

**T.C.**  
**ISTANBUL OKAN UNIVERSITY**  
**GRADUATE SCHOOL**

**THESIS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF BUSINESS  
ADMINISTRATION IN BUSINESS PROGRAM**

**Aliaa Ehab Mohamed ELSIED**

**EXPLORING DIVERSITY IN WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT  
IN SAUDI ARABIA, CHALLENGES,  
FUTURE DIRECTIONS, AND PROGRESS**

**THESIS ADVISOR**  
Associated Prof.Dr. Mustafa Cenk Uludağ

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**Exploring Diversity in Women's Employment in Saudi**  
**Arabia , Challenges, Future Directions, and Progress**

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**ISTANBUL, 2025**

## PREFACE

This thesis, *Exploring Diversity in Women's Employment in Saudi Arabia: Challenges, Future Directions, and Progress*, represents the culmination of extensive research, critical examination, and steadfast commitment over several months. The topic of diversity in women's employment transcends national boundaries; it is a global necessity that intersects with economic development, social justice, and sustainable advancement. The swift evolution of the employment landscape in Saudi Arabia acts as both a case study and a catalyst for wider discussions regarding gender inclusivity in the workforce. Comprehending these changes is not simply an academic endeavor but an essential step toward fostering more inclusive and resilient economies around the globe. The process of creating this research has been both intellectually challenging and profoundly insightful. The difficulties encountered in analyzing large datasets, constructing logical arguments, and uncovering significant insights have only strengthened my dedication to this subject. Each challenge presented itself as an opportunity to enhance my understanding of the complex elements that affect gender diversity in employment, not only in Saudi Arabia but also in worldwide labor markets.

I am deeply appreciative of my supervisor, **Dr. Mustafa Cenk Uludağ**, whose essential guidance, constructive feedback, and academic standards have been crucial in refining this work. His perspectives prompted me to think outside traditional paradigms and ensured that this research adds substantial value to the ongoing global conversation about workforce diversity. A special acknowledgment is due to my family, Engineer: **Mohammed Hafiz Abdelmoneim /and Dr. Alaa EHAB**, whose steadfast support, faith in my abilities, and relentless inspiration have been the cornerstone of my perseverance. Following the grace of God, they serve as the driving force behind every milestone of this accomplishment. In conclusion, I express my sincere gratitude to all who contributed to this research, whether through intellectual dialogue, provision of data, or steadfast encouragement. This thesis is not merely a scholarly project; it stands as a testament to the transformative potential of knowledge, the importance of inclusion, and the urgent need for fair opportunities in labor markets across the globe.

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## ÖZET

### **Saudi Arabistan’da Kadın İstihdamında Çeşitliliğin Keşfi: Zorluklar, Gelecekteki Yönler ve İlerleme**

Mevcut analiz, 2019-2023 yılları arasında Bankacılık, Enerji ve Perakende olmak üzere üç ana sektörde Suudi Arabistan’daki kadın istihdam çeşitliliğine dair ayrıntılı ve yoğun bir inceleme sunmaktadır. Sektör gelişimi, mevcut zorluklar ve Suudi Arabistan’ın değişen iş gücü piyasasını daha fazla cinsiyet çeşitliliğine yönlendirmek için gelecek yönelimler eleştirel bir bakış açısıyla incelenmiştir. Araştırma, odaklanılan sektörlerdeki en iyi şirketlerin 53 farklı yıllık raporuna dayanan nicel analiz yöntemlerini kullanmaktadır ve bu analiz, Suudi Arabistan Genel İstatistik Kurumu’nun ulusal işgücü istatistikleri ile desteklenmiştir. Kadınların işgücüne katılımı, yıllık istihdam artışı ve liderlik temsili gibi önemli çeşitlilik göstergeleri detaylı bir şekilde analiz edilerek işgücü dinamikleri değerlendirilmiş ve mevcut cinsiyet çeşitliliği programlarının etkinliği ölçülmüştür. Araştırma, çok katmanlı bir karşılaştırmalı metodolojiye dayanmaktadır: Öncelikle her sektördeki şirket performansı analiz edilir, daha sonra sektör genelindeki iyileşmeler gözlemlenir ve en sonunda üç sektör birbiriyle ve ulusal istihdam eğilimleriyle karşılaştırılır. Bu sistematik yaklaşım, cinsiyet çeşitliliği açısından en yüksek performansa sahip sektörü tespit etmeyi sağlarken, aynı zamanda başarıları ortaya koymakta ve politika müdahalesi ile işgücü geliştirme stratejileri gerektiren alanları belirlemektedir.

#### **Temel Bulgular:**

Analiz, sektörler arasında kadın işgücü entegrasyonundaki büyük eşitsizlikleri belirleyerek hem ilerlemeyi hem de yerleşik engelleri göstermektedir:

- Bankacılık Sektörü: Etkili çeşitlilik çerçeveleri, liderlik geliştirme programları ve kapsayıcı işyeri politikaları aracılığıyla ulusal kadın istihdam hedeflerini aşarak en dengeli ve sürdürülebilir büyümeyi sergiledi.
- Enerji Sektörü: Yapısal ve kültürel engellerin cinsiyet çeşitliliğindeki hızlı ilerlemeyi kısıtlamaya devam etmesiyle birlikte kademeli ancak yavaş bir iyileşme ifade edildi.

- Perakende Sektörü: İşe alım ve yetenek yönetiminde dalgalanmalar ile karakterize edilen, daha güçlü liderlik katılımı ve kariyer geliştirme stratejileri gerektiren düzensiz büyüme modelleri göstermiştir.

**Endüstri Ortalaması (IA) ve Yıldan Yıla Büyüme Oranı (YGR) kombinasyonu, işgücü eğilimlerini veriye dayalı olarak analiz ederek çeşitlilik çabalarında sektöre özel güçlü ve zayıf yönleri ortaya koymuştur.**

Sektöre Özgü Zorluklar ve Stratejik Fırsatlar:

- Bankacılık: Liderlik kapsayıcılığını geliştirme çerçevelerinin oluşturulması ve uzun vadeli cinsiyet çeşitliliği kazançlarının sürdürülmesi için sürekli çaba gerekmektedir.
- Enerji: Özellikle teknik ve yönetici pozisyonlarda sistemik ve kültürel engelleri aşmak için sektöre özel politika reformlarına ihtiyaç duymaktadır.
- Perakende: İş gücü istikrarı, yapılandırılmış işe alım uygulamalarının geliştirilmesi, kariyer ilerlemesi ve kadınlar için yönetici liderlik erişimine odaklanmayı gerektirmektedir.

**Politika ve İşgücü Gelişimi İçin Çıkarımlar:**

**Bu çalışma, politika yapıcılar, iş dünyası liderleri ve sektör paydaşları için cinsiyet çeşitliliğini ve ekonomik katılımı ilerletmek amacıyla temel içgörüler ve stratejik öneriler sunmaktadır:**

1. Yasama ve Politika Reformları: İşe alım, elde tutma ve kariyer ilerlemesi için cinsiyet çeşitliliği standartlarının uygulanması.
2. Yönetici Liderliği ve Mentorluk Programları: Yapılandırılmış yönetici eğitimi ve mentorluk aracılığıyla kadın liderlik boru hatlarının oluşturulması.
3. Sektöre Özgü İşgücü Stratejileri: Sektöre özgü toplumsal cinsiyet istihdam sorunlarının üstesinden gelmek için hedefli müdahalelerin uygulanması.
4. Kamu-Özel Sektör Ortaklıkları: Büyük ölçekli işgücü dönüşüm girişimlerinin uygulanması için hükümet ve kurumsal sektörler arasında işbirliğinin geliştirilmesi.



- **Ağırlıklı ve Sektör Ortalaması Yöntemlerinin Uygulanması:**

Her sektör için kadın istihdam oranını kesin olarak ölçmek için bu çalışmada işgücündeki kadınların gerçek yüzdesini elde etmek amacıyla ağırlıklı ortalama yöntemi kullanılmaktadır. Şirketler tarafından bildirilen verilerdeki tutarsızlıklar nedeniyle (bazı şirketlerin toplam işgücü sayılarını bildirdiği, bazılarının ise yalnızca istihdam yüzdelerini bildirdiği durumlar), sektörler arası karşılaştırmalara ağırlıklı ortalama uygulanmamıştır. Bunun yerine, endüstri ortalaması yöntemi, sektör çapında ve ulusal düzeyde karşılaştırmalar için daha gerçekçi bir yaklaşım olarak kullanılmıştır. Bu yöntem, tüm sektörlerde dengeli ve standartlaştırılmış bir değerlendirme sağlayarak kadın istihdam eğilimlerinin düzenlenmiş bir biçimde karşılaştırılmasını mümkün kılmıştır.

**Uzun Vadeli ve Gelecekteki Araştırma Yönleri** Suudi Arabistan’da kadın işgücü entegrasyonunu daha da geliştirmek için gelecekteki araştırmalar şu şekilde olmalıdır:

- Vaka çalışmaları, uzman görüşmeleri ve işgücü anketleri gibi nitel araştırmaları dahil ederek metodolojiyi çeşitlendirmek.
- 2023 sonrası uzun vadeli cinsiyet çeşitliliği trendlerini incelemek, sürdürülebilirlik ve ekonomik katkıyı dikkate almak.
- Kadınların ekonomik büyümeye katkılarına ilişkin daha geniş bir perspektif elde etmek için imalat, teknoloji ve sağlık gibi daha fazla sektörü kapsamak.
- Suudi Arabistan’ın cinsiyet çeşitliliği ilerlemesini uluslararası en iyi uygulamalarla karşılaştırarak ölçeklenebilir iş gücü kapsayıcılık modelleri geliştirmek.

Bu araştırma yalnızca kadınların işgücüne katılımının mevcut durumunu değerlendirmekle kalmıyor, aynı zamanda Suudi Arabistan’da daha kapsayıcı ve eşitlikçi bir işgücü piyasası oluşturmak için veriye dayalı, politika odaklı bir yol haritasının zeminini hazırlıyor.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kadınlar için kariyer çeşitliliği, Suudi Arabistan’da kadınlar için kariyer gelişimi, cinsiyet eşitliği, kadınların kariyer çeşitliliği için zorluklar, kadınların kariyer çeşitliliği için gelecekteki yönelim

# **ABSTRACT**

## **“Exploring Diversity in Women’s Employment in Saudi Arabia, Challenges, Future Directions, and Progress”**

The current analysis presents a fact-intensive in-depth review of women’s diversity of employment Saudi Arabia in three key sectors, namely Banking, Energy, and Retail, during 2019 and 2023. Sector development, current challenge, and future direction for shaping Saudi Arabia’s changing labor market towards increased gender diversity have been analyzed through a critical lens. The research utilizes quantitative analysis methods based on 53 annual reports of top companies in the focused sectors, supplemented by national labour statistics from the General Authority for Statistics. Important diversity indicators such as female workforce participation, year-on-year employment growth, and leadership representation were thoroughly analysed to gauge workforce dynamics and measure the effectiveness of current gender diversity programs. The research adheres to a multilayered comparative methodology: it begins by analysing the performance of companies within each sector, then analyses sector-wide improvement, and finally compares the three sectors to one another and to national employment trends. This systematic approach allows the sector with the highest gender diversity performance to be identified, both highlighting achievements and areas requiring policy intervention and workforce development strategies.

### **Key Findings:**

The analysis determines major disparities in female workforce integration between sectors, indicating both progress and entrenched barriers:

- **Banking Sector:** Expressed the most uniform and sustained growth, outpacing national female employment targets through effective diversity frameworks, leadership development programs, and inclusive workplace policies.
- **Energy Sector:** Expressed gradual but sluggish improvement, with structural and cultural obstacles continuing to constrain quick progress in gender diversity.

- Retail Sector: Exhibited irregular growth patterns, typified by fluctuations in recruitment and talent retention, necessitating stronger leadership inclusion and career advancement strategies.

**The combination of Industry Average (IA) and Year-over-Year Growth Rate (YGR) enabled a data-driven analysis of workforce trends, revealing sector-specific strengths and weaknesses in diversity efforts: Sector-Specific Challenges and Strategic Opportunities:**

- Banking: Requires continued efforts to enhance leadership inclusion frameworks and sustain long-term gender diversity gains.
- Energy: Needs sector-specific policy reforms to overcome systemic and cultural barriers, especially in technical and executive positions.
- Retail: Requires a focus on workforce stability, enhancing structured recruitment practices, career progression, and executive leadership access for women.

**Implications for Policy and Workforce Development:**

**This study offers essential insights and strategic suggestions for policymakers, business leaders, and industry stakeholders to advance gender diversity and economic engagement:**

1. Legislative and Policy Reforms: Implementing gender diversity standards for recruitment, retention, and career progression.
2. Executive Leadership and Mentorship Programs: Creating female leadership pipelines through structured executive training and mentorship.
3. Sector-Specific Workforce Strategies: Applying targeted interventions to overcome sectorspecific gender employment issues.
4. Public-Private Sector Partnerships: Enhancing collaboration between government and corporate sectors to implement large-scale workforce transformation initiatives.

**Application of Weighted and Industry Average Methods:**

To precisely measure the female employment rate for each sector, this study utilized the weighted average method to derive the actual percentage of women in the workforce. Due

to discrepancies in company-reported data where some companies reported total workforce numbers while others only reported employment percentages. The weighted average was not applied to cross-sector comparisons.

The industry average method was instead used as a more realistic approach for sector wide and national-level comparisons, providing a balanced and standardized assessment across all industries. This method enabled a structured comparison of female employment trends within each sector, across industries, and against national labour data.

**Long-Term and Future Research Directions To further develop female workforce integration in Saudi Arabia, future research should:**

- Enrich the methodology by including qualitative research, such as case studies, expert interviews, and workforce surveys.
- Evaluate long-term gender diversity trends after 2023, considering sustainability and economic contribution.
- Encompass more sectors such as manufacturing, technology, and healthcare to get a broader view of women's contributions to economic growth.
- Compare Saudi Arabia's gender diversity progress to international best practices, creating scalable workforce inclusion models. This research not only evaluates the current situation of female workforce participation but also provides the foundation for a data-driven, policy-driven roadmap towards creating a more inclusive and equitable labor market in Saudi Arab.

**Keywords:** Career diversity for women, career advancement for women in Saudi Arabia, gender equality, challenges for women's career diversity, future directions for women's career diversity.

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# **CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE**

## **Introduction**

The Diversity in Women's Employment landscape in Saudi Arabia has been undergoing a significant transformation, reflecting broader social and economic shifts. Historically, women faced multiple barriers to full participation in the labour market, rooted in cultural norms, institutional constraints, and systemic challenges. These challenges include workplace discrimination, unequal pay, limited access to leadership roles, and the absence of structural support such as childcare facilities and flexible work arrangements. Despite these obstacles, women in Saudi Arabia have gradually started to make strides in various sectors, showcasing resilience and determination in breaking traditional norms. This transformation is not merely a question of increasing numbers but rather creating a supportive and enabling environment that empowers women to reach their full potential. The concept of employment diversity emphasizes equal opportunities for women across sectors, not only to address gender imbalances but also to leverage their unique contributions toward national economic growth and innovation. Women's employment is now a critical factor in fostering inclusivity and enhancing productivity within the labour market. In addition to the diversification of women in Saudi Arabia in entrepreneurship, education, and in healthcare. Most prominently, entrepreneurship is a principal doorway for females to redefine their role in economies through innovation and sustainable growth. Not only does such transformation bring new thinking onto these sectors, but it also fortifies them in terms of adaptability and resilience through a broader range of talent and expertise wrought in them. By identifying these specific sectors and challenge, this study opens new windows of inquiry in researching sectors that have experienced little in terms of investigation in studies in the past. It sheds new light onto how women are utilizing opportunity to drive, innovate, and contribute to industries important to national socioeconomic development. However, despite improvements, a variety of challenges remain present. Women continue to encounter cultural expectations governing career options and career development. Institutional practice, such as unequal access to senior positions and poor work life balance provision, continues to restrain them. Overcoming such obstacles will require a multidimensional approach, including policy

reform, organisational transformation, and social consciousness. The thesis considers the dynamics of Saudi women's employment diversity in three dimensions: achievements to date, current challenges, and future directions to preserve momentum and generate momentum. In investigating these, the thesis aims at generating actionable. In addition to the diversification of women in Saudi Arabia in entrepreneurship, education, and in healthcare. Most prominently, entrepreneurship is a principal doorway for females to redefine their role in economies through innovation and sustainable growth. Not only does such transformation bring new thinking onto these sectors, but it also fortifies them in terms of adaptability and resilience through a broader range of talent and expertise wrought in them. By identifying these specific sectors and challenge, this study opens new windows of inquiry in researching sectors that have experienced little in terms of investigation in studies in the past. It sheds new light onto how women are utilizing opportunity to drive, innovate, and contribute to industries important to national socioeconomic development. However, despite improvements, a variety of challenges remain present. Women continue to encounter cultural expectations governing career options and career development. Institutional practice, such as unequal access to senior positions and poor work life balance provision, continues to restrain them. Overcoming such obstacles will require a multidimensional approach, including policy reform, organisational transformation, and social consciousness. The thesis considers the dynamics of Saudi women's employment diversity in three dimensions: achievements to date, current challenges, and future directions to preserve momentum and generate momentum. In investigating these, the thesis aims at generating actionable recommendations for policymakers, business leaders, and stakeholders for creating an inclusive and equitable labour market. In addition, it aims at showcasing the value of focused interventions such as skill development programs, leadership development, and educational reform specifically for women's needs and aspirations. Furthermore, this work brings a spotlight to important sectors such as banking, energy, and trade and retail driving employment diversity. These sectors serve important success markers and lessons for transferral to additional sectors. The thesis also considers the institution's role in important organisations, such as the Statistics Department and the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development, in enhancing workforce contribution through women and tracking progress towards gender diversity targets. Through this research, academic

and working expertise will be supplemented through completing important gaps in knowing factors impacting female workforce diversity. By documenting improvements, analysing barriers, and proposing new solutions, this research aims to contribute to ongoing efforts in creating a more vibrant and inclusive marketplace privacy in Saudi Arabia and the rest of the world. Overall, through this research, it is reiterated that women have a significant role in long-term social and economic growth, and a platform for a fairer future will be established.

### **Purpose of Study:**

The purpose of study in this case is guided by the general objective of researching, analysing, and enriching diversity in Saudi Arabian women's employment. Specific objectives of current study include the following:

#### **1. Identify and Analyze Existing Obstacles (Challenges)**

- Research cultural, institution, and systemic factors inhibiting women's workforce access.
- Examine workplace bias, pay gaps, restricted access to leadership roles, and lack of supporting frameworks such as access to care and flexible work.
- Study the obstacles related to the nine companies within the three sectors, specifically in banking, energy, trade and retail, to conduct a comprehensive review of the obstacles faced by women.

#### **2. Proposing Directions for Maintaining Progress (Future Directions):**

- Propose new policies and approaches to overcome existing barriers within companies and sectors and to continue to advance women's employment.
- Commitment to gender-sensitive work environments, increased training in relevant competencies and relative leadership.
- Targeted training and skills development with a specific goal in mind and entrepreneurial development to prepare for emerging trends in international markets, technology and companies within sustainable sectors.



### **3. Evaluated Most Remarkable Achievements Made (Progress):**

- Track achievements in increasing the relative female workforce in companies within key target sectors.
- Study the effectiveness of current programs and policies in supporting gender diversity, empowering women and creating a stimulating work environment that attracts human cadres.
- Identify successful examples, initiatives and strategies by which companies increase women's career diversity.

### **4. Offering Actionable Recommendations:**

- Make actionable recommendations for companies, policymakers, and stakeholders in supporting an inclusive workforce environment.
- Strengthen institution roles in supporting and tracking diversity in women's employment.
- Provide approaches for securing accomplishments and generating momentum for future breakthroughs in gender diversity.

### **5. Adding to Academic and Realistic Knowledge (Exploring Diversity in Women's Employs:**

- Strengthen academic discussion about diversity in Saudi Arabian women's employment in a thorough, focused analysis.
- Provide a basis for future studies in gender diversity and economic development.
- Offer insights into meaningful social and economic transformation through strategic actions, with a specific target of strengthening capacities of and its entities.

## CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

**Introduction** This chapter seeks to present an in-depth review of literature concerning Saudi women's diversity in the workforce. The review identifies four important dimensions that shed light on the overall and specific environments of Saudi women's employment in Saudi Arabia:

**1. Diversity in Women's Work:** In this dimension, diversity in sectors, institutions, and programs that target female workforce mobilization is examined. It also identifies efforts towards creating supportive and competitive working environments that promote increased female workforce participation.

**2. Obstacles to Women's Full Involvement:** In this section, cultural, social, structural, and workplace barriers that hinder full integration of women in the workforce are examined. It identifies obstacles that restrict career development and leadership for them.

**3. Alternative Directions and Solutions:** In this dimension, strategies and potential alternatives for enhancing women's contribution to the workforce are discussed. It looks at alternative approaches and implementable recommendations for overcoming current obstacles and infusing gender equity.

**4. Accomplishments and Factors for Future Growth:** In this section, improvements in enhancing workforce participation for women and factors driving gender diversity are examined. It looks at the factors that enable future development and describes how these accomplishments can be extended and sustained further.

### 2.1 DIVERSITY WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT IN SAUDI ARABIA:

Saudi Arabia is in a transformation drive with an objective of enhancing women's employability and workplace diversity, a significant transition towards a fuller and an inclusive labour market. In this regard, it emphasizes that women contribute to creating innovation and driving economic growth to offer a sustainable economy (AlKhowaiter, 2021). Recent data shows an astonishing surge in the number of females into the workforce, representing about 60% growth over two years from 2018 to 2020, thereby

testifying to the deep-seated impact of such a visionary framework. This growth surpasses the statistics themselves and reflects the ambition of the Kingdom toward a more inclusive labour market. By setting an ambitious target to elevate women's participation to over 30%, Vision 2030 lays a robust foundation for achieving gender parity in the workforce (Oxford Business Group, 2022). Legal reforms have taken place, allowing significant advances in gender equality in the workplace, creating an environment bereft of any systemwide obstacles to participation by women. These reforms include banning sexual discrimination at work, as well as enabling policies such as long periods of maternity leave and facilities for childcare. These are extremely important in ensuring a workplace is made where both men and women can work with complete dignity and without the shadow of discrimination or bias. By tackling these fundamental issues, these policies and developments have not only fostered increased female participation but have also established a standard for equitable treatment in the workplace (Oxford Business Group, 2022). Furthermore, these reforms herald a cultural transformation within the Kingdom, highlighting the importance of women's roles in economic development. And while these gains are certainly important, deep seated problems persist, notably with regard to pay equity and career advancement. In Saudi Arabia today, women earn roughly 57% of what their male counterparts receive, underscoring a marked disparity in wages and a lack of overall financial equality. This persistent pay gap serves to hinder the wider objectives of Vision 2030, revealing deep seated issues of systemic inequality (Oxford Business Group, 2022). Beyond the issue of unequal pay, the limited access to managerial positions and professional development creates further barriers for women to more fully participate in the labor market. Such barriers to individual career advancement and hindrances to economic benefits from a really inclusive labor market extend beyond the individual. More encouragingly, the unemployment rate for females fell back to 22 percent during the first half of 2021 from 32 percent at the end of 2018. While this portends well, there are still areas of concern regarding disparities in career development opportunities. Without particular interventions, this will not be fully realized in the full integration of women into the labor market, according to (AlKhowaiter ,2021). There is a need to address these disparities so that women can be better positioned to contribute effectively toward the economic goals of the Kingdom through equal training, mentorship, and career advancement

opportunities. The evolving role of women in the workforce is mirrored in their increasing presence across diverse industries, such as hospitality and entertainment. This diversification of roles not only indicates a shift in the labor market but also marks a significant transformation in societal attitudes toward women's work. As traditional gender norms undergo continual evolution, women are progressively acknowledged as essential contributors to economic and cultural development (Peck, 2023). This budding perception plays a very important role in building an environment which will finally permit women to pursue careers in traditionally maledominated domains and change the dimensions of culture and professionalism. Thus, as Saudi Arabia proceeds with its ambitious Vision 2030, enabling women through education, training, and mentorship is of prime importance in breaking down barriers and shaping an equal labor market. Moreover, the continuity of such reforms would require tieups involving the government, private sector stakeholders, and educational institutions. The Kingdom would be assured that women are better prepared for positions as diversified as technology, finance, tourism, and other forms of entertainment by initiating and publicizing various programs aimed at empowering them with skill sets and self confidence. This will not only advance gender parity but also solidify women's role as key drivers of Saudi Arabia's economic and social transformation (AlKhowaiter, 2021; Oxford Business Group, 2022). On the one hand, studies have indicated that female labor market participation rates in the MENA are among the lowest in the world and stand at only 24.6%. This is particularly striking given the high and, at times, even higher rates of female educational attainment in the region compared to men (McKinsey, 2018). This disparity shows the wide gulf between achievements in education and what is realized in the labor market and calls for the adoption of forceful policies capable of translating qualifications into rewarding professional opportunities. Failure to adequately utilize such a high level of education represents wasted opportunity for the economy to grow, innovate, and become more socially advanced. The Fourth Industrial Revolution presents a providential and transformative opportunity to address these challenges since rapidly advancing technology and an emergent digital economy are forging new pathways for the inclusion of women into the workforce. Various estimates have shown that the number of jobs available exclusively to women can actually double by 2030, especially in those technologydriven fields like artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and renewable energy

(Schwab, 2017). Yet, these opportunities have merely scarcely been tapped, and women are still underrepresented in high-productivity, high-technological-skills sectors. It is a question of great urgency that this skills gap is closed, at least in areas like STEM science, technology, engineering, and mathematics to ensure that women do not fall behind in this fast growing field (McKinsey, 2018). This requires collaborative effort between governments, private institutions, and educational bodies to adequately equip women with skills and training relevant to such industries. It is interesting to note that Saudi women possess very positive perceptions concerning their empowerment within the online labor market, now one of the lively and flexible means of participation. The digital medium basically allows them to get rid of typical barriers like rigid office policies, transportation issues, and social constraints. In contrast, personal variables like marital status, income level, and family commitments are more relevant in engaging the females into the digital workforce. According to Alshmary et al. (2023), this indicates that tailored support mechanisms in the form of provision for childcare and flexible working would motivate women to engage in opportunities availed to them within the digital economy. Furthermore, challenging the social stigmas associated with women working online might help regularize their presence within such an environment and allow an intellectual appreciation of their invaluable contributions. In the higher education setting, Saudi women are strategizing ways of navigating and breaking down the patriarchy structures that conventionally bar them from assuming leading positions. Many such strategies involve how to mobilize academic capital and professional networks in a way that stretches beyond systemic hindrances to position themselves within circles of decision making. Nonetheless, the success of these endeavors heavily relies on the existence of institutional support. Mentorship programs, initiatives aimed at developing leadership skills, and inclusive policies within both academic and professional environments have been recognized as vital facilitators for the advancement of women (Abalkhail, 2019). This institutional backing not only equips women with the essential resources for their success but also bolsters the cultural transformation towards increased gender equity in leadership. The uphill climb through complex dynamics societal gender norms and workplace integration remains a strong challenge. Culturally entrenched expectations and conventional roles regularly stand in the path of women's access to certain sectors and decision-making positions. But a change is underway, and changing mindsets go on

reshaping working women's roles in the workplace, opening a fairer and more inclusive environment. These changes, though promising, must have a pragmatic understanding of society and cultural spaces to make long term headways. To overcome these impediments, a multidimensional approach is imperative. Reforms in legislation must go hand in hand with a drive to modify minds in society through awareness programs designed to reshape thinking about working women. Complete gender parity in the workforce in the region also necessitates closing gaps in participation, technology related competencies, and career progression opportunities. Schooling must align outcomes with the demands of job markets, and focused training programs must impart emerging opportunities in high-potential industries. A tripartite collaboration between governments, private sectors, and nongovernmental sectors is imperative to dislodging systemic barriers and creating inclusive job markets. Economic and social dividends of such integration in terms of added innovation and productivity, and social cohesion, are enormous in range. By embracing such strategies, the region can unlock its full workforce potential and make significant headways towards gender equity. Ultimately, a lot of work must yet be done in an attempt to fully access women's potential in the labour economy. The closing of structural gaps, investing in skill development, and developing an environment to promote a supportive culture, are imperative actions in order for women to become key drivers in driving social and economic transformation in the region. It won't be a simple path towards gender equality, but the opportunity posed through the Fourth Industrial Revolution and broader programs for innovation and for inclusivity make for a positive direction. Understanding the myriad ways in which women navigate and negotiate their roles within these diverse contexts is crucial for crafting strategies that foster their complete integration into the workforce (Aldossari & Murphy, 2023). In Saudi Arabia, as in many other societies, women frequently find themselves balancing professional aspirations with traditional expectations a negotiation that demands resilience, adaptability, and institutional support. These challenges become even more fraught due to skewed social norms and deeply entrenched systemwide obstacles that often stifle the opportunities of women in regard to leadership, high productivity sectors, and career advancement. The interplay of these factors underlines how significant the reforms and cultural transformations that focus on structural obstacles as well as societal obstacles are to the rise of women.

