



Headcount Index and Population Below Poverty  
Line by DS Division – Sri Lanka: 2002

Department of Census and Statistics

## **Census Department Ranks DS Divisions by Poverty**

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Poverty is any barrier to prosperity and is lack of resources and opportunities, feelings of being disenfranchised from various support systems (i.e. educational, economic, cultural, and social), and diminished feelings of empowerment to obtain these resources and opportunities. The elimination of poverty is a key concern of all those interested in the development of poor countries, and now provides the main justification for promoting economic growth and development. The central objective of the Millennium Goals, agreed by 149 countries at the UN Millennium Summit in New York, is the halving of poverty by 2015. In official discourse almost every policy is currently assessed in relation to its impact on poverty.

Poverty is measured by using various indicators. In Sri Lanka, Poverty Line is one of the widely used indicators to measure poverty. The purpose of estimating poverty line is to capture the basic needs necessary to meet minimum living standards. This is captured by defining a consumption bundle which includes food and non-food items, that is adequate to meet the nutritional requirements, and estimates the cost of purchasing that consumption bundle.

From 1980 to 1990, poverty line was estimated by the Department of Census Statistics using data collected from various surveys including Family Budget Survey, Labour Force and Socio Economic Survey. Because of the high demand on poverty indices, in 1990, a survey was designed mainly to collect data required for estimating the indices related to poverty and food consumption patterns. This survey is known as Household Income and Expenditure survey (HIES). Since then the HIES is conducted regularly once in five years. The HIES is the main data source for compiling following indices.

- Food and non - food consumption patterns
- Population by income and expenditure deciles
- Income receivers income
- Sources of income
- Average nutrition intake values
- Poverty line
- Percentage of population below poverty line
- Average household size

The last HIES was conducted in the year 2002. The official poverty line in Sri Lanka is fixed at welfare level of a person who meets a certain minimal nutrition intake (2030 kilocalories) in 2002. More precisely, the official poverty line of 2002 is defined as the per-capita expenditure for a person to be able to meet the nutritional anchor of 2030 kilocalories in 2002. A full description of the estimation of poverty line is available on the website of the DCS ([www.statistics.gov.lk](http://www.statistics.gov.lk)). The estimated poverty line for the year 2002 is Rs. 1423. That is, people living in households whose real per capita monthly total consumption expenditure is below Rs. 1423 in the year 2002 in Sri Lanka are considered

as poor. The poverty line is deflated with the Colombo Consumer Price Index to estimate the official poverty line for other years. National poverty line estimated for 1990/91, and 1995/96 were Rs. 475 and Rs. 833 respectively.

Two other widely used important indices on poverty are Headcount Index and Population Below Poverty Line. Headcount Index is defined as the percentage of population below the poverty line. The Headcount Index and Population Below Poverty Line by district were estimated using the data collected by the HIES – 2002. Estimates could not be compiled for the districts in the Northern and Eastern provinces. The lowest Headcount Index of 6 percent was reported for the Colombo district while the highest Headcount Index was reported for the Badulla (37%) and Monaragala (37%) districts. The Headcount Index reported for Matale, Puttalam, Hambantota, Kegalle and Rathnapura were 30, 31, 32, 32 and 34 percent respectively.

<p align="center"><b>Headcount Index and Population Below Poverty Line – 2002</b></p>
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<b>District</b>	<b>Headcount index %</b>	<b>Population Below Poverty Line (Thousands)</b>
Colombo	6	143
Gampaha	11	230
Kaluthara	20	223
Anuradapura	20	156
NuwaraEliya	23	166
Polonnaruwa	24	89
Kandy	25	329
Kurunegala	25	384
Galle	26	269
Matara	27	219
Matale	30	136
Puttlam	31	232
Hambantota	32	179
Kegalle	32	265
Ratnapura	34	364
Badulla	37	303
Monaragala	37	155
<b>All districts</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>3,841</b>

