

# How to Boost Women's Employment in Sri Lanka

## Overview

In the 74 years since independence, we have studied the factors that affect women's labor force participation and the causes of women's lower involvement in paid work, among other topics, but we may observe a larger delay in putting the recommendations or the implications to make these proposals feasible into practice.

Therefore, the moment has come to contribute to the solution rather than the problem. This succinct report discusses the parts of the ILO study report that were highlighted. Sri Lanka labour force statistics issued by DCS and The world Bank study Reports on Sri Lankan Labor force participation were also taken into consideration.

This will hopefully prompt the appropriate authorities will take our recommendations into account and act upon these recommendations.

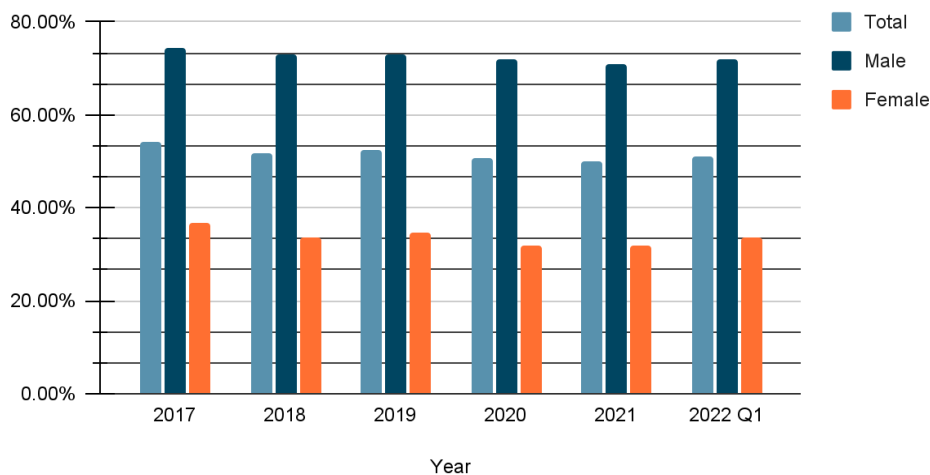
## The Problem

### What we have missed?

Sri Lanka lags behind in women's participation in the workforce, especially compared to other middle-income countries(The World Bank,2017)

Female labor force participation (FLFP) decreased from 41% in 2010 to 36% in 2016 despite the economy growing at that time ,and it is continue to decline up to 33.6% in 2022 with the current economic drawback; Sri Lanka has the 14th-largest gender gap in labor force participation internationally. Over that time, men continued to participate at a rate of over 75%(The World Bank,2017).

LFPR by gender and year,  
2017 - 2022Q1



Source;Sri Lanka Labour Force Statistics Quarterly Bulletin, First Quarter 2022

According to a World Bank research titled "Getting to Work: Unlocking Women's Potential in Sri Lanka's Labor Force," marriage can act as a barrier for women trying to enter the workforce. Other than that Research report of ILO reveals the main 3 reasons why women who had been employed previously, gave up their jobs to become full-time home-makers. Those are as follows,

1. Getting married
2. Having babies
3. Child care issues

## **Why Women's Labor?**

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimates that Sri Lanka's GDP may increase by up to 20% over the long term by eliminating the gender gap in its workforce in its 2018 Country Report on Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka could achieve a 14 percent increase over businesses-usual GDP, or an estimated \$20 billion, by expanding female labor participation, increasing the number of paid hours for work done by women, and adding more women to higher-productivity sectors.

Second, improving FLFP will also help Sri Lanka combat an ageing population. Sri Lanka is one of the fastest-ageing countries in the world. The country's labour force will stop growing around 2030, and then begin to shrink.

## **The Solution**

### **Recommendations**

According to these findings, any policy strategy designed to attract substantial numbers of full time homemakers into the labour market needs to include the following measures:

- Create opportunities for Flexible Working Arrangements including working from home
- Create a policy and legislative environment that supports part-time work and night work
- Provide a safe and convenient public transport system for women and children
- Ensure work environments which protect women from sexual harassment and gender-based discrimination
- Create opportunities for work that offers better wages
- Provide crèche (Daycare) facilities that can provide a quality childcare service

The implementation of the three suggestions above can be directly assisted by the Ministry of Labor. Other than that the Department of Manpower & Employment can provide policy recommendations and create as a mediator to implement other recommendations.

### References for the detailed reports

1. ILO.,(2016),***Factors Affecting Women's Labor Force Participation in Sri Lanka***.Retrived from [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-colombo/documents/publication/wcms\\_551675.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-colombo/documents/publication/wcms_551675.pdf)
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