

## **Analysing the Factors Affecting to Women’s Engagement in Sri Lankan Labor Force**

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Women's engagement in the workforce is a key factor in driving economic growth in Sri Lanka. Despite the country's advancements in recent years, women still face significant challenges that prevent them from fully participating in the workforce. The objective of this study is to explore the potential labor force of women in Sri Lanka and the factors affecting their participation, using data from the Labor Force Survey 2021. Analyzing data from 41,171 women out of 77,869 individuals using a binary logistic regression model, the study considered factors such as marital status, education level, age group, relationship to the head of the household, district, sector, ethnic group, religion, Sinhala literacy, and English literacy. The results showed that all the variables except for Religion, are statistically significant. Married and widowed women are less likely to participate in the labor force compared to never-married women, while separated and divorced women are more likely to participate. Women in districts like Nuwara Eliya, Kilinochchi, Kurunegala, Anuradhapura, Badulla, and Rathnapura have higher labor force participation rates. There is a notable gender gap in labor force participation, with males participating more actively than females; over half of the working-age female population remains economically inactive. Females constitute most of the unemployed demographic. Despite being more prevalent in urban and rural areas, labor force participation rates are higher in the estate sector. Most women abstain from job searches due to household responsibilities and education levels. Nearly half of discouraged women are concentrated in younger age groups, with 26% aged 25-34 and 21% aged 35-54. The study underscores the necessity of policy interventions to address barriers to women's labor market participation, especially in household duties and education, to enhance Sri Lanka's female workforce potential and contribute to its economic and social development.

**Keywords:** *Binary Logistic Regression, Economic Growth, Gender Gap, Women’s Labor force participation.*

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