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**SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS  
DURHAM UNIVERSITY**

## **The Participation of Women in Saudi Arabia's Economy:**

### **Obstacles and Prospects**

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**Salman Saleh AL-Dehailan**

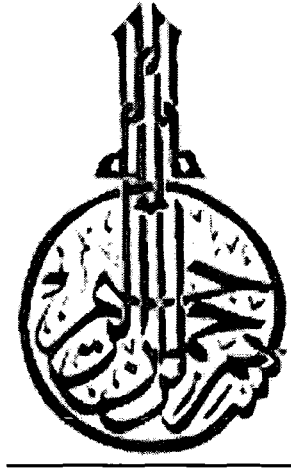
**B.A. in Islamic Economics (Imam Mohammed Bin Saud University, Saudi Arabia)  
M.A. in Economics (University of Colorado at Boulder, Colorado, USA)**

**Thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of  
the Doctor of Philosophy Degree, at the School of Government and  
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**17 OCT 2007**

**March 2007**





*In The Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

## **ABSTRACT**

Low female labour force participation has been one of the main characteristics of the Saudi labour market over the last fifty years. This study is an attempt to analyse the factors affecting women's (non)employment through the perception and understanding of employed and unemployed Saudi women and Saudi policy makers. By using primary data assembled through questionnaire and interview methods, it identifies the major factors influencing the employment and non-employment of women in Saudi Arabia. Since in order to promote women's participation in all sectors of the economy, accurate information regarding various types of historical, financial, social, familial, cultural, religious and demographic factors explaining the prevailing lack of women's participation in the formal production of the economy is needed and this study aims to provide such a comprehensive understanding of the issues involved.

The questionnaire method was conducted to collect data from employed and unemployed women samples to investigate their perceptions related to factors affecting their (un)employment and also challenges related to diversification and expansion of women participation in economic activity. In addition, semi-structure interviews were conducted to collect data regarding the perception of policy makers. The questionnaire survey and interviews were conducted in three cities of Saudi Arabia (Riyadh, Dammam, and Al Hasa) during the period of February 2004-June 2004. Assembled data were qualitatively and quantitatively analysed to provide further meaning through statistical, textual and interpretative methods.

The analysis of the data indicates that demographic, financial, socio-economic, attitudinal and cultural factors as well as government policies influence women's employment status in Saudi Arabia. The qualitative and quantitative factor analysis based on women's perception indicates that the following factors has important impact on women's participation in the labour market: distance difficulties, transportation, extended holidays, negative view towards working women, mixed working environment, labour legislations, child care facilities, par-time work and flexible working hours and promotion programs to change society attitude. Important recommendations include the need for a change in the attitudes of people towards women's employment as well as providing the facilitators which help women cope with employment.



*Dedicated to*

*My Beloved Mother, Brothers,  
Spouses and Children*

## **DECLARATION**

This thesis results from my own initiative and work, and has not been offered previously in candidature for any other degree in this or any other university

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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Durham

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## **List of Abbreviations**

ARAMCO	Saudi Arabian Oil Company
CAPI	Computer-assisted personal interviewing
CATI	Computer-assisted telephone interviewing.
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IMF	International Monetary Fund
GHP	Gross Household Production
GPGE	General Presidency of Girls Education
HRDF	Human Resources Development Fund
ILO	International Labour Organization.
IPA	Institute of Public Administration
LMP	Labour market programs.
MCI	Ministry of Information and Culture.
MEP	Ministry of Economy and Planning.
PCA	Principal Component analysis
SABIC	Saudi Arabian Basic Industries Corporation
SAGIA	Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority
SAMA	Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency
SAMBA	Saudi American Bank
SPA	Saudi Press Agency
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.
WTO	The World Trade Organisation

## Definition of Terms

**Gender discrimination:** "Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women ... of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil, or any other field". (1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against women).

**Household:** refers to all forms of family, including nuclear, extended and compound families.

**LFPR:** Female Labour Force Participation Rate - percentage of female population aged 15-60 working or actively looking for work.

**Maternity leave:** A time off work that usually covers a period before and after childbirth and is based on an immediate concern for the physical survival and health of mother and child and, as such is similar to a social insurance benefit. It offers full-wage compensation sick leave and is available only for women.

**Parental leave:** or extended maternity leave. An entitlement to time away from work to care for infants or young children with dismissal prohibited and job reinstatement guaranteed at the end of the leave. Any family member could be eligible for parental leave.

**Saudization policy:** the goal of which is to increase employment of its own citizens by replacing of foreign workers in the country.

**Social Tradition:** refers to all the customs and way of life in Saudi society.

**Women's Status:** the position of women inside and outside the household.

**Working Women:** all educated women involved in socio-economic activities.

**Wakil:** an authorized male representative or proxy.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

*"Saudi women must be given the opportunity to participate in social development in all areas"*

*Princess Adela, Daughter of King Abdallah of Saudi Arabia (Arab News, December 21 2006)*

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The male dominant nature of Muslim societies, including Saudi Arabia, and the perpetuated religious misunderstanding of the role of women, constitute barriers for women's engagement in real life. In addition, lack of civil society in Saudi Arabia does not allow women to speak up for themselves and endeavour towards creating opportunity spaces and choices for themselves. This is an important matter, as economic development is no longer defined as material well-being. Instead, The United Nations Development Project (1996) has redefined it by emphasising human well-being as the main determinant of economic development, namely the quality of life or the provision of choices. In Sen's definition (1999), this refers to the functioning individuals who have choices and capabilities. While it is true that Saudi Arabia generates income (per capita income is about \$12,000), by failing to provide choices in general and in particular, choices for women, and hence preventing an effective functioning of the individuals, it is difficult to state that Saudi Arabia is a developed country.

As stated by Ibn Khaldun in the middle centuries, no society can survive for long while preventing half of its population from playing a decisive role. Educated women can become an agent and source of positive change and can contribute to healthy,





progressive and normally functioning societies. It is a fact that women have been given opportunities in education in Saudi Arabia, and therefore in the urban areas they are well educated (Khoury and Moghadam 1995; and Joseph 2000). For instance, the female adult literacy rate increased to 48% in 1990 (Khoury and Moghadam, 1995), and is expected to increase to 85% by 2010. In addition, women are frequently wealthy but generally economically inactive.

With increasing access to education in Saudi Arabia, women have gained status and independence, with which they have managed to carve out spaces for themselves in business and professional spheres. These achievements have recently been substantiated by the establishment deciding to appoint three women as advisors to the Shoura Council, a consultative body to the executive branch of government.

It is important to note that presently in Saudi Arabia, 51% of all graduates are female and 25% of business is owned by women. Saudi women today have a 34% stake in private business in Riyadh and 25.6% in Jeddah, the two major cities of KSA. There are an estimated 5,000 businesswomen in Riyadh and 4,000 in Jeddah. Saudi women hold nearly 70% of all bank accounts in the Kingdom with deposits worth SR 62 billion (£9.92 billion). It should also be stated that the percentage of economically active women was 7.8% in 1992 (ILO) and this is expected to increase to 35% in 2010 (Country Report, 2004). Thus, a very small number of women have been working to earn their living other than self-employed ones. Data indicates that the most economically active female age group is 30-34 (33%) and 35-39 (24%), the product of earlier educational reforms. There is another area through which Saudi women have begun to thrive, and that is the banking and finance sector. Saudi women have been filling jobs in the special women's branches of banks by taking up jobs at every level upto middle manager.

Saudi Arabia, due to its particular religious interpretation, has very strict laws, which prohibit unrelated men and women from mixing. This is one of the barriers facing the participation of women in public life. Such a strict law about the segregation of the sexes make it terribly difficult and expensive for employers to hire women as they have to provide separate premises for those working for them. In addition, since there are very limited job opportunities in the private sector, women are offered jobs in the public sector such as health and education. While there is an inclination for self-employment, indeed, entering into the business world is a challenge for women, as it requires capital as well as unavoidable interaction with men, which may not be acceptable.

In sum, the increase in access to education has given Saudi women a chance to participate in the development of their society alongside men. Today Saudi women are making their presence felt in society as civil servants, university professors, teachers, doctors, under secretaries, business women, administrators, and in the media.

Despite a substantially improved educational status female participation in the labour force still remains low, and therefore more needs to be done. For example, there remains a need to increase the apparent unwillingness of some well-educated women to take up employment. In the past, studies have shown that this is due to custom and tradition, while economic prosperity also means that employment is a matter of choice, rather than of necessity. There are also indications that the educational qualifications obtained by many of the Saudi women are not always of those most in demand in the job market. Thus, in addition to institutional obstacles, there are micro and individual oriented reasons for low labour force participation among Saudi women.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

The level of women's participation in the labour force is growing worldwide. The trend has provided a set of opportunities and challenges to women as well as to their respective national economies. Over the past fifty years, there have been important

changes in what women do. Also, women's standard of living has increased steadily from the 1970s to 2000s.

In Arab societies, women in urban areas have made some significant gains in education, employment, and social participation, while there has been little change in rural areas. The participation of women in managerial and administrative positions has doubled in industrial societies from 14% in 1970 to 28% in 1990, while in present Arab societies participation is less than 10%. About 50 to 80% of the economically active women work in agriculture in Arab societies especially in parts of Africa. In contrast, less than 5% of the economically active women in many European countries and the United States are employed in agriculture (United Nations, 1995). As a result of regional and international changes caused by globalization, a number of new challenges have emerged for the Arab world, in particular. Among these challenges the issue of activating the role of women in development occupies a prominent position in the order of development priorities.

Low female labour force participation has been one of the main characteristics of the Saudi labour market over the last fifty years. The present situation in Saudi Arabia, economic hardship combined with greater educational and employment opportunities for women, the influence of western culture and media, have all brought the discussion of family to the forefront. Viola (1986, 177-195) lists the major obstacles that stand in the way of Saudi women's wider economic participation:

- (i) Most job opportunities for women are restricted to fields perceived to be in keeping with the traditional role of women as wives and mothers;
- (ii) Freedom of movement is restricted by the ban on women driving and their need for male drivers to accompany them for business purposes;
- (iii) The lack of child-care centres restricts the activities of those women who cannot afford live-in servants;

- (iv) Business initiatives are hampered by the inability of women to register a business in their own names or obtain home loans or government land grants, which might provide the finances to establish a private business;
- (v) A woman is prohibited from working if such work is contrary to the wishes of male members of her family, upon whom she is dependent both socially and economically;
- (vi) The religious interpretations of some sectors of the society deem it inappropriate for women to work outside the home;
- (vii) Fear of social stigma which may be attached to the working woman and /or her family, when suggestions are made relative to the family's economic status or the woman's morality is a further constraint on working women;
- (viii) Islamic tradition stipulates that the men of the family are responsible for the family's income which creates a lack of incentive for women to work, taking into account the relatively comfortable circumstances of much of Saudi citizenry, which further reduces the incentives for women's employment;
- (ix) The inability of most working Saudi women to have an effective role in the decision-making process in the workforce has choked women's opportunities;
- (x) Centuries of social traditions induced Saudi women to accept rather than challenge their role in life, which has been a powerful deterrent to the advancement of women's role in society.

In addition, the UNESCO (1994) also states the obstacles in both education and the labour market in Arab countries as the following:

- (i) Discrimination between males and females at both an educational and a developmental level;
- (ii) Women not taken into account during economic planning;
- (iii) Mismatch between educational output and labour market needs;
- (iv) Existence of negative attitudes to the idea of women working and also to their skills and abilities;

- (v) Discrimination between men and women in terms of salaries and promotion prospects;
- (vi) Lack of training programmes for women and also a lack of a suitable environment and facilities, such as transport, childcare, etc;
- (vii) Women face difficulties regarding their dual role at work and at home;
- (viii) There was no equality regarding the technical and vocational programmes for men and for women and, as a result, programmes were made to be better suited to men.

Table 1.1. depicts the low level of female participation in economic activity in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. According to this the labour participation rate of women in Saudi Arabia is even less than the Middle East average by being at only 6% in 2002.

Table 1.1. Labour force as percent of the total population			
Countries	Male	Female	Total
Saudi Arabia	32%	6%	19%
Middle East	49%	17%	33%
Sub-Saharan Africa	51%	37%	44%
Latin America	55%	27%	41%
East Asia	61%	51%	56%
Europe	72%	18%	45%
United States	77%	23%	50%
Sources: Saudi Central Department of Statistics for Saudi Arabia, 2002.			

It should be stated that women’s participation in economic activities is marked by two characteristics:

- (a) Participation in the labour force is limited since it does not exceed 14 percent of the total labour force according to the eighth development plan for the period of 2005-2010;
- (b) Confining female participation to employment in the sectors of education and health.

Consequently, women’s participation is limited in important economic activities such as those associated with information and communications technology, commerce, banking and other activities. In addition, the employment option for Saudi women is in the public sector, where the work environment is supported by legislations, job stability, incentives and facilitation which makes the public sector a better choice than the private sector.

Furthermore, employment in the public sector also brings with it a high social esteem. A significant number of Saudi women also cease working after marriage and bearing children, partly because of an insufficiency of childcare centres and partly because of the well-founded belief that maternal care is likely to be more beneficial for their children. Another problem that has been identified is the need for women to take up employment in a wider range of professions. Although barriers have begun to crumble in recent years, there is still a strong emphasis on the health and education sector. Within such a restrictive and limited framework, a number of issues and challenges related to diversification and expansion of women participation in economic activity in Saudi Arabia is addressed in this study.

This study argues that the problem of employment of Saudi women in the labour market is one of the most important issues currently facing Saudi Arabia and, based on personal views on and experience of the Saudi labour force, it is felt that the Saudi authorities are facing difficult problems. One of the major challenges stems from the general shortage of human resources. The Saudi government has tried to implement a 'Saudiization' policy which aims at replacing non-nationals with national labour.

With the expansionary educational policies, there are increasing numbers of unemployed qualified women in Saudi Arabia. Due to an increase of female graduates from universities, the government is being forced to make considerable efforts to reduce the numbers of unemployed women. In 2002, the percentage of employed females to total employed labour force was 12.8%. However, the share of unemployed females was 33.2% of the total unemployed. The overall rate of unemployment was 21.7% and 7.6% for females and male, respectively in 2005 (MEP 2005). Each year, tens of thousands of Saudi girls graduate from high school and start looking for a job, and many college graduates join them. Unfortunately, their dreams of starting a job are shattered by the realities of a male-dominated market and increasing difficulties in job

creation in the Saudi economy. Since the Saudi statistics, indeed, do not give much detail about gender trends in the labour force, this makes it very difficult to accurately estimate either the size of the labour force, or the unemployment rate.

### **1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

In order to promote women's participation in all sectors of the Saudi economy, there is a need for a more definitive understanding and more accurate information regarding various types of historical, social, cultural, religious, and demographic factors related to the prevailing lack of women's participation in the formal production of the Saudi economy. This study is, therefore, an attempt to collect data on the issues surrounding women's non-employment. Since women account for half the population, it also argues that Saudi women's contribution to the labour market will thus improve society. Therefore, this research is an attempt to explore and examine factors influencing women's participation in the labour force by directly depicting the perception and opinions of employed and unemployed women and policy makers through primary data. The objectives of this study are:

- Analyse and compare the socio-economic characteristics of both the employed and unemployed Saudi Arabian women;
- Explore the current situation for employed and non-employed women in Saudi Arabia on the basis of information collected from the field through a sample survey;
- Identify those factors that inhibit and frustrate women to seek employment in Saudi Arabia;
- Identify the view of Islamic scholars towards working women in the public as well as private sectors;
- Identify the attitudes of policy makers towards the employment of women;
- Identify the policies which policy makers could introduce to promote women's employment prospects;

- Identify and explain the relationship between women's participation in economic activities in Saudi society and social, educational, economic, cultural factors;
- Determine the most significant factors which affect Women's participation in economic activities;
- Suggest the factors that could increase employment among women.

The existing literature on women's issues in economic activities in Saudi Arabia suggests that this study will contribute to the existing literature and that it will lead to further research in the area of women's issues in the labour market, particularly in developing countries. At the same time recommendations for policies for increasing and developing women's employment in both the Saudi private and public sectors is considered according to the Islamic *Shari'a*. Therefore, the main aim of this study is to fully investigate, examine and explain the principal factors affecting women's participation in economic activities in Saudi Arabia.

#### **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This study aims to find answers to the following questions:

- What factors have encouraged women's participation in the labour force in Saudi Arabia?
- What are the social and cultural factors that contribute to the non-employment of women in Saudi Arabia?
- How can the participation rate of women in the labour markets be increased?
- What can help working women overcome problems they face due to their different roles relating to child raising, home duties and work responsibilities?
- Do Saudi policy makers promote women at work on the basis of equal opportunities?



- Are parents and husbands encouraging the employment of women through equal opportunities in recruitment and selection?

## **1.5 THE STRUCTURE AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY**

This thesis is organised into eight chapters (see Figure 1.1). Chapter Two reviews the theories related to women's participation in the labour market and the Islamic teaching and its impact on Saudi women.

Chapter Three provides a comprehensive overview of women's participation in the Saudi economy, the history of education and employment. It discusses the Five-Year Development Plans and focuses on policies for the women's participation in the labour force programme, taking into consideration new legislation and reforms. This chapter also provides background details of the obstacles and achievements.

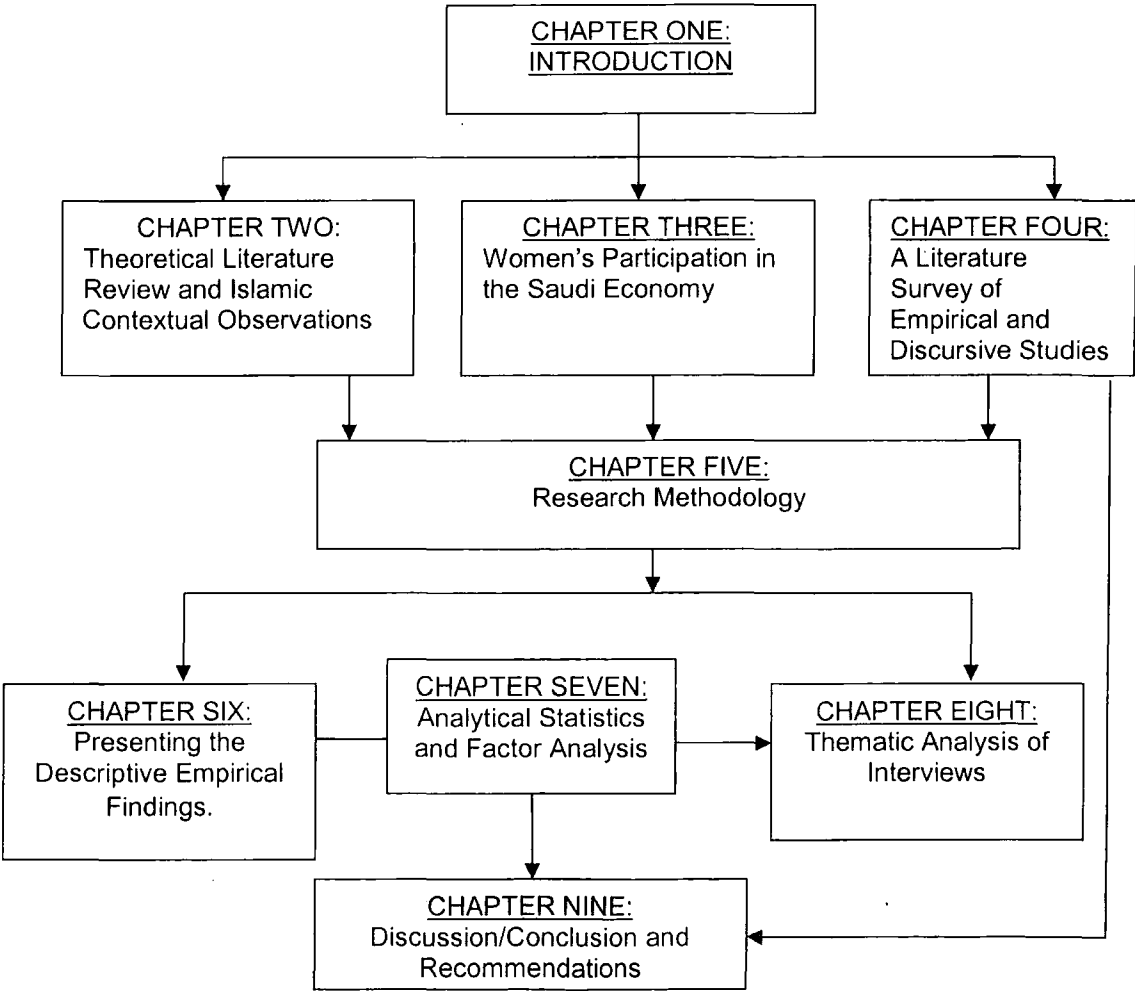
Chapter Four presents the empirical and discursive studies conducted in the field since the early 1970s to recent years with the aim of presenting their findings as well as their recommendations in regards to how to change and improve women's work in Saudi Arabia over the years.

Chapter Five is concerned with the research methodology, describing the research process and objectives used in this study. It presents in detail the rationale for adopting a combination of methods and issues related to data collection. Regarding the questionnaire survey, the methods used to collect data are presented, including the questionnaire design, pilot study, and distribution procedure. Also the semi-structured interviews, access and interview strategies are discussed. The statistical analysis that was employed is also described.

The empirical results of the study are detailed in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight. Chapter Six focuses on the results of the analysis of the questionnaire survey

presenting the descriptive empirical findings from employed and unemployed women, while Chapter Seven presents the analytical statistics and factor analysis with the same sample. Chapter Eight presents the analysis of the interview survey, which was conducted with leading Saudi businesswomen and policy makers. Chapter Nine presents an overview of the study and introduces research implications and recommendations. It also addresses the limitations of the study, offers suggestions for future research, and highlights the main contributions and recommendations of the thesis.

**Figure 1.1: The Structure and Overview of the Study**



## 1.6 SUMMARY

During the last three decades, the issue of women's participation in the labour force has received a great deal of attention in Saudi development plans, particularly in the eighth development plan (2005-2010). This study explores the experience of Saudi Arabia, which has paid high attention to enhancing and supporting Saudi women to become active members of the society. This introductory chapter has presented the background to the research problem, and has provided a brief explanation of the study's purposes, objectives, the research methodology, as well as its significance and importance. Finally, the structure of the thesis is detailed. Since the study aims to explore and understand the obstacles facing women's work and prospects the future of woman's participation in Saudi Arabia, the next chapter discusses the available literature on Saudi Arabian order to highlight the gap that exists in the literature which provides the rationale for this study.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Surveying Theories and the Islamic Teaching on Women's Participation in the Labour Market**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

In the era of mass education, working is indeed considered to determine the self-esteem of individuals, as in the open societies of the world, paid employment is considered as a defining feature of ourselves. In such societies, people's evaluation of each other may be determined by their employment, and unemployment can stigmatise. In addition, due to individualistically oriented economic and social life, employment is an economic necessity rather than choice most of the time. However, these are the consideration of industrialised and open societies, which went through an industrial revolution, thereby their value systems have changed.

Saudi Arabia, which is the case study of this research, has not experienced the industrialisation process. On the contrary, wealth came to the country due to natural resources, namely oil. The huge rents created from oil production paved the way for economic change and investment. However, the labour need for such change came from expatriates who have been working at various levels, from the top management to cleaning. Thus, not only were Saudi women prevented from taking part in the changing economy in KSA, but men also did not have much chance to participate in the economy until recent times. For instance, ILO data (which is available only for 1992) indicates that only 49.9% of the men and 7.8% of the women were economically active in 1992. These appalling economic participation rates for men and women are a result of 'getting jobs' done by the expatriates, while citizens enjoyed the benefits and the wealth created with oil, and therefore did not have, until recent times, much reason to be involved in paid economic activity other than self-employment.

Consequently, since the theories available in the literature are a result and theorization of the experience of the industrialisation process in the West, they may not be able to explain the experience of women and work in countries such as KSA. Not having the experience of industrialisation also means a lack of consciously constructed classes. Therefore, gender issues cannot be explained by the use of class oriented theories either.

However, functionalist theories attempting to explain subordination can be useful in explaining the reasons for limiting women to domestic household life in Saudi Arabia. Indeed, religion has been the major instrument utilised in the subordination of women. In other words, functionalist theory's reference to biological roles, family, survival of society depending on women, giving importance to family life and designated or defined suitable jobs for women, come very close to the religious understanding upheld in Saudi Arabia. Such religious expression aims to curb the development of individuality by making individuals subservient to the authority. In that process, by confining women's roles to their traditional functions, women are subordinate to men. Indeed, this is related to power and patriarchy, which is the main paradigm through which women's participation in the public sphere, is restricted.

In addition, rents created from petro-dollars furthered men's power and patriarchy. Therefore, it can be suggested that while women have enjoyed the wealth created by petro-dollars, their emancipation is undermined by this wealth, which perpetuated functional understanding of women being related to household chores. In other words, women are defined in relation to her domestic work, and therefore have been limited to non-market activities. However, domestic non-market activity is not productive either, because the rise of urbanisation and the wealth created and distributed by petro-dollars, have led to families employing servants to do the domestic work. As a result, a

women's life is limited to their leisure and shopping malls (Walter, 2005) except for a small minority of women who are economically active. In such a construction, they are perceived as breeding forces, and therefore, families generally have many children in polygamy oriented families (Obermeyer, 1995).

It should also be stated that strong segregation between the sexes in KSA is a result of this functional understanding of women, which is perpetuated by the use of a particular religious interpretation. Thus, gender hierarchy is perpetuated by the use of religious discourse, which helps to locate the differences and construct the subordination. Such construction explains polygamy in KSA.

This chapter, thus, attempts to survey some of the theories developed in relation to women's participation in the labour market. It also presents women's work in Islam, as Islam has shaped the cultural, social, economic and political norms of the Saudi society more than anything else. Therefore, women's work has to be contextualised within the Islamic understanding based on Saudi Arabian interpretation, as women's work is directly shaped over the years with the interpretation of Islam. Women's work in Saudi Arabia, thus, has to be analysed and examined within this context.

## **2.2 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

Labour force activity is a central concept in this study, which is defined as all persons of either sex who furnish the supply of labour for the production of economic goods and services as defined by the United Nations Systems of National Accounts and Balances as labour force (ILO, 1982 ).

Regarding unemployment, according to the International Labour Organization (ILO) normally unemployed people are defined as "all persons above a specified age who during the reference period were without work, currently available for work, and

seeking work" (ILO, 1996: 379). On the other hand, the employed comprise all "persons above a specific age who during a specified brief period, either one week or one day, were in paid employment or self employment" (ILO, 1996: 63). Unemployed by ILO definition, therefore, are people, who simultaneously satisfy the following three criteria:

- (i) They are not employed or do not earn income;
- (ii) They have been actively looking for a job during the preceding four weeks before the survey or have tried to start their own business.;
- (iii) They are ready to start working during the next two weeks.

Participation rate, being another central concept, is defined as the number of women within a specific age group who are economically active in the labour market divided by the total female population in the same age group in a given period of time. Whereas an economically active population; according to ILO; comprises of all persons of either sex who furnish the supply of labour for the production of goods and services during a specified time-reference period (1997:3).

## **2. 3. THEORETICAL MODELS EXPLAINING WOMEN'S WORK**

This section aims to present a brief survey of the theoretical and philosophical frameworks that have developed to conceptualize women's work.

### **2.3.1 Human Capital Theory**

The concept of human capital theory "refers to the fact that human beings invest in themselves by means of education, training, or other activities, which raises their future income" (Woodhall 1987 : 21). It also assumes that workers and employers make rational choices and that the labour market functions efficiently. It assumes that workers choose the best paying options after taking into account their own skills,

education, limitations (i.e. children, housing etc.), and their preferences (type of work and environment). However, employers, meanwhile, try to increase productivity, minimise costs and, as a result, maximise profits (Anker 1998 : 15). The human capital theory argues that men invest their "human capital" in amassing qualifications and experience while women are less motivated to do this since they must fit employment around their domestic arrangements (Rees 1992:23).

The important point of the human capital approach is that men and women may not be perfectly substitutable for one another. Women may accumulate less human capital through work experience, if their childbearing and rearing interrupts their labour force participation. Their human capital outside the labour market will be depreciated; therefore productivity differentials between men and women will arise. When women workers re-enter the labour market, they will earn less than men who had continuous market experience (Kocak 1999:10).

Education is an important form of human capital that improves productivity, health, nutrition, slow population growth, and helps improve economic performance, which is a problem that faces the developing world. Since economic growth is a prerequisite for industrialization and successful development programs, "the demand for human capital, as an effect of growth, is of primary interest to labour economists who focus on skill differentiation in the labour market"(Mincer 1993:70).



### 2.3.2 Labour Market Theory

Loveridge and Mok (1979) defined the labour market as “those mechanisms and institutions [where] the purchase and sale of labour power is arranged” (Loveridge and Mok 1979:28). There are two theories:

- the classical theory which links the mechanism of the labour market to the system of power and domination in society at large;
- the neo-classical theory which treats the labour market as a unified entity in which allocation is regulated by the price mechanism.(Loveridge and Mok 1979: 28).

According to Levitan et al. (1981), the main functions of labour markets are:

- to fix wages and other terms of employment ;
- to allocate labour among occupations, jobs and employers (Levitan, Garth et al. 1981:98).

Since most developing countries suffer from unemployment, the labour market theory can be used for labour market programs to assist long term employment and to assist the unemployed to find work. The major forms of labour market theories are (Dockery 2002):

- job brokerage;
- assistance and training in job search;
- skills training;
- job placement;
- employment subsidies and direct job creation for unemployed persons.

The only theory of markets without reference to its societal context is the neo-classical labour market theory (Loveridge and Mok, 1979). Thus, the labour market theory assumes that employers and workers have fairly accurate knowledge about wages and job opportunities throughout the market, following that they are rational in economic decisions. That is employers act to maximize profits and workers maximize satisfaction from real wages. Moreover, they represent a small part of the total demand or supply for labour; their individual decisions have no influence on wages. Also they act individually and not in concert with other workers or employers in making wage and employment decisions. Furthermore, there are no obstacles to mobility of labour and other factors of production. Lastly, labour within a particular market is homogeneous and interchangeable. (Loveridge and Mok 1979:28).

This theory was originally used to explain race segregation in the USA, but has been extended to explain the inequality of women in the UK labour market. (Rees 1992:30; Bagilhole 1994 :40).

In addition, the theory divides employment into primary and secondary sectors. The primary sector offers highly paid jobs, good fringe benefits, good working conditions, good opportunities for promotion and high levels of job security. The secondary sector is comprised of relatively low paid jobs, poor working conditions, fewer opportunities for promotion, and low levels of job security. Within this framework, this theory argues that women often work in the secondary sector, and men tend to occupy the primary sector. Also workers in the secondary sector are unlikely to be able to enter the primary sector (Loveridge and Mok, 1979:65; Rees, 1992:30; Anker, 2001:136).

### **2.3.3 Household Theory**

The household production theory argues that the production of goods and services by the members of a household, for their own consumption, using their own capital and their own unpaid labour (Ironmonger 2001:3). This means all goods and services produced by households are for their own consumption. The process of household production involves the transformation of purchased intermediate commodities (i.e. supermarket groceries and power-utility electricity) into final consumption commodities (i.e. meals and clean clothes). Households use their own capital (kitchen equipment, tables and chairs, kitchen and dining room space) and their own labour (hours spent in shopping, cooking, laundry and ironing) (Ironmonger 2001:3). The total economic value added by households in household production has been suitably named Gross Household Production (GHP) (Ironmonger 2001:3).

The definition of home work contained in the ILO report on the same subject, which was submitted to the International Labour Conference in 1995, which states that "home work is normally understood as the production of goods or the provision of services for an employer or contractor under an arrangement whereby the work is carried out at a place of the worker's own choosing, often the worker's own home. It is normally carried out without direct supervision by the employer or contractor" (ILO 1995). To define the concepts of work and employment - usually the two are equated – is crucial for women, which may not be important for men, as this is related to the difference between paid and unpaid work. Unpaid work is in the home; a child-care and other caring responsibility is sharply distinguished from 'employment' work done outside the home for a wage/salary.

The types of work that women do within and outside of households share several similar characteristics. Both tend to be socially significant but are either unpaid or undervalued. The unpaid work that takes place within the household consists of housework, which is geared towards physical maintenance of the household members. Childcare activities, a key component of unpaid household work, are an aspect of caring labour, which contributes to social reproduction. However, it should be taken into consideration that women's care-giving extends beyond child-rearing to provision of social support for partners, other relatives, and in the broadest terms it includes the immense variety of volunteer and organizational work in which women also engage (Baines 1991). Women, especially mothers, must divide their time between work, which is a "productive role" and family, which is a "reproductive role". For these women, time is valuable, as their livelihood depends on their ability to meet the demands of the family and the market.

#### **2.3.4. Feminist and Patriarchy Theories**

According to the definition of Valdivia (1995:8), Feminism is the "theoretical study of women's oppression and the strategical and political ways that all of us, building on that theoretical and historical knowledge, can work to end that oppression" (Valdivia 1995:8). Feminism is the organized movement which promotes equality for men and women in political, economic and social spheres.

Feminists believe that women are oppressed simply due to their gender by the dominant ideology of patriarchy. However, patriarchal thinking conflicts with feminism, as the male is classed to be superior and the female is viewed to be inferior (Iglitzin and Ross 1976 :8). Thus, patriarchy is viewed as the system, which oppresses women through its social, economic and political institutions. Many feminists have used the concept of patriarchy to help explain the persistence of women's subordination and

gender inequality. In addition, according to feminists the only way to liberate women is if society eliminates the patriarchy system. Furthermore, feminists believe, men have greater power in both the public and private spheres. To maintain this power, men have created boundaries and obstacles for women, thus making it harder for women to hold power. There is an unequal access to power.

In the 1970's, women started developing a theory which helped to explain their oppression. By the 1980's, however, feminists started disagreeing on particular issues linked to feminism. What was once one theory began to branch out into many theories that focused on different feminist issues. Consequently, there are many forms of feminism and many definitions of feminism as there are feminists. Each definition of feminism depends on a number of factors including ones own beliefs (Peterson and Runyan 1993).

It should be noted that this study benefited from feminist theory, since the research is in relation to economics of women. Feminists focused on the social environment where women live; whether under capitalism or Marxism. Feminist economics broadly refers to a developing branch of economics that applies feminist insights and critiques to economics. For instance, feminist economists investigate the ways in which the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) does not adequately measure unpaid labour predominantly performed by women, such as housework, childcare, and eldercare. Since a large part of women's work is rendered invisible, they argue that policies meant to improve the GDP can worsen the improvement of women, even if the intention is to increase wealth.

Feminism has branched out into the Muslim world as well with its distinct version of Islamic feminism, which encourages justice and equality to women as Islam ordered. It is also a tool to remind people what Islam is for women. While Islam is often

represented as a religion which denigrates women and limits their freedom, many women scholars have found evidence in Islamic texts which is supportive of women's rights. As Badran states the term Islamic feminism is an idea of awareness preaching that men and women have equal rights based on re-reading the Qur'an, re-examining the religious texts and telling people to practice it (Badran 2004). However, feminism in Islamic countries such as Saudi Arabia will be applied according to the Islamic principles and cultural background, where the western definitions of feminism might be perceived as not being suitable, while Islamic principles and Saudi culture have a great impact on the relationship between male and female on every aspect of public and private life in Saudi Arabia (Akeel 2003).

### **2.3.5 Cost - Benefit Analysis Approach**

Woman's work can be viewed as an economic resource that is subject to demand and supply. Accordingly, there are costs and benefits from woman's work. The cost benefit analysis of woman's work, therefore, must be taken into consideration when addressing the issue of woman's work. There are many interested parties in this regard, e.g. woman, family, employers, and government. These interested parties can be classified into two levels; micro level (which contains women and family) and macro level (which contains government and society). It can be noticed that the decision of women to work is taken on the micro level. However, the government on the macro level can play (positively or negatively) an important role in this regard by using different policies and techniques which may result in motivating women to participate or not in the development process. Therefore, a number of previous studies related to women's work use cost – benefit analysis approach, e.g. Kabeer (1992).

It may be useful to classify costs and benefits in this regard into two categories; direct and indirect. One of the problems, and may be the biggest one, is identifying indirect costs and indirect benefits. Moreover, there is no agreement about specific measures of the monetary value of costs and benefits of woman's work and as such it is difficult to quantify most of woman's work costs and benefits. The following paragraphs summarize the costs and benefits of women's work on the micro level and endeavour to touch this issue on the macro level.

#### **2.3.5.1 Women's work related costs**

It is commonly agreed that woman's work can be classified into two groups, direct and indirect costs. Transportation, purchased clothes and payment for required day care are examples of direct costs. Direct costs can be easily measured by monetary value. On the other hand, indirect costs include the opportunity cost of women's work, such as the negative effects on children and family due to the absence of mother in terms of less family care.

Opportunity cost method can be used to determine the real costs of women's work, which is the real value of resources used in the most desirable alternative (Todaro 2006). In other words, opportunity cost is the value of sacrificed economic resources due to choosing a specific alternative. When woman decide to work she sacrifices her time and efforts which can be allocated for house work, raising up her children, taking care of her family and herself. It is difficult to translate these costs to monetary units.

#### **2.3.5.2. Women's work related benefits**

Women's work results in several benefits, which can be classified into direct and indirect benefits. Additional income which is easy to measure is the noticeable direct

benefit from women's work. On the other hand, indirect benefits, which are more important than direct benefits, include self satisfaction or feeling better about themselves, personal respect, make children depend on themselves, and give them a wealthy live. Prather (1990) points out the psychological benefits are the reasons other than increased income and fringe benefits for being in the work force. Moreover, he states that perhaps just as important is reviewing the psychological benefits and costs, as these factors sometimes sway the final decision one way or the other. It may be worth mentioning that valuing indirect costs and benefits of women in work depends on some factors such as financial position of the family, personal characteristics and educational status.

On the macro level, government, in developed and developing countries, gives more attention to the issue of women's work. There are some economic and social consequences of women work. Some of them are positive and others are negative. The examples of positive consequences include increasing the gross national production and income, increasing public awareness to the importance of education, and improving the standard of living. Some health and social problems which may result from women's work are examples of negative results. It can be noticed that working women have been given more attention from governments around the world. They use different policies to remove the obstacles facing the participation of women in developmental activities.

A number of factors on the macro level can affect a women's work decision. Economic, culture and religious beliefs are examples of these factors. Culture and religion are most important factors in Islamic countries. The current research focuses on women's work in an Islamic country, namely Saudi Arabia.



### **2.3.6 Absolute advantage and comparative advantage**

There are two types of work in economy, market and home work. They are necessary to produce commodities, although individuals may have different abilities, such as having comparative advantage in one type of production over another. Specialization according to comparative advantage is the same as in international trade between two countries; the other country (family member) maximizes output, while men and women can co-exist in the home as well as in the labour market. Therefore, these terms can be used with women and men in their production. A woman has comparative advantage over man in producing a commodity it can do so at a relatively lower opportunity cost in terms of the forgone alternative commodities that could be produced. Taking man and woman, each producing two commodities (X and Y) woman is also said to have comparative advantage in production of X if its absolute advantage margin is greater or its absolute disadvantage is less in X than in Y (Todaro 2006). The example illustrates potential productivity gains due to specialization and exchange within a family.

## **2.4. WOMEN'S WORK IN ISLAM: CONTEXTUAL OBSERVATIONS**

The status of women in Islamic society in general and in Saudi Arabian society in particular is a complex and frequently misunderstood issue. Islam, it is asserted, is not merely a set of beliefs and rituals but is also a social order that has an all-pervading influence on its followers. This applies to the regulation of the public sphere, which has a direct impact on women and her activities in the public sphere.

Islam is a dominant factor in all aspects of life in Saudi Arabia. Powell (1982:101) noted that "any discussion of Saudi Arabia requires discussion of Islam. Islam pervades all aspects of Saudi life." In Saudi Arabia, one finds remarkably few distinctions between

the religious and secular. It would not be an exaggeration to say that in most daily activities, the seculars, as it is understood in the west, simply does not exist. Islam is very much a way of life in Saudi Arabia (Al-Zahrani 1986:46). Within such an environment, this misconception about the status of Saudi women has misshapen their social image and depicted them as low class. However, most of these misconceptions in the Muslim world are related to the society and culture in relation to woman's issues. This misunderstanding is caused because of the following:

- The ignorance in the Islamic rules, which organize the society;
- The wrong practices in the Muslim societies which make many people think that these are the teachings of Islam (Al-Jafari 2000).

In order to understand the status of Saudi women in the workforce and change this misconception, it is necessary to provide background details regarding Islamic understanding about women status, since the religion constitutes the main ingredient in the making of Saudi policy toward women, also the nature of the labour force and the nature of the development plans, which have also contributed to the low rates of women participation in the labour force.

Islam is not only a set of religious beliefs but also provides regulations and guidance for everyone's behaviour in private, social, and business life (Abdrabboh 1985). In Islam woman is considered to represent the entire humankind, since she constitutes half of it and she gives birth to the second half. Islam, therefore, has honoured the woman and put her in a higher social status. The Qur'an has also stated that she is the partner of man since the beginning of creation.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the Qur'an shows that the relationship between man and woman is a complementing relationship based on mercy and love

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<sup>1</sup> "O mankind! Reverence your Guardian-Lord, who created you from a single person, created, of like nature, his mate, and from them twain scattered (like seeds) countless men and women....." (Qur'an, 4:1).

rather than on conflict and tension<sup>2</sup>, as opposed to the conceptualization of feminism. Again, in Islamic conceptualization, woman also has the same rights as man, but not in realms where men have a degree of advantage over women.<sup>3</sup> In addition, Prophet Muhammad has paid great attention to woman as he said in his famous Sermon at the Farewell Pilgrimage, which is considered to be one of the earliest human rights documents.<sup>4</sup> He also paid attention, throughout his teaching and life, to matters that concern woman in her daily life including going out for work and the ways to organize this.

The most important responsibilities of woman in Islamic understanding prevailing in Saudi society are to provide a home for her family and to bring up her children properly. In the home the woman is expected to rule and give order to family. The home and the larger family structure in which she lives are for the Muslim woman her world. To be cut off from it would be like being cut off from the world and of the source of living. She finds the meaning of her existence in this extended family structure, which is constructed so as to give her the maximum possibility of realizing her basic needs and fulfilling herself (Jameelah 2005). This section attempts to expound on the roles of women in the Islamic society including status of women in Islam, equality and justice between man and woman in Islam, women's employment in Islam, conditions for women's work in Islam, employment areas for women, and Islamic terminology with the objective of providing a base for the following chapter through which it will be possible to locate the results of the study.

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<sup>2</sup> "And among His Signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that ye may dwell in tranquillity with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): verily in that are Signs for those who reflect" (Qur'an, 30:21).

<sup>3</sup> "And women shall have rights similar to the rights against them, according to what is equitable; but men have a degree (of advantage) over them. And Allah is exalted in Power, Wise" (Qur'an, 2:228).

<sup>4</sup> Prophet Muhammad urged Muslim men in his sermon that "Fear Allah with women. You married them by the word of God..."

Regarding the equality and justice between man and woman in Islam, Emara (1995) presents a model based on the Islamic culture in response to those who are promoting the western model. He states the difference between the traditional Islamic proposition and the secular scheme in this area is based on "the model of liberation". The secular movement adopts the western model which puts women against men. Meanwhile, Muslims are advocating the Islamic model of liberation of women, which sees women as the complementary and equal half of men in a whole society. It is a model that prepares her as a female without depriving her of equality. It recognizes the distinction between men and women and equality in all spheres of development, education and training. The sphere of work and practice, as well as the family and social sphere (Emara 1995).

Muslim revivalists argue that the *Shari'ah* or the Islamic Law does indeed stress the equality of men and women. Al-Turabi (1977) argues, for instance, that "if anyone examines the rulings of *Shariah* he will find that women are the equal half of men; they are not distinguished by asperate *Shariah* except, of course, in the limited area which enables both men and women to express themselves with originality and according to human nature" (Al-Turabi 1977:9). Similarly, Al-Rashed (1987) states that "indeed the Islam that is based on Qur'an and Sunnah and their teaching does not differentiate between people based on sex, race and colour. Justice is the first foundation of *Shariah*" (Al- Rashed 1987:110).

In concluding, according to Islamic belief Allah created both genders assigned to men and women the roles that each excels in due to its nature. Neither gender is inferior or superior to the other; instead they complement each other like the two halves of a whole. In everyday life we see that society consists of many different kinds of people, all of whom play their particular roles to keep society intact.

### 2.4.1. Women's Employment in Islam

Women have been working outside her home, throughout Islamic history along with men, and there is no textual legal evidence against women's work but rather against immodesty and mixing with unrelated men. Islam guarantees for the non-working woman's needs:

- Financial responsibility; the man is responsible for providing income for his wife;
- The man has to participate in household work (Al-Jwear 1995:77).

The home is the women's domain, her base of operations in life. The Qur'an and Sunnah command women to stay in their houses. Islam has given both spouses their rights and duties, so that the structure of the family and the society may complement one another. As a result the man has to work and struggle to earn a living, and spend on his family, and the woman has to take care of the husband and children. If she forsakes her duties, then the whole family suffers, emotionally and physically.

This does not signify that the woman's work outside her home is forbidden by Islamic law. No one has the right to forbid without an authentic text, which is clear in meaning. On that basis, we say that the woman's work in itself is allowed. It is even encouraged if she is in need of it, if she is a widow, divorced, or did not have a chance to marry, and if she has no income to avoid the humility of asking for charity or people's condescension. It could be the family who needs her work, such as to help her husband, or to care for her children, or young brothers and sisters, of her father in his old age, as in the story of the two daughters, of the old man mentioned in Surah Al-Qasas in the Qur'an, who used to look after their father's sheep.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The Almighty says: " And when he arrived at the water of Midian (Madyan) he found there a group of men watering (their flocks), and beside them he found two women who were keeping back (their flocks). He said, "What is the matter with you?" They said "We cannot water (our flocks) until the shepherds take (their flocks). And our father is a very old man." [28:23]

At time of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) women took part with men in numerous fields, such as pursuit of knowledge and nursing. Therefore, Islam allows women to work outside the home, bearing in mind that the work outside the home is not their essential work. They can go outside to work in specific situations (when needed) (Al-Jwear 1995:76). The society itself might be in need of the woman's work, as in giving medical treatment to women and looking after them, teaching girls and such work that concerns women. The acceptance of a man in some cases is a matter of necessity, which should be considered accordingly and should not be taken as a rule. The same case applies when the society needs working hands for the sake of development.

The concept of women's work in Islam is more comprehensive and deeper than that proclaimed by those who advocate that women should be liberated from home only so that may obtain paid employment. Unpaid work such as motherhood, bringing up children, housework, upholding the values of the society are also all work and investment in human capital stock.

In fact, the situations where a woman is allowed to go out for work can be summarized, according to traditional Islamic teaching, in three:

- I. A woman can work when she is in need due to the husband's or father's low income or when the father or husband passes away. However, this only happens in a society that does not apply the Islamic teachings and does not care about the widow or the poor.
- II. The inability of the father or husband to spend on the daughter or wife in which case she cannot be prevented from working.
- III. Working for the female community when she is needed.(Al-Jafari 2000)

### 2.4.2 Conditions for Women's Work

While it is true that women are allowed to work, traditional Islamic teaching conditioned this; and the following are some of such conditions: Firstly, the work itself should be Islamically lawful in the sense that it should not be Islamically forbidden (haram) or lead to what is forbidden, for instance as a maid working in the house of a bachelor, or as a private secretary for a manager, whose position requires her to stay with him alone, or as a dancer who excites physical instincts and lusts, or as a worker in a restaurant serving alcohol. She should not work in other types of work forbidden by Islam for women in particular, or forbidden for men or women.

Secondly, if she goes out of her house, she should adhere to the morals of a Muslim woman in her clothing, her talk and movement, as stated in the Qur'an.<sup>6</sup>

Thirdly, her work should not affect other duties which cannot be neglected, such as her duty towards her children and husband (Abu-Shaqua 1990).

Fourthly, it is required of the Muslim community to organize matters and make arrangements so that the Muslim woman can work, if her interest or her family's or her society's requires that, without undermining her modesty, or contradicting her commitment towards God, herself or her home. The general atmosphere should help her to perform her tasks as well as obtain her rights. She should also be granted enough leave for her marriage, delivery and nursing.

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<sup>6</sup> And tell the believing women to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things), and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts) and not to show off their adornment except only that which is apparent and let them not stamp their feet so as to reveal what they hide of their adornment. [Surah 24:31] then be not soft in speech, lest he in whose heart is a disease (of hypocrisy or evil desire for adultery, etc.) should be moved with desire, but speak in an honourable manner. [33:32]

Fifthly, some of the arrangements should include setting schools, colleges and universities especially for girls where they can practise sports and physical exercises suitable for them and where they can have freedom of movement to practise different activities. There should also be women in ministries, establishments and banks, and where a woman will not be alone with one or more men, in addition to other and new means which cannot be counted.

The main rules through which Islam encourages women to follow before leaving home to go to work can be summarized, as follows:

- Wearing *Hijab*: This is an important religious requirement mandated by the Qur'an, which is primarily intended to safeguard and modesty, dignity and honour of men and women.<sup>7</sup>
- Avoid mixing with men and being left alone with a man.
- Avoid using an attractive voice when talking.
- Husband's permission: Islam forbids a woman to go out without receiving permission from her husband or from her guardian if she is not married.
- Travelling from one city to another, as Islam forbids women from travelling without a *Mahram*, or without allowed male company. She must be accompanied by at least one *Mahram* during her journey.

The view of the scholars in Saudi Arabia can be represented by the *fatwa* of Shaikh Bin Baz<sup>8</sup>, who was the highest religious authority in the country before he died, whose views represent a whole school of thought that is adopted and widely accepted in many

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<sup>7</sup> Allah says in the Qur'an "O prophet! Tell your wives and daughters, and the believing women, That they should cast their outer garments over their persons (when outdoors): That is most convenient, That they should be known (as such) and not molested. And Allah is Oft- Forgiving. Most Merciful." ( 22: 59)

<sup>8</sup> Sheikh BinBaz (1912-1999) was the Grand *mufti* of Saudi Arabia. (A *mufti* is the principal scholar certified by virtue of his official position to issue *fatwas* or religious edicts and interpretations.) He was also the head of the council of senior *ulama*'.



areas of the Arabian Peninsula. This *fatwa* was delivered by him in 1985 as a response to the possibility of employing women in the government offices as clerks and in support management staff positions, a copy of which can be found in the appendix.

This *fatwa* summarizes the role of women in Saudi society and provides opinions towards working women outside the home. While Bin Baz had no problem with women's education and work, he emphasized that this was to be done within a strict segregation between men and women, as the free mixing of women and men in the work domain leads to the decay of Muslim society and its demise. His *fatwa* is shared by many other religious scholars in Saudi Arabia, including the late Sheikh Muhammad Otheimin and the current Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia Sheikh Abdul Aziz Al-Sheikh.

### **2.4.3 Employment Areas for Women**

Islam allows women to work outside the home in an appropriate job, which suits her nature, her concern, and her capacity, and which does not undermine her femininity (Al-Qaradawi 1998).

The following areas or fields are considered as suitable for women to work, according to the traditional teaching of Islam:

*Feminine fields:* This is a general frame where a woman works within sectors oriented for women. For example, she can be a doctor or nurse but she has to treat women only. Also she can be a teacher, an administrator or a secretary but within a female context. This goes according to the Islamic teaching, which prevents woman from dealing or mixing with men.

*Giving priority to community's need in determining women's work:* The fields which are considered to be suitable should be restricted to the community's needs: A community needs a work force both in the short run and long run. By working they put the work force in trouble in the long run. First, this is because the working women may try to have as few children as she can in order to be able to look after them. Second, women's employment may lead to unemployment among men. However, when women work according to the need only, then this would be more efficient as the unmarried and married women who have no children will participate in the work force whereas the women who have children will look after their children. The economy will benefit from this distribution of the work force more as each one has a suitable task that fits him/her. This will be reflected on production as well. It is worth mentioning here that when all women work they may get involved in professions that suit men best and not women. Women, as a result, may be less efficient and as a result less productive as the job might not be suitable for them psychologically and physically speaking.

*The job should suit the woman's nature:* In Islam, woman as a human being was not created to be exhausted and torn apart. She was created to be a jewel in her house and do the greatest thing ever: giving birth to children and looking after them. That is why she was created as a sensitive and compassionate creature to be a mother caring for her children. Moreover, Islam has, within its social and economic projection, distributed the roles between man and woman in a way that guarantees the maximum benefit to the society.

*Woman should not work in private institutions nor should she be directed by a man:* This is because working woman should not be under the mercy of the boss directly in order not to be irritated.

*She should not work in what Islam forbids:* Woman is a member of the Muslim society where she does what she is asked to do and avoids what the society forbids. That is why she is not supposed to work in jobs that God forbids (Al-Jafari 2000).

Women's work is significant from a social and economical point of view, especially in the current times, which is characterized by rapid development and growth in various fields of economic and social life. Their work becomes essential for and the perpetuation of modernization. Since females constitute half of the society; their power has to be invested in the society and be used to achieve development growth and welfare objectives of the society (Al- Jwear 1995:81).

Some scholars and researchers suggested certain fields of employment which are suitable for women, such as childcare, social services, home management, medical services, especially those directly for women; design of jewellery, clothes, textiles, food processing; educational services at all levels for women, IT technology according to Islamic *Shariah* (Ben-Duheash 1995), (Hamdi 1996), (Al-Hazmi 1997), (Al-Husaiin 1999) and (Daghestani 2000).

## 2.5 CONCLUSION

In trying to justify women's work, researchers have proposed several theories. However, from the proposed theories none could be voted as the best theory of women's work for the women in Saudi Arabia. This is because these theories are complementary to each other and are dependent on each other. Since Islam shapes every aspect of human life in Saudi Arabia, it is Islamic understanding of the Saudi society which can better explain women's work and related issues.

The emphasis in the Quran and Sunnah regarding women's work is thus not on total segregation but on minimizing factors that promote physical attractiveness, which may lead to the unlawful. Thus, traditional Islamic teaching requires believers to:

- Treat one another with respect at all times in all situations;
- Behave modestly;
- Avoid situations of seclusion (Khalwa);
- Dress modestly (by covering ones body and for females, their hair)

Islam is often represented as a religion which denigrates women and limits their freedom. However, many scholars have found evidence in Islamic texts, which is supportive of women's rights. Whereas Western concepts of feminism are often resisted as foreign and subversive of Muslim culture, arguments for women's equality from within Islam hold a lot of potential for feminists.

## Chapter 3

# Women's Participation in the Saudi Economy: An Overview of Developments and Trends

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Saudi Arabia is a traditional monarchy and an oil rich country situated at the heart of the Arabian Peninsula. It is a Muslim country, where Islam serves as a crucial social, legal and political framework for the entire Saudi society and the government. It provides the political ideological framework of reference to the Saudi regime as well as the constitutional base for the legal system. "Islam is the single most important factor in Saudi Arabia. It dominates... all activities and policies of both the government and the people" (Nyrop 1997). There is no separation between state and religion, thus, *Shariah* is considered the written constitution of the country. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Saudi society derives its values and principles mainly from the teachings of Islam and from local culture, traditions and customs. Therefore, most members of Saudi society are conservative in their characteristics and attitudes.

Regarding the participation of Saudi women in the economic life of the Saudi society, since early times they have been working in the domains of trade, agriculture, animal grazing, cattle breeding, sewing, education, guidance and nursing in addition to their work at home and nurturing of children. Against this historical reality, the change since the beginning of the twentieth century resulted in women being pushed out of the economic realms at least in the urbanised sections of the society. Therefore, a question remains to be answered as to what are the major reasons for the low rates of women's participation in the labour force in Saudi Arabia. This chapter attempts to present a general survey on women's participation in the labour market in Saudi

Arabia, their social and economic conditions, education, and history of women in work. In addition we will explore employment facilitators, characteristics of the female labour force and the reform process. Also, the situation of women in education and in employment in Saudi Arabia is investigated.

### **3.2 WOMEN'S ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION: DEVELOPMENTS AND TRENDS**

Women's participation in the labour force is the most important factor affecting the labour supply in Saudi Arabia, as women in Saudi Arabia constitute almost half of the population according to most recent data, 49.9% (as of 15<sup>th</sup> of September 2004).

The first time the development plans have addressed the issue of women's participation in the labour force is with the third development plan (1980-1985), which emphasised human resource development in general. In addition, the fourth development plan, as part of human resource development in the country, provided ways to utilize effectively the knowledge and skills of Saudi women in accordance with *Shariah*. The Fourth Plan envisaged that about fifty thousand more women would enter the workforce during the five years of the fourth plan period (1985-1990) (MEP 1985 pp. 51-2).

In its attempt to facilitate the entry of women in to the labour market, the Saudi government has made job opportunities available for the Saudi woman and facilitated their entry to the private sector, provided that the recruitment of the woman suits her nature and does not run counter to the teachings of the Islamic *Shariah* and the deep-rooted traditions of the Saudi society.

