Syntax Literate: Jurnal Ilmiah Indonesia p–ISSN: 2541-0849
e-ISSN: 2548-1398
Vol. 9, No. 12, Desember 2024

The Necessity and Importance of Research and Its Role in Afghan Society

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Abstract

This research examines the necessity and importance of scientific research in Afghan society and its role in the country's economic, social, and cultural development. Given Afghanistan's numerous challenges, including war, poverty, and political instability, research is recognized as a vital tool for identifying and analyzing problems and providing data-driven and evidence-based solutions. The research employs a qualitative methodology based on semi-structured interviews with researchers, university professors, and policymakers. Findings indicate that scientific research can contribute to economic development by enhancing educational quality, improving infrastructure, and increasing innovation. Additionally, the results suggest that institutional, cultural, and financial resource barriers are among the main challenges to advancing research in Afghanistan. Ultimately, this study emphasizes the need for investment in research and the creation of suitable infrastructures to achieve sustainable development and improve the quality of life in Afghanistan.

Keywords: Scientific research, economic development, Afghanistan, challenges, research infrastructure.

Introduction

Scientific research holds a unique position as one of the core elements of development and progress in today's world. All societies, particularly developing countries like Afghanistan, need scientific and applied research to achieve sustainable growth and create economic and social welfare. Research not only leads to the production of new knowledge but also aids governments and decision-making bodies in formulating more effective and intelligent policies to manage various challenges through data-driven solutions (Ooms et al., 2023). Afghanistan, as a country plagued by decades of war, poverty, and structural problems, needs scientific research more than ever. In a nation facing extensive security, economic, educational, and social issues, research can play a crucial role in identifying and analyzing problems and providing effective solutions. Specifically, local research conducted concerning Afghanistan's cultural, economic, and social conditions can significantly address the chronic challenges facing the community (Alemi et al., 2023). The importance of research in Afghan society can be examined from several perspectives. First, research can aid in economic development. Creating sustainable and efficient infrastructure, growing industries, enhancing educational levels, and improving people's quality of life require precise and knowledge-based research (Azzahra, 2023). Research in various fields such as agriculture, natural resources, water management, rural development, and local industries can enhance production and efficiency and place the country on a path toward economic development (Prado-Acebo et al., 2024). Second, research plays a fundamental role in improving educational quality in Afghanistan. Despite numerous efforts to enhance the educational system, significant

How to cite: Yar, F. G. M. (2024). The Necessity and Importance of Research and Its Role in Afghan Society. *Syntax Literate. (9)12.* http://dx.doi.org/10.36418/syntax-literate.v9i12
E-ISSN: 2548-1398

weaknesses remain in this sector. Scientific research can help identify weaknesses in the educational system and the needs of students and professors, and offer solutions to improve educational quality in Afghanistan. Moreover, through academic research, universities and educational institutions can become reliable sources for future decision-making and policy-making (Ameri et al., 2023).

Third, research contributes to increasing public awareness and participation in community development and reconstruction processes. By disseminating research findings and utilizing various media, people can gain a better understanding of societal problems and possible solutions. This can foster social cohesion and strengthen public participation in political, social, and economic processes (Hindhede & Aagaard-Hansen, 2017). However, despite the high importance of research in Afghan society, numerous challenges exist. Financial resource shortages, lack of access to modern technologies, absence of suitable research and educational infrastructures, and cultural and social limitations are among the obstacles faced by Afghan researchers. Additionally, political instability and the lack of prioritization of research at the governmental level have created problems in this field (Rahmani et al., 2021; Yar, 2024). Therefore, to achieve sustainable development and scientific progress in Afghanistan, research must be viewed as a fundamental pillar, and appropriate investments in this area are necessary. Encouraging young people and academics to engage in scientific and applied research, creating suitable infrastructures, and supporting research projects in key areas can be effective steps towards development and progress in Afghanistan (Snyder et al., 2020).

This research investigates the necessity and importance of scientific research in Afghan society. To achieve this goal, a qualitative approach is employed, including semi-structured interviews with researchers, university professors, and policymakers. This methodology allows us to gain deeper insights from participants and better understand the challenges and opportunities facing research in Afghanistan. This explanation provides a better understanding of the research process and its importance for the country's future development. The following sections of this paper will offer a more in-depth analysis of the importance of research, examine existing challenges, and propose solutions to strengthen the research culture in Afghan society.

The objective of this research is to examine the necessity and importance of research in Afghan society and elucidate its role in the national development process. This study aims to analyze the role of research in addressing economic, social, and cultural problems and to highlight the need for improving research and scientific infrastructures in Afghanistan. Additionally, identifying challenges and obstacles faced by researchers and offering solutions to improve the research environment in the country are also key objectives of this research.

