Female Visionary Leaders for Development: A Sociological Reading on Importance vs Reality of Gender, Development and State University Education in Sri Lanka: A Case Study

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Abstract— Visionary leadership is more about having a long-run vision. Sustainable development is a holistic approach to 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?. 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 an exploratory, qualitative, field-based research. Purposive nonprobability sample was used, collected primary data through questionnaires and structured interviews. Discourse analysis was used in analyzing data. Since this was done by selecting a state university and 8 selected ministries of the country, this is a case study particular to those main research fields. Enhancing equal participation in the private and public spheres need 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 female/s is somewhat inferior. Although a considerable number of females are engaged in labour force of the country, bringing female 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, Gender, State Universities

I. INTRODUCTION

According to the literature review of this research, it is clear that recent most studies have been done regarding female labour in the country's labor force, female leadership despite female visionary leadership, and more on female leadership in the entrepreneurship and corporative world. This is a long-standing issue. Gender asymmetry can be seen in education, training, and professional work, even in developed countries. Sri Lanka shows better rates in gender-related matters compared to other countries of the region. Picking development models which suit the Sri Lankan context would provide more effectiveness and efficiency to achieve sustainable development. The overall idea of development is to make a better life for everyone, expand the freedom of people, and go beyond a narrower understanding of development. The Sri Lankan education system at present consists of state and private sectors in schooling, university education, and vocational training. State university education is totally free of charges for undergraduates after introducing the free education policy to the country. State university education has been making a significant contribution towards national development, ensuring equality in education. However, it has also been experiencing challenges in enhancing its quality relevance to facing global advancements in education. Data collection methodologies need to enhance identifying gender-sensitive issues.

The nature of females' inclusion in different societies varies according to their social, economic, cultural, environmental, and political contexts, even within one region. Any systems which pull out females would not ensure their inclusion and would not take their visionary leadership to the mainstream. The fact of different gender patterns has been taken to attention by many scholars. With the expansion of university education for the masses, especially as a way of inclusion around the globe, which has influenced the universal model of university education, its prime task is considered to improve critical thinking, which would prepare students for graduate professions, as a secondary focus. Enhancing equal participation and compensation, both sectors of the private and public spheres need to have more pragmatic views on the concerns of females. Sustainable development is a holistic approach to development, including three key aspects of economic, social, and environmental development, which is the most concerned development model of the present world. Visionary leadership is somewhat goes beyond leadership.

visionary leadership does have a long-run vision with clarity, and working towards that in a very pragmatic,

strategic way. Although a considerable number of women are engaged in labour force in the country, in most societies bringing female visionary leadership into the mainstream is lacking. Females have better estimations of themselves than men rates women. Envisioning consists of broader scope, including working for a long-term plan with a clear mission, working with different stakeholders and at different levels, which are significant for them to realize and maintain consistency of envisioning. Being visionary go beyond merely being charismatic.

In such a context where the state policy of development of the country are not promoting women visionary leadership to navigate development process of the country, it is difficult for women to cope with up challenges they face. Although Sri Lankan state university education system makes a considerable contribution in including women visionary leaders in the development of the country who could lead the country's development process, practices existing in state universities have few drawbacks. State universities are a cross-section of the country and considered as a place where full of intellectuals. If we see gendered prejudices among such intellectuals in practice, it's obvious to see that in the broader society.

It is not a mandatory role of state university curriculums specifically to make and include women visionary leaders in the development process. Curriculums are different in different study streams, and those have generally made treating males and females, as well as all the other gender groups, equally. Curriculum plus personal choices, personality, values, and attitudes do have a strong impact on including women visionary leaders in the development process.

II. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Problem
What is the importance of having female visionary leaders in navigating the country's development process?

