Including An Assessment of Gender Inequality in the Privat Sector

LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION BULLETIN

2025

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Labour Market Information and Career Guidance Division
Department of Employment and Entrepreneurship
Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment

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FOREWORD

The Labour Market Information and Career Guidance Division (LMICGD) of the Department of Employment and Entrepreneurship, Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment is pleased to release the Sixteenth issue of the Labour Market Information Bulletin (LMIB).

Acknowledging the importance of access to timely and reliable labour market information, the Bulletin is intended to help both the supply side (jobseekers and workers) and the demand side (employers) understand the current labour market situation and be informed about various opportunities in the labour market.

Labour market information is crucial not only to help guide educational choices but also while helping youth to make a smooth transition between school to work. The information will allow the students, job seekers, employers and other stakeholders to make informed decisions based on the availability of and access to reliable labour market information.

On behalf of the Department, I hope this Bulletin will guide government, non-government agencies, private/corporate sectors, students, job-seekers, researchers and career counsellors in proper planning and decision making and help shape the growth of an informed workforce. The information and data highlighted in this current issue has been aligned with the fiscal year format in order to maintain data consistency. *This edition also features a special analysis on "Gender Inequality in Bhutan's Private Sector", which utilizes BMLIS data to diagnose the structural barriers behind the labour market disparities highlighted in this report.*

The Department encourages and welcomes your comments and feedback on the Labour Market Information Bulletin 2025 for future improvement.

(Kunzang Lhamu)
Director General
Department of Employment and Entrepreneurship
Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment

Definitions:

Sl.	Indicator	Definition
1	Supply of Labour	Supply of labour represents the number of workers entering into the labour market from schools, universities, educational institutions and technical & vocational training institutions.
2	Demand for Labour	Demand for labour encompasses the number of employment opportunities available in the public, corporate and private sector institutions within the country and abroad.
3	Price of Labour	Price of labour reveals the wage rates at which the Bhutanese labour exchanges locally.
4	Working Age Population	It refers to persons who are 15 years of age and above.
5	Labour Force (Economically Active Population)	The labour force comprises the economically active population (employed + unemployed) 15 years of age and above.
6	Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)	LFPR is the proportion of the labour force (economically active population) to the working-age population.
7	Employed	Persons who worked as paid employees, employers, own-account workers (self-employed), or family workers during the reference period. It even includes persons with a job but not at work during the reference period.
8	Employment Rate	It is the proportion of employed persons to the labour force.
9	Employee	The person who works for payment (cash or kind).
10	Employer	The person who employs at least one paid employee under him.
11	Unemployed	Those persons who did not work during the reference period but were looking for work and simultaneously available for work.
12	Unemployment Rate	It is the proportion of unemployed persons to the labour force (economically active population).

13	Long-term Unemployment	Those persons who are unemployed for 12 months or more.
14	Not in Labour Force (Economically Inactive Population)	Not in the labour force (Economically inactive population) comprising the working-age population (15 years and above) who are not in the labour force.
15	Economically Inactive Rate	It is the proportion of the economically inactive population to the working-age population.
16	Employment to Population Ratio	It is the proportion of employed persons to the working-age population.

List of Abbreviations:

AEC	Advance Entrepreneurship Course
BEC	Basic Entrepreneurship Course
BLMIS	Bhutan Labour Market Information System
CNR	College of Natural Resource
DoEE	Department of Employment and Entrepreneurship
DoL	Department of Labour
DoWPSD	Department of Workforce Planning and Skills Development
ESC	Employment Service Center
ESD	Employment Services Division
FWD	Foreign Workers Division
ILO	International Labour Organization
IZC	Institute of Zorig Chusum
JWPTI	Jigme Wangchuk Power Training Institute
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LMICGD	Labour Market Information & Career Guidance Division
MoESD	Ministry of Education and Skills Development
MoICE	Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
NSB	National Statistics Bureau
RDTC	Rural Development Training Centre
RITH	Royal Institute of Tourism and Hospitality
SLPD	Skills Liaison and Promotion Division, DoWPSD, MoESD
SPLD	Skills Promotion and Liaison Division
ToT	Training of Trainer
TTI	Technical Training Institute
TTTRC	Technical Trainers Training and Resource Centre
YELP	Youth Engagement and Livelihood Program

Key Indicators of Labour Market (2015 – 2025)

Indicators	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 (Quarterly)	1st Quarter, 2024	2nd Quarter, 2024	3rd Quarter, 2024	4th Quarter, 2024	2024 Average	1st Quarter, 2025	2nd Quarter, 2025
Labour Force Participation Rates (%)	63.1	62.2	65.7	62.6	66.4	67.8	69.1	63.1	65	63.9	61.8	65.1	64.8	63.9	64.3	65.3
Male	71.2	71.7	72.1	70.1	71.8	72.5	73.1	73.4	72.4	72.8	72.5	75.7	74	73.8	73.3	73.5
Female	54.8	53.6	59.9	55.5	61.2	63.5	65.3	53.5	56.8	54.1	50	53.5	54.6	53.1	54.4	56.3
AREA										41.2	43.3	40.9	39	41.1	40.2	39.3
Rural	64.8	65.4	68	64.3	68.5	69.7	71.1	65.2	65.9	67	65	68.7	67.1	67	67.1	68
Male	69.7	71.1	70.4	68.3	70	72.1	72.7	73.3	71.4							
Female	60.4	60.3	65.7	60.5	67	67.5	69.6	57.6	59.8							
Urban	59.2	54.5	62.1	58.9	62	64	65.3	59.7	63.4	58.8	56.7	59.1	61	58.9	59.8	60.7
Male	74.6	73.1	74.9	74.1	75.7	73.3	74	73.7	74.2							
Female	45.5	37.5	50.6	45.1	49.5	55.7	57.2	46.8	51.6							
Employment share by sector																
% share of employed in primary sector	58	57.2	51.3	54	51.1	49.9	49.2	43.5	43.5	41.3	41.2	44.08	39.9	41.7	41.7	43.5
% share of employed in secondart sector	8.7	8.5	11.8	11.5	14	13.5	14.1	13.7	13.6	14.8	13.5	15.5	16.9	16.3	12.5	15.2
% share of employed in tertiary sector	33.3	34.4	36.9	34.5	34.9	36.6	36.6	42.8	42.9	43.9	45.3	40.42	43.2	42	45.9	41.4
Employment to population ratio	61.6	60.9	63.7	60.5	64.6	64.4	65.8	59.3	62.7	61.3	59.5	63.1	62.8	61.7	62	
Male	69.9	70.3	70.1	68.3	70.2	69.5	70.5	70.2	70.5	69.9	70.3	73.9	72.3	71.6	71.3	
Female	54.2	52.3	94	53.2	59.2	59.7	61.3	49.2	5403	51.8	47.7	51.3	52.2	50.8	51.7	
AREA																
Rural	64.2	64.5	66.8	63.2	67.4	67.9	69	62.9	64.6	65.1	63.3	67.2	65.9	65.4	65.5	
Male	69.2	69.9	69.2	67.1	69	70.3	71	71.3	69.9	71.1	72.2	75.9	71.8	72.7	72.1	
Female	59.7	59.5	64.6	59.4	65.8	65.6	67.2	55.1	58.7	58.3	53.4	57.7	59.2	57.2	58.3	
Urban	55.5	52.4	58.6	54.7	58.7	57.6	59.5	53.4	59.5	55	53.5	56.1	57.7	55.6	56.4	
Male	71.4	71.1	71.7	70.8	72.7	67.9	69.4	68.4	71.3	67.9	67.2	70.5	73.2	69.7	70	
Female	41.3	35.3	46.8	40.2	45.9	48.2	50.2	39.6	46.6	41.5	38.9	40.5	41.6	40.7	41.6	
Unemployment Rate (%)	2.5	2.1	3.1	3.4	2.7	5	4.8	5.9	3.5	4.1	3.7	3.1	3.11	3.5	3.6	2.9
Male	1.8	2	2.7	2.7	2.2	4.1	3.6	4.4	2.7	4	3.1	2.4	2.3	2.9	2.7	2.4
Female	3.1	2.3	3.6	4.2	3.3	6	6.1	7.9	4.5	4.3	4.5	4.2	4.4	4.3	4.9	3.5
AREA																
Rural	1	1.5	1.7	1.8	1.6	2.7	2.8	3.4	1.9	2.8	2.5	2.1	1.8	2.3	2.4	1.6
Male	0.7	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.4	2.5	2.3	2.7	2	3.1	2.4			2.2		
Female	1.2	1.4	1.8	1.7	1.8	2.8	3.4	4.3	1.9	2.4	2.8			2.4		
Urban	6.3	3.9	5.6	7.1	5.3	10.1	8.9	10.4	6.2	6.6	5.7	5.1	5.5	5.7	5.7	5.4
Male	4.3	2.8	4.2	4.6	3.9	7.3	6.2	7.1	3.9	5.6	4.4			4.2		
Female	9.3	5.9	7.4	10.9	7.3	13.4	12.2	15.3	9.7	8.2	8			8.3		
Youth Unemployment Rate (%)	10.7	13.2	12.3	15.7	11.8	22.6	20.9	29.6	15.9	22.9	19.2	16.5	17.7	19	17.1	17.3
Male	8.2	16.4	11.2	15.4	9.7	19.2	16.9	24.3	13.4	25.7	18.9	11.9	14.5	17.7	14.8	13.8
Female	12.7	11	13.2	16.1	13.8	25.4	24.6	32.8	18.3	19.7	19.6	21.8	21.2	20.6	19.5	20.3
AREA																
Rural	4.8	9.9	8.6	10.8	7.8	15.1	15.8	22.7	9.4	17.9	16.7	13.8	15.5	16	14.3	12.8
Male	3.3	13.7	8.1	10.9	6	13	11.4	17.9	9.5	21.7	15	11.2	15.6	15.9	10.5	
Female	6	7.4	9.1	10.7	9.4	16.9	19.8	27.8	9.2	13	19.4	17.1	15.3	16	18.1	
Urban	28	23.3	17	24.4	19.4	33.3	28.6	35.6	23.9	31.5	21.7	20.1	19.8	22.7	19.7	22
Male	24.3	23.7	15.6	24.5	16.6	28.6	25	32.6	19.3	33	23.8	12.9	13.4	20.2	18.7	
Female	30.5	23	17.9	24.3	22	36.9	31.8	38.3	27.6	29.8	19.8	27.3	25.6	25.1	20.8	

Source: LFS Reports 2015-2017, MoICE; LFS Report 2018-2025, NSB

INTRODUCTION

The labor market, much like any other market, is characterized by three fundamental economic components: demand, supply, and price (wages or remuneration). Demand for labor encompasses the availability of employment opportunities across the public, corporate, and private sectors, both domestically and internationally. The supply of labor is represented by the influx of individuals entering the workforce from educational institutions, including schools, universities, and technical and vocational training centers. The price of labor is reflected in the wage rates at which workers are willing to offer their services, both locally and internationally. The interaction of these components forms the basis of labor market dynamics.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines Labour Market Information (LMI) as *"any information concerning the size and composition of the labour market or any part of the labour market, the way it or any part of it functions, its problems, the opportunities which may be available to it, and the employment-related intentions or aspirations of those who are part of it"*. LMI is crucial in facing the uncertainties of the changing demand and supply chains of the labour market - it can reduce job search costs for both employers and job seekers and make the supply and demand of labour more elastic thus making the labour market more flexible and adaptable to changing situations.

LMI also plays a key role in policy planning and implementation. It helps prospective job seekers (students) and workers realign their education and training in response to demand in the labour market leading to better career-management skills and a lower possibility of unemployment. For employers, effective LMI results in fewer skill shortages and a lower turnover rate from an informed workforce and hiring the right people for the right job. Hence, policy planning geared towards guiding the reallocation of skilled workers as per the changing market forces, through effective LMI, can enhance productivity, competitiveness, and economic growth within the market.

Labour Market Information Bulletin provides practical and timely information on the employment situation in the country enabling individuals to explore employment trends in the public, private and corporate sectors. It also comprises information on the supply and demand for workers both from within and outside the country.

CHAPTER 1: LABOUR MARKET

Labour Market Situation in Bhutan and Analysis

Bhutan's labour market continues to evolve, with structural shifts observed in recent years. As an important parameter to measure the economy, the unemployment rate remains a persistent challenge for policy makers and the government, particularly among youth (15-24 years). This demographic continues to experience heightened pressure due to an increasing number of young job seekers entering the labour market annually. This chapter provides an overview of the current labour market situation, drawing on the Second Quarter Labour Force Survey (QLFS) Report 2025, with focus on the economically active population (labour force: employed and unemployed) and the economically inactive population.

Labour Force

As per the recent Second Quarter Labour Force Survey Report 2025, Bhutan's working-age population stands at 604,680 individuals. Among the working-age population, 65.3 percent are active and engaged in the labour market constituting the country's labour force, while the remaining 34.7 percent are out of the labour force and considered inactive.

The labour force consists of both employed and unemployed individuals based on their engagement in the labour market. The employed persons are further categorized into three groups based on their nature of employment - own account workers[1], family workers[2] and employees[3]. About 40.5 percent of the employed are paid employees, 33.2 percent are own account workers, and 26.4 percent are family workers. As per the 2nd Quarter LFS Report 2025, the number of unemployed persons is estimated at 11,432, which corresponds to the national unemployment rate of 2.9 percent.

