



Sri Lanka Labour Force Statistics

Quarterly Bulletin, Second Quarter 2021

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 second quarter 2021 based on the data collected in April, May and June in 2021 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 49.8% for the second quarter of 2021
 - ❑ Unemployment rate for the survey period is 5.1%.
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Source Publication

<http://www.statistics.gov.lk/LabourForce/Statisticalinformation/Bulletins/2ndQuarter2021>

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, second quarter - 2021**

Sector	Economically Active Population					
	Total	%	Male	%	Female	%
Sri Lanka	8,514,766	100	5,722,184	67.2	2,792,581	32.8
Urban	1,355,533	100	936,917	69.1	418,617	30.9
Rural	6,741,191	100	4,544,783	67.4	2,196,408	32.6
Estate	418,041	100	240,485	57.5	177,557	42.5

Table 2: Economically inactive population by gender and sector, second quarter - 2021

Sector	Economically Inactive Population					
	Total	%	Male	%	Female	%
Sri Lanka	8,577,357	100	2,320,910	27.1	6,256,447	72.9
Urban	1,554,084	100	439,804	28.3	1,114,281	71.7
Rural	6,712,710	100	1,783,555	26.6	4,929,155	73.4
Estate	310,563	100	97,552	31.4	213,011	68.6

According to the Table 1, the estimated economically active population is about 8.5 million in the Second quarter 2021. Of which 67.2 percent are males and 32.8 percent are females. The economically inactive population is about 8.6 million. Out of the economically inactive population 27.1 percent are males and 72.9 percent are females. (Table 2)

Table 3: LFPR by gender and year 2016 – 2021Q2

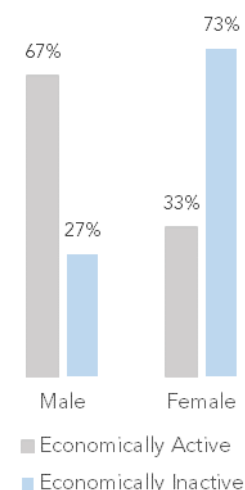
Year	Total	Male	Female
2016	54.1	75.1	36.0
2017	54.1	74.5	36.6
2018	51.8	73.0	33.6
2019	52.3	73.0	34.5
2020	50.6	71.9	32.0
2019 Q2	52.6	73.4	34.6
2020 Q2	50.2	71.7	31.6
2021 Q1	50.9	71.7	33.4
2021 Q2	49.8	71.1	30.9

Table 3 provides the information on LFPRs by gender since year 2016. Referring the Table 3, it is important to note that, male participation to the labour force is always higher than that of female.

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 rates for male is reported from age group 40 – 44 years (95.5%), while that for female is reported from 30 – 34 and 45- 49 age group (45.1%).

Table 4: LFPR by age group and gender, second quarter – 2021

Age group (Years)	Total	Male	Female
Sri Lanka	49.8	71.1	30.9
15 - 19	8.5	13.0	3.8
20 - 24	45.9	61.0	31.9
25 - 29	66.9	89.8	44.7
30 - 34	68.8	95.1	45.1
35 - 39	65.3	94.6	41.8
40 - 44	67.8	95.5	42.5
45 - 49	68.6	94.7	45.1
50 - 54	66.7	94.6	42.5
55 - 59	59.9	88.0	36.6
60+	29.0	47.6	13.3

Figure 1: Distribution of economically active vs inactive population, second quarter – 2021**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 (Second quarter 2020 - Second quarter 2021)

Quarter	Sri Lanka	Major Industry Group		
		Agriculture	Industries	Services
2020 Q2	7,977,000	2,159,609	2,146,862	3,670,528
(%)	100.0	27.1	26.9	46.0
2020 Q3	7,967,695	2,061,630	2,188,330	3,717,735
(%)	100.0	25.9	27.5	46.7
2020 Q4	8,031,233	2,330,266	2,101,645	3,599,322
(%)	100.0	29.0	26.2	44.8
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

Table 5 shows the percentage distribution of employed population by main industry from second quarter 2020 to second quarter 2021. During second quarter of 2021, the total number of employed persons in Sri Lanka is estimated as 8.1 million. Of which, about 46.9 percent engaged in service sector, 27.8 percent in Agriculture sector and 25.3 percent in Industry sector. In the second quarter of 2021, there is an increase in employed persons in Agriculture and service sectors compared to the second quarter of 2020.

