

Cairo Demographic Center

Labor Force Profile in Rural Upper Egypt versus Rural Lower  
Egypt

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Studies of development recognize the importance of human resources in the process of economic and social development.

In Egypt , rural areas are classified into two regions , Rural Lower Egypt (RLE) which includes the rural areas of the following eight governorates : Damietta , Dakahlia , Sharkia , Kalubia , kafr El-Shikh , Gharbia , Minufia , and Behera. The second region is Rural Upper Egypt (RUE) and includes the rural areas of the following eight governorates: Giza , Beni-Suef , Fayoum , Menia , Asyut , Sohag , Qena , and Aswan.

Several studies have shown that rural Upper and rural Lower Egypt have different fertility and mortality levels. Thus , this study seeks to identify whether levels of labour force participation and labour force structure are different in the two regions.

### 1.1 Objectives of the Study

This study focuses on the Labour Force Profile in Rural Lower Egypt (RLE) Versus Rural Upper Egypt (RUE) according to the results of Labour Force Sample Survey 1988.

The specific objectives of this study are as follows :

- (1) Examining the level and age pattern of participation in the labour force in rural Upper Egypt Versus rural Lower Egypt;
- (2) Analyzing the labour force structure by industry , occupation , and employment status in rural Upper versus rural Lower Egypt.

- (3) Analyzing the quality of the labour force due to educational structure.
- (4) Projecting the labour force size in rural Egypt up to the year 2011.

### 1.2 Data Sources and Limitations

The main source of data for this study is the Labour Force Sample Survey (LFSS) , fourth quarter ,1988 which was conducted by CAPMAS under the Labour Force Information System Project.

According to the detailed questions with enough probing and better trained personnel of LFSS ,1988, data of this survey not to be compared with the activity rates computed from other sources of data, specially for female.

### 1.3 Methodology

In addition to using Crude Activity Rate (CAR) , Refined Activity Rate (RAR) and Age-Specific Activity Rates (ASAR) , I will use the Index of Dissimilarity (ID) \* to examine the similarity or dissimilarity between rural Upper and rural Lower Egypt, with respect to comparison characteristics using the following formula:

$$ID = \frac{1}{2} \sum |r_{2a} - r_{1a}|$$

where  $r_{1a}$  represents the percent at each age group in the first population; and

$r_{2a}$  represents the percent at each age group in the second population.

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\* See Shryock and Siegl, 1976, P.131.

#### 1.4 Organization of the Study

The study consists of six sections. Following this introductory section, section 2 deals with the Labour Force Participation in rural Upper Egypt versus rural Lower Egypt . Section 3 examines the Labour Force Structure in rural Upper versus rural Lower Egypt. Section 4 examines the Quality of the Labour Force with respect to educational level. Section 5 presents the Labour Force Projections. Finally, the conclusions of the study are given in section 6 .

## 2. PARTICIPATION IN LABOUR FORCE

### 2.1 Crude and Refined Activity Rates

The crude Activity Rate is defined as the percentage of the total population which is economically active. The results of 1988 Labour Information System Project pertaining to crude and refined activity rates by sex in rural Upper and rural Lower Egypt are given in table (1). This table shows that the crude activity rate for rural lower Egypt was 40.5 % for both sexes combined while it was 37.7 % in rural Upper Egypt .

The refined Activity Rate , which is the ratio of labour force to population at age 6 years and over , was 50.9 % in rural Lower Egypt for both sexes combined while it was 48.8 % in rural Upper Egypt.

Table (1) also shows that the crude and refined activity rates were higher in rural Lower Egypt than rural Upper Egypt for male and female separately and also for both sexes combined.

The higher participation rates in rural Lower Egypt than rural Upper Egypt could be attributed to the former being historically more developed than the later (Osheba, 1990).

TABLE(1): CRUDE AND REFINED ACTIVITY RATES FOR RURAL LOWER AND RURAL UPPER EGYPT, 1988.

