

Brief Analysis of Population and Housing Characteristics

Population and Housing Censuses in Sri Lanka

Introduction

A Census of Population and Housing is undoubtedly the single most extensive statistical undertaken in the country. It is an official count of the population in Sri Lanka and the number of dwellings. It also gives very valuable information on demographic and other related characteristics, which will be very useful to planners, policy makers, administrators, researchers and other data users.

Sri Lanka has a long history of census takings. The first systematic and scientific Population Census was conducted in 1871. Since then censuses were conducted, usually in 10 years with certain exceptions. The census, which was scheduled to be conducted in 1991, could not be implemented due to the disturbances in Northern and Eastern provinces of the country. The last Census of Population and Housing was taken on 17th July 2001. The census in 2001 which is the 13th in the series was conducted after a time lag of 20 years.

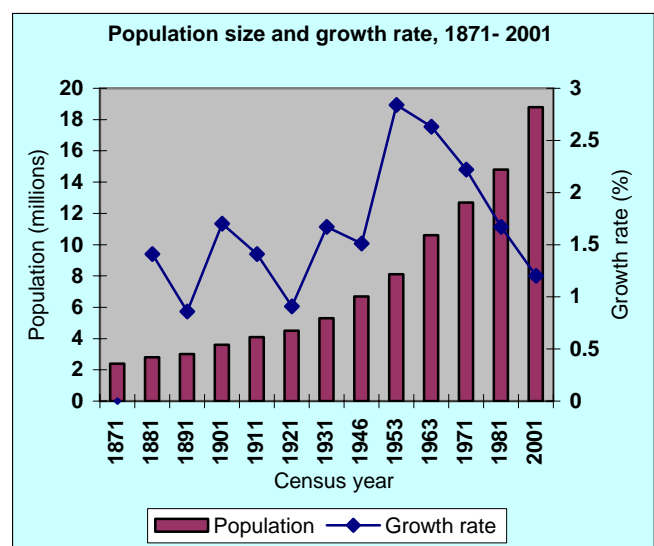
The 2001 census final enumeration was able to carry out completely in 18 out of 25 districts due to the disturbances in Northern and Eastern parts of the country.. These include all the 17 districts in Western, Central, Southern, North Western, North Central, Uva and Sabaragamuwa provinces and Ampara district in Eastern province. Due to the disturbed conditions prevailed in Northern and Eastern provinces certain areas could not be enumerated completely. In Jaffna, Mullaitivu and Kilinochchi districts no enumeration was done. In the Mannar and Vavuniya districts of Northern province and the Batticaloa and Trincomalee districts of Eastern province final enumeration was done partially. In Mannar district, out of 5 Divisional Secretariat (DS) divisions only one was enumerated partially. In Vavuniya district, out of 4 D.S. divisions, one was enumerated completely and 2 were enumerated partially. In Batticaloa district, out of 12 D.S. divisions, 5 were enumerated completely and 6 enumerated partially. In Trincomalee district out of 11 D.S. Divisions, 7 were enumerated completely and 2 were enumerated partially.

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Population size, growth and density of population

The first Population Census in Sri Lanka conducted in the year 1871 showed a population of 2.4 million. The twelfth Population Census in Sri Lanka conducted in the year 1981, before the last census in 2001 showed a population of 14.8 million. The total population enumerated in the 18 districts, as a whole where the 2001 census was done completely on the final census night is 16,929,689. Since the enumeration was able to carry out completely in 18 out of 25 districts, estimates were made for areas where the census was not completed and the total population in Sri Lanka is 18.8 million. This shows an annual growth rate of 1.2 percent during the intercensal

Population size and rate of growth,		
Year and date of Population Census	Population	Average annual growth rate (percent)
1871 March 27	2,400,380	-
1881 February 17	2,759,738	1.4
1891 February 26	3,007,789	0.9
1901 March 01	3,565,954	1.7
1911 March 10	4,106,350	1.4
1921 March 18	4,498,605	0.9
1931 February 26	5,306,871	1.7
1946 March 19	6,657,339	1.5
1953 March 20	8,097,895	2.8
1963 July 08	10,582,064	2.6
1971 October 09	12,689,897	2.2
1981 March 17	14,846,750	1.7
2001 July 17	18,797,257	1.2



period 1981 and 2001. Sri Lanka population is ever increasing and recorded nearly 8 fold increase since the first census in 1871. There was a dramatic escalation in growth rates during post world war, from 1946 to 1953 mainly due to the decline in mortality. Since 1953 population growth is steadily declining.

Population, Intercensal growth 1981-2001 and population density by district

District	Population		Intercensal growth		Average Annual Growth rate (per cent)	Population density (persons per sq.km.)
	Census 1981	Census 2001	Number	Per cent		
Sri Lanka ^(a)	14,846,750	18,797,257	3,950,507	26.6	1.2	300
Colombo	1,699,241	2,251,274	552,033	32.5	1.4	3,330
Gampaha	1,390,862	2,063,684	672,822	48.4	1.9	1,539
Kalutara	829,704	1,066,239	236,535	28.5	1.2	677
Kandy	1,048,317	1,279,028	230,711	22.0	1.0	667
Matale	357,354	441,328	83,974	23.5	1.0	226
Nuwara Eliya	603,577	703,610	100,033	16.6	0.8	412
Galle	814,531	990,487	175,956	21.6	1.0	613
Matara	643,786	761,370	117,584	18.3	0.8	600
Hambantota	424,344	526,414	102,070	24.1	1.1	211
Jaffna ^(a)	738,788	490,621	-248,167	-33.6	-2.0	528
Mannar ^(a)	106,235	151,577	45,342	42.7	1.7	81
Vavuniya ^(a)	95,428	149,835	54,407	57.0	2.2	81
Mullaitivu ^(a)	77,189	121,667	44,478	57.6	2.2	50
Kilinochchi ^(a)	91,764	127,263	35,499	38.7	1.6	106
Batticaloa ^(a)	330,333	486,447	156,114	47.3	1.9	186
Ampara	388,970	592,997	204,027	52.5	2.1	140
Trincomalee ^(a)	255,948	340,158	84,210	32.9	1.4	135
Kurunegala	1,211,801	1,460,215	248,414	20.5	0.9	316
Puttalam	492,533	709,677	217,144	44.1	1.8	246
Anuradhapura	587,929	745,693	157,764	26.8	1.2	112
Polonnaruwa	261,563	358,984	97,421	37.2	1.6	117
Badulla	640,952	779,983	139,031	21.7	1.0	276
Moneragala	273,570	397,375	123,805	45.3	1.8	72
Ratnapura	797,087	1,015,807	218,720	27.4	1.2	314
Kegalle	684,944	785,524	100,580	14.7	0.7	466

