comes to promotion to a very vital post it [gender] plays a very important role to the decision-maker. If you take my instance, I have acted 12 times for my superior while he was away overseas. But if his position becomes vacant, it will not be obvious that I will get it. There will be another person who is a total stranger to this department in all respects.

> There is one case where this rule does not apply. And that is when you are a political appointee. Let me give you one example. Mrs. [name], she is the [designation] of the [organisation] and the [designation] of the [organisation]. She was holding the post of [designation]. When the post fell vacant she was given the post [designation]. Take another example. Mrs. [name], she did not even have the qualifications and experience to be there. Now we have come the hard way. We are Ceylon Civil Service people. We came up the ladder with our experience. But this is not so when you are close to political powers [Suranjie, Chief Executive Officer, Government Department].

Political interference is another common aspect found in the practice of management of Sri Lankan organisations, according to organisational theorists (Gunatilleke, 1993; Nanayakkara, 1993b). The above response exemplifies the power of politically motivated decisions on gender issues in organisations. Political interference can seriously affect the performance and profitability of organisations. Scarce and valuable resources appear to be poorly managed and management objectives may be considered secondary to political motivation. Hence, Sri Lankan female managers seem to face gender discrimination due to political influences as well, especially in the public sector.

A covert reason for discrimination is on account of maternity. A female manager remarked in relation to maternity leave as follows:

> In this organisation, they [the management] don't encourage women to be in the senior positions. For example, I am the only woman in management. The next level at which you find women is the Junior Executive level. There is no one in between. The reason I see for this is the question of maternity leave. They [the management] do not want to employ women in the managerial grades because they feel that 84 days in a row would be missed which could turn out to be costly for the company, both in terms of replacements and salary (Jayanthie, Female Middle Manager, Finance Co.).

The significance of the maternity as a deterrent to managerial employment is, once again, a reflection of the lack of planning among some Sri Lankan organisations to recruit female managers as a competitive advantage as well as a human resource. Even among the few organisations that have female managers, such as the one from which this response originated, the female managers are unable to act as change agents. Perhaps the practice of 'wait for instructions from above' is the safest way to approach such a sensitive issue. A precedent or two of female managers seem to be inadequate for this organisation. This response seems to reinforce the influence of deep-seated institutional and cultural expectations that women (rather than both men and women) have familial obligations for childcare [for example, see Iddamalgoda (1991)], and are therefore unsuitable for management positions. Even though there are several cultural and institutional attributes that favour female managers, some of the other existing cultural paradigms and hierarchies are unlikely to create willingness and co-operation among participants in some organisational contexts, as Parikh and Farrell (1991) argue.

Another issue that is likely to have far more serious implications than gender discrimination in Sri Lankan organisations is the experience of sexual harassment among female managers. Sexual harassment was another variable better explained by organisational level variables in the quantitative findings. However, a female manager made an interesting and unexpected remark in relation to an experience in her organisation.

> I have . . . seen what is happening to others in terms of harassment and discrimination but I blame the person so harassed or taken

advantage of or discriminated equally with the person actually doing so. They even come crying to me. But what I think is that the person needs the capability to tackle the problem. I know many people in the US have lawsuits and other matters against men. But this is not only because of the man but also equally because of the woman because she did not develop the capability to handle the situation. I have no problem of any sort whether they are men or women. Even my colleagues have no problems in working under a woman. In fact many outsiders are surprised when they come to hear of me as a woman. They call me Mr. (surname) and then I have to tell that I am Mrs. (surname)! (Priyanthie, Female Director, Conglomerate Co.).

In a sexual harassment or gender discrimination case in Sri Lanka, one normally blames the patriarchal 'male superior/female subordinate' culture, where the damage is greater for the woman, than for a man. Sexual harassment, for example, often leaves a scar on her future life as she has violated the stringent cultural prescriptions of chastity and modesty. Society tends to blame the male for violating the principles of morality and scarring the future of the female. However, this respondent is at odds with the common Sri Lankan way of thinking. The respondent perceives that the blame is to be on both the harasser and the harassed. An important cultural and institutional concept useful for understanding and analysing this apparent paradox is the *Brahminic* ideology. Chapter 3 illustrated the concept of the *Brahminic* ideology where, in addition to being chaste and modest, women are also typically portrayed as cunning and are likely to lead men astray. The *Brahminic* ideal also suggests the behaviour of a woman as a devoted mother, a beauty queen, an evil temptress and a stupid housewife. Therefore, being a manager, this respondent takes a position where she is at odds with the typical Sri Lankan thinking where one blames only the male. She seems to endorse the validity that even though a male may violate moral codes, the female violates moral codes too. Although this response seems unusual, it highlights and analyses some of the adverse characteristics of a woman as the *Brahminic* ideal suggests. Almost all other responses in this chapter have only analysed some aspects of the *Brahminic* ideal such as subservience and self-sacrifice to the husband's interests, rather than other virtues of the *Brahminic* ideal such as the portrayal of women as being cunning and leading men astray.

The respondent also criticises the US legal system as merely instrumental in protecting the interests of female workers in organisations. She highlights in her

perception the importance of understanding that sexual harassment often has two equal sides to blame: the harasser as well as the harassed. The respondent emphasises the apparent irrelevance of gender in her organisational realities both within and beyond the organisation. She seems to be comfortable working with her employees. Similarly, the employees perceive her as their leader and manager. In addition, gender is irrelevant in the dealings beyond the organisations. Such a response might appear to be an exception rather than a rule. Perhaps a more balanced gender composition might be a solution to the pressure of sexual harassment?

Some of the adverse influences of sexual harassment pose difficulties and constraints on female managers in organisations. Nevertheless, the institutional level perspective shows that, irrespective of the life-stage context of woman managers, or the degree of work and non-work pressure, they have made significant contributions to Sri Lankan organisations (for example, as in the case of the USA, see Powell [1993]). Such a perception is particularly significant to Sri Lankan employers and policy makers. Thus, perceptions of female managers are gradually being transformed at both the individual manager as well as the formal organisational levels. An equal employment opportunity perception for female managers is emerging. Sri Lankan organisations are beginning to recognise the contribution of women managers. Some organisations have done so by creating precedents where, for example, the recruitment of the first female manager has led to the gradual opening of doors to other women in management. However, there are still many organisations and individual managers who have not attempted to encourage career women in their organisations. As a female manager remarked:

> Generally our management would prefer a male for this job. I am the first woman to be in this job. Only two months back the second appointment of a woman took place – that of an accountant. I have my people in my section who are male and they do the work for me. I have to take responsibility for my job. We did an art competition among school children and I had to be responsible to have this exhibited in all the provinces. I did it. I think that I had to prove myself to be a manager. It is not necessary that I had to work hard. It was not imposed on me. But I *did* work hard. I used to come home from outstations and go again the very next day. This position suits me because it does not involve much outdoor work and work outside

office hours. A Company such as ours that usually thought that only men were to be promoted to management levels is now becoming different. Though we have competition we are doing well. We have been in business only for about 30 years (Iranganie, Female Sales Manager, Manufacturing Co.).