**Table 3-1**  
**History of Women's Work in Public Sectors Until 1997**

Name Division	Year of start	Numbers of women in workforce		Total
		Saudi	Non- Saudi	
Ministry of Information	1949	29	-	29
Ministry of Health	1952	12008	26142	38150
GPGE	1960	161056	13744	174800
Ministry of Defence & Aviation	1961	2231	480	2711
Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs	1962	762	40	802
Ministry of Education	1964	138	2	140
Ministry of Higher Education	1965	2569	3299	5868
National Guard	1971	1354	82	1436
Ministry of the Civil Service	1973	104	-	104
Oversight and Investigation Authority	1975	7	1	8
Ministry of Interior	1975	539	295	834
General Presidency for Haramain Affairs	1982	128	-	128
Institute of Public Administration	1983	66	2	68
Ministry of Planning	1984	40	-	40
Ministry of Finance (RPD)	1984	274	-	274
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	1985	8	6	14
General Auditing Bureau	1985	2	-	2
Ministry of Municipalities and Rural Affairs	1986	109	-	109
Ministry of Telecommunications	1989	47	1	48
Others		182	57	239
<b>Total</b>		<b>181653</b>	<b>44151</b>	<b>225,804</b>

Source: Ministry of the Civil Service and (Aldakhail 2000 : 295)

**Table 3-2**  
**Public Sector Employment According to Gender 1999-2002**

Total	%age of Saudi Female	Non-Saudi Female	Saudi Female	Non-Saudi Male	Saudi Male	Years
656656	27.66	44151	181653	51827	379025	1999
674554	30.22	35940	203879	46956	387779	2000
694770	29.46	35672	204682	45776	408640	2001
710859	30.13	34191	214221	45644	416803	2002

Source: Ministry of Civil Service

Table 3-2 depicts the increased participation of Saudi women in the public sector employment because of Saudization, non-Saudi women's participation decreased from 44,151 in 1999 to 34,191 in 2002 which corresponds to 22.5% per cent, while during the same period, the % age of Saudi men in the workforce fell from 51,827 to 34,191, or by 11.9% per cent

**Table 3-3**  
**Estimates of the Total Labour Force by Gender (1999-2004)**

<b>Years</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Female</b>
1999	3173000	89.58	2842461	10.42	330539
2000	3321608	89.49	2972361	10.51	349247
2001	3477213	89.39	3108198	10.61	369015
2002	3640144	89.29	3250243	10.71	389901
2003	3810749	89.19	3398779	10.81	411970
2004	3990000	89.09	3554712	10.91	435288

Source: Estimates of the labour force growth rates using the seventh development plan

According to table 3-3. the females are estimated at 10.91% of the total labour force as compared to 89.09% for men in 2004. The limited economic activity of women is largely attributed to the limited job categories available to them. As the statistics indicate, Saudi women have attained a great position and presence across various fields of work including education, health, information, culture, economics, finance and investment, as well as in institutions offering various social services and community care. The Saudi government is making an effort to create more job opportunities for women in accordance with *Shariah*. In line with this, the fourth development plan states that:

“Recent developments in computer applications in other countries have increased the possibilities for women’s participation without their leaving home. As the level of computerization in the kingdom increases, more such job opportunities will become available. Policy measures in support of these trends might enable Saudi women to contribute more directly to the development process of the kingdom, in addition to increasing the Saudization of the work force. There are growing job opportunities in other areas also, such as process control and laboratory activities, where women can be employed in accordance with the *Shariah*. Furthermore employment prospects for Saudi women can be



generated during the fourth plan by rigorously following the Saudization of the teaching profession.” (MEP 1985 P 52)

It is important to state that the government could not address the participation of women in the labour force before with such liberty and ease, because it refrained from social changes. However, it is now in a position to adopt even employment related policies which would encourage positive changes in women's life, such as increasing participation of women in the labour market. In respect to the distribution of labour by nationality and gender, the total national labour force stood at 3.3 million workers in 2003. Women represented 12.2% of the total and foreign workers stood at 4.97 million workers. Although the rate of increase in the national labour force of 5.1% during the first four years of the Plan (1970 –1975) exceeded the Plan's targets of 4.7 %, the size of foreign labour has also increased during the same period by 457,000 workers, at an annual rate of 2.4%. However, the Plan's target was to achieve a reduction in foreign labour throughout the entire period of the Plan.

In respect to the levels of education of labour in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Table 3-4 demonstrates that 29.2% of the workers do not hold educational certificates (are illiterate or can only read and write). The majority of these workers are found among the foreign workers (41.9%). The percentage of national workers who are without educational certificates does not exceed 15.4%. On the other hand, 21.3% of the total national labour force are university graduates or postgraduates, whereas the percentage of holders of similar degrees among foreign workers is only 14.3%.

**Table 3-4**  
**Proportional Distribution of Total Labour by Level of Education; Nationality & Gender**  
**Breakdown of Saudis (2002) (%)**

Level of Education	Saudi			Non-Saudi			Total
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Total
Illiterate	9.8	4.9	9.2	12.5	11.7	6.0	11.0
Able to Read & Write	7.0	0.8	6.2	29.4	16.7	28.4	18.2
Hold No Qualifications	16.8	5.7	15.4	41.9	28.4	34.4	29.2
Elementary School	20.5	1.5	18.1	12.2	16.5	5.3	15.0
Intermediate School	20.8	2.0	18.4	14.7	17.9	7.6	16.5
Primary Phase	41.3	3.5	36.5	26.9	34.4	12.9	31.5
Secondary Phase	19.4	16.2	19.0	12.3	16.1	11.8	15.6
Intermediate College	5.4	23.3	7.7	4.5	5.1	12.3	6.0
Diploma							
Bachelor Degree	15.1	49.3	19.5	12.5	14.1	26.8	15.9
High Diploma / Master	1.2	0.9	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.2
Ph.D.	0.6	1.0	0.7	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.6
Tertiary Phase	16.9	51.3	21.3	14.3	16.0	28.6	17.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total Labour Size (000)	2671.0	437.1	3108.1	5136.6	7250.6	994.1	8244.7

Source: Proportional Distribution, Labour Force Bulletin 1423 (2002) – CDS

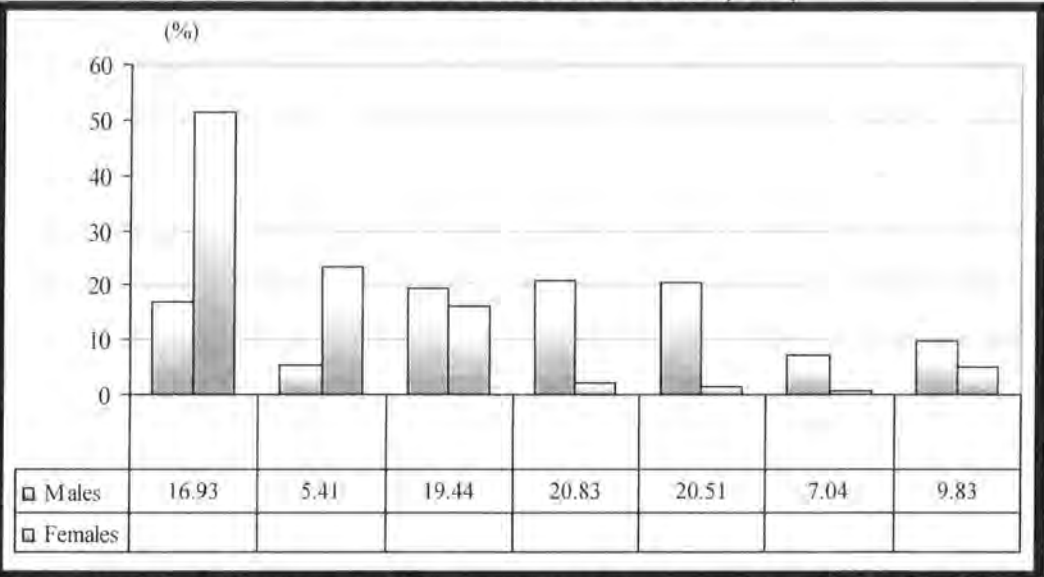
The participation of Saudi women in the labour market is yet limited in regards to the scope and diversity of their sectoral participation. Furthermore, women's entry into the labour market was both slow and belated during the early stages of development and their participation rate in the labour market did not exceed 5 percent until the end of the Fourth Development Plan in 1990. The impact of development efforts on the status of women's participation in the labour market (particularly in the educational field), started to gradually increase. In 2003 the rate of women's participation in the labour market increased to 10.3 percent. Females' share in the labour force reached 14 percent.

### 3.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF LABOUR FORCE IN SAUDI ARABIA AND WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

Figure 3-1 explains the proportional distribution of the female population in labour force according to the educational level, which indicates enormous increases in female

participation in economic activities resulting from a dramatic increase in women's enrolment rate in various educational stages.

Figure 3-1  
Comparative Distribution of Employed Saudis by  
Level of Education and Gender (2002)



Source: Ministry of Economic and Planning, Eighth development plan for (2005-2010)

The continuous increase in population in Saudi Arabia has created a number of opportunities and challenges in relation to employment, which are expected to continue in the medium and short range. This can be summarised as follows .(M.C.I 2004:13-14):

- 1- To provide enough employment opportunities for the new comers to the labour market considering the increase in their numbers at an annual rate of 4.7% on average in the coming two decades;
- 2- Replacing the national labour force for the foreign one in various jobs and activities in the private sector;
- 3- To increase the employment chances for women and increase their participation in the labour market according to the Islamic *Shariah*;
- 4- Minimize the technical gap between the kingdom and the advanced countries, and therefore, exert intensive efforts to develop and promote the Saudi labour force and raise its levels;

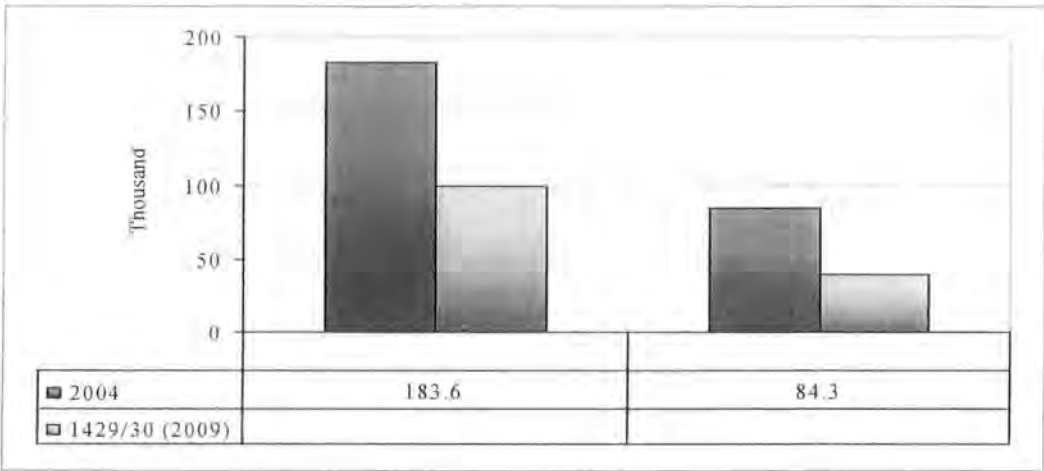
- 5- To close the gap between the high educational lay-outs and those vocational and technical education's and the labour market's requirements;
- 6- Improving the lay-outs of the labour force and escort the technical developments;
- 7- Improving the lay-out responses of the educational and training systems according to the market's requirements;
- 8- Improving the labour market services and establish integrated and improved data bases;
- 9- Consolidating the positive perspective towards work in general, this perspective should include women's work in suitable jobs.

### **3.3.1 Employment and Unemployment**

According to the Eighth Development Plan (2005-2010) forecasts, the number of employed Saudi national workers would jump from 3.54 million at the beginning of the Plan, (with women representing 12.2%) to 4.75 million workers at the end of the Plan (with women representing 17.9%). This implies that 1.21 million extra jobs will be made available to the national workforce, of which 33.2% would be filled by women.

The unemployment rates among the national labour force stood at 9.6% in 2003. However, this rate dropped to 7.04% in 2004 as a result of the intensive effort for the employment of Saudi nationals by the end of the Seventh Development Plan. It is the objective of the Eighth Development Plan to provide additional employment opportunities to 129,000 job seekers through the available vacancies. This would absorb 48.2% of those searching for jobs at the beginning of the Plan. The overall objective of the Plan is to reduce the unemployment rates among the national workforce to 2.8% by the end of the Plan in 2009. This means only 138,900 would remain unemployed by 2009; 99,700 of them would be males and 39,200 would be women (Figure 3-2).

**Figure 3-2**  
**Unemployment by Gender (2004-2009)**  
**Eighth Development Plan**



Source: Ministry of Economic and Planning, Eighth development plan for (2005-2010)

The statistics of the Ministry of Labour indicate that the number of job seekers, who are registered according to qualification, stood at 114,138 at the end of 2005, increasing by 83.7 % over the preceding year (SAMA 2005). The preliminary estimates by the Ministry of Economy and Planning indicate that the unemployment rate among Saudis for 2005 stood at 6.9% against 7.0% in the preceding year. The unemployment rate in Saudi Arabia is estimated at more than 20%, though officials insist it is below 10%, as can be illustrated in (Table 3-5). The rate of unemployment among Saudi women is 21.7 percent according to the statistics released in the year 2002. In fact, female unemployment is greater than male in general in the Kingdom.

**Table 3-5**  
**Estimates of Unemployment Rate by Gender and Nationality**

Year	Saudis			Non-Saudis			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2000	6.54	17.64	8.4	1.13	0.96	1.11	3.78	9.34	4.57
2001	6.82	17.32	8.3	0.98	0.60	0.93	3.87	9.14	4.62
2002	7.57	21.70	9.7	0.82	0.62	0.79	4.21	11.51	5.27
2003			9.6						
2004			7.0						
2005			6.9						

Source: Central Department of Statistics and Information, Ministry of Economy and Planning. (Data For 2003-2005 are obtained from the Ministry of Economy and Planning's web site).

### 3.3.2 Employment in the Public Sector

The total labour in the public sector who are in graded positions, professional positions and employees (exclusive of other employment categories such as the ordinary workers and direct recruitment), reached 747,000 employees, by the end of 2003, of whom 677,500 are Saudis (90.7% of the total). Saudi women occupy 225,000 positions which represent 89% of the total working women and 30.1% of the total Saudi labour in the public sector. During the first four years of the Seventh Development Plan, Saudi employees in the private sector increased by 14.5% as compared to the year 1999. The average annual growth rate of Saudi employment in the private sector was about 3.4%. While the average annual drop of foreign labour in that sector, was 4.3% during the same period. This is clear evidence of a change in the structure of labour in the public sector in favour of national workers.

Table 3-6 shows the total public sector employees by nationality and job category in 1423/24 (2003). The table indicates that the majority of Saudi and non-Saudi workers in the public sector are employed in education and health sector. The health and education categories employ approximately two thirds of all public sector employees. 52% of total public sector employees are employed in education, while 10.8% are employed in the health sector.

**Table 3-6**  
**Public Sector Employees by**  
**Nationality and Jobs (2003) (Thousands)**

<b>Jobs</b>	<b>Saudi</b>	<b>Non-Saudi</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Public Jobs (Grades)</b>	173.7	7.1	180.8
<b>Education Sector</b>	373.1	15.1	388.2
<b>Health Sector</b>	38.5	41.8	80.3
<b>Teaching Staff, Lecturers and Assistant Teachers</b>	12.7	4.9	17.6
<b>Judges</b>	1.0	-	1.0
<b>Members of Saudi Commission for Investigation &amp; Prosecution</b>	1.2	-	1.2
<b>Other Employees</b>	77.3	0.5	77.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>677.5</b>	<b>69.4</b>	<b>746.9</b>

Source: Ministry of Civil Service, *Achievements Report*, 1423/1424 (2003).

In respect to employment of nationals in the public sector, 15,520 citizens were hired in 2003, including 2,588 women (16.7%). In regard to educational qualifications of the new entrants, holders of bachelor degrees were the majority representing 75.1%, and 19.1% of them were females. Education jobs remain the largest employer representing 68% of the total, with 16.8% occupied by women in 2003.

### **3.3.3 Employment in the Private Sector**

The labour statistics on the private sector indicate a continued increase in the employment of Saudi nationals during the first four years of the Seventh Development Plan (2000-2005). This was also accompanied by an increase of foreign workers through the first three years of that plan. However, from 2003 the flow of foreign workers decreased in accordance with the government's Saudization strategy. In respect to the distribution of labour across different sectors (Table 3-7), the goods producing sectors employ 55.5% of total workers in the private sector. The construction and building sector alone employs 36.7% of the total. This sector employs about 28.7% of total Saudi workers and about 37.4% of total foreign workers in the private sector. The services sector employs 42.8% of the total labour in the private sector, and the wholesale and retail trade employs 26.4%. (Table 3-7), shows the relative share of Saudis and non-Saudis in each category in 2003. The large share of non-Saudis in the construction and wholesale/retail trade sectors is worth noting.

**Table 3-7**  
**Distribution of Labour in the**  
**Private Sector by Economic Activity & Nationality (2003) (%)**

<b>Activity Code</b>	<b>Economic Activity</b>	<b>Saudi</b>	<b>Non-Saudi</b>	<b>Total</b>
1.	Agriculture, Forestry, Terrestrial Hunting & Fisheries	1.91	8.15	7.69
2.	Mining, Oil, Gas and Quarries	0.88	0.37	0.41
3.	Manufacturing	10.72	10.38	10.41
4.	Electricity, Gas and Water	0.53	0.25	0.27
5.	Construction and Building	28.73	37.38	36.74
	<b>Total Productive Sectors</b>	<b>42.77</b>	<b>56.53</b>	<b>55.52</b>
6.	Wholesale & Retail trade	28.28	26.24	26.39
7.	Transportation, Storage & Communications	2.96	2.08	2.14
8.	Finance, Insurance, Real Estate and Business Services	5.87	1.36	1.69
9.	Community, Social and Personal Services	18.25	12.11	12.56
	<b>Total Services Sectors</b>	<b>55.36</b>	<b>41.79</b>	<b>42.78</b>
10.	Other Activities	1.87	1.68	1.70
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>
	Total Labour in the Private Sector (000)	2388.9	4816.5	7205.4

*Source: Proportional Distribution – Database of the Ministry of Labour.*

The statistics of Saudi employment in the private sector indicate that a vast majority of those job applicants who registered at labour offices have been placed in jobs. In 2002, 97.3% of applicants were nominated for vacancies in the private sector. In 2003, 94.5% of job applicants were nominated to fill vacancies in the private sector. This is clear evidence of the intensive efforts of labour offices in assisting Saudis to join the private sector. It is noticeable that the majority of applicants are holders of high school certificates, accounting for 46% in 2002 and 41.2% in 2003. The percentage of those registered as illiterate dropped to as low as 1.7% of total registered job seekers in 2003. They comprised 1.6% of total applicants during the same year. The percentage of those who cannot read and write is 2.8% and 3.8% for registered and applicants respectively.



### **3.4 INVESTIGATING THE SOURCES OF INCREASING PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE LABOUR FORCE**

This section provides a discussion aiming at explaining the reasons of increasing participation of women in the labour force. However, it is important to mention that the educational aspect of such changes is discussed in a later section due to its crucial impact.

#### **3.4.1 Population Growth**

The population growth patterns are an important consideration for policy decisions concerning investment in human resource, particularly education and health. Population growth has been higher in the Arab Countries than in Latin America, some of the highest population growth rates are in Yemen and Saudi Arabia. These rates are particularly important to analyze, most particularly in relation to the growth of the labour force. For example, Venezuela has a 2% annual population growth rate and a 3% growth rate in its labour force, while Saudi Arabia has 2.7% annual population growth and 2.9% growth in the labour force (World Bank, 2001). The Saudi population size and its distribution affects the Saudi labour supply, which has consequences for women's employment. Saudi Arabia is the fastest growing nation in the world in terms of population growth. According to the latest estimates of the Central Department of Statistics, the total population of Saudi Arabia was 24.06 million in mid 2003, comprising 17.9 million Saudi, 74.5% of the total population. Moreover, 55.7% of the Saudis are below 20 years and 44.7% of them are below 15 years. The Saudi population had grown from 7.3 million in 1975 to 24.06 million in mid 2003. The population increase and demographic changes require the government to meet high demands for basic services in the areas of education, health transport, communication,

municipalities, and for the vital public utilities, such as water, electricity, and others including housing (SAMA, 2003).

**Table 3-8**  
**Population Structure of Saudi Arabia (2000-2003)**

<b>Population Structure</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
Total Population(Million)	22.01	22.69	23.37	24.06
Annual Growth Rate (%)	3.1	3.0	3.0	2.9
Males (Million)	12.03	12.51	12.86	13.21
Females (Million)	9.98	10.18	10.51	10.85
Saudis (Million)	16.21	16.77	17.34	17.93
Annual Growth Rate (%)	3.5	3.4	3.4	3.3
Ratio to total Population (%)	73.6	73.9	74.2	74.5
Males (Million)	8.15	8.43	8.72	9.01
Females (Million)	8.06	8.34	8.63	8.92
Non-Saudi (Million) (%)	5.80	5.92	6.03	6.14
Annual Growth (%)	2.2	2.0	1.9	1.7
Males (Million)	3.88	4.08	4.14	4.21
Females (Million)	1.92	1.84	1.89	1.93

Source: Seven Development plan (2000-2004), SAMA (2003)

The rapid growth in population is the greatest challenge, which implies distribution of the development benefits over a greater population. The Kingdom has been able to double its average real income, as the real per capita GDP reached about SR 43,300 in 2004 with an average real annual per capita growth rate of 0.87% during the period 1971-2004. This was despite the high population growth rate of 3.9% during the same period (MEP 2005). The main challenges lie in the issues of education and qualification of manpower in harmony with the nation's development needs. If this challenge is confronted positively, the demographic characteristics of the Kingdom will become factors of strength and positive advantages that would contribute to the achievement of the goals and objectives of the strategy. However this implies an increase in demand for education and health services, greater employment, as well as an increased pressure on basic infrastructure facilities and the environment.

The census showed that the total rate of the Saudi participation in the labour force is less than the expected and dreamed ambitions for many reasons, the most important ones are:

- 1- The high ratio of population under the work age-group, as they constitute 45% from the total Saudi population.
- 2- The high ratio of housewives which constitutes 45% from the total Saudi population.
- 3- The high ratio of university and secondary education students from both gender which constitute 29,4% from the total population in the work age-group (M.C.I 2004 :10).

The Saudi population size and its distribution affects the manpower shortage especially between females in Saudi Arabia and the total participation rate of the labour force of people of working age. However, the government's policies can improve this factor to increase the percentage rate of participation in the workforce, especially the rate for females. This will decrease the country's dependence on expatriate workers. The fact that Saudi Arabia has such a young population means that the work force in particular will grow at a high rate and this will result in a change from reliance on a largely foreign labour force to one that is largely Saudi. The relatively high population growth rate coupled with the young age structure of the Saudi population carries significant implications for the development path of the Kingdom. The population in the Kingdom (Saudis and non-Saudis) is forecasted to grow at an average annual rate of 0.87% during the period of the strategy, to reach 29.86 million in 2024 of whom 4 million will be non-Saudis (see table 3-9). These forecasts suggest a reduction in the growth rate of the Saudi population from an average annual rate of 2.4% during the Eighth Development Plan to an average of 2.1% during the Eleventh Development Plan period, an average rate of 2.25% for the whole period of the strategy.

**Table 3-9**  
**Population growth projections during the Long Term Strategy**  
**Population (Million)**

	<b>2004</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>Average annual growth Rate (%) 2004-2024</b>
Total population	22.67	24.39	26.45	28.15	29.86	0.87
Saudis	16.53	18.57	20.79	23.21	25.81	2.25
Non-Saudis	6.14	5.82*	5.66	4.94	4.05	-1.38
Net dependency Rate of Saudis**	4.67	3.91	3.12	2.60	2.18	--

\* MEP estimates which take into consideration the decrease in the foreign labour force due to Saudization policy.

\*\* Net dependency rate = No. of Saudi population/Saudi employed.

Source: Central Department of Statistics and Ministry of Economy and Planning estimates

The population structure of Saudis is expected to witness a prominent change during the period, as the working age category (15-64 years) will grow by an average rate of about 2.8% during the term of the strategy. Therefore, the net dependency rate of Saudis will decrease from about 4.7 persons in 2004 to about 2.2 persons in 2024. As can be seen in Table 3.9 the growth rate in the age group 65 years and above which stands at 4.9% during the strategy period will increase by approximately three fold, resulting in more health and social care expenditure for this population category. Given the expected population growth rate, the required average annual growth in the GDP to achieve the targeted increase in GDP per capita is 6.6% during the strategy period. This rate is expected to rise from 4.6% during the first quarter of the strategy to 8.7% during the last quarter.

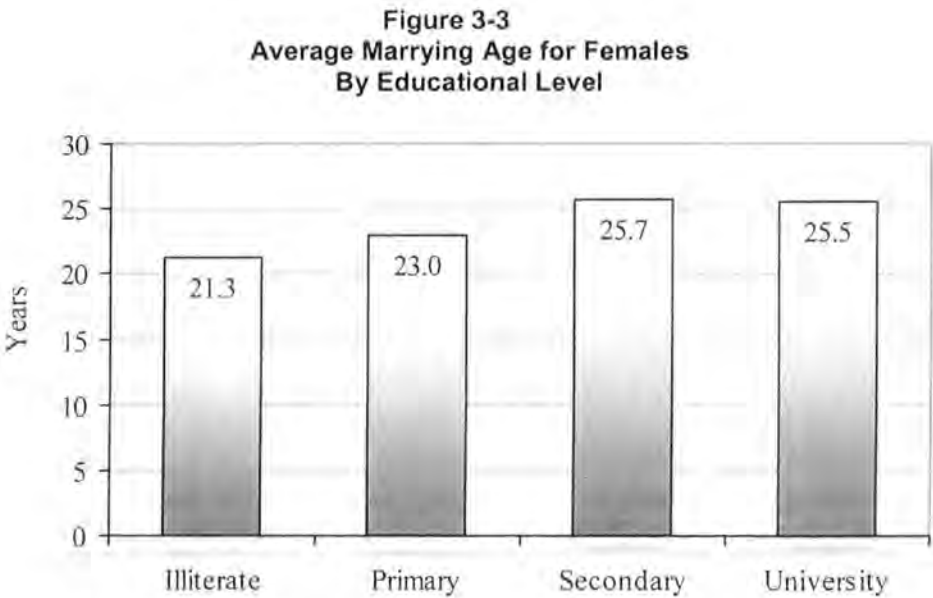
These estimates depend on the assumed increase in national workforce participation from about 36.9% to 56.3% during the same period, where the labour force participation will increase from around 63.8% to 80.0% for males (increased by 25%) and from 10.3% to 30% for females (increased by 91%). In other words, it is expected that women have the opportunity to play a key role in development plans. Therefore the above review of the previous development plans, highlight the key role of women's

participation in the Saudi economy, in particular the labour force.

3.4.2 Work and Fertility

Fertility is an important component of population change. Furthermore, education acts as a fertility decelerator by delaying marriage and by increasing the tendency to use contraception (Al-Qudsi 1998; Arab 1999:34). Al-Baadi (1982) found that Saudi women's use of birth control increases with their level of education. Consequently affecting, the Saudi family plan in terms of the size and spacing of their families.

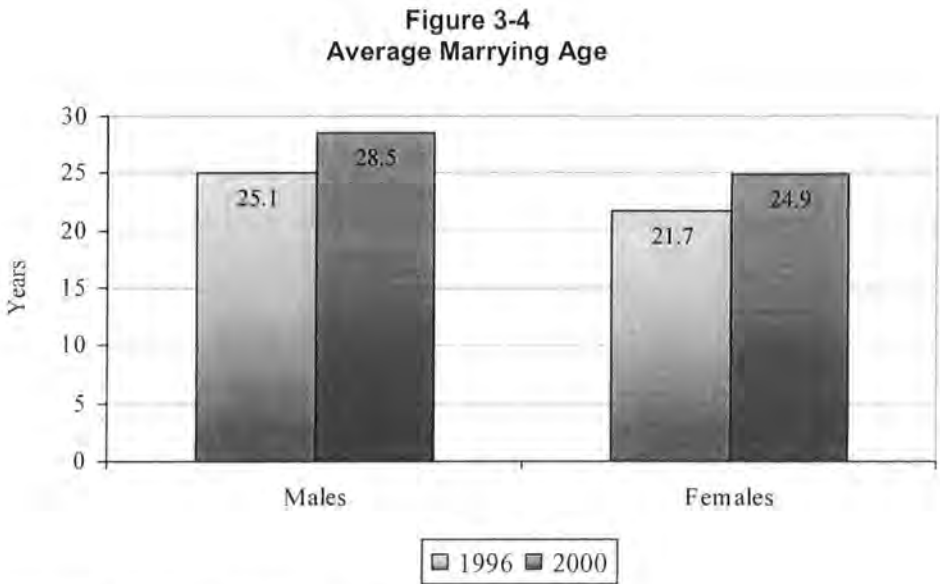
Khraif (2001) presents the fertility levels in Saudi Arabia and determines the most important determinants of fertility behaviour of Saudi women. She found that fertility is significantly influenced by woman's educational attainment, as education level increases, fertility decreases significantly. It is noteworthy that results have not changed, when education is introduced in the regression model as dummy variables. On the other hand, a husband's education has been found not to have a significant effect on fertility (Khraif 2001).



Source: Saudi Health Survey 1996

Contrary to most research findings, econometric analyses do not support her hypothesis regarding the effect of a woman's participations in the labour force (work status) upon fertility behaviour. The regression coefficient is not statistically significant. This is probably due to the fact that working women in Saudi law are given a motherhood leave, when they give birth. This leave consists of a two month vacation with paid salaries. For women working as teachers, this could be a rather good incentive for bearing children since they would have little to do for the rest of a semester after having the first two months off. In the end, her result emphasizes the weak impact of "work" upon fertility behaviour (Khraif 2001).

On the other hand, the Eighth Development Plan shows that the Saudi Family Health Survey reveals a change in the average marrying age for the first time, where there was a decline in the rate of marriages at young ages (see figure 3-4).



Source: Demographic Survey 2000

It is clear that there is a decline in the rate of marriage for age 18 and below, with a drop from 75% among females in the age-group 35-49 to 55% among females in the

age-group 25-29 and to about 31% among females in the age group 20-24 years (MEP 2005).

This delay in marriage and using birth control is a significant reduction in the number of children born per woman over her life time. It is clear that lower fertilities will affect the human resources for the country, as this will lead to reduced population growth, which helps in increasing per capita income. On the other hand, shortage in the workforce lets the country depend on other countries for a labour force. However, importantly, this implies a woman has more opportunities to enter the work force, due to a decline in the dependency rate. In other words, family planning together with delayed marriages, results in women's economic participation rate increasing as a result.

### **3.4.3 Social Factors in Saudi Society**

Saudi society is largely conservative and religious. Religion plays a central role in defining the culture and determining the norms, values, attitudes, and practices of society (Al Munajjed 1997). As a result, the Saudi population is characterized by a high degree of cultural homogeneity and by an equally high degree of social stratification. In Saudi Arabia, the family and religion are part of one institution. Much of the social, economic, and political life is still organized in terms of the family. However, with the changing economic reality, several changes have come to affect the Saudi family. Changing lifestyle and rising modes of expenditures such as private education, health, telecommunications, and entertainment, among other things, are making it impossible to support a family on one source of income. Therefore, the existing economic conditions guide women to find jobs to support the family. The implication of this is that women must be independent and therefore they must earn their own living as others. In other words, such changing economic conditions necessitate Saudi woman to work

in order to contribute to marital life's burdens, or help her parents and reduce their obligations, unlike in the past.

The fathers and husbands accept the idea that their wives and daughters have to work. Sometimes fathers even try to help their daughters find jobs so they can supplement their husbands' income due to the need for an additional income. Thus husbands and fathers strongly agree that their wives and daughters should work. Regarding the supply of work for this increasing domestic demand, the private sector — especially hospitals — prefer foreign women, because they can deal more comfortably with male customers or patients, and also adapt to the job more easily, as the Saudi women find it difficult to work in a mixed environment.

#### **3.4.4 Economic Growth**

Saudi economic growth has fluctuated over the past two decades due to structural imbalances in the economy, which have negatively impacted on the human capital development. The gross capital formation to GDP ratio fell from 28% in the early 1980s to around 18.4% in 2001 which was significantly below that of other developing economies averaging at 27%. Thus, economic downturn resulted in difficult economic conditions for ordinary people, which in the end necessitated the working of female members of the families.

The recent economic expansion sustained the increasing demand for work by women by providing a better business environment, as the Saudi economy is booming and will be the best in the Kingdom's economic history (SAMA 2005). According to Samba (2005) forecast, growth in GDP will be about 26% in nominal terms with insignificant domestic inflation. The oil revenues, the government budget surplus, and the current account surplus will all register all-time highs because of exceptional oil prices and high oil production levels. Samba believes the combination of strong consumer spending,



strong business investment, sustained high oil prices, growing Saudi oil production, improved government finances, and substantial fiscal stimulus in 2006 all combine to lay the groundwork for sustained economic growth for several years (Samba 2005:4). This implies creation of new job opportunities in general and expansion of women oriented jobs in the country as well.

### **3.4.5 Woman's Work and Regulatory Framework**

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs was established in 1960, which marked a successful starting point of social development and care for Saudi women for their important role in structuring the family and serving the society (M.C.I. 2004:56). In April, 2004, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs was split in two:

1. The Ministry of Social Affairs, which is responsible for social insurance, and social care and development. It has charities and co-operative societies, as well as social research within its jurisdiction.
2. The Ministry of Labour's responsibility is to deal with labour disputes, employment in the private sector and labour visas. Also to solve unemployment which is the major problem facing the kingdom.

Despite the recent economic growth, unemployment is growing at an alarming rate. The share of unemployed females was 33.2 percent of the total unemployed. The overall rate of unemployment was 21.7 percent and 7.6 percent for females and males, respectively (MEP 2005). A number of government initiatives for men and women have been taken to tackle the unemployment problem. For instance, the new Labour Law has issued a package of decisions with an objective of widening female participation besides securing all the necessary conditions for the participation of Saudi women in development in general and the economy in particular to create more opportunities for women by insuring women rights. Thus, it aims to remove the obstacles that stand in the way of women's employment. On 28 September 2005, the

Council of Ministers approved the new labour law, which has been endorsed by the *Shura* Council. The law protects the rights of workers and ensures a balanced relationship between employers and employees. It also goes along with the international agreements signed by the Kingdom and principles of the World Trade Organization. (SPA 2005)

Labour Minister Ghazi Al-Gosaibi believed the new law, which replaces the one issued 37 years ago, took into account national and international developments and changes and realized the interests of all parties on the job market. He said his ministry drafted the new law in coordination with other government agencies and the private sector. It has also taken into consideration Arab and international labour agreements (SPA 2005). The new law emphasizes the rights of working women but points out that they should not mix with men, must wear *hijab* (Islamic dress) and they should not work the night shifts — between sunset and sunrise during a period of not less than 11 hours. It contained special rules for house servants and those in the same category insisted on the following:

1. Raised the rate of Saudization of jobs in companies to 75%, The law, however, allows the labour minister to reduce this rate temporarily if there is a shortage of qualified hands required by companies;
2. Emphasized payment of end of service benefits (ESBs) to employees and gave details of how ESBs are calculated. Commission and bonus will be added to the basic salary while calculating ESBs;
3. An employer providing jobs to 50 women or more must arrange for babysitters to take care of their children aged below six;
4. Establishing employment offices, which will provide free service to jobseekers and employers. These offices will register the names of Saudis of working age. Employers have been instructed to inform the offices about job vacancies, types of jobs and conditions and salaries;

5. The Labour Ministry intends to create a suitable atmosphere for women's employment without mixing with men and without engaging in dangerous jobs or harmful activities;
6. Allows women to work in all fields that suit their nature;
7. Working women will be entitled to have maternity leave of four weeks before and six weeks after childbirth.
8. The law increased the entitled leave of a worker from 15 to 21 days annually, which will be raised to 30 days if he worked continuously with the same employer for five years;
9. The companies have to pay half months' salary maternity leave;
10. The companies must give health care during pregnancy and delivery to their female employees;
11. Businesses that have 50 working mothers must provide a nanny, and companies employing 100 working mothers must provide a fully equipped nursery room and nannies, calls for nurseries at workplaces that employ 50 women or more, but for women in smaller workplaces the lack of childcare is a big problem;
12. A woman employee would get 15 days leave with full pay in case of her husband's death (AbdulGhafour 2005);
13. The law has put the retirement age for men at 60 and women at 55 unless both sides agreed to an extension. It also allows early retirement for the first time;
14. It also allows a worker, who has joined an educational institution to have leave with full pay to write exams. It allows workers to have leave without pay with the approval of the employer;
15. The employers should provide women with enough time to breastfeed their babies and a place to take rest. The purpose of women's job must be compatible with their nature and the work should not prevent her from carrying out her household and marital duties;

16. Create suitable jobs for Saudi women in accordance with the Kingdom's traditions (AbdulGhafour 2005).

### **3.4.6 Human Resources Development Fund**

Another important source of increasing women's economic participation rates has been the creation of Human Resources Development Fund in the country, which was established in 2000 by the government. The objectives of this fund are the following:

- To support training and qualifying of the Saudi workforce;
- To contribute in the costs of training and development of workforce in the private sector;
- To pay a certain percentage of Saudi salaries during their training;
- To support projects and programmes which aim to recruit Saudis;
- To provide loans for those organizations which train and develop Saudi workforce;
- To carry out studies and research with regard to training and recruitment activities in Saudi Arabia.

The development of human resources in Saudi Arabia has always received priority in government expenditure. The development plans have focused on education and health care and remarkable resources have been invested in the development of human resources. The Fund aims to facilitate the employment and training of citizens, encourage them to work in the private sector, and support efforts to qualify and train the national labour force for employment in the private sector. The fund is available for women and their training needs as well. The Saudi government supports the fund's activities in terms of fees and subsidies. At the same time, the fund accepts grants, aid and endowments and has some investment.

The Fund has conducted, in cooperation with the Saudi Institute for Development of Entrepreneurs (SIDE) and Al Madinah Centre for Community Development, a training program with the aim of developing the skills cooperation resulting in the graduation of (59) young men and women. Furthermore, the Fund launched a study on a "Methodological Framework for Employment of Women in the Light of the Adoption of Telecommuting Options". It is a scientific survey study on the work of Saudi women in the private sector and to find solutions for it (HRDF 2005). This indicates the commitment of the authorities for creating a better environment for the economic participation of women in the economy.

### **3.5 THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN IN SAUDI ARABIA**

Since education has contributed to the increased economic participation of women in the Saudi society, it is important that education should be discussed in detail. Education is perceived to be one of the major contributors to economic growth; it is significant for preparing future generations and the government is ambitious to do this with due diligence and attentive means. Investments in girl's education yields high economic and social benefits that accrue to individuals, families, and society at large. Of course, the higher wages and productivity associated with additional education yield benefits for the community and wider society as well. Investment in girls' education has also been shown to increase the productivity of women working in the non-formal sector, which creates intergenerational educational benefits yielding significant environmental benefits. Education increases women's ability to manage natural resources efficiently and raises the likelihood that they will adopt new, more effective, technologies which are environmentally friendly.

The main tendencies of the educational policy in Saudi Arabia can be summed up in the following:

- Compulsion of elementary level schooling for male and female.
- Modernizing methods through raising the teacher's standard and promoting the educational aids to meet the real society's needs.
- To pay great attention to scientific and applied research in specialist fields.
- Directing the enrolment policy in higher education according to the need of the labour market.
- Paying great care to out-class activities and solve the infiltration problems in schools.
- The need for a solid integration of educational channels and tributaries and their flexibility.
- Encouraging the private sector to contribute in expanding the higher education base and to try to make use of the modern facilities such as the open university and distance education.(M.C.I 2004 :39-40)

The Kingdom has given special attention to the educational sector and made concerted efforts to provide education all throughout the country (MEP 2005), since education has given Saudi women knowledge, skills and a way of recognising their own social and economic power in society (Al Munajjed 1997).

The evolution of education in Saudi Arabia, starts from the *Ulama*; Muslim scholars with the authority to pronounce on religious questions, and who are able to strengthen their influence in periods of political sensitivity. The influence of the *Ulama* in the educational and social sphere is felt particularly strongly in respect to women's education and the role of women in public life, girls education was placed under the supervision of *Ulama* controlled General Presidency Of Girls' Education. The girls' school opened in 1960 under the *Ulama*'s own management and supervision, although the content of these schools' curricula was very similar of the boys' schools.

Education in Saudi Arabia is the area in which women have experienced the greatest progress, as illiteracy among women used to be widespread throughout the country. Expansion in educational opportunities have given Saudi women knowledge, skills and a way of recognizing, but not necessarily exercising, their own social and economic power in society. The increase in popular demand for public education for young girls and women was mainly thanks to a group of young, middleclass educated men in Saudi Arabia. They launched an appeal urging the government to establish schools for girls. They expressed their social dissatisfaction through newspaper articles and stated their need for educationally compatible wives (Al Munajjed 1997). When women were first granted the opportunity to receive an education, the education system treated males and females differently due to gender-based expectations of society. Girls were encouraged to develop their future roles as mothers and housewives. Furthermore, the curricula of girls' schools stressed courses that are suitable for the social function of woman in Saudi Arabia (Altorki, 1986). For example, in addition to religious studies, classes concentrated on home management, childcare, sewing and cooking. As can be seen such a curricula is far away from preparing the Saudi women to take up business roles. As a result, this creates another barrier for women in their attempt to enter into the work force, as they would lack the necessary education and training to get a job due to the gender bias in the education system.

It should be noted that those women that have chosen to take an active role and further involvement in the economy in Saudi Arabia are starting to see the payoff of their desire to make a change. Although the debate over the extent and kind of participation women can have in Saudi Arabia's development still continues, women are not denied access to either higher education or a widening range of jobs. As part of the objectives of the country's development plans, women in Saudi Arabia today are pursuing higher education and seeking to become active members of society where their roles are defined in terms of what they can offer for their country's economic, as well as social

and cultural development. Despite some accomplishments in the labour market and furthering their education, the women in Saudi Arabia still have a long way to go towards total equality.

Cordesman (1997) states that studies by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Bank indicate that the Saudi educational system is failing to adequately educate both male and female students for future jobs, and is steadily deteriorating in quality and economic relevance. Further, the existing Saudi labour force is now grossly overcommitted to the public and service sectors and much of it does not work in real jobs.

There is lack of realism in the government's efforts to address the problems in the Saudi educational system and their attempts to develop an effective work ethic by creating programs tailored to train Saudi males for jobs have so far failed. The demand for girls' education generated a very strong opposition from the *Ulama* (Islamic scholars) who were, and still are very powerful in shaping the social and political system in the country. Al-Baadi (1982:88) wrote that the *Ulama* saw the rising status of the secular intellectuals, with whose name calls for female education were associated, a threat to their own role as the society's sole intellectuals and ideologues. They saw the modern female education as an attempt to undermine their authority as well as a menace to societal women-related practices and ideals whose legitimacy and sanctity it was their role to provide.

As early as 1957, the government intended to open girls' schools under the supervision of the ministry of Education, which had been responsible for males' education since its establishment in 1946. However, the powerful *Ulama* very strongly opposed this idea, claiming that the Ministry of Education with its ideas of a modern secular education system and westernized young leadership could not be trusted in supervising female



education and the protection of familial honour (Al-Hazzaa 1993). The year 1959 was a landmark for female education in Saudi Arabia. That year a Royal decree was issued to establish schools for girls. To avoid the objection of the *Ulama* and gain their approval, the government established a commission of prominent *Ulama* to supervise and organize the female education programs. This commission was given the name: the General Presidency of Girls' Education (GPGE). This agency is controlled by the religious authority, which is independent of the Ministry of Education.

The royal decree states, as quoted by Al-Manea, "In compliance with the desire of the *Ulama*, we have decided to open schools for girls to teach religious sciences such as Koran, Islamic beliefs, Jurisprudence, and other subjects that are in compatibility with our religious beliefs such as homemaking and upbringing of children in addition to other sciences that sooner or later, pose no threat to our beliefs. Those schools must remain aloof from any influences that might affect the new generation's morals, integrity of belief, or traditions. We have given our order to form an Administrative Commission consisting of the notable *Ulama*, who are known for their ardent zeal for the religion and their affection for Muslim youth, to organize these schools, make up their programs, and supervise their conduct (Al-Manea 1984:88)". Despite this strong stance in 1960, the government opened 15 elementary girls' schools, when there were 712 elementary schools for boys (Al-hazzaa:97). In 1963, the General Presidency for Girls' Education opened the first five intermediate schools for girls and in 1965 it opened its first secondary school.

### 3.5.1 The Presidency of Girls' Education

The Islamic religious tradition in Saudi Arabia does not allow males and females to mix, unless they are related. This necessitated the establishment of separate schools for girls and the creation of the presidency of girls' education in 1960. The presidency is an

independent organization, which supervises girls' education from preschool to the undergraduate and graduate level. Prior to the formal establishment of this organization, girls' education was informal. Girls were educated individually in private school at homes in some cities in Saudi such as in Makkah and in Al-Hassa. There was no formal curriculum, and the content was primarily reading, writing and religious studies. The presidency of girls' education has developed an educational system for girls similar to the boys. The school curriculum for girls is very similar to that of the curriculum for boys; however, there are additional required courses, such as home economics, which are intended solely for girls as an indication for their chosen role in the society.

The presidency for girls' education realized the need for higher education; thus, colleges for girls were established in most major cities. The presidency also supervises nursing schools, tailoring centres and adult education, and is active in combating illiteracy among females (Ministry of Education, 1983-1984). Female students graduating from high school can either go to one of the GPGE education colleges or to one of the universities that admit women. In 1961, four female students were accepted at university. They studied in their homes and at the end of the year they would take the same exams as boys, but in separate rooms (Hallawani 1982:46). In 1976 the university established separate girls' centres where girls were admitted as regular students in the college of Art and the Administrative Science College in 1978.

During the Seventh Development Plan period (2000-2005), three new universities were established in Qassim, Madinah and Taif. Furthermore, in 2003 the Royal Decree approved the Higher Education Council's Resolution stating that the Ministry of Higher Education shall conduct a study for the establishment of new universities in Jouf, Hail, Jazan, Baha, Tabuk, Najran and the Northern Borders, while the existing colleges therein shall be the basis for establishment of these new universities. In order to

improve consistency levels between the outputs of the higher education institutions and the requirements of the country's development as well as the labour market needs, the new universities (Taiba, Qassim and Taif Universities) have been restructured. Moreover, establishment of new specialist (technical) colleges has been approved including 5 medical colleges, 3 pharmaceutical colleges, 2 dental colleges, one applied medical sciences college, one nursing college, 5 science colleges, 4 computer colleges, and 2 engineering colleges. One of the significant developments that took place during the Seventh Development Plan was the participation of the private sector in providing higher education services. Therefore, in 2000 the Council of Ministers' Resolution approved the regulation of private colleges, and a Royal Decree in 2003 approved the regulation of private universities. During the Seventh Development Plan (2000-2005), period, two private universities have been established, namely: Prince Sultan Private University and Al-Faisal Private University. The number of licensed private colleges reached about 70 in the various cities of the Kingdom, with an absorptive capacity of about 65,000 male/female students. Academic studies have started in 10 colleges with the enrolment of 2,115 male/female students by the end of the first academic term for 1424/25 (2004).

### **3.5.2 General Education**

According to the Ministry of Education, the total number of male and female students, including the students of adult education schools stood at 4.44 million at the end of the academic year 1425/1426H (2005) compared to 4.35 million in the preceding year, denoting a rise of 2% (Table 3.10). Male students constituted 52.2% of the total, while female students represented 47.8%. The number of teachers (males and females) at all levels of general education during the academic year 1425/1426H (2005) amounted to 397.7 thousand compared to 379.5 thousand in the preceding year, increasing by 4.8%. Male teachers made up about 48.5% of the total, while female teachers

constituted 51.5%.

**Table 3-10**  
**Number of Students, Teachers and Classrooms**  
**At The General Education Level (2005)**

	<b>No. of Students</b>	<b>No. of Teachers</b>	<b>No. of Schools</b>	<b>No. of Classrooms</b>
<b>Primary</b>				
Males	1,250,913	103,684	6,526	62,982
Females	1,166,898	109,629	6,637	57,807
Total	2,417,811	213,313	13,163	120,789
<b>Intermediate</b>				
Males	566,652	51,891	3,762	23,886
Females	505,095	52,784	3,324	19,831
Total	1,071,747	104,675	7,086	43,717
<b>Secondary</b>				
Males	504,241	37,389	2,136	17,726
Females	449,900	42,365	2,079	16,479
Total	954,141	79,754	4,215	34,205
Total Males	2,321,806	192,964	12,424	104,594
Total Females	2,121,893	204,778	12,040	94,117
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>4,443,699</b>	<b>397,742</b>	<b>24,464</b>	<b>198,711</b>

\* Including primary, intermediate, secondary and adult education levels.

Source: Ministry of Education.

Again, in the academic year 1425/1426H (2005), the number of schools stood at 24.5 thousand compared to 23.96 thousand in the previous academic year, increasing by 2.1%. About 12.4 thousand of these numbers were boys' schools and 12.0 thousand were girls' schools.

The number of classrooms in the schools of general education in the Kingdom during academic year 1425/1426 (2005) stood at 198.7 thousand compared to 196.1 thousand in the preceding year, increasing by 1.3%. Around 104.6 thousand of these were in boys' schools, representing 52.6% of total classrooms, and 94.1 thousand classrooms were in girls' schools, constituting 47.4% of total classrooms in the Kingdom (SAMA 2005).

### 3.5.3 Higher Education

The total number of students (male and female) registered in higher education institutions in 1425/1426H (2005) stood at 603, 8 thousand compared to 573.7 thousand in the preceding year, increasing by 5.2%. The breakdown of students (male and female) by academic levels was as follows: 2,032 students were at the doctorate level, 9,141 at the master level, and 1,670 at the higher diploma level, 505.9 thousand at the bachelor level and 84.9 thousand at the intermediate diploma level. The number of male students accounted for 42% of total students at higher education institutions, while that of female students represented 58.0%. The largest proportion of female students was concentrated at the bachelor level, amounting to 327.5 thousand or 64.7% of total undergraduates (Table 3-11).

The number of newly enrolled students (male and female) at different institutions of higher education exceeded 200.5 thousand in the academic year 1425/1426H (2005). Of these, 152.0 thousand were at the bachelor level (75.8%), 44.0 thousand were at the intermediate diploma (22%), while higher diploma, master, and doctorate levels accounted for 2.3 % of the total. Male students constituted 47.5 % and females 52.5 % of the total student population.

The total number of graduates from all levels of higher education topped 83.0 thousand in the academic year 1424/1425H (2004), of which 38.7 thousand were males and 44.3 thousand females (53.3% of the total). Graduates from the bachelor level accounted for 74.4% of the total, followed by graduates from the intermediate diploma level (23.3%), and from other levels at (2.3%). The number of teaching staff at the institutions of higher education in 1425/1426H (2005) stood at 26.8 thousand, divided as follows: 1,504 professors, 2,428 associate professors, 8,447 assistant professors, 6,123 lecturers, 4,580 teaching assistants, and 3,755 with other degrees (SAMA 2005).

Regarding the impact of higher education on women's participation rate in the economy, the development of education has had two positive effects on women's participation in the workforce:

- 1- Higher educational levels in the society in general have changed many traditional and social habits opposing women's work;
- 2- The high level of Saudi women's education has increased the labour participation rate of women because most of the jobs provided for women require skilled or, at least, semi-skilled workers. Therefore, the development of education can be said to have been a factor in increasing the percentage rate of women in the workforce from 1% in 1975 to 5.1% in 1985 (Al-Ghannam 1987:55).

The higher education of women is also conditioned by socio-economic and cultural factors in addition to personal choices. Therefore, female students enrol in the field of education either due to lack of other options or, most importantly, because it provides the most job opportunities which are also accepted by the society as a profession for women. Today, because of the lack of coordination regarding educational policies

between the universities and GPGE colleges, there is an oversupply of female students in the fields of education and the humanities.

**Table 3-11**  
**Higher and Postgraduate Education by Levels in Academic Year (2005)**

Level	New	Enrolled	Graduate of 1424/1425H (2004)	Teaching Staff	
<b>Ph.D</b>					
Male	292	1,139	63	Professor	1,504
Female	281	893	97	Associate Prof.	2,428
<b>Total</b>	<b>573</b>	<b>2,032</b>	<b>160</b>	Assistant Prof.	8,447
<b>Masters</b>					
Male	1,690	5,562	540	Lecturer	6,123
Female	1,169	3,579	309	Teaching assistant	4,580
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,859</b>	<b>9,141</b>	<b>849</b>	Others	3,755
<b>Higher Diploma</b>					
Male	901	1,351	782		
Female	203	319	111		
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,104</b>	<b>1,670</b>	<b>893</b>		
<b>Bachelors</b>					
Male	56,648	178,450	21,519		
Female	95,350	327,482	40,213		
<b>Total</b>	<b>151,998</b>	<b>505,932</b>	<b>61,732</b>		
<b>Intermediate Diploma</b>					
Male	35,685	67,049	15,844		
Female	8,314	17,943	3,525		
<b>Total</b>	<b>43,999</b>	<b>84,992</b>	<b>19,369</b>		
<b>Total</b>					
Male	95,216	253,551	38,748		
Female	105,317	350,216	44,255		
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>200,533</b>	<b>603,767</b>	<b>83,003</b>		<b>26,837</b>

Source: Ministry of Higher Education.

Consequently, thousands of female college graduates are staying at home with the result of severe depression and other social problems, as a failure of the educational

and labour market policies. As according to the Kingdom's educational policy, education should provide a woman with the skills to fulfil her role in society as wife and a mother and prepare her for other activities that are compatible with her nature such as teaching girls, nursing, and other activities needed by society.

However, the strict enforcement of gender segregation in educational policy translates into limited choices of subjects at university, vocational training courses and occupational opportunities for women. The country has made advances in terms of expanding access to education for girls with secondary and primary school rates for girls at over 40 per cent. The Government had allocated increased funding for girls' education in its latest development plan, which also continues to update and develop the education curricula compatible with labour market requirements, in order to provide a broader supportive role to the appropriate sectors and relevant agencies concerned with labour force issues.

### **3.5.4 Institutional and Organizational Development**

During the Seventh Development Plan period (2000-2005), a number of measures and steps were taken with a view to developing and upgrading general education institutions in particular in relation to women's education. Foremost among these measures were:

- Annexation of the General Presidency for Girls Education to the Ministry of Education as per Royal Decree # (A/2) of 10/1/1423 (14/3/2002).
- Unification of supervision tasks of general education at the Ministry of Education which has been entrusted with the supervision of general education undertaken by other agencies such as the National Guard, Ministry of Defence, Royal Commission for Jubail and Yanbu, in accordance with Royal Decree # (A/2) of



28/2/1424 (30/4/2003).

- Introduction of the kindergarten stage as a separate stage, with separate buildings and classrooms, independent from other educational stages in accordance with the Royal Decree # (7/B/5388) of 3/3/1423 (2002).
- Introduction of mandatory education for children at the age of 6-15 years in accordance with the Council of Ministers' Resolution of 26/4/1425 (2004).
- Introduction of English language classes from grade six (elementary stage) as a basic subject, along with improvement of teaching efficiency at the intermediate and secondary stages in accordance with the Council of Ministers' Resolution # (171) of 27/6/1424 (2003).
- The Higher Committee on Education Policy and the Higher Education Council have merged into one body named "The Supreme Education Council". Furthermore, a national centre for evaluation and development of general education and technical education has been established under the supervision of the Supreme Education Council. The Deputy Presidency for Girls Colleges and the Deputy Presidency for Teachers Colleges have also been transferred from the Ministry of Education to the Ministry of Higher Education. All these organizational steps have been taken in accordance with the Council of Ministers' Resolution No. (143) of 3/5/1425 (2004).
- Annexation of the General Presidency for Girls Education to the Ministry of Education as per Royal Decree # (A/2) of 10/1/1423 (14/3/2002).

According to the Ministry of Culture & Information, in the beginning of the First Development Plan (1970-1975) there were only 2772 schools for boys but it has increased to become 12285 schools. Girls' schools have increased from 511 to 12463 schools in the same period and there are now 8 universities, 78 girls' colleges, 13 hygienic colleges, 24 hygienic institutions, 68 centres and institutions for technical

education and vocational training. Meanwhile, the numbers of employees in the educational sphere are estimated at 500,000 teachers, women teachers, administrators working in more than 30,000 schools through-out the country which spends 26% from its general budget on them (M.C.I 2004). The total number of students enrolled increased at an average annual rate of 1.8% during the same period. The number of students enrolled grew by 0.9% at the elementary level, 1.3% at the intermediate level and 5% at the secondary level (MEP 2005).

In June 2005, three new universities were approved by royal decree, and three additional universities were created through a process of mergers involving Qassim University, Taibe University and Taif University. The Ministry also announced tentative plans in October 2005 to transform 102 women's colleges in the Kingdom into women's universities, and confirmed that six women's colleges in Riyadh had received official orders to merge into one new university.

These new universities are aimed at boosting capacity in the already overburdened university system and developing a domestic, highly skilled workforce. With growing population rates and approximately half of the population of 26 million under 30 years of age, demand for tertiary education is set to expand drastically over the next decade. Total educational enrolments over the last two decades have quadrupled and the gross enrolment ratio for tertiary level education in 2004 was approximately 22%, which highlights an increase on previous years but is still low compared to other Arab nations.

