PN-AAH-143

STATUS OF WOMEN

CE
301.412
C718

SRI LANKA

UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO

1979

STATUS OF WOMEN

SRI LANKA

UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO

1979

PROJECT COMMITTEE

Dr. Swarna Jayaweera, Professor of Education, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka (CHAIRMAN).

Dr Priyani E. Soysa, Professor of Paediatrics, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Dr. Wimala de Silva, President, Sri Lanka Federation of University Women, 1977 - 1979.

Dr. Hema Goonatilake, Lecturer, Department of Sinhala, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka.

Malsiri Dias, Lecturer, Department of Sociology, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, Executive Secretary, International Year of the Child Secretariat.

PROJECT ADMINISTRATOR: Hema Gunawardhana

RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

Rohini Perera .....December 1977 - March 1978
H.G.C. Jinadasa .....December 1977 - January 1978
D.M.Seelawathie .....December 1977 - March 1978
L.C. Fonseka.....December 1977 - July 1978
Jeeva Selvanandan .....December 1977 - August 1978
Katheeja Ismail .....December 1977 - August 1978
Selvi Thiruchandran .....December 1977 - June 1978
Kusum Fernando .....June 1978 - October 1978
Rathini Rajaratnam .....June 1978 - October 1978
Chandra Gunasinghe .....December 1977 - October 1978
P.A.Kalyanawathie .....December 1977 - December 1978
A.G.M.Premalatha .....December 1977 - December 1978
Vinitha Dias .....December 1977 - March 1979
P.W.Somawathie .....March 1978 - January 1979
Rohini E.A.N.R. Perera .....May 1978 - March 1979
Mallika Fernando .....September 1978 - March 1979
E.M.Bandara Menike .....November 1978 - March 1979.

CLERICAL STAFF: Daisy Cooray

Funded by USAID

Printed by: CBA - Ceylon Business Appliances, Colombo.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to record our grateful thanks to all those who assisted in carrying out this survey. Special thanks are due to:

(a) Professor Hiran Dias, President, Colombo Campus, University of Sri Sri Lanka, 1977 - 1978, for encouragement and assistance in initiating this survey;

Professor P.P.G.L.Siriwardena, Vice-Chancellor, University of Sri Lanka, 1977 - 1978;

Professor M.B Ariyapala, President, Colombo Campus, University of Sri Lanka, 1978; and

Professor Stanley Wijesundera, Vice-Chancellor, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, 1979;

for their co-operation and help at different stages of the survey.

Professor V K.Samaranayake, Dean, Faculty of Natural Sciences, 1976 - 1979;

Mr.D.Arampatta, Dean, Faculty of Education, 1977 - 1978;

Professor T.Nadaraja, Dean, Faculty of Law;

Professor R.N.de Fonseka, Dean, Faculty of Natural Sciences (1979);

for their assistance on numerous occasions;

Mrs.P.Gnanaindran, Mr.P.Subasinghe, Mr.U.L.P.Wettewa, Mr.T.J.Kitchilan, Miss.Chinta Amarasuriya, Mr.Dharmasena and Indrani Galappathy of the Administrative Staff of the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka for their support.

(b) USAID in Washington and in Colombo for their generous financial assistance.

(c) Thana Shanmugam of the Agrarian Research & Training Institute, Nirmala Chandrahasan and Chandra Jayasuriya, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, for their contributions.

(d) Hema Gunawardhana, Project Administrator and the Research Assistants for all the work they put in.

(e) The Sri Lankan professional women and members of voluntary organizations who gave us useful suggestions.

(f) The staff of Ministries, Government Departments, Corporations, Universities, Private Sector Establishments and members of Voluntary Organizations, the Creative Arts and Mass Media for their assistance.

(g) The people and administrative officers in the field sites for their co-operation.

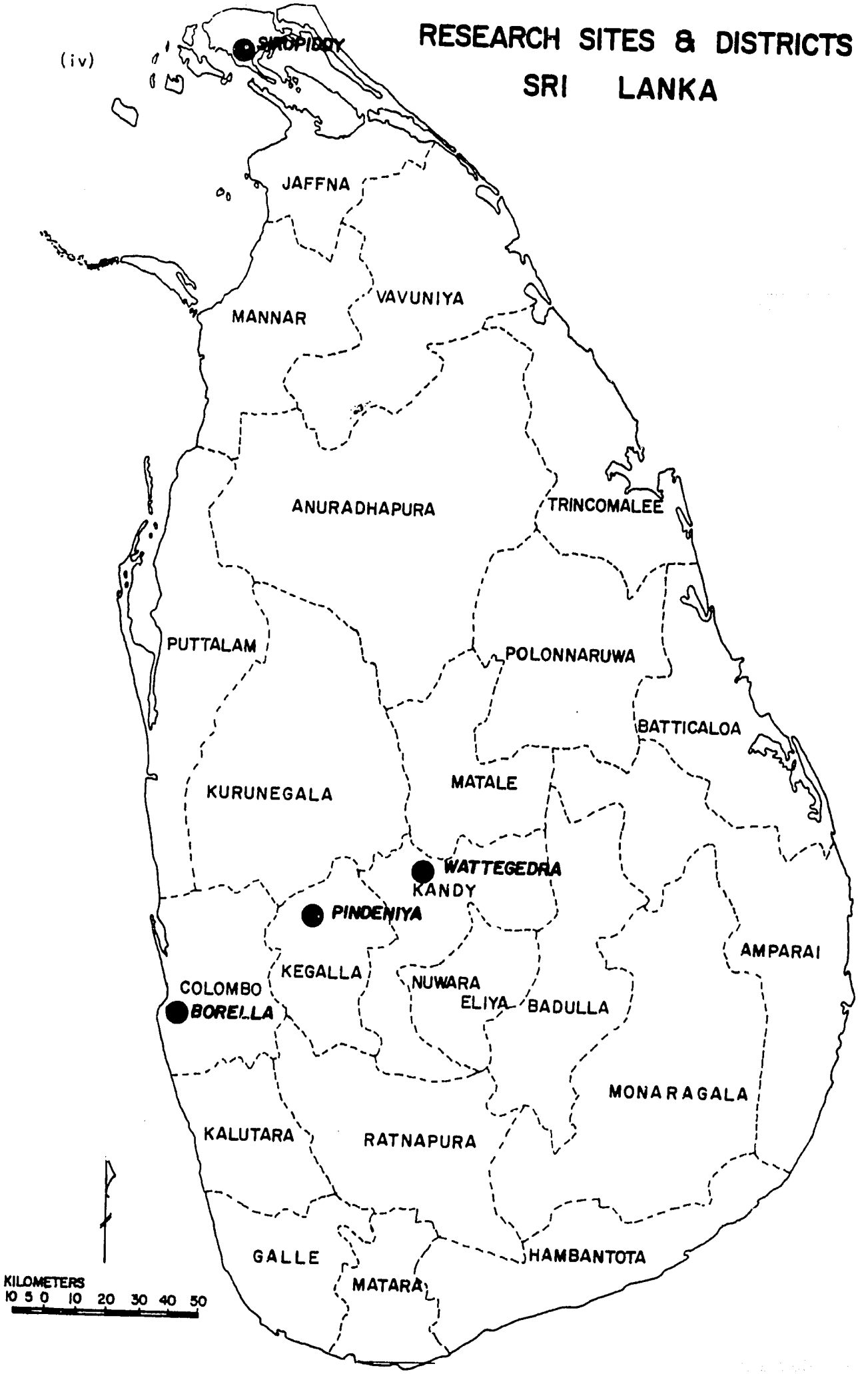
(h) K.Dharmakularajah, Pushpanjali Dharmakularajah, Lalangi Amarasinghe and Shareeda Farook of the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka and Diane de Silva and Mrs.Rodrigo for assistance in typing.

(i) The staff of the Headquarters of the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science for their co-operation.

(j) The Management and staff of Ceylon Business Appliances (CBA) and the University Press, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka, for printing this study so expeditiously.

September 1979.

RESEARCH SITES & DISTRICTS SRI LANKA



PREFACE

The University of Colombo, Sri Lanka sponsored this study as a part of its research programme to meet national needs As yet there have been very few studies on the status of women in Sri Lanka and it is hoped that this survey will lead to more in-depth studies leading to greater insights into the problems of women in different spheres of activity.

A major objective of the study was to activate policies and programmes to eliminate constraints and to promote the effective participation of women in national development. It is our hope that this study will be a useful contribution in this respect.

The University expresses its deep appreciation of the generous financial assistance given by USAID which made this study possible.

S Wijesundera

Prof. Stanley Wijesundera
Vice-Chancellor

University of Sri Lanka, Colombo,
September 1979.

C O N T E N T S

INTRODUCTION 1

SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS AFFECTING THE STATUS OF WOMEN
- MALSIRI DIAS 4

THE DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND
- CHANDRA JAYASURIYA 19

LAW AND THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN SRI LANKA
- NIRMALA CHANDRAHASAN 120

WOMEN IN CREATIVE ARTS AND MASS MEDIA
- HEMA GOONATILAKE 143

WOMEN AND EDUCATION
- SWARNA JAYAWEERA 254

WOMEN IN THE ECONOMY
- SWARNA JAYAWEERA 423

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND DECISION-MAKING
- WIMALA DE SILVA 551

HEALTH AND NUTRITION
- PRIYANI E. SOYSA 613

CONCLUSIONS 666

INTRODUCTION

THE PERSPECTIVES AND PATTERN OF THE SURVEY

International Women's Year generated interest in the needs and problems of women in Sri Lanka but the lacuna in information was seen to be a major barrier to the formulation and implementation of policies to improve the position of women.

These studies on the status of women in Sri Lanka developed from the initiative of a group of University women. They were greatly concerned that adequate data should be made available to policy makers and to the community to increase awareness of the needs of women and to activate policies and programmes directed towards promoting their participation in national life.

This concern led to an investigation of the legal, social and economic position of women in Sri Lanka. The survey was intended to focus attention on some crucial facets of the status of women. These were broadly their legal position, the extent of their participation in areas of national life such as political, educational, economic and social activities, their contribution to the household and national economies, their role in decision making in the family and community, their health status, their image, their attitudes, needs, potential, and finally, the social and cultural factors which affect their position.

The over-all survey comprises eight studies, the specific objectives of which are given below:

(a) To examine the social and cultural factors affecting the status of women;

(b) To collect and analyse available basic demographic data relating to women;

(c) To review women's legal rights as set forth in the laws of the land;

(d) To examine the image of women as reflected in the creative arts and in the mass media;

(e) To evaluate the impact of the development of education on the role and status of women in Sri Lanka;

(f) To gather information on the extent to which women participate in the economic sector and in Sri Lanka's national plans and development programmes;

(g) To gather information on the extent of women's participation in political life and in the decision making process in Sri Lanka;

(h) To investigate the health status of women, the extent of their utilization of the health services in Sri Lanka and the impact of their health on national development.

The thrust of the survey was to determine the present socio-cultural, legal and economic status of women and to examine the extent and impact of the educational, economic and political participation of women and the effect of socio-economic policies and changes on their position.

The survey was sponsored by the University of Colombo and funded by USAID. A Project Committee of 5 University women and a Project Administrator were responsible for planning and implementing it

METHODOLOGY

In a country with as rich a diversity of culture as Sri Lanka a single 'profile' of women would be misleading. The methodology of the survey was therefore influenced by the existence of three major population sub-groups and by urban-rural differentiation of life styles. Macro-level information from national level surveys and official statistics were supplemented by pilot field studies in three selected rural areas representing the three ethnic groups: (i) Sinhala; (ii) Tamil; and (iii) Muslims (Malays and Moors), and in an urban area with a mixed population of all ethnic groups

It was found that available sex-wise macro-level data was inadequate and 'researching' among official statistics a time consuming and often futile task Where further insights were felt to be necessary, case studies of aspects or of groups of women were undertaken. The legal and demographic studies were based only on documentary source materials. The other six studies were also supported by specifically collected data through field investigations and case studies.

The three villages were from districts which had not been isolated from 'modernizing' trends in recent decades. Pindeniya, the Sinhala village is located in the populous south-west zone in the island, not far from an

urban centre (Kegalle); Siruppiddy is eight miles from Jaffna, the chief urban centre in the north; and Wattegedera is six miles from Kandy, the most important town in the hill country. Such villages are a familiar scene in the Sri Lankan landscape. The urban area is Borella, a municipal ward in the metropolis, Colombo, with a population of different ethnic groups and of varying socio-economic strata.

17 graduates (15 women and two men) were selected as research assistants and a two week workshop organized to orient them to the objectives of the survey and to field research techniques. Discussions were also held with women who have been working in major areas of national activity. Questionnaires were prepared as a basis for structured interviews of members of householdsin the study areas and were pre-tested. The areas explored by means of these structured interviews were social and family structures, educational and economic participation, the processes of decision-making, selected social attitudes and institutions, health status and mass media. The field studies extended over a period of eight months. Research assistants lived in the field sites for short or long periods of time according to situational needs, interviewed female and male members of households and recorded their own observations. Data processing was carried out with the assistance of a consultant. The final writing of these six studies was the work of the members of the Project Commitee and therefore inevitably reflect the views of these writers.

On the eve of the mid-point of the U.N.Decade for women these studies would appear to be both evaluative and policy - oriented. They are presented in the hope that they will help to fill the 'information gap', stimulate thinking and action and eventually lead Sri Lankan women to new paths and to a better status in society.

SOCIO CULTURAL FACTORS AFFECTING THE STATUS OF WOMEN

by

MALSIRI DIAS.

SOCIO CULTURAL FACTORS AFFECTING THE STATUS OF WOMEN

INTRODUCTION

It has been widely reported throughout South and South-East Asia that women tend to take a more prominent role in society than would normally be expected given the low cultural value placed on them in these societies[1]. In the 1930's social reformers and nationalist leaders enlisted the support of women in their struggle against colonial rulers. In more recent times, women demonstrated their capabilities as freedom fighters in nationalist struggles such as in Vietnam. In the post-independent era, women have largely succeeded in implanting themselves in the educational and administrative sectors of their nations. In Sri Lanka and India, Sirimavo Bandaranaike and Indira Gandhi succeeded in assuming the post of Prime Minister, the highest political position in the country. This general picture of women in South and South-East Asia being vitally engaged in modern economic and political life nonetheless disguises much of the inferior status which they have in relation to men as well as the extent to which they have access to decision-making processes, in the wider political context.

In order to understand the status of women, which refers to her position in the social structure defined by her designated rights and obligations, in South and South East Asia but particularly in Sri Lanka which is the concern of this study, it is essential to examine some of the cultural and ideological factors which relate to her position. Traditional cultural ideas are still strong in modern Sri Lanka, even in the urbanised coastal areas of the Western and Southern seaboards in the shaping of social relationships.

These ideas have particular force in the area of domestic and family organization. This is highly significant in a country such as Sri Lanka where there is not a sharp distinction between domestic (private and household) and extra domestic (public, politics and economics) spheres of action as has been reported for other contexts and particularly the West (see Rosaldo and Lamphere)[2]. An important point to be grasped, especially when discussing the role of ideological and cultural factors in influencing the position of women, is that the domestic sphere of relations including the

wider network of kin is directly important in major areas of economic, political and social life which extend outside the immediate environment of the domestic and household structure. It is possible that the importance of the family and kinship in areas outside the domestic and the household is one factor which might give greater force to cultural and related ideological factors (a point which is argued in Marxist literature on pre-capitalist societies, see e.g. Sahlins, M.Stone Age Economics).

It is not our intention to argue this particular point in any great detail here (considerable more research needs to be done on this) but simply to emphasise two points which appear to follow upon it and which are considered here to be of significance in understanding the position of women in Sri Lanka. These are:

(a) women are likely to be continually subordinated in relation to men (irrespective of context, traditional or modern) in domestic situations;

(b) because of the central position of the domestic context in other areas which extend around it, women, in extra domestic situations, are likely to take a prominent role in a variety of activities. Despite this prominance, however, their status culturally is likely to continue as inferior to men.

The general argument which follows from the above is that the position of women in Sri Lanka is only significantly improved if the relationship of the domestic context to wider economic and political processes is changed and/or the cultural attitudes relating to the position of women in domestic and extra domestic contexts in relation to men are radically changed.

ETHINICITY

Sri Lanka is not a homogenous society in which all women receive comparable treatment. This description will be concerned mainly with the majority Sinhalese group, with small sections on the Tamil and Muslim. The Sinhalese constitute about 70 per cent of the population and are mainly Buddhist by religion. Among the Sinhalese a distinction is made on a regional basis between the 'low country' and 'up-country'people . Among the minority

groups, the Ceylon Tamils constitute about 11 percent of the population and are distributed mainly in the northern and eastern parts of the island. These people are Hindus by religion except for a few converts to Christianity. The Moors constitute about 6 percent of the population and are adherents of Islam.

Observations from the field study reveal that except for the women in the Muslim sample, the women in the other two ethnic groups and in the urban sector shared a similar life style. Among the Muslim women, especially in the village of Wattegedera, there was strict adherence to the rules of Purdah, especially in the sense of spatial confinement. The women were not free to move out of their homes and their world was separate to that of the men in the village. No matter how poor the family is, except for the case of teachers, the women were not allowed to take paid employment. It is not possible to generalise on this observation and I am aware that Muslim women from low income families in other parts of the island work freely in labouring tasks and in the paddy fields.

Village settlement patterns revealed that ethnic groups clustered around one locality. In Siruppiddy, the people were predominantly Hindu Tamils with the exception of one Christian family that has settled down in the area recently. Pindeniya was a Sinhala Buddhist village, with 'low country' people. Wattegedera was a predominantly Muslim village.

CASTE

Another way in which the island's people, the Sinhalese and the Tamils distinguish themselves from one another is by caste groups. Among the Sinhalese this hierachical division of society on the basis of traditional occupation takes the shape of an inverted pyramid, with the 'Goigama' or agricultural caste, the most numerous at the top and other so called 'low-castes' or service occupations at the base. Reviewing the caste system in 1971, Yalman[3] stated:

> "Today, however, the modern states of Ceylon and India do not officially recognize caste and therefore the hierachy is a matter of dispute. The top, middle, and bottom ranges of the hierarchy generally agreed upon, but there can be considerable difference of opinion regarding the exact ranking of particular castes."

Caste bears relevance to the status of women in both Sinhalese and Tamil Societies, by virtue of the control it imposes on economic participation and the decision making abilities of women. Women who belong to the service occupations ranked low in the caste hierarchy are expected to adhere to traditional caste obligations, whether it is to provide ritual services to the higher castes (as in the event of a girl attaining puberty) or to provide labour services to maintain the household of the higher castes. Because of religious sanctions, caste differences are more rigidly observed among the Hindu Tamils in the Northern Peninsula and is a major determinant of social distance and in the choice of traditional vocations. The Hindu women still continue to be influenced by the notions of ritual purity and pollution which in turn restricts their participation to activities more in the private domain. Caste, is also an institution which keeps together a community of people by not allowing its members to marry outside their group. In both ethnic sub-groups, one's caste, among other factors determine the choice of partner for marriage. In relation to the actual pattern of seclusion or exclusion of women, based on the structural factor of caste, the high castes are more restricted than the low castes and find it difficult to take a role outside the restrictive role of the family and household. However, social change associated with free and compulsory education over a period of three decades has produced changes in general caste rules. Though such changes have not affected caste values, it has led to certain modifications in roles expected from persons belonging to a certain caste.

It is realistic in a study such as this to examine the status of women across class lines within the same society. In Sri Lanka class distinctions have been in existence since early historical times and Wriggins in 1963 made the following observations:

> "In usual class terminology, Ceylon's Society is characterised by the presence of a small wealthy upper class who own rubber, coconut and tea plantations or engage in commerce, banking or transport activities. Beneath them is an upper middle class usually of professional people ..... Most of them owe their position to wealth which gave them access to advanced education or enabled them to control economic enterprises, but many have achieved this status from modest homes through superior educational performance. Beneath

> them, at a considerable income and deference distance, is the lower middle class, the numberless clerks in Government Service, business and country school teachers, indigenous doctors, smaller traders ... ... The 'working class' is in fact divided into three distinct groups of relatively equal status, the urban workers, estate labour and among the peasantry, the landless workers and tenant farmers."[4]

Despite stringent legislation and social reform the main body of the class hierarchy remains intact and the social inequalities persist. Class status tends to parallel economic levels though there are a few instances where factors of caste and/or life style confer social esteem. As an example. a woman born to a poor Kandyan 'radala' family living in a rural setting continues to command more social status than a wealthy woman from a low caste family. Further on the basis of class differentiation, it is apparent that the upper middle class women enjoy a wider range of opportunities and are freed from some of the restrictions imposed on their working class and rural sisters. A vast majority of the women in the lower classes live bound by the dual burden of cultural restrictions and poverty. These women have a strong sense of duty towards their assigned, cultural roles especially in their relationship to men and therefore maintain and perpetuate this ideology through socialising the female children to the same pattern of beliefs. A predominantly agricultural style of life and the slow pace of economic growth (per capita income US.$ 203) has affected the emancipation of a large segment of women who continue to spend most of their time in arduous, repetitive work and often contribute substantially to family income. The middle class woman has in contrast, been able to get the best advantage of equal political and economic rights, while continuing to enjoy economic dependence on the man. They generally consider work outside the home undesirable. According to social norms they confine their activities to home and children. Only a minority, usually University graduates and secondary school leavers accept salaried work, notably of a professional kind, as a part of a woman's life.

In the area analysis, the Sinhalese and Tamil villages represented a stratified society, where households differed according to class and caste. In both these areas, essential form of wealth and property is land and livelihood depended mainly on agriculture. In both areas, a few families enjoyed

a regular wage from the chief householder being in State service. Persons in this category and those who owned property maintained higher class status to those who were not in state employment and did not own land. Those who engaged in agriculture by virtue of their caste occupation ranked higher in terms of caste in relation to those in service occupations. In Pindeniya, the women of the washer caste were caste bound and were known to perform many ritually polluting tasks to those in the higher castes. In the same way, the toddy tappers, washermen and barbers ranked low in the caste hierarchy in the Jaffna village and their women were not permitted to socially interact with the women of the higher castes.

The initial argument, that if women can gain command of the public domain they are thereby assured of status in the private domain is evident in one period of the history of class formation in pre-independence Sri Lanka. The relationship of the domestic context to the wider economic and political processes during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is analysed by Roberts (1973)[5]. In Sri Lanka, a social group described as an 'intermediate-elite', ranked high in terms of the 'power-economic dimension' were able to achieve a high degree of social status even though many of the members of this group belonged to castes ranked low in the traditional caste hierarchy. The emergence of these elite groups from among the karave, salagama and durave castes is significant. The members of these three communities gained control over the newly opened plantation sector and became involved in urban business enterprises. A section of these communities, especially among the karave, figure prominently in the development of overseas trade. Through their economic power they were also able to emerge as prominent persons in the professions and in the fields of administration and education. It is in these communities during this period that the women were able to participate equally with men in private and public life. They too advanced socially with the men of their communities and became influential in business and in the professions, particularly in the upper and middle classes. For example, the women of Galle were critical in the organizations of the business at the home-end of many of the overseas entrepreneurs and were important custodians of the family property. They participated in social and religious endeavours in their own villages and became fully integrated in public life. In fact, the rise to prominence of the men in these communities were greatly dependent on women.[6]

However, the situation described above was a historical phase and it is difficult to generalise to the modern Sri Lanka context. As mentioned earlier, the modern Sri Lanka women enjoy certain equal rights with men in the political, economic and educational systems. But the impact of these privileges has been felt by a minority of women, living in the city centres. The vast majority of women, in all three ethnic groups under review live bound by cultural and ideological norms which confine them to domestic work and proscribe them from participating in outside opportunities made available with modernisation. They continue to adhere to the traditional cultural prescriptions which places the woman low in the cultural hierarchy and sets her role to that of wife and mother.

SEX ROLE DIFFERENTIATION

In Sri Lanka the traditional sex role of woman expects her to stay at home, keep house and rear children. Her education through formal methods or by socialisation within the household are oriented towards the acquisition of domestic skills and fulfilling maternal obligations. There is a division of labour by sex and the basic obligation of man and wife may be listed as follows[7]:

	WIFE'S OBLIGATION	HUSBANB'S OBLIGATION
(a)	Preparation of food : including fetching water and firewood, and pounding the grain.	Provision of food, including all forms of cultivation later.
(b)	Sex.	Sex.
(c)	Weeding and harvesting on chena.	Management of property and household.
(d)	Carrying reaped paddy to the edge of the threshing floor, transporting the grain to the granary.	Construction of threshing floor, threshing, winnowing, handling bullocks, etc.
(e)	Looking after the children.	Provision of clothing.
(f)	Cleaning and keeping the house.	Repairs to the house.

In all four area studies if was noted that the man is the head of the family and the chief contributor to the family budget. The women did perform a supportive role by assisting in agricultural tasks, rearing cattle or chickens to obtain a food supply to the house or being herself

a wage earner. However, she continued to perform all roles expected of her as a woman. The time allocation studies revealed that routine household chores were performed by women. Her day started usually around 4.30 a.m. and the hours upto noon were spent in food preparation, household tasks, caring for children and attending to the needs of the husband. The pattern was repeated during the second half of the day with the woman retiring around 10.30 p.m.

A large majority of the Sri Lanka women do not have labour-saving devices to increase their leisure.Neither has the working woman the capacity to evade the domestic duties expected from her on her return home. As such the actual amount of labour and effort extended by women in maintaining family life far exceeds that of men.

A female child is subject to a more exacting code of filial and kinship obligation. She is expected to build up certain characteristics which will ultimately fit her into a passive, dependent and auxiliary role. This was in keeping with the traditional image. Ryan wrote[8]:

> "From early childhood the male is schooled in his superiority. A family of many males is a 'fortunate one'; one of many daughters is 'burdened'. To the father's position services are due and deference is paid.There is a deeply seated belief that in marriage the wife must give complete loyalty and subservience to her husband."

Changes in the economy arising from such factors such as rapid colonization of the relative underpopulated areas of the country, land fragmentation and attendant popualtion pressure on available holdings, and increased participation in wage labour have led to changes in the basic structure of the family unit though role relationships between members of the family remain unchanged. In contemporary Sri Lankan society the nuclear family consisting of husband, wife and children is the most common type of family unit. At times this nuclear unit shares its residence with one or more close relative. The reason for this arrangement differs from one locality to another. In the rural areas, economic considerations and personal convenience are the main reasons for a young married couple deciding to stay on in the residence of one of the spouses. There are other instances when a single

surviving parent gets a son or daughter to live in the ancestral home after marriage. In the urban areas the family got extended for different reasons. The acute problems relating to housing and adequate child care arrangements often led to a number of kinsmen sharing urban residences. Family structures in all four research areas were mainly nuclear household. Of the few extended households, the persons sharing accommodation were close relatives.

Within the nuclear family unit, the relationships between mother and child is circumscribed by culture and guided by traditional family ideals. In Sri Lanka society there is a deep affective tie between mother and children and the mother is seen to assume a role complementary to that of the father/husband. The woman wields great power and influence over her children and often holds decision-making prerogatives on issues such as marital alliances and family economic transactions. Further it is the woman who is expected to maintain domestic stability and thereby ensure the continuity of the social order. Exposure to modernising influences have in no way affected expected filial obligations of children to parents. Such a statement is supported by the persistence of customary family duties such as acceptance of arranged marriages, devotion to aged and sick parents and expressions of appreciation to parents especially the mothers through gifts and even a part of the pay packet. Thus we may conclude that motherhood roles are greatly valued and given high status and respect. However, whether the mother as a woman receives commensurate rights is questionable.

Let us now examine other areas where this paradox is evident. This differentiation in status accorded to the married woman and the single woman is one area where this contradiction is manifested. The married woman has status in her inter-familial activities which is denied to the single woman. In the domestic context, marital status and age brings privileges to the woman. Further, according to civil law, the married Sinhalese woman enjoys independent legal and property rights. The single woman is less privileged. She is in the protective custody of her immediate family members. The young woman is considered a threat to men and depicted in popular literature as full of 'wiles and wickedness'. Her close kinsmen have a duty to shield her from men because of her biological vulnerability. Her respectability depends on adhering to a strict code of behaviour designed

to ensure feminine modesty and sexual segregation. In urban areas, a few women have managed to move away from the control of their own households. But, in turn, they have lost the social protection available in more closely knit social settings, especially in times of domestic crisis.

Religious ideology pervading all three ethnic groups is another factor which promotes inequality in the status accorded to women. Buddhist dharma delegates a secondary status to women and lays emphasis on the subservient role of women especially in relation to their husbands. Women could aspire only to second stage of enlightment in Buddhism (arahantship) and never aspire to be a Buddha. It is believed that bad karma in the previous birth that originally contributed to the birth as a female. The ideology of the day is a contradiction in relation to the status accorded to women in the time of the Buddha. When first propounded, Buddhism was the only religion which accepted women to the clergy and recognised that women could enter the highest paths of deliverance even while leading a household life. The concept of the female in Hindu ideology presents her on the one hand as fertile, benevolent - the bestower, on the other, as aggressive, malevolent, the destroyer[9]. The notion that they are unclean and dangerous, debars them from many orthodox religious practices. The Muslim woman too is faced with this inconsistency in relation to the Koran. There is ambiguity in the sanctions imposed on women in the Koran, and men, who usually interpret the Koranic sanctions usually interpret it to their own advantage.[10]

It is in participation of orthodox religious practices that one notices that women have little religious authority and are excluded from the ritual on the cultural interpretation that they are not only unclean and polluting in physiological make-up (menstruation and child birth) but also because it is the women who are associated with domestic activities which bring them into frequent contact with objects of pollution. Such a conception of impurity provides justification for not allowing women to associate with the sacred (e.g. relics, vedas or mosque prayers) and confines them to the more symbolic religious rites such as Buddha Puja among the Buddhists and ritual and devotional songs among the Hindus and Muslims.

The cultural constraints which relate to the status of women in Sri Lanka are shared by men and women. Women in many spheres of social life perceive their

status and role within the home and in relationship to husbands as 'subordinate' The woman's secondary status has been explained by the cultural interpretation that women are closer to nature than men.[11] Simone de Beauvoir locates the origins of woman's subordination, in part, in her relationship to nature and man's to culture. Man is freer than woman to pursue transcendence because he is not constrained by the tasks of reproducing and sustaining life. The women are tied to the domestic realm, which is located at a lower level of cultural order, reinforcing the conceptualization of women as close to nature. In contrast, the men are located in the public domain which transcends the domestic and because it is at a higher level.

Today it is no longer necessary to abide by the social and cultural pressures for rigid sex typed behaviour, which in Sri Lanka has been detrimental to improving the status of women With urbanization and industrialisation and a democratic political system, the women have been provided with new opportunities and scope for developing a more dynamic role. But, a large majority of women remain entrenched in a cultural domain which gives subordinate status to them in relation to men. The situation is made complex by their acceptance of their self image as inferior to men. There is thus a distinct cultural lag between the political and economic factors and socio cultural norms. It may be that the ideology giving women lowly status persists to ensure social stability and social organization in a predominantly rural, agricultural society. However, for a development oriented economic programme such cultural constraints can be dysfunctional not only for the progress of a country seeking rapid advancement but also in mobilising a precious human resource which forms nearly 50 per cent of our population.

REFERENCES

1. Women in the New Asia, Barbara E. Ward (ed.) Amsterdam, 1963.
2. Woman, Culture and Society (eds.) M.Rosaldo and L.Lamphere. Staford University Press, 1974.
3. N.Yalman, Under the Bo-Tree, University of California Press, 1971.
4. Howard Wriggins, Ceylon: Dilemmas of a New Nation, Princeton University Press, 1960.
5. Robert, M., Elite Formation and Elites, 1832 - 1931 from History of Ceylon, K.M.de Silva (ed.) University of Ceylon Press Board, 1973.
6. Kapferer, Bruce, Performance Communication and Transformation in Sinhalese Healing Rituals (in Press), 1979.
7. Yalman - ibid.
8. Bryce Ryan, 'Institutional Factors in Sinhalese Fertility', The Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly, 30, 1952.
9. Susan S. Wadley : Women and the Hindu Tradition in Women and National Development : The Complexities of Change Ed. The Wellesley Editorial Committee University of Chicago Press, 1977.
10. Shibani Roy : Status of Muslim Women in North India, B.R.Publishing Corp. Delhi, 1979.
11. Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex, New York : Alfred A Knof, Inc., 1952.

THE DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

by

CHANDRA JAYASURIYA

THE DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

In Sri Lanka, the role of population dynamics in socio-economic development is officially recognised and currently plays an important part in all development planning. Hence, demographic data pertaining to the female sector of the population are basic to general programmes of development and are particularly important in formulating programmes directed to women.

In this section the present state of the female population and probable trends in future are examined in detail to provide a resource base for all successive chapters of this study.

Sri Lanka has the advantage of the availability of census records for every decade since 1871. The early records do not have a high level of accuracy because of defects of under enumeration, and errors in age reporting. These errors have, however, decreased over the years.(1) This is evident from Table 2.1.9 which shows that the joint scores on age reporting for the Census 1971 is less than the joint scores for previous years. (Joint Score: Age ratio and Sex ratio score).

SIZE AND COMPOSITION OF THE FEMALE POPULATION

SIZE OF THE FEMALE POPULATION

Table 2.1. indicates the total population of Sri Lanka for the census years, the total female population, the proportion of females in the total population, and the sex ratio - which is defined as the number of males per thousand females in the population for each census year.

These statistics reveal that at all census counts the total number of males exceeded the total number of females in the population. Nevertheless there has been a steady increase in the proportion of females in the total population from 46.07 percent in 1871 to 48.05 percent in 1971.

TABLE 2.1

SIZE OF THE POPULATION 1871 - 1971

YEAR	TOTAL	MALES	FEMALES	PROPORTION OF FEMALES	SEX RATIO
1871	2,400,380	1,280,129	1,120,251	46.7	1143
1881	2,759,738	1,469,553	1,290,185	46.8	1139
1891	3,007,789	1,593,376	1,414,413	47.0	1121
1901	3,565,954	1,896,212	1,669,742	46.8	1135
1911	4,106,350	2,175,030	1,931,320	47.0	1126
1921	4,498,605	2,381,812	2,116,793	47.0	1125
1946	6,657,339	3,532,218	3,125,121	46.9	1130
1953	8,097,895	4,268,730	3,829,165	47.3	1115
1963	10,582,064	5,498,674	5,083,390	48.0	1082
1971	12,711,143	6,525,948	6,185,535	48.5	1055

SEX RATIO: Males per 1,000 females

SOURCE: Census Reports, Department of Census & Statistics, Colombo.

The continuity of this trend is supported by other factors such as high expectation of life at birth for females, and lower mortality rates for females than males. It is thus highly probable that the future proportion of females in the total population would increase. Further, census projections based on current mortality and fertility conditions have estimated 49.07 percent females by the year 2001. This means that an equal number of females and males can be expected by the turn of the century. Table 2.3 expresses this trend in terms of the sex ratio.

The observed sex imbalance in the population can be explained by a number of factors. A male favoured sex ratio at birth is a common feature of many a population of the world. The same phenomenon is observed in Sri Lanka (Table 2.4.).

Before 1946, the female death rate at all age levels had been higher than that of males and would have contributed to a decrease in the proportion of females in the total population.

Male predominant migration has been another factor contributing to a higher proportion of males in the population. In 1891 out of Indian born persons who migrated to Sri Lanka (then Ceylon), 171,342 were males while only 93,238 were females. 'The proportion of male migrants has been almost equivalent to twice the proportion of female migrants.'(2) Until recent years there was little emigration from Ceylon, but immigration was a marked feature from the mid 19th Century. In the immigrant population the males as a rule largely exceeded the females. Of 441,483 persons who returned from birth places outside Ceylon in 1911, 270,978 were males and 170,505 were females. In other words, to every 100 males 63 females had immigrated to this country.(3) Thus it is evident that during the 19th century and early half of the 20th century, male dominant migration has been a strong factor affecting the sex ratio of the population.(4)

Some demographers believe that in the early years of census recordings there could have been an under-enumeration of females, but no valid statistics are available to support this view. In 1911, Census Superintendent, Mr.E.B.Denham suggested that there could not have been an under-enumeration of females alone.

TABLE 2.2

TOTAL FEMALE POPULATION (in thousands)

1871	1,120
1881	1,290
1891	1,414
1901	1,670
1911	1,931
1921	2,117
1931	2,495
1946	3,125
1953	3,289
1963	5,083
1971	6,185

SOURCE: Department of Census & Statistics, Colombo.

TABLE 2.3.

SEX RATIO OF THE POPULATION
(Ratio of males per 100 females)

1871	114.3
1881	113.9
1891	112.7
1901	113.5
1911	112.6
1921	112.5
1931	113.0
1946	112.5
1953	111.0
1963	108.0
1971	105.0

SOURCE: Department of Census and Statistics.

TABLE 2.4.

SEX RATIO AT BIRTH

(Males per 100 females)

1871 - 1880	109.3
1881 - 1890	109 5
1891 - 1900	107.4
1901 - 1910	105.1
1911 - 1920	104.4
1921 - 1930	103.9
1931 - 1940	103.9
1941 - 1950	103.9
1951 - 1960	103.5
1961 - 1970	103.5

1961	103 5
1962	103.9
1963	104.0
1964	103 3
1965	103 3
1966	103 6
1967	103 1
1968	103 7
1969	103.3
1970	104 0
1971	104.4

SOURCE: Sex Ratio based on Registration Data Census Reports, Department of Census and Statistics, Registrar General's Reports.

'No disinclination to give all particulars with regard to the female population was shown in any part of Ceylon. In fact, in most places at the preliminary census the information was usually given by women. There is no reason to believe that there were any more ommissions of women at these census than there were of men.'(5)

In the post enumeration survey carried out by the Census Department in 1953 it was disclosed that more males were under-enumerated than females.(6)

Thus in summary, the following factors can be held to account for a higher proportion of males in the population during the first half of the 20th century:

(a) Higher female mortality rates in comparison with that of the males;
(b) Higher maternal mortality rates;
(c) Male dominant migration to Sri Lanka.

SEX RATIO - DISTRICT PATTERNS

Table 2 5 indicates the sex ratio for the districts of Sri Lanka. It can be observed that in some districts the sex ratio favours the males where as in others it seems to favour the females.

It is interesting to note that the districts of Galle, Matara, and Jaffna had a higher female population at all the four census counts of 1946, 1953, 1963 and 1971 This may be due to economic reasons such as male employment in other parts of the country A consistent out-migration from these districts of able bodied men and boys in search of wage employment has occured as observed in the reports of early censuses.

Districts like Mannar, Vavuniya, Anuradhapura, Monaragala, Trincomalee and Polonnaruwa, had a preponderence of males in the population. The anomalous high sex ratio observed in Trincomalee in 1946 could be accounted for by the fact that it was a naval base during the war years and immediately after With each census count from 1946 to 1971, it is seen that the sex ratio for different districts tends to regress towards the mean with the exception of Vavuniya, Polonnaruwa and Mannar A co-relation between the

TABLE 2.5

SEX RATIO - BY DISTRICTS

	1946	1953	1963	1971
Sri Lanka	113	111	108	106
Colombo	122	118	113	110
Kalutara	106	105	103	102
Kandy	113	109	107	104
Matale	115	115	108	106
Nuwara Eliya	110	110	106	104
Galle	98	97	97	98
Matara	100	102	98	98
Hambantota	114	109	106	106
Jaffna	100	100	101	99
Mannar	147	145	121	116
Vavuniya	136	136	133	124
Batticaloa	101	114	108	107
Amparai	---	---	119	110
Trincomalee	200	144	129	119
Kurunegala	116	115	108	105
Puttalam	119	116	108	106
Anuradhapura	144	135	119	115
Polonnaruwa	---	---	137	125
Badulla	111	112	107	105
Moneragala	---	---	116	115
Ratnapura	118	115	111	109
Kegalle	113	109	106	104

SOURCE: Calculated from Census Data 1946, 1953, 1963 and 1971.

degree of economic development and the sex ratio is evident in the district deviations. Thus it is possible that these deviations would be still further reduced if development speeds up.

SEX RATIO - URBAN AND RURAL AREAS

Table 2.6 gives the sex ratio for Rural and Urban areas of Sri Lanka. The proportion of males in the urban sector is appreciably higher than the proportion of males in the rural sector. The higher sex ratio in urban areas can be explained by male migration from rural areas to urban areas in search of employment. Thus the sex ratio analysis provides further conformation of the overall relative improvement in the numbers of females.

ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF THE FEMALE POPULATION

The population of Sri Lanka consists of several ethnic groups. Prior to 1901 the term 'nationality' had been used in census reports to denote an ethnic group But from 1911 the word 'race' has replaced the word 'nationality'. Since 1911 there have been about twelve categories. However, the Sinhalese, Indian Tamils, Sri Lanka Tamils, and Moors account for about 96 per cent of the entire population of Sri Lanka Birth, language, religion, geographic location seem to have some bearing on this grouping.

Table 2 7 shows the total female population by different ethnic groups in census enumerations from 1881 to 1971. These figures should be treated as approximate [7] Table 2 8 presents the enumerated female population by different ethnic groups in 1971

The low country and Kandyan Sinhalese account for 70 percent of the total female population in 1971. These two groups constituted about 66 percent of the female population in 1881 and 68 percent in 1901 and increased to 70 percent by 1971 The growth of the Sinhalese female population is solely due to natural increase. The maximum increase seems to have occured after 1946.

TABLE 2.6.

SEX RATIO - RURAL/URBAN

	TOTAL	RURAL	URBAN
1881	1139	1130	1220
1891	1127	1119	1194
1901	1136	1124	1231
1911	1126	1103	1289
1921	1125	1098	1303
1946	1130	1089	1390
1953	1115	1083	1310
1963	1082	1060	1180
1971	1061	1040	1133

SOURCE: Census Reports, Department of Census and Statistics.

TABLE 2.6 (a)

CENSUS 1971

Female Population by 5 year age groups, sex and sectors

	URBAN		RURAL	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
All ages	1356873	100.0	4857910	100.0
Under 1	34702	2.6	136317	2.8
1 - 4	132082	9.7	528732	10.9
5 - 9	171422	12.6	661816	13.6
10 - 14	172672	12.7	620906	12.8
15 - 19	148559	10.9	529248	10.9
20 - 24	140537	10.4	488077	10.0
25 - 29	108080	8.0	363858	7.5
30 - 34	81911	6.0	270485	5.6
35 - 39	78028	5.8	279483	5.8
40 - 44	63097	4.7	211881	4.4
45 - 49	56880	4.2	203131	4.2
50 - 54	45808	3 4	151021	3.1
55 - 59	36932	2.7	127510	2.6
60 - 64	28836	2.1	91028	1.9
65 - 69	24177	1.8	78193	1.3
70 - 74	16363	1.2	54888	1.1
75 - 79	8466	.6	28656	.6
80 - 84	4894	.4	17964	.4
85 +	3435	.3	14819	.3

SOURCE: 1971 Census Reports, Department of Census & Statistics, Colombo.

TABLE 2.7

TOTAL FEMALE POPULATION BY ETHNIC GROUPS - 1881 - 1971

(approximate figures in thousands)

		1881	1891	1901	1911	1921
Sinhala	Low Country	863.65	959.66	683.04	807.57	906.87
	Kandyan			408.66	469.71	512.52
Tamil	Sri Lankan	321.37	340.33	445.76	248.35	243.43
	Indian				249.76	283.62
Muslim	Sri Lankan	86.25	92.71	106.79	248.35	243.43
	Indian				15.38	15.52
Europeans		2.24	2.23	2.95	3.57	3.8
Eurasians and Burghers		8.36	9.97	11.00	12.56	13.83
Malays		4.16	4.74	5.57	6.11	6.31
Veddhas		1.03	.56	1.87	2.49	2.12
Others		3.52	3.90	4.54	5.97	10.35
All Races		1,290.18	1,414.10	1,670.2	1,935.5	2,116.98

contd. 28

TABLE 2.7 (continued)

TOTAL FEMALE POPULATION BY ETHNIC GROUPS 1881 - 1971 (Approximate figures in thousands)

		1931	1946	1953	1963	1971
Sinhala	Low Country	1,040.47	1,365.88	1,644.31	2,130.18	2,666.58
	Kandyan	590.05	808.47	1,017 63	1,452.78	1,815.36
Tamil	Sri Lankan	281.17	345.27	419.29	554.95	698.73
	Indian	384.27	367.34	461.65	585.35	542.02
Muslim	Sri Lankan	135 96	175.81	219 91	300.35	403.95
	Indian	17.0	16.75	22 51	26.63	14.14
European		4.319	2.54	3 08		
Eurasians and Burghers		15.16	19.72	21.80	20 07	[illegible].46
Malays		7.51	10.58	12.03	15.06	.97
Veddhas		2.44	1 13	38	.19	
Others		12.86	19 34	15.26	9 38	6.83
All Races		2,491 26	3,132.84	3,837 87	5,087.5	6,185.5

SOURCE: Calcualted using sex ratio and total population.

TABLE 2.8

FEMALE POPULATION BY ETHNIC GROUPS (1971)

		PERCENTAGE
Total	6,158,536	100.00
Low Country Sinhala	2,644,919	42.9
Kandyan Sinhala	1,797,729	29.2
Ceylon Tamils	684,578	11.2
Indian Tamils	567,619	9.2
Ceylon Moors	401,307	6.5
Indian Moors	11,572	0.2
Burghers	22,912	0.4
Malays	21,028	0.3
Others	6,872	0.1

SOURCE: Department of Census & Statistics, 1971 Census

TABLE 2.9

SEX RATIO SCORE, AGE RATIO SCORE AND JOINT SCORES FOR POPULATION

	1891	1921	1946	1953	1963	1971
Sex Ratio Score	32.0	22.0	9.6	4.4	4.6	4.7
Age Ratio Score-Male	29.4	14.1	12.2	8.8	8.8	4.5
Females	49.0	17.4	11.3	11.0	9.4	5.4
Joint Score	174.4	97.5	52.3	33.0	32.0	24.0

SOURCE: The Population of Sri Lanka,1974,World Population Year, Department of Census and Statistics

Ceylon Tamils and Indian Tamils are considered as two district ethnic groups. Ceylon Tamils have an ancient history and are concentrated mostly in the northern and north eastern parts of the island. Indian Tamils live mostly in the central hill country They were brought to Sri Lanka in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Their number has shown a decline from 1963 to 1971 as a result of repatriation of Indian nationals to India.

The Ceylon Tamil females who numbered 345,000 approximately in 1946 had nearly doubled their numbers by 1971. In 1971 the total female Ceylon Tamil population was 690,000 approximately, that is about 11 percent of the female population in Sri Lanka. The Moor females constitute about 6 percent of the entire female population, while the proportion of Indian Moor females is very low constituting about 0.2 percent in 1971. At the turn of the century Ceylon Moor females numbered 110,000 approximately. In 1971, this population had increased to 400,000 approximately.

Malays, Burghers and Eurasians constitute a very minor proportion of the female population. 1971 figures indicate that the combined number of these groups account for only 0.8 percent of the entire female population. The Malay females show a threefold increase in their numbers from 1901 to 1971. In the 1971 census enumerations Veddas have not been enumerated seperately but have been classed with others.

When the ethnic composition of the female population is related to their socio-economic circumstances and fertility behaviour, it is apparent that the females of the Moor community have very low literacy and educational levels, the lowest mean age at marriage and highest rates of fertility. Although they form a relatively small proportion of the population, national indicators of socio-economic development are considerably affected by those statistics.

Similar patterns are observed among the other communities in least developed pockets Special investment in the female population of these selected groups is essential for the realization of national development goals.

AGE OF THE FEMALE POPULATION

Age is another important variable in demographic studies. Age statistics reflect changes in behaviour at various stages of the life cycle. There is a socially appropriate and accepted age to attend school, to enter the work force or even to contract marriage. Sometimes these limits are determined by either tradition or administrative laws.

Information on age has been collected at every census count from 1871. At the last census of 1971, age had been reported in terms of completed years and also by date of birth As in many developing countries, digit preferences, and age heapings are observed in all census enumerations if one goes through the population statistics tabulated by single years of age and sex. Accuracy of age reporting however seems to have improved over time. Table 2.9 indicates that a considerable improvement had been effected in the age reporting of the Sri Lankans from 1946 to 1971, and with the improved literacy rates of the population age reporting should improve further.

Table 2 10 shows the 5 year age groups of the female population enumerated at the 1971 census. The female population is observed to be heavily weighted towards a younger age group. This phenomenon is common to many a nation in Africa and South Asia while in Western Europe and Japan a higher proportion of the population is in the middle age group.

Table 2 13, which gives the median age of the female population in 1881, shows that 50 percent of the total female population had been under 17.6 years of age The median age of females has increased slightly with every census enumeration and currently it stands at 19.3 years. The males of Sri Lanka have a slightly higher median age of 20.0 years.

Table 2 11 reveals that 39 6 percent of the total females are under 14 years of age. The high rate of population growth in the fifties and sixties has given rise to this high percentage of young people. In the developed countries of the West, the 0 to 14 age group constitute between 2 to 30 percent of their population, while the 0 to 14 proportion in some Asian countries are as follows:

TABLE 2.11

FEMALE POPULATION BY BROAD AGE GROUPS, 1971

	TOTAL	%	FEMALE	%
All Ages	12,712,277	100.0	6,158,536	100.0
0 - 14	4,997,706	39.3	2,431,440	39.6
15- 64	7,165,500	56.3	3,480,936	56.4
65 & Over	549,068	4.4	246,160	4.0

SOURCE: Census Report, 1971, Department of Census and Statistics.

TABLE 2.10

5 YEAR AGE GROUPS - FEMALES, 1971

All Ages	6,158,536	100.0	
Under 1	169,291	2.7	
1 - 4	649,924	10.6	39.5
5 - 9	824,085	13.4	
10 - 14	788,140	12.8	
15 - 19	671,248	10.9	
20 - 24	631,115	10.2	
25 - 29	475,188	7.7	
30 - 34	352,034	5.7	
35 - 39	358,567	5.8	37.9
40 - 44	271,876	4.4	
45 - 49	255,170	4.1	
50 - 54	190,991	3.1	
55 - 59	157,305	2.6	
60 - 64	117,442	1.9	
65 - 69	99,282	1.6	
70 - 74	70,313	1.1	
75 - 79	35,976	0.6	4.0
80 - 84	22,454	0.4	
85 +	18,135	0.3	

SOURCE: 1971 Census Reports, Department of Census and Statistics, Colombo.

TABLE 2.12

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE FEMALE POPULATION BY 5 YEAR AGE GROUPS 1881-1971

AGE GROUP	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921	1946	1953	1963	1971
0 - 4	18.7	18.3	18.6	15.3	14.9	13.6	15.7	15.7	13.3
5 - 9	15.4	15.4	14.4	14.3	13.3	12.8	14.0	14.1	13.4
10 - 14	9.5	9.7	9.7	12.2	12.2	12.5	11.6	12.8	12.8
15 - 19	12.7	12.2	12.3	8.7	9.4	10.1	8.8	9.9	10.9
20 - 24	10.2	9.7	10.4	10.1	10.4	10.0	9.7	8.7	10.2
25 - 29	9.7	10.2	10.3	9.8	9.5	8.7	8.8	7.2	7.7
30 - 34	4.3	4.6	4.9	7.2	7.1	6.5	6.2	6.2	5.7
35 - 39	5.8	6.1	6.1	5.3	5.8	6.6	6.4	6.1	5.8
40 - 44	2.5	2.6	2.9	4.7	4.7	4.5	4.2	4.3	4.4
45 - 49	4.5	4.4	4.1	3.2	3.5	4.4	4.2	4.0	4.1
50 - 54	1.7	1.7	1.6	3.6	3.5	2.9	3.1	3.1	3.1
55 - 59	2.5	2.6	2.3	1.6	1.7	2.2	2.1	2.3	2.6
60 - 64	0.6	0.7	1.1	1.9	1.8	1.9	1.8	2.1	1.9
65 +	1.9	1.8	1.3	2.1	2.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	4.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

SOURCE: ESCAP Country Monograph Series 4, Population of Sri Lanka, United Nations - Bangkok, page 93, Table 67.

TABLE 2.13

MEDIAN AGE OF THE POPULATION

	BOTH SEXES	MALE	FEMALE
1881	18.0	18.5	17.6
1891	18.2	18.7	17.7
1901	18.6	19.3	18.0
1911	20 3	21 0	19.7
1921	20.7	21.3	20.1
1946	21 3	22.1	20.5
1953	20.8	21.7	19.9
1963	19 4	20 0	18 4
1971	19 7	20.0	19.3

SOURCE: ESCAP Country Monograph Series 4, Population of Sri Lanka, U.N Publication.

TABLE 2.14

PERCENTAGE OF FEMALES IN SELECTED AGE GROUPS

	0 - 14	15 - 49	25 - 64	65 +
1881	43 6	49.7	31 6	1.9
1901	42 7	60 0	38.3	1.3
1921	40.4	50 4	37 6	2.2
1946	38 9	50.8	37.7	3.3
1953	41 3	48.2	36 8	3.4
1971	39 5	48.8	35.5	4.0

SOURCE: The Population of Sri Lanka, Department of Census & Statistics, Colombo, 1974

	YEARS (0 TO 14)
Republic of China	36.7
India	41.7
Indonesia	44.7
Japan	24.0
Republic of Kores	43.4
Nepal	42.4
Thailand	45 5

However, Table 2 12 and Table 2.14 suggests that the proportion in the age group 0 to 14 years has been somewhat on the decline from 1881 to 1971 with every census enumeration between the two years. Yet the dependency ratio[10] for females is quite high being approximately 76.7 for every 100 females. This ratio is about 55 for females in countries of the Western world. Therefore, a large share of limited resources in Sri Lanka needs to be channeled to current consumption of feeding and clothing, and provision of health and educational facilities to a sector of the population which cannot engage in productive activity. This inevitably affects economic growth and social development of the nation.

The proportion of females in the reproductive span is about 48.8 percent of the female population. From Table 2.14 it is seen that proportion has not varied much from about 1921 This means that in Sri Lanka the potential for a natural increase of population is high. Thus approximately 50 percent of the female population comprise a vital target group in the control of population growth - an area of high priority in development efforts. Studies on the recent declining trend in fertility in Sri Lanka have revealed that the effect of education and employment on the female population have been the more effective long term factors containing fertility.

Another discernible feature from the age statistics is that the proportion of females above 65 years is increasing. This is a consequence of a rise in the female expectation of life at all age levels, coupled with the reduction of mortality rates for females. An implicit assumption is that an increase in the life span is a positive indicator of development. This is not borne out in Sri Lanka where increased life expectancy is more the result of welfare policies and programmes than of economic development Increased life expectancy

can have a meaningful reality only with an improved quality of life and eradication of the conditions of underdevelopment and poverty.

MARITAL STATUS

All countries of the world recognize four marital statuses:

(a) Never married;
(b) Married currently;
(c) Widowed; and
(d) Divorced

Marital status is an important demographic determinant in the composition of the female population. It is important in population dynamics for it affects fertility. In Sri Lanka reproduction takes place mostly within marriage and illegitimate fertility is assumed to be very low. Marriage thus becomes the link between the biological urge to reproduce children and fertility. Fertility then becomes the result of marriage.

Today monogamous marriages are by and large the rule among the various ethnic groups in this country. Polygamy and polyandry seem to have been prevalent in some areas during previous decades but both these practices were legally abolished in 1859. Today the custom is very rare even among the Muslims.

Registration of Marriages in Sri Lanka is governed by three Ordinances:

(a) General Marriage Ordinance, No 19 of 1907. Revision of Ordinance No 6 of 1847. It was in 1847 that the law regarding registration of marriages was established. This law has been amended from time to time;

(b) Kandyan Marriage and Divorce Act No.44 of 1952. There exists two kinds of marriages among Kandyans - Diga - a girl becomes a member of the husband's family, and Binna - the husband enters the wife's family and is dependant on her and her parents. Kandyans also can marry under the General Marriage Ordinance;

(c) Muslim Marriages and Divorce Act No 13 of 1951.

In Sri Lanka both customary marriages and registered marriages are accepted as giving rise to marital status

At the 1911 and 1921 census enumerations, customary marriages had not been recorded as marriages. As a result the data on marital status is not satisfactory, the married sector having been under enumerated. From 1946 onwards this limitation has been overcome by accepting both customary marriages and registered marriages as legally married status.

In the 1946 census enumerations 69 percent were registered marriages. In 1971, out of 2,229,734 married females, 1,820,286 or approximately 82 percent of the total married females had their marriages registered.(11) The practice of registering marriages is increasing and consequently the proportion of persons marrying according to custom is on the decline.

Table 2.15 indicates the total number of females above 15 years of age, the number married and also the percentage married for different census enumerations from 1901 to 1971. Upto 1963 the proportion of married females in the total female population has not varied much. 1971 figures indicate a slight decline in the proportion of married females.

Table 2 16 and 2 17 give the 1971 data relating to marital status. 35 8 percent of all females, or 59 4 percent of females above 15 years of age are included in the category of married females Those divorced and legally separated account for less than 1 percent of the total female population. Of the female population 15 years and over, only 0 3 percent is divorced and another 0 3 percent is legally separated

It is evident from Table 2 18 that from 1946 to 1971, in each successive census enumeration the proportion of women currently married has dropped in the younger age group of 15 to 19 years and 20 to 24 years. In 1946, the proportion of women currently married in the age group 15 to 19 years was 23 9 while the corresponding figures for 1953, 1963 and 1971 have declined to 23.6, 14 7 and 10.4 respectively This decline from 1946 to 1971 approximately approximates 56.4 percent. In the age group 20 to 24, 68 4 percent of females were married in 1946 and 45.9 percent in 1971. This represents a decline of about 32.8 percent.

TABLE 2 15

MARRIED POPULATION 15 YEARS +

1901 - 1971

	POPULATION 15 +	MARRIED	PERCENT MARRIED
1901	958,070	582,008	60.7
1911	1124,022	676,627	60 2
1921	1262,396	736,360	58 3
1946	1910,561	1230,441	64.4
1953	2248,017	1459,852	64.9
1963	2921,058	1838,985	63.0
1971	3727,096	2201,524	59.1

SOURCE: The population of Sri Lanka, Department of Census & Statistics, Colombo, 1974.

TABLE 2.16

1971 CENSUS FEMALES BY MARRIED STATUS

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Never married	3,596,441	58.40
Married registered	1,789,693	29.10
Married customary	413,754	6.70
Widowed	334,981	5.40
Divorced	12,019	0.20
Legally separated	11,648	0.20
All ages	6,158,536	100.00

SOURCE: Census records, 1971, Department of Census & Statistics, Colombo.

TABLE 2.17

FEMALE POPULATION 15 YEARS AND OVER BY MARITAL STATUS, 1971

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Never married	1,169,381	34.1
Married registered	1,820,286	48.5
Married customary	409,448	10.9
Widowed	333,864	8.9
Divorced	11,596	0.3
Legally separated	11,577	0.3
TOTAL	3,756,152	100.0

SOURCE: Census Data, 1971, Department of Census and Statistics, Colombo.

TABLE 2.18

PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN CURRENTLY MARRIED BY AGE GROUP, 1946 - 1971

	1946	1953	1963	1971
15 - 19	23.9	23.7	15.0	10.4
20 - 24	68.4	65.8	57.6	45.9
25 - 29	84.4	84.4	81.0	73.4
30 - 34	87.1	87.8	88.6	85.8
35 - 39	85.4	86.5	89.8	88.9
40 - 44	78.4	80.7	86.1	86.9
45 - 49	71.4	73.8	81.6	83.5
50 - 54	61.3	62.6	72.0	76.1
15 - 54	64.4	64.9	63.0	59.1

SOURCE: 1971 figures from 1971 Census Reports
1953 & 1963 from the Population of Sri Lanka, Department of Census & Statistics, Colombo, page 41
1946 from 1946 Census Reports.

TABLE 2.19

AGE & SEX SPECIFIC PROPORTIONS OF NEVER MARRIED AND MARRIED PERSONS BY URBAN AND RURAL SECTORS, 1971 CENSUS

	MARRIED (CUSTOMARY & REGISTERED)		NEVER MARRIED	
	URBAN	RURAL	URBAN	RURAL
15 - 19	8.9	10.8	90.9	80.9
20 - 24	40.6	47.4	58.7	51.6
25 - 29	68.5	74.8	29.9	23.0
30 - 34	83.1	86.7	14.0	10.0
35 - 39	86.3	89.7	8.4	5.1
40 - 44	84.5	87.6	6.8	4.0
45 - 49	80.6	84.3	6.2	3.5
50 - 54	72.5	77.2	6.7	3.8
55 - 59	66.1	70.7	6.6	3.7
60 - 64	55.0	58.8	7.5	3.9
65 - 69	48.6	50.9	7.3	3.8
70 - 74	38.9	38.3	7.6	3.9
75 +	32.7	29.7	7.0	3.4

SOURCES: Census of Population 1971, Volume II, Part I, General Characteristics

TABLE 2.20

AVERAGE AGE AT MARRIAGE FOR FEMALES

YEAR	AGE AT MARRIAGE
1961	22.7
1962	23.1
1963	23.2
1964	23 8
1965	24.8
1966	22.4
1967	23.2
1968	23.6
1969	23 5
1970	23.6
1971	23.7
1975	25 7

SOURCE: Registrar General's Report, Refers to Marriages Registered only

TABLE 2 21

MEAN AGE AT MARRIAGE (YEARS)

	GENERAL MARRIAGE	KANDYAN	MUSLIM
1932	21 6	19.5	---
1946	22.9	21.1	19.8
1953	23 0	20 4	18.7
1963	23.2	20.0	19.5
1971	23 4	23.2	18.6
1973	23 3	21 7	19.4

SOURCE: The Population of Sri Lanka, Department of Census & Statistics, Colombo

TABLE 2.22

SINGULATE MEAN AGE AT MARRIAGE FOR CENSUS ENUMERATIONS, 1901 - 1971

YEAR	FEMALES
1901	18 3
1911	20 8
1921	21 4
1946	20.7
1953	20.9
1963	22 1
1971	23.5

SOURCE: (POPULATION OF SRI LANKA) 1974, Department of Census & Statistics, Colombo.

For the age groups above 39 years, however, there appears to be a slight increase in the proportion of females contracting marriage. Probably this could be attributed to the rise in the expectation of life and low mortality rates for females after 1946

Tables 2 19 to 2.22 indicate the changes that have occured in the average age at marriage for Sri Lankan females All four tables support an increase in the female singulate mean age at marriage. Table 2.21 presents the data from census reports while table 2.19 indicates the data on mean age at marriage from the Registrar-General's Reports. The mean singulate age at marriage for females has varied from 18.3 in 1901 to 23.5 in 1971. The available statistics indicate that the change in age at marriage has not affected the Muslim females (Table 2 20).

The drop in the proportion of currently married females in the younger age groups and the increase among the currently married older age groups indicate that those who postponed marriage have eventually married, and marriage is an accepted, socially desired goal for women in Sri Lanka.

The sociological reasons closely related to the postponement of marriage such as a longer period in the school system, higher levels of educational attainment, entry into the labour market of females and general unemployment particularly of males, show that young women exposed to education and employment can opt to delay marriage or remain unmarried The increased age at marriage of females is a significantly more effective factor in the fertility decline observed in Sri Lanka in recent years.

MORTALITY

Registration of vital events in Sri Lanka commenced in 1867 It was made compulsory in 1897, hence the data for the 1867 to 1897 period cannot be regarded as accurate, as during this period births, marriages and deaths may or may not have been registered. Analysis on mortality referred to here uses data generated from the vital registration system and census recordings Though some of the tables list data as far back as 1900, the study concentrates mainly on data after 1930 The census survey carried

out in 1953 to assess the coverage of death registration showed that completeness was 88.6 percent [12] In 1967 the completeness of registration was estimated to be around 94 5 percent,[13] which is quite appreciable. Accuracy of recording is a noteworthy factor which facilitates analysis and interpretation of data on mortality.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Table 2.23 presents the crude death rate for the population from 1920 to 1975. Table 2 24 presents the same for quinquennial periods from 1871 to 1975. Table 2.25 illustrates the crude death rate for the female sex while Table 2.26 illustrates the same for the males. Table 2.27 gives the crude death rate for both sexes for the intercensal years.

The Registrar-Generals' Reports indicate that Sri Lanka suffered from a Malarial epidemic in 1911, an Influenza epidemic in 1919 and another Malarial epidemic in 1935. The consequences of these were reflected in the high death rates observed during these years and subsequent years:

1911 - A crude death rate of 34.8 per thousand
1912 - A crude death rate of 32.4 per thousand
1919 - A crude death rate of 37.6 per thousand
1935 - A crude death rate of 36.6 per thousand

From 1930 onwards, the crude death rate showed a decline. The exception was the year 1935 which registered an unusually high death rate of 36.6 per thousand The period 1946 to 1950 marked a sharp decline in mortality.

With the mass spraying of D.D T.in malarial areas of the island, the death rate declined from 20 2 per 1000 in 1946 to 14.3 per 1000 in 1947. Since 12,578 died of Malaria in 1946 and 4,557 in 1947,[14] one conspicuous variable in this decline was the control of Malaria. But the causes underlying this declining trend in mortality have to be understood by a general examination of the situation in Sri Lanka in the broader perspective of the social, economic and political setting.

TABLE 2.23

CRUDE DEATH RATE 1921 - 1975

1921	31.1	1951	12.9
22	27.5	52	12.0
23	30.3	53	10.9
24	25.8	54	10.4
25	24.2	55	11.0
26	25.3	56	9.8
27	22.6	57	10.1
28	26.0	58	9.7
29	26.2	59	9.1
30	25.5	1960	8.6
1931	22.1	61	8.0
32	20.5	62	8.5
33	21.2	63	8.5
34	22.9	64	8.8
35	36.6	65	8.2
36	21.8	66	8.3
37	21.7	67	7.5
38	21.0	68	7.9
39	21.8	69	8.3
1940	20.6	1970	7.5
41	18.8	71	7.7
42	18.6	72	8.0
43	21.4	73	7.7
44	21.3	74	7.8
45	21.5	75	7.6
46	20.2		
47	14.3		
48	13.2		
49	12.6		
1950	12.6		

SOURCE: REGISTRAR GENERAL'S REPORT
One hundred years of vital statistics in Ceylon, 1867 - 1967
& Bulletin of Vital Statistics, 1974, Colombo.

TABLE 2.24

CRUDE DEATH RATE FOR QUINQUENNIAL PERIODS, 1871 - 1975

1871	-	1875	20.8
1876	-	1880	24.5
1881	-	1885	23.5
1886	-	1890	25.1
1891	-	1895	28 3
1896		1900	27.0
1901	-	1905	26.7
1906	-	1910	30.8
1911	-	1915	30.6
1916	-	1920	30.1
1921	-	1925	27.8
1926	-	1930	25.1
1931	-	1935	24.6
1936	-	1940	21.4
1941	-	1945	19.9
1946	-	1950	14.3
1951	-	1955	11.2
1956	-	1960	9.5
1961	-	1965	8.4
1966	-	1970	7.9
1971	-	1975	8.3

SOURCE: ESCAP, Country Monograph Series No.4, Population of Sri Lanka, U N. Publication.

TABLE 2.25

CRUDE DEATH RATE
MEAN FOR INTER CENSAL PERIODS

1921	-	1930	26.5
1931	-	1945	22.1
1946	-	1952	13.7
1953	-	1962	9.7
1963	-	1970	8.1
1971	-	1975	7.7

SOURCE: The Population of Sri Lanka, Department of Census, Colombo, 1974.

TABLE 2 26

CRUDE DEATH RATE BY SEX - MALES

1938	20.2
40	18.3
42	18.5
44	21.0
46	19.6
48	12.7
50	12.2
52	11.5
54	10.1
56	9.6
58	9.5
60	8.6
61	8.0
62	8.5
63	8.6
64	8.6
65	8.6
66	8.6
67	8.0
68	8.5
69	8.7
70	8.1
71	8.4
72	8.8
73	8.5
74	10.2

SOURCE: Registrar General's Reports.

TABLE 2.27

CRUDE DEATH RATE BY SEX - FEMALES

1938	22.0
40	19.4
42	18.8
44	21.7
46	22.1
48	13.8
50	13.0
52	12.5
54	10.7
56	10.1
58	9.8
60	8.6
61	8.0
62	8.5
63	8.5
64	8.5
65	7.8
66	7.9
67	7.0
68	7.3
69	7.6
70	6.9
71	7.0
72	7.3
73	6.9
74	7.5

SOURCE: Registrar General's Reports
Bulletin of Vital Statistics, 1974, Colombo, and a Hundred years of vital Statistics in Ceylon, 1867 - 1967.

In developed countries the decline in mortality began with increased industrialization which in turn lead to improved social and economic conditions producing a higher standard of living But in Sri Lanka mortality declined as a consequence of direct measures such as an improved health care system, and accessibility to health care facilities and indirect causes such as welfare schemes of subsidies of food stuffs and introduction of free education.

There was a gradual decline in the crude death rate from 1950 to 1975. The mean crude death rate for the intercensal period of 1953 to 1963 was 9 7 per 1000 whereas it was 8 1 per 1000 between 1963 to 1973. Since then the crude death rate has varied around 7.6 per 1000. Thus Sri Lanka has succeeded in achieving low levels of mortality enjoyed by countries of the West such as Sweden or the United States of America.

FEMALE MORTALITY

Table 2 27 indicates the crude death rate for the female sector of the population It reveals that the pattern of female mortality during the period 1920 to 1975 was similar to the pattern of mortality of the population as a whole. Although there existed a similarity in the patterns of mortality for the two sexes, yet the levels of female mortality have been different from that of the population as a whole and also from that of the males.

From 1871 to the first half of the twentieth century the female death rate had been well above the male death rate In 1938, the difference in the crude death rate between the two sexes was 1 8 per 1000 in favour of males. In 1946 the difference was 2 5 per 1000, in favour of males. In the four year period between 1946 to 1950 it registered a sharp decline for both sexes The female crude death rate declined from 22 1 per 1000 to 13.0 per 1000 - a decline of 43 percent. From 1950 to 1962 the decline continued but with relatively more gains in the female rates of decline. The sex difference in mortality was 1 0 per 1000 in 1952 in favour of males 1963 marked a turning point in the female mortality cycle, the male and female difference registering 0 1 per 1000 - in favour of females. This trend continued in the period 1963 to 1975

The change in sex-differentials of mortality levels is better illustrated in the more refined indices of the Expectation of Life at Birth or the Age Specific Death Rate.

AGE SEX SPECIFIC DEATH RATE - FEMALES

Tables 2 28, 2 29 and 2 31 depict Age Specific Mortality rates for females by five year age groups. Table 2 30 indicates the rate of decline for selected periods during the period 1920 to 1971. The following conclusions are evident from these figures.

In 1945 the mortality rate for females of all ages was 22.7 per 1000. This declined to 13 per 1000 in 1950. From Tables 2.28 and 2.29 it is seen that during this four year period the death rate had declined by 43 per cent equally for both females and males.

Table 2 28 further indicates a decline of over 50 per cent among females in the age ranges of 15 to 54 years. The 15 to 19 age agoup records a decline of 66 percent, the 20 to 24 age group of 59 percent, 25 to 34 age group a decline of 51 percent and 35 to 44 a decline of 58 percent. It is significant that these age groups comprise the child bearing span, and the decline corresponds to the sharp decline in the maternal mortality rates for the same period

In 1968 the mortality rate for females had declined to 7 3 per 1000 - a decline of 44 percent since 1950 The corresponding rate for males was 30 percent The percentage decline for females has been higher in all age groups with the exception of the 15 to 19 age group. The mortality rate of females of the 0 to 4 year age group has shown the sharpest decline, registering a decline of 68 1 percent

Thus the five year period 1945 to 1950 registered a 'drastic decline' of 43 percent whereas the 18 year period 1950 to 1968 registered a gradual decline of 44 percent in the mortality levels of females.

TABLE 2.29

AGE SPECIFIC DEATH RATES FOR FEMALES FOR SELECTED PERIODS (1920 - 1971)

AGE	1920-22	1945-47	1952-54	1962-64	1971
Under 1	211.3	133.6	78 4	53 1	44.9
1 - 4	55.0	30 0	20.5	9.8	6.0
5 - 9	16.8	5.5	3.7	2.3	1.7
10 - 14	10.6	5.2	1.4	1.1	1.0
15 - 19	10 5	6.6	2.2	1.6	1.4
20 - 24	14.7	9.0	3.7	2.6	1.8
25 - 29	17.2	10 6	4.5	3.1	2.4
30 - 34	19.3	11.7	4.9	3.3	2.5
35 - 39	19.8	11 6	5 4	4.0	3.2
40 - 44	20 4	11.9	5.3	4.2	3.4
45 - 49	21.1	13.0	6.4	5 7	4.7
50 - 54	25 3	15.7	8.4	7 1	6.3
55 - 59	36.8	21 5	12.3	11 5	9.9
60 - 64	54.5	31.5	18.3	16 6	15.3
65 - 69	80.4	46 9	31.0	33.1	26.3
70 - 74	127.0	68 9	50.1	52 9	47.1
75 - 79	192.9	105.3	75 5	81 6	68.0
80 - 84	260.8	186 2	138 7	132.5	126 3

SOURCE: Table 97, Population of Sri Lanka Country Monograph Series 4, ESCAP Asian Population Studies Series, U N.Publication

TABLE 2.30

ANNUAL RATES OF PERCENTAGE DECLINE IN ASDR FOR SELECTED PERIODS

	1920-22 1945-47	1945-47 1952-54	1952-54 1962-64	1962-64 1971-73	1920-22 1971
Under 1	1.3	5.9	3.2	1.9	78.7
1 - 4	1.8	4.5	5.2	4.9	89.1
5 - 9	2.7	4.7	3.8	3.3	89.9
10 - 14	2.0	10.4	2.1	1.1	90.6
15 - 19	1.5	9.5	2.7	1.6	86.7
20 - 24	1.6	8.4	3.0	3.9	87.8
25 - 29	1.5	8.2	3.1	2.8	86.0
30 - 34	1.6	8.3	3.3	3.0	87.0
35 - 39	1.7	7.6	2.6	2.5	83.8
40 - 44	1.7	7.9	2.1	2.4	83.3
45 - 49	1.5	7.3	1.1	2.2	77.7
50 - 54	1.5	6.6	1.6	1.4	75.1
55 - 59	1.7	6.1	0.7	1.7	73.1
60 - 64	1.7	6.0	0.9	1.0	71.9
65 - 69	1.7	4.8	-0.8	2.6	67.3
70 - 74	1.8	3.9	-0.6	1.4	62.9
75 - 79	1.8	4.0	-0.8	2.0	64.7
80 - 84	1.1	3.6	-0.5	0.6	51.6

SOURCE: Country Monograph Series No 4, ESCAP Asian Popualtion Studies U.N Publication.

TABLE 2.31

AGE SEX SPECIFIC DEATH RATES 1971

	FEMALES	MALES
Under 1	44.9	54.0
1 - 4	6.0	5.1
5 - 9	1.7	1.5
10 - 14	1.0	1.1
15 - 19	1.4	1.5
20 - 24	1.8	2.2
25 - 29	2.4	2.6
30 - 34	2.5	2.8
35 - 39	3.2	4.1
40 - 44	3.4	5.4
45 - 49	4.7	7.6
50 - 54	6.3	10.4
55 - 59	9.9	15.3
60 - 64	15.3	21.3
65 - 69	36.3	32.6
70 - 74	47.1	52.6
75 - 79	68.0	85.4
80 - 84	126.3	131.9
All ages	7.0	8.4

SOURCE: 1971 Census Reports, Department of Census & Statistics, Colombo (Unpublished print-outs).

In 1971 the female mortality level was 7.0 per 1000 indicating a decline of 0.3 per 1000 since 1968. The age specific analysis reveals that the mortality rates in all age groups are in favour of females, with the exception of the 1 to 4, 5 to 9 and 65 to 69 groups. This confirms our earlier conclusion that somewhere around 1968 the age specific mortality pattern switched in favour of females.

EXPECTATION OF LIFE AT BIRTH

The Expectation of Life at Birth is an index which is unaffected by the age structure of the population. It represents the average number of years of life a group of new born babies could expect to live if they continue to be subject to risks of mortality at each age observed for the period to which the index refers

Table 2.32 and 2.33 show expectation of life at birth in years for the two sexes. During the early period of this century the expectation of life at birth recorded for both males and females was low. From 1920 to 1922 the expectation of life at birth for males was 32.7 years and for females 30.7 years. These figures indicate a period of rather high mortality levels. The subsequent years show that the expectation of life at birth had increased for both males and females. This increase substantiates the decline in mortality levels. The greatest gains seem to have been during the 1945 to 1954 period. The pattern of decline exhibited in mortality levels is similar to both crude death rate and age specific death rate.

The expectation of life at birth favoured males over females up to the year 1963. This trend was reversed from the year which records a higher expectation of life at birth for females than for males. In 1963 the differences between the two sexes was 0.4 years in favour of females. In 1965 this difference increased to 1.3 years and in 1966 to 1.4 years. In 1967 the expectation of life at birth for females exceeded that for males by 2.1 years. The statistics available for 1971 recorded a life expectation of 66.9 years for females and 64.0 years for males.

TABLE 2.32

EXPECTATION OF LIFE AT BIRTH IN YEARS

PERIOD	MALE	FEMALE	EXCESS OF FEMALE EXPECTATION OVER THE MALE EXPECTATION
CEYLON			
1920 - 22	32.7	30.7	-2.0
1945 - 47	46.8	44.7	-2.1
1952	57.6	55 5	-2.1
1962 - 64	63.3	63.7	+0.4
1964	63.0	63.6	+0.6
1965	63.7	65.0	+1.3
1966	63.6	65.0	+1.4
1967	64.8	66.9	+2.1
SWEDEN			
1961 - 65	71.6	75.7	+4.1

SOURCE: T.Nadarajah, Life Tables Ceylon 1962 - 1967
Department of Census and Statistics, Ceylon, 1970.

TABLE 2.33

TRENDS IN LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH 1921 - 1971, FOR FEMALES IN SRI LANKA

YEAR	FEMALES	MALES
1921	30.6	32.6
1946	41.5	43.8
1953	55.7	57.8
1963	63.0	62.8
1971	66.9	64.0

SOURCE: Page 42, Table I, S.L.N.Rao.
Mortality and Morbidity in Sri Lanka.
Population Problems of Sri Lanka.
Demographic Training & Research Unit, University of Sri Lanka,
Colombo Campus, Colombo 3.

TABLE 2.34

RAPIDITY OF MORTALITY DECLINE AVERAGE ANNUAL INCREASE IN e_0^0 FEMALES OF SRI LANKA AND U.S.A.

	PERIOD	SRI LANKA		UNITED STATES	
		FEMALES	MALES	FEMALES	MALES
First	1921 - 1946	0.40	0.45	0.06	0.07
Second	1946 - 1963	1.13	1.10	0.42	0.41
Third	1963 - 1971	0.49	0.15	0.41	0.30

SOURCE: Same as Table 2.11.

Earlier Sri Lanka along with Pakistan was cited as the country which had a lower expectation of life for females than for males. But from 1963 females in Sri Lanka have enjoyed a higher expectation of life at birth than the males. The sex specific mortality pattern in Sri Lanka has approached the pattern in the advanced countries of the West.

INFANT MORTALITY

Infants, that is persons under one year of age, are subjected to greater risks of mortality than those of other age groups. Sri Lanka is no exception to this rule Table 2.29 supports this view. The age specific death rate for those under one year of age is seen to be much higher than the age specific death rate for the other groups. (Infant Mortality is defined as the number of infants who died in a particular year per 1000 infants born alive during that year)

Tables 2.35 and 2.36 depict the Infant Mortality Rates (IMR) for Sri Lanka from 1921 to 1975 1921 records a very high IMR - 187.5 per 1000. It is likely that the IMR would have been higher in the period prior to 1921.

The infant mortality rate for females and the infant mortality rate for the general population (both males and females - Tables 2.35 and 2.36) appear to be similar Like all other indices of mortality IMR shows a continuous decline from 1921 to 1975. But the decline has not been uniform over the period From 1921 to 1946, the infant mortality rate declined gradually except in the year 1936.

In 1935 the crude death rate exceeded the crude birth rate because of a malarial epidemic Thus the high infant mortality rates in 1936 can be attributed to the after effects of the malarial epidemic.

Between 1946 and 1951, however, there was a sharp decline. The infant mortality rate for 1946 was 135.8 per 1000 whereas in 1951 it was 74.7 per 1000. This indicated a decline of approximately 45 percent for the five year span. This period too coincided with a vigorous anti-malaria campaign throughout the island Directly or indirectly eradication of malaria appears to have been one of the contributory factors in this decline.[15]

TABLE 2.35

INFANT MORTALITY

AVERAGE RATES FOR QUINQUENNIAL PERIODS - 1881 - 1974

1881	-	85	154
86	-	90	158
91	-	95	169
96	-	1900	168
1901	-	05	171
06	-	10	189
11	-	15	201
16	-	20	190
21	-	25	190
26	-	30	175
31	-	35	183
36	-	40	160
41	-	45	131
46	-	50	101
51	-	55	75
56	-	60	63
61	-	65	54
66	-	70	51
1971	-	1975	47

SOURCE: T Nadarajah - Sources & Trends Difference in Mortality, p.136 ESCAP.

TABLE 2.36

INFANT MORTALITY RATES - RATES PER 1000.

1901	170	1929	187	1957	68
1902	173	1930	175	1958	64
1903	164	1931	158	1959	58
1904	174	1932	162	1960	57
1905	176	1933	157	1961	52
1906	198	1934	173	1962	52.8
1907	186	1935	163	1963	55.8
1908	185	1936	166	1964	56.9
1909	202	1937	158	1965	53.2
1910	176	1938	161	1966	54.2
1911	218	1939	166	1967	47.7
1912	215	1940	149	1968	50.3
1913	189	1941	129	1969	52.7
1914	213	1942	120	1970	47.5
1915	171	1943	132	1971	43.1
1916	184	1944	135	1972	45.1
1917	174	1945	140	1973	46.2
1918	188	1946	141	1974	48.5
1919	223	1947	101		
1920	182	1948	92		
1921	192	1949	87		
1922	188	1950	82		
1923	212	1951	82		
1924	186	1952	78		
1925	172	1953	71		
1926	174	1954	72		
1927	160	1955	71		
1928	177	1956	67		

SOURCE: Same as Table 2.1

TABLE 2.37

INFANT MORTALITY RATES FOR FEMALES

1921	187.5
1926	167.1
1931	144.5
1936	158.1
1941	122.4
1946	135.8
1951	74.7
1956	60.5
1961	48.1
1966	49.1
1971	43.1

PERCENTAGE DECLINE

	FEMALES	MALES
1921-46	27.6	26.1
1946-66	63.8	59.3
1921-66	73.8	69.3

SOURCE: ESCAP Country Monograph Series 4, Population of Sri Lanka, 1975.

TABLE 2.38

1971 FEMALE INFANT MORTALITY RATES BY DISTRICT

Colombo	37.6
Kalutara	29.5
Kandy	58.7
Matale	59.4
Nuwara Eliya	92 1
Galle	34.4
Matara	32.3
Hambantota	36.9
Jaffna	24.3
Mannar	35.6
Vavuniya	24.0
Batticaloa	51.7
Amparai	42.9
Trincomalee	35.7
Kurunegala	36.9
Puttalam	32.0
Anuradhapura	33.5
Polonnaruwa	36.4
Badulla	54.2
Moneragala	36.5
Ratnapura	53.4
Kegalle	37.5

SOURCE: Census Reports, 1971, Department of Census & Statistics, Colombo.

The percentage decline is seen in Table 2.36. A marked decline occured between 1946 to 1966, the proportionate decline being greater for female infants than for male infants Thus it is evident that in recent years a greater proportion of female infants have survived.

Statistics relating to the causes of infant death by sex are not available for the early years. Available data suggests that poor nutrition, lack of trained midwives, unhealthy methods of delivery and tetanus resulting from the infection of the naval were major causes of infant mortality during that time The drop in the IMR may be linked with food subsidies and the fact that the majority of women (approximately 65%) have their deliveries in institutions. It is only a minute proportion who do not have the assistance of some trained persons.

MATERNAL MORTALITY

Maternal Mortality is defined as deaths among mothers during pregnancy or as a result of child birth Maternal mortality rate is calculated as the number of female deaths attributed to complications of pregnancy, child birth, and puerperium per 1000 live births during a specified time.

Maternal mortality rates are available from 1921. Between 1921 and 1938 these rates had been exceedingly high. 1935 seems to have been an exceptionally bad year, recording the highest incidence of maternal death for the entire period for which data is available The subsequent years of 1936, 1937 and 1938 also record high maternal mortality rates. Malaria had been a major cause that accounted for this high death rate Low literacy levels prevalent among the female sector of the population and unsatisfactory maternal services seem to be some of the other causes of high maternal deaths during this early period.

From 1940 the maternal mortality rates showed a gradual decline, with the four year span from 1946 to 1950 recording an accelerated decline. 1946 records a maternal mortality rate of 15.5 per 1000. In 1950 it dropped to 5 6 per 1000. The decline in maternal mortality rates during this four year period is approximately 88 percent. In the 1950s the level dropped still lower

to around 4 4 per 1000; in the 1960s the maternal mortality rate was around 2 2 per 1000; in 1975 it further declined to 1.2 per 1000. Thus Sri Lanka has succeeded in achieving very low levels of maternal mortality comparable with the developed countries of the West.

Improvement in general health services, particularly better maternal and child care services, have been the main factors for this decline.

Free education was introduced to the country in 1945. By 1960 some of the effects of this policy came to be felt. The women became more educated. This would have helped in the decline of both Maternal and Infant Mortality rates.

The higher age at marriage too has indirectly helped to reduce maternal deaths. Before 1930, the mean age at marriage was low, being around 18 years for females Bearing children at a young age could mean that the mother was more susceptible to risks of mortality, than when bearing children as a mature adult at 24 or 25 years.

OTHER DIFFERENTIALS IN MORTALITY

In a study of district differentials in mortality, Dr.S.L.N.Rao has disclosed that wide variations prevail from district to district. In 1971, the average age at death was 55 9 years for Nuwara Eliya and 69 8 years for Matara, showing a difference of 14 years. The highest infant mortality rates were recorded for Nuwara Eliya and other estate areas where there is a high concentration of Indian Tamil population. Batticaloa and other districts with a high Moor population also recorded a high IMR. Jaffna and Polonnaruwa districts recorded the lowest IMR

As stated earlier, the female Indian Tamil estate population and the Moors have the lowest levels of literacy, and are the most backward among the communities of Sri Lanka With greater development of these areas the existing district differences are likely to be reduced

TABLE 2.39

MATERNAL MORTALITY RATES
(THESE STATISTICS ARE AVAILABLE FROM 1921 ONLY)

1921	21.0	1951	5.8
22	20.3	52	5.8
23	21.6	53	4.9
24	19.2	54	4.6
25	18.5	55	4.1
26	19.0	56	3.8
27	17.0	57	3.7
28	19.2	58	3.9
29	20.4	59	3.4
1930	21.4	1960	3.0
31	20.8	61	2.5
32	19.2	62	3.0
33	18.6	63	2.4
34	20.1	64	2.8
35	26.5	65	2.4
36	21.6	66	2.2
37	19.9	67	1.7
38	20.1	68	1.8
39	18.2	69	1.5
1940	16.1	70	1.6
41	15.3	71	1.3
42	14.4	72	1.2
43	13.3	73	1.2
44	13.7	74	1.2
45	16.5	75	1.2
46	15.5		
47	10.6		
48	8.3		
49	6.5		
1950	5.6		

SOURCE: Bulletin of Vital Statistics 1974 and Registrar General's Reports, Colombo

TABLE 2.40

MATERNAL MORTALITY RATES - MEAN FOR THE 10 YEAR PERIODS

1921	-	30	19.8
1931	-	40	20.1
1941	-	50	12.0
1951	-	60	4.4
1961	-	70	2.2
1971	-	75	1.2

SOURCE: POPULATION OF SRI LANKA, 1974, Department of Census & Statistics, Colombo.

TABLE 2.41

ETHNIC DIFFERENTIALS IN MORTALITY - 1963

ETHNIC GROUP	CDR	IMR
All Races	8.6	55 1
Sinhalese	7.9	49.2
Sri Lanka Tamil	10 0	52.0
Indian Tamil	11.4	102.3
Sri Lanka - Moor	10.2	62.2
Indian Moor	3.1	35.1
Burghers	9.3	33.8
Malays	7.3	47.4

SOURCE: ESCAP Country Monograph, Series No.4, Population of Sri Lanka, U.N.Publication

TABLE 2.42

CRUDE DEATH RATE OF SOME COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD, 1976

	CDR PER 100
World	12
Asia	13
Africa	20
Canada	7
United States	9
Sweden	11
India	15
United Kingdom	12
Singapore	5
Philippines	11
Burma	16
Sri Lanka	8
Nepal	20

As summarised by Dr. S. L. N. Rao, the following stages describe the Mortality transition in Sri Lanka:

(a) Prior to 1946 - an initial stage of relatively slow gain in expectation of life at birth, which favoured the male sector;

(b) 1946 to 1963 - a second stage of accelerated gain, with a phenomenal decline recorded in the first four years from 1946 to 1950, as indicated by the mortality indices of Life Expectation at Birth, Age Specific Death Rate, Crude Death Rate, Infant Mortality Rate, and Maternal Mortality Rate The gains were more favourable to females.

(c) 1963 onwards - a third stage of slow gain, tending towards a stationary mortality level The gains have significantly favoured the female sector.

A further widening of mortality levels between sexes can be expected if the present trend continues. For instance, in Sweden the infant mortality rate for the female sector is 9 9 per 1000, whereas the corresponding figure for Sri Lanka is 44 9 per 1000 Thus, despite the fact that female mortality rates are low in Sri Lanka, there is scope for much greater improvement.

It is difficult to isolate any one particular factor for mortality decline. It seems to be a result of a complex of forces such as social and economic development, education and improvement of health services.

CAUSES OF DEATH

Prior to 1950 Sri Lanka followed the fifth revision of the International list of causes of deaths and after 1950 Sri Lanka changed to the sixth International list of causes of death. The accuracy of reporting of the causes of death is very low.

Table 2 43 indicates the causes of death for females of Sri Lanka. The data has been calculated for the period of 1953 to 1957; 1958 to 1962; 1963 to 1967; 1968 to 1972, and grouped into five categories:

GROUP I B_1 - B_{17} Infective and Parasitic diseases

TABLE 2.43

AGE SEX SPECIFIC DEATH RATES FOR DIFFERENT CAUSES

(Computed by the writer using Registrar General's Reports of the Years: 1955, 1960, 1965 and 1970.)

YEAR 1955	Period 1953 - 1957							
	0 -	1 -	5-	15 -	25 -	45 -	65 -	75 +
GROUP I	3.7	15 14	23.8	14 27	13.31	9.45	3.74	1.27
GROUP II	.04	12	96	79	3.94	8 47	3.21	.56
GROUP III	02	.03	3.21	8.2	8.76	18.29	16.2	6.6
GROUP IV	027	1 79	10.52	9.51	3.44	2 37	1,34	.8
GROUP V	62 8	3.2	9 5	25.2	25.2	28 1	4.8	5.4
YEAR 1960	PERIOD 1958 - 1962							
GROUP I	2.9	17.9	12.3	8 8	11.8	5.5	3.04	1.18
GROUP II	.04	13	1.07	1.28	5.2	11.6	3.6	.82
GROUP III	.06	.89	4 2	11.2	12.9	17 6	15.69	6.74
GROUP IV	.36	2.5	12 1	15 3	6.45	2 7	1.2	.71
GROUP V	60 8	3.4	9.6	24.0	27.1	4 2	5.6	2.3
YEAR 1965	PERIOD 1962 - 1967							
GROUP I	.03	.1007	0170	8.3	1 95	6 9	7.5	---
GROUP II	1 8	.6	8	4 1	2.0	8 1	11,97	5.0
GROUP III	5 4	2 7	1 36	13 6	1.35	21 37	1.02	.8
GROUP IV	3	3 8	1.35	09	.2	.02	3.39	10.8
GROUP V	10.5	25 5	20 0	---	42.1	---	4 6	5.2
YEAR 1970	PERIOD 1968 - 1972							
GROUP I	02	.006	.016	6 2	1.65	5.4	6.4	---
GROUP II	.8	4	6	2.3	1 8	8.1	6.8	4.8
GROUP III	4.8	1 8	1 2	12.1	1 4	20.3	.01	.6
GROUP IV	.2	2.8	.35	06	3	.01	2.31	8.8
GROUP V	62 4	26.6	22 2	---	46.1	---	4.8	6.8

SOURCE: Computed using Registrar General's Reports on Causes of Death.

GROUP	II	B_{18}	Death from Cancer
GROUP	III	B_{22} - B_{24-28}	Diseases of the Circulatory System
GROUP	IV	$B_{47, 48, 49, 50}$	Deaths by violence
GROUP	V	$B_{19, 20, 21, 23, 33, 34, 35 \ldots\ldots 44}$	

It is observed that during the period of 1953 to 1957 infectious diseases accounted for a high proportion of female deaths. Since then deaths due to infectious diseases have decreased. By 1970, the proportion of these deaths was very low. Children under 5 years have been affected by this group of diseases. The proportion of deaths from Cancer has increased over the period 1955 to 1970 Females of 45 years and over seem to be particularly susceptible to this disease.

The proportion of deaths due to circulatory diseases too has increased, and in 1970, accounted for 20.3 percent of deaths in the age group of females over 45 years

The proportion of deaths due to violence is negligible, and has not changed during the 20 year period

Group V seem to be the major cause of death among females, of all ages and during all periods. The proportion of deaths in this group is the highest, and evidences poor diagonises of the causes of deaths in Sri Lanka.

FERTILITY

In Sri Lanka the impact of unrestricted population growth holds the attention of all planners of development programmes today. Reference is made to this problem in the Five Year Plan:

> "A word must be said about the implications of population growth both for short term and long term economic development The continued growth of population at the present high rates will pose problems which would defy every attempt at solution "(16)

> "Fertility is subject to a host of biological, sociological, social, economic and cultural variables, which interrupt the logical analysis and measurement of it."[17]

Fertility is conditioned by biological factors unlike mortality. Reproduction is mostly voluntary and requires interaction between two members of opposite sex. Fertility is also limited to a section of the population, only females, generally in the age span 15 to 50 years, can conceive. Although fertility is a repetitive process a small proportion of women in this age group are physiologically sterile throughout their life time. The greater majority are sterile during some part of their reproductive age span. Thus the age structure of the female population has an important bearing on levels of fertility.

The age structure is also relevant to the fecundity of women. Fecundity in women is known to rise from about 1 percent at the age of 14 years to a maximum of 93 percent at the age of 22 years. It then falls at first gradually and later with increasing rapidity.

Further, the interaction of social, cultural and ethical norms in Sri Lanka are strongly supportive of the institution of marriage. Reproduction generally occurs within the institution of marriage.

Fertility can be defined both in relation to males and females.[18] The data in this study refers to females only and was obtained from the two main sources of data on fertility in Sri Lanka:

(a) Registration data-vital statistics;
(b) Data generated from census reports.

Fertility is also subjected to variations of time. Statistics on births by maternal age is available only from 1952. Hence, the data from the censuses of 1963 and 1971 have received more attention in this analysis than data prior to 1952.

TIME TREND ANALYSIS

VARIATIONS IN LEVELS OF FERTILITY

Considering the variations in fertility levels as depicted by the crude birth rate and the age specific fertility rates, the period 1900 to 1975 can be categorised in the following manner in terms of levels of fertility:

(a) 1900 to 1950 - A phase exhibiting high birth rates averaging around 36 to 38 per 1000. (A detailed analysis of causes of fertility variations during this period is not feasible due to lack of data).

(b) The second half of the twentieth century from around 1953 could be considered as a turning point in fertility levels. 1953 to 1963 marks an initial phase of fertility decline.

(c) 1963 to 1971 - A second phase, where the fertility decline is more marked than in the previous period.

(d) 1971 + the decline is definitely established in Sri Lanka.

INDEX OF MEASUREMENT - CRUDE BIRTH RATE

The crude birth rate is defined as the number of births in a given year per 1000 mid-year population of the region concerned Tables 2 44 and 2.45 give the annual crude birth rate of the population from 1901 to 1974 and the quinquennial averages of the crude birth rate from 1871 to 1974 respectively

Prior to 1950 the recorded birth rate is relatively high varying around 38 to 39 per 1000. Until 1946 the prevalent high death rate seems to have off-set the high birth rate. Since 1946 the death rate has declined, but the birth rate has remained at a constant level of around 38 to 40 per 1000 In 1953 the crude birth rate recorded was 38.7 per 1000. In 1960 it was 36.6 per 1000 Thus a high crude birth rate has prevailed until 1960 Together with the fast declining death rate, 1946 to 1960 has been a period of increased population growth rate - the repercussions of which the country experienced during the last twenty years.

TABLE 2.44

ANNUAL CRUDE BIRTH RATES 1901 - 1971 (per 1000)

1901	37 5	1934	37 1	1968	32.0
1902	39.1	1935	34.4	1969	30.4
1903	40.0	1936	34 0	1970	29.4
1904	38 6	1937	37 7	1971	30.1
1905	38 7	1938	35 8	1972	29 7
1906	36 5	1939	35.9	1973	27.8
1907	33 6	1940	35 7	1974	27.3
1908	40 9	1941	35.6	1975	27.2
1909	37 5	1942	35 8		
1900	39 1	1943	39 5		
1911	37 9	1944	36 1		
1912	33.3	1945	35.9		
1913	38.6	1946	37.5		
1914	38 2	1947	38.5		
1915	36.9	1948	39 7		
1916	39 0	1950	39.1		
1917	40 1	1951	39.7		
1918	39 2	1952	39 8		
1919	36 0	1953	38 8		
1920	38 5	1954	38 8		
1921	40 7	1955	35 8		
1922	39 1	1956	37.3		
1923	38 7	1957	36.4		
1924	37 5	1958	36.5		
1925	39 9	1959	37 0		
1926	42 0	1960	36 6		
1927	41 0	1961	35 8		
1928	41 9	1962	35.5		
1929	38 3	1963	34.4		
1930	39 0	1964	33 2		
1931	37 4	1965	33.1		
1932	37 0	1966	32 3		
1933	38 6	1967	31.6		

SOURCE: Registrar General's Reports, Bulletin of Vital Statistics, 1974, Colombo, Government Press.

TABLE 2.45

CRUDE BIRTH RATE

QUINQUENNIAL AVERAGES 1871 - 1974

1871	-	75	28.6
76	-	80	26.3
81	-	85	28.6
86	-	90	30.2
91	-	95	31.7
96	-	1900	37.1
1901	-	1905	38.6
06	-	10	37.5
11	-	15	37.0
16	-	20	38.2
21	-	25	39.2
26	-	30	40.4
31	-	35	36.9
36	-	40	35.9
41	-	45	36.6
46	-	50	38.9
51	-	55	38.1
56	-	60	36.5
61	-	65	34.3
66	-	70	31.1
71	-	74	28.7

SOURCE: TABLE 115, ESCAP Country Monograph Series 4, Population of Sri Lanka.

TABLE 2.46

SINGULATE MEAN AGE AT MARRIAGE FOR FEMALES BY DISTRICT IN 1963 AND 1971

DISTRICT	AGE AT MARRIAGE FOR FEMALES		INCREASE
	1963	1971	
Colombo	23.3	24.4	1.1
Kalutara	24.0	25 2	1.2
Kandy	22.0	24.0	2.0
Matale	20.8	22.7	1.9
Nuwara Eliya	21.6	23.4	1.8
Galle	24.8	25 8	1.0
Matara	24 2	25.7	1.5
Hambantota	21 4	23.5	2.1
Jaffna	21.7	23.4	1.7
Mannar	18.5	20.2	1.7
Vavuniya	18.6	20 3	1 7
Batticaloa	18.2	20.1	1.9
Amparai	18.2	20.1	1 9
Trincomalee	18.1	19.7	1.6
Kurunegala	20.9	22.8	1.9
Puttalam	20.7	22 1	1 4
Anuradhapura	19.1	21.4	2.3
Polonnaruwa	19.0	21.0	2.0
Badulla	21 2	23.3	2 1
Monaragala	18.8	21 0	2.2
Ratnapura	22 0	23.8	1 8
Kegalle	22 5	24 4	1 9
Sri Lanka	22.1	23 5	1.4

SOURCE: Population of Sri Lanka, Department of Census & Statistics, Colombo, 1974

TABLE 2.47

MALES PER 100 FEMALES IN VARIOUS AGE GROUPS WITH AN AGE DIFFERENCE OF 5 YEARS IN FAVOUR OF MALES

		1963	1971
Males	20-24		
Females	15-19	88.3	90.6
Males	25-29		
Females	20-24	35.1	73.4
Males	30-34	95.9	77.7
Females	25-29		
Males	35-39		
Females	30-34	109.2	102.2
Males	40-44	83.4	87.1
Females	35-39		
Males	20-34		
Females	15-29	89 3	81.1
Males	20-44	91 1	84.9
Females	15-39		

SOURCE: Population Problems of Sri Lanka, D T.R.U , University of Sri Lanka, Colombo.
D F.S Fernando, Article Recent Fertility Trends in Ceylon, 1953-1968.

TABLE 2.48

PROPORTIONS OF WOMEN NEVER MARRIED BY AGE GROUP

	1946	1953	1963	1971	1975
15 - 19	75 3	75 7	85.0	89.4	93.2
20 - 24	29.4	32.5	41.3	53.2	60.6
25 - 29	11 8	12.8	17.1	24 6	31.9
30 - 34	6 6	7 5	8.3	10.9	13.7
35 - 39	4.3	5 4	4.8	5.8	5.8
40 - 44	4.1	5 0	4.3	4.7	4.6
45 - 49	3.4	4.4	3.9	4.1	2.1

SOURCE: 1975 DATA FROM WORLD FERTILITY SURVEY 1946, 1953, 1963, 1971 FIGURES FROM COMPLETE TABULATIONS OF CENSUS REPORTS.

TABLE 2.49

WOMEN IN DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL POPULATION.

	1963	1971
15 - 19	4 8	5.3
20 - 24	4 2	4.9
25 - 29	3.5	3 7
30 - 34	3.0	2.8
35 - 39	2 9	2 8
40 - 44	2.0	2.2
45 - 49	1.9	2.0
15 - 49	22.3	23 7

SOURCE: 1963, 1971 Census Reports, Department of Census & Statistics Colombo.

In 1963 the crude birth rate recorded was 34.4 per 1000. In 1968 the comparable figure was 32 0 per 1000. In 1974 the crude birth rate was 27.3 per 1000 [19] Thus using the crude birth rate as an index of assessment a decline in the levels of fertility is observed since the 1960s and was accelerated in the 1970s

INDEX OF MEASUREMENT - AGE SEX SPECIFIC FERTILITY RATE

Tables 2.50 and 2 51 show that the age specific fertility rates between the two intercensal years of 1953 to 1963 and 1963 to 1971 have declined. A sharp decline of 24.1 per cent in the 15 to 19 age group and a moderate decline of 12.1 per cent in the 20 to 24 age group can be observed between 1953 and 1963. Between 1963 and 1971 a further decline of 23.8 per cent and 19.1 percent has occured in the 15 to 19 and 20 to 24 age groups respectively. The marked decline observed in these younger age groups may chiefly be a result of reductions in the proportions of persons who married in the 15 to 24 age groups.[20]

Between 1963 and 1971, unlike in the former intercensal years, the age specific fertility rates dropped appreciably for all 5 year age segments from 15 to 49 years. The total fertility rate declined from 5.04 in 1963 to 4 16 in 1971 [21] Therefore, it appears that the fertility decline in the decade of the sixties seems to be much sharper than the fertility decline in the decade of the fifties. Wright[22] states that marital fertility declined little during the period of 1953 to 1963. Table 2.52 substantiates that the decline in marital fertility rates from 1963 to 1971 is more marked than the decline from 1953 to 1963. This means that more married women are having fewer children than in the past decades.

The more refined index of the age specific fertility rates indicate a decline in fertility levels from 1953, although the crude birth rate does not reflect this initial phase of decline. Both indices amply substantiate the second phase of decline from 1963 to 1971.

The major variables in fertility levels demographically accepted as applicable to any society in the world include:

TABLE 2.50

AGE SPECIFIC FERTILITY RATES

AGE GROUPS	1953	1963	% CHANGE
15 - 19	68 8	52.2	- 24.1
20 - 24	259.3	227.8	- 12.1
25 - 29	295.1	278.4	- 5.7
30 - 34	246.0	239.5	- 2.6
35 - 39	150 1	157.2	+ 4 6
40 - 44	38.1	45.8	+ 20.2
45 - 49	6.8	6 6	- 2.9
GENERAL FERTILITY RATE			
15 - 14	189.5	169.1	- 12.0
TOTAL FERTILITY RATE			
	5.32	5.04	- 5.3
GROSS REPRODUCTION RATE			
	2.61	2.46	- 5.7

SOURCE: D F S.Fernando
Fertility Trends in Ceylon, 1953 - 1969 and the National Family Planning Programme Monograph 17
Department of Census and Statistics, Ceylon, 1970.

TABLE 2 51

AGE SPECIFIC FERTILITY RATES FOR 1963 AND 1971 AND PERCENTAGE CHANGE 1963 - 1971

AGE GROUP	1963	1971	% CHANGE
15 - 19	52 2	39 8	- 23 8
20 - 24	227.8	184.2	- 19 1
25 - 29	278.4	231.9	- 16.7
30 - 34	239.5	199 1	- 16.9
35 - 39	157.0	131.0	- 16.6
40 - 44	45.8	39.6	- 13 5
45 - 49	6.6	5.6	- 15 2
G F R.			
15 - 14	166.8	138 7	- 16.8
TFR	5 04	4 16	- 17.5

SOURCE: W F.S Survey Table 1 2
1975 First Report
Department of Census and Statistics.
Ministry of Plan Implimentation, Colombo.

TABLE 2.52

AGE SPECIFIC MARITAL FERTILITY RATES - 1953, 1963, 1971 AND PERCENT CHANGE

AGE GROUP	1953	1963	1971	% CHANGE 53 - 63	% CHANGE 63 - 71
15 - 19	288	354	382	+ 22.9	+ 7.9
20 - 24	394	396	402	+ 0.5	+ 1.5
25 - 29	339	344	316	+ 1.5	- 8.1
30 - 34	280	270	232	- 3.6	- 14.1
35 - 39	174	175	147	+ 0.6	- 16.0
40 - 44	47	53	46	+ 12.8	- 13.2
45 - 49	9	8	7	- 11.1	- 12.5

SOURCE: World Fertility Survey, Sri Lanka, 1st Report, 1975
Table 1.3, Department of Census & Statistics, Ministry of Plan Implementation.

TABLE 2.53

AGE SPECIFIC MARITAL FERTILITY RATES - 1953 AND 1963

AGE GROUP	1953	1963	PERCENT DECLINE
15 - 19	288	347	
20 - 24	394	394	
25 - 29	339	341	
30 - 34	280	267	
35 - 39	174	175	
40 - 44	47	53	
45 - 49	9	8	
MARITAL FERTILITY			
15 - 49	251.8	238.3	- 5.3

SOURCE: D F S Fernando

Fertility Trends in Ceylon and the National Family Planning Programme

Monograph - 17

Department of Census & Statistics, Ceylon, 1970.

(a) Age at marriage;
(b) Proportions of females married;
(c) Age Sex structure of the population.[23]

In Sri Lanka the decline in fertility has been attributed to four interrelated demographic factors, all of which reflect changes in the behaviour of women:

(a) increase in the singulate mean age at marriage;
(b) changes in the marital age structure between 1953 to 1963;
(c) decline in the proportion of currently married females in early child bearing age groups;
(d) decline in marital fertility

These features indicate that women have begun to postpone marriage, more and more young women in the peak years of reproduction remain unmarried, and married couples are having fewer children. It is significant that these changes in the behaviour of women have been largely attributed by sociologists and demographers to socio-economic benefits of education, employment and improved health of women.

THE MEAN SINGULATE AGE AT MARRIAGE

Illegitimacy is very low in Sri Lanka society. Contraception is not widely practised as in the Western countries. The history of family planning does not date far back. Hence age at marriage constitutes a significant demographic determinant of over all levels of fertility

Age at marriage especially for females has been known to be low in Sri Lanka during the 19th century. During this period the proportion of women seeking careers was low. They were largely illiterate as not much attention was given to the education of females. The result was that women performed the role of a mother and a housewife almost exclusively.

The earliest available statistics on singulate mean age at marriage date to 1901 and records 18.3 for females. Since 1901 a steady increase is observed in subsequent censuses. From 1950 to 1960 the mean age at marriage had increased by 1.2 years, and for the intercensal period of 1963 to 1971 the increase was 1.4 years

The statistics for different districts in Sri Lanka (Table 2.46) during the period of 1963 to 1971 indicate that all 22 districts record an increase in the singulate mean age at marriage. Galle records the minimum increase with 1.0 years while Anuradhapura records the maximum increase with 5.3 years. The predominently Muslim areas of Batticaloa and Mannar recorded an increase above the average national increase The above evidence suffices to conclude that in Sri Lanka there has been an overall increase in the mean age at marriage for females.

The mean age at marriage in Sri Lanka has increased for both males and females. A higher age at marriage for females is of special significance in that it shortens their reproductive life span, and it is generally accepted that women marrying late have fewer children than women marrying at a younger age. Therefore, the increase of age at marriage especially for females has been a major contributor to the lowering of fertility levels in Sri Lanka.

A host of other economic, social and cultural factors affecting marriage support the increase in age at marriage for females. Table 2.58 depicts the effects of educational attainment on age at marriage. With each level of educational attainment the age at marriage increases by a number of years and a marked difference is noticed in the age at marriage between the women with ten or more years of schooling and those women who have not received any schooling.

Further, in Sri Lanka females generally marry males who are at least 4 to 5 years elder to them. The scarcity of eligible males at the marriageable age is another factor contributing towards an increase in age at marriage (Table 2 47) causing the 'marriage squeeze'.

> "In 1963 there depicts a minor sex imbalance at the popular marriageable ages, whereas in 1971 the situation seems to have deteriorated resulting in a serious marriage squeeze."(24)

Male unemployment is seen most in the age groups 20 to 24 years and 25 to 29 years Since employed males were sought by females, the chances of females and males both marrying at the ages of 15 to 24 years have greatly reduced.

CHANGES IN THE MARITAL AGE STRUCTURE OF THE POPULATION

Table 2 18 shows the proportion of women currently married. In 1971, 10.3 percent of the females in the age group 15 to 19 years were married. The corresponding figures were 15.0 percent in 1963, 23.7 percent in 1953 and 23.9 percent in 1946.

A similar decline is observed in the age group 20 to 24, the figures being 63 4 in 1946, 65.8 in 1953, 57 6 in 1963 and 45.9 in 1971.

Although the age group 25 to 29 years does not show an appreciable decline, nevertheless, a minimal decline in the proportion of females currently married is recorded from 1946 to 1971.

Conversely, the proportion of women never married has increased in the age groups of 15 to 19 years, 20 to 24 years, 25 to 29 years and 30 to 34 years for all intercensal years between 1946 and 1971, (Table 2.48). However, the changes in the age groups of 35 to 39 years, 40 to 44 years and 45 to 49 years are appreciably low. The proportion of women never married in the age group 45 to 49 years was 3.4 percent in 1946, and 4.1 percent in 1971.

The proportion of unmarried females in the last two age groups can be used as an index of spinsterhood. Thus in Sri Lanka the proportion of women remaining unmarried has not varied for the last quarter century, rather a delay in age at marriage for females has taken place.

Thus the increase in the mean singulate age at marriage and a reduction in the proportion of currently married females in the early child bearing age groups are two factors that have favoured a decline in the level of fertility by the year 1971 This trend is continuing upto the present day.

AGE SEX STRUCTURE OF THE POPULATION

Table 2 49 shows the proportion of females in each age group as a percentage of the total population. This represents the potentiality for fertility. In

1963 the females in the reproductive span constituted 22.3 percent of the total population This proportion had increased to 23.7 percent in 1971. For all 5 year segments of the reproductive span, the proportion of females in each group in 1971 exceeded the corresponding numbers for 1963, if judged from the age composition of females in the child bearing span alone. The years 1971 and after appear to have a potential for higher fertility than the years after 1963 or the years after 1953.

A series of standardization of birth rates has been made using 1963 and 1971 data 'Changes in the female marital structure have accounted for 100 percent decline in the crude birth rate and was the most significant factor that contributed to the decline in the birth rate between 1963 and 1971 Age structure retarded the decline, but age and marital structure accounted for 63 percent of the decline while 37 percent is explained by the decline of marital fertility '(25)

SOME DIFFERENTIALS AFFECTING FERTILITY

Foremost among the socio-economic and cultural variables affecting the decline in fertility levels is educational attainment. Studies done in other countries have indicated a positive relationship between the level of education and fertility. Improved female literacy (Table 2.59) and retention of females in schools for longer periods are factors that have caused an increase in age at marriage of females in Sri Lanka. Reduction in marital fertility can be explained by females joining the labour force and also their attitude of favouring small families. Family planning activities vary over the island. The impact of family planning activities need to be evaluated in analysing the causes of fertility decline. One would also wish to observe whether this decline in fertility levels is limited to a sector of the population in Sri Lanka, and whether there are urban, rural or even ethnic differences in fertility decline. These queries lead to a discussion of some fertility differentials.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Most of the available research evidence in India, Russia and the United States indicates a positive association between reduction of fertility and female educational attainment. In developing countries much attention is focussed on female education and it is expected that higher attainment levels in education by females would have an impact on levels of fertility. At the 1971 census the ever married females of the child bearing age were classified into five categories on educational status:

(a) No schooling;
(b) Passed Grades 1, 2, 3 and 4;
(c) Passed Grades 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9;
(d) Passed G.C.E. (Ordinary Level) or equivalent;
(e) Passed G.C.E. (Advanced Level) or higher.

Fertility was measured by the number of live births born to women in different age groups (Table 2.54).

In the age group 45 to 49 years the live births born to ever married women with no schooling was 5.973. With each successive level of educational attainment the number of live births decreased. To those women with the highest educational attainment level in the 45 to 49 age group the number of live births was 3.240. For all age groups the number of live births born to women decreases with increasing educational levels. Thus a significant difference is seen in fertility levels between the educated and the uneducated women.

There is little difference in fertility levels of the women with grades 1 to 4 schooling and women with no schooling, whereas a noticeable difference in fertility exists between these two groups of women (women who have studied upto grade 4 and women with no schooling) and those women who have passed G.C.E. (Ordinary Level) Examination.

Table 2.55 gives the mean parity of ever married women aged 45 to 49 · data from the World Fertility Survey of Sri Lanka.

FERTILITY AND EDUCATION

TABLE 2.54

NUMBER OF LIVE BIRTHS BORNE BY EVER MARRIED WOMEN ACCORDING TO AGE AND EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

AGE GROUP	NO.SCHOO-LING	GRADES 1 - 4	GRADES 5 - 9	PASSED G.C.E. O/L	PASSED G.C.E. A/L
15 - 19	0.633	0.624	0.534	0.380	---
20 - 24	1.681	1.634	1.365	0.942	0.519
25 - 29	3.100	3.077	2.480	1.580	0.940
30 - 34	4.463	4.426	3.665	2.415	1.859
35 - 39	5.706	5.450	4.593	3.221	2.561
40 - 44	6.035	5.687	5.080	3.594	3.099
45 - 49	5.973	5.758	5.084	4.094	3.240

SOURCE: The Population of Sri Lanka, Department of Census & Statistics, Colombo, 1974.

TABLE 2.55

MEAN PARITY OF EVER MARRIED WOMEN AGED 45-49 BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION

None	1 - 5 Years	6 - 9 Years	10 + Years
6.4	6.1	5.5	4.2

Reference made to all ever married women, aged 45 - 49 at the date of the Survey.

Overall mean for this group is 6.0 Children.

SOURCE: Table 5.3 W.F.S. Survey, 1st Report, 1975.

Mean Parity of ever married women who were married for 10 - 19 years before the Survey Overall mean of this sub-sample is 4.3 children.

LEVEL OF EDUCATION

NONE	1 - 5 Years	6 - 9 Years	10 + Years
4.5	4.4	4.2	3.6

SOURCE: Table 5.1 World Fertility Survey, 1st Report, 1975.
Department of Census and Statistics, Colombo.

TABLE 2.56

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE POPULATION 15 YEARS AND OVER BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION FOR FEMALES 1971

	15-19 YEARS	20-24 YEARS	25-29 YEARS	30-34 YEARS	35-39 YEARS	40-44 YEARS	45-49 YEARS
No Schooling	15.6	18.3	23.4	27.1	38.6	39.6	47.0
Passed Grades 1, 2, 3 and 4	18.6	18.2	21.8	22.0	23.6	23.8	21.7
Passed Grades 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9	50.9	37.7	33.3	34.2	28.2	29.7	27.0
G.C.E. (O/L) Less than 6 Subjects or equivalent	10.5	14.2	10.1	6.6	3.6	1.9	1.2
G.C.E. (O/L) More than 6 Subjects or equivalent	3.9	8.7	8.4	7.5	3.9	2.6	1.4
Higher Qualification	.4	2.2	3.0	2.7	2.1	2.5	1.7

SOURCE: Census Report, 1971

TABLE 2 57

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND FERTILITY

Average number of children born alive to evermarried fertile women by ethnic group and education and employment.

Socio - Economic Status

GROUP I - Educated Economically Active

GROUP II - Educated but not economically active

GROUP III - Uneducated but Economically active

GROUP IV - Uneducated but Economically not active

AGE GROUP 15 - 19	SINHALESE	C.TAMILS	I TAMILS	C.MOORS
GROUP I	1.14	---	---	---
GROUP II	1.16	1 27	---	1.23
GROUP III	1.20	1.24	1.11	1.40
GROUP IV	1.20	1.30	1.26	1.29
AGE GROUP 20 - 24				
GROUP I	1.44	1.68	1.93	1.92
GROUP II	1.66	1.78	1.65	1.76
GROUP III	1.96	2.04	1.71	2.35
GROUP IV	1.90	2.22	2.08	2.48
AGE GROUP 25 - 29				
GROUP I	1.96	1.97	2.36	2.13
GROUP II	2.32	2.68	2.98	2.83
GROUP III	3.38	3.39	2.81	3.86
GROUP IV	3.16	3 69	3.45	4.17
AGE GROUP 30 - 34				
GROUP I	2.54	2.84	4.60	3.04
GROUP II	3.41	3.54	3.69	4.31
GROUP III	4.67	4 65	4 16	5.62
GROUP IV	4.38	4.87	4.64	5 [illegible]
AGE GROUP 35 - 39				
GROUP I	3.17	3.60	3.21	3.60
GROUP II	4.27	4.40	4.80	4.98
GROUP III	5.94	5.72	5.15	6.57
GROUP IV	5.59	5.80	5.64	6.63

continued .....

TABLE 2.57 (continued)

	SINHALESE	C TAMILS	I TAMILS	C MOORS
AGE GROUP 40 - 44				
GROUP I	3.86	4.47	5.88	---
GROUP II	4.64	5 14	5.44	4.45
GROUP III	6.48	5 89	5.91	6.51
GROUP IV	6.06	6.26	6 07	7.17
AGE GROUP 45 - 49				
GROUP I	4.15	5.24	3.50	---
GROUP II	5.18	5.26	4.87	4.29
GROUP III	6.83	6.34	6.02	6.67
GROUP IV	6.57	6.13	6.29	6.93

SOURCE: B.Hanna and T.Nadarajah
Fertility Differentials in Sri Lanka,
Population Problems in Sri Lanka,
D.T.R.U., University of Sri Lanka.

TABLE 2.58

MEAN AGE AT MARRIAGE

A - For women with current age 25 - 49
B - For women with current age 25 - 29

	LEVEL OF EDUCATION				
	NONE	1 - 5 YEARS	6 - 9 YEARS	10-11 YEARS	UNIVERSITY OR HIGHER
A	16.6	17.8	19.3	21.4	22.5
B	17.6	18.0	19.6	21.6	22.5

SOURCE: Table 4.4., World Fertility Survey, 1st Report, Sri Lanka, 1975 Department of Census and Statistics, Ministry of Plan Implementation.

TABLE 2.59

LITERACY RATES

PERCENTAGE OF LITERATES

CENSUS YEARS	FEMALES	BOTH SEXES
1881	3.1	17.4
1891	5.3	21.7
1901	8.3	26.4
1911	12.5	31.0
1921	21.2	39.9
1946	43.8	57.8
1953	53.6	65.4
1963	63.2	71.6
1971	70.9	78.5

SOURCE: The Population of Sri Lanka, Department of Census and Statistics, Colombo, 1974.

TABLE 2.60

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF FEMALES 15 YEARS AND OVER BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION, 1971

No schooling	31.8
Passed Grades 1, 2, 3 & 4	28.4
Passed Grades 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9	30.5
G.C.E.(Ordinary Level) less than 6 subjects	4.8
G.C.E. (Ordinary Level) More than 6 subjects	3.3
Higher qualifications	1.2

SOURCES: Table 3.21, page 53. Census of Ceylon, 1971
The Population of Sri Lanka,
Department of Census and Statistics, Colombo, 1974.

