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Economic Participation of Women Workforce: A Case of Afghanistan

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Abstract

Economic participation of labor force, in particular, women's contribution at the workplace is one of the chronic challenges of the Afghanistan's economy. So that its rate is always at a considerable distance from the natural rate of participation; although in recent years, policies have focused on increasing the rate of female labor force participation to boost employment and reduce the unemployment, which has had economic complications effects. This study examines the important factors influencing female labor force participation, female literacy rate, GDP per capita growth rate, fertility and female unemployment rate effect on labor force in Afghanistan. It is also expected to find a significant relationship between female labor force engagement and human development goal. An attempt was made to specify the different types of economic activities in which women engage. The data for this study consists of secondary information from various sources and reviewing the existing case studies. The study finds that the educational attainment of women has a positive impact on the probability that they will participate in the labor market. On the other hand, Marital status, family size, employment status of the husbands, and GDP per capita of the household have negative impacts on the probability that women will engage in the labor market. Hence, the present economic conditions and the current state of the country require, the active participation of women workforce in all fields specially in economic matters and the provision of favorable conditions for them.

Keywords: *Economic participation, Profile of women at workplace, Disparity, Afghanistan economy.*

Introduction

"There is no chance of the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on one wing." -Swami Vivekananda.

Afghanistan is a traditional country with special customs and behaviors for women. It is believed that women should stay at home and do not have access to education attainment, they are not allowed to study and work altogether. One of the most important characteristics in developing countries such as Afghanistan is the low rate of female labor force participation at economic activities.

Today, women have more than ever allowed employment opportunities in an out-of-home environment. Women are not only responsible for the office; they are responsible for economic participation and doing jobs that in the past only men have been tasked with. The Afghan women's effort also has many contributions for social, political and economic participation that can be reviewed on a transient basis over several different periods.

Amanullah Khan was the first king of the breakaway and reformist country. The first steps were taken to set up the social and economic activities of women during their time. These movements of the reformist Shah have caused the wrath of the traditionalist forces and face many challenges. He developed several laws to equalize the rights and contributions of men and women. Unfortunately, after his death, many of the laws were abolished, and on the other hand, due to the reaction of the atrocities of the religious and secular people. The kings took more caution after him and paid less attention to equal rights for women and men and increased the social and economic activities of women. In the history of the ups and downs of Afghanistan was the first woman to do something to rid women of the 20th century. Queen Soraya was the daughter of Mahmoud Tarzi. Along with his wife, he created tremendous changes to provide women with relative freedom, such as the establishment of the Parents' Support Association and girls' schools. For Afghan women, the years of the Taliban rule were the worst because the regime had deprived women of all personal and social rights (Gregorian, 1967). Hence, with the establishment of a new regime, efforts were made to give Afghan women opportunities and privileges that they could at least compensate for the effects of the Taliban's misery. Women's preparedness for action has made their situation change soon.

Today, in Afghanistan, there is no room for women to attend in the Cabinet, women's representatives, offices, courts and judicial bodies, trade unions, behind the microphones on TVs, and on radios, there are Afghan women everywhere in schools and universities. After the formation of the new government, the first minister and the first governor were appointed. The unnamed women of the Taliban's time in Afghanistan now have different faces. There are still no accurate figures on how many women work in state and non-governmental agencies, as well as the figures that are well-known in the past and present of Afghanistan. (Newsletter, 2015).

Afghanistan is a challenging country for women in which women contribute less than men, there are so many underlying factors such as social environment, statistical inconstancy, demographically that restricting women from contributing to the labor marketplace. There are several studies demonstrates the essential factors that were affected the women workforce participation in Afghanistan. These efforts have been determined the economics activities in which women can work and emphasized that, women's education has a positive effect on their likelihood of working in the labor market, Traditionally, men usually want women to do housework, and women are the mainstay of domestic work in Afghanistan. Thus, marriage can change women's behavior, such as when a married woman focuses on her household or family responsibilities and therefore does not participate in the labor market. (Pikar G. R., 2018).