### Nominal Poverty Line by District

District	1990/91	1995/96	2002
<b>All districts</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>833</b>	<b>1,423</b>
Colombo	518	908	1,537
Gampaha	489	875	1,508
Kalutara	494	866	1,523
Kandy	485	850	1,451
Matale	466	816	1,395
Nuwara Eliya	494	841	1,437
Galle	489	833	1,466
Matara	470	816	1,395
Hambantota	470	791	1,338
Kurunegala	456	791	1,352
Puttalam	461	841	1,423
Anuradhpura	456	816	1,380
Polonnaruwa	475	783	1,366
Badulla	485	850	1,409
Monaragala	480	791	1,366
Rathnapura	494	833	1,451
Kegalle	466	858	1,437

Similar to many other surveys, the HIES is also designed to provide estimates at district and other higher level administrative units. It is not possible to compile these estimates at Divisional Secretary Division (DS) level or levels below this, because of the limitations in the sample size. However, these indices at lower level administrative units, particularly indices on poverty are in high demand as those are key inputs for prioritizing lower level administrative units for planning and implementing location efficient development and poverty eradication projects.

Sample size is directly related to the cost of the survey. Therefore, it is not practical to conduct regular surveys to provide estimates at all levels of administrative units. Recently the Department conducted a study successfully to estimate poverty indices by DS division using the same data collected at the HIES - 2002. The method used in this study is known as Small Area Estimation Technique. This method relies on sophisticated econometric techniques and a set of identical variables (e.g., household characteristics and educational background) in both a census and a surveyed representative sample of the overall population. By combining census and household survey data, researchers benefit from the strengths of each instrument: a census - complete coverage of a country and a survey - more detailed information from a sample.

For the first time in Sri Lanka, this technique was successfully applied to the data collected from the HIES – 2002 and the Census of Population and Housing – 2001 to compile two poverty indices namely the Headcount Index and the Population Below Poverty Line by DS division, fulfilling a long felt need. According to these estimates, the

lowest percentage (2.1%) of population below the poverty line is reported from the Dehiwala-Mount Lavinia DS division of the Colombo district and the highest percentage of 51.8% is reported from the Siyambalanduwa DS division of the Monaragala district.

With respect to the Headcount Index, Siyambalanduwa (Monaragala district), Rideemaliyadda (Badulla District), Meegahakivula (Badulla District), Kandaketiya (Badulla District), Kalpitiya (Puttalam district), Mundel (Puttalam district), Madulla (Puttalam district), Vanathavilluwa (Puttalam district), Elapatha (Rathnapura District) and Weligepola (Rathnapura District) are the 10 most poor DS divisions. The Headcount Index for these DS divisions is 51.8, 51.2, 46.5, 46.1, 45.3, 41.1, 40.7, 40.3, 40.1 and 39.2 percent respectively.

With respect to the Headcount Index, the 10 least poor DS divisions has been identified as Kelaniya, Homagama, Wattala, Kaduwela, Kesbewa, Thimbirigasyaya, Rathmalana, Maharagama, Sri Jayawardanapura Kotte, and Dehiwala-Mount Lavinia where Wattala and Kelaniya are in the Gampaha district and other DS divisions are in the Colombo district. The estimated Headcount Index for these DS divisions is 6.9, 6.4, 6.1, 6.0, 5.2, 4.4, 4.2, 3.5, 2.7 and 2.1 respectively. Headcount Index and the Population Below Poverty Line for all the DS divisions other than those for the Northern and Eastern provinces are given in the table below.

Poverty maps at DS division level, showing the spatial variation of percentage of individuals classified as poor (the so-called Headcount Index) and Population Below Poverty Line have been prepared and are given below. DS divisions have been grouped into four categories after ranking the DS divisions with respect to each of these two indices. In these poverty maps, DS divisions falling into most poor category are shaded in red colour while those belong to least poor category are shaded in dark green colour. The other two categories are shaded in orange and light green colours. Poverty mapping is increasingly becoming popular with development practitioners as they powerfully illustrate the spatial heterogeneity of poverty within a country. Poverty mapping facilitates implementing location-efficient poverty elevation policies.

These maps can quickly provide information on the spatial distribution of poverty that in turn proves the targeting of intervention or development projects. This greatly assists in the targeting and implementation of development projects, and the communication of information to a wide range of stakeholders, as it shows “Where Are the Poor?”.