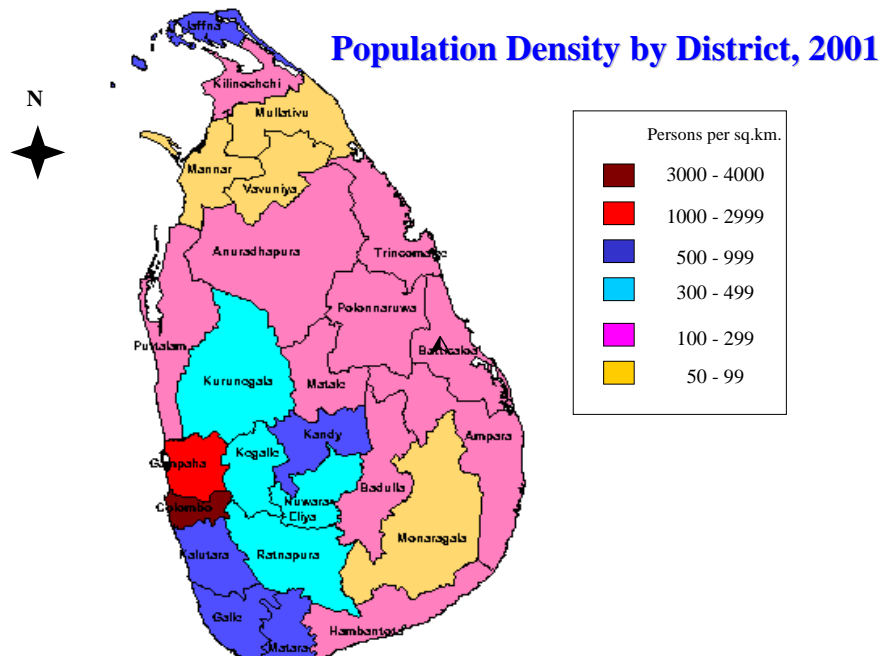
(a) 2001 data were Estimated

Note : In the 2001 Census out of the 5 Districts in the Northern Province, Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu were not covered during Preliminary and Final Census. Vavuniya and Mannar were covered partially. In the Eastern Province, Ampara was covered completely and Trincomalee and Batticaloa were covered partially. As such, estimates for the Districts and which were not covered or partially covered, are based on the information collected during the Listing and Numbering operation of the Census 2001, wherever possible, wherever the Listing and Numbering operation was also not complete the Registrar General's Estimates based on the registration of Births and Deaths, have been used.

In the 2001 Population Census the population estimates for districts which were not covered or partially covered are based on the information collected during the listing operation and/or estimates used for mid year population based on registration of births and deaths. According to these estimates and the enumerated population, among the 25 districts, the highest population is reported from Colombo district and it is 2,251,274. The second highest population is in Gampaha district, which has a population of 2,063,684. The estimated population of Mullaitivu district is 121,667 and it is the district with lowest population in the year 2001.

Growth rate does not show much spatial variation. Most of the wet zone districts have very low growth rates of less than 1 percent. A very clear exception is Gampaha district which has the high growth rate (1.9 percent). This could be due to the in migration, particularly to Free Trade Zone. Colombo district too has a growth rate, which is more than the average value. On the other hand, districts in dry zone area have growth rates exceeding 1 percent. The highest growth rates are recorded for the dry zone districts of Vavuniya(2.2 percent), Mullaitivu(2.2 percent) and Ampara(2.1 percent).

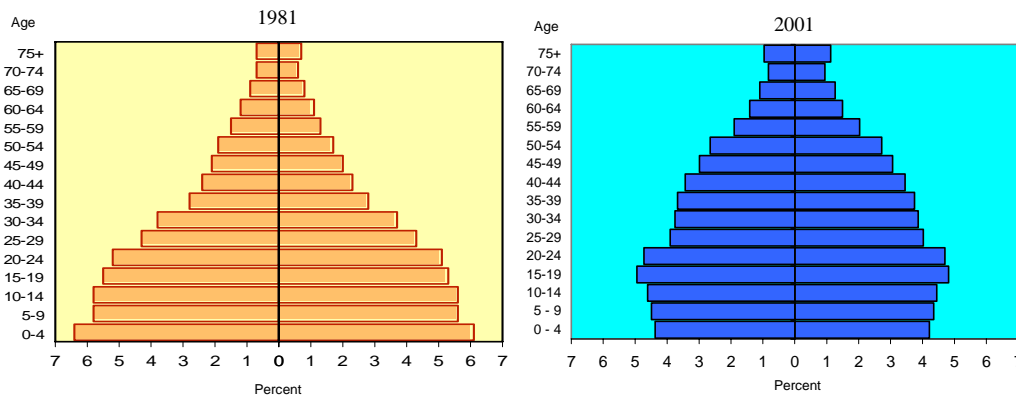
Population density measured as the number of persons per square kilometer of land. While the land area remain constant, the population density increase with the growth of the population. Today Sri Lanka is one of the most densely populated country of the world. According to the 2001 Census Sri Lanka population density stands at 300 persons per square kilometer. Wide variation in population density exist across the districts. Colombo is overwhelmingly the most densely populated district with 3,330 persons per square kilometer, which is nearly 11 times higher than the national figure.



Colombo is followed by Gampaha district (1,539 persons per sq. km.). The lowest value of 50 persons per square kilometer is recorded for Mullaitivu district. The coastal districts of the wet zone from Colombo to Matara known as maritime districts generally have higher population densities. Kandy, which is a hill country plantation district is also densely populated. Other hill country plantation districts such as Nuwara Eliya, Kegalle and Ratnapura fall into intermediate levels of the densities. In general, dry-zone districts such as Moneragala, Mannar, Vavuniya, Kilinochchi, Trincomalee, Anuradhapura and, Polonnaruwa show low densities..

Age-Sex composition

Age-sex composition of a population describes the pattern of the distribution of people in different age and sex categories. It is determined by the past trends of fertility, mortality and migration, which are the components of population change. The age pyramids are showing the distribution of population by five year age group and sex.



One prominent feature of the age pyramid is the gradual decline in the population below 15. This is mainly attributable to declining fertility levels in recent past. In the Census 2001 the highest population is seen in 15-19 age group for both sexes. But it was reported for 0-4 age group in 1981. The population is conveniently divided into three broad age groups; young (0-14 years), working age (15-59 years) and old age (60 years and over).

Percentage distribution of population by broad age group for all districts, 1981 and 2001

Age in years	Percentage	
	Census 1981	Census 2001*
0-14	35.2	26.5
15-59	58.1	64.4
60 and over	6.6	9.1
Dependency ratio	71.9	55.4

* Estimates

It is clearly seen that the proportion of young population has declined significantly by 8.7 percentage points during 1981–2001; on the other hand the proportion of old age population has increased by 2.5 percentage points. Working age population too shows an increase. The ratio of the population in the age groups 0-14 years and 60 years and over to the population in the age group 15-59 years is called dependency ratio. It is an approximation of the average number of dependants that each person of working age must support. This is 55.4 percent in 2001. The corresponding value in census 1981 was 71.9 percent. So, there is a significant decline in dependency ratio during 1981-2001 period.

For the Sri Lanka as a whole, the total number of females outnumber the males by 78,961. Sex ratio, which is defined as the number of males per 100 females is 99.2.

Among the 25 districts, the highest sex ratio of 109.7 was recorded for Polonnaruwa district while seven more districts have values in excess of 100 viz. Trincomalee (108.5), Colombo (104.7), Anuradhapura (104.2), Moneragala (104.2), Ratnapura (102.0), Ampara (101.7) and Vavuniya (101.0). On the other hand Matara district (94.2) has the lowest sex ratio. Galle (94.7), Kandy (95.3), Gampaha (95.4) and Kegalle (95.9) districts also show fairly low sex ratios.

