



# ***Women's Representation and Participation in Political Party Structures in Sri Lanka***

**Rohana Hettiarachchie**  
**Executive Director**  
**People's Action for Free and Fair Elections (PAFFREL)**

25 July 2017

# Constitutional and Legal Guarantees for Women's Representation and Participation

## CONSTITUTION

- **Fundamental Rights Chapter**

12(2): No citizen shall be discriminated against on the grounds of race, religion, language, caste, sex, political opinion, place of birth or any one of such grounds....

- **Directive Principles of State Policy and Fundamental Duties**

27(6): The State shall ensure equality of opportunity to citizens, so that no citizen shall suffer any disability on the ground of race, religion, language, caste, sex, political opinion or occupation.

## PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS (AMENDMENT) ACT, NO. 58 OF 2009

7(4)(d): In order to guarantee better representation of women in political parties and in the politics, every recognized political party shall ensure the inclusion of one or more women office bearers in the list of office bearers of such party.

# Election Commission to ensure at least 1 Female Officer in Party Governing Body



## Notice

### Election Commission



#### Notice under Section 7(4)(a) of the Parliamentary Elections Act, No.1 of 1981

- In terms of Section 7(4) (a) of the Parliamentary Elections Act, No.1 of 1981 as amended by the Parliamentary Elections (Amendment) Act, No. 58 of 2009, applications to be treated as a recognized political party for the purpose of elections will be received from 2017-02-01 to 2017-02-28. Applications may either be sent by post to the Secretary, Election Commission, Sarana Mawatha, Rajagiriya (10107) or the Secretary, Election Commission by the Secretary of the relevant political party. The 'Application for the Recognition of Political Parties' should be placed in the top left corner of the envelope enclosing the application.
- Applications received after the closing date will not be entertained.
- The Application to be treated as a recognized political party shall be approved by the Election Commission by the Secretary of the Party concerned.
- There is no specific specimen for the application and a self-prepared application should include the name of the Party, the address of the registered office of the Party, the telephone numbers and e-mail address (if available) of the Party for the purpose.
- The application should also specify which one of the approved categories in Schedule (b) of the Notification published in the Gazette Extraordinary, No. 1000/VI of 2017-01-30 such party desires to be allotted to such party if so the party is eligible.
- Certified Photostat copies of the following documents should be appended to the application:
  - Party Constitution
  - List of the office bearers of the Party. (Make sure that at least one female officer is included in the list.)
  - Audited Statement of Accounts of the party.
  - Current policy statement of the party.
  - All documents in proof of perpetual succession as a political party and a report thereof.
- The order of the Election Commission on any application to be treated as a recognized political party made under subsection 7(5) of Parliamentary Elections Act, No. 1 of 1981 as amended by the Parliamentary Elections (Amendment) Act No. 58 of 2009 shall be final.

H.M.  
Secretary  
Election Commission

Election Commission  
Election Secretariat  
Sarana Mawatha, rajagiriya. (10107)

On 31<sup>st</sup> of January 2017

P.S : Please refer to the relevant provisions of the Act in this regard.  
(The relevant act may be downloaded from [www.elections.gov.lk](http://www.elections.gov.lk))

- Certified Photostat copies of the following documents should be appended to the application:
  - Party Constitution
  - List of the office bearers of the Party. (Make sure that at least one female officer is included in the list.)
  - Audited Statement of Accounts of the party.
  - Current policy statement of the party.
  - All documents in proof of perpetual succession as a political party and a report thereof.