	RURAL LOWER EGYPT			RURAL UPPER EGYPT		
	M	F	T	M	F	T
TOTAL POP. (000)'	7619	7912	15531	6880	6726	13606
POPULATION (6+)	6069	6285	12354	5255	5267	10522
LABOUR FORCE	3622	2666	6288	3047	2088	5135
CAR	47.5	33.7	40.5	44.3	31.0	37.7
RAR	60.0	42.4	50.9	58.0	39.6	48.8

Source: CAPMAS (1990) ,Computed from results of 1988 Labour Force Information Project (Table 1&6).

## 2.2 Age-Sex Specific Activity Rates

The Age-Sex specific Activity Rates are defined as the proportion of the population engaged in the economic activity life in each age-sex group. Table (2) gives labour force age specific participation rates by sex in rural Upper and rural Lower Egypt. This table shows that , although both males and females show high rates of labour force participation in almost all age groups in rural Lower and rural Upper Egypt, there is a remarkable difference between the two sexes. In rural Lower Egypt, male activity rates ranged from about 12 % to 100 % , while those for females ranged from about 9 % to about 61 %. The lowest activity rate is found in the youngest age group for males and in the oldest age group for females.

TABLE(2):AGE SPECIFIC ACTIVITY RATES FOR RURAL LOWER AND RURAL UPPER EGYPT,1988.

Age Group	RURAL LOWER EGYPT			RURAL UPPER EGYPT		
	M	F	T	M	F	T
6-11	11.97	12.51	12.24	7.44	10.22	8.83
12-14	34.19	30.31	32.28	27.96	27.54	27.75
15-19	56.78	41.72	49.31	52.76	40.00	46.38
20-29	66.53	60.71	63.56	71.70	53.52	62.61
30-39	100.00	61.01	80.43	99.08	59.25	79.17
40-49	98.71	60.97	78.59	99.76	56.61	78.19
50-59	93.42	54.17	73.47	96.93	53.07	75.00
60-64	94.01	41.01	64.06	88.06	34.85	61.46
65+	59.75	9.13	33.07	51.03	12.71	31.87

