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Globalization and the Feminization of Poverty within Tradable and Non-Tradable Economic Activities

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1. INTRODUCTON

The 1990s witnessed the growing amount of research on the poverty issue in developing countries. Globalization has occasionally been seen as the main reason for the poverty problem due to the adverse effects of trade and financial market liberalization on the income flows of households in these countries. This is mainly because developing countries has been exposed to the income shocks generated in the world economy. Despite the increasing importance of policy coordination in economy managements among countries, the industrialized countries have still been showing reluctance to come forward with such corporation. Consequently the developing countries have no option other than designing their own policy measures to deal with the adverse impacts of the negative shocks in the world economy. Although such measures can be considered as vital for short term purposes, they would be unsustainable in the long term and would lead the countries, most of the time, to encounter the balance of payment difficulties.

In this research we divide all economic activities into two main groups as the tradable and non-tradable economic activities. It is assumed that tradable economic activities are exposed to the world economy and its inverse effects on income flows generated by these activities. Accordingly income flows of households in such economic sectors would also be influenced by the price condition in the world economy. With the trade liberalization in commodity markets income flows in these sectors become tided to world prices, and leave no option to the government other than complying with the condition created by external forces. Non-tradable economic activities in developing countries, on the other hand, are less exposed to the world economy, and leave some freedom to the government of developing countries to implement independent income management policies. In particular the presence of large but unproductive labour force together with the high income expectation of these groups force the governments of these countries to implement income separate management policies which is independent of the income condition in the world market.

In this paper, we propose a research to examine the likely effects of liberalization period on the poverty level of Turkish households. In particularly as the most vulnerable component of society the female-headed households (FHHs) are expected to be exposed to liberalization. For this purpose, we divide the FHHs into those earning income in tradable economic activities and those earning income in nontradable economic activities. Using the head count ratio as

a measure of poverty, we examine the changes in the poverty condition of the FHHs in comparison with the male-headed households over time. We also propose to test whether or not the poverty level of the FHHs is statistically higher than those of the MHHs and deteriorates over time. This testing is expected to introduce evidence regarding the feminization of poverty in Turkey. If this is true, then we investigate the forces that would affect the divergence and deterioration in poverty levels against FHHs. Using the regression method, we estimate a logit model and distinguish the likely determinants of the probability of being worse off for the FHHs and MHHs. We also examine whether or not the income obtained from tradable and nontradable activities have significant impact on the probability of being in poverty for both groups of households. For all these purposes, the required cross sectional data are obtained from *Household Income and Consumption-Expenditure Surveys* conducted by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat) in 1994, 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005. Each survey is sufficient to enable the estimation of income and expenditure of Turkish households, which serves as the basis for constructing a money metric measure of the standard of living.

The feminization of poverty is a change in poverty levels that is biased against women or female-headed households (Medeiros and Costa, 2008). The feminization of poverty idea is defined various meanings after than its original usage by Pearce who introduced it in the 1970s (Pearce, 1978). According to the conventional meaning if the ratio of women's poverty over men's poverty is greater than 1, poverty is feminized (Brady and Kall, 2008). Pearce has used two concepts for the feminization of poverty, the first being "an increase of women among the poor" and the second "an increase of female headed households among the poor households" (Medeiros and Costa, 2008). Since Pearce's approach has methodological problem in terms of looking poverty among the poor and not to look at poverty inside a group, subsequent researches have followed consequent approach. These researches used feminization as an increase in poverty in female headed households (or women) in relation to poverty in male headed households (or men) (Northrop, 1990; Wright, 1992; Fuwa, 2000).

Medeiros and Costa (2008) defined the feminization of poverty as comparison of poverty changes of female-headed households (or women) over time with the male-headed households (or man). The main point in this definition is adoption the feminization as a process instead of a state. Instead of the women-man comparison it could be more suitable to look at female-male

headed household comparison over time. The studies about the feminization of poverty such a latter definition above are less common and almost all are limited to developed countries (Medeiros and Costa, 2008). Nevertheless there is little yet growing literature addressing the issue of feminization of poverty in developing countries such as Medeiros and Costa (2008) for Latin America and Fuwa (2000) for Panama.

The reminder of the paper is organised as follows. In Section 2, we briefly discuss the data and the methodology of measuring poverty. The empirical findings of the paper are presented in Section 3. Finally, Section 4 sets out our conclusions.

