

Challenges in Measuring women's Participation in the Labor Force: Experiences from the Gulf

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Contents

- **An overview**
- **Measurement of LFP**
 - **Establishment Surveys**
 - **Administrative records**
 - **Household surveys and Population Censuses**
- **Female15+LFP(%) in GCC**
- **Main data items in Labor Force Survey**
- **Characteristics of Labor Statistics in GCC**
- **Economically active population (EAP)
Definition(ILO)**
- **Qatar Example LFS-2009**
- **General Conclusions**
- **Specific Conclusions**

An overview

- **Labor Force Participation in GCC respond to economic, social, cultural, and demographic mechanisms.**
- **In General Labor Force Participation for women is less than that of men.**
- **The collection of labor statistics is not a regular activity in GCC.**
- **The labor market constitute mostly of non-Nationals.**

Measurement of LFP

The Labor Statistics are obtained from:

- **Establishment Surveys**
- **Administrative records**
- **Household surveys and Population Censuses**

Establishment Surveys

- **Data collected from individual establishment records about individual workers and their characteristics.**
- **Do not take into account domestic workers and government workers which are very big in numbers in GCC countries.**

Administrative Records

- **Administrative data of a country is always preferred if they possess a reasonable quality.**
- **The main advantage of this source of data is that the cost of data collection is relatively small in relation to the costs that are incurred in conducting censuses and surveys.**

Administrative Records

- **The concepts and definitions used as required in terms of laws and regulations may be unsuitable for statistical purposes and also not conform to international standards.**
- **There are other limitations where the format of the record makes it difficult to extract statistical data.**
- **Cover only regular fulltime employment in the formal sector.**

Household Surveys

- **Main source of information on LFP.**
- **It covers all workers including government employment, self employed, domestic workers, casual workers and unpaid family workers.**
- **Provide comparable, comprehensive and good quality data.**

Household Surveys

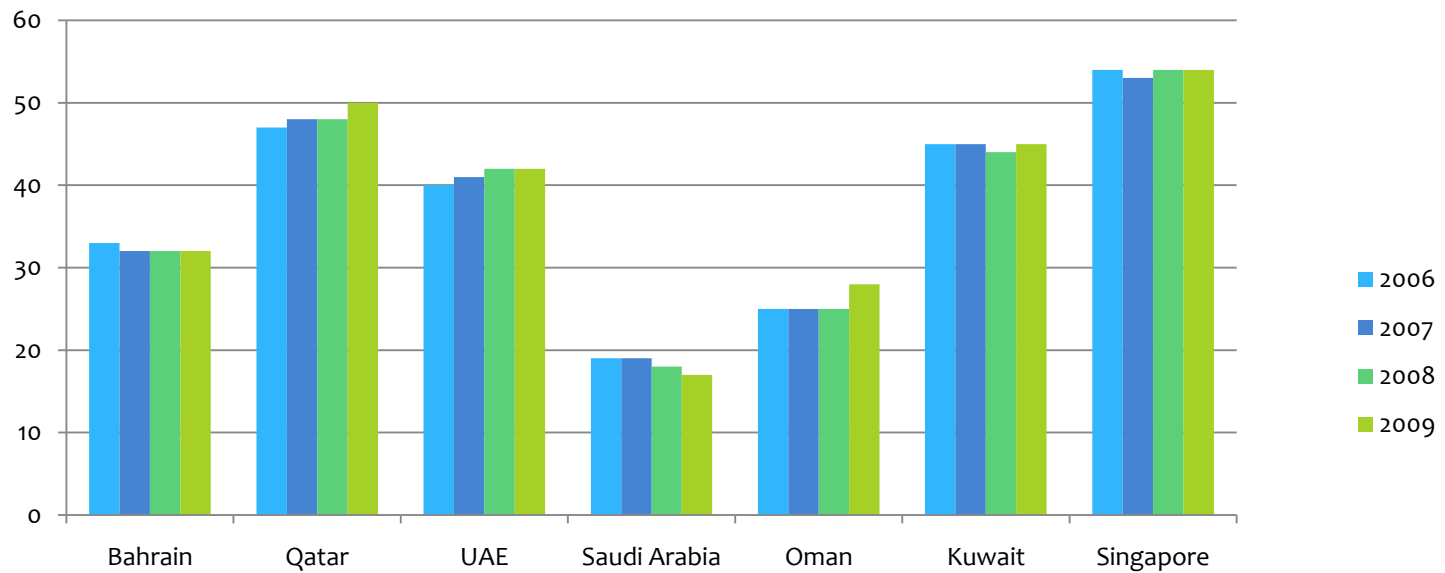
- **Provide detailed information on:**
 - **Employment**
 - **Unemployment**
 - **Underemployment**
 - **Hours of work**
 - **Income from paid and self employment**
 - **Occupation**
 - **Industry**
 - **Sector etc.**

Female 15+ Labour Force Participation (%)