B. Research Questions
1) What is the contribution of the state university curriculum regarding the inclusion of women in the present Sri Lankan development process?
2) What are the social and cultural factors that have penetrated into the Sri Lankan state university education system affecting women's inclusion in the present development process in Sri Lanka?
3) What is the relationship between the state university education system and creating female visionary leaders at the decision-making levels?

C. Main Research Objective

Examine what is the reality of including female scholars of state universities of the country as visionary leaders, within the country's development process.

Sub Research Objectives

1) Critically understand orientation of development agenda in present Sri Lankan development discourse.
2) To examine the contribution of women in the state university education system of Sri Lanka as visionary leaders in the process of development.
3) Examine the nature of gender aspects which effects the inclusion of women in the process of development with in present Sri Lankan state university education system.

D. Research Field
Primary data has been selected from below mentioned faculties and campuses of the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka as below and from the government institutions selected through secondary data.

- Faculty of Arts.
- Faculty of Science.
- Faculty of Technology.
- Faculty of Law.
- Faculty of Education.
- Faculty of Management and Finance.
- Faculty of Nursing.
- Sri Palee Campus.
- University of Colombo School of Computing.

The University of Colombo is considered as a leading university within the country's state university education system because of its knowledge production and higher number of academics and scholars. This research is a case study which has been collected primary data from above mentioned faculties of the University of Colombo and ministried below has mentioned.

Ministries where primary data collected were as below,

- Ministry of Social Services.
- Ministry of Higher Education.
- Ministry of National Policies & Economic Affairs.
- Ministry of Public Administration & Management.
- Ministry of Health.
- Ministry of Agriculture.
- Ministry of Labor.
- Ministry of Environment.

E. Research Sample
There were two samples in this research. The first research sample was the academic staff of the University of Colombo, and the second research sample was administration-level positions of 8 selected government

ministries. Considering the size of each study population, in order to protect the generalization of findings and reliability, a minimum of 10% from each research population was included within the sample. Further, by using purposive sampling under a non-probability sample, obtaining specific details from specific persons who have specialized knowledge regarding the research problem was expected. Ensured gender balance in the sample. To protect and enhance generalization of findings and the reliability of data, sampling with replacement has been used. Conducted a total number of 87 structured interviews and collected primary data from 132 questionaries in total.

III. Data Collection

This research was an exploratory research. As this study is a qualitative research, qualitative data collection methods were used. However, the questionnaire survey method was used to collect basic demographic and main statistical details. Structured interviews were done as a qualitative data-collecting method. Therefore, triangulation has been done. There were 3 stages of data collection as below,

Stage1– Distributing questionnaires among administration staff of the said faculties and campuses of the University of Colombo and selected government institutions.

Stage 2 – Using the data gathered in stage 1 by questionnaires, the main issues and problems were recognized. Those main issues and problems were discussed further through structured interviews.

Stage 3 – The main issues and problems recognized by stages 1 and 2 of data collection were discussed with the key informants to have a much deeper understanding.

Statistical reports, books, reports, etc., on state university education, gender and development were used as secondary data in data analysis.

IV. Data Analysis

Mainly qualitative data analysis methodology has been used. Discourse analysis was used as the main qualitative analysis method. Using the discourse analysis method, it has critically examined and discussed the country's current development and higher educational discourse, combined with gender aspects that can be seen in the country. Further, society's general discourse and policy level discourse about gender and education were discussed.

Ethical considerations towards respondents, data, and institutions were protected. Research was conducted only with the permission of the deans of each faculty, without disturbing the normal function of university routines. Participation in the research was only with respondents'

voluntary consent and highly protected privacy and identity of the data.

