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# Sri Lanka Labour Force Statistics

## Quarterly Bulletin, Second Quarter 2025

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Department of Census and Statistics  
Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development

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 2025 based on the data collected in April, May and June in 2025 covering the whole country.

This bulletin is based on the quarterly sample of 6,250 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 49.3% for the second quarter of 2025.
  - ❑ Unemployment rate for the survey period is 3.8%.
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### Source Publication

<http://www.statistics.gov.lk/LabourForce/StaticInformation/Bulletins/2ndQuarter2025>

**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  
(3<sup>rd</sup> 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 - 2025**

Sector	Economically Active Population					
	Total	%	Male	%	Female	%
<b>Sri Lanka</b>	8,491,296	100	5,590,609	65.8	2,900,687	34.2
<b>Urban</b>	1,379,851	100	900,214	65.2	479,637	34.8
<b>Rural</b>	6,751,339	100	4,466,501	66.2	2,284,838	33.8
<b>Estate</b>	360,106	100	223,894	62.2	136,212	37.8

**Table 2: Economically inactive population by gender and sector, second quarter - 2025**

Sector	Economically Inactive Population					
	Total	%	Male	%	Female	%
<b>Sri Lanka</b>	8,723,021	100	2,459,000	28.2	6,264,021	71.8
<b>Urban</b>	1,636,374	100	468,194	28.6	1,168,180	71.4
<b>Rural</b>	6,755,752	100	1,865,234	27.6	4,890,518	72.4
<b>Estate</b>	330,894	100	125,572	37.9	205,322	62.1

According to the Table 1, the estimated economically active population is about 8.5 million in the second quarter 2025. Of which 65.8 percent are males and 34.2 percent are females. The economically inactive population is about 8.7 million. Out of the economically inactive population 28.2 percent are males and 71.8 percent are females (Table 2).

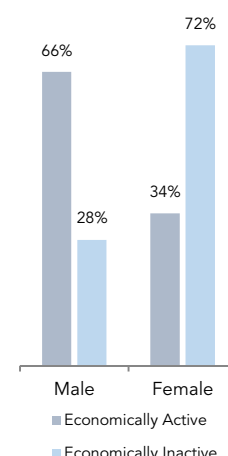
**Table 3: LFPR by gender and year, 2019 - 2025Q2**

Year	Total	Male	Female
<b>2019</b>	52.3	73.0	34.5
<b>2020</b>	50.6	71.9	32.0
<b>2021</b>	49.9	71.0	31.8
<b>2022</b>	49.8	70.5	32.1
<b>2023</b>	48.6	68.6	31.3
<b>2024</b>	47.4	67.4	29.8
<b>2023 Q2</b>	48.6	68.8	31.1
<b>2024 Q2</b>	47.8	68.1	30.0
<b>2025 Q1</b>	49.7	70.1	32.0
<b>2025 Q2</b>	49.3	69.5	31.7

Table 3 provides the information on LFPRs by gender since year 2019. 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 - 2025**

Age group (Years)	Total	Male	Female
<b>Sri Lanka</b>	49.3	69.5	31.7
15 - 19	7.5	10.6	4.4
20 - 24	45.2	59.1	33.0
25 - 29	67.9	88.2	47.8
30 - 34	65.7	94.1	43.9
35 - 39	67.3	94.9	44.4
40 - 44	67.5	95.3	42.7
45 - 49	70.0	95.1	45.2
50 - 54	65.8	91.2	43.9
55 - 59	61.6	85.4	41.1
60+	29.3	47.2	14.6

**Figure 1: Distribution of economically active vs inactive population, second quarter 2025**

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 (95.3%), while that for female is reported from 25 - 29 age group (47.8%).

