



# Sri Lanka Labour Force Statistics Quarterly Bulletin

Sri Lanka Labour Force Survey 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter - 2019

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## Department of Census and Statistics

Ministry of Finance, Economic and Policy Development

### Highlights

- Labour force participation rate is 52.2% for the Third Quarter of 2019.
- Unemployment rate for the survey period is 5.1%.

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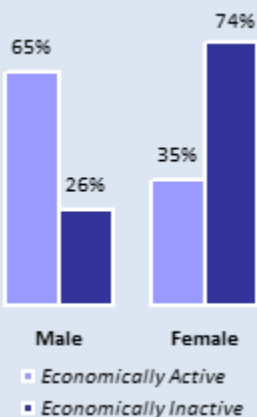


Figure 1 : Distribution of Economically active/Inactive population - Third quarter - 2019

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 third quarter 2019 based on the data collected in July, August and September in 2019 covering the whole country.

### Labour Force ....

#### (Economically Active Population)

Table 1 : Economically active population by gender and sector – Third Quarter 2019

Sector	Economically active population					
	Total	%	Male	%	Female	%
Sri Lanka	8,593,138	100.0	5,606,707	65.2	2,986,431	34.8
Urban	1,415,615	100.0	932,019	65.8	483,596	34.2
Rural	6,771,938	100.0	4,426,046	65.4	2,345,892	34.6
Estate	405,584	100.0	248,641	61.3	156,943	38.7

Table 2 : Economically inactive population by gender and sector – Third Quarter 2019

Sector	Economically inactive population					
	Total	%	Male	%	Female	%
Sri Lanka	7,864,590	100.0	2,082,799	26.5	5,781,790	73.5
Urban	1,491,222	100.0	422,235	28.3	1,068,987	71.7
Rural	6,063,798	100.0	1,566,594	25.8	4,497,203	74.2
Estate	309,570	100.0	93,970	30.4	215,599	69.6

Table 3 : LFPR by gender and year - All Island

Year	Total	Male	Female
2014	53.2	74.6	34.6
2015	53.8	74.7	35.9
2016	54.1	75.1	36.0
2017	54.1	74.5	36.6
2018	51.8	73.0	33.6
2017 Q3	53.6	73.6	36.6
2018 Q3	51.8	72.7	34.0
2019 Q1	52.6	73.4	34.9
2019 Q2	52.6	73.4	34.6
2019 Q3	52.2	72.9	34.1

Table 3 provides the information on LFPRs since year 2014. 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 30–39 years (95.9%), while that for female is reported from 45–49 age group (48.0%).

### 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 8.6 million in the third quarter 2019. Of which 65.2 percent are males and 34.8 percent are females. The economically inactive population is about 7.9 million. Out of the economically inactive population 26.5 percent are males and 73.5 percent are females (Table 2).

Table 4 : LFPR by age group and gender - Third Quarter 2019

Age group (Years)	Total	Male	Female
Sri Lanka	52.2	72.9	34.1
15 - 19	11.5	15.2	7.6
20 - 24	54.7	70.6	39.3
25 - 29	67.9	90.8	47.7
30 - 34	64.3	95.9	38.7
35 - 39	68.5	95.9	44.4
40 - 44	70.0	95.8	47.5
45 - 49	69.8	94.9	48.0
50 - 54	67.1	92.1	45.2
55 - 59	61.3	87.2	40.1
60+	30.9	48.9	16.1

## 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.

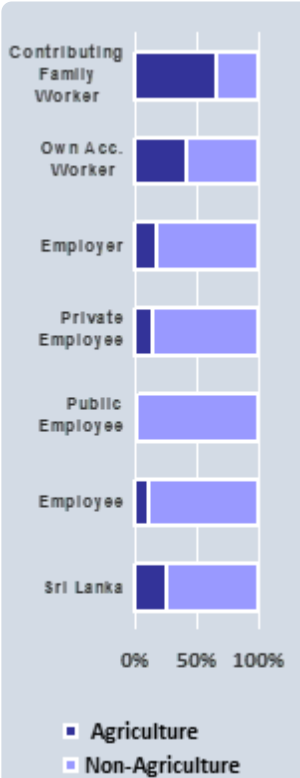


Figure 2: Distribution of employed population by employment status and Agriculture/Non-Agriculture sector - Third quarter 2019

## Employment ...

Table 5: Distribution of Employed population by main industry (Third Quarter 2018 – Third quarter 2019)

Quarter	Sri Lanka	Major Industry Group		
		Agriculture	Industries	Services
2018 Q3 (No.)	8,040,704	2,034,894	2,305,822	3,699,988
(%)	100.0	25.3	28.7	46.0
2018 Q4 (No.)	8,088,448	2,072,954	2,236,604	3,778,889
(%)	100.0	25.6	27.7	46.7
2019 Q1 (No.)	8,182,970	2,018,951	2,312,671	3,851,348
(%)	100.0	24.7	28.3	47.1
2019 Q2 (No.)	8,203,018	1,990,892	2,319,047	3,893,079
(%)	100.0	24.3	28.3	47.5
2019 Q3 (No.)	8,155,341	2,062,790	2,205,072	3,887,479
(%)	100.0	25.3	27.0	47.7

Table 5 shows the percentage distribution of employed population by main industry from third quarter 2018 to third quarter 2019. During third quarter of 2019, the total number of employed persons in Sri Lanka is estimated as about 8.2 million. Of which, about 47.7 percent engaged in Service sector, 27.0 percent in Industries sector and 25.3 percent in Agriculture sector. Compared to 2nd quarter 2018 in 2nd quarter 2019 a increase in employment numbers can be observed in Agriculture and Services sectors.

