



Labor Force Participation Gaps in Sri Lanka, Gender Disparities, Youth Unemployment, and Sectoral Shifts

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Abstract: This study examines the evolution of Sri Lanka's labor market over the critical decade spanning 2014-2024, analyzing data from the Annual Labour Force Survey to identify structural transformations, persistent inequalities, and emerging challenges. Using a decade-long longitudinal analysis, the research investigates trends in labor force participation rates, unemployment patterns disaggregated by gender and age, sectoral employment distribution, and working hour dynamics. The findings reveal four major interconnected trends that define Sri Lanka's contemporary labor market landscape. First, the Labor Force Participation Rate experienced a sustained decline from 53.2% in 2014 to 47.4% in 2024, with particularly pronounced drops among women (34.6% to 29.8%), indicating substantial withdrawal of productive human capital from the economy. Second, employment underwent gradual sectoral reallocation, with the services sector expanding from 44.8% to 48.5% of total employment while agriculture declined from 28.9% to 26.0%, and the industrial sector remained relatively stable, suggesting a pattern of premature deindustrialization. Third, despite overall unemployment stability (4.3-4.4%), youth unemployment (15-24 years) remained critically elevated, fluctuating between 18.5% and 26.5%, while female unemployment consistently exceeded double the male rate, reaching 8.5% during the 2020 pandemic compared to 4.0% for males. Fourth, the COVID-19 pandemic caused sharp reductions in full-time work (40+ hours) from 65.1% to 56.2% in 2020, followed by robust recovery to 67.4% by 2024. The comprehensive literature review contextualizes these findings within broader theoretical frameworks of labor market dynamics, skills mismatch, gender discrimination, informal employment, and structural transformation. The study concludes that Sri Lanka's labor market challenges are fundamentally structural rather than cyclical, requiring comprehensive policy interventions including expansion of social infrastructure for women, education system reforms addressing skills gaps, targeted support for youth employment transitions, and integrated social protection mechanisms. The analysis provides evidence-based recommendations for policymakers seeking to transform Sri Lanka's labor market into an inclusive engine of sustainable economic growth.

Index Terms: Gender employment gap; Labor force participation; Sri Lanka labor market; Structural transformation; Youth unemployment.

1 INTRODUCTION

Sri Lanka's labor market has undergone substantial transformation over the past decade, shaped by economic reforms, shifting demographic patterns, and evolving sectoral priorities. Since 2010, the country has pursued diverse trade and engagement agreements that have influenced its economic trajectory (Athukorala and

Jayasuriya, 2013). However, despite these initiatives, economic growth has remained inconsistent, hampered by frequent changes in governance structures and shifting national priorities. The generational transition in the workforce, coupled with ongoing sectoral shifts, has created both opportunities and challenges for sustainable development.

The Annual Sri Lanka Labour Force Survey, conducted with government support, provides critical insights into these labor market dynamics and structural changes. Between 2014 and 2024, the country experienced notable developments, including the emergence of the technology sector and a growing community of self-employed entrepreneurs as key economic actors (Jayasooriya, 2017). The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and the severe economic crisis of 2022-2023 further disrupted labor market patterns, affecting employment levels, working hours, and workforce participation across demographic groups.

Looking ahead to 2030, Sri Lanka faces critical decisions regarding its development trajectory, particularly in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) agenda and the need to establish self-sustaining mechanisms that promote decent work opportunities. Understanding labor market evolution over the past decade becomes essential for evidence-based policymaking. According to recent census data, approximately 66.7% of the population constitutes the working-age group, with nearly one-third being youth aged 18 to 30 years (Census of Population and Housing, 2024). This demographic composition underscores the urgency of addressing youth employment challenges and ensuring inclusive labor market participation. Fig. 1 below shows the trends in unemployment rates across four categories total, male, female, and youth (ages 15–24) from 2014 to 2024. The youth unemployment rate consistently registers the highest values throughout the period, peaking sharply around 2020–2021, likely reflecting the economic disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic, before showing a gradual decline in subsequent years.

This study analyzes data from the Sri Lanka Labour Force Survey covering the period 2014-2024 to examine the evolution of key labor market indicators. The analysis focuses on overall unemployment trends, gender-disaggregated unemployment rates, sectoral employment distribution, and working hour patterns. By identifying structural changes and persistent gaps particularly concerning gender disparities and youth unemployment this research aims to provide empirical evidence that can inform policy interventions designed to enhance labor force participation, improve employment quality, and support inclusive economic growth in the decade ahead.

