



**NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS**

**AN INQUIRY INTO INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY AND FEMALE  
LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION: A REVIEW OF  
DEVELOPING AND DEVELOPED COUNTRIES**

**Ph.D. THESIS**

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**Nicosia**

**JUNE, 2025**

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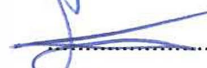

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## APPROVAL

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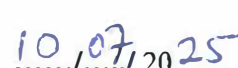
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## **DECLARATION OF ETHICAL PRINCIPLES**

I hereby declare that all information, documents, analysis and results in this thesis have been collected and presented according to the academic rules and ethical guidelines of Institute of Graduate Studies, Near East University. I also declare that as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced information and data that are not original to this study.

**Umar Habiba Mohammed Bello**

**25/06/2025**

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful. All praise to Allah the owner of the world and blessings and prayers is upon the Great prophet (peace be upon Him) his companion, family, and all those who follow them sincerely till the Day of Judgment. Thanks are to Allah for giving me the strength and ability to complete this dissertation paper

My deepest gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Dr. Huseyin OZDESER and co-supervisor Assoc. Prof. Mehdi Seraj, who has been extremely generous with their time, concern, valuable suggestions, and hospitality throughout my study, Special thanks to them again for understanding the time-consuming process required in completing this work.

Special thanks and prayers to my beloved husband (Dr Shuaibu Shittu) for his understanding and immense support throughout the programmed may Allah reward you for your wonderful effort and also a million thanks to my kids, Abdullahi and Husna for understanding what it takes for me to take away time away from the family time for my studies for me to accomplish this objective. I love you all. And a special note of thanks to my family and friends for their prayers.

**Umar Habiba Mohammed Bello**

## **ABSTRACT**

### **An Inquiry into Institutional Quality and Female Labour Force Participation: A Review of Developing and Developed Countries**

**Umar, Habiba Mohammed Bello**

**PhD, Department of Economics**

**Prof. Dr.Huseyin OZDESER (supervisor)**

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**June, 2025, 179 pages**

*This study investigates the relationship between institutional quality and female labour force participation (FLFP) across developing and developed nations, with a focus on Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), Asia, and the G7 countries. Utilizing panel data from 1996 to 2021, the study applies multiple econometric techniques, including linear regression, pooled panel estimates, system-generalized method of moments (SYS-GMM), Driscoll and Kraay Fixed Effects Estimator, and fixed effect-IV models. The analysis reveals distinct patterns across regions, reflecting the varying impact of economic, demographic, and institutional factors on FLFP. In Sub-Saharan Africa, economic growth significantly increases FLFP, while population growth, fertility rates, and self-employment serve as constraints. Voice, accountability, and regulatory quality enhance FLFP, whereas governance effectiveness and political stability indicators negatively influence women's participation in the labour market. Sectoral analysis indicates that while economic growth and fertility rates contribute positively to employment opportunities for women, population growth and self-employment exert inhibiting effects. The study on Asian countries incorporates the interactive effects of institutional quality with fertility and education. Findings indicate that fertility rates negatively impact FLFP, while education fosters participation. Institutional quality's effect on FLFP varies depending on the specific indicator used. Interaction analyses reveal that institutional quality moderates*

*the negative effects of fertility on FLFP, while its interplay with education presents complex dynamics. Sectoral findings demonstrate that fertility and education positively impact FLFP in agriculture but negatively influence participation in industrial and service sectors. Moreover, institutional quality appears to have an insignificant effect on FLFP, with control of corruption and regulatory quality showing no substantial influence in any sector. For the G7 countries, findings suggest that population growth and self-employment reduce FLFP, while economic growth and fertility rates enhance it. Governance, political stability, and corruption control negatively influence FLFP, but when institutional quality moderate's self-employment, participation levels increase. Sectoral analysis highlights that population growth supports FLFP in the service sector, while self-employment, political stability, and voice and accountability enhance women's involvement in agricultural and industrial sectors. Across all three regions, the study underscores the nuanced role of institutional quality in shaping FLFP. While economic growth generally promotes participation, demographic factors such as fertility rates and population growth exhibit mixed effects. Institutional quality can both facilitate and hinder FLFP, depending on governance indicators and sectoral contexts. Based on these findings, the study recommends region-specific policy interventions that consider the interplay between economic conditions, demographic trends, and institutional factors to enhance female labour force participation.*

**Keywords:** Institutional quality, Female labour force participation, Fertility rate, Population growth, Economic growth.

## ÖZET

### **An Inquiry into Institutional Quality and Female Labour Force Participation: A Review of Developing and Developed Countries**

**Umar, Habiba Mohammed Bello**

**Doktora, Ekonomi Bölümü**

**Prof. Dr.Huseyin OZDESER (supervisor)**

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*Bu çalışma, Sahra Altı Afrika (SSA), Asya ve G7 ülkelerine odaklanarak, gelişmekte olan ve gelişmiş ülkelerde kurumsal kalite ile kadın işgücüne katılım (FLFP) arasındaki ilişkiyi araştırmaktadır. 1996'dan 2021'e kadar panel verilerini kullanan çalışma, doğrusal regresyon, birleştirilmiş panel tahminleri, sistem genelleştirilmiş momentler yöntemi (SYS-GMM), Driscoll ve Kraay Sabit Etkiler Tahmincisi ve sabit etki-IV modelleri dahil olmak üzere birden çok ekonometrik teknik uygulamaktadır. Analiz, ekonomik, demografik ve kurumsal faktörlerin FLFP üzerindeki değişen etkisini yansıtan bölgeler arasında farklı modeller ortaya koymaktadır. Sahra Altı Afrika'da, ekonomik büyüme FLFP'yi önemli ölçüde artırırken, nüfus artışı, doğurganlık oranları ve serbest meslek kısıtlamalar olarak hizmet etmektedir. Söz hakkı, hesap verebilirlik ve düzenleyici kalite FLFP'yi artırırken, yönetim etkinliği ve siyasi istikrar göstergeleri kadınların işgücü piyasasına katılımını olumsuz etkilemektedir. Sektörel analiz, ekonomik büyüme ve doğurganlık oranlarının kadınlar için istihdam fırsatlarına olumlu katkıda bulunurken, nüfus artışı ve serbest mesleklerin engelleyici etkiler uyguladığını göstermektedir. Asya ülkeleri üzerine yapılan çalışma, kurumsal kalitenin doğurganlık ve eğitimle etkileşimli etkilerini içermektedir. Bulgular, doğurganlık oranlarının FLFP'yi olumsuz etkilediğini, eğitimin ise katılımı teşvik ettiğini göstermektedir. Kurumsal kalitenin FLFP üzerindeki etkisi, kullanılan belirli göstergelere bağlı olarak değişmektedir. Etkileşim analizleri, kurumsal kalitenin doğurganlığın FLFP üzerindeki olumsuz etkilerini yumuşattığını, eğitimle etkileşiminin ise karmaşık dinamikler sunduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Sektörel*



*bulgular; doğurganlık ve eğitimin tarımda FLFP'yi olumlu etkilediğini, ancak sanayi ve hizmet sektörlerinde katılımı olumsuz etkilediğini göstermektedir. Dahası, kurumsal kalitenin FLFP üzerinde önemsiz bir etkisi olduğu, yolsuzluk kontrolü ve düzenleyici kalitenin hiçbir sektörde önemli bir etki göstermediği görülmektedir. G7 ülkeleri için bulgular; nüfus artışının ve serbest mesleğin FLFP'yi azalttığını, ekonomik büyüme ve doğurganlık oranlarının ise artırdığını göstermektedir. Yönetişim, siyasi istikrar ve yolsuzluk kontrolü FLFP'yi olumsuz etkiler, ancak kurumsal kalite kadınların kendi işini yapmasını engellediğinde katılım seviyeleri artar. Sektörel analiz, nüfus artışının hizmet sektöründe FLFP'yi desteklediğini, kendi işini yapmanın, siyasi istikrarın, söz hakkı ve hesap verebilirliğin ise kadınların tarım ve sanayi sektörlerine katılımını artırdığını vurgulamaktadır. Çalışma, üç bölgede de FLFP'yi şekillendirmede kurumsal kalitenin ayrıntılı rolünün altını çizmektedir. Ekonomik büyüme genel olarak katılımı teşvik ederken, doğurganlık oranları ve nüfus artışı gibi demografik faktörler karışık etkiler göstermektedir. Kurumsal kalite, yönetim göstergelerine ve sektörel bağlamlara bağlı olarak FLFP'yi hem kolaylaştırabilir hem de engelleyebilir. Çalışma, bu bulgulara dayanarak, kadın işgücü katılımını artırmak için ekonomik koşullar, demografik eğilimler ve kurumsal faktörler arasındaki etkileşimi dikkate alan bölgeye özgü politika müdahaleleri önermektedir.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kurumsal kalite, Kadın işgücüne katılım, Doğurganlık oranı, Nüfus artışı, Ekonomik büyüme.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

The participation of women in the labor force is a crucial element of global socio-economic development, exhibiting varied patterns shaped by cultural, economic, and institutional contexts across regions (Anggadwita et al., 2017). This study examines the complex impact of institutional quality on job opportunities for women across various regions, including Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the G7 developed economies. This discussion aims to enhance global discourse on gender equality and economic development by identifying commonalities and disparities through regional studies. The landscape of women's workforce involvement in Asia exhibits considerable diversity, characterized by significant variations that highlight the region's complex socio-economic and cultural context. The variation in participation rates, from 16% to over 80%, highlights significant disparities across the continent (Sulaiman, Bustaman, & Tang, 2023). The variations are fundamentally linked to the economic, social, and educational structures of various Asian societies. They illustrate the deep entrenchment of gender roles and their significant influence on women's economic activities.

The economic effects of heightened female participation in the workforce are significant. Research indicates that improving gender equality in the labor market could markedly increase global GDP, particularly benefiting Asia (International Labour Organisation, 2018; World Bank, 2022). The challenge encompasses more than simple economic assessments. Social standards and educational attainments in different regions significantly influence Women's employment involvement. In regions of Asia characterized by conventional gender norms, women's involvement is significantly restricted, as they are frequently relegated to domestic duties (Chen & Ge, 2018). In contrast, in urbanized and educationally advanced regions, women's labor participation aligns more closely with international standards, indicating a correlation between elevated educational attainment and greater workforce engagement. This alignment underscores the significant impact of educational opportunities on women's economic outcomes. Improved educational attainment enhances job prospects and fosters financial



independence, allowing women to transcend traditional limitations and participate more actively in the economic domain (Olson-Strom & Rao, 2020). Policy interventions are evident in regions such as South Korea and Japan, where supportive measures, including favorable childcare and parental leave policies, have resulted in increased women's workforce participation (Seo, 2024). These policies illustrate the capacity of legislative and institutional frameworks to alleviate obstacles linked to elevated fertility rates, which typically hinder Women's employment involvement (Mukhopadhyay, 2023). The pursuit of gender parity in the workplace presents numerous challenges. The enduring gender wage gap reflects the continuous economic and social inequalities encountered by women, especially in high-skill positions. The gap impacts women's financial autonomy and mirrors wider socio-economic inequalities that persist in various economies throughout Asia (Bertay, Dordevic, & Sever, 2020). The interaction among advanced economic infrastructures, strong institutional frameworks, and women's workforce participation in G7 nations illustrates a narrative of both progress and ongoing challenges (Behrman & Gonalons-Pons, 2020). Developed countries illustrate the impact of institutional quality on complexities of gender in job settings, resulting in environments that can both facilitate and hinder women's economic participation. The economic justification for increasing the proportion of women in the workforce within the G7 is evident: research consistently demonstrates that increased gender inclusivity contributes to higher GDP per capita and facilitates poverty alleviation. This correlation underscores the wider socio-economic advantages associated with attaining gender parity in the labor force (World Bank, 2019). G7 nations acknowledge that supporting women in the workforce is more than just an equitable society issue; it is a vital economic strategy essential for national prosperity. These countries possess extensive legal protections, efficient governance, and supportive policies that collectively enhance involvement of women in the workforce. Essential policies encompass gender-neutral workplace laws, flexible work schedules and reasonably priced childcare, which are critical for dismantling traditional barriers to employment (Kimmel, 2006; Duflo, 2012). These measures facilitate a more effective balance between professional and family commitments for women, thereby ensuring a more consistent rate of participation in the labor market. Despite these favorable conditions, the gender pay gap persists as a

significant barrier, indicating ongoing discrimination and highlighting areas for potential enhancement of institutional supports (Blau & Kahn, 2017). Demographic shifts, including declining fertility rates, pose both challenges and opportunities. These shifts are associated with higher labor participation resulting from decreased caregiving responsibilities, yet they necessitate policy adaptations to accommodate the evolving roles of women in society (Nsanja, 2022). In Sub-Saharan Africa, female workforce participation is significantly affected by a complicated interaction of economic, cultural, and institutional impediments (Urama et al., 2020). Despite significant economic advancements in the region, persistent gender disparities in labor force participation underscore considerable challenges that impede women's complete economic integration. Institutional quality in Sub-Saharan Africa significantly influences labor market dynamics, especially concerning women. The institutional framework, which includes legal, regulatory, and governance systems, significantly influences access to financial resources for women, education, and healthcare (Makuta & O'Hare, 2015). Strong institutions can create conditions that enhance gender equality and economic inclusivity, whereas weak institutions may restrict women's access to economic opportunities and perpetuate prejudice caused by sexuality. Discriminatory cultural norms and practices in numerous Sub-Saharan African countries persist as significant obstacles preventing women from entering the workforce. These norms frequently restrict women's participation in the formal economy, relegating them to household responsibilities and informal sectors (Hakura et al., 2016). Addressing cultural barriers is essential for facilitating expanding women's work options and increasing their involvement in the development of the economy. Education and skills development are essential for improving involvement of women in the workforce. Women's engagement in the labour force has significantly increased in locations where they have better access to high-quality education. In certain regions of Sub-Saharan Africa, gender biases restrict educational access for girls, resulting in the underutilization of women's potential in the labor market (Abdulloev, 2018). Enhancing educational access and the quality of education for girls is crucial for empowering women and providing them with the necessary skills for active economic participation. The availability of economic opportunities and the nature of employment conditions significantly influence women's decisions to participate in the

labor force. In SSA, the availability of appropriate job opportunities and supportive financial resources are essential for promoting women's participation (Aluko & Ibrahim, 2020). Differences between genders in productive employment persist, hindering economic growth and efforts toward gender parity in the region (Bandara, 2015). Fertility rates and the health status of women are additional determinants of labor force participation. High fertility rates impose considerable demands on female energy and time for providing care, which limits their ability to engage in formal work. Enhancing healthcare and decreasing fertility rates via effective policies and programs can enhance the involvement of women in the workforce (Bloom et al., 2009).

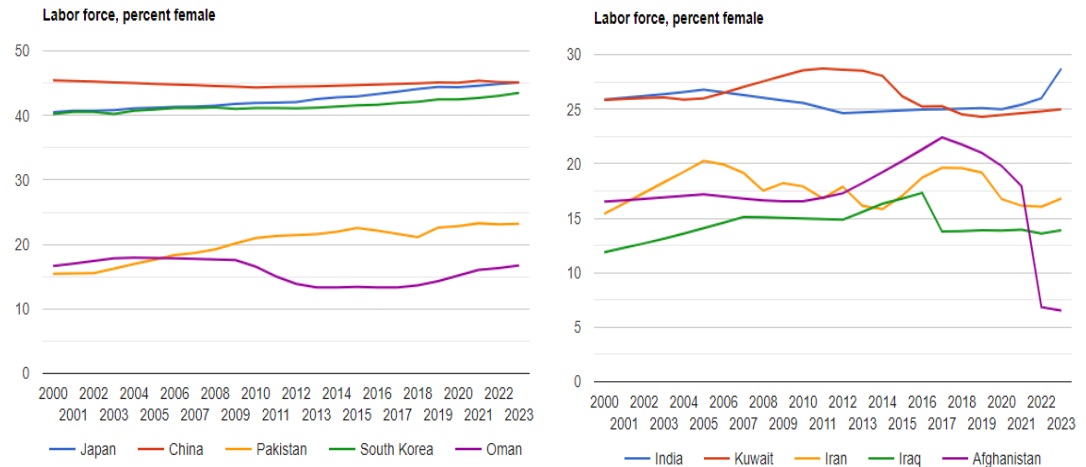
This study examines the influence of institutional quality on women's economic participation, utilizing data and literature from various regions. This research aims to analyze the complex interactions among governance, economic policies, and cultural factors to reveal how institutions facilitate or obstruct women's participation in the workforce. The synthesis of these diverse regions offers a distinct perspective on the global challenges and opportunities related to enhancing women's economic roles.

## **1.2 Statement of Problem**

The labour participation of women remains a global economic imperative, yet the extent of their involvement varies significantly across regions due to diverse institutional qualities and socio-economic conditions (Asongu et al., 2020). This disparity is notably evident when comparing Women's workforce involvement rates in Asia, advanced G7 countries, and Sub-Saharan Africa. Each region presents unique challenges and patterns that reflect how deeply institutional frameworks and cultural norms can impact women's economic engagement.

In Asia, the variance in Women's workforce involvement rates is stark, ranging from lows of about 5% in Afghanistan to highs above 45% in places like South Korea and Japan as can be seen in figure 1 below (World Bank, 2023). This range illustrates the profound impact of cultural, economic, and policy factors. For example, South Korea's

increase in Women's workforce involvement over two decades suggests effective policy interventions, whereas Afghanistan's sharp decline points to socio-political instability severely affecting women's ability to work (World Bank, 2023).

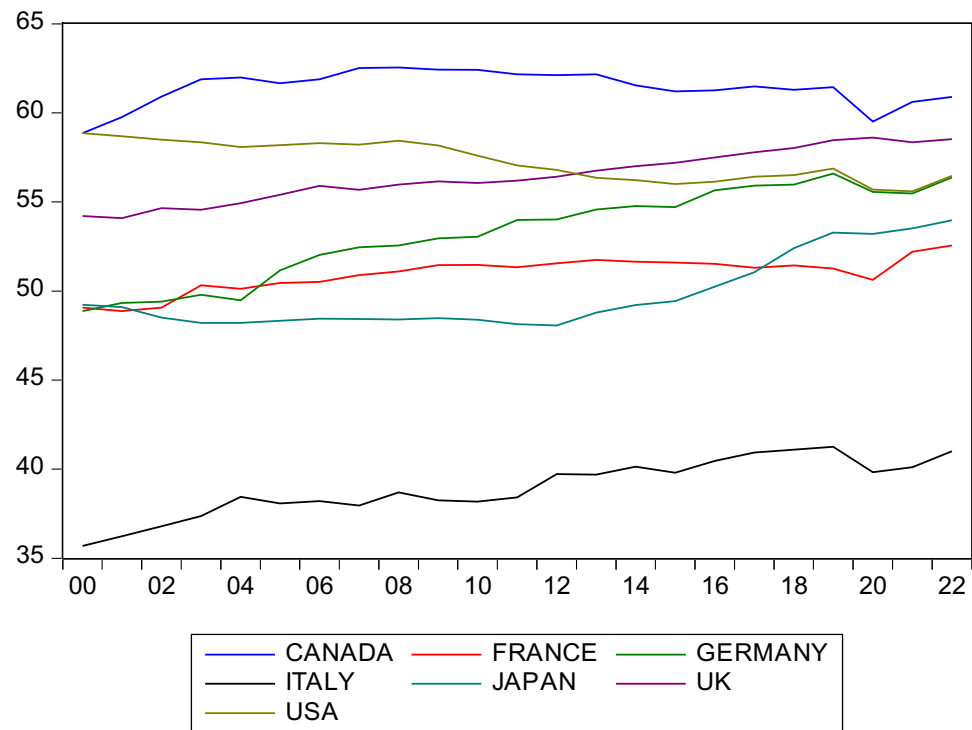


***Fig 1: Women's workforce involvement in Asia***

***Source: World Bank (2023)***

**Figure 1: Labour force percent Female**

Similarly, countries like Japan have shown a moderate increase in female participation due to supportive policies like "Women omics," though challenges like traditional gender roles and lack of affordable childcare persist (Kano, 2018; Xu, 2023). In contrast, the G7 nations, despite their advanced economic status and high levels of institutional quality, also display inconsistencies in Women's workforce involvement. The United States and Italy, for instance, have seen declines in female participation rates as seen in the figure 2 below, reflecting ongoing issues such as gender-based wage discrepancies and underrepresentation in leadership roles, which hamper full economic integration of women (World Bank, 2023; Alderotti, 2022). Canada and the UK, however, have made substantial progress by implementing gender equality policies, though challenges remain in achieving complete parity (Gupta, Balcom, & Singh, 2022; Olsen et al., 2018).



**Figure 2: Women's workforce involvement in the G7 countries**  
**Source: World Bank (2023)**

Sub-Saharan Africa presents a complex picture influenced heavily by institutional quality. Despite the region's rich natural resources and a young, growing consumer base, women's labour participation is significantly hindered by inadequate governance, corruption, and poor legal frameworks (Agovino et al., 2019; World Bank, 2022). Political instability and coups have further eroded the gains made towards democracy and civil engagement, severely impacting women's economic opportunities (Agbese, 2023). The rule of law is variably enforced, and issues like corruption permeate governance, undermining efforts to improve gender inclusivity in the labour market (Aderoju, 2023).

Institutional frameworks having a significant impact on female workforce participation, as these geographical variations demonstrate. There are areas where women are able to fully engage in the workforce because of progressive policies and stable socioeconomic circumstances, and there are parts where this is not the case because of instability and inadequate government. There needs to be targeted strategy to address specific regional challenges in order to increase women's workforce involvement worldwide. This is because institutional support varies greatly, from policy interventions

in Asia and gender equality measures in G7 countries to governance challenges in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The need for a holistic strategy that considers the unique and universal difficulties faced by women in various geographical settings is highlighted by this comparative study. Stakeholders may improve the design and implementation of policies that promote gender equality and economic empowerment globally by studying and addressing the unique institutional and cultural issues impacting women's labor participation in these varied locations.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

To explore the connection amongst women's participation in the workforce and the quality of institutions, the following research questions are formulated:

- i. How does the Institutional quality influence Women's workforce involvement in Sub-Saharan Africa?
- ii. What effect does institutional quality have on women's employment in Asian countries?
- iii. What effect does institutional quality have on women's involvement in workforce in G7 countries?
- iv. To what extent does Institutional quality affect female labour sectoral employment Sub-Saharan Africa, Asian countries and G7 countries?

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The objectives of this study are structured to systematically investigate the effects of different dimensions of institutional quality on Women's workforce involvement:

- i. To assess the impact of Institutional quality influence Women's workforce involvement in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- ii. To examine the influence of Institutional quality on Women's workforce involvement in Asian countries
- iii. To evaluate the role of does Institutional quality affect Women's workforce involvement in G7 countries.
- iv. To investigate the Institutional quality affect female labour sectoral employment Sub-Saharan Africa, Asian countries and G7 countries.

### **1.5 Research Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses will serve as the study's compass and will be examined at the 5% significant level:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Institutional quality does not have significant impact of the on Women's workforce involvement rates in Sub-Saharan Africa.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** Institutional quality does not have significant impact on Women's workforce involvement Asian countries.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** Institutional quality does not have significant impact on female labour force participation in G7 countries.

**H<sub>04</sub>:** Institutional quality does not have significant impact on female labour sectoral employment Sub-Saharan Africa, Asian countries and G7 countries.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study is significant as it addresses the critical nexus between institutional quality and Women's workforce involvement, providing a nuanced understanding of how governance, law, and policy influence economic gender equality across diverse global regions. The findings of this research are poised to offer substantial contributions to multiple domains, including economic policy, gender studies, and institutional reform, by highlighting the pivotal roles of voice and accountability, political stability, governance efficacy, and the rule of law in influencing women's employment.

Firstly, by examining the rule of law, this study underscores the necessity of robust legal frameworks that ensure gender equality in employment practices. It provides empirical evidence that can be leveraged by policymakers and international bodies to advocate for and design laws that protect women's rights in the workplace, thus fostering more inclusive economies.

Secondly, the investigation into the impact of political stability offers insights into how a tranquil and predictable political environment can create favourable conditions for women's economic participation. This aspect of the study is particularly relevant for regions experiencing political turmoil, where the findings can guide international aid and development agendas to prioritize stability as a foundation for economic development.

Furthermore, by evaluating governance effectiveness, the research highlights the crucial role of transparent and efficient government operations in facilitating gender inclusion in the labour force. This can inform government action and NGO initiatives,

encouraging the implementation of policies that not only aim at increasing female employment but also at ensuring that women can thrive in these roles.

Lastly, the focus on voice and accountability stresses the importance of women's participation in democratic processes as a fundamental aspect of their economic empowerment. This finding can influence advocacy efforts directed at enhancing women's roles in political and public spheres, which is essential for achieving broader societal changes towards gender parity.

Overall, this research advances our comprehension of the institutional dimensions that must be addressed to improve Women's workforce involvement. Its implications are vital for shaping policies and practices that support women's full economic integration, thereby advancing global efforts towards sustainable development and gender equality.

## **1.6 Scope of the Study**

This study is geographically and thematically focused on evaluating the impact of institutional quality on Women's workforce involvement in three distinct regions: Asia, G7 countries, and Sub-Saharan Africa. Each region presents unique institutional environments and socio-economic conditions that influence women's participation in the labour market, providing a broad spectrum for comparative analysis.

### ***Geographical Scope***

*Asia:* This region is characterized by vast economic diversity, ranging from high-income countries like Japan and South Korea to lower-income nations such as Afghanistan. The study will focus on a selection of countries that represent this range, analysing how varying levels of institutional quality impact Women's workforce involvement.

*G7 Countries:* Including the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, and Japan, this group of advanced economies provides a perspective on how highly developed institutional frameworks influence women's economic activities.

*Sub-Saharan Africa:* This region is notable for its dynamic economic potential and significant institutional challenges. The study will cover a variety of countries to reflect the diverse political and economic landscapes that affect Women's workforce involvement.



### ***Thematic Scope***

The research will centre around four main institutional quality variables, each representing a critical aspect of governance that can influence economic gender equality:

*Rule of Law*: Assessing how legal frameworks that protect rights and ensure equitable employment practices impact women's workforce involvement.

*Political Stability*: Analyzing the influence of a stable political environment on economic activities and how it supports or impedes women's employment.

*Governance Effectiveness*: Evaluating the role of government efficiency, transparency, and policy implementation in facilitating women's participation in the labour market.

*Voice and Accountability*: Examining the degree of participation that women can in political processes and express their opinions impacts their economic empowerment and labour market outcomes.

### ***Time Frame***

The study will analyse data from 1996 to 2021 to capture the trends and shifts in Women's workforce involvement over more than two decades. This period includes significant global economic events, technological advancements, and policy changes that have potentially influenced institutional structures and women's labour market participation.

### ***Methodological Scope***

The research will utilize a quantitative method to provide a comprehensive analysis. Quantitative data will be derived from international databases such as the World Bank. This approach help correlate institutional quality indicators with levels of Women's workforce involvement, while also providing contextual depth to the numerical data.

## 1.7 Operational Definition of Terms

*Women's Workforce Participation Rate:* The proportion of females around 15 and over who were either currently employed or looking for work, in relation to all females in the same age range.

*Institutional Quality:* Denotes the efficacy of legal, governmental, and administrative structures inside a nation. It includes the ability of these institutions to formulate and execute laws and policies that effectively manage public resources, safeguard rights, guarantee security, and protect openness and accountability in governance.

*Rule of Law:* The extent to which people trust and comply with society regulations, including the efficacy of contract enforcement, safeguarding of property rights, dependability of law enforcement and judicial institutions, and the incidence of crime and violence.

*Political Stability:* The extent to which a nation is devoid of political upheaval, erratic administration, or governmental violence. Political stability denotes the lack of substantial risks to the current administration, whether from either internal or foreign sources.

*Governance Effectiveness:* evaluates the effectiveness of government services, the civil service's independence from political influence, the effectiveness of the creation and application of policies, and the administration's consistency in upholding its declared policies.

*Voice and Accountability:* Represents the capacity of people to participate in governmental selection, as well as their rights to free speech, association, and access to independent media.

*Gender Wage Gap:* The disparity in median salaries between males and females across all industries and jobs, often represented as a percentage of male earnings. This gap may highlight discrepancies in access to opportunities and economic justice within the labor market.

*Economic Empowerment:* The capacity of women to participate in, impact, and benefit from economic activity in an environment that recognizes their efforts, guarantees equitable income negotiations, and fosters economic security.

These definitions provide a basis for comprehending the principal variables and ideas included in the research, so enhancing the clarity of analysis and discourse on the results associated with institutional quality and women's labor participation across various worldwide settings.

## **1.8 Summary**

The groundwork is laid in this chapter to investigate how the quality of institutions affects the participation of women in the workforce in Asia, G7 nations, and Sub-Saharan Africa. This document lays up the groundwork for future studies that will investigate the factors that affect women's employment rates, including political stability, the rule of law, the efficacy of governance, and the importance of women's voices and responsibility. The importance of the research rests in the fact that it has the ability to influence policy and improve gender equality on a worldwide scale. In order to tackle this complicated subject from 2000 to 2023, we first define important concepts and establish geographical and thematic scopes. Then, we use quantitative methodologies to conduct a complete study.

## CHATER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### 2.1 Introduction

With an emphasis on nations in Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and the G7, this literature review aims to critically assess previous studies on how institutional quality impacts the employment rates of women in different worldwide contexts. This study aims to clarify the complex interaction amongst institutional frameworks and female employment by examining the variables that affect female labor market involvement, including both the direct effects of institutional features and the intersectional aspects. Institutional quality and its aspects, patterns and trends in female labor participation, and other important concepts are defined and explored in the conceptual literature that this study draws upon. Theoretical and empirical literature reviews are also a part of it, tying the results to both current and future ideas in the fields of gender and labor economics. The goal of this research is to offer a thorough examination of the topic in order to draw attention to important trends, identify research gaps, and highlight areas where institutional changes may enhance female labor involvement. This section lays the groundwork for a detailed knowledge of the processes influencing women's economic activities and contributions in many cultural and economic contexts by including a variety of academic viewpoints and data.

#### 2.2 Conceptual Literature

##### *Institutional Quality*

Various aspects come together to form the idea of institutional quality, which encompasses the efficacy, efficiency, and integrity of the systems that control and allocate public resources. The rule of law, effective governance, high-quality regulations, political stability, voice and accountability, and control of corruption are a few of the important characteristics that define institutional quality (Isaksson & Durevall, 2023). These factors are fundamental to governance because they affect the conditions under which people and companies operate, which in turn affects the dynamics of the economy and the job market. The significance of institutional quality in fostering an environment conducive to female labor force participation is the primary emphasis of this research. The rule of law and thorough regulatory frameworks established by effective institutions play a crucial role

in ensuring that women have equal chances in the workforce (Achuo, Nkoa, Ndam, & Forgha, 2024). It is crucial to encourage women to participate in public and private sectors, and organizations that successfully manage corruption and maintain government accountability tend to create a more open and equitable work environment (Qaiser, Rehman, & Arshed, 2023). Furthermore, companies need political stability—an important component of institutional quality—in order to invest and grow, which in turn creates additional employment opportunities—potentially accessible to women (Mehmood et al., 2023). That is why the extent and quality of women's workforce involvement are greatly influenced by the quality of institutions.

### ***Women Labour Participation***

Women's labor participation refers to the involvement of working-age women in economic activities, whether as employees, employers, or self-employed individuals. According to Berar (2022), it is measured through the labor force participation rate, which represents the percentage of women aged 15 and above who are either employed or actively seeking work. This metric is a key indicator of women's workforce engagement and provides insight into broader socio-economic trends.

female labour participation is not merely about presence in the workforce; it is deeply influenced by a constellation of factors including educational attainment, cultural norms, economic conditions, and institutional frameworks (Ray et al., 2018). Education plays a pivotal role, as higher educational levels equip women with the necessary skills and knowledge that enhance their employability and potential to secure higher-wage jobs. Moreover, education can empower women, boosting their confidence to participate in economic activities (Sarfraz et al., 2021). Cultural norms also significantly shape women's labour participation. In many societies, traditional beliefs about gender roles can restrict women's employment outside the home. These norms influence the type of work women are expected to do and the balance they must maintain between domestic responsibilities and external employment (Davis, 2020).

