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Impact of Education on Poverty Alleviation in Afghanistan: An Empirical Evaluation

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Abstract

Afghanistan is a country with one of the lowest education levels and where 49.6 per cent of the population live under the poverty line. Moreover, poverty in Afghanistan is concentrated in rural areas and four out of five poor people live in poverty. The East, Northeast, and West-Central regions—where almost half of the inhabitants are poor—have the lowest per capita consumption and highest likelihood of poverty. In cognizance of the vitality of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and education is promulgated as the primary weapon against poverty prevalence. Hence it is important to seek out the effect of different levels of education on poverty in Afghanistan. This study evaluates the effect of different levels of education, experience and gender of the employed individuals (employers, self-employed, wage earners and unpaid family workers) as the determinants of poverty. The data is collected from the Living Conditions Survey for the years 2008 and 2019. A logistic regression model is estimated based on data, with the probability of an individual being poor as the dependent variable and a set of educational levels, experience and gender as explanatory variables. Further, the study identifies deficiencies related to basic education in poverty reduction and comes up with some policy conclusions that can be taken into account in the planning of effective basic education for poverty reduction.

Keywords: Afghanistan, Education, Poverty, Job rate, Development

Introduction

The brightness begins when the sun of knowledge and public awareness rises, and wherever the light of knowledge becomes silent, the darkness of ignorance dominates human life, which in turn leads to grave issues like poverty. As such, poverty is a big challenge in the present century. It's like a tree having many roots, one of which, among the many causes, is education. Not every individual without education is living in extreme poverty, but most of the extremely poor lack basic education.

Education is often referred to as the great equalizer as it can open the door to jobs, resources, and skills that a family needs to not just survive, but thrive. There are many, various, and interconnected causes of poverty, and we can't use a magic formula to eradicate it. But, we can consider education as a reducing risk element of high poverty, which may prevent the occurrence of another generation of much poorer people.

Having "No Poverty", thus ending poverty in all its forms as the number one goal on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda for 2030, combined with a range of strategies by international organizations such as the World Bank, the IMF, the UNDP, etc., is a global pledge and a sincere concern for poverty reduction to improve human development and good livelihoods. Modern development theories have increasingly placed greater emphasis on the need for human development and investment as an exit path or a way out of poverty. The worldview that education and human capital are important to economic growth and, consequently, lead to poverty reduction, gained much prominence in the mid-1990s when it was discovered that the economic success of East Asian countries like Singapore, Hong Kong, Korea, and Taiwan in the 1970s and 1980s was largely due to their investment in education and human capital development.¹ Education and poverty are inversely linked. As a result, the higher the educational level of the population of a country, the lower or lesser the number of poor people in that population would be. This is because education provides knowledge and skills that promote higher salaries.² Investing in human capital through education is, therefore, the key to poverty reduction and growth. The direct impact of education on poverty reduction is through an increase in earnings or income, not wages. The indirect effect of education on poverty is important in the context of "human poverty," because as education improves incomes, the fulfilment of basic needs becomes easier and increases the standard of living, which surely means a reduction in human poverty.³

Poverty in Afghanistan

The way people experience poverty goes beyond living on less than \$1.90 a day. Poverty is not only about lacking the means to make ends meet or pay the bills for basic services on time. Poverty is multidimensional and encompasses much more than income. According to the UN, poverty is defined as "a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity." It means not having enough to feed and clothe a family; not having a school or clinic to go to, not having the land on which to grow one's food or a job to earn one's living; not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living in marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water or sanitation. -UN, 1998.

UNDP has been working in Afghanistan for more than 50 years on challenges related to climate change and resilience, gender, governance, health, livelihoods, and the rule of law. Afghanistan is still among the lowest-ranked countries on the UNDP's human development index, at 168 out of 189 nations covered, and will continue to need significant assistance from the international community to realize

¹ Bloom, David E., David Canning, and J. P. Sevilla. "Economic growth and the demographic transition." (2001).

