CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION
The world of today is far different from what it used to be, just a few decades ago. Our world economies are becoming interdependent and interlinked as never before. Even with all the weakness and instability that mark the socio-political scenario in our country, low level of efficiency, and productivity, bedevil our economic arena, and performance in core areas. But India is now trying to pull its weight to be in step with the major economies of all developing and developed countries.

The government’s private-sector-friendly policies have triggered a new era in Indian Industry. The academic background of Top Leadership has helped all policy formulation stages at Delhi administration and has accelerated the growth of Indian economy.

Our organisations are waking up to its competitive disadvantage with the opening up of markets. As globalisation becomes a fact of life in the business world, Indian management will have to change its mindset to face challenges from multinationals rather than reformulate outdated ideologies. Indian industry will have to take care of obsolescence of its management and technology, and also take effective steps to rewrite old business equations. Revamping the Indian corporate world to global standard is not an easy task. But our executives will need to fulfill this mission in the coming years.

Savitha (2000) has analysed the performance management system in India. In terms of resources, we are as good as the best in the world or even better. The
Indian industry is utilising only a part of available human resources. The key reason seems to be that most of Indian organisations are unable to tap this potential and translate it into organisational performance. In spite of the increasing rate of non-utilisation of highly educated professionals in India, organisations around the globe prefer such talents from India. Management policy makers may show inefficiency in designing appropriate performance-generating techniques to derive maximum results. Our organisations are underestimating the capabilities of executives or unable to fully understand its worth.

Executives are responsible for the successful performance of an organisation. Executive performance has paramount importance due to pivotal role in creating success in organisations. The impact of executive performance may produce corresponding changes in the performance of the workforce, even the organisation's own survival. Decision-making is one of the key functions of an executive. An executive need to take decisions concerning the day to day functioning of his organisation, utilisation of resources and strategy formulation for designing the organisation's future performance.

Searching the factors influencing executive performance is a never-ending task. Newer and newer dimensions of executive performance are being explored. An executive's value system, personality correlates, mindset, social well being and a whole host of other factors are thought to influence the quality of the decisions and in turn, the performance of the executive.
In order to portrait executive performance on a broader frame, an analysis of human element behind is inevitable. It is only reasonable to start our study with the birth of human beings, and possibilities of the impact of various inborn and other factors, on executive performance.

What is clear through the study of biology is that within this cosmic frame, within this order of time and space and material being, we have been formed and fashioned by the forces of the earth. And this is the root meaning of the word human—derived from the Latin for "earth" or "soil": we are "creatures of the earth.

Human beings differ among themselves in terms of very many facets and dimensions. They differ in terms of physical, psychological, social and cultural facets of their existence. Of all the factors that account for differences among individuals, gender may be taken to be a very powerful one that colours one's perspectives and practices.

According to Stoller (1968) sex is biological; gender is psychological, and therefore cultural. Gender is a term that has psychological or cultural rather than biological connotations. If the proper terms for sex are male and female, the corresponding terms for gender are masculine and feminine; these letters may be quite independent of (biological) sex.

The transformation of male-female difference at the time of birth to masculine-feminine categorisation at adulthood, is due to the influence of diverse elements
like genitile, social and cultural factors. There is a growing support to the view that gender is a factor capable of influencing the performance of executives (Sargent, 1983).

Occupational segregation by sex occurs everywhere, causing labor market rigidity and economic inefficiency, wasting human resources, preventing change, disadvantaging women and perpetuating gender inequalities (Richard Anker, 2001). The interaction of biological and social factors on human beings may be partly instrumental in the development of gender identity.

The mismatch between male and female executive participation is prevalent in all countries including India. This disparity between executive participation of males and females is high at the upper end of the organisational hierarchy (Susan Vinnicombe–1997). The representation of women in managerial and professional positions has increased from 32% in 1983 to almost 50% in 2000 (Barr, 1996; Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2001). In 2002, women comprised 15.7% percent of all corporate officers in the Fortune 500, up from 8.7% in 1996 (Catalyst, 2002). Indian situation is entirely different from the global scenario. As per 2001 census reports, only 22.7% of females are employed against 51.7% of males. The corresponding figures in Kerala are 15.3% and 50.4% respectively. The male–female break up of executive participation is much less than this. In India females are clustered in clerical jobs, teaching, nursing, etc.

Socio cultural factors are instrumental in creating changes in sex-wise executive representation. Executive career prospects for women are significantly lower in
India than to men (Sangamithra, 1999). According to Webb (1991), stereotyped notion regarding women, for example, that they lack in abilities and personality traits required from managers, has contributed to lower the representation of women executives worldwide.

Schein (1973) and Vinmicomb (1997) have narrated reasons for the sex-wise inequality in executive positions biased towards males and females respectively. Schein (1973) has detected positive correlation between male traits and managerial success whereas women were rated deficient in these traits. Susan Vinnicomb contradicted the findings of Schein and argued that female managers possess all the traits necessary for the effective performance of executive tasks. She argued that increased female executive participation is essential for managerial success. No researcher has established any conclusive reason for gender related differences in performance. In most of the studies where gender is the prime concern, emphasis was on the discrimination of females. Dominance of female researchers may be a reason for the bias towards female side. Due to the overemphasis of sex based disparity, dimensions of managerial performance were ignored or not explored in researches.

If sex is considered a determining parameter in the managerial recruitments or promotions, it may reduce the weightage to real performance-related factors. The low weightage to factors deriving managerial performance may produce adverse impact on overall performance level of executives and in turn the organisational success. Sandra Bem (1974) has unveiled the concept of
androgyny and argued that beyond traditional sex differences, masculine and feminine orientations can occur in males and females.

Traditionally, gender role socialisation is thought to lead men and women to distinctly different interpersonal orientations and priorities that may influence behavior. Women are usually expected to assume the role of the caring nurturer focused on interpersonal relationships while independence, individualism, instrumental behaviors, and self-advancement are valued in men (Chodorow, 1989; Gilligan, 1982). Bem (1987) has defined the concepts of masculinity and femininity based on these societal conceptualizations of gender role.

In a country like India, with its executive work force, it is high time to identify a model for the effective utilisation of this potential. The lack of balance between male and female executive participation due to various reasons may result in positive or negative bias toward executives belonging to the two categories. If sex is not a determining factor in analysing managerial capabilities of individuals, this research posits that Gender-role Orientation may be a more valid parameter. Research literature is inadequate in this domain particularly in India.

The prime task of an executive is nothing but attainment of the organisational objectives through effective utilisation of resources. In order to materialise this goal, executives need to communicate the organisation’s vision blended with his or her ideas to subordinates, colleagues and outsiders. Apart from the theoretical knowledge acquired from education, executives’ ability to communicate appropriately can influence the executives’ success in realising organisational
objectives. Communication Styles consciously developed and utilised by executives can determine their persuasiveness while dealing with subordinates and others and hence can be deemed to be an important variable in explaining Executive Performance.

This study is an attempt to analyse Gender-role Orientations and Communication Styles of executives with a view to bring out the effect of these two sociocultural variables on the occupational performance of executives. It is also in the interest of the present study to explain the influence of biosocial characteristics of executives on their Gender-role Orientation.