Economic conditions further impact women's decisions to enter the labour force. In times of economic prosperity, more opportunities may arise, encouraging higher participation. Conversely, in economic downturns, women, particularly those in vulnerable employment sectors, may be the first to lose their jobs or be forced into part-

time positions (Ustabas & Gulsoy, 2020). Institutional frameworks are crucial in either supporting or hindering women's labour participation. Laws and policies that promote gender equality, provide maternity leave, childcare support, and protect against workplace discrimination are fundamental for enhancing women's participation in the labour market (Agovino et al., 2019). Effective implementation of these policies can create an enabling environment that supports women in both entering and remaining in the workforce.

In essence, female labour participation is a complex issue influenced by multiple intertwined factors that range from personal educational background to the broader socio-economic and institutional environment. Understanding these influences is crucial for developing targeted interventions that can effectively increase women's labour force participation rates globally.

### ***Rule Of Law and Women's Labour Participation***

When it comes to creating and maintaining laws that protect women's rights and promote gender equality in the workplace, the rule of law is a crucial cornerstone. The protection of women from workplace discrimination and abuse relies on this legal premise, which guarantees the uniform and transparent application of regulations. Gender equality in the workplace is more prevalent in nations that strictly adhere to the rule of law, according to Choi, Hong, and Lee (2018). Based on this association, it seems that countries with strong legal systems have less instances of gender discrimination, more chances for women to work, and more legal means to address workplace inequality. Additionally, the rule of law helps to provide a stable and predictable environment that attracts investment, which in turn creates jobs, especially in fields where women have been traditionally underrepresented. According to Cullen and Murphy (2018), companies are more inclined to support fair recruiting, retention, and promotion strategies for women in countries with a strong rule of law. In addition to increasing women's access to jobs, this investment helps them advance in their careers and feel more secure overall. The rule of law also affects how people see gender roles in society. Cultural attitudes and behaviours are shaped by the strong message sent by laws that explicitly advocate gender equality and punish discrimination (Inglehart et al., 2017). For women to overcome long-standing obstacles to not just joining the workforce but also rising through the ranks to positions of leadership and responsibility, this cultural transformation is essential.

In addition to ensuring compliance with domestic laws, upholding international accords and norms pertaining to gender equality, such as CEDAW, is essential. Equal employment opportunities for women will be more common in nations whose laws reflect these global norms (Hatano, 2021). Essentially, women may help shape more inclusive and equal labor markets by adhering to the rule of law. One-way nations may help more women enter and succeed in the workforce is by strictly enforcing laws that promote gender equality. Highlighting the links between legal integrity, gender equality, and sustainable development, it is clear that strengthening the rule of law has several advantages, including for women. It also contributes to wider economic and social growth.

### ***Government Effectiveness and Regulatory Quality***

The efficiency of the state plays a crucial role in determining the calibre of civil service, public services, and its independence from political pressures, which are foundational for supporting women's employment opportunities. Effective governance ensures that public services are delivered efficiently and equitably, directly impacting the economic opportunities available to women. Well-implemented gender-responsive policies such as maternity leave regulations and childcare support are known to significantly enhance Women's workforce involvement rates (Pimkina & de La Flor, 2020). These policies not only help women balance work and family commitments but also support their continuous engagement in the workforce, promoting both job retention and re-entry after childbirth.

Furthermore, regulatory quality plays a pivotal role in shaping the business environment, particularly affecting how easily women can access entrepreneurial opportunities. High regulatory quality reduces barriers to entry in the business sector, facilitates easier access to credit and market entry, and ensures protection under the law, all of which empower women to start and sustain businesses (Tripathi & Singh, 2018). This, in turn, boosts their participation in the labour market by not just creating jobs for themselves but also for others, fostering broader economic growth.

Additionally, effective governance can influence the enactment and enforcement of anti-discrimination laws and equal pay legislation, further ensuring that women can participate in the workforce on fair and equal terms. This aspect of governance is essential

for creating a supportive environment that encourages women's economic independence and labour market participation (Ustabas & Gulsoy, 2020).

The interplay between government effectiveness and regulatory quality also extends to the broader institutional environment, which includes the implementation of policies that ensure workplace safety, prohibit sexual harassment, and promote gender equality in leadership roles. These elements are crucial for not only attracting women into the workforce but also ensuring their advancement and satisfaction within their roles. As such, government effectiveness and regulatory quality are not just about enabling entry into the workforce but also enhancing the quality of female work life and their professional outcomes (Adeniyi et al., 2024).

### ***Political Stability, Voice, and Accountability***

Political stability, along with voice and accountability, plays a crucial role in shaping economic landscapes that are conducive to female labour participation. Political stability, defined by the absence of violence and the presence of predictability in governmental operations, is fundamental for fostering an environment that attracts investments in job-creating sectors. Shabbir & Zeb (2019) emphasized that such stability encourages investment particularly in sectors such as services and light manufacturing, which are often more inclusive of women's employment. This stable environment not only promotes existing job growth but also attracts new business ventures that are likely to offer opportunities conducive to female employment.

Furthermore, voice and accountability represent critical aspects of governance that affect women's roles in economic development. Voice refers to the ability of women to participate in political processes and to express their opinions freely, while accountability indicates the government's responsiveness to its citizens, including its commitment to addressing gender disparities. Cai & Dahiya (2020) have highlighted a positive association between these factors and the implementation of gender-inclusive policies. Such policies can range from anti-discrimination laws to proactive measures that encourage women's active participation in the workforce, thereby enhancing their economic independence and empowerment.

The synergy between political stability and the mechanisms of voice and accountability creates a feedback loop where stable governments are more likely to



implement equitable policies, and these policies in turn promote further stability by ensuring that all citizens, including women, feel represented and valued. This relationship underscores the importance of stable institutions not just for economic growth but for the advancement of gender equality in the labour market (Mehmood et al., 2023).

Therefore, ensuring political stability alongside fostering an environment where women have a voice and are accountable not only supports women's direct participation in the economy but also builds a foundation for sustained economic and social development. These elements are integral to creating a robust workforce where women can contribute effectively and equitably, which is essential for the overall health and progress of any economy.

### **2.2.1 Institutional Quality and Its Dimensions**

Institutional quality entails the capacity and effectiveness of institutions ranging from legal systems to public service entities and law enforcement agencies in upholding laws and regulations that guide societal interactions and economic activities (DeCaro et al., 2017). This quality is essential in fostering environments where markets can function efficiently, public services are delivered effectively, and where citizens can interact with their government in a manner that is transparent and accountable.

The importance of robust institutional quality extends beyond mere economic development; it is fundamentally intertwined with social equity and stability. Effective institutions are not only pivotal in driving economic growth through improved investor confidence and smoother functioning of markets but are also crucial in advancing social objectives. These include the promotion of inclusive social policies and the protection of human rights, which are essential for sustainable development (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2020).

In the context of economic functionality, institutions that enforce property rights, mitigate corruption, and administer effective regulatory measures contribute directly to the stability and predictability necessary for economic investments and transactions (Qaiser et al., 2023). Socially, when institutions function effectively and are perceived as just and impartial, there is an enhancement in societal trust and cohesion, which are vital for the long-term stability of any state (Achuo et al., 2024).

Thus, institutional quality directly influences the overarching framework within which both economic and social policies are formulated and executed, impacting everything from business operations and innovation to social welfare programs and labour market regulations. As such, understanding and improving institutional quality is crucial for achieving comprehensive development goals that encompass both economic prosperity and social well-being.

#### **2.2.1.1 Theoretical Foundations**

The theoretical underpinnings of institutional quality are deeply rooted in the principles of New Institutional Economics (NIE), which extends traditional economic theories by incorporating the roles and impacts of institutions in shaping economic performance. NIE suggests that institutions defined as the rules, norms, and constraints that structure social interactions play a crucial role in economic outcomes by influencing transaction costs and the predictability of economic interactions (Silva et al., 2024).

A seminal figure in this field, Douglass North (1990), introduced the concept that institutions are crucial for providing the structure within which economies operate. North argued that institutions reduce uncertainty in transactions, which in turn enhances economic efficiency by lowering costs associated with exchange and production. His work emphasizes the importance of both formal rules (laws, regulations) and informal constraints (norms of behaviour, conventions, self-imposed codes of conduct) in shaping economic performance (Bennett et al., 2016).

Another critical contribution to the understanding of institutional quality comes from Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, particularly in their 2012 work, "Why Nations Fail." They argue that political and economic institutions, which they categorize as inclusive or extractive, determine the success of nations (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2020). Inclusive institutions promote economic prosperity by empowering a broad swath of the population, ensuring the provision of public services, and fostering a level playing field in economic and political landscapes. In contrast, extractive institutions are designed to extract resources from the many by the few, leading to economic stagnation and, often, to political instability.

Acemoglu and Robinson's framework highlights the dynamic nature of institutions and their ability to evolve or regress depending on the distribution of political power and

the resulting policies. This perspective is crucial for understanding the variations in institutional quality across different countries and its subsequent impact on economic development and women's labour participation. These theoretical frameworks are instrumental in analysing how institutional structures can be designed or reformed to enhance economic development and gender equality. By understanding the mechanisms through which institutions affect economic activities, policymakers can better design interventions that promote more inclusive and effective institutions.

#### **2.2.1.2 Components of Institutional Quality**

The frameworks within which social and economic interactions take place are jointly shaped by a number of important factors that make up institutional quality. To improve the efficacy and reliability of institutions, each part is necessary, but they are not mutually exclusive.

The rule of law is essential for the fair administration of justice and the protection of individual rights because it guarantees the uniform and unbiased application of legal rules. This element is fundamental for commercial transactions and personal security because it supports the faith that people and companies have in a nation's judicial system. The foundation of a predictable economic environment is the Rule of Law, which ensures the enforcement of contracts and the protection of property rights (Shevchuk et al., 2020). The efficacy of the state is a gauge of the calibre of the goods it offers and the skill of officials responsible for carrying out policy. Healthcare, education, and infrastructure are just a few examples of the services that a well-functioning government provides in an efficient and effective manner to promote social welfare and economic progress. Overall economic development and stability are affected by how well policies are conceived, executed, and perceived by the public (Pimkina & de La Flor, 2020).

The ability of the government to establish and implement sensible laws and policies that promote and support the expansion of businesses is what we mean when we talk about regulatory quality. The costs of compliance and legal uncertainties are reduced when regulations are of high quality, creating an environment where businesses may prosper and compete worldwide (Qaiser et al., 2023). Because it shows how much public authority is used for private benefit, corruption control is an essential component of

institutional quality. Efficient use of resources and government actions that are in line with public interests can only be achieved via reducing corruption. Controlling corruption improves the efficiency of government agencies and lowers obstacles to economic participation, especially for disadvantaged groups like women (Aderoju, 2023). When a government is politically stable, there is little chance that it will be deposed by violent or unlawful methods. In order to develop and execute economic policies for the long term, a politically stable environment is essential. The inverse is also true: political instability may discourage investment both at home and abroad and cause major interruptions to economic operations (Corovei & Socol, 2019). A country's level of voice and accountability is proportional to its citizens' capacity to freely choose their government, as well as its freedom of association, speech, and the press. Governments' responsiveness to citizens' interests, including gender-specific issues, is an important indicator of institutional quality as it influences policies concerning economic and labor equality (Smith & Benavot, 2019).

None of these aspects of institutional quality exists in a vacuum; rather, they influence one another and a country's institutional framework as a whole via dynamic interactions. In order to tackle the larger issues of development and equality, it is crucial to understand each of these factors individually, since their combined strength or weakness may greatly affect social outcomes and economic performance.

#### **2.2.1.3 Measures of Institutional Quality**

It is not an easy task to assess the efficacy and integrity of governmental and financial organizations in order to evaluate their quality. Isaksson and Durevall (2023) note that a number of international organizations and research institutes have produced studies and indexes that provide light on the varying degrees of institutional quality across nations. If scholars, investors, and politicians want to know how other countries' governments work, they need these instruments.

One well-known method for assessing an institution's strength is the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) initiative. The six main factors that the WGI employs to evaluate governance are voice and accountability, political stability and the absence of violence or terrorism, regulatory excellence, rule of law, government

effectiveness, and corruption control. According to Koçak and Özer (2022), several indicators are used to quantify these characteristics, which come from surveys, administrative records, and expert evaluations.

More than 30 institutions, including survey centres, think tanks, NGOs, and international organizations, provide data to the World Gender Index (WGI). To guarantee an accurate portrayal of governance circumstances, its aggregation technique employs a statistical model that allocates weights according to the accuracy and dependability of each source. By using this consistent method, we may compare results from different nations and different periods of time (World Bank, 2021).

Institutional quality is measured by several indices in addition to the WGI. Annually, Transparency International compiles data on public sector corruption around the globe in their Corruption Perceptions Index. Indicators of economic freedom, which are associated with strong institutions of government, are used by the Heritage Foundation to rank countries in their Index of Economic Freedom. To evaluate the institutional settings in which social and economic policies function, these indexes are priceless. They are useful for spotting potential problems that can slow down social and economic development. Plus, these indices show how well institutions and governance are doing, therefore they may be used to measure how well new systems are doing (Samadi & Alipourian, 2021). Despite their usefulness, these indexes aren't without their flaws. Some of them include data biases, the subjective nature of corruption judgments, and the difficulty of measuring the whole complexity of institutional processes. Irtysheva et al. (2022) note that despite these problems, the indices play a crucial role in influencing national policy choices and international economic relations, and they also serve as a significant starting point for talks on institutional change.

Understanding and strengthening the governance structures that support successful and equitable societies relies on accurate measurements of institutional quality, which may be challenging. A more sophisticated knowledge of where and how to accomplish changes is made possible by the availability of comprehensive indexes such as the WGI.

### **2.2.2 Female Labour Participation: Trends and Patterns**

Understanding women's labour participation is pivotal, not only because it is a marker of gender equality but also because it significantly contributes to national and

global economic development. The inclusion of women in the labour force increases economic diversification, reduces poverty levels, and enhances productivity and economic growth. Therefore, the study of women's labour participation is essential for policymakers, businesses, and societies aiming to optimize their human resource potential and achieve sustainable economic progress.

This section provides a detailed analysis of both historical and current trends in women's labour participation across various global contexts. It will explore how shifts in socio-economic, cultural, and policy landscapes have shaped these trends over the decades. Additionally, this section will list and go over the wide range of intricate elements that affect women's choices to enter the workforce. These factors range from institutional frameworks and governmental policies to socio-economic conditions and cultural norms. Understanding these influences is crucial for developing strategies that encourage higher rates of women's labour participation and for crafting policies that support women's sustained engagement in the workforce. This exploration will not only highlight where progress has been made but also where challenges remain, providing a comprehensive overview of the dynamics at play in women's labour participation.

#### **2.2.2.1 Historical Overview of Female Labour Participation**

The trajectory of women's employment beginning in the early 1900s to the late 20th century presents a complex tapestry of gradual integration influenced by societal changes, legislative reforms, and economic conditions. Initially, women's participation in the workforce was largely restricted to roles considered 'suitable' for their gender, such as domestic service, teaching, and nursing. However, as industrialization progressed, especially during and after the two World Wars, there was a significant shift. Women began to enter industries such as manufacturing and engineering in larger numbers, primarily due to male conscription into military service (Goldin, 2014).

Post-World War II marked a pivotal era as women continued to remain in the workforce in unprecedented numbers. This period saw the beginning of a slow transformation in societal attitudes towards women's economic roles. The 1960s and 1970s, in particular, were landmark decades for female labour participation due to the intensification of the women's rights movement, which advocated for equal rights, including in employment (Milkman, 2013). This era also witnessed the introduction of

significant legislative measures like the Equal Compensation Act of 1963 in the US, which sought to remove gender-based salary disparities. Similar laws were enacted in other parts of the world, reflecting a growing acknowledgment of women's rights in the labour market.

Education reforms were additionally a key influence in promoting female labour engagement. The increase of educational options for women, especially for advanced degrees, in the late 20th century was instrumental. This increased educational attainment not only equipped women with the skills required for a broader range of occupations but also helped shift public perceptions about women's capabilities and roles in both public and private spheres (Olson-Strom & Rao, 2020). Despite these advances, women's labour participation was not uniform across all regions or economic sectors. In many parts of Europe and North America, women's increased presence in the workforce was noticeable in both blue-collar and white-collar jobs by the late 20th century. In contrast, regions such as South Asia and the Middle East witnessed slower progress due to more rigid cultural norms and varying economic conditions, which influenced the types of jobs women could access and their participation rates (Kabeer, 2021).

These historical shifts were not merely about more women working but also about changes in the policies and societal structures that governed their work. The late 20th century also saw increasing advocacy for work-life balance reforms, which included maternity leave, flexible working hours, and childcare support. These reforms were critical in enabling more women, especially those with familial responsibilities, to join and remain in the workforce, thus shaping the modern landscape of women's labour participation (Phipps & Prieto, 2016). This exploration of the historical trends in women's labour participation highlights how deeply intertwined it is with broader socio-economic, cultural, and legislative developments. The progress achieved was neither linear nor uniform but was marked by significant milestones that collectively contributed to enhancing women's roles in economic life.

#### **2.2.2.2 Current Trends in Female Labour Participation**

Modern shifts in female labor force participation are a result of a complicated interaction between globalization, technological progress, and worldwide economic

difficulties. Disparities, impacted by social, cultural, and economic variables, remain, despite substantial improvement in some areas.

After decades of increasing, female labor force participation rates have levelled off over the world. The International Labor Organization reported in 2020 that the worldwide female labor participation rate was at 47%, which was slightly lower than in previous years. Various areas reflect this stagnation in various ways. As a result of gender equality initiatives and more inclusive rules in the workplace, women's involvement has increased somewhat in G7 nations. As an example, in these nations, the participation percentage is typically between 55 and 70 percent (World Bank Group, 2022). As a counterpoint, Asia paints a complex image. Government measures in East Asian nations have been successful in increasing female labor force participation. This is especially true in South Korea and Japan. Nevertheless, cultural conventions and long-standing socioeconomic obstacles prevent women in South Asian nations from fully participating in the workforce (World Bank Group, 2021). Trends in Sub-Saharan Africa are diverse. Formal employment rates are low, despite the fact that there are many women working in the informal economy. These numbers are severely affected by systemic problems including inadequate healthcare and education (Adeleye et al., 2024).

There are two sides to the coin that globalization has dealt. One positive aspect is that it has opened up more career paths for women, especially in the service and technology industries. However, women's earnings and job security have been negatively impacted by rising competition brought about by global market integration, especially in developing areas' industrial employment (Sheraz et al., 2024). Gig and remote work options have proliferated because to technological improvements, providing women with the flexibility they seek—especially when juggling work and family duties. Retail and administrative labor, which employ a disproportionate number of women, are particularly vulnerable to automation's potential to replace them from their jobs (Egana-delSol et al., 2022). The number of women working has been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 epidemic. More women than males lost their employment during the epidemic, and now there is a lot of unpaid care labor to do, which makes it much harder for women to join the workforce. Worldwide, female labor force participation saw substantial reversals as a result of the pandemic, which both revealed and intensified pre-



existing disparities (Razavi et al., 2021). Overall, there are still a lot of obstacles for women to overcome, even if the world of work is changing due to factors including social policy, technology advancements, and global economic dynamics. A detailed knowledge of regional inequalities and focused legislative measures that take into account the specific obstacles women encounter in various socioeconomic situations are necessary for their successful resolution.

### **2.2.2.3 Socioeconomic Factors Influencing female Labour Participation**

Numerous socioeconomic factors, such as schooling and development of skills, affect women's labour force involvement. economic conditions, and cultural norms, each playing a distinct role in shaping their employment outcomes.

#### ***Education and Skills Training***

Education and women's labor force participation are strongly correlated, as is well recognized. The employability of women and their access to better-paying, more secure professions are both boosted by increased educational possibilities, which provide them with essential knowledge and skills. Greater economic development and poverty reduction are two of the many social advantages that accrue from increased levels of education (Paul & Goswami, 2022). Women gain economic independence and more influence in home and community decision-making when they complete their education. A study conducted by Yadav in 2019 found that women's labor force participation increased in nations where higher education was more accessible to them.

#### ***Economic Factors***

When it comes to women's choices to join or stay in the employment, economic cycles have a major effect on labor market circumstances. According to Jiménez, Muñoz, Campoverde, and Szeles (2024), when the economy is in a slump, industries like retail and hospitality, which employ a lot of women, tend to lose a lot of jobs. Women's rate of employment is disproportionately affected by this. Equal compensation for equal labour is still a major obstacle for women in the workforce. Women are less likely to actively pursue work because of the gender pay gap, which also impacts their ability to advance

professionally and earn a living income in the future. If we want more women to join and remain in the workforce, we must eliminate these discrepancies (Blau & Kahn, 2017).

### ***Cultural and Societal Norms***

There is a strong correlation between cultural norms and society expectations and the extent to which women work. Traditionally, women have been expected to take care of their families and children, which limits their prospects for paid work in many cultures. Women are less likely to be able to participate fully in the workforce since they are disproportionately responsible for family responsibilities including child and elder care. Culture also has a role in affecting workforce participation rates via social views regarding working women. According to Hamdani et al. (2023), women are more likely to be employed in communities where the principle of gender equality is well ingrained in the culture.

The impact on women's labor force participation of these socioeconomic conditions is multifaceted. While it may seem that getting a degree or improving one's abilities would lead to more economic engagement, cultural and financial obstacles might still get in the way. To tackle these issues, we need comprehensive policy strategies that take into account all of these different aspects, creating a setting where women may be fully and equally engaged in the workforce.

#### **2.2.2.4 Institutional and Policy-Related Factors Influencing Women's Labour Participation**

The landscape of women's labour participation is significantly shaped by a combination of government and corporate policies, as well as international influences. These institutional and policy-related factors create an environment that can either foster or hinder the inclusion of women in the workforce.

### ***Government Policies***

Government interventions play a pivotal role in shaping women's labour participation. Policies such as parenting assistance, leave for pregnancy, and anti-discrimination laws are crucial in providing the necessary infrastructure for women to join and remain in the workforce. For instance, countries with generous maternity leave policies and accessible childcare facilities tend to have higher rates of women's labour participation (Kluve & Schmitz, 2018). These policies allow women to balance family

responsibilities with their careers more effectively, reducing the likelihood of having to choose between the two. Furthermore, anti-discrimination laws help ensure that women can seek and obtain employment without facing gender-based biases or barriers, which is essential for creating a level playing field (Roy, 2019).

### ***Corporate Policies***

On the corporate level, policies that promote workplace flexibility, diversity initiatives, and equal opportunity employment significantly impact women's labour participation. Flexibility working plans, such as telecommute and flexible time, have been demonstrated to boost job fulfilment and engagement among women, particularly those with caregiving responsibilities (León et al., 2016). Diversity initiatives, which often include targeted recruitment and retention programs, help to ensure that women are not only hired but also supported throughout their careers. Equal opportunity policies further cement the commitment to a non-discriminatory work environment, allowing women to advance and succeed in their careers on merit (Windscheid et al., 2017).

### ***International Influences***

International agreements and cross-border policies also affect national labour markets for women. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is one precedent, and policies enacted through international organizations like the International Labour Organization (ILO), set standards that member countries strive to meet. These standards often encourage countries to improve their own labour laws and practices to ensure gender equality in the workforce (Smith & Sinkford, 2022). Additionally, the global exchange of ideas and practices through international forums and collaborations provides a platform for learning and implementing effective policies that have been successful in other countries.

These institutional and policy-related factors are interlinked, each reinforcing the others in building a supportive ecosystem for women's labour participation. Effective implementation of government policies provides a foundation that is enhanced by corporate practices promoting diversity and flexibility, while international standards and agreements offer a global benchmark and motivation for continuous improvement.

#### **2.2.2.5 Emerging Trends and Future Outlook in Women's Labour Participation**

Recent years have witnessed significant shifts in the landscape of women's labour participation, driven by rapid technological advancements and changes in work modalities. These developments are poised to continue shaping the future labour market in profound ways.

##### ***The Rise of Remote Work***

The increasing trend of remote work has emerged as a critical factor influencing women's participation in the labour force. The change was sped up by the COVID-19 epidemic, which showed that numerous jobs could be done efficiently beyond conventional work settings. For women, particularly those balancing professional commitments with caregiving roles, the freedom given by remote employment can assist greater participation in the workforce. Studies suggest that remote work options reduce turnover among women and increase job satisfaction and productivity (Lim & Zabek, 2023). However, there are challenges to consider, such as the potential for 'out of sight, out of mind' biases that could impede career progression and the blending of job and personal life, which may result in longer workdays and more pressure (Denfeld et al., 2020).

##### ***Impact of Technological Innovation***

Technological innovation, especially in the realms of artificial intelligence (AI) and automation, presents both possibilities and difficulties for the employment of women. On one hand, technology can create new job opportunities in emerging fields and industries, where women can leverage digital skills for career advancement. On the other hand, automation poses a significant risk to jobs traditionally dominated by women, such as those in retail and administrative support (Peetz & Murray, 2019). As AI continues to evolve, the demand for tech-savvy employees is expected to grow, emphasizing the need for initiatives that equip women with the necessary skills to thrive in a digitally-driven economy.

##### ***Future Labour Market Dynamics***

Looking forward, the labour market is likely to undergo further transformations influenced by ongoing technological evolution and changing societal norms. To ensure that women not only adapt but also excel in this shifting landscape, targeted educational

and training programs will be essential. These programs should focus on STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), digital literacy, and leadership skills to prepare women for high-growth sectors. Additionally, policy interventions will be crucial to address structural inequalities and ensure that the future workforce is inclusive and equitable (Jiménez-Cortés et al., 2017).

As we navigate these changes, it is critical to foster an environment that supports continuous learning and flexibility, allowing women to seamlessly transition into future opportunities. By doing so, we can ensure that women not only participate in the workforce but also play a pivotal role in shaping the future economy.

### **2.2.3 Other Factors Affecting female Labour Participation**

Understanding women's labour participation requires a nuanced approach that extends beyond the traditional analysis of institutional frameworks. The participation of women in the workforce is influenced by a complex array of factors that intersect with institutional elements, creating varied and unique experiences for different groups of women. This complexity necessitates a broader exploration that incorporates the concept of intersectionality a framework that examines how various social categories such as race, class, age, and gender identity interact on multiple levels to impact the individual experiences of women.

Intersectionality is crucial for analysing labour participation because it highlights how overlapping social identities influence access to employment opportunities and conditions in the workplace (Rosette et al., 2018). Additionally, this approach allows us to consider how institutional quality interacts with socio-economic variables such as education, healthcare, and economic policies, each of which plays a significant role in shaping labour market dynamics. By integrating these perspectives, we can better understand the barriers to and facilitators of women's labour participation, offering more targeted and effective interventions. This section aims to delve into these complex interrelations to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence women's participation in the labour force.

### **2.2.3.1 Examination of Intersectionality in Female Labour Participation**

Intersectionality, a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in the late 1980s, is pivotal for understanding the multi-dimensional factors that affect women's labour participation. This framework considers multiple identities and how they interact to influence individual experiences, particularly in the labour market. Intersectionality reveals that gender cannot be viewed in isolation from other personal dimensions such as race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and age; all these factors interweave to shape a woman's employment opportunities and challenges (Flippen, 2014).

#### ***Intersectionality of Gender with Race and Ethnicity***

The intersection of gender with race and ethnicity profoundly impacts women's experiences in the labour market, often creating multiple layers of disadvantage. In the United States, for example, Hispanic and Black women frequently face compounded discrimination that significantly influences their employment opportunities, salary potential, and career advancement. This type of discrimination is rooted in pervasive stereotypical perceptions and biases that negatively affect hiring practices and promotional decisions (Nelson et al., 2019). These challenges are not unique to the U.S.; they are a global phenomenon.

In Europe, migrant women from African and Asian backgrounds encounter substantial barriers to employment, which stem from a complex mix of racial and gender prejudices. These biases can severely limit their job opportunities, often relegating them to sectors characterized by instability and low wages. Such employment conditions underscore the significant role that race and ethnicity play alongside gender in shaping economic opportunities and labour market trajectories. The interplay of these identities frequently results in a cycle of marginalization, where affected women find themselves in positions that offer little security and even less opportunity for upward mobility (Schieckoff & Sprengholz, 2021). The persistent intersectional discrimination highlights the need for targeted policies that address the specific challenges faced by women at the confluence of race, ethnicity, and gender in various labour markets around the world.

#### ***Intersectionality of Gender with Socioeconomic Status***

Socioeconomic status is a pivotal factor that significantly influences women's participation in the labour force. Women hailing from lower socioeconomic backgrounds

frequently encounter barriers to accessing quality education and professional training, which directly impacts their employment opportunities (Munir et al., 2023). This lack of access not only results in lower employment rates among these women but also restricts their job opportunities to lower-paying sectors where advancement prospects are minimal. In contrast, women from more affluent backgrounds often enjoy better access to comprehensive education systems and robust professional networks. These advantages facilitate higher employment rates and broader career opportunities, enabling them to secure positions in more lucrative and prestigious sectors (Heath & Jayachandran, 2017).

Addressing these socioeconomic disparities is crucial for levelling the playing field. Implementing targeted policies, such as scholarship programs aimed at girls in underprivileged communities and training grants designed for women, can play a transformative role. These initiatives help bridge the educational gap and open up employment opportunities that were previously inaccessible (Psaki et al., 2022). By providing economically disadvantaged women with the tools and resources necessary to compete in the labour market, such policies not only improve individual lives but also enhance the overall economic health of communities. These efforts are essential for fostering a more inclusive and equitable workforce where women from all socioeconomic backgrounds can thrive (Rai et al., 2019).

### ***Intersectionality of Gender with Age and Lifecycle Changes***

The interplay between gender, age, and lifecycle changes significantly influences women's labour market participation, introducing complex dynamics that affect their career trajectories. Young women just entering the workforce often encounter specific challenges, such as inadequate career guidance and pervasive gender biases, particularly in industries traditionally dominated by men (Fortin, 2015). These early career obstacles can set a precedent that hampers their long-term professional development.

As women progress to their childbearing years, many experience what is commonly referred to as the 'motherhood penalty.' This term describes the career interruptions often due to maternity leave or part-time work arrangements that many women undertake to manage family responsibilities. These interruptions can have lasting detrimental effects on their professional advancement and earnings potential, perpetuating gender disparities in the workplace (Hurd & Rohwedder, 2022).

Furthermore, as women approach later stages in life, they frequently encounter 'double discrimination' a convergence of ageism and sexism that can severely impact their employment opportunities (Fortin, 2015). This dual-layer of prejudice can lead to fewer promotional opportunities and an increased likelihood of being pushed towards early retirement, further widening the economic gaps between genders (Ostry et al., 2018). Such discrimination underscores the need for comprehensive employment policies that address the unique challenges faced by women throughout their lives, ensuring equitable treatment and opportunities in the workforce.

These intersectional factors illustrate that policies aimed at improving women's labour participation cannot be one-size-fits-all. They need to be nuanced and multifaceted, considering how various identities interact to affect women's experiences in the workforce. By implementing targeted strategies that address specific barriers faced by different groups of women, policymakers can more effectively enhance women's inclusion and equality in the labour market.

#### **2.2.3.2 Interaction of Institutional Quality with Other Variables Influencing Female Labour Participation**

The interplay between institutional quality and various socio-economic factors critically shapes women's labour participation, weaving a complex matrix that influences their employment outcomes across multiple dimensions. High-quality educational institutions are foundational in providing women with the requisite skills and knowledge needed for the labour market (Silva et al., 2024). The disparities in educational attainment, particularly in STEM fields where women are underrepresented, correlate strongly with their participation rates in higher-paid, more stable careers. For instance, research has shown that improved access to vocational training and higher education can elevate women's presence in the workforce by as much as 20% (Jiménez-Cortés et al., 2017).

