Vol. 2, No. 1, Serial No. 2, Spring & Summer 2025

JAROS

Journal of Asian Regional Orders Studies

Journal Homepage: https://ijas.shirazu.ac.ir

https://doi.org/10.22099/JAROS.2025.52232.1025

Research Article

An Explanatory Study of Food Insecurity in Afghanistan Over the Last Two Decades (2000-2022)

Mohammad Shafi Mohammadi*

Research Scholar, Department of Economics, School of Economics, Central University of Kerala, Kasargod, Kerala, India

Article history: Received: 21/10/2024 Accepted: 26/01/2025

Abstract

Increasing vulnerability, political instability, and socioeconomic challenges have significantly worsened food insecurity in Afghanistan. Afghanistan is mainly affected by the serious worldwide problem of food insecurity because of its lengthy history of political unrest, war, and natural disasters throughout the last two decades (2000 to 2022). The causes and historical patterns of food insecurity in Afghanistan are examined in this research, which also covers the country's dependence on agriculture and vulnerability to external shocks and natural catastrophes. A sizable section of the populace finds it challenging to get enough wholesome food because of political unpredictability, persistent conflict, and inadequate administration. This study aims to conduct a comprehensive trend analysis of food insecurity in Afghanistan from 2000 to 2022 and quantify the scale and progression of the crisis. This study employs an explanatory research approach, using secondary data from institutions such as the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the World Bank. Food insecurity in Afghanistan has been exacerbated by economic instability, warfare, and environmental challenges. Fluctuating per capita income and negative growth rates have severely limited impoverished populations' access to food. To ensure long-term food access and stability, we must address food insecurity via sustainable agricultural investments, economic recovery programs, and more significant social safety nets.

***Keywords**:* Afghanistan, Food Insecurity, Poverty, Humanitarian Crises, International Cooperation

Please cite this article as:

Shafi Mohammad, M. (2025). An Explanatory Study of Food Insecurity in Afghanistan Over the Last Two Decades (2000-2022). *Journal of Asian Regional Orders Studies*, *2* (1) 309-328. https://doi.org/10.22099/JAROS.2025.52232.1025

* Corresponding author: E-mail address: mohammad.shafi2025@gmail.com

Copyright: © 2025 by the author(s). This article is published under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) licence (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

Introduction

Food insecurity is a significant phenomenon that affects millions of people globally, and Afghanistan is one of the most impacted countries. The Food Insecurity Experience Scale has highlighted the severity of the problem, with half of the Afghan population struggling with food shortages (United Nations, 2017; Samim & Zhiquan, 2020). Numerous agricultural households are impacted by food insecurity; research indicates that around 66.79% of them endure some food hardship, and 30.53% suffer from severe food insecurity (Samim et al., 2021). The following causes have directly or indirectly influenced food insecurity in Afghanistan over the last two decades.

Years of violence and instability have displaced millions of Afghans, forcing people to flee their homes in search of safety and a way to provide for their families. Many people discover that life as a refugee has distinct challenges. In Iran, for example, about 60% of Afghan refugees are food insecure, illustrating the challenges that displaced families face (Omidvar et al., 2013). Malnutrition has increased as a result of protracted conflict, economic instability, and political instability, especially among children (Rahmat et al., 2022). Natural catastrophes, military warfare, and political instability have all worsened Afghanistan's food security position since the early 2000s. The issue has been worsened by droughts, floods, and bad administration, particularly for people dependent on agriculture (Krishnan et al., 2019). With agriculture being a primary livelihood, farming and food supply disruptions have further increased food insecurity, particularly in rural areas.

Environmental factors exacerbate the situation. Droughts, floods, and earthquakes affect food production and delivery networks; floods primarily cause food shortages (Ahmadzai & Aryobi, 2021). Poor rural inhabitants have been disproportionately impacted by natural catastrophes, which have been exacerbated by climate change (Ahmadzai & Aryobi, 2021). In addition to environmental factors, cultural and economic factors substantially impact food poverty. Poverty, high unemployment, and gender inequality all limit access to essentials like food. A study on Afghan refugees in Pakdasht, Tehran, revealed that 88% of households faced food insecurity, primarily due to joblessness and economic hardship; the same study found that 58% of mothers were overweight, while 11% of children were underweight, and 12.7% experienced wasting (Abdollahi et al., 2015). Furthermore, the COVID-

19 pandemic significantly burdened food systems, making it more difficult for disadvantaged groups to obtain adequate nutrition (Islam et al., 2021). To solve these problems, an all-encompassing strategy that includes direct humanitarian aid, job creation, and agricultural development is required.

Afghanistan's rising food crisis emphasizes the urgent need for foreign help to address the root causes of poverty and hunger (Selimian et al., 2022). Without consistent employment or access to necessities, many people rely heavily on humanitarian assistance. Long-term remedies should build resilience, increase food production, and create economic opportunities. However, despite the vital assistance of agencies such as the World Food Programme (WFP), relief operations have been severely hindered by the freezing of Afghan assets and the suspension of international funding (Sida & Nelis, 2022). By offering workable solutions to improve food security and livelihoods in Afghanistan, this study seeks to add to policy conversations.