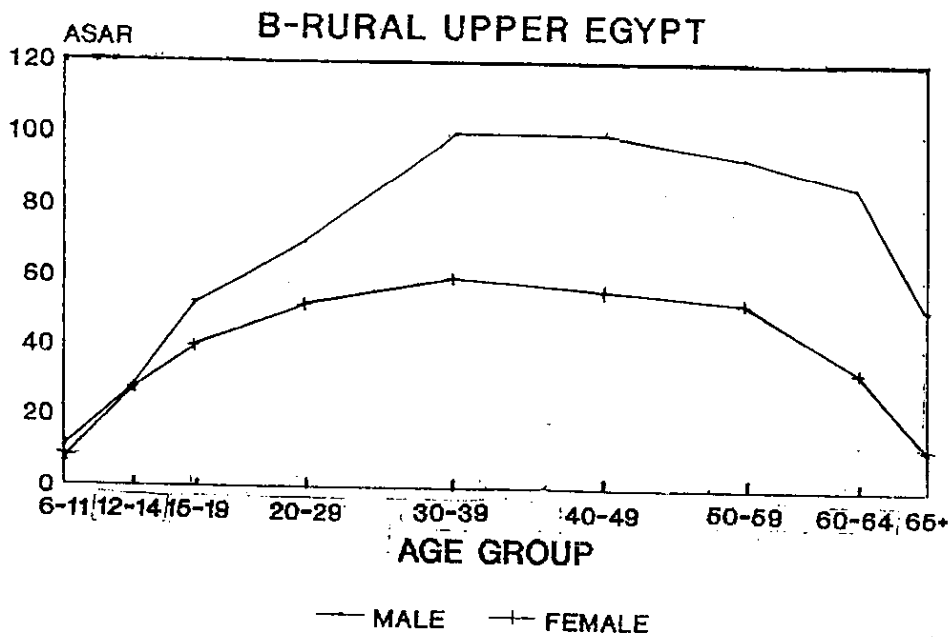
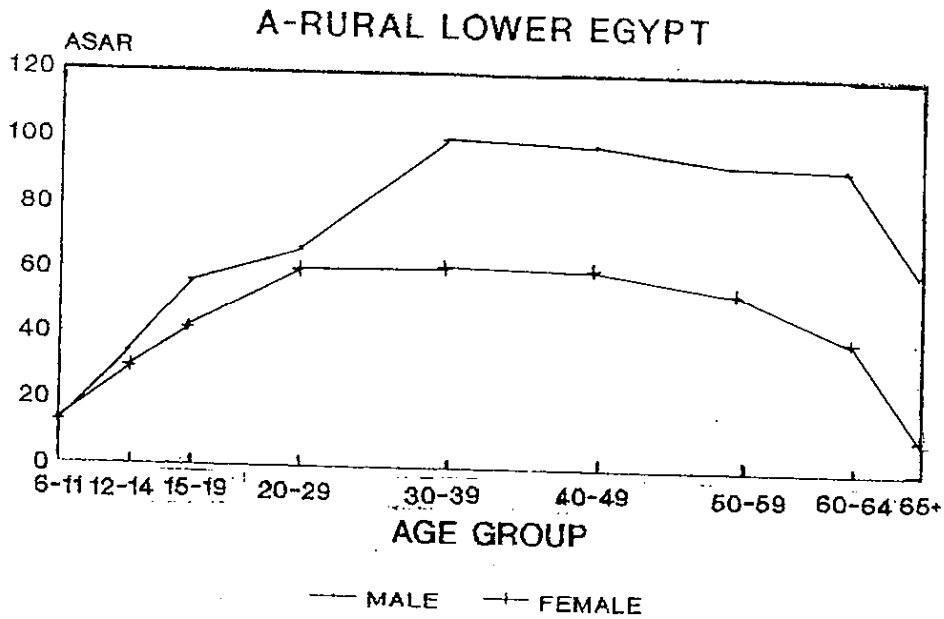
Source:CAPMAS (1990),Computed from results of 1988 Labour Force Information Project (Table 1&6).

In rural Upper Egypt , male activity rates ranged from about 7 % to about 100 % while female activity rates ranged from about 10 % to about 59 %. The lowest activity rate is found in the youngest age group for both males and females (See Figure 1).

It should be mentioned that female activity rates considered high in both rural Lower and rural Upper Egypt in all age groups. Female work in rural areas, where agriculture forms the predominant activity and where work outside home is not significantly affected by childcare. Women can take their children with them to work place. Age limits and hours of work are flexible in agricultural activities.

Also there is no complete social security coverage for aged persons working in agriculture, so they continue to work at advanced ages for sustenance.

(FIG.1): AGE-SEX SPECIFIC ACTIVITY RATES FOR RURAL LOWER & RURAL UPPER EGYPT, 1988.





### 3. LABOUR FORCE STRUCTURE

One additional aspect of the labour force, which deserves great attention is economic structure or the types of economic activities in which the the labour force is engaged (El-Biblawi,1984).

Three principal classifications of the economic characteristics of the labour force are currently used in population statistics : industry , referring to the function of the establishment or the enterprise in which the individual works ; occupation , referring to the type of work which the individual worker does ; and employment status, of which four primary categories are employees, employers , workers on own account , and unpaid family workers (U.N,1973).

This section examines each of these three principal classifications . The employed persons represent the total labour force.

#### 3.1 Industrial Structure

The percentage distribution of the employed persons by industrial sector is shown in table (3).

As expected in the rural regions , agricultural sector plays dominant role in absorbing the labour force For rural Lower Egypt , agriculture accounts for 69 % of the labour force which is very close to the corresponding figure in rural Upper Egypt (67 %).

