



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***FACTORS INFLUENCING THE ROLES OF LOCAL LEADERS TOWARDS
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN BAMYAN, AFGHANISTAN***

FAIZI MOHAMMAD SALEM

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN BAMYAN, AFGHANISTAN**

By

FAIZI MOHAMMAD SALEM

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra
Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science**

December 2020

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DEDICATION

My humble effort I dedicated to

My sweet and loving parents

To my lovely parents and my beloved Parent and Father Nazar Mohammad, Mother Basira Brother Mohammad Ibrahim Afrahim, Sister Hadisa & wife Patisha whom always kept praying for me day and night to achieve my goal

My supervisory committee

Associate Professor Dr. Norsida Man, Associate Professor Dr. Nolila Mohd Nawi and Associate Professor Dr. Khal Mohammad Ahmad Zai for valuable opportunities and unconditional support

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To all my friends who supported me all these years

other people who involved directly and indirectly in my MSc journey but not mentioned.

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE ROLES OF LOCAL LEADERS TOWARDS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN BAMYAN, AFGHANISTAN

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December 2020

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The need for local leadership is being demanded by the problems that arise in the local societies across the globe. Local leaders and agricultural extension agents should do their best of ability to solve the communities' problem and encourage them to trust and participate in the decision-making process – controlling, planning and implementation of the development activities in their community. However, the roles of local leaders are either poor or still at the early stage in the community development, so this problem continues to be a significant one that prevails in Afghanistan's local societies. Therefore, this study aimed at evaluating the factors that influence the roles of local leaders towards community development in Bamyan province, Afghanistan. The specific objectives were: 1) to determine the perception level of the community members towards the internal and external roles of local leaders in community development; 2) to determine the perception level of community members towards the decision-making by local leaders on community development; and 3) to identify the influencing factors among the roles assumed by the local leaders in shaping the community development decision making.

A well-structured close-ended questionnaire via self-administered was used to collect primary data from 384 community members and simple randomized sampling method was used to collect primary data from three tribes (Hazara, Tajik and Sadat) in five (5) villages in Bamyan Province, Afghanistan. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized for data analysis.

Based on the descriptive statistics, the results showed that the roles of local leader in community development were at a moderate stage. Two components of the roles included internal roles with a total mean of 2.85 and external roles with an overall mean of 2.75. The mean for perception towards the community

development by the local leader was 2.92. Factor analysis was performed to examine the underlying factors. The analysis showed that the KMO value for internal and external roles were 0.951 and 0.959, respectively and Bartlett's test of sphericity for both was significant at the level 0.000. Therefore, the data was suitable for PCA. Out of 76 statements, statements that had more than 1.0 eigenvalue were retained. Principal component analysis using the Varimax rotation extracted eight (8) underlying factors, namely Compatibility, Decisions' Needs, Overall Satisfaction, Development Standards, Information Collaboration, Strengthening Relationship, Immunity of Community and Attracting Sponsors. Based on the regression analysis, R² was found to be 0.550, F test was 57.275 and three factors were found significant: decisions' needs, immunity of the community, and attracting sponsors availability at the level of 1%, 1%, and 5%, respectively.

In conclusion, the roles of local leaders in community development decision-making improved from lower level to moderate level based on community members' perception. The result also indicated that decisions' needs, immunity and sponsors are required for community development decision-making. Therefore, this study recommends the need for support and training of the local leaders based on the above-mentioned factors to improve the condition of community development decision-making and the contribution with participation of stakeholders in decision making and implementation of development projects are essential for community development.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

**FAKTOR-FAKTOR YANG MEMPENGARUHI PERANAN PEMIMPIN
TEMPATAN KE ARAH PEMBANGUNAN MASYARAKAT DI BAMYAN,
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Keperluan untuk kepemimpinan tempatan dituntut oleh masalah yang timbul dalam masyarakat tempatan di seluruh dunia. Pemimpin tempatan dan ejen pengembangan pertanian harus melakukan yang terbaik untuk menyelesaikan masalah masyarakat dan mendorong mereka untuk mempercayai dan mengambil bahagian dalam proses membuat keputusan, mengendalikan, merancang dan melaksanakan aktiviti pembangunan di komuniti mereka. Walau bagaimanapun, peranan pemimpin tempatan adalah sama ada lemah atau masih di tahap awal pembangunan masyarakat, jadi masalah ini terus menjadi masalah besar yang berlaku dalam masyarakat tempatan Afghanistan. Oleh itu, kajian ini bertujuan untuk menilai faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi peranan pemimpin tempatan terhadap pembangunan masyarakat di Wilayah Bamyan, Afghanistan. Objektif khusus adalah untuk: 1) menentukan tahap persepsi anggota masyarakat terhadap peranan dalaman dan luaran pemimpin tempatan dalam pembangunan masyarakat; 2) menentukan tahap persepsi anggota masyarakat terhadap pembuatan keputusan oleh pemimpin tempatan dalam pembangunan masyarakat; dan 3) untuk mengenal pasti faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi peranan yang diambil oleh pemimpin tempatan dalam membentuk pembuatan keputusan pembangunan masyarakat.

