

The representation of women in Sri Lankan politics

K. M. D. C. Prasadi

Temporary Assistant Lecturer, Department of Economics, University of Kelaniya

prasahas@gmail.com

The higher percentage of the world population consists of women rather than men. However, there have long been limitations for women in the field of politics. These limitations were curbed to certain extent through universal suffrage in 1931. While the percentage of women in politics is 30% - 33% in the world, percentage of women participants in Sri Lanka is 5%, indicating an extremely low level of representation in Sri Lanka. This research attempts to identify the reasons behind this low level of representation by women in Sri Lankan politics. While this is the main objective, other objectives are to identify whether the representation of women can improve the quality of Pradeshiya Sabha and an examination of the electoral system. Primary data was based on elections from 2000-2005 of the Gampaha Pradeshiya Sabha. Secondary data was based on literature that includes the Constitution (1931-1978). The data obtained are analyzed quantitatively. According to the results obtained it is concluded that the representation of women in the Gampaha Pradeshiya Sabha is at low level due to caste, religion and level of education. In order to increase the participation of women in local politics, opportunities should be provided to women candidates by political parties at regional, provincial and national levels. In addition, public attitude towards women politicians must undergo a change by strengthening the role of women in established civil organizations.

Key words: Women, Representation, Politics, Pradeshiya Saba, Election