Annual Statistical Report of Foreign Employment 2024

This is the twenty ninth series of annual statistical report published by the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment that provides a continuous review of the trend and development of the foreign employment industry in Sri Lanka.

Research Division
Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment
P O Box 61
Battaramulla,
Sri Lanka.

Tel : (+94)112366749
Fax : (+94)112366698
E-mail : mgr_res@slbfe.lk
Web : www.slbfe.lk

PREFACE

The Annual Statistical Report is a product of the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE). This report is compiled annually by using the available data of the SLBFE and various other data sources including publications, with the view to providing useful information to the policy planners, researchers and the others who are interested in statistics pertaining to migration. This e-report provides statistics on foreign employment.

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P O Box 61
Battaramulla,
Sri Lanka

Telephone : (+94)11-2366749
Fax : (+94)112366698
E-mail : mgr_res@slbfe.lk
Web : www.slbfe.lk

Guidance : Isharika K. Wickramasinghe
Manager (Research)

Analysis & Presentation : B. Sachini Dilhari
Research Officer

Graphic Designing & Data Collection : B. Sachini Dilhari
Sujee Gunasekara

Subordinating Staff : K A A Kodithuwakku
D T U S Dangalle
P M R Pathirana
B V S G Prmarathne
K D N Rangana
A G H Tathsarani

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Outward Labour Migration in Sri Lanka 2024

Highlights

Total Registration Of Migrant Employees with SLBFE 314,786 Sri in 2024





Migration Trends
By mid-December 2024, over 300,000 Sri Lankans had departed for overseas employment, surpassing previous peak figures and indicating sustained growth in outbound migration.

Remittances
Workers' remittances increased by 10.1%, reaching USD 6.5 billion





Major Destination of Sri Lankan Employees
Kuwait 77,917
United Arab Emirates 52,067
Saudi Arabia 48,020
Qatar 46,639.

Skill Composition
Skilled migration accounted for **77.66%** of total registrations,





Gender Dynamics
Male migrant workers increased to **59.3%** of all registrations, reversing the trend observed in 2023. (186,674 = 2024)
Female migrant workers, constituting **40.7%** of the workforce, saw a decline after 2023 (128,112 = 2024)

Age Profile
The majority of migrant workers 16.74% are aged between 30 and 34 years.



Recruitment Channels
Approximately 193,784 workers migrated through private, self-initiated efforts 121,002 workers.

Table 1.1

Migrant Employee's Registration with the SLBFE by Gender 1986-2024

Year	Male		Female		Total
	No	%	No	%	
1986	11,023	76.25	3,433	23.75	14,456
1987	10,647	75.37	3,480	24.63	14,127
1988	8,309	45.09	10,119	54.91	18,428
1989	8,680	35.11	16,044	64.89	24,724
1990	15,377	36.08	27,248	63.92	42,625
1991	21,423	32.97	43,560	67.03	64,983
1992	34,858	27.99	89,636	72.01	124,494♣
1993	32,269	25.00	96,807	75.00	129,076♣
1994	16,377	27.22	43,791	72.78	60,168
1995	46,021	26.68	126,468	73.32	172,489
1996	43,112	26.52	119,464	73.48	162,576
1997	37,552	24.99	112,731	75.01	150,283
1998	53,867	33.71	105,949	66.29	159,816
1999	63,720	35.45	116,015	64.55	179,735
2000	59,793	32.82	122,395	67.18	182,188
2001	59,807	32.50	124,200	67.50	184,007
2002	70,522	34.61	133,251	65.39	203,773
2003	74,508	35.51	135,338	64.49	209,846
2004	80,699	37.59	134,010	62.41	214,709
2005	93,896	40.60	137,394	59.40	231,290
2006	90,170	44.65	111,778	55.35	201,948
2007	103,476	47.37	114,983	52.63	218,459
2008	128,232	51.19	122,267	48.81	250,499
2009	119,381	48.31	127,745	51.69	247,126
2010	136,850	51.16	130,657	48.84	267,507
2011	136,307	51.84	126,654	48.16	262,961
2012	144,135	51.03	138,312	48.97	282,447
2013	175,185	59.75	118,033	40.25	293,218
2014	190,217	63.26	110,486	36.74	300,703
2015	172,788	65.59	90,655	34.41	263,443
2016	160,306	66.02	82,510	33.98	242,816
2017	139,268	65.69	72,724	34.31	211,992
2018	129,712	61.41	81,499	38.58	211,211
2019	122,257	60.20	80,830	39.80	203,087
2020	32,500	60.51	21,211	39.49	53,711
2021	81,110	66.34	41,154	33.66	122,264
2022	186,947	60.12	124,006	39.88	310,953
2023	164,681	44.66	132,906	55,34	297,587
2024	186,674	59.30	128,112	40.70	314,786

Source: Information Technology Division-SLBFE

♣ Airport Survey-SLBFE 1992-1993

Table 1.3

Total Migrant Employee's Registration with the SLBFE by Manpower Level 1994 – 2024

