

Key Findings

- **Age:** Seventy-seven percent of all ever-married women age 15 to 49 are over 29 years old.
- **Education:** Forty-Seven percent of ever married woman age 15 - 49 in Sri Lanka have completed more than secondary education. However, two percent of women have never attended school.
- **Literacy:** Ninety-Four percent of ever married women age 15 - 49 in Sri Lanka are literate.
- **Exposure to mass media:** Eleven percent of women are not exposed to any mass media at least once a week. Estate women are almost two times more likely than urban women to have “no” regular exposure to any form of mass media (8 percent versus 17 percent).
- **Internet usage:** 16 percent of ever-married women have used the internet in the past 12 months.
- **Employment:** Thirty three percent of ever-married women age 15 - 49 were employed during the week before the survey.
- **Occupation:** Over one-third of employed woman works are unskilled manual occupations.

This chapter provides information on the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of ever-married women who were interviewed in the 2016 SLDHS. The chapter begins by describing basic background characteristics, including age, religion, ethnicity, marital status, residence, education, and wealth status. Information is also presented on exposure to mass media and employment status. This information will help in understanding some of the factors that affect reproductive behavior, contraceptive use and other health practices of women.

3.1 BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS.

A total of 18,302 ever married women were interviewed in the 2016 Sri Lanka DHS. Twenty-three percent of the ever-married respondents are under 30 years of age. The majority of women are currently married, with only 6 percent divorced and separated. Living together as if married is not popular in Sri Lanka; only 4 percent of ever married women are in this category.

The distribution of respondents by residential sector reveals that the vast majority of the respondents (81 percent) live in rural areas of the country. By district of residence, Colombo and Gampaha have 10 percent each of the respondents, while districts in Western Sri Lanka comprise 25 percent of the ever-married women included in the sample (see Table 3.1).

The majority of the respondents (71 percent) are Buddhist. Hinduism (11 percent) Islam (10 percent) and Roman Catholic (6.5 percent) are the other religious with notable proportions. The distribution of ethnicity parallels the pattern for religions, with three-quarters (76 percent) of the respondents being Sinhalese, followed by Sri Lanka Tamils (12 percent), Sri Lankan Moors (9 percent), and Indian Tamil (2 percent). These distributions are similar to the ones reported from similar surveys and from the 2012 population census.

Table 3.1 Background characteristics of respondents

Percent distribution of ever-married women age 15-49 by selected background characteristics, Sri Lanka 2016

Background characteristic	Weighted percent	Ever-married Women	
		Weighted number	Unweighted number
Age			
15-19	1.2	229	227
20-24	7.7	1,410	1,440
25-29	14.3	2,620	2,655
30-34	19.7	3,615	3,603
35-39	21.6	3,945	3,925
40-44	17.9	3,269	3,261
45-49	17.6	3,214	3,191
Religion			
Buddhist	71.0	13,003	11,577
Hindu	11.4	2,078	3,242
Islam	9.7	1,772	1,825
Roman Catholic	6.5	1,196	1,365
Other Christian	1.4	249	290
Other	0.0	4	3
Ethnic group			
Sinhala	76.1	13,928	12,372
Sri Lanka Tamil	12.4	2,271	3,658
Indian Tamil	2.1	383	519
Sri Lanka moor /Muslim	9.1	1,660	1,695
Malay	0.1	27	24
Burger	0.2	29	29
Other	0.0	5	5
Marital status			
Married	90.4	16,545	16,538
Living together	3.9	712	632
Widowed/divorced/separated	5.7	1,045	1,132
Residence			
Urban	15.6	2,855	2,910
Rural	80.5	14,737	14,344
Estate	3.9	710	1,048
District			
Colombo	9.5	1,731	1,333
Gampaha	10.1	1,845	1,476
Kalutara	6.0	1,104	815
Kandy	6.7	1,223	1,093
Matale	2.7	490	484
Nuwara Eliya	3.1	572	633
Galle	5.1	935	857
Matara	3.9	718	698
Hambantota	3.0	556	563
Jaffna	2.6	471	520
Mannar	0.4	81	416
Vavuniya	0.7	136	451
Mullaitivu	0.4	81	378
Kilinochchi	0.5	94	384
Batticaloa	2.9	531	601
Ampara	4.0	731	799
Trincomalee	2.0	362	460
Kurunegala	8.7	1,592	1,383
Puttalam	3.6	664	661
Anuradhapura	5.4	984	816
Polonnaruwa	2.2	399	447
Badulla	4.0	735	767
Moneragala	2.6	485	543
Ratnapura	5.9	1,084	1,011
Kegalle	3.8	698	713
Education			
No education	1.6	285	318
Passed Grade 1-5	6.9	1,257	1,431
Passed Grade 6-10	44.4	8,130	8,169
Passed G.C.E.(O/L) or equivalent	22.1	4,044	4,032
Passed G.C.E.(A/L) or equivalent	20.4	3,731	3,522
Degree and above	4.7	856	830
Wealth quintile			
Lowest	18.5	3,390	4,295
Second	20.2	3,695	3,720
Middle	21.0	3,838	3,588
Fourth	20.9	3,816	3,501
Highest	19.5	3,562	3,198
Total 15-49	100.0	18,302	18,302

Note: Education categories refer to the highest level of education attended, whether or not that level was completed.

