

Chapter 2: Women and Economic Participation

Introduction

Through their participation in various economic activities and occupations, women are considered men's partner in the economic process. Women's work is no longer considered marginal, but rather has become just as important as that of men. The increase in women's participation in the labor market and the shift in the nature of work practiced by women have had numerous positive effects on Jordanian society, such as raising the standard of living for women and their families. These effects have also made a mark on women's social and personal conceptions in that they have become more self-confident and encouraged by their achievements in attaining a more equal footing with men with regard to their rights and duties.

Despite the positive changes in women's increased economic participation, it is still far from the needed level. There are many reasons for their generally low participation and numerous hindrances that keep women from attaining their goals and reaching the economic levels attained by men. Among these obstacles is the fact that women's wages are lower in comparison to those of men. In most cases, women are engaged in occupations that are characterized by low incomes and limited incentives.

In general, women face different obstacles than those of men which are responsible for preventing their entrance into the labor market. Responsibilities in the home and the need to care for their children are among the most important obstacles. Additionally, women's lower educational and training levels also play a major role in their lower economic participation and inability to find suitable and higher paying work.

This chapter deals with economic issues related to women, such as the volume of the female labor force in the Jordanian market, their level of economic participation, unem-

ployment among women and characteristics of unemployed women. It also covers industrial and occupational structures, the employment status of employed women and wage levels.

Women's Economic Participation

Despite the significant changes that have been seen in Jordanian women's social and economic conditions, their participation in the labor market is still limited in comparison with that of men due to many reasons which are mostly social in nature. Thus, the aim of this section is to shed light on the changes and trends that have occurred in the female labor force with particular attention to the different rates of participation in economic activity.

The measurement of economic participation in any society can be achieved by computing a number of measures and rates that can be used to reflect the size and volume of participation. Among these measures is the crude activity rate, which gauges the proportional dimension of economic participation and reflects the volume of the population category which carries the burden of dependents who are outside the labor force.

Table 2.1 shows the percentage distribution of the population in 1979 and 2002

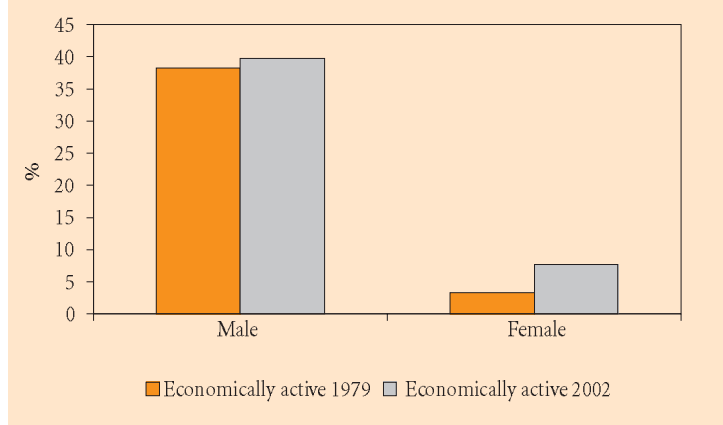
Table 2.1:
Percentage Distribution of the Population Aged 15 and Above in 1979 and 2002 by and Relationship to Economic Activity

Sex	1979*			2002**		
	Economically Active	Inactive	Total	Economically Active	Inactive	Total
Male	38.2	61.8	100.0	39.7	60.3	100.0
Female	3.3	96.7	100.0	7.7	92.3	100.0
Total	21.3	78.7	100.0	24.0	76.0	100.0

* Saleh, Kamal, "Dynamics of the Labor Force in Jordan: 1961-1982," Cairo Demographic Center, Cairo, 1987.

** Department of Statistics, "Employment Survey: Annual Report 2002," Amman.

Fig. 2.1:
Percentage of Economically Active Population in 1979 and 2002 by Sex



The Amman governorate recorded the highest proportion of economically active males (about 42%), while the lowest proportion (33%) was observed in the Mafraq governorate.

The Karak Governorate recorded the highest proportion of economically active females (9.5 percent), while the lowest proportion (about 5 percent) was observed in the Mafraq governorate.

by sex and economic activity status. The data indicates a noticeable increase in the proportion of the active population during the period of 1979-2002, where it increased from about 21% in 1979 to 24% in 2002. This means that a similar decrease occurred in the economic dependency ratio. Such a

decrease denotes a decrease in the number of dependents, on one hand, and an increase in the probability that living conditions of the population will be improved through the income gained, on the other.