# What is your Political Party's Constitutional Guarantee for Women?

PARTY	MAIN WOMEN'S WINGS	PARTY CONSTITUTION SPACE
United National Party	LAK WANITHA Front  Women Branch Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Article 7(1): According to the decision of Advisory Committee, one Representative should be appointed from the Parliament Members, PC Member or Zonal Authority President from each district and <b>at least one of those appointment should be a female.</b></li> <li>•No more than 4 trade union representatives will be selected by the Advisory Committee and <b>at least one should be female.</b></li> <li>•Advisory Committee, taking seniority into account, should select no more than 9 representatives from Local Government Authorities and <b>at least 2 from those should be female (these nominated females are representing the main Governing Body of the Party)</b></li> </ul>
Sri Lanka Freedom party	Freedom Party Women Front  Freedom Party Women Conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Article 9: <b>No more than 41 women participants should be represented in the SAMASTHA LANKA KARAKA SABAWA</b>, nominated by Freedom Party Women Front.</li> <li>•Article 11: <b>3 women representatives from the Freedom Party Women Front should be represented in the Executive Committee of the Party</b></li> </ul>
Jathika Hela Urumaya	HELA ABIMANI Women Front	
Mahajana Eksath Peramuna	Women Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•When nominating Members for the Central Committee, <b>2 members should be elected on behalf of Women Organization.</b></li> </ul>
Communist Party of Sri Lanka	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Preamble: No woman or man shall be discriminated against on the grounds of race, religion, language, caste, sex, and the Party will work towards the equal rights of women.</li> </ul>
Democratic People's Front		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Article 11 (d): Office bearers of the Zonal Committees shall be the Leader, Deputy Leader, Secretary, Finance Secretary, <b>Women Leader</b> and Youth Leader</li> <li>•Article 12(c): Office bearers of the Primary Committees shall be the Leader, Deputy Leader, Secretary, Finance Secretary, <b>Women Leader</b> and Youth Leader</li> </ul>
Ceylon Workers' Congress	Women Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Article 15(III): 8 Vice Presidents will be elected by the National Council, <b>2 of whom shall be women.</b></li> <li>•Article 15(IV): Members of the Executive Commission includes <b>Chairperson of Women Committees.</b></li> </ul>
Sri Lanka Muslim	Ladies Congress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Article 11.3 (a): There shall be established a Ladies Congress of Sri Lanka Muslim Congress,</li> </ul>

# What did Political Parties say in 2015 regarding Women's Representation?



Encourage political parties to have 25% of Local Government Authority Members, and 25% of nomination lists to be women



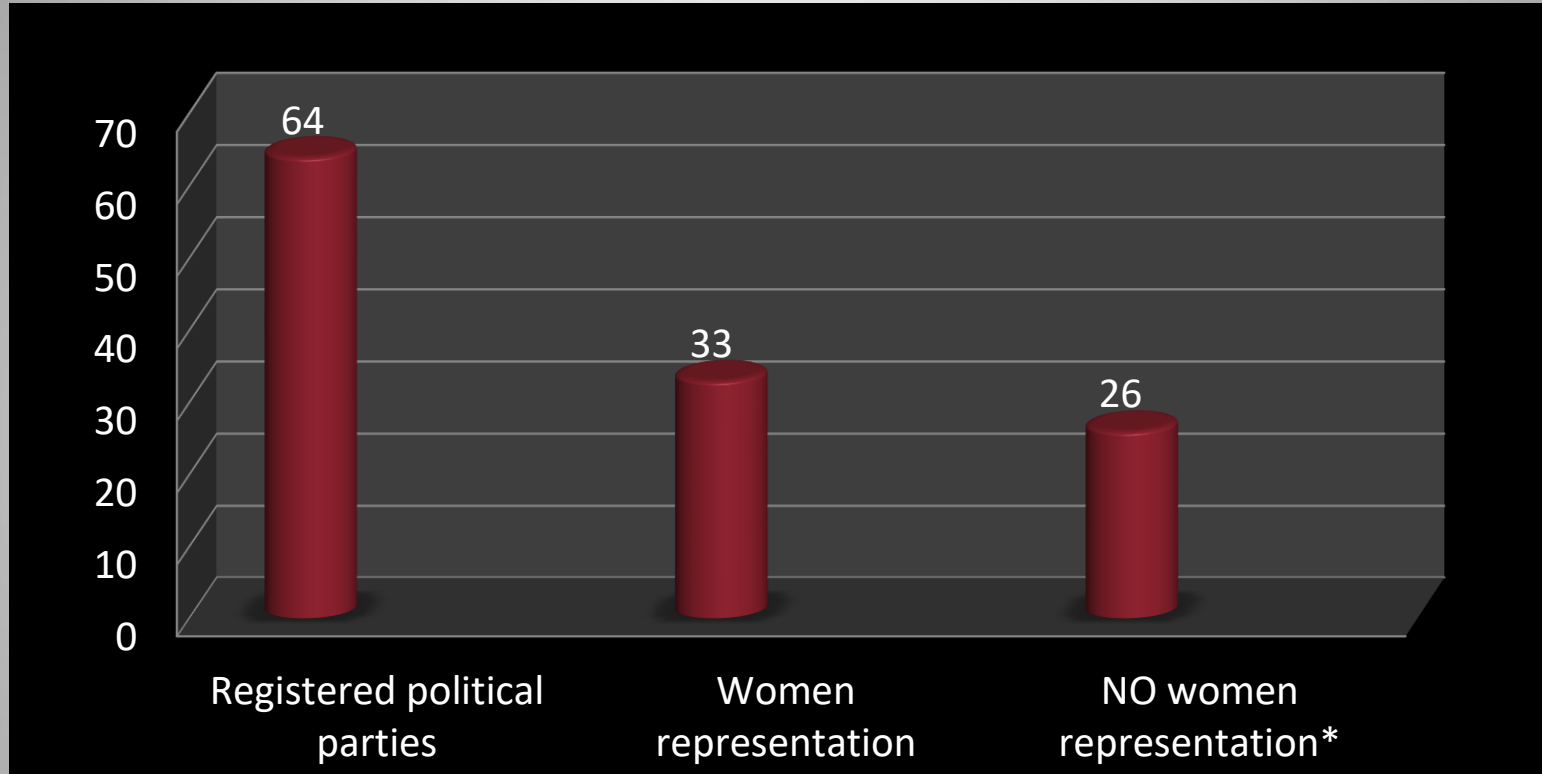
Assuring respect and equal rights for women in socio-economic and political platforms in Sri Lanka



