

**IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC FACTORS
AFFECTING RURAL UNDERDEVELOPMENT IN AFGHANISTAN****Fayaz Gul Mazloun Yar¹, Majid Yasouri², Aurelia Widya Astuti³**Nangarhar University¹University of Guilan²Politeknik Siber Cerdika Internasional³fmazloumyar@gmail.com¹, arlphlmn04@gmail.com³**Keywords**Development, Rural,
Afghanistan, Poverty,
Development Challenges,
Economy**Abstract**

Developing countries often face the challenge of underdeveloped rural areas, resulting in adverse impacts such as poverty, unemployment and migration. Therefore, it is very important to prioritize rural development and improve the living conditions of rural residents. This research aims to identify and analyze economic factors that contribute to village underdevelopment in Afghanistan. This research uses a combination of field studies, Expert Choice software, interviews with experts, and credible library sources for data collection. The statistical population consists of experts, university professors, and individuals involved in rural economic development. We collected data through face-to-face interviews and questionnaires. We used confirmatory factor analysis and coefficient of variation for data analysis. These findings reveal that there are several factors that contribute to rural underdevelopment in Afghanistan. These factors include management problems, especially the prevalence of unskilled labor in rural economic activities. Financial problems, such as inadequate credit and investment in rural areas, also play a role. Limited social participation and low involvement of women in rural activities are other contributing factors. Environmental problems, such as inappropriate use of underground water resources, further exacerbate this problem. In addition, physical challenges, such as weak or non-existent rural-urban communication networks and other related problems, also contribute to rural underdevelopment. Addressing and overcoming these fundamental barriers and challenges is critical to achieving rural development and overall national development. Furthermore, this research identifies key factors of rural development in the economic sector.

Corresponding Author: Fayaz Gul Mazloun YarE-mail: fmazloumyar@gmail.com**INTRODUCTION**

Almost half of the world's population lives in rural regions, and a significant percentage of them live in poverty (Adimassu et al., 2013). The majority of poverty is found in rural areas, where people often have limited access to healthcare, education, and other essential services. In developing nations, rural development is a fundamental and essential approach to achieving sustainable development (Fayez et al., 2022). Furthermore, as highlighted by the United Nations World Social Report 2021, it is an essential prerequisite for achieving the objectives outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Reducing poverty in emerging nations, particularly in rural communities, is a significant planning challenge that requires thoughtful consideration of village development and poverty eradication. Rural development is threatened by environmental instability, such as drought, resource scarcity, social unrest, unemployment, and a struggling economy (Adimassu et al., 2013). Food security and revenue from natural resources have been impacted by humanitarian interventions, necessitating a shift from conventional livelihood patterns to sustainable ones that meet current demands (Caniato et al., 2017).

In addition to economic expansion, rural development involves adapting rural regions to social and political institutions, human behaviour, and community involvement in the development process (Borodina, 2019). Achieving sustainable rural development is crucial for attaining sustainable development goals and improving the quality of life for rural populations. Villages are important hubs of social, cultural, and economic diversity in Afghanistan (GHazali & Zibaei, 2018). However, rural areas in the nation face several challenges that contribute to poverty, social injustices, and the unsustainable depletion of natural resources while also negatively impacting rural society. According to researchers, Afghanistan's poverty rate is more than 54.5% and continues to increase. Moreover, 90 per cent of those who live in rural areas, where 75 per cent of the population resides, struggle with food insecurity (GHazali & Zibaei, 2018). With 71% of the population engaged in agriculture or animal care, villages serve as Afghanistan's primary economic centres (NSIA, 2020).

Afghanistan's current challenges include income inequality, increasing poverty rates, food shortages, limited participation, inadequate investment in rural areas, inadequate infrastructure, and deficiencies in rural housing programs (Walelign et al., 2017). Afghan officials and politicians need to reevaluate their approaches to rural development, placing a strong emphasis on reducing disadvantage and inequality among the rural poor. Eighty per cent of Afghans living in rural regions work in agriculture or animal husbandry (NSIA, 2020). There has not been enough scientific investigation conducted in this area previously. Prioritizing rural development is essential, given the economic and social obstacles that Afghan communities face. This means creating efficient infrastructure, managing people better, and offering the right services to increase agricultural output. These actions are essential for promoting overall development in Afghanistan, achieving regional balance, and enhancing rural development (Fayez et al., 2022).

