



MINISTRY OF WOMEN, FAMILY
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



Empowered lives.
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STUDY TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES TO INCREASE AND RETAIN THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE MALAYSIAN LABOUR FORCE: KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*A Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development
(MWFCD) and United Nations Development Programme
(UNDP) Project*





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FOREWORD

It is an honour for the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFCD) to collaborate with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in addressing mechanisms to support the development of national policies and programmes to increase and retain the participation of women in the Malaysian labour force. In view of women being highly important contributors to the country's economic and social development, improving women's access to jobs and economic opportunities could significantly boost productivity of the nation.

In Malaysia, women constitute almost half of the total population. Over the years, women's participation in the labour force has increased from 45.7 per cent in 2008 to 52.4 per cent in 2013. Comparatively, male labour force participation rate in 2013 stands at 80.7 per cent. As such, there is a need to further enhance the working conditions and support systems to be more conducive to increase and encourage more women into the labour market whether as employee or as own account workers in order to achieve 55% women participation rate in the workforce by the end 2015. Women are valuable asset at all levels of society. If we are to be a high income developed nation, we must unleash the energy and full potential of Malaysian women. This can be done by providing them with the right supporting infrastructure in the community and by removing the barriers so that women can continue to contribute to nation building.

I would like to extend my appreciation and heartfelt thanks to all parties involved in this study especially to UNDP for their continuous support.



DATO' SRI ROHANI ABDUL KARIM

Minister of Women, Family and Community Development



FOREWORD

Malaysia has made significant progress in the past few decades, establishing itself as an upper middle income nation. The United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Human Development Index 2013 ranks Malaysia at 64th place out of 187 countries and the Gender Inequality Index at 42nd out of 148 countries. Even as Malaysia registers these significant achievements, efforts have to be further strengthened to achieve greater gender equality and parity in the country to bridge the socio-economic divides and accelerate progress towards inclusive and sustainable human development.

In line with the Government's efforts to foster inclusive growth, UNDP is pleased to collaborate with the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development to analyse the factors that contribute to women's low participation rates and, through extensive nation-wide stakeholder engagements and policy dialogues, to jointly develop policy recommendations and programmes to address these constraining factors.

I am pleased to note that the policy findings generated through this strategic partnership have been utilised as input for the preparation of programmes in the 2014 Budget and will also frame key strategies in the 11th Malaysia Plan (2016-2020) to address and remove systemic barriers that discourage women from entering or reentering the workforce, and to promote their increased and sustained participation through closer collaboration between the various Government agencies and other partners.

I would like to record my appreciation to the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, in particular the Policy Division of the Ministry, for their strong commitment to ensure that gender equality and the empowerment of women are promoted. In addition, I would like to thank the Department of Statistics, participating Government ministries, agencies and departments, academic institutions, private sector, as well as local women NGOs and individuals who have been instrumental in contributing valuable inputs, insights and feedback.

On behalf of UNDP, we remain committed to work with the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development and other key stakeholders in Malaysia to move forward the agenda of gender equality and empowerment to achieve the goals outlined in Vision 2020.



MICHELLE GYLES-MCDONNOUGH

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Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei Darussalam*



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ABBREVIATIONS

DoS	Department of Statistics
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education Council
EPU	Economic Planning Unit
GTP	Government Transformation Programme
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
INTAN	Institut Tadbiran Awam Negara
ISMK	National Institute of Human Resource
JPA	Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam
JKM	Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat
JPW	Jabatan Pembangunan Wanita
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LPPKN	Lembaga Penduduk dan Pembangunan Keluarga Negara
MDeC	Multimedia Development Corporation
MIDA	Malaysian Industrial Development Authority
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MOHR	Ministry of Human Resources
MITI	Ministry of International Trade and Industry
MWFCD	Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development
NIEW	NAM Institute for the Empowerment of Women
PEMANDU	Performance Management and Delivery Unit
PSD	Public Service Department
SKMM	Suruhanjaya Komunikasi dan Multimedia Malaysia
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SMECorp	Small and Medium Enterprises Corporation
SMI	Small and Medium Industries
SMIDEC	Small and Medium Industries Development Corporation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The situation of stagnating and low participation of women in the labour workforce in Malaysia is a major concern. The Government of Malaysia in seeking to address this has in the 10th Malaysia Plan (10MP) targeted a 55% women participation rate in the workforce by 2015. This project specifically looks at why women's labour force participation rates have been low despite the Nation successfully achieving gender parity in many national developmental areas particularly in education. The present statistical evidence of 47.9% women labour force participation rate is significantly less than most developed economics and within the ASEAN nations. This figure is also low compared to the OECD countries record of 61% women in their overall labour force participation rates¹. The objective of the study was to ascertain in detail what factors, both direct and indirect, contribute to this phenomena wherein the study.

At present, information on the labour force participation in Malaysia is primarily obtained from the Labour Force Survey. The Labour Force Survey under the Department of Statistics, Malaysia is conducted quarterly and presents the data on the characteristics of the labour force which is defined as 'those who, during the reference week, were in the 15 – 64 years age group and who were either employed or unemployed' and the structure of employment. These data provide the basis for analysing the labour market including supporting efforts to formulate, implement and monitor policies and programmes related to human resource and human capital development.

The data utilized for this project was drawn from the 2011 labour force survey. As per the 2011 data, only 47.9% of Malaysian women are economically active in the labour force. The female labour force participation rate in Malaysia has remained for the last three decades around 44% to 47%.

The Labour Force Survey found that the main reasons that women are 'not actively seeking work' are due to housework (66.9%) and schooling (27.7%).

However, this does not inform policy makers as to whether women want to work, whether there are barriers that are inhibiting them from working and what enhancers there are to enable women to work. The general assumption is that the delayed entry to the labour force is primarily as a result of the increased years spent in education and that women tend to leave the labour force due to marriage and child birth. This framework however is limiting as it traces women primarily as non-workers, and obscures women's potential and actual labour and economic contributions. It is also the back-drop as to why there is an under-recording of women in the labour force participation rates providing a conduit for unrecognised/invisible labour force. These increases the vulnerabilities faced by these women and create barriers to accessing their rights and entitlements.

The current policy and legal frameworks need to focus on the specific enablers to promote women's participation in the labour force. The findings of the survey had found amongst other, a need to reduce burdens of unpaid work, increase men's participation in unpaid work, better child care, better access to social protection and other capacity building initiatives to enhance women's skills and potential for work. While indeed, there have been many government initiatives already put in place to support women in the labour force, and are noteworthy, these appear fragmented, with no clear monitoring mechanisms to measure their effectiveness and outcomes.

The findings from the study show that a majority of the women want to work, whether or not they had worked before. The study also shows that majority of the women have moderate work-life balance (70.1%) which indicates that they are facing some difficulty in balancing work and life. Work-life balance policy is about creating and maintaining supportive and healthy work environments, which will enable

¹ http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/reg_glance-2011-en/04/index.html?contentType=&itemId=/content/chapter/reg_glance-2011-28-en&containerItemId=/content/serial/19990057&accessItemIds=/content/book/reg_glance-2011-en&mimeType=text/html

employees to have balance between work and personal responsibilities. The survey moreover shows that a large majority (78.7%) of all respondents (both working and not working) interviewed were doing care work in the family particularly for children and the elderly. Among women who are not working, the percentage of them doing care work in the family is significantly higher (83.7%) than those who are not doing care work (16.3%). The same pattern is observed among women who are currently working, where 74% of them are doing care work and 26% do not do any care work in the family. This indicates that women have a greater tendency to do care work in the family regardless of their work status. The government needs to lead and promote a healthy work-life balance wherein the stereotypes on women are removed and double/triple burdens on women are shared among their male counterparts. The strategy to reconcile work and family that integrates the care sector can create jobs such as for care workers, elementary support workers, trainers and other workers providing social infrastructure.

Further the findings all show a significant relation between education and employability. Efforts must be continued to address these gender concerns at all levels of education and employment. The development of better and accessible infrastructure to enable women to work needs to be developed based on needs and location. These findings and recommendations for a way forward is discussed in the following chapters.

**CHAPTER 1:
PROJECT RATIONALE, APPROACH
AND METHODOLOGY**

CHAPTER 1: PROJECT RATIONALE, APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In 2011, the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) embarked on a project to support the Government of Malaysia's target to increase women's participation in the workforce to 55% in 2015 as stated in the 10th Malaysia Plan. In 2011, the women's labour force participation rate was 47.9%.

The project combined research and stakeholder consultations to ascertain what factors, both direct and indirect, contribute to the low participation rates, in order to recommend specific policies and programmes which can be implemented to achieve this substantial increase of women in the labour force.

At the time the study first began, the information as well as research available did not provide a comprehensive picture as to why there are a large proportion of women 'missing' from the labour force, despite the fact that women's gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education (certificate, diploma and degree) increased nearly 20% between 2000 and 2009 (where at 2010, the enrolment of females in public tertiary institutions was at 60.1%). Moreover, the Malaysian Labour Force Survey (2011) only cites 'housework' as to why 66.9% of women were not working, providing a narrow and stereotypical perspective on why they were inactive in the labour force, when numerous literatures indicate that there could be other attributing factors.

Thus, there was a need to conduct an in-depth study on why women, particularly those who have tertiary education, are not entering the workforce. In doing so, the study would examine closely what other factors such as women's employability, occupational segregation, gender-based division of labour and cultural norms as well as the need for family friendly work designs and support have significant impact on women's participation in the labour force.

The Outputs of the study are as follows:

Output 1: The status and profile of women in the workforce, including sub-national disaggregated data based on educational attainment, age and ethnic groups identified and determined.

Output 2: Factors contributing to the stagnant rate of women's participation in the labour workforce identified.

Output 3: Short and long term strategies and programmes to increase and retain women in the labour workforce and monitoring mechanisms proposed.

A range of activities were designed to achieve these outputs. Activities such as a nationwide survey, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, international roundtable discussions, an international seminar and other stakeholder consultations enabled the project to deliver the three objectives of the project as follows:

1. Conduct an in depth research to ascertain the issues and obstacles hindering women's increased participation, as well as retention, in the workforce as well as issues that contribute to gender inequality and discrimination in the workplace.
2. Utilize the data gathered in the research phase of the study to provide policy and programme recommendations for the Government of Malaysia to support the increase of women's participation in the workforce, eliminate gender inequality in the workplace, and improve economic growth.
3. Propose mechanisms to monitor gender equality in the labour workforce including wage differentials, and other forms of discrimination to ensure the policies and programmes implemented from Objective 2 are obtaining the desired results.

To meet the objectives above, the project produced several reports from which the input from this report is primarily derived from:

1. The Inception Report, detailing the project's research approach, methodology and detailed work plan.
2. The Interim Report, which produced the preliminary findings from the nationwide survey.
3. The Final Statistical Report of Survey Data, which summarizes the survey data and findings.
4. The Final Research Report, which details the main research outcomes, findings and recommendations from the conducted study.

This final report which draws from the feedback, inputs, data and information from the reports above seeks to identify the key challenges faced by women in order to provide the basis for developing specific actions, programs and policies to improve labour market conditions and create a sustainable enabling environment that will advance the participation of women in the labour force.

Project Rationale: The importance of women's participation in the labour force

Striving for women's equality in the workforce is a goal in itself because every woman has the right to work and earn a decent wage. There is also a number of persuasive evidence that suggests that gender equality in employment contributes to economic growth. This is especially the case if the motivation for educating girls is to improve the opportunities available to women in the labor market. Promoting equality and increasing women's participation in the workforce is both the right thing to do and is smart economics because it contributes to higher productivity and income growth; helps invest in the next generation and enhances the quality of decision making (World Bank, 2012).

Higher female labour force participation is also recognised as being instrumental in building capacity for economic growth (although this does not necessarily equate to achieving gender equality). In August 2011, the Malaysian Prime Minister stated that Malaysia would need to increase its growth targets to 7%–8% per annum over the next decade in order to become a fully developed nation by 2020. This will be quite a challenge considering that over the last decade economic growth has averaged 5.4%.² Increasing women's participation in the labour force can translate to an annual GDP increase hence has the potential to contribute to Malaysia's economic growth targets. The UNDP calculates that if female labour force participation rate is increased to 70% it would boost Malaysia's GDP by 2.9%.³

In the 2010 New Economic Model (NEM), the Malaysian Government also recognised that many working women are among the bottom 40% of income earners and are quite marginalized. The NEM has thus stressed that targeted actions must be undertaken to strengthen this segment of the economy in order to spur overall growth.⁴

Increasing women's access to the labour force can contribute to reducing family income inequality. The life-cycle variation in the labour supply of married women can impact on family income inequality. The labour supply of married women varies considerably over her life cycle. Many married women continue to reduce their labour supply during child-bearing and child-rearing years. As a result, the contribution of wives' earnings to total family income can vary considerably (Shaw, 1989, 1992). The plan's target of achieving 55% women in the labour force if achieved can contribute to reducing the gini ratio because women's earnings equalize family income inequality.⁵ The increased labour supply of women particularly

² <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=206010688&sid=aAvHY!gq46!g&FORM=ZZNR8>

³ Asia-Pacific Human Development Report 2010, UNDP

⁴ New Economic Model, pp177-178

⁵ Although overall income inequality as well as inter-ethnic and rural-urban inequality has declined since the mid-1970s, intra-ethnic income inequality has started to rise since 1990 (Henderson et al., 2002). Income inequality has increased since the early 1990s (Ragayah, 2008, 2009, 2012). The Gini ratio for Malaysia peaked in 1976 and fell thereafter. However, from 1990 inequality has increased. This is indicated by the upward growth trajectory of the gini ratio (Ramasamy 2010). According to Ragayah (2012: 239) 'overall income inequality in Malaysia rose between 1970 and 1976, and then fell during the remainder of the New Economic Policy period. After declining to 0.446 in 1990, the Gini ratio rose through the decade to reach 0.470 in 1997. Inequality then moderated in the wake of the Asian financial crisis, which affected high-income more than low-income groups. The Gini rose once again to 0.462 in 2004 as the economy recovered from the crisis, but fell to 0.441 in 2007 and stayed at that level in 2009'.

from lower income households can contribute to decreasing family income inequality. Research from the Middle East and North Africa shows that if rates of female participation in the labour force increased from their actual levels to predicted levels, average household earnings would increase by as much as 25% (World Bank 2001, 2003).⁶

However, the issue of women in the labour force participation should not only be limited to their participation alone, but to their access to decent work which the International Labour Organization (ILO) defines within its strategic pillars as the promotion of rights at work; employment; social protection; and social dialogue. This includes substantive elements such as employment opportunities; adequate earnings and productive work; the ability to combine work, family and personal life; equal opportunity and treatment in employment; and social security. Some of these issues still remain a challenge in Malaysia for both men and women, but especially women. For example, the 2010 Asia Pacific Human Development Report states that Malaysian women earn only RM 0.42 for every RM 1 earned by men – the lowest among all ASEAN member states.⁷ More recent data however shows that on average Malaysian women make 92 cents for every Ringgit that a man makes (World Bank, 2012). Nevertheless, this indicates that pay differentials between women and men remains a challenge in Malaysia and should be addressed.

The Project Approach and Methodology

The factors, both direct and indirect, which contribute to women’s low participation rates, require in-depth scrutiny because much of the current data available, including the labour force survey does not provide a holistic picture. The project adopted a participatory approach to determine what specific policies and programmes can be implemented to achieve this substantial increase in women’s labour force participation. The approaches and strategies undertaken are described below.

Literature Review

A literature review was conducted on secondary data such as national labour force surveys; studies; Government policies and programmes; sectoral reports; as well as country and regional reports to establish baseline information and assessments on the trends and issues that affects women’s participation in the labour force. The literature review also took into account the various international best practise approaches, strategies and initiatives used to promote the entry and retention of women in the labour market.

⁶ <https://pslforum.worldbankgroup.org/resources/empowerment.aspx>

⁷ Asia-Pacific Human Development Report, 2010, UNDP

Nationwide Survey

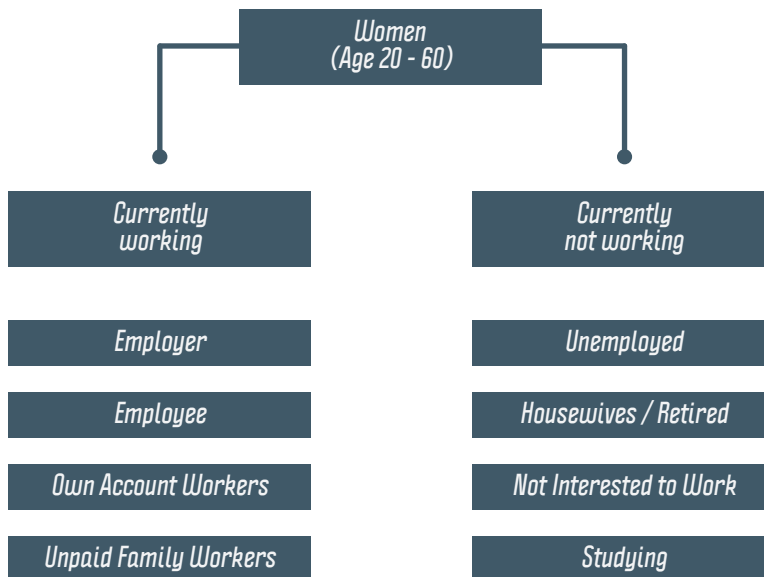
In order to understand in detail what factors, both direct and indirect, contribute to women's low participation rates, and to complement information found from the literature review and the Malaysian labour force statistics; a nationwide quantitative survey was conducted.

The survey gathered empirical data on women's:

1. socio-economic profile;
2. work status;
3. work-life balance issues and workplace policies;
4. barriers and facilitators to remain or return to work;
5. barriers and facilitators to career progression;
6. reasons for leaving employment;
7. care issues; and
8. work attitudes.

The sampling unit utilized for the questionnaire was individual women in the working age group (20-60) and a non-probability sampling design namely purposive quota sampling was adopted. A quota sampling was adopted on consideration of cost and time and the need to adequately represent minority elements (in this case it was based on the different criteria: states, stratum (urban/rural), ethnicity, age groups, education level). To ensure representativeness, sample distribution was stratified to female in the labour force (47.9%) and outside labour force (52.1%) according to states, urban/rural strata, different age groups and ethnic. Sample distribution was calculated based on percentage distribution according to states, location (urban/rural), age group and ethnic group.

The profile used to define women in and outside the labour force for the survey was as follows:



The survey commenced from August 1 to September 30, 2012 and was conducted concurrently in all states in Peninsular Malaysia as well as Sabah and Sarawak. The survey, which covered 2,640 respondents, was administered by 75 trained enumerators who were made up of statistics, gender and social studies university undergraduate and postgraduate students. In order to ensure the quality of the data collection, 14 trained field supervisors monitored enumerators.

Focus Group Discussions

The study also conducted focus group discussions (FGDs) to gather in-depth qualitative data from multiple stakeholders, interested parties and social partners. In bridging research and policy, the focus group discussions were valuable for validating key issues raised from the literature review and the national survey and for gathering inputs on the effectiveness of the various initiatives undertaken by the government, the private sector and civil society. The FGDs were made up of four different groups (see Appendix 1 for the list of organizations) as follows:

- Civil society organizations
- Trade unions
- Private sector employers (representing multinational corporations, government linked companies and small-medium enterprises from different sectors)
- Public sector employers (civil service, police, armed forces and national health service)

The key issues deliberated during these FGDs centred on factors affecting women's full participation in the labour force such as:

1. Skills mismatches and anticipation of Malaysia's future labour market need.
2. Work-life balance issues and organizational policies.
3. Family friendly policies and support mechanisms.
4. Social security and benefits.
5. Effects of casualization and outsourcing.

In-depth Interviews with Women in the Informal Sector

It is widely acknowledged that official labour force data provides inadequate coverage of women's informal remunerative work. The Malaysian Labour Force Survey, which follows the International Labour Organization's (ILO) statistical standards however, does attempt to capture those working outside a typical formal setting, by asking whether the respondents worked 'for pay or profit or for gains (including own-account work)'. Furthermore, when asked why they are not working, the options provided are 'furthering studies', 'housework', followed by other reasons. The options provided for in the labour force survey however, does not appear to widely cover the spectrum of definitions and conceptual categorizations of work including the different means of earning income or the recognition of unpaid work, as well as the way in which these are operationalized for data collection. This conceptualization and categorization of work is particularly essential as women may be engaged in seasonal work, or paid and unpaid activities which are not recognized as 'working'. An example of such activities, in the context of Malaysia, is baking and selling festive biscuits from home, or being engaged in online businesses which are not registered. As such, the low participation rates of Malaysian women in the labour force do not necessarily represent their lack of engagement in remunerative activities - rather a lack of recognition for their work in the informal economy (Loh-Ludher, 2007, cited in Franck Anja, 2012).

The project, in recognizing that a holistic and integrated approach is required to address the issues of women's participation in the labour force, sought to understand the issues that surrounds and concern women engaged in the informal economy. Apart from the 7.2% of the respondents from the project survey which were recorded to be 'currently working' in the informal sector, the project also identified other women in the informal economy for in-depth interviews. The interviews were designed to obtain a clearer picture of their employment status, and along with that, the reasons for why they are not in the formal economy.

The women were identified based on convenience sampling and their willingness to be interviewed and were made up of, amongst others, hawkers, tailors, workers in the market, van drivers, kuih sellers, graphic designers and online business women. The table below shows the distribution of the respondents interviewed by state and ethnicity.

Table 1: Profile of in-depth interviewees

	Malay	Chinese	Indian	Other Bumiputera	Total
Penang	2	2	-	-	4
Kelantan	4	-	-	-	4
Johor	3	-	-	-	3
Selangor / Kuala Lumpur	6	3	3	1 (Orang Asli)	13
Sabah	-	-	-	4	4
Sarawak	-	-	-	3	3
Total	15	5	3	8	31

Stakeholder Consultations

Organisational and institutional efforts to address the situation of low women’s labour force participation rates needed to be mapped and assessed before proposals on short and long term strategies and programmes to increase and retain women in the labour workforce and monitoring mechanisms could be made. This aspect of the project thus required direct stakeholder participation to complement literature review of reports, especially those of and by relevant government agencies. The approach undertaken varied from direct meetings and consultation with identified key implementing agencies to high-level roundtable discussions and a wider audience international seminar.

The consultative meetings with different government agencies to allow for inputs on current and planned initiatives took place with:

- Agencies under MWFC: namely the Policy Division, the National Key Results Area (NKEA) Division, the Social Welfare Department; the National Population and Family Development Board, Department for Women’s Development, and the NAM Institute of Empowerment of Women.
- The National Institute of Human Resources, Ministry of Human Resources
- Human Capital Development Section, Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister’s Department (EPU)
- Social Section, EPU
- Department of Statistics
- Pensions Division, Public Service Department
- Ministry of Higher Education
- Ministry of International Trade and Industry
- The Performance Management Delivery Unit, Prime Minister’s Department (PEMANDU)

Two international roundtables and an international seminar were also conducted to gather inputs and discussions on best practices and lessons learnt from other regions that could be contextualised and applied locally. Lessons learnt from countries such as Norway, Australia, Denmark and other countries, and international institutions were useful in providing the path forward. Experts and practitioners at these sessions including the relevant implementing stakeholders influencing women’s labour participation rates discussed various issues especially on the mismatch in education as well as the reduction in the burdens on women by promoting greater gender equality at home and work through various strategies like parental leave, father’s participation and more childcare facilities.

CHAPTER 2: TRENDS OF WOMEN IN THE LABOUR WORK FORCE

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Introduction

Women's participation in paid employment has increased over the years and is influenced by many factors both within the household and beyond the household. This chapter explores some of the factors that influences women's share in the labour market globally and in Malaysia, including the relevant gender gaps that still prevail.

Global Trends

Globally, women have increased their share in the labour market and the gender gap in the labour force participation rate has decreased in the 1990s from 27.9 to 26.1 percentage points. However, the gap has remained constant between 2002 and 2012, with both men's and women's participation rates falling equally. This trend was particularly evident in Latin American and the Caribbean, the advanced economies, Africa and the Middle East. The three general reasons usually cited for this fall, is due to the education, for younger age cohorts; aging; and the "discouraged worker" effect, which is someone who is eligible for employment and is able to work, is currently unemployed but has not attempted to find employment (ILO, 2012).

The overall increase in women's labour force participation rates is influenced by the combined effects of economic development, increasing education, declining fertility and also changes in technology where time and efforts for household production activities have enabled women to have additional time for other activities which earn them an income. Furthermore, the evolution of employment relations, such as part-time and temporary jobs has also brought women into the labour market helping women combine work and family responsibilities.

