

# Livelihood Opportunities and Its Impact on Women in The Rural Areas of Afghanistan

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## ABSTRACT

If women in rural areas have access to land, technology, financial services, education and markets like men, agricultural and non-agriculture (industry & services) production can be increased significantly, and the number of poor can be significantly reduced and impact the wellbeing of women in the rural areas. This paper aims to identify the possible livelihood opportunities for the poor people in the rural areas of Afghanistan, considering the current situation of the country, it requires to bring back at the center of focus to study the feasible livelihood opportunities and how it impacts the wellbeing of women in the rural areas of Afghanistan. Household headed women are in dire need in the rural areas of Afghanistan particularly after the collapse of the republic government after some of the restrictions were imposed on women. For analyzing the primary data model will be used for analyzing to determine the relationship between livelihoods opportunities and women lives in agricultural sector in rural areas of Afghanistan.

**Keywords-** Livelihoods opportunities, women empowerment, economic growth impact, rural areas of Afghanistan.

## I. INTRODUCTION

This research aims to study various sectors, including agriculture, non-agriculture, and industry and services, to identify livelihood opportunities and their impact on the wellbeing and livelihood of rural and poor women in Afghanistan. (Ieao, I. et al (2018). It will also touch on constraints analysis practices and propose a framework for conceptual opportunities, focusing on household-headed and poor women and those involved in making their livelihoods in rural areas Moser, C. O (2008). Agriculture and livestock are the primary income sources for women in Afghanistan's rural areas, but they face challenges like natural disasters, lack of market, hardships, and cultural norms. These barriers affect women's wellbeing and make it difficult for them to adopt these livelihoods. Lalzai, F (2023). Alternative means of livelihood are needed to support women's economic wellbeing and ensure their continued economic growth. (Bloch and Tang, 2003);. This research explores livelihood opportunities for poor women in rural Afghanistan, focusing on agriculture and non-agriculture

sectors. It highlights the need to identify suitable activities like home-based businesses, entrepreneurship, and The majority of the world's impoverished population lives in rural areas, facing challenges like climate change, declining crop prices, land access limitations, and fewer job opportunities. Despite various development initiatives, these efforts have not helped impoverished rural communities create sustainable livelihoods. Sustainable livelihood is crucial for long-term growth and development of nations and societies. Developed and developing nations are working towards sustainable livelihoods, which help manage resources, integrate development methods, and eradicate poverty. Sustainable living is essential for long-term livelihood prospects and benefits for other local and global livelihoods. (Gramlich, 1994). (Strand and Olesen, 2005). The "sustainable livelihood approach" focuses on rural livelihoods, emphasizing social capital as the primary capital of cultured communities. Religious and spiritual components, such as rituals, are recognized as forms of social capital that support local livelihood systems. Rituals serve as a platform for community engagement

and organizing social movements, contributing to poverty alleviation and reconstructing social norms. Meyer (2013) highlights the role of ritual capital in developing social capital. Afghanistan, a developing country, has a high poverty rate, with over 54.5 % of its population living in poverty. The Covid-19 pandemic and Recent government settlement drought have led to a decline in food and livelihood security, with farmers and herders resorting to negative strategies like begging, debt, asset sales, and livestock sales in Afghanistan. The agricultural industry provides a living for around 12.9 million people, or 90% of the population, in rural regions. The sustainable livelihood approach focuses on people's access to economic capital and how they combine and grow these assets to make a living. Pedroni (2008) Azim Mommand 2022 et; al. However, recent conflicts have made Afghanistan one of the poorest countries in the world, particularly in rural areas. This Research aims to identify and design a complementary approach to sustainable livelihood in the Agriculture and Non- Agriculture area, as no research has been conducted in these area.

## II. HYPOTHESIS

**H01:** There is a significant impact of agriculture sectors (livestock, sustainable agriculture, alternative livestock production systems, demand for livestock products, employment opportunities, supporting the global agriculture industry, and adaptation to climate change) on women in rural Afghanistan.

