

# Lankan women face tough jobs market

- More than 60% of country's professionals are women
- Disparities in regional wage earnings acute

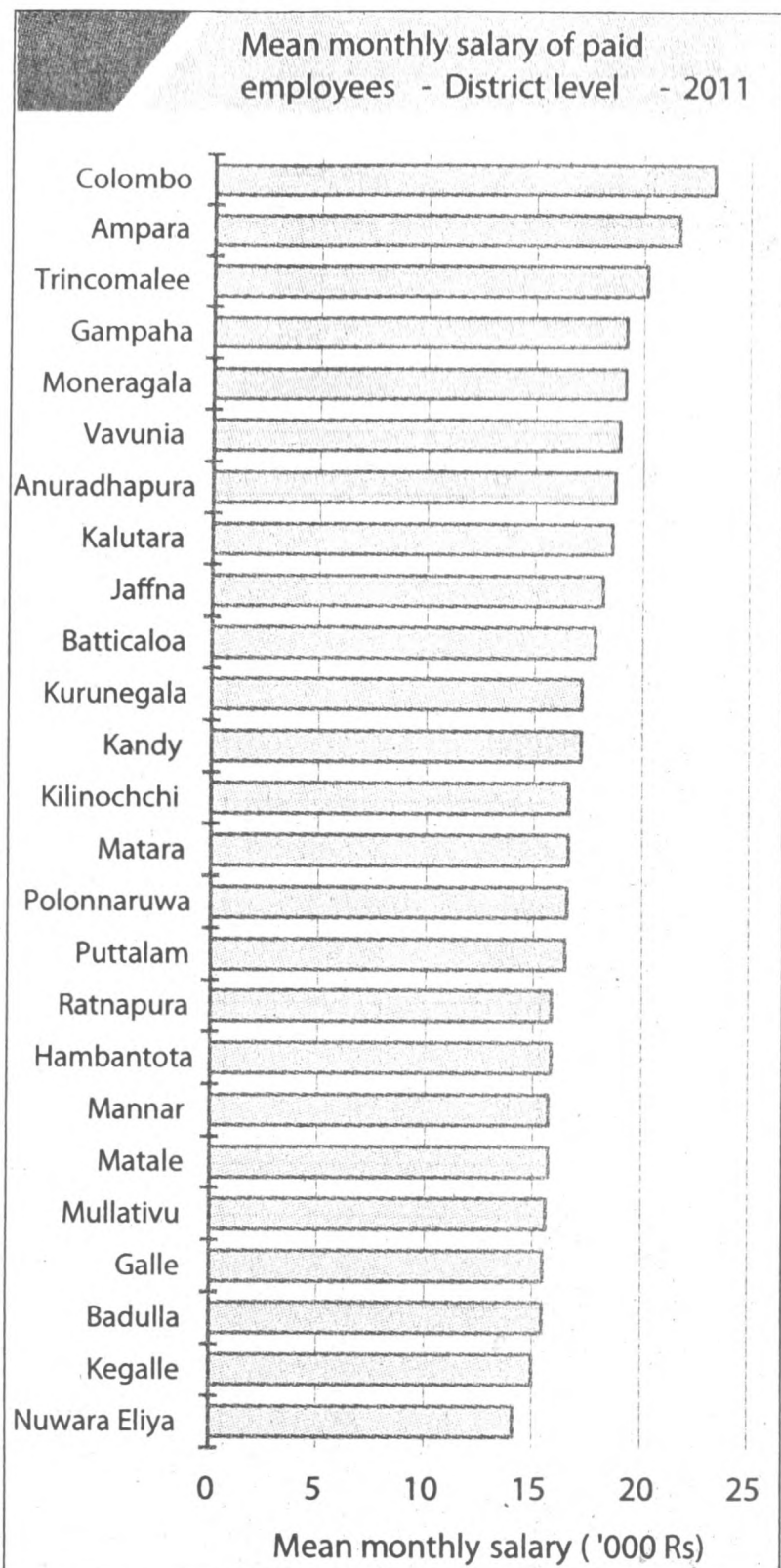
The Department of Census and Statistics last week released the Labour Force Survey Annual Report for 2011 after a survey which covered the entire country. While employment has improved in the recent past, unemployment continues to be high among women and educated youth while regional disparities in average monthly wages were acute.

The survey revealed that 8.2 million persons were employed during the year 2011. Out of these employed persons, about 5.5 million (67 percent) were males and 2.7 million (33 percent) were females.

The labour force participation rate was 48.8 percent in 2011, down from 51.2 percent in 2006.

Out of the total employed population, the highest share of 42.8 percent was reported under the services sector (42.8 percent), whereas the lowest was from the industries sector at 24.1 percent. An estimated 33 percent was engaged in the agriculture sector.

More than 40 percent of total employment comprises self employed workers in Moneragala, Polonnaruwa, Hambantota, Kilinochchi, Mullativu and Kurunegala dis-



tricts. Contributions made to the total employment by contributing family workers are comparatively higher in Anuradhapura, Badulla and Moneragala districts, which had higher female labour force

participation rates.

It is estimated that the total public sector employees was around 1.2 million. The percentage of female paid employees engaged in the public sector was higher at 17.8 percent compared with males at 12.7 percent.

Contribution to total employment by contributing family workers was 10.8 percent, and it was 23.3 percent for females, which was much higher compared to the contribution of males (4.5 percent) in the same category.

Women are heavily concentrated in certain occupations with 25.3 percent of them gaining employment as skilled agricultural and fisheries workers, compared with 21.9 percent of males.

Also, 11.1 percent of females work as professionals compared with 3.7 percent of males with 60.3 percent of all professionals in the country estimated to be women, with teaching and nursing being two dominant areas.

The number of unemployed persons was estimated at 357,803 during the year 2011. Out of this total, 43 percent were males and 57 percent females.

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## Educated...

The unemployment rate was 4.2 percent in 2011, down from 8.8 in 2011. Rural female unemployment at 7.1 percent was higher than the urban female unemployment rate of 6 percent. It could also be seen that, at the national level, the unemployment rate for females at 7 percent was two and half times greater than that of the male unemployment rate at 2.7 percent.

The highest unemployment rate of 17.2 percent was recorded from the young population (15 - 24 years) for both males (12.9 percent) and females (24.8 percent) whereas the lowest (0.7 percent) was from the 40 years and above age category.

The unemployment rate among the educated group (G.C.E. A/L and above) was 9 percent. It was 5.4 percent and 13.1 percent