The primary objective of this study is to conduct a comprehensive trend analysis of food insecurity in Afghanistan over the two-decade period from 2000 to 2022. Specifically, the research aims to examine Afghanistan’s economic landscape by analyzing key indicators such as GDP, GDP per capita, population growth, and poverty levels, thereby providing a clear overview of the country’s economic conditions during this timeframe. Additionally, the study seeks to explore the evolution of food insecurity trends, assess their impact on the Afghan population, and quantify the number of individuals affected by food insecurity over the specified period. Through this analysis, the research aims to offer valuable insights into the scale, progression, and socioeconomic implications of food insecurity in Afghanistan.

1. Literature Review

Afghanistan's political, social, and economic infrastructures have suffered significant damage due to decades of conflict, which is the primary cause of the country's lack of economic progress (Haidari et al., 2023). In addition, Afghanistan still faces issues, including high unemployment, poor literacy rates, and restricted access to essential utilities despite notable advancements in healthcare and education (Stanikzai & Fayeq, 2024). Mostly, people who live in rural areas face difficulties due to less development. Rural development is essential for

71% of the population, but it is hindered by environmental degradation, poverty, gender inequality, and bad governance (Yar & Zazia, 2024). The country's economy relies heavily on agriculture, which employs a significant portion of the population but remains vulnerable to external shocks and environmental stresses. Agricultural exports face several difficulties in a crucial economic sector, including energy shortages, difficulties accessing markets, and security issues (Rahimi & Artukoğlu, 2023). Addressing these issues requires comprehensive strategies that focus on economic diversification, infrastructure development, and social welfare programs to build resilience and reduce poverty.

Food insecurity in Afghanistan has reached alarming levels, with over half of the population struggling to access sufficient and nutritious food. On the one hand, Food insecurity increased from 70% to 98% nationwide after a new government assumed office in Afghanistan in 2021, making matters worse (Saif-Nijat et al., 2023). Between 61 and 70 percent of people in various parts of Kabul were reported to be food insecure (Arshad et al., 2024). On the other hand, it can be defined as a worldwide disease that most of the countries in Asia and Africa face. Food insecurity is still a significant issue globally, with an estimated 828 million people going hungry in 2021, a 150 million rise from 2019 (Burki, 2022). The incidence of food insecurity in a nation is inversely correlated with intranational food insecurity inequality, according to an intriguing Kuznets Curve for food insecurity (Barrett et al., 2023). The COVID-19 pandemic upheaval further exacerbated the situation by disrupting supply chains, reducing incomes, and limiting access to humanitarian aid. The COVID pandemic has substantially impacted the four pillars of food security: price, availability, quality and safety, resilience, and natural resources in nations with poor levels of food security (Saboori et al., 2022).

Social inequality, economic vulnerability, political unrest, and natural calamities are some of the interconnected problems contributing to Afghanistan's food insecurity. In the Takhar region of Afghanistan, where food insecurity affects a significant 66.79% of agricultural households, various factors, including the education level of household heads, dependency ratios, farm earnings, and livestock sizes, play pivotal roles (Samim et al., 2021). This situation is further compounded by Afghanistan's political instability, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and dependence on neighboring nations, necessitating international interventions to ameliorate food security (Islam, 2021). Temory (2023) emphasizes the COVID-19 pandemic's considerable

impact on family income and food security in Afghanistan's urban regions, affecting dietary behaviors and revenue-generating activities. Additionally, micronutrient deficiencies persist year-round in Bamyan Province due to insufficient dietary diversity, disproportionately affecting vulnerable groups like mothers, teenage females, and children (Poole et al., 2019). Furthermore, in Kabul, food poverty is organically connected to mental health difficulties, including stress, anxiety, and depression, particularly among reproductive-age women. (Zahidi et al., 2022). Moreover, Predictions suggest that by 2030, only 49.8% of the population will have sufficient food, prompting a call for increased public agricultural investment, enhanced infrastructure, and expanded cereal cultivation (Samim et al., 2021). Remarkably, Rahmat et al. (2023) underscore the gravity of Afghanistan's humanitarian crisis, with over 3.3 million children lacking critical food supplies, resulting in numerous fatalities each week. Interestingly, in Paktia Province's rural areas, food insecurity stems from various factors, including reduced income levels, farm and household sizes, floods, fluctuating food prices, and internal displacement (Ahmadzai et al., 2021). Addressing these factors requires a multi-sectoral approach that combines sustainable agricultural practices, economic reforms, and social protection programs to build resilience and ensure long-term food security for the Afghan population.

2. Conceptual Framework

Afghanistan's economic, political, and social underpinnings have significantly suffered due to four decades of internal strife. Life has become challenging for the people due to this lengthy conflict, which has resulted in social disintegration, economic decline, and ongoing political instability. One of the most serious repercussions of this long-term calamity has been severe food insecurity, as millions of Afghans have struggled to obtain adequate nutrition. There are several causes of food insecurity in Afghanistan, but the four main ones are environmental issues, social inequity, political turmoil, and economic instability. These forces have combined to produce a complex and linked environment, further weakening and disadvantaging the Afghan people.