Assuring equal rights for women



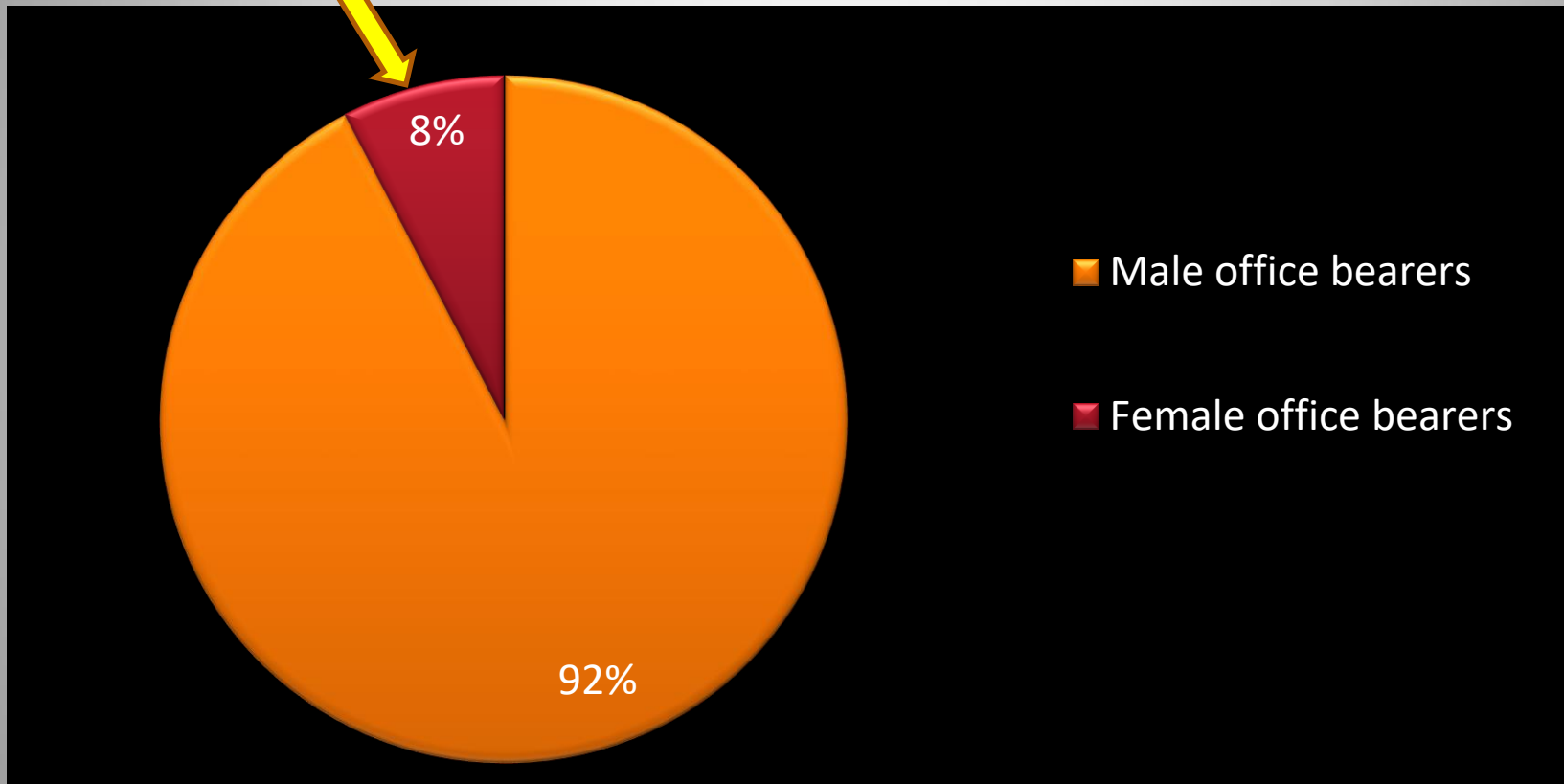
# Are we happy with this?



