

THE CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF WOMEN'S LIMITED PARTICIPATION IN THE LABOR FORCE: THE CASE OF SAUDI ARABIA

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1. BACKGROUND

Women's role in the public life in Saudi Arabia is limited to a great extent. Examination of women's participation in the civil service (civilian governmental employees), the non-oil private sector, the oil sector, and in the quasi-governmental sector illustrates the problem. Table 1 displays that while the majority of the civil service employees (231,552--44.6%) are in the employees cadre, only 14,999 (17.5%) of the total Saudi-female employees in the civil service are in this cadre. That is, Saudi-female employees represent only 6.5% (14,999) of this cadre, while non-Saudi employees represent 33.8% (male 18.4% and female 15.4%) and Saudi-male employees represent the majority 59.7% (138,328) of this cadre.

In the teachers cadre, there are 62,558 Saudi women which is 73% of all Saudi-female employees participating in the civil service, while there is only 24.4% of the Saudi-male employees participating in the civil service employees in the teachers cadre (Table 1). In regard to the foreign participants in the civil service, only 35.9% (27,772) of the male are in the teachers cadre and only 39.3% (24,322) of the female participants are in this cadre (Table 1). The majority of Saudi women participating in the civil service are in the teachers cadre because the education system in Saudi Arabia is segregated which allows women to work without male-female interaction which is prohibited in the work place in Saudi Arabia.

The other three cadres of the civil service make it very obvious that Saudi men dominate every cadre and represent the majority in every single one. Saudi women represent only 12% of the university faculty cadre while non-Saudi faculty represents 44% which is more than the percentage of the Saudi-male faculty (43%). Women representation in the university faculty is very limited and there is only 1577 Saudi-female in the university faculty cadre which is only 1.8% of the total Saudi-female participating in the civil service (Table 1). With respect to the laborers cadre, Saudi women represents only 7% of this cadre while Saudi-male represents 89%. The laborers cadre takes only 7.6% of the total Saudi women participating in the civil service (Table 1). Finally, the judicials cadre is dominated by Saudi men because neither Saudi women nor foreigners can work in this cadre (Table 1).

In the private sector, women participation is even more limited. While this sector employs 3,759,236 foreign labors who represent 70% of the total employees in the private sector, it employs only 86,569 Saudi women who represent only 2% of the total employees in the private sector.

In conclusion, the total civilian labor force in Saudi Arabia for the year 1990 is 5,771,800 of which only 168,900 (2.9%) are women. The total number of foreign labors, on the other hand, is 3,848,600 which represents 66.7% of the total labor force. The gap has been increasing since 1975 (Table 2). Finally, in 1990, only 5.3 of the female working-age population participate in the labor force, while 54.4% of the male working-age population participate in the labor force for the same year (Table 3). Table 3 shows that the total number of capable women prevented from participating in the labor force is very large.

2. ANALYSIS

The environment of the labor force in Saudi Arabia is very unique. It is shaped by four main factors which determine the level of women participation in public life. These factors are: the religion (Islam); the culture, the economic conditions, and the education system. The role each of these factors plays in limiting the role of women participation in the labor force is examined below.

2.1 The Religion (Islam)

Islam does not prohibit women's work per se. Rather to the contrary, it encourages women as well as men to work. It regards work as a warship and requires both males and females to work. However, Islamic scholars in Saudi Arabia impose certain conditions and guidelines for women's work such as segregated work environment. That is, a woman has the right to seek any kind of employment as long as her work does not require male-female interaction. The main reason for this requirement is the assumption that if men and women work in the same physical setting, anticipated consequences that violate the Islamic principles such as rape, sexual harassment, dating, adultery, illegal pregnancy etc., cannot be controlled. This assumption has significantly limited the role of women in the Saudi Arabian society.

Indeed, preventing such activities from the work place is essential and undoubtedly ideal goal to pursue, but is preventing women from exercising their rights and contributing to their society the only way to control such activities and prevent them from happening?

2.2 The Culture

The practice and the behavior of Arabs in their daily life is governed by the cultural norms more than anything else. The culture forces people to treat and perceive women in a certain way. According to the culture, a real man should not seek the opinion of a women nor should he listen to her instructions. It is commonly said that "a man who listens to a woman is a woman." It is also commonly said that "a woman has a deficiency in her faith and brain (intelligence)." Precisely, a woman is viewed and perceived as an inferior human being. A woman's main tasks are bearing children, cleaning the house, preparing food, and taking care of her husband. A woman is evaluated by others on the basis of her excellence in performing these tasks. If a woman succeed as an employee but fail in any of these main tasks, she will be perceived as a failure woman. When there is a conflict between work and taking care of the house, a good woman is the one who chooses her house over the work. On the other hand, the very successful man is the man who works while his wife stays home. A man has to feed and spend on his family from his own earnings. If a man depends on his wife's salary, he is viewed as a less man in the society.

