

Home Economics and Connectivity: Exploring Inclusive Development in Afghanistan through Lessons from South Korea (한국 발전 모델)

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ABSTRACT

Connectivity is the defining theme of the contemporary world and is crucial in shaping inclusive and sustainable development. Likewise, home economics in Afghanistan includes household production, resource management, and informal economic activity, which is central to survival and community resilience. However, its role in national development is often overlooked. This research is more exploratory rather than normative. It encourages more investigation into the facilitative role of connectivity - both infrastructural and digital- in transforming home economics from subsistence-level activity into a viable catalyst of sustainable economic growth. By examining how connectivity either facilitates or hinders the development of the home economy in Afghanistan. It locates connectivity as the crucial force behind economic inclusion. In the underdeveloped countries like Afghanistan, home economics has functioned in disconnected settings. However, its ability to alleviate poverty and support long-term development and household resilience heavily depends on consistent access to transportation, electricity, and internet infrastructure. This study utilizes the broader theoretical framework of connectivity and, relying on qualitative analysis, draws its sources from secondary data, development literature, and comparative insights. It examines how limited infrastructure in Afghanistan disrupts household-level economic participation, access to markets, and integration with institutional structures. Home economics provides a lens to reveal the broader national consequences of these deficits illustrating that without strategic investments in connectivity, even the most basic forms of local productivity cannot scale or sustain. To put this relationship in context, this paper examines South Korea's post-war rural development (한국 발전 모델), where targeted infrastructure enabled widespread household economic growth (새마을운동). Ultimately, it concludes with recommendations, arguing in Afghanistan, sustainable development needs the integration of connectivity and home economics. They should be treated as interdependent pillars of inclusive national progress.

1. INTRODUCTION

A search is necessary for Afghanistan's trajectory towards sustainable, resilient, and inclusive development. National strategies, developmental policies, and operational planning frequently prioritize top-down reforms, influenced by upheavals, institutional limitations, chronic underinvestment, and parochialism. This approach prevails in the fields of economic and developmental studies. The focus of these strategies is on extensive infrastructures, security measures, and state-building efforts, often at the expense of local economic and developmental initiatives. These efforts are essential; however, they come at the expense of neglecting a significant and foundational aspect of economic life, which is home economics often underrated and underutilized. In Afghanistan, particularly in rural and peri-urban areas, home economics serves a crucial yet often underestimated function in daily economic survival and social stability.

In Afghanistan, household economic activities is central to Home Economics encompassing a variety of tasks such as budgeting family income to fulfill essential needs, preparing nutritious meals through strategic planning, maintaining clothing through sewing and proper care to prolong garment life, conserving energy and water to lower utility costs, and making informed purchasing decisions that support sustainable practices (Ironmonger, 2001; Goodwin, 2009; Ene-Obong, 2023). Nonetheless, in light of their importance to livelihoods and food security, these household economies continue to be overlooked in national development strategies, receiving limited institutional support. Several constraints contribute to this exclusion, notably Afghanistan's lack of connectivity in terms of both physical infrastructure such as roads, energy, and transport and digital connectivity, including mobile networks and internet access. The isolation prevents households from accessing markets, services, and information networks, thereby perpetuating cycles of poverty and marginalization (AREU, 2021; Safi & Alizada, 2016).

Connectivity in the contemporary world has transitioned from being a luxury exclusively controlled by developed nations. Khanna posits that "Connectivity is the new meta-pattern of our age" (Khanna, 2016, p. 12). This is now acknowledged as a strategic facilitator - a catalyst - for economic participation, as well as for sustainable and inclusive growth. Its significance is demonstrated by the inclusion of infrastructure and

connectivity in SDGs by the United Nations, which recognizes their contribution to inclusive industrialization and innovation (United Nations, 2015). In the context of Afghanistan, the importance of connectivity is heightened by the country's challenging terrain, disjointed infrastructure, and pervasive digital exclusion. Consequently, households, especially in rural provinces, continue to lack access to vital inputs, markets, and institutions (Asian Development Bank, 2023).

This paper argues that connectivity requires a thorough remapping as a strategic instrument for enhancing household-level economic activities and development. This article utilizes the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (DFID, 1999), Infrastructure-Led Growth Theory (Calderón & Servén, 2010), and Amartya Sen's Capability Approach (Sen, 1999), along with insights from Kolb (2008). It redefines connectivity as a crucial factor and driving force behind economic agency. Within these frameworks, infrastructure serves a purpose beyond simply facilitating growth. It is a type of physical capital that enables individuals and households to transform latent skills and resources into viable, productive livelihoods (Kolb, 2008; Godehardt & Postel-Vinay, 2020; Khanna, 2016). The objective of connectivity, this paper argues, should be to unify household economics with national economics, ensuring that the system is resilient, inclusive, and sustainable.

