

Why aren't Sri Lankan women translating their educational gains into workforce advantages?

Type: Document

Content Type:

Why aren't Sri Lankan women translating their educational gains into workforce advantages?

Language:

Sources:

Topics:

Knowledge Products:

Publication Date: 17 Dec 2015

Open

[wcmstest4_160258.pdf](#)

The 2015 Echidna global scholars working paper The last two decades have seen a phenomenal rise in girls' education and a concomitant decline or stagnation in labor market outcomes for women, especially in female labor force participation in central and southeastern Europe, East Asia, Southeast Asia, and South Asia. This paper focuses on Sri Lanka, a country with a long record of gender equality in education enrollment and high female completion rates, which has also been characterized by low and stagnant female labor force participation. It remains a puzzle why Sri Lanka has been unable to translate its high girls' education gains into female labor force participation. This paper examines whether clues to the answer lie in (1) gender differences in skill acquisition, which have implications for education policy; (2) differences in the way the labor market values identical skills in men and women, with implications for labor market policy interventions, or (3) in the gender division of labor in the household, which has implications for family-friendly and social policies. The paper analyzes the 2012 World Bank STEP Skills Measurement survey, a rich data set that includes self-reported measures of cognitive and non-cognitive skills for all individuals of working age, to address these questions.

Subject Tags:

Regions:

**Countries and
territories:**