

# The Legal Profession: Challenges and Opportunities for Women with Reference to Sri Lankan Study

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**Abstract:** *In recent years, there has been significant progress in the representation of women in the legal profession, as seen by the increasing number of female law students surpassing their male counterparts in law faculties at universities and law colleges in Sri Lanka. Nevertheless, despite the considerable influx of women into the legal field in Sri Lanka, there is a noticeable disparity in the representation of women in leadership positions and prominent roles within the Attorney-at-Law profession. In Sri Lanka, men advocates hold a significant majority in the legal profession. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that women constitute nearly 33% of the overall judiciary and have held the esteemed position of Chief Justice. The lack of female representation in the legal profession can have detrimental effects on women's rights and their ability to access justice, while also diminishing the overall effectiveness of the justice system. The data suggests that a significant proportion of female law graduates opt not to pursue professional paths as practicing lawyers, prosecutors, or judges. Instead, they tend to seek employment opportunities within private sector corporations and other financial institutions and organizations. This essay aims to examine the obstacles and the experiences of women in entering and staying in the legal profession. This study examines the outcomes of two-panel deliberations that took place in two districts in Sri Lanka, within the context of my professional experience as a gender specialist in a justice project. The analysis is grounded in the firsthand accounts provided by the Panellists, as well as the input gathered from female advocates and female law students who participated in the panel deliberations conducted in the two districts. This study examines the experiences recounted by female advocates and proposes novel strategies for surmounting obstacles.*

**Keywords:** female advocates, obstacles, legal field, law students, prospects