

ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

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THE RESIDENT LABOUR FORCE

The resident labour force expanded at a moderate pace in the last ten years. The average annual rate of increase of the resident labour force was 1.8 per cent. This was the same as the resident population growth rate. In 2000, there were 1.6 million economically active residents, up from 1.3 million in 1990 (Table 1).

TABLE 1 RESIDENT POPULATION AGED 15 YEARS AND OVER BY ACTIVITY STATUS

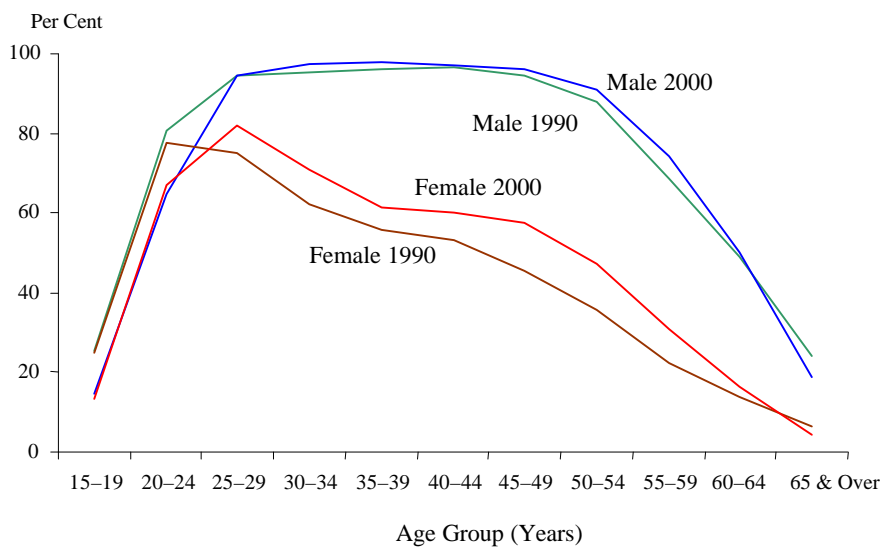
Activity Status	Number ('000)		Per Cent		Average Annual Growth (%)
	1990	2000	1990	2000	
Singapore Residents	2,078.8	2,494.6	100.0	100.0	1.8
Economically Active	1,314.6	1,576.6	63.2	63.2	1.8
Economically Inactive	764.2	918.0	36.8	36.8	1.9
Males	1,045.6	1,229.8	100.0	100.0	1.6
Economically Active	810.3	941.8	77.5	76.6	1.5
Economically Inactive	235.3	288.0	22.5	23.4	2.0
Females	1,033.2	1,264.9	100.0	100.0	2.0
Economically Active	504.3	634.8	48.8	50.2	2.3
Economically Inactive	529.0	630.1	51.2	49.8	1.8

There were proportionately fewer males in the resident labour force in 2000 than ten years ago. The male labour force participation rate declined slightly from 78 per cent in 1990 to 77 per cent in 2000. In contrast, more females had entered the labour market. The female labour force participation rate rose from 49 per cent to 50 per cent.

Increased Labour Force Participation in Working Ages

The male and female participation rates rose in all age groups except the youngest and oldest age groups (Chart 1). There was a decline in participation rates for those aged 15–24 years and 65 years and over. Proportionately more male and female residents aged 15–24 years were schooling and hence fewer joined the labour market. Among the elderly residents, there was an increased propensity to retire and withdraw from the labour market.