**H02:** There is a significant impact of non-agricultural sectors (livestock, off-farm employment, rural self-employment, non-farm activities, agricultural value chains, peri-urban regions, and agriculture hubs) on women in rural Afghanistan.

**H03:** Livelihood opportunities process media mediates relationship between agriculture and non-agricultural sectors for women in rural areas of Afghanistan.

## III. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The persistence of this study is to assess the livelihood opportunities in Agriculture and Non-Agriculture area for women in rural areas of Afghanistan. in livestock's and make possible, workable recommendations. The research has played a significant role in pointing out major agriculture and non-agriculture challenges that create a bottleneck for women in rural areas of Afghanistan. Through the identification of the major parameters that will help with the growth of the livestock sector, the country can get the maximum benefit in terms of livelihood opportunities for women in rural areas of Afghanistan, which remains secure, having secured competitive advantages over others. Therefore, this study could serve as an input for women in rural areas to understand market opportunities and ways to improve their competitiveness. Moreover, most major Afghan agriculture and non-agriculture industries, especially

those with livestock for women in rural areas of Afghanistan. Thus, it can be used as an input in order to assist its members. Furthermore, the outcome of this study can be used as a reference document for further research into women's livelihood activities in the rural areas of Afghanistan.

## IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Livelihood resources and opportunities are crucial for women in rural Afghanistan, and many scholars have investigated these issues. During the previous government's (2001–2021) tenure, women were a focus of humanitarian aid, with organizations like the World Bank, USAID, and UN implementing projects for well-being and sustainable livelihoods (Morse, 2013). Morse identified livelihood opportunities in all provinces of Afghanistan, emphasizing the importance of building capacity for poor people to utilize available resources and promoting rural industrialization (Adam et al., 2002). The project "Addressing livelihood in Afghanistan" by Pain (2002) found that community-level capacity building can reduce agriculture dependency and livestock husbandry, allowing new widows to support their families. Adman utilized secondary data and qualitative research methodology for his study. The article "Agro-business Sustainability and Sub-Sector Viability in Afghanistan" highlights the crucial role of women in economic contribution and job creation in rural Afghanistan. It emphasizes the need for capacity building and knowledge improvement in remote areas (Jaim & Rehman, 1988; Bloch & Tang, 2003; Strand & Olesen, 2005; Jo Ann, 2013).

Intel's research paper on "Fostering Education for Female Out-of-School Youth in Afghanistan" underscores the potential of training females in schools and informal institutions even during emergencies. USAID implemented this under the Afghan Primary Education Program, educating 17,000 youth, women, and girls in northern Afghanistan between 2003 and 2005. The research by Jo Ann (2013) suggests that trained women can improve their livelihoods and support their families, particularly through women self-help groups (WSHGs) focusing on livelihood diversification and women empowerment in rural areas. Results showed that the monthly income of targeted beneficiaries increased by over 50%, demonstrating the fruitful role of women's self-help microcredit in improving women's livelihoods.

Afghanistan's agriculture sector, contributing nearly \$10 billion in revenue, is highly productive with over 130 crops grown in the Central region. The sector is vital for the state's economic health, involving 37,100 unique farms across 15.3 million acres. The Kabul Department of Conservation supports agricultural land preservation. Biodiversity, a crucial concept since the 1992 Rio de Janeiro summit, is essential for conservation in agricultural and protected areas. The research by Morse (2013) discusses assessment tools like biodiversity

indexes, biotic indicators, and models to evaluate farm practices' impact on biodiversity.

This research proposes a method to calculate the probability of drought affecting a significant proportion of agricultural areas at a sub-national level, utilizing the Vegetation Health Index (VHI). The method, aggregated for sub-national areas, shows a valid drought indicator for all provinces in Afghanistan, highly correlated with drought events from 1981-2009 (Jaim & Rehman, 1988; Grace, 2004).