The argument that connectivity can transform Afghanistan is strengthened by empirical insights drawn from South Korea's Saemaul Undong (New Village Movement). This project represented a significant rural development initiative that effectively combined community mobilization with infrastructure investment, aiming to enhance household productivity and contribute to national recovery in the post-war context (Han, 2017). Regardless of the different socio-political realities and lived experiences in Afghanistan, the Korean case illustrates how the universal development principle of connectivity facilitates household labor, thereby allowing for integration into a broader economic system that supports sustainable growth.

This paper presents a compelling argument that the future of Afghanistan will not be determined exclusively by top-down industrialization and urban growth. Nonetheless, the essential factor for achieving success lies in the strategic integration of connectivity with economic activities at the household level, often referred to as home economics. In

a nation where the household serves as the most persistent economic unit and formal employment opportunities are limited, enhancing home-based economies through improved infrastructure and digital inclusion presents a feasible, fair, and sustainable approach for future development. This paper begins by positioning connectivity as a theoretical model, integrating insights from multiple disciplines. It contends that connectivity should not be regarded as secondary; instead, it should be prioritized as a fundamental element, serving as both a fuel and a catalyst for household economics at the local level.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative, interdisciplinary, and exploratory approach to investigate the relationship between connectivity and home economics in Afghanistan. Grounded in a diverse theoretical framework that includes the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, Infrastructure-Led Growth Theory, and the Capability Approach, this study defines connectivity as a driving force for economic opportunity and household empowerment. The research is guided by an exploratory qualitative design, utilizing a comparative case analysis that incorporates South Korea's Saemaul Undong rural development program to provide historical context and applicable lessons. The process of gathering information depends on secondary sources, which encompass academic literature, policy documents, development reports, and comprehensive case studies, including Afghan household enterprises and national initiatives like the NSP. The study employs comparative analysis to uncover patterns, barriers, and enabling factors, while a theory-driven synthesis integrates findings to produce insights pertinent to Afghanistan's developmental context.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

The subject of home economics and its application as a household economic activity has been increasingly recognized, especially in developing nations. This emphasizes the importance of households and their economic activities as essential components of sustainable development (Nwabuisi, 2018). Home economics aims to achieve optimal and sustainable living conditions for individuals, families, and their communities (International Federation for Home Economics, 2019). The significance of household-level economic activities has emerged as crucial for sustainable development and

inclusive growth (Ajaegbu & Eze, 2021). Household economic activities are central to Home Economics. It include a variety of tasks such as budgeting family income to fulfill essential needs, preparing nutritious meals through cost-effective planning, maintaining clothing through sewing and proper care to prolong garment life, conserving energy and water to lower utility costs, and making informed purchasing decisions that support sustainable practices; these activities not only improve the well-being of individual households but also play a significant role in the broader economy by decreasing dependence on external services and promoting self-sufficiency (Ironmonger, 2001; Goodwin, 2009; Ene-Obong, 2023).

In Afghanistan, household-level economic activities serve as the fundamental unit that underpins family welfare, economic survival, and community stability (Maletta, 2006). The activities encompass food preparation and preservation, livestock care, tailoring, embroidery, small-scale agriculture, child rearing, budgeting, and informal education (World Bank, 2005; Ganesh, 2017). This level of economic activity is significantly underrepresented and overlooked in the mainstream economic discourse. Home economic activities serve as a fundamental component of subsistence and semi-subsistence economies, especially within rural and peripheral areas (ILO, 2012; UN Women, 2020). Structural, environmental, and infrastructural constraints significantly restrict formal economic activities. However, household-level economics offer a viable pathway for generating livelihoods (Ganesh, 2013; Pain & Shah, 2009).

Ganesh (2017) indicates that in home economics, families oversee their production and consumption cycles, drawing on localized knowledge that is profoundly embedded in lived experiences and systems of community exchange. Nonetheless, numerous academics and professionals overlook home economics as a vital area for development. These activities extend beyond the domestic sphere, operating as micro-enterprises that directly enhance household income, food security, and social cohesion (AREU, 2021; UN Women, 2020). Furthermore, it is essential for the sustenance of families and plays a crucial role in the informal economy within the Afghan context, particularly in rural regions. In numerous Afghan communities, particularly in rural and peri-urban regions, these types of domestic labor serve as the primary source of income, particularly for women and marginalized groups (AREU, 2021; UN Women, 2020).