An underlying assumption for the preference for males as managers is deeply embedded in Sri Lankan organisations and management circles due to religious and cultural stereotypes such as the *Brahminic* ideal. The notion that women are temperamentally unfit for a position that involves decision making, hard work and commitment has had a significant impact to many organisations whose managers endorse traditional attitudes and gender stereotypes.

The respondent claims that her organisation would normally have employed a male for the management position. Such a claim, in addition, indicates the embeddedness of Sri Lankan management to look at the past and consider the past as a standard for the future, rather than looking forward to perform better than the past. The absence of female managers in the past seems to have been a safe precedent for the organisation to follow. In other words, there has been a respect for past tradition that appeared to promote the view that females were incompetent or unfit for management positions. Despite a change, the traditional view remains clearly embedded as the female manager's opening sentence reiterates. However, the new precedence (the presence of the first female manager) has changed the traditional as well as cultural attitudes in a tradition bound organisation with managers who previously held traditional views and stereotypes in relation to women and work. Senior managers and organisations have also lacked appropriate planning, both as a skill and practice, to recruit and encourage female managers into their organisations. Such a lack of planning is another culturally embedded attribute in Sri Lankan management practice (Mathupala, 1984).

Despite the lack of planning in Sri Lanka, another salient aspect emerges in a context where traditional and deep-seated cultural values abound, namely, the degree of gender pay parity. In an international study on gender pay disparity the International Labour Organisation revealed that:

> Compared to what men earn in this country, Sri Lanka's women are the best paid in the world . . . According to the survey, Sri Lankan women earned 70 per cent of what men earned in similar jobs in 1984. This figure had improved to 93 per cent in 1992 (*The Daily News,* 1995f: 1).

The corresponding figure for Swedish women was 82 per cent. Although one would argue that the ILO study included a more macro-level sample, constituting both management as well as non-management employees, it appears that there is a relatively near equity (93 per cent) across gender in relation to pay in Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan managers seem to believe that there is relatively fair salary parity. Although there is the likelihood of exceptions and the presence of inequalities, there was one manager who shared her personal experience that:

> In . . . Sweden, I know of a doctor who said that she was paid less than what her male colleagues earned. But here in Sri Lanka we do not have a problem of that nature (Kamalini, Female Top Manager, Engineering Co.).

This female manager perceives that Sri Lankan organisations seem to practice a gender-parity in relation to salary levels. One probable explanation for such a perception of parity is the existence of pay commissions and salary boards in the Sri Lankan labour market controlling the salary levels and structures, especially in the public sector organisations. The existence of legislation to control salary levels and structure is, once again, an institutional attribute in Sri Lanka. Another probable reason is that the legislation relating to salary structure and levels especially of managers does not distinguish between males and females, especially in relation to white-collar jobs. Nevertheless, there is likely to be a difference between legislative provisions and practice in reality, especially in the private sector.

Equal employment opportunities either for recruitment or for pay, however, are more than perceptions. Perceptions extend to organisational realities, sometimes challenging the normative expectations that men seem to hold towards women. As a female manager remarked:

> In our small organisation almost all are women. We give equal opportunities; otherwise you would not see us. I find [that] women are better workers than [do] men. Men always want to go home early.

> [There are] a lot of problems with men. Women are very
> conscientious (Lakmalie, Female Top Manager, Hotel Co.).

Normally, one would expect a response such as the above from a male respondent as female managers are likely to experience family worries. However, this response has come from a female manager in relation to a male manager. Perhaps the underlying motivation for such an unusual attitude in favour of female employment is due to the marital status of this respondent. As the earlier responses of managers have highlighted, female managers who are single or are single parents seem to devote their full attention to a career.

Challenging existing organisational and cultural stereotypes seems to be part and parcel of a woman manager's reality. Despite a relatively favourable position for women in some organisations, for many other women self-determination is the key to success in career.

> In the context of my present job, I have not had any experience
> affecting my career to such an extent because of my gender. It is not
> that much a problem in our company. We call ourselves equal
> opportunity employers. I think that this is true to a great extent. The
> only aspect that remains is the fact that a woman has to prove herself
> to be reliable and efficient to be able to get into the senior
> management posts. And this would mean working twice as hard and
> efficient as a man would. I think this to be a challenge – not a
> problem (Malkanthie, Female GM, IT Co.).

The analytical implication of the observations of this respondent is that gender is irrelevant for recruitment and promotion to management positions in some Sri Lankan organisations. Such organisations encourage female managers to advance in their careers, calling themselves equal opportunity employers. Chapter 5 elaborated that Western concepts of management need cultural sensitivity in their application to a context such as Sri Lanka. Although a Western concept, EEO perceptions have Sri Lankan cultural attributes that are deeply embedded. For example, even though Sri Lanka is a patriarchal society, the presence of female managers in organisations is culturally embedded in Sri Lanka's history where female leaders and queens have ruled and held positions of power (Mathupala, 1984). However, they are still a minority. The respondent perceives that the presence of women in organisations is not a problem. As some of the other respondents have also highlighted in this

chapter, Sri Lankan culture seems to be supportive towards female managers assuming positions of authority and power in organisations.

Although gender seems to be irrelevant in recruitment and promotion, there are other standards for performance that female managers have to achieve. The respondent is of the view that she has to prove her worth as a manager to the organisation through her work. As other female and male managers have also highlighted in this chapter, reliability, efficiency, hard work and consistency are therefore hallmarks of a female manager's performance. Such a standard seems to be stringent and arduous among female managers, as it often doubles their effort in terms of quantifiable performance. Such a perception is probably culturally embedded in the sense that female managers have to prove themselves 'worthy of their calling' to be managers, which is contrary to what societal and institutional expectations prescribe for females in Sri Lanka. Hence, women impose on themselves the 'twice as hard' rule that seems to appear to them as normal as a challenge.

Nevertheless, female managers work across diverse sectoral as well as organisational settings. They seem to enjoy considerable levels of encouragement to the furthering of their careers. Nevertheless, while some male managers appear to hinder female managers reaching higher positions, other male managers seem to emphasise the view that the gender of a manager is irrelevant to the job:

> We had a Chairman in our organisation and an influential manager asked him a question:
> "How are the *women* engineers in your place? Are they performing equally well as the *men*?"
> He answered:
> "All I know is that I have *engineers* in our organisation – not men and women".
> So it is very fortunate to have a broad-minded person as him in our department (Wimala, Female Director, Engineering Co.).