A difference of 2 2 children between the women with maximum level of education and women with minimum level of education can be observed from this table It indicates that women with no schooling have 6.4 children, women with 1 5 years of schooling have 6.1 children, women with 6.9 years of schooling have 5 5. children and women with 10 years or more of schooling have 4.2 children. Both these observations substantiate an inverse relationship between educational status and level of fertility.

If educational attainment is to be used as a successful combatant in fertility reduction most women of Sri Lanka should reach more than a secondary level of education. Therefore future educational planning should be with the view to ensure that at least 80 percent of females reach the G.C.E. (Ordinary Level), otherwise education cannot be held accountable for a reduction in the fertility levels of Sri Lanka.

A scrutiny of female educational attainment levels disclose the following facts. Table 2 59 indicates that literacy rates of females have risen appreciably. In the 19th century 5.3 percent of the females were literate. In 1901, at the turn of the century 8.3 percent were literate, and in 1971 the percentage was 70.9 Thus progress has been marked.

1945 is significant for the introduction of the free education system to Sri Lanka However, Table 2.56 shows that only 8.7 percent of females in the age group 20 to 24 years, 8 4 percent of females in the age group 25 to 29 years, and 7 5 percent of females in the age group 30 to 34 years have passed the G C E (Ordinary Level) Examination in educational attainment after 35 years of free education in Sri Lanka. The school enrolment statistics for 1971, indicate that only 17.4 percent of females of the 15 to 19 age group are in schools. Therefore the gains of 35 years of free education from the Kindergarden to the University for the female sector are hardly noteworthy An increased percentage of females in the age groups of 20 to 24 years and 25 to 29 years should have passed the G.C E. (Ordinary Level). Women participate at comparable levels with men and it should be possible for at least 60 to 80 percent of the females to pass G C.E. (Ordinary Level) in future. Dr Hanna and T.Nadaraja[23] in their analysis of fertility differentials investigate the relationship between the three combined variables of educational status, employment and ethnicity with that of fertility (Table 2.57).

Fertility is measured in this study by the average number of children born alive to ever married females in different age groups. The index represents cumulative fertility of a cohort of women upto 1971.

The analysis disclosed that although late marriage has definitely promoted the decline in family size, factors like education, female employment, ethnicity have their affects on levels of fertility as well.

Table 2 57 indicates a definite negative association between:

(a) Fertility levels and education plus employment;

(b) Fertility level and educational attainment.

ETHNIC DIFFERENCES IN FERTILITY

There are four major ethnic groups in Sri Lanka:

(a) Sinhalese, Low Country and Kandyan;

(b) Srilanka Tamils

(C) Indian Tamils;

(d) Ceylon Moors.

In all five year segments from 15 to 19 years to 45 to 49 years the educated, economically active females account for the lowest mean number of children (Table 2.57). This is true of all ethnic groups. Educated but economically not active females have a higher fertility level than the educated and economically active females. The differences between the uneducated employed females and uneducated unemployed females is minimal. For instance in the age group 45 to 49 for Sinhalese the difference in mean number of children is .16, for Ceylon Tamils .21, for Indian Tamils .27 and for Moors .26. This difference is almost the same in other age groups as well for these two categories of females.

Considering the two groups, the educated, economically active females and the uneducated economically active females, the difference in fertility level is somewhat remarkable. In the age group 45 to 49, the difference in average number of children born alive for Sinhalese is 1.68, for Ceylon Tamils 1.10, and for Indian Tamils 2.52. The figures for Moors cannot be calculated.

Table 2.17 shows the increase in the total population from 1871 to 1971 by ethnic group and Table 2.64 shows the crude birth rate by ethnic group for the censuses of 1946, 1953, 1963 and 1971.

The growth of Sinhalese, Ceylon Tamils and Ceylon Moors can be attributed mainly to natural growth, whereas in the case of Indian Tamils both natural increase and immigration account for their increase in numbers. However, migration has been on the decline during the last 10 years.

Ceylon Moors record the highest average annual rate of growth for the entire period of 1911 to 1971 with an average annual increase of 2.09 percent while it is 2.02 percent for the Sinhalese. Ceylon Tamils come next. The lowest growth rate is among the Indian Tamils.

The crude birth rate for the censuses of 1946, 1953 and 1963 is highest for Ceylon Moors. The socio-economic survey of 1969 too records Ceylon Moors as having the highest birth rate.

1971 figures indicate that the crude birth rate has dropped for all nationalities by a minimal amount. This supports an overall decline in fertility from 1963 to 1971. The crude birth rate for the Sinhalese increased during the intercensal period of 1946 and 1953. Thereafter it declined to 34.5 in 1963 and to 30.0 in 1969. The fertility levels of both Ceylon Tamils and Indian Tamils declined from 1953 whereas the Moors do not reveal such a decline from 1953 to 1963.

The World Fertility Survey in 1975, (Table 2.63) found that the mean parity of ever married women aged 45 to 49 (i.e. completed fertility) is highest for the Moors and lowest for the Indian Tamils. The Ceylon Tamils have slightly higher fertility levels than the Indian Tamils and the Sinhalese are intermediate between the Moors and the Tamils.

Table 2.57 gives the average number of children born to ever married women at different age levels. In practically all 5 year segments from 15 years to 49 years, Moors account for the highest fertility level. The lowest fertility level is among educated Sinhalese. Once the variable educational level is withdrawn the differences between ethnic groups seem very minimal (Table 2.57 - Row four in each interval).

TABLE 2.61

POPULATION OF SRI LANKA BY ETHNIC GROUP IN 1911 & 1971 (in thousands)

ETHINIC GROUP	1911	1971	AVERAGE ANNUAL RATE OF GROWTH. %
Sinhalese	2715	9147	2.02
Ceylon Tamils	528	1416	1.64
Indian Tamils	531	1105	1.20
Ceylon Moors	234	824	2.09
Others	98	220	1.35
TOTAL	4106	12712	1.88

SOURCE: Population of Sri Lanka, Department of Census & Statistics, Colombo, 1974.

TABLE 2.62

CRUDE BIRTH RATE BY ETHNIC GROUP

YEAR	SINHALESE	CEYLON TAMILS	INDIAN TAMILS	CEYLON MOORS
1946	38.7	35.6	41.2	41.7
1953	41.0	39.2	33.0	42.7
1963	34.5	37.6	28.3	42.9
1969	30.0	27.5	28.6	42.6
1971	29.9	31.8	25.7	39.0

SOURCE: The Population of Sri Lanka, 1974, Department of Census and Statistics, Colombo, 1974, 1969 figures from the Socio-Economic Survey and the rest from Census Reports of 1946, 1953, 1969. 1971 figures from the Bulletin on Vital Statistics, 1974.

TABLE 2.63

MEAN PARITY OF EVER MARRIED WOMEN 45 - 49 YEARS

Row A	-	As observed
Row B	-	Standardized on the overall distribution of age at first marriage.

Numbers in paranthesis are based on 20 - 49 cases.

ETHINIC GROUP

	SINHALESE	SRI LANKA TAMIL	INDIAN TAMIL	SRI LANKA MOOR
Row A	6.1	5.6	5.3	(6.4)
Row B	6.1	5.6	4.9	(5.7)

SOURCE: Table 5.3 W.F.S. 1st Report, 1975

Department of Census and Statistics.

TABLE 2.64

MEAN AGE AT MARRIAGE OF WOMEN WHO MARRIED BEFORE 25

A: Women with current age 25 - 49

B: Women with current age 25 - 29

ETHINIC GROUP

	SINHALA	SRI LANKA TAMIL	INDIAN TAMIL	SRI LANKA MOOR
A	18.6	17.5	17.2	16.5
B	19.5	18.0	18.2	16.5

SOURCE: World Fertility Survey, Sri Lanka, 1st Report, 1975
Department of Census and Statistics,
Ministry of Plan Implementation

However, this data too supports the findings of the previous paragraphs that among ethnic groups the Moors have the highest fertility levels, Indian Tamils the lowest level, while Sinhalese and Sri Lankan Tamils are intermediate.

Table 2.68 shows that the districts of Mannar, Batticalow and Amparai are in the high fertility zone These districts have a high percentage of Moors in their population. The high fertility levels in these districts therefore can be attributed to this fact

The reasons accounting for a comparatively higher Moor fertility are not easy to assess. Table 2 64 depicts that mean age at marriage for Moors is the lowest among all ethnic groups. The '75 survey discloses that the mean age at marriage for Moors is 16.5 years, and is a major contributory factor to the higher fertility levels. In terms of education and employment Moors are comparatively at lower levels than the other ethnic groups, but in terms of income some of the Ceylon Moors enjoy the highest income in the country. There is however very little empirical data on ethnic differentials in fertility levels.

URBAN / RURAL / ESTATE FERTILITY DIFFERENTIALS

The distinctive characteristics of the 'estate sector' is quite clear but it is not easy to distinguish between urban and rural areas in Sri Lanka.

The level of education in the estates is comparatively lower. Most women referred to here are Indian Tamils. Many of them work as estate labourers. Their men are employed in agricultural occupations. Their living standards and socio-economic status are appreciably lower than both rural and urban sectors of the population.

Except for Colombo, which is the only city comparable with other cities of the world, all other towns are overgrown villages. In Sri Lanka urban areas are defined as those that come uner the administrative jurisdiction of municipalities, urban and town councils. The distinction between urban and rural is mostly a difference in degree rather than a proto-type of urbanization.

Another difficulty is that most women in rural areas come to urban areas or urban hospitals for delivery purposes. Over 65 percent of annual deliveries take place in Government Medical Institutions, and the women who come from rural areas very often give an urban address. Therefore, if the crude birth rate is used to assess the fertility level, a correct picture of the differentials in fertility levels between rural and urban areas may not emerge.

Table 2.66 gives the child - woman ratio[24] for rural and urban areas for different censuses. For all census years the fertility level appears to be higher for the rural women than for the urban women. The same pattern is observed in other countries of the world.[25]

The mean parity of ever married women aged 45 to 49 years, in other words those who have completed fertility, is also highest for rural women (Table 2.67). Rural women have a mean parity of 6.2 while for urban women the comparable figure is 5.5.

The mean age at marriage for rural women is somewhat lower than that of urban women. Table 2.65 shows that for the rural women the mean age at marriage is 18.2 years, whereas for the urban women it is 18.8 years. The proportion of women marrying in the rural sector is slightly higher than in the urban sector. Further, the knowledge of contraception is found to be higher among women in urban areas than among women in rural areas. These factors are sufficient to account for a higher fertility level for rural women than for their urban counterpart.

On the other hand, the estate women have the lowest mean age at marriage- 17.3 years (Table 2.65). They also have the lowest completed fertility level with the mean parity of ever married women aged 45 to 49 being 5.2 as against 5.5 for urban and 6.2 for rural women (Table 2.67).

Knowledge of contraceptive techniques is not widespread among these estate women. Their level of education is also very low in comparison with both urban and rural sectors. In view of these factors it may appear paradoxical that estate women have the lowest fertility level in the country. Nevertheless, it can be explained by the fact that the largest rate of

TABLE 2.65

MEAN AGE AT MARRIAGE OF THOSE WOMEN WHO MARRIED BEFORE AGE 25

Row A - For women with current age 25 - 49 years

Row B - For women with current age 25 - 29 years.

TYPE OF RESIDENCE

	URBAN	RURAL	ESTATE
A	18 8	18.2	17.3
B	19.2	18 9	18.1

SOURCE: Table 4 4, World Fertility Survey, 1st Report, Ministry of Plan Implementation, 1975.

TABLE 2.66

URBAN / RURAL / ESTATE DIFFERENTIALS

CHILD WOMEN RATIO

CENSUS YEAR	URBAN	RURAL	RURAL/URBAN RATIO
1946	453	558	123
1953	549	672	123
1963	594	712	120
1971	492	569	116

SOURCE: Table 130, Country Monograph, Series 4, Population of Sri Lanka, page 170.

TABLE 2 67

MEAN PARITY OF EVER MARRIED WOMEN AGED 45 - 49 BY TYPE OF RESIDENCE

Row A - As observed

Row B - Standardized on the overall distribution of age at 1st marriage Mean for sub-sample 6 0

	URBAN	RURAL	ESTATE
A	5 5	6 2	5 2
B	5.9	6.1	4 9

SOURCE: W F S Report, 1975

wasted pregnancies is in this sector, as well as the highest infant mortality rate. Further, since most of these women are engaged in manual work - the highest female labour force participation being among them - it is possible that the nature of their occupation leads to an inherent weakness in fecundity levels, or compels them to restrict their family size using traditional methods.

DISTRICT DIFFERENTIALS

Table 2 68 gives the crude birth rate, the general fertility rate, and the total fertility rate for the different districts of Sri Lanka for the two census years of 1963 and 1971.

It is interesting to observe that all three indices of fertility measurement record a decline from 1963 to 1971 for all districts and for the entire country This supports the view that Sri Lanka has had a decline in fertility levels from 1963 to 1971. However, there are variations between districts. The level of decline also varies with the particular index used.

Both in 1963 and 1971 Kalutara and Kegalle record the lowest fertility level in terms of all three indices. In the year 1963, Monaragala recorded the highest crude birth rate of 47.2, the highest general fertility rate of 271.0 and the highest total fertility rate of 7.58. But the 1971 figures show that Batticaloa had exceeded Monaragala in terms of all three indices. However, in the overall pattern of fertility, variation among districts is not wide

Considering the cumulative effect of all three indices the districts of Sri Lanka can be classified into three approximate categories:

(a) Districts of low fertility levels below the national average - Colombo, Kegalle, Kalutara, Jaffna, Galle and Kurunegala.

(b) Districts of high fertility levels above the national average - Monaragala, Anuradhapura, Amparai, Batticaloa, Vavuniya, Mannar, Puttalam and Trincomalee

TABLE 2.68

FERTILITY RATES BY DISTRICTS 1963 AND 1971

DISTRICT	CBR		GFR		TFR	
	1963	1971	1963	1971	1963	1971
Colombo	32.2	28.2	156.1	127.9	4.67	3.84
Kalutara	28.1	25.8	129.3	113.9	3.94	3.43
Kandy	35.2	31.6	166.1	138.3	4.97	4.13
Matale	39 0	31.0	197.8	154.4	5.74	4.67
Nuwara Eliya	33.9	32 2	157.2	140.5	4.63	3.95
Galle	30.2	25.6	136.5	113.0	4.25	3.54
Matara	37.1	31.5	177.8	141.1	5.66	4.59
Hambantota	39.7	31 1	214.9	148.9	6.33	4.89
Jaffna	33.4	29.5	160.5	134.4	4.83	4.12
Mannar	41.7	34.7	237.6	182.3	6.75	5.36
Vavuniya	42.8	37.9	256.2	203.0	7.10	5.88
Batticaloa	43.6	39.1	228.1	198.2	6.51	5.70
Amparai	41.4	36.2	226.3	184 7	6.29	5.13
Trincomalee	38.4	36.2	219.9	193.2	6.06	5.48
Kurunegala	36.1	28.8	184.9	131 8	5.30	4.04
Puttalam	37.4	33 8	185.0	154.7	5.35	4.45
Anuradhapura	39.7	34.5	229.6	175.0	6 35	5.35
Polonnaruwa	39.4	32.0	233.3	169 2	6.46	4.92
Badulla	39.5	33.6	192 1	155 2	5.59	4.60
Moneragala	47.2	35.7	271 0	184.3	7.58	5.66
Ratnapura	33.2	30 6	160 1	137.9	4 71	4.10
Kegalle	28.1	23.1	134.8	101 3	4.06	3 09
Sri Lanka	34.6	30.1	169 4	137.9	5 02	4.15

SOURCE: CBR from Census and Reports

GFR & TFR Calculated by the writer using Census Data, 1963 & 1971

TABLE 2 69

CHILD WOMAN RATIO BY DISTRICTS, 1971

DISTRICTS	CHILD WOMAN RATIO (Number of Children 0 - 4 per 1000 women 15 - 49)
Colombo	481.4
Kalutara	483.3
Kandy	522.8
Matale	604.6
Nuwara Eliya	532.6
Galle	503.7
Matara	531.7
Hambantota	619.9
Jaffna	497.6
Mannar	737.9
Vavuniya	761.8
Batticaloa	747.6
Amparia	783.7
Trincomalee	782.1
Kurunegala	556.3
Puttalam	564.3
Anuradhapura	744.7
Polonnaruwa	788.6
Badulla	620.1
Moneragala	817.1
Ratnapura	563.0
Kegalle	501.7
Sri Lanka	624.8

SOURCE: Department of Census and Statistics, 1971 Census Data-unpublished Reports.

(c) Medium fertility districts of Kandy, Matale, Nuwara Eliya, Hambantota, Polonnaruwa, Badulla, Ratnapura and Matara, where the fertility level is slightly above the national average.

There still exists a remarkable difference in fertility levels among districts 1971 statistics on crude birth rate depicts a difference of 13.3 between the maximum and minimum records. The difference recorded in the total fertility rate is 2.45 From these figures it is evident that fertility levels can be further reduced in Sri Lanka.

FAMILY PLANNING

The Ceylon Family Planning Association was established in 1953 as a voluntary organization. The National Family Planning Programme was inaugurated in 1963 in collaboration with the Government of Sweden and family planning services were incorporated into maternal and child health service provided by the Department of Health. Its chief objective was to reduce the crude birth rate to 25 per 1000 by 1975. By 1971 there were about 400 clinics functioning in many parts of the island promoting family planning. The programmes concentrated on women in the age group of 20 to 34 years since they were responsible for at least 75 percent of the live births in Sri Lanka.

An assessment of the success of family planning activities can be estimated either from the extent of contraceptive coverage or from the total number of births averted. Crude birth rate in itself does not provide a very satisfactory index of measurement. Fluctuations in crude births take into account many factors besides family planning.

Table 2.70 and 2.71 on acceptors of family planning methods, and two impact surveys conducted in 1973 and 1974 covering the Superintendent of Health Services divisions of Matara and Jaffna and of Colombo South, provide information on the performance of the family planning programme in Sri Lanka. From these reports it is evident that 'Family Planning is now better established in Sri Lanka than in the great majority of so called developing countries'.[26] Estimates at the end of 1974 showed that the national

TABLE 2.70

SUMMARY DATA ON FAMILY PLANNING - NEW ACCEPTORS

FIGURES IN THOUSANDS

	IUDS	ORALS	OTHERS	MALE STERLIZATIONS	FEMALE STERLIZATIONS	TOTAL
1967	18.5	8.8	5.7	---	3.6	36.7
1968	20.6	16.0	6.3	0.1	1.0	44.0
1969	19.5	25.3	6.8	0.3	2.6	54.5
1970	15.8	26.9	7.6	0.4	4.6	55.3
1971	11.4	25.8	7.7	0.2	4.1	49.3
1972	18.5	32.3	10.6	0.4	9.1	70.9
1973	27.5	34.2	13.9	1.8	18.4	95.9
1974	29.5	32.0	14.0	7.3	34.9	117.9
1975 1st half	15.3	16.0	7.0	3.1	16.1	57.5

SOURCE: The Population problems of Sri Lanka,
Demographic Training and Research Unit,
The Sri Lanka University Press, 1976, Colombo(page 176).

TABLE 2.71

FAMILY PLANNING METHODS - USERS' RATE BY DISTRICT, 1971

DISTRICT	USER RATE PER 100 MARRIED FEMALES AGED 15 - 49
Colombo	28.5
Kalutara	21.3
Kandy	16.7
Matara	14.6
Nuwara Eliya	16.7
Galle	19.0
Matale	30.0
Hambantota	14.6
Jaffna	13.6
Mannar	5.8
Vavuniya	5.8
Batticaloa	7.8
Amparai	7.8
Trincomalee	19.5
Kurunegala	18.3
Puttalam	20.5
Anuradhapura	19.5
Polonnaruwa	30.0
Badulla	18.0
Moneragala	18.0
Ratnapura	17.5
Kegalle	20.8

SOURCE: Unpublished Report, Family Health Bureau.

programme had aided in averting approximately 39,000 births per year. This figure excluded births averted by traditional and other methods of contraception. In the year 1972, 71,044 new acceptors were enlisted, while in 1973, and in 1974 the number recruited were 95,931 and 71,927 respectively It is therefore evident that family planning has been considerably intensified in the country.

The surveys disclosed that approximately 19 percent of all married women or their husbands under the age of 50 years are using modern family planning methods. If this holds true, the number of new acceptors may be somewhat under-enumerated.

According to the socio-economic survey of 1969/1970 it was estimated that of the mothers who had five or more children as many as 63 percent were in households with an income less than Rs.200.00 per month. It was also found that they were mostly from rural areas.

CONCLUSION

The Demographic Transition of Sri Lanka can be therefore described as follows:

(a) An initial stage characterized by a high birth rate and a high death rate The growth rate was slow since the high birth rate was offset by a high death rate;

(b) A second stage where the death rate declined, but the birth rate remained at the same level, the result being a high growth rate of the population;

(c) A third stage characterised by a low death rate and a declining birth rate, indicating a decline in the growth rate of the population

It would appear that Sri Lanka has definitely entered the third stage, or is in between the third and fourth stages - the fourth stage being characterised by a low birth rate and a low death rate, leading towards a replacement level of population

TABLE 2.28

AGE SPECIFIC DEATH RATES

AGE	1945	1950	1968	PERCENT- DECLINE 1945 - 50	1950 - 68
FEMALES					
All ages	22.7	13.0	7.3	43	44
0 - 4	63.0	44.4	14.2	29	68
5 - 9	9.0	4.7	1.9	48	60
10 - 14	4.5	1.7	1.0	62	41
15 - 19	7.3	2.5	1.6	66*	36*
20 - 24	10.8	4.4	2.0	59*	54
25 - 34	11.3	5.5	2.3	51	58
35 - 44	14.4	6.1	3.4	58*	44
45 - 54	17.2	8.3	5.7	52*	31
55 -	90.2	45.6	41.5	49*	9*
MALES					
All ages	21.4	12.2	8.5	43	30
0 - 4	61.5	46.9	15.7	24	66
5 - 9	7.7	4.1	1.9	47	54
10 - 14	3.6	1.4	1.3	61	20
15 - 19	6.5	1.9	1.6	71	39
20 - 24	7.5	2.9	2.2	61	24
25 - 34	8.1	3.5	2.4	57	31
35 - 44	13.1	5.0	4 0	62	20
45 - 54	23.4	9.7	8.4	58	13
55 +	78.2	42.3	42.7	46	--

SOURCE: The Population of Sri Lanka, 1974
Department of Census & Statistics, Colombo, 1974.

It is not easy to compare Sri Lanka with either 'developing' countries of Asia or with 'developed' countries of the West. The dynamics of population change are unique to Sri Lanka and they are difficult to assess.

Mortality levels declined within a very short span of time. The levels of mortality are in line with advanced nations of the West. It is also possible for fertility to follow the same trend. Fertility decline has definitely set in Sri Lanka. This decline has not been dependent on high levels of economic development, high per capita income or urbanization and industrialization. In Sri Lanka the decline in fertility started around 1960, the rate of decline being about 1.8 percent per annum. It was found that the decline in fertility was due to:

(a) an increase in the mean age at marriage of women;
(b) a decline in the proportion of currently married females;
(c) a decline in marital fertility.

Studies carried out in Sri Lanka and in other countries have clearly indicated, that improvements effected in women through education and employment have resulted in low fertility behaviour. Although in Sri Lanka there is a high incidence of drop-outs at all levels of education, over the years there has been an increase in the level of literacy and educational attainment of females especially.

Estimates indicate that the female labour force will increase at a faster rate in the next two decades. However, with present unemployment of both males and females, limited resources for development and females achieving higher educational levels, full female employment will be very difficult to achieve. However, emphasis can be on strategies which would make women aware of the fact that the nation can no longer afford large families.

NOTES

1. "A Study of the Extent of under registration of births and deaths in Ceylon", Department of census & Statistics, Colombo, 1970.

2. Census of Ceylon, 1891, General Report, Department of Census & Statistics, Colombo.

3. Arunachalam, P , Census Superintendent, Census Report, 1911, Department of Census & Statistics, Colombo.

4. Sarka, N.K., Demography of Ceylon, Ceylon Government Press, Colombo, 1957.

5. Denham, E.B., Ceylon at the Census of 1911, The Review of the Results of the Census of 1911, Colombo. Government Record Office, 1912.

6. Post Enumeration Survey of 1953, Monograph I, Department of Census & Statistics, Colombo, 1953.

7. Calculated by the writer of this paper using the sex ratio of the population for each census year and the total population for the same year for different ethnic groups.

8. Barckley, G.W., Techniques of Population Analysis, John Willey & Sons., N.Y., 1958.

9. U N. Manual II, Methods of Appraisal for quality of basic data for population estimates, Chapters 1, 2 and 3, U.N Publications.

10. Dependency Ratio $\frac{\text{Population under 15 + Population over 65}}{\text{Population 15 - 64}}$

11. The Population of Sri Lanka, Department of Census & Statistics, Colombo 1974, page 39

12 Post-Enumeration Survey of 1953, Department of Census & Statistics, Colombo, 1953

13 A study of the extent of under registration of births and deaths in Ceylon, Department of Census & Statistics, Colombo, 1970.

14. For the Control of Malaria in Sri Lanka refer the following:

    (a) Gray, R.H., 'The decline of mortality in Ceylon and demographic effects of malaria control', Population Studies, London, Volume XXVIII, July 1974, p.205.

    (b) Collumbine, H., 'An analysis of vital statistics of Ceylon', Journal of Medical Sciences, Volume VII, parts 3 and 4, 1950.

    (c) Fredriksen, F., Determinants and Consequences of Mortality trends in Ceylon, Public Health Report, Volume 76, 1961.

    (d) Jones Gavin, W., and Selvaratnam, S., Population Growth and Economic Development in Ceylon, Hansa Publishers, Colombo, 1972.

    (e) Meegama, S.A., Population Studies, Volume XXIII, 1969.

15. Abhayaratne, O.E.R., 'The Influence of Malaria on Infant Mortality in Ceylon', Ceylon Journal of Medical Sciences, December 1950, Volume VII, Part II.

16. Five Year Plan, 1972 to 1976, Ministry of Planning, Colombo. 1973.

17. Determinants & Consequences of Population Trends, U.N.Publication.

18 Op. cit. 8.

19. Op. cit. 11.

20. Fernando, Dallas, F., 'Recent Trends in Fertility in Sri Lanka', The Population Problems of Sri Lanka, Demographic Training & Research Unit, University of Sri Lanka, Colombo.

21. Fernando, Dallas, F., 'Recent Fertility decline in Ceylon', Population Studies, Volume XXVI, No.3, November, 1972.

22. Wright, Nicholas, H., 'Recent Fertility Change in Ceylon & Prospects for the National Family Planning Programme', Demography, Volume 5, No.2, 1968.

23. Determinants & Consequences of Population Trends, U.N.Publication, Chapter 1.

24. Op. cit. 21.

25. Op. cit. 21.

26. Immerwahr, G.E., 'Evaluation and Future prospects for family Planning in Sri Lanka', Population Problems in Sri Lanka, Demographic Training and Research Unit, 1976.

LAW AND THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN SRI LANKA

by

NIRMALA CHANDRAHASAN

LAW AND THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN SRI LANKA

INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL BACKGROUND

The Legal System of Sri Lanka is not uniform. In as much as Sri Lanka is a plural society its laws too are diverse and reflect both the diversity of its racial and religious composition, as well as the impact of the legal heritage of its colonial past. To enumerate the different laws which obtain in Sri Lanka, there is the Roman-Dutch Law an amalgam of Roman Law and Germanic custom introduced into the island by the Dutch when they conquered the maritime provinces of Sri Lanka from the Portuguese in 1656. This is the Common Law of the Country [1] It applies to all the inhabitants of the island except in those instances where their own personal laws govern them. Next we have the English Law which was introduced by the British in 1796 when they conquered the maritime provinces of the island from the Dutch. This too governs all the inhabitants of the island in respect of certain areas of the law specifically provided for by legislative enactments, for example the criminal law, and the commercial law. However, English Law principles have also infiltrated into those areas of the law which are deemed to be governed by the Roman Dutch Law. Furthermore, a large volume of legislative enactments particularly after Sri Lanka attained independence now governs most areas of the law Hence when we speak of the Roman Dutch Law as the common law of the land it refers to the Roman-Dutch Law as modified, supplemented or altered by the principles of the English Law and by legislation.

The three major communities in the island the Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims also have their customary, (in the case of the Muslims, religious) laws. These are known as the personal laws, or special laws, as opposed to the general law to which we have referred above. The Sinhalese, living in the hill country in the centre of the island, were not conquered by the Portugese or the Dutch and retained their customary law which is known as Kandyan Law. The Tamil inhabitants of the Northern Province of Sri Lanka which prior to the Portuguese conquest in 1619 constituted a separate kingdom, continue to be governed by their customary law, which is the ancient Dravidian Law (not Hindu Law) known as the Thesavalamai. This customary law was codified in 1707 by the Dutch while they were ruling the kingdom, and officially promulgated by them as the law to be applied in all civil causes between the

native inhabitants. The Muslims of Sri Lanka who came to Sri Lanka even prior to the Portuguese as traders also brought with them their religious law, i.e. the Muslim Law.

However, it must be kept in mind that these personal laws do not exclusively govern the persons subject to them as they apply only to certain limited areas of the law, generally those dealing with family matters, i.e. marriage, divorce, intestate succession and property rights of the spouses. In all other matters as for example contract, tort, commercial law, criminal law etcetera those person who are subject to the personal laws would also be governed by the general law of the land. Furthermore, as the special laws are in derogation of the general law, a person who wishes to bring himself within the ambit of the personal law in any matter must prove that he is entitled to do so.[2] In other words the burden of proof lies on the person who asserts that the personal law applies to him.

In the light of this diversity of laws it is not always possible to state what the legal status of a woman in Sri Lanka is without an examination of the legal provisions under all the different systems of law. For example, a Sri Lanka muslim woman who has the same rights under the constitution as a Sinhalese Kandyan woman, would not have the same legal grounds for obtaining a divorce as a Kandyan woman would have. Hence when we examine the status of women under the law we will have to consider not only the general law, but also the special laws in those areas in which they apply.

THE CONSTITUTION

The recently promulgated constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka (Ceylon) guarantees the fundamental rights of all persons such as, freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention, freedom of speech, assembly, and association.[3] The Constitution states all persons are equal before the law and are entitled to the equal protection of the law.[4] The term persons includes men and women. Hence men and women are given equal rights under the Constitution. Furthermore, the Constitution specifically provides[5] that no citizen shall be discriminated against amongst other things on the grounds of sex. It

also states that no person shall on the ground of race, religion ..... sex be subject to any disability liability, restriction or condition with regard to access to any place such as shops, places of public entertainments, places of worship, etc.[6] It is also provided that nothing in the above section shall prevent special provision being made by law, subordinate legislation or executive action for the advancement of women, children or disabled persons.[7] Hence the constitution makes special provision for women. It is an advance on the earlier Republican Constitution of 1972, which did not make any special provision for women. The Chapter on fundamental rights in the earlier constitution did not have a general provision protecting women from discrimination on the grounds of sex, as in the new constitution. But it provided that in appointments to the public services, sex should not be a disqualification.[8] But under a proviso to the section it was provided that certain specified posts or classes of posts could be reserved for members of either sex. This section was used to justify the introduction of restrictive quotas for women in the administrative service. This quota system still continues at the time of writing by virtue of certain administrative regulations.[9]

POLITICAL AND CIVIC RIGHTS

In Sri Lanka we have had Universal Suffrage since 1931. Men and women over 21 years of age had the right to vote in all elections and were eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies. Today the age limit has been reduced to 18 years and men and women over 18 have the right to vote. The Constitution provides that every person shall be qualified to be an elector at the election of the President, and of the Members of Parliament, or to vote at any referendum.[10] It also provides that every person who is qualified to be an elector shall be qualified to be elected as a Member of Parliament or as President.[11] The women in Sri Lanka have always exercised the right to hold public office and to exercise all public functions. It is noteworthy that the world's first woman Prime Minister was from Sri Lanka. Nevertheless by Administrative Regulation the number of women who can enter into the Administrative Service is limited to a certain percentage. This may be regarded as contrary to the provisions of the Constitution as it comes within the category of discrimination on the grounds of sex.[12] However, those who do enter are not barred from holding any post, or exercising any public functions.

THE CIVIL LAW

(i) MARRIAGE UNDER THE GENERAL LAW

Marriage is monogamous. The Marriage Registration Ordinance provides that no marriage is valid, where either of the parties thereto had contracted a prior marriage which has not been legally dissolved or declared void.[13] The Marriage Registration Ordinance (also known as the General Marriage Ordinance) sets out the legal age, prohibited degrees of relationship, and the requirements and formalities for a valid marriage. The only distinction made between the sexes is as to the minimum age of marriage which is 16 for males and 12 for females. For Europeans and Burghers, i.e. (those of European Ancestry) the minimum age for females is 14, and males the same as above. As marriage is a contract it is required that the parties understand the nature of the contract and should fully consent to marry one another. The Ordinance provides for Registration of Marriages. It is apposite here to refer to the Convention on consent to marriage, minimum age for marriage, and registration of marriages 1962, and the recommendation on this of 1965 which provides that the minimum age for marriage to be specified by member states shall not be less than 15 years of age. It would be seen that the minimum age for marriage set out in our Ordinance is below that advocated in the afore-mentioned recommendations. The Law of Sri Lanka also recognizes customary marriages between Sinhalese and Tamils according to native rights and customs. This is so because the Marriage Registration Ordinance does not make registration compulsory. However, customary marriages are becoming the exception as registration becomes more common.

(ii) THESAWALAMAI LAW

Turning to the personal laws, the Thesawalamai Law which governs the Tamils of the Northern Province in respect of certain stipulated areas of the law, does not make any special provisions regarding the form and requirements of a valid marriage. Hence the marriages of persons governed by this law are contracted under the General Marriage Ordinance.

(iii) KANDYAN MARRIAGE

Kandyan Marriage too is monogamous in form. Polyandrous marriages were common among the Kandyans until prohibited by the Kandyan Marriage Ordinance

of 1859. Kandyan Marriages are of two kinds, Diga Marriages, and Binna Marriages. The former is a marriage under the patriarchal system where the husband takes his wife to his own house or that of his parents. The latter is a marriage under the matriarchal system where the husband is brought to the house of the wife, or her relations and occupys a subordinate position to the wife.[13(a)] Today most marriages are marriages in Diga rather than in Binna.[13(a)] Kandyans have the discretion to marry either under the General Marriage Ordinance or alternatively under the Kandyan Marriage and Divorce Act.[14] Under this Act too the age of marriage is 16 for men and 12 for women. Consent of the parties, and registration is made provision for in the Act. However, under the provisions of the Act where the parties are under the lawful age of marriage the marriage would still be valid if both parties have co-habited as husband and wife for a period of one year after they have attained the lawful age of marriage, or if a child is born of the marriage before both or either of them have attained the lawful age of marriage. This provision would allow child marriages to be subsequently validated.

(iv) MUSLIM MARRIAGES

Polygamy is legal under the Muslim Law, although today in Sri Lanka few men take advantage of this privilege. The Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act[15] does not provide a minimum age for marriage. But with the intention of discouraging child marriages the Act provides that a marriage contracted by a girl under the age of 12 shall not be registered under this Act unless the Quazi for the area authorises the registration of the marriages.[16] (Quazi is a person who exercises judicial power under the Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act). It should also be noted in this connection that under the Penal Code, s.363, a man commits the offence of rape if he has sexual intercourse with a girl below twelve years of age, even if she is his wife, and irrespective of her consent. However, under the Muslim Law if the Quazi authorizes the registration there would be a valid marriage. Furthermore, under the Muslim Law (Shaffie School of Law) the consent of the girl has to be given not directly by her but by her Wali (i.e. Guardian for the purposes of marriage). The Muslim Marriage Register as set out in the schedule to the Act has no provision at all for the signature of the bride although both the Bride-groom and the Wali (except where the Wali's signature is dispensed with under s.47) sign the register.

Hence although registration of a marriage is required under the Act, there is nothing to show on the face of the marriage register, or any declaration made before the registrar, that the woman has consented to the marriage. It should be kept in mind that the 'Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women', states that women shall have the same right as men to free-choice of a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent.

LEGAL CONSEQUENCES OF MARRIAGE

(i) DOMICILE AND NATIONALITY

Under the Roman-Dutch Law, the wife acquired the rank and domicile of her husband.[17] In Sri Lanka a woman of foreign nationality who marries a Sri Lanka national does not automatically acquire her husbands nationality (except for the purposes of the Married Woman's Property Ordinance[18]). But under the Citizenship Act of 1948[19], she may after one years residence apply for registration as a citizen of Sri Lanka. However, the Married Womens' Property Ordinance and the Matrimonial Rights and Inheritence Ordinance[20] both state that whenever a woman marries a man of a different race or nationality from her own she shall be taken to be of the same race or nationality as her husband for all the purposes of the abovesaid Ordinance so long as the marriage subsists and until she marries again. The Jaffna Matrimonial Rights and Inheritence Ordinance[21] states that a woman who marries a man who is governed by Thesawalamai is deemed to be so governed during the subsistence of the marriage. Hence in respect of a woman who is not an alien, she is automatically governed by the system of law which governs her husband, and as there are different races and legal systems in Sri Lanka, where there is a marriage between members of different races or communities the wife is automatically governed by the same legal system which governs her husband however disadvantages it may be to her. (For example, a Kandyan woman marrying a man governed by the Thesawalamai would find herself unable to contract, or sue or be sued on her own, whereas under the Kandyan Law as well as under the general law, she would not have been under any such disability)

As regards a woman of foreign nationality the above Ordinance would apply once she has become a citizen of Sri Lanka. As Sri Lanka does not allow dual citizenship a foreign wife of a Sri Lankian National would generally opt to become a citizen of Sri Lanka. It is noteworthy that Article 5 of the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women states, "Women shall have the same right as men to acquire change or retain their nationality. Marriage to an alien shall not automatically affect the nationality of the wife either by rendering her stateless or by forcing upon her the nationality of her husband".

(ii) CHANGE OF NAME

In Sri Lanka there is no legal requirement that a married woman should change her name. The Westernized urban sections of the population generally follow the western practice of the woman taking the husband's name. Among the rural and more indigenous section of the population a married woman generally retains her own name.

(iii) RIGHT TO SUPPORT AND MAINTENANCE

Under the Roman-Dutch Law the spouses are under a reciprocal duty to support each other. But the duty of support lies generally on the husband.[22] The husband is bound to maintain the wife in a manner suitable to her rank and position, so much so that he will even be liable for necessaries supplied to her whilst living apart (where she has left him on account of his misconduct) so that she can pledge his credit for necessaries.[22(a)] Maintenance was not allowed to the wife where she had ample means and the husband's income was limited. Under the Married Woman's Property Ordinance a married woman having sufficient means could be required to maintain a husband who is indigent.[23] The Maintenance Ordinance[24] provides a speedy and inexpensive way of enforcing the civil obligation. Under the Maintenance Ordinance where on the wife's application the Magistrate makes an order against the husband and the husband fails to make payment the Magistrate can issue a warrant directing the amount due to be levied as a fine, and may sentence such person to simple or rigorous imprisonment. An amendment to the Ordinance makes it more convenient for wives to recover maintenance as a Magistrate

may now make an attachment of salary order, requiring the employer of the person against whom an order has been made to deduct from the employees salary such amount as is due under the order of court.

The Thesawalamai Law does not have any separate provision on the above matter and the general law would apply.

Under the Kandyan Law the Diga married husband is liable for the support of his wife, and for this purpose agency of necessity is recognised to the extent of entitling the wife during the husbands absence to dispose of his money and goods and even to mortgage his lands for the maintenance of herself and the children.[24(a)] A Kandyan wife can apply for maintenance under the Maintenance Ordinance.

The Muslim Law too provides for the support of the wife by the husband. However, in the case of Muslims the Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act provides that the Quazi may inquire in to and adjudicate upon any claim for maintenance by or on behalf of a wife. Hence a Muslim woman would have to go before a Quazi Court, and not before the Ordinary Court, but the Quazi's order may be enforced by a Magistrate.

(iv) PARENTAL RIGHTS - CUSTODY AND GUARDIANSHIP

Children under 21, i.e. Minors are deemed to be incapable of exercising any civil right or performing civil duties and their interests consequently require to be protected by the recognition and appointment of a guardian to their person or property or both. The question of custody arises in cases where the parents are separated or divorced. Custody would relate to control over the person and day to day life of the minor child, upbringing and education, and form of religious education. Under the Roman-Dutch Law both the parents have parental rights and powers over the children but the father's rights are superior.[25] The father is the natural guardian. On the father's death the mother becomes the natural guardian and acquires full parental power. In the case of illegitimate children the mother is the natural guardian. During the continuance of the marriage the father has the right to the custody of the children.[26] But the mother may obtain the custody of a child, where it is in the best interests of the child. In practice courts will generally award custody of a child of tender years to a mother on the basis that it is in the interest of the child[27]. Where a

marriage has been dissolved by a divorce or there has been a judicial separation different considerations apply and the Courts look paramountly to the interests of the child[28]

Under the Kandyan Law the father is the custodian of his minor child. However, if the parties divorce, the Binna married husband had no claim to the children. On the dissolution of a Diga marriage the right to take the children varied according to the cause of divorce, i.e. depending on whether the husband or wife was at fault[29] Under one school of Muslim Law the father becomes entitled to the custody of a male child after he has attained the age of 7 years; of a female child after she had attained puberty[30] so that until then the mother would have custody. In Sri Lanka there is a long line of judicial decisions (purporting to follow the Shaffie School of Law) which recognise the mother and maternal relations as the guardians of the minor child in preference to the father.[31]

The Thesawalamai Law does not have provisions on the question of custody of minor children but provides that if a father wishes to marry for a second time he must hand over the children, if they are still young, to the mother-in-law or nearest relation to be brought up. Hence we may see that in this respect the Thesawalamai Law, and the Muslim Law make provision for the exercise of the mother's rights in respect of children of tender age.

DIVORCE

GROUNDS OF DIVORCE

The grounds of Divorce are set out in the Marriage Registration Ordinance.[32] These grounds are equally applicable to men and women without distinction. The grounds of divorce under the general law are:

(a) Adultery subsequent to the marriage;

(b) Malicious desertion;

(c) Incurable impotency at the time of marriage;

(d) Under an amendment to the Civil Procedure Code[33] a new ground has been added; where there is a decree of judicial separation, either spouse may after the expiry of two years apply to the Court for a decree of dissolution of marriage, and similarly where the parties have lived apart for seven years either party may apply to court for a decree of dissolution of marriage. The grounds of Judicial separation and nullity of marriage are also the same for men and women.[34]

The Thesawalamai Law does not have any provision on divorce. Hence the general law would apply.

Persons governed by the Kandyan Law have greater latitude in the matter of divorce. The grounds for divorce under the Kandyan Marriage and Divorce Act are wider than under the Marriage Registration Ordinance.

The grounds of divorce are as follows:

(a) Adultery/Adultery coupled with incest or gross cruelty;
(b) Inability to live happily together of which actual separation from bed and board for a period of one year is the test;
(c) Mutual consent.

The law draws a distinction between males and females in one respect. Whereas the husband can apply for a divorce on the grounds of the wife's adultery, where the wife applies for a divorce on the grounds of the husband's adultery, she has in addition to show incest or gross cruelty.[35] In this respect the spouses do not have available the same legal grounds in proceedings for divorce.

Under the Muslim Law men and women do not have the same grounds for divorce. The grounds for divorce under the Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act are not specifically set out in the Act, but the Act provides that the Muslim Law governing the sect to which the parties belong shall be followed.[36] Under the general Muslim Law, the husband is free to divorce his wife without assigning a cause. A divorce is deemed to be valid where a husband pronounces the expression Talak in the presence of the Quazi and two witnesses. A wife can effect a divorce with the husband's consent. Where however, a wife wishes to obtain a divorce without his consent she has to establish before a Quazi one of the grounds recognised for this form of divorce. The grounds of divorce differ depending on the sect to which the parties belong. Most of the Muslims of Sri Lanka belong to the Shaffie Sect of muslim law, and the grounds of divorce under this school of law are cruelty, desertion persistant failure or inability to maintain, impotency, insanity or other incurable diseases. The General Muslim Law makes provision for what is known as a 'Khula Divorce' where a wife is unable to prove any of these grounds but the marriage has in fact brokendown. But this type of divorce is not recognised in Ceylon.[37]

It may be seen that the spouses do not have available the same legal grounds in proceedings for divorce. Furthermore, a special tribunal the Quazi Court, and the Board of Quazis has jurisdiction in matters relating to Muslim Marriages and Divorces. Except where there is recourse to the Supreme Court in appeal, the ordinary courts of the island have no jurisdiction in regard to muslim marriages and divorces.

(ii) PROPERTY SETTLEMENT ON DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE

This matter is governed by the Roman Dutch Law which is the common law of the land, and the provisions of the Civil Procedure Code. The rules of the Roman Dutch Law in this matter are based on the fault theory of divorce. The innocent party in case of a divorce on the ground either of adultery or malicious desertion, may claim that the guilty party forfeit the benefits of the marriage, where such benefits are derived from the community of goods, or from the antenuptial contract. The forfeiture of property of an adulterous spouse contemplated by the Roman-Dutch Law has reference only to the benefits derived by him or her under the marriage and does not extend to the separate property of the offending spouse.[38] Under the provisions of the Civil Procedure Code[39] the Court has power on entering a decree for the dissolution of a marriage to make an order charging the property of the offending spouse for the benefit of the other. Under the Amended Code[39(a)] costs of litigation are to be borne by the party who has means where one of the spouses is not possessed of sufficient income or means to defray the cost of litigation. Thus either the husband or the wife can be called upon to do so Furthermore, whereas earlier the Court could on the dissolution of the marriage order the husband to pay permanent alimony either by securing to the wife a gross some of money, or annual or monthly sum of money, today under the new amendment this order may be made against either spouse and not necessarily the husband. These new provisions take into account the fact that today many wives are also wage earning parties, and often have equal educational qualifications or skills.

But it must be pointed out that the law inthis field does not take cognizance of the fact that a wife who is not a wage earning partner may nevertheless contribute to the common household as a wife and mother. In England, this has been provided for in recent legislation[41] The wife's contribution in house-keeping, looking after the children etc., is given a monitory value, and this is taken into consideration by the court when making a settlement of property on the dissolution of a marriage. Our law has not made provision for

the above factors to be considered. Hence this could work an unjustice where for example the family household is brought by the husband in his name, and hence is deemed to belong to him entirely although the wife has contributed her services. This same principle would apply to the women in rural areas who often work in the fields along with their husbands and are not paid any wages for this work

PROPERTY RIGHTS

Under the general law an unmarried adult woman can hold property, and has all the incidents and powers with regard to her property possessed by a male adult, i e she can make any disposition of it, sell, mortgage or deal with it in any way, make any contract with regard to it, and may inherit as well as alienate by deed or will as she wishes. The special laws too, do not impose any disabilities on an unmarried adult woman. A married woman's position was different. The Roman-Dutch Law regarded the wife as being under the marital power of the husband and during marriage there was deemed to be a community of property between husband and wife.[42] The Matrimonial Rights and Inheritence Ordinance[43] made certain alterations to the Common Law, and improved the position of the wife. However, it did not do away with all the disabilities. It was only with the passing of the Married Women's Property Ordinance[44] in 1924 that all the remaining disabilities were removed. In the case of a woman married after this Ordinance, she can hold her property both movable and immovable as her separate property in the same manner as if she were a feme sole, and she may dispose of it in any manner whatsoever without the consent of her husband Hence under the General Law today there is no legal disability placed on married women as regards their property rights.

However, the Married Woman's Property Ordinance does not apply to persons governed by the personal laws namely Thesawalamai, Kandyan Law and Muslim Law.[45] Hence we must examine the personal laws as well.

The Kandyan Law[46] and the Muslim Law[47] regard a married woman as a feme sole Hence she has the same rights as an adult male; i.e. she can hold separate property, make any disposition of it and sue and be sued independently of the husband.

Under the Thesawalamai Law a woman can hold both movable and immovable property as her separate estate[48]. But she is not a feme sole and is under the marital power of her husband. Hence she cannot deal with immovable property intervivos without the written consent of her husband.[48(a)] But in certain circumstances[49] as for instance where such consent is unreasonably withheld she may apply to the District Court for an order authorizing her to make such disposition without her husband's consent. As regards the property acquired during the subsistence of the marriage there is a community of property between husband and wife. Under the earlier law this meant it was owned in common But the amending Ordinance of 1947 and judicial interpretation[50] makes it uncertain whether this concept has been superceded by the notion of the husband and wife each having their own distinct share of such acquired property. By virtue of his marital power the husband is the manager of this common property and could sell and mortgage this common property even without the consent of the wife. However, judicial decisions on the interpretation of the amending Ordinance No.58 of 1947 makes it uncertain as to whether this provision still applies.[51]

RIGHTS IN CONTRACT AND TORT

Both Contract and Tort are governed by the General Law. The Special Laws do not have provisions on these matters.

As regards civil, i.e. tortions liability, both men and women are governed by the same rules without any distinction.

As regards contractual rights and obligations men and women are governed by the same substantive rules of law, but in respect of the capacity of a married woman to contract, as well as to sue and be sued, we have to look both to the general law as well as to the personal laws. Under the Roman-Dutch Law, as we saw earlier, a married woman was under the marital power of her husband and hence did not have full contractual capacity. These disabilities however were removed by legislation. But the Ordinances specifically provide that they do not apply to those persons governed by the personal laws and so we have to examine the position under the personal laws.

Under the Kandyan Law and Muslim Law a woman is regarded as a feme sole and has full contractual capacity and could sue and be sued independently of her husband. Hence although the Ordinance did not apply to these categories of

persons, the position of married woman under both laws was the same as under the general law.

Under the Thesawalamai Law there was no special provision regarding this matter, and in such instances, i.e. where the Thesawalamai was silent the Roman-Dutch Law was applied. Even though the general law was changed by the Married Women's Property Ordinance, this did not affect the personal laws. Hence the rule of the Roman-Dutch Law that the wife is under the marital power of the husband and does not have full contractual capacity, which had been incorporated into the Thesawalamai continues to be in force.[52] Furthermore, as we pointed out above the wife cannot deal with her immovable property without the consent of her husband. Hence she cannot (with certain exceptions) enter into any contract in respect of such property without the written consent of her husband. Being under the marital power of the husband she has no Locus Standi in Judicio (no status in Court) and cannot sue or be sued without her husband being joined as a party as long as the parties are living together.

INHERITANCE

Testate Succession is governed by the General Law.[53] Under this law no distinction is made between men and women and both are governed by the same rules as regards capacity, and the formalities for the making of a will Intestate succession however is governed by the personal laws as well.

Under the General Law which is the Roman-Dutch Law on the death of a married person the surviving spouse inherits one half of the property and the other half goes to the children.[54] No distinction is made as between males and females.

Under the Thesawalamai Law intestate succession is based on the division of property into the categories of Ancestral, Acquired and Dowry Property. Succession to the above is according to certain rules and they apply to both males and females without distinction the underlying principle being that the property must go to the source from where it came.

In the Kandyan Law too, property is divided into Ancestral property and Acquired property, and here too the underlying principle is the same. It has been said that the equality of division among children is one of the

cardinal points of the Sinhalese rules of inheritance, and sons and daughters are treated alike (except for a Diga married daughter who has been given her dowry [54(a)]

However, under the rules of the Muslim Law the female inheritance is not equal to that of the male. Hence while a widow is entitled to a one eighth share in her husband's estate, a widower is entitled to one fourth share in his wife's estate So also a son inherits double the share of a daughter.[55]

Statutory enactments dealing with the alienation of state lands have imposed certain conditions on the devolution of such lands. Hence a permit holder or holder of a grant are governed by certain rules set out in the Acts and the schedules to the Acts (See s 51, and Schedule 3, of the Land Development Ordinance Chapter 464, Vol XII L E ; and s 25 and Schedule of the Sale of State Lands (Special Provisions) Law No 43 of 1973). It may be pointed out that the order of priority according to which the title devolves is first to the surviving spouse and then to the other relations, giving priority to males over females.

THE CRIMINAL LAW

The Criminal Law as embodied principally in the Penal COde makes criminal liability dependent on age and knowledge without any distinction as to sex. However, taking cognizance of the physical differences between the sexes the Penal Code provided for certain offences, such as rape, kidnapping a woman for the purpose of illicit intercourse, carnal intercourse with young girls between 12-14 years etc., all of which are designed to give protection to women and young girls.[56] The causing of a miscarriage is also an offence under our law. This is intended for the protection of the unborn or new born infant. Hence, in our law a woman has no right to terminate an unwanted pregnancy by abortion The law excuses inducement of a miscarriage only where it is done 'in good faith for the purpose of saving the life of the woman '[57]

Punishments also take into consideration a woman's physical infirmities. Hence women cannot be whipped Further a woman convicted of murder but found to be pregnant shall have her sentence commuted to life imprisonment.[58]

LABOUR LAWS AND EMPLOYMENT

In general the same labour laws apply to both men and women. However, in the matter of wages the principle of equal pay for work of equal value is not always followed. In the professions, administrative and clerical services there is no discrimination in the payment of wages. But in the case of semi-skilled, and unskilled labour in industry and agriculture, women are generally paid lower wages than men. In certain industries where wages are determined by Wages Boards,[59] and in the plantation sector,[60] different scales of payment are stipulated for men and women, and women are paid at a lower rate.

The female plantation workers are among the lowest paid. Even recent legislation for payment of special allowances to workers in the plantation sector makes a distinction between the allowance paid to men and to women.[61]

Some labour laws apply specifically only to women. These are designed to protect women and cannot be regarded as discriminatory. The Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against women[62] specifically states 'Measures taken to protect women in certain types of work, for reasons inherent in their physical nature shall not be regarded as discriminatory'. With this end in view we find various statutory enactments. Thus for example women may not be employed in mines[63]. In factories[64] women are prohibited from work which may expose them to risk of injury as for example cleaning moving machinery When they do their work standing they have to be provided with suitable facilities for resting They cannot be employed for a spell of over 4½ hours without an interval of at least half an hour for a meal or rest. An employer must also provide seperate facilities and sanitary conveniences for women.

The Maternity Benefits Ordinance[65] as amended by subsequent acts, makes provision for paid maternity leave for women before and after their confinement The maximum period for which any women shall be entitled to payment of maternity benefit is six weeks, i.e two weeks upto and including the day of her confinement and four weeks immediately following that day. A women employee is defined as a women employed on wages in any trade. The Shop and Office Employees Act[66] also makes provision for maternity benefits for persons coming within this category. In the Planting Districts[67] the Superintendent of the Plantation has a duty to supply at the cost of the Plantation, every female resident upon the Plantation giving birth to a child, with food and lodging for one month after the birth of such child and has to see that the women worker is not required to work on the plantation for one month unless the District Medical Officer reports that she is fit for work. But the Superintendant is exempt from this duty if such women worker is granted maternity benefits under the Maternity Benefits Ordinance.

Although the leave entitlement may be regarded as fairly reasonable it must be pointed out that in many other countries including countries in the third world such as Ghana & Indonesia[68] the maximum leave entitlement runs to three months.

In order to protect a womens' security of employment during pregnancy, and after child birth, the Ordinance provides that the employment of a women worker shall not be terminated by reason only of her pregnancy or confinement, or of any illness consequent on her pregnancy or confinement. Furthermore, where the employer is prosecuted for the offence of contravening the above provision the burden of proof is on the employer to show that the termination of employment was for some other reason. Moreover where a female employee gives notice to her employer that she expects to be confined within a period of three months from date of notice, she shall not be employed on any work which may be injurious to her or her child.

The Ordinance also makes provision for child care facilities. The Ordinance makes it obligatory for the employer to establish creches for children under five years of age, so that the working mother may leave such children in such creche during the hours of employment. Furthermore, the employer is required to allow a mother who is nursing a child under one year of age, two nursing intervals of half an hours duration each, in any period of nine hours. Where no creche or other suitable place is provided by such employer each nursing interval shall not be less than one hour. These intervals shall be in addition to any intervals provided for meals or rest, and shall be regarded as time during which the women has worked in her employment. However, these provisions have in effect remained a dead letter, except in the plantations, where they have been given effect to.

Another field in which protective legislation has been enacted is as regards night work. Under the Shop and Office Employees Act[69] women coming within this category are prohibited from working after 6 00 p.m. and before 6.00 a.m , excepting certain categories of female employees who work in hotels and restaurants who may be employed even during the above hours. Although originally meant to prevent the exploitation of women these provisions curtail a woman's ability to earn extra wages by way of overtime, and may hence be regarded as restrictive.

The Employment of Women, Young Persons and Childrens' Act[70] governs the employment of women and children in industrial undertakings. Under the terms of this Act and regulations made thereunder, women cannot be employed after 10.00 p.m. and before 5 00 a.m. The provisions of this act apply in general to factories as well, and hence override the provisions of the Factories Ordinance in this respect. The restriction on night work does not apply to women holding positions of responsibility of a managerial or technical character, or those employed in health and welfare, or where the members of the same family are employed The provisions relating to night work are based on an I.L.O Convention which has been ratified by Sri Lanka. The principle underlying the restriction on night work is that a woman has social responsibilities.

As regards opportunities for Vocational Training and Apprenticeship Training despite the fact that there are no legal barriers to vocational training the opportunities for females to obtain such training are limited and are confined to traditional vocations such as weaving, sewing, etc.

Apart from women workers in factories, shops and offices, and other industrial undertakings there is a large sector of women employed in agriculture and small cottage industries. This sector which may be referred to as the unorganised sector of labour is generally outside the range of labour laws. The Contracts of Employment Act[71] seeks to overcome this problem by deeming a contract of employment embodying certain conditions in trades where the arrangement is that the worker performs his work at home (termed home work). Another category of women workers not covered by labour laws are women domestic servants.

As regards employment in general the labour force participation of women is increasing.[72] However, administrative regulations restrict the number of women entering the clerical service, and the Sri Lanka Administrative Service[73] As pointed out above this may be regarded as contrary to the constitution

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A survey of the general law and the personal laws reveal certain areas in which a women is subject to disabilities under the law, or does not exercise the same rights as men. This is so particularly in the civil law where as we have seen there are so many competing jurisdiction. Legislation should be introduced to bring the personal laws in line with the general law, and the principle of equality as between the sexes, Legislation should also be introduced to raise the minimum age of marriage to 18 years, for both men and women, irrespective of considerations of race.

In the field of employment and labour laws, the principle of equal pay for work of equal value should be given effect to. Legislation on the lines of an Equal Remuneration Act as in the U.S.A. and India or a Sex Discrimination Act as in the United Kingdom would be appropriate here. The provisions in the Shop and Office Employees Act prohibiting night work could be amended.

In the wider context it is suggested that legislation be introduced to abolish certain customs and practices which though not given legal recognition are still widely practised such as for example, the giving and receiving of Dowries (A Dowry being a sum of money or property settlement given by the parents of a bride
Although prohibition of this practice with legal sanctions may not be entirely effective if could nevertheless create a new set of norms which would ultimately result in the gradual erosion of this custom.

Another field in which new legislation may be introduced as well as stricter enforcement made of existing laws, is "to combat all form of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women", in conformance with the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women [74]

REFERENCES

1. See De Costa v Bank of Ceylon 72 N.L.R. 462.
2. Spenser v. Rajaratnam 16 N.L.R. 321.
3. Chapter III, Fundamental Rights.
4. Section 12(1)
5 Section 12(2)
6. Section 12(3)
7 Section 12(4)
8 Republican Constitution of 1972, Section 18.
9. See Government Gazette Extra-Ordinary of August 16, 1978.
10. Section 88, Chapter XIV of the Constitution.
11. Section 90 and 92 of the Constitution.
12. See Section 12(2). As the Constitution makes infringement of a Fundamental Right justifiable under S.17, this matter could be raised before a Court of Law.
13. Chapter 112, Volume V, Legislative Enactments (1956 Revised Edition).
13a See Hayley, 'Laws and Customs of the Sinhalese', p.193.
14 Chapter 113, Volume V, Legislative Enactments (1956 Revised Edition)
15. Chapter 115, Volume V, Legislative Enactments (1956 Revised Edition)
16 Ibid., Section 23.
17. Voet,'Commentary on the Pandects', 5.1.95.
See also Hahlo, 'South African Law of Husband and Wife', 4th Edition, p.541
18. Chapter 56, Volume III, Legislative Enactments, see, Section 3(1).
19. Chapter 349, Volume XI, Legislative Enactment.
20 Chapter 57, Volume III, See Section 2.
21 Chapter 58, Volume III, See Section 3.
22 Voet, 'Commentary on the Pandects', 25.3.8
See also Hahlo supra footnote 17 at p.112 - 113, and p.115
22a. Voet 24 2 18.
23 See Section 26
24 Chapter 91, Volume IV, Legislative Enactments.
24a. See Hayley 'Laws and Customs of the Sinhalese'. p.286.
25 Spiro 'Law of Parent and Child', 3rd Edition, p.3: Voet, Commentary on the Pandects, 1 6.2.
26. Ivaldy v. Ivaldy, 57 N.L.R 568.
27. See Kamalawathie v. De Silva 64 N.L.R. p.252; Boteju v. Jayawardene 75 CLW 55.
28. Supra footnote 26.
29. Nitti Nighandawa 45; Hayley, 'Laws and Customs of the Sinhalese', p.211. and p.198.

30 Tyabiji 'Principles of Mohamadedan Law', p.281.

31 See for example In re Application of Wappu Marikar and his Wife Ummani Umma 14 N.L.R. p.225; Supair v Isthikar 77 N.L.R. p.397; where it was held that the welfare of the child is the paramount consideration.

32 Section 19.

33 Section 608, Civil Procedure Code.

34 See Lee 'Introduction to Roman Dutch Law', p.90, 93.

35. Ibid footnote 14, Section 32.

36 Ibid footnote 15, Section 28.

37 See Fathima Mirza v. Ansar 75 N.L.R. 295.

38. Voet, 24.2.9.; 24 3.19.

39. Chapter 101, Volume IV, Legislative Enactments.

39a. See Amendment of 1977.

40. See Chapter XLII, Matrimonial Actions.

41. England, Matrimonial Causes Act, 1973, See Section 24; 25.

42. See Van der Lindon (1.3.8.)

43 Supra footnote 20.

44. Chapter 56, Volume III, Legislative Enactments.

45 Ibid. see Section 3(2).

46. Hayley 'Laws and Customs of the Sinhalese', Chapter V, p.285 - 286.

47. Fyzee 'Outline of Muhammadan Law', 3rd Edition, p.111.
See also Sellachy Umma v. Alia Marikar (Ramanathan Reports 1872 - 75 and 76), 233.

48 See Section 6, Jaffna Matrimonial Rights and Inheritence Ordinance, Chapter 58, Volume III

48a. See Iya Mattayer v Kanapathipillai 29 N.L.R. 301, see also s.6 above.

49. Ibid. Section 8

50 See Kumaraswamy v Subramaniam 56 N.L.R. p.44, at 47;
Arunachalam v Ayadurai 70 N.L.R. p.165.

51. Ibid.

52. See Tambiah 'Laws and Customs of the Tamils of Jaffna', p.124.
See also Iya Mattayer v. Kanapathipillai 29 N.L.R. 301 at 308, where Bertram C.J. held that in the absence of express provision in the Thesawalamai the principles of the Roman-Dutch Law might be adopted.

53. See Wills Ordinance, Chapter 60, Volume III, Legislative Enactments and Prevention of Frauds Ordinance, Chapter 70, Volume III, Legislative Enactments

54. See Matrimonial Rights and Inheritence Ordinance, Part III, supra f.n.20.

54a. See Hayley supra f.n. 46, Part VI on Intestate Inheritence.
At page 336 Hayley points out that though certain writers indicate that preference was given to males this proposition is erroneous. He says 'on general principles judging from the whole system of equality of the sexes and the manifestly equitable principles on which the majority of the customs are based, such a preference would not be anticipated.'

55. See Tyabji, 'Muslim Law', 4th Edition, p.805.

56. See Chapter 19, Volume I, Legislative Enactments.

57. Ibid Section 303

58. See Criminal Procedure Code

59. See the Wages Board Ordinance, Section 27, Chapter 136, Volume V, Legislative Enactments.

60. See The Minimum Wages (Indian Labour Ordinance), Section 8(2), Chapter 135, Volume V

61. See Special Allowances of Workers Law, No.17 of 1978, First Schedule.

62. See Article 10(3).

63. See Employment of Females in Mines Ordinance, Chapter 130, Volume V, Legislative Enactments.

64. See Factories Ordinance, Chapter 128, Volume V, Legislative Enactments.

65 See Maternity Benefits Ordinance, Chapter 140, Volume V, Legislative Enactments, Chapter 140, 1967 Supplement to revised Legislative Enactments, Volume I. and Amending Act of 1978

66 Shop and Office Employees Act, Chapter 129, Volume V, and Chapter 129, 1967 Supplement to revised Legislative Enactments, Volume 1, Part I(A).

67 See Medical Wants Ordinance, Chapter 226, Volume VIII.

68. See Law and the Status of Women - Published by Columbia University School of Law, 1977.

69. See 1967 Supplement, Legislative Enactments, Chapter 129, Volume I.

70. See 1967 Supplement, Volume II, Legislative Enactments.

71. See Contract on Employment Act 1975.

72. See S.Jayaweera, 'A Study of Educational Opportunity and Employment Opportunities Open to Women in Sri Lanka'.

73. See Government Gazatte Extra-ordinary of August 16, 1978. This states 'Female candidates who possess the prescribed qualification will be eligible to compete at this examination subject to the proviso that not more than 25% of the number of vacancies filled on the results of the examination may be filled by them. At the time of writing there has been a Cabinet Policy decision not to enforce this quota. However, the regulation still remains.

74. See Article 8.

WOMEN IN CREATIVE ARTS AND MASS MEDIA

by

HEMA GOONATILAKE

WOMEN IN CREATIVE ARTS AND MASS MEDIA

INTRODUCTION

Creative arts and mass media, in their depiction of women reflect the socio-economic structure, and at the same time, influence the role of women. It is thus a two way process. This study attempts to describe the relationship of women to the creative arts and mass media in three broad aspects. The first deals with the manner in which creative arts and mass media depict women and their role in society. The second deals with the participation of women in creative arts and mass media as writers, journalists and broadcasters etc., and the third attempts to assess the extent to which women are exposed to these influences as readers, listeners, and their tastes in respect to these arts. To view these three aspects in perspective, it is necessary to give a brief description of the changing socio-economic system of Sri Lanka, as it moved from a village based, caste ridden feudal society through a colonial dependent economy to a post-independent society which still bears the marks of economic and cultural dependence.

Sri Lankan 'classical' historical society was based on an irrigation centred village whose surplus supported cities of considerable magnitude. There is evidence to indicate that social organisation and division of labour based on the caste system existed in Sri Lanka from recorded times, though in practice, it was not as rigid as its Indian prototype. Cities were centres of religious activities, administration, commerce and learning. The principal ideological system in the classical era was Buddhism often interwoven with Hindu beliefs and practices. As far as literature and, what may be termed incipient mass media was concerned, the major means of communication were Sinhala, Pali and to a lesser extent Sanskrit and Tamil. Literary works were produced in the large monasteries and occasionally in royal courts and transmitted to village temples where they formed the subject matter for religious discourse. This creation of literary output in the centre, and its dissemination to the periphery was an important aspect of the cultural hold on the country by the elite and displayed many characteristics of today's mass media. Apart from this authorised and legitimised literature which arose in the centre, there is some evidence to believe that there existed a non-authorised,widely dispersed, secular literature, as is indicated for example by the Sigiri graffiti which spanned a period of about four centuries from the 6th to the 10th century.

The style of presentation of this legitimised literature as well as the manner of depiction of different societal roles were those that were governed by conventions of Sanskrit literary traditions, Buddhist norms and social relations existing at the time. These three facets bear strongly on the depiction of women.

The classical civilization based on irrigation agriculture broke down in the 11th to 12th centuries and there was a gradual shift of the centre of civilisation to the western coast, a process occuring over a period of three centuries at the end of which time, the trade based kingdom of Kotte assumed importance. The same time also saw an establishment of a separate kingdom in the north of Sri Lanka. This period also saw the collapse of the cultural hegomony which characterised the earlier period and also marked the growth of several non-hegemonic literary traditions which were partly influenced by developments in southern India. This was also a period during which incipient commercial values became important.

The 16th century saw the beginning of colonial domination of Sri Lanka, under the Portuguese followed by the Dutch and the British. This lasted for a period of nearly four and a half centuries. The result of the colonial incursion was that, in the economy the external trade links imposed by the colonial powers assumed importance, and economic activities began to be distorted away from the needs of the local population. The societal structure that emerged was dominated by a social strata allied to the foreign rule.

The resulting dual character accommodating the colonial presence as well as rejecting it, is reflected in the literature. The colonial situation tended to disrupt traditions, economic relations and social relations including those of women. Feudal relations now began to be superseded by relationships of a colonial economy.

The colonial period also saw new technological developments in European countries themselves, and these had repercussions which were felt locally. In the field of media, one saw the introduction of the printing press and thus an increase in the dissemination of the written word, a strong contrast to the earlier tradition of copying manuscripts. Initially the printing press

in Sri Lanka was used to disseminate the religion of the colonial rulers who now assumed a role similar to that of Buddhist Kings in their relation to religious literature.

During the latter part of the colonial period, one saw also the introduction of other mass media like newspapers, films, and the radio. These often acted as a carrier of socio-cultural influences of the West. During the post-independent period, initially the economy tended to be determined by expatriate interests whilst the external socio-cultural influence began to shift from Britain to the new Post-World War II hegemonic power, namely the U.S. Fashions in the mass media (including the style of presentation, its agenda setting etc.) and hero figures were influenced by what could be termed in effect neo-colonial cultural products. As opposed to these, were genuine local cultural efforts to counteract these external impositions or selectively to absorb them.

The above summarises very briefly the socio-economic setting and the cultural outline within which our description of the role of media and woman takes place. It is an interplay of women as well as the media responding to changes in the socio-economic conditions. The present socio-economic conditions can be summarised as a battle-ground where remnants of feudal social relationships vie with those of colonial and neo-colonial relationships against the universal spirit of human emancipation.

The presentation of material is arranged in two parts, namely (a) creative arts; and (b) mass media. The interpretation is largely based on content analysis, both quantitative and qualitative.

ROLE OF LITERATURE

SINHALA LITERATURE

For thousands of years, two general aspects of womanhood have been depicted throughout our literature; women have either been exalted and placed on a pedestal or looked down upon as the source of all sexual temptation and sin. Both these roles do not portray reality and can be considered two extremes of a chauvinistic attitude , and essentially as two sides of the same coin.

Early classical Sinhala literature followed the poetic traditions of Sanskrit literature and often imitated the ideas, descriptions and metaphors in such works. Saraswathi and Lakshmi were the Hindu Goddesses of Learning and Wealth respectively, whose virtues were often extolled in Indian Literature. Mortal women's beauty and charm were often described in countless Sanskrit metaphors. At the same time, women were also depicted as the embodiment of evil, greedy, inconsiderate, cruel, fickle, foolish, sensuous and full of lust. Other qualities not falling into these categories have also been depicted.

Jataka stories, (which describe former lives of the Buddha) had a great impact on the moulding of the character of the Sinhalese for centuries. If the female characters in such stories are analysed, it would be seen that those falling into the evil category far outnumber those falling into the good.

In the *Amittatapa Jataka*, a woman of 120 years, blinded by passion attempted to kill her son who stood in her way. A brahmin woman, Amittatapa sent her husband away and found a lover in the *Sattubhatta Jataka.*[1]

Patachara and Kundalakeshi were women who reached their doom due to their uncontrollable lust. (They later became Buddhist nuns). Women were seen also as the obstruction in the path of deliverence. They could tempt with their wiles even ascetics who observed the most rigid penances of asceticism, as depicted in the *Sakuni Jataka.*[2] In the narratives connected with the life of the Buddha, Thanha, Rathi and Raga, the symbols of greed,attachment and lust appeared in the form of three women to tempt the Buddha on the eve of His attainment of Enlightenment. Even after he attained Enlightenment, there were women who tried to descredit Him. Chinchi Manavika was a woman who tried to discredit the Buddha on grounds that the Buddha was responsible for her pregnancy.

The 'good' woman as portrayed in ancient Buddhist classics was an embodiment of chastity and wifely virtues. Yasodara, the devoted wife of Prince Siddhartha (who later became Buddha) suffered in silence after the Prince abandoned her in quest of the Truth. Madri Devi was the self-sacrificing wife and mother in the *Vessantara Jataka*, who acquiesced in the giving away of her children in order that her husband obtain Buddhahood. The Kinnari in the *Sankhapala Jataka* and Amara in the *Ummaga Jataka* were women of chastity who suffered in silence and remained faithful to their husbands to the end.

The portrayal of Visakha, the chief female lay devotee who lived during the time of the Buddha was a departure from the traditional virtuous woman, in that she was intelligent, less home-bound and associated herself with community and religious and intellectual activities. In her, we see, perhaps the description of an actual person seen in a sympathetic and realistic light away from the idealisation of the *Jatakas*.

Coming to more historical times, the female personality which has made perhaps the strongest impact on Sri Lanka women through nearly a millenia and a half, is the self asserting, dominant and courageous mother of King Dutugemunu who gave every encouragement to her son to go to battle and unify the country even against her husband's advice.

The image of woman as an object of beauty, created to satisfy man's senses reaches new heights in the literacy outburst of the 15th century specially the *Sandesa* poetry. The following verse from the Salalihini Sandesaya is an example of the stereotype description of woman's physical beauty, a description culled virtually directly from Sanskrit norms.

"A face like the full moon,
A waist that can be clasped in a fist,
Hips as wide as a chariot wheel,
Breasts like swans, golden skinned,
She is a celestial maiden, but for the fluttering of her eye lids."

The women portrayed in these poems of the 15th century were women of leisure who apparently were remote from the realities of daily life. The occasional mention in these poems of farmer women seen in fields, and women dancers in temples and palaces is a noticeable change from the idealised concept of 'woman' depicted in the *Sandesa* poetry.

That woman is only a creation for the pleasure of man is exemplified in the poems of the Matara period of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. A representative list of titles reads as follows: Viyovagaratnamalaya (A jewelled garland of separation), Makaradvajaya (Cupid), Ratiratnalankaraya (The jewel of lust), Dunuvila Hatana (The battle of the village Dunuvila). The

poem contains an imaginary description of a woman engaged in sexual lust with the Prime Minister, Ehelepola, and was written to tempt Ehelepola to lust), Srungaralpa (Erotic words), Ratiragamalaya (A garland of passion and love), Virahasokamalaya (Sorrows of separation), Viyogamalaya (Pangs of separation), Adarasokamalaya (Sorrows of love).

Unlike the poems of the court tradition which often centred round the love life of the idle, delicate women of the royal families and the ruling class, the folk poems depicted the vast mass of women in their everyday life. Although there was a sex division of labour, women worked with men in the paddy field, cottage industries of coir, brick, pottery, and handicrafts, and engaged in many other economic activities in the village. The following *nelum kavi* (harvesting song) - one of thousands of such poems-reflects the travails of a mother with an infant.

"The baby cries and howls,
The tiny little throat has run dry,
Mother is reaping paddy in the blazing sun,
For goodness sake, stop that reaping,
And fondle that child."

Instead of the chariot wheel like hips and the swanlike breasts, the folk poets sang of,
"Drops of sweat that poured down her forhead,
Like a string of pearls."

Towards the end of the 19th century with the coming of industrial capitalism, women were found to be working in graphite mines in cleaning, sorting and packing the graphite for export. Folk poems reveal that women left for work at the mines at 6.00 in the morning and returned home at 6.00 in the evening. Women were generally dissatisfied since they were paid low wages at graphite mines. Men who toiled with them expressed their sympathy for them as reflected in the following poem:

"You come at the crack of the dawn,
Continue to say 'I'm fed up' while breaking graphite,
What is the use of your earnings, my dear,
That rupee and a half?"

WOMEN POETS

Although there is evidence that there were women poets during the reign of King Akbo (568 - 601 A.D.) and among Sigiriya poets, the first woman known to have written a full length poem and to make a great impact on Sinhala poetry was Gajaman Nona (1758 - 1814). She was one of the two foremost poets in the South during this period, and had to suffer much social disapproval and slander due to the fact that she, a woman was also a poet - a hitherto unknown combination. Thus once a male poet in a gathering of poets insulted her in the conventional style of accusing women of loose character with the following verse.

"A beautiful woman called Gaja who is now around,
Mastered the arts with help of Buddhist monks,
As had been the accepted custom of all women,
She lives with secret lovers."

Gajaman Nona's unique qualities as a poet are revealed in the quick repartee of her reply.

"The poets in this city utter lies with relish,
A crooked piece of wood can be made straight,
Once it is heated,
But the adze with which the wood itself is shaped,
is even more crooked."

Literary works by women seem to have been also generally belittled by men. Another woman poet of the late eighteenth century Runa Hamine who also lived in the South of Sri Lanka put this succinctly;

"Had a man written this work,
He would have been bestowed with a position,
This work was not recognised,
Since it was written by a woman."

Gajaman Nona led the way for a generation of women poets of that time. Gajaman Nona's sister and her sister's two daughters Dona Francina Perumal Abeysinghe and Dona Katrina Perumal Abeysinghe, were among these. Ranchagoda Lamaya, Attragama Kumarihamy Dona Francina, Dissanayake Lamathanie,

sister of Subevidane, and wives[3] of Andare, Puyyappu, Barana, Udugoda Ganitha, and Thiruva were minor women poets from the south who replied in poetry form to the sarcasm as well as to the love expressed by male poets towards them. Balavattala Menike was the only contemporary woman poet from the Kandyan hills.

MODERN NOVEL

It was only with the dawn of the Sinhala novel in the late 19th century that there emerged a realistic portrayal of women. The female characters of the first Sri Lankan novelist, A Simon Silva's (1876 - 1920) novels, Meena and Theresa portray a generation of women who were relatively socially mobile and chose their own partners.

Piyadasa Sirisena (1875 - 1946), one of the strongest exponents of the national revivalist movement held contradictory views on women in his novels - he did not advocate education and freedom of movement for women while he promoted love marriages His attitude to women is summarised by Ediriweera Sarachchandra as follows:

> "Piyadasa Sirisena's attitude to women is coloured both by the monkish view of woman as the prime seducer and by modern conceptions familiarised through European literature A new attitude to women was also being introduced by the Sanskrit epics. In them was held up an ideal of female devotion and chastity, and women were painted as individuals capable of great strength and beauty of character. Sirisena evidently found it difficult to reconcile this view with the attitude expressed in Sri Rahula's famous verse which he quotes more than once in his novels, which states that, given suitable opportunities there are few women who would not stoop to folly. He holds, however that women should be allowed to choose their own husbands and that marriages should not be arranged for them against their wishes, though in his novels, women always choose their lovers for the right reasons, and never against the wishes of their parents."

W A Silva (1892 - 1957) was another of the important writers of this period who, like Piyadasa Sirisena, had conflicting views about the role of women and about social issues in general Both these writers were writing during

a period of national resurgence as a reaction to colonial pressures and their writings depict both the nationalist sentiments as well as sentiments and aspirations of a Sinhala reading middle class caught between self assertion and the repression of a colonially derived class at the top.

W A Silva's heroines in historical novels were nationalistic and heroic as exemplified in Sunethra, Rohini and Vijayaba Kollaya Heroines in most of his romantic novels and short stories are intelligent, well read, outspoken and self-asserting They exercise their own judgements, choose their own husbands, and take an interest in public affairs But at the same time they accept unquestioningly traditional customs and superstitions. In Hingana Kolla (Beggar boy), Marian, a Justice's daughter chants Sinhala verses to herself while tending her flower garden She is engaged in a discussion with her male friend on the Sinhala language and literature. The beggar boy (who later became a lawyer) is in love with Marian. The writer sees that there is no class difference between the two, as the beggar boy is revealed to be an illegitimate son of Marian's father. In Kala Handa Malinee, a village girl falls in love with an upper class man, Jayapala, and Malinee marries him in spite of the opposition of his motheer. Malinee learns European music and singing, and accomplishment expected by society women at the time Later Jayapala's mother succeeds in breaking up the marriage and gets him to marry a woman of the same social class. On hearing this, Malinee leaves for India where she turns out to be a famous actress But at the end she comes back and gives up the struggle and dies. The moral that the writer draws is that cross class marriage does not work

W A Silva's short story, [illegible] (Wisdom and Folly) in Deyiyanne Rate (God's Country), Sepalika resents a marriage proposal made by her parents She cannot but please her parents and gives in to their wishes. Later when she finds she likes the man, she is happy. Sepalika, after her marriage says to her parents, 'I can see that you have brought me up protecting me from the knowledge of the world . . But I now realise that it is better if you teach young men and women what they ought to know about the world and give them the advice necessary to enable them to look after themselves, whatever circumstances they find themselves in. If by any chance, I lost your protection, many things that are likely to have

defiled my character might have happened to me on account of my own ignorance. How much better is it for one to learn to look after oneself than to be looked after by others ' The writer's ambivalence in these indicate that the traditional system of love and marriage strongly tied to a traditional status hierarchy was breaking up but a new one fitting the new socio-economic relationship had not taken root.

In the novel Siriyalatha, Sirimana, the hero is in love with Agnes, a servant girl. All objections to their marriage disappear at the end, when it is discovered that Agnes, though found as an orphan is really of noble birth and none other than Sirimana's uncle's daughter. This example and the others quoted earlier are in essence Deus ex machina which the author constructs to reconcile the social realities of a new emerging order with the status quo. It is also evident that, though the author himself is sympathetic towards the emerging situation, his attitudes are imprisoned within the traditional. Both Piyadasa Sirisena and W.A.Silva depict the vicissitudes of a new emerging socio-economic structure specially that of a Sinhala reading middle class caught between the disillusion of feudal values and the absorption of the more egalitarean values of a commercial age.

T G W de Silva's (b 1909) short stories, were social satires and were popular from 1939 to the beginning of 1950s. In his stories, woman was the butt of sarcasm and ridicule; she was depicted as stupid, jealous and even a bad omen

An attempt was made again during the first half of the 20th century to present the life stories of well known women in Buddhist literature as models for Sinhala Buddhist women to emulate, as seen in the long poems written by B H Amarasena (1910 - 1951). Some of these were Bimbadevi, Yasodara (devoted wife of Prince Siddhartha - Buddha), Kisagothami (a loving mother who became an arhat), Janapadakalyani (beautiful bride-to-be whom Buddha's cousin Nanda left and took to robes on the eve of his wedding), Patachara (the woman who faced several disasters as retribution due to her uncontrolled passion, but later gave up the household life), Pabawathi (the beautiful wife in the Kusa Jataka story painted as a stupid woman who did not at the beginning appreciate the intellectual qualities of her deformed husband.

It is noteworthy that even during the period of modern poetry of the 20th century, the dominant themes were those relating to love and women. The woman was a one dimensional character of physical beauty, a romantic image which the poets wooed. The works of Meemana Prematilake (1918 - 1965), and P.B Alwis Perera (1917 - 1966), are the best known in this respect. It should be noted that Meemana Prematilake and Alwis Perera belonged to the school known as the Colombo poets which was a romanticist movement.

Most of these writers were of rural origin who in Colombo harked back to a romanticised rustic past, a harking back to the romantic poets of the early 19th century Britain whom some of the Colombo poets translated.

Martin Wickramasinghe, (1891 - 1976) was, the first modern writer to portray with understanding women as individuals who are products of a broad socio-economic situation Kuvenihamy in the short story 'Kuvenihamy' (1924) was a victim of a hypocritic society that led her to kill her beast of a husband The head of the jury who passed the verdict of guilty was a 'respectable gentleman' who seduced and led her to the depths of degradation. The short story *Gahaniyak* in the collection of stories with the same title, (1924) presents two rural women. One is portrayed as a long suffering wife with a brood of children, who is deserted by her husband. But she accepts her fate and leads a life as a dutiful mother. The other woman who does not accept the traditional role of child bearing, is depicted more sympathetically by the author. So is Sarojineein the novel, Viragaya (1956), who fights her way with self confidence through the various complex situations in her life

G B Senanayake's (b. 1906) novels which often deal with ancient Indian stories portray women as relatively stupid persons who make a mess of their life, for example in Rala Binduma, and Kekarilla.

The delineation of women is more retrogressive after the so called cultural revolution of 1956 The novels of Gunadasa Amarasekera, Siri Gunasinghe, K Jayatilake, and A V Suraweera broadly come into this category. Amarasekera's female characters are the most traditional in this respect They are the 20th century versions of Jataka Story females who are full of lust and passion It was said at the time that Amarasekera and others were influenced by Western writers such as D.H.Lawrence and Andre Gide However, their stereotyped portrayal of women's characters in this respect is more reminiscent of ancient classical Indian literature than modern ones.

Karunasena Jayalath's Goluhadavatha (Love Undeclared) 1963, which began a new trend in the Sinhala novel, and later became a model for mass market fiction dealt with the theme of romantic school girl - school boy love. The typical story in this genre follows a fixed plot with two possible variations. In both versions, the hero and heroine meet at school and develop a strong but undeclared love. The heroine is often a delicate, innocent creature with downcast eyes and fluttering fingers. The hero too is quiet, modest, but cleverer than the heroine and often a person who later does 'well' in life as a doctor or provincial administrator. It is noteworthy that the girl does not do a job. There is invariably an obstacle to their marriage. The parents of either the hero or the heroine do not approve of it because the parents of the other are from a poorer social class. In one version the hero and the heroine overcome this difficulty and win over the parents and live happily ever after. In the other version, the heroine obedient to the wishes of the elders, breaks off leaving the boy to nurse a broken heart.

Kumara Karunaratne, Karunasena Saputantri, Edward Mallavarachchi are some others who have churned out novels for the same mass market as Jayalath in the 1960s and 1970s. The cheap sensationalism of these works appealed even more than Jayalath's novels to the young girls and boys. The concept of woman being a sensuous creature reappears in these novels. All that the woman needs is to satisfy her sexual appetite. She can be tempted to do any evil so long as her sex demands are fulfilled

The early 1970s saw a new wave of the quality novels with writers such as Somaweera Senanayake, Aravvala Nandimitra, Jayasena Jayakody etc. They describe the harsh realisties of poverty and the complexities of human relationships. Even in these, the role of the woman comes within the confines of the conventional code of character written out for women, such as motherhood, wifehood, service, purity and duty, as for instance in Somaweera Senayake's Mavakage Geethaya (Mother's song), which portrays a rural woman who strives with courage to fulfill her obligations as a mother. The same theme appears in Aravvala Nandimithra's Piyawathie Saha Ege Putthu (Piyawathie and her sons).

Although the economic and social hazards a woman faces, in the role of mother and wife, have been aptly described, it is significant that the real situation of the contemporary Sri Lankan woman and her participation in varying economic, social and cultural activities have not been adequately portrayed in the Sinhala novel

In the field of contemporary poetry, however, a conscious attempt to portray realistically the Sri Lanka woman has been made by Parakrama Kodituvakku The poem Udavana e davasa (The day that dawns), in the collection called Podi Malliye (O! the younger brother) (1973), describes a woman rubber tapper fighting for higher wages. The poem 'Sthree' (Woman), in the collection Aluth Minihek Avith (A new Man has Arrived) (1975) portrays the plight of women, drawing his imagery from Buddhism and Sri Lankan history. A part of the poem in translation appears below:

"They imprisoned you,
In a golden cage,
Called 'chastity',
They abandoned you,
As a deadly poison,
A heap of dirt,
This is called 'The noble renunciation'."

MODERN WOMEN WRITERS

Women writers began to appear in the late 1950s Leticia Botheju is perhaps the first woman to write a novel in the modern times. Botheju's novel Para Dige (Along the Road), 1959, is a story of a boy who leaves his home unable to bear the harrassment of a cruel step mother. He comes up the hard way till one day he comes across a gold mine in his small plot of land. One of the leading female characters in the novel is an unscrupulous social worker under whom the boy takes refuge after leaving home. The author here takes the opportunity to attack the particular brand of upper class women who under the mask of social service exploits destitute children. Botheju's novel has a moral purpose - to expose contemporary social evils and hypocrasy, particularly practised by women.

Eva Ranaweera's Layisa, 1964, was perhaps the first novel by a woman writer that has attempted to portray woman's characters sympathetically. (The heroine's name is the title of the novel). The heroine is a young servant woman who is oppressed by the socio-cultural system she lives in. The trials and tribulations she faces in her neighbourhood are accurately depicted and the novel is a strong social comment on the particular Sri Lankan socio-cultural system.

Ranaweera's second novel Sedona, 1971, displays even more maturity and sensitivity. (The heroine's name is again the title) Here is a portrayal of an unmarried village woman, an orphan who struggles along in the midst of social, cultural and economic constrains. She makes a living by doing domestic work in houses and is an object of ridicule and gossip. Ranaweera has beautifully captured the travails of a village woman who has been unsuccessful in entering the institution of marriage and the courage with which she faces up to the situation.

Karuna Perera, a young woman writer who emerged in the early 1970s brought new dimensions to the Sinhala short story. For the first time slum life of Colombo was depicted in her short stories, in the two collections Andurata Eliyak (Light into Darkness), 1971, and Ekomath Eka Rataka (In a Certain Country), 1973. Woman is portrayed in these stories as engaged in a wide range of economic activities as well as bearing the burden of the family. The woman labourer who supports the family when the husband is dead or even alive, the small girl who sells gram at the toddy tavern, the young girl who sells gram at the toddy tavern, the young girl who remains a prostitute through economic necessity, the factory worker who protests for better wages and strikes at work, are some of the characters portrayed by Karuna Perera. In these she depicts the reality of the Sri Lankan woman not only in the slums of Colombo, but elsewhere too - a reality which is seldom portrayed in the literary works of this country.

A distinct feminist consciousness has been evident for the first time in the poetry of Monica Ruvanpathirana, one of the best known poets of the day, who has to her credit a substantial body of poetry, which is characterised both by its technical sophistication and its depth of feeling. She questions the

validity of traditional concepts and norms of womanhood and challenges the existing socio-cultural frame-work. She is able to present with sincerity and poignancy, the tragedy of women indulging in the 'beauty of life' while being trapped in the 'prison of conventions'. Her Obe Yeheliya aya Gahaniya (Your Friend, She is a Woman) 1975, brought out in commemoration of the International Women's Year portrays various aspects of woman's oppression in several roles of woman, namely as daughter, mother, wife, domestic servant, labourer etc We quote here extracts from Obe Yeheliya aya gahaniya:

"Equal pay for equal work,
Halt the factory wheel.
We, the working women,
Wave flags of victory.

If we get more money,
Bellyfull will be.
Our little ones,
And the aged parents.

We, the working women,
Are sisters,
Dear wives, daughters,
And mothers who create the world."

.....

"Hands and feet cracked and stained with cement,
Fingers full of carbuncles caused by Mammaties and katis[4]
Life is wasted at the factory wheel
A maddening smile appears on their faces.

Bodies bent with the weight of tea leaves,
Eyes teared with rubber late
Clad in tattered clothes inside the kitchens of big houses
They have no home of their own."

It is interesting to note the modern form of *Panchakalyani* (the five requisites for a beauty queen in the old classics are youthful appearance, well rounded physique, fair complexion, even teeth, long hair) as seen by Monica Ruwanpathirana.

"One who comprehends the world around her
And is determined to change it,
One whose cleverness brightens up the world,
And who is fearless of heart,
One who is to service dedicated,
She then,
Is the new Panchakalyani."[5]

Lakshmie Bombuwala, another woman writer works out women's characters with fine and sensitive observations of detail. In her short story collection, Piya Puthu (Father and Son) 1976, Hinakka of the tea boutique struggles to live with the help of her neighbours; the old woman who sells flowers embodies courage and strength of will; Somilie and Pinchie serve their mistresses almost in slavery.

There are a host of women writers at present, to name the better known ones - Anula de Silva, Somadevi Paranayapa, Dharma Samaranayake, Sumithra Ruhubadda and Priyanvada Banduwardhana.

In summary, the way women have been depicted has changed over the centuries from the stylized beauties of feudal courts, through the mixed characterisation of the nationalist era to recent attempts at depicting woman breaking away from bondage. This is with respect to the more serious elite literature. The literature for masses has also changed from the folk poems of an early age which depicted woman with a greater degree of realism to the present mass market pulp fiction which depicts woman as a stereotype, reminiscent of the elite writers of ancient times.

TAMIL LITERATURE

Although the influence of the South Indian Tamil novels and magazines on the Sri Lankan Tamil reader has always been strong, and a concerted attempt at an indigenous Tamil literature was made only in recent times, it is a matter of significance that the indigenous Tamil novel in Sri Lanka made its beginning, along with the Sinhala novel as early as 1891 under the influences of Christianity and European literature. Uson Palanthai Kathai, the first Tamil novel written in Sri Lanka [6] (second novel written in Tamil anywhere) written by S. Inasithamby of Trincomalee was a prose fiction of *Nattu Kuuttu*,[7] a form of folk drama popular in Jaffna and Batticaloa at the time.

An event of great significance in the history of the Sri Lankan Tamil novel was that the first novel to deal with social problems was written by a woman in 1914[8]. Mangala Thambiah, a woman with no formal education wrote two novels, and a book on the merits of Christianity. Her first novel Norungunda Iruthayam (Broken Heart) showed a woman who suffers at the hands of an avaricious and status conscious husband and how she seeks solace from a Christian Missionary. The husband realises the wife's virtues when she is on her death bed and reforms himself.

Mangala Nayagam Thambiah's second novel Ariyamalar (Precious Flower), written in 1924 is not available today. Her third book Anupavakalanjiyam (A Collection of Experiences) was an exposition on the merits of Christianity.

The next woman to publish a novel was Sempot Sotheeswarar Sellammal[9]. In the forward of her novel Rasathurai, which appeared in 1924, she mentions that the purpose of writing it is social reform. Rasathurai described the evils of society, particularly that stood against women. It is a story of two girls - one who conform to the accepted norms of society and the other, who fights her parents and the social conventions of the day and marries the poor boy of her choice.

Around the same time, the Tamil Novel was used as a weapon to criticise the western way of living and Christianity, as was the case in the Sinhala novels of Piyadasa Sirisena. Idaikaadar and M.V.Thirugnana Sambandapillai are two such Tamil novelists. It is interesting to note that the impact of western concepts of egalitarianism influenced a certain section of Hindus to fight the accepted social institutions of the day such as the dowry system.

and stigma against widows In Kopala Nesarathinam (the heroine's name is the title of the novel) 1924, a novel by M.V.Thirugnana Sambandapillai, a Christian priest allows his widowed daughter to become friendly with a Hindu young man with the motive of converting him to Christianity. The young man's orthodox mother's influence was so great that the Christian widow becomes a Hindu and the orthodox mother is made to accept a widow as a daughter-in-law, a practice which went counter to the norms of Hindu society at the time

In his next novel Thurai Rathinam Nesamani, (The heroine's name) 1927 - 1928, Thirugnana Smabandapillai discusses the evils of the dowry system, liquor and bad company. The merits of chastity and devotion to the husband are upheld as good practices that should be followed by Hindu wives. The author deplores the decline of morals among Christian women converts eg. moving with men on equal terms, and appeals to Hindu women to safeguard their cultural values. This is a clear indication of the conflict of values - the traditional and new in respect of women as was seen also in Piyadasa Sirisena's novels.

Another woman novelist, S.Rasammal, in 1929 made another 'first' - the introduction of the detective story to Tamil readers. Her detective novels Saraswathi and Kaanamat Pona Ponmani (Women who got lost) enjoyed a high degree of popularity.

In the 1940s M.A.Selvanayagam and H.Nalliah opened up new vistas in the Tamil novel reflecting the contemporary social problems facing specially the depressed castes and lower strata of society and attempting to resolve caste, religious and communal issues.

The 1950s saw a new era in the Tamil novel advocating the emancipation of woman from feudal ties. A generation of serious novelists with a new social consciousness emerged with the formation of the Progressive Writers Association in 1953 They included Ilankeeran, S.Ganesalingam, Nandi, Benedict Paalan and S Ponnuthurai A number of the best short story writers too appeared during this period Some of them were Piththan, K Daniel, Domini Jeeva, Maruthoor Gani, N.K.Ragunathan, M.S.M.Ramiah, Neerval Ponniah, Silayoor Selvarajan,

Kavaloor Rajadurai, K.Ariyanayagam and Maruthoor Kothan. Their works are characterised by the depth of feeling, human understanding and sympathy with which they discussed the contemporary social issues that the ordinary masses were immersed in.

Ilankeeran, a Jaffna Muslim was perhaps the best known novelist during this time. His novel Thentralum Puyalum (The Breeze and the Storm), 1952,deals with two stories. In one, Balu, a young man from a middle class Jaffna family falls in love with a rich girl,Manon from Colombo, who gets pregnant. But the girl's parents see that the daughter is given in marriage to an educated, wealthy man of high status.

In the other story, Balu's sister, Thangam falls in love with Poopathi of low caste. In spite of severe opposition, they get married. A thought that runs through the novel is that the lower middle classes are obsessed by caste considerations, whereas it is social status (built on capitalist socio-economic criteria) that is important to the upper class.

S.Ganeshalingam's novels too deal with social evils. Neenda Payanam (Long Journey) depicts the struggles of a depressed caste village for social and political emancipation. Sadangu (1966), (Ceremonies) of the same author deplores the attitude of the Hindus who observe zealously the marriage customs and ceremonies and totally ignore the wishes of the marriage partners.

Although these writers fought for the emancipation of the masses from feudal ties such as caste system, dowry system and the stigma against widows, they often did not totally deviate from the conventional norms of behaviour assigned to women and used different yard sticks for men and women to measure morals and values. Women who were raped (not due to a fault of theirs) or who slipped into adultery were not accepted by their husbands and sometimes the women even committed suicide.

Varathar's Kayamai Mayakkam (Confused Stinginess), 1969, a collection of short stories is a bold attempt to break through this tendency. In the story *Katpu* (Chastity) he depicts the plight of a woman who was raped during communal riots. Unable to bear the tortures meted out to her husband for refusing to

divulge where she was hiding, the wife comes out of the hiding place and the men, one by one rape her. The husband is made to analyse the circumstances logically, circumstances over which she had no control. He comes to the conclusion that she was not a willing partner to it! He accepts her. The wife does not have to beg for forgiveness. Nor is she shown as attempting to commit suicide. She sheds tears and he embraces her. The author seems to idnicate here that chastity is more a mental state than a physical one

Another story in the same collection that is critical of the conventional role of a model wife is Puthuyugap Penn (The Modern Girl). A young girl from a poor family was married to a much older man, because she had no dowry. She is prepared to accept her lot and live with him. To her dismay, she finds her husband a womaniser and a drunkard. She puts up with him until one day when he comes drunk in the dead of the night with another woman embracing and fondling her. She shoots him down and the author concludes saying "You did not shoot at Mr.Nallanathan, but you shot at the age old puranic concept that whatever atrocities the husband commits, the wife should still worship at his feet." Though propagandist from a purely literary point of view, it is an important stage in the depiction of woman in Tamil literature.

Yaththirai (The Journey) 1976, by P.Pathmanathan is another deviation from the formula novel and the changing image of a middle class woman. In Yaththirai, the heroine raped by her cousin, is married to him, but she finds out that he has a girl-friend and he would have preferred to marry her She breaks up the marriage, the partners of which are both unhappy. She seeks salvation from the unhappy marriage and the husband marries his girl-friend.

Oru Vilai Magalaikkaathalithenn (I fell in love with a Prostitute) 1974, by Indu Mahesh is yet another novel on similar lines. The hero falls in love with a prostitute and marries her against the wishes of his well-wishers.

Brave young women committed to the cause of the community appear in the later novels. In N.K.Thangaratnam's short story Illatchiyam (Idealism) 1974, the heroine, a young University graduate takes a vow not to marry the man who asks for a dowry. Till such time she gets one, she serves the rural women through the various woman's organizations. She eventually finds such a husband and fulfills her vow. Thirmanaththikku oru pen Kaththrukkiral (She is waiting for her marriage) 1974, by S.Agasthiar has a heorine who refuses to marry for the sake of marrying, and is more interested in social reforms. She withstands all persuasion by her friends and mother, and dedicates herself to the improvement of her community.

There are a few women writers in Tamil in the present day who attempt character portrayal of heroines with deeper understanding and sympathy. Kokilam Suppiah's Thuraththuppachai (Distant Pastures), 1964, depicts the exploitation, cruelty and injustice meted out to estate workers. Women have to submit to the sexual advances of those in power and authority; few of them resits them and many of them are unable to resist.

The consciousness of women's rights and emancipation is distinctly the underlying theme of Annalakshmy Rajadurai's Vilichudar (The glow of the eye), 1970. The U.K. returned handsome young man poses as a bachelor and marries to satisfy his mother, who foolishly thinks that martimonial bondage will make her young son forget his wife in U.K. After the marriage he goes back alone to England and never returns. The educated young wife though dejected and unhappy at first, gets over her dejection, continues her studies, takes up work as a teacher and moves out of the village to start life afresh. She meets a man who falls in love with her not knowing she is married. When he comes to know the past, he is bewildered but after some thought he accepts her and is willing to marry her. He upholds the view that 'Women should not be made the victims and made to suffer continuously for the fault of selfish men, who take advantage of situations peculiar to our society.'

Uravukkappal (Beyond any relationship) 1975 by N.Baleswary from Trincomalee is a stereotype with the wife forgiving the husband for suspecting her of adultery. The husband is made to realise the folly of being suspicious of his wife who was faithful to him.

It is important to note here that though many Tamil writers have focussed on crucial social issues affecting woman such as caste system and dowry system, they often have upheld the traditional ideal of womanhood as the self-sacrificing wife and mother. K Sivathamby[10] sums up the depiction of women in Tamil literary works when he says that women are depicted as opposing the conventional caste system and dowry system before marriage and often after marriage as accepting their life role as an appendage to the husband Sivathamby emphasises that woman feature prominently in Tamil literary works because she is the cornerstone on which the family structure is built and that every writer has accepted the marital bond signified by the *Thali*.

ENGLISH LITERATURE

Use of English is limited to a narrow segment of the population and the amount of writing in English is likewise minimal. Inevitably, all creative writers in English are drawn from the upper and middle classes and it is interesting to note that a large number of them are women. Punyakanthi Wijenayake and Suvimalee Gunaratna are well known for the novel and the short story respectively, while Yasmin Goonaratne, Ann Ranasinghe, Alfreda de Silva and Jean Arasanayagam are poets of high talent.

One of the noteworthy aspects of English creative writing is that very often the authors seem to have very little experience of the situations that they write about thus leading to a tendency to stereotype, generalise and romanticise. This is especially true of the portrayal of woman in English fiction

The female characters tend to be very lightly sketched even though women writers such as Punyakanthi Wijenaike, include a wide and varied cross section of women drawn from all strata of society

The city based Sri Lankan writers of English novels often set their work against a rural backdrop. Everything and everyone connected with the countryside is idealised, and the city is shown as an urban jungle, teeming

with materialistic automatons. As in the case of James Goonawardene, the author's attitude to female characters is often a faithful reflection of his attitude to the environment. In Goonawardene's novels the representatives of urban womanhood are deracinated, jaded females, utterly devoid of 'femininity' whose demanding qualities send their admirers to seek a more restful environment in the countryside, usually in the arms of buxom women, representing the eternal female figure. Part of their attraction seems to lie in their pliability and submissiveness (Here again the novelist is perpetuating a stereotype village woman who is obedient to the males, undemanding, and who rarely exists as a personality in her own right.)

"She would perform her duties as a wife without expecting much in return. It was part of the tradition in which she had been brought up. If she found her wedded life unsatisfactory, she would think it was because of her *karma*. She might even think that her pleasure and happiness did not matter. She merely satisfied the demands of her man."[11]

This sums up the traditional status of the village woman. Assigned the second place, existing on the will and pleasure of the husband, she is not encouraged to protest at the hardships of her lot, but is made to accept them with resignation because of her acceptance of the religious belief that her suffering is *karma*. The city girl on the other hand seems to be less attractive as a wife because with modern concepts of equality, she is less likely to accept without protest, a role of subservience. This unsympathetic attitude towards the modern urban young woman is conveyed by James Goonawardene in the following words:

> "She would know so much about co-habitation and about the responsibility of each partner in the marriage contract, and she would relentlessly make her demands."[12]

There is no significant difference in women writers in their attitude towards women. In Suvimali Gunaratne's story 'In the Temple', though the woman is not always free to choose for herself, the woman is held responsible when the marriage goes awry. 'A woman if she were a good partner must know how to keep her man sober and on the correct path, but it was obvious that this girl was totally incapable of having any such influence on her son.'[13] The

responsiblity for maintaining a successful marital relationship devolves entirely on the woman.

Women exist in a male dominated society. Even women writers seem to accept the status quo, and present characters who are conformists. Punyakanthi Wijenaike in her novels and short stories, seem to uphold and emphasise the premium placed on virginity. Wijenaike's Giraya (Arecanut cutter) in recording the vicissitudes of Kamini's existence is critical of the dominating mother-in-law but not of the constricting modes of thought that shape social thinking on issues such as dowry, caste system, etc. The presentation of certain stock situations such as the relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law is often stereotyped.

Sri Lankan English writing is not entirely free of the representation of woman as the tempter. It also shows woman as the passive victim of social norms which demand passive acceptance of traditions, such as the acceptance of a marriage partner chosen by the elders for his eligibility and not compatibility and often resulting in repression for the woman. However, some writers for instance Suvimalee Gunaratna, in the story 'Loku Aiya' seem to deal with this kind of situation with understanding and sympathy, as seen in the following line.

'Indeed she did not have the power of fight Loku Aiya That is why she had given way to a silent tantrum in the privacy of her room. She was a helpless craft dragged on by a force stronger than her will - the mighty current of Loku Aiya's ambitions '[14]

The usual response of women characters is that of the protagonist in one of Gunaratna's short stories, 'One should accept one's *karma* - fate as it comes.'[15]

Some of A C St V Thurairajah's poems are representative examples of male chauvinism that often appears in the pages of our newspapers. A commended entry in the literary competition held by the Daily Mirror, published in The Woman in the Storm is titled 'Should women diplomats be appointed to represent Ceylon Abroad?'

"To Ceylon's existing ills,
Women diplomats to 'lie abroad',
In saree, frocks and frills,
Would be a disgrace and fraud.
For 36 - 22 - 36
May win in beauty parade,
But with IQ at 36,
(For beauty and brains don't mix)
They simply won't make the grade! "[16]

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Children in Sri Lanka are taught through a standard system. Thus children learning through their national languages, Sinhala or Tamil, or through their second language, English,get an identical educational package, wherever they live. Since the education system is a primary socializing agent which imparts attitudes and values that last a lifetime, it is useful to examine the content of children's readers. This is presented in two parts, namely (a) school texts; and (b) supplementary readers.

(a) SCHOOL TEXTS

School text books for children in Grades 1 to 5 in Sinhala and Tamil, up to Grade 10 in English (The content of English readers is simpler as it is the second language) have been examined The attached tables analyse the roles in which women are depicted

TEXT BOOKS IN SINHALA

GRADE	STEREOTYPED SEX ROLES	NON-STEREOTYPED SEX ROLES
Grade 1	Nil	Nil
Grade 2	Aunt gifts a necklace to the niece and a ball to the nephew Mother prepares tea Only men work in the field Father opens a letter and reads. Mother and daughter listen.	Mother and son take vegetables to the fair. A picture of a female teacher A female vegetable vendor. A boy packs his clothes in a suitcase (His younger sister assists).

GRADE	STEREOTYPED SEX ROLES	NON-STEREOTYPED SEX ROLES
Grade 2 contd	Aunt and mother cook food. Men get down to the tank and wash their faces. Women are frightened to get into the water	Mother and teacher narrate the history of Ruvanveliseya.
Grade 3	Nil	Elder sister explains about Vesak celebrations in Eastern countries. Elder sister teaches folk poems. A story of a girl's bravery titled 'I also would like to do something like that' - A girl sees a broken rail track and runs along the railway line with a red cloth in hand in the direction of the approaching train in order to prevent disaster. The story of Viharamahadevi titled 'A brave mother and a heroic son' contains statements such as 'Nowhere else in the world has there been a woman who was ready to sacrifice her life to save the country from being washed over by the sea Her son acted on her advice and made the country self-sufficient in food as well as free from foreign rule. Our history is rich with such heroic women.' (In this particular presentation of an old story, there is no racial or communial bias.) A musical playlet based on a German folk tale where a wicked Queen wanted to be the most beautiful woman in the world carries the following verses which are obviously added by the text book writer -

GRADE	SEX ROLES STEREOTYPED	SEX ROLES NOT STEREOTYPED
		"In the ancient past, Woman's beauty reigned supreme. But today, The Intelligent woman Is the most beautiful It is so now; That was so then. Stupidity mattered not If the woman was beautiful."
Grade 4	Father and son are seated Mother cooks food. Daughter takes a look at a new dress material .	Men and women participate in trade. Girls and boys clean the class-room together. Women reap and men carry bundles of harvest.
Grade 5	Nil	Nil

TEXT BOOKS IN TAMIL

Grade 1	Picture of a family-father is seated on an easy chair reading; elder son is standing and talking to younger brother who is seated and studying. Mother is seated on the floor feeding the baby - daughter is seated on the floor, grand-mother is seated on the floor sewing. (All women are seated on the floor - as well as the dog).	The word 'sister' appears with a picture of a girl seated on a chair with a book - always the sister is shown reading a book while the elder brother is shown cycling Picture of a boy serving milk to visitors.
	The word 'mother' appears with a picture of a woman seated on the bed with a baby The word 'father' appears with a picture of a man pumping air to a tyre.	Mother is ordering the son to wash five plates and get water for lunch.

GRADE	SEX ROLES STEREOTYPED	SEX ROLES NOT STEREOTYPED
Grade 1 contd	Mother is serving lunch to son and daughter	Every lesson has girls and boys studying, going to school, sweeping, wiping the blackboard together.
	Son is asking mother whether they can go on a holiday She wants him to ask the father.	
Grade 3	Nil	Mother is engaged in cottage industry while her son assists. They all take their things to the market.
Grade 4	Nil	Nil
Grade 5	Nil	Nil

TEXT BOOKS IN ENGLISH

English Step One (Experimental Material) Grade 3	Nil	Picture of a mother reading a news paper, while the father is listening to the radio. Picture of a mother washing a frock and the father washing a shirt.
English Step Two (Experimental Material)	Mala is crying because the dog has taken her doll. Gamini (brother who appears to be as small as Mala) gets the doll from the dog. Mother and daughter are in the kitchen dusting and sweeping. Father and son are working in the field. Picture of the mother in the kitchen washing fish. The father returning from work with a brief case. Mother is sewing. Mala gets a doll as a prize	Mala wins a prize for her painting and this news is in the newspaper.

GRADE	SEX ROLES STEREOTYPED	SEX ROLES NOT STEREOTYPED
English Book 3 Grade 5	Mother is in the kitchen while the father is in the field . Girl sweeps. Girl is making tea. Alice washes pots. Sena studies History. Mother is carrying water Woman sweeps.	Women help males in cultivating
English Course for Grade 6	Mr Perera is working Mrs Perers is cooking rice. Mr.Siripala is reading a book, Mrs.Siripala is cooking. Gunawathie* sews. Kamala* sweeps. Mohan reads. Mohan reads an English book. Mohan reads while Kamala sweeps. Kamala washes her clothes. Girls sweep kitchen and wash clothes. Sarath makes a vase Kanthi* makes a roti Ranjit repairs his bike. Kamala washes pots and Leela* sweeps the kitchen. Son helps father and daughter helps mother	Rohan sweeps and Sita* sews. Mohan sweeps Kamala paints the door.
An English Course Grade 7	Girls work in the kitchen, boys in the garden.	Kamala wishes to be a doctor.

* Female names.

GRADE	SEX ROLES STEREOTYPED	SEX ROLES NOT STEREOTYPED
An English Course for Grade 8	Girl helps mother in kitchen. Girls are engaged in household work. 'Chameleon becomes a crocodile' - Woman's gossip	Hemamali* wants to be a doctor. Kamala is clever. Tilak is equally clever.
New English Course for Grade 9.	Nil	Working mother. Sita goes to work inspite of illness. A clever girl wins a scholarship to the University.
An English Course for Grade 10	Kamala who wants to become a doctor is not good at Biology, so she hopes to be trained as a nurse.	Nil
An English Course for H.N.C.E.	All students doing lab work seem to be male A boy who wants to be an architect	Kamala aspires to be a doctor. Passage on 'Marie Curie'. Leela* wins a scholarship to a Madya Maha Vidyalaya. Kamala who reads Sanskrit at Vidyodaya ends up as a teacher in her old school

It is noteworthy that in the Sinhala and Tamil texts surveyed, references to stereotyped sex roles are less than references to non-stereotyped sex roles However, the stereotyping of sex roles is more apparent in the English texts where all mothers are shown as housewives whose main interest and activities are limited to their homes There is only one reference to women's participation in economic activities and that only to their work in the field. The girls' activities too are confined to the kitchen - they sweep; make tea; cook roti; wash pots; play with dolls, while boys read; work in the field and repair bicycles. (In two instances boys sweep the house)

In the Sinhala and Tamil texts, on the other hand, women are portrayed as also engaged in trade, cottage industries and work in paddy fields, in addition to their being depicted in household activities. However, it should be noted that the occupations women are engaged in are traditional ones, which are in the lower end of the occupational and social scale. All these references, positive as well as negative seem, however, to have been made unconsciously by the authors.

The particular stereotyping of sex roles in English and national language text books is due to two sources - the traditional and the colonial. The English texts describe an English speaking middle class situation whereas the Sinhala texts describe the division of labour existing in the traditional economy. The same difference in status between males and females is reflected in a picture in Grade I Tamil text book where irrespective of age, the males are seated on chairs whilst all the females - mother, daughter and grandmother are seated on the floor. It can be inferred that modernisation as for instance, through the widespread use of furniture seems to change the traditional life style of the male more than that of the female.

It is noteworthy that the Grade 3 Sinhala text has made a deliberate attempt to deviate from the conventional pattern and project a positive image of women by describing women of heroism and intellect. A conscious effort has also been made to transmit the message of equality of men and women.

SUPPLEMENTARY READERS

SINHALA

The original of children's books in Sinhala can be traced to 1914 with the publication of Sirith Maldama, a book of aphorisms. Ananda Rajakaruna (1885 - 1957) and Munidasa Kumaranatunge (1887 - 1944) were the pioneers in children's literature. The poems written for children by the former and the latter's story books Heensare, Mangulkama and Hathpana are well known to this day. The stories rich in humour and fantasy are mainly about animals. The early thirties saw the emergence of a series of classics for children called Sadhu charita based on the lives of well known Buddhist personalities and Bodhisathvas

such as Sirisangabo, Gajaba, Mahaushada and Vidura, followed by popular stories such as Alibaba. H.D.Sugathapala's Nava Maga series (although they were school texts) brought new dimensions to children's books through the colour lay out and variety of theme.

It is significant that a children's book written and illustrated by a woman marked the beginning of the modern supplementary readers for children in Sri Lanka. This was Kuda Hora (The umbrella thief) by Sybil Wettasinghe published in 1956. It was a delightful booklet of 16 pages with colourful illustrations on each page. Since then a few other women have made a name in the field of children's literature, among whom the better known ones are Sumana Saparamadu, Soma Kiriella, Padmini Vithane and Vijitha Fernando.

Stories written with a view to give children social consciousness are few. Of them Sumana Saparamadu's Sujatha written in 1975 stands out. It portrays in a beautiful and lucid style the dreams and realities of a servant girl, virtually a child slave. It is an important piece of children's literature that should be used to get the message across, in this International Year of the Child, to thousands of 'mothers' who keep servant girls.

A striking feature of Sinhalese children's stories is that often the main character is a boy. As is to be expected the tendency to weave stories round girls, is more among female writers than among males. An exception is K Jayatilake who portrays girls and boys as having the same capacity for intelligence, courage and sensitivity to the joys and sorrows of life as is seen in his stories in Aiyai Nangiyi, (Sister and brother) and Irunu balala (Torn cat), 1973.

TAMIL SUPPLEMENTARY READERS

A work of Avaiyar (1st C A D)[17] a woman poet of the Sangam period in India has from ancient times influenced the Sri Lankan Tamil children This is a book of aphorisms for children with a poem or advice written for each letter of the Tamil alphabet.

Very few children's books in Tamil have so far been published in Sri Lanka. One worthy of mention is the recent publication by Tamil Sangam called Siruvar Kathaikal (1979) This is a book of stories (with illustrations) based on old sayings and proverbs It is noteworthy that stories depicting women in an unfavourable manner do not appear in this publication.

READING TASTES OF CHILDREN

Tamil magazines such as Ambulimama and Ananda Vikatan published in India provide the reading material for the Tamil speaking children in Sri Lanka, as revealed in a survey of reading tastes of children of the ten to fourteen years group undertaken by the Educational Publications Department in 1976. Stories from history, folk lore and mythology were top favourites according to the survey. The survey also revealed that the Tamil children liked stories best Religion, social stories, children's columns in newspapers, sports, politics and industry came next in popularity in this order. The least popular were the fairy tales, puzzles, articles on art and dancing, women's columns and literary articles.

As to the reading tastes of the Sinhala reading children, the cartoon strip was rated the most popular while the second choice was fairy tales. Adventure stories, with a social content, folk tales and biography followed in order of popularity. The preference for the novel and science fiction was very low. (Only very few science fiction books are available) It is to be noted, in this context, that reading tastes are formed by what is available

A fact which emerges from the survey is the desire to escape sustained and continuous reading in the young, as is indicated in the popularity of cartoon strips The image of women reflected in cartoon stories is distorted and unrealistic, and thus, a wrong impression can be created in the young It should be mentioned, therefore, that such a popular medium should be made use of, to project a realistic and a positive image of women.

Children's books published in English are few. Alfreda de Silva's The Peacock tree and other poems (1973,) and Children's poems (1973), a book of poems drawn from Sinhala traditional jingles and simple rhymes intended for play

involving speech and movement are worthy of mention. Deloraine Brohier's Tales of Sri Lanka retold in verse and story provides interesting reading for older children. It is noteworthy that sex stereotyping does not appear in supplementary readers in English.

THEATRE

THE EARLY SINHALA THEATRE

The dramatic tradition of Sri Lanka is not as ancient as that of arts like sculpture, painting, architecture and literature which have a continuous tradition of over 2,000 years. This is largely due to the influence of Buddhism which frowned upon music, dancing and drama. Literary references and sculptural monuments of the early era point to the presence of dance, music and dramatic arts within the Sinhalese courts where Hindu infleunce on courtly practices often prevailed, but these have not survived and have had no great influence.

Although the courtly tradition of drama has not survived, a tradition exists which can trace its origin several centuries back. This tradition combines elements of the patrician Sanskrit drama as well as elements associated with cult and magical beliefs of the common people. The austere, non-theistic and anti-ritualistic nature of Buddhism encouraged Sinhalese villagers to retain and develop pre-Buddhistic practices of invoking gods and demons for help with the problems of everyday life. These practices consisted of elaborate ceremonies incorporating such elements of drama as mimesis, impersonation and dialogue as well as the use of technical devices like masks and costumes.

A definite dramatic form was discernible only in the later folk traditions of *Kolam*, *Sokari* and *Nadagama*. The first two are local developments whilst the last was derived from a variety of South Indian folk plays known as *Terukkuttu* in the Tamil Nadu and *Vithi Nataka* in Andhara. The *Nattukkuttu* (the local name for *Terukkuttu*) which is not identical in all respects with the Sinhala Nadagama is performed occasionally in Jaffna and Batticaloa even today. The themes of the plays are largely taken from episodes in the Ramayana and Mahabharata and from Tamil legends. The *Nadagama* and *Kolam* have survived to date in the coastal villages of the South of Sri Lanka whilst *Sokari* is still performed in the up-country.

In the old folk plays of the Sinhala and the Tamils, roles of women were played by men. Women began to appear on the stage only in the last two decades of the 19th century with the emergence of the modern Sri Lankan theatre, known as *Nurti* (Although the *Nurti* had its roots in the old *Nadagama* form of flok drama, it was directly inspired by the Parsee theatrical troups which came from North India and by amateur English theatricals) It is worth quoting E.R Sarachchandra's comments on the impact made by the participation of women in the theatre.

"It was with the modern theatre, that women first came on the stage, and although this had its advantage from the point of view of dramatic art in general, it had unfortunate repercussions on the Sinhalese theatre. In the folk plays and *Nadagama*, women's roles were played by men. The new practice, however, instead of raising the status of an already despised art, served to bring it further into disrepute. Even singing and instrumental music had long since ceased to be regarded as accomplishments worthy of the respectable Sinhalese woman, although families who received an English education made an exception in favour of western music. If singing and instrumental music were allowed at all, it was only at the level of domestic accomplishments, and even at this level dancing was never admitted To perform any of these arts in public even as amateurs, or to take part in the public performance of a play, would be, for a woman, to descend to the lowest levels of degradation So that those women who acted on the stage, did so at the risk of their own reputations and unfortunately, the bad name they earned reflected further discredit on the stage. This was aggravated by the fact that the theatre offered professional careers to women, and even if the amateur actress might have barely escaped with her reputation, the professional actress had the worst of both worlds. The result was that educated middle classes in Colombo were slow to patronise the theatre, even if they liked it as a form of entertainment."[18]

It is interesting to note that in this respect the implied views of a middle class woman, Mary Matilda, from Moratuwa who wrote to the Editor of a newspaper in 1884, after seeing a *nurti* by C Don Bastian.

