

FOR ‘SYSTEM CHANGE’

It has been almost three years since the Aragalaya/Porattam of 2022, where the people of Sri Lanka took power into their own hands to overthrow a government that precipitated a devastating economic crisis and also stood accused of human rights violations, racism, and corruption.

It has been almost one year since the National People’s Power (NPP) government was elected to power on the back of the political consciousness amplified by the people’s movement. If the Aragalaya began as a movement to oust the sitting president, as it unfolded, the demands broadened as people realised they did not simply want to replace one man with another or reshuffle the same pack of cards. People demanded—and then voted for—a ‘system change’, even though it was ill-defined and meant different things to different people.

This policy brief draws on conversations held between April and July 2025 with more than 25 women’s rights activists working in various parts of the country, where they expressed their understanding of system change. Their visions of change: are based on ethnic, gender, and economic justice; challenge the violence inherent in capitalism, patriarchy, nationalism, and militarism; question the binary division between production and reproduction; and recognise that our experiences, identities, and challenges are shaped by intersecting factors such as ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, and geographic location.

We are inspired by the many struggles of the activists we spoke to, which began long before the Aragalaya and continue after, and what follows is in solidarity with their struggles. This brief does not claim to speak for or represent them. It is also not an exhaustive presentation of all demands of all women in all of Sri Lanka. We acknowledge that health and education, two vital sectors that impact the lives of many women and citizens broadly, are not explored in detail in this brief.

The vision of change encompassed in this policy brief is not limited to what has been—and continues to be—considered ‘women’s concerns’. We recognise that women are not a homogenous category; by ‘women’ we mean those who identify as women, those assigned female at birth, and queer women. We seek to emphasize the diverse experiences of women and acknowledge the intersectional social, political, personal, and economic injustices and inequalities faced by many sections of society. We also amplify long-standing demands to deepen our democracy.

Many of the recommendations made here are in line with Sri Lanka’s commitments under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and concluding observations of the CEDAW committee issued in February 2025.

Moreover, this document is a reminder to the NPP government of promises made in its own manifesto—A Thriving Nation, A Beautiful Life—released before the presidential elections of 2024, pledging a new social contract between the state and citizens. The pledges in political manifestos should not be for electioneering only and discarded thereafter.

Social Scientists’ Association

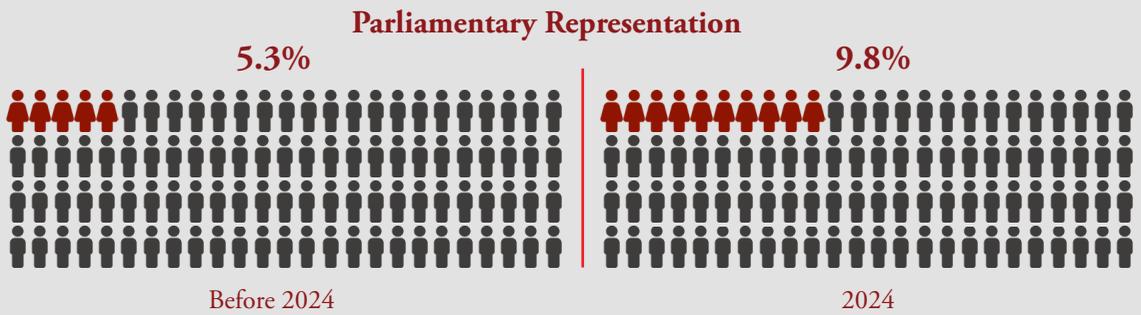
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POWER, POLITICS AND DEMOCRACY

Sri Lanka is a majoritarian democracy, in which the rights of minorities are flouted. People have no voice between elections, and the nature of the state has resulted in the centralisation of power and unfair allocation of resources.

