# STATISTICAL REPORT ON DRUG RELATED ARRESTS IN SRI LANKA

## DRUG ABUSE MONITORING SYSTEM

### VOL : 66
### January - December 2023

# Introduction

The general objective of the Drug Abuse Monitoring System (DAMS) is to establish a sound database for effective programme planning and monitoring. Specific objectives of the Reporting System are as follows:

- To determine the incidence, prevalence and characteristics of drug users who come for treatment, reporting institutions or practitioners.
- To monitor the trends and patterns in drug use
- To determine and describe the at risk groups in the population
- To be an `early warning system' to permit early programme responses

The information given in this report is mostly from Police Stations Island wide and Police Narcotic Bureau.

The Instrument of the Reporting Form used for reporting on drug users contains core items on:

a. Demographic characteristics
b. Drugs used
c. Route of use
d. Gender
e. Frequency of drug use
f. Nature of offence

## Contents

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# Abstract

This is an analytical report on persons arrested for drug related offences, received to the Drug Abuse Monitoring System (DAMS) from January to December 2023. Total arrests were reported from Island wide police stations on daily basis.

According to the data recorded in data base from January to December 2023, 62,607 persons were arrested for drug related offences and out of that 32,065 (51.2%) were Cannabis users. The highest proportions, 14,137 of arrests were in aged 25 to 29. The majority, 7,536 seizers were reported from Colombo district and 23.7% from Western province.

Among the arrests, 98% were male and 2% was female. And it further indicates, 32,628 persons (52.1%) were married and 23,911 (38.2%) were single. When considering their educational background, highest amount of drug use was reported from those who completed O/L. One Hundred Twelve were reported as professionally qualified.

According to the ethnicity 74.47% of arrests were Sinhalese, 9.3% Tamils, 8.49% Moors, and they were further classified by their religion as Buddhists (71.48%), Islam (11.49%), Hindus (7.91%) and Christians (4.28%).

The distribution of the arrestees reported by occupation for the period of January to December 2023 is as follows, 22.9% were labourers, unemployed were 11.58%, farmers were 2.75% and drivers or transport workers were 2.52%.

# Gender

Gender is not a deciding factor any more when it comes to drug consumption or related offences and it clearly shown in Fig.1. 61,371 (98%) persons were male and 1234 (2%) were females.

**Figure 01**
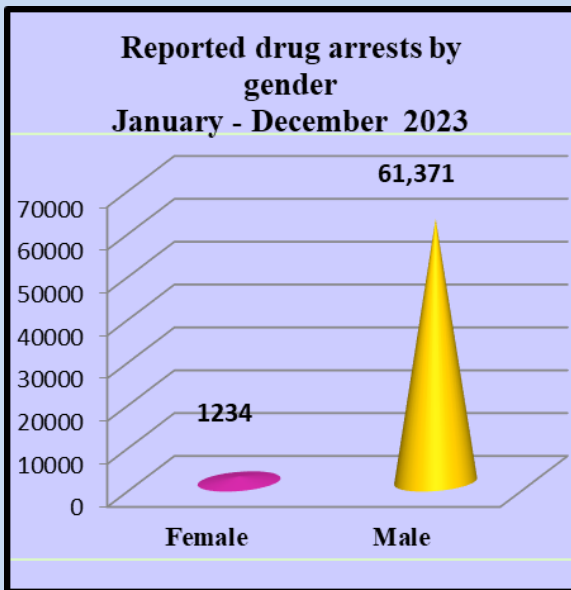


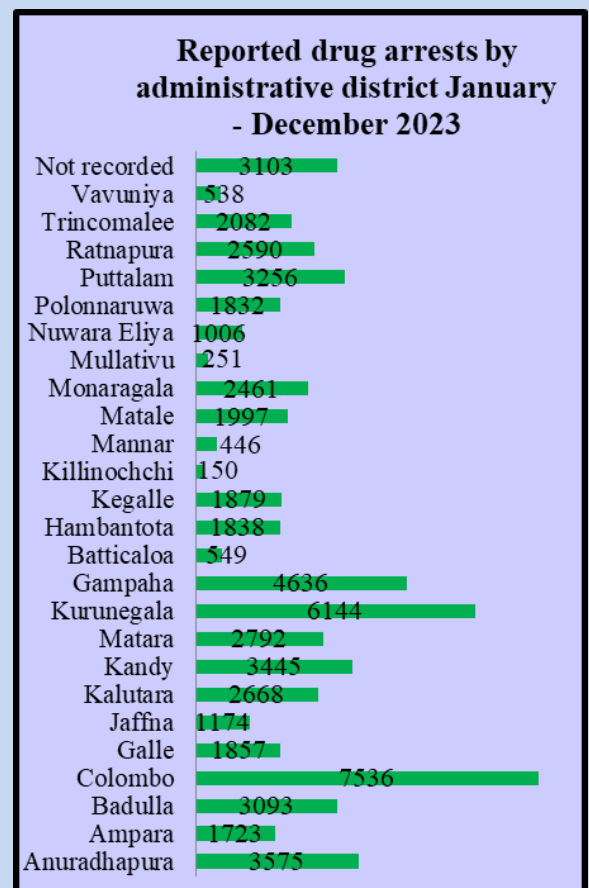Source:- Drug Abuse Monitoring System - 2023