The proportion of economically active females increased significantly during 1979-2002, where it approximately doubled (increased from 3.3 percent in 1979 to 7.7 percent in 2002). This reflects an increase in the tendency of females to participate in economic activity as a result of the socio-economic changes which have occurred in Jordan over the last two decades.

Regardless of the improvement of Jordanian females' economic participation in the labor market, a large proportion of women still do not work due to many reasons, such as job shortages and the competition they face from males.

Data in Table 2.2 indicates that the proportion of economically active males is much higher than that of females (39.7%

Table 2.2:
Jordanian Population Aged 15 and Above by Sex, Economic Activity Status and Governorate, 2002

Governorate	Male			Female		
	Active	Inactive	Total	Active	Inactive	Total
Amman	42.3	57.7	100.0	9.0	91.0	100.0
Balqa	39.6	60.4	100.0	9.0	91.0	100.0
Zarqa	41.7	58.3	100.0	6.7	93.3	100.0
Madaba	38.3	61.7	100.0	8.8	91.2	100.0
Irbid	37.3	62.7	100.0	6.4	93.6	100.0
Mafraq	33.2	66.8	100.0	5.3	94.7	100.0
Jerash	35.0	65.0	100.0	5.5	94.5	100.0
Ajloun	33.8	66.2	100.0	6.6	93.4	100.0
Karak	38.7	61.3	100.0	9.5	90.5	100.0
Tafila	34.7	64.3	100.0	6.6	93.4	100.0
Ma'an	37.5	62.5	100.0	6.0	94.0	100.0
Aqaba	41.5	58.5	100.0	6.4	93.6	100.0
Total	39.7	60.3	100.0	7.7	92.3	100.0

Source: Department of Statistics, "Employment Survey: Annual Report 2002," Amman.

Table 2.3:
Gender Gap and Gender Parity Index for the Proportion of the Economically Active Jordanian Population Aged 15 and Above by Governorate, 2002

Governorate	*Gender Gap	**Gender Parity Index
Amman	+51.5	0.21
Balqa	+52.0	0.22
Zarqa	+56.2	0.16
Madaba	+47.1	0.23
Irbid	+50.8	0.17
Mafraq	+50.1	0.16
Jerash	+51.1	0.15
Ajloun	+46.6	0.20
Karak	+48.4	0.23
Tafila	+49.1	0.20
Ma'an	+54.2	0.16
Aqaba	+60.7	0.16
Total	+51.9	0.19

*Gender Gap = rate for males – rate for females.

**Gender Parity Index = rates for females divided by rates for males.

for males and 7.7 percent for females). The proportion of economically active males shows significant variations among the governorates, with a range from 33.2% in the Mafraq governorate to 43.2% in the Amman governorate. Moreover, similar variations in the proportion of active males were observed in governorates contained in the same region, such as the range found between the Tafila (34.7%) and Aqaba (41.5%) governorates.

Gender measures have tended to be in favor of males rather than females. The gender gap is high in all governorates, and thus females' economic participation is still behind that of males. Discrepancies in gender gap values are significant among the governorates; they registered the highest value in the Aqaba and Zarqa governorates (around 60 and around 56 in the two governorates, respectively), which indicates that these two governorates have job opportunities that are more available for males than females. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that the low gender gap values observed in the

Ajloun and Madaba governorates (46.6 and 47.1, respectively) is not due to an improvement in females' economic participation, but rather the low economic participation of males in these two governorates.

The gender parity index also tends to be in favor of males rather than females, with a range from 0.15 in the Jerash governorate to 0.23 in the Madaba and Karak governorates. Thus, in order to attain equity between males and females in economic participation in these three governorates, it is necessary to increase females' economic participation by six-fold in the Jerash governorate and four-fold in the Karak and Madaba governorates.

Crude Activity Rate

The crude activity rate represents the percentage of the economically active members of society and it is calculated by dividing the total number of the active population by the total population. Table 2.4 presents the crude activity rate in 1979 and 2002 by governorate and sex. It is noticeable from the

Table 2.4:
Crude Activity Rate for the Jordanian Population Aged 15 and Above by Governorate and Sex in 1979 and 2002

Governorate	†1979		‡2002	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Amman	39.0	3.7	42.3	9.0
Balqa	38.3	2.8	39.6	9.0
Zarqa	*	*	41.7	6.7
Madaba	*	*	38.3	8.8
Irbid	35.2	2.4	37.3	6.4
Mafraq	**	**	33.2	5.3
Jerash	**	**	35.0	5.5
Ajloun	**	**	33.8	6.6
Karak	39.0	2.7	38.7	9.5
Tafila	***	***	32.9	6.6
Ma'an	47.3	2.3	37.5	6.0
Aqaba	****	****	41.5	6.4
Total	38.2	3.3	39.7	7.7

* Part of Amman Governorate

** Part of Irbid Governorate

*** Part of Karak Governorate

**** Part of Ma'an Governorate

†Saleh, Kamal, "Dynamics of the Labor Force in Jordan: 1961-1982," Cairo Demographic Center, Cairo, 1987.

