The Effect of Culture on Female Labor Force Participation in Afghanistan

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Eskişehir

2019

…..../……/2019

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SEDİQA SEDİQİ

ÖZET

AFGANİSTAN'DA KÜLTÜRÜN KADININ İŞGÜCÜNE KATILIM ETKİSİ

SEDİQİ, Sediqa

Yüksek Lisans-2019

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Bu çalışma Afganistan'da kültürün kadınların iş gücüne katılımlarına etkisini değerlendirmek üzere yapılan sıralı oluşturulmuş anketler yoluyla toplanmış nicel verilerle, Afganistan'da yapılmış bir literatür taramasını temel almaktadır. Bu amaçla, çalışmada, "Medeni hâl gibi demografik unsurlar Afganistan'da kadınların istihdam edilebilirliğini etkilemekte mi?" ve "Eğitim, kadınların iş gücüne katılma oranını artırır mı?" gibi Afganistan'a yönelik belirleyiciler kapsamında tartışmaya konu ülkenin kültürünü anlamada kilometre taşları olan ilgili sorular dikkate alınmıştır. Araştırmanın temel sorusu "sosyokültürel normların kadınların istihdam edilebilirliğini etkileyip etkilemediğini" belirlemek için, birincil ve ikincil olmak üzere iki tür veri kaynağının kullanılması amaçlanmıştır. Burada birincil veriler rastgele seçilen Afgan kadınlardan elde edilirken, ikincil veriler Dünya Bankası'ndan elde edilmiştir. Mevcut verilere rağmen, bu tezin araştırma konusu, çalışmayı daha iyi yönlendirebilecek az sayıda veri ve literatür bilgisi olması nedeniyle hâlâ yeni bir araştırma alanıdır. Ancak, Afganistan çapında toplanan bilgilerin yanı sıra hem birincil hem de ikincil verilerin bileşimi, çalışmayı, kadınların ekonomideki durumunu analiz etmek için daha yakın iç görüler elde etmeye yönlendirmektedir. Her ne kadar katılımcıların büyük çoğunluğu eğitimli bireyler olsalar da, araştırmanın temel sorusuna verilen cevaplardan hareketle sonuçlar göstermektedir ki, sosyokültürel normlar, kadınların eğitim seviyeleri, istihdam durumları ve bölgesel gelişmişlik seviyesine bakılmaksızın, kadınların tercih ve istihdam edilebilirliğini etkilemektedir.

ANAHTAR KELİMELER: Kadın işgücüne katılımı, Cinsiyetin güçlendirilmesi, İşgücü Piyasası, Sosyo-kültürel ve geleneksel normlar

ABSTRAC

THE EFFECT OF CULTURE ON FEMALE LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION IN AFGHANISTAN

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Master Thesis-2019

Department of Economics

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This study based on the review of literature in general and in Afghanistan, collected quantitative data through sequentially structured questionnaires to evaluate the effect of culture on female labor force participation in Afghanistan. In this purpose, the study aims to use two types of data source of primary and secondary data, wherein the primary data were obtained from randomly selected Afghan women, and the secondary data were collected from the World Bank to determine the main research question on "whether socio-cultural norms affect the employability of women" by taking into consideration other related questions of: do demographic factors such as marital status affect the employability of women in Afghanistan? And does education increase the likelihood of women in the labor market, which are the cornerstones of understanding the culture of the country discussed under the determinants of Afghanistan. Despite the existing information, the research subject in this thesis is still a new research area, where there is not much data and literature information to guide the study better. However, the mixture of both primary and secondary data alongside the information gathered across Afghanistan lead the study to gain closer insights to analyze women's situation in economy. Though majority of the participants were educated but the results provide evidence following the main research questions answer based on the purpose of the study that, socio-cultural norms affect women's employability regardless of their educational level, employment status and the regions level of development.

KEY WORDS: Female labor force participation, Gender empowerment, Labor market, Socio-cultural and traditional norms

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEDAW : Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against women

MOLSAMD : Ministry of Labour Social Affairs Martyrs and Disabled

UNSCR : United Nations Security Council Resolutions

FLFPR : Female Labor Force Participation Rate

NUWA : National Workers Union of Afghanistan

TDHS : Turkish Demographics and Health Survey

SIGI : System for Interactive Guidance and Information

WEE : Women economic Empowerment

LAC : Latin America and the Caribbean

ILO : International Labor Organization

CSO : Central Statistics Organizations

WDI : World Development Indicator

HLFS : Household Labor Force Survey

MENA : Middle East and North Africa

PSD : Private Sector Development

MMCs : Muslim Majority Countries

WBL : Women Business and Law

USA : United States of America

UAE : United Arab Emirates

EVS : European Value Study

WVS : World Value Survey

EU : European Union

UN : United Nations

UK : United Kingdom

US : United States

INTRODUCTION

Though an increase in the number of women participating in the labor market is one of the important social changes of the last century, where women's engagement in formal employment increased strongly since the World War II. But despite a general rising trend in female labor force participation rates, women's integration in the labor market varies with a noticeable differences among countries around the world. Taking a global perspective into consideration, women's participation both in developed and developing countries are in a complex situation wherein all the countries firstly, do not experience the same level of development due to this reason not all countries display a trend of rising female labor force participation rates (Blau et al. 2014). Rather, there are countries where their female labor force participation is constant and countries where female labor force participation decreased over the last decades. This is particularly true for countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, where their female labor force participation rate is the lowest in the world and there has been no increase over the last 20 years at all (World Bank, 2013b). At the same time, the female labor force participation in Eastern and Southern Asia, mainly due to patterns observed in China and India, declined from 72 to 64 percent and from 35 to 27 percent, respectively. However, countries, where they have recorded the most noticeable increase in the number of women participating in the labor market are observed in Latin America, the Caribbean and Southern Europe (International Labor Office, 2016).

Among these countries, Afghanistan in South Asia experienced slow growth in its female labor force participation over the last decades. While in South Asia, female participation rates range from around 16% in Afghanistan to almost 80% in Nepal in 2013 (ILO, 2013). The differences in female labor force participation among these regions can often be explained due to social and economic factors, where in Nepal women are less likely constrained by social norms, though they work mostly in subsistence agriculture, which is driven more by poverty than by choice. Yet, in Afghanistan women have suffered through multiple factors determining their position in the economy but due to a high causal relationship between these factors as well as related similarities, there seems to be overlapping effect from one factor to another. For clarity reasons however, these factors

are classified under their two major sources; cultural, historical traditional norms and as known to the world that Afghanistan has been battered by armed conflicts for more than three decades[1] now. This reality has not only left the country with serious economic, social and political challenges, but it has also weakened human capital capacities for different ethnic groups of men, women, the young, the old as well as different regions of the country. However, women are the most affected victims who have experienced significant challenges and have been victimized by different factors and subjugation almost in all spheres of life first by Mujahideen's period[2] (1992-1996), recorded as one of the worst period, then by Taliban's[3] regime (1996-2001).

During this periods, women were not allowed to go to school, make decision on their own or work outside their homes due to particularly Taliban's Amar Bil Maroof Wa Nahi An al-Munkar (Department for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice), and Sharia law[4] to monitor and control women's social behavior (Golechha, 2016). These laws, as a result, deteriorated economic and social conditions of women and girls in all areas of the country, in particular in areas under the Taliban full control. According to their law women and girls were prohibited from leaving their homes unless covered from head to toe not to show their skin in public, accessing healthcare delivered by men and restricting them from voting and being involved in politics and permitted publicly stoning women accused of adultery (Luccaro and Gaston, 2014). However, after the fall of the Taliban regime, and the emergence of Democracy in 2001, hopes for women were raised. They came out of dark places and looked to new horizons. Since 2001, women's situation has changed considerably but still yet to be done about women's economic participation in this country. Though women's position is almost universally subordinated particularly when their participation in the formal labor market are being discussed, existing subordination among highly developed countries are often explained by gender

[1] The three decades of conflict goes back to the Soviet occupation (1979–1989) to a period of tribal civil wars (1990–1996) and the oppressive rule of the Taliban (1996-2001).

[2] Freedom fighters, supported by the USA, Iran, and Pakistan fought against the Soviet occupation.

[3] Taliban is a group of terrorist led by Osama Bin Laden, a Saudi born militant.

[4] Sharia law is the body of Islamic law, which provides the legal framework for public and private aspects of life, including politics, economics, banking, business law, contract law, security and social issues.

discrimination which this in turn as a result push women to concentrate in low-wage and low status at work.

However, the case in developing countries differ much wider both socially and economically and can often explained as non-economic factors of cultural barriers and traditional issues where women feel less important than their male counterparts. Furthermore, as a result of these issues, women and their work has been the subject of cultural debates particularly in developing countries. Afghanistan as an example of these countries, although female labor force participation records as one of the lowest among other South Asian countries, it has progressively increased since 2001 from 14.82%, rising to 20% by 2018 (World Bank, 2019). Despite these increase, Afghanistan is till known as one of the most traditional and conservative countries with respect to women's work outside their home and this has been a never-ending debate among many communities and tribes. The existence of many community stereotypes has adversely affected the mindset of the average man towards women social and economic activities to work outside their home. Even though the situation among families living in urban and modern cities are improving, the larger portion of the population still needs more time to associate and cooperate with women's work out of the home. Though, women empowerment in economics and their participation in labor market has been the key issue for many developing countries such as Afghanistan, this has to some extent resulted to slow growth and development and in to some other instances, no growth, as well as a creation of segregated society, left women feel themselves less important than their male counterpart.

In addition, the issue of gender equality and women empowerment as an important sociological determinants has been flagged for more than decades past, but much has not been done to curb such problem. Though there have been studies based on women's economic participation along with economic factors when it comes to women in a variety of developing world, socio-cultural factors are the important ones which often prevent them to participate in countries most importantly developing nations. To this aim, the purpose of this thesis is to bring a light and evaluate the effect of culture on women's labor market participation in Afghanistan. Though culture is a very vague term to explain the literature economically, sociologically there has been a variety of concepts that covers

culture based on women's situation. Thus, within the literature about the effect of culture three concepts of culture such as social norms, gender roles and religion are used. These three concepts are related since social norms are assumed to have an impact on female labor force participation given that religious denominations differ in their emphases of traditional gender roles. Due to this reason, this thesis will follow this research tradition and concentrate on cultural factors in terms of social norms gender roles as well as religion.

To analyze these factors, this study collect quantitative data through sequentially structured questionnaires by using two types of data source of primary and secondary data, wherein the primary data was obtained from randomly selected Afghan women through an online survey, and the secondary data has been collected from the World Bank metadata to answer the main research question on whether socio-cultural norms affect the free employability of women" by taking into consideration other related questions of: do demographic factors such as marital status affect the employability of women in Afghanistan? And does education increase the likelihood of women in the labor market, which are the cornerstones of understanding the culture of the country discussed under the determinants for the case of Afghanistan in (Chapter 2)? Despite the existing information, the research subject in this thesis is still a new research area, where there is not much data and literature information to guide the study better. However, the mixture of both primary and secondary data at the same time the information gathered across Afghanistan lead the study to gain closer insights to analyze women's situation in labor market as a whole. The secondary data sourced from the World Bank further evaluates Afghan women's participation in the economy since the emergence of new the government in 2001, wherein the position of women in all spheres of life has begun to improve after three decades of conflicts.

To go through more in details, the thesis is structured as follows: first chapter puts in context the thesis topic to describe labor market across the world along with the female labor force participation both by taking women's historical perspective up until their current situation as well as their international comparison into consideration. The international comparison moreover, enlightens us both the countries higher level of female

labor force participation, as well as the lower number of female labor force participation particularly among so called MENA region due to wider socio-cultural issues in developing countries. For this reason, the legal framework along with other sets of standards on how to increase female labor force participation further explain us on how far these frameworks were effective to absorb more women's participation in economic as a whole. The first chapter further overviews the importance of women's participation that came into existence since the pioneering work of Mincer 1962 and Cain 1966, by attracting many other economists attention on how women are important in introducing new skills into the market and overall wealth in an economy.

Moreover, the second chapter follows what determinants do persist women to participate in the labor market both in general and in Afghanistan by going through both economic as well as non-economic factors. By going through to non-economic factors, the study further goes through on how culture came into existence and what are the main factors of culture that prevent women worldwide to be less available in the economy and society as a whole. The thesis also evaluates female labor force participation in Afghanistan among South Asian countries under two major sources: socio-cultural and historical traditional norms as well as three decades of conflicts that prevent women's movement severely in all spheres of life. To overcome challenges affecting women's movement both in the national and international sphere, the study has taken a closer look at the impact of human capital equipment and its positive effects towards their economic participation as a whole. At the same time, the third chapter will take us to the methodology and data presentation as well as analysis done by answering the main question with a broader explanation taking the literature review as well as the information obtained from studies around the world into consideration.

1. CHAPTER

LABOR MARKET AND FEMALE LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

INTRODUCTION

To understand the situation of female labor force participation around the world, this chapter firstly goes through the overall employment rate situation for both men and women explaining how countries are dealing with unemployment issues and the reason behind their low labor force participation in the economy as a whole. Secondly, it overviews the importance of women's participation that came into existence since the pioneering work of Mincer 1962 and Cain 1966, by attracting many other economists attention on how women are important in introducing new skills into the market and overall wealth in an economy. The chapter furthermore, goes through women's participation in the economy by taking their historical perspective up until their current situation as well as their international comparison into consideration. The international comparison moreover, enlightens us both the countries higher level of female labor force participation, as well as the lower number of female labor force participation particularly among so called MENA region due to wider socio-cultural issues in developing countries. For this reason, the legal framework along with other sets of standards on how to increase female labor force participation further explain us on how far these frameworks were effective to absorb more women's participation in economic as a whole.

1.1 LABOR MARKET

Firstly, it is necessary to know what a labor market is and how it works in order to determine its function in the world's market economy. The term labor market refers to a place where individuals try to offer their skills in exchange for wages, salaries and other forms of compensation to employers. In a broader sense, labor market as an extensive term includes both paid staff employment and self-employment (Serena, 2016). Paid employees are those who provide their services to an employer in exchange for a salary or wage. Whereas self-paid employees (known as own account workers) are those who perform their services for themselves. In this volume, the labor market from an economic perspective can be described in terms of supply and demand and as one of the main

components of the market economy of goods and services along with the capital market. Moreover, the labor market is a place where companies act like consumers and individuals act like suppliers in giving room for the principle of free competition operate. In this competition wherein workers try to compete against each other to obtain their position and employers compete to attract efficient employees for the better development of the activity, as a result, to make a profit within their organizations.

Furthermore, the labor market in the broadest sense can be divided into three main levels of primary, secondary, and tertiary sections to better analyze the situation of workers in labor market. The tertiary section which is determined by the underground economy includes unpublished work. Whereas, the first level includes those workers who have benefited a higher level of education and trainings from an environment where their income and employment stability are higher and there are other opportunities to improve their profession. A number of world developed nations having high progress level of income, high skilled 'knowledge' with employment opportunities of unprecedented earnings as an example, are currently experiencing this level. In opposite to primary level, secondary level includes those workers who have a relatively low level of education and mostly unskilled and semi-skilled hence the low levels of income with fewer chances of promotion and lack of opportunities to improve their professional growth prospects. Accordıng to some researches, the reasons behind these differences in wages are mostly due to lımıted access to education and training systems (Bae & Patterson, 2014). Citing many developing countries as an example, in these sectors evidence is present of the deterioration of their labor market translated by the decline of real wages, shrinking of formal employment sector, and lack of appropriate working conditions (Betcherman, 2002).

Generally, the labor markets worldwide are in disarray due to high levels of unemployment, especially among the youths. Countries in regions such as Africa and South Asia are mostly among those where their labor market faces challenges to employ a growing number of youngsters who enter the labor market. This high unemployment among the youths in most countries can be better analyzed by taking the population between the ages of 16 to 30 and splitting it into two different groups. The first group

containing those who are highly educated but finding it hard to get jobs commensurate with their skills and the second group containing those who have lacked education opportunities or have dropped out of school (Guillen, 2015). Similarly, the developing world also tends to have high levels of unemployment because many individuals of working age, particularly women, do not participate in the labor market. Studies show that labor market participation of women in 2014, varied from a low of 22 percent in the MENA to over 63 percent in East Asia and the Pacific and sub-Saharan Africa. While Latin America and the Caribbean experienced a strong increase in women's labor market participation of around 13% over the past two decades, the rate has been declining in South Asia. The rate in Europe and Central Asia has remained relatively constant (Gonzales, Jain-Chandra, Kochhar, & Newiak, 2015).

Thus, many countries around the world are grappling with the question of how to encourage employees to enter the labor market. For instance, developed countries have agreed on a framework based on the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) jobs Strategy report (1994, 1999b)[5] in order to encourage the market flexibility by investing in human capital, and "making the work pay" to reduce the issue of unemployment. However, developing countries beside some success stories are still delving with the problem of rapid technological change, continued low educational attainment, high illiteracy rates, and growing informal sectors (Betcherman, 2002). In order to overcome these problems, a set of formidable efforts including education and training of new generations, setting them on promising career paths, awareness of the virtues and challenges of immigration, as well as reduction of gender inequality with regard to women affairs, has to be formed. However, since these topics are often socio-politically controversial ıt often requires both firm leadership and open minds to ensure the well-functioning of labor markets.

[5] OECD 1994. The OECD Jobs Study: Evidence and Explanations. Paris.
OECD 1999b. Implementing the OECD Jobs Strategy: Assessing Performance and Policy, Paris.

