The background of the slide features a series of dark silhouettes of people walking from left to right. On the far left, a woman is pushing a stroller. Next to her is another woman. In the center, a woman is walking with a child. To the right, a man and a woman are walking together, holding hands. On the far right, a woman is walking. The silhouettes are set against a light, warm-toned background with a subtle pattern of faint, overlapping circles.

# **Gendered State: Governmentality and Labor Migration Law of Sri Lanka**

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# Background

- Sri Lanka is a major labor sending country in South Asia;
  - Predominant number of workers who migrate under 'unskilled' category are female workers;
  - Major destinations for these female workers are the countries in Gulf region;
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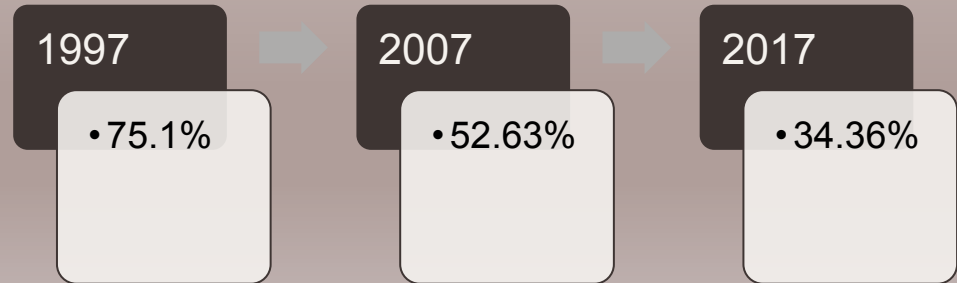
# Background

Year	Male		Female		Total
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
1990	15,377	36.08%	27,248	63.92%	42,625
1993	32,269	25%	96,807	75%	129,076
1995	46,021	26.68%	126,468	73.32%	172,489
1997	37,552	24.99%	112,731	75.01%	150,283

2000	59,793	32.82%	122,395	67.18%	182,188
2003	74,508	35.51%	135,338	64.49%	209,846
2006	90,170	44.65%	111,778	55.35%	201,948
2009	119,381	48.31%	127,745	51.69%	247,126
2013	175,185	59.75%	118,033	40.25%	293,218
2014	190,217	63.26%	110,486	36.74%	300,703
2015	172,788	65.59%	90,655	34.41%	263,443
2016	160,306	66.02%	82,510	33.98%	242,816
2017	139,271	65.64%	72,891	34.36%	212,162
2018	129,712	61.41 %	81,499	38.58%	211,211

- **In 2013, government introduced a new policy targeting female migrant workers who migrate under the category of 'domestic and care workers:**

- A mandatory 'Family Background Report'
  - Age limitation
  - restrict the migration of mothers with children under age 6
  - approval of the male member of the family
  - approval of the relevant government authority



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# Research Goal and Research Questions