Obviously, in this type of culture, bringing women to the labor force is very difficult for four reasons. First, a woman cannot work unless her husband allows her to do so. Second, women are very sensitive issue. You can ask a man any question you wish, but you cannot ask him about his wife, mother, sister, or daughter. They are perceived as private matters which should not be discussed in public. Third, a man who views a woman as inferior with deficiency in her faith and brain, is not likely to work for a woman. Finally, decisions regarding women's work are made by men who are not willing to loose their control over women.

2.3 The Economic Conditions

Before the turn of the century, people of the Arabian Peninsula had been scattered in different areas of the Peninsula making their living from raising animal and producing wheats and dates. During that period, survival required that both male and female had to work all day long. Male-female interaction was very common. Such interaction is still very well accepted

among the bedwings who still live in the desert because their life still requires such interaction. In fact, people living in the desert highly respect a woman who acts like a man; that is, a woman who fills her father or husband's place in his absence.

In 1974, oil price increased more than 100%. The total revenue increased from SR 6.4 Billion in 1970 to SR 98.2 Billion in 1975 and to SR 146.5 Billion in 1978. The government of Saudi Arabia was determined to effectively invest this wealth and share it with the citizens in the most effective way. As a result, the life style in Saudi Arabia changed dramatically. Men are no more in need for their wives' work and the income it brings. Women also enjoyed the luxury this wealth brought to them. Women's work is not desired neither by men nor by women themselves. These changes in the economic conditions made a dramatic shift in the labor force. Therefore, a very large number of foreign labors was needed to undertake the massive development, the country was going through. Moreover, certain types of jobs that used to be socially acceptable are no more acceptable neither by Saudi men nor by Saudi women.

Now the economy is very stable and money does not come without hard work as it used to be in the 1970s and early 1980s, work becomes a necessity for both men and women. However, the oil era produced a certain education system that fits with the culture that was produced in the 1970s and early 1980s. For example, vocational education was not preferred in the 1970s neither by men nor by women, but it was accepted by some Saudi men. Now, however, it is desirable and very well attended by Saudi men. A nurse, for instance, used to be viewed by many Saudi women similar to a housemaid and it had never been attended by Saudi women until the late 1980s. It seems that the culture that was originated in the 1970s produced a very specific system that is not compatible with the culture of the 1980s.

2.4 The Education System

The education system significantly contribute to preventing women from fully participating in the labor force. Most of the educational institutions were established in the 1970s; thus, they reflected the existing culture at that time. With the exception of King Saud University, Islamic University, the Institute of Public Administration, general education schools (elementary, intermediate, and secondary), and very few training centers, all the educational institutions were established after 1970.¹ Moreover, attendance in these institutions were very low, particularly the technical education and the vocational training due to the fact that these types of education qualify graduates for jobs that were not accepted in the 1970s neither by men nor by women. As a result, they were established for men only.

Now once the educational institutions have been established on the basis of the existing culture at the time, education becomes the main obstacles to female employment. This is so because almost all educational opportunities that are available for females do not qualify for jobs that are mainly occupied by foreign labors. In other words, all the jobs that are occupied by foreign labors require certain types of education that are not available for women. These are the jobs that once were not preferred neither by men nor by women.

Other than the general education (elementary, intermediate, and secondary) which is available to both male and female, educational opportunities for females are limited to a great extent

¹ Taweel, Mohammad. Public Administration in Saudi Arabia, in Al-Sayegh, Nasser, *"Public Administration and Administrative Reform in the Arab World."* Aman, Jordan: Middle East Co. for Publication, (1986), pp. 358-403; Assaf, Abdulme'ti. *"Organization in Saudi Arabia."* Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Dar Aloloom (1983), p. 178; and, Ministry of Planning, *"Achievements of the Development Plans 1970-1987, Facts & Figures."* Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. pp. 286-288.

(Table 4). There are 27 educational types that are offered by a variety of institutions around the country which award diplomas and certificates of which only 5 are available for women which are teachers' institutes (secondary and higher), health institutes (nursing), Institute of Public Administration, and the tailoring centers. The total female students in these types of education in 1987 is 13,187 of which 10,521 are in the teachers' institutes; that is, only 2,666 (20.2%) female students are pursuing education that does not lead to a teaching position. At the university level, education opportunities for females are also limited to a great extent (Table 5). There are 7 universities in Saudi Arabia in addition to Girls Colleges that offer a B.A. Two of the seven universities do not accept female students. These universities provide 27 fields of studies, out of which only 15 are available for women (Table 5). Moreover, in 1987 out of the total female students (44,130) in these universities, 28,846 (65.4%) are in the fields of education and social and human sciences alone. The great majority of female students 36,620 (83%) are in the fields that lead to teaching positions.

In 1987, 47,141 female students which is 82.3% of all female students in all levels of education (Excluding general education) are in types of education that lead to teaching positions (Table 5). Women choose to pursue the type of education that enable them to become teachers because there are only 11 fields of studies that are available to them other than the fields that lead to teaching positions. This is the type of education that the culture produced.