In summary, labor market conditions have been undergoing changes, although these changes differ from one country to another most of the OECD countries have increased their labor market flexibility. This in turn, has resulted in substantial changes in earnings inequality: especially in those countries where systems of social security and redistribution seek to reduce inequalities however unemployment has not diminished significantly. Whereas in developing countries the challenges that most of these countries face are formidable due to socio-cultural issues, poor education systems, lack of job, as well as the issue of migration and technological changes, are the other main challenges.

1.2 FEMALE LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

In order to evaluate the status of women in labor force participation, it's important to first understand what the labor force participation rate is in general. Labor force participation rate as defined by (ILO), is "the percentage of a country's working-age population who is considered as economically active, either by working or searching for a job (ILO, 2016). This definition briefly contains those people who are employed as paid, self-paid (unpaid family workers) or unemployed. It's worth noting, that everyone who is jobless is not automatically unemployed, in fact, many of those who are jobless are either students, retired seniors or they have given up looking for a job which is called the discouraged workers. The real unemployment rate includes those who prefer full-time work. It does include both; the discouraged as well as those who are working part-time due to the lack of full-time jobs. But excludes domestic labor: work done by an employee either for themselves or for their household members are not counted as labor force participation. From a historical perspective, the division of labor performed either in market or non-market are a new term which came to use very newly. In fact, before the industrial revolution, the differentiation between these two term were almost non-existent due to a very few numbers of people enrolled in paid work.

Along with the agricultural revolution, a separation between family and work took place, therefore families agreed on sending their individual members to work in the new landlords. However, this resulted in the separation of family life and paid work, with men

responsible for paid work and decision making and women for domestic labor as well as taking care of children. As a result, this shaped a perception of a division of labor based on gender due to biological construction of either sex by forming the ideology of separate spheres (Yenilmez & Işıklı, 2010). Thus, female labor force participation can also be explained in terms of the division of labor. The sexual division of labor, i.e. the delegation of different kinds of tasks between male and female, is the typical feature of all societies which came into existence before the age of industrialization (Wharton, 2012). Moreover, an increase in a large number of women engaging in market work has decreased the time they spend on domestic labor, although these changes have resulted a small shift on men's non-market participation. But segregation of domestic labor continues to be high among women, even if they are employed today (Brines, 1994; Treas and Drobnič, 2010).

Through globalization, a radical increase witnessed in the number of women participation in labor market across early industrialized countries of OECD and rich countries such as US. During that period, 17 million new jobs of US market was occupied by two thirds of women, similarly, a 2% increase in wage-employment of women in OECD countries shows a positive change of the 20th century (Tzetkova & Ortez-Ospina, 2017). Following this development, flexible production system provided an effective opportunity of a decrease in the number of full-time workers, increase in part-time workers, and creating new jobs for temporary workers to increase the number of women participation in market work. By doing so, the new system pave the way for women to get into market work despite their family responsibilities yet, the increase was only witnessed among women in developed countries. Wage-earning employment is another opportunity women received despite being mothers and housewives. Although housewives have no salary, labor is the only one who has to get paid most importantly (Poduval, 2009).

During the last decades, women have massively entered the labor market and their participation in labor force is increasing today. However, the increase follows a state of severe imbalance and is still relatively slow due to wide gender gaps, even among so-called developed or mature economies. According to the ILO, women represent 49.4% of the global labor force today, compared to 40% in 2011, but it's still 26.7 p.p. lower than for men and no improvements are expected in the short term (Karaalp-Orhan and Simay,

2017; Elborgh-Woytek et al., 2013). Despite significant progress in recent decades, labor markets around the world remain divided along gender lines, and the issue of gender equality remains an elusive goal because its persistence varies across the world and are not peculiar to any culture, region or level of economic development (Berrisford, Lan Tan, Lobez, & Kobayashi, 2016). Due to this reason, women are more likely to remain economically inactive and, when they do participate in labor markets, they are more concentrated in less dynamic sectors mostly in unpaid works, overrepresented in the informal economy, receive lower wages, and be under-represented at the top.

Furthermore, gender inequalities mentioned above are not only as a pressing moral and social issue but also is an economic obstacle for women to exercise their rights. Yet promoting gender equality in labor markets is not only about women or their rights, but it's about creating opportunities equally both for men and women in an economy as well as society as a whole. Thus, a growing body of literature highlights that the economic returns of closing gender labor gaps and a diverse workforce will further improve business performance (Langou et al., 2018). Therefore, the absence of a trade-off between equity and growth and its benefits in all dimensions make it imperative to advance towards women's empowerment. Taking this into consideration, there are two interrelated and important factors that play behind these gender gaps. Firstly, social norms and customs create gender stereotypes that are deeply rooted in societies are affecting women’s decision to engage in labor markets in general. Second, the sexual division of labor has historically considered women as primarily responsible for domestic and care work, hampering female participation in paid activities and generating a "double burden".

As we will see later, female labor force participation across the world is influenced much more by social norms and custom as well as a division of labor and this have long dictated women to continue on doing unpaid family works (Tzetkova & Ortez-Ospina, 2017). Due to this reason, this thesis mainly focuses on explaining more specifically by going through of the development and status of female labor force participation in international comparison (chapter 1.5).

1.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF FEMALE LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION IN ECONOMY

Female labor force and its importance in the economy began with the pioneering works of Mincer (1962) and Cain (1966), using modern economic methods to analyze the increase in the number of women in labor force. The topic has since then attracted considerable attention of economists who have done numerous theoretical and empirical studies based on the significance of women's labor force participation in labor market (Boserup, 1970; Boserup, Tan and Toulmin, 2013; Pampel and Tanaka, 1986; King and Hill, 1997; Lincove, 2008; and Lechman and Kauer, 2015). Their studies conclude, that women as a significant factor play an important role by introducing new skills into the markets and their contribution in labor force creates overall wealth in an economy (Heintz, 2006). Accordingly, a host of studies provide evidence based on the prominent character of women and their higher earnings with respect to poverty reduction (Yunus, 2007). For instance, the World Bank found that women participation in labor market with earnings in Latin America and the Caribbean have played a critical role contributing to a 30% reduction in extreme poverty over a 10 year period (Abney & Laya, 2018).

Furthermore, statistics across the world shows that there is a positive interrelation between women's participation in labor force and economic growth. That is to say, economic growth as a significant factor enlarges women's employment opportunities, female labor force participation in return supports growth by performing better and more resilient business and expands development goals for entire nations. In particular, the case is true for rapidly ageing economies, where higher female labor force participation can boost growth by mitigating the impact of a shrinking workforce. For instance, female labor force participation of women in Japan could raise the country's annual potential growth rate by ¼% if they consist an average number of G7[6] countries. Which in result, could have a permanent rise in the per capita Growth Domestic Product (GDP) of 4% compared to the baseline scenario IMF, 2012c (Elborgh-Woytek et al., 2013). In addition, Stotsky

[6] The Group of Seven (G7) is a group consisting of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States. These countries, with the seven largest IMF-described advanced economies in the world, represent 58% of the global net wealth ($317 trillion).

(2006b) posits that women's relative lack of opportunities in developing countries inhibits economic growth, while at the same time, economic growth leads to improvements in their disadvantaged conditions.

Moreover, the economic literature places particular emphasis on women's role not only in shaping social life but also on the important role that women's participation in labor force plays on the economic development of countries. However, a lack of opportunities for women to participate in labor force and play an important role in economic development varies greatly among countries. Taking developing countries into consideration, structural changes from agriculture to industry and service sector reduces female labor force participation (Mujahid and Zafar, 2012). Moreover, women's labor force activity in the developing universes of economic development is increasing with the increase in the dynamics of education and economic activity. For instance, studies of economies as varied as in Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, Ethiopia, and the United Kingdom (UK), suggests that women are more likely than men to invest a large proportion of their household income in education, health, and nutrition for their children, including girls. Which in result, stimulates wider benefits both in economic as well as for the development of countries especially developing economies (Abney & Laya, 2018).

Thus, as more women works, economies grow. This in result, creates an opportunity for countries to increase the size of their workforce to achieve additional economic growth because higher participation of women in labor market transforms a community from a relatively autonomous society to a participant national economy. Based on this regard, analysis of 95 countries from McKinsey Global Institute shows that women despite accounting for 50% of their global working-age population generate 37% of the world GDP today. Thus, the entry of more women into the labor force is a significant benefit for a country to improve its economy. For instance, women's employment on an equal basis would allow companies in a country to make better use of the available talent pool, with potential growth implications (Barsh and Yee, 2012; CAHRS, 2011). Therefore, a study done by Dezso and Ross (2011), provides evidence based on women's presence on boards and senior management has a positive impact on companies' performance. That is to say, companies that employ female managers are better positioned

to serve consumer markets by women and more gender-diverse boards could enhance corporate governance by offering a wider range of perspectives.

Above all, women constitute a little more than half of the world's population thus empowering them equally in the global economy both in advanced and developing countries could add $28 trillion in GDP growth by 2025. For instance, raising female labor force participation to country-specific male levels would increase the GDP in the United States by 5 percent, in Japan by 9 percent, in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) by 12 percent, and in Egypt by 34 percent. Even advanced economies that have already made significant progress in reducing gender inequality could achieve a significant economic boost from closing the gender gap. Western Europe, for instance, could increase annual GDP by 23 percent and Oceania by 19 percent (Elborgh-Woytek et al., 2013).

Therefore, as mentioned above that women play an important role both in society and the overall wealth of economies. Although there are certain factors that prevent women and their full participation to bring wealth and prosperity in the world. Most of women around the world are now joining labor market yet, there have to be more women participating in the economy especially in the developing countries labor market to help and transform their community from a relatively autonomous society to a participant national economy.

1.4 LEGAL FRAMEWORKS TO INCREASE FEMALE LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

Despite the fact that international law guarantees women and men equal human rights, women most importantly girls still continue facing inequalities as de juri (in law) and de facto (in practice) virtually in all societies. Despite some progress made in increasing female labor force participation in the last 20 years, the pace has been uneven, and large gaps remain both on gender equality in work and gender equality in society. For instance, FLFP in 2014 in OECD median countries was 54%, 14% below Male Labor Force Participation (MLFP), for the median middle-income countries FLFP was 49%, 26% below MLFP, and for the median low-income countries was 64%, 13 below MLFP

(Gonzales, Jain-Chandra, Kochhar, & Newiak, 2015). According to a study done by McKinsey Global Institute, gender equality analyzed in 40 out of 90 countries are very high and it remained extremely high in several areas, namely all aspects of work, maternal mortality, issues of legal protection, political voice and violence against women. Thus, to overcome these challenges, a set of various significant international human rights framework as well as other laws all over the world exclusively devoted to gender equality, but we focus mainly on few important economic implications of these frameworks across the world.

To start with, one of the most important legal frameworks that contains other sets of standards such as United Nation Security Council Resolution on women, peace and security (UNSCR 1325), as well as other forms of discrimination as a whole is Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The CEDAW, which was adopted in 1979 is often referred as 'women's bill of rights' is one of the core international human rights treaties of the United Nations (UN) which has been ratified by 183 states and it still continue expanding its member states. More precisely, CEDAW spells out in detail on women's human right to their participation in society as well as economics equally and maps out numerous range of actions that must be undertaken to achieve these goals. For instance, Equal numbers of women and men were empowered through trainings based on their rights most importantly women and girls right through community workshops (The International Legal Framework for Protection) under CEDAW and Security Council resolution 1325. Furthermore, Women, Business and the Law (WBL) is another important World Bank project that enhanced the study of gender equality since 2009, by collecting data on the laws and regulations that prevent women's economic opportunities. Over the last decades, WBL has expanded coverage to 187 economies and 8 topics relevant to women's economic participation and these data are useful both for research as well as policy discussions on improving women's economic opportunities today.

However, a question of do laws and frameworks mentioned made a difference, guide us to the OECD priority program called worldwide Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE), which is recognized as one of the major driving forces of global

economic growth and well-being aims at implementing programs like, Private Sector Developments (PSD) to achieve women's economic empowerment. Therefore, to fight for gender equality as it's a global challenge, both OECD countries and the partner countries from different regional context - Central Asia, MENA, Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and South East Europe came along together under this program to achieve gender equality. Therefore, to get our questions answer, we need to go further to explore opportunities and legal barriers through a month-long conference which was held by the Organization's Global Relations Secretariat on "The Impact of Legal Frameworks on Women's Economic Empowerment around the World". Thus, the result of the OECD reports found that significant progress has been made in combating gender inequality, however, this progress is limited and there are numerous other factors including legal and institutional frameworks that still hold women back to gain their full potential across the world.

For instance, women in all regions have disproportionate responsibility when it comes to unpaid work and family responsibilities. That is to say that 75% of the world's total unpaid work as well as care including child care, caring for the elderly, cooking, and cleaning is undertaken by women (McKinsey Global Institute, 2015). Taking OECD countries into account, women in these countries on average spend their 1.5 hours doing unpaid work per day. Moreover, the report analysis reveals that MENA regions have one of the lowest female labor force participation in the world, accounting for 31% compared to over 63% in OECD countries and the reason behind these rates can be explained due to cultural and social factors that limits women participation to be employed three times less likely than men (ILO, 2015; OECD, 2017). Though many MENA countries including; Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan and Algeria have taken measures to strengthen women's status through constitutional and institutional reforms despite various initiatives, many remaining discriminatory provisions in statutory and customary laws impact women's economic participation. Contradictions between different levels of law and hidden implementation gaps prevent countries from effectively fostering women's economic empowerment. Most importantly the personal status laws and regulations within the family strongly influence social values and norms, which in result have a powerful impact on economic outcomes.

Due to these laws existence, women in MENA regions generally do not share the same rights as men do, work, marry or divorce, become head of the household, and receive an inheritance or access wealth. For example, in Egypt, Jordan and Libya, women are still depending on their husbands as well as fathers permission to obtain work. At the same time, discrimination in sub-Saharan Africa is still very high on women to access land or have control over the property. OECD's recent country study on Burkina Faso shows that the plurality of legal systems specifically statutory and customary rights that govern many countries women's land and property rights vulnerable, has been easier today due to a revision of inheritance legislation in many countries for women to access land easier today. Moreover, the OECD's study in LAC regions shows that the main barriers which reinforce discrimination for women are sexist and misogynist stereotypes. And lack of social support system as well as high levels of informal employment throughout the region, have caused limited women's economic participation. Based on this regard, LAC regional report System for Interactive Guidance and Information (SIGI) points out, on government's initiative actions to combat workplace discrimination with an effort to gender gaps in employment. As a result, the Dominican Republic and Mexico have removed all legal restrictions on women's work.

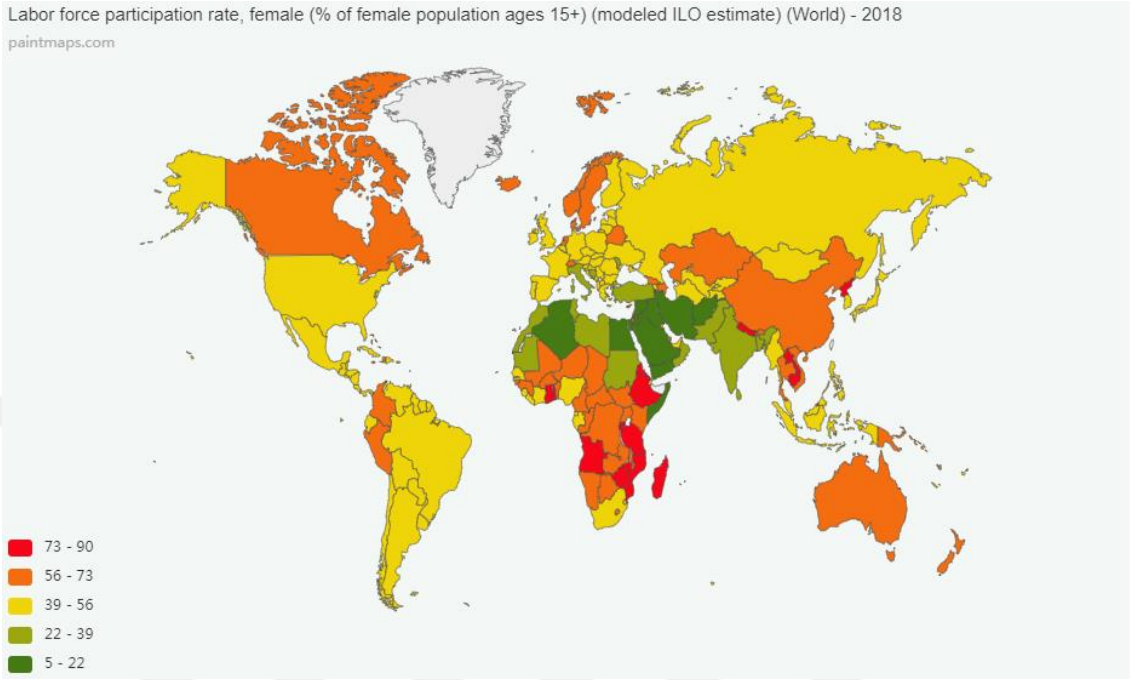
However, discriminatory laws continue to obstruct women's equal employment opportunities in 19 countries on the continent. Legal restrictions prohibit women from working at night, for instance in Jamaica Barres them from jobs that are deemed hazardous, unhealthy, require heavy lifting or that impair their morals, such as in Bolivia. Thus, the OECD on this regard has launched a Policy Dialogue to identify ''what works'' and to make more and better time use data available to assess the impact of reforms on social protection which is indeed one of the 4 domains to empower women. South East Europe on the other hand, has been in progress to achieve equal rights since the fall of communism. Which in result, has seen women access senior political positions. However, with the political focus on transition reforms, gender equality has slipped down the priority list. As a result, more and more women have regrettably gone "back to the kitchen" (Fodor and Balgh, 2010) with an estimated 17% income per capita lost due to gender gaps in labour force participation in the Western Balkans and Turkey (World Bank, Mars, Teigner, 2015).

