



**REGIONAL SEMINAR**  
**WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT, ENTREPRENEURSHIP & EMPOWERMENT:**  
**MOVING FORWARD ON IMPERFECT PATHWAYS**

# **Female Labor Force Participation:** *Contributing Factors*

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## Outline

1. How Asia fares globally?
2. What constrains Asian women from entering the labor force?
3. Evidences from Selected Asian Countries
4. What can policymakers do?



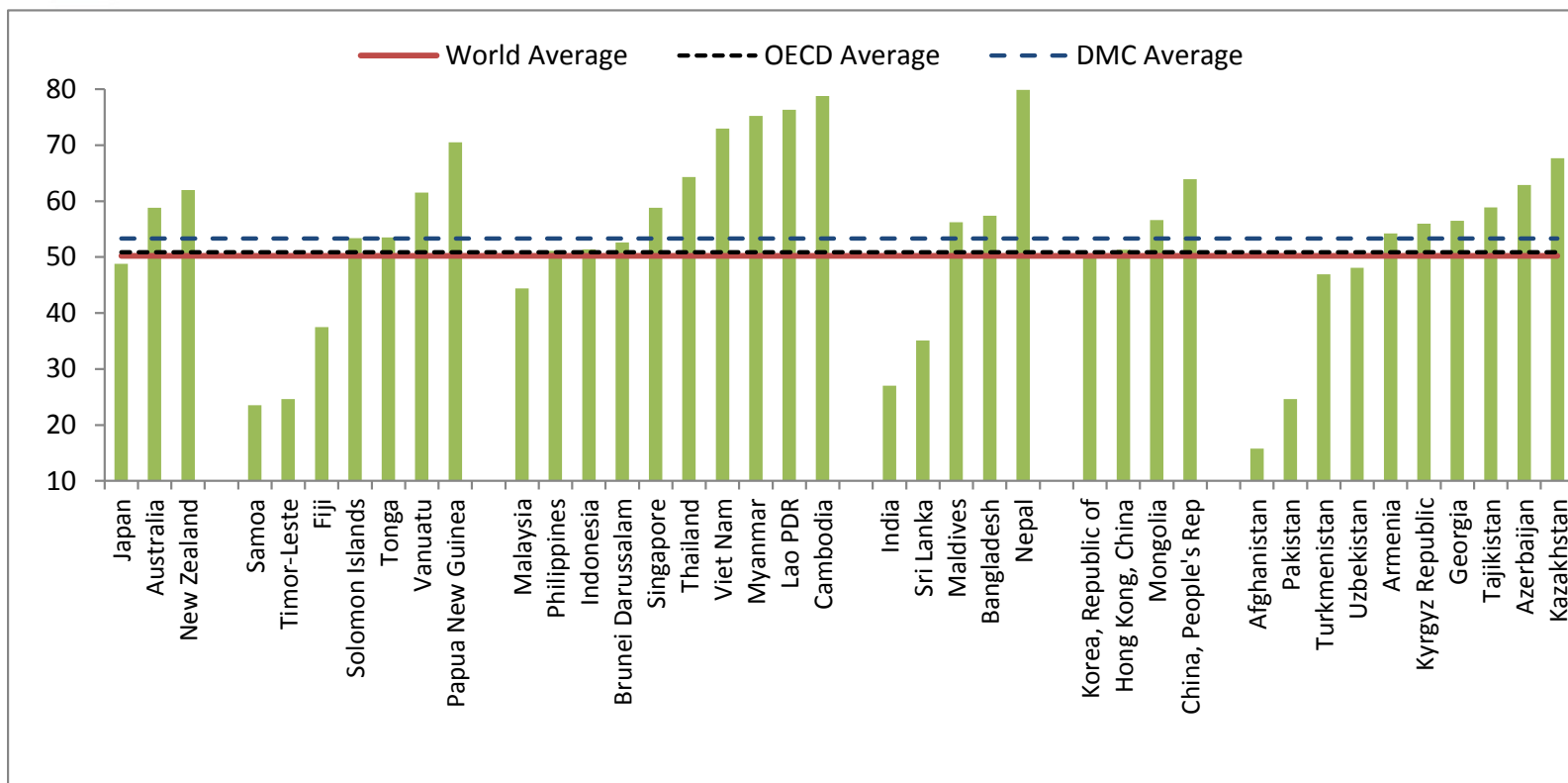


# How does Asia fare globally?





# Female Labor force participation rate varies from 16%-79% in Asia and the Pacific

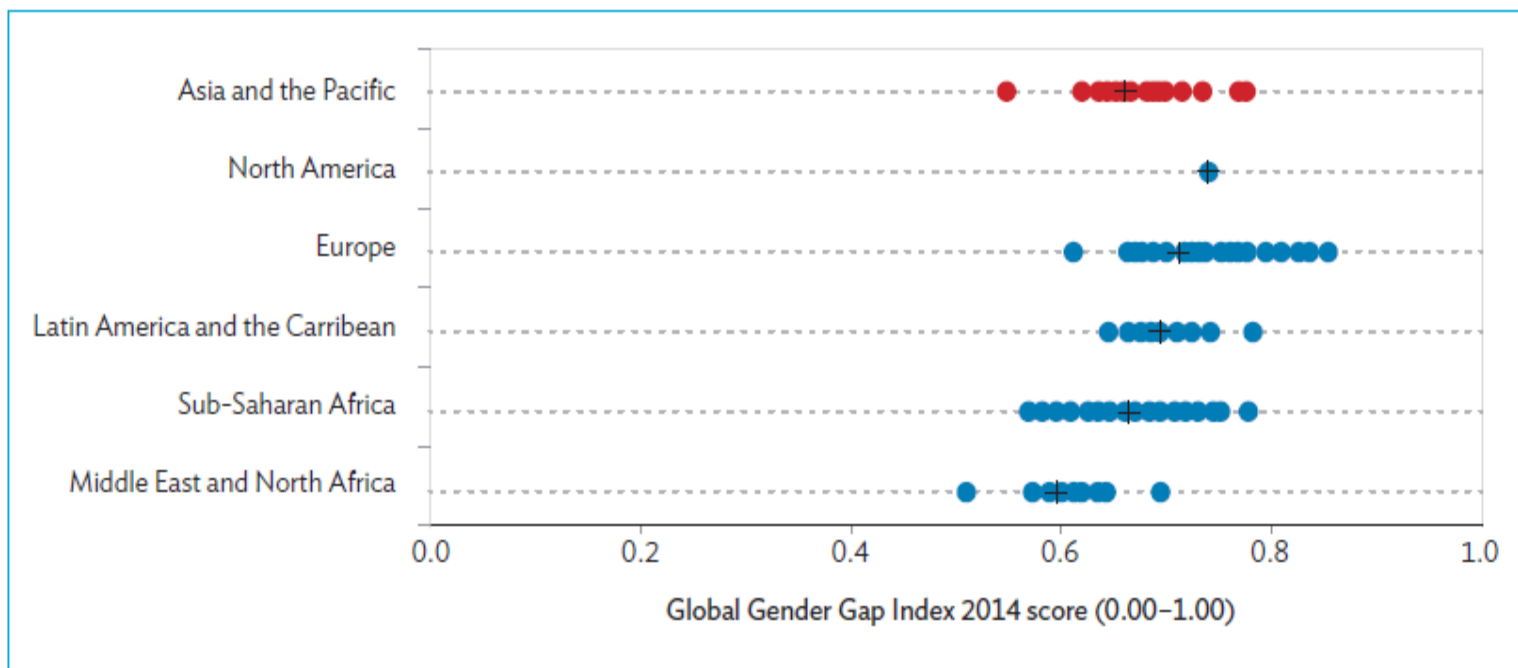


DMC= developing member countries, OECD= Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.  
