



Sri Lanka Labour Force Survey was designed to measure the levels and trends of employment, unemployment and labour force in Sri Lanka. This survey is being conducted quarterly, since the first quarter of 1990.

The field work of the survey for the first quarter 2008 was done in January, February and March in year 2008. Even though it was planned to conduct the survey in Northern and Eastern provinces, the survey was not conducted fully due to the prevailing uncertain conditions in districts of Northern province. In first quarter 2008 the survey was conducted in the Eastern province, hence this bulletin consist with summery statistics including Eastern province (See 'Selected Labour Force Indicators' page 4).

Labour force participation rate

Labour Force: Number of persons who were employed or unemployed during the reference week

Labour force participation rate: Labour force expressed as a percentage of population age 10 yr. & over

Table 1: Economically active population by sex and sector- First Quarter 2008

Sector	Economically active population					
	Total	%	Male	%	Female	%
Total	7530722	100.0	4811750	63.9	2718972	36.1
Urban	776921	100.0	538531	69.3	238390	30.7
Rural	6753801	100.0	4273219	63.3	2480582	36.7

Table 2: Economically Inactive population by sex and sector- First Quarter 2008

Sector	Economically inactive population					
	Total	%	Male	%	Female	%
Total	7581292	100.0	2342536	30.9	5238756	69.1
Urban	913967	100.0	284501	31.1	629466	68.9
Rural	6667325	100.0	2058035	30.9	4609290	69.1

The survey results revealed that (Table 1), the estimated economically active population (or labour force) was about 7.5 million in first quarter 2008. Of which 63.9 percent were males and 36.1 percent were females. Of the economically inactive population 30.9 percent were males and 69.1 percent were females (Table 2) .

Figure 1 : Distribution of Economically active/Inactive population

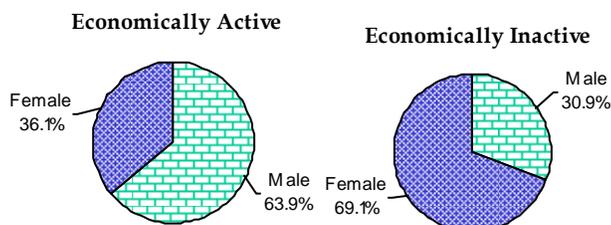


Table 3: Labour Force Participation Rate by sex & year

Year	Labour force participation rate		
	Total	Male	Female
2000	50.3	67.2	33.9
2001	48.8	66.2	31.9
2002	50.3	67.9	33.6
2003	49.7	67.5	32.6
2004	49.6	67.2	33.0
2005	49.3	67.3	32.6
2006	51.2	68.1	35.7
2007	49.8	67.8	33.4
2008 Q1	49.8	67.3	34.2

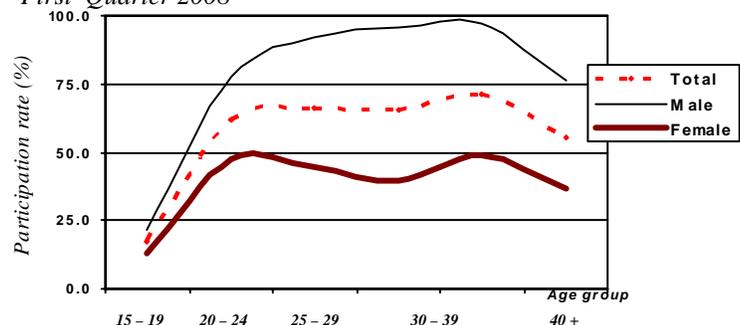
Table 3 provides the information on labour force participation rates since year 2000. As can be seen from this table, male participation rate for the first quarter 2008 is about 67 percent and it is 34 percent for females. It is important to note that, male participation to the labour force is much higher than as that of females.

Table 4 : Labour Force Participation Rate by age group & by sex - First Quarter 2008

Age group	Sex		
	Total	Male	Female
Total	49.8	67.3	34.2
15 - 19	17.1	21.4	13.1
20 - 24	61.8	77.8	47.6
25 - 29	66.3	91.9	44.6
30 - 39	68.5	96.3	44.4
40+	55.3	76.1	36.8

Table 4 provides the labour force participation rates by sex and age group. Males in the age group of (30 – 39) yrs shows the highest labour force participation rate (96.3%), for females the highest participation rate (47.6%) is reported from the (20 – 24) yrs age group.

Figure 2 : Labour Force Participation Rate by age group & sex - First Quarter 2008



Employment

Employed: Persons who are engaged in some kind of work for pay or profit or family gain during the reference week.