2. ISSUES IN MEASURING POVERTY

In empirical research there are three crucial issues that should be taken into account in measuring poverty. The first issue is the choice of an appropriate unit of analysis. The conventional analysis of poverty, which is based on the concept of income poverty or private consumption patterns, takes the *households* as the unit of analysis, implicitly assuming that all available resources are shared equally within the households. The second issue relates to the identification of the poor, and requires the construction of a monetary poverty line, so that all those below this line are considered as poor. Finally, the third issue involves the choice of proper aggregate measurement of poverty, which could capture all available information about being poor. In the following analysis, these three issues are discussed in detail.

Choice of Equivalent Scale

The first issue that should be taken into account is to answer the question of among whom income distribution should be considered. Of course, the answer for this question is individuals. However the data in practice is collected for households but not for individuals. The standard units of assessment in statistical surveys are taken as the household, in which the incomes of all household members are aggregated. In order to have individual equivalent income measure in this respect, household income is divided by an appropriately calculated *equivalent scale*. In this regard, there are two different ways to calculate an equivalent scale (N). In the first one,

$$N = 1 + \alpha(s_a - 1) + \beta s_k \qquad (1)$$

where s_a and s_k are the number of adults and children in the household respectively and α and β are their own constant parameters. Unlike (1), the equivalent scale can also be calculated as follows:

$$N = S^e \ , \qquad 0 \le e \le 1 \tag{2}$$

where *S* is the household size, *e* is the elasticity of the rate of scale with respect to household size. Equation (2) is the most commonly used way of calculating an equivalent scale measure in the established literature. In the one extreme case where *e* equals unity, no economies of scale exist and a family of two requires twice as much disposable income as a family of one to reach the same level of welfare. At the other extreme situation where *e* equals zero, economies of scale are perfect, so that a household of two, or for that matter a household of any number, can live exactly as well as a household of one with no increase in their disposable income (*see* Burkhauser *et al.*, 1996 for further discussion).

Recent studies on income equality and poverty have used the equivalence scale, which is calculated as in equation (2), and the value of *e* varies slightly between 0.50 and 0.55. OECD (1998) and Atkinson (1995), for example, used 0.5 as a scale value of *e* in the studies for *OECD* and *EU* countries respectively. In the present research, the same equivalence scale measure as in OECD (1998) is employed to convert the disposable income of households to disposable income per equivalent adult. Then, the disposable income per equivalent adult is accordingly calculated as follows:

$$Y_{ij} = \frac{R_i}{S^e} \tag{3}$$

where R_i and Y_{ij} stand for household income and disposable income per equivalent adult. Having discussed equivalent scale, there are two further issues left in measuring poverty.

Construction of a Poverty Line

The second issue that we encountered in such a study on poverty is to identify the poor among the whole population. This problem is simply resolved by selecting a properly defined *poverty line*. However the identification of this poverty line is an arbitrary process, and any poverty measure constructed with respect to different poverty lines may give rise to different poverty rates. In the literature, a poverty line can be constructed in either absolute or relative sense. In absolute sense it is, for example, determined by the cost of minimum food requirement

which is necessary for subsisting life. However, if someone wishes to compare the poverty lines of different countries, then it is appropriate to use the relative poverty line approach. This is also an arbitrary process, and generally one portion of median income (40%, 50% or 60%) is accepted as the poverty line. In Turkey the 2.5 % proportion of total population is more commonly taken as the critical rate for absolute poverty in comparison with the internationally comparable one-dollar per day poverty line (World Bank, 2000). There is, nevertheless, no absolute poverty problem in Turkey with the low poverty rate 7.2 % (Yemtsov, 2001). This study put particular emphasise on the importance of economic vulnerability and its likely distributional consequences in Turkey. The study further brings about the fact that 36 % of the total population has consumption expenditure below the economic vulnerability line, which compromises the costs of both minimum food basket and basic non-food spending. A recent study by Gürsel *et al.* (2000) also uses the same methodology as the World Bank and shows that relative income poverty improved slightly from 1987 to 1994. The present research also employs the relative poverty approach, and the poverty line was determined by the income threshold, which is the equivalent of 50 % of the median disposable income per equivalent adult.