- The office of the **Executive Presidency**, introduced in 1978 by J.R. Jayawardene, has few parallels among democratic systems of rule. Consecutive presidents have come to power outlining its ills and promising to abolish it, including the NPP. Previous governments have betrayed their promise once in power. Will the NPP end the curse?
- **Power sharing** beyond the 13th Amendment to the Constitution and the Provincial Councils Act of 1987, is a long-standing demand of the Tamil people. It remains unfulfilled, even as meaningful devolution of power can benefit all peoples in all provinces.
- Citizens need **opportunities to participate** in the management of their own affairs between elections, and to hold those they elect to power to account. People's power beyond elections was a key demand of the people's struggle. The NPP in its election manifesto and during its campaign recognised the demand for popular participation, but made no concrete proposals. To overcome marginalisation and exclusion in social, economic, and political spheres, those who are marginalised and excluded must have meaningful representation and participation. The NPP government must learn from experiences in Latin America and elsewhere of local democracy, including gender-equitable participatory budgeting at divisional, district, provincial and national level.
- Elected political institutions continue to be **dominated by men**. Even though women's parliamentary representation jumped from 5.3% to 9.8% in 2024¹, a significant increase by Sri Lankan standards, it is still lower than the South Asian average of approximately 22%.² Political parties remain hostile spaces for women's political leadership. The marginalisation of women in politics is rooted in deeply ingrained social norms and gendered expectations about their roles and behaviour. Unless these are addressed through long-term normative change, no individual intervention or tool to boost women's presence in public life will lead to structural or transformative change.

1 Juhola, A. (2025, January 16). The visibility of women in Sri Lankan politics is increasing. Demo Finland. <https://demofinland.org/en/the-visibility-of-women-in-sri-lankan-politics-is-increasing/>
2 Inter-Parliamentary Union and UN Women. (2025). Women in Politics:2025. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2025/03/women-in-politics-map-2025>



- **Militarisation** has been a key feature of state structure and society since at least 1976, and continues to be so, even 15 years after the end of the war. Security is imagined solely through checkpoints, encampments, surveillance, and armed men; and justification for the continued occupation of civilian land in the North and East. **The Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA)**, that allows for the arbitrary arrest and detention of persons, continues to be applied even by the NPP that once opposed it.
- **The PTA** supersedes any protection of the rights of the accused to due process and equality before the law. Demilitarisation and the repeal of terror laws is a key demand from survivor communities and their representatives.

- Abolish the **Executive Presidency**, drawing on recommendations of the Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC) on Constitutional Reform of 2016.
- Build a **national consensus** on **power-sharing** with the regions.
- Innovate mechanisms for **citizen-led decision-making** at local, provincial and national level.
- Introduce a **30% quota** for women in parliament and require political parties to appoint women to at least 30% of decision-making positions.
- **Repeal the PTA** now, and impose an **immediate moratorium on its further use** pending repeal.
- Release all **civilian land, property** and **housing** from military and police occupation.
- Cease **surveillance** and **harassment** of social activists.
- End **military participation** in commercial sectors such as agriculture and tourism, as well as social sectors such as education and health.
- Dismantle **military camps** and checkpoints; demobilise and **reintegrate ex-service personnel**.

DEBT, FOOD SECURITY, COST OF LIVING

The NPP government, following election in 2024, finalised the **IMF-backed debt restructuring deal** initiated by the previous government. This closed off an equitable path out of the crisis with key creditors, including international sovereign bondholders (ISBs) who hold over 30% of external debt. IMF austerity conditionalities, to maximise government revenue for debt servicing, have raised taxes for the poor; raised prices of energy, raised the cost of essential foods and medicines, and increased the unpaid care burden on women, punishing the poor women in particular.