Moreover, healthcare access plays a pivotal role in supporting women's continuous labour participation. Institutional healthcare services, especially those focusing on maternal health, significantly impact women's decisions to join or return to the workforce post-childbirth (Chung & Van der Horst, 2018). Adequate maternity care and health services ensure that women do not have to choose between their health and their career, thereby promoting longer and more fruitful employment trajectories. A study in 2022



indicated that countries with robust healthcare systems see a 15% higher re-entry rate into the workforce among new mothers compared to those with inadequate healthcare provisions (Gumy et al., 2022).

Economic policies such as wage equality legislation, unemployment benefits, and entrepreneurial support are also vital. The effectiveness of these policies often depends on the broader institutional framework. For example, wage equality laws can only be effective if they are backed by strong legal institutions capable of enforcing these laws. Similarly, support for women entrepreneurs, such as grants or subsidies, is more successful in environments where financial institutions are accessible and non-discriminatory (Pimkina & de La Flor, 2020).

Cultural norms and policies embedded within institutions further complicate the landscape. Cultural perceptions regarding gender roles are reflected in and perpetuated by institutional practices, affecting everything from hiring practices to workplace culture. In environments where traditional gender roles are strongly embedded within institutions, women often face significant biases that can limit their employment opportunities and growth. On the other hand, institutions that promote gender-neutral policies tend to foster more inclusive and equitable workplace cultures (Heilman et al., 2024).

This synthesis of education, healthcare, economic policies, and cultural norms underlines the critical importance of institutional quality in shaping women's labour participation. It highlights the need for a cohesive approach in policy development that recognizes and addresses the multifaceted impact of institutions on women's economic opportunities and outcomes. Moving forward, enhancing institutional quality across these dimensions is paramount for not only increasing women's participation in the workforce but also ensuring that their participation is equitable and fulfilling.

#### **2.2.3.3 Case Studies: Intersectionality in Policy**

The integration of intersectionality in policy making has shown significant advancements in addressing complex social inequities. Successful applications of intersectionality are evident in various policy fields, particularly those that focus on health and social services. For instance, the use of an Intersectionality-Based Policy Analysis (IBPA) framework has enabled a nuanced understanding of health inequities by considering multiple intersecting factors such as gender, race, and socioeconomic status.

This approach has been instrumental in revealing hidden biases in policies and has led to more inclusive health service delivery that better addresses the diverse needs of various groups (Humphries et al., 2023).

One noteworthy application was in the analysis of maternity care policies. By applying an intersectional lens, researchers were able to identify disparities in the quality of care provided to different groups of women, influenced by factors such as geography, ethnicity, and economic status. This analysis challenged the prevailing norms and standards of care and advocated for more tailored approaches to meet the varied needs of women during pregnancy and childbirth (Vohra-Gupta et al., 2023).

However, there are also examples where the lack of consideration for intersectional factors led to ineffective or adverse outcomes. Policies that overlook the complex realities of individuals' lives, especially those from marginalized communities, often fail to achieve their intended goals (Cole & Duncan, 2022). For instance, in certain health policy initiatives, failing to account for the intricate interplay of race, gender, and socioeconomic factors has perpetuated inequities rather than resolving them. Such oversights can undermine the efficacy of policies and exacerbate the challenges faced by those the policies aim to support (Akeredolu, 2018).

The case studies underscore the importance of embedding intersectionality within the policy development process. They illustrate that a deep understanding of the interconnected nature of social categorizations is crucial for crafting policies that are truly effective and equitable. This approach not only illuminates the varied impacts of policies on different groups but also provides a pathway for creating more nuanced and responsive strategies that can lead to genuine social change.

#### **2.2.4 Comparative analysis of institutional quality and female labour participation in Sub-Saharan African countries, Asian countries and G7 Countries**

Institutional quality significantly shapes labour market dynamics, directly influencing employment opportunities and working conditions with a profound impact on female participation in the workforce. This concept encompasses various factors such as effective governance, robust legal systems, equitable access to education and healthcare, and the enforcement of gender equality policies, which collectively create the framework within which economic activities occur. This analysis explores into how these

institutional factors influence female labour participation across three diverse regions: Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and the G7 countries. Each region presents unique institutional landscapes and challenges that affect women's employment:

Sub-Saharan Africa is often characterized by challenges in governance and infrastructure, impacting women's access to education and healthcare, crucial determinants of their economic engagement. Asia displays a vast spectrum of economic development and cultural perspectives regarding women's work, with institutional quality varying significantly across countries. This diversity affects the level of support and barriers women face in the labour market. G7 Countries, known for higher institutional quality, provide a contrasting perspective with more developed policies and systems supporting gender equality in the labour market.

Exploring these regions offers insights into the complex interplay between institutional quality and labour market participation among women. The aim is to uncover distinct impacts and draw lessons from various institutional reforms, thereby guiding effective policy-making tailored to enhance women's economic participation globally.

#### **2.2.4.1 Regional Overview**

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the institutional landscape presents a complex backdrop that heavily influences female labour participation. This region is characterized by significant variability in governance, with some nations grappling with political instability and weak legal frameworks, while others have made notable strides in institutional reforms (Amaina et al., 2019). These variations critically shape the economic opportunities available to women and dictate the nature of their engagement in the labour force. Female labour participation in Sub-Saharan Africa is predominantly in the informal sector, characterized by lower wages, minimal job security, and scant social protections. This trend is a direct consequence of underdeveloped formal labour markets and the limited reach of institutional support, which often fails to provide adequate education, healthcare, and legal protection (Thaddeus, et al., 2022). For instance, many women find themselves in agricultural roles or small-scale trading, where formal employment contracts are rare and financial security is precarious.

However, case studies from countries like Rwanda and Nigeria offer contrasting pictures of how institutional qualities can influence women's economic activities.

Rwanda is an exemplar within the region, having implemented substantial gender-sensitive reforms that boost female participation not only in the workforce but also in political spaces. These reforms have fostered an environment where women can contribute significantly to the economy and society. In contrast, Nigeria shows the challenges of inconsistent policy enforcement and prevailing cultural norms that restrict women's roles to traditional sectors (Opeloyeru et al., 2021). Despite legal frameworks supporting gender equality, practical application is sparse, and women continue to face barriers to accessing education and lucrative employment opportunities.

These examples highlight the critical role of robust and inclusive institutions in enhancing female labour participation. Strengthening institutional frameworks across Sub-Saharan Africa is essential for ensuring that women can move beyond informal employment into more stable, productive roles. This transition not only supports women's economic independence but also promotes broader socio-economic development within the region. Asia's diversity in institutional quality and economic development presents a multifaceted picture of female labour participation across the region. This diversity ranges from highly developed economies with robust educational and healthcare systems, like Japan and South Korea, to emerging markets such as India and Indonesia, where institutional development is still in progress (Kaufmann & Kraay, 2023).

In countries like Japan and South Korea, strong institutional frameworks support relatively high levels of female labour participation, though cultural norms about gender roles often influence the extent and nature of this participation (Christopherson Puh, et al., 2022). In these nations, government policies have increasingly focused on encouraging women's continuous engagement in the workforce, especially through reforms in parental leave and childcare services. For instance, Japan's "Women omics" policy initiative aims not just to boost female workforce participation but also to ensure that women can return to work after childbirth without career penalties (Kano, 2018).

Conversely, in South Asia, particularly in countries like India and Bangladesh, the quality of institutions often lags, particularly in rural areas where access to education and healthcare is limited. Despite high levels of women participating in agricultural labour, these women's work is often undervalued and undercompensated (Kinoshita & Guo,

2015). Educational opportunities for women, while improving, remain hindered by socioeconomic barriers and cultural expectations that prioritize men's education. However, there are signs of progress, as initiatives to enhance girls' education begin to slowly transform these traditional views.

Healthcare access significantly impacts women's ability to participate in the workforce in Asia. In Southeast Asia, for example, better healthcare systems correlate with higher Women's workforce involvement rates. This relationship underscores the importance of maternal health services and general healthcare in enabling women to enter and remain in the workforce. A study from the Philippines shows that improvements in community healthcare services have been linked to increased employment rates among women, as these services reduce the burden of care that often falls disproportionately on women (Chen & Ge, 2018).

This intricate interplay of education, healthcare, and economic policies within varying institutional contexts across Asia highlights the complex dynamics that influence women's labour participation. Each country's unique institutional quality shapes specific challenges and opportunities for women, suggesting that tailored approaches are necessary to effectively support and enhance women's economic contributions in different Asian contexts.

In the G7 countries, which encompass some of the world's most advanced economies, the impact of institutional quality on female labour market outcomes is distinctly positive, demonstrating how robust institutional environments can enhance employment opportunities for women. These countries typically exhibit high standards in governance, comprehensive legal frameworks, and effective implementation of policies, all of which contribute significantly to labour market dynamics favorable to women (Parvazian et al., 2017).

The advanced economic structures in G7 countries facilitate a supportive backdrop for the formulation and execution of gender-focused policies. For example, labour laws in these nations often include strong protections against workplace discrimination and support for maternity and parental leave, which are crucial for women's continued participation in the workforce (Gupta et al., 2022). Additionally, these countries generally

have well-established education systems and accessible healthcare, which further empower women to pursue and sustain careers.

The correlation between strong institutional environments and positive labour market outcomes for women in G7 countries is evident in the higher rates of female employment and their representation in professional and higher-paying roles. Policies that specifically target the enhancement of female labour participation have been particularly successful in these settings (Martin & Dutreuilh, 2022). For instance, Germany's introduction of policies that subsidize childcare and promote parental leave for both parents have been linked to an increase in the labour participation of mothers. Similarly, Canada's proactive stance on promoting gender diversity in leadership roles within corporate boards has spurred significant discussions and gradual changes towards gender parity in the business sector (Buterin et al., 2023).

These examples underscore the critical role that well-crafted and effectively implemented policies play in harnessing the potential of women in the labour market. By continuing to refine these policies and addressing emerging challenges, G7 countries can further improve female labour participation, setting benchmarks for other nations aiming to enhance their own institutional frameworks to support women in the workforce.

#### **2.2.5 Comparative Analysis of Institutional Quality and female Labour Participation Sub-Saharan African countries, Asian countries and G7 Countries**

In examining the impact of institutional quality on female labour participation across Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and G7 countries, distinct differences emerge that underscore the essential role of robust institutions in creating equitable labour markets. The G7 nations, renowned for their advanced economic infrastructures and strong institutional frameworks, showcase the highest levels of female labour participation. These countries benefit from well-established policies that promote gender equality in the workforce, including effective anti-discrimination laws, comprehensive parental leave policies, and extensive public childcare support (Akitoby et al., 2019). Such robust institutional support ensures that women in G7 countries participate extensively in the workforce across diverse roles, including leadership positions.

Conversely, the experiences of Sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Asia illustrate how variations in institutional quality can significantly influence women's employment outcomes. While countries like South Korea and Japan are advancing institutional supports for women, others still grapple with basic access to education and healthcare, crucial determinants of women's economic participation (Amaina et al., 2019). In Sub-Saharan Africa, despite high engagement of women in informal labour sectors, the absence of strong institutional frameworks often results in fewer protections and lower-quality employment opportunities for women (Agovino et al., 2019).

Moreover, the effectiveness of institutions in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa is frequently inconsistent, particularly when comparing urban and rural areas. Urban centers typically enjoy better institutional support, offering greater opportunities for women's labour participation compared to rural regions, where traditional norms and weaker institutional support prevail (Hakura et al., 2016).

This comparative analysis highlights the necessity for strong, inclusive institutions equipped with supportive systems to enable women to thrive in the labour market. Implementing policies that improve educational opportunities, healthcare access, and legal protections is critical, especially in regions where such support systems are underdeveloped or unevenly distributed. By tailoring institutional reforms to meet the specific needs of women in different regions, significant strides can be made toward achieving more equitable and productive labour markets (Klasen et al., 2021).

#### **2.2.6          Discuss trends, similarities, and stark differences observed in how institutions shape labour markets for women in Sub-Saharan African countries, Asian countries and G7 Countries**

There are striking parallels and contrasts in the ways that institutional quality affects women's labor markets in G7 nations, Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa. This shows how institutions greatly influence women's economic chances. There is a strong correlation between low institutional quality and women's lack of economic opportunity in Sub-Saharan Africa. The informal sector is the most common, and it is known for its poor earnings and lack of work security. Both the number of women participating and the quality of their career opportunities are negatively impacted by the region's problems with leadership and enforcing policies. Women face additional barriers to full

participation in the labor market due to factors such as subpar healthcare infrastructure and educational opportunities (Amaina et al., 2019). On the other side, a mixed picture emerges in Asian nations. Women are more likely to work, particularly in the formal economy, in countries like South Korea and Japan that have made significant investments in institutional changes. Cultural norms and institutional support in South and Southeast Asia limit women's economic participation, especially in rural regions where traditional roles force women to work for low wages or without pay (Olson-Strom & Rao, 2020). High levels of female engagement in varied sectors are frequently seen in G7 nations, thanks to their solid institutional frameworks. Women are far better able to join and thrive in the workforce when there are robust legal safeguards, excellent healthcare and education systems, and family-friendly policies. To help women successfully juggle work and family life, these nations' policies often include parental leave programs and extensive daycare systems (Buterin et al., 2023).

Regardless of these variations, a consistent pattern across all locations is the beneficial effect of targeted institutional improvements that encourage women to work. There is a ubiquitous correlation between higher educational possibilities, better healthcare access, and better labor market results for women. Cultural norms and the general economic climate may magnify or dampen institutional efforts, so moderating the efficacy of these measures. These findings highlight the need of tailored strategies in policymaking and institutional development to address the unique challenges faced by different regions in order to empower women economically. Promoting gender parity in the workplace requires policies that take into account regional economic and cultural norms and priorities, as well as initiatives to enhance institutional capabilities.

### **2.2.7 Comparative Analysis Using the Rule of Law Index Across Regions**

The rule of law index provides a stark illustration of how institutional quality varies across different regions and its potential impact on women's labour participation. This index measures the extent to which countries adhere to the rule of law, which includes factors such as the enforcement of laws, the fairness of the judicial system, and the presence of corruption as can be seen in the figure 3 below.

Analysing the Rule of Law trends from 2010 to 2022 across Sub-Saharan Africa, G7 countries, and Asian nations offers valuable insights. Sub-Saharan African countries like



Ghana, Kenya, and Nigeria show significant improvements, though they continue to score lower overall compared to G7 and some Asian countries (World Bank, 2023). For instance, Ghana has seen a steady improvement, reflecting efforts to enhance judicial effectiveness and governmental transparency. However, these nations still face challenges in fully implementing legal frameworks that support women's economic participation, such as laws ensuring equal pay and prohibiting workplace discrimination.

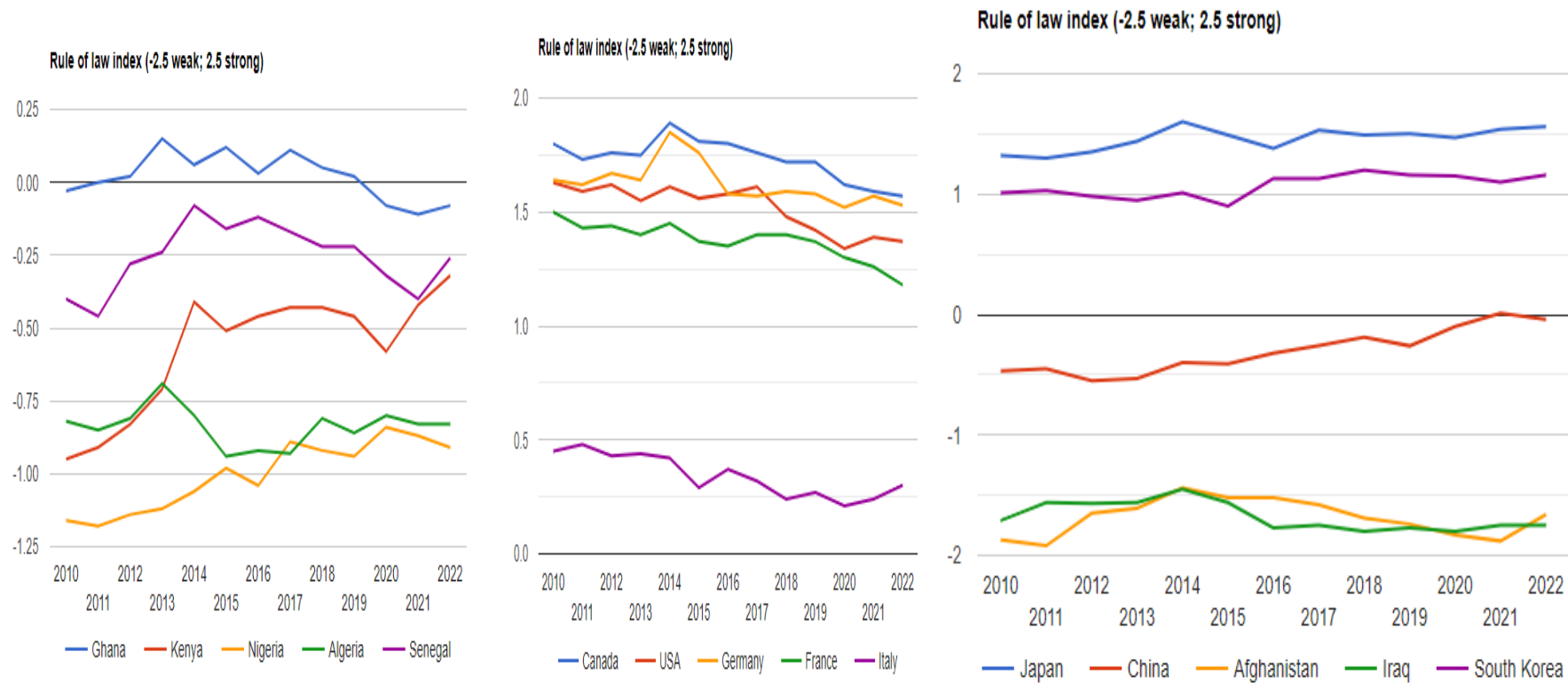


Figure 3: Comparison of the Rule of Law as an Institutional Quality variable across the three regions

Source: World Bank (2023)

In contrast, G7 countries like Canada, Germany, and the USA consistently rank higher on the Rule of Law Index, indicative of their stable, well-established legal systems. This robust institutional quality correlates strongly with higher labour market outcomes for women, including greater access to formal employment and protection against workplace biases (Olonade, et al., 2021).

Asian countries display a broad spectrum of scores. Nations like Japan and South Korea show high and relatively stable rule of law scores, supporting environments conducive to female participation in the workforce. Conversely, countries such as Afghanistan and Iraq, struggle with low scores due to ongoing conflicts and weak governance, directly impacting women's ability to participate safely and effectively in the labour market (World Bank, 2023).

### ***Statistical Insights and Policy Implications***

The data suggests a clear correlation between higher rule of law scores and better labour market outcomes for women. Countries with stronger adherence to the rule of law provide a legal environment that supports women's rights and employment, while countries with lower scores often lack the necessary legal protections for women, impacting their employment opportunities significantly. For instance, G7 countries, with their strong scores, implement and enforce policies that protect women from employment discrimination and support their career advancement. In contrast, in many Sub-Saharan and certain Asian countries, the lower scores highlight the need for significant institutional reforms to improve women's labour participation rates by enhancing legal protections and enforcing existing laws more effectively.

This comparative analysis underscores the essential role of robust legal institutions in promoting equitable labour markets for women. To enhance women's participation across all regions, it is critical to strengthen the rule of law, ensuring that women can access the same opportunities and protections as their male counterparts. As demonstrated, institutional quality directly influences the practical implementation of policies designed to support women's economic participation.

### **2.2.8 Challenges and Barriers to Women Labour Participation**

Women's labour participation across different regions faces a complex set of challenges and barriers that are both common and unique, depending on the cultural, economic, and policy-related contexts of each region.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, one of the predominant challenges is the lack of infrastructure that supports women's access to the labour market, including inadequate childcare and healthcare services. Economic barriers also significantly impact women, where high rates of poverty limit educational opportunities and, consequently, employment prospects. Culturally, traditional gender roles often dictate women's primary responsibility as caregivers, further hindering their full participation in the workforce. Policies intended to support women's economic empowerment are often poorly implemented and lack enforcement, leaving significant gaps in actual practice (Urama, et al., 2020).

Asia presents a diverse landscape where challenges vary widely between countries. In more developed regions like Japan and South Korea, cultural norms and long work hours pose significant barriers, despite strong institutional frameworks. In less developed parts of Asia, such as certain areas in Southeast Asia, educational disparities and limited access to vocational training restrict women's employment opportunities in higher-paid and more stable sectors. Additionally, in many Asian countries, there is a significant rural-urban divide, where women in rural areas face more pronounced barriers in terms of access to healthcare and education, directly impacting their labour participation (Sarfraz et al., 2021).

In G7 countries, although institutional support for women's labour participation is generally strong, challenges persist. For instance, despite policies aimed at reducing gender pay gaps, women in many advanced economies continue to earn less than their male counterparts for similar work. Furthermore, women are often underrepresented in leadership roles within major corporations and political positions, reflecting ongoing gender biases and cultural barriers that impede their career advancement. Moreover, even as policies support parental leave, the uptake by women significantly exceeds that of men, suggesting persistent cultural norms around caregiving responsibilities (Sheraz et al., 2024).

Across all regions, a common barrier is the persistent cultural stereotype that undervalues women's work and overemphasizes their role in domestic spheres. Economically, women worldwide face challenges related to job security, wage disparities, and underrepresentation in high-paying industries. Policy-wise, while many regions have established laws to support women's participation in the labour force, the effectiveness of these laws often falls short due to inadequate implementation and monitoring.

Each region requires tailored strategies to overcome these barriers effectively. In Sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Asia, improving basic infrastructure, education, and healthcare is crucial. In contrast, in G7 and other developed regions, the focus may need to be more on changing cultural perceptions and ensuring that existing laws are applied effectively and fairly.

### **2.2.9 Occupational segregation**

Occupational segregation denotes the disproportionate allocation of men and women (or other groups) among various occupations or sectors within the labour market. It can be classified into two primary categories: horizontal segregation and vertical segregation.

#### **2.2.9.1. Horizontal Segregation**

Horizontal segregation transpires when men and women (or other groups) are distributed across distinct sectors or jobs. This frequently occurs as a result of societal standards, educational access, and gender roles. For instance, women may predominate in sectors such as healthcare, education, and administrative assistance, whereas men may excel in domains like engineering, building, and technology.

In numerous Sub-Saharan African nations, women predominantly participate in agriculture, especially in rural regions. This is frequently attributable to conventional gender roles that designate caregiving and agricultural duties to women. Women may also be prevalent in informal industries and low-wage employment. Conversely, men typically prevail in higher-paying, formal industries such as mining, building, and transportation. Horizontal segregation in Sub-Saharan Africa is predominantly shaped by cultural norms and restricted educational opportunities for women, especially in rural areas.

In Asia, horizontal segregation is widespread, with women predominantly employed in traditional and service-oriented sectors, like healthcare, education, and textiles. Conversely, men are predominantly represented in higher-paying sectors such as technology, manufacturing, and finance. In many nations, such as Japan, women are predominantly employed in part-time, lower-status positions due to conventional expectations of family caregiving, whereas men occupy full-time, high-status occupations. The extent of horizontal segregation differs among Asian countries, with South Korea and India exhibiting notably pronounced divisions.

In G7 nations, women are frequently employed in lower-wage service industries such as healthcare, education, and retail. Conversely, men predominate in sectors such

as construction, engineering, and technology. Countries such as Canada and Sweden have made progress in diminishing horizontal segregation through gender-sensitive policies in education and labour sectors. The segregation is less pronounced than in Sub-Saharan Africa and certain regions of Asia, however it persists.

#### **2.2.9.2 Vertical Segregation**

Vertical segregation denotes the disproportionate allocation of men and women (or other groups) within the occupational hierarchy, wherein men predominantly occupy higher-paying and more esteemed positions, while women are confined to lower-paying, lower-status occupations within the same sector.

Vertical segregation is pronounced in numerous Sub-Saharan African countries. Men are more inclined to occupy decision-making positions or managerial roles, especially in formal industries, whereas women are disproportionately represented in lower-wage, administrative, or support positions. Cultural traditions, coupled with restricted access to higher education and leadership training for women, foster this type of division.

Vertical segregation is widespread in numerous Asian nations. In nations such as Japan and South Korea, although women may participate in the workforce, they frequently occupy subordinate roles with restricted prospects for advancement. This is frequently attributable to societal expectations regarding women's familial responsibilities and the "glass ceiling" in corporate settings. In nations such as India, women have substantial obstacles to career advancement owing to gender discrimination and restricted access to leadership positions.

G7 Nations: Although vertical segregation related to gender inequality has diminished in G7 nations, it remains prevalent. Women are under-represented in senior management roles, and the gender pay disparity persists across numerous sectors. Women frequently lack representation in high positions, especially in male-dominated sectors such as finance, technology, and engineering. Measures like gender quotas and diversity programs have been implemented to mitigate vertical segregation; yet, it continues to be a substantial problem in most G7 nations.

### **2.3 Conceptual Framework**

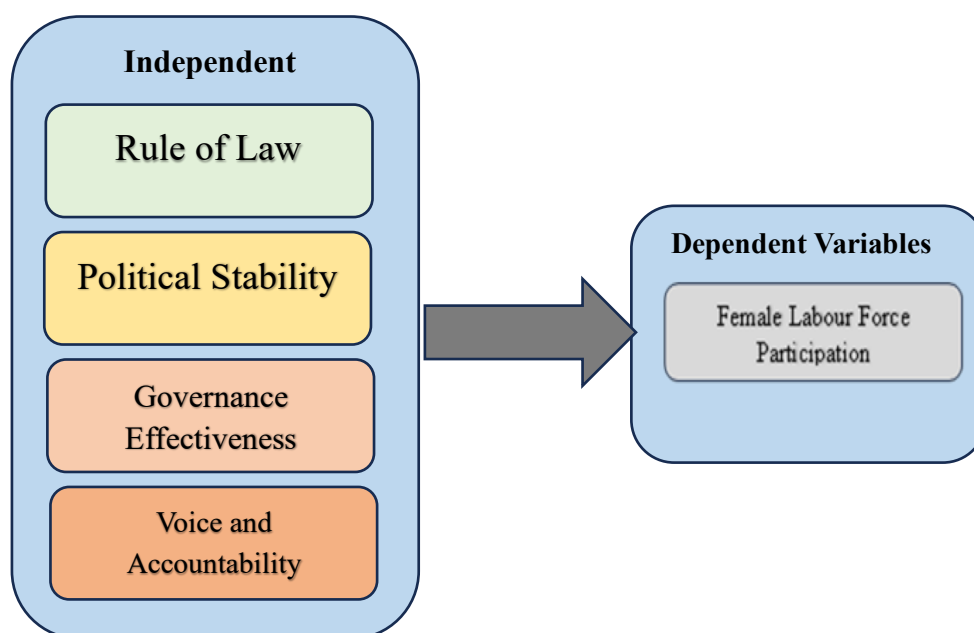
The interplay between the rule of law, political stability, governance effectiveness, and voice and accountability forms a complex framework that critically influences Women's workforce involvement. These elements are not isolated but deeply interconnected, each contributing uniquely and synergistically to create an environment conducive to or restrictive of women's economic engagement.

The rule of law ensures legal protections are uniformly and impartially applied, safeguarding women's rights within the labour market. This legal framework is essential for enforcing policies against workplace discrimination and upholding equal pay regulations. When combined with political stability, which provides a predictable environment for the effective implementation of these policies, the rule of law fosters a secure landscape where economic policies supporting women can flourish. Political stability thus amplifies the effects of the rule of law, ensuring that initiatives designed to boost female workforce engagement are neither interrupted nor reversed by political upheaval (Mehmood et al., 2023; Shabbir et al., 2019).

Effective governance is critical in actualizing the policies shaped by the rule of law and political stability. It ensures that public services crucial for supporting women in the workforce, such as childcare and healthcare, are adequately provided. This effectiveness is crucial for the practical application of gender-focused policies and for maintaining transparency and accountability in their execution. Furthermore, voice and accountability play pivotal roles in enhancing governance, as they involve the active participation of women in democratic processes and policymaking. This participation ensures that women's interests are represented and addressed, thereby promoting policies that facilitate greater labour market access and equity (Chen & Ge, 2018; Sarfraz et al., 2021).

The synergy among these factors creates a robust institutional quality that can significantly enhance women's labour participation. For instance, a country that scores high in the rule of law, political stability, governance effectiveness, and voice and accountability is likely to have comprehensive and well-enforced labour laws, supportive social services, and policies that encourage women's active participation in the economy. This interconnectedness not only supports higher employment rates among women but also ensures that women can ascend into leadership roles and participate in economic activities under equitable conditions (Sulaiman et al., 2023).

Understanding these interconnections highlights the necessity of a holistic approach to policy-making where improvements in one area of institutional quality can lead to enhancements in others, cumulatively boosting Women’s workforce involvement. It underscores the importance of not viewing institutional factors in isolation but as part of an integrated system that collectively influences the economic empowerment of women.



**Figure 4: Conceptual Model**

With the help of the offered conceptual model, we can see how different aspects of institutional quality affect female participation in the labor force. The layout of this model highlights the interplay between the dependent variable, women's workforce inclusion, and the independent variables, political stability, rule of law, governance effectiveness, and voice and accountability.

The rule of law is a social variable that measures how much people trust and follow societal norms, such as those pertaining to property rights, the police, the courts, and the quality of contract enforcement. It also takes into account the probability of crime and violence. According to Shabbir et al. (2019), a more robust legal system usually results in the efficient enforcement of legislation that safeguard women's rights, such anti-discrimination and equal pay laws. This, in turn, fosters an atmosphere that is favourable to women's labour participation.



The probability that the government would be destabilized or overturned by violent or unconstitutional methods, including terrorism and violence motivated by politics, is assessed by this component, which is known as political stability. Funding programs that support gender parity and seek to boost women's employment engagement requires a stable political climate since it makes economic forecasts easier to make (Shabbir & Zeb, 2019).

When we talk about the effectiveness of governance, we're talking about things like the reliability of government services, the civil service's freedom from political pressures, and the government's dedication to its stated goals, and the development and execution of policies. Policies aimed at increasing women's participation in the workforce can only be effectively and sustainably implemented if there is strong leadership in place (Chen & Ge, 2018).

Voice and Accountability: This metric assesses the degree to which a nation's inhabitants may have a say in choosing their government, along with other freedoms like free speech, association, and media. Public policies that give women a stronger voice and hold policymakers accountable are more likely to reflect women's values and priorities, which in turn may lead to more precise and efficient efforts to increase women's participation in the workforce (Goetz & Jenkins, 2016).

Gender diversity in the workplace: This variable represents the result that the four independent factors had an effect on; it is called the dependent variable. This metric tracks the number of working-age women as well as the number of women actively seeking employment. According to the model, women's participation in the workforce is anticipated to be favourably affected by advancements in political stability, the rule of law, effective governance, and voice and accountability (Thaddeus, et al., 2022).

The model deftly depicts the intricate web of relationships between policymaking, cultural mores, and the nuts and bolts of women's economic participation. Policymakers and academics can improve the targeting of programs to eliminate obstacles and boost women's involvement in the labor market by recognizing and assessing these links. Beyond laying out a thorough framework for investigating how institutional determinants affect female labor inclusion directly, this model also draws attention to the possible indirect effects that can result from better institutional quality.

## **2.4. Summary of Empirical Review**

The various empirical literature that are reviewed from different region under study are summarized in the table below for clearer comprehension.

S/N	Name of Author and Year	Title	Methodology	Findings
1	Backhaus & Loichinger (2021)	Women's workforce involvement in sub-Saharan Africa	Linear Regression Analysis	The research found a positive link between women's participation in the labor force and their educational attainment during their working years. Additionally, women's education is positively correlated with employment opportunities in sectors outside of primary industries. Early motherhood, on the other hand, correlates with reduced educational levels for women and an increased gender disparity in the workforce.
2	<u>Amaina et al.</u> (2019)	Economic Development and Women's workforce involvement	<u>Generalised</u> Method of Moments	The findings from the analysis indicate a U-shaped relationship between women's labor force participation and economic development.