Choice of Poverty Measures

Another issue to be resolved is the choice of appropriate aggregate measures of poverty. For our empirical investigation we employed three widely used measures (Kakwani, 1980; Foster *et al.*, 1984; Atkinson, 1987; Ravallion, 1994). They are namely *head-count ratio* (P_0), *poverty gap* ratio (P_1) and the *Foster-Greer-Thorbecke* (P_2) poverty index. For simplicity we employed the *head-count ratio, the* simplest way of measuring poverty in this study. The head-count ratio of poverty simply indicates the proportion of the population for whom income is less than the pre-determined poverty line; then $P_0 = q/n$ where q is the number of persons whose income lies below the poverty line, and n is the total population.

3. DATA AND EMPIRICAL RESULTS

The cross sectional data on which this study is based is obtained from *Household Income and Consumption-Expenditure Surveys* conducted by the Turkish Statistical *Institute* (TurkStat) in 1994, 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005. Each survey includes rural and urban sectors, and is sufficient to enable the estimation of

income and expenditure of Turkish households, which serves as the basis for constructing a money metric measure of the standard of living.

In this study, households are divided into two groups according to the gender of their household heads: namely Male-Headed Households (MHHs) and Female-Headed Households (FHHs). The concept of female headship is useful for the purposes of research. The female headed households are in fact poorer than other households, headship should seriously be considered as potentially useful criteria for targeting antipoverty interventions, especially in developing countries (Buvinic, M. and Gupta, G. R., 1997). Total household income was preferred for the construction of the standard of living. The measures of standard of living from all surveys were thus the total household income, which was adjusted by household size.

In what follows, this research seeks answers for a number of questions regarding the link between openness and poverty of female-headed households. and its distinction between tradable and non-tradable sectors. We first present a brief general descriptive summary of the general pattern of poverty in Turkey based on the survey data, and then examine the presence of any statistically significant difference between the poverty levels of FHHs and MHHs. Later, we investigate the importance of the sectoral difference in the FHHs and MHHs's poverty levels.

General Summary Measures of Samples

Table 1 reports the sample size and some summary statistics such as mean per household annual income and the Gini coefficients of the disposable income per equivalent adult. All surveys possess slightly more than 26000 households in 1994 and 2003, and around 10000 for 2002, 2004 and 2005. As seen in Table 1, FHHs constitute a very small proportion of total households in the samples; almost 10 % in all years. The MHHs / FHHs ratio of mean annual income per household has decreased from 1.54 in 1994 to 1.31 in 2005. However, the estimates of Gini-coefficients for both MHHs and FHHs appear to have improved slightly over time.

(*Table 1 and 2 about here*)

Table 2 presents estimates of head-count ratio over time which is decomposed by economic activities and gender. For the whole economy, the level of poverty seems to have slightly deteriorated from 1994 to 2005; about 16 % of

total population lived under the poverty line in 1994, 2002 and 2003 whereas the same figure was approximately 19 % in 2005. The same pattern can be observed for the poverty level among MHHs and FHHs. However the poverty rates for FHHs seems to have prevailed above those of MHHs over the entire period, have exhibited significant difference from MHHs. This striking feature of the data can be regarded as the feminization of poverty in Turkey. Interestingly inequality between the poverty rates of MHHs and FHHs appears to have eradicated over time. In other words, poverty gap between these two household groups narrowed. More precisely, the ratio of the poverty rate of FHHs to that of MHHs became 1.16 in 2004 and 1.28 in 2005, whereas the same figure was around 1.40 in 1994, 2002 and 2003. So far our initial examination shows that poverty appears to have slightly increased over time but slightly against MHHs, and inequality between FHHs and MHHs has slightly improved.

Table 2 shows whether or not there is a significant poverty gap between households in different sectors, and, more importantly, whether or not the feminization of poverty is related to the sectors from which household income is generated. In this regard, we decompose households with respect to two main sectors from which households earn their income, namely tradable and non-tradable goods producing sectors. Among them, the poverty level of the tradable sector can be considered to be related to the income generation process which is directly connected with foreign expenditure in the world economy. In particular the presence of free trade regime and/or import competition restricts the ability of policy makers to design independent income management policies in order to generate income in favor of the households employed in tradable sectors. Therefore households earning income in tradable sectors can be considered to be influenced more than those in the non-tradable sector by external shocks. Income earned in the non-tradable sector, on the other hand, could be controlled by policy makers though domestic expenditures which could be managed partly independently from the world economy. The adverse income effects of any external shocks on income earned in the non-tradable sector can be compensated easily by additional income created through independent income management policies.

