



Bulletin of Labour Demand for 2023

Labour Demand

The labour market includes the supply of labour by households and the demand for labour by firms. Labour demand was defined by the unfilled vacancies in the enterprise/establishment during the period under review.

Labour force supply in a country should be consistent with labour demand for the achievement of rapid economic growth. We can identify the highly demanded occupations in Sri Lanka and estimate the number in demand.

Survey on Working Hours and Labour Cost - 2022

The survey on working hours and labour cost was designed to collect data on employment, working hours, labour cost and labour demand. The survey covered all establishments with 5 or more persons engaged in the formal sector. This survey was designed as a postal survey and conducted

within 12 months. The reference period of the survey on working hours and labour cost – 2022 was 1st of January 2022 to the 31st of December 2022.

The total sample size was 6,000. It was selected from the frame of private and semi government sector establishments contributing to the Employees Provident Fund. Establishments with less than 5 employees were excluded from the survey considering the low share of output and other practical difficulties.

The International Standard Industry Classification (ISIC) Rev. 4 and International Standard Classification of Occupation (ISCO) – 2008 were used to classify the nature of business and occupation of the employed persons for data analysis purposes.

The objective here is to highlight the types of skills and occupations that enterprises are actively searching to fill in the next 12 months.

Table 1: Percentage distribution of establishments with labour Demand for 2023

Item	Establishments with labour demand (%)
Major industry group	
Total	30.2
Agriculture	31.0
Industry	31.0
Services	29.3
Current employment category	
Total	30.2
5 - 25	24.2
26 - 50	33.3
51 - 100	40.6
More than 100	49.1

Establishments with labour demand for 2023 were reported at 30.2 percent. It was reported as 49.1 percent from industries of more than 100 employee category.

Table 2: Labour demand in main economic sectors for 2023

Sector	Number of Vacancies			
	Total	Male	Female	Male or Female
Total	239,149	112,285	122,693	4,170
Industry	128,960	42,786	85,848	326
Construction	2,667	2,349	318	0
except construction	126,293	40,437	85,530	326
Trade and services	95,913	61,559	30,510	3,843
Trade	22,098	13,319	8,741	37
Services	73,815	48,240	21,769	3,806
Agriculture	14,276	7,940	6,335	0
Plantation	10,326	5,262	5,064	0
Agriculture except Plantation	3,950	2,678	1,271	0

For the year 2023, the total labour demand was reported 239,149. There were 128,960 vacancies reported in the Industrial sector. The Trade and

Services sector has 95,913 labour demand for the year 2023. It was the second place from the main sectors. Only 14,276 vacancies have been reported in the Agriculture sector.

Table 3: Minimum educational qualifications which are necessary by job classification

Occupation Category	Up to O/L	Passed O/L	Passed A/L	Degree & above
Managers, senior officials and legislators	0	498	1308	4062
Professionals	0	320	3,085	10,615
Technicians and Associate professionals	4,640	4,515	24,969	6,975
Clerks and clerical support workers	0	1,286	6,502	835
Service and sales workers	8,053	13,476	6,393	208
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	10	65	101	0
Craft and related trades workers	2,615	4,195	2,944	0
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	22,792	37,879	9,484	0
Elementary occupations	42,503	18,821	0	0

Table 4: Distribution of vacancies which is necessary a professional/ vocational training

Occupation Category	Number of vacancies which is necessary a professional/ Vocational training
Managers, senior officials and legislators	4,109
Professionals	9,162
Technicians and Associate professionals	13,545
Clerks and clerical support workers	1,676
Service and sales workers	11,052
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	205
Craft and related trades workers	2,725
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	9,117
Elementary occupations	6,050

Table 5: Labour demand by sex and occupation category for 2023

occupation category	Total	Male	Female	Male or Female
Total	239,149	112,285	122,694	4,170
Managers, senior officials and legislators	5,868	3,869	1,638	362
Professionals	14,019	6,906	6,092	1,020
Technicians and Associate professionals	41,100	24,411	15,461	1,228
Clerks and clerical support workers	8,623	3,938	4,551	135
Service and sales workers	28,130	21,676	5,430	1,024
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	176	169	7	0
Craft and related trades workers	9,754	6,347	3,397	10
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	70,155	16,993	53,124	37
Elementary occupations	61,324	27,975	32,995	354

Considering the total labour demand in 2023, the highest number of vacancies (70,155) was recorded for Plant and machine operators and assemblers. In this category, the number of vacancies for females was 53,124 and for males, it was 16,993.

