



## Libyan Women: Examining their Educational Reality and Contribution to Economic Development

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### Abstract

Historically, economic crises have benefited women rights in Libya. More specifically, such events bring attention to, as well as acceptance of, the right of women to receive a quality education and pursue of a career. Considering the underlying social, cultural, and economic challenges within Libya, the participation of women in the labor market has been below the needs of the nation. With a view toward increasing the participation of women in the Libyan labor market, the government is raising awareness of this issue, as well as providing education and vocational training opportunities for women. Additionally, legal measures have been enacted to protect the rights of women and increase their participation in the economy. Despite these efforts, there is a need for more effective and persistent action to achieve gender equality. Such efforts must expand within Libyan society to advance the progress women have achieved in professional development and the economy, as well as to mitigate gender-based cultural stereotypes.

Keywords: *sustainable development, women's rights, economic crises, Libyan women.*

### Introduction

After ending the foreign mandate and gaining its independence in 1951, the Libyan government passed the Mandatory Male and Female Education Law. The royal-era Libyan constitution was a progressive legal document, which enhanced the role of women in Libyan society. The constitution enacted provisions against discrimination and established full citizenship for women, as well as free and mandatory education. Moreover, it established gender equality regarding job opportunities. Subsequently, the number of women enrolled in school—at all levels of education—had increased. Moreover, women led major initiatives across various cultural fields, which includes literary writing, journalism, and social life. In addition, Libyan women formed their own societies and associations, with the initial group dating back to 1955 in Benghazi (Bugagis 2015).

After 1969, Libya witnessed a surge in nationalism, which is reflected in most of the legislation passed during this period. Several laws advocating on behalf of women were enacted. As a result, women's interest in education, as well as participation the labor force, grew. In 1970, several feminist organizations merged into the Women's General Union, which was later renamed the Libyan Women's Federation in 1977. Pursuant to Article 5 of the 11 December 1969 Constitutional Declaration, women were legally granted with equal status to that of men. For example, The Law on Education No. 34 of 1970 provided equal access to education for both genders. In addition, the Promotion of Freedom Law of 1991 was a key achievement during that era, which emphasized equality among the genders. This law also codified the right of women to work, defend the homeland, and equality regarding "financial matters in accordance with the articles of the Civil Service Act No. 15" (Bugagis 2015, 13).



In the past, economic crises in Libya precipitated an increase in the number of women participating in economic life. For example, the economic crisis in the 1980s led to an expanded interest within society regarding female education and employment, which correspondingly aided the ability of women to contribute to their familial and household needs. Accordingly, Libyan women engaged in various cultural, civil, and employment developments throughout the country while working side by side with men as employees and entrepreneurs, despite social customs that hindered full engagement (Bugaigis 2015).

Despite these efforts by the government, the number of women in the labor market remained below optimal levels. According to the World Bank Report on Libya in 2006, approximately 1.8 million women were unemployed. Meanwhile, the unemployment rate hit a staggering twenty-five percent among the population. Despite women accounting for fifty percent of the Libyan population, only thirty percent were in the workforce according to the Libya Statistical Yearbook of 2009 (BSC 2009). The small percentage of working women were highly concentrated in scientific professions, with an even lower 5.3–21 percent across other fields, including administration, agriculture, services, industry, and trade (WB 2006).

Identifying solutions to challenges and promoting efforts to attain a sustainable future is an inherent role that women occupy. Accordingly, the role women play in Libyan society regarding these challenges is as important as men. Women effectively contribute to boosting sustainability, social progress, and economic prosperity at both national and international levels (Abu Abboud and Mohamed 2023).

Further, there is an urgent need to enhance the role of women in Libya's social development and boost their capabilities through effective support, full empowerment, and strengthened competency. In Libya, comprehensive social development is only attainable via the active and effective engagement of women.

### **Importance of this Study**

This study explores the levels of education and economic participation of women in Libya through the examination of national censuses. This research aims to identify the challenges faced by women in Libya regarding education, as well as obstacles preventing their full participation in the nation's economic development. The study may aid in developing policies, as well as educational and economic programs, to augment the rights of women in Libya and empower them throughout society. Thus, this research aims to guide efforts that endeavor to achieve sustainable and comprehensive development in Libya.

### **Women and education in Libya**

From 1960s through contemporary times, Libyan society witnessed major developments that enhanced the role of women in society, which increased female empowerment. Public policy focused on ensuring the right to education for all citizens, regardless of gender. Moreover, a law established mandatory education for males and females ages six to eighteen years old. This policy has contributed to improving the level of education of girls in Libya (Al-Hawwat 2009).



According to the census conducting in 1964 (MoET 1964), students between ages of six and twenty-four years old accounted for 156,333 of the national population. Below, Table 1 organizes Libyan students across age and gender. Figure 1 exhibits the enrollment rates of Libyan students by educational level.

**Table 1.** Age range and gender of Libyan students, according to the census of 1964.

Age group Educational stage	Total population		Libyan student numbers		Enrolment rate (%)	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
6 – 14	87,113	75,039	85,297	34,440	97.91	45.89
15 – 19	62,021	59,805	18,624	5,458	30.02	9.12
20 – 24	63,920	59,239	10,765	1,749	16.84	2.95

Based on the findings in Table 1, Figure 1 reveals the female enrollment rates at educational institutions which were markedly low. The numbers were particularly low within higher education, which comprised the ages of twenty to twenty-four years old. Among this age group, this markedly low number was the result of marriage, as well as familial pressure to drop out of school.

**Figure 1.** Age range and gender of Libyan students by percentage, according to the census of 1964.

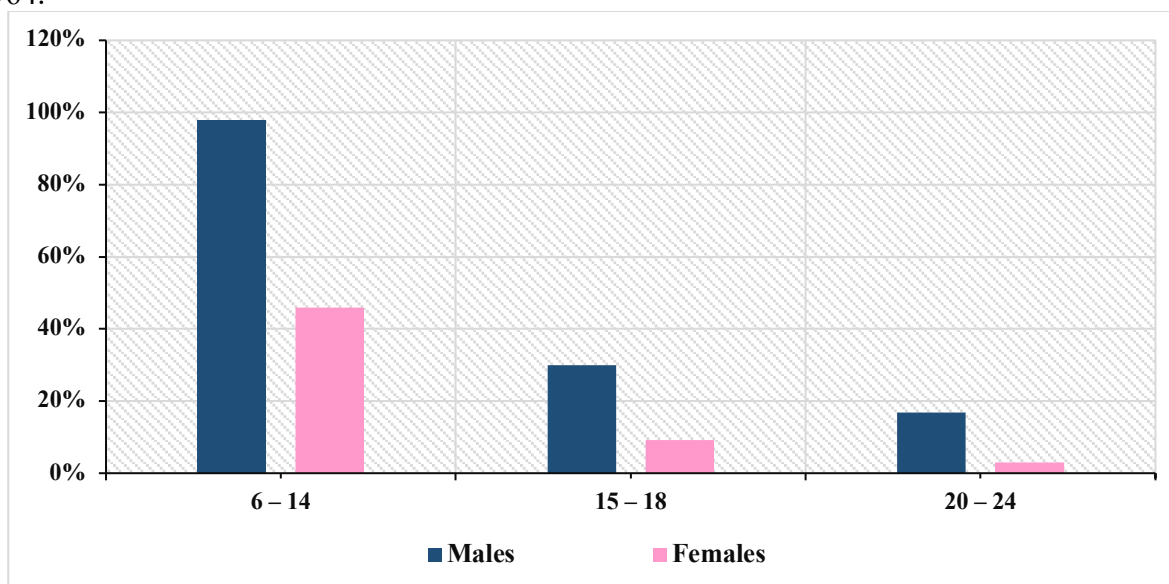


Table 2 classifies the gender of Libyan students across all levels of education. This table illustrates that males outnumbered females in primary education. Specifically, males accounted for 35,081 students in primary schools, 14,646 students in preparatory schools, and 4,455 students in secondary schools. Meanwhile, tertiary institutions and university students only accounted for 1,427 enrolled male students. Concurrently, female students accounted for 4,458 students in primary schools, 1,500 students in preparatory schools, and 295 students in secondary schools. The tertiary institutions and university students only accounted for a meager ninety-six enrolled female students.