In addition to the limited educational opportunities in these universities that offer education for females, there is another major problem which is the fact that these universities and the Girls Colleges offer education in only 11 major cities (Riyadh, Jeddah, Dammam, Dahrn, Makkah, Madinah, Hassa, Taif, Abha, Qaseem, and Tabouk),² while there are over 150 cities and towns in Saudi Arabia.³ Moreover, not all the campuses provide on campus housing. Thus, women who are not from these 11 cities cannot pursue their higher education unless they have very close relatives in these cities which is not always the case for too many females or they accept to live in the campus's housing if available. These conditions are due to the fact women cannot drive neither can they leave their towns unless they are accompanied by their guardians (father, husband, or brother). Therefore, women who do not have close relatives in these cities and choose to live in the campus's housing if they are provided, they cannot leave the housing unless their guardian comes. Consequently, not too many women who have the desire to continue their higher education can do so. It should be noted that non of these conditions applies to male students who can pursue any type of education in any city who can live on or off campus with no constraints whatsoever.

3. GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS

The government of Saudi Arabia recognized the shortage in the human resources over two decades ago. In the First Five-Year Development Plan (1970-1975), government's planners clearly indicate that "there will be an absolute shortage of manpower during the plan period..."⁴ Since 1970, the government has been trying to deal with the problem of human

² Ministry of Finance and National Economy, Department of General Statistics, *"Statistical Year Book"*. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: 26th Edition (1990); pp. 75-84.

³ Ministry of Finance and National Economy, Department of General Statistics, *"Statistical Year Book"*. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: 25th Edition (1989); pp.428-431.

⁴ Central Planning Organization (Now Ministry of Planning), First Five-Year Development Plan, 1970-1975. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: p. 86.

resources. An analysis of the five development plans will illustrate these efforts.

3.1 The First Five Year Development Plan (1970-1975)

In the beginning of the plan (1970), the total labor force required was 1,180,700, but the actual labor force was 1,165,400 of which 172,000 were foreign labors, 993,400 Saudi labors. Thus, there was a deficit of 15,300 workers. The government planned for an increase of 365,400 to have a total labor force of 1,546,100 of which 1,192,200 Saudi labors and 353,900 foreign labors.⁵

To accomplish this plan, the government invested in education. The plan indicates that the government "recognizes the important part which the formulation and implementation of appropriate education and training policies can play in providing the qualified manpower required for continued social and economic development."⁶

Evidently the problem of unemployed women did not exist in the beginning of the plan. In 1970, teaching was the only position that was sought by females and it was the only type of job that was offered to women. Yet, the total Saudi female-teachers in 1970 was only 1,184 which represents 26.5% of the total female teachers. That is, female education was depending on 3,277 (73.5%) non-Saudi female teachers. The government planned to increase elementary schools from 347 in 1970 to 595 in 1975; intermediate schools from 12 to 46; secondary schools from 1 to 11; the teacher training institutes from 35 to 64; and establish a new teacher's college for women in order to increase female teachers to 3,326 by the end of the plan and reduce the number of foreign female teachers to 3,203.⁷ Consequently, it is clear that there was a shortage in the supply which the government planned to increase rather than overabundance.

3.2 The Second Five-Year Development Plan (1975-1980)

In the beginning of this plan, the government planned for a massive development in the physical infrastructure which required a huge increase in the labor force. Yet, the national supply was not expected to meet the demand for labor force. According to the plan, "As the requirements for skilled workers build up, the continued large-scale expansion of the non-Saudi segment of the labor force becomes more and more evident."⁸ At the beginning of the plan, the total labor force was 1,600,000 of which 1,286,000 Saudi (1,259,000 men and 27,000 women) and 314,000 non-Saudi (306,000 men and 8,000 women). According to the plan, the total labor force is expected to increase to 2,330,600 of which 1,518,000 Saudi (1,470,000 men and 48,000 women) and 812,600 non-Saudi (767,000 men and 45,000 women).⁹

⁵ Ibid. pp. 86-87.

⁶ Ibid. p. 86.

⁷ Ibid. 115-122.

⁸ Ministry of Planning, Second Five-Year Development Plan, 1975-1980. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: pp. 215.

⁹ Ibid. p. 63.

The government has set up certain policies to accomplish its goals and objectives regarding the labor force increase and distribution:

1. Through the educational and training programs, prepare the new Saudi labor force entrants for occupations requiring higher productivity; through intensive in-service training programs within the private and public sectors, upgrade the existing Saudi labor force...
2. Increase the labor force participation rates by creating better educational and training opportunities for all citizens of the Kingdom, by increasing the reward system through differential earnings based on productivity, and by providing better working conditions for all male and female members of the work force.
3. Adopt whatever measures are necessary and appropriate to ensure that foreign workers can be obtained and retained in sufficient numbers to meet development requirements.¹⁰

Policies were designated to accomplish the goals and objectives regarding the labor force reveal that there was a great emphasis on education and a tendency towards reliance on foreign labor. In regard to the dependency on foreign labor is justifiable because there was no indication that there would be enough supply at the national level, while the government was planning to go through a massive development in the physical infrastructure. With regard to women involvement in the labor force, the problem of unemployed women did not exist at the time. In fact the demand for female teachers was too much higher than the supply. In fact, it was planned to increase female elementary teachers from 8,970 in 1975 to 16,065 in 1980 and the elementary schools from 827 to 1,534; intermediate teachers from 2,030 to 4,550 and the intermediate schools from 93 to 233; secondary teachers from 480 to 1,337 and secondary schools from 18 to 50; and teachers in the teachers' institutes from 250 to 755 and the institutes from 26 to 31.¹¹