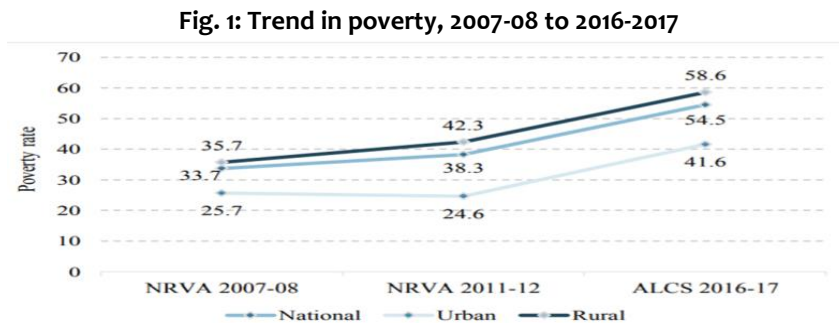
² Cremin, Peadar, and Mary Goretti Nakabugo. "Education, development and poverty reduction: A literature critique." *International Journal of Educational Development* 32, no. 4 (2012): 499-506.

³ Mihai, Mihaela, Emilia Țițan, and Daniela Manea. "Education and poverty." *Procedia Economics and Finance* 32 (2015): 855-860.

the true potential of its resilient and capable people. In Afghanistan, economic growth has not kept pace with population rises of more than 3% per year, leading to a recent fall in GDP per capita. The poverty rate has risen from 36% to 55% today, and some 1.9 million people are currently food insecure. One in four Afghans of working age is unemployed, and of those who do work, 80% are in insecure jobs. With a young and undereducated population, the number of people looking for work with insufficient skills increases sharply every year, but the annual number of businesses starting up has dropped significantly over the last decade.⁴

The trend in poverty, 2007-2019

Afghanistan has experienced a sharp increase in poverty since 2011-12. Figure 1 plots the national, urban, and rural poverty headcount rates based on the new series and using the three surveys where direct estimation of poverty is possible. Figure 1 provides the series of poverty estimates as presented in previous reports and according to the revised methodology. Poverty headcount rates measure the share of the population whose monthly per-capita expenditure falls below the poverty line. At the national level, these headcount rates increased from 33.7 per cent in 2007-08 to 38.3 per cent in 2011-12, followed by a sharp rise to 54.5 per cent in 2016-17.⁵



Source: Adapted from Afghanistan Living Condition Survey, 2016-2017

The Education System in Afghanistan

Afghanistan's education system has been devastated by more than four decades of sustained conflict. For many of the country's children, completing primary school remains a distant dream, especially in rural areas and for girls, despite recent progress in raising enrolment. In the poorest and remote areas of Afghanistan, enrolment levels vary extensively, and girls still lack equal access. There are an estimated 3.7 million children who are out of school in Afghanistan,

⁴ International Labour Office. *Global employment trends for youth 2020: Technology and the future of jobs*. International labour office, 2020.

⁵ Saeed, Huma, and Abhijit Bhattacharjee. "Combined evaluation of the European Union's humanitarian interventions in Afghanistan 2014-2018 (Part A) and DG ECHO's partnership with the Norwegian Refugee Council (Part B)." *The combined evaluation of the European Union's humanitarian interventions in Afghanistan 2014-2018 and DG ECHO's partnership with the Norwegian Refugee Council* (2019): 1-184.

out of which 60 % are girls.⁶ The education system in Afghanistan is being rebuilt and restructured. The Ministry of Education (MoHE) is responsible for primary and secondary education levels, while the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) supervises tertiary education. In principle, public education is free, and primary and lower secondary education are compulsory. Free education through the bachelor's level is a constitutional right in Afghanistan.⁷

Primary System Oversight

Primary education runs from grades 1 to 6. Children typically begin school between the ages of six and eight. However, the primary curriculum is consistent nationwide; therefore, teachers can tailor it to the local content. Primary education is divided into two cycles. The first cycle covers grades 1 to 3, and the curriculum includes subjects such as religious studies, first language (Dari or Pashtu, depending on the region), mathematics, arts, and physical education. The second cycle includes grades 4 to 6. The curriculum covers the same subjects as the first cycle, plus additional subjects such as natural sciences, history, geography, and a secondary language (Dari or Pashtu, depending on the region). At the end of grade 6, students must pass an examination to gain admission to lower secondary education [*Maktabeh Motevasteh*]. At this point, they may opt to pursue a religious studies track or a more general education track. The vast majority of students pursue the latter.