> "This is the first time a respectable family can sit together to watch stage plays "

Nurti, which came into being partially as a result of Western cultural influence had pre-marital romantic love as an essential ingredient. The Sri Lankan dramatists had to make this concept of romantic love acceptable to traditional Sinhala society by portraying the heroine as a chaste woman who remained faithful to her lover through many adversities.[19] The term *pativrata* (chastity) which originally meant fidelity to the husband (a virtue emphasised right through in classical literature), came to be used even for fidelity to the lover. There were also instances where women played heroic roles, of course, in relation to the husband - the wife protested against injustice and rescued the husband from prison as shown in C.Don Bastian's *nurti* "Franloo and Ingerlee", (1885).

The devoted, faithful wife was by far the most common role played by women in *nurtis* as indicated in the examples below. Thus the wife of Sirisangabo, on hearing that her husband had died, committed suicide, although Sri Lankan society did not demand such sacrifices. Pattini was bestowed with divine power, owing to her chastity. Evil befell the Queen who betrayed her husband and fell in love with the Portuguese General, Daskon.

The feudal concept of woman that prevailed during this time is epitomised in the following dialogue from '*Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe*', (1906), a *nurti* by John de Silva.

"Ehelepola - Even though I promised to return earlier, I could not do so since I had to discuss many matters of importance with the King.

Kumarihamy - You know my dear Lord, that it is not the custom for a Sinhala lady (*kulanganava*) to ask her husband where he went or why he delayed.

Ehelepola - (song)
What you said, my darling, is right
I am delighted,
At what you said.
You are my sweet darling,
Show me great affection,
My dear one is right.

Kumarihamy - I am the servant of my Lord,
I must say this.
I am his servant,
For my past sins.
My duty is to look after the family,
Activities outside the home are not my concern.
I am your obedient wife."

PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE EARLY THEATRE

Ana Perera (Kannangara) (1861 - 1949) from Pettah was perhaps the first Sri Lankan woman to take part in the theatre or give any public performance in song or dance. She was a past pupil of Punyasanvari school in Pettah started by C Don Bastian in 1870. She joined the theatre in 1876 and was the popular heroine in *nurtis* produced by C. Don Bastian and John de Silva.[20]

The first ever song to have been recorded on gramophone in 1908 was by a woman. It was Margaret D. Silva Warnakulasuriya, wife of B.George Perera, a share holder of a theatre company and the manager of the musical instruments section of H.Don Carolis and Sons Company Ltd , and the song was from the theatre *'Ratnavalie'*.

John de Silva preferred not to have women acting in his plays, because of social disapproval of women appearing on the stage. When John de Silva's son became the stage manager in 1919 of Tower Hall, the most popular theatre of the day, women were taken for all the leading female roles Most of the women recruited at the time were well-known *Nadagam* actresses of the day They included L Jane Perera from Peliyagoda (1893 - 1959), W Simona Perera from Negombo (1895 - 1948), M Annie Botheju from Logglate, Maradana (B 1903), Rejina Perera from Wolfendal Street (B 1902), Harriet Perera and twelve other Burgher and Sinhala women Susila Jayasinghe from Sedawatta (B.1908) and Lakshmie Bai from Pettah (B.1907) were two other well known actresses of Tower Hall Rukmani Devi, who later became the first film actress was one of the last recruits to the Tower Hall.

There was also a number of small-time theatre groups around this time who used to go from town to town, put up temporary sheds and performed Sinhala and Tamil plays It is interesting to note that there were women producers and managers of such plays at the time. Sandana Vadivu, a Tamil woman had staged plays in many parts of the country by 1919 and moved on to Mannar with her theatre group, which included her latest recruit, Lakshmie Bai. Lakshmie Bai was the first Muslim woman to enter the stage. Later she formed her own theatre group and staged Tamil and Sinhala plays in Ambalangoda, Matara, Elpitiya and Neboda until she joined Tower Hall. These groups consisted of more men than women. Nurjan and Kamalavati were two of the Tamil actresses of such plays at the time.

MODERN STAGE PLAYS

In the 1930s the plays produced by B.A.W.Jayamanne, made a vital change in the Sinhala theatre, for the first time attempting to depict the day to day life of the Ceylonese. They were largely social satires in which the immoral life of the upper and the middle classes were depicted along with a sub-plot which represented the life of the lower classes, voicing the grievances of the underprivileged. The hero of the subplot was always a merry character full of earthy jokes and had a weakness for beautiful house maids.

Straight-forward prose plays without songs were attempted by the students (both male and female) of the Sinhalese society of the then University College, in the 1940s, indicating the arrival of the theatre in the European sense. These were adaptations of Western plays that would suit the situations and characters of the middle class Ceylonese society. Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of being Earnest*, Chekov's *Ivanov*, and *The Proposal*, Gogol's *Marriage* were some of them. The characters here were, needless to say of Western origin but the plays chosen were those that fitted the local milieu, thus *The Proposal* and *Marriage* fitting well into the local marital situation.

Maname (1956), an outstanding piece of verse drama based on the old *Nadagama* marked the definite beginning of the modern Sinhala theatre. *Maname* was also significant that it was the final acceptance of actresses without any stigma by respectable middle classes. This was so as Maname's female roles were acted by those being groomed by society for middle class roles, namely University students.

Maname is a *Jataka* story, the purpose of which is to illustrate, that all suffering is due to desire and in this particular case, due to the sexual craving of woman, the source of all misery, the well known theme of many [illegible] as discussed elsewhere. The Princess betrayed her husband, Prince Maname, as she fell in love at first sight with the Vedda King. But Sarachchandra gives a more sympathetic delineation of her character. To quote Sarachchandra himself,

> "I presented situations in such a manner that we cannot definitely know what she would do, had she got the opportunity to think over. Although she says she wanted to hand over the sword to the Vedda King, one tends to surmise that she says this, since she is desperate in the forest. It is true that she fell in love with the Vedda King, but one may question whether she had the intention to kill her husband. At the end, she dies. But one wonders if she has committed a crime as to deserve death."[21]

Nevertheless, the climas of the play is where Vedda King rejects the Princess's love saying "What is the point in having women of such low behaviour who bring disaster to their husbands." The traditional view of a 'sinning' woman is further emphasised by the dying words of the Princess who sees her rejection as a punishment for her 'sins'. The success of Sarachchandra's play is to be partly explained by the fact that it combined tradition with values of the emerging new social situation

In [illegible], one of the most profound theatrical experiences of that time, Sarachchandra portrays the heroine's character with sympathy. In the legend, the best known Sinhala legend that illustrates the origin of the Sinhala race, Suppadevi leaves royal comforts owing to her sexual passion for a lion, and is humiliated at every stage for her actions. In the play, Sarachchandra sees a more mature woman caught up between the love for her husband and the responsibility towards her children, and later drawn in the conflict between family obligation and public duty which her son faces. Sarachchandra again uses a traditional story in a new way to depict in allegorical form the conflicts of the new woman.

In *Mahasara*, another play based on a *Jataka* story, Sarachchandra depicts the evils of woman in the classical idom of sixty four wiles, source of all

temptation, flasehood, misconduct etc. in short, evils personified. A male chorus sings the evils of women and the female chorus replies in song with, "Why do you men get tempted? You men cannot be without women. All evils men do, and put the blame on women." Although women reply to the stereotyped allegations against women, the dialogue reduces it into a trivial and comic exercise which perhaps tends to reinforce the existing image of women, rather than correct it.

The early 1970s saw the emergence of the political satire, presenting the views of the oppressed majority against the oppressing minority. Some of the plays that would fall into this category are *Subha saha Yasa* and *Sthree* (woman) by Saimon Navagattegama, *Ekadhipathi* (Dictator) by Dharmasiri Bandaranayake, *Nariya saha Keju* (The fox and the piece of cheese) by Hemasiri Liyanage.

Although the themes are anti-authoritative and populist, the portrayal of women reflects the same conservative attitude. Women in these plays are often the butt of jokes. A comment made in a short analysis of these political satires by Sarath Amunugama is interesting in this respect, namely that the gruel pot of the modern Sinhala theatre is cooking on the three hearth stones of politics, humour, and provocation of sexual feelings.[22]

Women appear in these plays only as sex objects for men or as serving their needs. Scenes involving women, often having little relevance to the main theme of the plays have been included mainly with the purpose of providing low humour, at the expense of women. In such a scene in *Subha saha Yasa*, a story of peasant revolt against royalty, wife of the gate keeper Subha, betrays her husband and makes love to the King and the playwright takes the opportunity to say, "You have revealed the true nature of a woman".

Ekhadhipathi voted best play of 1976 at the National Drama Festival is a populist, anti-authoritative play, pretentious at times, which attempts to create humour at the expense of woman. However, one of the two leading female characters is a strong woman who withstands many trials and tribulations and supports her husband in his struggle against injustice. She is eventually raped, but does not betray her husband or her ideals. The dictator's wife, on the other hand, is depicted as one whose sole concern is sex.

The contradiction between woman as a real person and as a sex symbol is evident in *Sthree* (woman) based on the life and times of Queen Anula of 2 nd. century B.C. popularly believed to have been a nymphomaniac who piosoned four husbands. Simon Navagattegama has given a modern political interpretation to the historical story by portraying Anual as a chaste, intellectually honest and self-sacrificing village girl who rebells against the establishment. Yet the playwright takes every opportunity to depict a stereotyped picture of women through crude jokes, with double meanings. Such low humour is a characteristic of many of these political satires.

There is a number of plays falling within the same category of political satires that have portrayed women's characters with sympathy and understanding They include Henry Jayasena's *Apata Puthe magak nathe* (There is no future for us my son!), Sugathapala de Silva's *Vahalak nati geyak* (A house without a roof), and *Thattu geval* (Flats). It is largely the conventional virtues of mother-hood that are glorified in these plays; yet the plight of mothers and wives going through vicissitudes under various circumstances are realistically and sympathetically portrayed.

Sugathapala de Silva's *Dunna dunu gamuwe* (The bow is in the bowman's village) and R.R.Samarakoon's *Kelani Palama* (The Kelani Bridge) are noteworthy for their unconventional character portrayal of women. In the former, the wife of a trade union leader does not give up the struggle even at the risk of her son's life. The poignancy of the dilemma she is caught in is expressed in her words, "One son's death will lead the way for lives of many sons." The play, *Kelani Palama* depicts a woman who is able to act independently of her husband and her son.

A noteworthy attempt is Gunasena Galappatti's *Mudu puttu* (ons of the Sea) which portrays a woman going against the accepted norms of society. The husband is inconsiderate and does not try to understand his wife's long standing desire to have a child. The playwright dramatises with restraint and sympathy the circumstances that led the wife to conceive a child by the husband's brother, and how the husband later kills the child. The myth that women are solely responsible for barrenness, and therefore, should suffer in silence is exploded in most powerful words uttered by the woman to her husband, after conceiving the child, "Who do you think is barren now, you or me?".

Henry Jayasena's *Kuveni* is another play that depicts a positive image of the woman. The play is a new interpretation of the character of the *Yakkha* Princess Kuveni, who is believed to have betrayed her people to Vijaya, the Indian Prince as he landed in Sri Lanka She is said to have had two children by him but was later banished by Vijaya himself. The plight of Kuveni is universalised and the drama reaches its climax at the point where evidence in court is led forand against Kuveni. The play ends with the following verses:

"Through the ages,
From birth to birth,
She achieves not,
The love and justice she seeks.

Known eternally
Born eternally,
Kuveni is the woman,
Then and now.

Victim of suffering,
Victim of violence,
Victim of insult,
Known as *Yakkhini*.

WOMEN PLAY PRODUCERS

It should be noted that in the Sinhala theatre today, the majority of theatre producers by far are men. However, there are a few women producers such as Manel Jayasena, Miyuri Samarasinghe, Iranganie Kalutantri and Jayawathie Jayasinghe The content of their plays, however, have not differed by the fact that they are women, (except Manel Jayasena's *Kuveni* which was first produced by Henry Jayasena), partly because some of them were adaptations.

TAMIL THEATRE

Social issues form the theme of the contemporary Tamil plays - both in dialogue plays and the modernised form of *Vadamodi*. (The old *Nattukuttu* had two styles, *Vadamodi* and *Tenmodi*). *Poodiar Viiddu Mappillai* (Bridegroom

of the landlady), *Sangaaram* (Destruction), *Porkkalam* (Battle field), *Kanthan Karunai* (Sympathy of God Skanda) are some of the better known plays that questioned the still prevalent injustices of the social system, such as caste, dowry system and the irreligious behaviour of temple management personnel.

The modern Tamil plays deal largely with social injustices, still prevalent in Jaffna society. It is noteworthy that plays portraying a positive image of women are today definitely more in number than those projecting a negative one. Plays of the latter type conform to the conventional role of woman assigned to her in Hinduism. "Home is like a temple. The husband is the God there. If the God errs, we have only to worship him, but we have no right to punish him or correct him." Such is a wife's attitude to her inhuman drunkard and womaniser of a husband, in the play *Oru Manithan Iru Ulagam* (One man, two Worlds) by Kalaichelvan. But the son views the problems of the father in a different way. As a child he has been observing his mother suffer at her husband's hands with so much aversion that he makes a resolution to punish him. He locks him up in a room, and takes revenge by ill treating him, of course without the knowledge of the mother. The mother's attitude towards her husband is a continuation of the concept of *Law of Manu* where he says "Though destitute of virtue of seeking pleasure elsewhere or devoid of good qualities a husband must be constantly worshipped as a God by a faithful wife". As Ananda K. Coomaraswamy says, "It would be beneath her dignity to deviate from a woman's norm merely because of the failure of a man."[23]

Young women fighting against conventional norms of caste, class and marriage are depicted in many Tamil plays. In the Tamil play *Avan Sahavillai* (He is not dead) by S.M.Chandran, the drunkard husband spends all the money on drinks, comes home, demands good food and beats up the wife. He has borrowed money from the money lender for his drinks. The money lender demands that the daughter have sex relationship with him in lieu of money. She refuses saying "Women have the right to live independently. Though we belong to the depressed class, don't take us to be cheap women who can be bought over by money." We also can see a striking difference between the attitude of the mother, who is submissive and quiet, sacrificing and is prepared to accept whatever comes her way, and that of the daughter who is outspoken, rebellious and speaks of her rights and roles in society.

In the play *Thakuti* (Status) by S.Thillainathan, the heroine is a high caste University undergraduate, a rebel against the caste system and advocates temple entry of the depressed class. She falls in love with an educated young 'gentleman' of the depressed class and meets with parental opposition. She enters into a heated argument with the father and tells him that happiness and not caste or wealth should be the criterion for marriage. She wants to be happy by marrying the man of her choice who is honourable and well educated and walks out of the house.

In certain plays, playwrights have found it difficult to deviate entirely from the accepted norms, as seen in the play *Emaligal* (Jokers) by R.Kanagarajah. A University undergraduate takes her boy-friend to her home. The father is not surprised, and does not find fault with the daughter, indicating a break from the traditional attitude of a conservative village father. The father does not approve of the marriage because of a promise he has given to his sister at the time of her death, that he will give his daughter in marriage to her son. This is a typical picture of the way the decisions are made regarding the marriage of daughters and sons even before they come of age, without consulting the partners of the contract. The daughter argues with the father, 'I can't sacrifice my life to save your word. I have the right to decide what is best for me. It's my life, and not anybody else's.' But the dramatist contrives a different destiny for her. When she falls sick and is unconscious she is raped by her cousin. When he admits this, the boy-friend gives her up. The cousin gets her in the end. The boy friend is not shown saying, "After all, she was not a partner to it", and accepting her, or she is not shown as resenting the cousin for his lowly act. For a society committed to the virtue of a virgin bride, ending the story otherwise, would have gone against the most cherished values of the audience who are conditioned to accept in respect of women, traditional virtues, in spite of a changing world.

Yet another turn of events is portrayed in the play *Ullaikum Karangal* (The hands that work). Trade unionism is not a field in which women generally take an active part. In this play, the trade union leader decides on strike action, as a protest against the dismissal of a co-worker. He discusses this course of action with his wife at home. She understands when he gets late to come home after the meetings. Their son meets with an accident and

needs a drug which is produced by her husband's company. She goes to one of the directors and begs him to give that drug. The company director agrees to give it, on condition, she persuades her husband to call off the strike. But the company director fails to buy her with this and the son dies. Consequently she joins the movement and works vigorously against the selfish and merciless capitalist society.

A similar theme is found in *Vilippu* (Awakening) by N.Sundaralingam, an award winning play at the National Drama Festival, 1975. An unemployed young graduate organises the frustrated youth and launches a political campaign. His wife is resents him for not looking for a job and there is tension between the two - a conflict of personal responsibility versus social responsibility. He tells his wife to leave if she wishes to do so. When she is about to go, she sees his friends who have been assaulted by the police and treats their wounds. She is then convinced that the husband's course of action is correct and joins the battle.

WOMEN STAGE PLAY PRODUCERS IN TAMIL

Women acting in stage plays have not yet been fully accepted by the Tamil middle classes. Hence it is not surprising that there are no women play producers. It should be mentioned, however, that learning Bharata Natiyam or Kuccupudi has become a status symbol among the Tamils, and as a result more women take to producing dance dramas. Karthega Kanesar who has produced eight dance dramas is by far the best known. Vijayambikai Indrakumar, Punitham Mahesan, Geetanjali Sivajodorai and Jayalakshmi Kandiah are the others who have produced dance dramas.

ENGLISH THEATRE

The origin of the Sri Lankan English Theatre goes back to the 1920s when an enthusiastic group of University students and teachers of the then University College formed a Dramatic Society. The Society was flourishing in the 1930s under the guidance of Professor E.F C. Ludowyk. and some of the popular plays produced at the time were the *Imaginary Invalid*, the *Good Woman of Setzuan*, *Antigone*, *Twelfth Night*.

Up to the present times, most of the English plays produced in Sri Lanka (Except for the comedies by H.N.C. de Lanerolle and E.C.B.Wijesinghe), have been adaptations or originals of Western plays. Even the choice of plays seldom demonstrates a recognition of the emotional needs of the local audience. Yasmin Gooneratne puts it succinctly when she says, "English theatre had become a kind of cult, and a dying one, entirely remote from the every day life of a Ceylonese people."[24]

Since most of the English plays shown are originally Western, and they occupy relatively an insignificant place in the local theatre, the image of women reflected in these plays were not analysed.

WOMEN PLAYWRIGHTS

It is interesting, however, to note that there are more women playwrights in English than men. This is not a matter of surprise since the English theatre is patronised largely by the upper class (except for University teachers, students and journalists). More women than men of this class follow courses of Trinity College of Music, Speech and Drama and it is they who eventually venture into play writing, acting and producing. Music, speech and drama were necessary components to become 'ladies' at one time, a trend, we should note, which is in the decline at present.

Iranganie Serasinghe, Irene Wanigaratne, Wendy Watmore, Yolande Abeyweera, and Nedra Vittachchi are some of the better known playwrights and producers.

PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN MUSIC, DANCING, PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

Although, Buddhism has discouraged the participation of both men and women in music and dancing, references to male and female participation in music and dance, are frequent in 13th century Sinhala literature, and women seem to have been specially gifted in these arts These performances were often in the royal court, but on festive occasions, song and dance recitals were performed in sheds put up for the purpose, for ordinary people.[25] Although there is no evidence to indicate that these arts were cultivated by a particular caste, the tendency to look down upon women who took to music and dance grew over the years and reached its heights in the 19th century.

In the Hindu tradition, the situation was somewhat different, in that the women performing music and dance in temples were called *devadasis* and belonged to a particular caste. The *devadasis* were not allowed normal matrimonial ties and they could only be mistresses. This concept of *devadasis* developed a stigma against women who take to music, dancing and stage acting. The stigma for the first two art forms disappeared in the recent past while stage or film acting is considered improper even today.

Dance is a more popular art form among Tamil women than among the Sinhala. Bharata natya *Arangetram*(debut) is a frequent occurence today in Sri Lanka. There are several internationally known Tamil female dancers like Balasundari Kanakasabai, Balendra Sisters (Neela, Daya, and Anusha) Anandavalli Sachitanandan, Renga Vivekanandan, Manorama and Anusha Kulasingham, Thiru Coomaraswamy, Rajes Thambiah and Geetanjali Sivajodoorai. It is to be noted that Sinhala women take to Bharata natyam more than to Kandyan or low country dancing. Miranda Hemalatha and Padmini Dahanayake are two such well known women in the field. Vajira is the only Sinhala woman who has earned an international reputation in low country dancing.

Women seem to fare better in the field of music. Participation of women in singing and instrument playing is fairly high. The two artistes selected as super grade Sinhala singers at a Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation audition by the Indian Classical Music maestro Sri Krishna Narayana Ratnajankar in 1952, were Kokiladevi Weeratunga and W.D.Amaradeva. Kokiladevi was the first woman to sing in Tamil or Sinhala over the radio in Sri Lanka and it was on June 23, 1929. At a recent audition for regrading, another well known woman singer Sujatha Attanayake came first. A large number of women enjoy great popularity as singers. Some of them are Nanda Malini Gokula, Amara Ranatunga and Neela Wickramasinghe.

Ponmanie Chelliah (Kulasingham), Muthulakshmi Shankar Iyer, Vijayaluckshimi Rajendra and Leela Rajan were popular female Tamil singers in early 1950s. Saraswathie Packiyarajah and Jegathambikai Paramanathan are the popular ones today

In Western music, women display special skill in string instruments. The Colombo symphony orchestra, which consists of 50 musicians, has 28 female string players and 2 female wind players.

Lyric writing is a field where women have yet to venture into. Only a very few songs have been composed by women in Sinhala to date. Contribution made by Tamil women to lyric writing is relatively much higher than that by their Sinhala counterparts.

There are very few women who have excelled in the field of painting and sculpture. Leela Dias Bandaranaike made a name as a sculptor while Nalini Jayasuriya and Swanee Jayawardane who started as painters now concentrate on ceramics and batik work respectively Ena de Silva and Barbara Sansoni are two women who have won international acclaim in the field of fabric design.

CINEMA

The Cinema in Sri Lanka today is a medium size industry. It produces about 35 feature films a year and the State Film Corporation estimates that 6.3 million people saw films in 1977 If we consider 15 - 60 as the cinema going age, almost 6/7 of the total population in that age group sees a film a year. Thus the cinema percolates through a significant segment of the population in Sri Lanka Even with the introduction of television, the film would still remain at least for the next decade - the most important medium of mass entertainment

Considering the fact that a large mass of population resort to this form of entertainment, it is important to examine the impact of the cinema on its viewers. What Mayer wrote about the British film audiences in 1945, that is before the popularity of the television as a mass medium in England, would well apply to the Sri Lankan society today

"..... films, to be more precise feature films exert the most powerful influence in our lives, an influence which in all probability is stronger than that wielded by press and radio. The nature of this influence which is exerted on

all classes of British Society - though there seem to exist significant differences in class reactions - is a normal one. Value patterns, actual behaviour, the outlook on life generally are manifestly shaped by film influence"[25]

The cinema, therefore is and will be in the forseeable future, the most potent vehicle by which attitudes are formed, perpetuated and reinforced. In this context, it is important to analyse the way the Sri Lankan films depict the role of women

SINHALA CINEMA

The cinema in Sri Lanka is relatively young, having come into being in 1947. The first Sinhala film to have been produced locally, was *Kadawuna Poronduwa* (Broken Promise)[27] (It is interesting to note that the first Sinhala film was produced by a Tamil, S.M.Nayagam whilst the first Sri Lankan Tamil film was produced by Henry Chandrawansa, a Sinhalese). Sinhala films of the early years were directed, shot, processed and edited in South India by South Indian film makers as the Sri Lankans lacked the technical expertise and the infrastructure to produce them in Sri Lanka. These Sinhala films were poor versions of popular Sinhala stage plays translated to the new medium or imitations of Tamil and Hindi films, which were favourite cinematic entertainment of the Sri Lankans at the time. Some of the films had taken over entirely the plots of Tamil films, the dialogues being transplanted with a change of name. The South Indian formula of film making which consists of long drawn out melodrama, comedy, unrealistic love sequences, night club scenes, fights, songs and dances have remained a commercial success to this day

An attempt at indigenisation of the Sinhala cinema was seen with the film [illegible] (Mother), the first film to have been made by a Sinhala director, Sirisena Wimalaweera in a studio in Sri Lanka in 1950. It was only in 1956 that there was the begining of a trend towards realism with Lester James Peiris's [illegible] (Line of Destiny), the first Sinhala film to be shot entirely on real locations. As a result the formula film presence has tended to get diluted. Lester James Peiris has continued to produce films and so has a host of younger directors who follow him - Dharmasena Pathiraja, Vasantha

Obeysekera, Sunil Ariyaratne, Vijaya Dharmasiri and H.D.Premaratne. The commercial success of these films has been varied, the lure of the formula film being still stronger than the more realistic cinema, the new film makers represent

Because of the immense popularity of the formula film, we should consider it as an important art form by itself. The themes of the formula film are similar and often reflections of the process of vertical social mobility the Sinhala speaking classes have been subjected to, as a whole in the last generation Many themes specially of the formula film show conflict laden social situations whereby a girl or a boy from a lower social class falls in love with a boy or a girl from an upper social stratum Both the upper and lower class characters tend to be caricatured in the formula film, (the upper class having been caricatured more crudely in the earlier films). The upper class is depicted in most unrealistic terms, the films conjuring highly imaginative social situations which portray an upper class with a seemingly independent cultural base.

As the Sinhala speaking classes have moved up the social ladder over the last 30 years, the Sinhala cinema itself has changed accordingly. Some of the earlier Sinhala speaking strata were literally represented as servants in the films (for example the female and male servants scenes in the Eddie Jayamanne films) whilst their betters were English speaking (though they spoke Sinhala in the film) In the 1950s and 1960s, one sees the depiction of the Sinhala speaking middle social strata like *mudalalis* (small entrepreneurs) whilst in more recent times, one sees big *mudalalis*, for example, gem dealers and industrialists

As the Sinhala speaking strata reaches middle and upper class status, these class values tend also to be depicted in the film These values as displayed by female characters reflect the dual origins of the values of this middle class - the values of the feudal society and those of the new entrepreneur. Thus conflicting values are reflected in role depiction. For instance, in films where the poor are seen as struggling to reach the upper class status, the females of the upper class are depicted as hard, unsympathetic and even harassing the poor servants.

Women in Sinhala cinema are generally depicted in two categories of 'good' and 'bad'. 'Good' ones are endowed with all the traditional virtues - docile, submissive, respectful to husband and parents, self sacrificing and placing the interests of her husband and children first in life. 'Bad' women conspire, are immoral, and stoop to any level to 'catch' the men they want and trap them into marriage; and if married, debilitate them with sexual demands. There are however, some factors common to both these categories - the woman has to attend to the needs of the husband, she is often depicted as being the victim of violence and harrassment in society, and in most cases she succumbs to it

Of the sex stereotypes that have permeated the Sinhala Cinema, the ones most frequently portrayed are those engaged in 'dating', mating or mothering roles The ideal of motherhood has been a very popular theme in films[28] as in *Rattaran Amma* (Golden Mother), *Janaka saha Manju* (Janaka and Manju) and *Nivena Ginna* (Dying Fire) The family film is often synonymous with the cult of mother and is advertised as 'A film of a mother's immortal love, which should be watched by the whole family'

It is not a matter of surprise that sexual exploitation of woman makes box office success Even many of the better directors have tended to concentrate-on the sexual and reproductive aspects of a woman's life which are no doubt of box office interest[29], namely coming of age and rape as in *Eya dan Loku Lamayek* (She is a big girl now), *Kalu Diya Dahara* (Black Waters) and in *Kadhana Ayiti* (Wasps have come), *Nivena Ginna*, miscarriage in *Ahasin Bimata* (From sky to earth) and abortion in *Ranadiya* (which has not yet been released) They have, however, failed to create a single female character with a consciousness of her personal oppression and with an understanding of the social forces and political structures that perpetuate this oppression.

Woman is often shown as being the opposite of intellectual, incapable of appreciating the husband's serious activities, leave along participating in them. She is often superficial, and is seen engaged in trivialities *Duhulu Malak* (Tender Flower) attempted to give a sympathetic portrayal of the boredom a middle class housewife whose main complaint against the husband was that he was too busy to take her even to the Galle Face Green in an evening. The heroine in

Ahasin Polovata (From the sky to the earth), is the wife of a doctor whose main occupations are admiring flowers in the garden, dolling herself up; and playing the piano, an accomplishment of upper class women. In *Veera Puran Appu* the wife of the heroic leader of the people's rebellion in 1848 is depicted as a colourless woman incapable of helping political activities of the hero.

Even the relatively emancipated women suffer in silence. In *Ahasin Polavata* the heroine suffers in silence, as retribution for the 'grave crime' of being photographed with her cousin before her marriage (though apparently nothing further happened). Her husband (both husband and wife belong to affluent feudal families) sees these photographs and questions her. She refuses to answer and withdraws into herself. As a result of the tension caused by this incident she has a miscarriage and dies. As a film critic wittily pointed out, the film depicts the imagined adultery of the Sri Lankan middle class.[30]

Certain Sinhala films help to perpetuate the virtues of docility and submission to traditional values as the ideal of womanhood. *Gehenu Lamai* (Girls) is one of the finest examples of this. (It is interesting to note that Gehenu Lamai is a film directed by a woman). The heroine, Kusum in *Gahenu Lamai*, though educated is frightened to fall in love, frightened to talk with the young man (her own cousin) who is in love with her., owing to the 'respect' she has for her uncle and his wife, who now belong to a higher social class. Later her uncle's wife tells Kusum and not her son to break off their relationship. She accepts it as her fate and submits unquestioningly.

Similarly traditional virtues of docility are endorsed in *Vasanthe Dawasak*. In *Vasanthe Dawasak*, a jobless young graduate from a village is in love with a girl. The girl's uncle despises him as being socially inferior and wants the girl to marry his own son, a mentally retarted person, who in the film is treated as a comic figure. The girl, as well as her mother, do not agree and the uncle gets some thugs to abduct the girl. The graduate rescues the girl and in his rage kills the uncle. He is tried and sent to jail. After the uncle's death, the girl's mother becomes determined to have her daughter married to the retarded boy. The girl unwillingly submits because it is her duty to obey her mother.

On the day of the marriage, the girl sends a message to the boy who returns on the same day from jail, meets him in order to tell him, 'I asked you to come so that I could have your blessings to lead a good married life".

However, in both *Gehunu Lamai* and *Vasanthe Dawasak* where the ideals of the docile submissive heroine is upheld, a new trend is evident, a rebellious spirit of a new generation of girls is provided even though their values are not endorsed In *Vasanthe Dawasak*, as noted by Touchstone in the Lanka Guardian,[31] it is the girl's sister who tells her not to give into the mother's request. In *Gahanu Lamai*, a class mate of the heroine represents more rebellious impulses.

Portrayal of women in occupational roles are rare and restricted to a few occupations, contrary to the actual situation in Sri Lanka where 30 per cent of the formal labour force constitutes women who are engaged in varied occupations. Films portraying women in occupational roles are just a handful, (we have considered here the more recent films) and can be listed as follows - In *Siripala Saha Ranmenika* the leading female character is a brewer of illicit liquor, in *Dheevarayo* (Fishermen) a fisher woman, in *Delovak Atara* (Between two worlds), a school teacher, in *Sanasuma Kothanada* and *Ipadune Ayi* a Nurse, in *Salee* and *Narilatha* an actress and in *Duhulu Malak*, a supporting role of a typist who falls in love with the hero.

Nevertheless the depiction of these working women, except for that of Ranmenike, as the brewer of illicit liquor does not attempt to give a realistic picture of the problems of working women Ranmenike is portrayed as having an independent existence of her own and not as an appendage of a male. Thus, *Siripala saha Ranmenika* is one of the most realistic Sinhala fimls ever made, perhaps due to the fact that it is based on an actual incident.

TAMIL CINEMA

In Sri Lanka, it was the South Indian film which catered to the Tamil audience and the need for an indigenous cinema was felt only in recent years.

More than twenty five Tamil films have been made locally to date and a good majority of them have been on the lines of the South Indian formula film. They contain the essential formula ingredients of love, tragedy, comedy, song, dance and fighting and night club scenes. These films, reminiscent of Indian epic drama portray the ideal life remote from reality which helps the mass audience to escape from, as well as cushion it from harsh realities of everyday life.

Kattu Vilakku (Brass Lamp), 1971 by V S.Thurairaja marked the beginning of the non-formula film. It attempts to describe in realistic terms a major problem confronting the Sri Lankan Tamil women - the oppressive dowry system. The story is of a poor Hindu girl who is in love with a rich boy. Since she did not have a big dowry, the boy's parents marry him to another girl. The heroine commits suicide.

Another realistic non-formula film dealing with oppressive social conventions is Dharmasena Pathiraja's *Ponmanie*, based on a novel by Kavaloor Rajadoorai. Here the heroine Ponmanie, the youngest in a 'high' caste Hindu family is in love with a Christian from the 'low' caste. Her family disapproves. Her family has promised her to a man who is socially acceptable. But there does not seem to be a chance for marriage in the near future because of the problems of dowry. And so, Ponmanie elopes with the young man of her choice and marries him in church. As they come out of the church, a killer hired by the man to whom Panmanie was originally promised shoots her.

In both these films, the position of the average woman in Jaffna society is depicted. Her only hope of survival is marriage. As Jayamanne puts it, "She has no value in herself. Marriage thus becomes a form of legalised prostitution."[32] This situation is poignantly conveyed in the words of Ponmanie's sister who is waiting for the dowry to be married, 'Ponmanie died yesterday. I died a long time ago.'

Only a very few non-formula films have been commercially successful. The best two examples, perhaps, are *Vaadai Kaattu* (Northern Monsoon), 1978 by Senkai Azhiyan and *Komalikal* (Comedians), 1977 by S.Ramanathan. *Vaadai Kaattu*

deals with a clash between two fishing groups over the claims of a fishing place. In this film a girl is raped and killed by a sex maniac. The theme of *Komalikal* is communal harmony in which Jaffna Tamil, Indian Tamil, Muslim and Sinhala families live together. Here a young Jaffna Tamil man falls in love with an Indian Tamil girl and they get married.

The success of these two films can be laid on the fact that they were successful and popular radio serials. Both of them deviate from the conventional Jaffna stereotype of a 'successful marriage' (that is a calculated transaction between money and status) and take a more democratic view. The social barrier overcome by the marriage of the Jaffna Tamil boy to the Indian Tamil girl is a very big step towards the liberalization of social conventions governing marriage in Jaffna.

It should also be mentioned that a few formula films attempted to deviate from the usual ideal life and portrayed, though superficially the trials and tribulations of estate workers, particularly of women. *Thottakkari* (Estate woman) by Henry Chandrawansa and *Pudiyakattu* (New wind) by V.P. Ganeshan are two examples. (The latter carries an implicit family planning message).

WOMEN FILM DIRECTORS, EDITORS AND PRODUCERS

Even though there are a very large number of highly talented actresses who are generally non-professional, the technical aspects of film production are almost completely dominated by males. In the Sinhala cinema, only Ruby de Mel, Florida Jayalath, Rohini Jayalath and Sumitra Peiris have tried their hand so far at directing films. Sumithra Peiris is also well known as a film editor. Susima Damayanthi is another gifted woman who has qualified as director, editor and script writer. A number of women venturing into the field of production of films by investing capital is on the increase. Iranganie Rajapakse, Sitha Rohini Ratwatte, Lalitha Rajapakse, Jayaseeli Jayatissa, E.A.P.Edirisinghe, Milina Sumathipala are some of them. Malini Pathiraja recently co-scripted a film with her husband.
In the Tamil cinema, the only woman associated with films is Komaladevi Somasekeran who has produced a film.

RADIO

Broadcasting on an experimental basis was started in Sri Lanka in 1923 by the Telegraph Department just three years after the inauguration of broadcasting in Europe A regular national broadcasting service came to be instituted in 1925 and the commercial service in 1950. Broadcasting is done in Sinhala, Tamil and English. In addition to the short wave service, the entire island is served through eleven regional medium wave transmitting stations. (There is FM transmission in Colombo.)

Estimates indicate that 2.5 million families in Sri Lanka have access to 2 million radio sets in their homes.[33] In addition to being used at home they are taken to places of work specially by farmers to their fields, to enable them to listen to popular songs.

PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE BROADCASTING INDUSTRY

The participation rate of women in employment in the media could affect the content of programmes and the image of women reflected in them. The following extract from the evidence submitted by the Association of Boardcasting and Allied Staffs, U.K. to the Annan Committee in 1975, about the B.B.C., the often admired *leitbild* of the Sri Lankan Broadcasting system is relevant in this respect.

"The B.B.C.'s attitude towards women's liberation, its presentation of female politicians and personalities, its portrayal of women in drama and comedy programmes, its use (or non-use) of women as comperes, newsreaders, panelists and experts, all affect the way society views women and their aspirations."

"Its biased image of women does not necessarily arise from deliberate male attempts to patronize or degrade women; it often develops because of the unconscious assumptions and prejudices of the mostly male directors and producers, who work in a largely male atmosphere, e.g. film editors, film cameramen, studio technical managers, heads of departments, where there are few women to put forward alternative views and where these few women are mainly in subordinate positions."

Examination of the Sri Lanka situation vis-a-vis the above show some interesting highlights Employment figures in the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation present a very favourable picture. Although there isn't a single woman on the Board of Management, women hold 60% of the positions in the managerial level of directors and assistant directors, possibly a height not reached in many other countries.

In the professional category of controllers, organisers, producers and announcers, women constitute 18% in the Sinhala service, 43% in the Tamil and 50% in the English Technician and clerical constitute 13% and 60% respectively.

The high representation of women in the Tamil and English services needs an explanation. One reason is that the salaries in the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation are relatively low and for the men, the stay in broadcasting is often an interim period until they find more lucrative employment elsewhere, often in the private sector. Women have no choice but remain behind due to the lack of better employment opportunities. Another reason is that a knowledge of music, culture and the arts is of special advantage for entry into broadcasting The emphasis of music in the Tamil traditional culture has enabled the Tamil girls who were brought up in the traditional socio-cultural setting to reach a high level of competence in the field of music. In the case of the English service, those who take to broadcasting are often Sinhala girls of the upper social strata who followed courses of the Trinity College of Music, Speech and Drama.

In the field of music, of the 227 permanent vocalist members of the orchestra in the Sinhala Service, 86 are females (27%), out of 77 instrumentalists, 4 are females, (5%) In the Tamil Orchestra, representation is much higher with 70 (55%) female vocalists and 29 (27%) female instrumentalists. There is no permanent orchestra in the English service.

It is a matter of great significance that the national radio in Sri Lanka employed women as newsreaders as early as the 1940s, and at present female newsreaders constitute about 40%. It should be mentioned here, in contrast, that it was only in 1974, a woman newsreader was employed for the first time on the national radio of the B B C , although the B B.C. Northern region had a regular female newscaster since the early 1960s.[34]

It is also noteworthy that in the English service, women arrange and present almost any programme except foreign affairs and political and economic analyses. "Planning prosperity together" (Colombo Plan Programme), "Talking of the arts", "New horizons in education", "Forum of the air", "Spotlight" are some of the more interesting programmes arranged and presented by female station staff as well as guest broadcasters, among whom the better known are Marion Abeysuriya, Priya Kodippily, Alfreda de Silva, Ann Abeysekera and Sujatha Jayawardene. Women form a good percentage of guest panelists and experts in forum and discussion programmes. In the programme schedule for the first fortnight in July 1979, there were 31 females including creative artists who arranged and presented or presented programmes while males numbered only 15.

The Sinhala service, however, presents a different picture in that only women's, children's and family programmes are arranged and presented by women. Very few women participate even as guest panelists and experts There is sometimes predilection for the token woman in certain discussion programmes. The programme schedule for the first fortnight in July 1979 carried 163 men's names and only only 31 women's names.

A similar pattern exists in the Tamil service. But here, in addition to women's and children's programmes, music programmes are arranged and presented by women The programme schedule for the first fortnight in July 1979 indicated the participation of 70 women and 192 men.

The fact to be emphasized is that there is relatively a high representation of women in the broadcasting industry in Sri Lanka The content analysis of various categories of programmes which is presented in the pages to follow reveals that the higher the participation of women, the more positive is the image depiction. (The presentation of women, the more positive is the image depiction) The presentation of a positive (or at least a non-negative) image of women is highest in the English service, followed by Tamil and then Sinhala. This follows the pattern of participation in broadcasting - highest being in English the next in Tamil and the lowest in Sinhala programmes.

WOMEN'S PROGRAMMES IN SINHALA

A total of two hours a week out of a total of 104 hours a week is devoted to women's programmes in Sinhala on Channel II between 1.30 and 2 p.m. and the audience envisaged is the housewife The comperes, participants and contributors for these programmes are all women. The producers and the organizers of the programmes call it a 'light programme for housewives'. They are magazine programmes with a number of items interspersed with two or three songs. The common feature in all the four programmes is that they contain items sent in by women listeners The items are as follows - well known sayings, short stories, poems, advices to women, cookery recipes, articles on household activities and children One programme contains a short item on the International Year of the Child The titles of the programmes appearing below would indicate their content - *Lalana Rekha* (The Grace of Women), *Pasan Nivasa* (Pleasant home), Gedara Dora (Household), *Vilasitha* (Fashions) and *Malaka Mahima* (The Enchanting Flower) A content analysis of the five programmes reveals that all items are confined to the traditional activities of women, such as cooking, cleaning, washing, saving, looking after children, husbands and the household It is often the same idea that is presented in various flowery and lilting words and tones to create a poetic aura. The short stories presented in these programmes often contain a melodramatic love theme where the heroine makes a self-sacrifice, sheds tears and evokes self-pity.

One of the few positive aspects of these women's programmes is that there is a very high degree of listner participation since almost hundred percent of the content of the programmes are contributed by women listeners. Nevertheless, there is the resultant weakness that neither the form nor content is of high order, and no direction is given to the contributers to raise the quality of their work in artistic terms or from the woman's point of view.

The so called 'more serious' programme *Vanithalatha* (Grace of Women) is a half hour weekly programme which goes on the air, on Channel I during the 'peak hour' from 8 30 to 9.00 p.m.[35] and repeated on Channel II The 'more seriousness'[36] of the programmes, apparently lies not in the content but in the literary quality of the language, presentation and the affected

and pompous interpretation of the content The compere would use poetic imagery but the content would be trite. For example the programme on July 24, 1979 contained the following, pompously addressed to listeners, "You, the woman, the most marvellous creation of the world - you who make your journey on the long path of life, lend not yourself to desires that bring misery." This pomposity is a packaging exercise which surrounds a core of triviality with an aura of seriousness a phenomenon common to many Sinhala writings of the day

To illustrate the difference between Channel I and II women's programmes (Channel I being the more serious and Channel II, the commercial channel) in the presentation and interpretation of the same topic, we would like to cite two examples. A simple theme such as "Women should develop patience" would be presented in Channel I in a more sophisticated manner, in the form of a feature or an interview with a professional or a well known woman. For example in one programme this topic was discussed in an interview with the wife of one of the foremost Sinhala writers in Sri Lanka where she revealed that her husband's success was partly due to her patience.

The content of the programme *Vanithalatha* of channel I is often very similar to that of women's programmes on channel II. The duties of woman, as wife and mother are emphasized though with more literary sophistication. "Women should practise the great virtues of patience, kindness, peace and pleasantness", is a view often expressed in *Vanithalatha* as in Channel II women's programmes. A *Vanithalatha* programme in the month of July 1979 carried the following advice to women. "Let us tolerate anything for the sake of peace in the family! If you remain patient, success will reach you " The majority of the songs in this programme glorify patience and peace at all costs - virtues extolled in a wife.

Attempts to discuss and analyse the problems faced by women are rarely made. One such good attempt was a programme where a dramatised feature illustrated how the poor parent child relationship led the daughter to reject her parents to elope with a young man of her choice. At the end of the play an expert was brought in to discuss the social and psychological aspects of the problem. Another interesting attempt was an interview with a female silversmith who

turns out items for sale and also trains a batch of pupils in the craft (while her husband is more involved in the marketing of the items). Often here is a tendency to dilute any serious analysis, perhaps due to the fact that women are thought of as persons of inferior intellect; an interview with even an intellectual woman turns into a watered down conversation.

It is noteworthy that the changing role of women who now constitute a significant portion of the work force is hardly discussed in *Vanithalatha*, although the broadcasting time of the programme suggests that it aims at working women who are not at home during the day It is also noteworthy that during one whole year from June 1978 to June 1979, not a single programme to raise the consciousness of women regarding their rights was broadcast in the so called serious programme.

WOMEN'S PROGRAMMES IN TAMIL

Channel I of the Tamil Service carries one women's programme, while Channel II broadcasts two - all half hour magazine programmes. The programme of Channel I, known as *Poongothai* (Flower Maiden) is aimed at a higher level, and covers a broader range of areas often focussing on vital social issues affecting women such as the freedom of women to choose a husband, the dowry system, the problems of working women, time budgeting and nutrition. Medical advice on child health, dental care and other family health problems and an intrview with women from various walks of life are regular features. The discussions are short and interspersed with a song or two. It should be pointed out that the comperes of this programme have made an attempt to move away from the cliched thinking of women's interests.

The Channel II women's programmes are generally 'light' and contain mainly listeners' contributions interspersed with songs. *Poovum Pottum* (Flower and Pottu) is meant for local housewives. The majority of the listeners' contributions are short stories of not a high literary quality depicting often the burning social issues of caste and class that affect the marriage of young girls., as well as the virtues of chastity *Vanitha Mandalam* is an Asian Women's programme for which thousands of responses come from India. This programme has also a magazine format of short stories and song requests sent in by listeners.

Kudumba Halam (Family Welfare), a programme sponsored by the Family Planning Association, though not a woman's programme has been very popular among women, as indicated by the high response from women listeners. This has given an ideal opportunity for women to send in anonymously their problems on family planning.

MUSLIM WOMEN'S PROGRAMME

There is also a 20 minutes magazine programme in the Tamil language for Muslim women called *Mathar Maglis* (Women's Group). In addition to the usual formula of cookery, recipes and songs, the programme deals with the specific problems of Muslim women, their backwardness in education and social activities, superstitions, etc. Religion is also a subject that is often discussed.

WOMEN'S PROGRAMMES IN ENGLISH

English Service Channel I did away with the women's programme called "Mainly for Women" and instead there is the "Family Circle" which covers subjects such as health, child care, nutrition, education, careers for women, and interviews with outstanding personalities.

In Channel II, Housewives' choice is a request programme of songs for women containing also recipes and interviews with prominent women.

RADIO SERIALS IN SINHALA

The Survey conducted in Pindeniya indicated that *Muvanpalassa* (The Deer Glade) was the most popular radio serial while *Monaratanna* (The Peacock Meadow) and *Vajira* came next in order of preference. It is interesting to observe that *Muvanpalassa* was the most popular programme irrespective of age, sex and education. The age ranged from ten year olds to those in their seventies. In addition to the fact that Muvanpalassa has been the longest lasting radio play so far, the village setting seems to have mass appeal not only in Pindeniya but all over Sri Lanka, except, possibly

a few urban areas in Colombo where the residents have lost their rural roots. The study area of Borella is apparently one of those urban areas where *Vajira* a more urban love theme is the most popular. *Samanalabadda* comes second and the third is *Muvanpalasa*.

Muvanpalassa is a series of episodes woven round the self assumed village leader Korale Mahattaya (District Chief) who lived in the 1930s. His wife Etanahamy is sharper than the husband and lets him know it. She runs the husband and his korale, and is portrayed as the materialistic, ambitious and nagging wife. The women are consistently cast in extremes, at one extreme is the image of the clinging submissive, innocent young woman like Komalie and Sapumalie, and at the other extreme is the loudmouthed virago like Etanahamy. The females in radio serials, without exception are stay at home.

There have been protests from the public at various times against *Muvanpalasa* on the grounds that it helps to perpetuate myths and superstitions about excorcisms, charms etc. It should be added that it also perpetuates myths and superstitions about women. Often it gives expression to local sayings derogatory to women such as "A woman's intelligence cannot comprehend anything beyond the handle of a spoon", "Women use their 64 wiles to have their way", "If you listen to a woman, you will be in trouble."

The radio serial *Vajira* is based on a love theme. Vajira, a mischievous girl, the only daughter of a rich family falls in love with a poor school boy Nimal. On hearing this, Vajira's father stops her schooling and her elder brother gets some thugs to take Nimal away to a *Karawalawadiya*.[37] Vajira leaves home in search of Nimal, meets Kamini, a kind girl in the Galle Face Green and decides to stay at Kamini's home as a domestic servant. When Vajira learns that her brother is a friend of Kamini's family and Nimal is working at Kamini's father's *Karawalawadiya*, Vajira leaves Kamini's home. Vajira's second brother who comes back from England happens to see her in Colombo. When she tries to run away from him, she meets with an accident. Vajira's brother brings her home. Vajira and Nimal get married in spite of opposition from Vajira's parents. Later, Nimal enters the gem trade and develops it as a successful business undertaking. Vajira who stays at home

with little to do is unjustifiably suspicious that Nimal is in love with a girl in his firm The story continues It is noteworthy that, for the male, marriage brings upward social mobility and a busy professional life, but for the women, a vegetative and parasitic existence.

A very rare position for a girl to have in a radio drama is that of a University undergraduate, in *Monaratanna*, another radio play depicting man's vertical social mobility. The heroine, Sanda, who comes from a middle class family, leaves the University out of the fear that the Police would question her in connection with a suicide committed by a man known to Sanda's fiancee. This indicates the low value placed on women's education - an instance of distorted reality.

Samanalabadda is a mere watered down imitation of *Muvanpalassa* with the same type of setting and the same type of characters.

It should be mentioned that all the writers of radio serials except one are males. *Pahan Tharuwa* (The Guilding Star)(which was mentioned as one of the popular programmes in the micro study) was written by Kusum Peiris, a programme producer in the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation. *Pahan Tharuwa* is a story depicting with deep sympathy, the social prejudices against an adopted child. Perhaps because this was written by a woman, it did not have any utterences rediculing or belittling women.

RADIO SERIALS IN TAMIL

As in the novels and stage plays, the dominant themes in Tamil radio plays centre round the class and caste issues and social conventions that dominate marriages in Jaffna.

Avalukku oru velai vendum (She needs a job) based on the novel by the same name by Illankeeran is by far the best of the plays serialized currently, in terms of literary and dramatic qualities as well as in the depiction of women.[38] The novel was one of the first conscious attempts at a portrayal of women as intelligent human beings, with independent views, trying to lead self-respecting lives and fighting all attempts to be treated as an object of sex.

In a serial *Kaahithap Pookkal*, (Paper Flowers), the third daughter of a poor family falls in love with a young man of low caste and runs away with him. The girl is accepted by the family only when the son-in-law returns after some time, as a rich man from abroad. The second daughter falls in love with her own cousin, but his father marries his son to a rich girl with a big dowry. Later, the second daughter meets a teacher whose wife is dead and left with a child. The girl's brother who does not want his sister to marry a widower kills the teacher. The girl remains unmarried for the rest of her life. The woman becomes a victim to the social pressures and accepts her destiny without question.

In the radio serial *Amudasuraby* (Never empty) which ended recently, the father of the young man does not allow him to marry the girl he loves, on the grounds that her parents were separated, in spite of the fact that the girl is a doctor. The two young people do not have the strength to fight parental objections.

Poli Vadivam (Pretence), a radio play written by a woman, Gnanashakthi Kandiah and serialised sometime ago portrays the mental conflict of a widow, torn between her desire to marry once again and the image she is expected to maintain as a widow.

In the radio serial *Chandiyan Chinnathamby* (Chinnathamby, the thug), the mother of the girl, who is anxious to have a son-in-law of high status, rejects the boy who is in love with the girl and marries the daughter to a U.K. returned young man, who is already married to a European woman in the U.K. The European woman turns up looking for the young man on the day of the wedding. The secret is revealed and the heroine marries the boy whom she loves.

Thaniyatha Thaagam (Unquenched Thirst) a very popular play serialised in 1978, depicted class and caste conflicts in Jaffna society at a very high literary level.

The differences in the themes of the Sinhala and Tamil serials may perhaps reflect the difference in the social realities in the two communities. The Tamil serials depict greater conflict and dramatise caste and class tensions. For the Tamil

woman, caste oppression has been overlaid with oppressions of a dowry system arising from a money economy.

An orverriding impression in both Sinhala and Tamil radio serials is that, whatever the theme, the males are depicted as independent persons holding responsible occupations and acting with dignity. On the other hand, females are often depicted as hysterical, irrational and preoccupied with trivialities.

NEWSPAPERS

Newspapers in Sri Lanka began in the early 19th century with the English medium *Colombo Journal* and *The Observer and Commercial Advertisers* catering to the expatriate Englishmen and their local allies. Newspapers in the Sinhala language began as religious propaganda with the weekly *Lankanidhanaya* published in 1840 by the Catholic Church.

Over the last 1½ centuries, the growth of newspapers and the reading public have reflected the socio-economic changes in the country, and the different religious, political and class interests.

There are today, three major newspaper groups - Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd., Times of Ceylon Ltd., and the Independent Newspapers Ltd. The first two are state owned and the third is a private establishment, but also strongly reflecting the views of the party in power. The spectrum of news and views in the newspapers today are thus relatively narrow, alternate views not being given adequate coverage. Alternate news and views are given in the dailies, affiliated to the different opposition parties of the time, (presently these are *Aththa* of the Sri Lanka Communist Party, *Janadina* of the Lanka Samasaja Party and *Dinakara* of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party) which have relatively a small circulation.

Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd., or the Lake House group publishes three dailies (only the major newspapers were considered) - *Dinamina* (Sinhala), *Thinakaran* (Tamil) and *Ceylon Daily News* (English), two evening papers - *Janatha* (Sinhala) and *Observer* (English) and three weeklies - *Silumina* (Sinhala) *Thinakaran Vara Manjari* (Tamil) and *Sunday Observer* (English).

The Ceylon Daily News introduces itself as the English daily with the largest circulation in Sri Lanka. It is the most popular daily among the English educated in the country and it is standard reading fare for government officials, professionals, business executives, and job hunters. The Lake House group as a whole was started by a nationalist with a conservative bias in the British era. Later it developed a strikingly right wing and pro-western stance as a result of which, it was nationalised by the coalition government of 1970-77. During this period, it became a spokesman for the parties in power, particularly the Sri Lanka Freedom Party. In this, it performed a dual function. It was an advocate of the social reforms that were undertaken during this period, while also being an apologetic defender of the then leading political personalities, around whom the government newspapers built personality cults.

Even after the return of a right wing government, Associated Newspapers Ltd. still remains nationalised and now defends the new statusquo. Over the last nine years of government tutelage, its pages have been heavily propagandist and dull - a quality it shares in common with other government newspapers.

The Times of Ceylon group publishes two dailies - *Lankadeepa* (Sinhala) and *Daily Mirror* (English) and two Sunday weeklies - *Sri Lankadeepa* (Sinhala) and *Sunday Times* (English). This group too was earlier privately owned but was nationalised recently and has today become, specially in its political comment, another dull instrument of propaganda.

Independent Newspapers Ltd. publishes three dailies - *Dawasa* (Sinhala), *Thinapathi* (Tamil) and *Sun* (English), three Sunday weeklies - *Rivirasa* (Sinhala), *Chinthamani* (Tamil) and *Weekend* (English) and two weeklies, *Honey* (English) and *Priyavi* (Sinhala). Independent NEwspapers Ltd., was started in the late 1950s, as part of the nationalist renaissance of that era. In its attitudes, it displayed the strong roots of the so called revolution of 1956, namely of Sinhala nationalism and became a spokesman of the new entrepreneurship thrown up during that period. In the former role, it was an ally of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party until 1970. In the early 1970s it took a critical stand towards the Sri Lanka Freedom Party government, specially its policies restricting the private sector. Eventually

it turned very hostile to the government. Consequently this press was closed by the government under emergency regulations for a period of over five years, until it was restarted just before the general election in 1977. Since the return of the present government, this press has supported the broad programmes of the government, although it has been critical at times on specific issues. It remains today, of the major newspaper groups, the only independent voice, although it is a right wing independent voice.

In addition to the Tamil newspapers of the Lake House group and the Independent News papers Ltd., there are national Tamil newspapers published by the Express Newspapers (Ceylon) Ltd., and the Eela Nadu Ltd. *Veerakesari* of the Express Newspapers was inaugurated in 1930 by a group of Indians. Although, it gave special emphasis, initially, to the coverage of news of estate Tamils of Indian origin, it is now a national Tamil paper with an independent stand, often voicing the grievances of the Tamil population. The other Tamil newspapers published by this group are *Veerakesari Vara Malar* (weekly) *Mithran* (daily) and *Mithran Vara Malar* (weekly). *Eela Naadu* (daily) and *Eela Nadu Vara Malar* (weekly) are two Tamil newspapers published in Jaffna by the Eela Nadu Ltd. They are independent newspapers aimed at the Tamil readership in the entire country.

The analysis of the role of women as reflected in the above and other newspapers covers the following aspects:

(a) Employment of women in the newspapers;

(b) Women as newsmakers;

(c) Reporting on women:

  (i) Women's rights and emancipation;
  (ii) Editorial response to the women's movement;

(d) Women's columns;

(e) Women's newspapers;

(f) Women's journals;

(g) Advertisements; and

(h) Cartoon strips.

EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN THE NEWSPAPERS

The employment figures of women in the three major newspaper groups reveal that women continue to be concentrated within the clerical ranks, constituting about 40 per cent. It is noteworthy that no women are in the cadres of the managerial and technical services. Men are, therefore, the decision makers, and women, those who carry out the decisions. In the category of editors, and sub editors & editorial staff, however, the proportion varies from 10.4 per cent and 14.8 per cent in the government owned Lake House group and the Times of Ceylon group, respectively to a relatively high 37.6 percent in the privately owned Independent Newspapers Ltd.

WOMEN AS NEWSMAKERS

Tables 4.1 and 4.2 analyse the content, as well as photographs appearing in 18 major newspapers (six from each language), which taken together have a total circulation of 12.9 million. If a hand to hand readership of five is taken into account, the newspapers sampled would reach the population, many times over.

To determine the capacity in which women appeared in the news, newsmakers (men and women) were categorised as follows: politicians, officials, professionals and those engaged in the arts and sports. (News in the personal columns was not included) The daily papers of the first week of June 1979 and the four Sunday papers during the month of June were analysed for this study.

The officials were those newsmakers who appeared in news stories in their capacity of government officials. Included in this category were secretaries of ministries, directors of government departments and chairman of corporations.

TABLE 4.1

NEWSMAKERS

(In daily newspapers of June 04 - 09, 1979 and Sunday newspapers in June 1979)

NEWS PAPERS	POLITICAL		OFFICIAL		PROFESSIONAL		ARTS		SPORTS	
	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
Dinamina	79	-	20	-	04	-	01	-	15	-
Silumina	15	01	06	-	09	-	14	01	-	-
Dawasa	78	-	36	-	06	-	07	-	03	-
Riviresa	32	02	10	-	05	01	43	01	04	01
Lankadeepa	115	02	33	-	22	01	-	01	23	-
Sri Lankadeepa	30	-	08	-	08	-	38	04	01	01
TOTAL	349	05	113	-	54	02	103	07	46	02
% of Women in each category	1.7		-		3.6		6.4		4.2	
Thinakaran	188	-	20	-	14	01	14	08	02	-
Thinakaran (weekly)	12	-	02	-	03	02	04	02	-	-
Thinapathy	96	-	05	-	02	01	07	06	09	-
Chinthamani	24	02	08	-	03	-	32	43	-	01
Virakesari	87	01	29	-	04	02	11	-	04	-
Virakesari (weekly)	25	-	04	-	10	-	02	-	-	-
TOTAL	432	03	70	-	36	06	70	59	15	01
% of Women in each category	0.7		-		14.3		45.7		16.3	
Ceylon Daily News	101	03	61	-	23	03	-	02	52	09
Sunday Observer	54	01	33	-	13	-	18	-	33	04
Sun	22	04	09	-	02	-	-	04	03	-
Weekend	28	-	16	01	06	-	07	02	16	03
Daily Mirror	105	01	31	-	10	03	-	04	20	09
Sunday Times	12	01	18	01	03	01	01	04	36	03
TOTAL	322	11	168	02	57	07	08	34	160	28
% of Women in each category	3.3		1.2		10.9		80.9		14.9	
TOTAL- All newspapers	1103	19	351	02	147	15	181	100	221	31
of all women in each category	1.7		0.6		9.2		35.6		12.3	
TOTAL (Male + Female)	1122		353		162		281		252	=2170
% of each category of news of all news stories	51.7		16.3		7.4		12.9		11.7	= 100

TABLE 4.2 - NEWSMAKERS IN PHOTOGRAPHS

(In the daily newspapers of June 04 - 09, 1979 and Sunday newspapers in June 1979)

NEWSPAPERS	POLITICAL		OFFICIAL		PROFESSIONAL		ARTS		SPORTS	
	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
Dinamina	18	01	C2	-	01	-	01	01	05	-
Silumina	10	-	01	-	04	-	05	02	-	-
Dawasa	47	-	-	-	-	-	04	-	03	-
Riviresa	17	03	04	-	03	-	14	11	04	01
Lankadeepa	52	02	22	-	03	-	-	-	04	-
Sri Lankadeepa	11	-	03	-	-	-	21	05	05	-
TOTAL	155	06	32	-	11	-	45	19	21	01
% of women in each category	3.7		-		-		29.7		4.5	
Thinakaran	44	01	12	-	03	01	02	09	01	01
Thinakaran (weekly)	12	01	05	-	06	-	31	32	-	-
Thinapathy	64	10	16	01	05	01	02	10	02	-
Chinthamani	02	-	03	-	-	-	20	29	-	-
Veerakesari	27	02	17	01	01	02	-	05	-	-
Veerakesari (weekly)	12	02	04	-	05	-	18	38	-	-
TOTAL	164	16	57	01	20	04	73	123	03	01
% of women in each category	8.9		1.7		16.7		62.8		25.0	
Ceylon Daily News	21	03	04	-	06	02	-	07	05	-
Sunday Observer	14	01	01	-	05	-	-	10	06	03
Sun	84	02	44	02	08	-	-	02	33	02
Weekend	12	-	03	-	05	-	01	11	03	-
Daily Mirror	21	04	06	-	02	-	01	02	12	-
TOTAL	152	10	58	02	26	02	02	32	59	05
of women in each category	6.2		3.4		7.1		94.1		7.8	
TOTAL-All newspapers	471	32	147	03	57	06	120	174	83	07
% all women in each category	6.4		2.0		9.5		59.2		7.8	
TOTAL (Male + Female)	503		150		63		294		90	= 1100
% of each category of news of all news stories	45.7		13.6		5.7		26.7		8.2	= 100

Professionals were individuals who made news because of their activities in their professional fields. This included professors, doctors, engineers, nurses, teachers, and specialists in other fields. The category of arts included writers, singers, dancers, acresses, painters and others in the creative arts.

In all the three languages, politicians were the most frequently covered representing 51.7 per cent of all news stories. The coverage of this category in the Sinhala and Tamil media is much more pronounced than in the English medium newspapers. This may be, because the English medium is more the organ of the elite- which includes officials and professionals- whilst the Sinhala/Tamil papers are still largely the organ of the masses.

Of the 19 (1.7%) news items about women in this category, 12 centered round four female politicians, while 7 news items focussed on two females who made news by virtue of the fact that they are the wives of the two foremost politicians in the country, namely the Executive President and the Prime Minister. The four female politicians included the former Prime Minister (who originally emerged as a political figure through her role as wife), the District Minister for Nuwaraeliya, Member of the National State Assembly for Dehiwela and the only member of the Colombo Municipality. Seven news items focussed on the former Prime Minister - an unusual coverage for a politician, not in power. This, however, can be explained by the fact that it was the week of the Non-alligned Foreign Ministers' Conference held in Colombo and Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike had been the President of the movement during 1976-7. The other reference to her was as a central figure in the proceedings of a Presidential Commission where her actions as the former Prime Minister were being investigated.

Only about 0.6 percent of news stories of government officials were about women, indicating the low representation of women in prestigeous and responsible positions. It is noteworthy that the Sinhala and Tamil newspapers did not contain a single news item falling within this category. The two news items in the English newspapers centred round the Director of the Women's Bureau who pledged to take action on complaints and suggestions

made by women, and an official in the Trade Ministry who gave an interview on the complaints made by housewives on inferior goods.

Women, however, get better coverage in the professional category, representing 9.3 per cent of professional news. Here again the English newspapers gave the highest coverage. Of the seven news items, five were on doctors, one on a nurse and one on a play ground instructress. In all these items, women appeared as playing their role. The two items in the Sinhala and Tamil newspapers were focussed on the murder of a police woman, and a doctor whose visa to leave the country had been cancelled. Here the women were not depicted in their professional role.

Women, as entertainers are the most frequent newsmakers in all the three media,in contrast to the situation regarding men. Ninety five of the hundred news stories in the category of women in the arts were on film and stage acresses, singers and dancers. The other five referred to the millionaire paperback authoress, Rosemary Rogers, who was in the island at that time, a woman winning a Shakespeare literary contest, a painter, maker of paper flowers and a carver of masks. Of the three media, the highest coverage of female entertainers was in the Tamil medium newspapers. The lowest was in the Sinhala papers.

The next highest coverage of women, when all the news papers were taken together, was in the field of sports. Emphasis was strongest in the English media while in the national languages this was almost neglible.

There were also other circumstances, in addition to the categories shown in the chart, which made women newsworthy. Two such news stories that appeared in almost every paper of all languages were of Miss Venus, the winner of the Venus Beauty Contest and a mother who bore triplets. Photographs of these two newsmakers also appeared along with news items Both these news items emphasised the spectacular aspect which made these women newsworthy.

With regard to the roles of women as depicted in photographs the highest coverage was given in all the three media to their role as entertainers. The next most frequent category of photographs related to political and

official personalities in that order.

In addition to the photographs falling into the above categories, others appeared which had a decorative function- that is as objects of beauty often adorning the front pages of news papers, along with a sensational caption, an example of which is given below. A photograph of a young woman exposing a considerable amount of midriff appeared with the following caption, "Mixed Grill". The text read, "To brighten up your Saturday, we asked Ranjani Abeysinghe to pose for our camera man. She did, and the result was a sumptuous mixed grill. Ranjani is a shop assistant in the city."

In summary, it is seen that there is a distinct difference in the coverage of men and women in the media. The woman is predominantly depicted as entertainer and very rarely as holding decision making and responsible positions, a situation that is the opposite in the case of men. This tendency is more pronounced in the Sinhala and Tamil media whose editorial content generally tends to treat its readers as intellectually emasculated, under class, vis-a-vis the English reading public. Women in this respect are depicted as the most emasculated of the emasculated under class.

REPORTING ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND EMANCIPATION

Neither The Women's Liberation Movement in the West nor the position of women in socialist countries gets much coverage in Sri Lanka. The few news reports that appear tend to sensationalise the issues with words such as "bra-burning, slogan-shouting, banner-waving, militant women's libbers" etc., without focussing attention on the deprivation and descriminations which gave to these protests. The media is chiefly responsible for making the women's liberation movement a matter of ridicule and evoking an unfavourable reaction from the English reading middle class in Sri Lanka, who are tied, on the one hand to a feudal view of women, and on the other to a view of their own social reality as seen from the eyes of the Westerners. However with the increased legitimisation of the issue of women's rights at international level, the sarcasm has tended to be milder. The examples given below illustrate the pitfalls of reporting on women even at present.

The coverage given in the local English newspaper in June 1978 to the visit of Jane McMichael, Executive Director of the National Women's Political Caucus in the U.S. was more than usual. The newsreports on her visit and her discussion with media women, are an example of good as well as bad reporting. Good, because her contribution to the women's movement in the U.S. and the issues discussed in the press conference, were adequately and positively covered probably due to the fact that she is American and the media is today extremely pro-western almost in a propagandist sense. Yet within this positive coverage, hidden values which have been internalised by the media emerge, as is shown in the following examples of reporting by women journalists.

The report on McMicheal's luncheon discussion given in the *Observer* is typical of the lighter vein reporting of women's activities. The newsreport is captioned "Our newswomen stumped on vital statistics". Little focus was directed to the main issues raised at the discussion and the treatment was very much in the fashion and home style of women's reporting as is indicated by the following:

> "The inability of the local representatives of the media to provide the data - was it due to the weather on that day or the extra chill in the fruit drinks";
>
> "The rice and curry lunch complete with pol sambol and pappadam like at home, at Mary Smith's the U.S.Embassy cool information officer";
>
> "An argument between a woman news editor who cut a dashing figure in black velvet pants and a fair Ph.D.";
>
> "Mrs McMicheal took both sides with a women's magazine smile in her kittenish grey eyes and while the woman editor and the Ph.D. carried on their private wars of liberation, I took mine to the lunch table."

The *Weekend* report entitled "Champion of Women's Lib" begins in a half humorous marner. "Though Ms McMicheal is more sophisticated, elegant and smarter thar most, she is violently opposed to people making anything but a sundry remark about a professional woman's looks."

It is seen that the tone of reporting is mildly satirical and is still trapped in the metophors of the fashion coverage scene,even in discussing women's rights.

Another pitfall of reporting on women is that the details of dress, appearance, marital status, number of children, husband's attitude to her work, are considered very important. The best of women journalists seem to have resorted to this kind of reporting unconsciously. Thus, to give an example, a very senior journalist begins her interview with the woman Ambassador from Cuba, thus, "In this, the Year of the Woman, glamorous Senora Ana Maria Gonzales Suarez has arrived in Sri Lanka from Cuba as her country's Ambassador. .....Dressed in a chic canary two-piece suit with a boufant hair do and out-size gypsy earrings. Her excellency greeted me warmly. Her appearance contradicts the old (male?) myth that beauty cannot go with brains ....".

The article ends with "Madam Ambassador has a doctorate in Law, is married and has two children, a girl and a boy. This is her first diplomatic appointment."

It should be mentioned that, the issue of women's rights as such gets news coverage and is subjected to discussion mainly, if not exclusively in the English media. Sinhala news coverage is limited to a few lines, if the news gets coverage at all.

EDITORIAL RESPONSE TO THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

Women's emancipations, as an issue came to the attention of Sri Lankan newspapers only due to the International Women's Year. It is interesting to chart the changes of editorial opinion since 1975 to the present day. The English language newspapers are covered, because it is in these, that the largest number of editorials appeared.It is interesting to remember, that the two major newspaper groups sampled here are both government controlled. (The Sun group of newspapers was closed until March 1977)

The first editorials to appear in the English media scoffed at women's issues, making them appear ridiculous.

The Ceylon Daily News editorial of 6.1.1976 was titled "The Women's year that was". The first and the last paragraphs of the editorial are quoted below:-

> "The International Women's Year has ended, but even if 'male chauvinists' disapprove the liberation of women has got going. Emancipatory laws have been passed and more liberal attitudes have been fostered to some extent. Someone said that men compose symphonies while women compose babies. But women in recent years have set out with histrionic fury to change the world for themselves. They have streaked and freaked, gone on strike thrown bombs, shrilled in loud voices, brandished placards with strident exhortations, donned mens' clothes and booed - they have balled those bras, we must mention, and burned them; they have even joined terrorist gangs and hijacked planes, ambushed buildings, taken hostages and robbed banks; two of them took or tried to take pot shots at the President of the United States and in Britain women crowned it all with characteristic pique by electing Dennis Healey, the Chancellor of the Exchequer the 'male chauvinist pig' of the year. His transgression; refusal to lower the tax on labour saving devices, considered one way of crippling the forward march of Women's Lib."

"But some discouraging facts have to be faced. Which women would care to pay alimony and who would like to be conscripted? And would you not mind coming home at dead of night after a night shift with some 'male chauvinist pigs' who think of you only as 34-24-38? And babies will always arrive, even test tube ones. Offspring, whether animals or human look for warmth, attention and security. So woman with her innate artfulness will have to strike a compromise between biological responsibilities and the fulfilment of emotional and intellectual needs".

The Daily Mirror mirrorscope of 14.6.1976 entitled "Women, lovely women" openly ridiculed the women's emancipation movement as the following paragraphs amply illustrate.

"What concerns us however is why the women of Sri Lanka - or more accurately Colombo 7 - should keep harping about 'emancipation'. 1975 was International Women's Year. It began not with one bang but ten, when ten men were executed in Somalia for denouncing a decree by the Revolutionary Council abolishing discrimination between the sexes. No such legal discrimination exists here." .....

"Colombo seven cuties who think that women constitute a clear-cut and identifiable group (and we are not thinking in terms of contours) forget that any differences that exist are due to class and cultural factors. In a recent issue of 'Logos' woman 'liberationist' showed how the women of China had achieved liberation without any 'battle of the sexes'." .....

"We suggest as their motto the stirring call - 'Women of Sri Lanka unite - you have nothing to lose but your husbands'.."

However, in the intervening years, change seems to have come about in the editorial perception about women's problems with the result that a more realistic and sympathetic portrayal of these issues were carried in the editorials in 1977. The change was very probably due to the importance

of the International Women's Year itself and the recognition that the women's issue had gained respectability, a perspective valid in a context of the Sri Lankan press, where external legitimisation carries a great weight.

The Ceylon Daily News editorial of 7.6.1967 entitled "Equal rights" though still slightly flippant on the subject, treats it with greater seriousness.

"Now the number of women administrators has climbed to respectable proportions and takes up 25 per cent of the administrative appointments. The figure for the clerical service has been truly a triumph for the libbers. However, the feminists are not to be fobbed off with this kind of victory. Admittedly there are many problems that the women of today are faced with, but whether men should be made to share the burden of bringing up children, as some feminists are insisting, is not one that has universal agreement still. It is not that the men do not share in the bringing up of children, it is that the washing and brushing and nappy washing somehow remains inadequately done by the men."

Similarly, the mirrorscope of the *Daily Mirror* of 9.3.1977 entitled "Wake up women" reflects a changing attitude, though there is still the tendency to mildly ridicule the women's issue. '1975 was "Women's International Year' and the Minister of Finance in his budget speech made an appropriate gesture by doing away with the aggregation for tax purposes of wife's employment income with that of a husband up to certain limits. Of course, it's the husbands (who pay the taxes) who will benefit but the relief also undoubtedly benefits the wives.".....

"Even countries which are still monarchies have taken significant measures to improve the general conditions of women by the appointment of National Commissions, and by the abolition of feudal practices such as the giving of dowries. In almost every field of work, whether it is plantation, shop, office or factory women are discriminated against in Sri Lanka in wage rates, prospects of promotion and in working conditions generally".

The editorials that appeared in 1978 were strong exponents of the women's cause.

The Ceylon Daily News editorial of 31.3.1978 with the title "Equal rights for women" says,

> "The old fictions about fragility etc. which have clothed women in myth and a so-called mystery can be explained in banal, unromantic terms; domestic chores and economic demands made on the man as the traditional breadwinner, has led this country, as many others towards prejudices about the inferiority of women. The eventual result is a sex based, sex biased division of labour, which has militated against appointments and promotions at all levels and remuneration at lower levels. Despite our enlightened attitude towards the education of women and the opportunities generally available to them the labour market has been sex-typed with the majority of jobs preserved for men. The perpetuated inequality works right from the bottom with a few exceptions to the highest managerial, executive and decision making levels."
>
> "But at a much lower and crucial level there is legalised discrimination against women. A man-made world has perpetuated the fiction that women are 'home makers' while it has compelled the women of a section of society which cannot even afford to hire servants to look after its children, to work in plantations, mills, industrial units, and in vital sectors of large companies which are dependent on their labour. They are paid less than men. This discrimination is legalised by the publication of rates in the Labour Gazette, and their governance under the Wages Boards."

Similarly, the *Sunday Times* editorial "Women and their rights" of 3.3.1978, states,

> "In the fundamental right to work, however, women in Sri Lanka are in many ways no better off than women in Victorian Britain. In many layers of society in Sri Lanka, and especially among employers, Victorian cultural values have become stratified and fossilised."

"our news columns today focus on the plight of a woman in a mercantile firm which is over a century old who had to get herself sterilized after being dismissed for absence due to domestic chores."

"The Ministry of Labour announced last week, that its package deal for labour is to include the removal of discrimination on grounds of sex and age in 15 wages boards. The Government would also be well advised to consider the precedent of Britain where a statutory Equal Opportunities Commission was established in 1975 to give teeth to the Sex Discrimination Act and the Equal Pay Act."

The Sinhala as well as the Tamil newspapers have not taken a hysterical stand against the women's issue like the initial response of the English newspapers. However, editorial comment in the Sinhala and Tamil newspapers has been surprisingly matter of fact and sympathetic even at the time of the first airing of the women's issue during the International Women's Year.

One gets the impression that the national language newspapers have taken their material directly from U.N. and similar publications. There seems to be a lack of dynamic and independent editorial policy which continues to display inferiority vis-a-vis the English language counterparts, even after 30 years of Independence. This has led in this case, to at least one good result in that the Sinhala and Tamil media have reproduced U.N. resolutions accurately.

WOMEN'S COLUMNS IN NEWSPAPERS

Of popular newspapers in the English language, *Sunday Observer*, *Sunday Times*, *Ceylon Daily News*, the *Daily Mirror* and the *Sun* carry women's columns. The following is based on a content analysis of the newspapers in the month of June, 1979. These columns, with the exception of "women and Leisure" column of the *Ceylon Daily News* follow the formula of "womanly activities" such as cookery, fashion and all other interests of the home maker, although there are exceptions occasionally. The articles and photo-

graphs in these generally give the reader the impression that these columns encourage women to seek self-fulfilment only as wives and mothers, and glory in their own "femininity". Further, the fact that the Sri Lanka upper classes are strongly influenced, in an imitative manner, by the West is aptly seen in the implied values of these women's columns.

The *Sunday Observer* half page column called 'All about Women' generally contains about four short features, two of which regularly deal with recipes and illustrated dress fashions. The other two columns generally tend to be of a slightly 'higher' quality, as indicated in the titles of the features, given below: "Batik artist with new ideas", (a woman), "Women are better drivers", "Merry friends" (short note on a women's group doing social work), "Infant milk, why the shortage?","Maestro of Gokkola art" (a man) "Proverbs for your scrap book" and "The left arm of diplomacy". (note on the wife of a diplomat). The emphasis given to features on wives of diplomats is a telling commentary on the dependent nature of the upper classes in Sri Lanka.

One page "Women's World" of the *Sunday Times*, is a happier combination of cookery and beauty care, and the more serious thought - provoking articles which are sometimes reproduced from foreign journals or based on such articles. It does not merely advocate fashions for fashion's sake but often considers the economics of fashions or the climatic needs of fashions. Even the recipes are presented often with some information on the subject , placing it in a local context, for example recipes on pickles begin as follows: " One of the greatest cultural inheritance, the Indians have, is the method of preservation of various fruits, vegetables, fish and meat by way of pickling."

The eight feature articles (in addition to fashions etc) that appeared in the "Women's World" during the month of June 1979, were informative, intelligent and analytical as titles listed below indicate. "Women-key to Africa's food production", "Inside the progressive class room", (modern comprehensive school system in Britain), "For children - TV with moderation", "Deaf ears for a deaf aid", (glove and cuff method of helping the deaf in Scotland), "Adults deprive infants of milk foods", "Male purveyors of

sick humour", (an article on male humour on women) "Child cruelty still rampant", and a reply (in poetry) to the article on male humour on women. It is interesting to note that important articles (though reproduced from foreign magazines) are given emphasis and an attempt is made to provoke discussion and dialogue. The article "Male purveyors of sick humour", reproduced from a foreign journal is introduced by the editor with the following words:

"They actually believe that women enjoy being the "butt" of their witticism. These conveyors of sexism do not seem to be aware that sex roles are being anxiously questioned and re-examined the world over. Readers' views are welcome."

In addition to the women's column, there often appear in the *Sunday Times* at least two or three articles discussing issues affecting women or news of women's activities in Sri Lanka and other countries. The *Sunday Times* is perhaps more comprehensive than the other newspapers in terms of representation of women's problems and rights.

The column "Women and Leisure", in the Ceylon Daily News is perhaps the only non-conventional women's column with the striking absence of "womanly" activities of cookery and fashions. This is usually a half page feature with three or four short articles re-examining the role of women in modern society and the serious problems confronting them. Most of the articles appearing in this column are thought-provoking and are often, either reproductions of those appearing in foreign journals or those based on them. This column also provides a forum for discussion of women's issues for which readers can contribute, though they seldom do.

"Women's Mirror", the weekly column of the *Daily Mirror* deals with the conventional women's interests of fashion, beauty care and recipes mixed with one or two popular articles of a slightly higher standard. To quote an example, one issue contained a description of an American woman, the director of a project on native Americans in Science, who was visiting India, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka.

The weekly women's column of the *Sun* (the Weekend has no women's column) titled 'Women' is a formula column with recipes and fashions. Yet the two feature articles which usually appear in addition to the formula, are informative For example one issue contained two interesting articles, one drawing attention to the insanitary conditions of markets in Sri Lanka and the other on the introduction of child care to the school curriculum for girls and boys in Bremen, West Germany.

Only very few Sinhala newspapers run women's columns. (*Silumina and Dawasa* carry women's columns from time to time and are not regular.) These seem far more conventional even than their English counterparts. They tend to perpetuate and reinforce the conventional view of women, although, it is from predominently Sinhala rural homes that educated women have entered into new professional roles.

The 'Lassana Gedera' (The beautiful home) of the *Sri Lankadeepa* is a three quarter page column containing three or four articles idealising the role of women (very similar to the women's radio programmes in Sinhala) as the dutiful mother and obedient wife. This column carries a regular feature written by a woman doctor titled "If you wish your husband to live longer ... " In this feature, topics such as the following are discussed, "Do not do anything that displeases your husband", "Even if your husband is doing anything wrong, treat him better", "You should love your husband first, in order to receive his love", "Remember! first place is to your husband and the second, to you", "Keep his clothes ready for the next morning before you go to bed", "Keep home tidy", "Do make life easy for your husband".

This column apparently presumes that the woman is a person of leisure in the house while the husband leads a hectic life.

Considering the fact that 80 per cent of the Sri Lankan housewives are rural women who generally help their husbands in the field or cottage industries and 30 per cent of the female work force constitute women, the articles seem irrelevant. One explanation for this could be, the fact that this column was written by an upper middle class woman who was not aware of the life style of the large percentage of women in the country.

The "Vanitha Viththi" (All about Women) of *Lankadeepa* is yet another formula column which emphasises on the beauty hints, cookery and fashion, although there are occasional articles deviating from this pattern.

The only other Sinhala newspaper which carries a weekly women's column is the *Dinamina*. In spite of the formula format, and the limited space of half a page, this attempts to give valuable information on topics such as nutrition, and highlights activities of various women's associations in the country and discusses problems of working women.

Although the Sunday *Rivirasa* does not carry a women's column, articles on women appear from time to time. They are often either mildly sarcastic and written in a humorous style, often on an age old myth such as, "Is the women's intelligence limited to the handle of a spoon", (as a proverb states), or articles idealising woman as wife and mother, in conventional poetic imagery.

The only Tamil newspaper that carries a women's column is *Chinthamani* which follows the formula format. Feature articles that appear in addition to the formula, often uphold traditional modes of dress, chastity, docility and obedience to husbands.

WOMEN'S NEWSPAPERS

There are two Sinhala weekly newspapers - *Tharuni* and *Kumari* devoted entirely to women. *Tharuni* , launched by the Lake House group in 1969 has reached a circulation of 165,000 and is widely read by women in the entire country, as is also revealed by the survey in the study areas.

The *Tharuni* caters for a wide variety of reading tastes. The list of regular features appearing in this paper given below indicates the varied readership. the newspaper aims at - "News on women and youth", "News on the Arts", "English for the youth", "Typing at home", "Legal questions and answers", "Personal problems answered", "Advice for expectant mothers,""Advice for the first time mother", (two sections on how to bring up the baby and how to make clothes for baby), scrap book (of four pages containing instructions on cookery , dress making, lace making, Batik designs, flower making, flower arrangements and first aid), serialized novel (always melodramatic), poetry (readers' contributions), a humorous episode with sketches and a cartoon strip. The unmarried women (and men) are catered for, from time to time with series of articles such as "Analyse his/her horoscope yourself".

Feature articles appearing, in addition to the standard format, often focus on women's social and cultural problems as falling victim to men, while walking alone in the streets or while travelling in the bus. There was also a series of articles in the form of letters addressed to female teachers, nurses and others in middle grade professions, to enable them to look at themselves critically. There was also a series of short biographical notes on women who have been honoured with commemorative stamps. Issues of topical interest are also presented, from time to time,in the form of interviews with well known personalities in the country. Feature articles highlight prestigious occupations, in which women are engaged.

The column "Tharunaya" (The young man) which was recently introduced to *Tharuni* contains the following regular features - "Young men's questions answered," a note on a young man who has excelled in a craft or skill and cartoons.

Kumari (Princess) is a women's weekly started in May, 1979 with a sensational pre-publication advertisement of "only for girls". The target is the volatile group of female teenagers The overriding impression which can be gained from the issues so far published is, that the sole concern of the teenagers should be, to fall in love while at school, exchange love letters, marry the man of her dreams, (possibly with parents' consent) and live happily ever after

One of the most popular features in the newspaper is a column called *Sevamallu* (Butterflies) which is described as "a column which introduces unseen girls and boys and which helps them to come closer to each others' hearts " The photographs of contributors appear with a note on their family background, age, hobbies, favourite pop songs etc. (Certain contributors go to the extent of saying "May I find a sincere and an ever-loving partner! ") The overwhelming response for this column apparently has prompted the publishers to introduce a coupon in the newspaper, which the contributors have to send in. "From your dear Saroji" is another popular column which gives answers to questions on emotional problems An interesting column which attracts a strong response, is the question box "Destiny and You" which says "Send in the time and date of your birth, and the major features of your horoscope. Write in your problem in your handwriting and place the print of your right thumb."

Other popular features are the "Wedding Greetings" (readers send in date of their weddings), "Sayings on love" snippets of humour, serialization of melodramatic novelettes, and poems from readers, mainly on the theme of love

"Women's formula" of beauty hints, hair styles, dress making, embroidery, flower arrangements also appear, though in a low key. "Karate lessons for girls", directed towards enabling young females to protect themselves, is a feature introduced for the first time in Sri Lankan newspapers.

It is interesting to note that the feature articles contain the sole theme of love, treated from different angles, as indicated by the following examples "Why do you love?,""Falling in love for the first time", "The

heart of your young man is sweeter than his face", and "Never to forget". The texts of love letters appear very often. The language used in these articles are mellifluous and emotional and the imagery is often associated with flowers, petals, roses, butterflies and the spring. Another interesting characteristic is the interspersing of English words in these articles, indicating the mixed language the young readers generally use.

A new feature introduced recently is the "Youngsters' Page" which contains about three features - fashions for young men, snippets of humour and an article of interest for young men, for example "Prince Charles, who has not had the love of a girl."

WOMEN'S JOURNALS

Journals devoted entirely to women have been few. The *Ceylon Woman* and the *Journal of the Ceylon Housewives' Association* that appeared in the 1950s were two of the earliest ones.

The" *Ceylon Women* continued for a number of years and was popular among the elite women in the country. It is noteworthy that most of the articles focussed on fashions and beauty care. The Housewives' Journal too represented the views and interests of the middle and upper classes, concentrating on cookery and other "womanly" activities.

There are two journals currently being published in Sri Lanka. *Kantha* (Woman) the journal of the Sri Lanka Administrative Service Women's Association appeared first, in October/December 1978. The objectives of this publication are given in the editorial of the first issue as follows:

"Our objective is to educate, inform and improve the critical faculties of women.... In this period of women's awakening, we have decided to publish this journal. A woman plays many roles in her life, an employee, a mother and a housewife. Her household chores keep her occupied, as much as she is kept occupied in office. Yet she earns only half the salary , her husband would get. But that is not our concern here. Our wish is

to highlight the hidden side of a woman's life, her aesthetic values and contribution to art and higher ideals."

It is clear that the objective to educate, inform and improve the critical faculties is considered different from discussing problems of working women. It is also clear from the above that the objective of *Kantha* was not to discuss numerous problems faced by Sri Lankan working women or reflect the changing role of women, which will lead to consciousness - raising of women, but "highlight the woman's aesthetic values and contribution to art and higher ideals." Yet the first issue of the journal contains a few important articles that would broaden the horizon of women, such as "Women's participation in trade union development", "Equality in law and practice", and "Women in Sri Lanka organisations functioning to change the traditional role of women." In line with the aesthetic ideals, there were eight poems in English and Sinhala and one short story in English.

It is noteworthy that *Kantha* , in spite of being the journal published by an association of women, in one of the highest professions in the country, could not deviate from an emphasis on the "Women's column formula", as is indicated from the following articles - "Pause a while to beautify", "Cooking with a smile", "Fashion", "Home sweet home", and "Child Care".

The second issue of *Kantha* which appeared in Jan/March 1979 has retained only "Fashion" out of the formula ingredients mentioned above. Yet a comment (which appears below), made in an article discussing the role of women in Sri Lanka leads us to believe that the formula is endorsed, "Everybody (except traditionalists of some culture and religion) takes for granted that women should be emancipated; that they have chancesof realising their personalities, develop their potential, making a contribution, proportionate to their numbers to world affairs. Certainly . But why is this necessarily outside the home and extraneous to the role of wife and mother?" The emphasis here is that self-realisation is only through the role of home maker.

Kantha Handa (The Voice of Women), which appeared in 1979 in Sinhala (Tamil and English issues are to be released soon.) is a journal of a small women's organisation whose members are drawn from factory workers and rural

undergraduates, in addition to school and University teachers. The editorial states, the objectives of the journal, as "..... to campaign for the economic, political, social and legal rights of women and for the full participation of women in the development of Sri Lanka.

..... to monitor governmental policies in order to assess how such policies affect women; to be vigilant on the policies and attitudes to women in the public and private sectors of the economy as well as in mass media, and to urge action on these matters where necessary."

Kuntha Handa attempts to present a radical view point on women with provocative articles, and the cover story "Woman is not a commodity", protesting against the use of women in advertising, illustrates their point with some of the sexist advertisements that have appeared recently in the newspapers.

ADVERTISEMENTS

Advertisements in the mass media in Sri Lanka havechanged, over the last few decades, according to different social climates and according to the medium itself. In the pre-colonial times, advertisements were restricted only to the newspapers, commercial radio coming to being in the 1960s and commercial television only this year. The advertising in the newspapers changes strongly according to the media; English language tending to serve the upper income bracket, Sinhala/Tamil, a low income bracket, although this division has changed considerably within the last 10 years or so, with the growth of an entire generation educated largely in Sinhala/Tamil.

The imagery used in the colonial times in the English newspapers were those derived for a clientele closely allied with the colonial presence and their needs. The Sinhala newspapers themselves created, for a different audience, advertised for different products. During the colonial era, there was no conscious use of the woman in a sexist image, although advertisements carried stereotyping which corresponded to the rough reality, at the time, of woman's role, being largely that of a home-maker.

The post colonial era saw the rapid expansion of the middle class market. It was a time of a sellers' market for consumer goods, and advertisements were, relatively speaking, matter of fact and to the point. This period also saw advertising agencies of international stature, like Grants, Thompson etc. being established in the country. These agencies had an array of professional copywriters and image makers which depended for the technology, and, at least for a part of the imagery on the West. Compared with their use in the Western media, sexist imagery was relatively little used. During the period 1960 to 1977, due to a foreign exchange crunch, and policies of import substitution, consumerism was kept strongly controlled.

A new government coming to power in 1977, on an improved foreign exchange situation introduced changes under the aegis of the International Monetory Fund, which liberalised imports. Although the purchasing power of the poorer segments of the population had contracted, largely due to withdrawal of subsidies, consumer goods available for the upper and middle income strata have increased dramatically. This is seen clearly in the daily English newspapers where there has been over a three-fold increase in space devoted to advertising. Because of the class nature of recent changes, one sees a heightening of a difference in advertising between the English and the Sinhala newspapers, the former tending to advertise more consumer products than the latter.

The goods advertised most heavily include television sets, radios, motor cars electrical appliances, perfumes, processed foods, etc. - all items which were in scarce supply earlier. Advertising is still, often, matter of fact and the advertisements sell these products on the basis of the prestige value of the goods. Human imagery used is not particularly sexist; women do not often appear in a sexist format. They are projected specially in the Sinhala/Tamil medium as component members of a traditional family, where the woman is seen more in the kitchen, shopping or serving the family.

There are, though, occasional uses of women in selling a particular brand of talcum powder, where the exotic and the erotic is exploited (thus "Reveal the provocative woman in you. Be 'all woman' warm, alluring, irresistible ..... with Goya".) or selling office equipment with a picture

of a bikini clad woman ("Only Canon captures contours like these"). A most dramatic example of such a type was an advertisement "for packaging of any kind, any size", where a scantily clad woman is tied in ropes like cargo inside a packing case and was labelled "Handle with care". The woman seems happy and revelling in her bondage.

However, it should be mentioned that the sexist advertisements are relatively rare, and in fact, certain advertisements have been withdrawn, in response to protests by women's groups, as for example, the "handle with care" advertisement referred to above.

The Sinhala and Tamil newspapers do not carry even this amount of modern commercial sexist imagery. The Goya advertisement is repeated in Sinhala and its image is softer, more subdued and evokes an aura of a feminine mystique, nearer to the traditions of womanly beauty, held in the South Asian poetic image.

In the commercial radio in English, sexist imagery is not used, even to this extent although women's soft voices are used, for instance in selling airlines. In the Sinhala commercial service, the traditional image of women, as described in the poetic tradition,is evoked in selling jewellery , soap etc. Apart from this type of imagery, radio also lends itself to selling products varying from gems & land to cosmetics. Certain advertisements take the form of a dialogue between a man and a woman (often in a family situation), where the woman is portrayed as docile, stupid, and not-interacting with the outside world, and the man, well-informed and all-knowing.

Portrayals of women in advertisements in the newspapers or in the radio in occupational roles are infrequent and restricted to relatively few occupations, such as secretaries and stewardesses. The depiction of women as professionals is almost non-existent.

An important category of advertisements that reflects the position of women in society is the marriage proposal columns in the newspapers. They have replaced for some prospective brides and bridegrooms, the professional

match-maker (*magul kapuva*). Most of these newspaper advertisements give background information on caste, religion, education, occupation, family and ethnic background while stating the corresponding requirements of the bride or the bridegroom to be, together with the dowry to be given or expected. An analysis of these advertisements in the Sinhala and English newspapers revealed that most of the advertisers are from the middle class. A large number of male advertisers are employed in modern sectors of the economy, earning regular salaries. It has also been revealed, that 75 per cent of the female advertisers have passed the G.C.E. Ordinary Level and that the majority of them are unemployed. Twenty per cent of the female advertisers have a University education and the majority of them are employed as teachers or in middle grade occupations. This study also suggests that marriage advertisements reflect the encroachment of commercialism on one hand, and the consequent adjustments of the economic and social practices of the traditional times, on the other.[39]

CARTOON STRIPS

Cartoon strips provide a very interesting mirror of the changing socio-economic situation of Sri Lanka[40] and of the different roles of women. Since the mid fifties, a significant change has been the spread of political power away from Colombo-based upper class to at least partially ,the rural-based middle class. This middle class earlier consisting of a stratum which included school teachers, traders, village level land lords and traditional physicians (or at least their sons and daughters) have over the last generation engaged in a process of upward class mobility, sometimes obtaining to themselves positions that were held by the earlier elite. This has been provided by the mobility given by the education system for upper strata professions, like those of medicine, engineering, administration, accountancy etc. as well as by new entrepreneurship. Within the period of a generation, a significant segment has risen from rural middle class origins and reached the upper professional and economic strata and in this, they have become a conduit for new cultural influences from abroad. The rise of this new class has also been accompanied by increased integration between the values and aspirations of town and country. The new values that have

emerged have not replaced the traditional values, and there is a high degree of value dissensus in this new stratum. Most of these changes are depicted dramatically in the cartoon strips.

The cartoon strips have similarities to temple paintings, specially those extant from the 17th century onwards which depicted in strip form, the mythical stories of Buddha's previous births. In these murals, sex roles in the society of the time were depicted.

It was with the growth and spread of the Sinhala newspapers, that the modern cartoon strips emerged. The readership of the Sinhala newspapers was provided in the early decades of the century, by the urban lower middle class as well as the rural middle class. The *Dinamina*, the only Sinhala daily up to the late 1940s, carried from the 1930s to the 1950s a very popular cartoon strip called *Mudalali* (small businessman). The Mudalali was a representative of the rural middle classes and his attitudes depicted a dual character common to the petit bourgeosie - supporting and at the same time critical of the strata above it. *Mudalali* was a conservative figure which supported the British crown even after independence. At the same time he ridiculed the English speaking upper middle classes of Colombo.

Nearly half a century after the emergence of the *Mudalali* cartoon, one sees virtually a revolution in both the numbers and themes of cartoon strips. Cartoon strips have blossomed not only in many dailies and weekly newspapers, but also in magazine form. Over the last five years, there has been a veritable explosion of such cartoon strips. The most popular format is the weekly picture story magazine having about twelve serials within it (*Sathuta*, *Sittara*, *Suhada*, *Swarna*, *Sithuvama* being the popular weeklies). The large readership of these can be gauged from the figures of circulation given below.

(1) The five weekly cartoon magazines (*Sathuta*, *Sittara*, *Suhada* *Swarna* and *Sithuvama*) - 405,000 (approximately)

(2) The daily newspapers, *Dinamina* and *Lankadeepa* (*Dawasa* does not carry cartoon strips) - 139,377

(3) The weekly newspapers (Sunday), *Riviresa*, *Silumina* and *Sri Lankadeepa* - 603,693

giving a total circulation of 1,148,070

There is a considerable overlap among these buyers, as well as a large hand to hand readership. The readership of comic strips is largely within the age group 10 to 30. One would expect also a hand to hand circulation in class rooms and among young working people of both sexes.

Interviews with publishers and authors revealed that a selection of themes of cartoon strips is not a random affair, but are what the market favours. The editorial staff of cartoon strips provides a range of stories to cater for a variety of tastes, but however, the result is a particular juxtaposition which indicates current consumer tastes.

Cartoon strips in the best selling weeklies and dailies can be demarcated in the following categories.

1. Stories arising from the local milieu
   (a) those depicting urban (westernized) values and aspirations, e.g. "Adaraya viraha geeyak noveva" in *Sittara* (Let not love be a song of separation), "Ithin eeta passe" (Thereafter...) in *Sittara*

   (b) those depicting village society, reminiscent of the feudal era, e.g. "Batti", "Sampath soya" (In search of wealth or glory) and "Palingu Menike" in *Sathuta*.

2. Stories transplanted from comics in the West, having, for example, cowboy type stories e.g. "Kuluharak" in *Sittara* , James Bond type stories, e.g. "Marijuanakarayo" in *Sittara* science fiction stories e.g. "Sulpha" in *Sittara* , Superman type stories e.g. "Veero" in *Sathuta* , detective stories e.g. "Mathakayen eth vu lovak" (a world away from memory) in *Sittara*, and "Kalupareviyo" (black pigeons) in *Sathuta*

3. Old classics from both East and West like Arabian nights, Guttila-Musila, and Spartacas.

The majority of the stories belong to category 1. (a) and they are stories of sentimental romance and adventure, reflecting the aspirations of youth. A common theme would depict a handsome young man-falling in love with a pretty girl- speeding in a big motor car- saving her from disaster and finally marrying and living happily ever after. Such "paper" characters found in these stories are apparently an answer to youth's need for escape. It is understandable that for relaxation and entertainment, they would turn to comic strips that take them to a fantasy world of romance and adventure, which they cannot achieve in real life. The characters dressed in what the authors perceive, as the latest styles, travel in planes, drive luxury cars, and move around in airports and pleasure gardens. Occurrences of boys going abroad for their studies, seem to be in the increase, as for instance in "Itin eeta passe" in *Sittara*, "Pani Kurullo" (Honey birds) in *Suhada*, "Supurudu Suvanda" (Familiar Smell) in the *Rivireea*

A study of the themes of the new comic strips depicts new values and new role divisions that have emerged. Girls are depicted as moving around in buses, going out with boys, and are not house bound. These reflect partially the changes that have come about in Sri Lankan society where women are now physically and socially more mobile, than a generation or two ago. Further, the role division of men and women has also tended to change specially with the impact of education. However, the cartoon strips do not reflect realistically these aspects of the changed reality of the Sri Lankan woman.

Women in cartoon strips have been portrayed in one of the following ways.

(1) Girls waiting to "trap" boys into marriage. Girls sometimes take the initiative in falling in love, indicating a new boldness in women. e.g. "Adaraya viraha geeyak noveva" in *Sittara*, and "Devadasi" in *Sathuta* etc. School girls or those attending tutories are usually the central characters in many of these stories.

(2) Womer as victims of kidnap, assault, harassment and rape e.g."Ithin eeta passe" in *Sittara* and "Batti" and "Kalhari" in *Sathuta* (Parallel to a theme common in the Sinhala cinema.)

(3) Women as thieves and gang leaders. e.g. "Viyaru muhuda" (Mad ocean), and "Kalhari" in *Sathuta*

It is noteworthy that women are not portrayed as doing any worthwhile activities other than falling in love. The school girls invariably give up their education once they fall in love. Only in very rare instances, do they continue their studies, as seen in "Mama tharaha naha" (I am not angry) in *Sittara* . None of them appears to do jobs, a contrast to reality, where most females are either employed or aspire to be employed. In the cartoon strips, even a girl who graduates from the University is not shown as doing a job, although she drives around in her own car.

Attitudes reflected in these cartoon strips depict partially contemporary reality and partially, the biases and prejudices of both writers and readers. With the very wide circulation of these cartoon strips, they could become a useful tool for education and change of attitudes.

The cartoon in the English medium newspapers, though read by a minority, are important since they reach the decision making elite. There are two comic strips currently appearing in the two leading English dailies the *Ceylon Daily News* and the *Sun*.The former features "Bringing up father" a U.S. cartoon strip with Jiggs and Maggie. The *Ceylon Daily News* has resurrected recently this cartoon strip after nearly ten years. The Jiggs cartoon depicts essentially a dated world of upper class American life with stereotyped sex roles.

A locally produced comic strip titled "Axa" is featured in the *Sun*. (The Sun group had its origins as an independent newspaper in the strong nationalistic era of the late 1950s.) Although the Sun caters for the English speaking dependent elite, it had always flavoured aspects of its cultural dependence with a local tinge. "Axa" though written by a local writer, has in its attitudes, themes and illustrations, a strong foreign flavour, reminiscent of Tarzan. The writer of 'Axa' has internalised the racist theme of Tarzan and has also combined it with a cave man's sexist view of women. At the same time, the attitude to women depicted is a typical middle class one, where the heroine is shown incapable of protecting herself even from a rat.

The Lanka Guardian has succinctly put "Axa" in perspective, as follows:

"As man's power to dominate the female declines, male fantasies according to sociologists, shift to pre-historic or futuristic periods,where nude women are chased , captured and tamed by gorrila - like males. It is back to the hunt, and "Axa" obliges with a daily dose of poses."

"The Amazonian Axa however, is a 'typical female' terrified of rats as the July 5 strips show! When Axa volunteers to kill the rat, the hero shouts: "Run, woman, your job is breeding, not fighting!" [41]

With the recent onset of television, it is reasonable to assume that the readers of these cartoon strips would become avid viewers of television (if they could afford it), because television as a modernistic symbol appears in several of these cartoon strips. Television, as it is organised today, in Sri Lanka (mid 1979) is a direct cultural colonizer with almost all its entertainment programmes canned in America. The content of these are bound to have a strong impact on the content of cartoon strips whose writers do not have the first hand experience of the West and it is to be expected that there would be an increase in the cultural colonization process.

Although some of the programmes shown on TV are not the direct coca-colonization type and include some that are socially relevant to the U.S., (like the children's programme of Sesame Street which has an under class bias,) there is a strong bias in the programmes now being shown. Most plays and films shown extol police violence justifying law and order of the most simplistic kind. Old films which are regularly shown have a very strong pre-selection bias and incorporate overt and covert assumptions of racial and civilizational superiority of America. Certain films evoke very much the spirit of 1950s cold war films, at their worst rabid anti-communist period. The age of Mcarthy may be dead and a more liberal mass media may exist in America, but in Sri Lanka, it apparently has got a new life.

THE USE OF MEDIA IN THE FOUR STUDY AREAS

The survey conducted in the four study areas attempted to examine the pattern of consumption of mass media among women, in relation to their habits and preferences in reading newspapers and books, in listening to the radio and in viewing films.

Table 4.3 indicates the frequency of reading newspapers. It would be seen, that the frequency of newspaper reading was much higher in the urban study area than in the rural ones. The Sinhala women, both in the rural and urban areas read newspapers most. The Muslim women in Wattegedera read the least, but the Muslim women in Borella read newspapers more often than the Tamil women in that area. This is probably due to the fact that the Muslim women living in urban Borella were more literate and had more leisure to read, than those in Wattegedera. A similar trend was noticed in the category 'not reading newspapers at all'. Thus the Tamil women in Borella and the Muslim women in Wattegedera were the least exposed to the newspapers.

The newspapers preferred by the Sinhala women in both rural and urban study areas were similar. The women's paper *Tharuni* enjoyed the highest popularity among Sinhala women, while *Silumina* and the cartoon newspaper *Sathuta* came next in order to popularity. The other popular papers in both Pindeniya and Borella were *Dinamina* and the cartoon paper

It is noteworthy that a medium introduced only a few years ago, namely the cartoon strip has gained a high degree of popularity among women in both urban and rural areas.

Sinhala women both in rural and urban sites expressed similar preferences with regard to columns in different newspapers. Women's columns, health columns, cartoon strips and local news came in order of popularity. Foreing news, editorials and features, enjoyed relatively low popularity.

Women in both Siruppiddy and Wattegedera preferred local news. Articles on health and nutrition, foreign news and articles on South Indian actresses were popular in Siruppiddy, whilst religious and educational issues interested Muslim women in Wattegedera. A notable feature in Siruppiddy was the special interest shown in foreign news.

TABLE 4.3

READING NEWSPAPERS

AREA			TOTAL RESPONSES*	HOW OFTEN DAILY	WEEKLY	ONCE IN A WAY	NOT AT ALL
BORELLA:							
	SINHALA	NO.	45	29	10	3	3
		%	100	64.4	22.2	6.7	6.7
	TAMIL	NO.	15	5	5	2	3
		%	100	33.3	33.3	13.3	20.0
	MUSLIM	NO.	10	4	2	3	1
		%	100	40.0	20.0	30.0	10.0
	TOTAL	NO.	70	38	17	8	7
		%	100	54.3	24.3	11.4	10.0
PINDENIYA		NO.	94	45	25	15	9
		%	100	47.9	26.6	15.9	9.6
SIRUPPIDY		NO.	93	18	19	30	26
		%	100	19.4	20.4	32.3	27.9
WATTEGEDARA		NO	95	10	6	42	37
		%	100	10.5	6.3	44.2	38.9

* IN BORELLA AND WATTEGEDARA, THERE WAS A RESPONSE OF 100%. IN PINDENIYA AND SIRUPPIDY, THE RESPONSE WERE 99% AND 98% RESPECTIVELY.

As to the reading preferences for women's columns, all four study areas demonstrated the same pattern - the most popular column was needlework instructions while the health column came next. The third preference was for beauty hints in all study areas except in Pindeniya where handicraft took the third place. Child caring and rearing occupied the fourth place in all study areas except in urban Borella where there was little interest in this subject. This finding is colloborated by a survey done on child care needs of low income families in rural and slum areas.[42]

Table 4.4. indicates that the percentage of women who read books was the highest in Siruppiddy while the habit of reading books was the lowest in Wattegedera.

Novels constituted the most popular reading in all study areas. Among the Sinhala readers in Pindeniya and Borella, the favourite novel was Karunasena Jayalath's *Gehunu Lowai* (later made into a film by a female director) and next in popularity was the same author's *Golu Hadavutha*. This was specially so among women between 18 to 30 years of age. W.A.Silva's *Sunethra* and *Daivayogaya* and *Hinganakolla* were popular among the age group of 30 - 40. It is to be noted, that there was also a small minority of readers whose favourite books included those by Martin Wickramasinghe, G.B.Senanayake, Mahagama Sekera, Gunadasa Amarasekera and T B.Illangaratne.

As to the favourite authors, Karunasena Jayalath enjoyed the highest popularity both in Pindeniya and Borella, followed by Kumara Karunaratne. Other writers mentioned were Edward Mallawaarachchi, Newton Gunasekera and Karunaratne Saputantri whose works deal with the theme of immature love.

It is interesting to note that the South Indian magazines such as *Kalki*, *Kalaimagal*, *Kumudam*, *Anandavikatan* which serialise novels were mentioned as their favourite books by women in Siruppiddy. These magazines uphold Brahmanical traditions of ancient India and appeal particularly to the traditional housewives of the middle and lower classes.

The novels serialised in these South Indian magazines often portray women in housewife roles conforming to traditions, and hardly playing a role in community life. Career minded women in these stories are often widows, divorcees, spinsters or barren women Religious discourses too are given prominence in these magazines.

TABLE 4.4

READING BOOKS

AREA		TOTAL RES-PONSES	NO. OF BOOKS READ PER MONTH NEVER	1-2	2-4	MORE THAN 4	NO. INTER-VIEWED	RESPONSE AS % OF NUMBER INTER-VIEWED
BORELLA:SINHALA	NO.	33	10	11	11	1	45	73
	%	100	30.3	33.3	33.3	3.03		
TAMIL	NO.	12	5	4	2	1	15	80
	%	100	41.7	33.3	16.7	8.33		
MUSLIM	NO.	8	3	4	-	1	10	80
	%	100	37.5	50.0		12.5		
TOTAL	NO.	53	18	19	13	3	70	76
	%	100	33.9	35.8	24.5	5.66		
PINDENIYA	NO.	69	24	36	2	7	95	73
	%	100	34.7	52.2	2.89	10.14		
IRUPPIDY	NO.	68	22	30	14	2	95	72
	%	100	32.4	44.1	20.5	2.9		
WATTEGEDARA	NO.	63	44	14	3	2	95	66
	%	100	69.8	22.2	4.8	3.2		

The most popular author, as revealed in the survey was South Indian Karunatharan, who started his literary career as a lyricist of Tamil film songs, and came into the limelight within the last few years. Second in popularity was the reputed South Indian novelist, Varatharajan, a writer of high calibre It is also interesting to note that another writer popular among the respondents was K.V.Jeganathan a writer with left political ideas and who has often highlighted caste and class discrimination and injustice. The heroes and heroines in his novels were often fisher folk, rickshaw pullers and shanty dwellers.

The admired character types differed in the four study areas. Bravery was most admired in male characters while cleverness came next in all study areas except in Siruppiddy, where 'quiet men' were the most popular, ('quiet' meant a home centred person) and cleverness came second. Bravery was not liked even as much as piety.

As to the female character types, the 'quiet' women (more home bound) was the most preferred type while the good character' came second. Cleverness ranked third in all study areas except in Wattegedera where religiosity or piety took its place. Cleverness, however, was rated much higher in Siruppiddy than anywhere else.

Table 4.5 indicates that listening to the radio was most popular among the Muslim women, both in the urban and rural sites, more so in the former. This habit was least popular in Siruppiddy. Generally, the urban woman listened to the radio more than her counterpart in the rural areas.

As to the preferences for radio programmes, the situation was very similar among Sinhala women both in Pindeniya and Borella The most popular programme in both places, were radio serials. Quizz programmes and songs came next in order of popularity. Sinhala film songs and film advertising programmes which included songs and excerpts from films were more popular among Sinhala women in Borella than in Pindeniya. Women's programmes occupied the fourth place.

Radio serials were also the most popular in Siruppiddy and to a lesser extent in Wattegedera. The second preference was for "story with songs programmes. Most of these stories are melodramatic and include popular film songs. Also

TABLE 4.5

LISTENING TO THE RADIO

AREA		TOTAL RES-PONSES	HOW OFTEN NEVER	ONCE IN A WAY	WEEK-LY	ABOUT 2-4 DAYS	DAILY	NO. INTER-VIEWED	RESPONSES AS % OF NUMBER INTER-VIEWED
BORELLA:									
SINHALA	NO.	43	5	3	1	5	29	45	90
	%	100	11.6	6.9	2.3	11.6	67.4		
TAMIL	NO.	15	2	2	1	-	10	15	100
	%	100	13.3	13.3	6.7	-	66.7		
MUSLIM	NO.	9	-	1	-	-	8	10	90
	%	100	-	11.1	-	-	88.9		
TOTAL	NO.	67	7	6	2	5	47	70	96
	%	100	10.4	8.9	2.9	7.5	70.1		
PINDENIYA	NO.	90	6	26	9	13	36	95	95
	%	100	6.7	28.9	10.0	14.4	40.0		
SIRUPPIDY	NO.	95	20	34	3	13	25	95	100
	%	100	21.0	35.8	3.1	13.7	26.3		
WATTEGEDARA	NO.	89	39	13	-	-	37	95	94
	%	100	43.8	14.6	-	-	41.6		

TABLE 4.6

LISTENING TO THE NEWS ON THE RADIO

AREA		TOTAL RESPONSES	HOW OFTEN NEVER	SOME TIMES	ALWAYS	NO RESPONSE NO.	%
BORELLA:SINHALA	NO.	38	1	11	26	45	85
	%	100	2.6	28.9	68.4		
TAMIL	NO.	13	2	6	5	15	87
	%	100	15.4	46.1	38.5		
MUSLIM	NO.	9	-	5	4	10	90
	%	100	-	55.6	44.4		
TOTAL	NO.	60	3	22	35	70	86
	%	100	5.0	36.7	58.3		
PINDENIYA	NO.	77	12	36	29	95	81
	%	100	15.6	46.7	37.7		
SIRUPPIDY	NO.	73	6	44	23	95	77
	%	100	8.2	60.3	31.5		
WATTEGEDARA	NO.	73	28	38	7	95	77
	%	100	38.3	52.0	9.6		

TABLE 4.7

SEEING FILMS

AREA			TOTAL RES-PONSES	NEVER	RARELY	ONCE A MONTH	ONCE IN 2 WEEKS	ONCE A WEEK	NO. INTER-VIEWED	RESPONSES AS % OF NUMBER INTER-VIEWED
BORELLA:	SINHALA	NO.	45	4	13	11	15	2	45	100
		%	100	8.8	28.8	24.4	33.3	4.4		
	TAMIL	NO.	11	2	6	2	1	-	15	74
		%	100	18.2	54.5	18.2	9.1	-		
	MUSLIM	NO.	7	1	1	1	3	1	10	70
		%	100	14.2	14.2	14.2	42.8	14.2		
	TOTAL	NO.	63	7	20	14	19	3	70	96
		%	100	11.1	31.7	22.2	30.1	4.7		
PINDENIYA		NO.	78	10	58	1	6	3	95	82
		%	100	12.8	74.3	1.2	7.6	3.8		
SIRUPPIDDY		NO.	95	30	30	25	10	-	95	100
		%	100	31.5	31.5	26.3	10.5	-		
WATTEGEDARA		NO.	74	15	41	16	2	-	95	832
		%	100	19.2	55.4	21.6	2.7	-		

popular are the request programmes for film songs and the Channel II Women's programmes.

A notable feature is the preference for the news on the radio (of the small percentage who listen to the radio) in Siruppiddy and to a lesser extent in Wattegedera. It is to be noted that in contrast, only a very small minority of Sinhala women both in Borella and Pindeniya listen to the news. (Table 4.6)

It is also noteworthy that Muslim women both in Borella and Wattegedera (more in the former) also listen to Sinhala radio programmes.

Table 4.7 indicates that the film was popular among the Muslim women in Borella and the Sinhala women in the same area. It is striking that the film was a source of entertainment rarely sought after generally by rural women and particularly by the Sinhala women in Pindeniya.

Films on family life were by far the most popular in all study areas. Films with religious themes and tragic films came next in order of popularity both in Siruppiddy and Wattegedera. The romantic film was the second most popular among the Sinhala women in Pindeniya and Borella. Films with religious themes were the third preference in Pindeniya. A notable feature was that religious themes did not attract any of the ethnic groups in Borella. Similarly romantic films were not popular in Siruppiddy and Wattegedera This was confirmed by the fact that a majority of respondents thought the treatment of sex and love in films indecent. The view of the majority of Sinhala respondents in Borella and Pindeniya was different; for them it was 'aesthetically satisfying'

Ilatara Peradiya (where Buddhist sacred places in India are shown), *Janaka Saha Manju* (which extols the ideal of motherhood) and *Ransalu* (a love story) were the most popular films in Pindeniya while *Golu Hadavatha* (a love story based on a mass-market novel), *Pembara Madhu* (a love story) and *Veera Puran Appu* (a film on the heroic leader of the 1848 rebellion) were popular among the Sinhala women in Borella

The findings of the survey broadly support the media consumption pattern as revealed by circulation figures and other macro level data. It is to be noted

that a large part of the consumption is related to trivia of an unreal and escapist nature. A fact that emerges from the study is, that publishers of newspapers and braodcasters cater for what the consumers want, and what the consumers are led to believe is fashionable and desirable. It is for this reason that a more enlightened media policy is needed, specially because the bulk of the media is state owned.

REFERENCES

1. The fifteenth century Kavyasekharaya, a versification of the same *Jataka*, draws the following moral, "Who is the woman who will not misbehave, she remains virtuous,only until she gets the opportunity."

2. The *Jatakas* have been noted by Martin Wickramasinghe to embody a complexity of social relationships, in some ways reminiscent of the Russian short story However, it should be pointed out that this complexity falls short of depicting in the female roles, an accurate reflection of their everyday reality.

3. It is interesting to note that these poets were known as the wives of Andare, etc. and were not identified by their actual names.

4. A long knife.

5. Economic Review (Issue on Women and Development), September, 1976.

6. Selvarajan, Sailayoor. Tamil Navalkalin Valarchi (The growth of the Tamil novel in Ceylon), According to S.M.Kamaldeen, the first novel written in Ceylon in Tamil was Asenbae by Siddi Lebbe, pub. in 1888.

7. See p.176.

8. Subramaniam, N. Ilathu Tamil Naval Illakiam (Sri Lanka Tamil Novel Literature), Jaffna, 1977.

9. Erroneously mentioned as the first woman novelist in "A note on the Tamil novel in Ceylon", by Sellaiyoor Selvarajan in Ceylonese writing, some perspectives ed C.R. Hensman.

10. Sivathamby, K , "Femininity and women's liberation within the Tamil cultural context", in Mallikai Annual Supplement, August, 1979, Jaffna.

11. Goonawardene, James "A Quiet Place".

12. Ibid

13. Gunaratne, Suvimalee, 'Bilipooja'

14. Gunaratne, Suvimalee 'Loku Aiya' in Bilipooja.

15. 'The Golden Oriole' in Ibid

16. Thurairajah, A.V.C. The Woman in the Storm, Colombo, 1976, p.88

17. There is a controversy about the period she lived in. Some believe, it was 8th century B.C.

18. Sarachchandra, E.R., The Folk Drama of Ceylon, Colombo 1966. (Sarachchandra adds that even the men had a low reputation, being associated with drinks, drugs and bad behaviour.)

19. Hapuarachchi, D.V., The influence of Western culture on the Sinhala novel and stage. A critical history of the Sinhalese Theatre, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Ceylon, Colombo, 1973, p.268.

20. Ratnayake, L.D.A., John de Silva Nataka Ithihasaya (The history of John de Silva's dramatic literature), (1857 - 1922), 1963.

21. Sarachchandra, Ediriweera, Sinhabahu, Colombo, 1962, Introduction.

22. Amunugama, Sarath, Review of 'Ekadhipathi' in Veemansa, Vol. 20, 1977 Oct., p.23.

23. Coomaraswamy, Ananda, K., Dance of Shiva, Chapter on the status of Indian women, p.105.

24. "Earnest Macintyre and the English Language Theatre", New Ceylon Writing, ed. Yasmin Gooneratne, Kandy, 1971.

25. Ariyapala, M.B., Society in Medeival Ceylon, Colombo, 1968, p.258.

26. Mayer, J.P., Sociology of Film.

27. "Royal adventure" was the first silent feature film to be produced in Sri Lanka in 1925 by A.G. Noorbhai with the future labour leader N.M. Perera playing the role of the hero. (Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the film industry in Ceylon appointed by His Excellency the Governor General on September 10, 1962.

28. An audience survey conducted in 1976 revealed this.

29. Jayaweera, ANanda, 'Cinematic images of women", Lanka Guardian, March 15, 1979.

30. Wijeratne. Chandra. "Ahasin Polovata - Essay in imagined adultery", Lanka Guardian, February 01, 1979.

31. "Love in the Spring", Lanka Guardian, July 15, 1979.