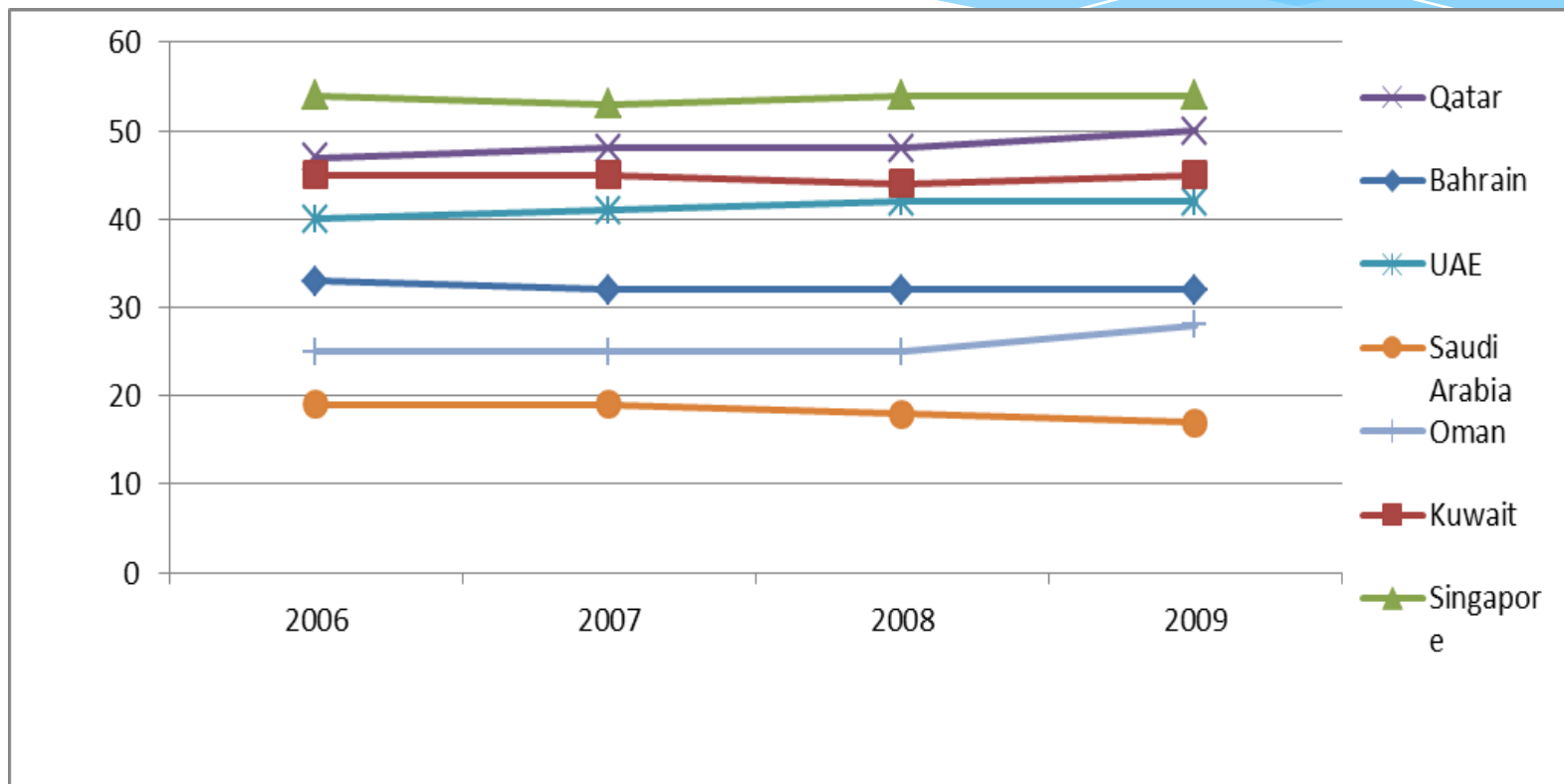
| Country | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 |
|--------------|------|------|------|------|
| Bahrain | 33 | 32 | 32 | 32 |
| Qatar | 47 | 48 | 48 | 50 |
| UAE | 40 | 41 | 42 | 42 |
| Saudi Arabia | 19 | 19 | 18 | 17 |
| Oman | 25 | 25 | 25 | 28 |
| Kuwait | 45 | 45 | 44 | 45 |
| Singapore | 54 | 53 | 54 | 54 |

Source: Compiled from the world bank database.

Female 15+ Labour Force Participation (%)



Female 15+ Labour Force Participation (%)



Labor Force Survey

➤ Main data items:

- i. Age, sex.**
- ii. Nationality.**
- iii. Marital status.**
- iv. Education and training.**
- v. Occupation**
- vi. Industry**
- vii. Status in employment**
- viii. Institutional sector**
- ix. Income from employment**
- x. Actual hours of work etc.**

Questionnaires From GCC Countries

- **Here are some sample questionnaires from the region:**
 - **Bahrain**
 - **Oman**
 - **Qatar**
 - **UAE**

Questionnaires From GCC Countries

| Economic Activity: For persons 15 years and over | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|---|--|---|
| Serial number | Have you worked during the past week (any of the past 7 days prior to filling this questionnaire) for even one hour in any sector with or without pay? <i>For example, sale of foodstuff, washing cars, etc.</i> | Have you had a job last week where you have been temporary absent? | What is the primary reason for your absence from work during the past week? | How many days have you worked during the past week? | What was the number of hours you actually worked during the past week? | How long you have been working at your current establishment? |
| | <p>1. Yes</p> <p>Go to (Q216)</p> <p>2. No</p> <p>Go to (Q214)</p> | <p>1. Yes</p> <p>Go to (Q215)</p> <p>2. No</p> <p>Go to (Q229)</p> | <p>1. Health related</p> <p>2. Public holiday or annual leave</p> <p>3. Personal reasons</p> <p>4. Study or training leave</p> <p>5. Maternity leave</p> <p>6. Temporary cessation of activity</p> <p>7. Strike or temporary suspension</p> <p>8. Other reason (specify)</p> <p>If you answer this question Go to (Q218)</p> | | | <p>1. Less than one week</p> <p>2. 1-4 weeks</p> <p>3. 2-6 months</p> <p>4. One year</p> <p>5. From 2-5 years</p> <p>6. More than 5 years (specify)</p> |
| (201) | (213) | (214) | (215) | (216) | (217) | (218) |
| 01 | | | | | | |
| 02 | | | | | | |

