

## Impact of Urbanization on the Standard of Living of Farmers in Injil District of Herat Province

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### ABSTRACT

This research was conducted to study the Impact of urbanization on farmers' living standards in the Injil district of Herat province of Afghanistan in 2019. Based on the research requirements, four villages within the radius of five kilometers of districts' centers as villages with high urban influence and four villages outside the five kilometers of districts' centers as villages with low urban influence have been selected. Ten farmers (a total of 80 farmers) were randomly selected from each town. An ex post facto research design was applied to this research. Pre-prepared questionnaires were distributed to the respondents, collected data were analyzed statistically, and the findings showed that forty percent of the farmers in the villages with high urban influence had high living standards. 30% and 20% of farmers in villages with high and low urban influence have taken up non-agricultural activities and turned to business. 95% of the farmers mentioned high production costs as the main reason for changing jobs to non-agricultural activities. This was followed by other reasons, such as the non-existence of a special market for agricultural products (90.00%). Ninety percent of the farmers continued their agricultural activities due to financial constraints, and 76.25% did not know about other jobs.

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**To cite this article:** Fazely, A. S., & Ghoryar, M. A. (2024). Impact of Urbanization on the Standard of Living of Farmers in Injil District of Herat Province. *Journal of Natural Science Review*, 2(Special Issue), 527–536. <https://doi.org/10.62810/jnsr.v2iSpecial.Issue.153>

**Link to this article:** <https://kujnsr.com/JNSR/article/view/153>



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### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received: Mar 23, 2024

Revised: Aug 11, 2024

Accepted: Nov 10, 2024

#### Keywords:

Farmers; Impact; Standard of living; Urban influence; Urbanization

### Introduction

Agriculture is the largest sector of economic activity in Afghanistan and plays a crucial role in the country's economic development by providing food, raw materials, and employment to a large portion of the population. The technological transformation of agriculture has had much more significant effects and has operated as a push-pull on the city-wide movement of people.

Urbanization is defined as the shift from a rural to an urban society and involves an increase in the number of people in urban areas during a particular year. Urbanization results from socio-economic and political developments that lead to urban concentration, large cities' growth, land use changes, and a transformation from rural to metropolitan patterns of organization and governance. With heavy migration from rural to urban areas, there have been significant changes in land utilization, and land converted to urban uses is increasing.

The rapid conversion of agricultural land due to urbanization negatively impacts the agricultural sector. Urbanization is one of the powerful social forces that may greatly affect a society. Urbanization and the misuse of agricultural land is a problem in all developing countries, where population growth and rural-to-urban migration rates are high. Urbanization increases the residential population and the expansion of non-farm businesses and industries, increasing the pressure on farmers and making traditional farming costlier and more difficult. At the same time, urbanization also creates opportunities for alternative, higher-value enterprises to take advantage of nearby urban markets and promotes commercial agriculture. However, urban infrastructure expansion reduces cropland areas, with urban development converting agricultural land into residential and commercial areas.

Urbanization not only causes the expansion of residential areas but also indirectly changes landholding patterns. Urban societies have a strong need for a wide range of facilities and services, such as health centers, schools, universities, sports fields, government and private offices, social and commercial offices, and transportation infrastructure, compared to rural societies.

When the demand for land development is high, land value exceeds its agricultural utility, and landowners prefer to avoid using their land in the agricultural sector. This trend causes land prices to rise, leading to the conversion of agricultural land into residential and industrial areas. The local agricultural economy suffers as agricultural land is taken out of production. Although farmers may be pleased with the increased value of their land, especially if they consider it capital for retirement and their children do not wish to continue farming, food security remains a major challenge closely tied to urbanization. The impact of urbanization on agriculture also relates to the consumption patterns of city populations. Rising incomes lead to higher consumption and increased pressure on natural resources, particularly in developed countries. As rural populations migrate to urban areas, agricultural output decreases. Conversely, agricultural production remains higher when farmers stay in rural areas, emphasizing the need to invest in rural infrastructure.

The 2005 Revision of the UN World Urbanization Prospects report described the 20th century as witnessing "the rapid urbanization of the world's population," with the global urban population proportion rising dramatically from 13 percent (220 million) in 1900, to 29 percent

(732 million) in 1950, and to 49 percent (3.2 billion) in 2005. The report indicated this figure could rise to 60 percent (4.9 billion) by 2030 (Anonymous, 2011).

According to Dubey (1972), "urbanization" implies the movement of people to urban areas. Thompson (1935) used the term in the same sense, writing that "urbanization" is characterized by movement of people from small communities concerned chiefly or solely with agriculture to other communities, generally larger, whose activities are primarily centered in governments, trade, manufacture, or allied interests.

Jacobson and Ved Prakash (1971) defined urbanization as a phenomenon describing a change in population status due to changing societal conditions. Gerald (1969) described urbanization "as a process of becoming urban, moving to cities, changing from agriculture to other pursuits common to cities, and the corresponding change in behavioral patterns."

