

Impediments to Women in Post-civil War Economic Growth in Sri Lanka

South Asian Journal of Human
Resources Management
2(1) 12–36
© 2015 SAGE Publications India
Private Limited
SAGE Publications
sagepub.in/home.nav
DOI: 10.1177/2322093715576160
<http://hrm.sagepub.com>



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Abstract

This policy-oriented article is an ethnographic study of the impact of the economic growth on women in the Eastern and Northern Provinces of Sri Lanka in the aftermath of the civil war. Preliminary indications are that the resurgent economic growth in the former conflict-affected regions have had very limited positive impact on women in terms of livelihood opportunities and economic empowerment. The impediments to realizing the opportunities by women are identified through ethnographic investigation and a consultative process with key stakeholders. Programmes and projects could and should be developed to address the profound difficulties faced by women in taking advantage of the opportunities spurred by the resurgent regional economies of Sri Lanka during the post-civil war era.

Keywords

Gender, post-civil war, regional economic growth, Sri Lanka, women

Gender and Economic Growth

There is a two-way relationship between economic growth and gender equality. That is, rising economic growth could potentially reduce gender inequality in terms of access to formal employment, gaps in pay, etc. Similarly, shrinking gender inequality (in terms of access to formal employment, gaps in pay, etc.) could potentially boost economic growth as well. This section is largely drawn from Cuberes and Teignier (2014).

As the economies progress the resultant structural changes in the economy such as the predominance of the services sector has hugely contributed to the rise in the labour-force participation of women. One economic model predicts that the rise in the service sector accounted for a 44 per cent of the increase in the hours

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