To sum up, though legal gender parity has improved there are other major differences and laws which hold women from working as well as running a business. The factors that hold them back are complex and varies across countries in the world. Taking the issue of stereotypes on gender roles and discriminatory social norms as societal values, unpaid work and informal employment in many regions still prevent women to work.

1.5 FEMALE LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON

Women and their participation in labor activities differ widely as World Bank, 2018 summary explains around countries over the world. As a result of these differences, the map below which has been modelled estimates from the (ILO), after harmonizing various data sources to improve comparability across countries represents a closer insight from different levels of female labor force participation worldwide. The map, which contains female labor force participation rates grouped into five different categories shows a strong variation of women participating in labor force between countries. Wherein, the first group is uncovered by the map, i.e. the green belt represents low female labor force participation of several countries grouped in one specific world region. Whereas, on the other side of the distribution countries of Madagascar, Mozambique, as well as Nepal with no specific geographical patterns, shows a very high level of participation in the world.

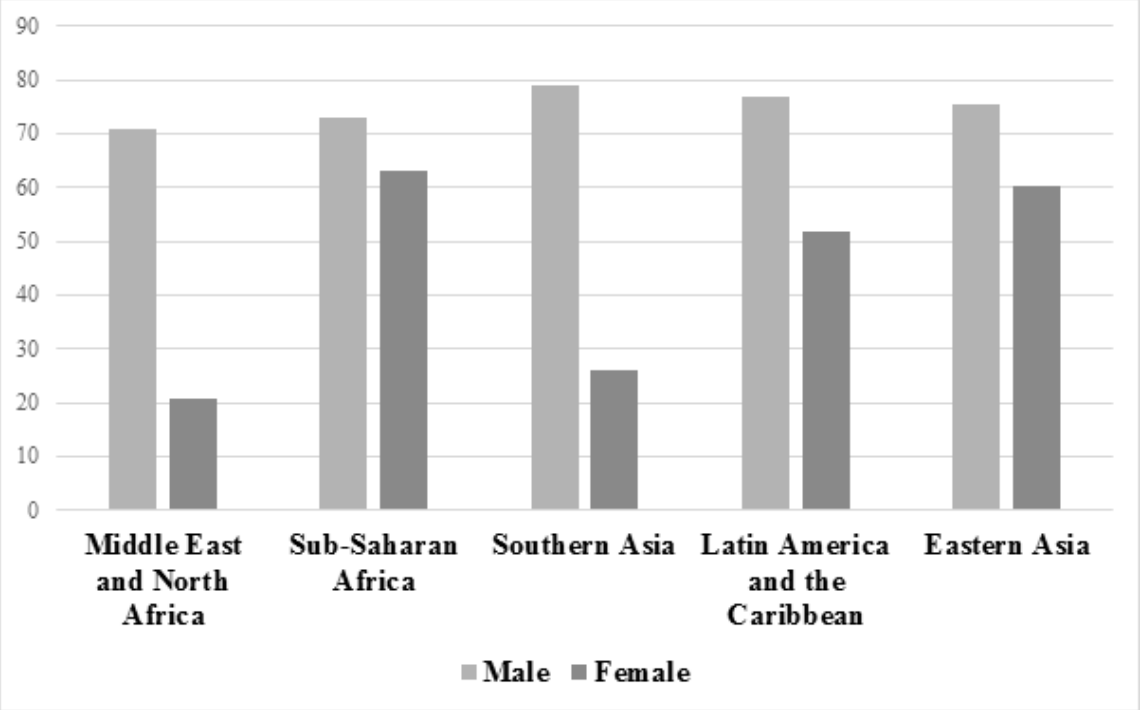
Figure 1.1: Female labor force participation world, 2018



Source: International Labor Organization (2019)

When we compare female participation to that of their male counterparts across five world regions in 2018 as illustrated in figure 1.2, we can see two main key findings. First, male labor force participation rate differs slightly between the regions ranging from 77 to almost 79 %, while female labor force participation rates differ hugely across regions ranging from 20% in MENA to 63% in Sub-Saharan Africa. Second, the lowest female labor force participation rate as we already see in the above map also can be found in the two geographically close regions; MENA and Southern Asia. Though the MENA region has experienced a slight increase as we are going to discuss in figure 1.3 with more details but it has lagged behind other countries in the world. As we mentioned the reason behind low female labor force participation above that socio-cultural norms have always prevented women to take part both in society and economics as a whole. The figure furthermore, demonstrates the three more regions where their female labor force participation rate is similar compared to those two world regions.

Figure 1.2: Female to male labor force participation rates 2018



Note: Modelled ILO estimates; % of population ages 15-64

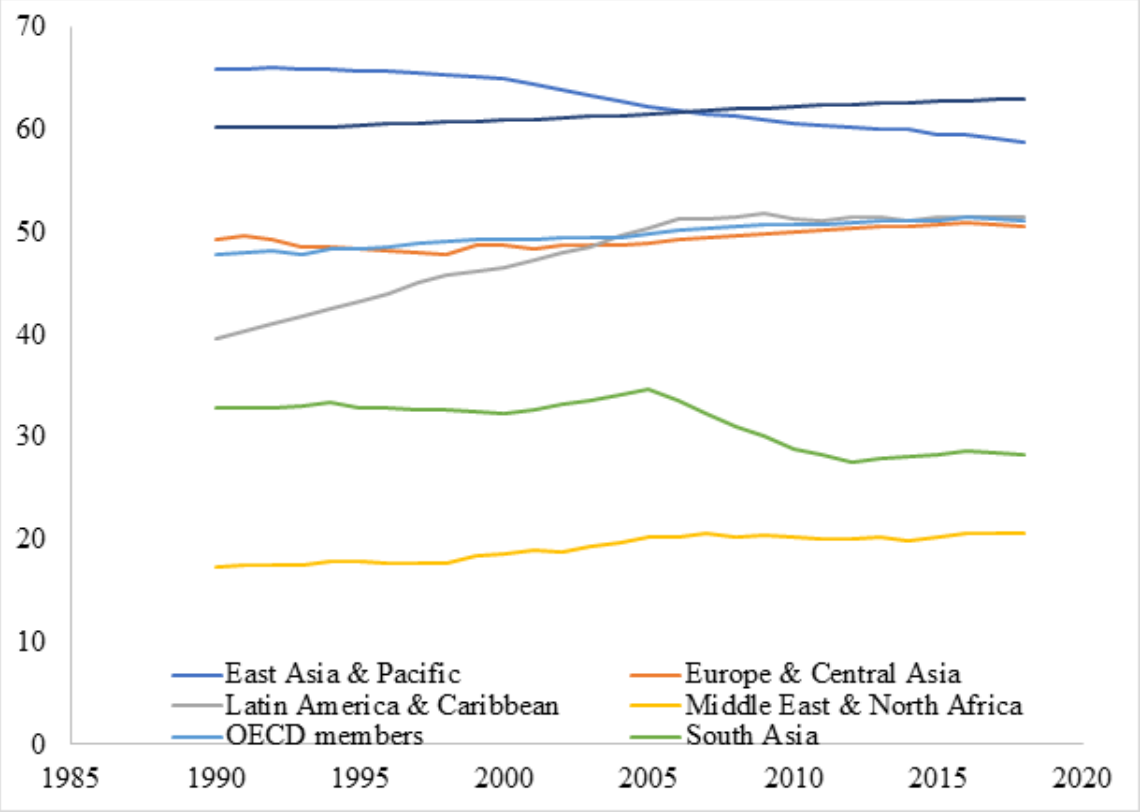
Source: ILO (2019); Own illustration.

However, it should be noted that the figure hides outstanding variation among the same particularly Muslim regions. For instance, female labor force participation in MENA regions varies widely with a high range of more than 50 in United Arabs, Djibouti, Qatar, Kuwait, to less than 20 in Jordan, Iraq, Yemen, Syria, Iran and Algeria. While, in the Sub-Saharan Africa which has the highest level of female labor force participation among four more world regions differ from the high range of more than 70 in Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, and Mozambique, to less than 40 in Comoros, Mauritania, Sudan, and Somalia. Additionally, when we focus our attention on trends over the world regions during the past few years, some further interesting observations attracts us to the changes that has been made lately. To go through these changes, figure 1.3 further guide us to the female labor force participation rates for seven world regions since 1990. As we can see in the figure, that female labor force participation rate not only differs in level but the trends also differs among world regions across the world. We can observe the most obvious findings

in the low female labor force participation in the MENA region with a slight increase from 17% in 1990 to 20% in 2018.

Following MENA region, the three other regions such as OECD countries, Sub-Saharan Africa, Europe and Central Asia also shows a slight increase, with a very strong 15% increase only in Latin America and Caribbean. However, female labor force participation both in South Asia as well as in East Asia and Pacific decreased slightly during these during in this time period from 1990 to 2018. It is also worth noting that the following figure displays changes in women's labor force participation only from 1990 to 2014 since there is no comparable data available to present all world regions before that time. The changes that most of the regions which show fairly stable labor force participation rates during the current period occurred prior to 1990.

Figure 1.3: Trends in female labor force participation rates



Sources: World Bank, 2019

To conclude, female labor force participation differs greatly among countries as explained both in the map and figures above. To explain the reasons behind female labor force differences around the world, we need to go through determinants and other factors in the second chapter of the literature review of the study.

2. CHAPTER

LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

To better understand the factors affecting women's labor force participation in the labor market, this chapter firstly goes through the economic factors explaining female labor force participation by taking countries level of economic development and its positive and negative effects on women's economic participation into consideration. Secondly, the chapter furthermore goes through to the main non-economic determinants, especially by discussing and specifically analyzing how culture and its specific factors social norms, gender roles, and religion affect their participation both in society and economy as a whole. The chapter moreover, guide us on how culture and its effects came into existence and how do economists evaluate these effects in the economy since then through studies not only across but also within the regions. Finally, the chapter evaluates female labor force participation in Afghanistan and the determinants behind its low female labor force participation among South Asian countries under two major sources: socio-cultural and historical traditional norms as well as three decades of conflicts that prevent women's movement severely in all spheres of life. To overcome challenges affecting women's movement both in the national and international sphere, this chapter take a closer look at the impact of human capital equipment and its positive effects towards their economic participation as a whole.

2.1 DETERMINANTS OF FEMALE LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

Despite making more than half of the world's population, women represent only 40% of the global labor market today (World Bank, 2011). Though there has been an increase in the number of women who are part of the labor force than half a century ago, this increase shows huge international discrepancies even among the economically advanced countries. Since World War II the following increase in the number of women participating in labor force has generally been witnessed, but by no means evenly globally, especially across OECD countries. In 2016, for instance, Sweden experienced 70%

increase in the number of women participating in the labor market, while Germany and Italy recorded 56% and 40% increase respectively, as a result of the rate of increase as well as the differences began at different points in time and different rates in each country (Pettit & Hook, 2005). Therefore, researchers comparing broad policy configurations argue that the different types of welfare states and factors behind low rates that will be discussed later emerged both in developed as well as developing countries since the end of II World War which contributed immensely to these differences. Thus, in order to explain these differences, we need to consider the determinants of female labor force participation not only across but also within the regions. The determinants include, but are not limited to, non-economic or social factors (e.g. social norms and culture, education, age, marital status, fertility, child care and family-oriented policies) and economic factors such as, level of economic development, institutional features including differences in both wage settings and policies (e.g. labor market, tax and transfer).

Looking at non-economic factors first, we can examine social and cultural norms. Evidence from an international study done by (Alesina, Giuliano, & Nunn, 2013), shows that social norms and culture under gender role lines affect women's labor market participation. The OECD analysis in this regard shows that it is in MENA region where women's labor force participation is one of the lowest in the world thus supporting the above premise. The reason why social norms and culture affects MENA regions female labor force participation according to OECD analysis continued the legacy of gender roles in family law which form social norms, and this leads to gender stereotyping and ingrained cultural barriers. This in turn, impacts the economic and public policies that affect women's confidence and emancipation in society overall (March-on-Legal-Framework-Highlights, 2018). Internationally, evidence shows that alongside social norms and culture, other factors such as education, age, marital status, fertility, and religion are of great importance with regard to female labor force participation decisions (Tzannatos & Psacharopoulous, 1989). Empirical evidence shows that women in their twenties and thirties have higher chances of participating in the labor market than women of all other age groups on overall. Yet, the result of some studies in regard to age shows that the impact of age can be either positive or negative based on the age group considered. For instance, an empirical study in Jordan and Kuwait proves that age has a negative impact

on women's labor market participation, whereas another study in Pakistan shows that effect of age on female labor force participation is positive up until the age of 49, which after then negatively affects women's labor market participation (Hosney, 2016).

In addition to age consideration, the importance and effects of marriage on women's propensity to participate in labor market cannot be neglected. As studies in Pakistan and many other developing countries show that married women are only responsible for household chores such as, cleaning, washing, and childrearing, while husband is the one who is responsible only for working outside the house as a breadwinner (Tzannatos & Psacharopoulous, 1989; Khadim & Akram, 2013). However, the negative impact of marriage mentioned above rarely happens in developed economies unless the marriage is accompanied by children. With respect to time, employment and childcare simultaneously require special attention such that the more time devoted for taking care of children, the less time would be available for women to enter the job market, especially where childcare arrangements are not an available option. For this reason, social democratic policies in Sweden designed paid parental leave in order to encourage both fathers and mothers to participate in child care as well as support full employment. Compared to developing economies, some studies undertaken in developing countries where the fertility rate is usually high pointed out that the presence of children has two effects on FLFP. The moment women start having children, it is expected that either they stay at home or continue working due to the dependency that increases as the number of children increases so as to contribute extra to their husbands' insufficient incomes.

Turning to economic factors, one must also look at the level of economic development; a vast number of studies have alluded to a U-shaped relationship between female labor force participation rate and economic development (Tam, 2011; Okonowicz and Lechman, 2013; Tsani et al., 2013; Tao and Kaur, 2014). However, in various countries or group of countries, the relationship relatively depends on the level of robustness of economic development as well as the female labor force participation rate over time. In this regard (Sinha, 1967), was first to suggest the description of the female labor force and the level of economic development by long-term U-shaped relationship on his study "Dynamics of Female Participation in Economic Activity in Developing

Economy" in the late 1960s. İt was observed that female labor force participation changes based on the development level of an economy. Meaning countries with a low level of economic development tend to have high female labor force due to a large number of women participating in agriculture. Their number then drops at the early stages of development due to a shift from home-based production to market oriented activities and then rises again towards later stages of economic development. Sinha's study precisely proved that female labor force participation rate in the initial phase of industrialization tends to decrease while as the economy develops, women's engagement in the labor market gradually increases.

Several inter-country studies relating to changes in the employment position of women through economic development process have been undertaken to analyze whether the U-shaped curve truly exists or not. Looking at international evidence from different countries, (Fatima & Sultana, 2009), through a case study undertaken in Pakistan confirm the existence of the U-shaped relationship between female labor force participation and economic development. The result of their study demonstrates that female labor force participation increased as the level of economic development positively changed. So it can be concluded that higher levels of economic development encourage women to participate in labor market by expanding the employment opportunities for them. Another determinant related to women's labor force participation is an existing significant wage gap compared to their male counterparts even if they have a similar occupation and individual qualities, such as education. A review paper based on a large number of studies across the world showed that 8 to 48 percent of women typically earn less than men with similar professional qualities.

Therefore the effect of both economic and non-economic factors can be seen to determine women's labor force participation around the world, however non-economic factors to a greater extent affect female labor force participation than economic factors. The case is true especially among those categorized as developing countries where the female labor force participation is lower than in developed countries. At the same time, most of the developing countries' economies are in the first stage of development, this, as a result, makes their effort to increase female labor force participation a great challenge.

Though this is expected to change as the economy grows, there a long wait will most likely be endured until the participation significantly changes.

2.2 THE IMPACT OF HUMAN CAPITAL EQUIPMENT ON FEMALE LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

The importance of human capital equipment as the main source of labor force participation as well as progress in economic growth has long been recognized in economic literature. However, the economists had begun to overlook the concept of human capital equipment until it's rebirth in 1960 with Becker's (1962, 1964) significant work, notably through close interaction with some of the pioneers in the field, such as Schultz (1961, 1962) and Mincer (1958, 1962, 1974). These economists regenerate this old concept by reaffirming its relationship with economic growth as well as by emphasizing its importance in explaining earnings differentials as its one of the persistent factors that increase the differences over a working life, especially so for college graduates. Since then human capital equipment attracted the attention of economists especially classical economist like Adam Smith (1776) who was first to use this term to his definition of capital. He included in the capital stock of a nation that inhabitants acquire useful talents because human skills are important in determining economic performance both for society as well as for individuals. Therefore, in order to analyze the impact of human capital equipment on determining female labor force participation, we need to first understand what the term human capital equipment means. According to Becker (1975), human capital can be defined as the aggregation of investments in activities, such as skills, knowledge, and social attributes often resulting from expenditures on education, on-the-job training, and medical care that enhance an individual's productivity in the labor market.

