
Sri Lanka Labour Force Statistics

Quarterly Bulletin, First Quarter 2022

Department of Census and Statistics
Ministry of Economic Policies and Plan Implementation

Sri Lanka Labour Force Survey (LFS) is designed to measure the levels and trends of employment, unemployment and labour force in Sri Lanka. LFS has been conducted quarterly, since the first quarter of 1990.

This bulletin contains labour force, employment and unemployment statistics for the first quarter 2022 based on the data collected in January, February and March in 2022 covering the whole country.

This bulletin is based on the quarterly sample of 6440 housing units. The survey covers persons living in housing units only and it excludes the institutional population.

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- ❑ Labour force participation rate is 51.2% for the first quarter of 2022.
 - ❑ Unemployment rate for the survey period is 4.3%.
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Source Publication

<http://www.statistics.gov.lk/LabourForce/StaticInformation/Bulletins/1stQuarter2022>

Labour Force

All persons above 15 years of age who are currently economically active during the reference one week period
(Labour Force = employed persons + unemployed persons)

Labour force participation rate (LFPR)

Labour force as a percentage of the population aged 15 years and over.

Labour Force (Economically Active Population)**Table 1: Economically active population by gender and sector, first quarter - 2022**

Sector	Economically Active Population					
	Total	%	Male	%	Female	%
Sri Lanka	8,761,803	100	5,664,059	64.6	3,097,744	35.4
Urban	1,367,392	100	900,650	65.9	466,742	34.1
Rural	6,999,472	100	4,530,042	64.7	2,469,430	35.3
Estate	394,939	100	233,367	59.1	161,572	40.9

Table 2: Economically inactive population by gender and sector, first quarter – 2022

Sector	Economically Inactive Population					
	Total	%	Male	%	Female	%
Sri Lanka	8,343,337	100	2,223,113	26.6	6,120,225	73.4
Urban	1,457,090	100	399,830	27.4	1,057,260	72.6
Rural	6,616,364	100	1,739,970	26.3	4,876,394	73.7
Estate	269,883	100	83,313	30.9	186,570	69.1

According to the Table 1, the estimated economically active population is about 8.8 million in the first quarter 2022. Of which 64.6 percent are males and 35.4 percent are females. The economically inactive population is about 8.3 million. Out of the economically inactive population 26.6 percent are males and 73.4 percent are females. (Table 2)

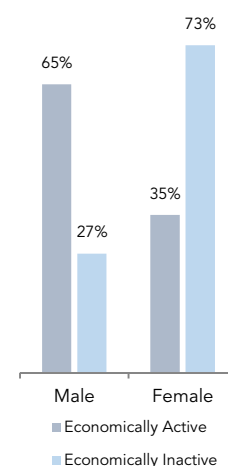
Table 3: LFPR by gender and year, 2017 - 2022Q1

Year	Total	Male	Female
2017	54.1	74.5	36.6
2018	51.8	73.0	33.6
2019	52.3	73.0	34.5
2020	50.6	71.9	32.0
2021	49.9	71.0	31.8
2019 Q1	52.6	73.4	34.9
2021 Q1	50.9	71.7	33.4
2022 Q1	51.2	71.8	33.6

Table 3 provides the information on LFPRs by gender since year 2017. Referring the Table 3, it is important to note that, male participation to the labour force is always higher than that of female.

Table 4: LFPR by age group and gender, first quarter – 2022

Age group (Years)	Total	Male	Female
Sri Lanka	51.2	71.8	33.6
15 - 19	8.9	13.1	4.9
20 - 24	50.8	66.4	36.7
25 - 29	68.2	91.0	47.1
30 - 34	68.7	95.3	46.9
35 - 39	67.2	97.5	42.6
40 - 44	70.2	95.7	49.0
45 - 49	69.4	96.1	46.4
50 - 54	68.8	93.2	49.3
55 - 59	61.7	88.7	37.2
60+	30.6	48.3	16.2

Figure 1: Distribution of economically active vs inactive population, first quarter 2022

Considering the Table 4, the distribution of LFPR by age group and by gender depicts high male participation compared to female in all age groups. The highest participation rate for male is reported from age group 35 - 39 years (97.5%), while that for female is reported from 40 - 44 age group (49.0%).