Source: ILO, Key Indicators of the Labor Market 8th Ed.; WB, World Development Indicators 2014.





# Global comparison of gender gap shows wide dispersion across regions



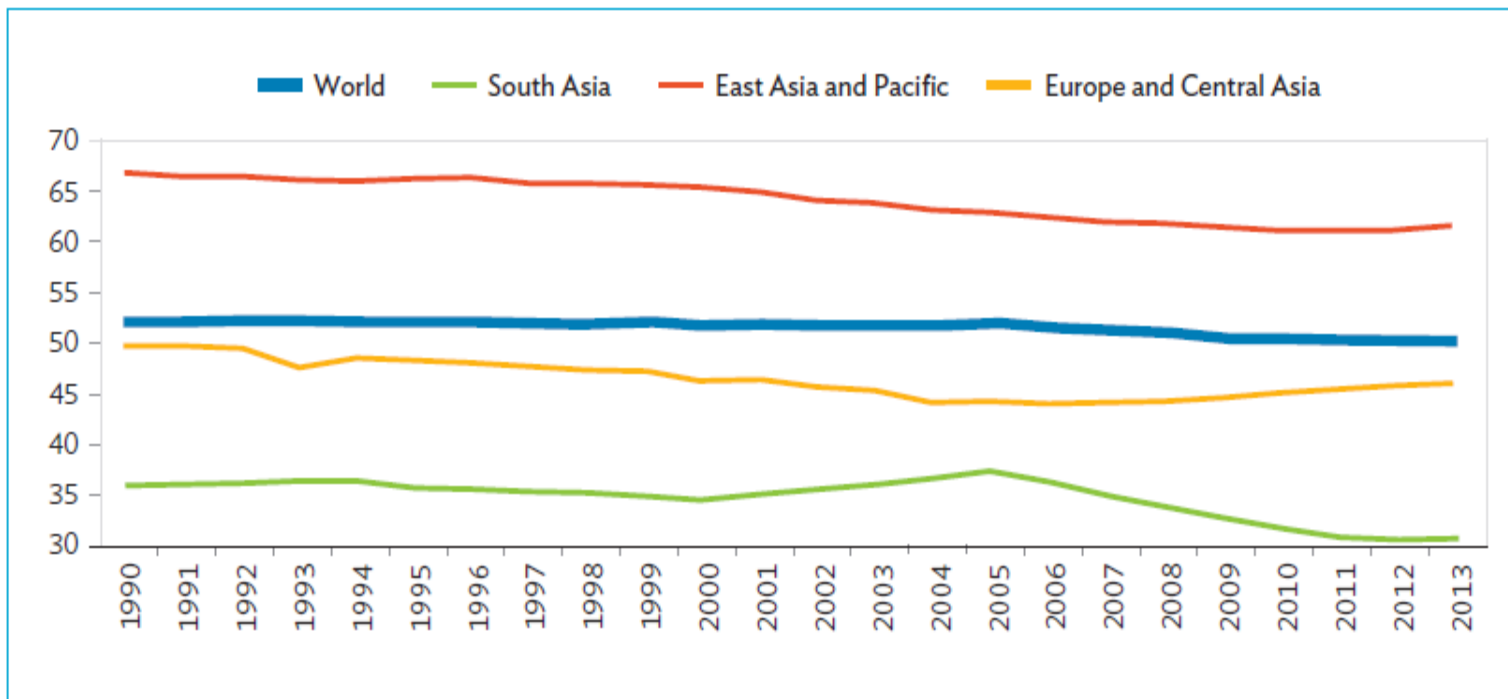
Notes: The Gender Gap Index compiled annually measures the gap of females relative to males on a composite of four subindices. The subindices measure economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment. Black cross markers correspond to regional averages weighted by population; regions are sorted by average score and weighted by population. Details on regional classifications are in Appendix 1.

Sources: World Economic Forum 2014; World Bank, World Development Indicators for population data (accessed January 2015).