Comparison with 1981 census figures reveals that the overall sex ratio has declined by 4.8 units from 104.0 in 1981 to 99.2 in 2001. While except Jaffna all other districts record declines. Mullaitivu, Polonnaruwa, Moneragala, Kilinochchi and Anuradhapura districts show very sharp drop in sex ratios. (viz. 25.4 in Mullaitivu, 21.4 in Polonnaruwa, 16.9 in Moneragala, 15.9 in Kilinochchi and 10.6 in Anuradhapura.)

Population by district , sex and sex ratio

District	Total	Male	Female	Sex ratio
Sri Lanka ^(a)	18,797,257	9,359,148	9,438,109	99.2
Colombo	2,251,274	1,151,413	1,099,861	104.7
Gampaha	2,063,684	1,007,702	1,055,982	95.4
Kalutara	1,066,239	527,281	538,958	97.8
Kandy	1,279,028	623,966	655,062	95.3
Matale	441,328	220,070	221,258	99.5
Nuwara Eliya	703,610	350,024	353,586	99.0
Galle	990,487	481,849	508,638	94.7
Matara	761,370	369,247	392,123	94.2
Hambantota	526,414	263,197	263,217	100.0
Jaffna ^(a)	490,621	242,719	247,902	97.9
Mannar ^(a)	151,577	75,024	76,553	98.0
Vavuniya ^(a)	149,835	75,273	74,562	101.0
Mullaitivu ^(a)	121,667	60,199	61,468	97.9
Kilinochchi ^(a)	127,263	63,005	64,258	98.1
Batticaloa ^(a)	486,447	240,314	246,133	97.6
Ampara	592,997	299,004	293,993	101.7
Trincomalee ^(a)	340,158	177,007	163,151	108.5
Kurunegala	1,460,215	723,179	737,036	98.1
Puttalam	709,677	352,455	357,222	98.7
Anuradhapura	745,693	380,516	365,177	104.2
Polonnaruwa	358,984	187,789	171,195	109.7
Badulla	779,983	387,583	392,400	98.8
Moneragala	397,375	202,816	194,559	104.2
Ratnapura	1,015,807	512,903	502,904	102.0
Kegalle	785,524	384,613	400,911	95.9

(a) Estimates

Note : Out of the 5 Districts in the Northern Province, Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu were not covered during Preliminary and Final Census. Vavuniya and Mannar were covered partially. In the Eastern Province, Ampara was covered completely and Trincomalee and Batticaloa were covered partially. As such, estimates for the Districts and which were not covered or partially covered, are based on the information collected during the Listing and Numbering operation of the Census 2001, wherever possible, wherever the Listing and Numbering operation was also not complete the Registrar General's Estimates based on the registration of Births and Deaths, have been used.

Sectoral Composition

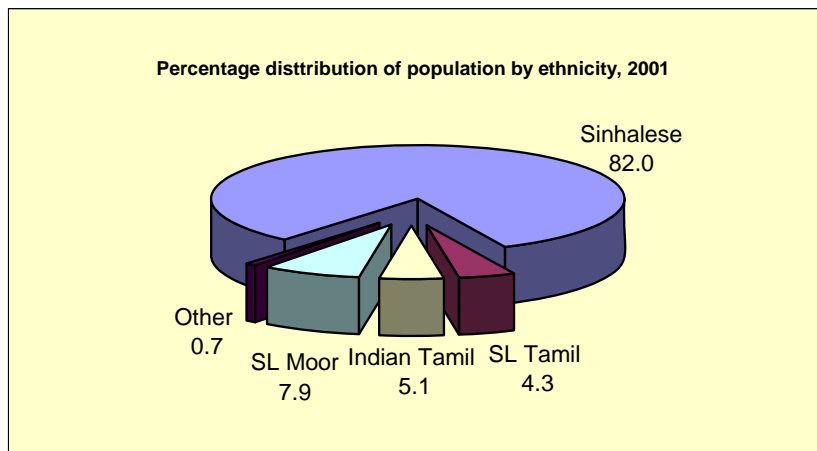
In the 2001 census, urban sector comprises of all Municipal and Urban Council areas. Estate sector is defined as plantations of 20 acres or more in extent upon which there are 10 or more resident labourers. Rest of the areas are treated as rural sector. Although the definition of estate sector is similar to that used in the 1981 census, the definition of urban sector is not comparable between the two censuses. This happened as a consequence of abolishing Town Councils which were treated as urban in the 1981 census and absorbing the administration of such areas into Pradesheeya Sabhas which are considered as rural since 1987. Therefore the urban population figures and percentages seem to be underestimate of the true picture of urban sector and should be interpreted cautiously.

Population distribution by sector for 18 districts

District	Total population		Urban		Rural		Estate	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Colombo	2,251,274	100	1,229,572	54.6	1,014,388	45.1	7,314	0.3
Gampaha	2,063,684	100	300,933	14.6	1,762,028	85.4	723	0.0
Kalutara	1,066,239	100	113,188	10.6	915,477	85.9	37,574	3.5
Kandy	1,279,028	100	155,987	12.2	1,030,172	80.5	92,869	7.3
Matale	441,328	100	36,103	8.2	383,468	86.9	21,757	4.9
Nuwara Eliya	703,610	100	43,073	6.1	283,659	40.3	376,878	53.6
Galle	990,487	100	109,921	11.1	863,309	87.2	17,257	1.7
Matara	761,370	100	64,361	8.5	676,499	88.9	20,510	2.7
Hambantota	526,414	100	21,571	4.1	503,410	95.6	1,433	0.3
Ampara	592,997	100	112,536	19.0	480,461	81.0	-	-
Kurunegala	1,460,215	100	34,691	2.4	1,418,881	97.2	6,643	0.5
Puttalam	709,677	100	65,294	9.2	642,210	90.5	2,173	0.3
Anuradhapura	745,693	100	53,151	7.1	691,573	92.7	969	0.1
Polonnaruwa	358,984	100	-	-	358,679	99.9	305	0.1
Badulla	779,983	100	51,536	6.6	567,178	72.7	161,269	20.7
Moneragala	397,375	100	-	-	388,226	97.7	9,149	2.3
Ratnapura	1,015,807	100	58,245	5.7	855,178	84.2	102,384	10.1
Kegalle	785,524	100	17,139	2.2	712,914	90.8	55,471	7.1
Total (18 Districts)	16,929,689	100	2,467,301	14.6	13,547,710	80.0	914,678	5.4

For the 18 districts, as a whole where the census was done completely, urban, rural and estate percentages are 14.6, 80.0 and 5.4 respectively. The highest urban population is concentrated in Colombo district (54.6 percent), followed by Ampara (19.0 percent) and Gampaha (14.6 percent). As expected the percentage of estate population is highest in Nuwara Eliya district (53.6 percent). Estate population is comparatively high in Badulla (20.7 percent) and Ratnapura (10.1 percent) districts respectively.

Ethnic Composition



For the 18 districts, which the 2001 census final enumeration was completed, the distribution of the population by ethnic groups are shown Sinhalese 82.0 percent, Sri Lanka Tamil 4.3 percent, Indian Tamil 5.1 percent and Sri Lanka Moor 7.9 percent. But according to the 2001 estimated population of Sri Lanka as a whole Sinhalese, Sri Lanka Tamil, Indian Tamil and Sri Lanka Moor population comprises of 74.5 percent, 11.9 percent, 4.6 percent and 8.3 percent respectively.

