



Labour Force Survey, Male'

2024 - 2025

Release date:
1 May 2026





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MALDIVES BUREAU OF STATISTICS (MBS)
Ministry of Finance and Public Enterprises



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The MBS extends its sincere gratitude to all the households and individuals who participated, as their continued support is essential for providing the critical data needed to understand labor market issues and make evidence-based decisions. The success of this survey also hinged on the hard work and dedication of the enumerators and supervisors.

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.

A large team of staff, including Ms. Aishath Hassan, Ms. Aishath Shahuda, Ms. Fathimath Nihan, Ms. Fathimath Riyaza, Ms. Sajida Ahmed, Mr. Ahmed Shaheed, Mr. Mohamed Habeeb, Mr. Ali Shafeeu, Ms. Aishath Aniya, Ms. Hudha Haleem, and Ms. Mibsam Hassan Zareer, were instrumental in providing comprehensive training for the enumerators. Administrative support was also crucial, with the budget team—Mr. Abdulla Nashid, Ms. Zumna Hassan Manik, and Ms. Shamila Rasheed—managing financial matters, and the HR team working closely with Ms. Mushfiqa Ibrahim and Ms. Mariyam Yoona to ensure smooth operations. In addition to her role with the HR team, Ms. Mushfiqa Ibrahim was responsible for the layout of the final report.

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 fully 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.

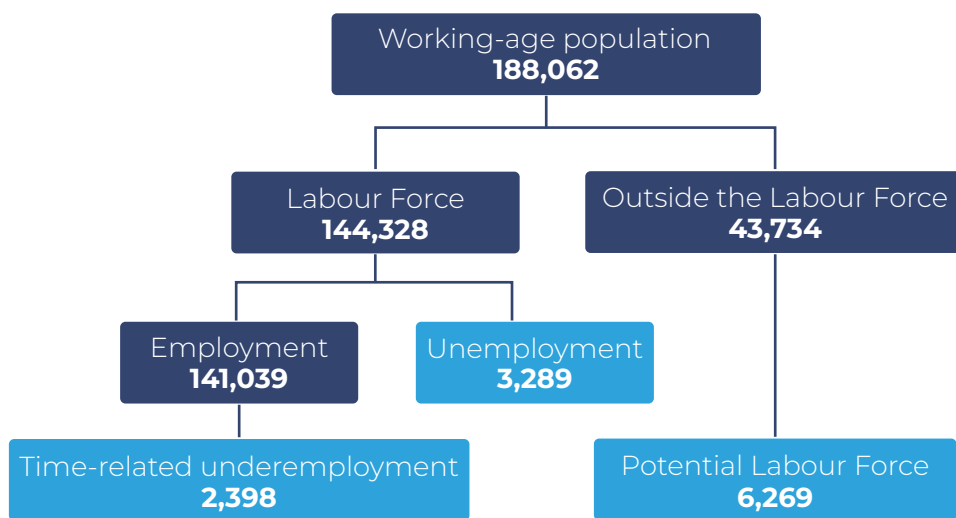
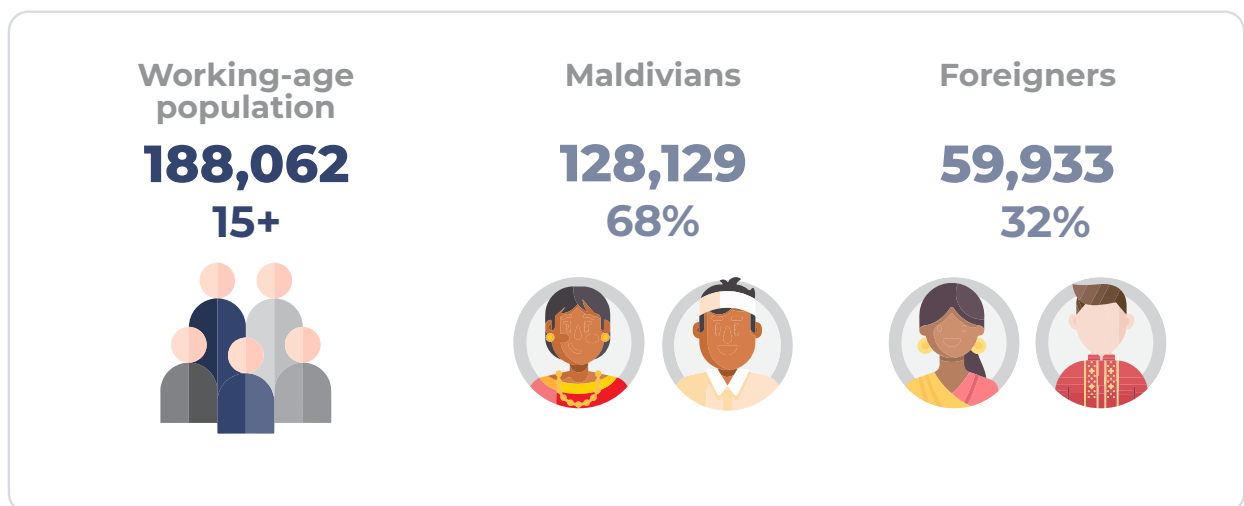
This annual publication 2024-2025 includes results of all four quarters (Q4-2024, Q1-2025, Q2-2025, Q3-2025) combined.

