

7. POPULATION, LABOUR FORCE AND EMPLOYMENT

Population

The population has been growing at an average annual rate of 1.2 per cent during the period 1990 - 1997, a decline from the growth rate of 1.5 per cent during 1981-89. According to the Registrar General's Department, the mid year population in 1997 is estimated to be 18.6 million, an increase of 1.3 percent over the previous year, due to a natural increase in population and increase in net migration. The addition of nearly 237,000 persons to the population during the year resulted in raising the density of population from 292 persons per square kilometer in 1996 to 296 persons in 1997. Although the population growth decelerated significantly during the 1990s, the population increase has created major problems such as high unemployment, high population density and land fragmentation. The available long-term population projections indicate several noteworthy features that are likely to emerge over the next few decades. They are the ageing of population and a rising dependency ratio. Among these, the ageing of the population and related economic and social policy issues need immediate attention.

The decline in fertility rates, along with the improvement in life expectancy, has led to a faster increase in the older age groups than in the younger age groups over the past few decades. The share of population aged 65 and above has reflected an increasing trend since 1946. The proportion of that age group increased from 3.5 per cent of the total in 1946 to 4.3 per cent in 1997. According to the latest projections, this ratio will continue to rise to 11.7 per cent by 2021. This change has resulted in a transformation of the population pyramid from a broad-based shape to a cylindrical shape. The share of children aged 0-14 years has been declining both in absolute and relative terms, as against an increase in the aged population.

The old age dependency ratio reflected a significant increase from 5.9 per cent in 1946 to 7.4 per cent in 1997. The median age of the population, which was estimated at

25 years in 1991, is projected to rise to 32.5 years by 2011. This will result in an increase in the old age dependency ratio (from 8.5 per cent in 1991 to 12.3 per cent in 2011). It is projected that this rate will be as much as 17.4 per cent by 2021. This increase will require additional economic and social resources to meet the basic needs of the aged.

The ageing of population will have a number of diverse effects on the labour force, education, health and other social welfare programmes. The future rate of growth of the labour force is expected to decline significantly and reach a steady state of zero growth from the year 2010 onwards. The number of youth entering the labour force will peak before 2020 and will fall thereafter. As a consequence, the problem of labour scarcity is likely to emerge in the first decade of the next century. This change in the labour market and the immediate problem of absorbing those who are currently unemployed into productive employment need to be given due consideration in the design of economic policies for the next twenty five years. In the short run there is an urgent need to promote investment, particularly in the private sector, for it to be able to provide productive employment to the currently unemployed. Labour market policies are complementary to this promotion of investment, as making the labour market more flexible and the labour force more productive and easily adaptable to industry demands would encourage private investment. If the economic growth is accelerated and new employment opportunities are generated faster through higher productive investment, a part of the ageing population, i.e., retirees after the compulsory retirement age of 60, could still be able to be actively engaged in economic activity. The education and training systems would also need to be reoriented towards promoting new skills to keep pace with technological developments.

The sex ratio declined steadily to 104 in 1997 from 113 in 1946. Projections for the early 21st Century reveal that this ratio is expected to decline further to 99 in the year 2021. The rise in the share of females in the total population

TABLE 7.1
Basic Indicators of Population

Year	Population ('000)	Annual Growth Rate (%)	Crude Birth Rate (per'000)	Crude Death Rate (per'000)	Life Expectancy at Birth (Yrs.)
1871	2,417	0.8	28.5	20.0	40.0
1946	6,657	1.5	35.4	14.3	42.2
1953	8,098	2.8	48.0	10.4	58.2
1963	10,582	2.7	34.1	8.5	61.7
1971	12,690	2.2	30.4	7.7	65.5
1981	14,847	1.7	28.2	5.9	69.9
1991	17,247	1.5	21.0	5.5	72.5
1995	18,112	1.4	19.3	5.8	n.a
1996	18,315	1.1	18.6	6.5	n.a
1997 (a)	18,552	1.3	n.a	n.a	n.a

