

(D) EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR RELATIONS**Employment**

According to the Short-term Implementation Programme a sample survey on the level of employment, unemployment and under-employment in Ceylon was conducted by the I.L.O. and the Department of Labour in 1959. The survey revealed that there were about 375,000 unemployed persons in 1959. In addition nearly 35 per cent of the workers in the rural areas and 20 per cent of the workers in the urban areas were either seasonally unemployed or had work of uncertain regularity.¹

No information on employment and unemployment is available annually in Ceylon. In the absence of such data the only rough indicator of the annual movement in the level of unemployment is the data relating to the number of registrants at employment exchanges. At the end of 1961, the number of registrants at employment exchanges was 0.1 per cent higher than in the previous year. These numbers have been increasing slightly in 1962, so that at the end of December 1962, these registrants numbered 152,209 compared with 151,265 at the end of December 1961. The number of registrants at employment exchanges was lowest in the second quarter of 1962. During the course of the year there was a steady increase in registration by persons seeking technical and clerical employment, so that at the end of the year these registrants numbered 22.4 per cent more than at the end of December 1961. The number of skilled and semi-skilled registrants remained relatively stable. The number of unskilled registrants, however, declined steadily during the course of the year and were 8.1 per cent lower than at the end of the previous year.

The following table shows the number of persons who have been placed in employment in recent years together with the percentage which such placements bear to total registrants on the books in each category.

TABLE II D-1

The number of Persons placed in Employment and their relative importance to total Registrants in each category

Year	Technical & Clerical	%	Skilled	%	Semi-Skilled	%	Un-Skilled	%	Total	%
1953 ..	1528	18.2	669	10.4	1371	10.0	2820	12.2	6388	12.4
1954 ..	1097	9.4	879	11.1	922	5.7	4660	17.0	7558	11.9
1955 ..	2166	14.9	1064	12.5	1187	5.9	3791	13.6	8208	11.6
1956 ..	1913	11.9	845	8.6	1565	6.1	4162	12.1	8485	9.9
1957 ..	1176	6.3	709	5.3	1180	3.8	3053	6.4	6118	5.5
1958 ..	1827	9.2	800	5.9	1006	3.1	2251	4.4	5884	5.0
1959 ..	1667	8.0	1045	7.5	1275	3.8	3218	5.4	7205	5.6
1960 ..	1400	5.3	771	4.6	1247	3.6	4744	6.5	8162	5.4
1961 ..	1259	4.6	631	3.5	964	2.8	2794	3.9	5648	3.7
1962* ..	1263*	3.7	498*	2.9	808*	2.3	2315*	3.5	4855*	3.2

*Provisional.

Source: Department of Labour.

The number of persons placed in employment has been relatively smaller than in recent years. The largest number of persons placed has been in the unskilled category. The highest percentage of persons placed to total registrants namely 3.7 per cent was in respect of those registered as technical and clerical with that of unskilled registrants a close second.

1. Draft Short-term Implementation Programme, 1962, p. 89.

Labour Relations

The data on strikes serve as a partial indicator of the changes in employer-employee relations. The Table below shows the number of strikes, the number of workers involved and the number of man-days lost as a result of strikes.

TABLE II D-2

Strikes

Year	Plantations			Other Employment		
	Number of Strikes	Workers Involved	Man-days lost	Number of Strikes	Workers Involved	Man-days lost
1958 ..	123	39,372	340,632	96	42,713	399,228
1959 ..	177	47,318	352,095	71	42,453	460,141
1960 ..	123	42,528	259,948	37	4,839	15,130½
1961 ..	90	29,223	317,866	39	38,013	170,372
1962* ..	130	39,658	178,972	38	21,654	726,356

*Provisional.

Source: Department of Labour.

In 1962* the number of strikes on plantations was considerably larger than in 1961, when their number was the lowest in recent years. The number of strikes in other employments showed little change. The largest number of strikes, however, still took place in the plantation sector where the major part of the working population organised in unions is employed. About 67.5 per cent of plantation workers are members of unions and their numbers constitute about 58.2 per cent of all employees, who are members of unions. In 1962, the number of strikes on plantations and other employment totalled 130 and 38 compared with 90 and 39 respectively in 1961. In the plantation sector the number of workers involved was also larger than in the previous year but the number of man-days lost was relatively lower. In other employment too a larger number of employees were involved but strikes were longer drawn out than in recent years, so that the number of man-days lost increased from 170,372 in 1961 to 726,356 in 1962. Of the number of man-days lost 530,767 man-days were lost on account of the strike by employees in the dock, harbour and port transport trade alone. The number of man-days lost as a result of the Bank employees strike was 165,850.

Looking at the reasons given for striking according to the classification made by the Department of Labour, estate rules, discipline, working arrangements etc., accounted for 36.9 per cent and wage disputes such as non payment and delay in payment of wages for 9.2 per cent of strikes and these took place mainly on plantations. Dismissal or loss of employment accounted for 22.0 per cent and demands for wage increases accounted for 0.7 per cent of the strikes.