The sociocultural, geographic, and economic realities of Afghanistan directly influence the formation, operation, and outcomes of home economics. The restricted involvement of various individuals in formal employment, coupled with decades of conflict, has severely undermined public services and disrupted labor markets, leading to the rise of home economics-related activities as a default livelihood strategy. (Pain & Shah, 2009; Ganesh, 2013). The ongoing nature of these practices underscores their significance as means of sustenance, as well as systems for passing down knowledge, fostering community connections, and promoting micro-entrepreneurship (Ganesh, 2017; ILO, 2012).

Therefore, if home economics aims to play a role in the sustainable and inclusive development of Afghanistan, it is essential to reimagine, remap, and implement economic strategies as a core element of Afghanistan's development agenda. The approach will transform home economics from being seen as informal and peripheral to acknowledging its potential as a locally-driven, sustainable economic engine. This reimagining relies on addressing the structural constraints that separate households from broader economic systems particularly the issue of connectivity, which will be examined in the subsequent section (Ganesh, 2017; AREU, 2021).

3.1. Connectivity Gaps in Afghanistan

Connectivity, although a prominent topic in contemporary discussions on sustainable and inclusive development, Afghanistan continues to experience significant gaps in connectivity throughout the nation. This issue is especially pronounced in rural and peri-urban regions, where home economics serves as the primary economic unit (Safi & Alizada, 2019; Amiri, 2017)(United Nations Environment Programme, 2021). The underlying factors are the precarious geographical and cultural dimensions of Afghanistan, which are quintessential for the success of connectivity. Afghanistan's geography is characterized by its rugged terrain and high-peaked mountains, creating significant challenges for connectivity (Ispahani, 2019). The Hindu Kush serves as a significant topographical divider in Afghanistan, creating distinct divisions both north and south, as well as east and west. The extensive mountain ranges and challenging landscapes have led to the isolation of various communities within distinct valleys across Afghanistan, resulting in diverse cultural practices and traditions (Barfield, 2010; Azimi,

2012; Haghpanah & Rahimi, 2011). As a result, the influence of the terrain and landscapes affected connectivity throughout Afghanistan.

Infrastructures and logistics are crucial in Afghanistan's quest for connectivity to unlock its full potential in home economics (United Nations Environment Programme, 2021; World Bank, 2017). Ghalib asserts that Afghanistan is poised to transform its narrative from being a landlocked nation to one that is land-connected (Ghalib, 2017). Nonetheless, Afghanistan exhibits inadequate infrastructure (Brecht-Clark and Osmani, 2016). Reports from the Asian Development Bank (2022; 2023) indicate that ADB has allocated a total of USD 2.2 billion to enhance Afghanistan's connectivity, aiming to improve regional connectivity as well as the safety, efficiency, and sustainability of land transport, while also expanding economic and social opportunities. Nonetheless, the transportation infrastructure in Afghanistan is characterized by limitations, insufficient funding, and an uneven distribution, primarily resulting from the low levels of investment in infrastructure.

Reports indicate that merely 30% of Afghanistan's roads are paved, with extensive areas, particularly in the central highlands and eastern provinces, either completed or only seasonally accessible. Inadequate road connectivity restricts households from accessing local and regional markets, healthcare and educational services, and suppliers of raw materials essential for home-based economic production. For Afghanistan to progress towards sustainable economic development, it is essential to focus on comprehensive internal infrastructure development and enhance external connectivity (Safi & Alizada, 2019). The accounts from the private sector emphasize the necessity of enhancing physical infrastructure, which, as previously noted, serves as the primary obstacle hindering a nation's deeper integration. Rasikh, an engineer with the Ministry of Public Works, asserts, "Afghanistan should prioritize the construction and improvement of its highways and roads because railroad construction takes time and is not always feasible, while air corridors are too expensive and inefficient" (Safi and Alizada 2018).

A deficiency exists in the energy connectivity within Afghanistan. The disparity in energy access within the country is evident, as urban centers may have the advantage of grid electricity or diesel generators. At the same time, vast areas of rural Afghanistan continue to be off-grid. This reliance on primitive energy sources presents considerable

obstacles for economic activities conducted from home. Haidary (2020) posits that electricity serves as a crucial input for both urban and rural development, directly influencing the welfare of households at the micro level. Furthermore, the absence of energy would result in food storage, restricted processing capabilities, constrained packaging capacity, limited or no access to electronic and technological tools, and diminished productivity.