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, second quarter - 2021

Employment Status	Sector					
	Sri Lanka		Agriculture		Non-Agriculture	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Sri Lanka	8,082,303	100.0	2,250,273	27.8	5,832,030	72.2
Employee	4,604,035	100.0	628,925	13.7	3,975,110	86.3
Public	1,257,395	100.0	31,341	2.5	1,226,054	97.5
Private	3,346,640	100.0	597,584	17.9	2,749,056	82.1
Employer	215,257	100.0	33,471	15.5	181,786	84.5
Own Account Worker	2,675,165	100.0	1,197,272	44.8	1,477,893	55.2
Contributing Family Worker	587,846	100.0	390,605	66.4	197,241	33.6

Majority of the workforce are private sector employees followed by own account workers (Table 6)

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 industry sector. Among employed females 32.1 percent is in agriculture sector while this share is 25.8 percent for males.

Figure 2: Distribution of employed population by employment status and agriculture/Non agriculture sector, second quarter- 2021

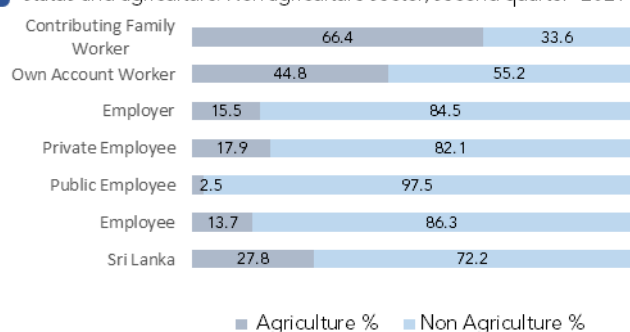


Table 7: Percentage distribution of Employed population by major industry group & gender, second quarter – 2021

Major Industry group	Sri Lanka	Gender	
		Male	Female
Sri Lanka	100.0	100.0	100.0
Agriculture	27.8	25.8	32.1
Industry	25.3	27.4	20.8
Services	46.9	46.8	47.1

Unemployment

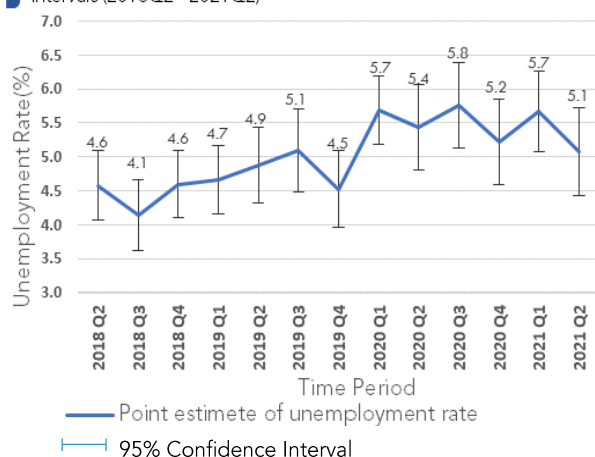
Unemployed

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 Rate and its 95% confidence Intervals (2018Q2 - 2021Q2)



The number of unemployed persons is estimated as 432,463 during the second quarter 2021. The unemployment rate for the second quarter 2021 is 5.1 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, second quarter - 2021

Age group (Years)	Unemployment Rate (%)			
	Sri Lanka		Gender	
	Number	Sri Lanka	Male	Female
Sri Lanka	432,463	5.1	3.8	7.7
15 - 24	242,768	30.0	24.9	39.8
25 - 29	80,678	9.2	5.4*	16.5
Over 30	109,017	1.6	1.1	2.5

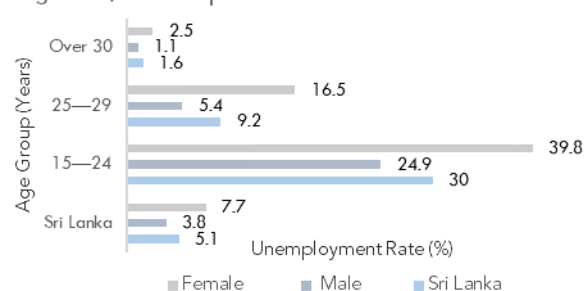
* These Figures are to be treated with caution as the corresponding CV (Coefficient of Variation) Values are high

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, second quarter - 2021



As per the table 8, overall unemployment rate reported for female is 7.7 percent and it is 3.8 percent for male. Youth unemployment rate (age 15 – 24 years) corresponding to the second quarter 2021 is 30.0 percent and that is the highest reported unemployment rate among all age groups. Further the unemployment rates for males and females are 24.9 and 39.8 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, second quarter - 2021

Level of Education	Unemployment Rate (%)			
	Sri Lanka		Gender	
	Number	Sri Lanka	Male	Female
Sri Lanka	432,463	5.1	3.8	7.7
Below GCE O/L	128,126	2.6	2.3	3.6
GCE O/L	109,964	7.2	6.4	9.4
GCE A/L & above	194,374	9.1	6.1	12.5