Questionnaires From GCC Countries

| Economic activity: individuals aged 15 years and above | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|---|
| Serial number | <p>Were you actively searching for another job during past week? This includes changing the establishment, changing the existing job title or additional job.</p> <p>1. Yes</p> <p>Go to Q220</p> <p>2. No</p> <p>Go to Q221</p> | <p>What was the primary reason for searching for another job?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> End of contract Insufficient wage Late payment of wages Does not suit my education /qualifications Unsuitable working hours Lack of training Dissatisfaction with management Difficulties in self employment job Other reason (specify) | <p>What is the name of the establishment that you worked past week? Or you worked in before?</p> | <p>What is the primary economic activity for the establishment that you work/worked in?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Agriculture and Hunting Fishing Mining and Quarrying Manufacturing Electricity, Gas and Water supply Construction Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles, Motorcycles and Personal and Household Goods Hotels and Restaurants Transport, Storage and Communications Financial Intermediation Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities Public Administration and Defence; Compulsory Social Security Education Health and Social Work Other Community, Social and Personal Service Activities Private Households with Employed Persons Extra-Territorial Organizations and Bodies Others (specify) |
| | (201) | (219) | (220) | (221) |

Questionnaires From GCC Countries

Economic activity: individuals ages 15 years and above

| Serial number | What type of establishment do you work in? | What is/was your occupation? For example, electrical engineer, primary school teacher, taxi driver, nurse, dentist, secretary, clerk, president, director, food trader...etc. <i>(Specify the main job task)</i> | What was your employment status past week? | How did you find your current job? | What was your monthly wage during the past month? (in Bahraini Dinars) |
|---------------|--|---|--|------------------------------------|--|
| (201) | (223) | (224) | (225) | (226) | (227) |
| 01 | | | | | |

Questionnaires From GCC Countries

Economic activity: individuals ages 15 years and above

| | Economic activity: individuals ages 15 years and above | | | | |
|---------------|---|--|--|---|--|
| Serial number | <p>Are you currently registered at:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Pension Fund Commission (PFC) General Organisation for Social Insurance (GOSI) Both 1 and 2 Neither 1 nor 2 I don't know. <p>END OF QUESTIONNAIRE</p> | <p>What is the primary source of your monthly income?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Assistance from family Pension Fixed deposit real-estate, inheritance Government aid Welfare societies Other source <i>(specify)</i> | <p>Are you currently free and ready to take a job. (or within the next two weeks)?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Yes <p>Go to 231</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> No <p>Go to 232</p> | <p>Have you been seeking work during the last four weeks by any of the following or other methods? (You may choose up to four methods)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Registering or following up with the employment office at the Civil Service Bureau Registering or following up with the employment office at the Ministry of Labour Registering or following up with the National Employment Programme Contacted a recruitment agency Registered or followed up with Career Consultation Office at University of Bahrain Contacted business owners directly Following up vacancies advertised in newspapers Following up vacancies advertised on the internet Through friends and family Started own business Other method <i>(specify)</i> <p>If you select one of the above</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Go to Q233</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I have not attempted to search for a job <p style="text-align: center;">Go to Q232</p> | <p>What was the main reason for not having searched for work during the last four weeks?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Still studying or taking part in a vocational programme Family Responsibilities Retired Health related reasons, disability or old age Have a contract to work starting at some point in the future Waiting for responses to my applications Family objections Unable to find a suitable job, or have given up Other reason <i>(specify)</i> <p>END OF QUESTIONNAIRE</p> |
| (201) | (228) | (229) | (230) | (231) | (232) |
| 01 | | | | | |

Questionnaires From GCC Countries

| Economic activity: individuals ages 15 years and above | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|--|
| Serial number | How long have you been without work and seeking work? 1. Less than one month 2. 1-6 months 3. 7-11 months 4. 1-2 years 5. More than 2 years (specify) | What kind of occupation were you searching for during the past 4 weeks | What is the minimum wage that you agree to work for? (In Bahraini Dinars). | Have you worked for at least two continuous weeks in the past? 1. Yes Go to Q237 2. No END OF QUESTIONNAIRE | What is the primary reason for leaving your last job? 1. Health related or disability 2. Family responsibilities 3. Study or on training 4. Other personal reasons 1. Unacceptably low wage 2. Suspension 3. End of contract term 4. Temporary shut-down of the establishment 5. Unacceptably long working hours 6. It was part time job 7. Shift work 8. Other non-personal reasons Please go to questions Q221 - Q228. |
| (201) | (233) | (234) | (235) | (236) | (237) |
| 01 | | | | | |

Characteristics of Labor Statistics in GCC

- **Irregular data collection.**
- **Limited dissemination of data**
- **Limited analysis of outputs**
- **Limited use for policy formulation**
- **Lack of harmonization of standard and definitions used in various labor statistics sources.**

Economically Active Population (EAP): Definition(ILO)

- **All persons Nationals and non-Nationals who during a specified time-reference period supply labor for the production of goods and services as defined by the international System of National Accounts (SNA). SNA 1993,2008 = most recent version.**

Economically active population (EAP): Measures

- **Currently active population (labor force): short reference period (one day, one week)**
- **Usually active population: long reference period (one year)**

Currently active population (labor force)