Regardless of all these increases, Saudi female-teachers were expected to represent only 53% of the total teaching staff in the female education.¹² Thus, it was assumed that the field would absorb all expected female entrants to the labor force. This assumption resulted in not considering employment sectors and opportunities other than teaching for women. Since all the types of education that were available for women were the teachers' institutes that qualify graduates for teaching positions and the demand for female teachers was so high, anticipating future problems did not seem to correspond with the reality. Consequently, the system continued to produce female teachers up to the point where there are enough female teachers. This is when the problem started to emerge.

3.3 The Third Five-Year Development Plan (1980-1985)

Actual figures presented in this plan shows that the goals of the previous development plan were not accomplished with regard to the labor force. This was due to the massive development in the physical infrastructure the country was going through and the huge increase in both the governmental sector and the private sector. Such major shifts caused by the dramatic increase in the oil prices led to uncontrollable situation, particularly the

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 216.

¹¹ Ibid. p. 291-301.

¹² Ibid. p. 307.

government was suffering from lack of qualified Saudis to operate the increasing size of the government.

According to the previous plan, it was estimated to have a total of 2,330,600 workers of which 1,518,000 Saudi (1,470,000 men and 48,000 women) and 812,600 non-Saudi (767,000 men and 45,000 women) in both the governmental and private sectors by the end of the plan (1980).¹³ This plan shows that the total labor force reached 2,471,200 of which 1,411,400 Saudi (1,308,400 men and 103,000 women) and 1,059,800 non-Saudi (1,014,900 men and 44,900 women). These figures display the discrepancy between what was planned and what was accomplished. They also show that the supply of Saudi women is too much more than what was expected while the supply of Saudi men is less than what was expected. This indicates that a serious action should have been taken to balance the supply of both sexes and the demand by the government and the private sector in order to control the increase in the labor force. Nonetheless, the government's planners seemed to be unaware of this fact. Their plan does not seem to reflect this trend in the supply of Saudi men and women as well as the need for foreign labors (Table 6)

To accomplish this plan, the plan emphasized on "Adopting incisive manpower development policies with objective of replacing foreign manpower by Saudis to the maximum possible extent, through increasing the number and the skills of the Saudi labor force and raising its productivity, both by greater efficiency within sectors and by intersectoral mobility."¹⁴ With this broad objective and policy it was assumed that the labor force would be balanced by the year 1985.

The plan very clearly acknowledged the problem of the labor force even though it has not reached its zenith until 1985, as we will soon see. The third plan indicates that:

Manpower development has the highest national priority, since the effective utilization of available manpower is the key element in the whole strategy for the Third Plan. There are four particular objectives for manpower development: to increase the total numbers of available manpower; to increase the productivity of manpower in all sectors; to deploy manpower to those sectors with the greatest potential for growth and highest productivity levels; *to reduce dependence on foreign manpower.*¹⁵

These objectives will be achieved through a comprehensive set of policies which, in combination, will directly or indirectly implement far-reaching changes in the allocation and development of manpower. These policies cover educational, training, research and administrative measures.¹⁶

As do the previous plans, this plan emphasizes on education as the most effective policy for balancing the labor force. Reality, however, showed that education by itself will not solve the problem neither will it balance the labor force because the government encouraged higher education to the extent that neither technical education nor vocational training are preferred by students. Moreover, encouraging women to enter the labor force did not seem to be a

¹³ Ibid. p. 63.

¹⁴ Ministry of Planning, Third Five-Year Development Plan, 1980-1985. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: p. 17.

¹⁵ Emphasis added by the author.

¹⁶ Ministry of Planning, Third Five-Year Development Plan, 1980-1985. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: p. 83.

viable alternative to reduce dependence on foreign labor even though the supply of women is increasing more than the supply of men (Table 6). The emphasis on education as well as ignoring women in the policies that were designated to balance the labor force are very evident in the third plan. The plan describes five specific policies regarding the Saudi human resources as follows:

The development of Saudi human resources stands at the heart of the development process. The national development plan aims at the formulation of policies necessary for the development of these human assets. These policies emphasize:

- (1) Ensuring that manpower training programs are in keeping with actual economic needs;
- (2) Developing and modifying the general education programs and curricula in accordance with the Islamic Sharia and the changing needs of society and development requirements;
- (3) Providing sufficient educational opportunities for all school age children;
- (4) Evaluating the programs and curricula of university education;
- (5) Reappraising the distribution and services of manpower in government and the private sector. To achieve this, the Kingdom's education and training system, together with the labor affairs programs, plays a central role as the flexible institutional structure that can adapt to the exigencies of rapid change and modernization.

