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ABSTRACT

This brief report presents and discusses statistics on the marital and family characteristics of workers in 1973 [e.g., nearly 40 million married men and 20 million married women were among the 88 million person labor force, and of the 1.7 million increase in the labor force, three-quarters consisted of married women (34 percent), single men (24 percent), and single women (15 percent)]. Family statistics are reviewed, and tables show employment status of persons 16 years old and over by marital status, sex, and race; labor force participation roles of married women (husband present) by presence and age of children; and employment status of family head and other family members by race. (NH)

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Summary
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Marital and Family Characteristics of Workers, March 1973

For every two married men in the labor force in March 1973, one married woman was also working or looking for work. Nearly 40 million married men and 20 million married women were among the 88 million persons in the labor force. There were almost as many workers who had never married--19 million--as married women, and 10 million were widowed, divorced, or separated persons.

Of the 1.7 million increase in the labor force in the year ending in March 1973, three-quarters consisted of married women (34 percent), single men (24 percent) and single women (15 percent). While population growth contributed to this increase, a large part of the gain resulted from the strong pick-up in economic activity and demand for workers. Employment increased in most marital categories, cutting back the number unemployed and absorbing the labor force growth. (See table 1.)

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Married men made no significant contribution to the year's labor force growth, even though their population rose by a half million. Their labor force participation rate continued its long-term gradual decline, slipping to 84.8 percent. As in past years, this decline was concentrated among husbands 45 years old and over, a group that includes those who are reaching retirement age and that has a greater incidence of disabling health problems than younger men. Labor force rates for Negro husbands declined as well, especially in the older age groups.

The labor force participation rate for all single men rose for the second year in a row, reaching 66.1 percent in March 1973. The increase was a reflection of the year's improvement in economic conditions; employment gains cut their unemployment rate to 10.9 percent, the lowest level in 3 years, and attracted a greater proportion of single men into the labor force.

The labor force participation rate of married women, husband present, continued on its long-term upward path, reaching 42.2 percent in March 1973. Virtually all of this rise stemmed from increases in the number of women under age 35 in the labor force, including both those who had no children and those who were mothers of preschool age children. The rate for wives 45 to 64 years old declined somewhat after remaining at a plateau of 44 percent since March 1970.

Despite the fact that the presence of young children in the family exercises strong inhibitory effects on the mother's labor force participation, the labor force rate of wives with children under 6 years old continued to increase, rising sharply over the year to 33 percent. (See table 2.) The increase in the rate for wives with children under 3 was matched only once before in the past 12 years.

Families

In line with the rising labor force participation of married women, the number of husband-wife families with more than one worker continued to grow over the year. In March 1973, there were about 22 million husband-wife families that had other family members in addition to the husband in the labor force. This number represented about 56 percent of all husband-wife families in which the head was in the labor force. (See table 3.)

As in earlier years, the proportion of families with more than one worker was greater among Negroes (65 percent) than among whites (55 percent) due in part to the lower income of Negro husbands relative to white husbands. Among both white and Negro families, wives rather than other family members were much more likely to be the additional family workers.

The number of female family heads increased by more than 400,000 over the year to 6.6 million. Their labor force participation rate, at 53.2 percent, remained unchanged. Women who are heads of families are more likely than wives to be in the labor force but they are not in the work force to the same extent as married men who are family heads.

These findings are from the annual survey of marital and family characteristics of workers in the population 16 years old and over. The survey was conducted in March 1973 for the Bureau of Labor Statistics by the Bureau of the Census. Additional information on this subject will be published in a forthcoming issue of the Monthly Labor Review.

