



Sri Lanka Labour Force Statistics Quarterly Bulletin

Sri Lanka Labour Force Survey 4th Quarter - 2020

ISSN 1391- 3050

Issue No.91

4th Quarter - 2020

Department of Census and Statistics

Ministry of Finance

Highlights

- Labour force participation rate is 50.1% for the Fourth Quarter of 2020.
- Unemployment rate for the survey period is 5.2%.

Inside

Labour Force	1
Employment	2
Unemployment	3
Selected Labour Force Indicators	4

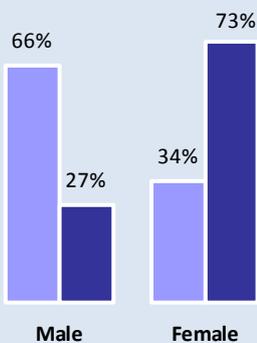


Figure 1 : Distribution of Economically active/Inactive population- Fourth quarter - 2020

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 fourth quarter 2020 based on the data collected in October, November and December in 2020 covering the whole country.

Labour Force

(Economically Active Population)

Table 1 : Economically active population by gender and sector – Fourth Quarter 2020

Sector	Economically active population					
	Total	%	Male	%	Female	%
Sri Lanka	8,473,230	100.0	5,620,610	66.3	2,852,620	33.7
Urban	1,351,549	100.0	913,263	67.6	438,286	32.4
Rural	6,702,585	100.0	4,466,054	66.6	2,236,531	33.4
Estate	419,095	100.0	241,293	57.6	177,803	42.4

Table 2 : Economically inactive population by gender and sector – Fourth Quarter 2020

Sector	Economically inactive population					
	Total	%	Male	%	Female	%
Sri Lanka	8,439,620	100.0	2,305,905	27.3	6,133,715	72.7
Urban	1,608,632	100.0	473,179	29.4	1,135,453	70.6
Rural	6,552,786	100.0	1,731,666	26.4	4,821,119	73.6
Estate	278,203	100.0	101,059	36.3	177,143	63.7

Table 3 : LFPR by gender and year - All Island

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
2018 Q4	52.2	73.2	34.3
2019 Q4	51.9	72.2	34.3
2020 Q1	51.0	72.4	32.5
2020 Q2	50.2	71.7	31.6
2020 Q3	51.0	72.5	32.4
2020 Q4	50.1	70.9	31.7

Table 3 provides the information on LFPRs 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 rate for male is reported from age group 35–39 years (96.8%), while that for female is reported from 25–29 age group (46.6%).

Labour Force

This is the currently economically active population. Which is the number of persons (age 15 years & above) who are employed or unemployed during the reference one week period.

Labour force participation rate (LFPR)

Labour force population expressed as a percentage of the population, age 15 years and over, defined as LFPR.

According to the Table 1, the estimated economically active population is about 8.5 million in the fourth quarter 2020. Of which 66.3 percent are males and 33.7 percent are females. The economically inactive population is about 8.4 million. Out of the economically inactive population 27.3 percent are males and 72.7 percent are females.

Table 4 : LFPR by age group and gender - Fourth Quarter 2020

Age group (Years)	Total	Male	Female
Sri Lanka	50.1	70.9	31.7
15 - 19	9.9	14.3	5.2
20 - 24	48.3	65.5	31.5
25 - 29	68.9	91.8	46.6
30 - 34	66.4	96.0	40.5
35 - 39	66.6	96.8	42.3
40 - 44	67.2	95.1	44.9
45 - 49	69.0	95.7	45.2
50 - 54	67.1	92.4	45.3
55 - 59	59.9	85.8	37.8
60+	28.9	46.1	14.9

Definition of '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

The Employment Rate

The proportion of employed population to the total labour force.



Figure 2 : Distribution of employed population by employment status and Agriculture/Non-Agriculture sector - Fourth quarter 2020

Employment ...