Sri Lankan organisations have a significant cultural influence embedded in their management systems. As Chapter 5 illustrated, Fayol's principles of management resemble many of the traditional management practices of kings and leaders, according to historical accounts. Specifically, an analysis of the *dasaraja dharma* (ten cardinal principles) relates to this female manager's

response regarding the perceptions of males towards females in the organisation. The analysis of the response connects the concept of *murudhubhava* (justice) that relates to Fayol's principle of equity in the organisation. The manager's gender is irrelevant in the organisation. Additionally, this response highlights the significant contribution, commitment and influence of higher level and senior managers towards a favourable perception towards equality of female managers in the organisation.

In sum, women managers' multiple roles as wife, mother, manager, and sometimes as single women or single parents often involve them in a considerable workload and effort to reconcile the work as well as non-work demands. Some women managers cope well, while others sacrifice their career to care for their children and families. Some organisations have begun to recruit and encourage women in their career. While some men hold a relatively traditional gender role attitude towards women, discouraging their working outside home, others consider it as a second source of income.

Some organisations however, succeed in emphasising greater gender awareness especially among males, so that men are more comfortable with women managers in their experience of gender relations at work. On the other hand, at the domestic level, men appear to be sharing some work at home, in order to help women managers feel comfortable with both their work and non-work demands. In addition, some of the management practices in Sri Lanka that are embedded in Sri Lankan culture seem to favour female managers in their experience of work and organisational realities. Such perceptions and experiences highlight both the prominence and contradictions in the social construction of gender of Sri Lankan male and female managers. They answer the question '*What* is it to be a Sri Lankan male or female manager?' rather than merely exchanging managers' views of one another.

10.2 Recommendations for further academic work

There are two drawbacks in the existing Sri Lankan gender and management literatures. Sample frames for past research have either failed to be representative or have had very small numbers of respondents. Sometimes, management research

includes non-management employees in the sample as well. In this thesis there is a large and representative as well as focussed sample: thus, it has overcome both these drawbacks. However, there remain potential areas for further research in Sri Lanka as some respondents suggested during field work and data collection:

10.2.1 A study of single women and single parent families

A large proportion of Sri Lankan women managers is more likely to be single or single parents. Such a finding is in line with the existing research in Sri Lanka as well as in the international literature. Women managers who belong to this group have specific issues and problems relating to their work, family, and managerial roles. Hence, it is necessary to focus attention on research issues exclusive to this group of managers. One potential research area could relate to the perceptions of such women managers that they experience societal pressure as a result of their being different to most other women in Sri Lankan society. In addition, among single parents, a potential area of study is to focus on the pressures that stem from marital breakdowns in relation to children, and the effects of these on work and career. Another area of study relates to the study of women (not necessarily managers) and families who have lost their husbands as a result of the on-going war, either as soldiers or as civilians. Many independent women in Sri Lanka are so less from choice and more from the effects of the on-going state of emergency.

The sample frame for accessing a representative sample would be a sensitive issue, as it is difficult to identify women managers by their marital status. One of the most appropriate means to gain access to the sample would be through Sri Lankan women's lobby groups. Data for the study of single women, as well as single parent women, would have to take the form of a mix of both quantitative as well as qualitative data, in order to make the best use of the similarity, as well as the dissimilarity of responses and respondents. Such issues emerge clearly from qualitative data than responses to survey scales.

10.2.2 A study of managers across different management disciplines

The study of work perceptions, in particular, their variation by gender across diverse managerial disciplines such as marketing, finance, human resource management and information technology, is another potential research area. The purpose of such a study would be to identify how managers across different disciplines perceive attitudes towards gender in organisations in relation to work. For example, managers

in the finance industry might have a more supportive disposition towards women managers because here there is a relatively greater representation of women managers, in comparison to a traditionally male preserve such as production management. The sample frame for this study did not allow for such an investigation.

A sample frame for such a study would include male and female managers stratified on the basis of their area of occupational specialisation. As was the case to some extent in this thesis, access for research would be likely to be most effective through professional bodies with whom managers are registered. Some examples are the Institute for Chartered Accountants, Sri Lanka (for financial personnel), the Institute for Engineers in Sri Lanka (for engineers), Institute for Personnel Management (for human resource managers) and the like.

10.2.3 A study of sexual harassment and gender discrimination among managerial and non-managerial women

Sexual harassment in Sri Lankan organisations is a closely guarded secret, because the adverse effects can harm the image, as well as interests, of the organisation and the victim, both within the organisation and in society more generally. As Jayasinghe (1996: 34) noted "Unlike in developed countries, victims in developing countries are reluctant to speak openly about their harassment for fear of public humiliation, loss of job or retaliation at work".

However, there have been a few reports in the mass media (especially newspapers) about the prevalence of sexual harassment in Sri Lankan organisations. It has been suggested that "Sexual harassment at work places in Sri Lanka is no better or worse than in any other developing country in the region" (Jayasinghe, 1996: 34). Victims of sexual harassment, according to Jayasinghe (1996), include clerks, typists, secretaries, airline stewardesses, administrative assistants and management executives. Hence, the study needs to include management and non-management employees. The sample frame for such a study that would reach women who have experienced harassment and discrimination at work would need to be planned in conjunction with women's lobby groups, such as Women in Need and Voice of Women. Such lobby groups are potential sources for securing research access.

10.3 Conclusions

Theoretically, this thesis has adopted a strong argument from the institutional level perspective, drawing from the intellectual work of the Cambridge studies on orientations to work (Goldthorpe *et al.*, 1968) and the action frame of reference (Silverman, 1970). However, analysis of the survey data largely fails to support the institutional level perspective. On the other hand, while a strong argument from the institutional perspective is one position in the literature, the results of this thesis should not be taken to mean their negation: yet, the findings do not support the culture-free thesis. The culture-free thesis refers to the influence organisational and industrial attributes such as contingencies of scale and technological development in the management and administration of organisations rather than cultural influences (Lammers and Hickson, 1979; Tayeb, 1988).

Child and Kieser (1979) support the view that both the cultural elements and the organisational environment are important in understanding managerial roles. On the one hand, the culture-specific argument suggests that, "even if organisations located within different societies do face similar contingencies and adopt similar models of formal structure, deep-rooted cultural forces will still re-assert themselves in the way people actually behave and relate to each other" (1979: 253). On the other hand, the culture-free or contingency argument suggests that, "[d]espite the diverse political, ideological and cultural origins of the industrialised societies, their institutional frameworks are converging under the force of a common industrial logic" (1979: 252). Child and Keiser studied the preference for work environments among British and German managers to examine the implications of the culture-free thesis. They noted that "culturally specific factors such as people's expectations about authority will mediate between contextual variables such as size of organisation and the nature of structures, roles and behaviour within organisations" (1979: 267). In particular, they found that "the cultural factor has most bearing upon modes of individual conduct and interpersonal relationships, and it is precisely at this level that one would expect the products of socialisation to be manifested most strongly" (1979: 258). The findings of this thesis confirm Child and Keiser's conclusion to some extent, because the preference for a male or female superordinate is a component of interpersonal interaction.