# World average remarkably stable over the last 25 years

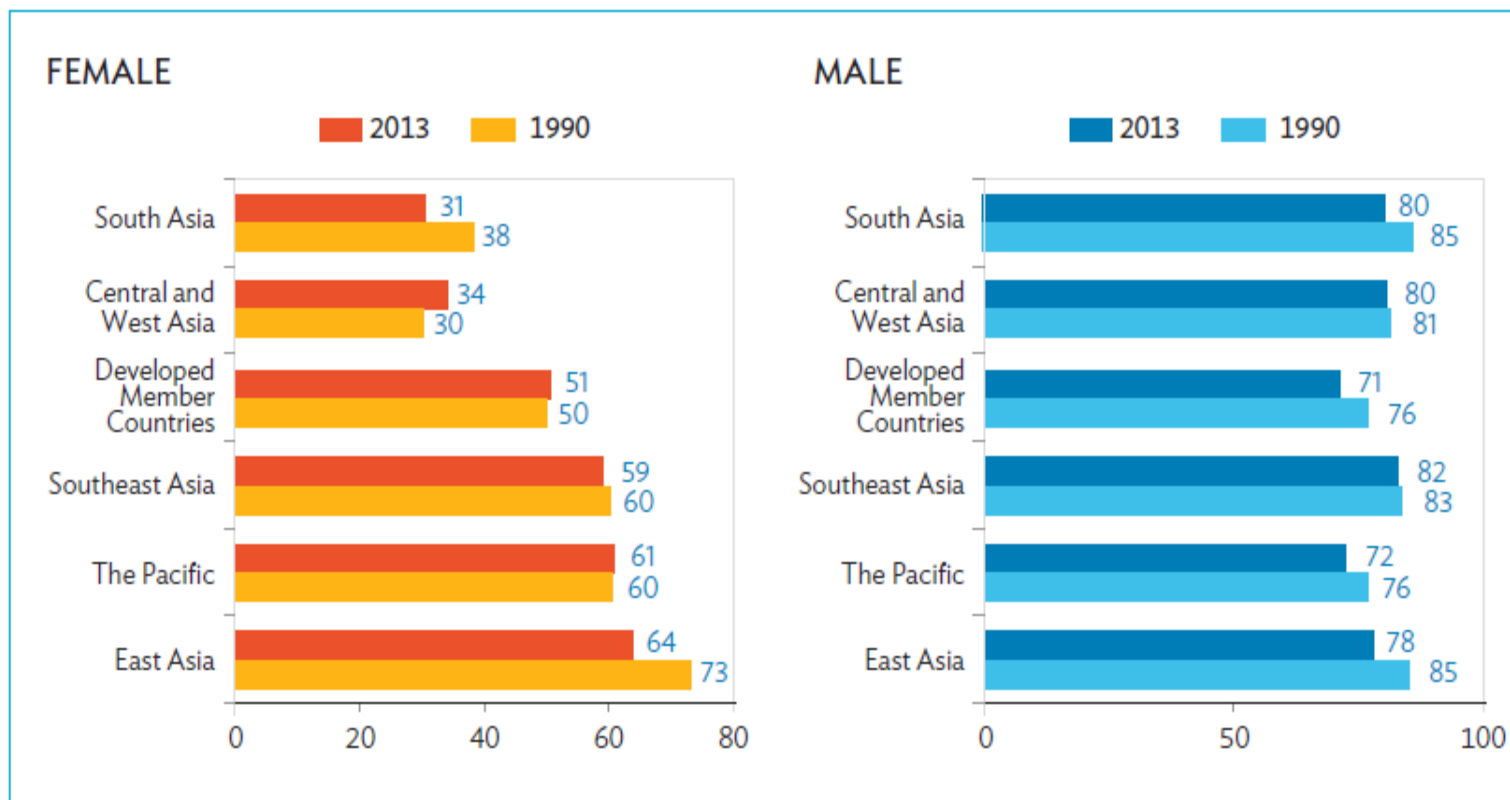


Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators (accessed January 2015).





# Small decline in male participation rates



FLFP = female labor force participation aged 15+, MLFP = male labor force participation aged 15+.

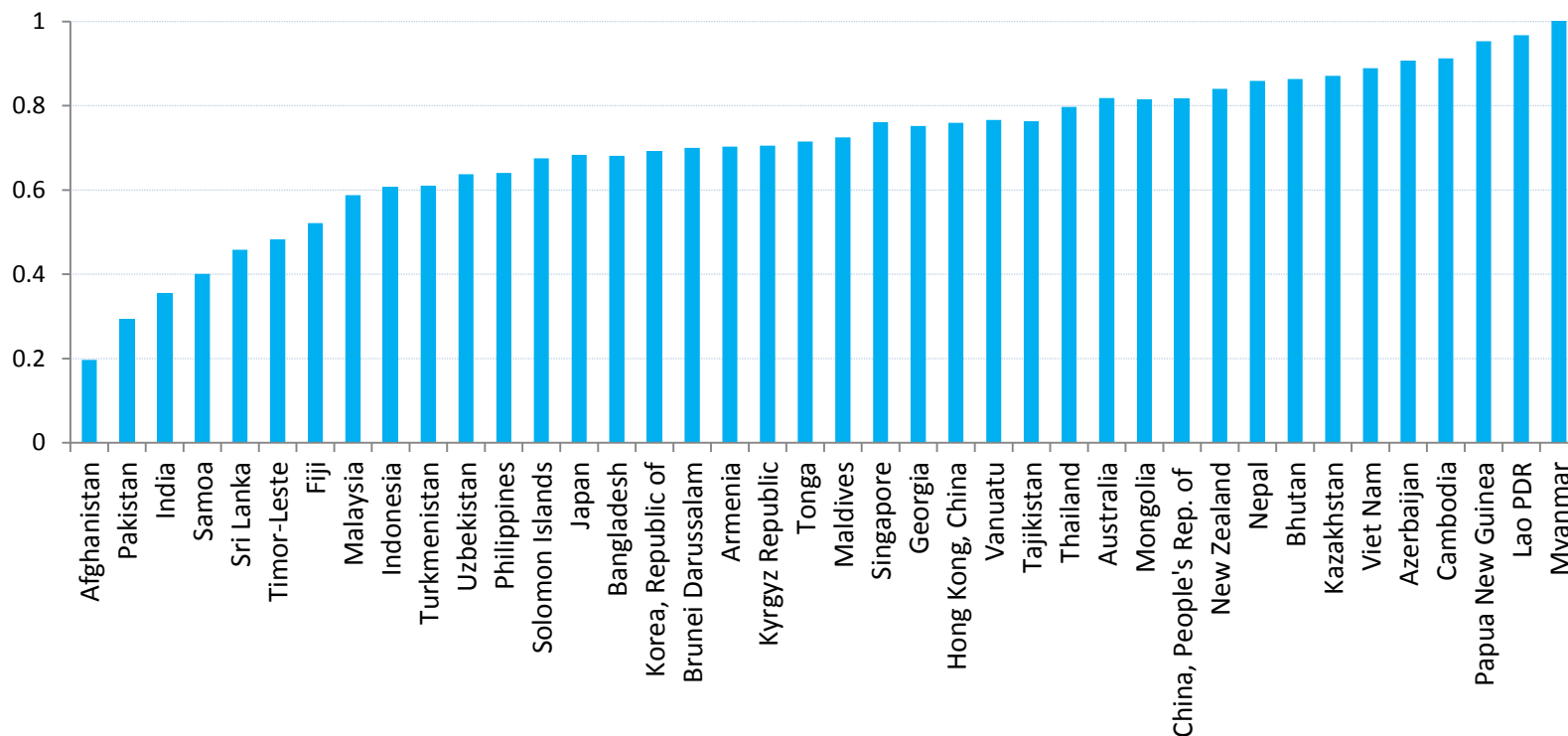
Note: East Asia refers to People's Republic of China and Mongolia.