This might include mentorship opportunities through policies, leadership development, and flexible workplaces that would allow women to hold more influential roles in the economic sphere. Further, awareness raising campaigns financed through public funds may work on challenging traditional gender stereotypes and the business case for diversity to try and reshape societal attitudes toward the role of women. It's not just about opportunity creation; it's about creating an environment that fosters confidence in women to pursue those opportunities and be supported in doing so. That means closing the "confidence gap," in which too many women fail to negotiate salaries and don't apply for leadership positions due to the conditioning of society. This is a gap that organizations could narrow through promoting an open dialogue culture, equal pay for equal work, and nonopaque promotion criteria. While noticeable improvement has been seen increased workforce participation of women and growing female presence in leadership positions much work is yet to occur in order to make real gender equality a reality. These improvements, beneficial as they are, also expose the level at which systemic and full social transformation is yet to take place. Those entails tearing down patriarchal structures, closing gaps in salaries, granting even access to training and education, and preparing women for emerging industries. Achieving meaningful gender equality in Saudi Arabia's workforce entails a multidimensional approach that involves policy reform, cultural transformation, and long term investment in female development. Besides, increased collaboration between government, private sector companies, and educational entities is important in supporting increased momentum. It will lay the path for a fairer and inclusive workforce, enabling women to become key drivers of country, social, and economic development. Celebrating successful women and holding them out as role models can motivate future generations and lend traction to the message of capabilities and contribution of women. Not an exercise in fairness, but a pillar of social and economic durability, moving towards equality is a journey for transformational change, redefining the role of women in society, offering a onetime opportunity to place them at the fore of future growth and national development. By showcasing achievement, society can speed steps towards a fairer and more equitable future Recent research reports about the way Saudi women contribution in sectors that have become diversified changed, most prominently in sectors of high education and health. All such changes unveil changing dimensions of working women in jobs, with enhancements in getting women incorporated

in sectors traditionally dominated by males. All such enhancements work towards reemphasizing the importance of continuous efforts and enlargement in regards to providing jobs for women in all sectors in an attempt to promote social and economic development. . (AlHanawi, Khan, and AlBorie 2019) had stated that health is such a sector that requires overall human resource development in order to meet the diversified demands of the growing population. They emphasize the policies like Saudization and the Nitaqat program, which have indeed played a very instrumental role in opening up avenues of employment for Saudi nationals, both male and female. These initiatives will make the road to employment smooth and try to reduce the longstanding dependence of the Kingdom on expatriate workers. The authors call for strategic realignment to achieve workforce balance whereby Saudi nationals play a leading role complemented by foreign professionals. They argue that such transformation is essential in the development of a sustainable and robust health sector intended to address national objectives and fulfill the bigger aspirations of Vision 2030 as laid out by (AlHanawi et al. ,2019).Alsubaie and Jones (2017) highlight that, while there has been growth in the workforce, the number of women in leadership positions remains significantly underrepresented within higher education. Their findings indicate a number of impediments to women's rise into decision making positions, such as deep seated cultural beliefs and institutional hindrances. On the other hand, it recognizes the outstanding accomplishments of a generation of women by whom systemic barriers to academic leadership positions were not only breached but are role models for a new generation whereby things can be different from the conventional ways. Alsubaie and Jones champion the need for more empirical research to delve into the complexities of women's leadership experiences, stressing that a more profound understanding of these dynamics is essential for crafting effective strategies aimed at supporting and enhancing women's leadership (Alsubaie & Jones, 2017).Complementing these facts, evidence of such rapid growth was provided in a Brookings report in 2021 from 20% at the close of 2018 to 33% toward the end of 2020 of women's participation in the Saudi labor market. Such dramatic growth has been particularly noticeable in the age group between 40 and 54 years, which has been facing longstanding problems trying to get back into the labor market after family or caregiving responsibilities.



These findings highlight the significant impact of recent reforms, including workplace flexibility policies and targeted training programs, which have empowered women to engage in the labor market like never before. The Brookings report emphasizes how these initiatives are nurturing a sense of optimism regarding the future of gender equality in employment, especially within sectors where women have historically faced underrepresentation (Brookings, 2021). Moreover, Alaref and Koettl, 2021, present clear evidence for the progress to be made in increasing labor force participation by women: it increased from 20% in 2017 to approximately 30% in 2020. This progress can be credited mainly to policy reforms taken towards systematically removing barriers that hinder women from joining traditionally male dominated sectors such as construction, engineering, and manufacturing. These reforms have been expanding women's access to various employment opportunities and have helped them break into spheres previously considered unreachable. The authors further stress these policy changes as important for long term economic growth, given that an increase in women's contribution to the workforce is directly related to improvements in productivity and innovation at work. In addition to quantitative changes, qualitative changes become more obvious with more and more women moving up to the leading position in all spheres. Today, notable figures are rising as pioneers in different careers, breaking barriers and setting ways forward for future generations of women in their respective careers. These are the icons showing the huge impacts of the new initiatives under Vision 2030 in providing a setting where women can thrive professionally. World Bank, 2020. Moreover, the cultural transformation toward a wider acceptance of women in the workforce is clearly reflected in the increasing support from families and male colleagues, which has played an essential role in allowing women to chase their professional dreams free from societal repercussions (World Bank, 2022). Admittedly, despite such gains, massive hurdles persist. Cultural resistance and organizational inertia remain resilient features standing athwart complete success. Women still struggle with structural barriers to reach leadership positions, receive equal pay, and have opportunities for career advancement. Alsu Baie and Jones (2017) argue that addressing these issues requires not only reforms in policy but also a change in the way society perceives the roles of women in the workforce. This approach to working together both to overcome structural barriers and shape social attitudes is key to creating an fair job marketplace in which women can flourish.

The chapters that follow build an examination of the implications for working women's contribution and ascent through jobs ladder of altering economic and social realities. While progress has been gained, sustained efforts will be required in overcoming current barriers. Only through coordination with social necessity, providing an environment friendly to work, and emblazoning role models can further progress be achieved, and Saudi women claim their rightful position in defining Saudi future economy and society. This is a significant rise in female contribution towards jobs through a sequence of state of the art reforms adopted sequentially to contribute towards working women and develop an inclusive labour marketplace., wherein the major gain is derived from the abolishment of gender based discrimination in employment practices. These reforms have not only dismantled the obstacles that once limited women's entry into the labor market, but they have also lifted enduring restrictions on their participation in industries traditionally dominated by men, such as manufacturing and construction (Alaref & Koettl,2021). By tackling these systemic inequalities, these reforms have paved the way for women, allowing them to engage more significantly in various sectors that are vital to the Kingdom's economic growth. What is more, Saudi Arabian women are taking up leading positions in all conceivable spheres: scientific, financial, and touristic, to name a few. The very fact of such an outstanding achievement stands as a testimony not only to their brilliant capabilities but also to pioneering government policies that enable their movement forward. In this respect, such policies have created an environment wherein women are inspired toward self actualization by the opportunity to access and acquire leading positions. For example, the promotion of gender diversity in decision making positions and mentorship programs have enabled women's professional development to date (World Bank, 2020).The narratives of pioneering women like Noura AlMudaiheem and Basmah AlMayman beautifully illustrate this advancement. Each of these remarkable individuals has shattered considerable obstacles in their own domains, showcasing unwavering resilience and determination on their journeys to success.Their accomplishments stand as compelling role models for future generations, igniting within young women the confidence and ambition to chase their career aspirations. These individuals embody the profound influence of Vision 2030 in transforming societal views on women's roles and capabilities, demonstrating that gender is no longer a barrier to attaining professional success (World Bank, 2020).

More importantly, along with these structural changes, a remarkable cultural shift has also emerged: the increased tolerance and encouragement for women to enter different professions. For the first time, families and male relatives are encouraging them more and more to pursue their professional ambitions. This is a very strong departure from age old custom and tradition, which often confined women's roles to within the four walls of the home. The support of families and male figures has emerged as a cornerstone, empowering women to penetrate industries and roles that were once beyond their reach, thereby highlighting the changing dynamics of gender roles within Saudi society (World Bank, 2022). This is reflected in increasingly larger numbers of women becoming leaders and high value professionals, whose worth and contribution are valued and appreciated. Progressive policies, supported by social momentum, allow for an environment in which a woman can rise and redefine in all areas of life. This double motion reform of structures and transformation in society not only empowers them but fortifies social and economic tissue of the nation. Such development underlines the two way street between reform in policies and cultural transformation. As much as structural reforms draw out blueprints for gender equality, social attitudinal shifts make them deep rooted and unending. Saudi Arabia, in taking such an integral path, is positioning its women at the forefront of its economy and culture, driving its growth towards a brighter and more inclusive future. Despite the remarkable progress made in recent years, challenges still linger in the workplace, obstructing the complete attainment of gender equality. One of these hurdles is the ongoing “confidence gap,” which underscores the reluctance or doubt that many women face when it comes to negotiating salaries or actively seeking leadership positions within organizations. This is very deep rooted in societal norms and cultural conditioning, which prevents them from asserting themselves in the professional field. The bridging of this confidence gap, according to AL Nasrallah (2023), requires not only individual empowerment but also changes within the organization in terms of culture to create an enabling environment for women to know their place and argue for themselves. Moreover, societal norms and traditional expectations still present considerable barriers to women's employment opportunities, especially in conservative circles where entrenched attitudes regarding gender roles remain dominant. These norms frequently insist that women prioritize family responsibilities over career aspirations, thereby constructing structural obstacles to their complete engagement in the workforce (Alaref

& Koettl, 2021). This may further be the reason for certain fields women are allowed to enter and specific leadership positions they assume, thus still contributing to gender inequalities within the labor market. It is essential, however, to acknowledge the profound impact that ongoing reforms are having, alongside the growing visibility of successful female role models. These reforms, designed to foster gender equality through legal protections and policy changes, are slowly but surely reshaping societal perceptions of women's roles. The presence of successful women in a range of areas from business, education, and science, to government provides a powerful catalyst for change. Such role models achieve more than inspiring young generations of women; they challenge traditional stereotypes, showing that women can excel and be leaders in most professional spheres (AL Nasrallah 2023). This is a strong indicator that society is transforming, with a growing number of women confidently entering the workforce and wholeheartedly seeing through career aspirations. Greater development reflects a general cultural shift towards heightened opportunity and access. Full equality between women and men, nevertheless, is a long term ideal that will demand persistent determination. Reforms will not have immediate repercussions; they will have to be accompanied with persistent dedication in order to demolish the ongoing barriers that hindered women in attaining even greater success and meaningful repercussions in the workplace. It is about creating an enabling environment that provides opportunity for growth and development, both empowering and supportive, with resources, tools, and options that allow women to grow. Some of the elements forming part of this would relate to mentorship programs, leadership training, and flexible working conditions, considering all the peculiar challenges faced by women. Moreover, organizational policies should be crafted to guarantee equal pay, clear promotion criteria, and inclusive workplace practices that actively work against gender bias (World Bank, 2020; Alaref & Koettl, 2021). Or, though big achievements were gained in the direction of gender equality in the Saudi labor market, much is yet to be undertaken. Shrinking confidence gaps and social barriers form only just a portion of that. It gives Saudi Arabia the opportunity to unleash the full potential of its feminine power towards economic growth and social development in harmony, as envisioned by Vision 2030, by fostering an enabling environment for women to thrive. (World Bank 2020; Alaref & Koettl 2021; Al-Nasrallah 2023).

## **2.2 DIVERSITY WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT IN SAUDI ARABIA: CHALLENGES**

Despite recent efforts toward greater female workforce diversity, barriers to female in Saudi employment at present run deep rooted in a deep web of social, cultural, and institution factors that have long shaped the workforce environment. Women interested in becoming part of such a workforce encounter significant impediments, such as social convention and systemic biases that resist integration into the economy. Peters, Den Dulk, and De Ruijter, 2010 argue that cultural and institutional barriers are some of the major factors impeding both men and women from engaging in work, particularly in the private sector. For instance, such barriers may relate to discriminatory hiring practices, limited promotion opportunities, and a lack of workplace policies that respond to women's specific needs. Worse still, such discrimination often gets institutionalized and passed on, without any objections, especially within the conservative structures of societies that stress the male's dominance in the workplace. Varma et al. (2022) provide a detailed review of structural and attitudinal barriers that Saudi women face at work. Entrenched gender stereotyping has been underlined by the authors as one of the roots for this cause, where women are confined to stereotypical roles and their career advancement and professional growth are inhibited. These are the roles that are very much perpetuated by societal expectation, considering women mainly as caregivers, thus creating work life imbalances that adversely affect their professional development. This is further aggravated by inflexible working conditions a lack of support systems that should have childcare facilities and further complicate the balance of professional and personal duties expected of women. According to the authors, such challenges do not merely hamper individual career pathways; they also reduce the wider economic contribution that women are able to make to the nation. The intersection of state policies and patriarchal cultural practices deepens these issues. In their exploration, Shihab AlDin and Abdul Qader (2023) provide insight into how societal resistance to women's engagement in the workforce often stands in jarring contrast to government initiatives aimed at furthering gender equality. While the government is working on reforms that try to bring more women into the labor market, the conservative social views see women's paid labor as a threat to the traditional male female relations. This misconnection encourages an

environment where women are usually discouraged from pursuing career goals, especially those viewed as masculine or less conventional for them. The ripple this causes does not limit opportunities only for females but also places broader risks on the goals of Vision 2030. Sian et al. (2020) add to this debate in their analysis of how religious nationalism, in association with patriarchal values, impacts workplace relations. This combination of elements exerts strong effects in traditionally male dominated sectors, such as auditing, engineering, and manufacturing. They further argue that the combination of religious and cultural expectations fosters exclusionary measures to eliminate women from influential positions. This systemic exclusion thus promotes a self-perpetuating circle of inequality, where women are underrepresented and, at the same time, face additional challenges to establishing their professional identities within such contexts. Aldossari and Chaudhry (2024) took a wider frame, highlighting how state-driven policies and socioreligious norms powerfully converge in complex ways to forge both structural and subjective precarity for women within the labor market. Whereas structural precarity denotes tangible barriers, unequal pay, limited possibilities of professional development, and lack of access to high level decision making positions, subjective precarity is about the psychological and emotional distress accompanying the struggle to survive in a work environment that hardly recognizes the value of women's contribution. This dual load constitutes an urgent need for policy reforms that address not only the practical but also the perceptual challenges faced by women in professional settings. The core reason is related to the lack of good mentorship and professional development opportunities in general for women. Many shared feelings of loneliness in masculine dominated settings, while networking opportunities and pathways to career advancement had been tailored towards males. Along with all these female related challenges, exclusionary policies and unsupportive mechanisms contribute to their burden and make it even more unlikely that they would achieve parity with their male colleagues. Societal perceptions further perpetuate these barriers. In many cases, deep seated cultural attitudes enforce that a woman's place is in the house, leaving little room for career ambitions. This kind of cultural resistance is very strong in rural and conservative regions where traditional gender roles are deeply engraved. Even in cities, however, women are often victims of more subtle forms of discrimination, including passing over for promotion or exclusion from decision-making activities. This progress is supplemented

with an increasingly successful cohort of women thriving in a variety of industries. Role model women have smashed down obstacles, delivering strong positive role models of achievement, with cultural and institution obstacles reduced. Their achievement underlines the imperative for an environment in which women can rise not simply as workers but as entrepreneurs and leaders. The achievements are also a sign of the multidimensional obstacles that confront Saudi women in the labour market. Research has captured how institution, society, and culture resistances become locked in an inescapable web, even when development is taking place. To beat them, multidimensional intervention is required that involves policy reform and transformation in society. Policies such as improving workplace diversity, mentorship, and getting out messages in society are imperative for achieving gender equality. As Saudi Arabia continues down its journey to creating an inclusive labour market, tearing down obstacles to powerful Saudi women is no longer a moral imperative but an economic imperative, too. Releasing the full potential of Saudi's female workforce is critical to driving innovation and productivity, and to supporting broader socioeconomic aspirations. Realization of such a dream requires unrelenting drive and a joined up effort from all sectors in society. According to Peters, Den Dulk, and De Ruijter 2010, cultural and regulatory barriers are ingrained in Saudi Arabia and hence, as a rule, they represent a formidable obstacle for women willing to enter the labor market. Most of the times such obstacles are artfully wrapped up in conservative social frameworks nurtured by conventional norms and values that prescribes male/female roles and discriminates against women. These are practices that get normalized and often go unchallenged, reflecting a larger social context that limits and circumscribes women's participation in the workforce and, by extension, their potential contributions to economic growth and national development. Building upon this, Varma et al. (2022) also give a comprehensive look into the structural and attitude barriers taken by employed Saudi women day in and day out. The findings have decried how gender stereotypes still dominate work relations and place women in subordination, affecting the development of their careers. These are stereotypes which have limited women's rise to positions of responsibility and even made them oblivious to workplace cultures that do not respect their service. This scarcity in career advancement opportunities, aside from an unhelpful work life balance, increases all these adversities.

The women often bear the dual responsibilities of working and attending to domestic affairs, finding little or no time to invest in future career prospects.

This gradually snowballs into lesser professional satisfaction and, over time, a shrinkage in the possibilities of career advancement for women. The effect of patriarchal norms and religious interpretation regarding women's working experiences cannot be underestimated. According to Sian et al. (2020), such norms institute a sex related division of labor, especially in professions related to auditing, since this is one of the fields normally dominated by males. These religious and cultural grounds are limiting their inclusion and perpetuating inequities, hence sustaining their marginalization. Consider society's expectations of women placing domestic responsibilities ahead of career ambitions; the environment has become such that female talents are grossly underutilized. Aldossari and Chaudhry (2024) extend this argument to outline how state driven politics, together with entrenched socioreligious mores, give rise to an assemblage of forms of gender based disparity in the labor market in its structural and subjective dimensions of precariousness. More precisely, these are of the nature of structural barriers: lesser wages, limited avenues of job mobility, and lack of access to positions of decision making power. They experience the psychological effects of working in places which do not welcome them to a point of growing professionally. In the retailing industry, for example, they are often subjected to inflexible work policies, negligible promotion opportunities, and cultural stigmatization which basically ends up dampening their pursuit of careers. While it is recognized that women make vital contributions to the economy under Vision 2030, societal disapproval and family dynamics continue to present considerable barriers. Shahabuddin and Mohammed Abdul Qadir (2023) observe that while the government initiatives are trying to increase female labor participation, the societal attitudes more often than not run perpendicular to this very initiative. Most of the conservative circles still believe in traditional gender roles, hence opposing women working, especially in jobs or professions which they consider uncustomary. This resistance from society is, therefore, blocking their path of attaining opportunities and then creating a self sustaining cycle of exclusion harmful to the attainment of broader goals of economic inclusion and gender equality. However, overcoming these barriers demands multilevel intervention. Not only must it change the outlook of society, but it also must entail awareness



campaigns for the masses, challenging conventional stereotypes and emphasizing the importance of contribution by females in the workforce.

Large changes in attitude could be brought about through educational programs that promote gender equality from a very young age. Additionally, recognizing women role models who have broken through various barriers could provide a beacon of hope for newer generations to come forward and realize professional success independent of social barriers. It means that, institutionally, hiring should be fair, and workplace policies must be based on inclusiveness. Apart from that, many women face specific impediments, and for that reason, it is imperative for organisations to promote diversity and inclusion through mentorship programmes, leadership programmes, and flexible work arrangements. In addition to that, availability of family friendly organisational policies and daycare centres can enable women to work and function effectively both in and out of work. Governments and private sector organisations must also make career development programmes and fair pay available for a fair and balanced labour force for women. The following observations confirm the imperative for systemic reform towards enhancing work opportunities for Saudi women. They show how cultural, institutional, and social impediments cumulatively build enormous obstacles for women in attaining success in the labour market. Overcoming these impediments is critical towards building an inclusive and balanced labour force, providing an environment in which career aspirations for women can flourish. By removing these impediments, Saudi Arabia can make full use of its full potential in its female labour force, not only in driving economic development but social development as well. This involves recognising and welcoming the contribution of women towards national development. In addition to economic development, instilling an awareness and valuing of women's efforts brings a balanced and inclusive path towards national development. Alghamdi 2022 observes that the Saudi women are increasingly joining the educational sector, yet they are facing countless family and social organizational difficulties which seriously impede the performance capabilities of the females to perform as leaders. This results from serious societal expectations regarding females' roles in society, which place other domestic duties ahead of females' professional pursuits. The dual role of caregiver and leader might be causing physical and emotional stress for women, which makes it difficult to commit to their professional development on all levels. Organizational structures often lack in such

flexibility or supporting mechanisms, like onsite childcare or family leaves, to help address the particular needs of female working professionals. This has the effect of decreased productivity and less contribution to economic development, thereby fostering an attitude that women cannot be good leaders. According to Alsubhi et al. (2020), the situation is even worse in rural areas, where women experience further deterioration due to inadequate educational and health facilities, as well as fewer opportunities for work. Rapid population growth, a preference for public sector jobs, and insufficient infrastructure particularly transportation and childcare facilities further isolate rural women, perpetuating cycles of unemployment and underemployment despite their qualifications. Indeed, in these underprivileged areas, the so called traditional cultural femininity often relegates female labor market participation to domains seen as an extension of women's domestic roles of teaching or caregiving. This rigid culture prevents many women from exploring other opportunities that would yield better economic returns, hence widening the labor market participation gap between men and women. Besides this, the lack of supportive infrastructure like transportation routes acts as a logistical barrier to mobility and also serves as a reason for female workers not to pursue job opportunities outside their locales. These obstacles collectively create a challenging environment for rural women, underscoring the urgent need for targeted policy interventions to level the playing field. In high growth industries, such as digital technology, the challenges are equally pronounced but take on a different dimension. Gadi (2021) identifies sociocultural factors, including male dominance and family non-support, as key deterrents to women's participation in the technology sector. It is at the same time an overwhelmingly masculine sphere of work that creates networks and opportunities, excluding women from them. Besides, women face a serious problem of digital divide due to a lack of training and enhancement of their skills in the digital sphere. Due to inability to interface with the changing technologies, they can hardly compete in this rapidly growing sector. This lack of training and professional development not only limits women's employment prospects but also stifles their potential to innovate and contribute meaningfully to national development. Raising societal awareness about these challenges is crucial to changing the narrative around women's roles in the workforce. It is indeed a challenge that stakeholders, whether governments, educational institutions, or private organizations, need to install programs that empower women with skills but most

importantly with confidence and opportunities to participate in the digital revolution. These include programs such as coding boot camps, mentorship programs, and even scholarships for women in areas of STEM, which could help alleviate the skill gap and increase female participation in technology driven sectors. Addressing these systemic barriers, Saudi Arabia could develop the immense potential of the country's female talent pool into active drivers of growth and innovation. The challenges go beyond only emerging industries into specialized professions such as journalism, where females face different challenges. Aljuaid (2020) talks about several of the challenges that female journalists face within Saudi Arabia, how societal perceptions have called into question, and continue to, their aptitude for challenging tasks and reporting on subjects typically held by their male peers. Each of these biases is entrenched within cultural perceptions of gender, whereby females should act out more subdued or "appropriate" roles. Such stereotypes not only narrow the opportunities for female journalists but also bind the trade, not being able to grasp those different perspectives and insights which women carry out in telling and reporting. For women in journalism, their challenges are often compounded by limited mentorship, fewer opportunities for leadership, and systemic exclusion from key editorial decisions, serving only to further marginalize their role inside the profession. These are issues which traverse both traditional and emergent industries, underscoring a suite of deeper structural, cultural, and institutional barriers that hinder the full participation of women into labor. These are challenges calling for an integrated and multifaceted response. Policymakers must commit to reform efforts which improve access to vital infrastructure such as quality, affordable childcare and reliable transport; allow flexibility in working arrangements; and provide equity in hiring. Wherefore, employers themselves must ensure that an enabling environment is provided through mentorship programs, leadership training, and ensuring equal pay for equal work. The society, on the other hand, must reorient attitudes to embrace and celebrate the roles that women are playing in all fields through public awareness campaigns, community outreach programs, and educational programs promoting gender equality that may help reshape perceptions and build a more enabling culture that allows the full participation of women. The more far reaching significance of such reform goes beyond issues of economic inclusion. Another critical aspect of Saudi Vision 2030 is women's complete integration into the labor market as part of an aspiration toward a diverse and inclusive