- The **debt trap** into which politicians, policymakers, and international financial institutions plunged us is a **mechanism of injustice**—draining public resources from public goods, worsening income and wealth inequality, and undermining democratic control over national resources. Much of the debt is illegitimate, having had no public benefit, lining the pockets of the corrupt, and financing ‘development’ that is unproductive and/or environmentally harmful. Meanwhile, billions of dollars in export revenues and excess profits are siphoned abroad by multinationals and the super rich in illicit financial flows.
- **Sovereign debt is intimately linked to household debt**, with external debt repayment reducing the fiscal space to mobilise domestic resources for employment, livelihoods, and social protection. Abandoned by the state, poor households fall into their own debt trap, taking microfinance loans to afford daily consumption, unforeseen expenses, and to finance productive activities. While women find ways to repay their loans somehow or the other, pawning gold jewellery, borrowing from friends and relatives and informal lenders, such efforts can push them into further debt. The microcredit industry promises empowerment to rural women, but actually causes financial ruin, despair and death by suicide. 2.8 million persons are trapped by predatory microfinance debt, of whom 2.4 million are women.³

Microfinance Debt



³ 13.02.2024. The Sectoral Oversight Committee on Alleviating the Impact of the Economic Crisis focus on the parties aggrieved by the impact of the micro finance crisis in Sri Lanka, Parliament of Sri Lanka, <https://www.parliament.lk/news-en/view/3897#:~:text=Addressing%20those%20present%2C%20the%20Sri,of%20which%2024%2C000%2C000%20are%20women>

- 70% of households have reduced **food consumption**, including by skipping meals, as food prices have increased by 73% since 2022.⁴ In October 2022, 3.9 million families (57.5% of Sri Lankan households) sought some sort of financial assistance.⁵ Instead of measly handouts of cash and/or food rations, what is needed is controls on prices of basic foods; restoration of the public distribution system; and programmes to supplement the nutrition intake of pregnant and young mothers, infants and schoolchildren, and the elderly. Women are also forced to compromise their own nutrition intake because of the economic crisis, while prioritising their children.
- In addressing this crisis, it is necessary to prioritize **food sovereignty**, which emphasises a just and sustainable local model of food production, distribution and exchange, centred on small farmers, many of whom are women.
- Women, though playing a key role in agriculture, are not recognised for their role as farmers. Only 16% of women in Sri Lanka are owners of private land.⁶ **Land title** is key to farmer association membership and therefore agriculture extension services, fertiliser and decision-making power on water and cultivation. Women remain the guardians of traditional food knowledge, preservers of local seeds for each new harvest, ensuring the survival and transmission of traditional plant varieties in an ecosystem colonised by industrial foreign input-reliant agriculture. Women, therefore, can be those who lead and sustain the shift towards food sovereignty.

private land ownership



⁴ Household Survey on Impact of Economic Crisis - 2023, Department of Census and Statistics & Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Sri Lanka, https://www.statistics.gov.lk/WebReleases/HECS_Bulletin_Final

⁵ Feminist Collective for Economic Justice 2023. (March 8). International Women's Day: Sri Lankan Women Demand Democracy, Economic Justice, and Freedom. *Polity* 11(1): 47.

⁶ Kamdar, B. (2021, March 9). Gendered Land: Sri Lankan Women Battle Unequal Access to Resources. <https://thediplomat.com/2021/03/gendered-land-sri-lankan-women-battle-unequal-access-to-resources/>

- **Audit public debt**, with **citizen participation**, to identify illegitimate or odious debts.
- **Suspend debt service** pending public audit findings.
- Impose a **moratorium on the repayment of all microfinance loans**, while immediately ceasing legal action taken against microfinance debt victims, and cancel microfinance debt.
- Provide access to **affordable sources of credit** for rural communities.
- Grant **women land title and equal access to agricultural resources** and associations as men.
- **Ensure state intervention in pricing** of essential commodities and essential foods.
- Ensure **universal social protection** with mandatory additional allocations for elders over 60 years, children below the age of 05 years, and persons with disabilities.
- Implement a **progressive direct taxation system** and **remove VAT on essential items**, including food items, school supplies, medicine and health supplies, books, etc.