‡Department of Statistics, "Employment Survey: Annual Report 2002," Amman.

The female crude activity rate increased significantly during the period of 1979-2002 and rose from 3.3 percent to 7.7 percent. The male rate increased by 1.5 percentage points.

1979 data that there were great variations in males' crude activity rate values among the governorates. They ranged from 35% in the Irbid governorate to 47% in the Ma'an governorate. In contrast, the female crude activity rates did not show nearly the same variations, as they ranged from 2.3 percent

in the Ma'an governorate to 3.7 percent in the Amman governorate.

Overall, data has shown a significant increase in the female crude activity rate during the period of 1979-2002, in which it rose from 3.3 percent in 1979 to 7.7 percent in

Table 2.5:
Crude Activity Rate for the Population Aged 15 and Above by Place of Residence and Sex in 1979 and 2002

Place of Residence	1979*		2002**	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Urban	39.3	4.6	40.9	8.2
Rural	36.6	1.5	35.9	6.0

* Saleh, Kamal, "Dynamics of the Labor Force in Jordan: 1961-1982," Cairo Demographic Center, Cairo, 1987.

** Department of Statistics, "Employment Survey: Annual Report 2002," Amman.

2002 (with a percentage increase of around 23%). Conversely, the male crude activity rate did not show a significant change during the same time period and registered an increase of about 4 %.

The stability observed in the male crude activity rate during 1979-2002 is mainly due to the sharp decrease in the number of young males entering the workforce. This is due to the spread of education, which is responsible for a delay in the age in which these males enter the workforce. On the contrary, education is considered the main impetus for the large increase in the female crude activity rate during the above mentioned period.

Refined Activity Rate

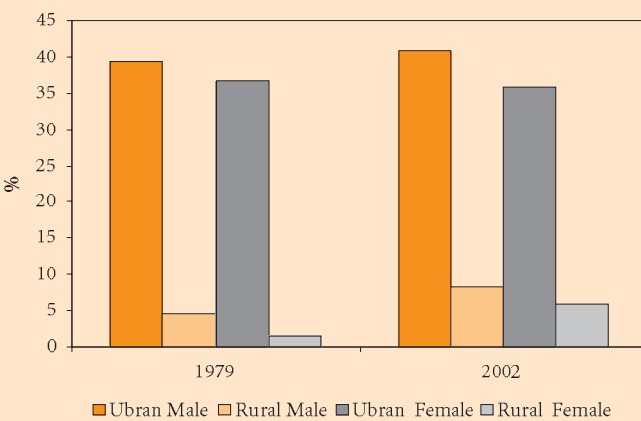
The refined activity rate is considered a more accurate measure than the crude activity rate, because it relates the actual workforce to those who are potential candidates for entry into the workforce. Table 2.6 shows the refined activity rate in 1979 and 2002 by sex.

It is obvious from the data that the male refined activity rates are much higher than those of females, whether in 1979 or 2002. In addition, a considerable increase in the female refined activity rate (86.3%) was seen between 1979 and 2002. The male refined activity rate showed a moderate decrease of about 18% between those years. No doubt, these variations are a product of the effects of education on females' attitudes towards participating in the workforce, on one hand, and a reflection of the effects of education on reducing the proportion of new males who enter the workforce at a young age, on the other.

Refined Activity Rate According to Marital Status

Refined activity rates for males and females vary significantly when they are classified by marital status (Table 2.7). These rates were higher among married males than other groups in 1979 and 2002 and, in the female category, highest among those females who were never married in both years.

Fig. 2.2:
Crude Activity Rate by Place of Residence and Sex in 1979 and 2002



Refined Activity Rate According to Educational Level

Refined activity rates clearly vary according to educational level and tend to increase where educational level increases, regardless of one's sex. This indicates a positive relationship between education and the

The female refined activity rate doubled between 1979 and 2002, while the male refined activity rate decreased by nearly 18%.

Table 2.6:
Refined Activity Rate for the Population Aged 15 and Above by Sex in 1979 and 2002

Sex	*1979	**2002	Percentage Change
Male	77.8	64.2	-17.7
Female	6.7	12.3	+83.6

* Saleh, Kamal, "Dynamics of the Labor Force in Jordan: 1961-1982," Cairo Demographic Center, Cairo, 1987.

