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ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF EMERGING DEMOCRATIC RULE IN AFGHANISTAN

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ABSTRACT

The study reveals that the state of democracy in the Afghanistan is very poor. People generally do not trust their rulers and are waiting to get rid of terror of Talibans, undemocratic ways of Pashtuns who treat every other ethnicity lesser than themselves. Despite of all these weak points of democracy, whatever little freedoms people have got has shown that people are being benefited from increased economic activity. The survey has shown that all among categories, the standard of living of people has improved under the present brief democratic rule. The existing ruling party should plan to conduct the free and fair elections to strengthen the faith of people in democracy.

KEYWORDS

Afghanistan, economic benefits, democratic rule.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The democracy in Afghanistan has been rated as an authoritarian regime with an index value (2.97) in 2018 on scale between zero to ten by Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) UK- Based Company. The low score of the country in democracy index is accounted for weak electoral process, poor functioning of Govt., low political participation, absence of political culture and less civil liberty. In a sample of 167 countries Afghanistan is ranking at 143rd position on democracy index. In this paper, we have analyzed the impact of democracy on the economic development of Afghanistan on the basis of the responses of people collected through a primary survey. The democracy, although in a very nascent state in Afghanistan and still struggling to emerge may have been beneficial to common people, that has been examined in this paper.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A number of studies are available on the relationships between democracy and economic development. Some of them have been reported here. **Heo and Tan (2001)** have observed that that economic development leads to democratization. Theoretically, however, more democratized political systems can also stimulate economic growth and development. Therefore, democracy may lead to economic growth, while economic development may also lead to democratization. To investigate, direction between the above mentioned two variables - the Granger causality analysis was used, the analysis drawn on data for thirty-two developing countries for the period from 1948 to 1982. The results of the analysis revealed that the causal direction between democracy and economic development cannot be generalized in either way.

Gerring et al. (2005) found that democracy has no robust association with economic growth. Yet all such work assumed that the causal effect of democracy can be measured by a country's regime status in a particular year (t), which is correlated with its growth performance in a subsequent period (t+1). The authors argued that democracy must be understood as a stock, rather than a level measure, which means a country's growth performance is affected by the number of years it has been democratic, in addition to the degree of democracy experienced during that period. In this fashion, democracy is re-conceptualized as a historical, rather than a contemporary, variable with the assumption that long-run historical patterns may help scholars to understand present trends. Also, it has been speculated that these secular-historical influences operate through four causal pathways, each of which may be understood as a type of capital i.e. physical capital, human capital, social capital and political capital. This argument has been tested in a cross-country analysis and is shown to be robust in a wide variety of specifications and formats.

Feng (1997) investigated the interactions between democracy, political stability and economic growth. Two aspects of the study differentiate it from previous research. First, a simultaneous approach was adopted which combines the study of economic growth and political stability with that of economic growth and democracy. Secondly, a distinction is made between types of political instability, because different kinds of government change have different effects on economic growth and democracy. This analysis employed three-stage least-squares (3SLS) estimation, and utilized aggregate data covering ninety-six countries from 1960 to 1980. The results indicated that democracy has a positive indirect effect upon growth through its impacts on the probabilities of both regime change and constitutional government change from one ruling party to another. In addition, the evidence indicates that the two kinds of political change mentioned above have significant and opposite effects on growth; that growth has a negative effect on regime change and a positive effect on the probability of the ruling party remaining in power; and that long-run economic growth tends to exert a positive effect upon democracy.

Drury et al. (2006) have long suspected that political processes such as democracy and corruption are important factors in determining economic growth. Studies showed, however, that democracy has only indirect effects on growth, while corruption is generally accepted by scholars as having a direct and negative impact on economic performance. It was argued that one of democracy's indirect benefits is its ability to mitigate the detrimental effect of corruption on economic

growth. Although, corruption certainly occurs in democracies, the electoral mechanism inhibits politicians from engaging in corrupt acts that damage overall economic performance and thereby jeopardize their political survival. Using time-series cross-section data for more than 100 countries from 1982-97, it was observed that corruption had no significant effect on economic growth in democracies, while non-democracies suffer significant economic harm from corruption. **Ernesto López-Córdova et al. (2008)** examined the likely endogeneity between democracy and trade with an instrumental variables strategy to know about whether international trade fosters democracy. A measure of natural openness was used to obtain estimates of the causal impact of openness on democratization in three separate samples spanning the last 130 years. A positive impact of openness on democracy was apparent in the data over the long run. The post-World War II results suggested that with a rise in trade with other countries equal to a one standard deviation increase, countries such as Indonesia, Russia, and Venezuela could eventually become as democratic as the U.S., Great Britain, or France. There is some variation in the impact of openness by region that may be because trade seems to have a positive impact only when the capital-to-labor ratio is sufficiently high. It was consistent with the idea that openness promotes democracy when it strengthens the economic fortunes of the middle class.