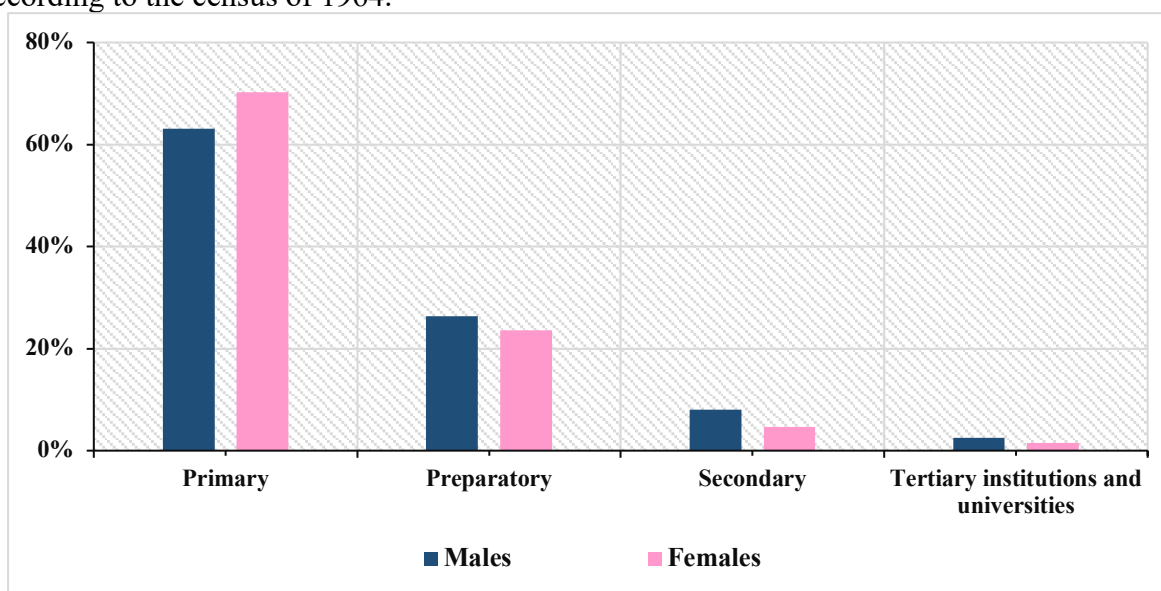


**Table 2.** Gender classification of Libyan students across all levels of education, according to the census of 1964.

Education Stage	Libyan student numbers		Enrolment rate (%)	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Primary	35,081	4,458	63.08	70.21
Preparatory	14,645	1,500	26.33	23.62
Secondary	4,455	295	8.01	4.641
Tertiary Institutions and Universities	1427	96	2.56	1.51

Figure 2 presents a visual analysis based on gender regarding enrolment rates at various educational stages. While females accounted for 70.21 percent of the total enrollment of students in Libya, the corresponding percentage at tertiary institutions and universities was a miniscule 1.51 percent.

**Figure 2.** Visual analysis based on gender regarding enrollment rates at all levels of education, according to the census of 1964.

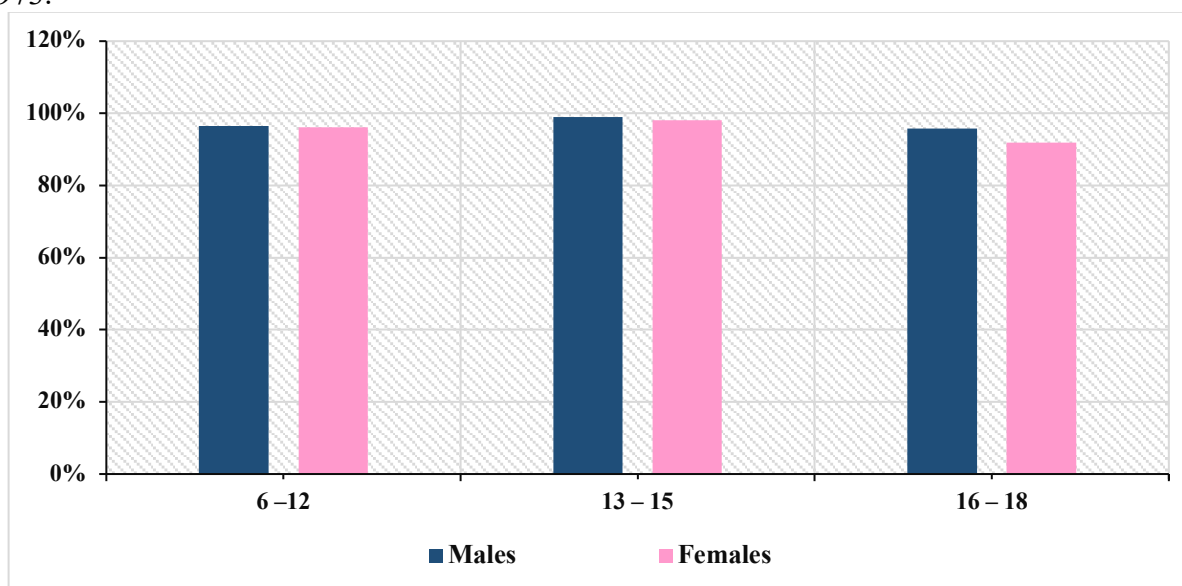


The national census conducted in 1973 (BSC 1973) revealed the total number of students among the ages of six through twenty-four years old was 568,513. Table 3 presents the age and gender of Libyan students enrolled at all levels of education. Figure 3 presents the percentage of Libyan students, based on gender, enrolled at all levels of education.

**Table 3.** Age range and gender of Libyan students, according to the census of 1973.

Age group Educational stage	Total population		Libyan student numbers		Enrolment rate (%)	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
10 – 14	142,141	129,942	137,608	125,714	96.81	96.74
15 – 19	96,112	87,811	88,793	80,524	92.38	91.70
20 – 24	85,974	76,514	70,468	65,406	81.96	85.48

The bar graph in figure 3 clearly illustrates similar enrollment rates among female and male students at all levels of education across all ages groups.

**Figure 3.** Age range and gender of Libyan students by percentage, according to the census of 1973.

It is worth noting that the Constitutional Declaration of 1969 included a provision that established the right and duty of Libyans to pursue education, which institutionalized mandatory elementary schooling for the nation. The declaration also established nationalized schools, institutes, and universities that were free to attend for those who qualified. Subsequently, this constitutional provision improved gender parity across many levels of education and age groups. Table 4 illustrates this outcome, which is based on the census conducted in 1973.

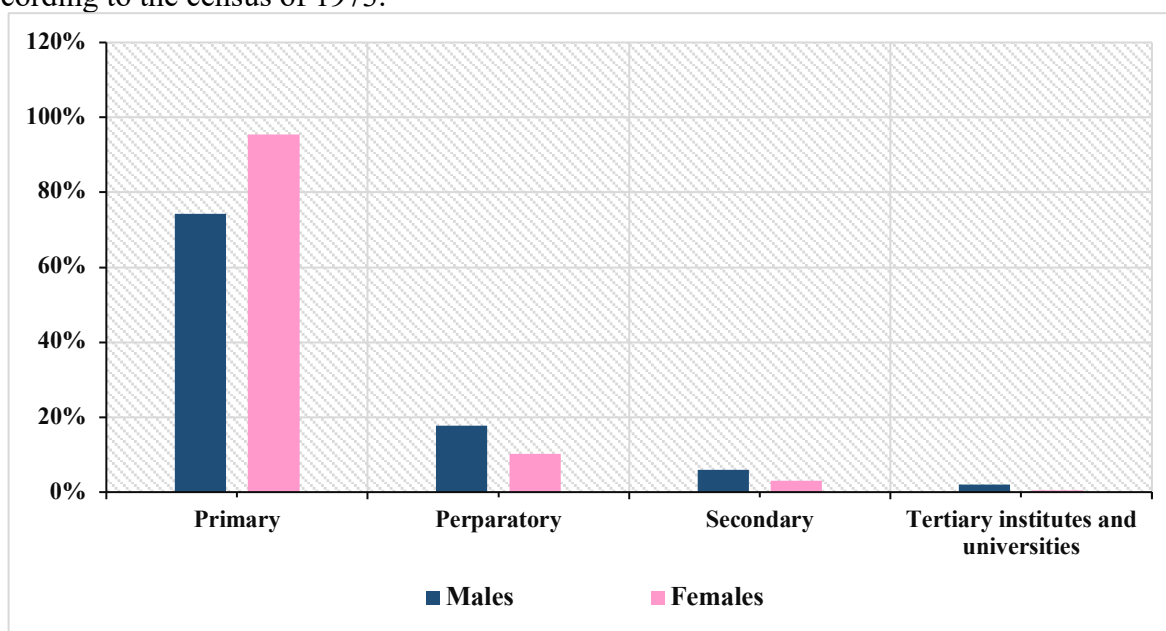


**Table 4.** Gender classification of Libyan students across all levels of education, according to the census of 1973.

Educational stage	Libyan students		Enrolment rate (%)	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Primary	250,060	184,274	74.25	95.47
Preparatory	59,859	19,716	17.77	10.21
Secondary	19,987	5,753	5.93	2.98
Tertiary Institutions and Universities	6,875	1,014	2.04	0.53

Figure 4 presents a bar graph that illustrates the age and gender of Libyan students at educational institutions by percentage. Notably, female primary students accounted for 95.47 percent of the entire female population in Libya. However, the corresponding percentage at tertiary institutions and universities was a scant 0.53 percent of the female population.