- **Definition:**

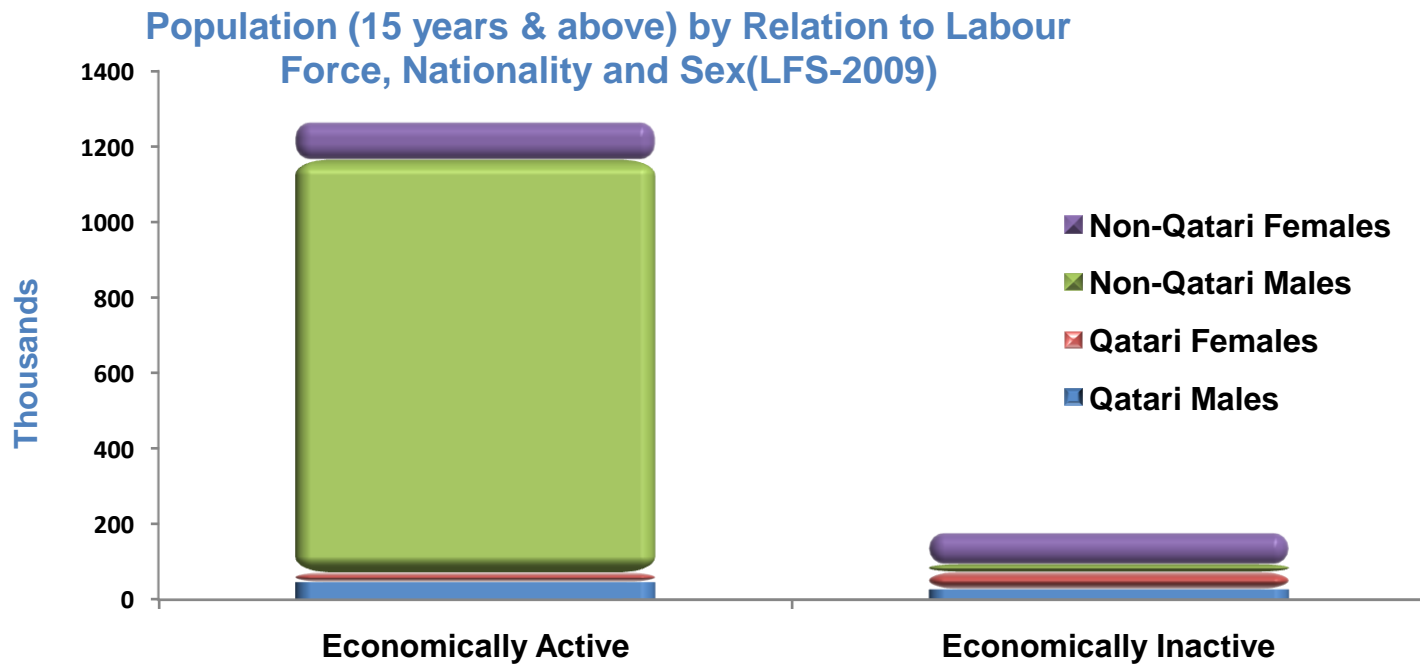
- **all persons who were**

- **employed or unemployed**

- **during a short reference period (e.g. one week, one day)**

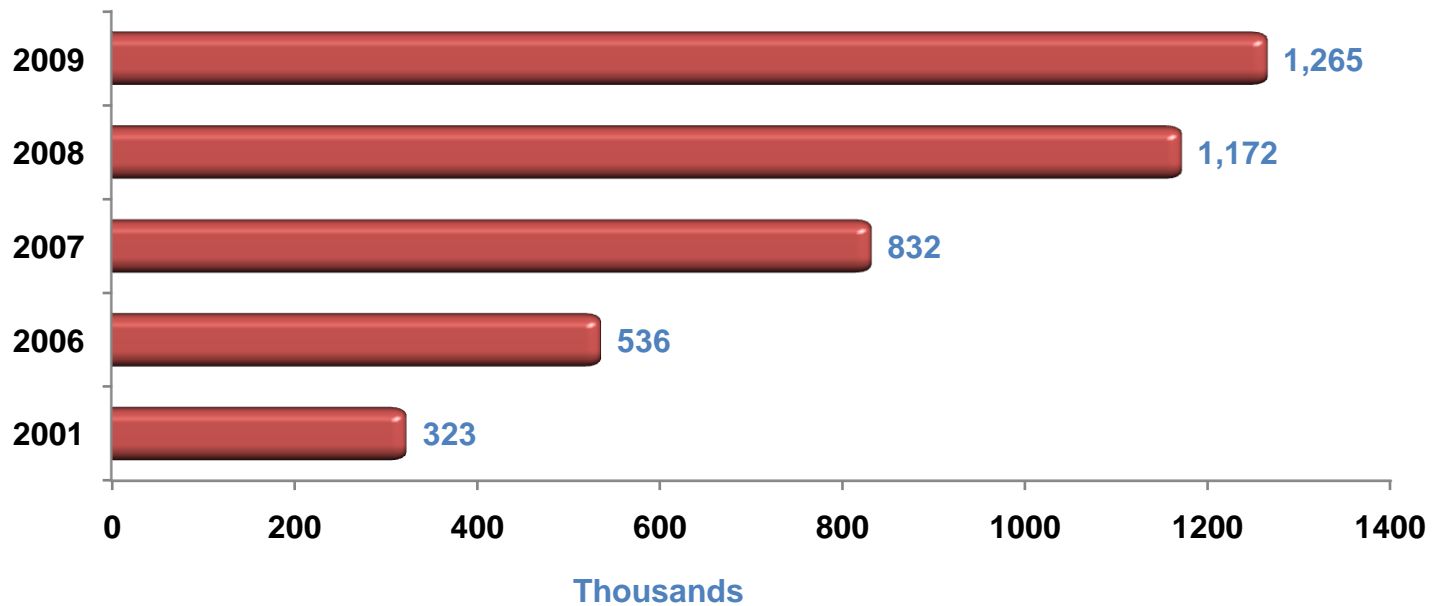
- **Labor force = employed persons + unemployed persons**