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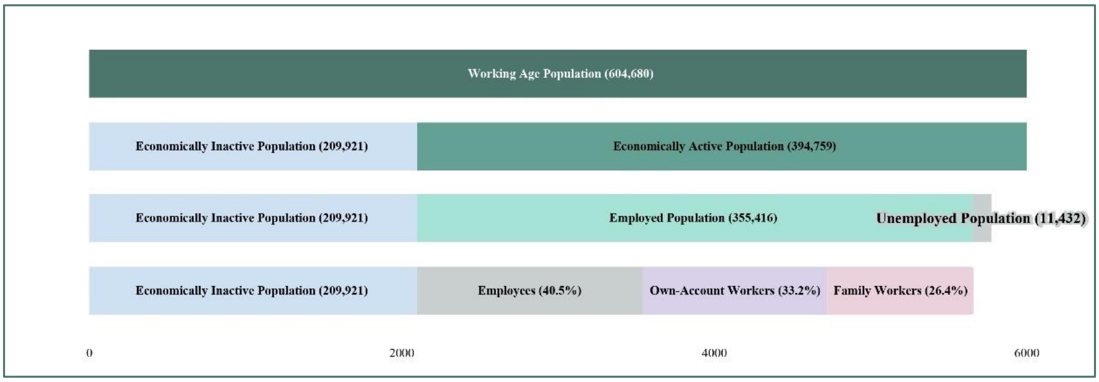
[1]**Own Account Workers:** Own account workers (Agriculture), Own account workers (Non-agriculture) and Employers

[2]**Family Workers:** Family workers (Agriculture) and Family workers (Non-agriculture)

[3]**Employees:** Regular paid, casual paid and contract paid employees

Figure 1.1: Composition of Labour Force, 2025 (2^{nd} Quarter)



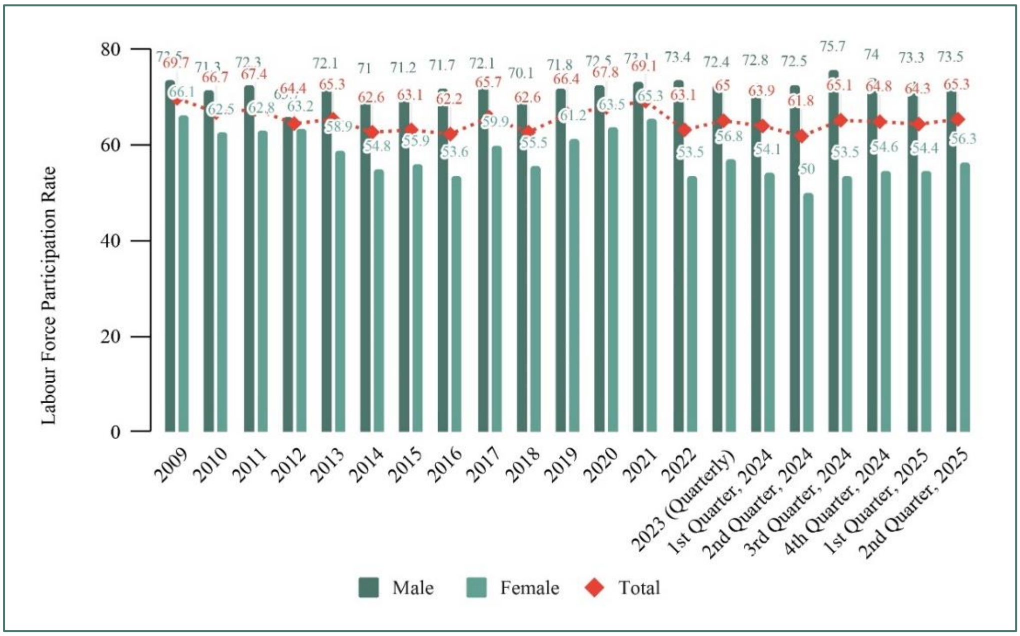
Source: 2^{nd} Quarter LFS Report 2025, NSB

Over the past sixteen years, Bhutan's overall labour force participation rates (LFPR) has demonstrated both resilience and concerning volatility. Beginning at 69.7% in 2009, the overall LFPR showed relative stability despite economic fluctuations, peaking at 69.1% in 2021 before declining to a fifteen-year low of 61.8% in the second quarter of 2024. The male participation rate has remained remarkably stable throughout this period, declining just marginally from 73.5% in 2009 to 72.5% in mid-2024 before recovering to 73.5% by the second quarter of 2025.

In contrast, female participation has shown much greater variability, reaching a high of 65.3% in 2021 before plummeting to 53.5% in 2022 and hitting a record low of 50% in Q2 2024. While recent data shows some recovery to 56.3% by Q2 2025, this still represents a significant 9 percentage point drop from the 2021 peak as illustrated in Figure 1.2 below.

These divergent trends have caused the gender participation gap to fluctuate dramatically, narrowing to just 7.8 percentage points in 2021 before widening to 22.5 points during the 2024 and currently standing at 17.2 points as of mid-2025. The overall LFPR's partial recovery to 65.3% in Q2 2025 suggests some labor market stabilization, though rates remain substantially below pre-pandemic levels, indicating persistent structural challenges in Bhutan's workforce engagement patterns.

Figure 1.2: Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) by sex (2009-2025)



Source: LFS Reports 2009-2017, MoICE; LFS Report 2018-2025, NSB

Bhutan's labor force continues to demonstrate distinct age and gender participation patterns, with the latest data revealing persistent disparities. Participation rates peak sharply for both genders in their prime working years, reaching their highest levels between ages 35-44, though significant gender gaps emerge early and widen substantially with age.

Key Patterns:

1. ***Early Career (15-24 years):***

- Both genders show similar trajectories, rising from 5.9% (15-19) to 52.8% (20-24)
- Gender gap remains minimal (6.2% male vs 5.6% female at 15-19; 54.1% vs 51.7% at 20-24)

2. ***Prime Working Years (25-49):***

- Male participation rises sharply to 84.7% (25-29) and peaks at 96.3% (35-44)
- Female participation peaks later and lower at 76.5% (40-44)
- Gender gap widens significantly from 18.2 percentage points (25-29) to 26.5 points (40-44)

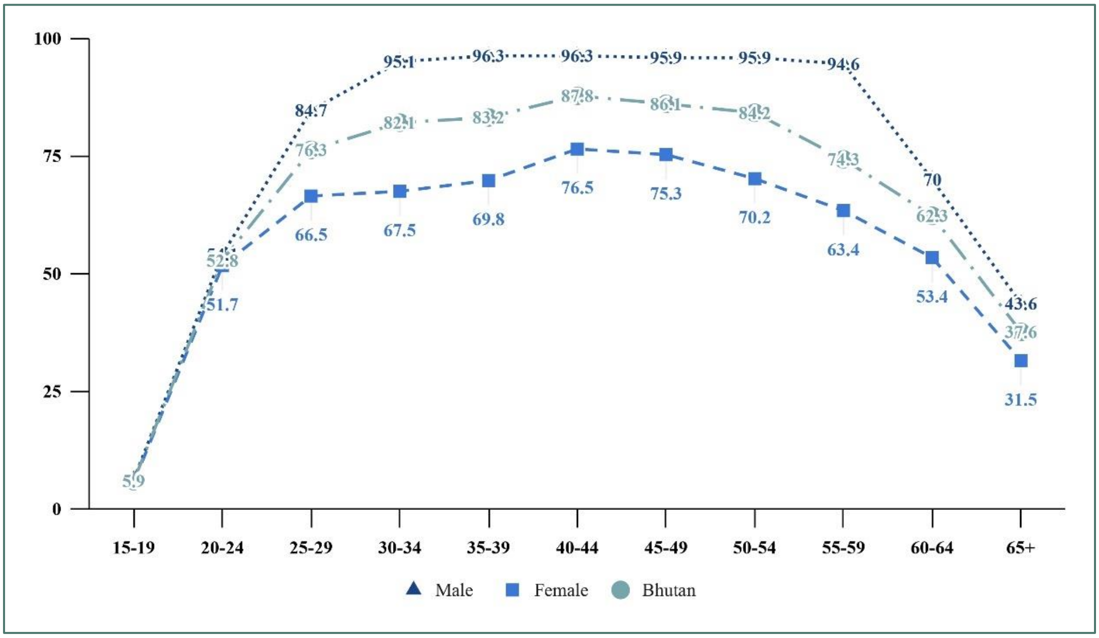
3. ***Later Career (50+ years):***

- Male participation remains above 90% until age 54
- Female rates decline steadily from 70.2% (50-54) to 31.5% (65+)
- Only 37.6% of seniors (65+) remain economically active

Critical Findings:

- The 25-29 age group marks a turning point where female participation (66.5%) begins diverging from male rates (84.7%)
- While male participation exceeds 95% between 30-54, female rates never surpass 77%
- The steepest female decline occurs after age 45, suggesting multiple exit factors

Figure 1.3: Labour Force Participation rate (LFPR) by area and sex, 2025 (2nd Quarter)



Source: 2nd Quarter LFS Report 2025, NSB

Employment

Table 1.1 shows the share of employed persons by major economic activity and gender. Of the total employed persons, 43.5% are engaged in ***Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing,*** confirming its position as Bhutan's dominant employment sector. ***Wholesale & Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles activities*** account for 8.8% of employment, followed closely by ***Public Administration and Defense*** at 9.3%.

The gender breakdown reveals both similarities and striking differences in employment patterns:

For both male and female workers, ***Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing*** remains the primary activity, though with significant disparity:

- 35.9% of employed males work in this sector
- 54.5% of employed females work in this sector

Beyond agriculture, male and female employment patterns diverge noticeably:

Male Employment:

- Public Administration and Defense (12.5%)
- Construction (10.4%)
- Transportation and Storage (6.9%)

Female Employment:

- Wholesale & Retail Trade (11.4%)
- Manufacturing (8.6%)
- Accommodation and Food Service Activities (7.1%)

The data reveals extreme gender concentration in certain sectors:

- Construction employs **14 times** more males than females (10.4% vs 0.7%)
- Transportation shows **12 times** more male participation (6.9% vs 0.6%)
- Conversely, Accommodation and Food Services employs **twice** as many females as males (7.1% vs 3.6%)

Other notable sectors include:

- Education maintains relative gender balance (6.3% male vs 5.3% female)
- Health and Social Work shows slightly higher female participation (2.4% vs 2.0%)
- Emerging sectors like Information and Communication remain small (<1%) for both genders

Table 1.1: Percentage distribution of employed persons by major economic activity and sex, 2025 (2nd Quarter)

Major Economic Activity	Sex		Bhutan
	Male	Female	
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	35.87%	54.50%	43.47%
Public Administration and Defence	12.45%	4.64%	9.27%
Wholesale & Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles	7.03%	11.42%	8.82%
Manufacturing	6.01%	8.56%	7.05%
Construction	10.41%	0.72%	6.46%
Education	6.30%	5.28%	5.89%
Accomodation and Food Service Activities	3.56%	7.12%	5.01%
Transportation and Storage	6.92%	0.59%	4.34%
Human Health and Social Work	2.03%	2.36%	2.16%
Other Service Activities	1.77%	0.94%	1.43%
Financial and Insurance Activities	1.41%	1.33%	1.38%
Electricity and Gas Supply	1.82%	0.56%	1.31%
Administrative and Support Service Activities	1.68%	0.66%	1.26%
Information and Communication	1.32%	0.45%	0.96%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities	0.49%	0.33%	0.43%
Mining and Quarrying	0.44%	0.13%	0.31%
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	0.23%	0.33%	0.27%
Real Estate Activities	0.15%	0.02%	0.09%
Activities of Extraterritorial Organizations and Bodies	0.06%	0.00%	0.03%
Activities of Households as Employers	0.00%	0.06%	0.03%
Water Supply, Sewerage, Waste Management	0.03%	0.00%	0.02%
Total	**51.7%**	**40.9%**	**100.0%**

Source: 2nd Quarter LFS Report 2024, NSB

By using the major economic activity, the structure of employment in the labour market can be categorized into three sectors – agriculture[4], industry[5], and service[6]

[4]**Agriculture Sector:** Agriculture and Forestry

[5]**Industry Sector:** Mining and Quarrying, Manufacturing and Construction

[6]**Service Sector:** Electricity and Gas Supply, Water Supply, Sewage, Waste Management, Wholesale & Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles, Transportation and Storage, Accommodation and Food Service Activities, Information and Communication, Financial and Insurance Activities, Real Estate Activities, Public Administration and Defense, Education, Human Health and Social Work, Arts, Entertainment and Recreation, Other service Activities, Activities of Households as Employers and Activities of Extraterritorial Organizations and Bodies

sectors. Figure 1.4 presents the gender-disaggregated distribution of employed persons, showing both transformation and continuity in employment patterns.

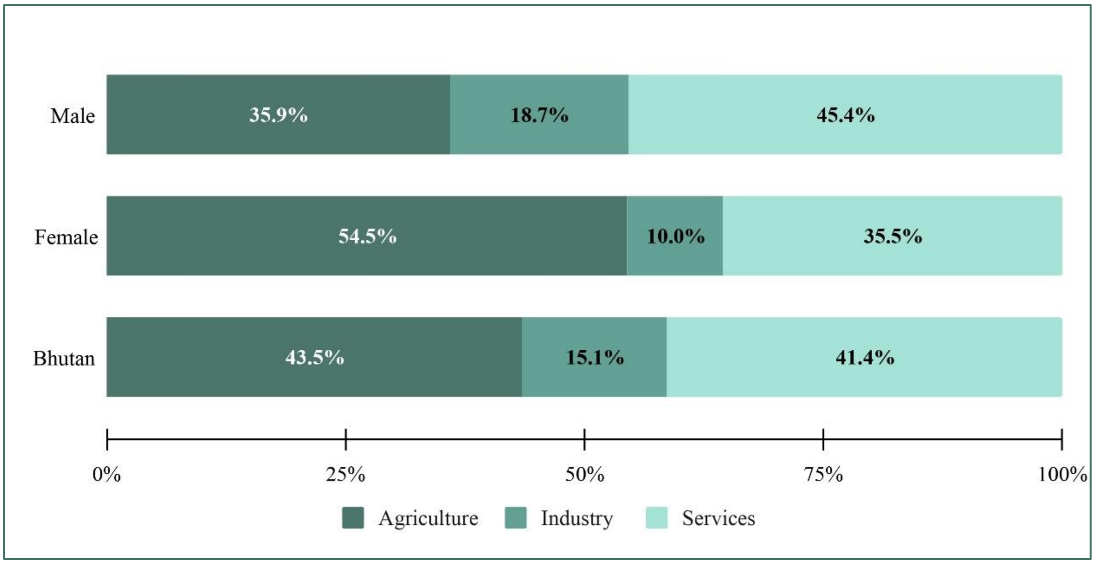
While the employment structure has been gradually changing, moving from primary to tertiary sector, the agriculture sector continues to be the largest sector of employment in Bhutan’s labour market. As of the second quarter of 2025, the agriculture sector constitutes 43.5 percent of the total employed persons followed by the service sector with 41.4 percent and industry sector with 15.1 percent of the employees.