OVERVIEW

WORKING-AGE POPULATION

Working-age population (15 years and older) living in Male' is estimated at 188,062 for the period October 2024 to September 2025, of LFS. This includes 128,129 Maldivians (68.1%) and 59,933 foreigners. One-third (32%) of the working-age population comprise of foreigners.

Labour force status of the working age population



■ Labour underutilization

About three quarters (75.0 per cent) of the working-age population were employed (working for pay or profit) in 2024-2025, amounting to 141,039 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 64.5% for Maldivians (82,580 people) and 97.5% for foreigners (58,459 people).

Employment ratio is much lower among women. Overall, it is 87.7% for males and 54.0% for females. Looking at the Maldivian population, the employment ratio is 78.0% for males and 51.1% for females. Looking at the foreigner population those are respectively 99.1% and 83.9%.

Unemployment in 2024-2025 involves 3,289 persons, almost exclusively Maldivians (3,150 people) and slightly more men than women (1,673 vs. 1,477 persons respectively).

Unemployment rate (sometimes labelled as LU1 indicator in tables) in 2024-2025 is low and equal to 2.3%. 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 3.7% overall, 3.3% for men and 4.3% for women. It is also 4.6% for Maldivians in the age group 15-34 and 2.9% 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 76.7%, but it is much higher for men (89.2%) than for women (56.2%), and is also much higher for foreigners (97.8%) than for Maldivians (66.9%).

Within people in employment, a small group of people (2,398 persons, corresponding to the 1.7% of all employed) are classified in Time-Related Underemployment (TRU) because they usually work less than 30 hours per week but would like to work more and are immediately available to do so. However, while TRU involves only 1.1% of the employed men, it involves 3.4% 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 3.9%, it is only 2.7% for males but 7.2% for females.

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 2024-2025 the PLF in Maldives include 6,269 persons, nearly twice the number of unemployed, and 60.3% 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 7.9%, it is only 5.0% for males but 15.2% for females.

OVERVIEW

Sex	Working-age population (15+)	Labour Force			Outside Labour Force
		Total	Employed	Unemployed	
Total	188,062	144,328	141,039	3,289	43,734
Male	117,281	104,562	102,818	1,744	12,719
Female	70,781	39,766	38,221	1,545	31,015

Table 1: Key Labour market statistics, 2024-2025

Among the working-age population in Male' a total of 144,328 are in the labour force (employed and unemployed). Among these 141,039 are employed (75.0%) and 3,289 unemployed (1.7%). Remaining 43,734 are outside the labour force (23.3%).

Disaggregation by sex reveals the magnitude of the gender gap. Among men, share of employed is much higher (87.7%) compared to women (54.0%). As for women, those outside labour force comprises a much higher share (43.8%) compared to men (10.8%).