Table 5 : Distribution of Employed population by main industry, (Fourth quarter 2006 – First Quarter 2008

Year	Major industry group			
	Total	Agriculture	Industries	Services
Jan-Feb-Mar 1 st Qtr - 2007	7008478 (100.0)	2234200 (31.9)	1889683 (27.0)	2884594 (41.2)
April-May-June 2 nd Qtr - 2007	6879916 (100.0)	2078797 (30.2)	1850588 (26.9)	2950531 (42.9)
July-Aug-Sept. 3 rd Qtr - 2007	7102425 (100.0)	2129201 (30.0)	1920033 (27.0)	3053191 (43.0)
Oct-Nov-Dec 4 th Qtr - 2007	7176679 (100.0)	2366192 (33.0)	1835126 (25.6)	2975360 (41.5)
Jan-Feb-Mar 1 st Qtr - 2008	7148318 (100.0)	2272031 (31.8)	1890286 (26.4)	2986000 (41.8)

Note: The tabulation groups based on ISIC (Rev.3) are indicated as A,B,C.....Q..

Agriculture

1. Agriculture (A)
2. Forestry and Fishery (B)

Industries

1. Manufacturing (D)
2. Construction (F)
3. Mining & Quarrying (C)
4. Electricity, Gas and Water supply (E)

Services

1. Wholesale and Retail Trade, Repair of Motor Vehicles, Motorcycles and Personal and Household Goods (G)
2. Hotels and Restaurants (H)
3. Transport, Storage and Communication (I)
4. Financial Intermediation and Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities (J,K)
5. Public Administration and Defence, Compulsory Social Security (L)
6. Education (M)
7. Health and Social work (N)
8. Other Community, Social and Personal Service Activities (O)
9. Private Households with Employed Persons (P)
10. Miscellaneous Labour work
11. Extra Territorial Organizations & bodies (Q)
12. Industries not adequately described

Table 5 shows the percentage distribution of employed population by main industry from first quarter 2007 to first quarter 2008.

However it is to be noted that the difference between corresponding figures in any given two quarters may not necessarily be statistically significant.

The total number of employed persons in Sri Lanka is estimated as about 7.1 million in first quarter 2008. Of which, about 41.8 percent engaged in services sector employment.

Table 6 : Percentage distribution of employed population by employment status and Agriculture/ non- agriculture sector – First quarter 2008.

Employment Status	Sector					
	Total		Agriculture		Non Agriculture	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Total	7148318	100.0	2272031	31.8	4876287	68.2
Employee	3956437	100.0	710586	18.0	3245851	82.0
Public	1068217	100.0	154588	14.5	913628	85.5
Private	2888220	100.0	555998	19.3	2332223	80.7
Employer	220113	100.0	38895	17.7	181218	82.3
Own account worker	2264446	100.0	1022495	45.2	1241951	54.8
Unpaid family worker	707323	100.0	500056	70.7	207267	29.3

Table 6 shows that, about 82.0 percent of total paid employees are engaged in non-agricultural sector activities, while this percentage is only 18.0 percent for the agriculture sector. Further, 81 percent of private sector paid employees are involved in non-agricultural activities, while this share is 19 percent regarding the agricultural activities.

It is important to see that, 71 percent of unpaid family workers are in the agriculture sector, and the balance, 29 percent are in the non-agriculture sector.

Note (1): Please see the explanatory note under 'labour force' link in the DCS web site www.statistics.gov.lk for detailed concepts & definitions.

Table 7 : Distribution of Employed population by main industry & by sex – First Quarter 2008

Major industry group	Total	Sex	
		Male	Female
Total	100.0	65.1	34.9
Agriculture	100.0	57.6	42.4
Industry	100.0	64.8	35.2
Services	100.0	70.9	29.1

It is very clear that, about 71 percent of services sector employment are males.

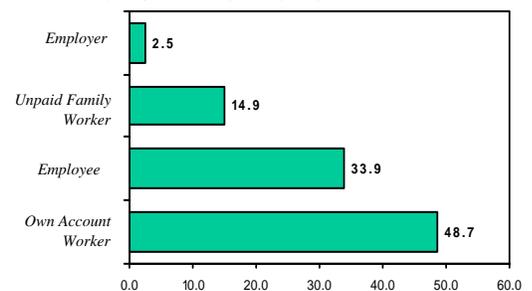
Table 8 : "Informal sector" employment by Agriculture/ Non-agriculture sector – First Quarter 2008

Sector	Total	Agriculture	Non-agriculture
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Formal	40.4	17.8	50.9
Informal	59.6	82.2	49.1

It is also important to see that, the employed population according to the formal and informal sector classification. 59.6 percent of the total employment is in the informal sector. 82 percent of the agriculture sector employment is in informal sector, while it is about 49 percent for non agriculture sector.

