CHAPTER 3

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
Chapter two presented a broad view of the literature on biosocial profile, Gender-role Orientation, Communication Style and executive performance. In order to extract a research path, a clear research model based on the located theoretical findings is essential. This chapter presents a framework connecting the three independent variables such as biosocial profile, Communication Style, Gender-role Orientation and the dependent variable executive performance.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

One of the major characteristics of human society is occupational sex segregation. The division of labor along sex lines has been the most minuscule form of differentiation in almost all societies. Women constitute more than half of the world’s population, yet there is considerable difference between male and female labor-force participation.

In the case of managerial occupations, male-female difference is very high. Gender differences appear more deeply embedded in Asian countries than in western countries. As far as India is concerned, there is a wide gap between the executive participation by men and women.

In the Indian scenario, prevalence of caste system (Bhatnagar and Nair, 1988) in work organisations which consider male and female managers as two separate classes are based on the centrality and superiority of men. Occupational segregation by sex occurs everywhere, causing labor market rigidity and economic inefficiency, waste human resources, preventions of change, then disadvantaging women and perpetuating gender inequalities. Findings of Richard
Anker (2001) indicate that occupational segregation by sex without any factual evidence is one of the reasons for labor market rigidity, economic inefficiency and wastage of human resources.

Policy makers and researchers around the globe have been in the processes of developing innovative ideas for maximum utilisation of available resources, including human resources. Minute defects in the utilisation of human resources are obstacles towards progress of a nation. In order to attain the objective of maximizing the utilisation of human resources, newer and newer dimensions of executive performance need to be explored.

According to Sangamitra (1999), the stereotypical perspectives of women's traits are inferior, hence unsuitable for leadership, restricts women's entry to executive positions. The cultural constraints on women's access to managerial positions can be traced to deep-rooted images of traditional women's roles.

Susan (1997) detected significant difference between males and females in terms of executive characteristics. Females are equally competent in performing managerial tasks. As per her findings, executive talent deficiency is not the reason for the female's lower level of executive participation. She found that elimination of females from higher level occupations due to biased decisions by males dominated top management teams. Sargent (1983) found that the proper blending of masculine and feminine polarities (Androgynous management) is essential for effective functioning of executive tasks. The study is rooted in the belief that performance of our organisations can be revamped, if the performance
level of the executive crew controlling cockpits of organisations is superior to what we have today.

Earlier studies on management and gender have not differentiated effective performance of executive functions by males and females. No researcher has clearly proved that male executives are superior or female executives are inferior, as far as managerial performance is concerned.

Bem (1974) argued that gender roles and related factors influence human behavior due to differences in Gender-role Orientation. Sargent's (1981) study was a pioneering effort in connecting androgynous Gender-role Orientation and managerial roles. The present study is intended to analyze executive performance with respect to Gender-role Orientations of executives.

The study purports to sharpen the methods to improve executive performance by increasing the potential of executives. Unlike in several other studies, the central theme of the study is to figure out a method to minimise the possibilities of wastage of some strata of individuals due to gender related segregations. The exaggerated importance given to variable biological sex in other studies is eliminated here.

Our gender roles affect almost every aspect of our lives. If a man cries at times, is he then less masculine? If a woman tries to assert herself, is she then less feminine? There are distinct roles for men and women in most cultures. However, these roles vary from culture to culture. Societal categorisation of male and
female roles is called stereotypes. The traits in these stereotypes fall into two separate groups. The first expresses competence and independence, while the second focuses on warmth and expressiveness. Men are seen as having competence traits, while women are seen as more expressive. Competency (masculine) traits are valued more in almost all societies. In contrast, expressive (feminine) traits are viewed negatively.

In order to analyse Gender-role Orientation in our culture, the biosocial dimension of Gender-role Orientation need to be explored. According to Stoller (1968) sex is biological, gender psychological, therefore it is cultural. Gender-role Orientation in one culture may not be like what it is in another culture. The term Gender-role Orientation itself is coined with a socio cultural element. Bem (1981), Deaux & Major (1987) and Spence (1984) have mentioned about the biological and psychological determinants that determine Gender-role Orientation. The possibilities of relationship between biosocial variables and Gender-role Orientation are postulated in hypothesis 1 (H1).