In Table 2 there exist very distinctive differences in poverty gaps between MHHs and FHHs in tradable and non-tradable sectors. First of all, it is evident that there is significant difference against the tradable sector. A further inspection of Table 2 reveals that FHHs, as a vulnerable group of the Turkish

society, suffers more from poverty if they earn their income from tradable good producing sectors. This is because their income in this sector is directly exposed to the level of foreign expenditure and most importantly import competition. Therefore any adverse development in both determinants of income flows in the tradable sector would influence the well-being of the FHHs. Although the poverty levels of both household groups deteriorated over time the poverty gaps seems to have gradually widened from 1994 to 2005. In particular, the proportion of household living under the poverty line in 2005 was about 46 % for FHHs, whereas it is only 21 % (almost half of the former) for MHHs. This can, indeed, be considered as evidence in favor of the *feminization of poverty* in the tradable sector in Turkey.

(*Figure 1 about here*)

There is also an interesting pattern in poverty gap between MHHs and FHHs in the non-tradable sectors in Table 2. More precisely the proportion of FHHs under the poverty line in this sector appears to have been lower than those of MHHs in the same sector over time. Moreover the poverty level of FHHs overall seems to have remained lower than 10% in 2004 and 2005. Interestingly we are *not* able to find any evidence for *the feminization of pove*rty in the Turkish non-tradable sector.

Sectoral and Occupational Decomposition of Poverty

We now make a distinction between households in accordance with economic activities which the heads of households engage to earn their household income, and then examine whether or not there is a difference in poverty levels between FHHs and MHHs with respect to their occupations and the sources of income. These activities are namely; wage earning economic activities, casual working, being an employer and self employment.

(*Table 3 about here*)

As seen in Table 3, the proportion of households living under the poverty line among these wage earner FHHs is systematically lower than those of *MHH*s, indicating that female wage earners are better off than male. In fact there is only one sector that the feminization poverty appears to have prevailed, namely self employed FHHs. This particularly becomes even more evident in 2004 and 2005.

When we analyze the sectoral decomposition of poverty between tradable and non-tradable sectors the feminization of poverty is clear in almost all occupational groups in tradable sectors. However an interesting observation appears in the causal income earner groups. Despite the larger proportion of FHHs under the poverty line in earlier year, the poverty gap seems to have reversed against MHHs in 2005 in the causal working group in the tradable sector. The female-headed households appear to be relatively well off in non-tradable sectors, particularly in all income groups in comparison with their male counterparts. It is also clear from Table 3 that causal working male households have been exposed to poverty more than their female counterpart in the tradable sectors, and their proportion has been increasing over time. The poverty among causal worker MHHs seems to have reach 68 % in 2005 in comparison with 57 % of their female counterparts in tradable sector. But there is again no concrete evidence for deliberate feminization of poverty among the causal income earners in the tradable sector.

Furthermore when we closely examine the total figures, the poverty gap between two households groups appears to be against MHHs, indicating that FHHs in the wage earning income group were better off overall. This even becomes more evident in the non-tradable sectors. However the tradable sector exhibits an evidence for the feminization of poverty among the wage earning income groups with the widening poverty gap from 1994 to 2005.

Interestingly, in the tradable sector the proportion of self employed FHHs under the poverty line appears to be consistently larger than male households implying that FHHs in this income group have a larger risk to become poor. Therefore the feminization of poverty in Turkey can be observed generally among the wage earning and self-employed FHHs in tradable sectors.

(*Table 4 about here*)

In order to examine whether or not traditional sectoral decomposition, such as agriculture, manufacturing and services, accounted for any significant difference in poverty levels between MHHs and FHHs, we have prepared Table 4. Given the current structure of the Turkish economy, this decomposition is important for two main reasons. First, the Turkish economy, to great extent, shows an agricultural nature in employment by providing jobs for more than 30 % of total labour forces. Second, the export orientation of sectors has been considered as important, and it would be interesting to examine whether or not exporter nature of any sector helps to eradicate poverty. Textile and clothing

could be crucial in this regard because do many years this sector has been considered as a traditional exporting sector in Turkey.

The first panel of Table 4 indicates that 23.3 % of households were under the poverty line and this ratio seems to have increased gradually and has reached 37 % in 2004 and 30 % in 2005. This is the largest poverty ration over all sectors, and argues immediate attention due to the importance of the agriculture sector in the Turkish economy. The service sector follows agriculture with relatively larger poverty ratio than others. There exists no large poverty ratio for the textile and clothing sector with the poverty ratio remaining stable about 10 %.