Table 6: High demand occupations in the agriculture sector for 2023

Occupation	Number of vacancies	%
Total	14,276	100.0
Crop farm labourers	5,897	41.3
Agricultural technicians	2,028	14.2
Tea pluckers	1,787	12.5
Rubber tappers	1,586	11.1
Livestock farm	694	4.9
Other	2,283	16.0

Table 6 shows the demanded occupations in the Agriculture sector for 2023. Crop farm labourers are the highest demanded occupation in the Agriculture sector.

Table 7: High demand Occupations in the manufacturing sector for 2023

Occupation	Number of vacancies	%
Total	128,960	100.0
Sewing machine operators	53,858	41.8
Manufacturing labourers	16,769	13.0
Manufacturing supervisors	12,073	9.4
Cleaners and helpers in offices, hotels and other establishments	3,615	2.8
Hand packers	3,437	2.7
Mechanical engineering technicians	2,588	2.0
Weaving and knitting machine operators	2,572	2.0
Other government associate professionals	1,976	1.5
General office clerks	1,785	1.4
Hand launderers and pressers	1,534	1.2
Other occupations	28,754	22.3

Table 8: High demand Occupations in the Trade and Services sector for 2023

Occupation	Number of vacancies	%
Total	95,913	100.0
Security guards	14,031	14.6
Cleaners and helpers in offices, hotels and other establishments	9,363	9.8
Manufacturing labourers	7,072	7.4
Commercial and sales representatives	6,058	6.3
Software developers	5,188	5.4
Shop sales assistants	3,277	3.4
General office clerks	2,422	2.5
Other government associate professionals	2,075	2.2
Accounting associate professionals	2,052	2.1
Sales workers	1,978	2.1
Other	42,399	44.2

Table 9: Distribution of labour demand in main economic activities for 2023

Sector	Total	Male	Female	Male or Female
Total	239,149	112,285	122,694	4,170
Agriculture	14,276	7,940	6,335	0
Crop and animal production, hunting and related service activities, Forestry and logging	14,276	7,940	6,335	0
Industry	128,960	42,786	85,849	326
Manufacture of food products	12,025	6,664	5,357	3
Manufacture of textiles	8,345	3,368	4,977	0
Manufacture of wearing apparel	80,619	12,873	67,423	323
Manufacture of wood and products of wood and cork, except furniture; manufacture of articles of straw and painting materials	3,703	3,652	51	0
Manufacture of chemicals and chemical products	2,354	1,499	855	0
Manufacture of rubber and plastic products	3,545	2,552	993	0
Other Industries	18,369	12,177	6,193	0
Trade and services	95,913	61,559	30,510	3,844
Wholesale and retail trade and repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles	2,471	2,113	351	7
Wholesale trade except of motor vehicle and motor cycles	14,952	8,407	6,514	31
Retail trade except of motor vehicles and motorcycles	4,675	2,799	1,876	0
Land transport and transport via pipelines	2,742	2,650	92	0
Accommodation	4,883	4,087	796	0
Food and beverage service activities	2,206	1,174	1,033	0
Computer programming consultancy and related activities	7,000	4,230	2,530	240
Activities auxiliary to financial service and insurance activities	3,865	3,231	634	0
Employment activities	9,609	6,676	2,933	0
Security and investigation activities	12,756	11,196	1,560	0
Services to building and landscape activities	6,343	2,913	3,430	0
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	4,309	1,975	2,167	167
Education	4,591	1,039	2,222	1,330
Other trade and services	15,510	9,068	4,373	2,069

According to the Table 9, the highest labour demand as of 80,619 has been reported from Manufacturing of wearing apparel industry in 2023. In this year, 14,952 vacancies have

reported from Wholesale trade except for motor vehicles and motor cycles. It was the highest labour demand in Trade and services sector.

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