



Labour Force Survey, Male'

Quarter 3
(July-September 2025)

Release date:
20 October 2025





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MALDIVES BUREAU OF STATISTICS (MBS)
Ministry of Finance & Planning



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Within the MBS, the survey was managed by the survey division, led by Ms. Fathimath Nihan, with support from Mr. Mohamed Habeeb and Ms. Mibsam Hassan Zareer. Ms. Aishath Aniya provided overall guidance for data coding. The data processing division, including Mr. Ali Shafeeu, Mr. Ahmed Shaheed, and Ms. Aishath Risla Umar, handled questionnaire design, data processing, and tabulation.

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The crucial tasks of analyzing the survey data and writing the final report were handled by Ms. Aishath Shahuda, with expert guidance from Mr. Antonio R. Discenza and Ms. Aishath Hassan.

Chief Statistician, Maldives Bureau of Statistics

Labour force survey (LFS) was commenced by the Maldives Bureau of Statistics on October 28, 2024, in the capital, Male' City. The fieldwork for the survey, which targets randomly selected households of four wards of Male', Hulhumale', and Vilimale'.

The LFS is fully aligned to the new statistical labour standards adopted by the 19th, 20th, and 21st International Conferences of Labour Statisticians. It helps to improve our knowledge of the labour market and the world of work by more adequately reflecting people's participation in employment and unpaid work, their labour underutilization patterns, their work relationships, and their involvement in the informal economy. The alignment to the international standards ensures that results are full comparable with those of other countries in the region and worldwide, obtained with the same methodology and standards.

Labour market data was collected from all household members aged 15 years and above in the sample households throughout the three months of the reference quarter. LFS technical and administrative reports provide survey methodology and operational aspects of the survey.

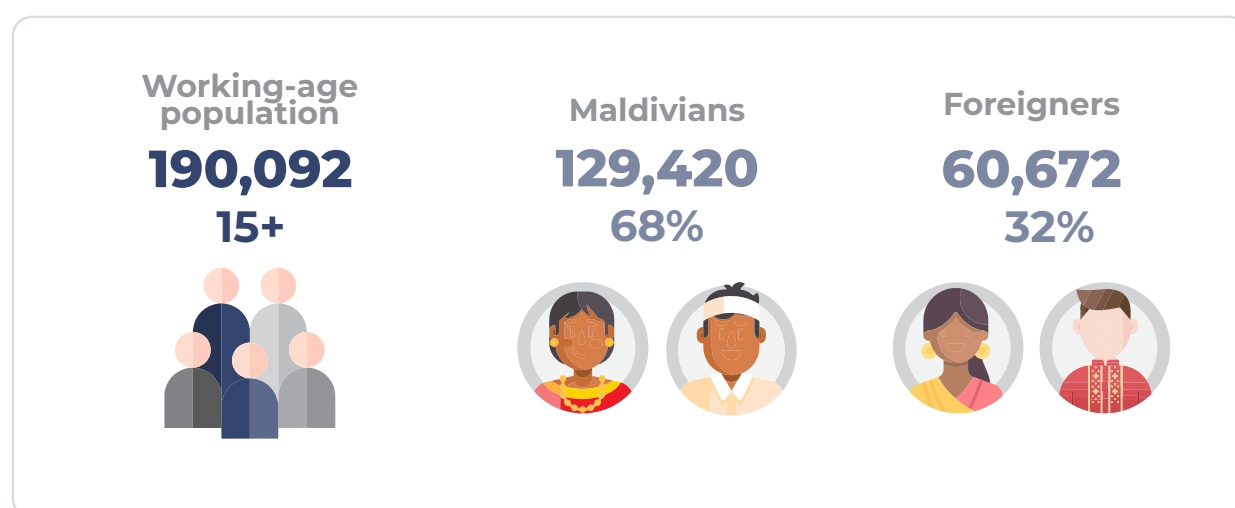
This publication illustrates results of Q3-2025 (July to September 2025) and compares them with that of the previous quarter Q2-2025 (April to June 2025)

OVERVIEW OF Q3-2025

WORKING-AGE POPULATION

In Q3-2025, working-age population (15 years and older) living in Male' were estimated at 190,092. Maldivians totaled 129,420 (68.1%). One-third (60,672) were foreigners.