Qatar Example (LFS-2009)

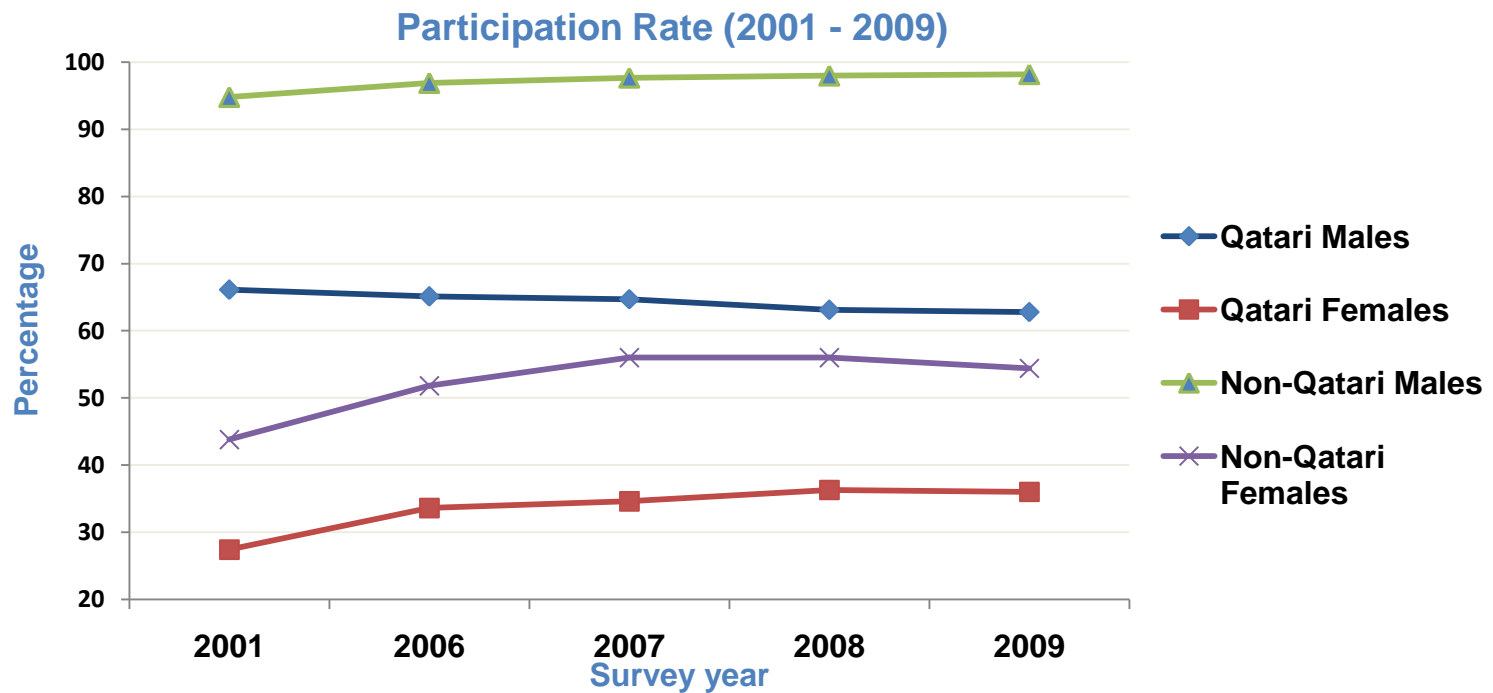


Qatar Example (LFS-2009)

Economically Active Population (Thousands)