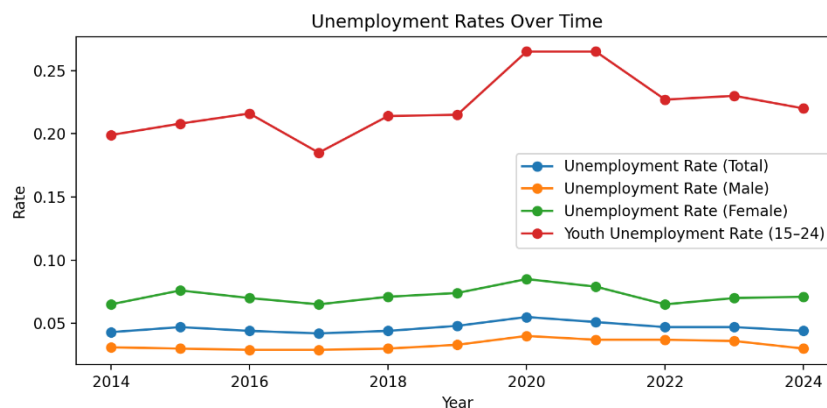


Fig. 1. Youth unemployment among individuals aged 15–24 is significantly higher, largely because most sectors consider 18 as the typical minimum working age.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Female Labor Force Participation and Gender Disparities

Despite Sri Lanka's relatively high levels of human development, female labor force participation has remained consistently low over the past decade. Maheswaranathan and Sabriya (Maheswaranathan and Sabriya, 2025) report that women's participation in the labor force stands at approximately 33%, with the gender gap persisting unchanged for three decades. Current data further highlight this disparity: as of 2024, the unemployment rate among women is 4.4%, significantly higher than the 3% recorded for men (Census of Population and Housing, 2024). In addition to participation gaps, wage inequality remains a critical concern. A study by the International Labour Organization (ILO) (International Labour Organization, 2024) examining the Gender Pay Gap (GPG) between 2013 and 2021 revealed a 27% factor-weighted difference in earnings between men and women. Notably, women face severe wage penalties regardless of their educational attainment, occupational category, or organizational affiliation, underscoring systemic inequities within the labor market.

Female labor force participation in Sri Lanka has shown gradual improvement since the end of the civil war, with notable changes observed from 2010 onward. Rising economic pressures on households have increased the demand for labor, creating opportunities for women to enter roles traditionally dominated by men (Solotaroff et al, 2020). Despite these developments, significant challenges persist. A persistent misalignment between educational attainment and labor market demands, coupled with workplace discrimination, continues to hinder progress. These structural barriers have contributed to a growing trend of migration, particularly among young women, who often seek opportunities abroad due to limited prospects within the domestic labor market.

The issue of gender equity in labor markets is not unique to Sri Lanka but is prevalent across South Asia. Strachan and Adikaram (Strachan and Adikaram, 2023) highlight that disparities in employment, wages, and economic opportunities have widened in the region, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Deep-rooted patriarchal norms and socio-cultural divisions continue to constrain female labor force participation. Although recent years have seen the introduction of legislative measures such as extended maternity leave and, in some European contexts, consideration of menstrual leave the implementation of such policies within South Asia has been slow and inconsistent.

Fig. 2 below showcases the employed population working 40 or more hours per week between 2014 and 2024. The share remained relatively stable around 0.66–0.68 until 2019, after which it experienced a sharp decline to approximately 0.56 in 2020, followed by a steady recovery trend through 2024, suggesting a significant disruption and gradual normalization in full-time work patterns.

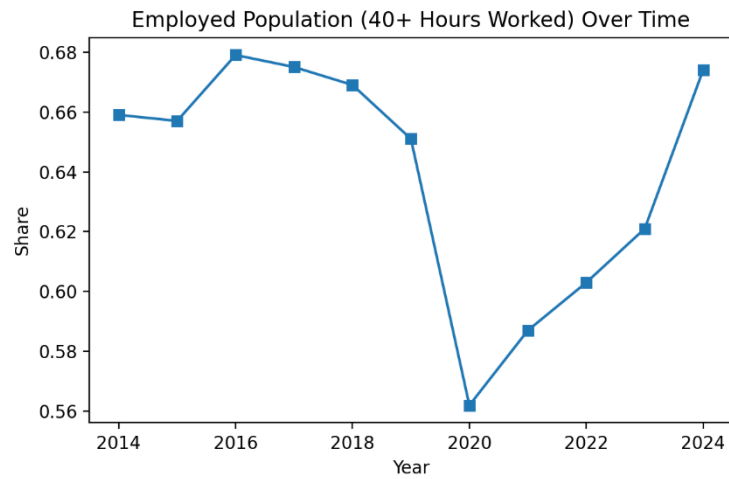


Fig. 2. Average weekly working hours exceed 40 for approximately 67% of the population. The decline in 2020 reflects the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.2 Youth Unemployment – A Structural Challenge

Youth unemployment has remained a persistent issue in Sri Lanka, both during and after the civil war, due to a chronic mismatch between educational qualifications and available employment opportunities. The Sri Lankan education system is highly competitive, with less than 40% of students gaining direct admission to local universities, while the majority unable to afford private education are compelled to attempt entry a second time (Weerasiri and Samaraweera, 2021). Even after completing higher education and acquiring relevant training, graduates often face unmet salary expectations and limited alignment with labor market demand.

Weerasiri (Weerasiri and Samaraweera, 2021) notes that female youth unemployment is twice as high as male unemployment, primarily due to gender-specific workplace harassment and socio-cultural barriers that restrict women's workforce participation. Many young women gravitate toward white-collar positions as a survival strategy when excluded from other sectors, rather than pursuing alternative opportunities. The "qualification paradox" further exacerbates this challenge: graduates enter the labor market with expectations shaped by their academic credentials, only to encounter salaries and roles that fall short of these expectations, prompting migration or career shifts. Fig. 3 presents three scatter plots examining the relationship between total unemployment and sectoral employment shares agriculture, industry, and services across observed data points. The dispersion of points in all three panels suggests the absence of a strong linear relationship between any individual sector's employment share and the overall unemployment rate.