The transition or current state of a country or regions' economy also influences the trend of women's participation in the labour, albeit differently. Ghani and Kharas (2010) found that the transition of the economy from agriculture to services, in South Asia provided a new avenue for women to enter the labour force as the demand for relevant work increased.

Likewise, in East Asia, assembly jobs in the garments and electronics industries have been mainly taken by women who left low-productivity self-employment on family farms. In emerging economies women are predominately found working in the agricultural and manufacturing sector. In developed countries women predominantly occupy service industries. The level of development is however often not the most important determinant of women's labour force participation; socio-cultural context sometimes appears to be an important, perhaps the most important, determinant. For the Middle East and North Africa, the increase of women in the labour force was due to the very low starting point resulting from the influence of traditional social norms which has seen some reform over time.

While general trends appear positive for women's participation in the labour force, inequalities within the household and within society still persist and remain one of the key factors influencing gender differences in the labour participation rates. Additionally, although women have become more educated, allowing them higher productivity and capacity to enjoy the benefits from their increased earning capacities, in some regions these longer stays in the education system also contribute to the decrease in overall women's labour participation rates.

Sectoral and occupational segregation has also been an issue over time, reflecting an unequal distribution of men and women across sectors and occupation. Globally, in 2012, just over a third of the women were employed in agriculture, almost half in services, and a sixth in industry – the latter trend, barely changing in the last two decades. In contrast, just under a third of men were employed in agriculture, more than 40% in services and a quarter in industries. Men's share in industry has barely changed in the last two

decades indicating that the segregation in industry has also persisted in those decades (ILO, 2012).

Occupation segregation can happen when there is an over-representation of women in a particular occupation or when men and women work in the same occupation, but are not given equal rights. Globally, women still continue to be over-represented in services, housework and agricultural occupations and the glass ceiling phenomena is still prevalent in both developed and developing economies (UNDAW, 2009).

Women also still tend to be confined to a more limited range of occupations than men where women's employment is mostly concentrated in mid-skills occupations such as 'clerks and services workers' and 'shop and market sales workers', while men in 'craft and related trade workers', 'plant and machine operators' and 'managerial and legislative' occupations suggesting that women do not have the same opportunities to access the full ranges of occupations as men (page 26: ILO, 2012).

There is also a marked difference between male and female labour force participation rate over a life-cycle. Generally, the rate for males remain relatively high and stable (a plateau) until they retire. However, the patterns of women labour force participation over a life cycle can vary. For example three different patterns of female labour force participation have been observed in the East Asia and Pacific region (Horton, 1996). The 'plateau' pattern has been where it remains fairly flat and less sensitive to life-cycle effects allowing women to work until they reach their early 50s and their labour participation declines with old age. The double peak or M pattern on the other hand is generally observed in more industrialised countries. It is characterized by high participation rates prior to marriage and childbearing years, then by a sharp decline during childbearing years and subsequent return to labour force once children get older. A 'single peaked' pattern exhibits higher rates of participation of younger ages and participation falls after the peak has occurred during child bearing age (World Bank, 2012)

Women's increased entry into the paid work force has also resulted in challenges in 'unpaid work' allocated to the care of family and where quite a number of countries still report a persistent low level of childcare facilities. In Ireland, the lack of comprehensive public policies towards childcare has been identified at both national and at EU level as a major barrier towards further increases in women's employment.

Similarly, in Italy, the national government acknowledges that childcare is a critical issue, and that services should expand in order to support the increase in female employment. In the US, where female labor force participation is relatively high, women with children continue to lag both men and women without children in their probability of employment, their working hours and their wages – due largely to employment reductions associated with caring for children. Women who reduce their employment to care for young children tend to pay a high price for these reductions well beyond their years of intensive caregiving (Crittenden, 2001; Waldfogel, 1998; Budig and England, 2001).

However, though the decline in fertility across many regions means that there are fewer children to be cared for, demographic ageing in some countries and major health crises in others have intensified the need for caring services. In many developing countries where public health services have been severely weakened during the decades of market-inspired reform, much of the care burden has inevitably fallen back on women and girls. In the more developed economies, paid care services have become a growing sector of the economy as a result of women's increasing participation in the paid labour force.

These services, in turn, employ many women. In this context, the quality of care and the pay and working conditions of carers, have become contested policy issues. Paid care services have been susceptible to competitive pressures that generate low-pay and low-quality services—adversely affecting both care workers and the recipients of care (Folbre 2006a).

The Informal Economy Globally

The informal economy, as it is understood in this Report, is the diversified set of economic activities, enterprises and workers that are not regulated or protected by the state. Although originally applied to self-employment in small unregistered enterprises, the concept of informality has now expanded to include wage employment with formally registered companies who engage workers on an informal basis without security of tenure, worker benefits and legal protection.

Some research view the informal economy in positive terms, as a 'pool' of entrepreneurial talent or a 'cushion' during economic crises. Others view it more problematically, arguing that informal entrepreneurs deliberately avoid regulation and taxation. However, the informal economy has also been viewed as a source of livelihood for the working poor (WIEGO, 2012) and does play a key role in employment creation, production and income generation.

Informal workers are engaged in a wide range of occupations, in both informal and formal enterprises; can be casual and temporary workers, employees, own account, unpaid family and home-based workers. But, despite this diversity, the activities they perform generally lack legal recognition, regulation and protection (Lloyd-Evans, 2008:1885 in Franck, 2012).

There exists a persistent gap in the literature on women's employment in the recognition given to the informal economy (Chen, Sebstad and O'Connell, 1999; Elson, 1999). Factors contributing to the persistence of this gap are the lack of data availability and perceptions that the sector represents a residual category and that it does not contribute significantly to either the national or global economies.

Research done over the past 20 years shows the informal economy is vital for the economic survival of poor women (Berger and Buvinic, 1989). Even in 'middle-income' countries, a large proportion of women are in the informal economy, notably, 76% in Thailand and as much as 80% in Turkey. There is evidence, too that the informal economy is becoming increasingly important in the transition economies, especially for women retrenched from the formal labour force (Aslanbeigui, Pressman and Summerfield, 1993; Kuehnast, 1993; Moghadam, 1994).

The informal economy provides more employment and in a more consistent manner for women than the formal sector. More than 80% of workers in low-income countries and 40% of those in middle-income countries are employed in the informal economy, both urban and rural. As the low and middle-income countries between them account for 85% of the world's population, it is clear that a majority of the world's workers 61% are employed in the informal sector (Chen, 1996). Of these, women represent a significant share.

Women's Labour Force Participation in the Malaysian Landscape

In Malaysia, the number of women in paid employment has also been increasing since its independence in 1957. This can be attributed to the changes in the Malaysian economy where the nation's focus shifted from agriculture to manufacturing and services and because women's participation in the labour force became progressively acceptable to Malaysian society.

This acceptance is also reflected by the improvement of women's access to education; marriages taking place at a later age wherein the age at first marriage for women went up from 17.4% in 1970 to 25.7% in 2010; and the decline in fertility rates (from 4.0% in 1980 to 2.3% in 2010).

As the structure of the Malaysian economy underwent changes, so too did employment trends which also affected the patterns of women's participation in paid employment. The Malaysian economy experienced a decline in agriculture, to an increase in manufacturing, influencing the participation of women in these respective sectors. Besides structural changes in the Malaysian economy, women gained more access to education. These factors also encouraged their migration from rural to urban areas, further contributing to the decline of female labour in the agriculture and mining sectors (Morris, 1999).

As manufacturing emerged as a key economic sector, this sector became the largest employer of women (Thambiah, 2010). The manufacturing industries in Malaysia employed young, unmarried women particularly of ethnic Malay origin (Kaur, 2000; Sivalingam, 1994). A majority of these women had primary to lower secondary level education which facilitated this move to manufacturing, but this shift has been lateral with little or no social and class mobility (Thambiah, forthcoming).

However, while Malaysian women's employment in manufacturing grew rapidly during the decade 1980-1990, it has since declined with the entry of migrant women from the Philippines, Indonesia and Bangladesh over the last decade (Piper, 2005). Several studies (Amin, 2004; Blau, 1985; Smith 1983; Kusnic and DaVanzo, 1980, Schafgans, 1998, Leppel, 1989 and Ariffin et al, 1996) have also analysed the differences in labour market outcomes by gender and ethnicity in Malaysia. Amin and Alam (2008) found that Chinese women are the most likely to work given their better education attainment and are able to take advantage of the employment opportunities in the private sector.

Studies have also shown that there was a strong link between export-oriented industrialization and women's entry into the labour force (Ariffin, Horton and Sedlacek, 1996; Kaur, 1999; 2000; Ng, Mohamed and Tan BengHui, 2006; Noor, 1999; Ong, 1987, Pearson, 2002).

Government initiatives and policies to increase foreign direct investments (FDI) also led to an influx of multinational corporations (MNCs) that provided employment. This inflow of FDI and the growing presence of MNCs in manufacturing which begun in the 1970s led to women's participation in manufacturing. As Ariffin (1994) notes, women in the labour market during the 1970s co-existed with the demands of 'off-shore' sourcing activities of MNCs.

However, it is seen that the technological advancement in agriculture as well as internal and international migration (foreign workers) also had a negative impact on women's participation rates in the rural areas. Women in agriculture were as such displaced and were subordinated to labour intensive tasks (Hing, 1984; Chia, 1987; Jamilah, 1992; Shamsulbahriah, 1994; Noraini, 1997; Aminah, 1999).

⁸ Women, Family and Community Development, Statistics, 2012

⁹ Women, Family and Community Development, Statistics, 2012

Current Scenario

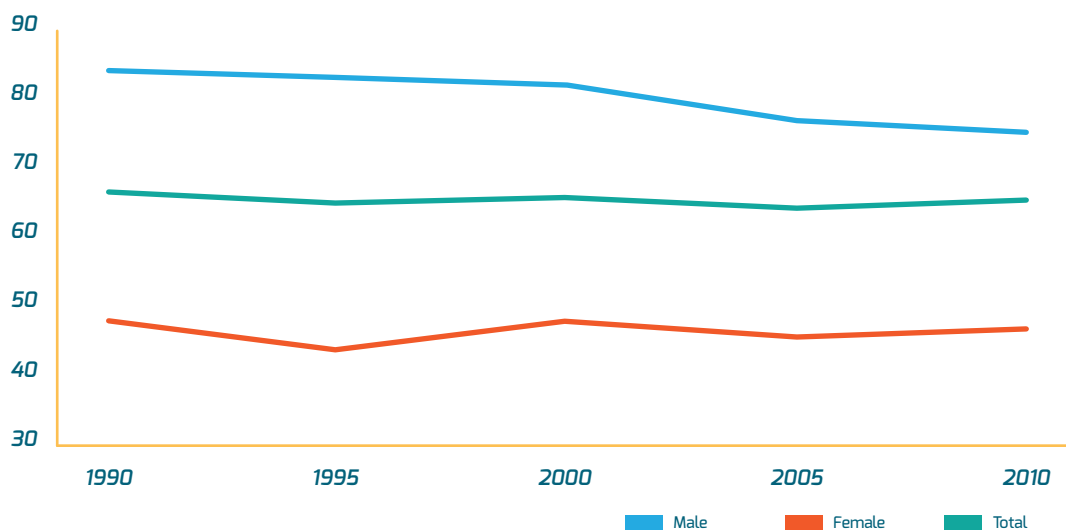
The total working-age population (15–64) of Malaysia in 2011 was 19,704,500, out of which 10,208,800 were men and 9,495,600 were women. Out of this population, 12,505,800 were in the labour force where 7,930,600 were men (63.4%) and 4,575,300 were women (36.6%). The labour force participation rate of males was 79.8% and for females it was 47.9% for the year 2011. The labour force participation rate among women has remained rather consistent between 44% and 47% for the last three decades and remains well below the participation rate for men (see Table 2 and Figure 1). There are therefore 6,990,400 persons from the working age group who are outside the labour force and out of this 2,009,900 are males and 4,980,500 are females.

Table 2: Male and female labour force participation rates, 1990, 1995, 2000–2011

Year	Male	Female	Total
1990	85.3	47.8	66.5
1995	84.3	44.7	64.7
2000	83.0	47.2	65.4
2001	82.3	46.8	64.9
2002	81.5	46.7	64.4
2003	82.1	47.7	65.2
2004	80.9	47.2	64.4
2005	80.0	45.9	63.3
2006	79.9	45.8	63.1
2007	79.5	46.4	63.2
2008	79.0	45.7	62.6
2009	78.9	46.4	62.9
2010	79.3	46.8	63.7
2011	79.7	47.9	64.4

Source: Labour Force Survey Report, various years

Figure 1: Male and female labour force participation rate (%), 1990–2010



Source: Dept. of Statistics, Malaysia, Labour Force Survey Report (various years)

The Gender Gaps and Challenges

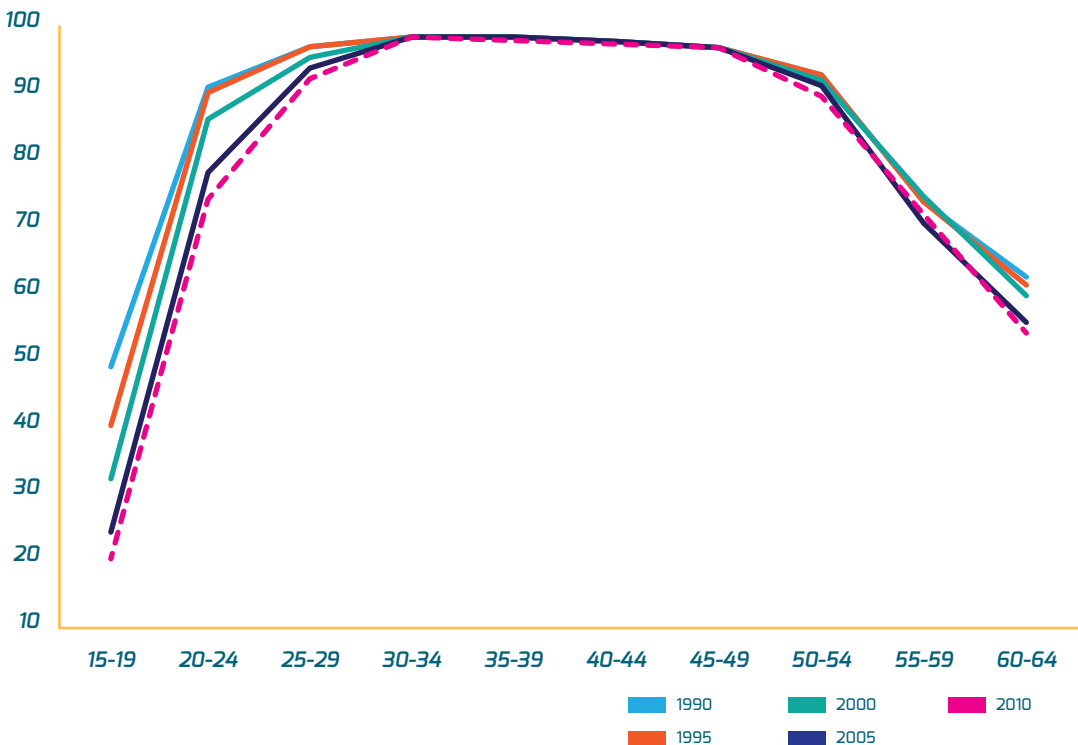
One of the salient features of the female labour force participation in Malaysia is the distinctly stagnating labour force participation rates of women. The female labour force participation rate has remained rather consistent between 44% and 47% for the last three decades. Despite Malaysia having achieved gender parity at the primary, secondary and post-secondary levels of education and better than parity at the university level, women in Malaysia make up only 36.3% of the labour force, significantly less than most developed economies.

Some of the factors contributing to the stagnant rate of women's participation in the labour workforce in Malaysia can be traced from the baseline data of the Malaysian labour force survey utilising a gendered approach as follows:

1. Compared to men, there is a substantive decline in the percentage (5-6% decline) of women in the labour force in the age group 25-29 to 30-34 i.e. those in the childbearing-child rearing age group. The female age cohort labour force participation profile shows a single peak pattern and the peak is in the age cohort 20-24 in 1990 and 2000 but the peak shifted to the age cohort 25-29 in the year 2005 onwards while male age cohort labour force participation profile shows more of a plateau for the same age group (see Figure 2). The male participation rate plateau however shows that the prime working age of 25 to 44 for men was close to a 100% participation rate.

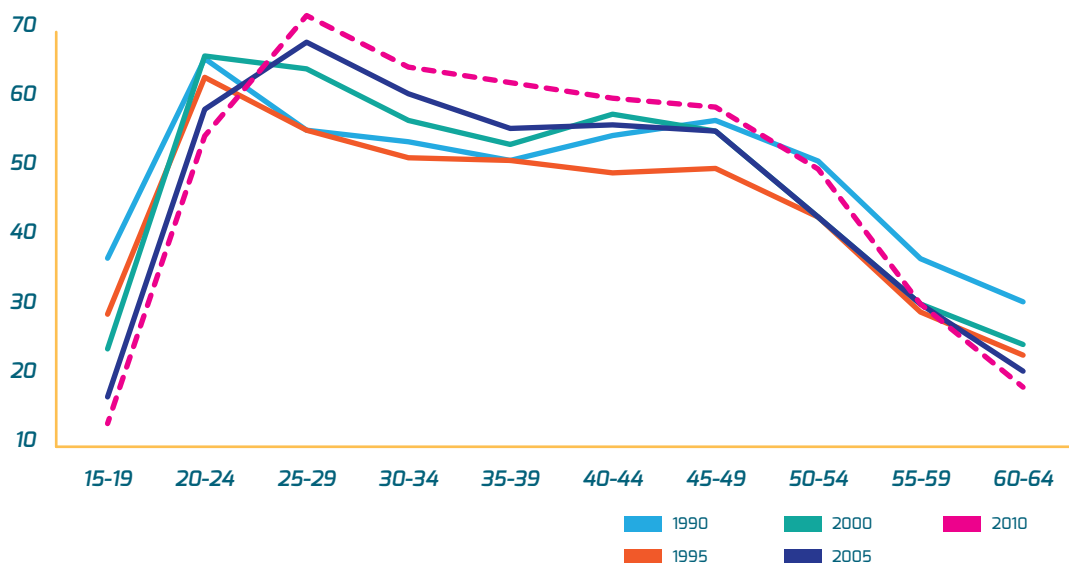
The shift in the peak from 20-24 to 25-29 for females could be due to increased participation in tertiary education and delayed marriage. The exit from the workforce for women from the 25-29 to 30-34 and also 35-39 age groups is most likely linked to marriage, childbearing and child rearing.

Figure 2: Male labour force participation rate (%) by age group, 1990-2010



Source: Labour Force Survey Report, various years

Figure 3: Female labour force participation rate (%) by age group, 1990-2010



Source: Dept. of Statistics, Malaysia, Labour Force Survey Report, various years

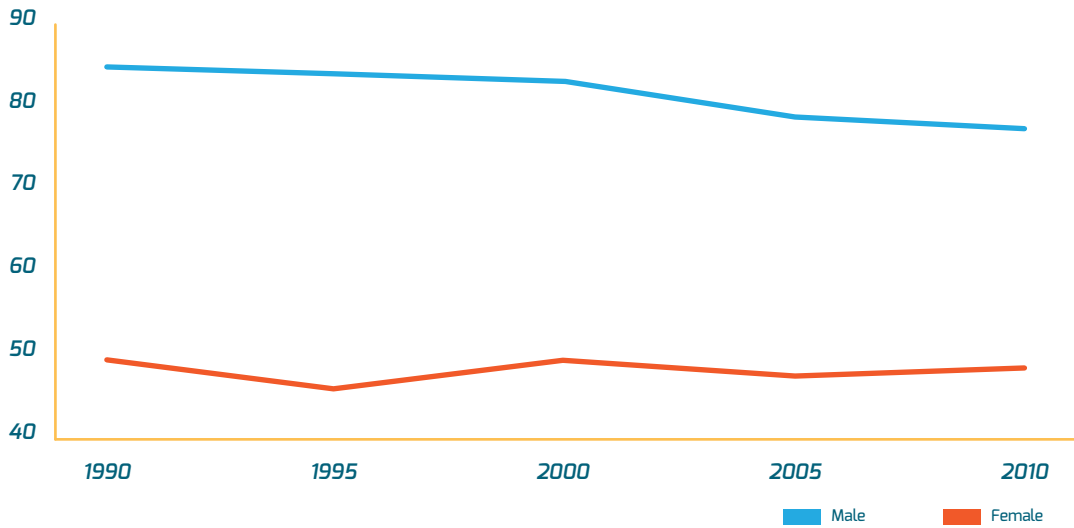
2. Early retirement. As indicated in the table above, there is a steep decline in the percentage (8-9%) of women in the labour force in the age group 45-49 to 50-54. The decline is even steeper at 15.1% from the age group 50-54 to 55-59.

The decline in labour force participation rate for women in the ages 45 and above has been increasing dramatically between 1990 and 2010. This shows that the nature and causes for early retirement itself is changing. Traditionally retirement has meant the end of work after a career of full-time jobs. However, frequent entries and exits from the workforce for childcare, for elder care, or from layoffs among other reasons may have left many women workers without traditional linear career paths. Moreover, there is a possibility that a large percentage of the women's workforce is employed in part-time, temporary and contractual jobs in career paths with no clear trajectory. For these workers, then, the concept of retirement may have a very different meaning.

3. There is a decline in the rural female labour force participation rate. Labour force participation rate for rural men is higher than urban men but for women it is the reverse— where labour force participation rate for urban women is higher than for rural women and there is a downward trend in female labour force participation rates of rural women (see Figure 4 and 5).

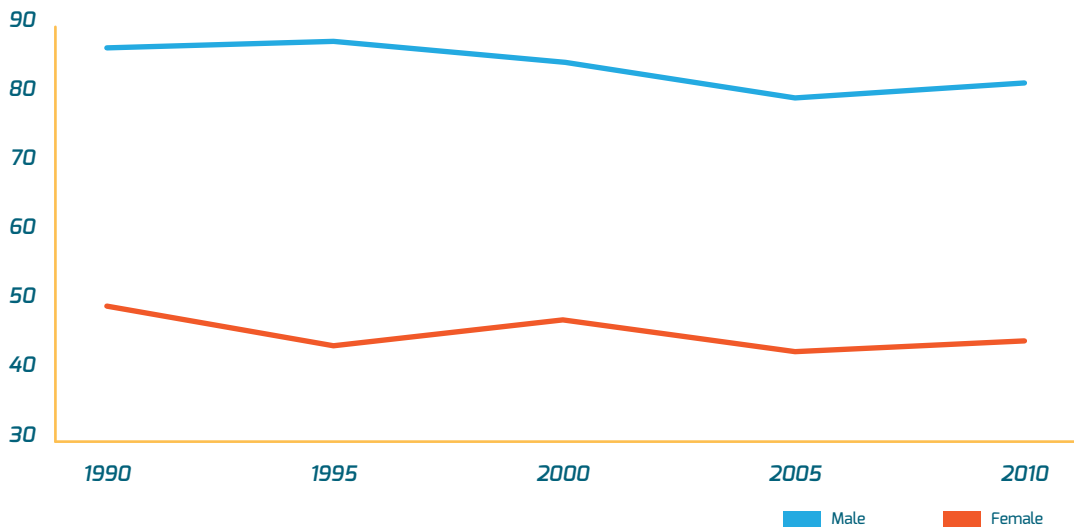
The decline in rural women's labour force participation rate is likely a combined result of staying longer in school and also changing attitudes towards farm-work and because fewer rural households are engaged in agricultural activities. The lack of job opportunities in the rural areas could also contribute to the widening of the female to male ratio of labour force participation. Rural Malaysia has also been aggressively moving into corporate agriculture which is heavily dependent on migrant workers and who have likely been replacing women as a source for agricultural labour.