3.2 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT BY BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS

Education is one of the most influential determinants of an individual's knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. The educational attainment of a population is an important indicator of the society's stock of human capital and level of socioeconomic development. Education enhances the ability of individuals to achieve desired demographic and health goals. Table 3.2 presents differentials in the educational attainment of ever-married women by selected background characteristics.

Table 3.2 shows the relationship between women's level of education and their other background characteristics. Forty-Seven percent of ever married women age 15-49 in Sri Lanka have completed more than secondary education. However, 2 percent have never been to school, 20 percent have completed only some primary education, just completed all primary education, or some secondary education, and 32 percent have completed secondary education. Older women, women in the estate sector, and those in the lowest wealth quintile are most likely to have no education. The median number of years of completed education has levelled off at 11 years.

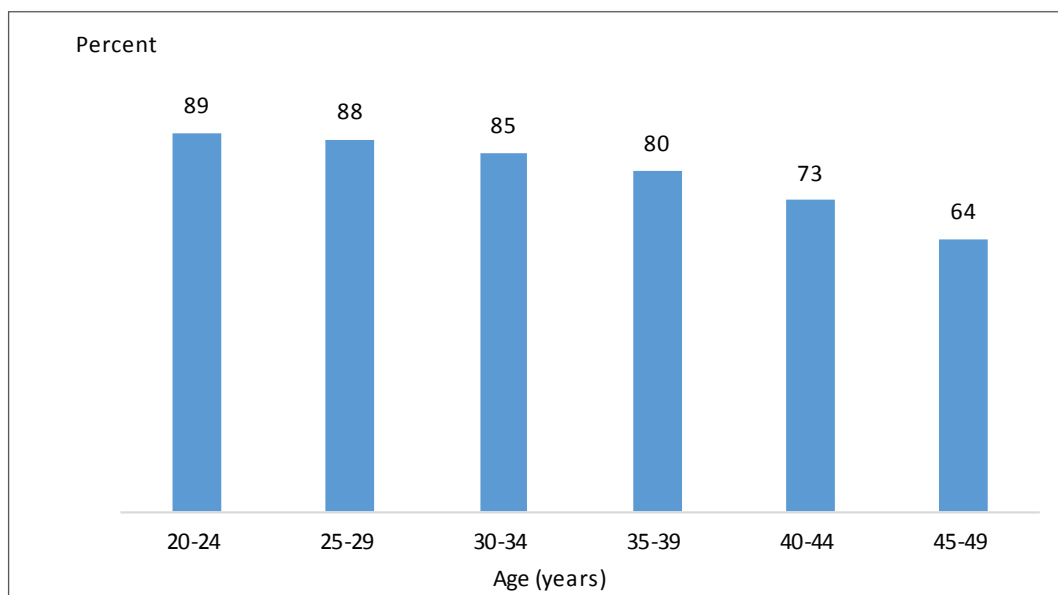
Background characteristic	Highest level of schooling						Total	Median years completed	Number of ever-married women
	No education	Some primary	Completed primary ¹	Some secondary	Completed secondary ²	More than secondary			
Age									
15-24	0.1	0.9	1.0	9.4	43.5	45.0	100.0	9.9	1,639
..15-19	0.0	1.0	0.8	14.4	55.3	28.5	100.0	9.6	229
..20-24	0.2	0.9	1.0	8.6	41.6	47.7	100.0	9.9	1,410
25-29	0.4	1.3	1.6	8.7	33.4	54.4	100.0	10.3	2,620
30-34	0.7	1.4	1.7	11.8	30.4	54.1	100.0	10.3	3,615
35-39	1.3	3.2	2.0	13.3	32.9	47.3	100.0	9.9	3,945
40-44	2.0	6.3	4.6	14.0	30.3	43.0	100.0	9.8	3,269
45-49	4.0	9.3	5.4	16.9	25.6	38.7	100.0	9.6	3,214
Residence									
Urban	1.0	2.7	2.8	13.5	23.0	57.0	100.0	10.4	2,855
Rural	1.3	3.8	2.5	12.0	33.8	46.6	100.0	9.9	14,737
Estate	8.4	14.4	10.9	26.3	20.9	19.0	100.0	8.2	710
District									
Colombo	1.1	2.6	1.9	11.1	23.2	60.1	100.0	10.6	1,731
Gampaha	0.6	2.0	0.9	10.1	28.8	57.7	100.0	10.4	1,845
Kalutara	1.1	3.0	1.9	11.0	32.8	50.3	100.0	10.1	1,104
Kandy	1.7	3.6	2.2	11.1	30.2	51.1	100.0	10.1	1,223
Matale	1.8	2.9	2.8	15.5	33.5	43.6	100.0	9.8	490
Nuwara Eliya	3.9	8.9	8.9	17.5	29.7	31.1	100.0	9.4	572
Galle	1.4	3.7	2.2	11.2	35.9	45.6	100.0	9.9	935
Matara	1.1	4.2	0.5	7.8	35.1	51.2	100.0	10.1	718
Hambantota	0.3	3.2	2.2	9.1	33.9	51.2	100.0	10.1	556
Jaffna	0.0	3.4	4.6	13.2	28.2	50.5	100.0	10.0	471
Mannar	0.2	2.9	7.9	24.0	28.9	36.1	100.0	9.5	81
Vavuniya	3.1	4.7	4.8	16.4	16.5	54.4	100.0	10.2	136
Mullaitivu	0.6	7.6	6.7	20.4	25.9	38.9	100.0	9.6	81
Kilinochchi	1.2	4.8	4.8	21.9	40.0	27.3	100.0	9.4	94
Batticaloa	2.3	7.9	7.4	20.8	21.3	40.4	100.0	9.6	531
Ampara	2.8	10.1	5.9	18.1	24.7	38.4	100.0	9.6	731
Trincomalee	2.3	4.6	7.1	21.6	22.7	41.6	100.0	9.7	362
Kurunegala	0.9	3.4	2.0	9.6	39.8	44.3	100.0	9.9	1,592
Puttalam	1.7	6.2	3.9	21.3	32.8	34.1	100.0	9.5	664
Anuradhapura	0.9	1.7	2.7	13.1	29.1	52.5	100.0	10.1	984
Polonnaruwa	1.5	4.6	2.1	14.7	44.8	32.4	100.0	9.6	399
Badulla	4.5	4.1	3.1	14.4	33.8	40.1	100.0	9.8	735
Moneragala	1.9	4.7	3.0	12.9	35.2	42.2	100.0	9.8	485
Ratnapura	3.0	4.6	2.5	12.6	41.9	35.4	100.0	9.7	1,084
Kegalle	0.9	3.7	2.1	9.2	31.0	53.2	100.0	10.2	698
Wealth quintile									
Lowest	5.6	10.2	7.3	23.9	33.8	19.1	100.0	9.2	3,390
Second	1.5	4.7	3.2	17.3	40.2	33.2	100.0	9.6	3,695
Middle	0.5	3.4	2.4	11.3	38.6	43.8	100.0	9.8	3,838
Fourth	0.4	1.6	1.3	8.5	30.6	57.6	100.0	10.4	3,816
Highest	0.2	0.6	0.5	3.6	14.4	80.7	100.0	12.2	3,562
Total	1.6	4.0	2.9	12.8	31.7	47.2	100.0	9.9	18,302