Secondary System Oversight

Secondary education includes two three-year cycles. The first cycle, from grades 7 to 9, is referred to as lower secondary education, and the second cycle, from grades 10 to 12, is referred to as higher secondary education. The curriculum of the first cycle includes subjects such as religious studies, local languages, mathematics, natural sciences, social studies, foreign languages (English, German, French, and Russian), and physical education.

Tertiary System Oversight

The Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) is responsible for the administration of higher education, including funding, policy development, institution establishment, quality assurance, and advanced teacher education. Afghanistan's 2010–2014 national higher education strategic plan tasked the MoHE with establishing an agency to oversee the accreditation of all public and private institutions of higher education. The MoHE has historically exerted a high degree of control over both the administrative and academic aspects of public universities. Post-Taliban reform efforts have sought to provide institutions with a greater degree of autonomy, but the effort remains incomplete. The higher education

⁶ UNICEF. *The state of the world's children 2006: excluded and invisible*. UNICEF, 2005.

⁷ Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Central Statistics Organization, *Afghanistan Living Conditions Survey, 2016 – 2017, Highlights Report*. (2016).

sector includes both universities and higher education institutes. As of 2020, there were 40 public higher education institutions, 120 private universities, and 19 higher education institutes in Afghanistan. The private higher education sector has seen dramatic growth since 2001.⁸

Quality Education

Quality is considered prominent at all the stages of the education system for all nations of the world. Quality education is one that is pedagogically and developmentally sound and educates the student to become an active and productive member of society.⁹ Quality education aims at developing the balanced set of capabilities children require to become economically productive, develop sustainable livelihoods, contribute to peaceful and democratic societies, and enhance individual well-being. A quality education provides the outcomes needed for individuals, communities, and societies to prosper. This is due to a major shift that contemporary society has made in the conception of knowledge from quantity to quality. While the quality of education is associated with student learning outcomes, it is not only the World Bank (2006) that stresses student outcomes as an indicator of quality but education specialists around the world also assert that quality refers to an education that is student-centred and driven by the needs of the local community.¹⁰

Afghanistan has been involved in a serious conflict for the past four decades. Therefore, the infrastructure, including the educational infrastructure, has been seriously devastated by this long-lasting war. At the present time, as a result of the war, the low quality of education is a matter of concern to all educators and pedagogues in this post-war country.^{11 12 13 14} There are a number of international organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF, Care International, World Bank, Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA), British Council and others that have been working with the Afghan government, especially along with the Ministry of Education, to enhance the professional qualifications of Afghan school teachers, but still, as it is said by this ministry, a long way is ahead to modify Afghan teachers' qualifications as they are required.

Literacy level in Afghanistan

Despite large investments in the education system in the one-and-a-half decades before the ALCS 2016-17, their conversion into increased literacy rates is a slow process. The adult literacy rate – referring to the population 15 years of age and older – has increased, from 23.6 per cent in NRVA 2005 to 31.4 per cent in NRVA 2011-

⁸ Aturupane, Harsha. "Higher education in Afghanistan: An emerging mountainscape." (2013).

⁹ Sean Slade, "What Do We Mean by a Quality Education?" Huffpost, February 22, 2016. Retrieved from <https://www.huffpost.com/entry/what-do-we-mean-by-a-qual_b_9284130>

¹⁰ *Ibid*

¹¹ Afghanistan. Education for All 2015 National Review (n.d.).

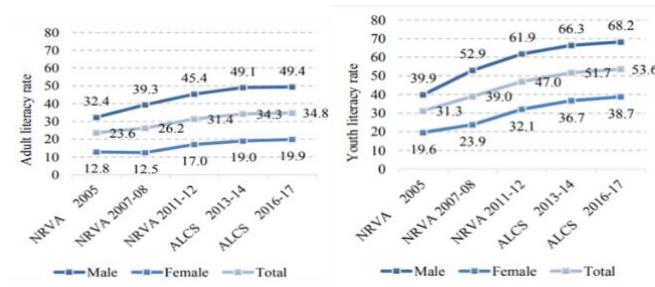
¹² *ibid*

¹³ Education Sector Analysis Afghanistan, *ESA-Revised-Final draft-2016*. (n.d.).