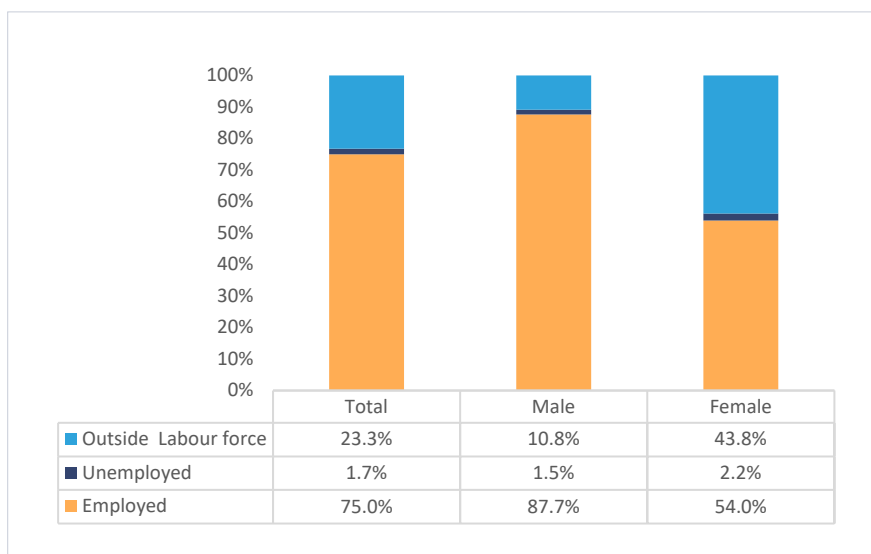


Figure 1: Labour force status by sex, 2024-2025

With the high number of foreigners in the work force, it is critical to understand the differences in contributions by nationality. One third of the working-age population (31.9%) comprises of foreigners. When it comes to the employed population foreigners comprise of 41.4% (37.7% men and 3.7% women). This is expected, as most of the foreigners are residing in the country for the purpose of employment. Among the unemployed, its mostly Maldivians (50.9% men and 44.9% women). Persons outside labour force comprise mainly of Maldivian women (68.8%). This is indicative of the gender roles prevailing in the society.

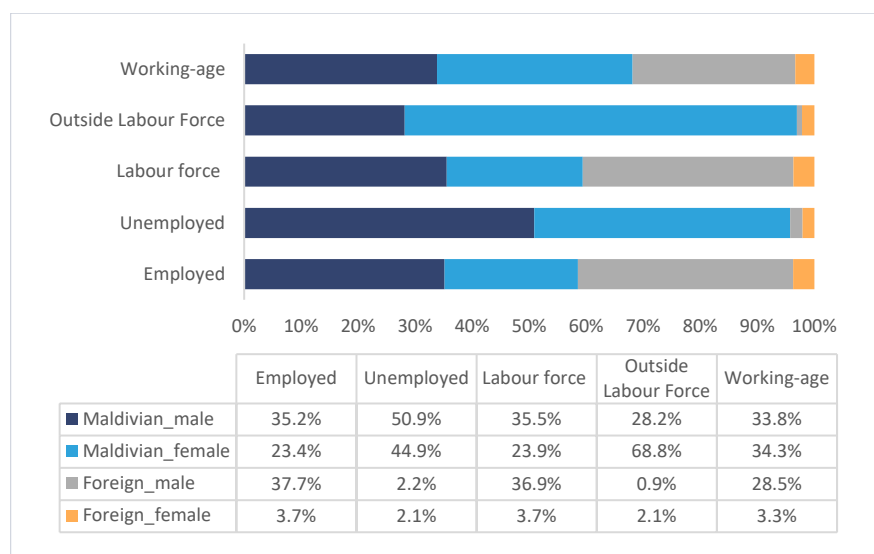


Figure 2: Labour force status by nationality and sex, 2024-2025

Key labour market indicators : labour force participation rate; employment to population ratio, unemployment rate and inactivity rate and their disaggregation by sex (table 2). Differences by nationality and sex is also studied (figure 3) below.

Labour force participation (LFPR) one of the key labour market indicators stood at 76.8%, with a huge gender gap (men 89.2% and women 56.2%).

Gender gap in LFPR is also observed by broad age-groups (Figure 4). Furthermore, this gap is widening with age. LFPR among young people aged of 15-34 (men 87.2% and women 62.4%) a gap of 24.8 percentage points. This gap is wider at 36.0 percentage points for 35–44-year-olds and 40.7 percentage points for those 45 years and older.

Sex	labour force participation rate	Employment to population ratio	Unemployment rate	Inactivity rate
%				
Total	76.8	75.0	2.3	23.3
Male	89.2	87.7	1.7	10.8
Female	56.2	54.0	3.9	43.8

Table2: Key Labour market indicators, 2024-2025

Unemployment rate of 2.3% is observed. Unemployment among Maldivians is higher at 3.7% and more so among women (4.3%).

Inactivity rate is high at 23.3% and much higher among women (43.8%), especially for Maldivian women (46.6%). This is indicative of the gender roles prevailing in the society.