\*Data of 5 registered political parties was not documented due to legal issues

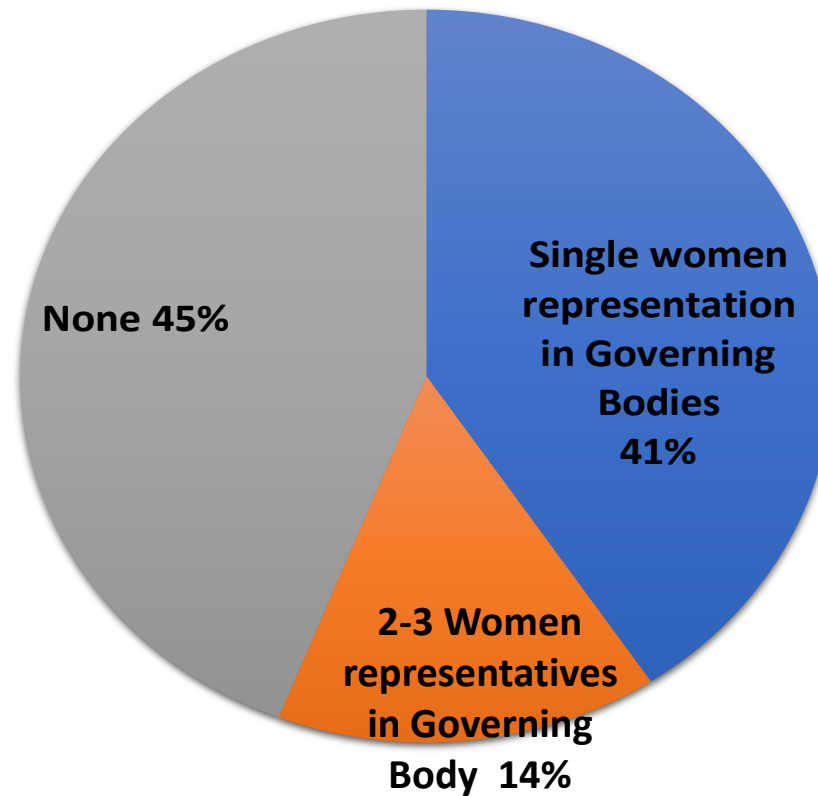
**Observations: Out of 59 registered Political Parties, 26 parties (45%) do not have a single woman representative.**