Livestock, referring to domesticated animals raised for various products, plays a crucial role in Afghanistan's agriculture. Investment opportunities in agriculture stocks, including ADM Archer Daniels Midland, Corteva, Nutrien, Bunge, CF Industries, Calavo Growers, The Andersons, Inc., Adecoagro S.A., Compass

Minerals International, Inc., and Dole plc, are explored (Jaim & Rehman, 1988; Grace, 2004).

The study reveals a significant increase in demand for livestock products in Afghanistan, particularly milk and milk products, due to the country's large population and growing income. Traceability is examined for its role in demand-oriented meat and livestock production, emphasizing the need for information and transparency in food chains. The study highlights the importance of market orientation, substantiation of benefits, and effective management of information flows (Jaim & Rehman, 1988; Grace, 2004). The demand for livestock products is driven by factors such as population growth, income growth, urbanization, and changing dietary habits.

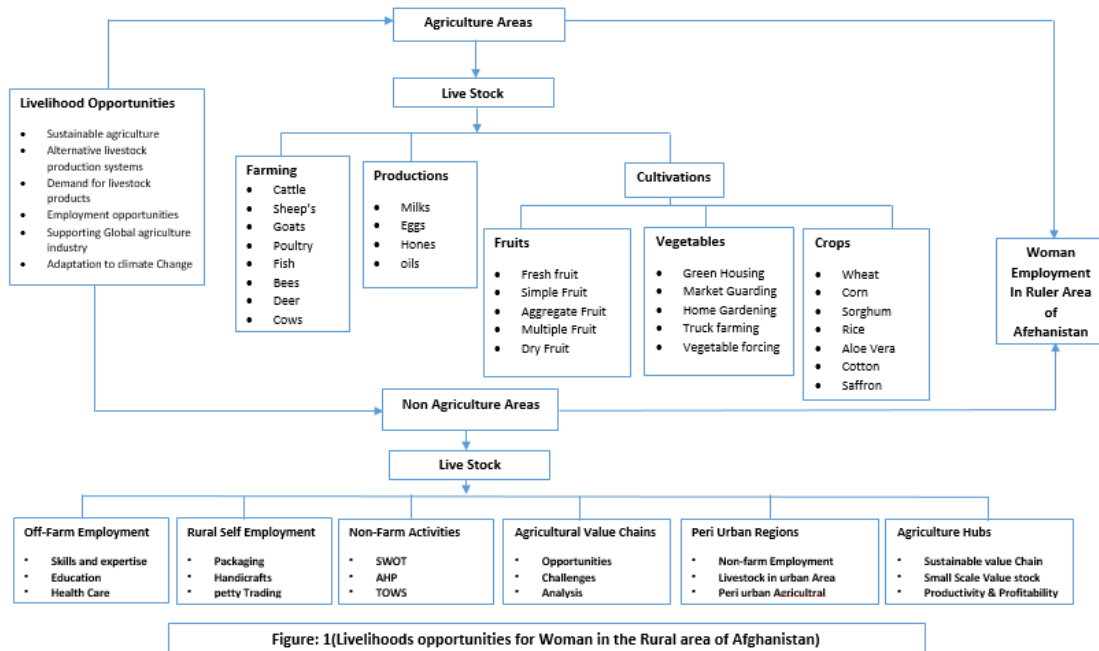


Figure: 1(Livelihoods opportunities for Woman in the Rural area of Afghanistan)

## V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

**Research Design:** This research design deductive approach to analyze the aim of this research is to determine Livelihood Opportunities and Its Impact on women in the rural areas of Afghanistan.

**Population:** The study focused provide comprehensive insights on the female population gender to get their livelihood. Similar findings of the reliability statistics were there in the Stanikzai, A. J. (2023)

**Source of Data:** The study collected both primary and secondary data.

**Primary Data Collection:** Primary data was obtained through questionnaires from Women in the rural areas of Afghanistan

**Secondary Data Collection:** Secondary data was gathered from various sources, including articles, textbooks, journals, newspapers and websites.