Clague et al. (2001) conducted a statistical study of the determinants of democracy in the postwar period. Important variables were found to be former status as a British colony, island status, the share of the population professing Islam, the share of the population that is of European descent, penetration of the English language during British colonial rule, and a measure of ethnic homogeneity. The evidence suggested that cultural beliefs and institutional inheritances are important determinants of the viability of democracy in poor countries, even when controlling for literacy and socioeconomic development.

Doucouliagos et al. (2008) observed that despite a sizeable theoretical and empirical literature, no firm conclusions have been drawn regarding the impact of political democracy on economic growth. The study challenged the consensus of an inconclusive relationship through a quantitative assessment of the democracy-growth literature. It applies meta-regression analysis to the population of 483 estimates derived from 84 studies on democracy and growth. Using traditional meta-analysis estimators, the bootstrap, and Fixed and Random Effects meta-regression models, it derives several robust conclusions. Taking all the available published evidence together, it concluded that democracy does not have a direct impact on economic growth. However, democracy has robust, significant, and positive indirect effects through higher human capital, lower inflation, lower political instability, and higher levels of economic freedom. Democracies may also be associated with larger governments and less free international trade. There also appear to be country- and region-specific democracy-growth effects. Overall, democracy's net effect on the economy does not seem to be detrimental.

Huber (1993) suggested that any account of the social and economic conditions of democracy must come to terms with the central finding of the cross-national statistical research: a sturdy (though not perfect) association between economic development and democracy. To tackle these questions of causation, the study adopted a strategy of analytic induction based on comparative historical research. The comparative historical research confirmed the conclusion of the cross-national statistical analyses of the correlates of political democracy: the level of economic development is causally related to the development of political democracy. However, the underlying reason for the connection, in our view, is that capitalist development transforms the class structure, enlarging the working and middle classes and facilitating their self-organization, thus making it more difficult for elites to exclude them politically. In addition to this, development weakened the landed upper class, democracy's most consistent opponent.

Baeg Im (2011) examined that Koreans have worked hard to improve the quality of their democracy. They have promoted the rule of law, accountability, control of corruption, freedom, and responsiveness, and made an effort to make government more effective. The study also committed to economic freedom. In relation to the rule of law, significant attention has been devoted to reducing terrorism and violence, making government more effective, and enhancing regulatory quality. However, with regard to accountability, control of corruption, and transparency, Korea has still a long way to go. The analysis of democratization and improvements in the quality of democracy to date suggested that Korea has adapted to the changing economic environment and is sustaining its economic growth. This has been accompanied by social and economic polarization and a consequent demand for more and better welfare services.

Moehler (2010) analyzed very important question i.e. Can field experiments be productively employed to study the impact of development assistance on democracy and governance (D-G) outcomes? A small but growing number of practitioners and scholars, often working in partnership, are inventing a new research domain at the intersection of evaluation and political science. The study reviewed recent and ongoing D-G field experiments, and it offered lessons about the prospects and obstacles to the future development of a useful body of experimental evidence on the political economy of development.

Baviskar (2004) found in many recent studies that democracy means different things to different people. For some, democracy is a method of selecting leaders, protecting civil liberties and political rights, and upholding the rule of law. Other citizens have more expansive views of democracy, viewing it as a mechanism for promoting social equality and economic growth, for example. While such studies provide strong evidence that the concept 'democracy' is multidimensional, to date scholars have not explained why citizens think of democracy in myriad ways, and whether such differences matter. The aim of the study was to address these issues using data gathered from field research in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Guatemala in 2001. Through open-ended questions, it was asked from diverse groups of respondents what democracy meant to them. Relying upon answers to these questions, the study attempted to explain why respondents had such varying views of democracy, and examine the implications these conceptualizations of democracy have for regime stability.

