Female Labor Force Participation in Iranian Rural Areas: An Inter-provincial Study

Authors : Zahra Mila Elmi, Mahsa Khanekheshi

Abstract : Almost half of the population and potential manpower in the country and rural areas are women. Manpower especially educated people, plays an important role in the production and economic growth. Also, the potential of rural areas to create employment should not be overlooked. In this research, the effects of socio-economic and demographic factors on women's economic participation in rural areas of Iran's provinces will be studied. Therefore, this study was performed by using the results of the rural households income and expenditure surveys -has been taken in 2016- in the framework of pseudo panel data. This study used the logit model and the maximum likelihood method to study the rural women's participation, with 28,265 observations. Results show the inverted U-shaped relationship between age and the probability of female participation; In other words, young women are more likely to participate in labor markets more than the other groups. Divorced and single woman has more chance of participation in comparison with who was being married. With increasing the divorce rate and singleness in Iran, economic policymakers must provide appropriate solutions for this challenge in the coming years. On the base of the results, being a student and the presence of an infant under the age of 6 in the household has a negative effect on the possibility of women's participation in the labor market. The women's education level has a U-shaped relationship with their participation rate. Illiteracy and high education have a strong positive effect on the economic participation of rural women. This shows the dual labor market for women in Iran. Illiterate women are attracted to service jobs, and educated woman are more attracted to education and health jobs. Increasing household income has a small but positive and significant effect on the probability of rural female participation. In the overlook, due to the frequency of the women population in the age group of 25 to 35 years, and more willingness of women in the age 35 to 44 years to participate in the labor market, and studying ofa significant portion of the rural women, the increase of rural female participation is expected in the years ahead. Thus, it is expected policy maker to create new job opportunities for the employment of educated women and take the necessary plan to improve the current situation for women.
Keywords : female participation rate, rural area, provincial data, pseudo-panel data method
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