Social scientists have long been interested in the problem of segregation in the labor market by gender, that is, the tendency of men and women in the employment population to be differently distributed across occupations. Many developing countries bring out gender gap in education, employment, and health which are the indicators of human capital. In addition, education is an asset. Once gained, it cannot be sold. This was based on the theory that education is an investment in human capital and as its amount increases, individual's skills and competencies also increase. There are overwhelming distinctions in education between the sexes in some Afghanistan. Furthermore, employment opportunities and earnings differ greater by gender in most developing nations (World Bank, 2001). There are numbers of studies in the literature which put emphasize on the impact of gender inequality in education that affects females. Female education has a great impact on the well-being of the families and societies.

One of the important indicators of economic growth and development is the level of labor force participation. Even if the efficient use of factors of production is based on economic development, the distribution of labor, which is the most important of these factors, faces the problem of gender inequality. Participation rates, which are vital preventive measures for the economy, are widespread among women around the world (Buhari, Akuz, 2017).

The most significant factors affecting women's participation in the labor force are level of education, family and community structure, number of children, and the level of economic development of the country. Women's labor force activity grows as the dynamics of education and economic activity increase in the developing world. Women's participation in the workforce is desirable in terms of equality and productivity. At the level of equality, women's participation in the labor force ultimately improves their economic situation and contributes to economic productivity by increasing the country's development potential (N and U, 2012).

Women's participation in economic activities can be influenced by many factors, especially the restructuring of a country. Several studies have shown that women's participation in the labor market during the transition of the economy from agriculture to industry is U-shaped. At a time when agriculture dominates economic activity, more women are entering the labor market, despite high fertility rates and low levels of education among women. However, as the structure of the economy shifts from agriculture to industrialization, this level of participation decreases (Goldin, 1994).

The low participation rate of women in Afghanistan indicates that various underlying factors prevent women from being employed, limited quality, gender differences, lack of economic activity, and low acceptance of bargaining power. Evidence shows that Afghan women are willing to contribute Outside the home, Gender equality is vital for development, thus we believe that the larger participation of females within the economy is a crucial chance for the reconstruction of the country as well as changes in social customs, additional females within the market, and inclusive policies that address the most barriers for women to affix the workforce (Li, 2004).

Women's economic participation in Afghanistan is progressively more recognized as an integral part of women's rights and important to development, as well as the research findings define that even though the achievements of the last decade are enormous, they are low compared to the cumulative deprivations they have faced over the past three decades and therefore face severe poverty. There are gender differences in major parts and strategies in Afghanistan, increasing women's access to economic opportunities would require strengthening existing ways, particularly in: education, health, economic direction, and spiritual affairs. (Ganesh, 2013).

Afghanistan has always had elite and middle-class women defending their rights and moving towards improvement. even though many Afghan women in rural areas have been persecuted through tribal customs. The women who have been in the public eye throughout Afghanistan's history belong to the royal or elite and represent a very small population of the country, as well as in Afghanistan, as in other traditional societies, there are no women outside the family and society. However, there is no need to destroy family and relation networks to improve the situation of women through education, employment, and access to resources. But they must be arranged (Huma, 2003). Limited rights, freedoms, and participation that women do not enjoy in urban areas there is a large population of women living in rural Afghanistan. such as economic opportunities in various fields, including educational dimensions, access to health care, and health Information and employment are scarce in rural areas compared to urban areas in Afghanistan (Mohmand, 2006).

Women in Afghanistan live in a male-dominated society and they are dependent on men, which makes competition very difficult because they do not have the support of society and the family. Many socio-cultural barriers demotivate them and make them work hard, but they can still develop because they face gender inequality, gender discrimination, and cannot receive adequate training to improve their skills (Matolia, 2019). Women's participation within the market varies greatly from country to country, reflective variations in economic development, education levels, fertility rates, access to service and different support services, and ultimately social norms. As a result, participation rates around the world vary significantly, with South Asia having the bottom rates (Verick, 2014).