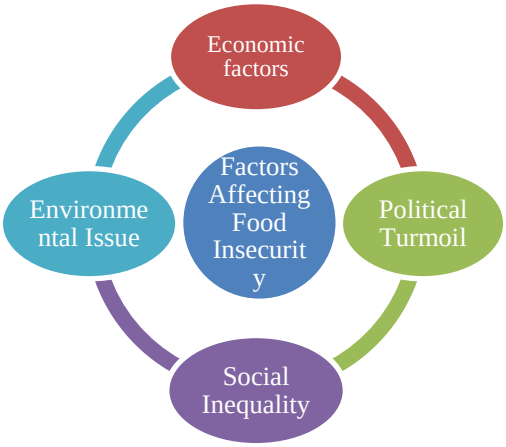

Figure 1: Factors Affecting Food Insecurity

Families in Afghanistan find it extremely difficult to obtain wholesome meals due to the country's high unemployment and poverty rates. These factors influence food insecurity in Afghanistan. Multiple factors contribute to food insecurity, including poverty, unemployment, conflict, weak infrastructure, and climate change (Samim & Zhiquan, 2020; Arshad et al., 2024). Low-income households in rural areas are affected more than in urban areas. Rural areas are disproportionately affected, with higher poverty and food insecurity rates compared to urban areas (Krishnan et al., 2019). On the other hand, food delivery networks have been badly damaged by years of political unrest and bloodshed, making it difficult to get essential food supplies to those most need them. Deaton and Lipka (2015) claim that political instability is positively related to food insecurity in developing countries. More food insecurity results from conflict because it restricts Afghan households' coping strategies in the face of growing food prices. (D'Souza & Jolliffe, 2012). On the other hand, In Afghanistan's agriculture sector, unpredictable weather patterns, including protracted droughts and erratic rainfall, have hindered agricultural productivity and food security. Climate change, including persistent droughts and temperature fluctuations, has reduced agricultural production and food insecurity in rural Afghanistan (Yar, 2024). Additionally, the Inability to obtain healthcare and education, especially for women and children, increases food insecurity by limiting economic possibilities and increasing knowledge about healthy eating. Social determinants play a significant role, with female-headed households, larger family sizes, and lower education levels associated

with higher food insecurity (Najam et al., 2023). All in all, these four factors remain the significant factors that affected food insecurity during 40 years of conflict.

3. Research Methodology

This research employed a strategy that relied on secondary data (time-series) such as the World Bank and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The material obtained spans two decades (2001-2021) and contains various themes related to Afghanistan's humanitarian crises, food security, and economic development. Chart analysis has been conducted for this study; each figure presents one indicator and defines the food crisis in Afghanistan. Using an explanatory research approach, the study intended to investigate the complex interaction of variables contributing to food insecurity and Afghanistan's economic troubles. Secondary data analysis enabled a thorough investigation of Afghanistan's numerous issues, including political upheaval, military conflict, financial fragility, reliance on food imports, and the consequences of external shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic. By undertaking a detailed analysis and interpretation of the available data.

Data Analysis

Afghanistan, plagued by long-running violence and political instability, has reached a watershed moment in its economic development efforts. Afghanistan, which emerged from a turbulent history characterized by external involvement, internal war, and unstable administrative institutions, has several challenges to economic progress. Despite its strategic position, abundant natural resources, and high unemployment rates, the country faces prolonged poverty, weak institutional frameworks, and inadequate infrastructure. Despite these problems, there is much potential for growth and regeneration. Afghanistan aspires to exploit its resources, promote inclusive development for its inhabitants, and support long-term economic prosperity via international cooperation and internal resolve. Understanding the complexities of Afghanistan's economic climate, capitalizing on opportunities, and reducing barriers are critical steps toward realizing the country's aim of a safe and prosperous future as it moves forward.

Table: 1 Afghanistan's Economics Background

Year	Population (Million)	Per-capita income (USD)	Per-capita income growth (%)	GDP	GDP growth
2001	19.68	-	-	-	-
2002	21	183.53	-	3.85 b	-
2003	22.64	200.46	0.9	4.54 b	8.8%
2004	23.55	221.65	-2.5	5.22 b	1.4%
2005	24.41	255.05	7.3	6.23 b	11.2%
2006	25.44	274	1.1	6.97 b	5.4%
2007	25.90	37L5.07	11.8	9.72 b	13.8%
2008	26.42	387.84	1.9	10.25 b	3.9%
2009	27.38	443.84	17.1	12.15 b	21.4%
2010	28.18	554.59	11.1	15.63 b	14.4%
2011	29.24	621.91	-3.2	18.19 b	0.4%
2012	30.46	663.14	8.2	20.2 b	12.8%
2013	31.54	651.98	2	20.56 b	5.6%
2014	32.71	628.14	-1	20.55 b	2.7%
2015	33.75	592.47	-1.7	20 b	1.5%
2016	34.63	520.25	-0.3	18.2 b	2.3%
2017	35.64	530.14	-0.3	18.9 b	2.6%
2018	36.68	502.05	-1.7	18.42 b	1.2%
2019	37.76	500.52	0.9	18.9 b	3.9%
2020	38.97	516.86	-5.4	20.14 b	-2.4%
2021	40.09	363.67	-22.9	14.58 b	-20.7%

Source: World Bank- Afghanistan Economics Profile

Afghanistan's population grew significantly, doubling from 19.68 million in 2001 to 40.09 million in 2021. This demographic expansion presents both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, a growing population can drive economic growth, innovation, and cultural diversity. On the other hand, it puts pressure on resources, infrastructure, and social services. Managing this population growth effectively is crucial for ensuring sustainable development, including investments in healthcare, education, and infrastructure to meet the needs of a larger population while maintaining environmental sustainability.