The significance of this research is noteworthy from both theoretical and practical perspectives. Theoretically, it contributes to the expansion of knowledge regarding the importance of scientific research in the national and international development processes and elucidates the necessity of viewing research as a primary driving force for development. Practically, the results of this research could be valuable for policymakers, educational institutions, and research centers in Afghanistan, aiding them in better planning for the enhancement of research and addressing its barriers. Additionally, this research could encourage youth and researchers to engage in scientific and applied research and play a significant role in fostering a research culture in the country.

Research is recognized as one of the core elements of sustainable development in various societies. In developed countries, research plays a crucial role in improving the

quality of life, advancing economic progress, and addressing social issues. However, in Afghanistan, scientific research faces numerous challenges, including a lack of necessary infrastructure, limited access to financial resources and modern technologies, and political instability (Essar et al., 2023). These challenges have resulted in research not having an adequate position in Afghanistan and failing to effectively address the country's fundamental problems. Consequently, many economic, social, and cultural issues remain inadequately examined scientifically, and decisions are often made without a research-based foundation (Yar & Yasouri, 2024). The problem statement for this research is based on the fact that despite the high importance of research in the development process, Afghanistan has not been able to fully utilize its research potential. Therefore, it is essential to thoroughly examine the barriers and challenges faced by Afghan researchers and propose solutions to enhance the status of research in this society.

Research Background

Scientific research is recognized as one of the primary factors of progress in any society and has played a significant role in bringing about positive and sustainable changes in developed countries. The importance of research in developing countries has also garnered attention from many researchers. Studies in this area show that economic, social, and cultural development is impossible without scientific and applied research.

In a study conducted by Fang et al. (2022) on the role of research in economic development in South Asian countries, it was found that countries that place greater importance on research and scientific development experience more sustainable economic growth. This study demonstrated that the use of scientific findings in economic policymaking directly contributes to poverty reduction and improved public welfare. Given Afghanistan's cultural and economic similarities with many South Asian countries, the results of this research could help understand the necessity of research in Afghanistan and illustrate how investment in scientific research can lead to economic growth and social improvement (Fang et al., 2022).

In another study by Igwe et al. (2021) in West African countries, the relationship between scientific research and the improvement of educational systems was examined. This research showed that research related to education and educational innovations has enhanced educational quality and increased literacy rates in these countries. The study emphasized that educational institutions require more financial and infrastructural support to conduct scientific research. Considering Afghanistan's similar conditions in the education sector and the importance of research in improving the educational system, this study can illustrate how scientific research in Afghanistan can contribute to educational quality enhancement (Igwe et al., 2021).

Regarding the role of research in political and governmental decision-making, Mondal et al (2022) concluded in a study conducted in Southeast Asian countries that the use of scientific findings in policy formulation could lead to more informed decision-making and reduce governmental risks. The study particularly highlighted the importance of academic research in addressing social and economic crises. Since Afghanistan faces similar crises, this research could be crucial for understanding the role of research in creating effective policies in Afghanistan (Mondal et al., 2022).

A study by about Middle Eastern countries also showed that the absence of a strong research framework leads to the inefficacy of many development and social projects. This research emphasized the importance of coordination between scientific institutions, universities, and governments to achieve developmental programs. As a neighboring

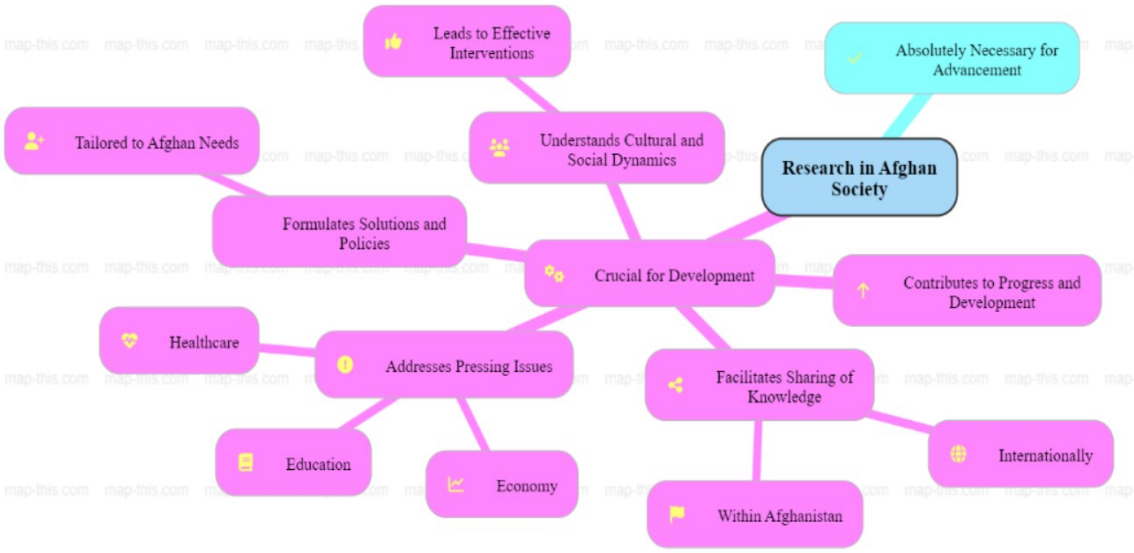
country to the Middle East, Afghanistan could leverage these findings to strengthen connections between universities and the government to increase scientific research and improve high-level decision-making (Emami et al., 2018). Overall, studies conducted in developing countries indicate that scientific research serves as a vital tool for sustainable development and improving economic and social conditions. However, in Afghanistan, there has not been adequate attention to this issue, and researchers face numerous challenges. This research, considering the gaps in scientific research in Afghanistan and the lack of sufficient resources, aims to provide solutions for enhancing the status of research in the country and contribute to the literature on this subject.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this research provides a conceptual structure to better understand the research topic and scientific investigations. This study aims to examine the necessity and importance of research in Afghan society and will utilize theories of sustainable development, research and higher education theories, and models related to capacity building and innovation.