### **3.5.6 Budgetary Allocations**

The actual allocations for the general education sector in the state budget for the Seventh Development Plan period amounted to about SR 244.3 billion, an increase of 10.2% over the Seventh Plan target. This amount was distributed approximately in equal proportions

between boys' education (49.7%) and girls' education (50.3%). However, the financial allocations of the general education sector during the Eighth Development Plan amounted to SR 276.1 billion for financing development of the educational process, development of manpower in the sector, supporting student services and extra-curricula activities, in addition to the operation and maintenance of educational facilities as well as programs for construction of schools and educational facilities.

The total allocations for the higher education sector (Ministry of Higher Education, universities and girls' colleges) during the Seventh Development Plan period amounted to SR 51,266 million, exceeding the total allocation proposed in the Plan by 11.3%. It should, however, be stated that the financial requirements of the higher education sector (Ministry of Higher Education, Universities and Girls' Colleges) during the Eighth Development Plan amount to SR 56,126.9 million, allocated for financing the educational process including administrative aspects, operation and maintenance, development of national manpower, student services and activities, community service, R&D programs, scholarships and cultural exchange programs.

### **3.5.7 Mismatch between Women's Labour Skills and Labour Market Requirements**

Since education is the key factor for females' employment, this requires a greater matching and integration between education and employment in a manner that would ensure that education becomes more responsive to the requirements of the labour market and the modern economy. In other words, the higher education sector faces a problem of poor matching between labour market needs, the modern economy and specialization trends of higher education students. In this respect, it should be noted that the indicated poor matching is sharper in the case of females compared to males.

Secondary education marks the beginning of educational choices, since at this stage students are distributed over a number of disciplines (study branches), which determine the subsequent trends in higher education. Enrolment in the arts section will not allow students to enter scientific or applied colleges; and actually students do not have a choice other than to seek acceptance in education and humanities' colleges. Graduates from such colleges into the labour market has almost reached the point of saturation.

It is to be noted that while one of the objectives of the Eighth Development Plan is to increase women's participation in economic activity, the women's pattern of specialization trends in higher education does not help to accomplish this objective. This pattern (as shall be observed below) confines women's participation to employment in government institutions and specifically in one sector (services/education). Such a situation calls for increased endeavours and a more liberal attitude to widen the scope of female specialization options in higher education in order to qualify and prepare them to play a more effective and diversified role in the society and in economic activities. This requires incentives for females in the secondary stage to direct them towards the scientific section.

### **3.6 WOMEN'S ISSUES IN SAUDI DEVELOPMENT PLANS**

Due to its importance in determining the developments in the socio-economic trends, it is important to analyse the Saudi Development Plans to investigate the priorities and the envisaged development in women's work and education related issues. Therefore, this section reviews Saudi development planning to provide a clearer picture of the Kingdom's strong intention to reform its economy and obvious shifts in key priorities in the current development plan in particularly in relation to women's issues.

It is important to state that development planning commenced in 1970 in Saudi Arabia, throughout which each development plan has aimed at increasing the array of opportunities and chances available for women and men alike in education and the work place. There are eight development plans that have been issued since the planning period commenced in 1390 H (1970). A brief review of the main themes and areas of emphasis in these plans confirms that, from the beginning, development planning has put human resources at the centre of the Kingdom's development efforts.

Since the 1970s, the standard of living and the income per capita have risen and the professional structure has changed with the emergence of new jobs. Women have participated actively in the labour market and secured their private economic and social status according to the constraints of Islamic teachings as expected in the Kingdom (M.C.I 2004:31). In other words, the Kingdom has concentrated with Saudi women's role in comprehensive development. Thus in its development plans the Kingdom makes all possible efforts to spend its wealth on preparing the citizen, men and women alike, for their expected role in modern development.

A general look at the tendencies of development plans, it can be noticed that the development plans have attached more importance to human resources considering it as a basic element for continuous development. Therefore, development plans have concentrated on education in its various kinds and stages including technical education, vocational training, pre-work and post-work training.

**Table: 3.12**  
**Structure of Actual Government Development Expenditures during the First Eight Development Plans (1970-2010) (%)**

Activities	First Plan	Second Plan	Third Plan	Fourth Plan	Fifth Plan	Sixth Plan	Seventh Plan	Eighth plan
Economic Resources Dev.	27.7	28.0	30.7	20.4	10.0	11.5	11.2	11.5
Human Resources Dev.*	20.6	14.7	18.4	33.0	48.0	51.5	57.1	56.6
Social & Health Dev.**	10.3	8.0	9.8	17.7	20.0	20.8	19.1	19.0
Infrastructure Dev.	41.4	49.3	41.1	28.9	22.0	16.2	12.6	12.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

\* General education, higher education, technical education, training, science and technology and informatics.

\*\* Health care; social, youth and information services; and cultural, religious, judicial and voluntary services.

Source: Ministry of Economy and Planning.

As can be seen in table 3-12, the steady increase in expenditure on human resource development as well as on health and social services underscores the special attention given to human development. Over the duration of the eight development plans 1390-1419H (1970-2010), expenditure on the development of human resources (general education, higher education, technical education, training, science and technology and information) increased from 20.6% of total expenditure on development sectors during the first five-year plan to 56 % in the Eighth Plan. During the same period expenditure on social and health services (healthcare; social, youth and information services; and religious, judicial and voluntary services) more than doubled to reach 19 % of total expenditure on development sectors. The following section, presents an evaluation of the development plans by paying particular attention to women related socio-economic issues.

### 3.6.1 First Development Plan: 1390-1395 AH (1970 - 1975)

The First Development Plan issued in 1390H (1970) and covers the period of 1970-1974 emphasized three core areas of development: growth of GDP, development of human resources and diversification of the economy to reduce dependence on oil. Subsequent plans continued to emphasize these objectives and build upon them, while adding new priority areas and dimensions. It should also be stressed that the importance of ensuring that opportunities for formal education are available for all

members of society from the elementary level to the university level has been an important thrust of the development planning.

The First Plan also gave priority to continued expansion of the elementary education system to accommodate the largest proportion of the elementary school-age population and make basic education generally available. The Plan also noted girls' high responsiveness to educational opportunities, which turned out as a result of the top priority accorded to this sector, since the beginning of development planning in the Kingdom. The priority given to girls' education is further reflected in the First Plan's objective of increasing girls' elementary school enrolment by 95% during the course of the Plan period as against 55% for boys. The emphasis on the need for expanding the provision of educational opportunities in smaller communities and rural areas further attests to the priority given to making primary education available for both boys and girls in all regions of the Kingdom. These priorities have been reiterated in successive development plans, with gradual shifts in emphasis, particularly towards higher education, along with continued efforts to complete the basis of general education and to upgrade its level, in order to achieve the relevant strategic objectives and meet emerging challenges (M.E.P 1970). This plan has helped to improve the Kingdom through the provision of essential basic infrastructure and services.

### **3.6.2 Second Development Plan: 1395-1400 AH (1975 - 1980)**

It is clear that the first and second development plans did not differ in their objectives. The sharp increase in oil revenues in 1973-74 created economic problems in the Saudi economy with very low absorptive capacity in the period in question, so, it needs to find domestic avenues for this surplus found. For that Second Plan laid special emphasis on the need for balanced growth that benefits all sections of society, on the development of the private sector and the need to focus on regional development.

The plan looked at the expansion and improvement of education at all levels. The goal was to achieve widespread education at the elementary level through the year 1980 for both boys and girls. The diversification of the economic resource was the main theme for both plans, along with greater investment in the physical infrastructure and the development of indigenous human resource.

The first and second development plans (1970 – 1980) concentrated on the need to employ foreign labour to keep abreast with the fast growth in capital and develop the basic equipments.

### **3.6.3 Third Development Plan: 1400-1405 AH (1980 - 1985)**

The Third Plan aimed to reduce the dependence on foreign manpower, while increasing the number of Saudi workers, improving their productivity, and deploying them into sectors with the greatest growth potential. Also, to improve the educational system's response to the development demand and the market's requirements, besides balancing the expansion of the education and training utilities reflected in certain goals in joining the different education and training stages above the intermediate stage.

This plan placed particular emphasis on human resource development by giving greater importance to the following strategic objectives: the need to improve the quality of education and training; enhance the responsiveness of the educational system to match the requirements of economic development and the labour market; and to achieve the quantitative expansion of education and training facilities in a balanced manner.

This plan placed the highest priority on the development of manpower and called for Saudization of the workforce since the second development plan period had revealed



the following manpower problem areas which were likely to dominate the third plan period:

- The need for foreign workers, because of the imbalance between the demand for labour and local supply of labour had increased;
- The private sector was reluctant to employ the local manpower;
- The public sector's share of the labour force may have been more than required (Al-Nughimishi 1998:48).

Due to these issues, the government took major actions in the third development plan by establishing an infrastructure for national manpower planning:

- Establishment of a Manpower Council in 1980;
- Establishment of the General Organization for Technical Education and Vocational Training (GOTEVOT) in 1980.
- Creation of the Education Development Centre (EDC).
- In recognition of the special needs in education and training in different regions of the country.
- The computerization of government offices (Al-Hazzaa 1993:131-132).

In a move to encourage enrolment in technical education institutions, this Plan also set specific enrolment targets for the various stages and types of post-intermediate education. It also showed the expansion of university education, especially in commerce, science, medicine, and engineering. However, there are increases in the enrolment of girls' colleges. In the mean time, the main emphasis in employment terms was to replace non Saudi female teachers by Saudi women; the government units have started employing women in many positions. However, female participation continued to be 6.0% per cent during the plan.

The Third Plan stressed the role of structural change in GDP growth, the need for a broader participation by the private sector in development efforts and increased efficiency in the use of resources.

#### **3.6.4 Fourth Development Plan: 1405-1410 AH (1985 - 1990)**

The Fourth Plan emphasized that manpower policy should shift its focus away from the government sector, where Saudi nationals were earlier encouraged to join, to respond to the exigencies of the earlier stages of development, namely towards more employment in the private sector. This Plan also included targets for Saudization and creation of more job opportunities for Saudis through accelerated economic growth and substitution of Saudis for non-Saudis. In addition, the plan targeted the reduction of the expatriate workforce, through improved productivity of Saudi labour force, and the private sector's response to the directions of Saudization.

The subsequent plans continued paying attention to human resource development as a necessary requirement for achieving sustainable development in the Kingdom.

Under the current global conditions of increasing economic globalization and accelerated technological developments, particularly in the field of information and communications technology, improved quality and productivity of labour will become the key means of enhancing the Kingdom's integration in the global economy and promoting assimilation on advanced scientific innovations and technologies. This plan called for a review of existing policies to promote private sector growth and emphasized community development. In addition, it paid special attention to the handicapped, achieving budgetary balance and environmental issues.

The fourth plan concentrated on transferring the labour policy towards employing national labour in the private sector contrary to the previous policy that encouraged the citizens to join the government sector. It also aimed at increasing the rate of jobs for

citizens through two factors; by accelerating the economic growth and by replacing the foreign labour by Saudi ones. Some specific goals based on these two factors are improving the performance of the Saudi labour and the private sector's response to those national orientations (M.C.I 2004).

The first time the development plans have addressed the issue of women's participation in the labour force is in this plan, as one of the key issues in the fourth development plan is to find the ways to utilize effectively the knowledge and skills of Saudi women in contributing to the economic growth of the economy in accordance with *Shariah*. The plan, for instance, envisaged that about fifty thousand women will enter the workforce during the five years of the forth plan period (MEP 1985 : 51-2).

The strategy of the third development plan (1980-1985) and the forth one (1985-1990) indicated clear provisions defining Saudi women's positive role in social, health, educational and economic development. Talking about human development policies, the fourth development plan indicated women's job opportunities on the basis of the remarkable quantitative and qualitative increases and success of women's education during the past years. Therefore, the plan suggested new potential work fields for Saudi women, asserting the importance of the suggested fields to be in conformity with Saudi society's traditions and the religion of Islam. The plan, therefore, suggested computers, laboratory activities and operations control, as suitable and important potential fields for Saudi women to specialise in.

In the actual application of the fourth development plan's policies, it was noticed that Saudi women's job opportunities in the education field increased enormously, as the GPGE in cooperation with the Ministry of Civil Service had exerted great effort to Saudize the education sector including the educational institutions that are concerned with women and not affiliated with the GPGE, such as the Ministry of Labour and Social Affaires, Ministry of Health and other ministries. M.O.C (2004). It skilfully indicated the

role assumed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs concerning women's recruitment and also envisaged establishing units for women's affairs in the fields identified as appropriate for their recruitment as one of the plan's policies.

### **3.6.5 Fifth Development Plan: 1410-1415 AH (1990 - 1995)**

The Fifth Plan reiterated the objectives identified in the previous plans and focused on the quality of education, regional development, increasing employment opportunities for women and the provision of adequate resources for maintenance. The plan also called for making primary education compulsory and underlined the market relevance of education. The fifth development plan was greatly concerned with women's job opportunities. Therefore, it emphasized the necessity of studying and defining new job opportunities for Saudi women in cooperation with the competent ministries. The estimated number of Saudi females who were expected to enter the labour market during the fifth plan years was envisaged to be 60,200, or 10.5% of the total Saudi labour supply (M.O.C., (2004). Moreover, it was planned that more than half this number will be university graduates and hence represent 44% of the total university recruitment. The plan also aimed at increasing the number of Saudi women working in natural and social sciences to reach more than half the total number of these specializations. Saudi women's job opportunities in this plan were not limited to the governmental sector only, as the private sector also was envisaged to participate in this respect.

Labour market objectives of the fifth plan can be summarised as follows:

- I. To develop a Saudi work force whose education and skill profile, remuneration expectations, and attitudes towards work are compatible with the realities of a dynamic labour market, by ensuring that the education and training systems are

capable of producing high quality, motivated graduates with skill mix that matches the manpower requirement of the economy.

- II. To gradually increase the employment of Saudis in all sectors of the economy, with the ultimate objective of replacing most of the non-Saudi workers with Saudis, particularly in skilled and professional occupations.
- III. To improve matching between Saudi workers and available jobs by ensuring the availability of needed labour market services and labour market information to individuals in the work force, to employers, and students making career choices.
- IV. To increase the participation of women in the work force.

The achievements of these goals were linked to the implementation of appropriate policy measures to resolve the following major labour market issues (p.116-118):

- Improving Saudi employment opportunities in the private sectors;
- The gap between Saudi and non-Saudi wages especially in the private sector;
- Improving Saudi labour skill;
- Reducing wastage in the education system;
- Improving labour market information;
- Expanding labour market services.

To enhance the participation of Saudi women in the development of the Kingdom, the following policy measures were aimed to be implemented (p 131):

- A Saudiization Plan prepared each year to gradually increase the employment of Saudi women in the public sector;
- Periodic reviews of the occupations, in both the public and private sectors, in which employment of women is deemed to be in accordance

with the *Shariah*, will be undertaken. This information will be disseminated widely to the public through the media;

- A study examining the feasibility of allowing women to teach boys up to grade four at the elementary school level will be carried out.

### **3.6.6 Sixth Development Plan: 1415 to 1420 AH (1995 - 2000)**

The Sixth Plan stressed on development and utilization of manpower, realization of economic efficiency, enhancement of the private sector's role in the national economy and privatization of utilities, while maintaining the Governments hold on the provision of basic services. The plan also highlighted the need to intensify efforts for the Saudization of employment, "Policies of Replacing Non-Saudi Labour Force", particularly in the private sector. The Saudization policy referred to "enhancing the efforts exerted to encourage women's investment and facilitate the procedures of free-lance works, such as private clinics, translation offices and any project related to industry and services complying with Islamic Law and approved by the state for its economic and social benefit" (M.C.I., (2004:85). It also emphasised the promotion of youth welfare programs and the education of citizens. Moreover, this plan adopted an informational plan encouraging researchers to work in the private sector and opening new work fields for women in conformity with the Islamic law.

### **3.6.7 Seventh Development Plan: 1420 to 1425 AH (2000 - 2005)**

The Seventh Plan has been formulated with a view to meeting the challenges faced in preparing the Saudi economy to integrate into the global economy and to confront the challenges at the domestic level. Foremost among the challenges is the steady rise in the population, which requires the expansion of public services and infrastructure and the need to increase the pace of Saudization through increased training and skill enhancement. The important target in this plan is increasing Saudi women's work fields and her contributions to the labour market, without any contradiction with Islamic law.

Another major theme in the plan is strengthening the development of technology and informatics through the build up of a national science and technology base. The process of planning in Saudi Arabia is now entering a new stage characterized by:

- i. Greater emphasis on expanding the private sector's role, and boosting its efficiency to undertake many of the economic and social tasks;
- ii. Increasing reliance on the indicative planning approach, while gradually reducing reliance on directive planning;
- iii. Greater emphasis on a strategic and long-term vision of economic and social development, with a time horizon that goes well beyond the five-year span, to twenty years;
- iv. Intensive Government efforts to realize human development as a priority developmental course, with special emphasis on the education sector and improving quality of the educational process;
- v. Increasing emphasis on science and technology as the global economy shifts to a knowledge-based economy, along with the fact that growth has become increasingly tied to the level of technical growth;

### **3.6.8 Eighth Development Plan: 1425 to 1430 AH (2005-2010)**

The Eighth Development Plan placed emphasis on several priorities, as the plan seeks to attain the objectives of the Kingdom's future vision, namely "a diversified and prosperous economy that ensures supply of rewarding job opportunities and economic welfare for all citizens, provision of good quality education and health care to the population, help manpower acquire the necessary skills, while maintaining the Kingdom's Islamic values and cultural heritages". Key among them are the upgrading of the quality of life and providing job opportunities to all Saudi citizens; expansion of education, training, health and social services.

Chapter 17 of the eighth development plan document entitled, "Women & Development" includes a set of policies and mechanisms to increase women's participation in the labour market through employment or investment opportunities available to women (especially businesswomen). The Plan places particular stress on

the increased participation of women in the economy and greater opportunities for employment of women and on strengthening the family role in society through improvement of the capabilities of Saudi women and elimination of obstacles that constrain their increased participation in economic and development activities. The recent development plan recognized women's contributions to the economy and sought to attract more women investors. Saudi Arabia would do its utmost to advance the cause of women in accord with *Shariah*.

The second strategic objective of the Eighth Plan stated "Giving attention to women affairs and promoting their capabilities along with removal of obstacles facing their participation in developmental activities, within the framework of Islamic values and teachings".

Saudi women have attained a great position and presence across various fields of work including education, health, information, culture, economics, finance and investment, as well as institutions offering various social services and community care. The Plan will therefore focus on increasing women's participation in the Saudi workforce from 10.3% at the beginning of the Plan to about 14.2% by the end of the Plan period. This will fulfil the Plan's objective of increasing the women's participation in economic activities and reducing the gender gap in terms of employment.

The Plan, therefore, focuses on the empowerment of women, privatization of state-owned corporations, setting up of strategic industries, and the development of mining and tourism sectors, "The Plan envisages greater participation of women in economic and developmental activities by implementing programs to improve their capabilities and removing obstacles that stand in the way of their wider participation," Manpower development is the main focus of the new five-year plan as it includes programs for the development of general education, training and skills and expansion of applied sciences and technology.



### 3.7 WOMEN AND REFORM IN SAUDI ARABIA

Despite the developments in economic and social life facilitating more women's participation in the economy, the traditional way of life may still be an important barrier preventing the envisaged policies identified in the plans to fully work. Therefore, reform in relation to women's issues in the country may seem to be inevitable for some. Therefore, whether Saudi Arabia needs reform in women's issues and why, remains a valid question. In order to answer this question, we can look at the regulation, which is stated to be from Islam, while the applications for this role may not be valid in the country. In addition, to look at the *Ulama's* influence on public opinion and their unrivalled ability to affect legislation in the country which affects women related issues.

With the economic and social development of the Kingdom, as well as the regional and international changes caused by globalization a number of new challenges have emerged for Saudi society. Among these challenges, the issue of activating the role of women in development occupies a prominent position in the order of development priorities. Saudi Arabia is mainly viewed by others as a traditionally conservative society, particularly in its attitudes towards women. But, below the surface, change is happening, even if reformers are wary of moving too quickly in case they face a traditionalist backlash, reforms should be at a snail's pace and slow to avoid any backlash.

Women are demanding more opportunities to work, and many of them are asking for reforms in the education system and employment opportunities. King Abdullah has introduced reforms in almost all sectors in order to boost the economy and provide a better standard of living for Saudi citizens. In this new era of reform women appear more optimistic than ever. They look forward to a brighter future with revised labour laws and civil services that cater for their needs and aspirations.

The Saudi authority under King Abdullah has recognized the vital role women can play in the Saudi economy. To quote King Abdullah, "The woman has a unique position in society... she is a citizen and above all she is a mother, sister and wife." Under his leadership women today are provided with more opportunities to prove their potential in government institutions and in the workforce. Reforms are introduced to meet the challenges of integrating women into the workforce and providing the necessary training to help them meet market requirements, raising the standard of education, and allowing the participation of women in the decision-making process. Among the many developments that recognize the status and role of women in society are the following:

- 1- The participation in the National Dialogue which gave them an opportunity to voice their opinion about issues that were taboo in the past and debate matters that are of vital concern to the community;
- 2- The involvement in the human rights organization enabled them to protect women's rights and address the needs and problems facing many women in this days and age;
- 3- The decision to give women the right to vote in the Jeddah Chamber of Commerce is a sign that women in business enjoy the recognition they deserve as equal partners in the development of the economy;
- 4- The participation of women in the *Shura* and Municipal Councils as well as *Shariah* courts are among the issues being addressed in the *Shura* Council debates. The *Shura* Council has been supportive of women's issues since it has been expanded and given more powers under the leadership of King Abdullah;
- 5- Freedom of the press and debating issues concerning women and their rights;
- 6- The Ministry of Education has created top jobs for women by establishing five deanships solely for female candidates as part of an effort to give women more autonomy in education for girls.

### 3.8 CONCLUSION

As the preceding discussion reveals women in Saudi Arabia have been strongly affected by the enormous economic changes that have taken place in the country in the past fifty years, and in no area more than in higher education. With the vast expansion of female education at all levels, a great need for female workers and administrators opened up. However, this situation has presented unique problems, in part because women in Saudi Arabia, unlike those in most other countries, cannot work or transact business directly with men, and men still hold most of the decision-making power, even over questions of the education of females.

In the end Saudi Arabia can accelerate economic and social reform to create opportunity spaces for women by:

- (a) Intensifying steps to join the World Trade Organisation and attract investments in the non-oil sector;
- (b) Strengthening technical and vocational training;
- (c) Continuing efforts to better balance the education curriculum between religious study and professional or technical trainings; and
- (d) actively implementing the decision to expand employment opportunities for women and abolishing the requirement that women obtain permission from a male guardian to access jobs, health and educational services (ICG 2004).

## **Chapter 4**

# **Women's Participation in the Labour Market in Saudi Arabia: A Literature Survey**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter 2 presented the prevailing Islamic understanding in Saudi Arabia in relation to women's work in the country. Chapter 3 expanded this with the objective of showing the changing role of women in Saudi Arabian economy. While strict religious practice of Islam shapes every aspect of life in Saudi Arabia, women's work has been affected and was shaped with the same religious understanding. However, with changing circumstances and small opening up in society in recent years the way has been paved for undeclared changes in society. More women now work in various areas of social and economic life including being self-employed. Sometimes financial needs necessitate work for women, sometimes women with emancipation motives move into professional life.

The following sections, thus, aim to present the empirical and discursive studies conducted in the field since the early 1970s to recent years with the aim of presenting their findings as well as their recommendations as regards to how to change and improve women's work in Saudi Arabia over the years. It should be noted that some of the findings of these studies will be contextualised in the discussion section of the conclusion chapter of this thesis.

## **4.2 EMPIRICAL AND DISCURSIVE STUDIES ON WOMEN'S WORK IN SAUDI ARABIA**

It should be stated that a large number of prior studies address the issue of women's work in different contexts, such as the prevailing culture and regime in Saudi Arabia. The following section, thus, aims to review the previous studies about the participation of Saudi women in the economy. Generally, several trends and criteria can be used to review literature. The current study chooses the chronological classification (historical review). The reason for using this categorization is to present the increasing academic attention of the women's work issue in Saudi Arabia through time. This classification helps in identifying the evolution of women's participation and the gap in literature. Moreover, it enables this study to link the academic efforts with the governmental policies overtime.

### **4.2.1 First Stage: 1973-1984**

Women's work has been given more attention since the 1970s, as there were key changes in the economic and social level in those years. A number of prior studies address the effects of these changes on the attitude of men toward women's work and the characteristics of the desired work. While some studies used samples of women only, other studies used samples from women and men. Also some studies address the effects of western culture on the attitude toward women's work. This section summarizes the key studies over the period from 1973 till 1984.

Al-Mana (1973), for instance, addresses the effects of western culture on the attitude of Saudi male students, who study in the United States, towards working women and religion. She used a small sample of 53 Saudi male students which represented ten percent of the total Saudi students studying in the United States at that time. This study indicated that exposure to the western culture tended to liberalize students'

attitudes toward the concept of Saudi women working in the labour market, as she found that areas of origin had less impact on the students than years of exposure to western cultural. On the other hand, there was a relationship between area of origin and religious beliefs. However, religious beliefs did not influence the attitude of Saudi students toward working women as much as exposure to western culture. Her discussion with students married to Saudi wives, seems to suggest that the exposure to western culture is giving to increased conservatism (Al-Hazzaa 1993).

Al-Baadi (1982) investigates the relationship between social change, modern education and the role of women in Saudi Arabia. He used four methods of research in this study: analyses of ethnographic data; content-analysis of women-related writings in Arabian newspapers; official data; and a survey. Ethnographic data about pre-oil Arabia indicates that women were heavily involved in agricultural and nomadic production. The data suggest that modern schooling and economic change have affected the role of many Arabian women. Relatively high levels of education are found to be instrumental in providing jobs to most women who work in Saudi Arabia's Modern sectors. Furthermore, Saudi women with higher levels of education are more likely to use means of birth control, along with more control over different aspects of their lives such as the age difference between them and their husbands and power relationship between them, on the one hand, and their husbands and in-laws, on the other. Among the other factors was an indication that the father's economic status and their vocations were significant with their daughter's level of education. Finally, the findings suggest that Saudi women's levels of educational attainment were rising, as they become more likely to resent some of the traditional sex-segregationist restrictions in Saudi society.

Al-Mana (1982) examined how the economic changes in terms of the growth of Saudi Arabia's oil revenues and its large scale development programs have affected the social and economic status of women in Saudi Arabia. The findings support Al-Baadi

(1982). To understand the position of women, the study describes the historical socio-economic and political conditions of Saudi Arabia. Moreover, it examines the availability of women's educational opportunities, labour conditions, the social welfare and health services and how the development programs affect these points. This study uses in-depth interviews conducted among five groups of women from four different communities: nomadic, rural, recently settled, and urban, as well as groups of salaried women. The findings of the study demonstrated that the development programs have included, for women, some educational opportunities, some job opportunities in the modern sectors, access to health and welfare services. However, these opportunities have been limited, for women in the modern sectors of the economy play virtually no significant role. Women's economic activities in agriculture and animal husbandry, and in the home have been disregarded and their economic contributions undervalued. Furthermore, women have been associated primarily with their maternal role and have been assigned a position subordinate to men.

Al-Saad (1982) conducted a survey studying the attitudes of employed Saudi women in Jeddah. She showed that 28% of the sample work for financial need, 86% work to serve others and 48% work for self-fulfilment. 95% of the sample indicates that they were working with the full support of their families. Many of them plan to continue after marriage, while, some stated they would not continue after the first child.

Halawani (1982) also identifies the problems and solutions concerning working women in Saudi Arabia. 48% of her sample indicates that their work prohibited them from giving enough time to their homes and children, while 48% stated the opposite. The same percentage was obtained when the sample was divided between single and married women. Availability of nursery schools is the most important for employed mothers. 60% in this study reported the crucial importance of this, while 15% preferred a nanny and 14% preferred grandparents. Regarding productivity, 70% did not think

that single women were more efficient than married women. However, in this study 72% of the sample preferred work in the private sector due to better wages and other benefits, better working conditions and no red tape. Moreover, transportation was a major problem for all women surveyed. The study indicates that the most important reasons for men not allowing women to work are as following: the difficulties in performing dual responsibilities of work and housework; men hold traditional and old-fashioned ideas which stigmatize a man who allows his wife to work; conflict between the needs of the husband and wife; by allowing his wife to work, the man feels threatened that he might give up some of his power; the man wants to be the only source of family income; thereby making his wife economically dependent on him.

In researching the issues for women's work, Rehem (1983) addresses the characteristics of jobs desired by Saudi women, acceptable working conditions, and work in a mixed environment. The study found that Saudi women studying in the United States preferred those occupations dealing with education such as teaching and school administration. The least favoured occupations were entrepreneur and secretary. The reason behind this was because the occupations would bring them into contact with men. Also, it found 88% of this sub group preferred part-time jobs over a full-time job, therefore they can take care of their home responsibilities. Similar findings were found among Saudi women studying in Saudi Arabia. 68% of the sample indicates that they need nursery school to help them to work in the labour market, 57% need the help of their husbands in housework, and 51% percent need domestic help. This finding shows that even Saudi women, who were educated in the United States, still adhered to the Islamic teaching. The employed sample in the public sector, 81% of the sample, indicated that they were dissatisfied with their jobs and 88% preferred part-time jobs. However, 87% of the sample agreed that working women were less respected, 85% stated that women should work only for financial help and 43% work for self-fulfilment. Also, a similar finding among women working in the public sector,



they felt that domestic help and nursery schools were necessary for women to work. On the other hand, the employed sample in the private sector showed more willingness to work in a mixed environment.

#### **4.2.2 Second stage: 1985-1995**

The second phase of academic enquiry for women's work is the 1985-1995 period, during which an initial study by Al- Khouli (1985) should be mentioned, which argued that the social background of any economic evolution needs to be given special consideration. He also argued that the progress toward female participation in Saudi Arabia since the early 1970s was slow as a result of both traditional roles or misconceived views of female work and the increasing number of low-wage, foreign workers of both sexes, consequently he applied the U-curve hypothesis of John Durand with the support of Sinha and International Labour Organization's studies. This U-Curve hypothesis shows a cross-sectional mean levels of female activity rates in relation to economic development levels. The resulting relationship trend shows a decrease in women's participation in the labour force in the early stage of development, increasing as development continues. The level of women's participation will increase by escalating the improvement of human resources and education (Al-Khouli 1985).

In addition, Al-Assaf (1986) applied a thorough analysis of women's work in the Arab Gulf Region. He concluded that though women in Arab Gulf States still have many job opportunities in fields other than education, they have preferred education. Also, the study found a strong correlation between the desire of women in the Arab Gulf States to work in education and the prevalent concept about women's work in the area. That is if a job secures Islamic values and satisfies prevalent concepts about women's work, then women would be more likely to accept the job. Al-assaf (1986:138), therefore,

suggests reducing the women's working hours to allow her to work inside and outside the house. Also, he recommends using all qualified women in the work force.

Al-Khateeb (1987) argues that ideological rather than material constraints are the major obstacles that limit full female participation in the Saudi Arabian labour force and hinder Saudi working women from combining their double roles as mothers and paid workers. One of the challenges that face Saudi Arabia, as a developing country is the great shortage of human resources, as 59.8% of the labour force in Saudi society In 1984/85 was foreign. Female participation in waged employment was very low with only 5.1% of women of working age participating in the labour force. The study considers in detail women's activities in their paid employment and domestic roles. Special attention is given to Saudi ideological stand, which restrict women's participation in the labour force, in particular Saudi conceptions of male and female relations. One of the main arguments is that Islam in itself is not responsible for women's limited participation in the labour force; rather it is the interpretation of Islam which is heavily affected by socio-political factors in Saudi society. Al-Khateeb argues that material constraints are not the main problem of working women in Riyadh. He indicates that there are three types of cultural and attitudinal factors that challenge Saudi working women. Firstly, there is women's conception of themselves, as women always locate themselves within the dominant culture which is greatly affected by male representations. Secondly, people's attitudes towards women's work play an important role in helping or hindering women to combine their double roles. Finally, there is the issue of husbands' support for their working wives. Because Saudi Arabia is a male-dominated society, husbands play an especially significant role in their wives' lives. They can be a great source of support and help, or they can be a source of frustration.

Alnimer (1988) addresses the motives behind Saudi woman's desire to work and the problems she faces affecting her participation in the development process. He

concluded that transportation and the lack of appreciation in economic development are the main problems for woman. However, Hassoun and Al Mana's (1989) study about opportunities for woman in the private sector showed that the participation of women in the labour force in the private sector is only 2%. As for the obstacles, the study talked about the routine, social norms, family commitments, and lack of services.

Rawaf (1989) in her study identified the problems facing women in leadership positions in the public administration of Saudi Arabia and suggests possible reforms to alleviate these problems. It was observed that barriers are of two types; organizational and perceptual, with perceptual barriers being the most difficult to eradicate. A historical perspective was provided on the governmental structure of Saudi Arabia as well as the role of Saudi women within the society, economy and public administration. The results of the survey corroborated that Saudi Arabian women are subject to the same perceptual biases that are experienced by women in other countries. Perceptions about the capabilities of women are similar among women and men in most cases. Organizational barriers were found to be prevalent in Saudi Arabia, effectively compromising the participation of women in public administration. These organizational barriers were not considered as limiting by the male respondents as they were by the female respondents. The survey also confirmed that women in public administration have not achieved parity with men in education, training or advancement. The obstacles to reform which were identified from the survey and literature review as being most likely to occur in Saudi Arabia were resistance to change with a concomitant lack of motivation, unfavourable economic conditions and lack of accurate data for planning. Suggested reforms which would minimize obstacles included the use of women in the planning and implementation phases of reform, increased emphasis on appropriate training and education for women and a gradual incremental approach supported by the government.

Al-Baker (1990) focuses on the interrelationship between education and employment for women in Saudi Arabia by investigating the work characteristics of female workers in Riyadh in relation to their education and work experience. Nine work characteristics are investigated: work commitment, working co-operatively and accepting other colleague's differences, educational and technical skills valuation, educational and occupational aspiration, change orientation, responsibility, decision making, time valuation and planning. The study is based on intensive interviews with four groups of women (20 in each) who work in educational institutions in Riyadh and who are different in their educational background and the length of their working experience.

Al-Hazzaa (1990 and 1993) in his studies points out the difficulties faced by Saudi working Saudi women, which are as follows: transportation is a peculiar problem for Saudi women since they are not allowed to drive; most employment opportunities are restricted to fields which traditionally fit the role of women as wives or mothers; the lack of child-care centres which restrict the movement of women who cannot afford a private nanny; clergymen's interpretation of Islam which limits the field of work for women in areas where there is no mixing of the sexes; lack of economic incentives-providing for family is the primary responsibility of the husband; however, this is changing and more husbands are looking for a working wife to increase the family income; the role struggle, as women and their husbands try to reconcile the professional interests of the working wife and her family duties; society's attitudes and stigmatization toward some occupations such as nursing and vocational education; the inability of working Saudi women to penetrate into the decision making process; decades of Saudi traditions which conditions Saudi women to accept, rather than challenge, their role in life has been a subtle but powerful deterrent to the advancement of women's role in society; the lack of a system of women's networks and professional organizations which can address women's working issues and provide role models, career counselling, and needed training (Al-Hazzaa 1993:153-154).



The study by Kattan (1991) was concerned with the effects of modernising changes, on Saudi women's traditional roles, resulting from rapid economic growth and widespread development in Saudi Arabia. The study showed three major factors affecting social life in general and women's roles in particular. The first factor is the impact of the application of *Shariah* laws, as interpreted by the Hanbali school of thought, on all aspects of life in Saudi Arabia, shaping its unique character. The second factor is the effect of Saudi traditional culture, which has preserved its conservative nature through its long isolation. The third factor influencing the change is the Saudi government's policy towards new modernising changes. The government balances the country's religious, conservative character with its increasing need to modernise by introducing change gradually and cautiously with the approval of religious *Ulama*. Although there are studies - in Arabic and in English - which deal with women's status and roles in Saudi society, the need still remains for research that addresses the problem from the women's perspective. It became apparent that the majority did not favour massive or radical changes in contrast to western expectations. Instead, they wanted changes to be introduced within the traditional framework of Islamic culture.

Al-Kashif (1991) addresses the major problems that female educational administrators face at work and at home, and whether the work related problems are viewed as being related to the home problems. The study found that these female educational administrators are indeed experiencing a lot of problems both at home and at work. These problems include lack of support for their careers at home; falling behind in home-related duties; lack of time to devote to their children; conflicts between home and work; the inability to make logical work-related decisions; jealousy; disputes at home on ways to spend the earnings; the problem of being able to assume accountability for their decisions at work; and the lack of moral and logistical support that women in a country like Saudi Arabia need to be able to succeed. It was found,

however, that the administrators with more education had less difficulty dealing with these problems than did their less-educated colleagues. A number of recommendations for improving the situation of these women are given at the end of the study.

Samergandi (1992) studied the factors that contribute to discrepancy between the high number of women receiving college education and the low number of women's participation in the labour force in Saudi Arabia. The basic research question was why Saudi women were not working despite their education and the government's need for their services, as Saudi Arabia is the largest importer of foreign labour in the Arab world. With the recession period in the 1980s it became apparent that there was a pressing need for educated women to use their educational degrees appropriately and to contribute to the work force, thus meeting the women's increased personal needs and the government's need for labour. The research focused on the changes in the role of Saudi women and the ensuing problems. The empirical examination based on the concepts of modernization (particularly Riggs's prismatic theory), cultural lag, and status inconsistency theories framed the research. The research also examined Muslim women's roles and attempted to explain how in highly traditional societies, such as Saudi Arabia, religious and cultural norms suppress certain aspects of the modernization process by enforcing the role of women. Qualitative methods were used to conduct in-depth interviews with sixty-nine professional Saudi women (workers and non-workers) in Saudi Arabia. The study examined factors such as professional work opportunities; motivational factors for seeking a college education and for choosing not to work outside the home; and professional employment; social restraints; degree of family support; religious, modernization, and individual factors. The findings indicated that the importance of motherhood and the wife roles, women's motivations for college education, lack of economic need before the recession in the 1980s, absence of employment opportunities (women's jobs were saturated), limited fields of education

available for women (education, social work, and recently, medicine), and religious restraints were the most important factors that influenced women not to work outside their homes. Implications for practice include a need for increased services to assist women in balancing the demands of their roles. To solve transportation and childcare problems for working women, car pooling and childcare centres should be provided. Employment services should be created such as job banks as well as full-time and part-time job sharing.

Al-Husseini (1993) in his study states that there is a satisfaction about the performance of the Saudi woman in the employment market. In another study about Saudi woman Aba Al Khail (1993) suggested that a female industrial zone should be established to encourage women to enter the industrial field

Al-Arifi (1993) compared the career maturity, achievement motivation, and self-esteem of college women living in Saudi Arabia, which is a traditional, conservative culture, and Lebanon, which is generally perceived to be much more liberal and westernized. The survey results indicated that Lebanese college females have a higher level of career maturity than their Saudi counterparts as a result of greater opportunities for career exploration and more educational options. The socialization practices of a Saudi society seem to have produced in women confusion about their self-perceptions and their societal roles. The expected differences on the variables of achievement motivation and self-esteem were not found. The study recommends both countries establish career development institutes for research and development to find ways to integrate women into the work force.

AL-Hefdhy (1994) examines the role of the *Ulama* (Islamic scholars) in establishing an Islamic educational system for women in Saudi Arabia, and to determine their perceptions of women's education and employment in the Kingdom. The findings of the

study indicated that most of the *Ulama* are supportive of women's education, which is an important issue, as they have been influential in establishing policy for the women's educational system and they supervise this system in Saudi Arabia. They also play an important role in teaching the Saudi people that Islam encourages education for females, contrary to some of the prevalent tribal beliefs. The study also identified the respondents' opinions of the academic areas that are appropriate for women to study. Most are also supportive of women working, but support was greater among the women respondents. All, however, insist that women work in only certain prescribed occupations and that they observe strict segregation from men in the workplace. Among the study recommendations are that more vocational education is needed for women, specifically targeted to available and appropriate employment. A separate university for women should be established as the number of girls graduating from high school is increasing rapidly and they need places in higher education. In addition, a special system of transportation should be developed exclusively for women as they are not allowed to drive cars in Muslim countries.

Banjabi (1994) examines the possibilities of finding new job opportunities in the industrial sector within the framework of the *Shariah* laws. This study is based on the assumption that there are job opportunities for Saudi graduate women in the industrial sector, but there are other negative variables associated with it, which restrict the optimization of these opportunities. These factors are women's attitude and desire to occupy an organizational or technical type jobs, their qualification, laws and social values, and the opinion of Saudi businessmen regarding women's employment in the industrial sector. These represent the main restrictions that limit women's contribution in the industrial sector. The results further indicate that the Saudi women have the aptitude, desire and qualification to occupy organizational and industrial jobs. Saudi women need more training and experience to work in the Industrial sector type of job. However, there are some cultural and social restrictions that limit her contribution in the



industrial sector. Moreover, businessmen do not agree that there are some social and cultural restrictions to women in the industrial sector.

#### **4.2.3 Third Stage: 1995-2000**

Al-Jwear's (1995) study focused on the negative and positive sides of women's work, and its impact on the family and society. He attempted to determine the Saudi women's position in the work force outside the home, to discover her reasons for working, and her priorities. The researcher found that the main reasons for a woman to work outside her home is to use her qualification and to achieve social benefits, while enjoying the work. The majority of women felt that they satisfied their hopes (66%); half of working women could leave their work, when their conditions allowed for it; 45% of working women felt that they did not look after their children properly due to their work; 73% agreed on the necessity of women's work, even though 24% were ready to accept fewer working hours, even with low salaries.

AL-Ahmadii (1995) shows that Saudis constitute only 13% of all physicians in Saudi Arabia. The study indicates that despite the relatively larger proportion of Saudi women in medicine (women represent 40% of all Saudi physicians), certain social and structural factors threaten the participation of Saudi women. This study explores the factors influencing the job satisfaction of Saudi physicians, with emphasis on gender differences. The findings show that eight factors influence job satisfaction of Saudi physicians. Gender differences were observed in several of the factors influencing job satisfaction. Men cited pay and hospital administration more than women, while women mentioned the ability to balance personal and professional commitments and working hours more often than men.

The difficulties facing Saudi working women were addressed by Swfee (1995). The study aimed at examining the benefit and significance of the job sharing system, which means two women sharing the same job performed in two shifts. It reveals the views of both women and men towards the disadvantages to carry on with the present system, which seems to divert Saudi women from their basic responsibilities. The conclusion reveals that several problems face full-time working women, and that they prefer the job sharing system because of their diverse responsibilities. Men also support this flexible system for it has many advantages among which is maintaining the required balance of the women's responsibilities besides their ability to regularly attend their jobs. It also helps in reducing the high turnover rate among women's labour force. The study, therefore, recommends facilitating the application of such a flexible system of job sharing which enables women to reach a compromise between their home duties and their jobs. It also encourages more women to work, and helps open up job opportunities for more Saudi women that conform to the true and tolerant laws of Islam.

Khaiat (1995) examines the characteristics of the Saudi women leaders working in the public sphere as far as the level of education, level of experience, the social structure, appointment criteria, the extent of different work opportunities, nature of work, authorities that are given, social and administrative obstacles, work incentives and leadership styles. The characteristics have been examined with the goal of supporting the positive characteristics and eliminating or diminishing the negative characteristics in order to increase the productivity of Saudi women leaders in the public sector. The research findings indicate that Saudi women leaders who work in the public sector enjoy several characteristics that have a positive effect on their productivity such as their high level of education, the broad range of specialization, the balance between authorities and responsibilities, the existence of moral work incentives, the increased use of democratic leadership style, and finally the increased level of training. On the other hand, there were several negative characteristics such as the limited work

opportunities, the novice leadership work experience, the dependence on promotion to fill leadership positions, and the presence of some administrative and social problems. To eliminate or diminish these negative characteristics, the study concludes with a group of recommendations. The recommendations focus on further broadening the work opportunities for women by increasing the social and financial benefits in work areas with a low women presence. Also recommended is improving the quality of the training programs dedicated to women's leadership in order to minimize the inexperience element in the field of leadership.

As regard to the general acceptance to woman's work, Al Ghamidi (1996) studied a sample of employed married women in order to observe the effect of work on their families. The majority of husbands, according to his result, are satisfied with their wives' work as long as it does not contradict the society's values and traditions. Gandorah (1996), on the other hand, focused on the obstacles encountered by Saudi working women after joining public service, and their negative impacts on their self-motivation and self-achievement. Such obstacles impose significant constraints causing frustration and indifference and leading to low performance of working women and subsequently on their organization. The study concluded that the main impetus of Saudi women to work is the desire to reach self-actualization and to prove her efficiency and competence. There is a positive relation between both levels of education and aspiration and ambition to work; available work areas for women are limited and not up to their expectations; and administrative women are insufficient to direct work as working men in the same organizations dominate most of the decision making, which can negatively affect the morale and motivation for work. Other research findings reflect the deterioration of self-motivation and self-achievement after work compared to that before work. Consequently, it leads to low efficiency in their organization, and such an effect differs according to both organizational types of activity and working women's attitudes. The researcher recommended continuous

encouragement and motivation for working women who prove efficiency and excellence; providing them with equal opportunities and powers to make decisions and accomplish their job assignments. Also, raising the level of awareness of the importance of working women roles in development and establishing women's branches for ministries and agencies to widen their opportunities to work and prove their competence and self-achievement were mentioned among the recommendations.

Kamfur's study aims to know the administrative and behavioural constraints and problems which hinder the female leaders from decision making at female departments in the dual academic administration. It also aims to develop an approach to solve these problems and render suggestions that run after increasing the activity of female leaders in those administrations and according to Islamic *Shariah* laws. The results showed the following: the authorities given to female administrators are not sufficient to arrange women's division; female administrators do not have the right to take instant decisions in some emergency situations; lack of sufficient means of communications for female administrators; the reliance on women's abilities in decision making are less than expected; some of the male leaders tend to keep the administrative and financial decisions in their hands. This study recommended giving the female administrators more independence for decision making, developing communication systems, decentralization, and taking care of training programs for female administrators for achieving developmental objectives.

Al-Turkestani (1998) explored the extent to which technical and vocational training for Saudi women is successful in providing them with new career opportunities. It showed the important role, which had been played by these new educational directions in diversifying specialities, preparing female workers, and distributing them among new occupations in a manner that allows maximum benefit. The findings of the study include: increasing awareness among members of the Saudi community with regard to

the importance of women's role and contribution in development. In addition, the importance of expanding and varying areas of occupation considering that is of prime necessity in light of the country's cultural and social changes; the need for modification of educational curricula and programs for women in order to meet the developmental needs for society. This emphasizes the importance of the role played by the educational system as a major focal point in determining new direction for the future with regard to Saudi women joining the work force.

In a study about woman's employment in the private sector prepared by the Research Centre in the Commercial and Industrial Chamber of Riyadh, focused on the reasons for the low participation of women in the employment market, which are: transportation, the mismatch between the specializations at the university and the market's need as well as the lack of training and private sector's nursing schools. The study also focused on the obstacles for woman's employment in the private sector such as: the mismatch between the offer (women) and the demand (companies) in terms of qualification and training; the unwillingness to work for the private sector; transportation; mixing with males; and high employment costs of local labour force. The study considered the recommendation to the private sector to increase female's employment such as: providing the necessary training and qualifications; adjusting and updating employment systems; showing seriousness and desire for work; and providing other services such as transportation and nursing schools

Arab (1999) studies educational and employment opportunities for Saudi women, the objective of her study aims to investigate the participation of women in socio-economic development in Saudi Arabia, as a comparative study between working and non-working women's attitude. The data indicated that educational qualification may be seen as a matter of personal fulfilment rather than as a passport to work. The study revealed that education affects the position of women and that further investigation is

needed to determine to what degree, compared with non-educated women. Arab, therefore, suggested that institutions, universities and private sectors should be more co-ordinated to study the needs of the labour market for women, and to offer women more fields of specialisation than those currently available.

Zeidan (2000) aims to determine the extent of woman's participation in the workplace through examining changes, in terms of time, motivation, initiative and creativity in carrying out work duties. Her results include the following: education is essential for the awareness of working women as it makes her participate in the development process efficiently; education is essential to guarantee that women reach leading positions through continuous hard work; more than half of the sample is satisfied with their jobs. This shows the desire for self-fulfilment, as few of the working women work to pass time and others work for financial reasons; women's work is essential for self fulfilment and to increase her education and awareness; development needs official and voluntary work.

In a field study concerning the obstacles that working women face in the public sector in Jeddah and Makah, Halwani (2000) concludes that there are six different obstacles that face a working woman, the most important of which are the male boss at the work place, the environment, the familial commitments and the limited choices that the employment market provides. Moreover, she stressed the importance of part time jobs, allowing optional retirement, providing nursery schools and better leave-permit system.

Aldakhail (2000) in her research studies the history of woman's work in the education sector, and her employment in different departments in public sectors. She also points out the challenges and obstacles of employment which include: the unbalance between the number of the graduates and the development programmes' need; replacing the non-Saudi female workers with Saudi ones and the obstacles which may arise. The

study argued that the challenges and obstacles came from the government policy, so, the solutions should come from a good plan to solve unemployment and increase female participation in the labour force.

Alnory (2000) aimed at defining the factors which contributed to the creation of the imbalance between job opportunities available for woman in the public sector and special subject areas provided for women at the universities. Through the field study, the researcher produced the following results: the declining awareness of the community, the subject of study, jobs available for woman in the public sector - qualitatively and quantitatively, despite the fact that their educational level is high and their relation with the subject is direct; the most important reason for the continuous availability of immigrant woman labour in the public sector is related to Saudi female graduates' reluctance to assume the type of jobs occupied by immigrant women; there is a centrifugal relation between the availability of jobs, which require abilities and qualifications that are lacked by Saudi female graduates. The lack of a defined admission policy for section and colleges in universities according to the needs of the society and the lack of suitable alternatives for university studies, are consequently considered affecting the equilibrium between the numbers of university female graduates and the opportunities available for them in the public sector market; the graduate's desire for a job in the public sector is affected by number of factors, including the type of work, commuting, wage and the status of the job in the eyes of the society.

#### **4.2.4 Fourth Stage: 2001-2005**

Fallateh (2001) studied the difficulties that face women in work such as, administrative, social and psychological problems. Also he studied the difficulties arising from the

rules and regulations of jobs that contrast with a woman's human nature, the lack of transportation, late career advancement, lack of training and the hard balance between work tasks and family duties. The followings are the main results of this study: the majority of the sample preferred the reduction of years in service before a full retirement to be 20 years instead of 40 years; the very long years in service, 40 years before retirement will surely cause a gradual decrease in their productivities; the current retirement system has a negative impact on their social and financial status; the administrative problems and the unsuitable work environment are always impeding women's innovation; the difficult balance between job tasks and family duties were behind the early retirement they seek. Fallateh made the following recommendations: reconsidering the current civil service retirement system to meet the nature and the needs of the Saudi working women; more flexible rules for motherhood and sick leave similar to those existing in some other Arabian countries; reducing the years of service required for a full retirement from 40 years to 20 years, thus allowing a full pension payment in a lesser period of time.

As a result of the importance of the Saudization process, which has economic, social, cultural and security effects on Saudi society, Sekhaily (2001) studied the presence of a large number of the Saudi female graduates looking for jobs who do not find the opportunity. At the same time there are many public organizations that have more than 50% of their employees as foreigners. This is despite the efforts to have more Saudis in jobs, which indicates that there are obstacles, which hinder such process. The finding of the study have indicated the correlation between the obstacles of Saudization and the available work fields for Saudi females, the available specialties, the training, curriculum, the foreign labour force, and the educational system. These factors seem to play a major role in slowing the process of Saudization in the female sector.



Al-Shetaiwi's study (2002) sets out to analyse the reality of Saudi women's employment in the private sector. There are significant numbers of unemployed qualified Saudi women and the latest Saudi Government Development Plan (2000-2004) expects the private sector to create the majority of jobs. The starting point of the study is whether the high level of unemployed qualified Saudi women is due to the educational system, the attitudes of women to employment, the attitudes of managers to employing women or the attitudes of society in general. According to the results of the study, the attitude of society was not seen as a problem in that society had a positive view of women in employment. The attitudes of unemployed women were very similar to those of employed women in the sample. This suggests that unemployed women are not unemployed due to their negative attitudes to employment. In fact they were more concerned about the lack of access of job market information. The women in the sample were not concerned about remuneration, since they were financially secure within the family, but they wanted more part-time jobs, more childcare and in particular transport arrangements to allow them to go further from home to where the jobs are without infringing Islamic regulations.

In a study about increasing employment opportunities for woman, Al-Shumairi (2003) stressed that the argument concerning woman's work and her role in the society has not been settled yet due to the exaggerated role of traditions and norms and the negative impact these have on the religious view point which could not form a clear vision in this regard. He stresses the fact that some of these norms are against the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Also that a clear distinction between religion and social norms should be made, as the Qur'an and Sunnah do not prevent woman from working. Al-Shumairi argues that female unemployment in Saudi Arabia indicates that economic and social problems exist in Saudi Arabia. He also stresses the inability of the society to open the door to females as the society opposes this idea. Other reasons are related

to work rules and their unsuitability for the working woman and the problem of the unavailability of some services such as transportation and nursing schools.

In the preparatory female workshop at the Riyadh Economic Forum in 2003, Nahood and Fasi pointed that the employment system in Saudi Arabia talks about employees in general and does not relate it to gender differences. This leads to individual judgements being made. They stressed the problems and obstacles resulting from the implementation of law, which is reflected on woman's contribution. They reached the following points: the most important of these obstacles is the authorised representative and the guarantor which has no religious background what so ever; the contradiction and ambiguity of the legislations as well as the civil and religious laws; the mixture of traditions, rules, systems, and religious concepts regarding the role of woman; the unequal opportunities between woman and man in government loans; preventing woman from running her own business; limiting the number of business and profession licences; the lack of observing and tracking discrimination and offences in the public sector. In order to encourage woman's participation in the world of business, they suggested the following: minimizing the laws and rules that affect investment; analyzing the reasons for the gap between rules and implementation; doing a religious study about woman's rights as this will enable the removal of social obstacle; clarifying the ambiguity which results from mixing between religious laws and social traditions; putting the signed agreements between the Kingdom and other countries into action.

In a study for Saudi Arabia General Investment Agency (SAGIA) (2003), twenty-seven obstacles were detected that prevented women from becoming active members of the business and economic sector in Saudi Arabia, some of which are related to the restrictions that are put on woman's work in transactions, decorating, letting agencies and various repair shops. The study also mentioned the difficulties which female investors face such as: the condition of the authorized representative; the slow pace in

carrying out the female transactions; the routine which women encounter when they need licences. It also clarified that the shortage in trained female staff is related to the limited courses a woman is allowed to take and which do not include the applied sciences. Moreover, the study put the blame on the governmental and investment institutions, which do not provide female training sessions to meet the market's needs. The obstacles in the investment sector were found to include the following: the lack of data and information; the difficulty a woman faces when she wants to meet foreign delegations; the norms and the traditions and some incorrect religious concepts. Moreover, it is apparent that the General Investment Administration avoids discussing the religious position regarding woman's work and rules. Some of the solutions suggested by the study in order to overcome these obstacles are: encouraging and backing female investment; allowing women to directly supervise and manage her business; developing women's management abilities; building a female industrial zone; providing female centres that provide services for business women; providing female administrations in the public sector; reducing the long time periods which women experience when they apply for a licence; offering bank loans for investors; solving the transportation problem; ruling out the authorized representative condition; adjusting education programmes to suit the market's needs.

Al-Yousef's (2003) study also aims to analyze Saudi women's participation in the employment market and recognize the extent of her participation in the different sectors in the Saudi society. It is obvious that female participation in the employment market has proved itself, especially in the education and health sectors. The recommendations of this study include the following: to prevent the mismatch, colleges and training centres should be updated and developed to meet this demand using the budget of the Ministry of Education; minimizing the number of students who are studying human sciences and turning these colleges into technical and scientific schools. For instance, the Saudi woman, as an employee, is under represented in the

health sector, which is less than 20%, where a large number could be employed. The college of medicine should be expanded and upgraded and nursing schools should be opened and joined to hospitals; the local labour productivity should be improved through improving the education and training systems and legislating new laws that encourage the increase of woman's participation in the private sector; removing the obstacles that the investing women face in the business sector; creating encouraging policies and applying reward and punishment systems; enrolling women in the consultative committees and in higher positions where they can participate in taking decisions that are related to women; making a detailed and comprehensive data base about the employment market available to everybody (Al-Yousef 2003).