Further, 48.7 percent of those employed in the informal sector are own account workers, while 34 percent of them are paid employees. (Figure 3).

Figure 3 : Distribution of informal sector employment by Employment status



Underemployment ⁽¹⁾

Table 9 : Underemployment rate by sex – First Quarter 2008

Rate	Sex		Economic sector		Total
	Male	Female	Agriculture	Non-agriculture	
Underemployment rate	3.6	4.8	5.7	3.2	4.0

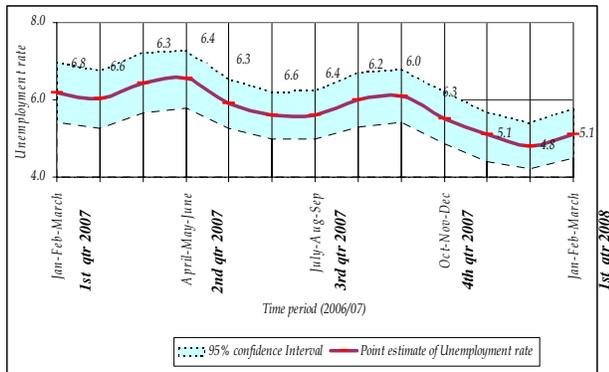
Table 9 reveals that, underemployment rate is higher for females than males. And also it is higher in the agriculture sector than as that of in non-agriculture sector.

Unemployment

Unemployment Rate : The number of unemployed persons as a percentage of the labour force

Unemployed : Persons who are seeking and available for work, but had no employment during the reference period

Figure 4 : Unemployment rates and its 95% confidence intervals (2007 Jan -Mar./2008 Jan -Mar)



The number of unemployed persons is estimated as about 382403 during the first quarter 2008.

The unemployment rate for the first quarter 2008 is reported as 5.1 percent.

As seen in figure 4, it is very important to note that, there is no statistically significant difference between the unemployment rates reported in different time periods of 2007/2008, when sampling error⁽²⁾ is considered.

Table 10 : Unemployment rate by level of education First Quarter 2008

Level of Education	Unemployment rate		
	Total	Male	Female
Total	5.1	3.3	8.2
Below G.C.E. (O/L)	3.2	2.3	4.9
G.C.E. (O/L)	6.4	4.1	10.6
G.C.E. (A/L) & above	11.0	6.9	15.6



Literacy⁽³⁾

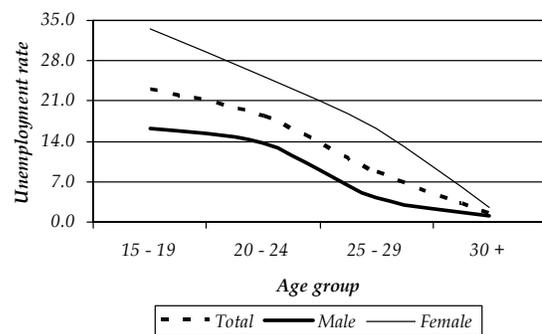
Table 12: Literacy rate by sex & sector

Sex & sector	1st quarter 2007	1st quarter 2008
Total	90.8	92.5
Male	92.4	94.0
Female	89.4	91.1
Urban	92.8	95.3
Rural	91.3	93.0
Estate	77.1	76.0

Table 11: Unemployment rate by age group and sex - First Quarter 2008

Age group	Total	Sex	
		Male	Female
Total	5.1	3.3	8.2
15 - 19	23.0	16.2	33.5
20 - 24	18.4	13.7	25.3
25 - 29	8.7	4.3	16.3
30 +	1.6	1.1	2.5

Figure 5 : Unemployment rate by age group and sex - First Quarter 2008



As can be seen from table 11, the unemployment rate reported for females is 8.2 percent and 3.3 percent for males. However, the unemployment rate among the age group (15 - 19yrs) is higher when compared with other age groups, and it is reported as 23.0 percent. Further it is 16 percent and 34 percent for males and females respectively.

Survey results reveals that, the highest unemployment rate is reported from the G.C.E(A/L) and above group which is about 11.0 percent. That is 6.9 percent and 15.6 percent for males and females respectively. This shows that the problem of unemployment is more acute in the case of educated females than educated males (Table 10).