## Are Political Parties willing to increase Proportion of Women Participation?



**Observation: There are 602 Governing Body members in registered political parties. Only 46 are women.**

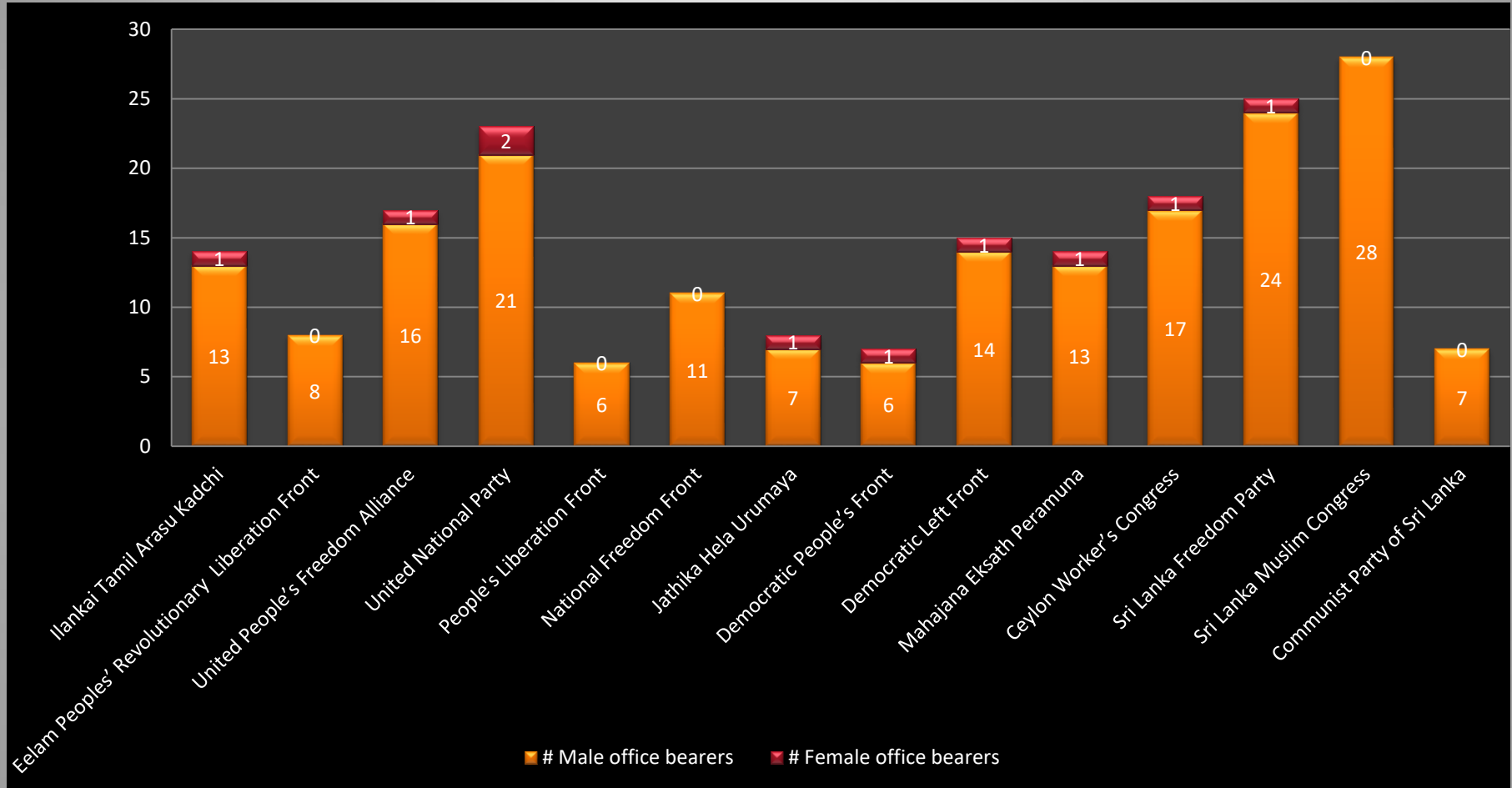
# Women in Governing Bodies of Political Parties



Observations: 26 Political Parties do not adhere to Party Registration Act.