V. Methodology

Vision plays a major role in Leadership. A visionary leader has to have excellent strategic analysis and rigorous implementation plans to make their plans a success. A research paper by Ibarra and Obodar (2009) explains the visionary Leadership of females and its importance in relation to the business environment. They have mainly discussed why females are considered visionaries or why are women not considered visionaries (Ibarra and Obodaru, 2009: 56-57). There are plenty of discussions, debates, policies, etc., on improving or facilitating female's labour force participation while bringing female's visionary leadership to the mainstream in reality is still lacking. In most instances, female's visionary Leadership has been discussed in relation to the business or corporate world, while discussing female's leadership in relation to the development process is lacking. Ibarra and Obodaru (2009) evaluated 10 dimensions of leadership as below,

1. Emotional intelligence.
2. Empowering.
3. Energizing.
4. Envisioning.
5. Global mindset.
6. Organizational designing and aligning.
7. Outside orientation.
8. Rewarding and feedback.
9. Team building.
10. Tenacity.

According to the said research, literature on gender and leadership suggest, female executives are less highly rated than their male counterparts; however, according to findings of the research, they have found that female business executives were rated higher than their male peers. They considered how females scored themselves, and that was higher than how their male counterparts rated themselves regarding the first four dimensions from the above 10 and the same regarding the other 6 dimensions. Therefore, as evidence shows through the research, women have a better estimation of their own abilities compared to their male peers. Again, they had insights into how peer groups score females in this regard (leadership dimensions). Here, men gave women a higher score than their fellow men regarding the first 07 leadership dimensions. However, female respondents have responded by positioning females on edge on eight. As one major point, while women hold higher rates compared to their male peers in most of the 10 leadership dimensions, women scored much lower on 'envisioning'" (Ibarra & Obodaru, 2009: 58-59). "Envisioning" was defined here as "articulating a compelling vision, mission, and strategy that

incorporates a multicultural and diverse perspective and connect employees, shareholders, suppliers, and customers on a global scale" (Ibarra & Obodaru, 2009: 58-59).

Having a compelling vision means having a long-term plan and a mission which means a way how the vision will be implemented, with a pluralistic and broad point of view. Working together with different stakeholders and different levels is important in realizing and ensuring consistency of envisioning. "Vision" consists of the ability to frame practices, generate new ideas and strategies, and communicate possibilities for others in an inspiring way. Visionary Leadership goes beyond just being charismatic, and there would be no leadership without a vision, as vision is fundamental to being a better leader. 'Vision' and 'Leadership' have an intimate relationship. 'Envisioning' is more about being forward-looking, having the possibility to share a view of the future (Ibarra & Obodaru, 2009: 59)."Also, this research has described "why females fail to impress with their vision". To have deeper insights into this, they considered the below key questions which are "Are female leaders really less visionary than men?"

- "Is it just a matter of perception?"
- (Ibarra & Obodaru, 2009: 59)
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According to the data gathered through female executives, this research has provided 3 explanations in this regard.

1. "Females are visionary but in a different way."
2. "Females hesitate to go out on a limb."
3. "Females do not put much stock in vision."
   (Ibarra and Obodaru, 2009: 59).

Ibarra and Obodaru (2009: 59–60) further explain the above factors below,

1. "Females are visionary but in a different way."

As responded by the females who participated in that research, women do not lack vision, but they formulate their vision in a more collaborative way than males. They emphasized how it helps to seek solutions and maintain its own structures and innovativeness. Here they considered, "who says females are not visionaries?". According to the findings of said research, in most instances, female peers rate other female peers as highly envisioned. However, male peers and female superiors are the ones who say females are visionaries (Ibarra & Obodaru, 2009: 59). There is an attitude in society that people cannot be visionary unless they are highly visible, and it has a negative impact on female visionary leadership.

2. "Females hesitate to go out on a limb."

Females need not be reluctant to take credit for having a shared vision. Here it has been highlighted the need to improve female's confidence to speak and back up what they say with a strong base of facts.

3. "Females do not put much stock in vision."