CHART 1 AGE-SEX-SPECIFIC LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES OF RESIDENT POPULATION

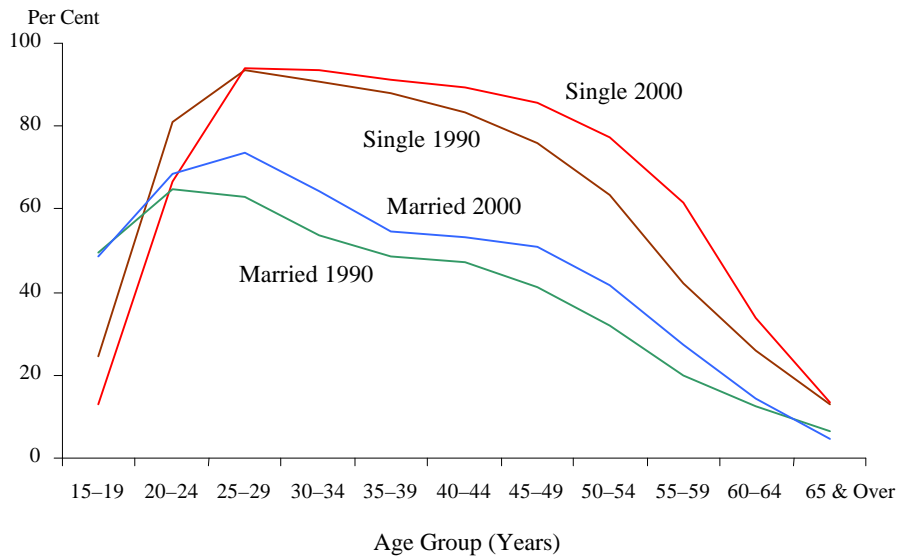


More Economically Active Married Females

Compared with 1990, participation rates of married resident females had risen (Chart 2). The rates for married females remained lower than those for single females, as married females tended to withdraw from the labour market for family reasons.

In 2000, the labour force participation rates for married resident females exhibited an emerging M-shape, with a distinct peak at the 25–29 age group and a smaller hump at the 45–49 age group. This was because some married women in their thirties withdrew from the labour force for family reasons. At age 40–49 years, some of the married women re-entered the workforce when their children grew older.

CHART 2 LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES OF FEMALE RESIDENT POPULATION



THE WORKFORCE

In 2000, there was a total of 1.48 million working residents (Table 2). Compared with the total of 1.29 million persons in 1990, the resident workforce had expanded by 1.4 per cent per annum. This was much slower than the increase of 9.4 per cent for the non-resident workforce. In absolute terms, the non-resident workforce grew from 248,200 in 1990 to 612,200 in 2000.

TABLE 2 WORKING PERSONS AGED 15 YEARS AND OVER BY RESIDENTIAL STATUS

Residential Status	Number ('000)		Per Cent		Average Annual Growth (%)
	1990	2000	1990	2000	
Total	1,537.0	2,094.8	100.0	100.0	3.1
Singapore Residents	1,288.8	1,482.6	83.9	70.8	1.4
Non-Residents	248.2	612.2	16.1	29.2	9.4

Upgrading of Occupational Structure

Economic restructuring and the improvement in educational attainment over time had led to occupational shifts in the employment structure of the resident workforce. A higher proportion of the resident workforce was in the more highly skilled occupational groups in 2000. Professionals and technical workers comprised 29 per cent, up from 18 per cent in 1990 (Table 3). There was also an increase in the proportion holding administrative and managerial jobs.

In 2000, 19 per cent of the resident workforce were in production or related jobs and only 6.8 per cent worked as cleaners and labourers. In comparison, a higher proportion of 24 per cent and 16 per cent respectively of the total workforce were employed in such jobs. The data reflect the concentration of non-resident workers in the low-skilled jobs.

TABLE 3 OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION BY RESIDENTIAL STATUS

Occupation	Per Cent			
	Total		Residents	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Administrative & Managerial	8.6	11.9	9.4	14.3
Professional	4.9	8.9	5.3	10.1
Technical & Related	10.8	14.9	12.2	19.1
Clerical	13.0	11.0	15.1	14.4
Sales & Services	12.7	10.1	14.4	12.3
Production & Related	30.8	24.4	27.7	19.3
Cleaners & Labourers	15.0	16.0	10.9	6.8
Others	4.3	2.6	5.1	3.6

All the three main ethnic groups experienced an upgrading in occupational structure. Between 1990 and 2000, the proportion employed in managerial, professional and technical jobs rose from 30 per cent to 46 per cent for the Chinese, from 12 per cent to 23 per cent for the Malays and from 22 per cent to 43 per cent among the Indians (Table 4). Among the Indians, the entry of permanent residents to fill professional jobs contributed to the increased proportion in these high-paying occupations.

