
Sri Lanka Labour Force Statistics

Quarterly Bulletin, Second Quarter 2023

Department of Census and Statistics

Ministry of Finance, Economic Stabilization and National Policies

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 2023 based on the data collected in April, May and July in 2023 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 48.6% for the second quarter of 2023.
 - ❑ Unemployment rate for the survey period is 5.2%.
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Source Publication

 <http://www.statistics.gov.lk/LabourForce/StaticInformation/Bulletins/2ndQuarter2023>

Labour Force

All persons aged 15 years & over who are currently economically active during the reference period (Labour Force = employed persons + unemployed persons)

Reference Period:

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

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 - 2023

Sector	Economically Active Population					
	Total	%	Male	%	Female	%
Sri Lanka	8,458,175	100	5,552,332	65.6	2,905,844	34.4
Urban	1,403,878	100	921,104	65.6	482,773	34.4
Rural	6,703,904	100	4,432,414	66.1	2,271,490	33.9
Estate	350,394	100	198,813	56.7	151,580	43.3

Table 2: Economically inactive population by gender and sector, second quarter - 2023

Sector	Economically Inactive Population					
	Total	%	Male	%	Female	%
Sri Lanka	8,953,794	100	2,512,977	28.1	6,440,817	71.9
Urban	1,597,672	100	456,651	28.6	1,141,021	71.4
Rural	7,054,191	100	1,971,044	27.9	5,083,148	72.1
Estate	301,930	100	85,282	28.2	216,648	71.8

According to the Table 1, the estimated economically active population is about 8.5 million in the second quarter 2023. Of which 65.6 percent are males and 34.4 percent are females. The economically inactive population is about 9.0 million. Out of the economically inactive population 28.1 percent are males and 71.9 percent are females. (Table 2)

Table 3: LFPR by gender and year, 2018 - 2023Q2

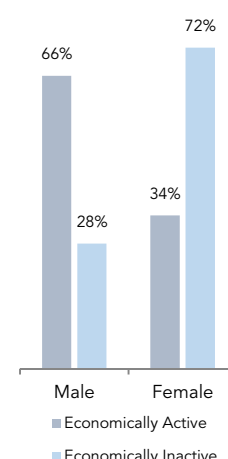
Year	Total	Male	Female
2018	51.8	73.0	33.6
2019	52.3	73.0	34.5
2020	50.6	71.9	32.0
2021	49.9	71.0	31.8
2022	49.8	70.5	32.1
2021 Q2	49.8	71.1	30.9
2022 Q2	50.1	70.9	32.1
2023 Q1	49.9	69.6	32.7
2023 Q2	48.6	68.8	31.1

Table 3 provides the information on LFPRs by gender since year 2018. 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, second quarter - 2023

Age group (Years)	Total	Male	Female
Sri Lanka	48.6	68.8	31.1
15 - 19	7.8	11.2	4.3
20 - 24	44.3	59.9	29.2
25 - 29	66.7	89.1	47.0
30 - 34	66.1	94.1	43.5
35 - 39	65.2	95.5	40.9
40 - 44	68.4	95.7	43.0
45 - 49	69.5	93.8	48.7
50 - 54	64.0	92.2	40.2
55 - 59	61.2	85.6	39.9
60+	28.3	44.6	15.5

Figure 1: Distribution of economically active vs inactive population, second quarter 2023



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 40 - 44 years (95.7%), while that for female is reported from 45 - 49 age group (48.7%).

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.

Employment Rate

The proportion of employed population to the total labour force.

Table 5: Distribution of employed population by main industry (second quarter 2022 - second quarter 2023)

Quarter	Sri Lanka	Major Industry Group		
		Agriculture	Industries	Services
2022 Q2	8,177,045	2,125,240	2,267,064	3,784,742
(%)	100.0	26.0	27.7	46.3
2022 Q3	8,010,340	2,152,377	2,076,868	3,781,095
(%)	100.0	26.9	25.9	47.2
2022 Q4	8,015,006	2,258,476	1,946,352	3,810,178
(%)	100.0	28.2	24.3	47.5
2023 Q1	8,199,792	2,187,563	2,090,031	3,922,198
(%)	100.0	26.7	25.5	47.8
2023 Q2	8,014,492	2,058,421	2,104,249	3,851,822
(%)	100.0	25.7	26.3	48.1

Table 5 shows the percentage distribution of employed population by main industry from second quarter 2022 to second quarter 2023. During second quarter of 2023, the total number of employed persons in Sri Lanka is estimated as 8.0 million. Of which, about 48.1 percent engaged in service sector, 26.3 percent in industry sector and 25.7 percent in agriculture sector. In the second quarter of 2023, there is an increase in employed persons in service sector compared to the second quarter of 2022.