**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 2024 - second quarter 2025)**

Quarter	Sri Lanka	Major Industry Group		
		Agriculture	Industries	Services
2024 Q2	7,988,626	2,000,744	2,116,002	3,871,880
(%)	100.0	25.0	26.5	48.5
2024 Q3	7,838,793	2,066,789	1,988,578	3,783,426
(%)	100.0	26.4	25.4	48.3
2024 Q4	8,069,891	2,159,496	2,071,302	3,839,094
(%)	100.0	26.8	25.7	47.6
2025 Q1	8,139,605	1,906,832	2,135,102	4,097,671
(%)	100.0	23.4	26.2	50.3
2025 Q2	8,172,638	2,104,353	2,063,914	4,004,372
(%)	100.0	25.7	25.3	49.0

Table 5 shows the percentage distribution of employed population by main industry from second quarter 2024 to second quarter 2025. During second quarter of 2025, the total number of employed persons in Sri Lanka is estimated as 8.2 million. Of which, about 49.0 percent engaged in service sector, 25.7 percent in agriculture sector and 25.3 percent in industry sector. In the second quarter of 2025, there are increases in employed persons in agriculture and service sectors compared to the second quarter of 2024.

**Main industry categories and sub sectors**

<b>Agriculture</b>
Agriculture Forestry and Fishery (A)
<b>Industries</b>
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 - 2025**

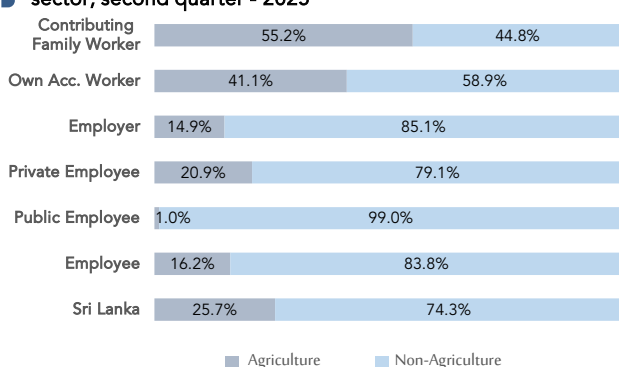
Employment Status	Sector					
	Sri Lanka		Agriculture		Non-Agriculture	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Sri Lanka	8,172,638	100.0	2,104,353	25.7	6,068,285	74.3
Employee	4,979,407	100.0	807,727	16.2	4,171,680	83.8
Public	1,165,094	100.0	11,951*	1.0	1,153,143	99.0
Private	3,814,313	100.0	795,776	20.9	3,018,537	79.1
Employer	267,556	100.0	39,981	14.9	227,575	85.1
Own Account Worker	2,538,505	100.0	1,043,104	41.1	1,495,401	58.9
Contributing Family Worker	387,171	100.0	213,541	55.2	173,630	44.8

\*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 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 industry sector. Among employed females 24.5 percent is in agriculture sector while this share is 26.4 percent for males.

**Figure 2 : Distribution of employed population by employment status and Agriculture/ Non- Agriculture sector, second quarter - 2025**



**Table 7: Percentage distribution of Employed population by major industry group & gender, second quarter – 2025**

Major Industry group	Sri Lanka	Gender	
		Male	Female
Sri Lanka	100.0	100.0	100.0
Agriculture	25.7	26.4	24.5
Industry	25.3	26.2	23.4
Services	49.0	47.5	52.1

## Unemployment

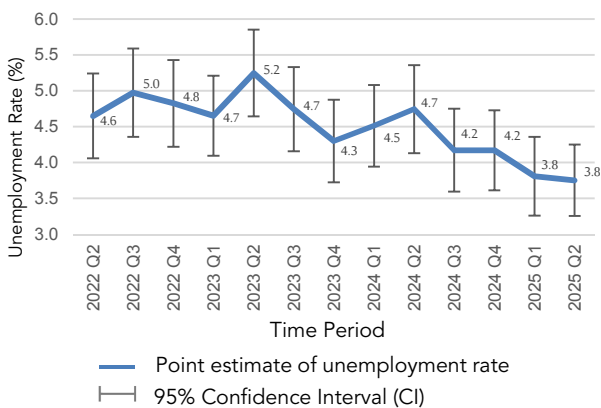
### Unemployed

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 rates and it's 95% confidence intervals, 2022Q2 - 2025Q2**



The number of unemployed persons is estimated as 318,657 during the second quarter 2025. The unemployment rate for the second quarter 2025 is 3.8 percent.

