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**89**

Drop in Sri Lanka's rank in the GGGI from 2006 - 2019/20

**13**

Sri Lanka's rank in the GGGI in 2006

**102**

Sri Lanka's rank in the GGGI in 2019/20

# Reducing the Gap in Understanding Sri Lanka's Gender Gap

Sri Lanka recorded the largest ranking decline of 89 places in the Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) from the introduction of the index in 2006 to 2019/20. This *Insight* shows that this reduction is due to a quirk in the calculation method, which inflated Sri Lanka's past scores. Adjusting for this anomaly shows that Sri Lanka's score on the GGGI has always remained low, indicating that the country has made no progress in closing its gender gaps over the past decade.

## The Global Gender Gap Index

**T**he World Economic Forum's **Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI)** is a composite index that measures the extent of gender-based gaps in and among countries and tracks progress towards reducing these gaps over time. See Box 1 on calculation of the Gender Gap.

Sri Lanka is recorded as taking a nose-dive over the decade in terms of its gender gap, with a dramatically worsening score on the GGGI. This

*Insight* shows that this reduction in Sri Lanka's score is due to a quirk in the calculation method, which inflated Sri Lanka's past scores. Adjusting for this anomaly shows that Sri Lanka's score on the GGGI is better read as having always been rather low, and has in fact remained about the same for over a decade.

## Sri Lanka's Dramatic Decline in the Global Gender Gap Index

In 2006, the year in which the GGGI was introduced, Sri Lanka was ranked

13 out of 115 countries included in that year's assessment, ahead of countries such as Australia, Canada, Switzerland and Singapore. However, in the latest edition of the report in 2019/20, Sri Lanka was ranked at 102 out of 153 countries.

Over a period of 13 years, Sri Lanka's ranking dropped precipitously by 89 positions. That is, Sri Lanka has the largest ranking decline in GGGI out of the 153 countries tracked since the introduction of the index. Exhibit 1 provides a summary of Sri Lanka's performance in the GGGI from 2006 to 2019/20.

### Decline in Relative Performance

Since 2006, most countries have recorded improvements in their GGGI score. However, Sri Lanka has experienced a steady decline in its GGGI score since 2010.

In 2006, countries such as Singapore, Ethiopia and France were ranked at 65th, 100th and 70th positions respectively, all far behind Sri Lanka's impressive 13th position. In contrast, in 2019/20, Singapore, Ethiopia and France improved their absolute score and increased their rankings to 54th, 82nd and 15th positions, respectively, while Sri Lanka dropped to the 102nd position.

Sri Lanka has performed poorly relative to its South Asian peers as well.

Over the period 2006 to 2019/20, almost all the South Asian countries (except Bhutan) have made progress in closing their gender gaps, which is evident from the upward trends recorded in each country's GGGI score (See Exhibit 2). South Asian countries such as India, Nepal and Bangladesh, which started off with much lower scores than Sri Lanka, have, over the 13-year

period, caught up. In the latest edition of the index, Bangladesh and Nepal were ranked in 50th and 101st positions respectively, ahead of Sri Lanka. In 2006, these two countries were ranked in the 91st and 110th positions respectively.

**It also means that, since the introduction of the index in 2006, on all the other factors measured, Sri Lanka has not made progress towards reducing its gender gap.**

### Explaining Sri Lanka's Gender Gap Decline Since 2010

Disaggregating Sri Lanka's GGGI score by each sub-index score makes it apparent that the decline over the last 10 years is predominantly due to the decline in the score of the Political Empowerment Sub-index. When disaggregating the scores further, it is apparent that even within this sub-index, it is only one of the three indicators that is driving the decline of Sri Lanka's score on the GGGI.

The three indicators that make up the political empowerment sub-index are: (1) Female to male ratio of seats in parliament; (2) Female to male ratio of those serving at the ministerial level; and (3) Female to male ratio of years as the head of state (in the last 50 years). It is this third indicator – the ratio of years as the head of state – that drives the dramatic decline in the GGGI score from 2010 to 2019 (See Exhibit 3).