Acemoglu (2008) observed a strong cross-country correlation between income and democracy but do not control for factors that simultaneously affect both variables. The study revealed that controlling for such factors by including country fixed effects removes the statistical association between income per capita and various measures of democracy. The study has used instrumental-variables estimates that also show no causal effect of income on democracy. The cross-country correlation between income and democracy reflects a positive correlation between changes in income and democracy over the past 500 years. This pattern was consistent with the idea that societies embarked on divergent political-economic development paths at certain critical junctures.

Biddle et al. (2010) observed that after the overthrow of the Taliban in 2001, the West has tried to build a strong centralized government in Afghanistan. But such an approach fits poorly with Afghanistan's history and political culture. A range of alternative models are possible, of which the two most realistic and acceptable in terms of U.S. security interests are decentralized democracy and a system of internal mixed sovereignty.

3. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Very few studies are available on Afghanistan economy in the absence of data. In this poor, underdeveloped country the data collection methods, procedures and infrastructure required for this purpose is non-existent. It is very difficult to make any policy recommendation without data and studies. Therefore, the present study is important to understand the feelings, expectations and perception of Afghan people about democracy. The level and quality of democracy in Afghanistan should be measured so that it could be used as an input for achieving desired socio-economic outcomes. This paper is devoted to the analysis of perception of Afghan people about the democracy. This analysis has been conducted with a view to identify the democratic forces so that the same can be strengthened with suitable strategies.

4. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The specific problem before us is to understand and measure the perception of Afghan people about existing democratic system, level of their faith in democracy and its institutions, perceived social or economic gains at personal/family/national level during the recent democratic rule.

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Considering the above stated problem, the specific objectives of this paper have been outlined to study the followings:

- The perception about election process in Afghanistan.
- The attitude of people towards democracy in Afghanistan.
- The level of trust in National institutions.
- The perception about seriousness of existing problems.
- The general direction of Afghan economy and society.
- The particular economic benefits at family level.

6. HYPOTHESES

The general hypothesis underlying the present study is that under democratic rule people get more opportunities to realize their economic goals. The particular null hypotheses chosen to be tested in this paper are given as below:

- The election process is not perceived as fair across provinces and ethnicities.
- People do not have a favorable attitude towards democracy.
- People do not have high trust in national institutions.
- The general socio economic condition in Afghanistan have not improved during democratic rule.
- There have been no economic benefits to individual families during democratic rule.

These hypotheses have been tested with the research methodology given in next section.

7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, we have mainly used the primary data to analyze the aforementioned objectives. A schedule of questions was developed to measure the perception about election process (PAEP), faith in democracy, accessibility of leaders to public and perception about future, the confidence in national institutions, the impact of democracy on socio-economic conditions, connectivity, economic benefits at family level and in general. All primary data was collected in person.

The primary data of 1200 respondents from five provinces of Afghanistan, namely - Balkh, Herat, Kabul, Jawzjan and Kandahar was collected. The equal numbers of 240 respondents have been chosen from each of the five provinces which have been selected to represent all ethnic groups. The respondents were chosen randomly in each province but to ensure that we get sufficient number across areas, languages, family types and land ownership so as to get significant results. All the data in the study, has been analyzed using software packages SPSS and Excel. We have used independent samples t-test for the significance of difference in statement-mean and assumed mean and F-test for One-Way ANOVA.

8. RESULTS, FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

Before analyzing the primary data collected from sample survey with schedule of questions, let us have a look at the change in some socio-economic variables during 2008-2018 given in Table-1 & 2.

TABLE 1: SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES OF AFGHANISTAN

Variables	2008	2018	Growth Rate (%)
Population	27294000	34940837	2.5
<15	44.60%	40.90%	-0.37
65+	2.40%	2.60%	0.02
Population density (no /sq miles)	128	138.70	1.07
Urban Population	22.90%	25.50%	0.26
LE (M)	43.6	50.6	0.70
LE (F)	44	53.6	0.96
BR per Thousand	46.2	37.5	-0.87
DR per Thousand	20	13.2	-0.68
IMR per Thousand	157.4	108.5	-4.89
HIV	<0.1%	<0.1%	
LR	28%	38.20%	1.02