Review of Literature

The literature on the economic participation of women can be revised concerning theoretical and empirical dimensions, in this regard Beker (1965) in his article defines women labor force participation in the context of an open economy forward-looking; women consist almost half of the world's population, they are doing about two-thirds of the world's activities, yet they make up only 10 per cent of global income and own less than 1 per cent of the world's wealth which is more common and often related to household chores such as: giving birth and raising children, cleaning and maintaining the family, caring for the elderly and the sick. He also revealed that many women are doing professions outside the home for almost a low wage. Economic growth and development of any country mostly depend on the share of human capital, low levels of human capital have long been recognized as a major inhibitor of economic growth and a powerful barrier to poverty reduction in developing countries. (Beker, 1965).

Gronau (1973) has conducted a study entitled "The effect of children on the housewife's value of time" which shows that, the low participation of women in the workplace and the low use of women in the labor market is a major problem and debate among researchers. In general, the basic reasons for the low labor force participation of women are due to demographic factors and economic characteristics such as age, education attainment, work experience, number of children, family size, men's market income, women's income in the market, and so on (Gronau, 1973).

Goldin (1994) in his article defined that, women's participation in economic activities can be influenced by many factors, especially the restructuring of a country. Several studies have shown that women's participation in the labor market during the transition of the economy from agriculture to industry is U-shaped. At a time when agriculture dominates economic activity, more women are entering the labor market, despite high fertility rates and low levels of education among women. However, as the structure of the economy shifts from agriculture to industrialization, this level of participation decreases (Goldin, 1994).

Taylor (2008) has defined the notion of labor force participation rate in his book called "Principles of Economics" which is explained that the labor force participation rate refers to the ratio between the labor force and the overall size of their group (national population in the same age range). In the West, in the second half of the twentieth century, labor force participation increased significantly due to the increase in the number of women entering the workplace. In the United States, there have been four important stages in women's participation in the workforce: it increases in the twentieth century and decreases in the 21st century. Men's labor force participation has declined from 1953 to 2013. Since October 2013, men have been increasingly joining the workforce (Taylor, 2008).

Buhari and Akyuz's paper (2017) emphasized that, one of the important indicators of economic growth and development is the level of labor force participation. Even if the efficient use of factors of production is based on economic development, the distribution of labor, which is the most important of these factors, faces the problem of gender inequality. Participation rates, which are vital preventive measures for the economy, are widespread among women around the world. The paper resulted that economic growth first increases the rate of female labor force participation but then decreases the rate of participation in the female labor force. Furthermore, this study has been shown that there is an inverse "U" relationship between economic growth and women's labor force participation (Buhari, Akyuz, 2017).

In the economic literature, there is a special emphasis on the role of women in the labor force in the economic development of countries. The structural shift of the economy from agriculture to industry and the service sector reduce women's labor force participation in developing countries. In this respect, the paper of N and U (2012) described the serious determinants of female labor force participation that are affecting women's engagement in the workplace are level of education, family and community structure, number of children, and the level of economic development of the country. As the economy grows, women have easier and better encouraged to engage in economic activity, at level of equality, women's participation in the labor force ultimately improves their economic situation and contributes to economic productivity by increasing the country's development potential (N and U, 2012).

According to Chapman (2015), understanding the relationship between economic development and women's participation in the workforce is important for many reasons. The U-shaped hypothesis states that there is a trade-off between gender equality and economic growth in economic development. Scientists and policymakers need to examine the relationship between labor market participation trends and policy design and implementation at this stage (Chapman, 2015).

Pikar (2018) had a review base study on youth labor force participation in Afghanistan, which showed in his study that years of work experience and having English language proficiency and computer skills increase the probability of a man or woman being in the job market. He also argued that youth participation in the labor market is determined by gender as well. Culturally, women are expected to work from home and take care of their children, so being a woman may reduce the chances of being in the workforce. Marital status, family size, and level of education of the head of the household had a positive effect on youth labor force participation. However, assets and intermediation in the recruitment process harm the likelihood of young economic activity (Pikar G. R., 2018).

