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**SOCIO-CULTURAL CONSTRAINTS TO WOMEN'S
PARTICIPATION IN THE RURAL INFORMAL SECTOR
ACTIVITIES**

UNIVERSITY OF PERADENIYA
FACULTY OF ARTS
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ABSTRACT

This study analyses the socio-cultural determinants of labour force participation among rural women in Sri Lanka. Home based employment/sub contracting has potential to generate income for rural women within the rapid expansion of the informal sector. The study purposes to examine the relationship between social closure including some-cultural factors and women's participation in the rural informal sector.

As the findings revealed, status group consciousness based on caste influenced women's in participation in the rural informal sector. Where the caste factor was less important the status group consciousness based on gentry (*pelantiya*) and kindred (*paula*) determined the women's level of participation. This was significant specially among low castes. Similarly, when the significance of extended family decrease, women's participation was higher. Moreover, rural women still preferred their traditional household chores than wage work. The study also found that women's participation was higher within the settlement than villages, because settlers were relatively free from traditional cultural norms. Consequently, the study argues that whatever influences made by push factors and pull factors, socio-cultural constraints direct rural women's decision making to participation in wage work.