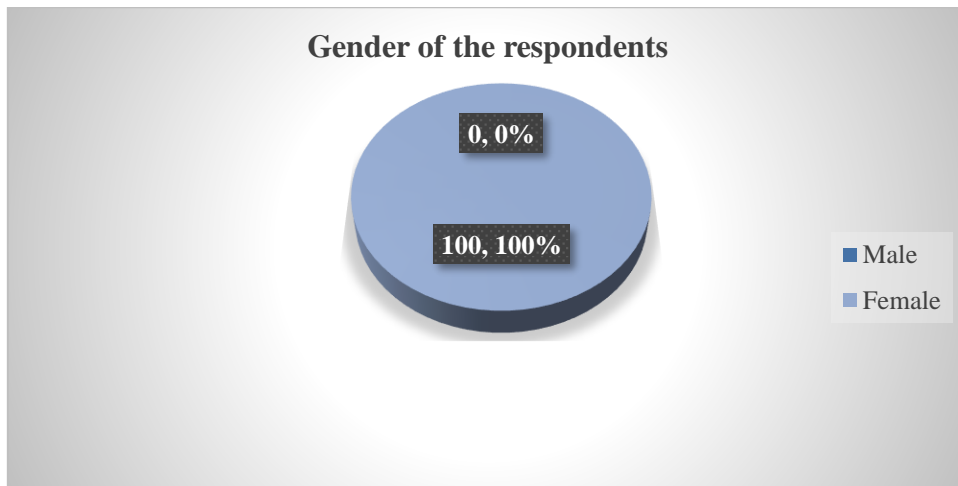
**Data Analysis:** Data analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Data processing included editing, coding, and tabulation. 44 completed questionnaires were collected. Data was entered into the latest version of SPSS for analysis. Jamali, A. (2023).

## VI. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter endeavors to unveil the outcomes derived from the gathered data, aligning them with the predetermined research objectives and questions. Within the realm of employee motivation, several personal attributes, including qualifications, employment level, and years of experience, are recognized as potential influencing factors. The subsequent section provides a detailed demographic analysis to better understand the interplay of these variables.

**Table-1 Gender of the respondents**

Gender of the respondents				
Particulars	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	0	0	0
	Female	44.0	44.0	100
	Total	44	100.0	100.0



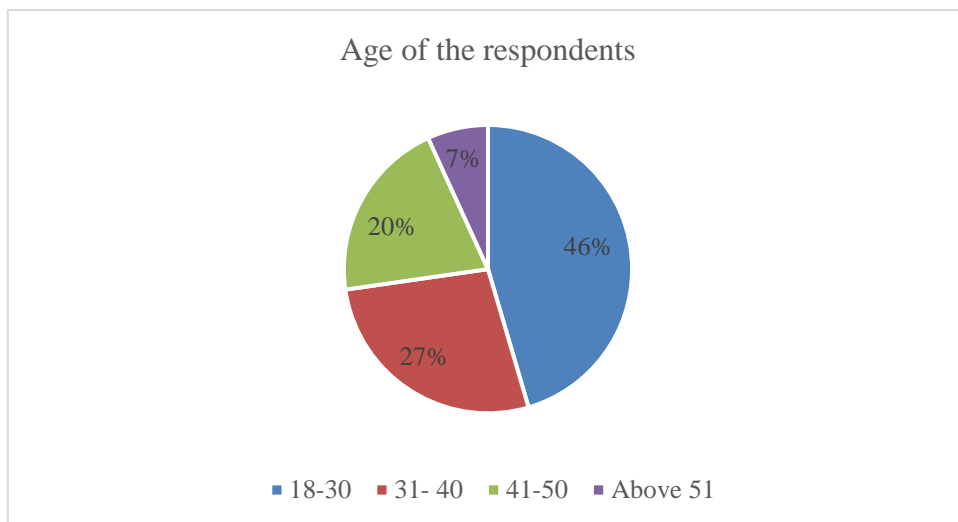
**Figure 1: Gender of the respondents**

Table-1 depicted the gender distribution of the respondents in the study. The entire sample comprises females, constituting 100% of the participants. The cumulative percent column confirms that all respondents

fall within the female category, emphasizing the exclusive focus on this demographic in the research. The total sample size is 44 participants, providing a clear overview of the gender composition in the study.