3.4 The Fourth Five-Year Development Plan (1985-1990)

"While in many important ways the Third Plan's concepts and recommendations were already pointing beyond the reality that was being constructed physically, developments in the oil market had re-emphasized the need to complete the country's infrastructure at a faster rate than had been originally conceived. A sizeable influx of foreign labor was the logical consequence."¹⁷ Indeed, the fourth plan can be regarded as the inauguration of a serious governmental manpower planning. The government's planners realized for the first time that they had been far from the reality and ignoring major exogenous factors.

It is the actual figures caused by previous policies that convinced the planners that they were heading in the wrong direction and unless major modification in the previous policies are made, the consequences will be severe. Nonetheless, the actual figures of the labor force compared to the projected (Table 7) seem to reflect the same values even though the policies are have been slightly modified.

Table 7 depicts that there was a great desire by the government to reduce the increasing number of foreign labors, but emphasis on women is very trivial even though the plan recognizes the problem of women's participation in the labor force. For the first time in the history of official planning in Saudi Arabia, women's participation in the labor force is recognized and considered as a serious problem. The plan indicates that the major challenge "lies in finding ways to utilize effectively the knowledge and skills of this segment [women] of the population in accordance with the Sharia. The growth in the number of educated and otherwise skilled Saudi females coincides with the need for increased Saudiization at all skill

¹⁷ Ministry of Planning, The Fourth Five-Year Development Plan, 1985-1990. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: p. 5.

levels."¹⁸ Thus, a serious effort though considerably late to find employment opportunities for females began to take place.

The goals and objectives of the fourth plan manifests a great commitment to solving the problem of manpower and for the first time "Saudiization" as a new theme emerged. "For the first time since the first plan, when rapid economic development began, not only the share, but also the absolute number of non-Saudi workers in the Kingdom will decline, while the economy will absorb substantial numbers of new Saudi entrants. To ensure the realization of this goal however, productivity gains must be made; Saudi workers' motivation must be high; the education and training systems must respond to labor market needs, and the theme of 'Saudiization' must be given practical meaning at all levels of the labor market."¹⁹

Nonetheless, the policies that were designated to attain these goals fall short because they emphasize on what is ought to be done to accomplish the goals without any consideration of how.

The plan highlights three broad policies that were intended to solve the problem of the labor force. First, the achievement of "Saudiization" is contingent upon:

- the skill profile of the Saudi work force entrants matching the skill requirements of the economy;
- a mutual consistency between the needs of employers and the expectations of Saudi new entrants, in terms of financial remuneration and career prospects;
- the labor market for non-Saudi workers operating with increasing efficiency.

Meeting the Saudiization targets will require improvements in the Government's administrative system for monitoring the non-Saudi work force, and steps to seek the cooperation of the private sector in providing employment opportunities to Saudi workers and ensure the prompt release of surplus non-Saudi workers.²⁰

Second, the education system must be modified in away to become oriented towards the labor market in its relevant activities. In order to achieve the desired balance between supply and demand, it is essential that:

- the quality and quantity of those graduating from the education and training establishments match the requirements of the private economy;
- special technical and vocational training programs for adults (both currently in the work force and potential workers) be expanded and based on private sector needs.²¹

¹⁸ Ibid. pp. 51-52.

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 50.

²⁰ Ibid. p. 51.

²¹ Ibid. p. 51.

Third, women's participation in the labor force can be increased through the utilization of computers which allows women to participate without leaving their homes. Other job opportunities for females include laboratory activities which do not require male-female interaction in the work place.²² These policies are very trivial and the practicality of them seems to be limited due to the absence of the guidelines and directions for implementation. Yet, they are encouraging as a first step towards more female's involvement in the public life and towards more positive role in the development of the country.

Finally, the plan accent three measures that the government would study in order to maximize the short and longer-term employment prospects of Saudis:

- influencing formal education and training curricula to adopt to the needs of a competitive economy relying on advanced technology and related systems of economic organization and management;
- providing financial incentives to the private sector employers to promote the employment and specialized training of Saudi workers;
- collecting and disseminating information on current labor market conditions and future requirements to all citizens, as well as information on the social, moral, and religious value of work, to influence their attitudes and expectations.

3.5 The Fifth Five-Year Development Plan (1990-1995)

Even though serious planning to bringing women in the labor force in employment sectors other than the education sector took place during the previous plan, the women who entered the labor force during that period (1985-1990) was very small compared to the supply because the employment opportunities for females were blocked by the old values that have been governing the work place and by the fact the education system that was designed in the 1970s, particularly in the case of female education does not match with the market. The female education system produced too many teachers, while the demand in the market is on technical and vocational education. Accordingly, the teaching positions are almost filled by Saudi females and there are no more vacant teaching positions for new graduates. It was at this point when the problem reached its zenith.

As a result of the previous policies that failed to take neither the culture nor the education into consideration, goals and objectives regarding balancing the labor force were not accomplished (Table 8). During the previous plan, it was planned to bring more women into the labor force and have a total of 176,600 though not a competitive goal, the total reached only 168,900 (Table 8), while the total foreign laborers reached 3,848,600 despite the fact that it was planned to reduce the total foreign labor from 2,660,000 to 2,059,800. Failure to implement sound policies resulted in uncontrollable increase in the foreign labor and very low level of female participation.