¹ Completed 5 grade at the primary level

² Completed 10 grade at the secondary level



Figure 3.1 Ever-married Women 20-49 with completed Secondary Education or Higher



As figure 3.1 shows younger women have attained more years of education than older women. For example, 89 percent of ever married women in age 20-24 have completed more than secondary education, compared with only 64 percent of ever married women in age 45-49.

Women in the urban sector show the highest percentage with some education above the secondary level (57 percent), compared with only 19 percent for women in the estate sector.

3.3 LITERACY

Literacy

Respondents who have attended higher than secondary school are assumed to be literate. All other respondents were given a sentence to read, and were considered literate if they could read all or part of the sentence.

Literacy is widely acknowledged as benefiting both the individual and society. Particularly among women, literacy is associated with positive outcomes, including inter-generational health and nutrition benefits. The ability to read and write empowers both women and men. Knowledge of the level of literacy that a population may attain is important for policy makers and program managers who design information materials.

The 2016 SLDHS defined literacy based on the respondent's ability to read all or part of a sentence. To test respondents' reading ability, interviewers carried a set of cards with simple sentences printed in Sinhala, Tamil and English. Respondents who had attended at least some secondary school were assumed to be literate. Respondents who had never been to school and those who had not attended school at the secondary level were asked to read the cards during the interview. From Table 3.3 we can see that Sri Lanka has high levels of literacy at 94 percent of ever-married women. However, there are substantial variations by place of residence and household wealth. Thus, 25 percent of the women of the estate sector are illiterate, compared to only around 5 percent in the urban and rural sectors. At the district level, four districts have illiteracy levels of 12 percent or more (Bataloa, 15 percent; Badulla, 13 percent; Nuwara Eliya and Trincomalee with 12 percent respectively). Illiteracy is also greater among the poorest 20 percent of the women (18%) and gradually declines with increased wealth to less than 1 percent among the richest women (see Table 3.3).

Table 3.3 Literacy

Percent distribution of ever-married women age 15-49 by level of schooling attended and level of literacy, and percentage literate, according to background characteristics, Sri Lanka 2016