TABLE 4 OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF RESIDENT WORKFORCE BY ETHNIC GROUP

Occupation	Per Cent							
	Chinese		Malays		Indians		Others	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Administrative & Managerial	11.0	15.9	1.1	2.9	7.1	12.5	13.2	27.0
Professional	5.8	10.7	2.0	4.0	5.2	12.7	10.8	17.5
Technical & Related	13.0	19.6	8.6	16.4	10.0	18.0	16.8	19.0
Clerical	14.9	13.5	16.0	20.0	15.0	15.4	18.2	12.5
Sales & Services	14.0	11.7	15.4	16.2	17.1	13.7	15.9	12.2
Production & Related	26.5	18.6	37.7	27.5	24.1	15.4	12.8	6.7
Cleaners & Labourers	9.7	6.2	16.2	10.7	15.2	8.0	6.5	3.0
Others	5.3	3.8	3.0	2.3	6.4	4.3	5.9	2.2

Shift in Employment by Industry

Overall, the services-producing industries had grown in importance during the decade, accounting for increasing employment shares. In 2000, 74 per cent of the resident workforce were in the services industries, up from 67 per cent in 1990 (Table 5). The expansion in employment share was most significant in business services. The proportion employed in financial services, transport and communications as well as the community, social and personal services also increased.

The employment share of the resident workforce in the goods-producing industries as a whole had declined. This was mainly due to the smaller manufacturing workforce. Employment in the construction industry increased slightly over the ten-year period.

The construction industry was the most reliant on non-resident workers. The construction industry employed 13 per cent of the total workforce, up from 8.0 per cent in 1990. In comparison, only 6.1 per cent of the resident workforce worked in the construction industry in 2000.

TABLE 5 INDUSTRIAL DISTRIBUTION OF WORKFORCE BY RESIDENTIAL STATUS

Industry	Per Cent			
	Total		Residents	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Goods Producing Industries	37.8	34.5	33.0	26.4
Manufacturing	28.9	20.8	26.2	19.5
Construction	8.0	13.1	5.9	6.1
Other Goods Industries	0.8	0.6	0.9	0.7
Services Producing Industries	62.2	65.5	67.0	73.6
Wholesale & Retail Trade	15.6	13.7	18.0	17.1
Hotels & Restaurants	6.3	5.5	7.1	6.3
Transport & Communications	9.5	9.4	11.0	12.0
Financial Services	4.0	4.6	4.5	5.9
Business Services	7.3	10.8	8.2	12.9
Community, Social & Personal	19.5	21.6	18.1	19.4

Ethnic Differentials in Employment Shares by Industry

Ethnic variations in employment across industries persisted in 2000. A higher proportion of the Chinese and Malays (20 per cent) were employed in manufacturing than the Indians (16 per cent) (Table 6). Compared with the Malays and Indians, the Chinese tended to be more commerce-oriented, with relatively higher concentrations of the resident workforce engaged in wholesale and retail trade, hotels and restaurants, and financial services. In contrast, the Malays and Indians continued to have higher concentrations than the Chinese in such services as transport and communications, business services as well as community, social and personal services.

TABLE 6 INDUSTRIAL DISTRIBUTION OF RESIDENT WORKFORCE BY ETHNIC GROUP

Industry	Per Cent							
	Chinese		Malays		Indians		Others	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Goods Producing Industries	33.4	27.3	35.5	24.7	25.8	20.6	17.3	15.9
Manufacturing	25.8	19.9	31.3	19.9	22.0	16.1	14.7	12.4
Construction	6.7	6.9	2.7	3.3	2.3	3.1	2.0	3.0
Other Goods Industries	0.8	0.6	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.4	0.7	0.5
Services Producing Industries	66.6	72.7	64.5	75.3	74.2	79.4	82.7	84.1
Wholesale & Retail Trade	19.7	18.5	9.5	10.2	15.2	13.4	14.4	13.9
Hotels & Restaurants	7.4	6.5	5.6	5.9	6.4	5.1	7.2	6.2
Transport & Communications	10.2	11.0	15.4	18.2	11.9	13.7	14.1	13.0
Financial Services	4.8	6.3	2.9	3.6	3.5	4.5	6.4	7.6
Business Services	7.6	12.4	10.8	13.7	10.5	15.8	14.3	19.9
Community, Social & Personal	16.9	18.0	20.2	23.7	26.7	27.0	26.3	23.6

THE UNEMPLOYED

Reflecting the effects of the recent regional financial and economic crisis, unemployment had increased in 2000. A total of 97,500 persons were unemployed during the second quarter of 2000 (Table 7). This was a marked increase over the total of around 45,500 unemployed persons in the pre-crisis period.

