

# Women and the World of Work in Sri Lanka



## GENDERED LABOUR MARKETS ARE STILL AT PLAY:

In 2023, less women than men were in labour force



Source: World Bank Gender Data Portal.

In 2020, more women than men were **contributing family workers**



Source: UN DESA Gender Data Hub.

In 2022, more women than men were in **time-related underemployment**



Source: ILOSTAT.

With a **global gender gap index** of

**65%**

Sri Lanka ranked

**122<sup>nd</sup>**

out of 146 countries.

Source: World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Index 2024 edition.

In 2011, **firms with female participation in ownership** were



Source: World Bank Gender Data Portal.

**Average hourly earnings** (PPP USD) in 2022



Source: ILOSTAT.

## TO SUPPORT WOMEN TO THRIVE AND SAFEGUARD THEIR ECONOMIC RIGHTS, GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE ACTIONS NEED TO ADDRESS:

### Women's decision-making power

In 2020, women had

**27%** of **managerial** positions

Source: SDG Global Database.

**26%** of **senior and middle management** positions



### Ownership of productive resources

**44%** Women

**62%** Men

owned a **debit card** in 2021

Source: World Bank Gender Data Portal.

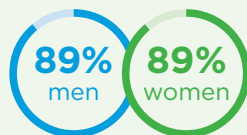


**10%** Women

**10%** Men

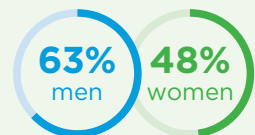
owned a **credit card** in 2021

Source: World Bank Gender Data Portal.



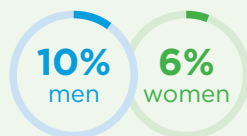
Source: World Bank Gender Data Portal.

owned an **account** at a financial institution or with a mobile money service provider in 2021



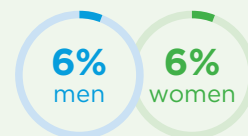
Source: World Bank Gender Data Portal.

made or received a **digital payment** in 2021



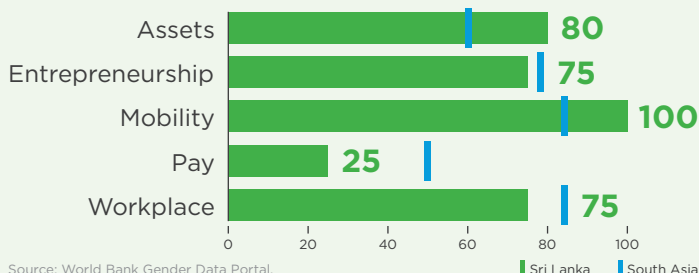
to start, operate, or expand a farm or business in 2017

Source: World Bank Gender Data Portal.



### Gender-blind systems

Women, Business and the Law Index scores, in 2023



Source: World Bank Gender Data Portal.



As of 2023, **NO** law prohibited **discrimination in access to credit** based on gender

Source: World Bank Gender Data Portal.



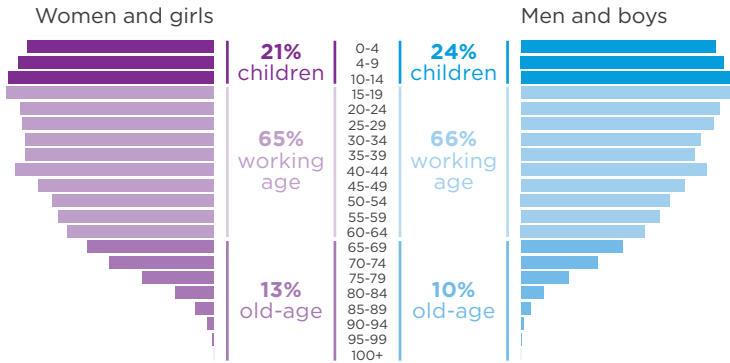
As of 2023, **NO** law prohibited **discrimination in employment** based on gender

Source: World Bank Gender Data Portal.

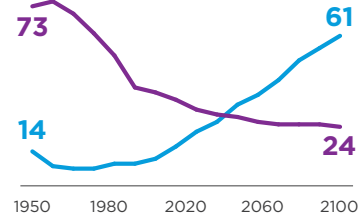
# Transforming Care Systems in Sri Lanka



## POPULATION STRUCTURE SHAPES THE DEMAND FOR CARE SERVICES



Source: UN DESA, Population Division, World Population Prospects 2024.



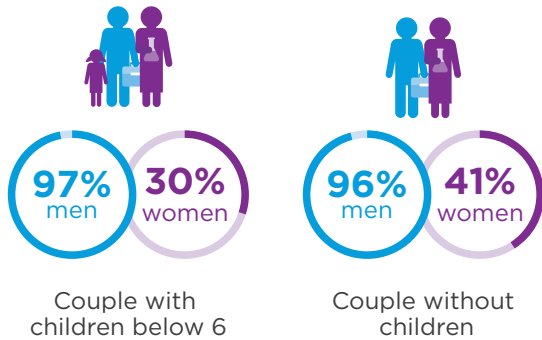
Source: UN DESA, Population Division, World Population Prospects 2024.

Demographic shifts present challenges and opportunities. While rising demands for unpaid care may hinder women's economic empowerment, they create potential for job creation.

## TO UNLEASH THE POWER OF GENDER-RESPONSIVE ECONOMIES, INVESTMENTS NEED TO:

### Tackle inequality of opportunities in the labour market

In 2020, prime-age (25-54 years) employment-to-population ratio was



Source: UN DESA Gender Data Hub.

**44%** **33%**

Women Men  
worked **part-time** in 2020

Source: UN DESA Gender Data Hub.

**28%** **15%**

Women Men  
aged 15 to 24 were **not in education, employment or training** in 2020

Source: SDG Global Database.

### Expand care services and create decent care jobs



workers were in **care employment** in 2022

Source: Authors' elaboration based on ILOSTAT data.

**512** **277**  
thousands thousands  
Women Men  
care workers were in **informal employment** in 2022

Source: ILOSTAT.

## CARE-ENABLING AND GENDER-EQUALIZING ACTIONS NEED TO ADDRESS:

### Discriminatory social norms

In 2016, among women aged 20-24 years

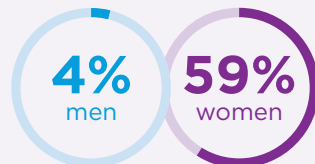
**10%** were married or in a union **before age 18**

**1%** **before age 15**

Source: SDG Global Database.



### Disproportionate unpaid care gaps

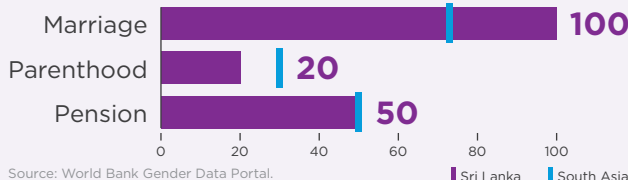


were outside the labour force due to care responsibilities in 2022

Source: ILOSTAT.

### Gender-blind systems

Women, Business and the Law Index scores, in 2023



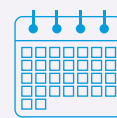
Source: World Bank Gender Data Portal.

Legend: Sri Lanka (purple), South Asia (blue)

In 2023, workers were entitled to



**84**  
days of **maternity leave**



**0**  
days of **paternity leave**

Source: World Bank Gender Data Portal.

As of 2023, there were **NO periods of absence due to childcare** accounted for in pension benefits

Source: World Bank Gender Data Portal.