This definition, as well as the basic concepts of human capital equipment, suggests that individuals increase their capacities to improve career prospects and thus generate income through investment in human capital development such as education. Exploiting the definition of human capital equipment as a result, guide us to the traditional theory of

human capital, which is developed by Becker (1962) and Mincer (1974) who viewed education as one of the main source of national investment; the capital which is invested in people is considered as human capital equipment. Which in turn, has a key significant positive impact on individuals' participation in labor market as well as chances of gaining a higher occupational status and hence higher lifetime earnings. Generally, society as a whole can significantly benefit from investment in education as now highly productive labor force results in the efficient allocation of resources which contributes to higher economic growth and development (Schultz, 1992). Education not only increases the rate at which women adapt to new innovations but it has also far-reaching societal benefits such as increased female educational attainment leading to decreased fertility rates and increased women empowerment in households. Though education is significant for both sexes women's educational attainment has a positive effect on its own to their labor supply due to several reasons.

As sociological theories assert that education provides skilled qualifications, raises earning power and occupational goals and induces women to seek employment to increase their empowerment and decision-making to become more competitive in the labor market. In this regard, Dima Dabbous-Sensenig, a professor at the Lebanese American University based said: "The more women are highly educated, the more they become motivated and get good jobs especially those who are young, which they did not have this option thirty years ago" (Davies & CNN, 2012: 7-63). Thus, education has been shown to have a significant positive correlation to labor market participation. Studying the same phenomenon, Glass (1992) found that the most highly educated countries had on average the highest female labor force participation because of a higher number of university educated women to access to higher paid jobs and better working conditions which encouraged women to participate in the labor markets in those countries. This case is particularly true for OECD countries, where the probability of entering the labor market for both sexes, especially women increased from 3% for primary school attendants to 73% for college graduates (Machin and McNally, 2007). In the case of developing countries, particularly in the MENA region, though female education has significantly increased over the last several decades, the unemployment rate still remains high among young women giving an example of Turkish women (Patterson, 2013). However, the theory of

human capital suggests education is to be an important determinant that has a positive direct and negative indirect effect on women's labor force engagements.

To evaluate these effects, human capital theory analyzed the relationship between education and labor force participation specifically for married women in the labor market. Economists argue that the relationship may be U-shaped across educational attainment categories. Based on their result, they found that the participation of women among illiterates is high, relatively lower with primary and secondary level attendees while, highest among the university graduate women. The reason behind this trend can be explained in different ways, taking the positive relation between education and wage rate as an example that has been explained as having a U-shaped relationship (Schultz 1961).The higher labor force participation at low levels of education where mostly illiterates will be active and working for very low wages can be explained by their need to earn some income to cater for basic needs. On the other hand, the low level of participation for married women with a primary and secondary level of education can be explained by their seeking job opportunities with low qualifications requisite such as secretarial work due to the low level of their education. Thus when there are limited opportunities for such jobs, women with such low educational attainment tend to stay home. As already stated above, that this is common in most developing countries where women with lower levels of education either to stay at home or work in the household production, which is excluded from the definition of the labor force. Therefore since informal sector workers are not included in the labor force and thus not reflected in the FLFPR, the resulting indicator shows a low female participation rate (Cameron et al. 2001; Lincove 2008; Schultz 1961).

Overall, female labor force participation both in developed and developing countries is positively influenced by education. However, this interrelation differs across countries based on educational distribution within the population, the quality of education system, and the distribution of workers among different economic activities. But many developing countries are exceptions when a large number of youths stays in school longer compared to those in developed countries the result of which makes their participation in labor market as low as studies prove.

2.3 THE THEORY OF PATRIARCHY AND ITS IMPACT ON FEMALE LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

To better analyze the theory of patriarchy and its impact on female labor force participation, it's important to first understand what patriarchy is and since when does this system have been started to be in use. The word "Patriarchy" has been used before the resurgence of feminist movement and their studies. As Kramarae and Dale (1992) on their article "The Condition of Patriarchy" pointed it out that the concept has been recreated in the past two decades to analyze the origins and conditions of men's oppression of women. In other words, patriarchal norms which describes the power of the father as head of the household and has been used during the post 1960s feminism to refer to the systematic superiority of male and subordination of women (Stacey, 1993 & Aina, 1998). A system in which men oppress women through its social, political and economic institutions, and at the same time women's social, economic and political discrimination operates in society. The fundamental social institution i.e. the family perpetuates patriarchy, where male is considered as the head of the household and control the productive and reproductive resources, labor force, and capacities on the notions of superiority and inferiority, which is learnt in gender role socialization.

At the same time, the radical feminists view patriarchy as a system of power relations which is mainly responsible for women's subordination and male dominance in the society. They further emphasize the role of men as capitalists in creating hierarchies in the production process in order to maintain their power. Capitalists do this by segmenting the labor market (along race, sex, and ethnic lines among others) and playing workers off against each other (Walby, 1990). Moreover, Kate Millet (1970) on his book Sexual Politics also finds societies as being patriarchal, where male dominates women in family, which reflects the rule of men in other areas of society as well. On the other hand, Hartman (1976) argues that patriarchy is a set of social relations which has a material base that has been established before any other system particularly capitalism. The material base of patriarchy is men's control over women's labor power in the family and by controlling they maintained women by excluding them from accessing to necessary economically productive resources through restricting their sexuality. For instance, men

became one of the maintaining control over the labor power of women with the advent of the public-private separations such as those created by the emergence of state apparatus and economic systems based on wider exchange and larger production units.

They maintained their control over the labor power of women through two mechanisms of: (1) the traditional division of labor between the sexes, and (2) techniques of hierarchical organization and control. These mechanisms were crucial in the second process, the extension of a sex-ordered division of labor to the wage-labor system, during the period of the emergence of capitalism in Western Europe and the United States. The emergence of capitalism in the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries threatened patriarchal control based on institutional authority as it destroyed many old institutions and created new ones, such as a "free" market in labor. It threatened to bring all women and children into the labor force and hence to destroy the family and the basis of the power of men over women i.e. the control over their labor power in the family (Marx and Engels, 1884). Though this changes, have increased number of women participating in the labor market as discussed in female labor force participation in chapter 1, but the increase follows a state of severe imbalance and is still relatively slow due to gender gap generated from patriarchal system even among so-called developed economies. Despite significant increase based on women's participation in the labor market in recent decades, labor market around the world remain divided along gender lines, which we will discuss more briefly under factors of culture explaining female labor force participation later.

Apart from gender lines which has been generated from patriarchal system, there are other various mechanisms but based on our research topic, we focus mainly on few important economic implications of these mechanisms across the world. Job segregation by sex is one of the primary mechanisms of patriarchal society that maintains the superiority of men over women, because it enforces lower wages for women in the labor market. Low wages keep women dependent on men because they encourage women to marry, thereby for married women to perform domestic chores for their husbands. Men benefit both, from higher wages and the domestic division of labor. This domestic division of labor as discussed in female labor force participation in chapter 1, in turn, acts to weaken women's position in the labor market. For instance, when jobs are scarce, men

should have more right to a job than women or if they do have the job, they either concentrate in low paid jobs or prefer to stay at home. This case is specifically true in developing countries, where women and their participation on all social, economic and political occasions where both sexes take part, women always lay behind men due to countries society being referred as one of the South and East Asian countries as "Patriarchal belt", from North Africa across the Muslim Middle East countries (offenhaur, 2005).

The belt, apart from shared religion, is also characterized by attributes such as male domination, early marriages, male child preferences, restrictive codes of behavior for women, the association of family honor with female virtue and existing of strong division of roles and gender segregation. Parlaktuna's across country analysis in Turkey based on this regard shows that strong division of roles and gender segregation do affect women's labor force participation in this country. Her analysis confirms that due to these roles, women are much more concentrated in lower paid job activities than men. Though many MENA countries including; Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan and Algeria as mentioned in the legal frameworks to increase female labor force participation in the first chapter briefly, has taken measures to strengthen women's status through constitutional and institutional reforms despite various initiatives, many remaining discriminatory provisions in statuary and customary laws impact women's economic participation. For example, in Egypt, Jordan and Libya, women are still depending on their husbands as well as fathers permission to obtain work due to this reason female labor force participation in these regions as furtherly discussed in female labor force participation in international comparison in the first chapter also, have one of the lowest rate among other regions in the world (OECD, 2017). While for the case of Afghanistan as we will discuss more briefly specifically on the determinants of female labor force participation in Afghanistan's case also that control over women's lives and gender roles are determined by patriarchal and tribal traditions where men exercise unmitigated power over women.

As Islam is deeply entrenched in Afghanistan and 80% of people in this country are Sunni Muslim who due to conservative way of living relate women's working with Islam. While this is not the case as we will discuss further in the religion section, that

Islam has given women the right to get education, work and participate in social activities. As Azhar and Kazmi on their article Muslim Women and their Property Rights also confirms that during Mohammad (PBUH) (Prophet, The Messenger of Allah) his wife Khadija was a businesswoman who sacrificed her wealth in Islam way (Azhar and Kazmi, 2009). Therefore, patriarchy and its impact on women's social, political and economic activities are entrenched in society through gender lines that oppress women and their participation in labor activities.

2.4 FACTORS OF CULTURE EXPLAINING FEMALE LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

2.4.1 Social Norms

An increase in the labor supply of women over the last half-century attracted a large strand of theoretical and empirical research. Based on this regard, a quite vast early literature inspired by the work of Mincer (1962), largely focused on explaining the increase in women's average wage rate across the world (Mincer, 1985; Smith and Ward, 1985; Blau, 1998; Kahn, 2007; Juhn and Murphy, 1997). Although the wage rate for both sexes did converge the female wage elasticity fell over time (Costa, 2000; Heim, 2007) due to a lower participation rate and the average working hours per week particularly for married women compared to that of their partners. In order to explain observed trends in wage and cross-wage responses of female labor supply, the conventional theoretical model largely focused on overall decline in fertility rates through, for example, the improvement of fertility control (Katz, 2002), the improvement of household technologies (Greenwood, Seshadri, and Yorukoglu, 2005), the rise of the tertiary sector (Cortes and Pan, 2018: 425-888; Weinberg, 2000) and a generally increased economic demand (Carodso and Morin, 2018). Over the years, multiple new strands of research have evolved to focus on alternative monetary factors behind low female labor force participation, such as institutional barriers and public policy (Hausman, 1980; Eissa and Liebman, 1996) as well as costs of participation in general (Cogan, 1980; Angrist and Evans, 1998).

However, as Blau and Kahn, 2017 summarizes, the above mentioned conventional economic studies were not able to fully explain the observed trends in female labor force participation. Due to this reason, economic research started to consider non-standard determinants, especially by discussing and empirically analyzing the role of social norms as important non-pecuniary factors (Bertrand, 2010: 1543-1590; Fortin, 2015; Goldin, 2006; Reimers, 1985; Carodso and Morin, 2018). Therefore, to investigate the role of social norms to women's decisions, in particular, married women regarding labor market participation, we need to first go through social norms definition. Firstly, Pears and Connell, 2015 defines social norms as "a collective definition of socially approved conduct, stating rules or ideals". That is to say, social norms can be embedded in formal and informal institutions and are produced and reproduced through social interaction. In order to evaluate the role of social norms in explaining female labor force participation, we follow the analysis advanced by Bertrand et al. (2015), which seeks to measure the effect of social norms on women and their choices to participate in labor market. Based on their study, they suggest that social norms concerning marital affairs have a significant impact on wives decisions to enter the labor market. Men and women have long been identified with the different prescriptions, for men as bread-winners and women as caretakers of the family, in more modern versions this is simply put as "a man should earn more than his wife".

This study has been particularly affirmed by data from the World Value Survey observed in Brazil, where 16.8% of Brazilians supported the view that "when jobs are scarce men should work more than women", and 33.5% of Brazilians agreed that if a woman earns more than her husband, it almost certainly causes problems. It is therefore unsurprising that the difference in weekly hours devoted to household chores between men and women is huge in Brazil, 10 hours for men and 20 hours for women, despite the fact that overall working hour gender gap in this country is reducing overtime. Such an observation shows that social norms in Brazil play an important role in decision making within households with this difference being more frequent with married women in this country (Codazzi et.al. 2018). The study furthermore, introduces us to the notion of informal labor markets, which is an institutional feature more common for women in Muslim Majority countries (MMCs), wherein compared to those in non-Muslim countries

have the lowest rate of economic inactivity in the world[7] (UN, 2010). Majority of women in these regions, despite being geographically dispersed live under the "patriarchal gender system" which is mainly common in rural areas that make their movement to take part in activities outside their home almost impossible (Moghadam, 2004; Offenhauer, 2005; Makama, 2013).

In the patriarchal system, consciously or unconsciously imposed in most of these regions, men have the primary authority to play the key role in the labor supply decision of women. The resultant social norm (but not law) hence essentially implies that all women are required to seek approval from their male "guardian", before applying for a job or starting a business in countries like Saudi Arabia (Bursztyn et.al. 2018). While in some parts of countries like Afghanistan, women have to seek a man's escort to either go to work or do other activities outside their homes. For this reason, women in these societies tend to be out of the labor force or if they are included, they will be in lower-paying jobs while men have access to better and more prestigious jobs (Fernandez-Kelly, 1983: 509-521). Based on this regard, many cross-national studies have briefly touched on the issue of cultural factors, such as social norms to explain women's work and their participation in labor market (Youssef, 1974; Caldwell 1982; Marshal 1985). is An example of such studies was done by Papenek (1973), who analyzed the seclusion of women both in Muslim and Hindu societies through a comparative study of separate worlds and symbolic shelter where women are seen as a vulnerable to the outside world. There in which they are in need of protection when it comes to pursuing a job or other social activities by the male members of their family.

Existence of such social norms in most parts of the world especially in Muslim regions, as a result, shows that women are mainly responsible for caring for the household, children, elderly, and other dependent individuals. Due to this reason, women either in social activities as or economic participation are under a symbolic shelter that makes their movement almost impossible to be active participants.

[7] MMCs, total female labor force participation is currently 28%

2.4.2 Gender Roles

The gender-based division of labor differs greatly between countries and regions. While in some countries women are actively participating in the labor market, in others there are specific and prolific gender lines that restrict their movement to participate in activities outside the domestic sphere. Though there have been many determinants to explain the reason behind these differences, including per capita income, and specialization of the economy in female-friendly industries, there remain time-invariant differences in gender roles (Goldin, 1995; Ross, 2008; Iversen and Rosenbluth, 2010). To explain these differences, a number of studies provided evidence based on the existence of persistent cultural norms about the appropriate roles of women in society (Fortin, 2005; Fernandez, 2007; Fernandez and Fogli, 2009). This, as a result, raises the inherent question of the origin of these differences in norms and beliefs, a question that gained a foothold through a study originally put forth by Ester Boserup (1970), who viewed the role of gender in different forms of agriculture practised traditionally. Based on her study, Boserup identifies the difference between two different forms of agriculture such as, shifting cultivation and plough cultivation. Wherein shifting cultivation, use of tools like hand-held digging stick meant labor intensive work in terms of numbers in which women were more actively participating.

On the other hand, plough cultivation, was much more capital intensive work that requires significant upper body strength, which is needed to either pull the plough or control the animals pulling it, unlike the hoe or digging the stick. Due to these requirements, where plough agriculture is practiced, men have an advantage in farming relative to women in a crucial aspect of productivity (Murdock and Provost, 1973). The result, according to Boserup findings, suggests that societies which traditionally practiced plough-based agriculture generated a division of labor along gender lines with men responsible for work outside the home in the fields, while women specialized in activities within the home. This division of labor since then generated norms about the appropriate role of women in society where, societies characterized by plough-based agriculture, and a resulting gender-based division of labor, developed the belief that women's natural place is within the home. These cultural beliefs as a result, tend to persist despite the economy

changing from agriculture based to other sectors thus affecting women's participation in activities such as, formal employment, entrepreneurship, or participation in politics outside of their home. Furthermore, Alesina, Giuliano and Nunn (2013), extended Boserup's work by connecting historical evidence to modern norms to evaluate whether existing cross cultural beliefs and values still affect the designated roles of women in society by looking at the division of labor in the distant past.

They test the same hypothesis that has been tested historically, with societies that adopted plough-based agriculture, by contrasting with societies that employed shifting cultivation. Their findings, measuring pre-industrial ethnographic data with contemporary ones of individual views on gender roles across the world and ethnic groups suggests that historical plough use has a positive statistical relationship with today's gender role inequalities. That is to say discrimination and bias still exists not only in agriculture but in many other ways permeating all spheres of life. For instance, gender-based restrictions as a significant factor exists in a number of countries but the nature of these restrictions differs all over the world. For instance, husbands in some countries can prevent their wives from working altogether, this case was true for US women at the end of Second World War, with only 18% of the population thought a wife should work only if her husband's supports her. Due to this reason, female labor supply in the market activities around this time was low and the demand-side barriers were very high in this country. As Fortin (2015), Goldin and Katz (2016) on their study show that US female labor supply started increasing with a change in gender norms: people's approval of married women working went high during a remarkable growth in female labor force participation and then flattened at around the same time that participation stalled.

Moreover, there are laws that restrict women from participating in specific professions all over the world, for example, women are only allowed to work within the mining industry as health care professionals but not as miners, this is case is especially true in East, Central, and West Africa countries (Marcus, 2018). Goldin (1988) in the same regard, provides evidence on the past prohibitions against the training and employment of married women in the US. She touches on some well-known restrictions, such as those which were against the training and employment of women as doctors and lawyers that

came along with marriage bars in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The restrictions were more so prevalent in teaching and clerical occupations such that, estimates suggested that 87% of all school boards around the time US entered the Second World War second, would not hire married women and 70% not retain a single woman who became married. Roudi and Moghadam (2003) also link women's employment in MENA oil-rich economic regions to being limited to a few socially acceptable occupations, such as teaching and medicines. Due to this reason, in the Gulf States, jobs unsuitable for local (Arab) women are often occupied by migrant female laborers from South and East Asia, which help inflate the national statistics for female labor force participation in these countries (Augustin et al., 2012).