Source: International Labour Organization 2014.





# Income not necessarily correlated to the gender gap in labor force participation



Ratio of Female to Male Labor Force Participation (aged 15+)

Lao PDR= Lao's People's Democratic Republic

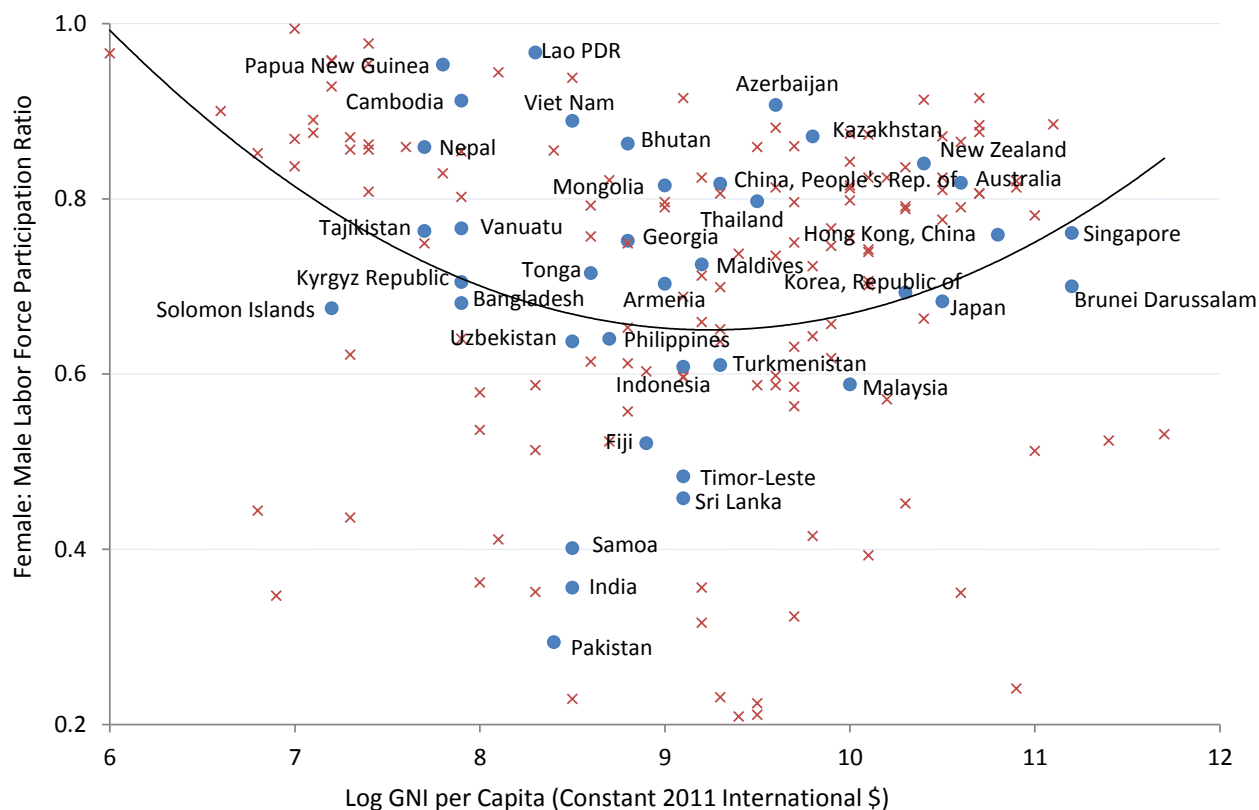
Source: United Nations Development Programme 2014







# FLFP and Economic Development: Stable U-shaped relationship



FLFP= female labour force participation, GNI= gross national income, Lao PDR= Lao's People's Democratic Republic  
Source: Human Development Index (UNDP 2014, <http://hdr.undp.org>)