economy. According to Alghamdi (2022), it contributes not only to fulfilling the ambition of parity between genders but also to ensuring sustainable economic growth, with strengthened national competitiveness. By dismantling systemic and cultural barriers to women reaching their full potential, Saudi Arabia would unleash new pathways to innovation, productivity, and social progress. These studies bring out the conclusive remarks that comprehensive reforms targeting structural, cultural, and professional barriers are urgently needed to be adopted with a view to address the participation of women in the labor market. These reforms should be bold and actionable, even to the extent of confronting root causes of inequality and assuring enabling environments for success. In so doing, Saudi Arabia will make sure that the aspirations outlined in Vision 2030 become reality and that women are nothing less than full partners in shaping the future of their very own country. Research consistently reveals that women in leadership roles encounter considerable obstacles, such as cultural resistance, restricted access to opportunities, and systemic biases that impede their progress (Alsahan & George, 2022). These challenges frequently arise from deeply rooted societal norms that favor conventional gender roles and cast doubt on women's abilities in leadership. These follow directly from interviews with the leading women: it would follow that there is a striking coincidence between what they have resilience, adaptability, and strategic thinking and rising to leadership. These attributes are, however, insufficient to overcome the structural and cultural barriers they face, and supportive reforms are thus crucial to enhancing women's political representation. The review by Alsahan and George (2022) argues that creating a more inclusive setting requires serious policy interventions that can address not only the overt impediments but also the entrenched cultural views that perpetuate gender inequality. In a study conducted in 2018 concerning female career development in state universities by AlSharif, there are seven crucial factors impeding their advancement, namely, cultural, family, individual, organizational, geographical, economic, and legal. These are interconnected factors and often interdependent, setting an uphill terrain for women striving for leadership. Cultural expectations state that women must not put their professional pursuits ahead of the interest of the family and thus reduce their availability. In addition, family factors such as insufficient support from husbands or extended family reduces women's ability to pursue career development. While the organization's discriminatory policies on recruitment and promotion, coupled with a lack of mentoring

and professional development opportunities, hint at systemic barriers at the organizational level, the geographical disparities, particularly in the rural areas, suggest that access to education, training, and job opportunities is severely impeded. All of these economic constraints are further exacerbated by wage disparities and restricted access to financial facilities that the women are exposed to. Finally, outdated legal frameworks and inadequate enforcement of gender equality policies leave women vulnerable to discrimination, making it imperative for political leaders to commit to increasing women's representation in decision making positions (Alsharif, 2018). The underrepresentation of women in STEM, particularly in cybersecurity, is a strong reflection of the sociocultural barrier that persists across industries. These are still male dominated areas of practice, not only because deeply entrenched societal attitudes about gender roles persist but also because of an overall absence of dedicated programs that would attract and retain women in these areas. This Digital Divide along with stubborn stereotypes about the technical capability of women discourages many women from pursuing careers in the STEM area. According to Author (Year), underrepresentation must be addressed from various directions: early exposure through STEM education, mentorships, scholarships targeted at females who want to enter the cybersecurity related field. Besides, the very fact that those industries are in the position of high demand for cybersecurity increases their relevance for national development in which engaging women is not just a question of gender equity but one of economics. Family commitment and conservatism concerning the place of women in society generally confines female participation in several fields. Most women are compelled to assume caring responsibilities, hence diminishing their capacity for full employment. The nature of work expectation wells these cultural expectations since work friendly policies like flex time, parental leave, and onsite childcare are not considered. Alselaime and Lord 2012 say that regional variations of attitude to women working add a further layer of complication; conservative regions often have much tighter restrictions on women's employment compared to the more enlightened cities. The sensitivity of the issue of gender within Saudi culture exacerbates these complications, making women working a much more complex issue than at first it might appear. These regional and cultural disparities require a nuanced approach that respects local traditions while promoting gender equality in a culturally sensitive manner. The underrepresentation of women in Saudi Arabia's labour

market carries important consequences for its social and economic development. Closing this gap is important to developing a more equitable labour force, with women's active contribution key to spurring innovation, raising productivity, and attaining long term growth. Closing this gap will involve focused efforts to make opportunities level, break down systemic obstacles, and integrate women in all sectors, and in turn contribute towards a more robust and equitable society. In policy, focusing on non discriminatory hiring, antidiscrimination laws, and placing more females through quotas into key leading and technical posts. Of course, According to Varma et al. (2022), such challenges require a multidimensional approach a composite policy, cultural, and institutional response. This should involve reforms equally significant are changes in culture that must be brought about through awareness campaigns, an education system where established gender roles are asked questions of, and females who are celebrated as role models to motivate girls. The other vital prop of this transformation is institutional support. It thus becomes an organizational imperative to create an enabling work environment to help them grow by offering them the necessary mentorship, leadership training, and exposure to professional networks. Finally, easy access to support infrastructure like childcare, transportation, and flexible working will facilitate better balancing of their professional and personal commitments. Educational institutions can play an important role in infusing curriculums with gender equality to encourage women to enter jobs traditionally male profiling, such as in work in STEM and leadership positions. Addressing such concerns requires overcoming obstacles encountered by women in Saudi Arabia's labor market, and such obstacles have profound cultural, institution, and systemic underpinnings of inequality. Progress has been accomplished, but actual improvement requires long term commitment and multidimensional approaches to eroding such obstacles. By overcoming such inequalities, Saudi Arabia can unleash its female workforce, drive innovation and productivity, and develop a model for a labor market in terms of inclusivity and empowerment, in which females contribute to its future in an integral manner. Alenazy (2018) posits that women professors remain underrepresented in many higher education institutions' leadership structures due to a combination of individual, cultural, and institutional obstacles. These issues mirror wider social and religious forces through which organizational life is produced to continue generating inequalities. Individually, many women are often troubled by a lack of self confidence or motivation in seeking

higher ranking jobs, due in large part to the traditional and cultural expectations placed upon them as caretakers of the home. Cultural expectations continue to depict management positions as better left to men, who thereby enhance their capability in terms of a stressful, high level performance capacity. The institutional level usually fails to create the needed policies and practices for advancement pathways to be opened to women through mentorship programs and professional development, among other programs, and fair hiring practices. This study shows that such barriers will not only affect the developments in the careers of women but also reinforce structural inequality at the institutional level in academia. This includes barriers to women holding leadership positions and hence inhibiting varied perspectives that may be instrumental in leading decision making processes with innovation and progress regarding higher education. In the sphere of health, these obstacles confronted by women are all pervasive but certain aspects assume peculiar shapes. Alobaid et al. (2020) point out a metaphorical "glass ceiling" hanging above female paramedics and discuss how to translate gendered organizational theories into practice at the workplace level. Such theories are usually based on traditionalist thinking about gender roles and make the professional experience for females complicated by entrenching systemwide prejudices and discriminatory practices. In this position of a paramedic, there are many barriers facing a woman in promotion opportunities, equity in payment, and assistance from colleagues and superiors. These not only impede professional growth but also help facilitate a broader exclusion culture that is marginalizing women in life support occupations within health care. The study emphasizes that the change in organizations should also be directed at gendering workplace dynamics and making such environments inclusive, which will help them to prosper both as professionals and leaders. The tourism and hospitality industries are another field where women face significant challenges in terms of empowerment. Alshareef and AL Gassim (2021) have identified the two major factors obstructing this empowerment socioeconomic factors and gender role perceptions. Socioeconomic factors include issues such as low wages, little availability of training and development, and lack of childcare facilities affect women who will be or are pursuing the fields of engineering and information technology. On the other hand, role orientations emanate from the deeply held traditional perceptions that place women in low order positions in society and dissuade their ambition for leadership. What this research underlines by Alshareef and

AL Gassim is a sad real situation where women in these sectors often feel not being given equal opportunities as men, thus leading to reduced professional growth and job satisfaction. This disparity limits not just the successful careers of women but also denies the tourism and hospitality industries the rich diversity of perception and skill that women can provide to these industries. These are further supported in the study of Maawadh et al. (2024) on the level of job satisfaction of women in the health industry, underlining that good work practices have paramount effects on strengthening women's empowerment, while opportunities to make decisions enhance their job satisfaction correspondingly. Those women who get great opportunities to have a say in organizational matters, where the environment also grows their professional record, record higher levels of satisfaction and commitment. This study shows the development of an inclusive and supportive work culture as a step toward empowering women and giving them the ability to perform at their best. Challenges facing women in academia, health, tourism, and hospitality are but a reflection of the deep seated structural bottlenecks to women's employment in Saudi Arabia, deeply intertwined with the cultural, institutional, and socioeconomic factors that create a milieu bound by limitations on women in pursuing professional success and leadership. An example here is that cultural norms have long emphasized the idea of women's responsibility within the household, discouraging them from fighting for ambitious career goals. Furthermore, biased recruitment or promotion at higher levels supports these gendered norms in institutional contexts by further limiting their access and opportunities to acquire leadership and professional skills. This is coupled with other socioeconomic issues such as unequal pay and lack of childcare at affordable costs that further complicate these priorities for women trying to balance these two careers. Such impediments become possible only through the adoption of a comprehensive approach, including policy reforms, cultural changes, and organizational changes. These reforms should address non discriminatory hiring and promotion policies, full implementation of antidiscrimination laws, and a quota system ascertaining the presence of women in decision making positions. Employers may also create an enabling environment with monetary benefits availed to organizations for promoting diversity and inclusion. Equally fundamental are the cultural changes brought about through the sensitization of society by means of publicity on traditional gender roles and measuring the worth of gender diversity in the workplace. The achievements of successful women in academia, health,



tourism, and other sectors can be celebrated to capture the heart of the new generation and remind one that a woman is equally capable of contributing to development in the nation. Organizational changes in themselves go a long way in creating an inclusive, supportive culture. Employers can invest more in mentorship programs, leadership training, and provide flexiworking opportunities that help women. Affordable childcare and transportation are other factors that will help women overcome some of the key logistical challenges that often create hurdles on the path to fuller labor market participation. Furthermore, safe and supportive workplace environments in which women feel valued and respected can also significantly improve feelings of job satisfaction and engagement, thus leading to improved organizational outcomes. A critical review of literature by Alenazy (2018), Alobaid et al. (2020), Alshareef and AL Gassim (2021), and Maawadh et al. (2024) collectively point toward an imperative need for comprehensive reforms in breaking structural obstacles deeply entrenched in Saudi Arabia. These reforms not only serve towards a realization of gender equality but serve towards an important position in allowing women to contribute maximally towards Saudi Arabia's social and economic development. To win over such a challenge, a collective effort must be pursued through employers, policymakers, and civil society in developing an inclusive and fair labour market. By disempowering social, socioeconomic, and cultural barriers that have in the past kept full female participation a preserve, such a country can maximize its female labour force, allowing for women to contribute equally with males towards nation development. In its transition towards development, Saudi Arabia, in overcoming such a challenge, not only involves matters of fairness but imperative approaches towards a long lasting national development. Empowering girls and women in such areas such as tourism, healthcare, and education can drive innovation, productivity, and competitiveness, resulting in a strong and robust economy in the long term. By committing towards general reform and through developing an in depth culture of inclusivity, Saudi Arabia can make its labour sector a model for female and gender empowerment, positioning women's contribution at the core of long-term national achievement. According to Mavin and Grandy (2012), the subjective beliefs and personal attributes of line managers act as strong barriers to integrating women into traditionally male dominated firms. These biases, usually shaped by deep seated societal norms and individual perceptions, influence hiring practices, workplace interaction, and

opportunities for advancement. For this, the perception needs to be changed, as a shift in managerial perception leads to increased female participation in organizational workforce performance. This transformation requires specific interventions, such as training programs, which would help deal with unconscious biases and promote gender sensitive management practices. Changing these attitudes at the managerial levels is vital for creating a culture of inclusion at work a culture that values women and supports them in their professional aspirations. Eger et al. (2022) extended this argument by noting that optimism towards gender equality has remained increasing among university students in Saudi Arabia due to changes that occur within the realm of Vision 2030 and an increasing awareness of the necessity of women in the labor market. This is greatly opposed during many instances by forces of resistance holding onto more traditional views and conservative ideological orientation. Such resistance shows the persistence of such cultural norms favorable to the male dominance of professional life, which sustains stereotypes against women. This struggle outlines the need for a change in culture to complement policy change in ways that attitudes in society grow incrementally with structural adjustments. In 2018, Sani looked more closely into the challenges women face for high level management positions, particularly in the banking industry. The current research pointed out that the major obstacles for women's further career enhancement are gender discrimination and cultural beliefs. It takes many forms, which include biased recruitment, restricted access to mentorship and professional networks, so important for their road to senior leadership. The banking sector is symbolic, representing those areas which were traditionally filled by men, hence symbolically standing for systemic problems women face on their path toward workplace equality. Overcoming these barriers requires comprehensive strategies that address both the structural and cultural dimensions of gender inequality. AlBakr et al. (2017) note that despite the growing talk about empowering female workers in Saudi Arabia, they face huge problems on the path to work equality. Although policies addressed to women's empowerment have met significant milestones, the study shows that women still fight for their recognition and equal opportunity in their workplaces. Most of them run in contrast to wider objectives of gender equality, thus perpetuating the problem. For example, women might also be resisted at the organizational level due to the fact that some colleagues or superiors may consider their presence in the workplace as threatening to their traditional values. There

is also a lack of supportive infrastructures such as child care and flexible working conditions, which further exacerbates the problem of balancing professional and personal life for women. Aggregately, these studies point out the number of barriers women are fighting against in workplaces. They tend to illustrate cultural attitude, organizational practices, and structural inequalities that combine in a forbidding landscape for women who seek work and career advancement in the KSA. Overcoming these obstacles will involve an integrated approach that addresses, at the same time, cultural, institutional, and individual factors. There must be a change in cultural attitudes towards increased appreciation and celebration of women's value to the workforce, and a transformation in companies to make them practice and implement inclusive approaches in a manner that ensures equal opportunity for everyone in its fold. This entails putting in place gender sensitive policies, training in mentorship and leadership for women, and a workplace environment that promotes diversity and inclusion. Central to these interventions is not just overcoming overt forms of discrimination but, in fact, subtle forms of bias and systemic barriers that impair women's success. For example, training programs for decisionmakers and managers can make explicit biases explicit and refrain them and make recruitment and development processes transparent and fair. Cooperation between educational programs and employers can bridge students' positive outlook towards gender equality and reality in the workplace. Programmes such as internships, networks, and career development programs can make them prepared for male dominated sectors, with skills and confidence to deliver in them. Public information and educational programmes and community actions can contribute towards changing society's outlook, towards acceptance in larger society of women's contribution, and towards active participation in all spheres of society. By working together, Saudi Arabia can build an environment in which not only will women participate, but flourish, and contribute towards national economic and social development. Conclusively, findings obtained from Mavin and Grandy, 2012; Eger et al., 2022; Sani, 2018; and AL Bakr et al., 2017, have established that an integrated approach is urgently needed regarding the inclusion of females in the workplace and their human resource development. This would require an approach that addresses the root causes of gender disparity but also draws lessons from the progress created under Vision 2030. Saudi Arabia will thus have to break down the

cultural and organizational obstacles toward creating an enabling labor market that allows women to equally contribute to the economic and social development of the nation.

And with unwavering determination, these challenges turn into opportunities through joint efforts in which the Kingdom will continue to guarantee women their Contribution to the future of Saudi Arabia. Alquraini (2022) realized that Saudi women still face many obstacles, which become a barrier to getting into top management or higher employment levels. This trend is nourished within some cultural and social thoughts that impose conventional thinking on gender roles through partiality projected against women in leadership positions. Alquraini has insisted on the need for such barriers to be removed since in their absence, women can realize full potentials and make useful service contributions. The study underlines the need for systemic reforms that address not just overt barriers but also those entrenched cultural attitudes that perpetuate inequality between men and women. For example, creating awareness and acceptance of the potential of women by way of public education campaigns and modelling might fundamentally shift social perceptions and create avenues for more women in leadership. Building on this view, Sobaih and Abu Elnasr (2024) depict several contradictions between modernization policy and traditional values in Saudi Arabia. Even though the legislative reforms were launched under the auspices of Vision 2030 aimed at achieving gender equality, their actual influence in improving female employment opportunities has become very limited. The authors comment that such kinds of reforms badly resist strong traditional cultural opposition; hence, it is very hard for the actual implementation of such policies to justify their respective goals. This tension can be especially felt in those industries where traditional views about women's roles are still held, such as manufacturing, technology, and finance. Sobaih and Abu Elnasr emphasize the need for a balance between modernization policy and cultural reality so that legislative change is translated into improvement in women's employment outcomes. Arayssi 2020 gives a future outlook by listing comprehensive policy options that if effected can significantly transform the socioeconomic status of the Saudi woman. These include equal pay policies, access to more training, as well as giving enabling working conditions that would be easy on the female sex. For instance, a flexible working condition that allows for remote work, sharing jobs, contributes significantly to women's lives in bringing up a balance in their professional and personal life with much more ease. Additionally,

mentorship programs and leadership training can help women attain whatever competencies are required for making it to top level management.

Arayysi emphasizes that these steps are not only basic in achieving gender equality but also in capturing an important part of the economic and social premium hidden in a more diverse workforce. These works, put together, reflect a still emerging yet promising development within the scope of the employment of females in Saudi Arabia and indicate some key challenges that persist. These are not simple ones, and resolution will require overall strategies for creating an environment for career development for women. In spite of small improvements, career development options for women remain constricted through cultural resistance, organisational biases, and systemic barriers. Overcoming them will only become possible through a collaboration between policymakers, employers, and civil society, with a view towards developing a culture of inclusion and equity. Inclusion and full real empowerment for girls and women will only become a reality through a resolution of such systemic impediments and granting everyone an equal opportunity. This necessitates closing the divide between policy and practice, ensuring that legislative reforms are not only effectively implemented but also supported by initiatives aimed at shifting societal attitudes. Public awareness programs that question the stereotype, on one hand, and highlight success stories of women who managed to emerge into key positions do much in changing perception and tolerance for women in leadership and other atypical positions. Equally important are the institutional reforms that will create an enabling environment for women to work institutions should have policy orientations for inclusive hiring, pay equity, and career advancement. This can be achieved by designing training programs specifically for the managerial levels and human resource personnel, which will help identify and eliminate biases associated with decision making processes, thereby evaluating the worth of women based on their merit and achievement rather than their gender. Investment in basic infrastructure such as childcare facilities, transportation facilities, and a safe working environment will eliminate the logistical barriers that largely hamper female participation in the job market. In summary, the studies by Alquraini (2022), Sobaih and Abu Elnasr (2024), and Arayysi (2020) emphasize the multilayered barriers toward creating an enabling environment that addresses female employment concerns in Saudi Arabia. Although the legislative and policy changes have given a platform for progress in this regard, much is yet to be done

to address the impediments in the cultural, social, and organizational arenas that hinder women's full integration into labor.

Educational institutions, governments, and society at large have a shared role in developing an environment in which women can flourish and contribute positively in the workplace. Women in Saudi Arabia, even with improvements, encounter resistances at the cultural level, biases at the organizational level, and restrictions in structures, and access and opportunity restrictions, all of which can effectively be tackled through coordinated policies, transformation at a cultural level, and reform at an institution level to nurture diversity and equity. By removing such impediments, Saudi Arabia can maximize its female workforce's contribution, drive productivity, innovation, and development for future times to come. The impediments for women in the workplace extend beyond simple economics and include strong cultural and structural impediments. Traditional social mindsets emerging out of deep rooted philosophies in many cases predetermine female contribution in industries and sectors in many cases. For instance, while legislative reform, such as opening gates for banking, energy, and technology, for women helped, social mindsets regarding roles for women in society have yet to become a lesser impediment. Leadership is a particularly male preserve, with many sectors having a lack of female leaders and, at best, trusting females in middling and junior management, excluding them from important roles in critical processes in an institution's success. Empowerment through training and skill development is a recurring theme in overcoming such impediments. Empowering woman with specific training programs such as leadership and technical capabilities is critical in overcoming impediments and success in career and working life. Empowerment training, according to research, empowers them with capabilities through which they can overcome impediments and make effective contribution in respective professions. Otherwise, socioeconomic equality in its achievement will not make meaningful headways. The tourism and hospitality industry is an example of the long term inequalities that have been experienced by women. Women in the industry report disadvantageous career development and less career progression opportunities compared to male counterparts. Meeting work and private life demands, such as family and health, is particularly difficult, most notably in high performance work with variable working times. Solving such issues requires a composite intervention, such

as flexible work options, recruitment policies supporting female candidates, and attempting to make them a norm in such industries.

Notwithstanding such impediments, social outlook is increasingly changing, courtesy of awareness programs and government programs for redefining female roles in society.

Leadership development programs and public recognizance of achievement for women are creating an environment in which contribution is valued. Such change is critical in developing a lasting work environment of gender diversity. In addition, aims to protect females from abuse at work and to promote contribution in key sectors such as in energy, finance, and technology have gained momentum. Several major companies in Saudi Arabia, such as Riyadh Bank and Aramco, have initiated policies for workplace improvement in diversity and career development for females. Such actions go beyond creating an opportunity for work; it creates an environment in which a woman can develop a career. A composite intervention is critical in enabling full potential for working females. It entails a review of such policies that inadvertently disadvantage females, such as such policies for maternity leave that can discourage employers in recruiting females, and work cultures that can make provisions for female specific demands. Empowerment of a female in contributing in decision making processes is no less significant, in that it enables them contribute towards policies and strategies in terms of value for them. Empowering women and gender equality at work are critical to achieving sustainable economic development and social progress. With overcoming cultural, structural, and institutional barriers to female contribution, Saudi Arabia can become a model for diversity and gender equality for the rest of the world. With persistent and collective efforts, a dream for an entirely empowered and diverse workforce can become a reality, fueling innovation, competitiveness, and economic growth for all.

## **2.3 FUTURE DIRECTIONS DIVERSITY WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT IN SAUDI ARABIA:**

The challenges of Saudi female employment require a serious drive for diversity and an inclusive workplace. Resolution of these challenges will necessitate an intervention in many dimensions through training, legislative reform, and cultural change, for preparing and including women in workforces at full potential. By tackling these factors, much can be gained towards a fairer and more inclusive work environment. Research highlights that

education programs are a significant tool for women's empowerment, particularly those focused on STEM science, technology, engineering, and mathematics combined with leadership development (Alshammari, 2024). Such programs help women gain the skills and knowledge to be successful in industries that have been dominated by men, thereby breaking down gender stereotypes and promoting greater diversity in the workplace. One key point about promoting an inclusive society involves incorporating gender sensitive curriculum in the education system. This curriculum aims to eliminate traditional gender roles by affording both male and female students' opportunities to pursue careers that are considered nontraditional. In this regard, Alshammari (2024) cites the importance of cooperation between the public and private sectors in laying down a standard framework in education and employment. For example, a partnership with an industrialist sets up the framework for vocational training, internship opportunities, and mentorship programs that will help to further bridge the gap between education and employment. They ensure that women are not only academically prepared but also practically prepared for the challenges they may face in today's workplace. In addition to these educational efforts, societal awareness programs play a very important role in changing the traditional gender roles and providing a more equal environment for women. According to Bassi (2021), active engagement with the social views of society through specific campaigns can modify the public opinion regarding women's ability and contributions. Such campaigns focus on the importance of women in all walks of life by making gender equality a social norm rather than an exception. It is in such initiatives that permanent and deep seated cultural changes challenge the subliminal stereotype.



Women play a vital role in environmental sustainability, which depicts empowerment and inclusion aspects.

According to Aldosari (2024), women's engagement with sustainable activity is intertwined with policy change that would allow their participation in every field. Such policies towards women led initiatives in renewable energy, waste management, and climate advocacy, among other areas, reflect global concerns regarding sustainability and place women at the helm of affairs regarding the future of environmental policy and practice. Giving women a voice in discussions on sustainability and social development empowers them to represent themselves, vocalize their aspirations, and create value for their communities (Bassi, 2021). Such involvement not only empowers and makes people feel more deeply empowered but also weaves richer socioeconomic tapestry for a nation. Holistic approaches toward addressing the status quo- which combine education reform, policy reforms, and cultural awareness instituting change in the labor force must be possible for women. Flexibility in the workplace; quality support systems, for instance, childcare facilities, or transport services, have emerged as some of the needed elements of this approach. Targeted leadership programs can help address the issue of inadequate representation at levels of decision making by focusing on improving women's advancement to such senior positions. In short, the journey forward calls for a cooperative effort toward the betterment of educational frameworks, inculcating inclusion, and establishing progressive policies that are for the empowerment of women. emphasizing the need for women's inclusion as active participants in Saudi Arabia's socioeconomic development (Aloufi, 2017). Addressing the challenges of women in the labor market is not only a matter of equity but also a strategic imperative for the sustainable development of the Kingdom. In implementing such programs, Saudi Arabia has the opportunity to tap into the full potential of its women and ensure that they are at the forefront of shaping a better and more prosperous future. Disparities in labour participation and pay equity endure, presenting continuous obstacles to realizing full gender parity within the workforce (Middleton et al., 2020). The Vision 2030 framework distinctly targets an increase in women's participation in the labor market from 22% to 30%, underscoring the essential role women occupy in the Kingdom's socioeconomic transformation (Alharbi, 2022). Realizing such an ambitious target, on the other hand, means overcoming those ingrained barriers that prevent women from enjoying equal employment opportunities.