⁽²⁾ Sampling error :

When a sample, rather than the entire population, is surveyed, estimates differ from the true population values they represent. This difference, or sampling error, occurs by chance, and its variability is measured by the standard error of the estimate. **For more details, please refer the explanatory note on the labour force link in the DCS website.**

⁽³⁾ Please see the explanatory note under 'labour force' link in the DCS web site www.statistics.gov.lk for detailed concepts & definitions.

Selected Labour Force indicators (Excluding Northern & Eastern provinces)
(2000 - 2008)

	Year										# 2008Q1
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2007 Q1	2008Q1	
Labour force participation rate											
<i>by sex</i>											
Both sexes	50.3	48.8	50.3	49.7	49.6	49.3	51.2	49.8	49.8	49.8	49.1
Male	67.2	66.2	67.9	67.5	67.2	67.3	68.1	67.8	68.1	67.3	66.9
Female	33.9	31.9	33.6	32.6	33.0	32.6	35.7	33.4	33.2	34.2	33.0
<i>by residential sector</i>											
Total	50.3	48.8	50.3	49.7	49.6	49.3	51.2	49.8	49.8	49.8	49.1
Urban	44.9	44.2	46.0	45.1	45.6	46.2	45.3	45.0	44.5	45.9	45.6
Rural	51.2	49.6	50.9	50.3	50.3	49.7	52.1	50.4	50.5	50.3	49.6
Unemployment rate											
<i>by sex</i>											
Both sexes	7.6	7.9	8.8	8.1	8.1	7.2	6.5	6.0	6.2	5.1	5.1
Male	5.8	6.2	6.6	6.0	6.0	5.3	4.7	4.3	4.4	3.3	3.2
Female	11.1	11.5	12.9	12.3	12.1	10.7	9.7	9.0	9.5	8.2	8.6
<i>by selected age groups(yr)</i>											
20 - 29	17.4	18.4	20.1	19.1	18.6	16.0	15.9	15.0	15.2	13.4	13.4
20 - 24	23.0	24.4	27.0	25.8	25.2	22.4	21.0	21.1	21.8	18.4	18.4
25 - 29	10.9	11.3	11.6	11.4	11.1	9.4	11.0	9.4	8.9	8.7	8.7
<i>by selected educational levels</i>											
G.C.E.(A/L) & above											
Both sexes	14.9	15.3	16.8	16.0	15.7	12.2	11.6	11.8	12.3	11.0	11.1
Male	8.8	10.1	10.8	10.1	9.6	7.9	6.9	6.6	7.0	6.9	6.9
Female	21.5	21.5	23.0	22.4	22.5	17.1	16.8	17.5	18.4	15.6	15.8
Employed population											
<i>by sex</i>											
Both sexes	6310247	6235588	6519415	6609466	6704006	6788119	7105322	7041874	7008478	7148318	7581163
Male	4241546	4248877	4395164	4496136	4512082	4546397	4610643	4653067	4648446	4653378	5004644
Female	2068701	1986711	2124250	2113330	2191924	2241722	2494679	2388807	2360032	2494940	2576519
<i>by industry (percentage)</i>											
Total	6310247	6235588	6519415	6609466	6704006	6788119	7105322	7041874	7008478	7148318	7581163
%	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)
Agriculture	2274153	2033343	2247602	2223691	2215282	2059293	2287268	2202098	2234200	2272031	2410307
%	(36.0)	(32.6)	(34.5)	(33.6)	(33.0)	(30.3)	(32.2)	(31.3)	(31.9)	(31.8)	(31.8)
Industry	1490795	1491408	1459194	1539035	1663383	1787274	1889953	1873857	1889683	1890286	1989655
%	(23.6)	(23.9)	(22.4)	(23.3)	(24.8)	(26.3)	(26.6)	(26.6)	(27.0)	(26.4)	(26.2)
Services	2545299	2710837	2812619	2846740	2825341	2941552	2928101	2965919	2884594	2986000	3181201
%	(40.3)	(43.5)	(43.1)	(43.1)	(42.1)	(43.3)	(41.2)	(42.1)	(41.2)	(41.8)	(42.0)
<i>by no. of hours worked per week (percentage)</i>											
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
0 •	7.2	4.3	5.6	7.3	5.3	4.9	6.7	6.5	4.3	4.1	4.0
1 - 9	1.9	1.5	1.5	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.9	1.5	1.3	1.9	1.8
10 - 39	32.7	28.2	32.0	32.9	28.4	27.9	28.6	28.3	28.2	31.1	30.7
40+	58.2	66.1	60.9	58.0	64.7	65.7	62.8	63.7	66.2	62.9	63.6

• Has a job but not at work during the reference week

Including Eastern province

Note: However it is to be noted that the difference between corresponding figures in any given two quarters may not necessarily be statistically significant.