**Figure 4.** Visual analysis based on gender regarding enrollment rates at all levels of education, according to the census of 1973.



The national census conducted in 1984 (BSC 1984) revealed the total population in Libya among the ages of six to twenty-four years old was 1,568,971. Of this population, 799,433 were male and 769,538 were female. Table 5 reveals the total number of enrolled students at all levels of education was 1,096,490, which comprised 610,287 males and 486,203 females.

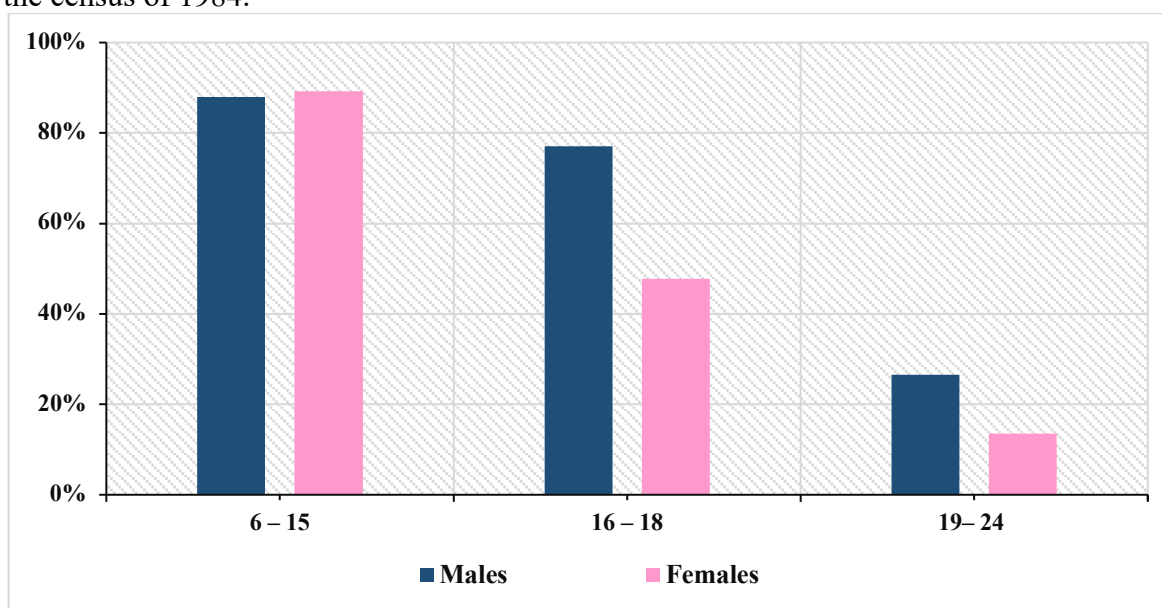


**Table 5.** Age range and gender of Libyan students enrolled at all levels of education, according to the census of 1984.

Age group Educational stage	Total population		Libyan student numbers		Enrolment rate (%)	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
6 – 15	530,262	458,663	466,379	409,004	87.95	89.17
16 – 18	116,234	110,555	89,542	52,789	77.03	47.74
19 – 24	204,628	181,068	54,366	24,410	26.56	13.48

Figure 5 classifies the gender of Libyan students across all levels of education. Notably, females enrolled in primary school comprised 89.17 percent of entire female population in Libya. The corresponding percentage at the tertiary and university levels were exceedingly low, which consisted only 13.48 percent of the entire female population in Libya.

**Figure 5.** Age range and gender of Libyan students enrolled at educational institutions, according to the census of 1984.



According to the 1973 national census, females enrolled at educational institutions constituted only 51.1 percent. However, the subsequent census conducted in 1984 revealed a significant increase to 63.2 percent. This rapid increase reveals the educational development achieved by women across all levels of education in Libya (BSC 1984).

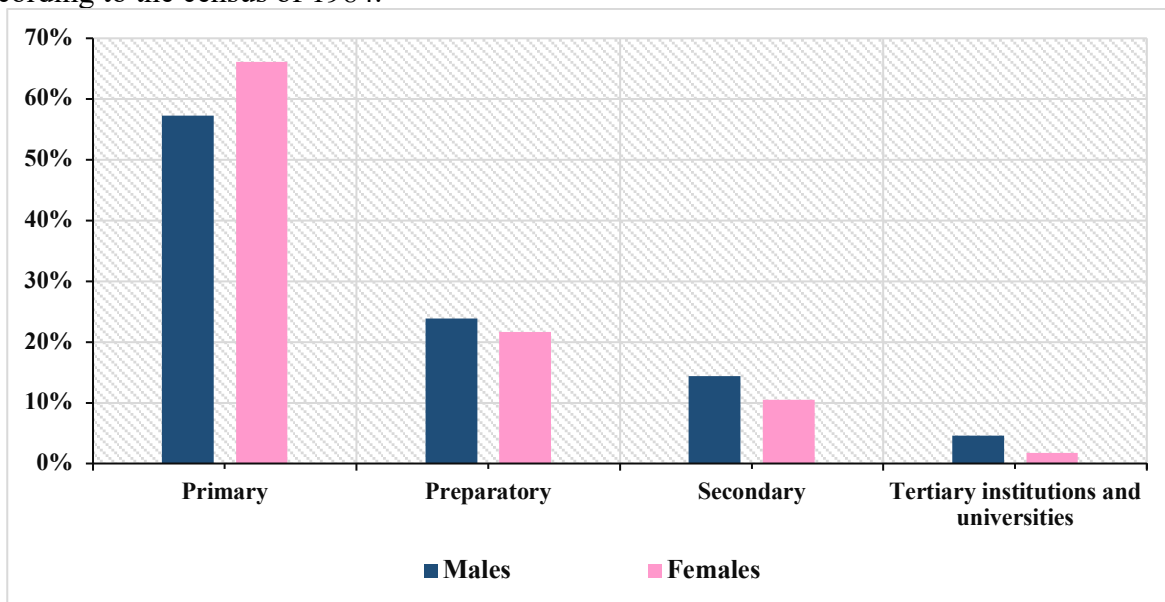


**Table 6.** Gender classification of Libyan students across all levels of education, according to the census of 1984.

Educational stage	Libyan students		Enrolment rate (%)	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Primary	352,021	322,159	57.27	66.09
Preparatory	146,420	105,411	23.82	21.62
Secondary	88,224	51,420	14.35	10.5
Tertiary Institutes and Universities	27,916	8,455	4.54	1.73

Figure 6 presents a visual analysis based on gender regarding enrolment rates at all levels of education. In primary schools, females accounted for 66.09 percent of the total female population in Libya. The corresponding tertiary and university enrollment percentage was a meagre 1.73 percent. The economic crisis that Libya experienced in the 1980s was to blame for such a paltry percentage.

**Figure 6.** Visual analysis based on gender regarding enrollment rates at all levels of education, according to the census of 1984.



The national census conducted in 1995 (NAID 1995) revealed the total number of students across levels of education in Libya was 1,603,264. During this time, the percentage of females enrolled in education across all levels was seventy-three percent of the entire female population in Libya, which was a tremendous increase from the census in 1984.