Sri Lanka had the distinction of electing the world's first woman head of state when Sirimavo Bandaranaike was elected to be prime minister in 1960 and served her first term till 1965. Her second term started in 1970.

The GGGI index calculates for the head of state gender gap indicator over 50 years. Hence, in calculating the index after 2010, that indicator declined, as Bandaranaike's first term was counted less after 2010 and then not at all after 2014.

### Re-estimating Sri Lanka's Gender Gap Trajectory.

Verité Research re-estimated Sri Lanka's GGGI score for the period 2006 to 2018, using the 2019 value for the gender gap indicator on the "years with

### Box 1: Calculation of Gender Gap.

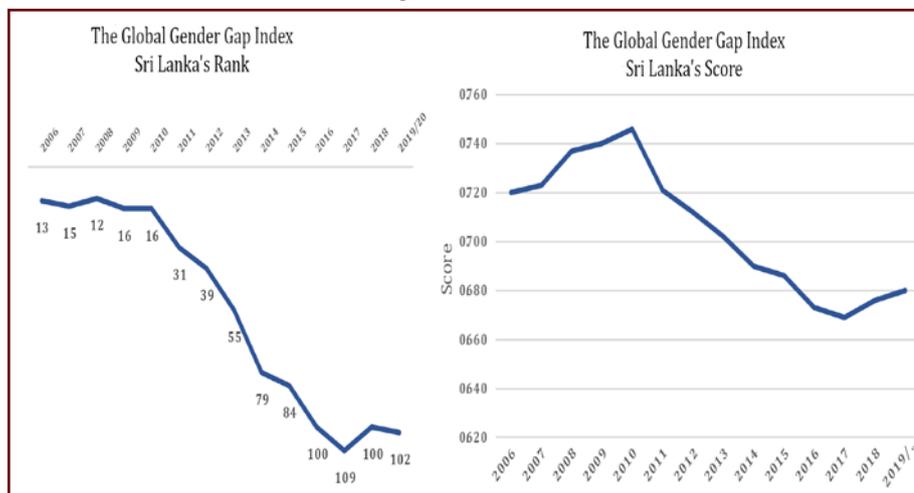
#### Box 1: Calculation of Gender Gap

The gender-based gaps are computed for each country based on four equally weighted sub-indices: Economic participation and opportunity; Educational attainment; Health and survival; and Political empowerment. The four sub-indices are composed of 14 indicators, displayed below.

1. ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION	2. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	3. HEALTH AND SURVIVAL	4. POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT
1. Female LFS over male value	1. Female literacy rate over male values	1. Sex ratio at birth	1. Female with seats in parliament over male value
2. Wage equality between women and men for similar work	2. Female net primary enrolment rate over male values	2. Female healthy life expectancy over male value	2. Female at ministerial level over male value
3. Female estimated earned income over male value	3. Female net secondary enrolment rate over male value		3. Number of years with female head of state (last 50 years) over male value
4. Female legislators, senior officials, and managers over male value	4. Female gross tertiary enrolment ratio over male value		
5. Female professionals and technical workers over male values			

The score for each indicator is computed based on female to male ratios. A score of 1 would indicate an equal number of women and men. The GGGI calculates an overall score between 0-1, where 1 indicates the highest gender parity and 0 the highest disparity. Countries are then ranked based on their score, with countries scoring closer to 1 ranked higher in the index. **The score is an absolute measure of the Gender Gap and the country rank depends on that score relative to other countries.**

