

Males and females in their 40s more dominant in Sri Lanka labour force

Key survey shows an increase in employment in 2024 compared to 2023
Unemployment problem more acute for educated females than educated males

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Most of the males and females active in the labour force in Sri Lanka were in their 40s, according to the Labour Force Survey (LFS) valid for the second quarter 2024, conducted by the Census and Statistics Department of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka.

The unemployment problem in Sri Lanka is more acute for educated females than educated males, the survey bulleting stated referring to its consistent observation over the past years.

The survey was based on the data collected in April, May and June in 2024 covering the whole country.

It was also based on the quarterly sample of 6,440 housing units. It covered persons living in housing units only and it excluded the institutional population.

Considering the distribution of Labour Force Participation Rate (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 45-49 years (96.3%), while that for female is reported from 40-44 age group (46.5%).

During second quarter of 2024, the total number of employed persons in Sri Lanka was estimated as 8 million. Of which, about 48.5 percent engaged in the service sector, 26.5 percent in industry sector and 25.0 percent in agriculture sector. In the second quarter of 2024, there were increases in employed persons in service and industry sectors compared to the second quarter of 2023.

The majority of the workforce are private sector employees followed by own account workers. Non agriculture sector covered 75.0



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percent of employed population in Sri Lanka, employees and own account workers were highly constraining in that sector. The highest employment share was in service sector and this was true for both male and female, while the lowest shares were for agriculture sector. Among employed females 22.1 percent was in agriculture sector while this share was 26.5 percent for males.

The overall unemployment rate reported for female was 7.0 percent and it was 3.6 percent for male. Youth unemployment rate (age 15-24 years) corresponding to the second quarter 2024 was 25.4 percent and that was the highest reported unemployment rate among all age groups. Further the unemployment rates for males and females were 20.1 and 35.6 percent respectively for age group 15-24.

The survey results further revealed that

the unemployment among females was higher than that of males, in all age groups. Youth and female unemployment contribute more to the overall unemployment of the country.

The number of unemployed persons was estimated as 397,855 during the second quarter 2024. The unemployment rate for the second quarter 2024 was 4.7 percent.

The highest unemployment rate was reported from the G.C.E.(A/L) and above group which is 7.8 percent. Corresponding percentages were 5.8 percent and 10.0 percent for males and females respectively. Female unemployment rates were higher than those of males in all levels of education. Survey results further showed that the problem of unemployment was more acute in the case of educated females than educated males, which was observed consistently over the results of previous survey rounds as well.