¹⁴ Mansory, Amir Mohammad. "Do Children Learn in Afghan Schools?." *Assessment of Math and Language Achievements of Students at the End of Grades 3* (2010).

12, and is now recorded at 34.8 per cent (Figure 8.18a). This implies a 47 per cent improvement for this indicator in 11 years' time. However, no statistically significant improvement can be reported since ALCS 2013-14. Since the female adult literacy rate improved relatively slightly more than the male rate, the gender parity index for this indicator increased from 0.32 in 2007-08 to 0.40 in 2016-17. In terms of residence, most gains were realized for rural residents, for whom the adult literacy rate increased from a very low 19.6 per cent in 2005 to a still-low 29.6 per cent in 2016-17 (a 61 per cent improvement).¹⁵

Fig. 2: Adult and Youth Literacy Rate



Source: Source: Adapted from Afghanistan Living Condition Survey, 2016-2017

This study reveals the effects of different levels of education on poverty. In order to find out this impact, the study used logistic regression with the probability of being poor on different levels of education and experience. On the basis of the lowest income quintiles, we construct a variable "probability of being poor". This is a dummy variable having values of zero and one. If a person is in the lowest quintile, then he/she is considered poor and he/she could be assigned a value equal to one, and if a person is in other quintiles, then he/she will be considered non-poor and will be assigned a value equal to zero. The present study uses the data of the HIES for the years 2014 and 2017 to find out the effect of education on poverty. The study is organized in the following manner: Section 2 outlines the model for empirical estimation and describes the data. Section 3 is the results and discussion, and the last section concludes the study.

Literature Review

The correlation between poverty and lack of education has become an increasingly popular research topic in the last decades. There are many complex and interlinked causes of poverty, and we cannot use a magic formula to eliminate it. However, education can be seen as a risk-reducing element in high poverty, which may prevent another generation from becoming much poorer. Over one billion people in the world live in extreme poverty, defined as less than 1.25 USD per day.¹⁶ Poverty means scarcity or insufficiency of basic necessities for survival. Fighting

¹⁵ *ibid*

¹⁶ Chen, Shaohua, Ren Mu, and Martin Ravallion. "Are there lasting impacts of aid to poor areas? Evidence from rural China." *Evidence from Rural China* (March 1, 2008). World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 4084 (2008).

poverty is a social responsibility for all. But, in the majority of underdeveloped countries, many people continue to live in abject poverty, finding it hard to access proper housing, food, and clothes. Education is considered one of the determinants of poverty. Lack of access to education is a significant indicator of transferring poverty from one generation to the next, and getting an education is one of the top ways to achieve financial stability.¹⁷

The Perception of Poverty

The definition of poverty is multidimensional and could be defined in either relative or absolute terms to indoctrinate social, economic, and political aspects. In absolute terms, poverty includes the inability to provide the basic means required to meet personal needs such as food, clothing, and shelter. Relative poverty, on the other hand, is characterized economically. Thus, poverty is linked to the economic status of other individuals in society; people are considered poor if their standard of living is below the prevailing standards in a given social situation.¹⁸ The work of Amartya Sen expanded the definition of poverty by describing poverty as a situation arising from a lack of freedom to make choices due to a lack of effective functioning in society. However, this understanding of Sen goes beyond the notion that poverty is viewed in monetary terms or as a lack of financial capital. Sen's view can also be interpreted as implying that lack of education can necessarily be seen as a component of poverty in many societies.¹⁹ Reflecting on the Sens approach or understanding of poverty, it is important to consider the absolute and relative essence of poverty when considering the relation between poverty and lack of financial resources, since both absolute and relative poverty is significant to education.

Concept of Education

Education is defined as "a purposeful, conscious or unconscious, psychological, sociological, scientific, and philosophical method, which brings about the progress of the person to the utmost extent and also the ultimate development of society in such a way that both enjoy maximum happiness and prosperity".²⁰ Thus, education is essentially the development of the individual according to the needs and demands of the society of which he or she is an integral part. Education is a human right and an effective tool for eradicating poverty. Education is one of the most important resources for alleviating poverty and promoting economic growth. It lays down the fundamental foundation on which most of the economic and social well-being of people is founded and created. Education is necessary if substantial progress is to be made in terms of economic and social growth (master thesis). Education thus represents the effectiveness and productivity of the workforce,

¹⁷ Addai-Boateng, Augustine. "Poverty and development: role of education in poverty reduction in the Ada East District of Ghana." Master's thesis, Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Ås, 2019.