Furthermore, a noticeable disparity exists in the digital connectivity within Afghanistan. Despite the significant growth in internet and mobile access since 2005, it continues to be distinctly uneven, slow, and costly (Safi & Alizada, p. 37; World Bank, 2021). The World Bank report indicates that there has been considerable growth in the ICT sector in Afghanistan since 2002. By the end of 2010, there were around 15 million mobile telephone subscriptions, a significant increase from just 60,000 telephone lines in 2002, with mobile networks reaching about 80 percent of the population" (World Bank, 2021).

As of 2023, internet distribution throughout the nation stands at 22%, with a significant concentration in urban areas and hubs. A report from the World Bank (2017) indicates that merely 11% of the Afghan population utilizes the internet. The mobile network experiences challenges that affect a significant portion of its functionality. Nonetheless, there has been a recent expansion in reach; however, issues related to service quality and affordability continue to be significant challenges. The level of digital literacy is notably inadequate, especially in regions that have experienced extended periods of conflict and displacement. The lack of digital connectivity has significant implications for home economics. Initially, households face challenges in accessing market price information, which restricts their capacity to negotiate equitable prices. This restricts their access to online skills training, entrepreneurship guidance, or government support programs. This confines them to conventional local low-scale trade and exchanges, hindering their capacity to participate in digital trade, mobile banking, and e-commerce.

As a result, the existing connectivity framework in Afghanistan significantly restricts household-based economic activities from progressing beyond mere subsistence levels. The lack of transportation for goods, the inability to power essential tools, and the absence of communication with buyers contribute to a state of isolation, inefficiency, and vulnerability in home economics. This paper clarifies that it does not argue that

home economics cannot operate independently of connectivity. It undoubtedly holds significance, particularly within traditional societies such as Afghanistan, and has the potential to generate income. This paper argues for its scale, high output, productivity, and creativity, suggesting that these factors can serve as a crucial instrument for fostering national sustainable economic development characterized by inclusiveness and connectivity.

3.2. Connectivity as the Fuel of Home Economics

Home economics possesses the calibre to serve as a localized and scalable form of economic activity. However, due to the major disconnects in Afghanistan, the potential will not materialize. Hence, in order for home economics to contribute meaningfully to the sustainable economic development of Afghanistan, connectivity is essential. Connectivity works as the catalyst for home economics to transform it from an isolated, localized, subsistence-level activity into a driver of inclusive development.

Infrastructure connectivity is paramount in enabling physical access and productivity (Kim, 1997; ADB, 2023). It allows households to engage with suppliers, cooperatives, and buyers very easily. For instance, a worker in Nangarhar province produces pickled vegetables; through connectivity, they can reach city and centre markets that will boost their sales. Simultaneously, energy - connectivity exacerbates productivity and creativity. Household-level economic activities connected to electricity and modern technologies can change how household economics work. South Korea illustrates how energy connectivity has enabled the use of cold storage, machines, and lighting for extended working hours.

Digital connectivity, particularly following the rise of artificial intelligence, is reshaping economies and societies around the world (Hoffman, 2016; 2024; 2025). In Afghanistan, where traditional economic structures are deeply rooted in households and informal systems, digital access has the potential to transform home-based economic activities and integrate them into the formal economy. The shift opens new pathways for productivity, income generation, and financial inclusion (Haidari, 2020). Access to mobile phones and internet connectivity allows rural producers and small traders to reach broader markets beyond their local bazaars. Through social media platforms and messaging applications, Afghan households can now advertise goods, compare prices,

and engage in e-commerce from their homes. These tools give them access to knowledge and new economic opportunities that were previously out of reach. For many households, this marks the beginning of participation in a hyper-connected global economy.

Progress in financial inclusion is also accelerating. Digital financial services now enable small entrepreneurs to save, transact, and grow their businesses. One notable example is HesabPay, a digital payment platform pioneered by Sanzar Kakar. When asked about the potential digital connectivity, he prolifically said, “ It allows users to send, receive, and store money securely through their mobile phones. By reducing reliance on cash, HesabPay enables small traders and home-based businesses to participate in the economy more safely and efficiently. If digital connectivity is strategically merged with household economic activities, and families are trained to use the tools effectively, Afghanistan can unlock a new wave of economic participation. This will not only increase household income but also foster institutional engagement and sustainable development. In short, digital connectivity when applied thoughtfully can transform Afghanistan’s home economics from isolated activity into a powerful driver of inclusive growth” (Kakar, 2025).