** Department of Statistics, "Employment Survey: Annual Report 2002," Amman.

Fig. 2.3:
Refined Activity Rate by Sex in 1979 and 2002

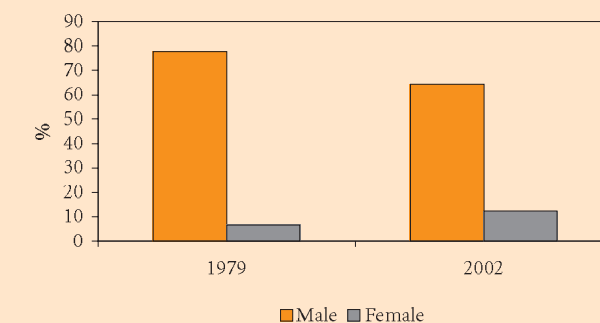


Table 2.7:
Refined Activity Rate for the Population Aged 15 and Above by Marital Status and Sex in 1979 and 2002

Marital Status	*1979		**2002	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Never married	46.8	16.5	53.9	17.1
Married	86.5	4.2	74.8	9.5
Divorced	22.1	5.2	†39.0	†7.2
†Widowed	78.7	20.5	-	-

* Saleh, Kamal, "Dynamics of the Labor Force in Jordan: 1961-1982," Cairo Demographic Center, Cairo, 1987.

** Department of Statistics, "Employment Survey: Annual Report 2002," Amman.

†Includes widowed and separated persons.

The refined activity rate for males is the highest in the Aqaba governorate and highest for females in the Karak governorate.

Table 2.8:
Refined Activity Rate for the Population Aged 15 and Above by Sex and Educational Level, 2002

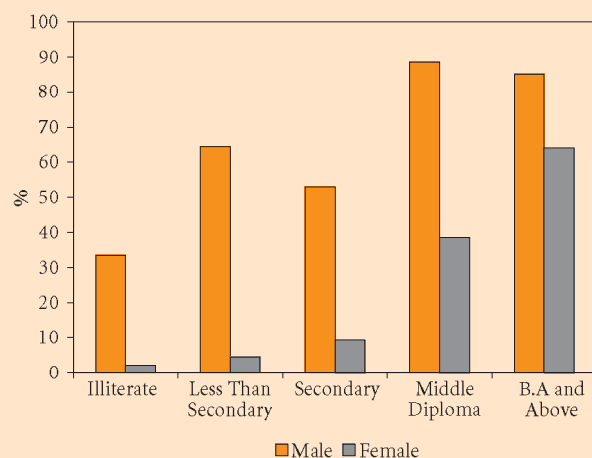
Educational Level	Male	Female
Illiterate	33.5	2.0
Less than Secondary	64.4	4.5
Secondary	53.0	9.3
Middle Diploma	88.6	38.6
Bachelor's and Above	85.1	64.1

Source: Department of Statistics, "Employment Survey: Annual Report 2002," Amman.

participation in economic activity (Table 2.8). Data illustrates that the refined activity rate for males with middle diplomas is higher in comparison to rates for other educational levels (88.6%), while the refined activity rate is highest for females with Bachelor's degrees (64.1%). The lowest refined activity rates were observed among illiterate males and females (33.5% and 2.0%, respectively).

The 1979 refined activity rate has an unsteady pattern when classified by educational level, unlike the pattern observed in 2002. In general, the data shows a significant decline in the participation rate of illiterate males between 1979 and 2002 and an increase, mainly among females, for persons with a secondary education and above.

Fig. 2.4:
Refined Activity Rate for the Population Aged 15 and Above by Sex and Educational Level 2002



Refined Activity Rate According to Governorate

Refined activity rates show variations when classified by characteristics such as place of residence. Table 2.9 shows the refined activity rates by governorate and sex in 2002.

Industrial Structure of Economic Activity

Researchers of economic activity encounter numerous difficulties when data analysis includes time trends due to the various revisions used in data sources. This chapter addresses those difficulties, as the classifications used in the 1979 General Census for Housing and Population differ from that used in the Employment and Unemploy-

Table 2.9:
Refined Activity Rates for the Jordanian Population Aged 15 and Above by Sex, Governorate and Measures of Gender, 2002

Governorate	Refined Activity Rate		Gender Gap	Gender Parity Index
	Male	Female		
Amman	65.3	13.8	0.52	0.21
Balqa	66.5	14.5	0.52	0.22
Zarqa	67.0	10.8	0.56	0.16
Madaba	61.2	14.1	0.47	0.23
Irbid	61.2	10.4	0.51	0.17
Ma'raq	59.4	9.3	0.50	0.16
Jerash	60.3	9.2	0.51	0.15
Ajloun	57.9	11.3	0.47	0.20
Karak	63.2	14.8	0.48	0.23
Tafila	61.0	11.9	0.49	0.20
Ma'an	64.5	10.3	0.54	0.16
Aqaba	72.3	11.6	0.61	0.16
Total	64.2	12.3	0.52	0.19

Source: Department of Statistics, "Employment Survey: Annual Report 2002," Amman.