Assuming that the goals of the current plan are accomplished, the result would be the last column of table 8. These goals, if accomplished still represent extremely very low level of women's participation in the labor force. Thus, regardless of what policies this plan proposes to achieve these goals, the question now shifts to the goals rather than the policies. Yet, it is very doubtful that these goals will be accomplished by 1995. Indeed, a serious planning should have taken place during the 1970s when education was in its first stages. Nonetheless, this should and will not prevent us from seriously engaging in a search for a policy that

²² Ibid. p. 52.

increases the number of women in the labor force by at least three fold.

The current plan proposes certain policies to accomplish the objectives it has designed (Table 8). The plan proposes a preparation of a comprehensive plan that reviews the education system in terms of matching the demands in the market of the work force and in terms of reviewing and evaluating the rewards that are given to students not in the technical and vocational education.²³ With respect to encouraging technical and vocational education, it should be noted that the government has taken a courageous unprecedented step which is expected to raise the number of graduates from the technical and vocational institutions. The government offers over \$30,000 of loans with no interests to be paid in 25 years for graduates from these institutions with a free land in an industrial zone in their home towns, in order for those graduates to start their own business. No matter how great and consciences this policy is, it is my conviction that this policy will be misused and hence, will not accomplish the intended goals.

In addition to the great emphasis on matching education with the available employment opportunities in the market of the labor force, the plan proposes reviewing and modifying the labor and workman regulations and establishing new information systems in order to provide accurate information to those who seeking employment in the labor force. The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs should undertake this responsibility and should work as the liaison between the work force market and prospect employees. The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs will also provide recommendations to job seekers and pressure the private sector employers to attract as well as employ more Saudi workers.²⁴

The third policy suggested by the plan is that the government will conditioned its contracts with the private sector contractors by employing certain numbers of Saudi workers. In addition, the government will provide certain incentives to the private sectors employers who attract and employ Saudi worker in order for those employers to provide on the job training for Saudi workers. With respect to the public sector, the plan proposes that each governmental agency conducts regular evaluation of its policies and the extent to which Saudiization is being achieved.²⁵

Finally, except one statement that proposes studying the possibilities of allowing women to teach in the first, second, third, and fourth grades in the male elementary schools,²⁶ there is hardly any statement in the whole plan that is concerned with female employments. The statement is very vague with no discussions of how it can be implemented. Yet, it is an indication that there is an over supply of female teachers which correspond with previous arguments.

In conclusion, It is my conviction that the next development plan will reveal that the goals and objectives of the current plan regarding the labor force have not been accomplished. That is, the total number of female participants will not be increased to 215,000 neither will the number of Saudi males increase to 2,142,100. Moreover, the number of foreign labors will not be decreased by over 220,000. This is because neither the current plan nor the previous

²³ Ministry of Planning, The Fifth Five-Year Development Plan, 1990-1995. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: p. 100.

²⁴ Ibid. pp. 178-179.

²⁵ Ibid. p. 179.

²⁶ Ibid. p. 179.

one seems to provide policies that lead to more female's participation in the labor force.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

One can very easily realize that there is a certain trend in the development plans being the emphasis on education. In addition to making education available to every citizen and free of charge, the government of Saudi Arabia provided tremendous monetary incentives to students. This policy resulted in huge and dramatic increase in the number of students as well as the number of schools and teachers. The number of male schools increased from 2,654 in 1970 to 8,470 in 1987 and the female schools from 453 in 1970 to 6,883 in 1987; the number of male teachers increased from 18,000 in 1970 to 86,700 in 1987 and the female teachers from 5,000 in 1970 to 67,800 in 1987; the number of male and female students in general education increased from 481,000 in 1970 to 2,131,000 in 1987; the number of students in higher education increased from only 7,000 in 1970 to over 13,000 in 1987; the number of technical students increased from 899 in 1970 to 13,095 in 1987; and the number of vocational students increased from 578 in 1970 to 9,719 in 1987.²⁷

These dramatic increases display undeniable fact that the government's endeavor to make education available to every citizens has resulted in a very positive consequences with respect to education. Yet, the results with respect to the labor force appear to be negative ones because there are more female graduates than there are employment opportunities for this segment of the population. This would not have happened, had we have effective employment policies that correspond with the effective educational policies. The Fifth Five-Year Development Plan (1990-1995) realizes this problem by indicating that "the number of female high schools graduate increased from 1,674 in 1975 to 18,211 in 1988 and it is expected that the number will increase to 43,269 in 1995. Yet, this huge increase is not coincided with the increase in the higher educational opportunities for female. Thus new post-secondary educational and training programs that correspond with the nature of the Saudi woman and the principals of Islam must be established."²⁸

It is evident that new policies ought to be considered if the problem of the very low women's participation in the labor force is to be overcome. A policy that takes the culture which has been ignored into account and provides employment opportunities for those already graduated and searching for jobs. A policy that should have been considered two decades ago. A serious search for employment opportunities for females by the government's planners does not seem to exist to the desirable and required extent. All the reviewed policies do not seem to provide the desirable outcome. The policies that are needed are not the ones that only provide employment for the specified numbers of females in the current development plan, but the ones that provide employment opportunities to a number of females that is equivalent to the number of males and reduce the dependency on foreign labors to a great extent. The major factor that preventing such policies from taking place is the behavior of the government's planners who have been operating with the same old values. Rather than questioning their values, they have been searching for new methods and means that accomplish the same goals and objectives without consideration of the values. These values which are not religious values must be considered and discussed if more female participation in the labor force is to

²⁷ Ministry of Planning, Achievements of the Development Plans, 1970-1987, Facts and Figures. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: pp. 110-118.