# Do Political Parties represented in 2015 Parliament, provide space for Women in their Governing Body?



**Observation:** Out of 14 Political Parties represented in Parliament, 5 Parties have not named a single woman in their decision-making structures (office bearers).

<b>No.</b>	<b>Name of Political Party</b>	<b># Male office bearers</b>	<b># Women office bearers</b>	<b>% Women office bearers</b>
01	Ahila Ilankai Tamil Congress	14	1	6.6
02	Akhila Ilankai Tamil Mahasabha	8	2	20
03	Our National Front	8	2	20
04	All Ceylon Makkal Congress			
05	Ilankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi	13	0	-
06	Eelavar Democratic Front	10	2	16
07	Eelam People's Democratic Party	03	0	-
08	Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front	08	0	-
09	United People's Freedom Alliance	16	1	5.8
10	United National Party	21	2	10.5
11	United Democratic Front			
12	Democratic Unity Alliance	15	1	5.8
13	United People's Party	9	0	-
14	Eksath Lanka Podujana Pakshaya			
15	Eksath Lanka Maha Saba Party	6	0	-
16	United Socialist Party	3	1	25
17	United Peace Front	1	0	-
18	Okkoma Wasiyo Okkoma Rajawaru Sanvidanaya	7	0	-
19	Up-Country People's Front	6	1	14.2
20	People's Liberation Front	6	0	-
21	<u>Democratic Tamil National Alliance</u>	6	0	-
22	<u>Jana Setha Peramun</u>	9	1	10
23	<u>National Congrass</u>	13	1	7.1
24	<u>National Peoples Part</u>	11	1	8.3
25	<u>National Freedom Front</u>	11	0	-

No.	Name of Political Party	# Male office bearers	# Women office bearers	% Women office bearers
26	Jathika Sangwardhena Peramuna			-
27	Jathika Hela Urumaya	7	1	12.5
28	Nationalities Unity Organization	2	0	-
29	Thamil Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal	15	1	6.2
30	Social Democratic Party Of Tamils	7	1	12.5
31	Desha Vimukthi Janatha Pakshaya	9	0	-
32	Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization	15	1	6.25
33	Tamil United Liberation Front	9	2	18.18
34	New Democratic Front	3	0	-
35	Nawa Sama Samaja Party	3	1	25
36	Nawa Sihala Urumaya	4	0	
37	Puravesi Peramuna	6	1	14.29
38	Frontline Socialist Party	6	0	-
39	People's Alliance	7	0	-
40	Democratic United National Front	14	2	12.5
41	Democratic Peoples Front	6	1	14.29
42	Democratic People's Liberation Front	9	0	-
43	Democratic National Movement	8	3	27.2
44	Democratic National Alliance	9	0	-
45	Democratic Party	9	3	25
46	Democratic Left Front	14	1	6.67

No.	Name of Political Party	# Male office bearers	# Women office bearers	% Women office bearers
47	Maubima Janatha Pakshaya	10	0	-
48	Mahajana Eksath Peramuna	10	1	9.09
49	Muslim National Alliance	13	0	-
50	Ceylon Worker's Congress (P.Wing)	17	1	5.56
51	Lanka Sama Samaja Party	12	3	20
52	The Liberal Party	8	1	11.1
53	Sri Lanka Labour Party	8	2	20
54	Sri Lanka National Force	5	0	-
55	Sri Lanka Freedom Party	24	1	4
56	Sri Lanka Vanguard Party	3	0	-
57	Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna	10	0	-
58	Sri Lanka Progressive Front			
59	Sri Lanka Mahajana Pakshaya	18	1	5.26
60	Sri Lanka Muslim Congress	28	0	-
61	Communist Party of Sri Lanka	7	0	-
62	Socialist Alliance	7	0	-
63	Socialist Equality Party	2	0	-
64	Sinhaladeepa Jathika Peramuna	8	1	11.11