Year	Skilled	%	Low skilled	%	Total
1994	51344	85.33	8,824	14.67	60,168
1995	148992	86.38	23,497	13.62	172,489
1996	140647	86.51	21,929	13.49	162,576
1997	129718	86.32	20,565	13.68	150,283
1998	125512	78.54	34,304	21.46	159,816
1999	135964	75.65	43,771	24.35	179,735
2000	146429	80.37	35,759	19.63	182,188
2001	150622	81.86	33,385	18.14	184,007
2002	167288	82.1	36,485	17.9	203,773
2003	165582	78.91	44,264	21.09	209,846
2004	171505	79.88	43,204	20.12	214,709
2005	189386	81.88	41,904	18.12	231,290
2006	161036	79.74	40,912	20.26	201,948
2007	162784	74.51	55,675	25.49	218,459
2008	185934	74.23	64,565	25.77	250,499
2009	190938	77.26	56,188	22.74	247,126
2010	202153	75.57	65,354	24.43	267,507
2011	195101	74.19	67,860	25.81	262,961
2012	216073	76.5	66,374	23.5	282,447
2013	218829	74.63	74,389	25.37	293,218
2014	217207	72.23	83,496	27.77	300,703
2015	180611	68.56	82,832	31.44	263,443
2016	167234	68.87	75,582	31.13	242,816
2017	147641	69.64	64,351	30.36	211,992
2018	156,739	74.21	54,472	25.79	211,211
2019	148,949	73.34	54,138	26.66	203,087
2020	38,935	72.49	14,776	27.51	53,711
2021	88,658	72.51	33,606	27.49	122,264
2022	207,369	66.69	103,584	33.31	310,953
2023	208,465	70.05	89,122	29.95	297,587
2024	244,467	77.66	70,319	22.34	314,786

Source-Information Technology Division-SLBFE

Table 1.4

Registration of Male Migrant Employees with the SLBFE by Manpower Level 1994-2024

Year	Skilled	%	Low Skilled	%	Total
1994	9,572	58.45	6,805	41.55	16,377
1995	26,430	57.43	19,591	42.57	46,021
1996	24,472	56.76	18,640	43.24	43,112
1997	20,760	55.28	16,792	44.72	37,552
1998	29,314	54.42	24,553	45.58	53,867
1999	33,608	52.74	30,112	47.26	63,720
2000	33,423	55.90	26,370	44.10	59,793
2001	34,223	57.22	25,584	42.78	59,807
2002	41,392	58.69	29,130	41.31	70,522
2003	43,671	58.61	30,837	41.39	74,508
2004	46,887	58.10	33,812	41.90	80,699
2005	55,344	58.94	38,552	41.06	93,896
2006	53,245	59.05	36,925	40.95	90,170
2007	53,201	51.41	50,275	48.59	103,476
2008	70,304	54.83	57,928	45.17	128,232
2009	69,920	58.57	49,461	41.43	119,381
2010	81,020	59.20	55,830	40.80	136,850
2011	79,014	57.97	57,293	42.03	136,307
2012	87,698	60.84	56,437	39.16	144,135
2013	111,140	63.44	64,045	36.56	175,185
2014	119,083	62.60	71,134	37.40	190,217
2015	100,177	57.98	72,611	42.02	172,788
2016	95,256	59.42	65,050	40.58	160,306
2017	84,939	60.99	54,329	39.01	139,268
2018	84,317	65.00	45,395	35.00	129,712
2019	78,852	64.50	43,405	35.50	122,257
2020	20,948	64.46	11,552	35.54	32,500
2021	54,350	67.01	26,760	32.99	81,110
2022	118,979	63.64	67,968	36.36	186,947
2023	106,859	64.89	57,822	35.11	164,681
2024	127,928	68.53	58,746	31.47	186,674

Source-Information Technology Division-SLBFE

Table 1.5
Registration of Female Migrant Employees with the SLBFE by Manpower Level 1994-2024