Gnangnon (Gnangnon, 2018), in a study of 112 developing countries from 2002 to 2015, observed that employment is concentrated in three sectors agriculture, industry, and services. In low-income countries (LICs) such as Sri Lanka, employment diversification remains limited. Workers transitioning from traditional agricultural roles to industry or services often struggle to adapt unless structural and technological transformations are implemented.

Rising unemployment is also linked to brain drain. Youth under 30 frequently pursue career paths aligned with family or social networks, and when migration opportunities arise, they often opt for permanent

relocation rather than returning to contribute domestically. As Kaluarachchi and Jayathilaka (Kaluarachchi and Jayathilaka, 2024) argue, “push factors” such as low GDP growth, economic instability, and declining skilled occupations outweigh “pull factors,” undermining prospects for human capital development to translate into domestic economic benefits. Without significant labor market reforms, Sri Lanka risks continued erosion of its skilled workforce.

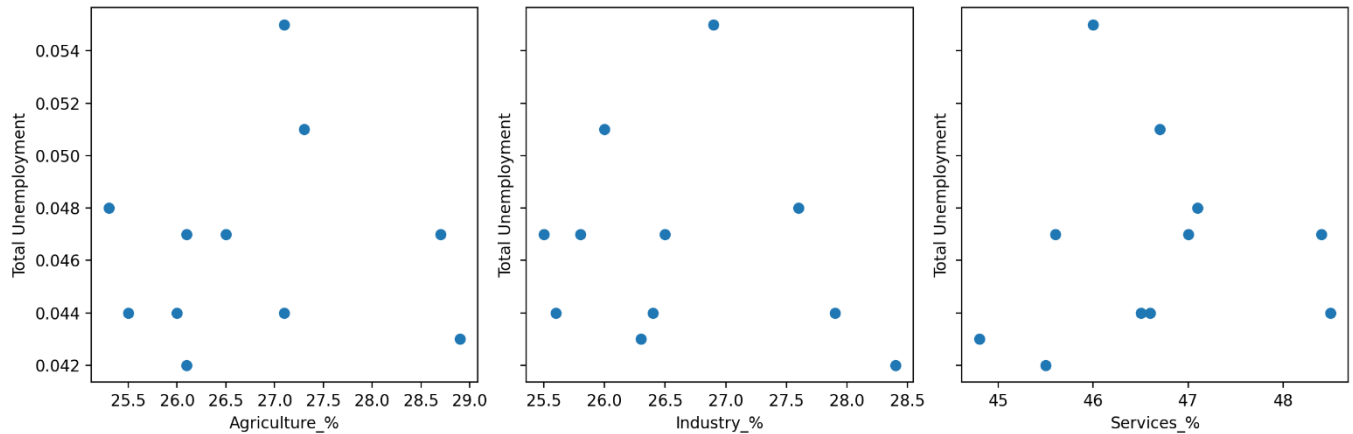


Fig. 3. The sector-wise scatter plots show no major or significant shifts in unemployment across industries

2.3 Brain Drain and Migration Pressures

Increasing unemployment in Sri Lanka is linked to brain drain, particularly among youth under the age of thirty. Many pursue career paths aligned with family or social networks, and when migration opportunities arise, they often opt for permanent relocation rather than returning to contribute domestically. As Kaluarachchi and Jayathilaka (Kaluarachchi and Jayathilaka, 2024) observe, “push factors” such as low GDP growth, economic instability, and declining skilled occupations outweigh “pull factors,” limiting the potential for human capital development to translate into domestic economic benefits. Without significant labor market reforms, this trend is likely to persist.

Evidence from other countries suggests that two-thirds of graduates end up in jobs unrelated to their educational background, creating a pool of overeducated workers in underpaid positions (Draissi et al, 2023). Employers increasingly prioritize soft skills such as adaptability, communication, and client relations over traditional theoretical knowledge. Yussoff and Sulaiman (Yussoff and Sulaiman, 2025) report that overeducated and over skilled employees face the greatest difficulty in securing long-term employment, as their qualifications often fail to align with evolving market expectations. This challenge is compounded by the growing prominence of artificial intelligence (AI)-driven roles, which further reduces demand for conventional human capital. Fig. 4 displays a stacked area chart showing the composition of employment across agriculture, industry, and services sectors from 2014 to 2024. The services sector consistently dominates employment share, while agriculture exhibits a modest decline over the period, and the industry sector remains relatively stable, reflecting a gradual structural shift toward a service-oriented economy.

These structural issues have contributed to the gradual rise of informal sector employment, often as an involuntary response to economic pressures. Migrant youth frequently accept informal jobs abroad to sustain themselves, while educated workers within Sri Lanka shift to informal roles, leading to an automatic brain

drain and skillset reconfiguration. Günther (Gunther and Launov, 2012) notes that women entering the informal sector face significant wage disparities, with only a small proportion securing formal employment, while most remain trapped in low-productivity roles or domestic work.