Sustainable Development Theory: is one of the key theories addressed in this research. Sustainable development is defined as a process that meets the current needs of communities without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Within this framework, scientific research is viewed as a crucial tool for creating innovation, improving productivity, and ensuring economic sustainability. In developing countries like Afghanistan, scientific research can contribute to finding sustainable solutions for economic, social, and environmental challenges (Thomas & Mantri, 2022).

Research and Higher Education Theories: will also be explored in this study. These theories examine the importance of research in enhancing educational quality, improving scientific infrastructure, and creating job opportunities in countries seeking progress and development. According to these theories, universities and educational institutions should serve as primary centers for scientific research and implement stronger research policies to train researchers and advance scientific knowledge within society (Schwengel & Toy, 2019). Finally, Models Related to Capacity Building and Innovation will be another significant component of the theoretical framework in this research. These models emphasize that establishing research capacities at the national level and strengthening scientific and technological innovations can help in economic growth and increase a country's ability to address complex challenges. Given Afghanistan’s current situation, enhancing research capacity could lead to the development of indigenous and practical solutions to the country’s problems (Bai et al., 2021). This theoretical framework helps clarify the foundational ideas of the research and demonstrates how scientific concepts and theories can elucidate the necessity and importance of research in Afghan society.



Fiqure 1. Mind Map of Research in Afghan Society

Research Methodology

The methodology of this research is designed to gather valid data and analyze it to assess the importance of research in Afghan society. The research adopts a qualitative approach, as understanding the perspectives, experiences, and perceptions of Afghan researchers, academics, and policymakers regarding research and its role in society is crucial.

Type of Research: This study is descriptive-analytical, focusing on describing and analyzing the status and significance of research in Afghan society. Necessary data will be collected through in-depth interviews and direct observation of the research status in universities and research centers in Afghanistan.

Sampling Method: Sampling will be purposeful. The study population includes researchers, university professors, graduate students, and policymakers related to the research and higher education sector. Theoretical sampling will be used to select individuals with the most experience and knowledge in research and higher education.

Data Collection Tools: The primary data collection tool will be “semi-structured interviews”. These interviews are designed to explore participants’ views and experiences regarding the importance and role of research in Afghanistan's economic and social development. Additionally, direct observation: and review of existing research documentation in universities and research centers will be used as secondary sources.

Data Analysis Method: Collected data will be analyzed using qualitative content analysis. In this method, the content of interviews and observations will be systematically coded, and patterns, themes, and key concepts will be extracted. The data will then be interpreted and analyzed using the research theoretical framework to derive the final research findings.

This research methodology will facilitate an in-depth and accurate examination of the role of research in Afghan society and will utilize valid data to analyze the challenges and opportunities in this field.

Research and Discussion

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data analysis and interpretation section is one of the most important parts of any research, where the collected data is examined, analyzed, and interpreted in detail. In this research, which examines the **necessity and importance of research and its place in Afghan society**, the data was collected through in-depth interviews and direct observations. In this section, the results obtained from this data are compared with the provided theoretical framework, and the research questions are answered.

1. Content Analysis of Interviews

Qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews with researchers, university professors, graduate students, and policymakers. The content analysis of these interviews shows us that overall perspectives on research in Afghanistan can be divided into several main categories:

a. The importance of research for economic development: Most participants believed that scientific research plays a direct role in the economic development of the country. They pointed out that in developed countries, scientific research has led to industrial innovations and improvements in production processes. However, in Afghanistan, this connection has not yet been fully established. According to one participant: "Research in Afghanistan is often limited to universities and rarely finds its way into economic policymaking." This finding aligns with the theoretical framework of the research which refers to “sustainable development theory”. According to this theory, scientific research should be viewed as a tool for creating innovation and improving economic productivity. In Afghanistan, the weakness in implementing this approach is evident.

b. The role of research in improving educational quality: Another part of the analysis indicates that participants believe scientific research can help improve Afghanistan's educational system. Most university professors and graduate students acknowledged that Afghan universities face a lack of research resources and scientific tools, which leads to a decline in the quality of education and scientific research.