Source: Book of Facts 2019, The World ALMANAC Books, New York

Afghanistan's ranking in term of democracy in 2018 is 143 and in terms of Human Development Index, it stands at 168th rank. Afghanistan has been witnessing a high population growth rate 2.51 during 2008 to 2018. We see that the young generation i.e. below 15 years has decreased during the said period which can be the effect of decrease in negative growth of birth rate (0.87). People above 65 years age are increasing at the rate of 2.6 percent. It is good to see that birth rate, death rate and Infant mortality rate (IMR) are decreasing. The Life Expectancy and Literacy Rates have shown marginal improvement in the selected period. The per capita income has shown remarkable improvement in the said period as we see that budget of the government has gone up more than three and a half times. We also observe the structural changes in the Afghan economy, as it seems that the labour is being shifted from the agriculture to industry. The growth rates of electricity generation, tourism and internet users show that the service economy in Afghanistan is expanding fast.

TABLE 2: SELECTED ECONOMIC VARIABLES OF AFGHANISTAN

Variables	2008	2018	Growth Rate
GDP(2004)	21.5	69.6	8.753
Per Capita GDP (2004)	\$800	\$2000	6.764
Budget (2005)	\$561million	\$ 5300 million	364.538
USD Rate (2007)	49.28 Afg	73.82Afg	2.929
Exports to India	22.10 %	56.50 %	2.646
Exports to Pakistan	21.10 %	29.60 %	0.654
Share of Labour in Agriculture	80.00 %	62.20 %	1.780
Share of Labour in Industry	10 %	31.10 %	2.110
Electricity Production	0.73 BKWH	1 BKWH	36.986
Tourism(1998)	\$ 1 milion	\$49milion	
Internet Users	535000	1465227	10.60

Source: Book of Facts 2019, The World ALMANAC Books, New York

The main export partners are India (46%), Pakistan (41%), Iran (3.1%), Iraq (2.1%), Turkey (1.9%) with total exports in 2018 was \$784 million and total imports was \$7.616 billion leading to a weak exchange rate. After this brief glimpse about the developments in last ten years, we shift our focus to the analysis of primary data.

8.1 Nature of Sample Data

Out of the total 1200 respondents 283 have been selected from rural areas and 917 are from urban areas. The share of urban population in Afghanistan is 26.7 per cent whereas in our sample the share is 76.2 per cent. It is reported that in the present study more number of respondent have been selected from urban area because of serious security, transport difficulties and boarding-lodging problems in rural areas. It can be justified on the ground that the democratic forces get better nurtured in the urban areas in initial phases. However, it is assumed that the disproportionate representation of rural-urban areas will not affect the quality of the study because the democracy process originates and develops mainly in urban areas.

There are 14 ethnic groups in Afghanistan namely, - Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Aymaq, Turkman, Baloch, Pashai, Nuristani, Gujjar, Arab, Brahui, Pamiri & others. The sample of this study comprises of five groups taking first four ethnicities and others as one group. It is estimated that the first four ethnicities have more than 75 per cent share in population. Although authentic data on ethnicities are not available, yet there are 483 Tajik, 407 Pashtun, 204 Uzbek, 58 Hazara and 48 others as respondents in our sample.

The official languages of Afghanistan are Dari (Farsi or Persian) and Pashto. Besides these, Uzbeki, Turkmani, Balochi and Pashayi are other dominant regional languages. In our sample, the respondents speaking Persian, Pashto, Uzbeki and Turkmani are 578, 408, 203 & 11 respectively.

The schedule used in the study was filled by me seeking information from two kinds of respondents such a head of the family and member of the family. In our sample 570 heads of the family responded and rest 630 were the members of families.

We have observed that the family structure also has an influence on the democratic thinking and beliefs. Therefore, in our sample three types of families have been taken. There are 860, 292 and 48 respondents from nuclear, joint, and extended families respectively. Out of 1200 respondents, 783 possess land and the rest have no land.

With this profile of the respondents, in the next section we shall discuss the analysis of the survey data with a view to understand the thoughts, feelings and perception of Afghan people about democracy.

Before, discussing the results it should be understood that a cross-section sample survey is a non-experimental data because there is no control group and there is no way to collect data like a before-after research design. Therefore, the present study measures the attitudes of the people after initiation of democratic process.

8.2 Analysis of Perception about Election Process in Afghanistan

Observing Table 3 and 4, it is found that the mean values of all the statements related with election process in Afghanistan are significant except the first one. These statements measure the perception of people with their level of agreement. From the first statement it's very clear that most people are confused whether Afghanistan is going in right direction. Even the province Kabul which is having the highest mean (3.46) is less than Agree.

