Gender Profile: Sri Lanka

General

Total male population under 15 (2014) (CIA, 2015): 2,758,360

Total female population over 15 (2014) (CIA, 2015): 8,524,752

Health

Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births (2014) (CIA, 2015): 9.02

Under-five mortality rate for males: NA
Under-five mortality rate for females: NA

Births attended by a skilled health professional (2007) (WHO, 2014b): 98.6%

Prevalence of HIV among males aged 15–49 (World Economic Forum, 2013): 0.1%
Prevalence of HIV among females aged 15–49 (World Economic Forum, 2013): 0.1%


Education


Students enrolled in engineering, construction and manufacturing tertiary education programs who are female (2012) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 74.8%

Teachers in primary education who are female (2012) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 86.3%

Teachers in secondary education who are female: NA

Teachers in tertiary education who are female (2011) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 42.6%

**Economic Activity**

Males over 15 who are active in the labour force (United Nations Statistical Commission, 2010): 44%
Females over 15 who are active in the labour force (United Nations Statistical Commission, 2010): 74%

Men who have an account in a formal financial institution (World Economic Forum, 2013): 70%
Women who have an account in a formal financial institution (World Economic Forum, 2013): 67%

**Decision-Making**

Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament (World Bank, 2014): 6%

**Human Rights**

Females married between 15 and 19 (World Economic Forum, 2013): 11%

Women subjected to physical/sexual violence by an intimate partner during their lifetime: NA

Women subjected to physical/sexual violence by an intimate partner or a non-partner during their lifetime: NA

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**Gender Gaps**

**Health**

- National maternal mortality rates have dropped steeply in the past 55 years (from 340 per 100,000 live births in 1960) and maternal health has improved substantially (UNICEF, 2009). However, UNICEF
notes that “[i]n recent years, the country has faced a shortage of health workers; according to the World Health Statistics 2008, in the 2000–2006 period the country had only 6 doctors and 17 nurses and midwives per 10,000 inhabitants.”

- Of notable concern is the health of women who live and work on tea plantations. These women make up approximately 1% of the country’s population over the age of 15 (1.8% of females over that age) but are essential for one of Sri Lanka’s key economic sectors; tea accounts for about 18% of the country’s export income (Embassy of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, Poland, 2015). The national malnutrition rate for reproductive-age mothers on tea estates is 33%, compared with 16% in the country overall. In addition, the teenage pregnancy rate on estates is 10%, compared with 6.4% nationwide (D’Almeida, 2014).

- According to the World Health Organization, “[s]ince 1992, the HIV infections among women have shown an upward trend,” which has not been the case for men (WHO, 2012, para. 5).

- As of 2007, 68.4% of women aged 15–49 who are married or in a union use contraceptives (UN Gender Statistics, 2015).

**Education**

- Women’s educational achievements are not helping them to obtain equality in employment opportunities. Government labour force data for the second quarter of 2011 indicated that unemployment levels for Sri Lankans holding university degrees were significantly higher for women than men, at 11.6% and 4.4%, respectively (Salary.lk, 2015).

**Economic**

- Women’s employment in Sri Lanka, according to one 2010 study, can be roughly categorised as follows: 24.5% in agriculture and fisheries, 22.7% in elementary occupations, 15.8% as craft workers, and 10.4% as professionals (mostly in teaching and nursing). This shows women are still drastically underrepresented in the STEM fields (science, technology, engineering and mathematics).

- In 2013, women comprised only 35% of the working population. According to Bertelsmann Stiftung’s Transformation Index, “[m]en dominate the more lucrative levels of employment in both public and private sectors and the average wage of females in the higher reaches of the formal sector is less than half that of men” (Weiß, 2014).

**Decision-Making**

- As of 2006 (the most recent available data), women made up only 4.2% of those in provincial councils and just 1.8% of those in local councils (Kodikara, 2009, p. 13).

- As of 2013, women made up 32% of legislators, senior officials and manager; there were no women in ministerial positions (World Economic Forum, 2013, p. 342).

**Human Rights**

- The Gender-Based Violence Forum indicated in 2008 that at least 60% of women in Sri Lanka had experienced domestic violence (IRIN, 2008).
• A 2010 report by the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights indicated that “sexual violence and gender-based violence is a generalized issue in Sri Lanka” (ECCHR, 2010, p. 13). In a 2011 Review of Research Evidence on Gender Based Violence (GBV) in Sri Lanka, the Sri Lanka Medical Association found GBV to be “a significant social and public health problem of considerable magnitude in Sri Lanka” and stated: “It is evident that GBV is currently not addressed adequately by the health care and other relevant sectors in Sri Lanka (Perera, Gunawardane, & Jayasuriya, 2011, p. i).

References