The great majority of employed females in 1979 (around 99%) worked in non-agricultural activities, while one male out of 12 worked in agricultural activities.

ment Survey of 2002. The 1979 General Census for Housing and Population employs the second standard version issued by the United Nations in 1968, while the Employment and Unemployment Survey of 2002 uses the third standard version issued by United Nations in 1988.

The complexity in integrating the two classifications lies in the adjustments made to various activities (in which some activities were moved from one group to another) and in the creation of new groups of activities that did not exist in the second classification. Due to these impediments, data was dealt with separately and comparisons between the changes made in the main groups of activities were done as much as possible. Table 2.10 shows the relative distribution for the employed population according to their main economic activity and sex in 1979.

Data shows that most of those employed, both males and females, worked in non-agricultural activities (88% of employed males and 99% of females).

The division of activities into primary, secondary and tertiary shows that the largest ratio of employed males and females is concentrated in the tertiary activities, which are characterized by service occupations. The secondary activities, which include manufacturing and construction, attracted around

Fig. 2.5:
Refined Activity Rates for Jordanians Aged 15 and Above by Governorate and Gender

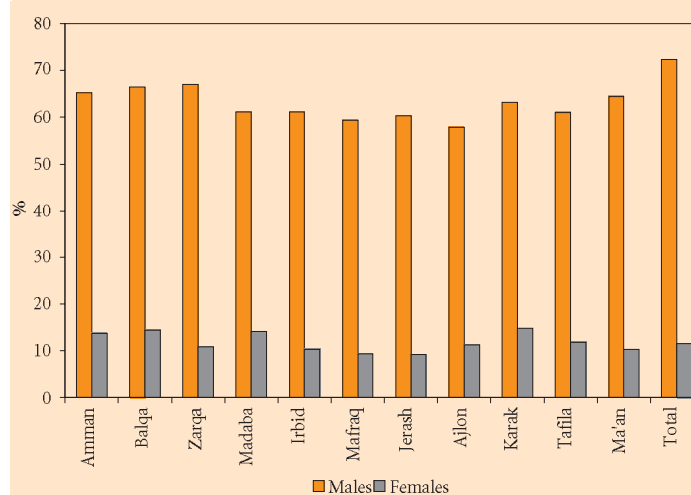


Table 2.10:
Percentage Distribution of Those Employed (Aged 15 and Above) According to Main Type of Economic Activity and Sex in 1979

Main Type of Economic Activity	Male	Female
Agricultural	12.1	1.2
Non-Agricultural	87.9	98.8
Total	100.0	100.0
Primary Activities (Agricultural, Mining and Quarrying)	13.7	1.4
Secondary Activities (Manufacturing and Construction)	25.0	7.2
Tertiary Activities (Electricity, Gas, Water, Wholesale and Retail Trade, Transport, Storage, Communications, Services and Non- Specified Activities)	61.3	91.4
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Saleh, Kamal, "Dynamics of the Labor Force in Jordan: 1961-1982," Cairo Demographic Center, Cairo, 1987.

one-fourth (1/4) of the employed males and 7 percent of employed females. In general, most employed males and females preferred to work in the various tertiary activities, with females having a significant preference to work in the education, health, societal and financial sectors, respectively.

Table 2.11 shows the relative distribution of the 2002 employed population according

to the main economic activity and sex. There is a clear variance in distribution between males and females according to the various economic activities. Despite the variety of economic activities (17 main activities), only a limited number of them attracted a significant portion of the workforce. Data shows that three main activities attract nearly half of all the employed males: wholesale and retail trade [around one-fifth (1/5)]; public administration, defense and social security (around 18%); and manufacturing (around 13%). The other half of the employed male population is distributed in other sectors with uneven ratios.

The distribution pattern of the employed female population shows a pattern similar to that of the males, but with a difference in activities in which they worked. More than half of them (55%) worked in two main sectors: education and health and social work. Education attracted the largest ratio of employed females (around 41%), and health and social work attracted 14% of them.

The tendency for females to work in these two sectors led to them becoming a majority

Fig. 2.6:
Percentage Distribution of Employed Persons by Major Economic Activities, 1979