### Exhibit 1: Trend in Sri Lanka's Ranking and Score in the GGGI from 2006 to 2019/20.

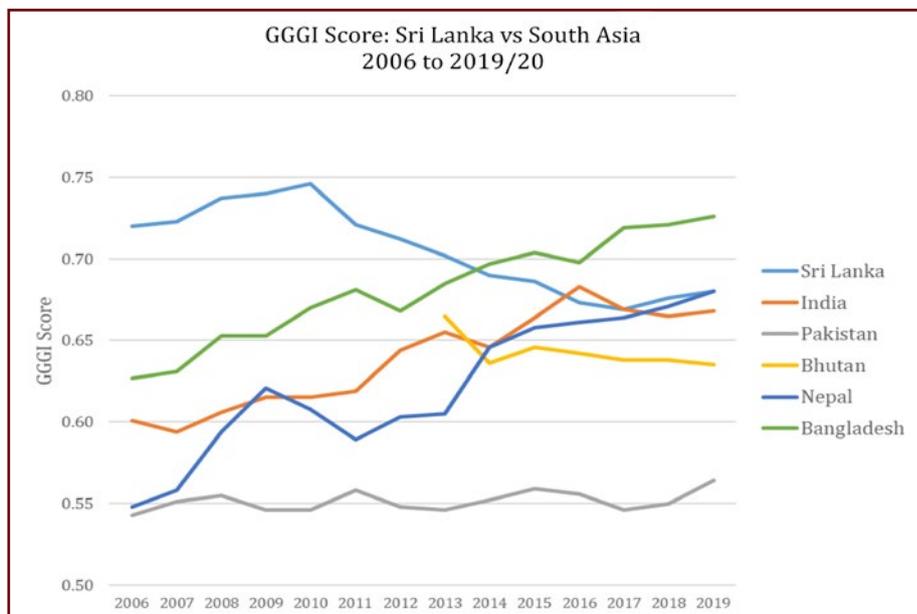


a female head of state". The results are illustrated in Exhibit 4.

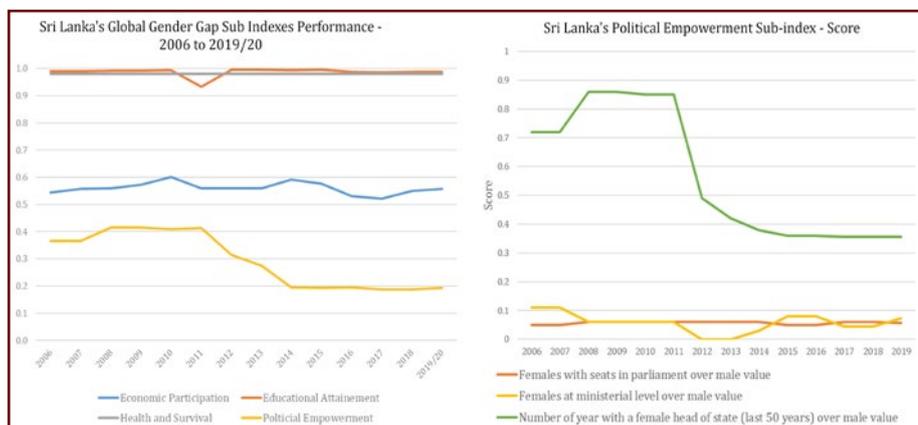
The re-estimated score shows that Sri Lanka's 2006 GGI score would have been approximately equal to its 2019 score, with the above adjustment. That means, when the indicator for having a woman head of state is taken out of the consideration, Sri Lanka's score does not show a decline, but remains about the same over the period, with some fluctuations.

It also means that, since the introduction of the index in 2006, on all the other factors measured, Sri Lanka has not made progress towards reducing its gender gap. ♦

**Exhibit 2: South Asian Countries' Global Gender Gap Index Scores - 2006 to 2019/20.**



**Exhibit 3: Sri Lanka's Global Gender Gap sub-index performance from 2006 to 2019/20.**



**When the indicator for having a woman head of state is taken out of consideration, Sri Lanka's score does not show a decline but remains about the same over the period.**

**Exhibit 4: Sri Lanka's Global Gender Gap Index - Actual vs. Re-estimated.**