The gender breakdown reveals distinct patterns:

- Male employment is led by services (45.4%), followed by agriculture (35.9%) and industry (18.7%)
- Female employment remains concentrated in agriculture (54.5%), with services (35.5%) and industry (10.0%) following

This gradual shift toward services reflects Bhutan's economic modernization, while the persistent agricultural base and gender disparities highlight ongoing structural features of the labor market.

Figure 1.4: Percentage distribution of employed persons by sector and sex, 2025 (2nd Quarter)



Source: 2nd Quarter LFS Report 2024, NSB

Deep Dive: Structural Barriers in the Private Sector

While the LFS data effectively maps the landscape of gender inequality in Bhutan's labour market, a recent analysis of administrative data from the Bhutan Labour Market Information System (BLMIS) provides a deeper diagnosis of the structural drivers within the formal private sector. This analysis moves beyond the "what" to explore the "why" and "how" of occupational and sectoral segregation.

Key findings from the Study includes:

- **The Pay Gap is Architectural**: The observed gender pay gap (mean of 15.6%) is not primarily due to unequal pay for equal work. Instead, it is driven by **systematic segregation** that channels women and men into different jobs, sectors, and employment types with fundamentally different economic valuations.
- **The Three Pillars of Inequality:**
  1. **Occupational Segregation ("Glass Walls"):** Women are highly concentrated in supportive roles (Clerical: 64% female; Services & Sales: 59% female), while men dominate technical and industrial trades (Craft & Trades: 80% male; Plant Operation: 92% male).
  2. **Sectoral Undervaluation**: The most feminized sector, **Accommodation & Food Services** (61% female), has the **lowest median wage** in the economy (Nu. 12,000). Conversely, high-paying sectors like **Energy** are overwhelmingly male-dominated.
  3. **Precarity of Work**: Women are overrepresented in vulnerable "**own account work**" (62% female), which lacks security and benefits, while men are more likely to hold stable "**regular" employment** (62% male).
- **The Educational Pipeline**: This labour market segregation is prefigured in educational choices. Women are significantly underrepresented in high-value fields like **Engineering & Technology (21% female**) and overrepresented in fields like **Arts (61% female),** creating a qualifications mismatch that locks them out of high-growth economic pathways long before they enter the workforce.

Policy Implication: These findings indicate that closing gender gaps requires transformative policies that target the entire ecosystem—from educational pathways and sectoral valuation to workplace practices and social protection—to dismantle these deeply embedded structural barriers.

Source: *Gender Inequality in Bhutan's Private Sector: An Analysis of Structural Barriers from the BLMIS (Working Paper, 2025). Data based on full BLMIS employee records as of August 2025 (n=64,864)*

Unemployment

Between 2013-2019, the Unemployment rates remained relatively stable, fluctuating within a narrow range of 2.1 to 3.4 percent. This period of stability was disrupted from 2020 onwards, when unemployment rates climbed significantly, averaging between 4.8% and 5.9% annually. The national unemployment rate peaked at 5.9% in 2022, driven primarily by urban unemployment reaching 10.4%, compared to just 3.4% in rural areas - highlighting unemployment as predominantly an urban challenge.

Gender Disparities:

Male unemployment rates have consistently remained below female rates throughout this period, with the gender gap widening particularly from 2017 onwards. The disparity reached its peak in 2022 when female unemployment (7.9%) was nearly double the male rate (4.4%).

Recent Improvements:

The latest data from the second quarter of 2025 shows encouraging signs of labor market recovery:

- National unemployment has declined to 2.9%, marking a significant improvement from:
    - 3.6% in Q1 2025
    - 3.7% in Q2 2024
    - The 5.9% peak in 2022
- Urban unemployment has fallen to 5.4%, less than half the 2022 peak (10.4%)
- Rural unemployment stands at just 1.6%, maintaining its traditionally lower levels

Gender Gap Narrowing:

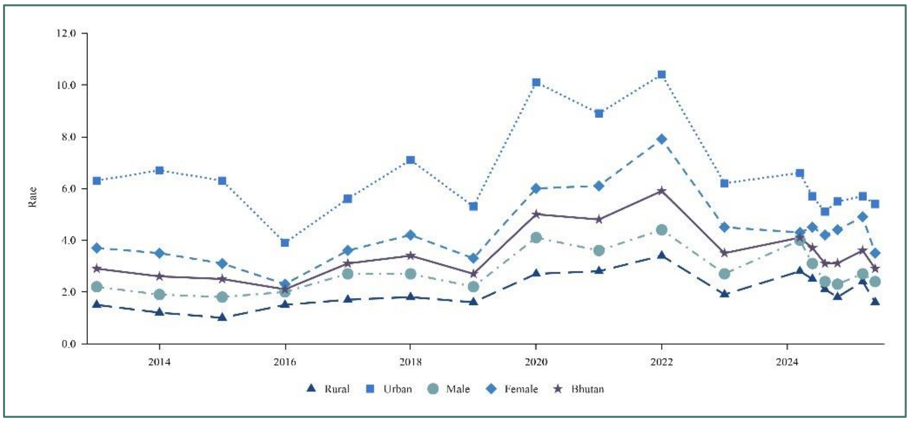
While gender differences persist, the disparity has reduced:

- Male unemployment: 2.4%
- Female unemployment: 3.5%

This represents a notable improvement from the 3.5 percentage point gap in 2022 to just 1.1 points in Q2 2025.

This recent data suggests a slight improvement in the overall unemployment situation in Bhutan, particularly in urban areas, where the reduction is more pronounced.

Figure 1.5: Unemployment rates over the years by area and sex (2013 – 2025)

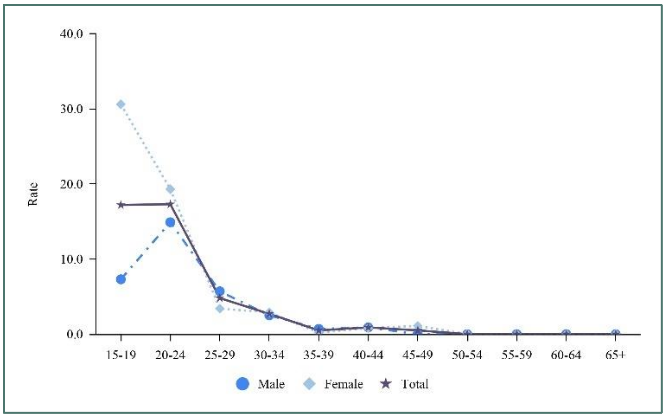


Source: LFS Reports 2013-2017, MoICE; LFS Report 2018-2025, NSB

Figure 1.9 reveals stark disparities in unemployment rates across age groups, with Bhutan's youth continuing to face the most severe employment challenges. The data shows;

- Alarming youth unemployment, particularly among:
    - Females aged 15-19 (30.6%)
    - Both sexes in the 20-24 brackets (17.3% total)
- Significant gender gap in teenage unemployment (7.3% males vs 30.6% female)
- Employment stability improves dramatically after age 25, with;
    - Rates falling below 5% for 25-29 years old.
    - Minimal unemployment (under 1%) from age 35 onwards

Figure 1.6: Unemployment rates by age group and sex, 2nd Quarter, 2025



Source: 2nd Quarter LFS Report 2024, NSB

Youth Unemployment

Youth unemployment in Bhutan has shown concerning increases over the past decade, rising from 9.5 percent in 2013 to a peak of 28.6 percent in 2022. Recent data indicates modest improvements, with the rate declining to 17.3 percent as of the second quarter of 2025.

Urban areas continue to experience higher youth unemployment, though the gap with rural areas has narrowed significantly. Urban youth unemployment stood at 22.0 percent in Q2 2025, compared to 12.8 percent in rural areas - a gap of 9.2 percentage points, down from 18.8 points in 2013.

Gender disparities persist but show signs of easing:

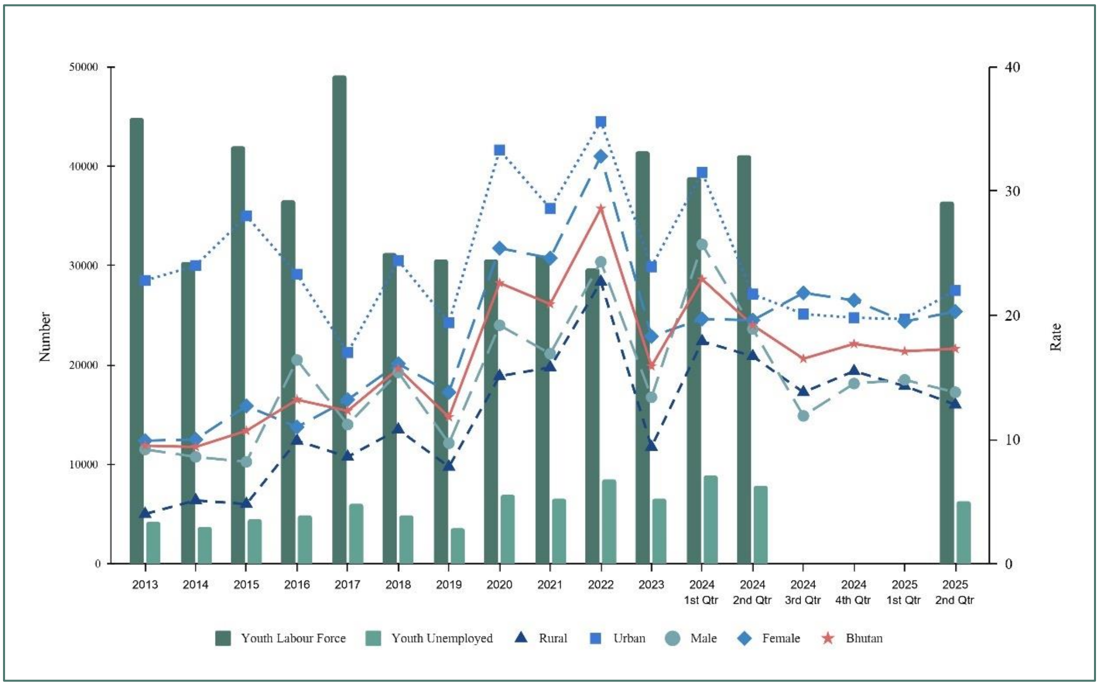
- Male youth unemployment: 13.8 percent (down from 24.3% in 2022)

Key Observations:

1. While youth unemployment remains elevated, the downward trend since 2022 is encouraging
2. The urban-rural gap has narrowed by more than half since 2013
3. Female youth continue to face higher unemployment, though the gender gap has reduced from 8.5 percentage points in 2022 to 6.5 points in Q2 2025
4. Current rates remain substantially higher than the 2013 baseline (9.5%), indicating persistent structural challenges in youth employment

The data suggests that while recent interventions may be having a positive effect, targeted efforts remain necessary - particularly for urban youth and young women entering the labor market. The improvement from 2022's peak (28.6%) to 17.3% in Q2 2025 represents important progress, but youth unemployment remains nearly double the 2013 level.

Figure 1.7: Youth unemployment rate by sex (2013-2025)



Source: LFS Reports 2013-2017, MoICE; LFS Report 2018-2025, NSB

Not in the Labour Force

Similar to the LFPR trends, Bhutan's rate of economic inactivity has shown fluctuations over the years, reaching 35.7 percent in the second quarter of 2025, up from 34.7 percent in 2013 but showing recent improvement from the 2024 peak of 38.2 percent.

The urban-rural divide in inactivity rates persists but has narrowed slightly:

- Urban areas reported 40.2 percent inactivity in Q2 2025 (down from 43.3% in Q4 2024)
- Rural areas showed 32.9 percent inactivity (down from 35% in Q4 2024)

This maintains the historical pattern of urban areas having higher inactivity, though the gap has reduced from 8.3 percentage points in Q4 2024 to 7.3 points in Q2 2025.

Gender disparities remain pronounced:

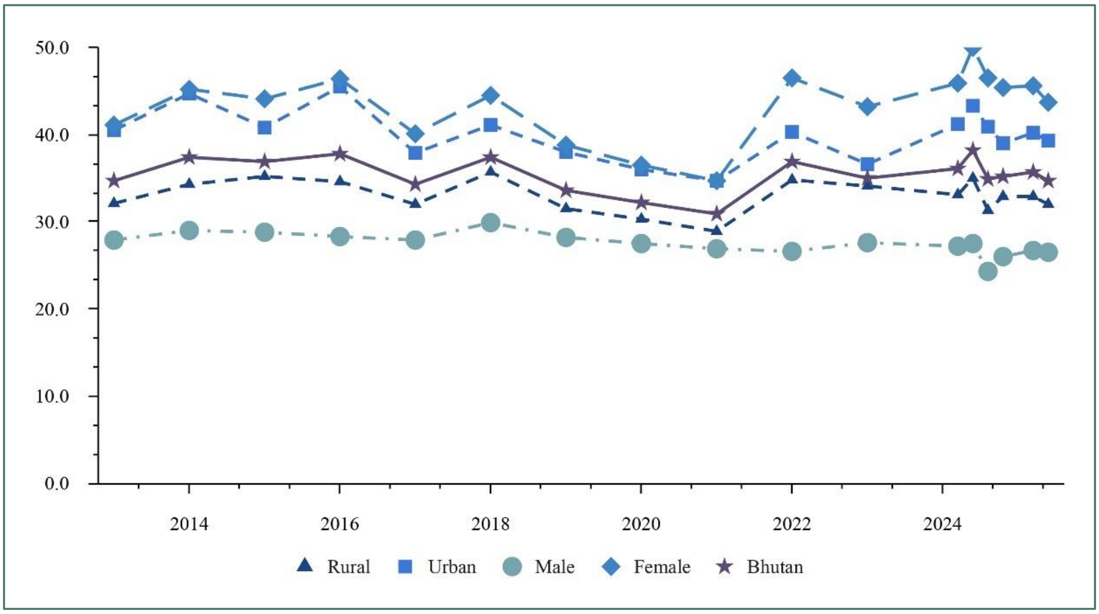
- Female inactivity stood at 45.6 percent in Q2 2025 (down from 50% in Q4 2024 but still elevated)
- Male inactivity remained stable at 26.7 percent, showing minimal change from 27.9 percent in 2013

Key Observations:

1. The overall inactivity rate has moderated from its 2024 peak (38.2%) to 35.7% in Q2 2025
2. Urban areas continue to show higher disengagement from the labor force compared to rural areas
3. The gender gap remains substantial at 18.9 percentage points (45.6% female vs 26.7% male)
4. Recent quarters show positive movement, with inactivity rates declining across all categories since late 2024

While the labor market shows signs of tightening, the persistently high inactivity rates - particularly among women and urban populations - suggest structural barriers to workforce participation remain.

