

Haredi sector sees continued rise in employment

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Bol stats show 27% uptick in working ultra-orthodox males over 10 year span, but percentage remains well below national average.



PHOTO: MARC ISRAEL SELLEM

The employment rate for haredi men increased from 35 percent to 45% between 2002 and 2011, according to a report published by the Technion's [Samuel Neaman Institute](#) for National Policy Research.

This translates to a 28% increase in haredi male employment in the past decade, compared to a 14% increase in haredi female employment and a 3% increase in overall employment, the report found.

Employment among haredi women stood at 61% in 2011, up from 47% in 1997, while the 2011 national average was 66%.

The report, which was based on Bank of Israel data, is part of a broader project the [Neaman Institute](#) is conducting on haredi participation in various segments of society such as the economy, military and higher education.

Project head [Dr. Reuven Gal](#) said that the findings were encouraging and demonstrated that it was possible to effect change in the field of haredi employment.

He added, however, that for every 10 haredi job-seekers, there is currently only one "secular" workplace willing to accept them. He said that in order to change this situation, the government must encourage and even provide incentives for secular employers to absorb haredi workers.

The study recommended several ideas for further increasing haredi employment, including the establishment of an extracurricular framework for teaching haredi school children English, Mathematics and Computer studies.

At present, the haredi school system teaches very little of the state core curriculum, but the institute argues that there is little opposition in the haredi community to the three basic studies mentioned.

Despite the recent expiration of the Tal Law – which allowed ultra-orthodox men to postpone military service indefinitely – the government must enable haredi yeshiva students who are exempt from IDF service to volunteer for national civil service, Gal said.

“Haredi participation in national civil service will show that they share the public burden, and provide the impetus for their entry into the job market,” he explained.

Gal also recommended that the government formulate a new plan to recruit haredi men into the IDF, pointing to a previous **Neaman Institute** report which found that 90% of haredi military graduates work and pay taxes.

Around 10,000 haredi men have participated in military or national civil service in the past five years, according to the institute.

Gal has been an outspoken critic of the High Court of Justice’s decision to strike down the Tal Law earlier this year, calling the ruling “a historic mistake” during a Knesset hearing on the issue of haredi employment last month.