

FEMALE VISIONARY LEADERS FOR DEVELOPMENT: A SOCIOLOGICAL READING ON IMPORTANCE VS REALITY OF GENDER, DEVELOPMENT AND STATE UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN SRI LANKA

Lavangi Ranasinghe¹

Visionary leadership is more about having a long-run vision. Sustainable development is a holistic approach to development, including three key aspects of economic, social, and environmental development. The country's state universities provide free-of-charge higher education for selected students based on their Advance Level examination results. The research problem of the study was 'what is the importance of having female visionary leaders in navigating the country's development process?' and main research objective was to 'examine what is the reality of including female scholars of state universities of the country as visionary leaders, within the country's development process'. This research was exploratory, qualitative, field-based research. Purposive nonprobability sample was used, predominantly primary data was gathered in data collection through questionnaires and structured interviews. Discourse analysis was used in analyzing data. Quantitative analysis was conducted where necessary. A one-state university and eight selected ministries of the country were the two samples of the research. Enhancing equal participation and compensation, both aspects of the private and public spheres need to have gender-sensitive lenses. The popular view on leadership as which belongs to the public sphere restricts females' full participation in leadership, in a patriarchal world. Patriarchy has created a mindset that working under women is somewhat inferior. Although a considerable number of females are engaged in labour force of the country, bringing women's visionary leadership into the mainstream is lacking. Theoretically state university curriculums made treating males and females, the other gender groups, equally. There are clear gender patterns in male-female student proportions in different study streams; those are bounded by gendered social constructions and gender-based division of labour. Females are not genetically less visionary. Where the state policies do not promote female visionary leadership to navigate the development process of the country, it is difficult for females to cope with up challenges they face.

Keywords: development, female visionary leadership, gender, patriarchy, state universities

¹ *Department of Sociology, Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo.*
lavangi92.ranasinghe@gmail.com