Despite progress over time even after explicit barriers have been lifted, the WB data suggest that almost 90 percent of the economies have at least one such restriction. Some countries have numerous legal restrictions, with some 28 countries having in place 10 or more restrictions on women's participation.

2.4.3 Religion

The importance of religion was first taken into consideration by sociologists who discussed the role of this cultural factor in economic development across the world. The most famous of these sociologists was Max Weber (1920), who argued that the Protestant Ethic allowed Northern Europe to develop much faster than Roman Catholic Southern Europe. Though, economists have been relatively late to this discourse, they have agreed on the effects of religion in an economy as a whole. Beit-Hallahmi (1997), as an example of these economists argued that many religions oppose family planning and treat women as inferior to men. This as a result, kept most of women around the world out of the formal labor market, with adverse consequences on development. Evidence around the world shows that cultural factors, such as religion, have an influence on economic attitudes and decisions differently based on countries' level of religiosity (Guiso et al. 2003; Iannaccone, 1998). Based on this regard, secularization theories have claimed that religion and its influence decrease when modernization occurs, this in turn increase the level of development as well as education as a whole. However, Iannaccone (1998) argues that empirical results are mixed and this doesn't explain all the countries because countries all

over the world vary greatly from one another. Thus, there is no clear pattern that emerges in all countries.

This case is true for countries in the Middle East where there has been a growth of fundamental Islam, also a resurgence of religion in post-communist nations and an increase of Protestantism in South America but religious beliefs have not decreased as modernization increased (Kus**,** 2011). In order to analyze what effects different religions have on explaining female labor force participation and to what extent these effects have changed, we refer to past studies around the world because these studies have analyzed the effect of religion between different groups of women either as studies within one country, or comparative studies in a large number of countries. Although there have been several number of studies for different countries (Amin and Alam 2008 for Malaysia; De Giusti and Kambhampati 2015 for Kenya; Ekert-Jaffe and Stier 2009 for Israel; Heineck 2002 for Germany; O'Neil and Bilgin 2013 for Turkey; Spierings 2014 for Indonesia and Nigeria) which analyze the impact of different denominations and religiosity within one country, we specifically focus on comparative studies which analyze the impact of religion on female labor force participation for a large number of countries. As an example of these studies Guiso et al. (2003) looked at the relationship between religious beliefs and economic attitudes for six different religious groups; Muslims, Hindus, Catholics, Protestants, Jews, and Buddhists.

Their results on average, suggested that religious beliefs had a positive effect on economic attitudes and decision of women from both society and their partners' side. They also found that across all of the six religious groups, people with stronger religious beliefs were less sympathetic to women's rights and held a more conservative view of women's role in society. These views in turn, are twice as strong for Muslim women compared to women of other religious groups. Moreover, Bayanpourtehrani and Sylwester (2013) also measured religion to distinguish between Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, and non-religious groups. According to their result, countries with all their inhabitants Muslim are ranked 17 percent lower than countries without any Muslims. They furthermore find that, female labor force participation is higher in Protestants and non-religious countries whereas lower among Hindu countries compared to Catholic countries.

In addition, a number of theoretical arguments on the low female labor force participation in most Muslim such as, Arab countries suggest that Islam might explain women's low labor force participation. Burton and Reitz (1981), as an example of these theoretical studies suggests that Islam tends to decrease the level of female labor force participation rate due to the society's way of secluding women by means of purdah or similar customs in activities outside of the immediate household (Korotayev and others, 2015).

However, studies of Azhar and Kazmi based on this regard suggest that majority of Muslim countries low female labor force participation is not as a result of Islam, rather Islam has given women the right to get education, work and participate in social activities. The majority of Muslim societies and their conservative way of thinking relate norms governing women and their social activities to Islam while as we mentioned above that during Muhammad his wife Khadija was a businesswoman who sacrificed her wealth in Islam way. We can therefore argue that women and their socio-economic activities are much more affected by society and people while religion has never prevented them from learning or participating in social activities.

2.5 PREVIOUS STUDIES ON THE EFFECT OF CULTURE IN FEMALE LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

Culture and its effects on economics have been in debate for decades. However, the importance of these effects has gone unnoticed by modern economics until recently due to the difficulty in quantifying the qualitative characteristics that make up culture. Though economists such as Becker, with his classic labor supply model, begin to expand other factors that may influence workers decision to enter labor market, he does not expand further enough to include cultural factors. Therefore, before analyzing how previous studies interpret cultural effects on women's decision to work, we briefly discuss the importance of these effects on their participation in economics and labor markets as a whole. Generally, culture as an endogenous factor has an independent effect on women's decision to enter the labor market (Heyne, 2017). Because culture limits a women's options when determining if and to what extent she is willing to join labor force. Due to

this, a cultural approach confirms that low female labor force participation is related to social norms and attitudes which prevent women from working outside the home (Algan and Cahuc 2005; Fortin 2005; Seguino 2011; Steiber and Haas 2009). For instance, studies around the world show that attitudes towards female labor force participation are connected to women's labor market participation in several countries, especially those in the MENA region (Cloin et al. 2011; Kan, 2007; Kanji, 2011; Stam et al. 2013).

The culture of a society thus serves as a frame of reference both for women's decision to enter the workforce as well as the employer; who having been raised exposed to society's prevailing view of women in the workplace, is concerned for his reputation in the community just like individual female workers. Turning to the previous studies that focus on the effect of culture on female labor force participation around the world, in order to recognize the effect of culture on female decision to enter work, economists such as Reimers in 1985 identified "cultural effects" by breaking the economic ground. She identified these effects as the source of significant difference between the female labor force participation rates of US-born white women and of US-born black and Asian women after accounting for economic variables like race, ethnicity, and immigration status. Based on her analysis she found that women who were born in the US had higher labor force participation compared to those who were foreign born. She also found out that US born Asian women had the highest labor force participation rate, while the foreign-born Hispanic women had the lowest rate.

In addition, (Antecol, 2000; Fernández and Fogli, 2005a; Blau et al. 2008), extended the analysis of Reimers (1985) by using the epidemiological approach developed by Fernández (2007) in order to quantify the effects of culture on various individual characteristics as well as the current economic and institutional set-up, tested whether behavior in the country of origin had an effect on the behavior of the immigrants. The authors found that women labor force participation in the country of origin is strongly related to the women's work hours and the result is quite robust to different specifications. At the same time, the researchers focused mainly on the empirical analysis of second generation immigrants, who came from different countries but share the same economic and institutional background in countries like US, Canada, and Australia. As a result the

researchers found that female labor force participation in the country of origin affects labor force participation of women in the host country for the first and second-generation. Moreover, there is a particular study, which is similar to these papers in its approach to investigate the effects of culture on female work but it differs from both studies in its consideration of both religion and philosophy above and beyond race and ethnicity. Clark et al. (1991) taking religion, ethnicity and race into consideration discussed the relationship between culture, gender and labor force participation to further explain the effect of culture on female work.

The researcher used 6 different categories of Islamic, non-Islamic African, Latin American, non-Islamic Asian, Marxist and Western on their analysis to define the effect of culture on women's labor force participation as a whole. Based on their analysis in 1980, they found that women in Islamic and Latin American nations had the lowest share of labor force by arguing this attribution to a custom of gender segregation in Islam, and traditional gender roles in Latin America. In contrary, they found the share of women in labor force in Marxist Nations and in Africa being the highest rates, although they do not discuss the reason behind this result. H'madoun (2000), extend Clark et al. taking religion, the key component of culture into consideration by using three religious factors such as: religious affiliation, fervency of belief, and participation in religious activities on her study to evaluate the effect of culture on women's labor market participation. Based on her analysis, she found that fervency of belief as a measure of religious conservatism had a negative effect because of the idea of majority religious teachings that men should serve as the main source of income and women should serve as housewives. However, participation in religious activities had a positive effect on female employment. Taking religion as one of the aspects of culture achieves an in-depth look according to her study which can be very significant on society's perspective of women employment. Not only would religion conceivably affect female labor supply, but could also have serious implications for labor demand.

For example, employers that observe these religious beliefs, including the view of women as the homemakers and not part of the labor market, are less likely to hire women in the formal market as well. However, the study emphasizes one element of culture, while

using multiple measures of culture is particularly important to capture society's view of female employment in non-religious cultures. Moreover, Antecol (2003) presents international evidence regarding the importance of cultural factors on female workforce, using transversal data from 1994 ISSP to analyze the effects of culture on female labor force participation in countries like Europe, the Middle East, Asia, Oceania, and North America. The study uses a set of questions regarding men's attitudes toward family and the distribution of roles between the genders to explain female participation rates. In conclusion he finds that women are more likely to participate in the labor market if their husbands exhibit greater cultural acceptance of such behavior. Finally, Contreras and Plaza (2010) also used two indicator variables from ISSP data in order to analyze the determinants of FLFP, age, education, marital status, number of children and culture from a feminist perspective. They used this data's to better identify if a women have conservative values or internalized machista[8] to proxy culture. Their results also indicate that women with more conservative attitudes are less likely to participate in the labor market than the women with less conservative attitudes.

Comprehensively, we see that culture as an explanation of economic outcomes affects female labor force participation. Though the effects of culture were fairly overlooked by modern economists until recently, these effects have been associated with the low female labor force participation in some of the world regions.

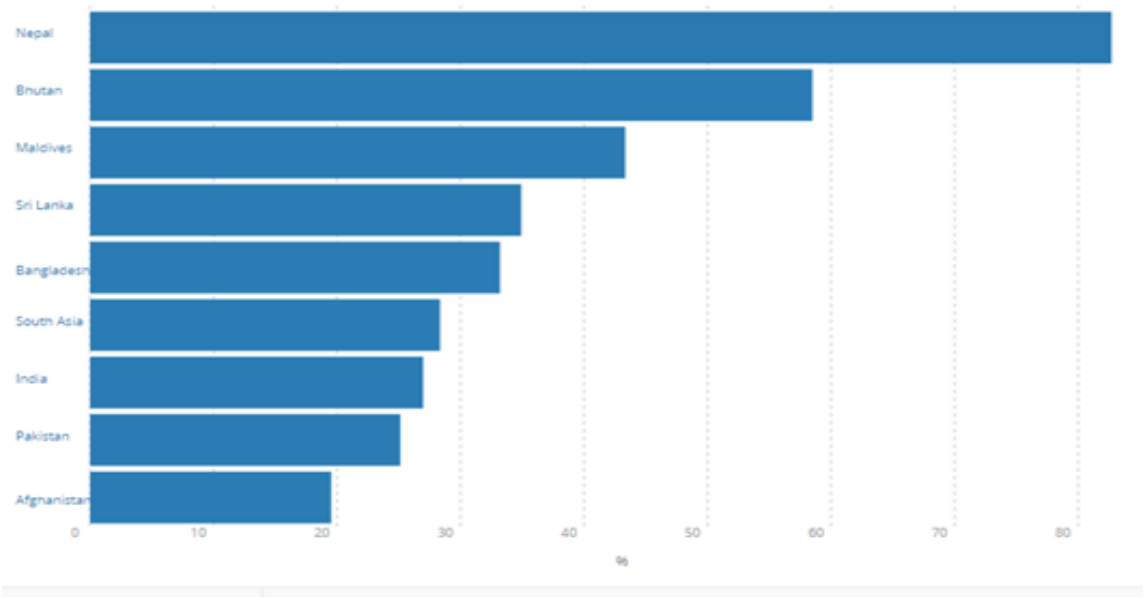
2.6 FEMALE LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION IN AFGHANISTAN

Although female labor force participation in Afghanistan records as one of the lowest among other South Asian countries as shown in figure 1, it has progressively increased since 2001, from 14.82%, rising to 20% by 2018 (World Bank, 2018), figure 2. Despite significant increase, Afghanistan's female participation rate still varies greatly across the same region when compared to the highest 80% rate of female labor force in

[8] A Spanish word refers to a male chauvinist and a chauvinist is a man who believes that men are naturally better and more important than women.

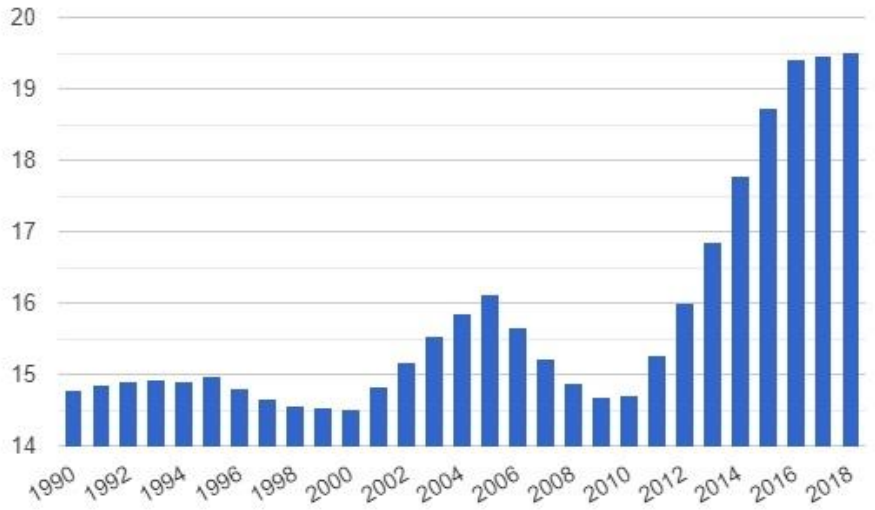
Nepal. Though a wide range of differences can be seen between the same region countries, these differences, explained and put forward by Harvard economist Claudia Goldin in a 1986 article, suggest that FLFP in the world follow a U-shaped curve. Ever since then scholars have refined and contradicted this curve which shows highs in every poor economies then dipping in the lower-middle and middle-income ones and finally rising again in rich economies. That is to say, poverty in low level of economic development leads men and women both alike to work in low-paid jobs, particularly in agriculture but as the economy grows, men become more educated which in turn makes a man to get better job and bring more money home. Perhaps, women in this situation prefer to stay at home than being relatively lowly-paid or women, whose education has historically lagged behind men's, always come second in accessing better paying jobs. Whereas in the case of advanced stages of development, the average household income rises with their attained education level and so does the quality of jobs they get (HSK, 2015).

Figure 2.1: Labor force participation rate of South Asian countries women in 2018



Source: World Bank 2019

Figure 2.2: Evolution of Female Labor force participation rate from 1990-2018 in Afghanistan



Source: World Bank 2019

Furthermore, the critics of the U-shaped model argue that some South Asian countries' female labor force participation does not follow the U-shaped trends despite their economic growth or their educational attainment, such is the case with India (HSK, 2015). However, for the case of Afghanistan, ideas of suitability of work are related with security concerns: as Lili's study based on this regard finds, that FLFP in Afghanistan is negatively correlated with the incidence of violence. She used province level and FLFP data on her study rather than national level and found that security affects FLFP more in Southwest provinces, whereas the opposite trend is found in northwest and northeast areas. Evidence from a recent survey of Afghan people in 2015 found, that 80% of the Afghan women insisted they should be permitted to work outside the home compared to just over half, 55% of men. Furthermore, urban respondents were unsurprisingly the ones who agreed more with the mentioned statement (Hopkins et al., 2012). However, as Ganesh, (2013) states, the representation of women in Afghanistan's labor market is disorganized due to very weak analysis of women's labor force participation in the country. This as a result, leads to lack of access to many internal and external resources that keep women's representation in the job market at the end of value chains.

Despite some changes in the overall position of women since the emergence of new government in 2001 and all the international aid for the Afghan people, particularly for women, the question why so few women participate in the economy persists. Although, female labor force participation in Afghanistan lags behind most of the countries in the world and while we can explain this from a socio-cultural perspective, another question arises on the country's economic reconstruction which is primary and is just beginning to breathe again to absorb the employment needs of its people. For this reason, the Asia Foundation survey in 2014 found that according to many respondents, unemployment was one of the main obstacles which prevented their national progress (Khaama Press, 2014). This means, that in addition to the unemployment rate of 2008 that was estimated at 35%, there is believed to be sharp rise of about 400,000 youths joining the labor market per year and the economy is not creating as many job opportunities to absorb them all (Index Mundi, Afghanistan Economy profile, 2013). Thus, the scarcity of job opportunities, leads to men being employed first and women are often the ones who are left out due to the disadvantages relating to receiving skills and education. As National Youth Policy of Afghanistan also confirms that, "women have fewer work opportunities than men" which is evidenced by Afghanistan's employment ratio of 80% males to 16% females (Afghanistan National Youth Policy, 2014).