Background characteristic	No schooling or primary school						Total	Percentage literate ¹	Number of ever-married women
	Higher than secondary schooling	Can read a whole sentence	Can read part of a sentence	Cannot read at all	No card with required language	Blind/visually impaired			
Age									
15-24	45.0	47.1	4.4	3.2	0.3	0.0	100.0	96.5	1,639
15-19	28.5	59.1	7.2	5.2	0.0	0.0	100.0	94.8	229
20-24	47.7	45.2	3.9	2.9	0.3	0.0	100.0	96.7	1,410
25-29	54.4	39.3	3.6	2.5	0.1	0.0	100.0	97.3	2,620
30-34	54.1	39.3	3.6	3.0	0.1	0.1	100.0	96.9	3,615
35-39	47.3	42.5	4.3	5.6	0.2	0.1	100.0	94.2	3,945
40-44	43.0	41.9	7.1	7.6	0.1	0.3	100.0	92.0	3,269
45-49	38.7	40.6	8.5	11.2	0.2	0.8	100.0	87.8	3,214
Residence									
Urban	57.0	32.9	4.7	4.5	0.8	0.1	100.0	94.6	2,855
Rural	46.6	43.1	4.9	5.1	0.0	0.3	100.0	94.6	14,737
Estate	19.0	38.9	16.5	25.2	0.2	0.2	100.0	74.4	710
District									
Colombo	60.1	33.3	2.1	3.4	1.1	0.0	100.0	95.5	1,731
Gampaha	57.7	37.0	2.8	2.4	0.0	0.2	100.0	97.4	1,845
Kalutara	50.3	41.7	2.7	4.8	0.0	0.6	100.0	94.7	1,104
Kandy	51.1	36.4	4.2	8.1	0.0	0.1	100.0	91.8	1,223
Matale	43.6	45.2	5.5	5.0	0.0	0.7	100.0	94.3	490
Nuwara Eliya	31.1	44.9	11.7	12.3	0.0	0.1	100.0	87.6	572
Galle	45.6	44.5	4.6	4.9	0.0	0.4	100.0	94.7	935
Matara	51.2	42.1	2.0	4.2	0.0	0.5	100.0	95.4	718
Hambantota	51.2	41.9	2.7	3.9	0.2	0.0	100.0	95.9	556
Jaffna	50.5	36.1	6.5	5.7	0.0	1.2	100.0	93.2	471
Mannar	36.1	43.7	15.1	4.5	0.0	0.6	100.0	94.9	81
Vavuniya	54.4	26.5	9.5	8.8	0.0	0.9	100.0	90.3	136
Mullaitivu	38.9	41.6	10.2	7.8	0.0	1.4	100.0	90.8	81
Kilinochchi	27.3	56.7	7.6	8.2	0.0	0.2	100.0	91.6	94
Batticaloa	40.4	32.4	12.4	14.8	0.0	0.0	100.0	85.2	531
Ampara	38.4	35.8	16.5	9.2	0.0	0.1	100.0	90.7	731
Trincomalee	41.6	29.7	16.0	12.6	0.0	0.1	100.0	87.2	362
Kurunegala	44.3	47.9	4.3	3.3	0.0	0.2	100.0	96.4	1,592
Puttalam	34.1	51.8	8.4	5.8	0.0	0.0	100.0	94.2	664
Anuradhapura	52.5	40.1	5.2	2.2	0.0	0.0	100.0	97.8	984
Polonnaruwa	32.4	56.1	4.6	6.3	0.0	0.6	100.0	93.1	399
Badulla	40.1	39.6	7.3	12.3	0.8	0.0	100.0	87.0	735
Monaragala	42.2	47.5	4.9	5.2	0.0	0.2	100.0	94.6	485
Ratnapura	35.4	53.3	2.9	8.3	0.0	0.1	100.0	91.5	1,084
Kegalle	53.2	40.9	3.1	2.8	0.0	0.0	100.0	97.2	698
Wealth quintile									
Lowest	19.1	49.5	13.3	17.6	0.1	0.4	100.0	81.9	3,390
Second	33.2	53.2	6.7	6.5	0.1	0.3	100.0	93.1	3,695
Middle	43.8	48.6	3.9	3.4	0.1	0.2	100.0	96.3	3,838
Fourth	57.6	38.1	2.1	1.8	0.3	0.2	100.0	97.8	3,816
Highest	80.7	17.2	1.2	0.6	0.1	0.1	100.0	99.2	3,562
Total	47.2	41.4	5.3	5.8	0.1	0.2	100.0	93.8	18,302

¹ Refers to women who attended schooling higher than the secondary level and women who can read a whole sentence or part of a sentence



3.4 EXPOSURE TO MASS MEDIA

Exposure to mass media

Respondents were asked how often they read a newspaper, listened to the radio or watched television. Those who responded *at least* once a week are considered to be regularly exposed to that form of media.

Access to information through the media is essential to increase people's knowledge and awareness of what takes place around them. The 2016 SLDHS assessed exposure to media by asking respondents if they listened to the radio, watched television, or read newspapers or magazines at least once a week. This information could be used effectively in determining the optimal media to use in passing health messages and other information to the public, and specific target populations.

Table 3.4 shows that television is most the popular mass medium (81 percent) among ever-married women, followed by radio (56 percent). Reading the newspaper is less popular (41 percent). It is also important to note that 24 percent women are exposed to all three media, and 12 percent are not exposed to any of the three media on a weekly basis. Estate women are less likely than urban women to have regular exposure to any form of mass media (8 percent versus 17 percent).

District of residence shows important differentials in media access by ever-married women. The percentage of women with no access to any of the three media at least once a week is highest in Kilinochchi (37 percent), Trincomalee (28 percent), Kegalle (27 percent), Moneragala (19 percent), Batticaloa (19 percent), Ampara (18 percent) and, Mullaitivu (16 percent). Altogether, in 14 out of the 25 districts at least 10 percent of the ever-married women have no regular exposure to mass media.

Exposure to all three media increases with the level of education (from 1 percent for those with no education to 45 percent for the highest education group). Media exposure is positively related to the wealth of the households in which ever-married reside, going from 25 percent with no mass media access among women in the poorest quintile to just 6 percent among those in the richest one.