3	Appiah (2018)	Relationship between Women's workforce involvement and economic growth	<u>Generalised Method of Moments</u>	The research findings presented in this study offer empirical support for the notion that augmenting women's involvement in the <u>labour</u> market has the potential to impact economic growth rates positively
4	Iweagu et al. (2015)	Determinants of Women's workforce involvement in Nigeria: The Rural/Urban Dichotomy	Logistic Regression	The findings indicated that in the rural sector, factors such as marital status, religion, poverty rate, and per capita income significantly influenced outcomes, whereas in the urban sector, age and literacy rate were the key determinants.
5	Ntuli (2017)	Determinants of South African Women's workforce involvement	Decomposition technique known as the "Even and Macpherson decomposition"	The results show that female labor force participation was positively influenced by education, which emerged as the primary factor. Additionally, non-labor income, marital status, fertility, and regional differences in economic development consistently hindered participation.
6	Ackah et al. (2019)	Factors that influence women's participation in Ghana's <u>labour</u> market	Regression analysis	The study demonstrated that women who have attained a primary school education or higher exhibit a greater level of economic activity than those without formal education.

7	Bibi & Afzal (2012)	Determinant of married women to participate in the labor force	Descriptive Analysis	The researchers discovered that several factors had a bearing on the <del>labour</del> force participation of married women. These factors included the education level of the participant, the number of children and dependents, the family's makeup, the husband's income, the family's monthly expenditures, and the positive mentality of both the husband and the family regarding women's employment.
8	Opeloyeru et al. (2021)	Investigated the role of institutional quality in the relationship between health expenditure and labor force participation (LFP) in Africa,	Generalized Moments Model	The quality of institutions was observed to negatively impact female labor participation. Additionally, the beneficial influence of government health spending on female labor participation is diminished when the interaction between institutional quality and government health expenditure is considered.

9	<u>Agovino et al.</u> (2019)	Investigate the influence of municipal institutions on <u>labour</u> market participation	Spatial econometrics	The findings confirm that the quality of institutions significantly influences labor market participation locally for both genders, although it does not impact the gender participation gap. Furthermore, institutions create spatial spillovers, impacting labor participation in adjacent provinces. Lastly, the presence of public childcare facilities is identified as a crucial factor in boosting female participation
10	Thaddeus et al. (2022)	Women's workforce involvement rate and economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa	Autoregressive Distributed Lag model and Granger causality test	The analysis reveals a sustained causal link from economic growth to female labor force in sub-Saharan Africa, indicating that economic growth directly influences female labor force participation. Moreover, the findings suggest that in the long term, female labor force participation has a negative and significant effect on GDP in this region, although this impact is negligibly negative in the short term, implying a potential liability.

11	Urama et al. (2020)	Women's <u>Labour</u> Force Participation: Economic Growth Nexus in Sub- Saharan African Countries	<u>Generalised</u> Method of Moments	The research indicated a positive correlation between gross fixed capital formation, female labor force participation, and economic growth in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), alongside a negative correlation between regional growth and fertility rates. Consequently, the study advises governments in the SSA region to develop policies that support and enhance women's participation in the workforce.
12	Abdullah and Bakar (2011)	Examines the causal relationship between total fertility rate (TFR) and women labor force participation rate (WLFPR)	Johansen Cointegration and Engle- Granger method	The results demonstrate that in every scenario, an increase in women's labor force participation negatively impacts the total fertility rate, suggesting that higher participation rates among women lead to lower fertility rates, rather than the reverse.
13	Milazzo & Goldstein (2019)	Institution and women's economic and political participation: Power inequalities, formal constraints and norms	Systematic Review	Findings from the analysis revealed that some measures have been effective in lowering inequality. Temporary initiatives can occasionally have long-term effects, and power and norms can change.

14	Sassler & Meyerhofer (2023)	Factors shaping the gender wage gap among college-educated computer science workers	Ordinary Least Square Regression analysis	For the sector studied, women earn approximately 86.6 cents for every dollar earned by men, a smaller disparity than the general workforce's 82 percent. Adjusting for factors such as family background, degree, and occupation further reduces this wage gap, yet women still earn 9.1 cents less per dollar compared to men.
15	Lincove (2008)	Growth, girls' education, and female labor: A longitudinal analysis	Regression Analysis	The findings indicate that enhancing female education can counteract the potential decline in female labor participation due to wealth increases. Furthermore, policies focused on promoting girls' education seem to yield positive outcomes for both labor markets and domestic productivity.
16	Zheng (2022)	Gender equality progress in a decade: health, education, and employment	Survey Analysis	The initial results from the 2020 Survey on Social Status of Women in China show advancements from 2010 to 2020 in enhancing women's status and efforts towards eliminating gender disparities and fostering gender equality across various sectors such as health, education, and employment.

17	Qaiser, Rehman, & Arshed (2023)	Role of institutional quality on women's empowerment: A case of highly gender unequal Asian countries	Panel Feasible Generalized Least Squares	The analysis indicates that female unemployment and effective governance are associated with widening gender disparities in Asian nations. Conversely, improvements in the Human Development Index, greater openness to trade, and enhanced democratic practices are linked to reductions in these gender gaps.
18	Hasan (2023)	Gender Inequality in South Asia: Tracing Impediments to SDG 5 of UN Sustainable Development Goals	Qualitative analysis	In South Asia, women continue to face significant challenges and remain disadvantaged in accessing their rights due to persistent gender inequality. The study underscores the region's extremely low levels of gender equality across various domains.
19	Raymo & Park (2023)	Understanding relationships between socioeconomic bifurcation in family behavior and inequality	Descriptive Analysis	Contemporary research frequently separates issues that include economic policies, cultural norms, and institutional frameworks without taking into account their interconnections. This fragmented approach fails to consider the combined impact of these factors on women's involvement in the labour force



20	Cislaghi, et al., (2022)	Gender norms and gender equality in full-time employment and health	Regression analysis	The findings from the study indicated that gender norms significantly affect women's economic participation and health outcomes globally. The study found that more egalitarian views concerning gender are associated with better health and employment outcomes for women, emphasizing the need for policies that promote gender equality to improve both economic and health indicators for women worldwide.
21	Mishra, Nielsen, & Smyth (2010)	Relationship between Women's workforce involvement and fertility in G7 countries: Evidence from panel cointegration and Granger causality	Panel cointegration and Granger causality	The key results of the study indicate that within the G7 countries, the female labor force participation rate and the total fertility rate are cointegrated. It was found that long-term Granger causality flows from the total fertility rate to the female labor force participation rate. Additionally, the findings show that a 1% rise in the total fertility rate leads to a 0.4% reduction in the female labor force participation rate in these countries.

22	Behrman & Gonalons-Pons (2020)	Women's employment and fertility in a global perspective	Regression analysis	The study reveals that across all major global regions, women's wage employment shows a negative correlation with total fertility rates and the unmet need for family planning. Conversely, there is a positive correlation between women's wage employment and the use of modern contraceptives. This suggests that as women engage more in paid employment, their use of effective family planning methods increases, while their fertility rates and unmet family planning needs tend to decrease.
23	Bloom et al. (2009)	Fertility, female labor force participation, and the demographic dividend	Panel Analysis	The findings suggest that a shift in behaviour, specifically an increase in Women's workforce involvement, plays a substantial role in boosting economic growth during periods of demographic transition marked by declining fertility rates. This indicates that as more women enter the workforce, their contribution becomes a critical factor in enhancing the overall economic development of a society undergoing changes in its population dynamics.

24	Goldin (2014)	A grand gender convergence	Comprehensive Qualitative Analysis	The study revealed that while significant progress has been made in reducing the gender gap in labour force participation and wages, persistent challenges remain, particularly related to the allocation of roles within households and the workplace.
25	Evan & Vozárová (2017)	Influence of women's workforce participation and pensions on total fertility rate	Correlation Analysis	The study challenges the widely reported positive association between female <u>labor</u> force participation and fertility rates, <u>labeling</u> these claims as misleading. The research demonstrates that the relationship is statistically insignificant, likely influenced by pro-family policies aimed at mitigating the adverse effects of women's participation in the workforce. These findings have prompted a renewed interest in examining the dynamics between female employment and fertility within the context of supportive family policies.

26	Shuangshuang, Zhu, & Mughal, (2023)	The impact of education and digitalization on Women's workforce involvement in BRICS: an advanced panel data analysis	Banerjee and <del>Crrion-i-</del> Selvestre cointegration, slope heterogeneity, and cross-sectional augmented autoregressive distributed lags model	The research findings highlight a positive correlation between digitalization and Women's workforce involvement in the countries studied. Additionally, factors such as education and GDP are crucial in promoting Women's workforce involvement over the long term. This relationship also holds in the short term, though the effects are less pronounced compared to the long-term impacts.
27	Taşseven, Altaş, & Un, (2016)	The determinants of female labor force participation for OECD countries	Panel logit model	The analysis revealed that factors such as the unemployment rate, per capita GDP, and fertility rates positively and significantly influence the rate of Women's workforce involvement. Among these variables, the fertility rate exhibits the most substantial impact on the participation rate of women in the labour force. This suggests a complex interplay where higher fertility does not necessarily deter women from participating in the workforce, possibly due to supportive policies or cultural factors that enable employment alongside child-rearing.

28	Fitong & Dzansi (2023)	Examining the impact of gender discriminatory practices on women's development and progression at work	Regression Analysis	The findings indicate that discriminatory practices in the workplace affect women's skill development, which in turn influences their career advancement. However, the study refutes the notion that these discriminatory practices directly hinder women's career progression. This suggests that while such practices impact skill acquisition, other factors may play a more significant role in advancing women's careers.
29	Adu-Oppong & Kendie (2018)	Impact of gender segregation on workplace advancement of women in Ghanaian universities	Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis	The study's findings highlight that women in Ghana face significant obstacles in their professional environments, primarily due to segregation that acts as a substantial barrier to their career advancement. This segregation in the workplace not only hampers their progression but also limits their access to equal opportunities compared to their male counterparts. The research underscores the need for more inclusive policies and practices to combat gender-based barriers and promote a more equitable working environment, allowing women to advance and succeed on par with men.

30	Stamarski & Hing (2015)	Gender inequalities in the workplace: the	Systematic Literature Review	The study found that gender discrimination in HR-related decision-making and in the
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		effects of organizational structures, processes, practices, and decision makers' sexism		enactment of HR practices stems from broader organizational inequalities. These systemic issues not only affect women's opportunities and earnings but also significantly impact their participation in the labour force. The findings suggest that addressing sexism in decision-making and improving organizational practices could enhance Women's workforce involvement by creating more equitable workplace environments.
31	Mousa (2021)	Does gender diversity affect workplace happiness for academics? The role of diversity management and organizational inclusion	T-test analysis	The study's results demonstrated that there is no direct correlation between gender diversity and organizational inclusion. However, the research went on to confirm that a combination of gender diversity, effective diversity management, and organizational inclusion are key predictors of workplace happiness. This implies that while simply having a diverse gender representation does not automatically lead to feelings of inclusion, the active management of diversity and the promotion of an inclusive culture play critical roles in fostering a positive work

				environment. These factors together enhance overall job satisfaction and contribute significantly to the well-being and happiness of employees within the workplace.
32	Shang (2022)	Tackling gender inequality: definitions, trends, and policy designs	Literature Review	The study's findings emphasize that not all gender gaps are indicative of gender inequality; some may not stem from a lack of equal rights and opportunities. It was noted that gender inequality is becoming more subtle and implicit, requiring more nuanced policy responses. The research argues that addressing gender inequality is beneficial for all of society, not just women, and suggests that both broad and targeted policies are necessary to combat these issues effectively. This approach to gender inequality is particularly relevant to discussions about Women's workforce involvement, as the study highlights how nuanced policies can help integrate women more fully into the workforce.
33	Chung & van der Lippe, (2020)	Flexible working, work-life balance,	Literature Review	The findings from the research demonstrate that gender significantly influences the

		and gender equality		<p>outcomes of flexible work arrangements, and this influence varies widely depending on the context. Specifically, for women in the labour force, the effects of flexible working are particularly nuanced. While flexible work options can enhance female participation in the workforce by providing the necessary balance between professional and personal responsibilities, the benefits can differ greatly based on factors such as industry, cultural norms, and individual workplace policies. This variation suggests that to effectively support female workforce involvement, policies need to be tailored to address the specific challenges and opportunities presented by different work environments. This approach is crucial for leveraging flexible work arrangements as a tool to promote greater inclusivity and equality in the workplace for women.</p>
34	Abington (2020)	The impact of government policies on female	Fixed effects regression model	The findings indicate that the presence of laws against gender discrimination in hiring correlates with increased



		labor force participation rates		<p>likelihood of women either working or seeking work. This may be because such laws boost the chances of women being employed, or because they provide women with the confidence to enter the labor force, knowing that legal protections against gender-based discrimination exist.</p> <p>Additionally, the data suggests that gender discrimination in hiring practices could potentially reduce the rates of female participation in the labour market.</p>
35	Aydın (2015)	Women's labor participation rates and competitiveness in the G7 countries.	Panel data analysis	The research concludes that an increase in female labour participation rate boosts national competitiveness; conversely, heightened international competitiveness also fosters an increase in women's labour participation rate within the G7 nations.
36	Bertay, Dordevic, & Sever (2020)	Gender inequality and economic growth: Evidence from industry-level data	Difference-in-Differences (DiD) model	The study reveals that addressing gender inequality has a tangible impact on economic performance by optimizing the use of female labour. By allocating women's labour to more productive sectors, the research suggests that reducing

				<p>gender disparities can significantly enhance the growth of industries that traditionally employ a higher proportion of women. The analysis underscores that industries within countries exhibiting lower pre-existing gender inequalities tend to experience more rapid growth in terms of value addition and labour productivity. This demonstrates a clear causal link between diminished gender inequality and improved economic outcomes, particularly through enhanced Women's workforce involvement.</p>
37	Ogbogu & Erero (2009)	Institutional factors affecting female labour input in the Nigerian University System	Descriptive Analysis	<p>The research indicates that female employees experience their work schedules as stressful and challenging, which hampers their ability to fully realize their potential. This issue is compounded by a lack of sufficient working facilities, low pay, congested work agendas, postponed promotions, inadequate research funding, insufficient childcare options for nursing mothers, and the absence of supportive policies that are conducive to gender equality.</p>

38	Thévenon (2016)	Do ‘institutional complementarities’ foster Women’s workforce involvement?	Descriptive analysis	The findings indicated that increased availability of childcare services influences women's participation in the labor market, with more significant effects observed in countries that provide greater overall support for working mothers.
39	Dieckhoff, Gash, & Steiber (2015)	Effect of institutional change on gender inequality in the labour market	Longitudinal analyses	The findings imply that men derive more obvious advantages from enhanced employment protection than women. Additionally, there is no evidence to support the neoclassical claim that robust trade unions lead to a reduction in female employment.
40	Krishnakumar & Viswanathan (2021)	Role of social and institutional factors in Indian women’s labour force participation	Sample-selection model	The findings revealed that women who are empowered and have trust in societal institutions are more likely to participate in the labour force. Additionally, those who have an adequate support system, including better amenities and shared household responsibilities, tend to work longer hours. This suggests that both social empowerment and supportive institutional frameworks play crucial roles in enhancing Women’s workforce involvement in India.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THEORITICAL BACKGROUND**

#### **3.1 Theoretical Literature**

Understanding the relationship between institutional quality and Women's workforce involvement requires a holistic theoretical approach that integrates diverse economic, sociological, and feminist perspectives. This comprehensive examination not only highlights the direct impacts of institutional environments on women's economic behaviours but also underscores the broader socio-economic contexts in which these interactions occur. Theories from various disciplines provide the necessary framework to dissect the complex layers of influence that shape women's roles in the labour market and guide effective policy-making aimed at enhancing gender equality in employment.

##### **3.1.1 Economic Theories of Labour Participation**

###### **3.1.1.1 Human Capital Theory**

One of the most important theories in labor economics, known as "Human Capital Theory," states that spending money on people's education and training has a significant impact on their success in the job market. Education and training, according to this idea put out by Becker (1964), boost an individual's productivity, which impacts their employability, earning potential, and professional advancement opportunities (Becker, 2009).

Education and training, like investments in physical capital, are considered formative investments in human capital, according to Human Capital Theory. Not only do women need these investments to break through occupational segregation and salary discrepancies, but they are also essential for accessing job possibilities. According to empirical research, women who have completed more years of schooling are more likely to be employed and to work in professional and technical fields (Goldin, 2014).

If women want to be competitive in the workforce, they need to invest in themselves by getting a formal education, but they also need to get vocational training and work on their skills. Adapting to technology changes and increasing employment needs is made easier for women via training programs that are suited to market expectations. Particularly in fields where women have historically been underrepresented, these types of programs are critical for enabling a transition to better-paying, more

specialized employment (Acemoglu & Autor, 2011). Human capital investment has far-reaching effects on women's success in the workforce. Improving one's employability and job stability are two primary outcomes of investing in one's education and training. A lower unemployment rate and a greater rate of secure, formal job contracts are associated with women's higher levels of education. Second, women are better able to negotiate greater wages and advance in their careers when human capital is invested in (Blau & Kahn, 2017). Beyond the obvious monetary advantages, there are broader social benefits to investing in women's education. Economic development, demographic transition, and social changes—such as lower fertility rates and better family health outcomes—are all things that educated women are likely to help bring about. In keeping with Human Capital Theory, this far-reaching effect demonstrates how education may change lives (Klasen, 2002).

**Obstacles & Things to Think About:** There are obstacles to implementing Human Capital Theory in a way that encourages women to work, despite the obvious advantages. Investing in women's human capital may be challenging due to cultural obstacles, discrimination in the workplace and classroom, and uneven caregiving duties. To overcome these obstacles, we need all-encompassing policy changes that remove structural barriers to gender equality in the workplace and provide opportunities for education and training (Nussbaum, 2011).

### **3.1.1.2 Labour Supply and Demand Theory**

Labour Supply and Demand Theory offers a comprehensive framework to analyse how labour market conditions directly impact female employment, wage determination, and overall participation in the workforce (Kabeer, 2021). By exploring the dynamics of labour supply and demand, we can better understand the interaction between economic conditions, technological changes, policy interventions, and educational attainment as they relate to female labour.

Economic conditions significantly influence labour demand; during economic expansion, employment opportunities increase, potentially benefiting women. However, economic downturns often lead to job cuts in sectors like retail and hospitality, where women predominantly work, reflecting a direct link between economic cycles and female employment stability. Moreover, technological advancements, while sometimes displacing traditional jobs held by women in administrative roles due to automation, also open new opportunities in emerging sectors for those equipped with necessary skills. Thus, technology acts as a double-

edged sword, reshaping demand and requiring adaptability in the female workforce (Autor, 2019).

Government policies such as enhancing maternity leave and providing subsidized childcare influence both the supply and demand for female labour. These policies can encourage more women to join or return to the workforce by lowering the costs associated with working, particularly for mothers. These interventions show how policy can adjust the labour supply curve by making employment more accessible and appealing to women (Goldin, 2021).

Educational attainment also plays a crucial role. As women achieve higher levels of education, they are able to secure positions in high-skilled fields, thereby increasing the supply of labour in sectors that traditionally offer better pay and job security. This shift not only affects individual women but also influences market wages and employment rates within female-dominated sectors, potentially narrowing gender wage gaps (Becker, 2009).

However, wage disparities remain a significant barrier. The gender wage gap can deter women from entering the labour force if they perceive the compensation does not reflect fair value for their skills. Addressing these disparities is essential for enhancing female workforce involvement and ensuring that labour markets function equitably and efficiently (Blau & Kahn, 2017).

This synthesis of Labour Supply and Demand Theory with respect to female labour highlights the interconnectedness of economic, technological, policy, and educational factors in shaping labour market outcomes for women. Recognizing these interdependencies is crucial for crafting effective policies that support gender equality in the labour market and promote broader economic stability and growth.

#### **3.1.1.3 Segmented Labour Market Theory**

Segmented Labour Market Theory provides a critical lens for examining the structural divides within labour markets, which often distinctly affect men and women. This theory posits that labour markets are inherently divided into 'primary' and 'secondary' sectors, characterized by disparities in job stability, wages, and advancement opportunities. Gender plays a pivotal role in this segmentation, often channelling women disproportionately into the secondary sector, which is marked by lower wages, higher turnover, and fewer career progression opportunities (Von Lockette & Spriggs, 2016).

Economic conditions, societal norms, and institutional policies interplay to enforce this segmentation. Women are frequently overrepresented in part-time, temporary, or lower-wage positions within industries such as care work, retail, and hospitality. This concentration not only limits their earnings potential but also restricts their overall career mobility. Addressing these disparities is crucial for policymakers aiming to enhance female workforce involvement and involves understanding the underlying factors that contribute to labour market segmentation (Paul & Dort, 2014).

Policies tailored to combat these disparities often focus on improving wage equity, enhancing job security, and providing career development opportunities within predominantly female sectors. Additionally, efforts to dismantle educational and occupational segregation are vital, as they help diversify the job types pursued by both genders, leading to a more integrated labour market (Blau & Kahn, 2017; Grimshaw et al., 2017).

Strategic interventions such as enforcing anti-discrimination laws, supporting transitions from secondary to primary sectors, and instituting supportive measures like childcare facilities can significantly mitigate the gendered impacts of labour market segmentation. These measures not only facilitate women's access to higher-quality jobs but also challenge the traditional norms that perpetuate job segregation along gender lines (Rees, 2022).

In essence, Segmented Labour Market Theory elucidates the complex dynamics that underpin gender disparities in labour markets. By addressing these segmentations through comprehensive and strategic policies, it is possible to foster a labour market environment where women have equal opportunities to secure stable, well-compensated positions, thus ensuring economic equity and enhancing overall economic productivity.

## **3.2 Sociological Theories**

### **3.2.1 Gender Role Theory**

Gender Role Theory offers a solid foundation for comprehending how long-standing cultural norms influence economic actions and lead to gender-based occupational segregation. Society norms dictate distinct behaviours and roles for men and women, according to this notion, which impacts career chances and individual choices in various ways for the sexes. Men are expected to provide financially while women are expected to care for others. By directing women into traditionally

feminine occupations like nursing, teaching, and caring, this gender bias affects both personal career decisions and economic activity as a whole. Contrast this with the male-dominated sectors of engineering and technology, where one is expected to exhibit traits typically linked with masculinity, like aggression and technical knowledge, and where one can expect to earn lower salaries and have fewer opportunities for advancement (Connell, 2013; Ridgeway, 2011).

The continuation of these roles results in occupational segregation, where different kinds of jobs are classified according to gender. This division limits women's access to high-paying fields and keeps wage inequities alive. The economic gap between men and women is widened because women are pushed to work less hours or in lower-paying jobs so they can take care of their families (Charles & Grusky, 2005).

Policies that support the advancement of women in STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) and other STEM-related sectors, as well as programs that support equal pay for equal labour and maternity leave, are examples of efforts to change these norms. These play a crucial role in challenging stereotypical gender norms. There are still many obstacles that women in traditionally male-dominated industries must overcome before they can advance in their careers (Correll et al., 2020). These include a lack of mentoring and an inclusive work environment.

Policy reform, educational initiatives, and cultural change are all necessary components of an effective strategy to challenge these long-standing misconceptions. Society may work toward a fairer labor market for women by advocating for regulations that equalize caring obligations, supporting educational changes that expand women's professional opportunities, and starting cultural initiatives to combat gender stereotypes.

### **3.2.2 Social Role Theory**

To better comprehend the complex ways in which gendered social roles impact people's decisions to enter or remain in the labor field, Social Role Theory offers a useful framework. Role conflict and role augmentation are complicated aspects that impact professional paths, particularly for women. This theory delves into these dynamics and offers insights.

The inability to fully commit to one position due to the obligations of another is known as role conflict. Struggling to balance their job and caregiving responsibilities is a major obstacle for many women. These difficulties might show up as a lack of opportunity to advance in one's profession, fewer jobs overall, or even the necessity



to take up part-time employment to help out around the house. Both individual careers and organizational effectiveness may be negatively impacted by workplace disputes, according to research (Eagly & Wood, 2012). These conflicts can cause greater stress, job unhappiness, and decreased overall performance. On the other hand, according to the idea of role augmentation, juggling many responsibilities might really be good. Caring duties may teach transferable abilities like empathy, time management, and multitasking that are useful in the business, since talents and experiences gained in one function may improve performance in another. Enhanced efficiency and distinctive professional competencies—often disregarded—can make substantial contributions to diversity and productivity in the workplace as a result of this improvement (Hyde, 2001).

The relationship between role augmentation and role conflict is complex and has far-reaching consequences for women's labor force involvement. Policies that allow for more flexibility in scheduling, generous parental leave, and easy access to child care are essential in reducing the negative effects of role conflict. These measures may assist working women in better juggling their personal and professional lives, which might lead to more women entering the workforce and happier workers overall. In addition, encouraging gender diversity in leadership positions within businesses may be achieved by acknowledging and supporting the abilities that are gained via role augmentation, which in turn can improve job placements and progression opportunities (Hochschild & Machung, 2012). Workplaces may be made more welcoming and helpful by strategic interventions that take into account the fact that people's roles can be both challenging and opportunities for growth. Mentorship programs that value and support women's non-work-related abilities, more adaptable work schedules, and benefits that reflect part-time employment are all examples of what may fall into this category (Kossek & Lautsch, 2018).

### **3.2.3 Structural Functionalism**

Structural Functionalism, a key sociological theory, provides a deep comprehension of how societal structures impact people's actions and preserve security, particularly regarding Women's workforce involvement (Parsons, 2017). According to this theory, civilisation is an intricate structure with interconnected pieces that cooperate to foster harmony and camaraderie. It posits that various social institutions, including the family, education, and the labour market, are structured in

ways that perpetuate traditional roles, which can significantly impact women's economic activities and opportunities.

Societal institutions, through their established norms and roles, define paths that are often gender-specific. Women, traditionally seen as caregivers, find themselves in roles that extend these societal expectations, such as nursing, teaching, and other care-related professions. This not only influences the type of employment women pursue but also impacts the valuation and compensation of these roles. Typically, jobs associated with female roles are undervalued and underpaid compared to those dominated by males, reflecting and reinforcing societal values that prioritize and reward male-associated characteristics (Parsons, 2017; Merton, 1968)

The challenge in altering these deep-seated structures lies in their foundational role in societal stability and continuity. Efforts to initiate change must encompass shifts in policy, cultural perceptions, and individual behaviours. Educational reforms that advocate for gender equality, workplace policies that genuinely support work-life balance for all genders, and broad social campaigns aimed at challenging traditional gender roles are critical. These efforts help redefine women's roles both in public and private spheres, facilitating a re-evaluation of women's contributions across all sectors of the economy (Durkheim, 2018; Bourdieu, 2018).

Enabling greater female participation in the labour force involves dismantling these structural barriers. Implementing policies that promote equal educational and professional opportunities, enforce anti-discrimination laws, and support women in leadership positions are essential steps. Furthermore, recognizing and appreciating women's contributions in traditionally undervalued sectors can catalyse broader societal change, paving the way for a more equitable labour market.

### **3.3 Feminist Economic Theories**

#### **3.3.1 Liberal Feminism and the Push for Equal Opportunities**

One school of thought among feminists, known as "Liberal Feminism," places an emphasis on achieving gender parity via liberal democratic political and legal reforms. This ideology argues that women should have the same rights as men to develop their own capacities and make choices without being limited by conventional gender roles. It advocates for equal access to opportunities, notably in education and work (Arat, 2015).

Liberal feminism maintains that equal access to decent education is a basic human right. To liberal feminists, the key to women's empowerment and full participation in society, politics, and the economy is equal educational opportunities for girls and women (Yashinta & Nurhayati, 2024). The fight for gender equality in education includes calling for measures to eradicate gender bias in schools and for initiatives to increase the number of women working in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) disciplines, which have hitherto been dominated by men (Eisenstein, 2019).

When it comes to the job, liberal feminism is all about removing obstacles that women face and helping them climb the corporate ladder. Part of this involves speaking up against discrimination in the workplace, such as wage inequality, sexual harassment, and obstacles to advancement. The United States' Equal Pay Act and Title IX, which prohibit gender discrimination in the workplace and guarantee women's access to economic opportunities and benefits, were both pushed for by liberal feminists (Freedman, 2007). Liberal feminism has achieved great gains in the fight for equal rights, but it has also come under fire for ignoring the complicated interplay between gender and other identities, such as class and race, and for focusing on problems that mostly impact white middle-class women. Fighting for equal chances in education and work continues around the world, making the essential concepts of liberal feminism increasingly relevant (Taş, 2021).

Greater gender parity in educational attainment, more inclusive work rules that encourage work-life balance for both men and women, and a rise in the number of women in leadership posts are all indicators of the impact of liberal feminism on institutional changes. As Walby (2020) points out, these shifts show that society is slowly but surely moving towards more equal systems that allow women to be fully included in everything.

### **3.3.2 Socialist Feminism: Analysing the Intersection of Capitalism and Patriarchy**

Socialist Feminism provides a critical analysis of the intersections between capitalism and patriarchy, arguing that the two systems are interlinked and collectively contribute to the subordination of women (Ehrenreich, 1976). This theoretical framework suggests that both economic and cultural systems must be transformed to achieve genuine equality for women.

Socialist feminists argue that capitalism, as an economic system, relies on patriarchal norms and structures to sustain itself. These norms manifest through wage disparities, the undervaluation of work traditionally done by women (such as caregiving and other domestic tasks), and the marginalization of women from powerful positions within corporate hierarchies. Patriarchy, in turn, leverages capitalist structures to maintain male dominance and control over economic resources, thereby perpetuating gender inequalities (Hartmann, 2015)

The combination of capitalist and patriarchal systems significantly impacts women's economic opportunities. Women often face systemic barriers to accessing high-paying jobs and are disproportionately represented in part-time and low-wage positions. Additionally, women's unpaid labour in the home is often unrecognized and undervalued, limiting their economic independence and perpetuating their economic disadvantage (Jaggar, 1983).

In the workplace, socialist feminism highlights how capitalist exploitation and patriarchal oppression converge to create hostile environments for women. Issues such as sexual harassment, glass ceilings, and the lack of supportive policies for work-life balance are seen as products of these intertwined systems. By addressing these issues, socialist feminism calls for a re-evaluation of workplace norms and policies to ensure they support gender equality and women's advancement (Cooper, 2017).

Socialist feminists advocate for strategies that address both economic and gender inequalities. These include advocating for equal pay, better recognition of domestic labour, comprehensive maternity and paternity leave policies, and greater support for women in leadership roles. Moreover, they support the movement towards a more socialized economy where community and cooperative solutions help mitigate the harsh impacts of capitalist competition, creating more equitable and supportive environments for all workers, particularly women (Rowbotham, 2001).

### **3.3.3 Radical Feminism and Its Impact on Economic Participation**

To find the origins of female oppression, radical feminism investigates the social and institutional systems in great detail, highlighting the intrinsic interdependence of these with the larger patriarchal systems (Bryson, 1992). This school of feminism contends that patriarchy permeates all levels of society, from the economic to the political to the social, and that the subjugation of women is not an accidental consequence of cultural mores but rather an inherent feature of these

systems. These findings have far-reaching consequences for our ability to comprehend and address the obstacles that prevent women from fully participating in the economy. The patriarchal organization of society, encompassing families, the law, and the economy, is the root cause of women's oppression, according to radical feminism. Patriarchal institutions, according to this notion, give males more power and wealth than women do. This leads to sexism in the workplace and in economic policy. For example, MacKinnon (1989) notes that women face systemic discrimination in the form of lower wages and underrepresentation in corporate leadership and senior management positions. The radical feminist view holds that patriarchal beliefs embedded in economic systems are directly responsible for women's economic marginalization, rather than being an accidental factor. These systems are structured to perpetuate male supremacy by keeping women economically subservient or reliant on males. Caregiving and domestic labor, which have long been associated with women yet are severely underpaid, are two examples of the kind of historically female-dominated occupations that radical feminists contend need a rethinking of current pay and value systems (Brubaker, 2014).