According to data gathered from female managers of said research, females do not give importance to "vision"; some say that females give more consideration to practical things and females have a sound sense of human dimensions. While men were busy promoting themselves, females were getting on with their work behind the scenes, as found in this research. This reflects how female's image of visionary leadership goes back and is hidden. Female's image is hidden by men's efforts to maintain and promote themselves. In most instances, people are continuing how they are showing strength and effectiveness in handling their jobs. Outspoken actions play a significant role in this. However, the issue is the risk of erasing females, or female's performances are hidden because of this. Because of this, a man who emerged by backing females will appear as the leader instead of the shadow female who backed this man appear as the leader.

It is important to study the question whether females lack respect for being visionaries or are females not visionaries at all. Regardless of the sector they are involved in, it is important for females as they must overcome their natural distrust of "being a visionary" to reach the top. Further, females need to be prepared to promote their contribution as visionaries. Females face greater challenges in expressing their vision, although they already have the characteristics of being visionary leaders.

"Gender mainstreaming" is an important concept to address issues regarding the inclusion of visionary female leaders in the development process of a country. This concept has evolved into a broader context over time and now generally refers to a comprehensive strategy that involves female-oriented programs and gender issues integrating programs which is a factor that needs to be included throughout the program cycle of those programs (Gunawardena & Jayaweera, 2008: 01). Female's equality is a right, and it is included and emphasized in Millennium Development Goals as one main goal to be achieved.

Gender mainstreaming is a significant factor in achieving gender equality. According to the Council of Europe (1999) (Council of Europe, 1999 cited in Gunawardena and Jayaweera, 2008: 02), organization, improvement, development, and evaluation of the policy process are included in the definition of gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming is fundamental in addressing gender issues, and it is a necessary strategy to prevent the marginalization of female's needs and address inequality which is a result of unequal power relations existing between men and

females within the society and institutions involved in the development process of a country. Therefore, gender mainstreaming is a "transformative" strategy (Kabeer and Sabrahmanian, 1996, cited in Gunawardena and Jayaweera, 2008: 02). Incorporating a gender perspective in policy development, research, advocacy, dialogue, and legislation is central to achieving gender equality (Gunawardena & Jayaweera, 2008: 02).

Goal 3 of the Millennium Development Goals focuses on promoting gender equality and empowering females. And Goal 4 of the Millennium Development Goals focus on eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education (Gunawardena & Jayaweera, 2008: 08) SDG 5 focuses on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.

A research paper by Wickramasinghe (2012) has considered combining theoretical and practical aspects of the discussion on gender in university structures. It has considered female's participation, representation, training, encouragement, and empowerment of individual females in university structures. Further, it considered the improvement of female governance structures and power positions in universities. The theoretical approach to gender has considered gender roles, responsibilities, needs, issues, relations, and politics of gender. Also, it has explained institutional structures, practices, and cultures. It is also important to think of the fact that gender is not only about females, and it also needs to consider men's issues as well. Earlier consideration of gender was focused only on females. However, nowadays, broadened debates on gender consider both men and women (Wickramasinghe, 2012: 13).

Personal focus on gender issues has shifted beyond personal and given legitimacy to the consideration of issues such as social justice, institutional responsibility, diversity, ethical work practices, social relevance, academic excellence, organizational efficiency, international and national legal standards, etc. (Wickramasinghe, 2012: 14). There are a few arguments that try to justify socially constructed gender-related prejudices such as,

- Cultural argument.
- History argument.
- Common sense argument.
- Nature argument.

Wickramasinghe (2012: 22) explain those as below.