Table 3.4 : Exposure to Mass Media

Percentage of ever-married women age 15-49 who are exposed to specific media on a weekly basis, by background characteristics, Sri Lanka 2016

Background characteristic	Reads a newspaper at least once a week	Watches television at least once a week	Listens to the radio at least once a week	Accesses all three media at least once a week	Accesses none of the three media at least once a week	Number of ever-married women
Age						
15-19	40.1	82.5	50.0	25.5	9.4	229
20-24	39.4	82.4	51.4	24.5	10.6	1,410
25-29	42.6	84.4	48.8	24.8	9.4	2,620
30-34	41.4	80.9	49.2	23.6	10.4	3,615
35-39	41.1	80.6	52.1	24.3	10.5	3,945
40-44	43.4	79.0	52.1	26.2	12.1	3,269
45-49	38.8	77.2	50.0	23.2	13.4	3,214
Residence						
Urban	51.6	83.3	50.1	27.5	7.5	2,855
Rural	39.7	80.3	50.6	24.0	11.6	14,737
Estate	31.0	73.2	53.0	19.9	16.5	710
District						
Colombo	59.0	85.5	51.1	30.7	6.0	1,731
Gampaha	53.9	83.8	51.7	30.7	8.6	1,845
Kalutara	49.0	84.0	54.8	28.2	7.3	1,104
Kandy	46.0	78.0	52.4	25.8	10.3	1,223
Matale	26.9	83.9	49.7	15.4	7.7	490
Nuwara Eliya	41.1	81.0	68.2	30.8	9.3	572
Galle	45.8	79.9	59.8	28.2	9.0	935
Matara	52.5	88.4	66.8	36.6	4.3	718
Hambantota	39.0	88.6	65.4	31.0	4.1	556
Jaffna	57.6	73.9	48.1	30.4	12.5	471
Mannar	52.0	82.0	60.4	41.6	10.3	81
Vavuniya	64.9	80.9	58.3	41.1	9.4	136
Mullaitivu	43.4	61.5	44.5	17.1	16.3	81
Kilinochchi	29.7	46.9	29.8	12.5	37.0	94
Batticaloa	22.8	72.8	35.6	12.4	18.8	531
Ampara	25.2	74.6	53.2	18.2	18.0	731
Trincomalee	31.9	63.3	40.1	17.9	28.1	362
Kurunegala	33.1	79.1	43.1	17.9	13.7	1,592
Puttalam	36.1	81.2	51.9	22.1	8.5	664
Anuradhapura	35.6	83.8	49.5	24.7	13.0	984
Polonnaruwa	33.1	82.8	53.5	19.8	10.0	399
Badulla	31.0	79.2	56.2	21.7	12.1	735
Moneragala	18.6	77.3	27.5	10.4	18.8	485
Ratnapura	29.1	83.9	46.3	14.5	6.5	1,084
Kegalle	38.5	68.3	30.6	20.5	26.8	698
Education						
No education	0.6	49.4	40.4	0.6	37.4	285
Passed Grade 1-5	7.2	62.5	40.1	3.7	26.7	1,257
Passed Grade 6-10	32.0	80.2	47.8	18.7	11.8	8,130
Passed G.C.E.(O/L) or equivalent	48.2	83.5	53.7	28.7	8.7	4,044
Passed G.C.E.(A/L) or equivalent	60.5	85.6	55.7	36.1	6.1	3,731
Degree and above	75.4	83.4	58.2	45.2	6.8	856
Wealth quintile						
Lowest	24.5	61.6	37.2	10.7	24.9	3,390
Second	31.1	80.1	46.2	17.3	11.5	3,695
Middle	37.9	85.7	51.4	22.6	8.2	3,838
Fourth	47.4	86.9	58.4	30.8	6.7	3,816
Highest	64.5	86.4	58.6	39.7	5.6	3,562
Total	41.2	80.5	50.6	24.4	11.1	18,302



3.5 INTERNET USAGE

Table 3.5: Internet usage

Percentage of ever-married women age 15-49 who have ever used the internet ever, and percentage who have used the internet in the past 12 months, according to background characteristics, Sri Lanka 2016

Background characteristic	Ever used the internet	Used the internet in the past 12 months	Number of ever-married women
Age			
15-19	21.3	18.5	229
20-24	26.1	22.5	1,410
25-29	27.7	25.4	2,620
30-34	23.8	21.7	3,615
35-39	16.6	14.8	3,945
40-44	12.8	11.3	3,269
45-49	8.6	7.4	3,214
Residence			
Urban	35.1	32.9	2,855
Rural	15.7	13.8	14,737
Estate	4.4	3.7	710
District			
Colombo	39.1	37.1	1,731
Gampaha	27.0	24.7	1,845
Kalutara	20.2	18.7	1,104
Kandy	25.4	23.1	1,223
Matale	17.5	13.6	490
Nuwara Eiya	7.3	6.3	572
Galle	18.0	15.9	935
Matara	13.2	12.0	718
Hambantota	14.3	11.1	556
Jaffna	17.8	17.2	471
Mannar	8.6	7.7	81
Vavuniya	16.6	14.7	136
Mullaitivu	9.1	8.2	81
Kilinochchi	9.6	9.3	94
Batticaloa	16.2	15.3	531
Ampara	11.7	9.8	731
Trincomalee	18.8	17.0	362
Kurunegala	14.2	11.7	1,592
Puttalam	15.6	13.5	664
Anuradhapura	11.7	10.5	984
Polonnaruwa	9.7	8.4	399
Badulla	12.4	10.3	735
Moneragala	7.4	5.3	485
Ratnapura	11.6	9.2	1,084
Kegalle	9.4	8.6	698
Education			
No education	1.1	0.7	285
Passed Grade 1-5	2.0	0.9	1,257
Passed Grade 6-10	6.5	5.3	8,130
Passed G.C.E.(O/L) or equivalent	17.0	14.9	4,044
Passed G.C.E.(A/L) or equivalent	40.1	36.6	3,731
Degree and above	71.8	68.4	856
Wealth quintile			
Lowest	3.3	2.2	3,390
Second	6.8	5.3	3,695
Middle	11.0	9.2	3,838
Fourth	21.3	18.8	3,816
Highest	49.1	46.4	3,562
Total	18.3	16.4	18,302

Table 3.5 shows that almost one in five (18 percent) of ever-married women age 15-49 have ever used the internet. This table also indicates that only 16 percent of the ever-married women have used the internet in the past 12 months.