PAID WORK

Women are around 34% of the formal labour force in Sri Lanka.⁷ In addition to the public sector (health, education, government services), they are the backbone of the sectors that keep the economy afloat through foreign exchange earnings from migrant remittances, apparel, tea and rubber.

Women are around **34%** of the **formal labour force** in Sri Lanka

⁷ Perera, B. M. (2024). Shrinking labour force: Economic impact and necessary reforms. The Morning. 27 October 2024, <https://www.themorning.lk/articles/j59zOFVVURJTDtLddj7w>

- These sectors remain either non-unionised or unions are **patriarchal spaces**, overwhelmingly dominated by men. There are no women in decision-making bodies that determine the workings of the sector, such as the Wages Board and the National Labour Advisory Council (NLAC). While women-led trade unions are taking great efforts to bridge this gap and fight for workers' rights, they still face immense challenges.
- Even though Sri Lanka's **foreign currency earnings** are unquestionably 'feminised', women's wages in these sectors remain low despite industry's profits, and appalling conditions of work overseas. Moreover, women in the apparel sector bear the brunt of both global and local shocks to the economy such as COVID 19 and imposition of tariffs. While most of the country ground to a halt during COVID, factories were marked 'essential services' and continued to work. This resulted in large clusters of COVID cases within them, yet the industry still made profit off the labour.
- Women are a large percentage of **workers** in key export agriculture products such as tea. Collective agreements, that set wages and standards for workers, have long since lapsed. The Malaiyaha Tamil women working in these plantations are also doing so without adequate safety equipment and insecure housing. These are barriers to decent work and better outcomes for women of an already-vulnerable community.
- It is **foreign remittances** from domestic work, not foreign direct investment, nor export earnings, that are Sri Lanka's largest source of foreign exchange. Yet, women workers abroad have no rights at work, nor social protection in illness, unemployment, and old-age. The Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE) is more interested in exporting workers for exploitation than in ensuring good outcomes for them and their families.
- Increasing **female labour force participation** is not the silver bullet for Sri Lanka's economic woes, nor is it by itself the answer to women's empowerment. International financial institutions and their local associates want women to take up waged work on top of the unwaged work that they do, day and night every day of the week. More than 57.2% of women are engaged in housework as opposed to 5% of men in Sri Lanka.⁸ Nothing is said or done to recognise, reduce and redistribute women's unpaid care work. Women are

⁸ Sri Lanka Labour Force Survey Annual Report - 2023. Department of Census and Statistics & Ministry of Finance, Economic Stabilization and National Policies. In <https://www.statistics.gov.lk/>.

already working in the monetised economy, except they are invisible because much of it is informal. Women are over-represented in low-paid domestic labour; while also working in casualised daily-waged work in salterns, seasonal plantations and small-scale food services. They are also working for the market from home, preparing small food items for sale, making lamp wicks, assembling cardboard boxes, making clay for bricks and more. Inside the home or outside, informalised or formalised, what is common is that women are paid less than men.

Housework Engagement



- The NPP has made direct references in its manifesto and in speeches, to giving value to the **unpaid care work** that women do. This is critical to broadening the definition of ‘work’; recognising what women do without payment in the household and community as work, and shaping state policy accordingly. Or else, gender inequalities will be entrenched or even worsen.

- Ensure respect for the **right to organise** and **right to collective bargaining**, and protect and promote a living wage, safe working conditions, and dignity for all workers including women.
- Ensure **accountability of the SLBFE** to migrant workers and their associations; and facilitate safe, regular and rights-based labour migration through government-to-government bilateral agreements instead of agents and brokers.

- **Ratify** and implement **ILO Convention 189** that tackles the informality of domestic labour.
- **Ratify** and implement **ILO Convention C190** that obligates the state to assure a 'safe and violent free world of work' for workers of all genders.
- Ensure **adequate, accessible and affordable care services** by the state and private sector and make provision for **paternal leave**.