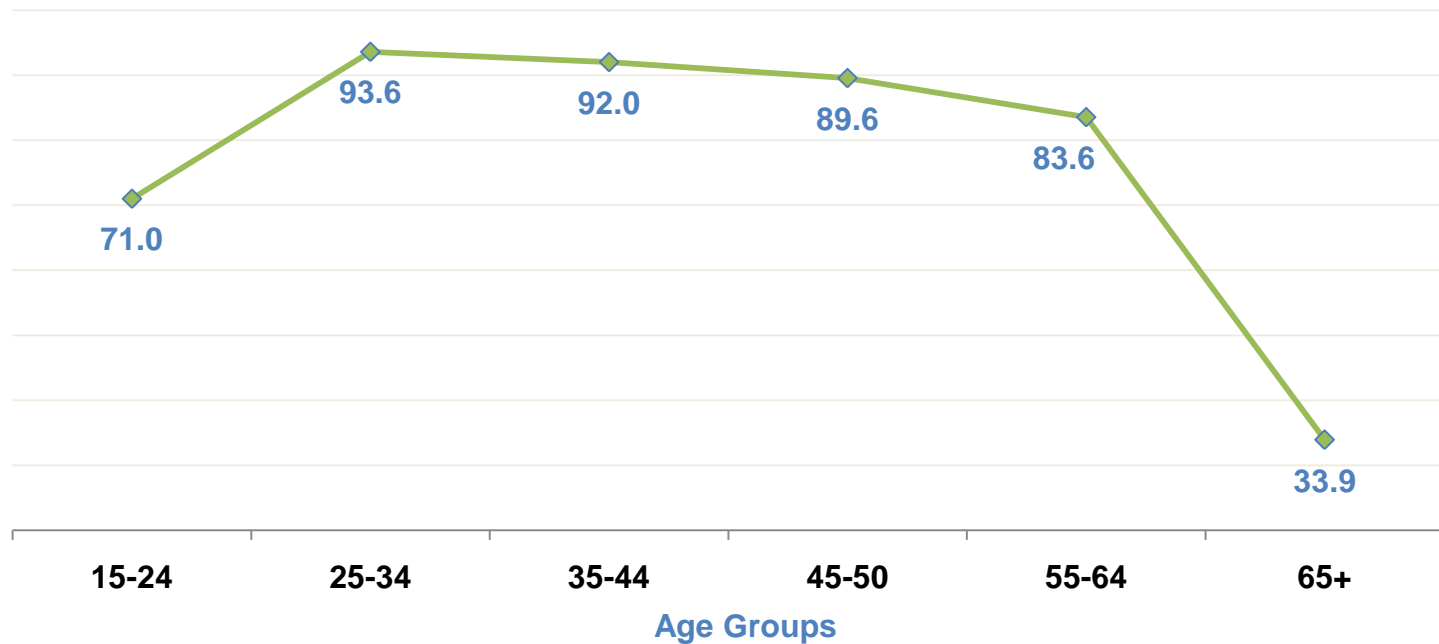


Qatar Example (LFS-2009)

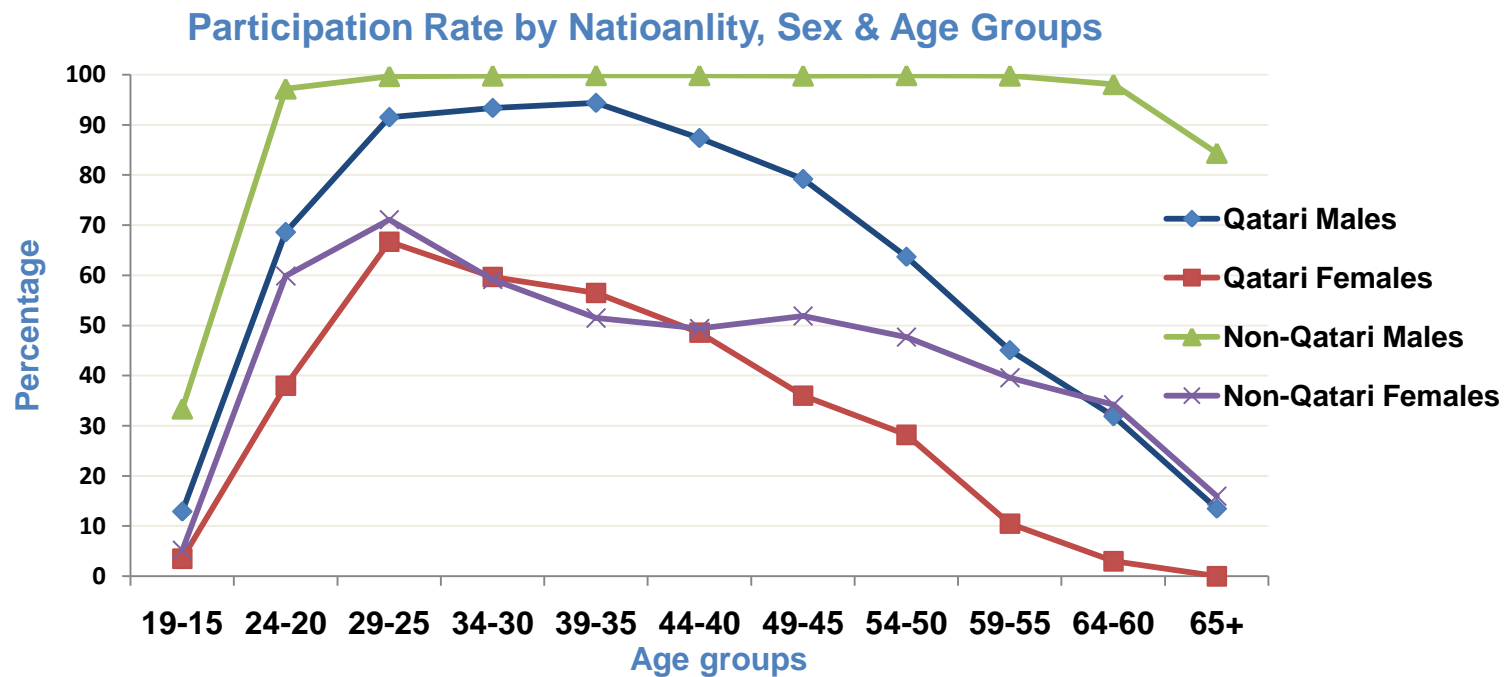


Qatar Example (LFS-2009)