Jabaa (2013) has revealed that, men's participation has declined, while women's participation has increased. The recent global crisis has had a significant impact on the employment of men and women, reflected in a narrower gender gap (Jabaa, 2013).

According to Hafeez (2002), women with a higher education level in a large family with low monthly income are more likely to interfere with the labor market. Less-educated women, who have more working families and have more financial assets are less likely to participate in the labor market (Hafeez, 2002).

World Bank (2017) has defined that, the current situation of Afghan women must be understood in terms of the impact of more than 30 years of devastating civil strife, an increasingly patriarchal and conservative society, and the trend of power discrimination since the fall of the communist regime. The pro-Taliban government, with the help of international agencies and donors, has provided opportunities for Afghan women to assert their rights as active participants in governance as well as the reconstruction and reconstruction of Afghanistan. Significant gains have been made with the reopening of girls' schools, the enrollment of young women in universities, and women as teachers, physicians, and government employees. Despite these achievements, there are still a significant number of unemployed women. Of the 8.5 million active labor force participants, the Afghan male unemployment rate was 22.6 per cent in 2013/14, while the female unemployment rate was 2.5 times higher (Bank, 2017).

Between November 2012 and March 2013, a study of relevant literature was designed to determine the main factors concerning women's economic participation in Afghanistan. Thereby Butler (2013) finding shows that, Afghan women have a key

role to play in the economic recovery and development of their country. They are one of Afghanistan's most valuable resources. Equality in the workplace helps lift people out of poverty and increase GDP, but women around the world continue to use their untapped economic potential. Globally, the gender gap in the workplace is shrinking, with women-owned jobs further shifting to the private sector for wider economic development. Now more than ever, an unprecedented number of Afghan women are participating in the formal private economy as entrepreneurs, business owners and employees. However, little information is available about these women and their activities (Butler, 2013).

Rajabi (2019) asserted that with the help of donors, the Afghan government has launched a range of policy measures aimed at equipping Afghan women with equal resources and opportunities to participate in the country's economy. However, the implementation of these women-centered policies remains weak and fights women only in the face of every day challenges due to the lack of equal acceptance in society. Research has allowed many issues to be resolved only if peace is achieved, Afghanistan is a country of conflict and women are a particularly vulnerable part of Afghanistan's population. Women's economic empowerment is a sensitive issue that requires an in-depth study of all the positive and negative effects of any political intervention. Investing in research and gathering empirical evidence based on location is important for accurate policy decisions. All proposed policy options should be based on evidence created by strong policy research and evaluation of proven practical solutions that link women's empowerment to economic development (Rajabi, 2019).

According to Ganesh (2013), women's economic participation in Afghanistan is progressively more recognized as an integral part of women's rights and important to development, as well as the research findings define that even though the achievements of the last decade are enormous, they are low compared to the cumulative deprivations they have faced over the past three decades and therefore face severe poverty. There are gender differences in major parts and strategies in Afghanistan, increasing women's access to economic opportunities would require strengthening existing ways, particularly in: education, health, economic direction, and spiritual affairs. (Ganesh, 2013).

Karnadi (2019) in his paper entitled "Is There Any Discrimination Towards Young Women in Labor Market?" expressed that gender equality refers to the idea that men and women have equal rights and responsibilities. This is achieved when men and women enjoy equal rights and opportunities. gender equality is an unresolved issue that is still hotly debated today. This is an issue that is always present in almost every country whenever there is a political debate, especially in a presidential election (Karnadi, 2019).

Mohmand (2006) has described those limited rights, freedoms, and participation that women do not enjoy in urban areas there is a large population of women living in rural Afghanistan. such as economic opportunities in various fields, including educational dimensions, access to health care, and health Information and employment are scarce in rural areas compared to urban areas in Afghanistan (Mohmand, 2006).