Of these barriers, the deficiency of adequate access to vocational training and recruitment services is the most important, since they are essential in providing women with the competence and connections needed to access and compete in the labor market (Akiri, 2013). A key focus of attention is the development of an entrepreneurship ecosystem tailored to meet the particular needs of women. In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, women entrepreneurs face significant challenges that include but are not limited to a lack of access to capital, limited networking opportunities, and a complex bureaucracy that make business startups and operations particularly challenging (Peters et al., 2010). These challenges not only disturb the possibility of women contributing toward economic diversification but also decrease their potential to become leaders of innovation and job creation. Such challenges require committed intervention in the form of eased access to finance, mentorship programs, and streamlined regulatory procedures that support women owned enterprises. Thus, Saudi Arabia has the chance to create an enabling environment whereby women are empowered with a more active and prominent role within its economy. The proposed interventions to address these challenges include expanding access to education, improving awareness about women's rights, and upgrading infrastructure related to recruitment and vocational training centres. Increasing access to education for women, especially in high demand sectors like technology and engineering, will help bridge the skills gap and better prepare women for leadership positions in emerging fields. Public awareness through campaigns and community programs for women's rights will also make it easier to challenge the stereotyping and hence ease the progress of females at workplaces. The structural establishment of hiring centres that incorporates the techniques for gender sensitive hiring and provides equal opportunity for job placement service access can also facilitate female labor force participation to a great extent (Alharbi, 2022; Akiri, 2013). Beyond the question of fairness, these issues represent a strategic economic and social development imperative which goes beyond Saudi Arabia. Opening up opportunities for Saudi Arabia to unleash underutilized potential emanating from their women allows them to address issues related to inequalities in labor participation and create ways through which women may pursue fruitful careers. This initiative also pertains to the overall goals devolved, underlining the achievement which, with the contribution of females toward sustainable development, raises the status of the country on the global platform. As Middleton et al. (2020) and

Peters et al. (2010) debate, with such steps being in effective operation, Saudi Arabia will definitely be able to expand its economic and social scope while making sure females contribute a great deal in shaping the future of the kingdom. In all, Vision 2030 is another milestone toward empowering women, but successful implementation can be ensured only through targeted policy initiatives to surmount these impediments to equality. By investing in education, entrepreneurship, and equitable employment opportunities, Saudi Arabia can create a better and more diversified workplace that truly works to meet the aspirations of the country's Vision 2030. These efforts will not only help in advancing women's inclusion but also make the Kingdom more capable of achieving its economic and social goals and more competitive as a global leader in innovation, diversity, and sustainability. Gadi, 2022 emphasizes the central importance of incorporating ICT competency within policies to improve women's work experiences. In his view, the creation of institutional foundations using principles of equal opportunities is one of the most outstanding avenues through which challenges that are against women's engagement in the digital technology space are effectively addressed. These barriers, which are embedded in systemic inequities and social norms, might have been breached if ICT skills had been integrated into education and employment policy so that women could take fuller advantage of the digital economy. On the one hand, Mehar Unisa et al. (2024) investigate how artificial intelligence might function as one transformative power for women's empowerment and present findings related to the higher education context. For instance, the role of AI-enabled solutions, like automations and virtual tools, could be explored in constructing women's agency and making their work life balance better. These technologies transcend structural obstacles and offer flexibility needed to further women's participation in the labor market and to create a more inclusive professional setting. Saqib (2016) zeroes in on the long-term economic benefits regarding women's empowerment; this could be interpreted in relation to its positive effect on economic development. He said that the nurturing of a friendly and permissive environment for women enables them to give valuable inputs in the workforce, which can accelerate productivity and national growth accordingly. This finding points out the need to promote equal opportunities as well as foster conditions for women's continued professional development. Mohiuddin et al. (2023) enter this conversation by calling for higher education reforms that would align the curricula and learning results more with industry requirements. According to the

authors, modern academic disciplines, influenced by the dynamics within the labor market, have become of vital importance in equipping women with human capital needed to successfully face current dynamic challenges in their working environment. In addition, pragmatic steps in the form of mentorship, internships, collaboration with industry leaders, will no doubt be irreplaceable in the quest to prepare women for emerging and high-demand careers. These collectively give great emphasis to education, technology, and institutional reforms that will help overcome some of the challenges women face within the workforce. Without such targeted interventions, realizing the provisions under Vision 2030, especially with regard to increasing female participation in the workforce, is a tall order. On one side, studies call for the development of a composite index that can measure female participation in key determinants such as health, education, economic participation, social engagement, and legislative bodies (Alqahtani, 2020; Omair et al., 2020). This index would be a very useful tool in helping policy planners to identify and address these lagging determinants of gender equality. This makes sure that focused interventions are instituted with appropriate measures in place, so equity and inclusion are enhanced in all sectors. The core issue and problem of achieving gender equality is that schools and other education related institutions do not have enough resources to provide full fledged opportunities for women's academic empowerment. As Abdalla et al. (2021) suggested, addressing these resource gaps may unlock the women's potentials to blossom in the academia and professional fields. Contrarily, training programs on entrepreneurship among women may make substantial impacts on their economic output. Al Mamary and Abubakar (2023) believe that the development of entrepreneurship programs, focusing on practical skills, network access, and financial literacy of women, are basically central elements in further enhancing business women's success. That is, of course, in those especially relevant contexts within which women face both structural and cultural barriers associated with enterprise initiation and durability. Research underscores the significance of sociocultural influences within entrepreneurial orientation frameworks, revealing that economic empowerment and innovation are vital components for women who aspire to thrive as entrepreneurs (Abdalla et al., 2021). These elements not only bolster women's personal success but also play a crucial role in fostering broader economic growth through the stimulation of

innovation and diversification. Nevertheless, for these outcomes to be realized, societal perceptions regarding women's roles must undergo a transformation.

One effective means of facilitating this change lies in enhancing media exposure, a strategy capable of raising awareness and challenging the traditional stereotypes that surround women's empowerment (Omair et al., 2020). Media programs for showcasing successful women in a range of sectors can become powerful tools for motivation and a conducive environment for female contribution towards society in all its dimensions. All these must be addressed in an integrated manner, focusing key dimensions such as education, entrepreneurship, social cultural values, and media, in a manner that expands balanced and non-discriminatory access for Saudi Arabia's female workforce. Such programs become significant in positioning women at the helm of national development and efforts at economic diversification. By tackling interconnected obstacles holding back women's empowerment cultural stereotypes, institutional barriers, and access to opportunity Saudi Arabia will raise its contribution of women in its economy and social pillar in an effective manner. All these will not only serve to expand the contribution of women but will contribute towards taking overall aspirations for socioeconomic development and social inclusivity to a new level, towards a more secure and vibrant society. Improving female employment in Saudi Arabia is a significant step towards gender and unlocking the full potential of the workforce. It reflects the state's determination to drive social and economic development with a view of including females as part of progress in everything. Various studies have lately begun to delve into the complicated nature of the economic empowerment of women the achievements so far and the remaining challenges. For example, Alessa et al. (2022) conducted a critical survey in which 903 females from different fields participated. The outcome was very encouraging regarding the programs of economic empowerment for women. The respondents were very hopeful with the steps taken towards involving them in the workforce and how Vision 2030 had brought a change in the society. Yet, it also emphasized areas that require improvement. Notably, at its top, is the inadequacy of compensation structures in securing gender parity. While women have proven effective in practically all sectors of workforce integration, salary gaps between males and females remain an enduring barrier to women's career and economic opportunity. Implementing supportive policies is critical in order for women to contribute actively towards economic development.

This entails flexible working terms, equitable opportunity for leadership positions, and skill development programs specifically designed towards closing gaps, in a manner that enables women to enter new sectors. From these observations, Saudi Arabia stands well positioned in developing a labor market that empowers women's aspirations and helps drive the country's overall social and economic objectives through a multifaceted approach towards women's economic empowerment, one that goes beyond mere integration of women in workforces. By prioritise of pay equity, policy reform, and skill development, Saudi Arabia can develop a workforce that empowers women's aspirations and helps drive the country's overall social and economic objectives. Drawing on data from the Global Financial Inclusion survey carried out by the World Bank, Shabir and Ali discussed, in their 2022 study on financial inclusion, how there is a significant gap in both access to and use of financial products. The figures were jolting to think that while 82 percent of males had bank accounts, only 60 percent of females were privileged enough to have one. This indicates the difference in male and female access in Central America, hence pointing out an important intervention area since financial inclusion remains one of the bases for economic empowerment and equality within the workforce. The study further emphasized that addressing these gender gaps in financial inclusion can open a path toward a more inclusive society. Equitable access to finance provides equal opportunities for both genders to engage in economic activity; therefore, FLMSPP increases as a means of achieving sustainable development. One Complementing the above assertion, Hassan et al. (2022) investigated of multidimensionality in empowerment regarding their implications on women's intentions to enterprise in the food and beverage industry. This study found that psychosocial, economic, and political empowerment significantly enhanced intentions of women to engage in entrepreneurial activities. Their study revealed that indeed, on one hand, social empowerment inversely impacted those very intentions because there was perceived inadequacy in support at the community level, adding to the strain that women go through to establish themselves as entrepreneurs. These findings create implications for the identification of the need for targeted interventions to address these identified barriers effectively. Effective way is through utilizing media campaigns in raising a spotlight regarding gender equality and prioritizing entrepreneurship through the contribution of women. Such programs can effectively contribute towards altering society's attitude, reducing stigmatization, and

supporting increased community acceptance of female entrepreneurs. Having access to financing, together with mentorship, will allow for effective counterbalancing entrepreneurial barriers, particularly in sectors with new emerging trends, such as foods and beverages. Together, these actions reinforce the imperative for overcoming systemic and social barriers for women's economic empowerment. Gaining financial access and entrepreneurial drive is a key part of creating a fair and balanced working environment. Implementing such multidimensional strategies, Saudi Arabia can make a move towards a balanced and vibrant economy that will enable women's aspirations and contribution. This is the reality of integrating women into the workforce in Saudi Arabia: an obstacle to be surmounted, an opportunity to be seized. In fact, the objectives relating to increased workforce participation by women can be achieved by focused intervention at various levels, comprising financial inclusions, economic empowerment awareness, and encouragement of community support. Addressing these elements will provide an enabling environment that will ensure their professional development and thus become helpful to the country's economy generally. The challenge is multidimensional; therefore, any efforts to respond to it require taking into account several forces that determine or affect women's participation in the labor force. In this respect, Apostu et al. (2023) claim that, presently, urbanization, incorporation of females in the labor market, and value added by industries become highly significant sources of urban dynamics. These are factors that, in turn, bear strongly on the employment opportunities for women. The rapid growth of an urban center encourages economic diversification, increased demand for a wide range of occupations, and therefore new opportunities for integrating women into gainful employment. In such urbanization, industries, services, and infrastructural facilities are developed, thus widening the job market. In consequence, urbanization may stimulate higher female participation in economic life, particularly in those spheres where labor is scarce or where new forms of skills are required. Tapping into urbanization's potential for driving employment for women entails taking affirmative measures to make an opportunity a reality and an accessible one, at least for men. Policies can stimulate it through gender sensitive urban planning, urban industries and its skill and educational requirements, and development in child care and public transport infrastructure. To make urbanled growth meaningful in terms of translating it into its dividends, supportive

community environments must challenge traditional patriarch values and motivate women to work for professional objectives.

The overcoming of these intertwined challenges and opportunities will enable Saudi Arabia to develop an inclusive labour market, one in which it enables its female citizens to work for its economic and social development in full capacity. By developing a value for its citizens of equality and a value for its citizens in relation to its workforce, its female citizens can actively contribute towards a vibrant and thriving future for its country. Alghamdi and Shaheen, in their work, 2024, present a comprehensive review of the factors that affect the labor participation of females. The key contributors come from GDP growth, an increase in the employment population ratio, and urbanization. By using their analysis, the interrelationship between economic development and gender equality in the labor market has been put forward whereby, with increased urbanization, economic development will surely improve the chances of women's access to employment opportunities. Greater economic diversification, job opportunities in what are usually male dominated as well as other sectors, goes a long way in promoting the process of urbanization, turning it considerably more inclusive of the labor market. It further underlines the need for policymaking to be targeted at ensuring such trends realize maximum benefits. In this respect, policies should eliminate various structural and cultural barriers against women's economic participation. Examples include pay equity, workplace diversity, pathways to leadership all of which attempt to break systemic barriers. Again, it is similarly important that investments in education and relevant skills training for the emerging industry are made alongside upgraded infrastructure, such as transportation and childcare services, so that women may seize the new opportunities that come their way. By interlinking urbanization driven economic growth with gender sensitive policies, Saudi Arabia would be able to move ahead with its ambitions under Vision 2030 to make sure women are not only integrated into the workforce but also become fully empowered. This way, development takes place on economic lines, with full social equity for the sustainable progress of the nation. Ortiz et al. (2017) directed their investigation to determine how Kneipp Therapy can be an intervention for caregivers in care institutions since it can potentially be applied in healthcare. According to this work, caregivers' health is part of the essential capital to retain their services, especially in very demanding health professions. The results suggested that good working



conditions, such as those enabled by wellness oriented interventions like Kneipp Therapy, improve job satisfaction and reduce the symptoms of burnout, which is one of the major barriers to the abysmally high turnover ratio and hence to retaining staff in the long run.

This research carries its contribution to the larger field of health, namely in terms of an awareness of the impact workplace settings have on work for women in many industries. Burnout and dissatisfaction in work have been considered strong disincentives to continuous work for women. Having a healthy and supportive workplace environment one with an orientation towards flexible work arrangements, employee wellness, and supportive programs will not only recruit but will secure continuous presence of women in the workforce as well. The ramifications of these findings speak to long term policy planning, namely for industries with high female workforce participations. Employers, through a orientation towards resolving workplace factors contributing to work related wellness, can best furnish an inclusive workplace environment supportive of continuous career enablement for female workers. To do so maximizes women's contribution to the economy through barrier extinction and creation of supportive and equitable working environments.

## **2.4 THE PROGRESS IN WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT DIVERSITY:**

Recent legislative reforms, as well as giant strides taken in education, have gone a long way to open wider horizons of job opportunities for Saudi women. In 2024, Abobaker noted that not only did the amendment of legislations in place open the doors to job opportunities, but the subsequent potential development of an entrepreneurial spirit ensured active participation by females in the labor market. These reforms not only validate women's contribution to national economic development but, through systemic impediment removal and enhancing gender equality in work, make significant contribution to an inclusive labor market in a relatively short period of time. But above all, it manifests in more women getting involved in leadership. Indeed, Al Matari and Alosaimi 2022 provide evidence that women directors can make a very positive difference in the boardroom, and the greater this gender diversity at the top leadership level, the better will be the firm performance.

This may point out that the inclusion of women in active decision making powers adds extra value to the organizational outcome and sustainable growth. Apart from this, the benefits of women in the boardroom also extend to role modeling, which would help in dissolving conventional male/female stereotypes and aiding gender equality in all sectors. The educational sector has been one of the strong pillars in empowering Saudi Arabia's women. Ahmed and Yusuf (2020) stated that the government has pursued unmatched moves toward rectifying the education gap for girls; due to it, it also shrunk the gender gap a little in this regard. It is these developments that have equipped women with the capability and qualification to participate actively in the workforce. This initiative of giving equal access to education has indeed granted women entry into sectors that were previously closed to them, hence facilitating workplace diversity. Of greater significance, however, is the fact that the issue of women's empowerment gathered greater pace under King Salman's rule, as stated by Alnufaie and Beghum (2021). As more interest is taken by the government regarding women's rights, issues pertaining to women are raised for the very first time, thus allowing a setting that would permit them to enter the labor market. New trends have given women more confidence and ability to be career oriented, thus enabling them to be integrated within more sectors. Besides legal and educational reforms, other efforts have aimed at empowering women entrepreneurs. For example, Khan (2020) explains that governments have also established programs geared toward ensuring that women entrepreneurs are empowered via training, mentorship, as well as access to finance. These programs acknowledge the role females can play in the aspect of economic development with regards to innovation and contributing highly to SMEs. These types of programs would encourage further diversification in women's employment opportunities, as more women would engage in entrepreneurial activities due to resources addressing traditionally inhibiting factors. These reforms and initiatives together reflect positive momentum towards greater job diversification for women and their economic inclusions in Saudi Arabian society. This enabling environment created by the government in line with the aspirations for Vision 2030 that is, necessary legislation, educational, and entrepreneurial dimensions on the road to women's empowerment toward an equitable society means such benefits will flow to individual women themselves and toward the overall contribution they will make in economic and social development inside the Kingdom, putting Saudi Arabia ahead in gender inclusive policy

and practice. According to Alghamdi and Shaheen (2024), female labor market participation is determined by a set of interrelated factors, which note that urbanization and economic indicators significantly influence the employment rate among women. Based on their analysis, it follows that when urban areas expand, accompanied by the growth of economies, opportunities for the inclusion of women in the workforce will be promoted through diversification and demand across different sectors. Findings are consistent with Naseem and Dhruva (2017) while presenting the case that women face significant obstacles in the labor markets, particularly in traditionally male dominated fields. They also reinforce the transformational potential of Vision 2030 in fostering female participation in economic growth what is needed, in other words, is policy intervention and reform in line with the goals of the vision. Business and entrepreneurship are also fields in which Ibraheem, Elawady, and Alhedhaif (2019) have explored the rising economic empowerment of Saudi businesswomen who invest in industrial projects. They conducted research that established that such investment will provide Saudi business women with better avenues for economic participation. They brought into light a very important awareness gap that exists in businesswomen regarding the resources and facilities extended to them. The study flags that there is a need for increased collaboration between supporting agencies for more enabling environments to be created for women entrepreneurs, including financial, government, and industrial sectors. This is an area that must be addressed if the businesswoman's maximum contribution to economic diversification and growth is to be ensured. The trend within leadership styles among Saudi female entrepreneurs also plays a very vital role in shaping their impact economically. Ur Rehman and Alorifi, 2024, discuss the dominant styles of Saudi women in leadership positions of entrepreneurship. The authors consider that under constraint of male-dominated culture, the authoritarian and democratic styles are dominant. This would help selective training programs aimed at enhancing the leadership potential of women. An increase in leadership skills among women would empower them and have them involved constructively and actively in key drives in business and economic development. Awwad and Hamdan (2023) go on to posit a developmental model that privileges economic diversification and women's empowerment as two critical pillars necessary in addressing oil revenue dependence in Saudi Arabia.

Their findings stress that one needs a twin track approach: on one hand, opening diverse economic opportunities, and on the other, empowering women to rise up to meaningfully contribute in these areas. Integrating women within larger economic efforts can help the Kingdom achieve a more durable and inclusive economy, one less vulnerable to changes in oil markets. All these put together demonstrate the need to address systemic barriers, build enabling environments conducive to women's employment and entrepreneurship, urbanization, economic diversification, leadership development of the women, and importantly reaching out to businesswomen with targeted supports. The culmination of aligning all these initiatives toward the goals under Vision 2030 will go a long way toward enhancing participation by females in the economy and meeting greater aspirations for the Kingdom in respect of sustainable development and social equity. Recent analyses have placed the spotlight on female employment diversity in Saudi Arabia, emphasizing significant advances but also the many challenges that remain. Saudi Arabia has an ambitious goal for increasing female labor market participation as part of its Vision 2030 initiative; this recognizes women's important role in boosting family economic security and overall social wellbeing (Alshareef & Algassim, 2021). This developed vision moves in the right direction toward the ideal situation of gender equity; it is, however, very far from being complete, having major barriers in its path. The structural impediments include strained legislative and policy frameworks, strained social attitudes, and inaccessible leadership positions that impede women's participation within the workplace (Elneel & Almulhim, 2024). Research underscores that socioeconomic factors alone are insufficient to empower women; rather, education and the development of specific skills and capabilities act as essential mediators in this process (Elneel & Almulhim, 2024). Providing women with access to quality education and opportunities for professional development equips them to overcome systemic challenges and enhances their ability to thrive in diverse employment sectors. This, therefore, requires targeted interventions that grapple not only with the symptoms but most importantly with the very causes of the disparity in the labour market. Women's employment in Saudi Arabia has seen significant development and growing diversification in a variety of sectors. It involves widening opportunity and occupations that represent a move towards increased inclusion and workforce participation.

Despite such improvements, deep rooted and sociocultural obstacles continue to hinder, and constant efforts have to make the labor market increasingly friendly and fair for everyone. By overcoming such obstacles, women can contribute more to the country's economic and social development. Despite the challenges that persist, it is evident that women in Saudi Arabia are beginning to perceive positive changes in attitudes toward their empowerment (Alshareef & Algassim, 2021). These shifts in perception reflect the gradual impact of initiatives aimed at enhancing gender equality and diversifying women's employment opportunities. While these changes are encouraging, they also underscore the need for continued efforts to build upon the progress made thus far. Or, put otherwise, while there have been remarkable achievements within Saudi Arabia in diversifying female employment, much remains to be achieved on the path of surmounting some obstacles systemically and culturally. Since this is a matter of policy reform, persistence in implementation at all levels of policy and practice will be required if equal opportunities are to be opened for women. Moreover, transforming societal attitudes is critical for fostering an environment that supports women's professional aspirations and challenges traditional gender roles. Concurrently, investment in skills development and education is pivotal for equipping women with the tools they need to excel in a rapidly evolving labor market (Torraco, 2023). These mutually complementary efforts will go a long way towards creating a workplace environment supporting full workplace gender equality. In taking a systemic and multidimensional approach towards addressing gender inequality, Saudi Arabia is well placed to establish an inclusive labour market. An inclusive labour market will not only allow for women to contribute positively towards national social and economic development but will also respond to society's general desire for development and for inclusion.(Aldekhyyel, Alhumaid, and Alismail 2024) investigate perception about Saudi women concerning the leadership of the health sector and how Vision 2030 is bound to change the situation and encourage more women to enter leadership. Findings brought forth the clear role of strategic policy frameworks and shifting society as an enabler for women in high achievement pursuits in one of the country's most vital industries. Similarly, Alsaadoun (2023) discusses the influence of Saudi organizations on furthering gender equality from the female employee's perspective toward attaining the SDG5 goals.

What this study highlights is that such workplaces and organizational supports policy on workplace and organizational culture make women an effective contributor to activities in a working organization. Saleh and Malibari (2021) discussed how Vision 2030 has affected women's involvement in marketing activities within the marketing context. According to their research, the enhancement of awareness and understanding of the vision's goals has significantly expanded women's vision within the sector, thus opening up previously male exclusive areas of sale. This growth is indicative of the broad role of nation building schemes in changing vocations and breaking down old customary obstructions. Furthering this argument, Elshaer et al. (2021) explore how women's empowerment may be related to sustainable tourism development. The study has shown that it is in psychological, political, and social forms of empowerment that could play a critical role in enhancing women's engagement with the tourism industry. Indeed, by providing enabling mechanisms on all three dimensions, the tourism industry will be working toward greater gender equity, while this segment of Saudi Arabia's economy is developed in a sustainable manner. Collectively, these studies speak to a positive direction of Saudi female employment diversification in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia is shifting towards its development horizons through interventions, institutionality, and society transformation. All these starting blocks are important for creating an equitable and inclusive labour marketplace, and one that is a key driver of sustainable development in any sector. The Saudi female labour marketplace has seen a significant transformation, with interventions towards empowering females and increasing their contribution towards the economy. This review seeks to merge a variety of dimensions of such development, with a keen emphasis on Saudi females entering new structures and industries that have facilitated them entering labour in larger capacities. All these speak to a larger drive towards creating a drive for inclusivity and unlocking full value of Saudi female labour. Parveen says that in 2021, the Saudi Arabian government went to incredible efforts to empower women through many progressive policies. These policies aim at bringing reforms into effect for the attainment of gender equilibriums in the workforce. The study shows that such revolutions came to break traditional restrictions, leading to the opening up of doors for Saudi women as more women joined these hitherto exclusively male fields.

It is not only a policy driven trend but also a cultural definition and recasting of the image of women in the workspace. GaStat, or the General Authority for Statistics, supplemented such information. Indeed, most remarkably, the unemployment rates of Saudi women dropped drastically by 2019, due to reasons both social and economic. The social reasons concerned changes in perception toward gender, while the economic reasons were dominated by a growing demand to draw women into the labor market. This dualness reflects how society's attitude and economic needs come together to facilitate women participating in every part of the employment economy. These transformations envisage a deeper and future oriented change, driven by rebalancing labour demand and generating a more balanced and vibrant economic model. Facts and analysis in this note draw attention to the role that social dialogue and policy innovation must play in unlocking long term gender balance and economy diversification. This is a key field of research exploring the empowerment of young Saudi women through the role of digital arts, as presented by Alamro et al. (2021). The results indicated that digital arts are a very strong tool for empowering creativity and acquiring skills among women, this study underlines that in digital arts well, being a modern and continuously developing field women get to develop marketable skills that are in high demand in the current economy. Digital arts could enable innovation and creativity in effectively involving women at all levels of public and private life. It integrates survey and Delphi research to draw upon a wide perspective of how digital arts can serve as a means of integrating women into the labor market. This approach has underlined not only the usefulness of digital arts as a means of empowerment but also how strategic engagement with digital transformation opens newer avenues of employment in high growth sectors. Current research underlines, through a framework of equipping women with digital and creative skills, how they can meaningfully contribute toward aspects dealing with media, design, technology, and cultural preservation. The results by Alamro et al. (2021) further emphasize how much digital transformation is part of Saudi Arabia's forward-thinking in creating jobs. As the nation seeks to re-strategize its drive for diversification, establishment of digital arts in educational and workforce development programs mirrors a broader policy objective for job creation in growth oriented sectors.

It mirrors at a deeper level, in fact, how digital transformation can serve as a principal catalyst for empowering women and spurring sustainable development in economies. Aleisa et al., 2023, discuss the transformational effects that advanced technologies have brought into the labor market of Saudi Arabia. The authors propose the AIRM model, a machine learning driven, data analytics approach that helps match job seekers effectively with vacant jobs. This newly developed method was harnessed to eliminate shortcomings found in the traditional recruitment process, especially those affecting women in their struggle to find suitable jobs. The AIRM model generates workplace effectiveness through efficient recruitment and bias eradication, and new channels for female presence in male professions. Over time, such and similar reforms can mitigate gender gaps in the labour marketplace, producing heightened workforce equality and towards a fairer labour marketplace. A study conducted by Ben Fatma et al., in 2024 accounted for the psychological dimensions of female entrepreneurship in Saudi Arabia and analyzed the place of dispositional optimism in entrepreneurial performance. Their findings indicated that the optimistic mindset strengthens the entrepreneurial capability among women to a greater extent, thus enabling them to identify and capitalize on new venture opportunities. That is important research that shows psychological motivators of female entrepreneurship, which has greatly increased over the years. The study underlines the need for the creation of an enabling entrepreneurial environment that will further enhance their self-esteem and resilience attributes so key to overcoming odds in initiating and maintaining business ventures in highly competitive markets. Hakiem (2022) takes a critical review of the issues of gender inequality in Saudi Arabian higher education through narrative inquiries on the structural and familial barriers experienced by female academics. There is immense development within the context of increasing the rate of female participation in academia, but challenges persist in structural discrimination and between professional aspirations and family expectations. These are barriers that impede women's holistic development of an academic career; hence, there is an urgent need for sustained interventions that guarantee equity in educational opportunities. The findings from Hakiem call for some programs aimed at such inequity coupled with policy reforms, without which women cannot be allowed to pursue or rise in academic careers. These studies will compile details on both the challenges and part of the opportunities facing women in Saudi Arabia. These range from technological innovations in the recruitment



process and the psychological aspects of entrepreneurship to systemic barriers in higher education, all urging strategic interventions and enabling environments that would guarantee women's contribution in the workplace. This contributes towards general discussion of gender equality and women's empowerment, with a strong emphasis for ongoing work to make meaningful improvement in these spheres. Lastly, Mohamed and Bendania (2023) explore the relationship between active openminded reasoning and future time perspectives with Saudi college students. Their study reveals striking differences in future outlooks based on gender and academic major that suggest greater open mindedness among women could empower them to explore and pursue a much larger array of career paths. This finding highlights the critical role that cognitive flexibility and critical thinking play in shaping women's decisions to venture into emerging spheres of employment. This research also brings to light the need to create educational environments that promote these cognitive skills, thereby preparing women to rise to challenges in a fast evolving job market. The findings from these studies give a fluid and changing landscape for Saudi women, where they are crossing into new professional and social territories. Government initiatives, changes in technology, psychological shifts, and educational reforms are all interacting dynamically to shape the opportunities available to women in the labor market. While significant success in empowering Saudi women has been registered, ongoing studies and intervention in policies must be pursued in a manner not only to empower women, but to make them well prepared to work in a range of professions. All these transformations in terms of women's contribution represent long term sociocultural transformation and technological development that increasingly modify country life social and economy. This narrative synthesizes current findings from research studies that explain in detail how Saudi women have increasingly taken up roles in emerging sectors like social media, ecommerce, privacy issues, mental health, and mobile financial services. Of these areas, social media has taken a very strong lead in affecting consumers' behaviors and changes in market trends. According to Alhomaidd (2023), social media influencer marketing has a notable effect on the online buying behaviors of women in the Kingdom. The study has highlighted that the unique cultural and social contexts of non-western countries, such as Saudi Arabia, need specific research approaches to comprehensively capture an understanding of consumer behaviour.