As expected, internet use is higher among younger cohorts but is at its highest among women 25-29 years of age. Similarly, place of residence predicts internet use well, with the highest percentages in the urban sector (33 percent used in the past 12 months, compared to just 14 percent and 3 percent in the rural and estate sectors respectively) and urban districts (Colombo, 37 percent, Gampaha, 25 percent, and Kalutara, 19 percent).

Education and household wealth also are good predictors of internet use. Sixty eight percent of ever-married women with “degree and above” have used the internet during the 12 months before the survey, compared to five percent or less among those with no education, primary or secondary education (passed grade 1-5 or passed grade 6-10). Almost half (46 percent) of ever-married women in the richest households have used the internet in the last 12 months, compared to only 2 percent of those in the poorest households, a dramatic difference (see Table 3.5).

3.6 EMPLOYMENT

Measuring employment status is difficult in part because some work, especially work in a family business or in the informal sector, may not be perceived as employment. To avoid underestimating respondents' employment, ever-married women were asked several questions to determine if they were employed or not. They were asked whether, aside from household work, they were working in the seven days before the survey. At the time of the survey, 33 percent of ever-married women age 15-49 indicated to be employed (see Table 3.6). The proportion employed is lowest among women age 15-19 (7 percent) and peaks at 42

percent in the 45-49 age group. The proportion of women employed decreases with increasing early levels of education. Thus, 57 percent of women with no education are employed compared with 26 percent of

Table 3.6 Employment status

Percent distribution of ever-married women age 15-49 by employment status, according to background characteristics, Sri Lanka 2016

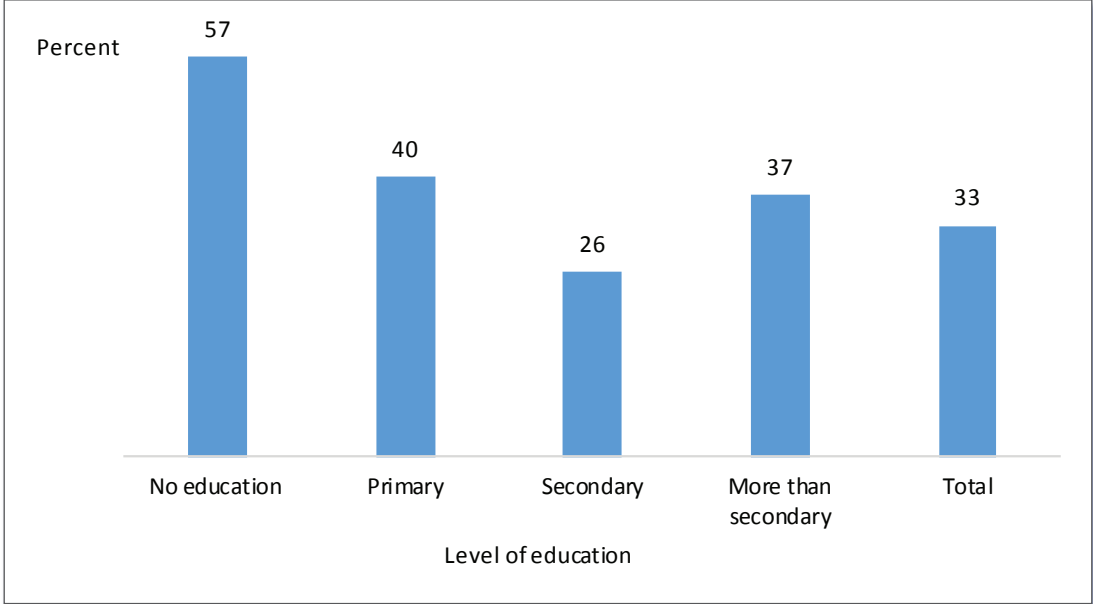
Background characteristic	Currently employed ¹	Total	Number of ever-married women
Age			
15-19	6.9	6.9	229
20-24	17.3	17.3	1,410
25-29	24.4	24.4	2,620
30-34	30.7	30.7	3,615
35-39	33.8	33.8	3,945
40-44	40.3	40.3	3,269
45-49	42.2	42.2	3,214
Marital status			
Married or living together	31.3	31.3	17,257
Divorced/separated/widowed	58.7	58.7	1,045
Number of living children			
0	40.0	40.0	1,873
1-2	31.8	31.8	11,489
3-4	33.0	33.0	4,584
5+	28.2	28.2	355
Residence			
Urban	34.2	34.2	2,855
Rural	31.6	31.6	14,737
Estate	53.4	53.4	710
District			
Colombo	39.0	39.0	1,731
Gampaha	36.8	36.8	1,845
Kalutara	41.4	41.4	1,104
Kandy	31.5	31.5	1,223
Matale	39.3	39.3	490
Nuwara Eliya	41.5	41.5	572
Galle	38.2	38.2	935
Matara	34.9	34.9	718
Hambantota	26.4	26.4	556
Jaffna	32.4	32.4	471
Mannar	17.4	17.4	81
Vavuniya	19.8	19.8	136
Mullaitivu	29.6	29.6	81
Kiilinochchi	29.8	29.8	94
Batticaloa	22.7	22.7	531
Ampara	17.7	17.7	731
Trincomalee	20.3	20.3	362
Kurunegala	34.5	34.5	1,592
Puttalam	28.9	28.9	664
Anuradhapura	20.3	20.3	984
Polonnaruwa	27.1	27.1	399
Badulla	38.0	38.0	735
Moneragala	24.4	24.4	485
Ratnapura	37.0	37.0	1,084
Kegalle	31.3	31.3	698
Education			
No education	57.0	57.0	285
Passed Grade 1-5	39.8	39.8	1,257
Passed Grade 6-10	26.3	26.3	8,130
Passed G.C.E.(O/L) or equivalent	24.6	24.6	4,044
Passed G.C.E.(A/L) or equivalent	40.1	40.1	3,731
Degree and above	84.7	84.7	856
Wealth quintile			
Lowest	32.3	32.3	3,390
Second	29.2	29.2	3,695
Middle	28.7	28.7	3,838
Fourth	31.1	31.1	3,816
Highest	43.6	43.6	3,562
Total	32.9	32.9	18,302