Employment**Employed**

Persons, who worked at least one hour during the reference period, as paid employees, employers, own account workers or contributing family workers are said to be employed. This also includes persons with a job but not at work during the reference period.

Reference Period:

Previous week of the survey week
(3rd week of every month)

Employment Rate

The proportion of employed population to the total labour force.

Table 5: Distribution of employed population by main industry (first quarter 2021 – first quarter 2022)

Quarter	Sri Lanka	Major Industry Group		
		Agriculture	Industries	Services
2021 Q1	8,181,491	2,083,102	2,228,028	3,870,361
(%)	100.0	25.5	27.2	47.3
2021 Q2	8,082,303	2,250,273	2,041,674	3,790,355
(%)	100.0	27.8	25.3	46.9
2021 Q3	8,043,868	2,390,849	1,969,427	3,683,592
(%)	100.0	29.7	24.5	45.8
2021 Q4	8,146,367	2,127,835	2,198,797	3,819,735
(%)	100.0	26.1	27.0	46.9
2022 Q1	8,388,531	2,098,143	2,342,511	3,947,877
(%)	100.0	25.0	27.9	47.1

Table 5 shows the percentage distribution of employed population by main industry from first quarter 2021 to first quarter 2022. During first quarter of 2022, the total number of employed persons in Sri Lanka is estimated as 8.4 million. Of which, about 47.1 percent engaged in service sector, 27.9 percent in industry sector and 25.0 percent in agriculture sector. In the first quarter of 2022, there is an increase in employed persons in all three sectors compared to the first quarter of 2021.

Main industry categories and sub sectors

Agriculture

Agriculture Forestry and Fishery (A)

Industries

1. Mining & Quarrying (B)
2. Manufacturing (C)
3. Construction, Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply, Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities (D, E, F)

Services

1. Wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles (G)
2. Transportation and storage (H)
3. Accommodation and food services activities (I)
4. Information and communication (J)
5. Financial and insurance activities (K)
6. Professional, scientific and technical activities (M)
7. Administrative and support service activities (N)
8. Public administration and defence compulsory social security (O)
9. Education (P)
10. Human health and social work activities (Q)
11. Other service activities (S)
12. Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods and services - producing activities of households for own use (T)
13. Real estate activities (L) Arts, entertainment and recreation (R) Activities of extra territorial organizations & bodies (U)

Table 6: Distribution of employed population by employment status in agriculture and non - agriculture sectors, first quarter - 2022

Employment Status	Sector					
	Sri Lanka		Agriculture		Non-Agriculture	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Sri Lanka	8,388,531	100.0	2,098,143	25.0	6,290,388	75.0
Employee	4,884,513	100.0	696,058	14.3	4,188,456	85.7
Public	1,253,145	100.0	24,315	1.9*	1,228,830	98.1
Private	3,631,369	100.0	671,743	18.5	2,959,626	81.5
Employer	226,907	100.0	32,635	14.4*	194,272	85.6
Own Account Worker	2,804,934	100.0	1,079,922	38.5	1,725,012	61.5
Contributing Family Worker	472,176	100.0	289,528	61.3	182,648	38.7

*These Figures are to be treated with caution as the corresponding CV (Coefficient of Variation) Values are high.

According to the Table 6 Majority of the workforce are private sector employees followed by own account workers. Non agriculture sector covers 75.0 percent of employed population in Sri Lanka, employees and own account workers are highly constraining in that sector.

Table 7 depicts the percentage distribution of male and female employed population by main industry sectors. Highest employment share is in service sector and this is true for both male & female, while the lowest shares are for agriculture sector. Among employed females 26.5 percent is in agriculture sector while this share is 24.2 percent for males.