Among Singapore residents, the unemployment rate had continued to increase in the second quarter of 2000. The rate rose to 6.0 per cent, from 4.9 per cent in 1999 and 3.4 per cent in 1998. Although the number of unemployed Singapore residents continued to increase, the rate of increase had slowed down. The number rose from 78,400 in 1999 to 94,000 in 2000, by 20 per cent. Between 1998 and 1999, the number grew by almost 50 per cent.

TABLE 7 UNEMPLOYMENT TRENDS

	1990	1995	1997	1998	1999	2000
Total Population						
Unemployment Rate (%)	1.7	2.7	2.4	3.2	4.6	4.4
Number Unemployed ('000)	25.8	47.2	45.5	62.1	90.1	97.5
Resident Population						
Unemployment Rate (%)	2.0	3.2	2.5	3.4	4.9	6.0
Number Unemployed ('000)	25.8	45.5	38.9	53.1	78.4	94.0

More Older Residents Unemployed

The unemployment rate for older persons remained high in 2000 compared with 1999 (Table 8). In particular, the older females in their late thirties to forties had relatively large increase (from about 4 per cent in 1999 to 6 per cent in 2000) in unemployment rate. The increase for their male counterparts was comparatively lower.

The unemployment rates for the younger age groups between the ages of 15 and 24 years were higher than the older age groups in 2000. This was mainly because many of the younger persons were new entrants to the labour market looking for jobs.

TABLE 8 RESIDENT UNEMPLOYMENT RATE BY AGE GROUP AND SEX

Per Cent

Age Group (Years)	Total			Males			Females		
	1990	1999	2000	1990	1999	2000	1990	1999	2000
Total	2.0	4.9	6.0	2.2	4.7	5.6	1.6	5.2	6.6
15 – 19	3.6	10.7	11.9	1.7	3.6	3.7	5.7	19.6	21.4
20 – 24	3.3	9.4	8.1	3.7	7.1	7.1	2.8	11.9	9.1
25 – 29	2.3	4.7	6.0	2.9	5.2	6.2	1.5	4.3	5.9
30 – 34	1.8	3.8	5.1	2.2	3.8	4.8	1.1	3.7	5.4
35 – 39	1.6	3.8	5.2	1.9	3.8	4.7	1.0	3.8	6.0
40 – 44	1.5	4.4	5.8	1.8	4.6	5.5	1.0	4.1	6.3
45 – 49	1.7	5.0	6.1	2.1	5.4	5.9	1.0	4.3	6.4
50 – 54	1.3	4.2	6.3	1.6	5.1	6.5	0.6	2.6	5.9
55 & Over	0.3	4.4	5.0	0.3	4.3	5.0	0.1	4.7	4.9

Higher Unemployment among the Less Educated

Unemployed residents with lower educational qualifications tended to face more difficulties in securing employment. The unemployment rate of those with primary or no qualification was almost 9 per cent in 2000, double that of those with post-secondary or higher qualifications (Table 9).

The unemployment problem among the less educated was mitigated by the small size of the less educated population and their decreasing numbers over the years. Among the economically active resident population, those with primary or no qualification formed a minority group of 31 per cent in 2000, down from 48 per cent in 1990.

TABLE 9 RESIDENT UNEMPLOYMENT RATE BY HIGHEST QUALIFICATION ATTAINED

Per Cent

Highest Qualification Attained	Distribution of Economically Active Resident Population			Unemployment Rate		
	1990	1999	2000	1990	1999	2000
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	2.0	4.9	6.0
No Qualification	19.4	14.1	9.9	2.1	6.1	9.0
Primary	28.5	22.2	21.1	2.6	5.9	8.5
Secondary	32.4	29.0	27.3	1.7	4.7	5.7
Post-Secondary	13.7	20.9	26.2	1.2	3.9	4.2
University	6.0	13.7	15.5	1.4	4.2	4.0