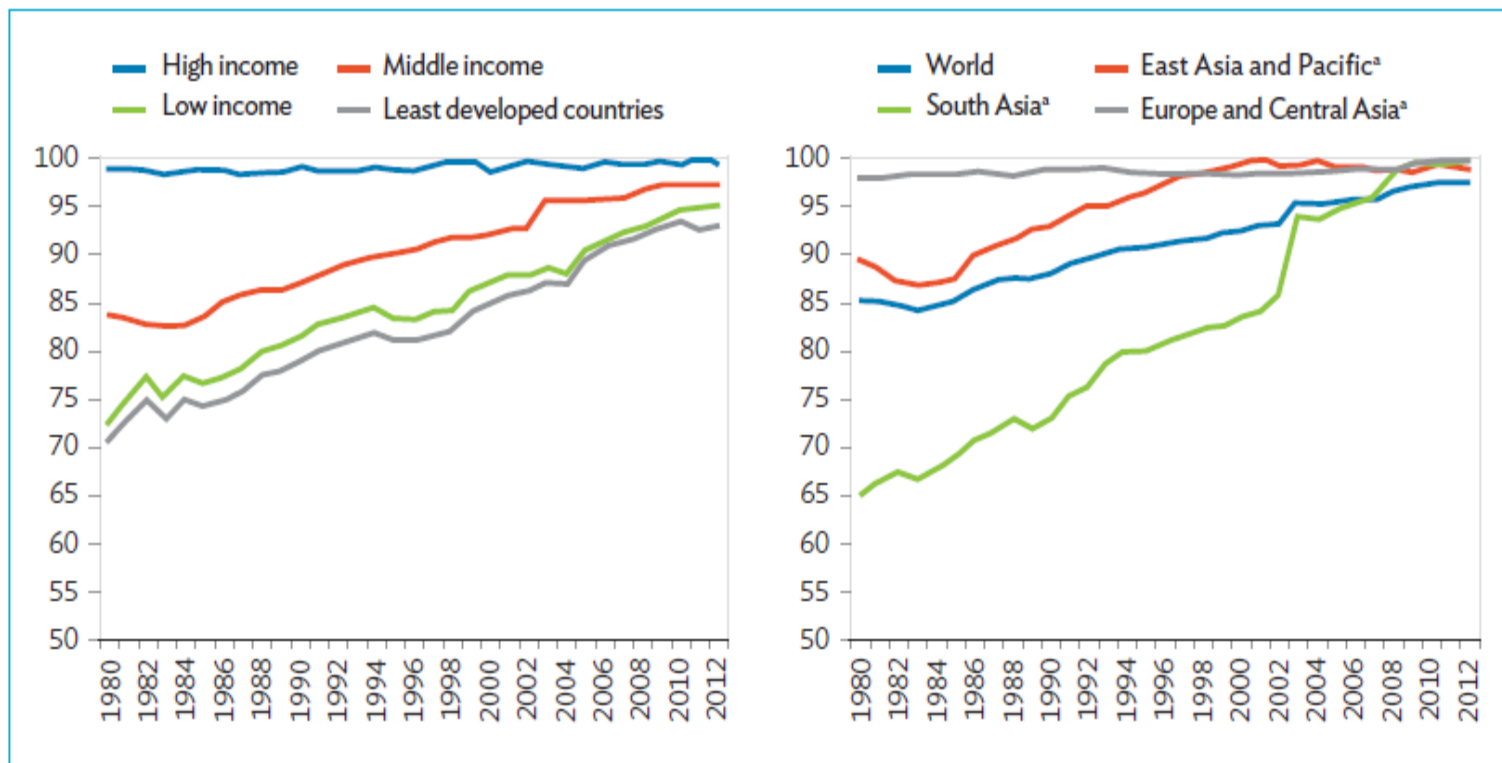


# What factors constrain Asian women from entering and staying in the labor force?





# Astounding progress in closing the education gender gap around the world—but has not come with higher FLFP



<sup>a</sup> All income levels.

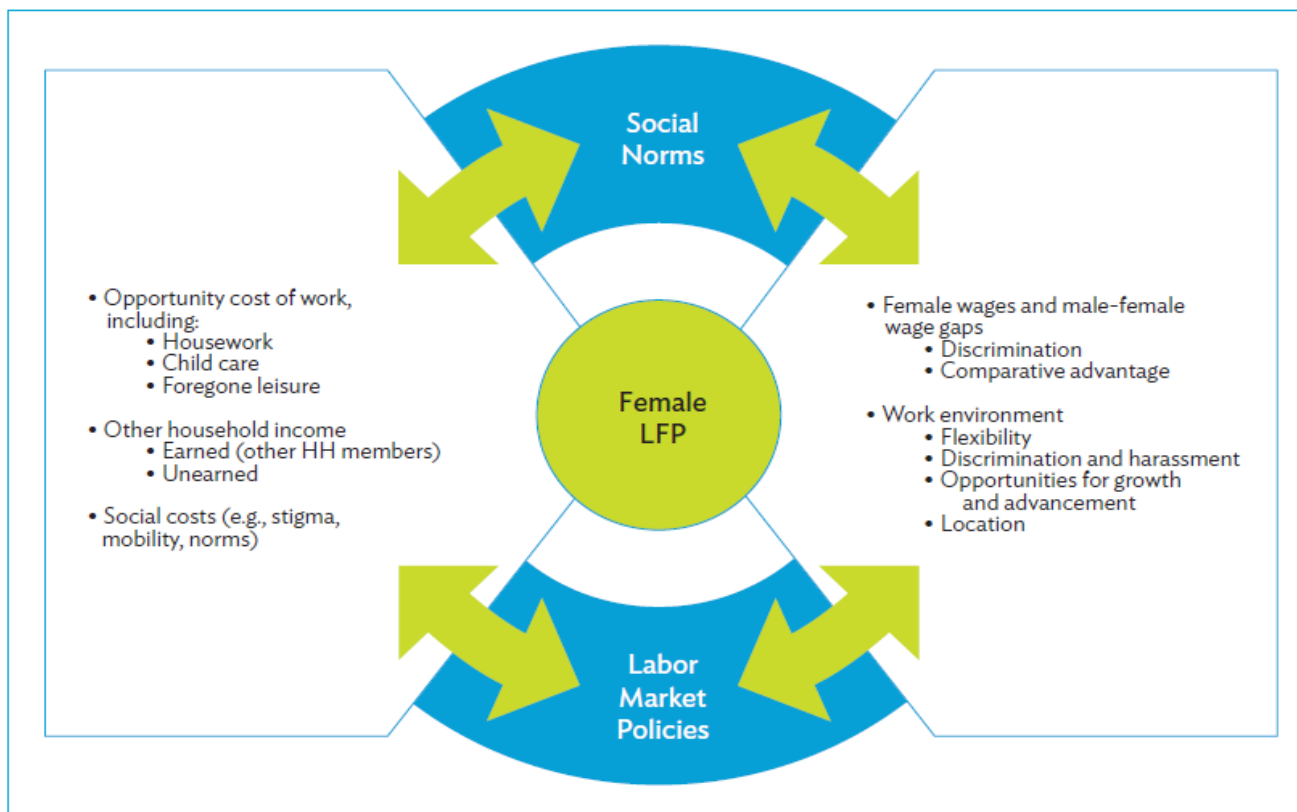
Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators (accessed January 2015).







# A woman's decision to work is a complex balance between valuing her opportunity and social cost against potential wages