Figure 2 : Distribution of employed population by employment status and Agriculture/ Non- Agriculture sector, first quarter - 2022

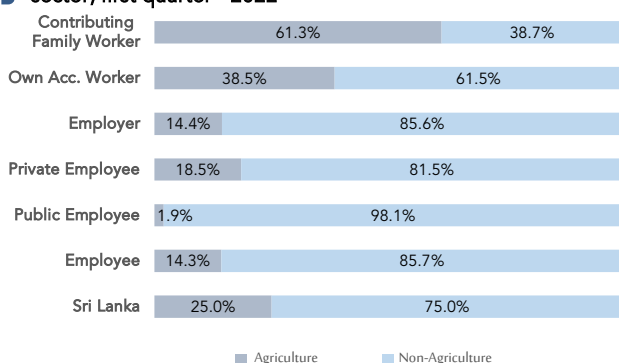


Table 7: Percentage distribution of Employed population by major industry group & gender, first quarter – 2022

Major Industry group	Sri Lanka	Gender	
		Male	Female
Sri Lanka	100.0	100.0	100.0
Agriculture	25.0	24.2	26.5
Industry	27.9	29.6	24.8
Services	47.1	46.2	48.7

Unemployment

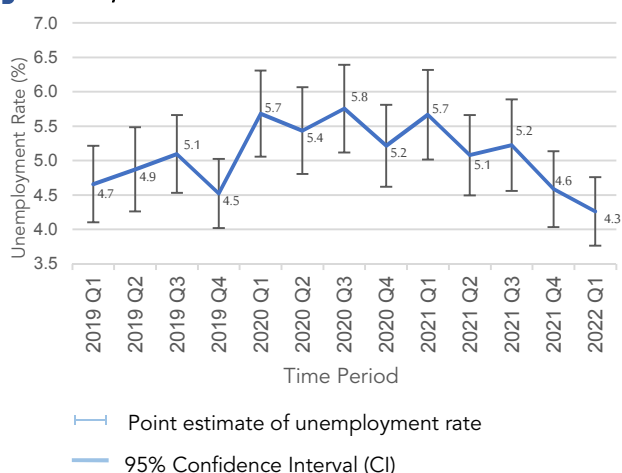
Unemployed

Persons available and/or looking for work, and who did not work and taken steps to find a job during last four weeks and ready to accept a job given a work opportunity within next two weeks are defined as be unemployed.

Unemployment Rate

The proportion of unemployed population to the total labour force.

Figure 3 : Unemployment rates and it's 95% confidence intervals, 2019Q1 - 2022Q1



The number of unemployed persons is estimated as 373,272 during the first quarter 2022. The unemployment rate for the first quarter 2022 is 4.3 percent.

As shown in Figure 3, it is very important to note that, when the changes in unemployment rate is explained the corresponding sampling errors¹ and the confidence limits need to be considered.

Table 8: Number of unemployed and unemployment rate by age group and gender, first quarter - 2022

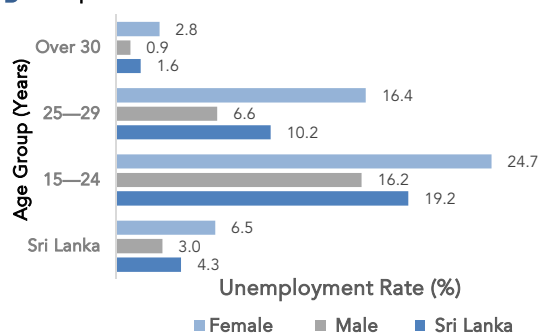
Age group (Years)	Unemployment Rate (%)			
	Sri Lanka	Gender		
		Number	Sri Lanka	Male
Sri Lanka	373,272	4.3	3.0	6.5
15 - 24	171,886	19.2	16.2	24.7
25 - 29	89,994	10.2	6.6	16.4
Over 30	111,391	1.6	0.9	2.8

1 Sampling error

When a sample, rather than the entire population, is surveyed, estimates differ from the true values of population they represent. This difference, or sampling error, occurs by chance, and its variability is measured by the sampling error of the estimate.

For more details, please refer the explanatory note given under the labour force link in the DCS website; www.statistics.gov.lk

Figure 4 : Unemployment rate by age group and gender, first quarter 2022



As per the table 8, overall unemployment rate reported for female is 6.5 percent and it is 3.0 percent for male. Youth unemployment rate (age 15 – 24 years) corresponding to the first quarter 2022 is 19.2 percent and that is the highest reported unemployment rate among all age groups. Further the unemployment rates for males and females are 16.2 and 24.7 percent respectively for age group 15 - 24.

The survey results further reveals that the unemployment among females is higher than that of males, in all age groups. Youth and female unemployment contribute more to the overall unemployment of the country.