(a) Provisional

Sources: Registrar General's Department
Department of Census and Statistics

TABLE 7.2
Population Composition by Age Groups and Dependency and Sex Ratios

Year	Broad Age Group (% Distribution) (Years)			Dependency Ratio (%)			Sex Ratio (%)
	0 – 14	15 – 64	65 & over	Child	Old Age	Total	
1946	37.2	59.3	3.5	62.7	5.9	68.6	113
1971	39.0	56.8	4.2	68.7	7.4	76.1	106
1981	35.2	60.5	4.3	58.2	7.1	65.3	104
1991	31.2	63.4	5.4	49.2	8.5	57.7	103
1995	35.2	60.5	4.3	60.2	7.3	67.5	104
1997	35.2	60.5	4.3	60.0	7.4	68.0	104
2011 (a)	23.3	68.3	8.4	34.1	12.3	46.4	100
2021 (a)	21.1	67.2	11.7	31.4	17.4	48.8	99

(a) Projections

Source: Department of Census and Statistics

Box 5

The Social Security System in Sri Lanka - Problems of an Ageing Population

Providing social security for economically inactive and weaker sections has now been almost universally accepted as a responsibility of a society. The economically and socially vulnerable groups include old aged people who have passed the working age, extremely poor groups who are unable to support themselves with their low incomes, orphans and disabled persons. In Sri Lanka, successive governments have continued to implement a large number of subsidy schemes and poor relief programmes such as public assistance, food rations, food stamps, Janasaviya and Samurdhi, with the objective of providing economic and social security to these groups. In addition, there are pension schemes and schemes such as the Employees' Provident Fund and Employees' Trust Fund, which provide income support to those who have passed their working age. Today, governments find that it is becoming increasingly difficult to continue these social security programmes on the same scale as in the past, mainly due to resource constraints. In particular, in Sri Lanka, issues relating to the old aged may reach a crisis situation unless effective solutions are found in the near future.

The problem of providing social security to the aged is common to all countries. However, this segment of the population increases its proportion in the population over a long period, and is usually preceded by economic development. The ageing problem of Sri Lanka is almost unique. It has an unusually fast demographic transition caused by rapidly increasing life expectancy and decreasing birth rates, which are similar to those of developed countries. The difference lies in that Sri Lanka has achieved this demographic status at a low level of per capita income. The projections are that Sri Lanka's population will age faster than in any other developing country. The proportion of

population aged over 60 years is estimated to increase from the current 8 per cent to 13 per cent in 2010 and to 21 per cent in 2025, making Sri Lanka the country with the third highest share of elderly in the population in Asia, after Japan and Singapore. The median age of the Sri Lankan population will increase from today's 25 years to reach 30 years in 2005, almost 40 in 2025 and 50 years after 2050. In other words, more than half of Sri Lanka's population will be over 50 years of age after another 50 years. The rapid ageing will affect all sectors of the economy, the labour force, education, health and social security.

On the health front, older people have different health care needs and the very old suffer from more illnesses and need more medical care than the young. This problem could become worse with the increasing cost of medical care and the erosion, due to inflation, of the purchasing power of old aged persons such as pensioners who have a limited income. Increasing medical care needs of the elderly cannot be passed on to the private sector to a significant degree because they are the least able to pay. The insurance markets are unlikely to be able to finance the frequent health care bills of the old. As a result, the health costs of the old may become a burden on the public sector.

In the case of the labour force, it is projected that there will be a decline in the number of new entrants to the labour market in the first decade of the next century. This trend will result in a declining proportion of the population that is earning and saving. Other estimates reveal that the economically active population as a per cent of total population would drop to 53 per cent in 2043 from the current 65 per cent. The population over 60 years of age would increase to 6.3 million or 28 per cent in 2043 from

1. Gunatilake, Godfrey, *The vision for the future - Goals and Perspectives* (1996)

Box 5 (contd.)

1.6 million or 8 per cent at present. The dependency ratio is estimated to increase from 58 per cent today to 72 per cent in 2048. Therefore, as the labour force is rapidly moving towards stabilisation, future economic growth will have to derive sustainability from an increase in productivity. Manpower for labour intensive activities will become scarce, forcing the economy to move into sectors which give much higher value addition.