Despite the overall increase in per-capita income from $183.53 in 2002 to $363.67 in 2021, it's important to note the fluctuations and the impact on individual well-being. While higher per-capita income generally signifies improved living standards, the variation over the years indicates economic volatility and the vulnerability of individuals to income shocks. For many Afghans, particularly those in rural or marginalized communities, income levels may remain insufficient to provide necessities like food, housing, and healthcare, highlighting the importance of targeted poverty reduction efforts. The fluctuation in per-capita income growth rates reflects the country's economic instability and susceptibility to external factors. Favorable growth rates indicate economic expansion and improved living standards, while negative growth rates signal economic downturns and increased financial hardships for individuals. The significant downturns in 2020 and 2021, likely influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic and political instability, underscore the urgent need for economic diversification, resilience-building measures, and social safety nets to protect vulnerable populations during times of crisis.

Afghanistan's GDP growth trajectory highlights its economic potential and development aspirations. The steady increase in GDP from $183.53 billion in 2002 to $20.14 billion in 2020 demonstrates economic expansion and wealth creation progress. However, the fluctuations and downturns, particularly in 2020 and 2021, underscore the country's vulnerability to external shocks and internal instability. Strengthening economic resilience, diversifying sources of growth, and improving governance and transparency are essential for sustained economic development and poverty reduction. The fluctuation in GDP growth rates reflects the country's economic performance and resilience. Favorable growth rates indicate economic expansion, job creation, and improved living standards, while negative growth rates signify economic contraction and increased financial challenges. The negative growth rates in 2020 and 2021, influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic and political turmoil, highlight the urgency of addressing structural vulnerabilities and investing in sectors that promote inclusive growth and sustainable development.

Fluctuations in the national poverty line underscore the dynamic nature of poverty in Afghanistan. While some years saw declines in poverty rates, others experienced increases, with notable spikes during economic turmoil and instability. The spikes in 2007, 2009, and 2016 highlight the vulnerability of populations to external shocks and internal

conflicts, emphasizing the need for targeted poverty alleviation efforts, social protection programs, and inclusive economic growth strategies to lift people out of poverty and promote shared prosperity.

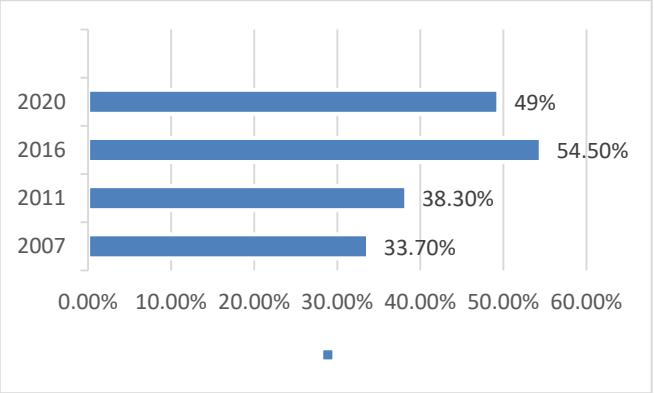

Figure 2: National Poverty Line
Source: World Bank (Afghanistan's Economic Profile)

Afghanistan has historically been a sizeable agricultural nation, yet food insecurity remains a crucial impediment to the country's growth and stability. Protracted conflict, political upheaval, and environmental deterioration have crippled the country's food production and delivery system, making it more challenging for millions of individuals to get enough food. Afghanistan's reliance on food imports exacerbates the issue and increases its vulnerability to external shocks. This problem is particularly acute in rural areas, where people typically need access to necessities. Afghanistan requires a comprehensive approach to address this issue, including underlying issues like poverty, current food shortages, poor infrastructure, and restricted access to healthcare and education.

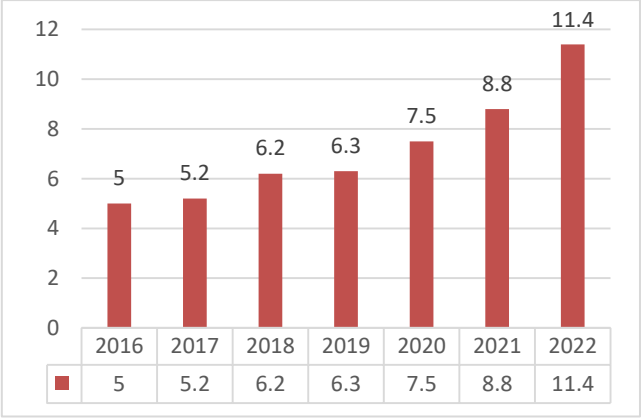

Figure 3: Number of Severely Food Insecure People (million)
Source: OCHA (Humanitarian Data Exchange) Afghanistan Food Security