Given the significance of rural development in Afghanistan for the country's overall progress, it is crucial to evaluate the challenges and obstacles in this field (Javadi et al., 2013). This study aims to identify and examine the economic factors that contribute to the underdevelopment of rural areas in Afghanistan, as there is a lack of research in this field. Understanding the difficulties and potential solutions for development in Afghan villages will be enhanced by the insights provided by the research, particularly in terms of promoting sustainable development and reducing instability in these areas (GHazali & Zibaei, 2018).

This study aims to analyze the successful characteristics of rural development in Afghanistan to support development plans and policies in rural regions. According to the research, there is a unique relationship between economic conditions and the growth or underdevelopment of Afghan villages. It is anticipated that the findings of this study will contribute to readers' understanding of the challenges and possible solutions related to the development of Afghan villages.

RESEARCH METHOD

Primary data was used in this survey-style study. In this study, the Expert Choice program and a questionnaire served as the primary instruments. The dimensions of the software were evaluated, and a preliminary questionnaire was developed by reviewing relevant literature and established theories in the field of study. There were two phases in the execution of the questionnaire for the research. Indicators that contribute to the underdevelopment of villages were identified independently in the first step. These indicators, which were derived from background data, international organizations, and research literature, were developed based on their direct impact on village underdevelopment. For each indicator, a questionnaire was created, and the Likert scale was used to assess the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the variables. After collaborating with thirty experts, including Afghan rural development professionals and university academics, a final set of indicators was agreed upon. These specialists were also asked to identify additional potential causes of underdevelopment in the village and assess their significance. A combination of two objective judgment techniques and snowball sampling was used to identify experts in the field. In the second stage, the hierarchical analysis

approach was employed to determine the priority and relative importance of the identified indicators. This approach is well-known for assisting individuals in making decisions on complex problems that involve multiple factors. Because it can consider both qualitative and quantitative criteria, it is useful for generating practical solutions to complex problems.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Economic Factors Affecting the Underdevelopment of Afghanistan

Based on the economic variables influencing Afghanistan's underdevelopment, the results show that the most significant sub-index is economic growth, with a weight of 0.295. With a value of 0.194, the productivity index ranks second, while the employment and income index ranks third with a coefficient of 0.159. The coefficients for import and export are 0.88 and 0.93, respectively, ranking them fourth and fifth. With a coefficient of 0.87, the sub-index for production and consumption patterns ranks sixth. The financial index ranks seventh with a coefficient of 0.87, while transportation ranks eighth with a coefficient of 0.83. The inconsistency rate for the paired rank of the economic environment sub-indices is 0.06, which demonstrates the reliability of the findings in this area. Table 1 presents the order and priority of the sub-indices of the economic environment for each group.

Table 1 the order and priority of the following economic indicators related to each group are specified below

Dimensi	Dimensi	About the indicators	weight	Inconsistency rate under indicators	Incompatibility rate of the economic environment
Economic Growth	0.295	Low per capita production of agricultural products	0.319	0.07	0.06
		The small amount of public investment	0.318		
		Inconsistency of the average level of household income	0.158		
		Inadequacy of cultivated area per capita	0.124		
		In a small % of the area under water cultivation	0.080		
Productive	0.194	Low agricultural productivity	0.775	0	
		Yield per hectare of agricultural products	0.225		
Employment and income	0.159	The burden of takaful	0.295	0.04	
		Total lack of job opportunities	0.161		
		The small ratio of working women to working men	0.146		
		Lack of livelihood diversity and ways of earning income	0.133		
		The amount of savings per capita	0.130		
		Low level of job stability	0.090		
		Low-income satisfaction	0.044		
Export and Import	0.093	The amount of local consumption products	0.093	-	
Production and consumption pattern	0.088	The ratio of using local production institutions	-	0	
		Annual water consumption in agricultural - industrial - domestic sectors separately for each sector	0.709		
Financial	0.087	High interest rates and strict guarantee conditions	0.291	0	