Although the reduction in the birth rate will result in a drop in the school going age population, this may not permit the Government to reduce expenditure on education. In the face of a drop in the labour supply, increasing expenditure will have to be made to achieve qualitative improvements in education with a view to achieving the desired improvements in labour productivity.

On the social security front, the long-term care of the dependent elderly is expected to be an increasing problem. Sri Lankan society has traditionally depended on the extended family system and non-working women to care for the elderly. This feature cannot be expected to continue in the future because a large proportion of females who provided the free labour for long term care of the old will be entering the labour market. Further, when the number of the aged increase, there will be fewer children to look after them. Moreover, the cultural value system cannot be expected to last too long because of the rapid economic changes.

The current pension schemes and other terminal benefit schemes such as provident funds cover less than 45 per cent of the labour force. The balance 55 per cent who are not covered live predominantly in rural areas and work outside the formal sector. In the future, governments may not be politically able to refuse to meet the demands for pensions or other social security of the majority of the population who currently have no access to formal old age income support. The government pensions scheme, which is unfunded, already exerts considerable pressure on the government budget accounting for around 2 per cent of GDP and is projected to be around 5 per cent of GDP in the year 2030.

The inherent weaknesses in the present public servants' pension scheme aggravate the problems associated with the ageing of the population. The age of retirement under the scheme was determined as 50 for women and 55 for men in the 1950s, when Sri Lanka's life expectancies for women and men were 55 years and 56 years, respectively. The age of retirement has not been increased despite the fact that the respective life expectancies have increased to 75 years and 70 years. As a result the passivity ratio, i.e. the ratio of the number of years after retirement to the number of years of work, has increased substantially, adding an extra burden to the pension bill. In fact, Sri Lanka is among the

countries with the highest passivity ratio. The present scheme also allows workers to reach the maximum pension benefit level at an earlier stage, encouraging retirement although they could continue in employment for a longer period.

How are we to face the problem of ageing?

As the country's population is ageing, while the per capita income level is still low, national priorities would need to be set to achieve higher economic growth with increased productivity that would ensure higher earnings for labour.

An increased participation of the poor and the disabled persons in economically viable activities, particularly in self-employment enterprises, will ensure a better distribution of income that would lead to greater social security for the majority living in rural areas who are outside the pension and provident fund systems. An advantage of such self-employment activities is that even elderly people who pass the normal retirement age can continue for some more years in income generating activities of this nature.

Private sector involvement in the long-term care of elderly persons would also need to be increased by popularising contributory pension schemes implemented by private sector enterprises.

Another need appears to be the development of a comprehensive national ageing policy, with the objective of finding solutions to the adverse impacts on different sectors of the economy, arising from rapid ageing. Research activities would need to be widened to collect necessary information and data for developing a national ageing policy.

Another way of mitigating the problem would be to encourage people to enter into long-term savings schemes, such as old age insurance schemes, during the earning periods of their lives.

The pension policy of the Government has to be reformed, reducing the burden on the government budget, which will also allow the Government to pay greater attention to the most needy. This will have to come in the form of a contributory pension scheme. Encouraging people to join multiple social security systems, where a person contributes to more than one scheme, would also be useful.

The private sector and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) may be encouraged to greater participation in social security systems such as operating homes for elders with necessary facilities for them to enjoy their old age.

The ultimate goal of a comprehensive old age social security programme should be to minimize the dependence of the aged on others, while providing them with opportunities to enjoy their old age with dignity.

is mainly due to the higher life expectancy of females. The expectation of life at birth, which was more favourable for men during the 1960s, reversed in favour of females during the 1990s. In 1991, the average life expectancy for females was 74.8 years as against 70.1 years for males.