32. Jayamanne, Lalini, "Sexual politics in Pathiraja's Ponmanie", Lanka Guardian

33. According to the latest data available at the Listener Research Unit of the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation.

34. Is this your life? Images of women in the media, ed. Josephine King and Mary Scott, London, 1977.

35. Peak hour is between 7.00 to 9.00 p.m. (Radio listeners Survey in Anuradhapura. A listener Research Report, S.L.B.C., May 1979, Colombo.)

36. The author who compered this programme in 1970 as a guest producer, was told informally not to make it too serious.

37. A fisherman's encampment to dry fish, usually run by an unscrupulous businessman using forced labour.

38. Another radio serial by Ilankeeran *Ingirindu Enge* (From here to where) which continued for 120 weeks in 1975 - 77 portrayed a woman doctor fighting for social justice.

39. Ranasinghe, Sudatta, "A Socio-economic analysis of newspaper marriage advertisements in Sri Lanka", Economic Review, February 1977.

40. The three introductory paragraphs in this discussion are influenced by the analysis of the cartoon strips that appeared in the Economic Review, November/December, 1976.

41. Lanka Guardian, August 01, 1979.

42. Survey of child care needs of low income families, Sri Lanka Federation of University Women, Colombo, 1978.

CARTOON STRIP'S

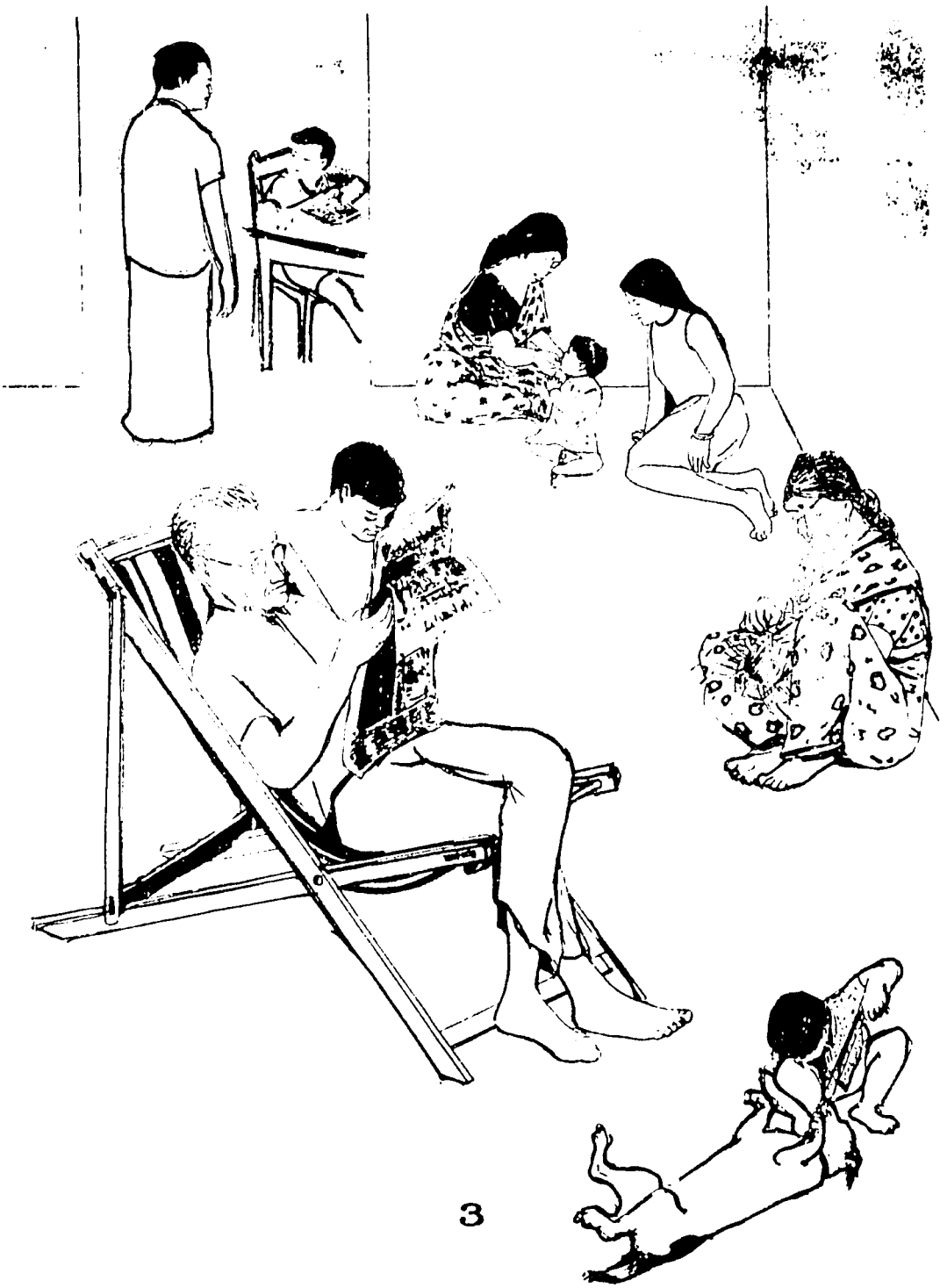


ILLUSTRATION FROM A TEXT BOOK

WOMEN AND EDUCATION

by

SWARNA JAYAWEERA

WOMEN AND EDUCATION

Education has an all-encompassing role in individual and social development. It is an important agency in imparting knowledge and skills relevant to basic living and to the complex demands of change in time and space. As a part of the process of socialization it can be a major determinant of attitudinal and behavioural change. It is therefore crucial to the status of women in her multiple roles in the home, in the labour force and in the community.

In view of the wide ramifications of its operation in individual and national life any analysis of the relationship between education and the status of women would appear to be simplistic and incomplete. All that is attempted in this study is:

(i) an assessment of the extent to which women participate in the institutional provision for education and of some of the factors that seem to promote or impede effective participation; and

(ii) an 'exploration' of the impact of education on a few indices of individual and social well-being and status, such as simple literacy, marriage and employment.

A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

TRADITIONAL EDUCACTION

In a country such as Sri Lanka with its long recorded history of over 2,500 years educational developments inevitably reflect the transition from 'traditional' to 'modern' society. A brief review of educational policy and change over these years will therefore help to explain some facets of the relationship between education and the status of women in contemporary Sri Lanka.

As in most traditional societies, education in Sri Lanka was rooted in its agrarian economy and domestic industries, its feudal social order and its deeply cherished religions. The Indian caste system stratified society so effectively as to limit the role of education as an agent of social mobility. Art, literature and education flourished intermittently under royal patronage and in times of political stability

As in neighbouring India the Brahmins were often the tutors of royalty and the purveyors of learning to a select few in their household 'schools' The pirivenas or religious educational institutions established to provide for the education of the Buddhist Sangha or Monks became centres of religions and secular learning. The local temple taught basic literacy and religion and informal learning in the home was supplemented by the religious discourses delivered at mass gatherings and by cultural activities. Non-formal vocational education in engineering, arts and crafts was organised within the family or on the basis of apprenticeship and membership of guilds.

The participation of girls and women in this process of education was influenced by the role ascribed by society to women. As a daughter, wife or mother a woman's life was home-centred and her youth was devoted to informal preparation for her role of service to other members of the family. There is no record of formal provision for the education of girls at this time and women had no access to the pirivenas, temple schools or Brahmin household 'schools'. Women of all social ranks could, however, join the Buddhist Sangha as Nuns and receive religious teaching at the highest level. There were women from royal and aristocratic families who were reputed for their accomplishments and some of the verses on the mirror wall of the eighth century rock fortress of Sigiriya are said to have been composed by women.[1]

On the whole, however, women from privileged families lived sheltered lives in the confines of their homes, and the less affluent were trained on the job to participate in agriculture, in 'feminine' domestic industries such as textiles, lace-making and embroidery, in dancing and as labour in constructional activities.

COLONIAL EDUCATION

This educational pattern began to change only after the economic and social penetration of the island by British Colonial rule in the nineteenth century, but the first impact of Western Colonial influence was felt with the arrival of the Portuguese in the sixteenth century and the Dutch in the next century.

Under colonial administration[2] educational institutions were established to meet the political, religious and cultural needs of colonial rule. Education was viewed as an instrument for spreading the religion of the colonial ruler, for creating a colonial elite imbued with the new culture and its values and for consolidating colonial rule. Educational trends and practices in metropolitan countries were exported in this process and both men and women were targets of policies of acculturation and religious change.

Under the Portuguese and the Dutch colonial rule was limited to the coastal areas in the island and the social structure was relatively unchanged. Girls had no access to the Portuguese Jesuit Seminary or secondary and higher education institutions but a few girls are reported to have attended missionary parish schools such as those at Chilaw where Roman Catholic instruction is said to have been given to girls in the morning and to boys in the afternoon.[3]

The Dutch created a state agency for education - the Scholarchal Commission - and introduced the concept of compulsory education by imposing fines for non-attendance in their parish schools. While girls had no access to the Dutch Seminary or secondary education institution in Colombo parents were encouraged to send their daughters to the co-educational parish school where religion and reading were taught.[4] The Scholarchal Commission and the parish school had a chequered career and parents tended to withdraw their daughters from school when they reached the age of about eighteen years, but the Dutch parish schools of the seventeenth century were the earliest recorded formal provision of elementary education for girls in Sri Lanka.

When the British acquired control of the whole island early in the nineteenth century the Christian evangelical movement was a strong pressure group at a Colonial Office and missionary societies were seeking fresh pastures in the British empire. The Christian missionaries opened schools for girls, often side by side with those for boys, to facilitate the transfer of Christian values to the home environment and to provide Christian wives for the men who were educated in their schools.

In metropolitan countries such as England educational opportunities were extended to a larger clientele and the majority of 'modern' educational institutions were developed only in the nineteenth century. The Female Superior Schools opened by the colonial government in Sri Lanka in the mid-nineteenth century, the High Schools for girls of the second half of the nineteenth century modelled on the High Schools in England, the introduction in 1881 of the School Certificate Examinations of the University of Cambridge which became the prestigious goal of ambitious middle class boys and girls, and the 'Vernacular' girls' schools for the masses were all largely inspired by the expansion of educational facilities for girls in nineteenth century England.

The earliest beneficiaries were Eurasian girls and very affluent Sinhala and Tamil girls - all members of the colonial elite. The kind of education imparted to these girls was largely limited to the social accomplishments which were part of their training for marriage. While sex-based curriculum diversification was an integral feature of school organization the introduction of the Cambridge examinations in 1880 helped to reduce the disparity between boys' schools and girls' schools, and enabled the first girl to enter the Medical College in 1892, and larger numbers to enter the University College opened in 1921.

Nevertheless, social prejudices which inhibited the participation of girls in education persisted in some areas till nearly the mid-twentieth century Tamil and Muslim girls over 10 years of age were exempted from compulsory attendance in schools during this period in deference to social conservatism that discouraged schooling for older girls in these communities.[5] At the turn of the century in 1901 girls formed 27.4% of those enrolled in schools (Table 5.4) There were special Teacher Training Schools for women and Industrial schools for destitute girls but there were no girls in Agricultural and Technical schools. The impact of education was also seen in the literacy figures of the time (TABLE 5.1).

TABLE 5.1

LITERACY IN SRI LANKA 1881 - 1921

YEAR	MALES %	FEMALES %
1881	24.6	2.5
1891	29.9	4.4
1901	34.7	6.9
1911	47.2	12.5
1921	56.3	21.2

SOURCE: CENSUS OF CEYLON 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911, 1921, GOVERNMENT PRESS, COLOMBO.

RECENT EDUCATIONAL POLICIES

Universal franchise and the constitutional changes which ended direct colonial rule and permitted local participation in policy formulation in education were introduced in 1931, and the extension of educational opportunity became a major concern of the new legislature. Education was considered to be an important instrument of social policy both during this transition period and after political independence was regained in 1948. Over the next three decades educational opportunity became, together with food subsidies, health services and other welfarist measures, a goal of policies directed towards reducing socio-economic inequalities.

In the nineteen forties state rural co-educational secondary schools (Central Schools) were opened in every part of the island and a system of scholarships enabled promising but economically disadvantaged children from primary schools to obtain a secondary and higher education. In 1945 education was made free from primary to tertiary (including University) level and a beginning was made in the use of the national languages as the media of instruction with English as a compulsory second language for all Sinhala and Tamil children.

In spite of the absence of compulsory education legislation at national level, social demand led to a rapid increase in the participation rate of boys and girls. Through all these changes equal access for boys and girls was an accepted principle of educational policy, particularly in educational provision, in every phase of educational reform. The result was the achievement in the nineteen sixties of near-parity in educational opportunity for boys and girls.

Educational facilities were also increased in other sectors of the education system. The University of Ceylon formed in 1942 by the amalgamation of the University College and the Medical College offered equal access for both sexes. The two Universities created in 1959 from two traditional centres of Buddhist education were initially

confined to men students but opened their doors to women in 1966. Vocational education has been the least developed sector in Sri Lanka. There have been few overt barriers to access to these institutions but cultural attitudes have always prevented women from making maximum use of technical education facilities.

PARTICIPATION OF GIRLS AND WOMEN IN EDUCATION

Data relating to the past few decades are presented in this section to illustrate development trends with a view to facilitating understanding of the current situation and to identifying major problems affecting the educational status of women. Any assessment of the extent of participation in an educational system has to take into account three main indicators - access to education, enrolment rates and retention rates in educational institutions.

ACCESS TO PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Although equal access to education has been accepted in theory and in practice in Sri Lanka for many decades, universal enrolment has only been a goal of social policy and no national legal provision exists for compulsory education. The 1939 Ordinance[6] provided that the Executive Committee for Education may make regulations for enforcing compulsory attendance for the age-group 5 to 14 years, but no such regulations were formulated in subsequent years.

Social pressures, however, led to the development of a formal school system which by 1978 provided a network of 9069 schools located in every part of the island It was estimated in 1977 that there were on an average three schools per ten square miles and 35 schools per 10,000 of the school age population.

In Sri Lanka pre-school education has not been developed on an organised basis and has been left largely to private enterprise. Entry to the

school system is at the age of five years and students receive a six year primary education (Pre-grade and Grades 1 - 5) and a five year secondary education (Grades 6 - 10). At the end of Grade 10 a public examination - the General Certificate in Education (Ordinary Level) - is the mechanism used to select students for senior secondary education. The two year senior secondary course is differentiated into curricilum streams on the basis of 'arts and commerce' and 'science' subjects although combinations of subjects are permitted. The General Certificate in Education (Advanced Level) Examination is the basis for entry to the Universities and other tertiary education institutions. Both the G.C.E. (Ordinary Level) and (Advanced Level) are accepted for entry to institutionalized vocational training and to employment.

A significant feature of the school system is that it is largely co-educational. The elitist-oriented English school system which was developed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries catered to the social prejudices of middle class parents and was based on sex segregation. The elementary 'vernacular' schools (schools in the two local languages, Sinhala and Tamil) were intended for the masses, and although the trend in the nineteenth century had been to open Vernacular Boys' Schools and Girls' Schools, they were modelled on their prototype, the Elementary Schools in England, and became rapidly co-educational in character.

This trend towards co-education can be seen in the statistics of schools presented in Table 5.2. Co-educational schools which had constituted only 39% of the total number of schools in 1900 increased their proportion to three-fourths in 1945 and now form 95.8% of the schools in Sri Lanka. The proportion of boys' schools decreased from 38% in 1900 to 11.0% in 1945, and that of girls' schools from 22.9% to 10.8%. Since 1945 the development of the state school system, and the restriction placed on the expansion of private schools have led to a situation in which only 4.2% of the schools in the island are single sex schools - Boys' schools (1.6%) and Girls' schools (2.6%).

TABLE 5.2.

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS (1970 - 1978)

YEAR	NO. OF BOYS' SCHOOLS	NO. OF GIRLS' SCHOOLS	NO. OF CO-ED. SCHOOLS	TOTAL NO. OF SCHOOLS	% BOYS' SCHOOLS	% GIRLS' SCHOOLS	%CO-ED. SCHOOLS
1900	695	419	714	1828	38.0	22.9	39 [illegible]
1925	905	523	1722	3170	28.5	17.1	54 [illegible]
1935	759	621	2761	4141	18.3	14.9	66.7
1945	529	496	3548	4573	11.6	10.8	77.6
1953	477	568	5516	6561	7.3	8.7	84.1
1963	258	709	7970	8937	3.2	7.9	89.2
1971	244	304	8946	9494	2.7	3.2	94.1
1975	181	291	8914	9386	1.9	3.1	95.0
1978	157	244	9069	9470	1.6	2.6	95.8

SOURCE: Administration Reports of the Department of Education, 1900, 1925, 1935, 1945, 1953, 1963 and

School Census, Ministry of Education, 1971, 1975, 1978.

Very few of the single sex schools are state schools. All of them are urban schools in the main towns such as Colombo, Galle, Jaffna and Kandy, catering to the demands of middle class families. With their traditions, social composition, student numbers and facilities they continue to be the socially and often academically prestigious schools in the island. The co-educational pattern of organization, however, prevails in rural Sri Lanka and in less affluent urban areas.

In many Asian societies lack of women teachers has been a barrier to access of girls to education. In Sri Lanka just over half the total number of teachers are women (52.0% in 1975), but the male-female ratio varies widely among the districts, and women out-number men in the more developed South-West and Northern parts of the island (Table 5.3). The main reasons for this imbalance are the harsh working conditions in less developed and rural districts and the migration of educated and qualified persons to developed areas. In the Sri Lankan context of a largely co-educational system in rural and remote areas such inadequacies have not had significant repercussions on the enrolment of girls. Nevertheless it would be useful to investigate in a future study the probable two-way relationship between the low proportion of women teachers and the relatively low enrolment of girls in traditional Muslim villages in the Eastern province.

In Sri Lanka problems with regard to access to education exist in:

(a) the relatively large proportion of 'small' schools, chiefly in less developed districts;

(b) inequalities in school facilities and qualified teachers, especially in areas such as science education.

While both boys and girls are affected by these shortcomings it is possible that such inadequacies are more likely to restrict the opportunities of girls in disadvantaged districts. This is especially so in the case of 'small' schools.

TABLE 5.3

DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHERS BY DISTRICT AND SEX

	1971		1975	
	MALES (%)	FEMALES (%)	MALES (%)	FEMALES (%)
Colombo South	28.0	72.0	27.2	72.8
Homagama	33.9	66.1	47.4	52.6
Colombo North	35.8	64.2	35.6	64.4
Kalutara	35.8	64.2	36.7	63.3
Kandy	48.1	51.9	48.4	51.6
Matale	53.1	46.9	55.4	44.6
N'Eliya	64.5	36.5	57.4	42.6
Galle	38.0	62.0	40.1	59.9
Matara	41.1	58.9	43.8	56.2
Tangalle	56.7	43.3	53.1	46.9
Jaffna	50.7	49.3	51.6	48.4
Mannar	58.3	41.7	71.6	28.4
Vavuniya	59.2	40.8	62.0	38.0
Batticaloa	61.2	38.8	59.9	40.1
Amparai	68.9	31.1	63.4	36.6
Trincomalee	60.9	39.1	60.1	39.9
Kalmunai	75.0	25.0	76.1	23.9
Kurunegala	51.3	48.7	52.7	47.3
Chilaw	52.8	47.2	57.2	42.8
Anuradhapura	64.7	35.3	62.5	37.5
Polonnaruwa	67.8	32.2	64.2	35.8
Bandarawela	59.1	40.9	55.1	44.9
Moneragala	74.8	25.2	69.3	30.7
Ratnapura	49.7	50.3	51.8	48.2
Kegalle	47.1	52.9	52.2	47.8
TOTAL	46 6	53.4	48.0	52.0

SOURCE: SCHOOL CENSUS, 1971 and 1975, Ministry of Education.

In 1977 23 3% of schools in the island had between 101 and 200 students, 17.3% had between 51 and 100 students and 9 9% had under 50 students, i.e. 27.2% of the total number of schools had less than 100 students. Some of the educationally backward districts had a large proportion of schools with less than 200 students - Anuradhapura 47.4%, Batticaloa 42.9%; Mannar 54.2%; and Vavuniya 63 9% These 'small' schools are often one or two teacher schools or are limited to primary classes. Access to secondary education constitutes a problem, particularly to girls in remote areas where the nearest secondary schools are inaccessible through lack of roads and transport facilities.

ENROLMENT IN SCHOOLS

The introduction of free education in 1945 relieved parents of the necessity of limiting the investment of their resources to the education of their sons alone. This measure together with the policy of equal access to education for both boys and girls has led to the achievement of near-parity in enrolments in the formal system of education. The percentage of girls in schools increased from 27 4% at the beginning of this century to 42.4% in 1946 and subsequently to 48.5% in 1974, and the growth rate in enrolment has been higher for girls (Table 5.4).

Statistics relating to:

(a) sex-wise enrolment in Grades 1 - 12 in 1963, 1970 and 1978 are presented in Tables 5.5(a), 5.5.(b) and 5.5(c); and

(b) sex-wise enrolment by single years from ages 5 - 19 in 1974 and 1978 in Table 5 6

Both sets of data indicate that although boys have an advantage in participation in education, the position with regard to girls is more satisfactory than in many developing countries, as seen in the comparative statistics relating to countries in Asia and Oceania in Table 5.7.

An interesting feature in the Sri Lanka data is that the percentage of girls is higher than that of boys in some grades in the secondary school

TABLE 5.4

ENROLMENT IN SCHOOLS BY SEX (GRADES I - XII) 1901 - 1978

YEARS	MALES (NO.)	FEMALES (NO)	TOTAL (NO)	FEMALES (%)
1901	133,086	50,175	183,261	27.4
1911	229,471	95,811	325,282	29.4
1921	274,136	135,068	409,204	33.0
1931	377,380	216,057	593,437	36.4
1946	537,232	396,126	933,358	42.4
1953	857,397	711,963	1,569,360	45.4
1963	1,328,407	1,132,287	2,460,694	46.0
1970	1,361,679	1,261,474	2,623,153	48.1
1974	1,336,853	1,259,735	2,596,588	48.5
1978	1,569,366	1,474,263	3,043,629	48.4

SOURCE: ADMINISTRATION REPORTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION 1901, 1911, 1921, 1931, 1946, 1953;
School Census, Ministry of Education 1970, 1974, 1978.

TABLE 5.5(a)

TOTAL ENROLMENT BY SEX AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION - 1963 (in numbers)

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	MALES (NO)	FEMALES (NO)	TOTAL (NO	FEMALES (%)
PRIMARY SCHOOLING				
TOTAL	953,085	797,154	1,750,239	45.5
GRADE I L.K.	225,928	180,640	406,568	44.4
I U.K.	180,466	150,149	330,615	45.4
II	160,780	136,806	297,586	45.9
III	146,603	126,108	272,711	46.2
IV	129,890	109,690	239,580	45.8
V	109,418	93,761	203,179	46.1
SECONDARY SCHOOLING				
TOTAL	375,316	335,133	710,449	47.2
GRADE VI	93,482	79,209	172,691	45.9
VII	76,182	65,240	141,422	46.1
VIII	61,920	54,280	116,200	46.7
IX	53,140	48,604	101,744	47.8
X	72,521	71,192	143,713	49.5
XI	10,582	10,603	21,185	50.04
XII	7,489	6,005	13,494	44.5
TOTAL GR I - XII	1,328,407	1,132,287	2,460,694	46.0

SOURCE: ADMINISTRATION REPORT, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, 1963

TABLE 5 5.(b)

TOTAL ENROLMENT BY SEX AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION - 1970 (in numbers)

LEVEL OF EDUCATION			MALES (NO)	FEMALES (NO)	TOTAL (NO)	FEMALES (%)
PRIMARY SCHOOLING						
TOTAL			888,537	781,708	1,680,245	46.5
GRADE I			222,371	197,910	420,281	47.09
II			192,509	171,058	363,567	47.05
III			182,198	160,730	342,928	46.87
IV			157,017	142,405	299,422	47.56
V			134,442	119,605	254,047	47.08
SECONDARY SCHOOLING						
TOTAL			473,156	469,752	942,908	49.8
GRADE VI			121,633	112,547	234,180	48.06
VII			104,799	105,937	210,736	50.27
VIII			73,897	68,267	142,164	48.02
IX	ARTS		33,232	38,451	71,683	53.64
	SCIENCE		17,297	12,412	29,709	41.78
	COMMERCE		9,380	8,323	17,703	47.02
X	ARTS		51,836	71,056	122,892	57.82
	SCIENCE		27,030	19,461	46,491	41 86
	COMMERCE		11,665	10,073	21,738	46.34
XI	ARTS		5,955	8,417	14,372	58.57
	SCIENCE		5,085	3,080	8,165	37.72
XII	ARTS		6,239	9,050	15,289	59.19
	SCIENCE		5,108	2,678	7,786	34.40
TOTAL GRADE I - XII			1,361,679	1,261,474	2,623,153	48.1

SOURCE: SCHOOL CENSUS, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, 1970.

TABLE 5 5 (c)

TOTAL ENROLMENT BY SEX AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION - 1978 (in numbers)

LEVEL OF EDUCATION		MALES (NO)	FEMALES (NO)	TOTAL (NO)	FEMALES (%)
PRIMARY SCHOOLING					
TOTAL		1,023,916	918,747	1,942,663	47.3
GRADE I	U.K.	172,084	140,566	312,650	44.9
GRADE I		219,549	195,016	414,565	47.0
II		183,876	166,354	350,230	47.5
III		170,795	156,035	326,830	47.7
IV		151,294	142,307	293,601	48.5
V		126,318	118,469	244,787	48.4
SECONDARY SCHOOLING					
TOTAL		545,450	555,516	1,100,966	50.5
GRADE VI		98,226	93,298	191,524	48.7
VII		71,800	58,465	130,265	44.9
VIII		93,507	92,157	185,664	49.6
IX		81,527	84,942	166,469	51.0
X		120,061	129,024	249,085	51.8
XI	ARTS & COMMERCE	23,531	33,855	57,386	58.9
	SCIENCE	20,412	18,657	39,069	47.8
XII	ARTS & COMMERCE	17,927	27,897	45,824	60.9
XII	SCIENCE	18,459	17,221	35,680	48.3
TOTAL GR. I - XII		1,569,366	1,474,263	3,043,629	48.4

SOURCE: SCHOOL CENSUS, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, 1978.

TABLE 5.6

ENROLMENT IN SCHOOLS BY SEX AND AGE, 1974 AND 1978

AGE	1974 TOTAL (NO)	1974 MALE (%)	1974 FEMALE (%)	1978 TOTAL (NO)	1978 MALE (%)	1978 FEMALE (%)
5	---	---	---	299,353	52.4	47.6
6	278,659	52.6	47.3	296,752	52.4	47.6
7	277,537	52.5	47.5	274,783	51.6	48.4
8	275,533	52.5	47.5	290,131	51.8	48.2
9	279,823	52.4	47.6	294,463	51.0	49.0
10	268,801	51.8	48.2	281,518	48.2	51.8
11	247,187	51.8	48.2	257,108	49.0	50.1
12	222,921	51.1	48.9	235,423	49.6	50.4
13	195,563	50.0	50.0	220,970	49.2	50.8
14	172,927	48.8	51.2	190,342	48.5	51.5
15	140,055	49.0	51.0	170,225	49.4	50.6
16	104,359	49.0	51.0	148,321	41.6	58.4
17	54,056	48.0	52.0	64,681	46.8	53.2
18	30,112	48.5	51.5	36,684	50.8	49.2
19	18,807	47.9	52.1	24,420	49.2	50.8
20 +	19,785	48.2	51.8	28,566	47.1	52.9

SOURCE: SCHOOL CENSUS, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION.

TABLE 5.7. - ENROLMENT RATIOS BY AGE GROUP AND SEX IN ASIA AND OCEANIA

COUNTRY	YEAR	6 - 11 TOTAL	6 - 11 MALE	6 - 11 FEMALE	12 - 17 TOTAL	12 - 17 MALE	12 - 17 FEMALE	18 - 23 TOTAL	18 - 23 MALE	18 - 23 FEMALE	6 - 23 TOTAL	6 - 23 MALE	6 - 23 FEMALE
DEVELOPED COUNTRIES:													
Australia	1960	100.0	99.3	100.8	66.6	68.7	64.4	10.3	14.8	5.5	64.6	66.1	63.0
	1965	98.6	97.9	99.2	73.2	75.9	70.4	11.9	16.4	7.2	64.3	66.3	62.2
	1970	98.7	98.3	99.1	77.6	79.5	75.6	13.6	17.9	9.1	64.8	66.7	62.9
	1975	99.4	99.8	99.1	79.1	79.1	79.0	19.9	23.6	16.1	66.8	68.0	65.6
Japan	1960	100.0	100.0	100.0	76.6	77.6	75.5	7.8	12.4	3.3	64.1	66.2	62.0
	1965	100.0	100.0	100.0	81.5	82.3	80.7	11.6	17.4	5.8	64.2	66.7	61.7
	1970	99.6	99.8	99.5	86.6	86.7	86.5	14.5	20.6	8.4	61.5	64.4	58.6
	1975	100.0	100.0	100.0	94.6	94.6	94.7	22.4	29.8	14.9	71.8	74.4	69.0
New Zealand	1960	98.2	100.0	96.4	74.4	75.8	72.9	10.9	14.3	7.4	67.4	69.4	65.2
	1965	100.0	100.0	100.0	75.5	77.3	73.7	11.8	15.1	8.4	67.2	68.7	65.7
	1970	101.7	101.7	101.8	77.8	79.3	76.2	15.5	18.7	12.2	68.4	69.8	67.0
	1975	99.3	99.3	99.3	82.2	82.8	81.5	22.8	28.4	16.9	69.5	71.4	67.5
U.S.S.R.	1960	82.0	82.0	82.0	73.7	72.9	74.5	14.1	15.1	13.0	56.2	56.6	55.8
	1965	82.0	82.0	82.0	85.3	82.9	87.7	33.7	34.9	32.3	71.9	71.3	72.4
	1970	82.0	82.0	82.0	81.8	78.9	84.7	26.3	25.6	27.1	65.9	64.8	67.1
	1975	82.0	82.0	82.0	79.9	77.3	82.5	24.0	22.8	25.2	61.8	60.4	63.1
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES:													
Afghanistan	1960	5.3	5.7	1.3	4.1	7.1	0.9	0.5	0.9	0.1	3.5	6.1	0.8
	1965	10.0	16.6	3.2	7.6	12.6	2.3	1.1	1.8	0.3	6.7	11.1	2.1
	1970	18.9	22.9	4.2	11.6	19.6	3.2	2.4	4.1	0.6	9.9	16.6	2.8
	1975	15.6	25.8	4.8	13.6	22.7	3.8	3.0	5.2	0.7	11.5	19.2	3.4
Bangladesh	1960	29.9	42.2	16.8	4.5	8.0	0.7	0.6	0.9	0.2	14.0	20.5	7.1
	1965	37.4	52.3	21.9	9.1	15.6	2.2	1.1	1.9	0.3	18.8	27.2	9.9
	1970	42.7	59.7	24.7	14.7	23.4	5.4	2.9	5.0	0.6	23.3	33.6	12.2
	1975	51.0	69.7	31.4	19.2	30.1	7.7	3.9	6.8	0.8	28.1	40.0	15.5

contd. .....

TABLE 5.7. (continued) - ENROLMENT RATIOS BY THE AGE GROUP AND SEX IN ASIA AND OCEANIA

COUNTRY	YEAR	6 - 11			12 - 17			18 - 23			6 - 23		
		TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
Burma	1960	44.3	47.2	41.5	14.1	17.9	10.3	1.8	2.6	1.0	22.0	24.6	19.4
	1965	50.4	53.0	47.7	18.8	23.0	14.5	2.5	3.3	1.8	27.0	29.8	24.3
	1970	62.2	65.3	59.0	26.8	32.1	21.5	5.0	6.2	3.7	35.2	38.6	31.7
	1975	62.9	64.6	61.3	26.6	30.5	22.6	5.7	6.9	4.5	35.2	37.6	32.7
Democratic Kampuchea	1960	50.6	66.6	34.4	20.8	31.7	9.9	1.3	2.2	0.4	28.2	38.9	17.6
	1965	61.0	75.3	46.5	28.0	40.9	14.9	3.5	5.7	1.3	35.7	46.5	24.6
	1969	68.5	77.9	58.8	30.9	43.0	18.4	4.2	6.5	1.8	39.3	47.9	30.5
India	1960	50.1	66.0	33.4	18.5	27.6	8.9	3.1	5.1	1.0	26.1	35.7	16.0
	1965	60.1	74.8	44.4	26.5	37.5	14.8	4.6	7.1	1.9	33.9	44.1	23.1
	1970	59.3	72.3	45.2	27.9	37.9	17.1	5.7	8.8	2.5	34.9	44.4	24.7
	1975	61.4	73.1	48.9	27.7	36.2	18.6	5.9	8.9	2.7	35.2	43.5	26.2
Indonesia	1960	50.4	58.7	42.9	24.1	33.9	16.3	2.1	3.5	1.0	27.1	34.0	21.3
	1965	52.6	55.7	49.4	31.7	41.4	23.2	4.4	7.3	2.1	32.8	38.9	27.3
	1970	57.0	59.3	54.6	34.4	41.1	27.5	7.4	11.6	3.8	37.4	42.4	32.4
	1975	62.0	66.3	57.6	36.9	42.0	31.6	6.7	9.3	4.1	39.0	43.3	34.6

contd. .....

TABLE 5.7. (continued) - ENROLMENT RATIOS BY THE AGE GROUP AND SEX IN ASIA AND OCEANIA

COUNTRY	YEAR	6 - 11 TOTAL	6 - 11 MALE	6 - 11 FEMALE	12 - 17 TOTAL	12 - 17 MALE	12 - 17 FEMALE	18 - 23 TOTAL	18 - 23 MALE	18 - 23 FEMALE	6 - 23 TOTAL	6 - 23 MALE	6 - 23 FEMALE
Iran	1960	31.9	42.7	20.9	18.7	26.1	11.2	4.4	7.0	1.7	20.9	28.5	13.1
	1965	49.9	66.8	32.6	27.8	38.4	16.9	5.7	8.5	2.8	31.6	42.9	20.0
	1970	58.9	74.8	42.9	35.9	46.9	24.6	8.3	11.9	4.6	37.9	48.9	26.6
	1975	65.6	81.0	49.7	53.8	67.0	40.3	14.3	19.1	9.2	47.7	59.5	35.6
Korea, Republic of	1960	84.6	89.8	78.9	35.8	45.6	25.1	7.1	11.6	2.4	47.5	54.1	40.3
	1965	92.3	94.8	89.5	43.6	50.3	36.5	9.1	13.2	4.7	56.1	60.2	51.7
	1970	96.7	97.5	95.9	50.1	57.6	42.2	11.0	15.7	6.0	60.1	64.3	55.7
	1975	100.0	100.0	100.0	62.9	69.7	55.6	12.5	16.7	8.1	61.8	65.6	57.7
Lao People's Democratic Republic	1960	20.8	27.6	13.8	5.5	7.9	3.0	0.4	0.6	0.1	9.9	13.2	6.4
	1965	34.6	42.3	26.6	7.4	10.0	4.7	0.5	0.7	0.3	15.9	19.7	11.9
	1970	46.4	56.9	35.7	11.5	16.1	6.8	0.7	1.1	0.2	22.1	27.7	16.3
	1975	54.7	61.0	48.3	14.8	18.9	10.7	1.1	1.7	0.5	26.8	30.7	22.8
Malaysia	1960	86.0	95.3	76.2	32.1	41.8	22.1	1.3	1.8	0.8	47.1	54.3	39.7
	1965	88.6	93.8	83.1	32.8	40.0	25.3	2.3	3.1	1.5	49.9	55.1	44.6
	1970	91.0	94.6	87.2	37.9	44.1	31.5	2.9	3.9	2.0	50.7	54.6	46.6
	1975	92.7	94.4	90.9	50.2	55.0	45.1	3.0	3.8	2.1	53.5	56.0	50.8
Mongolia	1960	48.7	49.0	48.4	30.0	30.6	29.4	16.0	17.5	14.5	33.2	33.9	32.4
	1965	59.1	59.3	59.0	38.2	39.1	37.2	18.0	19.2	16.7	40.7	41.4	40.0
	1970	68.8	68.8	68.8	51.8	53.1	50.5	21.6	22.1	21.0	50.6	51.2	50.0
	1975	72.3	73.0	71.6	59.8	60.9	58.6	28.3	28.9	27.7	57.0	57.7	56.2
Nepal	1960	10.0	17.0	2.6	4.2	7.2	0.8	0.5	0.9	0.2	5.6	9.6	1.4
	1965	17.8	29.4	5.7	6.9	11.8	1.7	0.8	1.3	0.3	9.9	16.4	3.0
	1970	22.0	36.4	7.0	8.0	13.9	1.9	1.4	2.2	0.6	11.7	19.4	3.6
	1975	27.2	43.5	10.9	10.5	17.3	3.5	1.6	2.5	0.6	14.4	23.2	5.3

contd. .....

TABLE 5.7. (Continued) - ENROLMENT RATIOS BY THE AGE GROUP AND SEX IN ASIA AND OCEANIA

COUNTRY	YEAR	6 - 11 TOTAL	6 - 11 MALE	6 - 11 FEMALE	12 - 17 TOTAL	12 - 17 MALE	12 - 17 FEMALE	18 - 23 TOTAL	18 - 23 MALE	18 - 23 FEMALE	6 - 23 TOTAL	6 - 23 MALE	6 - 23 FEMALE
Pakistan	1960	27.2	41.9	11.6	9.4	15.6	2.9	1.8	3.1	0.5	15.1	23.7	6.0
	1965	31.7	47.0	15.3	10.7	16.5	4.5	2.8	4.5	1.1	17.9	27.0	8.4
	1970	36.8	52.7	19.9	11.0	17.2	4.4	3.4	5.4	1.3	19.8	28.9	10.1
	1975	42.4	58.0	25.8	12.1	18.1	5.7	3.0	4.5	1.3	21.8	30.3	12.6
Papua New Guinea	1960	45.1	49.9	39.8	26.7	32.2	20.6	0.9	1.5	0.2	26.4	30.1	22.3
	1965	47.2	53.6	40.4	31.1	39.0	22.7	1.6	2.7	0.4	29.4	34.6	23.6
	1970	42.4	50.3	34.0	31.4	40.5	21.5	2.3	3.6	0.8	28.0	34.4	21.0
	1975	38.2	45.4	30.6	31.6	40.5	22.1	4.4	6.9	1.7	26.9	33.3	20.0
Philippines	1960	71.7	72.7	70.8	39.4	40.6	38.2	13.3	13.7	12.8	45.4	46.3	44.5
	1965	85.4	86.0	84.7	51.5	52.4	50.6	20.3	19.5	21.2	56.8	57.0	56.7
	1970	85.0	85.3	84.6	59.7	59.8	59.6	22.1	20.5	23.7	60.0	59.6	60.3
	1975	78.1	78.4	77.8	60.1	59.8	60.5	22.7	21.8	23.6	57.7	57.5	57.9
Singapore	1960	84.9	90.4	79.1	62.0	72.0	51.5	12.2	16.2	8.1	57.8	64.2	51.0
	1965	90.8	93.7	87.7	60.9	67.2	54.3	11.7	14.8	8.5	62.4	66.8	57.9
	1970	94.3	96.1	92.3	55.9	58.4	53.2	8.3	11.6	4.8	56.7	59.3	53.9
	1975	99.9	100.0	99.8	56.8	57.6	56.0	9.5	13.2	5.6	54.8	56.3	53.2
Sri Lanka	1960	91.1	95.0	87.2	48.7	57.5	39.6	6.8	8.6	4.9	54.9	59.9	49.7
	1965	85.8	88.5	82.9	54.4	56.4	52.3	8.7	9.8	7.6	54.8	56.9	52.6
	1970	74.5	76.2	72.7	58.0	59.3	56.6	9.4	10.2	8.5	51.9	53.4	50.4
	1975	61.8	60.8	62.8	53.7	53.5	54.0	8.5	9.0	8.0	44.6	44.2	45.0

contd. .....

TABLE 5.7 (continued) - ENROLMENT RATIOS BY THE AGE GROUP AND SEX IN ASIA AND OCEANIA

COUNTRY	YEAR	6 - 11			12 - 17			18 - 23			6 - 23		
		TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
Thailand	1960	75.7	77.8	73.5	26.7	31.4	21.9	5.2	7.2	3.1	41.2	44.1	38.3
	1965	74.7	76.7	72.7	21.7	26.0	17.5	4.4	5.6	3.2	40.7	43.4	38.0
	1970	77.9	80.0	75.7	25.5	29.9	21.1	5.3	6.6	4.0	42.3	45.4	39.2
	1975	78.3	80.1	76.4	33.9	38.6	29.0	6.2	7.9	4.5	44.2	47.1	41.2

NOTE: Enrolment ratios by age-group are obtained by dividing enrolment in a given age-group by the population of the same age.

SOURCE: UNESCO OFFICE OF STATISTICS, PARIS, 1978.

in 1970 and 1978 - and in the secondary school age group in 1974 and 1978. This may be due to the fact that more employment opportunities are available for boys than for girls. The 1970 and 1978 data also indicate that secondary school girls tend to concentrate in arts courses while more boys opt for science courses.

AGE-SPECIFIC PARTICIPATION RATE IN EDUCATION

Table 5 8 gives the participation rates by age groups for both sexes in the two Census years 1963 and 1971. Tables 5.9 and 5.10 give the participation rates by single years for both sexes and for both urban and rural sectors in the same years. These Tables make it clear that the participation rate of girls is less than that of boys in all age groups although the disparities are not wide.

This Census data also include enrolment in all formal educational institutions, both general and vocational and this explains the wider sex disparities in the second level age group which do not appear in the school statistics in the earlier Tables since less girls than boys are enrolled in out-of-school educational institutions. Lack of reliable population data by age and sex precludes the preparation of a similar Table of current enrolment figures. The absence of age specific data separately for primary and secondary education also makes it difficult to make an accurate assessment of participation in the first and second levels of education.

Both Sri Lankan and UNESCO statistics, however, point to a significant trend. The age-specific participation rate which is independent of demographic and administrative changes has declined in Sri Lanka from 1963 to 1971 for both sexes except in the oldest age group (20 - 24 years). It has been observed that there has been a further decline from 1971 to 1977 although it is not possible to give sex-wise age-specific data for these years. The Consumers' Survey of Ceylon in 1973[7] drew attention to this trend and also to the fact that the numbers of those who do not attend and have not attended schools have increased, particularly in the capital city and in some other parts of the island.

TABLE 5.8

PARTICIPATION RATE IN EDUCATION BY SEX AND AGE GROUPS, 1963 AND 1971

AGE GROUP	1963 MALE	1963 FEMALE	1963 TOTAL	1971 MALE	1971 FEMALE	1971 TOTAL
5 - 11	77.6	74.6	76.2	66.8	64.7	65.8
5 - 14	76.7	72.0	74.4	66 8	63.7	65.3
15 - 19	43 3	36.6	40.0	37.1	32.9	35.0
11 - 19	56.8	48.9	53 0	49.6	44.5	47.1
20 - 24	5.3	4.0	4.6	8.1	7.0	7.4
5 - 19	67.7	62.5	65.2	58.4	54.9	56.7
5 - 24	56.2	51.3	53.8	47.6	44.0	46.0

SOURCE: CENSUS OF CEYLON, 1963 AND 1971, DEPARTMENT OF CENSUS & STATISTICS

TABLE 5.9

PARTICIPATION RATE IN FULL-TIME EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

BY SEX AND AGE - 1963

	BOTH SECTORS			URBAN			RURAL		
AGE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
5	48.1	48.0	48.2	52.7	51.4	54.0	47.3	47.4	47.1
6	73.6	74.8	72.3	79.8	81.3	78.1	72.4	73.5	71.1
7	81.1	83.3	78.9	88.2	87.5	88.9	79.7	82.5	76.9
8	83.5	84.3	81.8	87.9	90.1	85.7	82.6	84.1	81.1
9	84.7	86.3	83.1	91.7	92.6	90.8	83.3	85.1	81.5
10	83.5	84.8	82.2	86.6	90.2	82.8	82.9	83.7	82.0
11	82.0	84.7	79.1	88.3	89.0	87.5	80.6	79.1	77.3
12	73.6	77.3	69.6	80.7	82.3	78.9	72.2	76.3	67.7
13	70.8	75.3	66.2	78.0	80.0	75.9	69.2	74.2	64.1
14	63.8	68.8	58.5	73.6	74.6	72.5	61.4	67.4	55.3
15 - 19	40.0	43.3	36.6	49.7	51.2	42.9	37.5	41.1	33.8
20 - 24	4.6	5.3	4.0	12.4	13.4	11.2	2.5	2.7	2.3
25 +	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.4	0.3	0.5
TOTAL 5 - 24	53.8	56.2	51.3	58.6	58.8	58.4	52.7	55.3	50.1

SOURCE: CENSUS OF CEYLON, 1963, DEPARTMENT OF CENSUS AND STATISTICS

TABLE 5.10

PARTICIPATION RATE IN FULL-TIME EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS BY SEX AND AGE, 1971

AGE	BOTH SECTORS			URBAN SECTOR			RURAL SECTOR		
	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
5	15.6	15.7	15.4	16.4	16.4	16.4	15.4	15.5	15.2
6	60.1	60.8	59.4	62.4	62.6	62.1	59.5	60.3	58.7
7	73.3	74.1	72.5	76.7	77.3	76.1	72.4	73.2	71.5
8	76.8	77.8	75.8	80.1	60.5	79.6	76.0	77.0	74.9
9	79.1	80.3	77.8	82.1	83.1	81.1	78.1	79.6	76.9
10	78.1	79.8	76.4	81.4	82.6	80.2	77.2	79.0	75.4
11	77.4	79.6	75.1	82.0	83.2	80.7	76.2	78.7	73.4
12	69.3	71.6	66.8	75.1	76.6	73.5	67.7	70.3	64.9
13	64.9	67.8	61.9	72.3	74.2	70.3	62.8	66.0	59.5
14	57.2	60.2	54.2	65.7	67.5	63.7	54.9	58.1	51.6
15	51.0	53.4	48.5	60.3	62.5	58.0	48.3	50.7	54.8
16	43.2	45.7	40.8	52.9	55.5	50.1	40.5	42.7	38.2
17	35.2	37.1	33.3	43.6	46.0	40.9	32.7	34.3	31.2
18	24.2	25.9	22.5	30.2	32.3	27.8	22.5	23.9	21.0
19	18.8	20.2	17.3	23.8	25.1	22.2	17.2	18.5	15.9
20	12.6	13.8	11.4	16.8	18.0	15.4	11.2	12.3	10.2
21	10.4	11.1	9.7	14.1	14.7	13.4	9.2	9.8	8.6
22	7.7	8.4	7.0	11.5	12.0	10.9	6.5	7.1	5.9
23	6.3	6.9	5.7	9.6	10.1	8.9	5.2	5.7	5.9
24	5.2	5.9	4.6	8.2	8.7	7.6	4.2	4.8	3.7
5 - 25	46.0	47.6	44.4	49.3	49.6	49.0	45.1	47.0	43.2

SOURCE: CENSUS OF POPULATION, SRI LANKA, 1971,
DEPARTMENT OF CENSUS AND STATISTICS

In this connection it is to be noted that Sri Lanka was one of the six countries which had relatively high primary level enrolment ratios in 1960 and which were expected in the Asian model of Educational Development formulated in Bangkok in 1965 to reach universal primary enrolment before 1980.[8] Sri Lanka is the only country in this group whose participation rate has declined since 1963 while the rest - the Republic of Korea, Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand have taken great strides towards achieving this goal.

NON-SCHOOL GOING AND EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING

Participation in education becomes meaningful only if students continue to be enrolled through the years of formal schooling and age-specific participation rates are good indicators of the extent of retention in schools.

It is noted that there is a marked decline in Sri Lanka in participation after the age of 9 or 10 years with the rate of decline increasing steeply after 13 years. This trend is indicative of a high incidence of early school leaving, and it has been estimated that 50% of entrants to Grade I have dropped out by Grade 6, 65% by Grade 8 and 95% by Grade II. No statistics are available separately of boys and girls who 'dropped out' or left school without completing their school education prior to 1978. The 'drop out' figures in Table 5.11 show that in 1978 at least there were more early school leavers among boys than among girls, particularly at primary level. This macro-level data does not however, necessarily reflect the situation in different regions.[9]

What emerges very clearly from the enrolment and drop-out rates is that a considerable proportion of girls:

(a) do not enter school at all; or

(b) leave prematurely, some of them without completing primary education and others with an incomplete secondary education.

TABLE 5.11

DROP-OUTS IN FORMAL EDUCATION BY SEX AND BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION (IN NUMBERS) - 1978

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	(1) MALES (NO.)	(2) FEMALES (NO.)	(3) TOTAL (NO.)	(4) FEMALES (%)
PRIMARY SCHOOLING				
TOTAL	20,877	15,902	36,779	43.2
Grade I	3,513	2,344	5,857	40.0
II	3,443	2,882	6,325	45.6
III	4,145	3,115	7,260	42.9
IV	4,308	4,008	8,316	48.2
V	5,468	3,553	9,021	39.4
SECONDARY SCHOOLING				
TOTAL	17,577	17,119	34,696	49.3
GRADE VI	2,772	2,242	5,014	44.7
VII	2,405	1,788	4,193	42.6
VIII	2,500	1,913	4,413	43 3
IX	3,836	4,127	7,963	51.8
X	2,712	2,421	5,133	47.2
XI Arts & Commerce	394	550	944	58.3
XI Science	339	199	538	36.9
XII Arts & Comm	1,592	2,518	4,110	61.3
XII Science	1,027	1,361	2,388	56.9
TOTAL Grade I - XII	38,454	33,021	71,475	46.2

SOURCE: SCHOOL CENSUS, 1978, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION.

The repercussions of this situation on the educational status of women will be discussed later, but the problem of non-schooling and early school leaving in Sri Lanka is aggravated by the fact that adequate provision is not made outside the formal school system for the education of these two groups. According to available evidence the majority of these educationally disadvantaged students come from economically deprived homes.

SOME IMBALANCES IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

(i) POPULATION SUB-GROUPS

In a plural society such as Sri Lanka in which several racial groups - Sinhala, Sri Lanka Tamil, Indian Tamil, Muslim and Burgher - and adherents of four world religions - Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity and Islam - live, population imbalances could exist as a result of historical factors. Table 5 12 and 5.13 which analyse sex-wise enrolment by race and religion in 1963 point to the fact that girls of Muslim and Indian Tamil parentage have been educationally disadvantaged groups. Unfortunately enrolment data has not been analysed by sex as well as by race and religion in the seventies but enrolment figures indicate that Indian Tamils are the most educationally disadvantaged group today.

Table 5.14 gives the numbers of boys and girls who have entered Grade 1 in the two media - Sinhala and Tamil - from 1974-1977 and it is apparent that sex disparities in the two language media groups are not significant.

(ii) REGIONAL IMBALANCES

The development process in the last three centuries has led to regional inequalities in socio-economic conditions. As a result the South-West and Northern sections of the island have superior education facilities and living conditions which are reflected in enrolment data

TABLE 5.12

ENROLMENT BY RACE AND SEX - 1963

RACE	MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL	FEMALES AS % OF TOTAL ENROL MENT	% OF FEMALES IN TOTAL POPULATION
Sinhalese	1,002,074	894,246	1,896,320	47.1	48.2
Ceylon Tamils	166,362	138,211	304,573	45.3	47.7
Indian Tamils	59,162	35,217	94,379	37.3	47.2
Moors and Malays	96,088	60,659	156,747	38.7	47.2
Burghers	3,654	3,115	6,769	46.0	50.3
Others	1,517	1,039	2,556	40.6	43.5
Total	1,328,887	1,132,487	2,461,374	46.0	48.1

SOURCE: ADMINISTRATION REPORT, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, 1963

TABLE 5.13

ENROLMENT BY RELIGION AND SEX, 1963

RELIGION	MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL	FEMALES AS % OF TOTAL ENROLMENT	% OF FEMALES IN TOTAL POPULATION
Buddhists	943,301	836,002	1,779,303	46.9	48.1
Hindus	180,687	150,877	331,564	45.5	47.6
Christians	106,084	82,655	188,739	43.8	48.9
Muslims	98,236	63,705	161,941	39.3	47.1
Others	579	546	1,125	48.5	40.5
TOTAL	1,328,887	1,132,487	2,461,374	46.0	48.1

SOURCE: ADMINISTRATION REPORT, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, 1963

TABLE 5.14

ENTRANTS TO GRADE I BY SEX, 1974 - 1977

YEAR		MALES (NO)	FEMALES (NO)	TOTAL (NO)	FEMALES (%)
1974	Total	142,521	133,242	275,773	48.3
	Sinhala Medium	115,746	107,963	223,709	48.2
	Tamil Medium	26,755	25,279	52,034	48.5
1975	Total	146,629	140,043	289,662	48.3
	Sinhala Medium	120,511	113,698	234,209	48.5
	Tamil Medium	29,118	26,355	55,473	47.5
1976	Total	154,023	145,885	299,908	48.6
	Sinhala Medium	122,366	116,105	238,471	48.7
	Tamil Medium	31,657	29,780	61,437	48.5
1977	Total	158,312	148,346	306,658	48.4
	Sinhala Medium	126,664	119,120	245,784	48.5
	Tamil Medium	31,648	29,226	60,874	48.0

SOURCE: SCHOOL CENSUS, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Provincial enrolment statistics in 1963 (Table 5.15) reveal that sex disparities existed chiefly in the Uva Province (in the interior of the island), and in the Eastern Province (with its strong Muslim population representation) With the organization of educational districts a clearer picture of regional imbalances began to emerge, and district and sex-wise enrolment statistics relating to 1971 and 1977 in Tables 5.16 to 5.19 also point to the fact that these imbalances have not been reduced to an appropriate extent in the seventies.

In 1971 sex disparities have been marked in Nuwara Eliya, Mannar, Vavuniya, Batticaloa, Trincomalee, Kalmunai and Bandarawela and participation has been relatively low in Nuwara Eliya, Batticaloa, Amparai, Trincomalee, Bandarawela and Moneragala. These are among the official list of disadvantaged areas and are found mainly in the Eastern and Uva Provinces and in the plantation or estate sector.

In 1977 sex disparities in enrolment are found again in the Eastern and Uva Provinces. Enrolment in Grades 11 and 12 (Senior Secondary School) science classes which offer access to higher education leading to remunerative employment reveal much greater disparities, reflecting sex stereo-typing in subject preferences. The analysis of the regional distribution of enrolment (Table 5.19) indicates that while imbalances are less marked in total enrolment figures, there is under representation of both sexes in science classes in a considerable number of districts - Nuwara Eliya, Tangalle, Amparai, Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Bandarawela, Moneragala and Ratnapura in contrast to high enrolment in Colombo and Jaffna.

Such regional imbalances are indicative of the fact that a positive policy of improving the socio-economic conditions and educational facilities in disadvanged areas has to be implemented if access to education is to be a practical reality leading to equal outcomes.

TABLE 5.15

ENROLMENT BY PROVINCE AND SEX - 1963

PROVINCE	MALES (NO)	FEMALES (NO)	TOTAL (NO)	FEMALES (%)
Western Province	380,575	328,441	709,016	46.3
Central Province	202,652	199,393	402,045	49.6
Southern Province	180,196	150,860	331,056	45.6
Northern Province	98,842	88,797	187,639	47.3
Eastern Province	69,786	42,293	112,079	37.7
North-West Province	136,810	116,872	253,682	46.1
North-Central Province	48,703	45,252	93,955	48.2
Uva Province	80,350	47,135	127,485	36.9
Sabaragamuwa Province	130,973	113,444	244,417	46.4
TOTAL	1,328,887	1,132,487	2,461,374	46.0

SOURCE: ADMINISTRATION REPORT, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION - 1963.

TABLE 5.16

ENROLMENT BY DISTRICTS AND SEX - 1971

EDUCATIONAL DISTRICTS	TOTAL ENROLMENT (NO)	MALE (%)	FEMALE (%)
Colombo South	252,192	51 9	48.1
Homagama	88,333	52.6	47.4
Colombo North	259,164	51.6	48.4
Kalutara	149,872	51 2	48.8
Kandy	237,949	52.3	47.7
Matale	66,637	51.1	48.9
Nuwara Eliya	81,463	54.9	45.1
Galle	171,348	51.6	48.4
Matara	146,501	51.9	48.1
Tangalle	79,674	51.2	48.8
Jaffna	173,425	52.4	47.6
Mannar	15,535	53.6	46.4
Vavuniya	20,026	52.0	48.0
Batticaloa	46,908	53.9	46.1
Amparai	20,260	51.8	48.2
Trincomalee	38,731	53.9	46.1
Kalmunai	35,044	56 7	43.3
Kurunegala	204,007	50.9	49.1
Chilaw	118,885	52 3	47.7
Anuradhapura	87,912	52.1	47.9
Polonnaruwa	35,754	50 8	49.2
Bandarawela	82,815	53.5	46.5
Monaragala	34,211	52.9	47 1
Ratnapura	124,349	51.3	48.7
Kegalle	146,72 7	51.1	48.9
TOTAL - SRI LANKA	2,717,719	52.1	47.9

SOURCE: SCHOOL CENSUS, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, 1971

TABLE 5.17

PARTICIPATION RATE BY AGE GROUP AND DISTRICT - 1971

DISTRICT	5 - 9 YEARS		10 - 14 YEARS		15 - 19 YEARS	
	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
SRI LANKA	61.6	60.2	72.2	67.4	36.5	32.4
Colombo	65.1	64.8	78.4	75.6	46.1	38.3
Kalutara	66.5	65.5	78.7	74.6	41.1	36.4
Kandy	61.5	60.0	73.4	67.0	39.7	33.5
Matale	58.9	57.8	67.0	62.3	30.1	28.7
Nuwara Eliya	56.4	51.2	67.8	54.2	33.2	21.3
Galle	65.5	65.5	77.3	73.3	43.9	38.3
Matara	65.6	65.3	76.7	73.1	41.4	40.4
Hambantota	61.0	59.8	67.4	66.0	26.2	28.0
Jaffna	67.7	67.0	79.9	77.1	50.9	39.0
Mannar	61.2	58.5	68.7	56.5	20.6	12.4
Vavuniya	60.0	56.0	66.4	62.6	28.0	23.9
Batticaloa	48.1	46.3	50.4	44.1	25.1	16.6
Amparai	55.0	52.4	57.8	47.4	22.7	14.3
Trincomalee	51.0	48.6	60.5	52.3	26.0	20.5
Kurunegala	63.9	63.4	71.8	69.2	33.0	32.6
Puttalam	58.2	58.1	66.3	59.4	27.6	21.0
Anuradhapura	58.0	56.4	64.3	60.2	24.7	26.6
Polonnaruwa	60.6	60.0	64.5	64.4	20.3	25.2
Badulla	56.3	52.2	69.6	58.4	34.7	25.8
Moneragala	50.7	47.4	57.3	51.5	20.8	20.0
Ratnapura	57.1	55.3	65.9	61.7	29.5	29.3
Kegalle	64.4	63.0	75.6	72.9	38.7	38.9

NOTE: FIGURES GIVEN ARE THE PERCENTAGES OF THE DISTRICT POPULATION OF EACH AGE GROUP AND SEX.

SOURCE: CENSUS OF POPULATION - 1971, Department of Census and Statistics

TABLE 5 18

ENROLMENT BY DISTRICTS AND SEX, 1977

EDUCATIONAL DISTRICTS	TOTAL ENROLMENT (GRADES 1 - 12) (NO)	FEMALE (%)	TOTAL ENROLMENT (GRADES11 & 12 SCIENCE) (NO)	FEMALE (%)
Colombo South	212,377	53.6	6,305	48.9
Homagama	79,686	48.3	977	44.3
Colombo North	152,870	50.5	2,100	45.0
Minuwangoda	86,766	48.9	648	46.4
Kalutara	138,205	50 1	1,800	55.0
Kandy	211,624	50 9	2,951	47.4
Matale	64,841	50.6	617	39 4
Nuwara Eliya	88,950	59.0	294	44.9
Galle	151,370	48 9	2,507	43.4
Matara	128,179	49.9	1,487	46.2
Tangalle	77,160	49.9	508	49.6
Jaffna	159,578	50.2	5,224	47.2
Mannar	16,936	47.4	141	34.8
Vavuniya	20,557	48 5	144	37.5
Batticaloa	48,901	47.5	606	25.1
Amparai	22,264	48.9	50	38.0
Kalmunai	40,082	44.8	293	36.9
Trincomalee	40,928	46.7	268	19.0
Kurunegala	186,933	49.7	2,138	50.1
Chilaw	112,766	48 1	762	44.6
Anuradhapura	92,665	48.5	216	37.0
Polonnaruwa	39,098	49 9	147	44.2
Bandarawela	82,876	55.6	461	53.1
Monaragala	32,772	38 1	57	35.1
Ratnapura	118,020	50.2	635	52.6
Kegalle	134,217	50.6	1,568	56.1
TOTAL - SRI LANKA	2,546,975	50 6	32,873	47.0

SOURCE: SCHOOL CENSUS, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, 1977

TABLE 5.19

ENROLMENT BY DISTRICTS 1977 (PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION)

EDUCATIONAL DISRICTS	POPULATION % DISTRI-BUTION	GRADES 1-12 TOTAL EN-ROLMENT % DISTRI-BUTION	MALE GRADES 1-12 % DISTRI-BUTION	FEMALE GRADES 1-12 % DISTRI-BUTION	TOTAL ENROL-MENT GRADES 11-12 SCIENCE % DISTRI-BUTION	MALE GRADES 11-12 SCIENCE % DISTRI-BUTION	FEMALE GRADES 11-12 SCIENCE % DISTRI-BUTION
1.COLOMBO SOUTH	20.9	8.3	7.8	8.3	19.2	18.5	19.9
2.HOMAGAMA		3.1	3.3	3.1	3.0	3.1	2.8
3.COLOMBO NORTH		6.0	6.0	6.0	6.4	6.6	6.1
4.MINUWANGODA		3.4	3.5	3.4	2.0	2.0	1.9
5.KALUTARA	5.7	5.4	5.5	5.4	5.5	4.7	6.4
6.KANDY	9.3	8.3	8.2	8.3	9.0	8.9	9.0
7.MATALE	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	1.9	2.1	1.6
8.NUWARA ELIYA	3.5	3.5	2.9	3.5	0.9	0.9	0.8
9.GALLE	5.7	5.9	6.1	5.9	7.7	8.2	7.0
10.MATARA	4.6	5.0	5.3	5.0	4.5	4.6	4.4
11.TANGALLE	2.7	3.0	3.1	3.0	1.5	1.5	1.6
12.JAFFNA	5.6	6.3	6.3	6.3	15.9	15.8	16.0
13.MANNAR	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.4	0.5	0.3
14.VAVUNIYA	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.4	0.5	0.3
15.BATTICALOA	2.1	1.9	2.0	1.9	1.8	2.6	1.0
16.AMPARAI	2.2	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.2	0.2	0.1
17.KALMUNAI	2.2	1.6	0.8	1.6	0.9	1.1	0.7
18.TRINCOMALEE	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.6	0.8	1.2	0.3
19.KURUNEGALA	8.1	7.3	7.4	7.3	6.5	6.1	6.9
20.CHILAW	3.0	4.4	4.6	4.4	2.3	2.4	2.2
21.ANURADHAPURA	3.1	3.6	3.8	3.6	0.7	0.8	0.5
22.POLONNARUWA	1.3	1.5	1.5	1.5	0.4	0.5	0.4
23.BANDARAWELA	4.9	3.3	2.9	3.3	1.4	1.2	1.6
24.MONARAGALA	1.6	1.2	1.6	1.3	0.2	0.2	0.1
25.RATNAPURA	5.1	4.6	4.6	4.6	1.9	1.6	2.3
26.KEGALLE	5.2	5.3	5.2	5.3	4.8	4.3	5.3
Total-SRI LANKA	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

SOURCE: BASED ON SCHOOL CENSUS DATA, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, 1977.

(iii) SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Research studies in many countries have identified a relationship between the socio-economic background of students and their educational attainment. The Socio-Economic Survey of 1969-70 in Sri Lanka investigated this aspect of educational opportunity and Table 5.20 gives the participation rate of male and female students by household income groups and by sector - urban, rural and estate - according to the survey findings.

It is to be noted that the participation rate and, even in some instances, sex disparities vary according to income differentials in all age groups, and the difference is most marked in the older age groups, 15 to 19 years and 20 to 24 years, inevitably with increasing costs of education. High income groups have a participation rate double that of the lowest income groups (below Rs.200.00) in the 15 to 19 age groups and almost treble that of income groups below Rs.600.00 in the 20 to 24 age group. While rural-urban differences are not wide, the estate sector which is an enclave of immigrant Indian Plantation Workers stands out as an educationally deprived group.

CURRICULUM AND EXAMINATIONS

Another crucial area in education is the curriculum, namely the range of subject areas open to girls, and their subject preferences. In Sri Lanka a common primary and secondary curriculum is offered to both sexes, but even within this framework sex stereo-types are reflected in the organization and selection of vocationally-oriented courses. Data relating to the subjects offered by candidates at the G.C.E. (Ordinary Level) (Grade 10) and G.C E. (Advanced Level) (Grade 12) examinations over the years and the N C G.E. Examinations (Grade 9) in 1975 and 1976[10] provide evidence of some degree of sex-based curriculum diversification particularly with regard to such courses.

TABLE 5.20

PARTICIPATION RATE IN EDUCATION BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME GROUPS AND AGE GROUPS - 1969/70

MONTHLY INCOME	ALL SECTOR			URBAN SECTOR			RURAL SECTOR			ESTATE SECTOR		
	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
5 - 9												
ALL GROUPS	73.8	74.0	73.6	79.2	80.4	78.0	74.6	74.5	74.8	58.1	58.5	57.7
RS. 100 & Under	61.9	61.9	61.9	75.5	66.6	90.5	64.5	65.2	63.8	34.2	37.2	29.7
RS. 100 - 199	68.9	70.1	67.8	71.6	73.9	69.4	71.4	72.8	70.0	54.7	54.2	55.3
RS. 200 - 399	75.8	75.3	76.3	78.5	79.9	77.0	76.6	75.1	78.2	63.5	66.5	60.6
RS. 400 - 599	79.6	80.0	79.1	79.4	82.2	76.6	79.7	79.5	79.8	79.1	73.4	82.8
RS. 600 - 799	85.6	84.2	86.9	88.1	89.7	86.4	84.3	81.2	86.9	87.5	83.3	100.0
RS. 800 - 999	76.3	77.0	75.6	82.6	79.4	85.9	71.1	74.8	67.2	100.0	100.0	---
RS.1000 & OVER	85.8	86.5	85.3	90.1	89.2	90.9	78.6	80.6	77.2	---	---	---
10 - 14												
ALL GROUPS	79.3	83.1	75.2	84.6	86.1	83.1	80.6	84.3	76.7	59.7	69.2	49.5
RS. 100 & Under	64.7	65.3	64.0	66.1	63.8	68.8	66.4	67.1	65.6	46.1	46.9	45.5
RS. 100 - 199	73.9	80.2	66.8	84.2	85.0	83.3	75.9	81.9	69.1	57.9	68.5	46.2
RS. 200 - 399	81.3	85.7	76.6	83.4	87.1	79.5	83.6	87.2	79.7	61.7	72.5	50.4
RS. 400 - 599	85.7	86.8	84.7	89.9	92.0	87.7	85.2	86.2	84.4	69.9	68.5	71.4
RS. 600 - 799	85.6	89.8	81.4	85.8	85.0	86.7	85.7	92.8	79.0	66.7	75.0	50.0
RS. 800 - 999	83.8	78.3	89.5	87.6	85.1	90.1	80.9	73.5	88.9	50.0	50.0	---
RS 1000 & OVER	81.3	79.5	83.7	79.2	75.2	83.5	86.7	88.4	84.1	---	---	---

SOURCE: SOCIO-ECONOMIC SURVEY 1969/70, DEPARTMENT OF CENSUS AND STATISTICS.

TABLE 5.20 (Contd.)

PARTICIPATION RATE IN EDUCATION BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME GROUPS AND AGE GROUPS - 1969/70

MONTHLY INCOME	ALL SECTORS			URBAN SECTOR			RURAL SECTOR			ESTATE SECTOR		
	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
15 - 19												
ALL GROUPS	38.8	43.2	34.6	48.0	53.5	42.7	39.9	43.6	36.6	13.4	20.8	6.7
RS.100 & Under	29.1	34.2	25.2	32.5	44.4	22.2	30.6	34.3	27.8	12.3	26.1	---
RS.100 - 199	28.9	33.1	25.0	35.7	42.3	29.6	31.2	34.9	27.8	10.2	16.5	4.3
RS.200 - 399	36.1	40.5	32.2	41.3	46.1	36.5	39.1	42.9	35.8	13.2	20.7	6.5
RS.400 - 599	48.7	52.9	44.5	51.5	60.5	42.1	49.1	51.2	46.9	29.0	41.5	20.6
RS 600 - 799	57.5	59.8	55.1	59.1	63.3	54.5	57.6	58.6	56.6	12.0	28.3	---
RS.800 - 999	55.3	57.5	53.1	62.5	65.6	59.4	47.8	49.2	46.2	---	---	---
RS.1000 & OVER	61.5	65.1	57.9	58.8	58.9	58.6	68.1	75.3	58.5	---	---	---
20 - 24												
ALL GROUPS	6.8	7.3	6.4	10.1	13.3	7.1	6.8	6.4	7.2	1.7	3.1	0.5
RS.100 & Under	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.7	6.9	6.6	7.4	7.5	7.3	---	---	---
RS.100 - 199	2.2	3.3	1.4	4.9	9.4	2.0	2.2	3.0	1.5	0.9	1.6	0.4
RS.200 - 399	6.5	6.2	6.7	7.3	10.0	5.0	7.1	5.8	8.4	2.2	3.9	0.3
RS.400 - 599	6.3	6.5	6.2	7.8	9.4	6.0	6.1	5.7	6.6	3.1	4.0	2.0
RS.600 - 799	16.6	13.1	21.2	12.5	13.6	11.2	19.0	13.3	26.8	---	---	---
RS.800 - 999	22.2	31.2	14.7	23.0	29.7	16.6	20.8	31.7	13.0	50.0	100.0	---
RS.1000 & OVER	19.9	22.5	16.5	20.5	25.6	14.7	18.9	17.9	20.6	---	---	---

SOURCE: SOCIO-ECONOMIC SURVEY 1969/70, DEPARTMENT OF CENSUS & STATISTICS.

In the G.C.E. (Ordinary Level) Examinations an equal number of male and female candidates offer science, social science, commerce and accounts, but few girls offer subjects such as advanced mathematics, geometrical and mechanical drawing, and wood and metal handicrafts. On the other hand, girls opt for home science, short-hand, weaving, ceramics, art and music. In the N.C.G.E. Examination options were only possible in the pre-vocational subjects, and while sex-wise statistics are not available, it appears from the available data that girls have offered stereo-type courses such as home science, dress-making, commerce education, coconut fibre work, weaving and cultivation of food crops and fruits.[11]

Examination statistics also offer evidence of the influence of cultural factors and stereo-types on motivation and subject preferences of girls. Table 5.21 shows that while an almost equal number of male and female candidates appeared for the G.C.E. (Ordinary Level) Examination and were successful in obtaining the required six passes, girls fared only half as well as boys in Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry. Such differences reflect the effect of cultural conditioning which tends to label these subjects as areas of masculine excellence.

Table 5.22 presents data relating to the G.C.E. (Advanced Level) Examination which is the basis in Sri Lanka for selection to Universities. Female candidates perform slightly better at the whole examination, but while they outnumber male candidates in arts and biological sciences they are less than 25% of those selecting physical sciences. It is also significant that while there is hardly any disparity between the performance of male and female students in arts and in biological sciences (30.8% and 29.2% respectively), nearly 50% of male candidates obtained the required three/four passes in the physical sciences but only 19.9% of girls did so.

Such disparities are obviously the cumulative result of social attitudes and stereo-types originating in child rearing practices, in the selection of toys for boys and girls and in curriculum organization. Education attainment is thus influenced by cultural factors but the education system in its turn tends to re-inforce sex-role stereo-typing in social and economical roles.

TABLE 5.21

G.C.E. (ORDINARY LEVEL) - CANDIDATES BY SEX - 1972

	MALES (NO)	FEMALES (NO)	TOTAL (NO)	FEMALES (%)
No. of candidates	190,657	183,456	374,113	49.0
No. passed in 6 or more subjects	35,918	34,108	70,026	48.7
% of No. passed in 6 or more subjects	18.8	18.6	18.7	
No. obtained 2 Distinctions/3Credits in Pure Mathematics, Applied Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry	6,125	2,565	8,690	29.5

SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF EXAMINATIONS

TABLE 5.22

G.C E (ADVANCED LEVEL) - CANDIDATES BY COURSE AND SEX - 1972

	MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL	FEMALES (%)
BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES				
No sat	2131	2737	4868	56.2
No. obtained 3/4 passes	657	800	1457	54.9
% obtained 3/4 passes	30 8	29.2	29.9	
PHYSICAL SCIENCES				
No. sat	4795	1591	6387	24.9
No. obtained 3/4 passes	2395	318	2713	11.7
% obtained 3/4 passes	49.9	19.9	42.5	
ARTS				
No. sat	7891	8718	16,609	52.5
No. obtained 3/4 passes	3434	3875	7309	53.0
% obtained 3/4 passes	45.8	44.4	44.4	
OTHER				
No. sat	1979	1004	2983	3317
No. obtained 3/4 passes	133	124	257	48.2
% obtained 3/4 passes	6.7	12.4	8.6	
TOTAL				
No. sat	16,769	14,050	30,819	45.6
No. obtained 3/4 passes	5,629	5,117	10,746	47.6
% obtained 3/4 passes	33.6	36.4	34.9	

SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF EXAMINATIONS

This is achieved largely through school texts and other curriculum and reading materials, and language and literature books are particularly effective as purveyors of norms of behaviour. While passages which reflect outdated concepts and relationships are selected from traditional literature, new curriculum materials such as textbooks in the teaching of English as a second language contain equally negative images of the role of women.

A survey of the content of the series of nine English textbooks prepared by the central educational administration for use in all schools in the island revealed that there is no consistent representation of sex roles but that current social attitudes are inevitable reflected in both text and illustrations. A few interesting examples are cited here:

(i) All mothers in the books, except in two instances, are shown to be only house wives whose interests and activites are limited exclusively to their homes;

(ii) different sex roles are juxtaposed in the same page. The fathers or sons shown to be absorbed in 'intellectual' pursuits and the mothers or daughters to be wholly engaged in household chores. For instance,

(a) Alice (a girl) washes pots and Sena (a boy) studies history.[12]
(b) Kamala (a girl) sweeps and Mohan (a boy) reads an English book.[13]

In effect, work in the kitchen and chores such as washing clothes are done only by women and girls. Concepts such as the sharing of household work or partnership in family responsibilities seem to be somewhat alien to the attitudinal framework in which many textbook writers live and work.

(iii) At the same time the books written for secondary school grades portray the achievement-oriented educational values which are a concomitant of the intensely competitive education system in Sri Lanka and the professional ambitions it engenders in aspiring teenagers. In the books written for those preparing for public examinations (Grades 9 - 12) clever girls win scholarships to

senior secondary schools and Universities.[14] The profession which is depicted as the goal of aspiring secondary school girls is, of course, the traditionally feminine field of medicine.[15] These stereo-types tend to stultify the personal and social growth of women. The repercussions of the interactions between these cultural norms and the educational media are also seen in the narrow range of educational and vocational aspirations and in the attenuated educational attainments of many girls and women.

TRENDS IN PARTICIPATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Access to higher education is an important agent of vocational and social mobility in most countries. In Sri Lanka University education is the apex of the educational pyramid and, in the absence of a pluralistic structure of tertiary education, the chief goal of educational aspirations.

When the University of Ceylon was established in 1942 by amalgamating the Medical and University Colleges, there were 91 women students and 19 of them were enrolled in the Faculty of Medicine. These women students constituted 10.1% of the total student enrolment of 901 students, and in common with their male fellow students come mainly from English educated professional elite homes. The policy of free University education introduced in 1945 opened the doors of the University to more English educated women students and their numbers increased to 832 or 28.2% of the total enrolment in 1958 (Table 5.23)

The early sixties witnessed a threefold increase in the University student population as a result of the adoption of the two national languages (Sinhala and Tamil) as the media of instruction in the senior secondary school in 1958 The number of women students in the University of Ceylon (in Peradeniya and Colombo) also increased steadily so that they formed 42.7% of the enrolment in this University in 1965 (Table 5.24). Their percentage in the total University student population, however, decreased from 28.2% in 1958 to 24.4% in 1959 as a result of the establishment of two new Universities - the Vidyodaya University and the Vidyalankara University. These two Universities developed from traditional Buddhist religio-cultural centres located in two suburbs of the city of Colombo and were open only

TABLE 5.23

NUMERICAL AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, BY SEX 1942 - 1978

YEAR	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	% FEMALE
1942	813	91	904	10.1
1943	800	104	904	11.5
1944	874	122	996	12.2
1945	932	133	1,065	12.5
1946	1,124	178	1,302	13.7
1947	1,312	242	1,554	15.6
1948	1,335	277	1,612	17.2
1949	1,519	325	1,844	17.6
1950	1,655	381	2,036	18 7
1951	1,761	449	2,210	20.3
1952	1,752	480	2,232	21.5
1953	1,784	608	2,392	25.4
1954	1,814	620	2,434	25.5
1955	1,781	650	2,431	26.7
1956	1,872	662	2,534	26.1
1957	1,990	728	2,718	26.8
1958	2,118	832	2,950	28.2
1959	3,093	946	4,039	24.4
1960	3,587	1,136	4,723	24.1
1961	4,659	1,547	6,206	24.9
1962	4,998	1,729	6,727	25.7
1963	5,843	1,973	7,816	25.2
1964	7,188	2,740	9,928	27.6
1965	9,631	4,579	14,210	32.2
1966	9,093	5,329	14,422	36.9
1967	8,528	5,759	14,287	40.3
1968	7,029	5,363	12,392	43.3
1969	6,573	4,975	11,548	43.1
1970	6,570	5,243	11,813	44.4
1971	6,822	5,252	12,074	43.4
1972	6,822	5,252	12,074	43.4
1973	6,907	5,143	12,050	40.6
1974	7,039	5,126	12,165	42.1
1975	7,496	5,152	12,648	40.7
1976	7,959	5,291	13,250	39.9
1977	8,369	5,797	14,146	40.9
1978	9,650	5,849	15,499	37.7

SOURCE: UNIVERSITY COUNCIL REPORTS, REPORTS OF THE VIDYODAYA AND VIDYALANKARA UNIVERSITIES, REPORTS OF THE NCHE AND UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA.

TABLE 5.24

STUDENT ENROLMENT BY SEX IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CEYLON 1958 - 1965

YEAR	MALE (NO)	FEMALE (NO)	TOTAL (NO)	FEMALE (%)
1958	2118	832	2950	28.2
1959	2231	946	3177	29.8
1960	2548	1136	3684	30.8
1961	3108	1547	4655	33.2
1962	3388	1729	5177	33.8
1963	3733	1973	5706	34.6
1964	4442	2740	7182	38.2
1965	6164	4579	10723	42.7

SOURCE: ANNUAL REPORTS OF THE COUNCIL, UNIVERSITY OF CEYLON 1958 - 1965

TABLE 5.25

ADMISSIONS TO UNIVERSITIES

YEAR	ARTS ORIENTED COURSES			SCIENCE ORIENTED COURSES			TOTAL		
	TOTAL (NO)	FEMALE (NO)	FEMALE (%)	TOTAL (NO)	FEMALE (NO)	FEMALE (%)	TOTAL (NO)	FEMALE (NO)	FEMALE (%)
1949	219	76	34.7	158	24	15.2	377	100	26.5
1951	259	99	38.2	249	40	16.1	508	139	27.4
1955	293	114	38.9	365	52	14.2	658	166	25.2
1958	440	228	51.8	446	84	18.8	886	312	35.2
1960	837	182	21.7	699	149	21.3	1536	331	21.5
1966	2866	1564	54.6	790	147	18.6	3656	1711	46.8
1969	2337	1203	51.5	790	260	32.9	3129	1463	46.8
1973	2243	1128	50.3	1177	376	31.9	3420	1504	43.9
1975	2079	940	45.2	1403	447	31.9	3482	1387	39.8
1978	2947	1351	45.8	1884	585	31.1	4831	1936	40.1

SOURCE: REPORTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CEYLON

to men students. The policy of equal access to University education, accepted since the inception of University education, was ignored during the years 1959 to 1965 and the percentage of women admitted to the Universities declined to 21.5% in 1960 (Table 5.25).

Fortunately the principle of equal access was restored from 1966 by the National Council of Higher Education and women were admitted to all four Universities - the Peradeniya, Colombo (now separated from Peradeniya), Vidyodaya and Vidyalankara Universities. The percentage of women students now increased from 32.2% in 1965 to 44.4% in 1970, although the total University enrolment declined from 14,422 in 1966 to 11,813 in 1970 and the number of men students decreased from 9,093 to 6,570 during these years (Table 5.23). In the Vidyalankara University, for instance, 53% of the students were women during the years 1968 - 1971, a fact which led to an abortive attempt to convert this University into a Women's Campus of the single University structure created in 1972.

From 1972 to 1978 the University of Sri Lanka functioned as one administrative unit in six Campuses - the four former Universities at Peradeniya, Colombo, Gangodawila (Vidyodaya) and Kelaniya (Vidyalankara), the former College of Technology near Colombo as the Katubedde Campus and the newly created Jaffna Campus in the North of the island. In 1979 this unitary University structure was abolished and the six Campuses became independent Universities and two new Campuses were established in 1978 in the South (the Ruhuna University College at Matara) and the Dumbara Campus near Kandy.

University enrolment was practically 'frozen' in the seventies till 1976 but the percentage of women declined to 39.9% in 1976 and is currently 37.7%. This situation could be the result of the interplay of several factors such as the addition of the new and largely male-dominated engineering Campus at Katubedde in 1972 and the increase in the number of students admitted to science faculties. As the admission statistics in Table 5.25 indicate, the percentage of women admitted to the arts faculties has declined from over 50% in the period 1966 to 1973 to 45% in subsequent years, while their percentage in the Science Faculties has not increased.

Faculty-wise admission and enrolment statistics in Tables 5.26 and 5.27 also point to some significant trends. While women had been enrolled in the arts, science and medical courses in the old University and Medical Colleges, they were able to enter other fields only some years after the introduction of each course - Veterinary Science in 1953, Agriculture 1954, Law 1956, Engineering 1959 and Architecture 1958.

The proportion of women students enrolled in science oriented courses has increased in the seventies largely because nearly half the number of students admitted to the Medical, Dental and Veterinary Science faculties during these years have been women. On the other hand only a quarter of the students in the Agricultural and Architecture faculties are women, while the Engineering faculty remains a male preserve although women have increased their representation from 1% in the early sixties to nearly 10% in 1978. In Arts courses too, it has been noted that less women enrol in Management courses.

The pattern of enrolment, therefore, reflects cultural attitudes which favour the teaching and medical professions as feminine jobs and reject technology as a male field. On the other hand it is also apparent that Sri Lankan women are taking to hitherto 'masculine' professional areas with considerable success.

The problem of access to University education is also affected by the lack of provision for senior secondary school leavers of both sexes who have obtained the minimum qualification (based on performance at the G.C.E. (Advanced Level) for admission to Universities but are unable to find places. While in the early days of the University of Ceylon over 40% of the applicants found places, only 8% of applicants and 16.1% of eligible candidates could be admitted to the Universities in 1978. The result is an imbalance between demand and supply and considerable frustration among applicants.

This impasse has led further to a situation in which 1.1% of the male population between 20 and 24 years and 0.8% of the same female age group were enrolled in Universities in 1971, and 1.3% of the relevant male age group and 0.4% of the female age group were in Universities in 1963. Since University enrolment did not increase significantly in the seventies the proportion enrolled currently could be even smaller.

TABLE 5.26 ADMISSIONS TO UNIVERSITIES BY FACULTIES AND SEX

	ARTS-ORIENTED			SCIENCE			MEDICINE			DENTAL SURGERY		
	TOTAL	FEMALE	% FEMALE	TOTAL	FEMALE	% FEMALE	TOTAL	FEMALE	% FEMALE	TOTAL	FEMALE	% FEMALE
1949	219	76	34.7	65	6	9.2	93	18	19.4	-	-	-
1951	259	99	38.2	94	16	17.0	119	24	20.2	-	-	-
1955	284	114	40.1	171	30	17.5	121	21	17.3	-	-	-
1960	837	182	21.7	286	78	27.2	254	66	25.9	11	1	9.1
1966	2841	1554	54.6	345	62	17.9	230	64	27.8	25	10	40.o
1969	2285	1181	51.6	333	129	38.7	229	92	40.2	21	8	38.1
1973	2243	1128	50.3	464	160	34.5	255	129	50.6	49	21	42.9
1975	2079	940	45.2	648	228	35.2	247	110	44.5	50	29	58.0
1978	2893	1322	45.7	798	277	34.7	382	172	45.0	50	23	46.0

	AGRICULTURE			VET. SCIENCE			ENGINEERING ARCHITECTURE			TOTAL		
	TOTAL	FEMALE	% FEMALE	TOTAL	FEMALE	% FEMALE	TOTAL	FEMALE	% FEMALE	TOTAL	FEMALE	% FEMALE
1949	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1951	9	-	-	5	-	-	22	-	-	508	139	29.4
1955	5	-	-	8	-	-	60	-	-	658	166	25.2
1960	26	2	7.6	11	2	18.2	111	-	-	1536	331	21.5
1966	18	3	16.6	20	4	20.0	152	4	2.6	3656	1711	46.8
1969	38	13	34.2	18	5	27.7	153	13	8.5	3129	1463	47.1
1973	88	34	38.6	23	7	30.4	298	25	8.4	3420	1504	43.9
1975	102	20	19.6	31	18	58.1	306	38	12.4	3482	1387	39.2
1978	135	36	26.7	30	15	50.0	408	39	9.5	4831	1936	40.1

SOURCE: REPORTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CEYLON, UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA.

TABLE 5.27 - ENROLMENT IN UNIVERSITIES BY FACULTIES AND SEX

	ARTS-ORIENTED			SCIENCE			MEDICINE			DENTAL SURGERY		
	TOTAL	FEMALE	% FEMALE	TOTAL	FEMALE	% FEMALE	TOTAL	FEMALE	% FEMALE	TOTAL	FEMALE	% FEMALE
1966	7108	3809	53.6	802	197	24.6	1646	482	29.3	94	-	-
1969	8116	4052	49.9	1149	359	31.2	1421	460	32.4	84	34	40.5
1973	7773	3843	49.4	1388	503	36.2	1136	501	44.1	161	82	50.9
1975	7638	3500	45.8	1797	660	36.7	1239	584	47.1	193	108	55.9
1978	9616	4119	42.8	2329	757	32.5	1424	596	41.9	196	81	41.3

	AGRICULTURE			VET. SCIENCE			ENGINEERING			ARCHITECTURE			
	TOTAL	FEMALE	% FEMALE	TOTAL	FEMALE	% FEMALE	TOTAL	FEMALE	% FEMALE	TOTAL	FEMALE	% FEMALE	TOTAL
1966	153	21	13.7	70	-	-	571	11	1.9	-	-	-	10,280
1969	137	26	18.9	80	16	20.0	551	27	4.9	10	1	10.0	11,548
1973	272	85	31.2	85	35	41.2	1183	76	6.4	52	18	34.6	12,050
1975	390	100	25.6	108	53	49.1	1210	126	10.4	73	21	28.8	12,648
1978	443	108	24.4	108	51	47.2	1294	119	9.2	89	18	20.2	15,449

SOURCE: REPORTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CEYLON, UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA.

TABLE 5.28

GRADUATES BY SEX AND COURSE 1966 - 1971

	1966			1971		
	TOTAL (NO)	FEMALE (NO)	FEMALE (%)	TOTAL (NO)	FEMALE (NO)	FEMALE (%)
General Arts	2318	659	28.5	2347	1294	55.1
Special Arts	145	39	26.9	634	261	41.2
Law	25	4	15.4	50	14	28.0
Commerce	16	---	0.0	42	19	45.2
Education	---	---	---	10	6	60.0
Public & Business Administration	--	---	---	84	9	10.7
General Science	169	55	32.5	192	62	32.3
Special Science	39	10	25.6	86	26	30.2
Medicine	203	59	29.1	261	78	29.9
Dental Surgery	17	8	47.0	27	14	51.9
Agriculture	25	3	12.0	27	3	11.1
Vet. Science	15	1	6.7	14	2	14.3
Engineering	86	1	1.2	165	4	2.4
Architecture	---	---	---	2	---	0.0
TOTAL	3058	823	26.9	3941	1792	45.5

SOURCE: UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA, SENATE HOUSE

IMBALANCES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

As in primary and secondary education, and perhaps to a greater extent in view of the limited opportunities available in higher education, imbalances exist in student enrolment among racial, religious and socio-economic groups and districts.

(i) Sex-wise enrolment data of the different racial and religious groups (Tables 5.29 and 5.30) show that Muslim women have been the most disadvantaged group with regard to access to University education. Data relating to the Indian Tamil population have not been prepared separately but representation of both male and female Indian students has been miniscule through the years.

(ii) Provincial data of the fifties and sixties show that sex disparities were evident in all provinces (Table 5.31). The distribution pattern of University entrants by districts in 1976 (Table 5.32) reveals that while access is relatively limited in Matale and Nuwara Eliya (the plantation area) and in the Uva, North-Central and Eastern regions, sex disparities exist chiefly in Batticaloa and Amparai in the East and in Moneragala in the Uva region. Sex disparities among entrants to science courses are more widespread and are found not only in the less developed regions but also in the populous and relatively educationally developed districts of Kurunegala and Kegalle.

(iii) The findings of two socio-economic surveys[16] of University entrants in 1950 and 1976 (Tables 5.33 and 5.34) provide interesting data with regard to the extension of higher education opportunities amoung different socio-economic groups over these years.

In 1950 the University had a strong middle class ethos, 68.5% of male students and an even larger proportion of women - 76.7% - were from the professional and managerial classes, and only 13.3% men and 10.1% women entrants were from agricultural (peasant) families. By 1976 the situation

had changed and socio-economic disparities had been somewhat reduced since 28.3% men and 31.7% women were from the professional and managerial classes and 29.3% men and 26.1% women were from peasant families.

Further analysis of the socio-economic background of students enrolled in arts-based and science-based courses indicates that access to science education is still the preserve of middle class students. This was so particularly in the case of women students.

In Sri Lanka there has been an increase of students from rural homes in arts-based faculties. In 1976, 42.4% male entrants and 34.9% women were from such families, and only 11.2% men and 17.1% women were from professional families. In contrast 52.9% of the men students and 65.5% of the women students admitted to science-based courses were from professional families and only 10.2% men and 5.8% women were from an agrarian background.

Income differences were equally significant. In Sri Lanka approximately 2% of families earned a monthly income of over Rs.1,000.00 in 1970. It is interesting to note that 17.6% men and 29.9% women science students, and 0.7% men and 3.1% women arts students came from families with an income of over Rs.1,000.00. At the same time 57.5% men and 47.9% women arts students and 23.7% men and 7.2% women science students were from families with a monthly income of less than Rs.200.00 (Table 5.35).

It is therefore apparent that students from rural, peasant and low income families have less opportunity to enrol in more prestigious and economically rewarding University courses through lack of access to relevant school courses. Such a situation has important implications since University courses provide entry to a range of employment with relatively wide income differentials.

It also underscores one dimension of the problem of educational opportunity for women at tertiary level since in Sri Lanka barriers to access seem to be created less by cultural attitude than by disadvantaged economic circumstances.

TABLE 5.29

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS BY RACE AND SEX (% FEMALE)

RACE	1952			1963			1976(ENTRANTS ARTS)			1976(ENTRANTS SCIENCE)		
	TOTAL (NO.)	FEMALE (NO.)	FEMALE (%)	TOTAL (NO.)	FEMALE (NO.)	FEMALE (%)	TOTAL (NO.)	FEMALE (NO.)	FEMALE (%)	TOTAL (NO.)	FEMALE (NO.)	FEMALE (%)
SINHALA	1338	321	23.9	4290	1583	36.9	2092	937	44.8	972	326	33.5
TAMIL	724	129	17.8	1266	364	28.8	213	94	44.1	388	127	32.7
MOORS & MALAYS	39	3	7.7	89	6	6.7	92	12	13.0	30	2	6.6
BURGHER	67	17	25.4	26	11	42.3	2	2	10.0	5	1	20.0
OTHERS	34	10	29.4	35	9	25.7	---	---	---	---	---	---
TOTAL	2202	480	21.8	5706	1973	34.6	2399	1045	43.5	1395	456	32.7

SOURCE: UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA, SENATE HOUSE

TABLE 5.30

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS BY RELIGION AND SEX

	1952			1963		
	TOTAL (NO)	FEMALE (NO)	FEMALE (%)	TOTAL (NO)	FEMALE (NO)	FEMALE (%)
Buddhists	977	228	23.3	5788	1359	36.9
Hindus	498	79	15.9	928	241	25.9
Christians	654	158	24.1	992	362	36.5
Muslims	47	5	10.6	89	6	6.7
Others	26	10	38.5	19	5	26.3
Total	2202	480	21.8	5706	1973	34.3

SOURCE: UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA, SENATE HOUSE

TABLE 5.31

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS BY PROVINCE AND SEX

	1952			1963		
	TOTAL (NO)	FEMALE (NO)	FEMALE (%)	TOTAL (NO)	FEMALE (NO)	FEMALE (%)
Western Province	1227	299	24.4	2799	988	35.3
Southern Province	207	44	21.3	935	341	36.5
Central Province	218	43	20.9	620	267	43.1
North Central Province	50	8	16.0	50	16	32.0
North Western Province	33	9	27.3	231	81	35.1
Sabaragamuwa	30	6	20.0	234	63	26.9
Uva	10	3	30.0	51	12	23.5
Northern Province	399	61	15.3	689	180	26.1
Eastern Province	23	4	17.4	81	20	24.7

SOURCE: UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA, SENATE HOUSE

TABLE 5.32

DISTRIBUTION OF UNIVERSITY ENTRANTS BY DISTRICT OF EDUCATION , 1976

DISTRICT	SCIENCE						ARTS						SCIENCE AND ARTS					
	MALES		FEMALES		TOTAL		MALES		FEMALES		TOTAL		MALES		FEMALES		TOTAL	
	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%
COLOMBO	399	42.5	204	44.5	603	43.2	250	18.5	231	22.1	481	20.2	649	28.7	435	29.0	1084	28.6
KALUTARA	44	4.7	16	3.6	60	4.3	64	4.7	61	5.8	125	5.2	108	4.7	77	5.1	185	4.9
KANDY	58	6.2	29	6.4	87	6.3	138	10.2	105	10.0	243	10.1	196	8.5	134	8.9	330	8.7
MATALE	10	1.1	4	0.9	14	1.0	8	0.6	11	1.1	19	0.8	18	0.8	15	1.0	33	0.9
NUWARA ELIYA	2	0.2	-	-	2	0.1	60	4.4	36	3.4	96	4.0	62	2.6	36	2.4	98	2.6
GALLE	81	8.6	36	7.8	117	8.4	92	6.8	83	7.9	175	7.3	173	7.4	119	7.8	292	7.7
MATARA	14	1.5	14	3.1	28	2.0	98	7.2	81	7.7	179	7.5	112	4.8	95	6.3	207	5.5
HAMBANTOTA	8	0.9	6	1.3	14	1.0	65	4.8	43	4.1	108	4.5	73	3.2	49	3.3	122	3.2
JAFFNA	192	20.5	93	20.4	285	20.5	62	4.6	55	5.3	117	4.9	254	11.0	148	9.9	402	10.6
MANNAR	-	-	1	0.2	1	0.1	11	0.8	8	0.8	19	0.8	11	0.5	9	0.6	20	0.5
VAVUNIYA	3	0.3	1	0.2	4	0.3	8	0.6	5	0.5	13	0.5	11	0.5	6	0.4	17	0.4
BATTICALOA	21	2.2	3	0.7	24	1.7	16	1.2	4	0.4	20	0.8	37	1.6	7	0.5	44	1.2
AMPARAI	1	0.1	-	-	1	0.1	41	3.0	4	0.4	45	1.9	42	1.8	4	0.3	46	1.2
TRINCOMALEE	14	1.5	4	0.9	18	1.3	20	1.5	17	1.6	37	1.5	34	1.5	21	1.4	55	1.4
KURUNEGALA	37	3.9	11	2.4	48	3.4	107	7.9	98	9.4	205	8.5	144	6.3	109	7.3	253	6.7
ANURADHAPURA	3	0.3	1	0.2	4	0.3	51	3.8	24	2.3	75	3.1	54	2.4	25	1.7	79	2.1
POLONNARUWA	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	1.1	9	0.9	24	1.0	15	0.6	9	0.6	24	0.6
BADULLA	23	2.4	7	1.6	30	2.2	72	5.3	44	4.2	116	4.8	95	4.1	51	3.4	146	3.8
MONARAGALA	-	-	-	-	-	-	30	2.2	6	0.6	36	1.5	30	1.3	6	0.4	36	0.9
RATNAPURA	6	0.0	10	2.2	16	1.0	32	2.4	28	2.7	60	2.5	38	1.7	38	2.5	76	2.0
KEGALLE	12	1.3	7	1.6	19	1.4	65	4.8	74	7.1	139	5.8	77	3.4	81	5.4	158	4.2
PUTTALAM	11	1.2	9	2.0	20	1.4	49	3.6	18	1.7	67	2.8	60	2.6	27	1.8	87	2.3
SRI LANKA	939	100.0	456	100.0	1395	100.0	1354	100.0	1045	100.0	2399	100.0	2293	100.0	1501	100.0	3794	100.0

NOTE: District of Education is the District where the entrant received his education at A.L.

SOURCE: UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS 1976 - A REPORT ON THE BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ENTRANT POPULATION -. PLANNING & PROGRAMMING DIVISION, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION 1977.

TABLE 5.33

UNIVERSITY ENTRANTS BY PARENTS' OCCUPATIONS

AND BY SEX 1950

(% DISTRIBUTION)

OCCUPATION	MALE	FEMALE
Professional	22.3	42.0
Proprietors	17.5	8.7
Managers	16.1	18.8
Teachers	12.6	7.2
Clerical	13.3	11.6
	6.3	1.4
Farmers	7.0	8.7
Skilled workers	4.2	1.4

SOURCE: UNIVERSITY OF CEYLON REVIEW, VOL.IX, NO.2 (1951)

TABLE 5.34

UNIVERSITY ENTRANTS BY PARENTS OCCUPATION AND BY SEX

1976 (% DISTRICUTION)

OCCUPATION	SCIENCE ENTRANTS		ARTS ENTRANTS		SCIENCE & ARTS ENTRANTS	
	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
Professional	9.9	11.6	1.5	2.8	4.9	5.5
Executives, Manager, Administrators	11.3	7.6	1.2	2.6	5.3	4.1
Teaching	31.7	46.3	8.5	11.7	18.1	22.1
Clerical	15.5	15.1	10.0	10.1	12.2	11.7
Sales	12.9	9.7	15.5	21.4	14.4	17.9
Agriculture, Forestry	10.2	5.8	42.4	34.9	29.3	26.1
Transport & Communication	1.0	1.6	2.4	2.6	1.8	2.3
Production, Craftsmen	4.1	0.5	11.0	9.5	8.2	6.7
Services, Sports Recreation	1.1	0.3	2.2	1.7	1.7	1.3
Total	939	456	1354	1045	2293	1501

SOURCE: UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA, SENATE HOUSE

TABLE 5.35

DISTRIBUTION OF UNIVERSITY ENTRANTS BY LEVEL OF MONTHLY INCOME OF PARENT/GUARDIAN,1976

	LESS THAN RS.100		RS.100-199		RS.200-399		RS.400-599		RS.600-799		RS.800-999		RS.100 & OVER		TOTAL	
	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%
SCIENCE																
MALES	83	8.8	140	14.9	200	21.3	126	13.4	105	11.2	120	12.8	165	17.6	939	100
FEMALES	9	1.9	24	5.3	84	18.4	68	14.8	64	14.1	71	15.6	136	29.9	456	100
TOTAL	92	6.6	164	11.8	284	20.4	194	13.9	169	12.1	191	13.7	301	21.5	1395	100
ARTS																
MALES	363	26.8	416	30.7	398	29.4	115	8.5	35	2.6	18	1.3	9	0.7	1354	100
FEMALES	247	23.6	254	24.3	275	26.3	127	12.2	71	6.8	39	3.7	32	3.1	1045	100
TOTAL	610	25.4	670	27.9	673	28.1	242	10.1	106	4.4	57	2.4	41	1.7	2399	100
SCIENCE & ARTS																
MALES	446	19.5	556	24.2	598	26.1	241	10.5	140	6.1	138	6.0	174	7.6	2293	100
FEMALES	256	17.1	278	18.5	359	23.9	195	13.0	135	9.0	110	7.3	168	11.2	1501	100
TOTAL	702	18.5	834	22.0	957	25.2	436	11.5	275	7.2	248	6.6	342	9.0	3794	100

SOURCE: UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS 1976 - A REPORT ON THE BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ENTRANT POPULATION - PLANNING & PROGRAMMING DIVISION, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION.

ACCESS TO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

The sex disparities and stereo-types noted in relation to science and technical courses in the general education system are found in even greater measure in the vocational education structure. In Sri Lanka vocational education has been and still is the weakest sector in the education system, and the narrow range of opportunities available to women make them a disadvantaged group in all fields in the economy except in some areas in the service sector.

Vocational education courses are organised by the Ministries of Education and Higher Education and by other Ministries with direct links with training for employment, and to a lesser extent by private agencies and by voluntary organizations. Both formal and non-formal training opportunities are provided in institutions and centres on a pre-service or in-service basis.

There are no legal barriers which limit the access of women to these courses but administratively admission quotas are enforced in institutions such as the School of Agriculture, and the Hardy Technical Institute in the Dry Zone, the Practical Farm Schools and some vocational Training Centres are single sex in organization. The main barriers to the effective participation of women in vocational education are societal attitudes and cultural conditioning which restrict opportunities and inhibit aspirations.

TERTIARY LEVEL INSTITUTIONS

In Sri Lanka tertiary education has been almost synonymous with University education and there has been little diversification through the provision of a wide range of vocationally-oriented courses. The Law College, a nineteenth century institution, provides professional courses in law and just over one-third of its students are women (Table 5.36). The Ayurveda College of Indigenous Medicine was affiliated to the University in 1977 Sex-wise enrolment data is not available but 55% of students admitted in 1978 were women

The External Agency of the University of Sri Lanka started functioning in 1972, and in 1978, 10,886 men and 7,136 women were registered for External Degrees in Arts, Law and Science, and 866 men and 1,354 women for professional teaching courses.[17] The drop-out rate is high and the number of students who successfully complete these courses are much smaller.

The Sri Lanka Institute of Distance Education of the Ministry of Higher Education provides Post-senior Secondary Courses in Science, Technology and Management through correspondence courses interspersed with programmes at regional centres. It had nearly 500 registered students in 1978 and only 23.1% of them are women (Table 5.37). The number of women enrolled in courses in electrical technology and electronics are minimal, and since these particular courses are linked with employment, this low participation is a reflection of limited employment opportunities in this field.

The increasing number of students who are excluded from the Universities through lack of accommodation has led to the acceptance of the need for an Open University to provide continuing education facilities in a wide range of courses. At the moment the Technological University of Moratuwa and some of the Polytechnics under the Ministry of Higher Education also offer some tertiary level courses, but since students in these institutions are drawn from secondary school as well as senior secondary school leavers they have been included as secondary vocational education students.

TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Eight Polytechnics and ten Junior Technical Institutes of the Ministry of Higher Education offer full-time and part-time courses leading to Diplomas and Certificates in technician , commercial and craft courses. The Colombo Technical College had between 2% and 7% women students in the fifties and sixties but sex-wise enrolment data is only available for all these institutions since 1973. Tables 5.38and 5.39 present enrolment data in technical institutions in 1973 and 1978 respectively.

In 1973 women students in these institutions constituted 22.9% of full-time students and 8 7% of part-time students (who are generally employed). The number of women students has increased to 41.6% of full-time students and 14.9% of part-time students in 1978. A striking feature of student enrolment in 1973 was the fact that over 80% of women students were enrolled in commercial courses generally of an elementary level, and that the enrolment in technical and particularly in craft courses was minimal. This trend persists and over 70% of women students are enrolled in commercial courses in 1978 but those following technician and craft courses have increased in number. Enrolment in trade courses has increased largely because traditionally feminine courses in toy-making, batik cloth printing and flower and doel-making have now been included in Technical Institutes. The evidence indicates that women students continue to shun courses such as mechanics and electrical wiring as much as they did in 1973.

Table 5.40 which analyses applicants to courses by fields of study in 1973 offers further evidence of sex-differentiation in course preferences and vocational interests. While male applicants are evenly distributed over the three areas - technician, commerce and trades - the majority of women applicants have opted for commercial (84.7%) and have inevitably rejected trades, probably as a result of culturally determined negative attitudes to employment in these areas. This phenomenon of minimal participation of women in technician and trade courses is also reflected in the student composition of the technician courses in the University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka (Table 5.41) This University does not offer commerce courses and the percentage of women students in middle level technician courses have even declined from 7.7% in 1973 to 4 7% in 1978.

The Ministry of Education's most recent venture has been the organization of non-formal technical courses for school leavers. These are provided in evening or week-end classes in school buildings and have expanded rapidly since their introduction in 1976. There appears to be a preponderance of women students (78.7%) enrolled in these classes but as the information regarding course enrolment in Table 5.42 indicates the term 'technical' seems to be misleading and enrolment follows the

TABLE 5.36

ENROLMENT IN LAW COLLEGE

	TOTAL (NO)	FEMALES (NO)	FEMALES (%)
1973	406	139	34.0
1978	724	287	39.6

SOURCE: LAW COLLEGE OFFICE

TABLE 5.37

ENROLMENT IN SRI LANKA INSTITUTE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION, 1978

	TOTAL (NO)	FEMALES (NO)	FEMALES (%)
Management I	926	165	17.8
Management II	530	232	43.8
Mathematics I	743	242	32.6
Mathematics II	474	145	30.6
Science	261	149	57.1
Electrical Technology	995	123	12.4
Electronics and Telecommunication	961	73	7.6
TOTAL	4892	1129	23.1

SOURCE: SLIDE, MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION, 1978

TABLE .38

ENROLMENT IN TECHNICAL INSTITUTES - 1973

	TOTAL (NO)	MALES (NO)	FEMALES (NO)	FEMALE (%)	% DISTRIBUTION OF FEMALE STUDENTS
FULL-TIME COURSES					
Technician	250	228	22	8.8	2.6
Commerce	1,714	1,963	751	43.8	89.9
Trades/Crafts	1,277	1,276	1	0.1	0.1
Dip. Art/Eng.	207	145	62	29.9	7.4
TOTAL FULL-TIME	3,448	2,612	836	22.9	100
PART-TIME COURSES					
Technician	1,119	1,066	53	4.7	16.4
Commerce	1,485	1,219	266	17.9	82.3
Trades/Crafts	1,123	1,119	4	0.4	1.3
Dip. Art/Eng.	----	----	---	----	----
TOTAL PART-TIME	3,727	3,404	323	8.7	100
TOTAL FULL-TIME and PART-TIME	7,175	6,016	1,159	16.2	

SOURCE: TECHNICAL EDUCATION BRANCH, MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

TABLE 5.39

ENROLMENT IN TECHNICAL INSTITUTES - 1978

	TOTAL (NO)	MALES (NO)	FEMALES (NO)	FEMALE (%)	% DISTRIBUTION OF FEMALE STUDENTS
FULL-TIME COURSES					
Technician	1,060	640	420	39.6	21.2
Commerce	2,779	1,314	1,465	52.7	73.9
Trades/Crafts	926	830	96	10.4	4.8
TOTAL FULL-TIME	4,765	2,784	1,981	41.6	100
PART-TIME COURSES					
Technician	1,430	1,265	165	11.5	22.2
Commerce	2,462	1,919	543	22.1	73.2
Trades/Crafts	1,084	1,050	34	3.1	4.6
TOTAL PART-TIME	4,976	4,234	742	14.9	100
TOTAL FULL-TIME and PART-TIME	9,741	7,018	2,723	27.9	

SOURCE: TECHNICAL EDUCATION BRANCH, MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

TABLE 5.40

APPLICANTS TO TECHNICAL INSTITUTES, 1973

	TOTAL (NO)	% DISTRI-BUTION	MALES (NO)	%DISTRI-BUTION	FEMALES (NO)	% DISTRI-BUTION	% FEMALES OF TOTAL
Commerce Diplomas	2,495	6.4	1,765	5.8	730	8.6	29.3
Commerce Certificates	12,970	33.4	6,560	21.2	410	76.1	49.4
Technician Courses	12,090	31.1	10,878	35.7	1,212	14.4	10.0
Craft Courses	11,303	29.1	11,227	36.9	76	0.7	0.7
Total number of applicants	38,858	100.0	30,430	100.0	8,428	100.0	21.6
Admissions	4,561	11.7%	3,902	12.8%	659	7.8%	

SOURCE: TECHNICAL EDUCATION BRANCH, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

TABLE 5.41

ENROLMENT IN TECHNICIAN COURSES, UNIVERSITY OF MORATUWA, KATUBEDDE

	TOTAL (NO)	FEMALES (NO)	FEMALES (%)
1969			
Full time	681	44	7.1
Part time	945	46	4.9
Total	1626	90	5.5
1973			
Full time	630	53	8.4
Part time	648	46	7.1
Total	1278	99	7.7
1978			
Full time	538	39	7.2
Part time	954	31	3.2
Total	1492	70	4.7

SOURCE: TECHNICAL EDUCATION BRANCH, MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

TABLE 5.42

ENROLMENT IN NON-FORMAL COURSES FOR SCHOOL LEAVERS (MINISTRY OF EDUCATION)

COURSES	MALES (NO)	FEMALES (NO)	TOTAL (NO)	FEMALES (%)
Sewing/Knitting	94	1909	2003	95.3
Cookery/Home Science	---	500	500	100.0
Batik Printing	85	818	903	90.6
Beauty Culture	---	60	60	100.0
Handicrafts	143	1807	1950	92.7
Woodwork/Metalwork	74	---	74	0.0
Sculpture	49	30	79	37.9
Carpentry	55	---	55	0.0
Masonry	36	---	36	0.0
Stenography	75	426	501	85.0
Business Administration	12	53	65	81.5
Farming	37	65	102	63.7
Animal Husbandry	72	15	87	17.2
Watch Repairs	15	---	15	0.0
Radio Engineering	554	10	564	1.8
Motor Mechanism	152	---	152	0.0
Electrical Wiring/Repairing	89	---	89	0.0
TOTAL	1,542	5,693	7,235	78.7

SOURCE: NON-FORMAL EDUCATION BRANCH, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, COLOMBO.

conventional pattern - boys are enrolled in technical courses and girls in traditionally feminine courses such as sewing, batik printing and cottage crafts. This programme, however, offers considerable potential for expanding vocational courses for women in new directions.

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

In the traditional agrarian society of Sri Lanka women have always participated in agricultural activities. It is not surprising, therefore, that there has been a steady demand from women for agricultural education opportunities as seen by the large number of applications received by the agricultural schools organised by the Ministry of Agriculture. Unfortunately opportunities for agricultural education have not been commensurate with this demand.

The Sri Lanka School of Agriculture, Kundasale, is the only secondary agricultural school in a country in which over half the population is engaged in agriculture for a living. This school is a co-educational institution offering two year post-G.C.E. (Ordinary Level) courses. Despite the fact that nearly half the applicants tend to be women - 41% in 1977 - an admission quota of 20% places is enforced for women as a result of the inadequate provision of residential facilities. It is also regrettable that the percentage of women students has declined in recent years to 16% in 1978 (Table 5.43). Sex-based differentiation operates even in this institution in the selection of optional courses, and women are concentrated in the rural home management course and men in the farm management course.

Practical Farm Schools provide a one year course in elementary agricultural instruction to early school leavers and even to secondary school leavers. They are mainly single sex institutions and a considerable proportion of applicants have been women. The number of these schools was reduced from nineteen to eight in the late sixties and have been increased again to thirteen, and one-third of the students are women (Table 5.43).

Outside these formal institutions the Ministry of Agriculture also offers non-formal extension courses which are serviced by three Regional Centres - the In-Service Training Institute at Gannoruwa, and two Regional Centres at Maha Illupoallama and Bindunuwewa. In-Service courses are provided in scientific agriculture and farm management for members of the Young Farmers' Clubs which were begun in the fifties. There were 2376 Clubs in 1978 and 47% of the 80,000 youth enrolled in them were women. The Department of Agriculture also conducts agricultural extension courses, in which 40% of the instructors were women in 1976, and home economics courses for women. These extension courses, however, rarely reach the low income rural women and agricultural workers who are in most need of such instruction.

In response to this need a special Farm Women's Agricultural Extension Programme was planned with F.A.O, assistance in 1970. Inaugurated in 1974 under the supervision of a woman agricultural officer it became a part of the extension programme of the Department of Agriculture in 1975. Its objective is to train women extension workers and village leaders, to increase income-generating activities and to improve rural living standards. This programme includes instruction in the cultivation of subsidiary crops and anthuriums, in animal husbandry and in the development of crafts from local resources. Instructors work in villages in selected colonization schemes and rural development areas and are expected to liaise with agricultural productivity centres. Unfortunately this very useful and practical non-formal course in agriculture and community education is handicapped by the lack of trained personnel and high quality materials and by poor marketing facilities, and lack of adequate income-generation has led to a high drop-out rate.

Women are still largely 'unpaid family workers' in agriculture with very limited opportunities for agricultural training. In the late sixties women were excluded from the Youth Settlement Schemes of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Agricultural Development Corps. Their participation rate has, however, been relatively high in the training-cum-employment schemes initiated after the 1971 youth crisis.[18]

Many of the Co-Operative Farms established on an electoral basis with a training component to improve agricultural and industrial skills had a considerable proportion of women participants but they failed as economic ventures, collective enterprises or training projects. Fifty per cent of the agricultural workers were women in the Co-operative

TABLE 5.43

ENROLMENT IN AGRICULTURAL SCHOOLS

YEAR	SRI LANKA SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE, KUNDASALE*			PRACTICAL FARM SCHOOLS		
	TOTAL (NO)	FEMALES (NO)	FEMALES (%)	TOTAL (NO)	FEMALES (NO)	FEMALES (%)
1947	91	---	0.0	285	30	10.5
1953	202	92	45.5	438	124	28.3
1964	201	127	60.8	850	235	27.6
1973	302	66	21.9	450	141	30.9
1978	181	29	16.0	450	150	33.0

* From 1948 to 1966 there were two agricultural schools - A school for men at Peradeniya and another for women at Kundasale. They were amalgamated to form the Sri Lanka School of Agriculture at Kundasale.

SOURCE: SRI LANKA SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE, KUNDASALE, DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, PERADENIYA.

settlements created for collective farming as a result of the Land Reform Laws of 1972 and 1975 but training facilities were ineffective and these enterprises too failed as economic enterprises.

The National Youth Council too organised collective farms for youth between 18 and 25 years and conducted leadership courses and vocational training courses in agriculture and industries at their three training centres (Table 5.54). In 1974 a separate farm for women was also established by the Council in a complex of four youth farms at Udawalawe and 350 young women were selected. Training facilities were unsatisfactory, the drop-out rate was high, and these youth farms disintegrated rapidly

Despite these failures, the fact that women responded readily to participate in these enterprises is a pointer to possible developments in the field of agriculture education. The extensive Accelerated Mahaweli Development Scheme has as yet offered few agricultural training-cum-employment opportunities for women but its potential for agricultural education is considerable.

EDUCATION FOR EMPLOYMENT IN THE SERVICE SECTOR

Vocational education facilities in this sector have a long history since women have traditionally taken to employment in its professions and services.

Over 50% of teachers in Sri Lanka are women and the most extensively developed educational institutions in the service sector are the Teachers' Colleges, the earliest of which were established in the late nineteenth century. Since 1961 all formal teacher education courses are provided by the Ministry of Education. Currently 25 institutions are used to meet the need for teachers in primary schools and in selected subject areas in secondary schools.

These institutions provide a 3 year in-service education leading to a professional certificate and as more women than men in the teaching profession are unqualified, the number of women students has exceeded 60% of the total enrolment in the seventies (Table 5.44). Enrolment data by courses in 1978 (Table 5.45) indicate that at present women teachers constitute over half the enrolment in all courses - including science, mathematics, agriculture and commerce - with the exception of physical education and in the education of handicapped children.

Vocational education facilities in the traditional feminine area of middle level health services are also relatively developed in Sri Lanka. The Ministry of Health conducts nursing schools in Colombo and in regional centres, and student allowances and specific employment prospects have ensured the popularity of these courses. Almost 90% of students in these institutions have been women, only women have so far been admitted to the Dental Nursing School and male nurses are usually recruited to work in wards allocated to male members of religious orders or in male psychiatric wards. The proportion of women students is much less in para medical courses such as those in physiotherapy, radiography and in laboratory work (Table 5.46) except in Apothecaries Courses.

A few other state institutions also offer vocational education facilities in this sector. In 1976 one of the Polytechnics of the Ministry of Higher Education was converted into a Home Science College (in Colombo) which has at present an enrolment of 165 women. The Institute of Aesthetic Studies attached to the University structure offers training facilities in Music, Dancing and Art, and the majority of students enrolled in Music and Dancing courses are women (Table 5.47). The students in this Institute represent an infinitesimal proportion of those following such courses in traditional schools and private institutions, about which, however, little information has been documented. The School of Social Work of the Ministry of Social Services has an enrolment of 25 men and 4 women in its full-time Diploma Course and the Schools of Co-operation attached to the Department of Co-Operatives and located in regional centres have approximately 20% women trainee students. Women students predominate in the Stenography and typing courses of the Official Languages Department while 40% of those enrolled in cources organized by the Ministry of Sports, are women.

TABLE 5.44

ENROLMENT IN TEACHERS' COLLEGES

	1967			1972			1978		
	TOTAL (NO)	FEMALES (NO)	FEMALES (%)	TOTAL (NO)	FEMALES (NO)	FEMALES (%)	TOTAL (NO)	FEMALES (NO)	FEMALES (%)
General Courses	4037	1280	25.4	5164	3802	73.6	649	387	59.6
Specialist Courses	1531	706	45.5	3160	1692	53.5	4862	2994	61.3
TOTAL	5568	1986	35.7	8324	5494	66.0	5511	3381	61.1

SOURCE: TEACHER EDUCATION BRANCH, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

TABLE 5.45

ENROLMENT IN TEACHERS' COLLEGES BY COURSES - 1978

	TOTAL (NO)	FEMALES (NO)	FEMALES (%)
Science	789	450	57.0
Mathematics	915	574	62.7
English	1138	721	63.3
Home Science	196	196	100.0
Handicrafts	370	200	54.1
Commerce	236	146	61.9
Aesthetics	571	372	65.1
Agriculture	232	132	56.9
Physical Education	183	63	34.4
Special Education	49	18	36.7
Primary Education	649	387	59.6
Religious Education	25	14	56.0
Sinhala as Second Language	122	90	73.8
Arabic	61	32	52.4

SOURCE: TEACHER EDUCATION BRANCH, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

TABLE 5.46

ENROLMENT IN MIDDLE LEVEL HEALTH EDUCATION INSTITUTES

	1973			1978		
	TOTAL (NO)	FEMALES (NO)	FEMALES (%)	TOTAL (NO)	FEMALES (NO)	FEMALES (%)
Schools of Nursing	377	296	78.5	500	425	85.0
Schools of Dental Nursing	25	25	100.0	25	25	100.0
Post Basic School of Nursing	50	48	96.0			
Training Centre Midwives	700	700	100.0	700	700	100.0
School of Physio-therapy	20	3	5.0	18	6	33.3
Medical Lab. Technicians	20	8	40.0	26	7	26.9
School of Radio-graphy	30	6	20.0	26	9	34.6

SOURCE: MINISTRY OF HEALTH

TABLE 5.47

ENROLMENT IN INSTITUTE OF AESTHETIC EDUCATION

COURSE	1973 TOTAL (NO)	FEMALES (NO)	FEMALES (%)	1978 TOTAL (NO)	FEMALES (NO)	FEMALES (%)
Art and Design	---	---	---	67	31	46.3
Dancing	80	56	70.0	58	49	84.5
Music	84	54	64.3	52	34	65.4

SOURCE: INSTITUTE OF AESTHETIC EDUCATION, MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

TABLE 5.48

ENROLMENT IN THE HOTEL SCHOOL

	1976 - 1977			1977 - 1978		
	TOTAL (NO)	FEMALES (NO)	FEMALES (%)	TOTAL (NO)	FEMALES (NO)	FEMALES (%)
Diploma Course in Hotel Management and Catering	28	--	0.0	28	--	0.0
Basic Level Courses:						
Hotel Reception	22	7	31.8	22	10	45.4
Restaurant Service	23	--	0.0	20	--	0.0
Hotel House-Keeping	22	18	81.8	41	20	48.8
Cookery	18	--	0.0	25	--	0.0

SOURCE: HOTEL SCHOOL, COLOMBO

The Hotel School of the State Hotels Corporation, however, pursues a policy of discrimination in a field of burgeoning employment since no women students have been admitted to its Diploma Course in Hotel Management and Catering. Since 1975, courses in Hotel Reception and Hotel House-keeping have been opened to women but they are excluded from courses in restaurant services and cookery (Table 5.48). Cookery courses are limited to men because the authorities concerned are of the view that women cannot cope with work in 'hot' kitchens!

VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRES - DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR

Sex stereo-types have always prevailed in the vocational training centres organised by the Department of Labour for early school leavers of the age group 18 to 30 years. The main training centres in Colombo offer courses in fields such as mechanics, machine repairs and electric work but women have never been admitted to these centres although large numbers of women are employed in the electronic industries. The mobile centres which are spread throughout the island provide training in carpentry, masonary, hair-dressing, tailoring and mat weaving and women are restricted to tailoring and mat weaving. The tailoring centres begun in 1970 have expanded to 24 male and 131 female centres and the percentage of women trainees has increased from 40.7% in 1973 to 85% in 1978 (Table 5.49). Nevertheless vocational education opportunities for women have not been extended to other areas and it is disappointing to note that in the new Vocational Training Programme[19] of the Department of Labour once again only traditional areas such as lace making have been added to the courses offered to women

CRAFTS AND RURAL INDUSTRIES

Cottage industries have been promoted by the Department of Small Industries (earlier the Department of Cottage Industries) which had in 1978, 344 training centres distributed among all 22 revenue districts in the island The majority of those enrolled are early school leavers and a few

are Grade 10 leavers. Advanced training is offered at the Velona Vocational Training Centre established with UNIDO assistance just outside the city of Colombo, and as most of the trainees enrolled in this Institution are potential instructors this course has a multiplier effect.

Sex-wise data is available for 1978 only but as the data in Table 5.50 indicate there is a cultural demarcation of 'male' and 'female' crafts. Women are concentrated in weaving (with reeds, rushes, etc.), sewing and lace-making, coir work and textiles, and men in carpentry, wood carving, metal work including brass and copper work while both men and women are trained in pottery and bamboo crafts.

The over-all majority of trainees are women (73.6%) but these crafts and trades tend to be the poor relations of the world of industry. The centres have not expanded in the seventies, their resources and facilities are minimal, standards are poor, and productivity and income-generation very low. They appear to be the refuge of rural school leavers and women from low income families who have no access to other avenues of vocational education.

The Department of Textile Industries is responsible for the powerloom and handloom centres scattered throughout the island In the sixties the Department of Cottage Industries organised a thousand handloom centres in which women trainees predominated. Restrictions in the seventies and current liberalization of imports have affected these centres and an area which provided employment opportunities for rural women has now become unrewarding.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTRES

The majority of the population in Sri Lanka live in rural areas and the need to improve the economic and social position of rural women led to the establishment of Rural Women's Societies in 1954. For two decades courses were conducted at mobile centres in the traditional skill of needlework. In 1975 an expanded programme was initiated and the 147

TABLE 5.49

ENROLMENT IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRES - DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR

	1977				1978			
TRADES	NO.OF CENTRES	TOTAL (NO)	FEMALES (NO)	FEMALES %	NO.OF CENTRES	TOTAL (NO)	FEMALES (NO)	FEMALES (%)
Tailoring	60	960	816	85.0	155	2481	2096	84.5
Carpentry	39	624	--	0.0	65	1040	--	0.0
Masonary	39	624	--	0.0	65	1040	-	0.0
Hair-dressing	10	160	--	0.0	10	160	--	0.0
Mat Weaving	1	16	16	100.0	1	16	16	100.0
Lace Making	--	--	--	--	5	80	80	100.0
TOTAL	149	2384	832	34.9	301	4820	2192	45.5

SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR

TABLE 5.50

ENROLMENT IN CENTRES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIES, 1972 and 1978

NAME OF INDUSTRY	1972 NO. OF CENTRES	1972 TOTAL (NO)	1978 NO. OF CENTRES	1978 MALES (NO)	1978 FEMALES (NO)	1978 TOTAL (NO)	1978 FEMALES (%)
Wetakeyya weaving	52	347	35	07	328	335	97.9
Mat weaving	24	160	26	--	107	107	100.0
Reed weaving (hanna)	06	21	11	08	39	47	82.9
Cane	12	84	16	43	32	75	42.7
Lacquer work	04	13	02	01	01	02	50.0
Sewing	05	21	08	--	66	66	100.0
Lace Making	05	27	12	--	64	64	100.0
Pottery	65	825	29	293	485	778	62.3
Coir	112	989	34	70	437	507	86.2
Carpentry and Wood carving	55	472	65	339	03	342	0.9
Art Line Textiles	--	--	26	43	615	658	93.5
Bamboo products	--	--	05	07	07	14	50.0
Palm ware	--	--	19	--	30	30	100.0
Brass and Copper ware	--	--	11	24	--	24	0.0
Miscellaneous (Toys, Ornaments, etc.)	20	169	44	13	151	164	92.1
TOTAL	360	3128	344	848	2365	3213	73.6

SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF SMALL INDUSTRIES

mobile centres were to be converted into permanent women's Development Centres which were to provide production-oriented training for self-employment for the 17 to 25 age group in food production and preparation, crafts, sewing and general education in nutrition and health. A centre was established in Colombo under the auspices of the Konrad Adeneaur Foundation to train instructors and demonstrators in addition to ten district training centres of the Department of Rural Development in which 50% of those enrolled were women.

A recent evaluation in 1977 [20] has shown that these centres have failed as vocational education centres. They are still largely confined to needlework instruction or to crafts which are often unsaleable in a competitive market. Like the small industries centres they suffer from lack of resources, facilities and trained personnel, and the past trainees are either unemployed, or if self-employed, have poor earning capacity.

NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP BOARD

The National Apprenticeship Board is the national level industrial training organisation created by an Act in 1971 to provide with the assistance of employers apprenticeship courses for secondary school and early school leavers. Practical training and related instruction are organised in trade and technician level courses. Apprentices are paid during their training period and although there is no guarantee of employment, a placement service and links with employers are in-built advantages in this respect

The Board's programmes are open to both sexes but as in many other countries the participation of women has been very limited (Table 5.51). As the data in Table 5.52 shows women have been limited to a few areas of the 66 trade courses offered to secondary school leavers and the 51 courses provided for early school leavers. The list of applicants in 1973, the first year of the programme (Table 5.53) shows that few women too are sufficiently motivated to seek access to a wide range of programmes. Over half the applicants were for weaving and employers' prejudices have led to the rejection of all applicants to other areas that year.

Subsequently the Board has helped to pioneer three new areas for women - radio mechanics and printing in 1975 and typewriter repairs in 1976 but in recent years the needs of the export-oriented garment industry appears to have dominated the selection and allocation of women trainees.

The Board has a crucial role to play today in meeting the demand for skills for national projects such as the Mahaweli Scheme and the Free Trade Zone, and in replacing the skilled workers who have migrated to West Asia in search of petro-dollars. Unfortunately it plays a secondary role to that of employers in recruiting women apprentices. It could undoubtedly take a more positive stance in helping to change the attitudes of employers and in widening opportunities for women in vocational education programmes. It has now been transferred from the Ministry of Industries to the Ministry of Employment and Youth Affairs - a strategic Ministry with respect to the educational and vocational interests of school leavers.

NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL

Another national level organization geared to provide training and employment opportunities for school leavers is the National Youth Council established in 1968. In its early years its programmes and projects were restricted to men but from 1975 to 1977 there was a preponderance of women in the training programmes in agriculture and crafts at its training centres (Table 5.54) and reference has been made earlier in this section to its unsuccessful Youth Farms. Currently there are very few women participating in its training programmes but young women are active participants in its village level development projects.

IN-PLANT TRAINING

Several Ministries and Corporations and organizations such as the National Institute of Management provide on-the-job training programmes for employees but the extent of the participation of women in in-plant training is dependent on their employment opportunities and promotional prospects. Employers also complain that for domestic reasons married women workers, in particular, are averse to participating in extension

TABLE 5.51

NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP BOARD
NO. OF CRAFT APPRENTICES 1973 - 1978

YEAR	TOTAL (NO)	MALES (NO)	FEMALES (NO)	FEMALES (%)
1973	768	748	20	2.6
1974	1261	1253	8	0.6
1975	1041	960	81	7.7
1976	2150	2153	55	2.5
1977	911	882	29	3.2
1978	3947	3721	226	5.7

SOURCE: NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP BOARD

TABLE 5.52

NATIONAL APPRENTISHIP BOARD
TRADES IN WHICH WOMEN APPRENTICES WERE/ARE TRAINED 1973 - 1978

TRADE	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
Weavers	20	--	40	18	--	20
Tailors	--	4	4	--	--	4
Bookbinders	4	2	--	--	--	--
Radio Mechanics	--	--	26	13	--	5
Monotopy caster attendant	--	--	6	--	--	--
Lino engravers	--	--	2	--	--	--
Typewriter repairs	--	--	--	13	--	--
Textile Printers	--	--	--	10	37	--
Painters	--	--	1	1	--	--
Garment cutter	--	--	--	--	--	1
Pattern makers (garments)	--	--	--	--	--	7
Batik printer	--	--	--	--	19	--
Hand screen painter	--	--	--	--	--	25
Sewing machine operator	--	--	--	--	--	164
TOTAL	20	8	81	55	56	226

SOURCE: NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP BOARD

TABLE 5.53

NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME, APPLICATIONS 1972/73

TRADES	TOTAL (NO)	FEMALE (NO)	FEMALE (%)
Fitter (General)	469	18	3.8
Fitter (Structural)	330	24	7.3
Fitter (Spinning)	17	2	11.8
Mason	46	---	---
Carpenter	162	---	---
Weaver	450	217	48.2
Auto Mechanic	3403	17	0.5
Auto Electrician	538	5	.94
Machinist	245	2	.9
Blacksmith	7	---	---
Tinker	18	1	5.5
Electrical Maintenance	755	6	.8
Welder	101	1	.9
Moulder	42	---	---
Plumber	135	2	1.5
No trade	41	---	---
	7008	380	5.4

SOURCE: MINISTRY OF EDUCATION & I.L.O. OFFICE

TABLE 5.54

ENROLMENT IN NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE COUNCIL VOCATIONAL CENTRES

YEAR	TOTAL (NO)	FEMALES (NO)	FEMALES (%)
1972	405	---	0.0
1973	523	---	0.0
1974	514	7	1.4
1975	1092	562	51.5
1976	458	448	97.8
1977	902	844	93.6
1978	139	25	17.9

SOURCE: NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE COUNCIL

programmes.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Very little information is available regarding vocational education programmes organized by the private sector.

Private institutions such as Aquinas College, Jaffna College and Ayurveda Schools prepare students for academic and vocational examinations. Private enterprise is also usually sensitive to the demands of the labour market and accordingly programmes are organized, particularly in urban centres, to meet these needs. Currently courses in Accountancy, Management and Business Administration whether by recognized bodies such as the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ceylon or by individual employers attract large numbers of students. Private Polytechnics also cater to the needs of the urban labour market. The Polytechnic in Colombo, for instance, has an enrolment of over 1,000 students of whom 56% are women. Only courses in air-conditioning and refrigeration have an all-male enrolment and the majority of courses lead to employment in the service sector.

Numerous small-scale private establishments and one or two large establishments such as the Singer Sewing Company and the Kathleen School of Dressmaking, offer vocational training programmes in areas ranging from sewing and batik printing to shorthand, typing and catering and other aspects of the tourist trade.

Private firms are increasingly providing short-term on-the-job training programmes for women, particularly in the garment and electronic industries. Such facilities have expanded with the establishment of the Free Trade Zone in which already 18 of the 34 economic ventures approved in 1978 were garment industries which hope to train and employ young women of the age group 18 to 25 years. Other enterprises in the Zone such as gem-cutting have also shown a preference for training young women whom most employers consider to be conscientious and docile workers.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION BY VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS

Non-Governmental voluntary organizations that provide vocational education facilities include those which offer programmes for both sexes as well as women's organizations and a few examples are described here to assess their role in promoting vocational education opportunities for women.

The Lanka Jatika Sarvodaya Sangamaya founded in 1958 to promote self-reliance and self-employment at grassroots village level had in 1978 programmes in 1,200 villages Twenty training centres of which five are Development Education Institutes provide short-term training courses in areas such as woodwork, metalwork, pottery, ceramics, photography and appropriate technology. The number of women participants varies usually according to the traditional connotation of 'masculine' and 'feminine' areas. For instance, those enrolled in pre-school teacher education and weaving courses and the majority in batik printing and dyeing courses are women. Likewise no women are enrolled in carpentry, masonary or appropriate technology courses. Nevertheless, 54% of the trainees at the Tanamalwila Training Centre and 44% of those at the Panwila Centre are women and female participation is high in scientific agricultural courses in rural areas.

At the All Ceylon Buddhist Congress Vocational Training Centre at Gangodawila 130 women follow a two year course ranging from the conventional commercial, pre-school, sewing and craft courses to radio and clock repairs and assembling

Among women's organizations, the Lanka Mahila Samithiya established in 1931 has a large rural base in the country. At its training and production centre at Kaduwela it provides a 3 to 5 month training programme in agricultural production and home gardening, home economics and food preservation and preparation, cottage industries, pre-school and health and child care to young women between 18 and 30 years of age who are expected to organize in their turn extension courses in their villages. It has also 24 other extension centres but like all other rural, agricultural and industrial programmes, these projects too suffer from a lack of economic viability.

The YWCA which caters to urban women has had a Residential Vocational Training Institute in Colombo since 1976 and 26 other urban training centres. These offer vocational training courses in fields such as Secretarial and clerical services, dress making, crafts, home science, cookery and beauty culture. Since fees are levied these courses are inevitably restricted to middle class school leavers seeking jobs and to housewives interested in exploring avenues of home-based employment.

Examples of other women's organizations which offer vocational education programmes are the Lankadara Society which organizes courses in commercial subjects, handicrafts and home economics for girls from less affluent families, the Halgashena farm run by the Good Shepherd nuns which train batches of 100 young women in six month courses in poultry, piggery, animal husbandry and horticulture; and the Sri Lanka Women's Conference which has initiated a three year course for 150 girls from economically deprived homes in home-gardening, food-preservation, dress-making, cookery, child care and nutrition.

The vocational education programmes of voluntary organizations have not been on the whole, very extensive due to resource constraints. They have, moreover, tended to follow the conventional pattern of traditional 'feminine' courses and have not yet functioned as 'path breakers' or innovators.

AN OVERVIEW OF EDUCATIONAL PARTICIPATION

In Sri Lanka women have equal access to the majority of formal educational institutions but sex disparities are found in the range of provision of facilities and in participation particularly in geographical and in specific content areas Such disparities appear largely to reflect societal attitudes to the role of women and their implications are seen in the constraints they impose on personal development as well as on employment opportunities. It is clear that barriers to educational opportunity are also linked with the poverty of individual and national resources in a low income country and that trends and problems in the educational participation of women have to be viewed in the context of over-all development.

Outside the formal system opportunities are miniscule in early childhood, out-of-school and adult education. Pre-school education opportunities are offered largely by private individuals and organizations and are consequently the preserve of the affluent. Continuing education and recurrent education are new concepts which have yet to be translated into concrete programmes on a scale commensurate with the social and vocational needs of the large majority of women.

It is interesting to note too that while women's ascribed roles of housewife and mother are eulogized, further education programmes in family health education, nutrition and child care which purport to assist women to function effectively in these roles are poorly funded and organized and receive very low priority.

LITERACY AND EDUCATIONAL LEVELS OF WOMEN

It is also possible to assess the extent of educational participation and to evaluate at least one facet of its impact on the status of women in Sri Lanka by examining their literacy and educational levels as reflected in national census data.

LITERACY

National literacy statistics for the census years 1946, 1953, 1963 and 1971 are presented in Tables 5.55, 5.56 and 5.57, and since 1971 census figures relate to the population over 10 years of age, comparisons are based on figures relating to this age group.

It will be noted from Table 5.55 that the over-all literacy rate in Sri Lanka increased from 62.8% in 1946 to 76.5% in 1963 and then very slightly to 78.5% in 1971. Male literacy, however, had been relatively extensive in 1946 with a rate of 76.5% which increased to 85.6% in 1963 and remained at this level till 1971. The female literacy rate on the other hand showed a significant increase over this period from 46.2% to 70.9%.

While the latter figure is not high it does indicate that the porportion of literate women has increased from less than half to nearly three-fourths. Adult literacy campaigns have never received priority in Sri Lanka and since functional literacy is achieved after approximately three years of primary education, this increase is obviously the result of the more extensive participation of women in at least primary education.

Analysis of urban, rural and regional literacy statistics reveal the existence of many disparities. As in many other countries urban men and women have a higher literacy rate than their rural fellow citizens. Male urban literacy increased from 84.5% in 1946 to 91.8% in 1963 and female urban literacy from 65.7% to 82.7% Both have declined slightly between 1963 and 1971. This decline may be the result of changes in demarcation of urban and rural boundaries but the fact that there has been no significant increase in urban literacy despite the provision of free education should be a matter of immediate concern to those involved in formulating and implementing social policies.

The rural male literacy rate increased from 74.7% in 1946 to 83.9 in 1963 and has shown little increase since then. The rural female literacy rate which was low in 1946 - 43%-increased to 67.9% in 1971. The slight increase in the over-all literacy rate in Sri Lanka from 1963 to 1971 was therefore the result of the increase in literacy among rural women. The relatively low female literacy rate is however a pointer to urban-rural disparities (81.5% urban female literacy and 67.9% rural female literacy) which affect adversely the status of rural women as well as their contribution to national development

The impact of education is seen more clearly in the declining rate of literacy among older age groups, particularly among women. All urben males and rural males under 55 years have had a literacy rate of over 70% since 1946. Among women literacy rates are lower among older age groups in all census years. Even in 1971 the rate for those under 35 years was over 80% for urban women and over 70% for rural women, and for the oldest age group 41% among urban women and 19% among rural women Such wide differentials underscore the impact of free education

and of the rural central schools started in the nineteen forties on the education level of younger rural women who have been the beneficiaries of these policies.

As a corollary to these developments sex disparities in literacy rates are minimal among younger age groups - those under 25 in the urban population and under 19 in the rural population. Disparities increase among older age groups and the male literacy rate was almost treble that of the female literacy rate among the oldest age group in 1971. This trend is consonant with the increasing participating rate of girls in education as depicted in Table 5.3. The over-all disparity between male and female literacy rates has been reduced from 30 percentage points in 1946 to 15 percentage points in 1971. It is apparent that this disparity will disappear with time if educational opportunities are expanded. Nevertheless, the current position is that the rate of illiteracy among women in Sri Lanka is double that among men.

Another facet of the position with regard to literacy is the existence of regional disparities (Table 5.58). The most disadvantaged women in this respect are in the Badulla and Moneragala districts, the Eastern province and the plantation district of Nuwara Eliya - which are all educationally backward areas. It is also significant that sex disparities with regard to literacy rates were found in 1971 in 12 of the 22 revenue districts in the island, including Kandy, the centre of the hill country

It has often been pointed out that the literacy rate of Sri Lankan women compares favourably with that of women in other economically developing countries. The comparative data in Table 5.59 shows that Sri Lanka is one of the four economically developing countries in Asia which has a female literacy rate of over 70%. Yet the existence of sex, urban-rural and regional disparities, the absence of any significant improvement in the position in the sixties, and the decline in the literacy level of the school-age population (10 - 14 years) call for more positive educational policies if women are to develop their potential and participate effectively in national life.

TABLE 5.55

LITERACY RATES IN SRI LANKA

AGE GROUP	1946			1953			1963			1971		
	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
5 - 9	28.8	26.1	27.4	48.4	44.0	46.3	45.6	43.9	44.8	---	---	---
10 - 14	68.6	54.9	61.9	81.9	69.8	76.1	86.6	82.7	84.7	83.7	82.3	83.0
15 - 19	79.5	59.0	69.9	83.5	66.3	75.2	90.3	82.2	86.3	88.3	85.1	86.7
20 - 24	83.6	56.2	70.3	85.0	63.6	74.6	91.0	77.5	84.2	91.0	83.1	87.1
25 - 29	82.9	50.3	67.7	85.3	59.3	72.9	89.4	69.4	79.6	91.0	78.3	84.7
30 - 34	81.5	46.4	65.6	84.1	54.9	70.9	88.6	66.8	78.3	90.4	73.8	82.4
35 - 39	77.9	40.8	61.5	81.4	48.9	66.7	86.8	59.3	73.7	86.3	62.5	74.5
40 - 44	76.7	37.7	59.8	78.5	45.4	64.1	85.9	56.0	72.4	86.7	61.3	74.9
45 - 49	73.9	33.7	56.8	75.8	41.8	61.2	82.6	51.8	68.9	84.0	54.4	70.1
50 - 54	72.2	30.8	52.9	76.1	39.7	60.6	80.8	47.9	66.2	83.0	51.3	68.7
55 - 59	70.8	28.8	53.1	69.9	35.6	52.4	77.7	44.3	63.6	79.1	45.3	63.9
60 - 64	67.2	25.7	48.3	71.8	31.8	53.7	74.8	39.0	59.6	75.6	41.0	60.5
65 - 69	66.9	26.0	48.8	67.3	28.1	49.2	73.5	37.4	57.7	73.5	37.5	57.3
70 - 74	59.6	19.9	41.1	---	---	---	69.1	31.2	51.5	69.9	31.8	53.2
75 +	---	---	---	---	---	---	61.3	27.1	45.3	60.8	23.8	42.9
15 + POP.	77.9	44.5	62.9	80.5	52.7	67.7	84.6	63.4	74.6	86.0	68.5	77.6
10 + POP.	76.5	46.2	62.8	80.7	55.5	69.0	85.6	67.1	76.8	85.6	70.9	78.5
5 + POP.	70.1	43.7	57.8	75.9	53.6	65.4	79.3	63.2	71.6			

SOURCE : CENSUS OF CEYLON 1946, 1953, 1953, 1971 DEPT. OF CENSUS & STATISTICS, COLOMBO.

TABLE 5.56

LITERACY RATES IN THE URBAN SECTOR IN SRI LANKA

AGE GROUP	1946			1953			1963			1971		
	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
5 - 9	47.1	44.3	45.7	51.6	51.8	51.7	61.2	61.1	61.1	---	---	---
10 - 14	74.6	68.0	71.5	86.0	82.9	84.6	91.5	90.3	90.9	88.4	87.6	88.0
15 - 19	84.7	75.1	80.8	90.5	84.2	87.7	94.8	92.1	93.5	92.4	91.0	91.7
20 - 24	88.5	74.4	83.2	92.4	81.0	87.9	94.8	89.7	92.6	94.6	90.5	92.8
25 - 29	87.6	70.0	81.1	92.1	78.3	86.7	94.5	85.9	90.8	94.3	88.2	91.6
30 - 34	85.8	66.6	78.8	91.6	76.6	85.8	93.9	84.5	90.9	93.5	85.3	89.8
35 - 39	83.4	61.8	75.4	88.0	68.3	80.0	92.5	80.0	87.0	90.5	78.1	84.8
40 - 44	82.8	59.5	74.0	88.3	67.3	80.3	92.0	77.8	85.9	90.4	76.6	84.3
45 - 49	80.5	56.7	71.3	85.5	63.2	76.9	90.2	73.3	83.0	88.6	72.1	81.2
50 - 54	78.7	51.1	67.9	85.0	62.3	75.8	89.2	69.8	80.9	87.8	68.6	79.2
55 - 59	79.3	53.5	68.5	83.2	59.7	73.5	87.1	69.9	79.9	84.7	63.7	75.2
60 - 64	74.8	48.1	62.4	79.2	54.7	68.2	84.6	64.0	75.5	82.5	58.8	71.6
65 - 69	74.2	48.6	62.5	74.2	49.2	61.9	82.6	59.4	71.6	79.3	55.6	67.9
70 - 74	68.2	39.7	54.2	---	---	---	80.7	59.2	70.3	75.6	50.0	63.4
75 +	---	---	---	---	---	---	74.8	50.9	63.0	68.2	41.2	54.2
15 + POP.	85.8	65.3	76.9	88.8	72.5	82.2	90.7	79.7	85.9	90.6	80.3	85.9
10 + POP.	84.5	65.7	76.2	88.5	74.1	82.6	91.8	82.7	87.7	90.3	81.5	86.2
5 + POP.	81.2	63.0	73.0	84.2	70.7	78.5	87.9	79.4	84.1	---	---	---

SOURCE : CENSUS OF CEYLON 1946, 1953, 1963, 1971 DEPT. OF CENSUS & STATISTICS, COLOMBO

TABLE 5.57

LITERACY RATES IN THE RURAL SECTOR IN SRI LANKA

AGE GROUP	1946			1953			1963			1971		
	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
5 - 9	26.5	23.6	25.0	47.9	42.8	45.4	42.5	40.6	41.5	---	---	---
10 - 14	67.7	52.9	60.5	81.3	67.7	74.7	85.6	81.1	83.4	82.4	80.9	81.7
15 - 19	78.3	65.0	67.8	82.0	63.2	72.8	89.1	79.8	84.5	87.0	83.4	85.2
20 - 24	82.1	52.9	67.0	83.1	60.8	71.9	89.8	74.7	81.9	89.7	81.0	85.3
25 - 29	81.7	46.9	64.6	83.6	56.1	69.9	88.2	65.8	76.7	89.7	75.4	82.4
30 - 34	80.3	42.9	62.7	82.3	51.0	67.7	87.1	62.7	75.3	89.3	70.4	79.9
35 - 39	76.6	37.4	58.7	80.0	45.6	64.1	85.3	54.8	70.5	84.9	58.2	71.4
40 - 44	75.4	33.6	56.9	76.2	41.6	60.8	84.2	50.8	68.9	85.4	56.7	71.9
45 - 49	72.6	29.9	54.1	73.8	38.2	58.3	80.7	46.8	65.5	82.5	49.4	66.8
50 - 54	70.8	26.8	50.0	75.9	35.6	57.6	78.6	42.6	62.5	81.9	46.0	65.4
55 - 59	69.4	24.7	50.6	67.4	31.2	52.1	75.4	38.4	59.8	77.5	39.9	60.6
60 - 64	65.9	21.8	45.9	70.5	27.8	51.2	72.6	32.8	55.9	73.8	35.5	57.2
65 - 69	65.9	22.4	46.7	66.3	24.5	47.1	71.4	31.5	54.3	72.0	32.0	54.4
70 - 74	58.4	16.8	39.2	---	---	---	66.7	24.8	47.4	68.5	26.3	50.4
75 +	---	---	---	---	---	---	58.7	21.7	41.7	59.0	19.0	39.9
15 + POP.	76.0	40.9	60.1	78.6	49.3	64.8	83.0	59.6	71.7	84.5	65.1	75.0
10 + POP.	74.7	43.0	60.1	79.0	52.4	66.4	83.9	63.6	70.1	84.1	67.9	76.2
5 + POP.	67.8	40.6	55.0	74.1	50.8	62.9	77.1	59.6	68.7			

SOURCE: CENSUS OF CEYLON 1946, 1953, 1963, 1971 DEPT. OF CENSUS & STATISTICS COLOMBO

TABLE 5.58

LITERACY RATES OF POPULATION 10 YEARS AND OVER BY SEX IN SRI LANKA - DISTRICTWISE - 1971

DISTRICTS	TOTAL POPULATION			URBAN			RURAL		
	PERSONS	MALES	FEMALES	PERSONS	MALES	FEMALES	PERSONS	MALES	FEMALES
Colombo	88.0	91.7	84.0	87.9	91.1	84.1	88.1	92.2	83.8
Kalutara	84.3	89.3	79.4	86.7	90.7	82.6	83.7	88.9	78.5
Kandy	74.4	84.3	64.2	88.7	92.1	84.7	72.3	83.1	61.4
Matale	73.0	82.4	63.2	85.1	89.7	80.5	71.3	81.4	60.8
Nuwara Eliya	65.4	79.5	50.7	83.6	89.4	77.1	64.3	78.9	49.2
Galle	81.8	87.6	76.5	84.8	90.0	79.8	81.0	86.9	75.6
Matara	76.9	84.5	69.8	86.5	90.3	83.3	75.7	83.8	68.0
Hambantota	72.4	81.5	62.7	80.4	86.6	71.5	71.5	80.8	61.8
Jaffna	80.6	84.0	77.3	86.3	89.0	83.5	77.7	81.4	74.2
Mannar	72.6	80.7	62.6	80.0	83.0	76.4	71.4	80.3	60.2
Vavuniya	72.2	77.4	65.3	69.3	77.0	60.6	73.0	77.5	66.8
Batticaloa	57.0	66.5	46.9	68.8	78.5	59.0	52.5	62.1	41.9
Amparai	64.6	75.6	52.3	62.1	72.2	51.4	64.9	76.1	52.5
Trincomalee	65.6	73.3	56.3	69.7	75.7	62.8	62.9	71.8	51.8
Kurunegala	81.6	88.3	74.4	89.5	91.9	85.7	81.2	88.0	74.0
Puttalam	83.3	88.1	78.5	77.8	82.3	73.1	84.3	89.1	79.3
Anuradhapura	75.6	83.6	66.3	86.7	89.4	83.5	74.3	82.9	64.2
Polonnaruwa	75.3	81.9	66.9	84.2	86.7	80.9	74.4	81.4	65.4
Badulla	64.7	78.1	50.8	82.7	88.5	75.7	63.0	77.0	48.6
Monaragala	61.8	72.2	49.6	65.5	71.9	58.3	61.7	72.2	49.4
Ratnapura	71.4	80.8	61.2	82.3	87.4	76.1	70.6	80.2	60.0
Kegalle	78.2	85.9	70.1	84.6	89.9	78.3	77.7	85.6	69.6
SRI LANKA	78.1	85.2	70.7	85.6	89.5	81.3	75.9	83.8	67.6

SOURCE: STATISTICAL PROFILE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN SRI LANKA, DEPARTMENT OF CENSUS AND STATISTICS, 1975

TABLE 5.59

LITERACY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN ASIA

COUNTRY	YEAR	MALE LITERACY RATE	FEMALE LITERACY RATE
Republic of Korea	1970	94.4	81.0
Philippines	1970	84.3	80.9
Sri Lanka	1971	85.6	70.9
Thailand	1970	87.2	70.3
Singapore	1970	83.0	54.3
Malaysia	1970	69.9	43.1
Indonesia	1971	69.5	44.6
Burma	1962	80.0	40.0
Kampuchea	1963	71.0	9.0
India	1971	46.8	18.9
Iran	1966	32.9	12.3
Laos Republic	1962	30.0	27.0
Bangladesh	1961	31.4	8.7
Pakistan	1961	23.5	5.8
Nepal	1971	22.4	2.6
Afghanistan	1965	12.0	1.0

SOURCE: UNESCO OFFICE OF STATISTICS, PARIS, 1978

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF THE POPULATION

While literacy is a basic requirement for functioning effectively as a citizen, national census data also provide us with a quantitative analysis of the population by educational attainment, which is a more meaningful indicator of educational status than literacy.

The distribution of the population by educational attainment is presented in Tables 5.60 and 5.62. The amalgamation of the categories of 'no schooling' and 'unspecified' in 1971 makes comparison difficult but it is clear from the data that the population of both men and women who have completed a ten year education (G.C.E. Ordinary Level) or obtained a higher level of educational attainment is very small and does not exceed 7%. The numbers with a higher education have increased at least two fold but the proportion itself is infinitesimal. In addition 35.9% men and 26.5% women in 1963 and 43.3% men and 36.0% women in 1971 had completed their primary education and acquired some junior secondary education. Altogether less than half the male and female population had a primary, secondary or higher education.

As Tables 5 64 and 5 65 illustrate disparities between men and women with a ten year education (G.C.E Ordinary Level) are minimal for those between 15 and 35 years of age but they increase in the older age groups till the proportion of men of this educational level is double that of women for the age group after 55 years. The impact of the education policies introduced in the forties has therefore reduced disparities in educational level between men and women under 35 years of age, and in course of time these disparities will perhaps be eliminated. The crucial problem is that after a quarter century of free education, less than 25% of men and women between 20 to 35 years have successfully completed ten years of education, while half the population have had no school or have been early school leavers.

While the status of women in Sri Lanka has a multi-faceted relationship with education level, the implications of the latter for socio-economic advancement are seen in the positive relationship between educational level and income in Sri Lanka (Table 5.66). The income gap between educational levels was narrower in 1971 than in 1963 but the differences are still large enough to place a premium on educational attainment.

TABLE 5.60

POPULATION 5 + YEARS BY EDUCATION ATTAINMENT, SECTOR AND SEX, 1963
(% DISTRIBUTION)

	BOTH SECTORS			URBAN			RURAL		
	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
No schooling	21.0	13.5	29.2	11.9	8.2	16.5	23.2	14.8	32.1
Grades1 - 4	38.0	40.2	35.6	31.3	30.9	31.8	39.6	42.5	36.5
Grades5 - 8	31.4	35.9	26.5	39.6	42.9	36.6	29.4	34.2	24.2
G.C.E.(ORDINARY LEVEL)	5.0	5.5	4.5	9.5	10.4	8.3	3.9	4.2	3.7
G.C.E.(ADVANCED LEVEL)/ Equivalent	0.8	0.9	0.7	1.3	1.3	1.2	0.7	0.8	0.5
Degree/Equivalent	0.2	0.3	0.09	0.6	0.9	0.3	0.09	0.1	0.04
Postgraduate	0.02	0.03	0.01	0.06	0.09	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.004
Unspecified	3.5	3.7	3.4	5.3	5.2	5.4	3.2	3.3	2.9
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

SOURCE: BASED ON DATA IN CENSUS OF CEYLON 1963

TABLE 5.61

POPULATION 5 + YEARS BY EDUCATION ATTAINMENT

SECTOR AND SEX 1963 (% FEMALE)

	BOTH SECTORS		URBAN		RURAL	
	MALE (%)	FEMALE (%)	MALE (%)	FEMALE (%)	MALE (%)	FEMALE (%)
No schooling	33.5	66.5	37.7	62.3	32.9	67.1
Grades 1 - 4	55.1	44.9	54.1	45.9	55.3	44.7
Grades 5 - 8	59.7	40.3	58.7	41.3	60.1	39.9
G.C.E.(Ordinary Level)	56.8	43.2	60.1	39.9	54.9	45.1
G.C.E.(Advanced Level)/ Equivalent	60.1	39.9	58.3	41.7	60.8	39.2
Degree/Equivalent	76.9	23.1	76.0	24.0	78.5	21.5
Postgraduate	81.3	18.7	84.5	15.5	75.4	24.6
Unspecified	53.9	46.1	54.1	45.9	53.9	46.1
TOTAL	52.1	47.9	51.5	48.5	54.7	45.3

SOURCE: BASED ON DATA IN CENSUS OF CEYLON, 1963

TABLE 5.62

POPULATION 5 + YEARS BY EDUCATION ATTAINMENT SECTOR AND SEX, 1971

(% DISTRIBUTION)

	BOTH SECTORS			URBAN			RURAL		
	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
Grades 1 - 4	30.2	31.7	28.2	24.1	23.9	24.3	31.8	34.1	29.3
Grades 5 - 8	39.8	43.3	36.0	49.6	52.2	46.6	36.8	40.6	33.0
G.C.E.(Ordinary Level)	3.8	3.9	3.6	5.9	6.5	5.3	3.1	3.1	3.1
G.C.E.(Advanced Level)/ Equivalent	0.9	1.0	0.8	1.3	1.4	1.2	0.8	0.9	0.7
Degree/Equivalent	0.4	1.02	0.2	0.9	1.2	0.6	0.2	0.3	0.1
Postgraduate	0.01	0.02	0.004	0.04	0.1	0.01	.005	.01	.001
No. Schooling/ Unspecified	25.2	19.5	31.2	18.1	14.8	21.9	27.3	21.0	33.8

SOURCE: BASED ON DATA IN CENSUS OF CEYLON, 1971

TABLE 5.63

POPULATION 5 + YEARS BY EDUCATION ATTAINMENT SECTOR AND SEX, 1971

(% FEMALE)

	BOTH SECTORS		URBAN		RURAL	
	MALE (%)	FEMALE (%)	MALE (%)	FEMALE (%)	MALE (%)	FEMALE (%)
Grades 1 - 4	54.5	45.5	53.0	47.0	54.8	45.2
Grades 5 - 8	56.2	43.8	56.2	43.8	56.2	43.8
G.C.E.(Ordinary Level)	53.7	46.3	58.3	41.7	51.1	48.9
G.C.E.(Advanced Level)/ Equivalent	58.4	41.6	56.1	43.9	58.0	42.0
Degree/Equivalent	69.7	30.3	69.4	30.6	70.0	30.0
Postgraduate	83.6	16.4	82.6	17.4	85.8	14.2
No. Schooling/ Unspecified	40.0	60.0	43.7	56.3	39.3	60.7
TOTAL	51.6	48.4	53.4	46.6	51.0	49.0

SOURCE: BASED ON DATA IN CENSUS OF CEYLON, 1971

TABLE 5.64

POPULATION 15 + WITH AT LEAST 10 YEARS EDUCATION BY SEX AND AGE, 1963

AGE GROUP		POPULATION (NO)	G.C.E.(O/L) + (NO)	%
15 - 19 years -	Total	1,022,650	101,480	9.9
	Male	520,850	51,200	9.8
	Female	501,600	50,280	10.0
20 - 24 years -	Total	884,520	146,720	16.6
	Male	440,270	78,320	17.8
	Female	444,250	68,400	15.4
25 + -	Total	4,220,350	285,260	6.8
	Male	2,271,250	180,020	7.9
	Female	1,949,100	105,240	5.4

SOURCE: BASED ON DATA IN CENSUS OF CEYLON, 1963

TABLE 5.65

POPULATION 15 + WITH AT LEAST 10 YEARS EDUCATION BY SEX AND AGE 1971

AGE GROUP		POPULATION (NO)	G.C.E.(O/L) + (NO)	
15 - 19 years	- Total	1,365,078	186,514	13.7
	Male	687,269	85,922	12.3
	Female	677,809	100,598	14.8
20 - 24 years	- Total	1,242,435	305,378	24.6
	Male	613,824	147,727	24.0
	Female	628,611	157,062	24.9
25 - 29 years	- Total	954,158	225,621	23.6
	Male	478,970	119,391	24.9
	Female	475,188	106,230	22.4
30 - 34 years	- Total	729,779	132,762	18.2
	Male	377,745	73,220	19.4
	Female	352,034	59,532	16.9
35 - 39 years	- Total	725,451	83,811	11.5
	Male	366,884	48,674	13.3
	Female	358,567	34,695	9.7
40 - 44 years	- Total	586,219	53,036	9.0
	Male	314,343	33,843	10.8
	Female	271,876	19,193	7.1
45 +	- Total	2,118,953	101,287	4.8
	Male	1,151,885	70,169	6.1
	Female	967,068	33,726	3.5

SOURCE_ BASED ON DATA IN CENSUS OF CEYLON, 1971

TABLE 5.66

MEDIAN INCOME FOR TWO MONTHS BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL FOR 1963 AND 1973

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	1963 MEDIAN INCOME		1973 MEDIAN INCOME		
	RS.	AS % OF MEDIAN INCOME FOR NO SCHOOLING (ILLITERATE)	RS.	AS % OF MEDIAN INCOME FOR NO SCHOOLING (ILLITERATE)	1973 MEDIAN AS % OF 1963 MEDIAN
No schooling (illiterate)	106	100	197	100	185
No Schooling (literate)	153	144	300	152	196
Primary	167	157	344	175	206
Secondary	257	242	450	229	175
Passed GCE/SSC	475	447	617	314	130
Higher	563	530	740	376	132
All levels	165	155	360	203	218

SOURCE: SURVEY OF SRI LANKA'S CONSUMER FINANCES 1973, CENTRAL BANK OF CEYLON, DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC RESEARCH, COLOMBO.

AREA STUDIES

Information obtained from the macro-level survey of the educational participation and status of women is supplemented in this section by data from the four area studies conducted as a part of this study of the status of women in Sri Lanka. The results of this investigation into the educational status and profile of rural samples of the three major ethnic groups living in the island and that of a mixed urban sample from the metropolis offer valuable insights into the problems of past and present educational opportunity and into possible future trends.

The female population of the selected samples in the Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim villages of Pindeniya, Siruppidy and Wattegedera respectively and in the Borella Ward of the Colombo Municipality was categorised as:

(a) those too young to go to school (age less than 5);
(b) primary school students (Grades 1 to 5);
(c) secondary school students (Grades 6 to 12);
(d) school leavers of every age group sub-divided into:
    (i) secondary school leavers (those who left school after completing at least Grade 10);
    (ii) early school leavers or 'drop-outs' (those who left school before completing Grade 10);
(e) the illiterate and those who never went to school.

Structured interviews were conducted in respect of the members of groups (c) and (d)(i) and (d)(ii) in the four areas. Information was obtained with regard to:

(a) the educational levels of the population;
(b) barriers to educational opportunity;
(c) educational aspiration of secondary school students; and
(d) parental attitudes to the education of girls and women.

Educational facilities were found to differ in the four areas. Borella in Colombo city has some of the leading schools in the island as well as impoverished schools in slum and shanty town environments. Pindeniya has a primary school and a relatively well-developed secondary school which draws students from neighbouring villages. Sirruppiddy and

Wattegedera have only primary schools but secondary schools are found in neighbouring villages.

Vocational educational opportunities are scarce. Pindeniya has a weaving school, and women in Borella have access to some at least of the vocational educational facilities in the city, but residents of Siruppiddy and Wattegedera depend on whatever facilities are available in villages and towns in the neighbourhood.

All four areas are located in relatively well-developed educational districts - that is Kegalle, Jaffna, Kandy and Colombo.

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF THE POPULATION

Data relating to the educational level of the male and female population (Table 5.67) indicate that while Wattegedera is educationally backward, the other three areas are at comparable levels of educational attainment except in that Colombo has an advantage in the area of higher education. Despite its location in the central province one-fifth of the women in Muslim Wattegedera have ever received a formal education and are illiterate. In all four areas sex disparities exist in the illiterate and 'no schooling' group in which women outnumber men, and also in the small number of University graduates among whom men form a majority. They are narrow among other groups except in Siruppiddy.

Trends in educational participation and in social policies and traditions are reflected in the analysis of educational level by age groups. Sex disparities are seen to be less marked in the school age group 5 to 15 years and 16 to 25 years. Except in Wattegedera over half the women in the age group 26 to 35 years have completed a ten-year education - a percentage that is higher than the national average since all four locations are in educationally developed districts. This age group were also beneficiaries of the policies introduced in the nineteen forties of establishing Central Schools in rural areas, providing free education facilities and changing the medium of instruction from English to the national languages

Sex disparities increase in the 36 to 45 years age group and the participation of women in secondary education is minimal among women over 46 years of age. Illiteracy is also, found chiefly among older women. A significant proportion of women over 46 years of age in Pindeniya, over 56 years in Borella and over 66 years in Siruppiddy have not been to school and are illiterate. In Wattegedera the percentage of illiteracy is very high - 22.5% in the 26 to 35 age group, 47.8% in the 36 to 45 age group and over 80% among women over 46 years.

The educational status of these urban and rural women who are under 35 years of age has therefore improved appreciably as a result of positive social and educational policies. Nevertheless, two thirds of men and women have not received a ten year education. The very limited participation in senior secondary and higher education is partly the result of the selective process which operates through public and competitive examinations after the open span of education. Muslim women appear to have been an educationally disadvantaged group for a longer time than other ethnic groups.

Present trends in school enrolment are illustrated in Table 5.68. There is near universal enrolment of the primary school age population in all areas but the proportion of secondary school age children in school is less satisfactory, particularly in Wattegedera where a little less than half the group are out of school. Except in Wattegedera again, the majority of the 'drop-outs' have left school after seven or eight years of education Muslim women therefore seem likely to continue to be a disadvantaged group. On the other hand illiteracy may cease to be a problem in all areas. There was no difference in school enrolment among the three ethnic groups in Borella.

BARRIERS TO EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Both Siruppiddy and Wattegedera have no secondary schools and the need to travel to neighbouring villages imposes an additional constraint on girls from conservative societies and low income families. Access to secondary education therefore appears to be a problem in Sri Lanka even in districts which are considered to be 'educationally developed'.

TABLE 5.67

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION BY EDUCATION LEVEL - SEX AND AGE WISE FOR EACH AREA

5 - 15 YEARS

EDUCATION LEVEL	PINDENIYA		SIRUPPIDDY		WATTEGEDARA		BORELLA	
	MALE	FE-MALE	MALE	FE-MALE	MALE	FE-MALE	MALE	FE-MALE
No Schooling/Illiterate	1.5	5.4	-	-	6.2	2.3	3.8	1.1
Primary (Grade 1 - 5)	54.4	59.4	67.3	67.3	58.3	62.8	61.3	69.3
Grade 6 - 10	41.1	33.8	26.5	25.0	35.4	34.9	32.1	27.2
O.L. / S.S.C.	2.9	-	6.1	5.8	-	-	1.9	1.1
A.L. / Equivalent	-	1.3	-	1.9	-	-	0.9	1.1
University Degree	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total (No.)	68	74	49	52	48	43	106	88

16 - 25 YEARS

EDUCATION LEVEL	PINDENIYA		SIRUPPIDDY		WATTEGEDARA		BORELLA	
	MALE	FE-MALE	MALE	FE-MALE	MALE	FE-MALE	MALE	FE-MALE
No Schooling/Illiterate	1.6	-	-	-	5.9	1.7	-	1.1
Primary (Grade 1 - 5)	1.6	5.1	8.8	12.5	14.7	20.3	1.7	12.9
Grade 6 - 10	25.8	23.8	22.8	20.0	42.6	37.3	41.7	31.1
O.L. / S.S.C.	51.6	40.7	47.4	50.0	32.3	35.5	48.3	53.7
A.L. / Equivalent	19.3	25.4	21.0	17.5	4.4	5.1	5.2	1.1
University Degree	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total (No.)	62	59	57	40	68	59	58	93

25 - 35 YEARS

EDUCATION LEVEL	PINDENIYA		SIRUPPIDDY		WATTEGEDARA		BORELLA	
	MALE	FE-MALE	MALE	FE-MALE	MALE	FE-MALE	MALE	FE-MALE
No Schooling/Illiterate	6.8	7.8	7.6	15.4	13.3	25.9	3.7	13.8
Primary (Grade 1 - 5)	47.6	19.6	11.5	41.0	30.0	16.6	31.5	26.1
Grade 6 - 10	43.2	56.9	69.2	35.9	33.3	29.6	51.8	47.7
O.L. / S.S.C.	2.3	11.8	11.5	5.1	5.0	5.5	5.5	3.1
A.L./ Equivalent	-	1.9	-	-	3.3	-	7.4	6.1
University Degree	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total (No.)	44	51	26	39	60	54	54	65

TABLE 5.67 (contd.)

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION BY EDUCATION LEVEL - SEX AND AGE WISE FOR EACH AREA

	36 - 45 YEARS							
	PINDENIYA		SIRUPPIDDY		WATTEGEDARA		BORELLA	
EDUCATION LEVEL	MALE	FE-MALE	MALE	FE-MALE	MALE	FE-MALE	MALE	FE-MALE
No Schooling/Illiterate	11.6	6.2	4.0	8.0	3.2	47.8	3.8	13.8
Primary (Grade 1 - 5)	9.3	34.4	12.0	28.0	51.6	39.1	7.7	17.2
Grade 6 - 10	41.8	18.7	24.0	40.0	19.3	8.7	34.6	48.3
O.L. / S.S.C.	30.2	31.2	60.0	24.0	22.5	4.3	38.5	20.7
A.L. / Equivalent	-	9.4	-	-	3.2	-	15.4	-
University Degree	6.9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total (No.)	43	32	25	25	31	23	26	29

	OVER 45 YEARS							
	PINDENIYA		SIRUPPIDDY		WATTEGEDARA		BORELLA	
EDUCATION LEVEL	MALE	FE-MALE	MALE	FE-MALE	MALE	FE-MALE	MALE	FE-MALE
No Schooling/Illiterate	1.96	31.4	9.8	7.9	45.2	86.5	17.0	28.3
Primary (Grade 1 - 5)	56.9	29.4	35.3	55.3	30.9	8.1	10.6	20.7
Grade 6 - 10	31.4	37.2	17.6	34.2	21.4	5.4	40.4	32.1
O.L. / S.S.C.	5.9	1.9	23.5	2.6	2.4	-	29.8	15.1
A.L. / Equivalent	3.9	-	13.7	-	-	-	2.1	3.8
University Degree	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total (No.)	51	51	51	38	42	37	47	53

	TOTAL							
	PINDENIYA		SIRUPPIDDY		WATTEGEDARA		BORELLA	
EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	MALE	FE-MALE	MALE	FE-MALE	MALE	FE-MALE	MALE	FE-MALE
No Schooling/Illiterate	2.9	8.9	2.9	3.1	12.1	21.8	5.5	8.1
Primary (Grade 1 - 5)	27.6	29.9	29.5	38.1	36.5	37.9	16.2	22.6
Grade 6 - 10	36.9	29.9	20.8	30.9	31.3	22.6	36.7	32.5
O.L. / S.S.C.	25.7	24.9	36.2	22.7	16.9	14.9	34.2	33.6
A.L. / Equivalent	5.6	9.7	10.6	5.1	2.6	2.7	4.7	1.8
University Degree	1.1	0.4	-	-	0.6	-	2.6	1.4
Total (No.)	268	257	207	194	307	261	234	283

TABLE 5.68

PARTICIPATION RATE IN SCHOOLS

	PINDENIYA	SIRUPPIDDY	WATTEGEDERA	BORELLA	TOTAL
Total No. of Females	294	249	305	302	1150
No. between 5 - 11 years	47	34	55	29	165
No. in school	45	34	54	28	161
No. out of school	2	---	1	1	4
% in school	95.7	100.0	98.2	96.5	97.6
No. between 12 - 19 years	49	26	55	53	183
No in school	39	18	29	39	125
No out of school	10	8	26	14	58
% in school	79.6	69.2	52.7	73.6	68.3
Total 5 - 19 years	96	60	110	82	348
No. in school	84	52	83	67	286
% in school	87.5	86.7	75.4	81.7	82.2

The cumulative effects of barriers to educational opportunity in these areas are reflected in the data presented in Tables 5.69, 5.70 and 5.71. The female population of all ages who have attended school are classified in Table 5.69 as secondary school leavers with (a) G.C.E. (Ordinary Level); and (b) G.C.E. (Advanced Level) qualification and as early school leavers whose education had been interrupted before they had completed their ten year secondary education. It is apparent that the incidence of early school leaving has been very high ranging from 68.9% in Borella (Colombo) and 70.5% in Pindeniya to 83.5% in Siruppiddy(Jaffna), and 92.5% in Wattegedera.

The further break-down of these numbers by the grade (Table 5.70) from which 'dropping-out' took place and the age wise analysis of these 'drop-outs' and those who have never been to school (Table 5.71) reveal that except in Wattegedera the illiterates and primary school leavers belong to older age groups and that about two-thirds of early school leavers have left from the secondary school. The largest numbers have left from Grades 5, 8 and 10, the terminal points of primary, junior secondary and secondary education respectively.

Reasons for early school leaving were ascertained from those who were interviewed in order to identify the nature of the obstacles to educational participation and this information is summarised in Table 5.72. The largest number in all areas excepting Wattegedera stated that economic constraints including the need to obtain employment or to attend to household chores or to look after siblings had prevented them from continuing their education. 'Family objections' which stemmed from economic difficulties or social attitudes had operated as a barrier for some, and puberty and marriage were factors which had led to early leaving among the older group, particularly in Siruppiddy and among the Tamil and Muslim women in Borella. A considerable proportion had left because they did not wish to pursue their studies and others as a result of failure in academic attainment. Few gave lack of educational provision or poor health as reasons for 'dropping out'. In all areas, therefore, economic difficulties and negative attitudes to education have contributed to a situation in which the majority of women had left school before completing ten years of schooling.

TABLE 5.69

FEMALE SCHOOL LEAVERS

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	PINDENIYA			SIRUPPIDDY			WATTEGEDERA			BORELLA		
	INTERVIEWED	NOT INTERVIEWED	TOTAL	INTERVIEWED	NOT INTERVIEWED	TOTAL	INTERVIEWED	NOT INTERVIEWED	TOTAL	INTERVIEWED	NOT INTERVIEWED	TOTAL
Secondary School leavers with Ordinary Level	32	--	32	13	5	18	5	--	5	40	13	53
Secondary School leavers with Advanced Level	11	3	14	2	1	3	4	--	4	6	--	6
Early School Leavers	74	36	110	97	7	104	78	33	111	114	17	131
TOTAL	117	39	156	112	13	125	87	33	120	160	30	190
% Early School Leavers			70.5			83.2			92.5			68.9

TABLE 5 70

EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING - BY GRADES (PERCENTAGE)

GRADES	PINDENIYA	SIRUPPIDDY	WATTEGEDERA	BORELLA	TOTAL
1	0.9	0 0	---	---	0.2
2	2.7	1.9	6 3	3.8	3.7
3	10 0	0.9	7.2	5.3	5.9
4	2.7	5.8	6.3	5.3	5.0
5	11 8	24.0	18.0	13.7	16.7
6	7.6	8.6	6.3	7.6	7.9
7	10.0	10.6	9.9	9 2	9.9
8	17.3	26.9	9.9	25.9	20.2
9	0.9	0.0	5.4	4.6	2.8
10	34.5	21.1	30.6	24.4	27.6
Total No.	110	104	111	131	456
Grades 1 - 5	26.4	32.7	37.8	28.3	31.6
Grades 6 - 10	73.6	67.3	62.2	71.7	68.4

TABLE 5.71

NO SCHOOLING AND EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS IN THE FEMALE POPULATION BY AGE

AGE	PINDENIYA			SIRUPPIDDY			WATTEGEDERA			BORELLA		
	ILLITERATES/NO SCHOOLING	PRIMARY SCHOOL LEAVERS	EARLY SECONDARY SCHOOL LEAVERS	ILLITERATES/NO SCHOOLING	PRIMARY SCHOOL LEAVERS	EARLY SECONDARY SCHOOL LEAVERS	ILLITERATES/NO SCHOOLING	PRIMARY SCHOOL LEAVERS	EARLY SECONDARY SCHOOL LEAVERS	ILLITERATES/NO SCHOOLING	PRIMARY SCHOOL LEAVERS	EARLY SECONDARY SCHOOL LEAVERS
9 - 17	4	1	--	--	--	3	1	10	7	1	--	2
18 - 25	--	26	--	5	14	1	9	32	1	11	28	
26 - 35	1	4	23	1	5	24	12	12	24	2	9	30
36 - 45	2	11	13	2	6	14	11	8	4	4	5	14
46 - 55	5	1	11	--	9	10	15	2	1	4	8	15
56 +	11	12	8	3	9	5	17	1	1	11	4	5
TOTAL 9 - 35	5	7	49	1	10	41	14	31	63	4	20	60
TOTAL 36 +	18	24	32	5	24	29	43	11	6	19	17	34
TOTAL	23	31	81	6	34	70	57	42	69	23	37	94

TABLE 5.72

REASONS FOR EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING

REASONS	PINDENIYA		SIRUPPIDDY		WATTEGEDERA		BORELLA		TOTAL			
	SECONDARY SCHOOL LEAVERS	PRIMARY SCHOOL LEAVERS	SECONDARY SCHOOL LEAVERS	PRIMARY SCHOOL LEAVERS	SECONDARY SCHOOL LEAVERS	PRIMARY SCHOOL LEAVERS	SECONDARY SCHOOL LEAVERS	PRIMARY SCHOOL LEAVERS	TOTAL SECONDARY	TOTAL PRIMARY	TOTAL	% DISTRIBUTION
Economic problems	14	4	14	7	7	2	22	7	57	20	77	
Employment	2	-	2	1	-	-	7	-	11	1	12	
Housework	-	-	16	3	-	-	2	3	18	6	24	
Care of Siblings	3	-	1	-	1	2	-	-	5	2	7	
No transport	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2	
Total Economic Reasons									92	30	122	33.6
Family objections	9	3	10	3	5	9	8	5	32	20	52	14.3
Puberty	-	-	9	7	1	3	4	4	14	4	18	4.9
Marriage	5	-	1	-	4	-	12	7	22	7	29	7.9
Lack of educational provision	2	-	2	-	-	2	1	-	5	2	7	1.9
Failure	5	1	-	-	12	3	8	2	25	6	31	8.5
Health	1	-	1	-	1	3	1	-	4	3	7	1.9
Did not like to study	17	6	13	7	5	9	16	5	51	27	78	21.5
Unable to give reason	-	-	-	-	8	1	-	-	8	1	9	2.5
TOTAL	59	15	69	28	44	34	81	33	253	110	363	

Obstacles to further education outside the formal school system were even more apparent. Of the 363 early school leavers only 16 had received any form of vocational education. One had gone to a Farm School, two to an Arabic School, and the others had enrolled in the conventional courses available to them - weaving, sewing, Batik printing, typing and nursing. On inquiry it was found that of these early school leavers 40.5% in Pindeniya, 3 1 in Siruppiddy, 29 5% in Wattegedera and 30.7% in Borella (belonging chiefly to the age group under 35 years) were desirous of obtaining some further education but had not succeeded in realizing their aspirations. The demand was for vocational training in the traditional 'feminine' areas of employment. The largest number (48.3%) expressed a wish to be trained in Batik printing - currently a remunerative area of employment - and the rest wished to be trained in sewing, stenography, nursing, home economics and Montessori teaching. Six wished to complete their formal education and one aspired to enrol in a technical course.

As stated earlier vocational training and continuing education facilities are inadequate in the three villages and constraints such as economic difficulties, household work and child care responsibilities have prevented these women from using facilities available in neighbouring towns.

Barriers to further education affected educational opportunity at both secondary and tertiary levels. Of the 113 secondary school leavers interviewed only 29 had had any post-secondary or vocational education after leaving school. Pindeniya had one arts graduate, Borella one graduate in arts, two in science, one in Medicine and one undergraduate. Eight women had received a professional training at Teachers' Colleges - three from Pindeniya, four from Wattegedera and one from Borella. Five had middle level professional qualifications - a diploma each in science, mathematics and commerce, a nursing certificate and Montessori Certificate and one was enrolled in an adult education class in English. Nine women had received training in traditional areas such as weaving, sewing, typing and Batik printing.

The limited partitipation of women in further education appeared to reflect, on the whole, lack of opportunity, economic constraints, the conflicting demands of home and work, and lack of motivation on the part of women themselves.

Educational opportunity tends to play a key role in a context in which facilities for cultural enrichment are minimal in the environment or economic deprivation prevents the majority from participating in a wide range of stimulating out-of-school activities.

In these four study areas the educational facilities available to a majority of women had been too limited to widen their horizons. They were by and large uncritical and lethargic regarding the need for a broader education, and half the secondary school leavers did not even respond to the question as to what other subject areas could have been meaningfully included in their curriculum. A few suggested Batik printing, typing and home science which were obviously considered to be of utilitarian value.

Their leisure interests were also limited by their narrow educational environment. Half the secondary school leavers claimed to have been members of literary societies in their school days and the early school leavers had been engaged in handicrafts or in shramadana activities. 23.7% of the early school leavers never read a book, 89% of urban and 33% rural secondary school leavers, and 69.9% of urban and 22% of rural early school leavers read the daily newspaper, 25% of early school leavers never saw a film and 60% did so very rarely. Since the leisure time activities of the girls in these areas who are presently enrolled in secondary schools are very similar it is difficult to envisage a richer cultural life for this new generation of young women.

To supplement the investigation relating to barriers which had prevented women in these four study areas from making optimum use of available educational facilities and to ascertain some current trends with regard to early school leaving an effort was made to investigate the incidence of 'dropping out' from the schools in the study areas. Wattegedera and Siruppiddy have each only a primary school and no more meaningful information could be obtained to supplement the earlier data from the interviews. Borella has several schools, some of them ranking among the prestigious schoolsin the island, but the student population is drawn from such diverse parts of the city and its suburbs that mobility is high and the variables affecting school participation are too complex to present a cohesive picture

Pindeniya, on the other hand, has in addition to its primary school a typical rural secondary school with classes from grades 4 to 12, which also meet the educational needs of neighbouring villages. An investigation was therefore made of the incidence of early school leaving in this secondary school from 1971 to 1977.

The total number and distribution of early school leavers or 'drop-outs' are presented by year and grade of leaving in Tables 5.73 and 5.74. It was found that while there have been more girls than boys enrolled in this school every year except in 1975, the rate of early school leaving has been consistently less for grils from 1971 to 1977. This pattern of more early school leaving among boys conforms to the national data (Table 5.11). The rate was higher in the mid-seventies as it was in the whole island according to School Census Returns. Two-thirds of the girls and over half the boys have left from Grades 9 and 10 - Grades which are crucial to access to senior secondary and higher education.

Reasons for leaving had to be ascertained from school records as only the early school leavers resident in the village of Pindeniya could be located and these had already been interviewed. It was found that one-third of both boys (33.5%) and girls (33.8%) had left to join another school, 8.1% of the boys and 12.3% of the girls had been 'pushed out' because they had not been able to qualify at examinations, and 1.5% of the boys and 1.3% of the girls had moved to another district. Although no definite conclusions can be arrived at from this inadequate data, just over half the boys and girls appear to have left school for socio-economic reasons. 3% of the boys and 1.9% of the girls have left specifically to seek employment and the rest have 'dropped-out' as a result of prolonged absenteeism (37.6% boys and 32.5% girls) or have been removed from school by parents for no explicitly stated reason (16.2% boys and 18.5% girls). Local experience and the findings of the area survey indicate that the majority of these two groups were compelled to leave school as a result of economic constraints which made it difficult for parents to meet the expenses of books and clothes or made it necessary for them to earn their living or to undertake time consuming household responsibilities.

TABLE 5.73

EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS - PINDENIYA MAHA VIDYALAYA 1971 - 1977

YEAR	NO. IN GRADES 1 - 10 MALES	NO. OF EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS	%	NO. IN GRADES 1 - 10 FEMALES	NO OF EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS FEMALES	%	TOTAL NO. IN GRADES 1 - 10	TOTAL NO. EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS	%
1971	391	14	3.6	401	7	1.7	792	21	2.7
1972	371	15	4.0	385	14	3.6	756	29	3.8
1973	368	15	4.1	370	12	3.2	738	27	2.7
1974	371	33	8.9	382	27	7.1	753	60	7.9
1975	352	22	6.3	344	14	4.1	696	36	5.2
1976	362	33	9.1	373	22	5.9	735	55	7.5
1977	357	27	7.6	348	19	5.5	705	46	6.5
TOTAL	2572	159	6.2	2603	115	4.4	5175	274	5.3

SOURCE: SCHOOL RECORDS, PINDENIYA MAHA VIDYALAYA 1971 - 1977.

TABLE 5.74

EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS BY GRADE AND SEX - PINDENIYA MAHA VIDYALAYA 1971 - 1977

GRADE OF LEAVING	MALES NO.	% DISTRI-BUTION	FEMALES NO.	% DISTRI-BUTION	TOTAL NO.	% DISTRI-BUTION	FEMALES %
4	15	9.4	12	10.4	27	9.8	44.5
5	12	7.5	6	5.2	18	6.6	33.4
6	13	8.2	5	4.3	18	6.6	27.8
7	16	10.1	6	5.2	22	8.0	27.3
8	12	7.5	9	7.8	21	7.7	42.9
9	30	18.9	26	22.6	56	20.4	46.5
10	61	38.4	51	44.3	112	40.9	45.5
TOTAL	159	100.0	115	100.0	274	100.0	41.9

SOURCE: SCHOOL RECORDS, PINDENIYA MAHA VIDYALAYA 1971 - 1977

The claim that there is a relationship between parents' occupation (in this case the fathers' occupation) and early school leaving was also examined. It was found that the relationship was statistically significant at 1% and 5% levels for boys but not for girls.[21] This conclusion may provide us with at least a partial explanation of the slightly lower early school leaving rate for girls in the national and local data.

It is possible that the fathers' disadvantaged economic circumstances becomes a motivating factor which compels boys to leave school in search of even casual jobs. In the case of girls the traditional economic role of woman as 'subsidising' workers or 'helpers' rather than as primary wage earners and their limited access to employment, obviously cushions them to some extent from the immediate impact of the fathers' economic circumstances on their schooling. This would be so particularly in Sinhala and Tamil villages and in urban society where the social constraints which operate to limit the participation of girls in secondary and higher education are also minimal.

EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS

In contrast to this rather depressing educational profile of women in these four locations, educational aspirations among secondary school girls are relatively high and the attitudes of parents and school children to the education of girls and women are largely positive.

Of the 132 secondary school girls in the four areas 116 responded to questions regarding their educational aspirations (Table 5.75). They were asked to state:

(a) the stage at which they intended leaving school - before Grade 10, after obtaining the G.C.E. (Ordinary Level) (Grade 10) or after obtaining the G C E. (Advanced Level) (Grade 12);

(b) whether they would seek employment or apply to enrol in a further education institution; and

(c) what type of further education institution they would wish to enter if they had the opportunity.

TABLE 5.75

EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL CHILDREN

	PINDENIYA	SIRUPPIDDY	WATTEGEDERA	TOTAL RURAL %	BORELLA	TOTAL URBAN %
TOTAL	35	18	27	100.0	36	100.0
A. Level of Educational Aspirations in School						
GRADE 12	35	16	24	93.7	34	94.4
GRADE 10	--	2	2	50	2	5.5
No response	--	--	1	1.3	--	--
B. Aspirations on leaving school						
Continue education in a further educational institution	4	11	16	38.7	32	88.9
Seek employment	31	7	10	60.0	4	11.1
No response	--	--	1	1.3	--	--
C Choice of further educational institution if opportunity given						
University	26	8	16	62.5	32	88.9
Technical College	--	3	2	6.3	--	--
Agricultural School	--	2	1	3.7	1	2.8
Nurses'School	3	1	1	6.3	--	--
Steno. Institute	--	1	--	1.2	--	--
Craft/Sewing Centre	4	1	6	15.0	1	2.8
Part-time Study courses	--	--	1	1.2	--	--
No response	2	2	--	5.0	2	5.5

The majority (over 90%) aspired to complete their senior secondary education. This included all the girls in Pindeniya and all except two each at the other locations.

Rural girls, particularly in Pindeniya preferred immediate employment on leaving school (60%) but 88.9% of urban girls wished to continue their education, presumably attracted by the opportunities available in Colombo and its suburbs.

A higher level of educational aspiration was reflected in the choice of University education as the objective of further education if opportunity was given by 88.9% of the urban girls and 62.5% of the rural girls. In Siruppiddy, Jaffna, technical and agricultural education were considered alternative avenues while 15% of the girls in the three rural areas envisaged joining craft or sewing training centres which were a reality in their own environment.

Education is evidently viewed by most of these girls as an agent of socio-economic mobility but presumably 'stretch values' created by their deprived circumstances have compelled some to accept more modest goals.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN

Parents interviewed in 375 households in the four areas appear to have a positive attitude to the education of their daughters and the old concept that girls should be confined to traditional household duties seems to have lost ground in the face of economic realities (Table 5.76). Parents were asked to indicate their stance regarding the views expressed in two positive and eight negative statements relating to:

(a) the usefulness of education for women;

(b) the concept of equal educational opportunity for women.

(a) The large majority of parents (over 90% of the mothers and nearly 90% of the fathers) agreed that the education of their women folk had a

socio-economic value and would help to ensure a brighter future, and it is interesting that no parent in any of the four areas disagreed with this view although 6% mothers and 10% fathers expressed no views.

There was less unanimity with regard to more specific statements. There were significant differences[22] among the views of parents in the four areas regarding the relative usefulness of employment as opposed to continuing education. Half the parents in Siruppiddy and Borella thought a job more useful, Pindeniya parents were undecided and only Wattegedera parents were unequivocally in disagreement, perhaps because the concept of employment was less acceptable in this Muslim community. A substantial number of Borella parents agreed that it was futile to attempt to enter the Universities because opportunities were so limited but while few in the other areas agreed with this view there was no strong disagreement. The views of Colombo parents may have reflected the current anxieties regarding prospects of University admission for their children. Most parents rejected the view that it was useless to invest in the education of their daughters and the majority had no strong views regarding the oft-repeated claim that the curriculum has no relevance to life.

(b) There was little opposition to the view that women should have the same educational opportunities as men but fathers tended to endorse this statement with less enthusiasm than mothers. There were significant difference[23] between the attitudes of mothers and fathers in Siruppiddy and to a lesser extent in Pindeniya and Borella. The view that women should not be given opportunities for (1) higher education- and (ii) vocational education were rejected by Pindeniya and Wattegedera parents. Most Borella parents were not in agreement but only a minority expressed clear disagreement and the majority of Siruppiddy parents were opposed to vocational education for their women.

Traditional societies tend to oppose educational opportunity for women through fear that educaction will lead to neglect of household responsibilities and to the erosion of traditional values. Few parents in these areas shared these fears and a considerable number did not appear to have any firm views, perhaps because they saw no dichotomy between the traditional role of a woman and their role expectations of an 'educated' woman.

In these area studies the Wattegedera Muslims appeared to be the most highly motivated with regard to the education of their daughters in contrast to their present educational backwardness, Siruppiddy parents tended to be the most conservative and rural Pindeniya parents were more forward looking than many city (Borella) parents. There was also no marked difference in views among the parents of the three ethnic groups in the city.

The majority of these rural and urban parents were evidently aware of the implications of the current problems of unemployment and the lack of adequate facilities for further education. Nevertheless they appear to believe that educating their woman folk would contribute to the welfare of their families and that educational opportunity was as important for women as for men in the present socio-economic context.

As a complementary study to this investigation of parental views two positive and six negative statements relating to the different aspects of the question of educational opportunity for women were given to a random sample of Grade 10 students (boys and girls) in selected schools in and around three of the study areas to elicit the views of the younger generation. The schools were:

(a) Pindeniya Maha Vidyalaya (co-educational institution);
(b) Jaminla Ashai Muslim Maha Vidyalaya, a co-educational institution in the neighbourhood of Wattegedera which secondary school age children of Wattegedera also attended;
(c) Devi Balika Vidyalaya, Colombo (girls);
(d) D S.Senanayake Maha Vidyalaya, Colombo (boys);
two prestigious single sex schools in Borella; and
(e) Susamyawardena Maha Vidyalaya - a co-educational school in Borella attended by children from low income families.

Respondents included students from the study areas as well as from other localities which the schools serve. Siruppiddy has no Maha Vidyalaya and circumstances at the time of the study made it difficult to obtain data from secondary schools in neighbouring districts.

The responses to the statements are presented in Table 5.77 and are summarised here.

(a) The majority of boys and girls agree that women should have equal educational opportunities but the boys and even the girls in Pindeniya and in the less affluent Borella school appear to be less committed to this concept. There is a significant difference between the reaction of the boys and girls in Wattegedera and in Borella.[24]

(b) With the exception of the boys in the Muslim school, the majority in all groups, and particularly the girls disagreed with the statement that women are not suited for higher and professional education.

(c) The view that the education of girls should be limited to 'useful' subjects such as needlework and knitting was firmly rejected by the girls and boys in the two affluent Colombo schools. A minority in Pindeniya, Wattegedera and Susamyawardena agreed with this view. While traditional concepts probably played their part in determining this response it is also possible that children from low income families had lower levels of aspirations which were largely influenced by utilitarian values.

(d) Fears that the traditional role of women in the home may be eroded by the spread of education among girls were not positively endorsed by a significant proportion of any group but all the boys and some rural girls appeared to have their reservations or to be uncertain about these issues.

(e) The economic value of education as an avenue to high level employment was strangely not appreciated by most students except by the girls in the affluent Colombo schools and to a lesser degree by the girls in the Pindeniya school.

(f) A possible relationship between expanded educational opportunity for girls and increasing unemployment was rejected by the majority in all groups except the Muslim boys.

TABLE 5.76 - ATTITUDES OF PARENTS TO EDUCATION OF WOMEN (PERCENTAGES)

	PINDENIYA = 100						SIRUPPIDDY 77 = 100%						WATTEGEDARA = 100					
	MOTHERS			FATHERS			MOTHERS			FATHERS			MOTHERS			FATHERS		
	Agree	Dis-agree	Un-certain	Agree	Dis-agree	Un-certain	Agree	Dis-agree	Un-certain	Agree	Dis-agree	Un-certain	Agree	Dis-agree	Un-certain	Agree	Dis-agree	Un-certain
Education improves the future prospects of our daughters/ sisters	99	-	1	93	-	7	96.1	-	3.9	87.0	-	13.0	90	-	10	89	-	11
It is better for our daughters/ sisters to seek a job than to continue their education	30	48	22	26	43	31	58.4	19.5	22.1	50.6	18.2	31.2	4	79	17	6	65	29
The subjects learnt in school by our daughters/sisters do not help them to cope with everyday problems	22	39	39	17	27	56	14.3	68.8	16.9	15.6	63.6	20.8	-	60	40	5	60	35
It would be more useful to use the money spent on books to buy food and clothing	5	56	39	9	25	66	3.9	81.8	14.3	7.8	74.0	18.8	-	90	10	-	86	14
It is useless for children to study to enter the University since the opportunities are limited	5	22	73	6	19	75	32.5	35.1	32.4	22.1	46.7	31.2	-	54	46	6	40	54
Women should have the same educational opportunities as men	91	8	1	64	8	28	94.8	1.3	3.9	77.9	9.1	13.0	84	-	16	82	4	14
Women should not be given opportunities for higher education	-	88	12	-	48	52	37.7	48.0	14.3	25.9	49.3	24.8	-	76	24	-	76	24
Women tend to despise their traditions as a result of their education	-	42	58	9	24	67	6.5	59.7	33.8	11.7	49.3	39.0	-	71	29	-	62	38
Educated women do not like to do housework	-	45	55	17	7	76	5.2	55.8	39.0	10.4	48.0	41.6	-	52	48	5	72	23
Even if girls are educated they should not be given a vocational training	-	99	1	-	81	19	85.7	5.2	9.1	75.3	11.7	13.0	-	80	20	-	44	56

TABLE 5.76 - ATTITUDES OF PARENTS OF EDUCATION OF WOMEN (PERCENTAGES) (contd.)

	BORELLA 98 = 100%						TOTAL 375 = 100%					
	MOTHERS			FATHERS			MOTHERS			FATHERS		
	Agree	Dis-agree	Un-cer-tain	Agree	Dis-agree	Un-cer-tain	Agree	Dis-agree	Un-cer-tain	Agree	Dis-agree	Un-cer-tain
Education improves the future prospects of our daughters/sisters	95.9	-	4.1	87.7	-	12.3	95.2	-	4.8	89.3	-	10.7
It is better for our daughters/sisters to seek a job than to continue their education	59.2	9.2	31.6	59.2	7.1	33.7	36.5	40.3	23.2	34.4	34.4	31.2
The subjects learnt in school by our daughters/sisters do not help them to cope with everyday problems	18.4	21.4	60.2	16.3	12.2	71.5	13.6	46.1	40.3	13.3	39.5	47.2
It would be more useful to use the money spent on books to buy food and clothing	7.1	47.9	45.0	6.1	22.4	71.5	4.0	68.3	27.7	5.6	50.7	43.7
It is useless for children to study to enter the University since the opportunities are limited	59.2	9.2	31.6	59.2	7.1	33.7	23.5	29.9	46.6	23.2	27.2	49.6
Women should have the same educational opportunities as men	90.8	-	9.2	78.6	-	21.4	89.9	2.4	7.7	75.5	4.8	19.7
Women should not be given opportunities for higher education	4.1	36.7	59.2	12.2	9.2	78.6	8.8	63.2	28.0	8.5	45.6	45.9
Women tend to despise their traditions as a result of their education	12.2	15.3	72.5	35.7	-	64.3	4.5	46.4	49.1	14.1	33.1	52.8
Educated women do not like to do housework	17.3	11.2	71.5	31.6	-	68.4	5.6	40.3	54.1	16.3	30.9	52.8
Even if girls are educated they should not be given a vocational training	3.1	28.6	68.3	-	9.2	90.8	18.4	56.3	25.3	15.5	38.1	46.4

TABLE 5.77 - ATTITUDE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS TO EDUCATION OF WOMEN

	PINDENIYA						WATTEGEDARA					
	GIRLS			BOYS			GIRLS			BOYS		
	AGREE	DIS-AGREE	UNCER-TAIN	AGREE	DIS-AGREE	UNCER-TAIN	AGREE	DIS-AGREE	UNCER-TAIN	AGREE	DIS-AGREE	UNCER-TAIN
Women should have equal chance of education	69.7	9.9	20.4	72.3	8.4	19.3	100.0	-	-	60.0	35.0	5.0
Higher education opportunities should not be provided for women	2.5	91.9	5.6	8.4	74.7	16.9	3.1	75.0	21.9	55.0	40.0	5.0
Even it women are educated they are not suited for professional education	5.5	73.4	21.1	19.3	55.4	25.3	21.9	43.7	34.4	45.0	35.0	20.0
The education of women should be limited to practical subjects such as needlework and knitting	10.5	66.7	22.8	21.6	60.2	18.2	43.7	21.9	34.4	30.0	20.0	50.0
Women who are educated will despise old customs	13.6	63.6	22.8	44.6	31.3	24.1	18.7	53.1	28.2	40.0	20.0	40.0
Women who are educated will not like household work	18.5	50.0	31.5	33.7	32.5	33.8	21.9	50.0	28.1	65.0	15.0	20.0
Educated women in higher level employment can help to overcome economic difficulties	64.8	9.2	26.0	50.6	21.7	27.7	40.6	31.2	28.2	20.0	25.0	55.0
The unemployment problem in the country has become more acute as a result of providing education opportunities for women	8.0	74.1	17.9	16.9	56.6	26.5	18.7	46.9	34.4	75.0	20.0	5.0
TOTAL (No.)	162	162	162	83	83	83	32	32	32	20	20	20

TABLE 5.77 - ATTITUDES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS TO EDUCATION OF WOMEN (PERCENTAGES) (contd)

	BORELLA (LOW INCOME)						BORELLA (PRESTIGIOUS SCHOOLS)					
	GIRLS			BOYS			GIRLS			BOYS		
	AGREE	DIS-AGREE	UNCER-TAIN	AGREE	DIS-AGREE	UNCER-TAIN	AGREE	DIS-AGREE	UNCER-TAIN	AGREE	DIS-AGREE	UNCER-TAIN
Women should have equal chance of education	66.7	23.3	10.0	57.5	7.5	35.0	92.1	0.9	7.0	68.7	5.3	26.0
Higher education opportunities should not be provided for women	-	93.3	6.7	5.0	82.5	12.5	0.9	98.0	1.1	4.5	75.0	20.5
Even it women are educated they are not suited for professional education	3.3	76.7	20.0	5.0	67.5	27.5	0.9	92.1	7.0	7.1	58.0	34.9
The education of women should be limited to practical subjects such as needlework and knitting	13.3	66.7	20.0	20.0	57.5	22.5	2.9	94.0	3.1	8.9	70.5	20.6
Women who are educated will despise old customs	3.3	73.3	23.4	17.5	47.5	35.0	7.9	71.3	20.8	23.2	28.6	48.2
Women who are educated will not tlike household work	6.7	53.3	40.0	20.0	35.0	45.0	5.9	75.2	19.9	17.8	28.6	53.6
Educated women in higher level employment can help to overcome economic difficulties	33.3	16.7	50.0	40.0	25.0	35.0	75.2	13.9	10.9	50.8	8.0	41.2
The unemployment problem in the country has become more acute as a result of providing education opportunities for women	-	70.0	30.0	17.5	40.0	42.5	4.9	67.3	27.8	11.6	41.9	46.5
TOTAL (No.)	30	30	30	40	40	40	101	101	101	112	112	112

On the whole girls had, perhaps naturally, a more positive attitude towards equal educational opportunity for women and other related issues. The girls from the achievement-oriented prestigious girls' school in Colombo were the most highly motivated and the boys in the Muslim school proved to be markedly conservative in their reactions.

One striking feature of the responses was that these students were by and large less positive in their attitude and less motivated than the parents in the survey with regard to the role of education as an agent of social and economic change. It must, however, be noted that these two groups are not comparable.

Parents are naturally highly motivated with regard to the future of their children and the majority of parents in these areas look to the education of both sons and daughters to liberate their families from social and economic deprivation. The students in this survey are 15 and 16 year old teenagers. Some of them have a high level of achievement motivation, others have their aspirations and views limited by their own disadvantaged circumstances, and many of them are full of the uncertainties that afflict their age and have not given much thought to social issues which do not appear to have immediate relevance to them. It is apparent, however, that there is need for increasing the motivation and consciousness of girls and of encouraging more positive attitudes towards social and economic change through education.

SUMMARY

The findings of these area studies confirm many of the conclusions arrived at on the basis of the macro-level survey. Where the student population is concerned sex disparities are minimal in all areas and the effects of the spread of education are seen in the rising educational level of the younger women. The lack of further education opportunities and early school leaving are major problems in every area, reflecting and reinforcing in turn poor standards of living, and underscoring the need for over-all

development. The aspirations of students and attitudes of parents are positive features of the current situation and the educational status of women is seen to be tied closely to their socio-economic status.

It must, however, be noted that these four study areas are located in relatively more developed districts in the island and that studies of backward areas may reveal a different situation in relation to some of the aspects of educational participation and of the status of women.

SOME COMPLETEMTARY STUDIES

While the area studies help to depict the educational profile of sub-groups of Sri Lankan women in a concrete setting it is also possible to obtain further insights into the multi-faceted relationship between education and the status of women by evaluating the impact of education on specific issues which are crucial to the social and economic role of women in Sri Lanka. Exploratory studies were made of two such issues - marriage and employment - to assess:

(a) the influence of education on two important components of the pattern of marriage - the mode of selecting a spouse and the social institution known as the dowry system;

(b) the extent to which education promotes economic mobility for women through employment.

These investigations were tentative. Their relevance to this study lies in their function in promoting a better understanding of social issues and social and economic changes which affect the quality of life of Sri Lankan women.

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL ATTITUDES RELATED TO SOME ASPECTS OF MARRIAGE IN SRI LANKA

In Sri Lanka the system of marriage is one of the strongest survials of traditional behaviour patterns. The large majority of women are still victims of a system in which their spouses are selected by an impersonal

mechanism controlled by the family kinship or friends and operating through familias connections, 'marriage brokers' or as in some instances in recent times, the press. This mechanism has an in-built commercial transaction by which bargaining is resorted to by means of the institution known as the dowry system. This depersonalizing process reduces women to the level of merchandise and vitiates their personal and social development.

It has been claimed that the winds of change have affected this traditional institution in recent decades and that both men and women are seen increasingly to take the initiative in selecting their spouses and to jettison the dowry system in the process. It seemed opportune therefore to obtain the views of a sample of men and women with regard to these two aspects of marriage and to attempt to evaluate the influence of their educational background on these views and attitudes.

The sample population of the four study areas - Pindeniya, Siruppiddy Wattegedera and Borelia - were interviewed for this purpose, and since those with a higher education were miniscule in these groups, the questionnaire was also administered to a group of final year medical students in the University.

Information was obtained with regard to:

(a) how the married respondents had selected their spouses;
(b) the mode which these married respondents preferred, if given the choice;
(c) how the unmarried respondents would like to select their spouses;
(d) the attitudes of all respondents to selecting a spouse from outside their racial, caste, religious, social, economic and age groups;
(e) whether the respondents accepted or rejected the dowry system.

The respondents in the study areas were grouped according to their levels of educational attainment into:

(a) illiterate;
(b) Grades 1 to 5 (primary education);
(c) Grades 6 to 10 (incomplete secondary education);

(d) G.C.E. (Ordinary Level)/(Advanced Level)/equivalent (complete secondary education);and
(e) University graduates.

The medical students were treated as a separate group.

THE PAST - HOW A SPOUSE HAD BEEN SELECTED

Married respondents were asked

(a) whether their marriages had been arranged for them through:
    (i) a 'marriage broker';
    (ii) the newspapers; or
    (iii) through family, relations and friends;
(b) whether they had made their own selection
    (i) with the subsequent approval of their parents; or
    (ii) despite opposition from parents and severance of relations with family.

On the basis of their answers respondents were divided into two groups:

(a) those who had gone through arranged marriages; and
(b) those who had made their own choices.

Table 5.78 gives the number and percentage of respondents of each educational level who had themselves selected their spouses. The majority in all areas had conformed to the traditional pattern of arranged marriages. One-third of the men and women in Pindeniya and Borella and very few in Siruppiddy (5.5% men and 5.7%women) and in Wattegedera (14.2% men and 7.5% women) had made their own choice. There was no significant difference in the behaviour pattern of men and women except in Wattegedera where a smaller proportion of women than men had made their own selection.[25]

It does not appear that the specific level of educational attainment was a major determining factor in making the decision, although among Pindeniya men and women with a complete secondary education half or just over half had made their own choice, and in Wattegedera a greater proportion of men with a ten year education had opted to select their partners.

A clearer picture emerges when the married women in all four areas are divided into two age-groups namely:

(a) 18 to 35 years; and

(b) over 35 years.

Table 5.79 presents the data relating to these two groups separately. It is interesting to note that there is a marked difference in the selection pattern of the two age groups in Pindeniya and Borella. A majority of the younger women, 74.3% in Pindeniya and 62.7% in Borella have made their own selection and few in the older group, 7.2% in Pindeniya and 2.7% in Borella, have done so. The few who have made their own choices in Wattegedera are all from the younger age group. In Siruppiddy, however, age has made no difference in the degree of acceptance of the traditional pattern.

The educational level of the women appears to have had little direct impact on either age group. While age appears to be the major determinant among women in Pindeniya, Wattegedera and Borella it has to be remembered that age and education are not two independent variables in Sri Lanka. The 18 to 35 years age group benefitted from the policy of free education introduced in 1945 and, presumably as a result, 52.6% and 50.8% respectively of the younger women in Pindeniya and Borella have at least a G.C.E. (Ordinary Level) qualification in contrast to 17.1% and 18.9% of the older women in these respective areas. The difference in attitudes reflected in selection patterns may be partially explained by the longer exposure to education of the younger women, and by the weakening of the influence of traditional practices in the wake of the spread of education in these two areas which could have been reflected in the more flexible attitudes of the parents of the younger women.

In wattegedera and Siruppiddy too, more women of the younger age group have had a secondary education as compared with the older women. Yet the impact of education was not so evident in these Muslim and Hindu communities, and in Siruppiddy, in particular, with the highest proportion of men with a secondary education, it seems that deeply-rooted cultural attitudes have been strongly resistant to change. This difference in the behavioural pattern of the Sinhala group on the one hand and the Tamil and Muslim groups on the other is seen in Borella too

TABLE 5 78

MARRIED MEN AND WOMEN WHO SELECTED THEIR OWN SPOUSES
(by educational level)

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	PINDENIYA			SIRUPPIDDY			WATTEGEDERA			BORELLA		
	TOTAL NO.	NO WHO MADE OWN CHOICE	%	TOTAL NO	NO. WHO MADE OWN CHOICE	%	TOTAN NO.	NO. WHO MADE OWN CHOICE	%	TOTAL NO.	NO. WHO MADE OWN CHOICE	%
ILLITERATE												
Males	4	1	25.0	2	-	0.0	19	4	21.1	7	1	14.3
Females	14	1	7.1	3	-	0.0	47	3	6.4	19	1	5.3
GRADES 1 - 5												
Males	30	6	20.0	18	1	5.5	33	2	6.1	7	-	0.0
Females	26	6	23.1	31	2	6.4	28	2	7.1	26	9	34.6
GRADES 6 - 10												
Males	39	14	35.9	15	1	6.7	22	1	4.5	39	16	41.0
Females	34	10	29.4	36	2	5.5	15	-	0.0	42	10	23.8
G.C.E. O.L./A.L / EQUIVALENT												
Males	24	14	58.3	38	2	5.3	15	5	33.3	40	12	30.0
Females	34	17	50.0	17	1	5.5	16	3	18.7	44	18	40.1
UNIVERSITY DEGREE												
Males	2	2	100.0	--	--	--	2	1	50.0	4	2	50.0
Females	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	2	1	50.0
TOTAL												
Males	99	37	34.3	73	4	5.5	91	13	14.2	97	31	31.9
Females	108	34	31.5	87	5	5.7	106	8	7.5	133	39	29.3

TABLE 5.79

MARRIED WOMEN WHO SELECTED THEIR OWN SPOUSES
(by educational level and age group)

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF WOMEN	PINDENIYA			SIRUPPIDDY			WATTEGEDERA			BORELLA		
	TOTAL	NO. WHO MADE OWN CHOICE	%	TOAL	NO. WHO MADE OWN CHOICE	%	TOTAL	NO. WHO MADE OWN CHOICE	%	TOTAL	NO. WHO MADE OWN CHOICE	%
ILLITERATE												
18 - 35	1	-	0.0	1	-	0.0	10	3	30.0	2	1	50.0
36 +	13	1	7.7	2	-	0.0	37	-	0.0	17	-	0.0
GRADES1 - 5												
18 - 35	5	4	80.0	6	-	0.0	16	2	12.5	12	9	75.0
36 +	21	2	9.5	25	2	8.0	12	-	0.0	14	-	0.0
GRADES6 - 10												
18 - 35	11	9	81.8	13	2	15.4	11	-	0.0	13	9	69.2
36 +	23	1	4.3	23	-	0.0	4	-	0.0	29	1	3.4
G.C.E. O.L/A.L./ EQUIVALENT												
18 - 35	22	16	72.7	9	1	11.1	15	3	20.0	30	17	56.7
36 +	12	1	8.3	8	-	0.0	1	-	0.0	14	1	7.1
University Degree												
18 - 35	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	50.0
36 +	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL												
18 - 35	39	29	74.3	29	3	10.3	52	8	15.4	59	37	62.7
36 +	69	5	7.2	58	2	3.4	54	-	0.0	74	2	2.7
TOTAL - ALL	108	34	31.5	87	5	5.7	106	8	7.5	133	39	29.3

where the pattern of preferences of the Sinhala women approximates to that of Pindeniya, 72.7% of the younger Sinhala women and 3.9% of the older group made their own choice, while no Tamil or Muslim women over 35 years and a minority in the younger group have done so.

On the whole the majority of those who selected their spouses have been able to do so with family consensus, and only 5 women. Four young Sinhala women in Borella and one in Pindeniya of different educational levels have been ostracized by the family or kingroup. Parental disapproval has stemmed from opposition to marrying outside the caste group or social class.

PREFERENCES IN THE MODE OF SELECTING A SPOUSE

Both married and unmarried respondents were asked how they would select their spouses.

The responses of the married group are presented in Table 5.80, and comparison with the data relating to actual marriage patterns reveals that while these men and women had by and large conformed to traditional practice in their youth, the majority in Pindeniya and Borella presently have more liberal attitudes. As the data in Table 5.81 indicates the change is most marked among the older women in Pindeniya and Borella. There is a significant increase also in the number of men in Siruppiddy who have positive attitudes to individual choice but the Siruppiddy women, and men and women in Wattegedera still accept the traditional pattern of arranged marriages.

The educational level of these respondents have no significant relationship to their views except in Pindeniya[26] where a larger proportion of men with at least a ten year education favour individual choice. Neither educational level nor age appear therefore to have a direct relationship with current attitudes but underlying these social norms may be seen the more extensive spread of education in Colombo and Pindeniya as contrasted with the

educational backwardness of Wattegedera. The importance of this data from these two areas is in the promise it seems to hold for the young girls of more liberal parental attitudes to their future selection and opportunity for personal development, and less overt conflict with families. It is a moot point as to whether the Siruppiddy men who expressed more liberal views can be a countervailing force of sufficient strength in this conservative society to make a meaningful change in the lives of their daughters and sisters.

The views of the unmarried respondents (Table 5.82) once again illustrates the positive social attitudes of residents of Pindeniya and Borella irrespective of their sex and intra-group educational levels. If these views are not mere nugatory hopes they augur well for change in role expectations of parents and women and in the whole nexus of family behaviour which centres round the present process of arranged marriages. In Siruppiddy nearly half the men with at least ten years of education and in Wattegedera a similar proportion of women of this same educational level have expressed relatively liberal views despite a negative socio-economic cultural context.

The mean age of marriage is 18 years in Wattegedera, 19 years in Siruppiddy and 22 years in Pindeniya and Borella and the modal years are 19 years in the first two areas and 23 years in the latter. With few exceptions the unmarried belong to the age-group 18 to 35 years but the attitudes of the unmarried are seen to be more liberal than even the 18 to 35 age group among the married group.

A partial explanation at least may lie in the higher educational attainment of a larger proportion of the unmarried group than of the married group (Table 5.83). At the upper level of educational attainment, too, are the medical students exposed to a longer period of education in an urban and largely 'westernised' environment. The large majority of these students - 82.1% Sinhala men, 97.6% Sinhala women, 80.0% Tamil men and 75.0% Tamil women - expressed their intention of making their own choice. Against this is the fact that the increases educational levels of the Siruppiddy men and women have had little impact on traditional ways of thought and living. The views of the unmarried are also largely aspirations which have yet to confront the cold world of reality.

TABLE 5.80

CHOICE OF MODE OF SELECTION OF SPOUSE BY MARRIED MEN AND WOMEN AND BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	PINDENIYA			SIRUPPIDDY			WATTEGEDERA			BORELLA		
	TOTAL	NO. WHO WISH TO MAKE OWN CHOICE	%	TOTAL	NO. WHO WISH TO MAKE OWN CHOICE	%	TOTAL	NO. WHO WISH TO MAKE OWN CHOICE	%	TOTAL	NO. WHO WISH TO MAKE OWN CHOICE	%
ILLITERATE												
Male	4	2	50.0	2	-	0.0	19	3	15.8	7	2	28.6
Female	14	5	35.7	3	-	0.0	47	3	6.4	19	5	26.3
GRADES 1 - 5												
Male	30	10	33.3	18	6	33.3	33	4	12.1	7	1	14.3
Female	26	15	57.7	31	-	0.0	28	3	10.7	26	19	73.1
GRADES 6 - 10												
Male	39	21	53.8	15	3	20.0	22	-	0.0	39	25	64.1
Female	34	23	67.6	36	3	8.3	15	2	13.3	42	29	69.0
G.C.E. O.L./A.L.												
Male	24	18	75.0	38	8	21.1	15	2	13.3	40	29	72.5
Female	34	23	67.6	17	2	11.8	16	2	12.5	44	31	70.4
University Degree												
Male	2	1	50.0	2	-	0.0	2	2	100.0	4	4	100.0
Female	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	50.0
TOTAL												
Male	99	52	52.5	73	17	23.3	91	11	12.1	97	61	62.9
Female	108	66	61.1	87	5	5.8	106	10	9.4	133	85	63.9

TABLE 5.81

CHOICE OF MODE OF SELECTION OF SPOUSE BY MARRIED WOMEN BY AGE GROUP AND EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF WOMEN	PINDENIYA			SIRUPPIDDY			WATTEGEDERA			BORELLA		
	TOTAL	NO WHO WISH TO MAKE OWN CHOICE	%	TOTAL	NO. WHO WISH TO MAKE OWN CHOICE	%	TOTAL	NO. WHO WISH TO MAKE OWN CHOICE	%	TOTAL	NO.WHO WISH TO MAKE OWN CHOICE	%
ILLITERATE												
18 - 35	1	-	0.0	1	-	0.0	10	-	0.0	2	-	0.0
36 +	13	5	38.5	2	-	0.0	37	3	8.1	17	5	29.4
GRADES 1 - 5												
18 - 35	5	2	40.0	6	-	0.0	16	1	6.2	12	8	66.7
36 +	21	13	61.9	25	-	0.0	12	2	16.7	14	11	78.6
GRADES 6 - 10												
18 - 35	11	10	91.0	13	2	15.4	11	1	9.1	13	11	64.1
36 +	23	13	56.5	23	1	4.4	4	1	25.0	29	18	62.1
G.C.E. O L /A.L.												
18 - 35	22	13	59.1	9	1	11.1	15	2	13.3	30	22	73.3
36 +	12	10	83 3	8	1	12.5	1	-	0.0	14	9	64.3
UNIVERSITY DEGREE												
18 - 35	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	50.0
36 +	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL												
18 - 35	39	25	65.8	29	3	10.7	52	4	7.7	59	42	71.2
36 +	69	41	61.4	58	2	3.5	54	6	11.1	74	43	58.1
TOTAL	108	66	62.2	87	5	5.8	106	10	9.4	133	85	63.9

TABLE 5.82

CHOICE OF MODE OF SELECTION OF SPOUSE BY UNMARRIED MEN AND WOMEN BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	PINDENIYA			SIRUPPIDDY			WATTEGEDERA			BORELLA		
	TOTAL	NO. WHO WISH TO MAKE OWN CHOICE	%	TOTAL	NO. WHO WISH TO MAKE OWN CHOICE	%	TOTAL	NO. WHO WISH TO MAKE OWN CHOICE	%	TOTAL	NO. WHO WISH TO MAKE OWN CHOICE	%
ILLITERATE												
Males	1	1	100.0	-	-	-	2	1	50.0	-	-	-
Females	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
GRADE 1 - 5												
Males	3	2	66.7	2	1	50.0	-	-	-	2	2	100.0
Females	1	1	100.0	3	-	0.0	3	2	66.7	8	7	87.5
GRADES 6 - 10												
Males	18	13	72.2	9	-	0.0	5	1	20	10	8	80.0
Females	7	5	71.4	8	1	12.5	7	3	42.8	18	16	88.9
G.C.E. O.L./A.L.												
Males	36	36	100.0	36	15	41.7	5	-	0.0	29	26	89.7
Females	40	37	92.5	23	1	4.3	14	6	42.8	39	33	84.6
UNIVERSITY DEGREE												
Males	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	50.0	2	1	50.0
Females	1	1	100.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	100.0
TOTAL												
Males	58	52	89.6	47	16	34.0	14	3	21.4	43	37	86.0
Females	49	44	89.8	34	2	5.9	24	11	45.8	67	58	86.5

TABLE 5.83

POPULATION WITH TEN YEAR SECONDARY EDUCATION

	PINDENIYA			SIRUPIDDY			WATTEGEDERA			BORELLA		
	TOTAL	NO	%	TOTAL	NO.	%	TOTAL	NO.	%	TOTAL	NO.	%
MARRIED												
Males	99	24	24.2	73	38	52.0	91	15	16.5	97	40	41.2
Females	108	34	31.5	87	17	19.5	106	16	15.1	133	44	33.3
MARRIED FEMALES												
18 - 35	39	22	56.4	29	9	31.0	52	15	28.8	59	30	50.8
FEMALES												
36 +	69	12	17.4	58	8	13.8	54	1	1.9	74	14	18.9
UNMARRIED												
Males	58	36	62.0	47	36	76.0	14	5	35.7	43	29	67.4
Females	49	40	81.6	34	23	67.6	24	14	58.3	67	39	58.2

THE SELECTION PROCESS

As the analysis of detailed responses (Table 5.84) indicates there appear to be ethnic and age group variations in the specific mechanism used in selection The preliminary negotiations relating to arranged marriages have traditionally been entrusted to a 'marriage broker' but the younger married group are less dependent on this intermediary and the unmarried have rejected this 'service'. Both in Siruppiddy and Wattegedera the family and kin circle practically control the process, thereby forming a bulwark built on the intimacy of family relationships against the impact of the less personalised world of education. In Siruppiddy there has been a trend towards using the services of intermediaries, a change that is consonant with the extension of the 'marriage market' beyond the confines of the neighbourhood to across the seas. The newspaper media appear to be a mode favoured only by urban parents or aspirants to marriage.

The majority of respondents wished to obtain family and social approval while making their own selection. No one in Siruppiddy and Wattegedera were prepared to challenge overtly the social control of the family and kinsfolk, few were willing to do so in the city environment of Colombo and only in Pindeniya was there a minority, largely from those with a secondary education, who even envisaged such a possibility.

ATTITUDE TO MARRIAGE OUTSIDE THE CULTURAL OR SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUP

An integral component of the traditional pattern of marriage was the in-built constraint on selection outside the socio-cultural group. The respondents in this study were asked to indicate their willingness to marry outside their:

(a) cultural group - race, caste, religion;

(b) socio-economic stratum - social class, economic status, different level of employment and educational level; and

(c) age-group.

TABLE 5.84

MODE OF SELECTION OF SPOUSE

		TOTAL NUMBER	THROUGH MARRIAGE "BROKER"	THROUGH NEWS PAPER	THROUGH FAMILY RELATION FRIENDS	OWN CHOICE WITH APPROVAL	OWN CHOICE WITHOUT APPROVAL	NO RESPONSE
PINDENIYA								
Married Women								
18-35	Mode of selection	39	2.6	2.6	12.8	71.8	0.3	7.7
	Preference		25.6	-	2.6	46.2	17.9	7.7
36 +	Mode of Selection	69	66.7	-	26.1	7.2	-	-
	Preference		37.7	-	1.4	46.4	13.0	1.4
Unmarried Women								
	Preference	49	4.1	-	6.1	63.3	26.5	-
SIRUPPIDDY								
Married Women								
18-35	Mode of Selection	29	-	-	89.6	10.3	-	-
	Preference		41.3	-	44.8	3.4	-	-
36 +	Mode of Selection	58	1.7	-	94.8	10.3	-	-
	Preference		24.1	-	72.4	3.4	-	-
Unmarried women	Preference	34	32.3	2.9	58.8	5.9	-	-
WATTEGEDERA								
18-35	Mode of Selection	52	7.7	-	71.2	15.4	-	5.8
	Preference		-	-	90.4	7.7	-	1.9
36 +	Mode of Selection	54	14.8	1.8	74.1	-	-	3.7
	Preference		-	-	85.2	7.5	-	11.1
Unmarried Women								
	Preference	24	4.2	-	50.0	45.8	-	-
BORELLA								
Married Women								
18-35	Mode of Selection	59	8.8	6.8	22.0	62.7	-	-
	Preference		10.2	5.1	13.6	66.1	5.1	
36 +	Mode of selection	74	37.8	17.6	41.9	3.4	-	-
	Preference		5.4	16.2	20.3	56.8	1.4	-
Unmarried Women								
	Preference	67	-	1.5	11.9	82.1	4.5	-
MEDICAL STUDENTS								
Sinhala Women		41	-	-	2.4	90.2	7.3	-
Tamil women		8	12.5	-	12.5	62.5	12.5	-

No one in Siruppiddy was prepared to marry from a different race, caste, or religion, and few in other areas favoured inter-racial marriages. The only substantial group to disregard caste differences were 42% of the married women in Borella and over 60% of the unmarried men and women in Pindeniya Half the unmarried group in Pindeniya were also not averse to selecting a spouse from another religion (Table 5.85). The views of Wattegedera men and women reflect the absence of caste in the social structure of the Muslim population.

The specific educational level of the respondents had no significant relationship with these attitudes. On the other hand 64% of all the Medical students, and 70% Sinhala women students and 75% Tamil women students were willing to marry outside their race. While schools have separate language media streams the educative environment in the Faculty of Medicine has been such as to reduce the social distance between racial groups. Their longer and broader educational experiences, however, do not appear to have much impact on caste prejudices since only a little less than half the medical students are willing to ignore caste differences in marriage.

Respondents tended to be more flexible with regard to marriage outside their socio-economic group Nevertheless there were interesting variations. Differences in employment and educational levels seemed to matter less to rural women than social and economic status while urban women appeared to be less conscious of social class and economic status. In the Tamil village few men and women wish to marry outside their strata but in Wattegedera the younger and better educated women were more flexible in their views. Age differences were less welcome to younger women except in Wattegedera.

While the evidence was inconclusive there was some indication that those with lower educational levels were less sensitive regarding status concepts and socio-economic differences in selecting their spouses. The responses of the Medical students also point to a greater concern for social and economic status than for cultural differences. It is possible that the

TABLE 5.85

ATTITUDE TO MARRIAGE OUTSIDE THE GROUP

		TOTAL	DIFFERENT RACE	DIFFERENT CASTE	DIFFERENT RELIGION	DIFFERENT SOCIAL CLASS	DIFFERENT ECONOMIC STATUS	DIFFERENT TYPES OF JOB	DIFFERENT EDUCATION LEVEL	DIFFERENT AGE GROUP
PINDENIYA	MARRIED MALE	99	0.0	16.3	13.0	25.0	27.2	34.8	77.2	55.4
	FEMALE	106	0.0	17.1	5.7	20.0	26.7	67.6	79.0	41.9
	UNMARRIED MALE	58	3.6	63.6	45.4	29.1	36.4	52.7	50.9	36.4
	FEMALE	49	8.2	63.3	53.1	36.7	30.6	38.7	40.8	22.5
SIRUPPIDDY	MARRIED MALE	73	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	56.2	45.2	42.5	2.7
	FEMALE	87	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.3	34.5	26.4	22.9
	UNMARRIED MALE	47	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.2	23.4	53.2	14.9	4.2
	FEMALE	34	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.4	54.8	9.7	16.1	19.3
WATTEGEDARA	MARRIED MALE	91	1.1	0.0	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	0.0	1.1
	FEMALE	106	22.6	1.9	25.5	7.5	5.7	10.4	1.9	23.6
	UNMARRIED MALE	14	33.3	100.0	28.6	21.4	50.0	21.4	14.3	71.4
	FEMALE	24	42.9	87.5	16.7	54.2	25.0	50.0	50.0	79.2
BORELLA	MARRIED MALE	97	7.2	27.8	16.5	35.1	47.4	38.1	41.2	15.5
	FEMALE	133	3.7	42.1	18.0	61.7	64.7	55.6	42.8	18.0
	UNMARRIED MALE	43	9.3	20.9	9.3	18.6	27.9	25.6	11.6	9.3
	FEMALE	67	4.5	14.7	31.3	44.8	52.2	38.8	20.9	10.4
MEDICAL STUDENTS										
SINHALA	MALE	28	67.8	46.4	71.4	28.6	35.7	35.7	67.1	53.6
	FEMALE	41	70.7	43.9	68.3	43.4	46.3	46.3	65.8	48.8
TAMIL	MALE	10	60.0	50.0	50.0	40.0	30.0	30.0	30.0	70.0
	FEMALE	8	75.0	37.5	25.0	12.5	62.5	62.5	50.0	37.5

younger and more educated women are more concerned with improving their life style in social and economic terms than with maintaining the status quo with regard to the socio-cultural structure.

THE DOWRY SYSTEM

The dowry system is sometimes the pivot around which arranged marriage revolves while in others it is an ancillary measure. The degree of formalization of the system also varies among regions and economic strata. In this study the percentage of those whose marriage included a dowry settlement ranged from 45.6% men and 47.6 women in Pindeniya, 55.7% men and 66.2% women in Borella and 61.5% men and 61.3% women in Wattegedera to 87.6% men and 82.7% women in Siruppiddy.

Tables 5.86 and 5.87 give the percentage of those (married and unmarried) who considered that giving or receiving dowries was an essential part of marriage. Regrettably no response has been obtained from the women in Siruppiddy where the dowry system is an integral part of the complex of marriage and kinship relations.

In all areas the proportion of the married group who agreed that a dowry was necessary is much less than could be expected from the prevalence of the practice. The numbers who reacted negatively to the dowry system are significantly greater only among those with at least a secondary education among the Pindeniya men and women.[27] The attitudes of the married could reflect social and economic changes, new patterns of thinking brought about by the spread of education or the travails of parents hard-pressed to provide dowries for their daughters.

The responses of the unmarried group varied from rejection of the dowry system by the men and women in Pindeniya, the women in Wattegedera, and to a lesser extent by the men and women in Borella, to acceptance of it by nearly half the men in Wattegedera (42.8%) and the greater majority (76.6%) in Siruppiddy. The response was similar at all educational levels. In the Medical Faculty too the dowry system was acceptable to only a minority of Sinhala students (14.3% men and 2.4 women) and Tamil women students (12.5%) but over half the Tamil men students (60%) thought it an essential basis for marriage. While most women appear opposed to

TABLE 5.86

MARRIED RESPONDENTS WHO CONSIDERED DOWRY TO BE ESSENTIAL

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	PINDENIYA		SIRUPPIDDY		WATTEGEDERA		BORELLA	
	TOTAL	%	TOTAL	%	TOTAL	%	TOTAL	%
ILLITERATE								
Male	4	0.0	2	0.0	19	26.3	7	71.4
Female	14	35.7	-	-	47	42.5	19	47.4
GRADES1 - 5								
Male	28	42.8	18	44.4	33	30.3	7	57.1
Female	25	20.0	-	-	28	35.7	26	38 5
GRADES6 - 10								
Male	36	22.2	15	53.3	22	27.2	39	53.8
Female	34	20.6	-	-	15	40.0	42	45.2
G.C.E. O.L./A.L. EQUIVALENT								
Male	22	9.1	38	31.6	15	40.0	40	42.5
Female	32	9.3	-	-	16	12.5	44	50.0
GRADUATES								
Male	2	0.0	-	-	2	0.0	4	25.0
Female	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	50.0
TOTAL								
Male	92	23.9	73	38.3	91	29.7	97	49.5
Female	105	19.0	-	-	106	35.8	133	45.1

TABLE 5.87

UNMARRIED RESPONDENTS WHO CONSIDERED A DOWRY TO BE ESSENTIAL

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	PINDENIYA TOTAL	%	SIRUPPIDDY TOTAL	%	WATTEGEDERA TOTAL	%	BORELLA TOTAL	%
ILLITERATE								
Male	1	0.0	-	-	2	100.0	-	-
Female	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
GRADES1 - 5								
Male	2	0.0	2	100.0	-	-	2	50.0
Female	1	0.0	-	-	3	0.0	8	50.0
GRADES6 - 10								
Male	16	12.5	9	88.8	5	40.0	10	10.0
Female	7	14.3	-	-	7	0.0	18	16.7
G.C.E. O.L./A.L./ EQUIVALENT								
Male	36	5.5	36	72.2	5	40.0	29	13.8
Female	40	2.5	-	-	14	7.1	39	25.6
GRADUATES								
Male	-	-	-	-	2	0.0	2	50.0
Female	1	0.0	-	-	-	-	2	0.0
TOTAL								
Male	55	7.3	47	76.6	14	42.8	43	16.3
Female	49	4.1	-	-	24	4.2	67	25.4

a system of which they are often hapless victims the reaction of the men seemed to differ according to the importance attached to dowries in the respective culture patterns.

The reasons adduced for accepting or rejecting the dowry system reflect the contending social and economic forces in the milieu in which education functions. The social system requires parents to provide a dowry as a measure of security despite the heavy economic constraints that operate in the case of the large majority of families in low income societies. It also imposes a custom which was accepted implicitly by a considerable proportion of the respondents. Nevertheless, while the protagonists of the system are chiefly concerned about its economic 'advantages', its opponents, and particularly the younger unmarried group have begun to assert their individuality against the stranglehold of the social system. The responses reveal that increasing numbers of women resent the loss entailed to their self-respect and to their individual worth by the process of business-like bargaining that is a concomitant of dowry transactions.

What is even more significant is that the majority in Pindeniya, Borella and Wattegedera look to employment through education as an economically viable alternative to the dowry system. Of the unmarried men, 92 7% in Pindeniya, 85.7% in Wattegedera and 74 4% in Borella preferred to marry a girl with a job than a girl with a dowry. Only in Siruppiddy did the majority (63 8%) prefer a dowry while another 17% wanted both job and dowry. It would, of course, be difficult to envisage a better status and future for women if education-cum-employment merely replaces the traditional dowry as a lever in the bargaining process.

SUMMARY

This study of two aspects of marriage which are central to the status of women indicates that the prevailing pattern is still the arranged marriage in which women are subordinated to the demand of a social system. Changing patterns of behaviour point to more individual

decision-making as against social conformity but social disapproval of marriage outside the socio-cultural group survives strongly. The nuclear family structure was more prevalent than the extended family in these four areas but as far as the selection process in marriage was concerned both formed part of a social system in which traditional practices had a dominant influence on decision-making.

In societies in which post-secondary educational opportunities are still very limited the educational level of the individual was not often seen to have a clear impact on views and attitudes. The more independent and liberal views of the younger age-group, however, reflect the erosion of cultural norms associated with marriage in an environment in which the spread of education is assisting women to be economically independent and is encouraging their personal development. Cultural lags have reduced the impact on education on closely-knit societies in two areas. On the other hand the responses of students in an achievement-oriented higher educational institution point to more rapid change as further education and employment opportunities are extended to women in all strata and regions.

EDUCATION AND MOBILITY THROUGH EMPLOYMENT

The higher rate of participation of women in education in the last four decades has been noted earlier in this Chapter. The increasing labour force participation rate and the influx of women into the professions as well as to other areas of employment are discussed in the next chapter. What is attempted here is the examination of data relating to some aspects of the relationship between education and mobility through employment.

The macro-level statistics presented in Tables 5 89 to 5.92 seem to indicate that there is a dual relationship between education and employment for both men and women, and particularly for women. It will be seen from Tables 5 88 and 5 89 that the educational level of employed women has improved in the inter-census years between 1963 and 1971. Data relating to specific professions in Chapter 6 will illustrate the fact that education has increased the employable skills of women, and their levels of

aspiration and weakened social barriers that have in the past inhibited the economic participation of women in employment outside the home.

At the same time unemployment statistics reveal that women have been more adversely affected than men by the unemployment problem in the country. In 1970[28] the unemployment rate of women (21.2%) was nearly double that of men (11.4%), and the statistics of the employed and unemployed male and female population by educational attainment in 1971 (Tables 5.90 and 5.91) show that there are more women than men among the unemployed with G.C.E. (Ordinary Level) and (Advanced Level) qualifications or university degrees.

Three features of the relative characteristics of the employed and unemployed are worthy of special comment.

(i) While the early school leavers together with those with no schooling constitute the majority of the population, the proportion of incomplete and complete secondary school leavers is much higher among the unemployed. Sex disparities are also evident among the unemployed with higher education attainment. While 7.1% of the employed men and 9.3% of the employed women have had a secondary or higher education, 10.5% of the unemployed men and 19.8% of the unemployed women have the same educational background.

(ii) The women were only 22.5% of the employed population and their proportion was higher only in the no schooling and Advanced Level groups. Among the unemployed, however, their percentage, 43.9%, ranging from 33.5% among primary school leavers to well over half the unemployed with secondary and higher educational qualifications.

(iii) The age-wise data in Table 5.92 shows that a similar situation prevails among all three age groups - 15 to 19 years, 20 to 24 years and 25 to 44 years - except in the case of higher education graduates where the two younger groups are more adversely affected since graduate unemployment has been a relatively recent phenomenon.

TABLE 5.88

EMPLOYED POPULATION BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND SEX, 1963

EDUCATIONAL	MALES	% DISTRI BUTION	FEMALES	% DISTRI BUTION	TOTAL	% DISTRI BUTION	FEMALES %
No Schooling	335,570	13.2	328,600	50.0	664,170	20.7	49.4
Grades 1 - 4	843,680	33.2	150,290	22.9	993,970	31.1	15.1
Grades 5 - 8	1,061,750	41.7	94,190	14.3	1,155,940	36.1	8.1
G.C.E. O.L.	142,290	5.6	35,160	5.3	177,450	5.5	19.8
G.C.E. Advanced Level / Equivalent	27,830	1.1	19,110	2.9	46,940	1.5	40.7
Degree/ Equivalent and above	12,620	0.5	2,780	0.4	15,400	0.5	18.1
Unspecified	119,180	4.7	26,680	4.1	145,860	4.5	18.3
TOTAL	2,542,920	100.0	656,810	100.0	3,199,730	100.0	20.5

SOURCE: BASED ON CENSUS OF CEYLON, 1963

TABLE 5.89

EMPLOYED POPULATION BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND SEX, 1971

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	MALES	% DISTRI-BUTION	FEMALES	% DISTRI-BUTION	TOTAL	% DISTRI-DUTION	FEMALES %
No Schooling	35,096	1.2	24,672	3.0	59,768	1.6	41.3
Grades 1 - 5	1,195,264	42.6	249,016	30.6	1,444,280	39.9	17.2
Grades 6 - 10	919,754	32.8	126,890	15.6	1,046,644	28.9	12.2
G.C.E. O L.	135,377	4.8	39,344	4.8	174,721	4.8	22.5
G.C.E A.L.	39,206	1.4	29,821	3.6	69,027	1.9	43.2
Degree and above	24,369	0.9	7,549	0.9	31,918	0.9	23.7
Unspecified	458,117	16.3	337,549	41.4	795,666	21.9	42.4
TOTAL	2,807,183	100.0	814,841	100.0	3,622,024	100.0	22.5

SOURCE: BASED ON CENSUS OF CEYLON, 1971

TABLE 5.90

UNEMPLOYED POPULATION BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND SEX, 1971

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	MALES	DISTRI-BUTION	FEMALES	% DISTRI-BUTION	TOTAL	DISTRI-BUTION	FEMALES %
No Schooling	58,041	13.0	43,216	12.3	101,257	12.7	42.7
Grades 1 - 4	71,859	16.1	36,140	10.3	107,999	13.6	33.5
Grades 5 - 10	269,545	60.4	200,922	57.4	407,467	59.1	42.7
G.C.E. O.L.	42,405	9.5	63,347	18.1	105,752	13.3	59.9
G.C.E. A.L/ EQUIVALENT	2,780	0.6	3,640	1.0	6,420	0.8	56.7
Degree/ Equivalent and above	1,770	0.4	2,528	0.7	4,298	0.5	58.8
TOTAL	446,406	100.0	349,798	100.0	796,204	100.0	43.9

SOURCE: BASED ON CENSUS OF CEYLON, 1971.

TABLE. 5.91

EMPLOYED AND UNEMPLOYED POPULATION 15 - 44 YEARS BY SEX AND EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT 1971

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	15 - 19 YEARS EMPLOYED FEMALES %	15 - 19 YEARS UNEMPLOYED FEMALES %	20 - 24 YEARS EMPLOYED FEMALES %	20 - 24 YEARS UNEMPLOYED FEMALES %	25 - 44 YEARS EMPLOYED FEMALES %	25 - 44 YEARS UNEMPLOYED FEMALES %
No Schooling	36.1	32.1	44.5	35.0	42.2	46.5
Primary Education	30.5	28.9	26.2	31.4	16.9	37.7
Middle School	23.4	40.8	20.6	42.4	11.2	45.7
G.C.E. O.L.	26.4	57.5	24.9	56.2	23.3	56.0
G.C.E. A.L.	32.9	43.4	34.9	42.6	46.1	58.1
Degree and above	25.6	100.0	39.3	68.0	66.2	56.5
Unspecified	47.0	-	47.5	-	46.6	-
TOTAL	32.3	38.8	26.7	44.0	22.9	48.6

SOURCE: BASED ON CENSUS OF CEYLON 1971

Education is still important as an avenue to higher level employment and economic considerations and educational qualifications impel more and more women to seek employment. As a concomitant, however, of the unemployment situation in recent years higher educational attainment per se has not led to socio-economic mobility through employment for women

HIGHER EDUCATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT

This dual role of education in relation to employment is also apparent in this case study of a sample of men and women who graduated from the Universities in Sri Lanka in 1971.

University education is the needle-like apex of the educational pyramid in Sri Lanka Till the early sixties any University graduate had easy and quick access to professional and high level employment, and higher education functioned successfully as an agent of socio-economic mobility. This situation changed from the later sixties when the University student population had expanded, the economy showed signs of poor absorptive capacity and graduate unemployment became a problem of great magnitude. Most graduates from science-based courses continued to find remunerative employment but University education became almost a blind alley for many arts graduates. In this situation University women were more adversely affected than their male counterparts.

Information regarding employment experience was obtained by means of a questionnaire sent to 631 men and women graduates, 20% of those who graduated from the four Universities in Sri Lanka in 1971 - Colombo, Peradeniya, Vidyalankara and Vidyodaya, 42 9% (146 men and 125 women) responded The majority belonged to the 25 to 35 years age group and 56.8% were married. The 36 men and 21 women from science-based courses had had no problems in obtaining satisfactory employment. The target group of the investigation relating to:

(a) type of employment; and

(b) waiting time in obtaining employment;

was therefore, the 110 men and 104 women 'liberal arts' graduates

Only one male in this group of 214 arts graduates was found to be unemployed in 1978 and the spectre of graduate unemployment seemed illusory. Nevertheless, the information obtained from this survey is of particular importance in evaluating the role of University arts education in providing access to remunerative employment.

TYPE OF JOB

Whereas in the past a University arts degree led to employment in the professions, administration or graduate teaching, only 8.2% of the men who graduated in 1971 and 1.8% of the women had jobs at this level. 22% of the men and 76.9% of the women had teaching jobs on the salary scale paid to teachers with secondary school qualifications, while nearly half the men (41.3%) and 8.6% women had clerical jobs which in the past had been an employment area for secondary school leavers (Table 5.92).