# District

Reported data were further classified by districts. It emphasized illicit drugs are not only confined to Colombo but exists in remote and rural areas as well. Figure 2 illustrate the prevalence of drug arrest by districts and provinces.

The maximum number of arrests, 7536 (12%), were reported from Colombo and out of the nine provinces Western Province (23.7%) was the highest drug related offences taking place and North Western Province has become the 2nd place (15%).

Some arrest district wise as follows, 3445 (5.5%) from Kandy, 4636 (7.4%) from Gampaha, 3256 (5.2%) from Puttalam, 6144 (9.8%) from Kurunegala, 3575 (5.7%) from Anuradapura, 3098 (4.9%) from Badulla, 2461 (3.9%) from Monaragala, 2590 (4.1%) were from Ratnapura, 1997 (3.2%) from Matale and 1838 (2.9%) from Hambantota.

**Figure 02**



Source:- Drug Abuse Monitoring System - 2023

# Age

According to the classification of drug related arrests by age, (Fig. 03) clearly indicates that highest percentage (22.6%) were in aged 25-29.

The distribution of drug related arrests by age is shown in figure 04 and it reveals that majority, 20.9% (13,103), 17.2% (10,779), and 11.5% (7,198) were in the range of 20-24, 30-34 and 35-39 years accordingly. 2124 were reported for age category of 40-44.
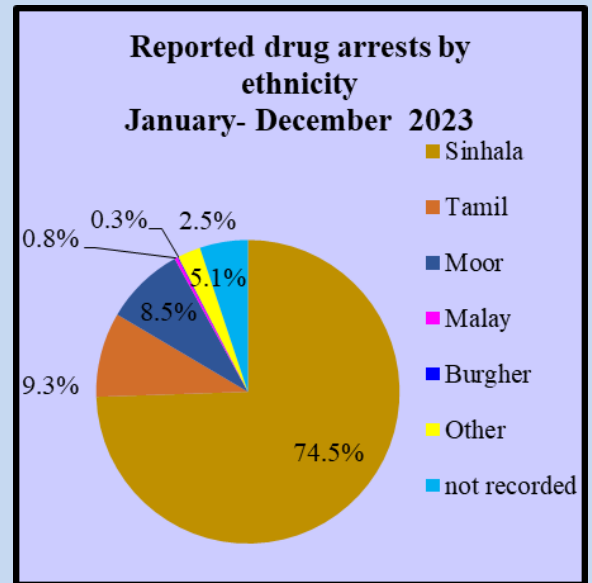
**Figure 03**
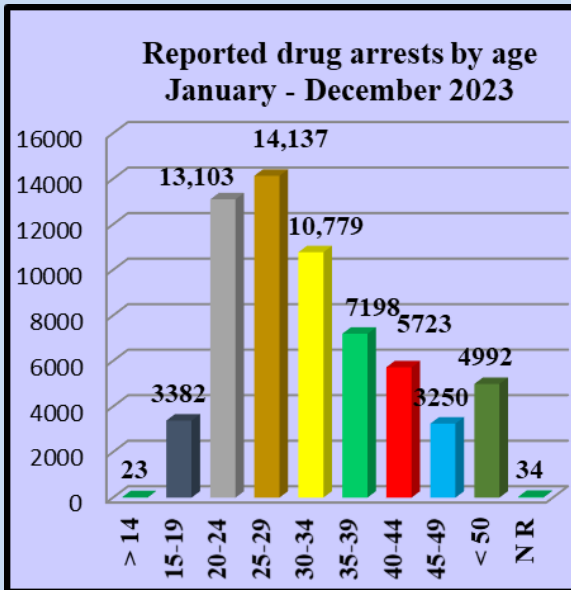