Year	Skilled		Low Skilled		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	
1994	41,772	95.39	2,019	4.61	43,791
1995	122,562	96.91	3,906	3.09	126,468
1996	116,175	97.25	3,289	2.75	119,464
1997	108,958	96.65	3,773	3.35	112,731
1998	96,198	90.80	9,751	9.20	105,949
1999	102,356	88.23	13,659	11.77	116,015
2000	113,006	92.33	9,389	7.67	122,395
2001	116,399	93.72	7,801	6.28	124,200
2002	125,896	94.48	7,355	5.52	133,251
2003	121,911	90.08	13,427	9.92	135,338
2004	124,618	92.99	9,392	7.01	134,010
2005	134,042	97.56	3,352	2.44	137,394
2006	107,791	96.43	3,987	3.57	111,778
2007	109,583	95.30	5,400	4.70	114,983
2008	115,630	94.57	6,637	5.43	122,267
2009	121,018	94.73	6,727	5.27	127,745
2010	121,133	92.71	9,524	7.29	130,657
2011	116,087	91.66	10,567	8.34	126,654
2012	128,375	92.82	9,937	7.18	138,312
2013	107,689	91.24	10,344	8.76	118,033
2014	98,124	88.81	12,362	11.19	110,486
2015	80,434	88.73	10,221	11.27	90,655
2016	71,978	87.24	10,532	12.76	82,510
2017	62,702	86.22	10,022	13.78	72,724
2018	72,422	88.86	9,077	11.14	81,499
2019	70,097	86.72	10,733	13.28	80,830
2020	17,987	84.80	3,224	15.20	21,211
2021	34,308	83.36	6,846	16.64	41,154
2022	88,390	71.28	35,616	28.72	124,006
2023	101,606	76.45	31,300	23.55	132,906
2024	116,539	90.97	11,573	9.03	128,112

Source-Information Technology Division-SLBFE

Table 1.6

Migrant Employee's Registration with the SLBFE by Country and Manpower Level 2024

Country	Skilled			Low Skilled			Total
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	
Kuwait	56,024	16,435	72,459	1,291	4,167	5,458	77,917
U A E	12,734	26,326	39,060	2,963	10,044	13,007	52,067
Saudi Arabia	22,549	15,610	38,159	1,053	8,808	9,861	48,020
Qatar	4,415	28,754	33,169	972	12,498	13,470	46,639
Maldives	1,131	7,386	8,517	372	3,410	3,782	12,299
Romania	605	4,608	5,213	884	4,409	5,293	10,506
Israel	123	5,703	5,826	1,551	2,805	4,356	10,182
Japan	1,495	5,692	7,187	206	1,351	1,557	8,744
Oman	5,044	2,422	7,466	237	752	989	8,455
South Korea	2	541	543	125	6,446	6,571	7,114
Jordan	3,080	1,115	4,195	472	243	715	4,910
Bahrain	1,749	1,537	3,286	118	633	751	4,037
Cyprus	2,321	449	2,770	214	591	805	3,575
United Kingdom	1,282	1,822	3,104	49	128	177	3,281
Singapore	1,001	1,192	2,193	303	98	401	2,594
Malaysia	571	690	1,261	163	669	832	2,093
Seychelles	54	1,071	1,125	33	151	184	1,309
Lebanon	1,026	23	1,049	35	161	196	1,245
Serbia	55	779	834	98	312	410	1,244
Russia	314	600	914	14	201	215	1,129
New Zealand	64	557	621	2	73	75	696
Australia	141	492	633	0	10	10	643
Turkey	5	592	597	5	4	9	606
Bangladesh	22	493	515	1	29	30	545
Hong Kong	246	49	295	195	51	246	541
Iraq	2	159	161	4	115	119	280
Canada	75	156	231	5	40	45	276
Ireland	15	245	260	0	13	13	273
Mauritius	27	83	110	134	19	153	263
Malta	26	137	163	9	48	57	220
Lithuania	28	175	203	4	5	9	212
India	21	148	169	0	7	7	176
Papua New Guinea	1	140	141	0	9	9	150
Fiji	10	116	126	0	11	11	137
Bulgaria	2	1	3	15	105	120	123
Poland	3	98	101	0	17	17	118
Vietnam	8	98	106	0	9	9	115
Ethiopia	7	85	92	0	9	9	101
Others	261	1,349	1,610	46	295	341	1,951
Total	**116,539**	**127,928**	**244,467**	**11,573**	**58,746**	**70,319**	**314,786**

Source-Information Technology Division-SLBFE

Table 1.13

Migrant Employee's Total Registration with the SLBFE by Districts 2024

District	Female	Male	Total
Ampara	2,529	14,990	17,519
Anuradhapura	8,435	6,011	14,446
Badulla	4,070	3,276	7,346
Batticaloa	3,792	14,215	18,007
Colombo	12,235	20,577	32,812
Galle	6,921	11,411	18,332
Gampaha	12,460	21,313	33,773
Hambantota	2,541	4,276	6,817
Jaffna	345	3,040	3,385
Kalutara	7,064	10,700	17,764
Kandy	9,382	15,435	24,817
Kegalle	4,980	6,625	11,605
Kilinochchi	235	342	577
Kurunegala	15,285	14,814	30,099
Mannar	278	417	695
Matale	4,886	4,938	9,824
Matara	2,702	5,407	8,109
Monaragala	1,422	1,507	2,929
Mullaitivu	261	311	572
Nuwara eliya	5,366	3,096	8,462
Polonnaruwa	4,215	3,288	7,503
Puttalam	8,145	9,471	17,616
Ratnapura	5,151	4,897	10,048
Trincomalee	4,523	5,184	9,707
Vavuniya	889	1,133	2,022
Total	**128,112**	**186,674**	**314,786**

Source-Information Technology Division-SLBFE