Culture is also defined as an enduring pattern of thought, value and behavior that characterize a given group of people (Morreale, Spitzberg and Barse cited in Samovar and Porter, 2001). However, Morreale, Spitzberg and Barse (2001) had come out with their own definition of culture, it is more specific. To them, culture consists of the beliefs of people, their attitudes about the world, spirituality, sense of status and hierarchy, their use of time, physical space and relationship of people to one another. Zaharna (1996) found that difference in individual's Communication Style is due to their perspective on the roles of language and the
way it designs a message. Diana (1984) found relationship between racial, regional, ethnic, cultural, religious and age related factors influence communication. Montgomery and Norton (1981) stated that human beings perceive others in different ways and in turn this leads to variations in communication between individuals.

Studies of Zaharna, Diana, and Montgomery, leads to the framing relationship between Biosocial profile and Communication Style (H2).

Susan (1997) has narrated the relationship between family setting, parental background and socio cultural elements on Gender-role Orientation. Eagly (1991) coined socio-cultural factors with Gender-role Orientation and highlighted the relationship between Gender-role Orientation and behavior of individuals. When talking about culture, one might think about certain rules, customs, norms and lifestyle of a society, which shape them and draw the uniqueness about them. Besides thinking of the rules, customs, norms and lifestyle of that society, Communication Style also should be concerned. In fact, Communication Style is one of the aspects that are shaped by culture. Therefore, it is different from one society to another society based on culture that they are bound with. Variations to individual's biological uniqueness can happen due to the interaction with other human beings. Communication is one of the mediums of interaction with other human beings. Over a period of time, males and females at birth will be transformed into masculine and feminine with specific Gender-role Orientations. (Fausto's –1993). Spender (1985) has mentioned the gender dimension of
communication. The socio cultural factors that constitute Gender-role Orientation may have instrumental role in producing variations on Communication Style (H3).

Das Gupta (1983) is of the view that, from the management point of view, communication is the means by which an executive gets his/her job done. An executive needs to communicate the organisational objectives in terms of the individual's performance targets. This communication should be styled in such a way that members of the team from different socio cultural background can grasp it in the proper way. Lack of proper management Communication Style was detected as the core reason for inferior performance of certain public sector undertakings in India (Ratnaswamy-1995). Communication Style can ensure employee performance and in turn of executives as well. Hence, variations in Communication Style may influence executive performance (H4)

Until the early years of seventies, masculinity and femininity were believed to be opposites. If a person was high in masculinity, he or she was regarded as low in femininity and vice versa.

Bem (1974) triggered a new era in gender related researches with the identification of Gender-role Orientations such as androgyny, masculine, feminine and undifferentiated. Bem has coined some of the qualities related with Gender-role Orientation with success. Masculine indicators such items as independence, assertiveness, leadership, and aggressiveness, which may be more related to success in the occupational realm than the feminine indicators such as gentleness, compassion, and sensitivity (Bem). The presence of these factors may produce positive influence on career success.
Chow (1987) examined the extent to which Gender-role Orientation is related to occupational attainment and found that Gender-role Orientation was significantly related to occupational attainment. Bem and Chow’s studies were more centered on Gender-role Orientation and they hinted about the relationship between Gender-role Orientation and occupational attainment. Executives are responsible for occupational attainment. Sargent (1983) argues that a proper blending of masculine and feminine orientation is desirable for the performance of managerial tasks in an effective way. Sargent specifically analysed the relationship between androgynous Gender-role Orientation and managerial performance. She has categorically stated about the relationship between androgynous Gender-role Orientation and effective managerial performance. Fagenson (1989) also found similar relationship. Several other researchers like Eagly, Karu and Makhijaai (1995) established the relationship between gender and leadership effectiveness. Twenge (1997) described that performance of executive roles are influenced by interference of Gender-role Orientation. Female executives’ managerial performance is more affected by Gender-role Orientation than that of male executives. It can be observed from the study of Twenge that Gender-role Orientation is a socially constructed factor that limits the career growth of female executives. This finding leads to infer the role of Gender-role Orientation on executive career particularly biased toward male and against females.

performance and found positive association with masculinity. Kolb (1997) also found that leadership was not attributable to the gender of a person but to their Gender-role Orientation. In a series of studies, Gender-role Orientation was projected as a dominant variable having influence on managerial performance related factors.

Shimanoff & Jenkins (1991) (cited in Kolb, 1997) found that a particular gender orientation is not a parameter in deciding managerial performance. Kolb (1997) used self reports and group assessments to explore the relationship between leader emergence and gender role. Individuals displaying either masculine or androgynous characteristics are more likely to emerge as leaders than those who are feminine in their orientation.