Selected Labour Force indicators (2000 - 2008)

	Year									
	2000	2001	2002	2003*	2004**	2005***	2006 #	2007#	2008Q1	2008Q1*
Labour force participation rate										
<i>by sex</i>										
Both sexes	50.3	48.8	50.3	48.9	48.6	48.3	51.2	49.8	49.8	49.1
Male	67.2	66.2	67.9	67.2	66.7	67.1	68.1	67.8	67.3	66.9
Female	33.9	31.9	33.6	31.4	31.5	30.9	35.7	33.4	34.2	33.0
<i>by residential sector</i>										
Total	50.3	48.8	50.3	48.9	48.6	48.3	51.2	49.8	49.8	49.1
Urban	44.9	44.2	46.0	44.4	44.9	45.5	45.3	45.0	45.9	45.6
Rural	51.2	49.6	50.9	49.6	49.2	48.7	52.1	50.4	50.3	49.6
Unemployment rate										
<i>by sex</i>										
Both sexes	7.6	7.9	8.8	8.4	8.3	7.7	6.5	6.0	5.1	5.1
Male	5.8	6.2	6.6	6.0	6.0	5.5	4.7	4.3	3.3	3.2
Female	11.1	11.5	12.9	13.2	12.8	11.9	9.7	9.0	8.2	8.6
<i>by selected age groups(yr)</i>										
20 - 29	17.4	18.4	20.1	19.4	19.2	17.2	15.9	15.0	13.4	13.4
20 - 24	23.0	24.4	27.0	26.4	25.9	24.6	21.0	21.1	18.4	18.4
25 - 29	10.9	11.3	11.6	11.4	11.4	9.5	11.0	9.4	8.7	8.7
<i>by selected educational levels</i>										
G.C.E.(A/L) & above										
Both sexes	14.9	15.3	16.8	16.5	16.8	13.8	11.6	11.8	11.0	11.1
Male	8.8	10.1	10.8	10.4	10.5	8.9	6.9	6.6	6.9	6.9
Female	21.5	21.5	23.0	23.3	23.8	19.1	16.8	17.5	15.6	15.8
Employed population										
<i>by sex</i>										
Both sexes	6310247	6235588	6519415	7012755	7440226	7518007	7105322	7041874	7148318	7581163
Male	4241546	4248877	4395164	4833483	5087861	5134765	4610643	4653067	4653378	5004644
Female	2068701	1986711	2124250	2179272	2352365	2383241	2494679	2388807	2494940	2576519
<i>by industry (percentage)</i>										
Total	6310247	6235588	6519415	7012755	7394029	7518007	7105322	7041874	7148318	7581163
%	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)
Agriculture	2274153	2033343	2247602	2384397	2474725	2306039	2287268	2202098	2272031	2410307
%	(36.0)	(32.6)	(34.5)	(34.0)	(33.5)	(30.7)	(32.2)	(31.3)	(31.8)	(31.8)
Industry	1490795	1491408	1459194	1611493	1781447	1928014	1889953	1873857	1890286	1989655
%	(23.6)	(23.9)	(22.4)	(23.0)	(24.1)	(25.6)	(26.6)	(26.6)	(26.4)	(26.2)
Services	2545299	2710837	2812619	3016866	3137857	3283954	2928101	2965919	2986000	3181201
%	(40.3)	(43.5)	(43.1)	(43.0)	(42.4)	(43.7)	(41.2)	(42.1)	(41.8)	(42.0)
<i>by no. of hours worked per week (percentage)</i>										
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
0 •	7.2	4.3	5.6	7.5	5.2	4.7	6.7	6.5	4.1	4.0
1 - 9	1.9	1.5	1.5	1.8	1.6	1.5	1.9	1.5	1.9	1.8
10 - 39	32.7	28.2	32.0	32.6	28.7	27.6	28.6	28.3	31.1	30.7
40+	58.2	66.1	60.9	58.1	64.5	66.2	62.8	63.7	62.9	63.6

• Has a job but not at work during the reference week

* Excluding Northern province

***All the districts are included

** Excluding Mullativu & Kilinochchi districts

Excluding Northern & Eastern provinces

(Before 2003, estimates excluded both Northern & Eastern provinces)