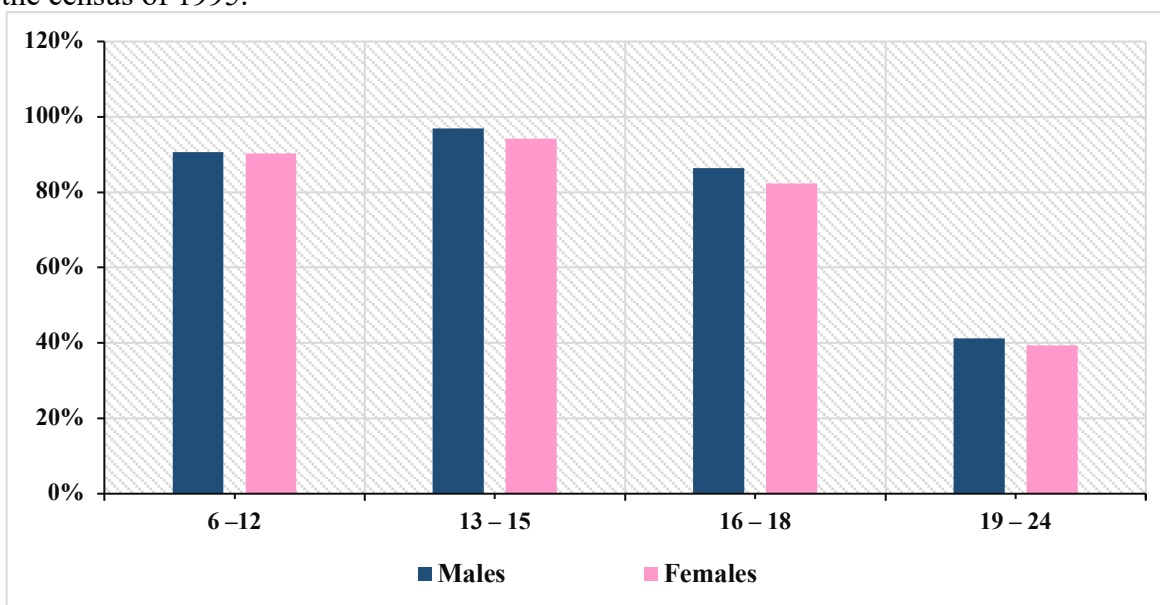




**Table 7.** Age range and gender of Libyan students enrolled at educational institutions, according to the census of 1995.

Age group Educational stage	Total population		Libyan student numbers		Enrolment rate (%)	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
6 – 12	412,592	401,471	373,670	361,173	90.57	90.27
13 – 15	182,609	176,884	176,882	161,546	96.86	94.14
16 – 18	176,322	171,254	152,270	134,067	86.36	82.38
19 – 24	312,952	305,078	128,905	114,751	41.19	39.42

**Figure 7.** Age range and gender of Libyan students enrolled at educational institutions, according to the census of 1995.



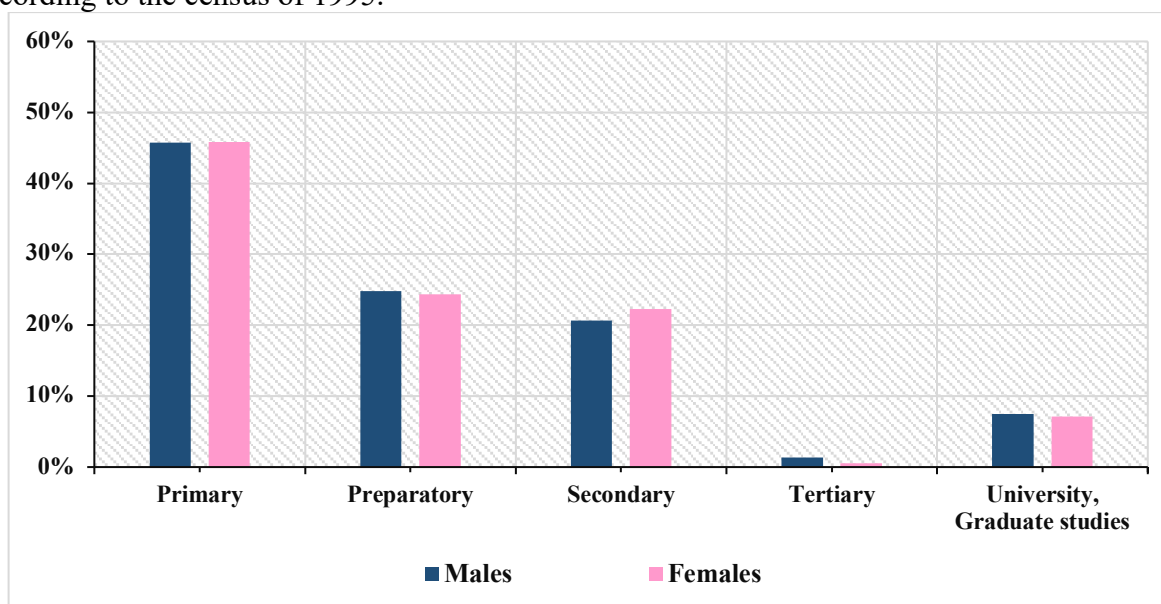
The national census of 1995 revealed the percentages of male and female students, compared to the respective populations of males and females in Libya, was close to equal. However, this did not extend to tertiary and university levels of education as male students outnumbering their female counterparts, which is particularly true at the tertiary level. Table 8 illustrates the total population of students in Libya, which is categorized by number and percentage for each gender.



**Table 8.** Gender classification of Libyan students across all levels of education, according to the census of 1995.

Educational stage	Libyan student numbers		Enrolment rate (%)	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Primary	383,070	355,062	45.72	45.83
Preparatory	207,748	188,576	24.79	24.34
Secondary	173,124	172,301	20.66	22.24
Tertiary	11,299	3,831	1.35	0.49
University and Graduate School	62,692	54,920	7.48	7.09

**Figure 8.** Visual analysis based on gender regarding enrollment rates at all levels of education, according to the census of 1995.



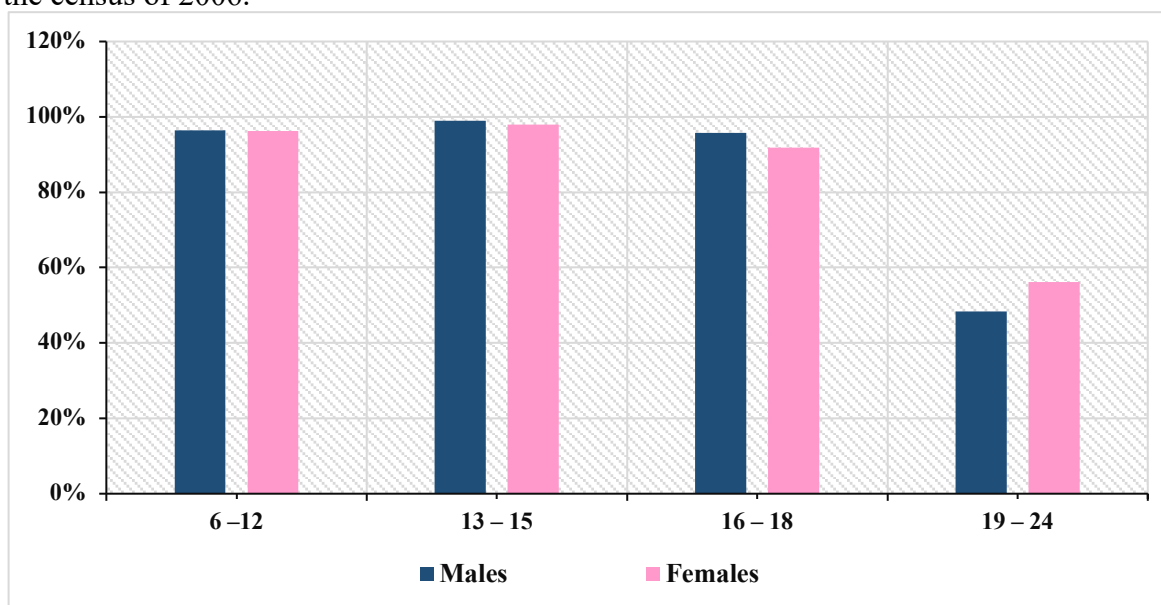
The national census conducted in 2006 (BSC 2006) revealed the total number of students in Libya was 1,792,799, which indicates that 81.9 percent of the total eligible population was enrolled at various levels of education. The percentage of female students, compared to the total population of females in Libya, was the highest yet attained in the history of the census. Table 9 illustrates the age and gender of Libyan students enrolled at educational institutions as per the census of 2006.



**Table 9.** Age range and gender of Libyan students enrolled at educational institutions, according to the census of 2006.

Age group Educational stage	Total population		Libyan student numbers		Enrolment rate (%)	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
6 – 12	379,078	364,624	365,829	350,948	96.5	96.2
13 – 15	170,959	164,190	169,272	160,867	99.0	98.0
16 – 18	174,859	169,931	167,372	156,024	95.7	91.8
19 – 24	347,398	339,884	168,014	190,604	48.4	56.1

**Figure 9.** Age range and gender of Libyan students enrolled at educational institutions, according to the census of 2006.