Labour force status of the working age population



About three quarters (74.4 per cent) of the working-age population were employed (working for pay or profit) in Q3-2025, amounting to 141,513 people.

The overall employment-to-population ratio mentioned above is an average of very different ratios for different population groups.

Employment ratio is substantially higher among foreigners. It is 63.0 for Maldivians (81,580 people) and 98.8 per cent for foreigners (59,933 people).

Employment ratio is much lower among women. Overall, it is 87.4 for males and 53.0 per cent for females. Looking at the Maldivian population, the employment ratio is 77.0 for males and 49.3 for females. Looking at the foreigner population those are respectively 99.7 and 91.1.

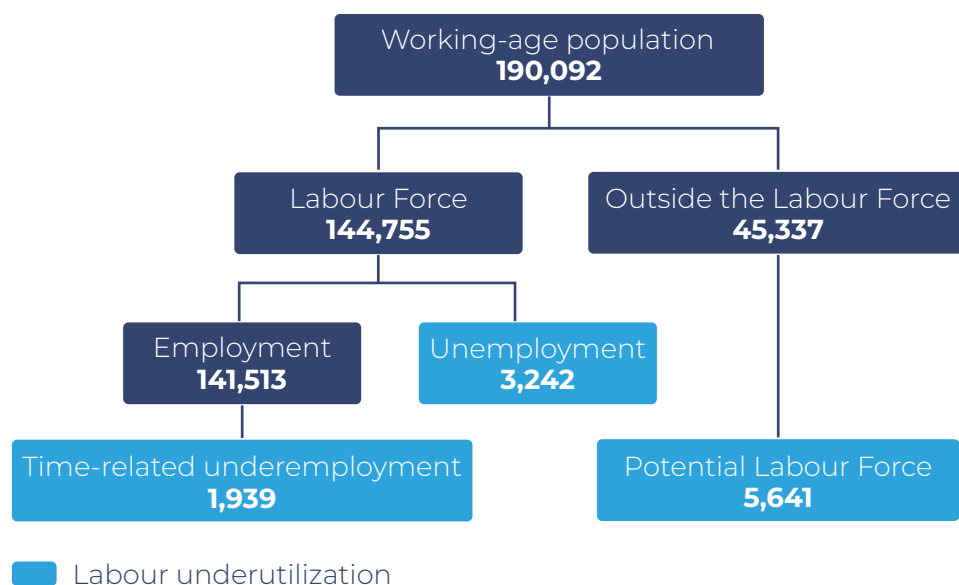
Unemployment in Q3-2025 involves 3,242 persons, almost exclusively Maldivians (3,069 people) and slightly more women than men (1,748 vs. 1,494 persons respectively).

Unemployment rate (sometimes labelled as LU1 indicator in tables) in Q3-2025 is low and equal to 2.2%. However, it reflects the fact that the foreign population is almost entirely employed. When looking at the Maldivian population only the unemployment rate is equal to 3.6% overall, 2.6% for men and 5.2% for women. It is also 4.3% for Maldivians in the age group 15-34 and 3.1% for those in the age group 35 plus.

Given the low unemployment, the labour force participation rate, which considers both employed and unemployed, is very close to the employment-to-population ratio. Overall, it is 76.2%, but it is much higher for men (88.7%) than for women (55.4%), and is also much higher for foreigners (99.1%) than for Maldivians (65.4%).

Within people in employment, a small group of people (1,939 persons, corresponding to the 1.4% of all employed) are classified in Time-Related Underemployment (TRU) because they usually work less than 35 hours per week but would like to work more and are immediately available to do so. However, while TRU involves only 0.7% of the employed men, it involves 3.2% of the employed women, mostly Maldivians. Putting together the Unemployed and those in TRU we can calculate the LU2 indicator and see that the gender gap increases. In fact, while the total is 3.6%, it is only 2.1% for males but 7.5% for females.

Overview of working age population



Within people out of the labour force (PLF), an important group is classified as Potential Labour Force. These are people which are “close” to the unemployed because they: a) are available to take up a job but did not search for a job in the previous 4 weeks; or b) searched for a job but are not available to start immediately. In Q3- 2025 the PLF in Maldives are 5,641 persons, slightly more than the number of unemployed, and 66% of them are women.