Among the all 25 districts, the highest percentage of Sinhalese population is reported from Hambantota district (97.1 percent) and the low percentages of Sinhalese population are reported from districts of Northern province (4.8 percent) and the Batticaloa (1.3 percent) and Trincomalee (23.4 percent) districts of Eastern province. Among the 18 districts under concern, which final enumeration was completed, the lowest percentage of Sinhalese population (39.9 percent) and the highest percentage of Sri Lanka Tamil population (18.4 percent) are reported from Ampara district. Colombo district also reported for 11.0 percent of Sri Lanka Tamil population. However, in the all districts of the Northern province (93.7 percent) and the Batticaloa district (74.5 percent) of Eastern province majority of the population are Sri Lanka Tamils. Sri Lanka Moor population is concentrated in Ampara, Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Puttalam districts (41.3 percent, 28.2 percent, 23.5 percent and 18.8 percent respectively) and fairly large proportion is found in Kandy district (13.1 percent). On the other hand, Indian Tamils comprise more than half of the population in Nuwara Eliya district (50.6 percent). In Badulla they account for 18.4 percent of its population.

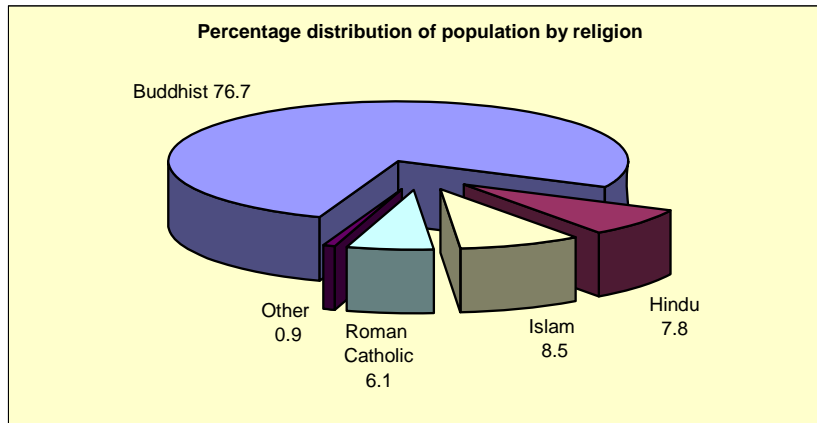
Number and percentage distribution of population by district and ethnicity

District	Total population	Sinhalese		Sri Lanka Tamil		Indian Tamil		Sri Lanka Moor		Burgher		Malay		Other	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Sri Lanka ^(a)	18,797,257	14,011,734	74.5	2,233,624	11.9	859,052	4.6	1,561,910	8.3	38,388	0.2	55,352	0.3	37,197	0.2
Total - 18 Districts	16,929,689	13,876,245	82.0	732,149	4.3	855,025	5.1	1,339,331	7.9	35,283	0.2	54,782	0.3	36,874	0.2
Colombo	2,251,274	1,724,459	76.6	247,739	11.0	24,821	1.1	202,731	9.0	15,703	0.7	21,778	1.0	14,043	0.6
Gampaha	2,063,684	1,877,545	91.0	65,302	3.2	7,621	0.4	78,705	3.8	11,093	0.5	13,683	0.7	9,735	0.5
Kalutara	1,066,239	928,914	87.1	12,665	1.2	28,895	2.7	93,293	8.7	836	0.1	973	0.1	663	0.1
Kandy	1,279,028	947,900	74.1	52,052	4.1	103,622	8.1	168,049	13.1	2,128	0.2	2,668	0.2	2,609	0.2
Matale	441,328	353,579	80.1	24,320	5.5	23,493	5.3	38,462	8.7	402	0.1	523	0.1	549	0.1
Nuwara Eliya	703,610	282,621	40.2	46,066	6.5	355,830	50.6	16,555	2.4	632	0.1	1,059	0.2	847	0.1
Galle	990,487	934,751	94.4	11,079	1.1	9,275	0.9	34,688	3.5	208	0.0	178	0.0	308	0.0
Matara	761,370	716,974	94.2	5,161	0.7	16,672	2.2	22,133	2.9	179	0.0	87	0.0	164	0.0
Hambantota	526,414	510,965	97.1	1,869	0.4	424	0.1	5,646	1.1	88	0.0	7,255	1.4	167	0.0
Jaffna ^(a) , Mannar ^(a) , Vavuniya ^(a) , Mullaitivu ^(a) and Kilinochchi ^(a)	1,040,963	49,530	4.8	975,789	93.7	2,847	0.3	12,673	1.2	50	0.0	7	0.0	67	0.0
Batticaloa ^(a)	486,447	6,345	1.3	362,431	74.5	727	0.1	114,111	23.5	2,696	0.6	21	0.0	116	0.0
Ampara	592,997	236,583	39.9	109,188	18.4	715	0.1	244,620	41.3	1,184	0.2	225	0.0	482	0.1
Trincomalee ^(a)	340,158	79,614	23.4	163,255	48.0	453	0.1	95,795	28.2	359	0.1	542	0.2	140	0.0
Kurunegala	1,460,215	1,341,237	91.9	17,585	1.2	2,972	0.2	94,544	6.5	613	0.0	2,150	0.1	1,114	0.1
Puttalam	709,677	523,116	73.7	48,072	6.8	2,227	0.3	133,134	18.8	735	0.1	1,214	0.2	1,179	0.2
Anuradhapura	745,693	676,073	90.7	5,073	0.7	443	0.1	61,989	8.3	179	0.0	279	0.0	1,657	0.2
Polonnaruwa	358,984	324,403	90.4	7,034	2.0	194	0.1	27,075	7.5	62	0.0	48	0.0	168	0.0
Badulla	779,983	564,752	72.4	29,542	3.8	143,535	18.4	38,798	5.0	583	0.1	1,813	0.2	960	0.1
Moneragala	397,375	375,691	94.5	5,754	1.4	7,493	1.9	7,800	2.0	124	0.0	127	0.0	386	0.1
Ratnapura	1,015,807	882,017	86.8	28,740	2.8	82,591	8.1	20,690	2.0	343	0.0	444	0.0	982	0.1
Kegalle	785,524	674,665	85.9	14,908	1.9	44,202	5.6	50,419	6.4	191	0.0	278	0.0	861	0.1

(a) Estimates

(b) Total for the 18 districts which the Census enumeration was completed.

Religious Composition



The religious affiliations in the 18 districts, which the enumeration was completed in the census 2001 show that out of the total population 76.7 percent are Buddhists, 7.8 percent are Hindus, 8.5 percent are followers of Islam, 6.1 percent are Roman Catholics.