7.2 Labour Force

According to the Labour Force Survey conducted by the Department of Census and Statistics, the labour force was estimated at 6.2 million (excluding the Northern and Eastern Provinces) at the end of the third quarter of 1997, more or less the same level that prevailed in the third quarter of 1996. Of this, 89.6 per cent were employed while 10.4 per cent were unemployed. The labour force participation rate (percentage share of the labour force in the total population) was estimated at 48.3 per cent. The participation rate for males and females was 65.7 per cent and 33.1 per cent, respectively. A dramatic increase in the participation of females in the age group of 25 - 34 years has been observed during the last few decades. The expansion of job opportunities in the services sector and in the Export Processing Zones was the major contributory demand factor which influenced this significant development. A rising requirement in the minimum family income, an expansion in the number of females with higher educational qualifications and changes in social attitudes were the major contributory factors that influenced the supply.

TABLE 7.3
Labour Force Participation Rate

Year	Total Labour Force ('000 persons)	Labour Force Participation Rate (%)		
		Total	Male	Female
1992	5,808	48.2	65.2	31.0
1993	6,032	49.1	65.3	33.1
1994	6,079	48.7	65.4	32.0
1995	6,106	47.9	64.4	31.7
1996	6,227	48.5	66.1	30.7
1997	6,218	48.3	65.7	33.1

Source: Department of Census and Statistics

(a) Quarterly Labour Force Survey, annual average up to 1996 and 3rd Quarter data for 1997 (Excluding Northern and Eastern Provinces).

The majority of those in the labour force had obtained primary and secondary education consequent to the availability of free education, the expansion of opportunities in general education and increasing school enrollment.

7.3 Employment

With a higher rate of economic growth in 1997, the economy generated about 75,000 additional employment opportunities during the year. The contribution to employment generation came mainly from the increased activities in the private sector. Similarly, as in previous years, the Board of Investment (BOI) contributed to a major share of the new employment creation during the year. As the size of the government sector is relatively small, employment

generation in 1997 was about 9,873 persons as compared with 14,690 in 1996.

A gradual deceleration in the unemployment rate was observed during the 1990s. Expansion of informal sector activities, creation of new job opportunities in the fields of computer, electronic media, and financial services and a continuation of high migration for foreign employment appeared to be the major contributory factors to the decline in unemployment. However, youth unemployment still remains high. Another feature of unemployment in Sri Lanka is the occupation desired by the unemployed. In the 3rd Quarter of 1997, only 0.6 per cent of job aspirants desired agriculture based occupations while about 33 per cent preferred 'white collar jobs'. A continuation of high unemployment while some economic sectors experienced labour shortages has been another special feature in the Sri Lanka labour market. Therefore, a major challenge ahead is to reduce unemployment by reformulating the education system so as to match the growing labour force to the changing needs of the economy, particularly the needs of the private sector.

The female participation in the labour force is likely to increase further due to factors such as the gradual increase in the proportion of females in tertiary education and job oriented training and increase in the sex ratio in favor of females.

Total public sector employment is estimated to be at 1.07 million in 1997, indicating a decline of 8 per cent over 1996. This was solely due to a decline of 24 per cent in semi-government sector employment. The transfer of 22 plantation companies in 1997 to the private sector under long-term lease agreements, coupled with the public sector reform policies, led to the decline in employment in the semi-government sector. However, following the trend observed during the past years, employment in the government sector, which includes the central government, provincial councils and local authorities, registered a 1 per cent increase in 1997. The increase in government sector employment was largely reflected in the categories of clerical and related workers and administrative and managerial workers. However the occupational category of professional, technical and related workers recorded a 2 per cent drop over the preceding year mainly due to a decline of 4 per cent in the sub category of teachers as a result of retirements.

The relative share of labour absorption by the services, manufacturing and construction sectors continued to increase, while the agricultural sector recorded a further decline in the 3rd quarter of 1997. Although the agricultural sector continued to occupy the dominant position in labour absorption, its share declined from 38 per cent in 1996 to 35 per cent in 1997. Meanwhile, the proportion of employed workers in the manufacturing sector increased from 15 per cent to 16 per cent. A noteworthy feature observed in this sector during the past few years was the increase in employment of females both in the rural and urban sectors, mainly due to the export oriented open economic policies.