Figure 4: Labour force participation rate (%) of urban male and female, 1990-2010



Source: Dept. of Statistics, Malaysia, Labour Force Survey Report, various years

Figure 5: Labour force participation rate (%) of rural male and female, 1990-2010

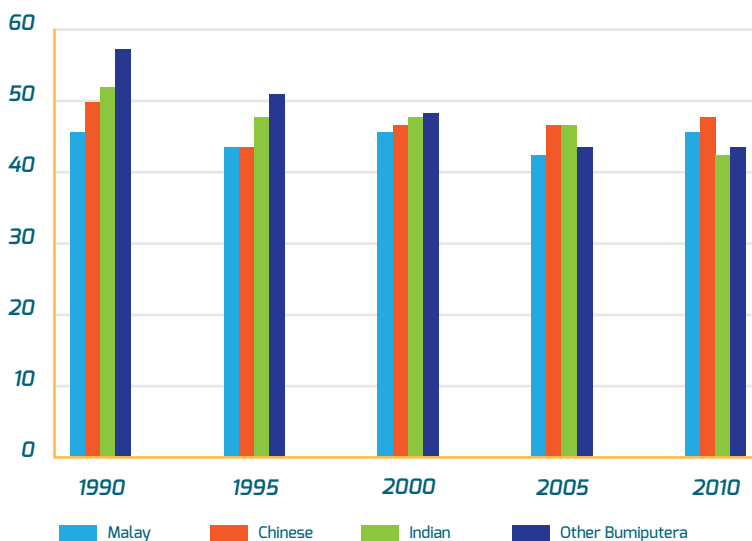


Source: Dept. of Statistics, Malaysia, Labour Force Survey Report, various years

4. There is a decline in the other Bumiputera and Indian female labour force participation rates. The labour force participation rate of Other Bumiputera was the highest for males (90.0%) in 1990 compared to Malays (85.1%), Chinese (83.4%) and Indians (83.7%). In 2011 Other Bumiputera male labour force participation rate was still the highest (81.1%), followed by Chinese males (78.5%), Indian males (77.6%) and Malay males (76.3%). However, labour force participation rate of Other Bumiputera females was highest (57.0%) in 1990 followed by Indian females (51.1%), Chinese females (48.1%) and Malay females (45.7%). But in 2011 female labour force participation of Indians was the lowest (43.4%), followed by Other Bumiputera (43.7%), Malays (46.5%) and Chinese females (49.9%).

Male-female gap in labour force participation rates by ethnicity shows that the gender gap is widening for the Other Bumiputeras and Indians but is on the decline for the other ethnic groups. The widening gender gap in labour force participation rate amongst the Other Bumiputeras and Indians also indicates a growing dependence of the women in these groups on their men. Besides that job opportunities might also be lacking due to their lower educational level compared to women from the other ethnic groups. There is a noticeable difference in the male-female gap in labour force participation rates by ethnicity (see Figure 6 below).

Figure 6: Female labour force participation rate (%) by ethnic group, 1990-2010



Source: Labour Force Survey Report, various years

5. Male-female gap in labour force participation rates by states show that the gender gap is widening for the states of Pahang, Sabah, Johor and Sarawak but declining for the states of Penang, Selangor, Malacca and the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur.

Figure 7: Female labour force participation rate (%) by state, 1990-2010



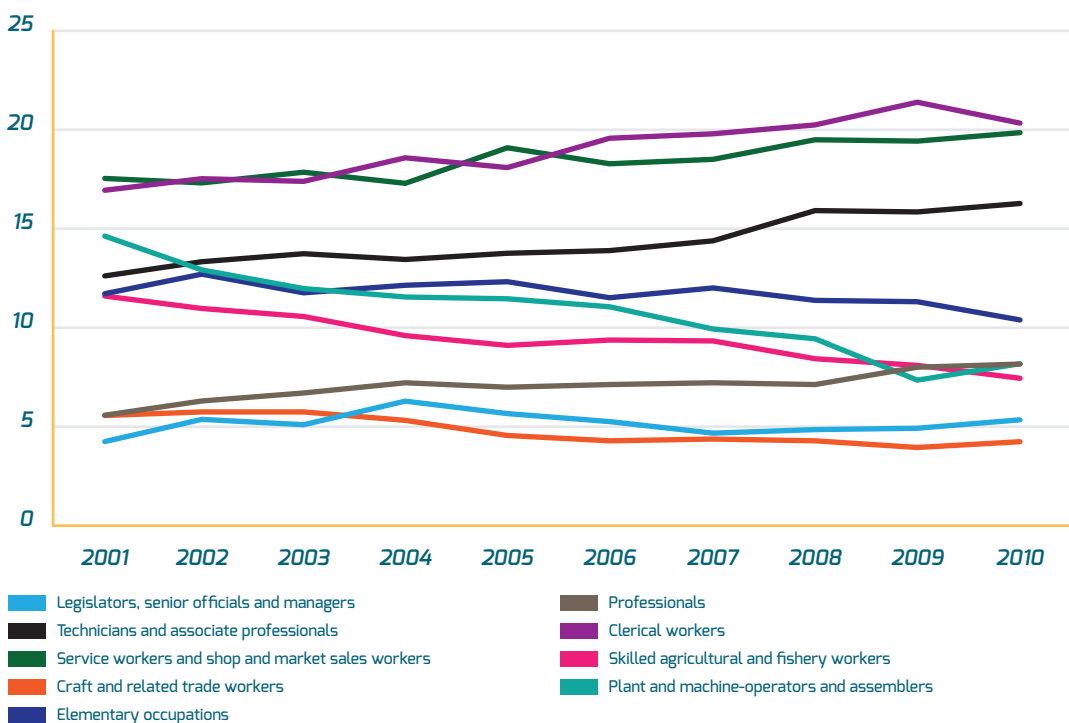
Source: Labour Force Survey Report, various years

5. Occupational Segregation by Gender. The analysis on occupational segregation is limited to 2010 due to the changes made in the occupational classifications (MASCO) in 2011. The composition of employed females by occupation has changed in line with the sectorial changes taking place where there is an increase from 2001 to 2010 in females employed in occupations such as service worker and shop and market sales workers (from 16.9% in 2001 to 20.1% in 2008 and in 2010) and professionals (from 5.6% in 2001 to 7.3% in 2008 and to 8.3% in 2010).

Occupations in which there is a decline in employed females are in the agricultural related work (from 11.4% in 2001 to 8.2% in 2008 to 7.6% in 2010) and plants and machine operators and assemblers (from 14.7% in 2001 to 9.4% in 2008 to 8.3% in 2010). There was an increase in technicians and associate professionals from 12.5% in 2001 to 15.7% in 2008 but decreased to 16.1% in 2010 (see figure 8 below).

Besides that, the majority of females in the professional category are in the teaching and nursing professions. Thus women are not well represented to the same extent of their male counterparts in the professional and sub-professional levels. The gender gap in this type of occupation is increasing. Overall occupational segregation by gender is declining but still prevails in some occupations.

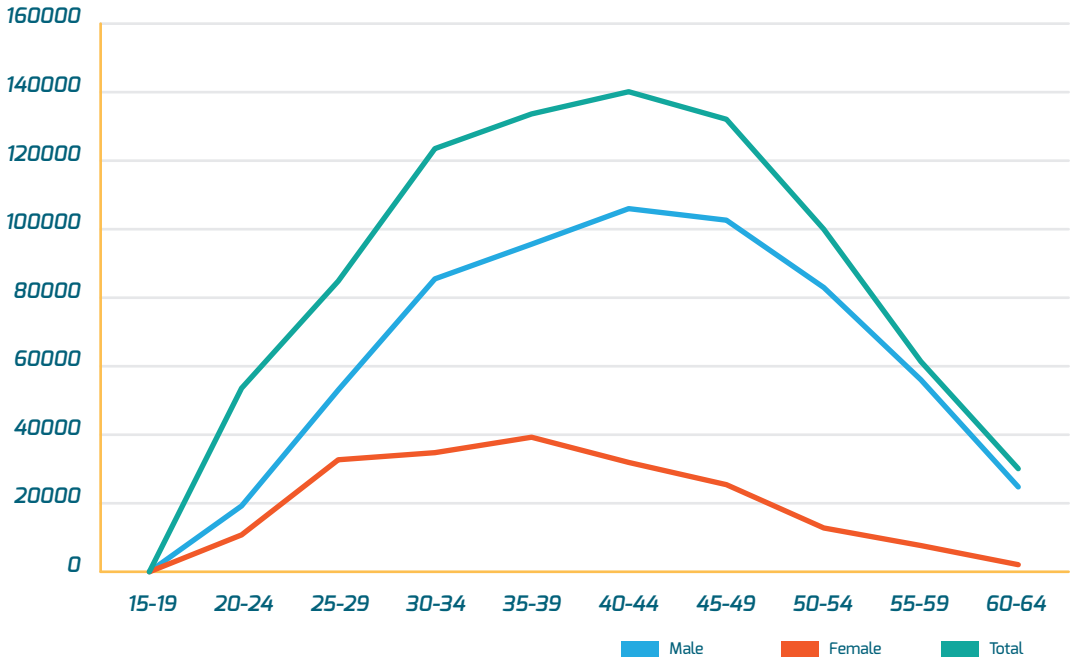
Figure 8: Female employed persons by occupation, Malaysia, 2001-2010



Source: Labour Force Survey Report, 2010

A further sectorial analysis shows that occupational segregation also occurs wherein the highest level of participation of females as legislators, senior officials and managers by age is in the age group of 35-39 and then begins to decline thereafter. However, for males it peaks at the age 40 to 44 and stabilizes till the age 45-49 before it starts to decline (see Figure 9 below).

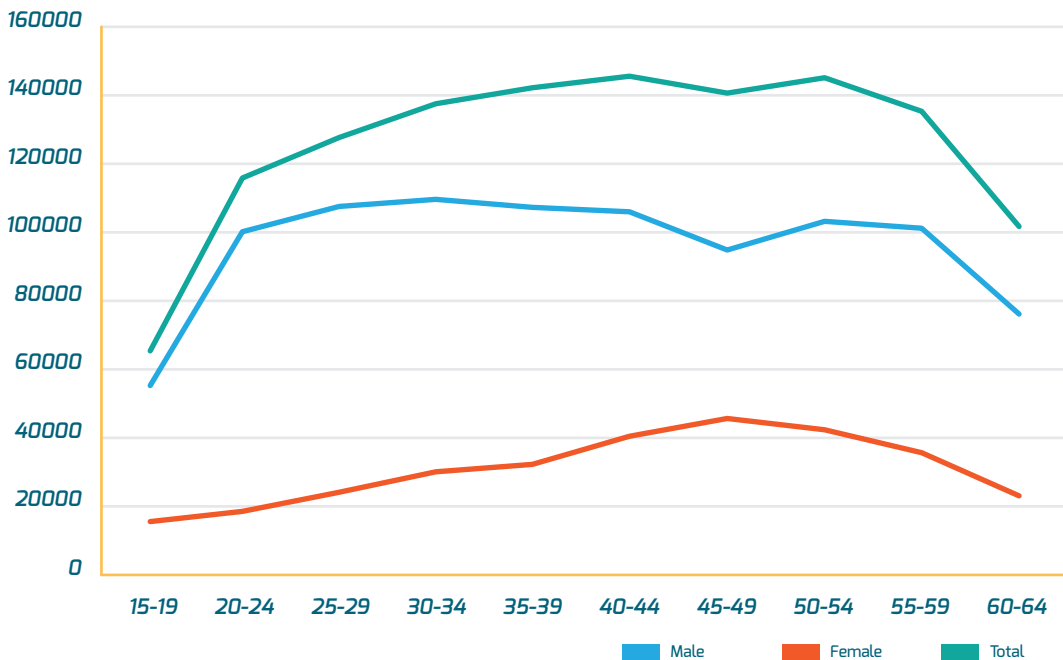
Figure 9: Number of legislators, senior officials and managers by age group and sex, 2010



Source: Labour Force Survey Report, 2010

The Figure 10 below shows a curious situation of the peak in employed females in skilled agricultural and fishery work in the age group 45 to 49 but in the same age cohort there is a decline for male participation. However, male participation increases in the age group 50 to 54. The double peak in males employed in the older age cohort also explains why there is a need for women to take on the responsibility in this occupation from the men when men leave for other types of jobs or income generating activities. There is also a possibility that women return to their villages as a livelihood strategy after being involved in other types of jobs in the urban areas.

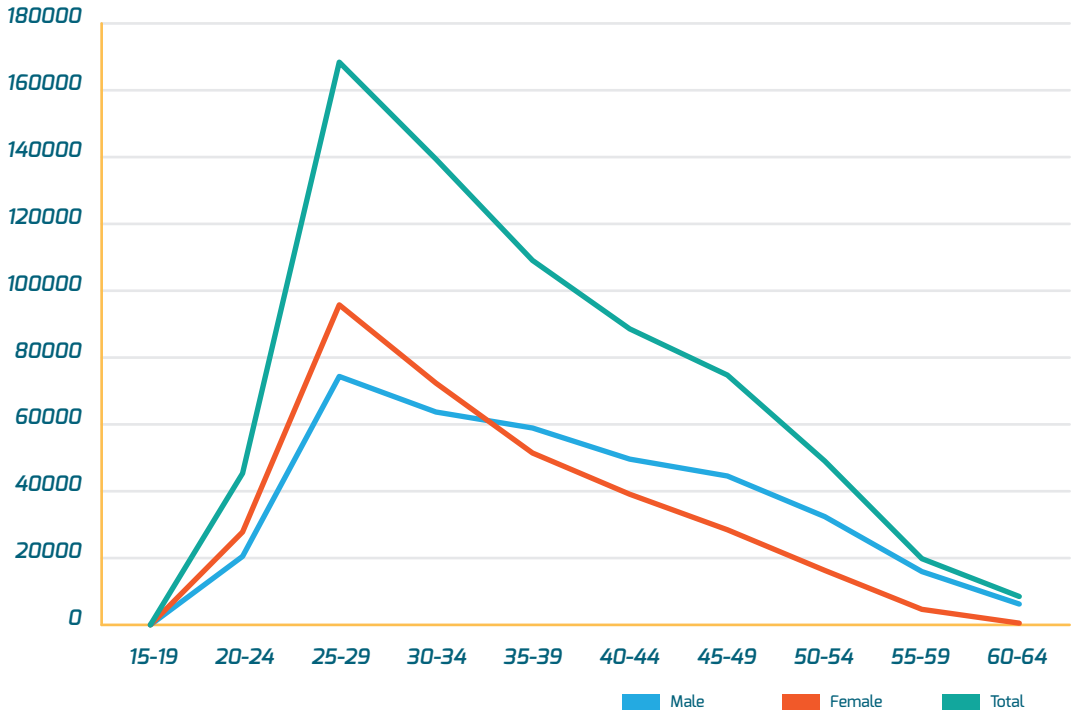
Figure 10: Number of skilled agricultural and fishery workers by age group and sex, 2010



Source: Labour Force Survey Report, 2010

Figure 11 below indicates that both female and male professionals peak at the age group of 25-29, but that female participation declines at a faster rate than male professionals.

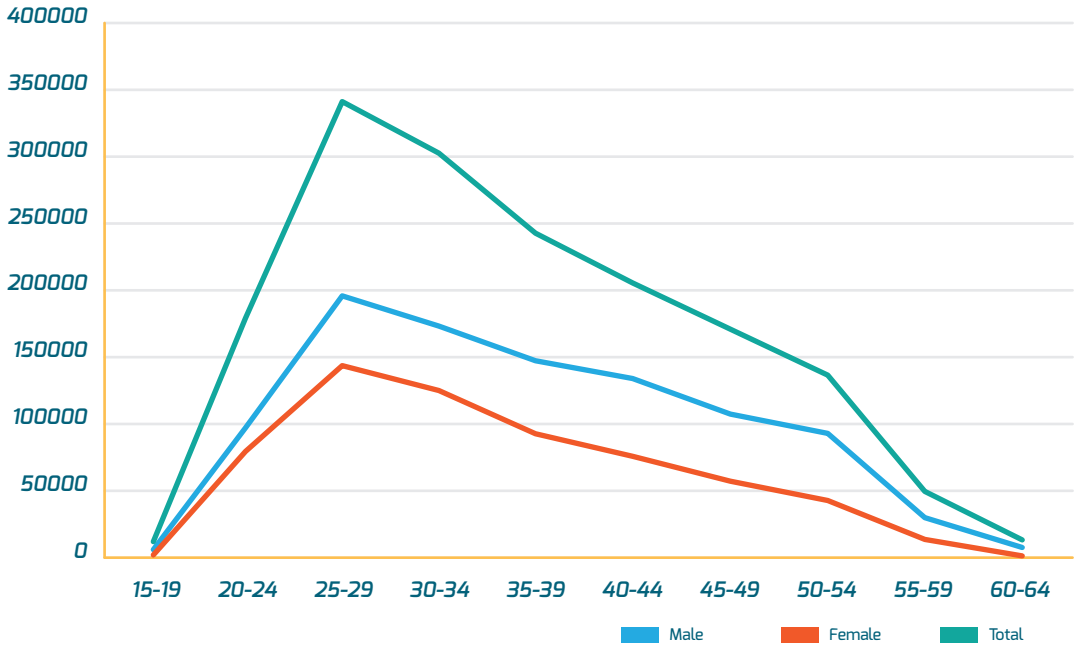
Figure 11: Number of professionals by age group and sex, 2010



Source: Labour Force Survey Report, 2010

Figure 12 below shows that the females and males employment as technicians and associate professional peaks at the age 25-29 but declines thereafter.

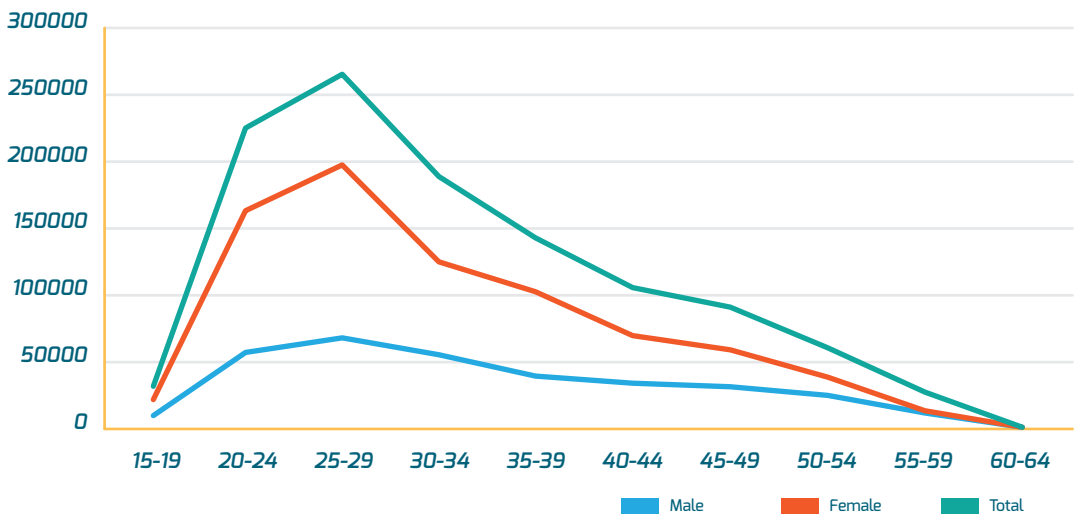
Figure 12: Number of technicians and associate professionals by age group and sex, 2010



Source: Labour Force Survey Report, 2010

Figure 13 shows that clerical work is a female dominated profession. Here, the female participation rate peaks at the age group 25 to 29 and declines thereafter.

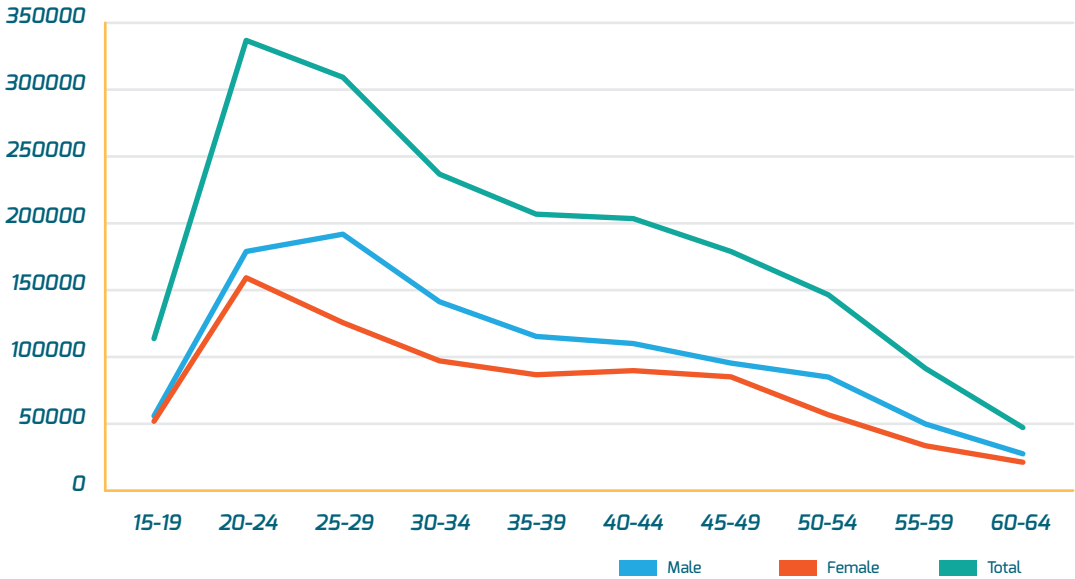
Figure 13: Number of clerical workers by age group and sex, 2010



Source: Labour Force Survey Report, 2010

Figure 14, which looks at the participation rate of service workers, shop and market sales workers, shows that it peaks for females in the age group 20 to 24 but peaks for males in the age group 25 to 29. This shows that the largest numbers of women employed in the services sector are in the younger age group and employed in lower levels of jobs in this sector.

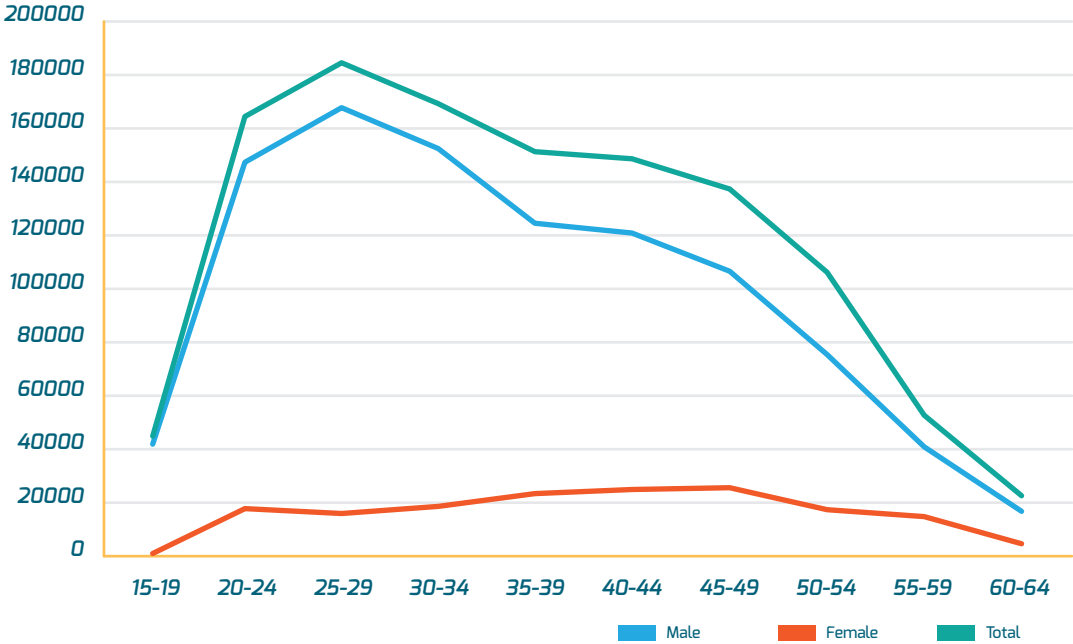
Figure 14: Number of service workers, shop and market sales workers by age group and sex, 2010



Source: Labour Force Survey Report, 2010

Crafts and its related trade however is predominantly a male dominated occupation but it is interesting to note that for females, their participation rate peaks at the age group 45 to 49 as shown in Figure 15.