In order to end patriarchal conventions that limit women's economic potential, radical feminism demands sweeping social transformations. To that end, we must fight for regulations that will put an end to pay disparity, end sexual harassment on the job, and increase the representation of women in positions of power. Further, in an effort to establish systems that foster genuine gender equality, radical feminists often advocate for the creation of non-Patriarchal economic models (Avilez, 2019). Although radical feminism offers valuable perspectives on the causes of female oppression, it has obstacles when it comes to widespread adoption and use. Its need for profound systemic reforms could be intimidating, and it sometimes fails to account for other overlapping elements like sexual orientation, race, and class in its analysis of patriarchy as the source of women's oppression. But the feminist movement still uses its central arguments to push for basic social reforms (Fahs, 2024).

#### 3.3.4: The "Doing Gender" theory

The idea of this theory which was first put forth by Candace West and Don Zimmerman in their landmark 1987 essay of the same name, contends that gender is a continuous social behaviour created via daily encounters instead of an intrinsic trait or permanent identity that people have. This theory holds that individuals "do" gender

by acting in manners that are consistent with the standards of both sex set by society. Through social structures, customs of culture, and interactions with others, these behaviors are acquired, performed, and continuously promoted. According to West and Zimmerman, gender refers to what one accomplishes rather than just what one is; it is a habitual achievement ingrained in daily behaviour. The idea that gender has biological roots is contested by this theory, which holds that masculinity is culturally formed and perpetuated via recurrent behaviours that conform to societal norms.

When it comes to female labour market involvement, the "doing gender" concept sheds light on how societal norms around feminine and household duties, in addition to economic considerations, influence women's responsibilities in their jobs. In many countries, for example, women are supposed to be loving, supportive, and family-oriented. These standards may limit their considered eligibility for high-status or managerial positions in the workplace. The gender pays gap, the glass ceiling effect, and discrimination in employment are all exacerbated by this. Furthermore, women who put their jobs first may be penalized by society for defying gender norms, and those employed in feminized occupations frequently have their labour valued less. The double burden phenomenon—where women are expected to manage domestic responsibilities and thrive professionally is further clarified by the theory, which supports the notion that women are always "doing gender" at work and at home. All things considered, the "doing gender" theory offers a critical perspective for comprehending the enduring cultural and structural obstacles that affect women's experiences in the workforce and economic involvement.

### **3.3.5: Hegemonic Masculinity Theory**

The hegemonic masculinity theory developed by Connell (1987) describes how patriarchal power systems are reinforced in society through the construction and maintenance of a dominant masculinity. Connell contends that although several forms of masculinity are present, hegemonic masculinity predominates and perpetuates male dominance (Wedgwood 2009). This idealised masculinity underscores attributes such as strength, leadership, power, and emotional stoicism. It elevates males who possess these characteristics to positions of authority, while subordinating women and other marginalised men, hence perpetuating gender disparities. Connell's theory posits numerous fundamental assumptions (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Masculinity is not a singular idea; it manifests in several forms. In addition to hegemonic

masculinity, there exist complicit masculinities (men who gain advantages from hegemonic masculinity) and subordinate masculinities (e.g., gay men) (Wedgwood 2009).

Secondly, hegemonic masculinity is associated with power dynamics in which men exert dominance over women and other marginalised groups. Ultimately, men's responsibilities in the workforce are influenced by hegemonic masculinity, which conventionally links men to leadership, power, and physical prowess. These ideas have prompted men to assume elevated-status and higher-paying positions, so cementing their societal role as providers and establishing a gendered division of labour. The theory possesses multiple merits it offers a paradigm for comprehending how masculinity is influenced by social, historical, and cultural settings, and it elucidates how hegemonic masculinity sustains male domination in both public and private domains (Connell 2004). It also considers the convergence of masculinity with other social categories such as race, class, and sexuality, providing a more complex comprehension of gender dominance. Furthermore, it elucidates the enduring nature of gender disparity in the labour market, specifically with the predominance of men in certain occupations and leadership roles (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Nonetheless, the idea possesses certain shortcomings, it frequently neglects women's agency, inadequately examining how women oppose or undermine hegemonic masculinity.

Furthermore, it may inadequately address the flexibility of gender identities within a swiftly evolving social landscape. Ultimately, the idea, initially developed within a Western context, may not possess global applicability, given that interpretations of masculinity differ throughout cultures. Connell's theory is significantly pertinent to the examination of female labour participation and institutional quality. Hegemonic masculinity perpetuates male supremacy across various organisations, especially in leadership positions, while obstructing women's professional progression (Wedgwood 2003).

### **3.4 Institutional Economics**

#### **3.4.1 New Institutional Economics: Understanding Gender and Institutional Evolution**

New Institutional Economics (NIE) provides a comprehensive framework for examining how institutions defined broadly as the rules, norms, and legal systems that

govern economic interactions influence economic performance and organizational decisions. Central to NIE is the understanding that institutions evolve in ways that can profoundly impact economic activities and that these evolutions are crucial for explaining differences in economic outcomes across different societies, including gender disparities in the workforce (Ménard & Shirley, 2014).

NIE posits that economic institutions do not merely facilitate the exchange of goods and services but also shape economic performance by reducing uncertainties and transaction costs associated with economic activities. These institutions evolve based on historical, cultural, and social factors, and their efficiency or inefficiency can significantly affect economic outcomes. For example, institutions that enforce property rights, mitigate corruption, and support contractual obligations tend to enhance economic performance by creating stable environments that encourage investment and innovation (North, 1990).

From the perspective of gender, NIE examines how institutional frameworks and organizational policies reflect and reinforce gender norms that affect women's economic opportunities. These institutions can either perpetuate gender inequalities or help dismantle them, depending on how they evolve (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015). For instance, labour laws that fail to protect against gender discrimination or that lack support for maternity and paternity leave can reinforce traditional gender roles and hinder women's career progression. Conversely, institutions that promote gender equality in hiring, compensation, and career development can enhance women's participation and success in the workforce (Elliott & Olson, 2023).

NIE also sheds light on how informal institutions, such as societal norms and unwritten rules, impact gender dynamics within economic systems. These norms can limit women's access to certain jobs, restrict their educational opportunities, or influence the unequal division of labour in households, which in turn affects women's economic independence and professional growth. Understanding these informal institutions is crucial for addressing the root causes of gender disparities in economic participation (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2013)

Effective strategies for reforming institutions to promote gender equality must involve both formal changes to laws and regulations and shifts in cultural attitudes and practices. This dual approach can help dismantle the structural barriers that prevent women from fully participating in the economy. For example, policy interventions that aim to provide equal educational opportunities, enforce fair



employment practices, and promote women's representation in leadership positions are essential for creating more equitable economic institutions (Mansbridge, 2010).

### **3.4.2 Property Rights Theory and Women's Economic Empowerment**

Property Rights Theory is crucial in understanding how legal and cultural frameworks surrounding ownership and rights to assets impact economic behaviours and societal outcomes (Kim & Mahoney, 2005). Specifically, secure property rights are fundamental in empowering women economically, influencing their participation in the labour market, and enhancing their overall economic independence.

Secure property rights enable women to own, inherit, and manage property independently of male relatives, which historically has been a significant barrier to their economic empowerment (Doss & Meinzen-Dick, 2020). Ownership of property not only provides women with physical assets but also boosts their bargaining power within the household and the community. This empowerment facilitates greater decision-making autonomy, increases investment in their health and education, and provides collateral to start businesses or take other economic initiatives (Meinzen-Dick, et al., 2014).

Property rights for women correlate strongly with their labour market participation. Owning property can provide women with a safety net that encourages them to enter the labour force or start businesses. In economies where women's property rights are protected, there is often a higher rate of entrepreneurship and labour market activity among women. This is because access to property increases women's ability to access credit and other financial resources, which are crucial for starting businesses and engaging in other income-generating activities (Hallward-Driemeier & Hasan, 2012).

The effectiveness of property rights in empowering women economically often depends on the legal and cultural context. In many regions, even where laws formally guarantee property rights to women, cultural practices and norms may prevent them from exercising these rights fully. Legal reforms aimed at strengthening property rights must be accompanied by efforts to change cultural attitudes and practices that hinder women's economic participation (Agarwal, 2010).

The extension of property rights to women is not only a matter of fairness but also of economic efficiency. Economies that enforce women's property rights more rigorously tend to experience more comprehensive economic growth and

development. Women invest differently than men, often prioritizing health, education, and family well-being, which can lead to broader social benefits. Thus, ensuring women's property rights can lead to more sustainable and inclusive economic development (Quisumbing & Pandolfelli, 2010).

### **3.4.3 Transaction Cost Economics: Analysing Barriers for Women in the Labour Market**

Transaction Cost Economics (TCE) offers a lens to analyse the various frictions and costs associated with economic exchanges and how these can act as barriers to women's entry into and persistence in the labour market. This approach considers not only the costs of goods and services but also the costs of transactions, include the costs of information and search, negotiation and decision-making, law enforcement and police, and more (Ketokivi & Mahoney, 2020). These transaction costs can disproportionately affect women, influencing their labour market opportunities and economic outcomes.

For women, transaction costs in the labour market might include the additional effort and resources required to find suitable employment that balances work and family commitments. Women often face higher search costs due to limited availability of flexible work options that accommodate family care responsibilities. Furthermore, the negotiation processes for wages and working conditions can also involve higher decision costs for women, who might face gender biases that men do not (Williamson, 1981).

Information asymmetry is a significant transaction cost that affects women's labour market participation. Women might have less access to information about job opportunities, promotions, or professional development resources, which can limit their career advancement. This asymmetry can be compounded by social networks that tend to be gendered, with men having better access to informal networks that often influence hiring and promotions (Akerlof, 1978).

Enforcement and policing costs refer to the efforts required to ensure compliance with contracts and agreements. For women, these costs might manifest in the need to advocate for enforcement of equal pay regulations or anti-discrimination laws. The burden of addressing workplace harassment or discrimination also falls disproportionately on women, requiring them to expend more resources on legal and organizational battles to secure a safe and equitable work environment (North, 1990).

Understanding these transaction costs is crucial for developing policies and practices that reduce barriers for women in the labour market. Solutions could include improving transparency in job postings and promotion criteria, establishing more robust support systems for reporting and addressing discrimination, and implementing policies that reduce the burden of caregiving responsibilities, such as onsite childcare or more flexible working hours (Coase, 2013).

### **3.5 Political Economy Theories**

#### **3.5.1 Dependency Theory and Its Impact on Institutional Quality and Labour Dynamics**

Dependency Theory offers a critical framework for understanding the historical patterns of economic and political dependence and their enduring impact on current institutional quality and labour dynamics, particularly in the context of developing nations (Ghosh, 2019). This theory posits that economic disparities between nations commonly delineated as the "core" and "periphery" are rooted in colonial and neo-colonial relationships that shape global economic and political interactions.

Dependency Theory argues that historical colonization has left many countries in a "peripheral" status, economically and politically dependent on "core" developed countries. This dependence manifests in the persistent extraction of resources and wealth from peripheral nations, which undermines their economic sovereignty and development. These historical interactions have resulted in institutional frameworks in peripheral countries that are often weak, underdeveloped, or structured primarily to benefit the core countries at the expense of their own economic and social welfare (Prebisch, 1962).

The quality of institutions in these dependent nations is directly influenced by these historical and ongoing economic dependencies. Institutions often remain focused on exporting raw materials to core countries, neglecting the development of diversified economies or robust labour rights frameworks. This dependency restricts the ability of these nations to develop policies that cater to their economic needs and often results in labour laws that fail to protect workers adequately or encourage sustainable economic growth (Frank, 1969).

In economies characterized by dependency, labour dynamics are often skewed towards low-wage, labour-intensive industries, which are promoted to meet the demands of core countries. This dynamic reinforces a cycle of economic

underdevelopment and limits the opportunities for creating high-value-added industries that could lead to better employment opportunities and improved labour conditions. Moreover, these dynamics disproportionately affect vulnerable groups, particularly women, who are often relegated to the lowest-paid and least-secured jobs (Mejia, 2024).

Addressing the challenges posed by dependency requires strategic efforts to diversify economies, strengthen labour rights, and renegotiate terms in international trade that favour more equitable economic relationships. Encouraging local value-added industries and improving educational and technological infrastructure can help break the cycle of dependency, leading to more robust and autonomous economic and labour systems (Cardoso & Faletto, 2024).

### **3.5.2 World-Systems Theory and Its Impact on Gender-Specific Economic Opportunities**

World-Systems Theory provides a macroscopic perspective on the dynamics of the global economy, emphasizing how different regions or nations are interconnected within a singular world system. This theory categorizes countries into core, semi-periphery, and periphery roles, each playing distinct parts within the global economic structure (Ciccantell, 2021). These classifications have profound implications for national policies and economic opportunities, particularly for women.

The core countries, with advanced industrial economies, exert significant influence on global trade and finance, often shaping international economic policies and practices. These nations typically set labour standards and trade agreements that can have ripple effects down to semi-periphery and periphery countries. For women in core nations, this might mean better labour protections and more economic opportunities compared to those in less developed nations. However, women in peripheral countries often find themselves in positions where they provide cheap labour for the global supply chains dominated by core countries, reflecting an entrenched form of economic inequality (Wallerstein, 2011)

In semi-periphery and periphery regions, which are often dependent on core countries for capital and market access, women frequently engage in labour-intensive industries such as textiles and assembly, where wages are low, and working conditions can be poor. These jobs, while providing crucial income, often do not offer substantial advancement opportunities or protections. The economic policies in these regions may

prioritize foreign investment and export-oriented growth at the cost of local labour rights, impacting women disproportionately (Chase-Dunn, 1998).

World-Systems Theory also highlights how global economic pressures can influence national policies regarding women's rights. In an effort to attract foreign investment, some countries might overlook labour violations, including those against women, leading to a slow progression of gender equality in the workplace. Conversely, global advocacy networks can leverage these interconnected systems to press for better labour standards and women's rights, showcasing the dual-edged nature of globalization (Bair, 2005).

To mitigate the adverse effects observed under World-Systems Theory, it is crucial for international coalitions and local governments to work together to ensure that economic development benefits all segments of the population equitably. Policies aimed at improving education, healthcare, and legal rights for women can help empower them economically and ensure they benefit more directly from global economic activities.

### 3.6: summary of theoretical background

THEORIES	DISCUSSIONS
1. ECONOMIC THEORY OF LABOR PARTICIPATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Human capital theory (Becker 1964)</li> <li>b. Labor supply and demand</li> <li>c. Segmented labor market theory</li> </ul>	<p>posits that investments in education and training are critical determinants of labour market outcomes.</p> <p>offers a comprehensive framework to analyse how labour market conditions directly impact female employment, wage determination, and overall participation in the workforce (Kabeer, 2021)</p> <p>This theory posits that labour markets are inherently divided into 'primary' and 'secondary' sectors, characterized by disparities in job stability, wages, and advancement opportunities.</p>
2. SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Gender role theory</li> <li>b. Social role theory</li> </ul>	<p>Gender Role Theory provides a robust framework for understanding how deeply ingrained societal expectations shape economic activities and contribute to occupational segregation by gender</p> <p>This theory explores into the dynamics of role conflict and role enhancement, offering insights into the complex ways these factors</p>

c. Structural functionalism	<p>affect career trajectories, especially for women.</p> <p>offers a profound understanding of how societal structures maintain stability and influence individual behaviour, particularly regarding Female's workforce involvement (Parsons, 2017)</p>
<p>3. FEMINIST ECONOMIC THEORIES</p> <p>a. Liberal Feminism and the Push for Equal Opportunities</p> <p>b. Socialist Feminism: Analyzing the Intersection of Capitalism and Patriarchy</p> <p>c. Radical Feminism and Its Impact on Economic Participation</p> <p>d. The doing gender theory</p> <p>e. Hegemonic Masculinity Theory</p>	<p>This theory advocates for equal access to opportunities, particularly in education and employment, asserting that women should have the same rights as men to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by traditional gender roles (Arat, 2015).</p> <p>This theoretical framework suggests that both economic and cultural systems must be transformed to achieve genuine equality for women.</p> <p>This theory underscores those patriarchal systems prioritize male dominance and interests, which manifests in various forms of discrimination against women, including in the workplace and within economic policies</p> <p>The idea that gender has biological roots is contested by this theory, which holds that masculinity is culturally formed and perpetuated via recurrent behaviors that conform to societal norms.</p> <p>This idealised masculinity underscores attributes such as strength, leadership, power, and emotional stoicism. It elevates males who possess these characteristics to positions of authority, while subordinating women and other marginalised men, hence perpetuating gender disparities</p>
<p>4. INSTITUTIONAL ECONOMICS</p> <p>a. New Institutional Economics: Understanding Gender and Institutional Evolution</p> <p>b. Property Rights Theory and Women's Economic Empowerment</p>	<p>provides a comprehensive framework for examining how institutions defined broadly as the rules, norms, and legal systems that govern economic interactions influence economic performance and organizational decisions.</p> <p>Property Rights Theory is crucial in understanding how legal and cultural frameworks surrounding ownership and rights to assets impact economic behaviors and societal outcomes (Kim &amp; Mahoney, 2005)</p>

<p>5. POLITICAL ECONOMY THEORIES</p> <p>a. Dependency Theory and Its Impact on Institutional Quality and Labour Dynamics</p> <p>b. World-Systems Theory and Its Impact on Gender-Specific Economic Opportunities</p>	<p>This theory posits that economic disparities between nations commonly delineated as the "core" and "periphery" are rooted in colonial and neo-colonial relationships that shape global economic and political interactions.</p> <p>This theory categorizes countries into core, semi-periphery, and periphery roles, each playing distinct parts within the global economic structure (Ciccantell, 2021).</p>
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## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **WOMEN'S WORKFORCE INVOLVEMENT IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN: THE ROLE OF INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY.**

#### **4.1 Empirical Literature**

Researchers have undertaken major research on the association between Institutional quality and women's labor force participation in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). This empirical literature review includes valuable insights from various research studies on the variables affecting and results arising from women's involvement in the Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) labor market.

To determine how institutions affect people's willingness to work, Massimiliano et al. (2019) conducted an extensive study. Individuals' choices about their involvement in the labor market are significantly influenced by institutional quality and governance frameworks, according to the research. An empirical examination was conducted by Opeloyeru et al. (2021) to examine the relationship between health spending, labor force participation, and institutional quality in an African context. Findings from the study shed light on the interplay between policymaking, health care spending, and women's economic empowerment. The impact of local institutions on labor force participation was the subject of research by Agovino et al. (2019). Findings from the authors' study on the role of governmental systems in determining women's access to economic opportunities are very relevant. The research suggested that it may shed light on similar trends in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and further demonstrated the importance of institutions in shaping labor market dynamics. A thorough investigation on the relationship between women's labor force participation and economic development in sub-Saharan Africa was carried out by Thaddeus et al. (2022). The study's findings on the potential effects of higher participation rates on the community's economic and social development were substantial. In similar research, Urama et al. (2020) proposed that sustainable economic development and gender equality are interdependent, providing useful insights into possible approaches to promote inclusive economic growth.

Research was carried out by Abdullah and Bakar (2011) to investigate the relationship between fertility rates and women's labor force participation. The study found that



women's labor force participation was negatively correlated with fertility rates, meaning that women's labor force participation tended to decline as fertility rates rose. Separately, Backhaus & Loichinger (2021) analyzed the patterns of women's workforce engagement in sub-Saharan Africa using a cohort approach. The research looked at patterns throughout time and showed how demographic shifts affect women's participation in the workforce.

Amaina et al. (2019) discovered a strong positive correlation between economic development and female workforce participation, suggesting that women have more job opportunities as economies grow. This finding is in line with other empirical research on the labor force and economic development. Research by Appiah (2018), which looked at the connection between women's labor force participation and economic development in developing countries, corroborated the results. This study's results provide empirical evidence that increasing women's participation in the labor force may have a positive effect on economic growth rates.

According to research by Iweagu et al. (2015), traditional and cultural beliefs have a stronger impact on rural husbands' views on their wives' jobs. That is why researchers in Nigeria set out to determine what variables influence people to join the workforce in both urban and rural areas. In rural regions, the results showed that religion, per capita income, poverty rate, and marital status were statistically significant variables affecting the outcomes. On the flip side, key factors in the urban region were found to be literacy rate and age. Using a deconstruction approach created by Even and Macpherson (1990), Ntuli (2017) showed that education is the main factor that positively influences women's labor force participation. Consistently limiting participation were variables including non-labor income, marriage, fertility, and regional economic development gaps, according to the study. Ackah et al. (2019) looked at two time periods—1991 and 2016—to determine what variables affect women's labor force participation in Ghana. The extent to which women participate in the Ghanaian labor force is, in their view, heavily influenced by their fertility rates and educational attainment. The research indicated that women who have acquired a basic school education or above display a larger degree of economic engagement than those without formal education.

In their research, Bibi & Afzal (2012) evaluated the many aspects that impact the decision-making process of married women about their engagement in the employment field. Several variables were found to affect married women's labor force

involvement by the researchers. The participant's degree of education, the number of children and dependents, the composition of the family, the husband's salary, the monthly expenses, and the family's and husband's favorable attitude toward women's work were all significant. Additionally, work satisfaction positively affected the labour force participation of married women. When married women consider whether or not to join the workforce, factors that weigh against them include the respondent's age, whether or not she lives with her spouse, the strength of their pre-marital relationship, how satisfied homemakers are with their current lifestyle, any restrictions placed on them by family, and whether or not there are other breadwinners in the household.

### **Research Gap**

Few studies have examined the impact of institutional quality on women's labor force participation in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), despite the abundance of literature on this topic. While previous research has looked at factors including population, economic development, and health, more comprehensive studies are required to determine how institutional frameworks and governance systems affect women's labor participation in SSA. There is a notable gap in our knowledge of how gender dynamics and institutional quality interact to impact women's choices to participate in paid work, since much of the current scholarly literature focuses on macroeconomic and socio-cultural issues. Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is a region where gender equality, institutional frameworks, and labor market results are all interconnected; therefore, this gap is confusing.

## **4.2. Data and Method**

### **4.2 Data**

From 1996–2021, our research makes use of balanced and yearly data from the estimated dataset for around 43 selected Sub-Saharan African states. These countries were chosen because their female labor participation rates were low according to sectoral employment and institutional quality standards. Based on an existing empirical model, this study's empirical specification provides the framework for the inquiry and analyzes the data. The data summary is shown in Table 4.1

**Table 4 .1: Description of Variables**

Variables	Symbol	Unit of Measurement	Sources
Female labour participation	FLFP	ILO estimate	WDI 2023
Economic Growth	GDP	In constant 2010 USD	WDI 2023
Population	POP	% of the sum population	WDI 2023
Fertility Rate	FR	Birth Per Woman	WDI 2023
Female Self Employed	SE	ILO estimate	WDI 2023
Government Effectiveness	GE	Index	WGI 2023
Rule of Law	ROL	Index	WGI 2023
Political Stability	PS	Index	WGI 2023
Voice and Accountability	VNA	Index	WGI 2023
Rule of Law	RQ	Index	WGI 2023
Control of Corruption	COC	Index	WGI 2023
Female employment in Agric	FEA	ILO estimate	WDI 2023
Female employment in industry	FEI	ILO estimate	WDI 2023
Female Employment of Service	FES	ILO estimate	WDI 2023

Author's computation

### 4.3 Model Specification

The impact of institutional quality variables on women's labor engagement and sectoral employment in Sub-Saharan Africa is the focus of this research.

For the first stage, we estimated Equations (1) using the OLS approach, as seen below.

$$FLPL_{i,t} = \alpha_i + \theta_1 POP_{i,t} + \theta_2 GDP_{i,t} + \theta_3 FR_{i,t} + \theta_4 SE_{i,t} + \theta_5 INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_6 X_{i,t} + \varepsilon_{i,t} \quad (1)$$

In Table 1, FLPL, POP, GDP, FR, SE, and INSTQ are specified, with X serving as the control variable of the vector,  $\varepsilon$  denoting the error term,  $i$  representing the country-specific impact, and  $t$  indicating the time period.

The pooled OLS approach, although simple and accessible, fails to account for unobservable fluctuations that may influence the parameter estimates in Equations (1). Besides the challenges associated with estimating time-invariant components and unobservable heterogeneity, OLS is unable to mitigate possible endogeneity issues arising from the two sources identified in Equations (1). To address the difficulties identified by the pooled OLS approach, we will model the panel system GMM as follows:

$$FLPL_{i,t} = \alpha_i + \varphi FLPL_{i,t} + \theta_1 POP_{i,t} + \theta_2 GDP_{i,t} + \theta_3 FR_{i,t} + \theta_4 SE_{i,t} + \theta_5 INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_6 X_{i,t} + \vartheta_{i,t} \quad (2)$$

The interaction effects of the institutional quality are introduced in equation (3)

$$\begin{aligned}
FLPL_{i,t} = & \alpha_i + \varphi FLPL_{i,t} + \theta_1 POP_{i,t} + \theta_2 GDP_{i,t} + \theta_3 FR_{i,t} + \theta_4 SE_{i,t} \\
& + \theta_5 INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_6 POP * INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_7 GDP * INSTQ_{i,t} \\
& + \theta_8 FR * INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_9 SE * INSTQ_{i,t} \theta_6 X_{i,t} + \vartheta_{i,t} \quad (3)
\end{aligned}$$

Again, the capture of the sectorial employment equations (4), (5) and (6) are introduced as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}
FEA_{i,t} = & \alpha_i + \varphi FLPL_{i,t} + \theta_1 POP_{i,t} + \theta_2 GDP_{i,t} + \theta_3 FR_{i,t} + \theta_4 SE_{i,t} \\
& + \theta_5 INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_6 POP * INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_7 GDP * INSTQ_{i,t} \\
& + \theta_8 FR * INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_9 SE * INSTQ_{i,t} \theta_6 X_{i,t} + \vartheta_{i,t} \quad (4)
\end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
FEI_{i,t} = & \alpha_i + \varphi FLPL_{i,t} + \theta_1 POP_{i,t} + \theta_2 GDP_{i,t} + \theta_3 FR_{i,t} + \theta_4 SE_{i,t} \\
& + \theta_5 INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_6 POP * INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_7 GDP * INSTQ_{i,t} \\
& + \theta_8 FR * INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_9 SE * INSTQ_{i,t} \theta_6 X_{i,t} + \vartheta_{i,t} \quad (5)
\end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
FES_{i,t} = & \alpha_i + \varphi FLPL_{i,t} + \theta_1 POP_{i,t} + \theta_2 GDP_{i,t} + \theta_3 FR_{i,t} + \theta_4 SE_{i,t} \\
& + \theta_5 INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_6 POP * INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_7 GDP * INSTQ_{i,t} \\
& + \theta_8 FR * INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_9 SE * INSTQ_{i,t} \theta_6 X_{i,t} + \vartheta_{i,t} \quad (6)
\end{aligned}$$

From equ (2)  $\vartheta_{i,t}$  equates  $(\varepsilon_i + \mu_i)$  where  $\varepsilon_i$  is given as the error term and  $\mu_i$  as country-specific effects, the case of no serial correlation is represented as  $\varepsilon_{i,t} \sim iidN(0, \delta_\varepsilon^2)$  while  $E[\varepsilon_{i,t}, \varepsilon_{i,t}] = 0$ . The interaction of institution quality variables with Women's workforce involvement and Equations (3) to (6) incorporate employment. We also incorporated the institution factors in distinct evaluations to circumvent the problem of collinearity.

#### 4.4 Empirical Strategy

Following prior research, we employed a fixed effect panel data model to evaluate the effects of institutional quality-related variables on women's labour force involvement. We can additionally assess a regression model with a proportional dependent variable using econometric techniques to adjust for the restricted character of the response. We must take into consideration the unnoticed variance brought on by national characteristics in order to get a fair assessment of women's workforce involvement (FLFP), our dependent variable. In addition, when a panel includes data from fixed and somewhat large sets of cross-sections, fixed effects regression is the preferred method. The reasoning behind this is that results from static models might be biased if women's workforce participation remains constant or if the relationship between women's workforce involvement and characteristics related to institutional quality is

reversible (Gaddis & Klasen, 2014). While, its necessary in conducting a cross-sectional dependence test to check the case of cross section in the data due to regional bias. Cross-sectional dependence occurs when errors across countries are correlated, which can bias estimates, especially when they are full data and where they are not missing data. Thus, with reference to our data in selected African countries where most of the data are missing it will be impossible to account for cross sections dependence and regional bias hence System GMM comes into play which has the tendency of accounting for missing data bias. Consequently, dynamic panel analysis is being used more and more by academics to investigate the elements that influence women's labor force participation. We also investigated the effect of institutional quality determinants on women's workforce involvement using a system GMM dynamic panel model (Blundell & Bond, 1998), taking into account the possibility of reverse causality and omitted variable bias. Using GMM is beneficial for three reasons: Panel data analyses take into consideration endogeneity in two ways: first, by controlling for the problem of reversed causality using internal instruments; second, by accounting for time-invariant omitted variables in the estimation; and third, by recognizing that there are 43 countries with 25 periods each, it is inevitable that there will be differences between them. All three issues—omitted-variable bias, variability, and multicollinearity—are addressed by this method. There may be inverse relationships between the dependent variable and some of the independent variables. Since endogeneity bias is assumed to be at play, a dynamic panel model is required to address the problem. Effective, convergent, and unbiased estimators may be obtained with the help of SYS-GMM (Wooldridge, 2001). Without reliable instruments, estimations based on reverse causality would always be biased. In level regression, the lag difference between the relevant variables is the instrument. At its core, the model is defined by a streamlined collection of instruments that use a one-step robust SYS-GMM. We do two specification tests to make sure the tools are reliable. The Sargan test of over-identifying constraints examines the sample version of the actual conditions utilized for estimating to ascertain the instruments' generally validity. Take a look at the second test and see whether the error term has serial correlation. We verify that the error term difference is second-order serially connected in both the regression difference and the system difference-level regression. This is due to the fact that development almost always results in a new residual that is first-order serially linked, even if the initially produced error term wasn't.

#### 4.5: Analysis and Discussion

To investigate the nomenclature of each variable using the dataset that is available, Table 4.1 displays the descriptive statistics of the variables of relevance for the present investigation. The female labor force participation rate (FLFP) ranges from 16.615 to 88.522, with a mean of 58.996 according to Table 4.1. There is a range between 18.539 and 10.966 for population (POP), with a mean of 15.083. In terms of gross domestic product (GDP), the average is 7.070, with extremes of 9.895 and 4.856. While specifics may differ by country and time period, it seems that most Sub-Saharan African nations saw respectable increases in female labor force participation, population, and GDP over the period under consideration. Fertility rates in Africa increased satisfactorily across the study period, with a mean of 4.825 and extremes of 7.634 and 1.360, respectively. This suggests that women's labor force engagement does not hinder fertility and childbirth. The mean, maximum, and lowest values for self-employment (SE) were 78.683, 98.230, and 11.811, respectively, indicating that SE improved across nations and eras. However, each country had its own unique characteristics. Along with GE, ROL, PS, voice and accountability, regulatory quality, and COC, the remaining variables that make up governance indicators all displayed negative mean and minimum values, with positive maximum values. This has far-reaching consequences for Africa, as almost every country in the continent is falling short on key performance indicators. This means that African governments are ineffective, laws are ignored, leading to widespread injustice, political instability is rampant, citizens do not have a voice, and accountability is lacking. To make matters worse, the country's regulatory structure and efforts to combat corruption are both woefully inadequate. Since political forces greatly influence economic events—undue interference—the degree to which women participate may be more constrained by governance constraints than by economic ones.

The kind and extent of the association between the study's relevant variables are shown in Table 4.2, which displays the results of the correlation analysis. Making sure there's some kind of connection between the dependent and explanatory variables is the reasoning for this. On the other hand, you may utilize this correlation matrix to see whether the explanatory variables are multicollinear; however, the best way to do this is using the variance inflation factor (VIF) test (Agubata et al., 2022).