Dabbagh (2004) in her study drew on current models of stress and theories of culture to explore the psychosocial variables that influence the mental health and well-being of working women in Saudi Arabia. The results of this study showed that both work and lifestyle stresses contributed to the explanation of strain over and above the effects of demographic and personality variables. More specifically, job demand, daily hassles, and social support played a significant role in explaining mental health. In contrast, husband support and marital hassles were related to life satisfaction, while work stresses indicated job dissatisfaction. Social support variables were found to moderate the relationship between work family conflict and measures of strain. However, other interactions were not consistent in form with theory and past research. Results also revealed that demographic and personality variables were significant in predicting perceived stress. Saudi women working in schools reported higher job demands and lower job discretion, supervisor support, and husband support. Overall, the studies showed that employed Saudi women experience stressors that are specific to their environment in addition to those that are more widely applicable. These findings are discussed in relation to the literature on job stress and cross-cultural mental health.

Aldakheel (2004) in her study analyzed the factors that affect the participation of Saudi woman in the employment market in Saudi Arabia on two levels, the micro and macro ones. She believes that the solution is to put a lasting national plan that includes a clear official and religious stance on the position of women's work and makes society aware of that. This should be accompanied with additional regulations and laws to control the relationship between both sexes. Furthermore, the study noted the fact that Saudization laws are not carried out, as they should be, and that opportunities should be provided for women and that the Human Resource Development Strategy should be put into action. She put forward the following recommendations: real application of the Islamic and international laws, agreed on by Saudi Arabia, with regard to women; obliging all sectors to employ a certain ratio of women without any discrimination, this can be done through developing certain rules and implementing them; restructuring the establishments so that they are able to employ women as part of the general structure and not as isolated and marginalized entities; providing the mechanism which guarantees an active communication between both sexes without mixing with males; clarifying the ambiguity in different areas via the media; putting rules which limit the relationship between both sexes at the workplace; developing the micro factors to serve the familial and economic roles in a perfecting rather than degrading way; supporting the national economy by relying on women; benefiting from international achievements in this regard; interacting with civilizational issues in creative rather than a refusing or offensive state of mind; and lastly to be aware of the unintended support of the masked unemployment.

In a study about the legal obstacles that a woman faces in Saudi Arabia, Zeina Abu Hassan (Aldakheel 2004:8) clarified that the slow pace in passing legislations and developing them resulted in passing temporary legislations by the governmental bodies. This, in turn, caused a double legislative standardization, especially when it comes to a woman where a big gap between rules and applications is found. The

researcher looked into the rules for employment, especially those related to woman. She did not find a single article that prevents woman's work or restricts it in any case.

Abu Hassan (2004:1-2) mentioned many legal obstacles, some of which are: restricting some jobs to men only in many official offices; restricting woman's work to some sectors such as the education, health and banking sectors; avoiding giving licences to women who wish to work as solicitors, engineers and accountants; going against the employment law by the Ministry of Trade imposing the condition of authorized representative on woman in popularization no. (380/10/1091/9/3) in (1977) which reads: "A Saudi woman is not permitted to participate in management and she should ask someone else to do so on her behalf and she can not choose her non-Saudi husband or any one who is not Saudi for that in order to avoid the marriage for interest." This is in addition to insisting on the guarantor when she requests a loan or any other service despite the fact that Islam gives her an independent financial trust. The researcher suggests the followings to improve the woman's situation and activate her role in economic activities: organizing rules for woman's work, especially when it comes to maternity leave as this is crucial for her health and safety; passing laws that allow woman long unpaid leave to look after her children and be guaranteed to come back; passing a law that looks after her in case of divorce or *edda*. She also suggests ruling out the conditions of the authorized representative and the guarantor, issuing an identity card for woman and organizing the relationship between both sexes at the work and public places. The recommendations include changes into criminal laws to prevent assaulting women. Regarding maternity leave, Article /28/23 states that the female employee is entitled to a paid 60-day maternity leave. The article, however, did not mention the pre-birth leave. Article /28/24/ states that the female employee is entitled to a paid (*edda*) leave. Abu Hassan Perceives this law as incomplete as it did not take into consideration some rules that are related to: breast feeding period; the injustice that results from firing her while she is on maternity or sick leave during her pregnancy;

giving her a one year unpaid leave to look after her children; her right to benefit from the same training and pay rise that is offered to a male worker.

Al-Dakhail's study (2004) aims to identify the suitable fields in which woman can work in order to increase her participation in the labour force for a wider and more efficient role in the development of economy. This can be achieved through creating new job opportunities by increasing the current work fields and finding new ones without ignoring woman's social and religious status. She recommends the following: adjusting girls' education system and guiding them to the actual market demand; to re-qualify the awaiting graduates according to the market's needs; to speed up the opening of new female departments in bodies which do not have them and increase woman's promotion rate at work to become around 15% as a fixed rate; the participation of women in consultancy committees that can influence the decisions taken and which are related to women. This will make the decisions more realistic; opening branches for female departments all over the Kingdom; reviewing the official procedures and changing them according to life's rhythm and putting laws and rules that are in the private sector's and woman's interest; facilitating moving among the official bodies and private sectors so that it is possible to replace men by women according to the suitability and vice versa; removing obstacles in a woman's way in the trade and investment sectors; supporting the small projects to increase job opportunities for women; setting up an information data base in order to remain updated with the market's needs so that girls know what to study and specialize in.

Farred (2004) suggested a few things that a woman should realize in order to guarantee her rights and secure her job such as: getting to know the employment laws. This is because a worker's rights are ignored or misused, especially when the employee is desperate for the job and is ignorant of these laws; taking woman into consideration in the development plans to create a balance between both sexes and

achieve a more comprehensive human development; reinforcing women's participation in the labour force through media and setting up a data base for her performance in the employment market and making her aware of her rights and duties; the employer should provide clear work contracts and any exceptions should be agreed on by both sides; the employee should know to who she can complain and who is responsible for supervising, monitoring and disciplining the public sector's employees in case she has a problem; educating herself about her role as an employee and about her job in order to get a better idea about her profession; benefiting from the experience of the previous employees as this will help her to learn how to think, take a decision and build her skills and abilities.

Khan's study (2005) of the banking sector in Saudi Arabia examines the experience of women working in women only bank branches. The most remarkable change in this sector has been the opening of special female branches, which provide women with the best suitable services to fulfil their desires and increases the number of women who have entered the banking profession to deal with the female customers. Her study investigated the job satisfaction of female staff in such branches of Saudi Arabian banks. It focused on the Saudi women job related factors because these factors are likely to play a definite role in job satisfaction among workers.

### **4.3 CONCLUSION**

The above studies have answered many of the research questions and provide us with the evolution of the women's issues in Saudi Arabia. Also they provide us with general ideas about the Saudi women and their roles in the society, finally we can get this summary as follows:

1. Factors that influence women's work in the labour market:



- The mismatch between the female graduates and market's needs:
- The social negative position towards technical and professional education and employment:
- The obstacle of transportation and daycare facilities;
- The limited employment options for women:
- The unsuitability of the work environment for women in the health sector:
- The society's negative look towards women's work:
- The long shifts and the availability of the part time jobs:
- The obstacle of dual duty:
- The problem in the Employment and Employee law:
- The weak financial motive for women:

## 2. The prospects and needs for Saudi Women in the employment market.

Women in Saudi Arabia have been strongly affected by the enormous economic changes that have taken place in the country in the past fifty years, and in no area more than in higher education. With the vast expansion of female education at all levels, a great need for female administrators opened up. However, this situation has presented unique problems, in part because women in Saudi Arabia, unlike those in most other countries, cannot work or transact business directly with men, and men still hold most of the decision-making power, even over questions of the education of females.

# **Chapter 5**

## **Research Methodology and Survey Design**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter aims to present a description of the procedures that were followed in this research in order to collect the primary data for this study. As already mentioned, the main aim of this study is to discover the factors that determine women's participation in the labour force, and also the social and cultural factors that create barriers to women's employment. This type of investigation requires a suitable blend of approaches to collect, process, and interpret the relevant information.

This chapter begins by setting the rationale for the selection of the data collection methods. Then, it focuses on the survey population and the procedures implemented to select the study sample. In a later section, an explanation is given about the instruments - questionnaires and interviews – used for data collection.

### **5.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Research design is a useful tool in emergent research, as it guides the research process. It serves many functions among which are (Black and Champion 1976):

- To provide the researcher with a blueprint for studying social questions;
- To enable the investigator to channel his energies in specific directions;
- To enable the researcher to anticipate potential problems during the implementation stage.

Miller states that the choice of design for any research project is generally an important concern to the researcher, who seeks to determine the validity of a hypothesis and how best to discover evidence to either accept or reject it (Miller 1991:21). In a more formal manner (Frankfort, Nachmias et al. 1996:98) define research design as “the program that guides the investigator as he or she collects, analyzes, and interprets observations. It is a logical model of proof that allows the researcher to draw inferences concerning causal relations among the variables under investigation.”

Similarly, Oppenheim mentions the functionality of research design by stating that we will be unable to draw any conclusion or comparisons unless our study is designed appropriately and is aimed at the correct target population. Thus, the “research design is concerned with making our problem researchable by setting up our study in a way that will produce specific answers to specific questions. Good research design should, above all, make it possible for us to draw valid inferences from our data in terms of generalization, association and causality” (Oppenheim 1998 :6).

For Bryman (2004), on the other hand, research design should reflect the decisions about the priority being given to a range of dimensions of the research process. These include (Bryman 2004:27):

- Expressing causal connections between variables;
- Generalizing to larger groups of individuals than those actually forming part of the investigation;
- Understanding behaviour and the meaning of that behaviour in its specific social context;
- Having a temporal (i.e. over time) appreciation of social phenomena and their interconnections.

The main aim of this study, hence, is to attempt to assemble data regarding the role of women in the labour force in Saudi Arabia, and to discover the factors influencing women's employment status in the labour market in the Kingdom. It also attempts to uncover new employment opportunities for women in both the private and public sectors and to determine the appropriate working conditions for Saudi women without violating social and religious codes. This constitutes the causal connection as identified by Bryman and making a generalisation about the Saudi women and the labour market participation, based on the results, fulfils Bryman's second dimension. In addition, since the study is a case study it aims to work with a special sample within a special social context. It attempts to understand the behaviour of Saudi women and the larger environment and about Saudi women's participation in the labour force. Thereby it fulfils the third dimension that Bryman identified as a function of research design. Furthermore, the study takes into account the developments in a time horizon, and so it fulfils Bryman's last function expected of the research design.

### **5.2.1 Research Method: Survey Methods**

Research method is a central part of the social sciences, and refers to data collecting techniques. This type of investigation requires a suitable blend of approaches to collect, process, and interpret the relevant information. The methodology adopted by any study must be in line with the aim and objectives of that study. According to Miller and Brewer (2003), the data collection instrument and method used in a study will be influenced by the nature of the research topic. The method used in this research, *i.e.* the sample survey, has normally been used by researchers and evaluators for mainly exploratory, descriptive and comparative purposes.

Johns (1984) describes the sample survey as a frequently used standard tool of social research, and an effective method for collecting information about a sample, with whom direct contact is made using questions set out in interview or questionnaire.

Furthermore, for social research in developing countries, a sample survey is practical and economic in terms of effort, time and resources.

The following sections describe the sample population, questionnaire design, piloting procedures and the administration of the questionnaire to two groups of respondent: employed and unemployed women. In addition, questionnaire validity and translation is discussed together with the interviewing process and data collection and analysis. Problems encountered in the course of this study will be outlined and study limitations highlighted.

### **5.2.2 Triangulation: Use of Multiple Research Methods**

Due to the complexity of social phenomenon, it is sometimes necessary to use more than one research method to compete the study. Therefore, triangulation may be necessary, which is defined as the combination of methods. It has become increasingly popular in the area of social research. Denzin (1989) states that triangulation can be of two types:

- Inter-method triangulation, which includes two or more methods of different methodological origin and nature;
- Intra-method triangulation, which employs two or more techniques of the same method.

Burgess (1984) conceives the reasons for employing triangulation is to obtain a variety of information on the same issue; to use the strengths of each method to overcome the deficiencies of the other; to achieve a higher degree of validity and reliability; and to overcome the deficiencies of single-method studies. Furthermore, Bulmer and Warwick (1993) emphasise that incorporating more than one method of data collection would result in:

- Yielding additional categories of data;

- Improving accuracy in measuring a single phenomenon;
- Formulating a generalisable finding.

Garaybah *et al.* (1981) justify the use of triangulation by suggesting that for most research topics in social science, a multi-technique approach provides a more valid picture of the phenomena being studied than a single technique. For that reason, to achieve the aim and objectives of this research, this study employs both quantitative methods in the form of a questionnaire survey and qualitative method in the form of semi-structured interviews in order to obtain all the information necessary for this study. In addition, taking into account the literature chapters which relied on textual analysis and also secondary data both in the form of qualitative and quantitative data, this constitutes the third data collection method with descriptive data and descriptive analysis. Indeed, each of these two methods has its advantages and disadvantages. Therefore, using triangulation enhances strengths and reduces weaknesses of each method.

### **5.3 RESEARCH METHOD AND DATA COLLECTION**

As mentioned in the introduction, this study relies on personal interviews, telephone interviews and self-administered questionnaire surveys for primary data collection. Each method is discussed in detail in the following sections. And as it has been said, each of these methods has its own advantages and disadvantages. The following sections discuss the process by which the survey instruments were chosen and used in this study.

Before any decision is made concerning methodology, the types of research methods need to be surveyed and compared with the nature of the present study as well as with previous studies in the same subject. The researcher found that survey methods

(questionnaire survey and interview survey) were regarded as the best methods for data collection in business and social research, especially if the study aims to gather amounts of large quantitative information for the study sample via the questionnaire and small amounts of data via the interviews.

### **5.3.1 Questionnaire Survey: Primary Data Collection Method**

To begin with, and as De Vaus states that "the use of the sample survey is a popular and useful technique for the quantitative method in social research" (De Vaus 1996), as it provides a large amount of collected data from a sizeable population in a very economical way. Based very often on a questionnaire, the survey approach gives the researcher more control over the research process (Saunders, Lewis et al. 1997). Questionnaires are usually used to test hypotheses or to answer questions and to collect large amounts of data. According to Wiersma (1986), questionnaire instruments are defined as a list of questions or statements to which the individual is asked to respond in writing; the response may range from a checkmark to an extensive written statement (Wiersma 1986:179).

Questionnaires are in fact considered to be an efficient mechanism for gathering data when the researcher knows specifically what is required and how to measure the important variables. It is the most popular method for collecting data, which is not available in open literature. In addition, "questionnaires are used to collect data that are unavailable in written records or cannot be readily observed" (Lewis-Beck 1994 P 2).

Questionnaires are regarded by social scientists as a standard method of collecting information. They consist of sets of items or questions to which subjects are requested to answer. Most questionnaire surveys are conducted to quantify certain factual information, such as to identify the characteristics of a particular group, measure attitudes, and describe behavioural patterns. However, certain aspects of the

questionnaire survey may also be qualitative in order to provide causal explanations or explore ideas (Zikmund 2000).

Sarantakos (1997) indicates that a questionnaire has a number of advantages which can be summarised as follows:

- It is less expensive than other methods;
- It produces quick results;
- It can be completed at the respondent's convenience;
- It offers less opportunity for bias caused by the respondent;
- It is stable, consistent and a uniform measure without variation;
- It offers a considered and objective view on the issue;
- It covers a large sample of respondents at the same time.

The questionnaire survey, however, has many disadvantages, as Sarantakos (1997) points out:

- It does not enable the researcher to probe or prompt the respondent or clarify questions;
- There are no opportunities for motivating the respondent to participate in the survey or to answer the questions;
- It is impossible to determine whether the right person has answered the questionnaire;
- It is impossible to know whether the respondent has followed the questions' order;
- There is no opportunity to collect additional information while the questionnaire is being completed.

Regarding questions in questionnaires and personal interviews, they can be classified into two types:

Structured questions, often called closed questions, in which respondents are offered a set of answers and asked to choose the most closely matched to their views and



opinions. Structured questions are easy to ask and quick to answer, as they require no writing by either the respondent or the interviewer, and their analysis is straightforward. Unstructured questions, or open-ended questions, which do not have a limited set of responses, do not force the respondent to pick from a list of answers. Respondents can express their ideas, opinions, and thoughts freely in their own words.

The major weakness in closed-ended questions is that they may introduce bias, either by forcing the respondent to choose from given alternatives or by offering the respondent alternatives that might not have otherwise come to mind. On the other hand, open-ended questions are difficult to answer and still more difficult to analyze (Frankfort, Nachmias et al. 1996).

This study utilised structured questions in the two sets of questionnaire it conducted, a sample of each is available in the appendix section. In order to overcome the weakness of using this kind of question, blank spaces were also provided after many closed-ended questions to give respondents the chance to express their thoughts freely in case they have further comments.

Regarding the questionnaire, it should be looked upon as a scientific procedure constructed for a specific purpose, and not merely as a list of questions: "A questionnaire is a scientific tool and therefore must be constructed with great care in line with the specific aims and objectives of investigation (Oppenheim 1998:100). In addition, questions must be written in such a way as to obtain the required material. Furthermore, as Evans mentions: "statements on questionnaires collected through investigation must be relevant to the specific objectives of the investigation" (Evans 1965:103).

Due to the sensitivity of the research topic, several principles were adapted in designing the questionnaire from those employed by other researchers, such as Zikmund (2000). These may be summarised as follows:

- (i) The questions asked should be relevant to the research problem;
- (ii) Questionnaires should be as short as possible;
- (iii) Avoid ambiguity, confusion, and vagueness;
- (iv) Avoid leading questions;
- (v) Avoid asking questions that are beyond the respondents' capabilities.

The questionnaire was conducted with two groups, namely employed and unemployed women. It consists of seven pages for the employed women sample and eight pages for unemployed women; attached to it is a cover letter that briefly:

- Identified the sponsoring organization and the researcher conducting the study;
- Explained the purpose of the study;
- Explained why it was important that the respondent answer the questionnaire;
- Assured the respondent that all the information they provided would be treated with strict confidentiality (Nachmias and Nachmias 1997).

An important factor to be considered in designing the questionnaire is the covering letter. The covering letter must succeed in persuading individuals to respond by filling out the questionnaire and posting it back. It should, therefore, include information such as the sponsor of the study, the purpose of the study, its importance, and an assurance that the respondent's answers will be held in total confidence. In this study, the researcher introduced himself to the respondent, explained the topic of the research, the purpose of the study, how and why the respondent had been selected, and made an appeal to the respondent for participation by filling out and returning the questionnaire.

### 5.3.1.1 The Questionnaire Design

The research instruments used in this research were questionnaires developed by the researcher drawing on the literature review. In developing the questionnaire, preliminary research had to be conducted by the researcher to review previous questionnaires about women's issues in the labour market. Apart from this, many academic and policy oriented material including articles; PhD theses and an exploratory survey about women's employment were reviewed in order to develop a valid questionnaire. Although the questionnaire has been designed in a multiple-choice format, it allows respondents to provide comments in certain areas regarding each question not covered in the structure. Thus, open questions were included in the questionnaire as well, which are useful because they are a source of rich information. They give respondents the freedom to say what they really think in their own words, rather than being forced into preconceived answers (Coolican 1990).

The literature review helped to identify those factors which influenced women's employment status in the labour market. These later were transformed into questions. The study conducted two sets of questionnaires with two different samples: employed and non-employed women. The employed women's questionnaire contained 43 questions about social, demographic and economic characteristics of employed women, which were considered to be influential in assisting women to gain employment. These questions included such variables as age, marital status, education level, number of children, age of children, women's role, facilities available for working women, mother's, father's and husband's educational level, their attitudes toward women's work and satisfaction for family income which are related to the objectives of the study previously noted. Secondly, the un-employed women have the extended version of the questionnaire of the employed women, as it included the possible social and economic characteristics that cause the unemployment.

In the opinion expressing type of questions, the questions follow the Likert scale in providing options to the respondents to express their preferences in terms of how strongly subjects agree or disagree with statements on four, five, six, seven, eight or nine point scales. The Likert scale is much used in various fields of research, in which a statement is given, and the endpoints correspond to agree strongly and disagree strongly (Sekaran 2003). Five-point Likert scales employed in this study, because it is most commonly used. With a five-point scale the points were labelled as 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'neutral', 'disagree' and lastly 'disagree strongly'.

The questionnaire is divided into five parts. The first part deals with the respondent's personal details and family background. Women between paid and unpaid work has been analysed in part two. Part three of the questionnaire is designed to focus on the influence of women's work on marriage, fertility and child care. Job environment, attitudes and opinions are discussed in part four. The final part deals with the attitudes and opinions regarding factors which are considered to be preventing women's employment and suggests factors that encourage employment policies to be applied to help women in the workforce. Moreover, a questionnaire about the unemployed investigates the causes of unemployment.

Regarding sampling, three important groups that were involved with women's employment were invited from Saudi Arabia to participate in this study. These groups were women employees in the public sector, women employees in the private sector and unemployed women as well. This helps to understand and investigate problems and obstacles facing women's employment in the public and private sector through quantitative and qualitative methods.

### 5.3.1.2. Sample Locations

In order to cover a large area of both public and private sectors, the sample was drawn from the population of three cities in Saudi Arabia: Riyadh, Dammam and Al-Hassa. The reasons for choosing these cities can be summarised as follows:

Riyadh, which lies in the Central Region, is the capital city of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its major urban centre, with many of the problems of urban centres worldwide. The city is the most populated area with about five million out of seventeen million people living there. The city is the centre of all the official governmental offices, ministries and political office and is therefore, the main political and commercial centre.

Dammam is the capital of the Eastern Region. It is considered to be the pathway for Saudi Arabia to the Arab Gulf coast. Located in the eastern region of the country, it produces oil and is the largest industrial region. It is the centre of many industrial and manufacturing companies and it is the most popular choice for the petroleum industry. Being the heart of an industrial region, Dammam attracts Saudis from different parts of the country.

Al-Hassa lies in the south of the Eastern Region in the Kingdom, which is known to be a main agricultural region with important date farming. Al-Hassa, in ancient times, was at the centre of the trade routes which traders followed between the east of the Arabian Peninsula and India. It is one of the most populous provinces in the Kingdom. The populations have different backgrounds in terms of their places of residence, as they are distributed in both urban and rural areas.

Limiting the study to these three cities raises the question of representation or, in other words, to what extent are these cities representative of the total population. Since the population of Saudi Arabia is relatively homogeneous in terms of ethnicity, language,

religious and societal affiliation, then any segment of the population should be a fairly accurate representation of the population as a whole.

### 5.3.1.3 Sample Size

A sample is a small selected portion of the population. Sekaran (2003) describes a population as an entire group of people, events, or things of interest that a researcher endeavours to investigate, and as “a subset of the population.” The size of the sample obtained must be sufficient enough to represent the population under study. If the size is inadequate, there is a likelihood of sampling error (Sekaran, 2003:266). According to Roscoe (1975), sampling sizes larger than 30 and less than 500 are appropriate for most research. A large sample, however, was beyond the scope and nature of this study, particularly in view of time and resource constraints.

The sample size depends on two key factors: first, the degree of accuracy required for the sample, and secondly, the extent to which there is variation in the population with respect to the key characteristics of the study (De Vaus, 1996). These weaknesses may be avoided by conducting personal interviews with some authorities, policy makers, Muslim scholars (*Ulama*) and businesswomen.

The main objective in choosing an employed and unemployed sample is to compare the results from both samples to investigate the commonalities and differences between the two samples in understanding particular similar and different issues related to their employabilities. Such a comparison, also, provides an opportunity to investigate the commonalities and similarities in obstacles to employment in both the sample cases in Saudi Arabia. This helps in exploring new policies and systems to develop particular policies for specific needs of a specific group. As Bryman concluded, the key of the comparative design is its ability to allow the distinguishing characteristics of two or more cases to act as a springboard for theoretical reflections about contrasting findings (Bryman, 2004:55).

After identifying the research methods and selecting the samples, the next section presents the questionnaire design.

### **5.3.2 Interview Survey: Primary Data Collection Method**

The interview is a kind of conversation as is stated by Cohen and Manion. It is “initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information and focused by him on content specified by the research objectives of systematic description, prediction or explanation” (Cohen and Manion, 1989:307).

Interviewing is an alternative method of collecting survey data to obtain information on the issues of interest to the research. Busha and Harter (1980:78) define an interview as a method in which “information is gathered from persons who are able to provide research data on the basis of their background. The information may be concerned with their experiences, opinions, attitudes, reactions to services, etc.” This can be done face-to-face or by telephone. The format may follow as one-to-one, many-to-one or one-to-many.

Interviewing is often claimed to be the best method of gathering information, because a richer set of data can be obtained. The interview can be defined as a direct verbal contact between the researcher and the sampling population. Saunders (1997) classified interviews according to the structural nature of questions as: structured interviews; semi-structured interviews; or unstructured interviews. Each one of these styles can answer a specific research problem. The choice between an unstructured and structured way of conducting an interview depends on the researcher's understanding of the research problem and its variables.

In the present study, the semi-structured interview style was chosen as the second method of data collection to meet the study objectives. This type of interview includes a

set of questions that the interviewer intends to cover in the course of conversation, but without having a fixed order to follow.

The main objective of a semi-structured interview is to encourage interviewees to answer the questions in depth with more details. Drever (1995:13) determined that the key characteristics of a semi-structured interview are as follow:

- (i) It is a formal encounter on an agreed subject;
- (ii) Main questions set by the interviewer create the overall structure;
- (iii) Prompts and probes fill in the structure: prompts by encouraging broad coverage, probes by exploring answers in depth;
- (iv) The interviewee has a fair degree of freedom: what to talk about, how much to say and how to express it;
- (v) The interviewer can assert control when necessary.

The advantages and disadvantages of the interview over other methods are summarised in table 5.1 (Sekaran, 2003:251).

Table 5-1

Mode of data collection	Advantage	Disadvantage
Personal or face to face interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can establish rapport and motivate respondents.</li><li>• Can clarify the questions, clear doubts, and new questions.</li><li>• Can read nonverbal cues.</li><li>• Can use visual aids to clarify points.</li><li>• Rich data can be obtained.</li><li>• CAPI can be used and responses entered in portable computer</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Takes personal time.</li><li>• Costs more when a wide geographic region is covered.</li><li>• Respondents may be concerned about confidentiality of information given.</li><li>• Interviewers need to be trained.</li><li>• Can introduce interviewer biases.</li><li>• Respondents can terminate the interview at any time.</li></ul>
Telephone interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Less costly and speedier than personal interviews</li><li>• Can reach a wide geographic area.</li><li>• Greater anonymity than personal interviews.</li><li>• Can be done using CATI</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nonverbal cues cannot be read.</li><li>• Interviews will have to be kept short.</li><li>• Obsolete telephone numbers could be contacted, and unlisted ones omitted from the sample.</li></ul>

Notes: \*CAPI (computer-assisted personal interviewing); \*\*CATI (computer-assisted telephone interviewing).



It has to be noted that for this study, in the case of the female respondents, it was very difficult to gain direct access to them due to cultural beliefs, the reasons for which are discussed in chapter two (Bulmer and Warwick, 1993) argue that gaining access to interview females may, in some countries, be next to impossible. Due to cultural beliefs in the case of female respondents in Saudi Arabia, it was very difficult to interview them face to face, so for the same reason, the researcher used telephone interviews.

Although the researcher used a questionnaire in the study, semi-structured interviews were designed and conducted with the objective of generating respondents' perceptions on five themes:

- (i) Reasons for women's work in the Saudi society;
- (ii) Obstacles;
- (iii) Equality, inequality and justice;
- (iv) The role of government;
- (v) The role of social environment.

As regards to interviewees, in order to investigate the opinions and attitudes of the Saudi authorities in the public and private sectors on the employment of women, ten people from various public and private authorities and policy makers (4 males referred to as 'M' and 6 females referred to as 'F') were interviewed between February and June 2004 in Riyadh, and Al-Hassa. Out of these ten interviewees, four males were from the General Presidency for Girls' Education (GPGE), Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, *Shoura* Council member and a university professor. It should be stated that, as expected, with males sample face-to-face interview method was used. On the other hand six female interviewees were chosen from Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Public Administration Institution, women's branch, ARAMCO Company, business women working from home and university professors. Due to the regulations

of gender relations in Saudi Arabia, telephone interview was used as a method to conduct interviews with the ladies.

#### **5.4 THE PILOT STUDY**

In order to ensure the reliability and validity of the assembled data, after translating the questionnaires the researcher had to pilot the questionnaire with a small sample, as suggested by research process (Kelly 1998). All data-gathering instruments must be tested to see how long it takes recipients to complete them, to check that all questions and instructions are clear and to enable the researcher to remove any items which do not yield valuable data. The purpose of testing is to remove any possible confusion from the instrument so that respondents in the main study should not experience any difficulties in completing it and the researcher can carry out the analysis stage with no difficulties (Bell 1996). Therefore, a pilot study provides the researcher with new opinions, approaches, ideas, and important clues, which increase the chances of obtaining clear-cut findings in the main study. In addition, a pilot study is very useful in making sure that the translation of the questionnaire will not lead to any misunderstanding of the questions.

The questionnaire was tested in a pilot study after the final draft and was shown to qualified Saudi women in Durham, as a number of them were residing in Durham. The questionnaires were distributed to ten selected employed and unemployed women who were asked to answer the questions and write any observation or suggestions concerning the clarity of the questions and time needed to answer all parts of the questionnaire. These applications helped to avoid inconsistent questions and to restructure the questionnaire. The main outcome of this pilot was that some words were not clear, which were replaced with others to make the questions clearer.

When the first draft of questionnaire had been written the researcher asked six of his colleagues at Imam Mohammad bin Saud University to fill it in. Useful feed-back was received. As a result of the pilot study and after receiving all responses, a few items were deleted, others were modified and rephrased, and further instructions were added to the questionnaires to ensure respondents understood the question content without changing the original ideas. The remarks which were made were very important for enhancing the language and wording for some questions.

Finally, the pilot study was completed to test the interview questions. Two interviews had also been conducted with two female professors from General Presidency for Girls' Education. The results from this stage were valuable and helped in many ways to avoid mistakes. Several questions were re-phrased because they were ambiguous and difficult to answer.

## **5.5 MAIN FIELDWORK**

In undertaking any research, it is very important that the researcher seeks to gain access. Cohen et al (2001:53) stresses the importance of gaining access and the need for asking permission in order to conduct the research: "Investigators cannot expect access to a nursery, school, college, or factory as a matter of right. They have to demonstrate that they are worthy, as researchers and human rights, of being accorded the facilities needed to carry out the investigation." At the same time, and according to Punch (1994), scientific research should be based on: "avoidance of harm, fully informed consent, and the need for privacy and confidentiality."

As a first step in the study, it was deemed necessary to obtain permission to secure the required access. Therefore, two letters were issued, one from the Saudi Cultural

Bureau in London and the second from Imam Mohammad bin Saud University, in Al-Hassa, where the researcher is a staff member.

In order to receive a reasonable number of responses for this study, 800 questionnaires were sent to public and private organisations in three cities in Saudi Arabia. In other words, 800 questionnaires were distributed in equal number to Saudi employed and unemployed women in three selected cities in order to cover a large area of the public and private sectors in Saudi Arabia.

**Table 5-2**  
**The sample size for the questionnaires**

No.	Category	Sample size
1	Employed women	400 cases
2	Unemployed women	400 cases
<b>Total</b>		<b>800 cases</b>

In distributing the questionnaires a personal approach was adapted, as they were distributed by hand. There was some difficulty in distributing the questionnaires to the unemployed women, since there is no institution or organization that exists through which such women could be easily contacted. These questionnaires were given to women known personally to the researcher through social networks and further copies were given to some private institutions such as banks, hospitals, schools, market centres and other organizations to be given to women who were to come looking for employment.

The questionnaires were distributed on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2004 but it was not possible to collect the completed copies until 10<sup>th</sup> June 2004. Collection proved particularly difficult

with questionnaires completed by unemployed women as these were widely distributed.

**Table 5-3**  
**Target and actual sample size of the questionnaires**

No.	Category	Sample size		Return rate
		Distributed	Responded	
1	Employed women	400	300	75%
2	Unemployed women	400	261	65.25%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>561</b>	<b>70.13%</b>

The response level of the questionnaire was that 561 (300 women employees and 261 unemployed women) questionnaires out of 800, which were submitted to Saudi women, were returned. Thus, the overall response rate is about 70%; with 75% return rate with employed women and 65.25% with unemployed women.

It should be noted that, no distributed questionnaires were received by post; therefore, all questionnaires were received by hand by the researcher and/or his assistants. This provides an implication for the time consumed in the data collection period.

**5.6 TRANSLATION**

The questionnaires and interviews were originally written in English. However as the mother tongue of the study society is Arabic, it was necessary to translate the instruments into Arabic and to ensure that the translated version were appropriate. The aim was to look for possible discrepancies between the English and Arabic versions in terms of correspondence, accuracy, clarity and content. Amongst the methods of translation were Brislin (1970), who recommends the translation process to be as follows:

- The original transcript to be translated into the target language;
- Target transcript to be grammatically checked;
- Target transcript then to be translated back into the original language;
- A pre-test to be undertaken before actual application.

This technique was followed precisely. The questionnaires and interviews were translated by a researcher in Arabic, after which consultation was held with three Saudi students undertaking graduate research in Durham University studying English literature, translation and linguistics. This group was asked to comment on the wording, style and presentation of the questionnaires and interviews. Their comments and suggestions were taken into account to produce a verified translation. Then both the English and Arabic versions were taken to Saudi Arabia.

## 5.7 DATA ANALYSIS

Choosing the correct data analysis technique to analyze data is one of most difficult parts of the research process. When making this selection, a number of different factors have to be considered, such as the type of question, the type of scales, the nature of the data for each variable and the assumptions that must be met for each of the different statistical techniques. Identifying the data analysis techniques used in other related studies should also help in choosing the correct one.

In this study quantitative data analysis method, namely statistical techniques, is utilised for the primary data collected through questionnaires. Statistical techniques involve methods for describing and analyzing data and for making decisions or inferences about phenomena presented by the data. Methods in the first category are referred to as descriptive statistics, while methods in the second category are called inferential statistics (Huck and Cormier 1996).

Descriptive statistics enable the researcher to summarize and organize data in an effective and meaningful way. They provide tools for describing collections of statistical observations and reducing information to an understandable form. However, inferential statistics allow the researcher to make decisions or inferences by interpreting data patterns. It should be stated that both descriptive and inferential statistics have been used extensively in this study.

The researcher used the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) statistical data analysis software for the analysis of data gathered from the questionnaires. The data collected was tabulated in statistical tables. Such presentation helps the reader to understand visually the main characteristics or the pattern of the data and can also suggest the type of statistical treatment. Also the data coded into SPSS for analysis purpose.

Data analysis in this study includes the following:

1. The frequencies and percentages in order to describe the sample of the study; (see chapter 6).
2. T-test was used to determine if the means of two groups (employee and unemployed) differ statistically. The t-test is calculated by comparing the difference between the two means with standard error of the difference in the means of the different groups (Bryman and Cramer, 1997:142). The t-test was also used to study the difference between the reaction of the two groups (employed and unemployed) towards the impact of the selected macro external policy encouraging and discouraging factors for women work (see chapter 7).
3. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used for comparing means of 3 or more samples/treatments, to avoid the error inherent in performing multiple t-tests. ANOVA test utilises the selected factors such as 'marital status', 'last qualification', 'family monthly income' and 'number of children' to correlate with some control variables to

find out how each of the factors is significantly related to these control variables (see chapter 7 section 8).

4. Cross-tabulation was used to test the level of significance between the dependent variable and each independent variable. This helps to identify contributing measures as well as to eliminate irrelevant ones. The chi-square method of cross-tabulation, which is in fact a test of independence, was used where appropriate. Cross-tabulation method was used, for instance, between type of work and number of children for employed and unemployed groups and the whole sample (see chapter 7 section 9).

5. The chi-square goodness-of-fit test was also used as a non-parametric test employed in a hypothesis testing. This test was used, for instance, in chapter 7 to investigate if there are any differences in the respondent's opinion about the importance of the factors affecting women's work, for both employed and unemployed sample.

6. Factor analysis, also used as data reduction to identify a small number of factors that explain most of the variance observed in a much larger number of manifest variables (SPSS:v12). However, factor analysis is a statistical technique used for a large number of variables to establish whether there is a tendency for groups of them to be inter-related (Bryman, 2004:539). Therefore, it was utilised to locate the most important factor for the categorical questions included in the questionnaire. In order to run the factor analysis, two main requirements should be met: Sample size (the larger sample size can produce better results); and strength of the relationship among the variables or the strength of the inter-correlations among the items (Pallant, 2005:173).

In this study, sample size is more than 500 (561 respondents). Therefore, it is assumed that the correlation coefficients should be more reliable as Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) guidelines state, for factor analysis for sample size indicates that sample size 50 is very poor, 100 is poor, 200 is fair, 300 is good, 500 is very good and 1000 is excellent. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test were also used to test the



factorability of the data beyond the manual guide suggested by Tabachnick and Fidell (2001). As a sampling adequacy ratio, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure should be greater than 0.5 for satisfactory factor analysis to proceed. In addition, for efficient results Bartlett's test of sphericity should be significant ( $p < .05$ ) for the appropriate factor analysis (Pallant, 2005:174).

7. Since this study collected primary data through interview, which is qualitative in nature, as well, it utilised qualitative data analysis in the form of grounded theory, which is more common to analysis interviews (Riley, 2000). There are seven main stages which help to analyse interviews: formalisation, reflection, conceptualisation, cataloguing, recording, linking, and revaluation (Easterby-Smith, 1991:108-111). To analyse the data from interviews, after transcribing the interviews, it was necessary to translate 10 interview contents from Arabic to English. In the next stage, answers were classified, analysed and described using illustrative and comparative methods (Sarantakos 1997:318). Interviews were carried out with Saudi authorities by the researcher. Consequently, interview transcripts were transcribed and translated into English, just as the questionnaires. The researcher did the initial coding of all interviews independently. The transcribed interviews were coded according to themes that coincided with the research questions. These five broad areas of themes are listed above. The researcher builds a matrix-like table according the themes. Interview findings were analysed manually to classify data and thematic analysis was used to present the results of the data gathered through interviews, along with the researcher's interpretation of the responses. As a result the experiential aspects of the interviewing process are subsumed by theoretical categories which are used, retrospectively, to interpret the data (May 2001:135).

## 5.8 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has explained the design of the empirical research conducted in Saudi Arabia. As mentioned, self-administered questionnaires and interview surveys (both later were translated into Arabic) were chosen as the most important means to conduct the research in this study. Both instruments were revised after the pilot study in which members of staff and colleagues gave useful advice and suggestions regarding some questions or translation to Arabic. The initial translation was made and checked by the researcher. It was a great advantage that a group of Saudi women at Durham was available to provide some commentary and offer comparisons on both versions. Their comments and modifications were very helpful in finalising the questionnaire.

Upon arrival in Saudi Arabia, the translation was checked by qualified bilingual staff at Mohammad bin Saud University, who reviewed both instruments. Their evaluation of the translation, grammar, organisation and design of the questionnaires was helpful. After assembling the data through returned questionnaires, it was decided then that the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) could be used for statistical tests which would establish relationship between the variable. Data collected through interview analysed by textual and interpretative methods, the latter was useful in interpreting the results of the statistical analysis for giving further meaning to the results.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Descriptive Empirical Findings on Women's Participation In the Labour Market: Perception Analysis**

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

The last section attempted to present the research methodological framework of this study. To answer the research question, the study employed questionnaires and interviews, which have been analysed statistically as well as textually. The statistical analysis has been divided into three chapters: This chapter presents the descriptive analysis, while the following chapter focuses on appropriate procedures applied to test the related research question. The third empirical chapter presents the analysis of the interviews.

The aim of this chapter, thus, is to present and discuss the overall responses of the questionnaire survey. It also focuses on the characteristics of the two types of respondents; employed and unemployed women. Finally, this chapter also presents a descriptive statistical analysis (frequencies and percentages) of the two samples that have been discussed in detail in the last section. It should be noted that this chapter concentrates on the questionnaire responses from 300 employed and 261 unemployed Saudi women, which constituted the sample of this study.

The questionnaire used in this study attempts to reveal information that could help to understand the current situation of women's employment in the Saudi labour market. It also aimed at collecting information in investigating the most important factors affecting the employment of qualified Saudi women in the labour market. A comparative analysis between employed women and unemployed women will be addressed to explore the common and different points of view between both samples regarding their different

experience of women's employment in the Saudi labour market.

In chapters 3 and 4, a brief description of the population structure in Saudi Arabia, the education system, the economic development, women's legislation and women's work in Islam as factors that influenced women's share in the labour market were presented. This chapter, thus, aims to provide an overview of the women's labour-market participation, this time, by providing evidence through primary data. The central focus is on employment and unemployment according to different demographic and socio-economic characteristics. The following sections present the analysis of the data concerning issues related to women's employment in the Saudi labour market through the responses of sample Saudi women.

Since this chapter is mainly related to descriptive analysis, it might be useful to present what the descriptive data analysis is. Data description is typically the first step in any data analysis project. Diamantopoulos and Schlegelmilch (2000) pointed out that in addition to being an important, self-standing activity when a descriptive focus characterizes the analysis' objectives, descriptive analysis provides a very useful initial examination of the data even when the ultimate concern of the investigator is inferential in nature (i.e. involving estimation and/or hypothesis-testing). Specifically, the purpose of descriptive analysis is to (Diamantopoulos and Schlegelmilch, 2000:73):

- a) Provide preliminary insights as to the nature of the responses obtained, as reflected in the distribution of values for each variable of interest;
- b) Help detect errors in the coding process;
- c) Provide a means for presenting the data in a digestible manner, through the use of tables and graphs;
- d) Provide summary measures of 'typical' or 'average' responses as well as the extent of variation in responses for a given variable;
- e) Provide an early opportunity for checking whether the distributional assumptions of subsequent statistical tests are likely to be satisfied.

The analysis and discussion in this chapter are categorised into a different number of subsections related to the issues about participants various characteristics. Findings related to the following particular characteristics in this chapter will be presented:

- Demographic Characteristics
- Family Background Characteristics
- Education and Training Characteristics
- Religious Knowledge and Attitude Characteristics
- Women between Paid and Unpaid Work Characteristics
- Job Environment Characteristics
- Unemployed Category Characteristics

## **6.2 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS**

This section covers the analysis of the demographic characteristics of the whole sample in terms of participant women's marital status, age, women and their children and children under school age.

### **6.2.1 Marital Status**

Regarding the marital status of the employed women participants, as can be seen from table 6.1, the majority of the working women in the sample, 64%, were married, which reflects the Saudi social and cultural system that has a tendency towards early marriages, while 27.7% of them were single, and only 8.3% were divorced or widowed. The percentages for married and single were almost similar for unemployed women in the sample: 47.5% - 47.9%, and only 4.6% were divorced or widowed.

The result of the chi-square test shows that there is a significant difference between both groups. The reason behind the difference could be due to the fact that some

women refuse to marry until they finish their university degree, hence the higher proportion of women employees holding a higher education degree (64.6%), compared with the number of unemployed women holding a higher education degree (72.8%). This result was expected, since the majority of employed respondents are married and most men prefer employed women for marriage in Saudi Arabia.

Table 6.1 Respondents' Marital Status

Marital Status		Employed		Unemployed	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1.	Married	192	64.0	124	47.5
2.	Single	83	27.7	125	47.9
3.	Divorced or Widowed	25	8.3	12	4.6
Total		300	100	261	100

Chi-square = .000

6.2.2 Women's Age

According to the eighth development plan, which was released in 2005, the key characteristic of Saudi employed females is their young age, i.e age groups between 25-29 and 30-34 years old. These age groups constitute 54% of the total number of working females, and it can be seen in Table 6.2 that the majority of the sample, 44.3%, in employment are in the age group less than 30; which is followed by the age range of 31 to 40 with 41.0 %, and 14.7 % who were more than 41 years of age.

Official statistics recorded in the Labour Force Bulletins indicate that the unemployment rate stood at 9.7% of the total national labour force in 2002. A detailed analysis by age category shows that the rate of unemployment is higher than the national average among those who are less than 24 years of age, while the percentage of unemployment is much lower among those who are over 24 years of age (MEP 2005). When looking at the unemployed women in the sample, this is in reverse, as 75.5 % were less than 30 years old.

Table 6.2 Breakdown of Respondents' Age

Age		Employed		Unemployed	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1.	Less than 30 years	133	44.3	197	75.5
2.	31 to 40 years	123	41.0	43	16.5
3.	41 years and over	44	14.7	21	8.0
Total		300	100	143	100

6.2.3 Women and Children

Table 6.3 depicts that the majority of the respondents have no children in both the employed (35.3 %) and unemployed (61.3 %) sample. 14 % of employed women have one child, while 7.7% do in the unemployed category. However, 11.7 % of employed women in the sample have two children, while 11.1% of unemployed women have two children. Nevertheless, there are more of the sample women (39.0%) in employment than the unemployed (19.0%) with three or more children.

The decline in the number of children in each family is an indication of the changing typical structure of the modern family in the Arab world. Most women do not favour having many children due to specific reasons:

1. Raising children can become costly, thus straining financial circumstances;
2. The spread of family planning programs, in order to control the rapid population growth in most of the Arab world;
3. The Arab world is passing through an intensive urbanization process, which directly affects the birth rate, and thus influences, the structure of the family (Al-Nuaimi 2002).

Table 6.3 Family Structure: Children

Women and children		Employed		Unemployed	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1.	No children	106	35.3	160	61.3
2.	One child	42	14.0	20	7.7
3.	Two children	35	11.7	29	11.1
4	Three or more	117	39.0	52	19.0
Total		300	100	261	100

6.2.4 Children under School Age

The percentage of unemployed women with no child under school age is 72.4% in comparison to employed women with 56.7% having no children under school age. Employed women with one child constitute the 25.3% of the employed sample and in the same category the percentage of unemployed women is 13.0%. Women with two and more children are very similar in both the categories: 14.6% and 18.0% respectively.

Table 6.4 Distribution of Respondents with Children Under School Age

Children under school age		Employed		Unemployed	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1.	None	170	56.7	189	72.4
2.	One	76	25.3	34	13.0
3.	Two	42	14.0	31	11.9
4.	Three or more	12	4.0	7	2.7
Total		300	100	261	100

6.3 FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS

This section analyses the family characteristics in terms of accommodation status, employment of family servants, education of mother and father, jobs of father and mother, monthly income and husband's personal opinion regarding agreement to his wife having a job. .

6.3.1 Accommodation Status

The majority of the respondents among the Saudi unemployed females, 68.6%, own their own property in comparison to 66.3% of females who are employed (Table 6.5). In the rental accommodation category, 30.0% of employed and 27.6% of the unemployed respondents live in rental accommodation. Moreover, less percentage of women from both samples receive accommodation from the government (3.7% and 3.8% employed and unemployed samples respectively).



Table 6.5 Respondents' Accommodation Status

House		Employed		Unemployed	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	Owner	199	66.3	179	68.6
2	Rental	90	30.0	72	27.6
3	State accommodation	11	3.7	10	3.8
Total		300	100	261	100

6.3.2 Family Servants

In Saudi Arabia, before Saudi women became involved in working outside the home, foreign female servants or foreign male drivers were not normally employed. However, when Saudi women started working outside the home the importation of female servants (to look after the children while mother works) and male drivers became necessary for most families as an alternative care provider due to the shortage of childcare centres and lack of public transport.

These workers are usually imported from India, Sri Lanka and Indonesia, as they provide cheap labour (350-1,000 SR monthly). The majority of households at present have a female servant, and this is one of the problems that the Saudi family is facing today with their children, as some servants are non-Muslim and hence differences in cultures and religions could create problems.

The practice of hiring maids can recover the problem for some women, but without a maid or nanny a woman returning from maternity leave faces enormous challenges It should be noted that Saudi Arabia today is one of the largest countries to employ foreign workers. The number of domestic workers employed in Saudi Arabia, including drivers and maids is nearly 1.2 million, according to the estimates of the Committee in the Chamber of Commerce Industrial Riyadh (Alwatatn 10/10/2005).

From Table 6.6, both sections (68.7% employed and 53.3 % unemployed) of Saudi female respondents stated that they have a female servant and 5.7 % of the employed and 9.2 % of the unemployed respondents employ drivers. On the other hand, 25.3% of the employed and 37.2% of the unemployed Saudi female respondents stated that they do not have female servants or drivers. Lastly, 0.3 % of the employed and 0.4% of the unemployed have both female servants and drivers.

**Table 6.6 Distribution of Respondents According to Having Family Servants**

Family's servants		Employed		Unemployed	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1.	None	76	25.3	97	37.2
2.	Female servant	206	68.7	139	53.3
3.	Personal driver	17	5.7	24	9.2
4.	Both	1	0.3	1	0.4
Total		300	100	261	100

**6.3.3 Education Level of Parents**

The findings presented in Table 6.7 show that the fathers of 77 (25.7%) of the total employed respondents (300) were illiterate, 34.7% had elementary certificates, 19.0% had secondary certificates, and 20.7% had a university degree or above. While the unemployed respondents show that the fathers of 56 (21.5%) of the total unemployed respondents (261) were illiterate, 29.1% had elementary certificates, 24.1% had secondary certificates, and 25.3% had a university degree or above.

**Table 6.7 Education Level of Fathers of the Respondents**

Father's education		Employed		Unemployed	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1.	Illiterate	77	25.7	56	21.5
2.	Elementary	104	34.7	76	29.1
3.	Secondary	57	19.0	63	24.1
4.	Higher education	62	20.7	66	25.3
Total		300	100	261	100

The findings presented in Table 6.8 show that 48.3% of respondents' mothers are

illiterate out of the total employed respondents (300), 32.3% had elementary certificates, 11.0% had secondary certificates, and 8.3% had a university degree or above, while the unemployed respondents show that the mother of 96 (36.8%) of the total unemployed respondents (261) were illiterate, 33.7% had elementary certificates, 20.7% had secondary certificates, and 8.8% had a university degree or above.

**Table 6.8 Education Level of Mothers of the Respondents**

Mother's education		Employed		Unemployed	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	Illiterate	145	48.3	96	36.8
2	Elementary	97	32.3	88	33.7
3	Secondary	33	11.0	54	20.7
4	Higher education	25	8.3	23	8.8
Total		300	100	261	100

**6.3.4 Job Status of Parents**

As is clear from table 6.9, the majority of fathers of both employed and unemployed women respondents have got jobs. The percentage of those who are retired is 34% and 28% for the respective groups, while 12.3% of the fathers of the employed and 11% of unemployed are unemployed or disabled.

**Table 6.9 Job Status of Fathers of the Respondents**

Father's job		Employed		Unemployed	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	Working in public sector	82	27.3	79	30.3
2	Working in private sector	20	6.7	31	11.9
3	Self employed	59	19.7	49	18.8
4	Retired	102	34.0	73	28.0
5	Unemployed or disabled	37	12.3	29	11.1
Total		300	100	261	100

Regarding the mother's job status, the situation is utterly different from the father's. The number of employed mothers consists of only one fifth of the number of employed

fathers. This means that the majority of the mothers are unemployed.

Table 6.10 Job Status of Mothers of the Respondents

Mother's job		Employed		Unemployed	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	Working in public sector	40	13.3	28	10.7
2	Working in private sector	12	4.0	6	2.3
3	Retired	10	3.3	19	7.3
4	Unemployed or disabled	104	34.7	91	34.9
5	Unpaid voluntary work	134	44.7	117	44.8
Total		300	100	261	100

6.3.5 Monthly Income of the Respondents' Family

Generally speaking, the percentage of the family's income of the employed participants is higher than that of the unemployed.

Table 65.11 Breakdown of the Respondents' Family Monthly Income

Family monthly income		Employed		Unemployed	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1.	Less than 3000 SR	39	13.0	30	11.5
2.	3000 to less than 5000	50	16.7	62	23.8
3.	5000 to less than 10000	91	30.3	105	40.2
4.	10000 and more	120	40.0	64	24.5
Total		300	100	261	100

6.3.6 Husband's Agreement to Having a Job

The husbands' agreement to their wives carrying out a job positively influences women's employment, since it is also a legal requirement in Saudi Arabia. This imposes a social impact on a woman's decision to get a job. This is because in Saudi society women are not obliged to provide the family with money, but they are expected to take full responsibility for looking after the children and home.

In the present economic situation of Saudi Arabia, however, a single income is no longer sufficient to run the family, and therefore a wife's wage has become essential for most families. Consequently, in this newly acquired role, the working wife faces challenges differing from those of house wives.

Due to the need for an additional income, husbands of employed and unemployed women strongly agree that their wives should work to support the family, which can be seen in table 6.12. However, support from husbands of employed respondents is greater than from the husbands of unemployed women participants.

**Table 6.12 Breakdown of Opinions Regarding the Need for Husband’s Agreement to Having a Job**

		Employed		Unemployed	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	Strongly agree	120	62.5	55	44.4
2	Agree	66	34.4	55	44.4
3	Disagree	2	1.0	7	5.6
4	Do not know	4	2.1	7	5.6
Total		192	100	124	100

**6.4 EDUCATION AND TRAINING CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS**

This section analyses the education and training background of the respondents in terms of qualification, subject and training. Education is a form of investment, which requires a good education system and training aims to maximize the productivity.

The educational system in Saudi Arabia can be characterized as heavily biased towards the arts and literature, as can be seen in the following sections, the majority of the respondents choose education over science.

**6.4.1 Level of Education and Subject**

This study in its attempt to ascertain the economic participation of women in the economy, asked the respondents to identify their level of education, as women's qualifications are very important in the study of women’s employment and development. Table 6.13 presents the responses as follows:

As can be seen from table 6.13, there is not much difference between the employed and unemployed women in terms of educational qualifications. That is to say, the

unemployed have also achieved a certain level of education in some cases better than those who are employed in certain educational levels.

**Table 6.13 Breakdown of Educational Qualifications of Respondents**

Women's qualification		Employed		Unemployed	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1.	Higher education	10	3.3	10	3.8
2.	Bachelor	184	61.3	180	69.0
3.	Diploma	26	8.7	22	8.4
3	Secondary certificate	80	26.7	49	18.8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>100</b>

Regarding the qualified subject, as can be seen in table 6.14, education graduates are more dependent on government employment than science graduates due to the enormous number of government employment opportunities in such fields during the last decade. It is clear that the unemployed women scored high in many study areas. However, the employed women did better in medicine and in variant subjects other than the ones mentioned in the table below. This may indicate that those who have studied medicine tend to benefit from their degree as they are able to practise this profession privately or in the public sector.

In Saudi Arabia female students enrol in the field of education probably because of the lack of other options and most importantly, because it provides the most job opportunities which are also accepted by society.

**Table 6.14 Respondents' Subjects of Study**

Choice of subjects by women		Employed		Unemployed	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	Humanities	32	10.7	33	12.6
2	Science	66	22.0	68	26.1
3	Education	123	41.0	121	64.4
4	Business	4	1.3	8	3.1
5	Medicine	9	3.0	3	1.1
6	Computing and Engineering	23	7.7	23	8.8
7	Others	43	14.3	5	1.9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>100</b>

6.4.2 Training During Last Three Years

As depicted in table 6.15, the percentage of women who did training is more than those who have not. This implies that trained women, have more job opportunities and can contribute to the quality of the production and meet the requirements of the labour market if they are employed.

Table 6.15 Respondents' Training During Last Three Years

		Employed		Unemployed	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	Yes	171	57.0	152	58.2
2	No	129	43.0	109	41.8
	Total	300	100	261	100

6.5 RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE

This section aims to present the findings of the research regarding Islamic knowledge about guidelines in work, adherence to this knowledge, whether the respondent woman is prepared to work in a mixed or non-mixed environment, and reasons as to why.

6.5.1 Islamic Knowledge and its Application

As mentioned in chapter 3, there are some conditions on women's work outside the home according to Islamic *Shariah* pursued in Saudi Arabia. One of such conditions stipulate that she should comply with Islamic guidelines of modesty and virtue. For some, this constitutes a barrier to women's participation in economic life. Therefore,

respondents were asked about such guidelines and whether they apply such guidelines in work outside their home.

**Table 6.16 Degree of Knowledge of Islam Regarding Women’s Participation in Economy**

		Employed		Unemployed	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	Know all of them	162	54.0	114	43.7
2	Know most of them	106	35.3	106	40.6
3	Know few of them	28	9.3	33	12.6
4	Do not know any	4	1.3	8	3.1
Total		300	100	261	100

According to the table 6.16, it seems that most of the respondents know about the Islamic principles regarding work. This reflects the influence of the educational system in the Kingdom, which is dominated by religious understanding. Alsharideh (1999) found that 98 of respondents strongly supported the idea that religious education should be made compulsory by both parents and the state, because they believe that religion should play a major role in education. However, it should be noted that knowing these principles is not enough; as the issue is whether they apply such principles at work. As table 6.17 evidences, more than half of the employed participants and less than half of the unemployed participants follow the religious principles as a whole.

**Table 6.17 Adherence to the Known Religious Principles**

		Employed		Unemployed	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	Follow them all	159	53.0	122	46.7
2	Follow many of them	131	43.7	112	42.9
3	Follow few of them	9	3.0	22	8.4
4	Do not follow any	1	.3	5	1.9
Total		300	100	261	100

**6.5.2 Mixed or Non-Mixed Work Place**

As depicted in table 6.18, 75.0% of the employed women and 78.2% of the unemployed prefer segregation from men at work. This is for religious reasons as table



6.19 shows. This also reflects the influence of the educational system in Saudi Arabia which separates males from females at all levels of education.