Putting together the Unemployed, those in TRU and the PLF, we can calculate the LU4 indicator and see that the gender gap increases even further. In fact, while the total is 7.2%, it is only 3.9% for males but 15.4% for females.

OVERVIEW OF THE QUARTERLY VARIATIONS

Labour force status	Q3-2025	Quarterly change (nos)	Quarterly change (%)
Labour force	144,755	-2,404	-1.6
Employed	141,513	-1,204	-0.8
Unemployed	3,242	-1,200	-27.0
Outside labour force	45,337	3,796	9.1
Total (15+)	190,092	1,392	0.7

Table 1: Key Labour market statistics, Q3-2025

Persons in the labour force decreased by 2,404 persons (1.6 percent) in Q3-2025 compared to Q2-2025.

Employment decreased by 1,204 persons (0.8 percent) over the quarter to 141,513 in Q3-2025. This is mainly due to a decrease among Maldivian men.

Unemployment decreased substantially over the quarter to 3,242 persons. This is mainly attributed to the decrease in unemployment among Maldivian men.

Persons outside labour force, increased over the quarter by a total of 3,796 persons (9.1%). This is mainly attributed to the decrease in Maldivian men and women in the labour force.

Working-age population also increased over the quarter by a total of 1,392 persons (0.7%)

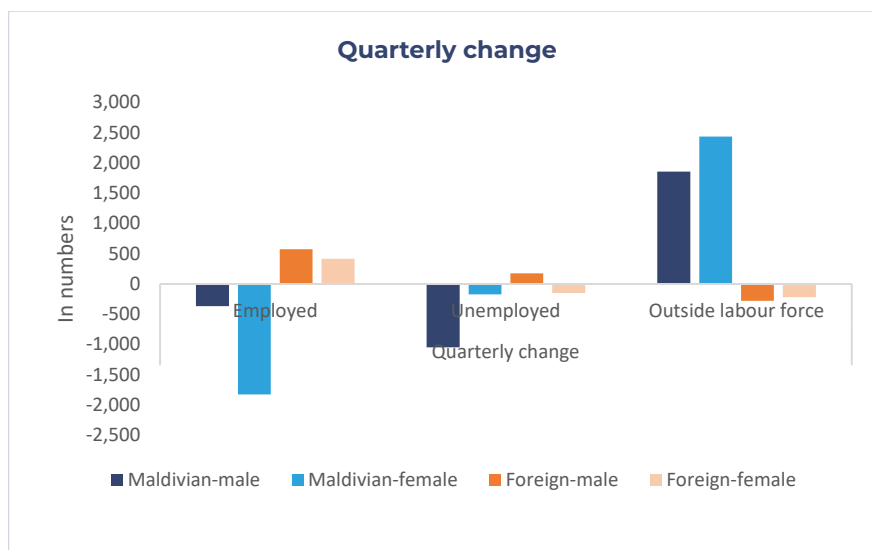


Figure 1: Quarterly change in key Labour market statistics, Q2-2025 to Q3-2025

Labour force participation rate decreased over the quarter by 1.8 percentage points to 76.2 percent in Q3-2025. Employment to population ratio also decreased slightly over the quarter (1.2 percentage points) to 74.4 percent.

Unemployment rate decreased in Q3-2025 to 2.2 percent with a decrease of 0.8 percentage points over the quarter.

Indicator	Q3-2025 (%)	Quarterly change (percentage points)
Labour force participation rate	76.2	-1.8
Employment to population ratio	74.4	-1.2
Unemployment rate	2.2	-0.8

Table 2: Key Labour market indicators, Q3-2025

Labour force participation rate among foreigners were (99.1%) in Q3-2025 while it is lower among foreign women 91.1%).

Labour force participation rate among foreign men increased over the quarter (0.5 percentage points), while it decreased for Maldivian men (2.8 percentage points).

Increase was most prominent among foreign women (3.5 percentage points).



Figure 2: Labour force participation rate by nationality and sex, Q3-2025



EMPLOYED POPULATION BY INDUSTRY IN MALE' CITY

Maldivian economy is dominated by the tertiary industry. In Male' City 76.6 percent of the of employed persons worked in services industry in Q3-2025, followed by secondary industry (23.3%). Primary industry has few employed people as it is mainly concentrated in the Atolls.