Table 4.2: Descriptive Analysis

<b>Variables</b>	<b>FLFP</b>	<b>POP</b>	<b>GDP</b>	<b>FR</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>GE</b>	<b>ROL</b>	<b>PS</b>	<b>VNA</b>	<b>RQ</b>	<b>COC</b>
<b>Mean</b>	58.996	15.083	7.070	4.825	78.683	-0.772	-0.664	-0.482	-0.504	-0.641	-0.632
<b>Minimum</b>	16.615	10.966	4.856	1.360	11.811	-1.887	-1.852	-2.699	-2.000	-2.236	-1.826
<b>Maximum</b>	88.522	18.539	9.895	7.634	98.230	1.160	1.029	1.200	0.998	1.127	1.159
<b>Std. Dev</b>	14.667	1.479	0.975	1.173	21.212	0.571	0.610	0.826	0.691	0.553	0.607
<b>Observation</b>	774	774	774	774	774	774	688	688	688	688	688

Table 4.3: Correlation Analysis

	<b>FLFP</b>	<b>POP</b>	<b>GDP</b>	<b>FR</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>GE</b>	<b>ROL</b>	<b>PS</b>	<b>VNA</b>	<b>RQ</b>	<b>COC</b>
<b>FLFP</b>	1										
<b>POP</b>	0.4332	1									
<b>GDP</b>	-0.3997	-0.1812	1								
<b>FR</b>	0.3049	0.4413	-0.5578	1							
<b>SE</b>	0.3255	0.2706	-0.7055	0.6838	1						
<b>GE</b>	-0.0451	-0.1440	0.4602	-0.5540	-0.7033	1					
<b>ROL</b>	-0.1032	-0.2693	0.3780	-0.5554	-0.6572	0.9073	1				
<b>PS</b>	-0.2324	-0.5353	0.5041	-0.58211	-0.5470	0.6237	0.7039	1			
<b>VNA</b>	-0.0129	-0.1929	0.2678	-0.4312	-0.5302	0.7047	0.7758	0.5973	1		
<b>RQ</b>	-0.0817	-0.0823	0.3815	-0.4297	-0.6170	0.8906	0.8823	0.5761	0.7250	1	
<b>COC</b>	-0.1670	-0.3208	0.3149	-0.5799	-0.6207	0.8339	0.8978	0.6573	0.7595	0.7892	1

Therefore, finding a link between the dependent and explanatory factors is the main emphasis of this research. African women's labor force participation is positively correlated with population, fertility rate, and self-employment, and negatively correlated with economic growth (GDP). Similarly, there is a modest negative association between the participation of women in the workforce in Africa and the rule of law, political stability, and control of corruption. In conclusion, there is a modest negative association between the level of regulatory quality, government efficacy, voice and accountability, and the engagement of women in the African workforce. It is reasonable to assume that these governance indicators will moderate the variables of interest in our research, regardless of the result, due to the substantial roles they often play in the economy.

### **Baseline Estimation Results Using the Pooled OLS Estimator**

To initiate the examination of the hypotheses proposed in alignment with the study's objectives, Table 4.4 presents the results from the pooled OLS regression estimator. The interest factors engaged with the governance indicators across six distinct models, each exhibiting its own unique characteristics, in this study. For instance, model one analyzed the connection between government effectiveness, rule of law, political stability, voice and accountability, regulatory quality, and self-employment. Meanwhile, model six focused on the relationship between fertility rate, self-employment, and control of corruption.



**Table 4.4: Conventional Panel Pooled Estimate**

Regressors	Panel 1	Panel 2	Panel 3	Panel 4	Panel 5	Panel 6
Population	3.543*** (0.000)	3.940*** (0.000)	4.916***(0.000)	3.918*** (0.000)	3.748*** (0.000)	4.002*** (0.000)
Economic growth	-5.174*** (0.000)	-4.616***(0.000)	- 5.966***(0.000)	-4.598*** (0.000)	-5.149*** (0.000)	-5.275*** (0.000)
Fertility Rate	-0.352*** (0.008)	-0.138* (0.061)	0.676** (0.046)	-1.465** (0.022)	-1.398*** (0.000)	-1.392* (0.077)
Self Employed	0.114*** (0.005)	0.106** (0.012)	0.076** (0.050)	0.148*** (0.000)	0.079** (0.060)	0.036 (0.392)
Governance	15.594***(0.000)					
Governance*Fertility rate	0.312 (0.697)					
Governance*Self Employed	-0.135*** (0.006)					
Rule of Law		18.116***(0.000)				
Rule of Law* Fertility rate		0.652 (0.474)				
Rule of Law* Self Employed		-0.207*** (0.001)				
Political Stability			18.048(0.000)			
Political Stability*Fertility rate			2.250 (0.008)			
Political Stability*Self employed			-0.298 (0.000)			
Voice and Accountability				19.001(0.000)		
Voice and Accountability*Fertility rate				-1.656 (0.019)		
Voice and Accountability*Self employed				-0.090 (0.052)		

Regulatory Quality					13.463*** (0.000)	
Regulatory Quality*Fertility rate					-0.512*** (0.004)	
Regulatory Quality*Self employed					-0.111** (0.044)	
Control of Corruption						17.454*** (0.000)
Control of Corruption*Fertility rate						-0.549** (0.027)
Control of Corruption*Self employed						-0.181*** (0.001)
Constant	38.781*** (0.000)	26.445*** (0.000)	19.035*** (0.000)	28.675*** (0.000)	40.079*** (0.000)	38.672*** (0.000)
Countries	43	43	43	43	43	43
F statistics	58.33*** (0.000)	50.69*** (0.000)	54.30*** (0.00)	53.13*** (0.00)	45.35*** (0.00)	47.64*** (0.00)

Notes: \*\*\*, \*\*, \*: statistical significance at 1%, 5% and 10% respectively. ( ) p value Source: Authors.

At the 0.01 level, all models (panels 1-6) show that population has a positive and statistically significant influence on the involvement of African women in the labor. The increasing number of people living in Africa raises the possibility that more women will join the workforce on the continent. Similarly, with the exception of panel six, where the statistical significance is not found, self-employment has a positive and substantial impact on women's workforce participation in Africa across all panels. Assuming all other factors remain constant, this indicates that women's labor involvement will be favorably affected by Africa's expanding population and growth in self-employment. However, self-employment shows a substantial negative impact at 0.1 in the second and sixth panels, whereas economic growth and fertility rate show a negative influence throughout all panels. All else being equal, these results suggest that increasing fertility rates and self-employment could have a detrimental effect on African women's labor involvement. Panel 1 shows that in Africa, women's workforce involvement is favorably and strongly impacted by governance indices, namely how effective the government is. It seems to have little influence on the fertility rate, but it has a noticeable and negative effect on self-employment. As a result, African governments have been instrumental in increasing the number of working women. However, efforts to encourage women to start their own businesses have the opposite effect on their labor force participation than programs focused at reducing fertility rates in Africa. Similarly, women's labor force participation is positively and significantly impacted by the rule of law across Africa. Although there is no discernible influence from the rule of law\*fertility rate interaction, there is a negative and substantial impact from the rule of law\*self-employment interaction. Thus, women's workforce participation will be maintained via the application of legal concepts pertaining to fertility; but, when these rules are extended to self-employment, they will have a detrimental influence on women's workforce participation in Africa. In Africa, women's employment involvement seems to be unaffected by government stability, accountability, and voice. When these indices of government policy affect the fertility rate and the rate of self-employment, we see the same thing. The level of regulation and efforts to combat corruption have a favorable and substantial impact on the number of African women who work outside the home. But they have a particularly unfavorable influence on women's labor force participation in the area due to their impacts on fertility rates and self-employment.

### **System GMM Estimation Results**

The results of the system GMM estimate that was used to investigate the stated goals in this research are shown in Table 4.5. The results demonstrate that, across all panels, at the 0.01 level of significance, the first lag of the dependent variable significantly enhances the current performance, i.e., the outcomes of previous women's workforce involvement in Africa significantly encourage more women's workforce involvement in the current period. Concerning the most critical factors, it has a negative and statistically significant effect on the participation of African women in the labor force at the 0.05 level of significance across all data sets. According to the different panels, women's labor participation will decrease by 0.0389%, 0.0244%, 0.0388%, 0.0264%, 0.0262%, and 0.0249% for every unit rise in the African population size, everything else being equal. This result appears to imply that, despite the increasing population in Africa, women's employment participation will remain stagnant due to a lack of human capital development. Education and other forms of human capital development that aim to provide women with the skills they need to be active members of the labor force are therefore likely to be underfunded in many African nations. According to the theory of national income accounting, a country's economic growth is hindered when women are primarily expected to stay at home and care for their husbands (Thaddeus et al., 2022). The present results do not square with the empirical stance of Amber & Chichaibelu (2023) for Pakistan. This could be because of the country's unique economic landscape and religious practices, which vary significantly from those of Africa, a continent home to a wide variety of faiths. Across all panels, women's workforce engagement is positively and significantly affected by economic development. There is statistical significance at the 0.1 level in panels 2, 3, and 6, and at the 0.05 level in all of the other panels. Since women are now actively participating in economic activities, this is in line with theoretical predictions that as the economy grows, their labor engagement would decrease. Economic growth should have a higher influence on female labor force participation in all panels, all else being equal, given that a few of these panels are statistically significant at the 0.1 level, which highlights the problem of female human capital development gaps in many African nations. For Pakistan, this corresponds with the findings of Amber and Chichaibelu (2023).

**Table 4.5: System GMM estimation results**

Regressors						
	Panel 1	Panel 2	Panel 3	Panel 4	Panel 5	Panel 6
FLFP(T-1)	1.0018*** (0.003)	1.0008*** (0.004)	1.0010*** (0.004)	1.007*** (0.004)	1.0007*** (0.003)	1.0007*** (0.004)
Population	-0.0389*** (0.030)	-0.0244** (0.031)	-0.0388** (0.039)	-0.0264** (0.031)	-0.0262** (0.031)	-0.0249** (0.033)
Economic growth	0.0630** (0.055)	0.0560* (0.061)	0.0632* (0.066)	0.0494** (0.058)	0.0555** (0.061)	0.0550* (0.062)
Fertility Rate	-0.0507** (0.057)	-0.0707* (0.0748)	-0.0502* (0.091)	-0.0707* (0.063)	-0.0665* (0.076)	-0.0632* (0.079)
Self Employed	-0.0033*** (0.003)	-0.0043*** (0.004)	-0.0058*** (0.004)	-0.0050*** (0.004)	-0.0043 (0.323)	-0.0048*** (0.004)
Governance	-0.0015* (0.056)	-0.0046 (0.277)				
Governance*Fertility rate	0.0163** (0.056)	-0.0135* (0.086)				
Governance*Self Employed	-0.0009*** (0.004)	0.0011 (0.007)				
Rule of Law		-0.0046 (0.278)				
Rule of Law* Fertility rate		-0.0135* (0.086)				
Rule of Law* Self Employed		0.0011*** (0.007)				
Political Stability			-0.0362** (0.034)			

Political Stability*Fertility rate			0.0452 (0.161)			
Political Stability*Self employed			-0.0030*** (0.013)			
Voice and Accountability				0.0924** (0.005)		
Voice and Accountability*Fertility rate				-0.0051* (0.082)		
Voice and Accountability*Self employed				-0.0012*** (0.007)		
Regulatory Quality					0.0400** (0.023)	
Regulatory Quality*Fertility rate					-0.0054* (0.090)	
Regulatory Quality*Self employed					0.0002*** (0.007)	
Control of Corruption						0.0243 (0.340)
Control of Corruption*Fertility rate						0.0015* (0.086)
Control of Corruption*Self employed						-0.0002*** (0.007)
Constant	0.4137** (0.001)	0.5180*** (0.008)	0.6414*** (0.002)	0.6148** (0.052)	0.5334** (0.050)	0.5235* (0.092)
Observations	645	645	645	645	645	645

AR(1)	0.004***	0.019***	0.019***	0.019***	0.019***	0.019***
AR(2)	0.934	0.205	0.201	0.204	0.205	0.205
Hansen	0.330	0.102	0.493	0.505	0.601	0.599
Instruments	13	13	13	13	13	13
F-stat	263.49*** (0.000)	277.73*** (0.000)	308.89*** (0.000)	325.29*** (0.000)	294.53*** (0.000)	288.09*** (0.000)

Notes: \*\*\*, \*\*, \*: statistical significance at 1%, 5% and 10% respectively. ( ) standard deviations robust to heteroscedasticity. Source: Authors.

In Africa, women's participation in the workforce is significantly and negatively affected by fertility and self-employment. This effect is more pronounced in self-employment (0.01) compared to fertility (0.1), but, panel 5's instance is not statistically significant for self-employment. So, everything else being equal, women's labor force participation tends to fall with every rise in both fertility and self-employment. Connoting that season of fertility restricts female involvement in work force. In fact, this is the case in several African countries, where mothers-to-be often quit their jobs after giving birth, even though some nations provide paid leave to new mothers. Women who were completely excluded from participating because of cultural or religious beliefs about their responsibilities in the house are considered to be at the extreme end of this spectrum (Amber & Chichaibelu, 2023). A common argument in favor of self-employment in Africa is that women often start small or medium-sized businesses, giving them more freedom than they would have in a traditional 9 to 5 job, where their boss or service provider tells them what to do and when to do it. An unusual African woman is hostile to the regulations of her employment because they interfere with her home routine and make it harder for her to fulfill her marital duties. Therefore, most African women are self-employed, which gives them the freedom to do what they want, when they want, without sacrificing their commitment to their marriages. In panel 1, the influence of effective governance on women's workforce inclusion in Africa is positive and considerable, but in panel 2, it is not. The same holds true for Africa; panel 1 shows that when good governance operates on reproduction rate, it significantly and positively impacts women's employment engagement, while panel 2 shows the opposite.

That is why it is important to pass laws that remove the barriers that women face when they are pregnant and allow them to continue working if they so choose. This may not be the case for all types of laws in Africa, as shown by comparing the findings of panels 1 and 2, which emphasizes the importance of having the correct legislation. There is no correlation between women's participation in the workforce and African countries' efforts to enforce the rule of law and combat corruption.

African women's participation in the workforce improves dramatically when policies aimed at lowering the fertility rate (rule of law\*fertility rate) are implemented, but policies aimed at reducing corruption\*fertility rate) lead to a marked decrease. In a similar vein, when it comes to self-employment, (rule of law\*self-employment) greatly increases women's workforce participation, but (control of corruption\*self-employment) drastically decreases it. In Africa, women are less likely to work outside the home when political stability is high, but there is no correlation between political stability and fertility rates. When it comes to self-employment, however—political stability\* self-employment—it has a major and detrimental effect on the participation of women in the African labor. As a whole, voice and accountability do a good job of getting more women into the workforce in Africa, but when applied to factors like the fertility rate and self-employment, it does a far worse job of getting more women into the workforce. Lastly, Africa's female labor participation may be advanced by high-quality regulations. Since regulations are crucial to promoting entrepreneurial enterprise in emerging nations, this becomes much more feasible when it impacts self-employment (regulatory quality\*self-employment). However, as the findings of the System GMM have shown, using the same to fertility will not lead to an improvement but rather a decrease. So, to get the desired result—more women's employment inclusion in Africa—the use of governance indicators must be handled quite delicately.

### **Sectorial System GMM Results**

Table 4.6 displays the results of the sectorial system GMM, which reveal that although the population has a positive and substantial effect on female employment in the industrial and service sectors, it has a negative and significant effect on female employment in agriculture. A closer look at the population's effect on the three sectors reveals that women are more likely to work in industry and services than in agriculture, even if the



impact is only 0.1 for the agricultural sector. In the past, agriculture played a crucial role in Africa's economy. However, with the discovery of crude oil, many regions of the continent have prioritized white-collar and blue-collar jobs above farming, which was previously an option. Furthermore, in Africa, the fertility rate has a positive and statistically significant effect on women's employment in agriculture, but a negative and statistically significant effect on women's employment in services and industry. This is a foreshadowing of what's to come when women work in agriculture throughout childbearing years, allowing them to pursue their passions while still meeting the needs of their families. So, African women are more likely to go for service and industrial white- and blue-collar employment after they finish having children or before they get married.

Additionally, women's employment in agriculture is positively and significantly affected by economic development, but women's employment in industry and services is negatively and significantly affected. During economic booms, women often (though not always voluntarily) settle into agricultural work, particularly during reproductive seasons. In contrast, male-dominated firms in the service and manufacturing sectors are less likely to hire women. Furthermore, women are less likely to work throughout their reproductive seasons due to the dedication and stress required by industrial and service employment. Similarly, self-employment has a major and detrimental effect on women's agricultural employment in Africa as many women today would rather own and run a company than get into agriculture. On the other hand, women are more likely to work in the service and industrial sectors if they are self-employed. This highlights the predicament of contemporary SSA women, who are likely to choose work in industry and services over self-employment, or, failing that, would choose self-employment over agriculture.

**Table 4.6 Sectorial System GMM Results**

	Estimation technique: GMM-System					
	Female employment in Agriculture		Female employment in Industry		Female employment in Service	
FLFP(T-1)	1.0263** (0.020)	1.0250** (0.020)	1.0144*** (0.008)	1.0157*** (0.008)	1.0031*** (0.004)	1.0015*** (0.006)
Population	-0.0468* (0.072)	-0.1131* (0.075)	0.0001** (0.026)	0.0574** (0.028)	0.0282** (0.052)	0.2622* (0.072)
Economic growth	0.3562* (0.075)	0.3821** (0.028)	-0.0232** (0.058)	-0.0340* (0.060)	-0.1375** (0.025)	-0.0973** (0.032)
Fertility Rate	0.0009** (0.047)	0.0422** (0.042)	-0.0041** (0.059)	-0.0006* (0.060)	-0.0858** (0.021)	-0.1256** (0.037)
Self Employed	- 0.0134*** (0.005)	-0.0115*** (0.007)	0.0047*** (0.004)	0.0014*** (0.005)	0.0007*** (0.003)	0.0049** (0.005)
Governance	-	0.1271** (0.003)		-0.6652 (0.247)		0.3579** (0.011)
Rule of Law	-	-0.7847** (0.023)		0.2435* (0.023)		0.0148** (0.053)
Political Stability	-	-0.0534** (0.001)		0.1147* (0.087)		-0.1241** (0.041)
Voice and Accountability	-	0.2782** (0.056)		-0.1600* (0.104)		0.1365 (0.195)
Regulatory Quality	-	0.3911** (0.058)		0.0655 (0.178)		-0.2144** (0.042)
Control of Corruption	-	0.0395** (0.023)		0.2866* (0.090)		0.0700*** (0.004)
Constant	-2.7743*** (0.008)	-2.3345*** (0.007)	-0.1838*** (0.002)	-0.9095** (0.026)	1.3173** (0.080)	1.2513** (0.055)
Observations	731	645	731	645	731	645
Countries	43	43	43	43	43	43
AR(1)	0.048***	0.045***	0.065***	0.086***	0.006***	0.030***
AR(2)	0.071	0.084	0.360	0.598	0.084	0.134
Hansen	0.431	0.456	0.509	0.543	0.541	0.618
Instruments	10	16	10	16	10	16
F-stat	1335.12*** (0.000)	1080.45*** (0.000)	8783.39*** (0.000)	4977.84*** (0.000)	888.20*** (0.000)	599.60*** (0.000)

Notes: \*\*\*, \*\*, \*: statistical significance at 1%, 5% and 10% respectively. ( ) standard deviations robust to heteroscedasticity. Source: Authors.

Women in Africa are more likely to work in agriculture and the service sector due to the continent's unique style of government, which has a favorable and substantial effect on these fields but a negligible effect on industry as a whole. The employment of women in agriculture is significantly and negatively affected by the rule of law, whereas the employment of women in industry and the service sector is positively and significantly affected. Inferring that the African legal system does a good job of tackling the problem of women's participation in the workforce, and that this is possible by protecting women's entitlement to maternity leave without jeopardizing their employment security. In Africa, political stability has a net beneficial effect on women's employment in manufacturing, but a net negative effect on women's employment in agriculture and the service sector. The rising insecurity in many regions of Africa, which is forcing farmers to leave their fields, is indicative of a political atmosphere that discourages women from working in agriculture and the service industry. Furthermore, rapes of women who went to tend to their farms are all too common; Nigeria is a prime example of this. There has been a marked decrease in the number of women working in agriculture in Africa, despite the fact that voice and accountability have greatly increased the number of women employed in the sector overall. More and more research is pointing to the crucial role that women play in subsistence agriculture in Africa, which is a fact that is reflected in the literature. While current policies do a great job of encouraging women to work in agriculture, they do nothing to help African women find jobs in the service industry. Last but not least, the fight against corruption in Africa has succeeded in removing the obstacles that women faced while seeking jobs in the service, manufacturing, and agricultural sectors. It seems that the more aggressive tactics taken by the different African countries have contributed to a low frequency of bribery, both in terms of cash and kind.

A number of panels demonstrated statistically significant first-order serial correlation (AR (1)) when tested using the Arellano-Bond Serial Correlation test for the different regression estimates; however, no problems with serial correlation were found at the 0.05 level of significance when testing second-order AR (2). Similarly, the models do not have an identification difficulty, according to the Hansen test that was performed to analyze the matter. In order to grasp this better, it is important to remember that

previous theories suggested that it is not viable to arrive at model estimates with an identification issue when utilizing a big panel dataset with greater N and lower T.

The double burden significantly influences women's employment engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), especially concerning fertility rates, self-employment, and governance. Recent studies spanning 1996–2021 across 43 African nations indicates that women's participation in the workforce is frequently obstructed by high fertility rates and the dominance of self-employment. The dual load is particularly pronounced in Sub-Saharan Africa, where women are anticipated to juggle familial obligations alongside professional duties, particularly in industries such as agriculture, where they are more inclined to assume caregiving activities. This issue is further intensified by fertility rates, as women often exit the workforce to concentrate on child-rearing or opt for less taxing, family-centric sectors such as agriculture. The findings indicated that economic development is essential in alleviating the double burden. Economic growth generates additional employment opportunities, particularly for women in non-agricultural industries such as services and industry. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the industrial and service sectors frequently lack attractiveness for women due to the demanding, inflexible, or unsuitable character of the employment for pregnant individuals. Moreover, nations reliant on natural resources, such as mining, generally neglect to invest in industrial areas that could provide more accessible employment opportunities for women. Governance has a crucial role. Favourable factors such as vocal support, accountability, and regulatory excellence promote women's workforce engagement, whereas inadequate governance and political instability diminish their prospects. Therefore, judiciously employing governance measures to limit fertility rates and promote women's self-employment could mitigate the dual burden, facilitating enhanced labour market inclusion for women.

## **6. Conclusion and Policy Suggestions**

Using a dataset covering the years 1996–2021, gathered for the relevant variables from 43 African nations (according to data availability), the research sought to understand the variables that impact women's employment inclusion in Sub-Saharan Africa and the moderating effect of governance indices. To estimate the dataset, we used the system generalized method of moment (System GMM). As a baseline regression estimator, we

employed the pooled OLS. The research used two main system GMM estimations: the generalized estimate and the sectorial estimate. The combined estimate showed that women's labour participation in Africa is much reduced by factors like population, fertility rate, and self-employment, but it is greatly increased by factors like economic development. It was shown that women's workforce engagement in SSA is discouraged by effective governance and political stability indices, but it is greatly encouraged by voice, accountability, and regulatory quality. Nevertheless, the research discovered that different results are shown when these governance factors are used to regulate or influence the fertility rate and self-employment in Africa. To keep the desired results in the pursuit of SSA women's labor participation, it is recommended that we use these governance mechanisms prudently to moderate the fertility rate and/or self-employment. As a policy push, they may be used to encourage or enhance the performance of the objective variable(s) pertaining to women's labor engagement. One strategy, among others, to get politicians to hear the people is to launch a campaign. The economies of sub-Saharan Africa should aim for good, consistent growth as well, as this would encourage more women to work. Since more jobs are created in different parts of the economy when the economy grows, this is shown to be true.

Specifically for the sub-Saharan African (SSA) area, the results demonstrated that female work in agriculture is discouraged by population and self-employment, but encouraged by economic development and fertility rates. The demand for domestic raw materials often stimulates agricultural operations and increases wages, making it appealing to everyone, even women, as economics needs both human and material resources. In addition, birth is a time when many women of reproductive age turn to agriculture, either because they want to stay out of the workforce until after having a kid or because they willingly leave their jobs to focus on raising a family. In addition, female work in the service and industrial sectors is encouraged by population and self-employment but hindered by economic growth and fertility rates. Many occupations include demanding or otherwise unsuitable jobs for pregnant women, which is why some women may be reluctant to work in these fields while they are trying to have a family. Similarly, most African countries do not invest in industrial sector advancement because

that is not how growth is designed. For instance, several nations in Africa significantly depend on natural resources, whose mining procedure is too laborious for a woman to enter into. If there is more development that promotes varied sectors, more women will be able to find work in the field, which would boost growth. It is imperative that African economies actively seek out and support industrial activity that empower women entrepreneurs. Also, African economies might use some incentives, training, and subsidies to entice more women to start their own businesses.

Lastly, the research concluded that although governance instruments, when used correctly, may effectively boost female employment throughout Africa's economy, they can have the opposite effect if misused. On an impoverished continent like Africa, where most nations lack contemporary education and training, human capital development is crucial. The region's large population has little skills and knowledge. Therefore, it is more audacious to advance this study by adding human capital development as a variable and to serve as a mediator in this model, given the possibility that this could be a major reason for the low women's workforce involvement on the continent. As a result, academics must direct their attention to this region for future investigations.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY AND LABOUR PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN ASIA COUNTRIES**

#### **5.1 Empirical Literature**

A complex web of economic, social, and institutional factors influences women's labor force participation in Asia, according to recent studies. United countries (2022) reports that despite significant economic growth in most Asian countries, women's labor force participation remains low owing to entrenched social norms and inadequate regulatory frameworks. Several studies have shown that higher levels of education and urbanization significantly affect the rate of female labor force participation. greater rates of labor force participation are often seen in countries where both the urban population and the percentage of educated women are greater (Heath & Jayachandran, 2017). However, the benefits are sometimes outweighed by the lack of supportive work environments, such as flexible scheduling, maternity benefits, and childcare facilities, which are crucial for women to remain employed (UN Women, 2022).

In addition, the study highlights the importance of institutional features, such governance and legal frameworks, in creating labor markets that are welcoming to women. According to studies, women are more likely to participate in the workforce when institutions are robust. Safer and more equitable workplaces, as well as legislation promoting gender equality, are means to this aim (Milazzo & Goldstein, 2019).

Despite widespread agreement that women's participation in the workforce is crucial to driving economic growth, gender pay gap and occupational segregation sometimes stand in the way of women's full participation in the economy. According to Sassler and Meyerhofer (2023), women are disproportionately found in businesses that are less stable and pay less due to this segregation. The results show that increasing women's labor force participation in Asia is not an easy task, despite the fact that we have come a long way. To do this, we need an all-encompassing strategy that considers not just the macroeconomic factors but also the microsocial factors that influence women's access to the workforce. Divergent beliefs and approaches characterize the debate over women's

participation in the Asian workforce. According to Lincove (2008), women's participation in the labor market rises in tandem with the availability of higher education opportunities. Using longitudinal data, this research shows a clear trend in several Asian countries, suggesting that educational reforms might greatly increase women's economic involvement (Lincove, 2008). However, Zheng (2022) showed via comparative research using survey analysis that although education does increase the chances of being eligible for work, it does not always lead to greater rates of engagement. Their findings highlight the power of cultural and social norms that limit women's access to the workforce, regardless of their level of education. Education improvements, according to Zheng (2022), are insufficient on their own and need a corresponding change in public opinion.

In addition, the impact of institutional quality on labor participation is also included in the debate. According to Qaiser, Rehman, & Arshed (2023), increasing women's participation in the workforce depends on the existence of robust institutions that efficiently execute laws advocating gender equality. Hasan (2023) presented South Asian case examples that contradicted the conventional perspective. Research shows that strong legislative frameworks don't always translate into high levels of actual participation because of problems with implementation and persistent gender inequality. Although most people think that schools and other forms of formal education are good for society, the findings show that there is a lot of cultural and socioeconomic variation in how these ideas are actually put into practice.

While there is a wealth of information available on women in Asia's workforces, many important gaps remain, particularly in research that take into account the myriad of variables that influence labour dynamics. Problems with economic policies, cultural standards, and institutional frameworks are often treated in isolation in modern research, which fails to consider the interdependencies among these factors. According to Raymo and Park (2023), this disjointed method disregards the cumulative effect of these variables on female labour force participation. Additionally, studies that track female participation in the labor over time to see how economic and social changes affect them are very lacking. According to Hasan (2023), a lot of research out there just provide static representations, which don't show how policies and cultures evolve over time. Research



on how technological advancements have affected women's access to work prospects is also severely underdeveloped. There have been major shifts in many different sectors as a result of digitalization. Understanding the impact of these changes on female employment is crucial for the development of more effective policies (Cislaghi, et al., 2022). To better understand the challenges and opportunities for increasing women's employment participation in Asia, there is an immediate need for research that considers all of these factors simultaneously. up addition to filling up information gaps, this study would make policy measures aimed at achieving gender equality in the workplace more effective.

## 5.2 Data and Method

### 5.2 Data

Our study employed the use of yearly data from 1996 to 2021 for Asian countries. These nations were chosen to examine female workforce participation through sectorial employment and institutional quality criteria. This study's empirical specification and analysis are based on an empirical model. Table 4.1 summarizes data:

**Table 5.1: Description of Variables**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Symbol</b>	<b>Unit of Measurement</b>	<b>Sources</b>
Female labour participation	FLFP	ILO estimate	WDI 2023
Economic Growth	GDP	In constant 2010 USD	WDI 2023
Population	POP	% of the sum population	WDI 2023
Fertility Rate	FR	Birth Per Woman	WDI 2023
Female School enrolment	SE	ILO estimate	WDI 2023
Government Effectiveness	GE	Index	WGI 2023
Rule of Law	ROL	Index	WGI 2023
Political Stability	PS	Index	WGI 2023
Voice and Accountability	VNA	Index	WGI 2023
Rule of Law	RQ	Index	WGI 2023
Control of Corruption	COC	Index	WGI 2023
Female employment in Agric	FEA	ILO estimate	WDI 2023
Female employment in industry	FEI	ILO estimate	WDI 2023
Female Employment of Service	FES	ILO estimate	WDI 2023
Author's computation			

### 5.3 Model Specification

This study examines how institutional quality determinants affect female sectorial employment and Women's workforce involvement in Asian's countries. Equations (1) shows the initial econometric expression:

$$FLPL_{i,t} = \alpha_i + \theta_1 POP_{i,t} + \theta_2 GDP_{i,t} + \theta_3 FR_{i,t} + \theta_4 SE_{i,t} + \theta_5 INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_6 X_{i,t} + \varepsilon_{i,t} \quad (1)$$

Where FLPL, POP, GDP, FR, SE and INSTQ are defined in table 1, and X is the control variable of the vector while the error term is represented by  $\varepsilon$ ,  $i$  is the country-specific effect, and  $t$  is the period. To address the concerns pruned by pooled OLS, we proceed to model the panel fixed effect IV and DK-FE are specified as follows

$$X_{i,t} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_j(X_{i,t-1}) + u_{i,t} \quad (2)$$

Where,  $X_{i,t}$  is a regressor in country  $i$  at time  $t$ .  $\alpha_0$  is the intercept,  $X_{i,t-1}$  is the first lag of the regressor and  $u_{i,t}$  is the error term.

$$FLPL_{i,t} = \alpha_i + \varphi FLPL_{i,t} + \theta_1 POP_{i,t} + \theta_2 GDP_{i,t} + \theta_3 FR_{i,t} + \theta_4 SE_{i,t} + \theta_5 INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_6 X_{i,t} + \vartheta_{i,t} \quad (3)$$

The interaction effects of the institutional quality are introduced in equation (4)

$$FLPL_{i,t} = \alpha_i + \varphi FLPL_{i,t} + \theta_1 POP_{i,t} + \theta_2 GDP_{i,t} + \theta_3 FR_{i,t} + \theta_4 SE_{i,t} + \theta_5 INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_6 POP * INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_7 GDP * INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_8 FR * INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_9 SE * INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_{10} X_{i,t} + \vartheta_{i,t} \quad (4)$$

Again, the capture of the sectorial employment equations (5), (6) and (7) are introduced as follows:

$$FEA_{i,t} = \alpha_i + \varphi FLPL_{i,t} + \theta_1 POP_{i,t} + \theta_2 GDP_{i,t} + \theta_3 FR_{i,t} + \theta_4 SE_{i,t} + \theta_5 INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_6 POP * INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_7 GDP * INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_8 FR * INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_9 SE * INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_{10} X_{i,t} + \vartheta_{i,t} \quad (5)$$

$$FEI_{i,t} = \alpha_i + \varphi FLPL_{i,t} + \theta_1 POP_{i,t} + \theta_2 GDP_{i,t} + \theta_3 FR_{i,t} + \theta_4 SE_{i,t} + \theta_5 INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_6 POP * INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_7 GDP * INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_8 FR * INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_9 SE * INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_{10} X_{i,t} + \vartheta_{i,t} \quad (6)$$

$$\begin{aligned}
FES_{i,t} = & \alpha_i + \varphi FLPL_{i,t} + \theta_1 POP_{i,t} + \theta_2 GDP_{i,t} + \theta_3 FR_{i,t} + \theta_4 SE_{i,t} \\
& + \theta_5 INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_6 POP * INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_7 GDP * INSTQ_{i,t} \\
& + \theta_8 FR * INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_9 SE * INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_{10} X_{i,t} + \vartheta_{i,t} \quad (7)
\end{aligned}$$

Equation (3) states that  $\vartheta_{i,t}$  equates to  $(\varepsilon_i + \mu_i)$ , where  $\varepsilon_i$  represents the error term and  $\mu_i$  the country-specific effects. This means that in the event of no serial correlation,  $\varepsilon_{i,t} \sim iidN(0, \delta_t^2)$  while  $E[\varepsilon_{i,t}, \varepsilon_{i,t}] = 0$ . Equations (4) through (7) include the relationship between female labor participation and employment and institution quality factors. To further mitigate the problem of collinearity, we incorporated the institution factors into independent analyses.