Figure 1.8: Rate of inactivity over the years (2013-2025)



Source: LFS Reports 2013-2017, MoICE; LFS Report 2018-2025, NSB

The latest data reveals distinct lifecycle patterns in economic inactivity, with significant variations across age groups and persistent gender disparities in Bhutan's labour market.

Age-Specific Trends:

- Youth (15-19 years): Show near-universal inactivity (94.1%), with 92.9% of males and 94.4% of females outside the labour force - reflecting educational enrollment.
- Young Adults (20-24 years): Activity surges as 47.2% remain inactive, marking the critical school-to-work transition phase.
- Prime Working Age (25-54 years):
  - Inactivity drops sharply to 23.7% (25-29)
  - Reaches its lowest point at 12.2% (35-44)
  - Begins rising slightly from age 45 (13.9%)
- Pre-Retirement (55-64 years):
  - Notable increase to 25.7% (55-59)
  - Jumps to 37.7% (60-64)
- Retirement Age (65+):
  - Over 62.4% inactive
  - 68.5% of women vs 56.4% of men disengaged

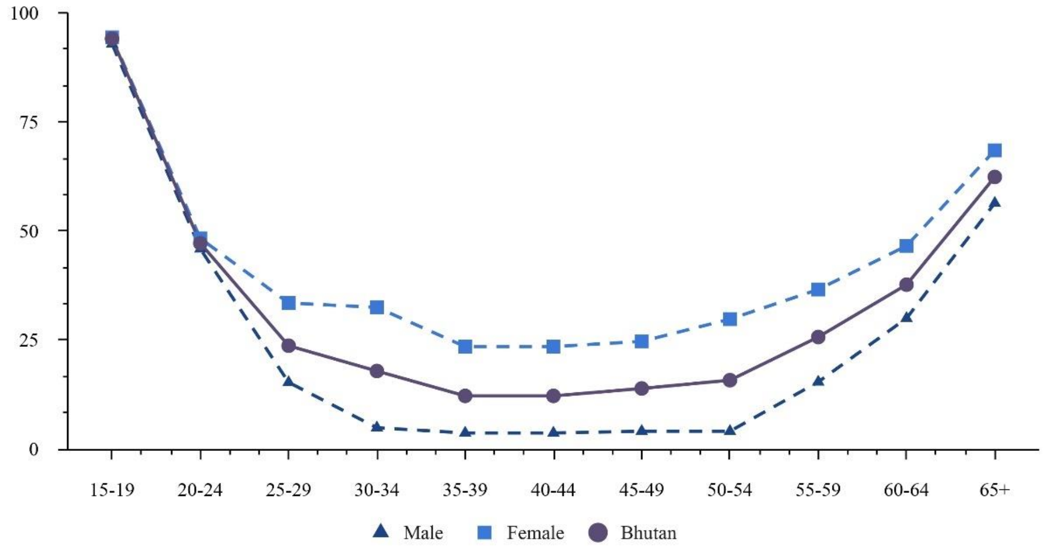
Gender Disparities:

1. The gender gap widens dramatically during childbearing years:
   - 25-29: 33.5% female vs 15.3% male inactivity
   - 30-34: 32.5% vs 4.9%
2. The disparity persists through retirement:
   - 60-64: 46.6% female vs 30% male
   - 65+: 68.5% vs 56.4%
3. Overall inactivity remains gendered:
   - 50% of women vs 27.5% of men outside labour force

Key Implications:

- The 25-34 age bracket represents the critical period where female participation drops most significantly
- Cultural/social factors likely influence the 20+ percentage point gender gaps in prime working years
- Retirement patterns show both genders disengaging, but women exiting earlier and in greater numbers

Figure 1.9: Rate of inactivity by age group and sex, 2025 (2nd Quarter)



Source: 2nd Quarter LFS Report 2025, NSB

CHAPTER 2: LABOUR MARKET INSTITUTION

In line with the Labour and Employment Act of Bhutan 2007, various aspects of labor protection, social security and safety measures are put into place. The government has rectified and improved the regulations on working environment and conditions of workers in both the private and corporate sectors.

Labour market institution is an institution of rules, practices and organizations which enhances smooth operation of the labour market. The balance between labour market flexibility and worker protection which results from the institution of labour administration can contribute to creation of jobs and allocation of labour efficiently. On the contrary, if the institutions are unbalanced and provide labour protection to certain sections of groups, this may lead to poor outcomes in the labour market. To avoid this outcome, the Department of Labour under the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment has devoted their attention to provide balanced labour protection to all workforce.

Table 2.1 shows the number of establishments visited for inspection by the Department of Labour, MoICE, over the past seven fiscal years. A total of 19,202 inspections were carried out across various establishments under different categories-namely routine inspection, follow-up inspection, and special inspection.

In the fiscal year 2023-2024, a new initiative, self-inspection, was introduced. This allows establishments to perform their own inspections using a checklist provided in the BLMIS system, aiming to improve operational efficiency and compliance. This new initiative is evidenced by the increase in self-inspections, with 304 such inspections recorded in the fiscal year 2023-2024 and 86 in the most recent fiscal year.

Table 2.1: Number of establishments visited for inspection by dzongkhag (2018-2025)

Dzongkhag	Routine Inspection							Follow-up Inspection							Special Inspection							Self-Inspection	
	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2023-2024	2024-2025
Bumthang	43	41	49	73	122	64	**100**	0	18	0	4	0	5	-	0	0	0	2	0	19	-	0	-
Chhukha	480	426	108	110	663	737	**749**	13	12	3	0	30	1	**2**	13	10	3	7	3	81	**9**	159	**12**
Dagana	21	6	32	30	56	20	**126**	0	0	0	1	0	21	**43**	0	0	0	0	0	11	-	0	-
Gasa	28	1	0	1	20	2	**0**	0	1	0	0	0	0	**0**	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	0	**0**
Haa	0	1	0	2	28	60	**28**	1	0	0	1	0	13	-	1	0	0	13	0	6	**1**	1	**1**
Lhuentse	18	11	14	14	23	8	**41**	2	2	0	2	4	7	-	2	0	0	1	0	5	-	0	-
Mongar	65	48	60	45	82	149	**161**	4	5	3	2	10	37	-	4	0	3	2	0	15	-	0	**2**
Paro	2	13	0	103	501	362	**106**	1	1	0	32	66	125	**2**	1	0	0	82	37	53	**8**	2	**3**
Pemagatshel	85	92	74	50	139	110	**107**	13	43	10	5	31	36	**11**	13	0	10	0	0	24	**0**	5	**10**
Punakha	136	130	0	30	120	104	**39**	0	15	0	20	16	12	-	0	1	0	41	7	7	**4**	0	**1**
Samdrup Jongkhar	243	234	249	200	106	89	**129**	30	50	14	16	24	41	**41**	30	0	14	0	0	29	**1**	16	**11**
Samtse	100	69	0	7	266	14	**226**	0	0	0	0	15	0	**1**	0	0	0	1	210	22	-	86	**7**
Sarpang	206	51	163	179	236	3	**207**	5	0	0	19	0	0	**2**	5	0	0	0	0	42	-	6	**12**
Thimphu	792	261	0	145	1871	653	**191**	32	5	0	61	52	155	**1**	32	7	0	45	98	155	**51**	29	**27**
Trashigang	65	43	99	72	26	43	**153**	4	5	10	5	8	29	-	4	0	10	1	0	20	-	0	-
Trashiyangtse	18	15	35	19	76	11	**46**	0	0	0	3	17	9	-	0	1	0	1	0	4	-	0	-
Trongsa	7	5	15	32	35	16	**39**	0	0	0	4	0	5	-	0	0	0	0	0	7	-	0	-
Tsirang	18	4	28	13	28	15	**81**	0	0	0	1	0	9	**7**	0	0	0	0	0	7	-	0	-
Wangdue Phodrang	256	123	0	11	190	46	**25**	1	29	0	8	3	10	-	1	1	0	30	0	8	**2**	0	-
Zhemgang	11	2	14	14	32	34	**77**	0	0	0	2	0	0	-	0	0	0	3	0	1	-	0	-
Total	**2,594**	**1,576**	**940**	**1,150**	**4,620**	**2,540**	**2,631**	**106**	**186**	**40**	**186**	**276**	**515**	**110**	**106**	**20**	**40**	**229**	**355**	**516**	**76**	**304**	**86**

Source: DoL, MoICE

Table 2.2 outlines the status of complaints by Dzongkhags for the fiscal year 2024-2025. Thimphu had the highest number of complaints resolved (17), with 6 pending and 3 withdrawn. Paro had 6 complaints resolved, with 1 under pending and no withdrawn.

In total, 35 complaints were resolved, 31 were pending, 6 were withdrawn, 105 rejected and 33 were forwarded to Headquarter or across all regions.

Table 2.2: Status of complaints by region, 2024-2025

Dzongkhag	Dismissed	Forwared to HQ/RO	Rejected	Resolved	Pending	Withdrawn	Total
Bumthang	-	0	-	-	4	-	4
Chhukha	-	2	-	1	1	-	4
Dagana	-	0	-	-	3	-	3
Lhuentse	-	0	3	-		-	3
Monggar	1	1	3	-	4	1	10
Paro	1	4	16	6	1	-	28
Pemagatshel	-	0	-	4	-	-	4
Punakha	-	1	5	-	-	-	6
Samdrup Jongkhar	-	1	9	2	-	-	12
Samtse	-	2	-	-	2	-	4
Sarpang	-	0	-	-	2	-	2
Thimphu	9	16	48	17	6	3	99
Trashigang	2	2	6	1	1	2	14
Trashiyangtse	-	0	4	-	5	-	9
Trongsa	-	0	-	-	1	-	1
Tsirang	-	0	-	-	1	-	1
Wangdue Phodrang	-	4	11	4		-	19
Total	**13**	**33**	**105**	**35**	**31**	**6**	**223**

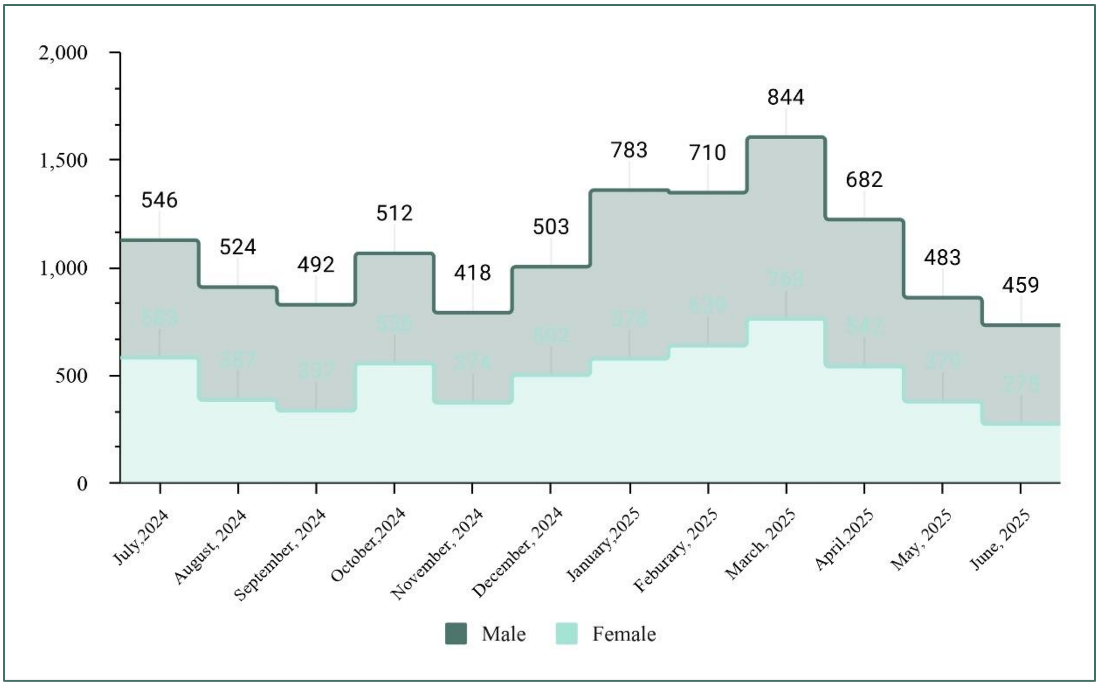
Source: DoL, MoICE

CHAPTER 3: LABOUR SUPPLY

Job Seekers

A closer look into the job seekers who registered in the Bhutan Labour Market Information System[7], in the Fiscal Year 2024-2025, a total of 12,871 job seekers registered, comprising 6,956 males (54%) and 5,915 females (46%). Analysis of monthly registration trends reveals notable peaks: the highest number of registrations occurred in March, 2025 and January, 2025. The January peak likely reflects new entrants from schools graduating and entering the job market, while the March spike may be attributed to graduates from higher educational institutions such as colleges and universities. Conversely, the lowest registration was observed in June, 2025, suggesting a potential seasonal drop-in jobseeker activity.