According to Shakib (2014), higher education has been one of the prominent sectors in Afghanistan for this country women's representation in this country has been steadily increasing over the past decade Country Higher Education System. However, the growth of an educated workforce the labor market and the growth of the national economy have not been the same. Toward Many university graduates are unemployed and have nothing to do with work, Official statistics indicate that half of the 35 million Afghanistan population are female nevertheless, only 3% of Afghan women enterprises are registered with the government. Unfortunately, the process of women's economic empowerment has not been closely aligned with that of women university graduates in Afghanistan. (Shakib, 2014).

Matolia (2019) argues that women in Afghanistan live in a male-dominated society and they are dependent on men, which makes competition very difficult because they do not have the support of society and the family. Many socio-cultural barriers demotivate them and make them work hard, but they can still develop because they face gender inequality, gender discrimination, and cannot receive adequate training to improve their skills (Matolia, 2019).

Statement of the Problem

Afghanistan is a country which is located in Asia along with 34 provinces and 264 districts as per census 2015. Afghanistan's female labor force is very less in the global scenario. further in the country, the female labor force is always registered less than males. The active participation of women in society is a problem that has long been faced with many obstacles so that these obstacles appeared in various forms of social, economic, religious, political, and other forms, and women were left from the community to the home. The current norms of dividing jobs, masculine insecurity, social insecurity, the possibility of active participation of women in a society that needs to develop, as well as improving the welfare of the community and the poor, has been hampered.

Participation is an imperfect indicator of women's economic authorization to rectify labor market outcomes in the countries, policy interventions ought to take into account each supply and demand, as well as up access to education programs, up to child care and alternative institutions to ease the burden of domestic duties, enhancing safety for women and inspiring formal and informal sector development in industries and regions that might increase job opportunities for women in developing countries. It is also worth mentioning that the most important factor in encouraging women to participate in economic activities of the community is perhaps the cooperation and assistance of family men along with women in home-based activities, which today we see this change, especially in families with a cultural strain and higher education, further we see in a modern family, women and men have shared responsibilities, and all family members share in all family matters, and thus have equal rights to women and men.

Purpose and Significance of The Study

There is limited research analysis, and data information available on women's economic participation in the overall field of Afghanistan. Therefore, current study attempts to fill that gap and determine the underlying factors influencing, barriers and impressive operations that government can do. Existing studies do not concentrate the top challenges and factors of determinant on the status of women's economic participations. Besides there is a shortage of information about the current study and how this, affects their household income. Based on this concern, we need a positive prospect for improving the economic participation of women in labor market of the country.

This study attempts to examine the underlying factors that affect economic contribution and illustration of women within the economy of Afghanistan. This paper more determines applicable approaches and solutions towards the participation of educated and non-educated women in the labor market insights and knowledge from different sources like Afghan and international

policymakers, university students, women with university degrees, and relevant native and international organizations to examine a large vary of views during this analysis. the main purpose of this study is to explore the challenges and offering opportunities for women to overcome these challenges.

Objectives of the study

The main purpose of this study is to determine the economic participation of women in Afghanistan along with following specific objectives:

1. To identify the factors influencing female labor force participation (FLFP) in Afghanistan.
2. To analyze the relation between women education and women labor work force.
3. To explore the limitations and difficulties Afghan women face in the labor market.

The above objectives will be analyzed by using data from secondary sources.

Research Methodology

This study will adopt a mixed method. I shall use books, articles, reports, journals, primary and secondary sources to define and describe the theoretical and empirical base with literature. In this research, both quantitative and qualitative methods can be useful to complete my knowledge about the economic participation of women in Afghanistan. It should be noted that the data were derived from the Central Statistic Organization (CSO) of Afghanistan from (2001 to 2017) in order to maintain consistency in the data and for this purpose E- Views is used as analyzing software.

The study Outline

A brief introduction about Economic Participation of women in Afghanistan and the relationship between different factors is presented in Section I. Review of existing literature and explanations of the variables studied by other researchers is discussed In Section II. Section III presented the research design and methodology. And the last section provides the results and discusses important findings.