Tayeb's (1988) study of attitudes towards work relations among British and Indian managers suggested the relevance of both the culture-free thesis as well as the culture-specific argument. While cultural factors were more likely to predict some work attitudes than non-cultural factors, there were others that seemed to prove the contrary. Hence, Tayeb concluded that although the cultural model was useful for understanding work attitudes, it was inadequate as a complete test. The findings for this thesis in relation to Sri Lanka concur with Tayeb's study of the British and Indian contexts.

On the whole, in the survey data analysis the organisation level attributes are over-determinant but, in specific cases, the institutional level attributes have an impact on work perceptions. Therefore this thesis contributes a significant, important and original piece of research to the understanding and intersection of gender and organisation theory. At the theoretical level, the literature suggests that either institutional or organisational level attributes are likely to influence work perceptions. However, in the case of this thesis, both institutional and organisational level attributes have a contingent relation with influencing work perceptions to varying degrees. Hence, future research in other parts of the world and in Asia can encompass both the institutional and organisational attributes, in the study of gender construction in the organisation. For example, Billing and Alvesson (1994) have emphasised the influence of both levels of analysis in their European study.

Thus, the thesis is a very strong test of the two countervailing accounts. The thesis deliberately studied the case of a culturally complex society with a distinct and strong mix of ethnicity and other cultural dimensions. The thesis has rigorously tested a theoretical model that has been previously used largely in the American/European contexts. It has illustrated the applicability of the action frame of reference as well as the concept of orientations to work to a society such as Sri Lanka. Thus, this thesis endorses the contribution, relevance, and applicability of the concept of orientations to work and the action frame of reference for the 1990s, as well as to a South Asian cultural context. In addition, this thesis has contributed to the knowledge of gender and organisational behaviour in Sri Lanka using large-scale empirical data. Past research has been weak in this regard. For this reason alone, the thesis would make a significant contribution, but, as argued previously, its claims to

innovation are both more specific and more theoretical. It uses rigorous empirical data to test competing hypotheses, as well as 'tell a story' about male and female managers in Sri Lanka.

What does this thesis contribute in terms of its findings to Sri Lankan managers, organisations, practitioners, academics, policy-makers and the government?

The first and most original contribution of this thesis is that Sri Lankan managers need *not* undergo a 'cultural revolution' in relation to changing their attitudes towards women, as well as their work perceptions in organisations. The reason is that organisational level phenomena, to a large extent, are more likely to explain attitudes and work perceptions than institutional level phenomena, such as religion and ethnicity. Therefore, managers and organisations have *within* their reach access to and control over corrective measures in relation to gender and organisation behaviour. Managers and organisations need *not* depend on extra-organisational or cultural forces that are beyond their access and control, nor use them as rationales for lack of action.

An important implication for management policy is that organisations should encourage women to enter their organisations as managers so that other male managers are exposed to the experience of working with women managers. Such an experience would have a double effect – both in the organisational experiences as well as in individual managers' perceptions at the institutional level. The quantitative as well as the qualitative data illustrate that the presence of women managers in a work setting has contributed to a favourable perception of women, especially among males. Traditional views of women abound, however. Yet, the most effective means to corrective action stems from within the organisation itself. A greater presence of women managers in Sri Lankan organisations is a potential means to a greater understanding and recognition of their contribution.

A Sri Lankan freelance television producer, observing the different viewpoints of women managers, remarked:

What Sri Lankan women have working in their favour, is a strong network of women's groups and NGOs striving towards the goal of improving the status of women in this country. Though much still remains to be achieved, in the areas of health, law, education and labour, the urban women of Sri Lankan have set themselves a tremendous pace for development. We need however, to see more women climbing the corporate ladder and honing their managerial skills. It is not that they lack the motivation or the intellect, it is simply that they are trapped in the eternal circle of having to lead double lives – of a career woman and a home-keeper. With the gradual breakdown of the extended family, and the increasing difficulty of obtaining domestic help, the prospect facing many women is bleak (Perera, 1995: 25).

The above quotation shows that traditional attitudes towards women do continue to hold sway in the Sri Lankan society. However, managers and organisations need not be constrained by the societal mores and value systems that might confront them. Rather, organisations and managers can develop the organisational culture, through values and expectations that they promote among other managers and employees. The organisational culture aspect has been salient in some of the qualitative data responses, especially with respect to the guidelines and limits for women managers in Sri Lanka. Thus, the development of a favourable and conducive environment whereby the organisational and corporate culture (Kono and Clegg, 1998) encourages women managers will be a significant milestone in every Sri Lankan organisation.

The second original recommendation is important in relation to the theory and practice of management in Sri Lanka. This thesis illustrates that organisational level attributes, to a large extent, have a greater explanatory power in explaining work perceptions. Hence, Sri Lankan management practice need *not* be constrained by the broader societal culture in Sri Lanka. Chapter 5 illustrated numerous socio-cultural forces shaping management practices and realities that were prevalent in Sri Lanka in terms of its 'national culture'. All if not most of these influences relate to the societal level. Therefore, Sri Lankan managers and organisations cannot blame "society": for example, a Sri Lankan work ethic or its 'national culture'. Rather, Sri Lankan managers have within their reach, the ability to develop a 'corporate culture' (Kono and Clegg, 1998) in relation to best practice in the management of

organisations. A leading Sri Lankan manager of a reputed group of companies in an interview with a Sri Lankan business magazine highlighted the view that Sri Lanka has not reached its potential to develop its management practices. He advised the corporate sector as follows:

> The decision making process is not filtering down adequately in many instances. Full delegation and responsibility, coupled with full accountability and answerability will enable the management system to get necessary feedback in the shortest possible time (*Lanka Monthly Digest*, 1996: 8).

Another expatriate manager in a Sri Lankan financial institution remarked that he believed

> in the need to break down one of the strongest barriers against diligence in Sri Lankans – the socio-cultural framework, where family obligations take priority over the workplace. He views that the socio-cultural set up as a kind of 'safety valve', which prevents an individual from rising too high or falling too low. He feels it is more than time that such a framework is overhauled. You have got to change things . . . People are frightened of change. But by leaving the status quo, problems and unhappiness keeps building up (*Lanka Monthly Digest*, 1996: 21).