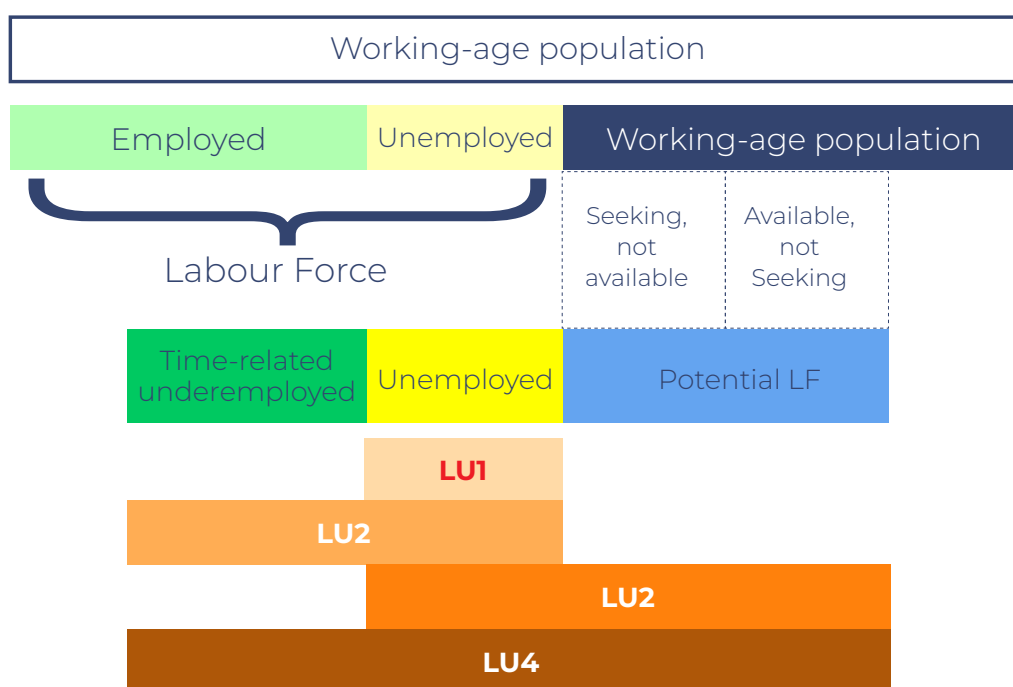
It is important to keep in mind that Industry composition will differ in this survey, as it does not cover tourist resorts or other islands in the Atolls.

Industry	Q3-2025 (nos.)	Quarterly change (nos.)	Quarterly change (%)	Q3-2025 (% share)
Primary	82	-44	-34.9	0.1
Secondary	32,858	-452	-1.4	23.2
Tertiary	108,573	-708	-0.6	76.7
Total	141,513	-1,204	-0.8	100.0

Table 3: Employed population by broad industry groups, Q3- 2025

LABOUR UNDER-UTILIZATION INDICATORS

New Combined indicators of labour underutilization indicators (LU1-LU4) are shown in the diagram below. These indicators are to be used alongside unemployment rate to provide insights into the extent of labour underutilisation.



Labour underutilization	Q3-2025	Quarterly change (nos.)	Quarterly change (%)
Time-related underemployed	1,939	-40	-2.0
Unemployed	3,242	-1,200	-27.0
Potential labour force	5,641	695	14.1
Total	10,822	-545	-4.8

Table 4: Components of labour underutilization, Q3- 2025

Unemployment rate remains the most commonly used labour underutilization indicator. Additional measures complementary are used alongside unemployment, to further explore the extent of labour underutilization. These include time-related underemployment and potential labourforce.

There was the sharp decrease in the number of unemployed individuals. The unemployment decreased by 1,200 persons, over the quarter to 3,242 in Q3-2025. This is mainly due to decrease in unemployment among Maldivian men.

The number of people in the potential labour force, who are not actively seeking employment but could be available for work, increased by 695 persons to 5,641. While unemployment decreased, potential labour supply that can be tapped increased over the quarter.