Providing that connectivity is rationally merged with the household-level economic activities, the home economics will integrate into the formal economy. Connectivity can open the door for home economics to institutional engagement. Connectivity is not a luxury, nor a secondary input. For Afghanistan, it is the missing link that holds back thousands of skilled, resilient households from realizing their potential. Thus, connectivity not only improves productivity but transforms household activity into strategic economic participation.

3.3. South Korea’s Rural Connectivity as a Foundational Strategy for Sustainable Development in Afghanistan

Afghanistan and South Korea are two different spatial configurations with different human-cultural-physical geographies. Their socio-economic landscape and development paths are fundamentally different. However, South Korean rural development experience and approach offer a valuable lens connectivity, which is a universal ingredient for success and possesses transformative potential. The devastating war left its scar on South

Korea, encompassing all sectors. The most discernible was the economy. South Korea managed to lay the foundation for broad-based economic growth by targeting the home economy productivity through connectivity-first development(Cho, 2003; Kim, 1997; Kim, 2004; Kang, 2008; Park, 2011; Saemaul Undong Central Association, 2017; Park, 2009; ADB, 2012; Kim, 2012).

Connectivity needs to be approached as a foundational strategy for sustainable development in Afghanistan. Sustainable development in Afghanistan cannot depend exclusively on foreign aid, urban-focused growth, and large-scale infrastructure projects. Instead, it should start where most Afghans live and work at the household level, where everyday economic activity and resilience are rooted. To unlock the potential of domestic productivity, the country must merge household-based economic activities with a broader national connectivity strategy. In this context, connectivity is not limited to roads; it also includes power grids, telecommunications, irrigation systems, digital access, and institutional linkages that connect households to better networks of opportunity, knowledge, and value.

South Korea's Saemaul Undong (New Village Movement, 새마을운동) presents an instructive model for Afghanistan. It was launched in the 1970s amid post-colonial and post-war devastation, when Korea was one of the poorest countries. The movement achieved a remarkable transformation and gradually reduced dependence on foreign aid by integrating rural households into the national economy physically, spiritually, and socially (Saemaul Undong Central Association, 2017). The Korean household-level-economy development model followed a specific sequence: Connectivity (연결성) → Activation of Household Labor (가정 노동 활성화) → Market Access (시장 접근) → Integration into the Formal Economy (공식 경제 통합).

A counterargument can challenge this model for Afghanistan, since it was planned and implemented for a distinct historical and cultural context. This paper does not suggest replicating the exact model; however, it suggests that it offers relevant insights into Afghanistan's development, and based on Afghan realities and lived experience, it can be

remodeled. Secondly, the signature theme of this model is connectivity and integration. Connectivity works the same everywhere, like a fuel.

Afghan households already engage in productive activities; however, these efforts remain overwhelmingly informal, under-capitalized, and disconnected. Lacking access to reliable electricity, transport, markets, and digital infrastructure, even the most hardworking households are trapped in subsistence.

The National Solidarity Program (NSP), introduced in 2003, aimed to bridge this gap by creating Community Development Councils (CDCs) that oversaw infrastructure development. The NSP successfully implemented over 83,000 sub-projects in sectors such as education, energy, roads, and irrigation (Beath, Christia, & Enikolopov, 2015). Despite its scale, the NSP often lacked the cohesive national vision and cultural momentum that drove Korea's success. Many CDCs remained isolated, donor-driven, and fragmented from broader economic and institutional frameworks (Mumtaz & Misook, 2016).

What distinguished Saemaul Undong was its integration of infrastructure development with civic empowerment and cultural reform. It was not merely an economic project it was a national movement grounded in the principles of 자조 (self-help), 근면 (diligence), and 협동 (cooperation). It focused on both material improvements and civic responsibility (정신개조, "mental reform") (Park, 2011; Saemaul Undong Central Association, 2017). During the early stages of Saemaul Undong's planning and implementation, the Korean policymakers and practitioners included strategies that made it successful, which are :

Unified Leadership and Centralized Vision (통합된 지도력): Strong centralized leadership under President Park Chung Hee maintained policy coherence, resource mobilization, and long-term planning. Rural development was framed as a national mission, not a peripheral project (Kang, 2008).

Local Community Ownership and Encouraged Voluntary Participation (자발적 참여): Villagers contributed labor, materials, and ideas. Women were mobilized as active

participants. Success stories were widely shared, cultivating a sense of (주인의식) ownership (Kim, 2004).