As shown in Figure 3, it is very important to note that, when the changes in unemployment rate is explained the corresponding sampling errors<sup>1</sup> and the confidence limits need to be considered.

**Table 8: Number of unemployed and unemployment rate by age group and gender, second quarter - 2025**

Age group (Years)	Unemployment Rate (%)			
	Sri Lanka	Gender		
	Number	Sri Lanka	Male	Female
Sri Lanka	318,657	3.8	2.6	6.0
15 - 24	161,652	20.8	17.5	26.2
25 - 29	75,786	9.3	5.1*	17.0
Over 30	81,219	1.2	0.7*	2.1

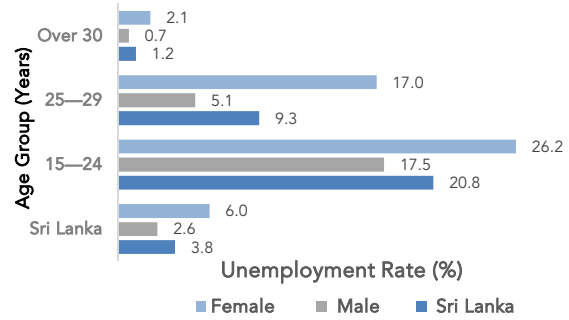
\*These Figures are to be treated with caution as the corresponding CV (Coefficient of Variation) Values are high.

#### 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](http://www.statistics.gov.lk)

**Figure 4 : Unemployment rate by age group and gender, second quarter 2025**



As per the table 8, overall unemployment rate reported for female is 6.0 percent and it is 2.6 percent for male. Youth unemployment rate (age 15 – 24 years) corresponding to the second quarter 2025 is 20.8 percent and that is the highest reported unemployment rate among all age groups. Further the unemployment rates for males and females are 17.5 and 26.2 percent respectively for age group 15 - 24.

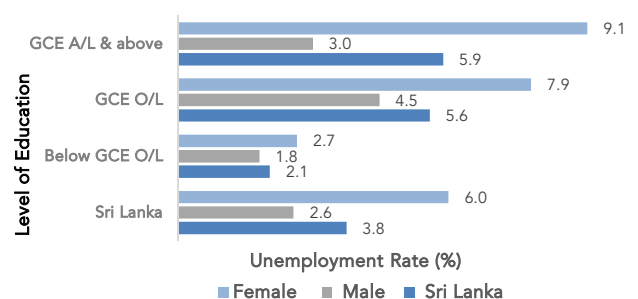
The survey results further reveals that the unemployment among females is higher than that of males, in all age groups. Youth and female unemployment contribute more to the overall unemployment of the country.

**Table 9: Number of unemployed and unemployment rate by level of education, second quarter - 2025**

Level of Education	Unemployment Rate (%)			
	Sri Lanka	Gender		
	Number	Sri Lanka	Male	Female
Sri Lanka	318,657	3.8	2.6	6.0
Below GCE O/L	94,783	2.1	1.8	2.7*
GCE O/L	87,743	5.6	4.5	7.9
GCE A/L & above	136,131	5.9	3.0	9.1