Table 6: Distribution of employed population by employment status in Agriculture and Non-Agriculture sectors – Third quarter 2019

Employment Status	Sri Lanka		Sector			
			Agriculture		Non-Agriculture	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Sri Lanka	8,155,341	100.0	2,062,790	25.3	6,092,551	74.7
Employee	4,735,206	100.0	554,392	11.7	4,180,814	88.3
Public	1,208,848	100.0	16,891	1.4	1,191,957	98.6
Private	3,526,358	100.0	537,501	15.2	2,988,857	84.8
Employer	210,022	100.0	37,851	18.0	172,171	82.0
Own Account Worker	2,605,346	100.0	1,072,045	41.1	1,533,301	58.9
Contributing Family Worker	604,766	100.0	398,502	65.9	206,265	34.1

Table 7: Percentage distribution of Employed population by main industry & gender – Third quarter 2019

Major Industry Group	Sri Lanka	Gender	
		Male	Female
Sri Lanka	100.0	100.0	100.0
Agriculture	25.3	24.8	26.3
Industry	27.0	27.9	25.4
Services	47.7	47.4	48.2

## 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

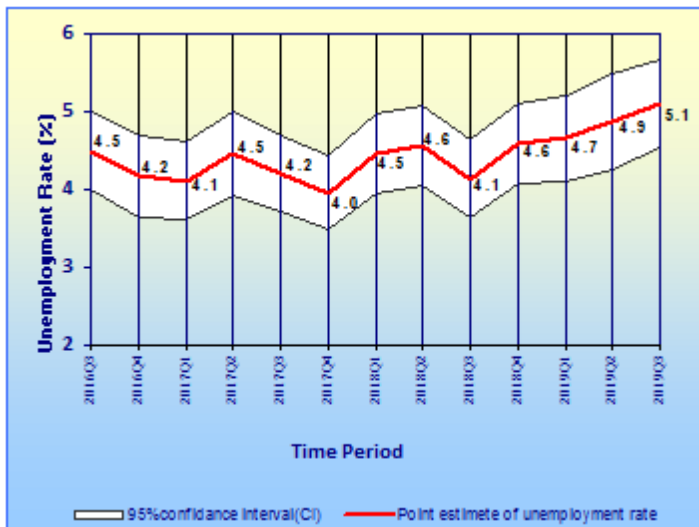
1. Wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles (G)
2. Transportation and storage (H)
3. Accommodation and food services activities (I)
4. Information and communication (J)
5. Financial and insurance activities (K)
6. Professional, scientific and technical activities (M)
7. Administrative 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 agriculture sector. Among employed females 26.3 percent is in agriculture sector while this share is 24.8 percent for males.

# Unemployment ...

Figure 3 : Unemployment rates and it's 95% confidence intervals (2016Q3 - 2019Q3)



<sup>1</sup>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)

Table 8: Number of Unemployed and Unemployment rate by age group and gender – Third quarter 2019

Age group (Years)	Unemployment Rate (%)			
	Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka	Gender	
	Number		Male	Female
Sri Lanka	437,797	5.1	3.3	8.5
15–24	213,967	23.3	17.5	33.9
25–29	102,981	11.8	7.1	19.8
Over 30	120,848	1.8	0.9	3.4

As can be seen from Table 8, overall unemployment rate reported for female is 8.5 percent and it is 3.3 percent for male. Youth unemployment rate (age 15 – 24 years) corresponding to the third quarter 2019 is 23.3 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 33.9 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 – Third quarter 2019

Level of Education	Unemployment Rate (%)			
	Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka	Gender	
	Number		Male	Female
Sri Lanka	437,797	5.1	3.3	8.5
Below GCE O/L	141,404	2.8	2.1	4.6
GCE O/L	116,047	7.7	5.8	11.3
GCE A/L & above	180,346	8.7	4.8	12.9

The highest unemployment rate is reported from the G.C.E (A/L) and above group which is about 8.7 percent. Corresponding percentages are 4.8 percent and 12.9 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.

## 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 437,797 during the third quarter 2019. The unemployment rate for the third quarter 2019 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 errors<sup>1</sup> and the confidence limits need to be considered.

## The Unemployment Rate

The proportion of unemployed population to the total labour force.