Schein (1973) and Susan Vinnicomb (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 (1997) contradicted the findings of Schein and argued that female managers possess all the traits necessary for the effective performance of executive tasks. Inconsistent ideologies still prevail regarding the relationship between Gender-role Orientation and Executive performance.

According to Dibenedetto (1990), male and female role performance at adulthood differs not because of their genitical difference, but due to gender characteristics. Dibenedetto (1990) found that masculine and feminine traits would influence their
Debenedeto's findings indicate that a female with more feminine qualities always perform their career related responsibilities in a better way than their other female colleagues with more feminine qualities, and the reverse is also true.

Heimovics and Herman (1988) found that there were no gender-related differences in the case of successful and unsuccessful performance of executives. However, the results of Deaux (1976) suggest that some gender effects do carry over to the organisational context. Several researchers have analysed Gender-role Orientation with respect to managerial performance and found contradicting findings. Inconsistent ideologies still prevailing regarding the relationship between Gender-role Orientation and executive performance. Considering the dominance of male factor in managerial occupations in our culture, a relationship may exist between Gender-role Orientation and Executive performance (H5).

From the findings of Bansal (1982), Brenner (1982), Martin (1990) and Rhodes (1990), it can be derived that Biological and Social factors may have instrumental influence on Communication Style, Gender-role Orientation and Executive performance. These findings lead to think that there is a probable relationship between Biosocial Profile, Gender-role Orientation, Communication Style and Executive Performance.

The theoretical framework is conceptualised as plotted in figure 3.1
The variables used in this study are

1. Gender - role orientation
2. Communication Style
3. Executive performance
4. Biosocial Profile

GENDER-ROLE ORIENTATION

Gender-role Orientation refers to the way that individuals perceive and evaluate the appropriateness of the attitudes and behaviors of men and women (Leslie & Clossick, 1996; Stevens-Smith, 1995).

Diana (1994) defined that gender includes such aspects as personality traits and also involves psychological make up, attitudes, beliefs and values as well as sexual orientation and gender - role identity. Gender is not a unitary or natural
fact but takes shape in concrete, historically changing social relationships (Throne-1983).

Gender roles may be defined as 'those shared expectations (about normative qualities and behaviors) that apply to individuals as the basis of their socially defined gender (Eagly 1987) or sets of norms that communicate what is generally appropriate for each sex (Burn 1995). Goff man (1977) referred 'gender as a social construct' whereas sex is the term used to indicate biological difference, gender is the term used to indicate psychological, social and cultural difference. Goff man speaks of "genderism" as a sex class linked individual behavioral practice – a practice linked to gender as a class. Gender identify thus emerges from rearing patterns, and is not determined by the hormones. Gender is determined by social practice and its patterns specifically social. Social structure is not pre ordained but is historically composed, thus feminity and masculinity should be seen as historically mutable. According to Harding (1986), the concept of gender applies at different levels. It is a dimension of personal identity, a psychic process of experiencing self.

Stoller (1968) narrated that sex is biological, gender psychological and therefore cultural. Dinana Trilling (1970) pointed out that individual behavioral pattern and even the thinking tenor are greatly influenced by socio-cultural factors. This traditionally developed and socially prescribed behavioral pattern is termed as 'gender role'.

Bem (1972) argued that these characteristics are not opposite ends of a single continuum but that individuals should be assessed in terms both of their
masculine – assertive and instrumental dispositions and their feminine – expressive and yielding nature.

Bem (1972) has described about Gender-role Orientation. According to Bem, those who are (relatively) high in both masculine and feminine qualities as Androgynous, those who are high in masculine and low in feminine qualities as masculine, high in feminine and low in masculine qualities as feminine and those low in both sets of qualities as undifferentiated.

Eagly (1991) defined Gender-role Orientation as the ‘traditionally developed culturally designed and socially described behavioral patterns specifically assigned for males and females.

Gender-role Orientation has been operationalised in terms of the response to the questions in the Indian adaptation of Bem sex role inventory (BSRI), modified by Rao (1982)

COMMUNICATION STYLE

Norton (1983) has indicated that an important aspect of communication process is the way individuals communicate with each other. This aspect of communicating is referred to as communicator style.

Samovar and Porter (2001) had given more simple definition of Communication Style in which it is defined as the way in which people prefer to interact with one another.
Communication Style is defined as the preferred way of individual for both communicating with and interpreting the communication from other (Centre for Educational Development and Assessment, 2002).