WAITING TIME

Information regarding the time taken to obtain employment reveals that the women arts graduates were a disadvantaged group in this respect (Table 5 93). 8.3% men and 0.9% women graduates found employment immediately and 15.6% men and 9.6% women had jobs within one year. At the end of four years 64.2% of all the men graduates and 22% of the women were employed. 60% of the women were employed in 1976, 56.8% being absorbed into the teaching profession at secondary school educated teachers' salaries in the fifth year of unemployment. This phenomenon was a result of a political decision and a special employment programme to absorb unemployed graduates into the teaching service at reduced salaries It is difficult to envisage the position of these women graduates (over half the sample) if this special measure had not been adopted

TABLE 5 92

UNIVERSITY ARTS GRADUATES - TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT
(sample 1971)

EMPLOYMENT	MALES NO.	% DISTRI-BUTION	FEMALES NO.	% DISTRI-BUTION	TOTAL NO.	% DISTRI-BUTION	FEMALES %
Professions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Executive	5	4.6	1	0.9	6	2.8	16.7
Research	3	2.7	-	-	3	1.4	-
Graduate teaching	1	0.9	1	0.9	2	0.9	50.0
Teaching (certificate)	24	22.0	80	76.9	104	48.8	76.9
Sub-managerial	14	12.8	7	6.7	21	9.8	33.3
Supervisory	6	5.5	3	2.9	9	4.2	33.3
Clerical	45	41.3	9	8.6	54	25.3	16.7
Agriculture	2	1.8	-	-	2	0.9	-
Distributive	1	0.9	-	-	1	0.5	-
Others	8	7.3	3	2.9	11	5.2	27.3
TOTAL	109	100.0	104	100.0	213	100.0	48.8

TABLE 5.93

UNIVERSITY ARTS GRADUATES - WAITING TIME FOR EMPLOYMENT
(Sample 1971)

TIME	MALES NO.	% DISTRI-BUTION	FEMALES NO.	% DISTRI-BUTION	TOTAL NO.	% DISTRI-BUTION
Immediately	9	8 3	1	0.9	10	4.9
Less than one year	17	15.6	10	9.6	27	12.6
1 year to less than 2 years	16	14.7	2	1.9	18	8.8
2 years to less than 3 years	18	16.5	3	2.9	21	9.8
3 years to less than 4 years	11	10.1	7	6.7	18	8.8
4 years to less than 5 years	14	12.8	63	60.6	77	37.7
5 years to less than 6 years	1	0.9	10	9.6	11	5.4
More than 6 years	1	0.9	2	1.9	3	15
Working as students	22	20.2	4	3.8	26	12.7
No response	-	-	2	1 9	2	0.9
TOTAL	109	100.0	104	100.0	204	100.0

The only woman graduate who obtained a job immediately is also the only woman in the sample holding an executive level employment. Her responses indicate that recruitment had been based on family or social connections and that education per se had played a secondary role.

CONCLUSION

University arts education in the seventies, therefore, led to frustration resulting from several years of unemployment and eventually to inadequate job satisfaction, stagnation and low economic 'status'. Education led to even more restricted mobility for women arts graduates than for men with the same qualifications, while both men and women, professional, medical and science graduates continued to enjoy the privilege of easy access to prestigious employment.

The effectiveness of education as a mechanism for achieving economic mobility for women is thus seen to have depended largely on the type of education received rather than on the level of education. The evidence from the graduate survey substantiates the view that science education had the greatest potential for mobility in a context of scarce skills in this resource area. This factor would operate for both graduates and secondary school leavers from arts-oriented courses as reflected in the macro-level data It also underscores the fact that employment opportunities for women are considered to be of marginal importance in a restricted labour market except in politically volatile circumstances.

SOME OBSERVATIONS

CURRENT PROBLEMS IN EDUCATIONAL PARTICIPATION

This survey of educational opportunities and participation has helped to identify and focus attention on four 'problem areas'.

(a) It is apparent that the policy of free primary, secondary and tertiary education has been a major factor in extending educational opportunities for girls and women. Nevertheless, economic constraints and the absence of legislative provision for enforcing compulsory attendance have contributed to a situation in which only half the number of boys and girls enrolled in school proceed to secondary schools. Priority should be given in educational policy to the large proportion of 'non-school going' and 'early school leaving' girls who become virtually educational outcasts and in consequence are destined to be confined to the lowest levels of the socio-economic pyramid.

(b) Inequalities exist in the provision of educational facilities. As indicated earlier such inequalities are regional and economic and affect both boys and girls, but their implications could be more grave for women in view of their greater vulnerability to discrimination arising from cultural constraints and negative societal attitudes. Imbalances in educational provision and participation have been identified among:

(i) those resident in economically disadvantaged districts;
(ii) those from economically deprived families in both urban and rural Sri Lanka; and
(iii) Muslim and Indian Tamil women

(c) Sex stereotypes in curriculum organization and learning materials reinforce social prejudices and affect adversely the provision of educational facilities and the level of aspirations and achievements of women.

(d) Outside the school system inequalities are of greater magnitude. Tertiary education opportunities for women have been limited to access to selected professions while the whole question of adequate opportunities for the further education of school leavers is a crucial national problem.

Women have had relatively easier access to, and have utilized,vocational educational opportunities in traditional areas in the service sector. In the rural society in which the majority of women live and work, access to agricultural education has been severely restricted. Training in traditional rural industries presents a depressing picture of second class status and poverty. Modern industry promotes exploitative training for routine jobs but in juxtaposition there is under-utilization of available facilities in institutions and in the National Apprenticeship Board Programmes. Pre-school and family and civic-oriented adult education have yet to receive adequate attention.

The main barriers to educational opportunity are therefore seen to be:

(i) the lack of facilties and the imposition of quotas which limit access to available facilities;

(ii) the cultural prejudices which affect the provision and utilization of educational opportunities. Some of these are overtly expressed as in the prejudices of employers who train National Apprenticeship Board apprentices or in the misconceptions expressed with regard to the 'weaker' sex by those responsible for policy making and implementation;

(iii) the lack of adequate motivation on the part of women for skill development and advancement as a result of cultural conditioning; and

(iv) Sri Lanka's economic and employment problems over the past decade which have inhibited participation in education and the provision of further education opportunities for women, and which tends to vitiate the trading policies of national level organizations and employers.

EDUCATION AND THE STATUS OF WOMEN

The lacunae in educational provision and participation have been identified but these studies also point to the fact that aspirations and attitudes, and what goes on within the educational institution and outside it also have their implications for the status of women. Education can function as an agent of development and change but the pace of change depends on a multiplicity of other factors which operate in the total social milieu.

In Sri Lanka positive social policies such as the extension of educational opportunities have set in motion social forces which have helped to improve the status of women. The impact of these forces is seen in this survey in the higher educational levels and aspirations of younger women, in their changing attitudes to traditional behaviour patterns, in the importance attached by parents to the education of their daughters, and in the entry of women into a wider range of occupations.

In any society, however, the role of education in effecting change is largely determined by the socio-economic environment and by societal values. Research evidence[29] has shown that education cannot by itself transform society, and a natural corollary is that education per se cannot change the status or role of women.

As elsewhere, in Sri Lanka too, education has not been able to compensate for inadequacies in the environment. Both macro-level and other data have shown that economic constraints are largely responsible for non-enrolment, early school leaving/imbalances in provision and participation and the poor absorptive capacity of the economy. Societal values operating through sex-role stereo-types and social norms place constraints on the role of education vis-a-vis the status of women. Aspirations and preferences are culturally conditioned. Even where educational participation is relatively extensive, role expectations of a woman as a subsidiary worker and as a passive unit in the family structure come into conflict with the demands created by new educational experiences.

In Sri Lanka half the school population and nearly 40% of the University student population are women, the female literacy rate is over 70%, and the concept of equal educational opportunity for both sexes appears to be a goal accepted by the majority of policy-makers and parents. At the

same time many women themselves were seen to conform to outmoded social conventions relating to marriage, caste and the dowry system, and society has assigned to women a subordinate status in this and other areas of social and national life. Such contradictions are still a part of Sri Lankan society.

The survey of social attitudes also revealed another facet of the role of education in determining the status of women. Education was seen to be most effective in liberating women from social servitude when it was linked with employment. Research findings[30] have also supported the claim that rising educational levels and increasing labour force participation among women have been two major determinants of the falling birth rate in Sri Lanka.

Education has, therefore, been an important stimulant to the improvement of the status of women in Sri Lanka, both on the ideational plane and in its practical consequences. Its impact on women has been reduced largely by attitudinal barriers in the total culture and within the education system as well as by the vicissitudes of the development process.

NOTES

1. Paranavitana, S., Sigiri Graffitti, OUP (1956)
2. The Portuguese were in Ceylon from 1505 to 1658, the Dutch from 1658 to 1796 and the British from 1796 to 1947.
3. Annual Letters of the Jesuits translated into English by Fr. S.G. Perera in 'Historical Records of the Society of Jesus' in the Ceylon Antiquary and Literary Register, Vol. II, p.80.
4. Palm, J.D., 'The Educational Establishments of the Dutch in Ceylon', Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1846, p.105.
5. Educational Ordinances No.5 of 1906, No.8 of 1907 and No.1 of 1920.
6. Education Ordinance No.31 of 1939 (Government Press, Ceylon).
7. Survey of Sri Lanka's Consumer Finances 1973, Central Bank of Ceylon, 1974.
8. UNESCO: An Asian Model of Educational Development.
9. There is evidence, for instance, that a high incidence of absenteeism prevails in the agricultural areas of the Dry Zone during the harvesting season and that the drop-out rate is higher than the national average in these areas. This is substantiated by data from the on-going National Science Council 'Man and Bio-sphere Project' in the Mahaweli New Settlement Areas (H Area) by Dr.Percy Silva, Dr.Jayanthi Perera and Mr.W.N.Wilson, Department of Geography, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka.
10. The National Certificate of General Education Examination was held only in 1975 and 1976 as a part of the 1972 educational reforms.
11. Pre-Examination Statistical Report on the first National Certificate of General Education Examination to be held in December 1975, Department of Examinations, Sri Lanka, 1975.
12. English Book 3 for Grade 5, p.70, Department of Publications, Colombo.
13. English Book 4 for Grade 6, pp.25 and 27, Department of Publications, Colombo.
14. An English Course for Grade 9, p.164 and An English Course for H.N.C.E., pp.72 and 75, Department of Publications, Colombo.

15. An English Course for Grade 8, p.2, An English Course for H N.C E , p 27, Department of Publications, Colombo.

16 (i) Strauss Murray,A , Family Characteristics and Occupational Choice of University Entrants as clues to the social structure of Ceylon. University of Ceylon Review, Vol. IX, No.2 (1951), pp.125 - 135; and

(ii) University Admissions 1976 - A Report on the Background Characteristics of the Entrant Population. Planning and Programming Division, Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka, 1977.

17. The Office of the External Agency, University of Sri Lanka, Colombo.

18 Ellman, A O , and Ratnaweera, D.de.S., New Settlement Schemes in Sri Lanka. Agrarian Research and Training Institute, 1974.

19. The Vocational Training Programme of the Department of Labour, 1978.

20. Dias Malsiri, Women's Development Centres (Konrad Adenauer Stiftung), 1977.

21. Relationship between reasons for leaving and father's occupation $x^2 = 115.26$ df = 72. Significant at 1% level

22. Statistical Significance of Difference of views among mothers in four areas $x^2 = 121$, df = 6, significant at 1% level.

23. Statistical significant differences between attitudes of mothers and fathers:

Siruppiddy $X^2 = 9.5$ df = 2 significant at 1% level
Pindeniya $X^2 = 6.5$ df = 2 significant at 5% level
Borella $X^2 = 5.7$ df = 2 significant at 5% level

24. Statistical significance of differences between the views of boys and girls:

Wattegedera $X^2 = 13.4$ df = 2 significant at 1% level
Borella (Devi Balika) $X^2 = 17.9$ df = 2 significant at 1% level
Borella (Susamyawardena M V.) $X^2 = 7.6$ df = 2 significant at 5% level.

25 Statistical difference in behaviour pattern of men and women in selecting spouse:

Wattegedera $X^2 = 6.02$ df = 2 significant at 5% level.

26. Statistical significance of relation between educational level and choice of spouse:

Pindeniya (males) $X^2 = 10.96$ df = 4 significant at 5% level.

27. Statistical significance of relation between educational level and acceptance of dowry system:

Pindeniya (males) $X^2 = 8.7$ df = 2 significant at 5% level
Pindeniya (females) $X^2 = 11.6$ df = 2 significant at 1% level.

28. Socio-economic Survey of Ceylon 1969 - 1970, Department of Census and Statistics, Colombo.

29. Some relevant studies are:
    (i) Halsey, A.H., Educational Priority, London, HMSO (1972)
    (ii) Husen Torsten, Social Background and Educational Career, OECD (1972)
    (iii) Coleman James, S., et al, Equality of Educational Opportunity (Washington) DC US Government Press 1966).

30. Marga Institute: Preliminary Report on Determinants of Fertility in Sri Lanka, Case Study, 1978.
    Hanna B., and Nadaraja, T., 'Fertility Differentials in Sri Lanka' in Population Problems in Sri Lanka, Demography Training & Research Institute, University of Sri Lanka, (1976).
    World Fertility Survey, First Report, Sri Lanka, Department of Census and Statistics, 1975
    Also refer section on Educational Attainment and Fertility in Chapter 2 of this Study (The Demographic Background) and Tables 2.54, 2.55, 2.57 and 2.58.

WOMEN IN THE ECONOMY

by

SWARNA JAYAWEERA

WOMEN IN THE ECONOMY

The economic role of women and the impact of development on the status of women have been the subject of much discussion and analysis in recent years. Historical, cultural and environmental differences among societies preclude generalizations and definitive conclusions but local studies have enriched our understanding of the complexities of the relationships between the economic activities of women and their status in society.

This Chapter attempts to evaluate the economic participation of women in Sri Lanka as an index to their status. The economic profiles of women have been examined from all possible aspects with assistance from data from national level surveys, area studies, and from the views of employers and women workers. The findings of the different studies are synthesized to present as complete a picture as possible of the economic activities of women and to highlight the issues and problems which affect the economic status of women in Sri Lanka.

WOMEN AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

TRADITIONAL SOCIETY

As in most societies, in Sri Lanka too, women were never limited exclusively to their ascribed role of homemaking and child bearing. While their economic role has been subsidiary and their status tied to social dependence, their economic contribution to the economy has been substantial in every phase of historical and social change

Little reliable information is available with regard to women in "prehistorical" Sri Lanka but their economic role could have been analogous to that of women in other hunting and "horticultural" societies. Subsequently for over 2500 years women have participated in the traditional agrarian economy, which still exists in the rural sector in Sri Lanka.[1]

Sex roles operated in this society within the economic and social stratification known as the caste system Castes which had their origins in races, tribes, occupations and immigrant population groups were linked eventually with occupations which were important determinants of income and status. Villages were sometimes segregated on caste basis but agricultural

was the main economic activity since the majority of the population were farmers, and even craftsmen and other non-agricultural workers depended on agriculture for subsistence.

Women were co-producers with men in this economy in the field and in domestic industries. They owned land and had access to economic resources, but the family was the basic social and economic unit and their economic status was viewed largely in relation to this unit. The man was usually the head of the family, the protector and the chief provider, and the woman, the wife and mother.

Economic activities took the form of family labour. In the cycle of agricultural activities and in domestic industries "men's work" and "Women's work" were sometimes defined by custom, social sanctions and even religion overlaid by myths. Women were excluded from threshing on the grounds of "pollution" and weeding and transplanting were generally considered to be feminine tasks. Women also participated actively in harvesting and to a limited extent in field preparation and sowing. They were responsible for preparing and taking food to workers in the field, for boiling and drying the paddy and separating the rice from the husks by pounding, and for cultivating the home garden. Women played a more active role in shifting (chena) cultivation of subsidiary food crops. Sex differentiation was also apparent in some domestic industries and crafts organized on a family basis. Metal and wood work were male occupations and women engaged in activities such as spinning, mat and basket weaving and coir work. It is interesting to note that this traditional pattern of cultivation and division of labour still survives in contemporary Sri Lanka.

Social class was from early times a determinant of women's economic role Women in affluent and "upper class" families were not directly involved in economic activities. They often supervised household tasks relating to the different phases of the agricultural cycle but for the most part they lived in seclusion and were relegated to domestic functions as distinct from economic functions. On the other hand women in economically disadvantaged families had no alternative but to participate actively in agricultural work in the fields and in ancillary tasks, and therefore led

less socially restrictive lives. As hired labourers and domestic servants many of them were an integral part of the work force in this feudal socio-economic structure.

COLONIAL SOCIETY

While the traditional agrarian economy continued to be the bedrock of the lives of the majority of the population, the impact of Western colonial rule from the sixteenth century, and particularly the deeper economic penetration of the island in the nineteenth century introduced new forms of economic organization and policies.

The abolition of rajakariya or service tenure in 1832 undermined the occu - pational basis of the caste system though not its concomitant social values and attitudes. Peasant agriculture received low priority and the creation of an export economy based on plantation cash crops such as coffee, tea, rubber and coconut led to the introduction of large scale capitalist enterprise. The hill country was transformed, villages disappeared as in the enclosure movement in eighteenth century England,[2] and large scale plantations owned by British entrepreneurs and firms and using immigrant Indian labour became almost an economic enclave.

Female labour was utilized in this new phase of economic development, but once again, women (and children) were employed in family labour units as subsidiary workers and were paid lower wages than men. Indian women labourers in their role of tea pluckers became an important component of the tea industry which was the chief source of revenue for the colonial government and of profit for private enterprise. They were also the first women to be exploited on a large scale as cheap wage labour.

This model of low paid female wage labour was replicated in the British owned rubber and coconut estates, in related industries, the coffee, tea packing , copra and coconut fibre mills in Colombo, - which like the factories in the aftermath of the Industrial Revolution in England, employed a large ill-paid women labour force,[3] - and in the estates, the plumbago mines, and fibre and other mills of Sri Lankan entrepreneurs who adopted the same form of economic organization as their rulers. Poor women from

the depressed peasant economy also drifted to urban centres seeking employment in domestic service in the homes of the upper class and the new middle class, or in petty trade in a new segment of the unorganised sector of the economy.

In juxtaposition, nineteenth century Victorian social norms centring around the concept that 'a woman's place is the home' were transposed into Sri Lankan elite society, reinforcing the traditional seclusion of upper class women and merging into the value system of the new middle class.

These norms, however, could not prevail against two new forces - the demand for female workers from the expanding service sector, and the supply of skills, albeit on a limited scale, from the schools organised for girls by the colonial administration, Christian Missionaries and local organizations, and from the Medical and University Colleges. As elsewhere, women first sought to enter occupations which were conceptually extensions of their domestic roles - the education and health services as teachers, nurses, midwives and doctors in urban and rural areas. As the twentieth century advanced they became clerks, telephone operators and sales girls, and began to pioneer new employment areas.

With 'modernization' as this phase in economic development has been termed, women therefore continued to be economic producers in a large way as cultivators in peasant agriculture, as plantation labour (Table 6.1) and unskilled factory workers,[4] as employees in the education and health services, and as domestic aides whose service was regarded as a pre-requisite for the participation of professional middle class women in economic activities. The majority of urban and rural women workers were wage earners who were often paid less than men or were unpaid family workers, but a minority achieved socio-economic mobility through the education system and employment.

RECENT DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

The colonial economy survived even after political independence and little change was manifest in the sectional distribution of the economy over three decades. The vicissitudes of time, however, brought several developments which serve as a backdrop to the identification of the economic roles of women in contemporary Sri Lanka.

TABLE 6.1

THE NUMBER OF PERSONS ENGAGED IN AGRICULTURE AND THE TEA INDUSTRY BETWEEN 1871 - 1911

		1871	1881	1891	1901	1911
Agriculture:	Males	531,573	579,336	673,389	774,858	827,431
	Females	37,025	64,948	584,861	631,677	681,762
	Total	568,598	644,284	1,258,250	1,406,535	1,509,193
Tea:	Males	---	---	16	211,345	247,559
	Females	---	---	22	176,275	222,639
	Total	---	---	38	387,620	470,198

SOURCE: The Determinants of Labour Force Participation Rates in Sri Lanka - 1973, Central Bank of Ceylon, Colombo, 1974.

Social imperatives led to the adoption of welfarist policies in areas such as education, health and food subsidies. Rapid population growth from the forties till the sixties added to the strains caused by slow economic growth.[5] As described in Chapter 5, equal access to education improved the education status of women. There was an influx of school leavers and higher education graduates into the labour market, seeking successfully at first to enter professional and white collar employment since vocational education opportunities had not expanded to provide them with a wider range of skills.

Employment opportunities were drastically curtailed from the sixties as a result of deteriorating economic conditions. Declining terms of trade and foreign exchange constraints and subsequent rapid world inflation limited the absorptive capacity of the economy. Repercussions were seen in a major unemployment problem gravely affecting entrants to the labour market. Women were more adversely affected than men and the unemployment rate of women is stated to have nearly doubled from 1959 (12.1 %) to 1969 (21.2 %)[6] and to be 32.9 % in 1975.[7]

During these years economic policies were often related to 'development models' or concepts which had their implications for the economic participation of women. In the years following political independence priority was given to large scale agricultural development of the dry zone through colonization schemes of settlers from more populous areas, such as the Gal Oya Development Scheme of the fifties, and to a few capital intensive industries. The pattern of economic participation did not differ radically in the new agricultural settlements but the larger land holdings could have limited the participation of women, particularly after the initial pioneering years. The majority of women continued to be 'unpaid family workers', and the over-all returns of these large projects were not adequate to improve the position of women in the rural sector. In industries such as the new and large textile mills, the machinery installed militated against the employment of women in what had been a traditional area of female participation.

Women were absorbed into the service sector until the market was saturated. 'Development' projects envisaged specifically for women during these years by both state and voluntary organizations such as the Lanka Mahila Samithiya were focussed on conventional programmes in rural development and rural

industries. The Department of Rural Development organized special women's societies from 1954 to develop handicraft, home economics, home gardens, health and sanitation which were considered to be relevant to the role of women in society. The main activities undertaken were the development of mobile needlework and home economics training centres in villages which were in effect limited to training traditional skills for the next two decades. Agricultural extension was directed to 'farmers' - a term which had an exclusive male connotation. The only employment-oriented programme was the 'Handloom Scheme' begun in 1965 in which the majoirty of participants were women. This avenue of income generation for rural women was however adversely affected by foreign exchange constraints and world inflation.

Despite the active participation of women as producers in agriculture their employment potential and problems have been of marginal interest to policy makers. The 'Unemployment Relief' Schemes of the Ministries of Agriculture and Land Irrigation and Power for youth from agricultural families (1966), the Agricultural Development Corps or 'Land Army' (1967), the Youth Work Projects of the National Youth Council established in 1968 - were all restricted to men. Training opportunities for women were limited to tailoring in the programmes for the unemployed organized by the Department of Labour. Unemployed male University graduates were given priority in the Graduate Training Scheme of 1971.

The emphasis on economic growth associated with the U.N. 'First Development Decade' in the sixties was modified by the concern with both economic and social development in the U.N. 'Second Development Decade' in the seventies. In Sri Lanka policy objectives were stated to be geared to income distribution through land reform, the expansion of the public sector, the development of decentralized employment programmes through the small scale sector, the use of labour intensive technologies and the promotion of self-employment. The majority of the new programmes[8] were rural based, and although no reliable sex-wise data is available for all projects, the participation of women appears to have been relatively high in some of these traditional employment areas.

The District Development Councils (1971) sponsored by the Ministry of Planning were intended to promote grass-roots level development and appropriate technology through agricultural, industrial, fisheries and service projects. Women constituted 20% of workers in agricultural projects and were also employed in a few new manufacturing projects such as the manufacture of watches and clock repairs. Some of the electoral Co-operative Farms of the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands had only male workers but in others female participation ranged from 30% to 70%. Women formed 50% of the workforce in the collective farms of Janawasas established by the Land Reform Commission after the Land Reform Law of 1972. This law limited private land ownership to 50 acres (and 25 acres in the case of paddy) and the 'surplus' land was brought under state management or distributed among the landless. Young women were participants in the National Youth Service Council Settlement Schemes and collective farms for the 18-25 age group (1973). An innovation was the Women's Farm begun in 1974 as a part of the Udawalawe complex of four farms. This Farm, however, turned out to be an unsuccessful venture and was eventually abandoned.

These programmes failed as collective enterprises, income-generating activities and training projects. Many of them were only innovatory in organization and women were absorbed into DDC farms and Janawasas as members of the agricultural labour force. The same unequal wage structure continued to operate. The only significant policies were the Women's Farm and the appointment of women representatives to the Board of Directors of one Co-operative Farm. The positive response made by women was however indicative of the potential resources for development among rural women.

The need to integrate women in the development process was not overlooked in Sri Lanka and two special programmes were introduced to assist rural women to maximize their contribution. The Farm Women's Agricultural Extension Programme (FWAEP) inaugurated in 1974 with FAO assistance is an on-going programme by the Extension Division of the Department of Agriculture. Its objective is to train extension workers and village leaders to promote income-generating activities in agriculture and industry among rural women and to improve the living standards of agricultural families.

The usefulness of such a programme is evident in the context in which agricultural extension has been generally confined to men. It is doubtful whether sufficient priority has been given to resources and training needs to ensure its success.

The expanded Programme of Women's Development Centres[9] of the Department of Rural Development was introduced in 1975 to extend the function of the Mobile Needlework Centres to provide production-oriented training in order to develop economically viable self-employment programmes among rural women. Lacking in capital resources and skilled personnel these centres had the depressing image of many such institutions in third world countries and were limited to teaching needlework skills and to the production of poor quality, unmarketable goods. The role and status of rural women did not, on the whole, undergo any significant change in improvement during the seventies.

The National Apprenticeship Board was created in 1971 as the main national agency in training industrial workers to meet development needs. The scheme is open to both sexes but it has made little impact on the participation of women in industry. A few women have received training in radio mechanics, typewriter repairs and printing but women apprentices have been limited to only 14 of 117 courses offered between 1973 and 1978 and have never exceeded 5% of the total enrolment. The Board has succumbed to the pressures of employers and has hardly made any headway against the barriers created by the sex-based division of the labour market. Despite its present negative role it has considerable potential for equipping women with a wide range of skills and facilitating their involvement in development programmes.

While national schemes have generally tended to overlook the role of women in economic development, policies engendered by worsening economic conditions have practically propelled women in greater numbers into the manufacturing sector. During the last decade both public and private sectors have launched programmes geared to (i) import substitution and (ii) promoting non-traditional exports and export-oriented traditional industries.

The repercussions of import substitution policies were seen in the efforts to expand the handloom, powerloom and synthetic textile and coir industries

in which large numbers of women have been employed, in the creation of additional employment opportunities in the manufacture of leather and plastic goods, toys, electronics, tobacco and food and beverage industries, and in the cultivation of subsidiary food crops such as chillies and onions. Foreign exchange constraints, however, operated as limiting factors in the promotion of these manufacturing industries.

The expansion of export-oriented industries had a more significant impact on the economic participation of women. Small industries have not been revitalized and the participation of women in the gemming industry is limited. On the other hand the labour intensive batik industry has offered avenues of creative participation and income-generation through small scale home-based and part-time employment. Women play a large role in sophisticated ceramic industries. Ninety per cent of the factory operatives in the export-oriented garment industry are young women between 18 and 35 years, using traditional skills in routine jobs and comprising an ever increasing source of relatively cheap labour for large scale industry.

Tourism which has become a major avenue of earning foreign exchange has also spawned a wide range of economic activities such as travel agencies, tourist guest houses and shops and air lines, although the State Hotels Corporation has limited the employment of women to the positions of receptionists and housekeepers. The negative impact of tourism is equally apparent in the towns and villages in the vicinity of tourist centres and complexes.[10]

Current development policies are directed to the liberalization of imports, the promotion of large scale private investment and enterprise both within and outside the Export Processing Zone established under the Greater Colombo Economic Commission, and the accelerated development of the Mahaweli Diversion and settlement project in the dry zone.

The liberalization of imports has expanded the field of economic activities, chiefly for urban women, and has at the same time imperilled the employment opportunities of the large numbers of women engaged in traditional and local industries which are battling for survival in the face of competition

from more sophisticated imports. The phenomenon of large national and multi-national enterprises employing thousands of women workers has increased manifold with the development of the Free Trade Zone and the expansion of the private sector. The majority of projects approved so far in this Zone are garment and allied industries which draw on the large labour reserve of young women.[11]

In the Dry Zone the Mahaweli Development Scheme has so far used male skilled and unskilled labour to develop the infrastructure. In the settlement areas the economic participation of women has differed according to manpower needs but the subsidiary role of women as unpaid family labour has continued to dominate this field of economic activity and very little provision is yetavailable for off-farm activities.

In the service sector women have been encouraged to enter hitherto male preserves such as the transport industry as bus conductors and traffic wardens, and the army, of course in their traditional role of health and clerical workers ministering to male needs.

There also looms on the development scene the steady exodus of skills to West Asia and the consequent lacunae in skilled employment. Unfortunately there has been no visible efforts made by the Department of Labour or the National Apprenticeship Board or any other agency to make optimum use of the human resources represented by women in filling this vacuum, although the hope still lingers that as in crisis situations elsewhere "women power" may be used to supplement 'manpower' needs.

ROLE OF WOMEN

In the macrocosm that is Sri Lankan society women have been and are producers in vital sectors of the economy. The process of economic and social change affected their economic role in diverse ways and it would be naive to assume that there is a clear positive or negative relationship between development and the economic status of women in Sri Lanka. It is useful also to make a distinction between (i) economic participation and (ii) economic status as these two often operate at different behavioural levels.

"Modernization" or political, economic, social and education changes have by and large tended to increase the economic participation of women and to enhance their contribution to national development. In traditional society women were an integral component of the largely family-based agricultural and industrial labour work force. Where traditional subsistence agriculture survives, the pattern has not changed appreciably. In large scale agricultural settlements a variety of factors have operated as determinants of economic participation.

The increase in the quantum of work has created a demand for female labour but distance from home and improved economic circumstances have tended to replace traditional exchange labour with hired labour in which men tend to predominate. Mechanization has introduced tractors to male areas of activity - ploughing and threshing - but traditional methodology continues to operate in transplanting and harvesting in which women have been active. The use of agro-chemicals , a male preserve, has however tended to obviate the need for female labour in weeding. In the plantation sector repatriation of immigrant Indian labour has increased the employment opportunities of local women.

Development has by-passed the large numbers of women engaged in small industries and traditional crafts which retain their depressing image of neglect and impoverishment. The establishment of large scale industrial enterprises has created role-conflict among married women workers, but the demand for low cost female labour has led to mass employment of young untrained women in depersonalizing "assembly line" occupations.

A significant change has been the emergence of women from more economically favoured families from their seclusion. Education, social and economic rewards and career commitment have impelled women from middle and upper income groups to participate extensively in service sector employment and to pioneer on a small scale new employment areas in traditional masculine fields such as, technology and management.

Economic independence often leads to higher economic status, but in the Sri Lankan social and economic structure they have not necessarily been

positively correlated. Women have always had access to economic resources such as land but not always to economic power or decision-making. A small proportion of women have scaled the heights of the public service with limited success. As far as the majority of women are concerned their work is valued in economic terms as low cost labour. The transition from unpaid family workers to plantation labour and factory operatives on low wages has not led to personal development or to improved economic status.

Women have always been integrated in economic development and have been exploited in the process. Their marginality in employment and development programmes is a useful pointer to their economic role and status.

LEGISLATION AFFECTING EMPLOYMENT

ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT

Constitutional provisions and state enforced administrative regulations constitute the framework in which access to organized employment is usually determined. In Sri Lanka both the 1972 and 1978 Constitutions accepted the principle of legal equality.

Section 16(2) of the 1972 Constitution pledged the Republic of Sri Lanka to securing full employment for all citizens of working age. Section 18(1) h stipulated that there should be no discrimination on the ground of sex. A proviso that "in the interests of such services, specified posts or classes of posts may be reserved for members of either sex", however, led to the imposition of discriminating regulations limiting the access of women to important sections of the public service.

Quotas were enforced restricting women to

(i) 10% of the recruitment to the Sri Lanka Administrative Service - the prestigious service from which the decision-makers are drawn. This quota was increased to 25% in 1975.

(ii) 20% of the recruitment to the vast island wide network of the General Clerical Service, and

(iii) 20% of the State Accounts and Shroff Services.

As a result a considerable proportion of women who qualified at the open competitive examination were denied entry to these jobs during the last six years.

With the change of government a new Constitution was introduced in 1978. Section 12 guarantees absence of discrimination in employment and a further clause ensures special provision "by law, subordinate legislation or executive action for the advancement of women,children and disabled persons." It is apparent that women are considered a disadvantaged group in need of the special protection of the state.

Despite the removal of the proviso in the 1972 Constitution and a government policy decision in March 1978 to the effect that there should be no discrimination against women in recruitment to the public service, the quotas were included in the Minute on the Sri Lanka Administrative Service in August 1978.[12] The quotas are inoperative in terms of the new Constitution but the gap between policy and regulation had yet to be bridged. The removal of the quotas is likely to increase employment opportunities in the public service which attracts large numbers of women. Its implications for expanding opportunities in the sanctum of managerial level employment are also noteworthy.

LABOUR LEGISLATION

In keeping with international practice Sri Lanka has introduced a series of labour laws and has, in addition ratified two I.L.O. Conventions relating to the prohibition of Underground and Night work.[13] These Labour Laws are in force in the organized sector :

(i) Maternity Benefits Ordinance, No.32 of 1939 as amended by No.35 of 1946, No. 26 of 1952, No.6 of 1958, No.24 of 1962, No.1 of 1966 and No.13 of 1978.

(ii) Factories Ordinance, No.45 of 1942.

(iii) Shop and Office Employees Act, No.19 of 1954.

(iv) The Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children's Act No.47 of 1956.

(v) Employees Provident Fund Act 1958.

(vi) Mines and Minerals Act 1973 and

(vii) Wages Board Ordinance.

The objectives of this legislation appear to be multifarious and the main provisions pertain to maternity benefits, welfare measures, protective legislation and remuneration. Legislation relating to maternity protection and benefits seek to protect the vital social function of women of reproduction. Minimal welfare facilities in the workplace are ensured by some provisions. By and large, however, other labour laws stem from the image of women as weak and helpless and therefore in need of protection and concessions and as deserving of subordinate socio-economic status with appropriately lower remuneration.

SCOPE OF LEGISLATION

(i) MATERNITY BENEFITS

(a) Paid maternity leave is guaranteed for a period of 14 days before and 28 days after confinement.

(b) Female employees cannot be dismissed during this period.

(c) Types of employment that could be injurious to the female employee and child are prohibited during a period of three months before and after confinement.

(d) Employers are required to allow women nursing children under one year two nursing intervals of half hour during working hours.

(e) Employers of more than a prescribed number of women workers are required to establish and maintain satisfactorily a creche for children under 6 years of age. This regulation is an abeyance and has been enforced only on estates.

(ii) WELFARE MEASURES

Employers are required to provide separate rest rooms and sanitary conveniences for women. In shops adequate seating accommodation has to be provided behind the counter.

(iii) UNDERGROUND WORK

No female can be employed in any underground work in a mine.

(iv) WORKING HOURS

(a) Maximum working hours for female employees are 9 hours inclusive of rest and meals.

(b) Women cannot be employed before 5 a.m. and after 10 p.m. Night work is permitted in the case of women holding managerial and technical posts, women in health and welfare services, residential hotel services, air lines, and female employees in undertakings where only members of the same family are employed. Permission can also be obtained from the Department of Labour to employ women on night work in times of emergency and if work has to be done with materials which are likely to deteriorate.

(v) WAGES

A policy of equal remuneration has always been accepted and enforced in high and middle level occupations in the public sector and in large private establishments. With regard to skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers, however, sex disparities in wages are an obnoxious feature of legislation embodied in the Minimum Wage (Indian Labour) Ordinance and in the minimum rates of wages for different trades stipulated by the Wages Board Ordinance and by collective agreements.

Minimum rates of wages are laid down regularly in the Labour Gazette of the Department of Labour in respect of 31 trades.[14] In 16 of these trades there is blatant discrimination between wages stipulated for male and female workers. The difference is approximately two rupees a day . It is significant that 12 of these trades are agricultural and agro-based occupations and that 10 of them are linked with the export economy and

the plantation sector which provided the prototype for this type of discrimination.

(a) Tea growing and manufacturing trade
(b) Tea export trade
(c) Rubber growing and manufacturing trade
(d) Rubber export trade
(e) Coconut growing trade
(f) Coconut manufacturing trade
(g) Cocoa, cardamons and pepper growing trade
(h) Cinnamon trade
(i) Tobacco trade
(j) Paddy hulling trade
(k) Plumbago trade
(l) Coir mattress and Bristle fibre export trade
(m) Brick and tile manufacturing trade
(n) Match manufacturing trade
(o) Dock, Harbour and Port transport trade
(p) Tyre and tube manufacturing,tyre rebuilding , rubber and plastic goods manufacturing trade.

In the other trades such as Baking, Beedi manufacture, cigar manufacture, Biscuits and Confectionary, Building , Garments, Hosiery, Textiles, Aerated Water and Printing, there is often disguised discrimination in the classification of employees' grades and in wage scales determined by tasks. It has been found that women employees are often grouped in less paid grades or that their tasks are undervalued for remuneration.

(vi) RETIREMENT AND SUPERANNUATION

Women are given concessions in leaving the labour force. They can withdraw their contribution on termination of employment in consequence of marriage, and they are entitled to superannuation if they opt to retire at 50 unlike men who are compelled to work till 55 years.

IMPACT OF LEGISLATION

The Labour Laws in Sri Lanka are fairly effective in ensuring security and minimum facilities for women in some occupations. Despite the powers of inspection vested in the Department of Labour and the provision for enforcing legal penalties for non-compliance, violations of labour laws have been noted by observers.

Regrettably also the majority of women workers do not come within the purview of these laws. Exploitation of human resources without minimum safeguards regarding terms of service or working conditions proceed apace in the amorphous informal sector, in small establishments flourishing as "sweated" labour, in the traditional agricultural sector and in the ill-paid drudgery known as domestic service. Women form a substantial proportion of this exploited labour. As home-based piece-rate workers, part-time employees and casual workers in large establishments too, they are the hapless victims of ruthless profit-oriented employers. Non-unionized labour lacks solidarity and organizational support. Without pension rights and social security their future is bleak and insecure.

The non-enforcement of the provisions in the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act relating to the prohibition of the employment of children under 14 years has led to the callous exploitation of a substantial number of children who eke out a joyless existence in virtual slave labour.

In the organized sector the implications of labour legislation are currently seen to threaten employment opportunities of women. In Sri Lanka protective legislation in the form of prohibition of night work has already led to restrictions on recruiting women to factory jobs and to the replacement of women who retire, by men. Employers claim that night shifts are necessary to achieve production targets and optimum labour utilization, and that employing women entails adjustment of work schedules and therefore presents organizational problems.

The demand for removing the prohibition of night work comes chiefly from management in garment and other industries which employ large numbers of

young women. Many women workers are themselves not averse to night work at higher rates of remuneration. Opposition comes from trade unions who point to the hazards, inconveniences and further exploitation which women night workers may be subjected to in Sri Lanka. The controversy has gained momentum in Sri Lanka with the establishment of the Free Trade Zone with its large enterprises such as garment industries. Pressure is being exerted currently by employers to persuade the administration to make special arrangements with concurrence by I.L.O. to permit night work.

This problem, however, is not confined to Sri Lanka. The International Labour Organization itself has been stymied in effecting any change to the existing law as it has failed to arrive at a consensus with regard to this issue. Trade unions in many countries oppose a relaxation of this regulation as they view night work for both men and women as a "disagreeable necessity"[15] which is detrimental to family welfare.

Maternity is a social function of national importance. The maternity benefits ensured by labour legislation in Sri Lanka hardly bear comparison with the more liberal provision and facilities provided in many other countries. Many Sri Lankan profit-conscious employers however, consider maternity leave to be a disruptive element in production and management programmes. The liability of employers in respect of cash payment of maternity benefits is another sore point with employers who consider that both maternity benefits and welfare facilities such as separate rest rooms are additional expenses which impose an unnecessary burden in a context in which male manpower is readily available. Employers therefore tend to view with disfavour married women applicants for jobs and prefer to depend on the casual labour of young women whose services can be dispensed with on marriage. Provision of child care is conspicuous by its absence in Sri Lankan industrial establishments. The same "cost-benefit" approach militates against the introduction of any programmes of this type.

The profit "motif" runs counter to welfare legislation but is the basis of discriminatory wage policies. Any proposal to eliminate disparities between male and female wages has been viewed so far as a measure which would jeopardize the viability of the labour intensive plantation economy.

Employers tend to view women workers as a source of cheap labour and it is claimed that equalization of wages may reduce the employment opportunities open to women.

CONCLUSION

Constitutional provisions and labour legislation has enabled the state and trade unions to protect the rights and promote the welfare of women workers in organized employment but has failed to prevent malpractices in other areas of the economy. Legislation in Sri Lanka also has yet to be oriented to recognizing the economic and family responsibilities of women as concurrent roles.

WOMEN IN THE ECONOMY

LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION

This section presents a quantitative and where possible a descriptive analysis of labour force participation in Sri Lanka with a view to determining the position of Sri Lankan women in different sectors of the economy and in occupation groups.

Statistics relating to employment are available in Census surveys, in socio-economic and special labour force surveys and in related studies[16] but the varied concepts and definitions used to identify the economically active population and the unemployed have reduced their value for comparability. Interpretation of trends is therefore possible only in broad terms and this analysis has to be understood within its statistical framework.

SIZE AND COMPOSITION OF THE LABOUR FORCE

The labour force in Sri Lanka (population aged 10 and over) expanded from 2.6 million in 1946 to 4.5 million in 1971 (Table 6.2) and 4.9 million in 1975.[17] Despite rapid population growth over these years and an increase

TABLE 6.2

Labour Force by Age Groups and Sex 1946 - 1971

Age Groups	1946 Total (No)	1946 Females (No)	1946 Females (%)	1953 Total (No)	1953 Females (No)	1953 Females (%)	1963 Total (No)	1963 Females (No)	1963 Females (%)	1971 Total (No)	1971 Females (No)	1971 Females (%)
10 - 14	104,502	46,011	44.0	92,488	44,281	47.9	82,758	27,733	33.5	80,729	31,329	38.8
15 - 19	292,487	76,526	26.2	263,479	94,139	35.7	348,116	108,713	31.2	511,690	178,911	34.9
20 - 24	349,692	74,657	21.3	428,318	106,853	24.9	504,388	129,387	25.7	840,613	272,001	32.4
25 - 29	362,908	71,104	19.6	447,906	96,402	21.5	455,833	102,173	22.4	655,295	191,121	29.2
30 - 34	303,319	58,572	19.3	342,266	70,984	20.7	419,777	78,747	18.8	492,761	123,768	25.1
35 - 39	321,303	64,488	20.1	358,318	78,378	21.9	412,566	80,354	19.5	475,607	117,988	24.8
40 - 44	227,575	47,091	20.7	256,422	55,790	21.8	303,535	55,010	18.1	387,818	83,682	21.6
45 - 49	224,224	45,418	20.3	258,262	56,630	21.9	287,306	51,144	17.8	352,449	75,369	21.4
50 - 54	229,084	48,142	21.0	192,155	42,455	22.1	212,264	32,475	15.3	256,806	47,149	18.4
55 - 59				126,498	27,173	21.5	155,876	19,797	12.7	183,473	27,638	15.1
60 - 64				91,611	20,889	22.8	118,169	11,776	9.9	112,623	12,965	11.5
65 and over	198,748	37,591	18.9	133,825	30,635	22.9	118,767	10,295	8.7	138,275	13,749	9.9
Total	2,613,842	569,600	21.8	2,993,349	724,609	24.2	3,451,707	715,661	20.7	4,488,139	1,175,670	26.2

* includes 4062 males and 3235 Females of unspecified age

SOURCE: Census of Population of Sri Lanka 1971, Department of Census and Statistics.

TABLE 6.3

AGE AND SEX COMPOSITION OF THE POPULATION AND THE LABOUR FORCE 1946 - 1971

AGE GROUP		POPULATION %				LABOUR FORCE %				ACTIVITY RATE			
		1946	1953	1963	1971	1946	1953	1963	1971	1946	1953	1963	1971
Under 10 Years	T	25.1	28.3	28.9	26.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	M	24.0	27.2	28.1	25.9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	F	26.4	29.7	29.7	26.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10 - 14 Years	T	12.1	11.4	12.6	12.7	4.0	3.1	2.4	1.8	13.0	10.2	6.2	5.0
	M	11.7	11.1	12.4	12.6	2.9	2.2	2.0	1.5	14.1	10.5	8.1	6.0
	F	12.5	11.6	12.8	12.8	8.1	6.1	3.9	2.7	11.8	9.9	4.3	4.0
15 - 19 Years	T	10.2	8.7	9.7	10.7	11.2	8.8	10.2	11.4	43.0	37.4	34.1	37.6
	M	10.3	8.5	9.4	10.5	10.6	7.5	8.8	10.0	59.2	46.5	46.2	48.3
	F	10.1	8.9	9.9	10.9	13.5	13.0	15.4	15.2	24.2	27.7	21.6	26.6
20 - 59 Years	T	47.1	46.2	42.3	44.0	77.2	80.6	80.5	81.2	63.2	64.4	61.4	65.3
	M	48.4	47.7	43.1	44.2	78.7	82.7	81.2	81.7	94.1	92.2	92.8	93.7
	F	45.8	44.6	41.5	43.7	71.8	73.8	77.6	79.8	28.6	31.3	26.0	34.9
60 Years and Over	T	5.4	5.4	5.9	6.3	7.6	7.5	6.9	5.6	55.2	51.6	38.2	31.1
	M	5.5	5.5	6.3	6.8	7.9	7.7	7.9	6.8	82.2	73.6	62.0	50.6
	F	5.2	5.3	5.4	5.9	6.6	7.1	3.1	2.3	23.0	25.6	8.0	7.3
All Ages	T	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	39.2	37.0	32.3	35.4
	M	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	57.8	53.1	49.3	50.7
	F	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	18.2	18.9	13.9	19.1

SOURCE: Census of Population in Sri Lanka 1971 Dept. of Census and Statistics.

TABLE 6.4

POPULATION AND LABOUR FORCE BY AGE GROUP AND SECTORS, 1971

AGE GROUP/SECTOR		POPULATION URBAN NUMBER	POPULATION URBAN %	POPULATION RURAL NUMBER	POPULATION RURAL %	ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION URBAN NUMBER	ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION URBAN %	ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION RURAL NUMBER	ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION RURAL %	ACTIVITY RATE URBAN	ACTIVITY RATE RURAL
10 - 14	T	343299	21.3	1265792	78.7	20288	25.1	60441	74.8	5.9	4.8
	M	175848	21.4	645103	78.6	12764	25.8	36636	74.2	7.3	5.7
	F	167451	21.3	620689	78.7	7524	24.0	23805	76.0	4.5	3.8
15 - 19	T	311171	22.9	1048792	77.1	106004	20.7	405686	79.2	34.1	38.7
	M	165313	24.0	523402	76.0	76196	22.9	256583	77.1	46.1	49.0
	F	145858	27.7	525390	78.3	29808	16.7	149103	83.3	20.4	28.4
20 - 44	T	1043310	24.5	3223076	75.5	678095	23.8	2173999	76.8	65.0	67.4
	M	573237	26.3	1604279	73.7	535511	25.9	1528023	74.0	93.4	95.2
	F	470073	22.5	1618707	77.5	142584	18.0	645976	82.0	30.3	39.9
45 - 60	T	302494	23.0	1009827	72.0	170846	21.5	621882	78.5	56.5	61.6
	M	166441	23.5	542414	76.5	145832	22.7	496740	77.3	87.6	91.6
	F	136053	22.6	467413	77.4	25014	16.7	125142	83.3	18.4	26.8
60 and Over	T	174692	21.6	631940	78.3	44157	17.6	206741	82.4	25.3	32.7
	M	90840	20.5	352190	79.4	37350	16.7	186834	83.3	41.1	53.0
	F	83852	23.1	279750	76.9	6807	25.5	19907	74.5	8.1	7.1
Total Aged 10 Years & Over	T	2174966	23.3	7179337	76.7	1019390	22.7	3468749	77.3	46.9	48.3
	M	1171679	24.2	3667388	75.8	807653	24.4	2504816	75.6	68.9	68.3
	F	1003287	22.2	3511949	77.8	211737	18.0	963933	82.0	21.1	27.4

SOURCE: Census of Population, Sri Lanka, 1971, Department of Census and Statistics.

TABLE 6.5

FEMALE LABOUR FORCE BY MARITAL STATUS 1971

Marital Status	Total Female Population		Total Female Labour Force	
	(Number	(Percent)	(Number)	(Percent)
Married	2203447	35.8	594898	51.0
Single	3596441	58.4	504556	43.3
Widowed	334981	5.4	56345	4.9
Separated	11648	0.2	4462	0.4
Divorced	12019	0.2	4344	0.4
Others & not stated	-	-	-	-
Total :	6158536	100.0	1164605	100.0

SOURCE: Census of Population Vol. LL, Part I,Table 8.

of 90% in the total population, the labour force recorded a lesser increase of 70%.[18] While the male labour force also reflected the same trend the female labour force had a higher rate of increase than the female population. This increase was particularly manifest in the nineteen sixties when the female labour force increased by 64% and the male labour force by 21% . Such a significant increase could be attributed to underestimation in the 1963 Census as well as to the erosion of traditional social norms as a result of the spread of education and economic imperatives.

It is noteworthy that women constitute only 26% of the total labour force whereas they are almost half the student population in Sri Lanka.[19] This proportion has not varied significantly in recent decades (Table 6.2). The situation in Sri Lanka is consonant with that of many other countries since the proportion of women in the labour force was reported to be 26% in economically developing countries and 34% in developed countries in 1975.[20] This low proportion of economically active women is the result of a computation based on the definition of working women as those engaged in "gainful" occupations measured in terms of activities which are not related to household duties or which are home-based and part-time and not reported as "employed".

The Labour Force Survey carried out by the Central Bank in 1973 is the only investigation in Sri Lanka which included housewives as a component of the labour force. In this survey the proportion of women in the labour force is 44.9%.[21] In all other surveys women engaged in household duties are represented separately and comprise over half the female population.

The majority of the labour force - both men (75.6%) and women (82.0%) - live and work in the rural sector (Table 6.4). Women in particular have a higher proportion in rural areas where traditionally women participated actively in peasant and plantation agriculture. There has been, however, an increase in the proportion of the urban female labour force from 13.4% in 1963 to 18% in 1971. Married women formed 35.8% of the female population but the proportion of married women in the female labour force was much higher - 51%.(Table 6.5)

TABLE 6.6.

LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES 1946 - 1971 (BY SEX AND AGE)

AGE GROUPS/YEARS		1946	1953	1963	1971
10 - 14	T	13.0	10.2	6.2	5.0
	M	14.1	10.5	8.1	6.0
	F	11.8	9.9	4.3	4.0
15 - 19	T	43.0	37.4	34.1	37.6
	M	59.2	46.5	46.2	48.3
	F	24.3	27.7	21.6	26.6
20 - 24	T	54.2	55.8	56.9	66.1
	M	83.3	81.3	84.4	88.9
	F	23.8	28.7	29.3	43.1
25 - 29	T	62.8	63.2	61.3	68.7
	M	95.0	94.7	94.1	96.9
	F	26.3	28.5	27.7	40.2
30 - 34	T	67.4	65.7	62.8	67.5
	M	99.3	95.1	96.5	97.7
	F	28.8	30.1	25.0	35.1
35 - 39	T	68.6	66.9	63.1	65.6
	M	98.4	95.8	96.8	97.5
	F	31.1	32.2	25.9	32.9
40 - 44	T	70.7	68.9	64.4	66.1
	M	99.0	95.3	96.1	96.7
	F	33.7	34.6	25.9	30.8
45 - 49	T	70.2	69.7	64.7	64.7
	M	97.5	95.3	95.7	95.7
	F	33.4	35.6	26.0	29.5
50 - 54	T (		69.1	61.4	61.4
	M (		93.8	92.7	92.3
	F (T	63.8	35.8	21.4	24.7
	(				
55 - 59	T (M	90.7	67.1	58.1	52.5
	M (F	30.1	91.2	87.8	81.1
	F (		34.1	17.5	17.6
	(				
60 - 64	T (		59.7	48.9	42.0
	M (		84.2	76.7	66.2
	F (		30.1	11.4	11.0
65 & over	T	55.2	47.2	31.3	25.7
	M	82.1	67.8	52.2	42.6
	F	23.0	23.3	6.0	5.6
Total	T	52.4	51.6	45.9	48.0
	M	76.1	73.0	69.2	68.4
	F	24.8	26.9	20.0	26.0

SOURCE: Census of Population 1971, Sri Lanka
Department of Census and Statistics.

TABLE 6.7

FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN THE LABOUR FORCE IN THE TWENTY-FOUR REGIONS OF THE WORLD 1960 AND PROJECTIONS FOR 1975 (PERCENTAGES

REGION	FEMALE ACTIVITY RATE		ACTIVE FEMALES AS AS PROPORTION OF TOTAL LABOUR FORCE	
AFRICA:	1960	1975	1960	1975
Eastern Africa	31.0	28.9	35.4	34.9
Middle Africa	33.6	30.0	38.7	37.4
Northern Africa	3.9	3.9	6.7	7.2
Southern Africa	19.6	18.9	26.1	27.0
Western AFrica	35.6	32.2	39.4	38.8
LATIN AMERICA:				
Caribbean	20.7	20.0	28.3	28.2
Middle America (Mainland)	9.3	9.1	15.3	16.0
Temperate South America	16.0	15.4	21.8	22.2
Tropical South America	11.6	11.2	18.0	18.7
Northern America	24.2	27.6	31.4	35.0
EAST ASIA :				
East Asian mainland	38.3	36.4	40.7	39.3
Japan	36.0	38.8	38.9	39.1
Other East Asia	23.3	23.0	32.3	31.4
SOUTH ASIA :				
Middle South Asia	23.5	20.7	28.3	27.6
South-East Asia	31.6	28.0	37.5	35.9
South-West Asia	20.7	18.0	26.7	25.6
EUROPE :				
Eastern Europe	41.4	42.0	42.4	42.2
Northern Europe	28.0	28.8	31.6	33.5
Southern Europe	20.1	19.9	25.3	26.4
Western Europe	29.2	28.9	34.1	34.6
USSR:	48.5	48.0	51.6	49.3
OCEANIA :				
Australia and New Zealand	19.9	23.8	24.9	29.0
Melanesia	45.5	41.6	40.4	40.5
Polynesia and Micronesia	9.5	10.2	14.9	16.2

SOURCE: Labour force projections 1965-1985, op. cit., Part V World summary in Equality of opportunity and treatment for women workers, Geneva (1975)

TABLE 6.8

FEMALE PARTICIPATION RATES ACCORDING TO AGE GROUPS, 1960 AND PROJECTIONS FOR 1975 (Percentages)

REGION	YEAR	AGE GROUP 10-14	15-19	20-24	25-44	45-54	55-64	65+
WORLD	1960	13.0	44.7	52.4	49.7	48.5	35.2	16.6
	1975	10.1	36.4	47.9	48.1	49.0	35.2	13.9
AFRICA:								
Eastern Africa	1960	24.7	44.9	49.8	51.6	55.1	50.0	29.3
	1975	22.0	41.5	47.0	49.4	53.0	48.6	27.4
Middle Africa	1960	24.7	50.0	53.0	57.2	57.3	43.4	22.1
	1975	18.9	42.7	48.0	53.4	54.2	41.3	19.7
Northern Africa	1960	4.0	7.7	6.8	5.5	6.3	5.4	3.0
	1975	2.9	7.6	7.7	6.0	6.6	5.2	2.6
Southern Africa	1960	4.6	35.8	42.5	32.2	29.9	23.7	12.4
	1975	2.9	30.0	43.4	33.1	30.9	23.3	10.7
Western Africa	1960	23.9	54.1	57.6	62.8	66.9	55.4	34.8
	1975	17.7	45.5	52.5	59.3	64.8	54.0	30.9
LATIN AMERICA:								
Caribbean	1960	8.6	27.4	37.4	37.0	35.3	30.8	15.2
	1975	7.8	24.6	36.9	35.7	33.6	27.0	13.0
Middle America	1960	3.2	17.2	19.6	15.9	15.5	14.2	11.3
(mainland)	1975	2.1	15.9	21.8	16.4	15.3	12.4	7.8
Temperate South	1960	3.2	30.3	37.3	25.3	18.9	12.2	5.9
America	1975	1.4	23.5	38.7	25.9	19.4	12.1	4.2
Tropical South	1960	6.4	23.1	23.6	18.7	16.9	14.1	9.2
America	1975	4.0	20.7	25.9	18.9	16.7	11.9	6.1
Northern America	1960	0.9	28.2	45.3	38.4	45.9	34.4	10.1
	1975	0.4	23.7	47.0	43.7	54.4	40.5	9.4
EAST ASIA:								
Mainland Region	1960	14.1	59.6	69.1	66.3	60.9	42.9	23.5
	1975	9.5	47.6	60.9	61.5	58.2	41.3	20.8
Japan	1960	1.8	49.7	68.0	52.2	53.8	43.0	21.1
	1975	0.8	39.5	71.4	56.2	58.2	41.9	15.1
Other East Asia	1960	12.8	40.7	42.8	40.2	41.3	31.6	13.8
	1975	6.8	31.3	42.4	40.5	42.5	29.7	10.6
SOUTH ASIA:								
Middle South Asia	1960	21.1	30.8	36.6	42.1	39.8	29.9	14.0
	1975	16.1	26.5	32.4	39.0	37.6	28.6	12.3
South-East Asia	1960	22.7	50.9	50.1	51.3	56.3	47.1	48.3
	1975	18.9	45.3	43.8	46.8	53.0	44.9	25.1
South-West Asia	1960	11.0	32.0	35.2	36.2	37.9	30.2	12.3
	1975	7.2	28.1	33.5	32.7	36.3	25.6	10.8

contd. .....

TABLE 6.9

FEMALE ACTIVITY RATES IN SELECTED ASIAN COUNTRIES (1950 - 70)

Country	1950	1955	1960	1965	1970
Burma	39.86	39.06	37.78	35.75	34.02
India	30.33	29.12	27.99	27.09	25.78
Indonesia	20.13	19.85	19.63	18.90	18.01
Iran	6.69	6.66	6.77	6.63	6.54
Japan	32.66	33.98	35.95	38.01	39.13
Malaysia	19.83	19.15	18.61	18.24	18.50
Nepal	42.61	40.76	38.74	37.50	36.88
Pakistan	3.40	8.20	8.68	8.71	8.66
Philippines	27.18	26.24	25.59	24.31	23.23
Singapore	10.92	11.93	12.74	13.08	14.17
South Vietnam	56.08	58.12	55.37	50.78	48.21
Sri Lanka	16.07	15.23	14.45	14.21	14.10
Thailand	53.30	51.79	49.83	48.36	47.45

SOURCE: Table No. I(a) ILO/SIDA Asian Regional Seminar on Labour Inspection in relation to the Employment of Women and Protection of Children held in Singapore in 1972 No. ILO/TF/AFE/R21

LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES

The male participation rate in Sri Lanka was 68.4% and the female participation rate 26% in 1971 (Table 6.6). As in most countries male activity rates are higher than female activity rates in all age and population sub-groups. Sex disparities are wide and only the Central Bank Survey of 1973 which included housewives in the labour force reported narrower differences. The female participation rate in Sri Lanka is also lower than that in many other economically developing countries (Tables 6 7, 6.8 and 6.9). Demographic and educational changes since the nineteen forties are apparently reflected in the decrease in the over-all participation rate of men and women from 1946 to 1963 and in its increase since 1963.

AGE-SPECIFIC PARTICIPATION RATES

Changes in the age structure reduced the proportion of the working age population but the decline in the participation rate of the 10-14 age group (Table 6.6) shows that a considerable proportion of the increasing population in this age group was absorbed into the expanding education system as a result of the introduction of free education in 1945. The 1971 statistics, however, identified an increasing proportion of this age group as economically not active but also non-school going group.[22]

There have been no significant changes in the activity rates of the male population in the age groups from 15 to 55 years from 1946 to 1971. In contrast the female activity rates have increased substantially from 1963 to 1971 for the age groups 20-24, 25-29 and 30-34, changed minimally for the age groups from 35 to 49 and declined steeply after 50 years (Table 6.6). The marked increase in the activity rate of women between 20 and 35 years of age since 1963 is perhaps the cumulative result of rising educational levels and consequent higher aspirations, weakening social constraints and increasing economic need for more than one wage earner in family.

PARTICIPATION IN URBAN/RURAL SECTORS AND DISTRICTS AND POPULATION SUB-GROUPS

Male participation rates were higher than female rates in both urban and rural sectors in 1971 (Table 6.4). An interesting feature is that for both

TABLE 6.10

FEMALE AGE-SPECIFIC EMPLOYMENT ACTIVITY RATE 1969/70

BY AGE AND SECTOR

AGE GROUP	TOTAL	URBAN	RURAL	ESTATE
5 - 14	1.2	2.3	0.8	2.1
5 - 24	18.0	11.0	12.0	70.7
25 - 34	25.0	14.0	16.4	88.5
35 - 44	30.2	20.9	23.5	90.5
45 - 54	27.5	17.7	21.9	80.4
55 - 64	13.9	10.1	12.4	31.9
65 and over	6.1	8.1	5.7	2.9
Total:	15.4	1o.4	11.1	53.8

SOURCE: SOCIO-ECONOMIC SURVEY 1969/70

TABLE 6.11

LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE BY DISTRICTS - 1971 (POPULATION OVER 10 YEARS)

DISTRICTS	PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION			LABOUR FORCE			LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE		
	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
COLOMBO	21.9	22.5	21.4	21.6	22.7	18.9	47.9	69.2	23.0
KALUTARA	5.9	5.8	6.1	5.8	5.7	6.4	47.8	67.9	27.5
KANDY	9.4	9.2	9.5	9.9	9.0	12.8	51.3	67.0	35.0
MATALE	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.5	2.4	2.8	50.0	68.6	29.9
NUWARA ELIYA	3.5	3.5	3.6	4.5	3.6	7.3	62.2	70.8	53.1
GALLE	5.9	5.6	6.2	5.8	5.4	7.0	47.4	65.9	29.6
MATARA	4.6	4.4	4.9	4.3	4.0	5.0	45.1	64.2	26.8
HAMBANTOTA	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.2	2.5	1.8	43.2	66.9	17.8
JAFFNA	5.6	5.3	5.9	4.1	5.0	1.7	35.9	64.6	7.8
MANNAR	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.1	44.3	76.0	5.3
VAVUNIYA	0.7	0.8	0.6	0.7	0.9	0.2	47.7	75.3	10.1
BATTICALOA	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.6	2.0	0.5	41.0	72.3	6.6
AMPARAI	1.9	2.0	1.9	1.7	2.1	0.6	42.5	72.4	8.4
TRINCOMALEE	1.4	1.5	1.3	1.2	1.5	0.4	44.4	72.7	8.1
KURUNEGALA	8.0	7.9	8.1	7.8	7.7	7.7	47.1	67.9	24.9
PUTTALAM	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	3.1	2.3	47.5	72.4	20.7
ANURADHAPURA	2.9	3.0	2.7	3.2	3.2	3.4	53.9	71.4	32.8
POLONNARUWA	1.2	1.4	1.1	1.3	1 4	0.7	50.8	74.5	18.1
BADULLA	4.7	4.8	4.7	5.2	4.5	7.1	53.8	67.5	39.3
MONERAGALA	1.4	1.5	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.1	48.0	70.5	20.7
RATNAPURA	5.2	5.3	5.1	5.7	5.4	6.6	52.8	70.0	33.7
KEGALLE	5.2	5.2	5.3	5.1	5.0	5.4	46.4	65.7	26.3
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	48.0	68.4	26.0

SOURCE: CENSUS OF POPULATION, SRI LANKA, 1971, DEPARTMENT OF CENSUS & STATISTICS.

sexes, urban rates were higher than rural rates only in the 10 - 14 age groups - a consequence perhaps of exploitation of child labour in domestic service and in other ill-paid jobs in urban centres.

It is also significant that while there was little difference between male urban and rural participation, the age-specific activity rates for rural women between 20 and 60 years were much higher than those for urban women of the same age. The explanation for this difference lies in the very high activity rates of estate women (Table 6.10). Indian women have been an integral component of the plantation economy. The demand for their labour, the infrastructural services provided to facilitate their participation as well as their low participation in education serve to isolate them as a special group in the female labour force. Women in the non-estate rural sector also had a slightly higher participation rate than urban women as a result of their traditional involvement in agricultural activities as unpaid family work.

District-wise data (Table 6.11) also indicates different patterns of activity for men and women. Male participation was high in sparsely populated agricultural areas while female participation was low in these same areas. Female participation was, in fact, less than 10% in the more socially conservative East and North of the island and was relatively low in sparsely populated Hambantota and Polonnaruwa. It was very much higher in the plantation district of Nuwara Eliya and also relatively high in other districts in which estates are located - Badulla, Kandy, Ratnapura and in the heart of the Dry Zone - Anuradhapura. It is evident that the pattern of women's economic activity was still largely influenced in 1971 by their role in plantation and peasant agriculture.

Little sex-wise data is available to determine the extent of labour force participation among women in different ethnic groups. According to data relating to the total estate labour force the Indian estate Tamil had the highest activity rate (51%), the lowland Sinhala (35.4%), the hill country Sinhala (30.6%), Burghers (29.7%), Ceylon Tamils (29.2%) and Malays and Moors the lowest rates (25.8% and 25.7%) respectively.[23]

MARITAL STATUS AND LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION

Married men and women had an overall higher participation rate than single men and women but age-specific marital status participation rates show that unlike in the case of men, single women had higher activity rates than married women in the age groups 15 to 54 years (Table 6.12).

This is inevitable in a cultural context in which household duties and child rearing are apt to be considered the exclusive responsibility of wives and mothers. Single adult women are relatively free of the dual obligations which cause hardship and role conflict among married women, widowed, divorced and separated women who presumably have been thrust by circumstances into the position of heads of households and have inevitably the highest activity rate among women. Regrettably there is no data available for the years before and after 1971 to ascertain whether increasing numbers of married women are seeking employment in Sri Lanka as noted in many other countries.

EDUCATION AND THE LABOUR FORCE

Male participation rates were higher than female rates at each educational level and the gap was narrowest at the "no schooling" level (Table 6.13).

Two trends which may reflect the impact of education on labour force participation have already been indicated (Table 6.6) :

(i) declining labour force participation rates in the age group 10 - 14 years of both sexes as a result of increasing participation in education in the nineteen fifties and nineteen sixties,

(ii) a marked increase in the participation of women between 20 and 35 years - the beneficiaries of education policies and social change.

It must be noted, however, that lack of education has not been a deterrent in Sri Lanka to economic activity. On the contrary women with no formal education had the highest participation rate among working age women (30.8% in 1971). Such a trend is to be expected in a country in which the

TABLE 6.12

ACTIVITY RATES FOR EMPLOYED POPULATION BY MARITAL STATUS, AGE SEX - ALL ISLAND (PERCENTAGES)

AGE GROUP IN YEARS	NEVER MARRIED			MARRIED			WIDOWED, DIVORCED SEPARATED			TOTAL		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
10 - 14	4.4	2.5	3.5	-	-	-	100.0	-	80.0	4.5	2.5	3.5
15 - 24	43.8	19.1	32.5	92.1	16.1	31.1	79.8	28.5	34.5	46.9	18.5	32.2
25 - 34	82.6	34.0	67.4	97.9	22.8	54.4	81.6	47.7	55.1	91.8	25.6	58.0
35 - 44	76.7	43.7	65.5	98.5	26.9	62.1	96.5	58.8	67.7	96.7	29.8	62.5
45 - 54	78.4	31.6	61.0	97.0	23.1	63.1	91.7	43.2	54.6	96.0	26.6	62.1
55 - 59	35.9	8.7	25.3	49.0	9.7	35.2	29.8	12.2	15.7	47.2	10.6	31.3
TOTAL: (10 - 59 Years)	35.3	13.8	25.5	89.2	21.8	53.7	71.1	34.4	42.2	58.7	18.8	38.7

NOTE: The Marital Status Specific employment activity rates shown in this Table have been computed as the ratio of employed persons in each Marital status, - Sex - Age group to the corresponding total population (10 years and over) in each such marital status - sex - age group.

SOURCE: STATISTICAL PROFILE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH, SRI LANKA, 1975, DEPARTMENT OF CENSUS AND STATISTICS.

TABLE 6.13

ACTIVITY RATES FOR EMPLOYED POPULATION BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION, AGE AND SEX - ALL ISLAND, 1971

AGE GROUPS	LEVEL OF EDUCATION																	
	NO SCHOOLING			PRIMARY			MIDDLE SCHOOL			PASSED G.C.E.(O/L)			PASSED G.C.E.(A/L) AND OVER			TOTAL		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
5 - 14	4.5	3.8	4.1	2.3	0.9	1.7	1.1	-	0.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.4	1.2	1.8
15 - 19	65.0	37.3	46.3	53,5	25.7	39.0	20.2	6.4	13.4	9.5	2.8	5.7	-	-	-	30.9	14.2	22.3
20 - 24	68,5	54.7	50.4	83.7	28.5	55.8	59.0	14.4	36.3	41.3	12.9	26.5	49.2	4.2	23 8	64.0	22.5	42.0
25 - 34	90.0	46.0	56.4	96.3	23.2	60.2	91.5	11.9	53.2	91.9	28.2	62.7	67.0	51.5	60.6	92.7	25.0	57.7
35 - 44	98.6	43.1	55.4	96.3	24.0	64.2	98.1	15.8	63.6	95.7	48.4	78.2	90.0	77.1	85.5	96.9	30.2	63.5
45 - 54	96.8	35.4	50.5	96.1	23.2	67.4	95.6	9.1	67.8	94.5	51.9	80.8	100.0	76.7	91.3	80.3	27.5	63.8
55 - 59	83.9	21.4	38.2	87.2	18.9	59.1	83.7	2.3	60.1	65.8	28.6	58.3	80.0	-	80.0	83.9	18.0	53.4
Total:	46.1	30.8	35.9	48.0	13.3	31.6	52.0	8.1	31.4	67.2	21.2	45.7	64.5	29.6	48.9	50.7	16.0	33.4

SOURCE: Statistical Profile of Children and Youth, Sri Lanka, 1975, Dept. of Census and Statistics.

SOURCE: STATISTICAL PROFILE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH, SRI LANKA, 1975,
DEPARTMENT OF CENSUS AND STATISTICS.

most economically active women are in plantation and peasant agriculture in which there is little demand for skills.

Table 6.14 shows that 80.7% of women in the "no schooling" group and 68.9% with only a primary education were in the agricultural labour force in 1971. Half the women with an incomplete secondary education had "blue collar" jobs and the vast majority of women with higher educational attainment - 78.4% of those with G.C.E. (O.L.) (ten year education), 98.1% of those with a G.C.E.(A.L.) (twelve year education) and 97.4% of those with a higher education - were in "white collar" employment. The trend was similar in male employment.

ECONOMIC BACKGROUND AND LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION

Very little macro-level information is available relating to the activity rate of men and women of different income groups. The 1973 Labour Force Survey of the Central Bank investigated this facet of labour force participation and three of its findings are relevant to this study.

(i) Female labour force participation tended to decrease in urban areas as household income increased, while rural participation rates appeared to be unrelated to the economic level of the household. Traditionally more affluent women dissociated themselves from economic functions, particularly outside the home, and it is likely that this attitude reinforced by nineteenth century Victorian concepts are perpetuated to a larger extent in urban middle class homes with their relatively higher prosperity and inadequate domestic assistance.

(ii) Households with more than six members had higher participation rates among those below 20 years of age of both sexes, since young people had perhaps to enter the labour force very early to provide income support to large families.

(iii) Participation in this age group was also higher in households where the head was engaged in agriculture, fisheries or in the service sector while young men and women in households where the head worked in manufacturing industries entered the labour force later. Unlike in the organized manufacturing sector, in subsistence agriculture and

TABLE 6.14

DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYED PERSONS BY OCCUPATION AND EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, SRI LANKA: 1971 CENSUS OF POPULATION

		White Collar Occupations		Agricultural Occupations		Other Occupations	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Total	T	650,916	17.8	1782,130	48.8	1215,829	33.3
	M	539,911	19.0	1287,175	45.3	1011,318	35.6
	F	111,005	13.7	494,955	61.1	204,511	25.2
No Schooling	T	47,224	5.6	583,013	69.3	210,954	25.1
	M	38,246	7.9	291,617	60.7	150,372	31.3
	F	8,978	2.5	291,396	80.7	60,682	16.8
GradesI-V	T	105,246	7.4	844,750	59.1	480,538	33.6
	M	99,260	8.4	676,666	57.0	410,674	34.6
	F	5,986	2.4	168,084	68.9	69,864	28.6
Grades VI-X	T	286,685	25.9	338,040	30.6	480,267	43.5
	M	255,157	26.2	303,911	31.2	413,877	42.5
	F	31,528	23.9	34,129	25.8	66,390	50.3
G C.E. 'O'	T	119,331	68.4	14,829	8.5	40,254	23.1
	M	89,423	65.6	13,542	9.9	33,321	24.4
	F	29,908	78.4	1,287	3.4	6,933	18.2
G.C.E. 'A'	T	57,736	94.1	1,205	1.8	2,770	4.1
	M	30,425	91.3	1,150	2.9	2,320	5.8
	F	27,311	98.1	55	0.2	450	1.6
Degree	T	28,703	95.7	297	1.0	1,002	3.3
	M	21,409	95.1	289	1.3	814	3.6
	F	7,294	97.4	8	0.1	188	2.5

SOURCE: Census of Population, Sri Lanka, 1971
Dept. of Census & Statistics.

in the informal sector sons and daughters evidently continue to assist their parents from an early age in unpaid family work or in ill-paid casual employment.

STATUS OF EMPLOYMENT IN THE LABOUR FORCE

Employment status as categorized in terms of (i) employer status (ii) paid employment (iii) working on own account or self employment and (iv) unpaid family work reflects one aspect of the economic structure of a country and is an index to the role and status of women in the economy. In quantitative terms employers are a negligible group in Sri Lanka. There has been an increase in paid employment and a decline in self employment and, to a lesser extent, in unpaid family work during the last few decades as a result of economic changes (Table 6.15) . The employment status of women however differs in the various sectors and sub-sectors of the economy.

Wage labour has been a characteristic feature of the organized sector in agriculture and in the tea, rubber and coconut estates almost all employed women are wage labourers. In the traditional agricultural sector only 10% women workers were paid employees in 1971. The pattern of employment also differed between men and women, for while the majority of men (67.6%) are "own account" workers evidently in their small holdings, only 37.6% women in this sector were so employed while half the women were unpaid family helpers, - presumably the wives, daughters and other members of the families of small land holders. Status wise therefore, women estate workers are exploited cheap labour and the majority of women in peasant agriculture are exploited family labour. Both female family workers and "own account" workers have increased in proportion from 1953 to 1971 as a result of the expansion of settlement schemes and acreage under cultivation. Paid employment among women has declined.

In the industrial sector there has been a sharp increase in paid employment from 18.5% in 1953 to 81.6% in 1971, and a decline in "own account" and unpaid family work especially among women. This trend is most marked in the manufacturing sector where the proportion of paid women workers has

TABLE 6.15
DISTRIBUTION OF LABOUR FORCE BY INDUSTRY AND STATUS 1953 and 1971

Industry Sector		Year	Total (No)	Employers (%)	Paid Employees (%)	Workers on own account (%)	Unpaid family workers (%)
Labour force	Total	1953	2,993,549	3.1	61.2	30.0	5.6
	Male		2,268,740	3.7	59.4	33.6	3.3
	Female		724,609	1.3	66.9	18.9	12.9
	Total	1971	3,648,875	3.1	66.6	25.0	5.2
	Male		2,838,404	3.8	63.7	28.9	3.5
	Female		810,471	0.8	76.9	11.2	11.2
Agricultural sector	Total	1953	1,584,141	2.6	56.8	33.7	6.9
	Male		1,147,401	3.2	48.8	42.9	5.1
	Female		436,737	1.2	77.9	9.1	11.7
	Total	1971	1,828,977	1.3	51.0	38.7	8.9
	Male		1,327,746	1.8	43.0	48.8	6.4
	Female		501,231	0.2	72.1	12.0	15.6
Agricultural Organized sector (Tea, Rubber, Coconut)	Total	1971	740,325	0.5	96.9	2.1	0.4
	Male		388,804	0.8	95.7	3.0	0.4
	Female		351,521	0.1	98.2	1.1	0.5
Traditional Agriculture Sector	Total	1971	1,088,652	1.9	19.8	63.6	14.7
	Male		938,942	2.1	21.2	67.7	8.9
	Female		149,710	0.5	10.9	37.6	50.9
Industry sector	Total	1953	378,794	3.0	54.9	36.6	5.5
	Male		282,668	3.7	67.3	27.3	1.7
	Female		96,126	1.0	18.5	63.9	16.6
	Total	1971	465,612	3.8	83.5	11.6	1.1
	Male		363,814	4.4	84.0	10.7	0.8
	Female		101,798	1.7	81.6	14.7	2.1
Manufacturing	Total	1953	303,038	3.1	48.9	41.9	6.[illegible]
	Male		212,335	4.0	62.8	31.2	2.0
	Female		90,703	1.0	16.2	66.9	15.0
	Total	1971	339,405	4.5	80.1	14.0	1.4
	Male		240,115	5.7	79.6	13.6	1.1
	Female		99,290	1.7	81.2	14.9	2.1

TABLE 6.15

DISTRIBUTION OF LABOUR FORCE BY INDUSTRY AND STATUS, 1953 AND 1971

INDUSTRY SECTOR		YEAR	TOTAL	EMPLOY-ERS	PAID EMPLOY-EES	WORKERS ON OWN ACCOUNT	UNPAID FAMILY WORKERS
			NO.	%	%	%	%
Electricity, Gas & Water	Total	1953	5,280	5.5	86.0	5.9	2.6
	Male		4,853	5.1	87.7	6.0	1.2
	Female		427	10.1	67.2	4.2	18.5
	Total	1971	9,367	1.2	96.8	2.0	0.1
	Male		9,317	1.2	96.7	2.0	0.1
	Female		250	-	99.2	0.8	-
Construction	Total	1953	56,686	2.5	78.6	16.1	2.7
	Male		53,447	2.6	80.3	16.3	0.8
	Female		3,239	1.2	51.5	14.0	33.3
	Total	1971	105,561	1.9	93.4	4.4	0.2
	Male		102,347	1.9	93.4	4.5	0.2
	Female		1,214	0.8	95.0	3.2	0.9
Service sector	Total	1953	832,599	4.5	67.9	24.2	3.4
	Male		680,484	5.2	68.0	25.4	1.4
	Female		152,115	1.6	67.5	18.7	12.2
	Total	1971	1,040,369	6.0	81.1	11.6	1.3
	Male		880,214	6.8	79.7	12.5	1.0
	Female		160,155	1.7	89.2	6.2	2.8
Wholesale & Retail Trade	Total	1953	232,633	9.5	36.0	50.5	4.1
	Male		207,253	10.2	39.0	49.0	1.8
	Female		25,380	3.5	12.0	62.2	22.2
	Total	1971	278,666	15.2	54.2	28.2	2.4
	Male		258,893	15.6	54.4	28.1	1.9
	Female		19,773	9.0	51.8	30.2	9.0

increased from 16.2% to 81.2% and that of self employed women has declined from 66.9% to 14.1% during this period. It is apparent that this change reflects trends in industrial development in Sri Lanka in recent decades. Expansion and modernization of manufacturing industries, particularly in clothing and food, has led to an increase in wage employment opportunities for women, while deteriorating economic conditions led to the decline of small-scale establishments and traditional industries which have always employed large numbers of women. This trend towards organized industry is seen also in the increase of paid women workers in construction industries from 51.5% to 95% and the reduction of unpaid workers from 33% to 0.9% during this period. As in the organized agricultural sector, paid employment in industry may lead to greater security or stability without necessarily improving the economic status of women.

The majority of workers in the service sector are paid employees. In trade, however, only half the men and women are in paid employment, a considerable number are still self employed and a higher proportion than in other industries are employers.

Structural changes have therefore favoured the extension of wage employment in Sri Lanka but self-employment and family labour are still characteristic of the traditional and unorganized sector in agriculture and trade. A survey of the unorganized sector (defined as establishments with less than 5 employees) by the Department of Labour in 1977 and a survey of the informal sector in the city of Colombo by the Marga Institute[24] have shown that the sector teems with self-employed or family workers in labour intensive industries such as the manufacture and processing of food, tailoring, repair services, transport, construction, trade and commercial services. 88.2% of those so employed in Colombo were men but women figure prominently in unorganized traditional rural industries.

SECTORS OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

Sector-wise there has been little change in the economic structure of Sri Lanka over the years (Tables 6.16 and 6.17). Just over half the population were engaged in agricultural activities in 1971, less than

TABLE 6.16

EMPLOYED POPULATION BY INDUSTRIES (Percentage of Females)

Economic Activities	1953 Total No)	1953 Females (No)	1953 Females (No)	1963 Total (No)	1963 Females (No)	1963 Females (No)	1971 Total (No)	1971 Females (No)	1971 Females (No)
Agriculture, Hunting, Forestry and Fishing	1,584,141	436,737	27.6	1,681,937	415,622	24.7	1,828,977	501,231	27.4
(1) Tea, Rubber, Coconut	856,110	349,107	40.8	787,872	355,541	45.1	740,325	351,521	47.5
(2) Other Agricultural Products	684,860	84,874	12.4	848,822	59,252	6.9	1,034,301	149,043	14.4
(3) Fishing	43,071	2,756	6.4	45,243	829	1.8	54,351	667	1.2
Mining and Quarrying	13,790	1,757	12.7	9,412	946	10.1	13,079	1,044	7.9
Manufacturing	289,245	90,162	31.2	292,275	63,200	21.6	339,405	99,290	29.3
Electricity, Gas and Water	3,264	168	5.1	7,842	123	1.6	9,567	250	2.6
Construction	56,686	3,239	5.7	85,131	1,336	1.6	103,561	1,214	1.2
Wholesale and retail trade, Restaurant and Hotels	282,842	29,499	10.4	349,108	23,595	6.8	343,768	23,329	6.8
Transport, Storage and Communications	104,292	5,312	5.1	137,598	2,415	1.8	178,876	3,366	1.9
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate and Business Services	65,070	7,966	12.2	15,599	833	5.3	24,945	1,717	6.9
Community, Social and Personal Services	396,204	110,138	27.8	440,869	123,563	28.0	492,780	131,743	26.7
Activities not adequately described	197,815	39,631	20.0	175,355	23,085	13.2	313,917	47,287	15.1
TOTAL:	2,993,349	724,609	24.2	3,195,125	654,718	20.5	3,648,875	810,471	22.2

SOURCE: Based on Census of Ceylon 1953, 1963 and 1971, Department of Census and Statistics

TABLE 6.17
EMPLOYED POPULATION CLASSIFIED BY INDUSTRY AND SEX

		1953		1963		1971	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
All Economic Activities	T	2993340	100	3195125	100	3648875	100
	M	2268740	100	2540407	100	2838404	100
	F	724609	100	654718	100	810471	100
Agriculture, Hunting, Forestry and Fishing	T	1584141	52.9	1681937	52.6	1828977	50.1
	M	1147404	50.5	1266315	49.8	1327746	46.8
	F	435737	60.3	415622	63.5	501231	61.8
(i) Tea, Rubber and Coconut	T	856110	28.6	787872	24.7	740525	20.3
	M	507005	22.3	432331	17.0	388804	13.7
	F	349107	48.2	355541	54.3	351521	43.4
(ii) Other Agricultural Products	T	684860	22.9	848822	26.6	1034301	28.3
	M	600085	26.5	789570	31.1	885258	31.2
	F	84874	11.7	59252	9.1	149013	18.4
(iii) Fishing	T	43071	1.4	45243	1.4	54351	1.5
	M	40315	1.8	44414	1.7	53684	1.9
	F	2756	0.4	829	0.1	657	0.1
1. Mining and Quarrying	T	13790	0.5	9412	0.3	13079	0.3
	M	12033	0.5	8466	0.3	12035	0.4
	F	1757	0.2	946	0.1	1044	0.1
2. Manufacturing	T	289345	9.7	292275	9.2	339405	9.3
	M	199083	9.8	229075	9.0	240115	8.4
	F	90162	12.4	63200	9.7	92290	12.2
3. Electricity, Gas and Water	T	3264	0.1	7842	0.2	9567	0.2
	M	3096	0.1	7719	0.3	9317	0.3
	F	168	0.0	123	0.0	250	0.0
4. Construction	T	56686	1.9	85131	2.7	103561	2.8
	M	53447	2.4	83795	3.3	102347	3.6
	F	3239	0.4	1336	0.2	1214	0.1
5. Wholesale and Retail trade and Restaurant and Hotels.	T	282842	9.4	349108	10.9	343768	9.4
	M	253343	11.2	325513	12.8	320439	11.3
	F	29499	4.1	23595	3.6	23329	2.9
6. Transport, Storage and Construction	T	104292	3.5	137598	4.3	178876	4.9
	M	98980	4.4	135183	5.3	175510	6.2
	F	5312	0.7	2415	0.4	3366	0.4
7. Financing, Insurance and Real Estate and Business services	T	65070	2.2	15599	0.5	24945	0.7
	M	57104	2.5	14765	0.6	23228	0.8
	F	7966	1.1	833	0.1	1717	0.2
8. Community, Social and Personal Services	T	396204	13.2	440869	13.8	492780	13.5
	M	286066	12.6	317306	12.5	361037	12.7
	F	110138	15.2	123563	18.9	131743	16.2
9. Activities Not adequately discribed	T	197815	6.6	175355	5.5	313917	8.6
	M	158184	6.9	152270	6.0	265630	9.4
	F	39631	5.5	23085	3.5	47287	5.8

SOURCE: CENSUS POPULATION SRI LANKA, 1971, DEPT. OF CENSUS & STATISTICS.

TABLE 6. 18
EMPLOYED POPULATION BY INDUSTRY, SEX AND SECTOR (percentage Distribution)

Industries	1963						1971					
	Urban			Rural			Urban			Rural		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing	7.6	8.2	4.1	63.4	60.8	72.4	9.3	9.5	7.9	61.2	58.3	70.4
Mining and quarrying	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.4	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.06	0.4	0.5	0.1
Manufacturing	13.8	14.3	10.8	8.9	8.6	9.6	12.0	11.7	14.0	8.6	7.5	11.9
Electricity, Gas & Water	0.8	0.8	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.01	0.5	0.6	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.01
Construction	4.2	4.8	0.5	2.3	2.9	0.1	3.3	3.8	0.4	2.7	3.5	0.1
Wholesale and retail trade, restaurant and Hotels	20.5	22.3	9.1	5.9	7.0	2.1	19.5	21.5	7.6	6.7	8.1	2.1
Transport, Storage and Communications	9.9	11.2	1.6	2.8	3.6	0.2	10.5	12.0	1.6	3.4	4.4	0.2
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate and Business Services	1.2	1.3	0.6	0.1	0.1	0.01	1.7	1.8	1.1	0.4	0.5	0.1
Community, Social and Personal Services	33.6	28.6	66.1	11.3	10.9	12.7	28.4	23.9	55.0	9.5	9.2	10.1
Activities not adequately defined	8.2	8.4	6.9	4.6	5.2	2.7	14.6	15.0	12.0	6.9	7.7	4.8
TOTAL:	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

SOURCE: Based on Census of Ceylon 1963 and 1971, Department of Census and Statistics.

one-third were in the tertiary or service sector, and the rest were in the industrial sector. There was a slight decline in the proportion of the labour force employed in the agricultural sector and a minimal increase in the non-agricultural sector from 1953 to 1971.

The economic activities of women do not differ significantly from this pattern. Just over 60% were engaged in agriculture in 1971 but the highest proportion of the female labour force were employed in the organized agricultural sub-sector of the tea, rubber and coconut industries (43.4%) and a relatively smaller proportion (18.4%) in traditional agriculture. On the other hand a larger porportion of men were in peasant agriculture than in the plantation sub-sector. Nearly half the labour force in the organized agriculture sector were women but in the last few decades the proportion of women in traditional agriculture increased as a result of economic policies geared to expanding the acreage under cultivation, to extending agricultural settlements and to repatriating Indian labour. While the number of women employed in the manufacturing and service sectors has been stable the female labour force in construction, electricity and gas and transport has declined to miniscule proportions in the face of competition in these traditional male areas of employment.

Urban and rural patterns differ in female economic participation (Table 6.18). Over two thirds of urban women workers were in the service sector but the relative proportion of women in the manufacturing sector has increased in recent years. In rural Sri Lanka 70% of the female labour force (and only 58.3% of the male labour force) were in agricultural occupations while almost an equal proportion of rural women were employed in manufacturing industries and in service sector occupations.

Macro-level data relating to economic participation in post Census years in the seventies is inadequate for comparative purposes. The annual employment surveys of the Department of Labour since 1971 are limited to about 10,000 industrial and commercial establishments and are therefore not representative of the total economy. Their findings however indicate that the proportion of women employed in industries has been relatively stable from 1972 to 1976[25] while there has been a significant increase in the

proportion engaged in trade, in finance and banking and in community services.

During these years land reform eroded the foundations of the agricultural sector and introduced changes in ownership and management without basically changing the life style of women who worked in it. In many of the villages in Sri Lanka women lack off-farm income-generating activities[26] to supplement the family income and enrich their personal lives. An investigation[27] into a small sample of training-cum-production centres in rural small industries revealed a high degree of female participation and a low level of efficiency and productivity and an air of genteel poverty, lethargy and depression. Modern industry is generating employment opportunities for women in repetitive factory operations in traditional and non-traditional manufactures but their employment in occupations involving higher levels of technological skill is bedevilled by problems created by cultural constraints. Professional level employment and tourism and its ancillary services continue to attract women to the service sector.

It is too early yet to evaluate the impact of the new economic policies introduced in 1977. Liberalizing imports, incentives offered for private enterprise both within and outside the Export Processing Zone in Katunayake, the Mahaweli Development Scheme in the traditional agricultural sector, the decline of traditional industries in the face of competition from imports, the expansion of the export-oriented garment and other industries, and the increased activity in construction, transport, trade and commerce are among the determinants of possible change in employment patterns.

OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS AND LEVEL OF EMPLOYMENT

It is also possible to explore other facets of the economic participation of women and to ascertain their status in the employment pyramid by identifying the occupations in which

(i) a substantial proportion of women are concentrated (over 30% of those employed in the specific occupations since women constitute 26% of the total labour force)

(ii) few women work (less than 10%) and

(iii)no women are employed (Table 6.19).

Unfortunately,the most recent national statistics relate to the last Census year 1971 but these have been supplemented by data from the Department of Labour Employment Survey of 1976, which is however restricted to economic activities in agriculture, industry and trade, and excludes a substantial proportion of service sector employment.

The pattern that emerges from this mosaic of female economic activities is the cumulative outcome of traditional and current economic policies and societal attitudes. Women were concentrated in 1971 in

(i) plantation and peasant agriculture, chiefly as tea pluckers, farm workers and rubber tappers

(ii) traditional "feminine" small industries such as spinning, weaving, sewing, pottery, basket making

(iii)the agro-based beedi and the traditionally female dominated coir industry

(iv) packing and labelling in industries

(v) a few industries that developed in response to import substitution - rubber and plastic products and chemical process industries, and

(vi) traditional feminine fields in the service sector - the education and health services, domestic service, office assistance, social work and librarianship (as an adjunct of education).

By 1976 larger numbers of women were employed in traditional and new industries. Garment manufacture and other textile industries and the beedi industry were female dominant fields. There was also substantial involvement in areas in which participation had been insignificant earlier, - in the manufacture of safety matches, toys, coconut-based products, confectionary,food processing , paper products, ceramics, perfumes and hairdressing. There was even a fair proportion of women in electrical repair and iinker workshops. It must be noted, however, that much of the

participation was in routine repetitive tasks such as assembling and packing and may well be analogous to the activities identified as "packing" and "labelling" in the 1971 Census. In the garment, electronic and other industries the trend was in the direction of using traditional skills as factory operatives in large establishments. In many instances participation was in semi-skilled tasks rather than in skilled industrial employment.

Table 6.19 also gives the employment areas in which women form only a small proportion. In many of them they have been late "entrants" and have yet to establish themselves. The administrative and diplomatic services were open to women only recently and access has been restricted by administrative fiat. There were no engineers, architects, biologists, veterinarians and agronomists reported in the 1963 Census. Increasing participation in higher education has enabled women to enter in small numbers a wide range of professions such as law, economics, architecture, engineering, technician, and to increase their participation in occupations relating to physical and life sciences, statistics and mathematics to nearly 20%. Women are still poorly represented in the creative arts,commerce and police service. The large employment potential in industries such as food and beverage processing, jewellery manufacture, wood and paper products and printing have yet to be tapped.

No women were employed in 1971

(i) as judges, surveyors
(ii) in the defence services
(iii) in transport and communications as postal and railway workers, bus drivers and conductors or taxi-drivers and
(iv) as motor vehicle and radio repairers, electronic fitters, power-generating machine operators, cement workers, stone masons, bricklayers, plasterers, carpenters and joiners, blacksmiths, toolmakers, welders and plumbers.

Women have been employed as bus conductors and traffic wardens in the last two years and are likely to be recruited as bus and taxi drivers. Currently steps are being taken to recruit them to the army but only in traditional roles as nurses and clerks. It is significant too that there is a continuous

TABLE 6.19

(i) Occupation is which women are concentrated

(a) Census Returns (1971)

Tea pluckers	90%	Spinners, weavers, dyers	82.3%	Nurses and Midwives	95.0%
Agriculture and animal husbandry workers	47.8%	Coir and mat weavers	81.1%	Domestic service e.g. maids	56.9%
		Coir rope makers	71.3%	Stenographers and typists	55.8%
		Seamstressers and embroiderers	70.0%	Teachers	51.7%
		Beedi manufacturers	54.7%	Receptionists	49.3%
Rubber tappers and rubber estate labourers	39.6%	Packers and labellers	51.3%	Telephone and telegraph operators	44.1%
		Pottery and clay workers	47.8%	Medical, Dental and Vet erinary workers	41.9%
		Basket weavers	47.8%	Social workers	34.1%
		Tailors and dressmakers	34.4%	Computer machine operators	33.3%
		Rubber and plastic product makers (except tyres)	30.1%	Librarians	32.0%
		Chemical process and related workers	31.8%		

(a) 1976 Employment Survey (Industries)

Cinnamon workers	48.1%	Carpets, rugs, matting workers	92.0%	Hairdressers and beauty shop workers	35.9%
Cocoa, cardamon, pepper cultivators	43.9%	Garment workers	78.6%		
		Beedi manufacturers	72.6%		
		Safety match makers	67.5%		
Livestock	45.9%	Other textiles	62.6%		
		Toy makers	57.5%		
		Coconut shell and charcoal workers	50.8%		
		Tinkering workers	45.0%		
		Confectionery	42.8%		
		Cordage, rope, twine workers	40.7%		
		Canning and preserving of food and vegetables	36.5%		
		Perfumes and cosmetics workers	36.3%		
		Electrical repair shop workers	36.8%		
		Paper board box makers	31.5%		

TABLE 6.19 (Cont'd)

(ii) Occupations in which few women are employed Census Returns 1971

Coconut cultivators	7.3%
Tea cultivators	7.1%
Rubber cultivators	4.9%
Farm managers	2.3%
Rubber supervisora	2.3%
Tea supervisory	2.2%
Fishermen	1.4%
Forestry workers	1.3%
Coconut supervisory	1.0%

Stone cutters, carvers	9.1%
Painters	6.6%
Tanners	6.4%
Miners and quarry workers	6.2%
Printers	2.6%
Production foreman	2.5%
Electrical fitters	2.1%
Jewellery and precious metal workers	1.5%
Food and Beverage process workers	1.2%
Wood and Paper workers	1.1%
Construction workers	0.7%

Performing artists	9.2%
Authors, Journalists	6.9%
Wholesale and retail trade proprietors	6.9%
Legislators and administrators	6.5%
Caterers and lodging proprietors	5.6%
Sales and shop assistants	5.6%
Economists	5.4%
Lawyers	5.2%
Managers	5.2%
Technicians	5.0%
Insurance, real estate workers, auctioneers	4.4%
Accountants	3.9%
Sculptors, painters	3.9%
Cleaners, caretakers	3.7%
Draughtsmen	3.6%
Engineers, Architects	3.4%
Hairdressers	0.9%
Transport workers	0.6%
Farm machine operators	0.6%

TABLE 6.19 (Cont'd)

(iii) Occupations in which no Women are employed - Census Returns 1971

Tea estates superintendents
Rubber estate superintendents
Coconut estate superintendents
Janawasama Superintendents

Motor vehicle mechanics
Radio and T.V. Repairers
Telephone and telegraph installers
Electric linesmen
Electronic fitters
Power-generating machine operators
Earth moving and related machine operators
Cement and terrazzo workers
Stone masons and bricklayers
Platerers
Carpenters, Joiners
Blacksmiths, Toolsmakers
Plumbers
Welders.

Judges
Mining and Industrial Engineers
Surveyors
Station Masters
Railway engine drivers
Signalmen,guards
Bus and lorry drivers
Bus conductors
Taxi drivers
Boatman
Ship workers
Postmen and telegraph messengers
Defence Services

exodus to West Asia of skills in which no women were employed and it remains to be seen whether this situation will facilitate the entry of women into these "closed" employment areas.

Two features of this employment structure have important implications for the status of women. The areas of concentration indicate that there is a tacit and sometimes even overt demarcation of the labour market into "masculine" and "feminine" jobs. Women appear to have easy access to traditional feminine or related occupations such as agriculture, nursing, teaching, weaving, coir work or domestic service, while negative attitudes limit opportunities in male preserves such as administration, management and technology. This division is extended to feminine tasks within employment areas as, for instance, weeding, transplanting and harvesting in traditional agriculture, plucking tea and tapping and curing rubber in plantation agriculture, picking and sorting in mines, sewing, weaving, spinning and dyeing in textile industries, packing and labelling in industries, assembly work in technical firms, and secretarial, clerical and sales assistance in offices. An invidious distinction is often made between "masculine" and "feminine" tasks in terms of economic status and monetary returns.

The second characteristic of female employment is the concentration of women in the lower levels of the occupational pyramid. In the occupational structure in 1971 (Table 6.21) the majority of urban workers are in the professions (26.4%), services (38%) and in production (21.9%) and rural workers were mostly in agriculture (69.5%) and production (15.9%). Employment at the decision-making level of administration and management was minimal (0.03%). The relatively large proportion of women among professional and technical workers (41% - Table 6.22) is of little significance since the majority of this group were employed in the education and health services. In other professions women are often still pioneers and social and professional acceptance has yet to be clearly established in some areas.

The majority of women workers are found in semi-skilled and unskilled employment in agriculture, industry and trade and community services and in routine clerical and sales jobs. The statistical breakdown of employ-

TABLE 6.20

EMPLOYED POPULATION BY MAJOR OCCUPATION GROUPS AND SEX

(Percentage Distribution)

Occupations	1963 Total	1963 Males	1963 Females	1971 Total	1971 Males	1971 Females
Professional, Technical and Related workers	4.5	3.5	8.5	4.5	3.7	9.1
Administrative and Managerial workers	1.0	1.2	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.1
Clerical and Related workers	3.7	4.4	1.0	5.1	5.9	2.4
Sales Workers	6.7	7.9	1.5	7.5	8.9	2.1
Service Workers	8.2	7.7	10.0	5.4	5.4	5.7
Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Forestry, Fishing workers	51.6	48.7	62.8	48.8	45.3	61.1
Production and Related Workers Transport and Operators and Labourers	23.1	25.5	14.0	25.4	27.9	16.7
Not stated	1.2	1.03	1.6	2.5	12.4	2.8
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

SOURCE: Based on Census of Ceylon 1963 and 1971, Department of Census and Statistics.

TABLE 6.21
EMPLOYED POPULATION BY MAJOR OCCUPATION GROUPS, SEX AND SECTOR

(Percentage Distribution)

Occupation	1963						1971					
	URBAN			RURAL			URBAN			RURAL		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Professional, Technical and Related workers	14.5	5.9	24.9	2.1	2.8	6.1	9.0	6.2	26.4	3.8	2.9	6.3
Administrative and Managerial workers	2.7	2.9	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.1	1.1	1.2	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.03
Clerical and Related workers	10.7	11.4	5.6	2.1	2.6	0.4	12.3	12.6	10.4	3.1	3.8	1.1
Sales workers	14.6	16.1	4.9	4.8	5.8	1.4	14.4	16.0	4.8	5.6	6.8	1.7
Service workers	19.8	16.5	41.4	6.9	6.7	7,7	12.1	10.4	22.7	3.6	3.8	2.9
Agricultural, Animal Husbandary and Forestry workers, Fishermen	7.3	7.9	3.4	62.1	59.6	71.2	8.9	9.2	7.7	59.7	56.5	69.5
Production and Related workers, transport operators and labourers	36.5	39.2	19.1	19.8	21.7	13.1	37.2	39.8	21.9	22.2	24.2	15.9
Workers not classified	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.8	4.7	5.4	1.9	1.7	2.4
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

SOURCE: Based on Census of Ceylon 1963 and 1971, Department of Census and Statistics.

TABLE 6.22

EMPLOYED POPULATION BY MAJOR OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS

(Percentage of Females)

Occupations	1963 Total (No)	1963 Females (No)	1963 Females (%)	1971 Total (No)	1971 Females (No)	1971 Females (%)
Professional, Technical and Related workers	144,128	55,841	38.7	178,488	73,287	41.1
Administrative and Managerial workers	32,548	1,093	3.4	13,917	827	5.9
Clerical and Related workers	118,250	6,769	1.0	186,144	19,627	10.5
Sales Workers	212,591	12,278	1.9	272,367	17,264	6.3
Service workers	261,318	65,318	10.0	197,978	45,977	23.2
Agriculture, Animal Husbandary, Forestry, Fishing Workers	1,649,410	411,157	24.9	1,782,134	494,950	27.8
Production and Related workers Transport and Operators and Labourers	739,245	91,376	12.4	926,391	135,625	14.6
Not stated	37,160	10,886	29.3	91,456	22,905	25.0
TOTAL	3,195,125	654,718	20.5	3,648,875	810,471	22.2

SOURCE: Based on Census of Ceylon 1963 and 1971, Department of Census & Statistics.

ment data by level of skill and status in the Department of Labour's Employment Survey of 1976 reveals that the majority of women workers in the sample were in semi-skilled occupations - 71.8% in 1973, 67.7% in 1974, 68.7% in 1975 and 70.8% in 1976.[28]

Even in a traditional feminine area such as education women tend to be concentrated in relatively lower income employment. Few women have reached the higher levels of the profession in the University and school teaching services and in educational administration (Tables 6.23, 6.24 and 6.25). In the Sri Lanka Administrative Service, in the upper echelons of the bureaucracy only 7.6% of the total cadre and 1.8% of the "decision-makers" are women (Table 6.26). In agriculture in which over half the female labour force is employed, all superintendents of estates, including state enterprises, are men, supervisory level personnel and cultivators are also largely men, and a singificant proportion of women are found only among the labourers (Table 6.27).

This hierarchic structure of female employment illustrates very clearly the economic status of women workers in Sri Lanka. The majority perform physically exhausting tasks which require little or no education and skills, for less monetary rewards than their male counterparts. A minority have reached the upper rungs but are largely excluded from decision-making - the key to economic power and status.

UNEMPLOYMENT

The economic status of women in Sri Lanka has also been adversely affected by the high incidence of unemployment. Rapid population growth and sluggish economic development for over two decades created a situation in which the population between 15 and 59 years increased by 56% from 1953 to 1975 while total employment increased by only 22%.[29] Where women are concerned, increasing labour force participation rates, particularly of those between 20 and 35 years led to an influx of women into the labour market in, what was for many, a futile search for employment. Educational

TABLE 6. 23

ACADEMIC STAFF OF THE UNIVERSITIES IN SRI LANKA
BY SEX AND GRADE (1973 and 1979)

	1973			1979		
Grade	Total (No)	Females (No)	Females (%)	Total (No)	Females (No)	Females (%)
Professor	83	2	2.4	119	3	2.5
Associate Professor	24	2	8.3	67	6	8.9
Senior Lecturer	126	19	15.1	220	37	16.8
Lecturer	180	33	18.3	283	57	20.1
Assistant lecturer	314	65	20.7	593	135	22.8
TOTAL:	727	121	16.6	1282	238	18.6

SOURCE: University Campusus of Colombo, Peradeniya, Vidyalankara, Vidyodaya and Katubedda, 1973.

Universities of Colombo, Jaffna, Kelaniya, Kotte, Moratuwa, Peradeniya and Ruhunu University College, 1979.

TABLE 6.24

CLASSIFICATION OF TEACHERS ACCORDING TO QUALIFICATION AND SEX (1970)

Qualification	Total	Male	Female	%Female
Trained Graduates (Science and Arts)	1133	773	360	31.8
Arts Graduates	5873	3654	2219	37.8
Science Graduates	1079	610	469	43.5
Commerce Graduates	100	87	13	13.0
Trained Teachers (General and Specialized)	41760	23704	18056	43.2
Certificated Teachers (untrained)	19295	5763	13532	70.1
Specialist Teachers (untrained and un-certificated)	3624	2121	1503	41.5
Uncertificated teachers (non-specialists)	14634	4588	10046	68.6
Pupil teachers	5658	1669	3989	70.5
TOTAL	93156	42969	50187	53.9

SOURCE: School Census 1970

TABLE 6.25

MEMBERS OF THE SRI LANKA EDUCATION SERVICE
BY SEX AND GRADE (1973 & 1979)

		1973			1979		
		Total (No)	Females (No)	Females (%)	Total (No)	Females (No)	Females (%)
Class	I	12	-	-	5	-	-
Class	II	36	3	7.6	32	3	8.6
Class	III	78	8	9.3	82	9	10.9
Class	IV	235	45	16.1	253	43	16.9
Class	V	831	73	8.1	899	28	3.1
TOTAL		1192	129	10.8	1271	83	6.5

SOURCE: Ministry of Education

TABLE 6.26

MEMBERS OF THE SRI LANKA ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE BY SEX AND GRADE 1979

Grade	Total (No)	Females (No)	Females (%)
Class I	165	3	1.8
Class II Grade I	345	19	5.5
Class III Grade II	1035	95	9.2
Total	1545	117	7.6

SOURCE: Department of Public Administration (Colombo)

TABLE 6.27

AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT (Percentage of Females)

MANAGERS		SUPERVISORY PERSONNEL		CULTIVATORS		LABOURERS	
Tea Plantations	-	Tea Plantations	2.2	Tea	7.1	Tea	55.8
Rubber Plantations	-	Rubber Plantations	2.3	Rubber	4.9	Rubber	39.6
Coconut Plantations	-	Coconut Plantations	1.0	Coconut	7.3	Coconut	24.0
State Plantations	-	Other Agricultural Plantations	8.6	Paddy	14.5	Traditional Agricultural Sector	11.3
Farm managers	2.3			Minor export crops	14.6		
				Vegetables	18.5		
				Livestock Farmers	14.5		

SOURCE: Census of Ceylon 1971, Department of Census and Statistics.

expansion converted some of the unemployed population in Sri Lanka into the "educated unemployed", and as beneficiaries of the policy of equal access to education women form inevitably a significant proportion of this group.

Definitions of unemployment differ in census, labour force and other surveys and statistics have necessarily to be interpreted with caution. Nevertheless, the results of surveys carried out from 1959 to 1975 (Table 6.28) point clearly to two trends:

(i) Unemployment has increased steadily over these years, and

(ii) There has been a sharper increase in unemployment among women, and the female unemployment rate has almost doubled in the sixties.

The dimensions of the unemployment problem among women can be understood from the fact that women formed 22.5% of the employed population and 43.9% of the unemployed population in 1971.

Since the crucial factor was the failure of the economy to absorb the expanded population that entered the labour market since the sixties, school and university graduates were the worst affected, and their narrow range of vocational skills made young women entering the labour market a specially disadvantaged group in this respect.

Age-specific unemployment rates in 1971 (Table 6.29) indicates that one-third of the labour force and 41% of the female labour force between 15 and 24 years of age were unemployed. The Central Bank Survey in 1973 found that the unemployment rate of this age group had increased to 45%[27] and the Land and Labour Utilization Survey in 1975 estimated the incidence of unemployment in this group to be even higher. Acute youth unemployment has therefore restricted the access of women to employment.

All surveys have also focussed attention on the fact that the unemployment rate increased with educational attainment. Reference has already been made in Chapter 5 to the dual relationship between education and employment- that education is still an important avenue to high level employment while at the same time access to employment becomes more difficult with increasing levels of educational attainment, except in some areas of specialization

As Tables 5.89, 5.90 and 5.91 showed the educational level of the unemployed in Sri Lanka is higher than that of the employed.

These tables in Chapter 5 as well as Table 6.30 indicate that "educated" women are even more disadvantaged than "educated" men. It is evi[illegible] that

(i) it is more difficult for women with a secondary or higher education to find employment than it is for men of the same educational attainment

(ii) the educational level of the unemployed female population is higher than that of the male unemployed population. This is even more marked in the rural sector where employment opportunities favoured by secondary school leavers or graduates are relatively limited.

The Marga sample Survey[30] of rural youth between 15 and 24 years found that 50.9% of the unemployed youth were women. The unemployment rate of women was seen to increase with educational level (58% for women with no schooling or primary education and 83% for those with a secondary education).

The Central Bank Survey in 1973 also drew attention to the problem of graduate unemployment and to the fact that more women graduates were unemployed. The employment record of the sample of 1971 arts graduates discussed in Chapter 5 clearly illustrates the implications of the unemployment situation for the economic prospects and status of Sri Lankan women.

A concomitant problem is the frustration created by "over-qualified" employment or underpaid employment. In the 1971 sample 76.9% of the women graduates had teaching posts on a salary scale fixed for teachers with secondary school qualifications. In 1972 64.5% of the graduates who applied for admission to the Clerical Service were women.

Under-employment is widely prevalent in the traditional agricultural sub-sector and in the informal sector of the economy but adequate data is not available for analysis or generalization.

TABLE 6.28

UNEMPLOYMENT IN SRI LANKA

YEAR	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
1959[1]	10.5	9.5	12.1
1963[2]	7.6	7.3	8.9
1969[3]	13.9	11.4	21.2
1971[4]	18.0	13.7	30.0
1973[5]	17.4	13.7	26.8*
1975[6]	19.9	14.3	32.9

SOURCES:

1. A Survey of Employment, Unemployment and Under-employment in Ceylon, I.L.O. Review, vol. LXXXVII, No.3, March 1963.

2. Census of Ceylon, 1963.

3. Socio-economic Survey of Ceylon, Department of Census and Statistics 1969/70.

4. Census of Ceylon 1971.

5. The Determinants of Labour Force Participation Rates in Sri Lanka, 1973, Central Bank of Ceylon, Colombo. 1975. *Housewives were included in the Labour Force in this Survey.

6. Labour and Land Utilization Survey 1975, Central Bank of Ceylon.

TABLE 6.29

UNEMPLOYED POPULATION BY AGE AND SEX - 1971 (Population over 10 years)

Age Group	Total Labour Force			Unemployed			Unemployed		
	Total (No)	Males (No)	Females (No)	Total (No)	Males (No)	Females (No)	Total (%)	Males (%)	Females (%)
10 - 14	85,153	52,400	32,753	31,157	17,423	13,734	36.6	33.3	41.9
15 - 19	512,840	334,017	178,823	202,523	123,861	78,662	39.5	37.1	43.9
20 - 24	812,527	547,463	265,064	277,966	155,605	122,391	34.2	28.4	46.2
25 - 29	632,369	447,006	185,363	121,863	61,979	59,884	19.3	13.9	32.3
30 - 34	481,288	358,683	122,605	50,890	25,323	25,567	10.6	7.1	20.9
35 - 39	467,069	350,539	116,530	31,967	17,061	14,906	6.8	4.9	12.8
40 - 44	386,213	301,212	85,011	22,038	12,168	9,870	5.7	4.0	11.6
45 - 49	353,333	275,892	77,441	18,327	10,090	8,237	5.2	3.7	10.6
50 - 54	255,558	207,406	48,152	12,993	7,378	5,615	5.1	3.6	11.7
55 - 59	185,372	157,841	27,531	10,270	5,982	4,288	5.5	3.8	15.6
60 - 64	112,589	100,029	12,560	6,259	3,740	2,519	5.6	3.7	20.1
65 - 69	77,345	69,598	7,747	4,904	2,783	2,121	6.3	3.9	27.4
70 - 74	38,884	35,930	2,954	2,701	1,626	1,075	6.9	4.5	36.4
75 +	17,659	15,572	2,087	2,316	1,388	928	13.1	8.9	44.5
Total	4,418,188	3,253,579	1,164,609	796,204	446,406	349,798	18.0	13.7	30.0

SOURCE: Census of Ceylon 1971, Department of Census and Staistics.

TABLE 6.30

UNEMPLOYED POPULATION (15-59 YEARS) BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION, AGE AND SEX
(1969 - 1970)

(Percentage Distribution)

Level of Education	15 - 59 years		15 - 19 years		20-24 years		25-34 years		35-44 years		45-54 years		55 -59 years	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
No schooling	4.1	7.5	5.9	7.6	3.4	2.2	-	4.9	4.1	39.0	-	71.4	-	84.6
Primary	27.6	14.6	39.0	17.7	15.8	9.9	20.3	17.1	58.2	25.0	76.9	28.6	25.0	15.4
Middle school	49.5	37.2	48.2	49.0	51.7	35.9	55.0	27.9	17.5	8.0	23.1	-	75.0	-
G.C.E. (O/L) (Secondary education)	16.9	7.2	5.2	24.1	27.5	45.6	20.6	37.2	20.2	28.0	-	-	-	-
G.C.E. (A/L) and over (Senior secondary Education and over)	1.9	5.4	1.7	1.6	6.4	4.1	12.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total:	100.0	100.0	1.00	100.0	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00

SOURCE: Socio-economic Survey of Ceylon 1969 - 1970

Unemployment is a national problem leading to under-utilization of labour, wastage of human resources, personal frustration and social unrest. Women constitute half the human resources of a country and as individuals they need to achieve personal fulfilment through developing aptitudes and interests. The extension of employment opportunities is, however, considered to be of marginal importance by policy makers and employers who tend to view women largely as secondary earners in the context of acute unemployment in Sri Lanka.

CONCLUSION

This survey of macro-level data has shown that the proportion of economically active women in official terminology is relatively limited in Sri Lanka, and that the majority of women are concentrated in traditional areas of employment, at lower levels of the occupational structure and among the unemployed. Over the years economic need, educational attainment and social change have impelled increasing numbers of women to seek employment. Nevertheless unemployment and social constraints appear to operate as major barriers to more effective economic participation.

ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE STUDY AREAS

ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

The four study areas were randomly selected to include rural samples of the three major ethnic groups in Sri Lanka and a sample of the city population in the metropolitan city. As such they are dissimilar in economic structure but the three villages have a common feature in that they are located within a reasonable distance of less than 10 miles from urban centres. They are open therefore to urban or "modernizing" influences and have not been isolated from the mainstream of life and the impact of development and social policies in recent decades.

The Sinhala village of Pindeniya in the Kegalle district is considered to be an agricultural community but less than one-third of the households were dependent on agriculture for a livelihood, and the extent of paddy land was relatively limited. It was largely a village of homesteads and inherited small landholdings in which paddy, rubber, coconut, cocoa, arecanut, pepper, cardamons and vegetables provided a source of income. A few residents had larger tracts of land worked by hired labour or they owned land outside the village, but the general pattern was that of small-scale farming based on the traditional system of "attan" or exchange labour. The village was surrounded by tea land but only two households in the village derived employment from it. Almost two-thirds of the residents worked in the service sector, chiefly in government service or in trade.

Siruppiddy, a Tamil village situated 8 miles from Jaffna town is mainly a village of farmers. Over 80% of the heads of households were owner cultivators of small holdings of about a quarter acre on average. They earned their livelihood from intensive cultivation of paddy as well as of other food crops such as onions, chillies, potatoes, yams, manioc and plantains. Each house had in addition a cow, goat and poultry for domestic needs. A few householders were employed in government service or community jobs.

Wattegedera village, six miles from the hill town of Kandy is also a village of small homesteads but the majority of this Muslim community were engaged in business and trade. A small number were employed in service sector occupations and a few depended on the produce of their home gardens.

Borella, a Municipal ward in the heart of the metropolis, Colombo,has a population ranging from upper socio-economic levels to slums and shanty dwellers. The sample selected for this study was found to comprise about 15% middle class professional families, over 35% low income workers and unemployed and an intermediate group of lower middle class families. There were no significant differences among the economic activities of the three ethnic groups in Borella.

Although structurally different ,these four areas present significant features respectively of a mixed economy, an agricultural society, a trading community and a typical urban population. They offer, therefore, a fairly diverse range of economic activities to assess the economic role of women.

ECONOMIC ROLE OF WOMEN

The economic role of women has to be examined in terms of both (i) economic status and power and (ii) economic participation. The former can be assessed in terms of land ownership, economic status in the household and prestige and remuneration derived from stable and high level employment. Such an assessment must necessarily be tentative. It is based on theoretical assumptions which may not be valid in specific contexts, since none of these three indices of power and status can operate effectively in a situation in which women may well be passive units in a male dominant social system. Economic participation is manifest in the economic activities in which women engage irrespective of whether such activities are rewarded in monetary terms or not.

Land ownership patterns in the study areas indicate that a proportion of women owned land and houses which they had inherited, received as dowry or, to a lesser extent, purchased. The proportion ranges from 42.9% in Siruppiddy to 20.9% in Pindeniya, 20.1% in Borella and 12.7% in Wattegedera (Table 6.31). The majority of these women owned less than an acre of land, and had, in fact inherited their homesteads. Only one woman in Borella who owned 25 acres (outside the city, of course) can be described as a substantial landowner (substantial in the context of the ceiling on property in Sri Lanka). Such ownership confers some degree of economic security and status in the community.

A small proportion of women were also found to be heads of households - in 14.7% of the households in Pindeniya, 17.5% in Siruppiddy, 10% in Wattegedera and 15.3% in Borella. In the majority of cases circumstances had compelled women to assume this role while in a few instances ownership of property

TABLE 6.31

PATTERN OF LAND OWNERSHIP AMONG WOMEN

	Pindeniya	Siruppidy	Wattegedera	Borella
Total No. of women owning land	34	61	18	39
Total No. of women over 21 years	162	142	142	194
% women owning land	20.9	42.9	12.7	20.1
A. Extent of Land owned				
Less than 1/4 acre	11	30	12	25
1/4 - 1/2 acre	9	8	2	6
1/2 - 1 acre	8	16	2	1
1 - 2 acres	5	5	-	2
2 - 4 acres	1	2	-	4
5 - 10 acres	-	-	-	1
25 acres	-	-	-	1
No response	-	-	2	-
B. How land was obtained				
Inherited	24	13	5	5
Dowry	2	47	12	27
Purchase	8	1	-	67
No response	-	-	1	-

had conferred this status. A few of these women were the economic mainstay of their families but some of them were nominal heads and their husbands or adult sons in practice shouldered economic responsibilities.

LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION

It is evident from the responses of those interviewed that only women who were engaged in wage or regular employment have reported themselves as employed, except in Siruppiddy where agriculture is the all-pervasive economic activity. In terms of their own classification only 18.7% of the female population over 14 years in Pindeniya, 58.1% in Siruppiddy, 12.2% in Wattegedera and 19.8% in Borella were in the labour force. Further probing, however, revealed that some "non-working" women were also involved in income-generating activities in their homes, even though working hours were irregular and limited. When these were included the proportion of women over 14 years engaged in economic activity increased to 47.3% in Pindeniya, 67.6% in Siruppiddy, 16.5% in Wattegedera and 29.5% in Borella (Table 6.32). Some of these self-style non-working women were part of the informal sector which often eludes enumeration in census surveys.

The participation rate was high in the agricultural community of Siruppiddy, and moderately high in Pindeniya with its sizable agricultural sector. It was relatively low (though not lower than the national rate) in urban Borella, and very low in Wattegedera where traditionally women did not participate in economic activities. The number of housewives who were virtually unpaid "domestic helpers" was very large in the city and in Wattegedera. Table 6.33 shows that there were only 3 households in Siruppiddy (3.8%) and 22 in Pindeniya (21.6%) in which no women participated in any economic activity. On the other hand women in 45 households (45.9%) in Borella and 72% or the vast majority of households in Wattegedera appeared to be confined solely to household duties. This data reveals interesting variations in the economic role of women in different economies and in societies with different traditions.