¹⁸ UNESCO. (n.d.). *Education for all 2000-2015 : achievements and challenges*.

¹⁹ Sen, Amartya. *The political economy of targeting*. Washington, DC: World Bank, 1992.

²⁰ Kumar, S., & Ahmad, S. (2008). Meaning, aims and process of education. *School of Open Learning*.

resulting in poverty reduction.²¹ The main factors deciding the standard of living in any given country are the degree to which the country manages, develops and utilizes the skills and expertise it possesses, as well as maintaining good and quality education for its citizens.²²

The linkage between Education and Poverty

The passport for coming out of poverty is education.²³ Education is generally believed to play a key role in reducing poverty and achieving sustainable growth. Education has provided an adequate grasp of growth in many countries. Education serves both the private and the public services.²⁴ The issue is that over 258 million children and young people are out of school around the world, according to data published by UNESCO in 2018.²⁵ Children do not attend school for several reasons, but they all stem from poverty. The framework of reference for the analytical focus is a definition of poverty that considers the ability to exercise fundamental rights as a way of guaranteeing acceptable living conditions. The lack of rights and lack of social rights lead to poverty. The right to education, which requires, in addition to the availability of and admission to schools, conditions of adoptability and acceptability, refers to the ability of a school to adopt the unique conditions of children, to respond to their needs and interests, and to ensure an appropriate standard of education, is of particular concern.^{26,27}

Education is a fundamental human right that opens doors for people to lead healthier lives and contribute to their communities. Poor families often get to choose between sending their children to school and offering other basic needs. Even if families do not have to pay school fees, the school is subject to the extra expense of uniforms, books, equipment, and/or test fees. Education promotes economic development because it offers skills that improve jobs and income prospects. Almost 60 million people could avoid poverty if all adults had just two more years of schooling, and 420 million could be eliminated from poverty if all adults had finished secondary education, according to UNESCO. One of the best ways to prevent being poor as an adult is to pursue a good education. Individuals with higher levels of academic performance and more years of schooling gain more than those with lower levels of human resources. This is not surprising because economists agree that schooling makes people more efficient and that wages are linked to productivity. Poverty is associated with the economic status of other

²¹ Omoniyi, M. B. I. (2013) the role of education in poverty alleviation and economic development: a theoretical perspective and counselling implications, *British Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*, 15 (2).

²² Lucas, R. E. (1998). On the mechanics of economic development. *Econometric Society Monographs*, 29, 61-70.

²³ McNamara, P., Harvey, A., & Andrewartha, L. (2019). Passports out of poverty: Raising access to higher education for care leavers in Australia. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 97, 85-93.

²⁴ Jaiyeoba, Adebola O. "Perceived Impact of Universal Basic Education on National Development In Nigeria." (2009).

²⁵ CONEVAL. (2018). Anexo único de los "Lineamientos y criterios generales para la definición, identificación y medición de la pobreza". Actualización 2018. Retrieved from Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social website: <https://www.coneval.org.mx/normateca/documents/anexo-lineamientos-dof2018.pdf>

²⁶ Tomasevsky, Katarina. "Indicators of the right to education." *iidh magazine* 40 (2004): 341-388.

²⁷ CONEVAL. (2018). Anexo único de los "Lineamientos y criterios generales para la definición, identificación y medición de la pobreza". Actualización 2018. Retrieved from Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social website: <https://www.coneval.org.mx/normateca/documents/anexo-lineamientos-dof2018.pdf>

individuals in society; people are considered poor if their standard of living is below the prevailing standards in a given societal context.²⁸

