

Sri Lanka

Women, Business and the Law 2024 (WBL2024) presents an index covering 190 economies and structured around the life cycle of a working woman. In total, 35 questions are scored across eight indicators. Overall scores are then calculated by taking the average of each indicator, with 100 representing the highest possible score. Data refer to the laws and regulations that are applicable to the main business city (Colombo). Different rules may apply in other jurisdictions so local legislation should be reviewed. Based on this approach, **Sri Lanka scores 65.6 out of 100.0**. The overall score for Sri Lanka is higher than the regional average observed across South Asia (63.7). Within the South Asia region, the maximum score observed is 80.6 (Nepal).

Sri Lanka - Scores for Women, Business and the Law 2024



Relative Strengths

When it comes to constraints on freedom of movement, and constraints related to marriage, Sri Lanka gets a perfect score.

Areas for Improvement

When it comes to laws affecting women's decisions to work, laws affecting women's pay, laws affecting women's work after having children, constraints on women starting and running a business, gender differences in property and inheritance, and laws affecting the size of a woman's pension, Sri Lanka could consider reforms to improve legal equality for women.

For example, one of the lowest scores for Sri Lanka is on the indicator measuring laws affecting women's work after having children (the WBL2024 Parenthood indicator). To improve on the Parenthood indicator, Sri Lanka may wish to consider making paid leave of at least 14 weeks available to mothers, making the government administer 100% of maternity leave benefits, making paid leave available to fathers, and making paid parental leave available.

Recent Reforms

No reforms were observed during the past year (October 2nd, 2022 – October 1st, 2023).



Further data details for Sri Lanka are available at:
<https://wbl.worldbank.org/en/data/exploreconomies/sri-lanka/2024>



	QUESTION	ANSWER	LEGAL BASIS
Mobility	Can a woman choose where to live in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Can a woman travel outside her home in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Can a woman apply for a passport in the same way as a man?	Yes	Immigrants and Emigrants Act, First Schedule Form A; Passport Application Form
Workplace	Can a woman travel outside the country in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Can a woman get a job in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Does the law prohibit discrimination in employment based on gender?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
	Is there legislation on sexual harassment in employment?	Yes	Penal Code, Sec. 345(1)
Pay	Are there criminal penalties or civil remedies for sexual harassment in employment?	Yes	<i>Criminal:</i> Penal Code, Sec. 345 <i>Civil:</i> Penal Code, Sec. 345
	Does the law mandate equal remuneration for work of equal value?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
	Can a woman work at night in the same way as a man?	No	Shop and Office Employees Act, Sec. 10
	Can a woman work in a job deemed dangerous in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Can a woman work in an industrial job in the same way as a man?	No	Employment of Females in Mines Ordinance No.13 of 1937, Sec. 2; Factories Ordinance No. 45 of 1942, Secs. 25, 67 and 67A (2); Mines and Mineral Act No. 33 of 1992, Sec. 55
Marriage	Is the law free of legal provisions that require a married woman to obey her husband?	Yes	No applicable provisions could be located
	Can a woman be head of household in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Is there legislation specifically addressing domestic violence?	Yes	Prevention of Domestic Violence Act, No. 34 of 2005
	Can a woman obtain a judgment of divorce in the same way as a man?	Yes	The Marriage (General) Ordinance, Sec. 19; Civil Procedure Code, Sec. 597
Parenthood	Does a woman have the same rights to remarry as a man?	Yes	The Marriage (General) Ordinance, Sec. 18; Civil Procedure Code, Sec. 625
	Is paid leave of at least 14 weeks available to mothers?	No	Shop and Office Employees Act, Sec. 18B; Shop and Office Employees (Regulation of Employment and Remuneration) (Amendment) Act, No. 14 of 2018
	Does the government pay 100% of maternity leave benefits?	No	Shop and Office Employees Act, Sec. 18C
	Is paid leave available to fathers?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
	Is there paid parental leave?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
Entrepreneurship	Is dismissal of pregnant workers prohibited?	Yes	Maternity Benefits Ordinance, Art. 10A; Shop and Office Employees Act, Art. 18E
	Does the law prohibit discrimination in access to credit based on gender?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
	Can a woman sign a contract in the same way as a man?	Yes	Married Women's Property Ordinance, Secs. 5(2) and (3)
	Can a woman register a business in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
Assets	Can a woman open a bank account in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Do men and women have equal ownership rights to immovable property?	Yes	Married Women's Property Ordinance, Secs. 5 and 7
	Do sons and daughters have equal rights to inherit assets from their parents?	Yes	Matrimonial Rights and Inheritance Ordinance, Sec. 24; Land Development (Amendment) Act No. 11 of 2022, Sec. 10
	Do female and male surviving spouses have equal rights to inherit assets?	Yes	Matrimonial Rights and Inheritance Ordinance, Sec. 22
	Does the law grant spouses equal administrative authority over assets during marriage?	Yes	Married Women's Property Ordinance, Sec. 5
	Does the law provide for the valuation of nonmonetary contributions?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
Pension	Is the age at which men and women can retire with full pension benefits the same?	No	Employees Provident Fund Act, Sec. 23
	Is the age at which men and women can retire with partial pension benefits the same?	Yes	No applicable provisions could be located
	Is the mandatory retirement age for men and women the same?	Yes	No applicable provisions could be located
	Are periods of absence due to childcare accounted for in pension benefits?	No	No applicable provisions could be located