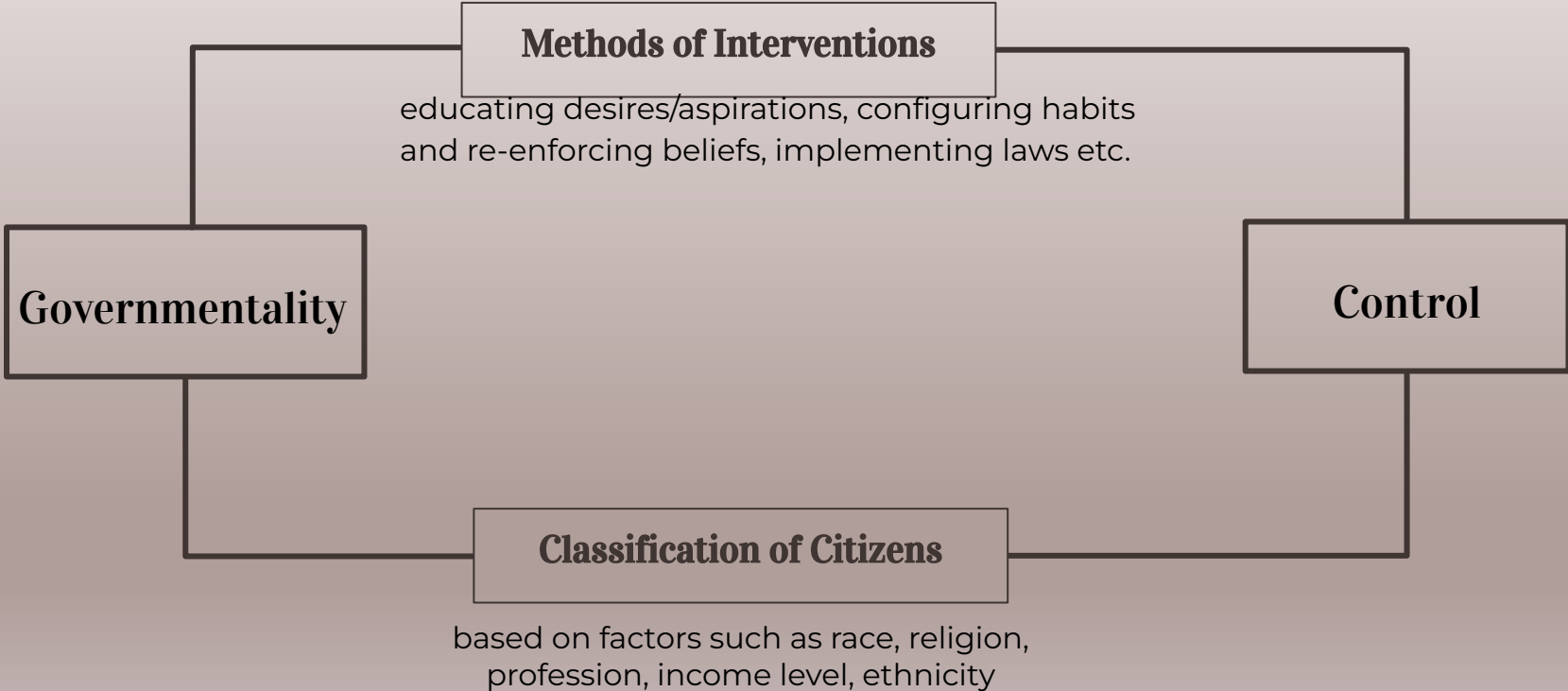
## Research Goal:

- To explain how succeeding governments' labor migration policies influenced the migration decisions of prospective female migrant workers; and
- To examine how do these change of policies related with government's policy priorities at the given time

## Research Questions:

- How did the government(s) intervene individual decision making (of prospective female migrant workers) through regulations ?
  - Why did the government(s) make such interventions?
-

# Theoretical Framework



# Analysis and Discussion

Within the context of 'Governmentality':

## Classification of Citizens

- Classify females who expect to migrate as 'housemaids' based on their profession

## Methods of Intervention

- Through formal government regulations (to encourage and discourage migration)

### Why does the process is gendered?

- The government(s) did not make any interventions targeting male migrant workers;
- There is no age restrictions for male migrant workers;
- Prospective male migrants are not required to go through the same process as females;

# Analysis and Discussion

- Implementation and removal of these regulations are based on the macro economic priorities of the state;

## **Early 2000 to 2019 (Discouraged through restriction)**

- Address social pressure
- Encouraged male migration for semi-skilled and skilled sectors

### **First Phase**

### **Second Phase**

### **Third Phase**

## **1980s to early 2000s (Encouraged by loosening restrictions)**

- Migration for development
  - Remittances
- Address unemployment

## **After 2020 –post Covid period (Encouraged by removing restrictions)**

- More remittances
- Introduce rewarding systems



# Findings

- Remittances play a significant role in this whole process:
  - Female migrant workers remit more in comparison to male workers;
  - Therefore, the government encourages female labor migration;
  - The restrictions were implemented as a measure taken to address social pressure without completely banning female labor migration;
  - The 'Family Background Report' reduced the government's responsibility as the authorization of the head of the family makes it a 'family decision'
- The government uses its control over vulnerable group of the country:
  - Female migrant workers are economically vulnerable and 'ready to migrate';
  - They are not aware of their labor rights or do not have labor unions;
  - This restriction is not applicable for females who migrate as skilled workers or semi-skilled workers

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# Conclusion

- The alternations of the migration policy made by the government targeting female migrant workers are primarily based on the government's economic policy priorities rather than ensuring the protection of the female migrant workers;

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# Thank You!

Do you have any questions?

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