Number and percentage distribution of population by district and religion for 18 districts

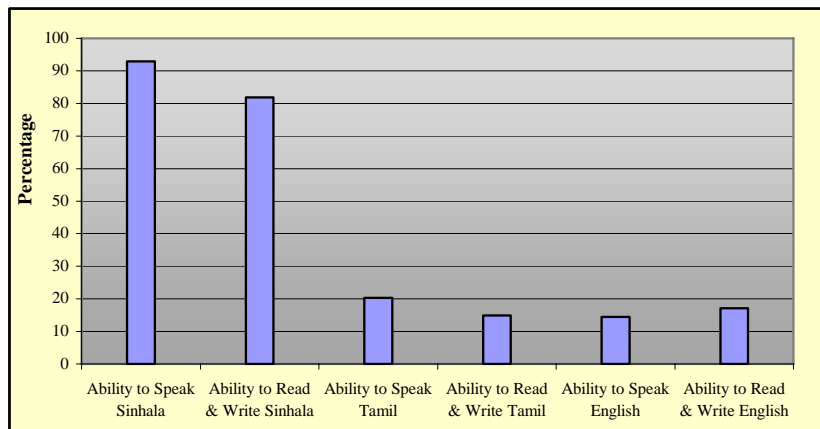
District	Total population	Buddhist		Hindu		Islam		Roman Catholic		Other Christian		Other	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Total	16,929,689	12,986,548	76.7	1,312,970	7.8	1,435,896	8.5	1,035,740	6.1	150,182	0.9	8,353	0.0
Colombo	2,251,274	1,578,246	70.1	194,743	8.7	241,944	10.7	181,920	8.1	51,334	2.3	3,087	0.1
Gampaha	2,063,684	1,479,955	71.7	42,356	2.1	93,496	4.5	418,286	20.3	28,361	1.4	1,230	0.1
Kalutara	1,066,239	883,968	82.9	34,678	3.3	105,957	9.9	36,176	3.4	5,038	0.5	422	0.0
Kandy	1,279,028	937,001	73.3	134,438	10.5	173,590	13.6	23,232	1.8	10,330	0.8	437	0.0
Matale	441,328	348,762	79.0	42,433	9.6	39,980	9.1	8,400	1.9	1,703	0.4	50	0.0
Nuwara Eliya	703,610	279,139	39.7	359,135	51.0	19,099	2.7	35,008	5.0	10,741	1.5	488	0.1
Galle	990,487	932,331	94.1	14,934	1.5	35,100	3.5	4,568	0.5	3,378	0.3	176	0.0
Matara	761,370	716,710	94.1	17,339	2.3	22,481	3.0	2,703	0.4	2,001	0.3	136	0.0
Hambantota	526,414	509,987	96.9	1,369	0.3	13,076	2.5	924	0.2	949	0.2	109	0.0
Ampara	592,997	235,652	39.7	100,213	16.9	245,179	41.3	7,816	1.3	3,969	0.7	168	0.0
Kurunegala	1,460,215	1,300,539	89.1	13,303	0.9	98,223	6.7	40,680	2.8	6,960	0.5	510	0.0
Puttalam	709,677	308,273	43.4	29,482	4.2	134,643	19.0	229,966	32.4	6,830	1.0	483	0.1
Anuradhapura	745,693	670,963	90.0	3,459	0.5	62,797	8.4	6,266	0.8	2,073	0.3	135	0.0
Polonnaruwa	358,984	320,491	89.3	6,592	1.8	27,225	7.6	3,883	1.1	691	0.2	102	0.0
Badulla	779,983	561,510	72.0	158,473	20.3	41,347	5.3	13,236	1.7	5,242	0.7	175	0.0
Moneragala	397,375	375,252	94.4	11,623	2.9	8,183	2.1	1,583	0.4	681	0.2	53	0.0
Ratnapura	1,015,807	880,151	86.6	96,738	9.5	21,901	2.2	11,728	1.2	4,924	0.5	365	0.0
Kegalle	785,524	667,618	85.0	51,662	6.6	51,675	6.6	9,365	1.2	4,977	0.6	227	0.0

Note : Jaffna, Mannar, Vavuniya, Mullaitivu, Kilinochchi, Batticaloa and Trincomalee districts in which the 2001 census enumeration was not completed are not included here.

Highest percentage of Buddhists is reported from Hambantota district (96.9 percent) and lowest percentage of 39.7 percent is recorded for both Nuwara Eliya and Ampara districts. The highest percentage of Hindus is reported from Nuwara Eliya district (51.0 percent) followed by Badulla district (20.3 percent). This is expected, as the percentage of Tamil population is high in these areas. The followers of Islam religion are highest in Ampara district (41.3 percent) since large proportion of Moors are living there.

Literacy, School attendance and Educational attainment

Ability to read and write at least one language was regarded as literate. The literacy rate of the population aged 10 years and over is 91.1 percent. Literacy rate of males (92.6 percent) is higher than that of females (89.7 percent). Overall rate has increased by 3.7 percentage points during 1981-2001; the increase is much more prominent among women than men.



Literacy rates in the two major languages, Sinhala and Tamil, are 81.8 percent and 14.9 percent respectively, in the total of 18 districts. Nearly 17 percent of the population can read and write English. Ability to speak English is lower than the ability to read and write English, in contrast to other two languages.

Literacy rates by sex for 18 districts, 1981 and 2001

Sex	Literacy rate	
	ensus 1981*	Census 2001
Male	91.5	92.6
Female	83.2	89.7
Total	87.4	91.1

* Computed for 18 districts in which 2001 Census was completed.

Literacy in a given language is predominantly determined by ethnic affiliations of the person. About 92.3 percent of the Sinhalese are literate in their mother tongue but only 1.8 percent can read and write Tamil. Literacy in Tamil for Sri Lanka Tamils and Indian Tamils are 78.5 percent and 72.7 percent respectively and nearly 31 percent of Sri Lanka Tamils and nearly 16 percent of Indian Tamils are literate in Sinhala. Literacy of Tamil is very

high for Sri Lanka Moor community and significant percentage (38.5 percent) of them can read and write Sinhala. Literacy in English is highest among Sri Lanka Tamils and lowest among Indian Tamils.

Literacy rates in languages by major ethnic group for 18 districts

Major ethnic group	Literacy in		
	Sinhala	Tamil	English
Sinhalese	92.3	1.8	16.2
Sri Lanka Tamil	31.4	78.5	24.1
Indian Tamil	15.7	72.7	11.0
Sri Lanka Moor	38.5	84.2	24.0

Ability of English language of people living in urban areas is higher compared to rural and estate sectors; nearly 32.9 percent of urban residents can speak English and 34.1 percent can read and write.

School Attendance

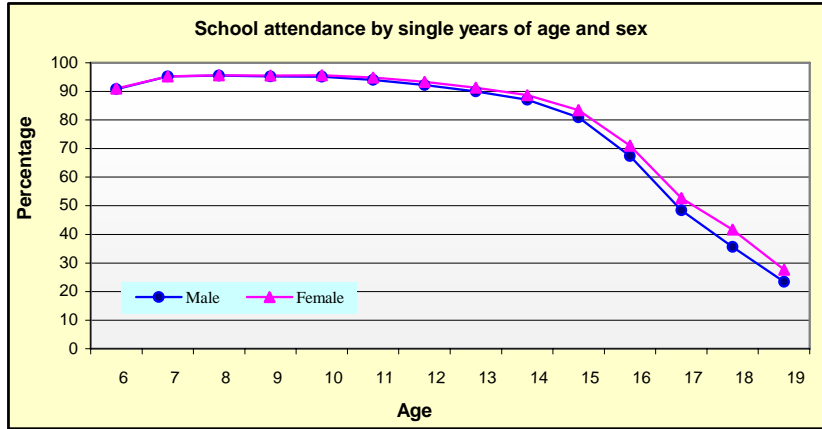
Generally, school attendance is regarded as attendance at any government or recognized school which provides regular education for any number of grades from grade 1 to G.C.E. (A/L). Usually children in the age group 5-14 years are treated as the population, which should compulsorily be at school. In the age range 5-14 years, children i.e. nearly 88.7 percent are attending school. There is no significant difference between girls and boys.