TABLE 7.4
Labour Force and Employment

	Thousand Persons					Percentage Change	
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1996	1997
Total population	17,619	17,865	18,114	18,315	18,552	1.1	1.3
Population (10 years and above) (a)	12,251	12,559	12,774	12,850	12,863	0.6	n.a.
Labour force (a)	6,066	6,046	6,172	6,245	6,218	1.2	n.a.
Employed (a)	5,227	5,315	5,433	5,535	5,571	2.0	n.a.
Public sector	1,295	1,325	1,307	1,161	1,072	-11.2	-8.0
Government	676	700	738	752	762	2.0	1.3
Semi-Government	619	625	569	409	310	-28.1	-24.2
Private sector	3,931	3,990	4,126	4,374	4,499	6.0	3.0
BOI enterprises	180	206	233	242	258	4.0	7.0
Others	3,751	3,784	3,893	4,132	4,241	6.1	2.6
Unemployed (a)	839	731	739	721	647	-2.4	
Memorandum Items							
Labour force participation rate, (%) (a)	49.5	48.1	48.3	48.5	48.3		
Unemployment rate, (%) (a)	13.8	12.1	12.0	11.1	10.4		

Source: Department of Census and Statistics
Central Bank of Sri Lanka

(a) Quarterly Labour Force Survey, 4th Quarter data up to 1996 and 3rd Quarter data for 1997

TABLE 7.5
Labour Force and Employment (Third Quarter of the Year) (a)

Item	Thousand Persons				
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Household population (10 years and above)	12,284	12,479	12,763	12,843	12,863
Labour force	6,032	6,142	6,115	6,238	6,218
Total employed	5,249	5,299	5,339	5,517	5,571
By Economic Sector					
Agriculture, Livestock & Fisheries	2,293	1,833	1,967	2,078	1,971
Mining & Quarrying	66	32	92	86	80
Manufacturing	740	769	864	838	904
Electricity, Gas & Water	23	25	12	28	21
Construction	171	260	270	284	299
Trade & Hotels	636	643	601	605	690
Transport, Storage & Communications	223	296	237	276	294
Insurance & Real Estate	81	61	72	1,046	1,125
Personal Services	776	1,080	952	975	960
Other Services (Not Defined)	238	299	272	242	238

(a) Excluding Northern and Eastern Provinces.

Source: Department of Census and Statistics
Quarterly Labour Force Survey

In the services sector, employment opportunities expanded in the subsectors of banking, finance and real estate, transport, storage and communication and trade and hotels.

The creation of self-employment opportunities through poverty alleviation programmes such as 'Samurdhi' continued to be in operation in 1997. Provision of credit facilities and upgrading of skills through vocational training helped to create income generating activities particularly in the rural areas. A higher concentration was evident in the areas of wholesale and retail trade and the personal and other services sectors.

7.4 Foreign Employment

According to the Sri Lanka Foreign Employment Bureau (SLFEB), around 150,000 persons departed for employment overseas through registered sources in 1997. The actual number would have been higher, since some persons

still secure foreign employment through friends and relatives without registering under the SLFEB. This, coupled with the relaxation of the scheme for registration of persons leaving for foreign employment, led to a decline in securing employment abroad through registered sources. Therefore, the actual number of overseas contracted workers may be greater than the number reported in 1997.

The bulk of the foreign demand for labour was for unskilled workers, particularly housemaids, who account for 86 per cent of the total female workers abroad. The Middle East countries accounted for the largest share, about 89 per cent, of the total departures, despite the fact that salaries and wages in those countries have stagnated over a long period.

The Government continued to improve and expand facilities for the welfare of these employees as well as their families since they have become a major source of foreign exchange earnings to the country.

Box 6

Consumer Finances and Socio Economic Survey 1996/97

The Central Bank conducted its first Consumer Finances Survey (CFS) in 1953, with the primary objective of ascertaining average incomes, expenditure patterns, employment, unemployment, housing conditions and savings of households. The first survey was a pioneering study in the field and it laid the foundation for the series of subsequent surveys conducted by the Central Bank in 1963, 1973, 1978/79, 1981/82, 1986/87 and 1996/97. In these surveys the size of the sample and the coverage of socio-economic variables were continuously expanded, while retaining the comparability of data in respect of major variables, thus enabling the users to have access to a comprehensive set of survey data for a continuous period of over four decades. The data from the Consumer Finances Survey series are widely used by researchers, planners, students, social workers and the general public. This survey series has been a major source of information for private and public institutions in policy making.