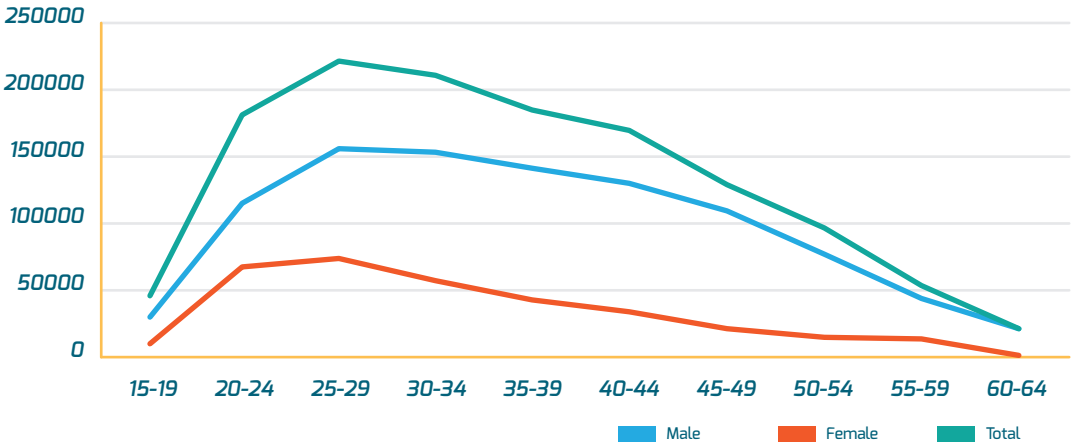
Figure 15: Number of craft and related trades workers by age group and sex, 2010



Source: Labour Force Survey Report, 2010

Figure 16 shows that the females employed as plant and machine operators and assemblers peak between the age group of 20 to 24 and 25 to 29. The figure also shows that the wide gap between male and female participation indicate that this is another occupation which is male dominated.

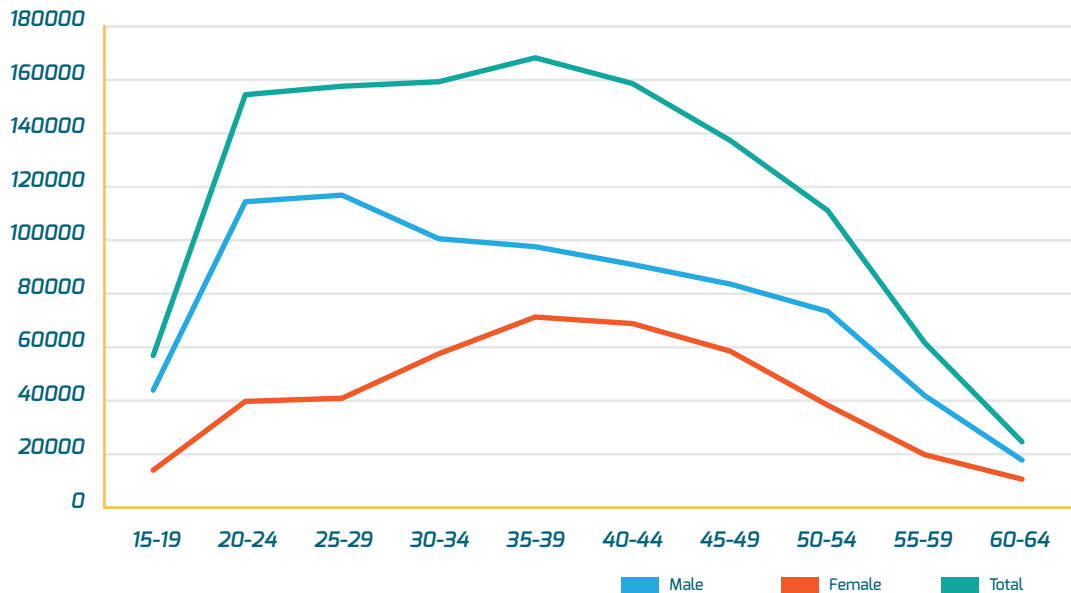
Figure 16: Number of plant and machine-operators and assemblers by age group and sex, 2010



Source: Labour Force Survey Report, 2010

Figure 17 below shows the peak age group for women entering lower skilled jobs and lower level employment is at the age group of 35-39.

Figure 17: Number of elementary occupation workers by age group and sex, 2010



Source: Labour Force Survey Report, 2010

6. The under recording and underreporting of the informal economy. As mentioned earlier, official labour force data tend to provide inadequate coverage of women’s informal remunerative work. At the time of this Report, there were no official data on women’s informal economic activities in Malaysia. However, the Malaysian labour force survey does seek to capture women who appear to be working in the informal sector, as it has categories such as own account workers and unpaid workers, as well as the different period of time they work (a minimum one hour during the reference week).

However, this may still not be sufficient to capture women’s paid or unpaid work as previous studies (Mata Greenwood, 1999; Chen et al., 1999; Bardasi et al., 2010 cited in Franck, 2012) have demonstrated that the reporting of women’s work is particularly sensitive to the survey methods used as well as the wording of questions. This is particularly so in settings where many individuals and women in particular, are employed in multiple activities, in activities not directly receiving salary or wage, and where employment is seasonal. Standard questions, such as ‘Did you work for at least an hour in the reference week?’ can potentially undercount persons working in such activities.

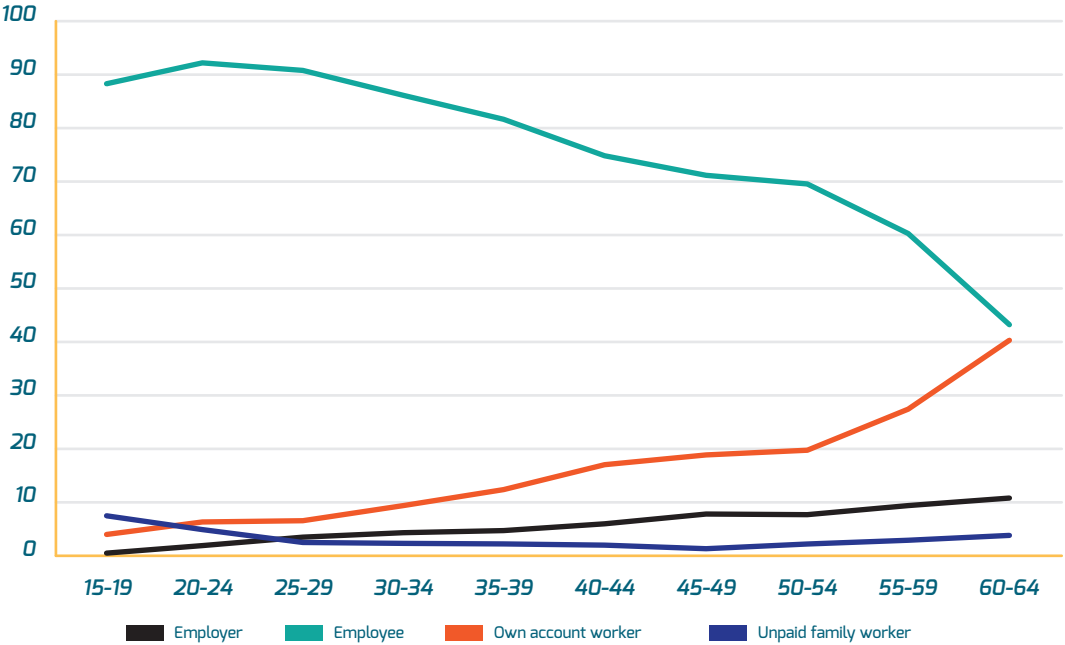
Previous surveys from various places suggest that so-called ‘housewives’ are often employed in both full-time and part-time informal economic activities (Chen, 1999, p. 605; Martin and Polivka, 1995 found similar evidence when assessing a revised U.S. Current Population Survey questionnaire).As such, economically active women may be considered inactive as they do not think of themselves as working. However, as stated by Ghosh (2002, p. 19): ‘...women are rarely if ever ‘unemployed’ in their lives, in that they are almost continuously involved in various forms of productive or reproductive activities, even if they are not recognized as ‘working’ or paid for such activities.’

In recent years, a group of informed researchers including members of the global research policy network ‘Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), worked with the International Labour Organization (ILO) to broaden the earlier concept and definition of the ‘informal sector’ to incorporate certain types of informal employment that were not included in the earlier concept and definition (including the official international statistical definition).’

In brief, the new definition of the 'informal economy' focuses on the nature of employment in addition to the characteristics of enterprises. For example many informal enterprises have production or distribution relations with formal enterprises and many formal enterprises hire wage workers under informal employment relations. For example many part-time workers, temporary workers and homeworkers work for formal enterprises through contracting and sub-contracting arrangements.

Figure 18 below shows a trend where there is a gradual increase in female labour force participation as own account workers and unpaid family workers in the older age cohorts.

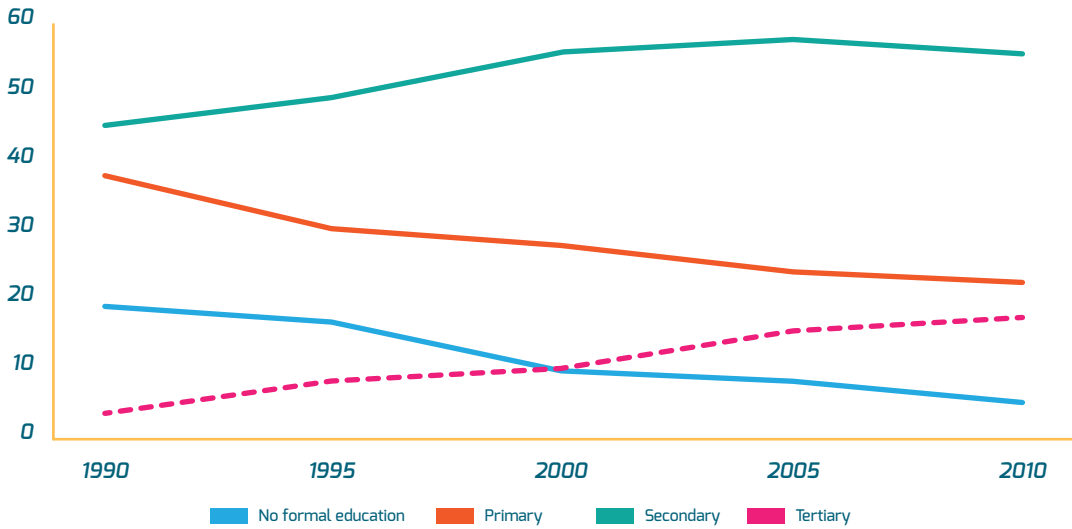
Figure 18: Percentage distribution of female employed persons by status in employment and age group, 2010



Source: Labour Force Survey Report, 2010

7. **Females of tertiary education outside the labour force are increasing.** Figure 19 indicates a pattern indicating that women of tertiary education do not seem to be able to enter the labour force as compared to women of other education levels. This shows that women of tertiary education are facing increasing challenges of entering the labour market. This pattern is also seen for women with secondary education.

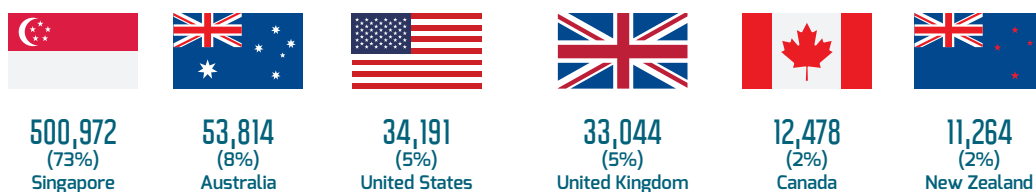
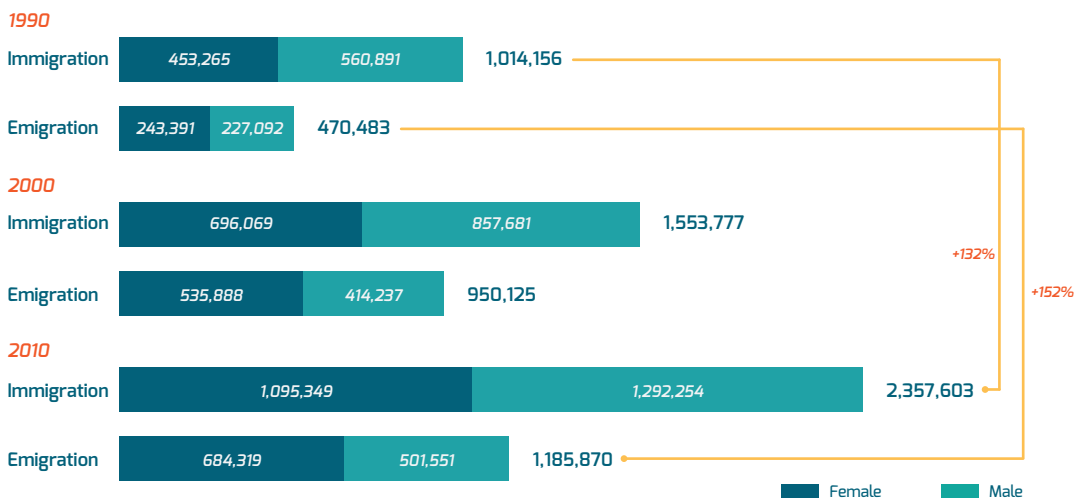
Figure 19: Distribution of female persons outside labour force by education, 1990-2010



Source: Labour Force Survey Report, various years

8. Significant numbers of women leaving the country may also be contributing to their low participation rate in Malaysia. This however requires further probing, as there is no known data showing what level of education or work status these women were, upon leaving Malaysia. It is nevertheless useful to note that female emigration (684,319) was more than male emigration (501,551) in 2010 and most of the women (73%) are immigrating to Singapore. See Figure 20 below.

Figure 20: Total migration by gender, 1990, 2000, 2010



Comparisons and Benchmarking

Malaysia's 2011 female labour force participation rate of 47.9% is the lowest among all ASEAN member states (see also Table 3 and Figure 21; ILO, 2008)¹⁰. Brunei and Singapore which are high-income countries in ASEAN show upward trends of female labour force participation rates while Thailand, an upper middle-income country in Southeast Asia has about a 20% higher female labour force participation rate compared to Malaysia although it is showing a downward trend.

¹⁰ Statistics on Women, Family and Community, Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, 2011

Figure 21: Female labour force participation rate, South East Asia, 1990-2010

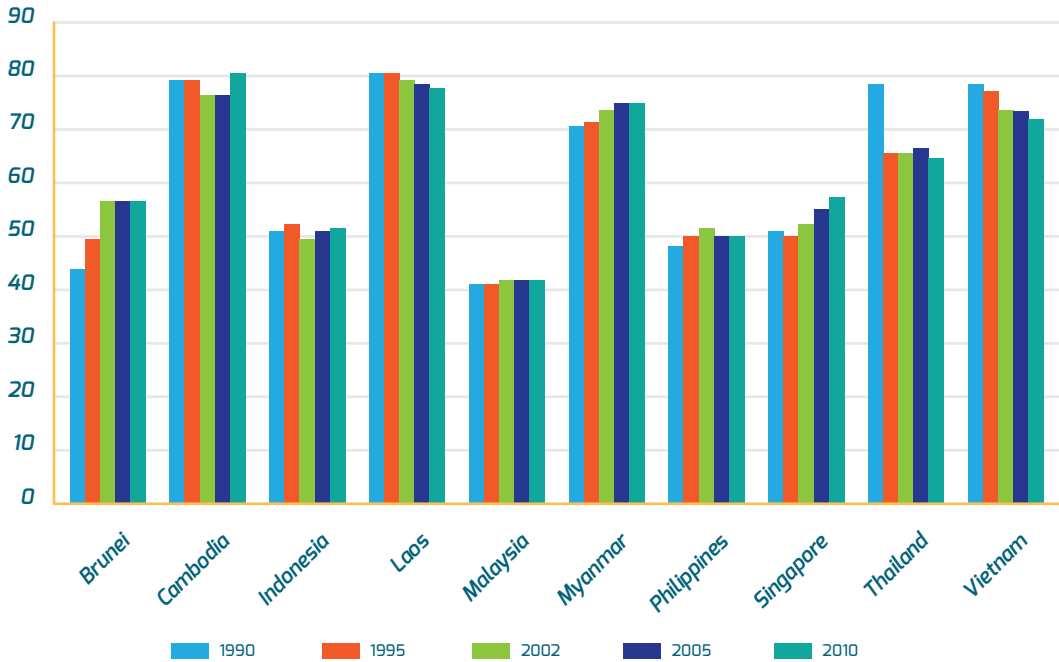
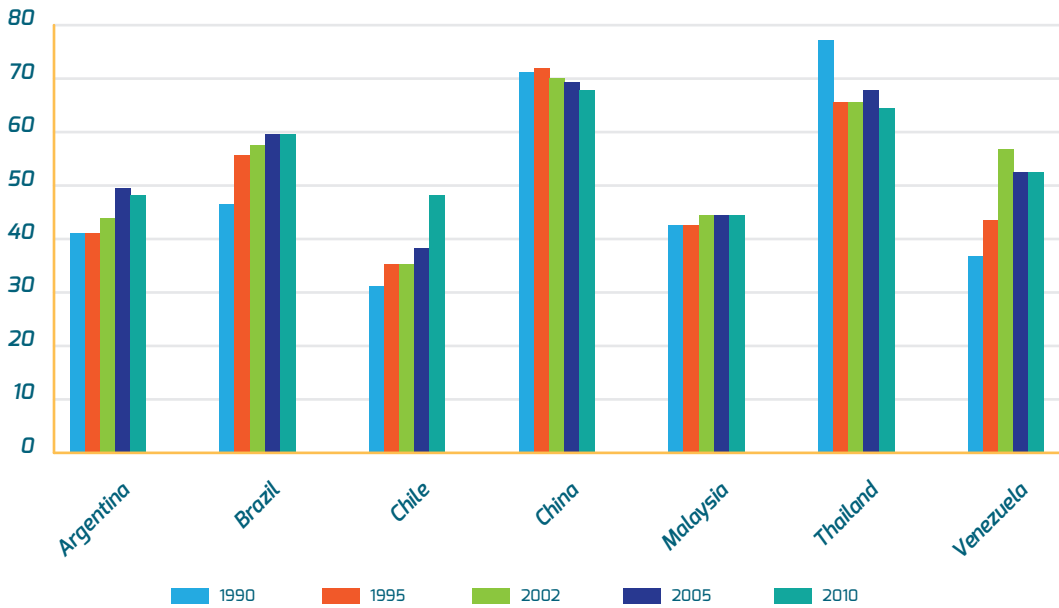


Figure 22: Female labour force participation, selected upper middle income countries, 1990-2010



Source: data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TL.FACT.FE.ZS/countries

In comparing Malaysia with other upper middle-income countries, these countries are also showing an upward trend in female labour force participation rates as seen in Figure 22. Countries like Chile, Argentina and Venezuela had lower female labour force participation rates in the 1990s compared to Malaysia but now show an upward trend compared to Malaysia. Brazil shows a healthy and consistent upward trend but started off at the same level with Malaysia in the 1990s and by 1995 had overtaken Malaysia by a 10 percentage point and has since been moving upwards.

Conclusion

Although, it can be shown that the Malaysian labour force participation trends and patterns is similar to the global labour force participation trends and patterns; however there are some distinct features that differentiate the Malaysian context. One of the key features of women's labour force participation rate is the single peak pattern. This single peak pattern seems to persist despite increase in the overall increase in the initial female labour force entry. The challenge that confronts the nation is on how to reduce the gender gaps that exist in the Malaysian labour market towards a more sustained increased and retained labour force participation trend.

CHAPTER 3: PROJECT KEY FINDINGS

CHAPTER 3: PROJECT KEY FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter examines the project survey key findings including the outcomes of stakeholder consultations on the factors that influence the women's labour force participation rate in Malaysia. The nationwide survey sampling was obtained from the 2011 national labour force statistics to ensure a nationally representative sample of the target population of women who are of working age. The definition of working age in Malaysia is 15-64 years, however, the project and the survey focused on women in the working age of 20-60 because it was assumed that a majority of those between the ages of 15 to 20 would be pursuing some form of education, and a majority of those above 60 were likely, based on social norms and trends in Malaysia, to be retired or unproductive¹¹.

On completion of the fieldwork, a total of 2,640 respondents were interviewed. Of the 2,640 respondents, 1,375 (52.1%) were currently working, and 1,265 (47.9%) were currently not working.

A majority of the respondents were between 25 to 39 years old (69.7%); 27% of them were 40 years and above and small percentage were below 25 (3.5%). The respondents were mostly married (67%) and about one-fourth were single (25.9%). Seven percent of them were either, divorced, widowed or separated.

The respondents were made up of 53.8% Malays, 17.7% Chinese, 16.3% Other Bumiputera (Sabah and Sarawak), 10.5% Indians and 1.7% others. A majority of the respondents (68.7%) were located in the urban areas while the rest, at 31.3% were located in the rural areas. In terms of level of education, 50% of the respondents had attained secondary education, 43% of tertiary level education and 7% of primary education. See Table 3 for further details on the profile of the respondents.

¹¹ For more details, refer to the project's Final Statistical Report of Survey Data' 2013

Table 3: Profile of respondents by work status

Background	No of resp.	Total %	W %	NW %
Working status				
Currently working	1,375	52.1		
Currently not working	1,265	47.9		
Sector				
Public	691	26.2		
Private	492	18.6		
Informal	191	7.2		
Not Working	1,266	48.0		
Location				
Urban	1,814	68.7	54.9	45.1
Rural	826	31.3	46.1	53.9
Age group (years)				
20-24	92	3.5	66.3	33.7
25-29	775	29.4	65.0	35.0
30-34	630	23.9	57.0	43.0
35-39	432	16.4	38.2	61.8
40-44	256	9.7	46.1	53.9
45-49	211	8.0	36.5	63.5
50-54	211	8.0	38.9	61.1
≥ 55	33	1.3	27.3	72.7
Marital status				
Single	683	25.9	70.0	30.0
Married	1,768	67.0	45.2	54.8
Separated	19	0.7	42.1	57.9
Divorced	87	3.3	63.2	36.8
Widowed	80	3.0	42.5	57.5
Others	2	0.1	50.0	50.0
Ethnic group				
Malay	1,418	53.8	54.2	45.8
Chinese	467	17.7	50.5	49.5
Indian	277	10.5	49.1	50.9
Orang Bumiputera (Sabah & Sarawak)	430	16.3	48.6	51.4
Others	46	1.7	52.2	47.8
Religion				
Islam	1,530	58.0	54.5	45.5
Christian	507	19.2	49.3	50.7
Buddhism	359	13.6	47.4	52.6
Hinduism	228	8.6	48.7	51.3
Others	14	0.5	64.3	35.7

Background	No of resp.	Total %	W %	NW %
Highest education				
Pre-school	3	0.1	0	100
Primary	147	5.6	21.8	78.2
Lower secondary	199	7.5	25.1	74.97
Upper secondary	923	35.0	39.3	60.7
Basic skills program	13	0.5	23.1	76.9
Form 6	201	7.6	50.2	49.8
Matriculation	9	0.3	33.3	66.7
Cert.-specific & tech. skills	37	1.4	35.1	64.9
Cert.-accredited bodies	11	0.4	63.6	36.4
Cert. - college/ polytech/univ.	50	1.9	56.0	44.0
Cert.- teaching/nursing/alld.health	25	0.9	80.0	20.0
Dip.-specific & tech. skills	17	0.6	52.9	47.1
Higher Nat. Dip.-specific & tech.	3	0.1	66.7	33.3
Dip. - college/ polytech/univ.	200	7.6	64.0	36.0
Dip.- teaching/nursing/alld.health	67	2.5	76.1	23.9
Bachelor Degree/ Adv. Dip.	482	18.3	82.6	17.4
Postgraduate	120	4.5	71.7	28.3
Master	93	3.5	77.4	22.6
PhD	7	0.3	42.9	57.1
Post-doctoral	2	0.1	100	0
Informal education	5	0.2	0	100
No education	24	0.9	12.5	87.5
Monthly income				
No income	1,134	43.0	0.1	99.9
<RM1000	334	12.7	73.4	26.6
RM1001-RM2000	354	13.4	94.1	5.9
RM2001-RM3000	387	14.7	96.6	3.4
RM3001-RM4000	291	11.0	96.6	3.4
RM4001-RM5000	76	2.9	98.7	1.3
RM5001-RM6000	27	1.0	96.3	3.7
RM6001-RM7000	6	0.2	100	0
RM7001-RM8000	10	0.4	100	0
RM8001-RM9000	6	0.2	100	0
RM9001-RM10000	3	0.1	66.7	33.3
>RM10000	8	0.3	87.5	12.5
Income earner?				
Yes	1,419	53.8	96.1	3.9
No	1,219	46.2	1.1	98.9

Similar to the findings of other conducted research seen in the literature review, the project also assumed that there is a tendency for women to be 'invisible' from national labour surveys when engaged in the informal economy. Further, while conducting the field work, the project experienced many challenges in identifying women who were not engaged in some form of income-generating activity and who could not fall under the category of women who are 'not-working'. Given this scenario, the survey showed 7.2% of the respondents who were not formally employed, fell under the 'working' category, because they were engaged in the informal economy. Based on these findings, 31 in-depth interviews were also conducted to understand the concerns affecting women engaged in the informal economy.