Anderson (1964) stated, "When we speak of urbanization, the assumption is often implied that there is a twofold change: people shift from agricultural work to industrial work while simultaneously changing from rural to urban residence."

Economic and industrial growth undoubtedly brings about many transformations in demographic, economic, and social progress, as well as changes in occupational patterns and standards of living for rural people. Traditionally, urbanization primarily involves the demographic shift of the population from rural to urban areas and the transformation from agricultural to non-agricultural pursuits corresponding to urban centers.

The following are the objectives, questions, and hypotheses of this study:

1. To assess the standard of living of farmers due to urbanization.
2. To understand the pattern of farmers' livelihood shift due to urbanization over the years.
3. To elicit the reasons to shift/continue their source of livelihood over the years.

#### *Research questions*

1. Is there any difference in farmers' standard of living due to urbanization?
2. Is there any difference in the livelihood of farmers due to urbanization over the years?
3. What are the reasons farmers have shifted/continued their source of livelihood over the years?

#### *Hypotheses*

1. Due to urbanization, there will be no difference in the standard of living of farmers.
2. There will be no difference in livelihood among farmers due to urbanization over the years.

3. All the respondents will have the exact reasons for shifting/continuing their source of livelihood over the years.

### **Methods and Materials**

This research was conducted in the Injil district of Herat province, located in the western region of Afghanistan. An ex-post-facto research design was employed to carry out this research. Data and information were collected from 80 randomly selected respondents from 8 villages (4 villages within a five-kilometer radius of the district center, representing villages with high urban influence, and 4 villages outside the five-kilometer radius, representing villages with low urban influence) using the personal interview method. The researcher personally visited the respondents to gather the data. Respondents were assured of the confidentiality of the data and encouraged to provide unbiased answers. The collected data were scored, tabulated, and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools to derive the results.

### **Findings and Discussion**

It was observed that 40% of farmers living in villages with high urban influence had high living standards, followed by 37.50% with medium and 22.50% with low living standards. Furthermore, 37.50% of farmers in villages with low urban influence had a medium level of living standards, followed by 35.00% with low and 27.50% with high living standards (Table 1).

The mean values of different dimensions of the standard of living are higher for the respondents in high-urban-influence villages than those in low-urban-influence villages. Therefore, the standard of living was also better for respondents from high-urban influence villages. Moreover, these highly urban-influenced villages, being closer to the city, have the advantages of better infrastructure and service facilities. The results of this study are consistent with the findings of Marais (1999) and Sokolow (2017).

*Table 1: Comparison of the level of living standard of farmers in villages with high and low urban influenced*

Category	High urban influenced villages (n=40)		Low urban influenced villages (n=40)	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Low	9	22.50	14	35.00
Medium	15	37.50	15	37.50
High	16	40.00	11	27.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.00</b>

In high urban influence villages, 42.50% of the respondents fully engaged in agricultural activities, while the remaining 57.50% of farmers depended on agriculture and allied activities in 2010. By 2019, only 12.50% of the respondents continued agriculture as their primary source of livelihood, 30.00% had fully shifted to non-agricultural activities, mainly business, and the remaining 57.50% were involved in agriculture and allied activities (Table 2).

The shift from agriculture to business in recent years may be attributed to the urbanization process, which has led to the sale of agricultural land for non-agricultural uses, such as the construction of industries, special economic zones, resorts, apartments, etc. Moreover, the implementation of development programs has resulted in increased land prices. The high cost of production in farming, coupled with uncertain output, has prompted some farmers to switch to diversified enterprises. These results are consistent with those of Sakharkar (1995), Saravan Kumar (1996), Chandrapaul (1998), Angadi (1999), Reddy (2015), Vijayakumar (2016), and Anitha (2018).

In low urban influence villages, 52.50% of the respondents were fully dependent on agriculture, while the remaining 47.50% were involved in agriculture and allied activities in 2010. By 2019, only 25.00% of farmers continued agriculture as their primary source of livelihood, 20.00% had fully transitioned to business activities, and 55.00% were still engaged in agriculture and allied activities (Table 3).

In low-urban-influence villages, the extent of the shift is less than in high-urban-influence villages. This may be due to the comparatively lesser impact of urbanization in low-urban-influence villages. The findings align with those of Sakharkar (1995), Saravan Kumar (1996), Chandrapaul (1998), Angadi (1999), Reddy (2015), Vijayakumar (2016), and Anitha (2018).