Overall Participation Rate by Age Groups

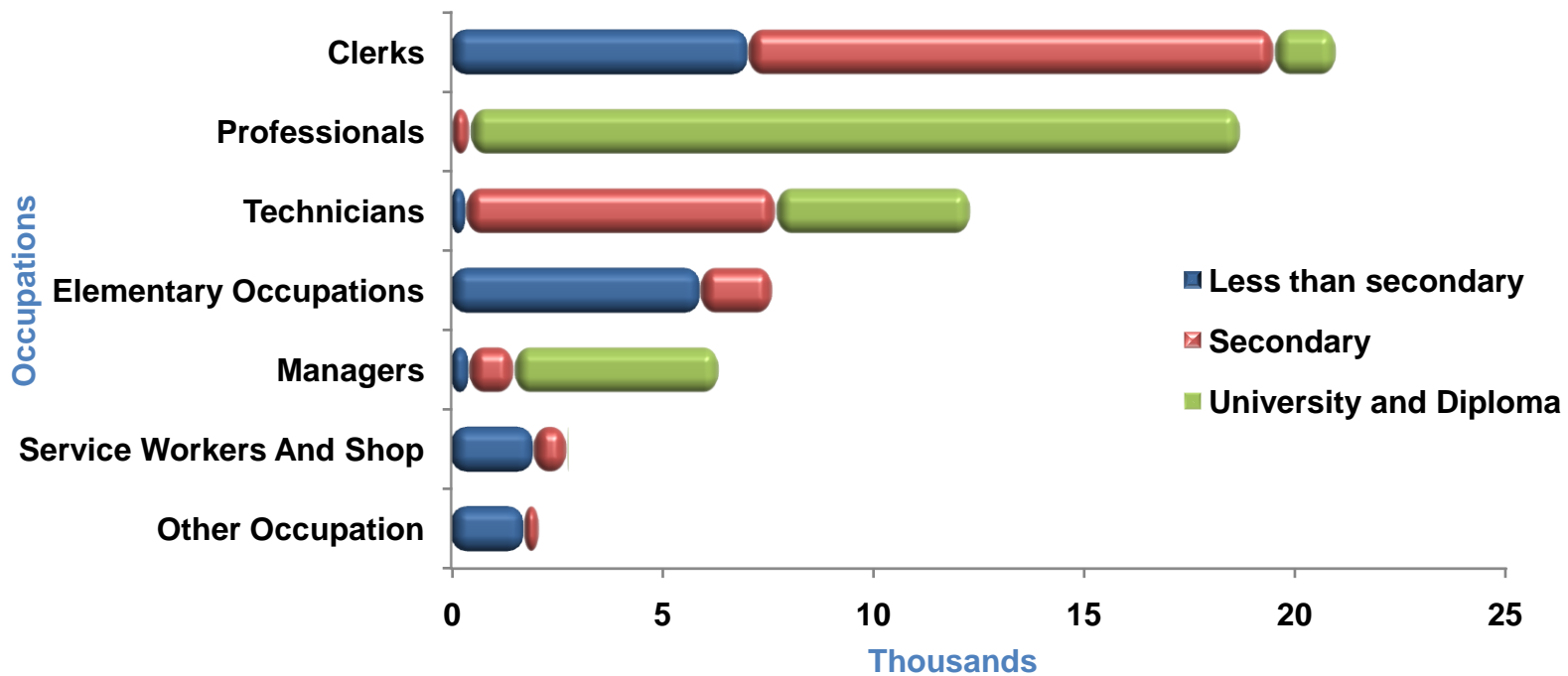


Qatar Example (LFS-2009)



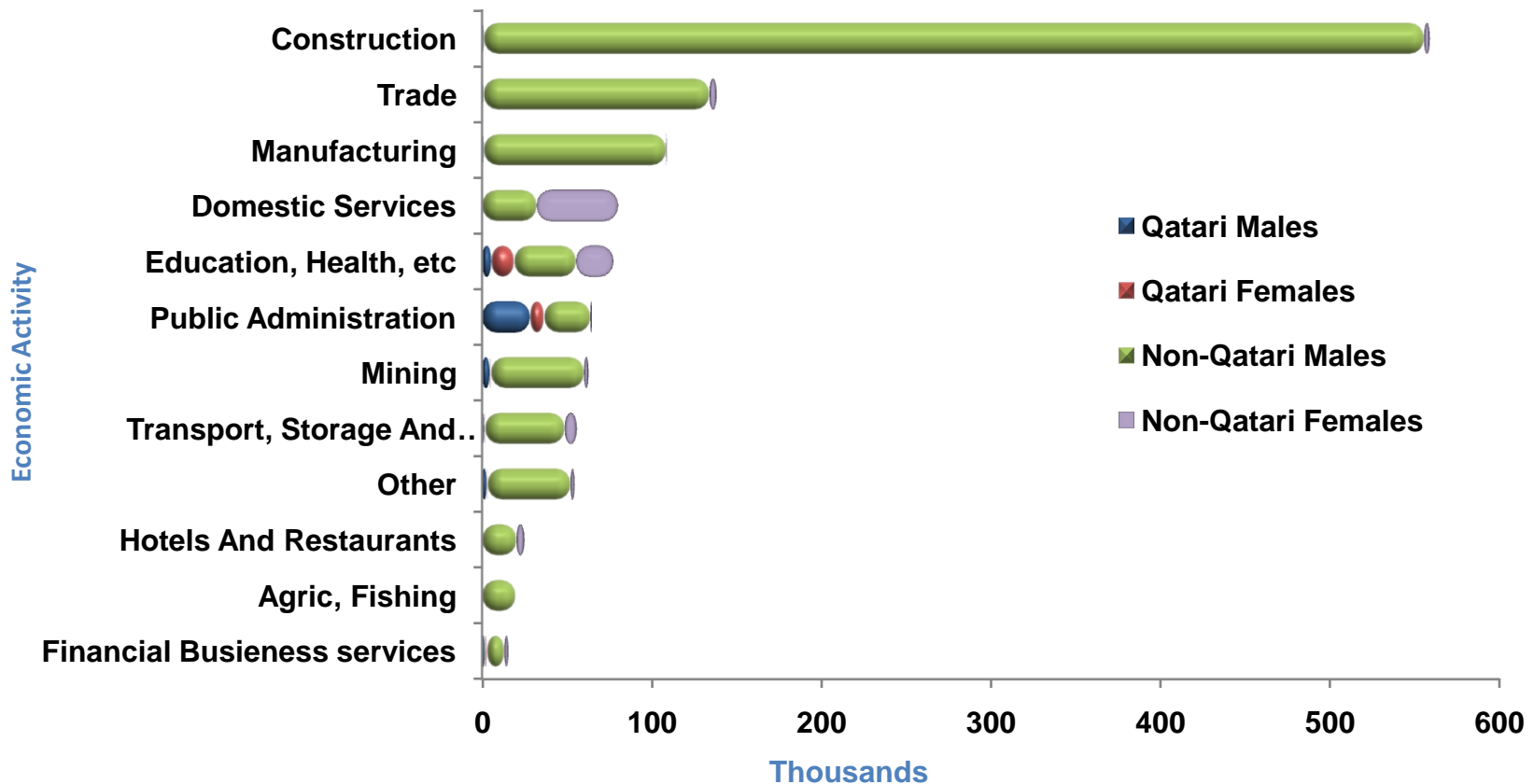
Qatar Example (LFS-2009)