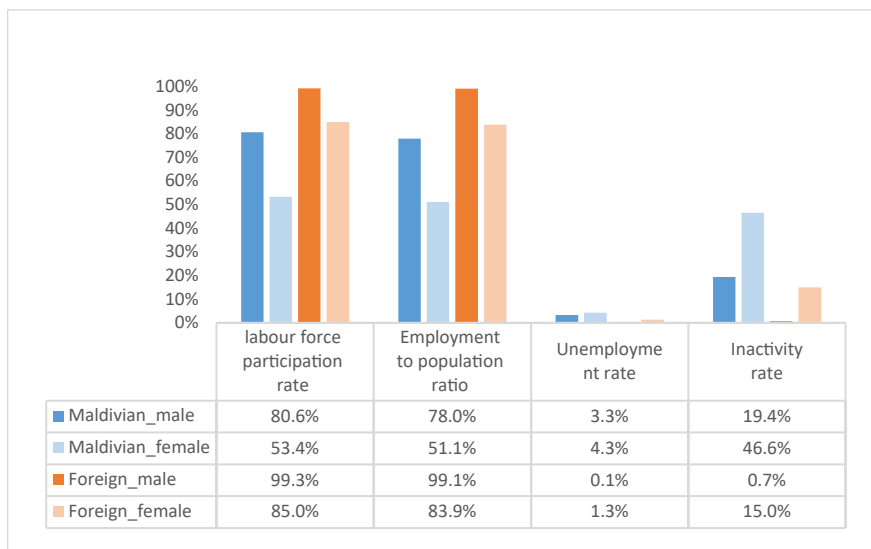


Figure 3: Key labour market indicators by nationality and sex, 2024-2025

Employment to population ratio stood at 75.0%. Gender gap is observed with (87.7% men, 54.0% women).

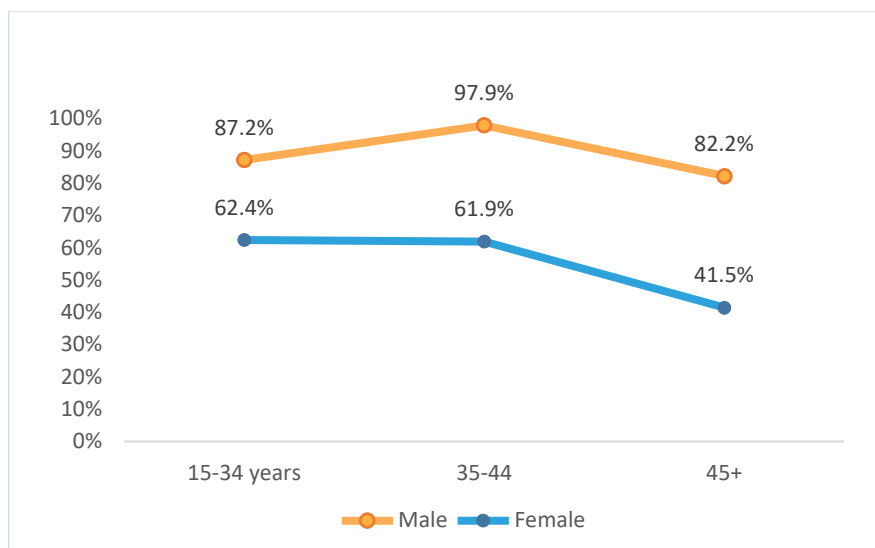


Figure 4: Labour force participation rate by broad age-groups and sex, 2024-2025

EMPLOYED POPULATION BY INDUSTRY AND OCCUPATION IN MALE' CITY

At the outset, it is important to note that Industry as well as the occupational composition of the employed will differ in this survey, as the survey does not cover tourist resorts or other islands in the Atolls.

Maldivian economy is dominated by the tertiary industry. In Male' City 78.4 percent of the of employed persons worked in services industry, followed by secondary industry (21.4%). Primary industry has few employed people as it is mainly concentrated in the Atolls.

Industry	Total	Male	Female
Total	141,039	102,818	38,221
Primary	217	217	-
Secondary	30,175	25,867	4,308
Tertiary	110,579	76,690	33,889
Not Stated	68	44	25

Table 3: Employed population by broad industry groups, 2024-2025

A higher share foreigner, majority men work in the secondary industry (65.9%). Tertiary industry on the other hand has a higher share of Maldivians (65.1%). Maldivian women are more prevalent in the service industry.