They are important insights in that they show how women can use social media for economic empowerment and entrepreneurship, to break into areas that used to be beyond their reach. The integration of social media as a tool for economic growth fits wider patterns in digital transformation but creates new opportunities for Saudi women to innovate and lead across the fields of marketing, ecommerce, and digital branding. Through these platforms, women in Saudi Arabia can leapfrog traditional barriers and constitute a substantial contribution to the economy. The findings also underline the importance of strategic use of digital tools and platforms in driving the Kingdom's overall economic diversification objectives. This continued change underlines the importance of ensuring inclusive policies, education, and access to technology that would guarantee women's ability to realize their potential in the fullest sense within the emerging economy. Alsulaimani (2024) examined variables that may affect consumers' intention to adopt grocery shopping in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, focusing most on its female section. Results showed that perceived benefit factors like convenience and timesaving increase the likelihood of women adopting egrocery platforms. This study has highlighted the market size of egrocery shopping, which is still at a small scale, meaning there is huge scope for its improvement. This is the transformative ecommerce that has brought a route to financial involvement and autonomy amongst Saudi women. The perceived risk factors are deterring this broader involvement, as this research indicates, if the full potential is ever to take effective place. In this respect, mitigating such risks would surely build stakeholder confidence amongst female customers and see its use expanded in virtual shopping on such platforms. Apart from ecommerce, the question about the women contribution to the privacy problems of the modern age gives more extensive evidence of their participation in this technological field. Alashwali and Alashwali 2022 talk about the perceptions among Saudi parents about the privacy issue their children face when they use smart device applications. While the research denotes high levels of parental concern on content appropriateness, as well as on data privacy, it has also pointed out a significant gap between concern and practice. Such discrepancies will underpin the call for increased awareness and education on digital security and privacy management, especially for women, who are often the caregivers in the household. With knowledge and ways to overcome these barriers, women would fight for better digital practices, hence policy, that protect children's privacy.

In so doing, a woman is not only an enhanced caretaker but also an active participant in the larger technology landscape. Women's contribution in raising awareness on digital security and child advocacy may help in creating safe digital space for a family and society in general. Aggregately, these studies represent ways in which women in Saudi Arabia participate in digital transformation from using ecommerce platforms to demanding better privacy measures. Indeed, women carry the promise of emerging as one of the most important stakeholders in the shaping of the digital economy. These, apart from illustrating the wider reach of the goals under Vision 2030, also represent increasing avenues through which women can usefully contribute to the socioeconomic development of the country. Another innovative domain in which Saudi women are setting remarkable records involves the intersection between mental health and technology. Aldaweesh et al. (2024) conducted a cross sectional mixed methods study that aimed to explore the availability and attitude toward mental health apps within the Kingdom. Results indicated that despite the persistence of cultural stigma related to the use of mental health services, this anonymity in digital platforms has become a new gateway through which women are now seeking out such resources. This shift not only makes women more sensitive to their own mental health but also pushes them to the forefront as one of the potential actors in the recasting of discourses on mental health. It is within these spaces that women have defied convention and moved to join a larger social revolution: one against stigma in mental health, creating a sprawling conversation of wellbeing. Besides mental health, technology is opening economic avenues for women, especially in rural areas. Roy et al. (2024) present how MFS can promote economic and social empowerment for women by referring to this very research done in Bangladesh but within the Saudi Arabian context. Based on such an analysis, despite suffering from several challenges, which range from unequal pay all the way to inadequate access to education, MFS can be extremely effective in increasing both female financial independence and stability. This may include empowering them to contribute more meaningfully in economic activities and prepare them for new fields that will, in turn, contribute to reducing disparities in women's participation in economic life and ensure sustainable development. Taken together, these illustrate the wide brush picture of how women make use of technologies in Saudi Arabian society in their attempt at reinvention.

Using different tools such as social networking, online shopping, mental health applications, and MFS women can disrupt thresholds, make claims for privacy and wellbeing, and contribute to economic development in ways which enable them to effect critical social changes without challenging the cultural sensitivities that define their lives. This further evidence that women in Saudi Arabia get more energetic across different fields and industries due to a new sociocultural landscape promoted by fast technological development. In such a way, women will redefine their role: reach out to the consumers, raise awareness about some crucial issues like privacy and mental health, and new opportunities created under electronic commerce and mobile financial aspect. These parallel developments further emphasize that consideration of the diverse cultural contexts of Saudi Arabia and the unique challenges faced by its women is paramount, as scholars and policymakers work toward greater gender equality and empowerment. It is such an approach that will guarantee full realization of the role of women in shaping a sustainable and inclusive future of the Kingdom.

## **2.5 SUMMARY OF LITERATURE AND RESEARCH GAP**

The current literature on Saudi Arabian women's employment reflects considerable improvement in driving gender diversity and enhancing female workforce contribution in Saudi Arabia. There have been a lot of studies investigating cultural, social, and institution related factors that shape women's roles, and overall trends in workforce integration for them. Most studies target obstacles such as workplace bias, restricted leadership opportunities, and systemic obstacles in career progression, but report improvement in areas such as education and healthcare sectors. Despite growing studies, important gaps in sector specific diversity and obstacles in principal industries have not yet been filled.

The principal area of research gap is in not having deep investigations of studies and shedding lights into diversity in Saudi Arabian women's employment in principal sectors in banking, retail, and energy sectors. There is not enough sector specific information in current studies about opportunity and obstacles, and therefore an incomplete picture of these sectors contributing towards, or obstructing, workforce contribution for Saudi Arabian women. The current thesis will bridge this gap by in depth investigation into the diversity of Saudi women's employment in companies within these sectors. It will reveal the individual dynamics of each sector, assess its success and failure, and make actionable recommendations for overcoming obstacles. With this, through her studies, she will contribute to the development of an inclusive workforce and drive greater goals for gender diversity and economic viability in Saudi Arabia and globally.

## CHAPTER 3 : METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION:

This chapter is a comprehensive and in-depth report of the research methodology adopted in investigating diversity in women's employment in Saudi Arabia's key economic sectors between 2019 and 2023. The study is a critical analysis of development, impediments, and opportunity in bringing women into the workforce, with a focus towards the Banking, Energy, and Retail sectors. The sectors have been deliberately selected for study for impacting Saudi Arabia's economy and to drive a revolution in employment trends through gender diversity and inclusion. The robustness of this study comes through its multidimensional and fact based methodology, well designed to present an in depth picture of trends in women's employment. By blending in depth company specific data, sectoral performance trends, and overall national employment statistics, the analysis is presented in a multidimensional and fact intensive manner. Not only does such multidimensional analysis expose gaps and trends, but it also tests the performance of programs and interventions adopted in these sectors for enhancing women's employment. Differently placed from studies with a focus towards mere trends identification, this study extends its ambit in gauging effectiveness in unlocking structures and opening doors through structures and reform in unlocking doors for women's workforce presence in the economy. It aims to gauge efficiency with which these sectors contribute towards national gender diversity and inclusive growth aims, providing actionable intelligence in formulating policy and organizational strategies. As a bonus, this study brings into picture contribution of new age policies, organizational behavior, and attitudinal transformation in overcoming longstanding impediments in the journey towards women's financial empowerment. What sets this study apart is its capacity to bridge gaps in existing studies through a sector specific, fact based analysis. By comparing and contrasting the Banking, Energy, and Retail sectors through a general framework, this study is a go to source for policymakers, industry leaders, and scholars interested in supporting women's contribution towards Saudi Arabia's labor marketplace.

Not only does it map out the success stories, but through a sophisticated analysis, ventures into systemic barriers that need to be countered through targeted interventions in order to

yield lasting, significant change. The documented evidence will have a deep impact, positively contributing to the narrative surrounding women's economic empowerment and providing a benchmark for Saudi Arabia. What's more, the study seeks to act as a model for other countries interested in gender diversity and spurring inclusive economic development. By aligning its frame of analysis with national development aspirations, this study reaffirms the critical role played by women in driving Saudi Arabia's, and in fact any countries, transformation and innovation towards a future economy.

### **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

This research employs a quantitative analysis tool to present objective, quantifiable, and fact dependent information regarding women's work trends in the sectors in view.

There are a variety of layers of analysis in the research, with the opportunity for a complete analysis of performance of sectors and companies in supporting female workforce presence. By mapping trends, comparing performance, and uncovering opportunity and challenges, this study aims to provide actionable information in supporting national efforts towards heightened gender diversity and an inclusive workforce. Such information is compatible with overall transformational programs for empowering women and enhancing sustainable economic growth in Saudi Arabia.

### **3.3 DATA SOURCES**

The current study has gathered data from two secondary sources to ensure a well-informed fact-based analysis:

#### **1.2 Annual Company Reports (2019–2023):**

- Data Collection Scope:
  - Collation and examination were done for 45 annual reports of nine key companies belonging to Banking, Energy, and Retail sectors for a continuous period of five years.
  - The dataset ranges from 2019 to 2023; hence, any kind of trend or pattern would emerge and would be accordingly stark. Selected Companies by Sector:
- **Banking:** (Target companies)

- Riyadh Bank, SNB, Al Rajhi Bank.
- **Energy:** (Target companies)
- Aramco, ACWA Power, Ma'aden
- **Retail:** (Target companies)
- Almarai, Cenomi, Bin Dawood

## **2.2 Data that was collated for each company, by industry:**

- Total workforce
- Number and percentage of women in the workforce.
- Number and percentage of men in the workforce.
- Yearly increase of women in the workforce (AGR)
- Women in senior management

## **3.2 National Labour Market Statistics 2022 to Q4 2023: Source:**

Data taken from 8 annual reports of the Saudi General Authority for Statistics and the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development.

- Scope of data collection
- Quarterly data from 2022 to 2023
- Detailed data on male and female unemployment and employment rates
- Labor force participation rates by gender
- Benchmark sectoral performance based on national employment and unemployment rates of females.
- Analyze whether the efforts of companies and sectors align with national goals on economic diversification and women's empowerment.

## **3.4 DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES**

The data analysis process is carefully organized into four sequential steps to ensure a comprehensive and multidimensional assessment of women's employment diversity, uncover challenges, give future direction, and demonstrate progress.

### **Step 1: Detailed Company-Level Analysis (2019–2023)**



### **1. Objective:**

- To critically assess the progress and trends of each company in hiring and retaining female employees over a five-year period.

### **2. Methodology:**

- Analyze data for each company on:
- Total number of employees.
- Number and percentage of female employees.
- Number and percentage of male employees.
- Annual growth rate of women's employment.
- Representation of women in senior management positions.
- Use line graphs and bar charts to help visualize the trends and point out areas of improvement or decline.
- Identify key moments of progress or stagnation in gender diversity.
- Expected Outcomes
- A clear, detailed understanding of how each company has contributed to women's employment over the years.
- Identification of specific factors influencing growth or decline in female workforce participation.
- Insight into company-specific strategies for promoting women's leadership roles.

## **Step 2: Sector Level Analysis**

### **1. Objective:**

- Assess and benchmark the performance of firms in each sector with a view to determining sector-specific trends and best practices.

### **2. Methodology:**

- Calculating the industry average for each sector to show the strongest company's performance in employing women in the same sector, therefore comparing companies within each sector with each other.
- Compare and benchmark the performance of different companies in the same sector for leaders versus laggards in gender diversity.

- Visualize sectoral performance using comparative visualizations such as clustered bar charts or line graphs.

### **3. Output:**

- Clear sector specific evidence showing which companies ensure progress in women's employment.
- Internal sectoral dynamics and barriers to women's workforce participation.

### **4. Expected Outcomes**

- A ranking assessment of sectors by their support for women's employment.
- An understanding of how sector-specific factors cause or inhibit progress in achieving gender diversity.

## **Step 3: Cross-Sector Comparison**

### **1. Objective:**

- To assess the performance and benchmarking of the Banking, Energy, and Retail sectors in employing women.

### **2. Methodology:**

- Sector-wide Industry Average comparisons across three sectors
- Graphically depicting the differences and similarities in gender diversity trends by using stacked bar charts or line graphs
- Identification of the most progressive sector with regard to support for women's employment, including best practices.

### **3. Expected Outcomes**

- Ranked assessment of sectors in terms of support for women's employment.
- Knowledge of how sector specific factors cause or impede progress on gender diversity.

## **Step 4: Sector vs. National Benchmarking**

### **1. Objective:**

- To benchmark each sector against national averages of female unemployment and employment rates.

## **2. Methodology:**

- Compare the Industry Average of each sector against national labor statistics of women.
- Perform a gap analysis to identify sectors outperforming/underperforming national benchmarks.
- Overlay graphs and trend analysis will depict sector performance in the national perspective.

## **3. Predicted Output:**

- Identify the sectors that meet or fall behind Saudi Arabia's national goals on female employment.
- Invaluable insights into which sectors need focused policy reforms so that women's employment is enhanced.
- Statistical Tools and Visualization Techniques The following statistical tools and techniques will be used for the analysis to be accurate and not vague:

### **3.5 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS**

#### **1. Objective:**

Describe and interpret the overall trends of women's employment in the different sectors.

#### **2. Methods Applied:**

Means: The average rate of participation of women within and between sectors to obtain a role in the functional diversity of women between sectors.

#### **3. Growth rates:**

An annual increase or decrease in female employment in companies.

#### **4. Percentages:**

proportion of women in several managerial and senior management positions

## 2. Industry Average Calculation

Purpose: To benchmark each sector's performance by providing an aggregated measure of women's employment across companies within the same sector.

- **Formula:**
  - **Industry Average Calculation =  $\sum(\text{Percentage of women in each company} / \text{Number of companies in the sector})$**
- (3.1)**

### Application:

- Allows for meaningful comparisons between sectors.
- Highlights which sectors are leading or lagging in integrating women into the workforce.
- Supports benchmarking against national employment trends.

Since there is no specific data on the number of employees in some companies, this research will not be able to use the weighted average approach. The Industrial Average will be used as a comparison tool to examine the company's performance in facilitating the diversity of women's employment in Saudi Arabia.

## 3. Visualization Tools

### Purpose:

To represent complex data through visuals for easier understanding and analysis.

- Type of Visualizations
- Line Graphs: Trend of growth in employment of women over the years.
- Bar Charts: For comparing sector and company performances.
- Gap Analysis Graphs: Mapping gaps between sector performance and the nation's gender diversity goals.

## 4. Annual Growth Rate (AGR) Calculation

Purpose: To measure the year-over-year change in the percentage of women employed within companies.

**Formula:**

$$AGR = \text{Current year \%} - \text{Previous year \%} / \text{Previous year \%} * 100 \quad (3.2)$$

- Application: Identifies periods of rapid or stagnant growth in female employment. Evaluates the effectiveness of diversity initiatives over time.

## **5. Comparison with National Data**

Purpose: To compare sectoral performance against national averages for female employment and unemployment rates.

### **1. Application:**

- Highlights which sectors align with or deviate from national gender diversity goals.
- Helps to uncover sector-specific challenges and opportunities for improvement .

### **2. Reliability and Validation Checks**

**Purpose:**

- keeping data integrity and accurate analytics.
- Methods Used:
  - Cross-referencing company-reported data with official government statistics.
  - Application of standardized formulae and metrics consistently across industries.

This study adopts a statistical and descriptive approach to obtaining industry averages in providing a comprehensive, fact based analysis of the diversity of women's employment in Saudi Arabia. The analysis and key findings provide sectoral challenges, successes and future strategies to promote gender diversity. This research supports development with actionable insights that contribute to the integration of women in the workforce, adding to sustainable economic growth, inclusive development and equality.

## **3.6 STUDY LIMITATIONS.**

1. There were some gaps in data on women in senior positions for a number of firms.

2. Sectoral Representation: The industrial sector is excluded because data is not available
3. Short-Term Scope: The five-year analysis period may not capture longer-term trends.

**Table 3.1 Summary of Methodology Steps**

| Step | Focus                            | Expected Outcome  |
|------|----------------------------------|---|
| 1    | Company-Level Analysis           | Analyse the annual performance trends for each company.   |
| 2    | Sector-Level Analysis            | Compare company's performances within each sector.        |
| 3    | Cross-Sector Comparison          | Identify the leading sector in women's employment.        |
| 4    | Sector vs. National Benchmarking | Evaluate sector alignment with national employment goals. |

This integrated analysis promotes a systemic and organized framework for understanding and analysing diversity of Saudi women's employment in critical sectors in Saudi Arabia. By blending information at the level of individual companies, sector performance markers, and national baselines, the study furnishes a rich, fact-based review of improvement achieved, impediments faced, and future options for growing gender diversity in the workforce. Carefully designed in its methodology, its purpose is to align with Saudi Arabia's overall national aims, namely improving women's empowerment and enhancing their contribution to the economy. In this way, the study's research and recommendations become implementable, providing valuable information for use by policymakers, executives in industries, and other concerned parties. The study is a critical tool for guiding company strategies and developing national policies for an inclusive and

balanced workplace environment. In its national context, nevertheless, this study possesses worldwide relevance. In offering a model for best practice and sector related impediments in Saudi women's employment, it furnishes a model for evaluation of gender diversity, adaptable and expandable for use in any region of the planet. The model furnishes lessons and approaches capable of instating real change in emerging economies and developed economies, qualifying the study to be a useful source for nations striving to develop gender equity in its workforce. Lastly, apart from its contribution to academic discourse, this study is a useful source for future studies as a rich and comprehensive reference. It guides academicians, policymakers, and company leaders in developing strategies to enhance Saudi women's workforce presence. National and international discussion forums for gender diversity will gain value from its observations and reinforce the necessity for inclusive economic development and development that will work.

## CHAPTER 4. RESULTS AND CONGLOTION

The percentage values of women in the tables were calculated using the total employees and the number of women with the following formula:

Percentage of women = (number of women / total employees) × 100

$$\text{women \%} = \frac{\text{NUMPER OF. WOMEN}}{\text{total employees}} * 100 \quad (4.1)$$

In addition, the annual growth rate was calculated in order to reveal the annual trends in female employment, and through it, one can understand sectoral development. However, given the fluctuations in the availability of complete and standardized information across all industries and firms, the industry average was seen as a methodological tool. A comparative analysis of female employment trends in each industry and between industries and in terms of national labour standards can be carried out in a sequential manner.

### 1. Detailed Analysis of Riyadh Bank (2019–2023)

#### Company Overview: Riyadh Bank

Riyadh Bank, one of Saudi Arabia's largest financial entities, has taken steps towards increased female workforce contribution, in keeping with a larger drive towards creating a gender diverse banking environment. Riyadh Bank has emerged a pioneer in workforce diversity and female empowerment through bold initiatives. Its "Women's Empowerment" scheme reflects its commitment towards inducting women in its workforce and acknowledging their contribution in its strategy. Flexible working arrangements, specifically for working mothers returning to work after maternity leave, reveal its concern for work life harmony. The bank's efforts to monitor and improve female workforce happiness earned it "Best Workplace for Women in Saudi Arabia for 2021" in an award. It is its inclusive policies, providing equal opportunity and a safe environment free of sexual harassments, with a strong focus on diversity and inclusivity, that make Riyadh bank a model for a balanced labour market, a benchmark for other institutes to emulate.



**Table 4.1 Year-by-Year Employment Data Statistical Analysis - Riyadh Bank**

| Sector  | Company    | Year | Total Employees | Number of Women | Percentage of Women | Annual Growth Rate | Men |
|---------|------------|------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----|
| Banking | Riyad bank | 2019 | 5,146           | 1,287           | 25.5%               |                    | 75% |
|         |            | 2020 | 5,214           | 1,304           | 25.5%               | 0                  | 75% |
|         |            | 2021 | 5,338           | 1,459           | 27.0%               | 6%                 | 73% |
|         |            | 2022 | 5,593           | 1,591           | 28.0%               | 4%                 | 72% |
|         |            | 2023 | 7,887           | 2,287           | 29.0%               | 4%                 | 71% |

### 1. Annual Growth Rate (AGR)

$$AGR = \frac{\text{Current year \%} - \text{Previous year \%}}{\text{Previous year \%}} * 100 \quad (4.2)$$

- 2021 AGR:  $AGR = \frac{27.0\% - 25.5\%}{25.5\%} * 100 = 6\%$  (2.a).
- 2022 AGR:  $AGR = \frac{28.0\% - 27.0\%}{27.0\%} * 100 = 4\%$  (2.b)
- 2023 AGR:  $AGR = \frac{29.0\% - 28.0\%}{28.0\%} * 100 = 4\%$  (2.c)

### 2. Observation:

- Steady annual growth with significant improvement in 2021 through increased recruitment efforts.
- Stagnation in 2020 can be credited to disruptions caused by COVID-19.

### 3. Progress Analysis

- Female Representation: Grew steadily from 25.5% in 2019 to 29.0% in 2023. • Annual Growth: Moderate but steady, with a positive recruitment direction.
- Male Employment: Fell from 75% to 71%, a sign of efforts towards diversity.

### 4. Progress Highlights:

- The sustained growth in Riyadh Bank's female employment is indicative of its slow but steady dedication towards including.

- Slow but steady improvements in each successive year point to a careful but sustainable direction.
- In 2021, Riyadh Bank was awarded the "Best Workplace for Women in Saudi Arabia" rating, a testament to its dedication to creating a supportive, inclusive and progressive work environment.
- By establishing policies to ensure equal opportunities and mitigate workplace challenges, Riyadh Bank stands out and sets an example in promoting gender diversity

## **5. Challenges Identified**

### **1. Leadership Representation:**

Not much rise in senior management female representations.

### **2. Growth Plateau:**

Post 2021, growth rates decelerated, and it seems that simple recruitment programs no longer work.

### **3. Retention and Progression:**

Few career progression programs might discourage long-term retention.

## **Future Directions**

### **1. Leadership Development Programs:**

Establish mentorship and career development avenues to promote women to senior positions.

### **2. Inclusive Workplace Policies:**

Adopt flexible work policies and family care services to recruit and retain female talent.

### **3. Targeted Recruitment:**

Target recruitment in underrepresented departments, particularly in technical and planning positions.

## **6. Visualization**

1. **Figure.A.1:** Annual Growth Rate Visualization

2. **Figure.P.2:** The difference between the rates of job diversity for women and men

## **2. Detailed Analysis of Saudi National Bank (NCB)**

### **(2019–2023) Company OVERVIEW: SAUDI NATIONAL BANK (NCB)OR(SNB)**

The National Bank of Saudi Arabia (AL Ahli): A Pioneer in Women's Empowerment and Labor Market Inclusivity the National Bank of Saudi Arabia (AL Ahli) has emerged a pioneer in empowering women and creating an inclusive work environment through its path-breaking programs and initiatives. The "Al-Ahli Program for Productive Families" helped drive an increase in women's presence in the work environment, with a target of a 30% participation level in line with national objectives. In 2019 alone, 866 women underwent training in crafts, and about 3,500 productive family financing packages, valued at 13.9 million SAR, were handed out. To date, 15,000 financings have been delivered through the program, worth 53 million SAR. Besides, the microfinance scheme helped finance women in small groups with no conventional guarantees, with financing between 3,000 and 10,200 SAR for each woman. The bank's training and development drive is also a key part of its strategy. Despite obstacles such as the COVID19 pandemic, the bank conducted over 125 training programs and seminars in 2019, in 11,800 training days. It even issued over 8,000 Saudi Central Bank professional certifications, proving its commitment to workforce upskilling. Implementation of a drive to boost workers' participation and happiness bore rich dividends. By creating an environment of transparency through workers' feedback, open forums, and reward programs, work environment happiness rose from 68% in 2022 to 79% in 2023, and the engagement level rose to 73% from 60%.The bank's "Rawad AL Ahli" scheme helped develop youth national talent, too. Female participation in "Rawad AL Ahli" increased in a quantum jump, from 27% in 2022 to 72% in 2023, in a reflection of the bank's strategic drive for retaining and developing talented women. Through these programs, AL Ahli Bank raises a benchmark for workplace diversity and inclusion, and stands an exemplary model for companies wishing to develop real opportunity for women and build a long-term, fair labour market.

**Table 4.2 Year-by-Year Employment Data - SNB**

| Sector  | Company | Year | Total Employees | Percentage of Women | Annual Growth Rate | Men    |
|---------|---------|------|-----------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------|
| Banking | SNB     | 2019 | 97.60%          | 13.00%              |                    | 87.00% |
|         |         | 2020 | 98.60%          | 14%                 | 8%                 | 86.00% |
|         |         | 2021 | 98.90%          | 26.10%              | 86%                | 73.90% |
|         |         | 2022 | 99.30%          | 27.00%              | 3%                 | 73.00% |
|         |         | 2023 | Not mentioned   | 72.00%              | 167%               | 28.00% |

### Statistical Analysis

#### 1. Annual Growth Rate (AGR) Calculation

$$AGR = \frac{\text{Current year \%} - \text{Previous year \%}}{\text{Previous year \%}} * 100 \quad (4.3)$$

- 2020 AGR:  $AGR = \frac{14\% - 13.0\%}{13.0\%} * 100 = 8\%$  (3.a)
- 2021 AGR:  $AGR = \frac{26.10\% - 14.0\%}{14.0\%} * 100 = 86\%$  (3, b )
- 2022 AGR:  $AGR = \frac{27.00\% - 26.10\%}{26.10\%} * 100 = 3\%$  (3,c)
- 2023 AGR:  $AGR = \frac{72.00\% - 27.00\%}{27.00\%} * 100 = 167\%$  (3, d)

#### 2. Progress Analysis

- Steady Growth in Women's Employment: From 13% in 2019 to 72% in 2023, a strong transition in female recruitment can be seen in SNB.
- Dramatic Growth in 2023: The 167% growth in 2023 reveals a fundamental change, perhaps due to forced recruitment efforts or diversity programs.
- Downtrend in Male Employment: The male employment level fell from 87% in 2019 to 28% in 2023, an extreme transformation in the gender mix of workers.

- In order to develop this progress, the Bank will have to make strategizing a top priority, develop women's leadership, and maintain a balanced and diverse workforce. SNB's actions make it a role model for financial sector institutions, with a strong message about developing long-term balanced growth in employment in the economy.

### 3. Challenges Identified

1. **Sustainability of Rapid Growth:** The sharp rise in female employment in 2023 poses a concern regarding such rapid expansion's sustainability.
2. **Lack of Senior Position Data:** We have no definite information regarding women's presence in senior management, revealing a lack of diversity in leadership.
3. **Workforce Balance:** The sharp drop in male employment could result in an imbalance in the organization and affect workplace dynamics.