While the project focused on the issues which influence women's decision to enter or leave the labour market, it also recognised that there are other critical influencing factors such as employers' policies and attitudes, government interventions and civil society advocacy that can also contribute to women's ability or decisions to work. Therefore, inputs from private and public employers as well as civil society organization through focus group discussions and consultations with key government implementing agencies were obtained to provide a more holistic representation of women's participation in the labour force.

The results of the processes above have been framed in this chapter to examine four core issues:

1. Women's attitudes towards work; which looks at whether women want to work, and if they do, why they are not accessing the labour market.
2. Women's employability; which looks at the factors and barriers that influences women's access to the labour market.
3. The barriers and impetuses for women to enter or remain in the labour, including work-life balance policies.
4. How care work influences women's ability to enter the labour workforce.
5. The informal economy; to understand the issues and concerns of women in the informal economy. This section reflects much of the inputs from the in-depth-interviews that were conducted in the project.

Women's Attitudes toward Work

Do women who are not working, want to work?

Overall, the Malaysian society still constructs itself around traditional gender roles in the family where a man is seen as the main breadwinner, earning an income to support the family through work while women's role on the other hand is to care for the family and household. Therefore, there is a general assumption, that the majority of women, who are currently not working, have no interest to seek work, and the common response for not doing so is 'housework', as reflected in statistics from labour force survey 2011. This however, does not give any indicator as to whether or not, women do indeed have the desire to work and if there exist other factors which contribute to their decisions for not working, other than those mentioned in the labour force survey.

The project survey shows that a majority of the respondents, who are currently not working, are interested to work. Out of the 1,265 respondents who are currently not working, 52.8% indicated that they have a desire to work. This percentage can be further broken down between those who have worked before, and those who have never worked before as seen in Table 4 below.

Table 4: No. of respondents who are currently not working who want to work

Work History	Total n=1,265 (%)	No. of Respondents	Want to Work (%)
Worked before	71.0	898	56.8
Never worked before	29.0	367	43.4

If they do want to work, why are they not working?

While women do have the desire to work, their decision to do so is affected by contextual differences in their experiences, access and opportunities as well as social norms as expressed in the findings of the project survey.

The project survey also looked into other factors such as their marital status, education level and age to understand how these factors might influence women's desire to work, or return to work as described below.

Why are married women not working?

Table 5 shows that that married respondents mostly stated that they were not working because they were taking care of their children, because of marriage, and because their husband had requested that they stop working.

Table 5: Reasons for married women not working

Reason for not working (n=967)	Ranking of most frequent answers (*multiple answers) (%)	
To look after children	1	66.9
Marriage	2	42.8
Upon husband's request	3	36.3
In support of husband's career	4	10.6
Difficulty in obtaining job	5	8.4
Upon family's request	6	8.3
To look after family members	7	8.2
Difficulty in achieving a work-life balance	8	7.2
Look for work that is nearby	9	6.3
In search for a higher salary	10	3.7
Difficulty in relocating work when husband has been relocated	11	3.2
Difficulty in getting a suitable job that matches my qualification	12	3.1
Looking for better benefits	13	2.5
In search for employment which has good policies	14	2.3
To look for a better work environment	15	1.9
To look after children with special needs	16	1.8
Health related problems	17	1.3

The age group of the married respondents, who mostly answered that they were not working because they were looking after their children, were between the ages of 25-39, which is typically the age group when a person is most productive in the labour market. See Table 6.

Table 6: Age group of married women who are not working because they are looking after their children

Age Group of Married Women (n=697)	Percentage
20-24	0.8%
25-29	11.0%
30-34	25.2%
35-39	26.4%
40-44	14.0%
45-49	13.3%
50-54	8.5%
≥55	0.9%

The survey showed that the highest number of those who were married and not working only had a secondary education (see Table 7). This pattern is similar to the pattern seen in Europe, where persons attaining a low educational level are more likely to be inactive in the labourmarket. In 2011 and for the whole EU-27, the inactivity rate of persons in the age group 25-64 who had attained a low educational level (i.e. less than lower secondary) was 37.3%, as compared to 20.8% for persons with a medium educational level (at least lower secondary level, but less than tertiary) and 11.8% for persons with a high (i.e. tertiary) level¹². This can indicate that the likelihood of staying out of the labour market is greater for the poorly educated than for high-educated people.

Table 7: Education level of married women who are not working

Age Group of Married Women (n=969)	Education Level (%)		
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
20-24 (n=9)	33.3	55.6	11.1
25-29 (n=141)	5.7	63.8	30.5
30-34 (n=234)	6.0	68.8	25.2
35-39 (n=236)	5.9	77.1	16.9
40-44 (n=119)	13.4	73.1	13.4
45-49 (n=117)	21.4	68.4	10.3
50-54 (n=97)	20.6	63.9	15.5
≥55 (n=16)	56.3	43.8	0

¹² http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Labour_market_participation_by_sex_and_age, EuroStat, European Commission, 2012 (accessed on 18 April 2013).

The findings shown in Table 8 further show that marriage does not necessarily influence the working respondent's decision to resign from their job. However, based on the focus group discussions especially with civil society organizations and trade unions it was pointed out that the attitudes of employers and discrimination within the Malaysian labour market against someone of a married status is one of the influencing factors that induces a drop-out.

Table 8: Left job/resigned after marriage

Left job / resigned after marriage	Percentage
Yes	39%
No	61%
Total	100%

Although most married respondents had stated that they were not working because they were caring for their children, there were also respondents who were married, with children and working. Most of these respondents stated that the reasons they were working, were for financial reasons, but also indicated that other social related reasons such as being a good role model to their children, and fulfilling their career goals was also important (see Table 9).

Table 9: Reasons married respondents who had children were working

Working mothers (n=750)	Percentage
Need extra income	82.1
Financial independence	53.2
I want to be a good role model to my children	45.1
Fulfill my career goals	42.8
Staying at home does not appeal to me	36.2
Work is fulfilling and makes me a happy mother	36.0
I want to be around other adults	19.3

What are the different reasons for not working between women with and without children?

The data from the project survey demonstrates that the traditional breadwinner model still strongly influences the division of labour between men and women within the Malaysian society. According to Eagly et al (2009) the consequences of gender roles and stereotypes are sex-typed social behaviour because roles and stereotypes are socially shared descriptive norms (roles) and prescriptive norms (stereotypes). Therefore, this is reflected in the data through the response to look after children, marriage and upon husbands' request as the predominant responses given by women with children in the survey as the reason for not working (see Table 10). This clearly shows gender culture/gendered roles contributes to the gender gap as observed in employment. Furthermore, this also challenges how values and norms equally impacts labour market outcomes along with individual attitudes and choices. The response from women without children also seem to indicate that their choice to work is also primarily gendered and influenced by external factors, with most indicating that they were not working because of marriage, and upon their husband's or family's request.

Table 10: Reasons for not working among married women with or without children

Reasons for not working	Married respondents (n=968)	
	With children (n=903) (%)	Without children (n=65) (%)
Marriage	42.0	53.8
To look after children	71.8	-
To look after children with special needs	1.9	-
To look after family members	7.6	15.4
In support of husband's career	10.9	7.7
Upon husband's request	36.2	37.5
Upon family's request	7.5	18.5
Difficulty in obtaining job	8.0	13.8
Difficulty in getting a suitable job that matches my qualification	2.9	6.2
Difficulty in achieving a work life balance	7.0	10.8
Difficulty in relocating work when husband has been relocated	3.0	6.2
In search for a higher salary	3.3	9.2
In search for employment which has good policies	2.1	4.6
To look for a better environment	1.7	4.6
Looking for better benefits	2.2	6.2
Look for work that is nearby	6.0	10.8
Others (health problem)	2.0	10.7

It is however, important to note, that married respondents, who had never worked before also stated that they found difficulties in obtaining jobs (see Table 11). The reasons for this however, are not clear from the project survey. Married respondents, however, who had worked before, also stated that they had challenges achieving a balance between their work and life, despite not having children (see Table 12).

Table 11: Reasons for why married women, with and without children, never worked

With children (n=253)		No children (n=15)	
Reasons for not working	%	Reasons for not working	%
To look after children	73.9	Marriage	53.3
Marriage	54.2	Upon husband's request	33.3
Upon husband's request	38.3	Difficulty in obtaining a job	33.3
Difficulty in obtaining a job	18.2	Upon family's request	20.0
Upon family's request	11.9	To look after family members	20.0

Table 12: Reasons for why married women, with and without children, who worked before, are not working

With children (n=253)		No children (n=15)	
Reasons for not working	%	Reasons for not working	%
To look after children	70.9	Marriage	54.0
Marriage	37.2	Upon husband's request	38.8
Upon husband's request	35.4	Upon family's request	18.0
In support of husband's career	10.0	Difficulty in achieving work-life balance	14.0
Difficulty in achieving work-life balance	8.2	Health	14.0

Why are single women not working?

In the project survey, single respondents who were not working (n=198) cited that the reason they were not in the labour workforce is because (i) they were in search for a higher salary; (ii) they found difficulties in obtaining a job; and (iii) they were continuing their education (see Table 13). This pattern however, varies between those who had worked before and those who had never work, a higher proportion of those in the latter cited that they had difficulties in getting a job that matches their qualification (see Table 14).

Table 13: Reasons given for why single women are not working

Single women who are not working (n=198)	
Reasons for not working	%
In search of higher salary	26.8
Difficulty in obtaining job	26.3
Continuing education	20.5

Table 14: Reasons given for why single women are not working by work status

Never worked (n=124)		Never worked (n=72)	
Reasons for not working	%	Reasons for not working	%
Higher Salary	32.3	Difficulty in obtaining a job	38.9
Looking for better benefit	22.6	Difficulty to getting a job that matches qualification	30.6
Looking for work nearby	22.6	Continuing education	23.3
Looking for a better work environment	21.0	In search of higher salary	18.1
Continuing education	19.5	Looking for work that is nearby	18.1
Difficulty in obtaining a job	18.5		
Difficulty to getting a job that matches qualification	16.1		

Overall, the single women who were not working in the survey, tended to be from the ages of 25 to 29, and had attained tertiary education. See Table 15.

Table 15: Age group for single women who are not working

Age Group	Percentage (%)
20-24	10.7
25-29	61.5
30-34	13.2
35-39	7.8
40-44	2.4
45-49	1.0
50-54	2.9
≥55	0.5

Table 16 seems to show that single women face challenges in entering the labour force market. The pattern for single women indicates a deeper issue of employability and education mismatch.

Table 16: Education attainment of single women who are not working

Single women age 25-29 (n=126)	
Education level	Percentage (%)
Primary	2.4
Secondary	33.3
Tertiary	64.3

During one of the consultations, a representative from the Ministry of Higher Education stated that there is also a mismatch in terms of the field of study and employment. When a woman is trained as an engineer for example she finds it difficult to get a job in her field of study because she is a woman and she settles for a job that is not related to her qualification. Another major concern raised by the Ministry of Higher Education is that a lot of qualified women/graduates are taking on jobs that they are over qualified for. She stated that there are degree holders who are doing clerical work and receiving salary based on SPM qualification which is much lower than their current qualification.

Women’s Employability

While the project survey data shows that women do want to work, this desire is not reflected in their overall labour force participation rates. This seems to indicate that women continue to face multiple challenges in entering the labour force. These challenges, which affect their employability needs to be understood to facilitate and create an enabling working environment for women to develop and maximise their human potential and capital.

Education and Employability

Throughout the project survey and focus group discussions, the issue of education and employability was seen as one of the key factors influencing women’s participation in the labour workforce aside from issues relating to care work. The project survey findings clearly show the relation between education and the access to work. Table 16 indicates that the lower the respondent’s education, the less likely is she to be working, as compared to women who have a higher education.

Table 17: Distribution of work status by level of education

Education level	Work status (%)	
	Working	Not working
Primary	19.6	80.4
Secondary	38.7	61.3
Tertiary	73.2	26.8

Table 17 seems to indicate that those who had studied in education are the most employable, while those who had studied in a basic or general program were less likely to be working. Similarly, the Ministry of Higher Education’s 2009 Tracer Study also indicated that the highest number of graduates in the workforce are those with qualifications in education at 50.3% (males=57.2% and females=47.7%).

Table 18 shows that those who had studied education and social sciences, business and law indicated a wide gap in terms of employability but those who studied in agriculture/veterinary, as well as arts and humanities were found to be working as well as not working, almost equally.

Table 18: Distribution of work status by field of study

Field of study (n=1506)	Work status (%)	
	Working	Not working
Basic/general program (n=344)	36.0	64.0
Education (n=168)	89.9	10.1
Arts and humanities (n=104)	51.9	48.1
Social sciences/business/law (n=472)	77.3	22.7
Science/mathematics/computer (n=166)	67.5	32.5
Engineering/manufacturing/construction (n=70)	64.3	35.7
Agriculture/veterinary (n=18)	50.0	50.0
Health and welfare (n=96)	69.8	30.2
Services (n=68)	60.3	39.7

The data above also indicates that there are qualified women who are not participating optimally in the workforce. This reflects a mismatch that is gendered in nature where these women who are able to provide their labour at different levels whether unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled but they are underutilized.

Labour force participation patterns of respondents who are working

Among the respondents who are women with primary education, 54.3% work in the informal sector, while 45.7% work in the formal sector (public and private sector). 42.7% of respondents with secondary education were in the private sector, 29.6% in the public sector and 27.7% were in the informal sector. Most of tertiary educated women were in the public sector at 65.2%, as compared to only 3.5% work in the informal sector. This seems to indicate that the lower the women's education, the more likely she is to be in the informal sector, and the higher the women's education, the more likely she will be in the public sector (see Table 19).

Table 19: Sector of employment by level of education (working respondents)

Sector	Education Level (%)			Total (%) n=1,374
	Primary (n=35)	Secondary (n=517)	Tertiary (n=822)	
Public Sector	5.7	29.6	65.2	50.3
Private Sector	40.0	42.7	31.3	35.8
Informal Sector	54.3	27.7	3.5	13.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 20 shows that those with an education background in the field of education (92.1%) and social sciences/business/law (61.9%) were primarily in the public sector, while those with a background in the field of science/mathematics/computer education were almost equally divided between the private sector (49.1%) and the public sector (46.4%). Those with basic/general program educational background were primarily in the informal sector (39.5%).

Table 20: Field of study by sector of employment (working respondents)

Field of study	Sector (n=968)			Total (%)
	Public (%)	Private (%)	Informal (%)	
Basic/General Program (n=124)	28.2	32.3	39.5	100.0
Education (n=151)	92.1	6.6	1.3	100.0
Art and Humanities (n=54)	55.6	33.3	11.1	100.0
Social Sciences/Business/Law (n=365)	61.9	32.3	5.8	100.0
Science/Mathematic/Computer (n=112)	46.4	49.1	4.5	100.0
Engineering/Manufacturing/Construction (n=45)	46.7	51.1	2.2	100.0
Agriculture/Veterinary (n=9)	77.8	22.2	0.0	100.0
Health and Welfare (n=67)	73.1	25.4	1.5	100.0
Services (n=41)	48.8	46.3	4.9	100.0
Total	59.8	31.2	9.0	100.0

Labour force participation patterns of respondents who are not working

Table 21 shows that amongst not working respondents, 58.3% with primary education reside in urban areas, while 41.7% reside in rural areas, while 61.7% of respondents with secondary education live in urban areas and the balance of 38.3% live in rural areas. A large majority of 76.6% of the tertiary educated respondents live in urban areas, as compared to only 23.4% live in rural areas. This raises the issue, that despite the respondents having tertiary education, and living in urban areas – they are still not in the labour force.

Table 21: Not working respondents by education and location (urban and rural)

Location	Education Level (%)			Total (%) n=1,262
	Primary (n=144)	Secondary (n=819)	Tertiary (n=299)	
Urban	58.3	61.7	76.6	64.8
Rural	41.7	38.3	23.4	35.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The table below shows that a high rate of 92% currently not working respondents who reside in urban areas studied in the field of engineering/ manufacturing/ construction and 8% in rural areas. Most of the currently not working respondents with education as their field of study reside in urban areas (88.2%) as compared to rural areas (11.8%).

Table 22: Not working respondents by field of study and location (urban and rural)

Field of study	Location (n=536)		Total (%)
	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	
Basic/General Program (n=219)	53.0	47.0	100.0
Education (n=17)	88.2	11.8	100.0
Art and Humanities (n=50)	70.0	30.0	100.0
Social Sciences/ Business/Law (n=106)	68.9	31.1	100.0
Science/Mathematic/Computer (n=54)	66.7	33.3	100.0
Engineering/ Manufacturing / Construction (n=25)	92.0	8.0	100.0
Agriculture/ Veterinary (n=9)	55.6	44.4	100.0
Health and Welfare (n=29)	69.0	31.0	100.0
Services (n=27)	81.5	18.5	100.0
Total	64.4	35.6	100.0

Will women who are currently not working return to work?

The project survey shows that in spite of these challenges, opportunities for re-skilling would encourage women to return to work. 33.3% of the respondents who are currently not working but had worked before said that workplace that offers skills development courses will encourage them to consider returning to work. While 24.4% of the respondents who never worked before divulged that workplace which offers skills development courses would be a main consideration when considering to work. This shows the importance of bridging the gender gaps faced by women in skills and education in supporting women's greater participation in the labour force.

Corresponding to this challenge faced by women as a result of the education attainments, age and location of women are further potential factors negating their participation in the labour workforce as presented. Table 23 shows that the higher the respondent's education, the more likely she will want to return to work. The table also shows that the younger the respondent, the more likely she will want to work as well.

Table 23: Decision to return to work by education level, location and age group for respondents currently not working

Categories	Return to work?			Consider working?		
	Yes (%)	No (%)	n	Yes (%)	No (%)	n
Education level						
Primary	41.0	59.0	83	26.2	73.8	61
Secondary	53.0	47.0	583	37.5	62.5	232
Tertiary	71.7	28.3	230	76.1	23.9	71
Location						
Urban	54.8	45.2	593	45.7	54.3	223
Rural	60.1	39.9	301	39.0	61.0	141
Age group (years)						
20-24	92.3	7.7	13	88.2	11.8	
25-29	84.1	15.9	176	74.2	25.8	
30-34	60.3	39.7	209	40.3	59.7	
35-39	53.3	46.7	210	26.3	73.7	
40-44	51.0	49.0	104	36.4	63.6	
45-49	37.3	62.7	83	29.4	70.6	
50-54	27.6	72.4	87	11.9	88.1	
≥55	14.3	85.7	14	11.1	88.9	

Barriers and Incentives for Women to Enter the Labour Force

It must be recognised that any efforts to reduce the stagnation of women in the labour workforce require that gender inequalities that exist in the labour market be addressed.

In Table 24, women who are currently not working, reported that the main barrier to working was childcare issues, followed by their lack of skills, and the lack of their appropriate qualification.

Table 24: Barriers to entering or re-entering the workforce

Women currently not working, who find there are barriers to enter the workforce (n=501)	
Reason given	(%)
Childcare issues	44.1
Lack skills	33.1
Lack appropriate qualification	32.1
Age factor	27.7
Distance/ transportation problems	24.8
Lack confidence	22.6
Pay not adequate	22.2
Employers not interested	12.4

Table 25 shows that working respondents on the other hand, opined that higher wages, better career prospects and flexible working hours would help women retain their jobs. Nevertheless, working respondents also cited childcare issues as important as well; specifically childcare that is of good quality, trustworthy and reliable, as well as affordable.

Table 25: Incentives for women to retain their jobs

Working women (n=341)	
Reason given	(%)
Higher wages	65.7
Better career prospects	57.2
Flexible work	54.1
Fair and equal treatment	38.1
Good quality childcare	38.1
Trustworthy/reliable childcare minders	18.5
Work from home/telecommunicating	18.5
Affordable childcare	17.9
Part-time work	17.6
Job sharing	17.1
Efficient public transport	14.2
Gradual retirement	11.8

Respondents who are currently not working, but want to work, reported that they would be encouraged to return to work if they were offered higher wages, had better career prospects and had flexible working hours. While, other issues also mattered, collectively, it appears that childcare – i.e. good quality, affordable and trustworthy childcare, that was closer to their workplace, was also of importance (see Table 26).

Table 26: Incentives for women to enter or re-enter the workforce

Women who are currently not working, and want to work (n=709)	
Reason given	(%)
Higher wages	57.5
Better career prospects	54.3
Flexible work	51.2
Fair and equal treatment	35.7
Workplace that offers skills development courses	34.0
Good quality childcare	33.6
Affordable childcare	28.6
Work from home/telecommunicating	26.2
Efficient public transport	25.8
Part-time work	25.2
Trustworthy/reliable childcare minders	24.7
Childcare services nearer to workplace	22.0
Job sharing	11.1

Table 27 shows that overall; a majority of the working respondents did not appear to face any career progression. However, for those who did, most cited the challenge of managing their time or balancing their workload as a barrier, while others cited childcare issues (including to focus on their children's development) and distance to work as key issues (see Table 28).

Table 27: Do working women face barriers to work progression

Working women (n=1,374)	
Have barriers to work progression	Do not have barriers to work progression
27.5%	72.5%

Table 28: What are the barriers women face to career progression

Working women who have barriers to career progression (n=378)					
Married (n=229)		Others (n=31)		Single (n=118)	
Time management/ Balancing workload	46.3%	Childcare	38.7%	Time management/ Balancing workload	37.7%
Desire to focus on child development	43.2%	Time management/ Balancing workload	35.5%	Distance to work	27.1%
Childcare	41% 21.8%	Distance to work	29.0%	Not gaining credibility/ respect from peers/ supervisors	20.3%
Distance to work		Desire to focus on child development	22.6%	Difficulties in gaining access to higher post	20.3%

Issues of Work-Life Balance

As mentioned above, respondents have indicated that issues such as flexible working hours and time management are of concern to them.

The challenge to find a suitable balance between work and daily living affects not only women, their families but the nation. The need to choose between paid employment or care work, in particular for children results in less employment or less children which impacts on the development of the nation. The work-life balance is greatly influenced by the extent of gendered roles. OECD reports that on average men in OECD countries spend 131 minutes per day doing unpaid work while women spend 279 minutes per day cooking, cleaning or caring. This situation is similarly found locally where a large majority of the survey respondents of all respondents (both working and not working) interviewed said that they do care work in the family such as looking after children and the elderly. Work-life balance is important to help create and maintain a supportive and healthy work environment which will enable employees to have balance between work and personal responsibilities.

As the needs for work-life balance is an important factor for women to enter or remain in the workforce, it is thus equally important that employers practise such policies which allow women, as well as men, to reconcile their careers and the needs of their family. Work-life balance programs benefits both men and women as have been demonstrated to have an impact on employees in terms of recruitment, retention, commitment and satisfaction, absenteeism, productivity and accident rates (Heleri De Cieri, Barbara Holmes, Jacqui & Trisha Pettit, 2005; Michael White, Stephen Hill, Patrick Ms Govern, Collin Mills, Deborah Smeaton, 2003)¹³.

Table 29 below show that most working respondents' employers provided leave policies that would allow the respondents to take time off to attend to personal matters, especially during emergencies and for bereavement purposes. The data also indicates that a high percentage of respondents could also obtain study and training leave – which is positive as this provides the respondents an opportunity to take time off to improve their skills. The data shows as well that 60.8% of the respondents were able to take care leave which are usually leave allowing for the employee to take time off to care for a sick member of the family. Only slightly more than half of the respondents stated that they could get a career break, which is particularly useful for women who have children and wanted to take a break in order to care for their children especially in the early years. The data however is limited as to what the conditions are that the respondent can take the leave mentioned below and for how long and whether the leave is paid or unpaid. Nevertheless, the data does show that some form of leave is available to the respondents.

Table 29: Availability of work-life balance (leave) policies

Does your company have work life balance (leave) policies? (n=1,170)			
Type of Policy	Yes (%)	No (%)	Don't know (%)
Care leave	60.8	30.9	8.4
Emergency leave	90.4	8.0	1.5
Study/Training Leave	71.2	22.8	6.1
Career break	54.8	32.5	12.7
Cultural/religious leave	68.7	23.7	7.6
Pay averaging for purchasing additional annual leave	20.9	60.3	18.8
Bereavement Leave	93.8	4.1	2.1
Pooling of leave entitlement	55.0	36.5	8.5

¹³ <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/topics/work-life-balance/>

Table 30: The importance of work life balance

Are work life balance policies important to you? (n=1,172)					
Type of Policy	Yes (%)		Neutral (%)	No (%)	
	Very important	Important	Don't know	Not important	Not at all important
Care leave	48.9	47.4	1.4	1.8	0.6
Emergency leave	60.8	37.6	0.3	0.5	0.8
Study/Training leave	31.9	52.8	5.6	9.0	0.9
Career break	24.0	50.4	10.9	13.2	1.5
Cultural/religious leave	34.5	50.9	5.7	8.0	0.9
Pay averaging for purchasing additional annual leave	9.1	35.5	24.9	27.5	3.1
Bereavement leave	68.2	30.1	0.4	0.3	1.0
Pooling of leave entitlement	31.6	46.1	10.1	11.1	1.1

In the focus group discussion with employers, some indicated that they were beginning to give importance to the needs their employees' work-life balance. For example, one employer shared their staff rejuvenation programme which allows staff to take time off from two to six months or up to one year on a case-to-case basis to allow them to attend to their personal needs and to return to work once they are ready to. This was implemented to retain employees in middle management as well as at the executive level. Some employers however did not see the importance of work life balance.