Figure 5: Unemployment rate by level of education and gender, second quarter - 2021



The highest unemployment rate is reported from the G.C.E.(A/L) and above group which is 9.1 percent. Corresponding percentages are 6.1 percent and 12.5 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								
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2019Q2	2020Q2	2021Q1	2021Q2
Labour force participation rate									
by gender									
Total	53.8	54.1	51.8	52.3	50.6	52.6	50.2	50.9	49.8
Male	75.1	74.5	73.0	73.0	71.9	73.4	71.7	71.7	71.1
Female	35.9	36.6	33.6	34.5	32.0	34.6	31.6	33.4	30.9
by residential sector									
Total	53.8	54.1	51.8	52.3	50.6	52.6	50.2	50.9	49.8
Urban	49.8	50.5	49.6	50.2	47.0	51.9	46.4	48.6	46.6
Rural	54.6	54.8	52.3	52.7	51.3	52.7	51.0	51.4	50.5
Unemployment rate									
by gender									
Total	4.4	4.2	4.4	4.8	5.5	4.9	5.4	5.7	5.1
Male	2.9	2.9	3.0	3.3	4.0	3.4	4.1	3.9	3.8
Female	7.0	6.5	7.1	7.4	8.5	7.5	8.2	8.9	7.7
by selected age group (year)									
20 – 29	14.2	13.5	15.0	15.3	18.1	15.1	18.2	20.3	18.2
20 – 24	19.9	17.8	20.1	20.3	25.2	17.8	26.5	28.8	30.2
25 – 29	9.2	9.5	10.4	11.0	12.0	12.6	11.0	13.0	9.2
by selected educational level									
GCE A/L and above									
Total	8.3	8.1	9.1	8.5	9.8	9.5	10.0	10.1	9.1
Male	4.7	5.0	5.1	5.0	6.2	5.1	6.3	6.5	6.1
Female	11.9	11.3	13.2	11.9	13.6	14.0	14.2	13.8	12.5
Employed population									
by gender									
Total	7,947,683	8,208,179	8,015,166	8,180,693	7,999,093	8,203,018	7,977,000	8,181,491	8,082,303
Male	5,149,948	5,279,158	5,300,310	5,368,896	5,372,947	5,384,357	5,369,119	5,369,194	5,504,060
Female	2,797,735	2,929,021	2,714,855	2,811,796	2,626,146	2,818,661	2,607,881	2,812,297	2,578,243
by industry (percentage)									
Total	7,947,683	8,208,179	8,015,166	8,180,693	7,999,093	8,203,018	7,977,000	8,181,491	8,082,303
%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Agriculture	2,153,874	2,140,185	2,043,698	2,071,940	2,169,679	1,990,892	2,159,609	2,083,102	2,250,273
%	27.1	26.1	25.5	25.3	27.1	24.3	27.1	25.5	27.8
Industry	2,097,503	2,331,494	2,239,262	2,258,421	2,152,746	2,319,047	2,146,862	2,228,028	2,041,674
%	26.4	28.4	27.9	27.6	26.9	28.3	26.9	27.2	25.3
Services	3,696,306	3,736,500	3,732,206	3,850,332	3,676,668	3,893,079	3,670,528	3,870,361	3,790,355
%	46.5	45.5	46.6	47.1	46.0	47.5	46.0	47.3	46.9
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	100.0
0*	4.4	4.7	5.6	6.4	14.6	9.6	31.5	3.3	15.9
1 – 9	1.5	1.7	1.7	1.7	2.1	2.0	2.5	1.3	2.9
10 – 39	26.2	26.1	25.7	26.8	27.1	25.8	25.5	26.3	31.4
40 & above	67.9	67.5	66.9	65.1	56.2	62.6	40.6	69.1	49.8

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


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

The Vision of DCS

To be the leader in the region in producing timely statistical information to achieve the country's development goals.

The Mission of DCS

Making contribution in the socio-economic development of the country by providing accurate timely statistics, more effectively by means of new technology, and utilising the services of dedicated staff under a strategic leadership to become a prosperous nation in the globalised environment.

 Department of Census & Statistics,
Sankyan Mandiraya
No. 306/71, Polduwa Road,
Battaramulla



info@statistics.gov.lk
+94 11 2147000
+94 11 2147011
statistics.gov.lk

This publication is produced by the Sample Survey Division
7th floor, Department of Census and Statistics
 Sample.survey@statistics.gov.lk
 +94 112147458  +94 112147447