Table 5 : Distribution of Employed population by main industry (Fourth quarter 2019 – Fourth quarter 2020)

Quarter	Sri Lanka	Major Industry Group		
		Agriculture	Industries	Services
2019 Q4 (No.)	8,181,442	2,215,128	2,196,895	3,769,420
(%)	100.0	27.1	26.9	46.1
2020 Q1 (No.)	8,020,446	2,127,212	2,174,148	3,719,086
(%)	100.0	26.5	27.1	46.4
2020 Q2 (No.)	7,977,000	2,159,609	2,146,862	3,670,528
(%)	100.0	27.1	26.9	46.0
2020 Q3 (No.)	7,967,695	2,061,630	2,188,330	3,717,735
(%)	100.0	25.9	27.5	46.7
2020 Q4 (No.)	8,031,233	2,330,266	2,101,645	3,599,322
(%)	100.0	29.0	26.2	44.8

Table 5 shows the percentage distribution of employed population by main industry from fourth quarter 2019 to fourth quarter 2020. During fourth quarter of 2020, the total number of employed persons in Sri Lanka is estimated as about 8.0 million. Of which, about 44.8 percent engaged in Service sector, 29.0 percent in Agriculture sector and 26.2 percent in Industry sector. In the fourth quarter of 2020, there is an increase in employed persons in Agriculture sector compared to the fourth quarter of 2019 by 115,138.

Table 6 : Distribution of employed population by employment status in Agriculture and Non-Agriculture sectors – Fourth quarter 2020

Employment Status	Sri Lanka		Sector			
			Agriculture		Non-Agriculture	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Sri Lanka	8,031,233	100.0	2,330,266	29.0	5,700,967	71.0
Employee	4,517,760	100.0	658,903	14.6	3,858,857	85.4
Public	1,202,137	100.0	37,696	3.1	1,164,440	96.9
Private	3,315,624	100.0	621,207	18.7	2,694,417	81.3
Employer	185,220	100.0	31,062	16.8	154,158	83.2
Own Account Worker	2,746,711	100.0	1,231,194	44.8	1,515,517	55.2
Contributing Family Worker	581,541	100.0	409,107	70.3	172,434	29.7

These figures are to be treated with caution as the corresponding CV (Coefficient of variation) values are high.

Table 7 : Percentage distribution of Employed population by main industry & gender – Fourth quarter 2020

Major Industry Group	Sri Lanka	Gender	
		Male	Female
Sri Lanka	100.0	100.0	100.0
Agriculture	29.0	27.5	32.2
Industry	26.2	28.2	22.1
Services	44.8	44.4	45.7

Main industry categories and sub sectors

Agriculture

1. 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

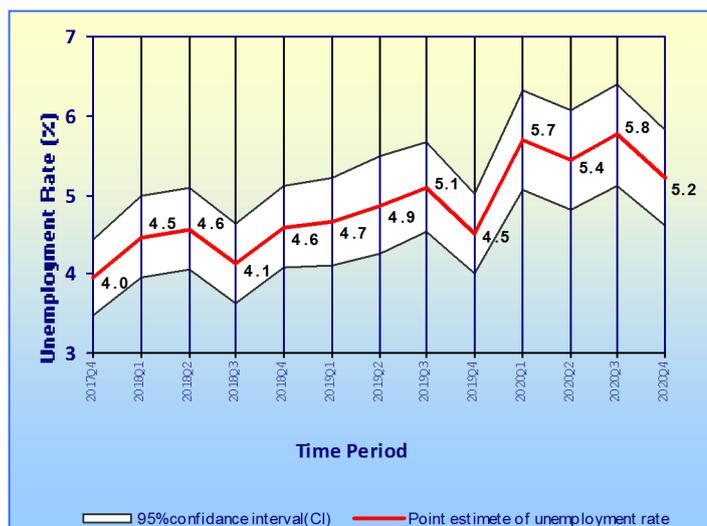
1. Wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles (G)
2. Transportation and storage (H)
3. Accommodation and food services activities (I)
4. Information and communication (J)
5. Financial and insurance activities (K)
6. Professional, scientific and technical activities (M)
7. Administrative and support service activities (N)
8. Public administration and defense 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)

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 32.2 percent is in agriculture sector while this share is 27.5 percent for males.