The data regarding the number of severely food insecure people in Afghanistan from 2016 to 2022 highlights a concerning trend reflective of the deepening food crisis within the country. Beginning in 2016, with 5 million severely food insecure individuals, there was already a notable population struggling to access adequate nutrition. However, over the subsequent years, the situation deteriorated significantly. Moreover, By 2022, the number had soared to 11.4 million, marking a distressing increase of more than double the 2016 figure. The rapid escalation in the number of severely food-insecure people in Afghanistan also raises concerns about the efficacy of existing strategies and the impact of recent events on food security. While efforts may have been made to alleviate food insecurity, such as humanitarian aid programs and development initiatives, their effectiveness must be improved in food-insecure in the face of mounting challenges. Moreover, recent events like the COVID-19 pandemic and political upheavals, including the new government's resurgence, likely exacerbated the situation by disrupting supply chains, deepening poverty, and displacing populations. These compounding factors have created a dire humanitarian crisis, necessitating immediate action from domestic and international stakeholders. Addressing the plight of severely food insecure individuals demands comprehensive measures, including emergency food assistance, investment in agricultural resilience, livelihood support, and conflict resolution endeavors to guarantee Afghanistan's long-term stability and peace.

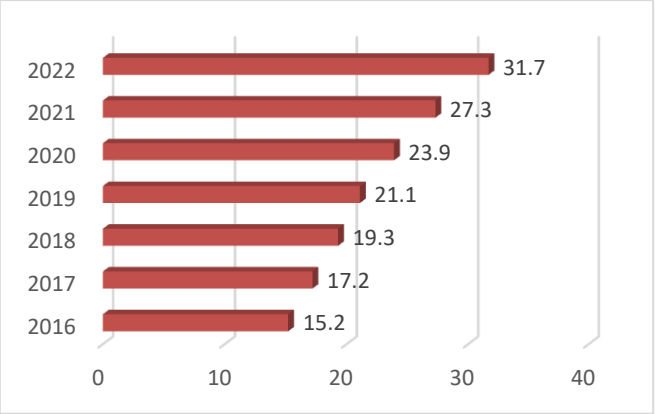

Figure 4: Total Number of Moderately and Severely Food Insecure People
Source: OCHA (Humanitarian Data Exchange) Afghanistan Food Security

The data concerning the total number of moderately and severely food insecure people in Afghanistan from 2016 to 2022 reveals a distressing escalation in the magnitude of food insecurity, indicative of deepening challenges and vulnerabilities within the population. Commencing at 15.2 million individuals in 2016, the figures consistently surged year after year, reaching a staggering 31.7 million by 2022. This dramatic rise underscores a profound and sustained deterioration in the country's food security situation over the specified period. The rapid expansion of the population experiencing moderate to severe food insecurity underscores the urgent need for targeted interventions aimed at addressing the root causes and providing immediate relief to millions of Afghans grappling with hunger and malnutrition.

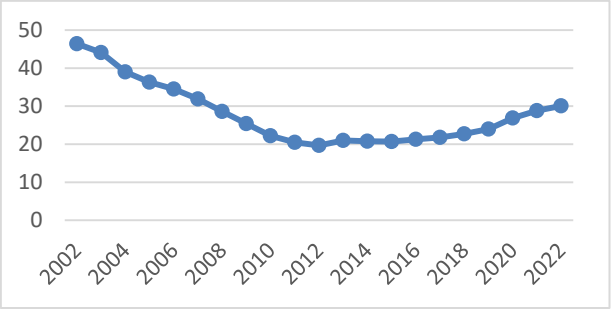

Figure 5: Prevalence of Undernourishment (Percent)
Source: OCHA (Humanitarian Data Exchange) Afghanistan Food Security

Over two decades, from 2002 to 2022, Afghanistan's battle against undernourishment reveals a nuanced trajectory. Initially, there was promising progress as the prevalence of undernourishment steadily declined from 46.4% in 2002 to 19.7% in 2012. These improvements likely stemmed from concerted efforts to bolster food security and access to nutrition. However, the subsequent years witnessed a fluctuating pattern, with a slight uptick in undernourishment rates from 2012 to 2014, reaching 21% and 20.8%, respectively. This fluctuation could signify challenges or setbacks in sustaining the earlier progress. Notably, from 2014 onwards, the trend took a concerning turn as undernourishment rates continued to rise, hitting 30.1% by 2022. This escalation underscores persistent obstacles, potentially exacerbated by conflict and economic instability. Addressing this worsening trend demands renewed and innovative strategies to fortify food security and combat undernourishment effectively in Afghanistan.

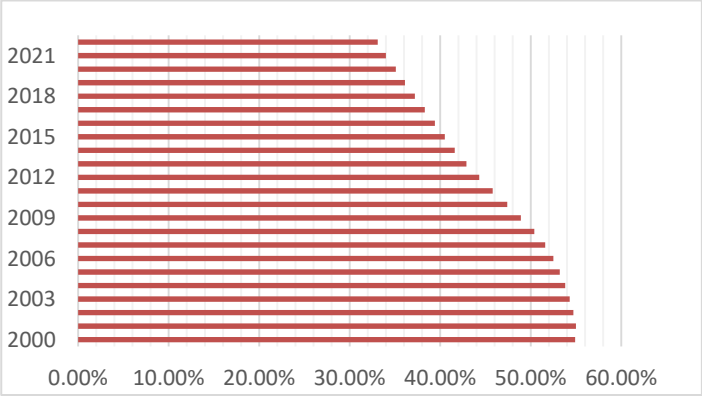

Figure: 6 Percentage of Children Under 5 Years of Age Who are Stunted (Modelled Estimates) (Percent).
Source: OCHA (Humanitarian Data Exchange) Afghanistan Food Security

The data regarding the percentage of children under five years of age who are stunted in Afghanistan from 2000 to 2022 illustrates a consistent downward trend, indicative of progress in addressing childhood malnutrition over the specified period. Beginning at 54.90% in 2000 and 55% in 2001, the percentage gradually decreased yearly, reaching 33.10% by 2022. This sustained decline reflects efforts to improve maternal and child health, increase access to nutritious food, and implement interventions to reduce stunting among young children. The

declining prevalence of stunting is a positive indicator of improved nutrition and overall well-being among children in Afghanistan, as stunting can have long-term detrimental effects on physical and cognitive development.