²⁸ Ministry of Planning, The Fifth Five-Year Development Plan, 1990-1995: p. 312.

be achieved. Otherwise, it is not possible to increase the number of female participants, neither is it possible to eliminate the dependency on foreign labors. This approach has never been considered, while it is the only approach that will provide a solution to the problem. All policies that have been designated to solve the problem, were focusing on the symptoms of the problem not the problem itself. The question should not be how to bring more women to the labor force? Rather it should be why women participation in the labor force is extremely limited? The former question will lead to artificial solutions dealing with the symptoms of the problem, while the latter will enable us to question the values that are governing the environment of the work force. Unless we discuss the undiscussable and question the governing values, the problem will not be solved and more women will be prevented from contributing to the society and participating in the public life of which they are essential part.

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Table 1

Distribution of civil service employees according to sex, nationality, and cadre.

CADRE		SAUDI		NON-SAUDI		TOTAL
		MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	
EMPLOYEES	#	138328	14999	42637	35588	231552
	%	47%	17.5%	55.1%	57.6%	44.6%
UNIVERSITY FACULTY	#	5540	1577	4495	1207	12819
	%	1.9	1.8%	5.8%	2%	2.5%
JUDICIALS	#	764	0	0	0	764
	%	.3%	0%	0%	0%	.1%
TEACHERS	#	71873	62558	27772	24322	186525
	%	24.4%	73%	35.9%	39.3%	35.9%
LABORERS	#	77775	6538	2462	715	87490
	%	26.4%	7.6%	3.2%	1.2%	16.9%
TOTAL	#	294280	85672	77366	61832	519150
	%	56.7%	16.5%	14.9%	11.9%	100%

Source: Department of Information, General Bureau of Civil Service, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: 1992.

Table 2**Distribution of the labor force according to sex and nationality for the years 1975-1985.**

Y E A R		SAUDI		NON-SAUDI	TOTAL
		MALE	FEMALE		
1 9 7 5	#	1,259,000	27,000	314,000	1,600,000
	%	78.7%	1.7%	19.6%	100%
1 9 8 0	#	1,308,400	103,000	1,014,900	2,426,300
	%	45.2%	4.2%	50.6%	100%
1 9 8 5	#	1,649,200	136,800	3,660,000	4,446,000
	%	31.5%	2.6%	65.9%	100%
1 9 9 0	#	1,754,300	168,900	3,848,600	5,771,800
	%	30.4%	2.9%	66.7%	100%

Source: Ministry of Planning, The Fifth Development Plan (1990-1995): pp. 75 & 167; Ministry of Planning, The Fourth Development Plan (1985-1990): p. 32; Ministry of Planning, The Third Development Plan (1980-1985); p.98; and, Ministry of Planning, The Second Development Plan (1975-1980): p63.

Table 3
Distribution of total Saudi working-age population and percentage of participation in the labor force according sex for the years 1985, 1990, and 1995.

CATEGORY	1985		1990		1995*	
	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
WORKING-AGE POPULATION	2,686,000	2,659,000	3,223,700	3,220,300	3,937,600	3,909,100
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS	1,649,200	136,800	1,754,300	168,900	2,142,100	215,000
RATE OF PARTICIPATION	61.4%	5.1%	54.4%	5.3%	54.4%	5.5%

* Estimate according to the Fifth Development Plan (1990-1995): p. 173.

Source: Ministry of Planning, Fifth Development Plan (1990-1995): p. 173; and, Ministry of Planning, Fourth Development Plan (1985-1990): p. 89.

Table 6
Discrepancy between planned and accomplished labor force distribution.

NATIONALITY	SEX	1980			1985
		Projected 2nd Plan	Actual 3rd plan	Difference	Projected 3rd Plan
SAUDI	M	1,470,000	1,308,400	- 161,600	1,437,400
	F	48,000	103,000	+ 55,000	120,000
NON-SAUDI	M	767,000	1,014,900	+ 247,900	1,023,900
	F	45,000	44,900	- 100	44,900

Source: Ministry of Planning, Second Five-Year Development Plan, 1975-1980: Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, p. 63 Ministry of Planning, Third Five-Year Development Plan, 1980-1985, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: p. 98.

Table 7
Discrepancy between planed and accomplished labor force distribution.