   This topic aligns with the “theory of research and higher education” that was examined within the theoretical framework. The theory of research and higher education emphasizes that without appropriate scientific research, the enhancement of educational quality in countries will not be possible. Our findings indicate that one of the main challenges in Afghanistan is the lack of necessary infrastructure for conducting scientific research.

c. Institutional and cultural barriers to research: Another key finding of this research highlights the cultural and institutional barriers to research in Afghanistan. Some participants pointed out that scientific research in Afghan society lacks sufficient support, and many government institutions have not recognized the importance of research. According to one researcher: In Afghanistan, research is not seen as a national priority, which has led to a lack of research funding and a decrease in motivation for researchers.

   These findings are consistent with "models related to capacity building and innovation" that were examined within the theoretical framework. These models emphasize that without institutional support and the establishment of research capacities, scientific innovations and the development of research in countries are not feasible.

2. Comparison with previous research

To analyze the data more accurately, the results obtained were compared with the findings of previous studies presented in the literature review section. Research conducted in South Asian and West African countries indicates that sustainable development is impossible without scientific research. The results of the present study also confirm that in Afghanistan, weakness in conducting scientific research, particularly in economic and educational fields, is one of the main factors of the country's developmental lag.

While previous research has shown that in many developing countries, scientific research has led to improvements in educational quality and enhanced economic policymaking, the findings of this study indicate that in Afghanistan, this connection has not yet been fully established, and many institutional and cultural barriers need to be addressed.

3. Response to Research Questions

Based on the collected data and conducted analysis, the research questions have been answered accurately:

a. How can research contribute to the development of Afghanistan?
   - The findings indicate that research can help improve production processes, and industrial innovations, and enhance educational quality. However, to achieve this goal, better infrastructure and institutional research support are needed.

b. What factors have hindered the development of research in Afghanistan?
   - Factors such as a lack of research funding, weak institutional support, and inadequate connections between research and economic policymaking are the main barriers. Additionally, cultural and social obstacles also play a significant role in reducing research motivation.

4. Conclusion from the Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Based on the analysis and interpretation of the collected data, it can be concluded that scientific research in Afghanistan is still not recognized as a national priority, and there is a strong need to create research capacities and scientific innovations. While scientific research has acted as a tool for improving economic and social conditions in many developing countries, Afghanistan still has a long way to go to achieve this goal. The findings of this research can help develop new policies to strengthen research in the country and highlight the necessity of implementing structural changes in scientific and educational institutions.

Discussion

In this section, we examine and analyze the main findings of the research and place them within the framework of the necessity and importance of research in Afghan society. This research aimed to investigate the role of research in the economic, social, and educational development of Afghanistan and the existing barriers to research development. The findings of the research indicate that research in Afghanistan is considered not only a necessity but also one of the main factors for the sustainable growth and development of the country, although there are numerous obstacles in its way.

The findings of this research showed that scientific research plays a key role in economic development, improving the quality of education, and smart policymaking in both developed and developing countries. However, in Afghanistan, this potential has not yet been fully utilized. The results indicated that three major factors have influenced the diminishing importance of research in Afghanistan:

1) Lack of financial and infrastructural resources: Afghan researchers face serious challenges in securing financial resources and suitable infrastructure for conducting scientific research. This lack of resources leads to decreased research motivation and quality of research.
2) -Weak institutional and cultural support: Governmental and private institutions have not sufficiently recognized the importance of research. As a result, the necessary support for researchers and scientific institutions is lacking, and there are no research-based policy planning efforts.
3) Lack of connection between research and economic and social policymaking: The connection between universities and research centers with the government and policymaking institutions is weak. This has resulted in research findings not being effectively utilized in economic and social decision-making(Ciocca Eller, 2024). These findings are generally consistent with the theoretical framework presented in this research. Theories of sustainable development and higher education emphasize that without scientific research, sustainable progress in economic and educational fields cannot be achieved.

Conclusion

This research demonstrated that scientific research in Afghanistan is considered a necessity for the country's development. The findings emphasize that to harness the potential of scientific research in Afghanistan, infrastructure must be improved, more financial resources allocated, and institutional and cultural support for researchers increased. Ultimately, strengthening scientific research can lead to sustainable development, economic growth, and improved educational quality in Afghanistan, acting as a key factor in the country's progress.

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