Dimensi ons	Dimensi ons weight	About the indicators	weight	Inconsistency rate under indicators	Incompatibility rate of the economic environment
		Lack of access to limited financial resources	0.684		
Transportation	0.083	Access to public transportation (Security of public to private vehicles (accidents	0.352 0.704	0.01	
		The volume of the loaded cargo	0.191		

It is evident from the available research on developing villages that various factors contribute to this issue (Junankar et al., 2016). Nevertheless, this research has not given enough consideration to economic concerns. Although studies have been carried out in many nations, none specifically cover Afghanistan. The importance of this study, therefore, lies in its examination of economic variables that have been overlooked in previous research and publications. However, they contribute to the underdevelopment of Afghan villages.

Afghanistan's rural regions are vital to the nation's economy because they serve as important centres of commerce, a key source of food and raw resources, and contribute to the GDP (Ge et al., 2021). Nonetheless, some issues, such as poverty, inequality, unemployment, and migration, impact these rural regions, highlighting the importance of prioritizing rural development over urban development (Ge et al., 2021). In Afghanistan, villages face harsh living conditions characterized by the depletion of natural resources and the environment, poverty, unemployment, and limited access to healthcare and education (Mirlotfi & Jahantigh, 2016).

According to researchers, enhancing rural development is crucial for generating employment opportunities and increasing income levels in communities (Banakar & Patil, 2018). The current government should prioritize expanding access to agricultural markets, promoting youth employment in rural areas, addressing social and health issues, improving rural infrastructure, and implementing efficient management techniques to achieve sustainable rural development (Danish et al., 2014). It is equally crucial for the local population to actively engage in development by understanding the principles of sustainable development and making efficient use of the available resources.

Afghanistan's population is predominantly rural (70%). Therefore, developing the country's villages is essential for achieving sustainable development (Azizi & Daqiq, 2019). Nevertheless, there are several obstacles to rural development in Afghanistan, including rapid population growth, poverty, insecurity, low productivity, unemployment, and limited access to education (Safi, 2023). Ensuring public access to production factors and social amenities, as well as investing in rural infrastructure, is crucial to overcoming these problems. By promoting robust economic growth, productivity, employment, and income generation, rural development seeks to fundamentally transform Afghanistan's economic structure (Azizi & Daqiq, 2019). Afghanistan has a GDP per capita of less than USD, classifying it as an underdeveloped country, according to the World Bank (Shah & Solangi, 2019). In rural regions, agriculture serves as the primary source of income and sustenance for people. However, the use of outdated techniques hampers productivity and hinders development (Nyoro, 2019). Afghanistan's agricultural potential can be utilized to enhance worker productivity, ensure food security, and offer higher wages and job opportunities. It is essential to reevaluate agricultural production patterns, employ innovative techniques, and utilize cutting-edge technologies to achieve sustainable development.

CONCLUSION

Rural growth is also greatly influenced by the social environment, and literacy and education are two crucial components of this. People who have received an education are better able to function in the workforce and provide significant economic benefits. To address the scarcity of professionals, it is necessary to encourage skill development and promote public education. Reducing poverty is the primary goal of rural development, which requires the establishment of vital infrastructure and ensuring access to education. Revised 2: To promote rural development, attention should be given to increasing financial resources for the educational system, providing free education, supporting teachers and professors financially, improving educational infrastructure and curriculum quality, motivating students and teachers, enhancing teachers' knowledge through continuous training, ensuring gender equality in education, facilitating access to information and communication technology in schools, providing free facilities for the underprivileged, strengthening monitoring and evaluation of students, repairing rural roads, preserving the environment, reducing the depletion of natural resources, promoting sustainable agriculture through modern methods, enacting and implementing environmental protection laws, strengthening environmental protection organizations, attracting university graduates in various fields, raising awareness about the importance of the environment, developing job opportunities, reducing unemployment, implementing family planning programs, and emphasizing sustainable agriculture through the preservation of natural resources. Reason 2: The revised text corrects grammar and punctuation errors, improves vocabulary and clarity, and enhances readability. These measures can contribute to sustainable rural development in Afghanistan, laying the foundation for long-term economic and social growth.

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