However, more specific and detailed definition had been given by Barker and Gaut (1996). To them, Communication Style is the way of an individual giving meaning through his or her verbal expression of words and delivery, it includes the choice of words, language, sentence structure and the characteristic of delivery.

In sum, it can be concluded that Communication Style is the preferable means or ways of an individual to interact with other people including the way he or she choose the words, language, sentence structure and the way the message is delivered which is influenced by the culture of the people.

Patton (1977) described Communication Style as the mode of influencing others action or work by passing of information or instructions.

The concept of Communication Style has been defined by Robert Norton (1983) as the way one verbally, nonverbally, and paravarbally interacts to signal how literal meaning should be taken, interpreted, filtered, or understood.

Das Gupta (1983) is of the view that, from the management point of view, communication is the means by which an executive gets his/her job done.
In this study Communication Style is **operationalised** as style exhibited by an executive as identified by Communication Style Inventory developed by Don (1981).

According to Chartier (1974), there are five typical Communication Styles using different amounts of telling and asking (transmission of messages, ideas) for information.

**FUNNEL**

Executives with this style are not aware of much about others, nor do others know much about them. This style is achieved by giving and asking for information in very small amounts. This style is labeled the funnel because the person directs the communications he receives from above to the proper people below, and in turn passes up information from employees to the proper people. He/she however adds very little of self to the communication. An executive with this style is often found to be operating with safety needs, delaying important decisions and avoiding people in sensitive situations. Withdrawal and avoidance are major dynamic forces associated with this style.

**AUTOCRAT**

This configuration does not represent executives who are not aware of much about others, nor do the others know much about them. This style is achieved by executives who tell a lot, always let others know what their opinions are, what their feelings are, but ask others very little. They tend to be insensitive to the feedback given to them in return to their communication. Either they may be poor
listeners or they may respond to the information in such a way that others are reluctant to tell them anything. Consequently, they do not know how they are coming across, or what their impact on others. The result of this one way communication is that they persist in behaving ineffectively executives of this type are often aware there is a problem somewhere in the organisation, but because they do not solicit information, they are totally unaware that they are, at least in part, a cause of that problem.

INTERVIEWER

Executions with this style is characterized by asking questions to find out what others think and feel about various situations, but not to give information or feedback about what they are thinking or feeling. Since they do not commit themselves in the eyes of others, it is hard to know where they stand on issues. The low use of telling can be interpreted as a sign of basic mistrust of others.

COMPROMISER

This style in often seen in relatively new managers who have not yet settled into a style. Executives with compromiser style usually give and ask information and ready to compromise on issues intended for promoting a harmonious work atmosphere. Executives with this style can easily get the support from colleagues and subordinates

OPEN COMMUNICATOR

It is generally considered the most effective executive Communication Style. Much of the executive’s behavior straightforward to others with whom he
Interacts. As a result, there are fewer tendencies for others to misinterpret or project different meaning to the executive's behavior.

EXECUTIVE PERFORMANCE

Richard (1975) defined executive performance as 'attainment of the organisational objectives by integrating the individual and organisational goals.

According to Karter (1977), executive performance is the effectiveness in managerial decisions having influence on his/her subordinates or colleagues work and the functioning of the organisation as a social system.

Executive performance can be defined as the role of executive in blending resources into desired outcomes. (Stewart – 1967)

Executive performance is the effort of the executive intended for the attainment of the organisational objectives by way of blending of resources including human assets.

For the purpose of this study an 'Executive is one who is involved in the core activity of the organisation where she or he is attached subject to the following conditions.

The work of one or more subordinate staff is under his or her control.
Should have power and authority to take decisions having direct impact on the performance of the organisation.

Responsible for the profitability of the organisation and excludes a Management Trainee.

For the purpose of this study, Executive performance is operationalised in terms of the fully effective executive as measured by Fully Effective Executive Self Test, developed by Gerald Kushd (1996)

BIOSOCIAL PROFILE

Researchers have analysed biological and social factors responsible for behavioral variations of human beings.

From the findings of Bansal (1982), Brenner (1982), Martin (1990) and Rhodes (1990), it can be derived that Biological and Social factors may have instrumental influence on Communication Style, Gender-role Orientation and Executive performance.

Bio-Social profile of an individual refers to the 'biological and social factors that denotes an individual's ancestry, parental background, educational qualifications, financial position and social and personal identities'.