Although the informal sector is a critical component of developing economies, its demographic composition typically includes individuals experiencing poverty, inequality, family instability, or inadequate living conditions (Sultana et al, 2022). In Sri Lanka, empirical data on informal employment remains scarce. The Sri Lanka Bureau for Foreign Employment (SLBFE) primarily tracks officially sanctioned overseas placements, leaving gaps in understanding the experiences of those who migrate independently and secure informal work. To address these limitations, advanced analytical approaches such as “multiple indicators multiple causes” (MIMIC) models should be employed to capture country-specific dynamics, particularly in low-income contexts (Ackrill and Igudia, 2024).

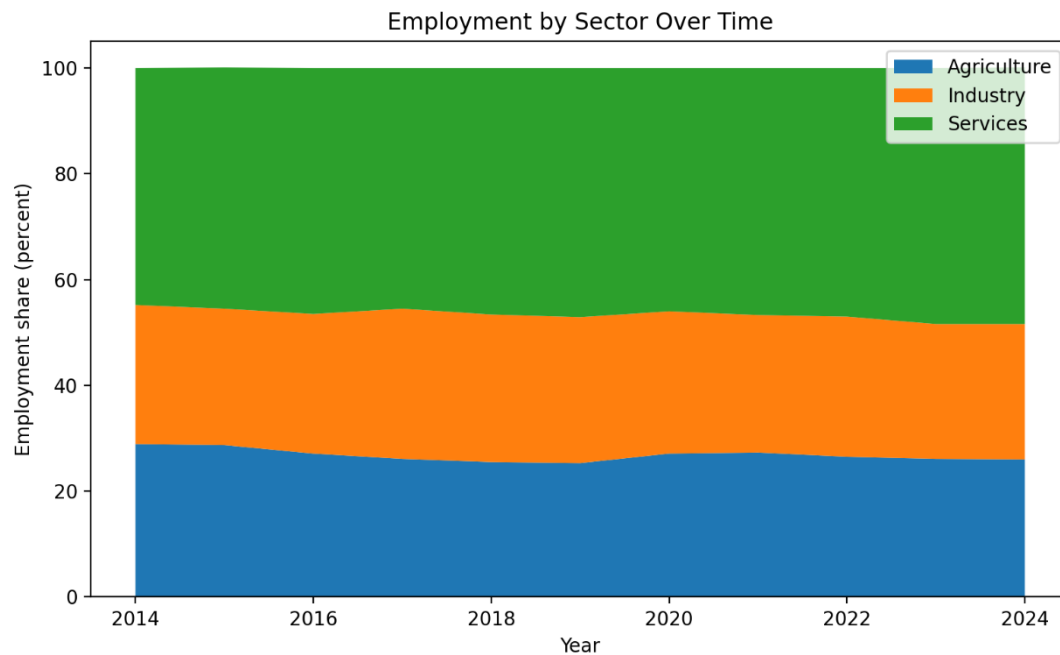


Fig. 4. Sectoral comparisons indicate a rise in employment within the services sector, a slight decline in industry, and a modest decrease in agriculture.

2.4 Social Protection and Labor Market

Several policy interventions have been introduced globally to enhance social protection, with some frameworks requiring employers to ensure that workers operate under conditions conducive to efficiency and well-being. However, compliance remains inconsistent, as many organizations prioritize profit over employee welfare, particularly in contexts where individuals seek employment out of economic desperation. The volatility of the informal sector is driven by market demand. While technological advancements, including artificial intelligence (AI), have accelerated growth in certain sectors, physical labor continues to be indispensable for tasks that cannot be automated (Arvin-Rad et al, 2010).

Working hours represent a major concern within social protection discourse. Although some countries provide flexibility, most lack clear mandates governing work arrangements. Payment structures vary

significantly, with hourly wages common in certain regions and daily wages prevalent elsewhere. Traditionally, a 40-hour workweek is considered standard; however, this benchmark varies by sector, country, and organizational regulations. In the informal sector, regulatory oversight is minimal, allowing employers to impose excessive workloads often exceeding 50 hours per week without government intervention (Sugiyarto, 2007).

The labor market has also undergone significant transformation over the past decade, marked by the rise of start-ups and entrepreneurial ventures. These enterprises typically rely on seed funding or grant during their initial years, prioritizing revenue-generating roles over compliance-related positions such as human resource or legal experts. Consequently, despite the existence of legal frameworks, enforcement remains weak, and failures within these ventures often go undocumented (Breza and Kaur, 2025). Income insecurity further compounds social protection challenges. Many employees allocate their entire monthly income to basic expenses, with limited engagement in financial diversification or investment opportunities. Organizations often exploit this dependency, reinforcing employee retention through financial vulnerability. Patel (Patel, 2024) emphasizes the importance of skills training, microcredit systems, psychosocial support, and financial literacy elements frequently overlooked in low-income contexts. Fig. 5 presents a group bar chart comparing annual employment shares across agriculture, industry, and services sectors from 2014 to 2024. The services sector maintains the highest share each year at approximately 45–47%, while agriculture and industry shares remain comparatively lower and relatively stable, reinforcing the dominant role of the services sector in the labor market throughout the study period.

