

## POSSIBILITIES AND CHALLENGES OF WOMEN'S POLITICAL REPRESENTATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS OF SRI LANKA

Somarathna D.H.A.S.<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Political Science, Faculty of Arts, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

\*arunasrisampath92@gmail.com

Women of Sri Lanka got their universal franchise under Donoughmore reforms of 1931. Although a period of 88 years have elapsed from that day to the present day women's political representation when compared to that of men is comparatively at a very low level. In National Politics, women's representation is as low as 5.8% while in local government institutions the percentage is above 1.9%. Although it is a characteristic in a democratic state to assert the independence, equality and rights irrespective of males and females it is still a problem that the female representation in Sri Lankan Politics is at a very low level, when compared to that of males. On that basis the basic objective of this study is to find the factors affecting the decrease of the representation of women in local government institutions of Sri Lanka. Under the qualitative research model the Central Province was selected as the field of study under the objective model system. 10 female representatives and 10 female representatives who are working at present in local government institutions and 15 active females of a number of women's organizations and 5 representatives representing major political parties totaling 40 delegates were selected to complete the total model. For the collections of primary data, interview system and Questionnaire system was used while letters, reports documents and internet were used for the Secondary data. For the overall data analysis, the descriptive method was used. The study revealed that a number of factors were responsible for the decrease of women's representation in local government bodies. Some of the main factors revealed were male-female social system, Attitudes and ideas prevailing in male dominated social system on women, method of elections, violent political culture and the knowledge and lack of experience of women regarding politics are some of the main causes. Accordingly, it is a time by requirement that new policies and programmes are formulated to raise the knowledge of women on politics.

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