Examining the decomposition of households by gender, Table 4 reveals interesting observations. First, the proportion of FHHs under the poverty line seems to have been more than MHHs, and the poverty gap between these two group increased over time. Second, the poverty level for both households in the agriculture sector appears to be important and large, but the poverty gap between them widened against FHHs providing a clear evidence for the feminization of poverty in this sector. The poverty level of households in the textile and clothing sector shows, to the lesser extent, the same pattern as the agriculture sector. Third, FHHs in the service sector seems to have been better off in comparison with MHHs. More interestingly the poverty gap between these two household groups has widened against MHHs in 2004 and 2005.

4. CONCLUSION

Since the 1980s, economic reforms and liberalisation of international trade regime have been widespread practice among developing countries. As one of them, Turkey began to liberalise her trade regime in 1983. Apart from the potential benefits of more liberal and open trade regime, it is also inevitable that this would have distributional effects on individuals. The literature has, so far, paid considerable attention to the reform-and-growth relationships and could not reach any concrete agreement on the direction of this interaction. The distributional consequences of the reform have, on the other hand, recently gained importance in the literature. The gender issue has however been largely ignored. The present research is an attempt, *to some extent*, to fill this gap with empirical evidence from a well-known reforming country in the literature, namely Turkey.

The present research show that there is a significant difference between the well-being of FHHs and MHHs, and this inequality seems to have decreased

in favor of FHHs from 1994 to 2005. It is also noted that the number of FHHs under poverty line and involving tradable economic activities to earn income has increased drastically, implying the feminization of poverty in the tradable sectors. This can also be considered as evidence that female-headed households would have been more exposed to adverse income shocks from international markets. We can conclude that households earning their income in tradable economic activities seem to have been under a serious risk of being under the poverty line. However the results shows that non-tradable economic activities appears to have provided better income opportunities for FHHs and their poverty level have remained far below the poverty level of male counterparts. This implicitly implies that it would have been easier to eradicate the effects of adverse income shocks in the relatively closer sectors in which the creation of income flows is dependent largely non domestic expenditure in national currency and requires no direct foreign expenditure. In addition, this research shows that the occupational difference can also accounted for poverty gaps between two household group in Turkey. Causal working households seems to have been under a risk of being poor. Interestingly, although the ratio of households under the poverty line is very large for all households groups, the poverty gap in tradable sectors appears to have reversed against MHHs in recent years. Finally income earned in traditional export sectors of Turkey, such as agriculture and textile and clothing, can be seen as a source of poverty for FHHs. But on the other hand, FHHs have been well off in service sectors.

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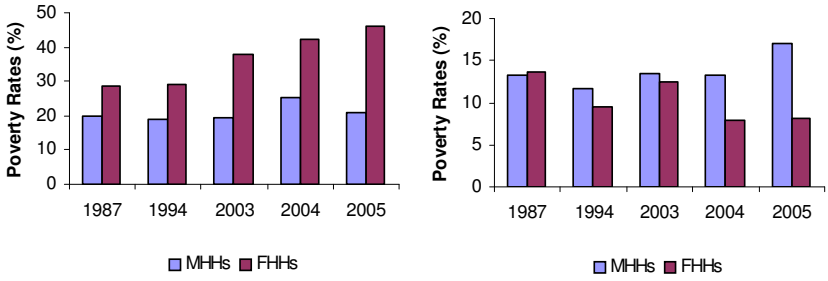
Table 1

	1994	2002	2003	2004	2005
Total					
Sample Size	26,236	9555	25764	8544	8551
Median household size	4	4	4	4	4
Mean Household size	4,50	4,26	4,18	4,14	4,15
Mean annual income per household (YTL)	151	7050	8640	12300	14103
Gini Coefficient	0,45	0,44	0,43	0,41	0,39
Head-count ratio	15.5	16.3	16.2	18.1	18.8
Male-Headed Households					
Sample Size	24,218	8594	23308	7642	9667
Mean annual income per household (YTL)	156	7250	8890	12600	14452
Gini Coefficient	0,45	0,44	0,43	0,41	0,39
Head-count ratio	15.2	15.7	15.6	17.9	18.5
Female-Headed Households					
Sample Size	2018	961	2456	902	884
Mean annual income per household (YTL)	101	5280	6280	9380	11069
Gini Coefficient	0,43	0,49	0,44	0,43	0,43
Head-count ratio	21.6	22.7	21.9	20.7	23.7