Social benefits remain underdeveloped in South Asia, particularly in Sri Lanka, where such provisions are typically confined to financially robust organizations. Insurance coverage for work-related travel is often absent, and financial transparency within institutions is limited, depriving employees of their right to accountability. Despite profitability, many organizations maintain opaque practices, perpetuating historical norms rather than adopting progressive measures (Ghorpade et al, 2024). The COVID-19 pandemic introduced notable shifts in work arrangements, including remote work policies aimed at promoting health and well-being. While many countries institutionalized flexible work options, low-income contexts experienced contrasting outcomes. In Sri Lanka, remote work often extended working hours and imposed cross-time-zone demands, undermining the intended benefits of flexibility (Anttila et al, 2021).

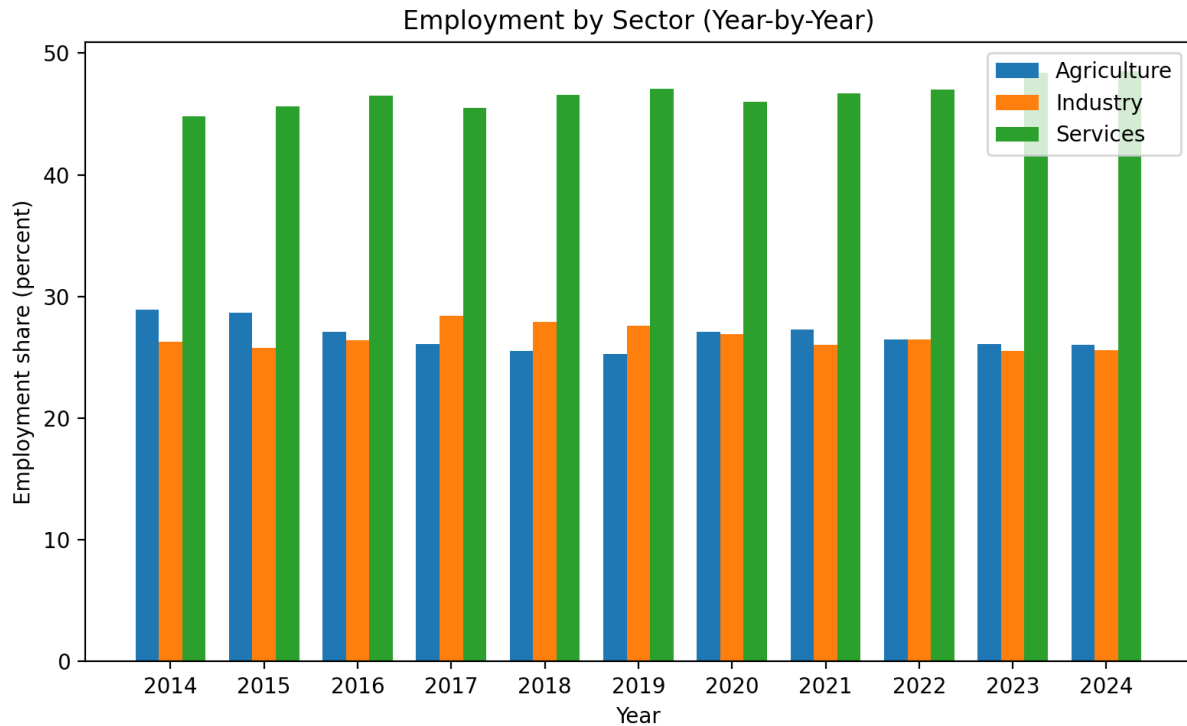


Fig. 5. Over the past five years, the services sector has steadily approached the 50% share of total employment, while the industrial sector has continued to decline.

2.5 Research Gaps in Sri Lanka

Following the economic crisis of 2022–2023, unemployment rates in Sri Lanka continued to rise as the country defaulted on its debts. Organizations began reducing working hours, and in some cases, even self-employed entrepreneurs struggled to secure funding to sustain their businesses. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), approximately 535,000 Sri Lankans migrated overseas in search of employment during this period. These figures, however, represent documented cases and may underestimate the actual number, as many individuals initially traveled on visit visas and later converted them to work permits (International Labour Organization, 2023).

Although numerous studies have examined various aspects of Sri Lanka's labor market, a critical gap remains in understanding long-term patterns of labor force migration and unemployment. Existing research often focuses on short-term fluctuations or isolated factors, leaving a need for comprehensive analysis over extended periods. Fig. 6 illustrates a side-by-side stacked area comparison of historical sectoral employment shares (2014–2018) against a 5-year forward scenario (2019–2023). The scenario projects a notable expansion of the industry and services sectors relative to historical levels, while agriculture's share remains broadly similar, offering a visual basis for evaluating structural transformation under alternative future conditions.

This study addresses this gap by analyzing data from the Sri Lanka Labour Force Survey to identify persistent unemployment trends and structural disparities. By examining a decade of labor market dynamics, the research aims to provide evidence-based insights for policymakers, academics, and researchers. The findings will inform strategies to enhance employment opportunities, improve livelihoods, and support inclusive economic growth in the coming decade.