Soalan kaji selidik tertutup yang tersusun dengan baik melalui pengurusan sendiri digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data primer dari 384 anggota masyarakat dan kaedah persampelan rawak mudah digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data primer dari tiga suku (Hazara, Tajik dan Sadat) di lima (5) kampung dalam Wilayah Bamyan, Afghanistan. Kedua-dua statistik deskriptif dan inferensi digunakan untuk analisis data.

Berdasarkan statistik deskriptif, hasilnya menunjukkan bahawa peranan pemimpin tempatan dalam pembangunan masyarakat berada pada tahap sederhana. Dua komponen peranan merangkumi peranan dalaman dengan jumlah min 2.85 dan peranan luaran dengan min keseluruhan 2.75. Rata-rata persepsi terhadap pembangunan masyarakat oleh pemimpin tempatan adalah 2.92. Analisis faktor dilakukan untuk mengkaji faktor-faktor yang mendasari. Analisis menunjukkan bahawa nilai KMO untuk peranan dalaman dan luaran masing-masing 0.951 dan 0.959 dan ujian kepataran Bartlett untuk keduanya signifikan pada tahap 0.000. Oleh itu, data tersebut sesuai untuk PCA. Dari 76 pernyataan, pernyataan yang mempunyai lebih dari 1.0 nilai eigen dikekalkan. Analisis komponen utama menggunakan putaran Varimax mengekstrak lapan (8) faktor yang mendasari, iaitu Keserasian, Keperluan Keputusan, Kepuasan Keseluruhan, Piawaian Pembangunan, Kerjasama Maklumat, Pengukuhan Hubungan, Kekebalan Komuniti dan Menarik Penaja. Berdasarkan analisis regresi, R² didapati 0,550, uji F 57,275 dan tiga faktor didapati signifikan: keperluan keputusan, kekebalan masyarakat, dan menarik ketersediaan penaja pada tahap 1%, 1%, dan 5%.

Kesimpulannya, peranan pemimpin tempatan dalam pembuatan keputusan pembangunan masyarakat meningkat dari peringkat rendah ke tahap sederhana berdasarkan persepsi anggota masyarakat. Hasilnya juga menunjukkan bahawa keperluan keputusan, kekebalan dan penaja diperlukan untuk pembuatan keputusan pembangunan masyarakat. Oleh itu, kajian ini mengesyorkan perlunya sokongan dan latihan pemimpin tempatan berdasarkan faktor-faktor yang disebutkan di atas adalah untuk memperbaiki keadaan pembuatan keputusan pembangunan masyarakat dan sumbangan dengan penyertaan pihak berkepentingan dalam membuat keputusan dan pelaksanaan projek pembangunan sangat penting untuk pembangunan komuniti.

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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of the Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFG	Afghani
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
CD	Community Development
CDC	Community Development Council
CDDM	Community Development Decision Making
CDP	Community Development Project
DF	Degree of Freedom
DV	Dependent Variable
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
H ₀	Null Hypotheses
H _a	Alternative Hypotheses
IV	Independent Variable
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
MAIL	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PCA	Principle Component Analysis
RLL	Role of Local Leader
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USD	United State Dollar
VIF	Variance Influence Factor
>	More than
<	less than

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces Afghanistan as an agrarian country, the community development and its, decision-making process, problem statement, research questions and the objectives of the study. Issues influencing leaders in the rural, the relationship between communities with local leaders and local leaders with methods of decision-making for development in Afghanistan are briefly deliberated in this section. Additionally, problems faced by the leaders and community members are explained in the problem statement. The research questions and objectives of the study are also described. Lastly, the organization of this thesis are described in detail in the last part of this chapter.