THE ECONOMICALLY INACTIVE

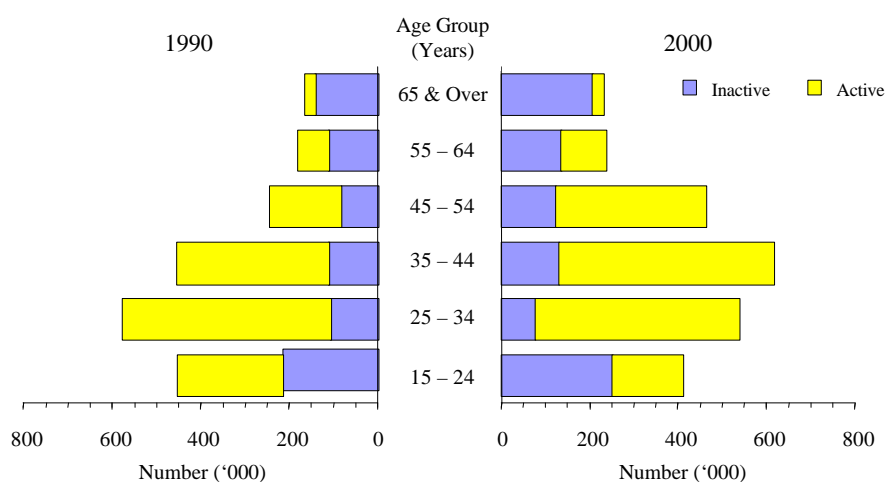
In 2000, there was a total of 918,000 economically inactive residents. Compared with the total of 764,200 in 1990, the resident economically inactive population had increased by 1.9 per cent per annum.

More Economically Inactive among Younger and Older Persons

The economically inactive population had grown faster than the economically active population among the oldest residents during the last decade. Inactive elderly residents aged 65 years and over increased by 3.9 per cent per annum, compared with 0.6 per cent for their active counterparts (Chart 3).

Among resident youths aged 15–24 years, prolonged schooling had increased the size of the inactive population (by 1.6 per cent) while reducing those who were active (by 3.8 per cent). In contrast, for the middle-aged and older adults between the ages of 35 and 64 years, the growth rate was slower for the economically inactive than active residents.

CHART 3 RESIDENT POPULATION AGED 15 YEARS AND OVER BY ECONOMIC STATUS



AVERAGE ANNUAL GROWTH, 1990–2000

	Per Cent					
	15–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65 & Over
Total	–0.9	–0.7	3.0	6.5	2.6	3.5
Active	–3.8	–0.2	3.5	7.6	3.6	0.6
Inactive	1.6	–3.1	1.5	4.0	1.9	3.9

Growth in Student and Retiree Populations

Corresponding to the growth of economically inactive residents in the youngest and oldest age groups, there was an increase in the number of students and retirees. The number of retirees increased at an average growth rate of 4.1 per cent per annum in the last ten years (Table 10). By 2000, the retiree population had grown to 247,800. The student population also increased rapidly by 2.4 per cent per annum, to 217,200.

**TABLE 10 ECONOMICALLY INACTIVE RESIDENTS
BY ACTIVITY STATUS AND SEX**

Thousand

Activity Status	Total			Males			Females		
	1990	2000	Average Annual Growth (%)	1990	2000	Average Annual Growth (%)	1990	2000	Average Annual Growth (%)
Total	764.2	918.0	1.9	235.3	288.0	2.0	529.0	630.1	1.8
Student	171.5	217.2	2.4	89.1	112.0	2.3	82.4	105.3	2.5
Homemaker	353.1	361.6	0.2	2.7	0.6	-14.0	350.4	360.9	0.3
Retired/Too Old to Work	165.6	247.8	4.1	93.8	125.7	3.0	71.7	122.1	5.5
Others	74.1	91.4	2.1	49.6	49.6	0.0	24.5	41.8	5.5

Higher Economic Dependency Ratio for Malays and Indians

Among those aged 15 years and over in 2000, there were 58 economically inactive residents per 100 economically active residents, unchanged from 1990 (Table 11). The ratio had declined slightly among the Chinese between 1990 and 2000, as there were more married women entering the labour market than those retiring from their jobs. Among the Malays, the increase in students and retired persons had contributed to an increase in the ratio of the economically inactive to active population.

The Malays had the highest economic dependency ratio among the major ethnic groups. They had the most youthful population structure and the lowest participation rate of married women in the labour market. In 2000, there were 72 economically inactive Malays per 100 active Malays. The ratio was much lower for the Indians (57 per 100) and Chinese (56 per 100).

**TABLE 11 RESIDENT ECONOMIC DEPENDENCY RATIO*
BY ETHNIC GROUP**

Ethnic Group	Per Hundred	
	1990	2000
Total	58.1	58.2
Chinese	57.8	56.2
Malays	62.6	72.0
Indians	52.1	57.3
Others	75.1	64.3

* Economic Dependency Ratio is defined as the ratio of economically inactive persons to economically active persons.