Table 1. Employment status of persons 16 years old and over, by marital status, sex, and race, March 1972 and 1973

(Numbers in thousands)

Marital status, sex, and race	March 1972						March 1973						
	Total population	Labor force 1972		Employed	Unemployed		Total population	Labor force 1973		Employed	Unemployed		
		Number	Percent of population		Number	Percent of labor force		Number	Percent of population		Number	Percent of labor force	
ALL PERSONS													
Men.....	68,272	53,669	78.6	49,402	3,076	5.7	69,350	54,399	78.4	50,895	2,525	4.6	
Married, wife present.....	46,400	39,654	85.5	37,311	1,326	3.3	46,939	39,782	84.8	37,822	1,110	2.8	
Married, wife absent.....	1,684	1,307	77.6	1,170	125	9.6	1,733	1,370	79.1	1,254	87	6.4	
Widowed.....	1,834	598	32.6	570	27	4.5	1,924	607	31.5	586	20	3.3	
Divorced.....	1,781	1,417	79.6	1,283	122	8.6	1,963	1,538	78.4	1,425	103	6.7	
Single.....	16,573	10,693	64.5	9,068	1,476	13.8	16,791	11,102	66.1	9,808	1,205	10.9	
Women.....	75,506	32,939	43.6	30,795	2,144	6.5	76,850	33,904	44.1	31,925	1,979	5.8	
Married, husband present.....	46,400	19,249	41.5	18,217	1,032	5.4	46,939	19,821	42.2	18,908	913	4.6	
Married, husband absent.....	2,840	1,500	52.8	1,328	172	11.5	2,902	1,522	52.4	1,367	155	10.2	
Widowed.....	9,601	2,570	26.8	2,488	82	3.2	9,854	2,484	25.2	2,394	90	3.6	
Divorced.....	3,055	2,143	70.1	2,022	121	5.6	3,276	2,338	71.4	2,216	122	5.2	
Single.....	11,610	7,477	64.9	6,740	737	9.9	13,879	7,739	55.8	7,040	699	9.0	
NEGRO AND OTHER RACES													
Men.....	7,261	5,312	73.2	4,727	504	9.5	7,582	5,533	73.0	5,024	423	7.6	
Married, wife present.....	3,825	3,261	85.3	3,033	150	4.8	3,827	3,237	84.6	3,037	128	4.0	
Married, wife absent.....	508	367	72.2	311	56	15.3	572	433	75.7	401	22	5.1	
Widowed.....	322	121	37.6	112	9	7.4	353	131	37.1	123	8	6.1	
Divorced.....	215	165	76.7	134	31	18.8	280	205	73.2	191	13	6.3	
Single.....	2,391	1,398	58.5	1,137	252	18.0	2,550	1,527	59.9	1,272	252	16.5	
Women.....	8,675	5,176	48.1	3,709	467	11.2	9,066	4,427	48.8	3,978	449	10.1	
Married, husband present.....	3,813	1,991	51.9	1,830	161	8.1	3,877	2,093	54.0	1,952	141	6.7	
Married, husband absent.....	1,056	538	50.9	458	80	14.9	1,122	546	48.7	477	69	12.6	
Widowed.....	1,222	412	33.7	394	18	4.4	1,292	369	28.6	356	13	3.5	
Divorced.....	479	315	65.8	299	16	5.1	516	366	70.9	337	29	7.9	
Single.....	2,085	920	44.1	728	192	20.9	2,259	1,053	46.6	856	197	18.7	

1/ The male labor force includes members of the Armed Forces, living off post or with their families on post.

Table 2. Labor force participation rates 1/ of married women, husband present, by presence and age of children, March 1960-1973