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

**Figure 5 : Unemployment rate by level of education and gender, second quarter 2025**



The highest unemployment rate is reported from the G.C.E.(A/L) and above group which is 5.9 percent. Corresponding percentages are 3.0 percent and 9.1 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									
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2023Q2	2024Q2	2025Q1	2025Q2
<b>Labour force participation rate</b>										
<b>by gender</b>										
Total	52.3	50.6	49.9	49.8	48.6	47.4	48.6	47.8	49.7	49.3
Male	73.0	71.9	71.0	70.5	68.6	67.4	68.8	68.1	70.1	69.5
Female	34.5	32.0	31.8	32.1	31.3	29.8	31.1	30.0	32.0	31.7
<b>by residential sector</b>										
Total	52.3	50.6	49.9	49.8	48.6	47.4	48.6	47.8	49.7	49.3
Urban	50.2	47.0	46.9	47.2	46.0	44.3	46.8	45.4	47.0	45.7
Rural	52.7	51.3	50.5	50.3	49.1	48.0	49.0	48.3	50.2	50.1
<b>Unemployment rate</b>										
<b>by gender</b>										
Total	4.8	5.5	5.1	4.7	4.7	4.4	5.2	4.7	3.8	3.8
Male	3.3	4.0	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.0	4.1	3.6	2.5	2.6
Female	7.4	8.5	7.9	6.5	7.0	7.1	7.4	7.0	6.3	6.0
<b>by selected age group (year)</b>										
20 – 29	15.3	18.1	18.3	16.2	17.0	16.1	16.4	16.9	13.8	13.8
20 – 24	20.3	25.2	26.8	21.8	21.6	20.7	22.0	23.7	18.3	19.6
25 – 29	11.0	12.0	11.4	11.7	13.0	12.5	11.6	11.2	10.1	9.3
<b>by selected educational level</b>										
GCE A/L an above										
Total	8.5	9.8	9.1	7.8	8.0	7.8	8.0	7.8	6.1	5.9
Male	5.0	6.2	6.2	5.5	5.8	5.4	6.3	5.8	4.2	3.0
Female	11.9	13.6	12.2	10.1	10.2	10.3	9.9	10.0	8.2	9.1
<b>Employed population</b>										
<b>by gender</b>										
Total	8,180,693	7,999,093	8,113,507	8,147,731	8,009,916	7,949,751	8,014,492	7,988,626	8,139,605	8,172,638
Male	5,368,896	5,372,947	5,414,280	5,373,965	5,307,563	5,358,554	5,323,491	5,379,472	5,399,400	5,446,537
Female	2,811,796	2,626,146	2,699,228	2,773,766	2,702,354	2,591,197	2,691,001	2,609,154	2,740,205	2,726,101
<b>by industry (percentage)</b>										
Total	8,180,693	7,999,093	8,113,507	8,147,731	8,009,916	7,949,751	8,014,492	7,988,626	8,139,605	8,172,638
%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Agriculture	2,071,940	2,169,679	2,213,015	2,158,559	2,088,344	2,066,651	2,058,421	2,000,744	1,906,832	2,104,353
%	25.3	27.1	27.3	26.5	26.1	26.0	25.7	25.0	23.4	25.7
Industry	2,258,421	2,152,746	2,109,482	2,158,199	2,043,154	2,031,417	2,104,249	2,116,002	2,135,102	2,063,914
%	27.6	26.9	26.0	26.5	25.5	25.6	26.3	26.5	26.2	25.3
Services	3,850,332	3,676,668	3,791,011	3,830,973	3,878,418	3,851,683	3,851,822	3,871,880	4,097,671	4,004,372
%	47.1	46.0	46.7	47.0	48.4	48.5	48.1	48.5	50.3	49.0
<b>by no. of hours worked per week (percentage)</b>										
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
0*	6.4	14.6	9.6	5.8	4.2	2.5	4.8	4.0	1.6	3.7
1 – 9	1.7	2.1	2.0	2.1	2.4	1.8	2.6	2.2	1.6	2.3
10 – 39	26.8	27.1	29.6	31.9	31.2	28.3	32.6	29.4	28.1	30.6
40 & above	65.1	56.2	58.7	60.3	62.1	67.4	60.0	64.3	68.7	63.3

\* 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


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