

Social Determinants of Fertility in Qatar

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How the Doha International Family Institute Works

Institutional Approach and Areas of Focus

Research

- Producing high-quality evidence to inform family policies and programs.
- Generating and promoting knowledge on Arab families at the national, regional, and international levels.

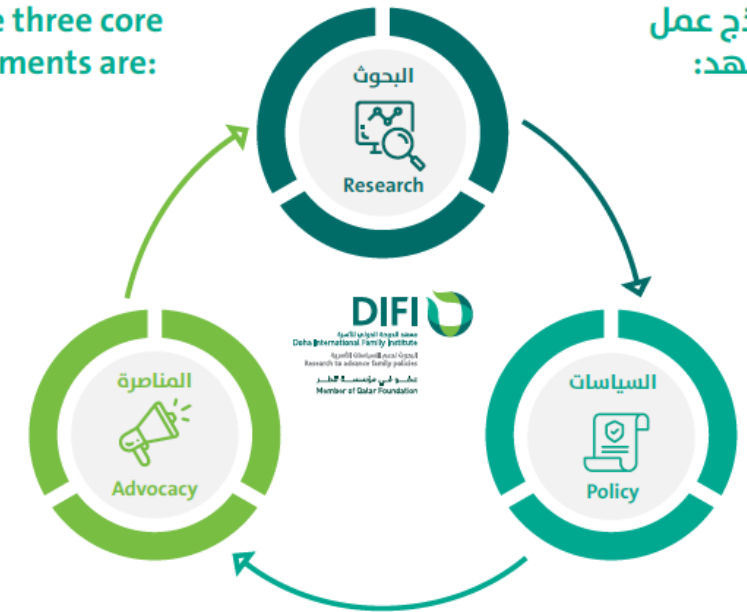
Policy

- Translating research evidence into policy outputs.
- Supporting the development of family-centered policies and programs.
- Promoting best practices that empower and strengthen families.

Advocacy

- Advocating for family cohesion and wellbeing.
- Encouraging evidence-based policies and intervention programs.
- Engaging stakeholders to achieve measurable impact and sustainable social change.

The three core elements are:



Why Fertility Matters?

- Fertility trends are changing across many societies.
- Family formation and childbearing decisions are influenced by social, economic, and policy factors.
- Understanding these factors is essential for developing effective family policies.
- DIFI, in collaboration with the National Planning Council, conducted a study to examine the social determinants of fertility in Qatar.

Demographic Trends and Fertility Changes in Qatar

- The proportion of Qatari nationals declined from over **40% of the population in the 1970s** to around **12% in 2018**.
- Qatar's population increased from approximately **369,000 in 1986** to more than **2.7 million in 2019**, largely driven by expatriate labor migration.
- The total fertility rate among Qatari women declined from **5.3 children per woman in 1986** to **2.9 children in 2017**.
- These trends highlight important demographic and social changes affecting family formation and fertility patterns.



شكل 4: معدل الخصوبة الكلي للمرأة القطرية (1986-2017)
المصدر: المجلس الوطني للتخطيط، نتائج تعدادات السكان في السنوات المذكورة، والنشرة السنوية للإحصاءات الحيوية (الولادات والوفيات)، 2018

Marriage Trends in Qatar

- Marriage rates in Qatar have declined over the past two decades.
- The general marriage rate for males decreased from **29.6 per 1,000 population in 1997** to **23.3 in 2018**.
- The marriage rate for females declined from **27.7 to 20.1 per 1,000 population** during the same period.
- Delayed and reduced marriage rates directly affect family formation and fertility levels.

جدول 2: معدلات الخصوبة العمري للقطريات (في الألف)

الفئة العمرية	العام							
	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
19-15 سنة	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	10
24-20 سنة	79	79	85	95	97	102	106	115
29-25 سنة	163	166	179	178	173	176	188	192
34-30 سنة	157	171	178	182	167	174	178	197
39-35 سنة	127	122	133	134	130	132	133	138
44-40 سنة	54	48	56	49	50	51	51	59
49-45 سنة	4	6	6	4	5	5	6	7

المصدر: المجلس الوطني للتخطيط، وزارة التنمية الإدارية، تقرير المرأة والرجل لعامي 2014 و2018