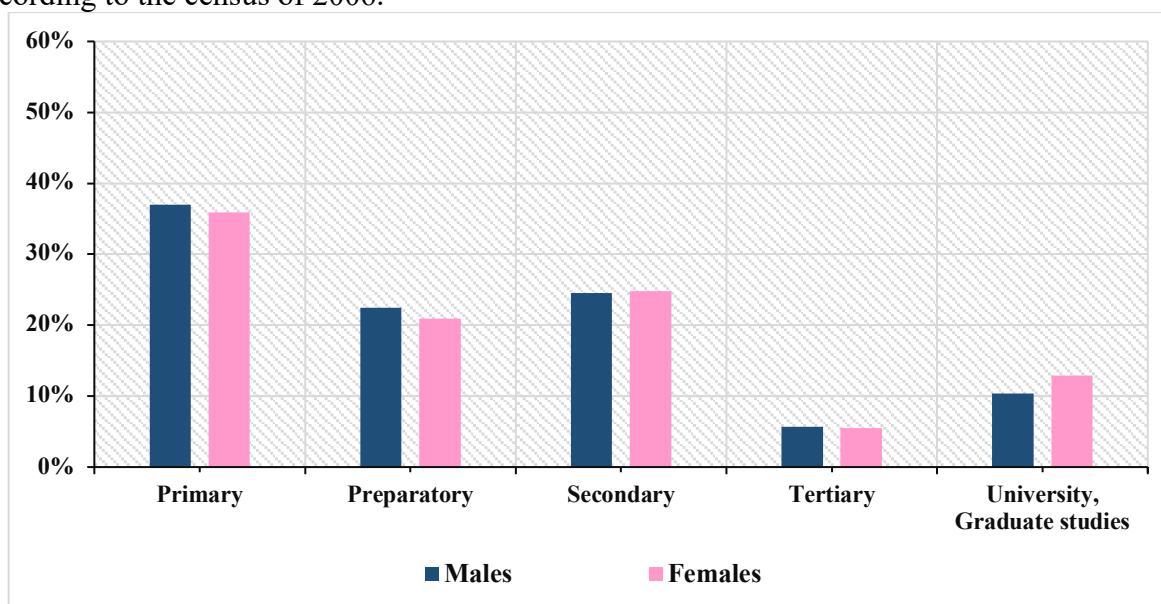
The census in 2006 revealed that female students enrolled at university had outnumbered their male counterparts, which constituted 12.88 percent of this female demographic. Meanwhile, males enrolled at this same level of education consisted of 10.37 percent. The latter percentage indicated a higher dropout rate for males, as opposed to females. Table 10 demonstrates the gender of Libyan students across all levels of education according to the census of 2006.



**Table 10.** Gender classification of Libyan students across all levels of education, according to the census of 2006.

Educational stage	Libyan student numbers		Enrolment rate (%)	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Primary	334,451	319,291	37.00	35.92
Preparatory	202,619	185,743	22.42	20.89
Secondary	221,665	220,262	24.53	24.78
Tertiary	51,322	49,219	5.68	5.54
University and Graduate School	93,761	114,466	10.37	12.88

**Figure 10.** Visual analysis based on gender regarding enrollment rates at all levels of education, according to the census of 2006.



### The Contribution of Libyan Women to National Economic Development

In recent years, Libyan society has been renowned for providing women with access to educational and vocational opportunities, which has expanded the role for women across all facets of life. This transformation in the lives of Libyan women has fundamentally altered society, which extends to their level of engagement in public life. Moreover, Libyan society no longer belittles the work of women, nor their engagement in the economy. Rather, Libyan women have gradually gained firmer footing at all levels of employment and across all career fields. Accordingly, joining the labor force is no longer a matter of choice for most women. Instead, this reality is inescapable as there is an increasing need for men and women to work collaboratively and cooperatively in the midst economic challenges.



The 2010 report by the League of Arab States (LoAS 2010), which is titled *More Working Women in Libya than Men*, argued that Libya is the only Arab state that has a higher rate of unemployment among men as compared to women. According to this report, the unemployment rate for women was eighteen percent and twenty-one percent for men. Previously, the report issued by the former General People's Committee for Social Affairs argued that the rate of unemployment for women was higher than the rate of unemployment for men. The report was published in 2006 and it revealed unemployment for women was far higher in the fields of education, health, and public administration, which accounted for a total employment rate for women at 88.3 percent across these sectors. For technical professions, the employment rate for women was less than 5.4 percent during the same period (Irqiah 2022).

Such data reveals an unprecedented social transformation for women, which has correspondingly transformed traditional Libyan society into a modern culture. This should come as no surprise because culture in Libya, like all other Arab societies, is proceeding through stages of modernization. The Libyan state has endeavored to liberate women and encourage their engagement through education, employment, and economic opportunities. Contemporary legislation in Libya plays a vital role in promoting gender equality, specifically involving rights and duties, but also taking into consideration the feminine nature of women and Islamic rulings (Al-Basha 2009).

Since ancient times, women primarily contributed to only two economic activities in Libyan society, which included agriculture and herding, in addition to their familial and household responsibilities. Moreover, Libyan women maintained an active role in traditional professions where they acquired skills in handicrafts, which were unmatched by men. As educational services developed, Libyan women expanded their activities beyond their households and began assuming various administrative and public roles, which were reflected in social transformations (GIA 2006).

The economic activities of women in Libya should be highlighted as it reflects the transformation of both the labor market and society. Table 11 demonstrates the historical rate of participation by Libyan women in the labor force, which is based on the previously examined censuses.

**Table 11.** Historical rate of participation by Libyan women in the labor force based on censuses.

Engagement in economic activity	15+ Libyan women				
	1964	1973	1984	1995	2006
Total employment-age women	403,646	477,877	788,043	1,314,739	1,805,834
Total working women	16,742	28,004	87,663	190,960	388,154
Working women (%)	4.15	5.86	11.2	14.52	26.44

Table 11 reveals the total number of working women in 1964 was 16,742, which comprised only 4.15 percent of the entire female population in Libya. By 2006 this number increased to 388,153, which marked a 26.44 percent increase. Figure 11 illustrates the difference between the number of working women juxtaposed to the total number of working-age women. Figure 12 reveals the percentage of working women in Libya as per the national censuses.



**Figure 11.** Visual analysis of working women compared to the total population of women in Libya, according to national censuses.



**Figure 12.** Percentages of working women in Libya during specific years, according to national censuses.

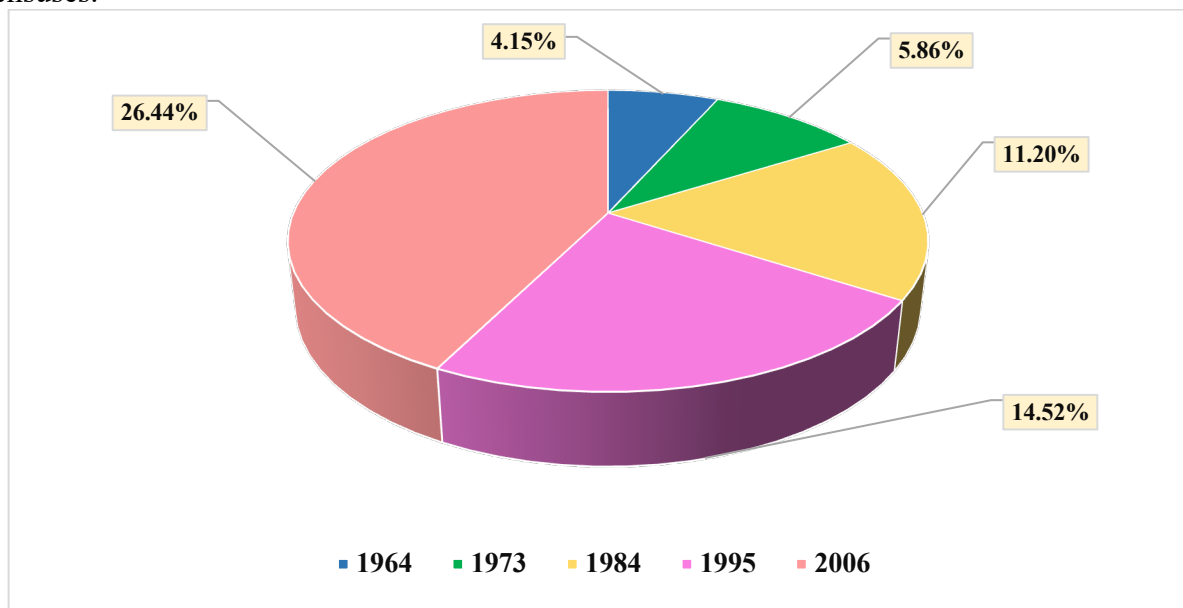


Table 12 displays the specific economic activities undertaken by males and females in Libya, according to the 1964 Census.