Table 2 - Poverty Rates for FHHs and MHHs within Tradable and Non-Tradable Economic Activities

	Total		Tradable Economic Activities		Non-tradable Economic Activities	
	MHHs	**FHHs**	**MHHs**	**FHHs**	**MHHs**	**FHHs**
1994	15,2	21,6	19,0	**28,9**	11,6	**9,5**
2003	16,0	28,2	19,6	**37,8**	13,4	**12,4**
2004	18,5	25,3	25,4	**42,1**	13,3	**7,9**
2005	18,7	32,1	20,8	**46,3**	17,1	**8,2**



(a) the Tradable Sector **(b)** the Non-Tradable Sector

Figure 1 - Poverty Gaps

Table 3 - Poverty Rates for income groups within two economic activities

	Total		Tradable Sectors		Non-tradable Sectors	
	MHHs	FHHs	MHHs	FHHs	MHHs	FHHs
			1994			
Total	15,2	21,6	19,0	28,9	11,6	9,5
Wage/salary	9,4	8,3	11,5	10,8	8,4	7,5
Casual	32,3	42,6	39,9	54,4	30,1	22,0
Employer	2,0	-	3,6	-	1,3	-
Self employment	17,6	26,9	21,1	28,1	9,3	8,7
			2003			
Total	16,0	28,2	19,6	37,8	13,4	12,4
Wage/salary	8,6	5,3	8,0	17,8	8,9	2,4
Casual	45,7	49,8	57,0	62,7	43,1	43,0
Employer	3,1	-	3,3	-	3,0	-
Self employment	20,7	36,2	24,8	38,1	12,9	7,7
			2004			
Total	18,5	25,3	25,4	42,1	13,3	7,9
Wage/salary	9,2	4,0	8,7	0,0	9,4	5,4
Casual	49,8	36,4	62,0	68,3	45,0	15,9
Employer	3,6	-	6,7	-	1,5	-
Self employment	24,8	45,3	33,7	50,4	10,3	8,1
			2005			
Total	18,7	32,1	20,8	46,3	17,1	8,2
Wage/salary	12,0	10,6	9,6	24,2	13,2	6,3
Casual	52,2	29,8	68,3	56,8	46,6	16,1
Employer	1,4	-	1,3	-	1,4	-
Self employment	21,4	45,5	24,9	48,2	15,4	-

Table 4 - Poverty Rates for Sectors

	Poverty Rates (%)		
	All households	MHHs	FHHs
1994			
Agriculture	23.3	22.9	30.0
Food Man.	9.7	9.5	17.8
Textile&Clot. Man.	9.7	*8.6*	*26.5*
Other Man.	10.0	10.0	4.8
Service	11.6	11.6	9.5
Non-working	16.1	15.2	19.3
Total	15.5	15.2	21.6
2002			
Agriculture	22.8	22.1	35.5
Food Man.	9.3	9.4	0.0
Textile&Clot. Man.	10.2	*8.2*	*39.1*
Other Man.	10.4	10.4	0.0
Service	14.9	14.9	16.9
Non-working	18.5	17.7	21.4
Total	16.3	15.7	22.7
2003			
Agriculture	26.9	26.4	39.1
Food Man.	8.8	8.7	12.5
Textile&Clot. Man.	9.8	*8.3*	*42.1*
Other Man.	7.5	7.5	0.0
Service	13.4	13.4	12.0
Non-working	15.2	14.1	20.1
Total	16.2	15.6	21.9
2004			
Agriculture	37.4	36.9	55.6
Food Man.	13.3	13.5	0.0
Textile&Clot. Man.	8.3	*7.7*	*16.5*
Other Man.	7.4	7.5	0.0
Service	13.2	13.3	7.9
Non-working	16.5	15.8	19.3
Total	18.1	17.9	20.7
2005			
Agriculture	30.4	29.4	53.1
Food Man.	7.1	7.2	0.0
Textile&Clot. Man.	10.4	*9.9*	*23.5*
Other Man.	8.3	8.2	15.0
Service	16.9	17.1	8.2
Non-working	18.5	17.9	21.2
Total	18.8	18.5	23.7