#### 5.4 Empirical Strategy

This study used the Driscoll and Kraay (DK) and Fixed Effects Estimator, an advance method for cross-sectional dependence calculations. The DK estimator improves efficiency and robustness, especially in cross-sectional dependence, over the typical fixed effects estimator used in panel data analysis (Bangura & Saibu, 2024). One notable feature of the DK estimator is its capacity to account for numerous forms of cross-sectional dependence that are prominent in panel datasets (Akinlo & Dada 2022). Simulations revealed that the IV-FE and standard fixed effects estimators exhibited cross sectional dependence Cross-sectional dependence emerges when the observations across multiple units (e.g., nations in the study) are correlated with each other. The relationship violates the assumption of independence commonly assumed in classic fixed effects models and can lead to incorrect and wasteful estimates. The DK estimator uses kernel-weighted means of cross-sectional residuals, thereby minimizing the impacts of cross-sectional dependency and giving more accurate and dependable estimations.

Furthermore, the DK estimator offers greater efficiency compared to classic fixed effects estimators, especially for small-sample or imbalanced panel scenarios (Ahmed, Abdul Hakim & Abdul Razak, 2023). By adding cross-sectional information in the estimation process, the DK estimator effectively utilizes the information at its disposal to produce more exact parameter estimations. In summary, the choice of the Driscoll and Kraay Fixed Effects Estimator in this study is well-justified, especially considering its capacity to account for cross-sectional dependence and its promise to generate more

efficient and trustworthy estimates in panel data situations. By utilizing this analytical approach, this study strengthens the reliability of its findings and advances to this study.

## 5.5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 5.5.1 Results

**Table 5.2 Descriptive Statistics**

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Female Labor Force Participation	844	34.511	12.53	7.786	52.736
Population	846	16.527	1.872	12.619	21.069
Gross Domestic Product	825	25.029	1.968	20.592	30.394
Fertility Rate	846	2.52	.979	.808	7.069
Secondary School Enrolment	844	42.261	29.466	.03	98.376
Government Effectiveness	768	-.113	.912	-2.279	2.437
Rule of Law	768	-.281	.869	-2.09	1.879
Political Stability	768	-.448	1.038	-3.181	1.615
Voice and Accountability	768	-.7	.844	-2.313	1.11
Regulatory Quality	768	-.224	.947	-2.53	2.261
Control of Corruption	768	-.322	.89	-1.689	2.326

*Source: Authors*

Table 5.2 provides a description of each variable that was utilized in the research. In order to comprehend and gain insight into the characteristics and fluctuations of variables, descriptive statistics are vital. Table 5.2 shows that women in Asian nations participate in the labor market at a rate of 34.5%, with a mean participation rate of 34.5 percent. This is the outcome that is of interest. The panel of nations with the greatest percentage of female involvement is 52.7%, as shown by the maximum value of 52.7. As a result, it seems that women are still underrepresented in the workforce. The average gross enrollment ratio for secondary schools, which accounts for students of all ages, is 42%. This metric sheds light on the state of education. This indicates that secondary education levels are still somewhat low in the area, yet the highest enrollment number shows a rate of 98%, so it's possible that other regions have greater rates.

Its metrics also show that, generally speaking, institutions aren't that good. Government efficiency, political stability, rule of law, regulatory quality, control of corruption, voice and accountability, and -.113, -.281, -.448, -.7, -.224, and -.322 are the ways. The ratings are low when compared to other areas and nations in the world, indicating that the quality of the institutions is weak. Higher ratings for each factor indicate stronger institutions and more effective systems of governance; the scale runs from around -2.5 to +2.5. Nonetheless, many Asian areas seem to have more robust institutions than others, based on the very high maximum figures for government effectiveness, regulatory quality, and control of corruption. A woman is likely to have 2.5 children if her reproductive capacity is fully used and she gives birth according to the age-specific fertility rates of the year, which is the total fertility rate. Gender dynamics rely on this variable since it shows how women are positioned in the house and how many children they choose to have and how far apart they have them (World Bank, 2024). Total population and gross domestic GDP are two more recorded control variables.

**Table 5.3 Matrix of correlations**

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
(1) FLFP	1.0										
(2) LPOP	-0.09	1.0									
(3) LGDP	-0.15	0.76	1.000								
(4) FR	-0.36	0.03	-0.32	1.000							
(5) SE	0.253	0.34	-0.20	0.317	1.00						
(6) GE	0.111	-0.13	0.402	-0.59	-0.55	1.00					
(7) ROL	0.034	-0.20	0.341	-0.56	-0.56	0.95	1.00				
(8) PS	0.330	-0.44	-0.037	-0.55	-0.39	0.62	0.64	1.00			
(9) VNA	0.213	-0.03	0.146	-0.25	-0.09	0.55	0.58	0.22	1.000		
(10) RQ	0.084	-0.21	0.310	-0.51	-0.56	0.91	0.90	0.53	0.604	1.000	
(11) COC	0.002	-0.26	0.260	-0.50	-0.53	0.92	0.94	0.65	0.551	0.844	1.000

*Source: Authors*

Table 5.3 shows the correlation test result which shows whether or not the estimations may suffer from the problem of collinearity. From the results, no coefficient of the covariate is substantially correlated except for the governance indicators. That is why each indicator of institutional quality is estimated in a separate model. Other than this, the

study analysis has no substantial issue of collinear covariates. And as earlier mentioned, the DK estimator is used for further analysis. This is because there is a significant amount of cross-sectional dependence amongst the variables. From table 5.4, apart from political stability all other variables are cross-sectionally dependent in the panel. When P-values are close to zero, it is indicative of the fact that the data are correlated across panel groups.

**Table 5.4: Pesaran test for cross-sectional dependence**

Variable	C-D Test	P-value	Corr
Female Labor Force Participation	2.38	0.017	0.017
Population	98.48	0.000	0.706
Gross Domestic Product	105.50	0.000	0.764
Fertility Rate	5.62	0.000	0.289
Secondary School Enrolment	28.20	0.000	0.203
Government Effectiveness	9.84	0.000	0.073
Rule of Law	10.81	0.000	0.080
Political Stability	1.09	0.276	0.008
Voice and Accountability	3.55	0.000	0.026
Regulatory Quality	3.79	0.000	0.028
Control of Corruption	5.99	0.000	0.045

*Source: Authors.* Notes: Under the null hypothesis of cross-section independence,  $CD \sim N(0,1)$ . P-values close to zero indicate data are correlated across panel groups.

Table 5.5 displays the results of the models that were considered in order to accomplish the goals of this study. Excluding interactions, Table 5.5 shows the effect of education, fertility rates, and institutional quality on women's labor force participation. All of the calculated models show that the fertility rate significantly reduces the likelihood that women will participate in the labor market. A decline in women's economic participation is a direct result of the rising fertility rate. Although there was a positive correlation between education and women's labor force participation, the impact was not statistically significant.

Table 5.5 DK-FE Results

	(1) FLFP	(2) FLFP	(3) FLFP	(4) FLFP	(5) FLFP	(6) FLFP
Population	-1.978*** (0.330)	-1.892*** (0.262)	-1.971*** (0.471)	-2.393*** (0.538)	-2.175** (0.708)	-2.252*** (0.461)
GDP	0.955** (0.308)	0.884*** (0.158)	1.077** (0.283)	1.308*** (0.309)	1.240* (0.455)	1.336*** (0.305)
Fertility rate	-1.025*** (0.0881)	-1.037*** (0.158)	-0.951*** (0.152)	-0.973*** (0.177)	-0.941*** (0.145)	-0.931*** (0.153)
School enrollment	0.0210 (0.0170)	0.0187 (0.0168)	0.0201 (0.0134)	0.0234 (0.0160)	0.0228 (0.0153)	0.0235 (0.0163)
Government effectiveness	0.405 (0.411)					
Rule of Law		0.577** (0.153)				
Political Stability			0.0952*** (0.193)			
Voice and Accountability				-0.447*** (0.399)		
Control of corruption					-0.151*** (0.659)	
Regulatory Quality						-0.294 (0.280)
_cons	44.73*** (3.657)	45.34*** (4.309)	41.43*** (3.941)	42.17*** (4.386)	40.48*** (3.963)	39.28*** (4.059)
F	310.4	48.72	39.21	34.44	96.07	32.93
N	735	735	735	735	735	735

Standard errors in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

**Table 5.6: DK-FE with Interactions**

	(1) FLFP	(2) FLFP	(3) FLFP	(4) FLFP	(5) FLFP	(6) FLFP
Population	-1.572*** (0.348)	-1.635*** (0.250)	-1.645** (0.557)	-2.906*** (0.674)	-1.216 (0.962)	-2.001*** (0.412)
GDP	0.929** (0.311)	0.860*** (0.157)	1.323** (0.372)	1.349** (0.372)	1.141 (0.552)	1.160*** (0.255)
Fertility rate	-0.680*** (0.152)	-0.804*** (0.140)	0.0785 (0.182)	0.0693 (0.209)	-0.207 (0.231)	-0.858*** (0.170)
School enrollment	0.0187 (0.0129)	0.0310 (0.0173)	0.0851*** (0.0198)	0.0439* (0.0152)	0.0346 (0.0196)	0.0431* (0.0152)
Government Effectiveness	-0.678 (0.621)					
Government Effectiveness *FR	0.621* (0.221)					
Government Effectiveness *SE	-0.0119* (0.0116)					
Rule of Law		-0.424* (0.443)				
Rule of Law*FR		0.234 (0.164)				
Rule of Law*SE		0.0105* (0.00389)				
Political Stability			-3.540*** (0.686)			
Political Stability*FE			0.691** (0.178)			
Political Stability*SE			0.0384*** (0.00469)			
Voice and Accountability				-4.660*** (0.921)		
Voice and Accountability*FE				1.385***		



Voice and Accountability*SE				(0.151) 0.0190* (0.00777)		
Control of Corruption					-2.596*** (0.240)	
Control of Corruption*FE					1.121*** (0.133)	
Control of Corruption*SE					-0.00276* (0.0099)	
Regulatory Quality						-0.959 (0.648)
Regulatory Quality*FE						0.0782 (0.158)
Regulatory Quality*SE						0.0219*** (0.00298)
_cons	38.06*** (5.435)	40.86*** (5.051)	25.25** (6.518)	46.49*** (3.731)	25.31** (6.627)	39.05*** (6.022)
F	444.2	76.00	162.5	68.57	230.0	59.81
N	735	735	735	735	735	735

Standard errors in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Table 5.7 Sectorial Results

	(1) FEA	(2) FEA	(3) FEI	(4) FEI	(5) FES	(6) FES
Population	9.325*** (1.128)	10.28*** (1.263)	-3.604*** (0.785)	-4.383*** (0.880)	-5.719*** (1.102)	-2.407*** (0.612)
GDP	-9.579*** (0.558)	-9.551*** (0.711)	2.433*** (0.388)	1.386** (0.495)	7.146*** (0.545)	1.477*** (0.383)
Fertility rate	3.156*** (0.399)	3.232*** (0.434)	-1.983*** (0.278)	-2.763*** (0.302)	-1.173** (0.390)	-0.217 (0.204)
School enrollment	0.464*** (0.0234)	0.463*** (0.0259)	-0.0105 (0.0163)	-0.0357* (0.0181)	-0.454*** (0.0228)	-0.0700*** (0.0139)
Government Effectiveness		-3.465*** (0.744)		0.454 (0.519)		-0.238 (0.349)
Rule of Law		4.514*** (0.854)		1.875** (0.595)		0.474 (0.407)
Political Stability		0.982** (0.330)		0.0643 (0.230)		-0.0177 (0.153)
Voice and Accountability		-0.477 (0.584)		-1.119** (0.407)		-0.687* (0.284)
Regulatory Quality		-0.823 (0.655)		0.190 (0.456)		0.281 (0.296)
Control of Corruption		-0.530 (0.786)		-0.303 (0.547)		0.555 (0.358)
_cons	87.93*** (16.73)	71.97*** (18.04)	16.76 (11.64)	58.64*** (12.57)	-4.703 (16.34)	15.89 (8.594)
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.689	0.703	0.154	0.198	0.623	0.922
<i>AIC</i>	3966.2	3415.6	3369.2	2884.1	3927.6	2034.3
<i>BIC</i>	3989.7	3466.2	3392.8	2934.7	3951.2	2088.7
F	428.6	160.7	35.24	16.74	319.5	675.2
N	823	735	823	735	823	689

Standard errors in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

As far as female labor force participation (FLFP) is concerned, our research shows that political stability and rule of law have a positive and major effect, but voice and accountability, together with control of corruption, have negative and substantial consequences. However, there was no correlation between government efficiency and regulatory quality—two measures of economic governance—and women's labor force participation (FLFP). Female labor force participation (FLFP) is positively and significantly affected by GDP in the model, but population has a negative and large effect. Economic development significantly increases women's participation in the labor, in contrast to rising population growth, which decreases their engagement.

Institutional quality, fertility rates, and education interact to affect female labor force participation (FLFP), as shown in Table 5.6. Fascinating insights are revealed by the findings. Female labor force participation (FLFP) was positively and significantly affected by the interaction of fertility rate with institutional quality indicators such as political stability, control of corruption, voice and accountability, and effective governance. On the other hand, regulatory quality and rule of law had a positive but insignificant effect. This suggests that the negative effects of fertility rate on women's labor force participation were significantly reduced by high-quality institutions. Second, there are a lot of complexities in the results of the connection between education and indicators of institution quality. Institutional quality indicators amplify the positive effect of education on female labor force participation (FLFP), which is influenced by the rule of law, political stability, voice and accountability, regulatory quality, and the interaction between the two. On the other side, education's interaction effects on government effectiveness and corruption control were unfavorable.

Table 5.7 shows the results of the study that looked at how education, fertility rates, and the quality of institutions affected the number of women working in agriculture, industry, and the service sector. We find some quite interesting things out of the estimations. A higher fertility rate is associated with higher rates of female labor force participation (FLFP) in agriculture, suggesting that the reproduction rate improves FLFP in this field. The fertility rate significantly and negatively affects female labor force participation (FLFP) in the service and industrial sectors, suggesting that it reduces FLFP in these areas. According to the findings, female labor

force participation (FLFP) in agriculture is significantly increased by higher levels of education, but FLFP in industrial and service sectors decreases at the same time. Generally speaking, there is no correlation between institutional quality and women's labor force participation. As an example, there was no discernible effect on female labor force participation across all industries from measures to curb corruption or improve regulatory quality. Despite its importance in the service and agricultural industries, the rule of law has a substantial impact on women's labor force participation everywhere. On the other side, women's labor force participation is negatively impacted by voice and responsibility in all industries, but especially in manufacturing and service. Agricultural labor force participation was the only sector where political stability had a favorable effect on women. Only in the agricultural sectors did the government's effectiveness have a negative impact on women's labor force participation. Research on the Asian labor market must take sectoral heterogeneities into consideration.

## **5.6 Discussions**

Important new information on the factors that influence FLFP in Asia, including the relationship between educational attainment, institutional quality, and fertility rates, has emerged from our research. To start, the results demonstrated, as expected from empirical evidence, that a higher fertility rate considerably lowers FLFP. Having more children has a major effect on women's capacity to engage in the workforce. Women may be less likely to participate in the labor market if they find it more difficult to juggle work and home responsibilities as a result of rising fertility rates. Brinton and Ensil (2019) conducted 160 in-depth interviews with educated men and women of childbearing age in Korea and Japan to find out how married women's employment and childrearing are incompatible. They found that gendered household labor is a result of workplace norms and labor market structure, which forces many married women to choose between not working or having more than one child. Second, the fact that FLFP education has a beneficial impact lends validity to the idea that education is key to empowering women so that they may fully engage and compete in the workforce. To empower women, education is essential because it equips them to overcome challenges, take charge of their life, rise in the family and community, and ultimately bring about equality (Jaysawal and Saha, 2023). There may be contextual differences among nations, however, as the results did not reach

statistical significance. The impact of institutional quality highlights the intricate nature of the connection between FLFP and governance systems. Rule of law and political stability play a positive role in indicating that women are more likely to have opportunities to participate in the workforce, while voice, accountability, and corruption control play a negative role, suggesting that there may be disparities or barriers in the institutional framework that prohibit women from entering the labor sector. Economic governance indicators may not directly impact women's labor market participation in these Asian countries, since there is no meaningful link between regulatory quality, government effectiveness, and FLFP.

In addition, the analysis's interactions provide intriguing findings, demonstrating dynamism and further confirming the intricate relationship between economic and governance factors (Parsa and Datta, 2023). The impact of the interaction between fertility rate and institutional quality parameters indicated a favorable effect. This consequently shows that the detrimental impact of fertility is reduced by governance. The results highlight the relevance of governance in promoting women empowerment by decreasing the repercussions of reproduction, patriarchal systems, and therefore enhance labor force participation. For example, a well-established system of government that is open, honest, and accountable to its citizens promotes democratization by giving everyone a say in policymaking (Divaka and Singh, 2022). This, in turn, empowers women (Menocal, 2020) via education, a healthy work-life balance, and gender equality. Education and institutional quality measures have different influences, which helps to explain the complicated link between FLFP and educational achievement in different governance systems. Education may have a mixed impact on women's labor force participation; while it does correlate positively with some measures of institutional quality—such as government effectiveness and corruption control—it correlates negatively with other indicators of institutional quality, suggesting that inefficiencies or barriers in the governance system may mitigate or even negate the positive effects of education on FLFP. Lastly, substantial differences in the impacts of the study's critical factors on FLFP are shown by the sectoral analysis. The influence of fertility rate on FLFP across sectors differed greatly in the agricultural, industrial and service sectors. It is probable that agrarian economies in the area rely on family labor due to the rising influence of fertility on FLFP in the agricultural sector. But in the service and industrial sectors, the situation

is completely different. This indicates that, in contrast to the rural sector, women in the industrial sector have considerable difficulties in balancing their job and family lives in the more organized and urbanized areas. This may be because of the way salaries are structured in the labor markets, which makes it harder for women to earn a living, particularly when they are pregnant or nursing. Similarly, there may be differences in skill sets and labor market needs, as shown by the sectoral differences in the impact of schooling on FLFP. In the agricultural sector, higher education improves FLFP. This could be because of factors like increased productivity and entrepreneurship, as well as seasonality. On the other hand, in the industrial and service sectors, we see the opposite effect. This could be due to sector-specific employment opportunities, discrepancies in educational requirements, or even just the structure and dynamics of these sectors, which make it less attractive for women to get further education due to unfavorable wage structures. In addition, sector-specific institutional quality metrics being insignificant calls attention to the need for comprehensive policy actions to address labor market disparities and institutional frameworks. Taken together, these findings highlight the importance of considering sectorial heterogeneities in labor market research and policy formulation for Asian women's economic empowerment and gender equality. This will ensure that policies and programs are focused and effective.

The double burden significantly impacts Female Labour Force Participation (FLFP) in Asia, particularly through the interplay of fertility rates, educational attainment, and institutional quality. Elevated fertility rates significantly contribute to the dual load, as women with many offspring frequently encounter increased challenges in reconciling paid employment with caring duties. Many women are discouraged from fully engaging in the workforce because of the dual expectations of juggling work and home responsibilities. Studies in nations such as Korea and Japan indicate that women often face the dilemma of choosing between childbearing and career continuity due to inflexible workplace standards and insufficient family assistance policies (Brinton & Ensil, 2019). Furthermore, education is an essential element in mitigating the double load. Educated women possess superior capabilities to navigate workforce challenges, enabling them to more efficiently reconcile familial and professional obligations. Education enables women to engage in the labour market, resulting in increased participation rates. The correlation between education

and female labour force participation is affected by the quality of institutions. In nations with superior governance structures, marked by political stability, adherence to the rule of law, and minimal corruption, the adverse effects of fertility on women's participation in the workforce are diminished. These governance aspects mitigate the dual burden by offering enhanced support mechanisms, such as work-life balance policies, that empower women to participate more fully in the labour market. The disparities among sectors in labour market dynamics underscore the intricacy of the dual burden. In agrarian economies, elevated fertility rates may not impede women's involvement owing to dependence on familial labour; conversely, in industrial and service sectors, the dual burden is more evident due to the organised, demanding characteristics of employment and less income flexibility. Consequently, tackling the double burden necessitates focused policy measures that take into account both sectoral and governance-related elements to improve women's economic empowerment and labour participation.

### **5.7. Conclusion and Policy Implications**

The findings from this study provide interesting insights which are important as it pertains to women's labour market dynamics and outcomes. Depending on the level of analysis, the results show that institutional quality, fertility rate and education play significant roles in explaining women labour force participation in Asia and developing countries. Three key findings emerged from the analysis. First, fertility rate significantly impacts FLFP negatively across all models without interactions, while education positively influences FLFP. The effect of institutional quality on FLFP was differed significantly based on the indicator of institutional quality. While indicators such as political stability and rule of law had positive effects on FLFP, voice and accountability and control of corruption had negative effects, and the duo of government effectiveness and regulatory quality did not significantly impact FLFP in the region. Secondly, the effects of the variables in the interactive analysis were significant. The interaction between fertility rate and institutional quality indicators showed a positive effect on FLFP, while the interaction between education and institutional quality indicators is complex. Thirdly, the study also investigated the effects of institutional quality, fertility rates, and education on FLFP in three sectors: agriculture, industry, and service, findings showing fertility rate and education both had positive effects on FLFP in the agricultural sector, while their effects were largely

negative in the industrial and service sectors. Finally, institutional quality's effects on FLFP were largely insignificant, with control of corruption and regulatory quality not significantly impacting FLFP in any sector.

The study's findings are crucial for policies relating women's labor market outcomes, gender equality, research and overall development in Asian nations. Therefore, policies that emphasize gender equality in household responsibilities, family-friendly regulations, and inexpensive childcare facilities can help in attenuating the detrimental effects of fertility rates on FLFP. While we do not advocate the fertility rate slowed down significantly since its rate within manageable thresholds, rather policies that support women during reproductive circles should be given priority. Again, given that the effect of education on FLFP generally is positive, more should be done to improve the educational options available to women. To guarantee alignment with labor market demands, interventions should also concentrate on raising the caliber and applicability of education, especially in the industrial and service sectors where educational attainment adversely affects FLFP. Furthermore, with respect to institutional quality, policymakers give due priority towards the enhancement of rule of law and political stability while addressing issues of accountability and corruption, as these factors influence FLFP significantly. Sector-specific policies are also crucial, acknowledging the differentiated impact of institutional quality, fertility rates and education across agricultural, industrial, and service sectors. Overall, in order to overcome the various obstacles, the limit women's entrance into, and their thriving in the labor market, as well as the promotion of inclusive economic growth and development in Asian nations, a thorough, comprehensive and context-specific approach is highly essential. Finally, further studies can focus on country specific comparative analysis of how institutional quality, fertility rates and education impact FLFP.



## CHAPTER SIX

### INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY AND LABOUR PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN ADVANCED G7 COUNTRIES

#### 6.1 Empirical Review

Women's involvement in the labour force is essential for economic growth and societal advancement in G7 countries. Studies show that more Women's workforce involvement can greatly enhance GDP per capita and help alleviate poverty (World Bank, 2019). Furthermore, increasing gender equality in the workforce is crucial for minimising discrepancies in income, education, and decision-making and for advancing inclusive economic development (OECD, 2017).

Various factors impact Women's workforce involvement in G7 nations. Higher fertility rates are generally linked to decreased female labour market participation due to caring duties, as indicated by Behrman & Gonalons-Pons (2020). Job possibilities play a vital role, with regulations that encourage gender-neutral workplaces, accessible childcare, and flexible working arrangements helping to increase female participation (Goldin, 2014). Furthermore, financial inequalities, such as the gender pay gap, impede women's involvement in the workforce, highlighting the importance of addressing these discrepancies for economic fairness (Blau & Kahn, 2017). Finally, institutional quality factors like governance efficacy and political stability impact women's economic chances, with robust governance structures backing gender equality measures (Duflo, 2012).

##### 6.1.1 Discussion of Female Labor Force Participation

Analyzing Women's workforce involvement rates in G7 countries is crucial for evaluating advancements in gender equality and their impact on economic growth. Recent research has examined these developments to get useful insights into the factors influencing women's participation in the workforce. Mishra, Nielsen, & Smyth (2010) observed that although Women's workforce involvement rates have gradually been improving in several G7 nations, inequalities still exist among different areas and demographic categories. Changing demographic patterns, technological improvements, and developing labour market dynamics are factors that contribute to these differences. (Behrman & Gonalons-Pons, 2020) highlighted that various factor influence fluctuations in Women's workforce involvement rates throughout time.

Demographic trends, such as variations in fertility rates, population ageing, and migration patterns, are important factors to consider. Decreased fertility rates in certain G7 nations have resulted in increased Women's workforce involvement due to reduced caregiving duties for women (Bloom, Canning, Fink, & Finlay, 2007). Technological progress and changes in industrial structure affect job prospects for women, influencing their choices to join the workforce (Goldin, 2014).

Understanding the dynamics in Women's workforce involvement is essential for stimulating economic growth and advancing gender equality. Studies show that boosting the involvement of women in the labour sector might result in elevated productivity, greater consumer expenditure, and improved innovation (OECD, 2017). Furthermore, advocating for gender equality in the workforce provides wider societal advantages such as alleviating poverty, enhancing health results, and economically empowering women (World Bank, 2019). Thus, governments should focus on measures that eliminate obstacles to women's participation in the workforce and advocate for equal opportunities for everyone.

Analyzing the factors that affect the Women's workforce involvement rate, Fertility rates have a substantial impact on women's choices about participation in the labour force. Evan & Vozárová (2017) and Behrman & Gonalons-Pons (2020) highlighted the intricate connection between fertility rates and female workforce participation. Increased reproduction rates are frequently associated with increased caregiving duties, causing some women to prioritize family commitments above paid work. Decreasing fertility rates are often associated with higher levels of Women's workforce involvement due to reduced limitations connected to childcare. Differences in fertility rates among G7 countries lead to varying trends in female labour force involvement. Countries with higher fertility rates, like Italy and Japan, typically have lower levels of female workforce participation (Shuangshuang, Zhu, & Mughal, 2023). Countries with lower fertility rates, like Germany and Canada, usually have greater levels of Women's workforce involvement (Taşseven, Altaş, & Un, 2016). The differences underscore how cultural norms, social regulations, and economic considerations affect women's choices to join the workforce. Fertility rates significantly influence Women's workforce involvement rates; however, this influence is affected by several contextual circumstances. Implementing family-friendly policies like subsidized daycare and parental leave can help reduce the impact of high fertility rates on women's engagement in the workforce (Zhang, Cai, Shi, Zhu,

& Shan, 2023). Inadequate support mechanisms can worsen issues for women with high reproduction rates, making it difficult for them to properly manage job and family commitments. Thus, although fertility rates offer useful insights into female labour force trends, a thorough comprehension of women's employment involvement necessitates examining wider socio-economic and policy environments.

For the G7 countries the role of double burden explains the twofold load that women bear, juggling paid employment with unpaid home duties like child care with reference to labour participation. First, fertility rates substantially impact this dynamic. Countries with elevated fertility rates, such as Italy and Japan, frequently see less female workforce participation, as women with greater numbers of children are anticipated to assume increased caregiving responsibilities, hence intensifying the dual burden. In contrast, nations with reduced fertility rates, like Germany and Canada, generally exhibit more female labour force participation, since women encounter fewer caring responsibilities. Nonetheless, in many countries, many women continue to experience a dual burden, as domestic obligations remain substantial. The double load is exacerbated in the absence of family-friendly policy. In the absence of cheap childcare and adequate parental leave, women may find it challenging to reconcile work and domestic responsibilities, thereby diminishing their capacity to engage in the workforce. Policies such as flexible working hours and subsidised childcare might mitigate the dual load, facilitating women's management of both professional and familial obligations. Mitigating the dual burden via supporting policies can enhance workforce participation, increase economic productivity, and promote gender equality. By tackling the obstacles women have in reconciling work and family, G7 nations may cultivate a more inclusive and economically vibrant workforce, hence enhancing societal advantages such as poverty reduction and women's empowerment.

### **6.1.2 Sectorial Employment and Women's Access to Employment**

Access to job options greatly impacts women's involvement in the workforce, with differences in sectors and rules around work-life balance playing key roles in influencing women's choices regarding employment. Research conducted by Fitong & Dzansi (2023) and Adu-Oppong & Kendie (2018) has shown how sectoral disparities affect women's employment possibilities, showing that some industries have significant levels of gender segregation and limited career advancement

prospects for women. Work-life balance policies, such parental leave and flexible working arrangements, are crucial in supporting women's involvement in the labour force.

Gender-neutral workplace policies and flexible work arrangements have significantly boosted the participation of women in the labour sector. Studies by Stamarski & Hing (2015) and Mousa (2021) show the beneficial impact of these measures on women's participation in the workforce. Gender-neutral workplace measures, such as equal pay rules and anti-discrimination laws, strive to remove obstacles to women's career progression and foster equitable chances for all employees. Flexible work options such as telecommuting and reduced workweeks help women reconcile work and home duties, leading to increased involvement in the workforce.

Although these policies are beneficial, problems persist in achieving their widespread adoption and implementation. Cultural norms and organizational practices can impede the implementation of gender-neutral workplace regulations, leading to gender-based discrimination and uneven treatment in the workforce (Shang, 2022). Access to flexible working arrangements may be restricted for women in specific industries or occupations with inflexible work structures or severe job requirements (Chung & van der Lippe, 2020). To tackle these difficulties, policymakers, businesses, and other stakeholders must work together to provide inclusive work environments and advance gender equality in the labour market.

### **6.1.3 Institutional Quality and Women's workforce involvement**

The relationship between institutional quality factors like governance and the rule of law and Women's workforce involvement is crucial, especially in the G7 countries. Studies by Abington (2020) and Aydın (2015) highlight the substantial impact of institutional quality on women's involvement in the labour force in industrialized nations. Robust governance frameworks, which priorities openness, accountability, and adherence to the rule of law, play a crucial role in promoting gender equality efforts and improving women's access to economic opportunities within the G7 frame work.

Evaluating how institutional quality influences women's economic possibilities in G7 countries has significant ramifications. Countries in the G7 with strong governance frameworks typically show increased gender equality, demonstrated by

smaller gender pay disparities, stronger presence of women in leadership roles, and better backing for work-life balance programmers (Bertay, Dordevic, & Sever, 2020). G7 countries with inferior governance structures may encounter difficulties such as increased gender-based discrimination, inadequate enforcement of labour rules, and insufficient economic resources for women.