Table 6.18 Mixed or Non-Mixed in Work Place

		Employed		Unemployed	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	Mixed	5	1.7	4	1.5
2	Female only	225	75.0	204	78.2
3	Depend on the type of the job	66	22.0	42	16.1
4	Do not mind	4	1.3	11	4.2
Total		300	100	261	100

Most chose working with women only due to religious reasons because they are familiar with all Islamic guidelines.

Table 6.19 Respondents Chose to Work with Females because:

		Employed		Unemployed	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	Family decision	4	1.3	12	4.6
2	Religion	212	70.7	183	70.1
3	Self choice	69	23.0	48	18.4
4	Norms	15	5.0	18	6.9
Total		300	100	261	100

6.6 WOMEN BETWEEN PAID AND UNPAID WORK

This section analyses the women between paid or unpaid work, as the respondents were asked if they could stay at home and take a wage for looking after their children and husband.

Wages for Housework: the movement and the numbers; a woman's work in the home is never done, not often counted, and hardly ever remunerated. Wages for Housework is trying to do something about the value of unpaid labour.

When the sample females were asked to stay at home looking after their children and husbands and be paid for that, as a household service value, the majority disagreed

and they preferred to do this for free as part of their duties. However, and as table 6.20 shows, the idea was not rejected totally and it posed a new question to women. This is evidenced by the results in table 6.21, as the majority of both samples deeply considered this payment, while some of them stated that this would not have any effect on them.

**Table 6.20 Payment to Respondents in Support of Housework**

		Employed		Unemployed	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	Strongly agree	35	11.7	22	8.4
2	Agree	38	12.7	28	10.7
3	Might agree	57	19.0	63	24.1
4	Disagree	99	33.0	67	25.7
5	Strongly disagree	71	23.7	81	31.0
Total		300	100	261	100

**Table 6.21 Effect on Respondents of Payment for Work**

		Employed		Unemployed	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	Accept and stay at my home	62	20.7	42	16.1
2	Think deeply about it	175	58.3	151	57.9
3	No effect	63	21.0	68	26.1
Total		300	100	261	100

As can be seen in table 6.22, it is a good idea for the majority to work from home as they can avoid many difficulties that they face from working outside. Moreover, it is more convenient for them and for the children as well. This shows the purpose of women working is for financial reasons and that once this problem is sorted out, they would prefer to stay with the family all the time.

**Table 6.22 Respondents' Preference to Work from Home**

		Employed		Unemployed	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	Strongly prefer	48	16.0	40	15.3
2	Prefer	103	34.3	81	31.0
3	Not sure	72	24.0	73	28.0
4	Do not prefer	62	20.7	41	15.7
5	Strongly do not prefer	15	5.0	26	10.0
Total		300	100	261	100

It can be noticed from table 6.23, the majority of women, employed or unemployed, do three hours daily of housework. This could be related to the availability of cheap housemaids and the improvement of technology in the household.

**Table 6.23 Respondents' Daily Housework Hours**

		Employed		Unemployed	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	No time	63	21.0	47	18.0
2	3 hours	117	39.0	91	34.9
3	6 hours	82	27.3	83	31.8
4	9 hours	14	4.7	22	8.4
5	More than 9 hours	24	8.0	18	6.9
Total		300	100	261	100

It is noticed from table 6.24 that the majority of women from both samples spend less than 20% out of their income on household services, but in the case of employed women 26% spend about 40%-60% out of their income on household services. In addition it can be noticed that in the present situation, a single income is no longer sufficient to run the family. Women's wages have become essential. This shows that the less they spend on domestic services, the more they are eager to work and the more they spend on these services the less they are eager to work.

**Table 6.24 Percentage of Respondents' Income Spent on Household Services**

		Employed		Unemployed	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	More than 80%	30	10.0	17	6.5
2	60 to 80%	22	7.3	19	7.3
3	40 to 60%	79	26.3	39	14.9
4	20 to 40%	70	23.3	45	17.2
5	Less than 20%	99	33.0	141	54.0
Total		300	100	261	100

As we can see from table 6.25, the husband or father holds the responsibility regarding spending at home as the woman is not responsible for that from an Islamic point of

view. In either sample, the percentages of financially self-sustained respondents are only about 12% and 11% respectively.

Table 6.25 Respondents' Financial Responsibility

		Employed		Unemployed	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	Husband or father	152	50.7	181	69.3
2	Myself	36	12.0	29	11.1
3	Both	112	37.3	51	19.5
Total		300	100	261	100

6.7 JOB ENVIRONMENT

This section analyses the respondents' daily working hours, the type of work they desire, the preferred sector, the effect of distance to work place on employment decision, information source for finding a job and age of retirement that Saudi women prefer.

As demonstrated in table 6.26, 89.3 percent of the employed women work between 6 and 8 hours a day. Those who work more than 8 hours are only 7.7 percent. This shows that the fewer hours a woman works, the more she is eager to work and vice versa. This is clear in the percentage of the unemployed women who are working in occasional jobs.

Table 6.26 Respondents' Daily Working Hours

		Employed		Unemployed	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	Less than 4 hours	9	3.0	125	47.5
2	6 hours	132	44.0	75	28.7
3	8 hours	136	45.3	54	20.7
4	10 hours	17	5.7	6	2.3
5	More than 10 hours	6	2.0	1	0.4
Total		300	100	261	100

The majority of both samples prefer full time jobs, as depicted in table 6.27. However, mothers will prefer a part time job.

Table 6.27 Respondents' Desired Type of Work

		Employed		Unemployed	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	Full time	136	45.3	144	55.2
2	Full 3 days	101	33.7	33	12.6
3	Part time	23	7.7	28	10.7
4	Do not mind	40	13.3	56	21.5
Total		300	100	261	100

Saudi women are mainly employed in medicine and social services. However, in the government sector most women are employed in the education sector with a smaller percentage in the health sector.

They prefer to work in the public sector as it is more secure and more rewarding. The public sector also has more facilities that are suitable for mothers who need day care for their children. The rest of the sectors attract fewer women for work due to the fact that working there is less stable and less paid as well. However, due to the limited vacancies in the public sector women would not mind working in other sectors. These are evidenced by the results in table 6.28.

Table 6.28 Respondents' Preferred Sector

		Employed		Unemployed	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	Public sector	235	78.3	201	77.0
2	Semi-government institution	19	6.3	22	8.4
3	Private sector	10	3.3	18	6.9
4	Self employment	36	12.0	20	7.7
Total		300	100	261	100

One of the major factors, which prevent women from work, is transportation, which still remains a big issue for women in the Kingdom as the distance between home and the work place might be long. Saudi law does not permit women to drive which makes life difficult for working women, since the father or husband has to provide transport

everyday back and forth. For these reasons, the majority of women sampled as table 6.29 indicates, consider distance as a major obstacle to work.

**Table 6.29 Affect on Respondents of Distance to Work Place**

		Employed		Unemployed	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	Strongly affect	121	40.3	103	39.5
2	Affect	64	21.3	65	24.9
3	No affect	62	20.7	35	13.4
4	Depend on the type of job	53	17.7	58	22.2
Total		300	100	261	100

Regarding information sources on employment, as can be seen in table 6.30, the employment office is one of the information providers which is responsible for employment in the private sector: 3.7% of employed and 5.7 percent of unemployed women respondents used this office. The table also shows that personal relationships play a major role in getting a job. The *Wasta* (family connections) usually works out if one has the right connections. This is to be expected in developing countries, where personal relationships are considered to be a significant method for securing employment, and Saudi Arabia is no different. As the table indicates, the role of the media is rather small, and therefore it can be concluded that the media is not doing its job properly in informing the job seeker about the vacancies.

**Table 6.30 Respondents' Job Opportunities Information Source**

		Employed		Unemployed	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	Media	35	11.7	28	10.7
2	Employment office	11	3.7	15	5.7
3	Civil service ministry	44	14.7	37	14.2
4	Personal relationships	131	43.7	93	35.6
5	Education ministry	68	22.7	86	33.0
6	Others	11	3.7	2	.8
Total		300	100	261	100

Without a secured job, women were seen as dependent wives of male workers with little need for income security in their own right. In particular a dignified old age with

pension is an important issue. Women's retirement has received little attention until recently. Most women, like most men, appear to adapt well to retirement with no serious physical or emotional consequences. As can be seen from the table below, more than 43% of employed and unemployed, married and non-married women would prefer to work as long as they are capable. However, the majority of 'married', employed and unemployed women would choose early retirement. This can lead us to conclude that non-married women would rather work till a later stage as they are not as committed as the married women who would prefer to retire earlier to pay more attention to the family.

Table 6.31 Preferred Age of Retirement

		Employed		Unemployed	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	35 to 40	56	18.7	39	14.9
2	41 to 45	55	18.3	50	19.2
3	46 to 50	35	11.7	34	13.0
4	51 to 55	16	5.3	15	5.7
5	56 to 60	7	2.3	10	3.8
6	Work as I am capable	131	43.7	113	43.3
Total		300	100	261	100

6.8 UNEMPLOYED CATEGORY

This section analyses the characteristics of the unemployed respondents, which include the duration of the unemployment period, whether a minimum payment is acceptable, reasons for not having or finding a job until now, any attempt to be self-employed by establishing a small business, if there is enough capital or skill to commence such projects, etc.

Question 44 of the questionnaire asked respondents to state the duration of their unemployment. Table 6.32 displays that around 38% of unemployed women have spent at least one year looking for a job. While 18% of the unemployed respondents

spent three years, about 20% of them spent more than 3 years looking for a job. In other words, about 38% of the respondents looked for a job for about 3 or more years. This is indeed a rather long period for job searching, which indicates the difficulties for women in finding a job.

Table 6.32 Respondents' Duration of Unemployment

Years of looking for a job		Unemployed women	
		Frequency	%
1	1 year	100	38.3
2	2 years	61	23.4
3	3 years	47	18.0
4	More than 3 years	53	20.3
Total		261	100

In regards to minimum monthly payment required by female respondents, Table 6.33 depicts that a large percentage of women would prefer a monthly salary that ranges between 2000 and 3000 S.R. Very few women are prepared to work for less or more than that. This result could be explained by demographic characteristics, education and training levels of the respondents. In other words, unemployed women may be prepared to accept employment offered in a lower payment category (2001-3000), in particular if they are looking for a job for a long time. It is therefore important to note that this finding may help policy makers to define a reasonable minimum wage that could be adopted in the labour market.

Table 6.33 Minimum Monthly Payment that Respondents are Willing to Accept

Minimum monthly payment accepted		Unemployed women	
		Frequency	%
1	1000 or less	6	2.3
2	1001 to 2000	51	19.5
3	2001 to 3000	97	37.2
4	3001 to 4000	58	22.2
5	4001 to 5000	29	11.1
6	More than 5000	20	7.7
Total		261	100

When unemployed women were asked about the reason as to why they don't have a job, the answer of the majority was that either they lacked the necessary or the



required qualifications (about 30.7%) or they gave up looking for one (33.3%). As mentioned above the media is not actively involved in informing job-seekers about new opportunities. Lack of information is opted by about 18% of the unemployed respondents as the reason why they have not found a job. 12.6% of the respondents stated that the main reason is the poor monthly payments for new graduates. Finally, having responsibilities at home was stated as the main reason by 5.7%. This can be related to influence by social and demographic factors as well. It worth's mentioning that the percentages for married and single women were similar for unemployed women in the sample (47.5% - 47.9%).

**Table 6.34 Respondents' Reason for not Having a Job**

Reason for not having job		Unemployed women	
		Frequency	%
1	Inappropriate qualifications	80	30.7
2	Lack of information	46	17.6
3	Home responsibility	15	5.7
4	Low payment for new graduates	33	12.6
5	Tired looking for a job	87	33.3
Total		261	100

An increasing number of women are graduating every year from universities, some of whom are fortunate enough to find jobs, and some less fortunate.

While the job market for women is rather difficult, this study aimed at finding if respondents would prefer to be self-employed by establishing their own business. As table 6.35 indicates, 78.5% of them prefer to establish a small business at home to start a career.

**Table 6.35 Respondents' Preference to Establish a Small Home Project**

Establishment of small home project		Unemployed women	
		Frequency	%
1	Yes	205	78.5
2	No	56	21.5
Total		261	100

The most important need for establishing a project or starting a home based business

is to have the capital. As evidenced by table 6.36, 74.6 percent of the unemployed women indicated that this is the case. The respondents opted for training as the second most importantly needed resource to start a business.

**Table 6.36 Respondents' Needs to Start Project**

Your need to start project		Unemployed women	
		Frequency	%
1	Capital	153	74.6
2	Labour	3	1.5
3	Land	10	4.9
4	Training	39	19.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>100</b>

As indicated in table 6.37, about 49% of unemployed women have got enough income whereas the other 51% do not, which prevents them from commencing a self-employed business.

**Table 6.37 Do Respondents have Enough Income**

You have enough income		Unemployed women	
		Frequency	%
1	Yes	128	49.0
2	No	133	51.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>100</b>

As the male is responsible for the livelihood of their dependant woman in the Saudi culture, it can be noticed that a large percentage of unemployed women rely on their parents and husbands for their income.

**Table 6.38 Where do Respondents Receive Individual Income From**

Receive individual income from following		Unemployed women	
		Frequency	%
1	Father or Mother	112	42.9
2	Husband	94	36.0
3	Pension	8	3.1
4	Inheritance	11	4.2
5	Others	36	13.8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>100</b>

6.9 FACTORS AFFECTING THE CHOICE OF SUBJECT OF STUDY

Saudi girls are encouraged to study home economics related subjects, including dressmaking, domestic sciences and literature, while boys are motivated to study engineering, physics and mathematics. In other words, due to traditional social roles, Saudi women's rights to education are limited to certain majors such as education, health, business, computer science, literature, and Islamic studies. They are not admitted in many majors such as law, aviation, security, journalism and the engineering sector whether petroleum, mining, civil, architectural, electricity, or mechanical. It is also important to note that women's rights to education are dependent on her guardian who can prevent her from pursuing education. This means the problem of a woman's employment does not come from the labour market but is rather related to qualifications, the attitude of parents and the larger regulations imposed by the authorities and traditional roles. It is important to note, however, that women's attitudes towards choosing her subject or her field of study has undergone change as well.

As table 6.39 indicates, the first group of factors that affect choosing a study area include prestigious and good social status gained, personal interest, market needs, nature of work, and choices available according to marks achieved.

In the sample, the greatest factor affecting women choosing a study area was personal interest which has the highest mean (4.04). This is followed by good social status gained and the nature of work after graduation with 3.39 mean for each category. In the same time, market needs has the lowest mean (3.21), which implies that the Saudi woman does not particularly take into account the needs and realities of the labour market in deciding what to do in their future life. This also implies the reasons for unemployment.

Table 6.39 Factors Affecting the Choice of the Subject Studied at University

	Words		Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Don't agree	Strongly disagree	Mean	Rank
1	Good social status	F	91	103	323	21	23	3.39	2
		%	16.2	18.4	57.6	3.7	4.1		
2	Personal interest	F	262	98	173	17	11	4.04	1
		%	46.7	17.5	30.8	3.0	2.0		
3	Market needs	F	76	102	292	44	47	3.21	3
		%	13.5	18.2	52.0	7.8	8.4		
4	Nature of work	F	114	104	262	47	34	3.39	2
		%	20.3	18.5	46.7	8.4	6.1		
5	No other choice	F	125	47	256	42	91	3.13	4
		%	22.3	8.4	45.6	7.5	16.2		

6.10 REASONS BEHIND SEEKING WORK

It is a general belief that economic necessity is a major reason for a job search. Saudi women work for financial as well as psychological reasons. The former will lead her to support her family and build up her society. Thus, a Saudi woman has patriotic feelings in terms of wanting to work in the sense of contributing to the development and progress of her community and country. Other reasons behind seeking work include culture and social needs, to support family, for covering personal financial needs, to contribute to the national economy, leisure purpose, and self-esteem and satisfaction. Due to the nature of the society and tradition, it seems that looking for personal respects and acknowledgement is the most important factor in seeking a job among the respondents.

Table 6.40 Reason Behind Seeking Work for Women

	Reasons		Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Don't agree	Strongly don't agree	Mean	Rank
1	Cultural and social needs	F	115	99	289	31	27	3.43	4
		%	20.5	17.6	51.5	5.5	4.8		
2	Support my family	F	138	90	222	49	62	3.34	5
		%	24.6	16.0	39.6	8.7	11.1		
3	Personal financial needs	F	160	107	237	32	25	3.61	3
		%	28.5	19.1	42.2	5.7	4.5		
4	Support the economy	F	101	105	284	24	47	3.34	5
		%	18.0	18.7	50.6	4.3	8.4		
5	For leisure time	F	210	99	206	26	20	3.81	2
		%	37.4	17.6	36.7	4.6	3.6		
6	Personal respect	F	345	73	126	11	6	4.32	1
		%	61.5	13.0	22.5	2.0	1.1		

Table 6.40 attempts to explore the main reasons behind Saudi women working and/or looking for jobs outside the home with the objective of understanding the main factors behind Saudi women seeking their jobs. It can be seen that both groups of respondents agreed on gaining personal respect as the most important factor out of six choices with the highest mean (4.32). Interestingly, women seeking work for leisure time scored the second highest ranking with the mean value of 3.81.

It can be stated that the reason behind this outcome is due to the fact that a large number of respondents have a sufficient amount of income and therefore their want to work is motivated by non-financial factors, as traditionally spending on their household needs is the responsibility of parents or husbands. Under a law based on *Shariah* principles, a husband must maintain his wife as long as she is married to him.

Financial needs as the reason for seeking a job came third in the list with the mean value of 3.61. This indicates that some women do not have enough personal income and they wish to earn more. Following this, came culture and social needs with a mean value of 3.43. Lastly was supporting the family and contributing to the national economy which scored the same ranking with the mean value of 3.34. Thus, in the case of not having a satisfactory family income, spouses are expected to work to support the family. Otherwise, society considers men to be responsible primarily for economic support of the family (Woodcroft-Lee 1983; Raharjo 1984; Niehof 1994)

## **6.11 THE IMPACT OF WOMEN'S WORK ON MARRIAGE, FERTILITY AND CHILD CARE**

Saudi women have achieved a high level of education and this could be used successfully in workforce participation. As a result, there is lower fertility and fewer children. In addition, by working, women contribute to value added in the economy and hence the economic output or income grows in the economy. With the lower rate of population growth as a result of women's education and economic participation, the per capita income increases as well.

In terms of emancipation, working helps women to liberate themselves, as economic dependence on their husbands may put women in a subordinate position, with less power than their husbands. Women who work for an income are believed to be economically and socially more independent than those who do not, although this contention has been widely debated.

In the present situation of Saudi Arabia, a single income is no longer sufficient to run the family, and therefore wives' wages have become essential. In these newly acquired roles, the working women face challenges differing from those of house wives, because in most cases the working women's multiple role involvement disturbs other people's expectations and their great range of demands. However, under inherited gender norms married working women find themselves torn and tired, and suffer from guilt when working outside, blame that they may be neglecting their children and home.

It can be argued that the Saudi woman is not ready to sacrifice her familial role for the sake of work. Therefore, it seems that the Saudi working woman tries to create a balance between both as much as she can. But if she fails to achieve that balance, she is ready to quit her job and stay at home. Hence,

women's role is negotiated and re-negotiated between tradition, modernity and the imposing conditions of economic realities.

For that reason a woman's work depends on three factors:

- (i) Avoiding working with men;
- (ii) The necessity for working and the suitability of that job for a woman's nature and idiosyncrasy;
- (iii) The ability to create a balance between work and home duties (Almazroa 2003:78).

The consequences of women's work can generally be described as having negative or positive impact, which are summarised in table 6.41.

Table 6.41 Marriage Related Factors

	Consequences of Work in Relation to Marriage		Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Don't agree	Strongly disagree	Mean	Ranks
1	Helps the family financially	F	195	168	162	24	12	3.91	3
		%	34.8	29.9	28.9	4.3	2.1		
2	Makes women more mature	F	182	218	132	22	7	3.97	2
		%	32.4	38.9	23.5	3.9	1.2		
3	To be familiar with colleagues, male and female	F	215	207	116	21	2	4.09	1
		%	38.3	36.9	20.7	3.7	0.4		
4	Late marriage	F	84	108	211	111	47	3.13	5
		%	15.0	19.3	37.6	19.8	8.4		
5	Working women are less caring with family	F	90	152	176	107	36	3.27	4
		%	16.0	27.1	31.4	19.1	6.4		
6	Women's work increases men's unemployment	F	58	58	192	137	116	2.65	6
		%	10.3	10.3	34.2	24.4	20.7		
7	Expose women to social harassment	F	55	57	171	124	154	2.53	7
		%	9.8	10.2	30.5	22.1	27.5		

For the positive factors, supporting the husband financially, contribution of work environment on women's maturity and meeting potential husband can be mentioned. Negative factors are represented by decreasing level of family care, late marriage, contribution of women's work on the possible increase of un-employment among men, and exposure to sexual harassment.

Table 6.41 attempts to investigate the identified negative or positive impacts of Saudi women's working and/or looking for jobs outside home. It can be seen that both groups of respondents, namely employed and unemployed, are agreed on the positive impacts. For instance, the consequence that working woman will be familiar with colleagues, male and female, scored the highest among the seven choices with highest mean value of 4.09. Second highest scored consequences are that work makes woman more mature with 3.79 mean value. The third highest scored consequence with the mean value of 3.91 is contributing to family's finances.

As regards to the negative factors, decreasing the level of family care is chosen to be the highest negative consequence with 3.27 mean value, which is followed by late marriage with the mean value of 3.13. Work will increase the possibility of unemployment among males scored third with 2.65 mean value, and lastly work will make women vulnerable to sexual harassment was opted to be the fourth negative consequence of women working outside home with the mean value of 2.53. As can be seen, the respondent's attitude towards marriage related consequences of working have demonstrated a more positive attitude toward work with much higher mean scores to the factors mentioned.

It is important also to state that child bearing and childcare is an important factor affecting women's work, as women have to withdraw from work to fulfil these roles. The working woman is forced to leave her children at the mercy of a servant or in one of those institutions set up to care for the children of working mothers. In both instances children live in deprivation of motherly affection that nothing can compensate for, and it might well be that this causes many complexities later in their lives.

The absences of women at work have a positive and negative impact represented in the following factors: The positive ones include promoting child independence, leading to a wealthy life for children, and leading to more quality attention for children in time off



work, while the negative ones will consist of less mother care, leading to educational and health problems, leading to negative roles for the house maid (child will depend on house servant).

Table 6.42 Children Related Factors

	Consequences of Work in Relation to Children		Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Don't agree	Strongly dis agree	Mean	Ranks
1	Her absence leads her to give more attention	F	149	159	178	63	12	3.66	3
		%	26.6	28.3	31.7	11.2	2.1		
2	Lead the child to count on himself (be independent)	F	134	216	168	30	13	3.76	2
		%	23.9	38.5	29.9	5.3	2.3		
3	Give a wealthy life to the child	F	175	189	165	26	6	3.89	1
		%	31.2	33.7	29.4	4.6	1.1		
4	Her absence leads her to be careless	F	65	144	191	133	28	3.15	4
		%	11.6	25.7	34.0	23.7	5.0		
5	Leads to education and health problems	F	57	95	186	169	54	2.88	5
		%	10.2	16.9	33.2	30.1	9.6		
6	Leads the child to be dependent on the house maid	F	79	73	158	111	140	2.71	6
		%	14.1	13.0	28.2	19.8	25.0		

Table 6.42 attempts to present the investigation aimed at the attitudes of Saudi women working and/or looking for jobs outside the home related to child bearing and other related issues.

As can be seen, both groups of respondents, employed and unemployed women, agree on the positive impact, seeing that working woman will give a wealthy life to the child, as the most important consequence among six choices with highest mean value of 3.89. This is followed by the factor stating that work leads the child to count on himself (with the mean value of 3.76), the third positive factor is that a mother's absence leads her to give more attention to the children with a mean value of 3.66.

Regarding the negative consequences, the first negative factor is mother's absence leads her to be careless (with the mean value of 3.15), which is followed by factors leading to education and health problems (with 2.88 mean value). Lastly, the last

negative factor is working leads the child to be dependent on the house maid, which scored 2.71 mean value.

It can be stated that woman's working has more positive than negative consequences and the Saudi culture and family ties will increase the positive and reduce the negative factors. In sum, the respondents' attitude toward child care related factors as presented have demonstrated a more positive attitude toward work.

## **6.12 OBSTACLES FACING WOMEN'S WORK**

In a traditional society, working can be a difficult task for women, not due to the physical burden of the work, but due to the process of re-negotiating their own position in society at large. Thus, there are obstacles preventing women from directly engaging in economic activity and work. These include, distance and transportation, holidays and off work time, mixed work environment, and negative view of the society towards working women.

**Table 6.43 Obstacles Facing Women's Work.**

	<b>Obstacles</b>		<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Not sure</b>	<b>Don't agree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Ranks</b>
1	Women find it difficult to move from one city to another	F	275	136	71	56	23	4.04	1
		%	49.0	24.2	12.7	10.0	401		
2	Women require extended holidays for their status and family	F	215	206	73	52	15	3.99	2
		%	38.3	36.7	13.0	9.3	2.7		
3	Society has a negative attitude toward women working outside home.	F	102	92	112	166	89	2.91	4
		%	18.2	16.4	20.0	29.6	15.9		
4	Some available jobs are in mixed environment with men	F	183	146	115	66	51	3.61	3
		%	32.6	26.0	20.5	11.8	9.1		

In Saudi Arabian society, young people, both men and women are expected to live in their parents' house until they are married. Also, the strong family relations lead many people to not accept work away from their homes. As Stookey et al found, 89% of the young Saudis sampled preferred lesser paid jobs near their families to well-paid ones far away (1984:24). In recent years, however, many young men have taken jobs in other cities due to the lack of employment in their cities, and hence a culture of single life for men has been progressing. It is still uncommon though for young single women to do so, for cultural and religious reasons.

It is a fact that women are totally dependent on male relatives, either a husband, a close relative or a hired driver, to drive and take them any where they need to go. Some women travel for miles every day to work, while others would spend half of their salary on transport for work. Therefore, women find it difficult to move from one city to another. Consequently, among the obstacle factors, this came out to be the major

obstacle that limits full female participation in Saudi Arabia, as evidenced from the results in table 6.43, where this factor received the highest mean value of 4.04. The next most preferred obstacle is that women require extended holidays for their status and family, which is opted as the second factor with 3.99 mean.

This problem relates to the woman's bodily structure within the traditional way of life in Saudi Arabia, as physical needs compel her to take time off during her monthly period or during pregnancy or breast-feeding and this is something that reduces production and disrupts work. Due to such factors, Saudi employers are discouraged from employing women. The third obstacle is that some available jobs are in a mixed environment with men, which has scored 3.61 mean value. This is further substantiated by the results presented in table 6.18 and 6.19, as most respondents prefer to work in a female only work environment due to the religious teachings. The fourth obstacle is found to be society's negative attitude towards women working outside the home with 2.91 mean value. This scored the least obstacle, which indicates change in the society towards accepting working women.

As in the Saudi culture man is expected to be the breadwinner of his family and woman is assumed to be mother and housewife; hence her career is home and children. However, with education women start to work in some job and get waged. Also the economic climate in Saudi Arabia requires women to expand the earning of their families. As a result, working Saudi women have to be acknowledged in the society as contributors to the economy and society.

### **6.13 MACRO EXTERNAL POLICY FACTORS ENCOURAGING WOMEN'S WORK**

In order to promote women's participation in all sectors of the economy, further obstacles related to macro external factors or mostly government policies are identified, which are believed to be inhibiting or encouraging women's employment in Saudi

Arabia. These factors are depicted in table 6.43. In order to facilitate women's employment, both the samples were asked about factors that help to correct their position.

Table 6.44 Macro external policy factors encouraging women to work

	Words		Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Don't agree	Strongly disagree	Mean	Ranks
1	Improving and updating labour legislation	F	331	153	64	11	2	4.43	1
		%	59.0	27.3	11.4	2.0	.4		
2	Providing child-care facilities for women	F	263	187	90	18	3	4.23	3
		%	46.9	33.3	16.0	3.2	.5		
3	Providing transportation for women	F	302	147	90	15	7	4.29	2
		%	53.8	26.2	16.0	2.7	1.2		
4	Reducing working hours and offering part-time system	F	294	143	95	17	12	4.23	3
		%	52.4	25.5	16.9	3.0	2.1		
5	Changing the society's attitudes towards women who are working	F	245	159	114	29	14	4.06	4
		%	43.7	28.3	20.3	5.2	2.5		

Table 6.44 identifies factors that facilitate women's employment, which include provision of transport facilities, improving labour legislation, provision of child-care services and facilities, reducing working hours and offering part-time work, promotion programs to change society's attitude and view towards working women.

The most important factor with the highest 4.43 mean value is improving and updating labour legislation. That means the government should update labour legislation to enhance women's status. In addition provision of transportation for women selected as the second important regulative change with mean value of 4.29. This can be achieved with the involvement of both government and private sector. Moreover, both providing child-care facilities for women and reducing working hours and offering a part-time system were selected as the third policy change with same mean value of 4.23.

It should be noted that such changes can also be brought about with the involvement of both sectors. Lastly, changing the society's attitudes towards women who are working was selected as the last change expected from society with the mean value of 4.06.

Although the expected policy oriented changes are ranked as a result, it is a fact that all these issues have a high mean value, which indicates their crucial importance for the participants.

## 6.14 CONCLUSION

This chapter offers a detailed analysis of the questionnaires received from employed and unemployed women in the Saudi labour market as it summaries in table 6.45 below.

**Table 6.45 Summary of the General Characteristics of the Sample**

	Characteristics	Employed	Unemployed
<b>Demographic</b>			
1	Marital Status	Married	Single
2	Women's age	Less than 30 years	Less than 30 years
3	Women and children	Three or more	No children
4	Children under school age	None	None
<b>Family Background</b>			
5	Accommodation status	Owner	Owner
6	Family servants	Female servants	Female servants
7	Father education	Elementary	Elementary
8	Mother education	Illiterate	Illiterate
9	Father's job	Retired	Public sector
10	Mother's Job	Unpaid voluntary work	Unpaid voluntary work
11	Monthly income	10000 and more	5000 to less than 10000
12	Husband agreement	Strongly agree	Agree
<b>Education and Training</b>			
13	Qualifications	Bachelor	Bachelor
14	Subject	Education	Education
15	Training	Yes	Yes
<b>Religious Knowledge and Attitude</b>			
16	Islamic Knowledge	Know	Know
17	Follow this Knowledge	Follow	Follow
18	Mixed or not mixed	Female only	Female only
19	Chose female because	Religion	Religion
<b>Women Between Paid and Unpaid work</b>			
20	Payment for housework	Do not agree	Strongly do not agree
21	Work from home	Prefer	Prefer
22	Daily housework	Three hours	Three hours
23	Spending of your income	Less 20%	Less 20%
24	Financial responsibility	Husband or father	Husband or father
<b>Job Environment</b>			
25	Daily working hours	8 hours	Less than 4 hours
26	Type of work	Full time	Full time
27	Sectoral Preferences	Public sector	Public sector
28	Distance effect	Strongly affects	Strongly affects
29	Information source	Personal relationships	Personal relationships
30	Age of retirement	Work as long as capable	Work as I am capable
<b>Unemployed Category</b>			
31	Years of looking for job		One year
32	Minimum payment		2001 to 3000
33	Reason for not having a job		Inappropriate qualification
34	Establishment of a small project		Yes
35	Need to start		Capital
36	Do you have enough income		No

A fascinating result of the analysis of the women's responses is the agreement in a large number of issues between employed and unemployed women. There is no evidence of unemployed women being unemployed because of different attitudes to employment from qualified women who do work.

Women respondents have given more emphasis to factors relating to education, labour market information, childcare and transportation facilities and flexible employment. However, little emphasis was given to factors relating to society's attitudes and remuneration issues.



## **Chapter 7**

# **FACTORS DETERMINING THE PARTICIPATION OF SAUDI WOMEN IN THE LABOUR FORCE: ANALYTICAL STATISTICS AND FACTOR ANALYSIS**

### **7.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous empirical chapters provided descriptive and discursive analysis regarding issues related to women's participation in the labour market. This chapter aims to take the analysis a step further by providing systematic and analytical analysis in its attempt at further exploring the factors affecting women's participation in the labour force in Saudi Arabia.

The first group of factors impacting women's participation in the labour market include factors influencing the choice of the study subject at university, which is expected to have life-time consequences for women's participation. These factors are personal interest, market needs, nature of work, prestige and good social status gained and choices available according to marks achieved.

The second group factors are related to the reasons behind seeking work for women in Saudi Arabia. These include culture and social needs, supporting family, covering personal financial needs, contributing to the national economy, leisure purpose, and, lastly, self-esteem and satisfaction.

The third group of factors is marriage related factors. This includes positive and negative factors. Positive factors are supporting the husband financially, the impact of work environment on the maturity of women, and meeting potential

husbands. Negative factors are represented by decline in the degree of family care by women, late marriage; possibility of un-employment for men in terms of spillover impact, and exposure to sexual harassment.

The fourth category factors are related to children. The absence of women at home due to work has a positive and negative impact represented in the following factors. The positive ones include leading to child independence, leading to wealthy life for children, and leading to more attention to children during time off work, while the negative factors consist of less mother care, education and health problems, negative role for the house maid (child will depend on house servant).

The last category of factors influencing women's participation in the labour market includes macro external policy factors discouraging or encouraging women work.

In addition to influencing factors, the researcher has chosen the following important obstacles within the analytical study in this chapter: distance and transportation, holidays and time off work, mixed work environment, and negative perception of the society for working women.

Following this, macro external policy factors related to larger environment impacting women to work are analysed and discussed, which include, provision of transport facilities, improving labour legislation, provision of childcare services and facilities, reducing working hours and offering part-time work, promotion programs to change society's attitude and view towards working women.

7.2 FACTORS AFFECTING THE CHOICE OF THE SUBJECT STUDIED AT UNIVERSITY

The choice of subject studied at university has a lasting impact on one’s life in societies like Saudi Arabia where it is not easy to work in a field which is different to one’s degree. Therefore, it is reasonable that it should be analysed as a factor influencing women’s participation in the labour market.

The chi-square goodness-of-fit test <sup>1</sup> has been used to identify the importance of the reasons leading one to choose to study a particular topic which is depicted in Table 7.1. The result of the chi-square goodness-of-fit test indicates that there is reasonable very low likelihood that the differences in respondents’ opinions about the importance of the factors affecting the choice of the subject, for both employed and unemployed samples.

Table 7.1  
Factors affecting the choice of subject studied

Words	Unemployed		Employed	
	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean
Good social status	2	3.49	3	3.30
Personal interest	1	4.00	1	4.07
Market needs	4	3.22	4	3.20
Nature of work	3	3.33	2	3.44
No other choice	5	3.11	5	3.14

Chi-square: .000

<sup>1</sup> The chi-square goodness-of-fit test, also referred to as the chi square test for a single sample, is a non-parametric test employed in a hypothesis testing situation involving a single with nominal and categorical data (Sheskin 1997)

As can be seen in table 7.1 the comparisons between employed and unemployed groups in the factors affecting the choice of degree subjects, both groups are in agreement on 'personal interest' being the most important factor. However, there are differences in the ranking of other factors: while 'social status' is the second choice for the employed sample, it is the third option for the unemployed sample. 'Nature of work' was ranked as the third among the reasons by employed women; it is ranked as the second factor for the unemployed women. However, both the groups are agreed on 'market needs' being the fourth reason.

It should be stated that these results substantiate the results in Chapter 6, where it was found that the top factor affecting women's choice of the subject area was 'personal interest' which has the highest mean of 4.04, which is followed by 'good social status gained' and 'nature of work after graduation' with 3.39 mean value for both the categories. At the same time, market needs has the lowest mean (3.21), which implies that the Saudi woman does not particularly take into account the needs and realities of the labour market in deciding what to do in their future life. This also implies the reasons for unemployment, on the other hand, as a desire to obtain a university degree does not reflect the realities of the market. Therefore, higher education policy has to be reformulated according to the needs of the society to prevent the disequilibrium between the numbers of university female graduates and the opportunities available for them in the public sector market.

In order to further substantiate the analysis, factor analysis was conducted for all the factors ranked above for both groups starting with the unemployed then employed sample.

In an effort to verify which of these factors has the higher degree of perceived importance, this section discusses the results of the factor analysis that was conducted on the five factors affecting (influencing) the choice of the study subject at university, as factor analysis is deemed to be appropriate for this particular analysis.

7.2.1 Factor Analysis with the Unemployed Sample

Table 7.2 presents the results of the KMO test and Bartlett's tests, which support factor analysis.

Table 7.2 KMO and Bartlett's Test results for the 5 items combined (Unemployed)  
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. .596

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	148.937
	df	10
	Sig.	.000

As table 7.2. Demonstrates, the KMO value is .60 (rounded), and Bartlett's test is significant ( $p=.000$ ), therefore it can be concluded that factor analysis is appropriate for this study. Based on this result, factor analysis proceeds with Principal Component Analysis (PCA) and Varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalisation. The eigenvalue should be 1 or greater to be regarded as significant and can be used to determine the factor to extract (Pallant, 2005 : 183).

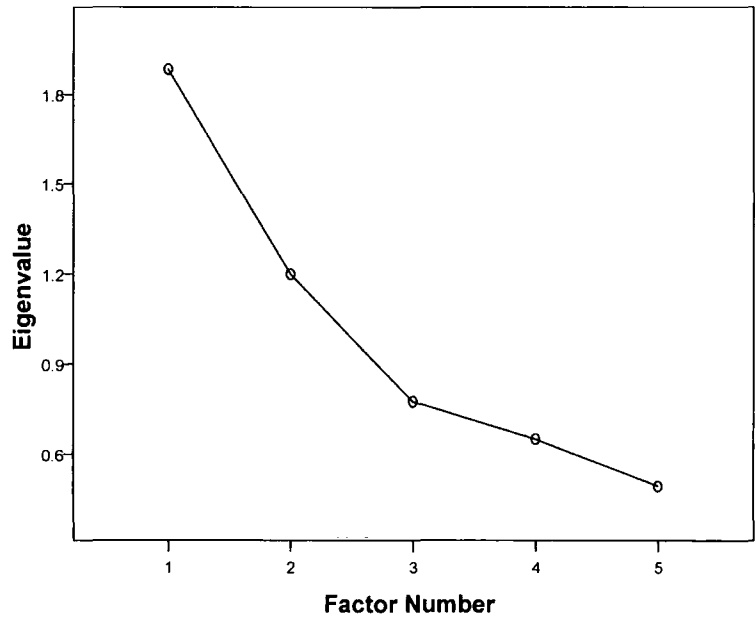
Table 7,3 Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1.883	37.655	37.655	1.571	31.414	31.414
2	1.199	23.977	61.632	1.511	30.218	61.632
3	.775	15.505	77.137			
4	.650	13.008	90.145			
5	.493	9.855	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

As table 7.3 depicts, there are two factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 (1.883 and 1.199). This initial analysis therefore resulted in a two-factor solution. That is, 5 factors can be simply reduced to two factors. Each factor explains a particular amount of variance in the items. In this case, factor 1 explains 37.655% and factor 2 explains 23.977 % of the pooled variance. The total variance explained is, hence, 61.632%. The distribution of the variance explained has also been adjusted after rotation. As a result, Component 1 now explains 31.414% of the variance and Component 2 explains 30.218% . The total variance explained is, hence, 61.632%, which was not changed after rotation, as only the way that it is distributed between the two components was changed.

Figure 7.1 Scree Plot



As in Figure 7.1, the scree plot is a graph of the eigenvalues against all the (components) factor (Pallant, 2005). The above graph depicts that the plot slopes steeply downwards from the first factor to two the second factor before moving

slowly towards the horizontal line in the last section. This explains the declining explanatory power of each factor.

Table 7.4 Rotated Component Matrix (a) on Factors affecting choice of the subject studied at university of unemployed

Variable	Factors	
	1	2
No other choice	-.820	
Personal interest	.709	
Good social status	.595	
Nature of work		.875
Market needs		.781
Eigenvalue	1.571	1.511
% of Variance	31.414	30.218
Cumulative%	31.414	61.632

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. a Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

The rotated solution as presented in table 7.4 reveals the presence of two factors with a number of strong loading. The interpretation of the two factors is based on the loadings of five variables of these factors. A factor loading is a correlation coefficient showing how much weight is assigned to that factor. As Vaus (2002) described, the higher the loading, the more that variable belongs to that factor. The results in table 7.4 indicate that all five factors affecting (influencing) the choice of the study subject at university is considered significant. The two factor solution explains a total of 61.632% of the variance, with factor 1 contributing 31.414% and factor 2 contributing 30.218%. Table 7.4 also depicts the communality of each variable. The higher the correlations among the variables means the more they have in common or the higher their communalities would be.

From table 7.4, all variables that are listed under factor 1 measure components are: no other choice, personal interest and good social status. Therefore, the items grouped under factor 1 can be appropriately described as ‘women’s

personal choice'. On the other hand, the clustering of variables under component 2 being 'nature of work' and 'market needs' portrays an underlying factor which relates to the requirements of qualifications and skills. Accordingly, this component can be named as "mismatch between the offer and the demand". Since factor 1 has approximately same eigenvalue and variance, which implies that both factors represent the same objectives perceived by government and social environment.

7.2.2 Employed Sample

The employed sample was also subjected to factor analysis in searching the factors affecting (influencing) the choice of the subject studied at university.

The result produced in table 7.5 shows a value of 0.6 (rounded) with KMO test, while Bartlett's Test of Sphericity also reached statistical significance (0.000). This indicates that factor analysis is appropriate for this sample.

Table 7.5 KMO and Bartlett's Test results for the 5 items combined (employed)  
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. .597

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	156.166
	Df	10
	Sig.	.000

Based on these favourable results, factor analysis was conducted using principal component analysis (PCA) and varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalisation, the result of which is depicted in table 7.6. As the result shows, the factors can be reduced into only two components.



Table 7.6 Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1.839	36.771	36.771	1.610	32.201	32.201
2	1.195	23.890	60.662	1.423	28.460	60.662
3	.814	16.289	76.951			
4	.620	12.393	89.344			
5	.533	10.656	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

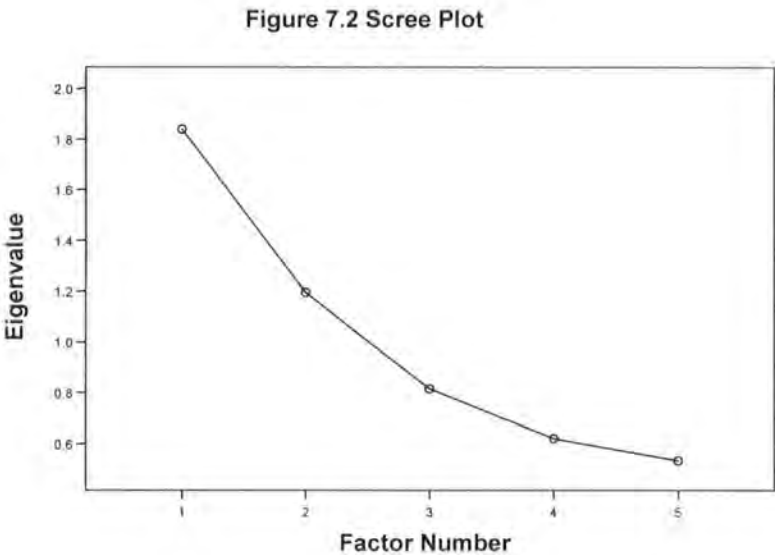


Figure 7.2 also depicts that the plot slopes steeply downwards from the first factor to two factors before moving slowly towards the horizontal line. Hence, indicating the declining explanatory power of the factors.

Table 7.7 Rotated Component Matrix (a) on Factors affecting the choice of subject studied at university of the employed

Variable	Factors	
	1	2
Nature of work	.814	
Market needs	.805	
No other choice		-.858
Personal interest		.743
Eigenvalue	1.610	1.423
% of Variance	32.201	28.460
Cumulative%	32.201	60.662

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.  
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

The resulting varimax rotated factors are given in table 7.7. The results reveal the presence of two factors with the same items as the unemployed sample. As in the employed sample, two, variables that are listed under factor 1 the clustering includes 'nature of work' and 'market needs' portrays an underlying factor which relates to the 'requirements of qualifications and skills', which can be named as 'mismatch between the offer and the demand'. On the other hand, factor 2 measure, which can be named as 'women's personal choice' includes 'no other choice' and 'personal interest'. However, 'good social status' variable is not in any factor, which means this variable has no significance for the employed sample.

Since factor 1 has an approximately higher eigenvalue and variance, it implies that factor 1 necessarily represents more important options perceived by government and social environment.

7.3 REASON BEHIND SEEKING WORK FOR WOMEN IN SAUDI ARABIA

This research attempted to find reasons motivating women to work in Saudi Arabia, which includes culture and social needs, supporting family, covering personal financial needs, contributing to the national economy, for leisure purposes, and self-esteem and satisfaction.

Table 7.8  
Reason behind seeking work for women for unemployed and employed

Reasons	Unemployed		Employed	
	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean
Culture and social needs	4	3.45	4	3.42
Support my family	6	3.36	5	3.33
Personal financial needs	3	3.55	3	3.67
Support the economy	5	3.37	6	3.31
For leisure time	2	3.85	2	3.77
Personal respect	1	4.27	1	4.36

Chi-square: .000

Table 7.8 depicts the ranking of the reason as perceived by the Saudi unemployed and employed women. The result of the chi-square goodness-of-fit test indicates that there is reasonable very low likelihood that the differences in respondents' opinions about the importance of the reasons behind seeking work for women for both employed and unemployed in the sample data can be attributed to chance.

As in chapter 6, both groups of respondents are agreed on 'gaining personal respect' as the most important factor out of six choices with highest mean value (4.32). Interestingly, women seeking work for 'leisure time' scored the second highest ranking with the mean value of 3.81, while 'financial needs' as the reason for seeking a job came third in the list with the mean value of 3.61. This is followed by 'culture and social needs' with the mean value of 3.43. Lastly 'supporting the family' and 'contributing to the national economy' had the same ranking with the mean value of 3.34.

The results in table 7.8 show agreement in the reason behind seeking work between unemployed and employed samples for certain factors such as 'leisure purpose', and 'self-esteem and satisfaction', 'personal financial needs', and 'culture and social needs'. However, 'supporting family' and 'supporting the economy' gets the lowest means for the unemployed sample, while 'supporting economy' as a reason comes before 'supporting family' in the employed sample.

**7.3.1 Factor Analysis for Unemployed Sample**

It can be seen from table 7.9 that the KMO value is .60 (rounded), and Bartlett's test is significant ( $p=.000$ ), both of which implies therefore that factor analysis is appropriate.

Table 7.9 KMO and Bartlett's Test results for the 6 items combined (unemployed)  
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. .579

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	247.641
	Df	15
	Sig.	.000

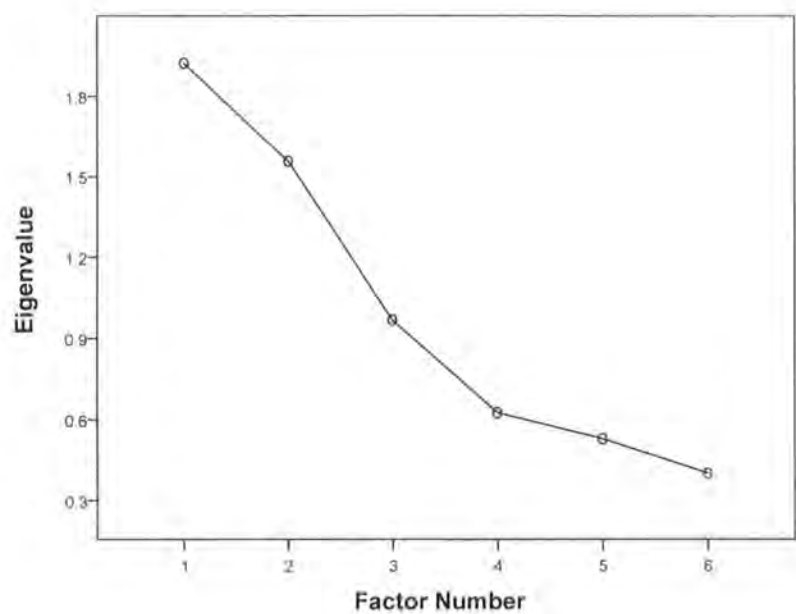
Table 7.10 depicts the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) and Varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalisation as part of factor analysis.

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1.922	32.037	32.037	1.914	31.897	31.897
2	1.558	25.968	58.005	1.566	26.108	58.005
3	.968	16.136	74.141			
4	.624	10.400	84.541			
5	.528	8.795	93.336			
6	.400	6.664	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

As table 7.10 indicates there are two factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 (1.914 and 1.558). This initial analysis therefore resulted in a two-factor solution. That is, 6 factors can be simply reduced to two factors. Each factor explains a particular amount of variance in the items. In this case, factor 1 explains 32.037% and factor 2 explains 25.968% of the pooled variance. The total variance explained, as a result, is 58.005%. The distribution of the variance explained has also been adjusted after rotation. Component 1 now explains 31.897% and Component 2 explains 26.108%. The total variance explained by the two components, hence, is 58.005%, which remains the same after the rotation.

Figure 7.3 Scree Plot



The scree plot in Figure 7.3 depicts that the plot slopes steeply downwards from one factor to two factors before moving slowly towards the horizontal line.

Table 7.11 Rotated Component Matrix(a) Reason behind seeking work for unemployed women

Variable	Factors	
	1	2
Culture and social needs	.689	
Support my family	.790	
Personal financial needs	.752	
Support the economy		
For leisure time		.804
Personal respect		.826
Eigenvalue	1.922	1.558
% of Variance	32.037	25.968
Cumulative%	32.037	58.005

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.  
a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

The results in table 7.11 demonstrate that five factors behind seeking work for unemployed women are considered significant. The two factor solution explains a total of 58.005% of the variance, with factor 1 contributing 32.037% and factor 2 contributing 25.968%. The higher the correlations among the variables, the more they have in common or the higher their communalities would be.

From the table, all variables that are listed under factor 1 measure include the following factors: culture and social needs, supporting family and personal financial needs. Therefore, the items grouped under component 1 can be appropriately described as 'socio-economy needs'. On the other hand, the clustering of variables 'for leisure time' and 'personal respect' together portrays a factor which relates to the personal principles. Accordingly, this component is assigned the title of 'personal principles'. 'Supporting the economy' variable is not in any component, which means this variable is not significant at all, which may be interpreted as being unimportant for the unemployed sample. It should lastly be stated that since factor 1 has an approximately higher eigenvalue and variance, factor 1 represents more important objectives perceived by the government and social environment

7.3.1 Employed Sample

The exercise presented above was conducted for the employed sample group as well. Initial KMO and Bartlett's test indicates that factor analysis is meaningful for this sample group as well, which is depicted in table 7.12, as the estimations are significant.

Table 7.12 KMO and Bartlett's Test results for the 6 items combined (employed)  
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. .561

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	235.846
	Df	15
	Sig.	.000

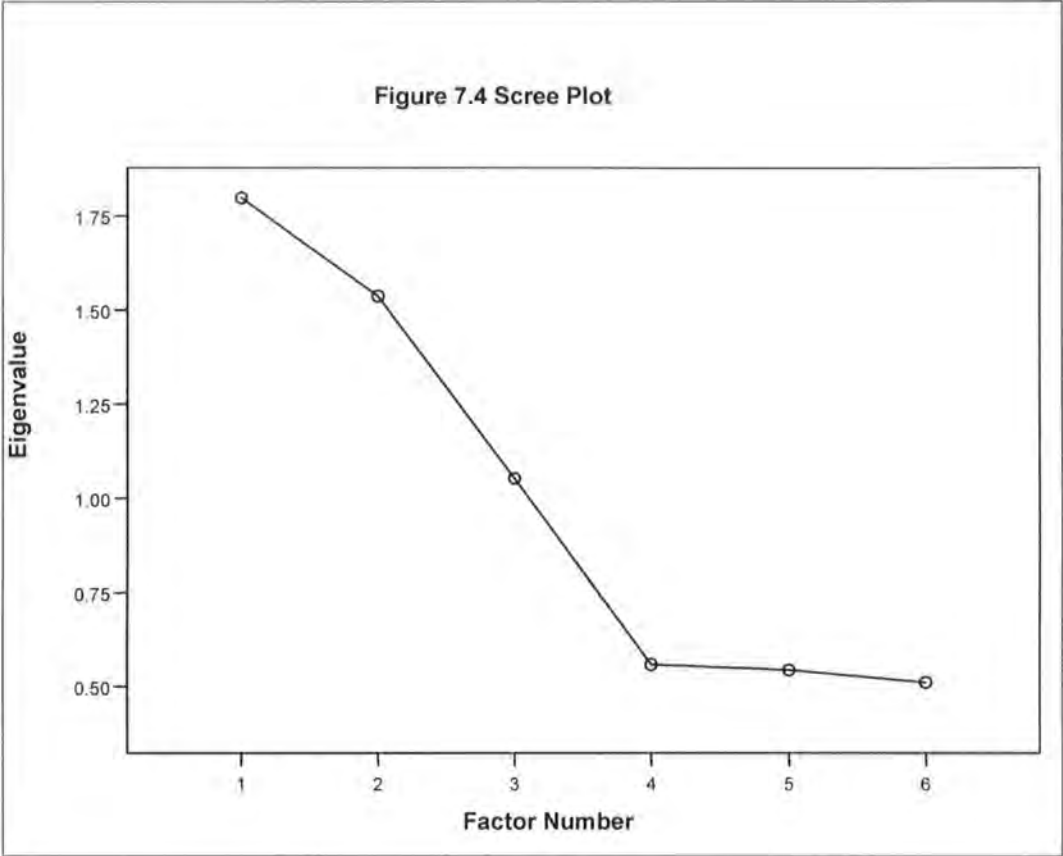
Table 7.13 depicts the principal component analysis (PCA) and varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalisation of the factor analysis.

Table 7.13 Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1.798	29.960	29.960	1.484	24.732	24.732
2	1.537	25.619	55.579	1.478	24.629	49.361
3	1.052	17.538	73.117	1.425	23.756	73.117
4	.559	9.309	82.425			
5	.544	9.065	91.490			
6	.511	8.510	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 7.13 shows that among six factors, there are only three factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 (1.798, 1.537 and 1.052). This initial analysis therefore resulted in a three-factor solution. Each factor explains a particular amount of variance in the items. In this case, factor 1 explains 29.960%, factor 2 explains 25.619% and factor 3 explains 17.538% of the pooled variance. The total variance explained is, thus, 73.117%. The distribution of the variance explained has also been adjusted after rotation, and as a result component 1 now explains 24.732%, component 2 explains 24.629% and component 3 explains 23.756% of the total variation. The total variance explained remains the same after rotation, but the distribution for each factor changed.



The scree plot (figure 7.4) reveals a clear break after the third factor moving slowly towards the horizontal line, which indicates the significance of the first three factors.

Table 7.14 Rotated Component Matrix(a) Reason behind seeking work for employed women

Variable	Factors		
	1	2	3
Personal financial needs	.860		
Support my family	.821		
Personal respect		.793	
For leisure time		.869	
Support the economy			.774
Culture and social needs			.873
Eigenvalue	1.798	1.537	1.052
% of Variance	29.960	25.619	17.538
Cumulative%	29.960	55.579	73.117

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.  
a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

The results in table 7.14 reveal the presence of three factors with six items for reasons for seeking work for employed women. The three factors solution



explained a total of 73.117% of the variance, with factor 1 contributing 29.960%, factor 2 contributing 25.619% and factor 3 contributing 17.538%.

As can be seen from table 7.14, all variables that are listed under factor 1 measure, include two reasons: 'personal financial needs' and 'supporting family'. Therefore, the items grouped under factor 1 can be appropriately described as economic needs. On the other hand, factor 2 component includes reasons as: 'personal respect' and 'for leisure', which can be classified as 'personal values'. Lastly, clustering of variables as the third component includes 'culture and social needs' and 'supporting the economy', which as a cluster can be named as 'socio-economy' factors.

Since factor 1 has an approximately higher eigenvalue and variance followed by factor 2 and lastly factor 3, which implies that factor 1 necessarily represents more important reasons for seeking a job in the case of employed women. This includes 'personal financial needs' and 'supporting the family'.

#### **7.4 ANALYSING THE MARRIAGE RELATED FACTORS**

Marriage is possibly the most important factor impacting women's participation in the labour market. Therefore, this section analyses the marriage related factors on women's employment and unemployment in Saudi Arabia. This will include positive and negative factors. For the positive factors 'supporting the husband financially', 'work environment will increase women's maturity', and 'meeting potential husband' can be included as factors. Negative factors are represented by factors such as 'deterioration in the degree of family care', 'late marriage as a result of working life', 'increasing possibility of unemployment for men', and 'exposure to sexual harassment'.

Table 7.15  
Marriage related factors for unemployed and employed

Consequences of Work in Relation to Marriage	Unemployed		Employed	
	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean
Financially helps the family	3	3.83	3	3.98
Makes women more mature	2	3.84	2	4.09
To be familiar with colleagues, male and female	1	3.98	1	4.19
Late marriage	5	3.11	5	3.14
Working women are less caring with family	4	3.29	4	3.26
Women's work increase men's unemployment	6	2.66	6	2.65
Expose women to social harassment	6	2.66	7	2.42

Chi-square: .000

The result of the chi-square goodness-of-fit test indicates that there is a systematic explanation for marriage related factors.