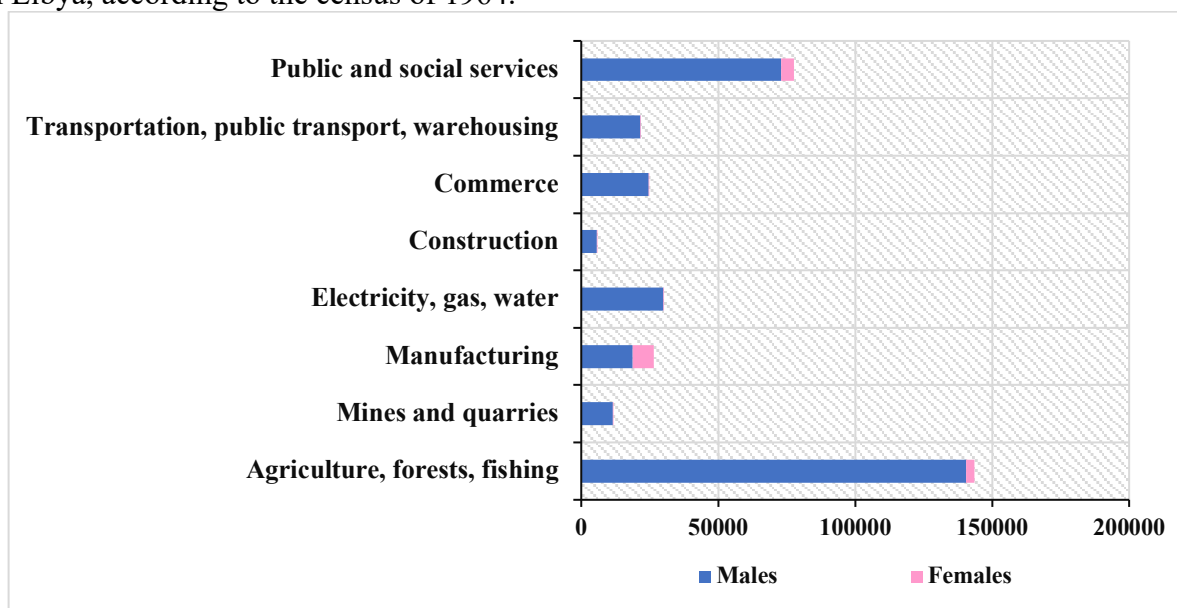
**Table 12.** Economic sectors categorized by male and female population in Libya, according to the census of 1964.

Economic activity	Males	Females	Total
Agriculture, forests, fishing	140,517	3,036	143,553
Mines and quarries	11,575	52	11,627
Manufacturing	18,763	7,784	26,547
Electricity, gas, water	29,876	170	30,046
Construction	5,571	77	5,648
Commerce	24,605	209	24,814
Transportation, public transport, warehousing	21,463	104	21,567
Services	73,023	4,624	77,647

Based on the national census conducted in 1964, the above table reveals a high level of female participation in manufacturing, specifically within the food and beverage industries, spinning and weaving, tanning, as well as others. The high number within these sectors is indicative of the rural nature of Libyan society during that time. Meanwhile, men in Libya had a higher rate of participation within the fields of agriculture, forests, and fishing, which totaled 140,517 out of a population of 1,515,501 people.

Figure 13 utilizes a chart to demonstrate the number of economically active Libyans based on gender and economic sector, which indicates a stark contrast between female and male participation rates.

**Figure 13.** Visual representation of economic sectors categorized by male and female population in Libya, according to the census of 1964.





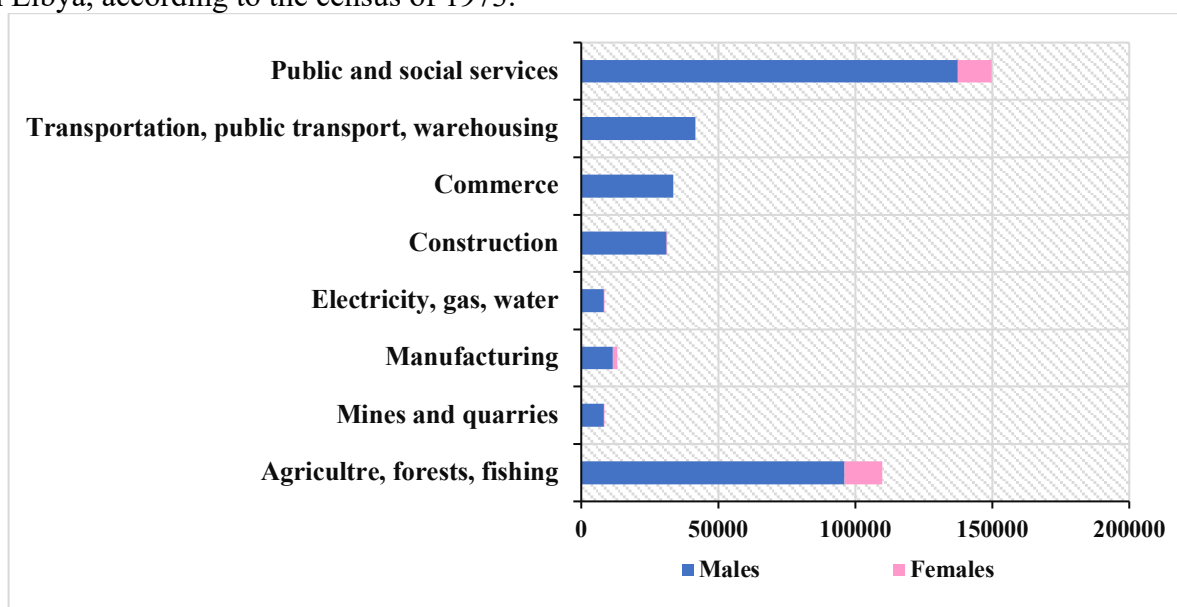
**Table 13.** Economic sectors categorized by male and female population in Libya, according to the census of 1973.

Economic activity	Males	Females	Total
Agriculture, forests, fishing	96,185	13,761	109,946
Mines and quarries	8,148	87	8,235
Manufacturing	11,589	1,510	13,099
Electricity, gas, water	8,353	64	8,417
Construction	31,138	45	31,183
Commerce	33,587	206	33,793
Transportation, public transport, warehousing	41,572	207	41,779
Public and social services	137,363	12,486	149,849

Table 13 reveals the number of working women in the agricultural sector outnumbered those of other economic activities. Specifically, 13,761 women worked in the agriculture sector in contrast to 96,185 males. The large number of women in this economic sector is indicative of the governmental approach at that time, which had undertaken land reclamation and distribution, as well as encouraged the expansion of agricultural activities by providing necessary support.

It is also of note that the public and social services sector had the second highest number of working women. More specifically, there were 12,486 females, which is indicative of the high level of engagement in education, health, and social services. According to the census of 1973, figure 14 is a visual representation of economic sectors categorized by male and female population in Libya, which reveals a high level of female participation in agricultural activities, as well as public and social services.

**Figure 14.** Visual representation of economic sectors categorized by male and female population in Libya, according to the census of 1973.







The contribution of women to the economic output in Libya rose from 4.9 percent in 1973 to 11.3 percent in 1984, which is mainly a result of the government encouraging women to join the labor force and contribute to the economy. Additionally, the census conducted in 1984 found the scientific and technical niche of the economy comprised 18.1 percent of total workforce. Interestingly, 54.2 percent of working females were in this sector, which illustrates a strong preference for this type of occupation. It further uncovered that most working personnel were civil servants and employees of public institutions, which boasted a staggering 84.6 percent of total workforce (BSC 1984).

With a total of 69,139 females in the public and social services sector in 1984, table 14 reveals a higher number as compared to the census of 1974. This increase reflects their preference for these fields.