Employed Qatari Population (15 years and above) by Categories of Occupations and Educational Status



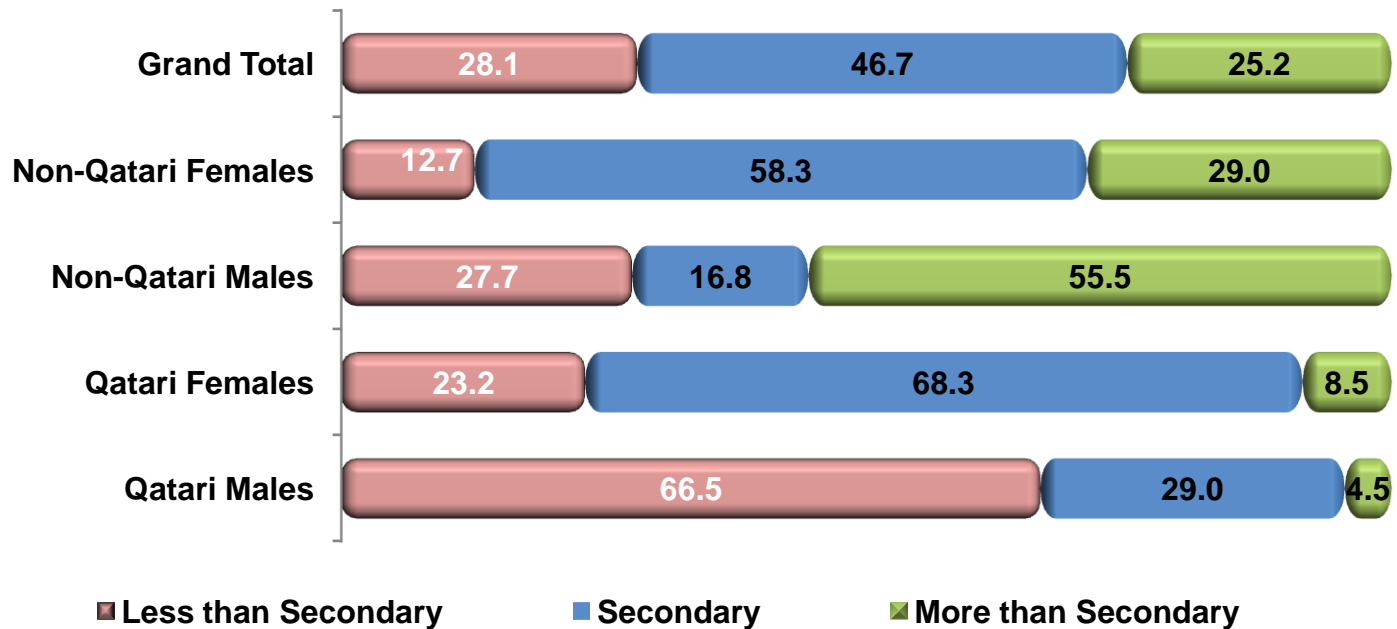
Qatar Example (LFS-2009)

Employed Population (15 years and above) by Economic Activity, Nationality & Sex



Qatar Example (LFS-2009)

Percentage of Unemployed (15 years and above) by Educational Status, Nationality & Sex



General Recommendations

- **In order to face the challenges of measuring the LFP of women, the following strategies are recommended:**
 - i. Developing a national policy to engender all sectors. The vision should be “to have equality among women and men in all spheres of life and in all levels”.**
 - ii. Establish a national committee on gender statistics constituting the key users and producers.**
 - iii. Establish gender statistics unit to organize training workshops on engendering the official statistics system and to avoid the stereotypes in the entire data collection process.**

General Recommendations

- iv. Census and survey planning committee should be established to spread guidance to other departments and participate in all the activities from design of instrument to the dissemination of the results.**
- v. Include sex variable as a primary classification in all collected, analyzed and presented data.**
- vi. Include the place of work variable in order to capture the domestic work and informal workers.**

General Recommendations

- vii.** Revise the standards, concepts, definitions and methods to better capture the work of women and men.
- viii.** Make arrangements to ensure that the results of the Labor Force Survey are analyzed and disseminated regularly.

Methodological Recommendations

- **Coverage all topics & types of activity:**
 - i. Work in widest sense, working time, job-seeking behavior etc.
 - ii. Multiple/combined activities, casual work, subsistence/informal employment, etc.
- **Adequate detail:**
 - i. decision-making/executing posts, entrepreneurs / home, income components (benefits, overtime?), place of work, small production units, etc.
- **Relevant disaggregation:**
 - i. personal characteristics, job characteristics, family context/personal circumstances, etc.

Methodological Recommendations

- **Question formulations:**
 - i. overcome biases & ensure application of definitional criteria.
- **Independent measurement & reporting:**
 - i. higher chance men & women receive equal statistical treatment.
- **Coverage of all productive activity:**
 - i. unpaid non-market services, incl. volunteers.
 - ii. Truly reflecting realities

Methodological Recommendations

- **Special emphasis should be given in the training of enumerators to enable them to capture workers participation.**
- **Manual of instruction for the enumerators should be prepared based on:**
 - i. Best practices in the region and at the international level**
 - ii. Include probing techniques to get the correct response**



Questions ?

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