As table 7.15 shows there is agreement between both samples on all consequences of work in relation to marriage, except the last consequence that 'work will make women vulnerable to sexual harassment' is opted to be the fourth negative consequence of women working outside home with the mean value of 2.53 for the whole sample, and employed group scored it with the same ranking level and with the mean value of 2.42.

7.4.1 Factor Analysis for Unemployed Sample

As can be seen from table 7.16 the KMO value is .648 and Bartlett's test is significant ( $p=.000$ ), which rationalises the factor analysis as appropriate.

Table 7.16 KMO and Bartlett's Test results for the 7 items combined (unemployed)  
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. .648

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	406.714
	Df	21
	Sig.	.000

Table 7.17 demonstrates the total variance explained with the included factors as a result of the principal component analysis (PCA) and varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalisation.

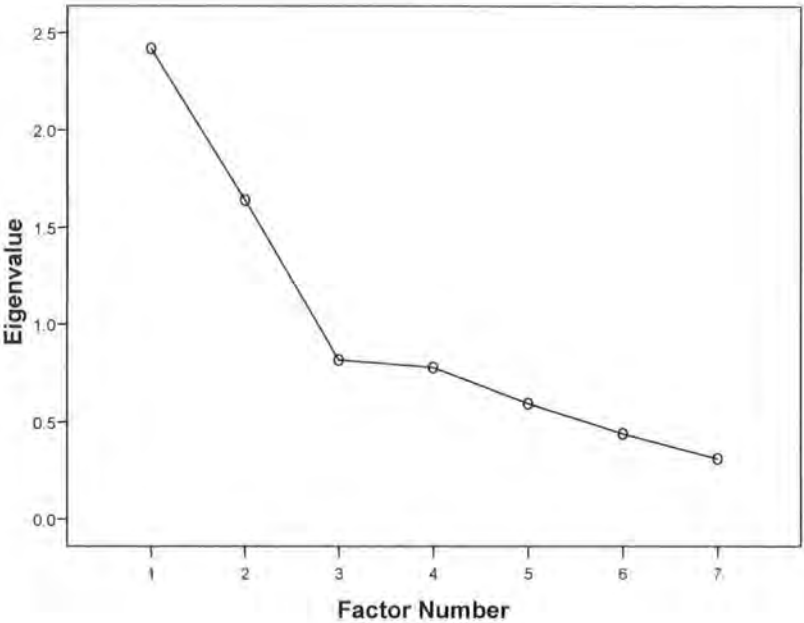
Table 7.17 Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.420	34.578	34.578	2.141	30.584	30.584
2	1.641	23.443	58.021	1.921	27.437	58.021
3	.816	11.658	69.680			
4	.777	11.103	80.782			
5	.593	8.475	89.257			
6	.440	6.281	95.538			
7	.312	4.462	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

As table 7.17 demonstrates, there are two factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 (2.420 and 1.641). This initial analysis therefore resulted in a two-factor solution. That is, 7 factors can be simply reduced to two factors. Each factor explains a particular amount of variance in the items. In this case, factor 1 explains 34.578% and factor 2 explains 23.443% of the total variance, which is equal to 58.021%. The distribution of the variance explained has also been adjusted after rotation. Factor 1 now explains 30.584% of the variance and factor 2 explains 27.437%. The total variance explained does not change after rotation.

Figure 7.5 Scree Plot



The scree plot in Figure 7.5 depicts that the plot slopes steeply downwards from one factor to two factors before moving slowly towards the horizontal line after the second factor.

Table 7.18 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. A Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

Variable	Factors	
	1	2
Women's work increase men's unemployment	.793	
Working women are less caring with family	.752	
Expose women to social harassment	.703	
Late marriage	.662	
Makes women more mature		.890
To be familiar with colleagues, male and female		.787
Helps the family financially		.651
Eigenvalue	2.141	1.921
% of Variance	30.584	27.437
Cumulative%	30.584	58.021

The results in table 7.18 reveal all the factors can be clustered under two component headings. The two factors solution explains a total of 58.021% of the variance, with factor 1 contributing 30.584% and factor 2 contributing 27.437%.

All variables that are listed under factor 1 measure or components, which can be named as negative factors, include the following reasons: 'women's work increases men's unemployment', 'working women are less caring with family', 'exposing women to social harassment' and 'late marriage'. On the other hand, factor 2 measures or components, which can be named as positive factors, include the following objectives: 'makes women more mature', 'to be familiar with colleagues-male and female' and 'helps the family financially'.

Since component 1 factors have approximately the highest eigenvalue and variance, it is therefore reasonable to conclude that component group 1 represents more important objectives as expressed by the participants.

7.4.2 Factor Analysis for the Employed Sample

Since, as can be seen in table 7.19, KMO and Bartlett's estimates are significant, it is concluded that factor analysis is appropriate for the purpose (KMO value is .700, and Bartlett's test is significant (p=.000)).

Table 7.19 KMO and Bartlett's Test results for the 7 items combined (employed)  
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. 700

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	515.572
	Df	21
	Sig.	.000

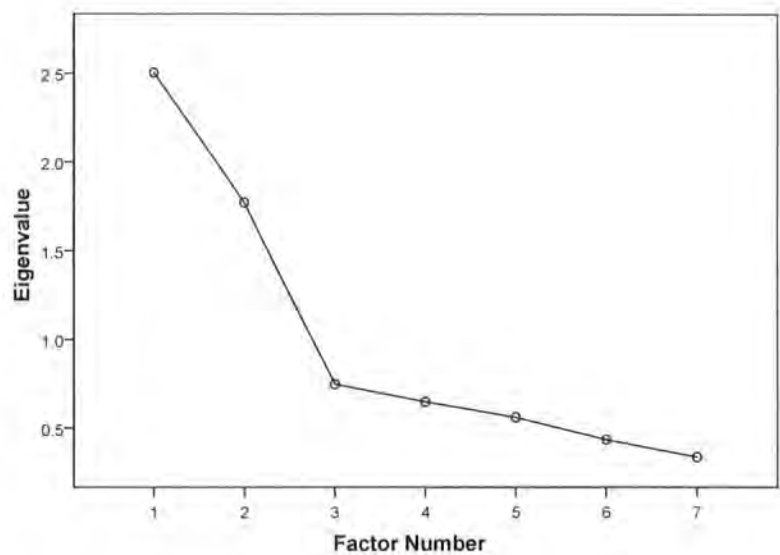
Based on these favourable results, the results of conducted factor analysis depicted in table 7.20 with principal component analysis (PCA) and varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalisation.

Table 7.20 Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.504	35.769	35.769	2.371	33.866	33.866
2	1.772	25.319	61.088	1.906	27.222	61.088
3	.747	10.674	71.761			
4	.647	9.236	80.997			
5	.560	8.004	89.001			
6	.434	6.207	95.208			
7	.335	4.792	100.000			

In table 7.20, there are two factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 (2.504 and 1.772). This initial analysis therefore results in a two-factor solution. In other words, 7 factors can be simply reduced to two factors. Factor 1 explains 35.769% and factor 2 explains 25.319% of the pooled variance. The total variance explained is 61.088% through two factors merely. The distribution of the variance explained has also been adjusted after rotation, according to which factor 1 now explains 33.866% of the variance and factor 2 explains 27.222% of the total variation. The total variance explained (61.088%) does not change after the rotation

Figure 7.6 Scree Plot



As can be seen in figure 7.6, the scree plot depicts that the plot slopes steeply downwards from one factor to two factors before moving slowly towards the horizontal line, which indicates the strong explanatory power of the first two factors.

Table 7.21 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. A Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

Variable	Factors	
	1	2
Expose women to social harassment	.826	
Women's work increases men's unemployment	.821	
Late marriage	.709	
Working women are less caring with family	.707	
Makes women more mature		.853
To be familiar with colleagues, male and female		.827
Helps financially the family		.646
Eigenvalue	2.371	1.906
% of Variance	33.866	27.222
Cumulative%	33.866	61.088

The results in table 7.21 reveal the presence of two factor groups or components with seven items of the consequences of women's work. The two factor solution explains a total of 61.088% of the variance, with factor 1 contributing 33.866%

and factor 2 contributing 27.222%. As repeated before, the higher the correlations among the variables, the more they have in common or the higher their communalities would be.

As the table indicates, all variables that are listed under factor 1 or component group include consequences such as 'exposing women to social harassment', 'women's work increases men's unemployment', 'late marriage and working women are less caring with family'. As before, this component group can be appropriately described as 'negative factors'. On the other hand, factor 2 component group includes the following factors: 'makes women more mature', 'to be familiar with colleagues-male and female' and 'helping the family financially', which therefore, can be called 'positive factors'.

Since factor 1 has approximately higher eigenvalue and variance it necessarily represents more important factors as indicating the consequences of women working in relation to marriage. Therefore, both samples agree about the importance of these positive and negative factors, but there are differences in the mean values and ranks between them.

**7.5 CHILDREN RELATED FACTORS**

The absences of women due to work have a positive and negative impact. The positive ones will include leading to child independence, leading to a wealthy life for children, and leading to more attention to children during time off work, while the negative impacts will consist of leading to less mother care, leading to education and health problems, leading to a negative role for the house maid (child will depend on house servant).



Table 7.22  
Children related factors for unemployed and employed

Consequences of Work in Relation to Children	Unemployed		Employed	
	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean
Her absence leads her to give more attention	3	3.63	3	3.68
Lead the child to count on himself (be independent)	2	3.74	2	3.78
Giving a wealthy life to the child	1	3.81	1	3.97
Her absence leads her to be careless	4	3.11	4	3.19
Leads to education and health problems	5	2.85	5	2.90
Leads the child to be dependent on the house maid	6	2.66	6	2.77

Chi-square: .000

The result of the chi-square goodness-of-fit test indicates the significance of the listed factors related to the differences in respondents' opinions about the importance of the children related factors for both the samples (see table 7.22). As can be seen in table 7.22 both the sample groups agreed on the positive impact and the negative consequences of work in relation to children. In addition, this result is similar to the whole sample as discussed in the previous chapter. The fourth factor analysis test is the 'Impact of Women's Work on Children'.

7.5.1 Factor Analysis for Unemployed Sample

As table 7.23 depicts, the KMO value is .650 and Bartlett's test is significant with  $p=.000$ . This implies therefore, that factor analysis is appropriate for this sample.

Table 7.23 KMO and Bartlett's Test results for the 6 items combined (unemployed)  
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. .650

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	460.606
	Df	15
	Sig.	.000

Based on these favourable results, factor analysis was conducted using PCA and varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalisation.

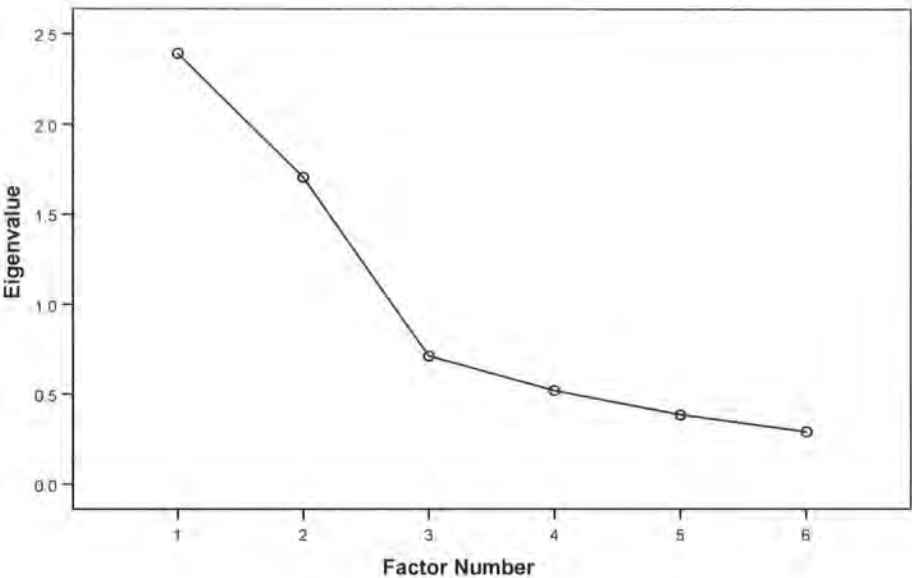
Table 7.24 Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.392	39.860	39.860	2.179	36.318	36.318
2	1.705	28.423	68.283	1.918	31.965	68.283
3	.712	11.867	80.150			
4	.519	8.650	88.799			
5	.383	6.391	95.190			
6	.289	4.810	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

In table 7.24 there are two factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 (2.392 and 1.705). This initial analysis therefore resulted in a two-factor solution, implying that 6 factors can be simply reduced to two factors. Each factor explains a particular amount of variance in the items. In this case, factor 1 explains 39.860% and factor 2 explains 28.423% of the total variance, which is equal to 68.283%. The distribution of the variance explained has also been adjusted after rotation. Hence, factor 1 now explains 36.318% of the variance and factor 2 explains 31.965%. The total variance remained the same after the rotation, just the way that it is distributed between the two components.

Figure 7.7. Scree Plot



The scree plot in Figure 7.7 depicts that the plot slopes steeply downwards from one factor to two factors before moving slowly towards the horizontal line, which rationalise the importance of only two factor groups.

Table 7.25 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. a Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

Variable	Factors	
	1	2
Leads to education and health problems	.883	
Her absence leads her to be careless	.864	
Leads the child to be dependent on the house maid	.794	
Lead the child to count on himself (be independent)		.852
Her absence leads her to give more attention		.813
Give a wealthy life to the child		.717
Eigenvalue	2.179	1.918
% of Variance	36.318	31.965
Cumulative%	36.318	68.283

The results in table 7.25 reveal the presence of two factor groups with six factors related to the impact of women's work on children. The two factors solution explains a total of 68.283% of the variance, with factor 1 contributing 36.318% and factor 2 contributing 31.965%. All variables that are listed under factor 1

items are 'leads to education and health problems', 'leads her to be careless' and 'leads the child to be dependent on the house maid'. Therefore, the items grouped under factor 1 can be appropriately described as 'negative factors'. On the other hand, factor 2 measures are 'leading the child to count on himself (be independent)', 'her absence leads her to give more attention' and 'gives a wealthy life to the child'.

Since factor 1 has approximately higher eigenvalue and variance, factor 1, therefore, necessarily represents more important objectives perceived by government and social environment.

7.5.2 Factor Analysis for Employed Sample

The KMO value (.717) and Bartlett's test ( $p=.000$ ) are both significant indicating that factor analysis is appropriate for this sample.

Table 7.26 KMO and Bartlett's Test results for the 6 items combined (employed)  
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. .717

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	579.680
	Df	15
	Sig.	.000

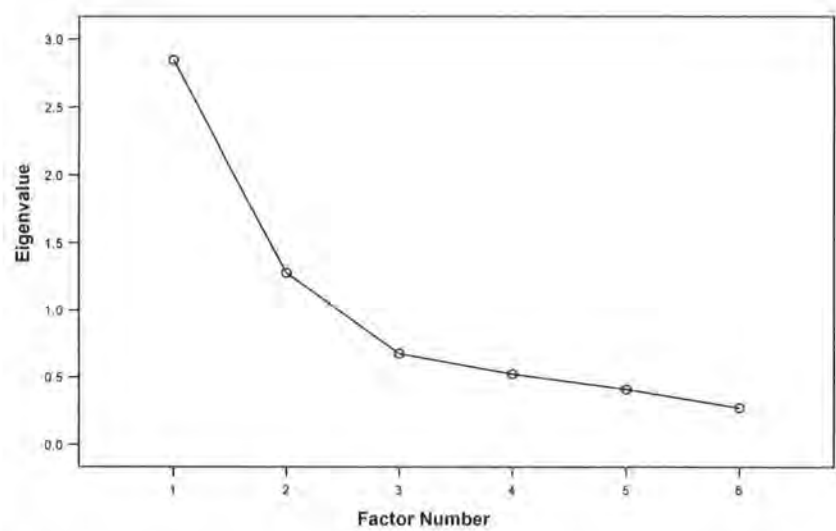
Based on these favourable results, factor analysis results are presented in table 7.27.

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.848	47.474	47.474	2.126	35.440	35.440
2	1.277	21.285	68.758	1.999	33.318	68.758
3	.674	11.235	79.993			
4	.522	8.702	88.696			
5	.408	6.794	95.490			
6	.271	4.510	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

As can be seen from table 7.27, the analysis relegated many factors and, consequently, only two factors are with eigenvalues greater than 1 (2.848 and 1.277). With this two-factor solution, 6 factors can be simply reduced to two factors. Factor 1 explains 47.474 % and factor 2 explains 21.285% of the pooled variance with the total variance, hence, being 68.758%. The distribution of the variance explained has also been adjusted after rotation and accordingly, factor 1 now explains 33.440% and factor 2 explains 33.318% of the total variance, which remains unchanged. However, only the way that it is distributed between the two components is changed after the rotation.

Figure 7.8 Scree Plot



The scree plot in Figure 7.8 evidences the two factor solution, which depicts that the plot slopes steeply downwards from one factor to two factors before moving slowly towards the horizontal line.

Table 7.28 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. A Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

Her absence leads her to give more attention		.815
Give a wealthy life to the child		.696
Eigenvalue	2.126	1.999
% of Variance	35.440	33.318
Cumulative%	35.440	68.758
Lead the child to count on himself (be independent)		.846

The results in table 7.28 reveal the presence of two factors with the distribution of the items for these two factors. The two factors solution explains a total of 68.758% of the variance, with factor 1 contributing by 35.126% and factor 2 contributing by 33.318% of the total variation. The higher the correlations among the variables, the more they have in common or the higher their communalities would be. As can be seen from table 7.28, all variables that are listed under factor 1 measure include 'leads to education and health problems', 'her absence leads her to be careless' and 'leads the child to be dependent on the house maid'. Therefore, the items grouped under factor 1 can be appropriately described as 'negative factors', while factor 2 measure includes 'lead the child to count on himself (be independent)', 'her absence leads her to give more attention' and 'provide a wealthy life to the child', and hence the second factors can be named as 'positive factors'.

Since factor 1 has approximately higher eigenvalue and variance, as compared to factor 2, factor 1 represents more important factors.

The results, for both the sample groups in the category indicate that both samples have the same opinion about the importance of these positive and negative factors, but there are differences in the mean values and ranking between them.

## **7.6 MACRO EXTERNAL POLICY FACTORS DISCOURAGING OR ENCOURAGING WOMEN TO WORK**

While the internal factors for both the groups are important, it is crucially important to investigate the macro external policy factors in relation to either

encouraging or discouraging women’s work. Therefore, the following important obstacles as part of the external environment have been chosen to examine their impact on women’s work: ‘distance and transportation’, ‘holidays and time off work’, ‘mixed work environment’, and also ‘negative view of society towards working women’. Furthermore, macro external policy factors which encourage or discourage women’s work, include ‘provision of transport facilities’, ‘improving labour legislation’, ‘provision of childcare services and facilities’, ‘reducing working hours’ and ‘offering part-time work’, ‘promotion programs to change society’s attitude and view towards working women’.

7.6.1 Obstacles Facing Women’s Working

This study included a number of factors which are believed to be obstacles for women’s work in Saudi Arabia. These factors are: ‘distance and transportation difficulty’, ‘holidays and time off work’, ‘mixed work environment’, and society’s negative view towards working women’. These are the most important obstacles.

Table 7.29  
Obstacles Facing Women’s Work

Obstacles	Unemployed		Employed	
	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean
Women find it difficult to move from one city to another	1	3.95	1	4.12
Women require extended holidays for their status and family	2	3.90	2	4.07
Society has a negative attitude toward women working outside home.	4	2.89	4	2.94
Some available jobs are in mixed environment with men	3	3.69	3	3.55

Chi-square: .000

The result of the chi-square goodness-of-fit test, as in table 7.29, indicates these factors are statistically significant in explaining obstacles facing working women. As can be seen in table 7.29 both groups of respondents, employed and

unemployed women, agreed on the importance of these obstacles. However, due to a ban on women driving in the country, it seems that women find it difficult to commute between two cities and this was ranked as the first important factor. 'Extended holiday requirement' was ranked as the second important factor by both the sample groups. The 'difficulties posed by mixed working environment' was ranked as the third important factor by both the groups. Lastly, both groups agreed that 'negative attitude of the society towards working women' should be the least important factor. Thus, there is total agreement between both groups on the importance of obstacle factors.

7.6.1.1 Factor analysis for the unemployed sample for obstacles

Table 7.30 shows that the KMO value is .633 and Bartlett's test is significant ( $p=.000$ ), both of which provide strong support for conducting factor analysis for this sample group.

Table 7.30 KMO and Bartlett's Test results for the 4 items combined (unemployed)  
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. .633

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	76.018
	Df	6
	Sig.	.000

Due to this result, factor analysis was conducted and the initial result is presented in table 7.31.

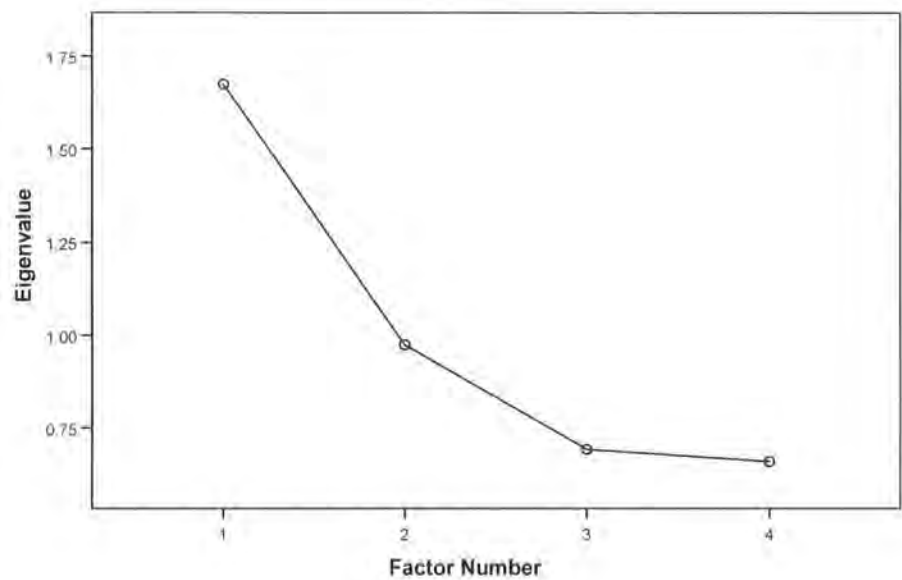
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1.674	41.847	41.847	1.674	41.847	41.847
2	.974	24.356	66.203			
3	.692	17.308	83.511			
4	.660	16.489	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.  
a. 1 components extracted. The solution cannot be rotated



Table 7.31 demonstrates that there is one factor with eigenvalues greater than 1 (1.674), indicating that 4 factors can be simply reduced to one factor. This factor explains a particular amount of variance in the items, which is equal to 41.847%.

Figure 7.9 Scree Plot



As figure 7.9 demonstrates the scree plot slopes steeply downwards from one factor before moving slowly towards the horizontal line, and evidences the rationale for one factor selection.

Table 7.32Component Matrix(a)  
Obstacles

	Factor
	1
Women find it difficult to move from one city to another	.746
Society has a negative attitude toward women working outside home.	.739
Women require extended holidays for their status and family	.620
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. a 1 components extracted. The solution cannot be rotated	

The results in table 7.32 based on component matrix reveal the presence of one factor with 3 items of the obstacles facing women's work, with a total of 41.847%

of the variance. According to the table, these variables are: 'women find it difficult to commute from one city to another', 'society has a negative attitude towards women working outside home' and 'women require extended holidays for their status and family'. Therefore, these items can be appropriately described as the most important obstacles. On the other hand, the last factor that 'available jobs are in a mixed environment with men' seems not to be perceived as a significant obstacle for the unemployed sample.

7.6.1.2 Factor analysis for the employed sample

As the results indicate in table 7.33 the KMO value (.6, rounded) and Bartlett's test ( $p=.000$ ) are both significant, which justifies the use of factor analysis.

Table 7.33 KMO and Bartlett's Test results for the 4 items combined (employed)  
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. .598

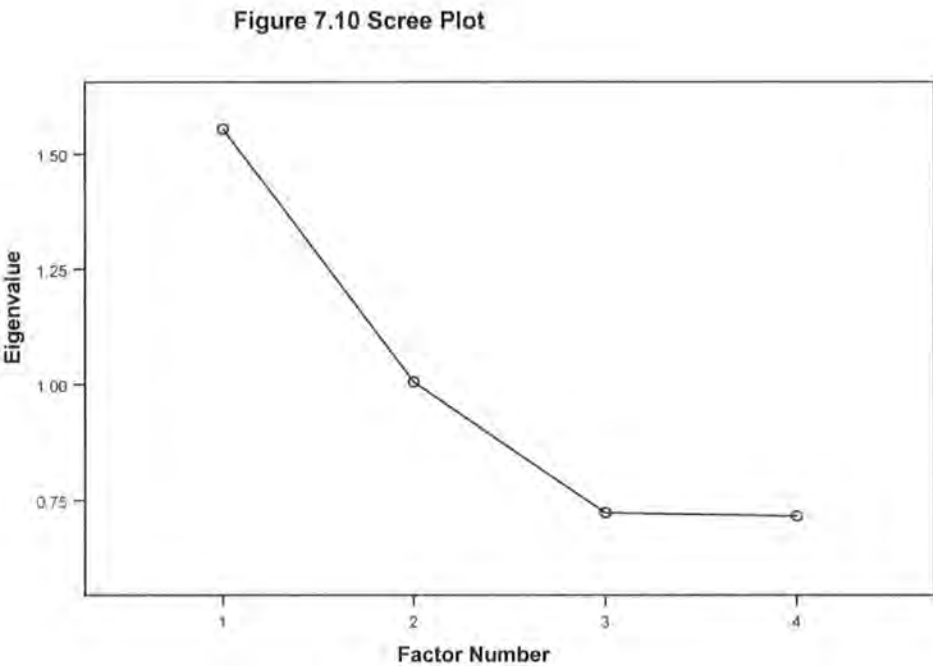
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	62.474
	Df	6
	Sig.	.000

The results of the factor analysis are presented in table 7.34, which shows that there are two factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 (1.555 and 1.005). This initial analysis, therefore, resulted in a two-factor solution. In other words, 4 factors can simply be reduced to two factors. Factor 1 explains 38.867% and factor 2 explains 25.134% of the pooled variance. The total variance explained, hence, equals to 64.001%.

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1.555	38.867	38.867	1.328	33.201	33.201
2	1.005	25.134	64.001	1.232	30.800	64.001
3	.724	18.088	82.089			
4	.716	17.911	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

The distribution of the variance explained has also been adjusted with the rotation process. As a result, factor 1 now explains 33.201% and factor 2 explains 30.800% of the total variation. The total variance remains the same after the rotation. However, the distribution of the explanatory power of the factors between the two components are changed.



The scree plot in Figure 7.10 depicts that the plot slopes steeply downwards from one factor to two factors before moving slowly towards the horizontal line, which clearly indicates the importance of two components in explaining an important percentage of the variation.

Table 7.35 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. A Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

Obstacles	Factors	
	1	2
Women find it difficult to move from one city to another	801	
Women require extended holidays for their status and family	.750	
Some available jobs are in mixed environment with men		.873
Society has a negative attitude toward women working outside home		.669
Eigenvalue	1.555	1.005
% of Variance	38.867	25.134
Cumulative%	38.867	64.001

The results in table 7.35 reveal the presence of two factors with 4 items of the obstacles facing working women in the rotation method. As can be seen the two factors solution explains a total of 64.001% of the variance, with factor 1 contributing 38.867% and factor 2 contributing 25.134%. It should be recalled that the higher the correlations among the variables, the more they have in common or the higher their communalities would be.

From table 7.35, all variables that are listed under factor 1 measure include 'women find it difficult to commute from one city to another' and 'women require extended holidays due to their status and family'. Therefore, the items grouped under factor 1 can be appropriately described as 'nature of women'. On the other hand, factor 2 measure includes the following factors: 'some available jobs are in a mixed environment with men' and 'society has a negative attitude towards women working outside home'. Therefore, this second category of factors or the second component can be named as 'working environment'.

Since factor 1 has approximately higher eigenvalue and variance, it means that it represents more important factors as perceived by the respondents. In comparison, the employed sample gives the impression that nearly all obstacles are important, while it seems that 'mixed environment' for the unemployed sample is not important. This could be explained by the fact that the unemployed need any job even if mixed with men. However, the employed sample have more thorough understanding than the unemployed sample about the importance of this item as part of the conventions of the country.

### **7.6.2 Factors Encouraging Women's Work**

In order to encourage Saudi women to participate in the labour force, the government should undertake some policy measures encouraging women to work but also to facilitate their working. Therefore, a number of such facilitating

factors were provided for the sample to express their opinions about their necessity. These include, 'provision of transport facilities', 'improving labour legislation', 'provision of childcare services and facilities', 'reducing working hours' and 'providing part-time work opportunities', and also 'promotion programs to change society's attitude and view towards working women'.

Table 7.36  
Macro external policy factors encouraging women to work

	Unemployed		Employed	
	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean
Improving and updating labour legislation	1	4.36	1	4.48
Providing childcare facilities for women	4	4.12	2	4.32
Providing transportation for women	2	4.26	3	4.31
Reducing working hours and offering part-time system	3	4.15	4	4.30
Changing the society's attitudes towards women who are working	5	4.03	5	4.07

Chi-square: .000

The result of the chi-square goodness-of-fit test, as depicted in table 7.36, indicates these factors are statistically significant for both the employed and unemployed in the sample data.

As can be seen in table 7.36 above both groups of respondents agree on the ranking importance of the first and last policies, namely 'improving and updating labour legislation' as the first most important factor and 'changing society's attitudes towards working women' as the least important policy issue. In addition, 'provision of transportation' is more important for unemployed women, who ranked this option as the second policy change. However, for working women 'the provision of childcare facilities' was opted as the second most important issue by the employed sample, which is self-explanatory. 'Reducing working

hours and the provision of part-time work' came third in the ranking of importance for the unemployed, which is again self-explanatory as unemployed women prefer to enter into the labour market on their own terms.

In order to provide further analysis, factor analysis was undertaken to test the importance of these factors, which is presented in the following sections.

7.6.2.1 Factor Analysis for Unemployed Sample for Factors Encouraging Women’s Work.

Table 7.37 provides evidence for the rationale for undertaking factor analysis, which shows that the KMO value is .740 and Bartlett's test is significant (p=.000).

Table 7.37 KMO and Bartlett's Test results for the 5 items combined (unemployed)  
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. .740

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	224.449
	Df	10
	Sig.	.000

Consequently, factor analysis was conducted using PCA and varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalisation, which is presented in table 7.38.

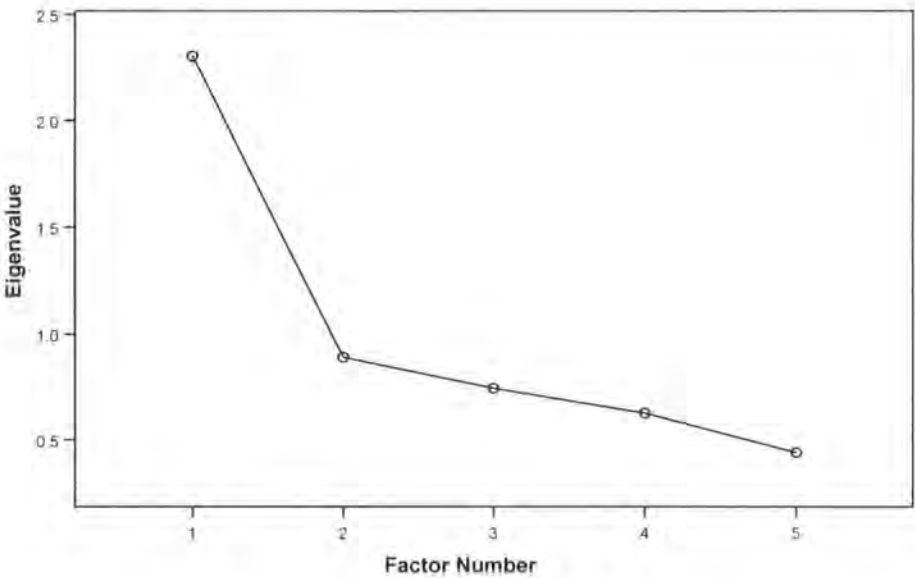
Table 7.38 Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.301	46.028	46.028	2.301	46.028	46.028
2	.891	17.825	63.853			
3	.743	14.867	78.721			
4	.625	12.504	91.225			
5	.439	8.775	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.  
a 1 components extracted. The solution cannot be rotated

As table 7.38, indicates there is only one factor with eigenvalues greater than 1 (2.301), which implies that 5 factors can be relegated to one factor, as this factor explains 46.028%.

Figure 7.11Scree Plot



The scree plot as depicted in figure 7.11 shows a clear break after the first factor moving slowly towards the horizontal line. Hence, it provides further evidence for the significant and dominating impact of the first factor only.

Table 7.39 Component Matrix (a)

	Factor 1
Providing transportation for women	.786
Reducing working hours and offering part-time system	.757
Providing childcare facilities for women	.704
Improving and updating labour legislation	.616

The results in the table 7.39 evidence the presence of one factor with 5 items of the 'factors encouraging women's work'. This factor explains a total of 46.028% of the variance. These four factors for these components are 'improving and updating labour legislation', 'providing childcare facilities for women', 'providing transportation for women and 'reducing working hours and offering part-time

system'. Therefore, these items can be appropriately described as the most important variables encouraging women's work. On the other hand, the last one, 'changing the society's attitudes towards working women' is not significant for the unemployed sample. Nevertheless, this variable is one of the obstacles as shown above.

7.6.2.2 Factor Analysis for the Employed Sample for Factors Encouraging Women's Work

Table 7.40 shows that the KMO value is .725 and Bartlett's test ( $p=.000$ ) are both significant, which provides evidence for the appropriateness of the factor analysis. Factor analysis, thus, was conducted, and the results are presented in table 7.41.

Table 7.40 KMO and Bartlett's Test results for the 5 items combined (employed)  
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. .725

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	338.888
	Df	10
	Sig.	.000

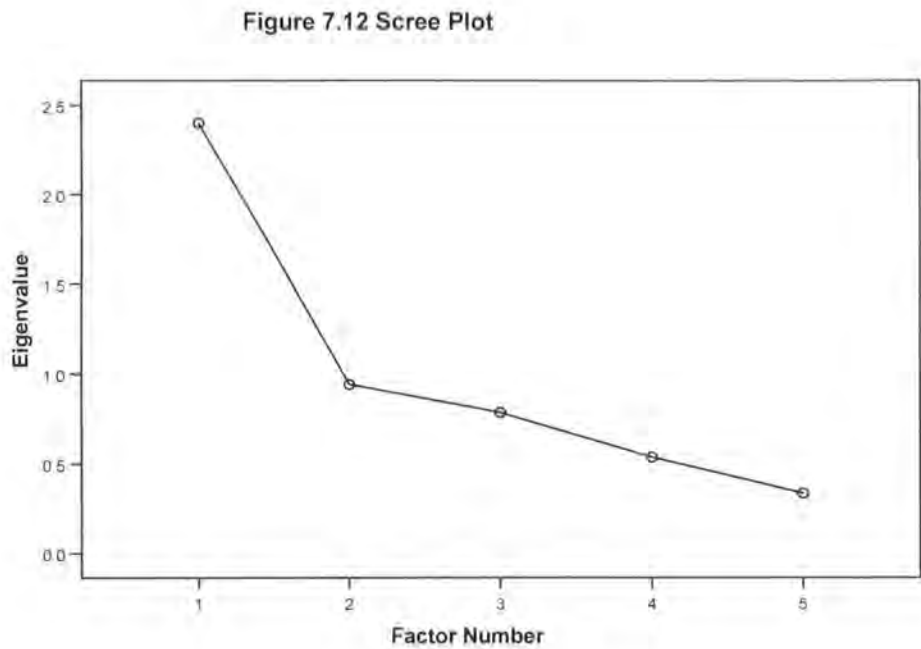
Table 7.41Total Variance Explained  
Component

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.402	48.048	48.048	2.402	48.048	48.048
2	.942	18.844	66.892			
3	.784	15.689	82.581			
4	.536	10.715	93.296			
5	.335	6.704	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.  
a 1 components extracted. The solution cannot be rotated

Table 7.41 shows that there is one factor with eigenvalues greater than 1 (2.402). Hence, 5 factors can be simply reduced to one factor, which explains 48.048%.





The scree plot as depicted in Figure 7.12 provides further support for the results provided in table 7.41, which shows a clear break after the first factor moving slowly towards the horizontal line.

Table 7.42 Component Matrix (a)

	Factor 1
Providing transportation for women	.859
Providing childcare facilities for women	.785
Reducing working hours and offering part-time system	.741
Improving and updating labour legislation	.592

The results in table 7.42 show the presence of one factor with 4 items of the 'factors encouraging women's work'. This factor explains a total of 48.048% of the total variance. As can be seen from the table, four variables that are listed under this component are 'improving and updating labour legislation', 'providing childcare facilities for women', 'providing transportation for women' and 'reducing working hours and offering part-time system'. Therefore, these items can be appropriately described as the most important variables 'encouraging women's work' in the case of the employed sample. However, the last factor, which states

the 'changing society's attitudes towards working women' is not found to be significant for the employed sample.

Consequently, as the results indicate both samples agree on the included factors for encouraging women's work in Saudi Arabia.

## **7.7 EXPLORING THE MACRO EXTERNAL POLICY FACTORS DISCOURAGING OR ENCOURAGING WOMEN'S WORKING IN SAUDI ARABIA**

From demographic and socio-economic components, marital status, level of education, the family income and number of children have been selected as the strong factors which affect women's participation in the labour market. Therefore, ANOVA test was conducted for both employed and unemployed samples with the following factors:

- (i) Distance difficulties;
- (ii) Transportation ;
- (iii) Extended holidays;
- (iv) Negative view towards working women;
- (v) Mixed environment;
- (vi) Labour legislations;
- (vii) Childcare facilities;
- (viii) Part-time work and flexible working hours;
- (ix) Promotion programs to change society's attitude.

These factors are correlated with 'marital status', 'last qualification', 'family monthly income' and 'number of children' to find how each of the factors is significantly related to these control variables.

This section, thus, attempts to respond to the following questions:

- (i) Is there a difference in the macro external policy factors encouraging or discouraging women to work for married, single and divorced or widow?
- (ii) Is there a difference in the same macro external policy factors encouraging or discouraging women to work for the different groups

classified by their last qualification obtained including secondary high school, diploma, bachelor degree and other postgraduate degrees?

- (iii) Is there a difference in the macro external policy factors encouraging or discouraging women to work for different income groups; the first group are those who have a family income less than 3000 RS per month, the second, the third and the fourth are 3000 to 5000RS, 5000RS to less than 10000RS and more than 10000RS?
- (iv) Is there a difference in the same macro external policy factors encouraging or discouraging women to work for both employed and unemployed samples classified by the number of children of the respondents?

In order to answer these questions ANOVA test is utilised to investigate the significance of each of the identified variables.

### **7.7.1 Obstacle Factor: Distance Difficulties**

Distance between home and the work place can be an important factor in determining job search and taking up potential jobs. As the factor analysis and other analysis in the previous section indicates, Saudi women prefer not to commute long distance, which prevents women from work. This is only natural if the ban on Saudi women's driving is taken into account. , The difficulty stems from the fact that a male relative, either father, brother or husband has to provide a lift everyday back and forth between home and workplace for the working women. As discussed in chapter 6, the majority of women indicated distance and transportation as a major obstacle to work. Women suffer when there is no suitable transportation or when the distance to the work place creates parental concerns about safety, propriety, and the loss of women's time for household chores.

Table 7.43  
Distance against selected variables  
ANOVA for both employed and unemployed groups for distance factor

Distance	Sig.	Sig.
	Unemployed	Employed
Marital Status	.313	.343
Last Qualification	.089	.162
Family Monthly Income	.556	.778
No. Children	.527	.683

Table 7.43 demonstrates the statistical significance provided by the ANOVA test as the correlation between employed and unemployed groups for the control variables. The table shows that none of the variables in the case of either sample are significant, and there is no difference between them.

7.7.2 Obstacle Factor: Transportation

Transportation determines access to a wide range of resources including, childcare, education and health for the working women, as it is one of the main obstacles to women's employment in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, providing transportation for employed women is crucial for working women, as public transport is not sufficiently developed to be a suitable option for women.

Table 7. 44  
Transportation against selected variables  
ANOVA for both employed and unemployed groups for transportation factor

	Sig.	Sig.
	Unemployed	Employed
Marital Status	.292	.742
Last Qualification	.048	.032
Family Monthly Income	.788	.662
No. Children	.358	.377

Table 7.44 demonstrates the significances provided by the ANOVA test for both the employed and unemployed sample for the transportation factor, which shows that there is no significant difference in any of the three variables (the marital status, family monthly income and number of children) in both the employed and unemployed sample. On the other hand, there are significant differences in 'last

qualification' variable in relation to transportation factor for both the groups, which is the only significant variable. Since this variable is significant, it is further examined by investigating the correlation between various educational groups in the sample in relation to transportation, the result of which is depicted in table 7.45.

Table 7.45  
Multiple Comparisons between various education groups on the effect of providing transport as an encouraging factor for both employed and unemployed groups

Dependent Variable:

(I) Last qualification	(J) Last qualification	Mean Difference (I-J) Employed group)	Sig. Employed group)	Mean Difference (I-J) unemployed group)	Sig. unemployed group)
Secondary certificate	Diploma	-.480(*)	.020	.571(*)	.015
	Bachelor	-.054	.657	.355(*)	.016
	Higher education	-.587	.054	.371	.240
Diploma	Secondary certificate	.480(*)	.020	-.571(*)	.015
	Bachelor	.426(*)	.025	-.217	.292
	Higher education	-.108	.749	-.200	.564
Bachelor	Secondary certificate	.054	.657	-.355(*)	.016
	Diploma	-.426(*)	.025	.217	.292
	Higher education	-.534	.070	.017	.955
Higher education	Secondary certificate	.587	.054	-.371	.240
	Diploma	.108	.749	.200	.564
	Bachelor	.534	.070	-.017	.955

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

As far as the unemployed group is concerned, as can be seen in table 7.45, there is only a significant difference between these two sample groups on their responses about transportation, since its significance is equal to .048. Similarly the significance for the same factor on the education groups on the employed group is .032 which means transportation has significant differences among the employed group. The results in table 7.45 indicate that providing transport as an encouraging factor has more effect on secondary high school degree holders compared with diploma and bachelor degree holders, since the mean is higher as shown. The results also indicate that the transportation factor has more effect on the unemployed group with lesser education and on the employed group with higher education.

7.7.3 Obstacle Factor: Extended Holidays

The analysis in the study shows that women require extended holidays for their status and family. Therefore, the requirement (or non availability) of extended holidays is found to be the second important obstacle factor with 3.99 mean, as the results in table 5.43 in chapter 6 demonstrate. Therefore, as a factor it is subjected to further analysis with the four mentioned control variables in this section, the results are depicted in table 7.46.

Table 7.46		
Extended holidays against selected variables		
ANOVA for both employed and unemployed groups for extended holidays factor		
	Sig.	Sig.
	Unemployed	Employed
Marital Status	.150	.002
Last Qualification	.719	.047
Family Monthly Income	.718	.504
No. Children	.505	.045

Table 7.46 reveals that there are significant differences in the employed group in three control variables: 'marital status', 'last qualification' and 'number of children' given that their significance are .002, .047 and .045 respectively. By contrast, the control variables in relation to extended holidays do not show any significant differences for the unemployed group. This could be explained due to the need for jobs by the unemployed group.

Due to the shown significances for the employed group, multiple comparisons for the employed sample for the control variables were conducted, which are depicted individually in table 7.47, 7.48 and 7.49.

Table 7.47  
Multiple Comparisons employed Marital status

(I) Marital status	(J) Marital status	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
Married	Single	.477(*)	.002
	Divorced	-.146	.922
	Widow	-.063	.999
Single	Married	-.477(*)	.002
	Divorced	-.622	.057
	Widow	-.539	.722
Divorced	Married	.146	.922
	Single	.622	.057
	Widow	.083	.999
Widow	Married	.063	.999
	Single	.539	.722
	Divorced	-.083	.999

To take the research further table 7.47 lists the differences between the means (Mean differences (I-J)) for the factors which have proven some differences between the marital groups in relation to 'extended holidays' factor for the employed group. The table shows clearly that the extended holidays has more affect on married working women and the single working women.

Table 7.48  
Multiple Comparisons employed last qualification

(I) Last qualification	(J) Last qualification	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
Secondary certificate	Diploma	-.313	.175
	Bachelor	.231	.091
	Higher education	.188	.583
Diploma	Secondary certificate	.313	.175
	Bachelor	.543(*)	.011
	Higher education	.500	.188
Bachelor	Secondary certificate	-.231	.091
	Diploma	-.543(*)	.011
	Higher education	-.043	.895
Higher education	Secondary certificate	-.188	.583
	Diploma	-.500	.188
	Bachelor	.043	.895

The table 7.48 shows the multiple comparison of extended holidays and educational background for the employed group, which reveals that extended holidays are considered a bigger obstacle for diploma holders compared with bachelor holders for the employed women in Saudi Arabia since (I-J) is a positive with a significance of level below .05.

Table 7.49 Multiple Comparisons employed No. Children			
(I) No. Children	(J) No. Children	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
No children	One child	-.204	.273
	Two children	-.161	.418
	Three or more	-.388(*)	.005
One child	No children	.204	.273
	Two children	.043	.854
	Three or more	-.185	.313
Two children	No children	.161	.418
	One child	-.043	.854
	Three or more	-.228	.246
Three or more	No children	.388(*)	.005
	One child	.185	.313
	Two children	.228	.246

Table 7.49 demonstrates the results of multiple comparisons of extended holidays as a factor in correlation with the number of children. The results show that by nature the more children the respondents have, the desire to have extended holidays gets stronger.

Based on these results, it is possible to conclude that the government should create a system which can guarantee extended holidays for working women, which can include the facilitation of taking unpaid holidays if needed for acceptable reasons like child-care or sick leave.



7.7.4 Obstacle Factor: Negative View Towards Working Women

Historically, traditional sectors of the Saudi society have had a negative attitude towards working women, and looked on women’s work as shameful. Such a negative social position was mostly shown towards technical and professional education and employment. It should be stated that this attitude in Saudi society has changed over recent years. For that reason working women are no longer looked at in doubt as was the case in the past. This factor, therefore, scored the least opted obstacle facing women’s work, which evidences the argument stating the change in the attitudes of the society towards working women.

Table 7. 50  
Negative view towards working women against selected variables  
ANOVA for both employed and unemployed groups for negative view towards working women

	Sig.	Sig.
	Unemployed	Employed
Marital Status	.109	.241
Last Qualification	.075	.001
Family Monthly Income	.576	.165
No. Children	.264	.418

Table 7.50 shows the correlation result for 'negative view towards working women' as an obstacle factor with the identified control variables. As can be seen, there are significant differences in any of the studied variables in the unemployed group. In comparison, there are significant differences in the employed sample, and 'last qualification' as a variable is statistically significant with.001. Therefore, table 7.51 shows multiple comparisons for this variable for the employed sample.

Table 7.51  
Multiple comparisons employed last qualification

(I) Last qualification	(J) Last qualification	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
Secondary certificate	Diploma	-.072	.802
	Bachelor	.617(*)	.000
	Higher education	.112	.792
Diploma	Secondary certificate	.072	.802
	Bachelor	.689(*)	.010
	Higher education	.185	.696
Bachelor	Secondary certificate	-.617(*)	.000
	Diploma	-.689(*)	.010
	Higher education	-.504	.223
Higher education	Secondary certificate	-.112	.792
	Diploma	-.185	.696
	Bachelor	.504	.223

As far as the negative view towards working women as an obstacle is concerned, the results in table 7.51 demonstrate that this factor has more affect on secondary high school degree holders as compared to bachelor degree holders. Also, the factor has more affects on bachelor degree holders compared with postgraduate degrees holders. Generally, these obstacles have more affect on less educated women.

The government in recent years ran programmes to change this negative social attitude, mainly through TV and radio. Similarly, these programmes, which aim to be an encouraging factor for working women, has more affect on secondary high school compared with bachelor degree holders. Thus, the Saudi media need to face up to their responsibilities in creating public awareness, especially among the younger generation.

7.7.5 Obstacle Factor: Mixed Environment

Saudi women, according to studies conducted by The Council of Labour Force in Saudi Arabia, are not ready to sacrifice their familial role for the sake of work. The studies show that they do try to create a balance between both as far as

possible, however if they fail to achieve that balance, women are ready to give up their job and stay at home. For that reason a woman's work depends on three factors (Almazroa, 2003 :78):

- 1- Avoiding working with men;
- 2- The necessity for working and the suitability of that job for a woman's nature and idiosyncrasy;
- 3- The ability to create a balance between work and home duties

Because some available jobs are in a mixed environment with men, The Council of Ministers approved a law in 2004 requiring government departments to set up special women's sections, as most Saudi women prefer to work in a female only working environment due to religious and cultural reasons. Furthermore, Saudi law states that women have the right to work "in all fields that are appropriate to their nature." This indicates that the government should create a suitable atmosphere for women's employment without the need for mixing with men and without engaging in dangerous or harmful jobs in accordance with the Kingdom's traditions. This was emphasised recently by the Labour Minister Al-Gosaibi in a statement carried by the Saudi Press Agency (SPA 14-08-2005).

Table 7.52		
Mixed environment against selected variables		
ANOVA for both employed and unemployed groups for mixed environment		
	Sig.	Sig.
	Unemployed	Employed
Marital Status	.918	.485
Last Qualification	.890	.785
Family Monthly Income	.102	.116
No. Children	.998	.572

Table 7.52, therefore, depicts the results of correlating the 'mixed working environment' as a factor with the identified control variables. The results show there are no significant differences in both groups in all studied variables, which point out that this factor does not have a particular significance for any of the control variables.

7.7.6 Obstacle Factor: Labour Legislations

The Council of Ministers approved a new labour law in 2004, as mentioned in the previous section. Since, labour legislations are one of the most important factors regulating women’s work, the labour law should be designed to encourage the employment of Saudi women. The most important issues for women with regards to the labour market regulations are flexibility for working women to exit and re-enter the labour force as necessary, and the rights to maternity leave and childcare facilities, in response to the changing needs and demands of their families

Table 7.53		
Labour legislations against selected variables		
ANOVA for both employed and unemployed groups for labour legislations		
	Sig.	Sig.
	Unemployed	Employed
Marital Status	.688	.527
Last Qualification	.150	.254
Family Monthly Income	.224	.365
No. Children	.438	.469

Table 7.53 depicts the correlation between the 'labour legislation' as an obstacle factor and the identified control variables. The result does not show any significant differences across the control variables for either of the groups.

This result can, therefore, be interpreted as both groups asking for an improvement in labour legislation to provide more rights. It should be stated that recent changes in the new Saudi law aims at working in that direction, as it includes the law allowing the employment of woman in all areas that comply with a woman's nature, as well as the right to maternity leave for four weeks prior to the probable date of delivery and six weeks after giving birth. The new law also requires employers who employ fifty female employees and more, to provide a

convenient place in which a sufficient number of babysitters are available to care for working women's children under the age of six years.

7.7.7 Obstacle Factor: ChildCare Facilities

Blau and Hagy (1998) classify childcare arrangements into four modes of care:

- 1- Childcare centre, including preschool and Head Start;
- 2- Family day care home which is provided in the child's home, by a person other than a parent or relative;
- 3- Other non-parental care such as a relative or babysitter care provided by an individual related to the child and that is provided in a private residence other than the child's home;
- 4- Parental care.

The cost and the lack of places in childcare centres is a nationwide issue that the Saudi government has failed to adequately address so far. The cost of childcare affects the employment policies of the private sector in particular and the work options of mothers of young children. The concern of the potential working women about quality and standards of such centres for the well-being of children is also an important factor. Consequently, the creation of childcare in the work place is an investment, as this will increase their contribution to value added in the economy and productivities in the long run. Table 7.54 shows the correlation between this factor as an obstacle with the identified variables.

Table 7.54  
Childcare facilities against selected variables  
ANOVA for both employed and unemployed groups for child care facilities factor

	Sig.	Sig.
	Unemployed	Employed
Marital Status	.247	.150
Last Qualification	.495	.004
Family Monthly Income	.386	.411
No. Children	.046	.057

Table 7.54 shows that there is not much difference in both the samples as there is no statistical difference, implying that both the groups have the same effects regarding this factor for the control variables. However, 'qualification' is statistically significant for the employed group with significance level of .004. In addition, 'number of children' as a control variable with this obstacle variable of 'childcare facilities' is significant for both the sample groups. 'Number of children' as a factor can explain the reasons for unemployment on the side of the unemployed.

Providing childcare facilities is a very important factor encouraging employed mothers to continue in their work and unemployed mothers to accept a job. There is a need for improving the nursery and kindergarten schools and for providing women with money as financial assistance to help them to leave their children in such facilities.

Since the results show that 'qualification' is a significant variable for employed women multiple comparisons was conducted to investigate the impact of this factor on various qualification levels, which is depicted in table 7.55.

Table 7.55 Multiple comparisons employed last qualification			
(I) Last qualification	(J) Last qualification	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
Secondary certificate	Diploma	-.557(*)	.002
	Bachelor	-.070	.517
	Higher education	-.587(*)	.031
Diploma	Secondary certificate	.557(*)	.002
	Bachelor	.487(*)	.004
	Higher education	-.031	.918
Bachelor	Secondary certificate	.070	.517
	Diploma	-.487(*)	.004
	Higher education	-.517(*)	.049
Higher education	Secondary certificate	.587(*)	.031
	Diploma	.031	.918
	Bachelor	.517(*)	.049



The result in Table 7.55 shows that in the case of diploma holders the facilities such as childcare as an encouraging factor is stronger than those who are less educated, given that (I-j) in all these cases are positive and their mean differences are below the significance level of .05. Generally, it can be concluded that these obstacles have more affect on the less educated

Table 7.56 Multiple comparisons unemployed No. Children			
(I) No. Children	(J) No. Children	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
No children	One child	-.350	.103
	Two children	-.172	.344
	Three or more	-.365(*)	.012
One child	No children	.350	.103
	Two children	.178	.498
	Three or more	-.015	.948
Two children	No children	.172	.344
	One child	-.178	.498
	Three or more	-.193	.356
Three or more	No children	.365(*)	.012
	One child	.015	.948
	Two children	.193	.356

As regards to significant control variable of 'number of children', multiple comparisons of correlations with various categories of 'number of children' with the childcare facilities factor is depicted in table 7.56. For unemployed respondents as disclosed in table 7.56, there is only one significant difference between these groups derived from the respondents' number of children on their responses about childcare facilities, since its significance is equal to .046. By nature, the more children the respondents have, the more they will be affected by the availability or non availability of childcare facilities, extended holidays and part-time work and flexible working hours.

For the unemployed group, childcare facilities are a stronger factor influencing those who have three or more children compared with those who do not have

any. In order to reduce unemployment among women, childcare subsidies can be applied for mothers in case there are no childcare facilities in the workplace.

7.7.8 Obstacle Factor: Part-time Work and Flexible Working Hours

While some women prefer part-time and temporary work because of its flexibility, others have difficulty securing regular, full-time employment. Furthermore, the part-time issue has been discussed for a long time. Some educated women objected to this idea, since they did not want any discrimination between men and women. Hence, some women are interested in this idea since it gives women a bigger chance to look after their children and husband in addition to becoming economically independent.

Part-time jobs have got advantages and are preferred by many women, as it suits a mother who has got children to look after, and sometimes parents. The full-time jobs, on the other hand, are convenient for a single woman who can create a balance between house work and her job. Moreover, the kind of job, whether it is an executive one or not, and the place of work such as working in factories, affect the choice between a full or part-time job. Part-time jobs are suited to married women who have responsibilities and priorities. In regard to the newly graduated women, full-time jobs help them gain experience of working under pressure and time management and they also benefit from the experience of the managers.

Table 7.57  
Flexible working times against selected variables  
ANOVA for both employed and unemployed groups for flexible working times factor

	Sig. Unemployed	Sig. Employed
Marital Status	.309	.017
Last Qualification	.075	.022
Family Monthly Income	.518	.006
No. Children	.445	.012



Table 7.57, therefore, presents the correlation between the obstacle variable of 'flexible working times' against the control variables, which reveals that there are no significant differences in any of the studied variables in the unemployed group. By comparison, there are significant differences in the employed group in all selected control variables with significance levels of 017, .022, .006 and .012 respectively. Therefore, the details of the significant control variables are further correlated with the obstacle variable in multiple comparisons which are depicted in the following tables.