Concentration of female labour force in the agricultural sector was high in the two regions, it was 85 % in rural Lower Egypt and 82 % in rural Upper Egypt.

the services sector ranked next to agriculture, it was 11 % in rural Lower Egypt while it was 10 % in

TABLE(3): PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYED PERSONS BY MAIN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND SEX, RURAL LOWER AND RURAL UPPER EGYPT, 1988.

Main Economic Activity	RURAL LOWER EGYPT			RURAL UPPER EGYPT		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Agriculture	58.2	85.2	69.4	56.9	81.7	67.0
Mining	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.4	0.0	0.2
Manufacturing	11.0	4.4	8.2	7.6	9.8	8.5
Electricity	0.6	0.0	0.4	0.9	0.0	0.5
Construction	3.6	0.1	2.2	8.7	0.0	5.2
Trade	5.8	3.9	5.0	7.6	5.0	6.6
transport	5.5	.1	3.2	2.2	0.1	1.3
Finance	0.5	0.2	0.4	1.0	0.3	0.7
Services	14.6	6.1	11.1	14.7	3.1	10.0
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N(000)'s	3517	2494	6011	2898	2003	4901
Index of Dissimilarity:	Male: (8%)	Female: (8.6%)	TOTAL: (5.4)			

Source: CAPMAS (1990), Computed from results of 1988 Labour Force Information Project (Table 14).

rural Upper Egypt. The manufacturing sector ranked the third, it was 8.2 % in rural Lower Egypt and 8.5 % in rural Upper Egypt.

Sex differentials in the industrial structure of the workers can be seen in Table(3). The main sector absorbing female labour force is agriculture; it absorbed more than four-fifth of the female workers in the two regions, which is much higher than the corresponding figure for males (about 60 %).

The Index of Dissimilarity shows that there is a small difference between the two distributions; only about 5 % of the labour force need to change economic activity to have identical distributions in rural Lower and rural Upper Egypt. The corresponding ID values for males and females are 8% and 9% respectively.

### 3.2 Occupational Structure

Information on occupational patterns and their trends is of special importance in the statistical framework of manpower planning as an integrated part of policy for socio-economic development (Nassef,1970).

Table(4) indicates the distribution of employed persons by occupation and sex in rural Upper and rural Lower Egypt. As shown in the table, the majority of the employed persons is concentrated in agricultural occupation it was 69 % in rural Lower Egypt and 66% in rural Upper Egypt. This finding corresponded to the industrial structure distribution, where more than two thirds of the employed persons were found in agricultural activity. Production is the second important occupation, in terms of labour force engagement, after agriculture; it comprised 14% of the employed persons in rural Lower Egypt and 16% in rural Upper Egypt.

TABLE(4): PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYED PERSONS BY MAIN OCCUPATION AND SEX, RURAL LOWER AND RURAL UPPER EGYPT, 1988.

Occupation	RURAL LOWER EGYPT			RURAL UPPER EGYPT		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Tech.&Scientific	7.3	4.1	6.0	7.5	2.5	5.5
Management	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.1
Clerical	3.7	2.5	3.2	3.7	1.2	2.7
Sales	3.9	3.5	3.7	5.5	4.5	5.1
Services	7.0	0.3	4.2	7.0	0.4	4.3
Agriculture	57.5	85.0	68.9	56.6	80.6	66.4
Production	20.4	4.6	13.8	19.5	10.8	15.9
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N(000)'s	3518	2493	6011	2895	2003	4898
Index of Dissimilarity:	Male: (1.2%)		Female: (7.4%)		Total: (3.6)	

Source: CAPMAS (1990), Computed from results of 1988 Labour Force Information Project (Table 13).

With respect to the sex differential in the occupational structure . Table (4) indicates that while the share of female in agricultural occupations is higher in rural Lower Egypt (85%) than rural Upper Egypt (80.6%) , the share of female in production is higher in rural Upper Egypt (11%) than rural Lower Egypt (4.6%).

The higher percentage of female production workers in rural Upper Egypt than rural Lower Egypt may be partly due to the construction of the Sugar Cane and Aluminum factories close to rural areas in Upper Egypt and the availability of job opportunities in such factories for women.

