

## **Female labor force participation in Sri Lanka**

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Women's access to employment and resources increase human capital and capabilities in a household as well as in an economy. According to the annual report of Sri Lanka Labor Force Survey in 2014, labor force participation 15years and over was 74.6 for male and 34.7 for female. The relatively low female labor force participation rate in Sri Lanka can be viewed as a puzzle given that the country enjoys high levels of female schooling. But, female labor force participation has not changed much in recent decades and remained stagnant at a rate around 30 to 35 percent of the working age group. Therefore, this study aims to explore why female labour force participation is low in Sri Lanka. Study explains the trends in the labour force participation and educational achievements of females in Sri Lanka and explores the factors behind the low female labour force participation rate, despite having high female education level during last decade. The study mainly utilized secondary data published in the annual and quarterly labour force surveys conducted by Department of Census and Statistics, Sri Lanka. Determinants contributed for the low female participation were examined from a descriptive manner utilizing these secondary data. A number of factors might have contributed to the low female labour force participation despite having high female education in Sri Lanka during the study period. Issues in the education system, higher level of female unemployment, narrowed choices of females in the labour market, wage discriminations and unavailability of child caring facilities are the main reasons behind the low female labour force participation. As a conclusion, it is essential to say that the women's labour remains a vastly disregarded area and a great deal of more research needs to be done at the national level to provide the necessary information to determine the factors influencing women's labour supply decision and policy makers should develop appropriate policies to enhance the female participation in the Sri Lankan labour market.

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