Unemployment ...

Figure 3 : Unemployment rates and its 95% confidence intervals (2017Q4 - 2020Q4)



¹Sampling 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

Table 8: Number of Unemployed and Unemployment rate by age group and gender – Fourth quarter 2020

Age group (Years)	Unemployment Rate (%)			
	Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka	Gender	
	Number		Male	Female
Sri Lanka	441,997	5.2	4.1	7.5
15–24	222,060	25.7	22.2	33.3
25–29	110,930	12.4	8.1	20.7
Over 30	109,008	1.6	1.1	2.7

As can be seen from Table 8, overall unemployment rate reported for female is 7.5 percent and it is 4.1 percent for male. Youth unemployment rate (age 15 – 24 years) corresponding to the fourth quarter 2020 is 25.7 percent and that is the highest reported unemployment rate among all age groups. Further the unemployment rates for males and females are 22.2 and 33.3 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 – Fourth quarter 2020

Level of Education	Unemployment Rate (%)			
	Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka	Gender	
	Number		Male	Female
Sri Lanka	441,997	5.2	4.1	7.5
Below GCE O/L	140,434	2.9	2.3	4.1
GCE O/L	113,671	7.3	7.5	7.0
GCE A/L & above	187,893	9.3	6.3	12.8

The highest unemployment rate is reported from the G.C.E (A/L) and above group which is 9.3 percent. Corresponding percentages are 6.3 percent and 12.8 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.

Definition of '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 said to be unemployed.

The number of unemployed persons is estimated as 441,997 during the fourth quarter 2020. The unemployment rate for the fourth quarter 2020 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.

The Unemployment Rate

The proportion of unemployed population to the total labour force.

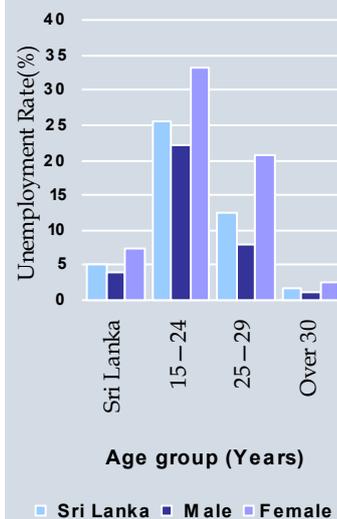


Figure 4: Unemployment rate by age group and gender – Fourth quarter 2020

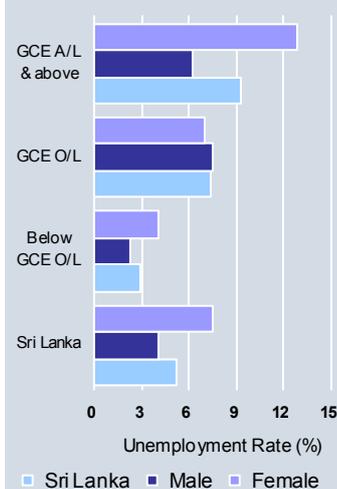


Figure 5: Unemployment rate by level of education and gender – Fourth quarter 2020



Department of
Census and Statistics

No.306/71
Polduwa Road,
Battaramulla.
Sri Lanka

Sample Surveys
Division
7th floor,
Sankyana Mandiraya
No.306/71
Polduwa Road,
Battaramulla.
Sri Lanka

Phone: 011-2147446
Fax: 011-2147447

E-mail:
sample.survey@statistics.
gov.lk

Vision of the DCS

*"To be the leader in
the region in produc-
ing timely statistical
information to
achieve the country's
development goals."*

Mission of the DCS

*"Making contribution
in the socioeconomic
development of the
country by providing
accurate timely statis-
tics, more Effectively
by means of new
technology, and utiliz-
ing the services of
dedicated staff under
a strategic leadership
to become a prosper-
ous nation in the
globalized environ-
ment."*

Selected Labour Force Indicators ...