TRUTH, JUSTICE AND REPARATIONS

More than 15 years after the end of Sri Lanka's civil war, a meaningful peace in which all ethnic and religious groups can live in dignity and equality remains elusive. Victim-survivors of the civil war are still searching for truth and justice for war-related atrocities, a majority of whom are mothers, wives, siblings and children of the forcibly disappeared. While there is no agreement on the number unaccounted for at the end of the war, the UN's 2012 Report of the Secretary-General's Internal Review Panel cited credible sources as estimating over 70,000 missing and disappeared persons.⁹ Tamil women family members of the disappeared who have been at the forefront of the struggle for accountability have been subjected to surveillance, intimidation, and criminalisation in varying degrees by successive governments for daring to question the state. Consecutive postwar governments have refused or failed to respond to survivor and civil society calls for a credible investigation of abuses by the Sri Lanka Armed Forces.

Disappeared and Missing Persons



70,000

- The NPP has promised to investigate and serve justice in political assassination cases, disappearances and assaults that happened in the past. It has stated it will take steps towards '**national unity and reconciliation**' through the work

⁹ Source: Report of the Secretary-General's Internal Review Panel on United Nations Action in Sri Lanka, November 2012, page 14 <<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/737299?ln=en&cv=pdf>>

of ‘domestic mechanisms’ such as the Office on Missing Persons (OMP), Office of Reparations and Office for National Unity and Reconciliation (ONUR). However, many affected communities have little to no hope in local mechanisms, having witnessed their consistent failure to deliver truth and justice.

- The government must undertake a deep and meaningful process of trust-building with victim-survivor communities before establishing a **domestic mechanism towards justice**. It would require challenging the Sinhala Buddhist ethno-nationalist view of soldiers as national heroes, strongly asserting the government’s commitment and political will to address truth and justice, fostering national understanding of the need for accountability for war-related atrocities and facilitating meaningful exchange among communities on these questions. It is crucial that allies demanding accountability fight for this deep systemic change, while also recognising the significance of international actors in mediating these issues.
- The issue of **land and land conflicts** remains unresolved in the postwar era. Many Tamil communities remain displaced from their traditional homelands, which continue to be occupied by the military and used for cultivation or tourism that benefits them. The state, non-state and private actors also trigger new land conflicts by acquiring and grabbing land in the Northern and Eastern provinces. They impose restrictions on land use by and access for ordinary people. This includes efforts of the Buddhist clergy to uproot people from, claim, and rename land in traditionally Tamil and Muslim-populated areas as ‘sacred areas’ or ‘Buddhist sites’. The Department of Archaeology is a key player in assisting this project.

- Establish a meaningful and enforceable **domestic mechanism for truth and justice** with international supervision. It must **take account of the findings of past initiatives** such as the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC), the Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Complaints of Missing

Persons (PCICMP) and the Consultation Task Force on Reconciliation Mechanisms (CTF).

- Fulfill the legislative mandate of the OMP to **address the demand for truth** by families of the forcibly disappeared.

- **Release the names of all detainees** at all detention centres and military facilities across the island.
- Cooperate with the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and **Sri Lanka Accountability Project** at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).
- Initiate **inquiry into gross violations of international human rights and humanitarian law.**
- Acknowledge **May 18 as a day of national mourning** and protect **Tamil families' right to memorialise** as a fundamental right.
- Activate Provincial Land Commissions to inquire, adjudicate and **resolve long-standing land disputes.**

LEGAL REFORMS

Fundamental rights and nondiscrimination are guaranteed to all citizens in Sri Lanka's 1978 Constitution. Yet there are a number of laws which explicitly discriminate against women and LGBTQI+ persons.