Such statistics have proved gender to be a key factor mediating employment access in Afghanistan's labor market and this mainly happens due to "conservative cultural attitudes that limit the role of women and girls in public spaces hence barriers to attending schools, training and working outside home" (Afghanistan National Youth Policy, 2015: 15-85). For this reason, the most common job which women hold in Afghanistan is being a school teacher (15.4%), and other unskilled home-based income generating activities particularly in rural areas like carpet weaving, sewing, tailoring, agricultural work and taking care of livestock and selling dairy products. Though, it might be surprising, traditionally, in addition to taking care of the family, women in Afghanistan form 65% of agricultural workforce and poor and married women are the ones who are more commonly involved in agricultural tasks (Simmons-Benton et. al., 2012). However, participation of women in politics and leadership as ministers in the ministry of Women Affairs, Higher education, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled witnessed a huge change with the new

democracy. As a result of these changes, a large segment (27.3%) of the seats in Afghanistan's Parliament are allocated to women today. It is an apparent example of women's political participation in Afghanistan that even excels countries such as the United States of America (USA), UK, where women occupy 15.2 % of US congress seats and 19.7% of British parliament seats respectively (Golechha, 2016).

The reason behind this trend in their social and economic participation as mentioned above can be attributed to the development structures and sectors which have been designed in the newly implemented system. To understand other trends that explain women marginalization and low participation in Afghanistan's economy, we need to go through the determinants of female labor force participation with more details specifically in the case of Afghanistan. The country's female economic participation is one of the lowest although there has been some improvements, these improvements show high disparities. This implies that there are underlying factors of security and unemployment posing as main barriers that limit women's social movement to participate in the labor market. Generally speaking, women participation in economy, not only improves their activity but it also contributes to the betterment of the country's economy as well.

2.7 DETERMINANTS OF FEMALE LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION IN AFGHANISTAN

There are multiple factors determining women's labor force participation in Afghanistan's labor market but due to high causal relationship between these factors as well as related similarities, there seems to be overlapping effect from one factor to another. For clarity reasons however, these factors are classified under their two major sources; cultural, historical traditional norms and the three decades of conflicts that we will be discussing later. Firstly, to understand the effect of cultural and historical traditional norms on women's economic participation, we need to analyze women's birthright along with other factors affecting their recognition in society within the larger historical context of Afghanistan. Only such a perspective can provide a reasonably concrete explanation of the position of women and the determinants behind their low labor force participation in Afghanistan's economy as a whole. Though the position of women in the Afghan society varies greatly according to age, socio-cultural norms and ethnicity, traditionally they have

always been regarded as inferior and weaker compared to their male counterparts (Rahimi, 1991). Moreover, taking their historical perspective into consideration, Afghan women, even until the beginning of 20th century, have been practıcally slaves to their fathers and elder brothers for the time before their marriage and eventually their husbands and father-in-law's after their marriage due to their silence and obedience in all kinds of situation.

That is to say, the essence of attitude towards women's position in most Afghan families to any kind of activities were and still, is a fate sealed at birth. For instance, when a girl is born, the matter brings about sadness and, occasionally blame on the wife while, birth of a boy is always a great rejoicing matter in the family. As a result of this situation, majority of Afghan families were paying great attention on how to raise their sons compared to their daughters (Barakat and Wardell, 2001). Taking education which is one of the fundamental rights into consideration, families spent great amounts of money on educating boys, and even they have been sent abroad for further studies. But educating girls except in very rare cases in some-well-to-do families, was and is still not a priority among majority of people in rural areas; besides some families even wait for their girl's dismissal from the family since they will be no longer responsible for seeing to their needs. Instead of sending them to school, families mainly encourage their daughters on how to rear children, to cook, to weave and sew, to become good listeners and tolerant, to stay at home and do the household chores. Girls of ages from 13 and 16 were married off to very young or very old men in exchange to what is called Toyana[9].

Girls had no right to choose their future husbands or question their engagement, which was arranged by their parents. The early marriage, as a result was the main cause of the suffering endured by girls in the Afghan society and due to such marriages they were both physically and psychologically ruined and often resulted in sickness and psycho-neurotic diseases. Many young mothers due to physiological reasons and early motherhood lost their lives during delivery. In case of need, divorce was a difficult act for women because they had no right to ask for it, however, it was easy if a man demanded it. When their economic position was taken into consideration, women in general were

[9] Toyana is the name given to marriage price in Afghanistan.

not supposed to earn a living or own as much as men did. Legally, daughters inherit only half of the amount compared to the sons, however more often than not, due to socio-cultural issues women would leave their share to their brothers as this case was, and still is, true for all women of all ages and ethnicities across the country (Rahimi, 1991). Beside inheritance, their earning a living was considered to be a reflection on the husband as the main source of women's property called Mahr[10]. As long as women are completely supported by men, they seldom claim Mahr only the time of seeking divorce only when her husband according to Islamic laws is proven to be impotent or suffering from an incurable disease (Mahbooba, 1986).

Additionally, as discussed above, on all social, economic, and political occasions where both sexes took part, women always remained separated due to country's society being referred as one of the South and East Asian countries' as "patriarchal belt", from North Africa across the Muslim Middle East countries (Offenhauer, 2005). The belt, apart from shared religion, is also characterized by attributes such as male domination, early marriages, male child preferences, restrictive codes of behavior for women, the association of family honor with female virtue and existence of strong division of roles and gender segregation. This particular tradition of segregation, locally known as Purdah was and still is summarized as keeping the worlds of men and women separate by maintaining symbolic shelter for women in the society. As Kakar, also confirms that the division of men and women into two separate worlds is much more pronounced in Afghan society. Due to this reason, the daily interaction of both sexes were structured by purdah through a code of behavior, which includes avoidance of any contact between both sexes and even veiling women in particular to hide their faces from men, by calling them Namahram[11] (Kakar, 1979). This code as a result, restricts women's role to private domestic spheres and men to the public, by bringing the issue of gender roles into existence.

These roles actually were and still are, passed down by mothers grooming their boys to enforce society rules on girls and for girls to become good mothers and wives.

[10] Mahr It is the amount of money assigned to a wife by her husband at the time of the marriage contract.

[11] Men that women are not allowed to interact with.

The community in fact, reinforces the gender roles by depicting women as "weak, emotional and in need of care and protection (Hamdan, 2005; Augustin et al., 2012). The second other major factor that worsened Afghan women's situation both in society and economy as a whole to participate in labor force, as known to the world is that Afghanistan has been battered by armed conflict for more than three decades now. This reality has not only left the country with serious economic, social and political challenges, but it has also weakened human capital capacities for different ethnic groups of men, women, the young, the old as well as different regions of the country. Moreover, years of ongoing conflicts, along with internal displacement and exile, have altered many aspects of lives both for men and women, who have all experienced and navigated many challenges and exclusions in distinctive ways. However, women are the most affected victims who have experienced significant challenges and have been victimized by different factors and subjugation almost in all spheres of life first by Mujahideen's period (1992-1996), recorded as one of the worst period, then by Taliban's regime (1996-2001). However worth noting is the fact that women modernization period of change was started first by the Amanullah Khan, who succeeded to defeat the British in the third and final Anglo-Afghan war in 1919 (Ahmed Gosh, 2003).

He was the only king, whose main agenda was to liberate women from tribal cultural norms by encouraging overall education for women in the country and publicly campaigning against the veil and polygamy. Additionally in his public function, he announced that Islam did not require women to cover themselves with any special kind of veil. Queen Soraya, the king's wife as a result of his statement tore off her veil in public and the wives of other officials present at the meeting followed this example. To encourage women to participate in the outside world, Queen Soraya founded the first magazine called Ershad-I-Niswan (Guidance for Women), following her example Kubra Amanullah's sister also formed the Anjuman-I-Himayat-I-Niswan, (Organization for Women's Protection), many women from the Amanullah family as examples publicly participated to become government officials later in that period (Dupree, 1986). Women were encouraged to get education, 15 young women as a result of these attempts had been sent to Turkey in order to get higher education by 1928. Queen Soraya continued enforcing change for women and through her liberal ideas she always encouraged women

to be active participants in nation building. As an example, she delivered a speech in 1996 at the 7th anniversary of Independence saying, "it's the day we have to all celebrate because men are not the only ones who serves the nation however, we do too as women did in the early years of our nation and Islam. As an example of those women we need to contribute toward the development of our nation, to do so we have to gain as much knowledge as possible, in order to render our services to society in the manner of the women of early Islam".

The second era of change was during Soviet era, where Afghan women were a strong part of the academic and professional fabric of society; they studied and served as nurses, doctors, engineers, and professors. The case was especially true in urban Afghanistan where women were involved in a variety of professions since 1940s, on the contrary, economic as well as social freedom of women in rural areas was entirely limited due to religious and tribal leaders' vehement opposition. By the late 1950s, women were increasingly encouraged to become economically active in jobs as teachers, doctors, entertainers, and government workers in order to help Afghanistan to achieve its targeted development goals. In fact through to 1990, as World Development Index also confirms, women represented 34% of the country's formal labor force participation , and six years later, women also made up half of the civil service in Afghanistan (Malikyar, 1998). However, since then and due in large part to the Taliban's rule from 1996 until 2001, the position of women sought to change completely. During this period, girls and women were strictly curtailed of receiving education and working outside their homes (other than health sector, but could only treat female patients) due to the Taliban's Amar Bil Maroof Wa Nahi An al-Munkar (Department for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice), and Sharia law[12] to monitor and control women's social behavior (Golechha, 2016).

These laws as a result, deteriorated economic and social conditions of women and girls in all areas of the country, in particular in areas under the Taliban full control. According to their law women and girls were prohibited from leaving their homes unless covered from head to toe not to show their skin in public, accessing healthcare delivered

[12] Sharia law is the body of Islamic law, which provides the legal framework for public and private aspects of life, including politics, economics, banking, business law, contract law, security and social issues.

by men and restricting them from voting and being involved in politics and permitted publicly stoning women accused of adultery (Luccaro and Gaston, 2014). Women and girls continued to be severely restricted in their access to all other activities but they were only allowed to set up their own businesses from their homes, if they had the means to do so. Taliban's policies also severely restricted women's freedom of movement, they could travel only when they were accompanied by a male escort, this in turn put a particular strain on female-headed households and widows (Barakat and Wardell, 2001). Senzil based on this regard states, that "It was women who suffered more than any other social group, first under Mujahedeen's (1992-1996), and later under Taliban's regime". He further points out, that the most audacious reforms and progress made on women's political and social and economic participation were during the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan in 1979-1992 (Nawid, 1999). However, since the overthrow of the Taliban by the support of US-led international forces and the emergence of new government in 2001, the position of women in Afghanistan has begun improving.

Though Afghan women had a long way to catch up and it was hard to strengthen their participation in all walks of life due to years of instability, their participation begun with thousands of young girls school enrolment almost in every part of the country which in turn increased the literacy rate of women aged 15-24 to 22.2% during 2010/2011 period (Massouda Jalal, 2014). The 2009 Survey of the Central Statistics Organizations (CSO), based on this regard found that women were being employed by government at a much faster rate also making 27.7% of the seats in parliament. Since then women regained their basic rights and continued to be employed in a variety of jobs, particularly in police and army where, British officers have helped to establish a military training academy that aimed to train 100 female army officers per year (CSO, 2012). Certain laws for the first time in many years were introduced for women to reclaim their rights and become active participants in governance, as well as in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. The Elimination of Discrimination against Women as an example of these laws issued a statement of solidarity and support for Afghan women, which stated, among other things, that the participation of Afghan women as full and equal partners with men was essential for the reconstruction and development of their country" (UN, 2002).

Despite all these changes, social norms and culture still affect women's participation in all activities most importantly in economic issues. Afghanistan's female economic participation is one of the lowest in the world and although there has been some improvements, such as women's especially girls participation in education where thirteen years ago virtually no girl attended school but with the emergence of new government these levels have been improved. However, these improvements are highly concentrated in certain urban areas while in majority of the country women still lack access to get education to increase their skills to be part of market activities.

3. CHAPTER

METHODOLOGY, DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an introspective on how the study and research methodology is conducted to accomplish the targeted objectives as stated in the introduction. First and foremost, the chapter guides us to the central research question of the study which, for us to answer, requires us to dissect its core into workable relative questions and assumptions which are cornerstones of how Afghanistan's society, more precisely culture, affects women's labor force participation in this country. The chapter furthermore, explains the data collection method by discussing the types and the sources of the data that has been amassed for use firstly by going through other similar studies which looked at the effect of female labor force participation as well as the current study method through data collection techniques. Moreover, the chapter explains the research limitation which was the challenges met on things such as study sample or how the data was obtained. At the same time, the research elucidates on descriptive analysis that will be performed in analyzing cultural effects on women's overall activities within Afghanistan's society. More precisely, the study also goes through findings and analysis in the next section of the research which first explains the data presentation that has been explained through tables and charts and finally summarizes the chapter of the research method with analyzing the findings that have been achieved through both secondary data and primary data.

3.1 Research Questions and Assumptions

Notwithstanding the fact that many conclusions and facts are going to be revealed in this study, the purpose of this section is to determine whether socio-cultural norms affect the competitive or free participation of women in the labor market in Afghanistan. To arrive at answering this main research question we have to take into consideration other related questions which are cornerstones of understanding the culture of the country as discussed in the second chapter under the determinants of female labor force participation in general and in Afghanistan. In addition to the questions we attempt to answer with this

research we also attempt to verify some assumptions that are generally made about the position of women in the labor market of the study country. The questions and assumptions answered by this research are as follows in their order of relevance to the study:

Question 1: Do socio-cultural norms affect the free participation of women in the labor market in Afghanistan?

Question 2: Do demographic factors such as marital status affect the employability of women in Afghanistan?

Question 3: Does education/qualification increase the likelihood of women in the labor market?

Assumption 1: Lack of commensurate employment opportunities is one of the main factors why women are not employed.

Assumption 2: Conservative socio-cultural attitudes affect female labor force participation of married women compared to single ones.

Assumption 3: Gender segregation is still very high whereby women are mostly restricted to domestic work while men are participating in the formal labor market.

Furthermore, the study enlightens us on facts like the age at which women are most involved in labor market and what can describe their visibility or invisibility to being part of labor force. At the same time the survey further shows us the percentages of women based on their marital status explaining whether married or single women are participating in the labor market. Moreover, we will get to understand the level of education from two perspectives, the level of education of the participants to the survey and the opinions of the respondents on how they think education levels affect the employability of women in the formal labor market.

3.1.2 Data Collection and Sources

3.1.2.1 Types of Data

This study, like many other related studies, collects quantitative data through sequentially structured questionnaires to evaluate whether socio-cultural factors mentioned as the first major determinants specifically for the case of Afghanistan affect their participation activities in the labor market. In our attempt to analyze these factors, we use two types of the data source of primary and secondary data. Wherein the primary data is obtained from Afghan women through a survey, and the secondary data has been collected from the World Bank metadata which is one of the most credible sources of economic data. From the existing information, the research subject in this thesis is still a new research area in Afghanistan, where there is not much data and literature information to guide the studies of this area better. For this reason, the mixture of both primary and secondary data at the same time the information gathered across Afghanistan allowed us to gain closer insights for better analyzing women's situation in labor market as a whole. The secondary data sourced from the World Bank further evaluates Afghan women's participation in economy since the emergence of new government in 2001, wherein the position of women in all spheres of life has begun to improve after three decades of conflicts as mentioned in the determinants specifically for the case of Afghanistan as the second major factor.

As a result of these improvements, more women became more active compared to the period prior 2001, as stated in the female labor force participation in Afghanistan with comparison to other South Asian countries that Afghan women ranked the lowest regarding their participation in economy. Though there has been some changes in the number of women participating in the economy, those changes and improvements are limited to cities and most urban areas where rural areas lag behind in experiencing the changes which have taken place lately. As stated in chapter 2 that socio-cultural norms have been affecting women and their economic activities all over the country for long centuries, the three decades of war as known to the world worsened women's situation. Due to this reason, to analyze the position of women both in society and economy as a

whole this study firstly goes through a survey questionnaire, to which participants were Afghan women, secondly through secondary data to better have an idea of whether cultural factors prevent women in this country from participating in the world labor market.

3.1.2.2 Data Collection Techniques

A quite vast number of similar studies both cross-country as well as international studies have used different techniques of data collection from only qualitative, only quantitative to mixed research to collect their data (Uysal and Guner, 2014; Ho, 2011; Contreras and Plaza, 2010; Heyne; 2017; Gedikli; Clark, 1991; Codazzi et.al. 2018). Heyne's study as an example of international studies used two types of techniques to collect the research data; first, cross-national data from an international research project: the World Value Survey (WVS). The WVS project conducted six waves of nationally representative surveys by using a common questionnaire since 1981 in almost 100 countries. Among the six main topics of these surveys, the information collected was based on the social background and the employment status of the respondents in order to compare women's labor force participation across the world. Second, she uses the European Value Study (EVS), equivalent of the WVS that started the same year, using the last wave of EVS data that was conducted in 2008 in 47 countries of different regions and by combining both data sets obtained information for 113 countries worldwide to evaluate the effect of culture on female labor force participation (Heyne, 2017).

Gedikli's study as an example of cross-country studies uses data from Turkish Demographic and Health Survey (TDHS), which had country representative data that covered a wide range of topics including fertility, labor force participation, history of migration and education as well as other socioeconomic indicators. He uses data provided by the Hacettepe University for the years 1998 to 2003 and 2008 (TDHS-98, TDHS-03 and TDHS-08), to evaluate the effect of social norms and culture on the female labor force participation in Turkey. To do so, he collected household data as well as individual level data from a survey consisting of eligible women selected from the Household Labor Force Survey (HLFS), one of the largest data sets available on the labor market in Turkey

(Gedikli). Unlike the above studies, due to lack of readily available data, this study employed internal and external resources designs and outlined an online questionnaire tool to identify the effect of culture on female labor force participation and this questionnaire was administered as a google forms survey which was conducted to 260 women who had access to internet across Afghanistan.