Purposeful Infrastructure: Infrastructure such as roads, electricity, and communications were directly linked to economic productivity facilitating market access, improving household industry, and enabling knowledge transfer (Kim, 1997).

Spiritual Reform and National Ethos: The “We Can Do It” (하면 된다) spirit transformed attitudes. It was more than rhetoric it became a collective norm that redefined rural identity and national pride. (Park, 2011; Cho, 2003).

Afghanistan’s NSP, while valuable, did not embed the same level of cultural and civic motivation. It remained primarily technical, donor-fragmented, and lacked a unifying narrative that could inspire people to transform their own lives. Afghanistan does not need to replicate Korea’s path, but it can internalize its principles and create a development model suited to local realities. That means linking household-level production to broader systems through smart infrastructure, institutional coordination, and cultural mobilization. Hence, it can adopt possible strategies to integrate the household economic activities with the national economy with a sustainable and inclusive development:

Start with Local Connectivity: Development should not begin in Kabul. Rural roads, solar energy, and mobile access should start at the household level, enabling micro-producers to enter broader value chains.

Purposeful Planning Over Fragmentation: Infrastructure must serve a clear economic purpose. A road to nowhere is a wasted investment. CDCs can become more effective with proper data, tools, and training.

Empowering Households as Economic Agents: With access to electricity, credit, tools, and training, households can evolve from subsistence to small-scale industries forming cooperatives or even export-linked micro-enterprises.

Cultivating a Unifying Ethos: Afghanistan can create its own version of 하면 된다 a national spirit rooted in Islamic teachings and traditional Afghan values.

Leapfrogging with Digital Tools: While Korea built telephone lines, Afghanistan can leap into mobile banking, e-learning, and SMS-based farming guides.

Bridging Traditional and Modern Governance: Development must respect local leadership structures. Elders and traditional authorities can be integrated into CDCs to build trust and avoid alienation.

Therefore, one could contend that the fundamental aspect of achieving sustainable development in Afghanistan lies in constructing a cohesive framework starting from the household level. The primary takeaway from South Korea's Saemaul Undong revolves around the strategic engagement of households via purposeful connectivity and culturally meaningful reform. GDP does not drive progress; it starts in communities and the collective conviction that change can be achieved. Afghanistan is currently experiencing a critical juncture. The individuals within this community demonstrate remarkable capability and resilience. A system that links their efforts to significant opportunities is essential. A transformative shift in household economics anchored in connectivity, shared identity, and local stewardship has the potential to establish a robust basis for sustainable and inclusive development over the long term.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Afghanistan requires immediate reform and is exploring avenues that will facilitate sustainable and inclusive development. It is crucial to understand that relying solely on top-down reforms and large-scale industrialization is inadequate. The path ahead begins at the most fundamental level of the economy the household. Home economics offers a valuable yet often overlooked approach to fostering sustainable growth, stability, and resilience. Nonetheless, for this tool to operate effectively, it requires a vital resource connectivity.

The paper argues that connectivity is integral to economic development, prosperity, and empowerment, rather than merely supplementary. It has emerged as a pivotal element and functions as a catalyst. Connectivity has emerged as a prominent term in developmental literature. In any space where infrastructures, roads, energy, and digital networks are present, different kinds of economic organization have the potential to develop and thrive, including household-level activities. Conversely, in countries where

connectivity is insufficient, even minimal economic activity fails to produce the expected advantages. This case pertains to Afghanistan, where home economics predominantly influences economic activities, particularly in rural areas that are on the periphery and semi-periphery. Following a thorough examination of the Afghan context, it has been found that for households and home economics to enhance their production efficiency, access markets, interact with institutions, and transition from survival-based activities to sustainable enterprises that will aid in the national economic development, the presence and spread of connectivity is essential.

Now is the moment for governments, the private sector, and both local and national enterprises to reassess their strategies on home economics. The rationale is that in the absence of connectivity, even the most adept and driven households remain marginalized, unnoticed, and economically stagnant. This research does not contend that home economics cannot function without connectivity. Home economics has operated in traditional societies such as Afghanistan without connectivity. However, it has simply remained unscalable and reliant on sustenance. Connectivity functions as a catalyst; when integrated with home economics, it enables individuals to progress from mere subsistence to sustainable economic development that is also inclusive.