The cultural argument can be seen mostly in Commonwealth countries. There is a perception that is seeing gender equity and equality as western concepts that hinders their own cultural values. They see gender equity and equality as a concept that damages the "purity" of local women as well as a 'western' concept that came through globalization. According to the nature argument, roles, responsibilities, characteristics, and behaviors of women and men are considered as something created by nature. Therefore, gender equity and equality are seen as unnatural or something against nature. The history argument on gender considers the status and roles of men and women as historically assigned factors. Therefore, those who believe this argument consider that there is no necessity to change these states of affairs. According to the commonsense argument on gender, men are traditionally considered breadwinners of a family, and because of that, men have to work in the public sphere in workplaces, and women have to take care of domestic work, which is considered the private sphere. One main factor connected to this is females are bound with prejudices connected to their pregnancy and childcare experience. There is a perception coming from the commonsense argument that pregnancy and childbirth would make disruptions for the institutions where females are employed. In the context that females have achieved things in the public sphere, these arguments can be noticed as barriers and factors that hinder gender equity and gender equality. Gender equity and equality are two main concepts discussed in gender mainstreaming. Through said arguments, in most instances, they see concepts of gender equity and equality as something against men and family. Also, some females tend to claim that their work life or careers are not influenced by these discriminations, while some tend to see it as an influence. Most importantly, relevant stakeholders need to be well-prepared to address and encounter these issues.

According to the nature argument on gender, sexual differences between females and males, as well as LGBTQI[1] population, are created by nature. Females' roles in pregnancy and childbirth are considered biological roles for her within the family. In contrast, according to the sociological argument on gender, gender differences are created socially and culturally, these have to be vigorously legally recognized in workplaces, and it has to strengthen the fact that both men and women can nurture a family and share parental responsibilities within a family.

Wickramasinghe (2012) identified significant factors connected to gender mainstreaming in the Sri Lankan university context. These prejudices and factors need to be taken seriously when addressing issues that are connected to the inclusion of women as visionary leaders in the development process of the country. In the present society, men's and women's self-definition is not merely

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[1] LGBTQI- Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Trangender, Queer people.

defined by nature. Here there are a few interesting factors to consider as below (Wickramasinghe, 2012: 23).

- Traditional patterns of sex are influenced by new scientific interventions.
- From one point of view, concepts of nature and biology are socially constructed, as the "concept of science" is socially constructed.

When considering gender commonalities and differences, those are not scientific and are subject to changes depending on time, geographical location, crisis situations, age, etc. (Wickramasinghe, 2012: 23). Organizations also can be gendered, depending on several factors such as who holds positional power, agenda-setting power, access to resources, influential networks, hidden powers, and valued skills, etc. (Module on Academic Leadership in the ACU[2] series cited in Wickramasinghe, 2012: 27).

Gender division of labour has become a crucial factor in organizations. According to this concept, in most instances, men are positioned in productive work, which will generate income, while women are positioned in unpaid reproductive work, which is mostly involved in maintaining a household or family (Wickramasinghe, 2012: 27). Here we can see a clear demarcation between social and public spheres, which is based on gender. Females are mostly positioned in the private sphere. Males have power and participation in both private and public spheres. Sometimes females have no power at all, even in their own private sphere.

Gender equality is referred to giving equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities to men and women as well as girls and boys. It does not claim females and males should be the same. However, it emphasizes that rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for both males and females (Wickramasinghe, 2012, p.28). Gender equity refers to specific interests, needs, and priorities of males as well as females. According to this, males and females have different needs and priorities, and those depend on their biological sex as well as gendered life experience. Therefore, females and males prioritize different beliefs and different issues. The concept of gender equity and equality emphasizes the need to consider the similarities and differences of both males and females, which is important in achieving gender justice. Gender identification includes consideration of gender roles and responsibilities in the family as well as at the workplace and cultural practices at the national and international levels. These include expectations of dresses, appearances, behaviors, assumptions on intellectual and emotional characteristics, sexual orientations, needs, and

preferences of females and males (Wickramasinghe, 2012, p.28).

According to primary data of the research, when considering the fact that whether state universities in Sri Lanka have sufficiently included or not included femalegraduates who passed out from those universities within the development process of the country as visionary leaders, half (50%) of the respondents think that it is "yes", while the other half (50%) of them think it is "no". The majority (87.5%) say that it is it is because of the practices, and a considerable number of them think that it is because of attitudes (62.5%) and values (20%). They further responded as below,

"Women are considered to be less powerful and always get discriminated against" (Field Data, 2021-2022).
"Women can do administrative jobs, and also there are no limits to go do a job with their knowledge, it depends" (Field Data, 2021-2022).