Figure 3.1: Number of Jobseekers registered in the BLMIS by sex, 2024-2025

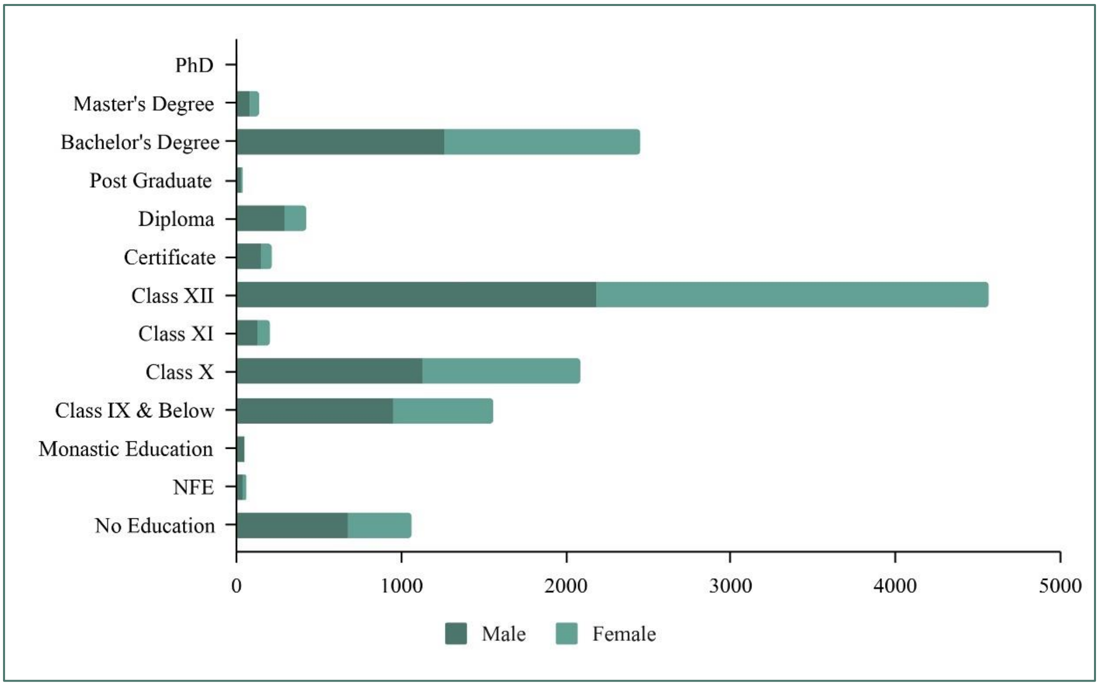


Source: ESD, DoEE, MoICE

[7] The Bhutan Labour Market Information System is an online platform where jobseekers and employers can register and access employment related services. They can avail the various engagement and training schemes offered by the government.

Majority of the registered jobseekers (37.1%) were those who had completed Higher Secondary Education (4773). 19 percent with a Bachelor's Degree and 16.2 percent had completed Middle Secondary Education as seen in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2: Number of Jobseekers registered in the BLMIS by educational attainment and sex, 2024-2025



Source: ESD, DoEE, MoICE

Tertiary and Technical Education Statistics

As of August, 2025, there are about 12,540 students pursuing tertiary education in Bhutan, with the Royal University of Bhutan (RUB) alone constituting around 75.5 percent of the total undergraduate students. Of the total enrollment, 47.2 percent are male undergraduate students and 52.8 percent are female undergraduate students as shown in the Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: Number of undergraduates within Bhutan by institutes and sex as of August 2025

Name of College	Male	Female	Total
Royal University of Bhutan	**4,818**	**4,651**	**9,469**
College of Language and Culture studies	25	52	**77**
College of Natural Resources	248	366	**614**
College of Science and Technology	922	372	**1294**
Gedu College of Business Studies	594	620	**1214**
Gyalpozhing College of Information Technology	298	142	**440**
Jigme Namgyel Engineering College	512	316	**828**
Norbuling Rigter College	346	500	**846**
Paro College of Education	462	641	**1103**
Royal Thimphu College	658	831	**1489**
Samtse College of Education	281	490	**771**
Sherubtse College	472	321	**793**
Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Sciences	**890**	**1746**	**2,636**
Apollo Bhutan Nursing Institute	149	505	**654**
Arura Acacemy of Health Sciences	148	393	**541**
Faculty of Nursing & Health Sciences, Royal Thimphu College	188	338	**526**
Faculty of Nursing & Public Health	317	405	**722**
Faculty of Postgraduate Medicine	25	25	**50**
Faculty of Traditional Medicine	41	48	**89**
Faculty of Under Graduate Medicine (Taba)	22	32	**54**
Autonomous Institutes	**217**	**218**	**435**
Royal Institute of Management	189	139	**328**
Jigme Singye Wangchuck school of law	28	79	**107**
Total	**5,925**	**6,615**	**12,540**

Source: From the MIS of respective Universities and Autonomous Institutes, as of 15th August 2025

Alongside the increasing number of undergraduate students within Bhutan, many are also pursuing tertiary education abroad. As of August, 2025, there are 3,160 undergraduate students studying overseas. The majority (44.3%) are in Australia, followed by 26.3 percent in India and 10.5 percent in Canada as shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Number of undergraduate students outside Bhutan by country of study and sex as of August 2025

Country	Scholarship		Self funded		Male	Female	Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female			
Australia	9	1	639	750	648	751	**1399**
Azerbhaijian	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Bangladesh	44	67	7	14	51	81	**132**
Canada	6	8	121	198	127	206	**333**
China	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Cuba	2	0	0	0	2	0	**2**
Cyprus	0	0	20	22	20	22	**42**
Georgia	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Germany	2	1	0	0	2	1	**3**
Europe	0	0	1	1	1	1	**2**
India	104	91	282	353	386	444	**830**
Japan	2	2	1	0	3	2	**5**
Malaysia	3	3	0	0	3	3	**6**
Maldives	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Malta	0	0	1	2	1	2	**3**
New Zealand	0	0	3	6	3	6	**9**
Nicosia	0	0	1	0	1	0	**1**
Republic of Cyp	0	0	33	31	33	31	**64**
Singapore	0	0	6	4	6	4	**10**
Sri Lanka	54	74	0	0	54	74	**128**
Spain	1	1	0	0	1	1	**2**
Thailand	60	100	1	0	61	100	**161**
UAE	0	0	1	0	1	0	**1**
United Kingdom	2	3	4	4	6	7	**13**
USA	8	6	0	0	8	6	**14**
Missing	0	0	14	21	14	21	**35**
Total	**297**	**357**	**1135**	**1406**	**1418**	**1742**	**3160**

Source: Civil Service Exam and UG Scholarship Division, RCSC & Higher Education and Qualify Council, BQPCA, MoESD & Youth Welfare Education Office, HM Secretariat.

Note; Compared to last year's report, the total number of undergraduate students studying outside Bhutan is less because last year the total figure included even those pursing Master's and PhD. But this year, only those pursuing Undergraduate and below are reflected.

Although there are a very large number of undergraduate students pursuing their tertiary education both inside and outside Bhutan, the number of trainees in the Technical Training Institutes (TTIs) is remains relatively low. As of June 2024, there are 2,325 trainees in TTIs under MoESD, with approximately 75.3 percent male and 24.7 percent female (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3: Number of trainees currently enrolled in Technical Training Institutes (TTIs) by trade and sex as of June 2025

Trade	Male	Female	Total
TTI - Chumey	**216**	**38**	**254**
Plumbing (IC)	23	10	33
Shielded Metal Arc Welding (IC)	6	0	6
Tile Laying (IC)	45	0	45
Wooden Furniture Making (IC)	11	0	11
Mason (BQF Certificate 2)	15	7	22
Plumber (BQF Certificate 2)	57	12	69
Welder (BQF Certificate 2)	12	0	12
Wooden Furniture Maker (BQF Certificate 2)	5	0	5
Construction Carpenter (BQF Certificate 3)	9	0	9
Mason (BQF Certificate 3)	13	3	16
Welder (BQF Certificate 3)	3	0	3
Construction Supervisor (BQF Diploma)	17	6	23
TTI - Khuruthang	**185**	**90**	**275**
Domestic Wiring (IC)	10	2	12
Home Appliance (IC)	5	1	6
Domestic Wiring Technician (BQF Certificate 2)	103	64	167
Welder (BQF Certificate 2)	29	6	35
Industry Electrical Technician (BQF Certificate 3)	10	7	17
Mechanical Fitter (BQF Certificate 3)	16	8	24
Welder (BQF Certificate 3)	12	2	14
TTI - Rangjung	**171**	**84**	**255**

Cloud Computing - AWS re/Start Program (IC)	18	10	28
Automotive Technician (BQF Certificate 2)	19	2	21
Computer Systems and Network Technician (BQF Certificate 2)	32	21	53
Domestic Wiring Technician (BQF Certificate 2)	67	38	105
Wooden Furniture Maker (BQF Certificate 2)	18	0	18
Computer Systems and Network Technician (BQF Certificate 3)	8	7	15
Industry Electrical Technician (BQF Certificate 3)	9	6	15
TTI - Samthang	**272**	**66**	**338**
Backhoe Operator (IC)	19	1	20
Excavator Operator (IC)	19	1	20
Hair and Beauty Therapy (IC)	9	31	40
Heavy Vehicle Driving (IC)	47	1	48
Auto Electrician (BQF Certificate 2)	10	4	14
Automotive Technician (BQF Certificate 2)	43	2	45
Backhoe Operator (BQF Certificate 2)	15	0	15
Earth Moving Equipment Mechanic (BQF Certificate 2)	5	0	5
Excavator Operator (BQF Certificate 2)	20	0	20
Hair and Beauty Therapist (BQF Certificate 2)	2	15	17
Heavy Auto Mechanic (BQF Certificate 2)	5	0	5
Heavy Vehicle Driving (BQF Certificate 2)	18	0	18
Auto Electrician (BQF Certificate 3)	20	1	21
Automotive Technician (BQF Certificate 3)	22	7	29
EV Technician (BQF Certificate 3)	9	0	9
Automobile Workshop Supervisor (BQF Diploma)	9	3	12
TTI - Thimphu	**186**	**25**	**211**
Digital Marketing (IC)	24	12	36
Electric Vehicle (IC)	13	0	13
Panel Beating (IC)	7	1	8
Auto Electrician (BQF Certificate 2)	8	3	11

Automotive Technician (BQF Certificate 2)	51	1	52
Panel Beater (BQF Certificate 2)	5	0	5
Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Technician (BQF Certificate 2)	11	5	16
Automotive Technician (BQF Certificate 3)	30	0	30
HVAC Technologist (BQF Certificate 3)	8	2	10
Automotive Technologist (BQF Diploma)	17	0	17
HVAC Technologist (BQF Diploma)	12	1	13
JWPTI - Dekiling	**720**	**272**	**992**
Biomedical Equipment Technician (IC)	6	5	11
Domestic Wiring (IC)	105	15	120
Masonry (IC)	17	1	18
Refrigeration and Air conditioning (IC)	3	3	6
Solar Power Technology (IC)	10	14	24
Tile Laying (IC)	3	0	3
Upholstery (IC)	1	6	7
Building Wiring (BQF Certificate 2)	21	13	34
Civil work and internal design (Masonry) (BQF Certificate 2)	31	21	52
Construction carpentry (BQF Certificate 2)	24	6	30
Digital Fabrication (BQF Certificate 2)	6	9	15
Fitter (BQF Certificate 2)	14	3	17
Jimzo (Sclupturing) (BQF Certificate 2)	24	7	31
Lhadri (Painting) (BQF Certificate 2)	46	31	77
Patra (wood carving) (BQF Certificate 2)	45	5	50
Plumbing and sanitary (BQF Certificate 2)	15	15	30
PV Solar Technology (BQF Certificate 2)	14	9	23
Robotics (BQF Certificate 2)	3	4	7
Transmission & Distribution line technician (BQF Certificate 2)	17	22	39
Trezo (metal smith and engraving) (BQF Certificate 2)	18	0	18
Tshemdru (embroidery) (BQF Certificate 2)	11	24	35

Welding (BQF Certificate 2)	28	3	31
Construction Carpenter (BQF Certificate 2)	7	2	9
Domestic Wiring Technician (BQF Certificate 2)	67	12	79
Mason (BQF Certificate 2)	49	9	58
Mechanical Fitter (BQF Certificate 2)	9	4	13
Plumber (BQF Certificate 2)	40	9	49
Transmission and Distribution Technician (BQF Certificate 2)	21	5	26
Upholsterer (BQF Certificate 2)	1	3	4
Welder (BQF Certificate 2)	21	2	23
Wooden Furniture Maker (BQF Certificate 2)	14	3	17
Construction Carpenter (BQF Certificate 3)	3	0	3
Mason (BQF Certificate 3)	2	3	5
Welder (BQF Certificate 3)	10	0	10
Solar Power Technologist (BQF Diploma)	14	4	18
Total	**1750**	**575**	**2325**

Source: SLPD, DoWPSD, MoESD

In the Institutes of Zorig Chusum (IZCs) under the MoESD, there are 340 trainees, with 57.6 percent male and 42.3 percent female (Table 3.4). While female enrollment in Technical Training Institutes (TTIs) is significantly lower than that of males, the enrollment numbers for males and females in the IZCs are relatively similar.

Table 3.4: Number of trainees currently enrolled in Institute for Zorig Chusum (IZC) by trade and sex as of June 2025

Trade	Male	Female	Total
National Institute of Zorig Chusum- Thimphu	**140**	**84**	**224**
Contemporary Art(IC)	19	2	21
Troezo (Gold and Silver Smith)(IC)	5	1	6
Lhadrip(IC)	16	0	16
Lhemdrup/ Applique(IC)	9	6	15
Parzo- Shingzo(IC)	13	0	13
Tshemzo(IC)	3	36	39
Jimzop(BQF Certificate 2)	17	2	19
Lhadrip(BQF Certificate 2)	14	3	17
Patrap(BQF Certificate 2)	10	0	10
Tshemzop(BQF Certificate 2)	5	26	31
Lhadrip(BQF Certificate 3)	16	0	16
Troezop(BQF Certificate 3)	5	0	5
Tshemzop(BQF Certificate 3)	2	8	10
Lhadrip(BQF Diploma)	6	0	6
College of Zorig Chusum - Trashiyangtse	**56**	**60**	**116**
Lhadrip(BQF Certificate 2)	12	0	12
Patrap(BQF Certificate 2)	13	0	13
Shagzop(BQF Certificate 2)	1	0	1
Troezop(BQF Certificate 2)	1	0	1
Tshemdrup(BQF Certificate 2)	1	5	6
Tshemzop(BQF Certificate 2)	1	22	23
Jimzop(BQF Certificate 3)	7	0	7
Troezop(BQF Certificate 3)	8	0	8
Tshemdrup(BQF Certificate 3)	0	11	11
Tshemzop(BQF Certificate 3)	0	12	12
Jimzop(BQF Diploma)	3	0	3
Patrap(BQF Diploma)	9	0	9
Tshemzop(BQF Diploma)	0	10	10
Total	**196**	**144**	**340**

Source: SLPD, DoWPSD, MoESD

The Royal Institute of Tourism and Hospitality (RITH) and the Rural Development Training Center (RDTC) under the MoESD, have a total of 382 trainees. Of these, 47.6 percent are male, and 52.4 percent are female, as shown in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5: Number of trainees currently enrolled in RITH and RDTC by trade and sex as of June 2025

Trade	Male	Female	Total
Royal Institute of Tourism and Hospitality (RITH) - Thimphu	**81**	**78**	**159**
Bakery and Confectionery(IC)	2	10	12
Bartender(IC)	17	4	21
Culinary Arts(IC)	8	4	12
Hotel Operation Supervisor(BQF Diploma)	29	38	67
Tour Operation Supervisor(BQF Diploma)	25	22	47
Rural Development Training Center (RDTC) - Zhemgang	**101**	**122**	**223**
Bakery and Confectionary(IC)	17	22	39
Barista(IC)	42	46	88
Basic Floriculture(IC)	3	5	8
Culinary Arts(IC)	10	13	23
Food Product Development(IC)	11	23	34
Herb and Spices Product Development(IC)	2	6	8
Orchid culture(IC)	4	0	4
Landscape Technician(BQF Certificate 3)	12	7	19
Total	**182**	**200**	**382**

Source: SLPD, DoWPSD, MoESD

Foreign Workers

In the fiscal year 2024-2025, the Foreign Workers Division, Department of Labour approved 151,646 foreign workers. Table 3.6 shows the number of approved foreign workers by major occupation groups. A majority of the approved foreign workers were in Craft and related trade workers (83.5%) followed by only 8.95 percent in Elementary Occupation.