This paper aims to substantiate its theoretical position by examining the case of South Korea, which exemplifies how strategic investments in connectivity can enhance household productivity. It is important to recognize that Afghanistan should not simply replicate the same strategies, as the country's conditions are distinct, characterized by its rugged geography and diverse culture. This paper argues that the fundamental principle underlying the Korean experience is connectivity, which facilitates the unlocking of capabilities. Utilizing connectivity as a driver for growth should align with the socio-economic and cultural realities of Afghanistan. The principle should be straightforward: when households are connected, they are able to engage actively. Participation leads to contribution. When individuals contribute, they play a crucial role in establishing the groundwork for a resilient and self-sufficient nation. To progress, Afghanistan needs to adopt a cohesive development strategy one that recognizes the interconnectedness of connectivity and home economics, treating them as mutually reinforcing elements of inclusive, grassroots growth. The decision does not lie solely between informal home

economies and contemporary development. The potential for advancement is rooted in the integration of the two elements.

5. SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

After an extensive analytical exploration of the broad concept of connectivity and home economics, this paper argues that a unique and compelling relationship exists between connectivity and the effectiveness of home economics as a means to achieve sustainable development in Afghanistan. Economic activities at the household level play a crucial role in shaping the country's economic landscape. However, its present influence is significantly constrained by disconnections. This paper posits that there exists an opportunity to merge home economics with the national and wider economic frameworks. It is significantly dependent on various forms of connectivity, including infrastructural, ideational, digital, and energy aspects.

To facilitate improvement in harnessing the potential of home economics as a crucial element of sustainable development in Afghanistan, scholars and policymakers need to begin by recognizing connectivity at the micro and macroeconomic levels. Secondly, the notion of connectivity ought to be reconsidered not merely as a support mechanism but rather as a strategic facilitator that warrants a fresh perspective. Furthermore, a rigorous scholarly examination of the concept of home economics is essential. Household-based economic activity should be stopped mapping just as a means of basic sustenance; it should be acknowledged as a fundamental component of local and national development. (DFID, 1999; Calderón & Servén, 2010; Sen, 1999).

Every country has focused on enhancing connectivity as a means to foster economic growth. Connectivity is recognized as a driving force for economic growth, and the South Korean example demonstrates that policy thinkers in Korea have concentrated on enhancing connectivity to achieve sustainable development (Kim, 2004; Kang, 2008; Park, 2011; Saemaul Undong Central Association, 2017; Park, 2009; ADB, 2012). Therefore, in this context, despite the differences from the landscape of South Korea, the Afghans need to focus on developing infrastructure throughout the country. Afghanistan faces significant challenges in infrastructure connectivity (ADB, 2023). The government needs to prioritize investments in all-weather feeder roads that link villages to district centers and markets (World Bank, 2017). The authorities need to prioritize road planning

that is grounded in the specific needs of regions exhibiting significant economic activity. Ultimately, the strategy for developing infrastructure connectivity should be implemented to establish a cash-for-work initiative, which will provide employment opportunities while enhancing access (Kim, 1999).

Investing in infrastructure plays a crucial role in fostering sustainable and inclusive economic development in Afghanistan (ADB, 2017; ADB, 2023). It serves a crucial function in achieving Afghanistan's long-term objective of establishing itself as a connectivity hub for the region. If Afghanistan establishes connectivity first, it will facilitate global connectivity with ease. Additionally, the country needs to engage actively in various international connectivity projects to achieve this objective, while remaining mindful of its own interests and autonomy. The integration of these connectivity projects will lead to the development of roads, infrastructure, internet connectivity, and energy connectivity by the host countries. (Kim, 1997; Kim, 2004).

The government ought to enhance decentralized and off-grid energy access to improve energy availability. They should prioritize the promotion of solar systems throughout Afghanistan. A method must be implemented that links energy access initiatives to productive applications. The founder of LinkedIn, Hoffman (2016; 2024; 2025), remarked that we are in an era defined by technology and artificial intelligence. The AI and technology we currently utilize are merely foundational, suggesting that future advancements will be truly astonishing. To effectively utilize that, we must initiate this process for improved application. In this context, the Afghan government should leverage technology, AI, and digitalization concerning home economics (United Nations Environment Program, 2021). A thorough and inclusive national strategy for rural digital connectivity must be formulated, concentrating on all peripheral areas. The strategy should prioritize the expansion of mobile and internet coverage in underserved areas. Also, it is essential to establish and promote community-based digital access hubs, while ensuring that data packages and digital tools are both affordable and available in Pashto/Dari. In a nutshell, connectivity must be incorporated into national development strategies, viewed as a fundamental enabler rather than a standalone sector. Key policies related to rural development, education, and economic inclusion should integrate connectivity benchmarks.