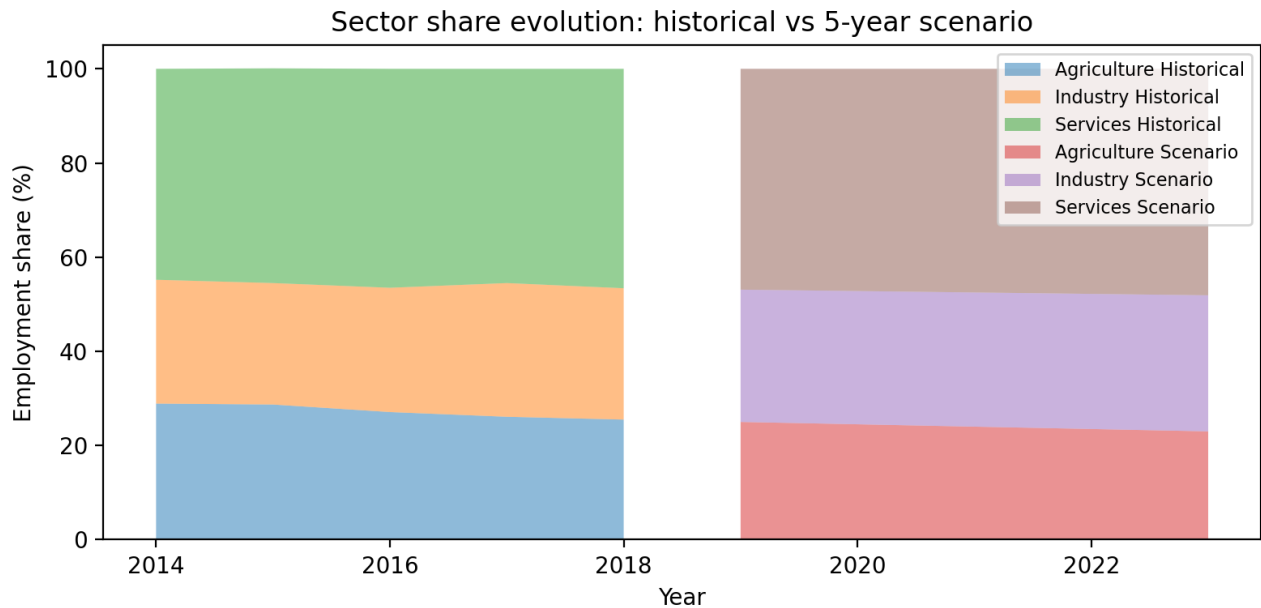


Fig. 6. Five-year sectoral trends illustrate how employment patterns in Sri Lanka are undergoing noticeable changes.

3 METHODOLOGY

This study utilizes secondary data sourced from the Sri Lanka Labour Force Survey reports spanning the period 2014 to 2024. These reports are publicly accessible, and the survey methodology has remained largely consistent over time, with incremental modifications to the questionnaire introduced in later years. The analysis concentrates on key labor market indicators, including gender-disaggregated unemployment rates, sectoral employment distribution with percentage breakdowns, informal sector data available from 2019 onward, and average working hours. The datasets were examined using descriptive analysis, followed by the development of visualizations through Julius AI and Microsoft Excel to illustrate and compare multiple dimensions of data availability. The figures presented below summarize the key findings derived from this analysis.

4 DISCUSSION

The past decade has transformed the labor market in Sri Lanka, with the sustained labor force participation rate declining from 53.2% to 47.4%. The working-age population has been affected the most, with a drastic gender gap difference showing a drop in women labor workforce from 34.6% to 29.8%, with similar trends being observed in South Asia (Klasen, 2019). This is a concerning sign in Sri Lanka, predominantly because the working age group might have migrated to other countries or there is a significant drop in female workforce participation which has to be studied further.

India reports similar decline where in 2011 there was a similar drop experienced of nearly 7% due to lack of job opportunities for women and the urbanization effects which is currently taking place in Sri Lanka (World Bank, 2024). Countries in early stages of development show this decline in the South Asian region, once

formal employment opportunities opened up the situation got better opening up pathways for equal pay and higher female participation (Chatterjee et al, 2015).

Another issue for female workforce has been insufficient social support infrastructure provided over the years, with increasing family responsibilities and childcare support given by the female, occupation segregation and discriminatory practices have risked their potential to continue their role (Gaddis and Klasen, 2014). Young women searching for white collar jobs face occupation segregation and labor market discrimination, which has led to young women searching for employment beyond their current scope of work. The bottlenecks that existed in solving the gender pay gap and inequality still exists in the LICs and specifically in the South Asian region (Habiyaremye et al, 2022) (Buckner and Alasaad, 2021).

The shift in employment from agriculture (28.9% to 26.0% in Agriculture) to increase in services (44.8% to 48.5%) indicates the shift in focus in the current workforce. This showcases economic modernization and technological advancement focused in high paying roles but it also can reflect low-productivity informal service employment (Deshpande and Kabeer, 2021) (Alon et al, 2020). The services sector can generate more jobs and more output than the agricultural sector, however this does not reflect in quality education being provided or jobs generation (Mitra, 2025).

Sri Lanka has not experienced industrial employment as of now, as suggested by the World Trade Organization (WTO) report in 2022 (World Trade Organization, 2022) without having an industrial base there is limited growth that provided reduced opportunities for decent well-paying jobs. Although the services sector can provide better opportunities there is a wide gap between the wage still between both genders and the conditions in the informal sector have not improved significantly when compared to the formal sector. However, for Sri Lanka the biggest concern is productivity enhancement causes displacement of work where workers from the agricultural sector cannot move into the other sectors without having their skillset to be matched to the market requirements (Martins-Neto et al, 2024).