The value of the Index of Dissimilarity (3.6%) shows that the occupational structure for both sexes compined in rural Upper and rural Lower Egypt are very similar. The corresponding ID value for females and males are about 7% and 1% respectively.

### 3.3 Employment Status

Distribution of labour force by employment status reflects the organization pattern of production . Table (5) presents the percentage distribution of the employed persons by employment status and sex in rural Upper and rural Lower Egypt. From this table , it is noticed that the non-waged family workers constitute the highest percentage of the labour force in the two regions, it is higher in rural Lower Egypt(45 %)than rural Upper Egypt (40%). The proportion waged workers (employees) in rural Upper Egypt (34 %) is similar to that in rural lower Egypt (33 %). The proportion of labour force classified as employers in rural Upper Egypt was 10 % which is similar to that in rural Lower Egypt (18).

The highest proportion of the labour force being

TABLE(5): PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYED PERSONS BY WORK STATUS IN MAIN JOB AND SEX, RURAL LOWER AND RURAL UPPER EGYPT, 1988.

Employment Status	RURAL LOWER EGYPT			RURAL UPPER EGYPT		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Waged Workers	44.9	15.5	32.7	51.8	7.6	33.8
Employer	25.0	7.0	17.6	24.2	11.2	18.9
Self-Employed	5.6	4.5	5.1	7.4	6.8	7.1
Non-Waged Family Workers	24.5	73.0	44.6	16.6	74.4	40.2
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N(000)'s	3517	2494	6011	2900	2003	4903
Index of Dissimilarity:	Male: (8.7%)		Female: (7.9%)		Total: (4.4%)	

Source: CAPMAS (1990), Computed from results of 1988 Labour Force Information Project (Table 15).

non-waged family workers in both rural Upper and rural Lower Egypt is due to rural areas being less developed with the traditional values and norms still holding strongly.

With respect to the sex differentials, Table (5) indicates that females are more engaged as unpaid family workers than males. It is noticed also that the percentage of waged female workers is higher in rural Lower Egypt (15.5%) than rural Upper Egypt (7.6%) while the percentage of female employers was higher in rural Upper Egypt (11.2%) than rural Lower Egypt (7%). This may be due, among other things, to restrictive traditions in rural Upper Egypt than rural Lower Egypt.

The ratio of employees (waged workers) per 100 employers, own account workers, and family workers combined was 48.6% in rural Lower Egypt while it was 51% in rural Upper Egypt, this reflects the traditional mode of production in the agricultural sector.

The value of the Index of Dissimilarity (4.4%) shows that there is a great similarity between the distribution of the labour force by employment status in rural Upper and rural Lower Egypt. The corresponding ID value for females and males are 7.9% and 4.4% respectively.

#### 4. QUALITY OF THE LABOUR FORCE

In recent years, interest in the quality of the labour force has been implicit in the growth of practical interest in concept of labour as human capital. Writers interested in quantifying improvements in labour quality have assessed them especially in terms of changes in the educational standard of the population. (Williams, 1970)

In this section I examine the quality of the labour force in terms of educational level attained.

Table (6) presents the percentage distribution of labour force by educational status in rural Upper and rural Lower Egypt. From this table we can notice that about two-thirds of the labour force is concentrated in the illiterate level for both region; it was 59% in rural Lower Egypt versus 68% in rural Upper Egypt. The proportion of read and write level ranked the second; it was 15% in rural Lower Egypt versus 11% in rural Upper Egypt.

Generally, it is noticed that the educational level of labour force in rural Lower Egypt is better than that in rural Upper Egypt, especially with respect to female labour force.

about eight out of every ten females in the labour force in both rural Upper and rural Lower Egypt are illiterate. This should alert policy planner and decision makers to the need for better educating female labour force in rural Egypt.

The value of the Index of Dissimilarity (9%) shows that the two distributions are somewhat different. The corresponding ID values for females and males are 6.5% and 12.5% respectively.