Source:- Drug Abuse Monitoring System - 2023

## Ethnicity

During the period of January to December 2023, the number of arrests reported by ethnicity wise is as follows, 46,632 (74.5%) were Sinhalese, 5319 (8.5%) Moors, 5654 (9.3%) Tamils, 212 Malays, 53 Burghers and 1545 (3.5%) were others.
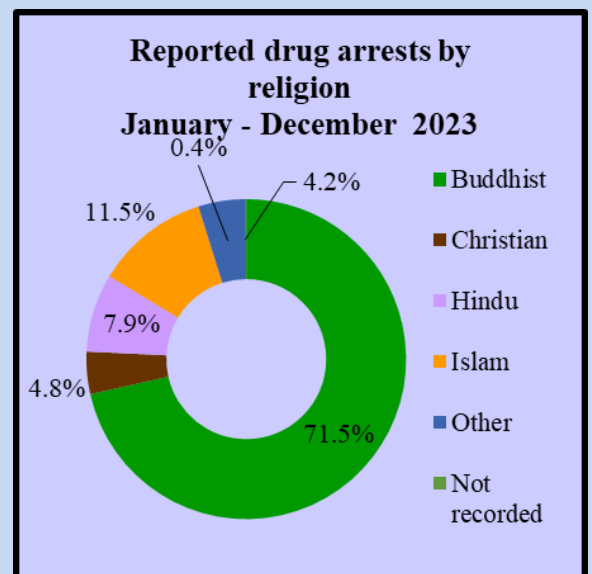
**Figure 04**



Source:- Drug Abuse Monitoring System - 2023

## Religion

According to the data shown in Fig 05, 44,761 (71.5%) were Buddhists, 4954 (7.9%) Hindus, 2678 (4.2%) Christians and 7197 (11.5%) were Islam accusers. It clearly shows that majority of arrests were Buddhists.
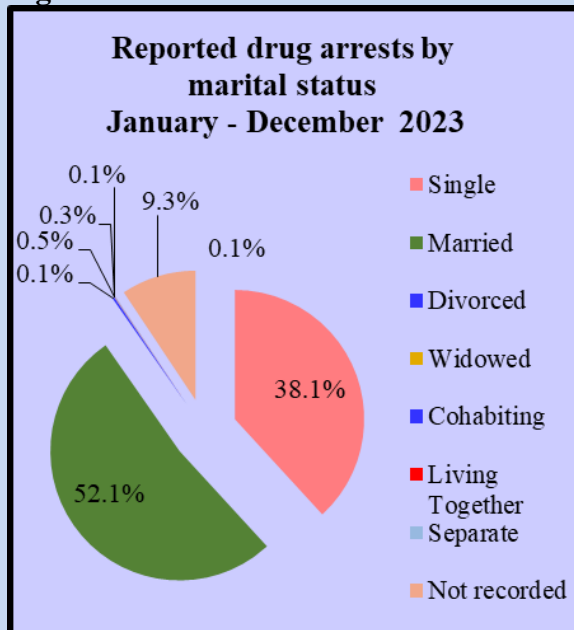
**Figure 05**



Source:- Drug Abuse Monitoring System - 2023

## Marital Status

Among the persons arrested in January to December 2023, 23,911 (38.2%) were single, 32,628 (52.1%) were married, and 155 (0.2%) were divorced. It had been reported 07 separated and one cohabiting persons as well.
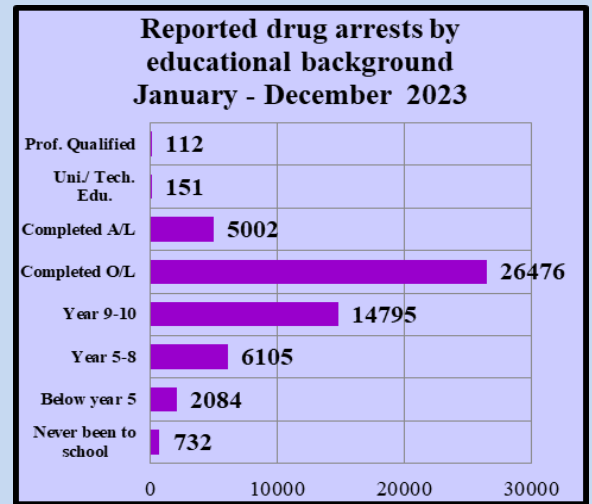
**Figure 06**



Source:- **Drug Abuse Monitoring System - 2023**

## Educational status

Persons arrested on drug related offences were further classified based on their educational level. Majority of them were somewhat educated, 42.3% of them studied up to O/L.

151 university or technically educated persons and 112 professionally qualified were also reported. However 734 (1.2%) of them were never been to school.

**Figure 7**



Source:-  **Drug Abuse Monitoring System - 2023**

## Drug related arrests by drug

According to the reported data, people arrested mostly for Cannabis and Heroin related offences. Their figures are as follows, 32,065 (51.2%) for cannabis and 19,569 (31.2%) for heroin. Nevertheless 8672 Methamphetamine users and 192 Hashish users were recorded.

In addition to above illicit drug users, 964 were arrested for other drugs, such as tablets tobacco powder (dumkudu), Babul, hans and Panpara in January to December of 2023.