The importance of managers and organisations in transforming attitudes towards productivity and development not only in an economic sense but also as an organisational value is highlighted in the following business account:

> Our country needs radical change in this respect [work culture and work ethics] to meet the new challenge. We have to eradicate the colonial attitudes and transform inherited agrarian habits to suit a rapidly advancing industrial age. This is an arduous task, but with the high literacy and the moderate development, which we have, it is not impossible. The transformation can be achieved by creating better work environment, by worker education, training skills and by disseminating suitable ethical work disciplines, norms and practices . . . Work ethics and work consciousness have to be nurtured and fostered as part of the lifestyle of our nation. Sri Lanka's vision of the future as an NIC depends on this transformation (Manokaran, 1996: 34).

Sri Lankan organisations and managers have the potential to match the performance of organisations in the industrialised, as well as industrialising, world, in terms of achieving excellence in the practice of management.

Due recognition has to be made however, that cessation of ethnic conflict is crucial for the greater and faster development of management, as well as the economy. Management practice needs to focus on the industry and development required to take Sri Lanka to a new management era – one that, while it values males and females equally, values civil society more than war.

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GLOSSARY

Bhikkunis

Buddhist nuns

Binna

a form of marriage where the husband moves to be with the wife and the wife has complete control over the house and property.

Chena

a plot of jungle-land, cleared for cultivation of mainly dry grains

Colebrook-Cameron Reforms

the pioneering steps in developing a laissez-faire policy for Sri Lanka in the setting-up of plantations in 1833. These policies were instrumental in setting up an administrative, judicial and financial system in Sri Lanka.

Diga

a common form of marriage among the Sinhalese, where the women moves to live with her husband and the husband has control over the property.

Dowry

a marriage ritual where the bride's parents offer a gift of money, or a fixed asset, to the groom.

Kandyan

Central hill country of Sri Lanka

Kangany

worker middleman in the tea plantations in Sri Lanka

Karma

according to the principle, one's status, beauty, wealth and power and even gender in the present birth have been determined by one's action in the past birth

Katunayake

a town 40 kms north of Colombo, where the first IPZ (established 1979) is situated.

Koggala

a town 130 kms south of Colombo where another IPZ is situated.

Line rooms

the accommodation that tea estates provide for the pluckers and their families.

Maha

one of the two paddy harvest seasons in Sri Lanka

Mukkava	the legal system of Tamil-speaking people in the East of Sri Lanka
Natkunam	or four great qualities — fear, shame, ignorance (of bad things) and pretence (not revealing too much knowledge of reality)
Pancha Kalyani	refers to the five attributes of beauty — namely hair, teeth, body, skin and youthful appearance
Poya	full moon (or fast) days
Sivagana Siddhir	the liberal form of Hinduism practised by Hindus in Sri Lanka. They sometimes call themselves *Smarta* Hindus.
Theravada	Sri Lankan Buddhists practise Buddhism that traces itself to the Pali Canon. This canon refers to Buddhist laws, codes and dialogues, written by Buddha's disciples after his death.
Untouchables	people who are not allowed to enter places of religious worship because of their caste membership
Veda	the sacred text of Hindus
Yala	one of the two paddy harvest seasons in Sri Lanka
Sati	widow suicide or immolation, a social custom found in some parts of India
Purdah	a custom normally found among Muslims where women wear a veil as part of their costume.
Borah	a very small north Indian minority community in Sri Lanka
Trincomalee	a northeastern Sri Lankan town famous for because of its location and one of the finest natural harbours in the world.
Donoughmore Commission	the policies that led to the grant of the right to vote for all women over 21 years of age in 1931.
Peoplisation	refers to part ownership of a company's shares by employees of the organisation

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Life context score	this is a re-coded variable using details relating to the marital status, the number and ages of children, and whether respondents are the sole/principal breadwinners or not.
Category A method	this method refers to the contact established through an introductory letter to CEO of organisations to reach potential respondents for data collection in this thesis.
Category B method	this method refers to the contact established through professional bodies and associations to reach potential respondents for data collection in this thesis.
Category C method	this method refers to the contact established through personal contacts among relatives, friends, and neighbours to reach potential respondents for data collection in this thesis.
Category D method	this method refers to the contact established through references of respondents in Category A to reach potential respondents for data collection in this thesis.
Category E method	this method refers to the contact established through self-introduction to reach potential respondents for data collection in this thesis.

APPENDICES

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STANDARD CLASSIFICATION OF OCCUPATIONS IN SRI LANKA
BASED ON THE REVISED INTERNATIONAL STANDARD CLASSIFICATION OF OCCUPATIONS (ISCO -
88) LAID DOWN BY THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION

Major Group 1— LEGISLATORS, SENIOR OFFICIALS AND MANAGERS

SUBMAJOR, MINOR AND UNIT GROUPS.

11			Legislators and Administrators
	111		Legislators
		1110	Legislators
	112		Senior Government Officials
		1121	Senior Government Officials
			Permanent Secretaries
			Additional Secretaries
			Senior Assistant Secretaries
			All Heads of Departments
			(Directors, Commissioners, Controllers, Auditor General, Solicitor General,
			Surveyor General, Registrar of Companies, Conservator, Commissioner of
			Title Settlements, Government Agents, Project Directors etc.)
			Security Advisors to President
			Advisor to Prime Minister
			Advisor to Minister of Education
			Advisor to Minister of Defence
			Inspector General of Police
			Ambassadors and High Commissioners
			Executive House Keeper (President's)
		1122	Deputy/Assistant Directors
			Deputy/Assistant Commissioners
			Deputy/Assistant Controllers
			Civil Administration Officer
			Staff Assistant - Ministry of Foreign Affairs
			Consular
			Chief Administrative Officer
			Additional Conservator
			Deputy/Assistant Commissioner
			Secretary of Sri Lanka Scientific Affairs
			Land Development Officer
			Assistant Commissioner of Title Settlement
		1123	Deputy Assistant Directors
			Deputy/Assistant Commissioners
			Deputy/Assistant Controllers
			Deputy Inspector General of Police
12			Corporate Managers (having three or more subordinate managers)
	121		Directors and Chief Executives
		1210	Directors and Chief Executives
			Chairman and Director of Corporations
			General Managers of Corporations
			General Managers of Banks
			General Managers of large scale trade organisations
			General Managers of large scale tourist hotels
			Managers of large scale industries
			Managers of Catering and Lodging services.

122		Specialised Managers
	1221	Production and Operations Managers
		Editor in Chief
		Chief Co-editor
		Production Managers
	1222	Finance and Administration Managers
		Managers - bank
		Managers - Insurance and Finance
	1223	Personnel and Industrial Relations Managers
	1224	Sales and Marketing Managers
		(Large Scale Institutions)
	1225	Advertising and public relations managers
	1226	Supply and Distribution Managers, Stores Superintendents and Managers
	1227	Computing Services Managers
		Data Processing Managers
	1228	Research and Development Managers
	1229	Other Specalised Managers

13   General Managers (managing on their own, behalf of the proprietor,   with no more than one other manager).

131		General Managers
	1311	General Managers in Agriculture, Estate Superintendents, in tea, rubber, coconut estates, and Farm Managers.
	1312	General Managers in Manufacturing
	1313	General Managers in Construction
	1314	General Managers in retail and wholesale trade
	1315	General Managers of restaurants and hotels
	1316	General Managers in Transport, Depot Superintendents and Transport Managers.
	1317	General Managers of Business services and firms

Source: Demography & Social Statistics Division, Department of Census & Statistics, 440/1, Havelock Road, Colombo 6.