"State university agenda has not excluded women" (Field Data, 2021-2022).

According to the data collected through the research, the power relations between females and males do have a significant negative impact on females' visionary leadership. In most instances, it positions females in less powerful positions while males are positioned in more powerful leadership roles. In contrast to that, according to the point of view of some respondents, females have no restrictions to do a job or hold any roles which are suitable for their knowledge, and the state university agenda does not exclude females. Although Sri Lanka does have a well-balanced university system, it needs to eliminate minor drawbacks.

Considering on reasons why present Sri Lankan state universities have insufficient inclusion of female graduates as visionary leaders in the development process of the country, the below responses are notable.

"Women are subjected to harassment and discrimination always" (Field Data, 2021-2022).

"State university agenda is same for both males and females. According to our country's cultural background, it makes women homebound. It should be changed" (Field Data, 2021-2022).

Harassment and discrimination against females hinder females' visionary leadership. Although state universities have no restrictions or barriers against females in theory, in practice, the cultural and social background of the country

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[2] ACU- Health and Fitness Education, Research, Career Support

restricts females only to be in the privet sphere in most instances.

"I don't see any... I mean any such female graduate as visionary leaders who developed the country or who can contribute to the development process of the country. For example, there are some female academics inside universities; maybe they are only limited to their own university or maybe for some 2-3 universities" (Field Data, 2021-2022).

Although there are female graduates passed from state universities in the country who have the capacity and potential to be visionary leaders, most of them have not come to the public; their inclusion is restricted by themselves or by other factors.

"If you go to India, you can see female leaders. I mean, from the artistic level or from the movement level, there are leaders. But in Sri Lanka, there are women'sorganizations, but less women leaders. See women's organizations…. there are no women leaders from universities; they are just general women. We have not seen…. I have seen very few women in general forums which talk about visions of the country" (Field Data, 2021-2022).

In Sri Lanka, females' active participation in movements is less. Even though there are female visionary leaders, there are only a few who talk about the visions of the country.
"See, when you think of women who are very promising and studying in better streams, it is only a very few are from state universities in Sri Lanka. Some of them graduated from foreign countries or some other private universities in Sri Lanka but not from state universities. There is something missing; it may be data sometimes. There may be women who actually contribute to the development process of the country from the state universities. But they are not highlighted, or they are missing. It can be that the data is missing, or they are maybe working under some other big shots…………….

Therefore, I think that it is sometimes not pointed out or statistically not visible to us, whether they are contributing to the development or not" (Field Data, 2021-2022).

In most instances, highlighted women visionaries in the country are mostly graduates from private universities or foreign universities. From another point of view, there are women visionary leaders who graduated from state universities; however, they have not been highlighted, or data about their contribution is missing.

"Their capacities, their creativity, and everything are lost when they started working as development officers.

Because they just have to go and visit homes and distribute plants and all. Very few only can come out from those very rigid criteria" (Field Data, 2021-2022).
Some positions which state university graduates are assigned in general do not facilitate them to enhance their capacities.

"In this faculty, the majority are obviously female. Of course, in other faculties, you have substantial numbers of women. But there are some differences. When it comes to medicine, a large proportion of females do that. So, the point is that women tend to be concentrated more in the liberal arts than in science" (Field Data, 2021-2022).
Different disciplines in state universities show different patterns of female and male student ratios.

"Mostly the leadership is on hands of men. That may be partly due to various constraints that they have. Because we still have those social and cultural conditions in the country. That prevents or discourages female graduates whenever they take such a position. That may be because of the long-standing division between public and private domains in Sri Lanka…..So, the point is this, when you have this divide between the public and private, there is a greater tendency of women to be in the private domain………And you know, leadership positions are normally not at home; leadership positions are in the public domain……….There are exceptions to those sometimes, where there are women taking up leadership positions………...and such positions are being held by women, so there are various factors that contribute to this particular situation" (Field Data, 2021-2022).