Federation of Afghan Women Trade

With the introduction of the new regime in 2001, there has been a lot of work on women's economic consolidation. These efforts began with the work of the Ministry of Commerce in support of Women in the Trade and Center for International Private Practitioners, which joined the process in late 2004. Collaborating with the Center for International Private Entrepreneurship and the Women's Business Development and Teachers' Business School, offered more than 2000 women in the initial and final skills classes that make it easier to develop and maintain various types of business.

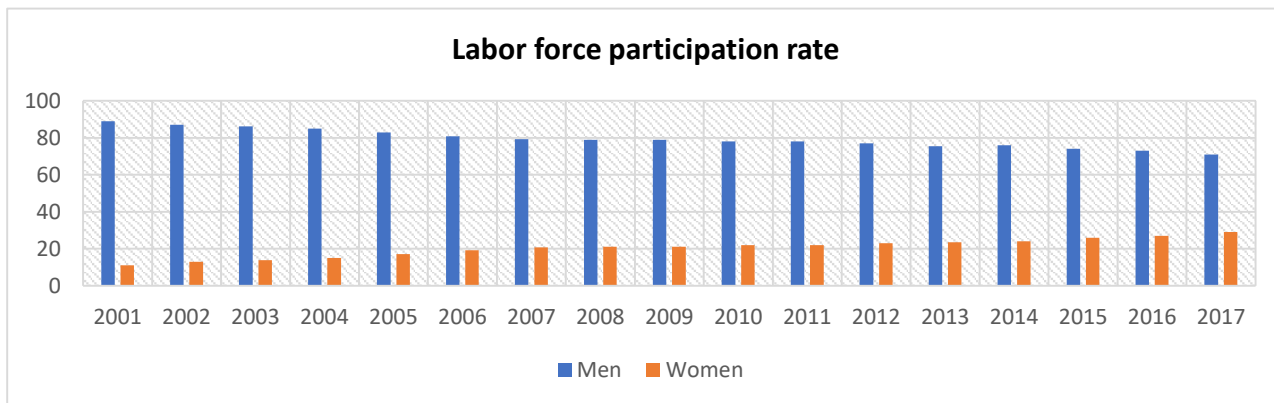
The Women's Business Development Division has set up trade shows, business and other similar programs that provide both economic opportunities and economic opportunities for women. At the same time, some women's trade associations such as the Afghan Women's Trade Council provided training programs and funded schools and other programs to help women's businesses. Despite all efforts to achieve the goal of developing women's businesses, the need for coherent and coherent work was felt, and as a result, the Afghan Women's Trade Association and the Afghan Women's Trade Council began working together with the Center for International Women's Affairs in 2005, and Federation of Women's Businesses.

Limitations of economic activities and women employment

Today, in advanced industrial societies, there is a huge shift in the jobs that women make. In the last three decades, industrial occupations were traditionally considered to be male-dominated by women. Although somewhat higher in some families with a favorable economic status, this pressure has been reduced to some extent, with the increasing use of various types of washing machines, dishwashers, electric wipers and other welfare technology equipment, and, in addition, the recruitment of domestic servants can be seen. It is also worth mentioning that the most important factor in encouraging women to participate in economic activities of the community is perhaps the cooperation and assistance of family men along with women in home-based activities, which today we see this change, especially in families with a cultural strain And higher education We see In a modern family, women and men have shared responsibilities, and all family members share in all family matters, and thus have equal rights to women and men. The most prominent cause of the lack of a strong presence of women in different fields can be summarized as three factors:

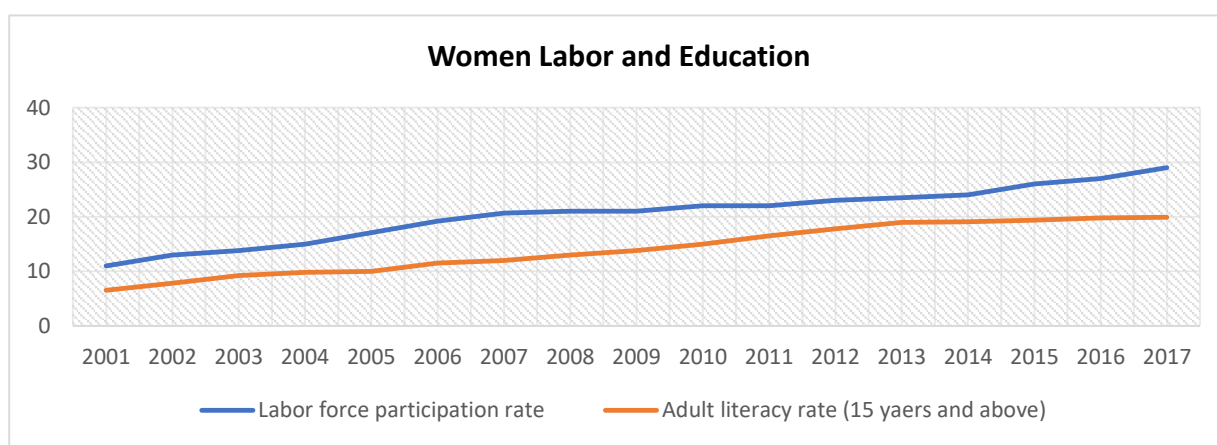
- Women's lack of self-belief.
- The rule of the patriarchal system.

Data analysis



Source: Central Statistic Organization (CSO) of Afghanistan. (Chart – 1)

Data shows that the portion of Men work force are more than women work force in last 17 years. Women work force have an increase change among these years, but the other hand men work force have a decrease change among these years.



Source: Central Statistic Organization (CSO) of Afghanistan. (Chart – 2)

Dependent Variable: Y				
Method: Least Squares				
Date: 13/06/21 Time: 20:30				
Sample: 2001 2017				
Included observations: 17				
Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	5.459499	1.247410	4.376669	0.0005
X	1.064092	0.084283	12.62517	0.0000
R-squared	0.913988	Mean dependent var	20.48824	
Adjusted R-squared	0.908254	S.D. dependent var	5.075540	
F-statistic	159.3948			
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000			

Source: E-Views

The data are shown that women labor and education have a strong positive relation with each other. It means if education increase, labor force also will increase. Our dependent variable and independent variable have a growth of rapidly. Labor force of women is increased to 29 percent. It means in seventeen years' education rate of women had a growth of 13.8 percent and labor force of women had a growth of 18 percent. All of the above data also show a positive relation of 0.92. And our independent variable 91.3 percent define our dependent variable. Both of these variables have impact of the economy of a country. Also, data shows that educated women most of them are working in organization in high stage.

Suggestions

After discussing the need for women's economies to work, they will have to limit their constraints and responsibilities to resolve them.

- It should be the context of women's participation in the workplace.
- Families should be provided with information on the employment of women and their impact on the economic and cultural foundations of the family.
- The proportion of contributions to the management of more important programs and projects should be increased.
- Should be corrected the beliefs of the society about the talent and the employment of women.
- Planners and policy makers need to be more active in women.

Conclusion And Discussion

Using Time-Series regression, this paper empirically concentrates on the effects of the level of education, GDP growth rate and other human development insides as well as unemployment on female labor force participation, the study of preventing factors and identification of employment opportunities and business activities, in the total social and economic participation of women in all its dimensions is difficult due to its breadth and extent, but it has been carefully tried to address the most important aspects that include the social, economic, cultural and legal issues that are discussed in this article.

The results are analyzed by using the E- Views analyst program. The results indicate that the level of education exerts a statistically significant positive effect on women in the society. There is an increasing trend in the labor force participation of females who are graduated from higher education. It is also found that the level of education and other demographical factors among the population in Afghanistan has an important impact on improvement of participation rate and gender equality in labor force. For overall, still economic participation of women in Afghanistan is low compared to men.

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