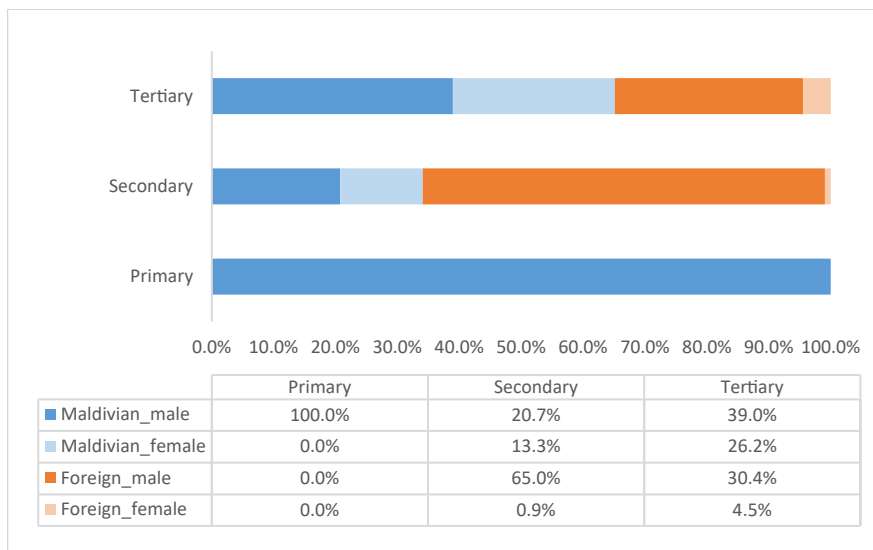


Figure 5: Employment by broad industry groups and sex, 2024-2025

Over half those employed in the secondary industry work in construction (58.9%), followed by manufacturing (29.2%). In case of tertiary industry, one fourth (24.2%) work in trade, followed by public administration (18.5%) and transport (12.9%).

Disaggregation by Industry classification (ISIC section level) shows 85.7% of the employed fall under nine industry categories (fig 6). Among these, wholesale and retail trade account for nearly one fifth (19.0%), public administration (14.5%), construction (12.6%), followed by transport (10.1%).

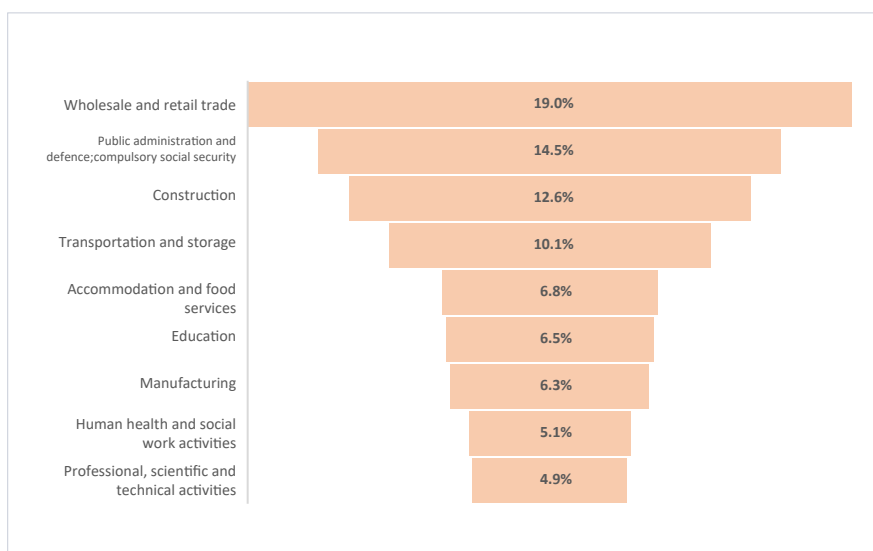


Figure 6: Employment by broad Industry groups, 2025-2026

Occupational groupings of those in wholesale and trade industry shows over one third (34.2%) were sales and service workers, one fifth (19.5%) were managers followed by those in elementary occupations (17.5%). In case of public administration, over one fourth (27.1%) were technicians and associate professionals. As for construction industry over one third (38.3%) were craft and related trades workers, followed by elementary occupations (28.0%).

Distribution of employed persons by major occupational groupings (fig 6) shows, service and sales workers (16.5%), elementary occupations (16.1%), professionals (15.4%) and technical and associate professionals (15.1%) account for the top four categories. This is followed by managers (12.4%).

Among professionals one third (32.6%) were in education. As for managers close to one third (29.9%) were in trade.