### 4. Future Directions

1. **Strengthening Leadership Pipelines:** Provide for women being placed in senior management positions in order to have long-term inclusion.
2. **Balancing Gender Representation:** Have strategies for maintaining a balanced workforce for both male and female workers.
3. **Evaluating Impact:** Internal evaluations to comprehend the impact of the workforce transition and build enduring diversity practice

### 5. Visualization

1. **Figure.P.3:** Annual Growth Rate Visualization(SNP)
2. **Figure.E.4:** The difference between the rates of job diversity for women and men(SNB)

### 3. Detailed Analysis of Al Rajhi Bank (2019–2023)

#### Company Overview: Al Rajhi Bank

Al Rajhi Bank, the world's largest Islamic bank and a key financial institution in Saudi Arabia, has continued to demonstrate its dedication to gender diversity and women's empowerment. By employing programs in areas such as pay equality, leadership development, medical care, and financial products that are specifically designed towards them, the Bank actively works to empower women in the workforce and the larger community. This demonstrates Al Rajhi Bank's position at the forefront of creating a level of inclusiveness and driving Saudi Arabia towards sustainable financial growth.

**Table 4.3 Year-by-Year Employment Data: (Al Rajhi Bank)**

| Year | TOE    | NFW   | POW    | AGR    | Men    | SMW | SMM |
|------|--------|-------|--------|--------|--------|-----|-----|
| 2019 | 13,439 | 2,049 | 15.25% |        | 84.75% |     |     |
| 2020 | 13,445 | 2,046 | 15.22% | -0.20% | 84.78% |     |     |
| 2021 | 15,078 | 3,166 | 21%    | 37.98% | 79.00% | 17  | 403 |
| 2022 | 19,964 | 5,590 | 28%    | 33.33% | 72.00% | 24  | 530 |
| 2023 | 20,878 | 6,263 | 30%    | 7.14%  | 70.00% | 23  | 430 |

#### 1. Annual Growth Rate (AGR) Calculation

$$AGR = \frac{\text{Current year \%} - \text{Previous year \%}}{\text{Previous year \%}} * 100 \quad (4.4)$$

- **2020 AGR:**  $AGR = \frac{15.22\% - 15.25\%}{15.25\%} * 100 = 0.20\%$  (4. a)
- **2021 AGR:**  $AGR = \frac{21.0\% - 15.22\%}{15.22\%} * 100 = 37.33\%$  (4. b)
- **2022 AGR:**  $AGR = \frac{28.00\% - 21.00\%}{21.00\%} * 100 = 33.33\%$  (4. c)
- **2023 AGR:**  $AGR = \frac{30.00\% - 28.00\%}{28.00\%} * 100 = 7.14\%$  (4. d)

#### 2. Progress Analysis

Al Rajhi Bank's analysis reveals a strong improvement in attracting more women into the workforce, A considerable rise in female employment in 2023 (30.00%) compared to

2019 (15.25%), almost doubling in five years, This improvement reflects the Bank's dedication to promoting gender diversity and empowering women workers.

- **Annual Growth Rate Trends:**

Highest growth in 2021 (37.98%) with focused efforts to boost female involvement, and a slow growth in 2023 (7.14%) with a continued need for efforts.

- **Senior Management Representation:**

Slow but steady improvement in female leadership, growing from 4.05% in 2021 to 5.08% in 2023, yet still lesser in proportion to male leadership.

- **Male Employment Decline:**

Male employment reduced from 84.75% in 2019 to 70.00% in 2023, signifying increased gender diversity.

### **3. Challenges Identified**

#### **Limited Senior Management Representation:**

1. **Although overall development, female leaders at senior management posts lag.**
2. **Sustainability of Growth:**

- The rapid growth in female employment between 2020–2022 eased off by 2023, a sign that emphasizes that strategies must be long-term.

3. **Workplace Inclusion:**

- In addition to recruitment, creating an inclusive workplace for female workers in traditionally male banking jobs continues to present a challenge.

### **4. Future Directions**

1. **Leadership Development Programmes:** Initiate mentorship and leadership development programmes for preparing female candidates for senior management roles.
2. **Sustainable Recruitment Policies:** Establish career development and job satisfaction-based long-term recruitment and retention policies.
3. **Diversity and Inclusion Policies:** Provide work-life balance, flexible work arrangements, and career development in workplace policies for women.

## 5. Visualization

1. **Figure N.5:** Annual Growth Rate Visualization (Al Rajhi Bank)
2. **Figure .D.6:** The difference between the rates of job diversity for women and men

## 4. Comprehensive Analysis of the Banking Sector (2019–2023)

(Riyad Bank, NCB, Al Rajhi Bank)

### Sector Overview: Banking Sector in Saudi Arabia

The Saudi banking sector is important for financial security, economic development, and workforce diversity, including gender diversity. In a five year analysis from 2019.to 2023 of Riyadh Bank, Saudi National Bank (NCB), and Al Rajhi Bank, analysis aims at assessing them in relation to female contribution and creation of an inclusive work environment. Through studying their policies, programs, and performance, analysis identifies them in relation to contributing towards an equitable workforce and increased Saudi female access in key sectors.

**Table 4.4 Year-by-Year Sectoral Employment Data - Banking Sector**

| Year | Riyad Bank (%) | NCB (%) | Al Rajhi Bank (%) | Industry Average (%) |
|------|----------------|---------|-------------------|----------------------|
| 2019 | 25.5%          | 13.00%  | 15.25%            | 17.92%               |
| 2020 | 25.5%          | 14%     | 15.22%            | 18.24%               |
| 2021 | 27%            | 26.10%  | 21%               | 24.70%               |
| 2022 | 28%            | 27%     | 28%               | 27.67%               |
| 2023 | 29%            | 72%     | 30%               | 43.67%               |

### Statistical Analysis of the Banking Sector:

#### 1. Industry Average (%):

Industry Average Calculation =  $\sum (\text{Percentage of women in each company}) / \text{Number of companies in the sector}$

#### 2. Annual Growth Rate (AGR) Calculation:



$$AGR = \frac{\text{Current year \%} - \text{Previous year \%}}{\text{Previous year \%}} * 100 \quad (4.5)$$

**(Riyad Bank):**

- Steady but slow growth: from 25.5% in 2019 to 29% in 2023.
- AGR peaked at 6% in 2021 and remained around 4% thereafter.
- Indicates consistent but conservative hiring strategies.
- It shows its strength compared to other currencies. The average industry rate compared to it is the strongest bank in the diversity of employment for women over the four years. The employment rate was superior to the industry average, as shown in the table.

**• NCB (Saudi National Bank):**

- Explosive growth, especially in 2023, with a jump to 72% female representation.
- AGR of 167% in 2023 reflects a significant organizational shift.
- Suggests aggressive recruitment policies or restructuring.

**• (Al Rajhi Bank:**

- Moderate and consistent growth: from 15.25% in 2019 to 30% in 2023.
- Highest AGR in 2021 at 37.98%, stabilizing in 2023 at 7.14%.
- Reflects a balanced and sustainable approach.

**Table 4.5 Performance Comparison**

| Aspect                       | Riyad Bank        | SNB               | Al Rajhi Bank           |
|------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Growth Trend                 | Slow and steady   | Explosive in 2023 | Moderate and consistent |
| Female Representation (2023) | 29%               | 72%               | 30%                     |
| AGR Peak                     | 6% in 2021        | 167% in 2023      | 37.98% in 2021          |
| Senior Management Inclusion  | Data not provided | Data not provided | 5.08% in 2023           |
| Sustainability of Growth     | Sustainable       | Questionable      | Sustainable             |

### 3. Progress Analysis

- (Best Performer)

- NCB shows stronger growth in female employment in 2023 but raises concerns about sustainability and workforce balance
- Al Rajhi Bank demonstrates a balanced and sustainable growth model.
- Riyadh Bank is making steady and conservative progress, which indicates the strength of this bank's strategies and the focus on equality by action.
- Sector-Wide Progress:
- The Saudi banking industry experienced an improvement in female workforce presence, with female sector presence rising to 43.67% in 2023 from 17.92% in 2019.
- The collective effort indicates significant progress towards gender diversity.

#### 4. Challenges Identified in the Banking Sector

1. **Sustainability of Growth:** SNB's rapid growth may not be sustainable, potentially leading to **organizational challenges**.
2. **Leadership Representation:** Limited data on **women in senior management** across all banks suggests a focus on lower and mid-level positions rather than leadership.
3. **Workforce Balance:** The sharp **increase** in female employment in **SNB** could disrupt **gender balance**, whereas **Riyad Bank** and **Al Rajhi Bank** maintained steadier integration.

#### 5. Future Directions

1. **Balanced Growth Strategies:** Banks should aim for **sustainable female workforce integration** without disrupting existing workforce dynamics.
2. **Leadership Development Programs:** Emphasize promoting women into **senior and executive roles** to achieve true gender diversity.
3. **Inclusive Work Culture:** Create policies that foster **inclusive environments** for long-term retention and productivity. A long term success in gender diversity is contingent upon a prioritization of long term growth, leadership integration, and workforce equilibrium over a long-term period.

#### 6. Visualization

**Figure. I.7:** Analysis of the performance of the banking sector in job diversity

## 5. Comprehensive Analysis of the Energy Sector (2019–2023)

### Detailed Analysis of Aramco (2019–2023)

Saudi Aramco Saudi Aramco encourages diversity in its workforce through female contribution in the energy sector. Some of its most important programs include:

- **Equal Opportunities & Inclusion:** Having males, females, and persons with specific requirements and developing a diversified work environment with over 90 nationalities.
- **STEM & Education Programmes:** Engaging in girls' studies in the field of STEM and providing career development scholarships in engineering and science.
- **Leadership Progress:** Developing female presence in senior roles and career development programs.
- **Workplace Wellbeing:** Empowering workforce development through effective policies and career development programs. Aramco takes a leadership role in closing the gender gap and providing an inclusive environment in the field of energy through such actions.

**Table 4.6 Year-by-Year Sectoral Employment Data (Aramco)**

| Sector | Year | TOE    | NOW      | POW   | AGR | Men    | SMW |
|--------|------|--------|----------|-------|-----|--------|-----|
| Energy | 2019 | 69,867 | 3,424    | 4.90% |     | 95.10% | 2.1 |
|        | 2020 | 66,800 | 3,407    | 5.10% | 4%  | 94.90% | 2.7 |
|        | 2021 | 68,493 | 3,853.00 | 5.60% | 10% | 94.40% | 3.1 |
|        | 2022 | 66,800 | 4,275.00 | 6.40% | 14% | 93.60% | 3.8 |
|        | 2023 | 73,311 | 5,278.00 | 7.20% | 13% | 92.80% | 4.8 |

#### 1. Annual Growth Rate (AGR)

$$AGR = \frac{\text{Current year \%} - \text{Previous year \%}}{\text{Previous year \%}} * 100 \quad (4.6)$$

- **2020 AGR:**  $AGR = \frac{5.10\% - 4.90\%}{4.90\%} * 100 = 4.08\%$  (6.a)
- **2021 AGR:**  $AGR = \frac{5.60\% - 5.10\%}{5.10\%} * 100 = 9.80\%$  (6.b)
- **2022 AGR:**  $AGR = \frac{6.40\% - 5.60\%}{5.60\%} * 100 = 14.29\%$  (6.c)
- **2023 AGR:**  $AGR = \frac{7.20\% - 6.40\%}{6.40\%} * 100 = 12.50\%$  (6.d)

## 2. Progress Analysis

- Steady Growth: Female presence in Aramco increased from 4.90% in 2019 to 7.20% in 2023.
- Representative Leadership: Incremental senior management representations increased, from 2.1% in 2019 to 4.8% in 2023.

### Highlights of Progress:

- Aramco mirrors long-term, sustained development in female recruitment.
- Increased presence in management is indicative of first tentative moves towards including leadership.
- Expenditure in female engineers' programs in technology and mathematics could be driving workforce diversity.
- A sustained focus on workforce diversity and expansion with an 'inclusivity' lens will generate momentum for such development.

## 3. Challenges Identified

1. **Slow Rate of Integration:** Despite with steady expansion, Aramco lags most industries in terms of female presence.
2. **Integration at Leadership Level:** Extremely low female presence at senior and critical positions.
3. **Obstructions in Culture and Industry:** Tradition in the energy industry can slow down gender diversity momentum.

## 4. Future Directions

1. **Leadership Programmes for Women:** Organise mentor and leadership training for developing and supporting senior female leaders.
2. **Recruitment of Women in Jobs in STEM:** Scale recruitment in technology, engineering, and management.
3. **Inclusivity Workplace Policies:** Adopt family-supportive and flexible work arrangements.

4. Saudi Aramco moved steadily but surely in its integration of females in its workforce, with female presence at 7.2% in 2023, a rise over 4.9% in 2019. As a positive sign, but work will have to go towards:
  - Establishing female leadership roles.
  - Establishing momentum for female presence in strategical and technical roles.
  - Enhancing policies to overcome sector-specific challenges.

## **6. Visualization**

### **1. Figure.C.8: Annual Growth Rate Visualization(ARAMCO)**

### **2. Figure.E.9: The difference between the rates of job diversity for women and men(ARAMCO)**



## 6. Comprehensive Analysis of ACWA Power (2019–2023)

### Company Overview: ACWA Power

CWA Power, a Saudi Arabia pioneer in renewable and water desalination development, is one of the driving factors in Saudi Arabia's renewable and sustainable development transformation. Integrating females in the field is not an easy challenge, but it can become a transformation opportunity through an increasingly inclusive and diverse workforce.

**Table 4.7 Year-by-Year Employment Data - ACWA Power**

| Sector | Company    | Year | TOE   | NOW    | POW    | AGR     | Men | SMW  |
|--------|------------|------|-------|--------|--------|---------|-----|------|
| Energy | Acwa power | 2020 |       |        |        |         |     |      |
|        |            | 2021 | 2,860 | 9.10%  |        | 89.900% | 68  | 682  |
|        |            | 2022 | 3,199 | 7.40%  | 18.68% | 92.600% | 93  | 1100 |
|        |            | 2023 | 3,701 | 10.10% | 36.49% | 89.900% | 106 | 911  |

#### 1. Annual Growth Rate (AGR)

$$AGR = \frac{\text{Current year \%} - \text{Previous year \%}}{\text{Previous year \%}} * 100 \quad (4.7)$$

- **2022 AGR:**  $AGR = \frac{7.40\% - 9.10\%}{9.10\%} * 100 = -18.68\%$  (7. a)
- **2023 AGR:**  $AGR = \frac{10.10\% - 7.40\%}{7.40\%} * 100 = 36.49\%$  (7. b)

#### 2. Progress Analysis

- **Fluctuating Growth:** Female workforce in 2022 decreased but increased in 2023 with a sharp boost to 10.10%.
- **Senior Management Surge:** Exceptional senior management development.
- **Volatile Trends:** Inconsistency in female workforce reflects potential unpredictability in recruitment policies.

#### Highlights in Progress

- **Stability in Growth:** Unlike 2022's downturn, ACWA Power experienced a significant boost in female workforce in 2023.

- **Representative Leadership:** Exceptional senior management development for females, reflective of inner-policy realignments.

### **3. Challenges Identified**

1. **Inconsistent Growth Trend:** Fluctuating female workforce reflects unpredictable recruitment and maintenance policies.
2. **Transparency in Data:** Inadequacy in reporting information about overall female workers and posts obstructs accuracy in analysis.

### **4. Future Directions**

1. **Stabilize Recruitment Strategies:** Implement uniform recruitment policies for long-term female workforce development.
2. **Build Inclusive Leadership Pipelines:** Invest in long-term leadership development programs for long-term female presence at senior positions.
3. **Enhance Data Transparency:** Provide detailed and consistent reporting on gender diversity metrics to track progress effectively.

### **5. Visualization**

1. **Figure.C.10:** Annual Growth Rate Visualization(ACWA)
2. **Figure .A.11:** The difference between the rates of job diversity for women and men(ACWA)

## 7. Comprehensive Analysis of Maaden

### Company Overview: Maaden (Saudi Arabian Mining Company)

Maaden, Saudi Arabia's state owned mining company and a region's key player, operates in a traditionally male field. Having women in its workforce, its actions represent part of a drive towards heightened gender diversity. In 2023, its investments in training, development, and skill development rose in an attempt to build female and male youth for future employment, specifically mining work. With governments and NGOs, Ma'aden works with communities, generates social development, and enables postmining operations' viability economically. Public reporting for female jobs, nevertheless, is not widespread, and significant information is present only for 2023.

#### 1. Annual Growth Rate (AGR)

$$AGR = \frac{\text{Current year \%} - \text{Previous year \%}}{\text{Previous year \%}} * 100 \quad (4.8)$$

- Since no data is available for prior years, the 2023 AGR is based on reported growth: AGR (2023) =25.00%
- 2. Progress Analysis
- Strong Inaugural Women's Involvement: 25% female workforce in 2023, a reflection of high level of gender inclusion.
- leadership Inclusion: Women occupy 3.56% of senior manager roles, a reflection of first steps in diversity at leadership level.
- Compatibility in progress and development: The statistics show that Maaden has begun to map its workforce towards supporting Saudi Arabia's national goal of boosting Saudi women's contribution to male-dominated industries. Strengthening it will allow Maaden to cement its position as a player in driving gender diversity in mining.

#### 2. Progress Highlights

- Rapid Inclusion: With 25 female workers in 2023, Maaden stands out in terms of gender diversity in a male-dominated mining sector.



- **Representation at Senior Level:** As low as it is, having female workers in senior management is an improvement.
- **Leader in a Traditional Male-Dominated Industry:** Maaden's success stands out in a male-dominated industry with no female presence in its formative years.

### 3. Challenges Identified

1. **Lack of Historical Information:** The unavailability of information in the past constrains long-term planning analysis and analysis of trends in growth.
2. **Minimal Leadership Representation:** 3.56% of senior roles have female representatives, and leadership development is a necessity.
3. **Career Progress and Retention:** The long-term success will depend on whether Ma'aden can retain its female workforce and enable career development for them.

### 4. Future Directions

1. **Enhanced Reporting and Transparency:** Regular reporting of statistics for gender diversity in a format that enables tracking and clarifies performance targets.
2. **Leader Development Programmes:** Targeted training and mentor programs for female leaders.
3. **Sector Cooperation:** Join with fellow mining and industrial companies in developing workplace policies.

## 8. Comprehensive Analysis of the Energy Sector (2019–2023)

### Companies Analyzed: Aramco, ACWA Power, Ma’aden

**Sector Overview:** The Energy Sector in Saudi Arabia The energy sector is a pillar of Saudi economy and its global position, powered by oil, gas, and renewable sources of energy. Traditionally male, it lags in its integration of female workers in its workforce. In contrast, during the past decade, a momentum for gender integration and diversity took shape. The following analysis considers development in female jobs in Aramco, ACWA Power, and Ma'aden during the past five years, weighing its success, its failure, and its potential for the future.

**Table 4.8 Year-by-Year Sectoral Employment Data - Energy Sector**

| Year | Aramco(%) | Acwa Power (%) | Maaden (%) | Industry Average (%) |
|------|-----------|----------------|------------|----------------------|
| 2019 | 4.90%     |                |            |                      |
| 2020 | 5.10%     |                |            |                      |
| 2021 | 5.60%     | 9.10%          |            | 7.35%                |
| 2022 | 6.40%     | 7.40%          |            | 6.90%                |
| 2023 | 7.20%     | 10.10%         | 25%        | 14.10%               |

**Table 4.9 Performance Comparison**

| Aspect                            | Aramco                 | ACWA Power                 | Ma’aden                  |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Growth Trend                      | Slow and steady growth | Fluctuating and unstable   | Aggressive and promising |
| Female Representation (2023)      | 7.20%                  | 10.10%                     | 25.00%                   |
| AGR Peak                          | 13% in 2023            | 36.49% in 2023             | 25% in 2023              |
| Senior Management Inclusion(2023) | 4.8%                   | Data not provided          | 3.56%                    |
| Sustainability of Growth          | Sustainable but slow   | Unstable due to volatility | Promising but untested   |
| Leadership Development            | Limited                | Lacks focus                | Emerging focus           |

### 1. Industry Average:

(%) Industry Average Calculation =  $\sum(\text{Percentage of women in each company}) / \text{Number of companies in the sector}$

### 2. Annual Growth Rate (AGR) Calculation:

$$AGR = \frac{\text{Current year \%} - \text{Previous year \%}}{\text{Previous year \%}} * 100 \quad (4.9)$$

- **Aramco:** Demonstrated incremental and consistent growth between 4.90% in 2019 and 7.20% in 2023, reflective of prudent but continuous recruitment processes.
- **ACWA Power:** Experienced fluctuations with a fall in 2022 (-18.68%) and a rise of 36.49% in 2023.
- **Maaden:** Joined in reporting in 2023 with a high female workforce of 25%, reflective of successful integration of females in its workforce 1 Analysis of Progress.
- **Measurable sectoral progress:** The sectoral average increased from 7.35% in 2021 to 14.10% in 2023, demonstrating a marked improvement in diversity.
- **Management Representation:** Female presence in senior management in companies is low, indicative of most diversity interventions at junior and mid-rank level.
- **Accelerating Integration:** High female workforce in 2023 in Ma'aden is an indicator of growing momentum in the sector for integration. Company-wide performance compared to industry average.
- **Aramco:** stable and prudent expansion with minimal risk but slow development. And showed the strength of performance of job diversity in several years.
- **ACWA Power:** Irregular integration policies, reflecting unstable expansion approaches, have shown the strength of their integration at high rates in a short period.
- **Maaden:** Ambitious and positive expansion towards workforce diversity. Where it showed the strength of its beginning for the diversity of the career of women to the extent that it surpassed the industrial average Energy Sector Challenges 1. Underrepresentation in Senior Positions In all three companies, underrepresentation of senior leaders holds diversity in decision-making.

### 3. Industry and Culture Challenges

- Persistent social constructs towards women in the energy sector inhibit integration.

#### **4. Talent Retention and Career Progress**

- An insufficiency in career development programs puts talent maintenance in such a field at risk.
- The sector is moving in a positive direction, but development continues to move towards junior positions, with senior integration lagging.

#### **5. Future Directions**

**1.Sustainable Inclusion Strategies:** Develop long-term recruitment and retention strategies with a view towards sustained and long-term female contribution.

**2.Leader Development Programmes:** Use training and mentor programs with a view towards senior and board level female appointments.

**3.Attitude and Policy Reforms:** Create a corporation with a positive gender diversity and inclusion atmosphere.

**4.Inter-sector Cooperation:** Enhance collaboration between companies in the energy sector with a view towards best practice and collaboration in closing gender gaps.

Visualization

#### **6.Visualization**

**Figure.P.12:** Analysis of the performance of the banking sector in job diversity.

### **9. Detailed Analysis of Almarai (2019–2023)**

#### **Company Overview: Almarai**

Almarai is a region's largest food and dairy producing entity and Saudi retail market dominant player with longstanding male workforce in consonance with traditional operational and logistic needs of its field. In current years, however, Almarai proceeded in direction towards an increased female presence in its workforce, an indication of a new direction towards a less male-intensive workforce .

**1. Annual Growth Rate (AGR) Calculation** Due to a lack of proportionate detail about female workers, an explicit calculation for an Annual Growth Rate (AGR) cannot be conducted. Despite that, an overall workers' rise from 38,370 in 2022 to 41,044 in 2023 reveals expansion in the company, possibly with growing female work opportunity.

## **2. Analysis of Progress**

### **1. Steps in Female Staffing.**

- Almarai's 100 female workers recruited in 2022 is a significant achievement in terms of beginning to include women in its workforce.
- The act is an expression of Almarai's slow move towards Saudi devolved in terms of gender integration.

**2. Worker Expansion:** The increase in near 2,674 workers between 2022 and 2023 reveals operational expansion, but detail about female workers in such expansion is not present.

**3. Delayed Information about Leadership Inclusion:** Nothing is mentioned about senior and executive positions for women, and therefore, female integration could be limited to junior or junior-entry positions.

## **3. Challenges Identified**

1. **Insufficient Transparency in Information:** The lack of information about the number and role of women in the corporation holds back actual development appraisal.
2. **Slow Integration Rate:** Although beginning recruitment of women, proportion and contribution of integration cannot yet be seen, suggesting a tentative integration pace towards gender diversity.
3. **Shortage of Women in Senior Roles:** Nothing confirms any drive towards putting women in manager and senior roles, confining them to contribute towards decision processes.

## **4. Future Directions for Almarai**

1. **Transparent Reporting of Information:** Almarai must report transparent, gender-disaggregated statistics, specifically for female jobs in departments and in senior jobs.
2. **Targeted Recruitment of Women:** The corporation must have explicit targets for female recruitment in operational, technical, and senior jobs.
3. **Programs for Women in Senior Roles:** Adopt training and mentor programs for preparing women for manager and executive roles, securing long-term gender diversity.
4. **Inclusive Workplace Policies:** Adopt flexible working times, family-conducive policies, and secure workplace environments for supporting long term female maintenance.

## 10. Detailed Analysis of Cenomi (2019–2023)

**Sector: Retail Company: Cenemic (formerly known as Fawaz Al Hokair Group)**

### Company Overview: Cenomi

Cenemic is a Saudi retail group with a leisure, lifestyle, and fashion orientation, and with its retail function, its workforce structure is most important in contributing towards female empowerment and workforce diversity in a manner most supportive of national social and economic development aims.

**Table 4.10 Year-by-Year Employment Data - Cenomi**

| Sector | Company | Year | TOE    | NOW    | POW    | AGR    |
|--------|---------|------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Retail | Cenomi  | 2019 |        |        |        |        |
|        |         | 2020 |        | 23.20% |        |        |
|        |         | 2021 |        | 23.39% |        |        |
|        |         | 2022 | 76.50% | 26.90% | 15%    | 85.00% |
|        |         | 2023 | 76.54% | 30%    | 11.52% |        |

### 1. Annual Growth Rate (AGR) Calculation

$$AGR = \frac{\text{Current year \%} - \text{Previous year \%}}{\text{Previous year \%}} * 100 \quad (4.10)$$

- **2021 AGR:**  $AGR = \frac{23.39 \% - 23.20 \%}{23.20 \%} * 100 = 0.82\%$  (10.a)

- **2022 AGR:**  $AGR = \frac{26.90\% - 23.39\%}{23.39\%} * 100 = 15.0$  (10. b)
- **2023 AGR:**  $AGR = \frac{30.00\% - 26.90\%}{26.90\%} * 100 = 11.52\%$  (10. c)

## 2. Progress Analysis

### Gradual Growth:

- The female workers' proportion rose to 30% in 2023, having increased from 23.20% in 2020.
- The greatest improvement in 2022 is an indication of deliberate recruitment.
- Leadership Representation: There is no indication of actions towards leadership integration.