TABLE(6):PERCENTAGE DISTRIPUTION OF LABOUR FORCE BY EDUCATIONAL STATUS AND SEX,RURAL LOWER AND RURAL UPPER EGYPT, 1988.

Educational Status	RURAL LOWER EGYPT			RURAL UPPER EGYPT		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Illiterate	45.8	78.2	59.4	57.1	84.7	68.3
Read&Write	22.9	4.8	15.3	16.1	4.7	11.5
Less than Inter- mediate	14.7	4.6	10.5	10.5	4.2	8.0
Intermediate	10.2	9.0	9.7	11.2	4.3	8.4
Above Intermediate	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.8	1.1	1.5
Universty & High	4.8	1.8	3.5	3.3	1.0	2.4
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N(000)'s	3551	2591	6142	3007	2040	5047
Index of Dissimilarity:	Male: (12.5%)		Female: (6.5%)		Total: (9%)	

Source: CAPMAS (1990),Computed from results of 1988 Labour Force Information Project (Table 7).

## 5. LABOUR FORCE PROJECTIONS

### 5.1 Assumptions and Methodology

This section focuses on projecting the labour force size for rural Egypt up to the year 2011. For this purpose the population projections ( Median Variant ) of CAPMAS, 1991b, were used, assuming the stability of the percent rural and the age-sex pattern of population according to the results of 1986 Census within the projection period. The procedure adopted essentially consists of projection of activity rates by age and sex and then applying them to the projected population by age and sex and then aggregating for all ages.

Due to the expected increase in school attendance in rural Egypt, it was assumed that the activity rates for males less than twenty years will decline to reach 1988 LFSS levels of urban Egypt by the year 2011. While the activity rates for females less than twenty years were assumed to reach 1988 LFSS levels of total Egypt by the year 2011.

Activity rates observed in the 1988 LFSS for other age groups are assumed to remain the same during the projection period. The projected participation rates for males and females are shown in Table (7) and (8) respectively.

(TABLE 7): THE PROJECTED LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES FOR MALES, RURAL EGYPT, 1991-2011.

Age Group	Years				
	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011
6-11	9.84	8.15	6.46	4.74	3.07
12-14	31.30	26.87	22.44	18.01	13.58
15-19	54.96	49.95	44.93	39.92	34.95
20-29	68.86	68.86	68.86	68.86	68.86
30-39	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
40-49	99.06	99.06	99.06	99.06	99.06
50-59	95.52	95.52	95.52	95.52	95.52
60-64	91.36	91.36	91.36	91.36	91.36
65+	54.92	54.92	54.92	54.92	54.92

(TABLE 8): THE PROJECTED LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES FOR FEMALES, RURAL EGYPT, 1991-2011.

Age Group	Years				
	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011
6-11	11.48	10.49	9.49	8.50	7.50
12-14	29.10	26.85	24.59	22.34	20.08
15-19	41.02	38.49	35.96	33.43	30.90
20-29	57.45	57.45	57.45	57.45	57.45
30-39	60.24	60.24	60.24	60.24	60.24
40-49	59.05	59.05	59.05	59.05	59.05
50-59	53.62	53.62	53.62	53.62	53.62
60-64	38.07	38.07	38.07	38.07	38.07
65+	10.82	10.82	10.82	10.82	10.82

## 5.2 Results of the Projections

The results of the projections are shown by age in Table(9) for males and Table (10) for females. The trend in the total size of the labour force by sex are summarised in Table (11).

From Table (11) it is noticed that the total labour force in rural Egypt may be expected to increase from 12.4 millions in 1991 to 17.3 millions in the year 2011. This means that the labour force is expected to increase by 40% in twenty years. The male labour force is expected to increase to about 10.2 millions; the increase being 30% , while the female labour force will reach 7.1 millions in the year 2011 ; the increase being over 43%.