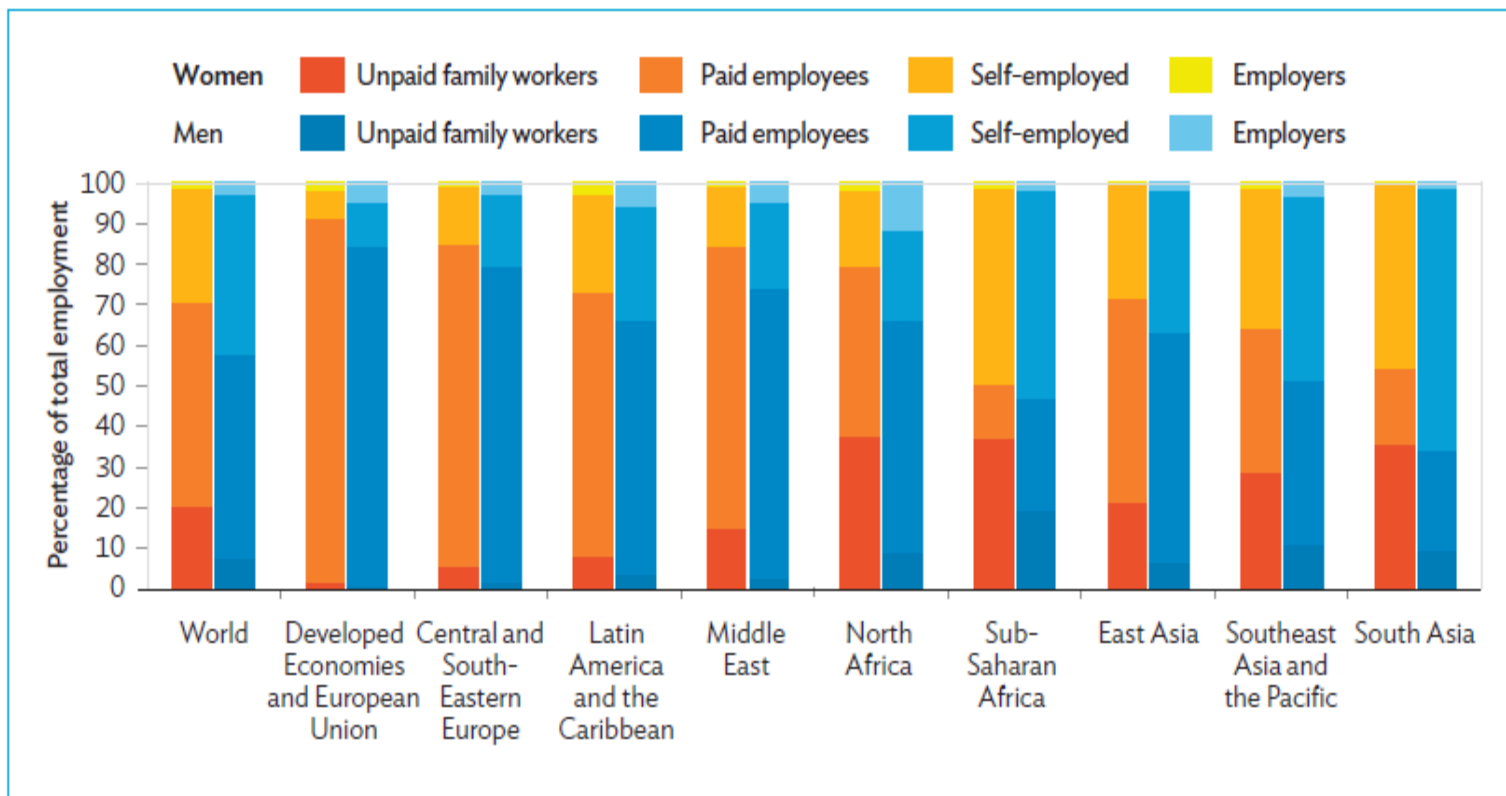


HH = households, LFP = labor force participation.  
Source: Schaner and Das 2015.





# Women are overrepresented in jobs that tend to command lower wages: by type, sector and activity.

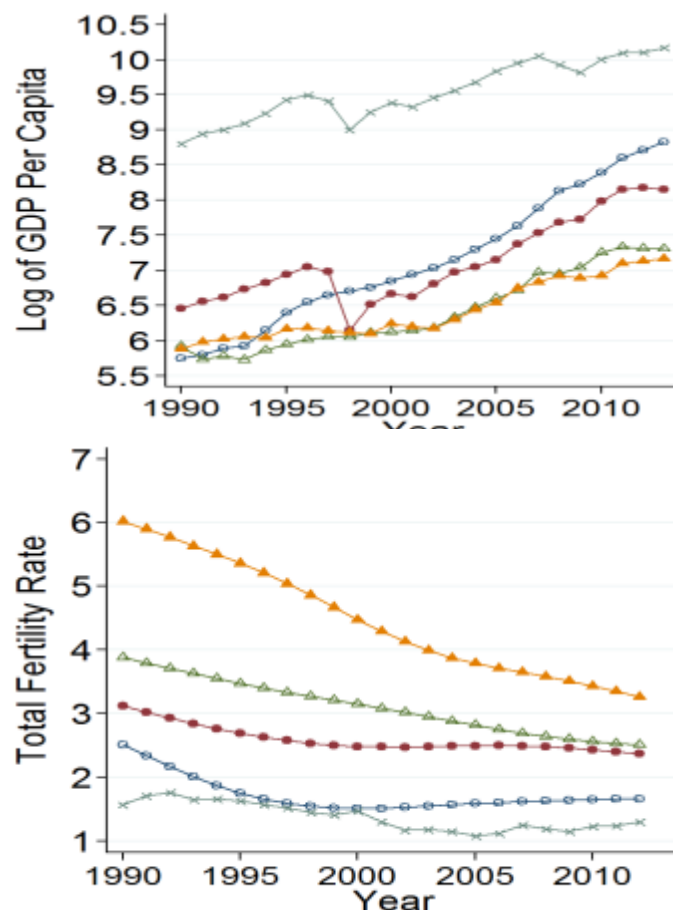
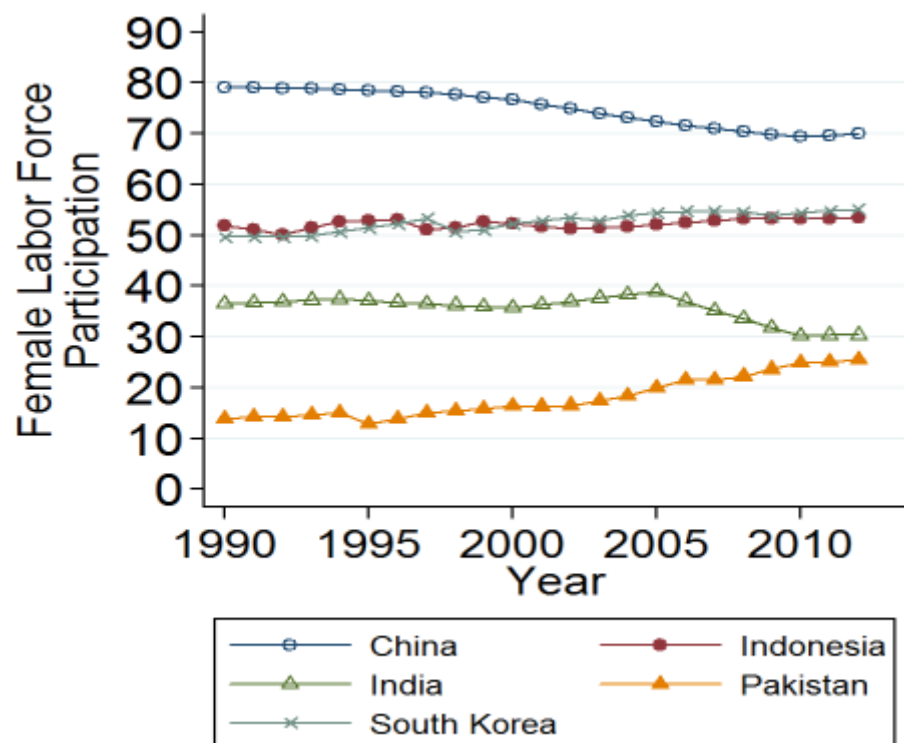


Source: International Labour Organization 2013.