COPY OF INTRODUCTORY LETTER TO CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS OF SRI LANKAN
ORGANISATIONS FOR BATCH I

The Chief Executive Officer
«Company»
«Address1»
«Address2»
«City»

2nd September 1995

Dear Colleague

We would like to introduce ourselves. Mr. Ranjan George is a citizen of Sri Lanka, and a member of the staff of the Open University of Sri Lanka, who is currently studying for his PhD at the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur under the supervision of Professor Stewart Clegg. The focus of our research is on 'Women Managers in Sri Lanka'.

We intend to carry out a large-scale study investigating how men and women experience being managers in Sri Lanka today. The research will compare similarities and differences between the experience of women and men occupying similar management positions.

We will administer a questionnaire survey. Our intention is to meet and survey at least 300 men and women in management positions in Sri Lanka, drawn from state and public sector organisations and from the private sector. We want to survey about 60 each of top, middle and lower level women managers and a matched sample of men. The questionnaire takes about an hour to complete and will take place in the beginning of 1996. All responses will be kept confidential and used for general investigations only.

Could you be of assistance to us in gaining access to, and constructing, the sample that we require? We feel sure that you could aid us in this important research for Sri Lanka. We have some ideas about how research access might be established, with your good auspices, that we would like to discuss with you. We would appreciate your filling in the enclosed response form and returning it to us in the self addressed envelope, to enable us scheduling the survey. As a token of our esteem for the help that you will render us, we would want to offer a seminar that feeds back the preliminary results of our research in Sri Lanka as soon as we have enough data able to do so. Please feel free to contact us if you need any clarification, by letter, fax, or e-mail. Our fax number in Australia is +61 46 284 289. We wish to inform you that we traced your name and address from the telephone directory.

Yours sincerely

Signed Stewart R. Clegg
Foundation Professor of Management
E mail: s.clegg@uws.edu.au

Signed Ranjan George
Doctoral Candidate
E mail: r.george@uws.edu.au

The Chief Executive Officer
«Company»
«Address1»
«Address2»
«City»

20th November 1995

Dear Colleague

We would like to introduce ourselves. Mr. Ranjan George is a citizen of Sri Lanka, and a member of the staff of the
Open University of Sri Lanka, who is currently studying for his PhD at the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur
under the supervision of Professor Stewart Clegg. The focus of our research is on 'Women Managers in Sri Lanka'.

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today. The research will compare similarities and differences between the experience of women and men occupying
similar management positions.

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management positions in Sri Lanka, drawn from state and public sector organisations and from the private sector. We
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preliminary results of our research in Sri Lanka as soon as we have enough data able to do so. Please feel free to
contact Ranjan, who is now in Sri Lanka if you need any clarification, or by letter, fax, or e-mail. Our fax number in
Australia is +61 46 284 289. We wish to inform you that we traced your name and address from the telephone
directory.

Yours sincerely

Signed Stewart R. Clegg
Foundation Professor of Management
E mail: s.clegg@uws.edu.au

Signed Ranjan George
Doctoral Candidate
6A Pelawatta Mawatha,
Nugegoda Tel. No. (Res) 856924

RESPONSE FORM

Mr. Ranjan George
6A Pelawatta Mawatha
NUGEGODA

Telephone No. (Res) 856924

Yes, we are interested in participating as respondents to your survey. We nominate the following members from our organisation.

NAME OF ORGANISATION:
ADDRESS:
TELEPHONE NOS:

Yes, we need arrangements to be made in advance for appointment for the survey.

(To help schedule and complete the survey we appreciate your response on or before 1st February 1996. You may add as many names as you would wish to this list and continue overleaf too.)

UNIVERSITY OF WESREN SYDNEY, MACARTHUR

[Letter head Paper]

31 October, 1995

Dear Colleague

We are conducting a large-scale study investigating managers' experience in Sri Lanka. We intend to compare the similarities and differences between the perceptions of different managers, including an equal number of top, middle and junior men and women managers from the public and private sectors.

The aim of the project is to:

- highlight diverse experiences that different people typically have of being a manager in a range of organisations and levels;
- explore the effects of these experiences in terms of management practice;
- describe and compare the strategies which managers typically use in their jobs;
- relate the research findings to the needs of managers;
- include your views in the project;
- feedback recommendations and interpretations to the respondents, and their organisations, involved in the study.

It is important that the experience managers contribute is recognised so that the sense of their own roles and their perceptions of managerial realities can be better understood. Our research strategy is to involve you and your organisation as 'partners' in the research process. By completing this survey, you will help the understanding of contemporary managerial issues not only for us, and the broader community of management researchers and students, but also, through our feedback, your organisation and colleagues.

Please take a few moments to fill out this questionnaire. It is very simple - just use the key provided for the questions by ticking the box that is the most appropriate response in your case, or filling in the space provided with a brief answer. Please hand back the questionnaire personally to the interviewer.

All your answers will remain anonymous, strictly confidential and used only for research purposes. It is not necessary to identify yourself nor your organisation/company on the questionnaire. However, if you would like the feedback that we offer, please indicate at the end of the questionnaire. The results will be analysed in general terms only. *No individual will be identified or be identifiable, from the research report.* The data collected via this questionnaire will be submitted as a doctoral thesis to the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur, Australia.

Thank you very much for your time and co-operation.

Yours sincerely

Signed Ranjan George
Doctoral Candidate

Signed Prof. Stewart R. Clegg
Foundation Professor of Management

PART A: JOB SATISFACTION

All jobs offer some satisfaction; some more, some less. These questions are designed to gauge your satisfaction in the job that you hold at present.

1. The following statements ask you to indicate your degree of satisfaction with aspects of your present job in terms of a scale from 1 to 5.

KEY				
NOT AT ALL	NOT MUCH	TO SOME EXTENT	SUBSTANTIALLY	TOTALLY
1	2	3	4	5

	My present job offers:	1	2	3	4	5
(a)	interesting and enjoyable work					
(b)	Responsibility					
(c)	career prospects					
(d)	job security					
(e)	Money					
(f)	good work and relations with colleagues					
(g)	good work and relations with superiors					
(h)	appropriate recognition from management					
(i)	appropriate use of my experience and abilities					
(j)	appropriate use of my skills and knowledge					
(k)	opportunities to enjoy excellent leadership from superiors					

2. The following eleven statements are about your work. Please rank which *THREE* statements best describe what is most important to your satisfaction in your present job.