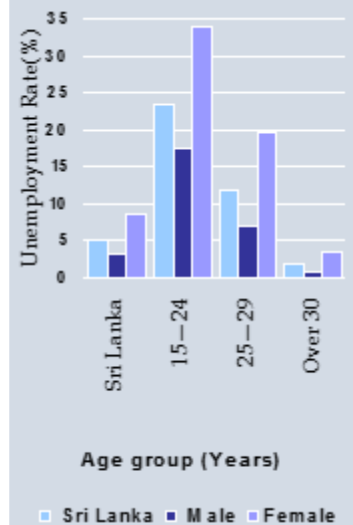


Figure 3: Unemployment rate by age group and gender – Third quarter 2019

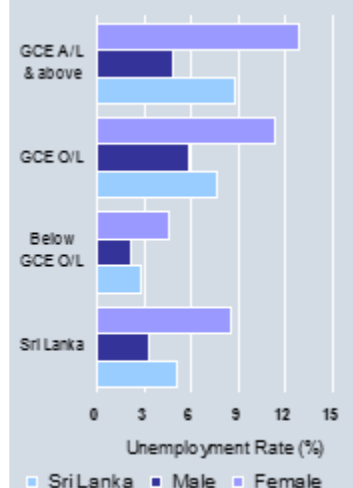


Figure 4: Unemployment rate by level of education and gender – Third quarter 2019



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a strategic leadership  
to become a prosper-  
ous nation in the  
globalized environ-  
ment."*

## Selected Labour Force Indicators ...

Indicator	Year									
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2017Q3	2018Q3	2019Q1	2019Q2	2019Q3
<b>Labour force participation rate</b>										
<b>By Gender</b>										
Total	53.2	53.8	53.8	54.1	51.8	53.6	51.8	52.6	52.6	52.2
Male	74.6	74.7	75.1	74.5	73.0	73.6	72.7	73.4	73.4	72.9
Female	34.6	35.9	35.9	36.6	33.6	36.6	34.0	34.9	34.6	34.1
<b>By residential sector</b>										
Total	53.2	53.8	53.8	54.1	51.8	53.6	51.8	52.6	52.6	52.2
Urban	48.7	48.6	49.8	50.5	49.6	49.9	48.3	51.0	51.9	48.7
Rural	54.1	54.8	54.6	54.8	52.3	54.4	52.6	52.9	52.7	53.0
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>										
<b>By Gender</b>										
Total	4.3	4.7	4.4	4.2	4.4	4.2	4.1	4.7	4.9	5.1
Male	3.1	3.0	2.9	2.9	3.0	2.7	2.8	3.4	3.4	3.3
Female	6.5	7.6	7.0	6.5	7.1	6.8	6.6	6.9	7.5	8.5
<b>By selected age Group (Year)</b>										
20 – 29	13.6	14.2	14.2	13.5	15.0	14.2	14.3	14.5	15.1	16.9
20 – 24	19.9	19.7	19.9	17.8	20.1	19.0	18.7	21.0	17.8	23.1
25 – 29	8.2	9.4	9.2	9.5	10.4	9.8	10.6	9.0	12.6	11.8
<b>By selected educational level</b>										
<b>GCE A/L and</b>										
Total	8.2	9.2	8.3	8.1	9.1	8.5	9.5	7.9	9.5	8.7
Male	5.4	4.7	4.7	5.0	5.1	4.9	4.8	5.4	5.1	4.8
Female	11.1	13.5	11.9	11.3	13.2	11.9	14.2	10.6	14.0	12.9
<b>Employed population</b>										
<b>By Gender</b>										
Total	7,700,489	7,830,976	7,947,683	8,208,179	8,015,166	8,163,869	8,040,704	8,182,970	8,203,018	8,155,341
Male	5,075,426	5,097,798	5,149,948	5,279,158	5,300,310	5,237,380	5,272,527	5,314,713	5,384,357	5,422,965
Female	2,625,064	2,733,178	2,797,735	2,929,021	2,714,855	2,926,489	2,768,177	2,868,256	2,818,661	2,732,376
<b>By industry (Percentage)</b>										
Total	7,700,489	7,830,976	7,947,683	8,208,179	8,015,166	8,163,869	8,040,704	8,182,970	8,203,018	8,155,341
%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Agriculture	2,222,859	2,244,547	2,153,874	2,140,185	2,043,698	1,983,870	2,034,894	2,018,951	1,990,892	2,062,790
%	28.9	28.7	27.1	26.1	25.5	24.3	25.3	24.7	24.3	25.3
Industry	2,027,426	2,018,171	2,097,503	2,331,494	2,239,262	2,372,007	2,305,822	2,312,671	2,319,047	2,205,072
%	26.3	25.8	26.4	28.4	27.9	29.1	28.7	28.3	28.3	27.0
Services	3,450,205	3,568,259	3,696,306	3,736,500	3,732,206	3,807,992	3,699,988	3,851,348	3,893,079	3,887,479
%	44.8	45.6	46.5	45.5	46.6	46.6	46.0	47.1	47.5	47.7
<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#	5.2	5.5	4.4	4.7	5.6	4.8	5.8	3.8	9.6	6.4
1 – 9	1.3	1.7	1.5	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.6	2.0	1.8
10 – 39	27.6	27.2	26.2	26.1	25.7	24.1	26.1	27.0	25.8	27.1
40 & above	65.9	65.7	67.9	67.5	66.9	69.3	66.3	67.6	62.6	64.7

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

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