At the international roundtable, the National Population and Family Development Board (LPPKN) shared the finding from its family well-being index, wherein Malaysia obtained an overall score of 7.55 out of 10. However Malaysia only scored 6.7 for the indicators on balancing work and family. LPPKN however also stated that their study showed that women needed to earn an extra income for the family as they scored very low in terms of future savings. Nevertheless, it is essential that women are able to balance their need to work, and their family responsibilities at the same time.

Work design and flexible working opportunities

One of the means of improving the lives of working women (and also men) is to increase flexible working opportunities. The UK Women and Work Commission (February 2006) 'Shaping a Fairer Future' reported that estimated costs of under-utilising women's skills is estimated to be between 15 and 23 billion pounds or 1.3 to 2.0 per cent of GDP and as such, promotes, amongst others, the need to challenge the default work option of 9-5 as perceived by employers and employees and restructure the concept of work and work time to allow for greater productivity.

Flexible working opportunity should not be narrowly defined as part time work. Flexible working encompasses a range of options including part time working and can include job sharing, flexible hours, compressed hours, term time working and working from home, or varying start and finish times¹⁴. These options can potentially aid women improve their lives by providing a better balance between work and home. Although this may not necessarily change the gendered roles, it will enable care-givers to balance their caring responsibilities with paid work and help employees in general to have a better work-home balance.

The findings of the study indicate that most of the working respondents' employers offered limited flexible work designs, even though these were important to them. See Table 31 and 32.

¹⁴ Flexible Working: working for families, working for business. Family Friendly Working Hours Taskforce (2009)

Table 31: Availability of work-life balance policies (flexible work designs)

Does your company have work life balance policies? (n=1,173)			
Type of Policy ¹⁵	Yes (%)	No (%)	Don't know (%)
Job sharing	45.5	49.4	5.1
Telecommuting	35.2	59.9	4.9
Cap on overtime	32.4	61.3	6.3
Opportunity to negotiate part-timework for fulltime employees	35.1	53.1	11.8
Time off in lieu, rostered days off	52.3	42.5	5.2
Self-roistering and/or staggered start and finish times	31.7	64.0	4.3
Gradual retirement	14.9	67.5	17.6

Table 32: Availability of work-life balance policies (flexible work designs) by sector

Does your company have work life balance policies? (n=1,167)				
Type of Policy	Yes (%)		No (%)	
	Public n=685	Private n=482	Public n=685	Private n=482
Job sharing	41.5	51.2	52.6	44.8
Telecommuting	33.1	37.8	62.2	57.1
Cap on overtime	31.3	34.2	62.4	59.5
Opportunity to negotiate part-timework for fulltime employees	29.4	42.3	59.2	44.6
Time off in lieu, rostered days off	57.2	45.2	38.4	48.1
Self-roistering and/or staggered start and finish times	31.6	31.7	62.5	66.2
Gradual Retirement	19.3	8.9	64.2	71.8

Table 33: Importance of work-life balance policies (flexible work designs)

Are work life balance policies important to you? (n=1,170)					
Type of Policy	Yes (%)		Neutral (%)	No (%)	
	Very important	Important	Don't know	Not important	Not at all important
Job sharing	18.7	48.8	10.7	19.3	2.4
Telecommuting	21.2	41.2	10.4	24.8	2.4
Cap on overtime	12.8	46.3	11.4	27.0	2.4
Opportunity to negotiate part-timework for fulltime employees	18.2	49.5	11.2	19.2	1.9
Time off in lieu, rostered days off	19.8	52.8	8.4	17.1	1.9
Self-roistering and/or staggered start and finish times	17.6	40.9	10.0	28.3	3.3
Gradual Retirement	11.7	41.0	22.0	22.8	2.5

¹⁵ The definition of the policies listed are as follows: Job sharing: A company policy that offers employees a job sharing program (e.g., two people share one job); Telecommuting: An arrangement that allows employees to telecommute or work at home as a regular work arrangement (i.e., where employees telecommute or work from home at least 20% of their time); Self roistering: Companies that allow staff to schedule their working day to meet the requirements of service delivery or production; Staggered start and finish times: An arrangement where employees can vary their daily start and end times to suit their work and personal commitments; Gradual retirement: A range of employment arrangements that allow an employee who is approaching retirement age to continue working with a reduced workload, and eventually transition from full-time work to full-time retirement.

Flexible work arrangements are important benefits that not only benefit employees but also employers it provides a means for reducing labour and the associated cost. For example, encouraging employers to work from home will mean that there is less need for office space. Moreover, part-time and flexi-time options can also lower the cost of wages.

One research¹⁶ found that women with young children show more interest in flexible work arrangements. This appeared to be more prevalent amongst women in the upper rung of the occupational status. Younger women however – particularly those of the Gen Y however were also more inclined to flexible working arrangements.

While the availability of part-time work does open doors to reconciling work and parenthood, it tends to be seen as “women’s work” and various studies have cautioned the use of part-time work as a means to achieving gender equity in the labour market as it risks reinforcing the traditional sexual division of labour (ILO, 2009).

Care Work

The project survey found that a majority (78.7%) of the respondents interviewed (n=2,640) were doing some form of care work, such as caring for their children or for the elderly.

Among the respondents who are not working, the percentage of them doing care work in the family is relatively high (83.7%). The same pattern is observed among women who are currently working, whereby 74% of them are also doing care work. This indicates that women have a greater tendency to do care work in the family regardless of their work status (see Table 34 below).

Table 34: Care work based on work status

Work status	Doing care work?		
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total (%)
Currently Working (n=1,375)	74.0	26.0	100
Currently Not Working (n=1,265)	83.7	16.3	100

¹⁶ 'Flexible Working Arrangements in Malaysia and the Participation of Women in the Labour Force' presentation by Dr GeethaSubramaniam, UITM, Malaysia, Roundtable Discussion, Putrajaya May 30, 2012

Table 35 shows that care work is performed predominantly for children and for the elderly with 77.3% caring for children followed by 28.4% for mothers, 18.8% for fathers, 4.1% mother-in-law and 2.7% for father-in-law. 13.1% said that they are taking care of their siblings.

Table 35: Who are being cared for

Women who provide care work (n=2,075)	
Caring for	(%)
Children	77.3
Mother	28.4
Father	18.8
Sibling(s)	13.1
Mother-in-law	5.2
Siblings child(ren)	3.6
Father-in-law	2.7
Others (mainly husband)	2.4
Grandchildren	1.7
Grandmother	1.2
Step-child(ren)	0.5
Adopted child(ren)	0.4
Grandfather	0.3

Issues of Childcare

Table 36 shows that most working women have childcare support, whereas the reverse is seen with women who are not working.

Table 36: Availability of childcare

Women, with children (n=1,175)			
Work status	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total (%)
Currently Working (n=742)	69.5	30.5	100
Currently Not Working (n=973)	13.8	86.2	100

Table 37 shows however those most primary educated respondents do not have childcare arrangements (86.2%) as compared to tertiary educated respondents who, in the majority, do (83.7%).

Table 37: Childcare Arrangement by Education

Age Group of Married Women (n=969)	Education (%)		
	Primary (n=29)	Secondary (n=322)	Tertiary (n=393)
Yes	13.8	57.5	83.7
No	86.2	42.5	16.3
Total	100	100	100

Income is also another factor which seems to have some influence on whether the respondent has childcare arrangements. In Table 38, most respondents who earn an income below RM1,000 have no childcare arrangements (60.3%) while those who earn above RM1,000 were more likely to have childcare arrangements indicating that those who earn less than RM1,000 are less likely to be able to afford childcare arrangements. This is similarly shown in Table 39, where the lower the husband's monthly income, the less likely respondent will have childcare arrangements.

Table 38: Childcare arrangement by the respondent's total monthly income

Childcare arrangement of working women by total monthly income (n=743)			
Total monthly income	Childcare arrangements		Total (%)
	Yes (%)	No (%)	
< RM1000	39.7	60.3	100
RM1001-RM2000	71.4	28.6	100
RM2001-RM3000	81.3	18.7	100
RM3001-RM4000	76.8	23.2	100
RM4001-RM5000	82.0	18.0	100
RM5001-RM6000	75.0	25.0	100
RM6001-RM7000	66.7	33.3	100
RM7001-RM8000	50.0	50.0	100
RM8001-RM9000	40.0	60.0	100
RM9001-RM10000	-	100	100
> RM10000	80.0	20.0	100
Total (%)	69.7	30.3	100

Table 39: Childcare arrangement by husband's monthly income

Childcare arrangement of married working women by husband's monthly income (n=665)			
Total monthly income	Childcare arrangements		Total (%)
	Yes (%)	No (%)	
< RM1000	48.0	52.0	100
RM1001-RM2000	71.3	28.7	100
RM2001-RM3000	79.5	20.5	100
RM3001-RM4000	82.1	17.9	100
RM4001-RM5000	73.2	26.8	100
RM5001-RM6000	73.2	26.8	100
RM6001-RM7000	87.5	12.5	100
RM7001-RM8000	50.0	50.0	100
RM8001-RM9000	-	100	100
RM9001-RM10000	72.7	27.3	100
> RM10000	86.7	13.3	100
Total (%)	71.3	28.7	100

Most respondents working in the public sector have childcare arrangements (78%). In contrast, 57.6% of respondents in the informal sector do not have childcare arrangements. See Table 40.

Table 40: Childcare arrangement by sector

Childcare arrangements	Sector			Total (%)
	Public (%)	Private (%)	Informal (%)	
Yes	78.0	71.7	42.4	69.7%
No	22.0	28.3	57.6	30.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

It is interesting to note however, that the Table 41 shows that those who provide childcare are mostly the respondents' family or relatives, followed by childcare centres and their neighbour. Table 42 shows that the highest percentage of those who rely on their family and relatives to care for their children are from the rural areas. Looking at Tables above, it appears that despite the respondents earning an income (Table 38) and indeed having childcare arrangements, the respondents seem to rely more on their family or relatives to fill that function, this preference may indicate that they find childcare facilities unavailable, costly or unreliable. This is indicated in Table 25 and 26 which indicates that good quality, affordable and trustworthy childcare, that was closer to their workplace, was of importance to respondents.

Table 41: Childcare providers

Married working women with children and with childcare arrangements (n=467)	
Who takes care of your children?	(%)
Family/Relatives	53.3
Childcare centre	25.8
Neighbour	13.9
Domestic worker/ home helper	9.0

Table 42: Childcare providers

Married working women with children and with childcare arrangements (n=467)			
Who takes care of your children?	Total (%) n=467	Urban (%) n=349	Rural (%) n=118
Family/Relatives	54.3	51.6	62.7
Childcare centre	25.8	30.1	12.8
Neighbour	13.9	14.3	12.8
Domestic worker/ home helper	12.6	12.0	4.3
School/Institute	7.7	6.6	11.1

In the focus group discussion with employers, it was highlighted that childcare should not be seen as a privilege, even for the manufacturing sector. It was informed that some employers are already providing state of the art facilities as they are well aware of the needs of their workers, and the need to support the retention of women in the labour force.

The project survey findings significantly point that the ***odds of working are 94% less likely for women without childcare arrangements*** as compared to women with childcare arrangements. Therefore, one of the key interventions needed to increase and retain women in the workforce is investing in childcare. It is evident that care work is a significant factor that hinders women's full participation in the labour force.

Other studies have also shown that inadequate supply of affordable childcare can constrain parents' full-time participation, in particular for mothers (Blau and Currie, 2004). The government has already initiated some programmes either conducted by government, themselves or with their social partners direct programmes like early childhood education and care, after-school programmes, promotion of locally-organised care, subsidisation, and regulation. However, its impact to increase women's participation in the labour force is still minimal.

Issues of elderly care

The project survey also found that elderly care is another important care work responsibility for both working and not working women. As indicated in Table 35, the respondents reported that they also cared for their parents where 28.4% of the respondents were caring for their mothers, 18.8 % for their fathers, 4.1% for their mother-in-law and 2.7% for their father-in-law.

Feedbacks from the focus group discussions and stakeholder consultations indicate that the potential for women to opt out of work because they want to look after the elderly exists. Many have sited that the issue relating to elder care is that of access and availability of infrastructure, for example establishing day care for the elderly and regulating assisted living services¹⁷.

Moreover, gerontology and psycho geriatric studies have shown that there is a physical and emotional burden, particularly anxiety, depression, stress and anticipatory grief during the care of the elderly, including those who are disabled (Hughes et al 2000, Stuckley et al 1997, NAC 2009)¹⁸.

It is clear from the data above that both childcare and elder care continues to influence women's daily life which may strongly determine a women's ability or choice to enter or stay in the labour force. The lower the income and education level the more precarious is the care arrangement, which also limits those of the lower income and education to enter or stay in workforce – and contribute to the family's household income.

Social security

The project had also looked into the issue of social security and the availability of social security for working women. Social security is important for women as it provides income security after their retirement and also provides protection should they face unexpected incidences or loss of income from unemployment or a disability during their working age.

Most women working in the public sector have social security benefits (92.9%), while only about 7% do not have the benefits. Unfortunately, extreme vulnerability exist for respondents working in the informal sector, where it was found from the project survey that about 70% do not have any social security benefits (see Table 43).

Table 43: Social Security by sector

Social security benefits	Sector			Total (%)
	Public (%)	Private (%)	Informal (%)	
Yes	92.9	92.7	29.8	84.0
No	7.1	7.3	70.2	16.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Most urban respondents have social security benefits (87.3%), while only 12.7% do not have the benefits. Over three quarters of rural respondents have social security benefits, while 24.4% do not have these benefits (see Table 44).

¹⁷ Assisted living is different from a home for the elderly for it is non-medical and does not up root the elderly from their existing environment. It is important to keep the elderly active and independent but with some assistance being made available when needed. Being in-charge of their life keeps them healthy and satisfied.

¹⁸ Unpaid and paid leave: The Effects of childcare and elder care on the standard of living, Levy Economics Institute of Bard College (2011) http://www.levyinstitute.org/pubs/wp_691.pdf

Table 44: Social Security by location

Social security benefits	Location		Total (%)
	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	
Yes	87.3	75.6	84.0
No	12.7	24.4	16.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 45 below shows what types of social benefits the respondents have based on the sector of work.

Table 45: Type of social security benefits by sector

Type	Formal (%) n=1,098	Informal (%) n=57
EPF	76.3	73.7
SOCSSO	48.3	56.1
Pension scheme	75.0	-
Unemployment insurance	2.0	22.8
*Others	10.0	17.5

Women in the Informal Economy

As indicated above, the project survey found 13.9%¹⁹ of the currently working respondents were in the informal economy²⁰, and that during the survey, identifying women, who were not working at all, was a challenge. This appears to indicate that there is a concentration of women in the labour force who are not visible. While this section will attempt to explore the issues surrounding women in the informal economy utilising the findings from the survey, the 31 in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, it is important to note however, that the findings are limited and therefore not covered at length under this project.

Since the 1970s, the informal economy has expanded and appeared in new guises in the context of globalization, in particular, the manufacturing sectors which have also influence amongst others, rural-urban migration (Bach, 2003; Carr and Chen, 2002; Chant and Mc Ilwaine, 1995; Chen et al., 2004; ILO 2002b, 2007a; Valenzuela, 2005). The informal economy is increasingly being recognised not only as economic activities and enterprises that are not registered or regulated but also registered companies who engage workers on an informal basis without security of tenure, worker benefits and legal protection. This highlights the complex subcontracting arrangements which have evolved within the formal economic structure particularly reflecting the 'race to the bottom' attitude of majority of businesses.

The growing size of the informal sector of which casual employment forms a subset, is an area of concern (see Pearson, 2012). Many women remain in casual employments which are deliberately disguised in order to sidestep labour regulations including health and safety responsibility, not to mention social benefits. There guise of 'flexibility' perpetuated through repeated short-term contracts illustrates the complex structure of subcontracting where income information and information of employment (due to its vagueness) is invariably difficult to obtain²¹.

¹⁹ See Final Statistical Report

²⁰ The term 'informal economy' rather than 'informal sector' is used to include both own account workers and wage workers in the discussion and analysis of informal work. It also shows how the informal work cross-cuts a range of sectors and areas of work and also that it frequently overlaps with work within the formal economy. (Women, Gender and the informal economy: An assessment of ILO research and suggested ways forward/ Sylvia Chant and Carolyn Pedwell; International Labour Office- Geneva: ILO, 2008)

²¹ Gender Equality: Striving for Justice in an Unequal World (2005) UNRISD ISBN 92-9085-052-3, Chapter 5: The feminization and informalization of labour.

At the time of this project, there was no official data on the informal economy in Malaysia, nor prior to the project (Jessree Kamaruddin & Mohamad Ali, 2006). One study approached this limitation through estimates using mixed income where it reported that the informal sector contributed 13.0% to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2005 (Nazaria Baharudin, Manisah Othman, Pazlina Waty Che Pah, Dipa Chellamuthu & Rubiah Musa, 2011). This approach uses the rationale that informal sector economic activities are still subjected to local authorities regulation and licensing which are usually covered in Household Income and Expenditure Surveys. (Lal & Raj, 2006). This contribution rate seems comparable to that of the OECD countries (18%) and Asia (29%) (Schneider, 2002).

During the focus group discussion with employers, many of the employers viewed the informality of employment as positive and reflecting a global trend, and that the sector was necessary as a means of drawing on informal workers to address labour shortages, and or, difficulties. It was also discussed that informality provides a platform for the creation of independent contractors and specialised services such as security and cleaning, rather than the mere casualization of labour as well encourages entrepreneurship. Furthermore, some opined that informality exist because there are workers who do not want to report their earnings, while the public sector outsourced to cut back on public sector employment and expenditure. The project survey and in depth interviews however found that the vulnerabilities created by the informal economy employment design are precarious particularly for many women.

Why do women work in the informal economy?

There is an assumption of the 'advantages' of part-time and home-based work that the informal economy labour market seems to provide (Elson, 1999). The findings from the project survey and in-depth interviews show that this is a common reason for leaving formal work. The reasons cited are looking after children and the role of husbands in making this decision. Yet, while some of those interviewed indicated an appreciation to the flexibility of time, they were still pressed to juggle their productive and reproductive work, especially when they are single mothers.

The project survey shows that 57.6% of respondents engaged in the informal economy do not have childcare arrangement for their children. As such a significant number of them are confined by care work (see table 39).

Another reason for taking on informal work was their inability to get any other kind of work. This factor is very much connected to one's educational background. Many of those found working in low-end jobs have at most, a Sijil Pendidikan Malaysia (SPM) certificate. Amongst the primary educated working respondents, 54.3% work in the informal sector compared to 27.7% of secondary educated respondents and 3.5% of tertiary educated respondents work in the informal sector. Further, the majority of working women with a basic and general program field of study are in the informal sector.

While a significant number of those with lower-level or no education make up the bulk of those performing informal work as observed in the project survey findings, there is also a growing number of women in the informal economy with higher qualifications (i.e. tertiary level). During an in-depth interview, the interviewee felt that there are those who are able to earn more when they work outside the formal economy²² and that the ability to save for the future is not an issue²³. Accordingly, there are more employment options and opportunity to earn better incomes than other working class counterparts. These include the higher end jobs such as consultants, entrepreneurs and project coordinators, right down to those in the food, music or financial advisor professions. Even though they may be paid less than a worker performing the same job in the formal sector, or receive less recognition for the work they do, some of these women feel that it is a price worth paying for the flexibility it offers.

²² In-depth interview, 20 Oct 2010

²³ Focus Group Discussion with employers, 4 October 2010

The project survey also highlights the extensive nature of vulnerability where 70% of respondents from the informal economy do not have social security benefits. This is a serious situation as the state will need to care for this group of workers and therefore increase dependency on the state.

The in-depth interviews with women working in the informal sector highlights the extensive nature of informal work, the variability in income, in particular lower income rates and the high vulnerabilities faced by women. It was observed that women in the informal economy who are employed in the lower-end occupations such as cleaners, child minders, coffee-shop attendants, hawkers, petty traders, and sub-contract or home-based workers rarely earn more than RM1,000 each month. Importantly it was found that many of these employments are irregular and often conditional on factors beyond their control. As a result of low wages, some take on a combination of different informal work to make ends meet and is rarely sufficient. The situation is worse for sole or main breadwinners of their household and female-headed households. It was found that those who had previously been employed in the formal sector had some form of savings from their contributions to EPF.

As indicated above, education has a bearing to the kind of work, income and working condition (for example, working with hazardous materials that can affect their health is not uncommon among women in the informal economy).

The issue of infrastructure

Distance and a lack of mobility were also cited as reasons why women do not take on formal employment. Amongst the currently working women (n=1375), 24.8% (341) said that they are considering dropping out of the workforce and from this amount 14.1% indicated that public transportation is a factor.

In the in depth-interviews conducted, the women indicated a fear of being harassed or assaulted if one had to travel a long distance to work, compounded by a poor public transport system. This often forced women into choosing jobs that pay poorly but give some semblance of peace of mind since this does not involve a long commute. These findings are consistent with previous findings in studies of women's informal work in Malaysia (see Franck, 2012).

Would they return to formal employment?

Among those interviewed who had contemplated returning to formal employment, not everyone rated their chances equally. Some felt they would be disadvantaged from being out of the formal labour force and without skills-upgrading, they would not be making as much as they would had they continued to stay on in their previous (formal) job.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the project findings can be taken to reflect the behaviour of the target group of women in the working age as the sample size is representative of the said target population of women. Significantly, though the project appreciates the contextual differences which affect the individual woman, the project survey did find that there are potentially a large group of women who do indeed, have the desire to work. This shows that the country has a large number of latent women workforces.

The reasons for why they are latent are multifold, but the key reason remains that women's role in providing unpaid care, whether for their children or the elderly remain the main barrier. This however is very influenced by the fact that women are still expected to fill the gendered role as many of the respondents cited that they were not working because they were married, or had been requested by their husbands to stop working. This indicates that their decision of whether or not to work is attributed to external factors.

While most of the working women cited that they had childcare arrangements, most of these were being provided for by their family or friends. While this may appear positive as this saves on the costs for paying

for childcare facilities, the responsibility for caring for a child may be a burden on family members and friends, especially if the family members are the children's grandparents, and therefore elderly. This can also indicate that the women have no other options for childcare which are affordable and trustworthy. For those women who did not have childcare arrangements, they tended to be those who had primary education and were from the lower income group of RM1,000 and below. This seems to indicate that they are unable to afford childcare, or did not have any family members whom they could rely on for childcare. Overall, this shows that professional, quality and affordable child minders and facilities are still insufficient and needed.

It is also significant to note that a large percentage of the women who are not working, are of secondary education, hence, interventions to promote the entry of women into the labour force will need to focus on this group of women. They also tend to be in their 30s, and would require interventions that acknowledge that they have been outside of the workforce for an extended period of time and would require support that addresses this issue.

The project study also supports the Ministry of Higher Education's findings that fresh graduates have issues of employability as it found single women, age 25-29 and currently unemployed faced difficulties in obtaining jobs. While some cited that they were not working because they were continuing their studies, it is perhaps plausible that they are doing so, because they are unable to find suitable jobs. This however, would require further investigation.

Different groups of women in the project survey also cited that they face challenges in balancing their work and life, and that transportation is, also an issue. For the former, it is thus noteworthy that most of these women cited that their employers did not have work designs that allow for more flexible work arrangements.

The necessary step forward is to reduce gender gaps between women and men and also amongst different categories of women by providing them an easier access to the labour market and expending their employment opportunities by reducing the various barriers that hinders and impedes women's labour participation.

CHAPTER 4: POLICY AND PROGRAMME RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAPTER 4: POLICY AND PROGRAMME RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

As indicated above, in Chapter 1, the project seeks to provide recommendations on specific policies and programmes which can be implemented to achieve the substantial increase of women in the labour force and target of 55% in 2015.