**Table-2 Socio Economics information of the respondents**

Age of the Respondents					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-30	20	45.45	45.45	45.45
	31- 40	12	27.27	27.27	72.72
	41-50	9	20.45	20.45	93.17
	Above 51	3	6.83	6.83	100
	Total	44	100.0	100.0	



**Figure 2: Age of the respondents**

Table-2 presented the socio-economic information about the respondents in the study. The majority of participants, 45.45%, fall within the age group of 18-30, followed by 27.27% in the 31-40 age range. Additionally, 20.45% are between 41-50 years old, and a

smaller percentage, 6.83%, are above 51. The cumulative percent column illustrates the distribution across age groups, with a total sample size of 40 respondents. This data provides insights into the demographic composition of the study participants.

**Table 3: The demand for Livelihood opportunities in the domestic market has increased from time to time in Afghanistan**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not Sure	12	27.0	27.0	27.0
	Agree	22	50.0	50.0	77.0
	Strongly Agree	10	23.0	23.0	100.0
	Total	44	100	100	

Table 3 showed that represents the surveyed of the population on the demand for livelihood opportunities in the domestic market in Afghanistan. The majority, 50%, agreed that the demand has increased, with an

additional 23% strongly agreed. Notably, 27% are unsure about the trend. The cumulative percent column shows the progression of responses through the table. The total sample size is 44 participants.

**Table 4: The global market demand for Fruits, Vegetables, Carpets, Dry Fruit and Fresh Fruit has a direct impact on female in rural area of Afghanistan**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not Sure	5	11.0	11.0	11.0
	Agree	15	34.0	34.0	45.0
	Strongly Agree	24	55.0	55.0	100.0
	Total	44	100	100	

Table 4 indicated the survey responses regarding the impact of global market demand for specific items on females in rural areas of Afghanistan. The majority, 55%, strongly agree that the demand for Fruits, Vegetables, Carpets, Dry Fruit, and Fresh Fruit directly affects women. Additionally, 34% agree, while 11% are unsure about the connection. The cumulative percent column tracks the progression of responses through the table, and the total sample size is 44 participants.

on employee motivation. The demographic analysis, specifically focusing on gender distribution, age groups, and perceptions of livelihood opportunities in the domestic and global markets, provides a comprehensive understanding of the participants. Notably, the entire sample comprises females, emphasizing the exclusive focus on this demographic in the study. The findings reveal diverse perspectives on the demand for livelihood opportunities and the impact of global market demand on females in rural areas of Afghanistan. These insights contribute valuable information to the broader discussion on employee motivation and socio-economic dynamics in the specified context.

## VII. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, providing women in rural areas with equal access to resources like land, technology, financial services, education, and markets can significantly enhance both agricultural and non-agricultural (industry and services) production. Ashipala and Haimbodi's (2003) findings reinforce the potential impact on poverty reduction and the overall well-being of women in rural areas. Given the current challenges in Afghanistan, this research underscores the need to refocus attention on studying viable livelihood opportunities and their influence on the well-being of rural women. The situation is particularly critical for household-headed women who face increased hardships, exacerbated by recent developments in the country, this chapter has delved into the outcomes of the research, shedding light on the significant influence of personal attributes such as qualifications, employment level, and years of experience

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. This study delves into the role of extension educators in Afghanistan, specifically focusing on the lives of women in rural areas.
2. It addresses the challenges faced by these women and evaluates the sustainability of extension projects. In light of these findings, the following recommendations are proposed.

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