Most of the time, there is a general assumption that males are the ones who are fit to be leaders, largely due to cultural beliefs. The gendered social constructions of the public and private spheres have greater impacts on this. Females are mostly treated as the ones who have to be at home, while males have to be in the privet sphere. Further, gendered constructions of roles and statuses intensify this division which has been making negative impacts mostly on females. Division of the private and public sphere and gendered division of labour are the main reasons behind these patterns.

"I think in the area of women's activism, there again I see a difference. Students who are working connected to conventional political parties, I think there are much fewer females involved, people who do politics in universities, those who belong to mainstream political parties, they are much less likely to adopt women" (Field Data, 2021-2022).

Most of the time, leaders of the student unions of the research field were held by male students. Even in the

faculties which have majority of female students, this pattern could be seen. They have included very few female members to the union council, but in the recent past, there were no female students who held the higher positions in majority of state university student unions. This pattern can be seen even in the other students' societies in the university. Most of the time, female students are the ones who nominate those male students for leadership positions in those student societies. According to field data, the major factor that respondents highlighted here is female students are mostly considered as a group who cannot stay in public spaces at night and have traveling issues alone, and male students are stronger at facing challenges (for example –participating in protests, etc.). Here it is clear how the gendered concept of the public and private spheres impacts female leadership. This reflects the larger society as the university has students from around the country, with many subcultures and so on. It is a cross-section of the larger society. Even in such a diverse place with a spectrum of ideologies, we can see the gendered division of the public and private spheres, which hinders female inclusion.

"I think we need to really revisit two things. We have to ask what do you want? And what kind of opportunities we want to create for women, encouraging them going to leadership positions?" (Field Data, 2021-2022).

"Our political culture is a reflection of male domination. You know, sometimes it is violent, sometimes very much harsh. There is a particular kind of personality that fits into these politics. For instance, if you take leadership positions in administration, women are very few. You have a vast majority of men. You know….it reflects the social, cultural, political, and economic process of the country. So, there is a kind of natural selection; women have other responsibilities too. And those responsibilities constrain them from getting and playing leadership roles" (Field Data, 2021-2022).

The political culture of the country is dominated by the patriarchy, and it has worsened by the fact that women have internalized those and generalized these prejudices by their own selves. Femininity and masculinity have been defined by society through the concept of gender, and all the rest are bounded by that in society in most instances.
"So, they have gender roles. So, I think gender roles are still quite rigid in the country. You can work, but you know working is something different from holding a leadership position. Because leadership positions are far more demanding than occupying a job. I think we really need to have a public discussion on this. For that, some new thinking can be injected into the situation that we are in today. I think universities can play a role in that, not only through curriculum but through various courses as

well. Also, playing an advocacy role within the university system itself is important. Various stakeholders, such as students also have to come to an understanding" (Field Data, 2021-2022).

Attitudinal change with an ideological base need to have in order to change prejudices experienced by females in becoming visionary leaders. State universities have the potential to act as an agent in initiating and strengthening this process. As same as the state university academics, state university scholars also have to work collaboratively to change challenges faced by female scholars, graduates and accelerate more females are becoming visionary leaders who navigate the development process of the country.

"Actually, the leadership…. I think we cannot refuse that the university contributes to producing visionary leaders. University has a considerable contribution to producing visionary leaders. Because most of the leading women in the administrative leadership positions of the country are state university productions. But I do not think we contribute more to that. Because we produce visionary leaders, it is an optional thing in a university system. If you want to be a visionary leader or if I have an inborn potential, then I can develop that potential or whatever through this system because the system supports you. But the thing is, if somebody cannot recognize their potential or inborn talent to be a visionary leader, then we cannot get the expected outcome from the system" (Field Data, 2021-2022).