A youth paradox is also experienced, where the educated young people face higher unemployment compared to their less educated counterparts as there is a skills mismatch between educational qualifications against the labor market requirements in the current evolving era. According to studies conducted [33-34] significant upskill and skill development within the youth is required to meet the current demands and technological advancements. This is applicable for both the young employees as well as the older employees since the current generation of growth is significantly faster than the previous decades with AI and technology taking over the basic job roles in the country.

Educational systems are established to ensure that educational knowledge is provided, however, practical skillset there needs to improvements in the modules where problem solving solutions and providing technical expertise is required currently (Kumar and Shobana, 2024). The concept of skills mismatches no longer exist in the current era as anyone can evolve at their own pace with the access of information available currently. Labor migration, socio-economic conditions and most importantly the ability to earn quickly at a relatively young age has become the idea they have on head currently (World Economic Forum, 2024). The main destination among the youth group (15 to 30 years old) has been the middle east as it provides them with social security and a stable income to save on the long run (UNCTAD, 2024).

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the labor workforce. How Sri Lanka's labor market works from 2014-2019 is different to how it works in 2020-2025 as there have been significant changes in how the market operates. However, the persistent issue of employees working 40+ continues to take place in the country with an average of 60-70% of the population working beyond 40 hours at minimum. Although during the 2020 pandemic there was a decline, the numbers in 2024 changed significantly and showed more work taking place, although job losses have taken place there have been signs of recovery in 2024. Unlike other countries in Sri Lanka the main job losses took place in 2022/23 during the economic crisis recovery period (Khushbu et al, 2024). Fig. 7 presents a dual-axis line chart tracking the total unemployment rate alongside the services sector employment share from 2014 through a 5-year forward scenario extending to 2023. The chart reveals a diverging trend in the scenario period where the services share increases steadily while the unemployment rate stabilizes and gradually declines, suggesting a potential inverse relationship between services sector growth and unemployment.

While the data which is currently showing the employment skillset distribution, literature highlights that informal employment and market dynamics have to be studied better with several subcategories and studies which need to be conducted to be undertaken to understand the true motivations behind this change in numbers (Habiyaemye et al, 2022). The gender equality spectrum and the SDG goals targets set at 2030 serve as a hypothetical assumption that aims to promote decent work and sustainable jobs while the reality there is a declining employment categorization (International Labour Organization, 2023). Research indicates the gap continues in both genders, but the informal and formal sector has the biggest issue as no mapping has been undertaken to map out the risks and potential drawbacks. The numbers speak for themselves, and the review supports the findings thus far showcasing the South Asian cultural shift [42-43]. As shown in Fig. 8, male and female unemployment rates over the period 2014 to 2024 is compared. Female unemployment consistently exceeds male unemployment across all years, with both rates reaching their respective peaks around 2020 before declining. The persistent gender gap in unemployment rates underscores structural disparities in labor market participation and outcomes between male and female workers.

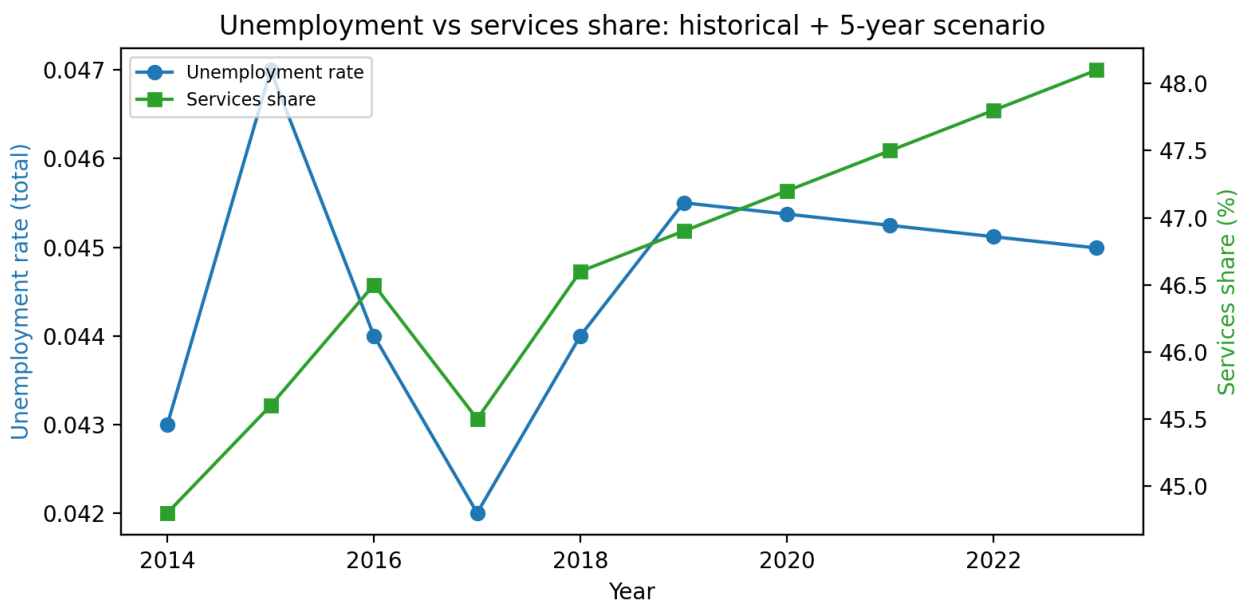


Fig. 7. Although employment in the services sector continues to increase, the overall unemployment rate has shown only a slight decline since 2017.