It is therefore an opportunity that has the potential to yield great benefits for such externalities. Education has emerged as a crucial requirement for poverty reduction and for improving the living conditions or livelihoods of underdeveloped countries, including Afghanistan. Poverty has a multiplier impact on education in Afghanistan and in the world as a whole. Poor households find it difficult to access quality education, and this makes them much poorer in the long run.²⁹ In 2002, after the war and terrorism had subsided in Afghanistan, many children were able to go back to their education. But one-third of these children were girls. Almost 80 per cent of girls in all 34 provinces were not enrolled in schools during the same time.³⁰ Agriculture is the foundation of Afghanistan's economy. Most of the agricultural work in Afghanistan is done by rural women farmers who provide almost 80 per cent of agricultural labour, but despite their immense position in the process of agricultural development, access to education opportunities and other financial services remains low.³¹ Well-educated farmers are highly efficient, and profitable and can greatly improve the problem of food security in Afghanistan.³² Moreover, most of the theoretical debate on the role of education and development and economic growth, and therefore in the battle against poverty, focuses on the productive aspect of education in the economic context. There are several statistics and reports showing that the level of schooling of the population is associated with the level of economic growth.³³ Efendi evaluated the relationship between poverty rates based on economic growth, health and education. The results showed that education has a negative and insignificant influence on poverty in Indonesia.³⁴ Serneels and Dercon investigated that aspirations matter for education as it connects directly the education and poverty.³⁵ Normally, about 91% of children attend school in developing countries, and their attendance sometimes does not guarantee to learn with a significant number of children who fail to achieve the minimum level of expected knowledge, and it is the poor people who showed the lowest achievements.³⁶ This explains the profound impact of the socio-economic

²⁸ *ibid*

²⁹ World Bank. "Poverty Reduction in Afghanistan: Despite Economic Growth, Widening Inequality." (2017).

³⁰ *ibid*

³¹ World Bank. "Unlocking the Potential of Agriculture for Afghanistan's Growth." (2018).

³² *ibid*

³³ *ibid*

³⁴ Efendi, R., Indartono, S., & Sukidjo, S. (2019). The relationship of Indonesia's poverty rate based on economic growth, health, and education. *International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding*, 6(2), 323-330.

³⁵ Serneels, P. M., & Dercon, S. (2020). Aspirations, poverty and education: Evidence from India.

³⁶ UNESCO Institute for Statistics. (2017). More Than One-Half of Children and Adolescents Area Not Learning Worldwide. Retrieved from <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/fs46-more-than-half-children-notlearning-en2017.pdf>

context on education, as has been discussed for more than 50 years, starting with the Coleman report and continuing today.^{37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43}

Methodology

The Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) is conducted by the International Labor Organization (ILO) and gives us detailed information on the household level in Afghanistan. The data used for this study is from 2014 to 19. It is the only available, gigantic and meaningful source of information of its kind that has household level information in Afghanistan. This study uses the logistic regression technique to identify the impact of education on poverty in Afghanistan. The study will seek out the effect of different education levels, experience, and gender on the probability of being poor among employed individuals. The dependent variable is dichotomous in that it has a value of 1 for the poor individual and a value of 0 for the non-poor individual. The very first thing is to elucidate the criteria through which we classify employed individuals (employers, self-employed, wage earners, and unpaid family workers) into poor and non-poor. In other words, we can say how we assign a value of one (poor) or zero (non-poor) to the dependent dichotomous variable. For this task, there are different approaches like the basic needs approach or the calorie-based approach, but here we classify the individuals through quintiles.

We will work out four quintiles of individuals depending on their monthly incomes. The lowest (fourth) quintile will have the individuals with the lowest monthly incomes. The individuals in the lowest quintile will be considered poor, and consequently, the dependent variable will take the value one for them, whereas each individual in the other three quintiles will obviously take the value zero. In explanatory variables, educational variables are dummy variables, and one of them will get the value one in response to the individual's highest educational attainment. It means the educational level will either fall into the middle, matriculation, intermediate, bachelor's or professional (masters and above) category, whereas 'primary education' will be attributed as the reference category. Other variables include experience (exp) and gender.

The experience variable is attained by subtracting the years of schooling and the school starting age from the age of a person. It is not the actual experience that is important, but the potential experience. The personal characteristics include gender (male = 1, female = 0), where the female will be the reference category. The

³⁷ Coleman, J. S. (1966). Equality of Educational Opportunity Study (EEOS). Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor].