## 3. Challenges Identified

### Limited Leadership Representation:

- Integration in workforce is ongoing, but senior female workers have no proportionate representation.

## 4. Future Directions for Cenomi

1. **Strengthen Leadership Paths:** Implementation of leadership development programs for increased female presence in senior roles.
2. **Transparency in Reporting:** Regular reporting of gender disaggregated information, particularly in leadership roles, in a sustained manner.
3. **Inclusive Workplace Policies:** Implementation of flexible work arrangements and family care programs in an endeavour to drive female development and upkeep.
4. **Recruitment Strategy Enhancement:** Extension of recruitment programs to involve more women in all departments, including operations and management.

## 5. Visualization

**Figure.P.13:** Annual Growth Rate Visualization(CENOMI)

## **11. (2019–2023) Sector: Retail Company: Bin Dawood Holding**

### **Company Overview**

Bin Dawood Holding Bin Dawood Holding is a leading grocery retail operator in Saudi Arabia, managing a network of supermarkets and hypermarkets. As a key player in the retail sector, its commitment to diversity and inclusion is essential for advancing women's empowerment and fostering a more inclusive workforce.

**Annual Growth Rate (AGR) Analysis** The availability of information for 2023 alone, no Annual Growth Rate (AGR) can be determined for years preceding it. With information for 2023, 8% of workers are female with no improvement in gender diversity.

#### **1. Analysis of Progress.**

1. **Meagre Female Presence:** 8% workers in 2023 alone are female, with little improvement regarding gender diversity.
2. **Workforce Breakdown:** The workforce consists of males (92%), with increased recruitment and female workers' retention.
3. **No Information about Senior Leaders:** The availability of no information regarding female senior leaders portrays a lack of diversity in programs for leader.

#### **2. Challenges Identify**

1. **Low Female Involvement:** The 8% female workforce reflects a general underrepresentation of females in retail.
2. **Shortage of Women in Senior Positions:** The fewer senior management jobs filled by women reflect a failure to develop female workers.
3. **Recruitment Challenges:** The presence of cultural, organizational, and sector related barriers can discourage female recruitment and maintenance.

#### **3. Future Directions**

1. **Targeted Recruitment Programmes:** Design specific recruitment programmes in an effort to promote female recruitment at all career stages.
2. **Executive Leadership Programmes:** Offer mentor and leadership programmes for grooming female executives for senior roles.



3. **Workplace Inclusivity Policies:** Implement flexible work policies and family-supportive work practices for female employees.
4. **Workplace Sensitivity Campaigns:** Design workplace diversity awareness programmes for a positive and supportive workplace for all.

## **12. (Almarai, Cenomi, Bin Dawood) Sector Overview:**

### **Saudi Arabia's Retail Sector**

The retail sector in Saudi Arabia is one of its most thriving and burgeoning sectors, sustained by demand and a move towards modernity and technology. It holds significant channels for female employment in sales, administration, and management. In contrast with an early boost towards diversity in working environments, recruitment and maintenance strategies for female workers in the sector showed mixed trends. The following analysis takes five years' worth of development, challenge, and future trends in female employment in Almarai, Cenomi, and Bin Dawood (2019–2023) into consideration.

### **Key Observations:**

- Cenomi saw continuous female workforce growth at 30% in 2023, a reflection of its strong commitment towards gender diversity.
- Bin Dawood, however, has a mere 8% female workers in 2023, a reflection of age-old impediments in traditional retail for female workers.
- The workforce in Almarai cannot be calculated, but overall trends in the sector have experienced a transition towards female workers, with a strong presence in logistics and management.

### **1. Industry Average**

(%) Calculation Industry Average Calculation =  $\sum(\text{Percentage of women in each company}) / \text{Number of companies in the sector}$

The retail industry's average fluctuated over the years, peaking at 19% in 2023, demonstrating inconsistency in female hiring practices and Sinomi has been the most engaged in hiring over the year.

## **2. Progress Analysis:**

**1/ Sectoral Progress:** Women have been recruited in retail, but improvement is not uniform between companies.

**2/ Sustained Growth in Cenomi:** Cenomi's female workers increased enormously, a sign of successful workplace diversity policies.

**3/ Weak Female Representation in Bin Dawood:** Bin Dawood hasn't included female workers effectively at a competitive level, and male-intensive traditional retail jobs dominate.

## **4. Retail Sector Challenges**

1. **Fewer career progression avenues:** Women in retail work almost exclusively in sales and frontline positions, with fewer career development avenues for progression to management roles.
2. **2. Staff Turnover Challenges:** High female workforce turnover is an indication of a lack of long-term career development and security in work.
3. **3. Industry and Culture Challenges:** The retail work environment still holds a male orientation, with companies such as Bin Dawood not yet taking a similar direction.
4. **4. Incomplete Policy Implementation:** Where Cenomi implemented positive recruitment policies, Bin Dawood lags, with no uniform gender diversity approaches in practice.

## **5. Future Directions**

### **Workforce Integration Strategies**

- Organizations must make long-term investments in female workforce integration with a career development and talent maintenance orientation. Leaders' Inclusion Policies.
- Shop companies must introduce mentor programs in an effort to direct women towards senior manager positions.

### **Policies for Flexible Work**

- Part-time and work-from-home integration can recruit more women in the field.

### **Sectoral Inclusion Policies**

- The creation of sectoral policies will act to counteract retail companies ‘recruitment deficits.

## 6. Visualization

**Figure .N.14:** Analysis of the performance of the Retail sector in job diversity

## 13.Comprehensive Comparative Analysis of the Three Sectors (2019–2023)

### Sectors: Banking, Energy, Retail

Women’s employment in Saudi banking, energy, and retail industries have developed at contrasting paces, with variation in integration and sectoral dynamics. Banking, through focused and sector efforts, developed most uniformly in female workforce integration. Historically male, the energy sector, for its part, underwent continuous improvement, with development at a slow pace. In retail, with early development, female presence could not be sustained, and a necessity for enhanced retention interventions can, therefore, be proposed. The analysis takes into consideration sector trends, challenge, and opportunity, providing an outlook for industries that have played a leadership role in workforce diversity and sectors with room for improvement in terms of supporting gender integration.

**Table 4.11 Year-by-Year Industry Average Comparison - Retail Sector**

| Year | Banking Industry Average | Energy Industry Average | Retail Industry Average |
|------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 2019 | 17.92%                   |                         |                         |
| 2020 | 18.24%                   |                         |                         |
| 2021 | 24.70%                   | 7.35%                   |                         |
| 2022 | 27.67%                   | 6.90%                   |                         |
| 2023 | 43.67%                   | 14.10%                  | 19%                     |

## **1. Sector-Wise Comparative Analysis**

### **1. Banking Sector Achievements:**

- The banking sector experienced most of its growth in female employees, rising to 43.67% in 2023 from 17.92% in 2019.
- Especially, SNB experienced a stupendous growth in 2023, contributing vastly towards driving the sector's average high.

### **2. Areas of Challenge:**

- Sustainability: SNB's 167% growth in one year creates apprehensions about whether such exponential growth can ever be sustained.
- Representation in Senior Roles: Women's presence in senior management remains negligible.

### **3. Directions for the future:**

- Target sustained growth and not exponential spikes.
- Design leadership programs for developing female presence in senior management.
- Enhance workplace policies for attracting and retaining women in the long term.

#### **1. Energy Sector Progress:**

- The energy sector has seen slow but steady growth, growing from 7,035% in 2021 to 14.10% in 2023.
- Aramco adopted a strong position in slow improvement, with a considerable improvement in 2023 to 25% female presence in its workforce.

### **4. Challenges:**

- Traditionally male workforce in Energy, slow integration for women.
- Leadership Challenges: Under inclusion of women in senior leadership and technical positions.

#### **Directions for future development:**

- Increased recruitment programs in STEM in an effort to recruit a larger proportion of women for engineering and technical positions.
- Leader and mentor programs for women in an effort to narrow down the gender divide in management.
- Implementation of family supportive workplace policies in an effort to enhance workforce.

## 2. Retail Sector Performance:

- The performance of the female workforce in the retail sector showed inconsistency. In the average industry and Cenomi was the strongest
- The best performer in improving women's contribution occurred in companies like Cenomi, but BinDawood performed poorly at 8% in 2023.

### Areas of Challenge:

- Decline in 2023 reflects a challenge in female workers' retention.
- Leadership Inclusion: There is no appreciable improvement in getting female workers into senior positions.

### Directions for the Future:

- Build female workforce retention programs.
- Improve leadership development with an eye towards getting female workers in upper positions.
- Implement flexible work terms and supporting programs for working moms

**Table 4.12 Cross-Sector Comparative Analysis**

| Aspect                    | Banking Sector                   | Energy Sector                    | Retail Sector                  |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Female Workforce Growth   | Highest growth (17.92% → 43.67%) | Moderate growth (7.35% → 14.10%) | Fluctuating (19%)              |
| Annual Growth Rate (AGR)  | Peaked at 167% (SNB, 2023)       | Steady (~14% in 2023)            | Insufficient data              |
| Leadership Representation | Minimal across all banks         | Limited in executive roles       | Insufficient data              |
| Sustainability of Growth  | Questionable (SNB rapid growth)  | Sustainable but slow             | Inconsistent                   |
| Inclusiveness of Policies | Moderate progress                | Minimal inclusivity              | Weak retention st              |
| Sectoral Barriers         | Cultural resistance              | Industry norms                   | Retention and promotion issues |

## Sectoral Insights

### 1. Best Performance:

- The Banking Sector takes a general lead but needs to work towards leadership diversity and sustainability.
- The SNB's high growth must be analysed with care to maintain long-term equilibrium.

### 2. Balanced Growth Most Sustained: Al Rajhi Bank (Banking) and Aramco (Energy) have consistently sustained growth.

#### 1. Sector with Most Challenges: The Retail Sector is challenged with regards to holding and sustained growth, and immediate strategic intervention is needed.

## Challenges Across Sectors

Representative Leadership: Women in senior and executive positions in all sectors underrepresented. Durability of Growth: Unsustainably rapid growth (e.g., SNB) can produce workforce imbalances. Norms and Culture: Workplace cultures and stereotypes discourage female integration.

## Future Directions

### 1. Sector-Specific Strategies:

- Banking: Level of integration development.
- Energy: Wider and deeper programs and policies in the area of STEM.
- Retail: Add programs for leadership and talent retention.

### 2. Cross-Sector Cooperation Shared programs for developing a workplace with diversity.

### 3. Policy Integration:

- Make sectoral strategies complementary to national objectives for women's economic empowerment.
- Frame sector-wise frameworks for uniform and persistent integration in sectors.

## Visualization

**Figure.D.15:** Sector performance versus industry average to measure the performance of sectors in the diversity of women's employment

## **14. Comparative Analysis of Sectoral Industry Averages with National Employment Data (2022–2023)**

This section compares in detail banking, energy, and retail sector averages with Saudi national employment and unemployment statistics in 2023 and 2022 in an attempt to assess sector performance in moving towards increased female employment, gain an awareness of key impediments, appreciate improvements, and make recommendations for workforce integration in consonance with national objectives.

### **Industry Averages vs. National Employment Data**

#### **4. Detailed Sector Analysis**

##### **Sector Comparison with National Averages Achievements Made:**

- The Banking sector fared much better in terms of national female employment, most noticeably in 2023 (43.67% compared with 30.8%).
- This is a confirmation of ambitious approaches, most particularly of SNB, in driving female contribution. Areas Identified for Challenges:
- The risk of unbalanced, high-rate growth in individual banks, with a danger of unsustainability.
- Too little leadership role for female workers in the sector in general.

##### **Directions for the Future:**

- Recruitment with a balanced mix with a view towards long-term viability.
- Leadership training for female workers. Energy Sector Comparison with National

##### **Averages Achievements Made:**

- The Energy sector saw slow but steady improvement, having moved from 6.90% in 2022 to 14.10% in 2023.
- Although it is still below

##### **Challenges Identified:**

- Cultural and male dominated technological environment creates barriers for rapid expansion.
- Too little career opportunity for technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) for women.

**Future Directions:**

- Extend technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) training and recruitment programs.
- Develop supportive and development policies for female leaders that involve them in a male-dominated environment.

**Retail Sector vs. National Averages Achievements:**

- The retail sector closely follows the national average to 19.00% in 2023.
- This reflects the lack of continuity in the growth of female workforce maintenance.

**Challenges Identified:**

- High workforce attrition and lack of career development options.
- Denial of career development through excessive use in casual and nonfixed terms and lack of continuity in workforce maintenance.

**Future Directions:** Offer career development and workforce

**5. Cross-Sector Performance Comparison****Table 4.13 Cross-Sector Performance Comparison**

| Aspect                          | Banking Sector        | Energy Sector             | Retail Sector              |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Female Employment Growth        | High (43.67% in 2023) | Low but improving (14.1%) | Inconsistent (19% in 2023) |
| Alignment with National Average | Above average         | Below average             | Above average in 2023      |
| Sustainability of Growth        | Moderate to High      | Slow but stable           | Unstable                   |
| Leadership Representation       | Limited               | Minimal                   | Negligible                 |

**6. Sectoral Challenges and Directions for the Future**

- Banking Sector: Needs to manage high powered female recruitment with sustained expansion and develop senior female leadership.
- Energy Sector: Needs to overcome cultural and sector related barriers and drive female presence in STEM.
- Retail Sector: Needs career development and maintenance in a move to consolidate and expand female presence.



- Conclusion and Emerging Trends Achievements Made:
- The Banking sector stands out in female employment, with strong expansion outpacing national employment trends.
- The Energy sector progresses steadily but lags in female presence.
- The Retail sector saw strong expansion but failed to gain momentum.

#### **Challenges to Overcome:**

- Bank expansion in Banking.
- Structural and cultural barriers in Energy.
- Leader development and maintenance in Retail.

#### **Directions for the Future:**

- Balanced development with an even mix of numerical expansion and development in terms of leadership, work environment.
- Integration with Saudi development objectives through sector-specific strategies.

### **6. Summary of Findings**

**1. Banking Sector:** Most developed, stimulated through highpowered recruitment but with a need to bridge gaps in leadership and sustainability.

**2. Energy Sector:** Lowest expansion, with sectorrelated barriers but with a positive outlook through its work in STEM.

**3. Retail Sector:** Initially high but unsteadfast; in need of organized expansion and maintenance strategies.

**1. TABLE.I.1:** Industry Averages vs. National Employment Data(2022)

**2. TABL.C.2.** Industry Averages vs. National Employment Data (2023)

**3. TABLE .E.3:** Cross-Sector Performance Comparison

## 4.1 CONCLUSION

This research is a critical examination of Saudi Arabia's Banking, Energy, and Retail sectors' female employment diversity in 2019 and 2023. By blending information specific to companies, sectors' performance, and national employment trends, analysis identifies key trends, barriers, and future directions for Saudi Arabia's new economy labor market female workforce integration. Analysis discloses that Banking is a forerunner in creating gender diversity, with continued and considerable improvement in female employment. Energy and Retail sectors, meanwhile, have continued barriers, such as structural, cultural, and sector related barriers, but with improvements showcasing increased awareness regarding gender diversity value for economies. The most striking conclusion of analysis is a continued rise in female employment in all sectors, with continued gaps, but reflective of slow but meaningful workforce integration, contributing to Saudi Arabia's long term development and economy diversification. Underrepresentation in senior management and long term integration in male dominated industries, for instance, represent continued barriers, but nevertheless.

**Methodology:** The weighted industry technique was utilized to estimate only the actual working proportion of women but, within complete data in each sector and in each establishment, comparative analysis between sectors could not be performed with it. **Instead, it was utilized to obtain an appropriate proportion of working women of Industry Average (IA) Application of Industry Average (IA) for benchmarking helped in objective sectoral performance comparison and determination of gaps in gender diversity. With its use, analysis could:**

1. **Analyse Sectoral Performance:** Benchmark performance in each sector in terms of national employment objectives.
2. **Detect Gaps in Gender Diversity:** Identify industries with a lag in female integration and present focused strategies.
3. **Record Progress:** Capture improvement in female employment and diversity programs' effectiveness over successive years.

## Highlights of Study Findings:

- **Progress:** The Banking sector experienced considerable improvement in female employment, a success for companies' diversity programs and supportive policies.
- **Challenges:** The Energy and retail sectors have longstanding sector related and cultural barriers, holding back full integration of women in both sectors. In all sectors, female presence in senior and leadership roles is low, suggesting a need for strong career development channels.
- **Future Directions:** Enhanced workplace policies, sector-related interventions, and leadership development programs will have to be embraced for overcoming current gaps. Higher female presence in decisionmaking and providing flexible work environments will become significant for longterm integration.
- **The current study** is both a sensitive analysis of female employment trends and an effective handbook for corporation executives, academicians, and policymakers. By describing sectorrelated gaps and providing actionable interventions, the study introduces pragmatic recommendations for corporation frameworks and effective policymaking for gender diversity improvement. **Second**, such observations fall in harmony with Saudi Arabian workforce integration, and most notably, with gender and economic empowerment improvement. Engaging a diversity workforce is a key for driving economic development, sectoral innovation, and longterm viability. **Lastly**, such a study introduces a factbased platform for developing an awareness of Saudi Arabian female employment trends' complexity. It is an important necessity for sectoral reform and strategic programs supporting inclusive economic activity. Present study forms a benchmark for international companies and governments, supporting a role for gender diversity in driving longterm development and solidity in both Saudi Arabia and globally.

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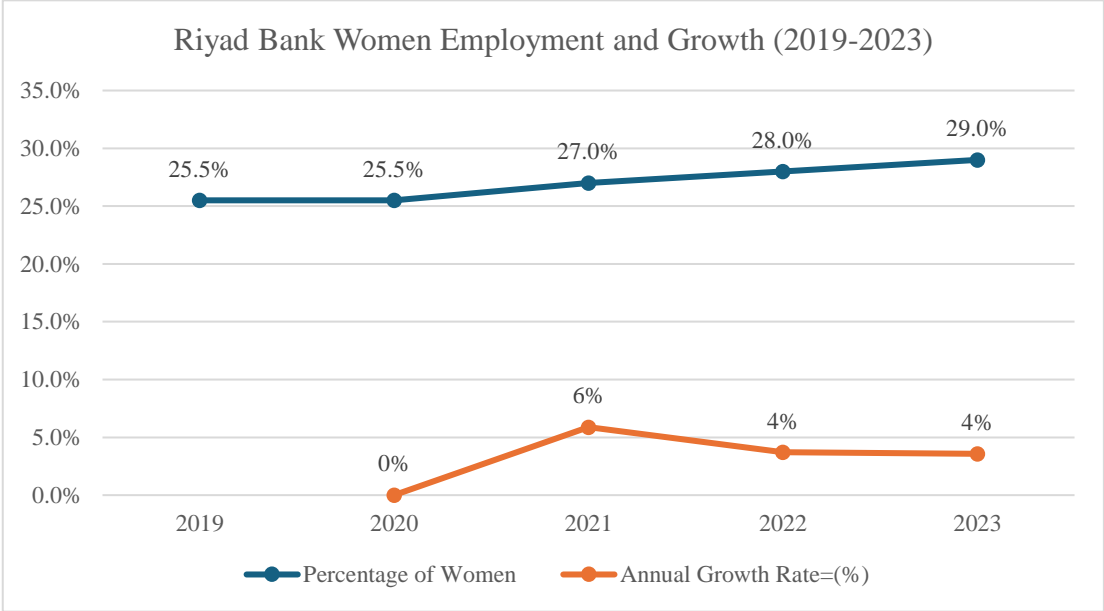
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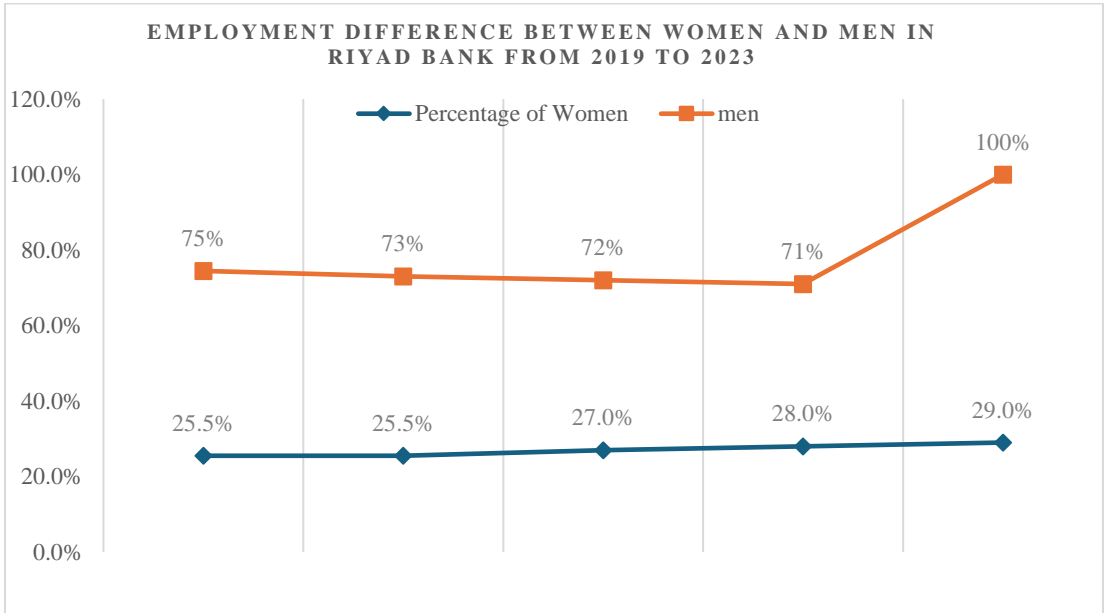
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# APPENDICES

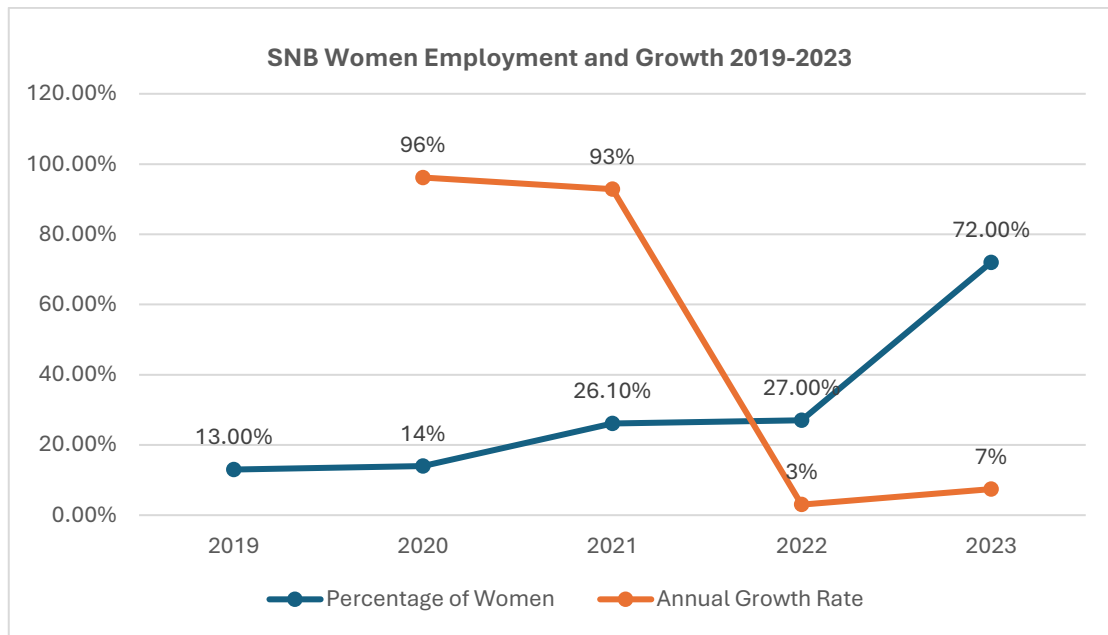


**Figure.A.1:** Annual Growth Rate Visualization

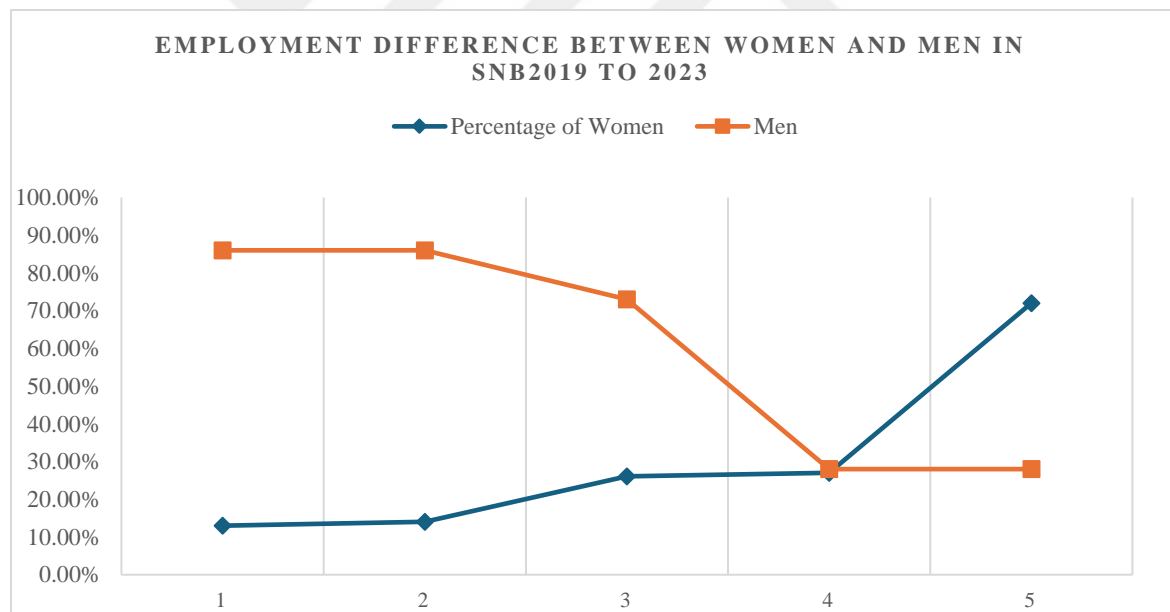


2.