One of the main uses of poverty maps is identification of Geographical/administrative units for prioritization for development and poverty alleviation projects. Such maps are also useful in program development and policy formulation, to guide allocation of anti-poverty investments and expenditures. Poverty maps could be used as a tool for monitoring and evaluation. By comparing spatial distribution of poverty levels using poverty maps prepared at regular intervals, the impact of various interventions aiming at development and poverty eradication projects can be assessed.

Map 1: Headcount index ( Percentage of Household Population Below poverty Line )  
By DS Division: Sri Lanka - 2002

Map 2: Household Population Below Poverty Line By DS Division: Srilanka - 2002

## Headcount Index (HI) and Household Population Below Poverty (HPBPL): 2002

No.	DS Division	HI	HPBPL	No.	DS Division	HI	HPBPL	No.	DS Division	HI	HPBPL	No.	DS Division	HI	HPBPL
	Colombo	6.0	144,106	38	Agalawatta	26.4	8,683	75	Nuwara Eliya	21.9	43,919	112	Lunugamvehera	33.5	8,222
1	Colombo	12.1	39,819	39	Palindanuwara	30.7	13,599	76	Ambagamuwa	22.9	45,324	113	Tissamaharama	32.2	18,616
2	Kolonnawa	8.2	12,292	40	Walallawita	31.4	15,535		Galle	26.0	221,320	114	Hambantota	31.3	13,937
3	Kaduwela	6.0	11,614		Kandy	25.0	281,523	77	Bentota	22.3	9,951	115	Ambalantota	33.3	20,515
4	Homagama	6.4	10,797	41	Thumpane	24.4	8,502	78	Balapitiya	22.0	13,791	116	Angunukolapelessa	33.0	13,555
5	Hanwella	14.2	12,562	42	Poojapitiya	24.7	13,010	79	Karadeniya	21.9	11,928	117	Weeraketiya	32.5	11,359
6	Padukka	10.7	5,439	43	Akurana	27.4	14,882	80	Elpitiya	22.7	13,308	118	Katuwana	34.3	14,348
7	Maharagama	3.5	5,973	44	Pathadumbara	19.2	15,157	81	Niyagama	23.7	7,890	119	Walasmulla	33.4	12,957
8	Sri Jayawardanapura	2.7	2,750	45	Panwila	33.8	8,914	82	Thawalama	29.5	9,088	120	Okewela	34.1	6,069
9	Thimbirigasyaya	4.4	9,672	46	Udadumbara	37.5	8,342	83	Neluwa	33.4	8,831	121	Beliatla	28.3	14,368
10	Dehiwala	2.1	1,896	47	Minipe	37.5	17,413	84	Nagoda	28.7	14,631	122	Tangalle	27.1	16,255
11	Rathmalana	4.2	4,058	48	Medadumbara	29.8	16,904	85	Baddegama	21.7	14,505		Kurunegala	25.0	305,364
12	Moratuwa	10.3	16,908	49	Kundasale	19.2	19,709	86	Welivitiya-Divithura	25.5	6,522	123	Giribawa	24.0	6,576
13	Kesbewa	5.2	10,326	50	Gangawata Korale	10.1	14,272	87	Ambalangoda	20.3	13,869	124	Galgamuwa	25.7	11,966
	Gampaha	11.0	218,447	51	Harispattuwa	20.0	15,448	88	Hikkaduwa	24.9	23,487	125	Ehetuwewa	26.2	5,895
14	Negombo	7.1	9,625	52	Hatharaliyadda	29.1	8,363	89	Galle Four Gravets	19.3	17,607	126	Ambanpola	23.1	4,545