School attendance by age and sex for 18 districts

Age in years	Percentage		
	Total	Male	Female
6 - 9	94.4	94.3	94.4
10 - 14	92.2	91.7	92.8
15 - 19	52.6	50.6	54.6
5 - 14	88.7	88.4	89.0
6 - 14	93.2	92.8	93.5

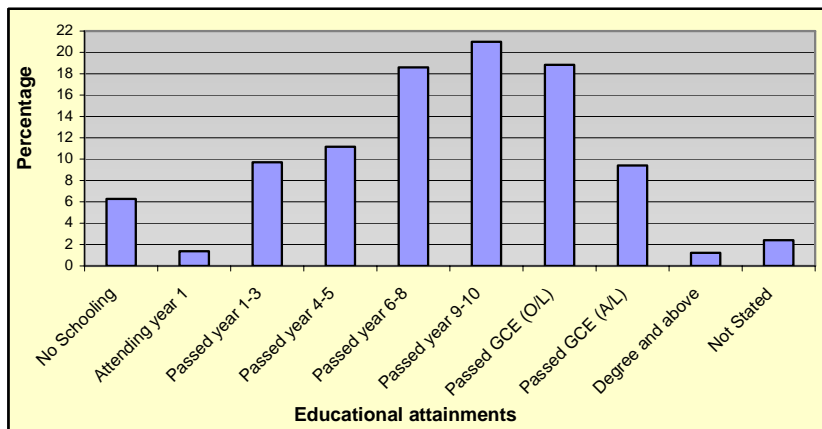
As some of the children who completed age 5 by the census date could not get a chance to enter schooling system in that year, it is more appropriate to consider age range 6-14 years as the group who should compulsorily be at school. A high proportion of 93.2 percent of children in 6-14 years is attending school in the 18 districts. Here any noticeable differentials do not exist between girls and boys. The average attendance of 15-19 year age group is 39.6 percentage points below that of 10-14

year age group. This is expected as large numbers terminate their formal schooling during 15-19 age group after G.C.E. (O/L) and G.C.E. (A/L) examinations. .



There is no appreciable drop in the level of attendance up to about age 15. It started to decline sharply after age 15. Although the differentials in attendance are marginal between girls and boys up to around age 16, female attendance is higher between 17-19 years.

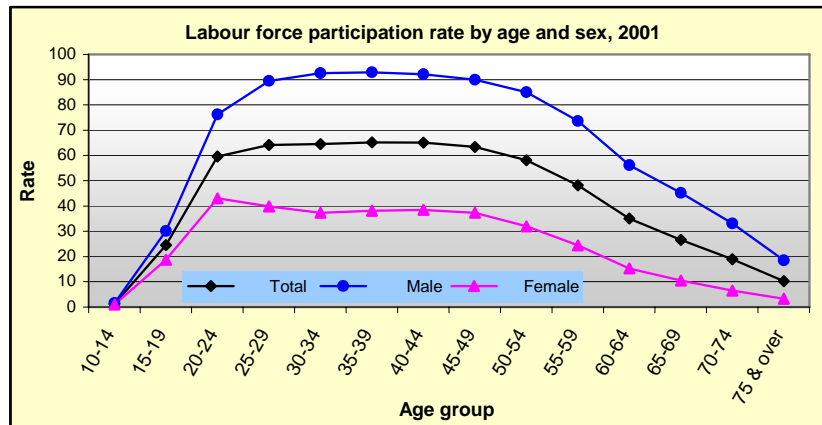
Educational Attainment



Among the educational attainment categories, the highest percentage is showing passed year 9-10 (21.0 percent). Those who passed G.C.E. (O/L) and G.C.E. (A/L) are 18.8 percent and 9.4 percent respectively. But another 18.6 percent have completed year 6-8. Only 1.2 percent of the population age 5 years and over record attainments with a degree and above. In urban areas the percentage of population with educational attainment G.C.E. (O/L) and G.C.E. (A/L) are higher than the overall value. The percentages are 23.7 percent and 14.2 percent respectively. Gender differences in educational attainment reveal that it favoured males up to year 10, but the percentage of females who passed G.C.E. (O/L) and G.C.E. (A/L) exceed the corresponding percentage of males.

2.7 Labour Force Participation

Economically active population or the labour force comprised of employed and unemployed persons. The proportion of the economically active population to the total population aged 10 years and over is called the labour force participation rate. It is 46.6 percent for the 18 districts, which the enumeration was completed in the census 2001.. Female labour force participation rate (28.1 percent) is very much lower than the males (65.5 percent). Labour force participation rates computed for five year age groups provide a more refined measure as the overall rate depends on the age composition of the population.



Labour force participation rate by age and sex for 18 districts

Age in years	Total	Male	Female
10-14	1.3	1.6	1.0
15-19	24.5	30.1	18.7
20-24	59.6	76.2	43.0
25-29	64.2	89.5	39.8
30-34	64.5	92.6	37.3
35-39	65.2	92.9	38.1
40-44	65.1	92.1	38.5
45-49	63.3	90.0	37.3
50-54	58.1	85.0	32.0
55-59	48.2	73.6	24.4
60-64	35.1	56.2	15.3
65-69	26.6	45.2	10.5
70-74	19.0	33.1	6.5
75 & over	10.3	18.5	3.3
Total	46.6	65.5	28.1

The male age specific labour force participation rates are higher than females for all ages. The labour force participation of children in 10-14 age group is very small for both sexes. More than 73 percent of the male population of 20-59 age group are economically active and they reach the peak value of 92.9 percent in the 35-39 age group. The sharp increase of female participation rate can be seen upto age 20-24 and the rate has a declining trend afterwards. The peak value of 43.0 percent can be seen for 20-24 age group.

The economically inactive rate is highest (98.7 percent) for 10-14 age group. As expected 95.0 percent of them are students.

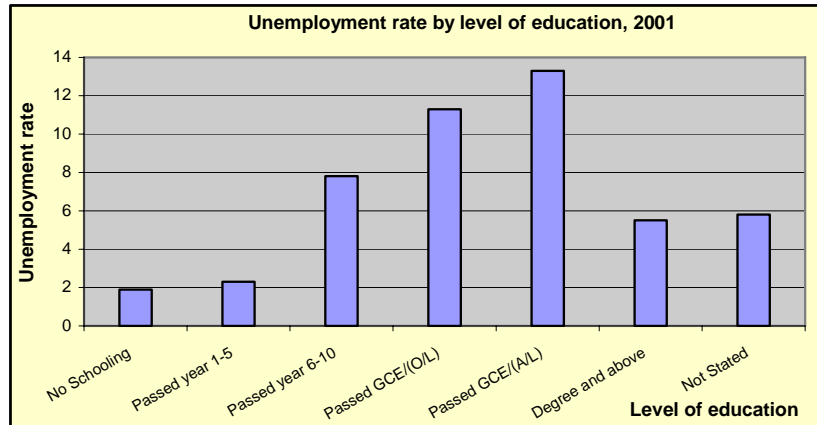
Unemployment

The majority of the unemployed population for the 18 districts, which the enumeration was completed in the census 2001 are males and it is 59.9 percent.