1.1 Afghanistan as an Agrarian Country

Afghanistan is mostly an agrarian country located in South Asia. According to its constitution, the governmental system is centralized and presidential. It has 34 provinces that are surrounded by six (6) neighbours and share borders with Pakistan (2,430 km) in the South and Southeast, China (76 km) in the Northeast, Tajikistan (1,206 km), Uzbekistan (137 km) and Turkmenistan (744 km) in the North, and Iran (936 km) in the West. Afghanistan is a landlocked territory with a majority of its residents involved in agriculture (Jurenas, 2001). The political map of Afghanistan depicted in Figure 1.1 shows the 34 provinces with their capitals and the border of the country.



Figure 1.1 : Political Map of Afghanistan
(Source: Maps of the World 2020)

Afghanistan encompasses 652,860 square kilometers that support 36,917,989 people comprising 51.5% male and 48.5% female. In 2019, the growth rate was recorded at 2.3% with 54.5% living below that of the poverty line. The population comprised of 74.5% living in the rural area whereas 25.5% in the urban areas with labourers engaged in agriculture (44.3%), industry (18.1%) and services (36.7%) (World-population, 2019). About 12% of the country's whole land is arable, 3% is below the jungle cover, 46% contains permanent pasture, and the other 39% belongs to mountainous and livable (CSO, 2009). Figure 1.2 depicts the land distribution in Afghanistan and Table 1.1 describes in detail of the land distribution in agriculture.

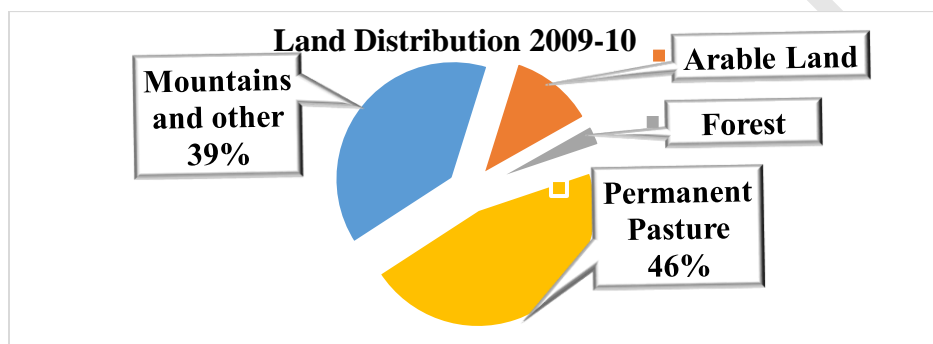


Figure 1.2 : Land Distribution of Afghanistan

Table 1.1 : Afghanistan's Land (1,000 Hectare) in 2016

Item	Area (1,000 Ha)
Country area	65,286
Agricultural land	37,910
Cropland	7,910
Arable land	7,729
Land under temporary crops	3,419
Land with temporary fallow	4,310
Land under permanent crops	181
Land under permanent meadows and pastures	30,000
Forest land	1,350
Land area equipped for irrigation	3,208
Agriculture area actually irrigated	2,457
Agriculture area under organic agriculture	0.4
Agriculture area certified organic	0.39

(Source: FAOSTAT, 2019)

Majority of Afghan's lack of access to elementary services are mainly in rural areas. According to the estimation, about 55.3% of the whole population (urban 78.2%, rural 47%) experienced lack of sustainable access to clean water and 20% of village families are facing chronic food insecurity (World Population, 2019). Afghanistan's literacy rate is 52% for men and 24.2% for women.

Although the Afghan economy has continued to experience significant growth over the few past years, it fails to alleviate the extreme poverty in the country (Wardak, 2011).

The demand for agriculture is exceedingly important as it is a life-blood in Afghanistan. The country has gone through a perennial drought that brings so many difficulties in the villages. Despite the negative situation for economic growth, the agricultural sector remains the primary source for livelihood to many Afghans. It is the most important sector in Afghanistan because almost 80% of the population depends on agriculture (Kock et al., 2010).

Agriculture is the main engine of economic development and contributes to food production in Afghanistan (Osmond, 1924). It includes a variety of licit and illicit products such as livestock, vegetables, and poppy production. These occupations are essential as a means of income generation for the local people. Therefore, agriculture is a livelihood for millions in rural areas. The importance of agriculture, especially in developing countries, is reflected by the existence of rural-based economies that are blessed with natural resources (Kock et al., 2010). Table 1.2 summarizes Afghanistan's annual crop production from 2005 to 2017. It shows a volatile trend of production among the five main crops: cereals, coarse grain, fruit, roots & tubers, and vegetables. As with the growing global population, Afghanistan is ranked 39th on the list of countries that reported an increasing population. Therefore, there is a pressing need for effective management to tackle these issues by setting specific targets for the next generations to utilize the sources efficiently.