Table 3.6: Number of foreign workers approved by major occupation, 2024-2025

Major Occupation Group	Total
Craft and related trade workers	126,630
Elementary Occupation	13,570
Technicians and Associate Professionals	6,367
Professionals	1,973
Service and sales workers	1,209
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	1,115
Managers	720
Clerical support workers	61
Skilled Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery	1
Total	**151,646**

Source: FWD, DoL, MoICE

The Table 3.7 presents the distribution of approved foreign workers by occupation group. Of the total 151,646 approved foreign workers, **Craft and related Trade Workers** dominates, with Masons (74,149, 48.9%) and Concrete Workers (26,699, 17.61%) being the most prevalent. This highlights a strong demand for skilled trades in construction.

In the **Technicians and Associate Professionals** group, Technicians (6,320 workers, 4.17%) and Maintenance Personal (1,217 workers, 0.80%) are notable, reflecting a significant need for technical support roles. The **Professionals** category includes Electrical Engineers (373 workers, 0.25%) and Auditors (280 workers, 0.18%), indicating a steady demand for specialized expertise.

In contrast, **Managers** and **Clerical Support Workers** represents a smaller fraction, indicating less demand for these roles.

Service and Sales Workers such as Cooks (377 workers, 0.25%) and Waiters (335 workers, 0.22%), show moderate demand. The **Elementary Occupation** group is led by Process Workers (8,182 workers, 5.4%)

Overall, the data underscores a strong demand for skilled trade workers, particularly in construction, along with technical and professional positions.

Table 3.7: Top Occupations under each Major Occupation Group, 2024-2025

Major Occupation Group	Top Occupations Approved	Number of Foreign workers approved	% from total foreign workers approved [151,646]
Managers	General Manager	95	0.06%
	Chief Executive Officer/Managing Director/Deputy Managing Director/ Governor/Deputy Governor	84	0.06%
	Director of Department [e.g. in SOEs, DHI and its Companies (BPC, DGPC, Bhutan Telecom, etc.]	79	0.05%
	Construction Project Manager	75	0.05%
Professionals	Electrical engineer (general)	373	0.25%
	Auditor	280	0.18%
	Mechanical Engineers	221	0.15%
	Electonics Engineers	143	0.09%
Technicians and Associate Professionals	Technician	6,320	4.17%
	Maintenance Personal	1,217	0.80%
	Interior Designers and Decorators	139	0.09%
	Construction Supervisor	99	0.07%
Clerical support workers	Bill Collectors	32	0.02%
Service and sales workers	Cook	377	0.25%
	Waiter	335	0.22%
	House Keeper	137	0.09%
	Child Caregiver	135	0.09%
Skilled Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery	Gardeners; Hoticultural and Nursery Growers	33	0.02%
Craft and related trade workers	Mason	74,149	48.90%
	Concrete Workers	26,699	17.61%
	Construction Carpenter	6,585	4.34%
	Welder	4,197	2.77%
	Riggers and Cable Splicers	3,027	2.00%
	Sheet metal worker	2,902	1.91%
	Tile layer	2,796	1.84%
	Fabricator	2,088	1.38%
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	Driller (Tunnel)	360	0.24%
	Crane operator	183	0.12%
	Heavy truck driver (truck,tripper,etc…)	107	0.07%
Elementary Occupation	Process Worker	8,182	5.40%
	Manufacturing labourer not elsewhere classified (loaders, bottle sorters, stackers)	1,873	1.24%
	Maintenance labourer	1,460	0.96%
		144,782	95.47%

Source: FWD, DoL, MoICE

CHAPTER 4: LABOUR DEMAND

The demand for labour, in its simplest form, is the willingness of an economy or firm to employ workers at a given point in time. The data pertaining to labour demand in this section is collected and compiled by the Employment Services Division (ESD), Department of Employment and Entrepreneurship of the Ministry from advertisements in various media outlets, as well as from administrative records maintained by relevant agencies.

Vacancies

During the Fiscal Year 2024-2025, a total of 5,939 vacancies were compiled by the ESD. About 32.9 percent of the vacancies were Overseas vacancies and the remaining 67.1 percent were compiled by the ESCs which includes vacancies from Government/Autonomous body, Corporate, Private and NGOs. The ESCs compiled the vacancies by qualification and enterprise and about 40.1 percent of the vacancies came from Private, 18.1 percent from Government/Autonomous Agencies, and 5.89 percent from Corporate respectively.

Table 4.1 presents the vacancies from the ESCs classified by education level across the four major enterprises. 18.2 percent of the vacancies announced were for those with the Higher Secondary education level and followed by 16 percent for those who had Middle Secondary and 7.31 percent for those with General Graduate level. This overview of the vacancy classification by education level indicates a huge demand for the Higher and Middle Secondary Level.

Table 4.1: Number of vacancies by qualification and enterprise, 2024-2025

Qualificantion	Government/ Autonomous	Corporate	Private	NGOs	Overseas	Total
Masters & Above	17	14	15	0	-	46
Technical Graduate	31	51	161	6	-	249
General Graduate	89	139	188	18	-	434
Diploma	61	24	94	0	-	179
Certificate	11	15	307	0	-	333
Class XII	506	59	356	160	-	1081
Class XI	0	0	1	0	-	1
Class X	291	21	638	0	-	950
Class IX & Below	13	11	221	0	-	245
Other	6	12	73	0	-	91
Illeterate	50	4	322	0	-	376
Total	**1075**	**350**	**2376**	**184**	**1954**	**5939**

Source: ESD, DoEE, MoICE

*Note: The overseas vacancies were for qualification above class 10.

Table 4.2 shows the vacancies reported monthly across the four major enterprises in Thimphu ESC and the Regional ESCs including overseas vacancies in the Fiscal Year 2024-2025. On average, about 495 vacancies were announced every month. There are, however, certain months where the vacancies announced were below average. For example, in November 2014, December 2024, April 2025 and May 2025, the vacancies announced were below the monthly average. This could particularly be due to the variations in the recruitment months of the respective enterprises.

Table 4.2: Number of vacancies (in months) by enterprise, 2024-2025

Months	Government/ Autonomous	Corporate	Private	NGOs	Overseas	Total
July, 2024	160	48	204	9	44	465
August, 2024	40	9	152	1	312	514
September, 2024	77	16	349	100	177	719
October, 2024	32	29	232	4	231	528
November, 2024	14	43	62	2	244	365
December, 2024	14	47	143	0	156	360
January, 2025	23	38	334	3	133	531
February, 2025	350	12	120	63	110	655
March, 2025	12	39	295	0	196	542
April, 2025	46	20	58	2	82	208
May, 2025	0	15	189	0	134	338
June, 2025	307	34	238	0	135	714
Total	**1075**	**350**	**2376**	**184**	**1954**	**5939**

Source: ESD, DoEE, MoICE

The vacancy trends across the four major enterprises in the Thimphu ESC, observed from July 2013 to June 2023, demonstrated a notable degree of consistency. However, a significant decline in vacancies was observed within the private and corporate sectors during the 2021–2022 period, attributed to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Conversely, a marginal uptick in vacancies in the private sector was noted in the Fiscal Year 2022–2023.

For the Fiscal Year 2023–2024, the data included a consolidated sector-wise breakdown of vacancies across all Employment Service Centres (ESCs), rather than just Thimphu ESC. As a result, the figures for sectors like private (2,420 vacancies) and corporate (602 vacancies) appeared higher than in previous years. However, this increase did not necessarily indicate a rise in vacancies within these sectors in Thimphu but could be attributed to contributions from other regional ESCs. The government and autonomous sectors reported 1,205 vacancies, while NGOs saw a slight increase to 62 vacancies. Overseas employment continued to play a significant role with 4,236 vacancies, bringing the total for the year to 8,525.

The latest data for 2024–2025 reveals a shift in these trends. The private sector maintained a relatively stable vacancy count at 2,376, while the corporate sector saw a decline to 350 vacancies—marking one of the lowest figures in recent years. Government and autonomous sector vacancies decreased slightly to 1,075, whereas NGOs recorded a notable rise to 184, the highest since 2017–2018. Overseas employment, however, experienced a sharp drop to 1,954 vacancies, contributing to a significantly lower total annual vacancy count of 5,939—the lowest since the pandemic-affected year of 2021–2022.

This broader dataset continues to reflect a comprehensive view of labour market trends across the country, highlighting fluctuations influenced by economic recovery, sectoral adjustments, and changing overseas employment dynamics.

Table 4.3: Number of vacancies by major enterprises, 2013-2025

Year	Government/ Autonomous	Corporate	Private	NGOs	Consolidated	Overseas	Total
July 2013 - June 2014	1,963	664	2,141	42	4,810	-	4,810
July 2014 - June 2015	758	485	2,801	32	4,076	-	4,076
July 2015 - June 2016	908	1,017	5,275	52	7,252	-	7,252
July 2016 - June 2017	1,193	1,148	3,560	49	5,950	-	5,950
July 2017 - June 2018	1,223	602	2,175	117	4,117	-	4,117
July 2018 - June 2019	1,447	950	1,692	36	4,125	4,043	8,168
July 2019 - June 2020	2,683	879	1,003	27	6,100	3,463	9,563
July 2020 - June 2021	1,162	2,944	1,244	5	6,827	23	6,850
July 2021 - June 2022	1,281	510	483	5	2,909	2,961	5,870
July 2022 - June 2023	808	327	1,257	42	4,115	7,272	11,387
July 2023 - June 2024	1,205	602	2,420	62	4,289	4,236	8,525
July 2024 - June 2025	1,075	350	2,376	184	3,985	1,954	5,939

Source: ESD, DoEE, MoICE

*Note: Before 2019, there was no record of the vacancy data in the regional ESCs. Only after July 2019, the regional ESCs started keeping record of the number of vacancies, but the data is not available by sector-wise breakdown, therefore it is reflected under the Consolidated data until July 2023.

Referrals

Job referrals carried out by Employment Service Centers (ESCs) are often used as a means to help employers connect with jobseekers thereby minimizing time and cost of normal recruitment processes. As part of the referral program, the Employment Service Centers of MoICE recommends jobseekers with various qualifications and skill levels to prospective employers. However, for the 5,939 vacancies between July 2024 - June 2025, there were only 1282 referrals made, and the majority of the referrals (77.4%) were made in the private sector, followed by (14.8%) in the Government/Autonomous Agencies as shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Number of referrals (in months) by sectors, 2024-2025

Months	Government/ Autonomous	Corporate	Private	NGOs	Overseas	Total
July, 2024	27		15			42
August, 2024	32		193			225
September, 2024	26		168	5		199
October, 2024	13		168		2	183
November, 2024	62	25	72			159
December, 2024			104			104
January, 2025		13	51			64
February, 2025	1		69			70
March, 2025	5	35	60		1	101
April, 2025	8	1	30			39
May, 2025	1	10	39			50
June, 2025	15	8	23			46
Total	**190**	**92**	**992**	**5**	**3**	**1282**

Source: ESD, DoEE, MoICE

*Note: Referral data from the regional Employment Service Centers (ESCs) are not available by sector-wise breakdown

Referral trends over the past decade have varied across sectors, reflecting changing job market dynamics. From 2013 to 2018, referrals were largely driven by the private sector. However, there was a sharp decline in 2019-2020, particularly in the private sector.

A recovery started in 2020-2021 with a rise in government/autonomous referrals and the introduction of overseas referrals. The most recent data from 2024-2025 shows a more balanced distribution, with significant referrals in private (992), Government (190), and corporate sectors (92). This suggests improved diversification in job matching, though more effort is needed to maintain this balance and enhance sectoral collaboration.

Table 4.5: Number of referrals by sectors, 2013-2025

Year	Government/Autonomous	Corporate	Private	NGOs	Consolidated	Overseas	Total
July 2013 - June 2014	0	155	547	80	782	0	782
July 2014 - June 2015	252	397	536	158	1,343	0	1,343
July 2015 - June 2016	120	18	978	31	1,147	0	1,147
July 2016 - June 2017	60	7	1068	4	1,139	0	1,139
July 2017 - June 2018	0	0	1187	0	1,187	0	1,187
July 2018 - June 2019	0	49	1207	0	1,256	0	1,256
July 2019 - June 2020	28	0	615	0	643	0	643
July 2020 - June 2021	207	0	265	389	861	0	861
July 2021 - June 2022	237	48	1830	2	2,117	3	2,120
July 2022 - June 2023	383	83	424	2	913	9	922
July 2023 - June 2024	804	176	780	5	1,765	1	1,766
July 2024 - June 2025	190	92	992	5	1,279	3	1,282

Source: ESD, DoEE, MoICE

***Note: Before 2022, there was no record of the referral data in the regional ESCs. Only after July 2022, the regional ESCs started keeping record of the number of referrals, but the data is not available by sector-wise breakdown until July, 2023.