The downward trajectory in the percentage of children under five years of age who are stunted underscores the importance of continued investment in nutrition-sensitive policies and programs and broader efforts to address the underlying determinants of malnutrition. While the progress is encouraging, stunting remains a significant public health concern in Afghanistan, with a substantial proportion of children still affected. Sustaining and accelerating the decline in stunting will require a multi-sectoral approach that addresses factors such as poverty, food insecurity, inadequate healthcare access, and poor sanitation. Additionally, ensuring equitable access to nutrition services and targeting interventions to the most vulnerable populations will be essential to reduce the prevalence of stunting further and improve the health and well-being of children in Afghanistan.

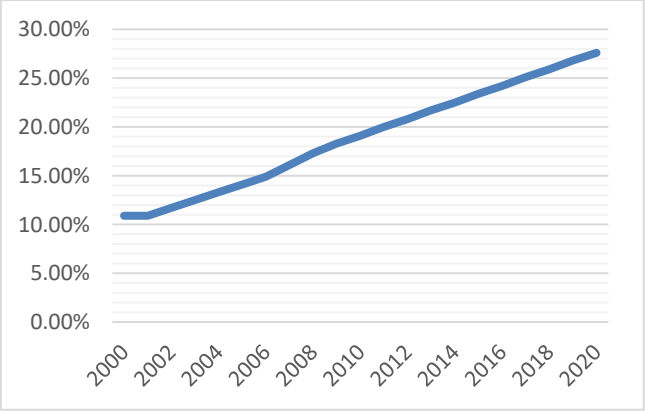

Figure 7: Percentage of Population Using Safely Managed Drinking Water Services (Percent)
Source: OCHA (Humanitarian Data Exchange) Afghanistan Food Security

The data on the percentage of the population using safely managed drinking water services in Afghanistan from 2000 to 2020 reflects a gradual improvement in having access to wholesome, secure drinking water over the specified period. Starting at 10.90% in 2000 and 2001, the percentage increased steadily each year, reaching 27.60% by 2020. This upward trend suggests efforts to expand and enhance water infrastructure,

improve water quality, and increase accessibility to safe drinking water sources nationwide. The steady increase in the proportion of people accessing securely managed drinking water highlights encouraging public health and environmental sustainability advancements. Access to clean water is crucial for averting waterborne illnesses and enhancing general health and welfare.

4. Findings

1. Afghanistan's population nearly quadrupled over the previous two decades, from 19.68 million in 2001 to 40.09 million in 2021, representing a tremendous demographic transition. In terms of economic improvement, high population growth has advantages and disadvantages. Although migration strains infrastructure, social services, and resources, it also has the potential to stimulate economic growth by increasing consumer demand and labor force participation. Thoughtful planning and effective management are required to capitalize on this demographic transformation.
2. the data reveals changes in economic development rates and income levels across the study period. While per capita income climbed from $183.53 in 2002 to $363.67 in 2021, negative growth rates, notably in 2020 and 2021, reflect people's economic uncertainty and fragility. These oscillations underscore the importance of social safety nets and resilience-building methods to shield disadvantaged populations against income shocks and economic downturns.
3. Political instability and the COVID-19 outbreak are two external factors that have significantly impacted Afghanistan's economy. These external shocks are responsible for the estimated negative growth rates in GDP and per capita income between 2020 and 2021 since they disrupt supply chains, diminish economic activity, and exacerbate poverty and inequality. Resolving the financial aftermath of catastrophic events necessitates targeted measures that foster economic variety, recovery, and systematization to reduce the negative consequences on society's most vulnerable people.
4. Furthermore, the data demonstrates how poverty in Afghanistan shifts over time, as seen by fluctuations in the country's poverty line. Examples of high poverty rates during economic turbulence and conflict demonstrate the challenges of tackling systemic poverty and supporting equitable development. Poverty reduction initiatives that address the root causes of poverty increase access to essential services

and promote economic opportunity for all Afghans need long-term effort.

5. Finally, the findings underline the significance of particular policy actions aimed at increasing economic resilience, reducing poverty, and improving living circumstances for all Afghans. A more egalitarian and sustainable economy that benefits all socioeconomic groups requires prudent social security, healthcare, education, and infrastructure investments. Furthermore, developing an environment in Afghanistan that promotes sustainable development and the eradication of poverty necessitates Tackling the underlying reasons for violence and instability.