TABLE 3: AVERAGE LEVEL OF AGREEMENT RELATED WITH ELECTION PROCESS STATEMENTS

Statement/Name of Province	BALKH	HEART	JAWZJAN	KABUL	KANDAHAR	Total
Generally Afghanistan is going in right direction	2.85 (1.29)	2.90 (1.29)	2.89 (1.55)	3.46 (1.32)	3.06 (1.34)	3.03 (1.38)
I take a lot of interest in local election	3.52 (1.02)	3.12 (1.31)	3.75 (1.11)	3.40 (1.24)	3.17 (1.34)	3.39 (1.23)
I take a lot of interest in national assembly elections	3.44 (1.00)	3.33 (1.30)	4.27 (0.83)	3.42 (1.26)	3.47 (1.34)	3.58 (1.21)
I take a lot of interest in presidential election	3.35 (1.13)	3.55 (1.30)	3.80 (1.29)	3.79 (1.23)	3.45 (1.45)	3.59 (1.29)
The election process is very satisfactory in our country	2.58 (1.30)	2.03 (1.18)	3.13 (1.46)	2.44 (1.29)	2.37 (1.21)	2.51 (1.34)
I will not cast my vote in next local/Assembly/Presidential elections.	2.81 (1.31)	1.91 (1.15)	2.39 (1.13)	1.69 (0.95)	1.63 (0.89)	2.09 (1.18)
Election is a good method for selecting leaders.	3.76 (1.41)	4.27 (1.05)	4.30 (1.02)	3.64 (1.32)	3.99 (1.24)	3.99 (1.24)
The elections are free and fair in Afghanistan.	2.73 (1.36)	2.14 (1.18)	3.18 (1.48)	2.50 (1.37)	2.36 (1.32)	2.58 (1.39)
Secrecy of votes and security of voters is very much ensured.	2.99 (1.38)	2.33 (1.08)	2.88 (1.34)	2.73 (1.17)	2.41 (1.15)	2.67 (1.26)
There is no influence of foreign powers on election process	2.61 (1.42)	2.09 (1.10)	2.12 (0.84)	2.37 (1.30)	2.08 (1.36)	2.25 (1.24)
Reduced foreign troops will affect the political situation	3.90 (1.10)	3.74 (1.18)	4.47 (0.90)	3.63 (1.27)	3.75 (1.23)	3.90 (1.18)
Afghanistan has very capable civil servants to implement policies.	3.34 (1.24)	3.16 (1.25)	3.66 (1.25)	3.57 (1.18)	3.06 (1.31)	3.36 (1.27)

Source: Computed by the researcher based on primary data

Figures in parentheses are standard deviations.

TABLE 4: AVERAGE AND SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL OF ELECTION PROCESS STATEMENTS (N=1200), d.f. =1199

Statements related with Election Process	Mean	t-ratio	Sig. (2-tailed)
Generally Afghanistan is going in right direction	3.033	0.816	0.414
I take a lot of interest in local election	3.393*	11.060	0.000
I take a lot of interest in national assembly elections	3.584*	16.724	0.000
I take a lot of interest in presidential election	3.591*	15.815	0.000
The election process is very satisfactory in our country	2.511*	-12.655	0.000
I will not cast my vote in next local/Assembly/Presidential elections.	2.086*	-26.768	0.000
Election is a good method for selecting leaders.	3.992*	27.611	0.000
The elections are free and fair in Afghanistan.	2.583*	-10.364	0.000
Secrecy of votes and security of voters is very much ensured.	2.668*	-9.168	0.000
There is no influence of foreign powers on election process	2.253*	-20.885	0.000
Reduced foreign troops will affect the political situation	3.896*	26.311	0.000
Afghanistan has very capable civil servants to implement policies.	3.358*	9.779	0.000

Source: Computed by the researcher based on primary data

*shows significant at 1% level

In this section, 14 statements have been included to understand the expected role of democracy by Afghan masses. Observing Table 5, we find that the mean values of all the statements related with attitude towards democracy in Afghanistan are significant except the 8th one (insignificant mean 3.028). We must respect the confusion of Afghan people regarding the way democracy works and their feeling about performance of democratically elected presidents (mean 2.933).