The stakeholder consultations with government agencies show that the Malaysian government is committed towards supporting women as an active and important contributor to the nation's economy. Various Ministries have already initiated interventions which promote the participation of women in the labour force through a variety of policies and programmes which have broadly focused on the following:

- Building the capacity of women in entrepreneurship skills in order to increase their livelihood options;
- Provide capital financing to support the development and expansion of women's enterprises to support the viability and sustainability of their enterprise;
- Reviewing and revising the relevant employment regulations such as the Employment Act;
- Welfare support for low income households to provide financial assistance for basic needs;
- Childcare and eldercare support services to help reduce the burdens faced by women in meeting their unpaid care work responsibilities; and
- Developing interventions which address gender gaps in the work force through the education system.

However, despite the government's commitment to support women's participation in the economy, the labour force data is not able to reflect this because, as indicated in the previous chapters, there are many complex reasons which can be attributed to the present low women labour force participation rate. This chapter will highlight some current government interventions as well as several entry points to enhance and support these policy interventions based on the findings in Chapter 3.

The identified entry points are:

1. Increasing access to work (promoting employability and income-generation).
2. Adopting family friendly employment strategies in the labour market by:
 - Reducing the burden of unpaid care (supporting child and elderly care)
 - Balancing the gender division of paid and unpaid work (promoting the father's share of parenting and parental leave)
 - Developing family friendly work designs (promoting flexible hours and patterns)
3. Mainstreaming gender into overall labour market interventions

Finally, broad recommendations will also be proposed for the informal economy as the project found that there are women engaged in this sector, whose issues and challenges require some attention.

Increasing Access to Work

The findings of the project survey showed that there was a great tendency for the clustering of women in certain fields of study, and this has resulted in occupational segregation and limited women's access to employment. The data from the project survey further demonstrates how different levels of education also limited the respondents' opportunities in the labour market. All these issue needs to be addressed to increase female labour force participation through interventions in the education and training system.

Employability, Education and Human Capital

There is a need to understand that the connection between the education and training system and the pattern of gender based occupational segregation of the labour market does not start at the point of entry to the labour market. It is predetermined through choices made in the education and training system.

Therefore, it is important to make sure that within the educational system, opportunities for diversifying educational paths and careers choices for girls/women are created. This is particularly important as many studies, including the project survey, show that female occupations tend to be less valued, offer lower pay, lower status and fewer advancement opportunities than male occupations. The project survey significantly shows a clustering of women in certain fields of study contributes to occupational segregation which limits women's access to work and their employability including confining women to lower production and lower skill enterprise development.

It is proposed that a ***strategic approach to create synergy*** where initiatives are taken bottom-up, top-down, and also via collaborative processes. This is because there is a continuum from mainstream education, technical education and vocational training to pre-employment skills training, in-service training and post-employment up skilling measures. More importantly, it is proposed that the strategy would be to connect these issues of education and capacity development in the over-arching theme of human capital. This was rightly planned in the 10th Malaysia Plan, however the implementation of which can be made with greater gender responsive approaches.

The concerns of human capital development and the need to develop local human potentials for national development warrant that the educational system needs to be adaptive and allow for permeability to allow individuals to have for greater access to the labour market.

The educational paths predominantly chosen by women should be upgraded with continuous and supplementary training and women should also be encouraged to choose non-traditional fields of study like technical skills and engineering. As proposed and discussed extensively at the stakeholder consultations, efforts to shift mind-sets and biasness within the labour market would also need to be inbuilt to ensure that it is also ready to absorb these women in the relevant fields and at the relevant level.

Coordination is paramount to ensure these education and human capital development strategies enable gender sensitive outcomes where:

- Gender stereotypes of national or local culture that influence people's attitudes (in particular those of parents, children and teachers) are addressed through education based interventions.
- Gender segregation in the labour market including biasness with regard to male and female roles, skills and competencies has to be consciously dismantled.

One key need for the nation's development is the efforts to narrow gender disparities in the employment of women in technical fields and to challenge traditional prejudices of women in this sector. This will help address the skilled labour shortage experienced by the country besides addressing gender base occupational segregation. Therefore, the government has to continue to recognise the importance of diversifying educational paths and careers choices for girls and women. The initiatives, as currently diverse for a range of target groups will create the change and increase in the women's labour force participation.

Case study: Intervention in Korea

Statistics on Korean education published by the Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI) in 2008 showed that 46.7 per cent of all middle school students (2,038,611) were girls and only 28.2 per cent of high school girls (409,990) were studying science subjects, which are required to major in science or engineering at university. This however was not reflected proportionately in the Korean labour workforce.

Based on the "Act on Fostering and Supporting Women Scientists and Technicians" that took effect in 2002, the Korean Government then established the Basic Plans for Fostering and Supporting Women in Science and Technology every five years since 2004 and has implemented policies to promote women in science and technology. The major policies were mainly commissioned by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) and the kinds of projects introduced include the following:

1) 3W Projects to encourage young girls to major in science and engineering

The 3W projects are WISE, WIE, and WATCH21. The WISE (Women into Science and Engineering) began as a pilot programme in 2001 to encourage young girls to major in science and engineering. The main strategy for the programme was providing online mentoring. Successful online as well as offline mentoring raised the number of active mentor-mentee pairs to 1,300 in 2007 with the aim of 2,000 by 2013. The mentors were primarily from the academia, and the mentees were mostly made up of college students and high school girls.

To promote women engineers and technicians, the WIE (Women in Engineering) project was launched in 2006. The Korean Government designated five universities with engineering colleges as leading centers of engineering education for women. The mission of the leading universities is to build a gender-recognized educational system, develop field adaptation programmes, and encourage employment of women graduates. As a result, 52 new courses have been developed, 53 were improved over three years, and the employment rate of women graduates increased from 66.1 per cent in 2006 to 76.8 per cent in 2008 on average.

The WATCH21 (Women's Academy for Technology Changer in the 21st Century) programme, began in 2004 and is a research and education programme providing high school girls with experience at engineering research laboratories. A team consists of four to five high school girls, two female engineering majors, and a female graduate student of engineering. The team is guided by a high school science teacher, an engineering professor, and a woman professional in a technology-related industry. Between 2004 and 2009, 315 teams with 2,238 female students participated in this programme.

The 3W projects receive a subsidy of US\$3million from the Government each year and are believed to have helped raise the ratio of women with science and engineering doctorates from 16.3 per cent in 2004 to 20.8 per cent in 2008.

2) Recruitment target system for women scientists and engineers

The Recruitment Target System (RTS) for women scientists and engineers was adopted in 2001 by the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC) under a presidential decree and applied to 25 government-funded science and technology institutes. The RTS, which is under the purview of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, aims is to increase the average rate of women recruits by the 98 institutes to 30 per cent by 2013. The 98 institutes must report their hiring data to the NSTC every year. The rate of women recruits increased from 18.2 per cent in 2003 to 26.6 per cent in 2009.

The RTS was also applied to 23 national and public universities. Between 2003 and 2005, the former Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development allocated 200 new faculty positions for women only in all fields. This policy resulted in a significant increase in the female faculty rate in 2005. Since 2005, the rate of female recruits to new faculty has gradually increased.

3) Promotion Target System for women scientists and engineers

Since 2007, the Promotion Target System (PTS) was also recommended to 25 government-funded science and technology institutes with the goal of having women comprise 30 per cent of those promoted.

²⁴ National Action Plan: Gender Equality in the Labour Market (2010), Austrian Ministry of Women and Civil Service

²⁵ Effective Policies for Supporting Education and Employment of Women in Science and Technology, (2010) Kong-Ju-Bock Lee, National Institute for Supporting Women in Science and Technology / Department of Physics, EwhaWomans University, Seoul, Republic of Korea

4) Designation of officer in charge of women scientists and engineers

To improve the working conditions and environment for women scientists and engineers, governmental organizations with 30 or more women scientists and engineers are required to designate a senior officer in charge of women employees. The target organizations are government-funded or invested national/public institutes and universities. The officer monitors, consults, diagnoses, and reports everything on promoting women employees. He or she is also educated and trained twice a year to maximize the effectiveness of the mission.

5) Exclusive research funds for women scientists or engineers

To encourage women scientists and engineers to stay on as researchers and to foster outstanding female talents in science and technology, a research and development budget has been exclusively allocated for women scientists since 2000. The ratio of women project managers more than doubled from 6 per cent in 2003 to 14 per cent in 2009. A Point Award System, which gives extra points to women researchers or those returning from maternity leave, and a quota system in which 14 per cent of project managers must be women were adopted for use in general research funds.

6) Childcare center at Daedeok Research Complex

The childcare center (nursery school) at Daedeok Research Complex in Daejeon was built for women scientists and engineers not by the Ministry of Gender Equality but by the former Ministry of Science and Technology. The complex has 20 per cent of the country's women scientists and engineers. The nursery school gets subsidies from institutes having employees using the nursery school.

7) Institute for Supporting Women in Science and Technology

Article 14 of the Act on Fostering and Supporting Women Scientists and Technicians defines the foundation, duty, and management of a working center, namely the Institute for Supporting Women in Science and Technology (ISWIST). The center is tasked with carrying out research in policy development; educating, training, and consulting with women in science and technology; providing information on employment; and supporting organizations of women scientists and engineers. ISWIST's mission is to foster women professionals in science and technology from the start of their employment to their becoming leaders in the science and technology workplace. ISWIST also offers various training and supporting programmes to individuals. These include job training as a professional science communicator and lab manager, communication skills, science and technology management, leadership training, and development of research ability.

Initiatives to increase women's economic participation

The stakeholder meetings with the various implementing agencies under the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development such as the Department of Welfare, the Department of Women's Development and the National Population and Family Development Board, and the Ministry of International Trade and Industry informs that there are many interventions in place for different target groups to increase income generating activities for women and families. Other ministries who attended the two roundtable discussions was also seen to appreciate the complexities faced by women and are committed to supporting women's labour force participation. The consultations however highlighted that although there are many programmes undertaken to increase women's economic participation and develop their human capital, in particular through income generating options, the outcomes are rather inconsistent and varied.

Among these programmes, for example, is the '1-KIT (Program Inkubator Kemahiran Ibu Tunggal)' where 30 single mothers in each state were provided skills training coupled with close supervision in tailoring, beauty, crafts, childcare, tourism and food processing. Similarly, similar initiatives can also be seen in various other ministries' programmes for different target groups. For example, some other initiatives from different ministries or even different departments of a particular ministry operate with different target group and different outcomes:

1. In the Ministry of Rural and Regional Development, under FAMA a programme for agro-based processing and marketing entrepreneur (Usahawan Pemprosesan dan Pemasaran Produk Asas Tani) which benefitted 455 women and claimed to generate sale of RM 6 million per month.

2. Jejari Bestari Program under the Department of Women's Development which another similar outreach program where trainers conduct nationwide skills training in sewing and embroidery.
3. The Purple DNA project of the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development focuses on single mothers, the disabled, the Orang Asli and residents of rehabilitation institutions through a new approach based on the concept of social enterprise. They are given skills and viable income generating businesses for example making handicrafts and organic soaps which are marketed as corporate gifts.
4. 1AZAM: entails programmes conducted by the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development to increase the income of those in lower income households through job placements, small enterprises, services and agriculture through four different programmes namely 'Azam Kerja', 'Azam Niaga', 'Azam Tani' and 'Azam Perkhidmatan'.
5. TEKUN: A scheme where microcredit loans are provided to women entrepreneurs.
6. AMANAH IKHTIAR MALAYSIA: a microfinance institution, which has been providing microcredit, particularly to women since 1987.

The government is also cognizant of the needs of lower income households, and thus provides the necessary welfare assistance to address their basic needs. It is, however unclear if there are any exit strategies being put in place for the household such as providing skills or upgrading skills of working aged household members, including the women to draw them into the labour market, so that there is less long term dependency on welfare.

The project had very limited opportunity to examine in detail the effectiveness and sustainability of these interventions. Nevertheless, the initial feedbacks obtained from the project consultations allowed for a rapid assessment where it seems to suggest gender gaps both in terms of planning, programme implementation and target recipients including exit strategies to reduce dependency on aid. It was clear that:

1. There is limited gender analysis undertaken in programme design resulting in an unclear outcome which seeks to address gender gaps.
2. There is a lack of systematic monitoring of whether those who have been trained are indeed utilising their skills to earn any income or to seek employment, and more importantly whether the employment is in the formal or informal economy.
3. Even where the women are utilising their skills, it appears unclear, whether they are generating enough income to address their basic needs or improve their socio-economic status.
4. While there are possibilities, that their training could give them opportunities for employment, it is also unclear whether this is in fact the case.
5. The number of women trained is still low as the outreach is limited and does not have a strategic outcome of whether the aim is for women to earn an income, or for them to enter the labour market.
6. The skills the women are trained in do not appear to match labour market or human capital needs in Malaysia. Moreover, the entrepreneurial skills training provided also tend to support the capacity development of subsistence entrepreneurs who only earn subsistence income, rather than transformative entrepreneurs, who are able to go beyond earning subsistence income and provide jobs and income for others.
7. There does not appear to be exit strategies for welfare recipients by providing them with the necessary skills to enter the labour market as a means of earning sufficient income independently.

This explains why some of these interventions have limited outcomes. Additionally, these programmes seem to be promoting low-skill and enterprises that have relatively low growth potential, and which further create segregation in the labour market confining women to lower production and lower skills, particularly in traditional or women-centric skills such as tailoring, beauty, crafts, childcare and food processing.

The findings of the project survey further illustrate disparities based on location (urban or rural) and regional disparities, where the lack of transport infrastructure is particularly a concern in rural areas

and in peri-urban areas. This location based disadvantages can be mitigated through the setting up of 'Working Women Centres' in all the development corridors to enable women to access information on labour and employment, with agencies such as the respective Labour State Departments taking a proactive and continuous role in promoting employment for women, but also developing strategies with employers to encourage them to employ women. The modality of these centres can be varied. A physical site as per the Australian example provided at the International Seminar, or an upgrading of the e-portal option as seen set up by Talentcorp and Jabatan Tenaga Rakyat is viable. It is proposed that a labour needs assessment at State level is carried out and also that a variety of avenues be set up including improving present interventions to support different target groups to ensure a wide outreach and multiplier effect.

Recommendations

Focus on the national human capital development plans in order to equip women with the skills, knowledge and aptitudes required in the labour market; either for paid employment or self-employment.

Short term interventions	Long term interventions	Further studies
<p>1. Employment roadshows for women Conduct nationwide employment roadshows or outreach programmes targeting women, particularly fresh graduates and those who are secondary educated, on jobs available to them at the State level.</p>	<p>1. Implement all human capital strategies through a gender lens Align and implement the national human capital development strategies under the 10th Malaysia Plan utilising gender sensitive approaches and analysis in order to equip women with the skills, knowledge and aptitudes required in the labour market; either for paid employment or self-employment.</p>	<p>1. Review current school curriculum and subjects Conduct reviews to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Remove any gender stereotypes in school curriculum and subject to promote the equal role of women and men in the labour force ▪ Include entrepreneurship skills in curriculum and subjects as a life-long ability to generate income.
<p>2. National social care and care work certification Develop a national social work or care work training and certification, and reskill excess nurses, teachers and social sciences graduates to provide care work and social work services or become social care work entrepreneurs.</p>	<p>2. Multi-sectoral National Action Plan Develop a multi-sectoral national plan of action to strengthen the coordination of these strategies and interventions with the Economic Planning Unit leading as the central agency which oversees the implementation of the 10th Malaysia Plan. The division on human capital is a good contender for this coordination with the various Ministries to ensure that the diverse approaches achieve the national outcome (see proposed structure by EPU in Annex 3).</p>	<p>2. Conduct in-depth studies on State labour market Conduct periodical studies to identify job opportunities available to women at the State level, as part of road show strategies.</p>
<p>3. Ensure entrepreneur skills graduate are earning income or are employed Ensure that women who have graduated from entrepreneurship skills training are running businesses or are employed by providing a follow-up programme (such as ensuring that they get access to seed funds/microcredit financing, or job placements).</p>	<p>3. Identify different entry points utilising a gender lens to address labour market biasness experienced by different target groups</p> <p>a) Enable and encourage girls and women access to training in technical areas. This can be done by exposing girls to technical areas early and create an enabling learning environment for girls in this area.</p> <p>b) Strengthen and enhance women's participation in vocational education</p>	<p>3. Develop tracer studies and exit strategies</p> <p>a) Develop a monitoring process for identifying the outcomes of women trained in entrepreneurship skills by conducting periodical tracer studies.</p> <p>b) Conduct a feasibility study on developing welfare exit strategies for low income households.</p>

Short term interventions	Long term interventions	Further studies
	<p>and government community colleges, especially in technical fields and through collaboration with employers and a substantial work-experience component, organised jointly with employers in all States.</p> <p>c) Promote entrepreneurial behaviours throughout the educational system and other adult education programmes to cultivate entrepreneurial capabilities as part and parcel of developing income generation skills from a younger age.</p> <p>d) Develop entrepreneurial skills which focus on market needs rather than from a narrow gendered perspective, and one which is able to cultivate transformative entrepreneurs rather than subsistence entrepreneurs.</p> <p>e) Provide relevant re-skilling programmes for women to return to work or enter the job market which matches both their base education/field of education and the needs of the labour market and in accordance to the national human capital development strategies.</p> <p>f) Set up Working Women Centres in all the development corridors to address issues of labour shortage and draw women into employment in the development corridors.</p>	

Adopting Family Friendly Employment Strategies in the Labour Market

Reducing the burden of unpaid care

The well-being of individuals and families depends on care, irrespective of whether it is being paid for or not. The project survey showed that the burden of care work rest on the majority of the respondents and that the care work undertaken within households is also unpaid. Such situations limit the time and energy available for meaningful and productive income generating activities including paid employment.

The government is clearly committed to supporting families and children. This is demonstrated by the various initiatives undertaken to address the inadequate supply and shortages of child care centres and support to reduce the burdens of care work on families, amongst others:

1. Government will provide a launching grant (geran pelancaran) amounting to RM200,000 to ministries to establish TASKA (day care) at the public sector work place.
2. The government will provide a 10% tax exemption per year for private sector employers on the cost of building or buying a building for a TASKA for 10 years.
3. RM180 childcare subsidy for each child sent to the workplace childcare for civil servants with a household income below RM3000.
4. TASKA 1Malaysia with an establishment grant amounting to RM119,000 which includes building cost (of one time grant to a maximum of RM55,000) and subsidised cost amounting to RM64,000 each year for 30 children who qualify to receive subsidy from low income household (RM2000 in urban areas and RM1,200 in rural areas).
5. In the 2013 budget, the Prime Minister further announced additional incentives for the care of children. They are:
 - Launching grant RM10,000 for the setting of private early childcare education centres (ECCE)
 - Double tax incentives for allowances and subsidies given to workers and for the maintenance expenses of childcare centre
 - Income tax exemption for 5 years and industrial building allowance at the rate of 10% a year given to a childcare entrepreneur.
 - Government is committed to embark on a pilot project for special needs children in 6 categories: a. down syndrome, b. autism, c. blind, d. deaf, e. mute, f. physically challenged and children with learning difficulties.

Although the government has put into place initiatives to increase childcare centres but the availability is still very limited and the quality can be improved to ensure that parents feel confident to utilise these centres. Acknowledging that there is indeed limited information on the effectiveness of these interventions, the government is working towards three key interrelated issues:

1. The projected demand for child care facilities.
2. The projected supply of child care facilities.
3. The need for skilled child minders.

Similarly, the government has also initiated a number of elderly care programmes including:

1. Elderly homes under the Social Welfare Department throughout Malaysia, which meets the needs of the elderly from low income households
2. Homes for the chronically ill to provide care, treatment and shelter for those who are not self-sufficient and with chronic illness
3. Activity centers for older person, which run activities for the elderly in the community
4. Home Help Services throughout the country through smart partnership with NGOs to provide care for older persons and persons with disabilities living alone
5. We Care Services, which provides transportation for older persons who need to visit hospitals/clinics for health treatment or for other purposes.
6. To encourage greater employment opportunities, a 100 % tax rebate is also provided on the cost of retraining older persons.

While indeed childcare and elderly needs are a national concern, the approach to such care work is currently seen from a narrow gendered perspective where the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development bears much of the responsibility for its implementation when care strategies needs to be approached from a multi-sectorial perspective. Moreover, a broad assessment of the current availability of care, appears to show that the outreach of and information on these services are still limited.

It is recommended that a comprehensive approach is undertaken by developing a national care strategy which comprehensively addresses the needs in one’s life-cycle from infant to adult to old age, including for those with special needs, in order to reduce the burden of unpaid work, on families, especially women.

The potential of job creation for women

Although care workers are typically women and this would perpetuate the traditional gender division of labour and reinforce occupational segregation (Chang, 2000; Mandel and Shalev, 2006), the potential for job creation for women is high in this sector. In fact, studies have suggested that publicly provided childcare may create better paid and more secure jobs for women (Razavi and Staab, 2010).

The investments in childcare as witnessed in developed countries, where affordable, accessible, high-quality childcare is provided, has been shown to improve work-family balance, increase parents’ labour force participation, increase labour force continuity, increase productivity and reduce absenteeism (Stier et al., 2001; Polachek, 2006; Gash, 2008; Letablier et al., 2009; Budig et al., 2010; Hein and Cassirer, 2010).

Additionally, with the ageing population growing in many countries including Malaysia, elderly care has become an increasing concern as well as a need. In examining elderly care in developed countries, individuals with medium intensity care responsibilities (10-20 hours a week) are likely to reduce their working hours, while those with high intensity care responsibilities (over 20 hours) are likely to either reduce their work hours or drop out of the labour force entirely (Lilly et al., 2007; Colombo et al., 2011). Therefore providing accessible, appropriate and quality elder care can reduce the burden of caring and promote the participation of women in the labour market.

Recommendations

Develop a comprehensive care sector strategy which addresses the demand and supply of care work.

Short term interventions	Long term interventions	Further studies
<p>Develop a one-stop e-portal for all relevant information on setting up care centres, and availability of current care centres</p> <p>a) In order to expedite the setting up of different types of care centers, there is a need for greater coordination amongst the different authorities on setting up child and elderly-care, regulations and licensing, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. This will aid in providing a well-defined and clear process to ensure the quality, accessibility and effectiveness of the initiatives undertaken. This can be done through a one-stop e-portal which creates a uniform procedure, and provides all the relevant information for potential providers, current providers and end-users. Further supporting officers at various related departments can also use</p>	<p>Develop a National Care Strategy</p> <p>A National Care Strategy needs to be developed comprehensively, paying particular attention on how the care sector can increase and retain women in the labour workforce. The potential for employment creation particularly for women is high and can effectively contribute to the increase in women’s share in the labour market. The strategy will have to include meeting the different categories and modalities of care needed for different target groups (including the need of different income groups), while developing a comprehensive multiple skills training strategy that will professionalize different kinds of care work and meet care work needs. The National Care Strategy should also take into consideration the financial support</p>	<p>Financing National Care</p> <p>A study will need to be conducted on that various options of how national care is financed between the State, employers and employees.</p>

Short term interventions	Long term interventions	Further studies
<p>this portal to be informed of the status of processes and advise their stakeholders systematically</p> <p>b) The current JKM website does not provide a comprehensive list of all the government provided care services, eligibility requirements, addresses and contact numbers and hence, this information should be updated for ease of reference to those seeking care facilities.</p>	<p>needed for this sector, which would likely be a combination of public and private financing (see Annex 4).</p>	

Balancing the gender division of paid and unpaid work

Despite increasing changes in family dynamic and growing participation of women in the labour market, men’s participation in domestic and care tasks remain minimal. Women, meanwhile, tend to be overburdened with work and demands as they continue to perform their traditional role as caregivers – a role regarded as natural – while simultaneously taking on new responsibilities in public life and in the labour market. This calls for a transformation of labour market practises and cultural norms that sanction an unequal distribution of paid and unpaid work between men and women.

It is essential to recognise the unbalanced division of paid and unpaid work between spouses in order to place women within paid work as this has several implications such as the returns which women receive for their education, for women’s employment status during their active age, and for women’s horizontal and vertical labour segregation.

Similarly, awareness on the importance of men balancing their career development and care responsibilities is crucial in changing the attitudes towards men having the opportunity to play a greater role in the household. This approach will help to balance the gender division of unpaid care work. Programs and policies should promote shared parenting through helping both parents or extending incentives to men to accept more responsibility in parenting through parental leave, which in turn would support the mother’s opportunities for employment. Educational programmes in the public education system to provide boys and men the life-skills and knowledge needed to take on new roles in households is useful in speeding up necessary modifications in social norms regarding men’s role (United Nations, 2011).

It is recommended that National Population and Family Development Board (LPPKN) continue to champion the formulation of a work-life balance policy and family reconciliation programme for the public sector and to extend it to the private sector. LPPKN has already conducted a time-use study which can be utilised as a tool towards this action.

To facilitate these transformations, a Family and Work Reconciliation Policy is needed to address gender stereotyping that perpetuate the traditional gendered family roles as it is detrimental to women’s employment and family well-being. It is also important towards removing socially constructed inequalities at work and in the home²⁶.

‘Family reconciliation’ policies in OECD countries has been successful in striking a balance that is favorable to both women’s employment and fertility (Ahn and Mira 2002; D’addio and Mira d’Ercole 2005). For this reason especially, work and family reconciliation policies are on the political agenda of a growing number of western countries. Similarly, countries in Asia, such as Singapore, and Korea have also been looking at such policies (Irene Hau-siu Chow & Irene Chew Keng-Howe, 2006; Tae-Hong Kim & Hye-Kyung Kim, 2004). More recently Taiwan has also introduced parental leave and the programme

²⁶ Hantrais, 2000:2

is becoming increasingly popular with fathers (8 May, 2010, Taipei Times). 'It would appear that work-life conflict is not only a moral issue – it is a productivity and economic issue, a workplace issue and a social issue, and needs to be dressed as such' (Duxbury and Higgins, 2003, xviii).

At the International Seminar and the High-Level Roundtable, the Norwegian experience provides input which can support this way forward. The participants were introduced to initiatives such as the introduction of a quota for fathers in paid parental leave in Norway which has diminished the notion that child-raising is a task that can and should be performed exclusively by women. Paid parental leave should also be written into law. It was shared that this can either take in the form of gender-neutral paid parental leave, or earmarked durations for fathers to take paid parental leave. The current structure of the law on paid maternal leave effectively perpetuates the notion that it is the woman who is the primary caregiver, and the man who is the primary caretaker. Allowing fathers to take paid parental leave would go a long way in changing gender stereotyped roles. Additionally, this paid parental leave should also be flexible, in terms of allowing part-time work to be carried out, or allowing for additional time off each year until the child is three years of age. In this way, parents will be able to maintain their contact with working life.

France

Parental Leave

France offers all women workers a paid, job-protected maternity leave six weeks before and 10 weeks after the births of the first two children, eight weeks before and 18 weeks after the birth of the third child, 34 weeks (12 prenatally) for twins and 42 weeks (24 prenatally) for multiple births. Maternity leave, pre- and postnatally, is mandatory. The benefit paid over maternity leave is equal to the woman's net salary, within certain limits. For insured mothers, benefits equal 80 percent of earnings for up to 16 weeks for the first and second child, 26 weeks for subsequent children and 46 weeks for multiple births.

At the end of the maternity leave, paid parental leave is available to either parent until the child turns three or if at least two children at home need care. The parent is then re-integrated into the previous or a similar job.

Child Benefits/Family Allowances

All families with at least two children under 18 are granted family allowances. France also offers several means-tested benefits for income supplementation, single parents, adoption, parents who reduce their professional activity to stay home with children, special education, schooling of children, and housing.

Child Care

Younger children are entitled to places in full-day child care centers (creches) and sometimes family day care. Beginning at age two and a half or three, children are served in all-day preschool programs, the creches, for which families pay on a sliding scale.

Lower-income families usually pay nothing and better-off families pay no more than 10 to 15 percent of their income for this service. Nearly all children enroll in the creches, even if they have an at-home parent, because these nursery schools have become such an effective mode of socialization, education and cultural reproduction.

France also offers allowances to defray the costs of hiring child care, at home or in registered facilities, for children under three.

Germany

Parental Leave

German women are entitled to a 14-week job-protected, paid maternity leave, eight weeks of which are taken postnatally (14 weeks in the case of premature or multiple births). The benefit paid to mothers on leave by the statutory health insurance is 100 percent of the woman worker's net earnings.

Paid parental leave, which can be alternated between the mother and father up to three times, is available at the end of the maternity leave until the child's third birthday. While on leave, parents can work up to 19 hours per week with their employer or, given the consent of the existing employer, with another employer.

For each child under 12, a working parent has ten days of paid leave to look after a sick child, up to a maximum of 25 days per year for each child.

Child Benefits/Family Allowances

Regardless of parents' income, child benefits can be claimed for children under 18, and they can be extended to dependents up to age 21 (if dependent is unemployed) or up to age 27 if dependents are in school or training. Benefits can be claimed without any age limit if the child is disabled. Payments can be smaller in states where the cost of living is lower, and some states keep paying a child care benefit after the entitlement to the federal allowance expires.

Tax exemptions are available for each child in a family, and workers whose income is too low to benefit from this exemption receive a minor monthly supplement to their child allowances.

Child Care

Current legislation entitles every child aged three through six to a place in kindergarten, but what's actually available is a place in a relatively expensive part-time center offering just five hours per day without a lunch.

²⁷ Family Policies in the US, Japan, Germany, Italy and France: Parental Leave, Child Benefits/Family Allowances, Child Care, Marriage/Cohabitation, and Divorce, (2003) <http://www.contemporaryfamilies.org/work-family/fampolicy.html>

Developing family friendly work designs

The findings of the study showed that majority of the women interviewed said that flexible work arrangements like job sharing, telecommuting, and cap on overtime, opportunity to negotiate part-timework for fulltime employees, time off in lieu of rostered days off, self-rostering and/or staggered start and finish times and gradual retirement were all important to them. The project survey further showed that majority of the respondents faced some difficulty in balancing work and life. Work-life balance policy is about creating and maintaining supportive and healthy work environments, which will enable employees to have balance between work and personal responsibilities.

Government as the role model should lead and encourage firms and social partners to allow for more flexible work design including gradual retirement scheme. A longer active working life facilitates greater flexibility in employment patterns over the life course by loosening the link between age and career progression. Malaysia can also benefit from the active participation of the older age group and maximize their human capital. Retirement schemes should be actuarially fair where those retiring later should be rewarded in terms of additional pension benefits and eligibility for early retirement should be tightened.

The Work Regulations for Part-Time Workers which came into effect on 1 October 2010 is a positive move towards increasing the participation of the latent workforce comprising housewives, single mothers, university students and retirees. The Ministry of Human Resources included the Part Time Regulations 2010 in the Employment Act where part-time employees under the amendment are defined as employees who work 30% to 70% of the normal working hours of a full-time employee in the same company carrying out the same work. This regulation supports work flexibility; however there is limited information on its practice.

Recommendations

Balance the gender division of paid and unpaid work to lessen the burden of care work for women and develop family friendly work designs.

Short term interventions	Long term interventions
<p>Education campaigns to promote shared unpaid work</p> <p>Education campaigns will need to be developed using various types of mass media to educate the public on family reconciliation and improving access for men to be active in care work is important to help promote a family-friendly environment in the labour force. This approach can be introduced through gender sensitive educational materials as well as through the media.</p>	<p>A National Work and Family Reconciliation Policy</p> <p>A National Work and Family Reconciliation Policy will need to be drafted to support and align efforts towards breaking barriers that restrict women's labour force participation including provisions of parental leave for men to play a role in care work.</p>

Mainstreaming Gender into Overall Labour Market Interventions

In all the project consultations, there is clear enthusiasm to promote women's labour force participation. These commitments can be seen tied closely to the core objectives of the respective ministries through their activities and development plans. However, there is still limitation with respect to its sustainability and likelihood of real impact and social change. In order to address these limitations, the recommendations as proposed earlier would require inter-agency cooperation. Therefore a modality for inter-agency cooperation that recognises the importance of synergy in management needs to be established. This should not be seen as a hindrance to pursue the respective agencies commitment and mandates. Instead, this process should rather enhance the complementarity of programmes, facilitate integrated planning within the national development and foster cohesion among the agencies.

In the consultations particularly with experiences from Norway and Australia where it was noted that financing is vital to ensure that budgetary allocations are made during the planning of policy. This should be conducted in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance and the Economic Planning Unit in a coordinating capacity. This entails seeing the areas in which women's economic potential can be utilised to a greater extent—for instance, health/social issues, education, labour/work, communications, agriculture, trade and industry—and working with relevant ministries to produce budget for programmes that will attract women back to work.

In order to embark on this, the use of gender approaches like continuous gender analysis in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation is an advantage to ensure an outcome based approach is maintained.

The government's present initiative to strengthen gender responsive budgeting offers a platform for action and entry point to allow gender approaches to be applied in the process of decision making and implementation. Currently, the gender responsive budgeting is piloted with five pilot ministries, namely Ministry of Rural and Regional Development, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Higher Education and Ministry of Human Resources. This intervention is spearheaded by Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development. With the change of budget structure to an 'Outcome based budgeting' system, there is greater opportunity to apply gender into the planning and budget processes. It is strongly recommended that the gender budgeting approach be implemented in all government offices, federal, state and local levels.

This reflects the consensus at the Beijing Platform for Action where the 'integration of a gender perspective in budgetary decisions on policies and programmes, as well as the adequate financing of specific programmes for securing equality between women and men'. The Beijing Plus 5 document, continues to promote this by iterating that 'Limited resources at the state level makes it imperative that innovative approaches to the allocation of existing resources be employed, not only by governments but also by non-governmental organizations and the private sector. One such innovation is the gender analysis of public budgets, which is emerging as an important tool for determining the different impact of expenditures on women and men to help ensure the equitable use of existing resources. This analysis is crucial to promote gender equality'.

As such the gender responsive budgeting is a strategic move towards ensuring that policy and programmes can be achieves the outcome that advances national development. These national economic policies and developmental plans can through its design and implementation contribute to the narrowing or widening of gender gaps that impacts women and men in employment access, education, health and nutrition and standards of living. Although in most of the consultations, it would appear that policies and budget appears to be gender neutral, these policies do affect men and women differently because their roles, responsibilities, access and opportunities differs. In fact, there is also danger to assume homogeneity which is seen in governmental implementation experiences.

²⁸ Resolution adopted by the General Assembly: Further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, S 23/3, 16 November 2000, paragraph 36.

In order for the Federal government to effectively act as the driver of transformation in a gender responsive manner, all ministries and local governmental bodies should also be compelled to produce gender disaggregated data related to their policies and activities throughout the year for monitoring and evaluation, aside from informing future programme design.

It was shared that in Norway, analyses on how activities throughout the year have affected gender equality, specifically in terms of workforce composition, work/family balance, unemployment, youth programmes, early childcare, taxation, education programmes, entrepreneurship programmes and parental leave is required by law from both the public and private sectors. Therefore at all times, there are adequate tools required to complete analysis and proper planning to ensure better outcomes.

Recommendations

Mainstream gender in all human capital related development policies and programmes, including those related to education.

Long term interventions

1. Strengthen gender based approaches in project planning, design, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. This can be achieved through continuous on-the job gender mentoring.
2. Expand gender-responsive budgeting to all ministries and where possible, state and local levels.
3. Show case success models to promote the continuity of gender based approaches.

The Informal Economy

The project, from its survey and importantly the in-depth interviews, finds that most women in the informal sector want welfare benefits that are made available to the poor as well as minimum wage regulations to be extended to them. Most women from the informal sector were also not aware of their rights and hence were not empowered to negotiate their wages/rates.

From the in-depth interviews, it was found that women who are from lower education backgrounds generally are not able to take advantage of economic opportunities including government initiatives because they lack access to such information, credit, skills and even technologies. In fact, some interviewees have accepted these limitations of time, space and lack of infrastructure including childcare despite this reducing their levels of productivity and lowering their income opportunities. These women tend to be engaged in menial work and often remain at subsistence levels and are poor. On the other hand, those who have greater access to resources do well and are reported to be in very profitable ventures.

With respect to these differences and gendered outcomes, the approaches cannot be a 'one size fits all' strategy. The project identifies three priority areas:

- Mapping of the informal economy
- Enhancing the capacity for employment and income generation
- Enhancing workers' social protection (including living condition and legal frameworks)

Mapping of the informal economy

The project showed that there are limited studies and information on the informal economy. This project sought to understand the gendered dimensions of women working in the informal sector in terms of their under-representation, agency, decision making and social protection. The in-depth interviews, gave, to some extent 'voice' and a face to the face-less. While this is helpful, there is a need to map the informal economy vis-à-vis its linkages between gender, paid work and unpaid work in a more comprehensive manner and from a more macroeconomic perspective.

The project showed that gendered inequalities exist particularly in the under-representation in existing data. Therefore mapping of where these vulnerable groups of women workers are is crucial to ensure that interventions and social innovations towards address their vulnerabilities can be made more effective. Further by collecting these data and obtaining an appreciation of their locations, the contributions of these women can be made visible to the national economy.

Enhancing the capacity for employment and income generation

In the focus group discussion with the employers and at the roundtable discussion, the issue of women and entrepreneurship were raised. Some believed that self-employed women in the formal and informal sector can be nurtured to become successful entrepreneurs. While in the in-depth interviews, the issue of skills attainment, availability of re-skilling is a concern. These are core issue as income is based on a productivity informal sector and expanding the capacity of women engaged in the informal sector needs greater policy intervention particularly to reduce poverty by increasing the earnings of these low income households.

Although there are many interventions available, those interviewed and survey respondents did indicate a difficulty to access to these interventions due to a variety of reasons from cost, transportation and minding children when they go to access these interventions.

A matter of infrastructure

When asked, the respondents and interviewees responded that they had limited choice but to work in the informal sector. This is because of the care work, low education and distance to work. These all points to the lack of proper infrastructure development from public transportation to availability of childcare centres catering for the low income.

The challenge here is greater where the issues seem to stem from early ages from access to education and education attainments up to the present situation of spatial developments. The issues of education and skills are also discussed earlier in the chapter. The challenge for policy here is to ensure access for women in this informal sector and an outreach specific to them, to allow them to improve their income capacity and household financial security.

Further in analysing the in-depth interviews; there is indication on how urban sprawl also affects peri-urban and rural communities. This development allows the informal economy to exploit women in these areas who are confined in those locations due to a lack of onsite infrastructure like good and reliable public transport and child-care facilities and because they have lower education attainments. These limitations create greater vulnerabilities as these women who are confined by time, burdens of care work and lack of mobility which reduces their productivity.

The challenge for policy outreach is to how to meaningful impact the lives of these women who are living in such vulnerabilities and to up-lift their levels of skills for greater productivity.

Rights of informal sector workers

The issue of rights firstly results from looking at work within the national economy as a whole and the understanding of 'informal-formal' as a continuum. To achieve the visibility more accurately 'count' women in the labour force, shifting more numbers of workers to the formal sector should be explored. Along with this shift, greater access to rights and social protection can be accorded.

The Employment Act has been enacted to protect employees. Due to the expansion of the informal economy, a large number of workers who are not considered employees and therefore are not protected under the Act.

Therefore existing labour legislation should extend to cover different groups of informal workers including extending minimum wage regulations and other protections accorded to employees to informal sector workers. It is recommended that appropriate strategies for improving the enforcement of gender-relevant legislation and directives with respect to the informal economy (including the development of appropriate indicators and monitoring processes) are undertaken to ensure that this sector is not left with deep vulnerabilities.

Recommendations

Further studies

- 1. There is a need to map the informal economy to understand the spread of this sector and the vulnerabilities women working in this sector face.*
- 2. It is also necessary understand the social protection needs of women in the informal economy.*

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

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The project from its survey and consultations revealed that, women's work pattern behaviour is significantly associated with various socio-economic factors that include: location (urban/rural), age group, and educational level. Education is seen as a central factor influencing women's labour force participation pattern and social security benefits. It also impacts on the behaviour of women's fertility (number of children) and the issues that surrounds it, i.e. childcare. This project survey has provided empirical evidence on the importance of childcare issue, especially, among working mothers which requires immediate response.

The project from its discussions and consultations with implementing agencies finds that the fragmented policies, structure of the labour market and interventions seem to maintain women labour force participation at low levels. Therefore, as recommended, careful design of policy is needed to promote increase participation of women in the labour force and reduce the negative factors that hinder women's labour force participation. The application of gender responsive approaches in policy/project/programme planning, design, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation can aid in ensuring that the overall development outcome is achieved.

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ANNEX 1

LIST OF ORGANISATION CONSULTED IN THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

A/ Focus Group Discussion with NGOs and Civil Society

1. CUEPACS
2. Persatuan Sahabat Wanita Selangor
3. National Union Of Bank Employees (NUBE)
4. National Union of Teaching Profession (NUTP)
5. Majlis Persatuan Ibu Tunggal Malaysia
6. National Council Of Women's Organisations (NCWO)

B/ Focus Group Discussion with Employer (Public and Private)

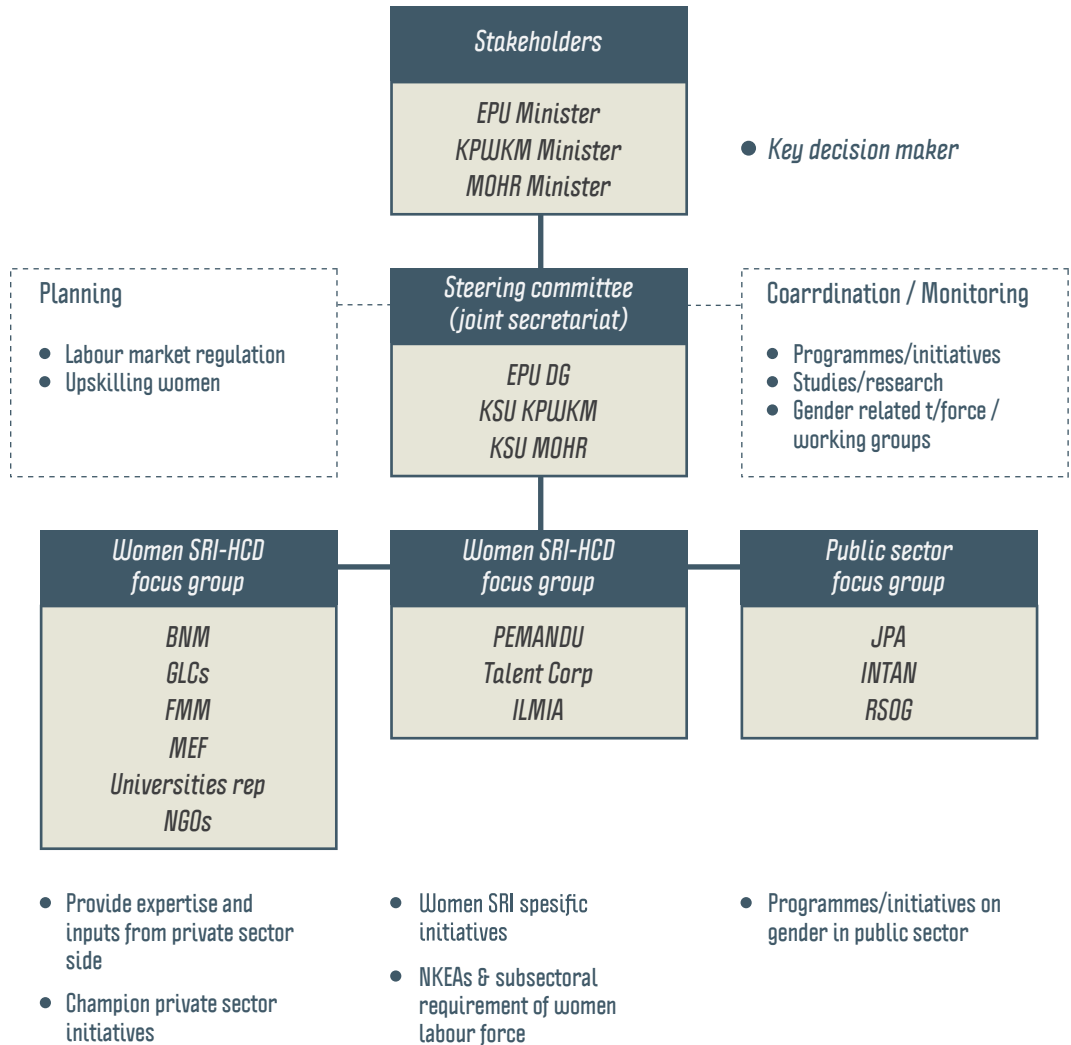
1. Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam
2. Kementerian Pendidikan Tinggi
3. Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia
4. Kementerian Kesihatan
5. Royal Malaysian Police (Polis DiRaja Malaysia)
6. Royal Malaysian Customs Department (Jabatan Kastam DiRaja Malaysia)
7. Maybank Berhad
8. CIMB Bank Berhad
9. Malaysia Association Of Hotels
10. JobStreet.com Sdn Bhd
11. MEASAT Broadcast Network Systems SdnBhd
12. Celcom Axiata Berhad
13. KPJ Healthcare Berhad
14. Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers
15. SMI Association of Malaysia

ANNEX 2 PROFILE OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Background	No of resp.	Total %	W %	NW %
Working status				
Currently working	1,375	52.1		
Currently not working	1,265	47.9		
Sector				
Public	691	26.2		
Private	492	18.6		
Informal	191	7.2		
Not Working	1,266	48.0		
Location				
Urban	1,814	68.7	54.9	45.1
Rural	826	31.3	46.1	53.9
Age group (years)				
20-24	92	3.5	66.3	33.7
25-29	775	29.4	65.0	35.0
30-34	630	23.9	57.0	43.0
35-39	432	16.4	38.2	61.8
40-44	256	9.7	46.1	53.9
45-49	211	8.0	36.5	63.5
50-54	211	8.0	38.9	61.1
≥ 55	33	1.3	27.3	72.7
Marital status				
Single	683	25.9	70.0	30.0
Married	1,768	67.0	45.2	54.8
Separated	19	0.7	42.1	57.9
Divorced	87	3.3	63.2	36.8
Widowed	80	3.0	42.5	57.5
Others	2	0.1	50.0	50.0
Ethnic group				
Malay	1,418	53.8	54.2	45.8
Chinese	467	17.7	50.5	49.5
Indian	277	10.5	49.1	50.9
O. B (Sabah & Sarawak)	430	16.3	48.6	51.4
Others	46	1.7	52.2	47.8
Religion				
Islam	1,530	58.0	54.5	45.5
Christian	507	19.2	49.3	50.7
Buddhism	359	13.6	47.4	52.6
Hinduism	228	8.6	48.7	51.3
Others	14	0.5	64.3	35.7

Background	No of resp.	Total %	W %	NW %
Highest education				
Pre-school	3	0.1	0	100
Primary	147	5.6	21.8	78.2
Lower secondary	199	7.5	25.1	74.97
Upper secondary	923	35.0	39.3	60.7
Basic skills program	13	0.5	23.1	76.9
Form 6	201	7.6	50.2	49.8
Matriculation	9	0.3	33.3	66.7
Cert.-specific & tech. skills	37	1.4	35.1	64.9
Cert.-accredited bodies	11	0.4	63.6	36.4
Cert. - college/ polytech/univ.	50	1.9	56.0	44.0
Cert.- teaching/nursing/alld.health	25	0.9	80.0	20.0
Dip.-specific & tech. skills	17	0.6	52.9	47.1
Higher Nat. Dip.-specific & tech.	3	0.1	66.7	33.3
Dip. - college/ polytech/univ.	200	7.6	64.0	36.0
Dip.- teaching/nursing/alld.health	67	2.5	76.1	23.9
Bachelor Degree/ Adv. Dip.	482	18.3	82.6	17.4
Postgraduate	120	4.5	71.7	28.3
Master	93	3.5	77.4	22.6
PhD	7	0.3	42.9	57.1
Post-doctoral	2	0.1	100	0
Informal education	5	0.2	0	100
No education	24	0.9	12.5	87.5
Monthly income				
No income	1,134	43.0	0.1	99.9
<RM1000	334	12.7	73.4	26.6
RM1001-RM2000	354	13.4	94.1	5.9
RM2001-RM3000	387	14.7	96.6	3.4
RM3001-RM4000	291	11.0	96.6	3.4
RM4001-RM5000	76	2.9	98.7	1.3
RM5001-RM6000	27	1.0	96.3	3.7
RM6001-RM7000	6	0.2	100	0
RM7001-RM8000	10	0.4	100	0
RM8001-RM9000	6	0.2	100	0
RM9001-RM10000	3	0.1	66.7	33.3
>RM10000	8	0.3	87.5	12.5
Income earner?				
Yes	1,419	53.8	96.1	3.9
No	1,219	46.2	1.1	98.9

ANNEX 3 GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE FOR DEVELOPING WOMEN TALENT




NOTES



*Empowered lives.
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**MINISTRY OF WOMEN, FAMILY AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

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