15	Katana	7.7	14,089	53	Yatinuwara	19.2	18,271	90	Bope-Poddala	18.1	7,167	127	Kotawehera	21.7	4,078
16	Divulapitiya	13.7	17,022	54	Udunuwara	22.0	21,112	91	Akmeemana	22.0	13,553	128	Rasnayakapura	23.0	4,214
17	Mirigama	18.2	25,296	55	Doluwa	26.5	11,837	92	Yakkalamulla	24.8	10,507	129	Nikaweratiya	19.4	6,799
18	Minuwangoda	12.5	18,424	56	Pathahewaheta	26.6	14,015	93	Imaduwa	21.8	8,486	130	Mahawa	20.9	10,248
19	Wattala	6.1	9,089	57	Delthota	34.0	9,942	94	Habaraduwa	28.7	16,199	131	Polpithigama	30.0	19,731
20	Ja-Ela	7.8	13,313	58	Udapalatha	21.4	17,750		Matara	27.0	176,021	132	Ibbagamuwa	24.3	18,154
21	Gampaha	9.9	16,276	59	Ganga Ihala Korale	27.7	13,889	95	Pitabeddara	26.6	12,737	133	Ganewatta	23.2	8,406
22	Attanagalla	15.4	23,100	60	Pasbage Korale	25.0	13,791	96	Kotapola	22.6	14,026	134	Wariyapola	18.9	10,504
23	Dompe	21.1	26,544		Matale	30.0	98,268	97	Pasgoda	28.2	15,551	135	Kobeigane	19.1	6,077
24	Mahara	12.1	20,438	61	Galewela	23.7	14,274	98	Mulatiyana	30.9	13,971	136	Bingiriya	16.8	9,214
25	Kelaniya	6.9	8,556	62	Dambulla	19.9	11,306	99	Athuraliya	27.8	8,116	137	Panduwasnuwara	18.9	12,728
26	Biyagama	11.3	16,675	63	Naula	24.3	6,611	100	Akuressa	21.9	10,601	138	Katupotha	20.0	5,400
	Kalutara	20.0	179,604	64	Pallepola	26.5	7,016	101	Welipitiya	23.7	10,670	139	Bamunukotuwa	19.7	3,966
27	Panadura	7.4	11,571	65	Yatawatta	29.9	8,384	102	Malimbada	24.3	7,483	140	Maspotha	19.6	3,622
28	Bandaragama	8.2	6,854	66	Matale	16.4	10,752	103	Kamburupitiya	24.9	9,008	141	Kurunegala	14.7	11,967
29	Horana	8.4	7,275	67	Ambanganga Koralaya	34.8	5,246	104	Hakmana	32.0	9,368	142	Mallawapitiya	19.5	8,782
30	Ingiriya	17.4	7,663	68	Laggala-Pallegama	34.6	4,103	105	Kirinda Puhulwella	27.1	5,111	143	Mawathagama	24.92	13,806
31	Bulathsinhala	27.4	16,042	69	Wilgamuwa	24.9	6,564	106	Thihagoda	27.2	8,210	144	Rideegama	32.76	26,002
32	Madurawala	18.6	5,393	70	Rattota	23.4	11,326	107	Weligama	21.5	13,713	145	Weerambagedara	20.11	5,936
33	Millaniya	16.9	7,332	71	Ukuwela	21.4	12,686	108	Matara Four Gravets	16.9	17,052	146	Kuliyaipitiya East	20.32	9,243
34	Kaluthara	12.5	16,642		Nuwara Eliya	23.0	167,610	109	Devinuwara	20.9	9,069	147	Kuliyaipitiya West	16.62	11,404
35	Beruwala	22.1	30,671	72	Kothmale	22.3	21,221	110	Dickwella	22.7	11,335	148	Udubaddawa	17.70	8,418
36	Dodangoda	21.2	11,441	73	Hanguranketha	34.6	29,673		Hambantota	32.0	162,278	149	Pannala	17.80	19,615
37	Mathugama	29.4	20,903	74	Walapane	26.5	27,473	111	Sooriyawewa	34.8	12,077	150	Narammala	21.40	10,517