TABLE 5: AVERAGE AND SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL OF ATTITUDE TOWARDS DEMOCRACY (N=1200), d.f. =1199

Statements related with Attitude towards Democracy	Mean	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Political parties can be a source of unity in the country.	3.327*	9.091	0.000
Political parties create division & confusion among public of Afghanistan.	3.496*	14.759	0.000
The members of Assembly should make laws even if president disagree.	3.850*	27.298	0.000
Commander in war should be kept away from public offices.	4.053*	19.977	0.000
Religious leaders should be given important role in government decisions.	3.451*	12.828	0.000
People need more protection from government.	4.356*	48.967	0.000
The democratic presidents perform satisfactorily.	2.933**	-1.849	0.065
We are very satisfied with the way democracy works.	3.028	0.614	0.539
Sometimes use of violence is justified for a good cause in our country.	3.278*	7.924	0.000
Competition among political leaders/parties is very high.	4.158*	39.458	0.000
Populism level during election is very high	3.850*	23.095	0.000
We feel that democracy will get stronger in future.	3.551*	15.613	0.000
There is a threat of dictatorship to our country.	3.464*	13.574	0.000
Repression in the society is increasing	3.568*	17.321	0.000

Source: Computed by the researcher based on primary data

*shows significant at 1% level

**shows significant at 10% level

This is one of the most important question before us to peep inside the mind of people in Afghanistan and try to know by whom they want to be ruled. The underlying hypothesis is that if most of the population shows the preference for elected leaders as compared to tribal leaders then strong tendency for democracy must exist in the Afghan society. Four options were presented to the respondents as shown in Table 6. It is found that most of the people in Afghanistan want their leaders to be chosen through formal elections (47.7 %). This is quite soothing and gives us a strong hope about the future of democracy. It is also observed that slightly less number of persons want that their rulers should be experts like Educationists, Scientists, Engineers, Doctors, Lawyers etc. It is not known in what way these experts should be involved in ruling. One can only presume that people want a greater role of experts in democratic process in Afghanistan through selection in bureaucracy.

TABLE 6: PERCEPTION ABOUT WHO CAN RULE BETTER IN AFGHANISTAN

Who Can Rule Better in Afghanistan According to You	Frequency	%
Strong Leaders without Election	83	6.9
Experts like Educationists, Scientists, Engineers, Doctors, Lawyers etc.	502	41.8
Elders & Tribal Leaders	43	3.6
Leaders through Formal Elections	572	47.7
Total	1200	100.0

Source: Computed by the researcher based on primary data

The hopes, expectations and apprehensions of common people about future events reveal the reality of the present situation. It is heartening to know that people have little hope about good things to happen in future. On a scale of 1-5, the mean value is significantly slightly above (3.2792) the indeterminate towards agreement only for the last statements in Table 7. It means people have little hope that the next president will come through regular scheduled elections. It can be concluded that people are somewhere in between from agreement to indeterminate level for the statements about end of most serious fighting and settlement of issues with Taliban. The only ray of hope comes from the result of first statement which shows that people do not agree that the Taliban will be influential in the next elections.

TABLE 7: PERCEPTION ABOUT TALIBAN, CONFLICTS AND STABILITY (N=1200)

Statement	Mean	t-test	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Taliban will be influential in Afghan politics in next five years.	2.4937	-15.4628	0.0000	-0.5063
Most serious fighting will end in Afghanistan in next three years.	2.4542	-17.6664	0.0000	-0.5458
The government will settle all issues with Taliban in next three years.	2.3575	-21.2960	0.0000	-0.6425
Next president will come through regular scheduled elections.	3.2792	8.0196	0.0000	0.2792

Source: Computed by the researcher based on primary data

These results should be taken with a pinch of salt because recently, the Taliban have been found changing their position from extreme to center. One of the important features of a democracy is the faith of people in its institutions. The objectives of brotherhood, equality, harmony and peace cannot be achieved without the faith in the institutions which itself depends upon the justice, impartiality, concern and sympathy practiced by the institutions. The general level of confidence and trust of the people in national institutions of Afghanistan is low. As we observe in the Table 8, on a scale of 1-3, people have shown **some confidence** and trust in national institutions. The trust and faith is high for Afghan national army and police as the mean value is significantly high for both these forces (2.649 and 2.441). People have shown some confidence and trust in community development councils with high significance level. The significance level of the trust for provincial councils local customary leaders is poor. People pose some confidence in local commanders which is a part of the state. The credibility of President, Supreme Court and parliament is more than the political parties and Independent Election Commission. (Mean value 1.588). People generally don't trust the Taliban (1.230).