## Lower governing bodies reflect lower female representation levels over the years

### Members of Provincial Councils, 1993-2013

Province	1993		1999		2004		2013	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Western	7	97	2	102	6	98	5	99
North Central	4	32	1	33	1	32	1	32
North Western	3	49	3	48	4	48	2	50
Uva	0	34	1	31	1	33	1	33
Central	1	57	3	55	5	53	3	55
Southern	2	53	1	54	1	54	1	54
Sabaragamuwa	1	43	1	42	1	43	2	42
Eastern	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	36
Northern	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	36
<b>Total No.</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>437</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>95.3</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>96.8</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>95.0</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>96.0</b>

Source : Ministry of Local Government and Provincial Councils

- In 2013, only 18 are women, reflecting 3.9 percent representation. In the Western Provincial council, the situation is comparatively better for women.

# Even lower number of Ministerial positions at Provincial Councils level

Province	1993		2006		2013	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Western	-	5	-	5	-	5
North Central	-	5	-	5	-	5
North Western	1	4	-	5	-	5
Uva	1	4	-	5	-	5
Central	1	4	-	5	-	5
Southern	-	5	-	5	-	5
Sabaragamuwa	-	5	-	5	-	5
Eastern	-	-	-	-	<b>1</b>	4
Northern	-	-	-	-	-	5
<b>Total No</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>91.4</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>97.7</b>

Source : Ministry of Local Government and Provincial Councils

**Observation: Only 1 woman Minister in Provincial Councils in 2006 & 2013**

## Female office bearers of Political Parties in 2015 Parliament

POLITICAL PARTY	POSITION HELD BY WOMEN	NAME OF THE OFFICE BARES
Ilankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi	<b>Vice Secretary</b> 2014/09/07	Mrs. Nachchiyar Selvanayakam
United People's Freedom Alliance	<b>Deputy Secretary</b> 2015/03/14	Mrs. Pavithra Wanniarachchie
United National Party	<b>Vice Chairman</b> 2016/01/24	Late Mrs.Renuka Herath
	<b>Chairman</b> - Eksath Lak wanitha Peramuna	Mrs. Anoma Gamage
Jathika Hela Urumaya	<b>Deputy President</b> 2016/2017	Mrs. Nirosha Athukorala
Democratic People's Front	<b>Admin Secretary</b> <b>Secretary</b> <b>Democratic Workers Congress</b>	Ms. Priyani Gunarathna
Democratic Left Front	<b>Women Section Secretary</b> 2016/11/16	Mrs. Rupa Ranjani Edirisinghe
Mahajana Eksath Peramuna	<b>Deputy President</b> 2016/03/03	Sriyani Wijewikrama
Ceylon Worker's Congress	<b>National Council - Vice President</b>	Mrs. Ansiya Sivaraja
Sri Lanka Freedom Party	<b>Deputy Secretary</b> 2015/03/14	Mrs. Pavithra Wanniarachchie





# Recommendations for increased women's representation & participation: Based on experience and discussions with Party Leaders, Secretaries and Political Representatives



- **Reinforce Political Party Registration Act**

- i. Compulsory quota to incorporate women in executive body.

- ii. Amend Political Party Registration Act to increase women's representation from 1 female to 30% women's representation and participation.

- **Increase Intra-Party Democracy**

- i. There are women candidates with skills and capacities to hold decision-making positions

- ii. Install transparent and democratic system to select Party Governing Body

- Opportunities and space created at ground level for women's capacity-building programs on leadership and political activism
- Women- and child-friendly environments created in Parliament, Provincial Councils and Local Authorities.
- Provide financial incentives and aid to women candidates

**Canada** has a financial assistance program that allows women and minority candidates to be reimbursed up to C\$500 for child care expenses incurred in seeking a nomination, C\$500 for travel costs in geographically large areas

- **National List** – At least every 3<sup>rd</sup> person should be a female candidate in Political Party National List
- Political Parties to draft and endorse criteria for candidates (both male and female).
- Political Parties to allocate separate budget to strengthen women's representation and participation
- Every party should have a separate women's political wing.

**THANK YOU**

*"Protect Your Rights by Performing  
Your Duties"*