# Evidences from selected Asian countries: FLFP stagnant (except for Pakistan) despite economic growth and falling fertility.





# Evidences from selected Asian countries

- **India:** FLFP 27%; cultural norms restrict upper caste Hindus, Muslims
- **Indonesia:** Wage gap reduced but FLFP stagnant for 30 years; labor market discrimination
- **Pakistan:** Low FLFP outside home; mobility restrictions by men; social, cultural, religious norms; safety; and poor transport facilities
- **PRC:** M/F 1.2 at birth, high FLFP- internal migration, low fertility; lower paid positions; wages 63% of men; limited access to education
- **South Korea:** FLFP lagging behind despite economic development; FLFP is M-shaped







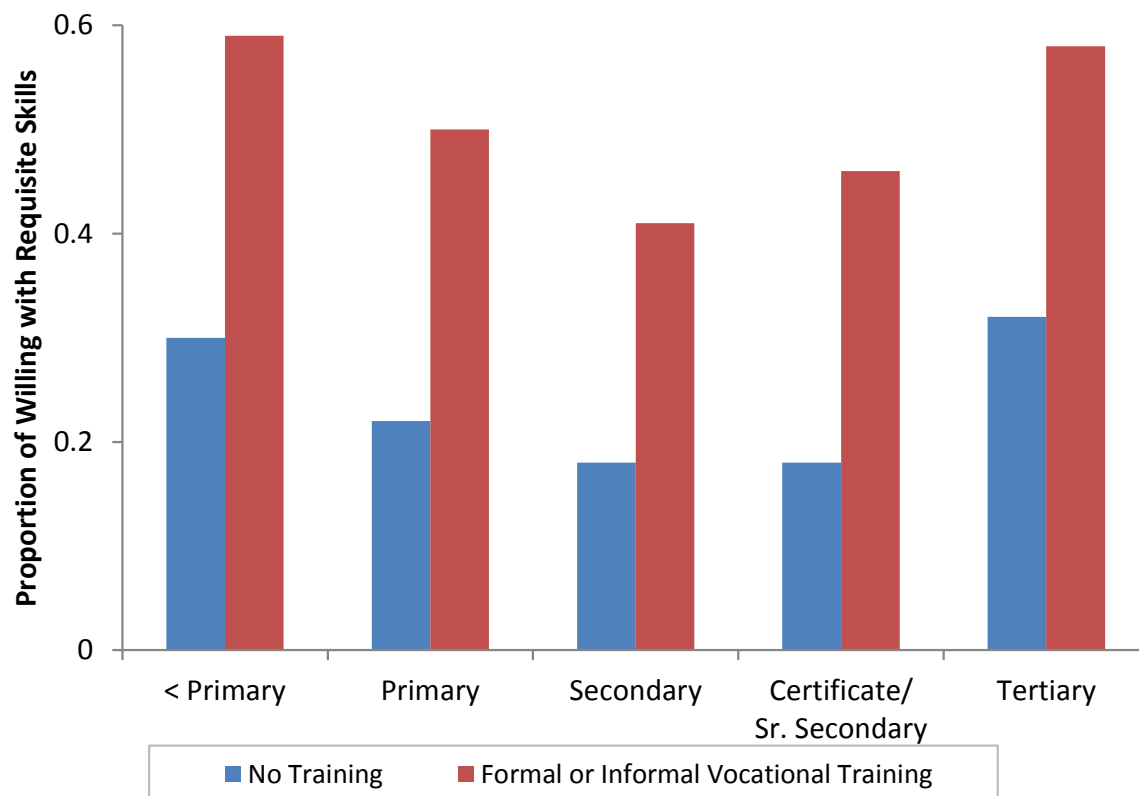
# What can policy-makers do?

- Establish employment quotas for women in limited circumstances.
- Provide more skills and vocational training.
- Provide information on available employment resources and job matching
- Address mobility, security, and other female-specific concerns
- Expand options for parental leave, child care, and flexible work arrangement
- Encourage competition through greater international trade and openness.
  - Evidence suggests that female labor force participation (FLFP) will increase in developing countries that locate export-oriented firms with female-specific jobs.





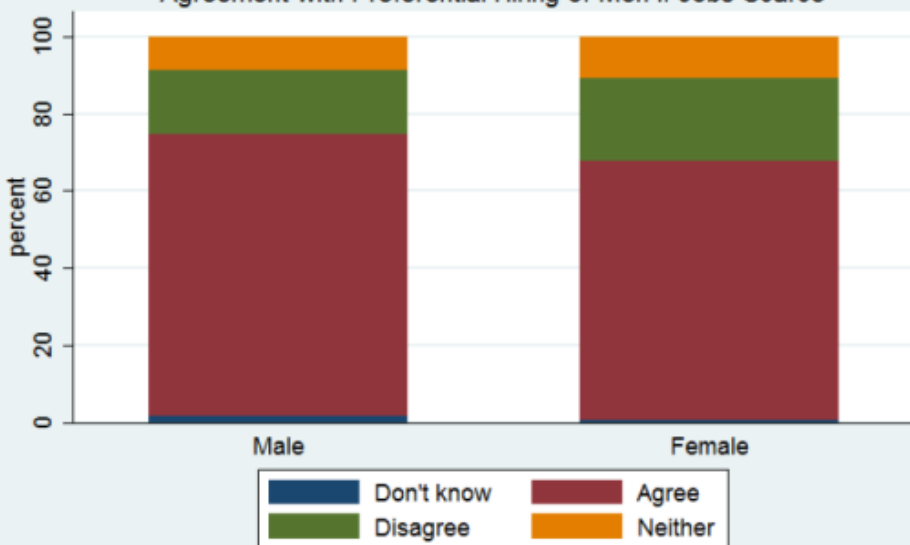
# FLFP by Skills and Vocational Training in India: despite progress in education, women do not always have access to vocational training.