TABLE 8: LEVEL OF CONFIDENCE AND TRUST IN NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS (N=1200)

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
President	2.004	0.838	0.024	0.172	0.863	0.004
Parliament	1.809	0.740	0.021	-8.928	0.000	-0.191
Supreme Court	1.881	0.783	0.023	-5.269	0.000	-0.119
Independent Election Commission	1.588	0.768	0.022	-18.576	0.000	-0.412
Political Parties	1.653	0.823	0.024	-14.595	0.000	-0.347
District Governors	2.044	0.757	0.022	2.022	0.043	0.044
Provincial Councils	2.005	0.774	0.022	0.224	0.823	0.005
Local Customary Leaders	2.036	0.784	0.023	1.583	0.114	0.036
Community Development Councils	2.183	0.732	0.021	8.633	0.000	0.183
Afghan National Army	2.649	0.645	0.019	34.848	0.000	0.649
Afghan National Police	2.441	0.726	0.021	21.037	0.000	0.441
Local Commanders	1.956	0.857	0.025	-1.785	0.074	-0.044
Taliban	1.230	0.558	0.016	-47.805	0.000	-0.770

Source: Computed by the researcher based on primary data

In Table 9, the level of Accessibility of leaders to public has been measured on a scale of 1-5. We can see that people have only somewhat accessibility to the leaders. Only in the case of religious leader, a mean of 3.512 has been observed showing little higher accessibility. The situation of democracy is dismal on this parameter.

TABLE 9: LEVEL OF ACCESSIBILITY OF LEADERS TO PUBLIC

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Religious Leaders	3.512	1.195	0.034	14.834	0.000	0.512
Members of national assembly	3.227	1.148	0.033	6.839	0.000	0.227
Community Development Council Members	3.181	1.036	0.030	6.045	0.000	0.181
Provincial Councils	3.295	1.174	0.034	8.707	0.000	0.295
District Government (Woluswali)	2.951	1.097	0.032	-1.553	0.121	-0.049
Province Officials	3.324	1.232	0.036	9.112	0.000	0.324

Source: Computed by the researcher based on primary data

In Table 10, we have developed the average ranking of the problems according to their perceived seriousness by the respondents. The issues related with security, violence, terrorism, unemployment, poverty and poor economy have been considered most serious. The issues related with weak government and crime has been perceived as medium serious. The issues related with hard infrastructure like electricity, roads, health care, education and drinking water have been ranked as low serious.

TABLE 10: RANKING OF THE PROBLEMS IN AFGHANISTAN ACCORDING TO PERCEIVED SERIOUSNESS

Problem	Mean	Median	Mode	Sum	Average Rank
Security issues/violence/terrorism.	8.779	10	10	10535	1
Unemployment	7.920	8	9	9504	2
Poor economy and Poverty	7.279	8	8	8735	3
Government/weak authority/corruption	6.903	7	7	8283	4
Crime	5.079	5	6	6095	5
Lack of electricity	4.694	5	3	5633	6
Education/schools	4.679	5	5	5615	7
Roads	3.913	4	3	4695	8
Health care	3.612	3	2	4334	9
Drinking Water	2.270	1	1	2720	10

Source: Computed by the researcher based on primary data

We have enquired whether specific opportunities have emerged for the individual families due to democracy. The results are giving in Table 11.

TABLE 11: ECONOMIC BENEFITS TO FAMILIES IN AFGHANISTAN UNDER DEMOCRACY (All figures in %)

Economic Benefits	Yes	No	Can't Say
Our family member got a government job.	53.10	38.70	8.20
Our family member got a job in private sector.	54.20	38.80	7.00
Our family member got a new business opportunity in last 10 years.	34.10	58.00	7.90
Our family member got a new government contract in last 10 years.	20.70	70.80	8.60
Approval of loan from bank/Government in last 10 years.	20.90	70.60	8.50
God rid of private money lender.	50.80	36.20	12.90
Opportunity for individual development have emerged in last 10 years.	62.10	29.40	8.50

Source: Computed by the researcher based on primary data

The Socio-economic conditions after starting of democracy, on scale of 1-3 showing from worsened to improved, we have got a significant mean 2.343 indicating little but significant improvement. People have agreed that improvement has taken place in availability of water for drinking & irrigation; education of children & female; and electricity supply.