## Headcount Index (HI) and Household Population Below Poverty (HPBPL): 2002

No.	DS Division	HI	HPBPL	No.	DS Division	HI	HPBPL	No.	DS Division	HI	HPBPL
151	Alawwa	25.21	14,504	189	Galnewa	18.46	5,476	225	Kuruwita	28.9	23,839
152	Polgahawela	22.91	13,047	190	Palagala	23.83	6,952	226	Kiriella	25.6	7,706
	<b>Puttalam</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>167,020</b>		<b>Polonnaruwa</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>57,567</b>	227	Rathnapura	21.9	23,818
153	Kalpitiya	45.34	36,197	191	Hingurakgoda	14.10	7,832	228	Imbulpe	32.0	17,070
154	Vanathavilluwa	40.31	6,373	192	Medirigiriya	13.37	7,650	229	Balangoda	27.3	20,399
155	Karuwalagaswewa	23.77	4,649	193	Lankapura	14.54	4,815	230	Opanayaka	34.1	8,380
156	Nawagattegama	26.44	3,326	194	Welikanda	24.72	6,760	231	Pelmadulla	30.2	25,211
157	Puttalam	25.08	16,864	195	Dimbulagala	22.59	13,614	232	Elapatha	40.1	14,369
158	Mundalama	41.08	22,503	196	Thamankaduwa	14.15	9,696	233	Ayagama	33.7	9,480
159	Mahakumbukkadawala	28.65	4,780	197	Elahera	18.45	7,200	234	Kalawana	36.4	17,252
160	Anamaduwa	16.77	5,502		<b>Badulla</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>241,697</b>	235	Nivithigala	32.8	18,820
161	Pallama	26.12	5,800	198	Mahiyanganaya	38.57	24,989	236	Kahawaththa	32.7	13,234
162	Arachchikattuwa	21.82	8,058	199	Rideemaliyadda	51.15	22,891	237	Godakawela	38.2	25,638
163	Chilaw	20.11	11,536	200	Meegahakivula	46.50	8,478	238	Weligepola	39.2	11,150
164	Madampe	17.18	7,252	201	Kandaketiya	46.10	10,183	239	Embilipitiya	31.6	36,252
165	Mahawewa	14.78	6,926	202	Soranathota	34.24	7,533	240	Kolonna	37.7	16,139
166	Nattandiya	15.54	8,688	203	Passara	31.88	15,395		<b>Kegalle</b>	<b>32.0</b>	<b>223,506</b>
167	Wennappuwa	14.88	10,260	204	Lunugala	38.82	12,616	241	Rambukkana	29.1	21,279
168	Dankotuwa	14.49	8,306	205	Badulla	17.19	11,205	242	Mawanella	28.8	28,192
	<b>Anuradhapura</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>142,308</b>	206	Hali Ela	34.58	29,672	243	Aranayaka	36.1	23,513
169	Padaviya	34.33	6,893	207	Uva Paranagama	33.35	25,054	244	Kegalle	26.7	22,184
170	Kebithigollewa	27.74	5,127	208	Welimada	29.19	26,698	245	Galigamuwa	27.5	18,625
171	Medawachchiya	21.34	8,113	209	Bandarawela	21.61	12,363	246	Warakapola	26.0	26,429
172	Maha Vilachchiya	31.16	5,566	210	Ella	28.04	11,665	247	Ruwanwella	28.5	16,196
173	Nuwaragam Palatha Cen	20.14	9,745	211	Haputhale	24.42	11,241	248	Bulathkohupitiya	32.5	14,510
174	Rambewa	20.57	6,339	212	Haldummulla	31.65	11,714	249	Yatyanthota	30.1	16,840
175	Kahatagasdigiliya	19.63	6,464		<b>Moneragala</b>	<b>37.0</b>	<b>114,843</b>	250	Dehiowita	29.3	21,161
176	Horowpothana	24.95	7,250	213	Bibila	26.0	8,925	251	Deraniyagala	33.6	14,577
177	Galenbidunuwawe	18.56	7,409	214	Madulla	40.7	11,320				
178	Mihintale	18.97	4,804	215	Medagama	30.2	9,539				
179	Nuwaragam Palatha Eas	11.97	6,645	216	Siyambalanduwa	51.8	23,795				
180	Nachchadoowa	18.97	3,993	217	Moneragala	29.3	11,786				
181	Nochchiyagama	16.98	6,861	218	Badalkumbura	27.9	10,051				
182	Rajanganaya	18.80	5,494	219	Wellawaya	24.9	12,047				
183	Thambuttegama	19.05	6,718	220	Buttala	21.2	9,730				
184	Thalawa	19.44	9,638	221	Katharagama	19.8	2,746				
185	Thirappane	18.59	4,200	222	Thanamalwila	35.8	8,039				
186	Kekirawa	20.13	10,103	223	Sewanagala	19.3	6,865				
187	Palugaswewa	24.70	3,090		<b>Rathnapura</b>	<b>34.0</b>	<b>305,318</b>				
188	Ipalogama	17.41	5,428	224	Eheliyagoda	26.9	16,561				