The number of time-related underemployed individuals, or those who want to work more hours, saw a slight decrease of 40 persons, moving to 1,939 in Q3-2025. Looking at the Labour underutilization by sex over the quarter shows improvement in time-related underemployed among women.

The total number of people in the combined categories (unemployed, underemployed, and potential labor force) decreased by 545 persons, to 10,822 in Q3-2025. This indicates the existence of an unmet need for employment among the population in Male'. The situation however shows an improvement over the quarter.

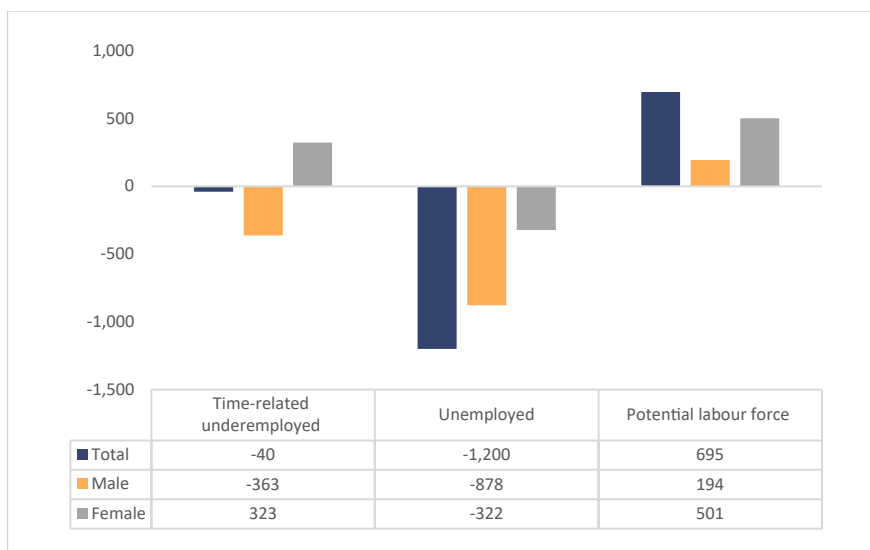


Figure 3: Quarterly change in Labour underutilization by sex, Q2-2025 to Q3-2025

Sex	LU1: Unemployment rate	LU2: Combined rate of time-related underemployment and unemployment	LU3: Combined rate of unemployment and potential labour force	LU4: Aggregate measure of labour underutilization
	%			
Both Sexes	2.2	3.6	5.9	7.2
Male	1.4	2.1	3.2	3.9
Female	4.4	7.5	12.6	15.4
	Quarterly change (percentatge points)			
Both Sexes	-0.8	-0.8	-0.3	-0.3
Male	-0.8	-1.2	-0.6	-0.9
Female	-0.6	0.3	0.7	1.5

Table 5: Labour underutilization indicators by sex, Q2-2025 to Q3-2025

Unemployment improved among men and women. Potential labour force comprises of a higher share of women (66.1%), indicating a higher potential labour supply of women that can be tapped.

Other labour underutilization indicators are much higher compared with unemployment rate.

In Q3-2025, aggregate measure of labour underutilization (LU4) was substantially higher at 7.2 percent compared to unemployment rate (LU1) of 2.2 percent.

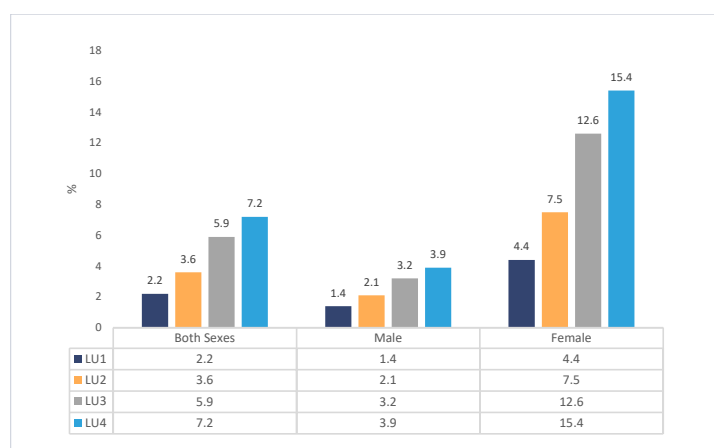


Figure 4: Labour underutilization indicators by sex, Q3-2025



PERSONS OUTSIDE LABOUR FORCE

In Q3-2025 a third (23.9%) of the working-age population accounting for a total of 45,337 individuals are not part of the labor force. This means they are neither employed nor actively seeking employment. There was an increase of over three thousand individuals (3,796) among those outside labour force over the quarter.