Year	All wives	No children under 18 years	With children under 18 years				
			Total	6 to 17 years only	Under 6 years		
					Total	3 to 5 years, none under 3 years	Under 3 years
1960.....	30.5	34.7	27.6	39.0	18.6	25.1	15.3
1961.....	32.7	37.3	29.6	41.7	20.0	25.5	17.0
1962.....	32.7	36.1	30.3	41.8	21.3	27.2	18.2
1963.....	33.7	37.4	31.2	41.5	22.5	23.5	19.4
1964.....	34.4	37.8	32.0	43.0	22.7	26.7	20.5
1965.....	34.7	38.3	32.2	42.7	23.3	29.2	20.0
1966.....	35.4	38.4	33.2	43.7	24.2	29.1	21.2
1967.....	36.8	38.9	35.3	45.0	26.5	31.7	23.3
1968.....	38.3	40.1	36.9	46.9	27.6	34.0	23.4
1969.....	39.6	41.0	38.6	48.6	28.5	34.7	24.2
1970.....	40.8	42.2	39.7	49.2	30.3	37.0	25.8
1971.....	40.8	42.1	39.7	49.4	29.6	36.1	25.7
1972.....	41.5	42.7	40.5	50.2	30.1	36.1	26.9
1973.....	42.2	42.8	41.7	50.1	32.7	38.3	29.4

1/ Labor force as percent of population.

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Table 3. Employment status of family head and other family members, by race, March 1971-1973

Employment status and relationship to head	1971	1972	1973		
			All families	White	Negro and other races
HUSBAND-WIFE FAMILIES					
Total families (thousands).....	44,739	55,752	46,314	42,585	3,729
Head in labor force: Number (thousands).....	38,496	39,116	39,298	36,147	3,151
Percent.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Wife or other member in labor force.....	53.5	54.6	55.7	54.9	64.7
Wife only.....	34.7	35.1	36.0	35.0	47.0
Wife and other member.....	9.2	9.9	9.8	9.8	10.8
Other member only.....	9.6	9.6	9.9	10.1	7.0
Neither wife nor other member in labor force.....	46.5	45.4	44.3	45.1	35.3
Head Employed ^{1/}					
Total: Number (thousands).....	37,146	37,855	38,247	35,215	3,032
Percent.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Wife or other member in labor force.....	53.4	54.5	55.7	54.9	64.5
Wife only.....	34.5	34.9	35.9	34.9	47.0
Wife and other member.....	9.1	9.9	9.9	9.8	10.6
Other member only.....	9.8	9.7	9.9	10.2	6.9
Neither wife nor other member in labor force.....	46.6	45.5	44.3	45.1	35.5
Head Unemployed					
Total: Number (thousands).....	1,350	1,261	1,051	932	119
Percent.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Wife or other member in labor force.....	57.2	56.5	55.6	53.6	70.8
Wife only.....	41.2	40.6	40.6	39.6	48.3
Wife and other member.....	10.5	7.5	7.8	7.1	13.3
Other member only.....	5.5	8.3	7.1	6.9	9.2
Neither wife nor other member in labor force.....	42.8	43.5	44.4	46.4	29.2
FAMILIES WITH FEMALE HEAD					
Total families (thousands).....	5,954	6,184	6,600	4,666	1,934
Head in labor force: Number (thousands).....	3,218	3,288	3,510	2,567	943
Percent.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Other member in labor force.....	37.2	38.5	35.8	38.5	28.2
No other member in labor force.....	62.8	61.5	64.2	61.5	71.8
Head Employed					
Total: Number (thousands).....	2,989	3,062	3,274	2,438	836
Percent.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Other member in labor force.....	38.1	39.1	36.6	39.2	29.0
No other member in labor force.....	61.9	60.9	63.4	60.8	71.0
Head Unemployed					
Total: Number (thousands).....	229	226	236	129	107
Percent.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Other member in labor force.....	25.8	31.0	24.8	26.9	22.2
No other member in labor force.....	74.2	69.0	75.2	73.1	77.8

^{1/} Includes members of the Armed Forces living off post or with their families on post.

NOTE: Figures for periods before March 1972 are not strictly comparable with later data. Data for 1972 and 1973 reflect the introduction of 1970 Census data into the estimation procedures. For an explanation of the changes due to the new Census data and an indication of differences, see "Revisions in the Current Population Survey" in the February 1972 issue of Employment and Earnings.