The conditions of all other parameters like freedom of movement, access to natural resources, domestic violence, violence by fundamentalists towards women, family stability, crime control, rule of law, control on bribery & corruption, justice and security have remained same after initiation of democracy as observed from the Table 12. Even the optimism and hope about future have remained same.

TABLE 12: IMPROVEMENT IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN AFGHANISTAN IN DEMOCRACY (All figures in %)

Socio-economic Condition Variable	Improved	About Same	Worsened
Generally economic condition in the country	58.6	17.1	24.3
Control on Bribery & corruption	29.1	29.3	41.6
Justice	20.0	40.3	37.7
Crime control	31.7	31.8	36.5
Availability of drinking water.	56.6	29.0	14.4
Water for irrigation	49.2	36.7	14.2
Supply of electricity	57.9	24.7	17.4
Security situation	22.3	27.8	49.9
Education for children	67.7	22.8	9.5
female education	69.2	18.8	12.0
Freedom of movement	47.1	25.2	27.7
Family stability	31.8	32.8	35.4
Domestic violence	36.8	32.8	30.4
Violence by fundamentalists towards women.	30.3	37.6	32.1
Rule of law	31.3	30.1	38.6
Hope/optimism for future.	36.6	28.2	35.2
Access to natural resources (pistachio/minerals/sand....etc)	42.2	32.2	25.5

Source: Computed by the researcher based on primary data

TABLE 13: IMPROVEMENT IN ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN AFGHANISTAN UNDER DEMOCRACY

Economic Condition	Improved	About Same	Worsened
Annual income	64.4	22.1	13.5
Annual saving.	50.3	32.9	16.8
Investment(land/property/shop/working capital/insurance)	50.8	35.6	13.6
Living standard	64.8	20.9	14.3
Availability of food Grains	61.8	25.0	13.2
Availability of Nutritious food(Milk or meet products)	65.2	22.3	12.5
Purchasing of clothes	68.8	22.2	9.0
Purchasing of shoes	66.9	21.8	11.2
Ownership of private vehicle.	69.7	22.2	8.1
Ownership of agriculture machines	46.6	63.7	9.8
Expenditure on marriage /social functions	65.0	18.8	16.2
Ownership of cattle (cow, sheep, goat)	44.0	42.9	13.1
Housing condition	62.2	25.8	12.1
Consumer durables (AC/TV/FRIDGE/WASHING MACHINE etc	78.8	13.8	7.3
Education of children	78.7	16,2	5.1
Health of family members	66.2	23.3	10.5
Entertainment	66.6	27.2	8.2
Status of family in society.	65.2	12.9	12.9

Source: Computed by the researcher based on primary data

9. CONCLUSIONS

The state of democracy in the Afghanistan is very poor. People generally do not trust their rulers and are waiting to get rid of terror of Talibans, undemocratic ways of Pashtuns who treat every other ethnicity lesser than themselves. Despite of all these weak points of democracy, whatever little freedoms people have got has shown that people are being benefited from increased economic activity. The survey has shown that all among categories, the standard of living of people has improved under the present brief democratic rule. The existing ruling party should plan to conduct the free and fair elections to strengthen the faith of people in democracy.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The faith of the people in election process along with safety of voters and secrecy need to be built up. Experts need to be engaged in various administrative processes who have rational, impartial, just and objective approach to the problems and are also viewed by common people in same image. The Taliban need to be shown their place in society by creative moral methods not by force and simultaneously need to be engaged in economic processes. The information dissemination to illiterates has to be done cautiously and selectively to build the nation.

11. LIMITATIONS

The present paper has successfully outlined the opinions, attitudes and perceptions of people regarding democracy and economic developments in Afghanistan. The study is mainly exploratory and descriptive. To analyze the relationships of two sets of variables belonging to two different disciplines, a more exhaustive framework is required which has been beyond the scope of this study. Despite of these limits, the study is important to gauge the behavior of Afghan people.

12. SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In future, one can study which ideology or which of their some of the components are closer to the ethos of people. What should be the strategy to establish a true people's democracy in Afghanistan which is compatible with their existing value system? How the economic systems and particularly market mechanism help in the development of democratic institutions? What should be done by Afghan society to avoid playing in the hands of unscrupulous international forces?

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