Placements

During the Fiscal Year 2024–2025, records show that 2,764 placements were made against 5,939 vacancies compiled by the ESCs including the overseas vacancies. The highest placements were made in the month of September 2024 with 345 Placements and April 2025 recorded the lowest with 92 placements contributing to only 3.33 percent of the overall placements made as shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4.6: Number of placements (in months) by sectors, 2024-2025

Months	Government/ Autonomous	Corporate	Private	NGOs	Overseas	Total
July, 2024	34	17	38	0	62	151
August, 2024	10	16	78	0	81	185
September, 2024	22	5	166	1	151	345
October, 2024	13	4	70	2	154	243
November, 2024	17	10	34	0	160	221
December, 2024	20	17	93	0	199	329
January, 2025	18	8	99	0	176	301
February, 2025	10	12	68	0	99	189
March, 2025	13	3	67	0	71	154
April, 2025	14	3	40	0	35	92
May, 2025	126	16	19	0	59	220
June, 2025	61	10	171	5	87	334
Total	**358**	**121**	**943**	**8**	**1334**	**2764**

Source: ESD, DoEE, MoICE

Employment Facilitation Programs

In the context of changing labour market scenario and changing efforts to facilitate employment for the growing number of jobseekers, several employment facilitation programs were initiated by the Ministry in the 12FYP. The major employment facilitation program was the *Guaranteed Employment Program* which consisted of (1) Overseas Employment Program, (2) Skills Development Program[8], (3) Youth Engagement and Livelihood Program, (4) Build Bhutan Project, (5) Entrepreneurship Development Program, and (6) GOWA Forum in order to address the employability issues directly and through skills development both within and outside the country.

Overseas Employment Program

The Overseas Employment Program's key objectives are to engage youth gainfully so that they will benefit from the transfer of knowledge and skills and exposure; contribute towards foreign currency reserves through remittance; and contribute towards employment generation through economic activities upon return.

In the Fiscal Year 2024-2025, 1,334 job seekers have been placed overseas. Table 4.5a shows the number of overseas placements in the last eleven years by education level. It can be seen that overseas employment has been limited to only those who have completed general graduate, higher secondary and middle secondary education.

Majority of the overseas placements were made for jobseekers with Higher Secondary Education with 47.84 percent followed by Middle Secondary Education (29.2%) and General Graduates with 22.09 percent.

Table 4.7(a): Number of Overseas placements by Qualifications, 2013-2025

Qualificantion	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-2025	Total
Master	0	-	0	1	2	0	0	0	13	0	0	0	16
General Graduate	144	-	154	470	511	474	987	0	211	176	62	54	3243
Technical Graduates	0	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
Diploma	3	-	4	12	11	13	16	0	20	12	5	7	103
Certificate	0	-	0	0	1	1	6	0	2	1	0	0	11
Class XII	276	-	405	456	763	470	778	3	814	1147	1040	871	7023
Class X	85	-	99	586	450	189	593	190	390	727	571	402	4282
Total	508	1329	662	1525	1738	1147	2380	193	1453	2063	1678	1334	14681

Source: ESD, DoEE, MoICE

[8] Skills Development Program is now with the Ministry of Education and Skills Development as a part of the Structural Reform of the civil service.

Youth Engagement and Livelihood Program

The Youth Engagement and Livelihood Program (YELP) remains one of the Department's key initiatives to enhance the employability of jobseekers transitioning from schools and institutions. Designed to benefit both employers and jobseekers, YELP provides a structured pathway for skill development and work experience. Under the revised framework, the monthly allowance is now tiered based on qualifications:

- Bachelor's Degree and above: Nu. 9,000 from the Ministry (employer contributes a minimum of Nu. 6,000)
- Diploma/NC3/NC2: Nu. 8,000 from the Ministry (employer contributes a minimum of Nu. 5,500)
- Class XII/Certificate holders: Nu. 7,000 from the Ministry (employer contributes a minimum of Nu. 5,000)
- Class X and below (including no formal education): Nu. 6,000 from the Ministry (employer contributes a minimum of Nu. 4,500)

The support duration ranges from 3 to 12 months, offering wage subsidies for engagements in non-civil service sectors while equipping jobseekers with critical on-the-job skills. Since its launch in 2019, 8,439 jobseekers (3,291 males and 5,148 females) have received engagement support, reflecting a significant expansion in reach.

The majority of YELP beneficiaries continue to be jobseekers with Higher Secondary Education (Class XII), though their share has declined slightly due to broader inclusion. Class X and below now constitute a significant proportion (37.6% in 2024–2025), followed by Certificate holders (43.0%) and Diploma graduates (4.9%). General graduates (Bachelor's) accounted for 5.1% of placements, while Master's degree holders represented 14.6%—a notable shift attributed to expanded eligibility and awareness.

YELP's evolving structure and widening reach underscore its role in bridging skill gaps and fostering inclusive workforce integration. The tiered allowance system further incentivizes employer participation while aligning support with qualification-based market demands.

Table 4.7(b): Jobseekers Engaged through YELP by Qualification, 2019-2025

<table>
<tr><th rowspan="2">Qualification</th><th colspan="3">2019-2020</th><th colspan="3">2020-2021</th><th colspan="3">2021-2022</th><th colspan="3">2022-2023</th><th colspan="3">2023-2024</th><th colspan="3">2024-2025</th></tr>
<tr><th>Male</th><th>Female</th><th>Total</th><th>Male</th><th>Female</th><th>Total</th><th>Male</th><th>Female</th><th>Total</th><th>Male</th><th>Female</th><th>Total</th><th>Male</th><th>Female</th><th>Total</th><th>Male</th><th>Female</th><th>Total</th></tr>
<tr><td>Master and Above</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>0</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>0</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>3</td><td rowspan="3">145</td><td rowspan="3">224</td><td rowspan="3">369</td></tr>
<tr><td>G. Graduate</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>91</td><td>85</td><td>176</td><td>128</td><td>180</td><td>308</td><td>141</td><td>182</td><td>323</td><td>51</td><td>79</td><td>130</td></tr>
<tr><td>T. Graduate</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>5</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td></tr>
<tr><td>Diploma</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>7</td><td>12</td><td>19</td><td>14</td><td>14</td><td>28</td><td>67</td><td>89</td><td>156</td><td>9</td><td>13</td><td>22</td><td>75</td><td>50</td><td>125</td></tr>
<tr><td>Certificate/TTI/IZC</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>13</td><td>12</td><td>25</td><td>25</td><td>22</td><td>47</td><td>39</td><td>25</td><td>64</td><td>8</td><td>19</td><td>27</td><td rowspan="2">399</td><td rowspan="2">691</td><td rowspan="2">1090</td></tr>
<tr><td>Class XII</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>103</td><td>263</td><td>366</td><td>124</td><td>266</td><td>390</td><td>308</td><td>696</td><td>1004</td><td>113</td><td>289</td><td>402</td></tr>
<tr><td>Class XI</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>0</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>8</td><td>11</td><td>11</td><td>26</td><td>37</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>6</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr>
<tr><td>Class X</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>62</td><td>122</td><td>184</td><td>56</td><td>134</td><td>190</td><td>134</td><td>319</td><td>453</td><td>31</td><td>93</td><td>124</td><td rowspan="4">519</td><td rowspan="4">434</td><td rowspan="4">953</td></tr>
<tr><td>Below Class X</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>50</td><td>25</td><td>75</td><td>56</td><td>55</td><td>111</td><td>154</td><td>215</td><td>369</td><td>38</td><td>43</td><td>81</td></tr>
<tr><td>NFE</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>0</td><td>9</td><td>9</td></tr>
<tr><td>NA</td><td>179</td><td>198</td><td>377</td><td>66</td><td>99</td><td>165</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>44</td><td>101</td><td>145</td><td>14</td><td>44</td><td>58</td></tr>
<tr><th>Total</th><th>179</th><th>198</th><th>377</th><th>396</th><th>618</th><th>1014</th><th>410</th><th>683</th><th>1093</th><th>899</th><th>1657</th><th>2556</th><th>269</th><th>593</th><th>862</th><th>1138</th><th>1399</th><th>2537</th></tr>
</table>

Source: ESD, DoEE, MoICE

***Note: For the Fiscal Year 2019-2020, the data is not available by qualification.
: For the Fiscal Year 2022-2023, after March, the YELP was on HOLD due to budget constraint and the special YELP support was administered through the spillover budget in the Fiscal Year 2023-2024.

Entrepreneurship Development Program

The entrepreneurship landscape has shown significant growth and diversification in recent years. In the Fiscal Year 2023-2024, 1,021 candidates participated in foundational entrepreneurship training programs (BEC, AEC, ToT). This foundation has since expanded, with 958 participants trained in various Entrepreneurship Development Programs in the current period, including specialized initiatives like the Student Development Program (SDP) and Civil Society Organization Accelerator (CSOA).

Capacity Building Highlights:

- 50 trainers (28 male, 22 female) certified through the Training of Trainers (ToT) in New Business Creation
- 35 early-stage startups currently undergoing intensive acceleration programs
- Infrastructure development continues with 2 operational Startup Centres (Dhamdum and Zhemgang)

Startup Ecosystem Growth:

The Department has significantly amplified its support for emerging businesses:

- 135 new startups/businesses established (directly supported by the Department)
- The 3 Startup Centers now support 54 active incubatees
- 178 new employment opportunities created through these initiatives

Event Portfolio Expansion:

The Department has dramatically expanded its entrepreneurial activation events, conducting 27 high-impact programs across the country, including:

- *Regional bootcamps* (Zhemgang and Serthig Gewog, Jomotsangkha)
- 3 Student Business Seedling Programs (Thimphu, Mongar, Sarpang)
- *Specialized programs:* Executive Bootcamp, National Startup Weekend, Startup Community Bootcamp
- *Innovation challenges:* Hackathon, WoW Bhutan, RUB-Business Idea Competition
- *Support programs:* DoEE-Loden Spring Call, CSO Entrepreneurship Bootcamp, Jabchor 2.0
- *Showcase events:* Druk Tshongrig Gatoen, Entrepreneurship Fair at Samtse, Made in Bhutan
- *Capacity building:* Validation Workshop for Freelancers, Branding & Profiling of Digital Freelancers & Remote Workers

This comprehensive approach has created multiple touchpoints for entrepreneurs at various stages - from ideation (through events like the Business Idea Competition) to acceleration (via the Startup Acceleration Program) and market access (through trade fairs and branding initiatives). The geographic spread of activities, reaching 5 colleges and multiple startup centers, demonstrates the program's national reach and inclusive approach to entrepreneurship development.

The ecosystem's growth is evidenced by the triple-digit increase in startups established and jobs created compared to the previous reporting period, reflecting both the effectiveness of these interventions and the growing entrepreneurial energy in the country. The diversified event portfolio now caters to specific segments including students, executives, civil society organizations, and digital workers, creating a more robust and inclusive entrepreneurial environment.

GOWA Forum

GOWA- connecting talents with the labour market, is an information dissemination platform followed by on-the-spot recruitment by potential employers. Additionally, beyond the standard program package, both the Regional Offices and the Head Office have consistently been generating creative ideas to enhance the program's benefits. This includes taking the GOWA to the local government, parents, SDP graduates product display, and on-the-spot recruitment among others.

The Division also initiated the GOWA for School initiative to brief students on labour market insights, employment related interventions and information on mapping career pathways including interactive sessions integrated with design thinking activities. The session is aimed at helping the students prepare for the world of work to navigate the labour market seamlessly.

In the FY 2024-25, a total of 21 GOWAs were conducted, from which the 8 were community based GOWA conducted by the Regional Office of Industry, Commerce and Employment (ROICE) in their respective regions and 13 were GOWA for School were conducted by the Head Quarter, ROICE Phuentsholing and ROICE Trongsa.

Table 4.7(c): Number of youths informed and placed through GOWA.

Region	No. of Events Held	No. of Participants			No. of Employers Present	No. of Youth Employed		
		Male	Female	Total		Male	Female	Total
Thimphu	11 (GOWA for Schools)	-	-	1147	-	-	-	-
S/Jongkhar	2	40	16	56	27	6	4	10
Gelephu	2	43	24	67	40	12	9	21
Phuntsholing	2 (1 Community Based and 1 GOWA for Schools)	316	145	461	63	-	-	0
Mongar	2	17	24	41	63	0	1	1
Trongsa	2 (1 Community Based and 1 GOWA for Schools)	349	370	719	5	-	-	0
Total	**11**	**765**	**579**	**2491**	**198**	**18**	**14**	**32**

Source: LMICGD, DoEE, MoICE

Labour Market Tightness

Over the past four fiscal years, significant fluctuations have been observed in the numbers of registered jobseekers, vacancies, referrals, and placements.

The 2021-2022 period saw 12,674 registered jobseekers against 5,870 vacancies, with 2,120 referrals resulting in 5,834 placements. The following year (2022-2023) witnessed an unprecedented surge in registered jobseekers to 43,725 - a dramatic increase attributed to the Employer-Employer Registration initiative. During this process, already employed individuals not previously registered in the Bhutan Labour Market Information System (BLMIS) were automatically added as jobseekers when their employers registered them as employees. This technical adjustment explains the artificial inflation of jobseeker numbers that year. Vacancies increased to 11,387 during this period, while referrals surprisingly dropped to 922, though placements rose to 6,337.

In 2023-2024, the number of registered jobseekers normalized to 18,516, with vacancies at 8,525. This period saw referrals rebound to 1,766, but placements decreased to 3,616. The most recent data for 2024-2025 shows a continued downward trend in key metrics: 12,871 registered jobseekers, 5,939 vacancies, 1,282 referrals, and 2,764 placements - the lowest placement figure in the four-year period.

Cumulatively, from July 2021 to June 2025, the system has recorded 87,786 jobseekers against 31,721 vacancies, with 6,090 referrals resulting in 18,551 placements.

The data reveals several important trends:

1. The 2022-2023 surge in registered jobseekers was an artifact of system changes rather than reflecting actual unemployment growth
2. Vacancies peaked in 2022-2023 and have declined in subsequent years
3. Referrals remain volatile, showing no consistent upward or downward trend
4. Placement numbers have generally decreased since 2022-2023, reaching their lowest point in 2024-2025

The persistent gap between jobseekers and vacancies, particularly in recent years, underscores the ongoing challenges in labor market matching. While the referral numbers suggest some stability in service utilization, the declining placement rates highlight the need for enhanced job matching strategies and stronger collaboration between employment services, employers, and jobseekers. The data emphasizes the importance of distinguishing between technical system effects and genuine labor market trends when interpreting these figures.