Table 1.2 : Afghanistan's Yearly Crop Production (Tonnes)

Years	Cereals (tonnes)	Coarse Grain	Fruit (tonnes)	Roots & Tubers	Vegetables (tonnes)
2005	5,425,000	674,000	936,923	300,000	1,243,836
2006	4,638,000	735,000	1,241,884	300,000	1,037,022
2007	5,786,000	750,000	1,276,449	300,800	1,040,207
2008	3,950,000	715,000	1,244,514	280,000	1,009,392
2009	6,514,000	805,000	1,459,939	302,400	1,022,578
2010	5,957,000	753,000	1,360,109	246,000	969,763
2011	4,681,020	621,020	1,274,114	205,000	762,948
2012	6,379,000	829,000	1,352,528	230,000	817,744
2013	6,520,329	839,000	1,346,187	302,980	790,267
2014	6,748,125	840,866	1,714,567	340,257	977,064
2015	5,809,811	726,771	1,832,632	327,507	1,016,463
2016	5,534,902	623,227	2,602,757	427,917	1,463,616
2017	4,897,143	277,947	2,496,509	513,194	917,568

(Source: FAOSTAT, 2019)

Table 1.3 shows the annual harvesting areas of Afghanistan's main crop production from 2005 to 2017. The production areas for cereals, coarse grain, and vegetables are evidently decreasing, and so are the total areas of production that reduced dramatically from 3,808,869 hectares in 2005 to 3,044,313 hectares in 2017. If the government do not address the pressing poverty issues considering the growing population in the country (at an annual growing rate of 2.39%), the country will face a serious famine crisis.

Rural area and community members have a significant role to play in developing the economy and alleviate the poverty if they can work and stand on their feet together. Hence, issues that exist in the community such as skills, knowledge, leadership methods, collaborations, and *et cetera* must be determined towards finding a resolution.

Table 1.3 : Annual Harvesting Areas of Afghanistan's Crop Production

Year	Cereals (Hectares)	Coarse Grain (Hectares)	Fruit (Hectares)	Roots & Tubers (Hectares)	Vegetables (Hectares)	Total (Hectares)
2005	3,030,000	528,000	114,901	20,000	115,968	3,808,869
2006	2,989,000	385,000	144,987	20,000	95,372	3,634,359
2007	3,021,000	385,000	148,073	20,000	93,742	3,667,815
2008	2,714,000	385,000	146,800	20,000	92,461	3,358,261
2009	3,192,000	417,000	165,005	21,600	95,328	3,890,933
2010	2,962,000	400,000	165,683	20,500	90,885	3,639,068
2011	2,820,000	378,000	153,865	20,500	74,006	3,446,371
2012	3,143,000	426,000	151,957	21,000	79,938	3,821,895
2013	3,182,922	425,000	143,966	22,960	78,821	3,853,669
2014	3,344,733	470,987	173,240	25,009	99,962	4,113,931
2015	2,723,762	431,658	204,207	25,019	103,546	3,488,192
2016	2,793,133	373,923	295,094	35,699	159,315	3,657,164
2017	2,418,725	204,896	292,600	32,116	95,976	3,044,313

(Source: FAOSTAT, 2019)

Afghanistan recorded a financial development at an average of 9.4% per year between 2003 and 2012. Part of this brilliant evolution performance can be attributed to the high level of support that has been conventional in Afghanistan in the past period, which elevated the collective request for properties, facilities, and construction. Official assistance for development and military support had helped steadily from US\$404 million in 2002 to more than US\$15.7 billion in 2010, equivalent to 98% of GDP. Around a third of these aids have led to the development of non-combatant infrastructure and facilities, such as education, health, electricity, and streets. The subsequent development outcomes are inspiring: between 2002/03 and 2011/12, GDP per capita increased exponentially from US\$186 to US\$688; the gross elementary school enrolment rate rose from 19% to 72.4%; the percentage of Afghans with access to improved water sources improved from 22% to 45.5%; maternal mortality reduced substantially, and life expectancy increased from 45 years to 48.7 years (World Bank, 2014). Despite this, Afghanistan is currently one of the developing

countries in the world. Its human development pointers rank at 168th among developing countries, especially among the local people (UNDP, 2018).

Although the number of urban residents is increasing daily in the country, the number of people living in rural areas is still remarkable (UNHABITAT, 2015). This is the reason why the majority of the areas have their local leaders playing a significant role alongside the government to take the residents and rural areas to development and peacebuilding. Unfortunately, the prolonged war and constant displacements are impeding the stability of local leadership and its efficiency (Zakhilwal & Thomas, 2005).