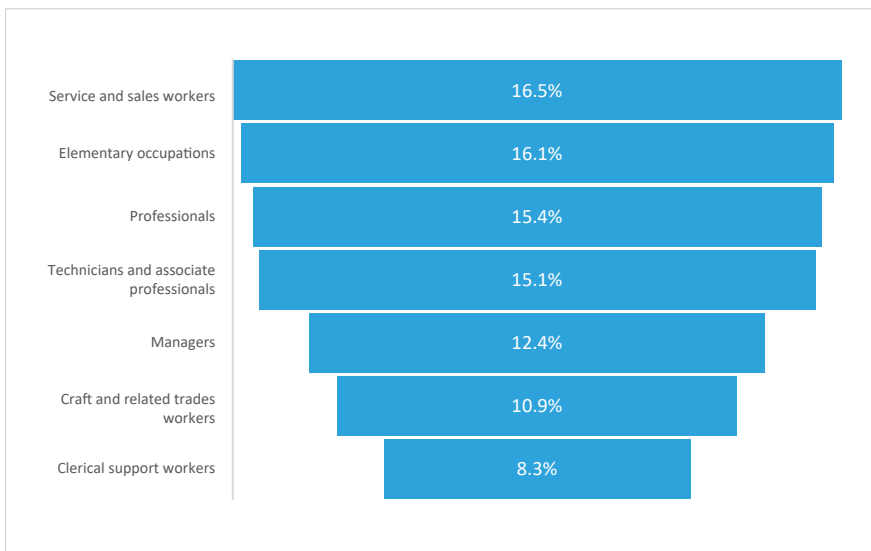
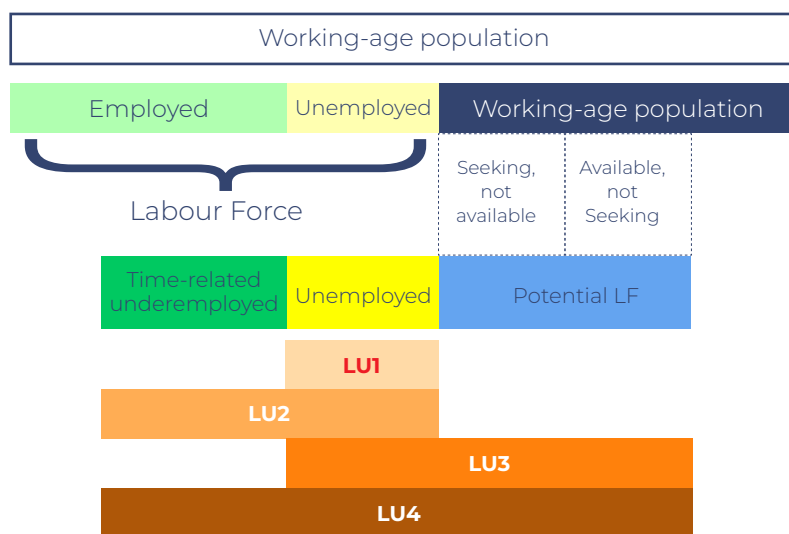


Figure 7: Employment by broad occupational groups, 2024-2025

Breakdown by institutional sector shows, state institutions as the main employer when it comes to Maldivians (53.3%). These include government, independent organization, judiciary, police and defense, parliament and State-owned Enterprises. When it comes to foreigners, private businesses provide overwhelming majority (88.6%) of employment.

LABOUR UNDER-UTILIZATION INDICATORS

New Combined indicators of labour underutilization (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.



	Time-related underemployed	Unemployed	Potential labour force	Total
Total	2,398	3,289	6,269	11,956
Male	1,081	1,744	2,491	5,316
Female	1,317	1,545	3,779	6,640

Table 4: Components of labour underutilization, 2024-2025

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 were 3,289 unemployed persons. Share of men were slightly higher than women (53%). These include those who were actively seeking and available for work. Potential labour force stood at 6,269 persons. They were not actively seeking employment but could be available for work . Share of women were substantially higher (60.3%) among them. This Potential labour supply, that can be tapped, were twice that of the unemployed.

The number of time-related underemployed individuals, or those who want to work more hours, stood at 2,398 persons.

The total number of people in the combined categories (unemployed, underemployed, and potential labor force) were 11,956 persons. This indicates the existence of an unmet need for employment among the population in Male'.