³⁸ Aikens, Nikki L., and Oscar Barbarin. "Socioeconomic differences in reading trajectories: The contribution of family, neighborhood, and school contexts." *Journal of educational psychology* 100, no. 2 (2008): 235.

³⁹ Blanco, Emilio. "Efectos escolares sobre los aprendizajes en México: una perspectiva centrada en la interacción escuela-entorno." *Papeles de población* 17, no. 69 (2011): 219-256.

⁴⁰ Ferguson, H. Bruce, Sarah Bovaird, and Michael P. Mueller. "The impact of poverty on educational outcomes for children." *Paediatrics & child health* 12, no. 8 (2007): 701-706.

⁴¹ ACo8926112, Anonymus, ed. *Equity and quality in education: Supporting disadvantaged students and schools*. OECD, 2012.

⁴² Roman, Marcela. "Factors associated with school dropout and dropout in Latin America: an overall view." *REICE. Ibero-American Journal on Quality, Effectiveness and Change in Education* 11, no. 2 (2013): 33-59.

⁴³ Tilak, Jandhyala BG. "Education and poverty." *Journal of human development* 3, no. 2 (2002): 191-207.

results will not be interpreted through the coefficients but we will use the odds ratios in logistic regression to see if the occurrence of any particular event will increase or decrease the probability of being poor and by what proportion as compared to the reference category. The odd ratios were defined as just two odds that are compared to determine whether one group has higher or lower odd ratios of a binary outcome. A number, greater than one indicates a positive association between an independent variable and the dependent variable. While a number between zero and one indicates a negative association.

Results and Discussion

A logistic regression model was estimated for the 'probability of being poor' on experience and different levels of education. The overall results are demonstrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Logistic Regression Model of being poor with multiple independent variables (overall)

Variables	2013-2014		2017-2018	
	β^*	Odd ratios	β^*	Odd ratios
Constant	2.998	32.76	1.943	15.43
Experience	-0.054	0.995	-0.051	0.453
Intermediate	-2.543	0.127	-2.431	0.190
Graduate	-3.541	0.231	-3.805	0.132
Professional	-5.11	0.005	-4.96	0.058
Male	-2.431	0.064	-2.293	0.054

* All coefficients appeared significant in the Wald test.

Dependent variable: the probability of being poor

Source: Data output generated from Eviews-8.0

The overall results of 2013-2014 and 2017-2018 presented in Table 1 are showing that the odds ratios of all variables are less than zero that putting all the educational levels, experience and gender in negative relation to the poverty status of the employed persons. The intermediate and graduate variables decrease the probability of being poor among employed people by 12.7% and 23.1%, respectively, as compared to the reference category of "primary education" for the year 2017-2018. Again, for the years 2017-2018 in the same sequence, the educational levels are reducing the likelihood of being poor individuals by 19% and 13.2% as compared to the same reference category. The yearly comparison of these educational qualifications vividly demonstrates that for lower levels of education, the negative effect of education on poverty remains intact but its intensity declines with the attainment of education level.

The estimates of both years separately proved the fact that as educational attainment improves, the proportional decline in the probability of being poor increases in the figure. Coming towards the experience-side, here we also see the negative coefficient sign and with the increase of one year in experience, we observe a decline of 4.5% in the likelihood of being poor for individuals for the years

2013-2014 and 5% for the years 2017-2018. It is quite evident that the effect is minor, but the improvement is there. On the gender side, our result is in favour of the widely prevalent concept of gender bias because being a male person reduces the chances of being poor by 93.7% as compared to the reference category of female, and the figure rises to 94.6% in 2013-2014. In the separate gender estimates in Table 2 and Table 3, we explore the patterns that are in line with the overall interpreted results explained above. For both male and female regressions, we see that experience and all educational levels are negatively related to the poverty status of the employed people. Moreover, as the acquisition of education increases, the proportional decline in the probability of being poor consistently increases. However, the experience of males appears to be increasingly beneficial in 2013-2014 as compared with 2017-2018 as the proportional figure goes from 4.7% to 5.6%, but we do not observe such an increasing trend for females.

Table 2. Logistic Regression Model of being poor with multiple independent variables (Male).