Bamyan is one of the 34 provinces of Afghanistan, located in the central highlands of the country. Its terrain is mountainous, at the western end of the Hindu Kush mountains concurrent with the Himalayas. Bamyan Province is divided into eight districts – Bamyan, Kahmard, Panjab, Sayghan, Shibar, Waras, Yakawlang No.1, and Yakawlang No.2), and Bamyan serves as its capital. The province has about 455,000 populations across 14,175 km² areas, bordered by Samangan in the north, Baghlan, Parwan and Wardak in the east, Daykundi and Ghazni in the south, and Ghor and Sar-e Pol in the west. Dari, which is Persian, is the main language spoken in the district. The name Bamyan can be translated as “the Place of Shining Light”. The central Afghanistan was strategically placed to thrive for the caravans of Silk Road that crisscrossed the region in antiquity, trading between the Roman Empire, China, Central Asia and South Asia. The historical sites of Bamyan are, now-destroyed Buddahs of Bamyan, more than 3,000 caves around Buddahs, the Band-e- Amir National Park, Dara-i-Ajdar, Gholghola, Zakhak, and Khoshak ancient towns.

Barai (2019), Nijat (2014), and Zakhilwal & Thomas (2005) highlighted that the decision-making in Afghanistan was and continues to be top-down and that the roles of community, local leaders, and governmental agents were not important. As a result, their needs were determined by the central planning outside the country, not only governmental services but also the United Nation’s support for development. Such situation was attributed by the fact that Afghanistan did not attract the attention of researchers and analysis on rural communities related issues. This top-down approach of decision making for development purposes has failed in different countries (Asnarulkadi & Aref, 2009; Andreas Wilde & Katja Mielke 2013; Okeke-Ogbuafor et al., 2018; Martiskainen, 2017; Terbish & Rawsthorne, 2020). The researchers highlight the significance of community members and local leaders as the key to development of their communities and making decisions. Unfortunately, in Afghanistan, particularly in the Bamyan province, it is one of the causes contributing to the backwardness in the province and the poverty issues (Najafizadah & Cohen, 2017; Emadi, 2011).

Soon after 2002, planners decided to include the participation of rural communities, local leaders, and governmental agents in the planning for development upon realizing the importance of their involvement. However, recent research shows that local people has remained skeptical about the efficiency of their participation in the planning process because the central government does what it wants to do anyway. Regardless, agricultural extension agents and community members should make decisions and the implementation of that decision should be their responsibilities, while the government and other organizations should support and help them to improve their abilities and skills. As an agrarian country, the agricultural extension agents should become the bridge between the people and the government.

1.2 Community Development in Afghanistan

Community development is a complex and interdisciplinary field of study that involves multidimensional in its applications. Why is this? Because community development is not only the physical realm of the community but also the cultural, social, political, economic and environmental aspects as well. Nowadays, community development emphasizes original needs-based that is inclusive and asset-based, and community development is now recognized as a distinct field for study. Today, scholars and practitioners are trying to respond to the challenges faced by the communities and regions because they aim to improve the quality of life and bring welfare to the community members (Phillips & Pittman, 2014).

The initial step to define community development is to define “community”. It can refer to a collection of individuals sharing a common interest and connected with a similar culture or costume and value of living at a specific location (communities of place). The decades of war in Afghanistan between 1979 and 2001 have forced the mass migration of experts, including agricultural extension agents to leave the country (Adovor, 2006). As a matter of fact, before the 1980s, the agricultural system in Afghanistan had 24 stations for research and more than 1,000 employees, 25% of which engaged in some form of technical investigation (Adovor & Estrada-valle, 2009). Nowadays, the agricultural extension system is influenced by the agricultural extension agents that used to operate in all 311 districts and villages with more than 400 extension administrations. Currently, there are 136 functioning extension units but most of them require a thorough training to learn about the modern system of extension (Adovor, 2006). Although more than 70% of people living in the rural areas, five decades ago they were overlooked by the central government, which strongly emphasized the development of infrastructures and services in the cities, especially in Kabul City (Zakhilwal & Thomas, 2005).

Shinn and Attaie et al. (2012) describe agriculture and natural resources as strengths; government, infrastructure, and corruption as weakness; exploiting labour, land, and water coupled with improved management and mechanization as opportunities; personal security and safety as threats; improving market chains and increasing governmental subsidies as incentives for the development of agriculture and especially, agricultural extension in rural communities in Afghanistan. The researchers concluded that the local leaders should manage and serve as the medium leading the society from backward to developed society. Hence, leaders should explore, and then manage the balance between the needs of rural communities and services of governmental and international organizations. On the other hand, it is recommended that foreign workers for agricultural extension purpose should have respect, trust, and gratitude to the opinion and authority of local leaders. Foreign agricultural extension workers must be informed of the spiritual and cultural events and the role of women and men in society. Their performance has to adopt with culture and holidays (Figueiredo, 2012).