The Statistics Department of the Central Bank conducted the field work of the 1996/97 Consumer Finances and Socio Economic Survey in four rounds during the period October 1996 to December 1997. The information was collected from a sample of 8,880 households spread throughout the Island, excluding some areas in the North and East. The major findings of this survey are the ageing of population, further improvement in health, educational attainment and literacy, a substantial reduction in the unemployment rate, increase in labour force participation, movement towards income equality and greater access to household amenities and equipment.

The population distribution by age has undergone significant changes during the last three decades. A major change is the decline in the proportion of population in younger age groups and the increase in that of older age groups. The proportion below 14 years accounted for as much as 40.5 per cent in 1963 and this declined to 25.9 per cent in 1996/97. Meanwhile, the proportion of population above 55 years increased from 7.2 per cent in 1963 to 13.3 per cent in 1996/97 indicating an ageing of the population. The demographic transition, which reflected the decline in the proportion of the population in younger age groups, could be mainly attributed to the reduction in fertility rates. On the other hand, the decline in mortality rates contributed to increase the life span of the population, thereby increasing the proportions in older age groups. These trends have various socio-economic implications. On the one hand, the decline in the proportion of population in the school-going age will ease the strain on the education system and will leave room for improvement in

the quality of education. On the other hand, the increase in the share of old age groups would require an expansion in the health care and social security systems for caring for the old in the future.

In the area of education, the 1996/97 Survey revealed that 56 per cent of the population has progressed beyond the primary level of education, compared to only 12 per cent in 1953. The adult literacy rate, which has reached 92 per cent in 1996/97, is the highest observed among the countries in South Asia, while the gender disparity in educational attainment, which prevailed in the past, has been progressively narrowed down.

The labour force participation rates have shown a progressive increase mainly due to the rise in participation among females. The increase in female participation is an outcome of a number of factors including higher educational attainment of females, employment aspirations induced by domestic economic expansion and the rise in the number of females actively seeking foreign employment.

The 1996/97 Survey also revealed a substantial reduction in the rate of unemployment. Unemployment was high, at 24 per cent of the labour force, in 1973 due to slow growth in the economy. In the post-1977 period, the economy expanded rapidly, resulting in a decline in the unemployment rate to 11.7 per cent by 1981/82. However, by 1986/87 with the completion of the major headworks of the Mahaweli Development Programme and other infrastructure development projects, the unemployment rate increased as depicted by the CFS data in 1986/87. Thereafter, with economic growth picking up in the 1990s, unemployment showed signs of easing. According to this latest survey, the unemployment rate has decreased to 11.5 per cent, the lowest level recorded in the entire CFS series. The rapid expansion of the economy due to export led growth and the dynamism displayed by the private sector has led to an intensification of the absorption of labour. A reduction of unemployment was shown in all three sectors, i.e., Urban, Rural, and Estate.

The income distribution, as revealed by the CFS data, had gradually shifted towards greater equality from 1953 to 1963 and 1973. This trend reversed in 1978/79 with the shift in the policy emphasis from equity considerations to faster economic growth. Income inequalities were further evident in the Surveys of 1981/82 and 1986/87. The 1996/97 Survey indicates a turn-around in this trend of worsening income inequality. This was an outcome of widespread employment generation through relatively rapid

Box 6 (contd.)

economic growth, better targeting of government welfare programmes and the seeping down of the benefits of liberalisation measures to the lower income groups. An increase in foreign remittances to family members from workers employed abroad also helped to raise the level of income of the poor, leading to a more equitable distribution of income.

The accompanying table summarises the trends in

some of the socio-economic indicators from the Consumer Finances and Socio Economic Surveys conducted since 1953. On the whole, most indicators show an upward trend in the physical quality of life and human resources as measured by literacy, educational attainment, labour force participation and employment generation, income distribution and the availability of household amenities and equipment.