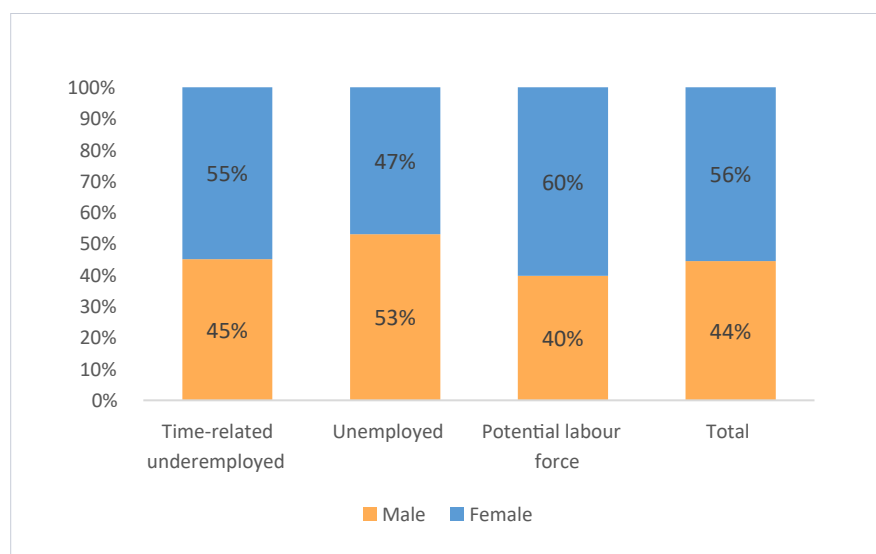


Figure 8: Labour underutilization by sex, 2024-2025

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
%				
Total	2.3	3.9	6.3	7.9
Male	1.7	2.7	4.0	5.0
Female	3.9	7.2	12.2	15.2

Table 5: Labour underutilization indicators by sex, 2024-2025

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

Aggregate measure of labour underutilization (LU4) was substantially higher at 7.9 percent compared to unemployment rate (LU1) of 2.3 percent. Furthermore, the difference is substantially higher among females (LU4 of 15.2%, LU1 of 3.9%).

Labour underutilization among females also increased substantially with age, with a rate of 20.5 percent (LU4) compared to unemployment rate (LU1) of 5.1 percent.

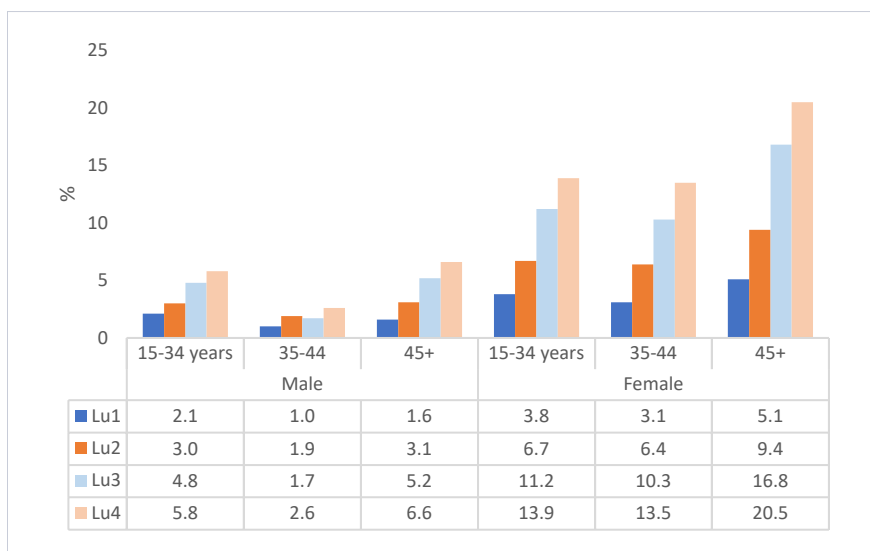


Figure 9: Labour underutilization indicators by sex and broad age-groups, 2024-2025

PERSONS OUTSIDE LABOUR FORCE

One third (33.1%) of the working-age Maldivian population accounting for a total of 42,399 individuals were not part of the labor force. It is much higher among females, with nearly half (46.6%) remaining outside labour force. This means they were neither employed nor actively seeking employment.

Among those outside labour force 6,269 (14.3%) are in the potential labor force category. Potential labour force comprises of unavailable jobseekers and available potential jobseekers.

The remaining 37,465 individuals (85.7%) 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.

Sex	Potential labour force_PLF			Others outside labour force_OLF			Total_OLF
	Total_PLF	Unavailable jobseekers	Available potential jobseekers	Total _ othersOLF	Willing non-jobseekers	Others not willing	
Female	3,779	17	3,762	27,236	1,439	25,797	31,015
Male	2,491	58	2,433	10,228	394	9,834	12,719
Total	6,269	75	6,194	37,465	1,833	35,631	43,734

Table 6: Persons outside labour force, 2024-2025

High proportion of women fall into the category of others outside labour force accounting for 27,236 women (72.7%) compared to 10,228 men.



Figure 10: Persons outside labour force, 2024-2025

Main activity status as to what best describes what they were doing was asked for individuals outside the labour force who did not search and did not want to want to work at the time of the survey (others not willing). Main activity categories here are taken as self-declared by the respondents.