Making a visionary leader or enhancing the visionary leadership of female graduates is not a mandatory role of state universities. However, in general, state universities of the country are dedicated to strengthening the competencies of their graduates, which ultimately positively cater to the development process of the country. From another point of view, this is also debatable.

"We have to redefine our curriculum and we have to introduce new aspects to our curriculums, and we should have much more preparations to accommodate gender roles. Departments should have a concern about the gender roles and the stance on the gender" (Field Data, 2021-2022).

State university scholars need to have a clear understanding of the vision and mission of state universities and work towards making that a reality. Sometimes state university curriculums are not well aligned with the demand of the existing systems. Some argue that state universities need to go beyond merely giving thorough academic training. University

curriculums needed to have more insights into gender sensitivity.

"Of course, there are also many academic researches coming from women, and they are doing well. I do not see any difference, any discrimination. So, I believe that now, which represents the discipline that I belong to is generally ok" (Field Data, 2021-2022).

In some instances, the inclusion of female visionary leadership is a matter of the female's own choice. However, most significantly engagement of females in development process of the country is being increased with increasing rates of female higher education. According to the point of view of some respondents, state universities of the country have been making a positive impact by including female visionary leaders who could lead the development process of the country in various ways.

As explained by Greenfield (1986) (Greenfield, 1986 cited in Manasse, 1985: 151), personal and organizational values are significant in visionary Leadership and its crucial in deciding alternative actions (Manasse, 1985: 151). Personal or personalized professional values, personal images of possibilities, and personal assessments of a situation matter in visionary leadership. Visionary leadership is not successful without personal vision and personal commitments, and ultimately it impacts creating organizational excellence. It is important to understand the distinction between managers and leaders. According to Bennis and Nanus (1985) (Bennis and Nanus, 1985: 21 cited in Manasse, 1895: 152), "managers do things right; leaders do the 'right thing'"; therefore, a visionary need to have capacity and capability of making right decisions (Manasse, 1895:152).

"Some of the departments have 90%-80% women. The student population has changed over time when you compare it with the last 15-20 years. So, it has taken a couple of decades. I think now we are in a situation where many departments have at least 50% women. Some departments have, of course, more than 50%" (Field Data, 2021-2022).

According to prospectors, female life expectancy will be higher than males by upcoming years in Sri Lanka. Since the majority of the present state university sector of the country consists of female undergraduates, there is great potential to include female visionary leaders in the development process of the country. This has been further strengthened by increasing rates of females' engagement in many courses of study in state universities.

VI. CONCLUSION

Sri Lanka shows larger gender gaps in labour force participation in world rankings, although females are nearly half of the population of the country. Although a considerable number of females are engaged in labour force in the country, in most instances bringing female visionary leadership into the mainstream is lacking. Labour force participation in the country contrasts with gender distribution patterns of the state university education system, country's state universities are a cross-section of its society. To sort out future issues of the country, including females in the development process of the country as visionary leaders is much needed. There has to be a balanced approach, integrating interdisciplinary approaches along with life skills, and eliminate gender prejudices. Micro and macro adjustments have to be taken into to consideration to eliminate gendered prejudices, as those prejudices limit females' inclusion as visionary leaders in the development process of the country. Visionary leadership somewhat goes beyond leadership.Visionary leadership does have a long-run vision with clarity, and working towards that in a very pragmatic, strategic way. Females are not genetically less visionary than men. However, in some instances, even females have internalized gendered prejudices against their own selves as somewhat normal. On the other hand, that choice is sometimes influenced by socially constructed gendered prejudices. Patriarchy and gender division of labour have clear negative roots on that. In a context where the state policy of development of the country are not promoting women visionary leadership to navigate development process of the country, it is difficult for women to cope with up challenges they face.

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