**Figure 08**
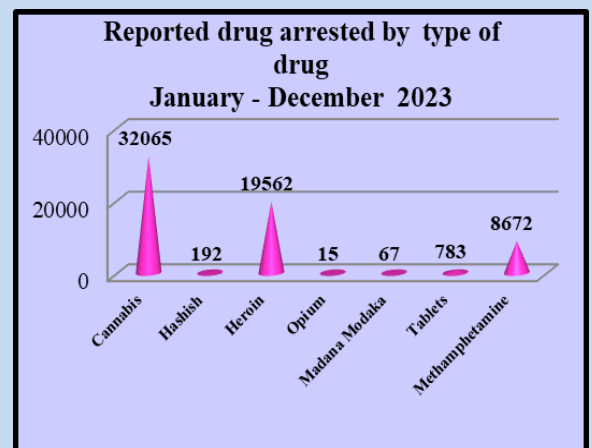


Source:- **Drug Abuse Monitoring System  - 2023**

## Routes (Method) of drug use

Persons who arrested for drug related offences have used different methods to use drugs.

Data imply that smoking 37,090 (59.2%), eating or drinking 939 (3%) and sniffing 1945 (3.1%). Smoking is the common drug using method in Sri Lanka. However 61 of drug injectors were also reported and fluctuated of those data are shown in Fig 09.

**Figure 09**
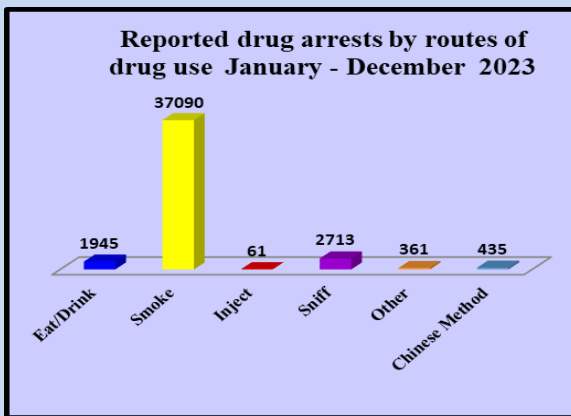


**Source:- Drug Abuse Monitoring System - 2023**

## Employment

The distribution of the arrestees reported by occupation for the period of January to December 2023 is as follows, 6,631 were labourers, 4,347 were unemployed, 3,575 were farmers and 1122 were drivers or transport workers.

**Table 01**

| Employment | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| **Professional** | 552 | 0.88 |
| **Managers / Administrators** | 8 | 0.01 |
| **Sales & Clerical** | 69 | 0.11 |
| **Drivers / Transport Workers** | 1580 | 2.5 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Agro based Workers** | 2405 | 3.8 |
| **Un-Employed** | 7250 | 11.6 |
| **Self-Employed** | 2475 | 3.9 |
| **Students** | 50 | 0.08 |
| **Laborers** | 14341 | 22.9 |
| **Businessman** | 1751 | 2.75 |
| **Fisherman** | 2289 | 3.6 |
| **Farmers** | 1725 | 2.75 |
| **Mason** | 222 | 0.35 |
| **Carpenter** | 80 | 0.13 |
| **Government Sector** | 207 | 0.33 |
| **Sex-Worker** | 9 | 0.01 |
| **Privet Sector** | 1611 | 2.57 |
| **Construction Sector** | 674 | 1.08 |
| **NA** | 11300 | 18.05 |

**Source:- Drug Abuse Monitoring System - 2023**

## Nature of Drug Offence

Among the total number of drug related arrests 58,257 (93.03%) were arrested as possessions, 1422 (2.2%) as drug sellers and 1069 (1.7%) were drug cultivators. In addition to that trafficker (1422), distributer (9), financier (5), Manufacturer (78) were also reported in January to December of 2023.

**Figure 10**
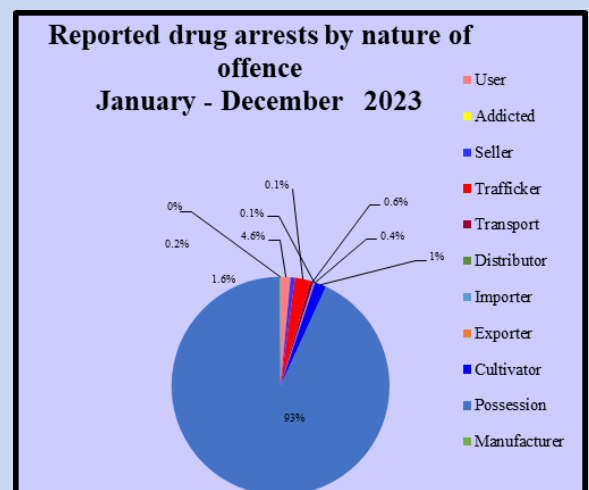


**Source:- Drug Abuse Monitoring System - 2023**

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