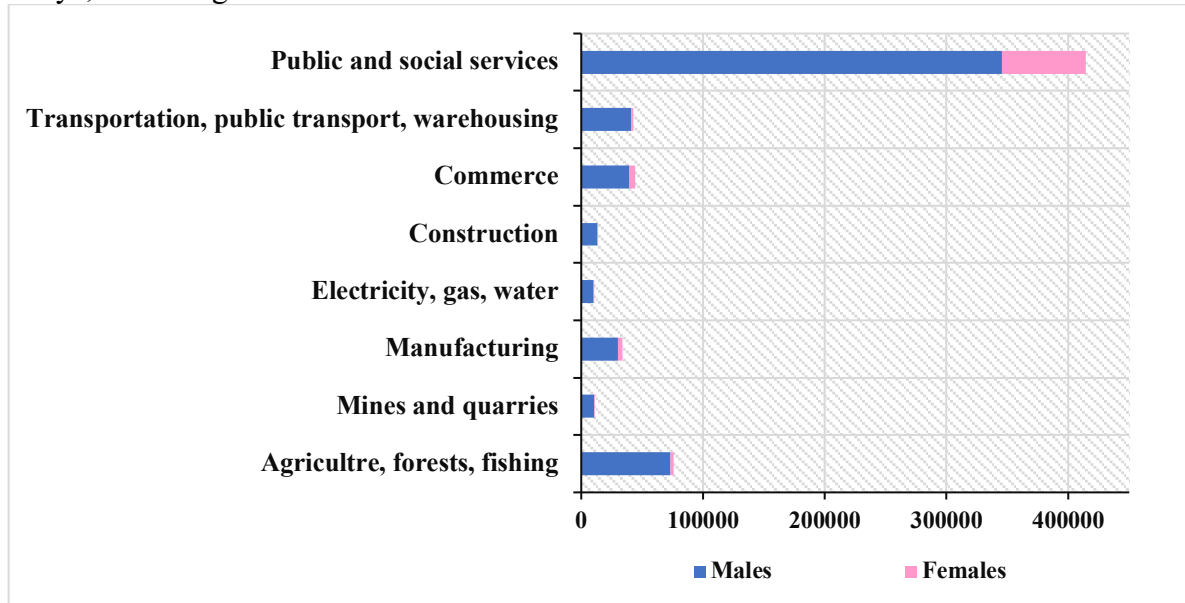
**Table 14.** Economic sectors categorized by male and female population in Libya, according to the census of 1984.

<b>Economic activity</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Total</b>
Agriculture, forests, fishing	73,502	2,589	76,091
Mines and quarries	10,568	266	10,834
Manufacturing	30,109	3,897	34,006
Electricity, gas, water	10,365	328	10,693
Construction	13,347	413	13,760
Commerce	39,812	4,776	44,588
Transportation, public transport, warehousing	41,116	1,729	5,845
Public and social services	345,470	69,139	414,609

Table 15 presents the economic sectors in Libya as categorized by male and female population, which is based on the census of 1995. This table clearly shows the preference that females in Libya had for the public and social services sector of the economy.



**Figure 15.** Visual representation of economic sectors categorized by male and female population in Libya, according to the census of 1984.



The census conducted in 1995 revealed the total number of Libyans active in the work force was 1,100,956, which accounted for forty-one percent of the total population that was fifteen years of age or older. Within the active work force population, males accounted for a labor participation rate of sixty-six percent while females represented sixteen percent.

The number of Libyans employed in scientific or technical professions was 241,022, which represented twenty-six percent of the total work force. Within the scientific and technical sectors of Libya, women accounted for a much higher percentage of the work force, which was seventy-one percent female versus sixteen percent male. This disparity reflected the preference by women to work in this economic sector.

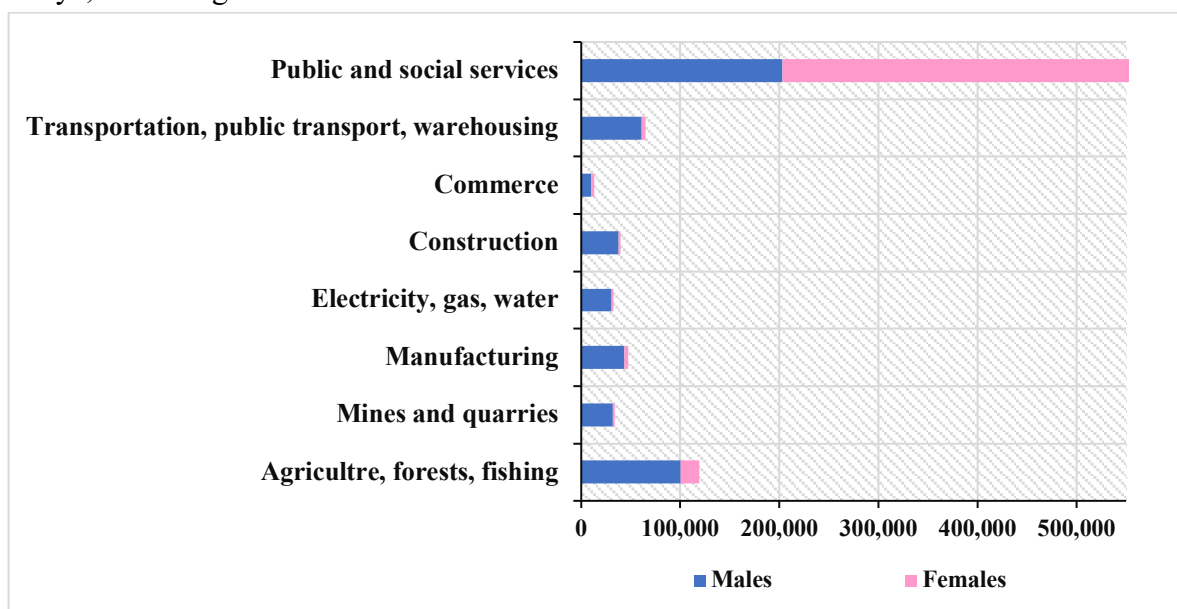
The census in 1995 found that 496,326 Libyans pursued employment in the public administrative sector, which represented forty-five percent of the total work force. This economic niche comprised seventy-seven percent of all working women in Libya and thirty-eight percent of all working males, which illustrates a preference by females for this sector of the economy (NAID 1995). According to the same census, most working Libyans worked in the public and social sectors of the economy, which comprised approximately fifty-four percent of the total workforce. These sectors of the economy comprised eighty-five percent of all working women and forty-seven percent of all working men. Subsequently, this further upholds the preference that females had for these fields of work (NAID 1995). Both table 15 and figure 16 present economic sectors categorized by male and female population in Libya, according to the census of 1995



**Table 15.** Economic sectors categorized by male and female population in Libya, according to the census of 1995.

Economic activity	Males	Females	Total
Agriculture, forests, fishing	107,709	4,206	111,915
Mines and quarries	18,606	679	19,285
Manufacturing	64,697	10,111	74,808
Electricity, gas, water	28,738	1,385	30,123
Construction	16,336	613	16,949
Commerce	79,059	2,941	82,000
Transportation, public transport, warehousing	59,935	2,280	62,215
Public and social services	348,971	147,355	496,326

**Figure 16.** Visual representation of economic sectors categorized by male and female population in Libya, according to the census of 1995.



The census conducted in 2006 identified 1,675,880 Libyans who were fifteen years or older were involved in the workforce, which represents approximately 45.89 percent of the total population. The total percentage of Libyan males within the workforce was 64.9 percent, which was higher than females at 26.3 percent. The census further revealed that unemployment rates were higher among males at 21.55 percent when compared to females at 18.7 percent. Moreover, the total number of Libyans employed by the scientific and technical sector was 438,458, which represented 32.84 percent of those who were economically active. This percentage was higher among females at 67.44 percent as opposed to males at 18.62 percent, which indicates that females preferred scientific and technical professions. This finding is consistent with the results in earlier censuses (BSC 2006).



Table 16 and figure 17 illustrate specific economic activities undertaken by male and female Libyans, according to the census of 2006.

**Table 16.** Economic sectors categorized by male and female population in Libya, according to the census of 2006.

Economic activity	Males	Females	Total
Agriculture, forests, fishing	100,307	18,980	119,287
Mines and quarries	31,952	2,157	34,109
Manufacturing	43,302	3,888	47,190
Electricity, gas, water	30,737	1,499	32,236
Construction	37,507	2,096	39,603
Commerce	9,733	3,532	13,265
Transportation, public transport, warehousing	61,162	3,373	64,535
Public and social services	203,210	640,942	844,152

According to Figure 16, most eligible Libyans worked in the public service sector. This sector of the economy accounted for a total of 844,152 Libyan citizens, which comprised 640,942 women. The second most attractive sector for females was agriculture, forest, and fishing with a total of 18,980 of the total 119,287 strong workforce.

**Figure 17.** Visual representation of economic sectors categorized by male and female population in Libya, according to the census of 2006.