Table 7.58			
Multiple comparisons employed marital status			
(I) Marital status	(J) Marital status	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
Married	Single	.358(*)	.020
	Divorced	-.022	1.000
	Widow	.656	.506
Single	Married	-.358(*)	.020
	Divorced	-.380	.343
	Widow	.298	.924
Divorced	Married	.022	1.000
	Single	.380	.343
	Widow	.679	.543
Widow	Married	-.656	.506
	Single	-.298	.924
	Divorced	-.679	.543

To take the research further table 7.58 lists the differences between the means (Mean differences (I-J)) of the between various marital categories in relation to the 'part-time and flexible working conditions as an obstacle factor'. As the table shows 'part-time work and flexible working hours' has more affect on married working women in Saudi Arabia than single working women, while there is no difference in these two factors. By contrast, the difference is in favour of singles compared with married, while the rest of the group remains the same.

Table 7.59

Multiple comparisons employed last qualification			
(I) Last qualification	(J) Last qualification	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
Secondary certificate	Diploma	-.480(*)	.020
	Bachelor	-.054	.657
	Higher education	-.587	.054
Diploma	Secondary certificate	.480(*)	.020
	Bachelor	.426(*)	.025
	Higher education	-.108	.749
Bachelor	Secondary certificate	.054	.657
	Diploma	-.426(*)	.025
	Higher education	-.534	.070
Higher education	Secondary certificate	.587	.054
	Diploma	.108	.749
	Bachelor	.534	.070

Furthermore, the result in table 7.59 shows different educational categories in relation to the 'part-time and flexible working conditions' factor, which indicates that the impact on diploma holders of the part-time work and flexible working hours as an encouraging factor is stronger than in the case of those respondents who hold secondary school and bachelor degrees given that (I-j) in all these cases are positive and their mean differences are below the significance level of .05. Thus, 'part-time and flexible working conditions' as a factor has more affect on less educated women.

Table 7.60

Multiple comparisons employed No. Children			
(I) No. Children	(J) No. Children	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
No children	One child	-.063	.712
	Two children	-.439(*)	.016
	Three or more	-.349(*)	.006
One child	No children	.063	.712
	Two children	-.376	.079
	Three or more	-.286	.089
Two children	No children	.439(*)	.016
	One child	.376	.079
	Three or more	.090	.617
Three or more	No children	.349(*)	.006
	One child	.286	.089
	Two children	-.090	.617

Table 7.60 depicts the results for 'number of children categories' and the 'part-time and flexible working conditions' factor. The more children the respondents have, the more they will be affected by childcare facilities, extended holidays and part-time work and flexible working hours. In general, the results in table 7.60 above shows that part-time work and flexible working hours for the employed group are considered more influential for those who have three or more children compared with those who do not have any.

Table 7.61 Multiple Comparisons Employed/Family monthly income			
(I) Family monthly income	(J) Family monthly income	Mean Difference (I- J)	Sig.
Less than 3000	3000 to less than 5000	-.619(*)	.002
	5000 to less than 10000	-.575(*)	.001
	10000 and more	-.504(*)	.004
3000 to less than 5000	Less than 3000	.619(*)	.002
	5000 to less than 10000	.044	.786
	10000 and more	.115	.463
5000 to less than 10000	Less than 3000	.575(*)	.001
	3000 to less than 5000	-.044	.786
	10000 and more	.071	.585
10000 and more	Less than 3000	.504(*)	.004
	3000 to less than 5000	-.115	.463
	5000 to less than 10000	-.071	.585

Table 7.61 shows the correlation results for multiple comparisons of family income categories in relation to 'part-time and flexible working conditions', which indicates that the high income group believes that part-time work and flexible working hours are more important as encouraging factors compared with low income groups. The rationale for this comes from the fact that low income respondents need full-time jobs due to financial reasons.

7.7.9 Promotion Programs to Change Society’s Attitude

The Saudi society has changed during the last thirty years, as people have started to give up narrow thinking and men have started to realise that working is good for women and for the man with whom she lives. For that reason working women are no longer looked at in doubt as was the case in the past. On the contrary, the belief that a job will provide a better position for women in the society and, hence, more respect, is gaining more importance. Moreover, the salary will guarantee her the money she needs to improve her image in the eyes of others in a society that cares about appearance. In addition, the Saudi younger males prefer to marry a working woman. This is an indication of respect for her. It is important for Saudi society to change its opinion about women and her role and abilities or about what could be accepted regarding the mixture between both sexes in and outside the family. What is desperately needed is a new government decision that allows women to work in professions she is prevented from. In this case, the fears of society can be handled by launching serious and qualitative campaigns and by opening special work sites for women such as laboratories, factories and other assisting services in addition to providing special offices for women who come to ministries and to public sectors for applications. Women in Saudi society are not encouraged to surpass themselves although changing this is not difficult. The mental abilities needed are already present and with education and training, women can certainly excel.

Table7. 62  
Promotion programs to change society's attitude against selected variables  
ANOVA for both employed and unemployed groups to change society's attitude factor

	Sig.	Sig.
	Unemployed	Employed
Marital Status	.273	.011
Last Qualification	.134	.033
Family Monthly Income	.538	.276
No. Children	.877	.117

Table 7.62 correlates the need for promotion programmes to change society's attitude towards working women with the control variables. The results reveal that there are significant differences in the employed group in two variables: 'marital status and last qualification' given that their significance is .011 and .033 respectively. By contrast, there are no significant differences in any of the studied variables in the unemployed group. Therefore, these two control variables are further analysed in multiple comparison by looking into their further categories in relation to this factor. The results are depicted in tables 7.63 and 7.64.

Table 7.63 Multiple Comparisons Employed Promotion programs to change society attitude			
(I) Marital status	(J) Marital status	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
Married	Single	-.370(*)	.022
	Divorced	-.021	1.000
	Widow	.729	.454
Single	Married	.370(*)	.022
	Divorced	.349	.462
	Widow	1.099	.127
Divorced	Married	.021	1.000
	Single	-.349	.462
	Widow	.750	.497
Widow	Married	-.729	.454
	Single	-1.099	.127
	Divorced	-.750	.497

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Table 7.63 shows the 'marital status' categories with 'promotion programme' factor. The differences between the means (Mean differences (I-J)) for the variable which has proven some differences between the marital groups, the difference is in favour of singles compared with married respondents, while the rest of the group remain the same as is shown in table 7.63 above.

Table 7.64

Multiple Comparisons employed Promotion programs to change society attitude

(I) Last qualification	(J) Last qualification	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
Secondary certificate	Diploma	.109	.625
	Bachelor	.311(*)	.019
	Higher education	-.337	.307
Diploma	Secondary certificate	-.109	.625
	Bachelor	.203	.326
	Higher education	-.446	.223
Bachelor	Secondary certificate	-.311(*)	.019
	Diploma	-.203	.326
	Higher education	-.649(*)	.043
Higher education	Secondary certificate	.337	.307
	Diploma	.446	.223
	Bachelor	.649(*)	.043

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Table 7.64 reveals that 'promotion programs to change society's attitude' is considered a bigger obstacle for diploma holders compared with bachelor holders for the employed women in Saudi Arabia, since (I-J) is a positive with a significance of level below .05.

### 7.8 TESTING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SAMPLE GROUPS TOWARDS THE IMPACT OF THE SELECTED MACRO EXTERNAL POLICY

It is important to study the difference between the reaction of the two groups, employed and unemployed, towards the impact of the selected macro external policy encouraging and discouraging factors for women's work. All the obstacle factors are included as macro external factors. The test results in the form of t-test are shown in table 7.65, which indicated that there is no significant difference between the employed and unemployed women in terms of their responses on the influence of the 'distance', 'holidays and time off work', 'negative view of society for working women', 'mixed work environment', 'total factors for obstacles



facing women at work', 'improving labour legislation', 'provision of transport facilities', 'reducing working hours and offering part-time work', and 'promotion programs to change society's attitude and view towards working women', as their significances are all above .05.

Table 7.65  
T Test (Independent Samples Test) for 9 encouraging and obstacle factors and their Totals

		Levine's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means	
		F	Sig.	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
Distance	Equal variances assumed	.477	.490	1.707	.088
	Equal variances not assumed			1.701	.090
Holidays and time off work	Equal variances assumed	.394	.531	1.898	.058
	Equal variances not assumed			1.889	.059
Negative view of society to working women	Equal variances assumed	5.494	.019	.418	.676
	Equal variances not assumed			.416	.677
Mixed work environment	Equal variances assumed	.001	.974	-1.241	.215
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.239	.216
Total factors for Obstacles facing women at work	Equal variances assumed	1.667	.197	.965	.335
	Equal variances not assumed			.959	.338
Improving labour legislation	Equal variances assumed	.018	.893	1.724	.085
	Equal variances not assumed			1.727	.085
Provision of childcare services and facilities	Equal variances assumed	.008	.928	2.798	.005
	Equal variances not assumed			2.778	.006
Provision of Transport facilities	Equal variances assumed	.555	.456	.546	.585
	Equal variances not assumed			.546	.585
Reducing working hours and offering part-time work	Equal variances assumed	.100	.752	1.823	.069
	Equal variances not assumed			1.815	.070
Promotion programs to change society attitude and view	Equal variances assumed	.018	.895	.443	.658
	Equal variances not assumed			.441	.660
Total factors for macro external policy factors encouraging women to work	Equal variances assumed	.078	.780	2.107	.036
	Equal variances not assumed			2.101	.036

By contrast, the overall of the total factors for macro external policy factors encouraging women to work, which is driven from the average of the components encouraging factors, shows some significance of .036. Moreover, the table shows a significant difference towards the provision of childcare services and facilities, as its significance is .005. This means that the impact of these factors is not equal on both groups. In fact, the employed and unemployed groups score a mean of 4.32 and 4.12 respectively which leads to a conclusion that the provision of childcare services and facilities has more affect as an encouraging factor on the employed group compared with the unemployed group.

7.9 THE IMPACT OF TYPE OF WORK PREFERRED AND THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN

In order to see the impact of type of work in the form of 'full-time' and 'part-time' on the nature of the family in the form of number of children, cross tabulation and chi-square tests were conducted, which is depicted in table 7.66.

Table 7.66

	Employed group			Unemployed group			The whole sample		
	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	25.865(a)	9	.002	12.157(b)	9	.205	47.471( c)	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	27.246	9	.001	11.086	9	.270	49.053	9	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	.305	1	.581	.913	1	.339	.293	1	.589
N of Valid Cases	300			261			561		

For the employed group (a) 3 cells (18.8%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.68.  
For the unemployed (b) 5 cells (31.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.15.  
For the whole sample group (c) 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.64

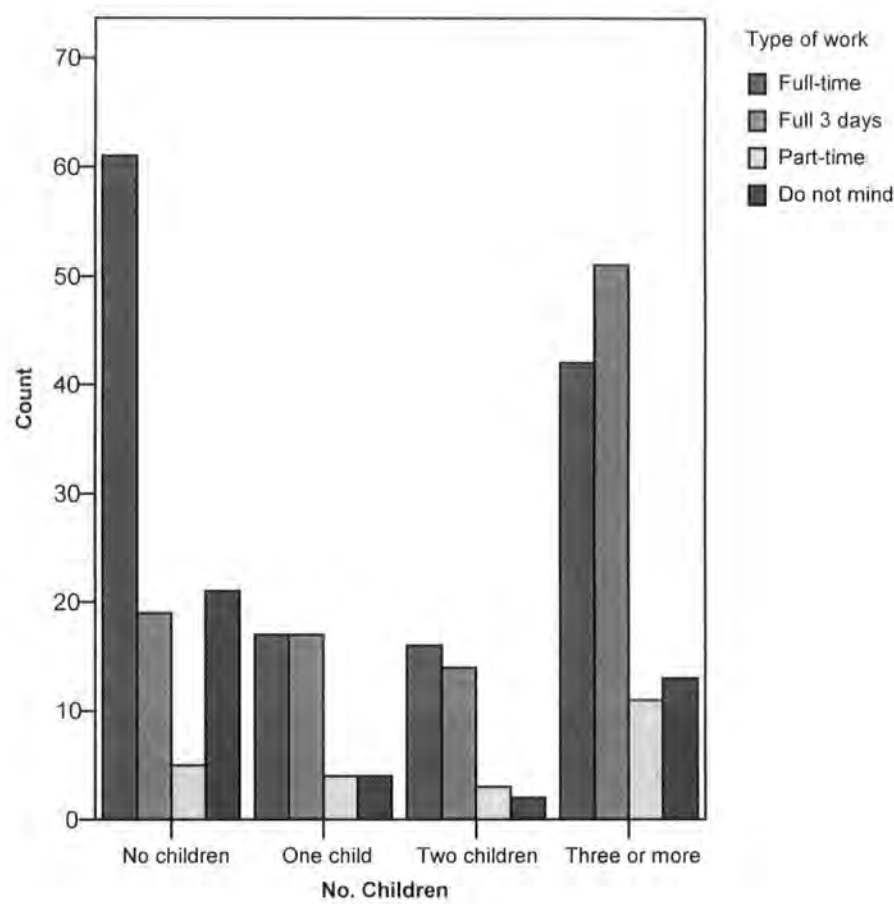
The table 7.66 shows that there is no significant difference in the unemployed group, since their significance value, which is 0.205, is bigger than the alpha



value of 0.05. This means that the type of work preferred is not significantly different between the different respondents who have different numbers of children and between the different groups of respondents who has no children, one children, two children and three or more. By contrast, the table shows that there are significant differences between the different groups of respondents according to the number of children they have and the type of work they preferred for the employed sample and the whole group.

To take the research further, figure 7.13 depicts the cross-tabulation between different groups of the respondents according to the number of children they have and the type of work they prefer in the case of the employed sample. The figure proves that the employed group with no children prefers a full-time job among other types of work, while the respondents who have three or more children in the employed group prefers 3 days work. There is no preference shown for the one child employed group compared with a minor favour of full-time work for the two children group. Several problems face full-time working mothers, and they prefer the job sharing system because of their responsibilities. Husbands also support this flexible system for it has many advantages among which is maintaining the required balance of the women's homely responsibilities besides their ability to regularly attend their jobs. It also helps in reducing the high turnover rate among the women's labour force.

Figure 7.13  
Cross tabulation between type of work and No of children for the employed group



Generally, the result supports with idea that the more children the respondents have, the less working hours they prefer. This supports the idea of providing the no children group with full-time work, while the different children groups can be provided with part time work. This will create new jobs which can be shifted to the unemployed women in Saudi Arabia, this requires re-distribution of the vacancies in the labour market. This leads to the recommendation to facilitate the application of such a flexible system of job sharing which enables women to reach a compromise between their home duties and their jobs. It also encourages more women to work, and helps open up job opportunities for more Saudi women that conform to the true and tolerant laws of Islam.

## 7.10 CONCLUSION

It was mentioned in Chapter 5 that the essence of this study is to explore the nature of factors affecting women's participation in the labour force in Saudi economy. This chapter, therefore, takes the analysis a step further by providing systematic and analytical analysis in its attempt at further exploring the factors affecting women's participation in the labour force in Saudi Arabia by employing factor analysis for the appropriate questions in the questionnaire to locate the most important factors affecting the raised issue related to women's participation in labour.

In an attempt to provide further evidence concerning these tentative findings, a series of interviews were undertaken to investigate the perception of Saudi policy makers and authorities, a comprehensive analysis of which is provided in the following chapter.

## **Chapter 8**

# **Investigating The Perception of Saudi Policy Makers and Authorities on Women's Economic Participation**

### **8.1 INTRODUCTION**

The debate about women's work in Saudi Arabia is a very complex one as the analysis in the following sections indicates. This will be shown through an analysis of the answers provided by in-depth interviews. While Islamic law is perceived to be an important aspect of this complexity, it should be noted that it allows the woman to work when she or her family are in need or when the society itself needs her in particular. Thus, the need for work is not merely limited to the financial aspect. It could be a psychological need such as the need for a specialised woman who is not married, or the married woman who has no children, or who has a lot of leisure time and wants to relieve boredom.

To promote women's participation in all sectors of the Saudi economy, there is a need for a comprehensive understanding of, and more accurate data regarding, various types of historical, social, cultural, religious, and demographic factors related to the prevailing lack of women's participation in the formal production of the Saudi economy. An important tool to gather such data, and hence form such a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter, is through the use of interviews, as it enables the researcher to gather primary data from the actors involved in the process. To substantiate this, Reinharz 1992) states that interviewing is particularly important for the study of women, because women can express

their own ideas. Lemsine (1983) argues that 'we can understand the present Arabia only by questioning and probing the problems of its women' (Lemsine 1983: 31).

In addition to interviewing women to gather their opinion and perceptions, it is also important to interview the actors on the supply side, namely the policy makers regarding women's economic participation in the country. This chapter thus attempts to present the analysis of and the findings from the interviews conducted with policy makers.

The issues will be explored at a theoretical level and a comment on what the interviewees think or suggest is presented alongside. There will be a concentration on the extent to which Islam is able to influence these issues. However, there will be no analysis of the Islamic laws regarding woman's rights at this stage as these are discussed in a separate chapter (Chapter 3). After the analysis, a conclusion will be drawn to see what it really is that separates these people theoretically and practically in their context.

## **8.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INTERVIEW SAMPLE**

In order to investigate the opinions and attitudes of the Saudi authorities in the public and private sectors on the employment of women, ten authorities and policy makers (4 males referred to as 'M' and 6 females referred to as 'F') were interviewed between February and June 2004. All answered questions on women's employment, with particular regard to the factors affecting woman's employment.

For this research, semi-structured interviews were designed and conducted with the objective of generating respondents' perceptions on five themes. The format of the data collected through the interview process followed a structured layout. Therefore, the researcher decided not to use any software to analyze the data, and rather decided to build a matrix-like table and involve in discourse oriented analysis of what has been related in the interview process. This approach will enable the reader to see the responses

derived from the interviewees, along with the researcher's interpretation of these responses, and compare these responses to each other. This indicates that an interpretative approach is used to analyse the data gathered through interviews.

The data analysis strategy allows us to break down the feedback into the pre-determined themes, and therefore, the analysis of each theme individually.

The five themes are:

- 1- Reasons for women's work in the Saudi society;
- 2- Obstacles;
- 3- Equality, inequality and justice;
- 4- The role of government;
- 5- The role of social environment.

These are the issues that were asked to participants in this survey based study, and their responses are analysed and presented in the following section.

In order to preserve the anonymity of my interviewees, each one of them is represented by pseudonyms in the following sections.

### **8.3 REASONS FOR WOMEN'S WORK IN THE SAUDI SOCIETY.**

Saudi Arabia is a wealthy country, which is grounded in Islamic law. According to Islamic tradition, woman may choose to stay at home highly-honoured away from working life, as the husband or father is responsible for her. In other words, for women the father or husband has the financial responsibility due to Islamic and cultural beliefs. However, the current economic situation forces a woman to find a job to support her family. In addition, there is a new philosophical understanding that women must be independent and

therefore must earn their own living, which is another important factor encouraging women to seek a job.

According to table 8.1, all respondents agreed that the Saudi woman works for financial and psychological reasons, namely to financially help support her family and contribute to the building of the society.

In fact, women work to provide for the family and reduce the burden of one partner having to provide the sole income. In addition, maintaining a sense of independence whilst being committed to the family is an essential part of a woman's sense of self-worth. A woman who is making an important monetary contribution to the family income develops and retains a sense of pride in being able to be responsible for ensuring that the family's income is sufficient to provide a high quality of living standard. The burden should not be on just the husband to provide for the family – it should be a joint responsibility.

#### **8.4 OBSTACLES**

In investigating the participation of women in economic life, one finds that there are many obstacles preventing women from working, such as the social and religious environment and most importantly the prejudice the employers have against women.

If a woman does not have the support of her husband and family it will be very difficult for her to work. Coupled with this is some employers' perception that women are less reliable than men – for instance some employers will assume that a woman will be absent regularly to deal with family matters or will ask for maternity leave. Even if a woman is just as qualified as her male counterpart, if not more so, she will have to battle with the employers' ingrained perceptions and prejudice, particularly if it is for a role traditionally dominated by men. Additionally, if a woman has children, the prohibitive cost of childcare is a major obstacle and typically the cost of this may take up the entire month's salary.

Other problems range from religious ones to social ones. Religion and social norms are very dominant in the Muslim and Arab societies in particular, and especially in a country that applies the *Shariah* law such as Saudi Arabia. Indeed, there are particular issues related to part and full-time jobs as regards to women which should be mentioned as well.

These issues were asked to the participants of this survey study to gather a better understanding of these obstacles and, consequently, to find a way out for them.

#### **8.4.1 Main Obstacles and Difficulties Inhibiting Women's Employment in Saudi Arabia**

As it has been revealed, according to the male and female respondents, most of the obstacles for women's employment are due to social norms and religious misconceptions. Other obstacles are related to shortcomings in vacancies, transport and training. While it is possible to overcome the obstacles related to shortcomings in vacancies, transport and training, it is difficult to remove the obstacles relating to society and religion due to their complications. However, Saudi Arabia has been going through change under the global forces and people are becoming more accommodative and flexible regarding religious teachings and social norms.

In particular, the financial needs of modern families act as an important push factor leading people towards change.

Another obstacle that was mentioned by the respondents is the long working hours. It is a fact that part-time jobs are not very popular in the Arab world, while there is a belief that such part-time jobs may be better suited to woman physically and financially under the family commitment, as she is not expected to be fully financially responsible for a family as is the case with the man. Full-time jobs are considered to be hectic for a woman who has family commitments. The public sector is supposed to provide child care in nursery



schools so that the employees would be more encouraged to carry out the job as this will not jeopardize their family life (See table 8.2, Q1 for further details).

#### **8.4.2 Effectiveness and Efficiency of Information Sources Available to Job Seekers**

As table 8.2, Q2 demonstrates, there are no good information sources available in the country for job seekers. That is, advertising for jobs is very poor or hardly efficient. Among the participants only F1 pointed out the Civil Ministry, which is responsible for advertising the jobs of the public sector. However, she also confessed that there is nothing done when it comes to the private sector. She, therefore, requests better action to be taken by the public sector in this regard. She consequently suggested that establishing some kind of job centres that satisfy the needs of the job seekers who do not necessarily have personal relationships and networks to enable them, according to her, to get good jobs.

#### **8.4.3 Problems Faced By a Working Mother in the Work Place**

As can be observed from the results, this question is particularly concerned about working 'mothers' who may face problems while coping with both work and home duties. The results indicate that problems faced by working mothers in the work place are enormous. This is because the children are involved in the process and not only the husband or the parents. Therefore, this requires the cooperation of the husband and his understanding of the situation. This seems to be a prerequisite for the woman to work. However, this is not the only problem that a woman faces, as the problem actually starts at the work place and not at home. As can be seen in table 8.2, Q3, most of the respondents argued that the lack of a close nursery school to the work place is the major obstacle for the working mother. This, of course, creates worries for the working woman, as she must make sure that her child is in safe hands and close to her, and that child should not be adversely affected by

mother working. This, as a source of worry will be reflected negatively on her familial as well as professional life. Added to this, are the long working hours which she has to spend at the work place. This results in spending less time with the children.

Maternity leaves or holidays are also a problem for the Saudi women, as pointed out by the respondents. However, these are also perceived as nightmares by the employers, who are not always ready to provide such leaves and holidays for women whenever they need. Other problems are related to transport and distance from the work place.

It is important to state that all respondents agreed on most, if not all, of these problems. However, there are exceptions. For instance, F6 argued that there is no problem for the working woman whatsoever. She stated that a woman would not opt to work, if she had not realized that she may face all of these problems, and as a result she must be prepared for them.

#### **8.4.4 Making a Balance between Work Demands and Home Responsibilities for Working Women**

The most difficult matter for working women is to establish the balance between demands of the job and home, the results of which shows the uneasy situation that the working woman faces in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, during the interviews Idioms such as will, balance, time management, husband's understanding and assistance were frequently repeated by most of the respondents.

This is such an issue which first of all, needs the husband's approval, understanding and cooperation as well. If he is not willing to help, then the problem becomes difficult. Using time management or a balance between both duties is not easy, as like any other human beings woman has limits and abilities. For instance, among the participants F3 and F5 think that it is extremely difficult to create such a balance as there could be a shortage of

time for the family. However, M2 suggests relying on house maids to help the woman create or help in creating this balance. For M3, the solution is related to finding a part-time job which could be satisfactory. If part-time jobs are not available he then suggested building nursery schools which will contribute to solving this problem. M4, on the other hand, says that this balance depends on the nature of the job and the number of the children. This means that if the job is difficult and the woman has more than one child and there is no house maid to help, then the task becomes more complicated (See table 8.2, Q4).

#### **8.4.5 The Characteristics of Full and Part-Time Working Woman: Age, Type of Work and Employer**

As part of the discussion above, part-time jobs are recommended for women who have a great degree of family commitments. According to the respondents, women who have children and are over forty should seek part-time jobs. This is due to the centrality of the mother within the family, which needs her more than the father. But also, according to respondents, she needs to take maternity leaves and deal with certain health problems. Furthermore, and again according to respondents, due to her physical nature, a woman becomes less productive as she grows in age.

Interview results indicate that full-time jobs, on the other hand, are considered to be suitable for women when they are younger or have no children. For instance, F5 thinks that a woman should spend more time at home with the family in order to strengthen the ties within the family as this is more important than anything else. For that reason, she suggests a part-time job suits woman's physical nature and familial commitments. For M4 there is no difference between a married or single woman in terms of being able to carry out a full-time time job as long as she is determined and is supported by the surrounding

circumstances. However, he stated that the older a woman gets, the less fit she is and as a result the more a part-time job becomes necessary (See table 8.2, Q5).

## 8.5 EQUALITY AND JUSTICE

According to a book titled *Women in Saudi Arabia: Care Development-Improvement* published by the Ministry of Culture and Information of Saudi Arabia, 'the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is highly interested in the welfare of women since Islam, which the kingdom follows as creed, straight path, and way of living, grants them a unique position. All Saudi plans, programs, and projects of women's development are in accordance with women's rights and obligations declared by authorities within a framework of equality in rights and duties between individuals, in addition to the special position of women, which comes from their being the societal foundation as they rear children and prepare them to serve their country and work in various fields'(M.C.I 2004) . But to what extent is this applicable?

Analysing the Saudi development plans indicates that planning for women started in the fourth development plan (1985–1990). It should be noted that for the first time, there is a chapter about women and development under the eighth development plan, which was released in 2005. But does this help or contribute to the equality between both sexes in Saudi Arabia? Some argue that women in Islam are considered equal with men starting from their rights to be part of a contract and ending in their right to possess properties and dispose of them as they wish. However, it is a fact that the Saudi traditions deny women those rights, as laws in Saudi Arabia discriminate against women in almost all aspects of life including decision-making, employment, education and family relationships.

In order to clarify this point and seek the truth, some questions were addressed to both men and women to see what they think and how they perceive the issue of equality. The first question was about whether men and women have the same rights and chances. The

second one was about if a working woman enjoys a better social status. The third was about discrimination between males and females. The results are presented in the following section.

### **8.5.1 Do You Think That Woman and Man Should Get the Same Chances In Education and Work?**

The answer to this question was almost the same with all interviewees, as they agreed on the fact that a woman should or she actually gets the same chances as man in terms of education. However, in terms of work, the interviewees believe that she is not supposed to have the same chance as the man. This is, according to the respondents, due to the fact that men are responsible for their families and are physically fitter for many jobs than woman. Only F1 insists that she get the same chances as males because she is as responsible and fit as a man and that she 'can work successfully in all fields'. If this is not happening, according to her, then it is the government to blame as it should provide the chances for woman to work in all professions and prepare the society through education oriented campaigns to accept this and cope with it. It is noted that F6 almost agreed with F5 regarding giving woman the same chances to work in all fields except in certain or very few ones that do not suit woman at all such as the military service or oil excavating (See table 8.3, Q1 for details).

### **8.5.2 Do You Believe That Women Who Are Employed Enjoy a Higher Social Status?**

Out of nine interviewees, four said that woman do really enjoy a higher social status due to working. This is due to the fact that she has equal opportunities with men in terms of holidays and salary. Moreover, the society has also started to look at her as a productive and active member who can be as responsible as the man. According to M3, for instance,

the new generation of Saudi males would prefer to get married to employed woman rather than to the non-employed one. This could be attributed to financial reasons, so that a woman may help the husband to achieve a better life. The rest of the respondents deny any kind of high social status for many reasons. F3, for example, states that there are no laws that protect their rights. F2 relates this to the social norms and the preference of men over women in professional life. F5 says that despite the fact that a woman may work for long shifts, she is 'deprived of the right to benefit from her salary directly' (See table 8.3, Q2).

### **8.5.3 Do Working Women Face Discrimination Compared to Men and the Kinds of Discrimination?**

Some of the interviewees started by acknowledging the existence of discrimination in certain aspects of working life, while the rest of the interviewees started their answer by denying any kind of discrimination but then changed that by using discourse markers such as 'however', 'but', 'none the less' and so on. So, there seems to be an agreement to a certain extent on the existence of discrimination in the society. But what aspects of discrimination are there?

Many of the interviewees mentioned the promotions issue, which, apparently, are only granted to men. Moreover, in terms of training and decision-making and attending conferences, men seem to have the largest portion. Not only this but also a woman is not even recommended to attend conferences, according to F4. Furthermore and as usual, F1 goes further by adding other aspects of discrimination that is going on unnoticed. She talks about discrimination in separating both sexes at the work place, discrimination in scholarships, in the distribution of landscapes, and in granting loans and mortgages. She even says that a woman is harassed by her boss or friends at the work place and is 'treated as a female' rather than a colleague.

Although F3 refused to answer, she confesses a kind of discrimination that she sees as normal due to the nature of both sexes. Another answer to be considered is that of M3 who said that it is the desire of the woman to work separately from men, and that is not discrimination (See table 8.3, Q3).

## **8.6 THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT**

The oil revenues greatly affected the economy and life of people in Saudi Arabia, as the welfare programs established by the government were financed through the oil revenues. However, from mid-1980 until recent times the low oil prices resulted in fiscal crises due to which cuts were made in the medical, social security, and educational services (Yamani, 1996). It is also important to state that while the economy of the country may do well through oil revenues, the distribution of wealth and incomes may not necessarily be just. Thus, recession due to low oil prices until recent times has affected the job opportunities both in public and private sectors.

The government plays a critical role in the functioning of the economy. However, many people do not really understand what exactly the government does and how this has an impact on the economy. For this reason five questions were asked, among which were questions about the changes in the Saudi economy and how these changes can be met.

### **8.6.1 The Number of Working Women in the Kingdom**

In the first question, respondents were asked to give their opinion on the percentage of working women in the labour market in Saudi Arabia. Replies generally indicated that the employment of women is low and limited. It is also worth noting that interviewees provided different rates. F2 said that the percentage reaches 6% while F6 said that it is no more than 3%. For F5 it is 17% and F3 agrees on this percentage. F6 said that the unemployment percentage among men and women in the kingdom reached 35%. So,

different rates but the result is one: a very low percentage of working women. However, M3 seems to have no worries about the percentage of working women since he considers finding jobs for the unemployed men to be a top priority when he stated that he does 'know the exact percentage but I think it is not a very big one. It is worth mentioning here that many young men are no longer finding jobs and unemployment average raised largely. So, I think that we should concentrate on finding jobs for men first since they and not the women are responsible about spending, and the professions in which women can work are limited, anyway' (See table 8.4, Q1).

The responses indicate that public awareness related to women's economic participation is very low; and even women themselves are not fully aware of their own position in the economic life of the country.

### **8.6.2 What Changes in the Saudi Economy have Affected Saudi Working Women in Recent Years?**

Apparently, and according to the interviewees, the leap in economy and the rise of prices with a stable income pushed many women to look for a job in order to cope with the increasing financial demands of the family and the society. But this does not mean that finding a job under these circumstances will be easy. With this leap in economy, the market, according to F2, will be looking for professional and trained employees. This will impose a challenge on the woman who, as it has been mentioned, may not be as lucky as a man in having such qualifications and experiences.

For M2 the issue is a little bit different, as he thinks that it is not the leap in the economy that leads to these changes but rather the deteriorating economy resulting from the weak currency due to the large number of foreign workers who are taking the money outside the country. This, according to him, has made the government realize that they can rely on the



women to reduce the number of foreign workers by having women replace the expatriates. Another respondent, M3, mentioned the weak economy, but he did not delve into the details of the reasons of economic difficulties as M2 did.

Finally, it is important to comment on the suggestion of one of the respondents, F1, in this regard. She believes that it would be impossible to keep relying on the public sector for employment or in finding solutions. In addition, since it is very costly to segregate men from women in the work place, and since the economy is also weak, under such circumstances, she suggests, woman's work is not preferable. As the statement implies having such a suggestion from a woman does not help to overcome the difficulties women are having (See table 8.4, Q2).

### **8.6.3 Where Could a Woman Find New Alternative Jobs in Harmony with the Expectation of Saudi Women?**

Answering such a question, F1, stated that women can work 'in all government and private departments as long as the nature of the job suits the nature of the woman, especially if she is guaranteed her idiosyncrasy as a Muslim woman'. For F1, thus, all jobs suit the nature of the Saudi woman as far as her idiosyncrasy is preserved. However, this is a question in itself anyway, as to how jobs satisfying such conditions can be secured or even created.

The rest of the respondents or the majority of them suggested opening special projects and work places for women so that they work in peace in a society that rejects the idea of mixing both sexes together. However, this was not the only alternative, as among others, F3, F5, F6 and M4 suggested working at home using certain facilities such as the computer, fax and telephone could still give women the opportunity to be part of the

economic activity. But is it a successful alternative? Indeed, no one seems to have mentioned anything about the success of this suggestion.

M2 and M4 put some of the blame of not providing suitable jobs on the private sector, which, M2 and M4 believes, employs foreign workers instead of local ones. The private sector can also, according to M2, build special factories to be run by women and thus help them find jobs and reduce the pressure on the public sector. F2, on the other hand, thinks that alternative jobs are available if women try to look for them, hence bringing an internal criticism.

Lastly, it is difficult to pass F1's statements without any comment. It seems that she does not like the term 'the nature of the Saudi woman' as this seems to be 'incorrect and unjustifiable', because a change has to come and the old perception about women must be changed. She is optimistic that the society is able to change this concept. Then, together with opening new work sites and providing job centres, a woman can find an alternative (See table 8.4, Q3 for details).

#### **8.6.4 Are There Any Future Plans to Encourage Women to Work in the Coming Five-Year Development Plan?**

The interviewees are optimistic for the future and believe that the situation is going to be better and that new plans and decisions are to be considered and implemented. However, as F6 puts it, there is a kind of obscurity in these plans and that the decisions are impromptu.

The Employment Act, as mentioned in the plans, guarantees that a woman can request part-time/flexible jobs as it is now a duty for employers to seriously consider these requests,

While it is important that plans should take into account women's economic participation, they should also be more promising in the implementation of targets.

**8.6.5 Do You Think That Laws and Regulations Controlling the Increase of Woman's Participation in Employment Market Will Be Changed? If Yes, Would Such Changes Take Place (Within Three Years Or More, For Example)?**

According to one of the male respondents, M1, change should come to meet and suit the needs of the society. The increasing number of graduates, increasing unemployment, and the rising prices impose new laws in order to adapt to the new needs.

F5, on the other hand, thinks that the changes have already taken place and can be felt and seen. A few of the examples she gives include the new laws that allow women to sign contracts with maintenance companies that operate in female departments, and the establishment of the woman-industrial estate in the northern region. This is in addition to the establishment of the different committees such as the National Committee for Human Rights and the Saudi Committee.

All interviewees agreed on the change in these regulations, but some of them were cautious in this regard. F2, for example, put a condition for these changes to be effective, when she said that they should not come into opposition with social norms.

F1 stated that it is worth waiting to see or test the credibility of these laws or changes to be implemented, while F3 describes these changes as random rather than organized ones. This, hence, implies the necessity of a structural change.

For M3 there are changes that will or have taken place. However, 'these laws may not create real changes for women and the reason is that the economy is still weak and unemployment is high among men who have the priority for these jobs if they exist'. This

again implies the importance of structural change, which may necessitate the further diversification of economic activity in the country. (See table 8.4, Q5 for further details).

## 8.7 THE ROLE OF SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

The social environment plays an important role in women's employment by providing customary regulations and principles. The reasons for this are many. Some of them are related to the way the society looks at or treats an employed woman, and others are related to the way a woman is perceived at the work place. The way the society deals with women in general and the employed one in particular can be related to religious misconceptions. Actually, the religion does not impose restrictions, as it does not state or prohibit a woman from working. The conventional restrictions in the Saudi society are the result of traditional interpretation of Islamic principles related to hijab, which has been extended to the work place.

Due to such nature of the issue, it is only with the help of the society and its understanding that the situation can change. The government will always support decisions and projects only when the society is happy about these and encourage the government for such changes. The world is changing and people are changing and are no longer blindly obedient. They are looking for a change that does not contradict with the *Shariah*, which, on the other hand, may contradict the old norms and traditions. Thus, the following section presents the evaluation of the interviews conducted regarding the social environment and changes taking place in the social environment.

### **8.7.1 Now a Days Many Families Believe in the Necessity of Both Man and Woman to Work in Order to Obtain a Good Living Standard. Is This Right or Wrong and Why?**

Although the question was one, the answers varied quite a bit. For example, as F1 stated, women of the lower class cannot work because they cannot afford a driver to give them a lift to the work place and thus they cannot improve their living standards. This is an important handicap, as women in Saudi Arabia had been forbidden from driving cars until recently. However, an entirely different view came from F3, who thinks that the living standards of women would be better without work. Her justification for that is that when a woman works, then she needs transport, clothes, a house maid and other superficialities. Thus, F3's remark is not aimed at preventing women from work, but rather related to the consequences of her working. M2, on the other hand, as a male, supported the view that women of both lower and middle classes need to work but not those of the upper one.

F5 confesses that the change in society necessitates a better income. However, she believes that the problem is not in the low income but in the way that income is spent. F3 agreed with this and she put the blame on the woman: 'Had she learned budgeting; she would not need to work!'. Similarly, F6 does not seem to care about these changes since men are responsible for spending and not women.

### **8.7.2 Are Saudi Working Women in Favour of the Idea That 'Woman Should Not Retire and Work Life Long' or the Idea That 'Woman Should Work Till the Age of Retirement?'**

Interviewee statements for this question display different opinions regarding working until the age of retirement. The majority, however, said that a woman would prefer to retire early even if means that she has to pay money to get that. An early retirement would give the woman plenty of time to spend with the family and would give the new generation a

chance to find a job as well. However, this is not obtainable for some reasons. First, if she leaves before the retirement age is due, then she won't be paid more than half of her salary. So, if she is guaranteed a full salary, she may do it straight away. Second, if, for any reason, she decides to come back to work, she won't be able to do so, according to the law.

M4 talks about an early retirement, especially in the education sector. For him, if this shows anything then it shows the complexity of the woman's doubled role in the society. But, in reality this constitutes another obstacle in front of women. Would it be easy for her to get a full salary when she retires earlier, and would she be able to come back to work when she needs? So, it is really a complexity in her role. It is worth mentioning here that some women, such as F4, would like to delay retirement and keep working in order to make use of their abilities and experience as they are confident about being able to give more. (See table 8.5, Q2 for further details)

### **8.7.3 Who, Among the Working Women, Has the Desire to Continue Work**

#### **After Getting Married or Having Children?**

From the answers of the interviewees, one can notice that the majority of the women would like to continue to work even if they get married or have children. However, this depends on the agreement between any couple. So, as far as she can maintain a balance, then there wouldn't be any problem. Women who have spent years at university would find it extremely difficult to leave their jobs and sacrifice their professional career even after marriage.

According to F1, many women would continue working: 'especially those who are specialized in certain fields such as doctors, engineers and postgraduates. All of those have spent years in specialization and wouldn't wish to lose them. That's why one can

understand their insistence to work and their position regarding this'. (See table 8.5, Q3 for further details).

#### **8.7.4 Do Social Customs and Traditions Have Influence on Woman's Desire Whether to Stay at Home or to Work?**

The differences in opinions in this question are crystal clear. While some of the interviewees said that customs and social norms have an impact, others stated that they do not. Those who said that norms have influence described this influence as being negative and expressed their pity for that. However, F3 reiterated her traditional position by stating that we should be obedient to the Holy Qur'an which asks women to stay at home. But do women really want to stay at home? For F6 they absolutely do not want to; but what can they do amid a society that has its own characteristics.

F1 confesses there is a gradual improvement and change in the society in this regard despite the fact that there are still some cases where we can find a big influence of customs and norms. According to her, due to the silent change taking place, girls are no longer ready to wait for a bridegroom to come and take her from her family. With these changes, women like to prove themselves. The same opinion is shared by M4. This is further substantiated by some other statements, such as M3, who states that women are encouraged to work.

Those who implicitly confessed the influence of the social norms, put the blame on non-abiding by the religious and social requirements through meeting the special needs for woman's work. F2, on the other hand, sees the matter differently. She thinks that the influence of the customs and social norms range according to the nature of the community within the Kingdom. For example, there is less influence in the rural areas such as among the places where Bedouins are inhabited.

## 8.8 CONCLUSION

To conclude, starting from the reasons for a woman to work and passing through the obstacles that she may face, in addition to the (in)equality with the opposite gender together with the frustrations that woman experiences from the role of the government and ending in the confrontation with the society, the Saudi woman's situation is not easy at all. Even when new laws are legislated to improve the employment of the woman, still some people have their own reservations as to whether these laws are suited to the social norms and customs.

Moreover, there is a big gap between the provisions of Employment Act and its implementations, which has not overcome the discrimination between the sexes, which is clear through the biased attitude of the employers.

Consequently, difficulties regarding women's economic participation have to be tackled. A good step that can be taken towards change is to remove these obstacles from women's way first, especially those related to the provision of nursery schools, transport, training and vacancies to facilitate women's economic participation in the economy. Policies, then, must be pursued to establish equality with men in terms of salary, promotion and vacancies. In addition, the role of the government should be activated regarding women's employment: special projects for women could be initiated; new plans and decisions need to be taken in order to increase woman's participation in the employment market. Finally, and most importantly, the opinions of religious authority and the religious opinion prevailing in the society, namely customs and norms, regarding women's employment should be re-considered to pave the way for positive changes, as it is clear that religious provisions are mixed with traditional customs and norms. But at a certain stage, the society has to



change its old concepts and misunderstanding of some religious teachings. People must be persuaded by the government and its *Ulama* (religious scholars) in order to transform the society into one, which accepts woman as an active and functioning partner without losing her characteristics as a Muslim woman.

Lastly, all the findings in this chapter are summarised in the following tables, which are hoped to provide a brief and concise understanding of the issues covered in this chapter:

**Table 8.1 Interviewee's responses /theme 1**

Reasons for women's work	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	M1	M2	M3	M4
Why	Financial and self-fulfilment	Financial	Fill spare time ,relieve boredom, and achieve luxurious life	Financial and self-fulfilment	Financial; and practice a social right	To be active and productive	Financial	To communicate with others and feel happy	Financial and psychological	Support herself
For whom	The family and the economy	The family and society	Herself	Serve her country	Fulfil herself and the family	The economy and society	The family and society	The family, relatives and help her country	For herself and family	Society needs

**Table 8.2 Interviewee's responses / Theme 2 /Q1**

Theme 2 Obstacles	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	M1	M2	M3	M4
Q1 What are the main obstacles inhibiting women's employment in Saudi Arabia; and that a woman could face in finding a job?	Familial, social, secular, misinterpretation of religious teachings and lack of qualifications.	Lack of job vacancies in public sector and the paucity of these vacancies in private sector, The social norm, Transport and The difficulty of moving	Lack of training	Shortage in vacancies, limitation of departments for women to work in, lack of formal permanent jobs system and the presence of temporary jobs the salary of which does not match with the employee's qualifications or with the work requirements.	Nature of the Saudi society, the poor financial rewards and unclear rights of the employee.	No obstacles if we have qualified women	Limited job in which a woman is allowed to work, nature of the social as well as the religious situation of the woman, Religious and legal restrictions that prevent her from mixing with men at work.	The limited job opportunities , The lack of the institutions that take the responsibility to look after the children. The opinion of the parents regarding the working of a woman as being against the social norms.	Limited chances in public sector, no market demand, not accepted by husband, and social norm	Transportation, no suitable accommodation outside her city, limited job opportunities and so many graduated women.

**Table 8.2 Interviewee's responses /Theme 2 /Q2**

Theme 2 Obstacles	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	M1	M2	M3	M4
Q2: Do you think that the information sources available to job seekers are affective and achieve their objectives?	No	Yes, regarding jobs in the public sector	No	No	No	No	No	No	Do not think so	Not active

Table8. 2 Interviewee's responses / Theme 2 /Q3

Theme 2 Obstacles	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	M1	M2	M3	M4
Q3: What kind of problems a working mother may face in the work place?	The distance between home or the place where the children are and work site. The difficulty of leaving the workplace in exceptional circumstances. The difficulty of transport in emergency. During the period of breast-feeding and at the age before children start going to school.	Nature of the job, child care and nursing service close to work place.	Child care problem to solve.	Transportation and how to handle both work and home.	A balance between work and familial duties, physical and psychological effort she exerts at work makes the woman's energy less at home, the absence of the nursery schools which are close to the work sites and the holiday that a mother requires when her children become sick.	I don't think that there are real problems facing the working mother since she is entitled to take a maternity leave when she gives birth. She can also use bottle feeding instead of breast feeding.	Unavailability of nursery schools at work sites.	Short maternity vacations and the irresponsibility of the husband towards the children.	The biggest problem is that work sites do not have a specified space for the children who should be close to their parents.	Schools are not equipped with nursery rooms and there are even very few nursery schools.

Table 8. 2 Interviewee's responses / Theme 2 /Q4

Theme 2 Obstacles	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	M1	M2	M3	M4
Q4 How can a working woman make a balance between work demands and home responsibilities?	Organize s her time and using technique s that save time and finds a helping hand regarding children when she is absent. It is also necessary for the working woman to put a list of priorities and sacrifice a lot of social activities.	By good planning, organization, time management and the help of the family members especially the husband.	There must be shortage of time.	Organize s her time, arranges priorities and finds assistance from the whole family.	Quit some of her familial commitments and rely too much on house maids and tutors.	She can if she separates between the working hours and home duties and carry out her responsibilities professionally and domestically speaking.	By being serious and able physically and psychologically speaking so that she has the desire to create the balance between work and home; by having a mutual understanding with her husband and organizing her time.	Cooperation from the husband and relatives such as the parents, by relying on the house maids. The problem of raising the children can also be given time if there was a strong will and ambition	She should arrange with her husband in this regard and should forget the problems she faces at work once she entered home. In this case the part time job could do. The government take the responsibility of nursing the children and give enough holidays .	Balance depends on the kind and nature of job and the cooperation of the family and the house maid who could help as well

**Table 8.2 Interviewee's responses /Theme 2/ Q5**

Theme 2 Obstacles	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	M1	M2	M3	M4
Q5 What are the characteristics of full and part-time working woman in terms of age, type of work and employer?	A woman would prefer to have a part time job during her undergraduate or postgraduate study and even during her marriage life, especially if she has children who need care. Also after her forties and fifties, a woman would still prefer to have a part time job as it is easier.	A mother who has got children to look after, and sometimes parents. It also suits women who have no commitments and are energetic and can make a balance. Moreover, the kind of job, whether it is a white collar one or not, and the place of work.	Suitable for married women who have responsibilities and priorities.	Suitable for women who have got children and cannot create a balance between their responsibilities , Women who have certain health requirements and can't work for long hours and women who need to take maternity leaves.	Due to her physical nature, a woman cannot work for long hours.	I think that the circumstance s on which a woman decides whether to go for a part or full-time job are not only related to the age, the sort of job she gets or for whom she works but rather to the personal circumstance s related to children, husband and health			Some ladies are interested in this idea since it gives woman a bigger chance to look after her children and husband in addition to earning some money. If this is applied, then it will give the woman much time to spend with the family.	There is a difference between a married woman and a single one. The nature of woman also and her familial circumstances may play a role in this regard. Moreover, the older she becomes the more she needs a part time job.

**Table 8.3 Interviewee's responses /theme 3 Q1, Q2 and Q3**

Theme 3 Equality, Inequality and justice	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	M1	M2	M3	M4
Q1 Do you think that woman and man should get the same chances in education and work?	Of course	Yes in education, but in work men should get more chances to get jobs.	Yes in education, but in work men should get more chances to get jobs.	Yes in education, but in work men should get more chances to get jobs.	Equality between them must be considered according to physical and professional characteristics.	Yes, apart from military works and oil excavating or any hard work, a woman should be given the same chances as man.	I do not think so	Yes in education, but in work men should get more chances to get jobs.	In work no, but in education yes	we want a woman to work and at the same time maintain her dignity and health
Q2 Do you believe that women who are employed enjoy a higher social status?	I don't think that women enjoy a fair social status	I don't think so with regard to education, training, and employment	Absolutely not.	Yes, I do	No	restricted to work in very limited areas	Yes	Yes	I think that the working woman in Saudi Arabia enjoys a just social status.	Yes
Q3 Do working women face discrimination compared to men? If 'yes', state the kinds of discrimination	Discrimination is there not in terms of wages, as the case in the west, but in terms of job opportunities	Yes, they face discrimination in terms of job opportunities	I refuse to answer this question. We are not in a field battle with men but we complete each other.	Yes, priority in high positions, promotions and decision making is given to men.	A man may be given a better chance in promotion, especially in public administrative centres.	Yes, there is discrimination among them, especially in certain fields.	The only discrimination that may exist is in the wide range of jobs available for men and not women	the leadership positions at work are always in the hands of men	There is no discrimination regarding work	Discrimination is in leading positions which go for men rather than women



**Table8.4 Interviewee's responses /theme 4/ Q1& Q2**

Theme 4 The role of government	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	M1	M2	M3	M4
Q1 What is the percentage of working women in the Kingdom?	Low	6%	18% in public sector and 3% in private sector	Increasing	17%	3-35% unemployment in Saudi Arabia.			Low	Work scopes are limited to education and medicine.
Q2 what changes in the Saudi economy have affected Saudi working women in recent years?	Leap in the economy	Leap in the economy	Leap in the economy	Rise in prices and the stability of income for more than twenty years.	Job offers, Family demands, media affect, competition and qualification			Foreign workers affect	Leap in the economy, lead to limited jobs	Modern society change women from productive to consumer, this leads to increase spare time.

Table 8.4 Interviewee's responses /Theme 4/ Q3& Q4

Theme 4 The role of government	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	M1	M2	M3	M4
Q3 Where could a woman find new alternative jobs in harmony with the nature of Saudi women?	Special work sites for women	Opening departments for women in all public sectors and giving them the chance to work in private sector	Remote work or working from home.	Opening specialized departments for women at universities, loans for those who like to start their own business and open departments for women in public sector.	Facilitating working in different governmental sectors.	To work from home through workshops in tailoring, making sweets or computer work.	In all government and private departments, the nature of which suits the nature of the woman	private sector has bigger responsibility	In courts and in the Ministry of Islamic Affairs	Alternatives offered from the private sector
Q4 Are there any future plans to encourage women working in the coming five-year development plan?	Sure there are, the last one of these are related to the new decisions taken by the Cabinet end of May 2004 and which give the opportunity for the employment of women in all ministries.	There are lots of plans and great expectations but need to be put into action		Yes, there are. There are some indications; and this is what we hope to see.	There are plans in the future to encourage women to work in private sector	I don't really know.			There is a debate about this issue. The Cabinet has issued some decisions regarding this and the government has clearly talked about opening new scopes for women who want to work	

**Table 8.4 Interviewee's responses /Theme 4/ Q5**

Theme 4 The role of government	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	M1	M2	M3	M4
Q5 Do you think that laws and regulations controlling the increase of woman participation in employment market will be changed?	New laws regarding woman's employment and the increase of her participation have really just been issued	Yes, shortly, within less than three years.	Yes, random changes have just started but I hope this will be soon, say in three years.	Yes, there will be change in favour of woman and I hope that this will take less than three years.	There are indications that show the increase of woman participation in employment market	Yes, after more than three years	Yes, I believe in change because the reality necessitates so	They have really changed and I think that will be better in the coming three years.	laws will change, and they have actually changed by the Cabinet.	Laws will change and change is happening gradually and rapidly these days.

Table 8.5 Interviewee's responses /Theme 5/ Q1 & Q2

Theme 5 The role of social environment	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	M1	M2	M3	M4
Q1 Now a day's many families believe in the necessity of working by both man and woman to obtain a good living level. Is this statement right or wrong and why?	It is right for certain classes	It is necessary when there is need and when some conditions are fulfilled	Of course it is wrong.	a woman's work is necessary but it is not obligatory .	Social and economic change in our society necessitated that more than one individual participate in income.	I think this is wrong because spending is the responsibility of the man and the man only		It is a right expression in all social classes except the rich one	It is right. Living standards are low which is why both man and woman work	The correct percentage is 70% and most of them want to improve the family's income and savings

Q2 Are Saudi working women in favour of the idea that "woman should not retire and work life long" or the idea that "woman should work till the age of retirement	Of course not.	There are two ideas: That a woman retires early to give the chance for the younger generation. And if she gets the guarantee to come back to work when she needs.	Till she retires.	Most of them don't prefer to work till retirement and some wish if they could even pay money to retire earlier. Others would like to delay retirement to make use of their abilities, experience and to give more.	The majority would prefer early retirement, but the problem is that the retirement system gives the woman half her salary.	I don't think that a human being can work for the whole life.	Not all of them share the same opinion	Most of the women would like to work but they prefer early retirement.	I think that I answered this question before	Regarding education, there are a large number of women who ask to retire early
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**Table8.5 Interviewee's responses /Theme 5/ Q3 & Q4**

Theme 5 The role of social environment	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	M1	M2	M3	M4
Q3 Who, among the working women, has the desire to continue work after getting married or having children?	The majority of the educated women, especially those who are specialized in certain fields	Many women would like to work especially those who can have a balance and those who would like to improve their living standards	There are many	the majority would prefer to continue working but would rather take into consideration the husband's approval and the need for work or any other reason that necessitates working	there are a few numbers of women who give up their jobs after marriage or giving birth	Those who have suitable circumstances and those in need of money or any other thing.	giving birth is not the reason for a woman to leave work but it is a reason when she has got many children or when some of her children have got special circumstances or needs	The majority	I believe that women would like to continue working after marriage and giving birth.	Many of the working women are married and have children, but there is an exception for that: the husband might not give her a helping hand
Q4 Do social customs and traditions have influence on woman's desire on whether to stay at home or to work?	This was true in the past	The social norms had a negative influence on a woman getting a job	Shouldn't we go back to the Holy Quran and listen to what it says: "And stay quietly in your houses"?	that the big change which is taking place in the society plays a major role in encouraging a woman to work and a man to get married to an employed woman.	the social norms have no influence on woman any more	A woman does not prefer to stay at home but she has to in order to abide by the social norms.	Social norms are a reason when the special needs that respect religion and social norms are not met at work sites.	Social norms differ from a society to another	At the time being, I do not think so. On the contrary, they encourage this	There is a great desire from women to work and families encourage them to have a place in the job market in a state of unemployment.

## **Chapter 9**

### **Conclusions: Discussion and Recommendations**

#### **9.1 INTRODUCTION**

This study attempted to diagnose the main problems that impair the level of effectiveness and hamper women's work, in order to promote women's participation in all sectors of the Saudi economy. After presenting the literature and empirical chapters, this chapter summarizes and synthesises the findings of the research in relation to the current situation of the status of employed and unemployed women in the Kingdom. It also summarises the existing obstacles inhibiting women's employment in the Kingdom, and the facilitators of women's employment. Policies which can be developed to facilitate women's employment are also discussed.

This chapter, which concludes the thesis, comprises seven sections, including this introduction. Section 9.2 presents conclusions and discussion of data findings, while Section 9.3 provides an overview of the main findings linked to the research questions. Section 9.4 focuses on the implications of the research findings and provides recommendations drawn from the findings. While Section 9.5 reviews the main obstacles and prospects in the Saudi framework, and then recommends some possible solutions to improve the women's work in Saudi economy. Section 9.6 defines the study's contribution to the field, while the last section identifies the limitations of the study and scope for further research.