¹ "Currently employed" is defined as having done work in the past seven days. Includes persons who did not work in the past seven days but who are regularly employed and were absent from work for leave, illness, vacation, or any other such reason.



women who completed secondary level. However, among women with more than secondary education it is 37 percent (see Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2 Percentage of currently employed ever married women among age 15-49 by level of education



3.7 OCCUPATION

Women who had worked in the 7 days before the survey were asked about their occupations. As shown in Table 3.7 and Figure 3.3, over one-quarter of employed women work in professional, technical, or managerial positions and almost one-sixth work in sales and services. Over one-third of employed women are unskilled manual workers. In urban areas, the most common occupations are Professional/Technical / Managerial

Figure 3.3 Percentage of ever-married women age 15-49 by occupation

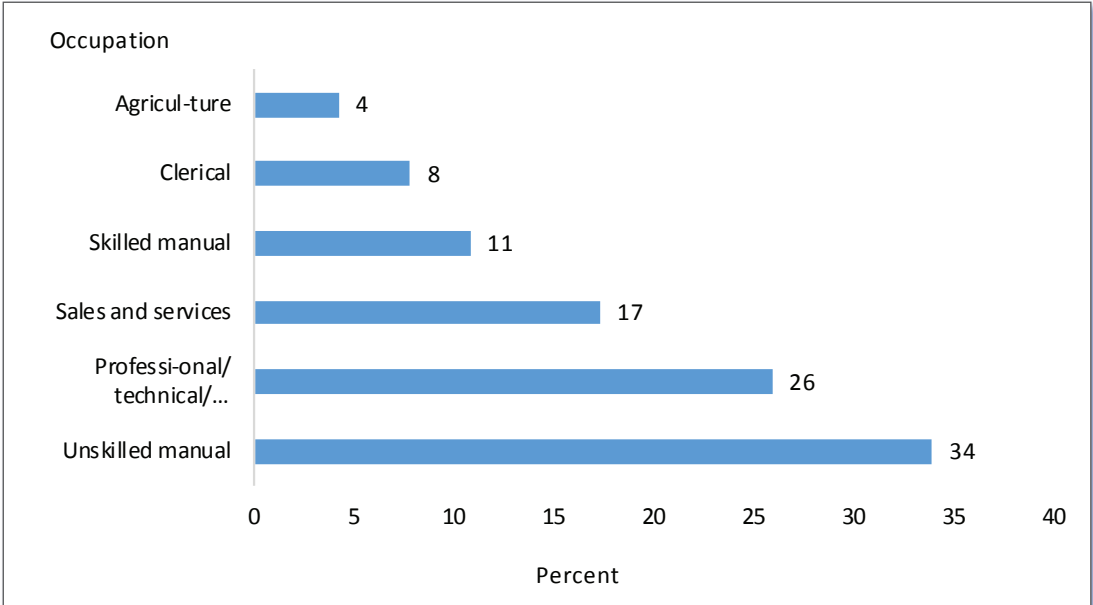


Table 3.7 Occupation

Percent distribution of ever-married women age 15-49 currently working by occupation, according to background characteristics, Sri Lanka 2016