In light of the above discussion, the ultimate objective of extension work is the development of community members in local areas so that they can do things for themselves. Those activities they are expected to do themselves should, therefore, constitute the working objectives of extension. Then, what are those things? The old saying "better farming, better business, and better living" can adequately summarize the situation (Chang, 1976).

The National Solidarity Programme (NSP) was introduced in 2002 in Afghanistan as national community driven development programme run by the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development and funded by various bilateral and multilateral donors, in large part through the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund. The NSP is based on a combination of customary Afghan practices (jirgas, shuras or councils, and collective community labour or ashar) with facilitating partners implementing the programme that are drawn from international and national NGOs as well as one United Nation agency, the UN Habitat. Facilitating partners facilitate the election of CDCs, help them to identify priorities of community development to be addressed by funds from block grant that are delivered in three instalments, and facilitate project implementation.

The NSP has two stated objectives. First, the programme is a local development initiative. Through the formation of Community Development Councils, it supports community input into the selection and implementation of community managed sub-projects comprising reconstruction and development. Second, the programme is a local governance initiative aiming to lay the foundations for a strengthening of community level governance (Nixon, 2008).

1.3 Decision Making (DM)

Afghanistan has passed four decades of war that have undermined the development of the country, market, structure of government, and societies. The war has left much of the country's villages infrastructure in a serious state of disrepair. As a consequence, the country's instability, combined with lack of governance and poverty, has resulted in damage to most human, physical and institutional infrastructure and most importantly, the insecurity in Afghanistan that prevents development (Wardak, 2011).

According to Nijat, (2014)

Afghanistan is a rural, patriarchal, traditional and religious society. At almost all levels, decision-making dynamics are top-down and largely informal. Identity is shaped by factors such as ethnicity, social privilege, financial assets, or by one's authority—formal or informal—the source of which can be any of the above or even the number of armed bodyguards and armored vehicles one possesses.

Top-down decision making mainly have worked to compensate for the lack of planning capacity and administrative roles shown by community members, thereby preserving a typical top-down pattern (Osti, Giorgio, 2000). Top-down decision-making approach in community development, however, lacked the focus on the local residents. Community members have been encouraged to take administrative roles in community development activities (Ushino, 1982). Afghanistan's National Development Strategic Plan (2013) shows that the governments' strategy demands consultations with national, sub-national, international, and private sector, civil society, religious and traditional communities. Through the consultation process, the government has aimed to connect with the local residents, local leaders, CDCs, governmental agents, and religious leaders for coordination of the development process.

History in Afghanistan from a century shows that top-down reform planning has failed. Therefore, the participation of stakeholders, both men and women in a society, is required to improve a sustainable and socially responsive towards enhancing their capacity to perform their roles for development (Nijat, 2014). According to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan UNAMA (2017), local leaders, religious leaders, or elders perform crucial roles in the villages of Afghanistan. They are respected figures, and the majority of the local population are following their words. This is common for whole the country, but more so, in the rural communities and districts. It conforms to the position made by Barai (2019), Nijat (2014), and Zakhilwal & Thomas (2005) that the decision-making in Afghanistan is top-down, and that the role of community members, local leaders, and governmental agents is not important in decision making process and agenda. As a result, their needs are determined by the central

planners outside the country, or in the capital of Afghanistan; it includes the governmental and non-governmental support for development.

Relevant strategy besides the National Development Strategy is the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF) and National Solidarity Program which established the CDCs for community development purposes in the community, by community members. The introduction and clarification of each strategy are as follow: Sajjad (2010) and Nemat & Werner et al., (2016) claimed that recently, more than 40,000 Community Development Council (CDC) have started their work on developing and alleviating poverties in rural communities. This also indicate the participation of these councils in decision making. Therefore, methods of decision making should change inversely from top-down to bottom-up. The methods involved planning at the local community councils are attached to the Afghanistan National Development Strategic Plan. However, ambiguities in the roles of the government and local leaders resulted in the plan being rejected by the government, resulting in the decision-making in Afghanistan as top-down (Nemat & Werner et al., 2016). 8 AM (2017) news reported that Afghans rural communities have been electing their Community Development Council (CDC) by a democratic election for ten years, and the CDC election is being held annually. The local leaders influence CDC, and both are trying to solve the conflict among people and take part in decision making with the government. Nowadays, the roles of youths in decision making in Afghanistan are significant than the warlords and elders. It motivates the president Mohammad Ashraf Ghani to open the youth parliament to improve the capacity and capability of young generation towards a better future and the participation of youth in the current government as leadership level has become significant while the roles of elders and warlords have diminished (Barai, 2019).