Table 9: Number of unemployed and unemployment rate by level of education, first quarter - 2022

Level of Education	Unemployment Rate (%)			
	Sri Lanka	Gender		
		Number	Sri Lanka	Male
Sri Lanka	373,272	4.3	3.0	6.5
Below GCE O/L	127,645	2.6	1.9	4.1
GCE O/L	79,799	5.0	4.4	6.4
GCE A/L & above	165,828	7.5	5.1	9.9

Figure 5 : Unemployment rate by level of education and gender, first quarter 2022



The highest unemployment rate is reported from the G.C.E.(A/L) and above group which is 7.5 percent. Corresponding percentages are 5.1 percent and 9.9 percent for males and females respectively. Female unemployment rates are higher than those of males in all levels of education.

Survey results further shows that the problem of unemployment is more acute in the case of educated females than educated males, which was observed consistently over the results of previous survey rounds as well.

Selected Labour Force Indicators

Indicator	Year							
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2020Q1	2021Q1	2022Q1
Labour force participation rate								
by gender								
Total	54.1	51.8	52.3	50.6	49.9	51.0	50.9	51.2
Male	74.5	73.0	73.0	71.9	71.0	72.4	71.7	71.8
Female	36.6	33.6	34.5	32.0	31.8	32.5	33.4	33.6
by residential sector								
Total	54.1	51.8	52.3	50.6	49.9	51.0	50.9	51.2
Urban	50.5	49.6	50.2	47.0	46.9	47.1	48.6	48.4
Rural	54.8	52.3	52.7	51.3	50.5	51.7	51.4	51.8
Unemployment rate								
by gender								
Total	4.2	4.4	4.8	5.5	5.1	5.7	5.7	4.3
Male	2.9	3.0	3.3	4.0	3.7	3.7	3.9	3.0
Female	6.5	7.1	7.4	8.5	7.9	9.6	8.9	6.5
by selected age group (year)								
20 – 29	13.5	15.0	15.3	18.1	18.3	18.8	20.3	14.2
20 – 24	17.8	20.1	20.3	25.2	26.8	26.1	28.8	19.0
25 – 29	9.5	10.4	11.0	12.0	11.4	11.6	13.0	10.2
by selected educational level								
GCE A/L an above								
Total	8.1	9.1	8.5	9.8	9.1	10.1	10.1	7.5
Male	5.0	5.1	5.0	6.2	6.2	5.5	6.5	5.1
Female	11.3	13.2	11.9	13.6	12.2	14.7	13.8	9.9
Employed population								
by gender								
Total	8,208,179	8,015,166	8,180,693	7,999,093	8,113,507	8,020,446	8,181,491	8,388,531
Male	5,279,158	5,300,310	5,368,896	5,372,947	5,414,280	5,381,218	5,369,194	5,492,427
Female	2,929,021	2,714,855	2,811,796	2,626,146	2,699,228	2,639,227	2,812,297	2,896,104
by industry (percentage)								
Total	8,208,179	8,015,166	8,180,693	7,999,093	8,113,507	8,020,446	8,181,491	8,388,531
%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Agriculture	2,140,185	2,043,698	2,071,940	2,169,679	2,213,015	2,127,212	2,083,102	2,098,143
%	26.1	25.5	25.3	27.1	27.3	26.5	25.5	25.0
Industry	2,331,494	2,239,262	2,258,421	2,152,746	2,109,482	2,174,148	2,228,028	2,342,511
%	28.4	27.9	27.6	26.9	26.0	27.1	27.2	27.9
Services	3,736,500	3,732,206	3,850,332	3,676,668	3,791,011	3,719,086	3,870,361	3,947,877
%	45.5	46.6	47.1	46.0	46.7	46.4	47.3	47.1
by no. of hours worked per week (percentage)								
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
0*	4.7	5.6	6.4	14.6	9.6	12.7	3.3	4.1
1 – 9	1.7	1.7	1.7	2.1	2.0	2.3	1.3	2.1
10 – 39	26.1	25.7	26.8	27.1	29.6	27.7	26.3	27.7
40 & above	67.5	66.9	65.1	56.2	58.7	57.2	69.1	66.1

* has a job but not at work during the reference week


Note: Working age population considered as age 15 & over population

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The Mission of DCS

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