**Figure.P.2:** The difference between the rates of job diversity for women and men

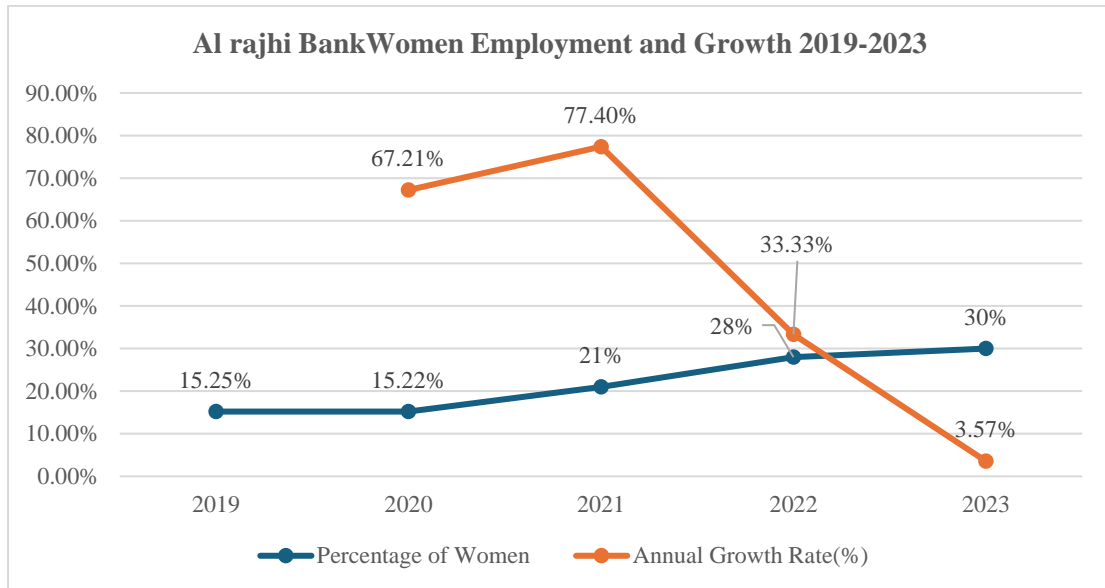


**Figure.P.3:** Annual Growth Rate Visualization (SNB)

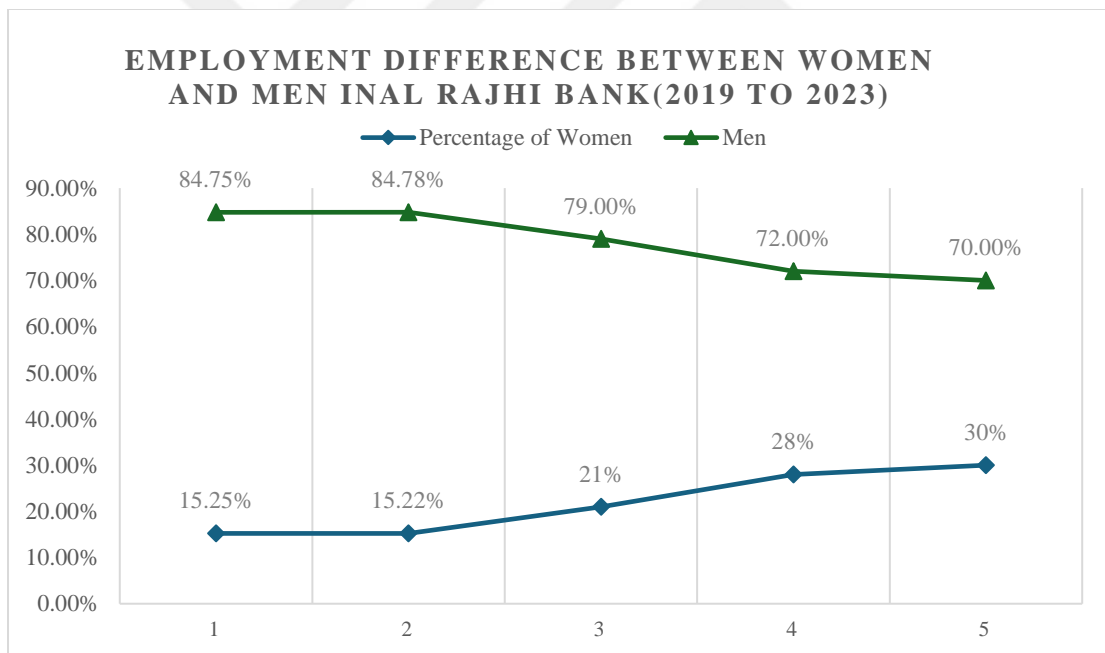


**Figure.E.4:** The difference between the rates of job diversity for women and men(SNB)

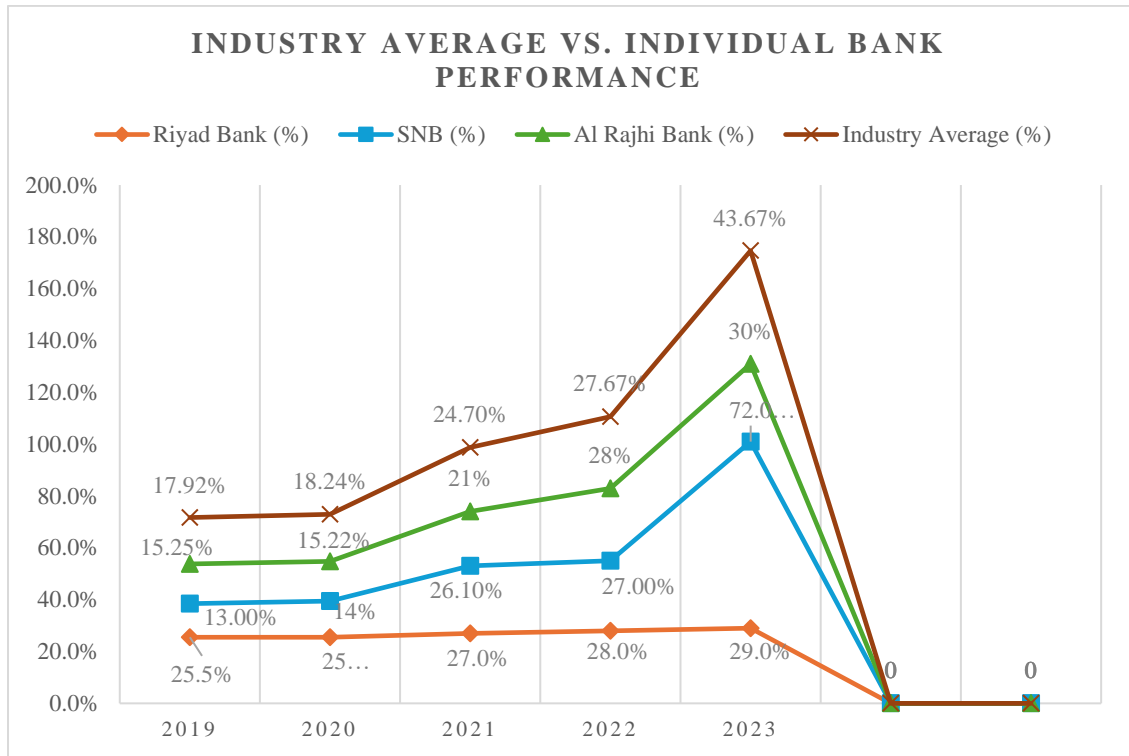




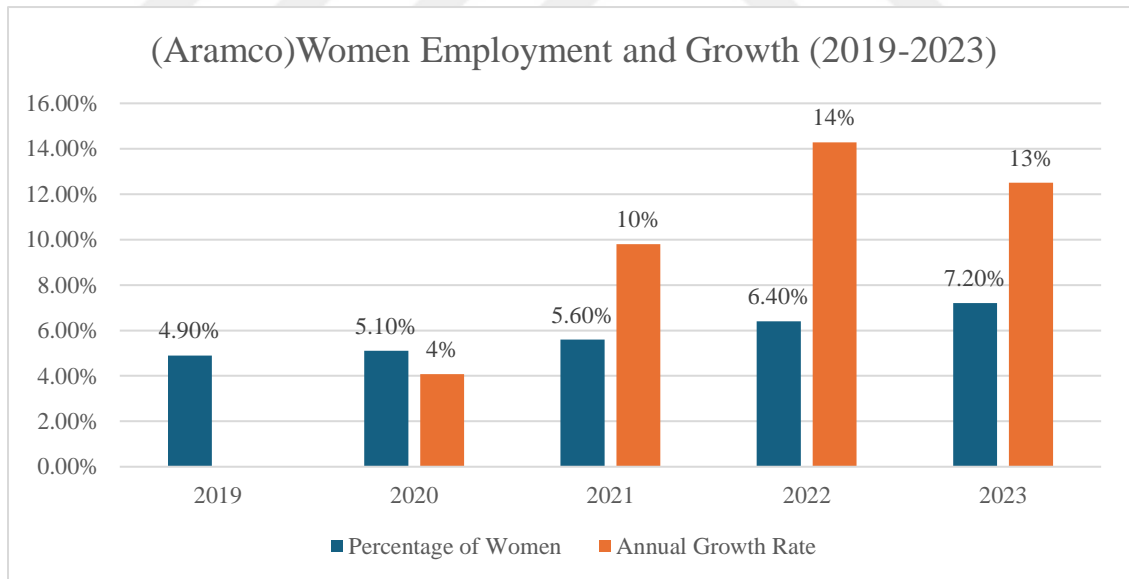
**Figure.N.5:** Annual Growth Rate Visualization



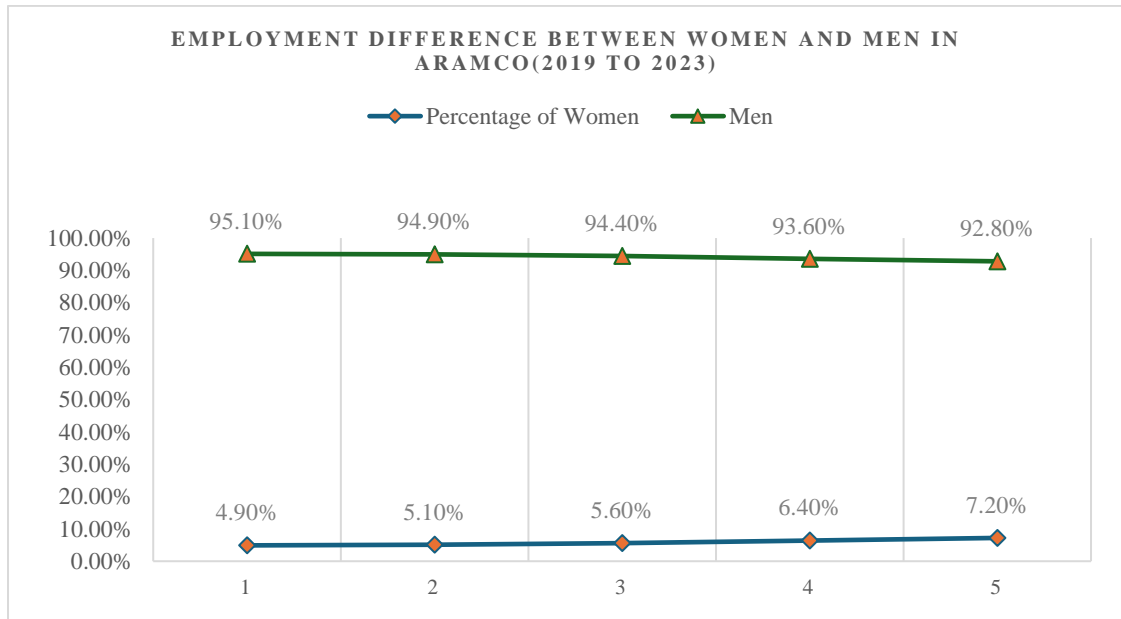
**Figure .D.6:** The difference between the rates of job diversity for women and men



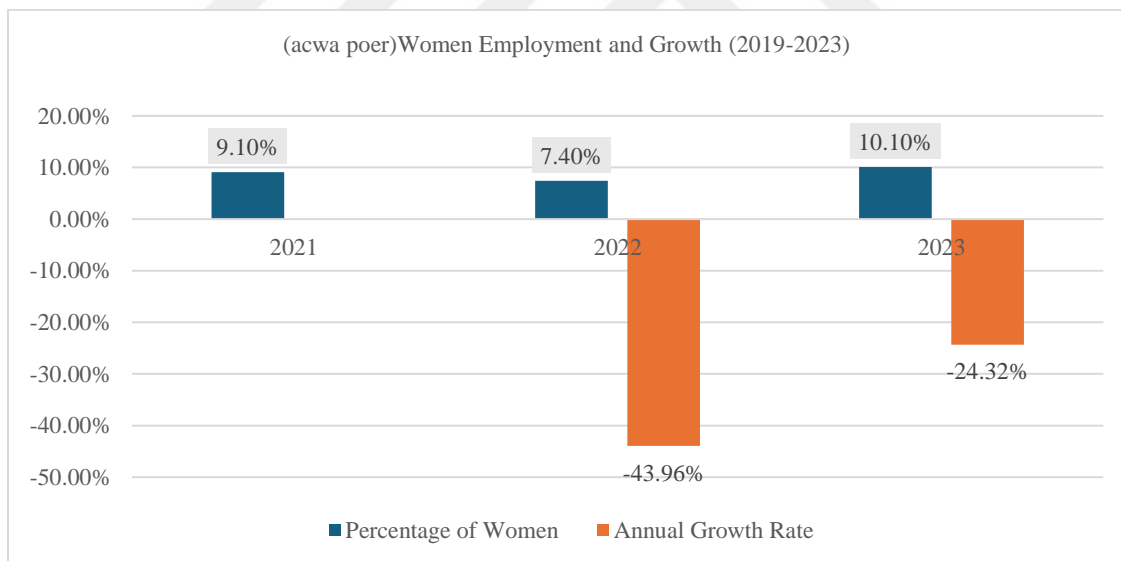
**Figure. I.7:** Analysis of the performance of the banking sector in job diversity



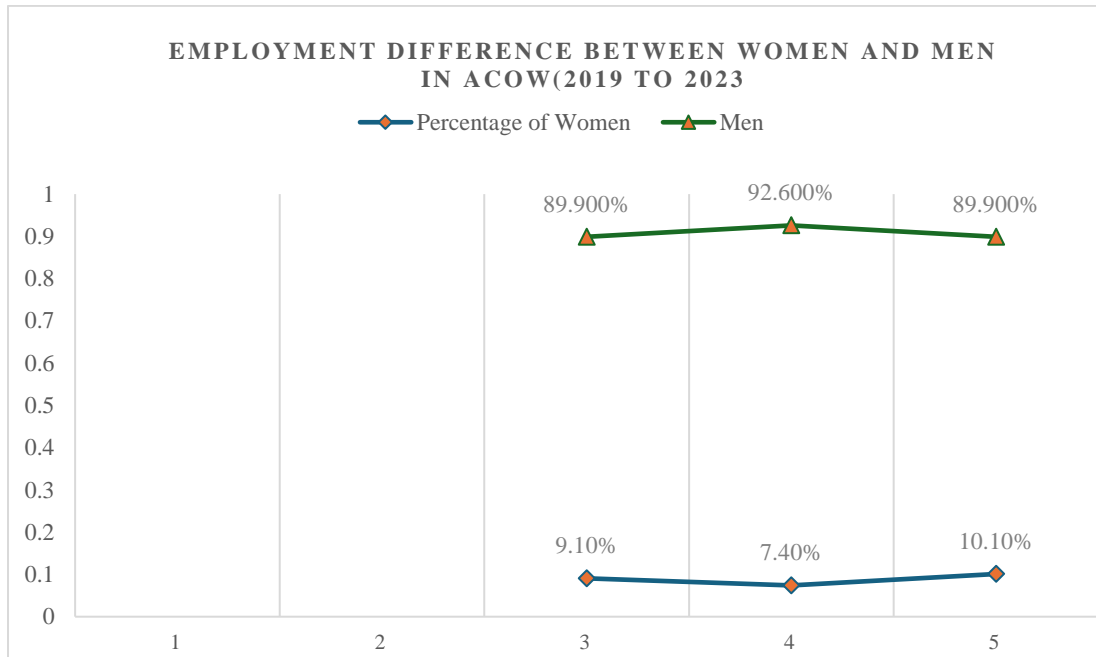
**Figure.C.8:** Annual Growth Rate Visualization(ARAMCO)



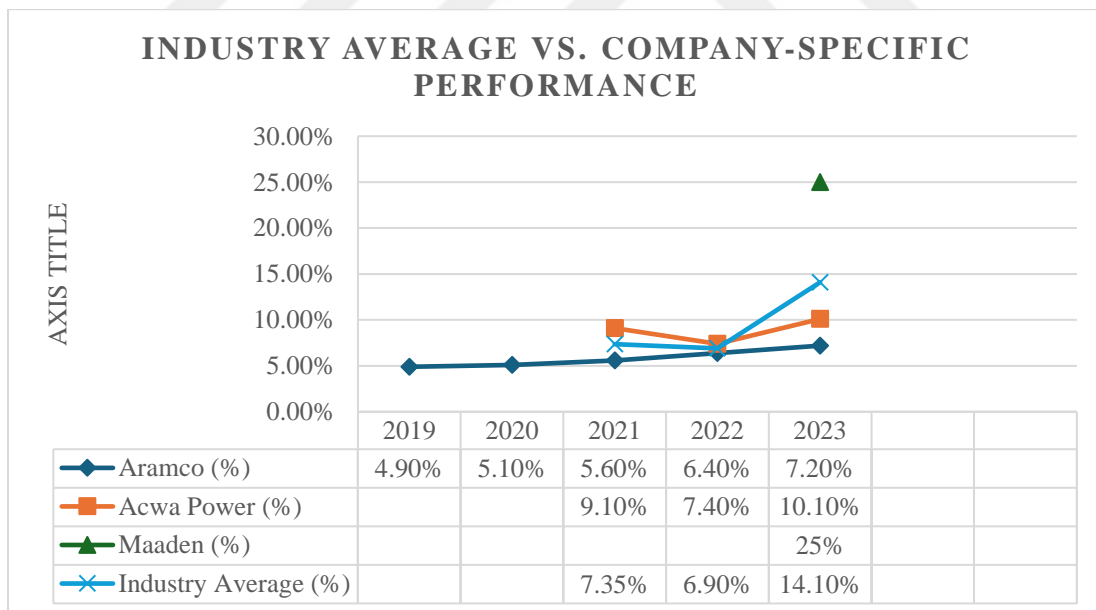
**Figure.E.9:** The difference between the rates of job diversity for women and men(ARAMCO)



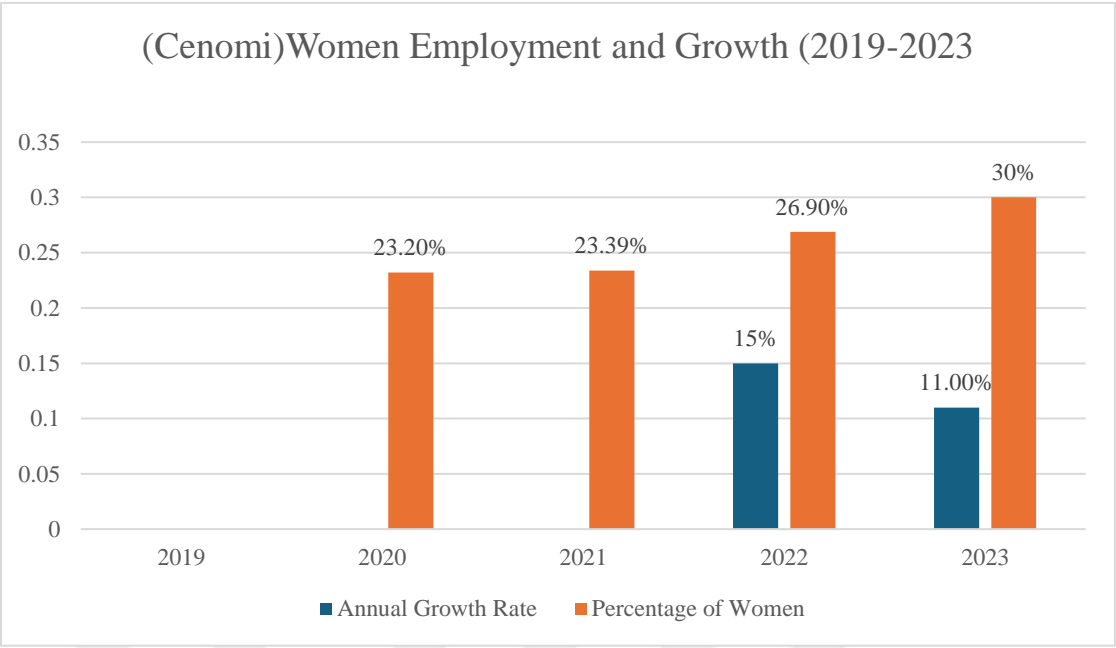
**Figure.C.10:** Annual Growth Rate Visualization(ACWA)



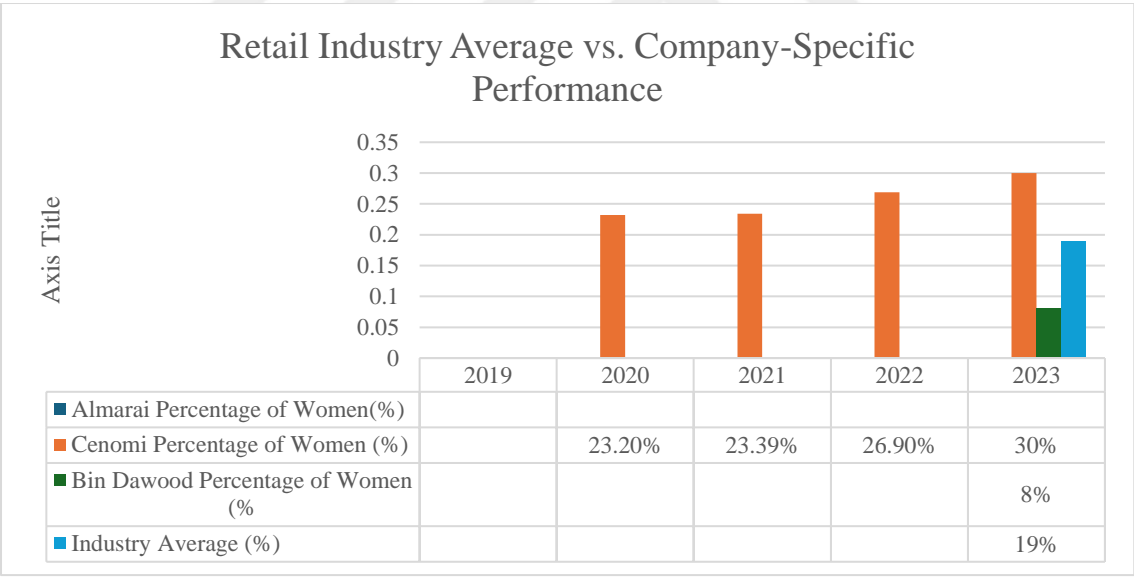
**Figure .A.11:** The difference between the rates of job diversity for women and men(ACWA)



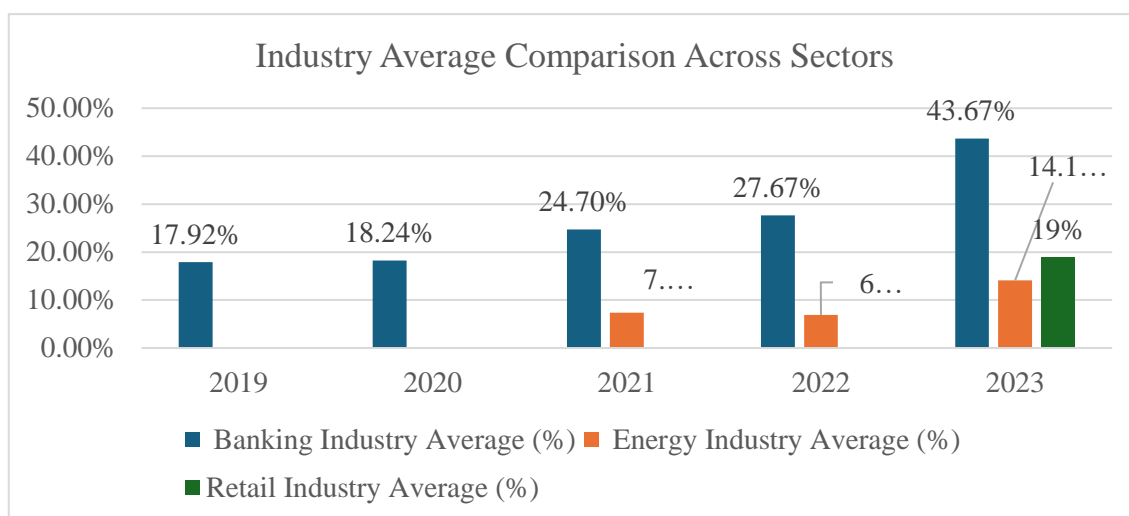
**Figure.P.12:** Analysis of the performance of the banking sector in job diversity.



**Figure.P.13:** Annual Growth Rate Visualization(CENOMI)



**Figure .N.14:** Analysis of the performance of the Retail sector in job diversity



**Figure.D.15:** Sector performance versus industry average to measure the performance of sectors in the diversity of women's employment

**TABLE.I.1:** Industry Averages vs. National Employment Data(2022)

| Quarter (2022)              | Q1   | Q2   | Q3   | Q4   |
|-----------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Male Unemployment (%)       | 2.9  | 2.6  | 2.2  | 2.1  |
| Female Unemployment (%)     | 16.4 | 15.9 | 16.7 | 13.0 |
| Total Unemployment (%)      | 5.4  | 5.1  | 4.9  | 4.1  |
| Male Employment Ratio (%)   | 78.7 | 80.4 | 81.4 | 82.1 |
| Female Employment Ratio (%) | 27.9 | 28.9 | 29.5 | 30.0 |
| Total Employment Ratio (%)  | 60.4 | 62.1 | 63.0 | 63.8 |

**TABL.C.2.** Industry Averages vs. National Employment Data (2023)

| Quarter (2023)              | Q1   | Q2   | Q3   | Q4   |
|-----------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Male Unemployment (%)       | 2.3  | 2.2  | 2.2  | 1.8  |
| Female Unemployment (%)     | 13.4 | 12.9 | 13.7 | 11.1 |
| Total Unemployment (%)      | 4.3  | 4.1  | 4.2  | 3.4  |
| Male Employment Ratio (%)   | 81.9 | 81.4 | 81.4 | 82.6 |
| Female Employment Ratio (%) | 30.6 | 29.6 | 29.9 | 30.8 |
| Total Employment Ratio (%)  | 64.1 | 63.4 | 63.5 | 64.7 |

**TABLE .E.3:** Cross-Sector Performance Comparison

| Year | Banking<br>Industry<br>Average (%) | Energy<br>Industry<br>Average (%) | Retail<br>industry<br>Average (%) | Female<br>Employment<br>Ratio (%) | Female<br>Unemployment<br>Rate (%) |
|------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2022 | 27.67%                             | 6.90%                             |                                   | 29.5% -<br>30.0%                  | 13.0% -<br>16.7%                   |
| 2023 | 43.67%                             | 14.10%                            | 19.00%                            | 29.6% -<br>30.8%                  | 11.1% -<br>13.7%                   |