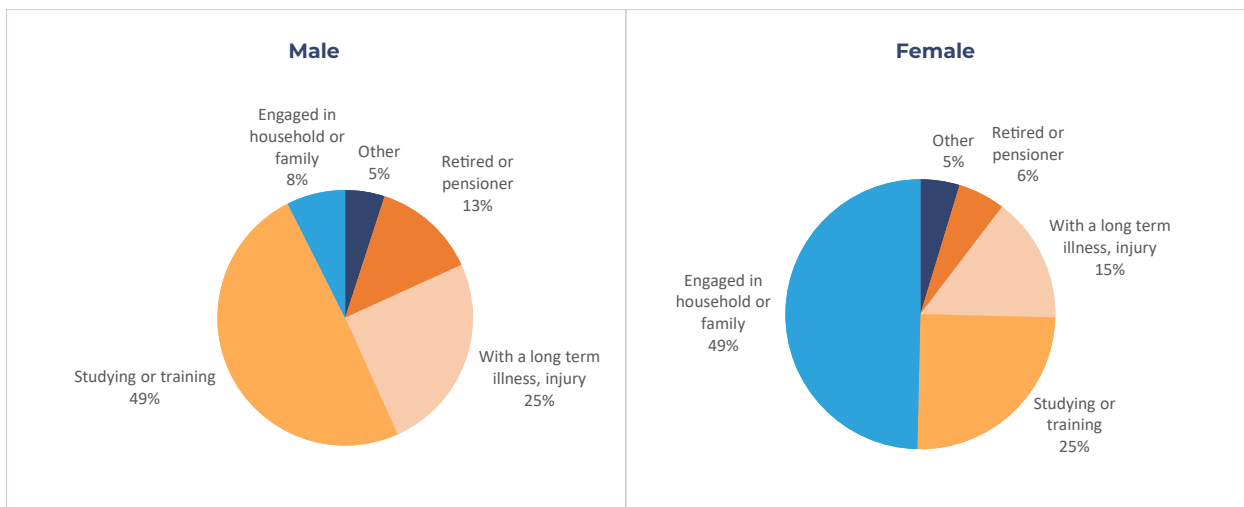


Figure 11: What best describes activity for others outside labour force by Sex, 2024-2025

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” stated by one fourth of women.

What men identified were quite different with half the respondents stating “studying or training, followed by “with a long-term illness, injury or disability” stated by one fourth of men. Unlike women a very few men (8%) 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.

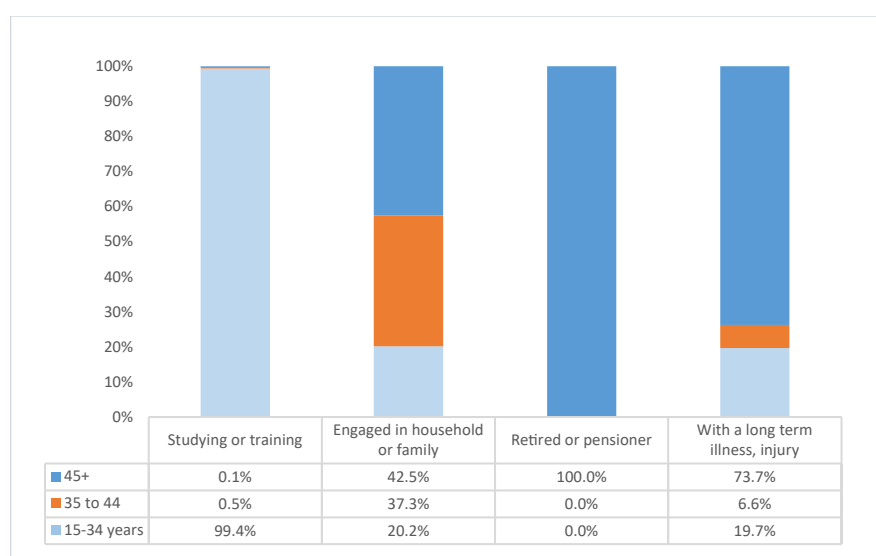


Figure 12: What best describes activity for others outside labour force by broad age-groups, 2024-2025

Among those in “studying or training” almost all are young people aged 15-34 ages. Those “engaged in household or family responsibilities” are higher among older ages with 42.5% aged 45 and above, another 37.3% aged 35-44 and one fifth young people (20.2%).

Those “with a long-term illness, injury or disability” is also more prominent among older ages 45 and above. Retired pensioners are in the older ages 45 and above, as expected.

Several of the people outside labour force 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 time-use module in the ongoing household income and expenditure survey 2025 (own-use provision of services -OPS module developed by ILO).

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 = $(\text{Persons Unemployed} / \text{Labour Force}) \times 100$ where Labour Force = $(\text{Persons Employed} + \text{Persons Unemployed})$

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

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

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

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

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



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