Persons outside labour force comprises mainly of Maldivians, with over a third (34.6%) of the working-age Maldivians remaining outside labour force. Furthermore, this is substantially higher among Maldivian women (48%) compared to men (21%)

Among those outside labour force 5,641 (12.4%) are in the potential labor force category in Q3-2025. An increase of 14 percent is observed in this category over the quarter. Potential labour force comprises of unavailable jobseekers and available potential jobseekers.

The remaining 39,696 individuals (88%) fall under the category “Others outside the labor force” They are neither actively seeking jobs nor available for employment and do not want to work at the time of the survey. Among those are working-age population comprising of students, homemakers, sick and elderly population who are unable to work. They also include individuals who have chosen not to participate in the labor market and do not want to work for various reasons.

Outside labour force	Q3-2025	Quarterly change (nos.)	Quarterly change (%)
Potential labour force	5,641	695	14.1
Others outside labour force	39,696	3,101	8.5
Total (15+)	45,337	3,796	9.1

Table 6: Persons outside labour force, Q3-2025

High proportion of women fall into the category of others outside labour force accounting for 28,148 women (71%) compared to 11,548 men in Q3-2025.

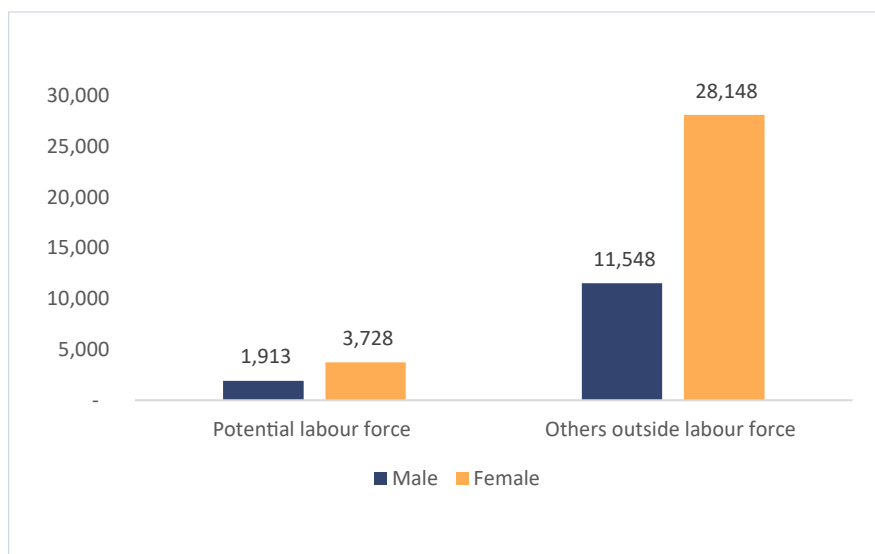


Figure 5: Persons outside labour force by sex, Q3-2025

Main activity status as to what best describes what they were doing was asked for individuals in this category and taken as self-declared.