The research on decision-making in a community is vital to determine how other projects became a success. Because each community has a different structure, the focus of leadership in a large community is poor (Kuponiyi, 2008). Sources and activities in rural areas are in two part internal and external (O'Brien et al., 1991). Therefore, local leaders need to perform their roles both in the internal and external of the community development such as solving the problems, sharing information, bridging, monitoring, fixing environment, and networking between inside and outside of the communities (Herminia, 2015; David & Lisa, 2015; Quiroz-Niño & Blanco-Encomienda 2017; Brown, 1991; Luloff & Swanson, 1990). Local leaders also need to look for information and sharing with the community members, particularly on the development level of other communities, and also prepare the short-term projects or fellowship opportunities to community members to learn and practice outside of the community, all while running the community development simultaneously (Salamon, 1989). Recently, an investigation shows that models of leadership are different from one rural society to others, and the strive of local leaders can solve the problems of their societies (O'Brien & Hassinger, 1992).

The Social Structure of Afghanistan is based on tribe: Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Ozbek, Turkman, Sadat, Pashai, Aimaq, *et cetera*. The religious structure is 99.8% (80% Sunni and 19.8% Shia) and the remaining 0.2% are Buddhism. The study area is all Muslim from Sunni and Shia, comprising three tribes – Hazara (Shia), Tajik (Sunni) and Sadat (Shia). Each community has local residents, local leaders, religious leaders, community elders, CDCs, emigrated people and governmental agents that are also stakeholders and their co-operation, and contribution is vital for decision making in the community for development purposes. According to Andreas & Katja (2013) changing the decision making from top down to bottom-up approach becomes more clarified.

1.4 Problem Statement

The Central Statistics Organization (CSO) (2018) reported that the national poverty rate rose from 38% in 2011-12 to 55% in 2016-17, and the food insecurity rose to 44.6% from 30.1% in the last five years. It shows the dangerous situation in Afghanistan, particularly the rural communities since the majority of the population live in the rural area which unfortunately, most of the rural area is vulnerable. Investment in agriculture and infrastructures may be the best way for Afghanistan to encourage economic growth, alleviate poverty, increase employment and enhance food security, especially the rural areas. The 75% of population in Afghanistan living in rural areas are dependent on agriculture for livelihood. During the four decades of war, the number of cultivable areas in the rural reduced, which results in lower food production and ultimately, lower income for their families. On top of this troubling situation, increase flood and droughts occurrence implicated by climate change means that agriculture and livestock production are becoming more volatile every year (FAO, 2018). Thus, the capability of decision making for community development in rural area must improve, and it is necessary to overcome the abovementioned issues. That is, the most critical aspect is the roles of local leaders in decision making for community development.

However, decision-making in Afghanistan is top-down as reiterated by Nemat et al. (2016) and the community members are not all involved in the decision-making and implementation of development projects in the community. Numerous studies in different countries have shown that the top-down decision making has failed (Samah & Aref, 2009). Therefore, decision making for the development purposes, especially in rural development, needs to be of bottom-up approach. Local areas in Bamyán, Afghanistan are facing with different problems as mentioned by Ahmadzai et al. (2016). The reasons for project failures are “poor administration, lack of ICT, lack of evaluation, poor leadership, inappropriate training, lack of collaboration, lack of participation, poor selection (right person for the right job), and environmental factors”. On one hand, these are the roles supposedly shouldered by the local leaders in the community development projects. On the other hand, local people need to involve in the decision-making, its implementation and exert control in the local area while the local leader must assume their roles in the decision-making process. All of which

are crucial for rural areas in the Bamyan Province to improve its capacity and capability of community members to develop their communities and decide by themselves.