Key Socio-Economic Indicators from the Survey Series (1953-1996/97)

Indicator	1953	1963	1973	1978/79	1981/82	1986/87	1996/97(a)
1. Population							
1.1 Population Distribution by Age Groups (In years) (%)							
0 - 13		40.8	38.4	34.2	34.0	30.8	25.8
14 - 18		11.5	11.5	12.3	11.3	11.7	11.3
19 - 25		10.9	13.1	13.7	13.5	12.5	11.3
26 - 35		12.4	12.3	13.7	14.4	14.3	14.6
36 - 45		10.1	9.9	9.6	9.9	11.2	13.2
46 - 55		7.3	6.4	7.6	6.0	6.4	10.4
Above 55		7.2	8.4	8.9	8.9	11.1	13.3
1.2 Population by Sex (%)							
Male	51.7	50.7	50.1	48.9	49.0	48.5	48.2
Female	48.3	49.3	49.9	51.1	51.0	51.5	51.8
2. Literacy and Educational Attainment of the Population							
2.1 Literacy Rate (%)		82.2	80.8	86.2	86.4	88.6	92.1
2.2 Educational Attainment (%)							
No Schooling	41.6	36.6	32.2	24.4	25.0	11.8	8.3
Primary	46.8	39.3	37.9	36.9	37.9	41.1	35.7
Secondary	9.8	19.6	23.9	26.4	25.8	32.1	41.1
Tertiary	1.8	4.5	6.0	10.3	11.3	15.0	14.9
3. Labour Force, Employment & Unemployment							
3.1 Economically Active Population (%)							
All Sectors	40.0	31.7	33.9	36.0	34.3	36.1	40.2
Male	58.0	-	48.0	50.1	49.7	51.7	53.4
Female	22.9	-	19.8	26.0	19.4	25.4	28.0
3.2 Distribution of Employment (%)							
Primary	-	53.2	54.3	49.6	52.8	49.6	38.6
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	-	53.0	54.5	48.3	51.2	47.7	37.1
Mining & Quarrying	-	0.2	0.8	1.0	1.6	1.3	1.5
Secondary	-	9.2	11.1	19.1	17.6	19.1	23.8
Manufacturing	-	7.9	9.3	13.8	12.4	13.4	17.6
Construction	-	1.9	1.8	5.3	5.2	5.7	6.5
Tertiary	-	37.6	24.1	31.3	28.6	31.3	37.6
Wholesale and Retail Trade	-	7.8	7.0	9.7	10.7	11.3	13.5
Public Administration, Defence and Other Personal Services	-	18.5	26.8	20.6	18.6	18.8	22.5
Other	-	11.2	0.9	0.8	0.3	0.8	1.6
3.3 Unemployed as a % of Labour Force							
All Sectors	16.6	14.6	24.0	14.7	11.7	15.5	11.8
Male	19.3	-	18.9	9.2	7.8	13.3	6.9
Female	20.0	-	36.4	24.9	21.3	29.6	19.7
4. Income Distribution							
4.1 Percentage Share of Spending Unit Income							
Lowest 20 per cent	5.2	5.4	7.2	6.3	5.7	5.1	5.5
Highest 20 per cent	53.8	52.3	42.9	48.9	52.0	52.3	50.2
Highest 10 per cent	40.8	36.8	28.0	34.6	37.3	37.4	34.8
4.2 Gini Coefficient (Spending Units)	0.46	0.45	0.38	0.43	0.45	0.46	0.43
5. Percentage of Households having Amenities and Equipment							
5.1 Electricity for Lighting	4.1	7.0	8.0	13.1	15.8	26.5	54.8
5.2 Pipe Borne Water for Drinking	11.3	5.0	21.0	21.8	18.4	22.6	30.6
5.3 Radio	-	26.0	25.4	49.9	60.7	67.1	72.3
5.4 Sewing Machine	-	22.0	26.2	31.3	30.7	37.2	41.7
5.5 Refrigerator	0.9	1.0	1.3	2.3	2.9	8.1	17.4
5.6 Telephone	-	0.8	0.3	0.7	0.9	1.4	3.7

Source: Consumer Finances & Socio Economic Surveys of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka

(a) Based on the first two rounds of the Survey