	Rank	In my work position I enjoy:
(a)	_____	Interesting work
(b)	_____	career prospects
(c)	_____	Responsibility
(d)	_____	job security
(e)	_____	Money
(f)	_____	good relations with colleagues
(g)	_____	recognition from management
(h)	_____	autonomy to define content and pace of work
(i)	_____	service orientation towards organisation
(j)	_____	the balance between work time and time for personal and family matters that the present job allows
(k)	_____	open communication

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3. The following statements are about what you do at work. Please rate your management in terms of each statement, from one to five.

KEY				
NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	ALWAYS
1	2	3	4	5

At work:	1	2	3	4	5
(a) results justify significant decisions that I have been party to					
(b) deadlines set are deadlines met					
(c) targets set are targets met					
(d) I feel that I could have done better quality work					
(e) I can manage or supervise people well					
(f) at meetings, I am confident in putting forward my point of view					
(g) planning and organising tasks is difficult for me					
(h) I easily influence and persuade people					
(i) in competitive situations, I effectively 'sell myself'					
(j) I cope well in situations of conflict					
(k) I react too emotionally when faced with problems at work					
(l) I make mistakes					
(m) I feel 'threatened' by others at work					

4. Here are some words that describe different management styles. To what extent, do these descriptions apply to your management style?

KEY				
NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	ALWAYS
1	2	3	4	5

On most occasions I:	1	2	3	4	5
(a) am flexible					
(b) am task-oriented					
(c) decisively instruct others what to do					
(d) am sensitive or sympathetic					
(e) prefer to be consultative, i.e. joint problem solving, rather than dictatorial					
(f) am co-operative					

5.   The following statements are about work related matters. Sometimes people feel "pressured" at work. At other times they don't. Please tick a box for each statement.

KEY					
EXTREME PRESSURE	HIGH PRESSURE	MODERATE PRESSURE	SLIGHT PRESSURE	NO PRESSURE AT ALL	NOT APPLICABLE
1	2	3	4	5	N/A

	For most of my time at work I feel:	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
(a)	work overload						
(b)	promoted beyond my trained capacity to cope with the complexity of my job						
(c)	that too much travel is required for my work						
(d)	pressure to take home work						
(e)	there is lack of proper controls						
(f)	there is a lack of power by managers over others						
(g)	there is a lack of influence by managers over others						
(h)	there is a lack of consultation and communication						
(i)	there is a lack of support from superiors						
(j)	conflicting job demands and loyalties						
(k)	a lack of support from peers and subordinates						
(l)	pressure to keep up with new technology or equipment						
(m)	there are inadequate resources and finances						
(n)	there is sex discrimination and prejudice						
(o)	there is inadequate job training and experience						
(p)	that colleagues of the opposite sex being treated more favourably by management						
(q)	pressure to attend meetings						
(r)	there are long working hours						
(s)	there is too much responsibility						
(t)	there is a need to move my work location in order to progress in my career						
(u)	there are unclear career progress prospects						
(v)	there is sexual harassment of a verbal or physical nature						

6.   Please list the FIVE most desirable characteristics that you consider a person should possess to be an 'ideal manager' (e.g., either physical, psychological or attitudinal). Then list the FIVE least desirable characteristics.

	MOST DESIRABLE	LEAST DESIRABLE
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

PART B: PROMOTION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEN & WOMEN

7. Looking at the following, to what extent do you think that your organisation gives equal opportunity to both men and women in:

KEY				
NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	ALWAYS
1	2	3	4	5
			1	2	3	4	5

		1	2	3	4	5
(a)	recruitment					
(b)	supervision					
(c)	training					
(d)	performance to be appraised					
(e)	promotion					
(f)	pay					

8. In your experience of the organisation in which you work, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about women at work?

KEY				
STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
1	2	3	4	5
			1	2	3	4	5

I believe that often:

		1	2	3	4	5
(a)	women make the choice not to further their career					
(b)	women lack the necessary qualifications and experience for their job					
(c)	women lack interest in a career					
(d)	women leave just at the point when they could make significant progress in their career					
(e)	women are encouraged to 'get on' with their job as much as do men					
(f)	women experience more discrimination and prejudice by managers than do men					
(g)	women choose lower paid lower status jobs and work for pin money					
(h)	while young men are given a wide and varied training, young women tend to get stuck in certain jobs					
(i)	women do not want to take responsibility in their job					
(j)	managers do not promote women to managerial positions because they believe that they will soon leave for childrearing					
(k)	women are not encouraged to be ambitious and to move from clerical to managerial grades					
(l)	women are not encouraged to be trained, and to move from clerical to managerial grades					
(m)	there are no career paths between the different segments of the workforce for women					
(n)	women perform better than men in routine jobs					
(o)	women suffer the same career blocks as do men					
(p)	promotion for either sex of long-serving employees is significantly influenced by where new recruits are placed					
(q)	career progression is primarily the result of self determination for men and women					
(r)	women don't progress because, frequently, they absent themselves from work due to domestic reasons					
(s)	managers have their favourite employees of either sex					
(t)	any sexual inequality that still exists is just the product of history and will gradually disappear over time					
(u)	whether managers are men or women, really makes no difference					

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9. *MALE MANAGERS* tend to resign from their job for various reasons. Do you think that, typically, this will be because

KEY				
STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
1	2	3	4	5

	They seek:	1	2	3	4	5
(a)	higher pay					
(b)	greater job satisfaction					
(c)	better relations with superiors					
(d)	better relations with colleagues					
(e)	less pressure/stress					
(f)	career development opportunities					
(g)	to avoid sex discrimination					
(h)	to work closer to home					
(i)	to avoid frustration in a female dominated culture					
(j)	a greater sense of achievement at work					

10. *FEMALE MANAGERS* tend to resign from their job for various reasons. Do you think that, typically, this will be because:

KEY				
STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
1	2	3	4	5

	They seek:	1	2	3	4	5
(a)	higher pay					
(b)	greater job satisfaction					
(c)	better relations with superiors					
(d)	better relations with colleagues					
(e)	less pressure/stress					
(f)	career development opportunities					
(g)	to avoid sex discrimination					
(h)	to work closer to home					
(i)	to avoid frustration in a male dominated culture					
(j)	a greater sense of achievement at work					

11. If you were given the option of choosing whether your next superior is a male or female, what would be your preference?

Male	1
Female	2
I don't mind either	3

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12. Sometimes you may find working relationships a source of difficulty. To what extent do each of the following impose pressure on you as a manager?