Percentage distribution of unemployed population by age and sex for 18 districts				Unemployment rate by age and sex for 18 districts			
Age	Total	Male	Female	Age	Total	Male	Female
10-14	0.9	0.9	0.9	10-14	24.6	23.9	25.7
15-19	25.6	27.8	22.4	15-19	34.0	35.5	31.5
20-24	41.0	40.3	42.0	20-24	23.3	21.5	26.5
25-29	16.2	14.8	18.2	25-29	10.1	8.1	14.5
30-34	7.1	6.5	8.0	30-34	4.6	3.5	7.0
35-39	3.9	3.8	4.0	35-39	2.5	2.1	3.5
40-44	2.3	2.4	2.2	40-44	1.6	1.4	2.1
45-49	1.3	1.5	1.1	45-49	1.1	1.0	1.2
50-54	0.8	1.0	0.6	50-54	0.8	0.8	0.9
55-59	0.4	0.5	0.3	55-59	0.7	0.7	0.8
60-64	0.2	0.3	0.2	60-64	0.7	0.6	1.0
65+	0.3	0.3	0.3	65-69	0.7	0.5	1.3
				70-74	0.7	0.6	1.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	75 & over	1.4	1.0	3.5
				Total	8.2	7.1	10.8

The highest concentration of unemployed is among young adults in the broad age group 15-29, which accounts for nearly 83 percent of the total unemployment. In the 15-19 age group, the percentage unemployed is higher for males than females but the pattern reverses for ages between 20-39.

The overall unemployment rate for the 18 districts is 8.2 percent. Although the number of unemployed males exceeds that of females, unemployment rate of females (10.8 percent) is higher than that of males (7.1 percent). Age specific unemployment rates reveal that the unemployment rate is very high for 15-19 and 20-24 age groups. Nearly 34 percent of the labour force in the age group 15-19 and 23 percent in 20-24 age group are unemployed. It is also seen that female rates are higher than the male rates excluding age group 15-19 years. The differential is highest for 25-29 age group.



Nearly 13.3 percent of the economically active population with education qualifications of G.C.E (A/L) are unemployed. The unemployment rate for persons with G.C.E. (O/L) qualification is 11.3 percent whereas 5.5 percent of those who completed education with degree and above are unemployed.

Examination of unemployed persons by marital status reveals that 81.8 percent of the unemployed persons are never married and the corresponding percentages for males and females are 84.6 percent and 77.4 percent respectively.

Occupation Pattern and Employment Status

The vast majority of economically active population is employed persons and it accounts for 91.8 percent. The highest proportion of male employed population belong to market oriented skilled agricultural and fishery workers. It is about 20.5 percent. The second and third higher proportions of male employed persons are extraction and building trade workers and unskilled labourers in elementary occupations. The percentages are 7.8 and 7.6 respectively. Another 6.7 percent of them are engaged as private business owners. Wholesale and retail business owners and owners of private enterprises regardless of the capital invested in the business are categorized under the private business owners. Nearly 83.4 percent of male private business owners are own account workers.

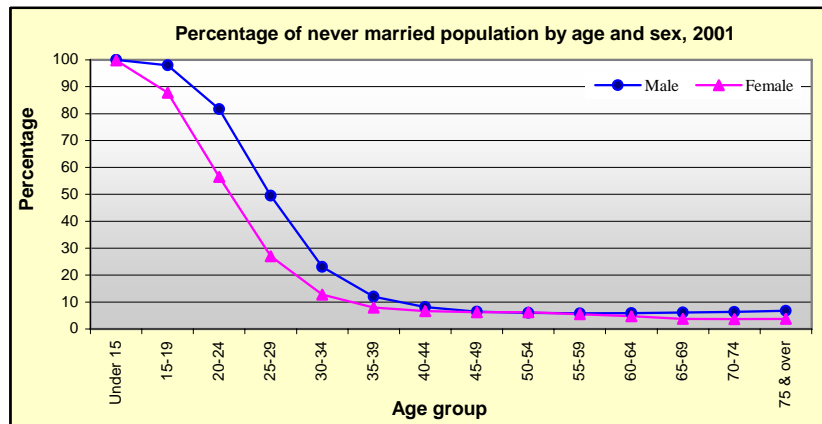
Employment pattern of females is quite different from males, although the highest category for both sexes are the same. Among the employed females the highest proportion belongs to market oriented skilled agricultural and fishery workers category (16.6 percent) followed by subsistence, agricultural and fishery workers (12.0 percent). Another 10.6 percent belong to other craft and related workers. Teaching profession has taken the fourth place (8.2 percent) for employed females in the 18 districts as a whole.

About 61.6 percent of employed men comprise of employees; 32.6 percent of the rest are own account workers. The majority of the employed women (68.6 percent) are employees. The percentage of female unpaid family workers (15.9 percent) is comparatively higher than that of males (3.9 percent). Moreover, majority of both male and female unpaid family workers is skilled agricultural and fishery workers.

Nuptiality

Figure 10 shows the percentage of never married population by age and sex for the 18 districts. As expected females are getting married earlier than males. For example, among females in 25-29 age group only 27.0 percent are never married but the corresponding percentage is as high as 49.5 percent for males. These patterns are reflected in singulate mean age at first marriage, which stands at 23.8 years for females and 27.6 years for males. The corresponding values for 1981 were 24.6 years and 28.0 years respectively.

Fertility



Mean number of children ever born is an indicator of cumulative fertility. Mean number of children ever born for ever married women aged 15 years and over is 2.8. Mean number of children ever born gradually increases with the age of the woman. It is also revealed that women in the total of 18 districts give birth to 2 children around age 35.

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

During the intercensal period of 1981-2001, in the 18 districts, which the enumeration was completed, the number of occupied housing units has increased from 2,490,114 to 3,969,211 by 59.4 percent.

Occupied housing units and intercensal increase for 18 districts, 1981 and 2001

District	Occupied housing units			
	Census 1981	Census 2001	Intercensal increase	
			Number	Percent
Colombo	272,489	473,045	200,556	73.6
Gampaha	265,954	475,847	209,893	78.9
Kalutara	160,423	245,784	85,361	53.2
Kandy	178,381	291,454	113,073	63.4
Matale	68,208	108,566	40,358	59.2
Nuwara Eliya	122,829	164,886	42,057	34.2
Galle	146,386	229,521	83,135	56.8
Matara	121,766	174,712	52,946	43.5
Hambantota	80,496	126,362	45,866	57.0
Ampara	77,978	132,371	54,393	69.8
Kurunegala	263,504	376,352	112,848	42.8
Puttalam	105,171	174,737	69,566	66.1
Anuradhapura	107,915	186,697	78,782	73.0
Polonnaruwa	48,183	90,999	42,816	88.9
Badulla	120,194	185,268	65,074	54.1
Moneragala	51,551	95,966	44,415	86.2
Ratnapura	158,693	242,882	84,189	53.1
Kegalle	139,993	193,578	53,585	38.3
18 Districts	2,490,114	3,969,027	1,478,913	59.4

Quality of Housing Units

Based on materials of construction used for wall, floor and roof, housing units have been divided into three types viz; Permanent, Semi-Permanent and Improved. Out of occupied housing units in 18 districts 69.8 percent are permanent, 28.3 percent are semi-permanent and 0.9 percent are improvised.

Principal materials of Wall, Floor and Roof

Out of occupied housing units 52.7 percent have walls constructed with bricks and 20.0 percent have walls of cement block. The percentage of occupied housing units having cement floors is 75.1 and 19.6 percent have mud floors. Tiles are used for the roof in 54.8 percent of occupied housing units. The corresponding percentages for asbestos and metal sheets are 18.3 and 14.1 respectively.