The survey contains 10 closed-ended questions and generally included but overlooked important questions on demographics (such as age, education, marital status, employment), as well as other constraining factors affecting women's labor market participation. Additionally, the survey was conducted among those women who are between the ages of 15 to 35, wherein a majority of these women's held university as well as graduate degrees, and those who had a secondary level or attended vocational trainings with different skills and academic career backgrounds. In an attempt to discover whether socio-cultural norms affect women's labor market participation, we specifically chose those women either employed or unemployed and gathered and attempted to explain the reason behind their unemployment status. However, we exclude their position as unpaid family workers to better understand whether their marital status affects their social or labor market participation.

3.1.2.3 Sample

The sample of this study as mentioned above is restricted to the ages of 15 to 35, as we will discuss later why we have selected these ages in our survey more briefly in the next chapter. Since the topic of this thesis is women's labor force participation, we are only interested in how culture affects women's choices to join the labor market. We excluded males and how their attitudes influence female labor force participation because the focus of the paper was not to determine if cultural attitudes of males or females are more important in determining female labor outcomes. The target of our sample was 300 responses and from the 300 requests; we got 260 responses. Our method was random sampling based on social media platform being the main sharing technique. Though a larger sample was preferable for this study to give a clearer picture, due to the scope of the issue, the limitations of time and accessibility to internet to some participant in remote

locations, made the data obtained herein just sufficient enough to be able to present a generalized overview of all women either employed or unemployed in Afghanistan. A larger sample and accessibility would have meant a wider range of participants from the country's 34 provinces and had there been equal representation from all these regions the data would have further given us the responses' distribution across the county to explain the changes of ideas as we move from better developed parts of the country to remote location. This area remains an unexploited dimension in the study of female labor force participation that further studies with the focus on statistical analysis can be oriented towards.

3.1.2.4 Data Limitations and cleaning

Though the study could have done a larger sample that would give this thesis a better picture of the phenomenon studied the previously mentioned limitation of time for getting more responses as per our target sample. The best representation would also have resulted from implementing different survey techniques such as door to door and panel interview which we unfortunately, couldn't implement due to several logistic constraints which brings us to the second limitation. Since the study was conducted remotely outside of Afghanistan, the survey questionnaire as explained above was online and due to this reason women's lack of access to the internet limited our survey sample to 260 women, where except few modern cities the large remaining provinces of Afghanistan lack internet access and women could not participate as we had expected. The survey was only conducted among randomly selected women either through social media and emails who had access to the internet mostly in cities and urban areas which this turn means that majority of women in rural areas may not have been well represented due to lack of access to internet. Another constraint is that we had to restrict the age to women, not above 40 in this study since Afghanistan has an extreme youthful labor force with slightly more than half of its population made up of young people between 14 and 29 years of age. That means, altogether 70% nearly 6 million strong workforces in this country is less than 40 years of age. Slightly more than one-fourth of this youthful workforce is made up of young women. The reason behind high unemployment for this young labor force in Afghanistan particularly women is the lack of education/skills, security and cultural barriers that have

put them in a disadvantaged situation both in social and economic activities as mentioned in the determinants specifically for the case of Afghanistan in chapter 2. Taking the Taliban period into consideration, where female education fell into 0% in 2001, since then with the emergence of new government women's education has slightly increased but still the literacy is lower than that of men which are 24% compared to their male counterparts' which is 52%.

In addition to the limitations mentioned above, the study also went through all responses obtained from participants and eliminated the entries which showed discrepancies as a data cleaning process. For example, the survey was either for working, looking for work or unemployed but some of the students had respond to the survey questionnaires due to this reason we had to remove such entries.

3.1.3 Descriptive analysis

In the following sections, we will be using descriptive analysis and here we talk about the types of questions that we expect to get responses to from this method. To understand better the demographics therein, firstly: we are going to check the percentage of women according to their age to know which age range had the highest responses by frequencies both statistically and graphically. Secondly, we are going to take their marital status and age into consideration to know which age range have the highest rate of married or single respondents. Thereafter, we will look whether the randomly selected educated women are all working or not and then we will look whether education level of the respondent women affects their employability by further analyzing the relationship between the level of education and their employability. At the same time, we will look at the relationship between their marital status and employment status to further know whether their position of being married affects their employment status or not. Since we will know which age range has the highest number of respondents and whether their education level and marital status affects their employability or not, we will now check if they are employed and if yes in which sectors do they work and what is their type of employment. To know this, we are going to see the relationship between education level,

marital status and employment sector and then we will further go to check the type of employment taking their education level as well as marital status into consideration.

In cases where they are unemployed we need to know their period of unemployment and the reasons behind their unemployment since we are here to explain the reason then we need to look for the overall main constraining factors that cause women not to participate in formal economic activities. We also attempt to verify whether these constraint factors are only affecting women who are married or do these factors affect single women too. To better understand this we will take a look at the relationship between age, marital status and constraint factors for further information. Once we are done with all the factors set, we now go to look to the reason for the informal work which we will be discussing in the next section on why women, as discussed in determinants specifically for the case of Afghanistan, are much more in the informal sector work compared to their male counterparts by only looking at the frequencies. To further explain the survey as sampled and to verify nullifying assumptions made on the research questions we will also make use of supportive secondary data which we have obtained from the World Bank.

3.2 FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

3.2.1 Data Presentation and Analysis

The demographic findings in Table 1 represent the descriptive statistics of the survey's 260 respondents, indicating that the highest percentage of women who participated are between the ages of 26 to 30, and the second highest age group is for women between the ages of 20 to 25, whereas, 30 to 35 as well as 15 to 19 have the lowest percentages of respondents. In order to know which of the following age groups have the highest rate in terms of either being married or single respondents, Table 2 further guide us to the marital status of the following four age groups explaining how many of them are married and how many others are single.

Table 1: Age range

Age	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
15-19	5	1.9	1.9	1.9
20-25	82	31.5	31.5	33.5
26-30	**131**	**50.4**	**50.4**	**83.8**
31-35	42	16.2	16.2	100.0
Total	260	100.0	100.0	

As seen in the Table 2, out of the 260 participants and from the highest respondents who were between the ages of 26 to 30, 64% of them were single at the same time the same age groups have the highest rate of married women which is 55,3% of all the married women. This means, the majority of respondent women in this study were single and falling in the 26 to 30 age range. Since we know which age group has the highest level of respondents and how many of the above age groups are married and single, now we will go through to analyze whether single or married women are joining the labor market based on the employment status in Table 3.

Table 2: Age range * Marital status Cross tabulation

Age range		Marital status		Total
		Married	Single	
15-19	Count	1	4	5
	% within Age range	20.0%	80.0%	100.0%
20-25	Count	18	64	82
	% within Age range	22.0%	78.0%	100.0%

26-30	**Count**	**47**	**84**	**131**
	% within Age range	**35.9%**	**64.1%**	**100.0%**
31-35	Count	19	23	42
	% within Age range	45.2%	54.8%	100.0%
Total	Count	85	175	260
	% within Age range	32.7%	67.3%	100.0%

The findings in Table 3 show that out of 260 participants, 95.4% of the single women were employed and they were working in different formal private and public sectors. While 63.5% of married women are currently not working. We will further go through on the period and reason for married women's unemployment specifically later in the next tables. Furthermore, to evaluate whether education increases the likelihood of women's employment status, we will analyze the relationship between respondents level of education with employment status. At the same time, we will further look at the relationship between the respondent's marital status and their employment status to know whether their position of being married affects their employment status or not in Table 4.

Table 3: Marital status * employment status Cross tabulation

Marital status		**Employment status**		**Total**
		No	Yes	
Married	Count	54	31	85
	% within Marital status	63.5%	36.5%	100.0%
Single	Count	8	167	175
	% within Marital status	4.6%	95.4%	100.0%
Total	Count	62	198	260
	% within Marital status	23.8%	76.2%	100.0%

The Table 3 as discussed above shows, when respondents both education as well as marital status is taken into consideration to know which level has the highest employment status and does respondents marital status affect their employment or not, we can see that university single graduates participants have the first highest employment rate which is 96% as well as the first highest married unemployed women which are 78%. Though it's surprising the second highest rate can be seen among vocational trainings which is 95% and the third highest rate or married unemployed women which is 50% can be seen among vocational trainers. While university graduates respondents have the third highest single employed women rate which is 91% but it has the second highest unemployed married women which are 55%. However, the secondary level has lower rates when it comes to their employment status based on their education level as well as marital status. This means single university degree women are more likely joining the labor market in Afghanistan.

Table 4: Education level marital status * employment status cross tabulation

Education level			**Employment status**		**Total**
			No	Yes	
Secondary level	Married	Count	4	2	6
		% within Marital status	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
	Single	Count	0	14	14
		% within Marital status	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Total	Count	4	16	20
		% within Marital status	20.0%	80.0%	100.0%
Vocational training	Married	Count	14	14	28
		% within Marital status	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
	Single	Count	2	44	46
		% within Marital status	4.3%	95.7%	100.0%
	Total	Count	16	58	74
		% within Marital status	21.6%	78.4%	100.0%

University degree	Married	Count	26	7	33
		% within Marital status	78.8%	21.2%	100.0%
	Single	Count	3	76	79
		% within Marital status	3.8%	96.2%	100.0%
	Total	Count	29	83	112
		% within Marital status	25.9%	74.1%	100.0%
Graduate degree	Married	Count	10	8	18
		% within Marital status	55.6%	44.4%	100.0%
	Single	Count	3	33	36
		% within Marital status	8.3%	91.7%	100.0%
	Total	Count	13	41	54
		% within Marital status	24.1%	75.9%	100.0%
Total	Married	Count	54	31	85
		% within Marital status	63.5%	36.5%	100.0%
	Single	Count	8	167	175
		% within Marital status	4.6%	95.4%	100.0%
	Total	Count	62	198	260
		% within Marital status	23.8%	76.2%	100.0%

In order to know which sector the following women work more within based on their education as well as marital status, we need to look to the relationship between respondent's education level to know which of the four educational level work more in which sector secondly to see which sectors do married and single women are busy in. When we take respondents level of education into consideration first we can see that Secondary level have the highest percentage participants in service sector which is 40%, while vocational trainers have the highest number of workers in agriculture, however, university graduate students have the first highest participants which are 30% in the industry sector and the second highest rate can be seen among graduate degree which is

27% in the same industry sector. Hereafter, we need to check for participant's marital position to know whether single or married women are working in which of the following sectors.

Table 5: Education level * employment sector Cross tabulation

Education level		**Employment sector**				Total
		Service sector	Industry sector	Agriculture sector	Na	
Secondary level	Count	8	1	7	4	20
	% within Edu	40.0%	5.0%	35.0%	20.0%	100.0%
Vocational training	Count	24	5	30	15	74
	% within Edu	32.4%	6.8%	40.5%	20.3%	100.0%
University degree	Count	29	34	20	29	112
	% within Edu	25.9%	30.4%	17.9%	25.9%	100.0%
Graduate degree	Count	12	15	14	13	54
	% within Edu	22.2%	27.8%	25.9%	24.1%	100.0%
Total	Count	73	55	71	61	260
	% within Edu	28.1%	21.2%	27.3%	23.5%	100.0%

When a participant's marital status is taken into consideration, we can see in the Table 6 that single women have the highest participation rate in the three sectors, service,

industry as well as agriculture. When we look at the married women's responses we can see that they are much more in agriculture sector than the other sectors. In order to better understand what reasons push married women to be in agriculture sector and having the knowledge we already acquired in table 4 above, that a very few of the participants among married women are working, it is imperative that we find out the reasons which are preventing them from working, thus we will go through a period of unemployment and the reason behind their unemployment.

Table: 6: Marital status * employment sector cross tabulation

Marital status		**Employment sector**				Total
		Service sector	Industry sector	Agriculture sector	Na	
Married	Count	12	5	15	53	85
	Percentage	14.1%	5.9%	17.6%	62.4 %	100.0 %
Single	Count	61	50	56	8	175
	Percentage	**34.9%**	**28.6%**	**32.0%**	4.6 %	100.0 %
Total	Count	73	55	71	61	260
	Percentage	28.1%	21.2%	27.3%	23.5 %	100.0 %

The Table 7, furthermore shows women's marital status and the relationship between their period as well as the reason behind their unemployment. From the calculation in the table below among 32.7% unemployed married women 61.5% is unemployed for more than three years, 23.1% of them are unemployed for 1 to 2 years and 15.4% of them are unemployed for less than one year. If we compare both married and single woman's period of unemployment, we can see married women lack far behind single women and the reason behind their unemployment as shown in the Table 7 are due to social norms, conservatism and lack of education/qualification.

Table 7: Marital status * Period of unemployment * reason of unemployment

Period of unemployment		**Marital status**		Total
		Married	Single	
Less than one year	Count	8	0	8
	% within Period of unemployment	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
1 to 2 years	Count	12	3	15
	% within Period of unemployment	80.0%	20.0%	100.0%
More than three years	Count	32	5	37
	% within Period of unemployment	86.5%	13.5%	100.0%
Employed	Count	33	167	200
	% within Period of unemployment	16.5%	83.5%	100.0%
Total	Count	85	175	260
	% within Period of unemployment	32.7%	67.3%	100.0%
Reason of unemployment		Married	Single	Total
Conservatism		12	3	15
Social norms and beliefs		32	5	37
Lack of education		8	0	8
Total		52	8	60

Since we know what reason do hinder the majority of women particularly married women to enter the formal labor market, we are going to analyze what the main constraints factors are which keep both single and married women away from social as well as economic activities in table 9. We can see the majority of the respondents have given social norms as well as customs and traditions as the main factors in comparison to the other two, lack of knowledge/skills and other factors. This means, women even face difficulty to get an education first due to these factors, secondly, even when they are

educated also they will face challenges to try and work outside their homes, this case being especially true for the married women.

Table 8: The main constraint factors

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Customs and traditions	65	25.0	25.0	25.0
Lack of knowledge/skills	56	21.5	21.5	46.5
Other	40	15.4	15.4	61.9
Social norms and religion	99	**38**.1	38.1	100.0
Total	260	100.0	100.0	

As discussed in the determinants specifically for the case of Afghanistan that the majority of women participate in informal employment, to further understand the factors behind their employability in informal work we need to take Table 9 into consideration to explain their situation. As we can see 33% of the respondents cited lower wages and lower quality jobs than those of their male counterparts as one of the main reasons while lack of jobs/gender issues comes as the second highest push factor followed by other factors.

Table 9: Reason for informal employment

	Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Lack of education/skills	50	19.2	19.2	19.2
Lack of jobs/gender issues	**69**	**26.5**	26.5	45.8
Lower wages and lower quality jobs than those for their male counterparts	**88**	**33.8**	33.8	79.6
Three of the above	53	20.4	20.4	100.0

To summarize, the descriptive statistics presented above indicate that the respondent's highest percentage age range compared to other age group, was that of women between the ages of 26 to 30 participating in the survey. When we looked at the respondents' employment as well as marital status and the sectors which they work more within, we can see that single women are mostly the ones who are joining the labor market and they are mainly working in the service sector. But when looked based on their education level, university graduates women between the ages of 26 to 30 were mostly employed in the industry sector. However, the higher percentage of married women are unemployed as we did find out from our data the majority of them have been unemployed more than three years due to this reason we looked to find out what the reason behind their unemployment could be. We found out that its social norms as well as conservative ideas that the majority of married women suggested affected their employability.

When the main constraint factors were taken into consideration for overall either married and single women, majority of respondents mentioned social as well as customs and traditional norms as some of the main determinants affecting both their social and economic activities as a whole. As discussed in the determinants specifically for the case of Afghanistan, that majority of women if not in urban areas in the other parts of the country are occupied with jobs in the informal employment sector. To extend this idea, we have also looked for the reasons behind women's informal sector employment as well, the majority of respondents, as a result, have given the option of lower wages and lower quality jobs to those of their male counterparts as one of the main obstacles and lack of jobs/gender issues as the second main challenge which push women to be in informal employment. In the following section we will further analyze and explain the findings presented in this section, to get a broader picture of how the various aspects presented affect each other and the female labor force participation as a whole.

3.2.2 Analysis

Analyzing the questionnaire responses as well as the secondary data from the World Bank led us to the identification of important themes regarding the central

phenomenon of the study. These following identified themes through the data analysis are: barriers against women entering the job market regardless of their marital status, obstacles faced by married educated women and the reason behind their unemployment, lower wages and lower quality jobs and lack of jobs/gender issues with certain other reasons behind majority of women's participation in informal work in Afghanistan. Social norms as one of the main barriers regardless of women's marital status is seen to prevent women from entering the job market. As was stated in the general determinants of female labor force participation in the literature review also that social norms as important non-pecuniary factors affect women's labor market participation. Especially this case is true for women in MCC's, where their female economic activity, when compared to non-Muslim countries are the lowest in the world (UN, 2010). The majority of women in these regions, despite being geographically dispersed, live under the patriarchal gender system wherein men have the primary authority to play a key role in the labor supply decision of women.

As a result this system, essentially implies that most women from MENA region countries are required to seek approval from their male guardians before applying for a job or starting a business especially in Saudi Arabia, where female labor force participation of this region is, as stated in the OECD analysis, one of the lowest rates both among Muslim as well as non-Muslim countries, across the world. Meanwhile, as discussed in the determinants specifically for the case of Afghanistan, the Afghan society is being characterized as having the most conservative socio-cultural norms in respect to women which practice many forms of norms. The practice of purdah is one of the main important ones which segregates by a using strong division of roles between men and women. As Barakat and Wardell (2001) as well as Rahimi (1991), also mentioned in their study that the social activities of women and men are embodied and structured through a code of behavior that includes avoidance of any contact between men and women in public through purdah. This system thus regulates the association between these two sexes in different or separate worlds where women are assigned to domestic private spheres and men to public spheres. Though the practice of this system as writers in their article also extend, differs with age, education, class and ethnicity, when it comes to overall socio-

economic activities especially women's work outside their home, it adversely affect the mindset of the average man due to the existence of many preconceptions and stereotypes in the community.