Focusing exclusively on connectivity will not be enough. This work has consistently argued that home economics plays a crucial role in economic development. Additionally, connectivity serves as a catalyst within this field, enhancing its significance. Thus, both represent the dual pillars of sustainable and inclusive economic development. Focusing exclusively on connectivity while assuming that Afghanistan has a rich tradition of home economics, without giving it the necessary priority, would be a significant oversight. Therefore, it is essential to prioritize the support and institutionalization of home economics in Afghanistan. Economic activities at the household level, particularly those related to home economics, ought to be formally acknowledged in policies that incorporate home economics into national strategies for economic recovery, local empowerment, and peripheral development. A comprehensive establishment of a home-based enterprise registry to identify, assist, and formalize home businesses would enhance the integration of these entities into national development strategies.

On another level, capacity building is essential for achieving success in the realm of connectivity and its application, particularly in home economics. Home economics in Afghanistan remains primitive to this day. It is essential for the government, policy makers, and the private sector to implement vocational and training programs focused on food safety, home budgeting, product packaging, and quality control (Chung, 2010). Private sectors and NGOs need to participate in this process by co-investing in toolkits and seed capital for home-based businesses. Afghanistan continues to fall behind in the adoption and application of technology and digitization. Connectivity serves as a catalyst for home economics, enabling significant advancements in the country's development. Therefore, collaboration between the government and the private sector is essential to enhance digital literacy and foster economic participation (Kim, 2012).

Considering the specific context of Afghanistan, it is essential to initiate digital skills campaigns focused on home economics. This should include training individuals in the use of mobile banking, digital marketplaces, and relevant government e-services that pertain to their professional activities. It is reasonable to assert that the ultimate goal of home economics is to aid in the sustainable and inclusive development of Afghanistan. To achieve this vision connectivity as a facilitator household economics must be woven into the fabric of markets, cities, centers, and the national economy. In this context, it is

important to highlight village-level collection points and local business exhibitions, such as rotating rural bazaars, along with regional product branding aimed at enhancing household income streams.

Highly efficient strategies that lack implementation are essentially non-existent (사예드, 뭉타즈, & 이미숙, 2016). These policies must be executed with a keen awareness of the Afghan socio-cultural landscape and configuration, utilizing proven coordination and implementation mechanisms. Initially, it is essential to establish an inter-ministerial task force that includes representatives from the economy, rural development, and communication sectors to coordinate efforts effectively. Involving local communities from rural areas, where home economics serves as the primary economic activity, in the task force team would enhance the overall process (Mumtaz & Misook, 2016; Kim, 2012). Furthermore, Afghan practitioners and policymakers, including experts in connectivity, economics, sustainable development, policy, planning, and strategy, should utilize NGOs and international connectivity projects that have incorporated Afghanistan to implement models of integrated connectivity along with support for home economics. In addition to these efforts, it is essential to consider the involvement of local individuals, organizations, and shuras in leading the identification of community priorities for investment.

In Afghanistan, the interplay between connectivity and home economics necessitates both infrastructural and policy innovation, as well as a strong scholarly foundation. Thorough and cross-disciplinary research should guide each aspect of design, implementation, and evaluation. Consequently, it is crucial to establish specialized research institutes that focus on the interplay between connectivity, local economics, and sustainable development. These institutions should engage in empirical research, implement community-driven innovations, and produce knowledge that is pertinent to policy-making. Additionally, it is essential to regularly convene national and international conferences, high-level policy roundtables, and cross-disciplinary academic forums. These gatherings should unite economists, development theorists, technologists, and sociologists to facilitate critical dialogue and exchange contextual expertise (Mumtaz & Misook, 2016).

Institutions of higher learning ought to take the initiative in fostering the academic revival by establishing specialized centers of excellence, offering postgraduate fellowships, and incorporating home economics and digital connectivity as fundamental subjects within the curriculum across both school and university settings. These initiatives will foster an emerging generation of thinkers, doers, and creators prepared to advocate for inclusive and community-centered development approaches. To implement this vision, significant funding for research grants and academic infrastructure is essential, ensuring that Afghanistan's journey toward sustainable development is firmly rooted in practice and informed by evidence, scholarship, and intellectual leadership. In this context, inquiry should not be a secondary consideration it should lead the way (Mumtaz & Misook, 2016). These perspectives could provide valuable insights for Afghan policymakers and practitioners.

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