Therefore, local leaders have a part in addressing the problems in the community for development as asserted by Aref and Ma'rof (2009) and O'Brien and Hassinger (1992) on the significance of local leaders in assuming essential role in the rural development. Shinn and Ford et al. (2012) quoted in their research as "indigenous knowledge is a fundamental resource and a foundation for local-level decision making and sustainability. Opinion leaders serve as channels to move the society from poverty and conflict towards security and peacebuilding". According to Kock and Turnbull (2011) and Zakhilwal and Thomas (2005), participatory rural development is needed among the people with stakeholders and government; it is important for peacebuilding, and sustainability of extension projects in the villages. However, only local leaders that possess authentic leadership is capable of achieving such situation in the rural. Regardless, Kuponyi (2008), Ali (2019) and Wardak (2011) noted the poor engagement in decision-making, controlling, and implementing development activities by the local leaders (warlords and Maliks¹) and the community members. This is a major problem that prevails in the Afghanistan's rural society. These leaders are not aware of their roles and responsibilities on the development of their community, making decisions for the welfare and solving the problems of the community members. While they have enough influence in the community and a lot of people are following their words and obeying their decisions, the decision-making for community development is still centralized because the roles of the local leaders are not clear and they do not know about their roles.

The gap is between the roles of the local leaders and community development in Bamyan Province, Afghanistan. The National Solidarity Program (NSP) has been empowering local leaders with Community Development Council (CDC) to be self-sustained, self-initiative and assuming essential role as an active driver in all aspects of development. The literature shows that after many years of NSP interventions, it is recognized that the local leaders and CDC are still dependent on outsiders and working for them as followers. They also lacked the capability and capacity to act as independent community development coordinators (Ali, 2019; Wardak, 2011). Ali (2019) recently illuminated that Afghan people believe local leaders are not only the reason for backward but also the root of corruption. Besides, there is no specific rules and regulation to show who can be a local leader. Moreover, it is crucial that local leaders are informed of their roles and responsibilities, as well as the importance of local leaders. Therefore, the abovementioned problems and recommendations motivated the researcher to

¹ Malik: An influential figure who represents a village and is in contacts with the government.

conduct this study and clarify the roles of local leaders and the influences in community development in Afghanistan.

Considering the lack of research and information on the subject in Afghanistan, there is a need for one to clarify the roles of local leaders in community development. This study aims to evaluate the factors that influence the roles of local leaders in community development in Bamyan, Afghanistan.

1.5 Research Questions

The research questions for the study are:

- 1) What is the perception level of the community members towards the internal and external roles of local leaders in community development in the Bamyan Province?
- 2) What is the perception level of community members towards the decision making on community development by their local leaders?
- 3) What are the influencing factors of the roles of local leaders on community development?

1.6 Research Objectives

The objective of this study was to determine the roles of local leaders in community development based on community members' perceptions.

The specific objectives of this study are:

- 1) To determine the perception level of the community members towards the internal and external roles of local leaders in community development in Bamyan Province.
- 2) To determine the perception level of community members towards the decision making by local leaders on community development.
- 3) To clarify the influencing factors of the local leaders' roles on community development.

1.7 Significance of Study

The role of local leaders is crucial for the development of the community in Afghanistan because a lot of people are following them and their words. On the one hand, development projects need the participation of people, especially local leaders. If a project is launched without the participation of stakeholders,

then the project will fail. On the other hand, local leaders, community members, and governmental agents do not have information about the roles of local leaders, and over time, they requested to define the roles of local leaders. This shows the significance of this research that can benefit all parties. First, it will help the government to change the decision-making approach from top-down to bottom-up. Second, it will help community members to expect from leaders based on their capability in assuming the responsibility and authority, not more and also local leaders will understand their roles in modernizing the community away from the traditional. Third, it will be useful for the ministry of rural development, agricultural extension, and as a source for researchers, university lecturers, and students.

1.8 Thesis Organization

The thesis consists of five (5) chapters that cover different areas of the study. The introduction in Chapter 1 provides broad information on Afghanistan, the agricultural sector, community development and decision making. It contains the problem statement, objectives of the study, research questions and significance of the study and limitation.

Chapter 2 reviews previous literature and findings on the definition, concept, theory, and model on leadership. Related literature with community development decision making is reviewed in this chapter. The purpose of a literature review is to review the work that has been done relevant to the subject or field. It helps to identify the gap of the research and generates a rationale or justification for the study. Also, the method used in previous research relevant to this research is also discussed.

Chapter 3 discusses the methodology adopted in this study. It describes in detail about the research design, including questionnaire as the instrument of the study, sampling frame, sampling size and sampling method employed in this research. This chapter also describes the details of the analysis and how it will be conducted.

Chapter 4 presents the result and discussion of the study. The last part of the study is Chapter 5 which concludes the findings of this research, followed by recommendations for future study, limitations faced in the present study and further research in this field. The questionnaire used in this study is attached as an appendix.

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