Indicator	Year									
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2018Q4	2019Q4	2020Q1	2020Q2	2020Q3	2020Q4
Labour force participation rate										
By Gender										
Total	53.8	54.1	51.8	52.3	52.2	51.9	51.0	50.2	51.0	50.1
Male	75.1	74.5	73.0	73.0	73.2	72.2	72.4	71.7	72.5	70.9
Female	35.9	36.6	33.6	34.5	34.3	34.3	32.5	31.6	32.4	31.7
By residential sector										
Total	53.8	54.1	51.8	52.3	52.2	51.9	51.0	50.2	51.0	50.1
Urban	49.8	50.5	49.6	50.2	52.0	49.4	47.1	46.4	48.6	45.7
Rural	54.6	54.8	52.3	52.7	52.3	52.4	51.7	51.0	51.6	51.0
Unemployment Rate										
By Gender										
Total	4.4	4.2	4.4	4.8	4.6	4.5	5.7	5.4	5.8	5.2
Male	2.9	2.9	3.0	3.3	3.2	3.2	3.7	4.1	4.3	4.1
Female	7.0	6.5	7.1	7.4	7.1	6.9	9.6	8.2	8.6	7.5
By selected age Group (Year)										
20 – 29	14.2	13.5	15.0	15.3	14.4	14.5	18.8	18.2	17.6	18.0
20 – 24	19.9	17.8	20.1	20.3	19.6	19.2	26.1	26.5	22.8	25.2
25 – 29	9.2	9.5	10.4	11.0	9.5	10.4	11.6	11.0	13.0	12.4
By selected educational level										
GCE A/L and above										
Total	8.3	8.1	9.1	8.5	8.7	7.7	10.1	10.0	9.6	9.3
Male	4.7	5.0	5.1	5.0	5.5	4.9	5.5	6.3	6.7	6.3
Female	11.9	11.3	13.2	11.9	11.9	10.4	14.7	14.2	12.7	12.8
Employed population										
By Gender										
Total	7,947,683	8,208,179	8,015,166	8,180,693	8,088,448	8,181,442	8,020,446	7,977,000	7,967,695	8,031,233
Male	5,149,948	5,279,158	5,300,310	5,368,896	5,300,402	5,353,552	5,381,218	5,369,119	5,348,960	5,392,490
Female	2,797,735	2,929,021	2,714,855	2,811,796	2,788,046	2,827,890	2,639,227	2,607,881	2,618,735	2,638,742
By industry (Percentage)										
Total	7,947,683	8,208,179	8,015,166	8,180,693	8,088,448	8,181,442	8,020,446	7,977,000	7,967,695	8,031,233
%	100.0	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	2,072,954	2,215,128	2,127,212	2,159,609	2,061,630	2,330,266
%	27.1	26.1	25.5	25.3	25.6	27.1	26.5	27.1	25.9	29.0
Industry	2,097,503	2,331,494	2,239,262	2,258,421	2,236,604	2,196,895	2,174,148	2,146,862	2,188,330	2,101,645
%	26.4	28.4	27.9	27.6	27.7	26.9	27.1	26.9	27.5	26.2
Services	3,696,306	3,736,500	3,732,206	3,850,332	3,778,889	3,769,420	3,719,086	3,670,528	3,717,735	3,599,322
%	46.5	45.5	46.6	47.1	46.7	46.1	46.4	46.0	46.7	44.8
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	100.0
0#	4.4	4.7	5.6	6.4	4.4	5.8	12.7	31.5	5.6	8.7
1 – 9	1.5	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.5	2.3	2.5	1.7	1.8
10 – 39	26.2	26.1	25.7	26.8	25.2	27.2	27.7	25.5	26.6	28.5
40 & above	67.9	67.5	66.9	65.1	68.9	65.5	57.2	40.6	66.1	61.0

has a job but not at work during the reference week

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