NATIONALITY	SEX	1985			1990
		Projected 3rd Plan	Actual 4th Plan	Difference	Projected 4th Plan
SAUDI	M	1,437,400	1,649,200	+ 211,800	1,984,100
	F	120,000	136,800	+ 16,800	176,600
NON-SAUDI, MALE AND FEMALE		1,068,800	2,660,000	+ 1,591,200	2,059,800

Source: Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Planning, Third Five-Year Development Plan, 1980-1985, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: p. 98; Ministry of Planning, Fourth Five-Year Development Plan, 1985-1990. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: p. 84.

Table 8
Discrepancy between planned and accomplished labor force distribution.

NATIONALITY	SEX	1990			1995
		Projected 4th Plan	Actual 5th Plan	Difference	Projected 5th Plan
SAUDI	M	1,984,100	1,754,300	- 229,800	2,142,100
	F	176,600	168,900	- 7,700	215,000
NON-SAUDI, MALE AND FEMALE		2,059,800	3,848,600	+ 1,788,800	3,628,200

Source: Ministry of Planning, Fourth Five-Year Development Plan, 1985-1990. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: p. 84; Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Planning, Fifth Five-Year Development Plan, 1990-1995, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: pp. 171-173.

Table 4
Types of education and attendance by male and female students for the year 1987.

TYPE OF EDUCATION		MALE	FEMALE
1. GENERAL EDUCATION		1,191,370	904,519
1.1. Elementary		810,774	649,509
1.2. Intermediate		266,701	170,456
1.3. Secondary	113,895	84,554	
2. TEACHERS' INSTITUTES		11,831	10,521
2.1. Secondary	5,538	6,111	
2.2. Higher		6,293	4,410
3. TECHNICAL EDUCATION		19,124	1,088
3.1. Secondary	18,331	1,088	
3.1.1. Industrial		4,653	0
3.1.2. Commercial		7,383	0
3.1.3. Agriculture		266	0
3.1.4. Technical Controllers	480	0	
3.1.5. Health Institutes (Nursing)		3,521	1,088
3.1.6. Post Institutes	711	0	
3.1.7. Telecommunications	1,251	0	
3.1.8. Veterinary & Animal Production		66	0
3.2. Higher		793	0
3.2.1. Technical		354	0
3.2.2. Commercial		439	0
4. OTHER TYPES OF EDUCATION		12,474	1,578
4.1. Saudi Airline Institute		895	0
4.2. Civil Aviation		323	0
4.3. Institute of Public Administration		1,484	191
4.4. Gen. Org. for Ports, Training Center	71	0	
4.5. Tailoring Centers	0	1,387	
4.6. Banking Institute (SAMA)		29	0
4.7. Vocational Training		9,672	0
5. MILITARY AND SECURITY COLLEGES		====	0
5.1. King Fahad Security College	====	0	
5.2. King Abdul Aziz Military College (Army)	====	0	0
5.3. King Faisal Air Force College	====	0	
5.4. King Khaled Military College (National Guard)	====	0	
5.5. Navy College	====	0	
5.6. Passports Institute	====	0	
5.7. Traffic Institute	====	0	
5.8. Civil Defense Institute	====	0	
6. UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES		67,252	44,130
6.1. King Saud University		23,230	8,765
6.2. King Abdul Aziz University		17,766	9,124
6.3. King Faisal University		2,184	1,801
6.4. King Fahad University	2,979	0	
6.5. Islamic University at Madinah	1,974	0	

6.6. Imam Mohd. Ben Saud Islamic University	10,686	1,546
6.7. Umm AL-Qura' University	8,433	5,901
6.8. Girls Colleges	0	16,993

Note: Graduate Students and Students in the preparatory year are not included.

=== Data is not available.

Source: Ministry of Finance and National Economy, Department of General Statistics, (1990). Statistical Year Book, (26th ed.). Riyadh: Saudi Arabia, pp. 54-96.

Table 5
Fields of study and availability for male and female students for the year 1987.

FIELD OF STUDY	MALE	FEMALE
Administrative Science and Economics	7,530	2,569
Agriculture and Nutrition	2,036	749
Applied Science	1,375	1,057
Applied Medical Science	693	484
Applied Engineering	426	0
Arabic Language	3,588	771
Architecture and Planning	1,097	308
Arts (Social and Human Sciences)	9,940	13,961
Computer Science and Information	1,452	0
Dentistry	328	302
Education	11,316	14,885
Engineering	4,361	0
Environmental Studies	274	0
Geology	807	0
Hadeeth (Prophet's Teachings and Sayings)	339	0
Health Programs	105	0
Holy Qur'an and Islamic Studies	85	0
Industrial Administration	432	0
Islamic Preaching	2,547	1,092
Islamic Law	8,000	1,539
Islamic Theory	1,223	349
Medecine	1,969	1,357
Meteorology	581	0
Pharmacy	792	684
Science	5,409	4,023

Sea Sciences	372	0
Veterinary and Livestock	175	0

Source: Ministry of Finance and National Economy, Department of General Statistics, (1990). Statistical Year Book, (26th ed.). Riyadh: Saudi Arabia, pp. 54-96.