TABLE 6.32

ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN - OCCUPATIONS

		PINDE-NIYA	SIRUPP-IDDY	WATTEGE-DERA	BORELLA
AGRICULTURE	Income earners	28	83	9	-
	Family helpers	14	-	-	-
INDUSTRIES	Scientific officer	-	-	-	1
	Technician	-	-	-	1
	Weaving	6	-	-	-
	Sewing and embroidery	6	2	7	2
	Beedi wrapping	-	5	-	-
	Cigar wrapping	1	1	-	-
	Saree printing	-	-	-	1
	Mats & Basket making	6	-	1	-
	Pottery	-	-	1	-
	Joss sticks industry	-	-	1	-
	Plastic and Paper bags	-	-	-	2
	Artificial flowers	-	-	-	1
SERVICE	Lecturer (Accountancy)	-	-	-	1
	Assistant Manager	-	1	-	-
	Rural Development Officer	1	-	-	-
	Co-Operative Manager	1	-	-	-
	Apothecary	-	-	-	1
	Graduate Teacher	-	-	-	1
	Non-graduate Teacher	8	3	8	7
	Nurse	2	-	-	4
	Clerk/Typist	4	-	1	13
	Pensioner	-	-	-	1
	Business	6	-	2	2
	Preparation and sale of food	4	3	-	18
	Sales girl	-	-	-	5
	Bus conductor	-	-	-	1
	Attendant	3	-	-	1
	Labourer	4	2	1	4
	Domestic servant	3	-	-	6
	TOTAL	96	100	31	73
	Total No. of women over 14 years	203	148	188	247
	% Economic Participation	47.3	67.6	16.5	29.5

TABLE 6.33

NO. OF HOUSEHOLDS IN WHICH WOMEN PARTICIPATE IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

	Pindeniya	Siruppiddy	Wattegedara	Borella
Total No.of households investigated	102	80	100	98
No. of houeholds in which women reported they were employed	34	62	20	35
No. of households in which women were engaged in home based income generating activities	34	15	8	18
No. of households in which women were unpaid family workers	12	-	-	-
No. of households in which women were not involved in economic activities (Housewives)	22	3	72	45

PATTERNS OF ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

AGRICULTURE SECTOR

As noted earlier in this Chapter traditionally women in Sri Lanka have participated extensively in agricultural activities and this practice has survived the vicissitudes of time. The data from the survey indicates that this participation was substantial in subsistence agriculture but income generation was relatively poor and the status of women has not been enhanced by this participation.

In Pindeniya 42 of the 96 economically active women were engaged in agricultural activities and even more participated in exchange labour during harvesting seasons and at the peak of agricultural activity. Fourteen of the wives of farmers were engaged only in agricultural activities and were "unpaid family workers". Ten women tapped rubber and cured, dried and sold their rubber sheets. Fourteen women supplemented the family income chiefly by growing and selling the produce of their home gardens such as coconuts, arecanuts, plantains, betel and vegetables. Two of them were involved in paddy and rubber cultivation and in home gardening, and some of them engaged in more than one agricultural activity according to the resources of their land. Two women worked as hired estate labour.

Income-wise their contribution was not substantial and status-wise they belonged to the unorganized sector with all its disadvantages. The agricultural tasks they performed were those decreed by tradition as appropriate for women - weeding, transplanting, reaping and, to a lesser extent, harvesting and winnowing. Ploughing and threshing were still male tasks. Women were also active in related tasks such as preparing food for the workers in the field during active phases of the agricultural cycle, and boiling and drying paddy for home consumption.

Siruppiddy presented a picture of intensive agricultural activity throughout the year, and 83% of working women were involved in this cycle of activity. In 46 of 80 households both husband and wife cultivated their

own small landholding. In 13 households women were heads of households, and either the women or their families were cultivators. In 9 households where the men were engaged in non-agricultural occupations, the women were responsible for cultivating the land. Paddy cultivation was supplemented by the cultivation of subsidiary food crops such as onions, chillies, potatoes, yams and plantains.

With few exceptions owner cultivation was the prevailing practice and exchange labour (attan) was never resorted to. The agricultural tasks performed by women were the same - weeding, transplanting, reaping and harvesting, and boiling and drying paddy. Respondents were vary of revealing their income although one woman claimed that she earned an average between Rs.600/- and Rs. 700/- a month. Living standards, however, were not high and hard physical labour and primitive methods undoubtedly confined them to a low economic status.

In Muslim Wattegedera the participation of women (and of men too) in agricultural activities was minimal and four of the nine women who were engaged in agricultural activity belonged to Sinhala families. One Muslim woman earned her living by weeding and four others by cultivating their home gardens.

INDUSTRIAL SECTOR

The survey data showed that modern technology and industrial development had had little impact on the employment opportunities of women in the study areas including even Borella. In the three rural areas a small proportion of women were engaged in traditional domestic industries which were in an even more depressed state than agriculture. In Pindeniya 6 women were employed in the traditional weaving industry - 4 as salaried workers and 2 self employed. Six women were seamstresses and several of them were self employed. Income generation was very poor in both weaving and sewing. Six more women earned a pittance by making mats and baskets in their homes.

The only local industry in Siruppiddy was beedi and cigar wrapping and 6 women were engaged in this depressed and home-based industry. Two women were seamstresses. In Wattegedera too, 7 women were engaged in sewing and embroidery and one each in pottery, making joss sticks and baskets. The situation was not more heartening in urban Borella. Only a scientific officer and a technician worked in fields related to sophisticated modern industry. Three women were engaged in sewing or saree printing and 3 in home-based activities such as making plastic and paper bags and artificial flowers.

The depressing pattern of industrial activity is a pointer to two important trends. A heavy pall seems to lie over rural industry since only a handful of women and men are employed in this field, and even this limited participation is economically unrewarding. Development does not appear to have touched these rural areas and little effort has been made to revitalize and restructure local industry. In urban Borella 20% of the men were in technical employment and sex stereotypes which exclude women from skilled and technical employment and cultural conditioning of women appear to have militated against the involvement of women in a wider range of industrial activity. Recent developments in large scale industrial organization had not impinged on the lives of women in this sample.

SERVICE SECTOR

In urban Sri Lanka the majority of women in the labour force are in the service sector. It was found in this survey that not only was this trend observed in urban Borella but that a considerable proportion of economically active women in Pindeniya and Wattegedera were also employed in service sector occupations. The explanation lies perhaps in the semi-agricultural economic structure of Pindeniya and its location in the "modernized" South West zone of the island, and in the commercial orientation of Wattegedera residents and the traditional lack of economic participation of women in this village. Service sector employment was limited in in Agricultural Siruppiddy but was seen to be favoured by the better educated daughters of these farmers.

In all four areas, there were few women in high level occupations. In the rural communities there were few men, too in the upper rungs of the employment ladder, except perhaps a few government officers. In Borella the proportion of women in professional employment was relatively small in a country hich has equal access to educational opportunity.

In Pindeniya the solitary woman graduate was a Rural Development Officer. One woman was a Co-operative Manager and the other economically active women were divided among

(i) the traditional "feminine" occupations of teachers, nurses and clerk typists (14)
(ii) the low prestige occupations of hospital attendants, labourers and domestic "servants" (10) and
(iii) private enterprise in the form of running boarding houses and tea boutiques, and preparing and selling food (10)

A few Siruppiddy wives were engaged in activities such as running a shop, selling food or working as labourers (5) and three daughters were teachers and one an assistant manager. In Wattegedera 8 women were teachers, one was a clerk, two were involved in family business concerns and one was a labourer.

Sixty five of the 73 economically active women in Borella were in service sector occupations. These included
(i) a Lecturer in Accountancy, a graduate teacher and an apothecary
(ii) non-graduate teachers, nurses, clerk typists, salesgirls and a pensioner (30)
(iii) hospital attendants, labourers and domestic servants (11)
(iv) those preparing and selling food in houses, boutiques, markets, workplaces, bus stops and railway stations (20)

Only one woman was employed in a non-traditional occupation as a bus-conductor, a male preserve which was opened to women this year.

EMPLOYMENT AND STATUS

The economic status of women is associated with the level of employment rather than with the extent of participation. Analysis of working hours of the economically active women in all four areas showed that a considerable proportion of these women could justifiably be classified as "underemployed". Twenty percent of the women in Pindeniya, 62% in Siruppiddy and 10% in Wattegedera said that their average working day was less than four hours. If 6 hours were computed as an average working day, 33% in Pindeniya, 80% in Siruppiddy, 25% in Wattegedera and 25% in Borella reported a shorter working day. This phenomenon of so-called under employment is inevitable in agricultural communities in which economic activities are seasonal and off-farm employment opportunities are miniscule, and in home-based activities which are essentially part-time employment.

As the data in Table 6.34 shows the majority of economically active women in Pindeniya and Siruppiddy were self-employed and engaged in home-based economic activities which are not time consuming. The large percentage of economically active wives in Pindeniya and Siruppiddy (Table 6.35) is explained by the fact that home-based or self employment was the mode of economic activity among the majority of women in these two areas. Women were secondary earners who supplemented the family income with meagre earnings or assisted the males in the family in the fields.

In Muslim Wattegedera the tradition of non-participation was being eroded very slowly with the younger and better educated women seeking employment in occupations such as teaching. In urban Borella Victorian and traditional middle class concepts which confine women to the home were reflected in the absence of any economic participation on the part of the wives of the majority of middle class professional men. Moreover, avenues of part-time employment for the economically disadvantaged are limited in this city environment.

Table 6.34 also shows that a substantial number of women were employed in relatively stable permanent jobs in the state sector only in the city and

TABLE 6.34

ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES OF WOMEN BY SECTOR AND STATUS

	Pindeniya	Siruppiddy	Wattegedara	Borella
	96	100	31	73
Sector :				
State	26	2	9	31
Private	5	9	7	11
Self employment	52	89	15	31
Family help	14	-	-	-
Status :				
Permanent	21	3	9	27
Temporary	3	3	2	6
Casual	5	3	12	16
Home - based	67	91	9	24

TABLE 6. 35

WOMEN ENGAGED IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES BY FAMILY STATUS

	Pindeniya	Siruppiddy	Wattegedara	Borella
Wives	70	67	18	38
Daughters	17	26	10	24
Daughters-in-law	6	4	1	2
Sisters	3	-	2	3
Sisters-in-law	-	-	-	2
Nieces	-	1	-	-
Mothers	-	1	-	-
Mothers-in-law	-	1	-	2
Others	-	-	-	2
Total:	96	100	31	73

in Pindeniya. These women enjoyed medical and maternity leave benefits and pension rights and their interests were safeguarded by labour legislation and trade union activity. The majority of women in the study areas were likely to be exploited by their employers as temporary and casual workers or by their families in the fields and in their homes.

Reliable data pertaining to income could not be obtained from many households as the survey was carried out during a period in which government subsidies were restructured on an income basis and respondents were therefore chary of revealing their income. This was specially so in Siruppiddy and Wattegedera where the income from agriculture and trading could not be verified. Information relating to salaried workers and to some of the selfemployed indicate that only the few men and women in high level professional employment in the state sector could be classified as moderately "high" income receivers (over Rs.700/- a month). Only 4 women in Borella belonged to this group. The majority of women in all four areas earned less than Rs. 300/- a month, and many of them, particularly the self-employed, less than Rs.100/-. Both status and income wise a substantial proportion of women were in the economically unrewarding and least prestigious strata of the economic structure as farm helpers, home-based secondary earners, casual workers, labourers, street and market vendors and domestic "servants".

In all these aspects of economic status the situation of women in these study areas did not differ substantially from the national pattern reflected in the macro-level data.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

In Sri Lanka equal access to educational opportunity has been a cardinal policy for over three decades but as the data presented in Chapter 5 revealed, the educational level of the majority of women in these areas was low.

The impact of education was reflected in increasing economic participation among younger women but did not appear to have necessarily led to economic mobility. Three of the five university graduates were in moderately high level professional employment but two of them were employed on near-subsistence level salaries. The few G.C.E.(A.L.) qualified were teachers and clerks. A ten year secondary education with a G.C.E.(O.L.) certificate had little economic value since women with this educational level were employed in a wide range of jobs from that of teacher to labourer or were unemployed. Those with a primary education or with no education were inevitably at the bottom of the employment structure.

UNEMPLOYMENT

It has been noted earlier in this Chapter that national surveys have revealed a high incidence of unemployment among women. Pindeniya and Borella follow this national trend and 22.2% and 21.1% respectively of the female population over 14 years in these areas were seeking employment. In Siruppiddy the proportion was very small (4.7%) because female labour was absorbed into family farm activities and the seemingly psychological isolation of the village from urban centres appeared to insulate the village from rising levels of expectation in the outside world. In Wattegedera the percentage was relatively small (8.5%) because the level of educational attainment was low and the increasing trend in economic participation seemed to be limited largely to younger women. The "waiting time" of these unemployed women also reflected these environmental differences. (Table 6.36).

It is unlikely too that the rate of unemployment will decrease substantially in the near future since these women were seeking employment in traditional and vulnerable fields of employment in the service sector such as teaching, clerical service, weaving and other small industries.

TABLE 6.36

NO. OF WOMEN SEEKING EMPLOYMENT

	Pindeniya	Siruppiddy	Wattegedara	Borella
1. Total No. of women	203	148	188	247
Women seeking employment (No)	45	7	16	52
(%)	22.2	4.7	8.5	21.1
2. Waiting time				
Less than 1 year	3	1		
1 year & less than 2 years	4	3		15
2 years & less than 3 years	8	1	4	13
3 years & less than 4 years	2	1	2	8
4 years & less than 5 years	5	1	2	5
5 years & less than 6 years	5		4	6
6 years & less than 7 years	4		1	1
7 years & less than 8 years	6			2
8 years & less than 9 years	2			1
10 years	3			
Over 10 years	3		1	1
No response			2	

VOCATIONAL SKILLS

In a restricted labour market such as in Sri Lanka vocational skills are a major determinant of employment. Women are a disadvantaged group in this respect since cultural constraints have limited them to a narrow range of skills. It was found that the employment opportunities of the women in the study areas were restricted by the lack of useful vocational skills.

As the data in Table 6.37 indicates women who had participated in vocational training programmes had received training in traditional feminine and stereotyped skills such as shorthand typing, textile weaving, needlework, batik, flower making and teacher training.

The same table examines the utilization of these skills in employment. It is instructive to note that these same popular vocational skills - shorthand typing, weaving, needlework, batik and flower-making - have not assisted the recipients to obtain employment. The majority of vocationally trained women have not been able to profit by their training and the data points to the availability of a substantial labour reserve of women whose potential is wasted through inappropriate training programmes or stagnation in the national economy.

The limited range of vocational skills reflects the paucity of vocational training facilities accessible to women. The facilities available in the neighbourhood were confined to conventional programmes. Pindeniya has a Textile Weaving Centre in the village, another in nearby Galigamuwa, a Batik Centre and Lanka Mahila Samithiya Training Centre in the neighbourhood. Siruppiddy has no vocational training facilities in the village but urban centres are found in proximity to the village. Wattegedera has a Rural Development Centre, a Weaving School and Sewing Centre in the neighbouring villages although there is no provision within the village. Colombo has varied vocational training facilities but lack of motivation and economic resurces appear to limit the access of Borella residents to these programmes. On-the-job training facilities are minimal and are dependent on employment.

TABLE 6.37 - VOCATIONAL SKILLS OF WOMEN AND THEIR UTILIZATION

VOCATIONAL SKILLA	PINDENIYA		SIRUPPIDDY		WATTEGEDERA		BORELLA	
	EMPLOYED	UNEMPLOYED	EMPLOYED	UNEMPLOYED	EMPLOYED	UNEMPLOYED	ENPLOYED	UNEMPLOYED
Graduate Training	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Teacher Training	1	-	1	-	-	-	3	-
Co-operative Training	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Shorthand/Typing	1	1	-	1	-	-	4	12
Accountancy	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Montesori Course	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
First aid course	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Textile weaving	7	6	-	-	2	1	-	1
Needlework and embroidery	3	11	1	-	8	1	2	15
Batik	1	2	-	-	-	-	1	9
Mat weaving	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Flower making	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4
Cane work	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Beedi wrapping	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Agriculture	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bud conductor	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
TOTAL	16	24	2	1	11	2	14	46

In Chapter 5 vocational training has been shown to be the weakest sector in the educational system in Sri Lanka. Where women are concerned both the State and Voluntary organizations seem to find it difficult to deviate from traditional norms and to pioneer new and employable skills development programmes for women. For their part women themselves are equally conditioned to accepting these limited horizons. In all four areas the respondents requested increased vocational training facilities in the same stereotyped fields - shorthand typing, weaving, sewing, batik and handicrafts - despite the wide prevalence of unemployment. The only interesting requests were for learning a foreing language (from Siruppiddy) and driving (from Borella). The demand for conventional training programmes by Borella women indicates that the "modernizing" process has tended to invest traditional feminine industries with a sophisticated garb but has failed to increase access to technical employment.

CONSTRAINTS TO EMPLOYMENT

There appeared to be general agreement regarding the factors that promoted or militated against economic participation with minor differences arising from local circumstances.

Although the general assumption in Sri Lanka is that expanded educational opportunities have led to increasing labour force participation among women, the majority of women stated that economic reasons compelled them to seek employment. This no doubt reflected their generally poor economic circumstances. Single earners were few in number and the majority found that it was necessary to supplement the income of the male "breadwinner" in order to maintain what they felt were minimum living standards. Some Siruppiddy women expressed succintly the underlying rationale for the participation of women in agricultural work in peasant societies today - the need to economise labour costs by helping in the field. Only a minority (15% in Borella and in Pindeniya and none in other areas) had sought employment because they wished to make optimum use of their education and skills. A few were compelled to do so because their husbands had no jobs or because there was "no male to support the family", thereby confirming the stereo-

type of women as purely substitute or supplementary breadwinners.

Constraints to employment were ascertained from heads of households and their spouses (Table 6.38), unemployed women (Table 6.39) and the few women who had been employed but had ceased to work. Both men and women in Pindeniya and Wattegedera, and to a lesser extent in Siruppiddy and Borella stated that lack of employment opportunities was a major barrier. In all four areas lack of educational qualifications and / or training was cited as constraints, particularly in Borella where over two-thirds appeared to feel that lack of suitable skills had precluded them from utilizing the job opportunities available in the city.

Household chores and child care reponsibilities were considered to be the third important barrier - except in Borella. It is interesting to note that in all four areas men appeared to be more conscious than women of the difficulties faced by working mothers in combining employment and child care activities. This may be due perhaps to the fact that many men are apt to regard child rearing as the sole responsibility of the mother. Family opposition and tradition still appear to operate as barriers both in the city and in the rural areas. Lack of time and capital resources presented the biggest problems to those who wished to use their own initiative and exploit their skills through self-employment. Another significant feature was the reaction of the unemployed women in Pindeniya and to a lesser extent in Borella who attributed their failure to obtain employment to political interference.

The reasons adduced by those who were employed in the past for giving up their jobs reinforced the views expressed by the working women. Half the women who gave up working in Pindeniya and Wattegedera had done so after marriage and childbirth. A few middle class women in Borella were compelled to stop working because their husbands were opposed to it. Others found that the income they received was not a sufficient incentive for employment outside the home.

TABLE 6.38

CONSTRAINTS TO EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN (Responses of Heads of Households and their spouses)

Obstacles	Pindeniya		Siruppiddy		Wattegedara		Borella	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Total No. who responded	61	71	72	66	72	91	63	82
Lack of employment opportunities	25	45	10	1	26	28	9	5
Lack of qualified training	7	11	25	51	15	37	46	61
Competition	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Reluctance of employers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Too old	7	10	6	-	4	-	-	-
Politics	6	8	-	-	-	-	1	-
Distance	1	1	1	-	-	2	-	-
Transport problems	-	7	-	1	-	10	-	6
Household chores	16	18	18	18	36	24	1	3
Child care responsibilities	12	1	18	5	31	19	9	-
Opposition of members of family	-	6	1	6	8	12	6	3
Family tradition	7	1	7	1	5	4	6	8
Ill health	5	-	-	-	2	-	-	-
Lack of motivation	4	-	-	-	2	-	-	-

TABLE 6. 39

CONSTRAINTS TO EMPLOYMENT - (Responses of Unemployed women)

Obstacles	Pindeniya	Siruppiddy	Wattegedara	Borella
Lack of employment opportunities	7	1	6	-
Lack of qualifications	4	5	1	40
No one to take interest	3	-	3	1
Politics	31	-	1	11
No specific reasons	-	1	5	-
Total No. unemployed	45	7	16	52

workers that only a few suggested that men should assist women in domestic work.

ATTITUDES TO THE ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN

While behavioural patterns were indicative of the extent of economic participation by women in these areas, responses were also elicited from a substantial proportion of men and women in these areas to statements which reflected attitudes to employment opportunities for women, and to the implications of female employment for home life (Table 6.40).

(i) Only Siruppiddy men and women and nearly half Wattegedera men believed that women should be confined to household duties and child care activities, and there was strong opposition to this view from both men and women in Pindeniya and Borella. Wattegedera women had no strong views on this issue. It is significant, however, that the concepts of equal opportunity in employment and equal wages were accepted by a large majority of men and women respondents in all areas except in Wattegedera where approximately only half the men subscribed to these principles. There were reservations, however, among all groups with regard to the policy of providing employment opportunities for women in times of male unemployment. Just over 60% men and women in Borella felt that such provision was desirable. Pindeniya respondents were divided on this issue and Wattegedera women were hesitant to express a positive view, but Siruppiddy men and women and Wattegedera men were firmly opposed to this policy.

All except Wattegedera men agreed that the rationale for seeking employment on the part of women was to supplement the family income and that women should participate in economic decisions in the home. Other evidence from the survey also substantiates this view that women have a relatively positive role in decision-making in the home regarding expenditure and consumption.

These barriers present problems to most economically active women in Sri Lanka today. The poor absorptive capacity of the economy and the lack of adequate vocational training facilities are national problems. Household and child care responsibilities stem from the crucial role of women as mothers, but the image of women as exclusively homemakers and the lack of supportive facilities in performing these domestic functions have limited the economic participation of women. This is clearly illustrated in the conditions prevailing in the study areas.

No child care institutions or services are available in any of these areas, not even in Borella. The concept of shared home responsibilities between husbands and wives was not universally accepted and according to the male interviewees themselves, the participation of the majority of men in household and child care tasks was minimal. Participation was more extensive in rural Pindeniya and Siruppiddy where the nature of agricultural employment enabled men to share domestic and child care tasks for much of the year. It was negligible in Borella and almost unknown in Wattegedera. In many households male participation was limited to marketing.

In the rural areas and especially in Pindeniya and Siruppiddy the large circle of family members and close kinsfolk took over some of the home tasks. Daughters were inevitably pressed into household chores and child care activities, and in Siruppiddy and Borella a few girls had been compelled to leave school to look after younger siblings in the absence of the mother. The assistance of domestic helpers, - an exploited group of women in many instances - freed the more affluent women in Borella and Pindeniya from some of these household and child care duties. Most working women had a long working day, starting with the drudgery of time consuming household tasks in the early hours of the morning and returning after work to the same chores till late in the night.

The felt needs of these women were expressed in the solutions they proposed to overcome these barriers. Those who articulated their views urged the provision of child care centres and nursery schools, greater access to household help, employment opportunities, training facilities and loans. So conditioned have they been to their image of sole household

(ii) Family needs and sex stereotypes were seen to dominate thinking with regard to the dual role of women as home makers and workers. Pindeniya and Borella men and women had positive attitudes to women continuing to work after marriage. About half Wattegedera men and women were also in favour but the majority of men and women in Siruppiddy were opposed to married women seeking employment. On the other hand all groups tended to disapprove of women working when their children were young, except in Wattegedera where there appears to have been a lack of consensus.

A significantmajority of Borella men and women, Siruppiddy men and Wattegedera women, and approximately half the others believed that household duties did not receive due attention when women were employed. Strangely enough the concept of shared work in the home was accepted only in the Siruppiddy agricultural community. Elsewhere women reacted as negatively as men to a practice which would help to alleviate at least some of their difficulties. In the circumstances it is hardly surprising that the economic activity favoured by all groups (though less positively by Wattegedera women) was home-based employment. At the same time there was no strong opposition to working outside the village or locality except among Siruppiddy men and women.

These responses seem to have been influenced by practical considerations as well as by the role ascribed by tradition to women in society. At the same time sex stereotypes pertaining to suitable "feminine" jobs were wholeheartedly endorsed by men and women in all areas although there appears to have been a polarization of views in Pindeniya.

These responses indicate that as in views expressed on education and social issues in Chapter 5, men and women in Pindeniya and in urban Borella had more positive attitudes to economic participation of women. Working women are a more familiar feature in these environments and economic imperatives tend to overshadow social norms in the face of the need to maintain rising living standards. The attitudes of Siruppiddy men and women veered between views engendered by the practical experience of shared economic and domestic duties and traditional conservatism which looks askance at women

with family responsibilities engaging in economic activities outside the immediate neighbourhood. Wattegedera men had consistently the most negative views and the lack of consensus in the attitudes of Wattegedera women may indicate more positive attitudes among the younger generation.

On the whole these views point to the persistence of sex stereotypes economic and social life which relegate women to household tasks or at best to safe feminine occupations, and ascribe to men the role of breadwinner whose status debars them from more active participation in the daily household work schedule. The majority of men and women who responded appear to have been influenced by two factors - their deprived economic circumstances and/or the cultural constraints of social norms. The impact of these influences varied according to local traditions and experience. This is reflected in the replies given by the men to the query as to whether it was necessary for their womenfolk to seek employment if their family income was adequate and did not need to be supplemented. Positive responses ranged from 69.9% in Borella to 42.2 in Pindeniya, 20% in Wattegedera and 9.1% in Siruppiddy.

VOCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS AND ATTITUDES

The conventional character of the aspirations of the unemployed women have already been referred to earlier in this section. Very few of the "working" women responded to questions pertaining to their aspirations but the few that did so did not have any ambitions beyond the familiar occupations of their environment such as teaching, nursing, midwifery, clerical work, weaving and sewing.

To supplement this data and to ascertain the views of future aspirants to the labour market, a sample of Grade 10 students in secondary schools within or in the neighbourhood of the four areas were asked to state their choice of vocation and to respond to statements which reflect vocational attitudes. Local conditions at the time of the survey prevented the administration of the questionnaire to a secondary school in the neigh-

TABLE 6.40 - ATTITUDES TO EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN (PERCENTAGE)

ATTITUDES	PINDENIYA MALE AGREE	PINDENIYA MALE DIS-AGREE	PINDENIYA MALE NO OPIN-ION	PINDENIYA FEMALE AGREE	PINDENIYA FEMALE DIS-AGREE	PINDENIYA FEMALE NO OPIN-ION	SIRUPPIDDY MALE AGREE	SIRUPPIDDY MALE DIS-AGREE	SIRUPPIDDY MALE NO OPIN-ION	SIRUPPIDDY FEMALE AGREE	SIRUPPIDDY FEMALE DIS-AGREE	SIRUPPIDDY FEMALE NO OPIN-ION
Women should have equal opportunities in employment	79.5	20.5	---	81.8	16.9	1.2	83.1	12.9	3.9	90.7	5.1	4.2
Women and men should receive equal wages	69.9	30.1	---	86.7	13.3	---	71.4	24.7	3.9	81.4	14.4	4.2
Women should Continue to work after marriage	72.3	22.9	4.8	93.9	5.5	0.6	18.2	67.5	14.3	37.3	57.6	5.1
There should be employment opportunities for women even when there is male unemployment	48.2	45.8	6.0	50.9	49.1	---	11.7	83.1	5.2	11.0	79.7	9.3
Women should work to supplement the family income	90.4	9.6	---	98.2	1.8	---	92.2	5.2	2.6	94.1	0.8	5.1
Women should not work outside the village/ locality	34.9	48.2	16.9	23.6	75.2	1.2	76.6	19.5	3.9	59.3	35.6	5.1

(contd.)

TABLE 6.40 - ATTITUDES TO EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN (PERCENTAGE) (contd.)

ATTITUDES	PINDENIYA						SIRUPPIDDY					
	MALE			FEMALE			MALE			FEMALE		
	AGREE	DIS-AGREE	NO OPIN-ION	AGREE	DIS-AGREE	NO OPIN-ION	AGREE	DIS-AGREE	NO OPIN-ION	AGREE	DIS-AGREE	NO OPIN-ION
Home -based employment is more suitable for women	66.3	8.4	25.3	95.8	3.6	0.6	98.7	---	1.3	95.8	---	4.2
Some jobs are not suitable for women	74.7	25.3	---	54.5	45.5	---	93.5	3.9	2.6	93.2	1.7	5.1
Women should be confined to household duties and child care activities	24.1	72.3	3.6	12.7	86.1	1.2	87.0	5.2	7.8	92.4	2.5	5.1
Women should not work when children are very young	87.9	12.0	---	95.8	4.2	---	70.1	25.9	3.9	71.2	20.3	8.5
When women work household duties are neglected	59.0	40.9	---	47.3	52.7	---	74.0	20.8	5.2	55.9	36.4	7.6
When women work men should help in the house	54.2	43.4	2.4	33.3	66.7	---	94.8	1.3	3.9	93.2	0.8	5.9
Women should participate in economic decisions in the home	83.1	16.9	---	93.9	6.1	---	96.1	---	3.9	94.9	0.8	4.2
TOTAL (No.)	83	83	83	165	165	165	77	77	77	118	118	118

(contd)

TABLE 6.40 - ATTITUDES TO EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN (PERCENTAGES) (contd.)

ATTITUDES	WATTEGEDARA MALE AGREE	WATTEGEDARA MALE DIS-AGREE	WATTEGEDARA MALE NO OPIN-ION	WATTEGEDARA FEMALE AGREE	WATTEGEDARA FEMALE DIS-AGREE	WATTEGEDARA FEMALE NO OPIN-ION	BORELLA MALE AGREE	BORELLA MALE DIS-AGREE	BORELLA MALE NO OPIN-ION	BORELLA FEMALE AGREE	BORELLA FEMALE DIS-AGREE	BORELLA FEMALE NO OPIN-ION
Women should have equal opportunities in employment	56.8	41.1	2.1	90.1	---	9.9	80.6	18.3	1.1	99.5	0.5	---
Women and men should receive equal wages	34.7	62.1	3.2	89.3	0.8	9.9	76.3	22.6	1.1	94.0	5.5	0.5
Women should Continue to work after marriage	42.1	52.6	5.3	50.4	12.9	36.6	84.9	9.7	5.4	93.5	6.0	0.5
There should be employment opportunities for women even when there is male unemployment	6.3	91.6	2.1	41.2	30.5	28.2	62.4	35.5	2.2	61.0	36.5	2.5
Women should work to supplement the family income	44.2	41.1	14.7	84.7	2.3	12.9	94.6	3.2	2.2	86.0	14.0	---
Women should not work outside the village/ locality	64.2	17.9	17.9	50.4	27.5	22.1	31.2	65.6	3.2	30.0	69.5	0.5

(contd.)

TABLE 6.40 - ATTITUDES TO EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN (PERCENTAGES) (contd.)

ATTITUDES	WATTEGEDARA MALE AGREE	WATTEGEDARA MALE DIS-AGREE	WATTEGEDARA MALE NO OPIN-ION	WATTEGEDARA FEMALE AGREE	WATTEGEDARA FEMALE DIS-AGREE	WATTEGEDARA FEMALE NO OPIN-ION	BORELLA MALE AGREE	BORELLA MALE DIS-AGREE	BORELLA MALE NO OPIN-ION	BORELLA FEMALE AGREE	BORELLA FEMALE DIS-AGREE	BORELLA FEMALE NO OPIN-ION
Home-based employment is more suitable for women	73.7	8.4	17.9	48.9	22.9	28.2	97.8	1.1	1.1	96.5	3.5	---
Some jobs are not suitable for women	74.7	4.2	21.1	88.5	8.4	3.1	90.3	8.6	1.1	75.0	24.0	1.0
Women should be confined to household duties and child care activities	41.1	17.9	41.1	11.5	32.8	55.7	1.1	96.8	2.2	2.0	91.5	6.5
Women should not work when children are very young	30.5	11.6	57.9	48.9	22.1	29.0	96.8	---	3.2	81.5	18.5	---
When women work household duties are neglected	49.5	23.2	27.4	70.9	9.9	19.1	90.3	7.5	2.2	75.5	24.0	0.5
When women work men should help in the house	41.1	31.6	27.4	46.6	19.8	33.6	30.1	68.8	1.1	35.0	64.5	0.5
Women should participate in economic decisions in the home	45.3	11.6	43.2	96.9	0.8	2.3	96.8	---	3.2	99.0	1.0	---
TOTAL (No.)	95	95	95	131	131	131	93	93	93	200	200	200

TABLE 6.41 - VOCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

VOCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS	PINDENIYA				WATTEGEDERA				BORELLA (Low income)				BORELLA (Prestigious school)			
	GIRLS		BOYS		GIRLS		BOYS		GIRLS		BOYS		GIRLS		BOYS	
	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO	%	NO.	%	NO.	%
Teaching	49	30.2	13	15.7	19	59.4	2	10.0	1	3.3	1	2.5	7	6.9	7	6.3
Clerical	26	16.0	12	14.4	7	21.9	1	5.0	4	13.3	12	30.0	2	1.9	10	8.9
Doctor	34	20.9	9	10.8	6	18.8	2	10.0	9	30.0	3	7.5	67	66.3	21	18.8
Nurse	39	24.1	1	1.2	-	-	-	-	11	36.7	-	-	1	0.9	-	-
Agrigulture/ Farming	-	-	2	2.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	2.7
Accountant	-	-	3	3.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	4.5
Own business, Trade	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1.9	4	4.8
Air Force	-	-	2	2.4	-	-	2	10.0	-	-	1	2.5	2	1.9	-	-
Army/Police Service	3	1.8	8	9.6	-	-	1	5.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1.8
Industrial Sector	2	1.2	4	4.8	-	-	2	10.0	-	-	4	10.0	-	-	4	4.8
Engineer	-	-	18	21.7	-	-	8	40.0	-	-	16	40.0	6	5.9	35	31.3
Lawyer	4	2.5	1	1.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	3.9	7	6.3
Stenography/Typist	1	0.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tourist Board	-	-	2	2.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Weaving	1	0.6	7	8.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pilot/Ship	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	5.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	2.7
Music Director	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	5.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lecturer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	3.9	-	-
Author	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1.8
Actor	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.9
Labourer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	5.0	1	0.9	-	-
Sports Instructor	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.9	-	-
No response	3	1.8	1	1.2	-	-	-	-	5	16.7	1	2.5	4	3.9	8	7.1
TOTAL	162	100.0	83	100.0	32	100.0	20	100.0	30	100.0	40	100.0	101	100.0	112	100.0

bourhood of Siruppiddy since the village itself had no such institution. The schools used for the purpose were:

Pindeniya Maha Vidyalaya (co-educational)

Wattegedera Maha Vidyalaya (co-educational)

Susamyawardena Maha Vidyalaya (a low income co-educational school in Borella)

Devi Balika Vidyalaya and D.S. Senanayake Vidyalaya, (two prestigious single sex schools in Borella.)

Table 6.41 which presents the vocational choices of these students reveals that the aspirations of these boys and girls conform to the pattern of vocational expectations commonly found among secondary school students in Sri Lanka. The range of popular vocations was narrow and individual choice was sometimes influenced by the economic circumstances of the student.

Two-thirds of the girls in the prestigious Borella school aspired to be doctors and a smaller number wished to be lecturers, teachers and engineers. In the economically disadvantaged Borella school ambitions were divided between the realistic expectation of being a nurse (36.7%) and the ideal of being a doctor (30%). Among Pindeniya girls preferences were divided among teaching (30%), nursing (24%) and medicine (20%) - reflecting again the conflict between aspirations and circumstances. In Wattegedera nearly 60% of the girls wished to be teachers and a minority to be clerks and doctors, perhaps because the first breakthrough to employment outside the home in this village was the teaching service.

The popular choice of boys in all schools was engineering - the goal of the majority of achievement-oriented secondary school boys in Sri Lanka. Medical was the next popular vocation in the prestigious Borella school and the clerical service in the less affluent school. In Pindeniya,teaching, clerical service and medicine were also choices. Only two boys in Pindeniya and 3 in the prestigious Borella school opted for farming, and a few boys and 2 girls in Pindeniya preferred other jobs in the industrial sector. With the exception of 3 girls in Pindeniya who wished to join the police service the vocational aspirations of the girls reflected the acceptance of sex stereotypes. A few boys went off the "beaten track" and wished to be a music director, an author or an actor.

Many of the responses to the statements (Table 6.42) did not indicate wide consensus except on a few issues and there was a high percentage of "no preference". This is inevitable in an age group that is still on the threshold of decision-making with regard to future careers. Nevertheless some of their views are indicative of future trends.

Responses relating to "job area" showed that manual jobs were preferred largely by Wattegedera boys while jobs in industry did not rate high in any group. Private enterprise in the form of business appealed to a fair porportion of the boys and girls of the trading community of Wattegedera. The clerical service was popular with a majority of Wattegedera girls, and specialized professions such as medicine and engineering were preferred by a large majority of girls in the prestigious Borella school and by the low income Borella boys.

A very large majority wished to work in the state sector except in the prestigious Borella schools. The security associated with employment in the state sector has always been found to appeal to students from economically disadvantaged homes. No group of students expressed preference for employment in the private sector - an unknown quantity to many young aspirants.

A few statements were included to explore the students' own perception of the environmental factors that facilitate or impede employment. It is typical of students that despite the high incidence of graduate unemployment the majority in every group felt that a higher education was almost a sine qua non for employment. This belief is undoubtedly linked with their aspirations to be doctors, engineers and teachers - occupations which to them appear to be the logical outcome of university education. Extraneous political and social factors were not considered to be important by the majority. Politics did not appear to be an important issue, only Wattegedera students felt that influential connections were necessary, and some of the students in the economically disadvantaged Borella school thought that studying in a "leading" school could be a decisive factor in selection for employment.

The responses of the students indicated that most of the problems and issues connected with job-selection and recruitment had not crystallized sufficiently in their consciousness. It is however surprising that this should be so in a country in which youth seek entry to the labour market very early and job frustration is practically endemic, particularly among the non-affluent majority.

TABLE 6.42 - VOCATION ASPIRATIONS AND ATTITUDES OF STUDENTS (PERCENTAGES)

	PINDENIYA						WATTEGEDERA					
	GIRLS			BOYS			GIRLS			BOYS		
ATTITUDES	AGREE	DIS-AGREE	NO PREFE-RENCE	AGREE	DIS-AGREE	NO PREFE-RENCE	AGREE	DIS-AGREE	NO PREFE-RENCE	AGREE	DIS-AGREE	NO PREFE-RENCE
I prefer a manual job	22.2	12.3	65.4	32.5	10.8	56.6	18.8	15.6	65.6	70.0	20.0	10.0
I prefer a clerical job	41.4	16.7	41.9	21.7	31.3	46.9	93.8	---	6.3	50.0	30.0	20.0
My preference is a job in an industry	8.6	20.9	70.4	19.3	26.5	54.2	18.8	62.5	18.8	40.0	45.0	15.0
I like a specialised kind of job such as Engineering, Medicine	35.8	16.7	47.5	38.6	25.3	36.1	37.5	15.6	46.9	55.0	20.0	25.0
I hope to start a business of my own	12.3	37.0	50.6	14.4	42.2	43.4	46.9	25.0	28.1	60.0	20.0	20.0
I would like to get a job in the State sector	92.6	0.6	6.8	90.4	1.2	8.4	100.0	---	---	100.0	---	---

(contd.)

TABLE 6.42 - VOCATION ASPIRATIONS AND ATTITUDES OF STUDENTS (PERCENTAGES) (Contd.)

ATTITUDES	PINDENIYA						WATTEGEDARA					
	GIRLS			BOYS			GIRLS			BOYS		
	AGREE	DIS-AGREE	NO PREFE-RENCE	AGREE	DIS-AGREE	NO PREFE-RENCE	AGREE	DIS-AGREE	NO PREFE-RENCE	AGREE	DIS-AGREE	NO PREFE-RENCE
I am hoping for a job in the private sector	6.8	50.0	43.2	13.3	44.6	42.2	15.6	71.9	12.5	10.0	75.0	15.0
In Sri Lanka, what one needs most to get a job are political connections	35.8	46.9	17.3	26.5	39.8	33.7	50.0	40.6	9.4	15.0	65.0	20.0
What is most important in seeking employment today is to know influential persons	22.2	51.9	25.9	16.9	57.8	25.3	65.6	12.5	21.9	30.0	45.0	25.0
Studying in a 'leading' school is what helps most in getting a job	9.3	54.9	35.8	8.4	55.4	36.1	6.3	43.8	50.0	20.0	65.0	15.0
A Higher education in the most important factor in getting a job	77.8	7.4	14.8	85.5	2.4	12.0	90.6	3.1	6.3	95.0	5.0	---
Men should be given preference over women in employment	8.6	49.4	41.9	42.2	19.3	38.6	18.8	43.8	37.5	10.0	60.0	30.0
TOTAL (No.)	162	162	162	83	83	83	32	32	32	20	20	20

(contd.)

TABLE 6.42 - VOCATION ASPIRATIONS AND ATTITUDES OF STUDENTS (PERCENTAGES) (contd.)

ATTITUDES	BORELLA (LOW INCOME) GIRLS AGREE	GIRLS DIS-AGREE	GIRLS NO PREFE-RENCE	BOYS AGREE	BOYS DIS-AGREE	BOYS NO PREFE-RENCE	BORELLA (PRESTIGIOUS SCHOOLS) GIRLS AGREE	GIRLS DIS-AGREE	GIRLS NO PREFE-RENCE	BOYS AGREE	BOYS DIS-AGREE	BOYS NO PREFE-RENCE
I prefer a manual job	46.7	---	53.3	37.5	---	62.5	20.8	12.9	66.3	44.6	13.4	41.9
I prefer a clerical job	26.7	10.0	63.3	35.0	25.0	40.0	16.8	34.7	48.5	9.8	42.9	47.3
My preference is a job in an industry	13.3	13.3	73.3	37.5	17.5	45.0	7.1	39.6	53.5	25.9	22.3	51.8
I like a specialised kind of job such as Engineering, Medicine	40.0	13.3	46.7	72.5	2.5	25.0	77.2	0.9	21.8	56.3	13.4	30.4
I hope to start a business of my own	3.3	26.7	70.0	22.5	15.0	62.5	10.9	30.7	58.4	---	---	---
I would like to get a job in the State sector	80.0	6.7	13.3	80.0	---	20.0	56.4	5.9	37.6	45.5	8.0	46.4

(contd.)

TABLE 6.42 - VOCATION ASPIRATIONS AND ATTITUDES OF STUDENTS (PERCENTAGES) (contd.)

ATTITUDES	BORELLA (LOW INCOME)						BORELLA (PRESTIGIOUS SCHOOLS)					
	GIRLS			BOYS			GIRLS			BOYS		
	AGREE	DIS-AGREE	NO PREFE-RENCE	AGREE	DIS-AGREE	NO PREFE-RENCE	AGREE	DIS-AGREE	NO PREFE-RENCE	AGREE	DIS-AGREE	NO PREFE-RENCE
I am hoping for a job in the private sector	10.0	36.7	53.3	10.0	17.5	72.5	4.9	29.7	65.3	9.8	28.6	61.6
In Sri Lanka, what one needs most to get a job are political connections	30.0	53.3	16.7	27.5	45.0	27.5	33.7	46.5	19.8	23.2	38.4	38.4
What is most important in seeking employment today is to know influential persons	20.0	66.7	13.3	30.0	50.0	20.0	22.8	23.8	53.5	16.1	52.7	31.3
Studying in a 'leading' school is what helps most in getting a job	43.3	50.0	6.7	42.5	50.0	7.5	14.9	63.4	21.8	8.9	58.9	32.1
A Higher education in the most important factor in getting a job	73.3	16.7	10.0	67.5	12.5	20.0	85.1	7.9	6.9	76.8	7.1	16.1
Men should be given preference over women in employment	13.3	50.0	36.7	32.5	17.5	50.0	6.9	74.3	18.8	31.3	23.2	45.5
TOTAL (No.)	30	30	30	40	40	40	101	101	101	112	112	112

SUMMARY

The data from this survey of selected study areas provide concrete illustration of trends and problems relating to the economic participation of women and in some respects clarifies the picture which emerged from the macro-level data. Impersonal figures come to life as men and women engaged, in the case of the majority, in a daily struggle to improve their quality of life.

The economic role of women is seen to be that of a secondary earner in most instances whether in the field, workplace and at home, and her economic contribution is limited by her disadvantaged position in the employment structure. Her participation also appears to be circumscribed by the economic constraints of unemployment and the social stereotypes which inhibit aspirations, initiative and performance from student life to adulthood In the total situation social class differentiation operates both overtly and invisibly as a determinant of both economic participation and economic status.

SUPPLEMENTARY STUDIES

The macro-level data pertaining to economic participation permits mainly broad generalizations and the area surveys refer to particular situations. It was felt therefore that useful insights could be obtained regarding the many facets of this aspect of the status of women by exploring the views and perceptions of representatives of important dramatis personae in the field of economic activity - employers and women workers.

VIEWS OF EMPLOYERS AND DECISION-MAKERS IN THE EMPLOYMENT STRUCTURE

Information was obtained by means of a questionnaire and interviews from 50 establishments, 23 in the public sector and 27 in the private sector. The public sector establishments included Ministries, Corporations, Banks and industries The private sector firms were national or multinational establishments engaged in a wide range of economic activities such as food processing, manufacture of textiles and garments, electronic, mechanical chemical and pharmaceutical industries, travel, books, entertainment and construction.

The investigation had two objectives - to evaluate the employment opportunities of women and to identify the attitudes of employers which appear to affect the economic participation of women in relatively well organized establishments which should theoretically offer the most favourable working environment.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Employers and decision-makers in state institutions (who are included in the term 'employers' in this study) were asked:

(i) to indicate the areas in which:
(a) many; (b) some; (c) few; and (d) no women were employed; and

(ii) the jobs and tasks from which women have been excluded.

The information received substantiates the data and trends presented earlier in the chapter.

(a) Women constituted between 50 per cent and 100 per cent of those employed in each of the following occupations - telephone operators, receptionists, steno-typists weavers, spinners, textile printers and processors, garment workers, packers, labellers and wrappers in food processing, pharmaceutical and chemical industries, precision workers in assembly line industries, pottery and ceramics workers, confidential secretaries, market researchers, librarians in research institutes, legal officers in banks and labour in the tea, rubber, coconut and tobacco industries. They were engaged in plucking and sifting in the tea industry, tapping, weeding, snipping dirt and cleaning in the rubber industry, and gathering nuts, weeding, weaving cadjans and making coir products in the coconut industry;

(b) A fair proportion (25 percent to 50 percent) were clerks, sales assistants, draughtsmen, sports officers and labourers;

(c) A few held managerial and executive jobs or worked as engineers, post telecommunication inspectors, technical and research assistants and security officers.

(d) No women were employed in technical jobs in any of the private sector firms.

Very few women had been recruited to managerial level employment in the private sector, and most women employees in this sector were clerical or manual workers. Two firms in the sample, a construction firm and one that manufactured household equipment, had no women employees at all and did not think that there would be a change of policy in this respect.

According to these responses women were virtually excluded from the factory floor and from management level jobs in private firms. In practically all the 50 establishments women were with few exceptions not recruited to the engineering department of industrial establishments where maintenance of machinery was required, to mechanically operated work, to factory floor operations, to cinema and factory jobs which entailed night shifts and to jobs as travelling sales assistants, drivers and security workers.

Reasons for exclusion varied according to the job and were largely based on sex role stereotypes. Employers thought that women could not manipulate machines and would find mechanical jobs strenuous and unpleasant, despite the fact that women manual workers in these establishments perform physically arduous tasks. A major reason for excluding women from factory work was the prohibition of night work for women by labour legislation. Some employers also claimed that it was undesirable to recruit women to managerial positions since men did not like women to be in positions of authority over men!

ATTITUDES OF EMPLOYERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

While these reasons reflect employers' attitudes and priorities, more negative attitudes and resultant constraints were reflected in:

(i) the occupations which employers considered were appropriate for expanding opportunities for women;
(ii) employers' perceptions of the problems encountered in employing women and the solutions envisaged by them;
(iii) the employers' profile and image of women workers.

(i) The concept of 'suitable' jobs obviously dies hard and the increasing female opportunities anticipated by most employers in their domains were largely the conventional feminine occupations in which the majority of women are already employed - steno-typists, telephone operators, clerks, cashiers, spinners, weavers and finishers, packers and labellers. Only a few were prepared to ignore sex role stereotypes and to encourage the employment of more women as draughtsmen, technicians, quality control workers in laboratories and tool operators. The sex-based division of the labour market, which was apparent in the existing pattern of employment opportunities in these establishments, is therefore likely to continue to operate as a constraint to the more extensive participation by women in administration and industry.

(ii) Problems encountered in employing women stemmed from practical difficulties entailing administrative adjustments, which, however, did not fall within employers' schemes of priorities, and cultural norms reflected in societal attitudes. In their view optimum labour utilization was adversely affected by:

(a) a prohibition of night work, which meant curtailing night shifts;
(b) the employment of married women, as they are entitled to a long period of paid maternity leave, non-strenuous work and nursing time during a specific period of time, and perhaps even child care facilities in some large establishments, and as they tend to have a high rate of absenteeism;
(c) the reluctance of women workers to accept transfers which disrupt their family life and to undertake overtime assignments;
(d) the cultural problem associated with field work for women workers;
(e) the limited range of jobs which were considered to be 'appropriate' for women.

Cultural attitudes determined what was appropriate or difficult for women workers and adjustments to meet their family responsibilities were considered to threaten satisfactory production norms. Solutions proposed included the termination of employment after marriage and the exclusion of young married

women from the labour market. Instances were noted by interviewers where unofficial 'contracts' permit employers to dispense with the services of women on marriage, or where young women between 18 and 25 years are recruited in large numbers as casual workers in order to facilitate such a procedure.

(iii) The employers' profile of women workers as based on their responses is presented in Table 6.43. It is interesting to note that this profile is very positive with regard to work discipline, seriousness of purpose and work output. It is less favourable regarding willingness to accept responsibility and regular attendance, while the majority of employers were of view that protective legislation has made women uneconomical units of production. Economic priorities influenced their perspectives and employers were divided on the issue as to whether a docile, conscientious and relatively politically inactive women work force compensated adequately for the organizational and financial problems created by employing women.

Employers'attitudes were also conditioned by their image of women as weak and passive and as primarily home makers and secondarily workers in selected and suitably feminine employment areas. A minority (39.3 percent) stated that women should cease to work after marriage. A majority of employers endorsed sex-based differentiation of jobs (78.6 percent) and felt that men were basically the bread-winners and should be given preference in job recruitment in situations of unemployment (60.7 percent).

The picture that emerged from this survey was that few employers and decision-makers are as yet aware that women are human resources to be developed and not exploited, and are individuals with aspirations and aptitudes and human rights.

PERCEPTIONS OF WOMEN WORKERS

The problems and implications of economic participation as perceived by women workers offer further evidence of the multiplicity of factors that operate in the Sri Lanka environment.

TABLE 6.43

EMPLOYERS' PROFILE OF WOMEN WORKERS AND THEIR ATTITUDES
(Responses of Employers)

(Percentages)

	Agreed	Disagreed	No opinion
(i) Profile Characteristics			
High absenteeism	42.9	53.6	3.5
Averse to accepting responsibility	39.3	60.7	-
Poor work discipline	14.3	82.1	3.6
Interested in Marking time till marriage	25.0	75.0	-
No commitment to work since they feel they are subsidiary workers	25.0	71.4	3.6
Work output poor	28.6	67.9	3.5
Uneconomic to employ as a result of protective legislation	82.1	14.3	3.6
(ii) Attitudes			
Preference should be given to male recruitment in times of unemployment	60.7	35.7	3.6
Women should cease to work after marriage	39.3	60.7	-
There are 'Men's jobs and "Women's jobs in the labour market	78.6	17.9	3.5

Total (No) 50 employers.

Information was obtained by means of questionnaires and interviews from a sample of 100 working women representing the total spectrum of the employment structure. Occupations as classified in the Census Survey were stratified in a three-tiered structure based on income and status as professional or executive (Group A), middle level jobs (Group B) and low income and low prestige jobs (Group C). Within each group occupations were selected randomly giving a greater weightage to the lowest income group women. Another consideration in the selection of women in such occupations was the relative ease with which they could be contacted. The respondents comprised 22 women in Group A, 33 in Group B and 45 in Group C. It was found that 75 of the respondents were married.

JOB SATISFACTION

As the analysis of responses presented in Table 6.44 indicates, job satisfaction was not high among the respondents. Only half had fulfilled their aspirations and succeeded in obtaining the job of their choice. The most frustrated in this respect were the low income women workers (Group C) whose disadvantaged circumstances have evidently compelled them to accept any type of employment however unsatisfactory. The most satisfied were Gruop B, among whom were those who were employed in traditional feminine occupations such as nurse, typist, clerk and telephone operator, which are popular vocational choices in Sri Lanka.

The majority of respondents (70 percent) stated that they were in search of better jobs, the proportion increasing as the level of employment decreased. The disparity (86 7 percent in Group C and 36 4 percent in Group B) is indicative of the wide salary and status differentials between these two ends of the employment continuum in Sri Lanka. Group C however was the least enthusiastic about obtaining further qualifications or training since their level of aspiration could have been depressed by their total lack of skills. Group B on the other hand had better opportunities for mobility and Group A was more motivated and had higher goals including overseas training.

TABLE 6.44

DEGREE OF JOB SATISFACTION (Responses of Women Workers)

(Percentages)

	Total	Married women	Unmarried women	Group A	Group B	Group C
Job obtained was 1st choice	49.00	50.1	44.0	54.5	69.7	31.1
Seeking a better job	70.00	64,0	88.0	36.4	69.7	86.7
Intends to obtain further qualifications	77.0	74.7	84.0	77.3	93.9	64.4
Satisfied with						
i) Salary	39.0	41.3	32.0	45.4	54.5	24.4
ii) Promotion prospects	46.0	46.7	44.0	50.0	54.5	37.8
iii) Working conditions	55.0	54.7	56.0	45.4	72.7	57.8
iv) Leave facilities	57.0	62.7	40.0	95.4	66.7	31.1
v) Status of Job	61.0	61.3	60.0	68.2	81.8	42.2

While upward mobility was a goal of most respondents, economic rewards appeared to be the chief concern and dissatisfaction with working conditions was most marked with regard to salaries and promotional prospects. Once again Group C was the most affected with regard to remuneration and future prospects, leave facilities (since labour legislation benefitted them least) and status. Group A was more sensitive to the working environment.

The fact that Group B was the most contented group of employees reflects the limited range of skills and lack of motivation of Sri Lankan women. The majority of women workers in Sri Lanka are secondary school leavers or school drop-outs and their level of aspiration is determined by their educational background. Group A has higher aspirations and Group C are faced with daily frustration of economic deprivation. Unmarried women workers appeared to be better motivated with regard to seeking better and more remunerative employment and to improve their skills. The domestic responsibilities of women workers obviously accounted for their greater concern with leave facilities - a problem associated with the perennial issue of absenteeism.

PERCEPTION OF DISCRIMINATION

An interesting pointer to the general lack of awareness of rights and relatively low levels of motivation among Sri Lankan women is the absence of any strong feeling of discrimination (Table 6.45).

Equal pay has always been an accepted principle in high and middle level employment but even in occupations in Group C in which overtly discriminatory wage policies are in operation, the proportion of workers who were conscious of such discrimination was not large. This is perhaps due to the fact that the unequal wage structure has been accepted for so long and has been even 'legitimized' by endorsement by labour unions. Nevertheless Group A employees whose aspirations are apt to be higher and who are likely to face male competition and prejudices in the upper levels of the employment structure were more acutely conscious of their disadvantaged position vis-a-vis male employees in equipping themselves with further training and in 'reaching the top'.

TABLE 6.45

PERCEPTION OF DISCRIMINATION (Responses of Women Workers)

(Percentage)

Area of Discrimination	Total	Married women	Un-married women	Group A	Group B	Group C
Table No.	100	75	25	22	33	45
Further training facilities	36.0	40.0	48.0	50.0	24.2	40.0
Promotions	38.0	42.7	20.0	63.6	24.2	35.6
Salaries	30.0	30.7	28.0	27.2	24.2	35.6
Employers' preference for Male employees	11.0	10.7	20.0	13.6	3.0	15.6
Male colleagues' attitudes	15.0	14.7	16.0	18.2	6.1	20.0

TABLE 6.46

BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT AS PERCEIVED BY WOMEN WORKERS

(Percentages)

Barriers	Total	Married women	Un marr-ied women	Group A	Group B	Group C
Preference for males in recruitment	8.0	8.0	8.0	13.6	-	11.1
Employers' reluctance to recruit to some jobs	15.0	14.7	16.0	-	12.1	24.4
Cultural prejudices of employers e.g. Women inefficient	30.0	34.7	16.0	72.7	18.2	17.8
Marriage	18.0	13.3	32.0	-	21.2	24.4
Immobility of women (transfers)	15.0	14.7	20.0	4.5	18.2	17.8
Prohibition of night shifts	8.0	6.7	12.0	-	21.2	2.2
Lack of qualifications	5.0	4.0	8.0	9.1	-	4.4
Lethargy of women	8.0	9.3	4.0	22.7	-	6.7
Transport	50.0	49.3	52.0	40.9	63.6	44.4
Hours of work	19.0	18.7	20.0	9.1	15.1	26.7
Child care activities	25.0	32.0	4.0	40.9	45.4	13.3
Family disapproval	16.0	16.0	16.0	-	-	-
Hourschold chores	4.0	5.3	-	9.1	-	2.2
Lack of servants	1.0	1.3	-	-	-	2.2
Lack of co-operation of husbands	1.0	1.3	-	4.5	-	-
Lack of facilities in community	3.0	2.6	4.0	4.5	-	4.4
TOTAL (No)	100	75	25	22	33	45

Few in any group complained of hostility on the part of employers or colleagues in their work places.

CONSTRAINTS TO EMPLOYMENT

Respondents were more articulate with regard to constraints to their effective participation in the labour force. A large majority (78 percent), including a very high proportion of married women and those in Groups A and B stated that they experienced specific difficulties. The barriers they listed related to access to employment, working conditions, and the problems that confronted them in continuing their dual responsibilities at home and at work.

The cultural prejudices of employers and their stereotypes of women as inefficient and weak were claimed to be a significant constraint to access to employment. Preference to males in recruitment particularly in traditional masculine areas was considered to be a concomitant of such attitudes. Women workers were concerned that marriage, their relative immobility, protective legislation and lack of adequate vocational skills tended to reduce their employment opportunities. Some admitted that poor motivation and general lethargy on the part of women themselves were contributory factors.

Compounding these difficulties were the domestic problems which imposed an additional burden on women workers, and particularly married women. Child care responsibilities were identified as the most important of these problems. Family disapproval, household chores, inability to obtain domestic help, the unco-operative attitudes of husbands and the absence of basic infrastructural facilities in the community were further problems to women in a context in which the principle of shared responsibility for household work is alien to a large majority of men.

Despite these obstacles 65.3 percent of the married respondents were convinced that they could continue their roles in the home and in employment satisfactorily.

TABLE 6.47

ATTITUDE OF WOMEN WORKERS

	Total	Married	Un-married	Group A	Group B	Group C
i) Attitude						
There are suitable jobs for women	75.0	78.7	92.0	4.5	100.0	91.1
Women should work after marriage	88.0	90.7	88.0	95.5	84.8	86.7
ii) Profile charcteristics of women workers						
High absenteeism	69.0	64.0	84.0	59.1	72.7	71.1
Averse to accepting responsibility	18.0	18.7	16.0	27.2	18.2	13.3
No work commitment	29.0	24.0	44.0	31.8	30.3	26.7
TOTAL (No)	100	75	25	22	33	45

ATTITUDES OF WOMEN WORKERS

The reaction of women workers to familiar sex stereotypes pertaining to the role of women in the economy was investigated. A significant fact was that an almost equally large proportion of women respondents in this survey (75 percent) as employers in the previous survey, accepted the sex-based division of the labour market. The jobs they considered suitable for women were by and large the stereotyped feminine occupations such as teaching, nursing, 'non-field indoor office work', sewing, weaving, handicrafts, packing, assembling, secretarial and clerical services, telephone service, and medical and legal professions. The least conformist were the women in Group A, some of whom have been pioneers in entering male preserves, and among whom perhaps consciousness has increased since International Women's Year. There was total acceptance from Group B, in which the majority of traditional feminine occupations are found, as noted earlier. In the circumstances it is difficult to envisage radical change in vocational choice and in employment patterns among women in the near future.

Despite the practical difficulties referred to earlier a very large majority (88 percent) felt that women should continue to work after marriage. Social norms appear to yield to economic imperatives in decisions pertaining to seeking employment but operate visibly in determining the type of employment.

The respondents' profile of the behaviour patterns of women at work differed from that of employers in one aspect - their view that the majority of women workers are not averse to accepting responsibility. In their own minds women tend to construe reluctance to accept responsible posts or transfers as a question of priorities. They agree with employers that women have a commitment to work but that they are more prone to absenteeism than men.

The responses of such a wide range of women workers are apt to be hardly definitive. The impression created by these responses, however, is that women workers are subject to conflicting forces - economic pressures that compel labour force participation despite the travails of domestic and working life, traditional stereotypes that inhibit choice of employment and lethargy and low motivation that affects the development of their potential.

AN OVERVIEW

From the welter of data presented in this Chapter it is apparent that both economic participation and status are linked with the position of women in the total social context. The status of women tends to be tied to that of man and is governed by the family structure. Their economic role is affected by pressures from interdependent systems such as education, the economy and social values.

The data has shown that women in Sri Lanka work primarily for economic reasons. Even middle class families are victims of the spiralling cost of living and only affluent women can afford to choose to work. Their economic participation is affected by a multiplicity of factors, and constraints are rooted in the socio-economic structure and value system.

Economic growth and male employment levels influence the demand for female labour. Mass poverty confines the majority of women to the lowest of the employment pyramid and exposes them to both class and sex barriers. The survey has focussed attention on the position of women workers in agriculture and industry. In retail trade too it was found for instance that one-third the regular vendors in two central markets,one in Colombo and one in the suburbs[31] were women and that approximately half these women were itinerant traders. Most high and middle income households are dependent on women domestic 'servants' for their household chores. It is difficult to envisage how the economic status of women can be improved unless the imbalances and distortions of the development process are corrected.

Education can lead to personal fulfilment and social competence. It raises expectations and facilitates adjustment to contemporary economic structures in which differentiation is more complex than in traditional societies. Data presented in Chapter 5 has shown that equal access has not led to equal utilization of educational facilities.

Vocational education was seen to be totally inadequate to meet economic needs. Expansion and revamping will obviously be necessary if University and school leavers and drop-outs, semi-skilled and unskilled rural and urban women, the self-employed in the informal sector, housewives desirous

of training and re-training for part-time employment, and migrant workers are to be integrated into the mainstream of economic life in the country and achieve personal growth.

Vocational preferences have little long-term reliability but they are useful because they reflect values and social attitudes as well as the incentive structure in the labour market. It was noted in the earlier analysis that the vocational aspirations of women and students in the study areas were narrow and stereotyped. It is clear from studies made in 1950,[32] and 1973 and 1976[33] that this conventional pattern of preference has not seen any marked change over many decades. The ten most popular vocations in these studies were teaching, medicine, air hostess service, nursing, clerical services, stenography, accountancy, engineering, law and police, - the last among rural girls only. These preferences are the outcome of a desire to escape from present hardship and to achieve upward mobility, tempered by the 'stretch values' and more realistic goals of the less affluent. Their relevance to this study is that with the exception of engineering and the police, they belong to conventional service sector occupations. The lack of flexibility in University courses in Sri Lanka and the narrow goals of University aspirants (medicine and engineering) encourage social conformity to a few selected professions and vitiates the growth of creativity and talent.

Societal attitudes appear to have a pervasive influence on the extent, direction and impact of economic participation. The surveys revealed that these norms and attitudes find overt or indirect expression as barriers to economic activities.

The image of women as exclusively home.makers continues to dominate the policy-makers and employers. From this central strand of thinking there stems a number of complementary attitudes and resultant problems. The principle of shared responsibility and work in the home has suffered as a consequence and the contribution of men to household activities is relatively limited. Other supportive facilities to enable women to combine their roles in the home and workplace are minimal. The provision of amenities such as time and labour saving devices, basic community services and no pay leave facilities have never received sufficient attention. In rural

and economically deprived areas in particular, women work from dawn to dusk, collecting firewood, carrying water, preparing food, ministering to children and other members of the family and cleaning the house, as well as participating in some form of economic activity.

Women themselves are ambivalent and suffer from a sense of guilt. Every survey has shown that women wish to continue to be employed after marriage, but role conflict leads them to opt for convenient and less stimulating and responsible jobs. Both men and women have indicated a preference for home-based employment, and the virtues of a home-centred life are eulogized. But women have hardly any access to the technical and managerial expertise and credit and marketing facilities which are necessary to make self-employment economically viable, and many existing programmes such as the National Apprenticeship Board and the Peoples' Bank joint programme for the self-employed are limited to men.

The second ideational schemata is the concurrent image of women as secondary earners or helpers and as pliant and passive instruments. The role of women as subsidiary workers has been reinforced by the concept of a single, and preferable male, breadwinner, which has gained credence in the current unemployment situation in Sri Lanka. Sex role stereotyping of women as the weaker sex and its corollary, the cultural sex-based division of the labour market have been endorsed by most men and women, young and old in these surveys. In consequence women have been excluded from many remunerative areas of employment particularly in modern industry, and from field jobs. The image of docility and passivity has led to the exploitation of women as conveniently dispensable units of cheap, casual labour.

The impact of economic participation is not clearly discernible as social values tend to obfuscate the benefits of economic participation. In the Sri Lanka scene education and employment have reduced fertility levels[34]. Jobs are increasingly accepted as substitutes for dowry settlements. Employment has been a means of escape from socially restrictive lives. But the social structure determines the type and status of economic activity, and employment in turn reinforces social class differentiation. And economic participation has belied expectations and has not always led to personal growth or improved status in a context in which it is tied to social dependence.

It has been claimed with some justice that Sri Lanka women are decision-makers in their own homes, and the men and women respondents in this survey endorsed the view that women share in making economic decisions within the household. This again is another facet of the central role ascribed to women in the family structure. It has not contributed to reducing the subordinate social status of women in her familial relationships and in the social system. Economic participation may strengthen their 'bargaining power', but has not freed the majority of women from the thraldom of social institutions such as arranged marriages.

The impact of development on women's economic role has been discussed in historical perspective earlier in this Chapter. The theory that development has reduced the economic status of women[35] is not tenable in the context of the Sri Lankan agrarian and 'modernizing' society. It may be more realistic to infer that economic change and the so-called development process have reinforced women's subordinate status in the economy while extending the sphere of control and redefining the superior status of men.

This survey has shown that while the position of individual women can differ widely and generalizations are not always meaningful, the economic and social marginality of women stand out as twin features of the status of women.

SOME PRIORITIES

In conclusion it may be stated that while more rapid economic development may improve the position of both men and women and a process of conscientization will be necessary to change social attitudes, some issues emerge clearly as focal points for immediate action-oriented policies. Four areas appear to be significant:

(a) The principle of equality of opportunity in employment embodied in the Constitution has to be translated into action by employment policies and programmes which treat women not as marginal earners but as individuals with human rights and personal talents and as valuable human resources;

(b) Social justice demands that equal pay be given for equal work in contradistinction to the current invidious policy of utilizing the majority of the women workforce as low cost production units. Labour legislation and social security schemes should safeguard the interests of women working in the unorganized sector;

(c) Vocational training programmes for women need to be promoted in non-traditional areas in order to expand and diversify employment opportunities. Upgrading the skills of employed women is a pre-condition for vocational mobility and improved economic status;

(d) Due recognition should be given by the state and society to the important role of women as mothers, and in consequence, to the need to provide adequate supportive facilities to married women workers. These would include provision for no-pay leave and re-entry to employment, a longer duration of maternity leave and the development of appropriate technology and community services to reduce the burden of household chores.

Such measures and programmes will not only ensure the more effective functioning of women as home-makers and workers but will also guarantee personal development and freedom and human dignity.

REFERENCES

1. Ariyapala, M.B., Society in Mediaval Ceylon, K.V.G.de Silva & Sons, Colombo and Kandy, 1956.

2. Vandendriesen, I.N., Some Aspects of the History of the Coffee Industry in Ceylon with special reference to the period 1823 - 1886, Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, 1954.

3. Jayawardene Kumari, "Women and Employment" in Economic Review, Vol. 2, No.6, September, 1976.

4. Fernando Sylvia, "Socio-economic Characteristics of Women Factory Workers in the Colombo Suburbs" in Ceylon Labour Gazette, Vol. V, No.2, Fall 1954.

5. The economic growth rate was sluggish and was on average 1.5% from 1959 - 1968.

6. Socio-Economic Survey of Ceylon, Department of Census and Statistics 1969/70.

7. Labour and Land Utilization Survey, Central Bank of Ceylon, 1975.

8. Karunatilleke, H.N.S., "An Evaluation of the Development Programme under Divisional Development Councils in Sri Lanka" in Sri Lanka Journal of Social Sciences, Vol.1, No.1, June 1978.

   Ellman, A.O., and D.de S. Ratnaweera, New Settlement Schemes in Sri Lanka, Agrarian Research and Training Institute, Colombo, AUgusr 1974.

   Shanmugaratnam, N., A Socio-economic study of Janawasa in the Kurunegalla District, Sri Lanka, National Institute of Management, Colombo, 1977.

9. Dias Malsiri, Women's Development Centres, Konrad Adenaeur Foundation, Colombo, 1978.

10. Perera Lakshmi, "Case - Hikkaduwa", in The Role of Tourism in Social and Economic Development of Sri Lanka, Social Science Research Centre, National Science Council of Sri Lanka, Colombo, August 1978.

11. Jayaweera, S., and Perera, L.S., Sri Lanka Report on Income Generating Skills for Women. I.L.O., Asian Regional Skills Development Programme, Bangkok, 1979.

12. Minute on the Sri Lanka Administrative Service, The Gazette of the Republic of Sri Lanka, August 16, 1978, Part I, Section (1) - General.

13. International Labour Organization (i) Underground Work (Women) Convention No.45 (1935) - Ratification registered on December 02, 1950.

    (ii) Night Work (Women) Convention (Revised) No.89 (1948) - Ratification registered on March 31, 1966.

14. Minimum Rates of Wages payable to workers in the different trades for which Wages Boards have been established are published regularly in the issues of the Sri Lanka Labour Gazette, Department of Labour, Colombo.

15. Equality of Opportunity and Treatment for Women Workers, Report VIII, International Labour Office, Geneva, 1975, p.46.

16. (a) Census of Ceylon, Department of Census and Statistics, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911, 1921, 1946, 1953, 1963 and 1971.

    (b) A Survey of Employment, Unemployment and Under-Employment in Ceylon, I.L.O. Review, Volume LXXXVII, No.3, March 1963.

    (c) Labour Force Survey, Ministry of Planning and Employment (1968).

    (d) Socio-Economic Survey of Ceylon, Department of Census and Statistics, 1969/70.

    (e) Survey of Ceylon's Consumer Finances, Central Bank of Ceylon, 1953, 1963, 1973.

    (f) Richards, P.J., Employment and Unemployment in Ceylon, O.E.C.D., Paris, 1971.

    (g) "Matching Employment Opportunities and Expectations - A Programme of Action for Ceylon", I.L.O., 1971.

    (h) The Determinants of Labour Force Participation Rates in Sri Lanka, 1973, Central Bank of Ceylon, Colombo.

    (i) Labour and Land Utilization Survey, 1975, Central Bank of Ceylon.

17. Labour and Land Utilization Survey, 1975, Central Bank of Ceylon, Colombo.

18. Census of Population, Sri Lanka, 1971, Department of Census and Statistics.

19. Refer Chapter 5 of this Study.

20. Equality of Opportunity and Treatment of Women Workers, I.L.O., Geneva, 1974.

21. The Determinants of Labour Force Participation Rates in Sri Lanka, 1973, Central Bank of Ceylon. Colombo.

22. The 1963 and 1971 Census Reports give the following figures for this non-school going group: 10 -14 years 1963- 9.6% M and 9.9% F., 1971- 15.5 % M and 16.2 % F.

23. Survey of Sri Lanka's Consumer Finances 1973, Central Bank of Ceylon, Colombo, Table 30, p.45.

24. A Study of the Informal Sector in Colombo City, Marga Institute, Colombo, 1978 (Sponsored by I.L.O., Geneva).

25. Employment Survey, 1976, Department of Labour, Colombo.

26. Wijayaratne, C.M. Gunawardene, A.M.T., and Samir Asmar: Study of Income Generating Activities for Farm Women, Agricultural Research and Training Institute Research Study Series No.25, February 1978.

27. Jayaweera Swarna and Lakshmi Perera: Sri Lanka, A Report on Income Generating Skills for Women, I.L.O., Asian Regional Skills Development Programme, 1979, pp.95 - 97.

28. Employment Survey, 1976, Department of Labour, Colombo.

29. Census of Population, Sri Lanka 1971, Department of Census and Statistics.

30. "Pattern of Job Expectations and Employment among Rural Youth", Marga Institute, Colombo, June 1977.

31. The markets surveyed were the Jatika Pola, Bauddhaloka Mawatha, Colombo and the market in Maharagama, a suburb of Colombo.

32. Green, T.L., "Education and Social Needs" in University of Ceylon Review, Volume X, October 1952.

33. Jayaweera Swarna, "Vocational Preferences of Secondary School Girls in Sri Lanka. A Comparative Study, 1973 and 1976" (to be published in Modern Ceylon Studies, Volume VII).

34. Refer Note 30 in Chapter 5 of this Study.

35. Boserup Ester, Women's Role in Economic Developemnt, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1970.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND DECISION MAKING

by

WIMALA DE SILVA

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND DECISION MAKING

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

INTRODUCTION

According to the Mahavamsa, the ancient chronicle which records the early history of Sri Lanka, when Vijaya an Indian Prince of the Sinha clan came with a band of 700 followers to the Island in the Sixth Century B.C., the country was peopled by a race known as the Yakkhas. They were at that time ruled by a Queen named Kuveni, whom Prince Vijaya is said to have subsequently married. This decision on the part of Kuveni had momentous consequences for it helped in the settlement of the Sinhala race in Sri Lanka. Thus, from earliest recorded times women have played a decisive role in the history of the Island The names of several Queens stand out - Vihara Maha Devi who, as a Princess was willing to offer herself as a sacrifice to the sea to appease the wrath of the Gods and is still remembered and revered as the source of inspiration to her warrior son, King Dutu Gemunu, who freed the country from a foreign yoke; Leelawathie - Queen Consort of King Parakrama Bahu the Great - who as Queen Regent proved to be one of the most successful women rulers of Sri Lanka; Kalyanawathie, Queen Consort of King Nissanka Malla, who again as Queen Regent brought peace and order to a war torn country. Thus, from the sixth century B.C. onwards, Sri Lanka can pick out outstanding women who have influenced the life and history of the country. But the opportunities for such involvement were available only to Queens and Princesses. The ordinary woman came to play a part in political life, only in the 20th Century.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL SITUATION

From the early 16th Century the maritime provinces had come under the domination of the Western Powers - first the Portuguese, then the Dutch, and finally, the British. These provinces were ruled by the colonizing powers and the areas which remained independent continued to be a monarchy governed by local rulers. Soon after the whole country came under British rule in 1815 a central legislature was established covering the entire

island and comprising of two Councils - the Executive and Legislative Councils. The members were appointed to these two bodies as officials of the British Government. The first step to draw in the people of the country was taken in 1837 with the appointment of two unofficial members to the Legislative Council. The number was increased in succeeding years. But there is no record of a woman being so appointed. The Constitutional situation remain unchanged till the early 20th Century. The elective principle was first introduced in 1910 when four of the ten unofficial members were elected on a limited made franchise. But there was a growing demand from the English educated sectors of the country for greater participation. The Ceylon National Congress was formed with the objective of obtaining constitutional reforms. Membership was open to both men and women and women were elected to serve on the Committee as well. This is the earliest record of the involvement of women in the political life of the country.

It was felt that a permanent organization was needed to achieve this objective and so the Ceylon National Congress was formed at the second Conference on Constitutional Reforms in 1918. Membership was open to both men and women and the name of Dr.(Miss) Nallamma Murugesu is recorded in the proceedings of the first General Sessions.[1]

Women came to be further involved through the affiliation of a women's society, the Mallika Kulangana Samitiya, a representative of which served on the executive committee of the Ceylon National Congress.

Though women thus came to participate in the general movement for constitutional reforms, the first action taken by the women themselves in the specific issue of women's franchise was in 1925 when at the General Sessions of the Ceylon National Congress, Mrs.Aseline Thomas of the Mallika Kulangana Samitiya proposed that 'a limited franchise be granted to women of the country'. This was seconded by Mrs.Agnes de Silva and passed with three dissents.[2]

In response to the demands for Constitutional Reforms the British Government appointed a Commission in 1927 under the Chairmanship of the Earl of Donoughmore (the Donoughmore Commission). One of the key issues on which representation was made was the question of universal adult franchise. The early 20th Century was the era of the suffragette movement in Britain and it was from one of the Commissioners themselves, Dr.Drummond Sheils,

Labour M.P., that the idea emerged that the women should form themselves into an Association to make representations to the Commission. This suggestion was taken up by the women in the Ceylon National Congress - Mrs. George E. de Silva, Mrs.E.R.Tambimuttu, Lady Soloman Dias Bandaranayake and others. It should be noted that these women had their husbands, sons or other male relatives active in the Congress. Therefore, it was with their advice and support that the Women's Franchise Union was formed to make representations to the Donoughmore Commission.[3] This was a significant step as for the first time women of this country organised themselves to form a pressure group

The Commission in its report submitted the following views about Women's Franchise:

> "We have given serious consideration to the question of women's franchise. Apart from the familiar arguments in its favour, and the general principle of sex equality, we have been impressed by the high infantile mortality in the Island, the need for better housing, and the development of child welfare, midwifery and ante-natal services all providing problems in the solution of which women's interest and help would be of special value. It is also true that though the position of women in the East has not, till recent years been suitable for the exercise of political power, that position is rapidly changing and the demand for the vote was put before us by a large and representative deputation of Ceylonese ladies. It was difficult to deny the force of the argument that the women of Ceylon are at least as competent to exercise the vote as the women of India, a considerable number of whom already possess the franchise."[4]

Nevertheless, the Commissioners considered that the increase in the numbers of the electorate which would result from the granting of universal adult franchise to women on the same terms as to men, might endanger the successful implementation of the reforms and recommended that subject to the general conditions laid down for eligibility, females over 30 years be eligible to vote and to be elected to the State Council (the Central Legislative Body recommended by the Donoughmore Commission), to Municipalities, Urban District Councils and Local Boards. Since

males over 21 years were recommended for the vote, the raising of this age requirement in respect of females was discriminatory against women. But this recommendation was not implemented, and when the reforms were introduced women were given equal political rights as the men. Thus, just four years after British women obtained universal adult franchise, the women of Sri Lanka obtained the same rights, without the struggles of a suffragette movement. In 1950 these political rights were extended to every citizen over the age of 18. The full implications of women's franchise has been felt only in recent years. Though demographic features indicate that the male population is slightly more than the female population, yet population trends reveal that this imbalance is being corrected (Table 7.1). Further, projections for the year 2001 indicate a female population of 49.7%. Therefore, the vote of the women has come to be a decisive factor in any election.

In 1944, the British Government appointed a Commission under Lord Soulbury (Soulbury Commission) to study and recommend further proposals for constitutional reforms. Two of the major recommendations were that the country should be granted Dominion status and that there should be a bi-cameral system of government based on the British model and known as the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Senate was to consist of 30 persons who had rendered distinguished service to the country. Half of this number were to be appointed by the Governor and the other half elected by the House of Representatives. The House of Representatives was to consist of 151 members - 145 elected members and 6 nominated members. Nominations to both Chambers could be made irrespective of sex. Thus, the new legislative structure afforded a further opportunity for the political participation of women through the Senate, until its abolition in 1971.

The constitutional changes brought about in 1972 and 1978 have not affected the political rights of women. The introduction of the principle of proportional representation[3] at elections may however bring in more women into active politics as more women may seek party nomination when they can face an election without threats of personal violence and character assassination.

TABLE 7.1

SEX RATIO OF THE POPULATION
(Ratio of Males per 100 females)

YEAR	RATIO OF MALES
1871	114.3
1881	113.9
1891	112.7
1901	113.5
1911	112.6
1921	112.5
1931	113.0
1946	112.5
1953	111.0
1963	108.0
1971	105.0

SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF CENSUS AND STATISTICS.

PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICS

(i) GENERAL

The earliest involvement of women in national politics was in the late 19th and early 20th centuries when there was a resurgence of nationalism. This found a voice throughout the Temperance Movement of 1912, which was speer headed by the Western educated elite and organized as a protest movement not only against the excise policies of the British Government but also against the social and economic problems of the villager. Though this movement was thus directed against British Imperialism, yet it was founded on Buddhist values. And so it brought into the movement women of a wealthy social class - generally wives of the leaders - and professional women such as teachers, who came into a political movement through their religious convictions.

Direct entry by women into political activities was brought in 1915 - the year Martial Law[5] was declared in the country. A radical society to work for national resurgence and development - The Young Lanka League - was established that same year. There were many dedicated women members such as Nancy Wijekoon, a woman teacher whose verses were considered seditious in character and brought her under the surveillance of the police. The Inspector General of Police at the time submitted in a confidential report that her works were intended to incite the people against the British Raj.[6] So when the Ceylon Labour Party was formed in 1928 arising from the Young Lanka League there were women of political experience to play a leading part in its activities. The first executive committee had 09 women members including Mrs.Agnes de Silva and Dr.Mrs. Satyawigneswara Iyer[7] (formerly Dr.Miss Nallamma Murugesu).

In the 1930s the influence of the Indian Independence Movement was felt in Sri Lanka Indian women political leaders such as Sarojini Naidu and Kamaladevi Chattopadyaya visited the island. Their charismatic appeal no doubt had an influence in drawing women into political activities. During this period there had sprung up a number of radical political organizations to fight for independence. One of their major activities at the time was the Suriyamal Campaign which was a protest against the sale of poppies on Remembrance Day (November 11th) to assist the British

soldiers. A counter campaign was launched with the sale of Suriyamal (Surya flower) to assist the poverty stricken people of the country. A leading figure in this movement was a woman, Doreen Wickramasinghe. There were other women, who were active workers as well. The Suriyamal Campaign provided a training ground for the leftist workers, in leadership and organization and in community welfare work, for when a severe malarial epidemic broke out in the mid 1930s, the organizers of the Suriyamal Campaign were in the forefront of those engaged in relief work.

Thus when the Donoughmore reforms were put into effect, there was already a political climate in which women with radical views could flourish. But such participation was confined to an elitist group, and did not involve the women of the country at large.

(ii) REPRESENTATION IN THE LEGISLATURE

Though women obtained the right to vote and be elected to the Legislature in 1931, they did not contest at the general elections for the first State Council - 1931. Nevertheless two women were elected at by-elections to replace their husbands. Thus Adeline Molamure became the first woman to serve on a legislative body, as well as to be elected to one. Naysum Saravanamuttu who was elected at a later by-election to the first Senate Council was elected at the General Elections of 1936 to the second State Council and became the first woman to be elected at a general election (Table 7.3).

Tables 7.2 and 7.3 however, indicate that though the opportunity was there, only a very small proportion either of the candidates or of the elected representatives were women. It is a sorry comment that in spite of 46 years of women's franchise, a more than doubling of the population during this period and universal free education up to the University for 32 years, only 4 women were elected to the National State Assembly in 1977. Thus the participation of women at the highest level of decision making is extremely low, in spite of Sri Lanka's achievement in having in 1960 the appointment of Sirimavo R.D. Bandaranaike as the first woman Prime Minister of Sri Lanka and also the first woman in the world to hold such office. The number of women Ministers also indicates the same situation. Throughout this full period 1931 - 1979 there have been only three women Ministers and one District Minister (Table 7.4)

TABLE 7.2. ELECTED WOMEN MEMBERS AND THEIR POLITICAL PARTIES

(Political parties were registered for purposes of elections as for the Third Parliament - 1956)

LEGISLATIVE BODY		NAME	ELECTORATE	POLITICAL PARTY
First State Council 1931	(a)	Mrs.Adeline Molamure (The first woman to be elected to legislative body)	Ruwanwella (By-election)	-
	(b)	Mrs.Naysum Saravanamuttu	Colombo North (by-election)	-
Second State Council 1936	(a)	Mrs.Naysum Saravanamuttu (Died January 1941).	Colombo North	-
First Parliament 1947	(a)	Mrs.Florence Senanayake	Kiriella	-
	(b)	Mrs.Kusumsiri Gunawardene	Avissawella (By-election)	-
	(c)	Mrs.Tamara Kumari Illangaratne	Kandy (By-election)	-
Second Parliament 1952	(a)	Mrs.Kusumsiri Gunawardena	Avissawella	-
	(b)	Mrs.Doreen Wickremasinghe	Akuressa	-
Third Parliament 1956	(a)	Mrs.Vivienne Goonawardena	Colombo North	L.S.S.P.
	(b)	Mrs.Kusumsiri Gunawardena	Kirella North	M.E.P.
	(c)	Mrs.Kusuma Rajaratna	Uva-Paranagama (By-election)	Independent
	(d)	Mrs.Vimala Wijewardene	Mirigama	M.E.P.
Fourth Parliament March 1960	(a)	Mrs.Wimala Kannangara	Galigamuwa	U.N.P.
	(b)	Mrs.Kusuma Rajaratna	Uva-Paranagama	Independent
	(c)	Mrs.Soma Wickremanayake	Dehiowita	L.S.S.P.
Fifth Parliament July 1960	(a)	Mrs.Vivienne Goonewardene	Borella (By-election)	L.S.S.P.
	(b)	Mrs.Kusuma Rajaratna	Uva-Paranagama	Independent
	(c)	Mrs.Soma Wickremanayake	Dehiowita	L.S.S.P.

contd. .....

TABLE 7.2. (continued)

LEGISLATIVE BODY		NAME	ELECTORATE	POLITICAL PARTY
Sixth Parliament 1965	(a)	Mrs. Sirimavo R.D. Bandaranayake	Attanagalla	S.L.F.P.
	(b)	Mrs. Wimala Kannangara	Galigamuwa	U.N.P.
	(c)	Mrs Siva Obeysekera	Mirigama	S.L.F.P.
	(d)	Mrs. Leticia Rajapaksa	Dodangaslanda (By-election)	S.L.F.P.
	(e)	Mrs. Mallika Ratwatte	Balangoda (By-election)	S.L.F.P.
	(f)	Mrs. Kusuma Rajaratna	Uva-Paranagama	Independent
Seventh Parliament 1970 became First National State Assembly 1972	(a)	Mrs. Kusala Abhayavardhana	Borella	L.S.S.P.
	(b)	Mrs. Sirimavo R.D. Bandaranaike	Attanagalla	S.L.F.P.
	(c)	Mrs. Vivienne Goonewardene	Dehiwela-Mt. Lavinia	
	(d)	Mrs. Tamara Kumari Illangaratne	Galagedera	S.L.F.P.
	(e)	Mrs. Siva Obeysekera	Mirigama	S.L.F.P.
	(f)	Mrs. Mallika Ratwatte	Balangoda	S.L.F.P.
				For purposes of the elections the SLFP, LSSP and CP formed a common front.
Second National Assembly 1977	(a)	Mrs. Sirimavo R.D. Bandaranaike	Attanagalla	S.L.F.P.
	(b)	Miss Renuka Herath	Walapane	U.N.P.
	(c)	Mrs. Wimala Kannangara	Galigamuwa	U.N.P.
	(d)	Mrs. Sunethra Ranasinghe	Dehiwela (By-election)	U.N.P.
	(e)	Mrs Amarawathie P Ratnayake	Wariyapola	U.N.P.

TABLE 7.3

CANDIDATES AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES/NATIONAL STATE ASSEMBLY 1960-1977[1] BY SEX

YEAR	TOTAL NO. OF M.Ps	TOTAL NO. ELECTED M.Ps +2	TOTAL NO. OF CANDIDATES		TOTAL NO. ELECTED		PERCENTAGE OF +3 CANDIDATES ELECTED	
			MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
MARCH 1960	151	143	885	14	142	3	16	21
JULY 1960	151	145	388	05	143	2	36	40
1965	151	145	482	13	141	4	29	31
1970	151	145	427	14	139	6	32	43
1977	168	145	747	14	164	4	22	28

+1 BY - ELECTIONS EXCLUDED.

+2 SIX WERE APPOINTED MEMBERS

+3 FIGURES CALCULATED.

SOURCE: SESSIONAL PAPER NO. IV 1978. REPORT ON THE GENERAL ELECTION TO THE SECOND NATIONAL STATE ASSEMBLY OF SRI LANKA (EIGHTH PARLIAMENTARY GENERAL ELECTION) 21ST JULY 1977. DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT PRINTING SRI LANKA 1978 MAY P.81.

TABLE 7.4

WOMEN MINISTERS

	PRIME MINISTER.	MRS. SIRIMAVO R.D.BANDARANAIKE	- 1960
1.	MINISTER OF HEALTH	MRS.VIMALA WIJEWARDENE	- 1956
2.	MINISTER OF HEALTH	MRS. SIVA OBEYSEKERA	- 1976
3.	MINISTER OF SHIPPING & TOURISM	MRS. WIMALA KANNANGARA	- 1978
	MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT	MRS. WIMALA KANNANGARA	- 1978
4.	DISTRICT MINISTER	MISS RENUKA HERATH	- 1979

Nevertheless Table 7.3 further reveals that at every election the percentage of female candidates elected was higher than the percentage of males. This suggests that though the number of female candidates nominated was low, the voters were not prejudiced against women candidates but voted on the merits of the party and of the individual candidates

A study of the ethnic distribution of women parliamentarians reveals that except for Mrs. Naysum Saravanamuttu who was elected to the first and second State Councils there has been no Tamil woman Member of Parliament from the time of her death in 1941 up to date in spite of the fact that Tamils form 20.4% of the female population. There has not been a single woman parliamentarian from the Moor and Malay (Muslim) communities though they jointly comprise 7% of the total female population.

When the geographical areas which women represented are analysed, it is seen that no women have been elected to the Central Government from the Northern and Eastern Provinces which are predominantly Tamil and Muslim areas, respectively.

Women were represented in the Senate from the time it was first established in 1947. These appointments seem however to be token appointments as there were only 7 women during the total 24 year period, not more than 2 women Senators ever served at a time and none during the periods 1956 - 1959 and 1969 - 1971 (Table 7.6).

A study of the backgrounds of these women Senators reveals that they were all social workers from an urban elitist class. There were no professional women even though the Soulbury Constitution specifically laid down that the Senate was to consist of women who had rendered distinguished public service or persons of eminence in professional, commercial or industrial or agricultural life including education, law, medicine, science, engineering and banking. Thus the rationale for political participation of women does not seem to have changed from the time of the Donoughmore Commission, when the special argument brought forward for granting franchise to women was that their assistance would be of special value in social welfare programmes.

TABLE 7.5

RATIO OF FEMALE POPULATION IN TERMS OF DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPINGS

	71 CENSUS DATA	
	TOTAL	FEMALE
LOW COUNTRY SINHALA	42.8	42.9
KANDYAN SINHALA	29.1	29.2
CEYLON TAMILS	11.1	11.2
INDIAN TAMILS	9.4	9.2
CEYLON MOORS	6.5	6.5
INDIAN MOORS	0.2	0.2
BURGHERS	0.3	0.4
MALAYS	0.3	0.3
OTHERS	0.1	0.1

TABLE 7.6. WOMEN SENATORS 1947 - 1971

CATEGORY	TOTAL	FEMALES TOTAL	%	NAMES OF FEMALE SENATORS	PERIOD
Elected	57	02	03	(a) Lady Adeline Molamore	1947 - 1951
				(b) Mrs. Clodah Kitchilan	1953 - 1956
Appointed	65	05	08	(a) Miss Cissy Cooray	1947 - 1955
				(b) Lady Evelyn de Soysa	1959 - 1963
				(c) Mrs.Sirimavo R.D.Bandaranaike	1960 - 1965
				(d) Mrs.Sita Molemure Seneviratne	1965 - 1967
				(e) Lady Evadne de Silva	1965 - 1969

(iii) PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Though till the 19th century the independent kingdoms in Sri Lanka were governed as absolute monarchies, yet at the village level people organized themselves into Gam Sabha (Village Councils) largely to deal with matters connected with agriculture and water, but also to settle disputes and raise with Royal Officials the question of dues. The Gam Sabha comprised of the village elders and leaders - presumably all males. There is no evidence that the term 'elder' in this context included the females. The older women apparently played their leadership roles within the home. As 'elders' they do not seem to have been involved in decision making within the village organization. The Portugese and Dutch introduced into Gam Sabha an element of officialdom by appointing village headmen at various levels to serve their interests. Based on the Gam Sabha, the British Government established Village Committees to which election was by adult male suffrage. Only males over 25 with certain educational and property qualifications were eligible as candidates. In addition to the Village Committees, new organizations were created in the 19th century to administer small towns. Three Municipalities were established in Colombo, Kandy and Galle. The Donoughmore Commission in its recommendations for reforms to Local Administration suggested that there be Village Committees, Town Committees, Urban District Councils , and Municipal Councils to meet the requirements of town and country. It also recommended that election for Town Committees should be as for Village Committees on adult male suffrage only and for the Urban District Councils and Municipal Councils the conditions of eligibility to be as for the Legislative Council - viz. on universal franchise irrespective of sex.

A major implication of these recommendations was that while the women in Urban areas were given an opportunity to be involved in local govenrment on an equal footing with the men, the women in the rural areas and small towns, i.e. the majority of women, were relegated to a subordinate status as they were silenced and debarred by law from any say in local matters. They were in that paradoxical situation, that while they were granted the right to participate in affairs of the Central Government which was far removed from their daily lives, they were prevented from having any say in local matters which were meaningful and of vital and immediate concern

TABLE 7.7.

FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS - May 1979.

	CANDIDATES			THOSE ELECTED		
	TOTAL NO.	TOTAL NO. OF WOMEN	% OF WOMEN	TOTAL NO.	TOTAL NO. OF WOMEN	% OF WOMEN
Municipalities	258	32+	12	192	07	3.6
Urban Councils	430	31	07	314	05	1.3

+ Of those 16 were for the Colombo Municipality.

TABLE 7.8 PERCENTAGE OF VOTERS AT GENERAL ELECTIONS

YEAR	%
1947	55.9
1952	70.7
1956	69.0
1960 March	77.6
1960 July	75.9
1965	82.1
1970	85.2
1977	86.7

SOURCE: Department of Parliamentary Elections.

to them. This may perhaps be one reason for the low participation of women in national politics. Debarred from local politics, they lacked a training ground to raise their levels of political consciousness and political thinking and equip them for involvement in national politics. Whatever they acquired filtered down to them from the men. Rural women were granted the opportunity to have a voice in the management of their local affairs from 1938 when the Village Committees Ordinance No.60 of 1938 was passed granting adult suffrage to both sexes. But the level of participation of women in local politics is understandably low.

At the Local Government Elections, May 1979 for the Municipal and Urban Councils, few women were nominated and only a small proportion of these were elected (Table 7.7). Elections have not yet been held for the rural areas as the Town Councils and Village Councils are being reconstituted as Rural Councils.

(iv) WOMEN AS VOTERS

Though women have been slow to participate in national politics as candidates at General Elections yet they have been almost as politically conscious as the men in exercising the right to vote. Statistics are not available regarding the sex ratios of the voters at either the general or local elections. But Table 7.8 reveals that the percentage of voters has increased with each succeeding election from 55.9% in [illegible]17 to 86.7 in 1977. It is reckoned that in recent elections, except in very backward areas, the sex ratio of the voters would approximate to the sex ratio of the population.

One reason for increasing numbers of women exercising the vote may be the increased awareness that political decisions made in the highest seats of government affect the humblest home. The ready access to employment, the availability of food and other essential commodities, the prices of such commodities, the state of the public transport systems - these are all matters which directly affect the woman. Politics have now entered the home and women are aware of them. The view has been expressed by knowledgeable persons of different political complexions, that a major factor in the last General Elections - 1977 for the complete rejection of the

previous government was the vote of the women who had to face the spiralling cost of living and scarcity of essential commodities. The average woman may not be aware of the fluctuations of the international monetary situation. But she is deeply aware when these affect her family and the management of the home. The rejection of the governing party in 1977 may be interpreted as her silent but effective protest against the difficulties she has had to undergo.

(v) WOMEN AND POLITICAL PARTIES

As is seen in Table 7.9 the Lanka Samasamaja Party is the oldest political party in the island. It was established by a group of young radicals educated in England and the U.S.A. as a protest against the Colonial Government and the local leadership. It included most of those who had been active in the Suriyamal Campaign. And so from its inception women played an active part in the L.S.S.P. - the wives, sisters and other female relatives of the party leaders being drawn into active participation. In 1940 (during World War II) the L.S.S.P. leaders were imprisoned for their activities against the British Raj. When they later escaped and went into hiding in India, most of them were accompanied by their young wives. Splinter groups from the L.S.S.P. formed the nucleus of the C.P. and M.E.P. Thus from the beginning, these two parties also included women with political experience. The U.N.P. and S.L.F.P. have a fair proportion of women in their membership. In general the membership of women in the different political parties varies from about 20 to 30 percent. The most recent addition to the political parties - the J.V.P. - emerged in the early 1970s as a revolutionary party composed almost entirely of young persons opposed to the ineffectiveness of the older political leaders in solving the economic problems of the country. The Marxist leaders though speaking of revolution were too much part of the Democratic traditions of Western Europe to have recourse to unparliamentary methods. But the J.V.P. with a leadership educated in U.S.S.R. started as an Insurgency Movement to overthrow the government by force. The young women recruited to the J.V.P. formed a very different picture from the women in the other political parties. They donned a common dress with the men, were trained to use the gun and were taught the methods of guerilla warfare.

All the major political parties have their Kantha Samithi or Women's organizations which are mainly meant to ensure the vote and support of women at elections. The national parties have branches throughout the Island. At the moment the U.N.P. has the widest organization with its 4211 Kantha Samithi. The S.L.F.P has a similarly wide network. The L.S.S.P. and C.P. have fewer such organizations though these are also spread throughout the country. These last two political parties maintaining a sustained interest in the Kantha Samithi and besides providing the traditional activities of the women's groups, try to educate the members in their political philosophy. They also aim at providing opportunities whereby the qualities of leadership and special abilities of members are surfaced and developed. It has been observed that in recent years other political parties also try to keep the Kantha Samithies alive in between elections and not confine their activities to elections and rallies.

In spite of the large membership of women in political parties, their representation at the highest decision making bodies is very low. The U.N.P. has approximately 10%, the S.L.F.P. 07%, the L.S.S.P. 02% and the C.P. 02%. Only the S.L.F.P. has had a woman party leader, which position she has continued to hold from 1960 up to date.

All the national parties include women in their nominations of party candidates for parliamentary and local government elections. But they form a minute proportion of the total number nominated. At the General Elections the largest number nominated by any party was only 04 (Table 7.10). Analysis of the numbers who contested the local government elections of May 1979 reveals that only 12% of the contestants for the Municipal seats were women. The percentage was even lower for the Urban Councils, being 07% (Table 7.7). Table 7.11 indicates that the S.L.F.P. nominated the largest number of women candidates for the Municipalities and the U.N.P. the largest number for the Town Councils. The L.S.S.P. and C.P. which had an election pact had jointly nominated the same number as the U.N.P. for the Urban Councils. The T.U.L.F. and C.W.C. did not nominate any women for the Municipalities or the Urban Councils or the General Elections.

The low participation of women as candidates for elections is often attributed to the leadership of the political parties which is almost exclusively male. But that there is more to this than the antagonistic attitudes of the males is indicated by the fact that while the S.L.F.P. with a woman party leader had nominated 17% of the total number of women candidates, the U.N.P. with a male party leader had nominated 25%. The L.S.S.P. and C.P. who had only 02% female representation in their Central Committees had nominated the largest number. Perhaps the low participation is due more to the reluctance of the female than that of the male.

It was observed that there were no women Muslim candidates. Of the three Tamil parties only the T.C. had nominated any woman at all and that for one Urban Council. The lack of participation on the part of Muslim women is readily understandable because of their low literacy levels and social customs. But it is worth investigating why women from the Tamil speaking areas are not involved in the higher decision making levels of political life even though in these regions education is widespread, co-education has existed for nearly one and a half centuries and the employment of women is socially accepted.

Though women form almost half the voting strength, yet no political party has made a conscious effort to woo the woman voter. Even at the General Election of 1977, shortly after the International Women's Year (1975) none of the party manifestoes except one took into account women as a target group. Of the three major national political parties the U.N.P. made no reference to women. The S.L.F.P. manifesto under the caption Social Services stated that it would establish child care centres to enable working women to leave their children during the period they were at work. The U.L.F. (A Union of the Communist Party and Lanka Samasamaja Party for purposes of the elections) had a section on women.

> "WOMEN
>
> Although women have improved their social situation recently, especially as the result of free education, they still labour under many handicaps. The liberation of women demands the elimination of all forms of exploitation that only a socialist society

can ensure. A Government of the United Left Front will take the movement for women's rights further forward, directing its immediate attention to:

Removing all discrimination in wage payments, establishing the principle of equal pay for equal work;

Abolishing all discriminatory laws relating to the inheritance of property, marital rights, divorce etc.;

Removing all legal and administrative restrictions on employment in State service; and

Removing the handicaps of working mothers as a result of the lack of such facilities, as creches, nursery schools, etc." [8]

Nevertheless the complete rejection at the polls of the U.L.F. (not a single candidate was elected), which had a declared policy on women, in favour of the U.N.P., which had none, seems to indicate:

(a) that most women were not concerned about changes in the law and such academic exercises - as it would seem to them - which do not affect them directly. The principle underlying the demand for equal pay for equal work did not seem to interest them either, "What does it matter who gets more as long as it goes to the household kitty?" Equal pay mattered only from the point of view of practical household economics - an increase of the family income.

(b) that women preferred to judge by past performance. ("Why did not they do all this when they were in power?") than by future promises.

The contemporary political situation in respect of women seems to be that women are slow to participate actively in politics. Nevertheless there is a high level of political awareness particularly where political decisions affect the home. They recognize the strength of the vote and are able to take an independent stand apart from the men.

TABLE 7.9 MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES

NAME	ABBREVIATED NAME	YEAR OF FORMATION	POLITICAL STANCE
Lanka Sama Samaja Party	L.S.S.P.	1935	Marxist - Trotskyite - Associated mainly with the urban working class.
Communist Party	C.P.	1943	Marxist - Stalinist
Ceylon Tamil Congress	T.C.	1944	Confined to the Tamil Speaking areas. Demand for the 'fifty-fifty' i.e. equal representation with the Sinhala.
United National Party	U.N.P.	1946	Was formed to accept Independence. Was associated in people's minds with British rule, Western attitudes and values, capitalism and free enterprise. After recent changes in the party hierarchy, there has been a fresh orientation, but continues to stand for free enterprise.
Federal Party	F.P.	1949	Confined to the Tamil speaking areas. Demand was for a federal form of government with the Tamil speaking areas forming a separate state.
Sri Lanka Freedom Party	S.L.F.P.	1951	Formed by a breakaway group from the U.N.P. and developed as a popular party identified with the values and aspirations of the rural elite and rural masses. Stood for the Sinhala-Buddhist. Implemented a policy of state control of public utilities and industries. In this was supported by the Marxist parties with whom it formed a United Left Front for the 1970 Elections.
Ceylon Workers' Congress	C.W.C.	1954	Operates mainly in the tea plantation areas. Its chief concern is the Indian Tamil plantation labourer.
Mahajana Eksath Peramuna	M.E.P.	1955	A breakaway group from the L.S.S.P. led by a founder member. A strong Sinhala-Buddhist bias. Allied with S.L.F.P. to form the 1956 government.
Tamil United Liberation Front	T.U.L.F.	1972	Confined to the Tamil speaking areas. Main demand is for Eelam - a separate Tamil state.
Jatika Vimukti Peramuna	J.V.P.	1976 (registered)	A party of the youth. Avowedly Marxist in its leadership, but sharply critical of the other Marxists.

TABLE 7.10

CANDIDATES FOR GENERAL ELECTIONS 1977 BY SEX AND POLITICAL PARTY

PARTY		TOTAL NO. OF CANDIDATES	MALES	FEMALES	
				TOTAL	%
	U.N.P.	154	151	03	2
	S.L.F.P.	147	143	04	3
U.L.F.	L.S.S.P.	82	80	02	2
	C.P.	25	24	01	4
	M.E.P.	27	25	02	7
	T.U.L.F.	24	24	00	0
	C.W.C.	02	02	00	0
	INDEPENDENTS	295	294	01	0.3

TABLE 7.11

FEMALE CANDIDATES FOR THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS, MAY 1979.

POLITICAL PARTIES CONTESTING

	TOTAL NO. OF WOMEN CANDI-DATES	U.N.P.		S.L.F.P.		C.P.		L.S.S.P.		T.U.L.F.		T.C.		INDEPENDENT FROUPS GROUP I		GROUP I		GROUP II		GROUP III		M.E.P.		D.W.C.	
		TOTAL	%	TOTAL	%	TOTAL	%	TOTAL	%	TOTAL	%	TOTAL	%	TOTAL	%	TOTAL	%	TOTAL	%	TOTAL	%	TOTAL	%	TOTAL	%
Municipality	32	06	19	08	25	01	03	06	19	00	00	01	03	06	19	01	03	00	00	03	09	00	00
Urban Council	31	10	32	03	10	05	16	05	16	00	00	01	03	04	12	01	03	00	00	02	06	00	00

+ Combined for the purposes of elections.

WOMEN AT DECISION MAKING LEVELS IN PUBLIC SERVICE AND IN THE PROFESSIONS

With the educational reforms of 1945 which introduced free education and instruction through the mother tongue (Chapter 5) parents began to encourage their daughters to take advantage of these opportunities and seek admission to Universities and other forms of tertiary education. The present situation is that, except in certain areas of specialization, the enrolment in educational institutions shows only a s.ight sex differential. Therefore two features characterize the last three decades as regards women.

(a) The large proportion of females taking advantage of educational opportunities at every level;

(b) The influx of women into the labour market particularly into the professions.

An increasing proportion of women gain employment each successive year as doctors, lawyers, accountants and administrators, and thus have their feet on the ladder leading to the highest decision making levels. But one cannot be complacent about the numbers who actually reach the highest rungs.

WOMEN IN PUBLIC SERVICE

It was only within the last two decades that women gained admission to the upper rungs of the administrative service which would automatically bring them close to the highest decision making bodies. Women were at first debarred from applying to the Ceylon Civil Service (the elite upper grade of the Administrative Service), and to the foreign service (now Overseas Service). In 1958 the Foreign Service was opened to women. When the Ceylon Administrative Service was formed in 1963 all persons who held positions at a certain administrative level and above were absorbed into it. This brought in one woman. Nevertheless the first advertisement for recruitment to the newly formed Administrative Service was for men only.

It was only after the women acted as a pressure group through the All Ceylon Women's Conference that the Administrative Service was opened to women. However, a quota of 10% was imposed on the number of women admitted. This was subsequently raised to 25% in 1975.

Nevertheless the view has often been expressed that even after a due allowance is made for the late entry of women into the administrative and Overseas Services, and the imposition of a quota system, the participation of women at the higher levels of decision making is disproportionately low. To ascertain whether this opinion is based on fact, a count was made of the women whose names appear in the Colombo section of the Official Telephone Directory, 1978. The assumption behind the choice of this method was that those public servants who function at a high level will be in Colombo close to the highest decision makers, will be allocated a telephone, and listed by name. This is only a ready reckoner and does not take into account the complexities of the situation. But it does give a broad picture of the levels at which women function in the public sector. Analysis of these figures are given in Table 7.12.

When the numbers listed in the Education and Health Ministries which are the largest employers of women were further analysed, it was seen that in the Education Ministry, only one woman was listed, out of a total of 55; and in the Health Ministry 4 out of a total of 58. The largest proportion of women was in the Ministry of Plan Implementation (8 out of 50) No women were listed in the following Ministries - Cultural Affairs, Food and Co-operatives*, Labour*, Lands and Land Development, Local Government, Housing and Construction*, Parliamentary Affairs and Sports, Plantation Industries*, Posts and Telecommunication, Power and Highways, Public Administration and Home Affairs, Rural Development*, Coconut Industries, Social Services*, State, Transport, Youth Affairs and Employment*, and Colombo Group of Hospitals and Family Health.* (The asteriks indicate the Ministries which deal with matters of vital concern to women.) This reveals that not a single woman is at the higher levels of decision making in 8 Ministries where the experience and thinking of women would be of special value.

TABLE 7.12

PERSONS LISTED IN THE OFFICIAL TELEPHONE DIRECTORY 1978
ON THE BASIS OF SEX

CATEGORY	TOTAL NO. OF PERSONS LISTED	TOTAL NO. OF MEN	TOTAL NO. OF WOMEN	% OF WOMEN
Office of the President, Prime Minister, Speaker, Leader of the House, Leader of Opposition, Cabinet Ministers, Public Service Commission, Judicial Service Commission	60	60	00	00
Ministries	648	611	37	06
Other Ministries	09	09	00	00
District Ministers	22	21	01	04
Supreme Court and Court of Appeal	25	25	00	00
Government Departments	1,864	1,794	70	04
Statutory Authorities, Commissions, Boards, etc.	1,292	1,263	56	03
Colombo Municipality	56	52	04	07
TOTAL	3,976	3,808	168	04

Analysis of the levels at which women function in the Public Service revealed that 7 women served as Private Secretaries to Ministers. 92 were Administrative Officers, of whom 8 functioned as Assistant Secretaries to the Ministeries. Sixty seven Technical Officers were listed. The highest level reached by a woman was as Chairman of a State Corporation (1). There were 5 Directors of Government Departments. The largest cluster was at the level of Deputy / Assistant Director / Commissioner (40). There were 16 Managers in State Corporations of whom 2 were at the level of General Managers. Nine were Corporation or Hospital Secretaries. Of these nine, 1 held the position of Secretary-General. Of the Technical Officers the largest group was that of Legal Officers (12). The next largest group was that of Accountants (11) There was an equal number (8) of Research Officers, Engineers and Specialist Medical Officers. In the overseas service the highest office held was that of Chief Protocol Officer.

Analysis further showed that there were no women in the Judiciary. No woman held the office of Secretary to a Ministry nor was there a single woman listed in the offices of the President and Prime Minister - the two persons who are at the highest decision making level in the country.

PARTICIPATION IN ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Female participation in professional and learned bodies is by and large limited to mere membership. In the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science, no woman has held the positions of General President or of General Secretaries. Out of a total of 205 sectional presidents since the establishment of the Association in 1945 up to January 1979, only 4 have been women. Only one woman has served as Chairman of its statutory sub-committees. Not a single woman has been elected to the Council for the year 1979, though generally there are one or two women in it. No figures are available of the women graduates, but it can be estimated that from the inception of the Ceylon University in 1942 well over ten thousand women have graduated up to date. Nevertheless the membership of the Sri Lanka Federation of University Women (SLFUW) is only around 250. Active participation in it is mostly by the older woman graduate, and those

at high professional level. Therefore, though membership is small it is able to exercise influence by the professional standing of its members.

Though there is a large preponderance of women in the field of education their participation in professional activities is very limited. In the National Education Society of Ceylon (affiliated to the New Education Fellowship) only one woman has held the office of President. But the post of the Editor of the N.E.S.C. Journal was mostly held by women. It is largely due to their efforts that there was an unbroken publication upto 1973.

The Government Grade One Principals Union though a trade union, is included within the category of academic and professional organizations, since its activities are directed more towards professional than direct trade union matters. There has been only one woman president. But women are well represented in the executive committee and have provided effective participation.

In the Medical field where the number of women now passing out almost equals that of the men, active participation is generally low. In the Sri Lanka Medical Association which was established ninety three years ago, there have been only 2 women presidents. There is usually a token representation of one woman in its 20 member council. In 1979 there was none. Women play a more active role in the specialists associations. In the Nutritional Society, 2 women - one medical and one non-medical have held the post of President. Women are also active in paediatrics and pathology and hold professorships in these two fields of study. Four women have held office as President of the Paediatric Association. In the newly formed College of Pathologists almost half the members in the Council are women. The Medical Womens' Association was formed to give the women doctor an opportunity to develop professionally and in qualities of leadership without being dominated by her male counter-part. It is affiliated to the International Medical Women's Association of which a Sri Lankan Woman doctor is presently a Vice-President. The Family Planning Association was established through the force and drive of some outstanding women, and women have continued to be the leaders in this field of work. Some of these workers are of international repute and of the highest professional standing.

TABLE 7.13

WOMEN IN SOME PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

ASSOCIATION	MEMBERSHIP			EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE/COUNCIL		
	TOTAL	MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL	MALES	FEMALES
Institute of Chartered Accountants	771	736	35	12	12	00
Institute of Architects	92	86	06	15	15	00
Bar Association	1,900	1,697	203	274	260	14
Institute of Engineers	1,472	1,440	32	27	26	01
Sri Lanka Medical Association	994	860	134	28	28	00

TABLE 7.14

EXTENT TO WHICH HUSBANDS INVOLVE THEIR WIVES IN DECISION MAKING IN HOUSEHOLD MATTERS

AREA	ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	NEVER
	%	%	%
Pindeniya	97	03	00
Borella	76	22	02
Sirupp̣iddy	60	38	02
Wattegedera	66	15	19

The membership of the Bar Association is open to both men and women. But with the large numbers passing out in recent years, women lawyers have felt the need to organize their own association so as to have a forum for discussion on matters of special concern to women. Thus the Ceylon Women Lawyers' Association was established in 1962 and affiliated to the International Federation of Women Lawyers. One of their most successful activities was that initiated for the Women's International Year - to press for Family Courts in Sri Lanka. It was largely due to their pressure that the Family Courts were established in 1978.

Female participation on June 30, 1979 as ordinary members and as members of the decision making executive committee or council of the Institutes of Chartered Accountants, Architects and Engineers and of the Bar Association are given in Table 7.13.

WOMEN IN TRADE UNIONS

Women almost invariably join trade unions which function in their places of work. Yet few play a leadership role in them. The figures as at the end of June 1979 indicate that in the Ceylon Federation of Trade Unions with 17 affiliated unions there is one woman in the executive committee out of a total of 32. In the general council of 132 only 2 are women. The Public Services Trade Union Federation comprising nearly 100 trade unions (including the 100% female Midwives Union and the Public Services United Nurses' Union with a membership of nearly 98% females) has 2 women in its executive committee of 31. One of them is a Vice-President. In the trade unions covering professions where women predominate the situation is no different

In the Sri Lanka Jathika Guru Sangamaya (Sri Lanka National Union of Teachers) where the membership of females (24,647) is more than the membership of males (23,811) none of the office bearers was a woman. In the Public Services United Nurses' Union where the male membership ranges between 01.04% and 02.04%, the President and Vice-President were both males. The office of Secretary is also often held by a male. In the Government Medical Officers'

Association where about 1/3rd of the members are women, no woman has held office. Thus it is seen that far from reaching out for leadership roles, the women generally have abdicated in favour of the men, even in areas where they predominate.

In the intensity of participation in general trade union activities there is a marked difference between the women in the working class, and those in the middle grades and professions. From the beginning of the Labour Movement and Trade Unions in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the working class women were conspicious participants. The names are recorded of many women workers who had been as active and militant as the men in May Day Rallies, and Workers' Strikes and demonstrations.[9]

A few middle class women are involved in trade union activities. But for the most part they are not members of trade unions, but political figures, representing political parties which provide the leadership for trade unions. The women in trade unions which protect the interests of the white collar worker and professionals are generally passive members and take an interest in professional rather than in strictly trade union matters.

VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS

The Sri Lanka Women's Conference[10] (S.L.W.C) is an umbrella organization bringing together individuals and voluntary associations to act as a body and share experiences and expertise for the welfare of women. It has 32 women's nongovernmental organizations affiliated to it.[11] Even before there was this present focus on women and development, the S.L.W.C. (then the All Ceylon Women's Conference) directed attention in the 1950s to the conditions of employment of the unskilled women worker in factories, small industries and domestic service. One of its most important functions is to maintain a watching brief on matters affecting women and act as a pressure group to promote policies and measures for the benefit of women and prevent acts discriminatory to them. It was seen how timely action opened the Administrative Service to women. The most recent of its achievements was in initiating action for a Women's Bureau and seeing it through the different stages

until it was finally established in 1978 as a cell in the key Ministry of Plan Implementation which functions directly under the President.

A number of the organizations affiliated to the SLWC are also affiliated to international organizations. Therefore, their members have an opportunity to participate in international forums, work with the U.N. and its specialised agencies and thus receive training in leadership at the international level.

It should however be observed that except for the Mahila Simiti which has a wide network of rural centres, the other affiliates of the SLWC are restricted to Colombo and a few other urban centres. Therefore, except where they influence policy, they affect only a very thin crust of society.

ORGANIZATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL WOMEN

It has long been recognized by successive governments, that the prosperity of the island depends on the prosperity of the rural sector which contains approximately 80% of its population. Land, agricultural and educational policies within the last 3 decades have been specially directed towards rural upliftment. The government agency which co-ordinates the activities of different departments working at village level is the Department of Rural Development. It has fostered the establishment of voluntary Rural Development Societies (RDSS) and provides financial and other forms of support to those societies registered with it. At first the Rural Development Movement directed its activities mainly towards the males. It was with the establishment in 1952 of Kantha Samiti (Women's Voluntary Societies for rural development) that women became a primary group for such programmes. With growing recognition that the involvement of women who form 47% of the population is essential to improve the economy of the country and that the untapped potential of rural women is a source of power for national development, programmes for vocational training and to improve the quality of living have been stepped up by various government departments, international bodies and voluntary organizations. One objective in most of these programmes is to develop qualities of self reliance and leadership in rural women.

Of the voluntary organizations, the Mahila Samiti established in 1931 and affiliated to the International Country Women of the World is the body which has been longest connected with the development of rural women. It has approximately 1,150 centres or Samitis spread throughout the island. These Samitis provide opportunities for its members to build up confidence, self reliance and qualities of leadership through discussion of common problems and seeking common solutions. Since few things build up self confidence as much as the possession of skills enabling a woman to raise income levels, the activities of the Mahila Samiti to provide training for self employment helps not only to improve the economic status of rural families but also to develop in women qualities conducive to assuming responsibility in community affairs.

A more recently established organization working at grass root level is the Lanka Jatika Sarvodaya Shramadana Sangamaya, popularly known as Sarvodaya. At the moment Sarvodaya works in about 2,000 villages throughout the country. Sarvodaya activities extend to the whole community. But it lays special value on the involvement of women as the key sector through which it can bring about village development. Therefore in building the basic organizational set up in a village, the highest priority is given to the Mothers' Group. Thus women are purposefully drawn into decision making roles and given opportunities to develop qualities of leadership.

The present situation is that there is a great deal of concern about developing the skills and abilities of rural women who form the most deprived sections of the community to assume leadership roles in village development. But it is observed that there is great deal of lethargy and reluctance on the part of educated women to accept responsibility in professional life.

The results of the survey undertaken in Borella (a Municipal ward in Colombo) and in three rural areas representative of the 3 major ethnic groups of the island gives deeper insights into the reasons why women fail to take leadership roles.

APPENDIX 7.1

AFFILIATED SOCIETIES OF THE SRI LANKA WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

All Ceylon Muslim Women's Association.
Association of Ceylon Women in the United Kingdom.
Association of Teachers of Domestic Science, Ceylon.
Ceylon Moor Ladies' Union.
Church of Ceylon Board of Women's Work.
Dehiwala Housewives' Society.
Dehiwala Housewives' Welfare Association.
Lanka Mahila Samithi.
Mallika Nivasa Samithiya Ltd.
Methodist Women's Fellowship.
Moors Islamic Cultural Home.
Muslim Ladies' Study Circle.
Muslim Women's Social League.
Nangayar Pani Kuhlue.
Quota Club
Saiva Mangaiyar Kalagam.
Social Service Ladies' League, Dehiwala/Mount Lavinia.
Soroptomist Club of Colombo.
Sri Lanka Federation of University Women.
Sri Lanka Housewives' Association.
Sri Lankadhara Society Ltd.
Tamil Women's Union of Sri Lanka.
The Ceylon Women Lawyers' Association.
The Girls' Friendly Society.
The Sri Lanka Girl Guides' Association.
The Sri Lanka Nurses Association.
Women's Temperance Union of Sri Lanka.
Young Muslim Women's League.
Young Women's Christian Association, Colombo.
Young Women's Christian Association of Sri Lanka.
Young Women's Muslim Association.
Zonta Club of Colombo.

STUDY AREAS

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING ROLES

The areas surveyed were Borella (urban multi-racial), Pindeniya (rural Sinhala), Siruppiddy (rural Tamil) and Wattegedera (rural Muslim). Except Borella, which had a wide cultural and economic heterogeneity, the other three areas were comparatively homogeneous in character.