Divorce Patterns in Qatar

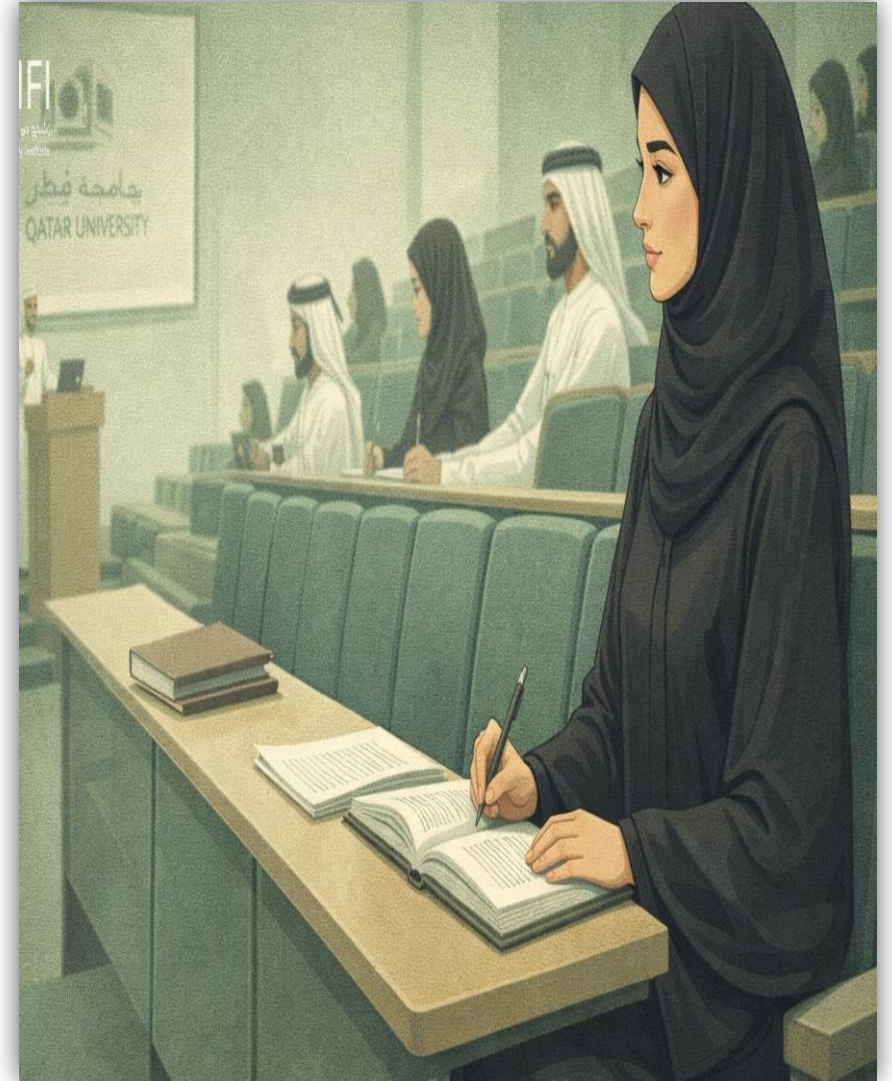
Early divorce has increased in Qatari society. Divorce before consummation rose from 4.4% in 1986 to 22.5% in 2018. Divorce during the first year of marriage increased from 29.3% to 31.8% during the same period. Early divorce reduces opportunities for childbearing and affects family stability.

Divorce Type	1986	2018
Divorce Before Consummation	4.4%	22.5%
Divorce Within the First Year of Marriage	29.3%	31.8%



Women's Education and Fertility

- Women's educational attainment has increased significantly in Qatar.
- More than **37% of Qatari women aged 15 and above hold a university degree.**
- Approximately **69% have completed secondary education or higher.**
- Higher education is associated with increased labor force participation and, for some women, delayed marriage and childbearing.



Women's Participation in the Labor Market

- Women's participation in the labor market has increased significantly in Qatar.
- The share of economically active Qatari women rose from **22% in 1997** to more than **37% in 2018**.
- This reflects major social and economic transformations in Qatari society.
- Increased employment opportunities may contribute to delayed marriage and childbearing for some women.





Economic Factors and Fertility Decisions

- Economic factors play a significant role in marriage and fertility decisions.
- **88% of men** and **86% of women** believe that rising marriage costs contribute to lower marriage rates.
- **62% of men** and **65% of women** report that the cost of raising and educating children influences family size decisions.
- Financial considerations can affect both the timing of marriage and the number of children couples plan to have.



Changing Lifestyles and Fertility Decisions.

Modern lifestyle changes influence fertility decisions.

69% of men and **76% of women** believe that busy lifestyles and competing responsibilities lead families to have fewer children.

64% of men and **69% of women** believe that concerns about maintaining quality of life influence decisions about having additional children.

Lifestyle preferences increasingly shape family size and childbearing decisions

Family-Friendly Policies and Fertility



Family-supportive policies can positively influence fertility decisions.

84% of men and 90% of women believe that workplace childcare facilities encourage working women to have children.

84% of men and 85% of women believe that flexible work arrangements can support higher fertility.

Policies such as remote work, part-time work, and childcare services can help families balance work and parenting responsibilities.

Health Factors and Fertility

- Health-related fertility issues are increasingly recognized as factors influencing childbearing decisions.
- **41% of men** and **47% of women** believe that infertility cases requiring medical treatment have increased.
- **36% of men** and **39% of women** believe that fertility-related health problems contribute to lower birth rates.
- Reproductive health support plays an important role in addressing fertility challenges.



International Experiences in Supporting Fertility

- Several countries have successfully addressed declining fertility through family-friendly policies.
- Examples include **France, Finland, Singapore, and Estonia.**

Key policy measures include:

Country	Examples of Pro-Family Policies
France	Family allowances and subsidized childcare
Finland	Generous parental leave and family benefits
Singapore	Childbirth incentives and financial support schemes
Estonia	Flexible work arrangements and work–family balance measures



Conclusion

- Fertility trends in Qatar are shaped by multiple social, economic, and institutional factors.
- Family formation and childbearing decisions are increasingly influenced by education, employment, lifestyle changes, and work–family balance.
- International experiences demonstrate that family-friendly policies can help support fertility and family wellbeing.
- Evidence-based policymaking is essential for strengthening families and promoting demographic sustainability.

Source: Doha International Family Institute (DIFI). (2026). *Social Determinants of Fertility and Policy Implications in Qatar*. Doha, Qatar: Qatar Foundation.

Thank you for listening