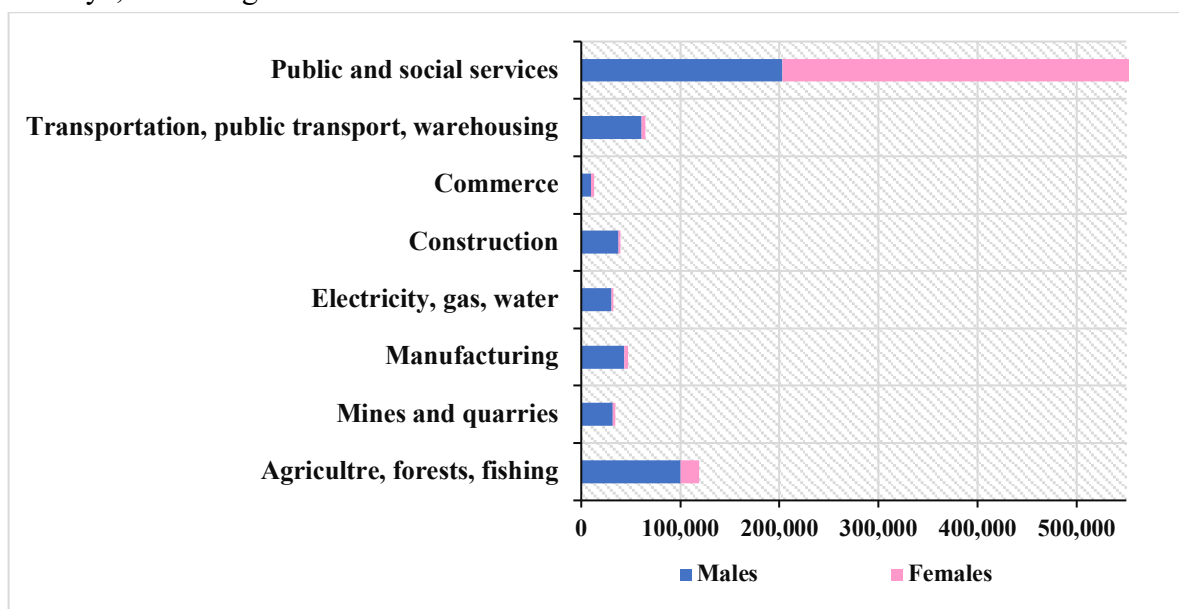
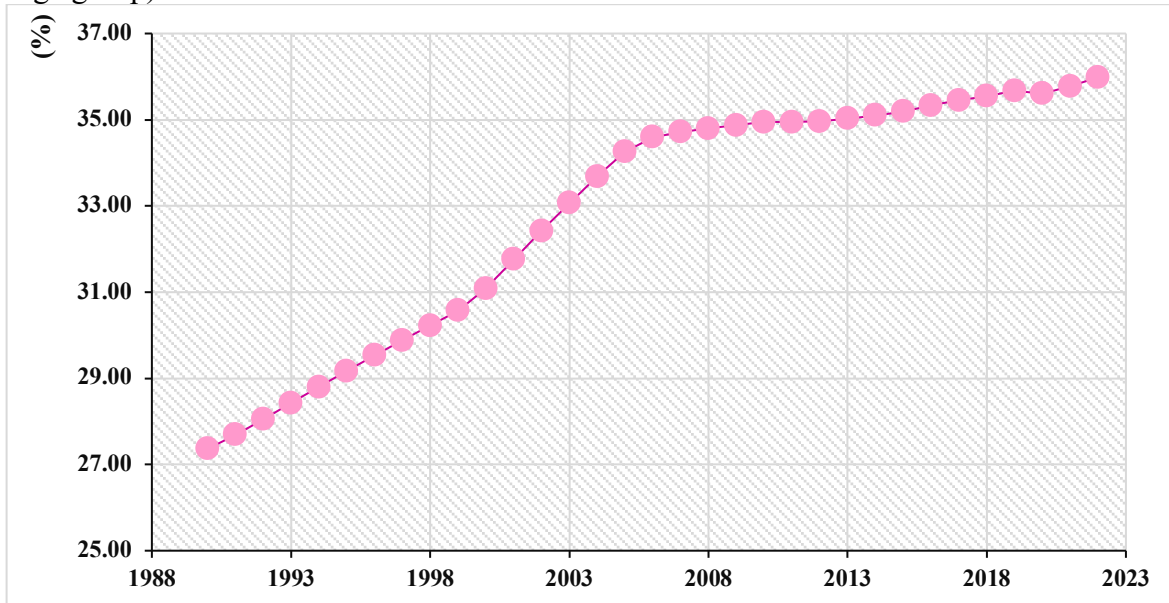


Figure 18 is based on World Bank statistics (WB 2022), which visually presents the percentage of working women in Libya from 1990 through 2022 amongst those ages fifteen to sixty-four years old. This graph illustrates a marked increase throughout the years. This percentage measures female economic activity in Libya, as well as their share of the workforce.



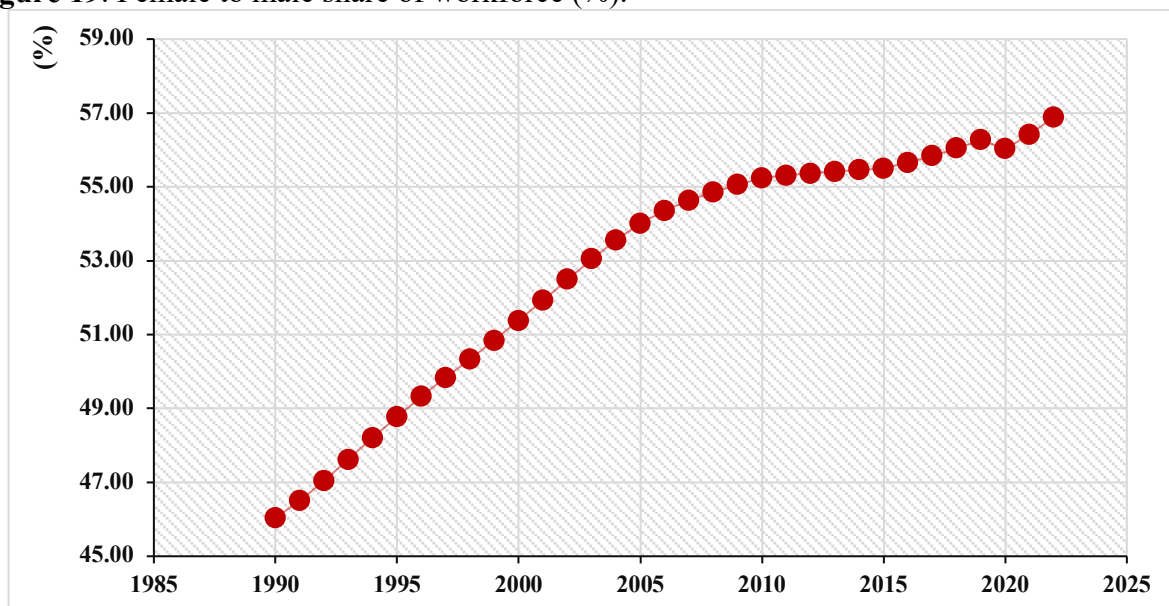
**Figure 18.** Female share of the workforce in Libya by year (as a percentage using a 15–64-year-old age group).



Source: ILO Department of Statistics (ILOSTAT), International Labor Organization (ILO).

With reference to the World Bank statistics (Figure 19), Libya has been experiencing a gradual increase among female participation in the workforce, which is fifty-seven percent, when compared to males.

**Figure 19.** Female to male share of workforce (%).



Source: ILO Department of Statistics (ILOSTAT), International Labor Organization (ILO).



## Conclusion

This research has identified no obstacles in legislation passed by the government that inhibit female participation in Libyan society. In actuality, the ratified laws in Libya incorporate the rights of women, particularly the right to an education and the freedom to work. Moreover, women in Libya are provided the opportunity to assume leading and administrative roles, which provides the opportunity for women to engage in all sectors of the economy. The analysis of educational statistics discloses the number of females enrolled at all levels of education in Libya has steadily increased throughout the years. The most recent census revealed that female university students in Libya outnumber their male peers. However, females within the marriable age group exhibit lower education enrollment rates. Regarding the work force, females in Libya tend to be attracted to the fields of public service, manufacturing, and agriculture. According to the World Bank, women's share of the workforce in Libya has increased on a yearly basis as compared to a gradual increase among men.

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