Variables	2013-2014		2017-2018	
	β^*	Odd ratios	β^*	Odd ratios
Constant	1.112	3.06	0.123	1.541
Experience	-0.049	0.954	-0.058	0.944
Intermediate	-1.94	0.127	-1.431	0.190
Graduate	-2.541	0.050	-3.23	0.032
Professional	-4.11	0.015	-3.96	0.028

**All coefficients appeared significant in the Wald test. Dependent variable: probability of being poor*

Source: Data output generated from Eviews-8.0

In Table 2 (Male), we see that bachelors level shown improvement as the proportional decline in probability of being poor goes from 95% to 96.1% whereas middle, intermediate, professional give downward trend and the effect of matriculation is same for the two years.

Table 3. Logistic Regression Model of being poor with multiple independent variables (Female).

Variables	2013-2014		2017-2018	
	β^*	Odd ratios	β^*	Odd ratios
Constant	4.112	73.06	2.73	10.58
Experience	-0.038	0.95	-0.031	0.974
Intermediate	-3.94	0.12	-2.431	0.087
Graduate	-4.541	0.12	-3.23	0.032
Professional	-4.21	0.015	-3.96	0.008

**All coefficients appeared significant in the Wald test. Dependent variable: probability of being poor*

Source: Data output generated from Eviews-8.0

In table 3 (female), more or less all educational levels do not ameliorate. Generally, the results showed that there was a negative relationship between the probability of being poor and different levels of education. It means that higher levels of education reduce the probability of being poor gradually. Hence, education level has an important role in reducing poverty in the country.

Moreover, most of the theoretical debate on the role of education in development and economic growth, and therefore in the battle against poverty, focuses on the productive aspect of education in the economic context. There are several statistics and reports showing that the level of schooling of the population is associated with the level of economic growth.⁴⁴ Efendi evaluated the relationship between the poverty rate and economic growth, health, and education. The results showed that education has a negative and insignificant influence on poverty in Indonesia.⁴⁵ Serneels and Dercon investigated that aspirations matter for education as it connects directly the education and poverty.⁴⁶ Normally, about 91% of children attend school in developing countries, and their attendance sometimes does not guarantee learning, with a significant number of children who fail to achieve the minimum level of expected knowledge, and it is the poor people who show the lowest achievements.⁴⁷ This explains the profound impact of the socio-economic context on education, as has been discussed for more than 50 years, starting with the Coleman report and continuing today.⁴⁸

Conclusion

This study is done to estimate the effect of education on poverty in Afghanistan. The data used for this task is taken from the Household Integrated Economic Survey (HIES 2014-2017) conducted by the international labour organization. The results of the logistic regression are in accordance with the generally accepted theory that educational attainment is a critical determinant of the incidence of poverty and should be considered primarily in implementing poverty alleviation programs. The results have shown that educational attainment has a negative impact on poverty. The other notable thing is the consistent increase in the chances of escaping the poverty of a person as we increase the educational level it means that as educational achievement increases, the likelihood of a person being poor declines. Therefore, education is the most important factor regarding poverty reduction. The attainment of education enhances the earning potential of individuals and consequently, the increased earnings will definitely help them to be out of poverty.

Education is negatively linked with the poverty status and higher levels of education will be more and more effective in poverty reduction. Experience has also a negative relation with the poverty status because obviously as the experience grows a person's expertise in particular field enhances which provides him an opportunity to earn higher. It can be taken as the improvement in expertise and skill enhancement, which have positive implications in case of poverty elimination. The 'feminization of poverty' means women are much more deprived and facing severe hardships in pulling themselves out of poverty as compared to men due to their unequal educational and employment opportunities. The current study concludes

⁴⁴ Mihai, M., Țițan, E., & Manea, D. (2015). Education and poverty. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 32, 855-860.

⁴⁵ *ibid*

⁴⁶ *ibid*

⁴⁷ *ibid*

⁴⁸ *ibid*

that a male person reduces the risk of poverty as compared to the female and the separate female results do not give us an impressive situation therefore there is a need to take an evasive action to provide a congenial employment environment for the female along with equal educational opportunities because they are almost half segment of our society and their wellbeing will definitely help us in eradicating poverty.

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