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 - 2023

Employment Status	Sector					
	Sri Lanka		Agriculture		Non-Agriculture	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Sri Lanka	8,014,492	100.0	2,058,421	25.7	5,956,071	74.3
Employee	4,737,038	100.0	749,962	15.8	3,987,076	84.2
Public	1,176,551	100.0	33009.878	2.8	1,143,541	97.2
Private	3,560,487	100.0	716,952	20.1	2,843,535	79.9
Employer	220,501	100.0	28947.808	13.1	191,553	86.9
Own Account Worker	2,590,878	100.0	1,034,588	39.9	1,556,291	60.1
Contributing Family Worker	466,075	100.0	244,923	52.6	221,152	47.4

According to the Table 6 Majority of the workforce are private sector employees followed by own account workers. Non agriculture sector covers 74.3 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 24.4 percent is in agriculture sector while this share is 26.3 percent for males.

Figure 2 : Distribution of employed population by employment status and Agriculture/ Non- Agriculture sector, second quarter - 2023

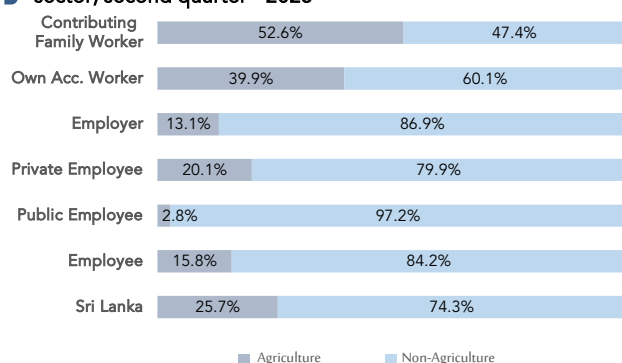


Table 7: Percentage distribution of Employed population by major industry group & gender, second quarter – 2023

Major Industry group	Sri Lanka	Gender	
		Male	Female
Sri Lanka	100.0	100.0	100.0
Agriculture	25.7	26.3	24.4
Industry	26.3	26.3	26.2
Services	48.1	47.4	49.4

Unemployment

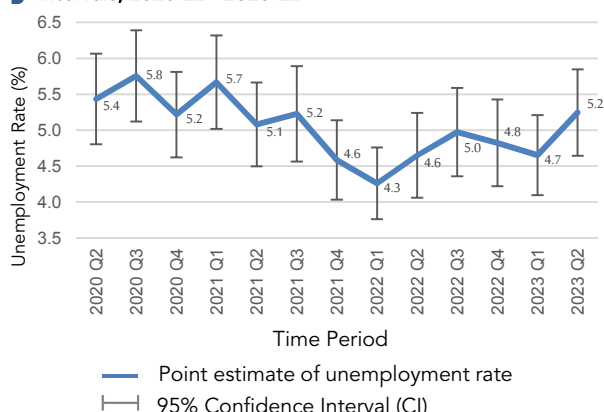
Unemployed

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, 2020Q2 - 2023Q2



The number of unemployed persons is estimated as 443,683 during the second quarter 2023. The unemployment rate for the second quarter 2023 is 5.2 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 - 2023

Age group (Years)	Unemployment Rate (%)			
	Sri Lanka	Gender		
	Number	Sri Lanka	Male	Female
Sri Lanka	443,683	5.2	4.1	7.4
15 - 24	209,074	25.8	22.7	32.3
25 - 29	90,561	11.6	7.1	18.9
Over 30	144,048	2.1	1.5	3.2

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 2023



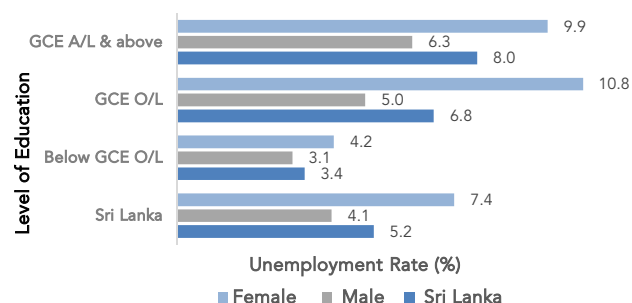
As per the table 8, overall unemployment rate reported for female is 7.4 percent and it is 4.1 percent for male. Youth unemployment rate (age 15 – 24 years) corresponding to the second quarter 2023 is 25.8 percent and that is the highest reported unemployment rate among all age groups. Further the unemployment rates for males and females are 22.7 and 32.3 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 - 2023