- **The Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act (MMDA)** of 1951 denies Muslim women and girls certain fundamental human rights. Child marriage is legal as there is no minimum age of marriage. This means that Muslim children are not protected by the law in the same way as their peers of other faiths. The bride does not sign her marriage registration form, which calls into question her free, informed consent to the marriage. Muslim men have an unconditional right of polygamy and divorce. Quazis, who adjudicate Muslim personal law in Quazi courts, are exclusively men.
- Muslim women's groups from across the island have advocated reforms to the MMDA for over 40 years.¹⁰ Multiple government-appointed committees since 1956 have each proposed much needed reforms. The NPP promised to reform the MMDA but has now walked back on it.¹¹ The government must stand by Muslim women's right to equality and justice rather than pander to conservatives and misogynists.

10 MPLRAG. (2023, July 31). MPLRAG demands for MMDA reforms - Muslim Personal Law Reform Action Group (MPLRAG). <https://www.mmdasilanka.org/demands/>

11 MPLRAG. (2024, November 7). STATEMENT: Minister Vijitha Herath's comments that MMDA reforms are not on the agenda fails to recognize long standing demands for change. - MPLRAG. Muslim Personal Law Reform Action Group (MPLRAG). <https://www.mmdasilanka.org/statement-minister-vijitha-heraths-comments-that-mmda-reforms-are-not-on-the-agenda-fails-to-recognize-long-standing-demands-for-change/>

“Abolish **Article 365 and 365a**” and

“Reform **MMDA of 1951**”

- **Articles 365 and 365a** of the Penal Code, another relic from colonial law-making, criminalises consensual sexual acts between adults of the same sex. In 2023, the Sri Lankan Supreme Court determined that repealing sections 365 and 365A of the Penal Code, particularly in the context of private, consensual sexual relations between adults, aligns with the principles of human dignity and non-discrimination and would not violate the constitution. However, arrests and mistreatment of individuals as well as targeted attacks on members of the LGBTQ+ community continue.¹² Individuals are often taken to police stations and are subjected to humiliation and abuse by officers based on their sexual and/or gender identity.
- **The Vagrants Ordinance** is also a colonial-era relic long overdue for repeal. It is essentially a morality or decency law that is wielded in a manner oppressive towards persons from marginalized and disadvantaged groups in society. The Ordinance has been used by police to intimidate, harass, and imprison sex workers, especially trans women.
- The NPP manifesto has promised to address the subject of **abortion** by implementing the Law Commission’s 2012 recommendations. These would ensure safe termination of pregnancy on two grounds; in the case of rape and the case of serious fetal impairment. However, the vast majority of women seeking abortions in Sri Lanka do so for reasons outside these exceptions.

¹² Joshi, Y. (2023). “All five fingers are not the same.” Human Rights Watch. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/08/16/all-five-fingers-are-not-same/discrimination-grounds-gender-identity-and-sexual>

- **Repeal Article 16 (1)** of the Constitution to enable reform of discriminatory laws enacted before the Constitution.
- Reform **gender-discriminatory provisions of the MMDA**.
- **Repeal Sections 365 and 365a** of the Penal Code.
- Repeal the **Vagrants Ordinance**.
- **Decriminalise abortion**, following wide consultation on the terms and instances under which it is allowed.
- In light of the enactment of the Women's Empowerment Act of 2024, and its operationalisation in the form of the Women's Commission, **review the state gender machinery** comprising the **Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Women's Bureau**, with reference to its mandates, financing, resources and capacities.

ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE

Sri Lanka is facing a climate crisis that stems from centuries of colonialism, imperialism, exploitation, extraction and inequality. High temperatures, a complex hydrological regime, and exposure to extreme climate events make the island highly vulnerable to worsening climate change. This poses significant risks to agriculture and water resource sectors, coastal zones, as well as to human health.

“Enshrine the **Right to Life** in the **Constitution!**”

- Successive governments have planned large-scale **mining and power projects** in ecologically sensitive regions such as low-lying islands, where fishing and cultivation are popular modes of income. The people in some of these areas have been displaced by the war and carry with them that history of injustice as well.
- The methods that are now being widely adopted to respond to the crisis fail to hold those ultimately responsible accountable for their toxic impact on the

environment. **Carbon credits** essentially commodify the valuable elements of nature and do not halt pollution and environmental degradation in the present. They are one of many examples of greenwashing disguised as climate action.