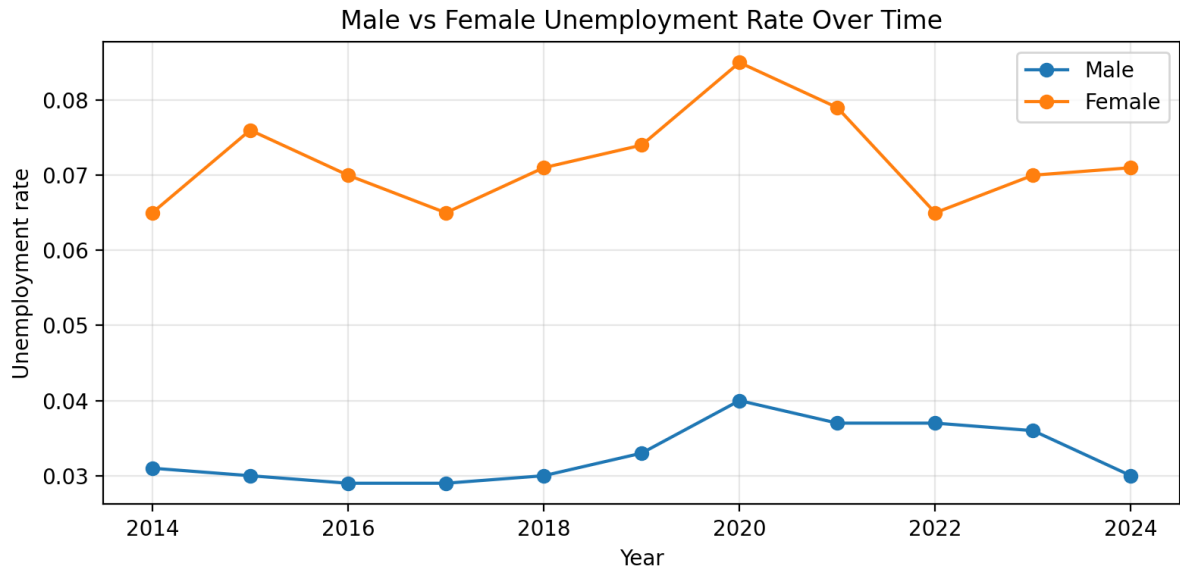


Fig. 8. The male-to-female unemployment gap continues to narrow, with a remaining difference of approximately four percentage points.

5 CONCLUSION

The comprehensive analysis of Sri Lanka's labor market over the decade 2014-2024 reveals a nation at a critical juncture, experiencing profound structural transformation marked by declining labor force participation, persistent gender and youth employment gaps, and sectoral reallocation that raises questions about the quality and sustainability of economic development. The sustained decline in the Labor Force Participation Rate from 53.2% to 47.4%, with particularly sharp drops among women (from 34.6% to 29.8%), represents a troubling withdrawal of productive human capital from the economy at a time when demographic dividends should be maximized. While the overall unemployment rate remained relatively stable between 4.3% and 4.4%, this aggregate stability masks severe dysfunction in specific segments: youth unemployment persistently hovered between 18.5% and 26.5%, peaking during the pandemic years, while female unemployment consistently exceeded double the male rate, reaching 8.5% in 2020. The shift from agricultural employment (28.9% to 26.0%) toward services (44.8% to 48.5%), without corresponding industrial sector expansion, suggests a pattern of premature deindustrialization that may limit future productivity growth and quality job creation.

The path forward requires recognition that Sri Lanka's labor market challenges are fundamentally structural rather than cyclical, demanding comprehensive policy interventions that extend far beyond conventional macroeconomic management or isolated active labor market programs. The evidence demonstrates that addressing declining female labor force participation necessitates coordinated investments in social infrastructure (particularly childcare and safe transportation), rigorous enforcement of anti-discrimination legislation, and redesign of social protection systems that currently create disincentives for women's work. Tackling youth unemployment requires not merely skills training programs which have shown limited effectiveness when divorced from broader reforms but fundamental restructuring of education systems to emphasize the soft skills and adaptability that employers value, strengthened school-to-work transition

mechanisms, and targeted support for young women facing compounded barriers of age and gender discrimination. The sectoral transformation underway must be actively shaped through industrial policy that prevents complete deindustrialization while ensuring that services sector growth occurs in higher-productivity activities rather than low-wage informal employment. Most critically, the declining labor force participation rate represents both a stark warning and a significant opportunity: if appropriate policies can mobilize the underutilized human capital of women and discouraged workers, Sri Lanka could unlock substantial economic growth and poverty reduction; however, if current trends persist unchecked, the nation risks squandering its demographic dividend and consigning a generation to economic marginalization. The decade of data analyzed in this study provides unequivocal evidence that business-as-usual approaches have failed to create an inclusive, dynamic labor market bold, coordinated, and sustained policy action is now imperative to transform Sri Lanka's labor market into an engine of shared prosperity that offers dignity and opportunity to all citizens, regardless of gender, age, or educational background.

6 ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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