The implication of these projections deserve careful consideration. The absolute increases are so large that creation of adequate employment opportunities in rural Egypt must be a major goal for policy makers, especially involving labour-intensive projects.

(TABLE 9): PROJECTED MALE LABOUR FORCE , RURAL EGYPT  
1991-2011.

(In thousands)

Age Group	Years				
	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011
6-11	225	209	184	150	106
12-14	364	350	326	288	239
15-19	952	971	972	954	919
20-29	1629	1827	2034	2246	2471
30-39	1699	1905	2121	2342	2577
40-49	1150	1289	1436	1585	1745
50-59	827	927	1032	1139	1254
60-64	300	336	375	414	455
65+	294	329	367	405	445
Total	7440	8143	8847	9523	10211

(TABLE 10): PROJECTED FEMALE LABOUR FORCE , RURAL EGYPT,  
1991-2011.

(In thousands)

Age Group	Years				
	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011
6-11	241	248	250	248	241
12-14	297	308	316	317	314
15-19	606	641	669	688	701
20-29	1333	1501	1677	1856	2046
30-39	1044	1176	1314	1454	1603
40-49	741	834	932	1031	1137
50-59	505	569	636	704	776
60-64	143	161	179	199	219
65+	56	64	71	79	87
Total	4966	5502	6044	6576	7124

(TABLE 11): FUTURE TRENDS IN THE LABOUR FORCE, RURAL EGYPT,  
1991-2011.

(In thousands)

Age Group	Years				
	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011
Male	7440	8143	8847	9523	10211
Female	4966	5502	6044	6576	7124
Total	12406	13645	14891	16099	17335

Third, the educational structure of the labour force showed that the proportion of illiterates was higher in rural Upper (68.3%) than rural Lower Egypt (59.4%), especially for females, ( 84.7% and 78.2% respectively).

Fourth, according to the labour force projections ,labour force in rural Egypt is expected to increase by 40% in the twenty years between 1991 and 2011.

Generally, it is noticed that labour force profile in rural Lower Egypt is better than that in rural Upper Egypt.

Given the findings of the study, the following recommendations are worth noting:

- (1) given the labour force profile in terms of participation and structure being better in rural Lower than rural Upper Egypt, more attention needs to be given to the latter region, especially to females, in terms of providing job opportunities outside the home for cash.
- (2) The inferior educational structure of the labour force in both rural Upper and rural Lower Egypt suggests that more attention needs to be given to educating the labour force in rural Egypt.
- (3) The expected increases in the labour force size are large that creation of adequate employment opportunities in rural areas must be a major goal for policy makers, especially through labour-intensive projects.

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## APPENDIX

(TABLE 12): PROJECTED MALE POPULATION, RURAL EGYPT ,  
1991-2011.

(In thousands)

Age Group	Years				
	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011
0-5	3280	3678	4095	4521	4975
6-11	2283	2560	2850	3146	3463
12-14	1162	1303	1451	1601	1762
15-19	1733	1943	2164	2389	2629
20-29	2366	2653	2954	3261	3589
30-39	1699	1905	2121	2342	2577
40-49	1161	1302	1450	1600	1761
50-59	865	970	1080	1193	1313
60-64	328	368	410	453	498
65+	535	599	668	737	811
Total	15412	17281	19243	21243	23378

(TABLE 13): PROJECTED FEMALE POPULATION, RURAL EGYPT ,  
1991-2011.

(In thousands)

Age Group	Years				
	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011
0-5	3179	3580	3999	4426	4879
6-11	2095	2359	2636	2917	3216
12-14	1020	1149	1283	1420	1566
15-19	1478	1665	1860	2059	2269
20-29	2320	2613	2919	3231	3562
30-39	1734	1952	2181	2414	2661
40-49	1254	1412	1578	1746	1925
50-59	943	1062	1186	1313	1447
60-64	375	422	471	522	575
65+	522	588	657	727	801
Total	14920	16802	18770	20775	22901

Source: CAPMAS, 1991, Demographic Analysis of 1986 Census Data, Vol. III.