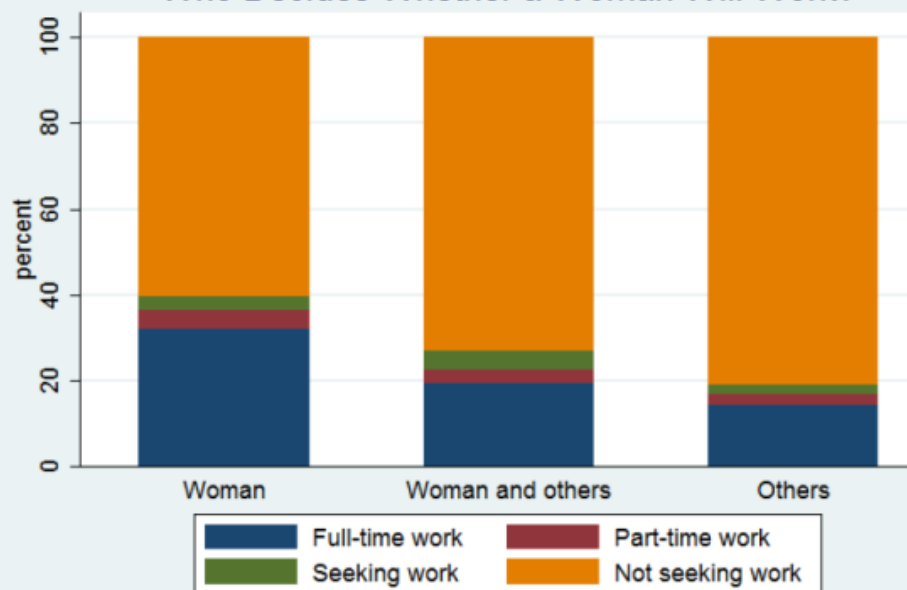
# Social Norms of both men and women can affect labor participation decisions in Pakistan

Attitudes to Women's Employment  
Agreement with Preferential Hiring of Men if Jobs Scarce



Source: World Values Survey 1997, 2001, 2012, Pakistan subsample

Who Decides Whether a Woman Will Work?

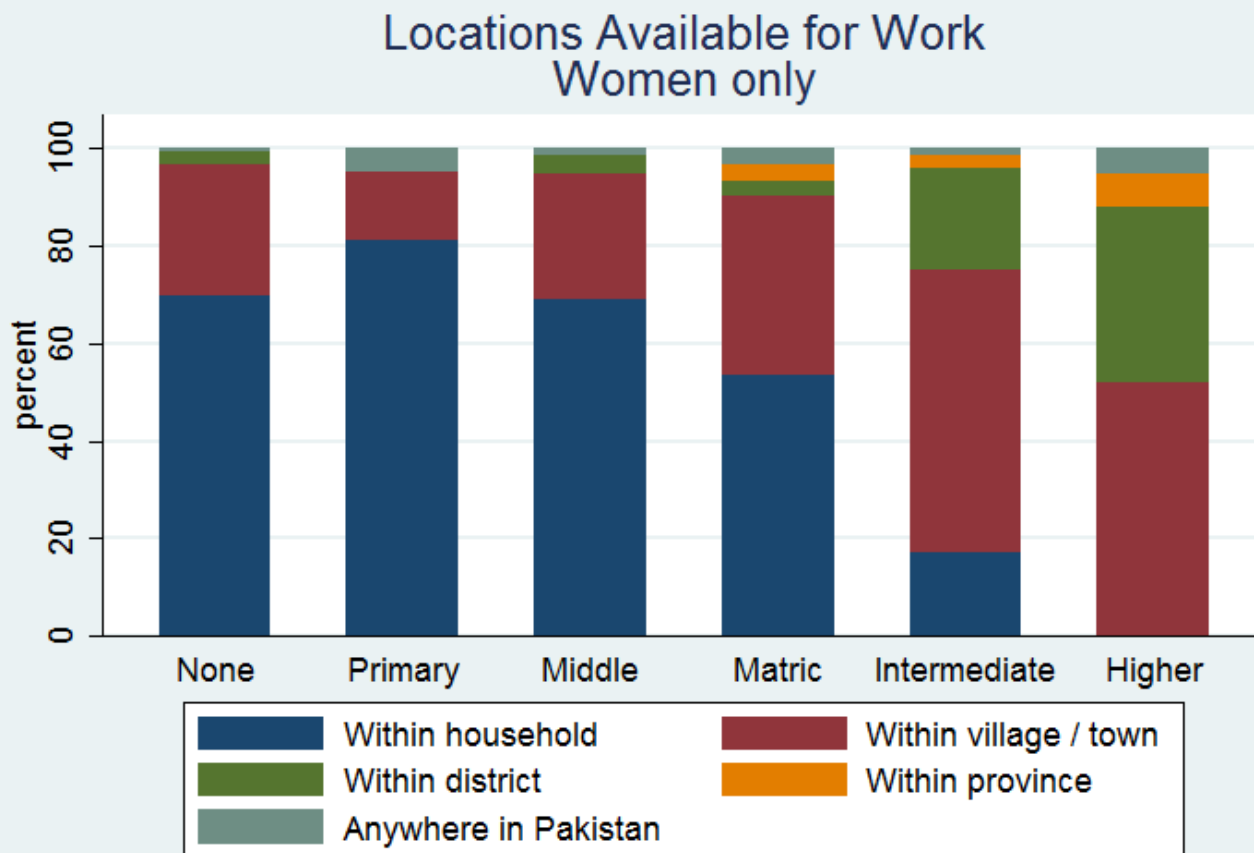


Source: PSLM 2005-6





# Survey: Acceptable locations for women to work in Pakistan



Source: Pakistan Labour Force Surveys 1984-2007





# Concluding Remarks

Not all countries require strong policy intervention—there may be differences across countries.

Demonstration effects can have a very large impact in breaking social norms.

Family-friendly policies—which benefit all genders—tend to have the greatest impact on FLFP and productivity.





# THANK YOU

<http://blogs.adb.org/blog/different-genders-different-decisions-why-asian-women-aren-t-work>