The main objective of the survey was to examine the extent to which women of different ethnic groups were decision makers in their own homes, in the local community and in national life. Both husband and wife were interviewed, but separately. It was not intended to generalize from these findings for the country as a whole. But since a major consideration in the selection of the rural study areas was that they should as far as possible be 'typical' of the different ethnic groups, the findings of this survey would not be irrelevant to the communities as a whole.

WOMEN AS DECISION MAKERS IN THE HOME

In a male dominated society as in Sri Lanka, the extent to which the husband discusses matters with the wife would indicate the extent to which women are involved in decision making in the home.

Table 7.14 indicates that the majority of women in all four study areas play an active role in decision making in all matters connected with the household. Their involvement is particularly high in the Sinhala rural area, where the wives are never completely excluded from decision making. Siruppiddy was the area where total involvement was lowest. But very few were completely shut out. 12% of the responding couples in Siruppiddy said that the husband sometimes discussed with the wife different matters connected with the household. 14% said that the husband always discussed money matters with the wife and 12% said he always discussed matters connected with the children. It was among the Muslim community, where women have not reached the same educational levels as in the other ethnic groups, that there was the largest percentage of women excluded from decision making even in household matters.

PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN LOCAL LEVEL ORGANIZATIONS

The respondents were questioned regarding their awareness of societies in the community since knowledge of their existence is a precondition for participation. It is seen from Table 7.15 that while in the rural Sinhala village of Pindeniya and cosmopolitan Borella, there was a high awareness of the existence of societies and organizations, in Siruppiddy such awareness was low and in Wattegedera very low.

The women's societies which generally function at village level are the Kantha Simithi of Rural Development Societies, Kantha Samithi of various political parties, women's religious organizations, Mahila Sámiti and Mothers' groups of Sarvodaya Villages. There are also societies open to both men and women such as the Rural Development Societies, Co-operative Societies, Credit Societies, Death Benevolent Societies, Young Farmers' Clubs, Agricultural Productivity Committees, Sports Clubs, Parent Teacher Associations and branches of the different political parties.

The societies functioning in the four study areas and the participation of women in them is given in Table 7.17.

None of the study areas had more than two women's organizations. In Siruppiddy and Wattegedera the women surveyed participated only in societies which were exclusively for women. In Pindeniya and Borella, women were members and held office in societies open to both males and females. But the participation rates were extremely low. The highest rate was 16%.

PROFILE OF WOMEN HOLDING OFFICE

The ages and educational levels of women in decision making positions in societies are given in Table 7.18.

TABLE 7.15

WOMEN'S AWARENESS OF SOCIETIES AND ORGANIZATIONS IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

		PINDENIYA	SIRUPPIDDY	WATTEGEDERA	BORELLA
No. of respondents		97	77	95	98
Numbers aware	TOTAL	89	29	92	88
	%	92	38	12	90

TABLE 7.16

FEMALE RESPONDENTS WHO HELD OFFICE IN SOCIETIES

		PINDENIYA	SIRUPPIDDY	WATTEGEDERA	BORELLA
No. of respondents		97	77	95	98
No. Holding Office	Presently	03	02	00	10
	Earlier	06	03	04	06
	TOTAL	09	05	04	16
	%	09	06	04	16

TABLE 7.16 - PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN AT DECISION MAKING LEVELS IN SOCIETIES

AREA		WOMEN ONLY IN AREA					IN NEIGHBOURHOOD	
		KANTHA SOCIETY	WOMENS' BRANCH OF POLITICAL ORGANIZATION	MAHILA SAMITI	WOMENS' CREDIT SOCIETY	WOMENS' BUDDHIST SOCIETY	WOMENS' MUSLIM SOCIETY	UNIVERSITY HOSTEL
PINDENIYA -	PRESENTLY	x		x				
	EARLIER	x	x	x	x	x		
SIRUPPIDDY-	PRESENTLY	x						
	EARLIER	x						
WATTEGEDARA-	PRESENTLY							
	EARLIER	x						
BORELLA -	PRESENTLY							
	EARLIER	x	x				x	x

TABLE 7.16 - PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN AT DECISION MAKING LEVELS IN SOCIETIES (contd.)

AREA		FOR MEN AND WOMEN IN AREA						IN NEIGHBOURHOOD / PLACE OF WORK			
		CREDIT SOCIETY	MARANA-DHARA SOCIETY	POLITI-CAL OR-GANISA-TION	PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCI-ATION	RURAL DEVEL-OPMENT SOCIETY	SPORTS SOCIETY	CHRISTIAN SOCIETY	TRADE UNION	TEACHERS' SPORTS SOCIETY	TEXTILE WEAVERS' SOCIETY
PINDENIYA -	PRESENTLY										
	EARLIER	x	x		x	x	x			x	
SIRUPPIDDY-	PRESENTLY										x
	EARLIER										
WATTEGEDARA-	PRESENTLY										x
	EARLIER										
BORELLA -	PRESENTLY			x							
	EARLIER		x	x	x			x	x		

x INDICATES WHERE THERE IS PARTICIPATION.

TABLE 7.18

AGES AND EDUCATIONAL LEVELS OF WOMEN HOLDING OFFICE

		GRADES									AREA			
		0	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	DEG	P	S	W	B
25-29	Presently	-	-	-	-	-	-	B	-	-	-	-	-	1
	Earlier	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
30-34	Presently	-	-	-	-	-	B	B	B	-	3B	3	-	3
	Earlier	-	B	-	-	-	-	PW	-	B	1	-	1	2
35-39	Presently	-	-	-	-	-	-	PSB	-	-	1	1	-	1
	Earlier	-	P	-	-	-	-	PPS	-	-	3	1	-	-
40-44	Presently	-	-	-	-	B	B	-	-	-		-	-	2
	Earlier	W	—	—	—	—	—	—	P	-	1	-	1	-
45-49	Presently	-	-	-	S	PPB	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	1
	Earlier	-	S	-	S	P	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	-
50-54	Presently	-	-	-	-	B	-	B	-	-	-	-	-	1
	Earlier	W	-	-	-	-	-	B	-	-	-	-	1	1
55-59	Presently	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Earlier	-	-	-	-	-	-	B	-	-	-	-	-	1
60-64	Presently	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Earlier	W	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
TOTAL	P-Pindeniya	-	1	-	-	3	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
	S-Siruppiddy	-	1	-	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
	W-Wattegedera	3	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	B-Borella	-	1	-	-	3	2	6	1	1	-	-	-	-
GRAND TOTAL		3	2	-	2	6	2	13	2	1	-	-	-	-

Table 7.18 reveals a very wide age spread, the range being widest in Borella and Wattegedera. In Borella the ages range from 28 years to 58 and in Wattegedera from 33 to 60. In Pindeniya the age range was narrower spreading from 32 to 48 years. In Siruppiddy all belonged to the age group 38 - 47 years. Though the numbers are too few to generalize with any degree of certainty the situation seems to be that in Borella and Wattegedera, age is not a constraint to participating in decision making roles. In Pindeniya and Siruppiddy it would appear that it is the women in the age group which has passed child care responsibilities, and not yet assumed the role of grandmother, who generally participate in such activities.

The educational levels showed an even wider variation, ranging from illiteracy to a University degree. All those who were illiterate were from the Muslim community and reflects the low educational level of the women of that group. Nearly half the number (15) had studied up to Grade 10 and beyond. In general it can be said that the majority of women at decision making levels in local organizations have had at least 8 years of formal education.[12]

The women were also questioned to find out the extent to which they were aware of local associations for the development of women. In Borella, there was a high level of awareness (83%). But in the rural areas it was very low - 38% in Siruppiddy and 33% in Pindeniya. In Wattegedera even the women who held office in Women's Societies did not seem to think of them as organizations concerned with the development of women.

Those respondents who were aware of societies in the community for the development of women were further questioned as to the considerations which seemed to operate in the election of office bearers. This question was inapplicable to Wattegedera as none of the respondents considered that there was such an organization in the village.

Table 7.19 suggests that in rural areas involvement in local activities is the most important consideration for electing persons to hold office. In Borella the level of education was considered more important. That these two characteristics are considered the most important generally in the country is borne out by the findings of a study of the role of rural development societies.[13] It is noteworthy that while in Pindeniya and Siruppiddy political consideration does not seem to have any weight it is a consideration in Borella even though it comes low down in the order of priority.

CONSTRAINTS TO FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL LEVEL ORGANIZATIONS

All the female respondents were questioned regarding their views in the participation of women in local societies. The women of Wattegedera had not expressed any opinions on the subject. In the other three areas, approximately half said that women should participate. A number of reasons were given for their opinion by those who held the contrary view. But no major constraint seemed to operate in any of the study areas. The commonest reasons given as to why women should not participate in community activities were as follows:

In Pindeniya it was lack of time(21%,) lack of interest (19%,) and thirdly lack of education. In Borella the reasons were very much the same. No interest 26%,no time 22%, and lack of education. It is noteworthy that child care responsibilities were not considered a constraint in either area. In Borella none of the respondents mentioned it, and in Pindeniya only 06%. In Siruppiddy on the other hand, child care responsibilities were the major constraint (37%). Next was lack of time (26%).

The respondents were also asked whether they take part in societies open to both men and women and the reasons for not participating if they did not do so. The responses indicated sharp differences in the different communities. The Muslim women both of Wattegedera and Borella, said they did not do so because it went counter to their customs and traditions.

In Siruppiddy too none of the women belonged to societies where membership was open to the full community irrespective of sex. The reason given was these societies did not function well. In Pindeniya 65% and in Borella 72% said they participated in such organizations. The one in which women participated most actively in Pindeniya was the credit society. 63% of those who did not participate in Pindeniya said they did not do so, since their husbands participated. Therefore, there was no need for them to participate as well. In Borella a number of other reasons were given indicating the heterogeneity of the community. Some were of the opinion that these societies had a class bias, and so those with a lower education or of a poorer social class or belonging to a minority group felt uncomfortable in them. It is noteworthy that except for the Muslim community, the other communities, whether urban or rural did not think that being a woman was a barrier to participation in mixed societies.

The husbands were questioned regarding their attitudes towards women participating in local societies. Table 7.20 indicates that in all the study areas except Siruppiddy the males did not approve or encourage the females in the family taking part in societies. Since the majority of Sinhala women said they participate, it seems to indicate that they are able to act independently whatever the opinion of the husband. With the Tamil respondents things seemed to operate conversely. The men approved but the women did not participate. Among the Muslims, the attitudes of both men and the women seemed to be the same as is indicated by the extremely low participation rate of Muslim women.

It was observed that in every study area, the view was held to varying extents that participating in community activities is man's work, and not woman's. The degree to which this view was held varied with the different ethnic groups. This was the most cogent reason given by the Tamil and Muslim males who disapproved. Perhaps it is the operation of this attitude which accounts for the fact that in national politics no Muslim women and only one Tamil woman has been in the legislature. Among the Sinhala community the major reason why males do not approve of women participating in societies is that it disrupts the house work. Therefore, if alternate arrangements can be made for the house work to be performed,

there is no objection arising from deep-rooted values and attitudes for the Sinhala women to participate in community activities as there is for her counterpart in the Tamil and Muslim communities.

USE OF THE VOTE

The female respondents were questioned as to whether they exercised their right to vote from the time they were entitled to do so, and the influence exercised by the husband in choice of party. Table 7.21 gives their responses.

Table 7.21 reveals that an extremely high percentage of women voters exercised their right to vote. In both Pindeniya and Siruppiddy the women seem to be more attuned to their husband's way of political thinking than in the other two areas. It was an extremely low percentage of husbands who wanted to thrust their opinions on their wives. As is to be expected, in a highly politically conscious area like Borella, where every major political party has a branch, nearly three fourth of the wives said they exercised their own judgement in the choice of party. But it was a matter of surprise that an almost equally high proportion of women in Wattegedera exercised the same right. It has been observed by Muslim leaders that even in backward Muslim villages such as Sainthamaruttu Division I, women were politically conscious and made their own choice of candidate for national and local elections.

The picture revealed by the survey conforms by and large to that of the national scene, where women exercised the vote but are slow to participate actively in public and community affairs, preferring to leave these areas to the men

TABLE 7.19

CONSIDERATIONS IN SELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

AREA	NO. OF RESPON-DENTS		PARTICI-PATION IN COMMU-NITY ACTI-VITIES	HIGH LEVEL OF EDUCA-TION	FAMILY STATUS	POLITI-CAL INFLU-ENCE	PERSONAL POPULA-RITY	HOLDS OFFICE IN OTHER SOCIETIES
Pindeniya	32	TOTAL	22	12	1	-	-	-
		%	69	38	03	-	-	-
Siruppiddy	29	TOTAL	14	05	03	-	07	-
		%	48	17	10	-	24	-
Borella	81	TOTAL	36	41	29	21	-	08
		%	44	50	35	30	-	10

TABLE 7.20

MALE ATTITUDES TOWARDS FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN SOCIETIES

AREA	NO. OF RESPON-DENTS		APPROVE	DIS-APPRO-VE	REASONS FOR DISAPPROVAL			
					ONLY MEN SHOULD PARTI-CIPATE	DISRUPTS HOUSE-HOLD WORK	WOMEN HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE OF THESE MATTERS	THERE'S 'TALK' WHEN DAUGHTERS PARTICIPATE
Pindeniya	84	TOTAL	35	49	13	35	-	02
		%	42	58	27	71	-	04
Siruppiddy	65	TOTAL	46	19	12	09	-	-
		%	71	29	63	47	-	-
Wattegedera	85	TOTAL	06	79	56	17	-	09
		%	07	93	71	22	-	11
Borella	83	TOTAL	31	52	08	31	07	07
		%	37	63	15	60	13	13

TABLE 7.21

FEMALE USE OF THE VOTE AND THE PART PLAYED BY THE HUSBAND IN CHOICE OF POLITICAL PARTY

AREA	NO. OF RESPON-DENTS	THOSE WHO VOTED		REASONS FOR CHOICE OF PARTY					
				SAME CHOICE AS HUSBAND'S		FORCED TO VOTE FOR HUSBAND'S PARTY		MAKES INDEPENDENT CHOICE EVEN IF DIFFERENT FROM HUSBAND'S	
		TOTAL	% TOTAL	TOTAL	% OF VOTERS	TOTAL	% OF VOTERS	TOTAL	% OF VOTERS
Pindeniya	99	97	97	72	74	02	02	23	23
Siruppiddy	77	77	100	50	65	00	00	27	35
Wattegedera	95	93	98	29	31	02	02	62	67
Borella	98	95	97	24	25	03	03	68	72

SOME OUTSTANDING CAREER WOMEN

The study of the involvement of women in decision making included interviews of a cross section of those who have reached very high levels in their careers and are accepted as leaders or pioneers in their special areas of work. The objectives of these interviews were:

(a) to achieve a richer understanding of; and

(b) to identify common features and common patterns where they exist in:

- (i) the various influences which go to determine the choice of career and commitment to it;
- (ii) the problems women have to face to reach their level of achievement;
- (iii) the role played by the husband in their careers;
- (iv) the impact they have made, if any, on their professions at national and international levels;
- (v) the impact they have made, if any, on the position of women in Sri Lanka;
- (vi) their views on the opportunities available to women to be decision makers at home, in employment and in national life; and
- (vii) the sense of fulfilment obtained through commitment to a career.

The following areas of activity were selected so as to obtain as representative a group as possible

1. The Arts
2. Business
3. Art Crafts
4. Local politics
5. National politics
6. Professions:
   - Administration
   - Education
   - Foreign Service
   - Medicine
   - Law
7. Women's Activities.

Each of the persons selected is identified by a letter of the Roman alphabet and not by a name. Their areas of interest are given below:

(a) The first professionally qualified woman film director;
(b) A high powered business executive in the tourist industry;
(c) The first to enter the international market in Sri Lankan batiks;
(d) The only woman Muslim politician. A former Municipal Councellor and a pioneer in the education of Muslim girls;
(e) First woman Prime Minister in the world, and leader of a national political party;
(f) President of the national Kantha Peramuna (Women's front) of a political organization, and a former Vice-Chairman of the Local Government Organization in her area;
(g) The first woman to be absorbed into the Administrative Service;
(h) A pioneer in the field of pre-school education and Montessori methods;
(i) An educationist who furthered the cause of Buddhist Education for girls;
(j) The first woman to enter the Foreign Service;
(k) A medical doctor, presently Chairman of a State Corporation - the first woman to be so appointed-
(l) A leading opthalmologist;
(m) A Lawyer - the first woman to practice in the Supreme Court;
(n) A pioneer in Family Planning.

The interviews were conducted on a common format, by members of the co-ordinating committee of the Study of the Status of Women, as it was felt that mature persons would be able to establish greater rapport with the interviewees and be in a stronger position to draw out relevant information than young research assistants.

The ages of the interviewees ranged from the late 30s to the mid 70s. Therefore, they could be categorized into two age groups - the older and the younger. The older group consisted of those over fifty and the younger group those who were fifty or below. Eight were in the older group and six in the younger.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

All the interviewees except two were Sri Lankans by descent. Of the other two one was born in India and had had University and professional training in that country. The other was from the USA They obtained Sri Lankan citizenship,one because of marriage, and the other for her distinguished service to the country.

An analysis of their socio-economic backgrounds revealed that 11 of the 14 were from affluent, western oriented, elitist backgrounds. Their fathers were either leading professionals, or from the landed aristocracy. Most of them were in a position to send their daughters to foreign Universities for higher education or take them abroad on holiday. Two were from middle class homes. One was from a rural background where the parents held psoitions of leadership in the community. None of their mothers had 'worked' though they had been well educated according to the concepts at the time.

Economically all were at least comfortably off. Even the one interviewee who said she had financial problems to start with had a brother who was able to finance her professional training abroad. No one was from a poor, deprived background. All of them started life with strong supports - educated parents holding positions of leadership in the community, and comfortable if not affluent homes.

All the interviewees had at least 10 years of formal education . All had completed their secondary education in schools in their own country. All except two had studied in leading girls' schools. The older group had, without exception, studied in prestigious Christian Missionary Schools or Convents. Of the younger group three had studied in leading Buddhist Girls' Schools and one in a government school. All except one, had studied in the English Medium.

Eight of the 14 had University degrees, two had professional qualifications at tertiary level. Seven of the degree holders had postgraduate qualifications as well. Six of the 10 who had a tertiary education, did their studies in foreign Universities or professional institutions. They were financially supported by their parents or some member of the family. All those who had postgraduate qualifications had got them abroad. Three had done some government scholarships.

THE FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CHOICE OF CAREER

Replies to the question regarding the factors which influenced them in their choice of careers revealed that the influence of the home, particularly that of a father, mother or older brother had played a major part in the choice of career. Most interviewees gave more than one factor as influencing their decisions. Eleven said that their family background was a major influence. With some it was the direct influence of a parent or brother. With others, the home background created an interest in the type of work in which they became later involved. With three who had started their careers late in life, the major influence was that of the husband. B started her career so as to help her husband in his business. E was compelled through forces beyond her control, to take the place of her husband as the head of his political party. C became involved in her particular field because her husband's work brought her opportunities to further her interest in the subject and support her son in his creative activities.

Unlike the home, the school does not seem to have had any specific influence on these women in their choice of careers. One stated that the Principal of her school had influenced her strongly to pursue a University education. Four said that the school exercised an indirect influence on them. Of these 4, two felt that they developed a sense of social responsibility in school. The other 2 said that they provided the courses of study required for admission for training in their particular field of interest. None of the 8 who had a University education considered that the University had exercised any influence in their choice of career. Five of these 8 had already selected their professions prior to entering the University. With one the course of studies in the University provided the academic background needed in her later career. For the other 2, the University influenced them only to the extent that a degree was a basic requirement for entry into their profession.

THE PROBLEMS FACED BY CAREER WOMEN

None of the interviewees had any problems in deciding on their careers, though one felt it was a momentous decision that she had to make. Four had started on their careers after marriage and when the children were school going. They were all in the older group. Reasons other than an early interest in and commitment to their area of work had launched them on their careers. But once involved, their commitment became very strong, taking up most of their time, far beyond normal working hours.

Though none of the interviewees had problems in selecting their careers, 5 had problems at the start. One had to wait 6 years before her father who considered she was not strong enough for University education, gave her permission to join the University. One had a problem in that her school at that time did not teach the subjects required for her selected course of study. One has financial problems. But these were resolved for her by her brother. One had to meet the opposition of conservative parents who could not accept the idea of a girl travelling alone for classes, and one had to face the disapproval of a very conservative social environment.

When questioned whether they faced any special problems in reaching their level of attainment, six said they had none. These were persons in political life, and the entrepreneurs. Three in Government service said they encountered discrimination and hostility because of their sex. The 3 who were in the field of education were founders of schools and had to face the problems of pioneers such as shortage of funds for their institutions. Further they had to contend with social attitudes which disapproved of freedom for children, particularly for girls and so had to educate the parents to a new way of thinking. Two had to contend with the conservatism of governing bodies as well. In the field of family planning, there was a great deal of hostility to overcome partly because people misunderstood its objectives - the pall of immorality shrouding it in the early days and partly because it was thought of as an activity of the women from the elitist class.

Several of the interviewees had personal problems. Four of them had to take up leadership position without any experience or training for it in a subordinate role. One found that there was no guidance even by way of a manual of procedure to help her in her work.

All the interviewees found that it required a great deal of physical energy and stamina to stand up to the demands of their career.

Only three said they had to face up to problems arising from sex discrimination. They were all in public service and felt that in opportunities for training and promotions men were at an advantage. Men who were less qualified and experienced got ahead of them. They said that since interview boards were generally composed of men only, they directed questions at female applicants to show that as women, they were incapable of meeting the requirements of the job and that the appointment of a woman would create problems to the administration. One of the interviewees said that when she was first appointed to a supervisory post she had the problem that the men whose work she had to supervise resented having to take instructions from a woman. But with time they got used to the idea of a woman 'boss'. Two of the interviewees worked entirely in a woman's sphere and so did not come into competition with men. The others said they felt completely at ease with their male counterparts. They had the confidence arising from proven abilities and said they were accepted as professionals on their own worth. Four in fact thought that sometimes it was an advantage to be a woman.

One of the major problems for career women arises from the fact that they have to combine the demands of a career with the responsibilities of a wife and mother. The domestic responsibilities of the interviewees varied widely dependent on their civil status and whether they had children or not. One was not married and considered her home the place where she slept and kept her belongings. Two were married but without children. In the older group all who were married had children. At the time of the interview their children were all married and/or established in a career of their own. Four of the older women had started on their careers after their children were of school going age. Only three in this group worked when the children were young. All in the younger group combined a career and home right from the start. Three in this group had young children and one had an infant as well.

One striking feature about all thirteen who were married was the fact that not only were they deeply concerned with their families but also had the ability to combine without undue strain the responsibilities of both. They all agreed that a major contributory factor for this happy situation was the availability of domestic help to relieve them of the routine household chores, and free them for other work. Nevertheless,it called for greater organization and planning in the home and the establishment of priorities. The main concern of these women as housewives was the welfare of their children. They cut down their social activities to a minimum unless they were part of their responsibilities in the wider family system or an extension of her or her husband's official work. Thus they were able to have more time with their children and 'not miss a scrap of their growing up', as one interviewee said. It was noticeable that those mothers who were in a position to do so tried to involve their children too in their own activities, so that they could share their experiences and be with them even in work outside the home. B said that her daughter was given a definite job and specific hours of work in the business from the time she was 14 C's son shared in the artistic activities involved in her industry E and F took their children to political meetings and rallies. I's children when young were popular figures in her school. Thus these career women were able to make up in the quality of the time given to their children what they were not able to give in quantity. Three interviewees felt that they were able to provide for their children more intellectual stimulation and a wider and richer social environment than if they had been full time mothers. Nevertheless those in the older age group, particularly those who had to combine both roles, where the children were very young, felt the children had suffered because of their involvement in a career. Since many of their children had taken to the same or allied careers and 6 of the interviewees had stated that they had reached their levels of achievement because of the understanding of their children, it is likely that their sense of guilt regarding their children is a relic of the traditional values instilled into women particularly those of an older generation, that their roles in life is to be a full-time wife and mother. The younger women seem to have accepted their dual roles, planned for them and adjusted to both with greater equanimity. One of them said that she chose her area of specialisation so that she can combine both roles comfortably. One said that the fact that her children were young had acted

as a constraint on her professional development. Nevertheless, she seems to have done very well even within those constraints. But none in the younger group expressed a sense of guilt about their involvement in a career.

To the majority of these interviewees, their leisure time activities were an extension of their career commitments There were no sharp boundaries between work and leisure. This was particularly true of the three who were involved in politics. All of them worked long and hard far beyond the normal requirements of a job. Of the rest 2 said that the nature of their work was such that when they worked they worked round the clock. At other times they were comparatively free. One outstanding feature, however, was that though they all said that they had no leisure, yet further probing revealed that except for three who had no other interests beyond their career and children, and two who had no interests other than those connected with their work, the rest were able to stretch their time to included a variety of other interests as well. One was involved in political activities as a support to her husband. Five said their main leisure time activity was reading. Five participated in the activities of women's organizations. Two played tennis and went swimming whenever they could. Other interests included gardening, Church work, bird watching and preservation of the environment and old monuments. Of the 13 who had been married, seven said that their husbands shared some of their interests.

THE ROLE PLAYED BY THE HUSBAND

Of the interviewees one was unmarried and one was already a widow by the time she started on her career. One said her husband's work took her for long periods of time away from home. All those to whom the question was relevant were of opinion that they were able to achieve these high levels in their careers because of the support they received from their husbands. Thus understanding provided the necessary climate which enabled them to function efficiently both in their careers and in their homes. Two said their husbands sometimes felt neglected. Nevertheless they gave them every encouragement in their work. The general attitude of the husbands can be summed up in the words of one interviewee. 'My husband believes that anything worth doing is worth doing well. He felt it was a worthwhile cause and did not grudge the time I spent on it'.

The encouragement given by the husband varied from a peripheral interest and passive acceptance of the wife's career to total involvement, from 'My husband is a non-interfering person', to 'we are in the same field. It is a great advantage being his wife. I am what I am today, because of him'. One wife mentioned that though her husband gave her opportunities and encouragement to pursue her career, yet he did not want any of their daughters to take to the same field. Seven of the interviewees worked in the same profession or area of work as their husbands. But there did not appear to be any rivalry or competition between them. Professionally too they seemed to work as a team. All the husbands had seen their wives at work. Nevertheless, none of the interviewees was able to give a direct answer to the question as to what impression their husbands had formed of their performance in the professional role. There seemed to be tacit approval, though no one stated that her husband had explicitly stated so 'It was what he expected'. Could there be a more glowing tribute?

THE IMPACT MADE BY THE INTERVIEWEES ON THEIR PROFESSIONS AND AREAS OF WORK AT NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS.

The decision making levels of the interviewees varied from the major decisions taken by a Prime Minister to the routine decisions taken by a public servant. E considered that though as Prime Minister she consulted the cabinet and the decisions implemented were group decisions, yet opinions carried weight in making those decisions. N thought that though she could not say that she herself made an impact on her area of work, yet personally and as a member of a pressure group she was able to raise the interest of persons who were decision makers at the national level to a point of action. Thus indirectly she had been in a position to influence government policy and mobilize the support of those working in the field to put policy to effect. H felt that her greatest contribution was not so much in pioneering pre-schools as in making parents tied in the restrictive methods of child rearing generally practised in the country, realize the need for freedom in the development of the child. I had raised the level of Buddhist education for girls, so that Buddhist parents who earlier sent their children to the prestigious Christian Mission Schools and Convents, found that there were equally good Buddhist Schools for

their daughters. D felt that she had improved the educational facilities available to Muslim girls and made Muslim parents think more of the education of their daughters. C said that through her efforts at popularizing batiks, she had helped to open out fresh areas of employment of women.

All the interviewees had taken part in international conferences, seminars and other activities connected with their work. But only three felt they had made an international impact. E had been Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement. L had 2 surgical procedures under her name. C felt she had made a minor impact by introducing Sri Lankan Batiks to the international market.

Analysis of the answers to the question as to whether as decision makers they had made an impact on the position of women in Sri Lanka showed that 3 had not thought of the question at all. Ten felt they had made a general contribution. Four mentioned specific situations when their intervention had helped to improve the status of women or enhance their professional image.

Two of the interviewees felt that though this was not their main objective, yet their work had benefitted women, as their pioneering work had opened up fresh avenues of employment for them. A felt that she had been able to create a greater understanding of the problems of women through a sympathetic delineation of theirs. Two were able to help raise the educational levels of the girls through their work as principals of schools and the films she directed. E and M as leaders of the Kantha Peramuna (Women's League) of a political party had helped to draw more women into active participation in politics. G had devoted the greater part of her career to rural development and had introduced an extended educational programme for rural women, so as to include education in family health, nutrition and home gardening in addition to sewing. N had started on her career with studies on the economic role of women. Later a pioneer in the field of family planning, she was able to get government acceptance of these programmes which aim at the improved health of the mother and the freeing of the woman for activities other than child bearing and child rearing.

Of those who mentioned specific contributions towards the enhancement of the status of women, M stated that in spite of threats of physical violence and character assassination she had taken the decision to appear in a murder case which none of her male collegues would 'touch'. When she won the case

she felt it was not only a personal triumph but it had also enhanced the professional image of women. J said that since her work brought her in close touch with the decision makers of the country she was able to promote the idea of a women's Bureau (a proposal which had been first mooted over 10 years ago), and follow it up until it was finally implemented. G reported that when the Sri Lankan Administrative Service was closed to women, she spotted an advertisement on recruitment to the service for males only and brought it to the notice of the All Ceylon Women's Conference (now Sri Lanka Women's Conference) which was able to act as a pressure group to open the doors to women also. The political decision to admit women to the Administrative Service was made by E when she was Prime Minister. Her contribution to the Status of Women was moreover not confined to Sri Lanka. As the first woman Prime Minister in the world she was able to demonstrate that women could with acceptance, fill the highest decision making position in a country.

VIEWS REGARDING THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN TO BE DECISION MAKERS

The interviewees were questioned as to what they considered to be the opportunities available to women to be decision makers in family life. One had no views on the subject. Two who were involved in national politics said that while women make some decisions, generally the major ones were made by the husband. Two said the decisions were made by both husband and wife - the husband in some, the wife in some, and both jointly in others. Nine felt that the wife had a very strong influence in the home, particularly in matters concerning children. The three who were in the field of education held this opinion very strongly.

The interviewees were further asked regarding the opportunities available to women. Those who had their own businesses or worked in areas which did not bring them into competition with the men were not aware of problems other than social strictures. Every one of those who worked in government departments or had experience of the public sector were of the view that discrimination against women still operates so as to bar them from the highest levels of decision making. They said that in matters regarding scholarships, opportunities for training and participation in conferences

and seminars - all of which would equip them for positions of greater responsibility - men were generally given preference, unless there was a female applicant of such high calibre, that she could not possibly be overlooked. Sometimes they said, a woman was selected as a concession to 'Women's Lib' One of the interviewees felt strongly that problems which were high-lighted as being peculiar to women were those faced by both men and women. Another was of the view that sex streo types keep the women on unskilled jobs. Women are said to be good with their fingers and so are put to jobs which require manual dexterity, but hardly any decision making. The men are said to need more interesting work which involves the use of the brain. Therefore they are given preference in jobs which are more interesting, higher paid and involves decision making. Nevertheless all agreed that opportunities are there for women to reach high levels of decision making, though the going may be tough. The older interviewees were of opinion that the opportunities were much more now than they were when they first launched on their careers.

When questioned regarding ways in which women could reach the higher levels of decision making in employment, three considered that full employment is the only answer to the question. They said that women will then automatically arrive at the decision making level. But they were also of opinion that women should equip themselves for higher responsibility and not expect to obtain preferential treatment because of sex. One felt that there should be 'lobbying' by women's organizations and active campaigns to change the attitudes of male employees on the subject.

In response to the question as to what they considered to be the opportunities for women to participate in national life, three did not express any opinion One interviewee mentioned that the greatest impact women as a body had on national life was through the exercise of the vote, a right which they have enjoyed since 1931 Four stated that from the time of Kuveni upto present times, women of Sri Lanka have had an opportunity to make an impact on national life Their view was that this being so, we need not bother about a 'Women's Lib' in Sri Lanka. The general opinion was "We've had a woman Prime Minister haven't we. So the opportunity is there". The next question that logically followed was, "If the opportunity is there, why don't women make greater use of these opportunities ?"

The answers varied. Three stated that to make an impact on national life, women have to participate actively in politics and public affairs particularly at local level. This makes them a target for much mud slinging. Therefore, neither the women nor their husbands wish to put them in such a situation. Some women also felt that such participation would affect their homes adversely. It was to them a matter of priorities. Nevertheless, these interviewees believed that if women wish to participate in decision making at the national level, then they should be strong enough to stand up to all these difficulties. Two of the interviewees mentioned that particularly in the Muslim Community there is still strong prejudice against women participating in public life. Five were of opinion that one of the major constraints was the case of children. Someone has to look after the children and traditionally this is done by the women. Four mentioned the lack of infrastructure such as labour saving devices to enable the average woman to combine comfortably the responsibilities of a home and career. One mentioned the lack of incentives and opportunities for women to equip themselves for greater responsibility in professional life. For instance, she said automatic promotions in the incremental scale in the teaching service militated against women wanting to equip themselves for professional advancement. Further, she said there were no courses or refresher courses directed towards the housewife, and therefore there was an atmosphere of intellectual stagnation. One interviewee with very wide experience was of the opinion that women generally were not aware of the need to participate in public life. Many were lazy and do not see the need to work at all.

SENSE OF FULFILLMENT THROUGH A CAREER

The final question was directed to finding out the sense of fulfilment these interviewees obtained from their commitment to a career. "Some say a successful career woman is not a happy one. What are your views on the subject?"

Every one of the interviewees rejected the statement. Some of the responses were guarded. "Can't generalize. Depends on the individual". "I think a successful career woman will be unhappy only if she does so at the expense of other things." Others vehemently opposed it. "What rubbish! She is a happy, but a tired one, not a frustrated one".

"No! Her very success makes it possible to act and make decisions to make life more favourable for herself and her family."

"I feel my children suffered My home life suffered. But I found great happiness both in my work and my children. I have a sense of fulfilment".

This seems to be the crux of the matter. In spite of the hard work they have had to put in all had a sense of fulfilment in their work.

CONCLUSIONS

It would appear from the foregoing study that the women of Sri Lanka even those from backward communities, are aware of the power of the vote and exercise it. Apart from this, their active participation in politics, community activities and professional organizations is very low. It mav be asked why it is that in a country where females make use of educational opportunities just as much as the males and seek employment at every level, their participation in public affairs should be so poor. It was seen that traditionally women of Sri Lanka did not play a decision making role in matters that concerned the community. The elders who comprised the Gam Sabha were all males. Community affairs were considered the special preserve of the men. The survey indicates that this view is still prevalent. In all four study areas this was given as one reason why males objected to females taking part in societies. This belief was extensively held in the Muslim and Tamil areas and to a lesser extent in the Sinhala community. Therefore, social disapproval of women participating in public affairs is still a force to contend with. Participation in education and in paid employment outside the home are comparatively recent phenomena where women are concerned. Nevertheless they bring tangible rewards in the form of higher incomes and greater chances of a 'good' marriage. A regular job is now almost the equivalent of a dowry. Bur there is little incentive for women to break away from tradition and participate in public affairs. Even the educational system does not reward them for it. For instance admissions to Universities and other institutions of higher education are based entirely on the marks scored at competitive examinations. No weightage is given for a student's contribution

to the life of the school or of the community. Thus by spending time on matters other than studies a girl takes the risk of being at a disadvantage where examination success is concerned - this being still the main gateway through which a female can reach independence and a richer quality of life.

Therefore it is the exceptional woman whose nature demands such an outlet who engages actively in political and community work or is involved in professional activities beyond the requirements of duty. The Sinhala community has traditionally had a formula for the acceptance of these outgoing women. Their behaviour is given an astrological explanation. They are said to be born under a 'Pirimi Nekata' a male constellation. So they are socially accepted but still considered the odd persons.

A further explanation may be gathered from the interviews with some outstanding career women. It was seen that they all had strong domestic support as well as the support of their husbands. For the average woman who has to look after children and a home as well as do a full time job without adequate assistance the question becomes one of priorities. Should she spend her meagre resource of time with the family or away from the family? It was seen that even with the high powered career woman the home, the husband and children were greatly valued. It is therefore most unlikely that without a supportive infrastructure and a change of social attitudes, particularly on the part of the males and incentives rather than disincentives for participation in public affairs that women would be in a position to play a more positive role in politics, local level organizations or professional bodies.

REFERENCES

1. The Handbook of the Ceylon National Congress 1919 - 1928: ed. by S.W.R.D.Bandaranaike, Colombo, 1928, p.177.

2. Ibid p.265.

3. The writer is indebted to Sir (then Mr.) Senarath Goonawardena for information on what took place behind the scenes. As one of the joint secretaries of the Ceylon National Congress at the time, he was one of the persons directly involved in the establishment of the Women's Franchise Union.

4. Ceylon: Report of the Special Commission on the Constitution, 1928 (Donoughmore Report) - His Majesty's Stationery Office, p.88.

5. Martial Law was declared by the British Government when riots broke out between the Buddhists and Muslims in 1915.

6. Jayawardena, Visakha Kumari. The Rise of the Labour Movement in Ceylon, Duke Press, 1972, p.172.

7. Ibid. p.277.

8. Election Manifesto of the United Left Front, June 1977, p.6 - 7.

9. Jayawardhana Kumari, 'Kantha Vimuktiya', 1st May 1975, Colombo, pp. 31 - 41.

10. For the activities of the SLWC and its affiliates. See Sri Lanka Women's Conference Report compiled for International Women's Year, 1975.

11. Ibid See Appendix 7.1.

12. That this is generally true of the leadership in rural organization, is borne out in a study of the Role of Rural Development Societies in Sri Lanka by the Research Council of the Department of Rural Development. The Secretaries of the R.D.S.S. were asked their opinions regarding the attributes an office bearer should have. The most important consideration was that the office bearers should have a general education i.e. a level of achievement between grades 8 and G.C.E. (Ordinary Level), p.74.

13. Loc. cit.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

by

PRIYANI E. SOYSA

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

The crucial role of woman as mother is one which has come down the ages and its significance recorded through history by pen, brush, sculpture and camera The mother/child dyad has special biological, social, psychological and nutritional significance. Health problems both in the developed and developing worlds are closely connected with the vulnerability of the mother/child dyad to infections, drugs, inadequate or inappropriate nutrition and too closely spaced pregnancies. Abnormality in the mother can and often does affect the child. Hence, it becomes well nigh impossible to consider children apart from their mothers, whether in health, nutrition or even education. The woman's status in the family and society would govern her role as mother. One wants to continually stress her role in the physical and mental development of the young Thus when one analyses this closely and seeks meaningful solutions to the problems of children, the role of mother becomes even more magnified.

In developing countries, the most vulnerable groups requiring attention in health and nutrition are mothers and children who compose 75% of the community. Major determinants of disease and death include customs affecting the health care and nutrition of these vulnerable members of society. The status of women and children in society are clearly of major interest in this connection In other words, the status of woman in society determines not only her health and nutrition but also that of her children who are completely dependant on her acceptance of available resources.

As mothers and housewives, women are in the vanguard of the struggle for social progress Because of their position in the family and society, they have the possibility of changing attitudes and practices and accepting new ideas, implementations of which would lead to greater maternal benefits and better health and nutrition.

Date obtained for this analysis were studies both at macro level and area studies. Macro level data was obtained from Statistics through the Ministry of Health, viz. Family Health Bureau and Epidemiological Unit and published reports viz Statistics from the Registrar-General, Census, Central Bank, Medical Research Institute, 'Better Medicine for Sri Lanka' - a World Health Organization Report of fourteen substudies written by Simanov[1] and 'Psychiatric Morbidity in a semi-urban population in Sri Lanka' by the Department of

Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine, Colombo.[2] Health Statistics of working women in mercantile firms in Colombo were also examined.

Sri Lanka has recently been rated high in a study on the Physical Quality of life index when compared with countries with a high GNP[3] (Table 8.1).

It is against this background of an internationally low general mortality rate of 8 per 1,000 live births, and a fairly widely distributed health care system of 2,149 health facilities within 0.8 ml. from the average home, that one has to assess the health and nutrition of women.

SEX DISTRIBUTION

A look at the sex distribution of population by age groups (Table 8.2) shows that the number of males for every 100 females in the population was between 111 and 114. There is no significant variation between the sexes if we also look at the sex distribution at birth (Table 8.3).

MATERNAL MORTALITY

However, on account of frequent pregnancies and deliveries, women are subject to increased health hazards. The country's health care system provides for special antenatal and natal care and the maternal mortality rates would be an indication of the utilisation of these facilities. Since 1967, there has been a steady decrease in maternal mortality down to 1.2 per 1,000 live births in 1971. On an average, there are about 370,000 live births annually in Sri Lanka. Over 63% of deliveries are institutional with trained staff in attendance. Even the majority of domiciliary deliveries are well attended and only less than 3% have no trained attendants at delivery. An examination of the differential rates in different districts, shows the highest rate in Nuwara Eliya (2.8) because of the estate population of South Indian origin and next highest in Batticaloa (2.2) because of the high Muslim population there. Similarly, wherever there is a high Muslim or a South Indian Tamil population in a district, the maternal mortality rate is high. Vide (Table 8.4). The highest still birth rate is also among the estate population and this pregnancy wastage is accompanied by a high birth rate. This is a reflection of the awareness of the need for antenatal and natal care and the availability and utilisation of free health facilities.

TABLE 8.1

PHYSICAL QUALITY OF LIFE INDEX

LOW INCOME COUNTRIES (under $ 300 per capita)	GNP	PQLI
Egypt	280	46
India	140	41
Indonesia	170	50
Nigeria	290	25
Sri Lanka	130	83
LOW MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES ($ 300 - $ 699 per capita)		
Cuba	530	76
Ghana	430	31
Republic of Korea	480	80
Thailand	310	70
UPPER MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES ($ 700 - $ 1,999 GNP)		
Iran	1,250	38
Mexico	1,090	63
Taiwan (ROC)	810	88
Yugoslavia	1,310	85
HIGH INCOME COUNTRIES ($2,000 or more GNP)		
Kuwait	11,770	76
Libya	4,640	42
Sweeden	7,240	100
United Kingdom	3,590	97
United States	6,670	96

TABLE 8.2.

MALE/FEMALE POPULATION BY AGE GROUPS

AGE GROUP (YEARS)	TOTAL (x 1000)	MALE (x 1000)	FEMALE (x 1000)
TOTAL	12,958.8	6,623.2	6,335.6
0 - 4	1,830.7	922.9	907.8
5 - 14	3,220.5	1,629.9	1,590.6
15 - 19	1,358.2	687.4	670.8
20 - 59	5,751.7	2,943.4	2,808.3
60 +	797.7	439.6	358.1
(15 - 45)	5,767.0	2,898.2	2,868.2

SOURCE: BETTER HEALTH FOR SRI LANKA (SIMENOV)

TABLE 8.3

SEX RATIO AT BIRTH FROM 1964 - 1974

YEAR	NUMBER OF BIRTHS		SEX RATIO (NUMBER OF MALES PER 100 FEMALES
	MALE	FEMALE	
1964	18,3721	17,7856	103.3
1965	18,7757	18,1680	103.3
1966	18,7796	18,1357	103.6
1967	18,7575	18,1956	103.1
1968	19,5601	18,8577	103.7
1969	18,9370	18,3404	103.3
1970	18,7535	18,0366	104.0
1971*	19,5397	18,7083	104.4
1972*	19,6115	18,7951	104.3
1973*	18,7185	17,9001	104.6
1974*	18,6072	17.9613	103.6

*Provisional
SOURCE: REGISTRAR GENERALS DEPARTMENT

TABLE 8.4

MATERNAL MORTALITY RATES BY DISTRICTS FROM 1964 - 1972

DISTRICTS	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972
Colombo	2.1	1.7	1.8	2.8	0.9	0.7	0.9	0.7	0.7
Kalutara	2.6	2.7	1.9	1.1	1.3	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.0
Kandy	3.6	3.4	2.6	2.3	2.6	1.6	2.0	2.0	2.2
Matale	3.4	3.5	3.9	1.8	2.6	0.7	2.8	1.8	1.8
N'Eliya	3.2	3.6	3.6	2.6	3.7	3.2	2.7	3.0	2.3
Galle	3.1	2.3	1.8	1.7	1.0	1.3	0.9	1.3	0.9
Matara	2.1	1.8	1.6	1.1	1.8	1.7	1.4	1.2	1.4
Hambantota	2.7	2.7	2.5	1.5	1.5	1.1	1.4	1.2	1.5
Jaffna	2.9	1.6	2.2	1.3	1.5	0.6	0.8	0.8	0.9
Mannar	4.3	4.3	3.0	0.8	3.4	2.1	3.4	1.9	1.1
Vavuniya	2.7	5.5	1.8	2.3	2.6	2.7	0.9	0.3	1.7
Batticaloa	2.4	2.1	3.0	3.1	3.8	3.0	1.8	2.3	1.7
Amparai	3.1	3.4	1.6	1.9	2.2	2.1	1.3	1.5	1.5
Trincomalee	4.2	2.0	4.0	2.6	2.6	1.3	2.7	0.9	1.5
Kurunegala	2.9	1.9	1.6	1.1	2.5	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.1
Puttalam	2.9	2.7	2.1	3.7	0.8	1.5	1.5	1.3	2.0
A'pura	2.8	3.3	2.2	1.1	1.9	1.4	1.1	1.0	2.3
Polonnaruwa	2.1	3.2	3.0	2.2	4.1	0.2	0.8	1.1	1.7
Badulla	2.9	2.2	2.3	2.1	2.2	1.9	1.8	1.9	2.0
Monaragala	3.2	2.3	1.8	3.7	1.6	3.7	1.9	2.2	2.0
Ratnapura	4.1	2.1	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.3	2.5	1.7	1.1
Kegalle	3.4	2.1	2.6	1.2	1.6	1.9	1.1	1.5	1.2

SOURCE: REGISTRAR GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

TABLE 8.5. DELIVERIES AND COMPLICATIONS OF PREGNANCY, CHILD BIRTH AND THE PUERPERIUM

	MANNAR		PUTTLAM		JAFFNA		BATTICALOA		RATNAPURA		A'PURA		BADULLA		KALUTARA		KEGALLE	
Toxaemias of pregnancy and puerperium	55	01	52	01	167	-	90	06	105	-	135	01	145	-	253	05	209	01
Haemorrhage of pregnancy and child birth	79	02	180	03	351	01	144	06	72	01	42	04	462	01	233	04	66	01
Abortion induced for legal indications	-	-	04	-	26	-	02	-	-	-	02	-	01	-	02	-	-	-
Other unspecified abortions	245	-	921	03	778	-	571	01	1607	-	858	-	1500	-	1149	10	733	-
Sepsis of child birth and the puerperium	16	-	07	-	31	-	43	-	23	08	50	01	33	-	88	-	04	01
Other complications of pregnancy, child birth and the puerperium.																		
(a) Anaemia of pregnancy	191	01	449	-	370	02	1077	24	1401	-	1901	-	774	01	440	10	754	04
(b) Others	76	02	722	-	884	02	222	02	9092	22	907	01	1115	05	599	27	349	02
Delivery without mention of complications	4065	-	10087	-	15203	07	9354	-	13879	-	11411	-	11419	-	13793	-	10203	-
Admitted for deliveries but not delivered	1428	-	3209	-	2210	-	3313	-	8508	-	4744	-	7054	-	40005	-	8330	-

SOURCE: REPORT ON INDOOR MORBIDITY AND MORTALITY IN S.H.S. AREAS, 1975
ADMINISTRATION REPORT, 1975 - EPIDEMIOLOGICAL UNIT

contd. ...

TABLE 8.5. DELIVERIES AND COMPLICATIONS OF PREGNANCY, CHILD BIRTH AND THE PUERPERIUM (contd.)

	KURUNEGALA		COLOMBO GROUP		COLOMBO NORTH		GALLE		MATALE		KANDY		COLOMBO SOUTH		MATARA	
Toxaemias of pregnancy and puerperium	1010	01	1505	01	149	01	245	02	207	04	449	09	122	-	104	03
Haemorrhage of pregnancy and child birth	333	-	514	01	52	03	190	05	98	-	416	12	89	01	124	03
Abortion induced for legal indications	28	-	54	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	120	-	41	-	02	-
Other unspecified abortions	2507	01	5121	08	3438	03	1142	01	817	-	2775	-	349	-	1652	09
Sepsis of child birth and the puerperium	1189	-	70	01	17	01	23	04	79	-	131	03	04	-	16	02
Other complications of pregnancy, child birth and the puerperium.																
(a) Anaemia of pregnancy	1526	01	1123	10	835	01	574	01	560	03	2482	02	530	01	1600	-
(b) Others	1172	02	2031	01	324	02	1139	06	2120	13	1635	18	75	09	1520	-
Delivery without mention of complication	22681	-	29684	-	26257	01	13671	01	9227	-	22453	-	5141	-	16074	-
Admitted for deliveries but not delivered	11694	-	2531	-	8717	-	5428	-	4336	-	7640	-	1317	-	4491	-

SOURCE: REPORT ON INDOOR MORBIDITY AND MORTALITY IN S.H.S. AREAS, 1975
ADMINISTRATION REPORT, 1975 - EPIDEMIOLOGICAL UNIT

TABLE 8.6

DEATH BY CAUSE

OBSTERICS AND GYNAECOLOGY

	CAUSE OF DEATH	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970
1.	Malignant neoplasm of breast	156	119	160	142	-
2.	Malignant neoplasm of cervix uteri	127	108	114	83	-
3.	Malignant neoplasm of other and unspecified of area	44	54	33	31	-
4.	Puerperal sepsis	53	34	71	51	-
5.	Sepsis of pregnancy, child birth and the puerperium	31	05	05	03	-
6.	Puerperal eclampsia	136	168	161	131	-
7.	Toxaemias of pregnancy and the puerperium	86	04	02	29	-
8.	Haemorrhage of pregnancy and child birth	229	197	215	165	-
9.	Abortion without mention of sepsis of toxaemia	16	10	17	11	-
10.	Abortion with sepsis	12	14	10	12	-
11.	Other complications of pregnancy child birth and the puerperium	256	198	208	169	-
12.	Postnatal asphyxia at electasias	778	592	605	621	-

SOURCE: REGISTRAR GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

MORBIDITY

The report on morbidity and mortality of the 1975 Administration report - Epidemiological Unit[4] (Table 8.5) gives in detail the complications of pregnancy, child birth and the pueperium. The morbidity in Batticaloa is once again highlighted. Special mention must be made of the anaemias of pregnancy which is a reflection of the poor status of maternal nutrition and priority given to food for the pregnant woman, in the family. Obliquely it is a reflection of poor nutrition due to high parity.

The high pregnancy wastage due to abortion and the consequent drain on maternal resources is also illustrated in this same table. The widespread incidence of Toxaemias of pregnancy is an indicator of poor utilisation of health facilities which is again related to poor health awareness and education. Sepsis in the puerperium is still another reflection of inadequate health education, and awareness of personal hygiene and cleanliness

OBSTETRIC AND GYNAECOLOGICAL MORTALITY

However, when one looks at mortality trends of women in successive years, deaths pertaining to essentially female diseases (Obstetric and Gynaecological) show a steady and rapid decline (Table 8.6). This is a happy state and worthy of note.

LIFE EXPECTANCY

Table 8.7 indicates deaths for all ages according to sex and there is no statistical evidence to show that women are the weaker sex. In fact in Sri Lanka, life expectancy at birth for men is 64.8 and for women 66.9. More importantly, once again if one studies the trends since the twenties (Table VIII) the 1967 figures surely must be a reflection of the liberalisation of education and higher literacy among women in recent years, improving their health status.

TABLE 8.7

DEATHS BY AGE AND SEX

YEAR AND SEX	ALL AGES	UNDER 1 YEAR	UNDER 2 YEAR	2 - 4	5 - 14	15 - 24	25 - 34	35 - 44	45 - 54	55-64	65-74	75 AND OVER	NOT STATED AGE
ALL PERSONS													
1969	99841	19663	3514	6271	5169	4408	3826	4961	6618	9210	13875	22225	101
1970	94141	17416	2925	5035	4632	4528	3942	4963	6528	8944	13687	21174	343
1971	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1972	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
MALES													
1969	55405	10758	1698	2866	2748	2317	1985	2878	4203	5864	8287	11742	59
1970	52692	9664	1372	2334	2360	2360	2050	2942	4162	5840	8189	11201	218
1971	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1972	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
FEMALES													
1969	44436	8905	1816	3405	2421	2091	2091	2083	2415	3346	5588	10483	42
1970	41455	7802	1553	2701	2272	2178	2178	1991	2366	3104	5498	9973	125
1971	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1972	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

SOURCE: REGISTRAR GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

TABLE 8.8

EXPECTATION OF LIFE AT BIRTH

	1920-22	1946	1953	1962	1967
Males	32.7	43.9	58.8	61.9	64.8
Females	30.7	41.6	57.5	41.4	66.9

SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF CENSUS AND STATISTICS

TABLE 8.9

LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH

DISEASES	MORTALITY PER 10,000		
	MALE	FEMALE	BOTH
Diseases of infancy and immaturity*	116	98	107
Heart diseases*	92	58	76
Diarrhoeal diseases	68	71	70
Respiratory Infections	45	49	47
Gestroenteritis	47	46	46
Accidents and Suicides*	61	28	45
Anaemias and malnutrition*	32	46	38
Malignancies	27	27	27
Other infectious diseases	23	18	21
Other helmintous diseases	14	17	15
Tuberculosis*	18	11	15
Dysentery	5	5	5
Hookworm	2	3	2
Typhoid	1	1	1

SOURCE: BETTER HEALTH FOR SRI LANKA - REPORT ON A HEALTH MANPOWER STUDY, NOVEMBER 1975 - BY L.A. SIMENOV

GENERAL MORTALITY

Table 8.9 gives an analysis of the leading causes of death. Heart disease, accidents, suicides and even tuberculosis are significant of higher incidence in males. This is perhaps related to their life and environment outside the home, which is both open to external infections and of higher risk of death from road and industrial accidents. However, deaths due to anaemia and malnutrition are more in women than men. Here again, one has to stress the poor nutrition of women which needs active programmes of health promotion.

NUTRITION

Iron deficiency anaemia is commonly seen in Sri Lanka[5]. This is not only due to a poor intake but also various factors that reduce the availability of dietary iron. Ascorbic acid, meat and fish in the diet increase iron absorption. Phytates, and phosphates in a rice diet further reduce iron absorption. Information from dietary surveys anywhere in the world are unreliable. Firstly, if records of diet are made on recall, very careful and painstaking interrogation is necessary for accuracy. The average investigators in the majority of surveys in Sri Lanka besides being graduates, have no special training which would give the degree of accuracy required for reliability. It is our experience that for prestige reasons, dietary information is built upto match the expectations of investigators. Indeed intrafamilial distribution is even more inaccurate. Where food is scarce, often the bread-winner is given the major share or else the family would starve. Table 8.10 gives an estimate of anaemic mothers, numbers who have participated in the government supplementary feeding programme (Triposha) and numbers attending clinics and thus receiving iron and folate supplements[5]. Hookworm infestation among adults increases the severity of anaemia. The usual parasite in Sri Lanka is Necator Americanus, which fortunately causes less gastrointestinal bleeding than Ankylostoma duodenale. The incidence of hookworm infection is directly related to the level of health education and the availability of satisfactory toilet facilities. However, there is no data in relation to infection among women alone although community studies of parasitic infections have been done in the Hindagala Community Project of the Peradeniya University[6].

TABLE 8.10

CONTROL PROGRAMME FOR NUTRITIONAL ANAEMIA IN PREGNANT WOMEN

NUTRITION IMPROVEMENT FOR PREGNANT MOTHERS

BY S.H.S. AREAS

SHS AREA	NO. OF PREGNANT MOTHERS 1976	NO. OF MOTHERS RECEIVED THRIPOSHA AUGUST 1976	NO. MODERATELY ANAEMIC 1976 +	NO. SEVERELY ANAEMIC 1976 ++	NO. REACHED THROUGH CLINICS AND HOMES VISITED 1975
Colombo	98,175	3,078	22,000	1,500	38,860
Jaffna	25,179	1,961	7,020	580	11,510
Puttalam	14,289	400	5,800	450	14,147
Kalutara	26,268	529	11,600	800	9,794
Vavuniya	6,765	404	2,300	280	4,550
Kurunegala	37,785	3,551	12,000	1,250	11,153
Matara	33,858	578	7,900	680	7,534
Anuradhapura	23,067	1,284	8,240	4,110	7,629
Galle	26,334	514	8,028	980	17,659
Batticaloa	17,028	380	6,082	3,200	5,082
Badulla	31,086	679	9,190	5,200	8,290
Kegalle	22,968	587	9,900	980	15,536
Matale	18,645	582	5,080	500	18,354
Ratnapura	24,321	581	7,500	980	10,125
Kandy	58,344	3,672	12,300	2,000	18,457
TOTAL	464,112	18,780	134,040	23,490	198,680

Personal Communication - Dr.B.V.de Mel, M.R.I.

MORBIDITY IN GIRLS vs. BOYS

Diseases of infancy and immaturity are more among boys than girls. This is in agreement with perinatal morbidity even in developed countries. Again in all nutrition studies in the University Paediatric Unit in Colombo, no sex difference has ever been noted in the incidence of severe protein calorie malnutrition. This is in contrast with Indian Studies in a Hindu Culture[7], and studies in the Middle-East in a Muslim Culture[8]. Colleagues in the latter regions have often been surprised of this difference in Sri Lanka. We could presume that in Sri Lanka, there is no special flavour or favour in the treatement and feeding of boys over that of girls. This thought will be further developed in the area studies.

SICKNESS AMONG WORKING WOMEN

During the course of a national socio economic survey, investigators found that women reported sick slightly more often than men (Table 8.11) except in the sixty plus age group. This is in contrast with mortality figures and may indicate stresses such as those due to and following pregnancy in the age group 20 - 59 years.

In a study of women workers at Lever Brothers conducted during this investigation, it was found that 18 out of 162 women workers exceeded their sick leave. Simanov's Report - 'Better Health for Sri Lanka' reports that females (57.9%) show a higher percentage of disability than males (56.5%). At the same time, females have a higher percentage of disability of short duration (less than 14 days) - females 34% and males 32.6%.

Table 8.11 shows that women between 15 - 60 years reported sick more often than men. This could also relate to leave taken due to children's illnesses or social obligations.

PSYCHIATRIC MORBIDITY

Psychiatric morbidity is higher among women than men. This was revealed in a study in a semi-urban population done by the University Department of Psychiatry in Colombo, Table 8.12(a) shows that for all ages 207 women as against 141 men had active psychiatric disorders. A closer analysis(Table 8.12(b)

TABLE 8.11

NUMBER OF PERSONS REPORTING SICK DURING A FOURTEEN DAY PERIOD IN SRI LANKA AND THE PRECENTAGE MORBIDITY RATES IN DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS

AGE GROUP	MALES		FEMALES		TOTAL	
	NUMBER (x 1,000)	%	NUMBER (x 1,000)	%	NUMBER (x 1,000)	%
0 - 4	118.8	13.1	115.7	13.1	234.6	13.1
5 - 14	102.9	6.4	93.2	6.2	196.0	6.2
15 - 19	29.7	4.4	33.6	5.2	63.4	4.8
20 - 59	190.5	6.7	219.3	8.3	409.8	7.4
60 +	67.4	15.6	34.2	9.9	101.5	14.5
TOTAL	509.4	7.9	496.1	8.1	1,005.5	8.0

SOURCE: BETTER HEALTH FOR SRI LANKA

Report on a Health Manpower Study by L.A.Simenov. World Health Organization - Regional Office for South - East Asia, New Delhi, November 1975.

TABLE 8.12(a)

DIAGNOSIS OF ACTIVE PSYCHIATRIC BISORDER BY MARITAL STATUS AND SEX

DIAGNOSIS	MARITAL STATUS													
	NEVER MARRIED		MARRIED & LIVING WITH SPOUSE		SEPARATED		DIVORCED		WIDOWED		NOT RECORDED		TOTAL	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Schigophrenia	9	8	2	6	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	11	18
Endogenous depression	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	3
Dementia	2	0	4	2	0	1	0	0	3	7	0	0	9	10
Anxiety neurosis	1	24	18	59	0	1	0	1	1	12	0	0	20	97
Hypochondriacal Neurosis	11	15	5	26	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	1	17	45
Neurotic depression	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	6	0	0	1	10
Alcoholism	5	0	39	0	3	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	50	0
Mental retardation	20	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	17
Other	6	6	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	7
TOTAL	54	71	75	99	3	4	1	1	8	31	0	1	141	207

SOURCE: PSYCHIATRIC MORBIDITY IN A SEMI-URBAN POPULATION IN SRI LANKA AND POSSESSION STATES IN A SEMI-URBAN COMMUNITY IN SRI LANKA, 1975 MARCH BY L.P.WIJESINGHE, S.A.W.DISSANAYAKA, P.L.V.N.DISSANAYAKA, DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY, FACULTY OF MEDICINE, UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO, SRI LANKA.

TABLE 8.12(b)

AGE SPECIFIC PREVALENCE RATES PER 1,000 BY DIAGNOSIS OF ACTIVE PSYCHIATRIC DISORDER AND SEX

DIAGNOSIS	0 - 14		15 - 24		25 - 34		35 - 44		45 - 54		55 - 64		>65		TOTAL	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Schizophrenia	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.2	0.0	6.2	10.9	9.8	14.9	19.0	5.0	14.4	0.0	0.0	2.9	4.7
Endogenous depression	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0	3.2	0.0	4.8	0.0	5.4	0.3	0.8
Dementia	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	0.0	2.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0	0.0	36.8	54.8	2.3	2.6
Anxiety neurosis	0.0	4.1	0.0	23.4	6.9	37.0	15.3	48.8	11.9	50.6	14.9	43.1	12.3	21.5	5.2	25.4
Hypochondriacal neurosis	1.6	2.4	6.2	11.0	3.4	12.3	13.1	24.4	3.0	25.3	5.0	23.9	0.0	10.8	4.4	11.8
Neurotic depression	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.2	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.5	0.0	19.1	6.1	5.4	0.3	2.6
Alcoholism	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.9	0.0	30.5	0.0	74.4	0.0	29.9	0.0	6.1	0.0	13.1	0.0
Mental retardation	8.6	8.1	8.6	4.9	0.0	3.1	2.2	2.4	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.2	4.4
Others	3.1	2.4	0.0	3.7	1.7	0.0	13.1	0.0	0.0	3.2	0.0	0.0	6.1	0.0	3.1	1.8
TOTAL:	13.3	17.0	14.8	45.1	20.7	60.2	87.1	85.4	110.1	110.8	59.7	105.3	67.5	96.8	36.8	54.2

SOURCE: PSYCHIATRIC MORBIDITY IN A SEMI-URBAN POPULATION IN SRI LANKA AND POSSESSION STATES IN A SEMI-URBAN COMMUNITY IN SRI LANKA, 1975.
BY - L.P.WIJESINGHE, S.A.W.DISSANAYAKA, P.L.V.N. DISSANAYAKA,
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY, FACULTY OF MEDICINE,
UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO, SRI LANKA.

shows that it is in the early child bearing years (under 35 years) and in the menopausal age (over 55 years) that this difference is significant. In accordance with the cultural background, there is no incidence of alcoholism. In actual fact, the balance between the sexes in the age group 35 to 55 is due to alcoholism among men. The two conditions which are highly significant in this differential sex incidence are anxiety and hypochondriacal neuroses. Further this difference in incidence prevails throughout all age groups. Is this a reflection of extra burdens in women in our society and their reaction to them? It is a way out of such a stressful situation that society would excuse them for, and an apparently fair way of excusing themselves. Divorce was uncommon. But there were 31 sick who were widows as against 8 widowers. There was as much psychiatric disease among the married women as among the unmarried. Thus, the burdens could not be merely physical ones although even young unmarried girls have domestic chores that boys escape from. In the same study, neither epilepsy nor mental retardation showed this differential sex incidence.

MATERNAL NUTRITION AND LOW BIRTH WEIGHT

One often hears of a concern for the younger generation as the nucleus for the country's future. But how much of this is reflected in planned change? This aspect is in respect of the role of maternal nutrition which has been re-emphasised by the recognition of the problem of low birth weight. It has been estimated that in developing countries it affects nearly 20 million babies annually. Studies in the University Unit in the De Soysa Maternity Hospital have revealed that over 20% of babies born in the Unit are of low birth weight. Gestational assessment of the newborns demonstrated that as much as 80% of these are light or small for dates and only 20% are truly preterm. This is an inter-generational effect and is fully demonstrated by the fact that this low birth weight is related to poor maternal height and weight (Figures 1 and 11).

Taller mothers produced larger babies and shorter mothers had a large percentage of low birth weight babies. The weight of the mother was also important in that the incidence of low birth weight was highest when the mother's weight was poorest. However, supplementary feeding programmes (such as Triposha in Sri Lanka) have been promoted with the hope of

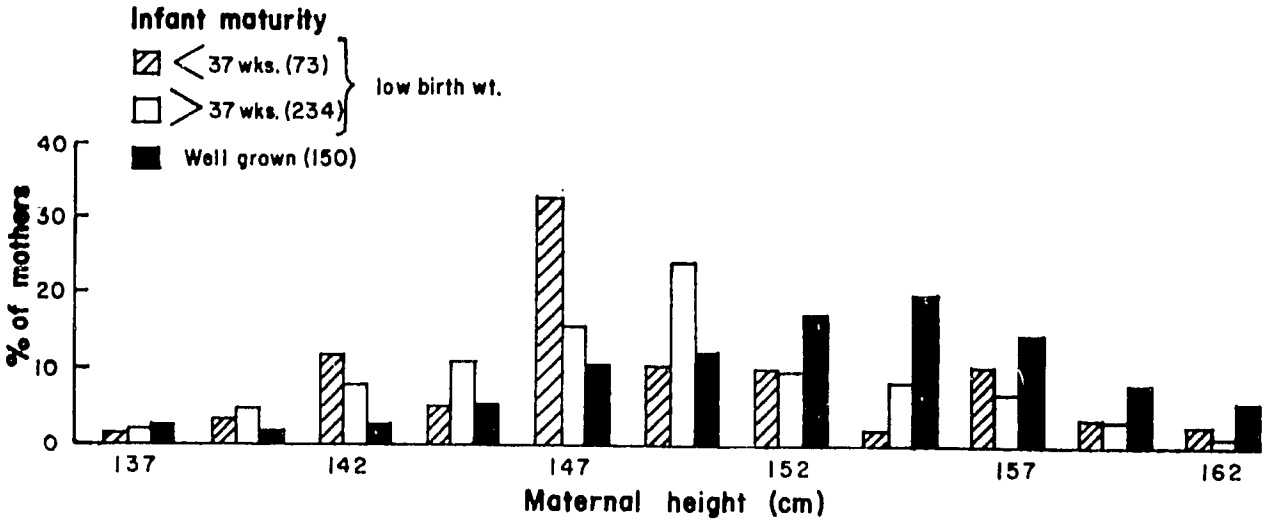


FIG. 1. Maternal heights in low birth weight groups (37 weeks, 37 weeks) and well-grown groups.

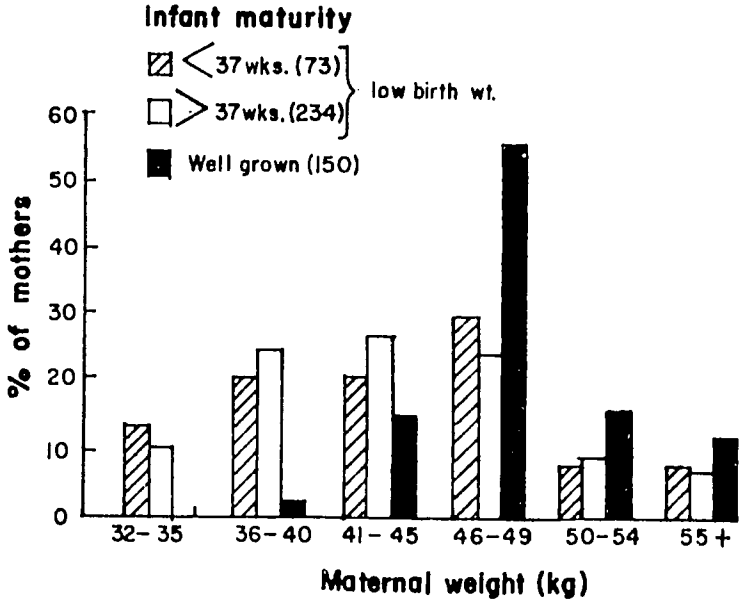


FIG. 2. Maternal weights in low birth weight groups (37 weeks, 37 weeks) and well-grown groups.

improving maternal nutrition in pregnancy. Other international programmes have been evaluated and it is estimated that baby's weight can be increased by about four ounces by such feeding. But as mentioned earlier, the height of the mother can only be improved by an inter-generational improvement of nutrition. One has to look a generation ahead into the nutrition of young girls. That this is a socio-economic problem is observed by the fact that 50% of these poorly nourished mothers had family incomes of Rs.200.00 per month or less (the national average at the time of that study).

FERTILITY AND ACCEPTANCE OF FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES

The effect of parity must also be noted (vide Table 8.13). After the third pregnancy, the problem of low birth weight was increased. It is important to emphasise that in Sri Lanka, the maternal resources are exhausted by the third pregnancy. Fertility has been on the decline in Sri Lanka for quite some time, even before Family Planning Programmes were actively supported and utilised. This phenomenon has been attributed to two important factors viz. the decrease in the percentage of the married female population and the postponement of marriage by young women. The age of marriage of women is now 24 years. This has been ascribed to the expansion of education and the high literacy rate of women leading to employment and hence postponement of marriage. Thus the critical fertility decline can be related to the improved status of women. In 81.2% of Muslim Marriages however the bride was under 21 years of age when the national figure is 26.6 and the percentage of Kandyan Marriages under 21 years of age (bride) is 51.6% (FHB).

Further decline in fertility is necessary to bring about the desired changes in population dynamics contemplated for the country's progress and development. This would depend on the number who demand family planning services from the state and private sector. The orientation of families to alter fertility decisions depends on how significantly both men and women participate in the modern social systems. In Sri Lanka the majority of the women are literate unlike most of South East Asia. Educational development in its broad sense is not merely the ability to read and write but also literacy skills outside school. Thus education affects the norms and values of women so that they begin to question traditional practices. They come in contact with 'change agents' such as family planning, health and nutrition advisers.

TABLE 8.13

DISTRIBUTION OF INFANTS BY PARITY OF MOTHERS

	GROUPS I, II, IV, VI <2500gm <37 weeks		GROUPS III, V, VII <2500gm >37 weeks		GROUP VIII >2500 gm	
PARA	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%
0	22	30.1	86	36.4	44	29.3
1	11	15.1	41	17.5	8	5.3
2	9	12.0	37	15.6	20	13.3
3	4	5.6	16	6.9	8	5.3
4 or more	27	37.2	54	23.4	70	47.0
TOTAL	73	100.0	234	99.8	150	100.2

Indeed, the Family decision could relate to a joint one or to either partner. Nevertheless, the ultimate acceptance of the method seems to be heavily loaded towards the woman. Sri Lanka was one of the countries in Asia where the intra-uterine device was popularly accepted and with success even in the sixties. Although other methods like orals and condoms have become more popular recently, still it is the woman who is the greater participant. Even with the popularisation of Family Planning Programmes at places of work with the involvement of UNFPA in spheres other than the Health Ministry Clinics, still there are much more female than male sterilisations. Further, all educative and motivation programmes stress the simplicity of male sterilisation both in respect of days of hospitalisation and maternal child separation. Yet it is the woman's role in acceptance and the practice of family planning that is noteworthy The number of new acceptors of family planning techniques appear to have contributed to the reduction of fertility in the country.

UTILISATION OF HEALTH SERVICES

Another aspect of Health and Nutrition of a community is the evaluation of the utilisation of health services. There are many reasons for under-utilisation of services that have been free for many years. Firstly, accessability is good in that a western medical facility is within three miles of the average home and an Ayurvedhic facility is within 0.8 ml., Secondly, there are some problems connected with staff acceptability by the public For instance the trek to the city and the larger provincial hospitals is due to an expectation of better facilities such as drugs and qualified staff. Thus the small maternity homes and peripheral units are underutilised, although they are nearer to their homes. Thirdly, fairly good transport is available and many patients prefer to attend the large hospitals. Finally, awareness of the need for prevention of disease and early recognition of ill health depend on the educational level of any society Maternal and child health services have been the bulwork of Sri Lanka's basic health services. But there is only around 30% utilisation of clinic services at the periphery. Acceptance of Ayurvedhic services shows an interesting feature. More men seek the services of private Ayurvedhic practitioners. Perhaps women seek more institutional care for child bearing and hence there are more recorded female visits than male to Ayurvedhic hospitals and state run dispensaries.

There are over 500 institutions offering women facilities for hospital deliveries and over 2,000 public health midwives serving as field workers in rural areas. The fact that over 60% of all deliveries in Sri Lanka are institutional and that the vast majority of the rest are attended by trained midwives is an indication of the awareness of the average woman of available facilities and the usefulness in availing themselves of same. Less than 3% of deliveries are unattended by trained staff.

AREA STUDIES

105 households in Pindeniya, 100 households in Wattegedera, 100 households in Jaffna and 99 households in Borella were studied.

Nuclear families were more in Jaffna 27/86 families in Pindeniya and 37/94 in Borella were extended families. Borella had the most extended families which could be due to sharing of accommodation with housing being limited and expensive in the city.

Age at marriage has relevance to birth weight since low birth weight is seen in younger mothers (below 20) and in older mothers (after 35 years). Observations in the Muslim and Hindu areas revealed younger mothers (mean age at marriage being 19 in both Wattegedera and Jaffna)(Tab.8.14(a)) The range of ages at marriage of these mothers was also less in these two areas, women being as young as 14 and as old as 26 whilst in Pindeniya and Borella later age at marriage was observed (Table 8.14(b) .Very few mothers in all areas had babies after 35 and 40 years. Complications of delivery such as haemorrhages are common in older women and as well the incidence of Down's Syndrome. The absence of late maternal age which is related to these conditions is noteworthy as it is a beneficial trend.

When age at marriage is matched with educational levels, it is obvious in all areas that the early drop out from school is tied up with early marriage and this is most obvious in Wattegedera.

Birth interval between youngest and second youngest child was 3.25 years for Jaffna, 3.75 years for Pindeniya, 3.93 years for Borella and

TABLE 8.14(a)

AGE AT MARRIAGE IN YEARS

	12-13	14-15	16-17	18-20	21-25	26-30	30-35	NR
Borella	-	3	7	19	21	14	1	29
Jaffna	-	5	15	21	18	3	-	14
Pindeniya	-	1	7	21	32	8	-	17
Wattegedera	3	15	17	22	14	3	-	12

TABLE 8.14(b)

RANGE OF AGE AT MARRIAGE OF MOTHERS

Borella	15 - 31
Jaffna	14 - 26
Pindeniya	14 - 30
Wattegedera	12 - 26

for Wattegedera, 3.3 years. The urban woman therefore showed the best birth interval. A longer birth interval gives a woman a greater chance of recuperation from pregnancy and lactation. For the child, this means that maternal reserves are restored and better birth weight and adequacy of mother's milk are assured.

SURVIVAL OF CHILDREN

This was best in Pindeniya (almost 100%) and lowest in Jaffna (92%). On the whole there was little pregnancy wastage. It is generally observed that with pregnancy wastage, birth interval becomes shorter and maternal nutrition declines.

PARENTS' ATTITUDES TO COMPOSITION OF FAMILY BY SEX

This would give an indication of parental aspirations of Boys vs. Girls. It is significant to observe this as an indication of the status of Girls vs. Boys. There could also be expansion of family size in the hope of achieving the parents' desired sex distribution among children. The majority in all areas appeared satisfied with their family composition. Only a few (approximately 2%) desired more boys and some even more girls (Table 8.15).

IDEAL FAMILY SIZE

In all areas, it is very significant that the women who had a fair education (upto G.C.E. Ordinary Level) did not in the greater majority have more than four children. Among the better educated women in all the study areas, the ideal family was under four children. The illiterate desired larger families.

HEALTH CARE DURING PREGNANCY

In Borella, 88 attended the Clinic and only 6 did not. On the other hand in Jaffna, 53 received care but 23 did not. But in Wattegedera, it was very poor. 48 received care and 32 did not. When studied in greater depth, even in Borella, those who had not attended clinics were those who were

TABLE 8.15

PARENTS' ATTITUDES TO DISTRIBUTION OF SEX OF CHILDREN IN FAMILIES

Not satisfied

Reason - why?

1. Likes to have sons - (as she has daughters only)
2. Likes to have daughters - (as she has sons only)
3. Sons are needed to help build the family income
4. Does not like sons as they worry the parents always.

	MOTHERS' ATTITUDES						FATHERS' ATTITUDES					
			IF NOT, REASONS WHY						IF NOT, REASONS WHY			
	SATISFIED	NOT SATISFIED	1	2	3	4	SATISFIED	NOT SATISFIED	1	2	3	4
Borella	81	13	8	2	3	-	79	12	8	2	1	1
Jaffna	60	7	-	3	1	3	57	7	3	3	1	-
Pindeniya	77	9	2	4	2	1	77	4	2	2	-	-
Wattegedera	72	11	2	2	2	5	69	7	2	1	1	3

school drop outs. It was strange that in Jaffna, even a few women who had passed G.C.E. Ordinary Level had not attended antenatal clinics in pregnancy. In Wattegedera, educational levels was most obviously related to the use of clinic facilities in pregnancy. As many as 24 illiterate mothers of a total of 80 who responded did not attend clinics.

CARE AT DELIVERY

In Borella and Pindeniya all mothers had skilled attendance at delivery, whereas in Jaffna and more so in Wattegedera, a number had unskilled attendance.

DURATION OF BREAST FEEDING

In Pindeniya babies were breast fed for 87 weeks, in Borella for 77.6 weeks and in Jaffna only for 65.4 weeks. In Wattegedera, the duration was the least viz. 63.6 weeks. On the whole, these studies brought out the present situation that breast feeding is still popular in Sri Lanka (Table 8.1 (a)).

PRELACTEAL FEEDING

Water, glucose and milk formulae were popular as prelacteal feeding in all areas except in Jaffna where milk formulae alone was given first (Table 8.1 (b)).

WEANING FOODS

It was surprising to find that a milk formula was the most popular replacement for breast milk. Local cereal viz. rice cunjee was next popular in Pindeniya, Borella and Wattegedera. In Jaffna, rice cunjee was not as popular. Commercial cereal foods were not much used except in a few cases. Protein containing foods from animals were more popular than legumes for infant feeding. Triposha is a weaning food used in Sri Lanka. It is a wheat soya blend (CARE), packed in the country. Triposha was available and used for infant feeding only in a few homes. Triposha was not used at

TABLE 8.16 (a) - BREAST FEEDING

PRESENT AGE OF MOTHERS		PINDENIYA										JAFFNA								
		18-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-60	61-66	TOTAL	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-60	61-66	TOTAL
TOTAL NUMBER OF MOTHERS		1	5	12	11	19	11	10	12	5	86	5	14	13	9	12	10	11	2	76
YOUNGEST CHILD																				
NUMBER OF MOTHERS BREAST FED YOUNGEST CHILD IMMEDIATELY AFTER BIRTH	- YES	1	5	12	11	17	9	9	11	4	79	-	3	6	3	5	2	-	2	21
	NO	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	1	-	5	5	11	7	6	7	8	11	-	55
	DOESN'T RECALL	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
NUMBER OF MOTHERS PRELACTIAL FED AFTER BIRTH	WATER	-	2	2	7	9	2	4	5	1	32	5	14	13	9	11	9	11	1	73
	GLUCOSE	1	3	8	1	10	7	3	2	1	36	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	01
	MILK FORMULA	-	-	2	3	-	2	3	5	3	18	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	02
	NO RESPONSE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

(contd.)

TABLE 8.16 (a) - BREAST FEEDING (contd.)

PRESENT AGE OF MOTHERS	BORELLA 18-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-60	60-70	78 YEARS	TOTAL	WATTEGEDARA 18-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-60	61-70	75 YEARS	TOTAL
TOTAL NUMBER OF MOTHERS	1	5	22	10	8	11	15	13	8	1	94	2	6	18	17	10	9	9	11	3	1	86
YOUNGEST CHILD																						
NUMBER OF MOTHERS BREAST FED YOUNGEST CHILD IMMEDIATELY AFTER BIRTH -YES	1	5	19	8	7	9	14	13	8	1	85	2	5	12	8	6	2	1	-	-	-	36
NO	-	-	2	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	06	-	1	4	8	1	5	4	1	-	-	24
DOESN'T RECALL	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	03	-	-	2	1	3	2	3	2	-	-	13
NUMBER OF MOTHERS PRELACTIAL FED AFTER BIRTH-																						
WATER	1	3	8	1	1	4	5	4	1	-	28	-	3	5	2	3	4	4	1	-	-	22
GLUCOSE	-	2	14	9	6	5	5	8	6	1	56	2	1	8	12	3	2	2	1	-	-	31
MILK FORMULA	-	-	-	-	1	2	5	1	1	-	10	-	2	5	3	4	3	2	1	-	-	20
NO RESPONSE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	8	3	1	13

TABLE 8.16 (a) - BREAST FEEDING (contd.)

PRESENT AGE OF MOTHERS	PINDENIYA										JAFFNA								
	18-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-60	61-66	TOTAL	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-60	61-66	TOTAL
YOUNGEST CHILD																			
STILL BREAST FEEDING	-	2	4	3	6	-	-	-	-	15	1	8	5	-	-	-	-	-	14
NOT BREAST FED NOW																			
NEVER BREAST FED	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	01	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	02
BREAST FED UNTIL																			
3	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	02	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3 to 6	-	-	2	1	3	-	-	-	-	06	1	1	-	-	2	1	-	-	05
6 to 8	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	01	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
8 to 12	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	02	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	02
12 & above	1	3	5	6	9	11	9	11	4	59	3	5	5	7	1	2	2	2	27
Doesn't recall	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	7	5	9	-	24
No response	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
NUMBER OF MOTHERS REPORTING PREGNANCIES BETWEEN YOUNGEST CHILD AND 2ND YOUNGEST CHILD -																			
Yes	- -	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	02	-	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	05
No	-	2	10	10	15	10	9	11	4	71	3	10	11	8	9	9	11	1	62
Doesn't apply	1	3	2	1	3	1	1	-	1	13	2	3	1	-	2	-	-	-	08
No response	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

(contd.)

TABLE 8.16 (a) - BREAST FEEDING (contd.)

PRESENT AGE OF MOTHERS	BORELLA											WATTEGEDARA										
	18-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-60	60-70	78 YEARS	TOTAL	18-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-60	61-70	75 YEARS	TOTAL
YOUNGEST CHILD																						
STILL BREAST FEEDING	1	1	5	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	11	2	1	8	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	15
NOT BREAST FED NOW																						
NEVER BREAST FED	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	03	-	-	-	-	-	--	-	-	-	-	-
BREAST FED UNTIL																						
3	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	02	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3 to 6	-	-	3	2	1	-	2	-	-	-	08	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	03
6 to 8	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	02	-	-	2	1	2	1	-	-	-	-	06
8 to 12	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	01	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	01
12 & above	-	4	9	6	5	7	12	13	8	1	65	-	3	5	9	2	5	4	2	-	-	30
Doesn't recall	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	02	-	2	2	3	3	4	1	-	-	-	18
No response	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	8	3	1	13
NUMBER OF MOTHERS REPORTING PREGNANCIES BETWEEN YOUNGEST CHILD AND 2ND YOUNGEST CHILD-																						
Yes	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	02	-	-	3	2	1	1	1	-	-	-	08
No	--	3	14	8	6	10	13	11	7	1	73	-	3	12	13	8	8	6	4	-	-	54
Doesn't apply	1	2	7	2	2	1	2	1	1	-	19	2	2	2	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	08
No response	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	8	3	1	13

(contd.)

TABLE 8.16 (a) - BREAST FEEDING (contd.)

PRESENT AGE OF MOTHERS	PINDENIYA										JAFFNA								
	18-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-60	61-66	TOTAL	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-60	61-66	TOTAL
NEXT YOUNGEST CHILD																			
TOTAL NO. OF MOTHERS WITH MORE THAN ONE CHILD	-	2	10	10	16	10	9	12	4	73	3	11	12	9	10	10	11	2	68
NEVER BREAST FED	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	01	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
BREAST FED UNTIL																			
3	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	01	-	2	-	1	1	-	-	-	04
3 to 6	-	-	2	1	4	-	-	-	-	07	-	-	1	-	-	4	3	-	08
6 to 8	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	01	1	-	3	2	-	1	-	-	07
8 to 12	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	03	-	-	1	2	3	2	-	-	08
12 & above	-	1	7	7	9	7	6	6	-	43	2	7	6	2	1	-	3	1	22
Doesn't recall	-	-	-	1	-	3	3	6	4	17	1	1	-	1	5	1	4	1	14
No response	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	2	1	-	06

TABLE 8.16 (a) - BREAST FEEDING (contd.)

PRESENT AGE OF MOTHERS	BORELLA											WATTEGEDARA										
	18-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-60	60-70	78 YEARS	TOTAL	18-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-60	61-70	75 YEARS	TOTAL
NEXT YOUNGEST CHILD																						
TOTAL NO. OF MOTHERS WITH MORE THAN ONE CHILD	-	3	15	8	6	10	13	12	7	1	75	-	4	16	17	10	9	8	10	3	1	78
NEVER BREAST FED	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
BREAST FED UNTIL																						
3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3 to 6	-	-	5	1	-	-	2	1	1	-	10	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	02
6 to 8	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	--	-	-	02	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	02
8 to 12	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	01	-	-	2	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	06
12 & above	-	3	9	7	5	7	2	7	1	-	41	-	1	6	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	12
Doesn't recall	-	-	-	-	1	3	7	4	5	1	21	-	2	3	5	5	2	3	3	-	-	23
No response	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	6	3	6	4	7	3	1	33

TABLE 8.16 (b) - BREAST FEEDING AND WEANING

AGE OF YOUNGEST CHILD (5 YEARS AND LESS)	PINDENIYA MONTHS 1- <6	6-<12	YEARS 1- <2	2- <3	3- <4	4- <5	5 YEARS	TOTAL	JAFFNA MONTHS 1- <6	6-<12	YEARS 1- <2	2- <3	3- <4	4- <5	5 YEARS	TOTAL
TOTAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN	2	3	7	9	5	9	4	39	6	6	4	-	-	-	-	36
NO. OF CHILDREN BREAST FED STILL NOW	2	3	3	4	2	1	-	15	6	5	2	-	-	-	-	13
CHILDREN BREAST FED ON DEMAND	-	-	1	3	2	1	-	7	5	3	2	-	-	-	-	10
CHILDREN BREAST FED ON SCHEDULE	2	3	2	1	-	-	-	8	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	03
NOT STATED	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CHILDREN BREAST FED DURING MOTHERS WORKING HOURS - ONCE	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TWICE	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	3	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	2
THRICE	1	1	-	2	-	-	-	4	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
FOUR TIMES	-	2	2	-	1	-	-	5	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
FIVE TIMES	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
CHILDREN BREAST FED DURING MOTHERS SLEEPING HOURS - ONCE	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TWICE	1	3	3	2	2	-	-	11	2	2	2	-	-	-	-	6
THRICE	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	3	-	-	-	-	-	5
NOT STATED	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
FOOD GIVEN PREVIOUS WEEK NO. OF CHILDREN GIVEN _ NOTHING BUT BREAST MILK	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	5	1	-	-	-	-	-	6
BREAST MILK OCCASSIONAL	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
BREAST MILK WITH DAILY SUPPLEMENTS	-	-	3	4	2	1	-	10	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	2

TABLE 8.16(b) - BREAST FEEDING AND WEANING (contd.)

AGE OF YOUNGEST CHILD (5 YEARS AND LESS)	BORELLA								WATTEGEDARA							
	MONTHS 1- <6	6-<12	YEARS 1- <2	2- <3	3- <4	4- <5	5 YEARS	TOTAL	MONTHS 1- <6	6-<12	YEARS 1- <2	2- <3	3- <4	4- <5	5 YEARS	TOTAL
TOTAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN	1	9	7	8	4	3	4	36	5	8	9	6	6	3	4	41
NO. OF CHILDREN BREAST FED STILL NOW	1	5	3	2	-	-	-	11	5	6	3	1	-	-	-	15
CHILDREN BREAST FED ON DEMAND	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	2	2	4	2	1	-	-	-	9
CHILDREN BREAST FED ON SCHEDULE	1	4	1	-	-	-	-	6	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	3
NOT STATED	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	3
CHILDREN BREAST FED DURING MOTHERS WORKING HOURS - ONCE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TWICE	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	3	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	5
THRICE	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
FOUR TIMES	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	3
FIVE TIMES	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
CHILDREN BREAST FED DURING MOTHERS SLEEPING HOURS - ONCE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	4
TWICE	1	2	2	1	-	-	-	6	1	4	1	-	-	-	-	6
THRICE	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	3	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	2
NOT STATED	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	3
FOOD GIVEN PREVIOUS WEEK NO. OF CHILDREN GIVEN-NOTHING BUT BREAST MILK	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	3
BREAST MILK OCCASSIONAL	-	5	1	-	-	-	-	6	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	4
BREAST MILK WITH DAILY SUPPLEMENTS	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	4	1	1	3	1	-	-	-	6

(contd.)

TABLE 8.15(b) - BREAST FEEDING AND WEANING (contd.)

AGE OF YOUNGEST CHILD (5 YEARS AND LESS)	PINDENIYA								JAFFNA							
	MONTHS 1- <6	6- <12	YEARS 1- <2	2- <3	3- <4	4- <5	5 YEARS	TOTAL	MONTHS 1- <6	6- <12	YEARS 1- <2	2- <3	3- <4	4- <5	5 YEARS	TOTAL
SUPPLEMENTARY FOOD GIVEN PREVIOUS WEEK																
NO. OF CHILDREN GIVEN- MILK OR MILK BASED PRODUCTS	2	3	3	4	2	1	-	15	6	5	2	-	-	-	-	13
LOCAL CEREAL RICE CUNJEE	-	2	4	2	1	-	-	9	--	1	1	-	-	-	-	2
COMMERCIAL CEREALS	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	2	1	2	1	-	-	-	-	4
ANIMAL PROTEIN	-	3	3	4	2	1	-	13	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
LEGUMES	-	1	2	4	2	1	-	10	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
OTHER VEGETABLES	-	3	2	4	2	1	-	12	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	3
TRIPOSHA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
AGE AT WHICH SUPPLEMENT COMMENCED - 2 MONTHS	2	3	3	4	2	1	-	15	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	2
6 MONTHS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
NOT APPLICABLE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
12 MONTHS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	2
NO RESPONSE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2

(contd.)

TABLE 8.T6(b) - BREAST FEEDING AND WEANING (cont.)

AGE OF YOUNGEST CHILD (5 YEARS AND LESS)	BORELLA								WATTEGEDARA							
	MONTHS 1-<6	6-<12	YEARS 1-<2	2-<3	3-<4	4-<5	5 YEARS	TOTAL	MONTHS 1-<6	6-<12	YEARS 1-<2	2-<3	3-<4	4-<5	5 YEARS	TOTAL
SUPPLEMENTARY FOOD GIVEN PREVIOUS WEEK																
NO. OF CHILDREN GIVEN-MILK OR MILK BASED PRODUCTS	-	5	3	2	-	-	-	10	5	6	3	1	-	-	-	15
LOCAL CEREAL RICE CUNJEE	-	2	2	2	-	-	-	7	33	1	2	1	-	-	-	7
COMMERCIAL CEREALS	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
ANIMAL PROTEIN	-	3	3	2	-	-	-	8	--	1	2	1	-	-	-	4
LEGUMES	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
OTHER VEGETABLES	-	2	3	1	-	-	-	6	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	4
TRIPOSHA	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	3	2	-	-	-	-	5
AGE AT WHICH SUPPLEMENT COMMENCED - 2 MONTHS	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	3	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	2
6 MONTHS	-	3	2	2	-	-	-	7	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	3
NOT APPLICABLE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	3
12 MONTHS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
NO RESPONSE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3	-	1	-	-	-	7

all in Pindeniya. Questioning revealed that it was not available in the local health centre. Some of the investigators who visited Pindeniya observed that Triposha did not move out of the MOH's Office for lack of transport.

Weaning was around six months in most cases (Table 8.16 b)).

MATERNAL OPINIONS ABOUT BREAST FEEDING

There was no evidence of any influences on the mother's decision regarding breast feeding. Mothers did not know how long they should breast feed, although they did so for over a year. However, they all preferred to breast feed with some privacy within the home. There was no response when they were questioned about advising their daughters regarding the need to breast feed. This could be related to higher educational status of Daughters vs. Mothers. Education has been liberalised and girls are generally more educated than their parents. As in many other situations, here we find that the mothers would not seek to advise their daughters about the choice of foods for infant feeding.

INFANT MILK FOODS

Lakspray is a full cream powder locally packed for toddlers. Lakspray was the most popular brand of milk food in all houses. This could indicate that infant milk foods are not yet popularly used because breast feeding is still practised in the areas studied. Lakspray however is used at cessation of breast feeding.

ACCEPTANCE OF FAMILY PLANNING

In the areas studied, the older women, to whom this question was not applicable, having being excluded, 15 out of 64 in Wattegedera, 35 out of 53 in Pindeniya, 46 out of 58 in Borella and 7 out of 59 in Jaffna had accepted family planning (Table 8.17). This shows the very high acceptance in Borella, fair acceptance in Pindeniya, poor acceptance in Wattegedera and the very poor acceptance in the Jaffna village. When questioned about the non acceptance in the Jaffna village, 51 women gave no response. 6 out of 7 who had

TABLE 8 .17 - ACCEPTANCE OF FAMILY PLANNING

PRESENT AGE MOTHERS	PINDENIYA										JAFFNA								
YEARS	18-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-60	61-66	TOTAL	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-60	61-67	TOTAL
NO. OF MOTHERS	1	5	12	11	19	11	10	12	5	86	5	14	13	9	12	10	11	2	76
NO. OF MOTHERS -																			
PRACTISING FAMILY PLANNING	-	2	10	7	12	2	2	-	-	35	-	1	1	2	2	-	1	-	7
NOT PRACTISING FAMILY PLANNING	1	3	1	3	6	-	-	-	-	14	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
NOT APPLICABLE	-	-	1	1	1	9	8	12	5	37	1	-	-	1	1	8	6	2	19
FAMILY PLANNING METHODS USED - CONDOM	-	-	2	1	2	1	-	-	-	6	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
LOOP	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
DIAPHRAGM	-	-	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
RHYTHM METHOD	-	2	2	4	4	1	2	-	-	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
STERILISATION FEMALE	-	-	3	2	4	-	-	-	-	9	-	-	1	2	2	-	1	-	6
STERILISATION MALE	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

TABLE 8.17 - ACCEPTANCE OF FAMILY PLANNING (contd.)

PRESENT AGE MOTHERS	BORELLA											WATTEGEDARA										
YEARS	18-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-60	61-70	78 YEARS	TOTAL	18-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-60	61-70	75 YEARS	TOTAL
NO. OF MOTHERS	1	5	22	10	8	11	15	13	8	1	94	2	6	18	17	10	9	9	11	3	1	86
NO. OF MOTHERS -																						
PRACTISING FAMILY PLANNING	-	2	15	10	7	6	6	-	-	-	46	1	-	4	9	1	-	-	-	-	-	15
NOT PRACTISING FAMILY PLANNING	1	3	7	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	12	1	6	14	8	9	9	2	-	-	-	49
NOT APPLICABLE	-	-	-	-	-	5	9	13	8	1	36	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	11	3	1	22
FAMILY PLANNING METHODS USED - CONDOM	-	1	3	2	2	2	-	-	-	-	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
LOOP	-	-	5	3	1	-	3	-	-	-	12	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	3
DIAPHRAGM	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
RHYTHM METHOD	-	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
STERILISATION FEMALE	-	-	4	4	3	2	3	-	-	-	16	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
STERILISATION MALE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

(contd.)

TABLE 8.17 - ACCEPTANCE OF FAMILY PLANNING (contd.)

PRESENT AGE MOTHERS	PINDENIYA										JAFFNA								
	YEARS 18-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-60	61-66	TOTAL	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-60	61-67	TOTAL
PERSONS MAKE DECISION OF FAMILY PLANNING -																			
HUSBAND	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
WIFE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
JOINTLY	1	5	10	9	18	2	2	-	-	47	-	1	1	2	2	-	1	-	7
NO RESPONSE	-	-	1	1	1	9	8	12	5	37	5	13	12	7	10	10	10	2	69
IDEAL FAMILY SIZE -																			
2 CHILDREN	-	-	2	1	3	3	1	1	1	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3 CHILDREN	1	4	5	8	5	1	5	7	3	39	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4 CHILDREN	-	1	3	2	8	4	2	3	1	24	-	1	-	2	-	-	1	-	5
5 CHILDREN	-	-	1	-	2	2	2	1	-	8	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
6 CHILDREN	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7 CHILDREN	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
NO RESPONSE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	13	12	7	11	10	10	2	70

TABLE 8.17 - ACCEPTANCE OF FAMILY PLANNING (contd.)

PRESENT AGE MOTHERS	BORELLA											WATTEGEDARA										
	YEARS 18-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-60	61-70	78 YEARS	TOTAL	18-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-60	61-70	75 YEARS	TOTAL
PERSONS MAKE DECISION OF FAMILY PLANNING -																						
HUSBAND	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
WIFE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
JOINTLY	1	5	22	10	8	6	6	-	-	-	58	-	1	5	7	1	-	2	-	-	-	16
NO RESPONSE	-	-	-	-	-	5	9	13	8	1	36	1	5	12	7	9	9	7	11	3	1	65
IDEAL FAMILY SIZE -																						
2 CHILDREN	-	-	1	3	1	1	2	-	2	-	10	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
3 CHILDREN	1	3	10	3	2	4	5	5	4	1	38	1	1	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
4 CHILDREN	-	2	11	3	4	2	7	5	2	-	36	-	1	4	3	-	-	1	-	-	-	9
5 CHILDREN	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	3	-	-	5	-	1	-	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	5
6 CHILDREN	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	2
7 CHILDREN	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
NO RESPONSE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	1	9	9	9	8	10	3	1	64

(contd.)

TABLE 8.17 - ACCEPTANCE OF FAMILY PLANNING (contd.)

PRESENT AGE MOTHERS	PINDENIYA										JAFFNA								
YEARS	18-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-60	61-66	TOTAL	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-60	61-67	TOTAL
TIME GAP BETWEEN DELIVERY UNDERTAKEN OF METHOD																			
AFTER 2 DAYS	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
AFTER 3 DAYS	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
AFTER 5 DAYS	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
AFTER 7 DAYS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
AFTER 10 DAYS	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
AFTER 2 MONTHS	-	-	2	2	1	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
AFTER 3 MONTHS	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
AFTER 4 MONTHS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
AFTER 5 MONTHS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
AFTER 8 MONTHS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
AFTER 1 YEAR	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
NO RESPONSE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	2	-	1	-	5
REASONS FOR NON ACCEPTANCE-																			
HUSBAND DECISION	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
LIKE CHILDREN	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
NO RESPONSE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1

(contd.)

TABLE 8.17 - ACCEPTANCE OF FAMILY PLANNING (contd.)

PRESENT AGE MOTHERS	BORELLA											WATTEGEDERA										
	YEARS 18-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-60	61-70	78 YEARS	TOTAL	18-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-60	61-70	75 YEARS	TOTAL
TIME GAP BETWEEN DELIVERY UNDERTAKEN OF METHOD																						
AFTER 2 DAYS	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
AFTER 3 DAYS	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
AFTER 5 DAYS	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
AFTER 7 DAYS	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
AFTER 10 DAYS	-	-	-	-	2	1	1	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
AFTER 2 MONTHS	-	-	5	3	1	1	2	-	-	-	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
AFTER 3 MONTHS	-	1	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	2	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
AFTER 4 MONTHS	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
AFTER 5 MONTHS	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
AFTER 8 MONTHS	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
AFTER 1 YEAR	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
NO RESPONSE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
REASONS FOR NON-ACCEPTANCE-																						
HUSBAND DECISION	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
LIKE CHILDREN	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
NO RESPONSE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3	2	-	-	-	8

accepted Family Planning has sterilisations. Similarly in Wattegedera 5 had had sterilisations and 4 were on depoprovera injections. On the other hand, in Borella, a variety of methods of family planning were used.

On the question of the decision maker in the acceptance of family planning, it appeared that a joint decision had been made. This was most obvious in Borella where all decisions were made jointly. However, with such a high rate of non responders in Jaffna, no conclusion could be made on this point. Thus within limits of such a questionnaire in the majority there appeared to be agreement between husband and wife in these families on this question of family planning. When cross tabulation was done between acceptors and their level of education, there was no co-relation. Where the husband had made an independent decision, there was a co-relation between the poor level of education (namely illiteracy) and the nature of this decision.

Among the reasons for non-acceptance, the responders were not satisfied with the sex distribution of the children (male - female ratio) in the family. Some wished to have many children.

UTILISATION OF HEALTH FACILITIES FOR CHILDREN

This was almost 100 % in Borella.
The few in Pindeniya who had not availed themselves of free health facilities for their children claimed that the child was ill; one thought it was unnecessary. One illiterate mother thought the triple immunisation was attended with complications; another such woman's husband decided that immunisation was not necessary.

In the Jaffna village there were almost as many children who were not immunised as those immunised. The majority of these women thought it was unnecessary and one stated that her child was ill and hence she had missed immunisation.

CHILD CARE

Fathers in all areas appeared to help mothers in all aspects of child care such as cleaning and bathing, feeding, putting the child to sleep, playing

with the child and taking the child to school and other places. In the villages, female relations helped the mother, whereas in Borella, a few paid servants gave such help.

CONCLUSIONS

The women of Sri Lanka have improved in their health in recent times. The wide distribution of basic health services viz. antenatal, postnatal and family planning clinics, maternity homes, central dispensaries and peripheral centres for emergency medical care, referal services, have offered a springboard for the improvement of the quality of life in the vast majority. Not only the physical presence of these health facilities but also their availability within a reasonable distance and fair means of transport have helped the health situation. But far more important is the expansion of education with the resultant literacy among women that has improved helath. Health education opportunities too have had a different perspective and approach to the people. Health indicators such as the general mortality rate, the maternal mortality rate and life expectancy have proved this.

However, the situation should not lead to complacency on the part of health planners. On the other hand, there is much room for improvement within the present framework. The differential maternal mortality rates in various districts illustrate the role of status of women in relation to their health and nutrition. Their greater susceptibility to disease and death has been related to poor literacy levels specially among the Muslim and South Indian women. Thus their awareness of health facilities and utilisation of same have been related to morbidity and mortality. The status a woman enjoys in her home and society thus determines her decision to avail herself of free health facilities and to justify the expense of cheap travel, weighing the merits of one against the other and thus improve her health The study of morbidity in respect of essentially female diseases and analysis of that situation is proof that there is much room for improvement of health with greater acceptance of regular antenatal and skilled natal care

It is in the realm of planned families and spacing of children that a woman can envisage better health. High parity and short birth intervals lead to poor nutrition due to loss of maternal reserves and failure to recuperate health status before embarkation on a fresh pregnancy with its attended risks. The fact that the majority have resorted to a drastic method of family planning like sterilisation demonstrates the lack of earlier planning and choice of simpler methods like pills or condoms. In Sri Lanka birth rates commenced to fall even before family planning services were freely available. This is the result of many factors such as the wider distribution of basic services (and not merely health). The expansion of education and the rising status of woman leads to higher aspirations for a better quality of life leading to planned families.

There must be better demonstration of the need to plan families to prevent population explosion which necessarily leads to dilution of available resources for development. The recent expansion of family planning services has not lead to a sufficient acceptance of vasectomy by the men. The poor acceptance of family planning in 'the Jaffna village' is not merely a reflection of any level of literacy there, because on the whole, there is a greater stress for education in the north than in the south. However, it is in keeping with recent trends in that region. The Muslim women on the other hand are backward in accepting family planning and this is related to their status in family and society.

The level of poor nutrition has been demonstrated by the distribution of anaemia in pregnancy and the effect of maternal nutrition on the large problem of low birth weight in Sri Lanka as in all developing countries. Partitipation in the supplementary Triposha feeding programme could improve the maternal situation to a great extent. But in general those areas which need it most, use it least. Visits to the study areas (as in Pindeniya) revealed that there is a problem of transport of Triposha from the Office of the Medical Officer of Health to the Health Centres in the village. Visits to homes by the investigators revealed that Triposha was not available The logistics of such supplementary feeding programmes need to be revised

The poor maternal height related to low birth weight demonstrates the inter-generational effect of maternal nutrition and the need to look into the health of young girls, long before pregnancy, if Sri Lanka hopes to

improve this problem of low birth weight which in itself is an indicator of poor nutrition in the community. This problem in turn is attended with higher morbidity and mortality due to the increased vulnerability of the low birth weight baby to infection. The burden of pregnancy and child care and the problems of playing the dual role may be reflected in the rate of absenteism among working women. One cannot help repeating the need for better health facilities, day care nurseries and more maternity benefits for the working woman (example, maternity - lactation level).

No doubt the domestic burdens of house-wives are reflected in the higher psychiatric morbidity among young girls, unmarried and married women. The better the status of woman in society the less would be the extra expectations from them alone on the domestic front. The educated man would have a greater respect and regard for his wife, share her burdens and have better understanding of her obligations.

The status of woman is reflected in her role as mother and her decision to utilise preventive health care for her children. This has been demonstrated in her utilisation of services, such as immunisation. Sri Lanka has embarked on a programme of expanded immunisation and hopes to achieve a target of 80% acceptance by 1981. Due regard must be placed on mothers' reluctance to immunise because of fears of complications. In the experience of the investigator, minor illnesses are used as excuses to postpone immunisation when in actual fact that is not a contraindication.

The nutrition education of women needs strengthening not only in respect of her own health (as shown earlier) but because of its reflection on infant feeding which is crucial for the prevention of malnutrition and ultimate national development. The study of prelacteal feeding, supplementary foods used, the time of introduction and use of weaning foods and opinions in relation to breast feeding shared that knowledge in this area was poor. Not only must the Ministry of Health improve maternal education in these areas but more importantly, nutrition education must commence through the Ministry of Education whilst children are in school. The programme must be pragmatic, relevant to the cultural background and availability of local cereals, legumes, green leaves and yellow fruits. Both boys and girls must receive this education if men are to have greater understanding of a woman's nutritional needs in pregnancy and lactation.

The present situation demonstrates that there are no antinutritional cultural effects on girls.

The vast majority of disease and death in Sri Lanka is related to preventable causes. Availability of pure water and toilet facilities would reduce much peurperal sepsis, helminthiasis and gastroenteritis. Visits to study areas revealed the lack of these ingredients to good health. This was most evident in the Muslim village where the source of water was the local river. Not only were the investigators concerned about the impurity of water but also the inadequacy. The women spent much time and energy carrying water into their homes. The problems may be universal but this area was particularly geographically difficult too.

In studying the status of woman and its bearing on health and nutrition in the different areas, child care was an aspect evaluated against educational levels and freedom of decision making and the facility of emerging as a working woman.

In the traditional setting in Sri Lanka, extended families provide support for child care and rearing. In the society in the areas studied, domestic support was mostly from extended families and only rarely from paid domestic support. Thus in Borella with the highest incidence of extended families, women enjoyed the best support for child care and rearing. The Sinhalese village women come next, with similar (though less than the Borella dwelling city women) advantages which the Muslim and Tamil women did not enjoy.

Deviation from the traditional early marriages brings out an advantage of preventing low birth weight. Yet this deviation was not extreme in that there was no evidence of late maternal age with its attended associations of Down's syndrome ('Mongolism' with mental retardation), and complications at delivery. Therefore women have evolved for the better and the majority had babies at a desirable age with least health hazards to mother and child.

Child spacing was commendable in all areas, preserving maternal reserves and permitting recuperation of maternal health. This also reflects on adequacy of lactation and the prevention of malnutrition.

Survival of children has an effect on acceptance of family planning and smaller families. The minimum pregnancy wastage observed was a healthy sign providing a spring off for family planning activities.

The status of woman is reflected in the aspirations of parents regarding the sex distribution among their children. It has an influence on acceptance of family planning too. The general satisfaction on this count thus indicates an equal status for girls and boys.

The acknowledgement of smaller family size is also taken as a level of better thinking with better education of women.

Health awareness in the woman and her utilisation of health facilities were taken as a positive reflection of the status she enjoyed in her family. This was measured by such variables as acceptance of health care during pregnancy, institutional deliveries with skilled attendance and acceptance of health care for her children. A commendable situation was the attitude to breast feeding; however negative aspects were brought out in the inadequacy of knowledge of nutritious infant feeding practices. There was lack of confidence in the older generation in their attitude to influencing their progeny regarding breast feeding. On the other hand, one could state that the younger women were free to make their own decisions, rightly or wrongly, in regard to the choice of foods for their infants.

In the area of family planning, decision making was mainly a joint one demonstrating an equality of status between man and wife. The negative aspect demonstrated among illiterate women, where their husbands made the decision, is a pointer to the better status a woman enjoys when she is educated. However, the stress of family planning still appears to be the woman's lot.

These studies also brought out differences between the different cultural and ethnic groups. There were also differences between the city women and the rural women. On the whole, the leader was the city woman, with positive attitudes to health and nutrition. The Sinhalese village woman emerged with better awareness and actually utilising health facilities better than the Muslim and Jaffna women.

The variables used in this research protocol were intended to evaluate the extent to which health status and awareness were proportional to the status of women in different environments and cultural backgrounds in Sri Lanka. The research protocol was also related to goals which would identify, analyse and assess the health and nutrition status of women in the hope of attempting to define remedial measures.

REFERENCES

1. Simenov , L.A., Better Health for Sri Lanka, November 1975 WHO/SEA/PHA/149

2. Wijeyasinghe, C.P., Dissanayake, S.A.W., Dassanayake, P.V.L.N., Survey Psychiatric Morbidity in a Semi-Urban Population in Sri Lanka, Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica, 1978, Volume 58, pp. 430 - 441.

3. Morris David Morris and Florizelle Liser, The PQLI: Measuring Progress in Meeting Human Needs, Communique on Development Issues, Overseas Development Council, No.32.

4. Administrative Report - Epidemiological Unit, 1975.

5. De Mel B.V., Nutritional Anaemias in Pregnancy - Personal Communication.

6. Fernando, Malcolm, A., and Balasooriya, S., Prevalence of Soil Transmitted Helminths in the Hindugala Community Health Project Area - Ceylon Medical Journal, Volume 21, No.3, Sept. 1976, pp.177 - 183.

7. Soysa Priyani, E., and Jayasuriya Devika, S., Birth Weight in Ceylonese, Human Biology, February 1975, Volume 47, No.1, pp. 1 - 15.

8. Gopalan, C., Risk Factors in Malnutrition in Hyderabad,Personal Communication

9. Harfouche, J.K., Risk Factors in Malnutrition in Lebanon , Personal Communication.

C O N C L U S I O N S

CONCLUSIONS

TOWARDS A PLAN OF ACTION

The U.N. Declaration of Human Rights and the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women have envisaged a better status for women. The International Women's Year World Plan of Action embodied a programme which was intended to resolve some of the problems that face women, bring them nearer to the goal of equal opportunity and assist them to function effectively as co-partners in national development. Nevertheless in a world of competing priorities, programmes need to be reviewed and revamped and on-going evaluation utilized to stimulate further action.

In Sri Lanka, consciousness among women has been heightened in recent years but policy-makers are yet unaware of all the constraints that handicap women in private and public life. The only major achievements of the past few years have been the establishment of the Women's Bureau in the Ministry of Plan Implementation as a co-ordinating agency and the removal of Constitutional restrictions on the employment of women.

These eight studies have highlighted inadequacies and discriminatory practices that bedevil the progress of women. As an outcome of this survey the Project Committee has formulated suggestions which may serve as a basis for a much needed national plan of action for the second half of the Decade for Women. It is hoped that these suggestions will help to achieve the twin purpose of compelling reflection and stimulating change and development in the position of women in Sri Lanka.

The proposed suggestions are:

LEGAL STATUS

(1) Legislation be introduced

(a) to bring the personal law in line with the general law in those areas in which women suffer disabilities, as for example, divorce under Muslim law, and the women's right to contract and dispose of property under the Thesawalamai law;

(b) to raise the minimum age of marriage to 18 years for both men and women, of all racial groups;

(c) to make illegal the giving and receiving of dowries as a compulsory pre-requisite for marriage;

(d) to introduce the principle of equal pay for equal work on the lines of an Equal Remuneration Act as in some countries;

(e) to review the restriction on night work for women taking into consideration the provision of adequate transport and accommodation facilities;

(f) to extend labour laws to cover certain categories such as women domestic servants and home workers;

(2) Stricter enforcement of existing laws and enhanced penalties, to combat traffic in women and prostitution.

SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS

(a) Support be given by national leadership to women's organizations and women leaders to overcome the obstacles in the socio-cultural structure and promote advancement of women;

(b) Consciousness raising programmes be initiated to help question the legitimacy of present cultural and ideological beliefs pertaining to the status of women;

(c) Programmes be initiated at national and community level to encourage the change of attitudes of men;

(d) Action be taken that women's social position will improve rather than worsen as modernization proceeds;

(e) Information be collected on the consequences of adhering to outmoded beliefs on the woman's role, particularly its implications to mobilization of women for development.

THE CREATIVE ARTS AND MASS MEDIA

(a) More women be employed in policy making positions in the media, particularly in the newspapers;

(b) Broadcasters and journalists be urged to reflect the changing roles of women in the media;

(c) More coverage be given in mass media, particularly in the national language media, to women's activities at local, national and international level, and these be reported as seriously as any other activities;

(d) Film and stage actresses, women singers and those who lend themselves to advertisements be urged to refrain from participating in advertising programmes which will degrade the image of women;

(e) Writers of children's books be encouraged to portray women in a positive light and as equal in status to men;

(f) A committee be set up to constantly monitor the mass media in order to take appropriate action to improve the image of women.

EDUCATION

(a) Legislation be introduced and enforced requiring compulsory education for all boys and girls under 15 years of age, with appropriate penalties for non-attendance;

(b) Special efforts be made to increase education facilities in disadvantaged districts and reorganize the existing 'small schools' to serve the needs of the community more effectively;

(c) Adequate provision be made for pre-school centres in urban and rural districts and measures introduced to ensure the satisfactory supervision of non-governmental pre-schools;

(d) Steps be taken to reduce the incidence of early school leaving through:
   (i) adequate provision of incentives such as scholarship and welfare services;
   (ii) introduction of flexible term schedules taking into account the special needs of activities such as harvesting seasons;
   (iii) establishment of pre-school centres near schools to enable older girls to combine schooling and child care activities;
   (iv) improvement of transport facilities in remote areas to facilitate access to schools;

(v) provision for early school leavers to re-enter school programmes and to enrol in non-formal continuing education programmes;

(e) Girls be encouraged to select a wider range of subjects in educational institutions and 'home economics' and 'family life' be taught to both boys and girls;

(f) Textbooks be evaluated and revised to reflect a positive image of women;

(g) Diversified opportunities for tertiary education and life long education be offered equally to men and women;

(h) Equal access be made available to vocational education in agricultural, technological, industrial, commercial and community service skills;

(i) Multipurpose centres be established in rural areas to provide for appropriate training - cum - production with quality control, work norms, and access to materials and credit and marketing facilities to ensure their success;

(j) The National Apprenticeship Board, National Service Youth Council and the Department of Labour be urged to train women in a wider range of non-traditional and employable skills.

ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

(a) Regulations and administrative practices that conflict with the principle of equal access to employment be removed;

(b) The principle of equal pay for equal work be accepted and enforced in all occupations;

(c) Legislation be introduced to prevent the exploitation of labour of young people under 15 years;

(d) Labour legislation be extended to include part-time and home-based employment and in dispersed industries and domestic service;

(e) Minimum wages be fixed for women in the category of domestic servants;

(f) Social security schemes be introduced for all workers in agricultural, industrial and service occupations in the organized and unorganized sectors of the economy;

(g) The Women's Bureau evaluate and monitor all development programmes to ensure that they include provision of the development and deployment of the skills of women;

(h) Equitable representation be given to women on advisory and policy-making boards pertaining to the development and utilization of economic resources and on recruitment committees;

(i) Access be provided for qualified women to managerial and administrative posts at decision-making level;

(j) Women entrepreneurs and self-employed women be provided adequate access to resources in land and credit and marketing facilities;

(k) Rural and urban women be encouraged to form co-operatives to make maximum use of their economic resources and vocational skills, and that infrastructural facilities be provided for the efficient functioning of such co-operatives;

(l) Up-grading and retraining facilities be provided for women in semi-skilled and unskilled employment to improve their promotional prospects;

(m) The period of maternity leave be extended in line with international practice and measures be taken to reduce the employers' liability for financial benefits;

(n) Protective legislation regarding house work be reviewed with appropriate safeguards for the provision of accommodation, transport and other welfare facilities of workers;

(o) Women should be assisted to combine their dual responsibilities at home and at work by the provision of:
   (a) no-pay leave facilities without prejudice to previous service;
   (b) flexible hours of work;
   (c) infrastructural facilities such as child care servicesin the neighbourhood, time and energy saving devices for household tasks, and availability of packetted food items;

(p) Measures be taken to improve transport and housing facilities to assist women to serve in undeveloped areas;

(q) Steps be taken to help to integrate the most disadvantaged women including disabled persons and beggers in economic participation;

(r) Programmes be instituted to:

(i) foster positive attitudes to women workers among employers;

(ii) motivate women to free themselves from cultural conditioning;

(iii) encourage the development of the concept of shared responsibility in work in the home among men and women.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND DECISION MAKING

(a) STUDIES BE CARRIED OUT:

(i) regarding the constraints which prevent women of different ethnic groups and different social strata from participating actively in political activities both at the national and local levels;

(ii) regarding the constraints which prevent women from making a more effective contribution to professional life;

(iii) to ascertain the truth regarding popularly accepted beliefs damaging to the image of women in the professions e.g. women take more leave than men, women are more reluctant than men to work in difficult areas;

(b) CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING PROGRAMMES BE CARRIED OUT AMONG:

(i) men and women of all strata and all ethnic groups regarding the need for women to contribute to and participate in public life;

(ii) professional women to equip themselves for and be ready to accept positions of responsibility without expecting special privileges because of sex;

(iii) employers so that selections for employment, promotions and participation in activities which will equip the persons for greater responsibility be made on criteria of suitabilityand efficiency and not those of sex;

(c) The Women's Bureau set up a unit which will be empowered to look into acts of discrimination, both overt and covert, against females in employment and to take necessary remedial action;

(d) The state, other employers and trade unions be requested that as a routine matter competent women be included in delegations and representations both national and international;

(e) In selection for employment, for admission to Universities and other institutions of tertiary education,weightage be given to the contribution that the applicants have made to community life;

(f) The Universities,other institutions of tertiary education and the media be called upon to provide enrichment courses specially directed towards the intellectual stimulation of women both professional and non-professional;

(g) In rural areas, programmes be introduced which will lead to more active participation of women in organizations such as Kantha Samithi and Mahila Samithi;

(h) The political parties be requested to restructure their organizations so that more women can obtain training at grass root level and gradually work up to decision making levels in the national bodies.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

(a) Utilization of health facilities and of the need to utilize them for improvement of the health of mothers and children to reduce illness and death;

(b) Nutrition education be built into the school curricula very early in the school years so that boys and girls receive it as a part of the core curriculum, and attention be focussed on:

(i) the naturalness and uniqueness of mother's milk and its special qualities for human growth and protection from diseases specially for the newborn baby;

(ii) the need for home-made weaning foods to supplement feeding from 4 to 6 months;

(iii) introducing feeding from cup and spoon from fifth month onwards and dissuading bottle feeding;

(iv) the importance of rectifying undernutrition in childhood among girls because the reflection of antenatal improvement of mother's nutrition alone on low birth weight is not sufficient;

(c) Nutrition education be extended to the community to include protection and promotion of breast feeding, introduction of a weaning food at

4 to 6 months and the needs of pregnant and lactating women. (Ideally simple messages should be made available to mothers.);

(d) The need for immunization be translated into simple acceptable guidelines for mothers as there is much misunderstanding of what are contraindications and be provided guidance on these contraindications;

(e) The impact of planned families on maternal health be made known much more widely through improved channels of communication. The influence of parity and more importantly a long birth interval on maternal nutrition must be emphasized;

(f) Male sterilization be encouraged by reassurance as there are exaggerated fears and wrong ideas about non-existant complications;

(g) Education on population growth and family planning be given to school children in the school leaving year as drastic methods of family planning would not be necessary if family planning is considered early in marriage;

(h) Work places be required to provide facilities for breast feeding for mothers;

(i) Workshop be held to identify "maternal groups at risk" of poor nutrition.