Table 4.8: Number of registered job seekers, vacancy, referral and placement over the years, 2021–2025

Year	Registered Jobseekers	Vacancies	Referred	Placed
July 2021 - June 2022	12674	5870	2120	5,834
July 2022 - June 2023	43725	11387	922	6,337
July 2023 - June 2024	18516	8525	1766	3,616
July 2024 - June 2025	12,871	5939	1282	2,764
Total	**87,786**	**31,721**	**6,090**	**18,551**

Source: ESD, DoEE, MoICE

****Note: The data presented reflects only the actual jobseekers that registered in that FY instead of the whole dataset which includes the past migrated data.*
The jobseeker data for FY 2022-23 (approx. 43,725) includes existing employees who registered as jobseekers during the Employer-Employee Registration, causing a sudden increase in numbers.

Labour market tightness[9], measuring vacancies against referral flows, has shown continued volatility over the past four fiscal years. After peaking at 12.4 in 2022-2023, the ratio declined significantly to 4.8 in 2023-2024 and stabilized at 4.6 in 2024-2025. This persistent elevation above the 2021-2022 baseline (2.8) suggests ongoing structural imbalances in the labour market. The current ratio indicates that for every jobseeker referred, there are approximately 4.6 vacancies available - a situation where employers may continue facing challenges connecting with suitable candidates despite available opportunities. This underscores the need for strengthened

[9]The number of referral flows is given by: E=kU;

where
E = number of referral flows
U = number of active registered job seekers
Therefore, k implies an average number of referrals per job seekers. If k ≥ 1, a job seeker applies for more than one job vacancy on an average. Dividing the number of job vacancies (V) by the referral flow (E) equation gives:

- = 1/k θ

Where (V/E) = labour market tightness.

intermediation services through Employment Service Centers and targeted matching initiatives.

Application ratio[10], which is the ratio of job vacancies to the registered jobseekers, has demonstrated relative stability in recent years, maintaining a ratio of 0.5 since 2023-2024 after recovering from its low of 0.3 in 2022-2023. This consistency suggests that while the absolute numbers of both jobseekers and vacancies have fluctuated, their proportional relationship has reached equilibrium. However, the ratio remaining below 1.0 continues to indicate that job opportunities have not kept pace with the pool of active jobseekers in the system.

Adequacy ratio, which is the ratio of job placements to job vacancies, showed modest improvement in 2024-2025, rising to 0.5 from 0.4 the previous year. While this remains below the 1.0 ratio achieved in 2021-2022, the reversal of the previous downward trend may signal early positive developments in placement efficiency. The four-year cumulative adequacy ratio of 0.7 suggests that overall, about 70% of vacancies are being successfully filled through the system. While the adequacy ratio provides insights into the efficiency of job placement, it is essential to consider additional factors such as the quality of placements, including wage levels, job security (regular paid, contract, casual, or temporary employment), and the alignment of the job with the jobseeker's qualifications or training background.

Key observations from the updated data:

1. Labour market tightness has stabilized at levels nearly double the 2021-2022 baseline, indicating persistent matching challenges
2. The application ratio's stability at 0.5 reflects consistent but constrained job creation relative to jobseeker numbers
3. The recent improvement in the adequacy ratio warrants monitoring to determine if it represents the beginning of a positive trend
4. The cumulative four-year data reveals systemic patterns that may not be apparent in annual fluctuations

These indicators collectively highlight the continuing need for:

- Enhanced matching mechanisms between employers and jobseekers
- Targeted skills development to address qualification mismatches

[10] The symbol θ in the above equation indicates application ratio, where (θ=V/U)

- Improved data collection to better understand the quality and sustainability of placements
- Strengthened collaboration between employment services and industry sectors

The data suggests that while some metrics show stabilization, significant work remains to achieve optimal labour market efficiency and ensure that job creation translates effectively into quality employment opportunities.

Table 4.9: Trends for labour market tightness, application ratio and adequacy ratio, 2021-2025

Year	Registered Jobseekers	Vacancies	Referred	Placed	Application ratio	LM tightness	Adequency ratio
July 2021 - June 2022	12674	5870	2120	5,834	0.5	2.8	1.0
July 2022 - June 2023	43725	11387	922	6,337	0.3	12.4	0.6
July 2023 - June 2024	18516	8525	1766	3,616	0.5	4.8	0.4
July 2024 - June 2025	12,871	5939	1282	2,764	0.5	4.6	0.5
Total	**87,786**	**17,257**	**3,042**	**12,171**	**0.2**	**5.7**	**0.7**

Appendix

Appendix Table A.1: Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) by sex (2009-2025(Q2))

LFPR	Male	Female	Total
2009	73.5	66.1	69.7
2010	71.3	62.5	66.7
2011	72.3	62.8	67.4
2012	65.7	63.2	64.4
2013	72.1	58.9	65.3
2014	71	54.8	62.6
2015	71.2	55.9	63.1
2016	71.7	53.6	62.2
2017	72.1	59.9	65.7
2018	70.1	55.5	62.6
2019	71.8	61.2	66.4
2020	72.5	63.5	67.8
2021	73.1	65.3	69.1
2022	73.4	53.5	63.1
2023 (Quarterly)	72.4	56.8	65
1st Quarter, 2024	72.8	54.1	63.9
2nd Quarter, 2024	72.5	50	61.8
3rd Quarter, 2024	75.7	53.5	65.1
4th Quarter, 2024	74	54.6	64.8
1st Quarter, 2025	73.3	54.4	64.3
2nd Quarter, 2025	73.5	56.3	65.3

Appendix Table A.2: Labour Force Participation Rate by Age Group, Area and sex, 2nd Quarter, 2025

Age Group	Male	Female	Bhutan
15-19	6.2	5.6	5.9
20-24	54.1	51.7	52.8
25-29	84.7	66.5	76.3
30-34	95.1	67.5	82.1
35-39	96.3	69.8	83.2
40-44	96.3	76.5	87.8
45-49	95.9	75.3	86.1
50-54	95.9	70.2	84.2
55-59	94.6	63.4	74.3
60-64	70	53.4	62.3
65+	43.6	31.5	37.6

Appendix Table A.3: Percentage distribution of employed persons by major economic activity, area and sex, 2nd Quarter, 2025

Major Economic Activity	Sex		Bhutan
	Male	Female	
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	35.87%	54.50%	43.47%
Public Administration and Defense	12.45%	4.64%	9.27%
Wholesale & Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles	7.03%	11.42%	8.82%
Manufacturing	6.01%	8.56%	7.05%
Construction	10.41%	0.72%	6.46%
Education	6.30%	5.28%	5.89%
Accommodation and Food Service Activities	3.56%	7.12%	5.01%
Transportation and Storage	6.92%	0.59%	4.34%
Human Health and Social Work	2.03%	2.36%	2.16%
Other Service Activities	1.77%	0.94%	1.43%
Financial and Insurance Activities	1.41%	1.33%	1.38%
Electricity and Gas Supply	1.82%	0.56%	1.31%
Administrative and Support Service Activities	1.68%	0.66%	1.26%
Information and Communication	1.32%	0.45%	0.96%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities	0.49%	0.33%	0.43%
Mining and Quarrying	0.44%	0.13%	0.31%
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	0.23%	0.33%	0.27%
Real Estate Activities	0.15%	0.02%	0.09%
Activities of Extraterritorial Organizations and Bodies	0.06%	0.00%	0.03%
Activities of Households as Employers	0.00%	0.06%	0.03%
Water Supply, Sewerage, Waste Management	0.03%	0.00%	0.02%
Total	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

Appendix Table A.4: Percentage distribution of employed persons by sector, area and gender, 2nd Quarter, 2025

Sector	Sex		Bhutan
	Male	Female	
Agriculture	35.9%	54.5%	43.5%
Industry	18.7%	10.0%	15.1%
Services	45.4%	35.5%	41.4%

Appendix Table A.5: Unemployment rates over the years by area and sex (2013–2025 (Q2))

Year	Rural	Urban	Male	Female	Bhutan
2013	1.5	6.3	2.2	3.7	2.9
2014	1.2	6.7	1.9	3.5	2.6
2015	1.0	6.3	1.8	3.1	2.5
2016	1.5	3.9	2.0	2.3	2.1
2017	1.7	5.6	2.7	3.6	3.1
2018	1.8	7.1	2.7	4.2	3.4
2019	1.6	5.3	2.2	3.3	2.7
2020	2.7	10.1	4.1	6.0	5.0
2021	2.8	8.9	3.6	6.1	4.8
2022	3.4	10.4	4.4	7.9	5.9
2023	1.9	6.2	2.7	4.5	3.5
2024 1st Quarter	2.8	6.6	4.0	4.3	4.1
2024 2nd Quarter	2.5	5.7	3.1	4.5	3.7
2024 3rd Quarter	2.1	5.1	2.4	4.2	3.1
2024 4th Quarter	1.8	5.5	2.3	4.4	3.1
2025 1st Quarter	2.4	5.7	2.7	4.9	3.6
2025 2nd Quarter	1.6	5.4	2.4	3.5	2.9

Appendix Table A.6: Unemployment rate by age group and sex, 2nd Quarter, 2025

Age group	Male	Female	Total
15-19	7.3	30.6	17.2
20-24	14.9	19.3	17.3
25-29	5.7	3.4	4.8
30-34	2.5	2.9	2.7
35-39	0.7	0.2	0.5
40-44	0.9	0.8	0.9
45-49	0.0	1.1	0.5
50-54	0.0	0.0	0.0
55-59	0.0	0.0	0.0
60-64	0.0	0.0	0.0
65+	0.0	0.0	0.0

Appendix Table A.7: Youth unemployment rate by sex (2013-2025 (Q2))

Year	Youth Labour Force	Youth Unemployed	Rural	Urban	Male	Female	Bhutan
2013	44865.0	4282.0	4.0	22.8	9.2	9.9	9.5
2014	30361.0	3680.0	5.1	24.0	8.6	10.0	9.4
2015	41965.0	4504.0	4.8	28.0	8.2	12.7	10.7
2016	36525.0	4813.0	9.9	23.3	16.4	11.0	13.2
2017	49101.0	6026.0	8.6	17.0	11.2	13.2	12.3
2018	31280.0	4921.0	10.8	24.4	15.4	16.1	15.7
2019	30600.0	3626.0	7.8	19.4	9.7	13.8	11.8
2020	30654.0	6922.0	15.1	33.3	19.2	25.4	22.6
2021	31016.0	6492.0	15.8	28.6	16.9	24.6	20.9
2022	29682.0	8496.0	22.7	35.6	24.3	32.8	28.6
2023	41542.0	6590.0	9.4	23.9	13.4	18.3	15.9
2024 1st Quarter	38958.0	8932.0	17.9	31.5	25.7	19.7	22.9
2024 2nd Quarter	41081.0	7903.0	16.7	21.7	18.9	19.6	19.2
2024 3rd Quarter			13.8	20.1	11.9	21.8	16.5
2024 4th Quarter			15.5	19.8	14.5	21.2	17.7
2025 1st Quarter			14.3	19.7	14.8	19.5	17.1
2025 2nd Quarter	36403.0	6293.0	12.8	22.0	13.8	20.3	17.3

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Appendix Table A.8: Rate of inactivity over the years (2013-2025 (Q2))

Year	Rural	Urban	Male	Female	Bhutan
2013	32.1	40.5	27.9	41.1	34.7
2014	34.3	44.7	29.0	45.2	37.4
2015	35.2	40.8	28.8	44.1	36.9
2016	34.6	45.5	28.3	46.4	37.8
2017	32.0	37.9	27.9	40.1	34.3
2018	35.7	41.1	29.9	44.5	37.4
2019	31.5	38.0	28.2	38.8	33.6
2020	30.3	36.0	27.5	36.5	32.2
2021	28.9	34.7	26.9	34.7	30.9
2022	34.8	40.3	26.6	46.5	36.9
2023	34.1	36.6	27.6	43.2	35.0
2024 1st Quarter	33.1	41.2	27.2	45.9	36.1
2024 2nd Quarter	35	43.3	27.5	50.0	38.2
2024 3rd Quarter	31.3	40.9	24.3	46.5	34.9
2024 4th Quarter	32.9	39.0	26.0	45.4	35.2
2025 1st Quarter	32.9	40.2	26.7	45.6	35.7
2025 2nd Quarter	32	39.3	26.5	43.7	34.7

Appendix Table A.9: Rate of Inactivity by age group and sex, 2nd Quarter, 2025

Age Group	Male	Female	Bhutan
15-19	92.9	94.4	94.1
20-24	45.9	48.3	47.2
25-29	15.3	33.5	23.7
30-34	4.9	32.5	17.9
35-39	3.7	23.5	12.2
40-44	3.7	23.5	12.2
45-49	4.1	24.7	13.9
50-54	4.1	29.8	15.8
55-59	15.4	36.6	25.7
60-64	30	46.6	37.7
65+	56.4	68.5	62.4
Total	**27.5**	**50**	**38.2**

Appendix Table A.10: Number of Jobseekers Registered in the Bhutan Labour Market Information System by sex, 2024-2025

Month	Female	Male	Total
July,2024	583	546	1,129
August, 2024	387	524	911
September, 2024	337	492	829
October,2024	556	512	1,068
November, 2024	374	418	792
December, 2024	502	503	1,005
January,2025	578	783	1,361
February, 2025	639	710	1,349
March, 2025	763	844	1,607
April,2025	542	682	1,224
May, 2025	379	483	862
June, 2025	275	459	734
Total	**5,915**	**6,956**	**12,871**

Appendix Table A.11: Number of job seekers registered by educational attainment and sex, 2024-2025

Qualification	Male	Female	Total
PhD	2	2	4
Master's Degree	80	57	137
Bachelor's Degree	1258	1192	2450
Post Graduate	25	18	43
Diploma	291	132	423
Certificate	149	69	218
Class XII	2181	2388	4569
Class XI	125	79	204
Class X	1128	956	2084
Class IX & Below	956	601	1557
Monastic Education	52	2	54
NFE	37	26	63
No Education	672	393	1065
Total	**6956**	**5915**	**12871**

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