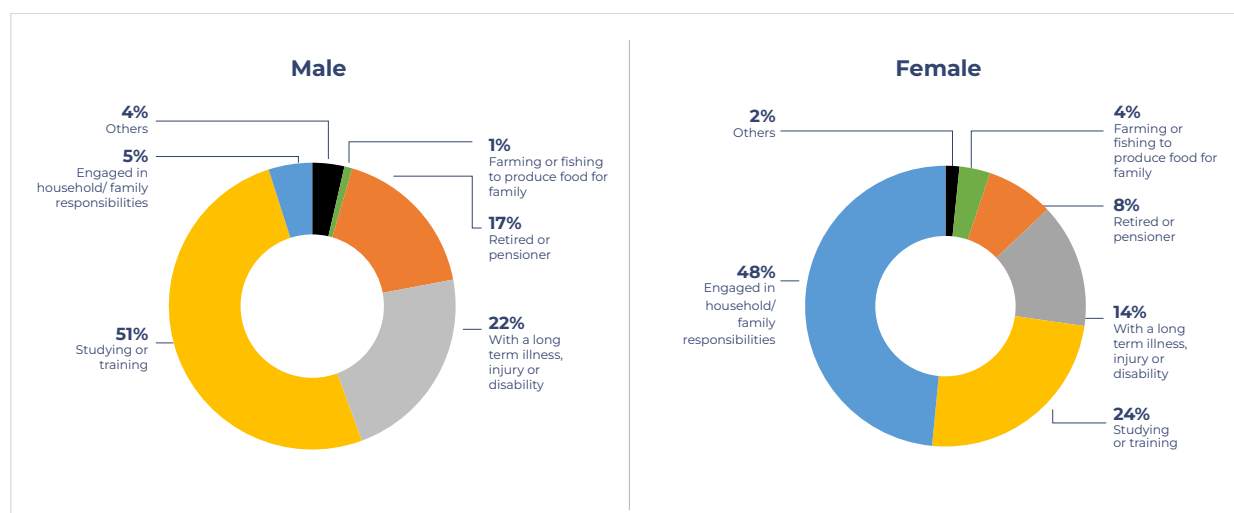


Figure 6: What best describes activity for others outside labour force by Sex, Q3-2025

Close to half the women states “engaged in household or family responsibilities” as what best describes what they were doing at the time of the survey. This was followed by “studying or training”.

What men identified were quite different with over half the respondents stating “studying or training, followed by “with a long-term illness, injury or disability”. Unlike women a very few men (5%) stated “engaged in household or family responsibilities”. This difference is due to the care responsibilities that are mainly carried out by women in the society and is perceived as such.

Several of the people outside labourforce are also engaged in productive activities in forms of work other than employment. These include Own-use production work, Volunteer work, Unpaid trainee work, as described in the Resolution concerning statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization (19th ICLS). These are not explored in detail in this survey and will be captured through a proper time-use module in the upcoming surveys.



ANNEX I: DEFINITIONS

- 1. Working Age Population:** The population aged 15 years and older.
- 2. Labour Force:** The sum of all persons of working age who are employed and those who are unemployed.
- 3. Employed:** Persons in employment are defined as all those of working age who, during a short reference period, were engaged in any activity to produce goods or provide services for pay or profit.
- 4. Unemployed:** Persons in unemployment are defined as all those of working age who were not in employment, carried out activities to seek employment during a specified recent period and were currently available to take up employment given a job opportunity.
- 5. Potential Labour Force:** Individuals of working age who are not part of the labour force but may become part of it due to their willingness and ability to work.
- 6. Unavailable jobseekers:** Actively seeking employment, even though job opportunities are not readily available.
- 7. Available potential jobseekers:** Not currently seeking employment but are available and ready to commence work.
- 8. Persons Outside the Labour Force:** Individuals of working age who are not part of the labour force, including those not seeking employment and not available for employment.
- 9. Labourforce Participation Rate:** The labour force participation rate expresses the labour force as a percent of the working-age population.
- 10. Employment -to- population ratio/employment rate:** Expresses the number of persons who are employed as a percent of the total working age (15+) population.
- 11. Unemployment Rate:** Calculated by expressing the number of unemployed persons as a percentage of the total number of persons in the labour force.
Unemployment Rate = (Persons Unemployed / Labour Force) x 100 where Labour Force = (Persons Employed + Persons Unemployed)

12. Time-related underemployed – Employed, but with insufficient working time

13. Labour underutilization indicator (LU1) $= \{(\text{Unemployed person}) / (\text{Labour force})\} \times 100$

14. Labour underutilization indicator (LU2) $= \{(\text{Unemployed person}) + \text{Persons in time-related underemployment}\} / (\text{Labour force}) \times 100$

15. Labour underutilization indicator (LU3) $= \{(\text{Unemployed person}) + \text{Potential labour force}\} / (\text{Labour force} + \text{Potential labour force}) \times 100$

16. Labour underutilization indicator (LU4) $= \{(\text{Unemployed person}) + \text{Persons in time-related underemployment} + \text{Potential labour force}\} / (\text{Labour force} + \text{Potential labour force}) \times 100$



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