Background characteristic	Professional/ technical/ managerial	Clerical	Sales and services	Skilled manual	Un- skilled manual	Agriculture	Total	Number of ever- married women
Age								
15-19	*	*	*	*	*	*	100.0	16
20-24	21.1	6.8	13.8	22.4	33.5	2.4	100.0	244
25-29	28.4	13.6	13.1	12.7	29.6	2.7	100.0	640
30-34	31.4	10.2	15.6	11.2	28.9	2.6	100.0	1,110
35-39	25.6	7.7	18.1	11.3	32.5	4.9	100.0	1,334
40-44	24.3	5.7	18.9	9.3	37.0	4.8	100.0	1,318
45-49	23.1	5.4	18.9	8.3	38.7	5.6	100.0	1,355
Marital status								
Married or living together	26.7	8.3	17.1	10.8	32.9	4.3	100.0	5,402
Divorced/separated/widowed	19.0	3.7	19.3	11.1	42.7	4.2	100.0	614
Number of living children								
0	33.6	14.8	15.2	14.5	20.5	1.4	100.0	749
1-2	28.0	8.4	17.2	11.1	31.8	3.5	100.0	3,656
3-4	18.6	3.3	18.2	8.4	44.2	7.2	100.0	1,512
5+	4.5	1.4	19.8	8.6	57.9	7.8	100.0	100
Residence								
Urban	30.4	12.6	23.3	10.4	22.9	0.5	100.0	977
Rural	26.5	7.4	16.4	11.5	34.2	4.0	100.0	4,660
Estate	7.7	0.3	12.5	3.6	59.4	16.5	100.0	379
District								
Colombo	30.8	13.3	28.6	10.6	16.5	0.2	100.0	675
Gampaha	23.8	8.9	26.9	22.4	17.8	0.3	100.0	679
Kalutara	30.2	4.3	16.6	9.8	35.1	4.0	100.0	458
Kandy	34.5	7.5	17.1	9.8	25.9	5.2	100.0	386
Matale	16.2	6.3	13.9	11.3	51.1	1.1	100.0	192
Nuwara Eliya	13.4	2.6	8.7	2.9	52.7	19.8	100.0	238
Galle	13.6	6.0	13.5	5.7	58.1	3.1	100.0	357
Matara	55.5	5.2	15.8	3.9	10.3	9.2	100.0	250
Hambantota	24.8	4.9	21.5	18.6	25.5	4.6	100.0	147
Jaffna	26.3	20.2	10.6	5.9	35.4	1.7	100.0	153
Mannar	*	*	*	*	*	*	100.0	14
Vavuniya	(27.3)	(13.8)	(21.4)	(1.8)	(26.3)	(9.4)	100.0	27
Mullaitivu	*	*	*	*	*	*	100.0	24
Kilinochchi	(5.3)	(23.6)	(10.3)	(14.7)	(38.0)	(8.1)	100.0	28
Batticaloa	2.1	22.6	10.9	19.8	40.0	4.6	100.0	121
Ampara	2.3	6.8	10.0	11.2	67.4	2.2	100.0	129
Trincomalee	27.0	15.2	11.1	9.2	37.6	0.0	100.0	73
Kurunegala	32.1	5.0	10.9	5.7	45.0	1.2	100.0	549
Puttalam	27.2	7.5	23.4	13.3	17.0	11.8	100.0	192
Anuradhapura	25.6	6.9	5.6	4.5	54.8	2.6	100.0	199
Polonnaruwa	22.9	2.7	28.8	16.3	19.5	9.8	100.0	108
Badulla	22.0	4.3	7.0	1.4	64.6	0.7	100.0	280
Moneragala	39.2	6.7	19.6	4.4	29.3	0.8	100.0	118
Ratnapura	21.6	4.1	7.0	18.9	36.8	11.5	100.0	401
Kegalle	22.6	9.3	34.0	13.2	15.5	5.4	100.0	218
Education								
No education	9.0	0.0	21.2	2.5	62.7	4.6	100.0	162
Passed Grade 1-5	8.2	0.0	12.7	8.0	60.4	10.7	100.0	500
Passed Grade 6-10	11.5	1.1	17.8	17.6	45.2	6.8	100.0	2,140
Passed G.C.E.(O/L) or equivalent	19.6	7.2	24.7	14.4	30.3	3.7	100.0	995
Passed G.C.E.(A/L) or equivalent	38.8	18.9	17.0	5.5	19.0	0.8	100.0	1,495
Degree and above	66.7	12.8	8.5	0.4	11.6	0.0	100.0	724
Wealth quintile								
Lowest	10.0	1.6	12.7	11.9	54.6	9.2	100.0	1,097
Second	15.3	3.2	17.9	14.2	43.1	6.2	100.0	1,079
Middle	20.3	6.5	18.4	15.4	34.7	4.6	100.0	1,101
Fourth	28.4	10.3	19.6	11.1	28.4	2.3	100.0	1,186
Highest	46.6	14.4	17.6	4.2	16.6	0.6	100.0	1,554
Total	25.9	7.8	17.3	10.8	33.9	4.2	100.0	6,016

Note: An asterisk indicated a figure is based on fewer than 25 unweighted cases and has been suppressed and figures in parentheses are based on 25-49 unweighted cases.



The type of occupation of ever-married women has an interesting association with the number of children. On the one hand, greater participation in professional/technical/managerial, clerical, sales and services, and skilled manual occupation are observed among women with lower numbers of living children. At the same time, unskilled manual occupations tend to increase with the number of living children (see Table 3.7). For example, the percentage of ever-married women working in professional/technical/managerial occupations changes from 34 percent among those with no children to only 5 percent among those with 5+ living children. This compares to those working in unskilled manual occupations where only 21 percent of childless women work in such an occupation, compared to almost sixty percent (58 percent) among those with 5+ living children. This pattern is similar across sector residence, with the Estate sector highly influenced by unskilled manual and agricultural occupations.

At the district level, there are clusters of districts with higher percentages of either skilled or unskilled occupations reflecting somehow the level of development of the country. Of particular importance is the high percentage of unskilled manual and agriculture occupations observed in 6 of the 25 districts (50 percent or more of the ever-married women): Nuwara Eliva (73 percent), Ampara (70 percent), Badulla (65 percent), Galle (62 percent), Anuradhapura (57 percent), and Matale (52 percent).