Moreover, the position of women being identified from their birth was and still, is a matter of sad by preferring the male child as a matter of rejoicing and paying a great amount of attention and money on their boy's further education within or outside the country is another form of the norm. Where girls and women education except in some-well-to-do families it's not a priority among majority of people who are in rural areas, they instead of being married in a very early ages of 13 to 16 to young and rich men in exchange to Toyana. Besides that, they don't have the right to choose their husband who to marry they even cannot question their engagement which is arranged by their parents. Early marriage is another type of the norm which restricts girls from school and education at the same time it causes them server health or they even lose their lives when the time they deliver a baby. Even though according to UNICEF child marriage is the matrimonial unification both informal and formal the ages of 18 but Afghanistan statistics show that the most common ages for girls to get married are 15 and 16 meaning that there still exist a large number of families allowing child marriages. The result is that these young girls who become early mothers have to be dropped out of school (if they were ever enrolled at all), thus become ineligible to join the labor force requiring university skills (UNICEF, 2018).

Gender role is another type of social norms that have been passed down through mothers by grooming their son to enforce society rules on girls and for girls by calling them as weak and in need of care and protection. Even though the mentioned situation among families living in urban and modern areas have improved but the larger population of the country still need more time to associate with women's position both in society as well in the economy to let women participate in the labor market. As illustrated in the main constraint factors in Table 8, 38.1% of both single and married women believe that social norms among three more factors as one of the main challenge affects their labor market participation. Thus, in response to our main research as well as other cornerstone questions which answered bellow as follows:

- First main question "Does socio-cultural norms affect the free participation of women in the labor market in Afghanistan?" 38% of the respondent women marked social norms as one of the main factor affecting their positions and choose to enter the labor market. This means our findings based on the survey conducted among both employed and unemployed educated women states that social norm among other factors mainly affects women's either working situation as well as the choice to enter the labor market. As it was mentioned in the determinants for the case of Afghanistan as well as among 31% of the higher educated married respondents in the survey majority states that unemployment is another main factor that prevents particularly married women to enter the world of market. But when asked for their period of unemployment as in Table 7, the majority of them were unemployed for more than three years. Furtherly, they have given social norms and beliefs (26%), as one of the first and conservatism (25%) as a second major reasons for them to enter the job market. As the representative of the National Workers Union of Afghanistan (NUWA), also confirmed that around 70% of the workforce in Afghanistan is currently unemployed. Despite some improvements in the past ten years, the unemployment situation of the country has not been reduced.

As deputy chairman of NUWA in 2010 further states that "Afghanistan's labor laws do not meet international standards, and the government has been unable to begin solving the unemployment problems in the country" (State of employment in Afghanistan, 2012: 27). Even though unemployment in Afghanistan is one of the critical concerns for the young generation of the country particularly for young women but low employment is widespread national concern for many Afghans. However, 95% of the single educated respondent women who consists of the majority of the employed participants in this study, do not see employment as a significant problem. It should be also noted that more than half of the respondents in this survey were employed women who do not consider unemployment as a serious concern except married educated women. In response to our other related questions which are cornerstones of understanding the culture of the country as discussed in the second chapter,

- Second question "Do demographic factors such as marital status affect the employability of female labor force participation"? And second assumption, "Conservative socio-cultural attitudes affect female labor force participation of married women compared to single ones". According to our findings and the majority of the responses received from the married

> women, we can say that marital status of women as well as the reason behind their unemployment as they stated that conservative socio-cultural norms affect their employability in the labor market. Lack of jobs/gender issues as marked by 26.5% of both married and single educated participants is another barrier that limits women's participation in the job market. As stated in the female labor force participation in Afghanistan also that women are willing to work, for this reason, evidence from 2015 survey also shows that 80% of Afghan women insisted they should be allowed to work outside their home unsurprisingly majority of these women who agreed more with the statement were residents of modern cities. Furthermore, the survey confirms that since 2012 women have been stated that, "lack of job opportunities" is one of the main barriers preventing women to enter the job market.

However, scarcity of job opportunities as stated in the determinants specifically for the case of Afghanistan is due to the country's economic reconstruction which is primary and absorbing all the employment needs of its people is difficult to accomplish. Unemployment has been stated as one of the main obstacle as discussed above also, while in addition to unemployment there is believed to be a sharp rise of about 400,000 youths joining the labor market per year due to this reason the scarcity of job opportunities, leads to men being employed first and women are often the ones who are left out of the labor market activities. Thus, we can confirm our assumption based on our findings from our survey respondents as well as the other sources that, "Lack of commensurate employment opportunities is one of the main factors why women are not employed". The confirmation of this assumption furtherly guides us to the gender segregation, one of the other main major reason marked by 33.8% both educated single and married women who select the lower wages and lower quality jobs than those for their male counterparts as the other main barrier to enter the job market. As National Youth Policy of Afghanistan also confirms that, "women have fewer work opportunities than men" which is evidenced by Afghanistan's employment ratio of 80% males to 16% females (Afghanistan National Youth Policy, 2015). This means that the scarcity of job opportunities stated above due to economic infrastructure which leads men to be employed and women to be unemployed furthermore lead women to be in informal works. As was stated in the determinants for the case of Afghanistan also that women, particularly among rural married ones, are primarily involved in unskilled home-based income generating activities like carpet

weaving, sewing, tailoring, agricultural work and taking care of livestock and selling dairy products.

Due to this reason, women in Afghanistan comprise 65% of the agricultural workforce and that majority of poorer as well as married women in rural areas tend to be more involved in these tasks (Mihran and Parto, 2010, Simmons-Benton et. al., 2012). As a result, according to our finding in the survey indicates that among 31% married women 17.6% of the respondents which is the highest rate are currently busy in the agriculture sector. This means that we can confirm our assumption of "Gender segregation is still very high whereby women are mostly restricted to informal work while men are participating in the formal labor market. However, lack of education is one the other widespread national concern particularly for women that has been witnessed a number of ups and downs throughout the history of Afghanistan due to three decades of ongoing conflicts. As stated in the determinants for the case of Afghanistan also that the position of girls and women, particularly in Taliban's period, were strictly curtailed of receiving education and many other activities even accessing healthcare delivered by men was restricted due to their Amar Bil Maroof Wa Nahi An al-Munkar sharia law to control and monitor women's social behaviour. It was during Taliban where female education fell to 0% while this rate increased with the emergence of the new government with the thousands of young girls education almost in all over the country to 22.2% in 2010/2011 period (Massouda Jalal, 2014).

Although education is one of the successful achievements of the new government as mentioned in the determinants specifically for the case of Afghanistan also there is still needs a lot of infrastructural development and expansion to reach an adequate for higher public demand especially in rural areas where women still suffer from lack of education. Although the lack of education is still a widespread national concern for many Afghans, all the women in our survey both single and married are educated and they are working in different public and private sectors. Particularly this case is true for single educated women where majority of them as per their answers to our survey question which is 34.9% are busy working in service sector and the second rate can be seen in agriculture which is 32.0% and the third rate among single educated women can be seen in industry sector

which is 28.6%. Due to this reason, participants in this study do not see education as one of their barrier problem to enter the job market. Which this in turn guide us to our third question response:

- Third question "Does the level of education/qualification increase the likelihood of women in the labor market"?, furtherly with our secondary data from the Global Economy as discussed in female labor force participation in Afghanistan topic also that female labor force Participation of women in Afghanistan has increased since the emergence of the new government from 14.82% in 2001 to 20% in 2018 as a result of improvement in education that leads them increasingly to participate in the job market. As Becker (1962) and Mincer (1974), who developed the traditional theory of human capital theory, as stated in the literature review views education as one of the main sources of national investment; the capital which is invested in people is considered as human capital equipment. Which this, in turn, has a key significant positive impact on individuals' participation in labor market as well as chances of gaining a higher occupational status and hence higher lifetime earnings.

Becker and Mincer extended their views on the importance of education with respect to women that increase them to adopt new innovations but it has also far-reaching societal benefits such as increased female educational attainment leading to decreased fertility rates and increased women empowerment in households. Though education is significant for both gender, women's educational attainment has a positive effect on its own to their labor supply due to several reasons. As Dima Dabbous-Sensenig, a professor at the Lebanese American University based on this regard said that "The more women are highly educated, the more they become motivated and get good jobs especially those who are young, which they did not have this option thirty years ago" (Davies, C & CNN, 2012). Thus, as a result of both theoretical as well as undertaken practical survey participants responses received from the overall participants with the secondary data, we can conclude that education as one of the main key factors play an important role to provide skilled qualifications and occupational goals in order to induce women to seek employment to increase their empowerment and decision-making to become more competitive in the labor market as whole.

CONCLUSION

This study was mainly conducted to examine whether socio-cultural factors affect women's free employability in Afghanistan's labor market. The thesis firstly focused on the theoretical perspective by going through women's labor force participation taking their historical up until their current situation as well as their international comparison into consideration. The international comparison moreover, enlightens us to a number of increase in women's rate participating in the labor market over the past few decades, a large variation in the increased rates of female labor force participation among the world countries can be observed. Wherein majority of the developed nations have experienced a notable increase on the number of women participating in the labor market while one world region namely the MENA region among developing countries show no increase in female labor force participation at all due to socio-cultural norms. To identify how socio-cultural norms affect women's participation in developing countries, the study went through both economic factors explaining female labor force participation by taking countries level of economic development as well as to the main non-economic determinants, especially by discussing and specifically analyzing culture and its specific factors such as, social norms, gender roles, religion and its effects on women's participation both in society and economy as a whole.

Though culture, as stated above, is a vogue term to explain in economic terms however, sociologists have come across with the effect of socio-cultural norms on the female employability than the economic factors with the variety of cultural concepts such as social norms, gender roles as well as religion as the main determinants that constrains women's employability in the labor market. As previous studies based on the effect of culture also confirmed that countries with traditional gender roles have fewer women participation in the labor market. Due to this reason, the aim of this thesis was to find out how culture and social factors affect the employability of women in one of the most conservative traditional norms such as Afghanistan. Secondly, the study was utilized through a quantitative study with a feminist lens and the normative survey technique for gathering data. Though there has been some improvement as our secondary data from World Bank in 2018 suggest in the number of women participating in Afghanistan's labor

market these changes and improvements are limited to cities and most urban areas as our survey respondents also confirmed most of the rural areas lack the changes which have been taken place lately in the country. Though the aim of this thesis was to cover both women living in rural and urban areas to evaluate the effect of culture on overall women in Afghanistan's labor market participation where compared to other South Asian countries have the lowest number of female labor force participation. But due to lack of access to the internet, women who are either single or married educated at the same time from urban and modern areas could attend our targeted sample. Though the sample of the study which was targeted to 300 requests from following requests we got 260 responses and the scope of the issue as well as the limitation of the study, gained in this paper are not able to represent the generalized condition for all women either employed or unemployed in Afghanistan but it did explain to go through women's situation in labor market.

Taking participants level of education into consideration we can see that almost majority of them were educated and busy in sectors such as service as well as industry sectors despite married women as they marked social norms as well as conservatism as one of the main problems where they have been unemployed for more than three years. While single educated women majority of them were employed and this means that the marital status of women affects women's labor market participation in Afghanistan's labor market. Overall speaking, both the survey questionnaires, as well as the secondary data undertaken from the World Bank, confirmed that socio-cultural norms when analyzed with four main determinants in the findings suggest that social norms were one of the main mentioned determinants that affect the employability of women in Afghanistan's labor market as a whole. The study was designed with the main research question of does socio-cultural norms affect the free participation of women in Afghanistan's labor market by taking into consideration other related questions of do demographic factors such as marital status affect the employability of women in Afghanistan? And does education increase the likelihood of women in the labor market, which are the cornerstones of understanding the culture of the country discussed under the determinants for the case of Afghanistan guided us to the findings that women were being affected through cultural norms to join labor

market. But the findings were mainly on married women as they are the ones who have to take care of the house as well as children due to this reason they have been unemployed more than single women.

We can conclude, that religion mainly Islam is not the main determinants that explain the low female labor force participation as it was also mentioned in the literature review in the second chapter that MCC's have the lowest women economic inactivity compared to non-Muslim countries. The detailed analysis of possible explanations both taking theoretical as well as previous studies into consideration on the low female labor force participation specifically for the case of MENA region can be explained not only with a single cultural factors but a common consideration of traditional gender role attitudes, social norms legal institutions routed in the patriarchy can account for the effect. Moreover, the information gathered around Afghanistan as well as the finding results both from primary data through participants respondents as well as the secondary data in Afghanistan's case confirmed that socio-cultural norms affect women's choice to either work or decide to enter the labor market. Despite, an overall situation since the overthrown of the Taliban in Afghanistan's situation, women represent the lowest rate among South Asian countries this means that historical traditional norms still affect women's movement either at taking part in education or working outside their homes. The result of the study furthermore guides us to recommendations to be undertaken into consideration by responsible agencies and Afghanistan's government in order to economic participation of women in the country.

RECOMMENDATION

An analytical approach guides us to the following number of recommendation based on the findings of the study. First and foremost of all, three decades of continuous conflicts as discussed one of the second major factor in the determinants specifically for the case of Afghanistan worsened Afghan women's situation both in society and economy as a whole to participate in labor force. Though majority of women in the capital city, Kabul despite security issues try to get involved both in social and economic activities while in other parts of the country due to lack of development, women's situation differs. Due to this reason the government of Afghanistan as well as the number of international agencies working for the betterment of women's situation in the country has to provide an environment especially for those who have improved their knowledge to be part of working populations. However, as findings of our survey as well as the determinants for the case of Afghanistan also confirms that women face problem in finding jobs and gender issues as one of the main barriers preventing women to be laid off when it comes for them to work. For this reason, Ministry of Labor Social Affairs Martyrs and Disabled (MOLSAMD) needs to take job opportunity actions to bring practical works to encourage both girls and women to participate in the world of market.

There are other organizations, institutions where women can feel free and get job but the possibility is very limited to cities however, women in rural areas due to security issues are highly prevented in order to firstly receive an education secondly, to join the world of labor market. Although education is one of the successful achievements of the new government as mentioned in the determinants specifically for the case of Afghanistan and majority of the participants participated in our survey were also educated from the urban areas and they did not consider education as one of their problem to join labor market. But there is still needs a lot of infrastructural development and expansion to reach an adequate for higher public demand especially in rural areas where women still suffer from lack of education. As a result, a wide number of women in these areas are busy in unpaid agricultural works, particularly this case is true for married women as findings in analysis also confirmed. As also stated in the determinants for the case of Afghanistan that

80% of women in the country are willing to work particularly those women who want to run their own business.

However, Afghanistan's labor market has been characterized mostly for men where women feel less important to try to apply when it comes to job scarcities as discussed in analysis as well the determinates for the case of Afghanistan. To encourage them, certain policies and awareness based on gender issues has to be undertaken to support women and their decisions not only in the economic participation but to ensure them to be an active participants in society as a whole.

APPENDICES

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Cultural Issues and Female Labor Force Participation in Afghanistan

This is a master thesis that focuses on the effect of culture on female labor force participation in Afghanistan. The main purpose of this thesis, is to find out why there is so few women participating in Afghanistan's labor market, and to what extend does culture affect women's participation in this country. Although female labor force participation in Afghanistan records as one of the lowest among other South Asian countries, it has progressively increased since 2001 as World Bank 2018 confirms from 14.82%, rising to 20% by 2018. Despite significant increase, Afghanistan's female participation rate still varies greatly across the same region when compared to the highest 80% rate of female labor force in Nepal. And the reason behind these differences explained and put forward by many economists as a social and economic factors. Though women in Nepal are less likely constrained by social norms, they work mostly in subsistence agriculture, which is driven more by poverty than by choice. But for the case of Afghanistan, historical traditional norms and cultural issues as well as thirty decades of continues war has caused women to be less participants in the economy as a whole.

To find out how these norms affect women and their economic activities, we have conducted the survey questionnaires bellow with few main questions to know further about their situation.

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1. Which age range do you fall within?

- ○ 15-19
- ○ 20-25
- ○ 26-30
- ○ 31-35

2. What is your relationship status?

- ○ Married
- ○ Single

3. What is your level of education?

- ○ Secondary level
- ○ Vocational training
- ○ Graduate level
- ○ Graduate degree

4. Are you currently employed?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

5. If yes, what type of employment?

- ○ Full time
- ○ Part time

6. Which sector do you work within?

- ○ Service sector
- ○ Industry sector
- ○ Agriculture sector

7. If no, how long have you been unemployed?

- ○ Less than one year
- ○ 1 to 2 years
- ○ More than three years

8. What you think constrains women from entering the labor force?

- ○ Social norms and beliefs
- ○ Conservatism
- ○ Lack of education

9. What are the main constraining factors affecting women's labor force participation?

- ○ Customs and traditions
- ○ Lack of knowledge/skills
- ○ Social norms and religion
- ○ Other

10. What reason do persist women to join informal work?

- ○ Lack of education/skills
- ○ Lack of jobs/gender issues
- ○ Lower wages and lower quality jobs than those for their male counterparts
- ○ Three of the above

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