KEY					
EXTREME PRESSURE	HIGH PRESSURE	MODERATE PRESSURE	SLIGHT PRESSURE	NO PRESSURE AT ALL	NOT APPLICABLE
1	2	3	4	5	N/A

		1	2	3	4	5	N/A
(a)	working relationships with superiors of the opposite sex						
(b)	working relationships with colleagues or peers of the opposite sex						
(c)	working relationships with subordinates of the opposite sex						
(d)	lack of a sex role model - to emulate a role model						
(e)	members of the opposite sex seem uncomfortable working with me because of my gender						
(f)	I feel uncomfortable working with members of the opposite sex						
(g)	I feel my gender is a disadvantage when it comes to job promotion or career progress prospects						
(h)	members of the opposite sex at work try and force me into behaviours they associate with my gender, rather than let me 'be myself'						
(i)	I feel I have to perform better at my job than colleagues of the opposite sex						
(j)	experiencing prejudiced attitudes from members of the same sex at work because of my gender						
(k)	I feel uncomfortable on training courses when I am one of the few people of my sex who is there						
(l)	my partner's negative attitude towards my career						
(m)	demands of work on my relationship with my children						
(n)	demands of work on my relationship with my spouse/partner						
(o)	dependants (other than children) living at home						
(p)	business travel and staying in hotels alone						
(q)	lack of emotional support at home						
(r)	lack of domestic support at home						
(s)	demands of work on my private/social life						
(t)	conflicting responsibilities associated with running a family, home and career						

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PART C: GENDER ROLE ATTITUDES AND DOMESTIC DIVISION OF LABOUR

13. The following statements are about role of women in work in Sri Lanka today. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the statements, by ticking the most appropriate box for each statement.

KEY				
STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
1	2	3	4	5

		1	2	3	4	5
(a)	It is better if the husband is the principal breadwinner and the wife has primary responsibility at home					
(b)	If both husband and wife work, they should share housework and childcare equally.					
(c)	There should be as many women as men in important positions in organisations.					
(d)	It would be better for Sri Lankan society if fewer women worked in jobs outside the home.					
(e)	A woman who works in a paid job can be just as good a mother as one who does not.					

14. The following statements are about who does specific childcare and household tasks. Using the key below, tick the box indicating who USUALLY performs these tasks. If any of these are NOT relevant TO YOU in your household, then place a tick in the N/A box.

KEY						
SELF	PARTNER	BOTH	SERVANT	RELATIVE	OTHER (Specify who)	NOT APPLICABLE
1	2	3	4	5	6	N/A

	Who spends the most time:	1	2	3	4	5	If 6, then who? (Please specify)	N/A
(a)	with your children							
(b)	getting children to bed							
(c)	playing with your children							
(d)	going out to a movie or a sport activity							
(e)	taking children to visit relatives							
(f)	taking children to and from school							
(g)	helping children with studies							
(h)	preparing the meals							
(i)	cleaning up after meals							
(j)	shopping for groceries							
(k)	cleaning the house							
(l)	putting out the garbage							
(m)	washing clothes							
(n)	ironing clothes							
(o)	doing gardening							
(p)	doing maintenance and improvements							

D: PERSONAL

15. What is your age?

Under 25   26 - 30   31 - 35   36 - 40   41 - 50   51 - 60   Over 60

16. Tick the appropriate box indicating if you are:

Single   Married or in a stable relationship   Remarried
Widowed   Separated or divorced

17. Tick the appropriate box indicating if you are:

Male   Female

18. Tick the appropriate box indicating if you are:

Sinhalese   Tamil   Muslim   Burgher
Other (Please specify) _____

19. Tick the appropriate box indicating if you are:

Buddhist   Christian   Hindu   Muslim
Other (Please specify) _____

If Christian, what is your denomination? _____

20. Are you the main income earner in your household?

Yes   No   Equal

21. How many children do you have?

None   One   Two   Three   Four or more

22. Tick the most appropriate box(es) indicating your child's/children's present educational, employment, and/or marital status.

Child	Infant	Pre-school	School	Post-school/University	Employed	Married/settled
1						
2						
3						
4						

23. How much time do you spend travelling to your workplace from home (one way)?

Less than 30 mins.   30 - 45 mins.   45 - 60 mins.   1 - 2 hrs.   More than two hrs.

24. What is your highest ACADEMIC qualification?

O Level   A Level   Bachelor   Master   PhD

Other (Please specify) _____

25. What PROFESSIONAL Association qualification(s) (if any) do you have?

(a) _____

(b) _____

(c) _____

26. How long have you worked full time for your present company or organisation?

Less than 1 yr.   1 - 5 yrs.   6 - 10 yrs.   More than 10 yrs.

27. How long have you worked before joining this organisation?

Never   Less than 1 yr.   1 - 5 yrs.   6 - 10 yrs.
More than 10 yrs.

28. In all, how many COMPANIES or ORGANISATIONS have you worked for in your working life?

One   Two   Three to five   Six to ten   More than ten

29. Have you had a break for longer than twelve months from the workforce in Sri Lanka?

Yes	No
	[If 'No' go to Question 31]

How many months was the break? _____ months.

30. Why did you leave the workforce in Sri Lanka to have a break?

studies   childrearing   travel   overseas employment
caring for relatives   unemployment   sickness   not applicable
other (Please specify) _____

31. What is your total monthly salary from your full-time job?

Less than Rs. 10,000
Rs. 10,000 - 20,000
Rs. 20,000 - 30,000
Rs. 30,000 - 40,000
Rs. 40,000 - 50,000
Above Rs. 50,000

32. How many people do you directly or indirectly supervise in your full-time job?

None   1 to 5   6 - 10   11 - 20   More than 20

33. Is your present immediate superior a male or a female ?

Male   Female   Not applicable

34. Are your colleagues at work:

Predominantly female   Balanced between male and female
Predominantly male   I have no colleagues

35. What are the total number of employees in your company/organisation ?

1 - 10   11- 50   51 - 100   101 - 200   201 - 500   501 - 1,000   Over 1,000

36. What percentage of MANAGERS are women in your organisation?

Less than 5%   5 - 10%   11 - 20%   21 - 30%   31 - 40%   41 - 50%

37. What is your job title? _____

38. Through what channel were you recruited into this organisation?

Word of mouth   Recruitment agency
Social or family networks   Advertisements

39. Which of the following best describes your organisation's line of business? (More than one selection allowed)

Agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing	1
Mining and quarrying	2
Manufacturing	3
Electricity, gas and water	4
Construction	5
Wholesale/retail trade, restaurants and hotels	6
Transport, storage and communication	7
Financing, insurance, real estate and business services	8
Community, social and personal services	9

We thank you for completing this questionnaire.

FEEDBACK BOX
Please complete the box below if you wish to be informed of the general results of this survey.

Name: Mr./Dr./Ms./Mrs./Miss.
Address: