

## LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE PHILIPPINES ACROSS THE LIFE CYCLE

### OVERVIEW

Women's participation in the labor force in the Philippines has changed over time as their participation rates were higher in 2010 than in 2000. In the past, women's work was restricted by traditional and cultural limitations. Today, women have become more active in the labor market, attained higher levels of education, spent more time working, and experienced an increase in earnings.

Using the Labor Force Survey (LFS) public use files, this issue of LABSTAT Updates presents the trend in the labor force participation rate (LFPR) of women in 2000 and 2010 and describes their LFPR across the life cycle by region, marital status and highest grade completed.

The labor force participation rate (LFPR) of women in the Philippines increased from 47.7% in 2000 to 49.7% in 2010. (Table 1)

Except for Regions I, II, VIII, X, XI and Caraga, the rest of the regions registered increases in women's LFPRs, most notably in Region IX and CAR, where the LFPR increased by 8.4 and 6.1 percentage points, respectively.

Region X consistently pegged the highest LFPR: 59.6% in 2000 and 57.7% in 2010, whereas ARMM consistently recorded the lowest LFPR: 27.3% in 2000 and 33.1% in 2010.

In 2000, Region XI recorded the second highest LFPR (52.3%), followed by Region VII (51.3%), Caraga (50.3%), CAR (50.1%) and Region II (50.0%). The rest have LFPR of less than 50%.

In 2010, CAR placed second (56.2%), followed by Region IV-B (55.7%),

Region VII (55.1%), Region VI (51.5%) and NCR and Region IV-A (51.3% each).

**TABLE 1 - Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) of Women by Region, Philippines: 2000 and 2010**

Region	2000	2010
<b>Philippines</b>	<b>47.7</b>	<b>49.7</b>
National Capital Region	49.0	51.3
Cordillera Administrative Region	50.1	56.2
Region I - Ilocos Region	45.6	44.7
Region II - Cagayan Valley	50.0	48.7
Region III - Central Luzon	42.1	44.4
Region IV - Southern Tagalog	47.1	NA
Region IV-A - CALABARZON	NA	51.3
Region IV-B - MIMAROPA	NA	55.7
Region V - Bicol Region	49.0	49.4
Region VI - Western Visayas	48.3	51.5
Region VII - Central Visayas	51.3	55.1
Region VIII - Eastern Visayas	49.8	48.7
Region IX - Zamboanga Peninsula	41.1	49.5
Region X - Northern Mindanao	59.6	57.7
Region XI - Davao Region	52.3	48.0
Region XII - SOCCSKSARGEN	47.6	49.8
Caraga	50.3	49.7
Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao	27.3	33.1

Note: Region IV was split into Regions IV-A and IV-B per EO 103 (May 17, 2002).

NA Not Available.

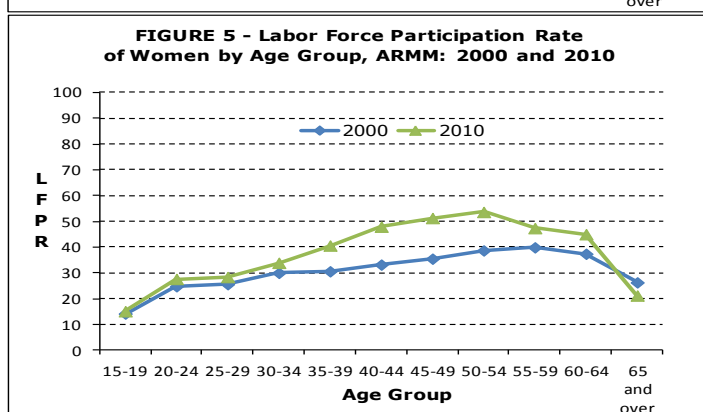
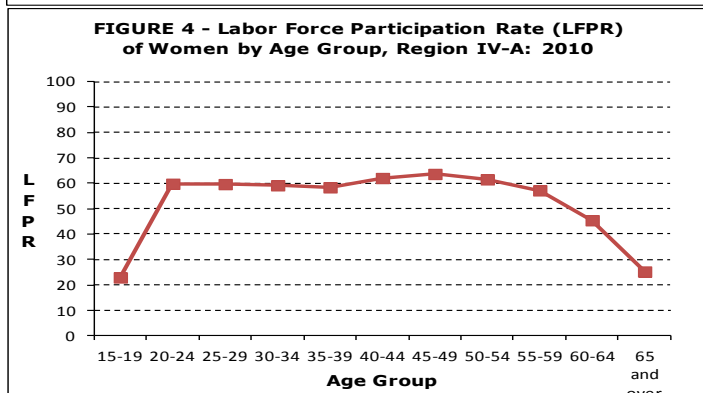
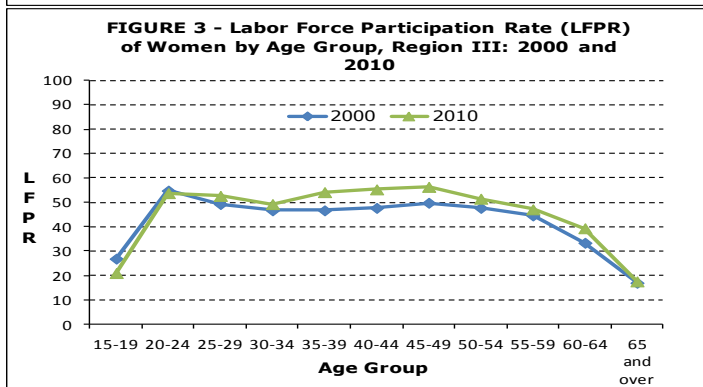
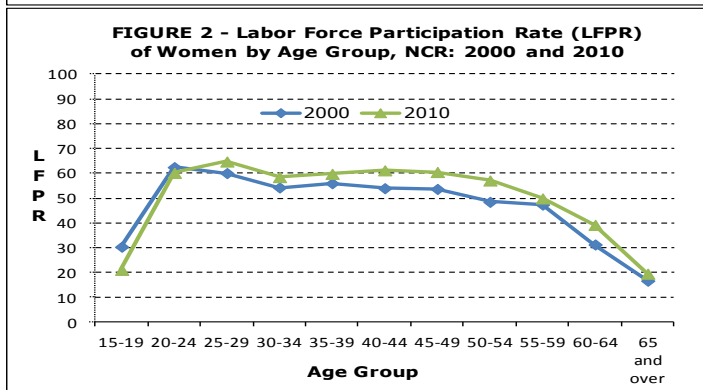
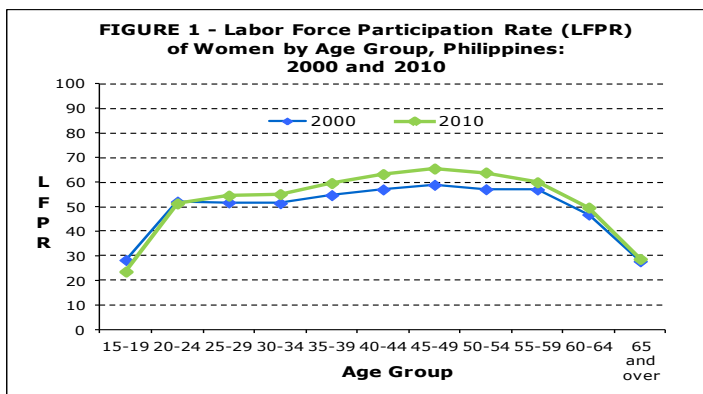
Source of data: National Statistics Office, Labor Force Survey.

In 2010, the LFPRs of women across the life course were generally higher than in 2000, notably at ages 40 to 54. In contrast, the LFPR of the youth ages 15 to 24 was lower, particularly the 15 to 19 age group. This suggests that in 2010, more young women were deferring their participation in the labor force, probably to stay in school longer. (Figure 1; Tables 2 and 3)

**By Region**

The national pattern in women’s LFPR over the life course was almost replicated in most regions, except in National Capital Region, Region III and Region IV-A, where the LFPR was consistently higher across the life course starting at ages 20 to 24. These three regions are relatively better off in terms of economic development compared with other regions. Associated with economic development are women’s delayed entry to marriage and lower fertility, which in turn, are also some of the factors that keep women in the labor force. Further, the labor force participation rates among women in these regions started to decline in their 50’s (50 to 54 age group). (Figures 2-4)

Although women in ARMM consistently recorded the lowest LFPR, their LFPRs over the life course have also been increasing, particularly in age groups 40-44, 45-49 and 50-54. Furthermore, this region also exhibited the largest shift in LFPRs over the 10-year period under review. (Figure 5)

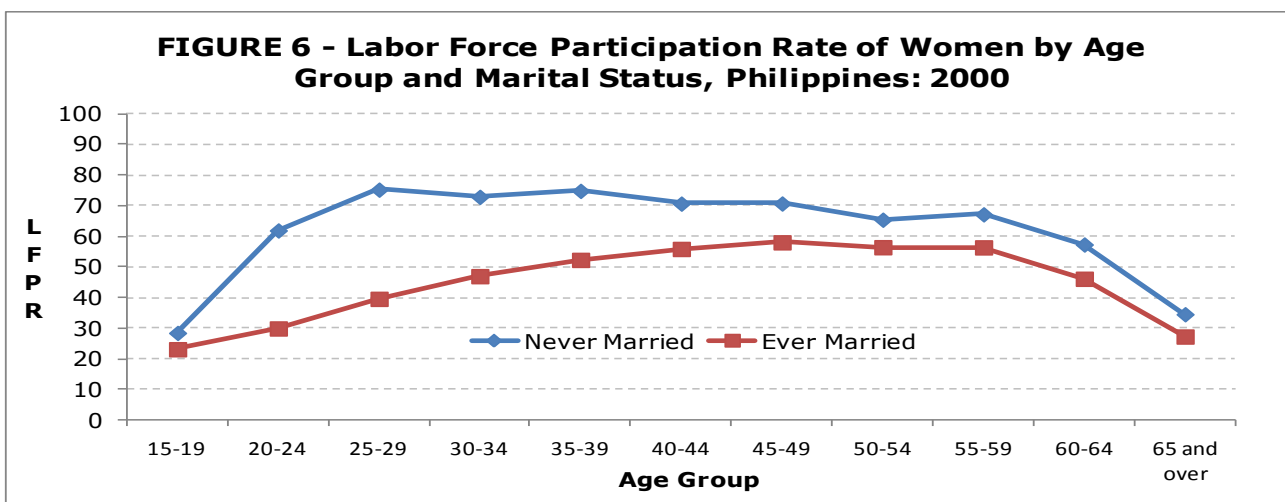


### By Marital Status

The LFPRs of ever married women over the life course were generally lower than the never married women. It was lowest at ages 15 to 24 but started to peak during their late 40's. The gap was most pronounced during childbearing age which is between 20-39 years old.

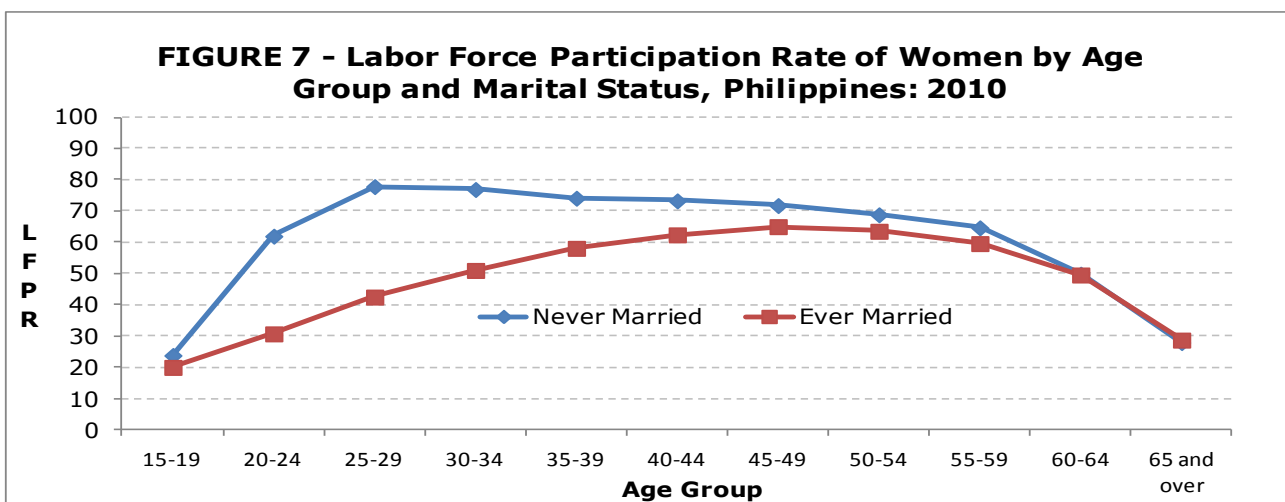
The low participation of married women in their 20's can be partly explained by the fact that Filipino women usually marry and start childbearing around these ages.

The demands of childbearing and childrearing in these age groups must have contributed to the decision of women not to participate in the labor force. However, as married women reached their late 40's, when their reproductive years are about to end, they tend to become active in the labor force. (Figures 6-7; Table 4)



Over time, the LFPR of never and ever married women started to converge at a much younger age. In 2000, the LFPR of women started to converge at ages 65 and over but in 2010, it converged at ages 55 to 59.

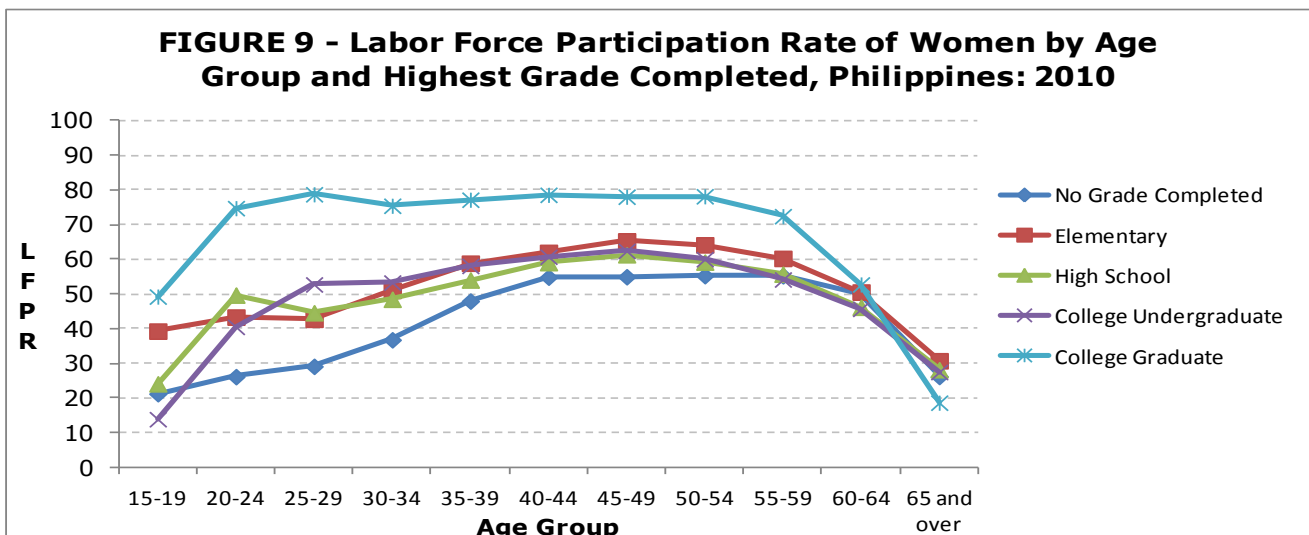
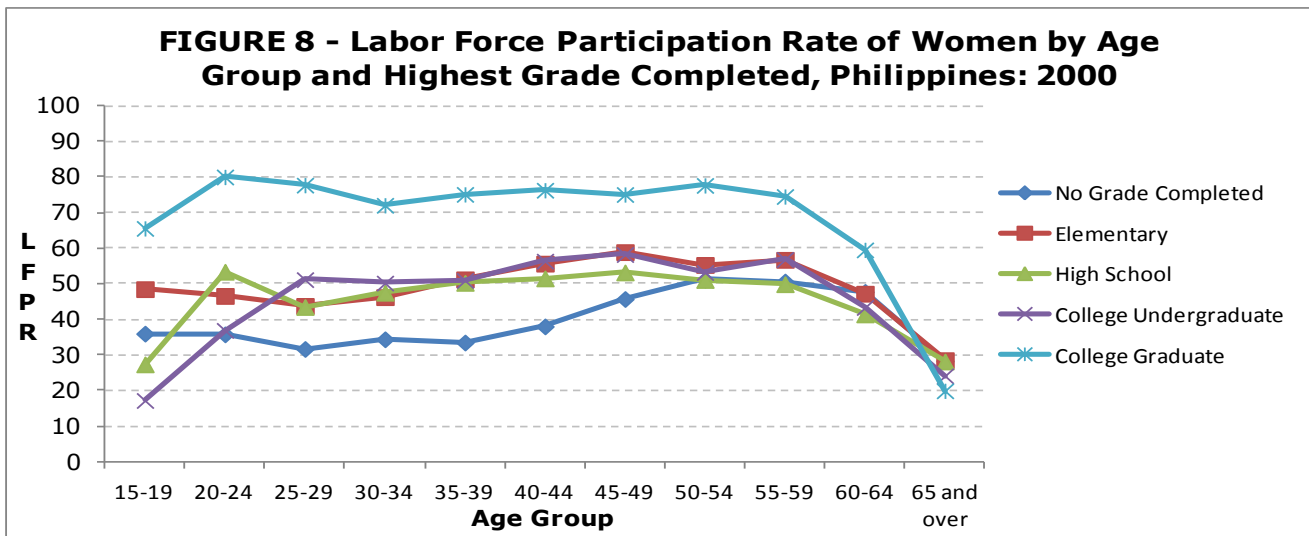
This implies that over time, the marital status of women at older years becomes less important in their decision to join the labor force.



**By Highest Grade Completed**

As expected, the LFPR of women with college degree was consistently higher than women with lower levels of education. The LFPR of college-educated women started to peak right after they obtained their degree, which is normally around ages 20 to 24, dipped slightly at ages 30 to 34 and plateaued thereafter until their 60's. (Figures 8-9; Table 5)

College-educated women in the Philippines usually marry during their mid-20's to early 30's and consequently bear children thereafter. This explains the small dent in their LFPR at ages 30 to 34, which is probably devoted for childbearing. However, since they also have fewer children and are capable to hire someone to take care of their children, their participation in the labor force is less interrupted, as evidenced by their consistently high LFPR throughout the life cycle.



In contrast, women with no grade completed have generally lower participation rate over the life course and unlike those with college degree, their LFPR started to peak much later in the life course, usually when they reached their 40's. The low labor force participation rate of women with no education can be partly influenced by their marriage and childbearing behavior.

Poorly educated women usually marry and start childbearing at an early age. They also bear more children, with smaller birth interval compared with highly educated women. Owing to the longer time they spend in childbearing and childrearing, their labor force participation over the life course tend to be curtailed as well.

The LFPR of women with elementary, high school and college undergraduate education tend to cluster with each other, and are situated in between that of women with no education and those with college degree. This implies that there is an education gradient in the labor force participation of women, i.e., as education level increases, so does the women's LFPR; although this gradient becomes pronounced only after a college degree has been completed.

## SUMMARY

The LFPR of women in the Philippines and most of its regions increased from 2000 to 2010, notably in Region IX and CAR. Region X and ARMM consistently recorded the highest and lowest LFPR, respectively.

The LFPRs of ever married women over the life course were generally lower than that of the never married women. The low participation of married women in their early 20's and the upsurge in their labor force participation in their late 40's can be partly explained by their marriage and fertility behaviors. Women in the Philippines usually marry and start childbearing during their early 20's and start childrearing thereafter. At ages 45 and over, when their reproductive years are about to end and the weight of childrearing began to lighten; married women start to become active in the labor force.

College-educated women have exceptionally higher LFPR than women with lower levels of education. Their LFPRs across the life course is also consistently high, starting at ages 20 to 24 until age 59, after which it started to decline. In contrast, women with no education consistently registered the lowest LFPR across the life course.

---

### FOR INQUIRIES

Regarding this report contact **LABOR STANDARDS STATISTICS DIVISION** at 527-3000 loc. 311  
Regarding other statistics and technical services contact **BLES DATABANK** at TELEFAX 527-9311  
Or Write to BLES c/o Databank, 3/F DOLE Bldg. Gen. Luna St., Intramuros, Manila, 1002  
FAX 527-5506 E mail: bles\_issd@dole.gov.ph or visit our website at <http://www.bles.dole.gov.ph>

---

**TABLE 2 - Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) of Women by Age Group and Region, Philippines: 2000**

Age Group	Philippines	NCR	CAR	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	Caraga	ARMM
All Age Groups	47.7	49.0	50.1	45.6	50.0	42.1	47.1	49.0	48.3	51.3	49.8	41.1	59.6	52.3	47.6	50.3	27.3
15-19	28.3	30.4	23.6	25.1	24.4	26.9	27.1	25.8	29.1	30.5	32.7	23.6	42.7	33.3	28.3	26.2	14.2
20-24	52.1	62.5	45.7	47.2	42.0	54.8	56.6	44.5	50.9	53.8	44.8	37.8	54.3	50.5	45.2	44.1	24.8
25-29	51.7	60.1	50.3	51.3	49.7	49.3	53.6	46.6	49.6	55.0	46.2	37.9	58.3	56.8	47.9	48.2	25.6
30-34	51.4	54.3	52.6	53.2	54.3	46.7	49.1	51.4	49.4	55.4	48.7	44.2	66.8	59.9	50.8	53.8	30.0
35-39	54.7	56.0	58.7	56.5	61.8	46.7	54.0	55.3	57.2	57.0	53.9	48.5	66.9	60.2	59.8	52.1	30.6
40-44	57.0	54.0	64.2	58.0	64.2	47.7	55.7	64.1	64.2	59.2	59.5	51.9	72.0	59.8	58.7	63.9	33.2
45-49	58.9	53.7	66.5	53.6	64.7	49.8	55.8	66.3	66.3	62.7	64.7	54.3	75.2	64.8	60.6	66.7	35.5
50-54	57.1	48.5	69.8	56.4	68.0	47.7	54.2	64.4	61.6	61.9	61.9	52.6	71.0	61.5	57.7	70.2	38.7
55-59	57.0	47.4	66.6	59.9	58.6	44.6	55.0	67.2	58.4	64.8	64.6	56.4	68.7	58.1	57.8	64.1	39.9
60-64	46.8	31.3	60.4	47.7	56.0	33.4	43.0	53.4	52.7	55.7	57.3	43.2	62.3	51.3	46.4	54.3	37.4
65 and over	27.8	16.7	41.3	25.0	30.8	17.0	23.8	35.2	25.9	36.8	37.3	25.3	38.8	34.4	32.2	40.2	26.3

Source of data: National Statistics Office, Labor Force Survey.

**TABLE 3 - Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) of Women by Age Group and Region, Philippines: 2010**

Age Group	Philippines	NCR	CAR	I	II	III	IV-A	IV-B	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	Caraga	ARMM
All Age Groups	49.7	51.3	56.2	44.7	48.7	44.4	51.3	55.7	49.4	51.5	55.1	48.7	49.5	57.7	48.0	49.8	49.7	33.1
15-19	23.6	21.1	25.0	20.8	20.3	21.0	22.9	25.1	25.1	24.2	28.7	22.9	24.2	34.8	24.6	23.9	27.2	15.1
20-24	51.3	60.2	47.5	46.6	40.6	53.8	59.8	48.0	44.3	51.7	56.2	40.5	39.0	53.4	46.9	46.1	42.7	27.6
25-29	54.5	64.8	62.0	47.2	49.6	52.6	59.7	54.2	46.4	56.1	60.6	46.1	45.3	57.2	50.9	50.4	50.6	28.4
30-34	55.1	58.5	68.3	51.2	61.3	49.3	59.2	60.5	52.7	56.6	60.9	50.3	54.1	59.4	50.7	55.6	51.6	33.9
35-39	59.6	59.8	73.3	53.3	63.2	54.2	58.5	64.5	60.5	64.0	65.0	59.4	61.7	69.4	57.6	64.0	58.4	40.6
40-44	63.2	61.2	76.9	61.0	66.8	55.3	62.1	72.1	63.7	67.7	67.8	65.7	65.5	74.6	60.5	65.3	62.7	47.9
45-49	65.5	60.5	74.8	64.1	70.7	56.3	63.8	76.8	70.7	70.1	69.2	69.0	68.2	72.8	63.7	68.1	69.3	51.3
50-54	63.9	57.1	74.9	61.6	65.0	51.5	61.3	77.3	69.5	69.8	66.9	71.5	69.3	74.6	61.7	69.2	67.5	53.6
55-59	59.9	49.9	73.4	56.3	59.9	47.1	57.4	75.5	64.6	65.2	66.0	69.1	68.1	71.7	59.8	66.0	64.2	47.4
60-64	49.6	39.2	61.3	43.9	49.6	39.4	45.4	64.7	55.3	53.8	60.8	55.2	56.4	59.4	51.7	46.7	56.2	45.0
65 and over	28.7	19.5	35.2	22.3	21.6	17.6	25.3	43.4	36.1	29.5	37.8	35.1	38.0	41.7	30.0	29.5	35.3	21.2

Source of data: National Statistics Office, Labor Force Survey.

**TABLE 4 - Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) of Women by Age Group and Marital Status, Philippines: 2000 and 2010**

Age Group	2000		2010	
	Never Married	Ever Married	Never Married	Ever Married
All Age Groups	48.3	47.4	46.5	51.3
15-19	28.6	23.2	23.9	20.0
20-24	62.0	30.0	62.0	30.8
25-29	75.3	39.7	77.9	42.5
30-34	73.0	47.1	76.9	51.1
35-39	74.9	52.4	74.2	58.1
40-44	70.7	56.0	73.3	62.4
45-49	70.8	58.1	71.8	65.1
50-54	65.5	56.5	68.9	63.6
55-59	67.2	56.5	64.7	59.6
60-64	57.4	46.2	49.9	49.6
65 and over	34.7	27.4	28.0	28.8

*Source of data: National Statistics Office, Labor Force Survey.*

**TABLE 5 - Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) of Women by Age Group and Highest Grade Completed, Philippines: 2000 and 2010**

Age Group	2000					2010				
	No Grade Completed	Elementary	High School	College Undergraduate	College Graduate	No Grade Completed	Elementary	High School	College Undergraduate	College Graduate
All Age Groups	36.8	48.3	42.4	40.5	73.5	39.5	50.8	44.1	42.8	73.1
15-19	36.0	48.5	27.4	17.2	65.6	21.3	39.4	24.2	13.9	49.3
20-24	35.8	46.6	53.4	36.9	80.0	26.2	43.4	49.8	40.6	74.8
25-29	31.7	43.8	43.5	51.2	77.7	29.2	42.8	44.7	52.8	78.8
30-34	34.4	46.3	47.5	50.2	72.1	36.8	51.1	48.5	53.4	75.5
35-39	33.5	51.3	50.3	51.0	75.1	48.0	58.9	54.1	58.2	77.3
40-44	38.0	55.7	51.5	56.4	76.3	54.9	62.1	59.1	60.8	78.7
45-49	45.7	58.9	53.2	58.2	75.1	55.0	65.4	61.4	62.5	78.1
50-54	51.2	55.3	51.1	53.2	77.7	55.4	64.3	59.3	60.1	78.3
55-59	50.6	56.7	49.9	56.8	74.5	55.3	60.3	55.8	54.2	72.5
60-64	47.7	47.2	41.4	43.4	59.5	50.2	50.6	46.2	45.8	52.8
65 and over	28.3	28.5	28.2	24.1	19.9	26.3	30.8	28.2	27.6	18.7

*Source of data: National Statistics Office, Labor Force Survey.*