- The most disadvantaged communities are bearing—and will bear—the brunt of worsening ecological crises. Women are particularly vulnerable, especially in relation to their livelihoods. They face increased burdens of care work and food production due to bad harvests, and may experience higher rates of violence and poverty due to crop failures and economic crises. **Climate change** has also had an outsized impact on the out-migration of women looking for alternative sources of income. This migration may be in-country towards the urban service and manufacturing economy or out-of-country for domestic work.
- The NPP’s manifesto speaks at length about the **environment**, including its protection and engaging communities to find solutions. It also aspires to move away from ‘anthropocentric thinking that places man as the sole owner of the earth.’ Furthermore, its Clean Sri Lanka project seeks to ‘reposition the nationwide efforts of environmental, social, and governance initiatives through introducing change, integration, and collaboration.’ In keeping with these policy goals, we call on the government to:

- Enshrine the **right to life** as a fundamental right in the Constitution.
- Enact a right to **Healthy Environment law** that **ensures access to clean air, water, and healthcare**.
- Undertake mandatory and meaningful **environmental assessments** and **informed community consultations** for all development projects, with **equitable compensation** where communities are harmed by development drives.
- Hold to **account polluters and corporations** for environmental harm through punitive fines; with **funds channelled back to affected local communities**.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Women face high levels of violence both within the public sphere and the private sphere of the family. Women are twice as likely to experience physical or sexual violence from a partner than from anyone else in their lifetime.¹³ The police Women's and Children's Desks receive thousands of rape complaints every year; yet there are no more than four convictions annually. Women also face high levels of sexual harassment in the workplace and on public transport. Moreover, women and girls are now vulnerable to new forms of violence with the rise of social media and digital technologies.

- Twenty years ago, Sri Lanka enacted legislation for the protection of women from **domestic violence**. However, patriarchal ideology that prioritises the preservation of the family unit over the protection of women, and the reluctance of law enforcement to acknowledge violence inside the home, have limited the number of women invoking this law.
- The trivialisation of violence by law enforcement personnel, a lack of awareness of protections under legislation, and the acceptance of violence by many victims further fortify unequal gender–power relations in families and society, perpetuating and entrenching impunity for such violence. However, we recognise that enforcement of criminal law and the carceral system most often ensures that poor persons from underserved communities are targeted in law enforcement measures to counter crime and terror.
- Survivors are further disempowered by the absence of adequate **support services** such as crisis shelters and legal aid and counseling. Many such initiatives are run by non-governmental organisations. When the economic crisis hit, several of the state-supported facilities were among the first to close their doors.
- The NPP manifesto addresses in depth the issue of gender inequality, including social protection for violence survivors and a commitment to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) education. It is essential that these pledges be met in full. **Norm changes**, as discussed above, are essential for lasting impact on women's lives and social interactions.

¹³ Women's Wellbeing Survey - 2019. Department of Census and Statistics. <https://srilanka.unfpa.org/en/publications/womens-wellbeing-survey-2019>

- Implement **recommendations of the Task Force** to implement the Report of the Leader of the Opposition-Commission on the **Prevention of Violence against Women and Girl Child of 2016**.
- Facilitate **free services** through the Legal Aid Commission for **survivors of GBV**.
- Allocate **national budgetary support** for **shelter and community services**.
- **Prevent all forms of gender-based violence**, intimidation and hate speech against women in politics, including technology-facilitated GBV.
- **Strengthen district-level Gender Based Violence Forums** to address concrete complaints and enable referrals to appropriate service providers.
- Use **arts, culture, education and entertainment** to **challenge and change traditional gender norms and roles**.



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