Strong governance structures are essential to support gender equality initiatives in G7 countries, which are advanced economies. Kulkarni (2014) and Duflo (2012) highlighted the significance of institutional quality in guaranteeing the successful execution and enforcement of gender-sensitive policies in these countries. G7 nations with strong governance systems are more capable of implementing and enforcing laws that combat gender-based discrimination, therefore ensuring legal safeguards for women's rights in the workforce and fostering equal opportunities for everyone.

## **6.2 Summary and Research Gap**

The research gap in Women's workforce involvement in G7 countries emphasizes the lack of thorough studies on this subject. There is a paucity of comprehensive study investigating the various factors that influence women's participation in the labour in the G7 countries, despite its importance. Current research frequently offers restricted perspectives, failing to include important subtleties and complex interactions that influence women's involvement in the workforce. Therefore, there is an urgent requirement for thorough and comprehensive research to address this gap. This will offer policymakers and stakeholders a more profound insight into the obstacles, possibilities, and actions needed to advance gender equality and enhance women's economic empowerment in the G7 labour markets.

## **6.3. Data and Method**

### **6.3 Data**

Our study employed the use of yearly data from 1996 to 2021 for G7 countries (Japan, Germany, UK, Italy, US, France, and Canada) from 1996 to 2021. These nations were chosen to examine female workforce participation through sectorial employment and institutional quality criteria. This study's empirical specification and analysis are based on an empirical model. Table 3.1 summarizes data

**Table 6.1: Description of Variables**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Symbol</b>	<b>Unit of Measurement</b>	<b>Sources</b>
Women's workforce involvement	FLFP	ILO estimate	WDI 2023
Economic Growth	GDP	In constant 2010 USD	WDI 2023
Population	POP	% of the sum population	WDI 2023
Fertility Rate	FR	Birth Per Woman	WDI 2023
Female Self Employed	SE	ILO estimate	WDI 2023
Government Effectiveness	GE	Index	WGI 2023
Rule of Law	ROL	Index	WGI 2023
Political Stability	PS	Index	WGI 2023
Voice and Accountability	VNA	Index	WGI 2023
Rule of Law	RQ	Index	WGI 2023
Control of Corruption	COC	Index	WGI 2023
Female employment in Agric	FEA	ILO estimate	WDI 2023
Female employment in industry	FEI	ILO estimate	WDI 2023
Female Employment of Service	FES	ILO estimate	WDI 2023

Author's computation

#### 6.4 Model Specification

This study examines how institutional quality determinants affect female sectorial employment and Women's workforce involvement in G7 countries.

Equations (1) shows the initial econometric expression:

$$FLPL_{i,t} = \alpha_i + \theta_1 POP_{i,t} + \theta_2 GDP_{i,t} + \theta_3 FR_{i,t} + \theta_4 SE_{i,t} + \theta_5 INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_6 X_{i,t} + \varepsilon_{i,t} \quad (1)$$

Where FLPL, POP, GDP, FR, SE and INSTQ are defined in table 1, and X is the control variable of the vector while the error term is represented by  $\varepsilon$ , i is the country-specific effect, and t is the period. To address the concerns pruned by pooled OLS, we proceed to model the panel fixed effect IV and DK-FE are specified as follows

$$X_{i,t} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_j (X_{i,t-1}) + u_{i,t} \quad (2)$$

Where,  $X_{i,t}$  is a regressor in country  $i$  at time  $t$ .  $\alpha_0$  is the intercept,  $X_{i,t-1}$  is the first lag of the regressor and  $u_{i,t}$  is the error term.

$$FLPL_{i,t} = \alpha_i + \varphi FLPL_{i,t} + \theta_1 POP_{i,t} + \theta_2 GDP_{i,t} + \theta_3 FR_{i,t} + \theta_4 SE_{i,t} + \theta_5 INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_6 X_{i,t} + \vartheta_{i,t} \quad (3)$$

The interaction effects of the institutional quality are introduced in equation (4)

$$\begin{aligned}
FLPL_{i,t} = & \alpha_i + \varphi FLPL_{i,t} + \theta_1 POP_{i,t} + \theta_2 GDP_{i,t} + \theta_3 FR_{i,t} + \theta_4 SE_{i,t} \\
& + \theta_5 INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_6 POP * INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_7 GDP * INSTQ_{i,t} \\
& + \theta_8 FR * INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_9 SE * INSTQ_{i,t} \theta_6 X_{i,t} + \vartheta_{i,t} \quad (4)
\end{aligned}$$

Again, the capture of the sectorial employment equations (5), (6) and (7) are introduced as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}
FEA_{i,t} = & \alpha_i + \varphi FLPL_{i,t} + \theta_1 POP_{i,t} + \theta_2 GDP_{i,t} + \theta_3 FR_{i,t} + \theta_4 SE_{i,t} \\
& + \theta_5 INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_6 POP * INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_7 GDP * INSTQ_{i,t} \\
& + \theta_8 FR * INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_9 SE * INSTQ_{i,t} \theta_6 X_{i,t} + \vartheta_{i,t} \quad (5)
\end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
FEI_{i,t} = & \alpha_i + \varphi FLPL_{i,t} + \theta_1 POP_{i,t} + \theta_2 GDP_{i,t} + \theta_3 FR_{i,t} + \theta_4 SE_{i,t} \\
& + \theta_5 INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_6 POP * INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_7 GDP * INSTQ_{i,t} \\
& + \theta_8 FR * INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_9 SE * INSTQ_{i,t} \theta_6 X_{i,t} + \vartheta_{i,t} \quad (6)
\end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
FES_{i,t} = & \alpha_i + \varphi FLPL_{i,t} + \theta_1 POP_{i,t} + \theta_2 GDP_{i,t} + \theta_3 FR_{i,t} + \theta_4 SE_{i,t} \\
& + \theta_5 INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_6 POP * INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_7 GDP * INSTQ_{i,t} \\
& + \theta_8 FR * INSTQ_{i,t} + \theta_9 SE * INSTQ_{i,t} \theta_6 X_{i,t} + \vartheta_{i,t} \quad (7)
\end{aligned}$$

Equation (3) states that  $\vartheta_{i,t}$  equates to  $(\varepsilon_i + \mu_i)$ , where  $\varepsilon_i$  represents the error term and  $\mu_i$  the country-specific effects. This means that in the event of no serial correlation,  $\varepsilon_{i,t} \sim iidN(0, \delta_t^2)$  while  $E[\varepsilon_{i,t}, \varepsilon_{i,t}] = 0$ . Equations (4) through (7) include the relationship between female labor participation and employment and institution quality factors. To further mitigate the problem of collinearity, we incorporated the institution factors into independent analyses.

## 6.5 Empirical Strategy

This study used the Driscoll and Kraay (DK) and Fixed Effects Estimator, an advance method for cross-sectional dependence calculations. The DK estimator improves efficiency and robustness, especially in cross-sectional dependence, over the typical fixed effects estimator used in panel data analysis (Bangura & Saibu, 2024). One notable feature of the DK estimator is its capacity to account for numerous forms of cross-sectional dependence that are prominent in panel datasets (Akinlo & Dada 2022). Simulations revealed that the IV-FE and standard fixed effects estimators exhibited cross sectional dependence Cross-sectional dependence emerges when the observations across multiple units (e.g., nations in the study) are correlated with each other. The relationship violates the assumption of independence commonly assumed in classic fixed effects models and can lead to incorrect and wasteful estimates. The

DK estimator uses kernel-weighted means of cross-sectional residuals, thereby minimizing the impacts of cross-sectional dependency and giving more accurate and dependable estimations.

Furthermore, the DK estimator offers greater efficiency compared to classic fixed effects estimators, especially for small-sample or imbalanced panel scenarios (Ahmed, Abdul Hakim & Abdul Razak, 2023). By adding cross-sectional information in the estimation process, the DK estimator effectively utilizes the information at its disposal to produce more exact parameter estimations. This is particularly advantageous in this study, because the sample consists of a relatively limited number of nations in G7, and where standard estimators may suffer from efficiency difficulties. In summary, the choice of the Driscoll and Kraay Fixed Effects Estimator in this study is well-justified, especially considering its capacity to account for cross-sectional dependence and its promise to generate more efficient and trustworthy estimates in panel data situations. By utilizing this analytical approach, this study strengthens the reliability of its findings and advances to this study.

## **6.6 Results and Discussion**

Table 6.2, presents the descriptive statistics used to show the features of the dataset used in the study. Female labor force participation (FLFP) has a mean of 45.636 and ranges between 40.277 and 48.829 in percentage with a standard deviation of 2.396, population has a mean of 18.241 and ranges between 17.279 and 19.62 with a standard deviation of 0.651, GDP has a mean of 28.837 and ranges between 27.878 and 30.653 with a standard deviation of 0.755, FR has a mean of 1.627 and ranges between 1.24 and 2.12 with a standard deviation of 0.248, SE has a mean of 10.358 and ranges between 5.081 and 22.193 with a standard deviation of 4.045 indicating substantial variation across the study period, government effectiveness has a mean of 1.431 and ranges between 0.198 and 1.922 with a standard deviation of 0.434 indicating improvement in governance quality over the study period, Role of Law has a mean of 1.43 and ranges between 0.246 and 1.891 with a standard deviation of 0.449, political stability has a mean of 0.64 and ranges between -0.231 and 1.275 with a standard deviation of 0.328 indicating an improvement and increasing relative peace in the political climate, voice and accountability has a mean of 1.226 and ranges between 0.912 and 1.668 with a standard deviation of 0.18, regulatory quality has a mean of 1.395 and ranges between 0.642 and 1.887 with a standard deviation of 0.322,



while control of corruption has a mean of 1.183 and ranges between -0.03 and 2.07 with standard deviation of 0.674 indicating and improvement over the study period.

**Table 6.2: Descriptive Statistics**

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
FLFP	126	45.636	2.396	40.277	48.829
Lpop	126	18.241	.651	17.279	19.62
Lgdp	126	28.837	.755	27.878	30.653
FR	126	1.627	.248	1.24	2.12
SE	126	10.358	4.045	5.081	22.193
GE	112	1.431	.434	.198	1.922
ROL	112	1.43	.449	.246	1.891
PS	112	.64	.328	-.231	1.275
VNA	112	1.226	.18	.912	1.668
RQ	112	1.395	.322	.642	1.887
COC	112	1.183	.674	-.03	2.07

The table 6.3 present the correlation relationship among the interest variables, indicating that a weak negative correlation exists between female labor force participation and population and between political stability and female labor force participation, while a strong but negative correlation is observed between SE and female labor force participation. Furthermore, a weak positive correlation is observed between GDP and female labor force participation, a moderate positive correlation is observed between control of corruption and female labor force participation while the rest of the variable showed strong positive correlation with female labor force participation.

**Table 6.3: Matrix of correlations**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
Variables											
FLFP	1.000										
lpop	-0.139	1.000									
lgdp	0.020	0.978	1.000								
FR	0.709	0.218	0.324	1.000							
SE	-0.700	-0.482	-0.576	-0.645	1.000						
GE	0.653	0.082	0.191	0.365	-0.759	1.000					
ROL	0.739	0.068	0.201	0.416	-0.772	0.950	1.000				
PS	-0.185	-0.202	-0.213	-0.495	0.086	0.343	0.307	1.000			
VNA	0.667	-0.493	-0.363	0.217	-0.317	0.584	0.624	0.120	1.000		
RQ	0.694	-0.090	0.074	0.303	-0.549	0.775	0.852	0.201	0.726	1.000	
COC	0.482	-0.044	0.060	0.518	-0.364	0.619	0.579	0.120	0.255	0.445	1.000

The Pesaran CD cross sectional dependence results are displayed in table 6.4, revealing that cross sectional dependence exist in the panel cross section of the study. According, at 0.05 significance all the variables indicated cross sectional dependence except self-employment and government effectiveness which is significant at 0.1

**Table 6.4: Pesaran test for cross-sectional dependence.**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>C-D Test</b>	<b>P-value</b>	<b>Corr</b>
<b>FLFP</b>	9.11	0.000	0.469
<b>LPOP</b>	4.95	0.000	0.255
<b>LGDP</b>	35.84	0.000	0.960
<b>FR</b>	5.62	0.000	0.289
<b>SE</b>	-1.81	0.071	-0.093
<b>GE</b>	1.76	0.078	0.096
<b>ROL</b>	4.18	0.000	0.228
<b>PS</b>	3.39	0.001	0.185
<b>VNA</b>	8.44	0.000	0.461
<b>RQ</b>	7.12	0.000	0.386
<b>COC</b>	-4.43	0.046	0.406

In order to verify if the study's hypothesis is in accordance with its purpose, the fixed effect IV regression estimates are shown in table 6.5. A negative and statistically significant relationship between female labor force participation and population size was found. Since there is more competition for fewer employment as the population grows, this is true. Furthermore, as predicted theoretically, economic expansion has a favorable and statistically significant impact on the labor force participation of women. It is widely believed that a flourishing economy makes it easier to industrialize, which in turn opens the door to new employment possibilities. greater women will have greater opportunity to join the workforce if more jobs are created. Models 3 and 4 also demonstrate that the fertility rate significantly and positively affects the labor force participation of women in G7 nations, whereas the remaining models find no such effect. This is appropriate, as it shows that the economy and culture do not prohibit married women of childbearing age from working, in contrast to several emerging

nations, particularly those in sub-Saharan Africa. This is feasible since the G7 countries are well developed. Women's labor force participation in G7 countries is significantly and negatively impacted by self-employment. That more women will go into business for themselves is a good indicator of the availability of chances for individuals to do so, whether via invention or some other means. Because they are not answerable to a superior, they are free to focus on their homes while they work on their paste. Female labor force participation is significantly and negatively impacted by governance in G7 countries. In contrast to Africa, and Nigeria in particular, where there is a rising movement for increased female participation in both the governing and labor forces, this demonstrates that the structure of government does not promote female labor force participation. While the G7 countries' female labor force participation remained unchanged when governance was allowed to interact with fertility rate, the story changed when it was allowed to interact with self-employment, encouraging more women to join the labor force. Consequently, measures put in place by the government are essential if we want to see more women in the workforce and beyond. Even when the legal system is used to interact with fertility rate and self-employment, there is still no significant effect on female labor force participation in G7 nations. This holds true even when controlling for rule of law.

**Table 6.5: Fixed Effect -IV Estimation**

	(1) FLFP	(2) FLFP	(3) FLFP	(4) FLFP	(5) FLFP	(6) FLFP
Population	-8.474*** (0.601)	-8.588*** (0.899)	-8.123*** (0.592)	-7.541*** (0.959)	-7.832*** (1.052)	-6.841*** (0.632)
Economic Growth	5.790*** (0.536)	5.961*** (0.794)	5.438*** (0.539)	4.918*** (0.782)	5.327*** (0.894)	4.671*** (0.553)
Fertility Rate	-0.779 (2.444)	2.464 (2.593)	2.864*** (0.790)	9.103** (3.282)	3.743 (2.588)	-1.535 (1.320)
Self Employed	-0.887*** (0.102)	-0.589*** (0.118)	-0.386*** (0.0279)	-0.197 (0.191)	-0.342** (0.120)	-0.432*** (0.0300)
Governance	-8.726** (3.021)					
Governance*Fertility rate	1.790 (1.574)					
Governance*Self employed	0.336*** (0.0692)					
Rule of Law		-2.459 (3.006)				
Rule of Law*Fertility rate		-0.222 (1.673)				
Rule of Law*Self Employed		0.146 (0.0808)				
Political Stability			-1.353* (0.3733)			
Political Stability*FE			-2.578* (1.061)			
Political Stability*SE			0.2329** (0.0373)			
Voice and Accountability				9.581* (4.816)		
Voice and Accountability*FE				-5.464*		

				(2.623)		
Voice and Accountability*SE				-0.150		
				(0.173)		
Rule of Law					1.563	
					(3.627)	
Rule of Law*Fertility rate					-1.025	
					(1.741)	
Rule of Law*Self Employed					-0.0168	
					(0.0875)	
Control of Corruption						-7.302***
						(1.709)
Control of Corruption*FE						3.773***
						(0.969)
Control of Corruption*SE						0.126*
						(0.0489)
_cons	47.33***	34.49***	36.80***	29.59***	32.66***	42.20***
	(7.299)	(8.756)	(5.877)	(8.209)	(8.652)	(5.928)
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.935	0.918	0.930	0.918	0.915	0.930
<i>AIC</i>	224.6	251.1	230.7	250.9	254.8	233.7
<i>BIC</i>	246.4	272.9	249.7	272.7	276.5	255.4
F	214.3	166.0	233.7	166.3	160.2	196.5
<i>N</i>	112	112	112	112	112	112

Standard errors in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

In G7 countries, female labor force participation is negatively and significantly impacted by political stability at the 0.1 significance level, suggesting that political instability may be a contributing factor. Despite the fact that their jobs require them to be in public during times of political turmoil, women avoid being out in public during these times because they are more susceptible to harm. Women of childbearing age have a tendency to decrease in labor force participation when fertility rate and self-employment are regulated using political stability. However, self-employment stimulates increased female labor force involvement. So, in a politically stable environment, women in the G7 are more likely to work as self-employed. The interaction between voice and accountability, fertility rate, and self-employment has a negative and statistically significant influence on female labor force participation, whereas the effect of self-employment is minor. In light of this, it would seem that the disengagement of women of childbearing age from the labor market is supported when public opinion and sensitization over the G7 countries' fertility and employment policies are raised. Even after accounting for changes in the fertility rate and the prevalence of self-employment, the rule of law does not seem to have any discernible influence on the labor force participation of women in the G7 countries. In addition, there is a negative and statistically significant relationship between corruption control and the involvement of women in the labor force. This indicates that the only way for more women to join the workforce in G7 countries is for corruption control to be eliminated. G7 countries see higher rates of female labor force participation when corruption control is applied after adjusting for fertility rate and self-employment. It seems that corruption is preventing more women from actively participating in the work field.

Population favors increased female labor force involvement, according to the DK-FE regression estimates in table 6.5. This is relevant only for models 3 and 4. This proves, as a matter of course, that there will be more women eager to join the workforce, particularly as positions become available, as the population grows. Consistent with the FE-IV result, while neither economic growth nor fertility rate are statistically significant, self-employment does have a negative and substantial impact on female labor force participation. More women are discouraged from entering the workforce by governance in general, but their involvement increases when regulations are put in place to limit self-employment. The rule of law also shows a comparable result. While political stability has

little born on female's labor force participation, efforts to curb the fertility rate and discourage self-employment have the opposite impact in the G7 countries. While it moderates the fertility rate and self-employment, voice and responsibility discourage more women from joining the workforce in G7 countries. However, when these factors are relaxed, women's labor force participation improves dramatically. Although reducing corruption has a negative impact on women's labor force participation in G7 nations, it has the opposite effect when it reduces fertility rates.



**Table 6.6: DK-FE Estimation**

	(1) FLFP	(2) FLFP	(3) FLFP	(4) FLFP	(5) FLFP
Population	4.875 (4.761)	3.472 (3.807)	10.55** (3.560)	10.51** (3.490)	6.648 (3.765)
Economic Growth	3.054 (1.575)	2.732 (1.419)	1.056 (1.112)	-0.335 (1.394)	4.794 (2.300)
Fertility Rate	-0.678 (1.503)	-1.000 (3.634)	3.767 (1.850)	-7.340* (3.248)	-4.543** (1.470)
Self Employed	-0.645*** (0.0937)	-1.147*** (0.243)	-0.315*** (0.0363)	-0.722*** (0.155)	-0.368*** (0.0874)
Governance	-6.166* (2.152)				
Governance*Fertility rate	1.946 (1.378)				
Governance*Self employed	0.301*** (0.0546)				
Rule of Law		-9.749*** (1.838)			
Rule of Law*Fertility rate		1.841 (1.692)			
Rule of Law*Self Employed		0.678** (0.206)			
Political Stability			5.173 (2.600)		
Political Stability*Fertility rate			-3.483* (1.577)		
Political Stability*SE			-2.6353* (0.3647)		
Voice and Accountability				-17.73** (5.721)	
Voice and Accountability*FE				7.683* (3.373)	

Voice and Accountability*SE				0.407*	
				(0.138)	
Control of Corruption					-9.860***
					(2.154)
Control of Corruption*FE					5.649**
					(1.690)
Control of Corruption*SE					0.0790
					(0.0545)
_cons	-123.5*	-82.54*	-179.9**	-115.8***	-203.3***
	(43.21)	(33.09)	(48.25)	(25.47)	(21.29)
F	1108.5	453.1	81.30	182.7	155.4
N	112	112	112	112	112

Standard errors in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

The sectorial outcome for the G7 countries from fixed effect-IV is shown in Table 6.7. Industry, agriculture, and services make up the three divisions. Thus, in the agricultural and industrial sectors, population has a negative and statistically significant influence on female labor force participation, but in the service sector, population has a positive and statistically significant effect. Resulting in fewer women joining the workforce in the agricultural and industrial sectors of G7 nations, while more women are drawn to work in the service sector. Agricultural and industrial female labor force participation is unaffected by economic development, whereas G7 female labor force involvement in the service sector is discouraged by economic expansion. Fertility rates in the G7 countries' agricultural and industrial sectors discourage women from entering the workforce, but in the service sector, they actually encourage women to do so. More so than in the service sector, where self-employment discourages women from entering the workforce, self-employment boosts women's labor force participation in agriculture and industry. Agricultural and industrial sectors show no substantial influence of governance and rule of law on female labor force participation when looking at institutional quality indicators. However, in the service sector, these factors hinder female labor force participation. Female labor force participation is encouraged in agricultural and industrial sectors by political stability, voice, and responsibility, but discouraged in the service sector. Lastly, with regard to the G7 countries' agricultural, industrial, and service sectors, there is no substantial influence of regulatory quality and corruption control on female labor force participation. As a result, although rising populations and fertility rates tend to put more women into service sector jobs, the inverse is true in agriculture and manufacturing. The opposite is true for women, who are more likely to work in agriculture and industry when they have the opportunity for self-employment, political stability, and a voice and responsibility. This has obvious ramifications: it shows how the government can use agricultural policy to get more women to work. Women are also given the chance to seek jobs and join the labor force by official policies that promote industrialization.

**Table 6.7: Sectorial Results Fixed Effect-IV**

	(1) FEA	(2) FEA	(3) FEI	(4) FEI	(5) FES	(6) FES
Population	-3.248** (1.049)	-3.464** (1.101)	-29.37*** (3.479)	-29.15*** (3.821)	32.61*** (4.288)	10.74*** (2.544)
Economic Growth	-0.920* (0.450)	-0.787 (0.515)	2.097 (1.493)	1.288 (1.786)	-1.177 (1.840)	-3.545*** (0.969)
Fertility Rate	-0.685** (0.238)	-0.793** (0.255)	-2.934*** (0.789)	-3.391*** (0.886)	3.619*** (0.972)	0.996* (0.495)
Self Employed	0.179*** (0.0150)	0.183*** (0.0163)	0.554*** (0.0497)	0.564*** (0.0565)	-0.733*** (0.0613)	-0.170*** (0.0463)
Governance		0.0266 (0.201)		0.0935 (0.697)		-0.770* (0.380)
Rule of Law		-0.495 (0.263)		-0.223 (0.911)		0.868 (0.490)
Political Stability		0.513*** (0.115)		1.126** (0.398)		-0.901*** (0.221)
Voice and Accountabili		0.565* (0.271)		2.981** (0.939)		-0.177 (0.549)
Regulatory Quality		0.0373 (0.192)		1.176 (0.667)		0.0366 (0.342)
Control for corruption		-0.0946 (0.162)		-0.450 (0.564)		-0.0475 (0.329)
_cons	86.73*** (12.96)	86.67*** (14.24)	485.8*** (42.97)	500.5*** (49.41)	-472.6*** (52.96)	-70.48* (34.62)
$R^2$	0.643	0.765	0.678	0.787	0.687	0.957
$AIC$	-51.72	-84.75	250.3	194.0	303.0	37.14
$BIC$	-37.54	-54.85	264.5	223.9	317.2	68.99
F	51.82	31.00	60.50	35.18	63.24	176.4
N	126	112	126	112	126	105

Standard errors in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

## **6.7: Conclusion and Policy Recommendation**

The current study investigated the role played by institutional quality towards the participation of women in the labor of G7 nations. The study adopted the fixed effect-IV and DK-FE estimators to investigate the stated objectives which was done on the aggregate panel and at sectorial levels. The findings for the aggregate panel result for the G7 nations showed a slight disparity in the outcome of the FE-IV and DK-FE regression estimates. According to the FE-IV estimates, population and self-employment impedes female labor force participation in G7 while economic growth and fertility rate enhances it. Similarly, governance, political stability and corruption control militated against female labor force participation in the G7 nations but when made to moderate self-employment female labor force participation is enhanced. This same outcome from the institutional measures is observed in the DK-FE regression estimates where governance, rule of law, voice and accountability and corruption control militated against the involvement women in the G7 nation's labor force however, when these institutional quality measures moderate fertility and self-employment, it enhances the participation of women in the labor. This connotes those institutions of the government are ample tools to influence the labor market in G7 nations toward the elimination of gender bias and inequality, when applied wisely and appropriately. These may include the institution of new policies or fine-tuning existing policies to suit current realities in the labor market in G7 to achieve the desired outcome. Moreover, economic growth is indispensable in promoting gender balance by way of encouraging greater female participation in the labor force in the G7. Furthermore, at the sectorial level, population is effective in improving female participation in the labor force in the service sector, whereas, self-employment, political stability and voice and accountability enhanced then involvement of more women in the labor within agricultural and industrial sectors of G7 nations. Thus, implying that institutions of government can effectively employ their control or regulatory measures to measures in closing the gender inequality gaps in the various sectors in the G7 nations. The study recommends that the economies of the G7 nations should ensure steady growth of their economy and where necessary employ the tools of institutions in developing sound and suitable policies to regulate and control the labor market in the line of eliminating gender biases and inequality in the various sectors as

well as in the overall economy. Furthermore, because the current study is limited by the geographical scope (centering in the G7 nations). Thus, recommendation for future study is made to consider other developed nations beside the G7 nations. More so, emerging and developing economies need be considered also as they form the Centre of attraction in the global labor market because they are heavily endowed with vast human capital potentials but are equally suffering high unemployment and underemployment rates compared to the developed economies of the world.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### GENERAL CONCLUSION

The examination of Women's workforce involvement in Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and advanced (G7) countries reveals distinct patterns and shared characteristics shaped by fertility rates, institutional quality, governance, political stability, voice and accountability, and sectoral employment ratios. Each region's unique socio-economic and political landscape informs these differences and similarities, highlighting the complex interplay between institutional factors and women's labour market outcomes.

#### **7.1: Differences Across Regions:**

In Sub-Saharan Africa, high fertility rates significantly influence Women's workforce involvement. The prevalent demographic pattern necessitates that many women balance child-raising with work, often resulting in higher female employment ratios in the agriculture sector compared other sectors. The region's institutional quality and governance are generally weaker compared to Asia and G7 countries, with lower political stability and less effective governance structures. This environment restricts the opportunities for women in formal employment sectors, pushing them towards informal and subsistence agriculture roles. The voice and accountability in Sub-Saharan Africa are also limited, reducing women's ability to influence policies that could enhance their economic participation.

Asia presents a varied picture, with countries like Japan and South Korea demonstrating lower fertility rates and higher institutional quality compared to their South and Southeast Asian counterparts. Political stability and governance in many Asian countries are relatively stronger, providing a conducive environment for Women's workforce involvement in the service and industrial sectors. However, cultural norms and gender roles in certain parts of Asia continue to restrict women's economic activities, despite improvements in institutional frameworks. Voice and accountability vary widely within the region, influencing the degree to which women can advocate for their labour rights and economic inclusion.

In advanced G7 countries, low fertility rates and high institutional quality create a favourable context for Women's workforce involvement across various sectors. These countries exhibit strong governance, political stability, and robust mechanisms for voice

and accountability, which collectively support women's integration into the labour market. The employment ratios in the service and industrial sectors are significantly higher for women in G7 countries compared to Sub-Saharan Africa and many parts of Asia. These nations also implement comprehensive policies to support work-life balance, such as parental leave and childcare services, further facilitating women's labour market engagement.

## **7.2: Similarities Across Regions:**

Despite these regional differences, several commonalities exist concerning fertility rates, institutional quality, governance, political stability, voice and accountability, and female employment ratios across sectors. Across all regions, there is a clear correlation between lower fertility rates and higher Women's workforce involvement. As fertility rates decline, women have more opportunities to engage in the labour market, a trend visible in the progressive shifts within Sub-Saharan Africa, parts of Asia, and consistently in G7 countries.

Institutional quality and governance improvements positively affect Women's workforce involvement in all regions. Countries that enhance their institutional frameworks, ensure political stability, and promote good governance see better female labour market outcomes. The development of strong institutions that uphold the rule of law, transparency, and accountability is crucial for creating an environment where women can thrive economically.

Voice and accountability remain pivotal in advancing women's labour participation across regions. When women have the means to participate in decision-making processes and hold institutions accountable, their economic prospects improve. This empowerment is crucial in advocating for gender-sensitive policies that address barriers to female labour market entry and retention. The sectoral distribution of female employment shows that women in all regions are overrepresented in the service sector compared to the industrial and agriculture sectors. This trend highlights the global shift towards service-based economies and the increasing opportunities for women in this sector. However, the proportion of women in agriculture remains significant in Sub-Saharan Africa, reflecting the region's economic structure and the critical role of agriculture in livelihoods.



In conclusion, while the specific contexts of Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and G7 countries shape the nuances of Women's workforce involvement, the underlying dynamics of fertility rates, institutional quality, governance, political stability, voice and accountability, and sectoral employment patterns offer a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing women's economic engagement globally. Addressing the disparities and leveraging the commonalities can inform policies and interventions aimed at enhancing Women's workforce involvement across diverse socio-economic landscapes.

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## ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL



NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

30.04.2025

Dear Umar Habiba Mohammed Bello

Your project **“An inquiry into institutional quality and female labour force participation: a review of developing and developed countries”** has been evaluated. Since only secondary data will be used the project does not need to go through the ethics committee. You can start your research on the condition that you will use only secondary data.

Prof. Dr. Aşkın KİRAZ

Director



## PLAGIARISM REPORT

AN INQUIRY INTO INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY AND FEMALE  
LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION: A REVIEW OF DEVELOPING  
AND DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

### ORJİNALLİK RAPORU

% <b>14</b>	% <b>6</b>	% <b>13</b>	% <b>1</b>
BENZERLİK ENDEKSİ	İNTERNET KAYNAKLARI	YAYINLAR	ÖĞRENCİ ÖDEVLERİ

### BİRİNCİL KAYNAKLAR

<b>1</b>	Habiba Mohammedbello Umar, Mehdi Seraj, Huseyin Ozdeser. "Female Labour Participation in Sub-Saharan African: The Role of Institutional Quality", Journal of the Knowledge Economy, 2025 Yayın	% <b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	Rahman, Sabrin. "The Impact of Foreign Direct Investment on Women's Economic, Political and Civil Rights", Nottingham Trent University (United Kingdom), 2024 Yayın	% <b>1</b>
<b>3</b>	Amber, Hina. "Economics of Female Labor Force Participation: Overcoming Barriers in Pakistan", Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universitaet Bonn (Germany) Yayın	<% <b>1</b>
<b>4</b>	<a href="https://scholarcommons.usf.edu">scholarcommons.usf.edu</a> İnternet Kaynağı	<% <b>1</b>
<b>5</b>	Syed Salleh, Sharifah Nabilah. "Women's Labour Force Participation and Exit Decisions in Malaysia", University of Malaya (Malaysia) Yayın	<% <b>1</b>
<b>6</b>	<a href="https://etd.aau.edu.et">etd.aau.edu.et</a> İnternet Kaynağı	<% <b>1</b>
<b>7</b>	<a href="http://www.wisdompress.co.in">www.wisdompress.co.in</a> İnternet Kaynağı	<% <b>1</b>