Level of Education	Unemployment Rate (%)			
	Sri Lanka	Gender		
	Number	Sri Lanka	Male	Female
Sri Lanka	443,683	5.2	4.1	7.4
Below GCE O/L	159,253	3.4	3.1	4.2
GCE O/L	104,703	6.8	5.0	10.8
GCE A/L & above	179,728	8.0	6.3	9.9

Figure 5 : Unemployment rate by level of education and gender, second quarter 2023



The highest unemployment rate is reported from the G.C.E.(A/L) and above group which is 8.0 percent. Corresponding percentages are 6.3 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								
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2021Q2	2022Q2	2023Q1	2023Q2
Labour force participation rate									
by gender									
Total	51.8	52.3	50.6	49.9	49.8	49.8	50.1	49.9	48.6
Male	73.0	73.0	71.9	71.0	70.5	71.1	70.9	69.6	68.8
Female	33.6	34.5	32.0	31.8	32.1	30.9	32.1	32.7	31.1
by residential sector									
Total	51.8	52.3	50.6	49.9	49.8	49.8	50.1	49.9	48.6
Urban	49.6	50.2	47.0	46.9	47.2	46.6	47.6	47.5	46.8
Rural	52.3	52.7	51.3	50.5	50.3	50.5	50.6	50.4	49.0
Unemployment rate									
by gender									
Total	4.4	4.8	5.5	5.1	4.7	5.1	4.6	4.7	5.2
Male	3.0	3.3	4.0	3.7	3.7	3.8	3.7	3.4	4.1
Female	7.1	7.4	8.5	7.9	6.5	7.7	6.5	7.0	7.4
by selected age group (year)									
20 – 29	15.0	15.3	18.1	18.3	16.2	18.2	17.1	17.1	16.4
20 – 24	20.1	20.3	25.2	26.8	21.8	30.2	24.2	21.5	22.0
25 – 29	10.4	11.0	12.0	11.4	11.7	9.2	11.0	13.6	11.6
by selected educational level									
GCE A/L and above									
Total	9.1	8.5	9.8	9.1	7.8	9.1	7.8	8.3	8.0
Male	5.1	5.0	6.2	6.2	5.5	6.1	4.5	4.7	6.3
Female	13.2	11.9	13.6	12.2	10.1	12.5	11.3	12.0	9.9
Employed population									
by gender									
Total	8,015,166	8,180,693	7,999,093	8,113,507	8,147,731	8,082,303	8,177,045	8,199,792	8,014,492
Male	5,300,310	5,368,896	5,372,947	5,414,280	5,373,965	5,504,060	5,421,108	5,402,656	5,323,491
Female	2,714,855	2,811,796	2,626,146	2,699,228	2,773,766	2,578,243	2,755,937	2,797,136	2,691,001
by industry (percentage)									
Total	8,015,166	8,180,693	7,999,093	8,113,507	8,147,731	8,082,303	8,177,045	8,199,792	8,014,492
%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Agriculture	2,043,698	2,071,940	2,169,679	2,213,015	2,158,559	2,250,273	2,125,240	2,187,563	2,058,421
%	25.5	25.3	27.1	27.3	26.5	27.8	26.0	26.7	25.7
Industry	2,239,262	2,258,421	2,152,746	2,109,482	2,158,199	2,041,674	2,267,064	2,090,031	2,104,249
%	27.9	27.6	26.9	26.0	26.5	25.3	27.7	25.5	26.3
Services	3,732,206	3,850,332	3,676,668	3,791,011	3,830,973	3,790,355	3,784,742	3,922,198	3,851,822
%	46.6	47.1	46.0	46.7	47.0	46.9	46.3	47.8	48.1
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	100.0
0*	5.6	6.4	14.6	9.6	5.8	15.9	7.7	4.7	4.8
1 – 9	1.7	1.7	2.1	2.0	2.1	2.9	2.4	2.1	2.6
10 – 39	25.7	26.8	27.1	29.6	31.9	31.4	34.1	30.5	32.6
40 & above	66.9	65.1	56.2	58.7	60.3	49.8	55.8	62.7	60.0

* 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

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The Mission of DCS

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