

The Role of Urban Agriculture in Enhancing Food Supply and Export Potential: A Case Study of Neishabour, Iran

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Abstract : Rapid urbanization presents multifaceted challenges, including environmental degradation and public health concerns. As the inevitability of urban sprawl continues, it becomes essential to devise strategies to alleviate its pressures on natural ecosystems and elevate socio-economic benchmarks within cities. This research investigates urban agriculture's economic contributions, emphasizing its pivotal role in food provisioning and export potential. Adopting a descriptive-analytical approach, field survey data was primarily collected via questionnaires. The tool's validity was affirmed by expert opinions, and its reliability secured by achieving a Cronbach's alpha score over 0.70 from 30 preliminary questionnaires. The research encompasses Neishabour's populace of 264,375, extracting a sample size of 384 via Cochran's formula. Findings reveal the significance of urban agriculture in food supply and its potential for exports, underlined by a p-value < 0.05. Neishabour's urban farming can augment the export of organic commodities, fruits, vegetables, ornamental plants, and foster product branding. Moreover, it supports the provision of fresh produce, bolstering dietary quality. Urban agriculture further impacts urban development metrics—enhancing environmental quality, job opportunities, income levels, and aesthetics, while promoting rainwater utilization. Popular cultivations include peaches, Damask roses, and poultry, tailored to available spaces. Structural equation modeling indicates urban agriculture's overarching influence, accounting for a 56% variance, predominantly in food sufficiency and export proficiency.

Keywords : urban agriculture, food supply, export potential, urban development, environmental health, structural equation modeling

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