#### **9.2 Conclusions and Discussion of Data Findings**

Figure 9.1 summarizes the obstacles preventing Saudi women and the prospects that influence women's participation in the labour force as a result of the analysis of the sample survey. Saudi woman have the intention to participate in the labour force in order to contribute in building the society but there are obstacles and difficulties

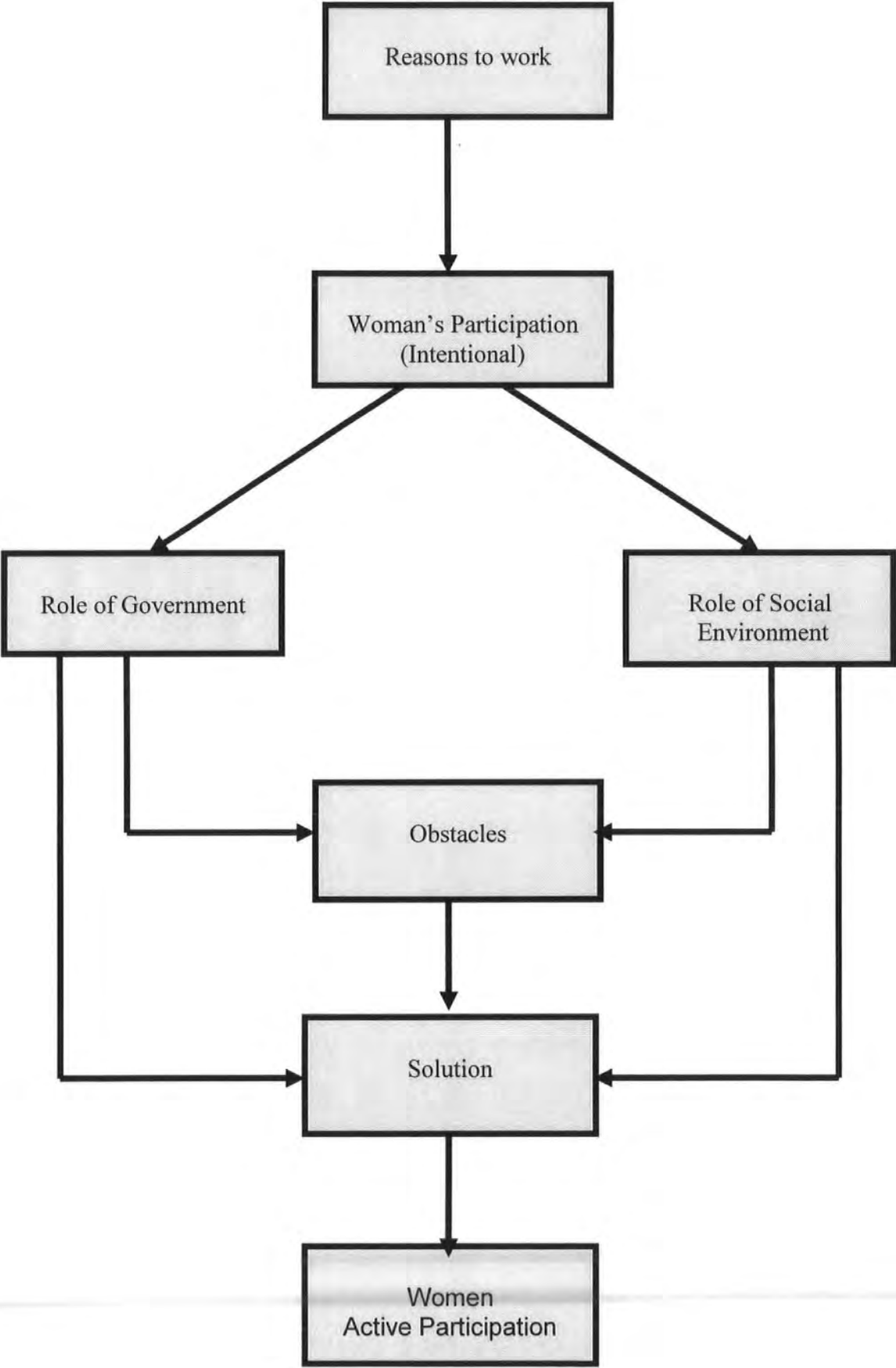
inhibiting her. These obstacles come from two sources: the role of government and the role of social environment. However, these two sources have the solution for these obstacles, as these two sources can apply the policies which can be developed to facilitate woman's work to be an active participant in the Saudi economy.

Some common patterns are deducted from the analysis of the data assembled from interview and questionnaires, which have confirmed the previous research results related to women's participation in the labour force in Saudi Arabia. This research provides new findings in this research, which complement what has been done before, to make the body of knowledge concerning women's participation in the labour force in Saudi Arabia today more informative. This section summarizes research results, which were accumulated through the current study. They can be characterised into the following points:

1. Results related to why women became economically active in Saudi Arabia;
2. Results related to the social and cultural factors that contribute to the non-employment of women in Saudi Arabia;
3. Results related to what can help working women overcome problems they face due to their different roles relating to child raising, home duties and work responsibilities;
4. Results related to attitudes of parents and husbands towards women's work;
5. Results related to the ways of increasing the participation rate of women in the labour market;
6. Results related to the policies that promote women at work on the basis of equal opportunities. Thus, this chapter is structured according to figure 9.1.



Figure 9.1 Summary of Finding



### 9.2.1 Reasons for women's work in the Saudi society

According to the Islamic point of view and Saudi cultural beliefs, the husband or the father is responsible for a woman's financial well-being. Therefore, the women do not need to work. However, the current economic conditions force a woman to find a job to support her family, as the earning of one person in the family may not necessarily provide the well-being sought after. Therefore earning her own living is an important factor encouraging women to seek a job. The most important economic change in Saudi society is the increased economic liberalisation which increased employment opportunities. Also changes in the consumption culture due to the new varieties in markets which in turn necessitated the participation in expenditure by more than one member in the family. Furthermore, media openness which conveys to people many social and economic opportunities and also the availability of a woman ready to join the working force who has proved to be competent and skilled in performance contributed to the increased number of women taking up jobs in the market.

In this study, which is based on data gathered through questionnaire and surveys from employed and unemployed Saudi women, all respondents in the interview agreed that the Saudi woman works for financial and psychological reasons, namely to financially help support her family and contribute to the building of the society. On the other hand, it can be seen that both groups of respondents agreed on gaining personal respect as the most important factor out of six choices with the highest mean (4.32). Interestingly, women seeking work for leisure time scored the second highest ranking with the mean value of 3.81. Financial needs as a reason for seeking a job came third in the list with the mean value of 3.61. This indicates that some women do not have enough personal income and they like to earn more. After this was the culture and social needs with the mean value of 3.43. Last was supporting the family and contributing to the national economy, both of which had the same ranking with the mean value of 3.34.

Other researches, such as Arab (1999), showed that the most common reason was to exploit qualifications, while the least favoured reason for the employed sample was for extra income, while for the unemployed sample was to increase their experience (Arab 1999: 162). Al-Shetaiwi (2002) found that the main reason behind Saudi women seeking work was for cultural and social needs. This is followed by supporting the national economy, while the family's financial income was the least rated reason (AL-Shetaiwi 2002: 190). These results are consistent with Al-Jwear's findings (Al-Jwear 1995). Al-Saad (1982) showed that 86% of women work to serve others, and 48% work for self-fulfilment and 28% of her sample work for financial need. Rehem (1983) showed 85% of the employed sample agreed they should work only if it was a financial need and 43% worked for self-fulfilment. Finally, Saudi women work in order to be an active and productive member in the society.

As a result, it can be concluded that Saudi women work for two reasons:

1-To fulfil herself and practice a social right after she gets her degree.

2-To help the family which is in need especially when the father passes away or when the income is so low which is the case nowadays.

### **9.2.2. The Obstacles facing women's employment in Saudi Arabia**

There are many obstacles preventing women from work, such as the social and religious environment and most importantly the prejudice that employers have against women. The study has analysed various factors which influence employed and unemployed women in the Saudi labour market. These include demographic, attitudinal, cultural, and socio-economic factors. The results of the empirical research, the Saudi literature review and the interviewee responses conducted indicate the main factors which influence women's employment status which are discussed below:

### **9.2.2.1 The mismatch between the female graduates and market's needs**

Despite the fact that woman's education project has started lately, women have progressed to such a level to compete with men in the job market in terms of quality and overcome men in terms of quantity. This is due to the efforts exerted by the department named General Administration for Female Education, since it is responsible for Saudi woman's education. However, these efforts concentrate more on quantity rather than quality and lack the variation in courses that are useful to the employment market. Moreover, the majority of the college graduates are qualified mainly in teaching, nursing or medicine and not in other professions. The reason behind this might be the selection of the study subject at university. In our sample the top factors determining the choice of study by a woman was personal interest, followed by good social status and nature of work after graduation. At the same time, the demand for the labour market, as the selection criteria, has the lowest rank, which implies that the Saudi woman does not particularly take into consideration the needs and realities of the labour market in deciding what to do in her future life.

Moreover, the increase of public education and the multiplication of job seekers due to the immense number of graduates, made employment very difficult especially as the current qualifications do not meet the market or the private sector. This implies the reasons for unemployment, as when unemployed women were asked about the reason as to why they do not have a job, the answer of the majority was that they lacked the necessary or the required qualifications which led them to give up looking for jobs. This factor was considered as an obstacle in many studies that have dealt with woman's work in Saudi Arabia (Alnimer 1988: 39), (Al-Husseini 1993), (Al-Ghayth and Al-Mashouq 1996), (Al-Sabaan 2000), (Al-Husaiin 1999), (Daghestani 2000: 377-380) and (AL-Shetaiwi 2002).

### **9.2.2.2 Distance and Transportation**

The majority of the participants indicate that the distance and transportation are the major obstacles preventing women from work. For a woman who comes from a conservative family, the idea of commuting to work over long distances is out of the question. A woman travelling long distances alone in Saudi Arabia will certainly be in danger and that is why most Saudi families reject such an offer regardless of how great an opportunity, career-wise, it might be. However, the distance between home and the workplace might be long, and there is no suitable transportation, which is complicated by the fact that Saudi law does not permit women to drive is one of the major factors, which still remains to be a big issue for Saudi women in the Kingdom. This makes life difficult for working women, as the father or husband has to give a lift everyday back and forth.

There are no significant differences between the employed and unemployed sample regarding the importance of the distance difficulty. While the transportation indicates that the factor has more affect on the unemployed group whenever they have less education and on the employed group whenever they have higher education. Studies have pointed out to the fact that the lack of these services have contributed to the decrease in woman's participation (see Al Saad, 1982; Al Namir, 1988; (Halawani 1982) and (Al-Hazmi 1997).

### **9.2.2.3 Holidays and time off work**

As the working woman is responsible for her job and her family, a psychological pressure results especially when she works for long hours or when she works for extra hours at home. In addition, if the working woman gets married, she might face some of the following problems:

- (i) The distance between home or the place where the children are and work site;

- (ii) The difficulty of leaving the workplace in exceptional circumstances;
- (iii) The difficulty of transport in emergency;
- (iv) During the period of breast-feeding and at the age before children start going to school, the need to look after the children is greater. This worries the mother more and weakens her concentration and performance.

Being away from the children and due to her feminine nature and of motherhood makes a woman feel more responsible towards her children. However, she is still likely to face resistance from the administration whenever she asks for a leave of absence when her child is sick or if she wants to check how he/she is doing at school. Therefore, the more a woman asks to leave early or take holidays, even to attend her children, the more problems she is likely to face at work.

The sample survey indicates that women's participation is still very low and concentrated in public sector organizations and in female designated occupations. This is mainly due to cultural factors as females prefer to be employed in the public sector which provides shorter working hours, better benefits and more secure employment. This assists the employed women to manage better between their two responsibilities at work and home. Moreover, there is social pressure on women to choose forms of employment, which are considered consistent with their traditional caring and nurturing roles. These types of jobs are more prevalent in the public sector. Meanwhile, flexibility and working-from-home make self-employment an attractive alternative. Therefore, the more a woman asks to leave early or takes holidays, even to attend her children, the less productive she is likely to be.

Commonly, women have to choose one of the following as part of her choice of employment: first, a woman retires early to give the chance for the younger generation and second, a woman continues working on condition that she gets a paid maternity holiday for two months and then for two years without a salary. It is a certain fact that

the absence of the nursery schools which are close to the work sites makes it difficult for the mother to work in peace.

Part-time work for women is an issue which has been discussed for a long time. Some educated women objected to this idea since they did not want any discrimination between men and women. Anyway, some ladies are interested in this, since it gives women a bigger chance to look after her children and husband in addition to earning some money. If this is applied, then it will give the woman much time to spend with the family. Indeed, there is a difference between a married woman and a single one regarding this matter, as, the nature of woman and also her familial circumstances may play a role. Moreover, the older she becomes, the more she needs a part-time job.

A woman would prefer to have a part time job during her undergraduate or postgraduate study and even during her married life, especially if she has children who need care. Also after her forties and fifties, a woman would still prefer to have a part-time job since it is easier. This study, therefore, argues in favour of the availability of part time jobs for everybody. This is possible in health and education sectors and even in private sectors.

However, some other jobs do not accept part-timers. Part-time jobs have advantages and are preferred by many people. The same applies to the full time jobs. The former suits a mother who has got children to look after, and sometimes parents. The latter suits a single woman who can create a balance between house work and her job. It also suits women who have no commitments and are energetic and can make a balance. Moreover, the kind of job, whether it is an executive one or not, and the place of work such as working in the factories, affect the choice of a full or part-time jobs. Part time jobs are suitable for some women who have got children and who cannot create a balance between their responsibilities, as mothers and workers at the same time. Part-time jobs are suitable for married women who have responsibilities and priorities. In regard to the newly graduated women, full time jobs help them gain experience under

pressure and time management and in benefiting from the experience of the managers as well.

Women who have certain health requirements and cannot work for long hours and women who need to take maternity vacations or *iddah* 'waiting period' after divorce are keen for part-time jobs. However, not every job is ready for part-timers unless there is a suitable experience, training and qualification for that job. The majority of both samples in this study expressed their preference for full-time jobs, because they concentrate on the financial income in the first place. If women get the same income with a less professional commitment, then the majority will welcome that. They also welcome early retirement, in which they get the same salary as if they are working. Despite that, there is a minority which would like to work and prefer to go on even after retirement age and even to work over time for free.

Both samples asked selected a part-time system as policy selection to create a balance between work and home duties which would increase women's participation in the labour force. By looking at ANOVA findings for the employed group, it can be seen that three variables are statistically significant, which are marital status, last qualification and number of children, while there is no significance in unemployed group. Therefore, this goes with the idea that the more children the respondents have the less working hours they prefer. This finding consisted with interviewee results as well. Also, the long shifts and the availability of the part-time jobs are also considered as obstacles that contribute to the weak female contribution in the employment market and were mentioned in many studies such as Halwani (1402) and Rahimi (1403).

It is perhaps worth pointing out that there is support for the idea of providing the no children group with full-time work, while the different children groups can be provided with part-time work. This will create new jobs which can be shifted to the unemployed women in Saudi Arabia, which requires a re-distribution in the vacancies in the labour market.



#### 9.2.2.4 Mixed work environment

Religious, social, cultural and legal restrictions prevent women from mixing with men at the work site. Work places are unwilling to allocate a separate site for the woman to work in (Almazroa, 2003). Since available jobs are in a mixed environment with men, the Council of Ministers approved a law in 2004 requiring government departments to set up special women's sections. Furthermore, Saudi law states that women have the right to work 'in all fields that are appropriate to their nature'. This indicates that the government should create a suitable atmosphere for women's employment without mixing with men and without engaging in dangerous jobs or harmful activities in accordance with the Kingdom's traditions (Saudi Press Agency 14-08-2005).

Islamic education was reflective when respondents were asked about Islamic guidelines for working women and whether they apply such guidelines in the work outside their home. It seems that most of the respondents know about the Islamic principles regarding work and more than half of the employed participants and less than half of the unemployed participants follow the religious principles as a whole. Most who chose working with women was only due to religious reasons. Saudi women find it difficult to work in a mixed environment, as the findings in both samples are that 75.0% of the employed women and 78.2% of the unemployed sample prefer segregation from men at work due to Islamic and cultural principles. On the other hand, ANOVA test shows that there are no significant differences in both groups in all the studied variables which points to the fact that both groups have the same feeling for this factor. Segregation gives Saudi women a professional advantage because there is no competition with men for such jobs in the public sector (Fakhro 1990). Nevertheless, it would be impossible to keep relying on the public sector. In addition, it is very costly to segregate men from women in the work place especially in the private sector. Consequently, some unemployed women might accept jobs in such places as it can be seen in the factor analysis result, because they need any job even if mixed with men.

On the other hand, in the employed sample the women have more understanding than women in the unemployed sample about the importance of this item.

In addition, these obstacles are related to the misunderstanding of the religious teachings such as the difference between the *khalwah* and the *ikhtilat*. The social system in Islam prohibited *khalwah* or seclusion between men and women while, mixing between men and women or *ikhtilat* in public is allowed but not encouraged, especially if the woman is not covered. As Al-Munajjed emphasises the importance of 'the practice of segregation and confining women to their own company as an institutional mechanism designed to regulate women', to protect their chastity and to 'prevent other men from encroaching on the male honour of the family' (AlMunajjed, 1997, 8, 34). Accordingly, it is important to determine the working conditions and economic feasibility of providing a segregated work environment to solve this obstacle. Thus, the findings in this section of the research are consistent with Rehemi (1983), Alturkestani (1998), Al-Hazzaa(1993) and Aldakheel (2004) findings.

#### **9.2.2.5 Negative view towards working women**

The social and cultural obstacles are related to the norm which says that the woman's major role is to run the house and serve the family, but not to work since a woman's dignity is fulfilled when she keeps away from the street. This social norm has had a negative influence on women getting a job. In addition, some of the obstacles are related to the misinterpretation of the religious teachings, such as in the case of the verse that says: 'And stay quietly in your houses' which is interpreted as the non permissibility of a woman to go out for work. However, the nature of some jobs, which necessitate going out of the job location frequently, such as the case in marketing and the long shifts in the private sector, which could be up to 12 hours is also an obstacle. The poor financial rewards in comparison to the effort made as well as the unclear rights of the employee in terms of insurance and compensation add to these obstacles.

Consequently, Saudi society has a negative attitude toward women working outside home, as the view of Saudi society in the past and present in some cities looks to women's work as a shame. It is, however, important to state that, this way of thinking in the Saudi society has changed. For that reason, working women are no longer looked at in doubt as was the case in the past. Therefore, this factor scored the least obstacle facing women's work, which indicates change in the society towards accepting working women. While some of the interviewees said that customs and social norms have an impact, others stated that they do not. Those who said that norms have influence described this influence as being negative and expressed their pity for that. However, participant F3 reiterated her traditional position by stating that we should be obedient to the Holy Qur'an which asks women to stay at home. But do women really want to stay at home? As for F6, they absolutely do not want; but what can they do amid a society that has its own characteristics?

There is a social negative position towards technical and professional education and towards woman's work. Despite the fact that the Kingdom is paying attention to professional and technical education, the society's negative position towards such kind of education makes these efforts useless, since these kinds of jobs are looked at as not rewarding or respected. These obstacles have more affect on less educated women. Lastly, the Saudi media needs to face up to their responsibilities in creating public awareness, especially among the younger generation. This obstacle also contributes to woman's participation in the economic activities and has been mentioned in many studies among which are Al Namir (1988) and Aba Al Khail (1993). Also, social norms do not help the woman to work far away from home; as it is still unacceptable for some Saudis that woman go out for work, because this will affect her main duty at home.

It should therefore be summarized that both samples agree about the importance of these positive and negative factors regarding marriage and children, but there are differences in the mean values and ranks between them. In addition, according to

ANOVA test, these obstacles have more affect on less educated women. Lastly, the Saudi media need to face up to their responsibilities in creating public awareness, especially among the younger generation.

#### **9.2.2.6 Attitudes of parents and husbands towards women's work**

The Saudi society is in the opinion that women are not obliged to provide the family with money, but they are expected to take full responsibility for looking after the children and the home. However, parents and husband's agreement for their daughters and wives to get a job, positively influences women's employment, as this is a legal requirement in Saudi Arabia. In this study, it can be seen that parents and husband are supporting their women financially applying the Saudi culture, as can be noticed that a large percentage of unemployed women rely on their parents and husbands for their income.

In addition, employed women get strong support from husbands of employed respondents more so than the husbands of unemployed women participants. Furthermore, the husband or father holds the responsibility regarding spending at home as the woman is not responsible for that from an Islamic point of view. In either sample, the percentage of financially self-sustained respondents is only about 12% and 11% respectively. In the same direction the interviewees agree about the importance of the understanding of husbands and parents of the idea that woman's work is essential for a woman to be successful in her job and by having a mutual understanding with her husband and parents regarding the rights and duties, then there should be no obstacles apart from finding the right opportunity and the suitability of personal circumstances, especially if there is a husband and children. The unsuitability of the work environment for woman particularly in the health sector and private sector may be problematic since some mixing jobs are not accepted by husbands or family. There is a necessity for working and also of the suitability of that job for a woman's nature and idiosyncrasy. Therefore, primarily, she should arrange with her husband in this regard.

Another important issue here, and which could help, is the government departments which employ a large number of staff, such as the ministry of education. They should take the responsibility of nursing the children and give enough holidays for pregnant women and women who need emergent vacations. If women are qualified academically speaking, then, there should be no obstacles apart from parents and husband's attitude towards their work and the suitability of personal circumstances, especially if there is a husband and children. The majority would take into consideration the husband's approval and the need for work that necessitate working because husbands play a significant role in their wives' lives in Saudi society. Conversely, the majority of husbands in the sample are supportive and satisfied with their wives' work as long as it does not contradict the society's values and traditions. This finding is consisted with Al-Khateeb (1987) and Al Ghamidi's (1996) findings.

#### **9.2.2.7 Home duties (marriage related factors and children related factors) and work responsibilities**

Woman is the spine of the Saudi family and her role is as important as man's. For that reason, Islam encouraged her to stay at home and urged her not to work, unless she is in need and within some conditions. Moreover, and due to the new social and economic changes that took place in the Kingdom after the discovery of oil, there was a need for female labour force especially in education and health sectors. This, as a result, led to the duality of tasks for woman which resulted in some social and psychological problems. The long hours she spends outside her home due to the work and non-tolerant work system make it difficult for a woman to find a balance between work and familial duties. Moreover, the physical and psychological effort she exerts at work makes the woman's energy less at home. Also, the absence of the nursery schools, which are close to the work sites, makes it difficult for the mother to work in peace. Some of these problems face the working woman regardless of whether she is

a mother or not and they start when she finishes work. Added to these problems are the nature of the job, the children, if the woman is married, and whether there is a nursery school at the work site or not. What can help working women overcome the problems they face due to their different roles relating to child raising, home duties and work responsibilities. Women, especially mothers, must divide their time between work 'productive role' and family 'reproductive role', and balancing all the demands. Women with children are the most disadvantaged group in terms of employment prospects in this country. The husband's support is a critical factor in the mother's ability to seek and attain challenging positions for the majority of the women who are married.

To broaden a mother's options in the labour market, a part-time job would be ideal for them, but these are not easy to find. There is a general lack of quality part-time work available throughout the Kingdom. Also, very few openings, part-time jobs and even fewer fit women backgrounds since most graduates come from social sciences and education; this means that women's skills are being seriously underutilized.

The government established the Human Resources Development Fund to solve unemployment problems, which can help women to look for opportunities only; but it cannot create jobs. This was found to support training and qualifying Saudi workforce in order to encourage them to work in the private sector. Certainly a greater variety of part-time opportunities with more prospects for individual progression after children have left home would offer the best solution, both socially and economically.

Time is valuable for these women, as their livelihoods depend largely on their ability to fulfil the multiple demands of the household and the marketplace. In addition, working mother's absence leads to emotional and cognitive deprivation in the child, because working mothers give less time and supervision than non-working mothers; and due to the lack of the bodies that take the responsibility to look after the children in the right way due to inadequate daycare facilities. It is important that daycarers should give children the early foundations for educational achievement. The availability and cost, of childcare are factors in decisions made by mothers, to participate in the labour market.

Consequently a wide range of settings caring for children at varying stages, including day nurseries, playgroups and after-school care, plays a crucial role in enabling the employment of others; therefore it contributes to the productivity of other sectors and to gender equality.

The absences of women at work have negative and positive impacts on the marriage and children. In this research surveys have shown that 39% of employed women have three children or more, while 19% of unemployed sample have three children or more. Some women think that money is not a good reason for them to leave their children for a foreign housemaid to look after them, as Islam obliged her as a legal guardian to look after children. That is why many qualified women prefer to stay at home despite the availability of jobs. Many also leave their jobs after marriage or giving birth because of the negative impacts on their husbands and children. The majority of the women who were married believed that the husband's support would be a critical factor in their ability to seek and attain challenges and conflicts between home and work; the inability to make logical work-related decisions; jealousy; disputes at home on ways to spend the earnings; the problem of being able to assume accountability for their decisions at work; and the lack of moral and logistical support that women in a country like Saudi Arabia need to be able to succeed. It was found, however, that the administrators with more education had less difficulty dealing with these problems than did their less-educated colleagues. Similar findings which support the research findings in this study are in Al Halwani (1402), Rahimi (1983), and Al Nimir's (1408) studies.

#### **9.2.2.8 Legislative and institutional factors**

Laws pertain to providing women with better opportunities or obstructing their economic participation. Researchers, responsible people and employees think that it is time to develop new laws to suit the economic change in the Kingdom; especially due to the fact that woman have become part of the work force.

Labour law is potentially very important to bring women into the labour market, and to increase their income levels and productivity. Thus, the Saudi government realized the importance of women's rights, as the new labour law replaces the one issued 37 years ago. The new labour law protects the rights of workers male and female, Saudi and non-Saudi and ensures a balanced relationship between employers and employees. It also goes along with the international agreements signed by the Kingdom and principles of the World Trade Organization.

Currently, there are no activation and application of some laws and decisions. However, according to one of interviewees, these laws may not create real chances for women and the reason is that the economy is still weak and unemployment is high among men who have the priority for these jobs if they exist. The respondents of both questionnaires indicate that the media, Employment Office, Civil Service Ministry and Education Ministry are not doing their job properly in informing the job seekers about the vacancies. It can be seen that both groups are equal in looking at the importance of labour laws, as both groups asked for improving the labour legislation in order to give them more rights. Many studies have considered this factor as an obstacle. The most important of these studies were Halwani (1408) and Al Nimir (1408). This study anticipates that the application of new law change is about to come and the policy makers in charge are seriously working on it.

### **9.3 THE POLICIES TO PROMOTE WOMEN'S WORK ON THE BASIS OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

Like in any society, a Saudi woman is required to be treated gently, never exposed to hardships and must be provided with a healthy working atmosphere, by issuing policies, legislation and strategies that ensure women full rights, as Saudis, like any other workers, are ready to accept the job that offers a suitable salary, good facilities, and a good environment.



The Manpower Council proposed that unemployed Saudis be paid either SR1, 000 or SR1, 500 per month — the first amount to a single person and the second to the head of a family. The *Shura* Council considered the 'dole' system impractical in a country like the Kingdom, where employment conditions are different from those in countries which use the 'dole'. The council said the payments could backfire, resulting in additional complications at a time when efforts are focused on training of Saudis.

Despite this background, Human Resources Development Fund was established. Its eventual objective is to open up employment opportunities before all Saudis who are looking for work. Need for the establishment of this Fund emerged as a result of increasing development requirements in the Kingdom. Moreover, the need to encourage Saudi young men and women to enter the work arena in the private sector, to take part in the development process on a larger scale and to replace the expatriate workforce have necessitated the creation of such a specialised Fund. The Fund is specialized in the facilitation of employment and training for Saudi citizens as well as encouraging them to join work at the private sector. To this end, the Fund will continue to support training and rehabilitation programs by various training establishments, such as providing the employer with SR 500 per month towards each candidate's training, also, SR 500 will be paid for no more than three months during the period of training. As an alternative to unemployment grant support, the fund provides subsistence allowance during the training period equal to 75% of the employee's salary, provided that such a subsistence allowance does not exceed SR1, 500 per month and continues for a period which does not exceed three months. According to the Annual Report, men have the lion's share of that fund (HRDF 2005). Moreover, the Saudi government should design policies specifically for women in the following areas:

- Effective training programs;
- Improving job environment and facilities;
- Improving job opportunities;

- Providing job search assistance by explaining, monitoring and educate women on the new labour law;
- Place up flexible work programs facing working mothers who must balance career and family commitments.

Provision of such policies are important, because there are no laws that protect working woman's rights, the most important of which is the existence of inspection committees that look into the complaints of working women. Moreover, a working woman is not being familiarized with her rights. Getting to know the labour laws is a very important step for women to learn their rights as well as duties. This is because worker's rights are ignored or misused, especially when the employee is desperate for the job and is ignorant of these laws. It should also be noted that job search assistance provided by the Fund normally covers a selection of activities aimed at improving the speed of finding a suitable job. Furthermore, there is a lack of public training centres in the whole Kingdom. As one of the respondents believes that training is one of the obstacles for a woman's employment and there are no centres which deliver good training but rather commercial ones, the aim of which is to make profits basically. On the other hand, the questionnaires point out that the percentage of women who did training is more than those who have not. 78.5% of the unemployed sample prefers to establish a small business at home to start a career, if they get financial support and training as the second most importantly needed resource to start their projects. This implies that women, when trained, have more opportunities in getting a job if they are unemployed and can contribute to the quality of the production and meet the requirement of the labour market if they are employed. In fact there is a shortage in vacancies, limitation of departments specified for women to work in, the unavailability of formal permanent jobs system and the presence of temporary jobs, the salary of which does not match with the employee's qualifications or with the work requirements. Saudi woman can find alternatives if she tries, some of which are:

- i. Opening departments for women in all governmental (public) circles especially those which address women's needs and system;
- ii. Opening departments for typing, computer programming and communications;
- iii. Giving the woman the chance to work in companies and private sector;
- iv. Remote work or working from home is also another opportunity. A woman should make use of her energy in addition to learning modern techniques which help her succeed in her job and work for a company via internet.

This study is in the opinion that different policies that are designed both to change the practice and the culture of the workplace of women's work such as the new labour law and the Human Resource Fund in order to help women improve their skills, promote quality part-time work and establish community centres and schools to help women find jobs.

#### **9.4 THE WAYS OF INCREASING THE PARTICIPATION RATE OF WOMEN**

The way to increase the participation of women in the labour market is by solving all the obstacles facing them, which can be from two sources, namely the government and social environment. To improve efficiency in the policy development, this study found the most important obstacles and recommended some possible solutions. Furthermore, there are clear public initiatives to increase the job opportunities for women especially in the private sectors such as in the free market or building industrial estates for women. This has, somehow, started on ground. Also, there are plans for the future to encourage women to work.

The eighth development plan (2005-2010) forecasts that the employed Saudi national workers would jump from 3.54 million at the beginning of the Plan. Before this, the new decision taken by the Cabinet at the end of May 2004, gives the opportunity for the

employment of women in all ministries. Moreover, the Ministry of Labour, and through the project of 'Saudising' jobs, can feminise some jobs such as tailoring as well as encouraging working at home for some companies.

#### **9.4.1 The impact of WTO on women's participation in Saudi Arabia**

Saudi Arabia formally became the WTO's 149th member on 11 December 2005, which opened Saudi markets to foreign investment and goods and aimed at further liberalising the economy. As regards to women's participation in the labour market, it is expected that the participation of Saudi women might improve through developing the abilities of women and eradicating the obstacles stopping their participation in economic and development activities.

Globalization as represented by the membership of WTO might provide Saudi women with access to a wide range of jobs from around the globe. It is however true that joining the WTO will open the Saudi labour market to competition. This competition will also be between Saudi women and non Saudi women unless Saudi government provides legislation for Saudi women to work outside the Kingdom such as other GCC countries.

While further liberalisation of the economy under WTO can be considered as a positive development for women's economic participation, the efficiency and effectiveness concerns of Saudi companies to remain in the market due to aggressive competition in the globalised world, results in many companies aiming to cut their operation costs by laying off staff, reducing salaries and benefits, hiring part-time staff as opposed to full-time, using home-based workers, laying off older staff about to receive pensions, and giving remaining staff increased workloads. It is true that women's experience in terms of both paid and unpaid work have been affected by this changing trend. Thus,

economic globalization has led to increased workloads, lower pay, and more stress for those women in paid employment.

A number of delegates at the IMF Women's conference ( 2005) has raised the issues related to the adverse impact of globalisation in terms of affecting women's work. These issues are related to women's work in Saudi Arabia as well. For instance, Anne Donnellan from Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union stated that, 'Globalisation creates levels of insecurity for women workers by increasing the rate of casualization in the manufacturing industry and by increasing the wage gap between men and women.' Also, Elizabeth Gabreil Migongwa from the Tanzania Union of Industrial and Commercial Workers stated in the same conference that, 'Free markets and globalisation cause women to easily lose jobs, because they can't compete in the labour market due to low education. Investors come with their own people.' Ingeborg Adam from the Gewerkschaft Metall – Textil of Austria also highlighted the same issues when she stated that, 'Globalisation means an increase in women's unemployment and at same time more women are forced to work part-time. Because of those women's poverty increases and due to wage reductions the situation will get even worse",. These are the typical issues for Saudi women, as in addition to not always having the market driven skills and education, they have to compete with international globalisation. (IMF 2005)

As regards the further impact of WTO, it can be stated Saudi Arabia's insistence of imposing a stipulation in the WTO agreement might help women's employment on some level. Because Saudi Arabia insisted on following the Saudisation project in the labour market, which is essentially against WTO rules, despite this, Saudi Arabia managed to get a concession, in the end, on the continuation of Saudisation in the labour market. According to this it is expected that Saudi companies still will carry on with Saudisation policy in their employment by employing Saudis up to 70% of their staff. While this may be considered as a positive development for Saudi women, it may

not help the Saudi companies to sustain the competition in the global markets. In other words, companies may not be able to compete in the international market due to operation costs, and therefore they may choose to relocate their operations to cheaper regions of the world, such as South-east Asia. This will have negative impact of Saudi women's employment opportunities.

In conclusion, since WTO is another important corner stone in Saudi Arabia's attempt at globalisation, initially it might be considered as a right policy for Saudi women's labour participation. However, a critical analysis might indicate that the impact could be adverse as well. Therefore, Saudi government should play a stronger role in minimizing the problems and increasing the benefits of globalization and their impact on women.

## **9.5 IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS DRAWN FROM THE FINDING**

The findings of this research indicate that in order for change to happen, there must be involvement of three factors: the government, social environment and precise recommendations. The following recommendations can be drawn from the analysis and the results of this study for increasing women' participation in the labour force:

### **9.5.1. On the governmental level:**

- i. From the researcher's experience as a citizen of Saudi Arabia and from the findings of earlier research, as stated in this study, it is apparent that confusion still exists between Islamic teaching and custom, especially on issues related to women's status and roles in the society. This is true in many parts of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and even among some educated people. Islamic scholars need to take responsibility for explaining to the public in lectures, writings, on television and radio, the respected position and importance of the

role of women at home or at work, and the importance of education for women. Women should seek to promote moderation and tolerance and reject gender discrimination.

- ii. The mass media can be used strategically to affect the prevailing negative attitudes in the society towards women's working role and to shape the opinions of families regarding the importance of women's work. The radio and TV programs that are recommended have to cover the relationship between males and females from an Islamic point of view. Saudi women in the media are playing an important role in changing attitudes, raising the level of awareness in the society, and educating women about their legal rights. The government has projected women in the media by removing restrictions that prevented them from appearing on national TV or working as newsreaders in the radio.
- iii. Adopting a policy to increase the strength and significance of the school is recommended. The most important factors in secondary school and higher education are the academic career advice. Moreover, the academic career adviser is a prerequisite to select the type of courses at university, which are needed to be taken in order to obtain employment; to be related to the labour market needs. This will require the development of a human resources database prepared by the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Economic and Planning, to help the planner to plan for the labour market.
- iv. Implementing plans to eliminate women's poverty by encouraging and financing home production projects by holding seminars and training courses, especially for rural women in order to enable Saudi women to become financially independent and productive and effective members of society. In this regard, Islamic finance can be utilised to introduce microfinancing in encouraging urban women to start small and medium size enterprises and rural women to have the necessary endowment to continue their lives with effective agriculture related economic activities.
- v. Encourage Saudi women to become involved in voluntary work and to develop their leadership talents in order to prepare themselves for effective participation

in the future.

- vi. Evaluate Human Resources Development Fund activities in order to lay out an action plan for improving the level of women's participation.
- vii. Promising equal opportunities for men and women to occupy higher executive and representative posts in the government's various departments and agencies.
- viii. Guaranteeing the existence of laws which protect the working woman and enable woman to fulfil her role in the family without infringing upon her public functions; such laws include those governing maternity and nursing leave, the provision of nurseries connected with the institutions where women work, the personal status law, and amendments to retirement laws and social security.
- ix. Encourage private sector with various subsidiary policies to open women only working environment, as some private banks have in recent years initiated.
- x. Survey to test for difference in travel choice between workplace and residential areas to reduce travel distance.
- xi. Exploratory research in transportation policies, re-examine public transportation, travel behaviour and transportation demand which may have influenced the women employees.

#### **9.5.2. On the level of social environment:**

- 1. Engaging in ongoing efforts women should prove themselves in the areas of professional work, with an emphasis on the elements of creativity, innovation and the ability to shoulder responsibility.
- 2. Working to overcome social obstacles, particularly those which have been imposed by social environment, or in some cases, by the husband, by the women being aware of her rights, which she has under Islamic law, and by her striving to change the customs and traditions, which are different with the rights she has been granted by the Islamic religion.
- 3. Helping women to improve their knowledge of their rights and duties



4. Women need to organize themselves to improve the situation for women in Saudi Arabia, based on their own experiences as gulf women. Such as creating a higher council for women and the family. This council can encourage Saudi women to run for election and raise the importance of making use of their rights.

**9.5.3. Specific recommendations:**

The results successfully provided by this study might be more specific in targeting groups. For example, instead of recommending increased financial packages for all employed women to meet the difficulties they face due to transport and distance, this research finds that the married employed women with bachelor degrees and children are more affected compared with others. Hence, to start with, we can recommend giving these groups an increased financial package. Below is the summary of the most affected groups by the studied factors, which can provide a base for developing governmental policy to target specific groups accordingly:.

As can be seen in table 9.1 the distance difficulties, mixed environment and labour legislations are factors which are equal for both groups. On the other hand, transportation factors have more affect on the unemployed group, in particular whenever you have less education and on the employed group whenever higher education is concerned. Therefore, it is possible to recommend that transportation benefits should be according to the degree of last education for both sample types.

Table 9.1

Summary of ANOVA Finding

Marital Status, Last Qualification, Family Monthly Income and No. Children Variables	Group targeted
1- Distance difficulties;	All equal
2- Transportation ;	This factor has more affect on the unemployed group whenever you have less education and on the employed group whenever you have higher education
3- Extended holidays;	Three variables which are Marital Status, Last Qualification and No. Children given that their significance are .002, .047 and .045 respectively. By contrast, there no significant differences in any of the studied variables in the unemployed group.
4- Negative view towards working women;	No significant differences in any of the studied variables in the unemployed group. By comparison, there are significant differences in the employed group in Last Qualification given that significance is .001.
5- Mixed environment;	All equal
6- Labour legislations;	All equal
7- Child care facilities;	last qualification for employed group has significant affect with significant .004, unemployed group has significant in number of children which might by the cause behind unemployment
8- Part-time work and flexible working hours;	there are significant differences in the employed group in all selected variables

Extended holidays are affected by three variables such as marital status, last qualification and number of children given that their significance are .002, .047 and .045 respectively. By contrast, there is no significant difference in any of the studied variables in the unemployed group. Married working women in Saudi Arabia are affected more than single working women; it also considered a bigger obstacle for diploma holders compared with bachelor holders for the employed women. It is

possible to conclude that the government should create a system which can guarantee extended holidays for working mothers.

Regarding the negative views towards working women, these obstacles have more effect on less educated women. Consequently, the Saudi media needs to face up to their responsibilities in creating public awareness, especially among the younger generation.

Providing child care facilities is a very important factor in encouraging employed mothers to continue in their works and unemployed mothers to accept any job. Generally, these obstacles have more affect on less educated women in the employed group. On the other hand, the number of children led the unemployed sample to become more affected because of child care options that might be one of the primary causes of unemployment among unemployed mothers. In order to reduce unemployment, child care subsidies can be applied for mothers, in case there are no child care facilities in the workplace. Flexible working hours have no significant impact in any of the studied variables in the unemployed group. By comparison, there are significant differences in the employed sample; in particular it has more affect on the married working women with a diploma, who have three or more children from high income groups

## 9.6 SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The following are recommendations that can be suggested for further research:

- i. A cross-cultural study should be conducted to determine the differences in attitudes between males and females toward women's work;
- ii. Similar studies should be conducted about the attitudes of parents and husbands toward women's work in Saudi Arabia;
- iii. For future research on the same problem, the suggestion is to cover variables

and issues that were not included in this study;

- iv. Further studies to suggest suitable public transportation that is suitable for women with reasonable cost to enable women to travel or commute with ease;
- v. Further studies could be conducted on high school students to test their attitudes before going on to college;
- vi. Different studies with unemployed females to find out the affect of being more egalitarian;
- vii. Study should be conducted to measure economics of unpaid work.

## **9.7 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY**

As no previous attempt has been made to assess obstacles to women's participation in the labour force in Saudi Arabia, this study is the first to appear on this subject. The result of this study, therefore, is expected to shed some light on the determination of successful transition to employment for Saudi women. The knowledge of these determinations will certainly help the women and policy makers to ease the transition. Undoubtedly, this study will be a very beneficial guide to reduce the unemployment rate among the women in the country and then push the economy forward. Furthermore, this study should help provide some insights to shape women employment policies and programmes today.

## **9.8 LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM MAIN FINDINGS**

As indicated earlier, there has been no previous study evaluating women's participation in the economy and obstacles related with this, which makes this the first attempt to examine women's participation in the labour force in Saudi Arabia within such a framework. Consequently, no information on the problem under investigation existed. Hence, an exploratory approach was used.

This research, however, suffers from one major limitation. The present study concentrated only on three cities of Saudi Arabia (Riyadh, Dammam, and Al Hasa) and does not represent the entire country in particular, the peripheral regions of the Saudi

society. This is due to the reasons that it impossible to investigate the whole country due to time and resource constraints, so a choice was made to choose only three cities to represent the country. In doing this, due consideration was given to the limited differences between the provinces of Saudi Arabia in terms of socio-economic or economic factors.

Another limitation of this study relates to the numbers of factors that influence full participation of women in the labour force, which were limited only to the factors selected by factor analysis. However, other active factors could have been considered. Furthermore, there are two types of work, paid and unpaid work, both of which can be perceived as contributing to the national economy. The concern, however, in this study was limited only to paid work; while unpaid work is still valuable for the economy of the Kingdom but it is not calculated in the GNP. Consequently, unpaid work was not included in the analysis presented in this study.

Finally, the samples that have been analysed in this study are restricted merely to two groups, namely, employed and unemployed women, even though there are many other groups, such as students, housewives, parents, or husbands.

Thus, this study provides well-built evidence that women's participation in the Saudi Arabia economy should be increased by solving all the obstacles facing them. The weak roles of applying the recommendations drawn from this study, particularly the government roles towards women which require immediate change to achieve adequate proportion of unemployed women, and the importance of social environment in completing the successful planning to empower Saudi women.

## **9.9. EPILOGUE**

This study aimed at searching and locating the issues related to women's participation on the labour market. In doing so, primary data were collected from employed and

unemployed women through questionnaire and also through interviews from leading individuals and policy makers in the field.

The research presented its findings and the interpretations of the these findings in a logical and methodological manner with their implications. Thus, the study has fulfilled its aims and objectives and located the factors facilitates but at the same time hinders women's participation in the Saudi labour market.

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## APPENDIX 1; SHEIKH BIN BAZ'S FATWA

On the Employment of Women in Government Department ... I have been acquainted with what was published in the local newspapers on the first of Ramadan, 1400A.H.(10/26/1980) about the intention of the Bureau of Civil service (Eastern Province Branch) to employ women in government departments to typing, interpretation, and other clerical jobs... It is known that a woman's decision to work in the field of men leads to interaction (*Ikhtilat*) which is a very dangerous matter that has its own grave results, bitter fruits, and dangerous consequences. It is also contrary to *shariah* (legal) clauses which order woman to stay in her home and perform the jobs which concern her in her home and the like where she is far from interaction with men. It is also contrary to plain, well, referenced legal (*shariah*) evidence which prohibits a man from being alone (*khalwah*) with a non-related woman and from looking at her and which ban all means which lead to falling into what God has prohibited... God said, stay, ye women, in your homes; do not exhibit like pre-Islamic women; do your prayers; pay your *zakat*; obey God and his messenger. God only want to rid you, House of Mohammad, of evil and to purify you. Remember what is being read unto you of God's verses and wisdom. God is kind and knowledgeable." God has also said, Tell (male) believers to look down and to preserve their genitals: it is purer for them. God is knowledgeable of what they do. Tell female believers to look down; to preserve their genitals; not to show their ornament except to their husbands, their fathers and the fathers of their husbands... These verses and prophetic traditions are clear in showing the obligation of women to stay in their homes, to avoid interaction which leads to corruption (*fasad*), the destruction of families and corruption of societies. So, why must we disobey these verses and traditions? Shouldn't we learn from the experience of societies that preceded us into this dangerous matter and are now very sorry for what they did, wishing they could go back to the state in which we now live? Why don't we look at the status of woman in some neighbouring Islamic countries and see how insulted and downtrodden she is because she has been taken out of their home and made to do jobs other than hers. Wise men in these countries and in the western countries have called to the necessity of bringing woman back to her natural position which God has prepared her for and formed her for physically, and mentally, but it is too late for them.

Authorities in the Bureau of Civil Service and the General Administration of Girls' Education should fear God, observe his instructions and not open unto this nation a great door of evil, one which once upon will be difficult to close ... The labour shortage is not to be solved by involving women in men's jobs ... The right solution for it is to create incentives for the thousands of young men who do not find in government work enough incentive to join it, so



they leave it and go to business and private establishment and companies. The start of a correct solution is to simplify the procedures of employee placement, application review, and in paying an employee what he deserves for his effort... in which case each government department will have a surplus of employees. I am certain, God willing, that the authorities after reading this speech, will retract their intention of employing women in men's fields once they know that it is prohibited according to the Book and Sunnah, is contrary to normal nature, and is one of the strongest reasons for decline and destruction of society. It is above that, a dear wish of the enemies of Islam ... We hope that our sons and brothers will help them or realize their objectives for them. (Ad-Da'wah #764, 1980) (BinBaz 1985).

## APPENDIX II: GLOSSARY FOR ISLAMIC TERMINOLOGY

### *Islamic Terminology*

This section will describe some important terminology in this chapter, such as segregation, veil, *Hijab*, *niqāb*, *Jilbab*, *Ikhtilat*, *Khalwah*, *Mahram*, *Sadd Al-Dharaie*, *A mujtahid* and sources of Islamic law

1- *Segregation*: Islam forbids women to mix with men unless with a *Mahram*. Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) said: "Whoever believes in Allah and the hereafter should not allow himself to be in privacy with a woman who does not have a *Mahram* from her side. Other-wise Satan is their third party." (Jabir Narrated) (Shaker 1997:29)

The social system in Islam prohibited (*Khalwah*) seclusion between men and women; Mixing between men and women (*Ikhtilat*) is not allowed, it is very dangerous, especially if the women is displaying her beauty and is not covered. (Al-Musnad 1996). It is a general rule that applies to education, banking, public transportation and the work place. It also applies to restaurants, schools, and libraries. "The practice of segregation and confining women to their own company is an institutional mechanism designed to regulate women", to protect their chastity and to "prevent other men from encroaching on the male honour of the family" (Almunajjed, 1997, 8, 34).

2- *Veil*: In the English language a 'Veil' is normally a piece of usually more or less transparent fabric attached to a woman's hat, etc., to conceal the face or protect against the sun (Bullock 2002px1).

Most westerners, felt that the veil was a cultural tradition that Muslim women could surely work to eliminate, while it is a commandment women should obey. The negative stereotype of the veil is as something oppressive preventing women's work.

3- *Hijab*: from the root *hajaba* in Arabic language meaning to cover, conceal, hide, is a complex notion encompassing action and apparel. It can include covering the face, or not (Bullock 2002). It is a reference to the proper dress of a Muslim woman which covers her completely (Al-Musnad 1996).

4- A *niqāb*: refers to covering the face, worn by some women . Its use is to keep non-*mahram* men from seeing a Muslim woman's face. The Islamic scholars differ on this point, some say that is required, while others say it is only recommended. *Niqāb* in Saudi Arabia is traditional dress and considered obligatory.

5- *Jilbab*: This is the outer cloak that women are commanded to wear and it covers the women's entire body from her head to her feet. (Al-Musnad 1996).

6- *Ikhtilat*: is the mixing between men and women.

7- *Mahram*: It is a reference to a woman's husband and all the men that are within the prohibited degrees of marriage, such as her father, brothers, father in law and so forth. It is allowed for a woman to be alone with such men, travel with them and so on. It can also be used in reference to a man's wife and all women relatives within the prohibited degree, such as his mothers, sisters and so forth. He is allowed to be alone with such women, travel with them and so forth (Al-Musnad 1996).

8- *Sources of Islamic law*: Islamic jurists rely on two sources for determining what Islamic law is: the textual sources, the Qur'an and the Sunnah, which form the basis of juridical reasoning, and *ijtihad*.

The Quran is the holy book of Islamic religion, the Hadith and Sunnah are the recorded commentaries on the Prophet's life, tradition, and sayings, *Ijma* is the consensus of the *Ulama* (religious scholars) (An-na'im 1990) and the last source of the law is the *Qiyas*, which is simply the use of analogies in reaching decisions when the other three sources cannot be of any help, while the *shariah* refers to laws created in the first centuries after the Prophet's lifetime (An-na'im 1990).

9- A *mujtahid* classically is a member of the '*ulama*, consisting of elite scholars who are trusted in the exercise of *ijtihad*.(Eissa 1999).

10-*Sadd Al-Dharaie* principle (the closing of doors which could lead to corruption or sinful actions) is one of the values in Islam, this principle comes from A *mujtahed*, who can use traditional jurists relied on "the four proofs": the Qur'an, the Sunnah, *ijma'*, and *qiyas*.

Driving a car is an example of using this principle to prohibit women from driving cars. On the other hand, women who work are forced to hire drivers, often foreigners, to transport them. Muslim women anywhere else in the world are able to drive, although in Saudi Arabia it is prohibited by *Ulama* to close any doors which could lead to corruption.

## **APPENDIX 3:**

### **Questionnaire for Employed and Unemployed Women**

#### **Personal details:**

1-Marital status:

- (1) Married.
- (2) Single.
- (3) Divorced.
- (4) Widowed.

2-Women and Children:

- (1) No children
- (2) One
- (3) two
- (4) Three or more

3- Children under school age:

- (1) None
- (2) One
- (3) Two
- (4) Three or more

4- Your age:

- (1) Less than 30.
- (2) 31 to 40 years.
- (3) 41 years and over .

#### **Family background:**

5- Your accommodation status:

- (1) Own.
- (2) Rental.
- (3) State accommodation.

6-Family's employees:

- (1) None
- (2) Female maid.
- (3) Personal driver.
- (4) Both.

7- Education level of parents

**Father:**

- (1) Illiterate.
- (2) Elementary.
- (3) Secondary.
- (4) Higher education.

**Mother**

- (1) Illiterate.
- (2) Elementary.
- (3) Secondary
- (4) Higher education.

8- What is your family average monthly income?

- (1) Less than 3000 SR.
- (2) 3001 to less than 5000.
- (3) 5001 to less than 10000.
- (4) 10000 and more.

9- Father's job status:

- (1) Working in public sector.
- (2) Working in private sector.
- (3) Self employed.
- (4) Retired.
- (5) Unemployed or disabled.

10- Mother's job status:

- (1) Working in public sector.
- (2) Working in private sector.
- (3) Household.
- (4) Retired.
- (5) Unemployed or disabled.
- (6) Unpaid voluntary work.

11- Husband's job status:

- (1) Working in public sector.
- (2) Working in private sector.
- (3) Self employed.
- (4) Retired.
- (5) Unemployed or disabled.

12- Your qualification:

- (1) University degree or higher.
- (2) Secondary certificate.
- (3) Diploma.

13- What subject did you study?

- (1) Humanities.

- (2) Education.
- (3) Islamic studies.
- (4) Business.
- (5) Science.
- (6) Medicine.
- (7) Computing and engineering.

14- What are the factors influencing your choice of subject?

- (1) Good social status.
- (2) Market needs.
- (3) Personal interest.
- (3) Nature of work.
- (4) No other choice.

15- What are the factors encouraging you to seek work?

- (1) Culture and social needs.
- (2) Support my family.
- (3) Personal financial needs.
- (4) Support the economy.
- (5) For leisure time.

16- Do you know the Islamic guidelines for women working outside the home?

- (1) I know them very well.
- (2) I know many of them.
- (3) I know a few of them.
- (4) I do not know any.

17- Do you follow these guidelines in your work?

- (1) I follow them all.
- (2) I follow many of them.
- (3) I follow a few of them.
- (4) I do not follow any.

18- Would your husband agree with you having a job?

- (1) Strongly agree.
- (2) Agree.
- (3) Disagree.
- (4) I don't know.

### **Women between paid and unpaid work.**

19-If payment was suggested for your housework (cleaning, children care, food preparing ...etc.) will you agree?

- (1) I strongly agree.
- (2) I agree.
- (3) I disagree.
- (4) I strongly disagree.

20- What is the effect of this payment on you going to paid work?

- (1) No effect.
- (2) I will accept the payment and stay with my children.
- (3) I will deeply think about it.

21- If you could work from home would you prefer to work outside the home?

- (1) I strongly prefer it.
- (2) I prefer it.
- (3) I don't prefer it.

22- What is the percentage of your monthly income going towards payment of home services? (Driver, servant, nursery, take away food).

- (1) More than 80%
- (2) 60 to 80%
- (3) 40 to 60%
- (4) 20 to 40%
- (5) Less than 20%

23- Who takes the financial responsibility for this payment?

- (1) Husband or father.
- (2) Myself.
- (3) Both.

24- How many hours do your employment account hours daily?

- (1) 6 hours.
- (2) 8 hours.
- (3) 12 hours.
- (4) More than 12 hours.

25- How many hours does your housework take daily?

- (1) No time.
- (2) 6 hours.
- (3) 8 hours.
- (4) 12 hours.
- (5) More than 12 hours.

**Influence of women's work on marriage, fertility, and child care.**

26- Do you think women's work affects marriage?

- (1) Affects marriage positively.
- (2) Does not affect marriage.
- (3) Affects marriage negatively.

27- If you think women's work affects marriage positively, why?

- (1) It helps financially the family.
- (2) Makes women more mature.
- (3) To be familiar with colleagues, male and female.

(4) All above.

28- If you think women's work affects marriage negatively, why?

- (1) Working women are less caring with family.
- (2) Women's work increase men's unemployment.
- (3) Expose women to social harassment.
- (4) All above.

29- Do you think that women's work affect child caring?

- (1) Affect positively.
- (2) Does not affect.
- (3) Affect negatively.

30- If it affects child caring positively, state why?

- (1) Her absence leads her to give more attention.
- (2) Lead the child to count on himself (be independent).
- (3) Give a prosperous life to the child.
- (4) All above.

31- If it affects child caring negatively, state why?

- (1) Her absence leads her to be careless.
- (2) Lead to education and health problems.
- (3) Lead the child to be dependent on the house maid.
- (4) All above.

### **Job environment.**

32- What type of work would you like?

- (1) Part time.
- (2) Full time.
- (3) You don't mind.

33- Where do you prefer to work?

- (1) In the government.
- (2) In the private sector.
- (3) Semi-government institution.
- (4) Self employment.

34- Would the distance you need to travel from home to work affect your choice of employment?

- (1) Yes.
- (2) No.

35- Where do you prefer to work?

- (1) In a mixed female and male environment.
- (2) Only with females.



(3) Don't mind.

36- If you choice are working only with females, is because of:

- (1) Your family decision.
- (2) Religion.
- (3) Your choice.
- (4) Norms.

37- Have you received any training during the last three years?

- (1) Yes.
- (2) No.

38- Who paid for the training?

- (1) Yourself.
- (2) The employer.
- (3) The government.
- (4) Voluntary.

39- What are the reasons influences your decision to accept your current employment?

- (1) Good monthly payment.
- (2) Acceptable location.
- (3) Interest in the work.
- (4) Suitable to my background.
- (5) No choice.

40- What is your most important source of information about job opportunities?

- (1) Media.
- (2) Civil service bureau.
- (3) Employment office.
- (4) Personal relationships.

41- At what age would you like to retire from active work?

- (1) I would work as long as I am capable.
- (2) 35 to 40.
- (3) 41 to 45.
- (4) 46 to 50.
- (5) 51 to 55.
- (6) 56 to 60.

42-what are the main factors preventing women's employment?

- (1) Women find it difficult to move from one city to another.
- (2) Women require extended holidays for their status and family.
- (3) Society has a negative attitude toward women working outside home.
- (4) Some available jobs are in mixed environment with men.

43- What are the factors which would encourage women's employment?

- (1) Improving and updating labour legislation.
- (2) Providing child-care facilities for women.
- (3) Providing transpiration for women.
- (4) Reducing working hours and offering part-time system.
- (5) Changing society's attitudes towards women who are working.

### **Unemployed women**

44- How long have you been looking for work?

- (1) 1 year.
- (2) 2 years.
- (3) 3 years.
- (4) More than 3 years.

45- What is the minimum monthly payment you require to accept work?

- (1) 1000 or less.
- (2) 1001 to 2000.
- (3) 2001 to 3000.
- (4) 3001 to 4000.
- (5) 4001 to 5000.
- (6) 5001 or more.

46- Why do you think you don't have a job?

- (1) Inappropriate qualifications.
- (2) Lack of information.
- (3) Having home responsibility.
- (4) The pay is too low for new graduated.
- (5) You are tired looking for a job.

47- Do you wish to establish a small home project?

- (1) Yes.
- (2) No.

48- If you wish to establish a small home project, what do you need to start your project?

- (1) Capital.
- (2) Labour.
- (3) Land.
- (4) Training.

49- Do you think that the family income is enough?

- (1) Yes.
- (2) No.

50- Do you receive individual income from any of the following?

- (1) Father or mother.
- (2) Husband.
- (3) Pension.
- (4) Inheritance.
- (5) Others.