Table 2: Pattern of Shift in the livelihood of farmers over the years (2010-2019) in high urban influenced villages

(n=40)

After (Upto 2019) Before (2010)	Agriculture		Agriculture +Animal Husbandry		Agriculture Horticulture		+ Agriculture +Business		Business		Agriculture +Employment		Total	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
<b>Agriculture (n=17)</b>	5	29.40	2	11.76	1	5.88	4	23.50	5	29.40	0	0.00	<b>17</b>	<b>42.50</b>
<b>Agriculture + Animal Husbandry (n=6)</b>	0	0.00	0	0.00	3	50.00	2	33.33	1	33.30	0	0.00	<b>6</b>	<b>15.00</b>
<b>Agriculture +Horticulture (n=14)</b>	0	0.00	4	28.57	0	0.00	5	35.71	4	28.57	1	2.50	<b>14</b>	<b>35.00</b>
<b>Agriculture +Business (n=3)</b>	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	33.33	2	66.66	0	0.00	<b>3</b>	<b>7.50</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12.50</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>15.00</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10.00</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>30.00</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>30.00</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2.50</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table 3: Pattern of Shift in the livelihood of farmers over the years (2010-2019) in low urban influenced villages

After (Upto Before (2010)	(n=40)													
	2019)		Agriculture +Animal Husbandry		Agriculture +Horticulture		+ Agriculture +Business		Business		Agriculture +Employment		Total	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
<b>Agriculture (n=21)</b>	10	47.6	3	14.28	1	4.76	3	14.28	4	19.04	0	0.00	21	52.50
<b>Agriculture + Animal Husbandry (n=4)</b>	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	50.00	1	25.00	1	25.00	0	0.00	4	10.00
<b>Agriculture +Horticulture (n=13)</b>	0	0.00	5	38.46	0	0.00	4	30.76	3	23.07	1	7.60	13	32.50
<b>Agriculture +Business (n=2)</b>	0	0.00	1	50.00	0	0.00	1	50.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	5.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>25.00</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>22.50</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7.50</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>22.50</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>20.00</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2.50</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The main reasons for changing agricultural jobs to other occupations were the high cost of production (95.00%), lack of a special market for selling agricultural products (90.00%), inadequate availability of timely workers (80.00%), fragmentation of land passed down through generations (70.00%), and fluctuations in the prices of agricultural commodities (65.00%) (Table 4).

*Table 4: Reasons for changing agriculture to other activities over the years*

No.	Sl. Reasons	Number *	Per cent
1.	High cost of production in farming.	76	95.00
2.	Lack of exclusive market for the produce.	72	90.00
3.	Inadequate availability of timely labor.	64	80.00
4.	Fragmentation of land generation after generation.	56	70.00
5.	Fluctuation in prices of agricultural commodities.	52	65.00
6.	Uncertainty of monsoon.	48	60.00
7.	Inadequate agricultural production.	48	60.00
8.	Non remunerative production	44	55.00
9.	Less cultivated land to meet the basic needs	44	55.00
10.	Farming cannot fully support household needs	40	50.00

**(2010-2019)**

(n=80)

It is evident that with the increase in input prices, the cost of production has risen, which likely prompted farmers to cite this as a major reason. Adequate marketing facilities, specifically for agricultural produce, are still lacking in these villages. The migration of agricultural laborers to urban areas for better employment may have created a labor shortage at the right times. Additionally, reduced joint families have led to land fragmentation over generations. These findings are consistent with Addisshaiah's (1979) and Sokolow (2017) findings.

The important reasons for farmers to continue farming are financial constraints (90.00 %), followed by farmers' lack of knowledge about other jobs (76.25 %), dependency on owning land (66.25 %), more experience with the current occupation (60.00 %) and only source of livelihood (56.25 %) (Table 5).

Since business and other non-agricultural activities need a considerable amount of monetary investment, which the rural people are devoid of to a certain extent, they stated financial constraints as a major reason for continuing agriculture—due to lack of training in enterprises other than agriculture made them to be in the same occupation. They cannot switch over to enterprises other than agriculture to maintain the traditional values of being



attached to their forefathers' land. More farming experience made them to be in the same occupation. The results align with Addisshaiah's (1979) and Sokolow (2017) results.

Table 5: Reasons for continuing agriculture over the years (2010- 2019)

Sl. No.	Reasons	Number *	Per cent
1.	Financial constraints	72	90.00
2.	Lack of knowledge about other enterprises	61	76.25
3.	Attachment to own land.	53	66.25
4.	More experience with the current occupation	48	60.00
5.	The only source of livelihood	45	56.25
6.	Provision of subsidies	33	41.25

## Conclusion

Forty percent of the farmers in the villages with high urban influence have high living standards. 30% and 20% of farmers in villages with high and low urban influence have taken up non-agricultural activities and turned to business. 95% of the farmers mentioned high production costs as the main reason for changing their jobs to non-agricultural activities. This was followed by other reasons, such as the non-existence of a unique market for agricultural products (90.00%). Ninety percent of the farmers continued their agricultural activities due to financial constraints, and 76.25% did not know about other jobs.

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