Conclusion

Finally, the findings and conclusions offered in this study provide crucial fresh views on Afghanistan's complex socioeconomic environment during the last two decades. Over this time, the nation's population has doubled, resulting in significant demographic shifts. This demonstrates vulnerabilities to economic upheavals while offering opportunities and difficulties for economic growth, such as increased consumer demand and labor force participation. The influence of external factors such as the COVID-19 outbreak and political instability, which have disrupted supply chains, raised poverty levels, and slowed progress toward sustainable development, is reflected in volatility and negative growth rates in per capita income.

Despite these challenges, targeted policy efforts focusing on social welfare, poverty reduction, and economic resilience remain critical. All Afghans benefit from expenditures in vital sectors, including social safety nets, healthcare, education, and infrastructure, which encourage general growth and improve living conditions. Furthermore, to build an environment in Afghanistan that promotes long-term development and poverty eradication, the root causes of violence and instability must be addressed. Afghanistan may steer towards a more sustainable and prosperous future by implementing these policies and strategies, providing its residents equitable access to opportunities and a higher standard of life.

Suggestions:

1. Strengthening Economic Resilience: Given Afghanistan's vulnerability to external economic shocks, strengthening resilience must be

prioritized. To achieve this, the economy may need to diversify beyond traditional fields such as agriculture and look at opportunities in growing industries such as technology, renewable energy, and tourism. Entrepreneurship and small business growth can assist in increasing economic resilience by fostering a diversity of income streams and job possibilities.

2. Improving Social Welfare Programs: Improving social welfare programs that benefit society's most vulnerable individuals is critical to lessening the consequences of economic shocks and decreasing poverty. This might include investing in education and skill development to boost job opportunities and earnings potential, improving access to healthcare services, and implementing targeted cash transfer programs.
3. Improving Infrastructure: To encourage economic growth and enhance living standards, investments in infrastructure such as transportation networks, electrical power, water supply, and sanitation are critical. Improved infrastructure may contribute to more inclusive development by increasing connectivity, lowering transportation costs, and attracting investment to underserved areas.
4. Addressing the Root Causes of Conflict and Instability: Creating an environment conducive to sustainable development necessitates addressing the root causes of conflict and instability. To enhance stability and security, advocating for inclusive governance systems, addressing socioeconomic disparities, and supporting peacebuilding and reconciliation initiatives may be necessary.
5. Promoting Sustainable Development Practices: To maintain Afghanistan's long-term prosperity and resilience, it is critical to promote sustainable development practices such as climate resilience, environmental conservation, and sustainable resource management. This might include promoting renewable energy sources, implementing climate adaptation strategies, and supporting sustainable agricultural techniques to safeguard the ecosystem and conserve natural resources.

References

Abdollahi, M., Abdollahi, Z., Sheikholeslam, R., Kalantari, N., Kavehi, Z., & Neyestani, T. R. (2015). High occurrence of food insecurity among urban Afghan refugees in Pakdasht, Iran 2008: A cross-sectional study.

Ecology of Food and Nutrition, 54(3), 187–199. https://doi.org/10.1080/03670244.2013.834819

Ahmadzai, W., & Aryobi, H. (2021). Natural and socio-economic factors affecting household food security in rural areas of Paktia Province, Afghanistan. *Asian Journal of Agricultural Extension, Economics and Sociology,* 39(2), 1–11. https://doi.org/10.9734/AJAEES/2021/V39I230521

Arshad, N., Kabuli, M. S., Farooqi, M., & Erfani, A. N. (2024). Measurement of food insecurity in selected districts of Kabul city. *Integrated Journal for Research in Arts and Humanities*, 4(2), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.55544/ijrah.4.2.10

Barrett, C. B., Smith, M. D., Wesselbaum, D., & Aiyar, A. (2023). But it came from a food pantry: Product stigma and quality perceptions of food pantry offerings. *World Development, 165*, 106189. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2023.106189

Burki, T. (2022). Food security and nutrition in the world. *The Lancet Diabetes & Endocrinology,* 10(9), 622. https://doi.org/10.1016/S2213-8587(22)00220-0

Deaton, B. J., & Lipka, B. (2015). Political instability and food security. *Journal of Food Security, 3(1),* 29–33. https://doi.org/10.12691/jfs-3-1-5

Fay, D. (2012). Conflict, food price shocks, and food insecurity: The experience of Afghan households. *SSRN Electronic Journal.* https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2236284

Haidari, A. J., Furogh, M. J., Kunduzi, M. O., & Aanwari, G. (2023). Main factors of lack of economic development in Afghanistan. *International Journal of Social Science Research and Review, 6*(2), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.47814/ijssrr.v6i2.803

Islam, Z., Kokash, D. M., Babar, M. S., Uday, U., Hasan, M. M., Rackimuthu, S., … Nemat, A. (2021). Food security, conflict, and COVID-19: Perspective from Afghanistan. *The American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, 106(1),* 21–24. https://doi.org/10.4269/ajtmh.21-1058

Krishnan,Nandini,Wang,Zihao,Wieser,Christina. (2019, July 24). *Hunger before the Drought : Food Insecurity in Afghanistan*. Policycommons.net; World Bank Group. https://policycommons.net/artifacts/1286722/hunger-before-the-drought/1885212/

Najam, W., Ibiyemi, T., Aziz, S., Najam, R., Gichohi-Wainaina, W. N., & Oldewage-Theron, W. (2023). Social determinants of rural household food insecurity under the Taliban regime. *Nutrients, 15(7).* https://doi.org/10.3390/nu15071681