Type of Structure

Of the existing occupied housing units in 18 districts 86.3 percent are single houses, 5.4 percent are row houses / line rooms and 3.5 are attached houses. Nearly 97 percent of housing units are used only for residential purposes and a very small percentage is used for both residential and commercial purposes (3.2 percent). About 69 percent of the occupied housing units in urban sector and more than 93 percent in rural sector are single houses but in the estate sector more than 64 percent are row houses / line rooms.

Average number of Rooms

The average number of rooms per occupied housing unit in the 18 districts as a whole is 4.0. Examination by sector shows that the highest value is in the rural sector (4.1). The corresponding value for urban and estate sectors are 4.0 and 2.8 respectively. Average number of rooms by permanent, semi-permanent and improvised housing units are 4.5, 2.8 and 1.4 respectively.

Year of Construction

In the 18 districts nearly 42 percent of occupied housing units are constructed during the period 1970-1994. About 20 percent are constructed before 1970 and 34.4 percent are built in 1995 and onwards.

About 44 percent of permanent housing units are constructed during the period of 1970-1994; 72.6 percent of improvised housing units and 41.3 percent of semi-permanent housing units are built in the year 1995 and onwards. Most of the occupied housing units in both urban and rural sectors are built during 1970-1994, and the majority in the estate sector are constructed before 1970 (66.8 percent).

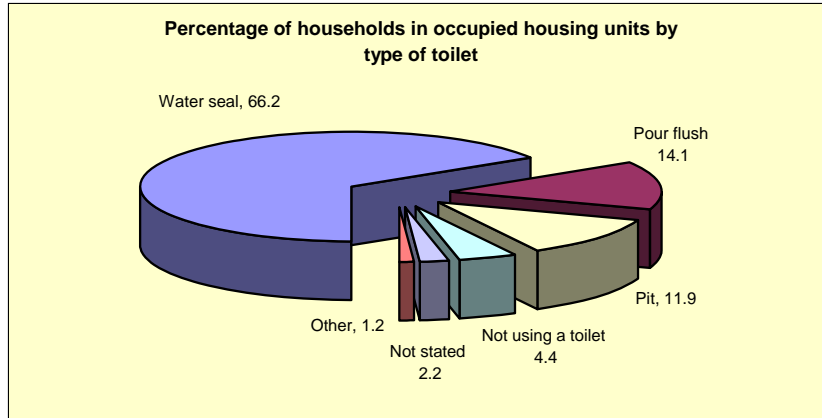
Household Composition

There are 4,054,385 households in 3,969,211 occupied housing units in 18 districts. More than 98 percent of the occupied housing units, in all the three sectors has one household and a very small number of housing units have two or more households. The average size of household in the 18 districts is 4.2 persons and the average occupants per room is 1.1. Comparison with 1981 Census figures reveals that the average size of household has reduced by 0.7 from 4.9 and average occupants per room has also reduced by 1.0 from 2.1.

Toilet Facilities

Nearly 92 percent of the households in occupied housing units have a toilet of their own; 78.6 percent have a toilet exclusively for the household and 13.0 percent are sharing with another household. About 4.4 percent of households are not using a toilet at all. The

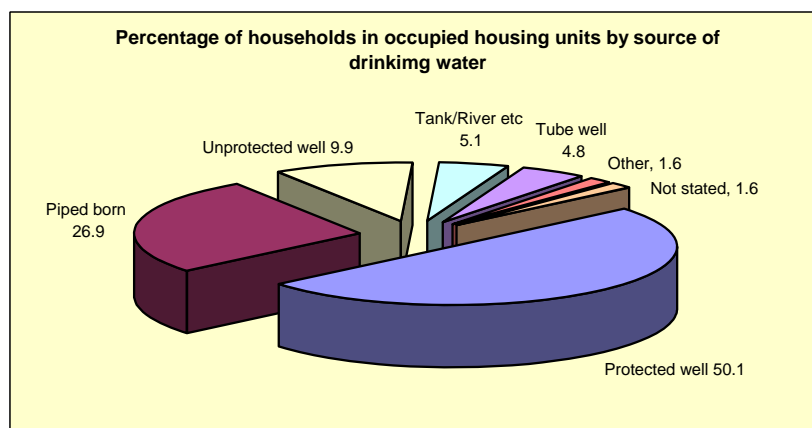
percentage with no toilets is highest in the estate sector (14.8 percent). Comparison with 1981 Census figures reveals that the percentage of households having a toilet of their own is increased by 8.4 percent and the percentage of households not using a toilet at all is decreased by 22.2 percent from 26.6 percent.



About 66 percent of households in the 18 districts are having water seal type toilets. The corresponding percentages for pour flush and pit types are 14.1 and 11.9 respectively. As expected, in the urban sector most of the households have water seal type toilets (75.6 percent). Nearly 13.4 percent of households in rural areas use pit type toilets.

Source of Drinking Water

Majority of households in occupied housing units drink water from protected wells (50.1 percent) and 9.9 percent of households get water from unprotected wells. Another 26.9 percent of households use piped born water and 4.8 percent drink water from tube wells. More than 5 percent use river / tank / stream etc. for drinking water. Comparison with 1981 Census reveals that the percentage of households using unprotected wells has decreased by 12.0 percentage points in contrast to the increase of 8.1 percentage points of households using piped born water during the period 1981-2001.



Most of the households in the urban sector (77.8 percent) use piped born water for drinking. In rural areas, the main source of drinking water is well, about 58 percent drink water from protected wells and 11.5 percent use water from unprotected wells. Interestingly, a large proportion of households in the estate sector (24.8 percent) use river / tank / stream etc. water for drinking.

Lighting

Electricity is the major type of lighting in 18 districts (63.6 percent) and almost all the other households use kerosene as the source of lighting (34.6 percent). The percentage of households using solar power for lighting is negligible (0.3 percent). As expected electricity is found mostly in the permanent type of housing units and kerosene is used mostly in the improvised type housing units.

During the period of 20 years between 1981, 2001 the number of households with electricity has been increased by 49 percent from 14.6 percent with a reduction of kerosene users by 48.1 percent from 82.7 in the 18 districts.

Electricity is more prevalent in the urban sector; 85.3 percent urban households have electricity connection. In the rural sector, the corresponding percentages for electricity and kerosene are 62.0 and 36.5 percent respectively. Kerosene is the main source of lighting in the estate sector households (59.6 percent).

Cooking Fuel

Majority of households use firewood as cooking fuel (80.0 percent). Gas is used by 14.8 percent and kerosene is used only 3.1 percent. Similar patterns can be seen in the rural and estate sectors, but in the urban sector main source of cooking fuel is gas (45.3 percent).

During the 1981-2001 period the percentage of households using gas is increased by 14.3 percentage points from 0.5 and the percentage of households using firewood is decreased by 13.9 percentage points from 93.9 percent.

Tenure

Most of the households in occupied housing units is owned by a member of the household (82.1 percent); 7.0 percent households live rent free and 5.8 percent live in rented / leased housing units.

While owner occupied housing units are predominate in the urban and rural sectors (69.2 percent and 88.0 percent respectively) most of the households in the estate sector live on rent free basis (63.3 percent). In estates it is very common to provide line rooms for its workers free of rent.