OCHA. (2021). Afghanistan food insecurity. *Humanitarian Data Exchange.* https://data.humdata.org/dataset/afghanistan-food-insecurity

Omidvar, N., Ghazi-Tabatabie, M., Sadeghi, R., Mohammadi, F., & Abbasi-Shavazi, M. J. (2013). Food insecurity and its sociodemographic correlates among Afghan immigrants in Iran. *Journal of Health, Population, and Nutrition, 31(3),* 356–366. https://doi.org/10.3329/jhpn.v31i3.16828

Poole, N., Amiri, H., Amiri, S., Farhank, I., & Zanello, G. (2019). Food production and consumption in Bamyan Province, Afghanistan: The challenges of sustainability and seasonality for dietary diversity. *International Journal of Agricultural Sustainability, 17(4),* 413–430. https://doi.org/10.1080/14735903.2019.1680229

Quraishi, R. (2021). Impact of climate change on food security in Afghanistan. *Addaiyan Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, 3(8).* https://doi.org/10.36099/ajahss.3.8.2

Rahimi, M. S., & Artukoğlu, M. (2023). Afganistan tarım ürünleri ihracatçılarının sosyo-ekonomik yapısı ve ihracata bakış açıları üzerine bir araştırma. *ANADOLU Ege Tarımsal Araştırma Enstitüsü Dergisi, 33*(1), 134–148. https://doi.org/10.18615/anadolu.1310061

Rahmat, Z. S., Rafi, H. M., Nadeem, A., Salman, Y., Nawaz, F. A., & Essar, M. Y. (2023). Child malnutrition in Afghanistan amid a deepening humanitarian crisis. *International Health, 15(4),* 353–356. https://doi.org/10.1093/inthealth/ihac055

Saboori, B., Radmehr, R., Zhang, Y. Y., & Zekri, S. (2022). A new face of food security: A global perspective of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Progress in Disaster Science, 14,* 100252. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pdisas.2022.100252

Saif-Nijat, J., Pakravan-Charvadeh, M. R., Gholamrezai, S., Rahimian, M., Lane, G., Béland, D., Koc, M., Clark, N., Omidvar, N., Sadeghi, R., & Vatanparast, H. (2023). The association of the quality of life with Afghan households' food insecurity before and after the recent political change in Afghanistan: A comparative analysis. *BMC Public Health, 23,* Article 2066. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-023-16967-z

Samim, S. A., & Zhiquan, H. (2020). Assessment of food security situation in Afghanistan. *SVU-International Journal of Agricultural Sciences, 2(2),* 356–377. https://doi.org/10.21608/svuijas.2020.45765.1044

Samim, S. A., Hu, Z., Stepien, S., Amini, S. Y., Rayee, R., Niu, K., & Mgendi, G. (2021). Food insecurity and related factors among Takhar region, Afghanistan farming families. *Sustainability, 13(18),* 10211. https://doi.org/10.3390/su131810211

Samim, S., Hu, Z., Yu, W., Amini, S., & Eliw, M. (2021). Assessment of cereal self-sufficiency and food balance projection in Afghanistan. *Asian Journal of Agricultural Extension, Economics & Sociology, 39(3).* https://doi.org/10.9734/AJAEES/2021/V39I330544

Selimian, H., Nassr, M., & Sen, K. (2022). Conflict, sanctions, and the struggles of Syrians for food security in the shadow of the UN Food Systems Summit 2021. *BMJ Global Health, 7(1),* e007477. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2021-007477

Sida, L., & Nelis, T. (2022). Theories of change for WFP Afghanistan's contribution to the triple nexus: Policy note. *Institute of Development Studies (IDS).* https://doi.org/10.19088/ids.2022.066

Stanikzai, M. A., & Fayeq, A. F. (2024). Analyzing economic and social indicators of Afghanistan. *Cognizance Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies, 4*(6), 602–608. https://doi.org/10.47760/cognizance.2024.v04i06.030

Temory, M. (2023). Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on household income and food security in Afghanistan: Case study of Kabul, Kandahar, Nangarhar, and Balkh. *International Journal of Fisheries and Aquaculture Research, 9(1).* https://doi.org/10.37745/ijfar.15/vol9n11431

United Nations. (2017). The state of food security and nutrition in the world. *Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).* https://doi.org/10.18356/fe66e08f-en

World Bank. (2021). Afghanistan economic profile. *World Bank.* https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/afghanistan

Yar, F. G. M. (2024). The impact of climate change on food security and adaptation strategies in rural areas of Afghanistan. *Eduvest - Journal of Universal Studies, 4(11).* https://doi.org/10.59188/eduvest.v4i11.44724

Yar, F. G. M., & Zazia, J. G. (2024). Obstacles and challenges of rural development in Afghanistan: Examining problems and solutions. *Jurnal Locus Penelitian dan Pengabdian, 3*(9), 787–796. https://doi.org/10.58344/locus.v3i9.3168

Zahidi, F., Khalid, M., Surkan, P., & Azadbakht, L. (2022). Associations between food insecurity and common mental health problems among reproductive-aged women in Kabul, Afghanistan. *Frontiers in Nutrition, 8.* https://doi.org/10.3389/fnut.2021.794607